

2021

YEAR IN REVIEW

Daily Advocate
EARLY BIRD



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VERSAILLES 20, KIRTLAND 16

Tigers win D-V state title

Versailles fight off late Kirtland rally, holds on for 1st title since 2003

By Bryant Billing

bbilling@sidneydailynews.com

CANTON — The comeback of the Versailles football program is complete.

Versailles held on to beat Kirtland 20-16 in the Division V state championship game on Saturday night at Tom Benson Hall of Fame Stadium.

It's the seventh state championship in program history, but it's the first since 2003. The Tigers (15-1) hadn't been to a title game since 2004 — and had struggled for much of the 17 years since.

But third-year head coach Ryan Jones has presided over a quick turnaround. Versailles finished 2-8 in 2018 before Jones took over, 3-7 in Jones' first year in 2019 and 5-3 last season.

"These players, these seniors, have (led this turnaround)," Jones said. "When I came in, they were sophomores. They could have said, 'Who is this little guy coming in here from Troy Christian? We don't want any part of this.' But they embraced it,

bought into the program and gave every ounce of effort they had.

"They put the work in in the weight room and on the field and in the classroom. They're just tremendous young men, and they've made me be a better man and a better coach just being around them."

Versailles hung on in the fourth quarter.

After a Versailles three-and-out early in the fourth quarter, Kirtland quickly drove and scored when Gage Sullivan ran in from 39 yards out with 9:03 left in the fourth to cut the gap to 20-10.

After the teams traded possessions, Kirtland came up with another score in the final minute.

The Hornets drove 65 yards on six plays in a little more than a minute and scored when Mason Rus ran in from 4 yards out with 37 seconds left.

But Connor Stonebraker blocked the extra-point attempt, and Versailles easily recovered an onside kick attempt to secure the win.



Luke Gronneberg | Sidney Daily News

Versailles players after beating Kirtland 20-16 in the Division V state championship game on Saturday night at Tom Benson Hall of Fame Stadium in Canton. It's the program's seventh state title and its first since 2003. The Tigers, which finished 3-7 two years ago, will lose 18 seniors to graduation.

Then the players went wild on the field, as did the thousands of fans clad in black and orange in the bleachers.

"Just a tremendous accomplishment for our players," Jones said. "Couldn't be more proud of these guys for the hard work that they've put in. They set their mind to do this. They found that the price of success is high, and they were willing to pay it. It started in June, and they approached every day with the same attitude, to get better.

"...We never once said our goal is to win a state championship. We never talked about it. Our goal was to focus on the system that we do and how we approach things. We focus on getting better every day, one rep at a time."

The Tigers will lose 18 seniors to graduation, including senior quarterback Carson Bey, who completed 8-of-12 passes for 129 yards with one TD and ran for 99 yards and one TD on 27 carries.

See TIGERS | 20



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Controversy over proposed solar project heats up

By Tammy Watts
DailyAdvocate.com

DARKE COUNTY — Early in 2021, it came to the attention of a growing number of Darke County residents that Apex Clean Energy of Charlottesville, Virginia, had plans to build a 2,400-acre solar project throughout parts of Greenville, Van Buren, and Neave Townships. It was learned that some property owners had signed agreements with Apex to lease farmland for the use of solar panels and related facilities in 2020.

Many community members were concerned that the project required too much farmland, would reduce property values, and negatively

impact the environment through the potential leakage of hazardous chemicals, noise, glare, and loss of animal habitat. The Darke County Citizens Preservation Association (DCCPA) Facebook page was created in January 2021, and opposes the solar project.

In February, Senate Bill 52 was introduced, along with a companion bill, House Bill 118, co-sponsored by Jena Powell (R-Arcanum.) Both bills would require developers to share their application for wind or solar energy projects with township trustees, before submission to the Ohio Power Siting Board. The trustees could then vote to allow public input in the form of a petition or referen-

dum. Senate Bill 52 was subsequently passed and signed into law, giving county commissioners the option to prohibit construction, or place limits on the boundaries of the project.

At a Darke County Commissioners' meeting in June, an Apex representative stated that 60 farmers were already involved in the project. The landowners who have signed leases with Apex feel they have a right to do what they wish with their property. Those opposed to the project point out that if it causes damage, particularly drainage and water supply issues, or loss of value to neighboring properties, then it becomes unlawful.

At a September meeting of the Darke County Commissioners, members of the DCCPA attended to voice their frustrations. Commissioners explained that under Senate Bill 52, only one of eight of the Public Utilities Commission board members is allowed to be a county commissioner representative. The DCCPA gained a better understanding of the process, and that the commissioners are limited in taking any action until Apex's application is submitted to the Ohio Power Siting Board. The group emerged from the meeting more determined than ever, to educate the community on the potential consequences of such a large solar project in Darke County.

In November, the DCCPA held a panel discussion and public meeting at EUM Church in Greenville, where it was brought to the community's attention that the Darke County Parks District Board of Commissioners had signed three easement agreements with Apex in April.

Residents who stand to be impacted by the development of a solar project, attended the November meeting of the Darke County Parks District Board of Commissioners to

express their concerns. According to the Parks Commissioners, Apex had originally approached them in February regarding the easements, but at that time, they were unaware of the scope of the project.

In December, Darke County Commissioners explained that letters were sent out in October to 20 townships, in order to get feedback from the trustees as to the sentiments of their constituents regarding the solar project. Commissioners stated that it will be a long process, since it is similar to a zoning activity; therefore letters have to be sent out to nearly every household in a township. After a public hearing, resolutions can be developed, and action taken. Neave Township Trustees, however, already passed a resolution on September 27, that the Painter Creek Solar Project is not in the best interest of their citizens.

In December, property owners adjacent to the proposed project began receiving letters from Apex encouraging them to sign "Good Neighbor Agreements," under which they could not sue for damage, voice opposition, or otherwise interfere with the construction, operation, or maintenance of the solar farm, should it be approved. Even more citizens filled the next Parks Commissioners' meeting, urging them to speak with an attorney about rescinding the easement agreements with Apex. The same evening, Apex held an open house event to answer questions and address community concerns. Apex plans to submit an application for the Painter Creek Solar Project to the Ohio Power Siting Board in February 2022, with the goal of Painter Creek Solar becoming operational in 2024. Many Darke Countians plan to fight that endeavor every step of the way.

