



HOWEY

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Taxing the Salad Days

The new Republican governor sells tax hikes to his doughnut base; Hancock Council OKs

By BRIAN A. HOWEY in Greenfield, Shelbyville, Noblesville

Mitch Daniels is not only governor of Indiana, but he is a listener, an empathizer, an innovator, a solution-seeker ... and a tax hiker.

The "town hall" circuit he has conducted this week in the "doughnut counties" surrounding Indianapolis has become not only an extension of his historically successful 2004 gubernatorial campaign, but a release valve. Most of the folks showing up for these town halls voted for Daniels in 2004. Until now, not only were they some of the most ardently reliable Republican voters in the nation, they were also for small, efficient government and low taxes.

The fact is that the super structure of power in Central Indiana is pushing the tax hikes for the stadium and Indiana Convention Center. The various county councils appear ready to comply. Half the money is theirs to keep to pave roads and rebuild crumbling bridges; the other half goes to Indianapolis ... up to \$5 million. Indy taxpayers and visitors are paying the other 90 percent. But this tax will never go away. It will join the pantheon of forgotten taxes ... the 1987 A-Plus tax that was installed to keep class sizes low (you're still paying that) and the 1 cent sales tax in 2002 as a trade off for low property taxes (good for two years!)

The only proposed tax that would have gone away was Gov. Daniels' State of the State tax on \$100,000 households for one year, and legislators couldn't get their minds around that. They rejected that and now schools are preparing to raise more taxes (see page 7) and the new governor has hit the road, expending political capital ... selling a tax hike he insists he didn't want.

The *Greenfield Daily Reporter's* headline on Tuesday read, "Don't force-feed food tax, citizens warn governor" and its lead story began, "A vocal group of Hancock County residents told Gov. Mitch Daniels Monday they object to a one percent food



Gov. Mitch Daniels at the Golden Corral salad bar with employees in Shelbyville Monday. (HPR Photo)



"I'm going to start my own cable news network."

— Clarence, a recent high school graduate, answering Gov. Mitch Daniels in Shelbyville. Daniels had asked him what he wanted to do for a living.

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Covering a Decade of Indiana Politics



Gov. Mitch Daniels listens (right) to a question about slots over taxes in Greenfield on Monday; and faces a battery of cameras in Noblesville on Tuesday. (HPR Photos by Brian A. Howey)



and beverage tax being shoved down their throats." County Councilman Bill Bolander and County GOP Chairman John Willey told HPR they expected the tax to easily pass, and it did Wednesday. After Daniels appeared in Noblesville, Hamilton County Council President John Hiatt said he had initial misgivings about the proposal. Fifty percent of e-mails were for the tax and 50 percent were against it. "I was on the fence before tonight, but I'll probably vote for it," he told the *Noblesville Daily Times*. Commissioner Christine Altman agreed. "He opened it up to all the questions, he addressed all the issues, and I was just very impressed," she said.

Those powerful apparachiks close to the governor -- Joe Loftus and Bob Grand -- told HPR in Shelbyville they expected the tax to pass all the county councils. As for the \$48 million payment due to the Colts, Loftus explained, "We're working on it," and then predicted the Indianapolis City-County Council would pass the measure "in the low 20s" (the council has 29 seats).

At the Golden Corral in Shelbyville, there was one delicious moment when a citizen asked about the \$48 million payment to the Colts. Gov. Daniels responded, "I don't know who negotiated that payment," as Loftus watched nearby at the salad bar (*psst, Loftus handled the 1997 Conseco/Dome deal for Mayor Goldsmith*).

But Daniels was there to deflect instigation of the plan and tax, sympathize with the Republicans who weren't used to their governor seeking tax hikes, and sell the plan all the same. He did it on behalf of the Colts, Mayor Peterson (from whom he wrested controlling interest of the deal) and Republican legislative leaders who chose taxes over slots. He did it as the sixth Colt player was arrested over the weekend and duly noted by a Shelbyville woman. State Sen. Luke Kenley melded into the background at Tuesday's confab in Noblesville, but Senate President Pro Tempore Robert Garton and House Speaker Brian Bosma, the two who essentially made that critical decision, were nowhere to be found. State Rep. Luke Messer, who sponsored the slots proposal, attend-

ed the Shelbyville event and State Reps. Jerry Torr and Kathy Kreig Richardson joined the inconspicuous Kenley at Noblesville.

