2020 in review

Mohawk joins pipeline coalition

Mohawk Local Schools Board of Education has unanimously voted to join the Ohio School Pipeline Coalition.

The membership fee is $500, reported school treasurer Rhonda Feasel when the board met March 10. The purpose of the coalition is to "even the playing field," she said. "The gas and oil lobby is very strong in Ohio."

Between 30-40 schools have joined the coalition to advocate that the Rover Pipeline re-valuation petition does not go through, she said.

Rover Pipeline is seeking a reduction in valuation of 43 percent, which would reduce Mohawk's anticipated tax revenues by approximately $730,000.

Carey refinances building debt

The Carey Board of Education has refinanced the $10.5 million debt on its school building, expected to save the school nearly $2.6 million over the life of the bonds.

The school board approved the "advanced refunding of most of the school's bonded debt" March 9. Bonds priced on Feb. 12 will cut interest costs 24.5 percent over time, saving the school nearly $2.6 million in interest, according to school treasurer Karen Phillips.

Spring sports on hold for now

Due to the coronavirus the Ohio High School Athletic Association has banned spring sports practices and scrimmages of member schools until at least April 5.

Unless new directions are issued from the governor's office, practices may begin on Monday, April 6, and scrimmages and contests can start April 11.

If school re-opens April 6, practices will resume that day and current tournament dates will remain as scheduled.

Mandates from the governor's office or public health officials could postpone the season further or cancel it entirely.

Fantasy of Lights awards $101,000

Upper's Winter Fantasy of Lights has awarded $101,000, in grants to the following local groups:

Wyandot County 4-H, $20,000; Wyandot County EMS, $27,000; City of Upper Sandusky Parks, $30,000 and Frank Shuleski for Youth Organization, $24,000.

Carey, Sycamore close village offices

Both Carey and Sycamore have implemented precautionary steps against the spread of the coronavirus.

The villages announced the closure of their offices to the public, and Carey Police Department and Sycamore Fire & Rescue are asking residents to limit their calls to emergencies.

While the villages apologize for the inconvenience, both noted their commitment to keeping the public informed as changes develop and thanked their residents for their support.

April

COVID-19 pandemic ends their dream

For the first time since the World War II era, the Ohio High School Athletic Association has canceled sports events.

OHSAA Executive Director Jerry Snodgrass made the announcement on March 26 that all ice hockey, wrestling and basketball tournaments were shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

All three athletic tournaments had previously been indefinitely postponed due to the coronavirus outbreak. There was hope that the tournaments would be able to be delayed but with Governor Mike DeWine's decision to shut down the schools that option was put in jeopardy. The extension of the stay-at-home order by the governor put OHSAA in a no win situation.

"We are just devastated that the tournaments cannot be completed," Snodgrass, an Upper Sandusky High School graduate, said via a news release. "But our priority is the safety our student-athletes, coaches, communities and officials. Governor Mike DeWine is asking all Ohioans to do everything they can to stop the spread of the virus. That request, along with our schools not being able to reopen for weeks, means that school sports cannot happen at this time.

"Even if our schools reopen this spring, it will be difficult to find facilities willing to hold the tournaments," Snodgrass continued. "Most campuses are shut down until mid to late summer. We are already planning on ways that these student athletes will be honored at next year's tournaments."

Locally the cancellation affects four Northern 10 Athletic Conference wrestlers and the Upper Sandusky boys basketball team. Tanner May (Carey), Morgan Price (Mohawk), James Clouse (Mohawk) and Emery Pahl (Upper Sandusky) all earned their way to the 83rd edition of the state wrestling tournament. The Rams basketball team had advanced to the regional tourney where they were scheduled to take on Lima Shawnee, the state's top-ranked squad.

Local food pantries remain open

Food pantries in Carey and Sycamore remain open during the coronavirus pandemic, and food pantry boxes located throughout the area are being stocked for anyone who might need the extra assistance.

