

5-DAY WEATHER FORECAST FOR SOUTH-CENTRAL INDIANA

Today	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Updates online
42 33	35 29	37 28	39 29	40 30	The latest National Weather Service forecast, radar and severe weather alerts are at HoosierTimes.com/weather , where you can also see an hour-by-hour forecast.
					
Mainly cloudy & rainy. 80% chance of rain.	Snow showers. 60% chance of precipitation.	Cloudy. Winds light and variable.	Cloudy. 20% chance of rain.	Cloudy. Winds light and variable.	

Bray attends Owen Co. legislative breakfast

By Nicole DeCriscio
Hoosier Times Correspondent

SPENCER — After the opening remarks at the first legislative breakfast of 2020, members of the audience had the opportunity to ask questions and provide comments to State Sen. Rod Bray and State Rep. Bob Heaton.

The first comment was from Darrell White, who commented on all of the work that INDOT, or the Indiana Department of Transportation, has done in Spencer.

“Just driving through Spencer yesterday morning, I remembered how rough and in poor repair those roads were just a few years ago, so it’s been a great improvement to Spencer,” White said. He said that he could see an improvement in state roads throughout southern Indiana.

Heaton thanked him for those comments, adding that he thinks adding the sidewalks makes a difference.



Indiana State Sen. Rodric Bray talks during the recent legislative breakfast while State Rep. Bob Heaton looks on. (Nicole DeCriscio / Hoosier Times)

Heaton said he mentioned the caution light at the Ind. 46 and Concord/Flatwoods intersection to INDOT Commissioner Joe McGuinness and McGuinness said INDOT would look into that.

Heaton also mentioned the roundabout that is proposed for the Ind. 46 and Ind. 43 intersection as well.

Bray also thanked White and said that the legislature worked hard on the road funding initiative a few years ago. Bray also noted that over

the summer, Indiana was ranked as the No. 1 state with the best infrastructure.

Next, the two legislators were thanked for what they have done to provide rural infrastructure like water and broadband.

Bray said the internet is no longer a luxury but a necessity.

Heaton noted that his fellow legislators up north can’t imagine water and broadband not being accessible.

Some of the other topics

that came up were an abortion ban and issues with the department of forestry allowing loggers to transport their wood through state forests without the state collecting a fee.

But the one that spurred Bray to continue thinking about the matter throughout the rest of the legislative breakfast was brought up by Owen County Sheriff Sam Hobbs.

Hobbs said he was concerned by HB1076, which requires all misdemeanors to be summoned to court with few exceptions. Hobbs wanted sheriffs to maintain the discretion to determine whether or not someone needs to be arrested or issued a summons.

He said that he took an oath to arrest those in the county and in the state that break the law.

“We’re not looking out for overcrowding in the jail. That’s a whole different issue. Our job is to look out for the

victims,” Hobbs said.

Bray said that he was not familiar with that bill.

“I haven’t read it, but I’m inclined to agree with you. Law enforcement needs to decide if somebody is a serious danger to themselves or others. The bottom line is when you break the law you go to jail,” Bray said.

He then said they go through the process.

“If a law enforcement officer comes into contact with someone who has broken the law, they can either issue a summons saying okay you’re going to be charged with a crime and you have to come back to court, and then they go home and then they come back for a court date. The other way to do it, of course, is to take them to jail right then,” Bray said.

That person can then bond out if they are eligible or be part of a pretrial release program.

Heaton said he would

look into who authored and co-authored the bill.

“The more I sit here thinking about that sheriff, that would create some serious challenges if everybody knew they weren’t going to get arrested,” Bray said.

Hobbs shared an example with the audience.

“We have to protect the victims in these cases,” he said. “I know misdemeanors are misdemeanors, but they’re still against the law.”

The other topics that came up included invasive species, mountain bike trail issues with the department of forestry, grants for small towns and rural areas, logging, the amount of taxes and the amount of money spent on the criminal justice system.

The next legislative breakfast will take place Feb. 15 at 7:30 a.m. at Owen Valley Christian Fellowship, 338 Ind. 43, Spencer.

PATH

CONTINUED FROM PAGE A1

“We get tons of compliments about that,” he said. “Just like because you can put kids on there and not have to worry about vehicles, you know, coming by and things like that.”

The trail passes through multiple campgrounds and other facilities in the forest. It was completed last year, Bridges said, and they plan to have a pseudo grand-opening ceremony sometime this spring to advertise it to the community.

He said there are some minor inclines along the trail, but that overall, it’s pretty level riding area and good for families.