Pushing taxes in a era of tax problems

Even as Daniels subtly and adroitly pushed the tax, he acknowledged the storm clouds that are gathering before Indiana Republicans.

At Noblesville, Daniels fielded a question from a man who lost an \$80,000 job, his health insurance, and as a single parent was considering joining the National Guard. "State and local officials need to stop taxing people. It's not in our budget," the man said.

"I agree we have a tax problem," Daniels answered. "For many, many years -- for decades -- we were a low tax state. Indiana governors bragged about this. Total taxes, if you put them all together, were always in the low 40s (out of 50 states). Then we were in the 30s for a good part of the last decade. Last year, we were 16th. I thought, wow, I must have taken my eye off the ball."

He acknowledged that putting Medicaid in a 5 percent increase when the experts say it will grow 12 percent a year is "a hold your breath item" that could unbalance the heralded balanced budget. On the day of the Noblesville town hall, General Motors announced 25,000 layoffs that could hit the Hoosier state hard; Ford Motor Company is teetering (see *page 9*), and Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan seemed perplexed about the economy and unpredictable interest rates. There is talk the housing bubble is about to burst, similar to the high tech bubble of the late '90s that pasted Indiana's budget with falling capital gains tax contributions.

Daniels noted that property taxes are increasing and "taxation by schools is way up; vastly faster than inflation and student growth." He castigated an unnamed Marion County school district for buying an instant replay scoreboard for its new football stadium.

From the governor's perspective, timing is everything.



Pushing a stadium tax he didn't want comes almost three years before he earnestly begins campaigning for re-election. Today's stadium tax will probably be forgotten as few of us add up all our restaurant tabs. It is a re-elect his campaign brain trust believes can only be lost with a major scandal. That same brain trust (i.e. Bill Oesterle) told Marion County Republicans this past week that in 2006, the highest priority would be re-electing Marion County Prosecutor Carl Brizzi (and not House Republicans who put him on the tax hike trail).



Laid off Southwestern Shelby Teacher Betsey Treon confronts Gov. Daniels at Shelbyville as her kids watched. (HPR Photo by Brian A. Howey)

But the budget Bosma and Garton forced on the new governor is set to ignite property tax increases across the state (see page 7). Evansville Schools began setting that reality in motion this week with a legislature-blaming crescendo expected in August along with scores of others.

The town hall tour produced some indelible moments. In Lebanon on Tuesday, Gov. Daniels politely accepted a question from a Boone County man wearing a green "My Man Bitch" tee shirt and earnestly answered. It was the kind of moment that would have made other governor handlers cringe and steadfastly avoid. Gov. Atlas just shrugged.

In another time, gubernatorial handlers would have made sure the room was filled with adoring faces; this past week the critics and wingnuts could always find a seat.

At Shelbyville, laid-off sixth grade teacher Betsey Treon, surrounded by her young children, earnestly told the governor, "I would rather see that 1 percent tax go to our schools. If you need a new roof, you don't go on vacation."

It allowed Daniels to empathize, explain that this whole thing interrupted his priorities, and yet he pushed for the tax all the same. Daniels explained to Treon the money going to the stadium project was tiny and said that if the project was rejected, it wouldn't have any impact on schools. "Frankly, it was a problem I didn't want to deal with. I didn't dream this thing up. It's not my idea; not my design," he said.

As that exchange ended, Daniels told Treon, "Thank you for teaching." Treon responded, "I wish I could."

Asked by people in both Greenfield and Shelbyville why he opted for more taxes over slots, Daniels said that Indiana was already the third biggest gambling state in the nation. But, he added in Shelbyville -- home of the near empty Indiana Downs horse track -- "that idea will be back. I will say that I am not closed minded about that."

When the controversy over a \$48 million payment Indianapolis owes the Colts was noted, Daniels said, "I'm out here defending the mayor, the design and Colt behavior. Sometimes I wish this thing had just gone away."

But Daniels then laid on the soft sell, telling the 80 people gathered that Indianapolis had staked its 1980s revival on amateur sports. He said the convention center, stadium, and his proposal to lure motorsports to Indiana will help Indiana's comeback. "That sort of thing is worth going after if you get it right," he said. "This is in the self-interest of Shelby

County." He noted that the nearby Intelliplex Park in Shelbyville would be trying to lure companies who want the cultural amenities 30 minutes away in Indianapolis.

