

Greater LAFAYETTE

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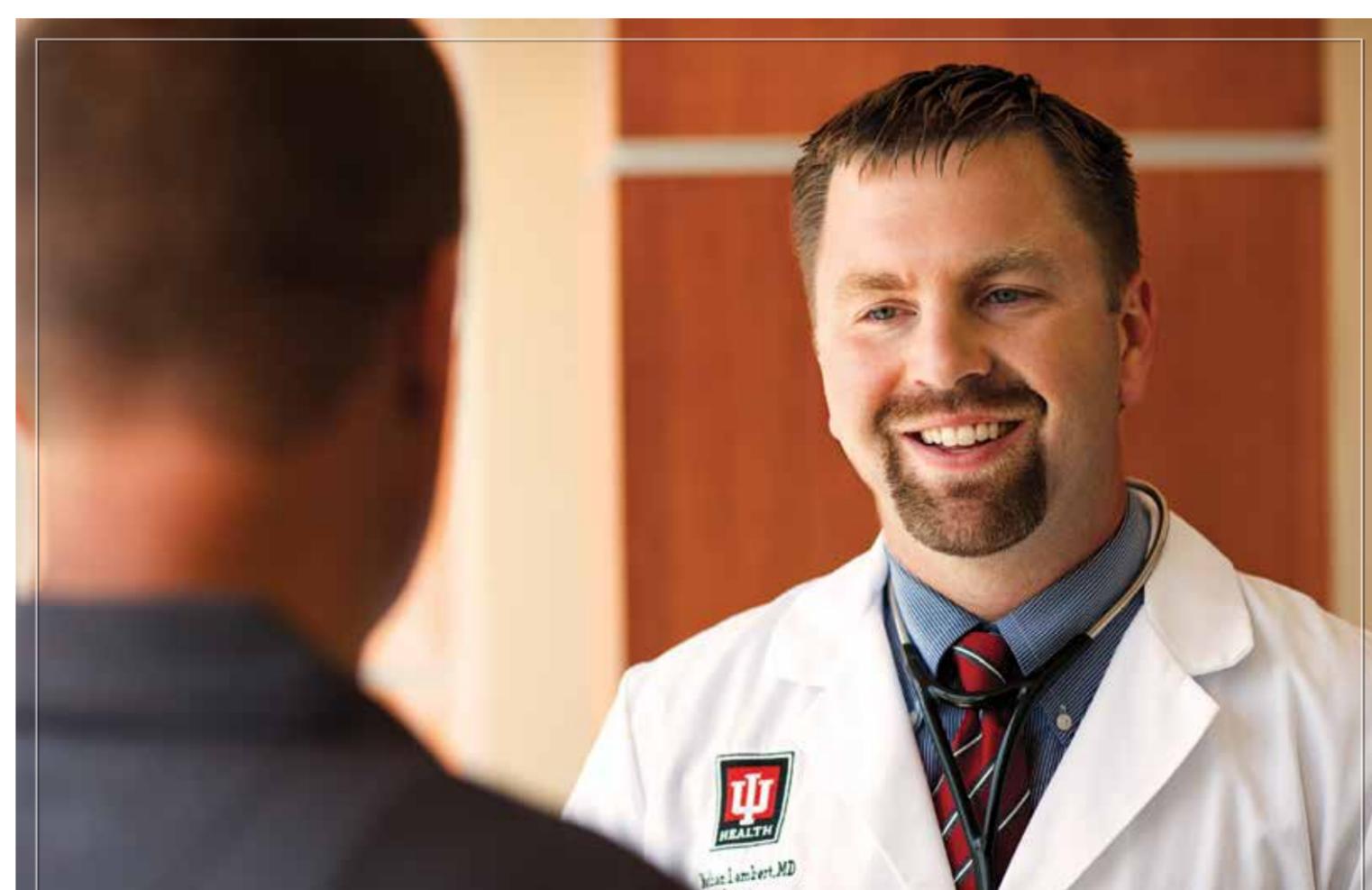
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GREATER LAFAYETTE MAGAZINE

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MISSION

Greater Lafayette Magazine captures the spirit and vitality of the people who call Greater Lafayette home and what it means to live, work and thrive here. It tells the region's success stories, from business expansions, entrepreneurship, leadership and philanthropy to quality of life, arts and cultural events. Our hope is that readers of Greater Lafayette Magazine will become active participants in the world around them and join in our mission to make Greater Lafayette the place where progress, creativity and community come together.

AUDIENCE

Greater Lafayette Magazine serves as the leading quality-of-life and business trade publication for the area. Leveraging our award-winning team of writers and designers, Greater Lafayette Magazine attracts a diverse group of readers who are engaged in the community as consumers, visitors, business leaders, volunteers, residents and future residents of Tippecanoe County. This publication is for anyone that appreciates a good story that not only reveals something new about our community but offers insight and pride for the place we call home.

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Spring gatherings

By the time April rolls around in Indiana, winter is bidding its final farewells (we hope) and spring is getting a strong foothold. Signs of the season are everywhere: bulbs in bloom, Easter dresses in boutique windows, the Now Open sign at the Frozen Custard. But if anything says warmer weather is upon us, I'd have to say it's receiving an invitation in the mail to an outdoor gathering. Laughter, maybe a bit of romance, and reuniting with family and friends. Can you beat a good old get together?

Greater Lafayette boasts myriad unique, festive and even serene spaces suitable for the elegance of a wedding, the sheer joy of a birthday party or class reunion, or the more business-like feel of a corporate retreat. From historic structures to rustic barns, there's just the spot in Greater Lafayette for any gathering. Check out our cover story on Page 38.

Over the winter there was movement at Lafayette's Columbian Park, but much of it was behind-the-scenes. Now's the time to see the results of all the hard work. Not only can visitors introduce themselves to Shazam, Sagely and Donner – Columbian Park's trio of African penguins – but they also can check in on all the zoo's residents, from dwarf goats to singing dogs. Next door, Loeb Stadium will be buzzing with baseball games, movie nights and other warm weather activities. Tropicanoe Cove will be readying for another busy summer (Page 54).

Spring also serves up menu and venue adjustments at Greater Lafayette restaurants. Guests can savor in-season selections and a wider range of locally grown fruits, vegetables and other products in the coming months. Restaurants have dusted off patio furniture and outdoor seating so guests can enjoy al fresco dining. And let's not forget that Lafayette, West Lafayette and Purdue farmers markets set up shop in May. There's not a better way to celebrate and support area farmers, beekeepers and other producers (Page 10).

Greater Lafayette area officials are celebrating collaborative efforts that landed nearly \$35 million in grants that will support and enhance the region's economic health and student readiness (Page 22). Projects being considered include Purdue airport expansion, new greenway and trail systems and rural broadband expansion. Stay tuned as these exciting developments unfold in the months ahead.

In this issue of GLM, we spotlight local business successes as well. Learn more about Stall & Kessler, Greater Lafayette's Small Business of the Year (Page 28); Lafayette's Donte Wilburn, Indiana's entrepreneur of the year (Page 32); Embracing a Second Chance Workforce (Page 60); and Teledyne FLIR (Page 70). Each brings unique and vital services to our communities.

This spring, I hope you gather with friends, enjoy good food, drink and company and take in all that Greater Lafayette has to offer.

Cheers,

Carol Editor, Greater Lafayette Magazine

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ON THE COVER:

Lafayette's historic Fowler House is a popular destination for gatherings and celebrations.

Photo by Christine Petkov
Flowers by Rubia Flower Market

Area venues welcome gatherings as weather warms and pandemic retreats. | page 38



38

Welcome Note | page 4
From Editor Carol Bangert



10



16

BUSINESS & PROGRESS:

What you got, Scott?
| page 8

Collaboration pays off with \$35 million in grants
| page 22

Small Business of the Year: Stall & Kessler | page 28

Donte Wilburn: A business and personal success story
| page 32

Column: Ask the Experts
| page 52

Teledyne FLIR: Life-saving instruments | page 70

Real estate: A local snapshot
| page 76

ARTS:

The Arts Federation: New name, same regional mission
| page 16

FOOD & ENTERTAINMENT:

Al fresco dining and seasonal offerings beckon
| page 10

Scones & Doilies serves up European-inspired desserts
| page 64

COMMUNITY & CONNECTION:

Columbian Park pays homage to its past
| page 54

Program gives employees a second chance | page 60

Summer camps have it all
| page 72



54

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What you got, Scott?

Jobs, jobs, jobs

Greater Lafayette has returned to pre-pandemic levels of workforce and job openings. Our employment rate has been relatively low over the past year. The number of people in the workforce has been steadily growing, returning to a level we saw prior to the pandemic. And the number of job openings also has remained steady. All that means that more people are employed, thankfully!

Yet demand for workforce has not trailed off. We see the need for new employees across every industry. The numbers seem to show that there are at least two jobs for every job seeker. Over the long term we expect to see the population continue to grow. Indiana ranked sixth in population growth, according to 2021 transactional data compiled for the annual U-Haul® Growth Index. Greater Lafayette featured as a notable net gain at the community level. Job opportunities, lower tax rates and housing cost compared to neighboring states all play a factor. Greater Lafayette Commerce is trying to help accelerate this trend by helping companies recruit people to work in the great jobs we have here. We are developing a playbook on how communities like ours can recruit workers to our great companies.

Climate Action Plan

Our forward-looking cities and county are joining in the creation of a new Climate Action Plan. The vision statement is a climate-resilient community, a reduced carbon footprint and an equitable quality of life for all within Greater Lafayette. While each entity has had sustainability plans and goals in the past, this new initiative combines efforts and broadens the dialogue around sustainability.

The project, underway over the past year, is nearing the halfway mark and is making strides forward. Community surveys and information can be found at Climate Action Plan - Greater Lafayette, Indiana (greaterlafayetteind.com) We applaud our communities' leadership for taking this cooperative step forward. ★

CLIMATE ACTION PLAN TIMELINE:



PHASE 1 PROGRAM INITIATION

- Conduct Chartering Session
- Establish Leadership Framework
- Develop Interagency Agreement
- Draft Vision and Mission Statements



PHASE 2 PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

- Develop Communication Plan
- Identify Key Stakeholders
- Facilitate Action Plan Review Workshops
- Develop Resource Catalogue
- Prepare Schedule

CURRENT PHASE



PHASE 3 PROGRAM EXECUTION

- Perform Baseline Assessment
- Identify Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
- Integrate Approach with Existing Plans
- Identify and Prioritize Potential Program Initiatives



PHASE 4 REPORT DEVELOPMENT

- Synthesize Data and Organize Initiatives
- Focus on Sustainability and Resilience
- Clean and Renewable Energy Alternatives
- Improved Transportation Options
- Reduced Waste Strategies



PHASE 5 PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

- Measurement and Verification of Metrics
- Development of New Policies
- Engaging with Local Businesses and Industries
- Public Outreach

Scott Walker is the president and CEO of Greater Lafayette Commerce. He can be reached at 765.742.4044

Set the table for spring

BY RADONNA FIORINI PHOTOS BY CHRISTINE PETKOV

With warmer temperatures and the promise of locally grown fruits and vegetables just around the corner, some restaurants are freshening up their menus from the comforting warmth of winter to the bright palate of spring.