Daily Advocate reporter Tammy Watts can be reached at twatts@aimmediamidwest.com



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Portman will not seek 3rd term

First elected to Senate in 2010

Staff report

CINCINNATI — On Jan. 26, 2021, U.S. Senator Rob Portman (R-OH) issued the following statement announcing that he will not seek another six-year term in the United States Senate when his current term expires in 2022:

“I feel fortunate to have been entrusted by the people of Ohio to represent them in the US Senate. Today, I am announcing that I have made a decision not to run again in 2022.

“This doesn’t mean I’m leaving now — I still have two more years in my term and I intend to use that time to get a lot done. I will be the top Republican on the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, and I have a number of oversight projects and legislative initiatives I’m eager to get across the finish line. Over the next two years, I look forward to being able to focus all my energy on legislation and the challenges our country faces rather than on fundraising and campaigning.

“This was not an easy decision because representing the people of Ohio has been an honor. But I’ve been doing this a long time, longer than I ever intended.

“I’ve been in public service for 30 years — in the House of Representatives for 12, in the Executive Branch for about eight years in various roles in four different administrations, and in the Senate for the past 10 years. All this time, our family has kept our home in Ohio, where we raised our kids, and I have commuted back and forth to Washington. Jane and our three children have been 100 percent supportive, but I am really looking forward to being home in Ohio full time, seeing family



Portman

and friends more, and getting back to the private sector, including being able to be more involved in the community and in our family business. And I plan to stay involved in public policy issues,” he said.

Portman was first elected to the U.S. Senate in 2010. Prior to this, Portman served as the director of the Office of Management and Budget and as a trade representative under President George W. Bush. He was a U.S. Representative for Ohio’s 2nd Congressional District from 1993 to 2005.

“During my service in the Senate, I am proud of what we’ve been able to accomplish for Ohio and the country. I have consistently been named one of the most bipartisan Senators. I am proud of that and I will continue to reach out to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to find common ground.

“Eighty-two of my bills were signed into law by President Trump, and 68 were signed into law by President Obama. This includes impactful laws to address the drug addiction crisis like the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act that has saved lives by providing billions in new resources for evidence-based prevention, treatment and, for the first time ever, recovery services. It includes laws to confront the horrific crime of human trafficking. Working with trafficking victims, advocates, and law enforcement, my SESTA legislation has allowed victims to seek justice, and closed down websites that were trafficking girls and women online.

“It includes laws to help workers, legislation that before the pandemic helped create one of the strongest economies in a generation, with significant wage growth for working families and the lowest poverty level

ever recorded. I took a leadership role on tax reform and tax cuts, workforce training, regulatory relief and permitting reform. They all played a role in creating an opportunity economy and are key to getting us back on track. I have also been a leader on retirement security, technology policy, cybersecurity, trade, energy efficiency, prisoner reentry, National Parks, stopping China from stealing our technology, and more. I have worked constructively with my colleague, Senator Sherrod Brown, on matters that help move Ohio forward.

“I don’t think any Senate office has been more successful in getting things

done, but honestly, it has gotten harder and harder to break through the partisan gridlock and make progress on substantive policy, and that has contributed to my decision.

“We live in an increasingly polarized country where members of both parties are being pushed further to the right and further to the left, and that means too few people who are actively looking to find common ground. This is not a new phenomenon, of course, but a problem that has gotten worse over the past few decades.

See PORTMAN | 21



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Poultry Days is Back!

Staff report

VERSAILLES — Ohio has lifted COVID-19 restrictions and Versailles is proud to offer the return of one of the first major festivals of the summer.

Known for overcoming fires and floods the village has weathered a pandemic and is ready to welcome visitors. Poultry Days will be celebrated June 11 to 13 with a theme of “A Village of Champions, Honoring Those Who Make Us Great!” This theme is particularly appropriate given the many everyday “champions” who have stood out over the past year.

Poultry Days is famous for our chicken. Our goal is to deliver hot, fresh

and delicious dinners with as short of a wait as possible. To do this several changes have been made including adding a fifth chicken assembly line during peak times. With these additional volunteers as many as 3,000 dinners will be served per hour. The number of cookers has been increased from 7 to a peak of 10. These beautiful silver machines produce 220 dinners every 90 minutes. Cooking will begin before sunrise and that delicious smell will float throughout the village.

More Chicken Faster! On hand will be 38,000 fresh, never frozen, chicken halves ensuring there will be plenty of World Famous barbecue dinners available. The drive thru and walk



thru chicken lines are located at 459 S. Center Street and will serve individual dinners. These lines open at 3:30 p.m. Friday, 11:30 a.m. Saturday and 11 a.m. Sunday. Tickets will be for sale in both lines. Pre-purchased cooler pick up will be at the High School (280 Marker Road) and is best entered from Marker Road. Individual dinners will not be served in the bulk pick up line.

Mike and Sandy McClurg have been selected as Honorary Parade Marshals for the Grand Parade which will be held at 11 a.m. on June 12. The flag raising ceremony will be 1 p.m. on June 12 and include members of the Versailles High School Band. The Antique Car parade will be held at 2:30 p.m. on June 13. Registration for the Antique Car Parade and Display will begin at 10 a.m. at the corner of S. Center and Euclid Streets.

Remember live entertainment? The Social Tent will offer live entertainment all weekend including Tricky Dick & The Cover Ups, SNAFU, The Hammer Jockeys, Kaitlyn Schmit & The Move, Eight Ball, and Mustang Sally. The Social Tent will offer beverages from The Winery at Versailles, MillerCoors, Anheuser-Busch and Moeller Brew Barn. In addition to chicken the festival will have festival food, the Music Booster Food tent

and that Famous VAPPA Lemonade.

