

# The Star Press

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**COPS IN TROUBLE CAUSE CONCERN**



## Tarnished?

INCIDENTS INVOLVING POLICE OFFICERS PROMPT CITIZEN CONCERNS ABOUT DEPARTMENT'S INTEGRITY

■ A grand jury will decide whether Jeff Leist will face a battery charge in the most recent incident involving an MPD officer.

By RICK YENCER  
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A Delaware County grand jury will decide whether Muncie police officer Jeff Leist committed a crime when he struck Robert D. McCallum in the head with his gun, which then discharged.

"Because of the increased attention in this case, it is better to let a grand jury decide," Delaware County Prosecutor Mark McKinney said on Wednesday.

Leist, 52, remained on administrative leave with pay as Muncie police investigated whether criminal charges — specifically, battery with a deadly weapon, a class C felony carrying a standard four-year term — are warranted. In a call to 911 dispatchers Sunday morning, Leist said he struck the 24-year-old McCallum with his gun after finding the Muncie man in the company of the officer's 26-year-old daughter. The incident occurred in a bedroom of the daughter's southside

mobile home. On Wednesday, the case was handed over to McKinney, who said the recommended felony charge also warranted a look by a grand jury made up of local citizens.

The prosecutor on Sept. 13 — three days before the Leist-McCallum incident — filed documents asking Delaware Circuit Court Judge Robert Barnett Jr. to convene a grand jury. Its members are scheduled to be impaneled on Sept. 28.

Leist

**Integrity questioned**  
The Leist case, the latest in a series of potentially embarrassing incidents involving local law enforcement officers in recent years, has drawn a great deal of attention from local Internet posters and other citizens, some of them raising questions about the integrity of the Muncie Police Department.

► See LEIST, 2A

Ex-officer charged in 'joy ride' crash

■ The prosecutor's office filed misdemeanor charges this week against Jason Lyons.

By RICK YENCER  
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MUNCIE — More details about a late-night joy ride have emerged with criminal charges filed against former Muncie police officer Jason Lyons.

Lyons, 39, faces charges of reckless driving and interference with reporting a crime, both misdemeanors, resulting from an Aug. 28 incident in which he crashed a police car with three Ball State University students inside.

The prosecutor's office filed the charges in Muncie City Court this week, with preliminary arraignment pending.

"These are clear-cut cases," said Prosecutor Mark McKinney.

Lyons picked up the students — Stacy Walters, Sommer Redmon and Billie Wrede — at a Village Pantry in The Village.

► See LYONS, 2A

## Welfare budget slashed

■ The County Council cut about \$3 million from the 2008 budget request for the Delaware County Department of Child Services.



Bowman



Botkin

By NICK WERNER  
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MUNCIE — Delaware County Council and the Delaware County Department of Child Services are at odds over spending for next year.

Child Services presented a 2008 budget request \$16.5 million.

Council members criticized the request as wasteful and voted unanimously during budget hearings this month to chop the spending plan down to the 2007 level, which was about \$13.6 million.

"It's out of hand," councilman Ted Bowman said during a budget hearing.

Jackie Fisher, director of Delaware County Department of Child Services, denied wasteful spending and said she plans to appeal the \$2.9 million cut to the Indiana Department of Local Government Finance by Oct. 1.

DLGF attorneys are researching whether DLGF would have

**Where the money would go**

The Delaware County Department of Child Services asked for \$16.5 million for 2008 and planned to spend the money the following ways.

- Placing children in residential facilities: \$8.25 million.
- Placing children in foster homes: \$3.9 million.
- Adoption services: \$2 million.
- Family counseling, assistance for day care and utilities: \$1.6 million.
- Child welfare services: \$320,000.
- Miscellaneous costs for children (often clothing): \$220,000.
- Medicaid expenses: \$144,000.
- Programs to help children transition to young adults: \$130,000.
- Interest on loans: \$50,000.

**More inside**

► Bayh, Hill introduce bill to provide property tax relief | 2D

the authority to restore some or all of the cut, DLGF spokeswoman Mary Jane Michalak said.

The Department of Child Services is a statewide agency with offices in all 92 counties, with services that are funded through local property taxes. Administrative costs, including salaries, are paid through state and federal funds.

► See BUDGET, 2A

**Stepping Toward Fitness**



CHRIS BERGIN / THE STAR PRESS

SUTTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL students Dario Dakins (left), David Lindsey (middle) and Breyanna Treadway talk to Kyle Ramsy from Ball State University during their Walking Club on Wednesday afternoon along the Cardinal Greenway. The club is an after-school club to get students active.

## Taxpayer group targets Muncie's life insurance plan

**Learn more**

For more information about Citizens of Delaware County for Property Tax Repeal, go to [www.propertytaxrepeal.com](http://www.propertytaxrepeal.com).

The group is planning a meeting and rally at 6:30 p.m. Sept. 25 at the Delaware County Fairgrounds, Memorial Building.

■ Muncie paid \$58,234 in life insurance premiums for city employees last year.

By SETH SLABAUGH  
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MUNCIE — A taxpayer group is criticizing the City of Muncie for providing life insurance to its employees. Citizens of Delaware County for Property Tax Repeal filed a petition

objecting to the city's 2008 budget. City officials acknowledge that employees receive \$30,000 in free life insurance, but they dispute other objections raised by the taxpayer organization, which was created this summer in response to property tax increases of 25 percent or more.

"The city needs to make some radi-

cal concessions to get back to a budget that is a reasonable reflection of where this town has been as compared to where it is today," said taxpayer Chris Hiatt, owner of Hiatt Printing.

The local population has been shrinking since the 1970s because of economic conditions. Between 1990 and 2000, Muncie's population decreased from 71,035 to 67,430, and it is estimated to have dropped to 65,287 since then.

During an interview, Muncie City

Council President Bill Shroyer was open to the possibility of eliminating city life insurance policies.

"I suppose we could, if council wants to do that," he said. "That's a way to cut things. It's something to look at."

Providing life insurance to employees in 2006 cost the city \$58,234, according to city controller Mary Ann Kratochvil.

► See PETITION, 2A



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