



Duck hunters rescued after boat freezes in river

(Dubois County) Indiana Conservation Officers responded to a call for help on the White River on Saturday and rescued five hunters after their boat froze into the White River near Haysville.

At 11:37 a.m., officers responded to the call for help just east of the Haysville bridge.

Under weather conditions of 12 degrees and snow, with that area of the river nearly

frozen from bank to bank, officers deployed an airboat, reached the hunters, and brought them safely to shore.

Other responding agencies included the Dubois County Sheriff's Department, Dubois County Emergency Medical Services, Haysville Fire Department, and Luce Township Fire Department (Spencer County).

Dubois County Art Guild Gallery Walk at the Jasper City Mill set for May

The Dubois County Art Guild at the Jasper City Mill in Jasper, IN, has a new exhibit up and it will be on display through May, 2026. The DCAG Gallery Walk exhibit changes every 6 months. The public is invited to the Jasper City Mill, open Thursday- Sunday.

The featured artist for this time period is Kim Henzel. She is a contemporary impressionist painter whose work explores themes of identity. Kim is originally from Michigan. She also lived in Orlando, Florida before settling in southern Indiana. These transitions inform her search for connection and meaning within new environments of her community. By weaving together imagery such as the forests and cliffs of southern Indiana with figures like Larry Bird, an emblem of regional pride, Kim reflects on the ways shared heritage and personal history intertwine through expressive color, layered brushwork, and a balance of nostalgia and discovery, her art captures both the humor and tenderness of finding one's place in a changing world.

In addition to Kim's art, the other art guild members have a collection of their artwork in the gallery walk as well. Become a collector of original art. Prices are very affordable and the work is beautiful. All artwork at the Jasper City Mill DCAG Gallery Walk is original and for sale. The work consists of oil, watercolor, drawing, acrylic, photography, print, sculpture, and 3D wall pieces.

Winter Is coming and a



Kim Henzel holding her artwork

great time to visit the Jasper City Mill and see the exhibit. It's quant setting by the river and winding river walk is an inviting atmosphere. Spend an afternoon with the family and watch the corn grinding and listen to the demonstrations and stories about the mill.

If you are looking for something different and original for those birthday or wedding gifts, the Jasper City Mill provides a unique atmosphere to do so. Shop at the mill for gifts, bakery items, homemade jellies and

much more. The mill also has a beautiful collection of Amish made hickory furniture, numerous artisans' merchandise as well as the art in the Gallery Walk.

The Dubois County Art Guild promotes the appreciation of art and art education in the Dubois County communities. Artists are welcome to join the art group for sharing, support, learning and painting.

The guild meets the first Thursday, 6 pm at the Jasper Arts Center.

Stephanie Stallwood Fair files for Dubois County Clerk

JASPER, Ind. — Stephanie Stallwood Fair has officially filed to run for Dubois County Clerk on the Republican ticket in the 2026 election.

Fair currently serves as Chief Deputy Clerk, a position she has held since 2023. She brings years of hands-on experience in the Clerk's Office and is committed to continuing the efficient, professional service currently provided to the residents of Dubois County.

"We have a great team in the Clerk's Office, and I look forward to continuing our work in a proficient and dependable manner," Fair said.

Prior to her role in the Clerk's Office, Fair worked for German American Bank for more than 10 years in the operations department, gaining valuable experience in financial procedures, accuracy, and accountability. She is a

2003 graduate of Jasper High School and earned a degree in Criminology from Indiana State University.

Fair said her education and professional background uniquely position her for the role.

"My criminology degree and banking background are definite benefits to the Clerk's Office, particularly when dealing with court cases and county budgeting," she said.

Stephanie resides in Jasper with her husband, Matt Fair, stepson Isaac, and daughters Reese and Sadie Fair. She is actively involved in the community, volunteering her time with girls' youth sports and is a member of St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Haysville.

In addition to public service, Stephanie and her husband are small business owners of Fair Landscapes, which they have operated since 2015.

