



Budget ramifications ablaze

Tax increase stories pepper news coverage

By BRIAN A. HOWEY in Indianapolis

On Sunday in Muncie, on the front page of the *Star Press*, came a memorable quote from freshman Rep. Bill Davis, R-Portland, featured just to the right of this very paragraph: "I have heard nothing but good feedback" on the biennial budget.

The amazing thing about that quote was this is how that story by reporter Rick Yencer opened:

*The new \$24.3-billion state budget that Gov. Mitch Daniels signed on Friday reaches out and touches most Hoosiers. Here are some of the ways East Central Indiana residents will be affected: * Many of the 18,000 on-campus students at Ball State University will see a 4.8-percent tuition hike in 2005-06 and a 5.5-percent increase in 2006-07. * Muncie Community Schools will cut 43 teaching positions to make up a \$1.6-million loss of state funding for the 2005-06 school year, leading to larger class sizes. * As many as 17,481 Delaware County residents who received Medicaid benefits in 2004 could find that a 5-percent yearly hike in spending will not cover their bills if, as expected, expenses rise nearly 10 percent. * Thousands of property owners in eastern Indiana could find their property taxes going up over the next two years as schools and local government make up the difference of state spending cuts.*



Freshman Rep. Bill Davis, the poster boy of optimism.

The spectre of increased class sizes, higher tuition and the prospect of property tax increases where each locale will put blame squarely on the Indiana General Assembly, but Rep. Davis took the plunge. He voted for this budget; and, to his credit, he is attempting to defend the proposition.

Over the weekend, Indiana newspapers were full of stories about looming tax hikes. In the *Fort Wayne Journal Gazette*, 18 of the 33 northeastern Indiana school districts indicated they would probably raise property taxes. "I appreciate their efforts, but make no mistake about it, public education is underfunded in the next two years," Bill Carnes, superintendent of Whitley County Consolidated Schools, told the *Journal Gazette*. Carnes also is president of the Indiana Association of Public School Superintendents. "Public schools are going to be challenged over the next two years



"I have heard nothing but good feedback."

— Freshman State Rep. Bill Davis, on the recently passed biennial budget that has set off a flurry of local news copy about imminent property tax increases, to the Muncie *Star Press*

The Howey Political Report is published by NewsLink Inc. Founded in 1994, The Howey Political Report is an independent, non-partisan newsletter analyzing the political process in Indiana.

Brian A. Howey, Publisher
Mark Schoeff Jr., Washington Writer
Jack E. Howey, Editor

Subscriptions:
\$350 annually HPR via e-mail;
\$550 annually HPR & HPR Daily Wire.
Call 254-0535.

The Howey Political Report
PO Box 40265
Indianapolis, IN 46240-0265.

www.howeypolitics.com
BrianHowey@howeypolitics.com

Indianapolis Office: 317-506-0883.
Indianapolis Fax: 317-254-0535.
Washington Office: 202-775-3242.
Business Office: 317-254-0535.

©2005, The Howey Political Report. All rights reserved. Photocopying, Internet forwarding, faxing or reproducing in any form, in whole or part, is a violation of federal law and is **strictly prohibited** without consent of the publisher.



| | |
|--------------------------------------|------|
| Retribution: Pyrrhus at Asculum | p. 3 |
| Daniels, the Pentagon and Hope, Ind. | p. 4 |
| Fire alarms and Indy Works | p. 5 |
| 2006 Horse Race: Hill-Sodrel rematch | p. 6 |
| Howey Column: License branch tips | p. 7 |
| Columnists: Brown, James, Stedman | p. 8 |



to maintain the standards that have been set by No Child Left Behind while at the same time balancing their budgets," he said. "The mandates haven't changed but the funding for the mandates certainly has."

In suburban Indianapolis, Fishers Town Council President Scott Faultless told the *Noblesville Daily Times* the stadium taxes are in trouble. "In plain terms, I'm not a fan of redistribution of tax dollars at any level, whether it's county, state or federal," Faultless said.

In Lake County, there was controversy over the 2 percent circuit-breaker. Subsidizing the cap on 2003 bills cost \$14 million. Countywide, 29,863 homeowners qualified for the circuit breaker, more than 80 percent of them from the northern cities, the *Post-Tribune* reported. Councilman Larry Blanchard, D-Crown Point, explained, "It's a bad idea, adding a tax to subsidize another tax," he said. "When you've got to pay to support somebody else, people don't like doing it."

