



SCOREBOARD

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JANUARY 15, 2011
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YOUNGSTOWN MURDER TRIAL

Change of venue sought

By PETER H. MILLIKEN
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YOUNGSTOWN

Lawyers for a defendant awaiting a capital murder trial in the death of a local real-estate broker are asking for a change of venue and a gag order due to what they say has been extensive pretrial publicity.



Brooks

Attys. Ronald D. Yarwood and James S. Gentile filed the motions Thursday in Mahoning County Common Pleas Court on behalf of their client, Robert S. Brooks, 26, of Castalia Avenue.

Brooks and his co-defendant, Grant P. Cooper, 21, of Sulgrave Drive, Brookfield, face the death penalty if convicted in the Sept. 20 murder of Vivian Martin, a 67-year-old real estate broker, who was killed in an East Side house.

Martin's badly burned body was found inside a Nelson Avenue house that had been set afire. The house had been listed for sale by Martin's Essence Realty.

Brooks and Cooper face charges of aggravated murder, aggravated robbery, aggravated arson and kidnapping in Martin's death.

"This county has been so saturated with the facts underlying this case that it is impossible for the defendant to receive

See TRIAL, A4

Brown: Extend two programs for jobless

By DAVID SKOLNICK
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BOARDMAN

When the U.S. Senate returns to session Jan. 25, Sherrod Brown said he'll work to extend two programs for the unemployed.

Speaking Friday at the Mahoning County One-Stop office in the Boardman Plaza, the senator said Congress must extend the Health Care Tax Credit and the Trade Adjustment Assistance program. Both expire in mid-February.

Brown, a Democrat from Avon, said the programs are critical to thousands, including Delphi Corp. salaried retirees, whose pensions have been cut and health-care coverage eliminated.

The programs "are lifelines for tens of

See JOBLESS, A4

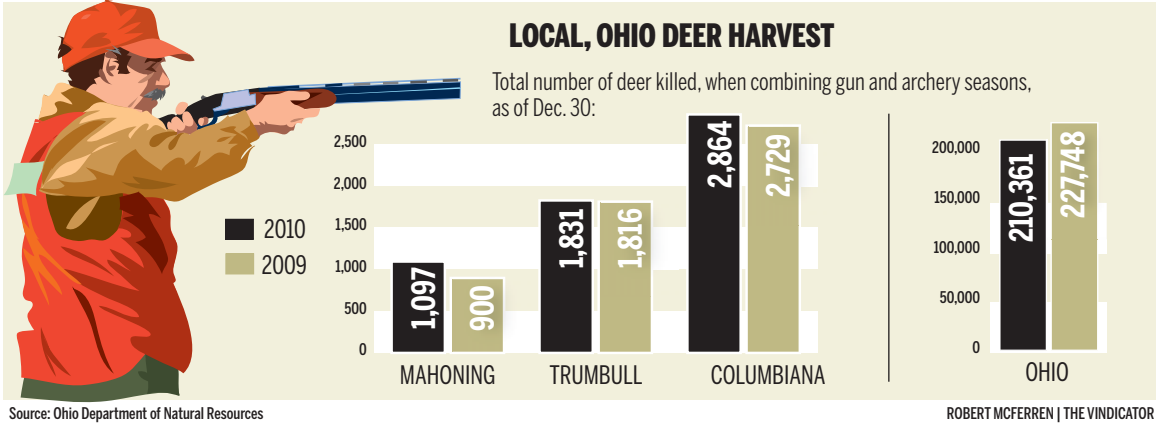


Brown



Sami Awadallah runs a deer checkpoint from his gas station and convenience store, Lakers, in Diamond.

RAMI DAUD | THE VINDICATOR



By KRISTINE GILL
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DIAMOND

IT'S NOT UNCOMMON to see a line of pickup trucks waiting in the Lakers Inc. parking lot late at night during deer season.

Tired but animated hunters usually swap tales while they wait to register their kills at the convenience store that serves as a check station through the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Wildlife.

"They

tell me

some fish

stories

and stay

and have

coffee,"

said Lak-

ers owner

Sami

Awadallah.

The Ohio hunting industry is holding steady despite a national trend that indicates interest in the sport is dwindling. But a change in the way deer and other game are checked through the ODNR Division of Wildlife could affect the tradition, and that has business owners worried.