Brother Evagrius Allison professes temporary vows at Saint Meinrad

Novice Douglas Allison professed his temporary vows as a Benedictine monk in a ceremony on January 20, 2026, at Saint Meinrad Archabbey, St. Meinrad, IN.

He has completed his novitiate, a year of prayer and study of the Benedictine way of life. As is the custom during the profession of vows, he chose a religious name. Novice Douglas is now Brother Evagrius.

Brother Evagrius, 25, is a native of Perrysburg, OH, where he was a member of St. Rose Catholic Church. He attended St. Francis de Sales School in Toledo, OH. In 2023, he graduated from Bowling Green State University with a bachelor's degree in accounting and finance.

Before entering the monastery, he organized and helped provide communion for homebound individuals for over 10 years and worked for the Ohio Auditor of the



Brother Evagrius Allison, OSB, reads aloud his vows during his first profession as a Benedictine monk of Saint Meinrad Archabbey on January 20, 2026.

State. Brother Evagrius currently serves as master of ceremonies IV in the Archabbey Church.

Temporary vows are typically for three years. This period offers a

continuing opportunity for the monk and the monastic community to determine whether monastic life is, indeed, the right vocation for this individual.

Angels watching over us

If you're going through something that's new and painful remember God is with you to heal and restore you. "With us is the Lord our God to help us" (2 Chron 32:8). I honestly believe there are angels watching over us.

HEAVEN'S SAVINGS ACCOUNT

eternity.

Still, just as the son paid rent to please his father rather than secure a reward, we must bless others, give our all for God's kingdom, and treat every day as a sacrificial altar—not to manipulate God for blessings, but simply to please Him. The Lord owes us nothing, yet He promises to reward our faithfulness with “an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you” (1 Peter 1:4). Are you storing up treasures in heaven?

LIVE AUCTION

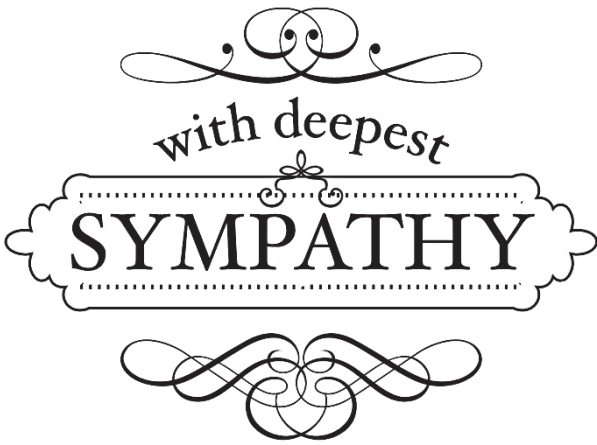
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Deberah “Deb” Fleck

Deberah “Deb” Fleck, 71, of Jasper, Indiana, passed away on Thursday, January 29, 2026. A Mass of Christian Burial for Deberah Fleck was held at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, February, 3, 2026, at St. Joseph’s Catholic Church in Jasper, Indiana, with burial to follow at a later date

Denise M. Smith

Denise M. Smith, age 72, of Jasper, Indiana, passed away at 12:45 p.m. on Wednesday, January 29, 2026, at Brookside Village in Jasper, Indiana. A visitation for Denise M. Smith will be held 10:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 4, 2026, at the Becher Kluesner downtown chapel in Jasper. A private burial will follow at Fairview Cemetery.

Charles W. Neuman

Charles Wayne Neuman, age 87, of Jasper, Indiana, passed away surrounded by family at 9:43 p.m. on Wednesday, January 28, 2026, at Deaconess Memorial Medical Center in Jasper, Indiana. A Celebration of Life will be held at a later date.

Florence E. Angerer

Florence E. “Topsy” Angerer, age 91, of Jasper, Indiana, passed away peacefully surrounded by family at Deaconess Memorial Medical Center at 8:15 p.m. on Wednesday, January 28, 2026. A Mass of Christian Burial for Florence E. “Topsy” Angerer will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Thursday, February 5, 2026, at St. Joseph’s Catholic Church in Jasper, Indiana, with burial to follow in Fairview Cemetery in Jasper. A visitation will be held from 9:00 a.m. until the 11:00 a.m. Mass time at the church on Thursday.

