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101st YEAR

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 8, 2025

PHONE: (216) 441-2141 • EMAIL: NNEWS1923@AOL.COM

FREE

Maple Hts. Council OKs grant agreement with Famous Supply; company moving to old GOJO plant

By Judith Goldsworth

At its Dec. 18 meeting, Maple Heights Council approved an ordinance authorizing an Economic Development Grant Agreement for Famous Supply, an Akron-based HVAC/plumbing/building supply company that plans to locate a 354,000 square-foot distribution facility in the former GOJO plant, representing an investment of \$42 million and more than 80 jobs in the city.

The ordinance authorizes Mayor Annette Blackwell to enter into the grant agreement, in which the city will make annual payments of \$25,000 to Famous Supply for 10 years, beginning November 15, 2025. The payments will come from property tax revenue generated from the development of the property, located at 5700 Lee Rd. South.

According to the grant agreement, the company will develop a "state of the art" distribution and job training center on the property, "which will create job and employment opportunities, including training center scholarships, to improve the economic welfare of the residents of the city."

Nearby interstate and rail access were among the reasons Famous Supply chose the property, along with the large square footage and the previous improvements to the building, Blackwell said.

She also credited GOJO for taking an active part in finding Famous Supply as a new tenant for the facility and not leaving the building vacant.

"GOJO was really a big part of making that property available and making Famous aware of all that it had to offer," she added. "They were really committed to helping us find an appropriate tenant, and they were significant in bringing that to the attention of Famous Supply. I want to say thank you to the owners of GOJO for their help."

(Continued on Page 3)

Local rapper shot to death

Carlos "Kash" Banks, 28, of Cleveland was shot to death on Sunday, Dec. 29, and found inside a third-floor apartment at 5115 Broadway Ave., in the North Broadway area of Slavic Village, according to WOIO 19 News.



Banks

Those who knew the local rapper said Banks was always smiling, rapping and recording his music, posted 19 News.

Cleveland Police detectives are conducting an ongoing investigation to identify his killer. Anyone with knowledge of the homicide is asked to call Cleveland police or Crime Stoppers, where information can remain anonymous.

Photo taken from the Facebook post of Carlos Banks

Cleveland adopts new ward map; Fleet Ave. split

Cleveland City Council Monday night passed legislation to deal with the city's decades-long population loss by approving a redistricting map that will reduce the number of wards from 17 to 15 and scrambled boundaries across the city, including Slavic Village.

At first glance changes to the Slavic Village neighborhood were subtle. Boundaries grew and the number of wards it was divided into was reduced from four to three. But it became apparent after study that it's likely that, for the first time in history, Slavic Villagers will have leaders who do not live among them. Most glaringly, Fleet Ave. is now cut down the middle, with the area north of the street in the new Ward 3 and south of the street in the new Ward 2.

Monday's meeting was presided over by Council President Blaine Griffin. It began with public comment by citizen activists: west siders generally supported the plan while east siders expressed dismay.

When the vote on the new redistricting map was taken, it decisively passed 14-2, as council members rose to explain their votes.

Council President Griffin described the inherent challenge of eliminating two wards. Current Ward 3 Councilman Kerry McCormack said his colleagues were placed in a no-win position by the U.S. Census and legal mandates, but expressed satisfaction that his booming Ohio City neighborhood was left whole. Ward 5 Councilman Richard Starr reminded Clevelanders that it was they who created the issue, by passing a charter amendment several years ago tying council size to census numbers.

Ward 12 Councilwoman Rebecca Maurer of Slavic Vil-



Ward 12 Cleveland Councilwoman Rebecca Maurer speaks with Slavic Village Stakeholders after the redistricting vote Monday night at City Hall.

lage, and Ward 16 Councilman Brian Kazy were the two "no" votes on the redistricting map.

Maurer spoke in support of her frustrated residents who had circulated anti-redistricting petitions that were sent to all 17 council members. She decried what she described as a closed, rushed redistricting process and reiterated her view that "politicians should not be drawing their own maps." The large anti-redistricting contingent in the audience, among them the Slavic Village Stakeholders' elected officers, jumped to their feet with sustained applause when Maurer finished.