Outdoor tables are being dusted off and fresh, herby menu options are popping up. Here's a look at some of the changes coming for spring at area dining establishments.

The Bryant
1820 Sagamore Parkway W, West Lafayette
765-250-8963



Executive Chef Alejandro “Alex” Cruz is all about fresh from farm to table when he creates seasonal menus at The Bryant. Spring and summer mean more local produce with which to experiment and achieve the fresh flavors he loves.

Cruz shops at the farmers markets and also buys direct from some local producers. He generally offers new items as specials and those that do well may become part of the regular menu.

“I like to help local farmers and I like to play with flavors and offer something different,” Cruz says.

“Having salt and pepper on the table isn’t necessary if the dish is seasoned well. I try to make something that is good, just as it is.”

This spring he’s excited about serving lamb dishes with meat purchased from a local farmer. More gluten-, dairy-free and vegan options are in the works, from entrees to desserts. Look for the gluten-free Key Lime tart with an almond flour crust.

Fresh produce means colorful sides and salads, including a Caprese salad appetizer featuring a gazpacho/kale pesto, burrata cheese and prosciutto on a crostini. Or how about a corn cake BLT with local bacon, heirloom tomatoes and avocado on homemade corn cakes adorned with honey sriracha mayo?

Really hungry? Dig into the new Monte Cristo sandwich that features local ham, Swiss cheese and cherry jam, that is dipped in batter and deep fried. Wanting something a little lighter? The new Basil Ranch salad made with arugula and baby kale and topped with blueberries, peaches, fontina cheese, candied walnuts and pancetta might fit the bill.



Teays River Brewing and Public House
 3000 S. 9th St., Lafayette
 765-746-6614

The patio doors are open at this south-side brewery and restaurant that focuses on artisanal sandwiches, steaks and pizza, along with unique craft beer.

“Our patio is the most popular outdoor seating area in Lafayette,” says owner John Hodge. “We’ll have an official patio opening party in mid-May, and it will be open as often as the weather allows.”

While the Teays River menu doesn’t change with the seasons, some warm weather specials will be offered every month. The menu was refined in late winter to reflect current supply chain and labor market challenges, says Hodge. Rising food prices and the continuing difficulty in hiring staff meant the restaurant needed to focus on the most popular, easy to prepare items. More vegetarian and vegan choices also are available.

You’ll still find hand-crafted pizza, chops, salmon, flavorful sandwiches and salads, along with an extensive menu of signature beers. Here’s to the wind in your hair and a cold one in your hand.



East End Grill
 1016 Main St., Lafayette
 765-607-4600

From salads to appetizers to hand-crafted cocktails, the spring menu at East End will be veggie and fruit forward, says General Manager Laila Syed.

Lots of herbs and fresh vegetables play a crucial role in the lighter fare featured currently. The grill changes its menu twice a year, freshening up salads and adding some lighter fish choices in the spring. For example, the fall salad featuring apples, seeds and goat cheese has been replaced with a green salad topped with berries and candied almonds.

The chef is working on a fresh fish appetizer to accompany the menu favorites that remain throughout the year, including the Wagyu beef, which comes from a farm in Cutler, Indiana. The restaurant works with about 10 different food vendors, many in the region, to find the best quality and freshest ingredients possible.

“Our handcrafted cocktails are very fruit forward for spring,” Syed says. “We also feature lighter wines and funky beers.”

Due to Indiana’s unpredictable weather, it’s hard to know when East End’s outdoor tables will be open regularly. Just head downtown when a soft, warm breeze wafts through, heralding the lengthening days and promise of fresh flavors from locally grown produce.



The Whittaker Kitchen
 702 W 500 N, West Lafayette
 765-441-2010
 info@thewhittakerinn.com

The kitchen at the Whittaker Inn is open to the public from 4-8 p.m., Wednesday through Sunday, with a reservation made 48 hours in advance. To-go orders also are welcome. Call in your reservation or send an email.

Chef Andrew Whittaker — who owns and operates the inn with wife Elizabeth — looks forward to freshening up the dinner menu each season and sees spring as the time to feature leafy herbs and seasonal veggies.

While the protein options — steak, fish and chops — are fairly consistent year-round, side dishes, salads, sauces and soups now feature lighter, brighter flavors. There will be a few new entrée options as Whittaker is experimenting with trout this season, in addition to his popular salmon dish.

“Our winter/fall menu has more shallots and robust veggies,” Whittaker says. “Spring and summer we use more leafy herbs such as basil, which we grow out in front of the inn.”

Seasonal vegetables such as asparagus and peas are going in risotto, and salads are updated with baby tomatoes, artichoke or steamed asparagus. Regular trips to the area farmers markets keep Whittaker supplied with many of the fresh ingredients that go in his signature dishes.

Overnight guests also enjoy a complimentary breakfast, made to order from an a la carte menu, and can raid the night kitchens, which feature fresh baked goods and beverages.



Farmers markets opening soon »

It’s almost time again for delightful strolls through one of the areas three farmers markets, all of which open the first week of May and plan to operate through October. Here are the details:

West Lafayette Farmers Market:

Opens Wednesday, May 4, 3:30 - 7 p.m., in Cumberland Park, 3065 N Salisbury Street, West Lafayette. More than 50 vendors offer fresh produce and baked goods, prepared foods and juried crafts. Wine by the glass from area vineyards is featured along with food trucks.

Purdue Farmers Market:

Opens Thursday, May 5, 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. on the Purdue Memorial Mall, West Lafayette. Organizers are expecting more than 20 vendors offering produce, baked goods and prepared foods. Pay attention to parking restrictions and use nearby parking garages when possible.

Lafayette Farmers Market:

The area’s oldest market opens Saturday, May 7, 8 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. and will be open most Saturdays. Stretching along 5th Street in

downtown Lafayette between Main and Ferry streets, the market features produce, meat, fresh flowers and house plants, crafts and jewelry, handmade soap, baked goods and more. ★

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A small name change can go a long way. For The Arts Federation — known locally as TAF — the removal of Tippecanoe actually means more gains than losses.

Tetia Lee, TAF executive director, says the name has always caused a little bit of confusion. People have been known to refer to “Taft,” she says. Or when she’s out in the field, working with artists in other counties, the Tippecanoe label seemed to fall a little flat.

Because as a Regional Arts Partner of the Indiana Arts Commission, TAF serves more than half a million residents in a 14-county area in north-central Indiana, the largest geographic area in the state. It’s much more than Tippecanoe County, and the time had come for the name to truly reflect that.

Thus with this rebranding, The Arts Federation helps to more accurately represent the counties represented by Region 4.

Since 1997, TAF has provided support for artists and is the umbrella organization for more than 200 different member organizations. This encompasses everything from vocal and instrumental music organizations — large established ones such as the Wabash Valley Youth Symphony, or smaller ones like the Jazz Club — as well as individual artists — painters, sculptors, weavers or writers. Even performance venues such as the Long Center for the Performing Arts are members, using TAF services to help them network and reach their audience, or expand to a new one.

TAF provides a physical home for those groups who need it, in their newly renovated facility, the Wells Community Cultural Center on North Street in downtown Lafayette. The

TAF

The Arts Federation

New brand better reflects organization's mission and focus

BY CINDY GERLACH PHOTOS BY CHRISTINE PETKOV
COLLAGE PHOTOS PROVIDED



"We are a regional organization. We want everything to reflect our focus."

building has large and small meeting spaces, a dance studio, recording studio and craft space. TAF offers after-school arts programming for children of all ages.

Financial support also is available to member organizations, as TAF helps administer a series of grants, both state and federally funded, both for operating and project support, to its members.

The whole change began with a website redesign, Lee says. The organization knew it needed to update the site, make it more user-friendly, for ease of access.

"Our greatest change, we knew we would be overhauling our website to make it more beneficial and add some widgets," Lee says. "We knew we wanted to do a rebrand."

As they began to go through their style guide, emphasis fell back on the logo, which, Lee had known for a long time was less than ideal. With its multiple elements, it tried a little too hard to

represent too much, says Lee.

And a market test found that people found the old logo unrelatable. "People thought we were a manufacturing company," Lee says.

"It was a printer's nightmare," Lee says. "No one would even embroider it for us." The new logo, a more simplistic yet visually appealing design, represents the arts with a sleeker, more cohesive look.

New logo, new name — sort of — yet the same mission. And best of all, the acronym TAF is still accurate, so there's no learning curve for longtime members. This rebranding will help better spread this message to the people TAF wishes to serve. And in the end, the new name better represents TAF's mission and its outreach to the entire region.

"When I was out in the field, it was hard to gain trust because we had Tippecanoe in the name," Lee says. "We are a regional arts organization. We want everything to reflect our focus." ★



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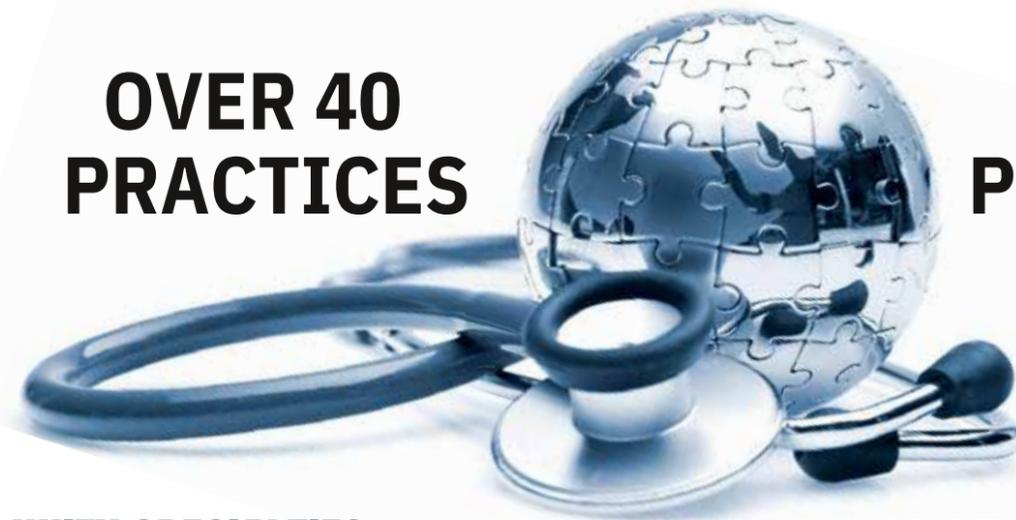
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Collaboration and cooperation result in big wins for Greater Lafayette workforce

What does it take to score almost \$35 million in federal and state grants designed to bolster long-term economic health and student-to-workplace success? For officials in six area counties and six cities within those counties, plus representatives from several educational institutions, it took joining hands and working collaboratively.

