



'We've got to stop governing like this'

A behind-the-scenes look at the Blue Ribbon Commission report that could change Indiana

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS - The Blue Ribbon Commission on Local Government Reform released its earth-rattling report on a foggy December morning and Indiana's 191st anniversary of joining the Union.

It was an extraordinary group of public servants. Gov. Mitch Daniels chose the man he defeated in 2004, former Gov. Joe Kernan, to co-chair the commission. Chief Justice Randall T. Shepard was once a key aide to Evansville Mayor Russell Lloyd. There were former Secretary of State Sue Anne Gilroy and former State Sen. Louis Mahern, who lost mayoral bids in Indianapolis; former Lincoln National CEO Ian Rolland, who retired and watched his company



Former Gov. Joe Kernan said the Blue Ribbon Commission report is an "indictment" of Indiana's system of local government. Chief Justice Randall T. Shepard said that the changes will be "painful and disruptive" and added, "We think those with a vested interest in the status quo will resist them. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

flee Indiana for Philadelphia. There was the former presi-

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Reform and vengeance

"Blessed is he who, in the name of charity and good will, shepherds the weak through the valley of the darkness. For he is truly his brother's keeper and the finder of lost children. And I will strike down upon thee with great vengeance and furious anger those who attempt to poison and destroy my brothers."

- Ezekiel 25:17



By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS - Lost in the hoopla of the Kernan-Shepard Commission Tuesday was the announcement that the Samuel Adams Foundation will honor dominatrix-turned-tax activ-



"I am here to tell you Iowa, he is the one."

- Oprah Winfrey, campaigning for U.S. Sen. Barack Obama in Iowa last weekend



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ist Melyssa Donaghy in Chicago next week for her tax activism. She took her anger at Mayor Bart Peterson, who shut down her dungeon, and turned it into activism. Her \$5,000 award will go to the cause of repealing property taxes. Then there's George Rogge, the Miller Beach tax activist who is taking aim at State Rep. Charlie Brown in the HD3 Democratic primary. Over in Brazil, there is Duane Conover, who is challenging State Rep. Amos Thomas in HD44. I expect there will be many, many more primary challengers filing in the coming weeks.

These people will be the heart of the movement to reform Indiana's 19th Century government. Before every session of the Indiana General Assembly, there are those who spread conventional wisdom. In 2002, I was repeatedly told there was "no way" tax reforms would pass. They did.

In 2006, I had dozens of Statehouse marble buffers tell me that Major Moves was doomed. It wasn't.

People with resumes, vastly superior resumes to mine, snickered at me when I said with a straight face that Brent Waltz had the assets to defeat Larry Borst. Ditto Greg Walker who defeated Bob Garton.

Last August **HPI's** Horse Race analyzed that if Greg Ballard could raise a quarter million, he would have a shot at Mayor Peterson. He did both.

And now I'm here to tell you that any legislator who doesn't treat the Kernan-Shepard Commission report with some level of open mindedness will make mighty fine ballot pulp.

There's an even more profound notion: that Eric Miller, long rousing his 30 percent base, is poised to tap into a wide river of anger that is

coursing through the Hoosier populace. When he told **HPI** last week that he wasn't a candidate for governor (either against Gov. Mitch Daniels in the GOP primary or as an populist independent in the general) "at this time," he knows of the "furious anger" that's out there.

"We have too many of everything and they all cost money," Daniels explained. "There is a very direct connection here to our ambitions to

dramatically lower property taxes. If you want to get property taxes down and keep them down, this commission has given us a terrific roadmap for doing that."

It won't be easy. Hammond Mayor Tom McDer-mott closed one of the lone city health departments (Lake County has one) several months

ago and then squeaked out a 53-47 percent victory on Nov. 8. "It almost cost me the election," he said, noting he was accused to being against clean pools and for dirty restaurants. "But I did the right thing."

Chief Justice Shepard led off his remarks Tuesday by asking, "Can anyone remember a time of greater public anxiety about the cost of government or its capabilities?" Shepard gleaned this from among the populace, amply expressed by the more than 700 Hoosiers who appeared before the commission. "We think those with a vested interested in the status quo will resist them," Shepard said. "And they will be easy for you to find." Here are words of wisdom and warning to the Indiana General Assembly: Practice inertia at your own considerable risk. You are elected to "do the right thing" and not to protect turf and fiefdoms. ❖



Unlikely bed fellows: Mayor-elect Greg Ballard, Sen. Brent Waltz, and tax activist Melyssa Donaghy (right). (HPI photo by Brian A. Howey)



dent of Indiana University in Adam Herbert, and John Stafford, a former chief of staff to Fort Wayne Mayor Paul Helmke, who had long theorized about a reformed Indiana government. And there was the tragic element of John Krauss, who lost his wife in an auto/pedestrian accident several months into this historic project. At Franklin College, Krauss valiantly talked of Hoosier families talking about this topic around their dinner tables. In short, this extraordinary group of public servants suffered their own triumphs and adversities. They stood on a shifting earth and, as Gov. Daniels explained, "We are here to celebrate an act of citizenship on the part of these seven people - seven people with no axes to grind, but only the interests of the people at heart. They have brought us 27 recommendations carefully thought through and unanimously agreed upon. This is a report not to me, but to all the people of Indiana. I think everybody ought to read it, digest it and reflect upon it as I have been doing."

