



HPI Analysis: Rating Indiana on Amazon

\$5 billion, 50,000 potential job bonanza would change Indiana forever

By **CRAIG DUNN**

KOKOMO – There’s no doubt about it. The location of a second world headquarters for Amazon in the Indianapolis area would significantly alter the landscape, in just about every discernable area, forever.

The recent news that Amazon is soliciting proposals for locating a second world headquarters, employing up to 50,000 new employees, has sent shock waves around the country as cities and states begin the high stakes process of competing for the biggest plum in economic history. And just because you don’t know computer code from Morse code, don’t think the location of Amazon in Indiana won’t affect you and your family.

Economic development specialists are always looking at the employment multiplier of every type of new job. For example, industrial jobs have a multiplier effect of 1.4



Gov. Eric Holcomb with IEDC President Elaine Bedel at the groundbreaking for BNI Group in Greenfield. The two face the biggest economic development challenge in history with Amazon HQ2. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

new jobs created for every new industrial job created. That sounds great but when it comes to technology jobs, the multiplier goes off the charts. According to the Bay Area

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Goading ‘Rocket Man’

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – We hear TV correspondents talk about something being “totally destroyed” and an occasional newspaper reporter will write about “sudden death.” When something is destroyed ... it’s destroyed. In totality.



The adjective is redundant. As the late Prof. Fred Walker Jr. of Vincennes University used to tell us in the journalism program, all death is sudden, unless you’re covering the NFL. You’re either alive or you’re deceased.

On Tuesday, President Trump essentially threatened to wipe 25 million human beings off the map when he told the United Nations’ General Assembly, “Now North Korea’s reckless



“We face tough issues as a nation and need Luke Messer in the Senate to meet those challenges and Washington work better for Hoosiers.”

- U.S. Rep. Susan Brooks, endorsing U.S. Rep. Luke Messer for U.S. Senate



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pursuit of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles threatens the entire world with unthinkable loss of human life. The United States has great strength and patience, but if it is forced to defend itself or its allies, we will have no choice but to totally destroy North Korea."

And there was this school cafeteria kicker aimed at Kim Jong Un: "Rocket Man is on a suicide mission for himself." Chief of Staff John Kelly winced. If Kim is suicidal, he's delusional and non-negotiable.

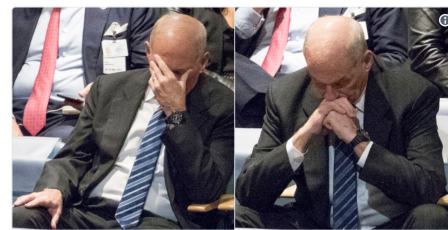
We've never heard a U.S. president talk like this. Leaders who threaten the lives of millions of people tend to be despots and tyrants like Hitler, Mao, Stalin and Pol Pot. Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev once threatened to "bury" us, which to a kid in the Cold War was enough to produce adolescent nightmares and nuke drills at Edgewood Elementary School.

It's jarring to hear an American president use such terms. And it's not just the North Koreans who will be in the crosshairs. If you're a resident of Seoul or Tokyo, where the Japanese people are already practicing the Cold War exercise of ducking under desks every time Kim lobs a missile across their bow, you are coming to grips that hundreds of thousands if not millions of allies also face death and destruction, both sudden and total.

As a compelling New Yorker article by Evan Osnos recently reveals, we don't know what realm of reality Kim resides in and whether there's anyone in Pyongyang who can put the brakes on a delusional and genocidal act. While traveling to Pyongyang, Osnos was assigned to a "Mr. Pak" as his handler.

Osnos writes: "I asked Pak what he and other North Koreans thought of Trump. 'He might be irrational – or too smart. We don't know,' he said." Hoosier pundits and Republicans had similar conversations in 2015 and 2016.

Osnos continues: "They suspected that Trump's comment about 'fire and fury' might be part of a subtle strategy, like the Chinese 'Art of War,' Mr. Pak said. 'If he's not driving toward a point, then what is he doing? That is our big question.' For Pak and other analysts in North Korea, the more important question about the United States extends beyond Trump. "Is the American public ready for war?" he asked. "Does the Congress want a war? Does the American military want a war? Because, if they want a war, then we must



President Trump during his U.N. address as Chief of Staff John Kelly reacts.

prepare for that."

Then there was the journalist's dinner with Ri Yong Pil, a Foreign Ministry official who had questions. "In your system, what is the power of the president to launch a war?" he asked Osnos. "Does the Congress have the power to decide?"

"A president can do a lot without Congress," Osnos said. Ri asked about the nuclear codes: "I've heard the black bag is controlled by McMaster. Is it true?"

"No, the president can launch nukes largely on his own," Osnos replied. "What about in your country?" His answer was similar. "Our supreme leader has absolute power to launch a war," he said.

And there was this nugget about Kim Jong Un, his information flow and whether anyone can reason with him. Osnos writes: "U.S. intelligence believes that Kim is in sole command. 'He's the top decider, you

might say,' a U.S. Korean expert said. 'He's the only guy that counts.' Many analysts worry that, as Kim moves deeper into confrontation with America, he does not have advisers who speak candidly to him."

"**We can't identify** an internal or external channel of information flow that's effective in communicating the risks of the course that he's on," Scott Snyder, a Korea specialist at the Council on Foreign Relations, told Osnos. "What general is going to be willing to risk his stars, if not his life, in order to tell Kim Jong Un he's doing the wrong thing?"

So there in front of the green United Nation tiles that Trump detests, the president hurled insults and taunts at a mysterious 34-year-old despot. Richard Haass of the Council of Foreign Relations believes that ridiculing Kim is "more likely to persuade North Korea to increase its nuclear weapons and missiles than limit them [or] give them up." Scuttling the Iran deal, as Trump is pondering, gives Kim no incentive to negotiate anything.

The Wall Street Journal Editorial Board weighed in: "Donald Trump's method has been to use his speeches on the world stage to roil diplomatic convention, and he did it again Tuesday in his address to the United Nations. The president abandoned any nuance, even by his standards, in denouncing the 'rogue regimes' in North Korea and Iran. He was especially unabashed in describing North Korea's offenses, calling it a 'depraved regime.' These aren't words typically heard at Turtle Bay, where others among the depraved sit on the Human Rights Council, as Mr. Trump also had the effrontery to point out. But he really rattled the seats with his threat to act against North Korea if the U.N. fails to do so. The threat to destroy the North offended the foreign affairs cognoscenti, who view Mr. Trump as a barbarian. And at first hearing the 'Rocket Man' reference to dictator Kim Jong Un does sound like an insult better left to teenagers in the school yard."