Aaron A. Haller

Aaron A. Haller, age 47, of Jasper, Indiana, passed away on January 27, 2026, at his home. Per the family’s request, a cremation was performed. Online condolences may be made at www.becherkluesner.com.

Edna June DeKemper

Edna June DeKemper, age 98, of Dubois, Indiana, passed away surrounded by family at 2:50 p.m. on Tuesday, January 27, 2026, at St. Charles Health Campus in Jasper, Indiana. A funeral service for June DeKemper was held at 11:00 a.m. on Tuesday, February 3, 2026, at St. Peter’s UCC in Dubois, Indiana, with burial to follow at St. Raphael’s Cemetery in Dubois.

Rosalie A. Isenbarger

Rosalie A. Isenbarger, age 91, of Jasper, Indiana, passed away at 12:47 p.m. on Monday, January 26, 2026, at Deaconess Memorial Hospital in Jasper, Indiana. A celebration of life will be held at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, May 30, 2026, at the Mishawaka United Methodist Church in Mishawaka, Indiana.

Sarah Katherine Elliott

KSarah Katherine Elliott (Kay), age 87, of Jasper, Indiana, passed away on January 23, 2026. Visitation will be held on Saturday, February 7, 2026, beginning at 9:00 a.m., with the funeral service to follow at 11:00 a.m. at Becher-Kluesner Funeral Home, North Chapel, in Jasper, Indiana.

Kenneth O. “Kenny” Blessinger

Kenneth O. “Kenny” Blessinger, age 88 of St. Anthony, Indiana, passed away at 3:40 p.m. on Friday, January 23, 2026 at Brookside Village, surrounded by family. Funeral services for Kenneth O. “Kenny” Blessinger will be held at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, January 31, 2026, at St. Anthony Catholic Church in St. Anthony, Indiana with burial to follow in the church cemetery. The St. Anthony American Legion Post #493 will conduct military graveside rites.

Rose Ellen Johnson

Rose Ellen Johnson, Jasper, IN, passed away

peacefully surrounded by family at 12:26pm on Friday, January 23, 2026, at Legacy Living of Jasper. She was 5 days shy of celebrating her 89th birthday. A funeral service for Rose Ellen Johnson will be held at 11:00 am on Thursday, January 29, 2026, at Shiloh Church in Jasper, IN, with visitation at the church from 9:00 am until the 11:00 am service time. Due to the inclement weather, graveside service will be held at the church. a.m. until the 11:00 a.m. Mass time on Monday.

Donald R. Taber Sr.

Donald R. Taber, Sr., age 93, of Jasper, Indiana, passed away at 9:13 a.m. on Thursday, January 22, 2026, at St. Charles Health Campus in Jasper, Indiana, surrounded by family. A Mass of Christian Burial for Donald R. Taber Sr. will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Friday, January 30, 2026, at St. Joseph’s Catholic Church in Jasper, Indiana, with burial to follow in Mariah Hill Cemetery in Mariah Hill, Indiana. The Abe Lincoln Post #444 will conduct military rites in the back of church after the Mass. A visitation will be held from 9:00 a.m. until the 11:00 a.m. Mass time at the church on Friday.

Virginia L. “Tootie” Knies

Virginia L. “Tootie” Knies, age 82 of Jasper, Indiana, passed away at 8:43 p.m. on Wednesday, January 21, 2026 at Deaconess Memorial Hospital in Jasper, just short of her 83rd birthday. Funeral services for Virginia L. “Tootie” Knies will be held at 11 a.m. on Saturday, January 31, 2026 at Holy Family Catholic Church in Jasper, Indiana, with burial to follow at Fairview Cemetery in Jasper. A visitation will be held from 9 a.m. until the 11 a.m. Mass time at Holy Family Catholic Church on Saturday. .