Obviously, Howey Politics Indiana will be doing just that in the next few weeks. But we thought it appropriate to get a more behind-the-scenes look at how the commission came up with its findings.

Daniels explained an aspect that was evident in the report: "In terms of local government structure, Indiana skipped the 20th Century. We are dealing with a system that is a century and a half old. It is in need of modernization. We have too many of everything and they all cost money. We have structures that don't exist at all in other states. Secondly, there is a very direct connection here to our ambitions to dramatically lower property taxes in this state and too much government pushes property taxes up. Viewed the other way around, if you want to get property taxes down and keep them down, this commission has given us a terrific roadmap for doing that."

That statement comes as at least two Indiana House members - States Rep. Charlie Brown and Amos Thomas - are finding themselves facing primary challengers based on the property tax issue. Those wallowing in conventional wisdom will tell you many of these proposals will be "impossible" to pass. That may be so with the current Indiana House. But if they cling to the status quo, we will have a very different Indiana House in 2009.



John Stafford (left) and Ian Rolland following Tuesday's Statehouse press conference. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

John Stafford and Ian Rolland

These two commissioners are from Fort Wayne, Stafford from government and academia and Rolland from business.

Rolland: We had six or seven meetings here and an awful lot of electronic communications.

Stafford: One of the most amazing things as we went on is we got an idea of where each one of us was independently of each other. That was quite a revelation. We were amazingly close, independent of trying to influence each other's opinions. That really gave us the launching pad.

Rolland: They asked us to send in our own views on things we felt had to be done and so that was the first bit of input. John and I were a little concerned about that. We were giving input that hadn't been subject to screening. But in my view, it turned out to be a

really good way to do it because it forced each one of us to examine the way we thought about it ourselves. It brings us the direction in which we are going.

Stafford: There was a tremendous amount of agreement from that point on. It gave us the ability for a framework.

Rolland: I didn't think there was anything we couldn't reach agreement on. I think we were able to come to agreement on major recommendations. There wasn't a lot of contentious discussion. Most of us came into the process and as we learned we supported what eventually came out.

Were the commissioners scared of recommending big changes?

Stafford: One of the first questions I would say to a citizen, explain to me how it all works today. I think most people struggle with that. If most of us have difficulty explaining today's structure - it's too complicated. If we are moving in a direction where the majority of our citizens can explain their local government structure to each other, then we've made real progress. In certain respects for those of us who deal with this all the time, there's a lot of change. But is it change for the average citizen? Or is it change for the system?

What was the hardest recommendation?

Rolland: I think there's going to be opposition



to almost all of it. The one issue that took us a little longer to get together on was the election of the sheriffs. I suspect that one will get a lot of scrutiny. But we realized there was a precedent for this. Police chiefs are not elected. State police superintendents are not elected. So what is different about the sheriff? I would guess that's a recommendation that's going to surprise a lot of people.

Stafford: For those that will require a constitutional amendment, the constitution is hard to amend. For good reason. That's going to take two General Assemblies and the voters of the state to do. That doesn't mean that there can't be, legislatively, some reassignment of duties. The Constitution isn't full of a lot of assignment of duties. It identifies certain elected offices. Maybe part of this process is the shifting of duties.

Rollard: We believe we did a lot of this without the necessity of amending the constitution.

Does government need to evolve like businesses do?

Rollard: I think it's really important. We're working with a government right now that was designed well over 100 years ago. While there's been some honest change from time to time, there's been no change that really examined the whole spectrum of government. I just think they need to go do that a lot more often.

Stafford: As long as government is setting public policy for the citizens, we simply believe that is too complicated today; too many players doing too many fragments of that system. The other is providing public services and where we can do it more efficiently, more effectively. Part of this is about governance and part of it is about what businesses are forced to do every day, which is to be as effective as they can in providing whatever services and the product that they do.

Rollard: There is one real important aspect with regard to these recommendations. That is policy makers - people who determine tax rates and so forth - ought to be elected and responsible so the public knows who to hold accountable. Administrative people, as defined in the constitution, ought to be appointed. It just makes a lot of sense.

Stafford: I call that the "Rolland Test." Does the office set policy or provide a service? If it doesn't set policy, then why do we elect it?



Former Gov. Joe Kernan explains how the Blue Ribbon Commission reached consensus. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

Gov. Kernan

Former Gov. Kernan answered the call from the man who defeated him because he wanted to make a contribution to the state. He talked about some of his philosophies as they worked up the recommendations.

Kernan: We strongly looked for opportunities for local governments to collaborate. And not look just within the boundaries of a county but also for multi-county regional collaborations, such as with emergency dispatch. There are other things as well. We didn't have a farmer in the group, but the group was small by design. You actually had a representative of the farms by the former commissioner of agriculture (he laughs; that was his role as lieutenant governor). We didn't cover every base, and we certainly recognized the difference of communities and tried to provide for local options. We looked at counties increasing the representation of the councils to seven, nine, 11 members in order to provide additional representation to

people who feel they might have lost due to the elimination of townships. It's not a one-size-fits-all. There is some flexibility in the implementation.