Two, multimillion-dollar grants have been awarded to Greater Lafayette Commerce that will be used to address quality of life issues, economic development and student readiness in a six-county region around Lafayette, says Greater Lafayette Commerce President and CEO Scott Walker.

Greater Lafayette Commerce spearheaded the arduous process of applying for the grants, working in partnership with regional elected officials and education professionals to obtain \$30 million through the Indiana Regional Economic Acceleration and Development Initiative, or READI, and a \$4.9 million Student Learning Recovery grant.

READI split the state into 17 regions and requires neighboring counties and communities to create governing boards that represent each region. The Greater Lafayette region, as defined by the state, encompasses Benton, Carroll, Fountain, Tippecanoe, Warren and White counties.

While Lafayette/West Lafayette comprise the most populace cities in the region, collaboration between all counties and municipalities is critical for success, says Ben Dispennepp, economic development director for Warren County.

“Collaboration among regional counties and cities is necessary because people desire a diversity of living, recreational and employment options,” he says. “If we share in efforts to build up the region and promote across these invisible boundary lines, this region will offer a higher quality of life and provide more opportunities to thrive in the long run.”



Just applying for the grants was a challenging process that started last May. Creating a final action plan to be implemented in the next four years is the current challenge.

“It’s complicated and we have to follow all the federal procurement and accounting guidelines,” Walker says. “The ultimate benefit will be fostering regional collaboration in a way that hasn’t been done before. It’s complex, it’s challenging. Over the long term, we’ll work to create more vibrancy and more economic development with regional partners in ways that are strategic.”

**Here’s a look at each grant:
READI Grant**

After local officials learned of the grant in 2021, the Greater Lafayette Regional Board of Representatives was established. This 20-person group is comprised of six county commissioners; the mayors of Attica, Covington, Delphi, Lafayette, Monticello and West Lafayette; representatives from area economic development organizations; and representatives from Purdue University and Ivy Tech Community College, Walker says.

The board worked together to draft the more than 70-page Lafayette Regional Development Plan,

which was approved by the state. The \$30 million grant was announced in December.

The plan calls for unprecedented collaboration between the urban and rural areas of the region with a goal of retaining and expanding businesses, including high-tech and advanced manufacturing companies. It addresses the need for a well-trained, diverse workforce, and the importance of addressing quality-of-life issues such as safe, affordable housing; a strong labor market; recreational and cultural opportunities; plentiful child care options; vibrant city centers; and sound infrastructure.

“The process has been very enlightening,” says board member John Dennis, West Lafayette’s mayor. “Bringing together several communities with different population dynamics, different economic drivers, and different needs and priorities has been a real eye opener for all of us.”

Dennis describes Indiana as a diverse state with influences from around the world and an equally diverse and unique economic base.

“Collaborating with our regional partners opened the doors for further collaborative opportunities and opened our eyes to the fact that although we might not share a ZIP code, we all share a great love for our communities and our state,” he says.



The regional board currently is identifying specific projects to be funded by the grant.

Some projects being considered include:

- Expanding the airport near Purdue, bringing commercial air service back to the region.
- Residential development plans to address housing needs.
- Investment in greenways and a trail system along the Wabash River.
- Expanding access to broadband in rural areas.
- Expanding the availability of quality child care.
- Programs to attract talent and a diverse workforce, with a focus on veterans.

“At the risk of sounding hokey, all the projects submitted have a purpose and greatly benefit the region,” says Dennis, adding that he doesn’t have a favorite. “We’re very blessed here in Tippecanoe with two economically strong cities and county. Having a world-class university in our community doesn’t hurt, either.”

Warren County’s Dispennepp concurs that all the proposed projects are important in attracting and retaining a robust workforce. Adequate and affordable housing, however, stands out as one of the keys

to long-term economic health.

“In talking with area businesses, they see housing availability as a concern for their workforce and their ability to expand,” he says. “And I would agree that low supply of housing impacts the cost of living, quality of life, and is a barrier to growing our workforce. Our READI project, focused on increasing housing in the region, would help accelerate the efforts that are already being made to address housing needs.”

Projects ultimately chosen must meet federal and state guidelines and be sustainable, long after the grant money runs out, Walker says. The stimulus money, he adds, will help leverage new private/public partnerships to sustain and grow the regional economy and quality of life.

“The READI funding will provide much-needed capital for economic development throughout our region,” says Lafayette Mayor Tony Roswarski, also a board representative. “We have an opportunity to accomplish several quality-of-life initiatives that have been part of our collective conversations for years.”

Student Learning Recovery Grant Program

This \$4.9 million grant, which was awarded to Greater Lafayette Commerce in January, is aimed at addressing issues related to education and the workforce, says Greater Lafayette Commerce Workforce Development Director Kara Webb.

The federal and state stimulus money is designed to help students make up for learning losses experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic and strengthen the quality of education. Local leaders are focusing much of their efforts on creating strong connections between area manufacturing partners and schools.

In the last few years, Greater Lafayette Commerce and local governments have partnered with companies to develop programs that introduce students to careers in industry and manufacturing. Those efforts have included tours of area manufacturing plants, and summer camps that offer hands-on opportunities to learn about careers in advanced manufacturing, logistics, coding, robotics and more, Webb says.

Lafayette's Roswarski touts collaborative work on such projects as the Greater Lafayette Career Academy, Greater Lafayette Commerce Manufacturing Week/Month and serving as a pilot city for Make IN Move, a statewide advanced manufacturing and logistics initiative.

"These partnerships — along with our work with local businesses, industries and building trades — have built a strong foundation to maximize the use of these (grant) funds," he says.

The grant also provides funding for the creation of a curriculum that imbeds manufacturing principles into student coursework. Area manufacturers will work with Skyepack, a West Lafayette company that creates digital learning courses and pathways, and Ivy Tech to develop coursework that will help students obtain credentials and certifications before they graduate high school. Those credentials can help students land a job or get an early start on a college degree.

"The Student Recovery Grant will help close learning gaps and prepare students for a career right after graduation," Roswarski says. "Financial resources to schools and community partners will provide students with access to career opportunities and resources as they prepare to join the local job market."

And the curriculum will emphasize lifelong skills that will serve students well, no matter what college

or career they choose, Webb says. The teaching of such life and character qualities as attention to detail, confidence, independence and problem solving will be included in the curriculum for each grade level.

Area educators are excited that the curriculum will be made available to them on their own timeline, she says. Participating schools will use their own discretion in how to incorporate the teaching into different instructional areas.

The almost \$5 million grant must be used by June 30, 2023, so some of the money will go to help participating schools hire additional staff and tutors to roll out the curriculum.

Eight schools have signed on, and Greater Lafayette Commerce is offering the program to many more in the region. There is the potential to impact more than 12,000 students in the six-county area, Webb says.

And local industry will benefit from having access to a well-trained workforce, prepared to fill new, high-tech jobs in the region.

"These programs will allow students to earn credentials and build a portfolio before employment," Webb says. "We are building a talent pipeline and providing access to a talent pipeline. This will help students recover from the loss (during the pandemic) and have access to local jobs."

Two other Student Recovery grants were awarded locally:

Purdue University's College of Education received a \$1.1 million grant and will be working with students in kindergarten through third grades in the Tippecanoe, Lafayette and Frankfort school districts.

"We are partnering with district leadership and K-3 grade classrooms ... to expand literacy clinics to support emergent readers and writers; expand language clinics to support emergent bilinguals; and offer release time for teachers through our grant," says Christy Wessel Powell, a Purdue assistant professor.

Purdue also is offering professional development for teachers and partnering school districts using online resources, related workshops and a lending library.

Lyn Treece Boys and Girls Club of Tippecanoe County received a \$383,813 grant to extend current programming. ★



Where does this grant money come from?

Federal funds came available to states last year following the passage of the American Rescue Plan Act by the Biden administration and Congress. As a result, the Indiana Legislature approved the use of that available federal money to develop the Indiana Regional Economic Acceleration and Development Initiative (READI) with \$500 million in grants to be awarded statewide. The Indiana Economic Development Corp. has oversight of those grants.

In broad terms, the grants are meant to "... equip Indiana regions with the tools and resources needed to implement strategic investments in quality of place and innovation ..." Gov. Eric Holcomb said when announcing the program in May 2021. Simply stated, one of the program goals is to help neighboring counties and communities join forces to promote economic growth and enhanced quality of life for their region.

In addition, the Indiana Department of Education was charged with awarding \$150 million statewide through the Student Learning Recovery Grant Program, which is designed to help students overcome losses caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Those awards were funded through a combination of federal and state tax dollars.



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SMALL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

Stall & Kessler in the business of telling

love stories



BY KEN THOMPSON PHOTOS BY CHRISTINE PETKOV

From its modest beginning as a small repair shop founded by John M. Stall II in 1953, Stall & Kessler has become Lafayette’s oldest jewelry store the old-fashioned way.

Building love stories one diamond at a time, Stall & Kessler’s reputation for quality and service earned it Greater Lafayette Small Business of the Year honors for 2021. Stall & Kessler emerged from a list of finalists that included Mecko’s Heating and Cooling, Starr Associates, Richelle in a Handbasket, Indoff Office Interiors and Advantage Title, Inc.

Greater Lafayette Commerce has been selecting Small Business of the Year winners since 1993. No business was honored in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The Small Business of the Year award is something that we consider to be a tremendous accomplishment,” says Kristopher Kessler, co-owner. “It has taken decades for us to become what we are to have received it and reflects on more than ‘just an award.’”

Kessler credits the award to his customers and the Greater Lafayette community, which has embraced the foundation of principles and policies created by John Stall II, John Stall III, Jeff Kessler and Sandy Utz.

“Without the loyalty and support of our customers and our community we wouldn’t be around today,” Kristopher Kessler says. “Some things never go out of style: consistency of quality, outstanding customer service and a dedication to excellence in all that we do are principles we strive for. Regardless

of what happens in our time – past, present and future – we believe that these core principles will always be in style.”

Stall & Kessler boasts that it has been “celebrating 68 years of love stories.” One story in particular has remained with Kessler.

A woman in her 60s or 70s came in holding a small, delicate ring. She asked a typical question: do you repair jewelry? Oftentimes, the affirmative answer yields a story behind the ring. This lady’s tale, though, was unusual.

“This story took me a bit by surprise and it was that day that I realized the significance of what we provide to our customers,” Kessler says.

The lady’s grandmother had given her the ring when she was 13. Now, she wanted it repaired to pass along to her 13-year-old granddaughter.