Veteran Ward 8 Councilman Michael Polensek of Collinwood spoke last, focusing on the dire population loss on the city's east side. He pleaded with Clevelanders, leaders and citizens alike, to attend to unglamorous but critical "quality of life" issues: crime, education, housing. "We need more people coming not leaving. Sports venues won't do it. MedMarts won't do it. We have to stop making mistakes."

It's unclear what candidates will run in the new wards. Filing deadline is early June, with elections for mayor and council in the fall.

OverDrive workers donate to Garfield Hts. Food Bank



OverDrive employees generously donated \$10,000 to the Garfield Heights Food Pantry. The company has been very generous over the years helping the city's families in need, said city officials. Pictured are Senior Center Manager Jennifer Sopkovich, Mayor Matt Burke, OverDrive Human Resources Coordinator Mandee Strefas and Senior Center Activities Coordinator Laketia Gaston at the check presentation.

Homicide in Maple Hts.

On Tuesday, Dec. 31, at about 6:30 p.m., the Maple Heights Police Department responded to 5514 Dunham Rd., for a report of two gunshots in the area and a male lying in the parking lot of the Convenience Store.

Upon arrival officers located a male with a gunshot wound. The victim was transported to Marymount Hospital where he died from his injuries. The identification of the victim is being withheld until proper notification of the family is completed.

Circumstances behind this homicide are still being investigated by MHPD's Detective Bureau. Anyone with information related to this case is urged to contact the Maple Heights Detective Bureau at 216-587-9624 or Detectives@mhpdohio.com. Information can also be supplied anonymously to Crime Stoppers.

Maple Hts. OKs grant agreement with Famous Supply

(Continued from Page 1)

First step in Senior Center levy renewal, other legislation passed

• As the first step in renewing a levy to fund the Maple Heights Senior Center, council passed a resolution to declare it necessary to renew the existing 5-year, 1.3-mill tax levy to fund current expenses and general operations of the Senior Center, and requesting the Cuyahoga County fiscal officer to certify the total current tax valuation of the city and the dollar amount of revenue that would be generated by the renewal.

• Also passed was an ordinance authorizing Blackwell and Fire Chief Dan Sypen to apply for and accept, if granted, a fiscal year 2024 Assistance to Firefighters Grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency for operations and safety equipment. The city would be required to match 10% of the award.

Blackwell and Sypen have recommended that the city apply for the grant, in an amount not to exceed \$368,000, for the purchase of 36 portable safety radios.

• Council passed a resolution authorizing Blackwell to enter into an agreement with James G. Zupka, C.P.A., Inc., to prepare and file the annual Generally Accepted Accounting Principles financial statements for the city for the year ending Dec. 31, 2024, at an anticipated cost of \$14,620.

• Also passed by council was a motion requesting that the Planning and Zoning Commission provide a recommendation to council on the mayor's request to amend the text of the codified ordinances to allow battery-charged fences. Electrified fences are currently prohibited, except for underground low voltage fences and battery charged fences.

A towing company in the city had asked that the amendment be considered to allow a battery charged electric fence be installed around their property to protect vehicles from trespassers, Law Director Frank Consolo stated.

Housing Administrator Sharri Thomas, who has served the city of Maple Heights for the past several years, was honored by Blackwell and council for her service, as she is taking a new position as a Neighborhood Development specialist with the city of Shaker Heights in January.

In her final report to council, Thomas stated that there had been "amazing real estate opportunities" in the city over the past year, including the sale of 300 residential properties, ranging in price from \$90,000 up to \$196,000.

"On the commercial side," she said, "we've even had several sales, as with Famous Supply. There's been a total

of 11 commercial property-type sales... I am excited, not only as an employee but as a resident, because the more value that comes into the city of Maple Heights, the better off the residents and property owners will be."