In Indianapolis on Monday, the *Indianapolis Star* reported, Marion County property owners will pay tens of millions more in taxes as the state pressures counties to cover \$85.8 million in juvenile prison costs. The budget Gov. Mitch Daniels signed into law Friday will require state officials to withhold property tax subsidies from local governments to recoup the money that's owed if counties are six months or more behind in making payments. "You have about 70 or so counties paying for juveniles now and at least 20 not paying," said House Ways and Means Chairman Jeff Espich, R-Uniondale. "If we don't do something, pretty soon no one will pay."

And on Monday, the *Richmond Palladium-Item* reported, "Area school administrators still are deciphering Indiana's new two-year budget, but most are pretty sure they already know the bottom line: Get by with less money or raise local property taxes. Administrators are disappointed with the lack of support for education, while new funding sources were found to build a sports stadium in Indianapolis." They're also unhappy with what they say is the General Assembly's "smoke and mirror" approach to how much "new" money schools actually will receive. Wayne County schools, which are in the latter category, will lose money, according to the information distributed by the State Budget Office. Without new local taxes, Richmond Community Schools would see a 1.7 percent cut in school revenues or a loss of about \$667,553 in 2006. "It's really frightening," Richmond Supt. Alan Bourff said. "In a period of declining revenues, we can't count on declining expenses."

Last night, 13 employees of the Mount Vernon

School Corp., including four teachers, were laid off by the School Board to cover a shortfall in state revenue (*Evansville Courier & Press*). Schools in Mount Vernon stand to lose slightly more than \$500,000 in each of the next two years. "As bad as we feel about each individual, we tried to protect kids and programs to the best of our ability with the cuts we made," said Randy Boyer, School Board president. "But regardless, it does impact the kids when you start reducing staff as much as we did."

In this era of Indiana politics, that kind of prospecting over tax increases is virtually unprecedented. They were the kinds of stories we were hearing back in 2002 if the tax restructuring didn't happen. This time, however, the prospects of this happening are virtually a foregone conclusion.

With "good feedback" like that, to paraphrase Gov. Daniels, one wonders what negative feedback would look like.

This morning, Gov. Daniels attempted to recast the debate, releasing a study from the Department of Local Government that revealed that Indiana school districts build or add on facilities that cost 15 percent more per square foot, and are 27 percent larger than the national average. He said that total costs are 46 percent higher.

"If we were as careful about construction spending as the average state, we could free up millions of dollars for other projects," Gov. Daniels said. He said if communities built at the national average savings would be \$234 million, which is about the figure that Democrats estimate property taxes will go up due to educational spending.

Daniels said a full 10 cents of the average local property tax bill goes to school construction projects.

"We build it because we can," said DLG Commissioner Melissa Henson. "The money is in the capital accounts." Daniels added, "We build big because the money is there. School districts try to out do the one next door. That's no excuse to over spend

it."

The *Richmond Palladium-Item* (located in soon-to-be primary challenged State Sen. Allen Paul's district) reported citizens shouldn't be surprised at the financial changes Gov. Mitch Daniels has made, because he's doing exactly what he said he'd do if elected, Bourff said. "If people were listening, he was most explicit," Bourff said. "If taxpayers are concerned about education, there are elections. We need to sustain the dialogue with our state legislators so they know what the impact of their decisions are."

Union County school officials joined local taxpayers



Gov. Daniels and DLG Commissioner Melissa Henson take aim at school building costs this morning. (HPR Photo by Brian A. Howey)



on a trip to Indianapolis during the session to talk about the need to reduce schools' reliance on property taxes and the need for reform, the *Palladium-Item* reported. That effort wasn't successful, at least not this time, Farm Bureau member Tom Knollman said. "I want everybody to know that these people (school officials) tried." Said Centerville Supt. Charles Hobbs, "We see this going on for as long as Gov. Daniels is in office."

In signing the budget bill that paved the way for all of this, Gov. Mitch Daniels concentrated on balancing the books, as opposed to the future pain. "In this most productive and historic session of the General Assembly, perhaps the most important of many, many achievements was the pas-

sage of the first honestly balanced budget Indiana has seen in a decade," Daniels said.

Sen. Allie Craycraft, D-Selma, a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, said property owners won't be hit with immediate increases in their tax bills (*Muncie Star Press*). "They will see tax increases in 2006 and 2007, and that is going to happen to fund education," said Craycraft, warning of about \$237 million shifted to local taxpayers.

HPR asked Gov. Daniels this morning if he agreed with House Ways & Means Chairman Jeff Espich that changes in the property tax system would probably have to wait until 2007. "I don't know," Daniels said. "I'm inclined to trust Jeff's judgment on that." ❖

Retribution for the gamers (with no anti-elephant devices)

By BRIAN A. HOWEY

INDIANAPOLIS - You may not remember the victory of Pyrrhus at Asculum in 279 BC. But you will the Grand Old Party at the Indiana General Assembly in 2005.