“To this day, it gives me chills,” Kessler says. “With a little bit of respect, the products we provide can last for generations. That is why the quality of product is so important as well as the expertise and quality of service, so we can allow love to transcend the effects of time through jewelry.

“Love doesn’t live in what we do, but it can be represented through the products and services that we offer.”

Stall & Kessler often sees love stories at the beginning as well with couples shopping for wedding rings or gifts for special occasions.

“When people come into our store, it is usually a purposeful trip so people make an effort to come see us,” Kessler says. “We see relationships that we are privileged

to be a part of and hope to develop for any occasion. Our hope is to be there to provide ring cleanings for a Saturday night out or a special item for a 50th wedding anniversary and everything in between.”

Like many professions, Stall & Kessler boasts an extra level of expertise. In this case it is home to Indiana’s only Master Graduate Gemologist. Stall & Kessler also has three Gemological Institute of America (GIA) diamond graders, two GIA pearl graduates and three GIA Retail-Jeweler graduates.

The Gemological Institute of America, Kessler says, is the utmost authority in the jewelry and gemological world.

“If you are diamond shopping, the ‘4 C’s’ of a diamond is something that you will become familiar with throughout the purchasing process,” says Kessler, referring to cut, clarity, carat and color.

A diamond’s cut refers to the quality of the angles, proportions, facets and finishing details. Color stands for how colorless the diamond is.

Clarity indicates how clean the diamond is of inclusions and blemishes. Lastly, carat is the weight of the diamond.

“Becoming a Graduate Gemologist takes a series of courses in jewelry, diamonds and gemstones. There are also three separate lab courses that are in person to delve deeper in diamonds, gemstones and overall gem identification. The Master Graduate Gemologist ... takes the Graduate Gemologist degree a step further into the retail specialization.”

Those skills allow Stall & Kessler to use a CAD (computer-aided design) software system that allows



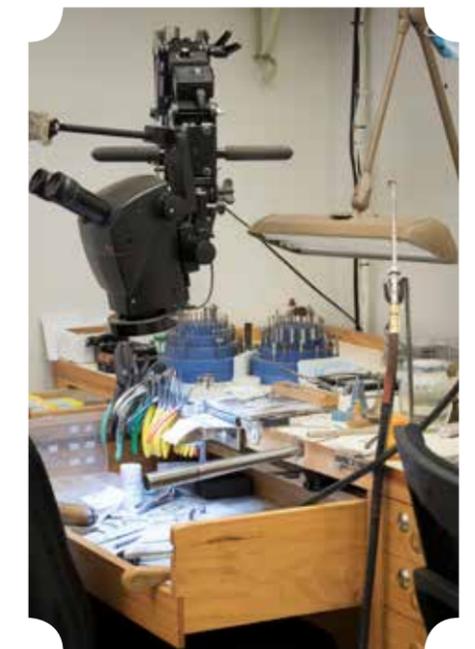
the repurposing or refreshing of existing jewelry that might need a new setting.

As small businesses begin to make a comeback from the effects of COVID-19, those that can adapt to change like Stall & Kessler figure to survive.

Stall & Kessler has evolved from a jewelry repair shop to selling diamonds and other precious gems at its present location, 333 Columbia St., since 1979.

“Sixty nine years in the jewelry business has allowed for plenty of change,” Kessler says. “We hope to improve (our current location) for a more pleasant shopping experience and develop our online presence. Regardless of what happens, we will continue to work on developing our quality and consistency of products and services. We will invest in the people who choose to work with us. Those things I can forecast with certainty.

“The rest we leave up to the Lord, a little luck and perhaps a spark of inspiration from our people.” ★



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ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR
DONTE WILBURN

BY KAT BRAZ PHOTOS PROVIDED

A Shift in Direction Alters the Destination

Indiana's entrepreneur of the year reflects on the drug deal gone bad that changed his life's course

The night of April 14, 2004, seems like a lifetime ago to Donte Wilburn, the Lafayette businessman honored as the 2021 entrepreneur of the year by the Indiana Small Business Development Center. That night, Wilburn, then 22 years old and a junior at Purdue University, sped through the streets of Lafayette, desperate to get his friend to the emergency room. The two had just been involved in a drug deal gone bad. Wilburn's friend was shot four times.

"That night altered my life forever," Wilburn says. "I had been living a dual life since I was in 10th grade at Harrison High School and someone taught me how to sell drugs. I continued selling in college, but that night was supposed to be my last big drug deal. I could have died."

Wilburn's friend survived the gunshot wounds. And eight months later, Wilburn pled guilty to conspiracy to deal marijuana, a Class D felony. He was sentenced to three years of community corrections. He went to jail but was allowed to leave to attend school and work. The only place that would hire him with his felony record was a local carwash. During that time, he earned his bachelor's degree from Purdue.

"Underneath my graduation gown I was wearing an ankle monitor," Wilburn says. "I asked the correctional officers if I could have one hour after graduation and they gave it to me. I took my girlfriend to Logan's steakhouse and proposed to her. Before the food came out, I had to go back to jail."

"Then I heard a small, still voice tell me, 'Ya know, if you don't like it, change the industry.' "

As a graduate and newlywed, Wilburn threw himself into his work. He wasn't afraid of hard work, but he didn't like what he saw in the carwash industry. Employees were paid minimum wage for grueling labor. They were treated poorly and looked down upon.

"I was complaining and thinking, 'I've got to get out of here,'" Wilburn says. "Then I heard a small, still voice tell me, 'Ya know, if you don't like it, change the industry.' "

And that's what he set out to do. He became a system manager and when that company closed down, he went to clean cars for Mike Raisor Automotive Group. In 2011, Raisor gave Wilburn the opportunity to reopen Premier Auto Detailing. Wilburn and his father renovated the facility, which opened on November 1, 2011, with 13 employees. Impressed with Wilburn's tenacity and leadership in the company, Raisor offered to sell him the business and the property. Wilburn closed the deal in 2018 and became owner of Premier.

"When Mike told me he was going to sell me the business, I broke down and cried," Wilburn says. "There were a lot of trying times, but God came to me and showed me a grand vision of how he would bless me if I blessed the people in this industry. When Mike says those words, 'I'm selling you this company,' I realized that the vision I had in the middle of the night in 2008 was real. It was unbelievable."

Wilburn continued to grow the business and opened a second location in Kokomo in 2020. He now has dreams of franchising 50 locations throughout the country. In 2021, he became one of four new owners of the Legacy Courts sports complex in West Lafayette. The partners have expansion plans to create a Legacy Park that includes fields for baseball and soccer in addition to its indoor basketball courts. Wilburn and his father also invest in real estate.

Nearly 20 years after that fateful night, Wilburn can hardly believe his good fortune. He and his wife, Tesha, are the parents of three children: Trinity, 13; Titus, 10; and Truitt, 4. Wilburn never had big dreams growing up. He certainly never imagined the life he leads now.

"If one shifts their direction, it alters their destination," Wilburn says. "If I would have known the opportunities and possibilities that lay before me when I was 18, where would I be now? My goal is to live a life that inspires others to come behind me. I want to give them hope that no matter how bad your situation is, you can come up out of it. I want my children to know that whatever they dream, they can attain." ★



Donte Wilburn, owner of Premier Detailing and Wash LLC, is presented with the 2021 Entrepreneur of the Year Award by David Watkins, Indiana Small Business Development Center State Director. (photo courtesy of Nikos Frazier / Journal & Courier)



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Photo by Marta Lewis

Fowler House Mansion

909 South St., Lafayette • fowlerhouse.org

Built by Moses Fowler in 1852, the house is considered one of the finest examples of a large Gothic Revival residence still standing in the United States. Ornately carved woodwork adorns surfaces throughout, and the ceilings in the north and south parlors feature elaborate plasterwork. With a combined indoor/outdoor seating of 150-200, the mansion is an iconic location for weddings and other private rentals. The Tudor-style formal dining room and Italian-style tiered patio and formal gardens combine to create an elegant and refined setting. On-site catering services ranging from charcuterie and crudités to full-scale entrées or buffet are available to enhance any event. All proceeds from rentals and catering benefit the 1852 Foundation, established to preserve the mansion.



Left: Chef Jeff Tishner, along with sous chef Brandon Fry, runs the Fowler House kitchen. Here Chef Tishner shares his favorite dessert, Blueberry-Lavender Mousse Bombe.

Above: One of many unique entrees, the diver scallops with sweet corn succotash, lemon creme fraiche, caviar, lardons and forbidden black rice.



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Duncan Hall

619 Ferry St., Lafayette • duncanhall.org

With its striking architectural details and stately grandeur, Duncan Hall evokes an unforgettable experience for guests. A variety of rooms from the intimate Victorian tearoom to the majestic ballroom can accommodate parties large and small. Benefactor Thomas Duncan bequeathed the resources to build this gracious, Colonial-style building, and the hall's mission carries on Duncan's wish to provide a place for cultural, educational and celebratory events that enrich the community. Since 1931, the hall has hosted myriad events, including plays, art shows, ballroom dances, wedding receptions, community forums and fundraisers — even a speech by JFK in 1959.

Gathering Acres Event Center

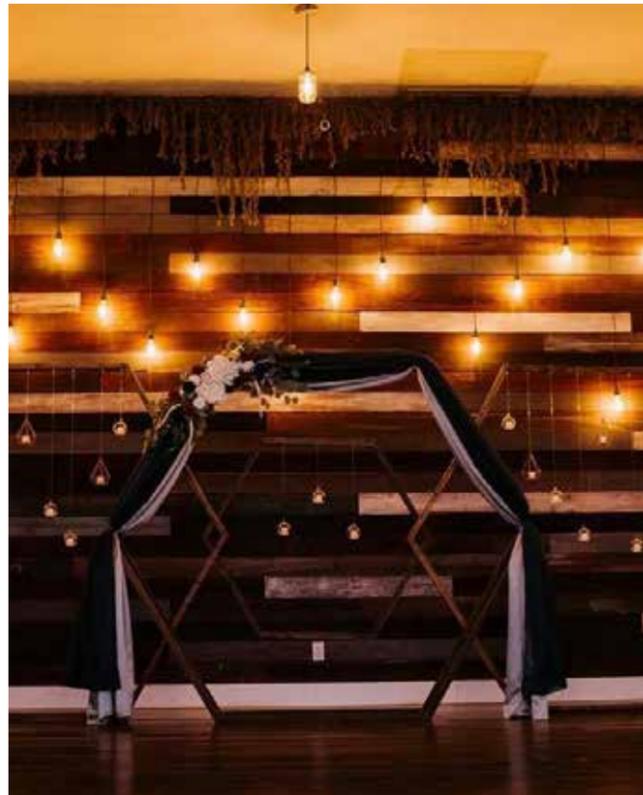
5074 E 550 S, Lafayette • gatheringacres.com

Situated in a picturesque country setting overlooking a pond, Gathering Acres provides an idyllic spot to tie the knot. A four-bedroom, two-bath bridal suite located in the main house is also available for rental. The 8,000-square-foot facility can accommodate 300 attendees and is climate controlled and available for year-round events. The charming space is accented by wooden chandeliers and plank flooring. There's also a 1,500-square-foot covered patio that seats 75 with an expansive view of the countryside. Not just for nuptials, this event center books company events, church retreats, graduation parties, quinceañeras and family reunions.