Wilfred L. “Wif” Gress

Wilfred L. “Wif” Gress, age 95 of Ireland, Indiana, passed away at 10:11 a.m. on Wednesday, January 21, 2026 at Deaconess Memorial Hospital in Jasper. Funeral services for Wilfred L. “Wif” Gress will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Thursday, January 29, 2026, at St. Mary Catholic Church in Ireland, Indiana with burial to follow in the church cemetery. A visitation will be held from 8:30 a.m. until the 11:00 a.m. Mass time at the church on Thursday.

Patricia M. Opel

Patricia M. Opel, age 88, of Jasper, Indiana, passed away peacefully on Wednesday, January 21, 2026, at Deaconess Memorial Medical Center in Jasper, Indiana. A funeral service for Patricia M. Opel was held at 11:00 a.m. on Friday, January 23, 2026, in St. Paul’s Lutheran Church in Haysville, Indiana, with burial to follow in the church cemetery.

Stephen P. Warner II

Stephen P. Warner II, age 66, of Jasper, Indiana, passed away at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, January 20, 2026, at home. A Celebration of Life Memorial Service will be held at a later date.

Barry S. Wright

Barry S. Wright, age 56, of Huntingburg, Indiana, passed away with family by his side at 5:03 p.m. on Monday, January 19, 2026, at Deaconess Memorial Medical Center in Jasper, Indiana. A Celebration of Life for Barry S. Wright was held at 2:00 p.m. on Friday, January 23, 2026, at the Becher-Kluesner Downtown Funeral Home in Jasper, Indiana. Pastor Larry Wooldridge will officiate. A burial will be held at a later date.

Florence V. Matthews

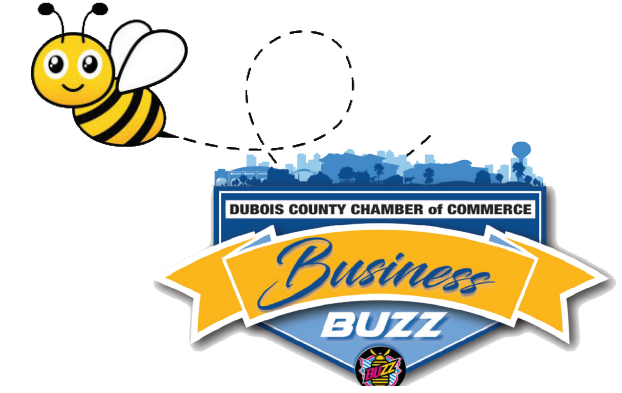
Florence V. Matthews, age 74, of Jasper, Indiana, passed away surrounded by family at 2:42 p.m. on Monday, January 19, 2026, at Serenity Springs at Northwood in Jasper, Indiana. A Mass of Christian Burial for Florence V. Matthews was held at 11:00 a.m. on Thursday, January 22, 2026, at St. Joseph’s Catholic Church in Jasper, Indiana, with burial to follow in Fairview Cemetery in Jasper.

Kenneth Binkowski

Kenneth Binkowski, age 75, passed away at 11:05 a.m., Wednesday, January 21, 2026, at Core Nursing and Rehab in Dale. A private graveside service for Kenneth Binkowski was held at Dale Cemetery. Rainey Funeral Home in Dale hasbeen entrusted with handling the arrangements.

Cora Sue Sams

Cora Sue Sams, age 84, of Santa Claus, passed away at 9:36 a.m., Sunday, January 18, 2026, at Willowdale Village in Dale. Services will be held at a later date.



Progress over Perfection

Angie Sanchez-Hostetter
Executive Director
Dubois County Chamber of Commerce
info@duboiscountychamber.com



As business owners, it’s easy to fall into the trap of waiting for the “perfect” moment, perfect timing, perfect plan, perfect conditions. The truth is, perfection often delays progress, and in today’s fast-paced business environment, forward movement matters more than flawlessness.

Progress doesn’t have to mean a major overhaul. Sometimes it’s updating your hours to better serve customers, trying a new marketing approach, reorganizing your workspace, or testing a small idea you’ve been sitting on for months. These incremental changes build momentum, confidence, and growth over time.