Foreign Policy magazine observed: "The remarks represented a full-fledged rejection of calls from allies and



rivals alike to tone down the rhetoric on North Korea and pursue a diplomatic path to resolving the crisis."

Melvyn P. Leffler writes in Foreign Policy: "Most experts agree that President Donald Trump's foreign policy and national security strategy have been disappointing so far, if not disastrous. But historians also know that this isn't entirely surprising. Since the United States became a global power after World War II, most administrations experienced difficulties getting started. Some, like Ronald Reagan, entered office with a real sense of strategy but floundered at the outset because of bureaucratic infighting or slow staffing. Others, like John F. Kennedy and Bill Clinton, disdained strategy and sought to improvise, and they suffered."

Leffler adds of Trump, "He must learn, as did his predecessors, that national security requires his systematic attention, that quick decisions based on a momentary crisis or an initial conversation invite larger problems down the road. In short, Trump needs to get involved in a sustained way and think strategically. Whether he has the personality and temperament to do so is another question."

A huge question. Perhaps the question of the Age. **Los Angeles Times** columnist Doyle McManus observes: "Trump may think he's backing North Korea and China into a corner, but he risks backing himself into one at the same time. If North Korea crosses the 'red line' the president has drawn – putting a nuclear warhead on a long-range missile – his bluff will have been called. And then he will face two bad outcomes: Back down or go to war. If the result is war, a war the United States doesn't want to fight, Tuesday's 'Rocket Man' speech will be remembered as one of the steps that took us there."

So, the North Koreans don't know if Trump is punking them or whether he's serious. And we know that President Trump acts impulsively. Both Trump and Kim have unfettered and unchecked access to their nations' nuclear codes. The decision is with the two of them. Total, and perhaps, sudden. ❖

Amazon, from page 1

Council Economic Institute, every new technology job spawns 4.3 other new jobs. That means that the 50,000 Amazon jobs would, in reality, become a 250,000-new-job bonanza.

Is it any wonder that the mayors of both Fishers and Indianapolis are scrambling to partner up on a massive campaign to close the biggest economic deal in Indiana history?

I'm sure that the Amazon request for proposals was lengthy and specific. Requirements gleaned from reading the opinions of economic development experts

tend to put local government incentives at the top of the competition list. Business environment comes in a close second. Other considerations are the availability of a tech-savvy work force, cost of real estate and transportation access.

Let's take a look where Indiana might stand in a toe-to-toe economic beauty pageant:

Local and government incentives

While Indianapolis might be squeezed to offer up their own economic incentives, Fishers could step up to the plate with some serious money. But let's be real here. We're not talking about landing an IKEA store. We're talk-

ing about bagging a 50,000-employee behemoth with serious needs for workers, office space, land, homes, apartments, autos, dry cleaners, painters, landscapers, etc. A big winning proposal will need the very best in incentives that the State of Indiana, both public and private, can muster. This is where Indiana's great budget situation and pro-business environment will help out immensely. In addition, I believe that our state will be able to count on organized labor to do its part in this process. This is not a Republican or Democrat, labor or business, or have or have-nots issue. This is a team effort that will potentially benefit all Hoosiers and an economic tide that will lift all boats.

In my personal opinion, we could give Amazon a 20-year abatement of all corporate and property taxes and it would all be worth it to grab this brass ring.

Business environment

Score a big fat A+ for the Hoosier State in this category. The transformational economic climate brought to Indiana by enlightened Republican leadership in both the governor's office and the Indiana Legislature has placed Indiana in an amazing competitive position. Mitch Daniels, Mike Pence, Eric Holcomb, David Long and Brian Bosma have made the tough decisions and fought the big political battles necessary to make Indiana fertile ground for a big Amazon expansion. Our state corporate tax, property tax and business friendly governmental environment are the envy of all of our competitors and if we ultimately lose



Gov. Eric Holcomb welcomed Chinese company BNI Group to Greenfield in July. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

out to some other locale, you would be better off blaming the Indianapolis Colts than our Hoosier tax and economic environment.

Availability of a tech-savvy workforce

If there is a potential weakness in an Indiana proposal, this is it. Three consecutive Republican governors have beaten the drum that we need to place greater emphasis on education in the STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) areas. Indiana has been racing to catch up in STEM but 50,000 tech-oriented employees is a pretty big list to fill. Of course not all of the 50,000 will be Hoosiers. Most of the 50,000 new Amazon workers will probably come from out of state or out of the country.

One big advantage that we have are our post-secondary gems. Indiana has some of the leading science, engineering and technology colleges and universities in the world. Former Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels has ably led Purdue University in stepping up its game in meeting the

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technology employment needs of our modern world and his efforts may pay enormous dividends when the ultimate Amazon decision is made.

Cost of real estate

Let's see, the median cost of a home in Indianapolis is \$133,000 and the median cost of a home in Seattle is \$700,000. Cornfields are plentiful and Amazon could build big old buildings as far as the eye can see for a great cost per square foot. Score this category as a big trump card for Indiana.

Transportation access

They don't call Indianapolis the "Crossroads of America" for nothing! We are ideally suited to meet most transportation needs involving trucking. The Indianapolis International Airport consistently ranks in the top three for best airports in the United States. We serve as a hub for Federal Express, have lots of room to grow the airport and will launch non-stop flights to Paris next year. In addition to the Indianapolis International Airport, Grissom Aeroplex is sitting just 50 miles north of Indianapolis, with the longest runway in the state.

Our only weakness on the transportation front is in mass transit. That's a real hot button with some economic development folks. Some people believe that if you can't ride a dirty, graffiti-marred rickety old train through some urban battle zone, you just aren't living the high life. I trust our economic development experts will have an effective way to counter that potential drawback.

In short, when you look at things objectively, the Indianapolis/Fishers proposal should be a strong one. Indiana should be in an excellent position to score this massive economic development victory. We are on the pole position to go from Naptown to IndianaWow!

This begs two interesting questions. Does the average Hoosier really want Amazon to bring their second headquarters to Indiana and does the average Hoosier even understand the ramifications of what such a move would mean?