In Noblesville they love the gov-na

I could hear Lynyrd Skynyrd's Ronnie Van Zant's voice in my mind ("*In Birmingham they love the gov'na; now we all did what we could do*") as the standing room only crowd in the Hamilton County Council chambers (complete with motto in gold letters: "That government is best that governs least") rose to give him a standing ovation. Here the anti-stadium crowd was, in this writer's estimation, about a quarter. In Shelbyville, when a man asked the 80 people gathered whether they supported the tax and stadium, the result was virtually unanimous against.

'Give me the ball'

As Monday turned to twilight and after Gov. Daniels had shaken 50 hands and posed with the Golden Corral staff, he ended up in the parking lot with HPR, WXNT-AM's Abdul Hakim Shabazz, and the *Star's* Matthew Tully.

Was it tough to deal with the question from the laid off teacher, Betsey Treon? "Sure it was," Daniels said. "It is a new problem in our state. There will be less of it when we are able to get the budget in balance and the economy growing."

Is the the Colts deal expected to pass all the county councils? "That's what they're telling me," Daniels said. "At any such meeting it's only natural those folks who choose to come will be those who want to get something off their chest. You can't conclude it is reflective of the whole community. What I hear from elected officials is that the gen-



eral attitude in their community is positive. But there are folks who feel the opposite way so I've given them a chance to talk about it."

Would it be helpful to have Colt and Indianapolis representatives at the town halls?

"It might be nice. Might be helpful," said the governor. "There were different reasons they made it plain they weren't ready to do that. I said I would so I'm delivering."

Will one county council rejecting the deal kill it?

"It wouldn't undo it. But it would be best if it were unanimous in terms of expression of solidarity. The right way to approach this is on a regional basis. There will be real benefits over time for the entire region. It would be good if there are no free riders."

Will the \$48 million dilemma be solved. "Yes, it will," Gov. Daniels said. "There are some honest misunderstandings. I think it can be resolved. It makes it a little harder. The biggest problem is there never has been a lease between the city and the Colts. That's what I worry about the most. That's solvable. But we're working against a deadline here. As for the payment, the city doesn't have enough money to



meet its obligation. We understand that. That is a more justifiable item for borrowed money than operating costs of the CIB which would be highly irregular. This cash payment they don't have can be viewed as more legitimate to be included in the mortgage."

Epilogue

The people loved this governor coming to their hometowns to sell and defend something that would have been unfathomable in times gone by. Many of them didn't agree with him on the tax hikes. But few were rolling their eyes or spewing under their breath as they left. The press found this to be a spectacle, a Republican governor going to seven base counties selling tax hikes he agreed to after legislative Republicans cut off the options. There is no doubt the governor has some real gonads. But it was striking that legislative leaders who brought this spectacle on were missing. It wasn't too long ago that legislative leaders would have leaped at the chance of sharing the limelight with their governor. Perhaps they thought the doughnut kitchen during Gov. Daniels' salad days would be too damn hot. ❖

Roemer vs. Lugar?

A further symptom of perceived GOP vulnerability

By BRIAN A. HOWEY

INDIANAPOLIS -- The one slam dunk contest in 2006 had been U.S. Sen. Richard Lugar's election to a sixth term.

Then came word that Indiana Democrats conducted a poll and it showed Lugar leading 9/11 Commissioner Tim Roemer by a mere 41-39 percent margin.

St. Joseph County Chairman Butch Morgan insisted the Garin-Yang poll wasn't pushed (but a "positive/positive" on both men), as Lugar campaign manager Nick Weber suspected. Morgan said the closeness of the race is being fueled by a 36/53 percent right track/wrong track the poll revealed. It comes as a series of polls in 2005 have revealed Lugar's approval rating to consistently be in the 70th percentile.

Roemer did little to dispel speculation on the story HPR broke on Monday. "I have been privileged to represent Indiana in the U.S. Congress and work on behalf of all Americans as a member of the 9-11 Commission. It is heartening to know that the public approves of my work to make America safer," Roemer said in the statement published by the *South Bend Tribune* on Wednesday. "The poll suggests



that the majority of Hoosiers think the country is on the wrong track, and that they are ready for change. As a husband with four young children, and president of the Center for National Policy, I will carefully consider how to best continue my public service and do what is best for my family."

A Roemer candidacy would potentially be the most credible opponent Lugar has faced since his two races against sitting Sens. Birch Bayh (a loss in 1974) and Vance Hartke (a win in 1976).