Perfection can be intimidating. It creates pressure and can lead to procrastination or burnout. Progress, on the other hand, allows room to learn, adapt, and improve along the way. Businesses that grow successfully aren’t always the

ones with the best plan; they’re the ones willing to take action and adjust as needed.

At the Chamber, we encourage our members to focus on consistent improvement rather than unrealistic standards. Use available resources, lean on your network, ask questions, and don’t be afraid to try something new. Every step forward no matter how small, adds value to your business and strengthens our local economy.

Remember, success isn’t built overnight. It’s built through steady progress, learning from experience, and showing up every day committed to moving forward.

Progress over perfection, because done is better than delayed.

Dubois County Chamber to host Canva crash course for small businesses

Jasper, IN — The Dubois County Chamber of Commerce invites local small business owners, entrepreneurs, and marketing professionals to attend a Canva Crash Course on Wednesday, February 11, from 12:00–1:00 p.m. The event will be held in the Cherry Room at the Jasper Public Library.

This hands-on training will introduce participants to the benefits of using Canva as a marketing tool for their business. Attendees will learn basic graphic design skills through Canva, including a

step-by-step tutorial on navigating the platform and creating professional-looking marketing materials with ease.

The session is designed for beginners and those looking to enhance their current marketing efforts, providing practical tools that can be used immediately to strengthen brand presence and visual communication.

The Canva Crash Course is free for Dubois County Chamber members. Non-members may attend for \$10.

For more information, please contact the Dubois County Chamber of Commerce.



**Huntingburg Press
Jasper News Journal**
ingnewspapers@gmail.com
812.827.2232
The Huntingburg Press
Publication # 020-051
PO Box 144 Huntingburg
(Dubois County) IN 47542
Dubois County) IN 47542
state; 109
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Huntingburg Press • Jasper News Journal
www.ky-news.com • 812.827.2232
Published weekly by: Indiana Newspaper Group, 1540 McCracken Blvd., Paducah, KY 42001.
Mailing Address: 1540 McCracken Blvd., Paducah, KY 42001.
Subscription rates are \$51.00 County (420 zip code); \$81.00 out of county and state; 10% discount senior citizen; \$39.99 on line (subscribe on-line at www.ky-news.com). Mail subscriptions to: Kentucky Publishing, Inc. Attn: Indiana Newspaper Group, 1540 McCracken Blvd., Paducah, KY 42001. Visa, MasterCard and Discover are accepted. Mail subscriptions are payable in advance. Late payments are retroactive to due date.

Publisher: Greg LeNeave
Sales: Greg LeNeave, Larrah Workman
Editor/Production: Larrah Workman
Bookkeeping: Teresa LeNeave

Advertising standards Merchandise and services advertised in our papers are expected to be accurately described and readily available.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Indiana Newspaper Group, 1540 McCracken Blvd., Paducah, KY 42001. The Huntingburg Press (ISSN 10413421-USPS #0030002). Periodical Class Postage Paid at The Huntingburg Post Office, Huntingburg. IN 47542.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The demise of Democracy

Submitted by Nancy Gehlhausen

It has been said the best way to control people is to not educate them, but it is not just the “abc’s” of education that are being considered. It is the taking away of the history from which we learn that is the threat to education. Public Monuments and Lands are being told to remove any references to indigenous peoples, slavery, gender rights, and anything that reflects negatively on this country in an effort to hide the past as if it never occurred. When history becomes lost, the truth is whitewashed and people come to know only what those in power want them to know. Without history, we have no rights and lose our Democracy.

The knowledge of our scientific world is being lost because those in power do not believe in science. They refuse to even minimally fund scientific research that educates us about climate change, the negative impact of fossil fuels, and scientific studies that can improve our health and protect us from disease and viruses. Instead, those with little or no education in the field are making statements with no scientific backing or merit whatsoever. We are being asked to blindly follow their stupidity. We lose our right to know the truth and we lose our Democracy.

Our history of generosity, kindness and empathy for those less fortunate is being erased as well. Foreign aid, food assistance programs, FEMA, medical assistance programs, and affordable housing are programs being scrutinized as if those in need are not worthy of support. White males are looked upon favorably. Without Democracy there is no equality.