Amusement rides, games, pony rides, and much more. YOLO will organize the 5k Run/Walk with registration extending to the morning of the event. Ultimate Frisbee players will return to Versailles with a one-day tournament on June 12. The vendor area will be managed by the Zac Richards Foundation which will host a large selection of merchandise. The Versailles FFA will offer an Agriculture Awareness and Promotion Tent on Saturday and Sunday. Other activities include “Sons of the Legion” Cornhole Tournament, Lions Club Chuck-a-luck, FREE Kiddie Tractor Pulls, Flower Show, K of C Bingo, displays, Cake & Egg Show, Art & Photography Show, and of course the Miss Chick and Little Miss Poultry Days pageants. NEW this year is a FREE Chicken Eating Contest on Sunday.

Poultry Days thanks everyone for their continued support. The board is committed to offering a festival that celebrates our history and welcomes visitors. Visit VersaillesPoultryDays.com for the full festival schedule and event details. Get live festival updates by following Poultry Days on Facebook. All chicken questions should be sent to VPDChickenLine@gmail.com. General questions about the festival can be sent to PoultryDaysChairman@gmail.com.

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Midmark celebrates Hotel Versailles construction

Beam-raising ceremony marks historic milestone

Staff report

VERSAILLES — Midmark Corp. held a beam-raising ceremony to celebrate the progress being made on the new facility that will be Hotel Versailles, the restaurant Silas, and a new event space named 1819 Room.

The ceremony was held Monday on the site of the former Inn at Versailles, and featured several community leaders and Midmark executives, including Jon Wells, president and CEO of Midmark, Jeff Subler, mayor of Versailles and Matt Aultman, Darke County commissioner. Guest speakers at the event took the opportunity to explain the importance of the new facility to the community. The ceremony culminated with attendees signing one of the final beams that will be placed into the structure.

“Nearly everyone in the community has a fond memory of The Inn at Versailles. It’s where they went to celebrate special occasions and spend time with friends and family,” said Jack Olshan, managing director of Hotel Versailles, Midmark. “Today, we honor that legacy while looking forward to the exciting future this new facility represents for the village of Versailles and the surrounding area. I look forward to creating an environment with Hotel Versailles, Silas and the 1819 Room where residents can continue to come for their celebrations and get-togethers and create new memories. We are also looking forward to hosting those who are looking for that special getaway or simply a place for an intimate social gathering.”

The new facilities are scheduled to open in the spring of 2022 to support Midmark’s business partners and welcome regional patrons. Hotel Versailles will offer an elevated experience through its 30 rooms, including six suites, enhanced amenities, a fitness room, and a new courtyard and patio. The centerpiece of the boutique hotel is Silas, which will feature an array of indoor, outdoor, lounge and private dining seating. There are also plans for frequent live entertainment in the lounge area. The 1819 Room, which features an outdoor courtyard, will accommodate up to 200 guests and offer a premier event space to the surrounding community. All spaces can be reserved for private parties by visiting hotelversaillesohio.com.

This month, Midmark announced the appointment of Aaron Allen to its hospitality team as executive chef of Silas at Hotel Versailles. With more than 14 years of culinary experience, the Dayton-native will oversee menu planning for Silas and 1819 Room. He is currently working with Olshan to build out their team, with positions available now, and plans to announce several more in the fall. Positions currently available are hotel manager, pastry chef and sous-chef. In addition, they will be looking to fill more than 50 positions in the early fall, including servers, cooks, bartenders and front desk agents, with an array of benefits unique to the hospitality industry.

“It’s really exciting to see the construction moving along. Progress on the facility is advancing at a



Provided photo

Midmark Corp. held a beam-raising ceremony Monday to celebrate progress on the Hotel Versailles. Shown from left to right are Mike Busse, Village Administrator, Village of Versailles; Matt Aultman, Darke County Commissioner; Jon Wells, President and CEO, Midmark; Monique McGlinch, VP, Customer Engagement, Midmark; Jack Olshan, Managing Director, Hotel Versailles; Larry Holmes, Darke County Commissioner; Jeff Subler, Mayor of Versailles; and Mike Stegall, Darke County Commissioner.

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See HOTEL | 8

Spencer retires as Darke County Sheriff



Daily Advocate image

Darke County Sheriff Toby L. Spencer retired Oct. 31, 2021. Spencer was first elected sheriff in 1992.

28-year run ended Oct. 31

Staff report

DARKE COUNTY — Darke County's longtime sheriff announced his retirement in September 2021.

Effective Oct. 31, 2021, Darke County Sheriff Toby L. Spencer stepped down as sheriff and retired after 47 years of service with the Sheriff's Office, 28 of which have been as the elected sheriff of Darke County.

Spencer first joined the sheriff's department in 1974 as a road deputy and performed in that role until 1977 when he was promoted to the detec-

"I truly am a blessed man to have served the wonderful citizens and great Darke County, Ohio."

— **Toby L. Spencer,**
Retired Darke County Sheriff

tive section. Spencer was first elected Darke County Sheriff in 1992.

Sheriff Spencer said he wants to thank the citizens of Darke County for supporting him and having the confidence in him to have elected him for eight terms as sheriff.

Spencer said, "I truly am a blessed man to have served the wonderful citizens and great Darke County, Ohio."

Spencer reported retiring from the Sheriff's Office for personal reasons that have taken a toll on his life in the past couple of years. As well, he noted there were professional reasons that he believed were not conducive to allowing him to do the job he was elected to do.

"I was elected to serve and protect the citizens of Darke County," he stated. "Unfortunately, under the courts of Darke County, the only ones that are protected are those that continue to offend and continually break the law. There is no accountability for those

that prey on our society."

The Darke County Republican Central Committee unanimously elected Mark E. Whittaker to fill the vacancy left by Spencer, a Republican. Whittaker will act as interim sheriff to serve the remainder of Spencer's unexpired term. By Ohio statute, the party leadership is responsible for choosing a person to fill any unexpired term of an office vacated by a member of its party.

"It is a privilege and an honor to be selected by the Republican Central Committee to serve the citizens of Darke County as their sheriff. I look forward to leading the men and women of the Darke County Sheriff's Office in providing professional service with integrity to our county. I would like to thank everyone for the overwhelming support I have received and especially to retired Sheriff Spencer for his mentoring of me over the last 12 years as his chief deputy. I feel his strong leadership has prepared me for the future," said Whittaker.