Let's face it, Hoosiers aren't exactly the most change-motivated bunch. We're the same type of folks that President Obama talked about clinging to our guns and Bibles. Up here in Howard County we fought a nasty battle over putting windmills in cornfields. The old spoiling the landscape, destroying our heritage and traditional ways of life arguments were forcefully made and an economically beneficial windmill expansion bit the dust under extremely vocal political pressure.

Someone is bound to tell it like it will be in the Amazon world, and that may just drive some good old Hoosiers over the edge. I suppose it would be foolish to rush headlong into the Amazon proposal without knowing what a successful bid will mean for Hoosiers within shouting distance of Indianapolis and Fishers.

Here are just a few of the things Indiana will experience from winning the second Amazon headquarters: We will see dramatic upward pressure on wages at all levels. Good if you are an employee, but not so great if you are an employer.

The current skilled worker shortage will get worse. Employee turnover will be greater as workers migrate to jobs where they are treated best.

Traffic will get much, much worse in the Fishers and northeast quadrant of Indianapolis during rush hours. Is that even possible?

You'll have longer waits at the grocery, bank, drycleaners and restaurants until development catches up with the huge population influx.



Land values will skyrocket and make it almost impossible for farmers to resist the urge to cash in their farmland.

Home prices will begin a steady escalation anywhere within commuting distance of an eventual Amazon headquarters. Rents will follow home prices. Non-Amazon workers will see much of their wage gains eaten up by higher living costs.

People who don't look, worship and act like you will move into your neighborhood. Horror of horrors! The 50,000 new Amazon employees will dramatically change the demographics of our Hoosier State. We will be a much more diverse state with all that it entails.

It may or not be politics as usual around Indiana. The average tech worker is younger, more diverse and more politically liberal. They will have significantly different views on immigration, guns, abortion and GLBTQ issues. Indiana will lean a little more to the left politically than it presently does.

As with any major change, there will be economic winners and losers with a second Amazon headquarters. I, for one, see this as the greatest economic opportunity that our state has seen since the advent of the automobile. The benefits to our state far outweigh the risks in my estimation. Let's hope that Hoosier Prime and Amazon Prime will soon meet up somewhere north of I-465.

I've got a nice little location for the Bezos Spaceport on the northwest side of Kokomo ripe for the taking!



Amazon's coming indecent proposal

By **MORTON MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS – I've been impressed by writings on the Amazon call for proposals concerning the location of their second headquarters. Some writers believe Indiana/polis should be flattered by being qualified to compete for the second headquarters to be built by this massive, transformative company.



Others contend we don't have the financial resources required by Amazon's list of desirable attributes to make the final cut. How would we finance the modern, comprehensive transportation system Amazon envisions? Does Indiana offer the appreciation of innovative thinking Amazon imagines necessary for its new location?

However, I find it strange no one objects to the paternalistic, self-congratulatory, insensitive attitude of Amazon's proposal. The company demands much and offers little in return to its all-too-eager metropolitan supplicants. Amazon wants to add (perhaps) 50,000 jobs to the blessed area, paying an average of (perhaps) \$100,000 in total compensation, and (perhaps) \$5 billion in construction outlays.

The magnitudes are so great that many Hoosier leaders recognize this may be too much for a conglomeration of contentious, competing Indiana towns still struggling to be a city.

Amazon wants to be paid for its beneficences. We can be certain our state Santa (the Indiana Economic Development Corporation, IEDC) will respond as would our local governments, if they had anything to offer. Thanks to our state legislature, cities and towns are severely limited in their ability to respond, which is good considering their history.

There is nothing I found in the Amazon request for proposal (RFP) to suggest Amazon has any sense of social responsibility. They want wonders, but will not commit to developing those assets beyond paying for those things of direct benefit to Amazon. This is a business proposition that could be so much more.

If Indiana wants to respond to Amazon's proposal, it should do so by putting forward Northwest Indiana. Access to the Chicago metropolitan area meets most of the conditions put forward by Amazon. The Gary/Chicago Airport does not have the air service Amazon might desire, but it could with the support of a company that sees itself as remarkably important.

Northwest Indiana has thousands of employees Amazon could train for its jobs. A compact to give prefer-

ence for training and employment to persons living within a certain radius of the site would be a great contribution to the local economy. Amazon presumes local schools, colleges, and universities will supply the needed labor. Amazon wants a place with amenities, but only if they are pre-existing conditions. The firm demonstrates no willingness to help create the ideal community they seek.

Economic development is not achieved by government alone or by the private sector alone. Amazon is very conscious of its potential impact on a community. If they had a broader vision of their own company, this RFP would have been sent to a very limited set of struggling communities, starting with Detroit. ❖

Mr. Marcus is an economist, writer, and speaker who may be reached at mortonjmarcus@yahoo.com. ❖



Amazon raises issues Indiana must consider

By **MICHAEL HICKS**

MUNCIE – Jeff Bezos recently announced that Amazon is looking for a location other than Seattle for a second headquarters building. The proposal is for perhaps 50,000 total jobs with annual compensation of \$100,000 or higher. This would make it the largest potential economic development deal in U.S.



history. Naturally, this announcement sent city fathers across the U.S. scrambling to craft a proposal for Amazon.

The specifications for the new site leaves just a dozen or so metropolitan areas as potential places for the facility dubbed HQ2. Any reasonable analysis would rank the Indianapolis area in the top half dozen potential sites. This raises a few issues that everyone in Indiana and the Midwest as a whole should consider.

This proposal comes on the heels of what is arguably the most irresponsible economic development deal in modern history, Wisconsin's \$3 billion plus bid for 3,000 Foxconn jobs. Compared to that piece of fiscal insanity, the Amazon deal should be worth about \$25 billion in incentives. By comparison, Indianapolis spends a tad bit more than \$1 billion running the city each year, and New York City's annual budget is about \$75 billion a year. Beyond offering an immediate illustration of Wisconsin's folly, there are other insights into this deal.

Tax incentives, which Bezos suggests will be a key part of this deal, should be viewed by all citizens

with some skepticism. Business relocation accounts for a vanishingly small share of jobs here and elsewhere. The best data I have seen suggests that maybe 1.5 percent of current net employment in Indiana is due to firm relocation. More importantly, there's little real evidence that incentives play a leading role in firm relocation decision. On the contrary, most real research in the matter suggests such mundane things as school quality and safe, attractive neighborhoods plays a larger role in the location decision of firms than do incentives.

The best way to think of tax incentives is as compensation that a community must pay for its flaws. And that leads us to the next lesson of Amazon.