Why elect a county executive?

Kernan: Common sense. You wouldn't run GM with three CEOs. You wouldn't run your local Dairy Queen with three CEOs. One person having the responsibility makes sense from an administrative standpoint.

Why an appointed sheriff?

Kernan: For the same reasons. Having one administrator who makes policy decisions as opposed to a group of administrators who are making policy decisions relative to their own specific responsibility. We believe there will be clearer definition of responsibility. The sheriff is the only elected law enforcement officer in America at any level of government. We don't elect a chief of police, we don't elect the state police superintendent, we don't elect the head of the FBI. We believe there should be civilian oversight and clearer lines of authority.

Why elect a prosecutor?

Kernan: The prosecutor is a state office. We did not go there. We believe that is an exception to the administrative functions; we left it as an elected position.

What's the benefit of the county executive?

Kernan: Instead of having 11 policy makers, making decisions based on their own silo with the services that they do - there is no coordination - this eliminates confu-



sion as to who's in charge, and not just within the system but for the citizens. If something goes wrong in the city, you blame the mayor. The same should be true in counties. Commissioners in 89 counties have some administrative as well as legislative duties. Marion, St. Joseph and Lake don't. In all the counties, all of that legislative duty would move to the council.

Would there have been a conflict of interest for a prosecutor being appointed by the executive?

Kernan: It could. It may be something that may be revisited later on.

What was the commission's view of an elected coroner as opposed to a board certified county medical examiner?

Kernan: I think we referred to a county medical examiner and that standards be established as well as others where standards would be appropriate.

And the rationale behind eliminating the elected assessor?

Kernan: What will happen I don't know, but what I can say about assessors is if you look at disparities, within communities and across the state where we know where there are inequities, there are problems with consistencies and in some cases the assessments are unfair. The chief justice has made a great point that it's not just whether your assessor is competent. It's also about the assessor in the township next to you. If your assessor is right on the money and the same home across the street and across the township line is local, then you who got the good assessment will pay more money because your house is worth more relative to the person who got low-balled. It's really the whole system that is intertwined. Assessors within the community all need to be uniform or somebody is going to end up paying more money in taxes than they should.

On the countywide 800 MHz communication system:

Kernan: We still have fire departments that cannot talk to police departments. Police departments that can't talk to the state police. It's happening all over Indiana and we think it needs to be fixed.

On consolidating school corporations to at least 2,000 students:

Kernan: We believe that number gives critical mass to be able to provide all the kinds of different activities as well as educational opportunities in their districts. This would affect more than half of the school districts.

On county library consolidation:

Kernan: It will provide a more efficient system, one that provides consistency, one that provides savings to taxpayers. And, very, very importantly, will permit library services for the 400,000 Hoosiers who are not served in any way by a library.

On tax review:

Kernan: We propose that bonds of school districts be approved by the fiscal body of the council that is already in place in the municipality or the county with the greatest proportion of the assessed valuation. It is an existing body that would have final approval that citizens are familiar with. It is less confusing, but provides some oversight and some ability to be able to make sure that the expenditures are being made are consistent and fair for the community.

Chief Justice Shepard

What was the most surprising or unexpected part of the commission deliberations?

Shepard: I was a little surprised that after either four or five governorships where the General Assembly and the governor has continually raised the level of state support for local education, education was still more than half of the property tax bill. Maybe I knew this intellectually. The state started back no later than the Bowen administration to increase more state money into education and yet it is still half the bill. That's why we felt you can't really say anything about tax rates unless you talk about education. The other thing that didn't shock me but I hadn't seen it close up, the number of places where what used to be the volunteer fire department - volunteers that raise the money by having chili suppers - there are a number of places in the state where those are now paid firefighters. There are many places where the township trustee is really a very small, traditional fire department and that's why it was so important. Gov. Kernan said, and I agree with him, that there ought to be a countywide body who answers the bell. Who runs the emergency system. Not that all of it has to be done by a single department. There ought to be a forum where they can create a plan.

Are you confident that counties can spread the safety net to every corner?

Shepard: It's happening in place after place whether we change the structure or not. But it's not happening in a very efficient way. There are places that have multiple fire training towers and they really only need one.