History Center

522 Columbia St., Lafayette • tippecanoehistory.org

This newly renovated history center in the heart of downtown Lafayette offers several spaces well suited for a variety of events. The former home of the Masonic Lodge of Lafayette, a building now owned and operated by the Tippecanoe County Historical Association, includes an auditorium with optional dance floor and a commercial kitchen. There's also a banquet hall, a lounge and plans to install a hardscaped brick patio. TCHA purchased the building in 2017 as a curatorial event space, offering affordable rentals and adaptable space, particularly for other area nonprofit organizations.



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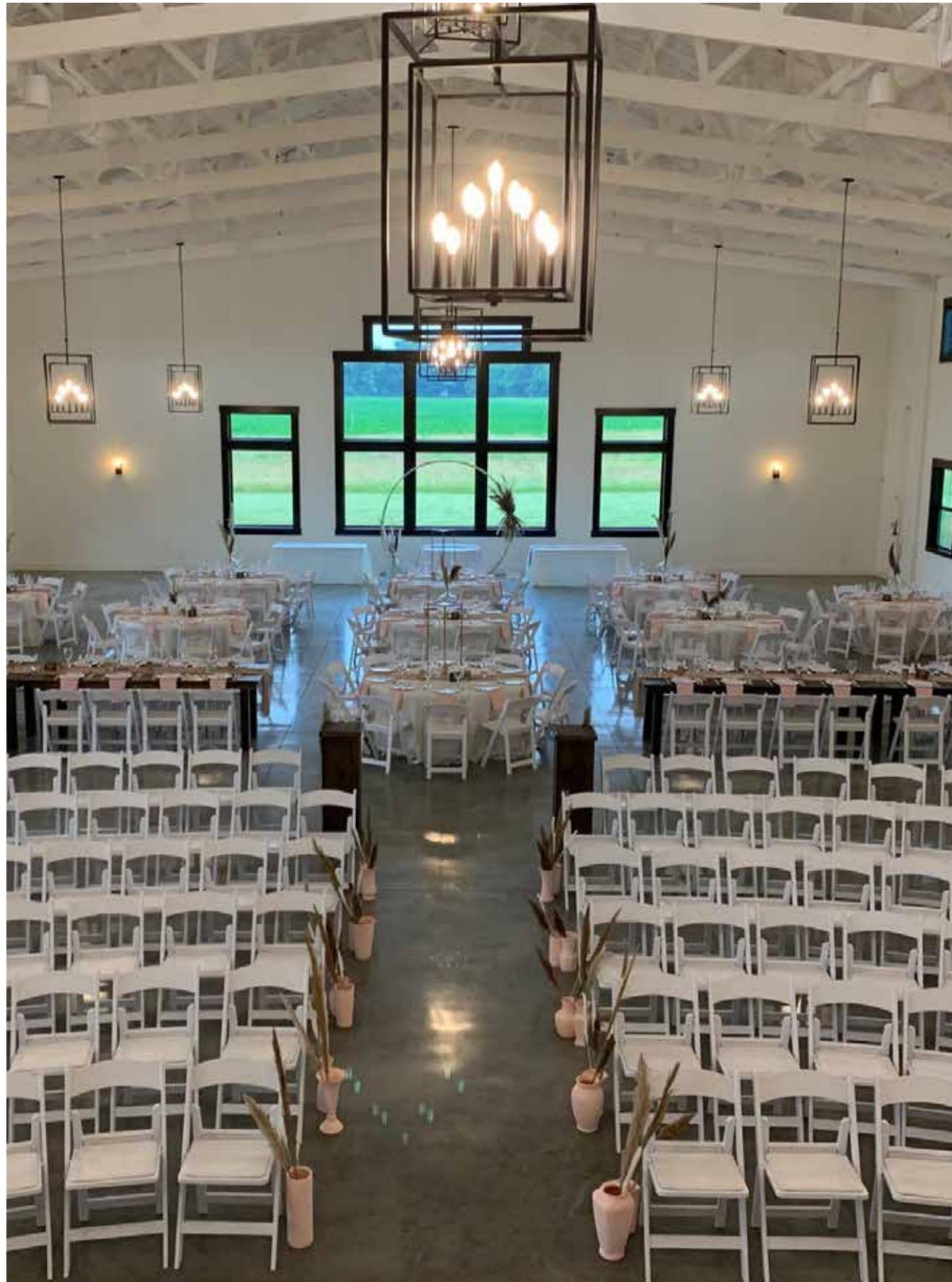
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Lafayette Country Club

1500 S. Ninth St., Lafayette • lafayettecountryclub.com

Billed as an everyday oasis, the Lafayette Country Club has provided a nearby vacation spot for area families since it opened in 1909. Available for weddings and other special events as well as meetings and luncheons, the facilities accommodate banquet events from 10 to 300 people as well as private meeting rooms and a conference center with a board room. While it is preferred that all non-members have a member host the event, it does have the capacity to sponsor events to non-members. Available catering menus include everything from simple refreshments to decked out buffets with a carving station.

New Journey Farms

2181 S 800 E, Lafayette • newjourneyfarms.com

Located on nearly 14 acres in a secluded country setting, New Journey Farms offers both indoor and outdoor ceremony sites with the ability to host up to 350 guests, and ample parking. The climate-controlled facility allows for year-round use and provides modern amenities such as spacious private bridal suites. Large, covered porches perfect for socializing with refreshments flank the building and a grand staircase allows couples to make a memorable entrance. Polished concrete floors and lofted white ceilings contribute to an airy, bright vibe and modern ambiance.

Northend Community Center

2000 Elmwood Ave., Lafayette • faithlafayette.org/northend

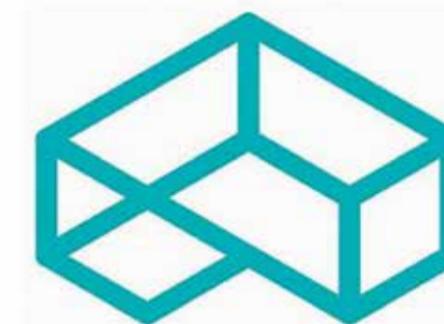
Multiple community, conference and break-out rooms accommodate groups of various sizes at the Northend Community Center. A commercial kitchen stocked with amenities, a gymnasium with two full-size basketball courts and an innovation center with work tables for creative endeavors also are available for rent. The community center is an entity of Faith Ministries.



The Stables Event Center

7071 S 100 E, Lafayette • thestableseventcenter.com

Clad in wood paneling with wagon wheel chandeliers, the Stables Event Center is awash in rustic chic elements. The family-owned facility is nestled on 40 acres of pastures and woodlands with a creek and horse farm providing attractive backdrops for photos. Sliding barn doors open to a spacious covered patio with firepit that looks out on to the bucolic countryside. Private bridal suites, ample catering and bar space and plenty of parking allow for a flawless event. The Stables is available for a range of events from live concerts to parties, even prom!



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Tippecanoe County Fairgrounds

1401 Teal Road, Lafayette • tippecanoeountyfairgrounds.com

Reopened in 2021 following a \$21 million investment in renovations, the fairgrounds event center anchors the complex and provides a welcoming home for traditional fair, farm and animal-related events. The large, multi-purpose facility consisting of the coliseum and three wings is equipped with state-of-the-art audio equipment and rigging points. The space can be divided as needed to accommodate smaller rentals. There's also a large fully appointed commercial kitchen available. The fairgrounds offers a number of other buildings and grounds for rent, too, including the west pavilion, horse barn, outdoor festival area and shelter house.



Wea Creek Orchard

5618 S 200 E, Lafayette • weacreekorachard.com

Owned and operated by three families who are descended from the pioneers who purchased the farm in 1855, Wea Creek Orchard and its 3,600-square-foot vintage barn create a lovely setting for weddings, showers, graduation parties and special events. Delight guests with wagon rides and incorporate orchard produce into your celebration. There's plenty of space for yard games and a bonfire surrounded by wooden benches and hay bales.

West Lafayette Golf and Country Club

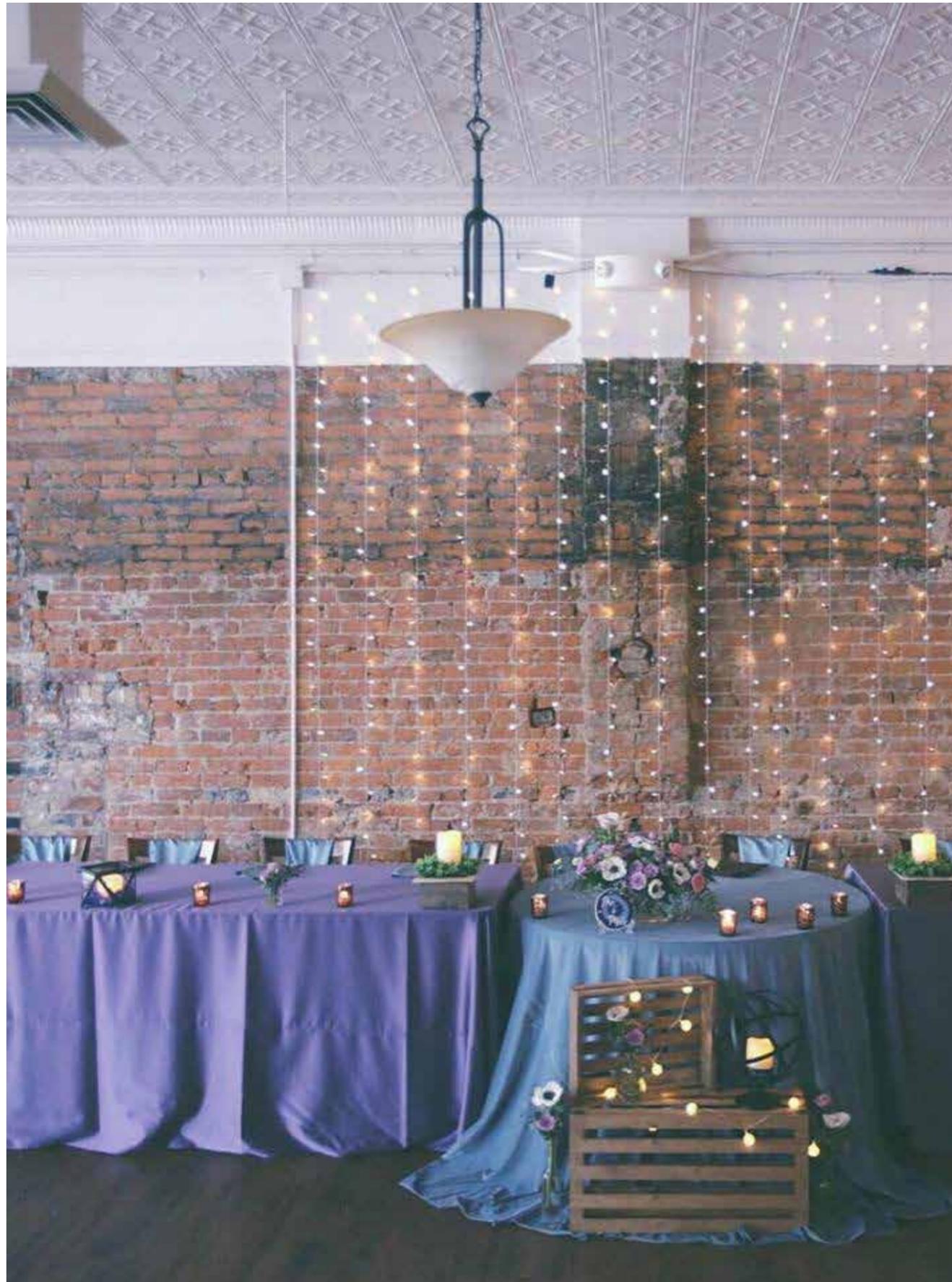
3224 US Hwy 52 W, West Lafayette • wlgcc.com

