



No newspaper published Friday

We will not publish a newspaper on Friday, Nov. 23, so that employees may celebrate the Thanksgiving holiday with their families. The next edition of this newspaper will be published on Saturday, Nov. 24.

Sewer project will close Main Street

AUBURN — A lengthy stretch of north Auburn roadway will be closed to traffic this weekend. Main Street is closing from North Street to Betz Road, beginning Saturday at 7 a.m. and continuing through Sunday at 5 p.m. while crews install pipe, Auburn city officials said. The closure is part of the multi-year north-side sewer project. It will separate sanitary sewers from storm sewer lines in an area north of First Street, west of Cedar Creek, east of Van Buren Street and south of Madison Street. The goal is to reduce flooding in the area and prevent raw sewage from flowing into Cedar Creek.

Police: Teen driver drinking before deadly crash

FARMLAND (AP) — Authorities in eastern Indiana say a 17-year-old driver had been drinking alcohol before pulling out in front of a train in a crash in which she and a classmate were killed. Farmland Town Marshal Melvin Nott tells The Star Press that tests determined Kristin Kiser had a blood-alcohol level of 0.14 percent, nearly double the state's legal limit for driving by someone at least 21. Police say Kiser was driving about 2:30 a.m. Oct. 28 when the car went onto the tracks despite red warning lights and alarms at the crossing about 15 miles east of Muncie. The crash killed Kiser and 17-year-old Amber Morrow and injured a fellow Monroe Central High School student. Nott says investigators haven't determined where the teens were before the crash.

Israel, Hamas OK cease-fire

Agreement ends fierce fighting over Gaza

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israel and the Hamas militant group agreed to a cease-fire Wednesday to end eight days of the fiercest fighting in nearly four years, promising to halt air strikes and rocket attacks that have killed scores and to discuss easing an Israeli blockade constricting the Gaza Strip. Cheering Gazans emerged from their homes after a week, flooding

the streets in wild celebration. Gunmen fired in the air, and chants of "God is Great" echoed from mosque loudspeakers. Residents hugged and kissed in celebration, while others distributed candy and waved Hamas flags. "I just hope they commit to peace," said Abdel-Nasser al-Tom, from northern Gaza. However, a dozen rockets hit southern Israel until an hour after

the cease-fire deadline, authorities said, and schools in the region planned to stay shut Thursday as a precaution in case rockets continue to be launched. The deal was brokered by the new Islamist government of Egypt, solidifying its role as a leader in the quickly shifting Middle East after two days of intense shuttle diplomacy that saw U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton race to the region. Under the agreement, Egypt will play a key role in maintaining the peace.

Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal said the deal included an agreement to open all border crossings with the Gaza Strip, including the important Rafah crossing with Egypt. A copy of the deal obtained by The Associated Press appeared to be somewhat vague about the details on the crossings. "The document provides for the opening of all crossings," he insisted. Minutes before the deal took

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Auburn Man Mentors Fellow Amputees

Losing leg can't slow him down

BY MATT GETTS
mattg@kpcnews.net

AUBURN — Cancer couldn't change Ashtan Wallace. Not even when it took his left leg below the knee.

A relentless, positive attitude has carried the 26-year-old Auburn resident through circumstances many would find tragic, and he now uses that positive approach as a patient advocate for SRT Prosthetics & Orthotics.

In his role with the company, Ashtan advises fellow amputees on what they can expect when they are fitted with prosthetic limbs.

"You know they're scared, so you try to be as sympathetic as possible," Wallace said.

"He's been a very needed, added benefit to our company," said Theron Steinke, of SRT's community relations department. "Ashtan has a very genuine passion for our patients. He is able to empathize with what they are going through."

Wallace seemed destined to serve — just not as he originally intended.

Wallace grew up in Auburn, attending and wrestling for DeKalb High School until 2004. At that time, he moved to where his mother lived in Nebraska, and he graduated from high school there in 2005.

He described himself as a bit of a joker, and he hasn't lost his sense of humor. His vanity license plate reads "5 toes," and this past Halloween he wore a pirate costume complete with peg leg.

Both of his parents had served in the military, and he joined the U.S. Army in 2006, becoming an engineer.

"I grew up in the military," he said. "I just knew it was for me."

On Dec. 12, 2009, he

went to his doctor to have a cyst removed from his leg. When the biopsy came back, doctors discovered he had cancer. He called his mother, and she immediately told him he was going to get through it.



PHOTO BY
DAVE KURTZ

Ashtan Wallace, 26, of Auburn shows his prosthetic leg.

Eventually, his left foot was removed from the heel forward.

"I never did the 'Why me?'" Wallace said. "It's not going to answer anything."