Public education and public broadcasting, as well as private broadcasting, are being told what they can and cannot say. Failure to comply results in lack of funding or termination. Freedom of speech is lost without Democracy.

None of this “lack of education” affects the wealthy. They are in control and can weather any setback because they have the financial means to do so. By erasing what used to be, and creating a world for the wealthy, our Democracy (is lost. Without a history, we have no rights. Our right to free speech and our right to vote, particularly in light of redistricting in favor of the party in control, become meaningless when we are governed by a wealthy few.

This is all happening under the eyes of our Republican-led Congress. They are allowing this demise of Democracy to happen. If you value a democratic way of life, stand up for Democracy. Believe you can make a difference.

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Holiday lights recycling program results in 1/4 ton of lights this year

The seventh annual Christmas light recycling program in Dubois County was a great success, with 1435 pounds of Christmas lights recycled at the Rural King and SWMD Process Center drop-off locations in December and January. This is the seventh year in a row that at least a half ton of light strands were

diverted from the landfill through this program. “We are so glad that our residents appreciate this program, and we do have residents from other counties say they wish it was available near them. Recycling helps our local economy much more than taking up space in a landfill.” States Carla Striegel-

Winner, director of Dubois County Solid Waste District, the agency that oversees the program. The Solid Waste District does plan on offering the program again next season. If anyone missed out and still has lights, they may bring them to the Process Center only at 1103 S 350 W in Jasper during regular public hours.

This recycling program is in cooperation with Jasper Salvage, Jasper Rural King and the Dubois County Solid Waste District. For more info on other programs offered by the District, Residents may go to www.duboiscountyreycles.org, visit the Facebook page, or call 812-482-7865.

Laura Grammer ATHENA display unveiled at Dubois County Museum

The ATHENA Leadership Award is a prestigious honor presented annually by the Rotary Club of Dubois County, recognizing women whose leadership, service, and commitment have made a lasting impact on the community. On January 21, 2026, the Rotary Club of Dubois County proudly unveiled Laura Grammer’s permanent display in the ATHENA exhibit at the Dubois County Museum.

Laura was named the 2025 ATHENA Leadership Award recipient on September 17 at the Club’s 13th annual ATHENA Leadership Awards Banquet. Her display now joins those of past honorees, collectively celebrating the remarkable women who have shaped Dubois County through leadership, service, and advocacy. Previous recipients include Jane Chappell (2012), Brenda Stallings (2013), Kathy Tretter (2014), Nancy Eckerle (2015), Connie Nass (2016), Tonya Heim (2017), Kim Messmer (2018), Dr. Tracy Lorey (2019), Kelly Clauss (2021), Rossina Sandoval Monsavais (2022), Sister Rose Mary Rexing (2023), and Jodi Routson (2024). The exhibit also features a complete listing of all ATHENA finalists.

ATHENA International is a nonprofit

organization dedicated to supporting, developing, and honoring women leaders. The program identifies eight key attributes that reflect women’s contributions to leadership: Authentic Self, Relationships, Giving Back, Collaboration, Courageous Acts, Learning, Fierce Advocacy, and Celebration & Joy. These qualities, combined with traditional leadership strengths such as risk-taking, assertiveness, and perseverance, define the ATHENA model of leadership for the 21st century.

Laura Grammer exemplifies these attributes through a lifetime of professional excellence and community service. A dynamic leader, entrepreneur, and advocate, Laura’s roots in Dubois County run deep. From washing trucks at her family’s business, Ackerman Oil, to helping lead and expand a multi-location chain of convenience stores, she has built a career grounded in hard work, innovation, and empowering others—particularly women.

After earning degrees in Data Processing and Mathematics and obtaining her teaching license, Laura began her career at Kimball International, where she introduced executives to emerging IT systems and trained leaders in creative problem-solving.



Laura Grammer

She later returned to Ackerman Oil, working alongside her husband Paul to modernize operations, introduce new food service concepts, and establish a Certified Manager program that opened doors for employees seeking long-term career growth. Her belief in second chances and structured support helped countless individuals—especially single mothers—find confidence, stability, and success.


