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# Monroe County Beacon

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Pictured above are the winners from this year's Monroe Arts Art Show and judge, Greg Siegwart, during the Art Show Reception Saturday, May 3 at the Monroe County District Library.

## Ring's 'Watermelon on the 4th of July' takes top prize in annual Art Show

Last year, it was a brood of pecking chickens that caught the judge's eye.

This year, it was a precocious little lady enjoying a watermelon.

For the second year in a row, local artist Paula Ring claimed the top spot in the Monroe Art's 28th annual Art Show.

This year, Ring submitted three new pieces, for the show, with "Watermelon on the 4th of July" taking the Best of Show award, as selected by this year's judge, Greg Siegwart, an artist and teacher from the Stifle Art Center and Art Works.

Ring said the painting originated last summer, when she was able to capture a picture at her barbecue pit.

Though the subject was shy, Ring managed to get the shot, which became an award winning painting.

Ring also won first place in the oil category for "For Sale in Clarington," a painting she made of a car for sale in Clarington.

Saundra Sofia won second place in the oil category for her piece, "Grace."

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The commissioners read a proclamation for Mental Health Awareness Month during their regular meeting Monday, May 8. Pictured are, from left to right: Commissioners Bill Bolon and Diane Burkhart, Mental Health and Recovery Board Executive Director Lisa Ward and Commissioner Mick Schumacher.

# Discussing 'transformational change' for the county

Progress takes time.

So does development. It doesn't happen as quickly as we want it to, sometimes to the frustration of those who are expected to make that progress happen.

While the Monroe County Commissioners recognize that people need jobs today, they also see that there are big possibilities that could be coming down the road.

The commissioners met with some of the people

helping to make progress happen in southeast Ohio as they welcomed Economic Developer and Monroe County Port Authority Director Jason Hamman and Matt Abbott and Marisa Vetula, of OhioSE, an economic development organization focused on bringing job growth and "transformational change" to their

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# Rain doesn't dampen a positive day

\$1.50

The rain came down steady Saturday, May 3 at Piatt Park in Woodsfield.

But despite the soggy conditions or any slips along the trail, there were no sour moods to find.

Maybe it was coincidence.

Maybe it was a result. Regardless of the reason, the end result was what was hoped for during the annual Mental Health

Awareness Hike.

Despite damp conditions, more than 20 people visited Piatt Park to take part in activities designed to boost positivity during Mental Health Awareness Month.

Through the combined effort of several entities, visitors could enjoy a K-9



Hikers emerge from the woods after the Mental Health Awareness Hike Saturday, May 3 at Piatt Park.

demonstration by the Monroe County Sheriffs Office, learn about various resources available to them through community organizations such as the Mental Health and Recovery Board and Monroe County Health

Department and, of course, enjoy the ambiance of the great outdoors at one of the county's best treasures.

A guided hike through the trails of Piatt Park took visitors up and down hills and past waterfalls.

Guests were offered a

quick route back to the shelter, but each continued along the hike, which ended up lasting more than an

Some rain finally arrived

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# Resident requests rules for the pool

There are a few things you look for on a hot, summer day.

A nice spot of shade, a cool place to take a dip and enjoy the sunshine.

One thing you don't want at your cool place is a small group ruining it for everybody else.

A local resident urged Woodsfield Village Council to take steps to prevent just such a thing from happening during its regular meeting Monday, May 5.

Kris Ogden addressed council about issues she's noticed at the Monroe Memorial Pool during her many trips there with her grandchildren.

"Last year," Ogden said, "there were a lot of problems out there (at the pool)."



A local resident asked Woodsfield Village Council to consider posting rules at the pool during its regular meeting Monday, May 5.

For Ogden, those problems included teenagers disrespecting lifeguards and using foul language.

Ogden suggested setting rules and making those rules know by posting them and having authority, be it adults or lifeguards, who enforce them

who enforce them.
"When I was growing

up," Ogden said, "there were rules."