**INVITATION FOR BIDS
LEGAL NOTICE**

Sealed bid proposals will be received by the City Manager of the City of Bedford, Ohio at his office, 165 Center Road, Bedford, Ohio until 12:00 Noon on the **31st day of January 2025** for:

BEDFORD COMMONS

and will be publicly opened and read immediately thereafter. Each bid must contain the full name or names of the party or parties making the same, with an affidavit as to interested parties, and in the case of a corporation not chartered in Ohio, with a proper certificate that such corporation is authorized to do business in Ohio, and be accompanied by a certified or cashier's check on a solvent bank made payable to the order of the City of Bedford, the amount shall be equal to ten percent (10%) of the amount bid, drawn in favor of the Clerk of the City of Bedford, Ohio, or a Bid Guaranty/Bid Bond in accordance with Section 153.54 of the Ohio Revised Code.

Each bidder must ensure that all employees and applicants for employment are not discriminated against because of their race, creed, color, sex, or national origin.

The price of material and labor bid for shall be separately stated.

Copies of the Specifications, Instructions to Bidders, Forms of Proposals and other contract documents are on file at the office of the Clerk of the City of Bedford. These documents may only be obtained through the office of GPD Group by emailing Ivan Valentic ivalentic@gpdgroup.com and requesting a digital copy. Digital documents will be provided free of charge. Questions or inquiries should be directed to GPD Group at (440) 927-8684. No questions will be answered after 1 p.m. on January 27, 2025.

An optional Pre-Bid Meeting for all contractors is scheduled for Thursday, **January 23rd** at **10:00 A.M. Local time** at City of Bedford City Hall Building, 165 Center Road, Bedford, Ohio 44146.

The bid check or bid bond, as the case may be, will be held as a guarantee that, if the bid proposal is accepted, a contract will be entered into between the bidder and the City of Bedford, and the performance of such contract secured by said check or bond, and in default thereof said check or bond, and the amount represented thereby, shall be forfeited to the City of Bedford as liquidated damages.

The City of Bedford reserves the right to reject any and all bids, to waive any informalities in the bids received, and to accept any bid which it deems most favorable to the City.

Michael S. Mallis, City Manager
City of Bedford, Ohio

NN: January 8, 2025
January 15, 2025

**Happy New Year!
To All Our Neighbors
in Ward 4 from
Rochelle and
Avery Johnson**

**City Council President
Garfield Heights
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Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad derails near Peninsula; no reports of injuries

At approximately 8:53 p.m., on Saturday, Dec. 21, a Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad (CVSR) train derailed near Peninsula, Ohio. Three cars came off the tracks but remained upright.

There were no injuries reported among the 588 passengers and crew members on board. CVSR provided coach buses to transport passengers back to Rockside Station in Independence.

Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad operates on tracks owned and maintained by the National Park Service in the Cuyahoga Valley National Park. Park officials said safety remains the top priority for both organizations, and the incident is under investigation.

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¹Actual monthly payment for above example is based on 252 month term and is \$52.95 at a fixed APR of 2.99%. Rates effective as of 2/1/2024 and are subject to change. ²Fixed APR is 2.99%. Homeowners Insurance required. Flood insurance required, if applicable. Maximum LTV 85%. Minimum loan amount \$1,000. Maximum loan amount \$9,900. 21-year term. A Third Federal Home Repair Loan is available as a first or second lien on owner-occupied primary residences and can be the only HELOC on your property. \$0 annual fee and \$10 minimum monthly payment. Borrowers must meet certain income, geographic and other requirements to qualify. Product features subject to change without notice. ©2024 Third Federal.

Skate with Santa a big success!



Skate with Santa at the Dan Kostel Rec Center in Garfield Heights on Dec. 15 drew a great crowd who all had a fun time out on the ice with the Christmas superstar. The kids especially were glad to see Santa, as he had small gifts for all in his little red bag. Paul Birk, Sr., director of Parks & Recreation, and Mary Nichols, coordinator, wish to thank all who came out to participate in this popular event.