Indianapolis and Fishers have already announced a partnership in crafting a proposal for Amazon, and have invited other local governments, notably Carmel, to participate. We should welcome regional cooperation, but doing so on a business development deal is especially tough. The simple reason is that the actual firm location within the greater Indianapolis area hardly matters.

Once the inevitable slew of incentives are handed out, the only economic benefits will flow to the communities where workers decide to live. And this leads to my final point.

The business attraction model that has so long been the widespread hope across much of Indiana has largely failed for the simple reason that footloose firms (firms that are able to relocate) represent a vanishingly small share of total employment. Big deals tend to cause

otherwise sober politicians to act like drunken sailors. What we need instead is a new model of economic development, where business attraction activities occur in regions, like the greater Indianapolis area. These places can afford experienced professional staff who should be agnostic about the location decision of a firm within the region. They would know full well that the benefits follow household locations, not that of headquarters or factories.

This would leave local governments the job of making themselves the attractive place to live, generating a competition for excellence in schools, neighborhoods and downtowns. This is a complete reversal of five decades of economic develop policies and practices that seek to commoditize workers and communities, driving down investment. Those policies failed and far too many communities spent the last few decades paying incentives to compensate for poor schools, potholed streets and vacant downtowns.

The simple fact that Indianapolis is on the short list of potential cities is because so many communities across the region have been investing in themselves. The greater Indianapolis region will prosper and grow because of these decisions, with or without Amazon's HQ2. That's a lesson all of Indiana should heed.

Michael Hicks is the George and Frances Ball Distinguished Professor of Economics and the director of the Center for Business and Economic Research at Ball State University.

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Trump, Pence heading back to Indiana

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Both President Trump and Vice President Pence will return to Indiana in the coming week, and you can thank Democratic U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly for the coming exposure.



Donnelly is a conspicuous Democrat when Trump pushes his tax reform package. He was one of three moderate Democrats to dine at the White House with Trump and Pence last week, as they sought a new coalition of

Senate moderates to break through the inertia that has trapped most of the administration's congressional agenda.

Pence is expected to visit Anderson on Friday, where Donnelly kicked off his campaign in August, with the Herald-Bulletin reporting the vice president will likely address the Anderson Chamber of Commerce in his former congressional district. Trump is expected to travel to the state where he

clinched the Republican presidential nomination in May 2016, possibly to Fort Wayne. Pence will almost certainly join him on the trip.

The visits come after Trump warmed up to his new friends "Chuck and Nancy" – Minority Leaders Chuck Schumer and Nancy Pelosi – to forge a Hurricane Harvey and debt ceiling deal.

Trump was so pleased with the positive press his deal brought, that many believe he's willing to chuck an ineffective GOP coalition that has failed to deliver on what had been his No. 1 priority, the repeal and replace of Obamacare. Sometime in the next nine days, Republicans will try and pass the Graham/Cassidy health reform. If Sens. Rand Paul, Susan Collins, along with either Lisa Murkowski or John McCain, vote it down, Trump will almost certainly place emphasis on the emerging bipartisan coalition to achieve some kind of tax reform deal.

Pence shuttled between New York and Washington on Tuesday, attending the Senate Republican lunch in an effort to get the Graham/Cassidy health reforms to the promised land. But the attempt appears to fit the definition of insanity (doing the same thing over and over expecting

a different result). It is another partisan effort to remake one-sixth of the American economy, as nary a Democrat is on board or involved in the negotiations. U.S. Sens. Lamar Alexander (R) and Patti Murray (D) had been working on a plan to stabilize the Obamacare markets, and they have suspended their efforts in the wake of Graham/Cassidy.

Sam Baker of Axios details why the Graham/Cassidy bill is on a precarious pass: It lacks the "soft landing" on the Medicaid phase-out (something Gov. Eric Holcomb favors); it has no opioid crisis funding; it keeps many Obamacare taxes in place; it allows states to waive coverage for pre-existing conditions; and it lacks a CBO estimate. Holcomb is backing the Graham/Cassidy legislation.

McCain decried the corrupted "process" when he stunned Trump, Pence and Majority Leader McConnell last summer by voting no. With Graham/Cassidy, there have been no hearings or debates. So Graham/Cassidy appears to be a Republican attempt to "do something/anything" to redeem their seven-year rhetoric of repealing Obamacare.

Tax reform is much more promising and is bringing Donnelly, Heitkamp and Sen. Joe Manchin to the table. Donnelly told the South Bend Tribune's Jack Colwell that the White House dinner was "really productive and businesslike." He added, "The president expressed a desire to



Donald Trump points to Indiana Gov. Mike Pence during his "audition" for the ticket in Westfield in early July, 2016. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

try to get something done." He said he told Trump, "I'm all in, if tax reform is bipartisan, with focus on creating jobs and help for the middle class, not big cuts for the wealthiest individuals and corporations."

There has also been speculation that Donnelly might hitch a ride on Air Force One as colleague Heidi Heitkamp did to North Dakota earlier this month. "If I'm invited, I would be honored to be with the president on Air Force One," Donnelly said. The spectacle there is if potential opponents Todd Rokita and Luke Messer aren't on board.

Messer is also focused on tax reform, telling the Richmond Palladium-Item this week, "When you talk to folks back home, the number-one concern is frozen paychecks; the fact that it seems it's harder and harder to

get a good-paying job where you can get ahead. I think the bill we're working on right now that can most impact that is tax reform ... We need to provide a pay raise to the American worker and one of the clearest ways to do that is to ease the tax burden."

Donnelly told WAVE-TV on Wednesday, he's not feeling pressure. "You know actually I don't," he said. "He never pressured, he just laid out that, 'Look, my goal is to also to make sure the tax cuts help the middle class,' and I said to him, 'Mr. President it's not the very wealthy who elected you,'" Donnelly told us.

Trump and Pence return to the state at a time when the administration is seeing a polling rebound. Much of that is due to the administration's handling of Hurricanes Harvey and Irma, and the distance from Trump's disastrous July flip-flops in response to Charlottesville. An NBC/Wall Street Journal Poll has Trump's approval at 43%, a 3% uptick, while 52% disapprove. Following a low of 39% in the POLITICO/Morning Consult poll in August following Charlottesville, Trump was at 43% this week. Gallup tracking had him at 38% approval, up from 35% last month. As we reported last week, internal Indiana numbers from a Republican U.S. Senate campaign revealed that on President Trump's image question, 45% of Hoosiers approve and 51% disapprove. But on job approval, the numbers are reversed: 52% approve and 46% disapprove. So Trump still has mojo with Hoosier Republicans.