The Battle of Asculum was the second encounter between an Alexandrian, phalanx-based army and the Roman legion. The two armies were equal in numbers. The Romans had more infantry (four legions, 20,000 Romans, plus Dauni allies) and 300 anti-elephant devices. After the battle of Heraclea, in which the Epiriotic war elephants had a heavy impact on the Romans, the legions were provided with inflammable weapons and anti-elephant devices: these were ox-led chariots, equipped with long spikes to wound the elephants, pots of fire to scare them, and with troops who would hurl javelins at the elephants to drive them back.

The first day, Pyrrhus cavalry and elephants were blocked by the woods and hills where the battle was fought; however, the Italic units he mixed to his phalanx fought well. Both sides withdrew at dusk, neither having gained much advantage.

Next dawn Pyrrhus sent light infantry to occupy the difficult ground which had given him trouble the previous day, and thus obliged the Romans to fight a set battle in the open. As at Heraclea, an even fight between legions and phalanx followed, until the elephants, supported by light infantry, broke through the Roman line. It was probably then that the anti-elephant wagons were driven against them; after a brief success, they were overwhelmed by psiloi who negated the anti-elephant chariots of the Romans. The elephants then hit the Roman infantry, which buckled under the pressure. Simultaneously, Pyrrhus launched a charge by the Royal Guard, which completed the victory. The Romans then retreated to their

camp. Romans lost 6,000 men; Pyrrhus had 3,500 casualties, among which included many of his officers. As he was congratulated on the victory, Pyrrhus is reported to have said, "If we defeat the Romans in one more such battle, we shall be completely ruined." Thus, the phrase "Pyrrhic victory."

In the battle of Indianapolis, the predominant Republican attitude, from Gov. Mitch Daniels to the House Republicans about the biennial budget is this: We got the gamers, who lacked anti-elephant devices.

Even though prairie fires are bursting out all over the state on property taxes, with the real consequences likely to emerge in 2006, an election year, Statehouse Republicans are boasting about sticking it to the gamers. Gov. Daniels explained on April 30 what he was told to expect: "Gambling lobbyists are powerful and they get what they want in the end. But that didn't happen."

The reason for this glee? Retribution.

The May 2004 defeat of Senate Finance Chairman Larry Borst became a rallying cry. Many Republicans and the *Indianapolis Star* (which took a pass on covering the race) blamed Rex Early "and the gamers" for Borst's defeat. This despite the fact that virtually no gaming money ended up in Sen. Brent Waltz's campaign coffers. The irony is that it was Borst who was most responsible for all the red ink budgets that Gov. Daniels has since decried.

When it came time to choose between higher taxes and gaming to solve budget, stadium and education dilemmas, Speaker Bosma, President Garton and, ultimately the Governor, chose higher taxes, ending more than a decade of tax raising as an anathema to core GOP principles. As Democrat John Shorg explained, "They all drank the Kool Aid."

So the 2005 budget session had a payback element. Whether it will later be placed in the "Pyrrhic victory" file remains to be seen. ❖



A week of ups and downs for Gov. Daniels

By BRIAN A. HOWEY and MARK SCHOEFF JR.

Which do you suspect might be more difficult to deal with: The Pentagon or a president of the Indiana Senate upset about the closure of a tiny license branch in his district?

Gov. Mitch Daniels had both of these elements on his plate last week.

He won with the Pentagon when it announced that it would maintain the Crane Naval Surface Warfare Center in southern Indiana but cut 683 jobs at the facility while adding 3,378 positions at the Defense Finance and Accounting Service in Indianapolis by consolidating regional centers from around the country.

Daniels said on Friday, "This is the best result we could have hoped for. With regard to both Crane and Terre Haute, we are already at work on plans that will, I believe, in time, bring more new jobs than are being realigned and probably before those jobs ever move. I'm very positive about the prospects for both of those facilities."

"This is great news for Indiana," Republican Rep. Steve Buyer, chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, said at a Capitol Hill press conference on Friday. "I am almost overjoyed."

Praise for Daniels; scorn for Kernan

Buyer and other Republican members of the Indiana congressional delegation heaped praise on Gov. Daniels for his role in preserving Crane, but Buyer's encomiums came with criticisms for Daniels' predecessor, Democratic Gov. Joseph Kernan. Buyer credited Daniels with putting a new team together after the November election and formulating a gameplan that limited the amount of work taken away from the Martin County facility, which employs about 4,000 people. "Our coach was the governor," Buyer said. Kernan's efforts on Crane were "going...in the wrong direction," Buyer said at a Capitol Hill press conference on Friday.

He said that Kernan didn't support a southern Indiana coalition to save the base. "I'm proud of the Southern Indiana Business Alliance," Buyer said.

