



HOWEY

Political Report

V 12, No 13 *Weekly Briefing on Indiana Politics*

Thursday, Nov. 10, 2005

Government reforms begin to take shape at Indianapolis, Evansville *Bosma sees 2007 local restructuring*

By BRIAN A. HOWEY

INDIANAPOLIS - The month of November 2005 may well go down in history as a key period in the 21st Century reform initiatives of state and local government.

Next Monday night, the Indianapolis City-County Council will vote on a merger of the city police and the Marion County Sheriff Department. It is one of the biggest unfinished pieces of business left over from the historic Unigov passage more than three decades ago.

Deputy Mayor Steve Campbell refused to predict whether the merger was a done deal. "We're optimistic," Campbell said. "I can't speak for the sheriff, but we've talked to him and his people and the changes made by the council committee reflect those changes."

Mayor Bart Peterson told the *Indianapolis Star*, "It's better than what I proposed. It's a great example of how the public process is supposed to work."

Marion County Democratic Chairman Ed Treacy, asked if Anderson and Peterson are on the same page, told HPR, "I believe that they are now OK."

The high drama in Indianapolis is only one aspect of a flurry of reform activity sweeping the state. Late last month, the Evansville Council voted 9-0 supporting a resolution supporting a county referendum on the unification of Evansville and Vanderburgh County. The Vanderburgh commissioners voted 2-0 a few days later to support the resolution. In Lake County, U.S. Rep. Pete Visclosky will meet with local elected officials on Nov. 28 to discuss his "Good Government Initiative."

Last week it was House Speaker Brian Bosma who opened the door for legis-



Marion County Sheriff Frank Anderson is the key man on the Hoosier government reform front. County Chairman Ed Treacy looks on. (HPR Photo)



"This is sad. This is just sad. There's just nothing much to find."

— Vanderburgh County Sheriff Brad Ellsworth, on Wednesday as tornado victims returned to their destroyed homes, to the *Evansville Courier & Press*

The Howey Political Report is published by NewsLink Inc. It was founded in 1994.

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Subscriptions:
\$350 annually HPR via e-mail;
\$550 annually HPR & HPR Daily Wire.
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lation that would foster local government reforms. "It's more of a concept than a plan," Bosma told HPR as he headed to Franklin Wednesday night for a House Republican Town Hall meeting. "The state needs to allow local elected officials more flexibility."

Bosma said that in addition to government consolidation initiatives already under way in Indianapolis, Fort Wayne and Lake County, Republican officials in Hamilton County had approached him about their desire for change. "A lot of people want the opportunity to try creative solutions to make government more efficient and effective," the Speaker said. "Local government doesn't have all the tools that it needs."

Bosma said that recent legislation allowed townships to merge, "but it didn't give cities and counties the ability to merge."

He said that it was a study of Lake County and its 30 units of local government that raised the issue with him. "Since that time, that has become an issue that many people have brought up," Bosma said. In Hamilton County, there are some wanting townships to merge.

"We'll have a healthy discussion in the short session," Bosma predicted. "Local government restructuring will be one of the prime issues in 2007."

As for whether he backed the police merger in his home county, Bosma wouldn't endorse or deny the plan, though the 14-member Republican minority is expected to oppose the plan next Monday. "The debate is important," Bosma said. "The City-County Council was elected to make that decision. The debate is taking place at the right level of government. I don't have a position on it."

Campbell believes that council Republicans have tried to make it "a partisan issue" but "we don't see it that way. These are all Republican ideas we've been espousing."

Campbell said that Mayor Peterson intends to push his Indy Works proposals during the 2006 legislative session, saying that it was watered down in 2005 "not because of policy disagreements, but instead 100 percent politics."

The compromise Indy Works plan that came out of the legislature allowed for the police merger, but threw township fire department mergers to the individual townships where there is great opposition from township employees.

As for the Evansville/Vanderburgh County "unification," Phil Fisher, who heads up the committee supporting that drive, told HPR that legislators are still mulling things over.

"Our local delegation is still making up their minds about what to do," Fisher said.

Vanderburgh Councilman Lloyd Winnecke told HPR, "The unification attempt is an interesting exercise. Walking the halls of the Civic Center in Evansville, one will hear a zillion reasons why unified government will not work, and

Sen. Garton's 'waterfall'

By BRIAN A. HOWEY

That quote in Sunday's Matthew Tully column was so glib. Just for old time's sake, let's review: Of Gov. Daniels, Sen. Bob Garton observed, "It will be an interesting historical study. Is it a watershed administration or a waterfall?"

Damn. What a quote. What a question. Of course, it fueled speculation on the relationship between the powerful Senate President Pro Tempore and the governor. Tully also asked Garton if he kept in touch with Daniels. "Not very often," he said. Garton, who found himself essentially on the same page with the governor on the (duoh!) "intelligent design" debate, called Daniels "personable and persuasive" but added that the first-year governor should work on his communication skills with lawmakers and the public.