Come March 1, deer and turkey can be checked online or by phone. The system is already in place in several other states and could save local hunters the hassle of traveling to distant check-points.

Though businesses such as Awadallah's don't have to pay fees to be a checkpoint through the state, they aren't paid for their services either. Some worry checking game remotely will limit the cash flow some enjoy when hunters buy gas or a cup of coffee after a long day in the woods.

"The hope is that when people have to wait a bit, they grab a bag of chips or something," said Tom Frank, Mahoning County wildlife officer with ODNR. "These [business owners] are really doing us a favor."

Frank collects forms from each of the three Mahoning County check stations on a regular basis. On Wednesday, he picked up 35 forms filed in just two days at Lakers Inc., a gas and convenience store in Diamond.

Awadallah has owned the store since 1995, and it has been a check point for hunters for about four years. So

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PLEASE RECYCLE



inside today

\$15,000 IN RESTITUTION

A 50-year-old Girard woman pleaded no contest to a reduced theft charge and agreed to pay \$15,000 in restitution to the estate of an elderly businessman whose money she stole.

LOCAL & STATE, A3

MEN'S RALLY IN VALLEY

Bishop George V. Murry of the Diocese of Youngstown will open the second annual Men's Rally in the Valley on May 7 at Covelli Centre.

RELIGION, A10



A 'DILEMMA' INDEED

"Dilemma," director Ron Howard's new buddy comedy starring Vince Vaughn and Kevin James, presents viewers with a dilemma of their own, a critic writes.

VALLEY LIFE, C1

Boardman seeks input on 3 levies Jan. 24

By ASHLEY LUTHERN
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BOARDMAN

Township trustees will have an open forum about potential levies on the May ballot at their regular meeting Jan. 24.

Officials felt there was not enough time to set up a forum before their next meeting, so they will take residents' comments and questions before any new business is discussed Jan. 24, said township Administrator Jason Loree.

"The trustees will prepare

IF YOU GO

- ♦ **What:** Boardman trustees meeting
- ♦ **When:** 5:30 p.m. Jan. 24
- ♦ **Where:** Trinity Fellowship Church, 4749 South Ave.

three potential resolutions and bring them to the meeting," Loree said.

Those resolutions will either be a police, fire or general-fund levy. All three would be 3.85-mill, five-year

additional levies that would generate about \$3.7 million annually — and would cost the owner of a home valued at \$100,000 an additional \$116.80 annually, he said.

"We'll most likely have a first reading on that date [Jan. 24]," said Trustee Brad Calhoun at Monday's trustee meeting.

The trustees have a Feb. 2 deadline to place a levy on the May 3 ballot, meaning the levy recommendation would need two readings by

See BOARDMAN, A4

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HUNTING

Continued from A1

far this season, he said the store has checked about 1,500 deer.

Awadallah and his employees take photos of the hunters who stop by and hang the best of the photos on a wall in their gas station. They submit some to trade magazines for publication.

"I'm kind of disappointed because I might lose business," Awadallah said. "When people come in here, they might pick something up."

Mary McCarthy, owner of Red's Sport Shop in Columbiana, said sharing stories in her store's parking lot is half the fun.

"It's all the experiences that go into it, the story, the things that happen to them," she said. "The hunt

is what it is, it's not the kill so much."

Despite the new check system, Frank said many hunters will still do things the old way.

"I firmly believe a good percentage will come to check in at a station," he said. "Guys will do it just to be able to say, 'hey, that's a good deer.'"

Linda Dickson, owner of Monty's Mosquito Lake Carryout & Restaurant in Cortland, agreed.

"A lot of the fun of hunting is being able to share your stories with other hunters and being able to come in and see what the other guys got," she said. "We take a lot of pictures and those pictures are passed around many, many, many times over. Half the time I think they come in just so they can see those pictures."

Jamey Graham, spokes-

person for the northeast Ohio division office of ODNR's Division of Wildlife, said the new system could even encourage more hunters to buy licenses next season if the process is less time-consuming. Hunters are required to check their kills by 8 p.m. the day after harvest.