U.S. Rep. Mike Pence (6th CD) touted the "bold, decisive leadership of Gov. Mitch Daniels. He got into this process late because of electoral politics but I believe made a decisive difference in arguing for Crane and our piece of the

military infrastructure of this country on the merits." That was the easy part.

A power struggle with Garton

The hard part came when BMV Commissioner Joel Silverman announced the closure of 12 license branches, including the one in tiny Hope, Ind., whose senator happens to be Senate President Pro Tempore Robert D. Garton.

Sen. Garton was not a happy camper. In a hearing at Hope, an angry Garton told Silverman, "I represent these people. And you are not going to close this Hope branch."

Garton accused Silverman of a "sneak attack." Silverman not only timed the announcement of the 12 license branch closings to occur after the General Assembly session ended in order to shut out input from legislators, he bragged

about his actions. Asked by the *Indianapolis Star* whether Garton's charge that the action was a "sneak attack" to bypass response by elected legislators was true, he responded. "Yeah, I'll be honest."

Daniels had earlier had mild criticism for Silverman, suggesting that while his management skills were formidable, his "diplomacy" was lacking.

This creates a power showdown. If Gov. Daniels and the BMV cave on the Hope branch, then Sen. Garton has further consolidated his

power, which he adroitly cast during the last legislative session. And if Hope goes down, Gov. Daniels will have a pissed off president in the Senate to deal with.

This is surprising, because in the early days of the administration, Gov. Daniels asserted that his office would control the flow of information. In that scenario, you might have expected the news of BMV branch closings to come in tandem with new programs that Daniels talked about on the campaign trail: multi-year plating, plating at dealerships, etc.

The emotions around this issue are high. The *Columbus Republic* editorialized in almost hysterical fashion, calling the license branch closures "mind-boggling" and "knee-jerk" and "a sham."

"There is a saying in the military that goes like this: "When a general gets far enough out in front of his troops, he runs the risk of beginning to look like the enemy," the *Republic* editorial stated. "That is not healthy. It is not healthy for our community. It is not healthy for our state. It is not healthy for the politicians in Indianapolis."

So a battle for power has been enjoined.

Stay tuned. ❖



Gov. Daniels and Ambassador Coats prior to the Crane decision. (HPR Photo by Brian A. Howey)



Indianapolis Works. Now what? Hit the fire alarm?

By BRIAN A. HOWEY

INDIANAPOLIS -- When he was a member of the Indianapolis City-County Council, Phil Hinkle once sat down with a department head and he was wearing a big, rubber-band around his wrist.

Occasionally, this official told HPR, Hinkle would pull the rubber band back and exclaim, "I need to feel the pain."

When we asked Deputy Indianapolis Mayor Steve Campbell about the state of Indianapolis Works, Campbell produced a chart of fire tax rates.

In Wayne Township, where most of Rep. Hinkle's HD92 is located, the fire tax rates for 2004-05 went up 177 percent. In Pike Township (also part of his district), fire rates were up 34 percent. Yet it was Hinkle that spiked most of the Indianapolis Works legislation.

"They killed most of it by way of our thinking," said Campbell.

"They gave us the police part, which is good. Not as we wrote it; we've got our lawyers looking through the legislation. They gave us the budget consolidation which is good, so that means the city controller now controls most budgets in city-county. They gave the auditor some minor authority. But that doesn't make sense if you're going to consolidate.

"Other than that, we didn't get anything else," Campbell said, "We didn't get trustees, fire, assessors and poor relief."

Campbell explained that the "vast, vast, vast majority" of the \$35 million a year Mayor Bart Peterson said would be saved, "was the fire piece."

"There was very little savings on the police. On fire, they left us with nothing. The township boards would have to sign off on this and we know they won't."

The irony is that while Hinkle and other Republicans quizzed the mayor on fire costs, the 2004-05 fire rates have already been going up: Wayne Township 177 percent, Decatur 47 percent; Pike 34 percent, Franklin 20 percent; Lawrence 9 percent, Washington 1 percent, Warren .03 percent. In only two districts, Perry and Indianapolis FD, did the rates stay static or decline.

"In places like Decatur and Frankling townships, the rates are going through the roof," Campbell said. "We think

Indianapolis Works would have foregone most of that."

Another huge irony is the handoff of Marion County budgeting functions to the mayor. This came after Republican office holders stopped paying juvenile detention bills to the state several years ago, to the tune of \$57 million. Then they handed the unenviable task of balancing the books to the Democratic mayor.

Campbell explained that Indianapolis Chief of Staff Jennifer Simmons and Controller Bob Clifford are going through the current budget. "We already cut \$55 million in 2003-04," Campbell said.