Over the weekend, the *Columbus Republic* asked Daniels if he supports the practice of a citizen legislature, in the wake of WISH-TV's expose of Garton and other legislators drawing dual state salaries from the legislature and Ivy Tech.

"We've raised the standards in many ways," Daniels said. "I do think that going forward we ought to avoid the situation where government employees are voting on their own budgets." Daniels also praised Garton, however. "Bob Garton, in particular, is fastidious... about working harder than the job requires at Ivy Tech."

As to whether there is a pending meltdown between the governor and president, administration insiders insist there is not, despite the twin-bladed rhetoric.

But of interest is the coming news that Daniels' chief counsel, Steven Schultz, an administration rising star, is going back to Columbus to work for Irwin Financial Corp. (and will be replaced by Mark Massa). There was no hint that Schultz might have an eye on a legislative seat.

However, if the governor wants to talk to the president this afternoon, he'll likely find Garton busy on the phone, which is what happens when any inkling of a challenger appears on the horizon. ❖

shouldn't even be considered on a referendum. Outside the hallowed halls, there are many informed citizens who think the concept is quite practical and don't understand why most office holders don't support it."

The Vanderburgh County Council passed the resolution by a 4-2 with the Republican Winnecke joining three Democrats. ❖



Surveying Indiana's townships: Some savings; some waste

By BRIAN A. HOWEY

INDIANAPOLIS - Why do we need townships?

It's a question I've been asking for several years now.

Over the past two years, there have been two reports that ponder this question. One was the Indiana Project for Efficient Local Government prepared for the Indiana Chamber of Commerce. The second, released in September, was done by Indiana University's Institute for Family and Social Responsibility.

The Chamber's report notes that appropriations for local governments increased from \$3.44 billion in 1997 to \$4.24 billion in 2002, a 23 percent increase. The consumer price index increased by 12 percent during the same period.

The Chamber called for centralization of poor relief, with an estimated savings of \$26 million annually, multi-county correctional facilities (savings between \$5.4 million and \$10.5 million) and joint purchasing by counties and municipalities (up to \$7.6 million in savings).

On poor relief, it noted that "for every dollar of assistance, approximately 90 cents was appropriated for administrative costs. Marion County's Center Township and Lake County's Calumet Township appropriated \$16 million to deliver \$7.7 million in assistance. By comparison, the United Way has 13 percent administration costs in contrast to 47 percent for Indiana. Hoosier non-profits spent between 13 and 18 percent administratively.

IU's township study included 30 counties, but not Lake or Marion. It noted that 21 states have township government. In only five states, townships administer poor relief.

The national trend is shifting more and more responsibilities to county government. Between 1952 and 1997, county expenditures rose from 31.5 percent to 39.1 percent, while township expenditures dropped from 9.9 percent to 5.2 percent and municipalities from 51.2 percent to 44.9 percent.

"The expenditures and employment trends documented point to the unmistakable conclusion that the service roles of county governments have been increasing in significance in recent years," the IU study explains.

Why?

Because county jurisdiction often transcends urban,

suburban and rural areas. Services don't stop at imaginary boundary lines, but follow the needs of populations.

In some areas, the IU study is laudatory of township services, particularly fire protection. There are 800 volunteer departments and 17,500 volunteers protecting about 80 percent of land mass. They possess 80 percent of fire fighting equipment. "It would cost in the neighborhood of \$430 million per year to convert these stations from all-volunteer to all-paid," the study explained. "For the citizens of Indiana, volunteer fire companies provide a financial bargain like no other." In the 37 townships responding to the survey, there were a total of 1,132 firefighters; 74 were full-time paid professionals and 1,058 were non-paid volunteers.

It used Howard County as an example. The professional Kokomo Fire Department costs \$296.30 per capita resident; compared to \$13.20 for the volunteer department at Russiaville, \$7.11 for Greentown, \$65 for Center Township and \$5.10 for Liberty Township.

In other areas, such as property assessment, the IU study says, "There is no current duplication of effort across county and township assessors so there would not be any savings derived from ending duplication of effort if county assessors were to assume all functions of local assessment."

But, it continues, "Empirical evidence indicates that consolidation could permit realization of some economies of scale and reduced operating costs in many counties, but the magnitude of those cost savings varies considerably from county to county."

Only five states -- Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, New

Jersey and North Dakota -- rely on townships to do all or part of property assessment. "There may be savings associated with moving primary property tax assessment from the township to county level," the IU report explains. "The gains would not be from ending duplication of effort. Gains might be derived from economies resulting from doing assessment at a larger scale of operations. In other words, the cost of the assessment function for

an office servicing a population of 15,000 may be less than triple the cost of an office servicing a population of 5,000."

Out of 27 counties, 24 show potential savings that could be obtained from centralization and three (Shelby, Montgomery and Clay) demonstrate no such savings resulting from consolidation. Estimated savings would be 74 percent in Elkhart, 57 percent in Adams, 62 percent in Allen, 2 percent in Howard, 13 percent in LaGrange, 27 percent in Wells, 61 percent in Whitley.