Democrats are viewing 2006 as a potential post-Watergate style bloodbath for the ruling Republicans who hold all of Congress and the White House. The war in Iraq with no end in sight, a squirrely economy, skyrocketing gasoline prices, Lugar's consistent support for President Bush, and Roemer's own credibility on national security issues could make this an interesting race. Roemer is undefeated and served 12 years in Congress before retiring.

Republicans scoff at the notion of Lugar being vulnerable. Just as they did at Birch Bayh taking on Sen. Homer Capehart in 1962 or Dan Quayle challenging Bayh in 1980. But the idea of a Roemer challenge to Lugar is further evidence that Democrats are sensing blood in the water. ❖

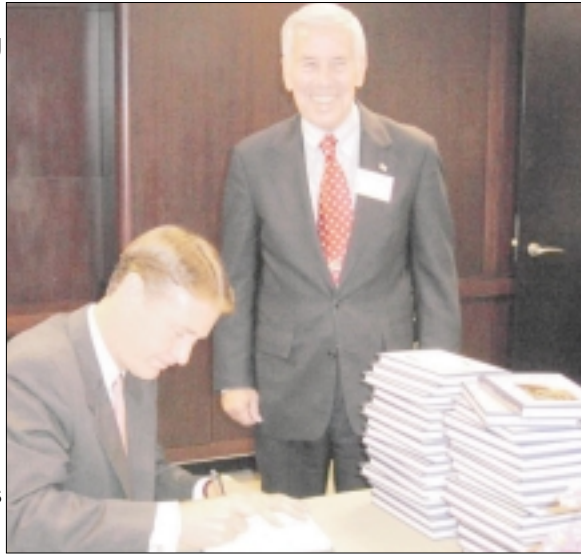


Bayh speaks in Des Moines

Trendline: Indiana Sen. Evan Bayh on Wednesday told a group of Des Moines-area business and civic leaders in the nation's capitol for their annual lobbying trip that "he is doing the 'practical things' to keep open the option of seeking the Democratic presidential nomination in 2008 (*Des Moines Register*).



Appearing to go somewhat further than he has in past public appearances, Bayh, while taking questions after a speech to members of the Greater Des Moines Partnership, was asked if he will seek the presidency. "Am I doing the practical things that would allow me at some point to make that decision?" he replied. "Yes, I'm doing the practical things to keep that open as an option." Bayh told reporters afterward that he saw three elements to a presidential candidacy (*Louisville Courier-Journal*). "The most important thing is having a firm grasp of the challenges that will shape our future, and an agenda for dealing with these challenges, and a burning desire to address them," Bayh said. Christopher Coleman with the Des Moines Better Business Bureau said that statement "sounded to me like somebody that's going to run for President. We get to hear these guys a lot, and usually the ones that are even for sure dance a little more than he did" (*WTHR-TV*) Republican Carole Tillotson with the Window Heights City Council was impressed. "I thought he did a marvelous job of handling both sides of the coin, making bipartisan issues and statements that even Republicans can agree with."



Bayh and Lugar together at a book signing

Indiana 2006 Congressional

U.S. Senate: Republican: U.S. Sen. Richard Lugar. Democrat: 9/11 Commissioner Tim Roemer. **1988 results:** Lugar (R) 1,430,525, Wickes (D) 668,778. **1994 results:** Lugar (R) 1,039,625, Jontz (D) 470,799, Bourland (L) 17,343,

Barton (A) 15,801. 2000 Results: Lugar 1,425,150, Johnson (D) 680,046, Hager (L) 33,896. **2006 Forecast:** For Lugar, it was déjà vu all over again. After all it was five years ago, as Lugar was preparing to seek an unprecedented fifth term, that Democrats released polling data that showed the then-68-year-old Senator losing to a relatively unknown challenger (*Roll Call*). That survey, conducted by the Washington, D.C.-based Garin-Hart-Yang Research Group, also found that only 36 percent of likely voters wanted to re-elect Lugar, while 37 percent wanted someone new. So when news leaked this week that a new poll conducted by the same firm showed Lugar leading Roemer by a slim 2-point margin, Republicans quickly expressed outrage. "The season is right," said Nick

