

SPORTS



Triad girls top M'burg

Visiting Triad beat Mechanicsburg in OHC action Monday night ...
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Honda announces further cuts to production

By BREANNE PARCELS
Staff Writer

MARYSVILLE – Honda of America Manufacturing announced to associates Monday that it will cut production at the auto assembly plants in Marysville and East Liberty, as well as the Anna Engine Plant and Honda Transmission Manufacturing in Russells Point.

“We will further reduce production at the Marysville and East Liberty auto plants through additional non-production days and reduced daily output,” said Honda spokesman Ron Lietzke.

“Combined with an earlier announcement on Dec. 12, this results in canceling production on most Mondays and Fridays through the end of March 2009.”

Honda had planned to cut production in North America by 119,000 vehicles, according to the December statement.

“In Ohio, we’re looking at an additional 14,000 vehicles between the two plants,” Lietzke said. “The engine and transmission plants will face different scheduling restructuring because they supply not only the Ohio and Indiana assembly
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A PLACE FOR LOCAL ARTISTS



Citizen photo by Shaun Dunlap

Artist Paul Reif (left) and Building Owner Pat Thackery look through some of the works of art available at Scioto Street Gallery.

Downtown art gallery features local artists' work

By SHAUN DUNLAP
Citizen Correspondent

In spite of the often cloudy, overcast days of winter, one new shop in downtown Urbana is determined to keep things bright and colorful.

The Scioto Street Gallery opened in December 2008 and features art created by local artists.

Currently supplying the gallery with merchandise are Paul Reif, Kay Nutter, Debbie Loffing, Linnae Wilson and Jane Bauer.

“We’re hoping to get more (artists) out of the woodwork,” said building owner Pat Thackery.

“We need to add some culture to the downtown area if we’re going to stimulate the economy in Urbana,” he said, adding it helps that all the artists currently providing work for the gallery live in Champaign County and represent it well.

Thackery said putting an art gallery in the building was more practical than letting it stay empty. “There’s too many empty storefronts in Urbana now, anyway.”

After Thackery contacted Reif regarding the idea, it was only a matter of a three weeks before five acclaimed Champaign County artists were on board and the store was full of art for sale.

Reif said the gallery has oils, pastels, acrylics, pen and ink, photographs, stain glass, pottery and more. “We want to keep

a balance of all mediums and type of work, from abstract to realism,” he said, adding that selections will be changed every couple months and will be appropriate to the season.

“We’re planning on having different openings (shows),” he said. For example, he suggested having a show on Valentine’s Day with all the pieces done in red.

There is a possibility of the gallery hosting workshops, he added. “Being this new to the game, we haven’t any solid thoughts, yet.” He said he is pretty sure the artists will have something special planned for the next Art Affair on the Square next July.

Reif said he would like to have a one-man-show. “Right now, it would probably just be one wall (dedicated to a single artist), but someday it could take up the whole gallery.”

All the pieces in the gallery are available for purchase, Reif said. He encouraged local patrons to stop. “Over 50 percent of the paintings are scenes of Champaign County,” he said.

All the artists do commissioned work, according to Reif, who said prospective buyers wanting a specific piece created can contact artists through the gallery.

Current hours are noon to 5 p.m. on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Reif said the gallery will have extended hours in the summer. Customers also can set up appointments by calling 788-2239.

Oak Dale gazebo to be rebuilt

Recreation projects on tap

By KATHLEEN FOX
Assistant Editor

Today’s agenda is the longest the Urbana City Council has seen for a while and includes guaranteed and hoped-for funds to provide recreation and to clean up foreclosed and abandoned properties.

Meeting at 7 p.m. today in the municipal building, the council also will accept a number of communications, including notices of county commission action creating a county Economic Development office and authorizing Urbana Director of Administration Bruce Evilsizor and County Administrator Andrea Millice to seek resumes from those applying for the Economic Development Director position.

Evilsizor said a committee that includes County Commissioner Max Coates and Councilmen Bill Bean and Larry Lokai is reviewing a draft copy of a job description that will be advertised in newspapers and on Web sites such as the Ohio Municipal League’s and the Ohio City-County Managers Association’s.