Knight Township Volunteer firefighters search for tornado victims. (WRTV)



The IU study explains, "It is likely that countywide assessment would create greater consistency of property assessments within the county because the larger scale of operations could permit hiring of personnel with greater skill and would permit administrative controls across the entire county."

The trickiest aspect of township government comes with poor relief. "In many townships, the trustee's office has become the first line of defense when families experience emergencies, rather than the last resort as was originally envisioned," the IU study explained.

In the 30-county case study, an estimated 20,000 households which received township assistance would have required an additional 144 caseworkers employed at the county level (average cost of \$26,827) or a total of \$3.8 million plus benefits. Percent of requests granted range from 9 percent in Adams County, to 30 percent in Elkhart, 42 percent in Howard, 48 percent in LaGrange and Wells, 59 percent in Whitley, 81 percent in Montgomery.

But township officials claim that they know the territory. They are open "24/7" and one told IU, "The trustee knows who is needy and who is greedy."

The study found that 71 percent of township trustees and assessors earn less than \$10,000 annually.

The IU study explains, "Consolidation at the county level may increase consistency in benefits and adherence to guidelines, but travel time and expense for low-income families applying for assistance will increase. In addition, the ability to assist in unique circumstances may be curtailed with a more bureaucratic system. Township trustees are able to meet directly with applicants when needed; there is not a chain of command to see an elected official. If consolidation were to occur, services would become more depersonalized."

And the report says, "Consolidating township assistance at the county level may add additional psychological barriers to seeking out much-needed help, particularly among the elderly who are poor but proud. While there may appear to be some cost savings to be derived from the consolidation of some functions of township government, the end result might be a 'wash' if the anticipated additional infrastructure costs for the counties that assume township functions ... are taken into consideration. We might anticipate the need for higher overall salaries and more costly benefit packages for state and county level employees."

Lastly, the report says, "Local flexibility in program design and service delivery would allow local needs to be met in the most efficient manner without the imposition of one generic structure on all townships and counties." ❖

From Bethlehem to Delphi

By BRIAN A. HOWEY

INDIANAPOLIS - When Indiana ponders the role of townships and poor relief in the coming years, one might consider the name of Robert S. Miller.

The name rings a bell, right?

He's CEO of Delphi Corporation, the bankrupt company that has proposed slashing \$27-an-hour wages to \$9.50 an hour for production workers and \$19 an hour for skilled workers.

Terry Thurman of the UAW's Region 3, was angered at Gov. Mitch Daniels for meeting with Miller and agreeing to those demands. "You can't raise a family, you can't send your kids to college, you can't retire with dignity on \$9 an hour," Thurman told the *Indianapolis Star*. Of Gov. Daniels, Thurman said, "If I could give him a grade lower than 'F,' I would." He goes to Kokomo and basically endorses \$9 an hour."

Daniels, who campaigned on increasing Hoosier household income, bristled, telling the *Star*, "Of course you feel terrible about anybody who experiences a significant (pay) reduction. And I'm not defending it. But \$9 an hour, plus a huge benefit package, is not a job we should turn our nose up at in Indiana. We've got a lot of folks for whom that would be a very acceptable job, or a step up."

CEO Miller has played this role before. He was CEO

at Bethlehem Steel, which filed for bankruptcy in 2001.

In fact, Indiana's industrial landscape is full of companies who have shaped what some describe as the coming pension debacle: Studebaker, Bethlehem, National Steel, LTV, United Airlines, and now Delphi. General Motors may be next.

Studebaker's decision in 1959 to stretch out its pension funding schedule ended in its catastrophic 1963 collapse in South Bend. The *New York Times* magazine called the Studebaker collapse "a watershed" that prompted the UAW to lobby for federal pension protection. It took a decade, but in 1974, Congress passed the Employee Retirement Income Security Act. When Bethlehem Steel failed, it was only 45 percent funded; United only 42 percent.

Miller told the *Times* that the days of "30 and out" for workers are gone. "These pensions were created when we all used to work until age 70 and then poop out at 72," Miller explained. "Now, if you live past 80, a not-uncommon demographic, you're going to take benefits longer than you are working. That social contract is under severe pressure."

State Sen. Vi Simpson told HPR last summer that she has seen estimates where "a third of the current pensions" are teetering on the brink.

Who will pick up the slack? The federal government, and, perhaps, the local poor relief office when the future shock arrives. ❖



Tornado halts 8th CD race; brings scrutiny to Ellsworth, Hostettler over storm costs

By MARK SCHOEFF JR.
The Howey Political Report

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- A capricious natural disaster not only destroyed lives and property in southwest Indiana earlier this week, it brought one of the most competitive congressional races in the country to a halt for the time being.