Weber, Lugar's campaign manager. "It seems that this is fairly reminiscent of things that have happened with the Senator before." But Roemer does have a résumé and a fundraising ability that far eclipses David Johnson, an Indianapolis attorney, former Senate staffer and close associate of then-Indiana Gov. Frank O'Bannon. Roemer's consideration of this race is fascinating (*HPR*). Should he decide to enter, he would be challenging perhaps the most popular Hoosier politician in its history. Lugar's approval ratings have consistently been in the 70th percentile this year. But Roemer would be the most credible oppo-

nent Lugar has faced since he was defeated by Birch Bayh and then triumphed over Vance Hartke in 1976. Roemer brings an interesting set of credentials. He is pro-life on the abortion issue. He is already a giant killer, having upset U.S. Rep. John Hiler in 1990. He went on to carve a distinguished 12-year congressional career that culminated with the creation of the 9/11 Commission (his proposal), which he then went on to serve. So that gives Roemer thorough credibility on national security issues and those rate highly in most national polling. Lugar has been one of President Bush's most consistent supporters in the Senate. Could he become vulnerable if the war in Iraq deteriorates and a national Democratic wave develops? The easy answer is no. But if



Iraq becomes a morass, the economy tanks (Alan Greenspan seemed mystified by the economy this past week), and a national Democratic wave develops, all bets are off. **Status:** *Likely Lugar.*

Congressional District 2: Republican: U.S. Rep.

Chris Chocola. Democrat: Joe Donnelly. **Geography:** South Bend, Michigan City, Mishawaka, Elkhart, Kokomo, Plymouth, Logansport; LaPorte, St.

Joseph, Starke, Marshall, Pulaski, Fulton, Cass, Carroll and parts of Howard, Porter, Elkhart and White counties.

Media Market: South Bend-Elkhart, Indianapolis, Lafayette, Chicago. **People:** Urban/rural 73/27%; median

income \$40,381; Poverty 9.5%; Race 84% white, 8% black; 5 Hispanic; Blue/white collar: 34/50%. **2000 Presidential:** Bush

53%, Gore 44%; Cook Partisan Voting Index: R+5; **2002 Result:** Chocola 95,081 (50%), Long Thompson 86,253 (46%); **2004 Result:** Chocola 140,496 (54%) Donnelly (D) 115,513 (45%) **2006 Forecast:** Elkhart Mayor Dave Miller

enlisted another supporter to help expedite cleanup of the Himco Superfund site in Cleveland Township (*Elkhart Truth*).

U.S. Rep. Chris Chocola visited the 60-acre site on Wednesday afternoon and heard presentations by Miller and other city officials about the history of the site and how several local businesses have agreed to pay the \$10 million bill to clean it up. **Status:** *Leans Chocola*

Congressional District 3: Republican: U.S. Rep. Mark

Souder. **Democrat:** Fort Wayne Councilman Thomas Hayhurst. **Geography:** Fort Wayne, Goshen; Kosciusko, Whitley, LaGrange, Steuben, DeKalb and parts of Elkhart and

Allen counties. **Media Market:** South Bend-Elkhart, Fort Wayne. **People:** Urban/rural 65/35%; median income \$44,013; Race: 87% white, 6% black, 4.5% Hispanic; Blue/white collar: 36/52% **2000 Presidential:** Bush 66%,

Gore 33%. Cook Partisan Voting Index: R+17. **2002 results:** Souder 92,566 (63%), Rigdon 50,509 (34%). **2004 Results:** Souder, Parra **2004 Results:** Souder 171,389 (69%), Parra

76,232 (31%). **2006 Forecast:** After a long career as a physician, Tom Hayhurst left his practice in April – but that doesn't mean he's retired. Hayhurst, a Democrat who's been a Fort Wayne city councilman since 1996, has higher political aspirations: He's considering a run against Souder. "I don't really



like the term retire," he said Thursday (Fort Wayne News-Sentinel). "To me, it's just a job change." At 62, Hayhurst has spent the biggest chunk of his life working as a pulmonary specialist with Indiana Medical Associates LLC, a group he helped found in the 1970s. But he decided to leave the practice this year. "I just wanted to work in an environment that was a little less chaotic." He's ready to take the good and bad that comes with running for a national office, and said he already has support from about 200 people who said they'd work on his campaign. He plans to make a final decision "while the weather's still warm," and has the firm support of his wife, Judy. The *Cook Political Report* rates Souder's northeast Indiana district is the 31st most Republican district in the United States. Souder, R-3rd, said he's not making a play for the chairmanship of the House's newest committee, the panel created to oversee the Department of Homeland Security and its far-reaching missions (*Fort Wayne Journal Gazette*). "You never rule anything completely out," he said. "But there are enough things that this one does not seem like a logical move to make. I am content with my subcommittee chair and my other committee assignments right now."