Voting continues until April 28

Voters have until April 28 to cast their ballot in the Ohio Primary Election. All voting will be done by absentee ballot, following postponement of March 17 in-person voting due to the coronavirus.

There are only two Wyandot County races, both in the Republican party.

Brad Batton is challenging incumbent Steve Seitz for Wyandot County Commissioner and Roger Hetzel and Todd Frey are running for sheriff to replace Wyandot County Sheriff Mike Hetzel, who is retiring. No Democrats are running for those offices.

A temporary respiratory clinic at Wyandot Memorial Hospital is being used to assess a patient's COVID-19 symptoms of fever, cough and shortness of breath to determine if further treatment is necessary or if home care is appropriate. Photo by Lori Musgrave.

Heavy rains Saturday evening and early Sunday morning caused flooding and headaches for some local homeowners. The water subsided as quickly as it rose but high winds remained. The wind caused some electrical outages in the Carey area when lines were taken down by a fallen tree. Photo by Mike Lang.

State of emergency in Wyandot County

The Wyandot County Commissioners have declared a state of emergency within the county.

The decision was made after consideration of the national and state emergency declarations and the first documented case of coronavirus in the county, according to Commissioner Bill Clinger.

The resolution, passed March 26, calls for all public offices and employees of Wyandot County "to exercise the utmost diligence in the discharge of duties required of them for the duration of the emergency and in execution of emergency laws, regulations, and directives from state authorities and local authorities."

The courthouse will be closed to the public, except for appointments, attorneys, court cases, etc., Clinger explained. Employees will still staff the courthouse and answer the phones.

The resolution also calls upon citizens to "comply with necessary emergency measures, to cooperate with public officials, safety services, disaster management, or health officials in executing emergency operations plans, and to obey and comply with the lawful directions of properly identified officers."

Judge closes court for two weeks

Wyandot County Common Pleas Court Judge Kate Aubry has closed all divisions of the common pleas court for two weeks.

"Continuing to hold non-emergency court hearings brings people together and proper distancing may not be able to be achieved in the room provided," Aubry stated in a judgment entry.

"Different technological platforms have been explored but have proven unworkable," the judge continued.

The court will continue to be open for emergency matters, but limited to the parties involved.

Those with an emergency that needs to be addressed by the court are directed to contact their local law enforcement agency.

Commissioners meet by teleconference

The Wyandot County Commissioners have begun holding their meetings via teleconference.

The move allows them to follow the sunshine laws while practicing social distancing during the coronavirus.

The teleconference sessions will be held on Monday and Thursday of each week at 10:30 a.m. and continue for the duration of the coronavirus crisis.

Anyone who wishes to enter a topic of discussion should contact the clerk prior to the meeting to be placed on the agenda. The phone number for the commissioners office is 419-294-3836. If someone needs to talk to the board directly, a link for the conference call will be provided.

Volunteers offer residents assistance

A group of Sycamore volunteers recently canvassed the town, dropping off packages. The goal is to make sure residents have access to assistance if they need it while separated due to the coronavirus.

The group assembled nearly 200 packages, which contained a large card with one green side and one red side, a list of eight contact numbers and homemade masks.

The red and green cards can be placed in a street-facing window. Green signals that everything is okay and red means the resident needs assistance.

The packages include a list of contact numbers residents can contact if they need help. Volunteers can pick up groceries and prescriptions and assist with meals.

Nathan Curtis new village administrator

Nathan Curtis has been appointed the new village administrator of the Village of Carey.

Curtis served as assistant administrator under Roy Johnson, who retired as administrator at the end of March, and has worked for the village for approximately two years.

Scheck named Carey solicitor

Laurie Scheck has been appointed the new solicitor for the Village of Carey.

Scheck is an attorney with Stansbery, Schoenberger & Scheck Attorneys at Law. The law firm maintains offices in Upper Sandusky and in Carey at the Times Building. She served as the village's solicitor from 2005 to 2010.

