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South Counties • Thursday, Sept. 20, 2007

The Lima News



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Plenty of flu shots promised

Now the push is on to get those at highest risk to get them

By LAURAN NEERGAARD
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Come one, come all: After years of shortages and confusion, this fall promises plenty of flu vaccine to go around — up to 132 million doses, more than the nation has ever produced. The ample supplies have the government urging vaccinations

not just for people at highest risk of dying from influenza, but for anyone who wants to avoid a week of aching misery.

“Flu is a formidable foe,” Dr. Julie Gerberding, head of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said Wednesday. “It is not an illness we should be complacent about.”

But new CDC data show only a

fraction of people who need flu shots the most get them, including just one in five babies and toddlers. And there’s wide geographic variation, with Rhode Island reporting the most high-risk adults vaccinated and Nevada the fewest.

Shots aren’t the only option. Wednesday, the government ruled that it’s safe for younger kids than ever before to try a nasal-spray

vaccine called FluMist. Once only an option for people ages 5 to 49, FluMist now can be used by children as young as 2.

Flu usually peaks in February, so a winter vaccination isn’t too late. Still, Gerberding advised seeking vaccine early in case flu begins striking before the usual November.

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CRAIG MACK • The Lima News

Paul Leffler (left) glances at his attorney, Javier Ar-mengau, as Judge William Hart sentences him Wednesday at the Hardin County Courthouse in Kenton.

A bubbly personality



KELLI CARDINAL • The Lima News

Libby Frazier, 3, of Bluffton, plays with a large bubble wand Wednesday in her front yard on Lawn Avenue. Libby was outside in the warm weather playing with the other children and drawing with sidewalk chalk with her neighbor, Seth Pannabecker, 3.

U.S. 30 group looking down the road

Community leaders discuss promoting business, industry along corridor

By BART MILLS
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LIMA — The group of leaders attempting to organize a seven-county partnership to promote U.S. Route 30 has more in mind than the road.

Leaders of the communities along the newly improved U.S. Route 30 met Wednesday to discuss the next step in creating a formal partnership to promote business and industry in the dis-

AT A GLANCE

Seven counties — Allen, Crawford, Hancock, Hardin, Richland, Van Wert and Wyandot — have come together for the U.S. 30 Development Partnership with the hope of drawing new business and industry to the region.

trict. Neil Chase, consultant with Burgess & Niple, the Columbus-based firm brought in to help coordinate the counties’ effort, said

the first steps would be to form some kind of official partnership — most likely a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation — and move on from there with reasonable steps.

“Over the last four months I’ve heard ‘Let’s not jump in too deep. Let’s start small and grow from there,’” Chase said. “The idea is to start in a manageable way.”

Business and community leaders from the seven counties that make up the U.S. 30 Development Partnership have been meeting in

a series of roundtables to build consensus on the goals and purpose of the newly formed organization. The group was formed in March to explore ways to market U.S. 30, which will be four lanes from Mansfield to Fort Wayne, Ind., by the end of 2008.

The group will work to market the corridor as a specific region with the hopes of drawing new businesses and industries to the

See **U.S. 30** • A7

Pastor sent to prison

Kenton man gets 28 months for sex crimes against two girls

By GREG SOWINSKI
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KENTON — Saying justice can be harsh sometimes, a Hardin County judge sounded Wednesday as if he was going to throw the book at a pastor convicted of child-sex charges but in the end did not.

Judge William Hart sentenced Paul Leffler to 28 months in prison but left the door open for early release after serving one month. The charges were for sex crimes against two teenage girls.

“The court has got to see that justice is performed,” Hart said. “Not only did you take advantage of one young person but you appeared to be grooming another young woman for your lustful desire.”

Hardin County Prosecutor Brad Bailey said Leffler had sexual intercourse with a girl who was either 15 or 16 at the time. Leffler also was grooming another girl who was 15 for what Bailey believed was the same actions he took with the first girl, he said.

Leffler, 35, used his position as pastor of the Freedom of the Spirit Church in Kenton to get close to the girls. Both were having family problems and he offered to counsel them, which was his way to reach them for his sexual desires, Bailey said.

See **PASTOR** • A7

Army begins testing soldiers’ brains before sending them to war

By KRISTIN M. HALL
The Associated Press

FORT CAMPBELL, Ky. — Before they leave for Iraq, thousands of troops with the 101st Airborne Division line up at laptop computers to take a test: basic math, matching numbers and symbols, and identifying patterns. They press a button quickly to measure response time.

It’s all part of a fledgling

Army program that records how soldiers’ brains work when healthy, giving doctors baseline data to help diagnose and treat the soldiers if they suffer a traumatic brain injury — the signature injury of the Iraq war.

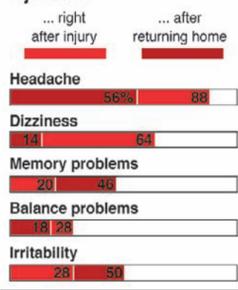
“This allows the Army to be much more proactive,” said Lt. Col. Mark McGrail, division surgeon for the 101st. “We

See **BRAIN** • A7

Troop brain injuries

The Army has begun brain-function tests on soldiers before war to give doctors critical data for treatment if a soldier returns with a traumatic brain injury.

Symptoms of soldier brain injuries ...



Former Allen County auditor worker accused of taking more than \$5,000

By GREG SOWINSKI
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LIMA — A woman the Allen County Auditor’s Office trusted to collect dog license fees is accused of stealing more than \$5,000 while on the job.

Nichole Barker, 27, of 85 Steeple Chase, was indicted on one count of theft in office, a charge that carries up to five years in prison. She is scheduled to enter a plea Friday in Allen County Common Pleas Court.

Barker resigned her position

as deputy auditor June 29, 2006. She collected dog license fees, cigarette vendor fees, mobile home transfers, and personal property tax, said Tony Stechschulte, the director of accounting at the Auditor’s Office.

Prosecutor Juergen Waldick said the majority of the money was from dog license fees. He declined to discuss how the al-

leged theft was carried out. “We have changed our practices in the area she worked and how the money is handled,” Stechschulte said.

The Auditor’s Office is in the Allen County Courthouse. The alleged thefts occurred between Dec. 1, 2005, and Nov. 30, 2006, Sheriff Dan Beck said.

Waldick said the dates extend beyond the date Barker resigned because the investigation discovered more missing money as the probe grew.

You can comment on this story at www.limaohio.com.



Barker

5 on the go

1 Firefighters in Evansville, Ind., had to tear through a wall to rescue an intoxicated man who became stuck while trying to climb down a chimney into the residence of his former girlfriend.

2 A man wearing nothing but a hat tried to rob a convenience store in Carbondale, Pa. Police say the 24-year-old man often stands naked in front of the window of his apartment.

3 An errant cow is headed for greener pastures after being corralled by police following a two-mile chase through the streets of Queens, N.Y.

4 The Pennsylvania Game Commission is setting traps in Hickory Run State Park after a bear bit a 12-year-old camping with his Boy Scout troop.

5 Thousands of bees got loose when the truck carrying their hives ran off a highway and overturned near a Montana community, the Highway Patrol said.

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