The cuts, he said, might be painful: Parks activity budgets, cutbacks in neighborhoods, layoffs.

When? "I'd say within the next month or so. We're preparing the cuts right now. Preparation for the 2006 budget is underway and what is cut this year will remain cut."

Any numbers? "Not yet," said Campbell. "But it was a triple whammy for us. There's the PTRC cut, which is going to have an adverse effect. We got this juvenile debt issue. That's been one of most frustrating things; the

county budget is in a shambles. For the first time, we'll have an opportunity to have a say in that. But there's only one party controlling the Statehouse right now. People tend to point fingers at the Statehouse. We hope to explain that to people."

Will people understand by 2006? "Most likely," said Campbell.

Mayor Peterson is beginning to speak out about what he is calling a power grab. Addressing the Boone County Jefferson-Jackson Day Dinner, Peterson said legislative Republicans had a "we win, you lose attitude. They are as partisan a group as has ever occupied the Statehouse. They are overplaying their hands."

Might there be political pain of the non-rubber band variety for Hinkle and others?

Campbell explained, "I think that process tends to take care of itself. The one thing I will tell you, support for Indianapolis Works was deep. Support was in high 60s. I would hope that gives some current legislators some pause."

Campbell said that Mayor Peterson has vowed to revive Indianapolis Works in coming legislative sessions. "I wouldn't be surprised if we come back with another package. Mayor Peterson has vowed to come back every year. It's the right thing. It's time has come." ❖



Fire in the hole! What hath Rep. Hinkle wrought? (HPR Photo)



Indiana 2006 Congressional

Congressional District 9: Republican: U.S. Rep.

Mike Sodrel. Democrat: Baron Hill. **Media Market:**

Evansville, Indianapolis, Louisville, Dayton, Cincinnati.

People: urban/rural 52/48%, median income \$39,011; race white 94%, 2.3% black, 1.5% Hispanic; blue/white collar:

34/50%; **2000 Presidential:** Bush 56%, Gore 42%; Cook Partisan Voting Index: R+8.

2002 Results: Hill 96,654 (51%), Sodrel 87,169 (46%).

2002 Money: Hill \$1.144m, Sodrel \$1.62m. **2004**

Results: Sodrel 142,197, Hill 140,772, Cox (L) 4,541.

2006 Forecast: *Roll Call* reported that Hill "will hold



what is being billed as a formal Washington, D.C., kickoff of his campaign fundraising effort next month, as he moves closer to officially announcing a bid to regain his old seat. "I

intend to run but I am short of making a formal announcement about it yet because I want to see how the fundraising goes," Hill said Wednesday. Hill will be the featured guest at a "Bring Back Baron" event June 13 at Tortilla Coast on Capitol Hill.

Hill made clear that he was interested in a 2006 rematch. Republicans were quick to point out that Hill's fundraiser has the appearance of corporate sponsorship -- which could raise red flags since corporate contributions to federal campaigns are strictly prohibited. The name of Hill's firm, mCapitol Management, appears at the top of the invitation welcoming the VIPs to the fundraiser. The firm is listed as a corporation in disclosure documents filed with the House and in documents on file with the state of Illinois. Said NRCC spokesman Carl Forti: "I find it interesting that with (Minority Leader) Nancy Pelosi's emphasis on maintaining a higher standard, that Baron Hill would kick off his campaign with an event hosted by a corporation." Sodrel's spokesman Cam Savage said "He's been making gestures in that regard," Savage said. Sodrel is committed to a re-election bid and has been raising money at a torrid pace. He reported nearly \$400,000 in contributions. "The congressman is expecting a tough race but he's committed to waging a great campaign," Savage said.

Status: *TOSSUP.*

McClain, Cass County Commissioner Rick Eller. Democrat: Open. **2004 Results:** McClain 14,825, Southern (D) 7,089.

2006 Forecast: Local observers suggest that Commissioner Eller might not be a lock to win re-election, let alone challenge Rep. McClain. Apparently Eller promised some type of ethanol facility for Cass County and it hasn't happened yet.

Status: *Leans R*

House District 33: Republican: State Rep. Bill Davis. Democrat: Ron Liggett. **2002 Results:** Liggett (D) 9,143, Thornburg (R) 6,895. **2004 Results:** Davis 13,330, Liggett 10,924. **2006 Forecast:** Rep. Davis uttered this week's HPR "Quote of the Week," telling the *Muncie Star Press* that he had "heard only good things" about the biennial budget. The quote came after the *Star Press* recounted pending teacher layoffs, bigger class sizes and property tax hikes. Which prompts us to wonder whether Rep. Davis is simply whistling past the graveyard, or ... are we missing something? **Status:** *Tossup.*