The past and present:

Shepard: At least a few pieces that we have proposed were proposed as long ago as 1935. It seems today that Indiana might decide to move forward. We can't afford to make mistakes like that again, unless we are willing to pay higher bills. The status quo in Indiana local government simply isn't good enough. Indiana can either embolden itself, designing new arrangements for its prosperity and future, or it can trudge along under a system of government designed 150 years ago. We think now is the time for a change. It will only happen if the people of Indiana insist on it. This has been both daunting and invigorating. ❖



Matt Tully, Indianapolis Star - This is a state that elects politically connected coroners and surveyors, when most everyone knows the people holding those posts should be appointed based on their credentials. This is a state with tiny school districts and 3,086 units of local government. This is a state that holds local elections in odd-numbered years, even though it would be cheaper, and turnout would be higher, if they were held in congressional election years. The commission's report, unveiled at the news conference Tuesday, would change all that. And more. "The status quo in the state of Indiana simply is not good enough," Supreme Court Chief Justice Randall Shepard, one of the commission's co-chairs, said. He's right. Still, Indiana has not always embraced the idea of moving forward. The easiest thing to do at the Statehouse is kill a good, progressive idea. "This," former Gov. Joe Kernan, the commission's other co-chair, said Tuesday, "will be nothing more than a report if it is not implemented." For those of you worried about property taxes, take Kernan's words as a cue to pay attention and not let special interests dominate this debate. The beauty of the report is that it doesn't mean less service. It means smarter government. It means looking at the needs of Indiana in 2007, not 1857. "You want to see how we're going to get property taxes low and keep them there?" Daniels asked. "This is the road map." It will be a fight. It will probably take years. And even if every idea is accepted, government still will be full of inefficiency. We are talking about government, after all. But at least we'd be talking about a local government structure created in the 21st century, as opposed to what Shepard called "a system of government designed 150 years ago." ❖

Mark Kiesling, Times of Northwest Indiana - I predict weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth by government, library and school officials and others affected by Tuesday's release of the report from the Indiana Commission on Local Government. It has come up with ideas that are bold and far-reaching, yet practical to implement and designed to drag Indiana from the 19th into the 21st century. If you're moaning about your property tax increases, county income taxes and a proposed state sales tax hike, you know in your heart something like this has to be done. It comes at the cost of essentially blowing up the existing system under which Indiana has labored since before the Civil War and replacing it with something in line with the 21st century, which will make local government squeal. The subtitle of the study is, "We've got to stop governing like this." Indiana is ready for reform. If it does not reform, it can continue to expect the brain drain that now saps so much of the home-grown talent that is driven elsewhere by Indiana's unwillingness to change due to selfish political



considerations. In Lake County, for example, the surveyor is neither a licensed surveyor nor a civil engineer. The Lake County assessor isn't trained to assess. Throughout Indiana, the sheriff is elected, but none of our cities and towns elects its police chief. So tell me again why we need an elected sheriff? Or an elected coroner rather than a hired, trained medical examiner? Small school districts, such as Boone Township in Porter County or Dewey Township in LaPorte County, which has only 156 students, would be forced to consolidate with adjacent districts under the proposed plan. I predict squealing like that of a thousand stuck pigs and righteous indignation that this removes the voter from the "public servant." That is bull. How much farther removed from the voter can our elected officials be, the ones who fill their own cars at county gas troughs and cry like babies when they can't get a county-owned car to drive? I hope it finds a more receptive audience than the Good Government Study done for Lake County earlier this year. That study on streamlining and cost savings was immediately met by howls from officeholders, and the county's elected pigs continue to grunt, "Where's mine?" Unless we reform, that should be our official motto. ❖

Abdul Hakim-Shabazz, WXNT-AM - I'm in the process of reviewing the Local Government Reform Commission's recommendations on streamlining local government. However, the one I think I like the most is the part on consolidating school districts. In recommendation 11, the commission recommends consolidation for school districts that have fewer than 2,000 students. Who can argue with this. Schools take, on average, 54 percent of your property taxes. That means they are more than half the problem. More than half of 293 school districts in Indiana have fewer than 2,000 students and 46 districts have fewer than 1,000 students. The pride of the pack is the Dewey Township School District in LaPorte County with a whopping 156 students. Just for comparison sake, my high school in Chicago had 2,000 students. The commission argues there are too many administrators ("educrats" as I like to call them) and districts. It does not say close schools, but schools should be a lot less top-heavy. Indiana exceeds the national average in non-instructional staff when it comes to schools, but nearly 77 percent of last year's Indiana high school graduates would not be able to get into IU or Purdue if higher standards slated to go into effect in 2011 were in place today. This is not about closing schools, so no one would have to move. This is about re-allocating resources to be where they need to be; either in the classroom or in the taxpayers pockets where it belongs. ❖



Melee in Iowa: 20 days to vote (with holidays)

me-lee: 1. (a.) Confused, hand-to-hand fighting in a pitched battle. (b.) A violent free-for-all. 2. A confused tumultuous mingling, as of a crowd.

- American Heritage Dictionary

By **MARK CURRY**

WASHINGTON - That "Guidebook to Presidential Politics" you received over the holidays last year? Throw it out the window. This year is going to be a tumult.

Just about everything political activists and observers have ever learned about the early states will be put to the test over the next few weeks. Expect the unconventional, because anything can happen, especially over the holidays. Here's an idea: Wet your finger and hold it up, and you'll know almost as much as anybody about which way the wind is blowing. Voters in the first Democratic and Republican contests are shivering like a ship's sail turned too close to the wind. Less than three weeks before the Iowa caucuses on Jan. 3, polls indicate a shift in direction, with new trends emerging. To top it all off, Christmas week begins in only 10 days, and the early states have never conducted elections this close to the start of the year. Campaigns are entering uncharted waters.