A tornado packing winds between 158 and 206 miles per hour accompanied by severe thunderstorms killed 22 people in Vanderburgh and Warrick counties in the early morning hours Sunday. The weather injured more than 200 people, damaged hundreds of homes and leveled much of Eastbrook Mobile Home Park near Evansville.

The tragedy has put local politics on hold. "For all intents and purposes, the campaign has been suspended this week and will stay that way for the rest of the week most likely," said Jay Howser, campaign manager for Vanderburgh County Sheriff Brad Ellsworth, in an HPR interview on Tuesday. Ellsworth is challenging incumbent 8th CD GOP Rep. John Hostettler.

"Who has time to think about politics? Our hearts and minds are with those who are affected," said Howser. "Politics can wait for another day."

Between Sunday, when the storm hit, and Tuesday, Howser had only spoken only once to Ellsworth, who has had a prominent role in helping to lead the disaster recovery.

In the storm's wake, local Republicans and Democrats have put part partisanship aside. "It is not an appropriate place for any kind of partisan conversation--period," said Brent Grafton, Vanderburgh County GOP chairman. "Everybody has responded that way."

His counterpart demonstrated the same sentiment. "There is not one shred of thought of politics or campaigns," said Larry Aiken, Vanderburgh County Democratic chairman. "There is zero consideration to politics at a time like this."

Grafton and Aiken are examples of how the tragedy is



Hostettler won't visit storm site

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Rep. John Hostettler has decided not to tour any of the tornado destruction this weekend when he's back in the district (*Evansville Courier & Press*).

"He doesn't want to interfere," said his spokesman Matthew Faraci. "He is very adamant."

"Our district staff members are literally in the field trying to do the best they can to assist FEMA. From Mr. Hostettler's perspective, he does not want to get in the way of state and local officials doing their job."

Hostettler, R-8th District, did lend his support to Daniels' request for a federal disaster area, which was granted Tuesday night. He had also signed a letter asking for FEMA money for the ice storms in January, and that request, too, was granted. Hostettler has not always been a fan of FEMA. In June 2001, he voted against restoring cuts to the agency. And more recently, he was one of 11 votes against a \$50 billion appropriation for aid to victims of Hurricane Katrina. ❖

touching nearly everyone in the community. Some employees at Grafton's manufacturing company have been involved in rescue efforts. An aide at Vanderburgh County Democratic headquarters had a brother whose family suffered injuries.

Tragedy Offers Leadership Opportunities

Although partisanship has receded in the 8th CD, the tornado tragedy, like most natural disasters, gives politicians a role to play in recovery. Gov. Mitch Daniels has been praised by Republicans and Democrats for visiting the area twice this week and spearheading an effort that secured assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Daniels' FEMA request was supported by Sens. Richard Lugar and Evan Bayh as well as Hostettler.

Acting FEMA Director R. David Paulison toured tornado-ravaged locations in Evansville and Newburgh on Wednesday, praising local emergency response and promising rapid federal recovery help (*Evansville Courier & Press*). Preparation by Evansville-area fire, law-enforcement and disaster agencies by "drilling and exercising together" - coupled with a "spirit of teamwork" that eliminated "turf wars" - may have saved lives here, said Paulison. He was named acting director in the wake of Hurricane Katrina after Michael Brown resigned from the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency.

"What you saw here in this state is what you should see in every state across the country," Paulison said in a



briefing after a walking tour of Eastbrook Mobile Home Park, where Sunday's tornadoes killed 18 people and left 200 injured, some critically.

People in Vanderburgh, Warrick, Dubois, Gibson, Pike, Posey and Spencer counties are eligible to apply for federal assistance for temporary housing, disaster unemployment, crisis counseling and disaster loans.

Asking FEMA for help did put Hostettler in a bit of an awkward political position because he was one of 11 Republicans who voted against \$52 billion in disaster relief for Hurricane Katrina victims earlier this year.

A Hostettler aide said there was no contradiction in Hostettler's stances on the two storms. Hostettler opposed Katrina aid because provisions in the bill allowed the government to let no-bid contracts as large as \$250,000, compared to the normal \$20,000 FEMA limit.

"He was concerned that there would be a lot of waste," said Hostettler spokesman Matthew Faraci. Faraci said his boss had not toured the damaged area as of Wednesday but that his district staff has been working with FEMA to help constituents affected by the storm.

One accomplishment Hostettler has touted over the years on his campaign Web site--bringing a Doppler radar system to the district--is related to severe storm policy. For the warning system to be most effective, people need special radios provided by the National Weather Service.

Hostettler will make follow-up inquiries about Doppler in the wake of the storm. "We're looking into that to find out how well it worked," said Faraci.

Hostettler, Ellsworth Can Gain

Whether it's Ellsworth leading the effort to identify

storm victims or Hostettler trying to determine whether Doppler saved lives, both can gain from doing their jobs well, said a Hoosier political operative who has worked on state campaigns for more than 20 years.

"It's more likely to be a plus for Hostettler and Ellsworth rather than a liability for either one," said Chris Sautter, a Washington media consultant.