House District 35: Republican: State Rep. Jack Lutz. Democrat: Open. **2004 Results:** Lutz 17,779, Saunders (D) 11,786. **2006 Forecast:** This is another seat where we are hearing persistent rumors that a primary challenge may materialize. Delaware County Republicans would love to knock off Lutz. **Status:** *LEANS R.*

House District 54: Republican: State Rep. Tom Saunders. Democrat: Open. **2004 Results:** Saunders 18,202, Surber (D) 7,318, Bond (L) 1,194, Crammer (I) 577. **2006 Forecast:** WRTV's expose on the hit and run involving Saunders' son, Andrew, focused on what happened to the car, which had Indiana General Assembly license plates. Reporter Jeremy Brilliant said the car was stored in a garage for two and a half days before police investigators had access and that the plates had been removed. He had an interview with BMV Commissioner Joel Silverman, who said the plates should have been treated like any other. And Brilliant suggested there could be further charges filed. As for Rep. Saunders, his district was drawn overwhelmingly Republican (to help Rep. Phil Pflum), so it is not likely to become a Democratic pickup if this case goes from family tragedy to coverup. But there could be primary challengers, Statehouse sources say. **Status:** *Likely R.*

House District 64: Republican: State Rep. Troy Woodruff. Democrat: John Frenz. **2002 Results:** Frenz 10,516, Davis (R) 8,774. **2004 Results:** Woodruff 12,698, Frenz 12,507. **2006 Forecast:** Last week we recounted how Rep. Woodruff was present during the meth and biofuels bill signings. And when Gov. Daniels signed the Daylight-saving time bill, Woodruff was there, but didn't get much press coverage. **Status:** *LEANS D.*

❖

Indiana 2006 House

House District 24: Republican: State Rep. Richard



Turn-of-the-century guidelines to using the Indiana BMV

By BRIAN A. HOWEY

INDIANAPOLIS - In late April, I received a letter from the Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicles.

In this letter were two forms: one to renew the plates on my Ford F-150; the second to renew the plates on my Hobie Cat boat trailer.

It told me the amount I would need to pay. It told me the date that I had to send it in, which, being an "H", was May 15. It told me to whom to make the check out. And it apologized for some of the advertising in this notice, pointing out that such advertisers were helping to cut the costs of this mailing.

I promptly sent in two checks for \$291.

And on Monday, a letter with two green "May 06" stickers arrived. I took a wet paper towel, wiped my current plates clean, and applied the new stickers.

I didn't have to go to a license branch in Broad Ripple, or Hope, or Hartford City, or Butler, or Knightstown. I did all of this business in the comfort of my own home. The mailman came to my very own mailbox and did the rest of the physical work for me.

And these were steps created by the evil O'Bannon-Kernan administrations.

In 2004, then-candidate Mitch Daniels talked about further reforms. Like me being able to plate my next F-150 at the Tom Wood Ford dealership. Or going to a kiosk in a mall or even at a convenience store in, say, Hope, Ind. Or plating for three or four years in a row, not just one.

These changes in the BMV and future ones being devised by Gov. Daniels' "rocket scientists" at Joel Silverman's BMV reflect a social trend. We do our banking differently now than we did in 1990. I go on-line to pay my bills. I can get it done in about 10 minutes and don't have to spend any money on postage.

I don't carry as much cash I as used to; I extensively use a debit card. I don't write many checks, beyond those for school lunches and parking tickets. When I flew to Aspen last year to ski or attended a Chicago White Sox game, I was able to make my reservations and print my plane/game tickets out on my home computer/printer.

We communicate over the phone differently. I don't

even have a "land line"; HPR and the Howey family are totally mobile. And faxes? They aren't cool any more. Send it to me via e-mail, you nutty flack! I don't talk to real people at the Indianapolis Star or Citizen's Gas or Sprint; I get menu options.

About the only thing that hasn't changed is the church collection plate.

And, in the minds of some Indiana senators, the BMV, which now pits Gov. Daniels vs. President Garton.

We covered Senate President Garton's cantankerous response to Commissioner Silverman: ("I think it's time to welcome (Joel Silverman) to the public sector. He has created a firestorm throughout the state.")

Then there was a *Decatur Daily Democrat* story about State Sen. David Ford and Silverman's decision to close the Berne license branch. "Senator Ford called me right after he got off the phone with Commissioner Silverman and he said he'd never been treated more rudely in his political career. He told us to right this tooth and nail," said Berne Mayor John Minch. "Sen. Ford told me this was not a done deal. Sen. Ford said if we get a thousand people to show up -- concerned citizens, not just politicians -- we can show the BMV that we mean business in Berne and that we want this branch badly."