He remembered telling one of his parents, "God thought I was going too fast. It was his way of slowing me down."

But there was no slowing down for Wallace. He worked

SEE LOSING LEG, PAGE A10

Homes coming down

Blast-ravaged houses in Indy ordered demolished

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Demolitions have been ordered for more than two dozen homes in a blast-ravaged Indianapolis neighborhood where a house explosion that killed two people is being investigated as a homicide case, officials said Wednesday.

The 29 homes slated for razing amounts to nearly a quarter of the 125 houses in the subdivision where the Nov. 10 explosion destroyed five homes and damaged dozens more, leaving some on the brink of collapse. No arrests have been made in the blast, which investigators believe was intentionally set and caused by natural gas.

Marion County Prosecutor Terry Curry said search warrants are being executed and interviews are being conducted, though he declined to say who had been interviewed or what investigators have found. He and other authorities announced Monday that the case was now being treated as a criminal homicide investigation.

"As we learn information and learn the identities of individuals who might or might not have information, we're pursuing every lead along that line," Curry said Wednesday.

Indianapolis' code enforcement

SEE HOMES, PAGE A10

Smaltz takes oath as new state lawmaker

INDIANAPOLIS — Newly elected state Rep. Ben Smaltz, R-Auburn, was sworn in Tuesday as a member of the freshman class of the Indiana House of Representatives.

Smaltz represents House District 52, which includes all of DeKalb County, the town of Hamilton and Richland and Otsego townships in Steuben County and Perry Township in Allen County.

All Indiana legislators were sworn in Tuesday, Organization Day, which marked the first meeting for the 118th General Assembly. Indiana Supreme Court Chief Justice Brent Dickson gave the oath of office to all 100 members of the House, including 19 new Republicans.

"It is very humbling to have the opportunity to represent my community in the Indiana General Assembly," Smaltz said in a news release. "House Republicans have accomplished a lot to move



New state Rep. Ben Smaltz, R-Auburn, center, joins his colleagues Tuesday on the floor of the

Indiana House of Representatives.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Indiana forward in recent years, and I'm eager to begin working toward making Indiana the best place to live, work and raise a family."

Smaltz added, "My top priority is to equip Hoosiers with the tools they need to meet the demands of the 21st century marketplace, and having the necessary training or

education is the first step. Jobs and education are going to be the focus this legislative session, and I am excited to get to work on these issues for my community."

ONLINE:

LOOK FOR VIDEO

Auburn Christmas parade online
kpcnews.com

Info

The Star
118 W. Ninth St.
Auburn, IN 46706

Auburn: (260) 925-2611

Fax: (260) 925-2625

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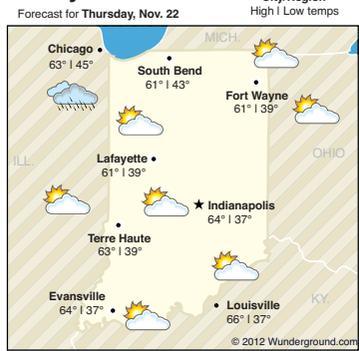


Partly sunny and warm today with a high of 63 degrees for Thanksgiving Day. Low tonight will be 40. Temperatures will drop for Friday with cloudy skies and a possibility of rain. Daytime highs will be in the mid-40s. Overnight low of 25 expected. Partly sunny Saturday. High of 38.

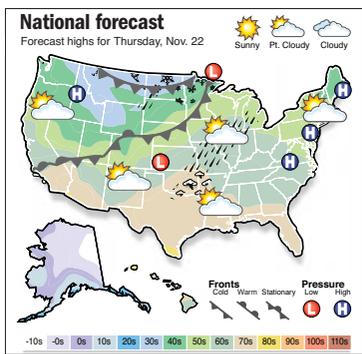
Wednesday's Statistics

Local HI 56 LO 41 PRC. 0 South Bend HI 54 LO 44 PRC. 0
Fort Wayne HI 57 LO 41 PRC. 0 Indianapolis HI 61 LO 41 PRC. 0

Today's Forecast



Sunrise Friday 7:39 a.m. Sunset Friday 5:16 p.m.



Today's drawing by: Taylor

Submit your weather drawings to: Weather Drawings, Editorial Dept. P.O. Box 39, Kendallville, IN 46755

Drivers pay more for gas, but still give thanks

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Many drivers are giving more at the pump than a year ago but they still have reason to be thankful. Prices in many parts of the country have fallen recently, and AAA says gas prices could end the year lower than where they started.

The national average Wednesday was \$3.43, down 44 cents from mid-September although still 8 cents higher than a year earlier. Gas started the year at \$3.28 a gallon. AAA says it should be between \$3.10 and \$3.30 when 2012 ends.