The polls form a confusing tale. National surveys at this leg tell us little about the early states. For Republicans, at the national level, former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani (R-NY) is losing ground to up-and-comer former Gov. Mike Huckabee (R-AR), with polls at roughly 24-19, according to an analysis published online at Real Clear Politics. But Huckabee is pounding both Giuliani and former Gov. Mitt Romney (R-MA) in Iowa, while in New Hampshire, which votes Jan. 8, Romney is far ahead of Giuliani and Sen. John McCain (R-AZ). Huckabee, while rising, remains a distant fourth.

The Democratic side is even more interesting. Nationally, on paper, the race looks stable, where **Real Clear Politics** has Sen. Hillary Clinton (D-NY) continuing to out-poll Sen. Barack Obama (D-IL) 43-25. Yet Obama leads in

Iowa and is trending that way in New Hampshire, drawing Clinton into the fight of her career. Today, the Democratic candidates meet in Iowa for their final debate before the first elections. Expect a hard scrabble, unlike yesterday's GOP debate, which featured little in the way of fireworks (a boon to Huckabee?).

Victory in either or both of the two earliest contests doesn't necessarily clinch any candidate their party's nomination, but it will make the candidate a winner as they enter subsequent contests. And, as everybody knows, America likes a winner. Consider this item out of Des Moines that was published in the **Boston Globe**: "Caucus goers are looking for someone who can win. With Obama's numbers, it gives more credibility that he can actually win the state," Dianne Bystrom, director of the Center for Women and Politics at Iowa State University, told reporter Sasha Issenberg. "One of the things helping Clinton nationwide is the idea she can actually win the election."

NBC's Chuck Todd reported that it appears the Democratic nomination is "a truly competitive race across the country." "In three new MSNBC/McCLATCHY/Mason-Dixon polls of Iowa, New Hampshire and South Carolina, the national frontrunner, Hillary Clinton, leads in all three states but her lead is not outside the margin of error in any of those states," according to Todd, who also stated, "Don't write off John Edwards."

As for the Republicans, Huckabee's entry into the top tier has upset a race that has unsettled many in the party. David Feddoso of **National Review** anticipates a slog exacerbated by what he called "the matter of the extremely complicated, state-by-state process of selecting delegates - a process whose successful, early conclusion decreases in likelihood as the number of apparently viable

candidates increases and the frontrunners' leads decrease." Feddoso speculated that the GOP convention slated for Minneapolis in September 2008 could produce "a multiple-ballot floor fight."

For now, the upcoming holidays compound the uncertainty. Weekend after next, most Americans will put down their newspapers and turn off TV news to spend quality time with their families. With voters and volunteer workers thusly distracted, campaigns will suspend most groundwork for at least a few days. Reporters and camera crews will take a break. Little news will arrive out of these early states, and, if anything should happen, chances are few of us will notice, or even care to. "We will not be able



Oprah and Obama in South Carolina. The Illinois senator is closing strongly.



to get a true picture until the actual caucus voting in Iowa occurs on January 3rd - which takes place 48 hours after New Years Day," according to ABC's Matthew Dowd. "And in a contest which is wide open and close on both sides, it is an interesting dilemma for those covering and watching the races as well as for those in the race. Without objective data, everyone is going to rely on anecdotal evidence - not always the best indicator of the truth."

The **Des Moines Register** Iowa Poll is one key indicator to watch as the year winds down. In the past, it's been the only survey of caucus voters to correctly identify candidate order of finish. According to the latest Iowa Poll of likely caucus participants, conducted in November, Huckabee scores 29 percent, Romney 24 and Giuliani 13. Among Democrats, Obama has 28, Clinton 25 and Edwards 23.

One thing is certain: With contests so close and so much at stake, there won't be much of a holiday this year for candidates and top staffers. They will be forced to spend as much time as possible with the minutiae of running a large campaign organization, trudging through the snows of Iowa, talking for hours on the phone keeping in contact with supporters. After all these months of groundwork and organization it has come down to this: every vote matters. ❖



Mike Huckabee is getting worked over in the press.