Whittaker has been a resident of Darke County for most of his life. He has served as a Darke County Deputy for a total of 26 years, including his 12 years as chief deputy.

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From page 7

consistent pace. This is in large part thanks to the overwhelming support Midmark has received from the community as we've embarked on this project," said Monique McGlinch, vice president, customer engagement, Midmark. "It won't be long before local residents have a premier location to experience quality

food with locally sourced ingredients. As the hospitality industry gets back on track and families start venturing out again, the village of Versailles will be ready to welcome guests and visitors."

For more information or to inquire about making 1819 Room reservations, visit hotelversaillesohio.com. You may also visit @hotelversaillesohio and @silascreativekitchen on Facebook and Instagram for the latest updates.

Darke County Parks welcomes Bear's Mill

By Abigail Miller
DailyAdvocate.com

GREENVILLE — The Darke County Parks District welcomed the historic Bear's Mill into its family of parks on Saturday afternoon.

The Friends of Bear's Mill approached Darke County Parks two years ago about potentially obtaining ownership of the mill and the surrounding 38 acres. Since then, both parties worked together towards the transfer of property to the park district.

The transfer of ownership was made official on April 1 and approved by the Ohio Public Works Commission.

The previous owners, Terry and

Julie Clark, owned the mill from 1979 to 2013, and made significant changes like adding a gallery, upgrading the shop, and preserving the overall condition of the mill while they were owners.

Former board member of Bear's Mill, Thomas Menke, said without the Clarks, he doesn't think the mill would still be standing.

"The Clark hippies came along in the '70s, the flower kids, and they put their heart, soul, their blood, their tears, their equity into this thing," he said. "After so many years of keeping things going, I think if they wouldn't have been involved, this building may have been a feature down at King's

Island, probably a haunted mansion or something like that."

In addition to mill tours, art classes and the mill store, the parks are now offering canoe and kayak rentals from the Bish Discovery Center and to canoe and kayak down the scenic Greenville Creek to Bears Mill.

Darke County Parks Director Roger Van Frank indicated one of the most important issues with this transfer is the actual preservation of the mill and mill race. Plans for the first phase of the mill race renovation are already underway.

Ohio State Rep. Jena Powell (R-Arcanum) said the mill will continue to be an asset to young children

in the community, just as it was to her growing up in Darke County.

"It's incredible to be here today," she said. "I toured this place when I was just a little home-schooled girl and I remember walking out and thinking it was just incredible. Congratulations to you all, you're really passing on the torch of ideas and imagination to kids, parents and the people of Darke County, so well done on your work."

The mill is currently open Thursday to Sunday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. The Darke County Parks District asks that people wear masks to offer protection for everyone.



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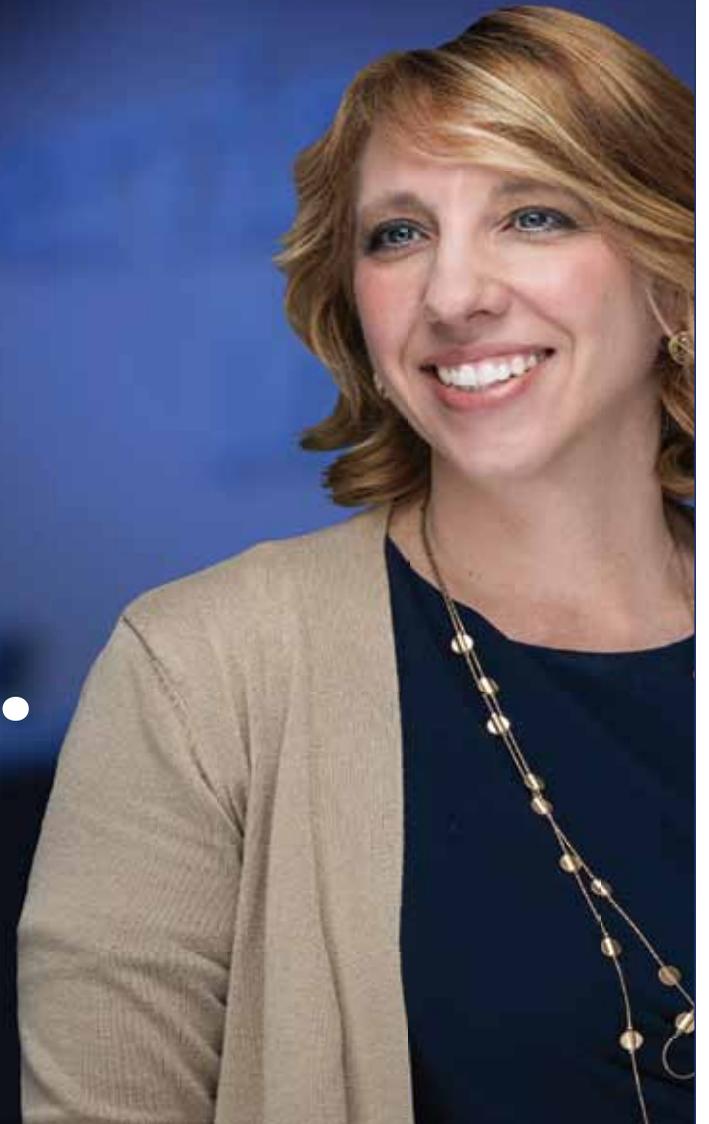


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Postal worker commended for saving life

Alerted officials to medical emergency

By Erik Martin
DailyAdvocate.com

GREENVILLE — Heroes don't always wear capes, but they do often wear uniforms. In some instances, they wear the uniform of the United States Postal Service.

Jacinda "Jacy" Dohme, of Greenville, a postal carrier for the Greenville branch of the USPS, was lauded Thursday morning by her coworkers and the Postmaster General of the United States, Louis DeJoy, for her act of heroism which saved a life.

