

## Council to address right of way on Venture Boulevard

By **BRYAN SCHAAF**  
Staff Writer

WOOSTER — City Council will be asked to provide right of way access to facilitate drilling a gas well near Venture Boulevard when it convenes Monday for its first meeting of June.

The ordinance would allow

driller R.D. Wiles Inc. the ability to combine pieces of property split by the roadway to place a well on.

State law requires drillers to have 40 acres of contiguous property, which Wiles has if his property on each side of the road is allowed to be combined.

Mike Sigg, director of administration for the city, said roadways in the city differ from those in the county because the city actually owns the roads.

"Normally, a road isn't consider as being real property," Sigg said. "There, property owners really do own to the middle of the road. If you want

to annex property, the road essentially doesn't exist. In the city, we own the roads, so this would allow them to jump across the road and combine the properties."

In new business on Monday, council will be asked to pass legislation providing for the annual tax budget.

Also, the body will review a resolution authorizing the director of law to retain outside counsel for representation involving environmental issues.

Sigg said there is no litigation against the city, but administration is looking for counsel with expertise dealing with the

Ohio Environmental Protection Agency.

Council meets the first and third Mondays of each month at 538 N. Market St. All meetings begin at 7:30 p.m.

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## Awareness event

Third annual Kite Fest brings attention to fostering children

By **CHRIS LEONARD**  
Staff Writer

WOOSTER — It was sunny, somewhat windy weather Saturday at Kinney Field, a first in two years after poor, gray rainy weather, that led dozens of parents and children to the park for the third annual Foster Care Awareness Kidz Kite Fest, sponsored by Wayne County Children Services.

Kids and parents spent the afternoon at the park flying kites, getting faces painted, jumping in a bounce house, and overall enjoying good weather, helping celebrate National Foster Care Month.

Regina Schwartz, Foster Home Recruiter for Children Services, said the event was designed to not only bring people together, but help bring about awareness for fostering children.

Currently there are 121 kids in the department's care and about 51 families that foster children. Out of the 51 families, only eight specialize in teenage care, she said adding that 44 of the 121 kids in the department's care are teenagers.

"Anybody can do it," Schwartz said. "It doesn't take a superhuman. You just have to love kids and want to help."

For foster parent Tammy Yoder, of Apple Creek, you wouldn't have to call her superhuman, but dedicated would be a good choice of words. For the last 15 years, her family has fostered more than 20 kids.

"We never wanted to adopt. We always wanted to foster. Our intent was to save the world," she said.

And with each child the family has helped foster, she said the experience changes them for the better.

"A lot of it, I guess, is self-satisfaction. I see the kids, where they come from, where they go, it's amazing," Yoder said.

Helping with the event was the Ohio Society for the Elevation of Kites. Members stationed at a tent helped children all afternoon set up sled kites, of which they help make at least 1,200 a year, and tried to teach them the joys of flying a kite.

"It gets you outside, away from the TV, the phone and from work," Jim Gibson,



Asvin Gireesh, 9, of Wooster flies his kite in the air during the third annual Foster Care Awareness Kidz Kite Fest on Saturday.

Dan Starcher photos

society president said. "It's good stress relief, if the wind blows."

Harry Gregory, the society's director of operations, said the joy of flying a kite is that it's one of the least stressful activities.

"Once you have the kite, the work is done. The wind is free. Go enjoy it," he said.

Schwartz said the nature of kites, and the idea of flying high, was a perfect complement for the afternoon's activity to help promote awareness for National Foster Care Month.

"Especially with the economy being tough, it's nice to have a free family activity," Schwartz said.

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Beth Miller and her son Oliver, 2 1/2, of Wooster attempt to get their kite in the air.

## Northwestern OKs five-year forecast

By **CHRIS KICK**  
Staff Writer

NORTHWESTERN DISTRICT — The district's five-year forecast is in better shape than it was just three months ago, Treasurer Al Miller reported during the board's meeting Tuesday.

A big reason for the improvement was the retirement of 11 staff, including several teachers whose positions will not immediately be refilled.

"That has a major positive impact on the forecast," Miller said.

But he's still concerned about state funding, which comprises about 58 percent of the district's revenue. So far, the state has held up to its expectations, Miller said, but he expressed concern over the potential for cuts in June, the last month in the district's fiscal year.

"My feeling is we can get through the next three years," he said. "There is, unfortunately, the state income, the money from the state is about 58 percent of our total revenue and there is just a great deal of uncertainty in that."

The next three years show the district bringing in revenue and other financial support of about 11,660,000 for 2009, 11,800,000 for 2010, and about 12,000,000 for 2011.

Over the past three years, the district has averaged a revenue increase of about 3.8 percent, compared to the yearly increase in expenditures of about 2.3 percent.

Miller said the current fiscal year produced income tax revenue of about \$56,000 less than the previous year. However, last year's figure also included about \$130,000 in delinquent income taxes, which pushed the total up by that amount.