“It’s a good place to learn to ride, you know,” he said, “without having to worry about running people over or vehicles.”

Gary Davis, the general manager for Indiana Trails, an organization that advocates for more biking and hiking trails across Indiana, said they didn’t even know about this trail until they noticed it during the Hilly Hundred bike ride a few months ago.

“That particular trail is ... a tremendous asset for Morgan County and Monroe County because it’s in an area that people have not been accustomed to seeing that kind of trail,” Davis said.

He said the trail is family oriented and, like Bridges, praised the trail’s distance from a main road. He said there aren’t many



The 5-mile trail is paved and easily accessible for bikes as well as wheelchairs. It features some inclines, but they are relatively minimal. (Cody Thompson / Reporter-Times)

paved trails in Indiana this separated from busy streets.

He also mentioned that this trail would be great for wheelchair-confined persons with its minimal inclines that seem to follow the natural dips and rises of the area.

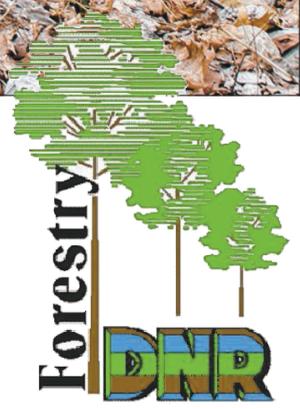
He said he suggested a couple names for the as-of-yet

unnamed trail. The first of these names was after a longtime DNR staffer and avid bicyclist while the other was to name it the “Breaking Away” trail after the iconic Little 500 movie, which recently celebrated its 40-year anniversary in July last year.

“The fact that that trail connects to the campground and

connects to the fire tower and connects to the new forest headquarters down there, it’s a really unique, separate, paved trail at this point,” Davis said.

Contact Cody Thompson at 765-342-1440 or at cthompson@reporter-times.com. Follow him on Twitter at @CodyMThompson.



OBSERVATORY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE A1

Space science center named

Grand Universe would be operated by Link Observatory Space Institute, a nonprofit organization based just north of Centerton that’s dedicated to informal science education and public engagement programs in NASA missions, astronomy and space exploration.

Link executive director and CEO Greg McCauley said, if approved, Grand Universe would open in 2024.

“The available land and the existing popularity of Grand Park made Westfield an ideal location to create

this concept,” McCauley said. “We’re adjacent to Grand Park, right off U.S. 31, and it’s an ideal location for everyone in Indiana and the nation.”

Here’s what you need to know about Grand Universe and the community entertainment center features.

Grand Universe

The 105,000-square-foot space science center would feature a digital planetarium sky theater that is 70 feet in diameter with room for up to 250 people, as well as NASA exhibit areas, and a science, technology, engineering and math education center.

The STEM education center would feature after-school programs, summer

programs, a summer space camp for kids and adult education programs.

Grand Universe would also feature the Astronaut David Wolf public observatory, which will be the anchor of the project, McCauley said. The observatory will have twin domes, nighttime celestial and daytime solar telescopes, and the largest radio telescope in the U.S. dedicated to STEM education, he said.

McCauley said the goal of Grand Universe is to inspire kids in Indiana to pursue careers in STEM. Though the Grand Universe experience is expected to be similar to that of the Kennedy Space Center in Houston, the focus of the exhibits will be different, he said.



“Museums celebrate the achievements of the past,” McCauley said, “but Grand Universe will be about what we’re going to do in the future.”

One of the largest exhibits at Grand Universe will be on the NASA Artemis mission, which is set to put the first woman and next man on the moon by 2024.

“We plan on being open and covering that event live as it happens,” McCauley said.

McCauley would not comment on the total costs of the project and said Link Observatory is in the process of raising the funds needed for construction.

Community entertainment center

If the project is approved, a community entertainment center south of Grand Universe would feature a two-level indoor electric go-kart track, as well as an outdoor track, Dalton told IndyStar.

The go-karts would be similar to those at K1 Speed in Fishers, he said.

The track will aim to attract an Indy race team or driver race school to the area.

EdgeRock Development is investing about \$19 million on the

180,000-square-foot community entertainment center.

It will also feature laser tag by Carmel-based LaserFlash, a restaurant and bar, a trampoline park, bowling and an arcade.

If the planned project moves forward, Dalton said he’d expect to break ground on the community entertainment center in the summer and open in 2021.

There are also plans for a hotel and a public park along the Monon Trail north of Grand Universe.

The park would feature parking to allow visitors easy access to the Monon Trail, Dalton said, and it would aim to connect visitors from Grand Park to Grand Universe and the entertainment center.