

# DEEPER INTO THE PLAYOFFS

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL COVERAGE IN SPORTS

**NORTHWOOD . . . . . 7**  
**JIMTOWN . . . . . 16**  
**CONCORD . . . . . 23**  
**LOWELL . . . . . 60**

**BREMEN . . . . . 27**  
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# The Elkhart Truth

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## A view for sale

A ski resort two decades ago, Elkhart County's highest point goes to auction



Truth Photos By J. Tyler Klassen

Above, Loyal Wilson walks across the top of Buzzard Hill on Friday. When Wilson started Mt. Wawasee on Buzzard Hill, it was the first ski hill in Indiana. The property will be auctioned Nov. 14. Below, Wilson talks about the experience of owning Indiana's first ski hill.

Buzzard Hill, known as Mt. Wawasee for 25 years of skiing, will be open to the public Sunday then auctioned off Nov. 14.

BY JUSTIN LEIGHTY  
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NEW PARIS — An auction next week could open up the county's highest point to future possibilities.

But whether it's purchased for a ski resort, a sledding hill, a retreat center, a gravel pit or any other use is anyone's guess.

It's been a couple of decades since anyone skied down the slopes at the Mt. Wawasee ski resort on Buzzard Hill, but anybody with interest in the 55-acre property can go Sunday afternoon to look around.

Sunday's open house runs from 1 to 3 p.m. at the hill, 18646 C.R. 50. The auction will happen Nov. 14 at 10 a.m.

The Buzzard Hill name comes from the Buzzard family of Foraker who once owned it. In the 1940s Paul and Helen Christner bought the hill, and in 1962 a group of three investors opened up Mt. Wawasee. They sold it in the late '70s, and it closed in 1987.

The Christners died in 1996, and a legal battle erupted among their survivors. In 2006 the property sold at a sheriff's sale to the Christners' three grandsons: Brian Christner, Chris Begley and Brad Begley. Their aunt bid against them at that time, but is now deceased.

The brothers kept everything the same since then and decided it's time to sell the property.

There's a ski lodge that needs work, the framework of an old chair lift, and some disconnected snow-making

equipment. At the 1,041-foot summit of the hill a deck provides views of Syracuse and Goshen.

It sits on a lot of rock, too. The second-place bidder in the 2006 auction, Barney Beer of Elkhart County Sand & Gravel, said he's not sure if he's going to try again to buy the hill for gravel. "With the way the economy is, I just don't know," he said.

The economy also has Brian Christner wondering if it will sell. "I don't have a crystal ball," he said.

However, he pointed out it has "the best view in northern Indiana."

Christner also said, "In my heart it's a crown jewel in Elkhart County. It's just a spectacular piece of property."

That, said Brandon Steffen, who's handling the auction, should insulate it from economic woes. "I don't have as much concern for a property like this because it's so unique."

The property will sell as four parcels, though the owners hope all four go to the same person.

There will be a reserve price, Steffen said, though Christner said it hasn't been set.

"There's a lot of good interest in the property," Steffen said.

Tomorrow's open house could allow people to relive some history. "We certainly invite the community to come out and look at the property, reminisce, there's a lot of great memories, walk to the top, you can see for miles," Steffen said.

For more information on the auction check out [www.mtwawasee.com](http://www.mtwawasee.com) or [www.steffengrp.com](http://www.steffengrp.com).



## Reflections on a hill's history

BY JUSTIN LEIGHTY  
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NEW PARIS — In the early 1960s, Loyal Wilson went skiing and broke his leg.

The experience would've turned some people off from the sport. Instead, it gave Wilson an idea: Why not build a ski resort in northern Indiana?

"I had too much time on my hands to dream," Wilson joked Friday inside the ski lodge he, a friend and their pastor built.

"The hardest part was finding a hill. I scoured northern Indiana," Wilson said. Most hills had a gradual slope to the north and the steep side to the south. Since the sun isn't kind to snow, a steep southern exposure wouldn't work. Then they found Buzzard Hill and convinced Paul Christner to lease it to them.

"We added 40 feet to the top of the hill," they got a ski safety expert from Michigan to engineer the ski area and the head of a T-bar lift company in New York came and helped with

Please see **HISTORY, A2**

## Jobless benefits extended

President Obama has signed a bill providing up to 20 weeks of extra assistance and an extension of the tax credit for homebuyers.

BY MARILYN ODENDAHL  
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A new round of unemployment relief coming from the federal government is expected to be in Hoosier pockets by Thanksgiving.

President Barack Obama signed a \$24 billion economic stimulus bill into law Friday, giving tax incentives to prospective homebuyers and additional jobless benefits to those idled by the business slump. The Indiana Department of Workforce Development anticipates providing those payments to eligible residents beginning the week of Nov. 23.

For Elkhart County, one of the most economically depressed areas of the country, the extension is a "tremendous blessing," said Dean Preheim-Bartel, executive director of Church Community Services in Elkhart. With up to 20 weeks of extra assistance available, struggling local families will be able to stay in their houses through the winter months instead of losing their shelter and having to live on the streets.

The bill signing came a day after the House, displaying rare bipartisan agreement over the troubling employment picture nationally, voted 403-12 to pass the measure. The Senate approved it unanimously on Wednesday.

The White House said the law, which also includes tax cuts for struggling businesses, builds on the provision in the \$787 billion stimulus package enacted in February to avert an economic meltdown.

"The need for such a measure was made clear by the jobs report that we received this morning," said Obama, citing Friday's government report that the jobless rate hit 10.2 percent last month, the highest since 1983.

He called it a "sobering number that underscores the economic challenges that lie ahead" and vowed that, "I will not rest until all Americans who want work can find work."

The cost of the unemployment benefits

Please see **JOBS, A8**

## Daniels announces more cuts

Indiana's governor says the moves are necessary to save the state's surplus and avoid tax increases.

BY MIKE SMITH  
AP Political Writer

INDIANAPOLIS — Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels announced on Friday a series of spending cuts and other steps to offset a continuing multimillion-dollar dive in state revenues.

Among other things, Daniels has ordered agencies to cut spending by 10 percent; reductions in reimbursement rates for some Medicaid providers; no pay raises for state employees next year; delays in some building projects; and state employees be allowed to take unpaid leave voluntarily.

October tax collections were \$46 million less than forecast in May and \$309 million, or 7.4 percent, less than expected during

Please see **CUTS, A2**



Truth Photo By Mark Shephard

Goshen College's Voices in Harmony perform Friday at the Goshen Theater during First Fridays.

## FIRST FRIDAYS TEAMS UP WITH LOCAL ARTISTS

GOSHEN — Downtown Goshen showed its creative side Friday at the First Fridays Fall Arts Festival. The monthly block party was held in conjunction with the biannual Open Studio Tour, a self-guided tour of artists' studios in Goshen.

As chestnuts roasted outside Goshen Theater, several local musical acts performed inside. Spacious Heart Yoga demonstrated how yoga can be art.

The Open Studio Tour continues from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. today.

See Page A3 for the full story.



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64° 46°  
 Warmer with partial sunshine. **More weather, B7**

**COMING TOMORROW**  
**GREEN GROWTH:** Elkhart's economy is set to go green, but what is a green job? **BUSINESS, C1**