

BOONE COUNTY GOLF COURSE MANAGER FIRED OVER UNREPORTED WAGE ISSUE [Page C2]



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KENTUCKY



Bunning's back to help sheriff with re-election

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SEVERE FREEZE SWEEPS THROUGH REGION



Damaged pipes, energy usage peak as temperatures fall

By Bowdeya Tweh and Adam Kiefaber
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Frozen pipes and the potential of higher heating bills pose a hangover from this week's cold spell.

Around Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky, the sub-zero temperatures and rapid thaw are causing havoc for pipes, drains and the people who service them. Thousands of people – from individual residents to multifamily property owners to University of Cincinnati

students and Hamilton County workers – are dealing with the damage from pipes bursting.

Greg Zarick, Cincinnati branch manager for Roto-Rooter Plumbing and Drain Services, said the volume of calls reached a level unseen in years.

“We probably in the past several days have gotten several hundred calls about frozen pipes and all of last winter, we had 20 or 30,” he said.

Michael Helbling, fire captain of Engine 14 in downtown Cincinnati, said, “We were going run to run to run Wednesday morning. It was one after another.”

Helbling said Cincinnati firefighters typically go on about 225 runs a day. On Wednesday, the department had responded to more than 250 calls by 4 p.m. Helbling personally made 10

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Jim Egloff, a maintenance technician for Time Warner Cable, repairs a cable line damaged by a house fire on Messmer Hill Road in Campbell County on Wednesday. The fire in the unoccupied home was started by a space heater. THE ENQUIRER/PATRICK REDDY

Bunning will run sheriff's re-election bid

By Scott Wartman
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Former U.S. Sen. Jim Bunning will come out of retirement at the age of 82 – to manage the re-election campaign of a Northern Kentucky sheriff.

The former major league right-hander has kept a low profile since leaving the Senate in 2011. But now he's signed up to manage Campbell County Sheriff Jeff Kidwell's re-election.

Kidwell won election last November as sheriff to fill the unexpired term of John Dunn, who retired after 25 years as sheriff. His term ends at the end of the year.

"I am so proud that Jim has agreed to come out of retirement to manage my re-election campaign," Kidwell said in a statement. "I don't think I could find a better mentor, political strategist and friend than Jim Bunning. I will make good use of his knowledge and work ethic for the people of Campbell County."

Kidwell previously served as constable in Campbell County and is chairman of the Campbell County GOP. He received a citation in 2013 from the Kentucky House of Representatives for his work in the sheriff's office.

"Being the first Republican to hold the office of sheriff in Campbell County in forty years, and because of all the streamlining, modernization and other improvements on both the fiscal and law enforcement segments, I hope that the citizens of Campbell County will allow me to continue my work," Kidwell said in a statement.

Two opponents have announced as challengers against Kidwell so far: Republican and former Campbell County, Newport and Fort Thomas police officer Mike Jansen, and Democrat and Alexandria resident Scott Hildebrand. ■

Campaign boosts college in 4 years

Associated Press

FRANKFORT — A statewide campaign is urging Kentucky's students to complete 15-credit schedules each semester to finish college faster.

The "15 to Finish" campaign announced Wednesday is promoted as a way to save time and money by encouraging full course schedules. Supporters say it will get students into the workforce sooner.

Lt. Gov. Jerry Abramson says the campaign will help supply Kentucky with a highly trained workforce.

The campaign is a project of Kentucky's colleges and universities and the Council on Postsecondary Education. The council's president, Bob King, says "time is money" when it comes to on-time graduation. He says students pile up less debt when they can avoid extra semesters.

The council says most full-time students take 12 credit hours, but can stay on track for on-time graduation by adding one more class per semester. ■

After 12 years, a swan song for Fort Thomas' Vito's Cafe

Italian restaurant known for its singing servers

By Shauna Steigerwald
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Vito's Cafe, the Italian restaurant with the singing servers in Fort Thomas, has closed.

"After a lot of thought and analysis, we have decided to close Vito's Cafe," said Vito Ciepiel, who owns the restaurant with his wife, Mary. "We truly regret having to make this decision, but our customer counts are really down. With over 30 new restaurants opening this past year in the Downtown, Over-the-Rhine, The Banks and the Horseshoe Casino areas, perhaps this was inevitable.