The West Lafayette Golf and Country Club has been serving the community since 1941. Its remodeled clubhouse banquet facility complements the stunning golf course grounds the space overlooks. Services are offered to the public as well as to club members, so there are no limitations on who can book an event. Multiple dining rooms offer seating for events accommodating 25 to 300 guests. Whether it's an elegant wedding, reception or rehearsal dinner, a golf outing or an important business affair, the country club staff attends to every detail from event coordination to custom menu creation.

Rat Pak Venue

102 N Third St., Lafayette • ratpakvenue.com

With exposed brick walls, tin ceiling and enormous windows that overlook the Tippecanoe County Courthouse, Rat Pak Venue features architectural details befitting a glitzy city event. Whether it's a wedding, graduation party, corporate gathering or social event, the combined ballroom and lounge can seat 220 guests or accommodate more intimate engagements. The name Rat Pak stems from the company's mobile DJ services that are available to enhance any event, in addition to bar catering. ★



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John Erickson

Erickson is a Purdue engineering graduate and received his doctorate from Trinity International University in Chicago. For 30 years he been developing next-generation leaders for healthy organizations and businesses.

QUESTION: What is the most untapped resource for developing your business?

The single greatest advantage any company can achieve is organizational health.

To quote Patrick Lencioni: "Organizational Health will one day surpass all other disciplines in business as the greatest opportunity for improvement and competitive advantage." Many leaders are limiting their search for advantage to conventional and largely exhausted areas like marketing, strategy and technology. With Lencioni, I believe there is an untapped gold mine sitting right beneath your business. Yet, it is ignored by most leaders even though it is simple, free and available to anyone who wants it. I have sat with dozens of business leaders, many of whom run multimillion-dollar companies, and most of them have not considered the impact of being healthy. Instead of trying to become smarter, leaders and organizations need to shift their focus to becoming healthier, allowing them to tap into the more-than-sufficient intelligence and expertise they already have

Being a leader and a company that is both smart and healthy is what drives our passion and vision for your business. It's not at all touchy-feely, and it's far more extensive and more important than mere culture. Smart organizations are good at the fundamentals of business – strategy, marketing, finance and technology – decision sciences. Being smart is only half the equation. Yet, it occupies almost all the time, energy and attention of most business leaders.

The way we describe healthy leaders and healthy business is "thriving." A healthy leader is a thriving leader who knows how to build a thriving company. Thriving is comprehensive. Of course, it includes positive financials, market growth and product innovation. But those things are shallow rewards if they cost the vitality of your people, or they squander your future legacy. Tap into health and your company with flourish.

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BY KEN THOMPSON PHOTOS PROVIDED

Everything old is new again

Columbian Park
revives old favorites
for a new generation
of visitors

Nostalgia is defined as a sentimental longing or wistful affection for the past, typically for a period or place with happy personal associations.

For many of us who grew up in Greater Lafayette during the 1960s and 1970s, one of those places was Columbian Park. It had everything for children of all ages and their parents.

A merry-go-round. A train ride. Playground equipment such as the imposing “curly” slide. Gas-powered bumper cars on a winding paved track. A large swimming pool whose fenced-off 10-foot deep section was at first scary and then a rite of passage toward adulthood.

“We’ve brought back some things for people who remember the park when they were kids,” says Jon Miner, director of operations for Lafayette Parks and Recreation.

No, “monkey island” isn’t coming back. Nor is that swimming pool or the bumper cars.

But the COVID-delayed carousel will be opening sometime this summer. Returning for a full season of operation is the train that gives riders a tour of Columbian Park, and the paddle boats.

“We’ve changed enough to adopt what people are looking for today in recreation,” Miner says. “So those families who don’t remember that can still come to the park and make their own memories. Coming to the ballpark to watch the Aviators play, going on a paddle boat ride or seeing a concert at Memorial Island. Visiting a first-rate zoo.

“Even though the water park is different than the old pool, I think people growing up with Tropicanoe Cove will have the same memories we had of the old round pool. There’s a lot there for the community and people of all ages. Bringing back the paddle boats, the train and the carousel will add to that experience.”

It’s been more than 20 years since the last time a merry-go-round entertained children in Columbian Park. The 42-foot diameter carousel, which was budgeted for \$600,000, will feature 36 carved horses and other animals. Morgan Constructors of Lafayette built the building that will contain the carousel.

“Once that’s up we’ll have a full allotment of rides,” Miner says.

“I think it’s probably the thing most people are excited about. The paddle boats kind of surprised people last year when we said we were bringing them back. That brought a lot of nostalgia back. We’ll experience some of that same thing with the carousel. I think the carousel will be that same type of experience for those of us who remember the old carousel at Columbian Park, and for kids who didn’t experience that it’ll add another reason to come to the park. I think the community will be really, really pleased.”

The carousel and the restrooms under construction on the site of the former Jenks Rest building will wrap up several years of renovation at Columbian Park.

“We’re really looking forward to this summer since it’s going to be the first since 2018 where we haven’t had any construction happening inside the park,” Miner says. “Once that carousel is in, we’re going to



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have a good year where people will come and not have any construction fences up and around. It's exciting to get to see what you want to see and not have to worry about restricted parking or 'we can't go over there because it's under construction.'

The new restrooms will serve the east side of Columbian Park that is home to Memorial Island as well as the SIA Playground and the picnic shelters.

"While bathrooms are typically not the most exciting thing to construct, they are critical infrastructure," Miner says.

The biggest news coming out of Columbian Park during the past few months came from the zoo. Six of the nine African penguins died after contracting avian malaria.

The three surviving penguins – Shazam, Sagely and Donner – are "doing well," according to Miner.

"They've gained weight and are holding their own," he says. "I am not a veterinarian nor an animal person but I think we're past the illness stage with them. There can be some long-term effects of avian malaria on surviving penguins. It's a matter of keeping an eye on that and making sure we're doing the things necessary to keep them healthy."

The Columbian Park Zoo is set to open April 16.

By that time, the zoo's neighbor – Loeb Stadium – will be home to Lafayette Jeff high school baseball for the second consecutive year following Loeb's renovation.



Loeb also will host a movie night on April 22. The animated film “Onward,” featuring the voices of Tom Holland, Chris Pratt, Julia Louis-Dreyfus and Octavia Spencer, will be the second movie shown at the ballpark following “Elf” this past fall.

The Lafayette Aviators summer collegiate baseball team opens its home schedule at Loeb Stadium June 1 against Terre Haute.

Residing west of Loeb Stadium, Tropicanae Cove is preparing to launch its 23rd season. The water slides that remind some park-goers of the old Big Dipper slide is back for the fourth year.

“That’s hard to believe for those of us who remember the old round swimming pool,” Miner says.

Once the carousel and new restrooms open, that will be the last of planned construction at Columbian Park until possibly 2023. That’s a potential date to replace some of the equipment at the SIA Playground, which sits on the land formerly occupied by the pool.

“Playgrounds have a shelf life, and the SIA Playground is approaching 23 years,” Miner says. “That gets to be about the point in time you have to start looking at replacing some of those pieces for safety.”

Future plans also include bringing exhibits featuring primates and North American cats to the zoo.

Also in the next year or so, fishing may be allowed again in the lagoon, which Miner was proud to say still has crystal clear water following years of decay and mud buildup.

“We’re continuing to work on the ecosystem in the lagoon,” Miner says. “We did a lot of stocking (of fish) last fall. It’s not going to be ready for fishing quite yet. The fish that are in there won’t be of size, but we’re working with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources and Purdue on stocking it with the appropriate species.” ★

Embracing a Second Chance Workforce

Program seeks to
empower businesses
to support employees
navigating addiction
recovery

BY KAT BRAZ
PHOTOS BY CHRISTINE PETKOV

Everyone deserves a second chance. But for individuals in recovery from addiction, second chances can be hard to come by. A grant-funded partnership between Phoenix Recovery Solutions, a division of Phoenix Paramedic Solutions, and Valley Oaks Health provides peer-based recovery support to individuals struggling with issues related to substance abuse, mental health or homelessness.

“Our certified peer recovery coaches have lived experience and are in recovery from mental health or substance use themselves,” says Jason Padgett, the director of marketing solutions for Phoenix and one of the founding members of its quick response team (QRT), which facilitates the second chance program with support from the state-wide Indiana Workforce Recovery Initiative. The QRT, which includes a warm line staffed 24/7, services nine counties: Tippecanoe, White, Jasper, Cass, Carroll, Benton, Newton, Fulton and Pulaski.

“As a person in recovery myself, I didn’t have many choices when I entered recovery 16 years ago for alcoholism,” Padgett says. “Alcoholics Anonymous has saved millions of lives, but recovery is not a one-size-fits-all journey. The beauty of peer support is that unlike saying ‘this is how I did it, you’re going to follow my same path,’ a peer recovery coach takes the view that your journey is your journey. We’re here to help show you your options and support you on your journey by connecting you to community resources. It’s up to you to decide what route to recovery you want to explore.”



One of the biggest challenges for persons in recovery is maintaining employment. Although the Americans with Disabilities Act protects addicts in recovery from a substance use disorder, relapses — not uncommon on the path to recovery — can lead to a positive drug screen, tardiness or missed work, which can lead to dismissal. Embracing a Second Chance Workforce, a new program offered by

Phoenix QRT and Greater Lafayette Commerce, seeks to educate and empower businesses on how to support employees through addiction recovery.