And that's why Trump and Pence will be here to spread the love, reminisce about the 2016 glory days, raise a little money for Pence's leadership PAC, and put Donnelly in the tax reform crosshairs. But that's attention that Donnelly will be more than happy to receive.

U.S. Senate

Rep. Brooks endorses Messer

U.S. Rep. Susan Brooks endorsed Luke Messer in his campaign for United States Senate. She became the first member of the Indiana delegation to choose between Messer and U.S. Rep. Todd Rokita, both vying for the nomination.

"Luke and I have been friends for a long time, and being his colleague and watching him work up close, I have no doubt he'll make a great U.S. senator," Brooks said on Wednesday. "We face tough issues as a nation and need Luke Messer in the Senate to meet those challenges and make Washington work better for Hoosiers. Luke is a



proven conservative, but more than that, he is a respected and skillful leader who builds the relationships necessary to get our shared priorities enacted into law. His principles and strong communication skills have made him a go-to leader in the House, and those same attributes will enable Luke to deliver results when he arrives in the U. S. Senate. His record of fighting for school choice to create better education opportunities for tens of thousands of Indiana families and protecting veterans' GI Bill benefits shows Hoosiers they can trust him to do the right thing and do it well."

Messer faces Rokita, attorney Mark Hurt, businessman Terry Henderson, State Rep. Mike Braun and educator Andrew Takami in the GOP primary.

Messer announced Brooks will serve as honorary chairwoman of a new statewide team "Women for Luke," a group of women supporters focused on electing him to the U.S. Senate. "Susan is a great friend and an exceptional public servant who works hard for Hoosiers every day," Messer said. "Her leadership on the opioid crisis and her dedication to supporting veterans and Hoosier families speaks volumes about her character and the type of leader she is for Indiana. I'm thrilled to have her involvement and support in our campaign."

Brooks and Rokita both faced off in the 22-day 2016 campaign for governor after Pence resigned his nomination to run on the presidential ticket. Brooks finished second to Holcomb on the second ballot while Rokita finished third.

Complaint vs. Rokita

The American Democracy Legal Fund filed another complaint against the Rokita campaign, based on an Associated Press story that reported congressional office staffers "felt obligated" to volunteer for his campaigns. The group filed a complaint against Rokita and Messer in July, accusing them of violating FEC fundraising rules prior to declaring their candidacies.

Messer backs Trump on DACA

Messer told WIBC's Tony Katz that he backs President Trump's stance on DACA, where he essentially asked Congress to find a permanent solution. "It says pretty clearly in the constitution that Congress makes the laws, the executive enforces them," Messer explained. "What the president (Obama) did was unilaterally just make law, and that was wrong."

Part of President Trump's push to keep DACA alive is to simply have Congress enact the program, which, Messer says, is the right way to go about it.

Messer would also like to tie in the assurance of funding and action on Trump's long-discussed border wall and believes that funding for the wall should

be part of any effort to reinstate DACA.

Hurt backs tax reform

Republican Senate candidate Mark Hurt called for change in the U.S. tax code in an op-ed article he wrote for the NWI Times. "The current tax code (comprises) 74,608 unreadable and too often undecipherable legalistic pages, or more than 10,000 words. Most novels you might read, just for example, run about 200 to 300 pages (62,500 words). This has to change," wrote Hurt. "For personal income tax reform, President Donald Trump seeks to cut taxes and simplify the tax structure. Trump seeks to expand tax benefits for families, including a larger allowable deduction for child care expenses that could be taken whether a taxpayer itemizes or not, and would also be allowed for up to four children. The current law only allows for two children. This is a start. We must lower personal income taxes and provide a code actually capable of being understood. For example, the standard deduction should double to \$15,000 (single) and \$30,000 (married), from the current levels of \$6,350 and \$12,700, respectively. I would like to put an exclamation point on the president's persistent mantra of jobs, jobs, jobs!"

Congress

6th CD: MacKenzie announces

A business consultant who bills himself as a "conservative outsider" will run for an open eastern Indiana congressional seat (Associated Press). Stephen MacKenzie announced a Republican primary bid Monday for the 6th CD seat once held by Vice President Mike Pence. Republican Rep. Luke Messer represents the district. But he's giving it up to run for Senate. The vice president's brother Greg Pence is considering a run for the seat. State Sen. Mike Crider has also announced a bid.

9th CD: Curtis pulls out of Democratic race

Tod Curtis, a business owner from Bedford, has withdrawn from the race for the 9th District U.S. House seat now held by Republican U.S. Rep. Trey Hollingsworth. Curtis, who was running as a Democrat, announced in a Facebook post Saturday that he had fallen short of the fundraising goals that would allow him to pursue a winning campaign (Bloomington Herald-Times). "Running for Congress has always been a dream of mine, and I'm glad that I had the opportunity to make it happen. I have no regrets whatsoever; I put everything I had into it while still trying to maintain my professional and family life. It is an insane ride to be a candidate, and an honor to have so many people believe in your campaign. I've met so many great people, and I have tremendous respect for those who sacrifice so much to serve in public office," Curtis wrote in the post. "I can say with absolute certainty that I am not stepping aside due to the work, the commitment, or the challenge. Those are all things that, if you know me, you

know I thrive on. There is a reality, though, that raising funds is an absolute necessity to success, and I have fallen shy of what I believe will be necessary to win."

Democratic candidates still in the race include Bloomington lawyer Liz Watson, Indiana University instructor Tom Pappas, New Albany civil rights attorney Dan Canon, and Robert Chatlos, a Bloomington truck driver who initially filed as an independent but is now running as a Democrat.

Statewides

Klutz kicks off auditor campaign

Auditor Tera Klutz kicked off her campaign at Parkview Field in her hometown of Fort Wayne Wednesday. "I am proud to have increased the transparency of Indiana's finances as well as created an Internal Control Department



which will work to improve the processes within the Auditor's office," said Klutz. "It is fiscally responsible to be transparent when spending taxpayer's money. But equally important, being transparent encourages fiscal responsibility," Klutz said.

