

# Record-Courier

HAPPY  
Father's Day!

## Farm tax break would hurt homeowners

State plan would mean higher taxes, less money for schools

By **JIM SIEGEL**  
GateHouse Ohio Media

A plan by legislative Republicans to give a tax break to farmers would mean higher property taxes for Ohio homeowners and less revenues for schools.

According to an analysis of proposed farmland value changes in the new two-year state budget, Ohio homeowners face more than \$60 million in unvoted property tax increases, while schools could face a loss of \$58 million in state

and local tax revenue. That comes as 439 school districts would see either state funding cuts, or increases of less than 1 percent per year under the proposed budget.

GOP leaders want to give a break to farmers who faced significant property tax increases due to rising values. But because of how property taxes work in Ohio, lowering farm values means homeowners in more than 500 school districts would see the tax burden shift to them for

levies already in place.

The plan would lower agricultural land values by roughly 30 percent through a change to the Current Agricultural Use Value, or CAUV. The complex formula reduces the taxable value of farmland — currently less than 55 percent of market value — by using an “agricultural use” value rather than a “fair market” value.

“Really what we’re looking for is to make sure this formula is accurate,” said Leah Curtis, policy counsel for the Ohio Farm Bureau.

“There are portions of the formula that need to be more tied to the farm economy ... so farmers have an accurate property value like everyone else does.”

But in Ohio, reducing farm values has consequences.

According to Howard Fleeter, analyst with the Ohio Education Policy Institute, in 65 school districts with high concentrations of farmland, homeowners would see property

See Page A2 | Break

DISTRICT MILLAGE INCREASE

Aurora	.02
Crestwood	.28
Field	.13
Garfield	.28
Kent	.03
Ravenna	.12
Rootstown	.23
Southeast	.33
Streetsboro	.07
Waterloo	.51
Windham	.36

## Portage celebrates fatherhood

## Area funeral homes deal with fallout from cemetery

Families cheated by Grandview need to make new arrangements

By **DIANE SMITH**  
Staff Writer

They thought they had it all planned out.

But one by one, families are coming to local funeral homes to make changes to their final arrangements which, it turns out, are not so final after all.

Ron Spicer of Shorts, Spicer and Crislip Funeral Home in Ravenna and Streetsboro, said roughly half a dozen families have come to his funeral home to update their pre-need agreements, because Grandview Cemetery in Ravenna Township, at least for now, won't be honoring “pre-need” items with deed holders at the cemetery.

“They each paid \$9,000 and thought they had it all worked out, and now they’ve paid \$18,000 for

two plots of land,” Spicer said. “It’s put a lot of people in a difficult situation.”

For generations, the privately owned Grandview Cemetery has billed itself as a “one stop shop,” offering its plot owners not only the land, but vaults, caskets, urns, grave markers and the eventual opening and closing of their graves.

Now that the cemetery’s owners, Theodore “Ted” Martin and his wife, Arminda, are both serving prison sentences for tax evasion, Stephen Colecchi, a local attorney, has been appointed to run the cemetery while a lawsuit is pending. Colecchi has said that although he can still provide families with their cemetery plots, families are on their own when it

See Page A3 | Fallout



Passages and Portage County Job & Family Services hosted the fourth annual Portage County Fatherhood Celebration on Saturday at Brown Middle School in Ravenna. The free event featured games, a petting zoo, pony rides, inflatables, free car seat checks, face painting, bicycle giveaways, crafts, refreshments and more. Billy Liber, of Passages, gives his daughter, Maryn Liber, 2, of North Canton, a kiss.

Amanda Woolf photo/Record-Courier

## Hiram animal rehab program expands

College's Field Station celebrates many changes over 50 years

By **KELLY MAILE**  
Staff Writer

Fifty years after biology professor James H. Barrow founded Hiram College's Field Station, his former student Jim Metzinger has taken over research and wildlife rehabilitation at the facility near campus.

As director, Metzinger has grown the bird rehabilitation program and allowed students of all majors to engage in research projects at the 550-acre facility.

“I always want to include everyone,” Metzinger said. “A lot of previous directors wanted to keep it to the biology students. For me, it’s about working with all the students.”

Over time, the biggest change at the Field Station “has been in the animal col-

lection and the way they’re housed and cared for.”

“Back then, most of what we had were part of an exotic collection of animals that James H. Barrow, the prof and founder of the Field Station, thought would be good to have for students to observe,” Metzinger said. Rhea, deer, fox and pheasant were among the animals roaming the grounds.

But Metzinger has put a focus on bird rehabilitation. The Field Station has a rehabilitation facility with incubators and duck docks and a newly built raptor flight cage to ready birds for release back into the wild.

“We do bird rehabilitation for the state of Ohio,” Metzinger said. “We have about 30 birds that we’re



Director Jim Metzinger at the James H. Barrow Field Station, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary.

currently rehabbing.”

One of the most unique things about the Field Station is that college students

— biology and art majors alike — get hands-on experience working in wildlife rehabilitation.

“We haven’t had loons in years, but we just got two

See Page A2 | Expands

86°  
66°

**INDEX**

Classifieds	D1
Crossword	D4
Deaths	A7
Gateway News	B5
Sound Off	D3
TV	L3

**Good morning**  
A special good morning to Record-Courier subscriber Steve Francis of Rootstown.

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