Final winter Sessions #3 and #4 of Learn to Skate and In-House Learn to Play Hockey begin the weeks of Jan. 13 and Feb. 24, and run for six weeks. Deadline for Session #3 is Jan. 11. Free Try Before You Buy ice skating sessions will be held today, Wednesday, Jan. 8, from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., and Saturday, Jan. 11, from 10 to 11:15 a.m. Child must be accompanied by parent or legal guardian.

Cleveland Public Library: Fleet Branch

Here are some of the FREE programs for the month of January being held for youth, adults and families at the Fleet Branch of the Cleveland Public Library, 7224 Broadway Ave., Cleveland. To register for any programs, please call 216-623-6962.

Kids Café: Cleveland Foodbank after school lunch program for youth ages 1-18. Monday-Friday, 3:30-4:30 p.m.

Clay Creations: School-aged. Thursday, Jan. 9, 4-5:30 p.m.

Mario Kart Tournament: School-aged. Tuesday, Jan. 14, 4-5:30 p.m.

Banned Book Coffee Chats: Adults. Wednesday, Jan. 15, 12-1 p.m. This month's title will be "The Bluest Eye" by Toni Morrison. Limited copies of the book will be available to check out. **Comic San Creations:** School-aged. Wednesday, Jan. 15, 4:30-5:30 p.m.

Book to Movie Matinee: Family. Saturday, Jan. 25, 12-2 p.m. This month's book to film feature will be "Curious George" by H.A. Rey. Limited copies of the book will be available to check out. **Create Your Own Puzzle:** School-aged. Wednesday, Jan. 29, 2:30-3:30 p.m.

Preschool Storytime: Youth. Thursday, Jan. 30, 4-4:30 p.m.

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Linda Vopat honored in Maple Hts. with two retirement parties

On Tuesday, Dec. 10, friends, family, co-workers and community officials gathered at the Affluent Event Center to celebrate the decades-long career of Linda M. Vopat. She touched the lives of so many in Maple Heights, serving under six mayors, taking care of the city's seniors and residents throughout her tenure.

Mayor Annette M. Blackwell welcomed everyone to the catered event, along with speakers including James Castelucci, former MHFD chief; Lisa Brazytis, chief marketing officer at Jennings; Janice Dzigel, former Senior Connection director; and Kristin Warzocha, president and CEO of the Greater Cleveland Food Bank.

On Wednesday, Dec. 18, the seniors gathered to honor Human Services Director Vopat with a retirement celebration at the Maple Heights Senior Center. Speakers included Dzigel and Mayor Blackwell, and all enjoyed delicious desserts and punch.

She will certainly be missed by so many as she embarks on a well-deserved retirement after 37 years of service to the residents of Maple Heights.



Linda Vopat

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Preschool Storytime: Youth. Thursday, Jan. 30, 4-4:30 p.m.

Independence Branch Library

Here are some of the FREE programs being offered at the Independence Branch of the Cuyahoga County Public Library, located at 6361 Selig Dr., Independence. For

New Year's GREETINGS

The time has come for us to wish you much happiness and success in this exciting new year.

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2025

Wishing all a Happy, Healthy New Year!

From The Elkins Family

more information or to register for any program, please call 216-447-0160.

ADULT

Wednesday Night Book Discussion. No registration required. Join us for a casual and lively book discussion of "The Art Thief" by Michael Finkel. The books will be available approximately one month before the discussion date. Wednesday, Jan. 15, 7:15 p.m.

Thursday Afternoon Book Discussion. No registration required. Join us for a casual and lively book discussion of "The Art Thief" by Michael Finkel. The books will be available approximately one month before the discussion date. Thursday, Jan. 16, 2:15 p.m.

Car Capitol of the World. Registration required. At one time Cleveland was the automobile capitol of the world. Join the Western Reserve Historical Society for a look at a treasure trove of Cleveland-made vehicles. This event will be held at the Independence Civic Center. Friday, Jan. 24, 12:30 p.m.