Status: *Safe Souder*

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:** Fresh off his first overseas trip as a

member of Congress, Sodrel said that his journey to Central Asia reminded him of the dangers that American troops face abroad (*Louisville Courier-Journal*). "This is not Fort Knox," he said of the military posts in Afghanistan and other nations.

"You're a captive of your environment." Sodrel visited the 1st Battalion of the 151st Infantry Regiment, an Indiana National Guard unit based in his hometown, New Albany. The unit is stationed near Kabul in Camp Phoenix. **Status:** *Tossup.* ❖



The perfect education/tax storm begins to take shape

By BRIAN A. HOWEY

NOBLESVILLE - Earlier this week, Evansville-Vanderburgh School Corp. officials "hinted strongly" that property tax increases were just over the horizon.

The *Evansville Courier & Press* reported that one provision would be to enact a tax to make up for the state's decrease in the "free" textbook funding. The state also used to pay part of the transportation costs, but eliminated its share this year.

And there was this explanation from Supt. Bart McCandless. The Legislature had three major goals this year while looking at balancing the state's budget: Getting the budget in the black, in part by cutting school funding; not raising state taxes, and giving local schools options to raise property taxes to make up for the state cuts.

Now, fast forward to Wednesday, when the Indiana Department of Education released its No Child Left Behind "needs improvement list." The *Indianapolis Star* reported, "Ninety-nine Indiana schools have been named to a federal list for failing to meet expectations in 2004, up nearly a third from the year before. More Indiana schools struggled this year, in part because the number of students who took the Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress-Plus last fall more than doubled, the state's top education official said Wednesday."

The numbers published in the *Fort Wayne Journal Gazette* this morning were even grimmer: Of the 210 schools in northeast Indiana, 91 failed to make the progress required under the federal No Child Left Behind law. Last year, 48 schools were listed as failing to make progress. The failure rate mirrors that of the state, where 750 schools – or 40 percent – landed on the list. Of the 750 schools that did not meet progress goals, 332 missed the mark in just one category and 185 missed in two.

School superintendents were left to explain the failures. "The individual schools impact the school corporation," Muncie Community Schools Supt. Marlin Creasy told the *Muncie Star Press*. "For the school corporation, the overall scores made AYP. The two areas -- and they've been ongoing concerns for us -- is the lack of significant progress, and significant is a key term with the black students and the special

ed students. Even though we've seen improvement, it hasn't been the type of improvement we need to make."

Elkhart Superintendent Mark Mow said exactly what restructuring will mean at Roosevelt Elementary School, which landed once again on the failure list, has not yet been determined. "We've received no guidance from the state at this point," Mow said (*Elkhart Truth*). According to DOE literature, restructuring could include replacing the staff or implementing a new curriculum. Mow stressed he is not expecting anything that drastic. "I know the federal sanctions talk about state control," he said, "but we've been told taking over a school is not something the state wants or intends to do."

The political implications of all this could be staggering. NCLB is the unrefutable rationale for another layer of property tax increases that will come late this summer.

No Child Left Behind is a federal mandate. And, some educators will say, an unfunded one at that. The Indiana General Assembly passed a biennial budget that allowed for tiny budget increases. Gov. Daniels was quick to note on his town hall meeting tour that it was one of only two areas (Medicaid was the other) that got any increase.

That is little solace to educators left to correct the problems.

This is about the third consecutive year that Indiana schools have been laying off teachers when a case can be made that more teachers and aides should be added to get non-English speaking and special education students prepared to meet these increasingly rigid standards. The standards only get harder as the education balloon payment gets closer in 2014 when all students at all schools must meet all proficiency standards.

Daniels said repeatedly this past week that once the current budget hurdles are met, he wants to put more resources in the classrooms. Daniels affirmed his commitment to public education when he was asked in Noblesville whether he supported vouchers. "That will not be part of my proposal," he said, adding that vouchers would need to be "openly debated ... not sneaking up on anyone."

"The simple fact of life is that 90 percent of our kids will be in public schools. I will help that system succeed. No child left behind ... that ought to be our attitude."