Still, because the price was so high for so much of the year, Americans are likely to spend a record amount for gas in 2012. Tom Kloza of the Oil Price Information Service estimates that Americans will spend about \$483 billion on fuel this year, eclipsing last year's record of \$471 billion. And that's even as Americans use less gas by taking shorter trips or driving more fuel efficient cars.

The Energy Department estimates that gas prices will average \$3.64 a gallon this year after averaging a record \$3.53 a gallon in 2011.

A number of things affect the price of gasoline. It starts with the price of oil, which can be impacted by everything from the strength, or weakness, of the global economy to tensions in the Middle East. That oil is turned into gasoline and other

products at refineries. The U.S. has about half the number of refineries it did 30 years ago. When one goes down due to a fire or unplanned maintenance, it can lead to a shortage of gasoline, which sends prices higher.

All of these factors have come into play in a big way this year. That's why prices haven't just been high — they've been on a roller coaster. There have been four separate swings of at least 40 cents — two higher and two lower.

The wild swings have been even more notable in individual states.

The long lines are gone but motorists in New York and New Jersey are still paying as much as 30 cents more per gallon than they did a year ago. Even before Superstorm Sandy, drivers in the both states — and elsewhere in the Northeast — were paying higher prices because refinery issues caused temporary supply shortages in late summer. Just as supplies were being replenished, Sandy hit. Refineries were shut down, oil imports were delayed and many gas stations were without power. Drivers who didn't want to risk running out of gas waited on lines for hours to fill up. New Jersey and then New York imposed gas rationing. Prices rose more than 10 cents in New York City, Long Island and

certain parts of New Jersey, according to AAA.

Gas prices have dropped in Washington D.C. about 70 cents after jumping above \$4 a gallon in May. Most drivers are now getting a discount of about 20 cents compared with last year.

The reason: West Coast refineries, which had been closed for fires or other maintenance, are operating again. That includes BP's Cherry Point refinery in Blaine, Wash. Washington also is benefiting from cheaper crude delivered by rail from the Bakken shale region in North Dakota, where oil production is booming. Bakken crude is on average about \$4 cheaper than oil at the Clearbrook, Minn., pricing hub, says Tom Kloza, chief oil analyst at Oil Price Information Service.

Utah's gain has been Nevada's loss — and in this case Nevada is happier. Utahns are paying about 30 cents more per gallon than last year. Traditionally, the gas produced by Utah's five refineries was kept in-state, meaning lower gas prices, particularly when demand fell during the winter. That changed in the fall of 2011 when a pipeline opened between Utah and Las Vegas. That's taken the extra capacity away from Utah and helped balance supplies in Nevada, which also gets some gasoline from California, Kloza said.



Palestinians celebrate the cease fire between Israel and Hamas in Gaza City Wednesday.

ISRAEL: Details about border to be negotiated

FROM PAGE A1
effect at 9 p.m. local time. (2 p.m. EDT) there was a spasm of Palestinian rocket attacks and Israeli airstrikes, including one that killed a Gaza man minutes before the deadline. After 9 p.m., the airstrikes ceased, but a dozen more rockets hit, police said. The stragglers did not seem to pose a threat to the truce deal.

Israel had launched well over 1,500 airstrikes and other attacks on targets in Gaza since fighting started Nov. 14, while more than 1,500 rockets pounded Israel. In all, 161 Palestinians, including dozens of civilians, were killed, while five Israelis died.

Standing next to Clinton, Egypt's foreign minister, Mohammed Kamel Amr, announced the truce breakthrough that capped days of intense efforts that drew the world's top diplomats into the fray.

The agreement will "improve conditions for the people of Gaza and provide security for the people of Israel," Clinton said at the news conference in Cairo.

In Israel, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he agreed to the cease-fire after consulting with President Barack Obama to allow Israeli civilians to get back to their lives. He said the two leaders also agreed to work together against weapon smuggling into Gaza, a statement confirmed by the White House.

Netanyahu also left the door open to a possible ground invasion of Gaza at a later date.

"I know there are citizens that expected a wider military operation and it could be that it will be needed. But at this time, the right thing for the state of Israel is to take this opportunity to reach a lasting ceasefire," he said.

According to a copy of the agreement obtained by The Associated Press, Israel and all Palestinian militant groups agreed to halt "all hostilities." For the Palestinians, that means an end to Israeli airstrikes and assassinations of wanted militants. For Israel, it brings a halt to rocket fire and attempts at cross-border incursions from Gaza.

After a 24-hour cooling off period, it calls for "opening the crossings and facilitating the movement of people and transfer of goods, and refraining from restricting residents' free movement."

Hamas officials said details on the new border arrangements would have to be negotiated.