"That aside, for our 12 years, we always strove for, and achieved, the highest standards," he said, noting that the restaurant has earned various accolades over the years, including a nomination for best restaurant of the year for 2013 from the Kentucky Restaurant Association and diner's choice awards in three categories from OpenTable.

The restaurant served its last meal to 200 diners on New Year's Eve. It's currently closed for the Ciepiels' scheduled vacation until



Vito's customer counts are down, the owner says, citing competition in downtown Cincinnati, Over-the-Rhine, The Banks and Horseshoe Casino. ENQUIRER FILE

Jan. 15, but it won't reopen, he said. "I'm happy to have gone out with a bang," he said.

Ciepiel said that Vito's may re-

open "someday, somewhere." In the meantime, he said he's grateful to the patrons that have supported the restaurant during its 12-year run. ■

Fort Mitchell officials won't rescind resolution rebuking councilwoman

Dispute arose over allegedly false email

By Cindy Schroeder
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FORT MITCHELL — One month after Fort Mitchell Councilwoman Vicki Boerger was publicly reprimanded for allegedly fabricating an email and lying about it, council rejected pleas from Boerger and her supporters to issue a formal apology and rescind its resolution criticizing her.

Monday's vote was 4 to 3 against rescinding a Dec. 2 resolution reprimanding Boerger.

Last month, The Enquirer reported Councilman Ray Heist claimed in a resolution that Boerger created a "fictitious and false" email questioning whether he lived in Fort Mitchell and was entitled to serve on council. The resolution claimed the email cost "thousands of dollars in city attorney fees," although City Attorney Rob Ziegler later said his research was covered under his annual retainer. The resolution also accused Boerger of violating her "fiduciary duties and public trust." Council approved the resolution by a vote of 4-1.

A subsequent investigation by Ziegler determined that Heist, who temporarily lived outside Fort Mitchell while going through a divorce, did so because of "circumstances beyond his control" and

hadn't technically changed his residence.

Monday, Councilmen Dennis Zahler and Dan Rice joined Boerger in supporting her motion to rescind last month's city resolution reprimanding her. Members Heist, Frank Hicks, Jim Hummendorf and Kim Nachazel voted against it. Councilwoman Mary Burns, who abstained in last month's vote criticizing Boerger, was absent.

In a letter Boerger read to council Monday, she said she "has honestly and faithfully served" Fort Mitchell residents for 16 years. She said a majority of council had found her guilty "without documented proof" and she accused her fellow city officials of "libel, slander and defamation of (her) good character." She asked that the resolution be rescinded and a formal apology issued.

Among those expressing support Monday were three family members and two other residents.

"We as citizens paid for 15 to 20 minutes (at the December council meeting) to allow the city attorney to rework a resolution that was not on the agenda, was not read by some of the council members (and) was not a valid resolution as prepared," said resident Diane Becker.

Boerger's husband, Mark Boerger, presented council with his research showing an IP address linking the email in question to Children's Hospital Medical Center. He also presented copies of emails

between his wife and Mayor Chris Wiest, none of which questioned the validity of the emails.

Hummendorf said he understood Mark Boerger's point about the IP address, but he said when city officials tried to contact Mary Lang, the purported author of the email, their research showed that the email address did not exist, and had not existed for some time. Last month, Wiest also said city employees found no Mary Lang on the city tax rolls and no phone listing for a Fort Mitchell resident by that name.

After Mr. Boerger told council Monday that his wife doesn't delete her emails, Hicks asked that a computer be brought into council chambers so that officials could log onto Vicki Boerger's personal email account.

Vicki Boerger said that according to the Kentucky League of Cities, she "(was) not legally obligated to prove or disprove anything" and that the documentation her husband provided to council should be sufficient. She later said she and her husband have offered to let council or the city attorney examine her computer on three separate occasions, but city officials haven't taken the Boergers up on their offer.

"Everything my husband presented on paper (to council) Monday is the exact same thing that's in my computer," Boerger said. ■

Community Recorder reporter
Melissa Stewart contributed.