Hoosier Support List

Giuliani: Marion County Prosecutor Carl Brizzi, Stephen Goldsmith, Tim Durham, Beurt SerVaas, Steve Hilbert. **McCain:** Gov. Mitch Daniels; Attorney General Steve Carter, Dan Coats. **Romney:** Secretary of State Todd Rokita, James Bopp Jr., Dan Dumezich, Bob Grand, Chris Chocola. **Thompson:** U.S. Rep. Steve Buyer, U.S. Rep. Dan Burton, David McIntosh, Mike McDaniel, Rex Early. **Clinton:** Sen. Evan Bayh, Joe Hogsett, Mel Simon, Bren Simon, Speaker B. Patrick Bauer, Judy O'Bannon, Kathy Davis, John Gregg, State Sen. Vi Simpson, Marion County Sheriff Frank Anderson, Chairman Dan Parker, Butch Morgan, Steve Haines, Michele Livinghouse, Phoebe Crane, Robert Pas-trick, Marjorie Warnick, Jeff Fites, J.D. Lux, Jan Ellis, Tom O'Donnell, Anthony Long, Mary Lou Terrell, Kevin Murray, Mary Titsworth Chandler, Hobart Mayor Linda Buzinec. **Edwards:** Robin Winston, Ann and Ed DeLaney, Mike Jones, Vidya Kora, State Reps. Russ Stilwell, Dennie Oxley, Terri Austin, Terry Goodin, Sheila Klinker, Linda Lawson and Scott Pelath; Robert Kuzman, Greencastle Mayor Nancy Michael, Bill Moreau Jr., Shaw Friedman, Vanderburgh Co. Chairman Mark Owen, Greg Hahn, Bruce Kehoe. **Obama:** Kip Tew, State Rep. Charlie Brown, Melina Kennedy, Mae Dickinson, State Rep. Bill Crawford, State Rep. Jeb Bardon, State Sen. Earline Rogers, Frank Short, Jack Wicks, Andy Miller, John Fernandez, Dennis Lee. ❖

2008 State Presidential Polls

Iowa (R)	Date	Huckabee	Romney	Giuliani	Thompson	McCain
Rasmussen	Dec. 10	39	23	8	8	6
Strategic Vision	Dec. 8-10	30	25	10	13	5
Newsweek	Dec. 5-6	39	17	9	10	6
New Hampshire (R)						
Suffolk/WHDH	Dec. 9-11	10	31	17	4	19
CNN/WMUR	Dec. 6-10	9	32	19	1	19
Iowa (D)	Date	Clinton	Edwards	Obama	Richardson	Biden
Rasmussen	Dec. 10-12	29	22	26	7	4
Strategic Vision	Dec. 8-10	25	24	33	4	4
Newsweek	Dec. 5-6	29	18	35	9	4
N. Hampshire (D)						
Rasmussen	Dec. 11	28	17	31	8	4
Suffolk/WHDH	Dec. 9-11	33	25	26	5	--
CNN/WMUR	Dec. 6-10	31	16	30	7	3



Greg Goodnight's Story is Kokomo's Story.
 Greg Goodnight has lived in Kokomo his entire life, growing up in a three-bedroom home, the son of a truck driver. Greg played football in Kokomo schools, working through high school as a bag boy at the neighborhood supermarket—he spent his summers weeding soybean fields, detasseling corn, and mowing lawns. After graduation, he went to work midnights in the melt shop at Haynes, where he didn't miss a day of work for ten years. That work ethic made Greg a leader amongst his coworkers, and he was elected to represent them as the Steelworkers President. As Haynes International went through bankruptcy, his leadership helped save 789 jobs.

"I've lived in Kokomo my entire life. My kids should be able to find good jobs here too."

Innovative, Effective Leadership
 Greg was elected a City Councilman because of his long-standing advocacy for kids—he coached baseball for eight years—and his commitment to Kokomo families. He worked as a consensus-builder with both Republicans and Democrats to solve problems, cut wasteful spending, and make Kokomo safer.

www.GregGoodnight.com

Bigger, Bolder Ideas.
 We've always counted on Greg Goodnight's creative leadership to solve tough problems. He passed the first city budget in X years that cut city spending instead of raising taxes. He was the only Councilman to vote against increasing daycare fees for parents struggling to make ends meet. He did it for better government. He did it to keep Kokomo a great place to raise a family. He'll do it as our mayor.

How Goodnight won Kokomo

The story of a modern campaign execution in a bellwether city

By **RYAN NEES** and **DAVID GALVIN**

KOKOMO - The City of First's politics are some of the nastiest in Indiana. In 2003, the Democratic primary ended in a tie, went to court, and was decided by a single vote by a party caucus. The Democratic primary loser endorsed the Republican in the general, and the ultimate Democratic general loser proclaimed that he'd rather lose than ask for the support of the Democratic primary loser. Then in 2007 the Democratic general loser ran again, became a Democratic primary loser, and endorsed the Republican in the general.

Take a breath. There's more.

Last fall, the Republican Party chairman, Brad Bagwell, resigned his position so that he could abandon neutrality and work against incumbent Republican Mayor Matt McKillip in the primary. A month before that primary, his replacement as chairman also turned on McKillip, comparing him to Ad-

olf Hitler in the press and refusing to resign his chairmanship.

So how did Greg Goodnight become the first Democratic mayor of Kokomo in 16 years? How did he beat Republican Rick Hamilton 65.6% to 34.4%? How did Goodnight win every precinct in the city but one and all but five with over 55% of the vote? How did he outpace Democratic at-large council candidates in every precinct? How did his coattails turn a Republican council into a Democratic one? How did he increase straight-ticket balloting by 33% in one election? How did his margin beat those of every other pick-up race in the state? How did he out-fundraise his opponent by more than 2-1 and spend more than any other Democratic mayoral candidate in Kokomo history? This is the story of a modern campaign of inclusion and execution.