Israel imposed its blockade of Gaza after Hamas, a militant group sworn to Israel's destruction, seized control of the territory five years ago. It has gradually eased the closure, but continues to restrict the movement of certain goods through Israeli-controlled crossings.

Among the restrictions: a near-complete ban on exports, limited movement of people leaving the territory, and limits on construction materials that Israel says could be used for military use.

The deal was vague on what limits Israel would lift, and whether Gaza's southern passenger terminal on the Egyptian border would be expanded to allow cargo to pass through as well.

eventual collapse.

"With all of these homes we believe they should come down because they pose a safety risk," he said. "We believe they're not repairable."

The four houses at the crime scene include the home where investigators believe the explosion occurred and the house next door, where the couple killed in the blast — John and Jennifer Longworth — had lived.

The owners of the house believed to be the blast site weren't home at the time of the explosion.

City arson investigators, along with agents from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, have

concluded that the late-night blast was not an accident. Total damage has been estimated at \$4.4 million, and federal authorities are offering a \$10,000 reward for information in the case.

Investigators have focused on appliances in their search for a cause.

Curry said investigators are continuing to "narrow down the precise mechanics of the explosion." But the prosecutor said he could not comment on what investigators believe may have led up to or triggered the blast.

"The belief at this time is that it was an intentional act, but other than that, I can't discuss how investigators might or might not think that occurred," Curry said.

LOSING LEG: Wallace shares his own experiences

FROM PAGE A1

hard to remain on active duty in the military and was deployed to Afghanistan in 2010. Wallace served as a liaison for his unit, helping soldiers who were heading home to arrange flights and accommodations.

He brought four prosthetics to Afghanistan. Unfortunately for him, his half-foot prosthetics did not hold up. He had broken all four of them in his first 32 days in Afghanistan, and he was sent out of country for evaluation.

"I had to duct-tape the last one to get me from Afghanistan to Germany," Wallace said.

Wallace asked the military to send more prosthetics so he could get back to his deployment. It wasn't meant to be, and he eventually was shipped home.

"I tried everything in Germany to get back to Afghanistan," he said. "I wish I could have stayed there the whole deployment."

When he returned to the United States, a combination of pain and the physical limitations of a half-foot prosthetic forced Wallace into a difficult decision. At the age of 24, he asked to have his leg removed below the knee.

The procedure was performed at Fort Sam Houston in Texas in March 2011. He said he knew he had a better chance at a normal life with the extended amputation.

By June of that year, he was walking on a prosthetic.

"It was a good feeling to stand up again," he said. "It was nice to walk around again."

Attitude is everything, he said.

"You just have to stay positive," he said. "It's the biggest part to your recovery. Your mindset has to be right."

The toughest part, he said, was watching the extra load his wife, Amanda, had to carry regarding household chores. He used this as a motivation to work harder so he could help out more around the house and spend quality time with his 4-year-old daughter and 1-year-old son.

It was through his recovery effort that he first came into contact with SRT Prosthetics & Orthotics, a Fort Wayne-based company that manufactures and fits prosthetics and orthotics.



Ashtan Wallace, 26, of Auburn is shown with his wife, Amanda, and daughter, Haedyn.

When he first was fitted with a prosthetic after his first amputation — before he heard of SRT — the person who fitted him with his half-foot prosthetic and the oncologist who worked with him at the time both had all of their limbs. Neither could tell him what it truly would be like to be an amputee.

The staff at SRT is different. The person who fitted him for his latest prosthetics is an amputee. Wallace said after interacting with SRT's staff, he begged and begged for a job with SRT.

He was intrigued by the Fort Wayne-based company's programs such as the Amputee Walking School scheduled for January dates in Kokomo, Muncie and Fort Wayne. Put on by SRT, the events are for any amputee — even if their prosthetic is from another manufacturer — to help them learn walking techniques and muscle-building exercises.

"They're just trying to help the amputee," he said of SRT's involvement.

Wallace said he wanted to be involved with a company that cared for so much more than just the bottom line. He got his wish for a job earlier this month after retiring

"You just have to stay positive. It's the biggest part to your recovery."

Ashtan Wallace
Patient advocate

from the military for medical reasons Oct. 21.

Now moved back to Auburn, Wallace shares his own first-hand knowledge with people who are being fitted — or will be fitted — with a prosthetic. He is not a salesman, he said — he is there "to help other people and mentor them."

Having to repeatedly go through the story of losing his limb in order to help others is not a burden, he said.

"I love telling my story," he said. "I don't let my story get me down. I have nothing to be sour about."

Wallace now plays wheelchair basketball, jogs and golfs. He is still pretty much at the beginning of a life well lived.

"It's just the way I was before the amputations," he said. "I'm just going forward. I'm better. I'm more active."