"In more rural counties like Harrison, there aren't many check stations," Graham said. "If you shoot a deer late at night and have to work the next day, you might have to take off work or drive around. No w they can go straight home and do it online or grab a cell phone and check it in the field."

Also under the new law, those locations that have sold hunting licenses and permits in the past will also have to check deer and wild turkey. They will now earn a dollar per license sold in-

stead of just 50 cents. The state earned about \$23 million in license and permit sales in both 2009 and 2010, according to data collected by the ODNR.

Graham said statistics indicate that Ohioans are still avid hunters and youth continue to get involved in the sport.

"We do make effort to try to increase or maintain our hunting license sales. We're certainly not suffering like other states," she said adding that many states have seen drops in license sales in the tens of thousands.

Graham said fluctuation in Ohio license sales from year to year is expected and usually due to weather.

The number of hunting and fishing licenses sold in 2009 and 2008 have held steady in Mahoning, Columbiana and Trumbull counties at around 27,000,

31,000 and 50,000 respectively. Data is not yet available for 2010.

Graham said Ohio sold about 298,000 licences in 2009 and about 12,000 fewer in 2010, a 4 percent drop.

But the state's nonresident license sales have increased 8 percent between 2009 and 2010.

"Ohio has some premiere deer hunting," Graham said. "We have trophy bucks, which is very appealing to hunters, and an extremely healthy herd."

Before the deer season began in November, there were 750,000 deer in Ohio. Graham said that number is down to about 500,000 now, but usually rebounds between seasons each year.

"We're doing really good in Ohio," Graham said.

TRIAL

Continued from A1

a fair trial" in Mahoning County, Yarwood and Gentile argued on behalf of Brooks.

"Only a trial in another county will allow for the empaneling of a jury composed of impartial persons," they wrote in their motion for a change of venue.

Attached to the motion were numerous local newspaper and Associated Press wire stories about the case.

The other motion asks the trial judge, James C. Evans, to impose a gag order that would bar prosecutors or any other state, county or city officials from discussing the case with the media.

Specifically Yarwood and Gentile objected to a statement to *The Vindicator* by Dawn Cantalamessa, an assistant county prosecutor, that both defendants had confessed.

Such public statements could prejudice potential trial jurors, the defense lawyers said.

Judge Evans has not yet ruled on the motions.

Attorney Thomas E. Zena, who represents Cooper, said he'll file a motion for a change of venue for his client, but Zena said he wouldn't file a motion for a gag order.

The trial dates for Brooks and Cooper are still unknown.



Martin



Evans



Cooper

JOBLESS

Continued from A1

thousands of Americans who, through no fault of their own, lost their job or their pensions and health-care benefits," Brown said. "We can't pass trade agreements that undermine Ohio workers, and then turn our backs on those workers when they lose their jobs."

Mary Ann Hudzik, vice president of Warren's Delphi Salaried Retiree Association, who also was at the One-Stop, said without extensions many Delphi retirees will have to go without health care.

The tax credit pays 80 percent of health-insurance premiums for qualified trade-affected workers and retirees.

Thousands of Delphi salaried retirees, including about 1,500 in the Mahoning Valley, lost health-care coverage and a portion of their pension when the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corp. took over the plan during the federal government's restructuring of General Motors in 2009.

Hudzik said she lost 40 percent of her pension and all of her health and life insurance.

The adjustment assistance provides training and re-employment services to workers who lost their jobs because of foreign trade.

Janet Cornwell, who spent 14 years at Delphi before losing her job when the work she did was outsourced to Mexico, is being trained in pharmacy technology at Mahoning County Career & Technical Center, funded by the federal

adjustment assistance program.

A single parent of two, Cornwell said Friday that he expects to graduate shortly and find a job with medical benefits.

The U.S. Senate on Dec. 23, the last day the legislative body met in 2010, voted to extend the two programs by six weeks. Funding for the programs were to expire Dec. 31.

Brown said it will be difficult to persuade enough Republican senators to continue the programs. Ideally, Brown said, the extensions should last 18 months.

After Friday's press conference, Brown was asked about any changes he's making in security at public events because of last Saturday's shootings in Tuscon, Ariz.

U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords was shot in the head by a gunman who opened fire at an event at which the congresswoman invited constituents to meet with her.