He said resumes will be accepted until the position is filled, which will not be until at least the end of February. He added a committee will review resumes and make a recommendation to the county commission. The person selected will be employed by the county to head economic development efforts in the entire county, including in Urbana.

Incoming funds

The city intends to have a new gazebo at Oak Dale Cemetery’s Soldiers Mound in time for the Memorial Day observance. Remnants of Hurricane Ike demolished the previous gazebo Sept. 14. The council will consider a \$4,457 purchase order to Country Variety Store for a replacement. Insurance is paying \$4,197 toward the cost.

The city is applying for the \$23,072 NatureWorks funding available this year to Champaign County through the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. The first reading of a resolution authorizing application for funds is on today’s agenda.

Code Enforcement Officer Doug Crabill said funding would purchase new playground equipment for Melvin Miller Park and make the playground area compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. This will include creating paved paths in the playground area.

In addition to the \$23,072 grant, the city would contribute \$5,768 in funds or in-kind contributions.

Crabill said the city should know whether it is receiving the funds by late summer.

At the request of the Simon Kenton Pathfinders, the agenda includes an application for Clean Trails dollars from the state so the multi-use Kenton Trail can be extended from the depot on Miami Street to the northern edge of the city. A few bridges in the city need to be improved if the trail is to be extended from here to Bellefontaine.

The city is merely a pass-through agency for funding and would only assist with in-kind contributions, rather than money. The Pathfinders intend to raise the needed dollars for a local match.

Improving properties

Guaranteed federal funding is coming the city’s way via the Neighborhood Stabilization Program, which will allow communities to buy and redevelop foreclosed and abandoned properties. The council will consider a resolution authorizing the administration to enter into an agreement to secure \$245,945 earmarked for the city. A similar amount is earmarked for the county commission.

Other agenda items include:

- The second reading of a three-year agreement between the city and patrol officers. The agreement includes 2 1/4 percent increases in salary ranges each of the three years.

- The first reading of an ordinance adding a high-volume category to sewage fees. This new category will provide a financial break for industries with high volumes of sewage. Evilsizor said no current industry in the city qualifies, but that the former paper mill would have qualified. He said this lower rate may be an incentive for industries moving into this area.

- A \$40,000 purchase order to Pioneer Electric for 2009 electric usage at the new West state Route 29 well field.

- An \$8,959 purchase order to Ohio Valley Integration Services for holding cell intercom and camera systems.

- A \$3,210 purchase order to Smartbill for 72,000 pre-printed forms and 55,000 envelopes for utility billing.

- A \$20,400 purchase order to Mulch Plus to double grind brush from the Sept. 14 wind storm. The Federal Emergency Management Agency will reimburse 75 percent of this cost.

- A \$14,360 contract with Airport Manager Carol Hall for 2009. The funds are to be paid in monthly increments of \$1,196.67.

- A \$13,844 purchase order to Neptune Equipment to replace two water division handheld meter readers.

- A \$10,484 purchase order to Gardner Denver for three aeration blowers at the wastewater treatment plant.

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NEWS



Notes from the Bog

Read all about the small but mighty chickadee ...
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Senate OKs 4-month delay to digital TV changeover

By JOELLE TESSLER
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate on Monday voted unanimously to postpone the upcoming transition from analog to digital television broadcasting by four months to June 12.

The vote is a big victory for the Obama administration and Democrats in Congress, who have been pushing for a delay amid growing concerns that too many Americans won’t be ready for the currently scheduled Feb. 17 changeover.

The Nielsen Co. estimates that more than 6.5 million U.S. households that rely on analog television sets to pick up over-the-air broadcast signals could see their TV sets go dark next month if the transition is not postponed.

“Delaying the upcoming DTV switch is the right thing to do,” said Senate Commerce Committee Chairman Jay Rockefeller, D-W.Va., author of the bill to push back the deadline. “I firmly believe that our nation is not yet ready to make this transition at this time.”

The issue now goes to the House. House Commerce Committee Chairman Henry Waxman, D-Calif., has scheduled a committee vote
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