Gov. Eric Holcomb, who appointed Klutz to fill the office vacancy created when then-State Auditor Suzanne Crouch became Lt. Governor, said, "Tera Klutz's experience as a Certified Public Accountant, as Allen County's elected Auditor and for the last eight months as our Auditor of State, have only reassured me that she was, and continues to be, the best choice to serve as Indiana's Chief Financial Officer. I fully support her campaign, from convention to General Election, and look forward to continuing to work with her for years to come."

Indiana Republican Party State Chairman Kyle Hupfer, who introduced Klutz at the event, said, "I'm so excited to know that Tera Klutz will be on our Republican Statewide Ticket in 2018, a critical election in which Tera, along with Secretary of State Connie Lawson and Treasurer Kelly Mitchell, will be forces to be reckoned with. They will also help support our eventual Senate nominee as we defeat Democrat Joe Donnelly and continue our run of proven Republican leadership in Indiana."

She is seeking her first full term after Holcomb appointed her to fill the term of Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch, who held that post before she joined the gubernatorial ticket. ❖

Donnelly open to Trump tax reform

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – President Donald Trump is doing no favors for Republicans seeking to defeat Sen. Joe Donnelly.

Republican contenders are trying to tear down Donnelly's image as a moderate Democrat, likening him to Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders. And then Trump invites Donnelly to dinner at the White House, clearly identifying him as one of the moderates who might be willing to reach across the aisle for bipartisan agreement on tax reform.



The president shared the thousand island dressing and views on middle-class tax relief with Donnelly during the dinner last week. Donnelly was seated next to Trump at the affair, attended by a bipartisan group of senators, four Republicans and three Democrats. Vice President Mike Pence and other key administration officials also were there.

In a telephone interview, Donnelly said the discussion "was really productive and business-like," not like the sharp partisanship on display at a White House luncheon to which he was invited earlier in the administration.

"The president expressed a desire to try to get something done," Donnelly said, and he told Trump of requirements he saw as necessary for a bipartisan tax reform deal, including focus on creating jobs, keeping jobs in America, help for the middle class – not just big cuts for the wealthiest individuals and corporations. He said the president responded that he was "all in on all of that."

Donnelly said he warned: "If it's skewed toward the very wealthy, I don't think you are going to get any Democrats." A hopeful sign, Donnelly said, was when Trump related that many of his wealthy friends tell him they don't want a tax cut, just more fairness and global competitiveness.

Since the president seems to be concentrating now on working with new partners "Chuck and Nancy"

rather than counting on Republican congressional leaders, those efforts can only be successful if enough Democrats will join with a significant portion of the Republican majority to pass a bipartisan proposal.

Did the president pressure him to be one of the needed Democrats? No, Donnelly said, there was no pressure, no threats, no arm-twisting.

It is reported in Washington that both Trump and Pence plan trips to Indiana aimed at pressuring Donnelly to go along on tax reform. Donnelly laughed at a report of Pence planning several flights to Indiana for that purpose. "That's spending a lot of money, when he could just pick up the phone," Donnelly said. "My vote will not be based on how many trips the vice president makes to Indiana."

What if he is invited to fly on Air Force One on a presidential trip to Indiana? Sen. Heidi Heitkamp of North Dakota, one of the other Democratic moderates at the dinner, recently flew with Trump on Air Force One to her state.

"If I'm invited, I would be honored to be with the president on Air Force One," Donnelly said. He said that would be true of any president. He noted his disgust with some partisan Republicans who refused to attend events at which President Obama appeared.

"The president is the president of the United States of America, not of Republicans or of Democrats," he said, and disagreement on issues shouldn't extend to disrespect of the office or hope for presidential failures

that could harm the nation.

One issue on which there was disagreement after the dinner? Ice cream. The shape of the ice cream with dessert and whether Trump was the only one to get a second scoop actually was discussed at length on one of cable news shows.

Sen. Joe Manchin of West Virginia, the third Democratic moderate at the dinner, said he first thought the ice cream was an egg because

of its shape. "In West Virginia they may think an oval looks like an egg. In South Bend we would say it looked like half of a football," Donnelly quipped. ❖

Colwell has covered Indiana politics over five decades for the South Bend Tribune.



U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly and U.S. Rep. Jackie Walorski greet Vice President Pence in May prior to his address to the University of Notre Dame graduation. (South Bend Tribune Photo)

Déjà vu on the zombie Obamacare repeal

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – There have been no hearings. No amendments. No Congressional Budget Office scoring.

And yet in another case of fitful déjà vu, U.S. Sen. Todd Young and about 46 of his Republican colleagues are prepared to vote for the Graham/Cassidy repeal and replace bill of Obamacare. They don't know what's in it or the impacts, but they don't care. This bill has little to do with sound public policy and process. It is a political exercise as Republicans fret going on the campaign trail in 2018 after failing on the 60th-something time to repeal Obamacare, a promise they've made since the ACA passed in 2010.

Gov. Eric Holcomb joined other GOP governors in backing the plan, writing, "Adequately funded block grants to the states, along with maximum flexibility and control, is the best option on the table."

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell is prepared to call for a vote sometime next week on what is described as the last gasp chance to pass an Obamacare replacement. "It is the leader's intention to consider Graham-Cassidy on the floor next week," his spokesman, Don Stewart, said Wednesday.

U.S. Sens. Rand Paul and Susan Collins look to be solid no votes. U.S. Sen. John McCain, who voted against the last repeal/replace bill, complaining about the corrupted process, is one of U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham's best friends. "Nothing has changed. If McConnell wants to put it on the floor, that's up to McConnell," McCain told Politico Playbook. "I am the same as I was before. I want the regular order." Asked if that means he's a 'no' vote, McCain said: "That means I want the regular order. It means I want the regular order!"

That places U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska on the bead. "The problem last time was process and substance," Murkowski told the press on Wednesday. "Nobody knew what we were really ... voting on."

And, once again, Vice President Mike Pence and his long-time aide, Trump legislative liaison Marc Short, are playing the point in the Senate. Pence shuttled back and forth from New York to Washington on Tuesday to press for the Graham/Cassidy bill. The Washington Post reports today that Pence and Short "have conducted much of the outreach to on-the-fence senators this week, revealing little public information about whom they are contacting or what they are saying."

President Trump, seeking a deal and a win while understanding little of the potential impacts, Tweeted his support on Wednesday, saying, "I would not sign Graham-

Cassidy if it did not include coverage of pre-existing conditions. It does! A great Bill. Repeal & Replace. Senator (Doctor) Bill Cassidy is a class act who really cares about people and their Health(care), he doesn't lie-just wants to help people!"