Recently, while delivering mail to the Fox Run Senior Apartment Complex in Greenville, Dohme noticed that one of her customers was conspicuously absent for a few days, observing the woman had not picked up her mail or taken her trash can out for pickup.

"I started to feel concerned," said Dohme, "I went to knock on the door, rang the doorbell, there was no answer, so I asked her neighbor if he'd seen her lately and he said 'No.' So I went down to the office to let them know. She was found down and



Postal worker Dee Valdes (left) presents fellow employee Ryan Miller (right) with a commendation naming him the Greenville branch's MVP for the year.

unresponsive. They got the proper medical care to her."

Dohme said she was glad to have been there at that time so somebody could find the woman in distress.

On hand at the Greenville USPS branch to present a signed commendation from the U.S. Postmaster General were Rob Baker, regional post office operations manager, and Jean Lovejoy, district manager.

As for the commendation signed by the U.S. Postmaster Gen-



Photos by Erik Martin | The Daily Advocate

Jacinda "Jacy" Dohme (center) holds a commendation from the U.S. Postmaster General, applauding her for saving the life of an elderly woman. Rob Baker, regional post office operations manager (left), and Jean Lovejoy, district manager (right) were on hand to present her the commendation.

eral, Dohme said she was "a little shocked, surprised, but it is a great feeling to have that honor. Everybody in the office gets to share all that enjoyment too."

Postal worker Ryan Miller of Greenville also received kudos from his post office coworkers, being named as this year's "MVP." His commendation was presented to him

by fellow employee Dee Valdes.

Postal Officer in Charge Walt Brown said he is extremely proud of all his workers.

"They're great, they care about their customers and they like watching out for them," he said.

To contact Daily Advocate Editor Erik Martin, email emartin@aimmediamidwest.com or call 937.569.4312.



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DeWine praises Darke County's vaccination efforts

Toured Reid Hospital's vaccination site

By Erik Martin
DarkeCountyMedia.com

GREENVILLE — Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine, joined by Ohio First Lady Fran DeWine, visited Greenville Saturday, March 13, 2021, to witness Darke County's vaccination efforts to combat COVID-19.

Local health care workers were joined by members of the Ohio National Guard in vaccinating Darke County citizens. Reid Hospital, Wayne HealthCare, Family Health, and the Darke County Health Department have joined together

in a mutual effort to provide vaccinations for the public. The event took place at Reid's Jackson Street location in Greenville.

DeWine toured the facility and spoke with staff and those receiving the vaccine and noted their sense of relief.

"One thing we notice everywhere we go is that people are happy to get the shots, they're happy to move on with their life," he said. "This is a very impressive operation. This is really the community coming together."

DeWine said at least 17 percent of Darke County residents have been vaccinated, and that those aged 50 years old and older represent 98 percent of the deaths in the state. As of Friday,

See DeWINE | 18



LEFT: Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine (speaking with Dr. Henry Chong, left) was in Greenville, overseeing COVID-19 vaccinations being dispensed at Reid Hospital's Greenville offices. DeWine said approximately 17 percent of Darke County residents had thus far received the vaccine.

Erik Martin | Darke County Media

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City approves water, sewer increases

By Erik Martin
DarkeCountyMedia.com

GREENVILLE — After many months of debate and revisions, Greenville City Council approved an ordinance raising water and sewer rates for city residents and businesses on June 1, 2021.

Water and sewer rates went up 20 percent effective Sept. 1, 2021. Rates will see a 10-percent increase March 1, 2022, a 20-percent increase Sept. 1, 2022, and a further 10-percent increase March 1, 2023.

As well, the city will switch to monthly billing for water and sewer services beginning Sept. 1 this year. The measure passed unanimously.

The city is seeking the increases to

pay for infrastructure improvements for water and wastewater services, including replacement of aged water lines and construction of an additional water tower as recommended by the EPA.

The initial version of the measure had significantly higher rate increases at the start — 50 percent for water, 25 percent for sewer. Though council accepted the Utilities Committee recommendations for rate increases, the measure was defeated following input from the public.

A revised version had lower percentages to start but included a locked-in 5-percent yearly increase. This was also declined by council.

In December 2021, Ohio Lt. Gov. Jon Husted announced an Ohio BUILDS

Water Infrastructure Grant award of \$1.4 million for the City of Greenville at the Greenville City Building's Council Chambers on Dec. 9.

"It was not expected," said Greenville Safety/Service Director Ryan Delk. "When we first started talking about raising water rates, we didn't have the funds to kick it off, so we would have to do low-interest loans or wait to save the money to get it. We've applied for many grants."

Greenville's \$1.4 million grant will be used for new transmission water mains on the south side of town, replacing the original infrastructure installed in 1893.

Currently, many of the cast iron mains run through private property, making them difficult to maintain. In 2019,

there was a major water line break, resulting in a boil water advisory for Greenville, including the City Building.

According to Delk, the total project estimate is slightly less than \$1.9 million, so the \$1.4 million grant from the state covers a significant portion of that cost, and the city has also received a second grant towards the project.

"We've received this one this week, and we've also received a lead-line grant which is about \$900,000 to replace the lines, plus principal forgiveness through the Ohio EPA as well, so we're looking at about \$2.3 million total to work with," Delk stated. He added that, in the short-term, this will have no bearing on enacted rate increases on water and sewer services to Greenville residents.

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Dale Barger | Darke County Media

Gov. Mike DeWine and his wife speak with Ohio National Guard members onsite at Reid Hospital's Jackson Street office in Greenville.

DeWine

From page 16

March 12, the state reported a total of 17,871 COVID deaths, with Darke County itself recording 116 COVID deaths.

Asked when he expects there to be a lifting of restrictions and mask wearing,

DeWine said a return to normal activities depends on how fast Ohioans get vaccinated, saying the goal is "50 cases per 100,000 population."

The Republican governor's slow-paced return to normal, however, faces opposition among members of his own party in the Ohio General Assembly

On March 4, State Rep. Jena Powell (R-Arcanum) introduced legislation intended to remove the mask mandate

altogether.

"Sixteen states currently do not have a statewide mask mandate," said Powell. "These states are thriving economically, mentally, and emotionally."