Laura’s influence extends well beyond the workplace. She has played a key role in revitalizing local traditions and initiatives, including reintroducing German Flair to the Jasper Strassenfest, helping establish the Glockenspiel and May Pole, and guiding strategic planning for the Jasper German Club. She has coached youth sports, organized neighborhood events, served on the Vincennes University Foundation Board, taught religion classes at St. Mary’s Church, and brought creativity to community fundraisers such as the JHS Band Burger Bash and the Popcorn Colonel campaign. Known for her thoughtful planning, tireless work ethic, and hands-on leadership style, Laura leads by example—whether mentoring young women, supporting coworkers, or stepping in wherever help is needed. Her generosity often happens quietly, through acts of kindness and support that reflect her deep care for people and community. The ATHENA recipient is invited to choose a quote of their choice to display on their plaque. Laura chose this insightful

quip from Winnie the Pooh: You are Braver than you Believe, Stronger than you Seem and Smarter than you Think. “Laura Grammer represents the very heart of ATHENA leadership,” said Manda Combs, ATHENA Award Banquet Chair. “Her lifelong commitment to Dubois County, her passion for lifting others up, and her unwavering service to this community make her an incredibly deserving honoree. We are proud to recognize Laura and share her story through this permanent display.”

Nominations are now being accepted for the 2026 ATHENA Leadership Award. The Rotary Club of Dubois County encourages community members to nominate a woman who lives and/or works in Dubois County and is making a meaningful difference. Nomination applications are available at www.duboiscountyrotyary.com and are due May 1, 2026.

The 2026 ATHENA Leadership Awards Banquet will be held in September 2026, at the Huntingburg Event Center. Information regarding the event, keynote speaker, and sponsorship opportunities will be distributed early in 2026. For the latest updates, follow the Rotary Club of Dubois County on Facebook or visit www.duboiscountyrotyary.com.

About the Dubois County Museum The Dubois County Museum is open Tuesday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., and Sunday from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. The museum is closed on Mondays. Located at 2704 N. Newton Street (US 231) in Jasper, the museum is a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving and sharing the history of Dubois County. Operations are supported through memberships, admissions, donations, and community support. For more information, call (812) 634-7733 or visit www.duboiscountymuseum.org.



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What to know before a wedding gown shopping trip

Weddings mark a turning point from one stage in life to another. The significance of that transition is perhaps one reason why couples and their guests dress so nicely for a wedding ceremony and reception. Formal garb is a wedding tradition, and guests anxiously await seeing which type of gown a bride will wear. In western cultures, white wedding gowns have been the standard since the nineteenth century and are believed to symbolize purity and grace. In eastern cultures, wedding gowns often have been elaborate, colorful creations that have their own symbolic meanings unique to various areas of the world.

Shopping for a wedding gown can spark mixed emotions. While it is exciting to try on some remarkable garments, there also is

the pressure of knowing all eyes will be on you while wearing this couture creation. Narrowing down wedding gown prospects can take vision, time and patience. The following pointers can help when it comes time to visit bridal shops.

Make an appointment
Many bridal shops operate by appointment only. That's because the staff wants to devote complete attention to a client, and having people simply walk in from the street can draw their attention away and/or lead to long wait times. Identify the stores you want to visit, and then call to secure your time slot.

Narrow down styles
Think about what your personal style might be and how you want to look on your wedding day. If you're not sure about the vo-

cabulary surrounding dress silhouettes, visit Pinterest or Instagram and save images of dresses that you love. Then you can show the sales staff what you are thinking instead of going in empty-handed.

Keep an open mind
Try on a few different styles even if you have a particular dress in mind. You never know if something might be a better fit for your body type or the scope and style of your wedding unless you give it a go.

Start the process early
Unlike off-the-rack clothing, most wedding shops will have to order your dress and have it shipped. Then comes a few weeks for alterations. KWH Bridal notes eight to 12 months before a wedding is a good time to choose and order a dress. Brides



magazine says most made-to-order wedding gowns take about six to nine months to create. There also are three separate fittings to

ensure the gown will fit like a glove.