Sam Baker, writing for Axios, posted this morning that the key battle on this bill is pre-existing conditions. "The bill Cassidy introduced with Sen. Lindsey Graham would not repeal the section of the Affordable Care Act that requires insurance companies to cover people with pre-existing conditions, nor could states seek a waiver from that provision," Baker writes. "But it would let states waive the section that says insurers can't raise your premiums because of a pre-existing condition, which could make coverage unaffordable. States also could waive the law's essential health benefits – excluding, for example, expensive prescription drugs. And once a service is no longer an essential benefit, it's also not subject to the ACA's ban on lifetime or annual coverage limits.

Baker adds, "So, in several ways, the bill could make coverage substantially more expensive, and even unaffordable, for people with pre-existing conditions. So when President Trump tweeted last night, 'I would not sign Graham-Cassidy if it did not include coverage of pre-existing conditions. It does!' – it's a sign that he may not understand the bill."

"[I]f you have less money, you either cover fewer people, or you cover the same amount of people with less generous coverage," Avalere's Caroline Pearson told Axios. "So if a bill reduces the availability of comprehensive insurance, people with chronic conditions are going to be disproportionately harmed."

The Los Angeles Times reported Wednesday: "The latest Republican bid to roll back the Affordable Care Act would likely leave millions of currently insured Americans without health coverage in the coming decades, and strip benefits and protections from millions more, a growing number of independent studies suggest. Healthcare safety nets in dozens of states stand to lose more than \$200 billion by 2026 and hundreds of billions of dollars more in the years that follow, the analyses indicate."

Axios reports: "Avalere Health, a nonpartisan consulting firm, said the bill would cut \$215 billion in federal spending by 2026, growing to more than \$4 trillion after its block grants cease to exist. The liberal Center for American Progress estimated that, by 2026, 30 million more Americans would be uninsured under Graham-Cassidy than under the status quo.

AARP, which opposes the bill, released a report saying premiums for older consumers could rise by roughly \$16,000 per year. Conservatives are lukewarm. Freedom-Works said yesterday that "we don't support nor do we oppose Graham-Cassidy." Americans for Prosperity and Heritage Action have been noncommittal. ❖





Martinez rides mayor endorsement to win

By RICH JAMES

MERRILLVILLE – There were a lot of questions raised during and after the Democratic precinct caucus that elected Oscar Martinez Jr. as the new Lake County sheriff last week.



Martinez, who has been a Lake County police officer since 1993, won a third-ballot victory over Schererville Police Chief David Dowling. Martinez had 223 votes to Dowling's 170.

It was the first Democratic caucus since James L. Wieser was elected party chairman earlier this year.

What a web has been weaved. During the chairman's election, Wieser and Lake County Commissioner Mike Repay tied. Outgoing chairman John Buncich broke the tie by selecting Wieser. It was because of Buncich that there was a need for the special caucus last week.

Buncich was convicted last month on fraud charges in connection with kickbacks on towing contracts. Repay was Martinez's strongest supporter during

the Sept. 16 caucus. What put Martinez over the top was the endorsement of Hammond Mayor Thomas McDermott Jr., who is the former county chairman. Martinez was sworn in by Lake Circuit Judge Marissa McDermott, who is the mayor's wife.

Repay and McDermott have long been at odds largely because they represented two sizable egos in the same city – Hammond. Some say they put those differences aside last week.

Wieser was known to be supporting Dowling but didn't do it publicly since he is party chairman. There was background maneuvering involved in the caucus. There was a thought among many that Martinez would be easier to defeat in the May 2018 primary than would Dowling.

That thinking comes out of the camp of Lake County Clerk Mike Brown, who is likely to enter the sheriff's primary because he is prohibited from seeking a third term as clerk. Brown, who is black and enjoys wide political support, likely would be the lone African-American in the primary race.

Dowling has said he will be a candidate in the spring. Martinez, too, will be running for a full term, but will have to do it with the general public, not precinct committeemen. ❖

Rich James has been writing about state and local government and politics for more than 30 years. He is a columnist for The Times of Northwest Indiana.

Jon Webb, Evansville Courier & Press: Could Democrats and progressives ever like Donald Trump? It's a ridiculous question, I know. Right up there with "could a snake drive a car," "does Mike Pence own a Slayer album" or "can Betsy DeVos name the third president." Last week, however, provided a fun little test. About a week after Trump announced he'd rescind the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals immigration order – which shields from immigration anyone brought here illegally by their parents by 2007 – Democrats Chuck Schumer and Nancy Pelosi said they'd struck a deal with Trump. Their plan would protect DACA recipients and beef up border security, all without funding the infamous wall Donny bleated about during his campaign. The White House denied any such deal, because of course they did. If you told them Donald Trump was president, they'd deny it. (Wait. I may have solved all this.) This deal – or deal to make a deal – obviously won't erase the terrible actions and statements that have transformed Trump into the arch enemy of anyone who doesn't want to build 40-foot walls around the perimeter of the United States. But let's say Trump keeps at it. What if, supposed friend of the working man that he is, he heads to Twitter to blast the national right-to-work bill germinating in Congress (which Larry Bucshon co-sponsors)? Or the big one: What if, tired of Republicans failing to pass healthcare reform, Donny comes out in favor of single-payer? That sounds ludicrous, but it's at least theoretically possible. Trump seems to dislike Paul Ryan and Mitch McConnell as much as I do. And nothing would make Ryan cry faster than a president who thinks low-income people should get healthcare. ❖