Sautter was working for the late Rep. Frank McCloskey, a Democrat who represented the 8th CD before losing to Hostettler in 1994, when a severe tornado struck Petersburg in 1990. McCloskey won plaudits for being on the scene immediately and working to maximize federal assistance. "If that's what Hostettler does now, he will be given credit from all voters," said Sautter.

A local observer, however, said that the political effects of the tornado are likely to be limited. "Neither candidate will be able to use this event to heighten his public profile because both of them have wall-to-wall name recognition already," said Robert Dion, assistant professor of political science at the University of Evansville, in an e-mail interview.

In addition, the storm has occurred early in the election cycle. "It's likely that the tornado and its aftermath will probably have no noteworthy effect on the congressional race," said Dion. [W]e are a year out from the next election, and lots of other issues are going to be crowding in before then."

When the 8th CD does return to politics, Hostettler will have another tough re-election battle. Ellsworth has \$257,833 on hand, compared to \$27,576 for Hostettler, who has never won an election with more than 53 percent of the vote. ❖

Dem gains preview to 06?

TV and print coverage is portraying the Democratic election wins in the Virginia and New Jersey gubernatorial races as an indication that President Bush has become a liability for Republican candidates (*Frontrunner*). *NBC Nightly News* reported the off-year elections "confirmed some Republican fears that President Bush's falling approval ratings may be a drag on the party. But even as Democrats celebrate big wins in the two governors' races, others say you can't read a national trend into last night's results."

NBC (Gregory) added, "It was a big night for Democrats who portrayed gubernatorial wins in Virginia and New Jersey as a black eye for President Bush." Still, top Republicans "dismiss the idea these results were symptoms of Mr. Bush's plunging popularity. Democrats also won the Virginia and New Jersey races they noted in 2001, when the

President's approval ratings were sky-high." Still, Republicans "eyeing next year's mid-term elections are nervous."

The CBS Evening News reported, "This was not a great night for President Bush, particularly in the state of Virginia. He went in and he campaigned for the Republican candidate for governor who lost, and this was a state that the President himself won by 8 points in the last election." Before the 2006 midterms, Republicans would "like his popularity to go up a little bit in the polls. But if that can't happen, they are saying they need an agenda. I spoke with one top House Republican today who said to me if the President can't give us an agenda, just get out of our way for the 2006 election."

CBS anchor Bob Schieffer asked, "And are Republicans really worried now, do you think, about perhaps losing the House next year?" Borger: "They are worried about losing the House, and maybe the Senate." ❖



Matthew Tully, *Indianapolis Star* - One of the biggest moments of Mayor Bart Peterson's time in office will come Monday night. That evening, in a City-County Building assembly room, a large chunk of the mayor's legacy will be written. Before a crowd of political aides and police, the council will finally decide whether to merge the Indianapolis Police and Marion County Sheriff's departments, as the mayor has sought. For Peterson, this council vote will be more politically significant than any other for him. This is The Big One. This isn't about an underdog Democratic mayor begging a Republican-run Statehouse for a stadium. This time, the mayor's fellow Democrats are in charge. They have the council majority, and on Monday they'll show how much power Peterson wields with his own party. This plan is his vision. Failure will be a full-scale embarrassment, the worst of Peterson's six years in office. If he fails, he won't be able to blame partisans or politics. He'll have to blame himself. He'll have to explain why he couldn't sell his own party, and at least a sympathetic Republican or two. But a win would nicely cap a year of political fights and provide momentum when Peterson returns to the Statehouse in January for the rest of his government consolidation. This is more crucial for the mayor than the stadium debate. If that bill had died, Peterson could have pushed it again in 2006. The merger, he warns, is urgent, vital to holding off police layoffs in the near term. And nothing would make the mayor look worse than asking cops to turn in their badges. That would be especially stunning coming from a guy who rode into office with a promise to hire more police. Six years later, with crime on the rise, how could he lay them off? On Monday, before a council panel moved the merger to the full council for a vote next week, Council President Steve Talley insisted he wouldn't let the plan fail. "I'd be shocked," he said of a "no" vote. "They'd have to carry me out." But this one will be close. ❖

Gary Gerard, *Warsaw Times-Union* - Frankly, I think most Americans would see these decisions (by Judge Sam Alito) as reasonable. Should a husband know if his wife is aborting his child? Should a kindergartner be able to say he's thankful for Jesus on a poster at school? Should a black man be allowed to use as evidence the fact that a juror in his case made a racist remark after a verdict? I was watching CNN earlier this week and Teddy Kennedy, seemingly sober at the time, was ranting about how Alito was a "radical." No kidding - a radical. Kennedy really said that. Honestly, if the Democrats filibuster this guy because he's too radical and

extreme for them, I think they paint themselves into a corner.