“Our goal is to partner with local corporations, particularly manufacturing but any industry, to refer employees who test positive on a drug screen or are having trouble with mental health or substance abuse issues,” Padgett says. “The

companies would contract with us to assign a peer recovery specialist to support that individual on their recovery journey. That allows the company to retain the individual on its workforce, which is much cheaper than hiring and training a new employee. There are tax incentives for companies that embrace second chance policies.”

A Lunch and Learn panel discussion held in April featured repre-

sentatives from companies that embrace second chance policies geared toward people in recovery as well as individuals with felony records. As a follow up, a second chance career fair is scheduled from 1-7 p.m. May 18 at the Tippecanoe County Fairgrounds. In addition to showcasing companies embracing second chance policies, the career fair will also have representatives from community social

service organizations.

“We want everyone who comes to the career fair to have access to every community resource they could possibly need,” Padgett says. “From peer support to treatment to ongoing education, they can even get help creating a resume or practice interviewing to make them comfortable speaking with potential employers.”

Holding a job is a large part of an individual’s recovery capital, the internal and external resources that can initiate and sustain long-term recovery. Phoenix, which embraces felony-friendly hiring and employs several individuals in recovery in addition to Padgett, will be among the employers represented at the career fair.

“I’ve had a relapse in recovery and I was supported by my employer,” Padgett says. “It meant the world to me. A bump in the road doesn’t have to mean going all the way back down to the bottom and starting at zero again.” ★



A career fair for individuals re-entering the workforce after being incarcerated or recovering from substance use disorder will be held May 18 from 1-7 p.m. at the Tippecanoe County Fairgrounds: bit.ly/GLCCareerFair2022

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Pretty tasty:

Scones and Doilies Bake Shop crafts European-inspired desserts with equal measures of beauty and flavor

Sunlight streams through the windows of the red-painted brick building at 623 Main St., casting soft rays into the vintage space. On a white painted cabinet between the front door and the check-out counter, packages of walnut shortbread cookies rest on an elevated cake plate, while clusters of biscotti stand at attention in ivory mugs bearing the bakery's logo. Nearby on the same wooden countertop, handmade doily bags bearing pieces of chocolate hang from the branches of a gilded tree, while a house plant on a marble-top stand adds a contrasting green to the vignette.



In this Pinterest-perfect space, gallery-white walls and honeyed wood floors serve as the backdrop for carefully curated displays of dozens of different pastries, all handmade by bakers Sergei and Natasha Vasili.

Founded eight years ago, their Scones and Doilies Bake Shop serves up European-inspired, made-from-scratch baked goods that are as delicious as they are pretty.

“Our products are unique, hand-crafted and freshly baked using quality ingredients. Our recipes are all original, and you’ll see seasonal flavors and varieties. For example, during Easter we make decorated Easter cookies and Greek Easter bread,” Natasha says.

A fresh look

Natives of Albania – a mountainous coastal country situated on the western part of the Balkan Peninsula within the Mediterranean Sea – the couple worked in food service after immigrating to the United States. “We learned a lot about the industry – product trends, food safety and customer service,” Natasha explains. They baked on the side, getting rave reviews from family and friends for their pastries and decorated cakes.

Eventually, with the encouragement of their daughters, the two launched their business at local farmers markets, using a commercial kitchen for baking. Then they moved downtown into a space that they shared with City Foods Co-Op.

Two years ago, when City Foods closed its Main Street location, the Vasilis became the sole proprietors of the space, and they set to work on freshening it up. Rustic wood walls and corrugated metal trim gave way to a cheerful, neutral and

slightly boho space that allows their intricately detailed pastries to be the stars of the show.

Their goal, says Sergei, was to make the place “feel like something different, something really unique. I think people in Greater Lafayette really enjoy that.”

Rustic and elegant

Albanian baking is a mix of Mediterranean, European, rustic and elegant, and all of that is on display in Scones and Doilies. On any given day, customers may discover gingerbread cookies piped with tiny flowers nestled next to delicately rolled pieces of baklava and berry galettes enveloped in flaky dough and sprinkled with sugar.

Menu items vary but generally include scones in such flavors as honey fig pecan and white chocolate raspberry, challah bread, rugelach, baklava, biscotti, cookies, cupcakes, and galettes in savory flavors such as roasted vegetable and ham and cheese. Several gluten-free pastries are regularly available, including scones made on site.

“We also craft specialty cakes, all baked to order, dense in texture with our signature buttercream icing and beautiful decorations,” Natasha says. Along with traditional flavors of chocolate and vanilla, the bakers offer specialty flavors in lemon blueberry, blackberry lime, raspberry champagne and carrot, in double-layer, triple-layer, half-sheet and full-sheet styles. Pricing varies by flavor and decoration. Some of these special orders are spotlighted on Scones and Doilies’ Instagram page, their colorful sprays of flowers puddling over iced layers.

Sales for a cause

The Vasilis love giving back to



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their adopted community of Greater Lafayette as well as communities around the world. In addition to being active in the International Center at Purdue University, the couple supports Gift of Life International (GOL), a Rotarian-based organization whose mission is to provide life-saving heart surgeries to children in developing countries.

Nine years ago, they helped to facilitate surgery in Indiana for their niece in Albania, who was born with a heart condition. Today, the couple says that Luna is a happy, healthy young girl – a testament to the partnership between GOL and Riley Hospital for Children. The couple continues to raise funds for the charity through the sales of some of their baked goods and handmade items such as doilies and mittens.

“We’re able to support them in bringing the babies here, or sometimes they bring the doctors there,” Sergei explains of the charity, which to date has treated more than 40,000 children from 80 countries, according to the organization’s website. ★

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Located next to Lafayette Brewing Company, Scones and Doilies is open Tuesdays through Saturdays. Allow at least 10 days for any special orders. Visit their website at sconesanddoilies.com. Follow them on Instagram and Facebook at @sconesanddoilies

Teledyne FLIR:

Life-saving technologies



Teledyne FLIR founders, Dennis Barket and Garth Patterson



Teledyne FLIR Director, Site Operations, Clint Wichert

Teledyne FLIR's slogan is "Everywhere You Look".

For 20 years, this company in Purdue's Research Park has been improving technology, "helping people around the world save lives, protect the environment and enhance productivity. We're building more than innovative technologies; we're striving to build a more sustainable, more efficient, safer future."

Teledyne FLIR, a company started by two Purdue graduates who worked with Dr. Graham Cooks, is owned by parent company Teledyne, a large multinational conglomerate. FLIR is a leader for its applications in thermal imaging and chemical detection, says Clint Wichert, director; site operations.

The company is best known for its highly specialized chemical detection instruments. There are broad applications for these instruments, which use mass spectrometry, allowing for very specific chemical identification. They can separate specific chemical mixtures, allowing the identification of minute amounts of potentially hazardous chemicals.

"Our instrument is really the best to use in these applications," Wichert says.

This highly specialized equipment can be used by the military, first responders and by hazardous materials units.

It can, for example, detect fentanyl, a synthetic opioid that is highly addictive and possibly fatal

when taken in high doses. It is often mixed with other drugs on the black market; this technology can detect fentanyl at even 2 or 3 percent, when it is mixed with acetaminophen — a dangerous and potentially lethal combination.

Improvements in technology have made these instruments smaller and more compact over the years, and they are now portable, meaning they can now be transported to a site. With a three to nine-month backlog in some modern forensics labs, this means less time to identify a substance, and less chance that substance will be contaminated during transport.

"This technology is really the gold standard for chemical identification," says Wichert.

The instruments are sensitive and complex. For years, they were large; with the computer required, pumps and the power source, they took up a great deal of space. But the same technological progressions the world has seen in all other areas have helped make this technology more portable and accessible.

"We've worked progressively over the past 20 years to miniaturize the technology," says Wichert. "Something that used to weigh 120 pounds is now down to under 40 pounds. This same kind of tech progression has happened and been pioneered in West Lafayette."

The company employs around 50 people and hires many Purdue



graduates but also gets talent from Indiana University and Rose Hulman. Employees are drawn to the Lafayette area and working in the Research Park, with its proximity to the Purdue campus and ability to continue the collaboration with Dr. Cooks.

As the company continues to grow and expand, it looks forward to expanding these life-saving technologies, Wichert says.

"It's been great over the last 20 years to really have the support of the community and of Purdue," he says. "We work with experts, and we like to be able to tap into this talent pool, both technology and manufacturing. We're happy to be part of this community." ★



Summer Camp Adventures

There's no shortage of summer camps for Greater Lafayette youth to enjoy during their break from school. From theater and dance to zoo animals and wolves, there's a wide array of options for kids of all ages.

Wolf Park • wolfpark.org/summer-camps

Wolf Park, an education, conservation and research facility located in Battle Ground, offers Summer Science and Art & Enrichment camps for children of all ages.

Two-day camps are arranged for grades K-8 and vary by theme, date and age group. For example, children in grades 4-5 will explore ecosystems, and children in grades K-1 will learn about the wonders of wildlife in their backyards and beyond.

Education and Advocacy Director Christopher Lile says, "Wolf Park's summer camps provide a unique opportunity for youth to connect to the rich history of Indiana's wildlife. Campers learn about wildlife conservation, animal husbandry and how to become wildlife advocates through engaging games, crafts and activities."

There also are opportunities for teens ages 14-17 to be wildlife advocates in an 8-week volunteer program geared for those interested in pursuing a career in wildlife. An additional opportunity, called Junior Keeper Camp, is a 2-day experience that introduces youth to the field of wildlife conservation where campers will carry out daily keeper duties at Wolf Park.

Lastly, new this summer is Art & Enrichment Camp for grades K-8. Campers will use their artistic skills through nature and conservation-themed projects. The projects will serve as enrichment for several of the animal ambassadors throughout Wolf Park.

"All youth programs focus on empowering the next generation of conservation champions — their voices are essential to 'Save Wolves, Save Wilderness,'" Lile says.

Dance Moves & Gymnastics (DMG) • flipdmg.com/camps

Dance Moves & Gymnastics, also known as DMG, is on Meijer Drive in Lafayette and offers several different summer camp options.

Dance Director & Marketing Manager Kaitlyn Williams says, "DMG is the place to be for summer camps, starting at age 18 months with Mommy and Me camps though school-age children."

Three-day camps feature different themes including princess, adventure island, jungle gym and Olympic dreams. One-day Mommy and Me camps also are themed and geared for toddlers from 18 months to 3 years old.

"We have dance, gymnastics and baton twirling with fun performances. Come help us celebrate 40 years of DMG this summer," says Williams.

For youth interested in cheerleading or baton twirling, campers have the opportunity to perform at a Lafayette Aviators baseball game at Loeb Stadium. Registration for all DMG summer camps begins in April.