Ogden felt there were instances where teenagers, between throwing footballs across the pool, allegedly hitting "little ones" and using foul language, ruined the day for everyone else. She pointed to days when

free swimming was made

available, only to be dominated by those who chose to act inappropriately.

Ogden hopes to continue to take her grandchildren there, but she also hopes the village takes action to curtail the bad behavior.

Continued on Page 4

# Delinquet Land Tax Sale brings in more than \$937,000

Monroe County's recent Delinquent Land Tax Sale resulted in a record-breaking \$937,416.07 in total sales for 31 foreclosed parcels, marking one of the largest, if not the largest, tax foreclosure sales in county history.

More than 100 interested bidders gathered on the third floor of the Monroe County Courthouse on Friday,

Continued on Page 4



Prospective buyers head to the third floor of the Monroe County Courthouse for the delinquent land tax sale Friday, April 25.

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From Pg. 1

#### Rain doesn't dampen From Pg. l



Visitors meet a tortoise during an Animal Experience with the Oglebay Good Zoo Saturday, May 3 at Piatt Park.

as the hike neared its conclusion, but the dense canopy of the forest helped keep the hikers dry on their way back.

The day wasn't quite done as they reached the shelter as they were greeted by three animal friends, a tortoise, an armadillo and an opossum as part of the Oglebay Good Zoo's Animal Experience.

The event was the first of three hikes geared at boosting mental health in the southeast Ohio area.

A beginner course Mental Health Mile will be held from 9 to 11 a.m. Saturday, May 10 at Sally Buffalo Park in Cadiz and a moderate course Mental Health Mile will be held from 9 to 11 a.m. Saturday, May 17 at Memorial Park in St. Clairsville.

#### NOTICE OF INTENT TO NO **LONGER TAKE ORDERS** FOR BASIC LOCAL SERVICE FROM NEW CUSTOMERS BY **AT&T OHIO**

AT&T Ohio ("AT&T") has filed with the Federal Communication Commission ("FCC") an application to no longer take orders for Basic Local Exchange Service from new customers in the Aberdeen, Arabia, Atwater, Beallsville, Belfast, Bellaire, Bloomingville, Belpre, Bloomingburg, Burton Oh, Barnesville, Bowersville, Cedarville, Chagrin Falls, Cheshire, Columbus 44, Canal Fulton, Conesville, Christiansburg, Corning, Carroll, Castalia, Duffy, Philo, Donnelsville, Dresden, East Canton, East Liverpool, East Palestine, Franklin, Fultonham, Fletcher Lena, Fairborn, Five Points, Glenford, Gnadenhutten, Graysville, Hillsboro, Jeffersonville, Jamestown, Kirtland, Lowellville, Lindsey, Louisville, Leetonia, Leroy, Maumee, Guyan, Magnolia, Manchester, Mingo Junction, Mantua, Monroe, Marlboro, Marshall, Murray City, North Hampton, New Holland, North Industry, North Jackson, Nelsonville, Navarre, Newcomerstown, New Lexington, New Middletown, New Matamoras, Newport, New Riegal, New Waterford, Patriot, Piqua, Pitchin, Rogers, Rio Grande, Rainsboro, Ripley, Roseville, Rootstown, Rushville, Sebring, Scotland, South Charleston, Sedalia, Sugar Grove, Sugar Tree Ridge, Shawnee, Somerset, South Point, Spring Valley, South Solon, South Vienna, Tiffin, Thornville, Toledo Downtown, Tremont City, Trenton, Uhrichsville, Upper Sandusky, Vinton, Washington Court House, Whitehouse, West Jefferson, West Lafayette, Wellsville, and Winchester exchanges. Effective on or after March 17, 2025, pending regulatory approval, AT&T will no longer take orders for Basic Local Exchange Service from new business and residential customers in these exchanges. Existing business and residential customers will retain their existing service, but will not be allowed to move, add to, or change it. AT&T's application was filed with the FCC on January 31, 2025. AT&T's notification filing with the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio ("PUCO") will be submitted on or after March 18, 2025.