Mark Kiesling, *Times of Northwest Indiana* - The Lake County Good Government Initiative, launched by U.S. Rep. Pete Visclosky and others, supports governmental efficiency and effectiveness and is aimed at improving the quality of life. The compact's drafters have asked all elected officials and their challengers to sign the 10-point pledge, and it's drawn public criticism from County Council Attorney Ray Szarmach, who said in essence the compact is not worth the paper it's been faxed on. He's right. If you are ethical and in public office (yes, there are some), then you don't need this compact. If you're unethical and in public office, sign away with a flourish, then violate all its principles. There's nothing to stop you. Tell everyone how ethical you are, then pick their pocket. The pledge itself is admirable, but it has an ivory tower odor about it. Szarmach, who has spent 31 years in the trenches of Lake County government, called the pledge a "feel-good political measure" that reeks of McCarthyist intimidation tactics. The idea being that if you don't sign the pledge, which includes support for the Good Government Initiative, you are by your own admission unethical and unfit for the support of the voters in the next election. One of the drafters, Ed Charbonneau said no one should feel intimidated and everyone has the ability to opt out without repercussion. A quick look at Pledge One, though, shows that may not be the whole truth. It calls upon the officeholder to join the Good Government Initiative or a similar initiative and to support a 10 percent budget reduction for any county agency whose leader refuses to sign on. Of course, most of the signers have no control over the budgets, so that's basically posturing. None of those who do hold budget power (the seven members of the County Council and the three county commissioners) have signed on. Few have leapt aboard. Sheriff Roy Dominguez signed up right away, but after that it's been pretty quiet. ❖

Dan K. Thomasson, *Johnson County Daily Journal* - Pollster Frank Luntz, who is highly critical of how the White House is handling things, says that salvation for the GOP next year may lie in the unrelenting demeanor of House Democratic chief Nancy Pelosi, who, he contends, has been the angriest, most bitterly negative political leader in years. As evidence of the truth of this he cites not only his own surveys but also a steady stream of diatribes at Bush and his friends that Pelosi launches almost daily on the House floor, in public speeches, and in e-mails to the press. ❖





Bayh raises \$7.88 million

TRENDLINE: From July to September, Sen. Evan Bayh, D-Ind., raised \$7.88 million -- twice as much as Indiana's other senator, Richard Lugar -- officially under the guise of his 2010 Senate campaign in the past year, said Bayh's spokeswoman, Meghan Keck (*Indiana Daily Student*). "Senator Bayh has traveled across the country primarily to help the Democratic Party and to help elect like-minded candidates running for office," Keck said.

2006 Congressional Races

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 171,389 (69%), Parra 76,232 (31%). **2006 Forecast:** It's not quite the House bounced-check scandal that helped Rep. Souder defeat Rep. Jill Long in 1994. But *The Hill* reported that Souder spent more than \$5,700 on a plasma-screen television. Souder weighed in on the time controversy facing Elkhart and St. Joseph counties. He urged the U.S. Department of Transportation to keep St. Joseph County on Eastern time (*Elkhart Truth*). "It makes no sense for St. Joseph County to stick out as a Central Time Zone island, surrounded by a sea of Eastern Time Zone," Souder writes. "While the city of South Bend certainly maintains ties to Chicago, they dwarf in comparison to the economic, social, and family ties going north, east and south." **Status:** Likely Souder



Congressional District 8: Republican: U.S. Rep. John Hostettler. Democrat: Vanderburgh County Sheriff Brad Ellsworth. **Geography:** Evansville, Terre Haute, Greencastle; Posey, Vanderburgh, Warrick, Gibson, Pike, Martin, Daviess, Knox, Sullivan, Greene, Owen, Clay, Vigo, Vermillion, Parke, Putnam, Warren and part of Fountain counties. **Media Market:** Evansville, Terre Haute, Indianapolis. Lafayette.

People: Urban/rural 58/42%; median income \$36,732; poverty 10.7%; race white 93.7%, black 3.7%, Hispanic .9%; blue/white collar: 32/52%. **2000 Presidential:** Bush 56%, Gore 42%; Cook Partisan Voting Index: R+8. **2002 Results:** Hostettler 98,952 (51%), Hartke 88,763 (46%), **2004 Results:** Hostettler 145,576, Jennings (D) 121,522, Garvin (Green) 5,680. **2006 Forecast:** Hostettler raised \$38,000 in the third quarter of the year, bringing his cash on hand to nearly \$28,000. Ellsworth amassed more than \$144,000 during the three-month period and ending with nearly \$258,000 in the bank (*The Hill*). Questions about the war in Iraq and high energy prices were among those fielded by Rep. John Hostettler, R-Ind., at a town meeting in Boonville on Saturday. Hostettler said Congress, not just the Bush administration, should bear responsibility for the decision to go into Iraq and said, despite claims of intelligence failure, "Congress had all the information that was necessary to make the right decision" as it gave Bush the authority to go to war. Hostettler, who voted against that authorization, said he relied mostly on reports from the Central Intelligence Agency that cast doubt on the reports that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction. Much information supporting the war came from dissidents within Iraq, who testified that Saddam had weapons of mass destruction. However, Hostettler said he believed these people had their own motives for toppling the dictator. "Ultimately, Congress is accountable. We are accountable for the decisions we make," Hostettler said. "Sometimes we get it right. Sometimes we get it wrong." Hostettler also said he supported legislation that would encourage development of domestic gas refineries and discourage dependence on foreign oil. He supported the opening of the Arctic Reserve in Alaska for oil drilling. The additional oil would increase supply, reduce cost and alleviate dependence on foreign oil, he said. Hostettler, who voted against an aid package to victims of Hurricane Katrina, said that the total amount of relief to the victims, \$62.3 billion, was 50 percent more than the annual budgets of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama combined. "We're going to spend in seven weeks what the three states spend in 78 weeks combined." Hostettler was one of 70 lawmakers signing a letter to President Bush urging him to relax a set of new restrictions aimed at curbing religious coercion within the U.S. Air Force (Forward). The guidelines state that "public prayer should not usually be included in official settings" and instruct that, when an exception is made, any prayer recited should be "non-sectarian." Hostettler denounced the "mythical wall of church-state separation" and insinuated that the proposed measures