There's a lot of Kokomo in Greg Goodnight.

What's Inside:
 A Kokomo Story
 Bold, Proven Leadership
 Big Ideas for Kokomo

Where Kokomo goes, so goes Indiana. Always.

Howard County is Indiana's single most reliable bellwether county. In 2000, it voted for Democratic Gov. Frank O'Bannon 55%-43%; the state elected him 56%-42%. In 2004, it elected Republican Gov. Mitch Daniels 54%-45%; the state elected him 53%-46%. That same year, it elected Republican U.S. Rep. Chris Chocola 53%-45%; the second district elected him 54%-45%.

When it ousted Democratic State Rep. Ron Herrell, and Democrats lost control of the Statehouse. In 2006, it reinstated Herrell, and Democrats won back control of the Statehouse. And when it voted Democratic U.S. Rep. Joe Donnelly into office, the 2nd CD went Democratic, the state went Democratic, and the nation did too.

By the numbers, a gubernatorial campaign could be won without winning Kokomo. But if history is any

Publisher's Note: Nees and Galvin worked on the Goodnight mayoral campaign



guide, a candidate that doesn't win Kokomo ... doesn't win.

It is the perfect microcosm of our state. Unpredictable, fickle even, unkind but not unreceptive to Democrats. It's why cycle after cycle, the Indiana House Democratic Caucus is forced to bail out Rep. Herrell to the tune of \$100,000-\$200,000. It's why no politician, even the most senior, wins without a struggle.

But in 2007, Kokomo broke the mold.

In May, Republican primary voters thoroughly rebuked incumbent Republican Mayor Matt McKillip 57-40%. Eleven incumbent Hoosier mayors were sent into premature retirement that month, the spring prelude to a November election that has been described as a "storm surge," a "tsunami," and "bloody" and claimed 38 percent of incumbents.

In Goodnight's polling, McKillip's October 2007 approval rating was a meager 19%. Yet in November Kokomo overwhelmingly elected a Democratic councilman that had voted with much of McKillip's agenda, voted to raise taxes, and refused to rule out raising taxes in the future. His opponent, Republican Rick Hamilton, vowed to die trying to cut property taxes. "I will cut property taxes," Hamilton said. "You have to know who I am. If I say something will happen, it will either happen or I'll die trying."

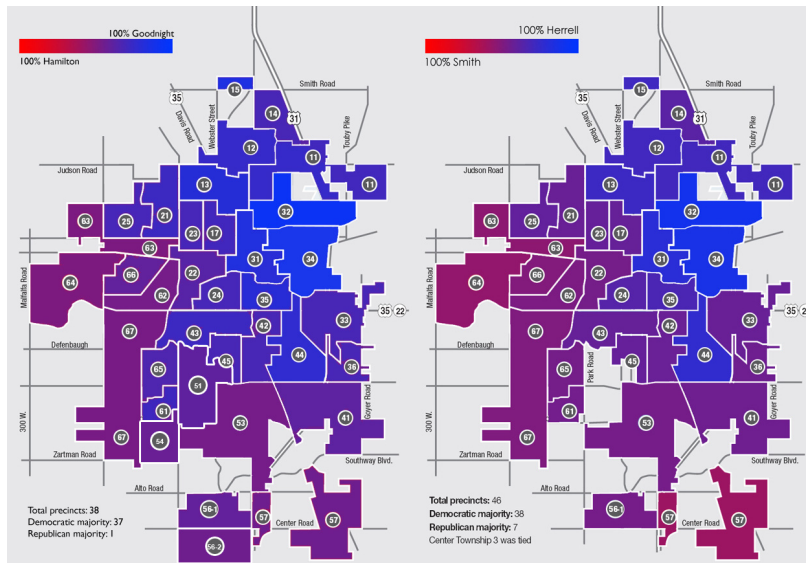
If 2007 was a referendum on property taxes, or a sort of anti-incumbency wave, Kokomo voters were decidedly backward.

The Paradigm Shifts

They start with the sound of crickets chirping. Then, the voice of Greg Goodnight. "For over eight years," he says, "I worked third shift ... Midnight shift workers never get recognition for protecting our streets and working in our factories and businesses while our city sleeps. Having worked the midnight shift, I just want you to know that I respect what you do."

Running radio ads from 1 a.m. – 4 a.m.? Unconventional, sure. But then, Greg Goodnight wouldn't have consistently won men 18-49, Democrats' bloodiest demographic group, by 10 points and more in our polling.

GregGoodnight.com lured 20,000 visits, 150 volunteers, and doubled the number of contacts on the party's email list. It motivated volunteers by allowing them to



choose volunteer activities they preferred, and to schedule on an interactive calendar which days — and which times during those days — best fit their personal schedules.

A hundred regularly active volunteers knocked on over 6,000 doors in five months. Volunteers planted some 1,300 yard signs. Nearly 600 supporters attended a chili supper organized by volunteers.