The legislation also prohibits any statewide mask mandates by the governor or any department director during the duration of the COVID-19 state of emergency, unless approved by the General Assembly.

Asked his thoughts on the measure, DeWine called it a "mistake" and said, "We're driving, we're at the 5-yard line of the other guy, and ready to score, but we can't walk off the field, we can't stop right now."

"We need to play defense a little while longer with these masks. These masks work exceedingly well," he added. "The reason we are in the position we are today is two things: We have the vaccine, which is on offense, and we're driving hard... but for a little while longer we've got to play defense."



Dale Barger | Darke County Media

Gov. Mike DeWine speaks with the press about his visit to Reid Health in Greenville. He called it "a very impressive operation."

Gov. DeWine predicted a return to normal activities in Darke County this summer, and expects community events such as the Darke County Fair and Annie Oakley Days to go ahead as planned.

Darke County Health Department Director of Nursing Emily Hoisington said they were dispensing 400 doses of the vaccine Saturday, accommodating approximately 100 people per hour.

Darke County Commissioners Larry Holmes and Mike Stegall accompanied the governor on his tour of the facility.

Stegall said Darke County citizens should be proud of all local health care organizations involved.

"This collaboration between Reid, Family Health, Wayne HealthCare, they've done a tremendous job," he said.

Holmes said it was good to have the governor visit and he, too, was proud of Darke County.

"It's been nice that we've been able to come together," he said, "Let's finish the race and try to get back to normal."

To contact Darke County Media Editor Erik Martin, email emartin@aimmediamidwest.com or call 937.569.4312.



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Horses dance down Broadway once again

Holiday Horse Parade ushers in the holiday season

By Dawn Hatfield
DailyAdvocate.com

GREENVILLE — The winter holiday season has officially begun in Greenville, Ohio. With the crisp fall weather came the clapping of horse hooves down South Broadway Saturday evening. The long-anticipated annual Hometown Holiday Horse Parade was back in full gallop, well, maybe more of a trot, after three long years! Equestrians and spectators excitedly filled the streets of Downtown Greenville, and even the horses seemed responsive to the buzz of excitement in the air. Spotty rain showers had cleared and the lingering sting of cold in the air was overpowered by winter coats, hats, gloves, and even blankets. No one was going to miss this celebration.

The parade began at 7 p.m. and ran for nearly an hour as more than 90 lighted horse-drawn carriages, hitches, and riders illuminated downtown. Horse teams descended on the community from across Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky to entertain the estimated 8,000-plus spectators gathered in Greenville from across Darke County and beyond.

Currently in its 18th year, the Hometown Holiday Horse Parade was selected as the “Best of Ohio” parade by the readers of “Ohio Magazine” for 2019. Main Street Greenville’s event chairperson, Diana Stebbins, coordinated this activities-packed family event. Unfortunately, due first to weather conditions in 2019 and then to the COVID-19 pandemic last year, the parade had been canceled for two consecutive holiday seasons. However, this year brought back the tradition in a big way. Both Romer’s Catering and Sure Shot Tap House both offered

delicious (reservation/ticket-required) buffets great for fueling up for all the after-hours shopping available in more than 40 downtown establishments. Free pony rides for children and free hot cocoa for everyone were two favorites of event-goers. Live music was offered in front of the Darke County Courthouse as well as at the Circle Fountain.

The grand marshals of this year’s parade were Steve Baker, of WHIO-TV, and Betty Birt, former Main Street Greenville Board secretary. The two shared the honor as co-grand marshals due to the cancellation of previous parades. They were carried from Martin Street up South Broadway to the Circle and back by a single-horse carriage shining brightly with twinkling lights.

Although not a Darke County resident, Baker was honored with the distinction of grand marshal because of his dedication to covering news stories and events in Greenville and Darke County. According to a 2020 press release, Baker started his career in broadcasting after a stint in the Navy and worked at WPTW in Piqua and also as a stringer for Channel 2 before joining WHIO-TV in 1980. Chairperson Stebbins explained Baker’s connection to the Hometown Holiday Horse Parade. In the first years, the parade was fortunate to draw 1,000 to 2,000 spectators, but after Baker did a story on the event, it grew to around 10,000 visitors. Baker said of Greenville and its parade to WHIO.com, “Just a great parade, a great parade. A neat city, a neat county. I’m all excited about it and so is my wife.”

Additional grand marshal, Betty Birt, graduated from Siena Heights University in Michigan in 1971 and is a self-described “transplant” who

married Rick Birt from Greenville that November. Betty worked at Brethren Retirement Community and first began volunteering for Main Street Greenville under the leadership of Amber Schmerge. She worked closely with both Amber and Deanna York, the previous executive director of the Darke County Visitors Bureau. Betty collaborated with Deanna to bring GOBA (Great Ohio Bicycle Adventure) to Greenville and became a member of the board in 2013, serving as board secretary beginning in 2015.

A 2019 press release says it best, “Betty Birt was an easy choice to serve as a Main Street Greenville Board Member,” said previous director Amber Garrett. “Her positive

attitude, willingness to volunteer, and her continuous support of downtown Greenville were all beneficial to the organization over the years. Betty has been involved with numerous projects, programs, and events including the free pony rides during the Hometown Holiday Horse Parade.”

When asked about her favorite part of downtown Greenville, Betty touched on the holidays, “I love the Horse Parade and all of the lights and the horses prancing down the street and all of the good smells from the street vendors! I love Christmastime and seeing the beautiful windows and the Circle and the street lights decorated

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Photos by Luke Gronneberg | Sidney Daily News
Versailles senior quarterback Carson Bey throws as he gets a block from teammate Titus Gehret during the Division V state championship game on Saturday night at Tom Benson Hall of Fame Stadium in Canton. Bey threw for for 129 yards with one TD and ran for 99 yards and one TD on 27 carries.



Versailles' Payton Platfoot, left, and Trey Mills bring down Kirtland's Gino Blasini during the Division V state championship game on Saturday night at Tom Benson Hall of Fame Stadium in Canton.