would "quash the religious expression of millions of service personnel." **Status:** TOSS-UP

Congressional District 9: Republican: U.S. Rep. Mike Sodrel. Democrat: Baron Hill. **Media Market:** Evansville (11%), Indianapolis (23%), Louisville (55%), Dayton, Cincinnati (10 percent). **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. **2004 Presidential:** Bush 59%, Kerry 40%. **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:** Sodrel confirmed this week during a stop in Seymour that he'll seek re-election to a second term in Indiana's 9th District (Seymour Tribune). Hill said on Nov. 2 he's close to making a decision. "That is all coming together better than I anticipated, so I'm optimistic," Hill said. An announcement could come mid-month. Democrats are planning a fundraiser, dubbed Committee to Bring Back Baron, for Nov. 18 in Seymour. On the tone of the 2004 campaign, described by many political observers on both sides as negative, Sodrel said he stands by ads that his campaign approved and financed. "I didn't run any negative ads," Sodrel said. "I ran some comparative ads," contrasting the positions of himself and Hill. "The negative ads were run by third parties on each side. I don't apologize for any ad that I agreed to say, 'I'm Mike Sodrel, and I approved this ad.'" Hill agreed the campaign was negative but disagreed with Sodrel's assessment that his campaign ran no negative ads. "It was a dirty campaign," Hill said. "When (Sodrel) says he didn't run negative ads, that's wrong. I voted against partial-birth abortions, but his ads said I voted for partial-birth abortions. That's not true. I'm against abortion." During a visit with the *Seymour Tribune's* editorial board Monday afternoon, Sodrel agreed with Hill's sentiments — expressed many times over his six years in Congress — that members of the U.S. House of Representatives spend too much time and energy raising campaign contributions. Sodrel estimated he logs three to four hours a week, while his campaign has two workers spending more time on that chore. "I'm a lot better contributor than I am a solicitor," Sodrel said. "McCain-Feingold didn't fix the problem," he added. "It might have made it worse with the 527s (third-party organizations that finance some advertising and other messages that target candidates)." Sodrel voted for HR4128 on property rights, saying, it is "a very good bill, that addresses a new found power of government that frightens every homeowner, small businessman, and farmer with the possibility of having their

home or business involuntarily taken and given to some other private entity which may provide more tax revenue." **Status:** Toss-up.

2006 State Races

Senate District 41: Republican: Senate President Pro Tempore Robert D. Garton. Democrat: Open. **1998 Results:** Garton 26,499. **2002 Results:** Garton 21,918, Gividen (L) 3,350. **2006 Forecast:** Matthew Tully of the *Indianapolis Star* wrote: Garton has led the Senate for a quarter of a century. He's well past retirement age. Most of his generation's lawmakers have moved on. But he is running for another term next year. I asked when he plans to step down. That was one of the few questions he dodged. Instead, he explained his philosophy: If he thinks about quitting fewer than three times in a week, he knows legislating is still "in my blood." It was only Tuesday, the third day of the week. But, Garton joked, "I'm up to my second feeling that I should quit." Don't bet on it. **Status:** Safe R.

House District 31: Republican: State Rep. Tim Harris. Democrat: Blackford County Commissioner Larry Hile. **2002 Results:** Rep. Dean Young 9,046, Raju (D) 3,909. **2004 Results:** Harris 10,480, Hile 10,330. **2006 Forecast:** Blackford County Commissioner Larry Hile announced his plans last week to seek a rematch in the House District 31 race, challenging Rep. Tim Harris, R-Marion, who won the 2004 contest by 150 votes, the closest of any House race (Yencer, Muncie Star Press). **Status:** Tossup.

