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Tomorrow's weather

Partly
Cloudy

84
66

Scrapbook:

Last July 20:
High: 83
Low: 69

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Road closure planned

South Gallatin Street between Third & Fourth streets will be closed Thursday and Friday, July 22 and 23, and Monday and Tuesday, July 26 and 27, in order to bring in equipment for apartment projects, according to Virgil Hartley of the Marion Engineering Department. For more information, call Jason Edwards at 317-927-8300.

COVID-19 vaccine information

COVID-19 vaccines are now available to Hoosiers 12 and older. To schedule at a facility within the state system, visit ourshot.in.gov or call 211. Vaccines are free, but insurance may be charged an administrative fee. Appointments for the second dose will be made when the first dose is administered if receiving a Moderna or Pfizer vaccine that requires two doses.

The Grant County Health Department is operating a vaccine clinic locally within the state system. Appointments can still be scheduled, but walk-ins are also now accepted at this time. Children ages 12-17 are only permitted to receive the Pfizer vaccine.

The Marion Walmart and Meijer locations, Walgreens locations at 1323 N Baldwin Ave. and 2620 S. Western Ave. in Marion and CVS at 4630 S. Washington St. in Marion are also offering COVID-19 vaccinations at their in-store pharmacies as part of the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program (FRPP). Eligible customers can schedule a vaccine appointment via the stores' respective websites.

Visit uplandfamilypharmacy.com or call 765-998-8072 for information on Upland Family Pharmacy's vaccine clinic that offers the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

All veterans can now receive a COVID-19 vaccine from VA Northern Indiana

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Dispatch center to request additional staff

By **TIM TEDESCHI**

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Grant County Central Dispatch Director Michael Clayton plans to request additional staffing during annual budget hearings next month in an effort to reduce the burden on current employees.

At last week's Grant County Public Safety Operations Center Policy Board meeting, Clayton said he

plans to request two additional full-time dispatchers from county council, which would bring the total number of full-timers from 18 to 20. If the additional employees are approved, Clayton said he would also transition the center from its current eight-hour shifts to 10-hour shifts.

"With the 10-hour schedule we have it worked out where we at full staffing could have everyone off

every other weekend and actually...give some quality of life back to the dispatchers who have been kind of beat up for the past year," he said. "With our current staffing, I can't make 10s work. I need two additional bodies, and that's where that came from."

Clayton and the board have discussed the high call volume and heavy burden currently being placed on dispatchers for nearly the

entire time central dispatch has been operational since June 2020. The policy board and Clayton had previously requested that county council create three additional dispatcher positions in the 2021 budgeting process last fall, but the council rejected the proposal.

Clayton said the center currently only has 15 full-timers and has five

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By **ANDREW MACIEJEWSKI** / amaciejewski@chronicle-tribune.com

Marsha, Robbie & Friends plays their set on the James Dean Memorial Stage in Fairmount.

Sounds of Summer highlights local art

By **ANDREW MACIEJEWSKI**

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The Fusion Arts Alliance has one more concert to play in Fairmount before it's summer concert series moves back to the Grant County Courthouse square in August.

The Fusion Arts Sound of Summer events were created to feature local talent that showcases contemporary and experimental performances. Executive Director Ryan Drown said the idea was born in the belief that arts unite and strengthen our neighborhoods and communities, so Fusion Arts Alliance wanted to create a platform that allows diverse artists and audiences to collaborate and enjoy good times together.

"What we want to do is pull people from around our community and make

them a part of something that gives them exposure so they don't have to move away in order to make their name big," Drown said. "We want them to be able to do it from their community."

Drown said the artists showcased in their events are different from the musical acts that play at various concerts series across Grant County in hopes to promote the supporting of local artists.

"(Supporting local arts) is drastically important because these people are doing something they love. When they don't have an audience, it's hard for them," he said. "They might think what's the point of me playing or doing anything along the lines of art. It's important to support local artists no matter what genre."

The events take place

every Monday until the end of August from 6:30-8:30 p.m., with concerts at Playacres Park in Fairmount during July and performances at the Grant County Courthouse Square in August.

"The people that have been to this event have loved it," Drown said. "The first week we were in Fairmount I had a gentleman say it's nice to see stuff going on here on a Monday because Mondays are typically nights you wouldn't think that a music series would be on."

Drown said the movement between different towns has been a nice change since it shows that the Fusion Arts Alliance serves a wider area than Marion, where last year's concert series took place.