Scheck follows Kathy Collins, who announced her resignation as solicitor last month to become the county magistrate.

Carey expects 20 percent budget cuts

Carey and other municipalities throughout Ohio are bracing for a 20 percent budget loss due to the coronavirus.

"Expect cuts of 20 percent to the budget," Mayor Jennifer Rathburn told council when members met via Zoom, a video conference app, April 6.

The village will have to start the process of looking at essential spending, according to the mayor.

Council member Robert Styer Jr. pointed out the loss of income tax caused by Hanon Systems' suspension of operations and only essential employees working at Continental Structural Plastics. The mayor said about 20 percent of the CSP workforce is essential.

Harry's moving to medical center

Harry's Pharmacy will be open at its new location in the Carey Medical Center complex Monday, April 20.

Formerly located at 101-103 E. Findlay Street, Harry's will begin moving to 930 Sheriden Drive, Suite C, after the downtown store closes on Friday, April 17. Harry's will be closed Saturday, April 18, and will open at its new location on Monday at 8:30 a.m.

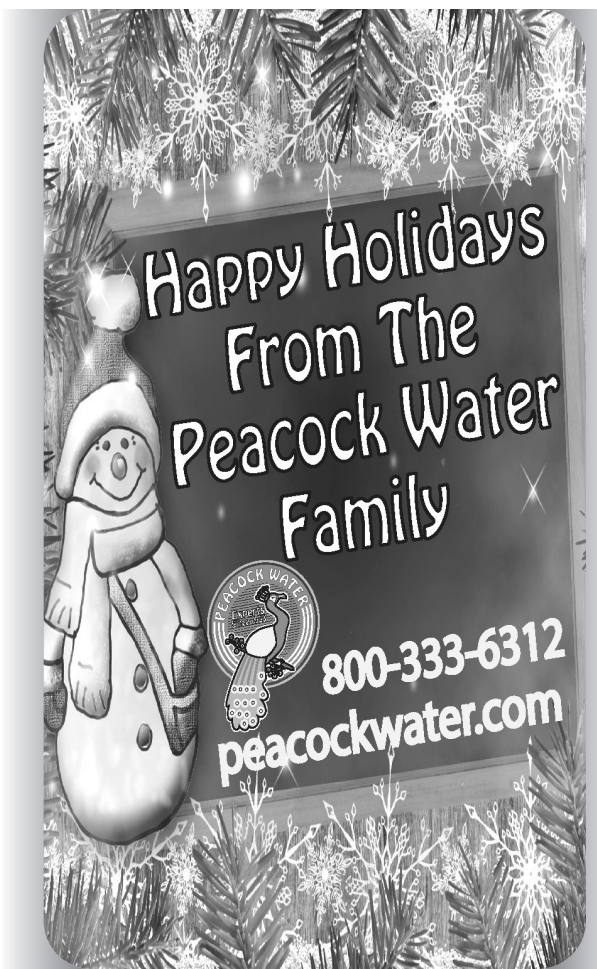
Business sold to BVHS.

Randy Myers, in his 30th year of ownership of Harry's, has also announced the sale of the pharmacy business to Blanchard Valley Health System. Myers will become the pharmacy manager at the new Carey location.

Dave Myers, Randy's father, owned Harry's Pharmacy for 25 years and Harry Myers, Randy's grandfather, owned it for 29 years before that. All three of the men were graduates of the Ohio Northern University School of Pharmacy.

CHS Class of 2020 car parade Saturday

Carey High School seniors will participate in a car parade through Carey Saturday, April 25, beginning at 5 p.m.

Seniors will decorate their vehicles and the best decorated vehicles will be awarded $50 or $25 gas cards. The parade will be escorted by first responders.

Community members are invited to observe the parade to help celebrate the class of 2020. The route will be as follows: Glenn Avenue to E. South Street to S. Patterson Street to Grove Street to High Street to E. Findlay Street to West Street to CH 96 to W. Findlay Street to S. Vance Street back to the school.