It's kind of funny that Sen. Ford, who faces re-election in 2006, spent a good part of 2004 tailing RV1 hoping to be Gov. Daniels' lieutenant governor. He billed himself as a "high-tech" senator looking for cutting edge technologies to modernize Indiana's economy. It was also interesting that he voted against Daylight-saving time in April.

Now that license branches in tiny Berne and Hope are closing, Sens. Garton and Ford are dodging the issue; attacking the messenger. Can the governor stick to his guns and risk alienating Sen. Garton? Will he lose face if he backs down. Garton and Ford could have held press conferences and pointed out that the times they-are-a-changin' (a little music, Bruce?) and they could have told you what I did in the first six paragraphs. They could have told the good folks of Berne and Hope that more changes are coming, like dealership plating (perhaps, some day, even on a Sunday), and kiosks.

About the only thing you might not be able to do is get your driver's license renewed.

I was a big fan of Joel Silverman's old Galyan's sporting goods store. It was a great way to buy camping gear and kayaks. There were walls to climb and discount cards. I think we should give this business wiz a chance to show us the future.

I just hope he doesn't get burned on his lack of diplomacy. ❖





Lesley Stedman Wiedenbener, *Louisville*

Courier-Journal - In the weeks leading up to the base-closure announcement -- when the fate of Crane, especially, was uncertain -- the Daniels administration consistently emphasized that the previous administration had not done enough. Daniels said repeatedly that Indiana was "playing from behind." In effect, he was saying that had the realignment commission opted to close Crane, it would have been because those before him had not done enough, not because he had failed or simply because the commission found the base less useful than others. Granted, Daniels and his team have been leading the state for a mere four months. There are plenty of people and issues -- good and bad -- left from the administration of former Gov. Joe Kernan, a Democrat. But there is frankly little reason now to criticize the previous administration -- except to lower expectations. At some point, the Daniels administration will need to stop looking back -- not just when talking about Crane or the state budget, but with all issues. After all, when the governor went to Marion last week to announce that Dollar General would build a new distribution center there and create 500 jobs, Daniels never mentioned the work Kernan had done to phase out the inventory tax or provide other tax incentives. But when asked several weeks ago about why University Loft, a company that Daniels had touted during his campaign, decided to expand in Tennessee instead of Indiana, the governor said he guessed his administration hadn't arrived in time to stop it. Enough. The Daniels administration should just stand on its successes or failures. After all, it's just a four-year term. And it's Daniels' term -- no one else's. ❖

Amos Brown, *Indianapolis Recorder* - "Where is

the next generation of Black leaders?" There are more African Americans aged 25 to 40 in responsible, professional jobs in Indianapolis than ever before - at the law firms, accounting firms, the medical community, Anthem/Well Point, Lilly, and scores of other corporations. But when it comes to African-American leadership in this town, it seems our leaders are overwhelming those with plenty of gray hair and years of service to our community. Most of our Black elected City-County councilors and state legislators are in their 60s. As is Congresswoman Julia Carson. Many key business leaders are in their mid-to-late 50s and early 60s as are the heads of many of our civic organizations. There's a generational shift going on in Indianapolis' African-American church leadership, with, other than Eastern Star's Rev. Jeffrey Johnson and New Life's pastor John Ramsey, few Black ministerial leaders are under 50; fewer under 40. The graying of our community's

political leadership is of extreme concern. In the next five to six years, many current African-American political leaders are expected to leave the stage. While I wish continued good health and long life for Bill Crawford, Glenn Howard, Billie Breaux, Mae Dickenson, Rozelle Boyd and Julia Carson, the reality is that some, if not all of them, may voluntarily retire from the scene. Who are the African Americans who will replace them? Just three African-American City-County councilors -- Vernon Brown, Ron Gibson and Sherron Franklin -- are under 50. Just two African-American legislators, Carolene Mays and Vanessa Summers, are below that mark. Where's the next generation of Black political leadership who'll take the place of the great leadership we have today? ❖