Six people were killed at the event. Giffords is among the 14 people wounded.

"I'm not going to run and hide," said Brown, who added he received death threats during the health-care debate.

Brown said he's asked local law enforcement agencies to provide security at certain events he feel could be unsafe in the past, and will do so in the future.

There was no security at Friday's event.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Honoring King, protesting Kasich

Union workers and community activists take part in a candlelight vigil to honor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and to protest some of new Ohio Gov. John Kasich's policies at city hall in downtown Cincinnati. The event took place Friday night. Monday is the national holiday honoring the civil-rights leader who was assassinated in Memphis, Tenn., on April 4, 1968.

Boardman bus accident

BOARDMAN

A Boardman school bus was involved in an accident around 3: 15 p.m. Friday at Westport Drive and Shields Road. The Ohio State Highway Patrol said that a male bus driver drove to Shields Road, began to cross it and the bus collided with a Ford Focus.

The bus driver was charged with failure to stop at a stop sign. The OSHP said that no one was taken from the scene for medical help. The patrol is still investigating the crash.

BOARDMAN

Continued from A1

then. The trustees will need to have a special meeting before Feb. 2 for a second reading, because after Jan. 24, their next regular meeting isn't until Feb. 14.

Loree said trustees do not want to wait until November for another chance at a levy, nor do they want to spend \$25,000 for a special election, which is why a May ballot issue is being sought.

Trustees are revisiting a levy because last fall's vote was so close.

"The community was really split. If a levy goes down by a big margin in May, the trustees will not go for it in November," Loree said. "There will be major restructuring of the township and a loss of services."

The November levy lost 8,473 to 8,043.

That restructuring could include 20 or more layoffs of the 132 township employees, Loree said.

At Monday's meeting Al Miller of Oak Knoll Drive said that he voted for the police levy but offered the trustees advice.

"If you want to sell additional levies, you need to be very specific about what that money is going to go for because right now I'm a little bit concerned," Miller said.

All three trustees answered that they will be as specific as possible and urged those attending to remind friends and neighbors to attend Jan. 24 or call the township with concerns at

POSSIBLE TAX LEVIES

Boardman Township trustees are seeking community input Jan. 24 on these three tax-levy options:

1.) 3.85-mill, five year additional police levy.

- ◆ **Police budget** is \$7 million. This levy will bring in an estimated \$3.6 million annually earmarked solely for the police department and primarily will be used to hire officers.
- ◆ **The general** fund money going to the police department will be scaled back, possibly by \$2 million, but the police budget will still increase to \$8.6 million.
- ◆ **The amount** returned to the general fund would be used to maintain current services in the township.

2.) 3.85-mill, five year additional fire levy.

- ◆ **The fire** department now has an annual budget of \$4.5 million, and 80 percent of it comes from the general fund. The levy will bring in an estimated \$3.6 million annually, specifically for the fire

department.

- ◆ **That 80** percent, about \$3.6 million, will be returned to the general fund and at least \$1.5 million will be reallocated to the police department for the hiring of officers.
- ◆ **Within the** fire department's current budget, \$700,000 is generated from a previous levy. If the additional fire levy passes, that \$700,000 would be set aside for capital projects in the department

3.) 3.85-mill, five year additional general-fund levy.

- ◆ **Township trustees** can decide where to allot the estimated \$3.6 million that would be generated annually.

4.) No levy

- ◆ **If no** levy is put on the May ballot, or is voted down, then residents will see a decrease in services and 20 township employees will likely be laid off.

330-726-4150.

Monday's meeting at St. John Greek Orthodox Church drew 15 residents, about three times the usual number, Calhoun said.

That location was specifically chosen for the first meeting because it is where residents of Newport Glen and Forest Glen vote. Three of the four precincts at that polling location heavily supported the November police levy.

The Jan. 24 trustees meeting will be at Trinity Fellow-

ship Church, 4749 South Ave. At that polling location, the levy was defeated by 89 votes.

Overall, support was lowest at the precincts that voted in Paul C. Bunn Elementary School, off of Sheridan. For precinct 39, which includes Sequoya, Holbrooke and Nova, 177 more people voted against the levy than supported it. That number was 78 for precinct 44, which includes the streets of Lealand, Lemont and Wolosyn.

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