Paul Waldman, Washington Post: Imagine you're Kim Jong Un. You just watched on television as President Trump went to the United Nations and gave a speech in which he demanded that you give up the weapons program that you have worked to make a source of intense national pride. He also threatened to kill you and all 25 million of your citizens, and even called you "Rocket Man," and although you actually kind of like that nickname — you love your rockets, after all — you know that he's trying to belittle you. You might argue that the threat to utterly destroy your adversary is at the heart of nuclear deterrence, which is true. But saying it out loud creates a different kind of atmosphere. And it's critical to keep in mind that we aren't just trying to deter North Korea from attacking us or an ally such as Japan; our goal is to get them to agree to give up their weapons. It's not just a matter of them not using them. We're asking for something much harder for them to give. So again, put yourself in Kim's position. The United States is demanding that you give up your nuclear weapons, presumably as part of some kind of negotiated settlement that would include something you'd receive in exchange. But at the same time, the American president is threatening to withdraw

from a carefully negotiated agreement Iran made with the world's leading economic and military powers, in which it set aside its nuclear weapons ambitions in exchange for a package of economic incentives. If the United States is going to renege on that deal, why wouldn't it renege on a similar deal it made with you? Then you could find yourself without your weapons, and without the economic help you had been promised. Not only that, we know that the North Koreans talk a lot about the experience of Moammar Gaddafi, who agreed to give up many of his weapons programs, but ended up being deposed and executed in a revolution that was aided by the United States. Dan Coats, Trump's director of National Intelligence, made this clear at a public appearance in July when he said this: "There is some rationale backing [Kim Jong Un's] actions which are survival, survival for his regime, survival for his country, and he has watched I think what has happened around the world relative to nations that possess nuclear capabilities and the leverage they have and seen that having the nuclear card in your pocket results in a lot of deterrence capability. The lessons that we learned out of Libya giving up its nukes and Ukraine giving up its nukes is unfortunately if you had nukes, never give them up. If you don't have them, get them." ❖

Kyle Hannon, South Bend Tribune: There is a political debate going on right now. It is one of the most divisive debates of all time, which means it's not really a debate. It has turned into an exercise in name calling. And it is missing an opportunity. The issue is climate change. That is the last time I'm going to say it. Don't say that phrase in polite company. It won't be polite very long. You will be labeled a liberal extremist, or a denier, or something else. So let's not argue about whether that phenomenon-not-to-be-named caused the last two big hurricanes. Neither side will convince the other. Instead, let's look at the environment and the local economy. Earlier this summer I shared that our regional economy is an outdoor economy. The RV and boating industry in Elkhart County are dependent on people appreciating the outdoors. Our region is responsible for families enjoying memorable camping weekends. Many of us have spent a relaxing evening puttering around the St. Joseph River on an Elkhart-made pontoon boat. Notre Dame football weekends, which are outdoors, generate a plenty of commerce. Martin's Super Market stores supply many tailgate parties. All the hotels in the region fill their rooms. More than any other region, we are dependent on the "great outdoors" being great. We can protect the outdoors two important ways, sustainability and innovation. Please don't confuse sustainability with that other issue, the divisive one. Instead, think of pollution prevention. Companies can work to eliminate the waste they send to landfills. The Elkhart Chamber has an Environmental Council that helps companies explore new processes that reduce pollution. ❖

Holcomb gives \$150M for locals

INDIANAPOLIS — Gov. Eric Holcomb announced Wednesday road funding grants that total \$150 million for local governments across the state (Smith, Indiana Public Media). The General Assembly created the Community Crossings grants in 2016 to help local road funding efforts. Counties and cities would put up half the money for a project – the state would match that amount. The program's second year will send \$150 million to almost 400 county and local governments statewide. Applications for the grants increased 48 percent this year.



Holcomb buys 5 millionth Toyota

PRINCETON — Toyota Motor Manufacturing Indiana couched a few surprises into Wednesday's formal ceremonies marking the plant's 5 million vehicle plateau (Stubbs & Martin, Evansville Courier & Press). It was announced that Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb and his wife, Janet, were buyers of the plant's 5 millionth vehicle, a Sequoia Platinum Edition SUV.

Report shows little prison savings

INDIANAPOLIS — A report to Indiana lawmakers shows that the state hasn't seen significant savings from an overhaul of criminal sentencing laws aimed at sending fewer people convicted of nonviolent crimes to prison (Associated Press). The report presented to a legislative committee Tuesday shows the average monthly number of new state prison inmates declined from nearly 650 in 2014 to more than 120 last year. That decline allowed the state to close the Henryville Correctional Facility in southeastern Indiana, reducing spending by

nearly \$2.5 million. But Chris Johnston of KSM Consulting told lawmakers most nonviolent offenders are now ending up in county jails, rather than in community corrections and probation programs. The KSM study found the state's \$11 million in estimated annual prison savings are largely consumed by the nearly \$9.5 million it pays to counties holding low-level felons in jail.

Task Force 1 heads to Puerto Rico

INDIANAPOLIS — Twenty-seven members of Indiana Task Force 1 are in Ohio waiting to get on a plane to fly down to Puerto Rico to help with the recovery efforts (WTHR-TV). Some of the members were only home for a few days after helping with either Hurricane Harvey in Texas or Hurricane Irma in Florida.

Indiana college grads owe \$30k

WASHINGTON — There's a good chance that more than half of your college classmates you just graduated with have thousands of dollars of student loan debt (Clark, IndyStar). According to a new study from The Institute for College Access & Success, the average graduate from an Indiana public or private college owes almost \$30,000 in student loan debt.

Thousands of rape kits go untested

INDIANAPOLIS — Like many states, Indiana has a problem — mountains of untested rape exam kits in local law enforcement agencies that contain DNA evidence potentially identifying sex offenders (Stafford, Indiana Lawyer). Indiana's backlog of untested kits is certainly in the thousands. Victim advocates say the question is, how many thousands? No one can accurately answer that question — at least not until Dec. 1. That's when a

report to lawmakers is due from Indiana State Police, detailing the number of untested kits warehoused by law enforcement agencies around the state. "We want to know the numbers and perhaps just as important, the reasons for which they may not have been processed to start with," said Sen. Mike Crider. Crider authored Senate Resolution 55, which passed the General Assembly this year and put in motion the state police audit.

Rand study shows high hospital costs

INDIANAPOLIS — A new Rand Corporation report finds the price Indiana hospitals charge for outpatient services "shockingly high," more than three times what they charge Medicare for the same procedures (Rudavsky, IndyStar). The report, the first to pinpoint how much individual hospitals in this state charge employers who provide insurance to their employees for medical services, also found a wide variation in price for both outpatient and inpatient procedures from hospital to hospital... Brian Tabor, president of the Indiana Hospital Association, takes issue with the report's calling Indiana's hospital prices "shockingly high." "I would say that's a pretty subjective statement," he said.

Mueller requests WH records

WASHINGTON — The special counsel investigating Russian election meddling has requested extensive records and email correspondence from the White House, covering areas including the president's private discussions about firing his FBI director and his response to news that the then-national security adviser was under investigation, according to two people briefed on the requests (New York Times). White House lawyers are now working to turn over internal documents that span 13 categories that investigators for the special counsel have identified.