If you are an existing AT&T Ohio residential Basic Local Exchange Service customer and have any questions or need more information about changes to your local residential service, please contact AT&T's Customer Care Center toll-free at 1-888-994-7035.

If you are an existing AT&T Ohio business Basic Local Exchange Service customer and have any questions or need more information about changes to your local business service, please contact your AT&T Account Manager or AT&T's Customer Care Center toll-free at 1-800-321-2000.

For additional information regarding AT&T's application, customers may contact the PUCO or the Ohio Consumer's Counsel ("OCC"). The PUCO can be reached at 1-800-686-7826 or online at https://puco.ohio.gov and the OCC can be reached at 1-877-742-5622 or online at https://www.occ. ohio.gov.

### Ring's 'Watermelon

Yvonne Reusser categories, taking first in Watercolors for "Alstromeria" and mixed media for "Glory to God."

Mary Moore was second in Watercolors for her piece "Building on Water" and Shirley Weber was second in missed media for "Blue Wave."

Jack Norman was first in Acrylic for "On the Farm," with Belva Blackstone taking second for "Whispers of North."

Blackstone took first in the Decorative Arts category for "Teacup." Judy Hamilton was second for "Pumpkin Center."

Tom Carpenter was first in the Photography category for his piece, "Bryce Canyon." Renae Scheiderer was second for "Spring Bird."

Patricia Burgess took first and second in ceramics for "Blue Vase" and "Blue-Green Vase," respectively.

Lisa Matin won the Sculpture category for her piece, "Pelican." Weber was second for "Ocean Ice."

Hazel Freeman was first in Fabric - Fiber category for "Botanical Scarf." Dawn Minder was second for "Cardinals."

Terry Elliott was first in Woodworking for "Paddle Boat." Jason Turner was

Paula Ring stands next to two of her pieces from this year's Art Show, with "Watermelon on the 4th of July" taking the top prize.

second for "Civil War Pen." One award is yet to be determined, that being the

People's Choice Award.

Voting continues until May 9 at the Monroe County District Library in Woodsfield.

### Resident requests rules

From Pg. 1

Mayor Carol Hehr said she had already met with the Park Committee on the matter, saying that lifeguards were told that if someone was "acting up," that person would be "out for the season."

Also during the May 5 meeting, council took steps toward agreeing to a lease to take over the Brown Community Center.

Village Administrator Kevin Brooks prodded council to take action on the matter, saying it had been "put off"

Village Solicitor Ryan Regel had been working with the Brown Center Board

of Directors on the lease agreement, and provided an update.

The lease would be for 15 years at \$1 per year. The village would be responsible for utilities at the facility, but not for real estate taxes.

The Brown Center name would need to remain in tact and it would also have to be used as a community center.

The village would also have an "out", allowing it to get out of the lease if it wasn't "working out."

Council approved a motion to move forward with the lease pending the finalization of the language of the lease document.

Council member Tom Kirkland mentioned a conversation he had with village residents in regard to the building the village tore down at the corner of South Main Street and East Church Street.

The lot is intended to be a small park, but has been a roped-off pit of sorts for months, as the village works through issues with the Ohio EPA. According to Brooks, "proper EPA protocol" was not following in the demolition process, which has led to the standstill. A temporary fence has been put back up at the site, as the village continues to work with the EPA to result the issue.

## **Delinquet Land Tax Sale**

From Pg. 1

April 25 for the public auction, which had to be relocated from its usual location to accommodate the large crowd.