LEFT:
Versailles' Noah McEldowney hauls in a pass as Kirtland's Tommy Gogolin approaches during the Division V state championship game on Saturday night at Tom Benson Hall of Fame Stadium in Canton.

Tigers

From page 3

“Coming into the year, we wanted to make it farther than last year (a 31-28 regional final loss to Roger Bacon). We had our eyes on a state championship,” Bey said. “But we always preach process over product. There’s nothing more we could do than work hard every day to reach the goal we did today.”

Jack Osborne ran for 50 yards and one TD on 22 carries. Noah McEldowney caught four passes for 68 yards.

Both squads finished with 263 yards of offense.

Versailles scored on the first drive of the game. The Tigers received the opening kickoff and drove 63 yards on 10 plays to take a 6-0 lead after a missed extra point. Bey scored on a 15-yard run with 6:24 left to cap off the drive.

Kirtland responded on the next drive. The Hornets drove 43 yards on nine plays and scored when Johnny Raguz kicked a 38-yard field goal with 2:52 left in the first.

But Versailles scored on its next drive possession. The Tigers drove 65 yards on 10 plays and scored when Bey threw a 24-yard TD pass to Michael Osborne on the visitor’s sideline, which Osborne caught under pressure with 9:25 left in the second to push the lead to 13-3.

Both squads had one turnover late in

the second, but neither capitalized. Versailles drove to Kirtland’s 20 in the final seconds of the quarter but couldn’t score.

Kirtland went three-and-out to start the third quarter, and Versailles then went on a 13-play, 80-yard drive that was capped by a 1-yard touchdown run by Jack Osborne with 3:22 left. Chase McEldowney kicked the extra point to push the lead to 20-3.

It was the second state title earned by Midwest Athletic Conference team on Saturday. Marion Local beat Newark Catholic 42-7 in the D-VII state title game on Saturday morning. It’s the program’s 12th state championship. Coldwater lost 26-14 to Carey in the D-VI state title game on Saturday afternoon.

Versailles and Marion Local’s win pushes the number of football titles won by MAC schools to 39 and the number of state titles in all sports to 145.

“You’ve got difficult games week in and week out in the MAC,” Jones said. “You can lose any week. You’ve got to be consistent, and you’ve got to bring your ‘A’ game every week, because anybody can knock you off.”

Kirtland (14-1) had won 55 consecutive games before Saturday’s loss, including the D-VI state title game in 2018 and D-V state title game in 2019 and 2020.

Reach Bryant Billing at 937-538-4818, or follow @SidneyOHSports on Twitter and @BryantBillingSDN on Facebook.

Portman

From page 5

“This is a tough time to be in public service. For many of the issues I am most passionate about, I will continue to make a difference outside of the Senate, beyond 2022. In the meantime, I am hopeful that President Biden will follow through on his inaugural pledge to reach across the aisle, and I am prepared to work with him and his administration if he does. I was on the bipartisan call yesterday on a new COVID-19 package. I hope the Administration will work with us on a more targeted approach that focuses on things like vaccine distribution, testing and getting kids back to school.

“I want to thank the great people of Ohio for giving me the incredible opportunity to serve, and I look forward

“I appreciate my friends in every corner of Ohio and across the political spectrum who encourage me and help me better represent our diverse state.”

— **Rob Portman,**
U.S. Senator (R-OH)

to continuing to work hard for them over the next two years. I appreciate my friends in every corner of Ohio and across the political spectrum who encourage me and help me better represent our diverse state. I thank them for what they do for our communities and for the inspiration they give me.

“I want to thank my amazing staff both in Ohio and in DC. They work really hard for the people of Ohio and have enabled me to be so much more effective. I know I am biased, but I really believe they are the best team in the Senate, and others think that, too.

“Of course, I will always be grateful to the voters of Ohio who have

supported me in nine elections to the House and Senate. Thanks to them, I’ve never lost an election and never won by less than 18 points. I am confident that with their support I could have won again but, for me, the question was whether I wanted to serve an additional six years in the Senate.

“I decided to make my announcement now because I have made up my mind, but also because it will allow whichever Republicans who choose to run plenty of time to gear up for a statewide race.

“Finally, and most importantly, a special thanks to Jane and our family for the unconditional support and for

the sacrifices they have made — and will continue to make for the next two years. I appreciate Jane, Jed, Sara and Sally for being here today and for the well wishes from Will and Tyler who weren’t able to travel to Cincinnati this morning. We are a team.

“In these next two years, I will continue to be actively engaged, doing my best to provide hope as we try to get through the devastating coronavirus pandemic and doing my best to help bring our great country together, to help us heal, so we address the many challenges we face together.”

A number of GOP hopefuls announced they would seek the Republican nomination for Portman’s seat in 2022, including Jane Timken, former chair of the Ohio Republican Party, Josh Mandel, former Ohio Treasurer and State Representative, best-selling author JD Vance, Ohio Sen. Matt Dolen, and businessman Bernie Moreno, among many others.



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First vaccines administered at Wayne HealthCare

By Nathaniel Kubik

DailyAdvocate.com

GREENVILLE — The Moderna COVID-19 vaccine has arrived in Greenville. Staff at Wayne HealthCare were the first to receive the vaccination Thursday (Dec. 24, 2020) morning.

The first small shipment of vaccines in Greenville comes as a part of Phase 1A of the vaccine distribution from the Ohio Department of Health (ODH). Phase 1A is focused primarily on, “high-risk healthcare providers and residents of congregate care facilities,” according to information provided by the ODH. The next phase of vaccinations, hopefully coming in the very near future, will focus on adults who are 65 years of age or older, those with developmental disabilities such as sickle cell or down syndrome, and all adults working in school buildings.

The Moderna vaccine is administered in a two-dose series, with the second dose coming 28 days after the first. According to the FDA, protections against the virus begin to take effect shortly after receiving the first dose.

Dr. Stephanie Buchanan, a surgeon at Wayne, was the first to receive the vaccine in Greenville. Along with Dr. Buchanan, a number of other surgeons, registered nurses, and hospital staff received the vaccine. Dr. Buchan-



an, alongside her colleague Dr. Alisha Reiss, are both advocates for receiving the vaccine as soon as you are able. Buchanan and Reiss stated that the vaccine will enable them to better protect their patients, their families and themselves — allowing them to continue to excel at the important work they do.