He also pointed out that Indiana, per capita, is the fourth most generous state when it comes to funding public education. And he took aim at small counties with three to five school corporations, superintendents, sets of administrative aides and transportation directors. "That's ruining public education for the benefit of grownups," Daniels said. "That has to change."

Indiana faces a costly dilemma here, one that will require much more money, resources, political will and restructuring that since 1987 its leaders have lacked. ❖





Ruth Holladay, Indianapolis Star - Is rise in suicides job-related? An autopsy performed in Marion County is not at all like what's depicted on TV, said John A. Linehan, chief deputy coroner. The procedure is done in a large room on the first floor of a building south of Downtown, at West and McCarty streets. The setting is similar to a hospital surgical suite -- antiseptic and gleaming, with participants in gowns and masks. A forensic pathologist is in charge. A lengthy external exam is first, followed by a basic autopsy. Our numbers are real, too. Of 555 autopsies performed in the first five months of 2005 in Marion County, 75 have been on suicides. Death by one's own hand is on a sharp rise here, said Linehan, 53. He's been in the coroner's office for seven years. Before that, he was a paramedic. He's done this work all his life. He was accustomed to seeing a few suicides a month, maybe 10 or so. Then came 2005. In January, the coroner recorded 33 confirmed suicides. That's about 20 times the national average, Linehan said. The numbers have slowed down, but 75 so far this year is still too high. Add two more, said Linehan -- during the weekend. For perspective, consider that last year, Marion County had a total of 125 suicides. ❖

Rich James, Post-Tribune - You might say the party is over for the seven men and women on the Lake County Council. Draw the shade and turn off the lights. There will be those who say it's about time. Others will holler for one last call. It used to be such a delightful job -- one of the best in all of local government. If you could curry enough political favor and raise enough money to get elected, it was easy street for the next four years. Being a councilman means getting the royal treatment from other county officials, who hope councilmen will look kindly on their requests for additional personnel and bigger budgets. Money is power and councilmen control the county purse. And, if councilmen approve additional jobs, they often try to ensure their people are hired. Quid pro quo. There's probably not a part-time elected official in Indiana with more clout. And they get paid \$28,483 a year for having all that fun. But the joy ride is headed for a crash. Before this month is over, council members will tackle the "T" word twice. They've never ever done it once. They first will vote on whether to impose a 1 percent food and beverage tax on those who eat and drink in the county's bars and restaurants. That money would go toward the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority. So, do they impose the food and beverage tax, knowing that two weeks later they might be imposing a county income tax? Do they impose one tax but not the other? Or, do they kill both taxes? Approve both? And you thought things were tough on

"Fear Factor." Councilmen right now would rather down a plate of maggots than vote on taxes. ❖

Jack Colwell, South Bend Tribune - Now we know the identity of Deep Throat, that shadowy figure who played such a prominent role in one of the finest examples of American journalism. The identification makes that example more impressive than ever. And it comes at a time currently not regarded as one of journalism's finest hours. Deep Throat, whose identity was guarded for more than 30 years by Bob Woodward of the Washington Post, is W. Mark Felt. When Felt provided guidance for investigative stories that exposed the Watergate scandal and helped to bring down a president, he was the No. 2 official in the FBI. That's a very impressive source, someone clearly in a position to know the facts. The identification puts to rest the suggestions of some critics of the reporting of Woodward and Carl Bernstein that there really was no Deep Throat, that this was just an invention for their book and film, "All the President's Men." Some speculated that Deep Throat, instead of a high-level, informed source, was a composite of a bunch of different sources. The source was solid. So was the reporting. The motivation for Felt's informing is irrelevant in evaluating whether the information was valuable and accurate. So are the rival views now of whether Felt was a patriot or a snake. The best sources for information -- on organized crime, for example -- are not Sunday school teachers. ❖

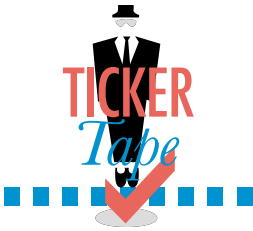


Gary Gerard, Warsaw Times-Union - As a fund-raiser, Howard Dean is a flop. Dean spoke in December, 2004 -- a month after the re-election of W -- on the future of the democratic party. During that speech, he said this: "The destination of the Democratic Party requires that it be financially viable, able to raise money not only from big donors but small contributors, not only through dinners and telephone solicitations and direct mail, but also through the Internet and person-to-person outreach." I would tend to agree with that. But that's not what Dean has been able to do -- at least so far. A hundred days into his tenure Dean is in deep money trouble. According to the Federal Election Commission, the DNC raised \$14.1 million in the first quarter of 2005, vs. the Republican National Committee's \$32.3 million. Dean drew about 20,000 new donors, while his rivals picked up 68,200. The bottom line: Republicans have \$26.2 million in the bank vs. \$7.2 million for the Dems. It seems Dean is having a tough time connecting with major business donors -- "the big donors" -- as he referred to them in December 2004. ❖