The auction was the culmination of more than two years of preparation. Under Ohio law, tax foreclosure sales require counties to follow a rigorous legal process laid out in the Ohio Revised Code. The Monroe County Prosecutor's Office must conduct extensive due diligence before initiating foreclosure cases on delinquent properties, including providing legal notices, identifying all parties with interest in the parcels, and obtaining court orders authorizing the

Monroe County Sheriff Derek Norman led the auction with the assistance of his staff, in coordination with Monroe County Prosecutor James Peters, Clerk of Courts Beth Ann Rose, and their respective staffs.

"This sale reflects a collective team effort across county offices to get these properties back into productive use," said Monroe County Treasurer Taylor Abbott. "I'm happy to see that these parcels will return to the hands of responsible tax-paying owners who will take care of them and contribute to our local tax

Of the \$937,416.07 raised through the sale, Monroe County was owed approximately \$76,500 in back taxes, penalties, and court fees. Under Ohio law, the county retains the portion necessary to cover those debts. Any remaining proceeds are held in trust for the previous property owners. If no rightful claims are made within three years of the sale,

the surplus, in this case, potentially more than \$850,000, reverts to the county.

"It's important that we stand with the taxpayers who meet their obligations by holding those who don't accountable," said Treasurer Abbott. "Monroe County continues to maintain one of the lowest delinquency rates in the state because we take a proactive, fair approach. We offer payment plans and support for those who fall on hard times, there's no reason for anyone to fall too far behind when we have options to help them stay current."

Abbott extended his thanks to Prosecutor James Peters, Sheriff Derek Norman, Clerk of Courts Beth Ann Rose, and the staff from each office, including his own, for their efforts in bringing the successful sale to fruition.

### Transformational change

From Pg. 1

25-county area, which includes Monroe County, during their regular meeting Monday, May 5.

That transformational change that Abbott, the president and CEO of OhioSE, alluded to could come through other avenues, such as improvements in healthcare, childcare and housing, but, as he saw it, those are the pathways to change and attracting business and funding to communities.

Hamman sees the importance of focusing on things that lead to development, including infrastructure, saying he has seen projects slip through the county's fingers due to lacking what some see as necessities.

"We lost a project, a call center, as the old Shopko," Hamman said. "The CEO of the company was a little freaked out when she had no access to her cell service for a stretch (from Caldwell to Woodsfield)."

A focus on infrastructure at the former Conalco and Ormet sites along the Ohio River has helped the lost call center not be a repeated situation in Monroe County.

Hamman and Vetula praised the efforts of American Heavy Plates, which operates at the Hannibal Industrial Park.

The company has made use of small business development programs through JobsOhio and OhioSE and has grown its workforce from 60 to more than 120 workers in a few years.

Hamman hopes Bitdeer, a data center set to locate at the Industrial Park, can be a similar jobs creator in the county. He expected construction to begin by the end of the year, with the data center opening by the end of 2026.

Commissioner Burkhart expressed frustration that things take so long, but she was reminded by fellow commissioner Bill Bolon that even the construction phase of the project would bring jobs to the area, with Hamman adding that the data center would ultimately bring high-tech jobs, "jobs of the present and the future," as he put it.

Following their meeting with the commissioners, Hamman took Abbott and Vetula to tour the Powhatan No. 7 site and American Heavy Plates.

Also during the commissioners' regular meeting, Lisa Ward, executive director of the Mental Health and Recovery Board, visited with the commissioners to recognize May as Mental Health Awareness Month.

The commissioners read a proclamation for the occasion.

The commissioners also approved a motion to permit online sale of dog tags in the county by Monroe County Auditor Denise Stoneking's

Stoneking said her office had been looking for a way to move the service online and was presented an option to do so without a set up fee if it was done prior to the end of July.

The new online service will also house the county's dog tag database online.

County residents will still be able to purchase their dog tags in person or through the mail if they so desire.



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County Road 58 (Krieg Road) will have a DAYTIME CLOSURE, from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday - Friday, starting May 19, lasting for approximately 3 weeks, 0.4 miles west of the intersection with State Route 800, for a slip repair, weather permitting. Thank you for your patience.