“I think there is a lot of research and science that has went into this vaccine,” said Dr. Reiss. “While it has felt rushed from the public standpoint, this type of vaccine has had almost 20 years of research, dating back to studies conducted on SARS-

CoV-2. It has been rushed, if you will, for this specific Coronavirus, however, it has had lots of research and data, and we’ve had tons of side-effect profiles for people who have already received the vaccine.”

Reiss also touched on how important it is for the general public to receive the vaccine, adding that she believes this is the light at the end of the tunnel.

“You’re starting to see hope, you’re starting to see a light at the end of the tunnel, we might have a way out of this pandemic,” Reiss concluded, adding, “I wouldn’t recommend it to patients and people in the community if I didn’t think it was safe.”

This shipment of vaccines comes courtesy of the Darke County General Health District, which is responsible for distributing vaccines from the state. Doses were allotted to Wayne HealthCare in accordance with federal and state recommendations.

Despite this news, health experts are recommending that the general public still follow the necessary COVID-19 guidelines to keep everyone safe.

Horses

From page 19

and hearing the Christmas music,” but she explained it is “too hard to pick a favorite—there is just too much good stuff going on.”

The enchanting night concluded with the rejuvenated tradition of a community Christmas tree lighting at Annie Oakley Memorial Park, which is anticipated to become an annual event once more.

Mayor Steve Willman addressed the community just before Santa turned on the lights, “Although it is spectacular on its own, it’s what [this tree] represents that makes it special. I’m honored to be a small part of dedicating this tree to Barbara Fee as a tribute to her life... Because she loved to decorate and celebrate Christmas, the tree is donated by her husband Hershel Fee and the Lighthouse Christian Center...”

In addition to pastoring the Lighthouse Christian Center for decades alongside husband, Hershel, Barbara chaired the community Christmas dinner for 38 years and served as president of the Darke County Republican Women’s Club as well as Chaplain for the organization. She was also elected Treasurer of the City of Greenville in 2005 and served in that position for 11 years until her retirement. Barbara was the recipient of many local and regional awards. She was a strong leader and an involved presence in the community who has been missed since her passing in November 2020.

Mayor Willman continued, “Tonight, this Christmas tree is a symbol of new life for Barbara and for us, a beginning of many memories we will make tonight as we did in the past.”

Contact Daily Advocate Reporter Dawn Hatfield at dhatfield@aimmediamidwest.com or 937-569-0066.

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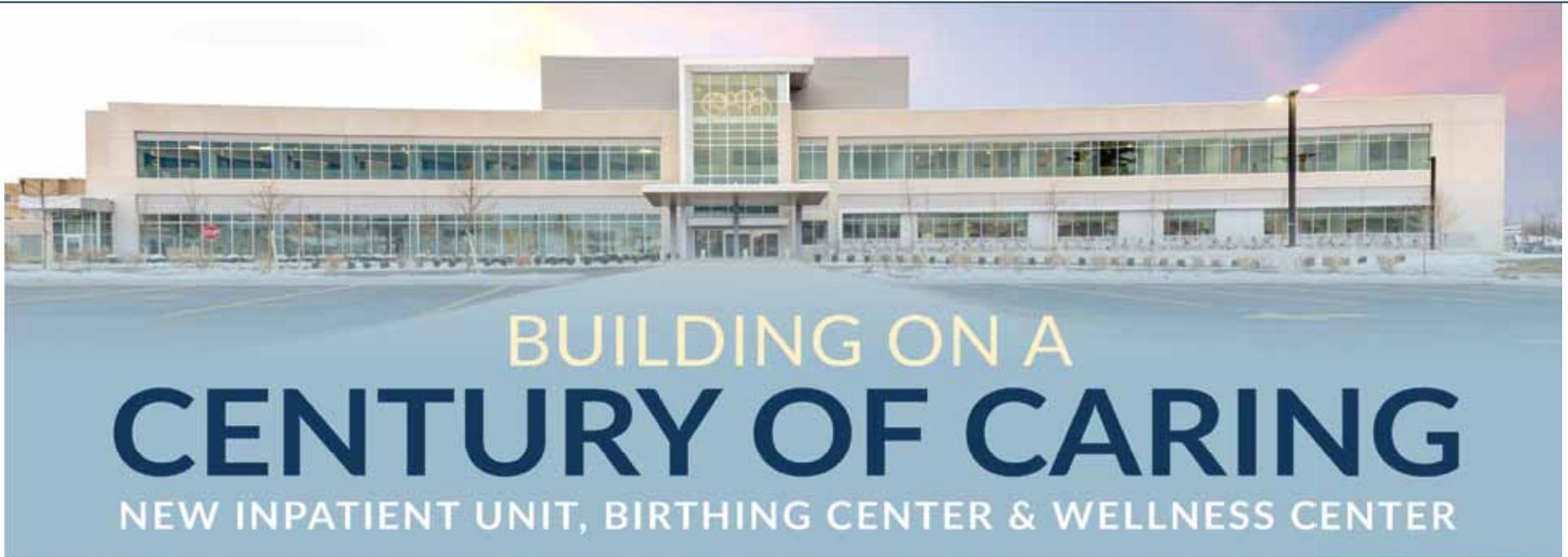
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- Community rooms and cooking demonstration lab for wellness education

At Wayne HealthCare, our patients and their healthcare are at the center of everything we do.

They're why we continue to grow and expand, ensuring the communities we serve can count on Wayne HealthCare to provide world-class care close to home for years to come.

It's not just a hospital, it's an experience

Research has shown that healing extends beyond medical science. That's why it was important to bring in landscape, light and soothing color palettes. Our spacious private rooms feature floor-to-ceiling windows, allowing for healing natural light to flow in.

Transforming lives

This expansion is about much more than growth and modernization. It's really about connecting people to expert healthcare and providers who care.



835 Sweitzer Street • Greenville, OH 45331 • 937.548.1141 • WayneHealthCare.org