Invite a handful of confidantes
It's best not to arrive

at the shopping appointment with an entire entourage. Pick, at the most, four people whose opinions you trust; otherwise, it could be a case of too many cooks in the kitchen. As a bride-to-be you'll already be anxious, and you'll want soothing, supportive people with you.

Plan your budget
Know well in advance what you can afford to spend. According to data from The Knot, wedding attire accounts for 7 percent of the average couple's budget. Most wedding gowns are in the range of \$2,000. Don't forget about additional costs, such as veil, shoes, alterations, undergarments, and any add-ons.

In addition to these tips, arrive to an appointment well-rested, fed and comfortable.

How to maximize outdoor wedding venues

When searching for the right place to tie the knot, each couple looks for their own unique spot. According to The Knot Worldwide 2024 Global Wedding Report, couples across the globe identify cost and venue style/type as the most important variables to consider. Nearly 75 percent of couples worldwide report getting married within 30 miles of their homes. And many couples prefer an outdoor wedding.

Outdoor weddings peaked in popularity in 2020, when the global pandemic forced

couples to be creative as they sought to tie the knot with friends and family in attendance. Statista reported that 68 percent of couples hosted their wedding ceremonies outside or partially outside in 2020. However, Hudson Valley Weddings paints a more conservative picture of outdoor weddings today, with 35 percent of weddings now being held outdoors.

Couples hold their ceremonies and receptions outside for a variety of reasons, including the chance to tie the knot in a naturally beautiful

landscape. The following are some ways to maximize the benefits of outdoor venues.

• Embrace the opportunity to accommodate more guests. Couples with large guest lists may opt for outdoor weddings because venues with outdoor space typically can accommodate more people. Outdoor spaces can be vast and not constrained by the walls of banquet halls or restaurants — allowing guests to spread out.

• Include child-friendly elements. If it would

be difficult to exclude children from the festivities, an outdoor venue can ensure kids have something to do. Kids tend to have high energy levels, and an outdoor venue gives them space to run around without crashing into something or tipping something over. Setting up a separate kids' play area also makes it easy to gather the kids in a certain spot, helping to keep children away from adults who are dancing.

• Take advantage of the aesthetic. Most outdoor spaces offer awe-inspiring features. Those who opt for spring or summer weddings can take advantage of culti-

vated, fragrant gardens or even fields of natural wildflowers. Fall weddings will be on fire with the natural oranges, reds and yellows of the changing landscape, which makes the perfect photo backdrop for nuptials. Try to time the occasion for around sunset to make outdoor areas even more special. A setting sun can cast a special glow on the festivities. And save money on decor by relying exclusively on natural features.

• Get creative with food. Part of the appeal of being outdoors for the wedding is the freedom to offer guests less standard fare in regard to food. A pig roast for a tropical

affair or even wood-fired pizzas or barbecue align well with an outdoor wedding. Caterers often suggest passed appetizers for the cocktail hour and plated meals for dinner to cut down on insects buzzing around a buffet line.

• Design a contingency plan. Every couple wants the wedding to go off without a hitch (except for the actual getting hitched part), so it's important to have a tent, pergola or covered area to retreat to in the event of rain or strong sun.

Outdoor weddings are popular options that can add a special touch newlyweds will remember for years to come.



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FEBRUARY 14

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DISINGER.COM 3770 N NEWTON ST, JASPER, IN 812-482-4833

Chocolate Lovers Weekends

February 7 and 8, 14 and 15, 21 and 22

Enjoy these 4 Chocolates paired with 4 wines and choose 4 more of your own:
Key Lime, Raspberry Crunch, Valencia Orange and Mendoza Dark





8 Wines with 4 Complimentary Chocolates ONLY \$6 per person

Tropical Chocolates from Whetstone Chocolates, St. Augustine FL

WINZERWALD WINERY

26300 North Indian Lake Road
I-64, Exit 72, just east of Ferdinand

Chocolates served 10:00-4:30 CST all 6 days
812-357-7000 • www.winzerwaldwinery.com