Rich James, *Post-Tribune* - Stuck in the middle of

a long list of e-mails was a letter to the editor from Indiana House Speaker Brian Bosma. What Bosma had to say was that the Republican-controlled General Assembly -- in four quick months -- had cured all of what ails Indiana, except straightening out the basketball coach problem down in Bloomington. "From my vantage point, it was the most progressive and aggressive legislative session in a generation," Bosma said. I could envision crime grinding to a halt, help-wanted signs at the Broadway gate to U.S. Steel, ISTEP scores soaring and property taxes decreasing. You made my day, Mr. Speaker. Then I read closer. Between the lines if you will. You know how these Republicans like to sugar-coat lemons. Among the host of accomplishments mentioned in Bosma's letter are: -- Approval of the Defense of Marriage amendment, which leads one to believe that marriage has been under attack. Actually marriage is holding steady, with the divorce rate sitting around 50 percent. What the Republicans did was kowtow to the Bible Belt and approve the first leg of a constitutional amendment to ban gay marriages in the state. Makes me feel better knowing the gay couple living next door will never be allowed to marry. Don't you just love that compassionate conservatism? -- "We balanced the budget ... and we did it all without a tax increase," Bosma added. Come clean, Mr. Speaker. You balanced the budget without a state income or sales tax increase. However, the voodoo economics will increase property taxes and force new and larger county option income taxes for the folks back home. -- Daylight-saving time. You said the GOP, unlike the Democrats, put progress before politics to put most of the state an hour ahead of Northwest Indiana year-round. While I don't disagree that it is progress, I wonder why Republicans have been ducking the issue for the last two decades. ❖





Skillman, Miller unveil seven goal agriculture plan

MONTICELLO - In one of the state's most agricultural counties, Indiana Lt. Governor Becky Skillman unveiled the strategic plan for the newly created Department of Agriculture. Titled "Possibilities Unbound", the plan has 7 primary goals (*Brownfield Network*). "Indiana will be a center for global food and agricultural innovation and commercialization," Skillman told a group of over 300 people on the Doug Morehouse farm in White County on Tuesday. The 7 sectors of Indiana agriculture identified in the plan include, hardwood lumber, bio-fuels, pork production diversification, food processing, environmental regulations, and trade and farm policy. The plan is the result of 6 months of research and input by the Daniels administration and is based largely on the Bio-Crossroads study that was released earlier this year.



Daniels appoints Klipsch to stadium authority

INDIANAPOLIS - Gov. Mitch Daniels announced today that John Klipsch, a former special projects director of the Indianapolis Bond Bank, will serve as executive director for the Indiana Stadium and Convention Building Authority.

East Allen schools make more cuts

FORT WAYNE - East Allen County Schools made additional budget cuts Tuesday but backed away from its original plans to cut the length of the vocational agriculture program and immediately eliminate family health

insurance for paraprofessionals (*Fort Wayne Journal Gazette*). The school board approved \$165,000 in cuts, including reductions in professional development and eliminating the executive director of technology position.

IDEM beefs up sewer overflow staff

INDIANAPOLIS - Faced with an ambitious federal deadline for approving plans to fix Indiana's overflow-prone sewers, a state agency is beefing up the number of staffers assigned to tackle a backlog of nearly 100 sewer cleanup plans (*Associated Press*). About a year and a half ago, the Indiana Department of Environmental Management had only a single full-time staff member devoted to the task of reviewing the detailed plans. The agency now has four full-time employees assigned to that job and will add more because IDEM's new commissioner, Thomas Easterly, is eager to eliminate the backlog. Indiana has 102 communities with combined sewer systems that carry both storm runoff and sanitary waste and 98 have submitted state-mandated cleanup plans.

State says New Albany books are a mess

NEW ALBANY - The latest state audit of New Albany city government has found such poor record-keeping that the auditors couldn't determine whether the city's financial statements were accurate (*Louisville Courier-Journal*). Among other things, the audit for 2002 said the origin of \$19,500 in cash in city accounts was unclear. It also said there were "numerous transfers" of funds between accounts without documentation "There are very serious problems there," said Marilyn Rudolph, the interim state examiner.

Clay appointment to Lake County election board fails

CROWN POINT - A County Election Board fill-in helped torpedo Lake County Democratic Chairman Rudy Clay's nominee to serve as board attorney Tuesday (*Post-Tribune*). Hammond attorney David Saks, attorney for Election Board chairman and Lake County Clerk Thomas Philpot, was elected to the high-profile position over Clay's objections at the Board's morning meeting. "Chairman Clay and I had a disagreement on this issue," Philpot said. "There has not been a long-standing tradition for the county chairman to pick the attorney." But Clay seethed as he pointed out to the board that his predecessor, Stephen R. "Bob" Stiglich, appointed James Wieser as Election Board attorney.

Hammond Council critical of school debt costs

HAMMOND - The School City's annual debt payments will peak at slightly more than \$18 million in 2007 before slipping down to about \$17 million through 2018, documents presented Tuesday to City Council show (*Times of Northwest Indiana*). Those many millions a year include every penny borrowed to pay for all of the projects under way in the school district's sweeping program. But the numbers don't include the biggest project of all -- a new, \$84 million high school, which is on hold indefinitely because of popular opposition. Those figures were eye-popping for City Councilman Chico Hinojosa, considering the entire budget to fund municipal city services is slightly less than \$40 million a year. "I have two grandkids and I would love to have them have a new school, but if we can't afford it, we can't afford it," Hinojosa said Tuesday.