"If you remove that factor from last year's number, then this year we actually had an increase," he said.

Compared to other districts across the state, the district appears to be doing well financially, he explained. Last year, the state saw about a 22 percent drop in income tax revenue, he said, while Northwestern saw only a 4.5 percent drop, with some districts, such as Dalton, actually showing an increase.

"For whatever reason, it seems as though our little community hasn't been hit as hard," Miller said. "It's a confusing situation; we know that there are some jobs that have been lost in the area, but yet we have not been hit nearly as hard, at least thus far, as it has been statewide."

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## Holmes library transforms into family fun spot Saturday

By **CHRISTINE L. PRATT**  
Staff Writer

MILLERSBURG — Simultaneously advancing the objective of offering area teens options for good clean fun and promoting the library as a community center, Saturday's family fun fair promises a plethora of entertaining activities for all to enjoy.

"I would like to see it as an opportunity for the whole family to come out to the library, even if they've never been to the library before," said teen services specialist Jess Arnold. "The library really should be a community center, more than just a place to check out movies and books. People need to start thinking of the library as a place they can come as a family to spend time."

Starting at 2 p.m., the parking lot at the main branch of the Holmes County District Public Library will transform into a virtual playground, with the inflation of a bounce house for children, games, activities and fair-style food available for purchase.

All activities are free and, like parent-child races, are designed "to get mom and dad and the kids involved in the same things," Arnold said.

The winners of the Good Clean Fun poster and video contest will be announced at 4 p.m.

While disappointed there were not more entries, Arnold said there were a "couple in each category," enough to award \$400-\$500 in prizes.

"We got a lot of pictures taken around the county — iconic homes county images — of kids on the trail, riding bikes, playing music with their friends," Arnold said, adding, "As a whole, the entries show there are a lot of kids in Holmes County going out spending their time doing healthy, wholesome activities. There are kids who are conscious of the choices they make," Arnold said.

Helping Arnold to judge the contest were Holmes County

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## Man who wanted \$20 now faces prison for assault while attempting to steal purse

By **CHRIS LEONARD**  
Staff Writer

WOOSTER — A Wooster man pleaded guilty Thursday to assaulting a woman while attempting to steal her purse.

On the day he was to face a jury, Michael James Slaughter, 27, of 578 N. Grant St., pleaded guilty to one count of robbery, a third-degree felony, and one count of domestic violence, a first-degree misdemeanor. One count of theft, a fifth-degree felony, was dismissed.

The charges stem from an Oct. 6 incident in which Wooster Police where called to the intersection of Winter Street and Beall Avenue and found Slaughter and a 24-

year-old woman who reported Slaughter attacked her and stole her purse, according to an incident report.

The two were at a Beall Avenue business when the woman said she reluctantly agreed to give Slaughter \$20 to avoid a scene. She later tracked him to another business where she retrieved the bill from a counter where Slaughter was standing, according to the report.

She fled on foot, followed by Slaughter, who reportedly chased her to the intersection, where he grabbed her and tugged at her in an attempt to take the bill from within her bra, according to the report, which notes the woman said

Slaughter kicked her feet out from under her.

Slaughter grabbed her purse and pulled out a wallet, according to the report. When arrested at the scene, he was found in possession of the wallet.

Slaughter admitted to pushing her down and standing on top of her in an attempt to locate the money, according to the police report.

He faces five years in prison on the most serious charge. Following a presentence investigation, he will be sentenced July 15.

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## Trial of man accused of sexual conduct with 11-year-old in 1999 scheduled to begin

By **NICK SABO**  
Staff Writer

MILLERSBURG — A Kentucky man arrested in March on three counts of rape was first investigated for the same alleged crime in 1999.

John R. Yarnell, 29, of 438 Grayson Lake Drive, Lexington, was investigated in 1999 by the Holmes County Sheriff's Office for allegedly having sex with an 11-year-old girl. The girl disclosed Yarnell allegedly engaged in sexual conduct with her while residing in Holmes County over an 18-month period beginning in July 1996.

Holmes County Prosecuting Steve Knowling said Yar-

nell was investigated but no charges were filed.

A jury trial is scheduled in Holmes County Commons Pleas Court for Aug. 31. The trial date was extended Tuesday from June 15 at the request of Yarnell's attorney, Andrew Hyde. Hyde said part of the reason for extending the trial date was to further investigate the claims made by the girl in 1999.

The girl made the disclosure after having moved to Florida with her family, Knowling said. The investigation was reopened in January and Yarnell was arrested March 13.

Knowling said no charges were filed in 1999 because of

"complicating factors." The case was reopened to investigation "in part," Knowling said, after conversations with the alleged victim, now age 24.

"The (1999 disclosure) was made when the girl was out of state," Knowling said. "There were other complicating factors (and there was not) a full investigation at the time."

Hyde said Yarnell has been falsely accused, and the failure to bring charges in 1999 bears out that fact.

"He has maintained his innocence since day one," Hyde said. "You have these

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