House District 33: Republican: Bill Davis. Democrat: State Rep. Ron Liggett. **2002 Results:** Liggett (D) 9,143, Thornburg (R) 6,895. **2004 Results:** Davis 13,330, Liggett 10,924. **2006 Forecast:** And Rep. Bill Davis, R-Portland, will again face former representative Ron Liggett, whom he defeated by 2,500 votes in 2004 for the House District 33 seat. That contest was the most expensive House race at the state, coming in at \$1 million for both campaigns (Muncie Star Press). "The Republican Party is getting blamed a lot at the top," said Ball State University political science professor Gary Crawley, citing the economy, the war in Iraq and handling of natural disasters like Hurricane Katrina. "It should be a good year for Democrats." **Status:** Tossup.

Senate District 23: Republican: State Rep. Tim Brown, Hendricks County Councilman Dick Thompson. Democrat: Open. **1998 Results:** Harrison (R) 21,175 Shelby (D) 11,436. **2002 Results:** Harrison 23,811. **2006 Forecast:** Our sources are saying that Rep. Brown is seriously looking at this race. But if he enters, it would be at considerable risk to his legislative career. He would have to give up his relatively safe House seat and Thompson, a former senator, is already working hard to line up support. **Status:** LEANS THOMPSON. ❖



Daniels signs casino contract

FRENCH LICK - Amid a festival atmosphere with the sounds of construction in the background, Gov. Mitch Daniels signed the contract yesterday for a casino boat to be developed in Orange County (*Louisville Courier-Journal*). The contract -- which grants a partnership called Blue Sky LLC the exclusive right to build and operate the boat -- had long been anticipated. When Daniels took office in January, he asked his appointee Ernest Yelton to look into the deal. "I decided the right thing was to say: 'Donald, you're fired,'" Daniels told the crowd yesterday. "Bill Cook is the one who made this all happen," State Rep. Jerry Denbo said. "It's now going to be grander and more spectacular than any one ever dreamed."



Marion County Prosecutor Carl Brizzi comforts a Shortridge Middle School student during an Educating Kids about Gun Violence convocation Monday. Brizzi appeared with U.S. District Attorney Susan Brooks and Supt. Suellen Reed. "We are doing this program for three simple reasons," Brizzi said. "We care about kids, we care about community and we will do whatever it takes to save one life." (HPR Photo)

Seymour Schools face fuel deficit

SEYMOUR - Record-breaking oil prices have caught up to Seymour's schools and the district's general fund will feel the hit (*Columbus Republic*). Seymour Community Schools Superintendent Robert Schmielau informed the board Tuesday night that the district's transportation operations fund faces a \$70,000 to \$120,000 deficit due to the rising cost of diesel fuel. \

Kokomo economic outlook uneasy

KOKOMO - Brian Harris had five words to sum up his outlook on the local economy for 2006, none of them particularly rosy (Smith, *Kokomo Tribune*). "Uncertainty, apprehension,

reservation, skepticism and nervousness," offered Harris, vice president of First National Bank & Trust, during the annual Economic Outlook Panel discussion hosted by the Indiana University Kokomo School of Business. At a time when the entire community has been rocked by news of Delphi Corp.'s Chapter 11 bankruptcy filing, Wednesday's panel discussion offered little in the way of optimism. Harris, who presented the local economic outlook, was joined by three Indiana University professors in giving an overall gloomy assessment for the coming year. Rising interest rates, the threat of inflation, high energy prices and concerns the housing market "bubble" may be about to burst are factors creating pessimism about the possibility of growth next year, the panelists concluded. "There's a great deal of uncertainty right now," said Bill Witte, an IU professor of economics.

"I've been doing these economic outlook panels for 10 years and I think there's more uncertainty now than I can remember during that time."

Lafayette mulls new mandated fees

LAFAYETTE - Unlike sewage, rainwater that flows off the ground undergoes little treatment before entering streams, ponds and rivers. Along the way, it carries along some of any motor oil, antifreeze, fertilizers, pesticides, trash or construction debris it encounters. To comply with a new federal mandate aimed at reducing such pollution, local governments in Tippecanoe County are considering imposing a monthly \$3 to \$4 fee on residents (Shaw, *Lafayette Journal & Courier*). Bob Brza, a junior at Faith Christian High School and regular fisher of Wildcat Creek, said he welcomes the effort to improve the quality of water in Tippecanoe County. "I can smell signs of pollution when I'm down on the Wildcat," he said. "I see garbage floating down the creek, and that really upsets me. I see fish kills. I've seen that twice in the past five years, and I think that's too many times."

House GOP survey hints at coming issues

INDIANAPOLIS - High-fenced hunting, legalized video gambling and myriad tax issues top Republican legislative surveys being sent to area voters in preparation for the fast-approaching 2006 legislative session (Kelly, *Fort Wayne Journal Gazette*). The surveys are sent by lawmakers every year to gauge public sentiment on possibly contentious issues they might vote on. Democrats in the House and Senate have not finished drafting their surveys, while House Republicans are finished. Many Senate Republicans have already mailed their questionnaires. ❖