Clinton talks peace in Indianapolis

INDIANAPOLIS - Former President Bill Clinton didn't come to Indianapolis to rip the Republican who succeeded him in the White House (*Indianapolis Star*). Only minutes into his one-hour speech Wednesday night at Congregation Beth-El Zedeck synagogue, Clinton made it clear he had a different agenda. "I'm not going to say anything bad about anybody," he said. "Our democracy is diminished by those who believe we have to dislike those with whom we disagree. If you are mad, you cannot hear." His words brought applause from the 1,500 people filling the Northside synagogue. In a post-9/11 world, Clinton said, people need to hear one another more than ever. "We can't escape each other," he said. With Gov. Mitch Daniels, the former White House budget director sitting in the front row, Clinton called for a balanced federal budget and an end to President Bush's tax cuts. He was for those the first two years, he said, but not after the Sept. 11 attacks. If Americans want a well-equipped military, homeland security and other needs, "you've got to be willing to pay for it," Clinton said to applause.



Daniels to attend woman's graduation

INDIANAPOLIS - More than a year ago a deal was formed between a young, Latina single mother working toward her high school diploma and a candidate for governor. Megan Bravo held up her end of the bargain, and now Governor Mitch Daniels will complete

his. On Saturday the governor will attend and speak at the commencement ceremony for Campagna Academy Charter School in Schererville (*HPR*). Campagna is a school that offers a non-traditional education option for high school students who struggle in a traditional school. It was during the governor's visit to the academy in February of 2004 that he met Megan. Through their conversation, the governor learned that Campagna had an on-site day care where Megan took her daughter, Mya. The facility allowed Megan to continue her education while staying close to her daughter. "A lot of people doubted that the governor would come to the graduation, but I knew he would," said Megan. "I'm very honored and speechless. I can't wait for Saturday."

Revised job report released

INDIANAPOLIS - Today the Indiana Department of Workforce Development released revised April and preliminary May 2005 payroll employment figures for the state (*HPR*). Indiana's seasonally adjusted job figures revealed a revised April total of 2,968,200 jobs, while May preliminary figures reported its total to be 2,961,300 jobs. Ron Stiver, Commissioner for the Department of Workforce Development, stated, "Indiana has gained 36,600 jobs over the past year, however we still remain 54,700 jobs shy of our peak reached in May of 2000.

Visteon plant closing would be disastrous for city

CONNERSVILLE - The message here Tuesday was clear: If Visteon Corp. were to close the local plant, for any reason, the economic impact would be disastrous (*Richmond Palladium-Item*). And everyone in the Connersville, Fayette County area and beyond would

feel it. "More than 50 percent of our local economy depends on Visteon," said Pete Bell, president of the Connersville Economic Progress Coalition. As the management of the plant with 1,690 hourly and salaried employees and the workers' union -- International Union of Electrical Workers-Communications Workers of America Local 919 -- negotiate their next contract, economic development officials said a new contract never had been so critical for the community. Speakers repeatedly referred to the contract negotiations as a "critical crossroads" for the area.

Brown County commissioner gets jail time for DUI

NASHVILLE - Brown County Commissioner Amy Couch was ordered to spend three days in jail and one year on probation for driving under the influence of alcohol and marijuana (*Columbus Republic*). At a sentencing hearing Wednesday, Couch read a statement in which she said she was sorry for her conduct and for disappointing her family, friends and constituents. "I am committed to making sure I will never repeat this mistake," Couch said. Couch said she chose not to resign so she could prove to herself and others that people can learn from their mistakes and continue their lives and work.

Mueller honors dead FBI agent in Portage

PORTAGE - FBI Director Robert S. Mueller III came to town Wednesday to honor a special agent for whom he had special admiration (*Post-Tribune*). Special Agent Robert Russell "Rob" Hardesty was called "a fallen hero" by Mueller during funeral services. Hardesty died June 2 from injuries he sustained in training. ❖