"I think people are catching on that we are moving around," he said. "The arts

alliance's vision was to advocate and support the arts in Grant County and the surrounding area, so we are trying to change what we are doing so that people don't think we are only located in Marion."

With plenty more acts on the event list, Drown says he hopes the word spreads so more people can enjoy the free, family-friendly event.

"Attendance has been good," he said. "Our average attendance so far has been 70, so we are hoping that we will keep growing as people learn where we are at."

The remaining schedule includes:

Classic Voice on July 26 at Playacres Park in Fairmount.

Mike Snyder on Aug. 2 at the Grant County

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Harmless funnel clouds reported in county over weekend

By **TIM TEDESCHI**

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Some Grant County residents observed a scary sight in the sky on Saturday, but the funnel clouds reported turned out to be harmless and served as a good test of the county's tornado procedures.

EMA Director Bob Jackson told Grant County Commissioners Monday that several residents reported observing "quite impressive" funnel clouds on Saturday afternoon. Luckily, the clouds that were observed turned out to be cold funnel clouds, which are usually not a threat to cause damage or touch down, Jackson said.

According to the National Weather Service, cold air funnel clouds can form beneath rain storms or weak thunderstorms in certain conditions when the air is especially cold and are usually most common in the fall and spring. While cold air funnels are usually harmless, like in the situation in Grant County this weekend, the National Weather Service stated on rare occasions the clouds can touch down and cause EF-0 level tornado damage, with winds up to 85 miles per hour.

Grant County Central Dispatch Director Michael Clayton said a trained spotter called into the center on Saturday reporting seeing the funnel clouds, and based on that information the county's emergency sirens were activated as a precaution.

"The good news is the system did work. We did what we were supposed to," Clayton said. "There are a little

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ISP: Standoff ends with arrest of Macy man

By **JARED KEEVER**

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PERU — Authorities arrested a Miami County man last Tuesday afternoon after they said he led police on a car chase and then locked himself inside his home.

Jason Fites, 45, of Macy was originally arrested on charges of resisting law enforcement, criminal recklessness with a firearm, possession of heroin, possession of methamphetamine, dealing heroin, dealing methamphetamine, pointing a loaded firearm, violent felon in possession of a handgun and possession of a syringe, a news release from the Indiana State Police said.

He was taken into custody just before 4 p.m.

On Friday, the State Police announced prosecutors had also added a charge of attempted murder, dealing cocaine and two additional charges of possession of a handgun by a violent felon.

The incident leading to Fites' arrest began around noon when officers from the Cass County Drug Task Force were conducting surveillance at a hotel in Peru, searching for Fites who, according to the release, was wanted on a Tippecanoe County arrest warrant for violation of his parole on a class A felony

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MCS discusses school reentry plans

By **TIM TEDESCHI**

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Marion Community Schools officials discussed reentry plans for the 2021-22 school year at the school board's regular meeting last week.

Director of Communications Patricia Gibson stressed that the primary option students will begin school this year will be in-person, five days a week, though online and e-learning may be utilized due to COVID-related quarantines, for weather-related building closures and during planned e-learning days already on the school calendar.

Regarding masks, Gibson said the school will follow current guidance that fully vaccinated individuals will not be required to wear a mask, while unvaccinated staff and students will be encouraged to wear a mask while indoors. Per federal mandate, masks will be required for all staff and students on school buses, and Gibson said all visitors to school buildings during the day will be required to wear a mask in part due to the relatively low vaccination rate present in the county.

"It has been proven they do offer a great degree of protection and so obviously it's going to be up to each in-

dividual to decide, but that's where we stand right now kind of getting in line with all guidance today," Gibson said of the mask guidelines.

Grant County Health Officer Dr. William David Moore was present at the meeting and said the health department and county school districts including MCS continue to work closely together to develop best practices for returning to school.

Moore said that with the efficacy of currently available vaccines, COVID-19 has become more of a disease of choice, but board President Serafina Salamo noted that students younger

than 12 don't currently have the choice to be vaccinated.

Moore said for the most part children infected with COVID seem to have less serious cases, and most deaths have been concentrated in older populations. Protecting children in schools is important both for the students' health and also to prevent kids from infecting more vulnerable adults, he said.

Gibson said another change from last year's protocols is the updated guidance on quarantining. Contact tracing will remain in place the same as last year

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