Greater Lafayette Commerce Robotics in Manufacturing greaterlafayettecommerce.com/robotics-in-manufacturing-camp

Organized by Greater Lafayette Commerce and in partnership with local Boys & Girls Clubs, Robotics in Manufacturing Camp provides week-long day camp sessions to area students in grades 1-8. Sessions vary by location and grade, but all focus on educating youth about the applications of new technology in modern manufacturing.

Workforce Development Director Kara Webb says, "Robotics in Manufacturing Camp is a great summer activity for campers in our region. Campers develop and grow in their knowledge of coding and programming in a fun environment with robotics, 3D printers and more. We bring in local industry at the camps as well."

A typical day at camp rotates children through stations that build upon what they learned the day before. Stations will cover EV3 robots, Sphero robots, littleBits, 3D printing, Scratch coding software and more. It's a great way to get hands-on with manufacturing skills and processes while meeting local manufacturers.

"Campers get to engage with local manufacturing and logistics employers to learn about what is created and produced in their backyard, and what careers they have in the industry," Webb explains. "I'm always fascinated by how creative and innovative the campers are!"

Civic Youth Summer Theatre • lafayettecivic.org/camps

Civic Theatre in Greater Lafayette hosts a number of camps serving youth interested in choreography, singing, acting, musical theatre, improvisation, design and performance. This summer, Civic Theatre has planned the following camps: Choreography; Theatre Intensive; Rising Stars Camp: Moana's Island Vibes; Out of the Box; and Curtains Up Camp: Disney's Moana, Jr.

"Summer camps with Civic Theatre are incredible opportunities for kids to develop performance skills and theatre knowledge in a fun and team-focused environment. The most beneficial takeaways the campers have shared have been the friendships, sense of accomplishment and self-confidence gained from working together towards a common goal," says Julie Baumann, director of education and outreach.

As an example, the Curtains Up Camp will prepare camp participants for a final, full-scale production of "Moana, Jr." with lights, sound and costumes. Technical crew members are also needed for this production. Interested teens should email Julie at julie@lafayettecivic.org for possible tech crew openings. Positions include set construction, sound board operators and backstage crew members.

Wild About Horses • wildabouthorses.net/summer-camp-2018

Wild About Horses Equestrian Center, located in West Point, was established in 1998 by Pam Bowen Gibson. She focuses on teaching the fundamentals of a balanced rider through horsemanship, partnership on the ground, kindness and respect for horses.

Her summer camp program, going on 24 years now, includes two lessons per day in this week-long camp. The week concludes with a Friday afternoon horse show, open to camper families and friends. Children ages 7 and older are welcome and are encouraged to bring a change of clothes and boots.

Lafayette Parks and Recreation Department lafayette.in.gov • columbianparkzoo.org

McAllister Center Summer Camp: Children ages 6-12 are welcome to the McAllister Center each summer for day camp full of fun activities. Campers go on field trips to the City of Lafayette's aquatic facilities and parks. They're also able to visit the movie theater and bowling alley.

Registration is available in weekly sessions, and there are discounts for households with multiple campers. Before and after care services are included in the weekly fees, and a junior counselor program is an option for 13-14 year-olds.

Columbian Park Zoo Camp: Zoo day camp programs are planned for children ages 3-14 with a variety of themes and schedules. Zoo Cub mini-camp is organized for children ages 3-4 in three-day sessions. Preschoolers experience hands-on animal encounters, games, crafts and other activities. Children also enjoy supervised outings to zoo exhibits.

Learning Adventures Camps are offered to three different age groups: ages 5-7, ages 8-11 and ages 12-14. The learning camps highlight nature-based topics alongside hands-on activities and animal encounters. Behind-the-scenes tours are a popular addition to zoo camp as well as games, crafts and STEM activities.

The campers in the oldest age group get an inside look at what it's like being a zookeeper. This unique week-long day camp has been offered at the Columbian Park Zoo for over a decade, and it's perfect for those interested in animal-related careers. Campers work alongside staff zookeepers and gain experience with public speaking in front of small groups of zoo visitors.

West Lafayette Parks and Recreation Department westlafayette.in.gov

West Lafayette Wellness Center Summer Camp: After celebrating its one-year anniversary since opening, the West Lafayette Wellness Center is ready to host campers for a second summer. Children ages 6-11 participate in this day camp for one-week sessions. Campers get to make a splash in the indoor pool, participate in both indoor and outdoor sports and games, create crafts, go on field trips and enjoy special guest speakers.

Lilly Nature Center Camp: In addition to the camp held at the wellness center, the West Lafayette Parks and Recreation Department is



also hosting a new summer camp at the Lilly Nature Center off Lindberg Road. Children will explore a new, nature-themed day camp for each week-long session. Session themes cover such topics as insects, wildlife, plants and geology.

Head Camper Program: Area teens ages 13-15 are invited to apply for a new Head Camper Program at the West Lafayette Wellness Center. Participants will gain leadership skills and work experience in a day camp setting. Head campers have to undergo an interview process and must be responsible, enthusiastic, reliable and be willing to serve as role models to the younger campers.

Boiler Kids Camp • purdue.edu/recwell/sports-and-programs

After a two-year hiatus due to Purdue's COVID-19 policies, Boiler Kids Camp is returning this summer at Purdue RecWell. Youth ages 5-12 register for week-long sessions.

Activities include rock climbing, swimming, arts and crafts, cooking, games and visits to on-campus landmarks. Before and after care services are included, and both RecWell members and non-members are welcome.

YMCA – Camp Tecumseh • camptecumseh.org

Located on the banks of the Tippecanoe River in Brookston sits Camp Tecumseh. There are a variety of camp options for kids ages 5-12, including overnight, equestrian and day camps as well as adventure trips.

Summer day camps are themed, week-long sessions full of planned activities that include games, horseback riding, swimming, arts and crafts, archery, obstacle courses, fishing, nature adventures and more. With more than 600 acres to explore through trails, lakes and pools, there's opportunity for a new adventure every day in this faith-based environment led by expertly trained counselors.

YMCA – Straight Arrow Day Camp • lafayettefamilyymca.org

The YMCA hosts the Straight Arrow Day Camp just outside Lafayette at Camp Treece for weekly sessions during the summer. Camp sessions are themed with related activities that include swimming, canoeing, arts and crafts, archery, obstacle courses and team building.

Campers are divided into age groups: Preschool Camp for ages 3-5, Regular Camp for ages 5-9 and Youth in Action overnight camp for ages 10-12. Straight Arrow Day Camp also offers a Junior Counselor Camp for youth ages 13-15.

Bus transportation is provided for pick-up and drop-off from the YMCA. Additionally, a pick-up and drop-off site is available at West Lafayette Elementary School. ★

Getting Tight housing market presents many challenges real

BY CINDY GERLACH STOCK PHOTOGRAPHY

If you are hoping to sell your house, good news: It's a great time to put your house on the market. But if you're a first-time home buyer, be prepared. It might be tough for you to get your offer accepted in a tight market.

Properties that are priced in that "sweet spot" — properly priced and in reasonable condition — are seeing single-digit days on the market and multiple offers, says Charlie Shook, broker and co-owner of Coldwell Banker Shook. Right now, that "sweet" price is from \$150,000 to \$350,000. Prices that might have once been considered fairly expensive are now seen as the norm. It's a reflection of the economy, of supply and demand.

"It sounds exciting, but it's really just a reaction to the economy," Shook says. "Brokers don't want that. It makes prices go up. There are more buyers than product."

Inventory in Tippecanoe County is at historic lows, says Stacy Grove, a broker and owner of the Russell Company. On one day in early March, active listings for single-family houses were at 67. But when filtered for those that had offers, that number dropped to 46. Of those listings, 12 were in West Lafayette. The prices ranged from \$79,900 to \$1.5 million. And of those 46, only 19 listings were under \$300,000.

"People don't understand the crisis that is our inventory shortage," Grove says. "We just don't have the new construction to back up the inventory demand."

For sellers, this means a potential profit. People used to have to hold onto a house for several years before they could see making any money with a sale; now, Grove says, properties can appreciate up to 1 percent a month; one need only own their home for a short time before they can recoup their costs and see a return.

For those trying to buy their first home, the process might be an arduous one. Most listings for houses under \$300,000 are seeing multiple offers, many above the asking price.

"We're seeing multiple offers over the list price," says Grove. "The list price used to be our ceiling, now it's our floor."

Buyers are waiving inspections and writing offers without contingencies. Some buyers are able to write cash offers, getting temporary loans to avoid financing. And they are adding what is known as an escalation clause, offering to beat the best offer up to a certain amount.

"It's a valid strategy," says Shook. "Those intangibles are becoming more and more popular."

And when prices are not reflecting the appraisal, buyers are offering to pay the difference in the appraisal gap, says Grove, essentially taking an advance on their equity.

"It's the Wild West out here," Grove says. "It is crazy."

Thus it's a great time to sell your house — if, that is, you have someplace to go. Because the story for buyers, especially first-time buyers, is not so rosy.





Getting your offer accepted may be a path fraught with disappointment and frustration.

But even though it seems abnormal, some buyers are seeing their offers accepted. One just has to be ready and prepared to make an offer — there probably isn't a lot of time to consider your options. Look at a house and be ready to act immediately. Write your best offer. And be prepared for little to no negotiating.

The best advice for a buyer? Use an agent, says Markus Jamison, team leader at Keller Williams.

"If you're just googling properties, by the time you get on there, it probably already has an offer. And get prequalified."

It is, Shook says, a great time to invest in real estate. The uptick in prices certainly is evident. In 2019, 40 homes in Tippecanoe County sold for more than \$500,000; in 2021, that number was 116. For homes in the \$400,000-500,000 range, 2021 saw 136 sales, compared to 82 in 2019.

"Our market has been undervalued for years," Shook says. "My gut feeling is people are feeling more confident about investing in real estate."

People who think they may build a house instead are likely in for a surprise — and a wait. With supply chain issues, materials are more expensive. The

estimate to build a ranch house, on a slab, is around \$450,000, Grove says. Add a basement, and the price jumps to \$650,000.

With interest rates predicted to go up in the coming months, the market could change. But it may not be to a buyer's advantage, says Grove.

"At some point, with inflation going up, people will be spending more on necessities," she says. "At some point, they won't have the money for a mortgage they once did. The buyer pool will shrink because they won't have the liquidity they once did."

Jamison says it's anyone's guess what will happen. But with rates at historic lows, buyers could still be in a good position.

"That's the plus side," he says. "In the long run, you're not paying as much. It's a tug-of-war, and we don't know where it's going."

Shook encourages buyers to not get too frustrated. It may take some time, but your dream house is out there. He projects that 2022 will look a lot like 2021 did, but some of the pent-up demand will abate.

"The professional real estate community understands the angst, the pain a buyer has to go through," he says. "It's hard to call a buyer four or five times and tell them they didn't get it. But I'm always amazed at how often the next house is better." ★

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