(Continued on Page 8)

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Independence Branch Library

(Continued from Page 5)

TEEN

Teen Drone Challenge! Registration required. Have fun exploring tello drones, learn how to fly them and do a few challenges. Saturday, Jan. 11, 2 p.m.

Volunteers. Registration required. Volunteer at the library, earn service hours. We will work on a project benefitting the library or for a need in the community. Tuesday, Jan. 14, 7 p.m.

CHILDREN

Baby & Toddler Story time. No registration required. Join us for rhymes, songs, finger plays and books. Mondays beginning January 6, 11 a.m. Wednesdays beginning Jan. 8, 10 a.m.

Preschool Story time. No registration required. Join us for rhymes, songs, finger-plays and stories. Thursdays beginning January 9, 10 a.m.

Toddler Story time. No registration required. Join us for rhymes, songs, finger plays and stories. Thursdays beginning January 9, 11 a.m.



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City of Bedford Fire Medic Entry Exam

The City of Bedford Civil Service Commission will be establishing a list of candidates for the position of Fire Medic for the City of Bedford Fire Department. The written test will be administered through the National Testing Network (NTN) at www.nationaltestingnetwork.com.

The candidate application package deadline is February 28, 2025 at 4:00 p.m. and must be uploaded to NTN.

Eligible candidates will be required to successfully complete an extensive background investigation, physical agility testing, polygraph examination, psychological examination, drug testing, personal interview, and medical exam. BY ORDER OF THE MUNICIPAL CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION OF BEDFORD, OHIO. The City of Bedford is an equal opportunity employer.

NN: 1-8, 1-22, 2-5, 2-19, 2025

City of Bedford - Fire Medic

The City of Bedford, Ohio is accepting applications from qualified candidates to establish a Lateral Transfer Certified List for the position of Fire Medic. Starting base pay \$72,559 up to \$86,661 commensurate with experience.

Applications can be obtained from our website at, [Http://bedfordoh.gov/civil-service-commission/](http://bedfordoh.gov/civil-service-commission/).

Applications must be submitted by January 13, 2025.

The City of Bedford is an Equal Opportunity Employer
By Order of the City of Bedford Civil Service Commission.

NN: 12-18-24 & 1-8-25

City of Bedford - Police Officer

The City of Bedford, Ohio is accepting applications from qualified candidates to establish a Lateral Transfer Certified List for the position of Police Officer. Starting base pay is from \$72,571 up to \$86,653 commensurate with experience.

Applications can be obtained from our website, at <https://bedfordoh.gov/civil-service-commission/>.

Applications must be submitted by January 13, 2025.

The City of Bedford is an Equal Opportunity Employer
By Order of the City of Bedford Civil Service Commission

NN: 12-18-24 & 1-8-25

Garfield Heights Branch Library

Here are some of the **FREE** programs available at the Garfield Heights Branch of the Cuyahoga County Public Library, 5409 Turney Rd. Call 216-475-8178 to register or for more information.

ADULT PROGRAMS

Google Sheets Learn how to enter, modify and organize data using Google's free web-based spreadsheet application. A Google account is needed to participate in the class. Monday, Jan. 13, 1-3 p.m. Registration required.

Innovation Center Orientation Learn about the equipment and policies of the Innovation Centers throughout Cuyahoga County Public Library. Attending this orientation allows users to utilize the Innovation Centers throughout the library system.

For adults 18 years and older. Upcoming sessions: Monday, Jan. 13, 7-8 p.m.; Saturday, Jan. 25, 11 a.m.-12 p.m. Registration required.

TEENS

Cooking for Teens Join us to learn how to make a tasty and simple bowl of ramen. Saturday, Jan. 11, 2-3:30 p.m. Registration required.

Winter Comic and Graphic Novel Club Join us in the Teen Room to talk about and read graphic novels and comics! Wednesday, Jan. 22, 6-7 p.m.

AV Club Teens can come and use the technology in the branch's Innovation Center to make a craft. Tuesday, Jan. 14, 3-4:30 p.m.



Wishing Everyone a Happy and Prosperous New Year!

*from
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Happy New Year!

2025

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