Then there's direct mail that folks started showing up with at Greg's house parties. For Goodnight's biographical piece, the city was divided into five regions. He organized six "Front Porch Conversations" through the months of September and October in each region, and then invited each of the target voters to their closest event in the first piece of mail. Different locations, different maps, different invitations all in a single mail piece. A "Front Porch Conversation" with Greg Goodnight meant on a front porch near you, in your neighborhood. It meant a piece of direct mail customized to your neighborhood, to you.

The days of direct mail "carpet bombing" are gone. The paradigm has shifted. There is no "piece one" of mail that corresponds with "mail drop one." There are only carefully scheduled mail drops containing multiple targeted mail pieces. One trip to the post office means four or five pieces of mail being sent to four or five different targeted groups at once, each with four or five demographic customizations. No piece of mail should ever go to every voter. No piece of mail is that good, no message that uniformly receptive. Some voters will never receive mail; some will receive two or three pieces; others might be sent seven or eight. But then, why waste money persuading voters that need no persuasion?

This from a 2006 Democratic memo: "... given the fact that there are no messages we are using that hurt us with some voters, our suggestion is to [mail] every voter." This is easier, to be sure, and carries the added bonus of stripping away accountability in favor of the consultants and not having to be right when picking targeted voters. But it ignores the reality that some messages are more persuasive than others. Wasting resources mailing messages — benign or not — to voters that don't need persuasion prevents resources from being used to mail tighter, more niche messages to voters that require more sophisticated



persuasion.

The Coordinated Campaign of Inclusion

Everything was coordinated. Mail pieces coincided with newspaper ads and specific radio spots. Cable spots overlapped debates and a targeted canvassing plan. Canvassers were briefed weekly on mail pieces that were in the field and given a stake in a campaign that excited them and gave them a chance to change their city. The volunteers shared their enthusiasm daily with coworkers and neighbors, because they were a part of team – a team that needed them.

Laying at the heart of the targeted mail pieces, interactive newspaper ads, carefully placed radio spots, and lighthearted cable commercials was a traditional grass-



roots campaign that was consistent, targeted, organized around sophisticated databases, and supported by dedicated volunteers. The campaign was focused on encouraging participation and maintaining constant contact with volunteers, supporters, and voters.

Timing and execution were paramount in turning a mayor's race into a political movement that has reinvigorated the local party, and introduced a style of campaigning that mobilized Democratic base for the first time in more than a decade. The combination of grassroots tactics, technology, and the execution of a vigorous campaign have laid the groundwork for Mayor-Elect Goodnight and the Democrat led city council to rebuild their local party and be the leaders their constituents deserve. ❖

Mayoral recounts underway in Terre Haute and Muncie

Two cities with rollicking political histories - Terre Haute and Muncie - are now conducting mayoral recounts.

At Terre Haute, an unchallenged precinct recounted Wednesday included more discrepancies than precincts challenged by Mayor Kevin Burke's recount watchers, an opposing watcher said (Arceo, Terre Haute Tribune-Star).

The precinct's absentee ballot applications were stored in a bag separately from the rest of voting materials, and the absentee application envelopes were missing, said Bill Treadway, a watcher for Mayor-elect Duke Bennett and chairman of the Vigo County Republican Party. Also, the candidates' watchers said at least one absentee ballot application was missing. Despite the issues, watchers, who can challenge or dispute ballots or ballot-related issues for Republican Bennett and Democratic Mayor Kevin Burke, did not challenge the precinct's results.

Burke watcher Bill Lower said he knew from the beginning of the recount about a sack of election-related materials that was not included with the rest of the items sealed in a blue tub. "The whole thing is challenged anyway," Lower said. "Because of the discrepancy, the judge is going to have to review it." Burke won the precinct on Elec-

tion Day with 192 votes to 166 votes for Bennett, based on the certified election results. Bennett won three precincts that Burke's team has previously challenged. Watchers said Wednesday evening that the recount commission only has four or five precincts of the 51 remaining.

Bennett won the election by 107 votes, and Burke challenged the results, thus the recount.

At Muncie, Republicans remained silent on what evidence they have to prove Democrats committed voter fraud, even as the mayor's race recount began Wednesday (Werner, Muncie Star Press). The first day of the recount was relatively uneventful. It did not include arguments from attorneys concerning Republican allegations that Democrat Jim Mansfield's 11-point victory over Republican Sharon McShurley was influenced by fraud, misconduct and tampering.

Instead, the three-person recount commission spent most of the day counting absentee ballots by hand and comparing their tally to those produced by ballot-reading machines on Election Day. Observers from both parties requested that dozens of ballots and related materials, including absentee ballot envelopes and absentee voter applications, be marked for further inspection.

The commission finished the day having completed 14 precincts and 25 remain to be recounted. ❖



2008 Indiana Governor

Governor 2008: Republican: Gov. Mitch Daniels, La Ron Keith. Democrat: Jim Schellinger, Jill Long Thompson. **1996 Results:** O'Bannon (D) 1,075,342, Goldsmith (R) 997,505, Dillon (L) 35,261. **2000 Results:** O'Bannon (D) 1,230,345, McIntosh (R) 906,492, Horning (L) 38,686. **2004 Results:** Daniels (R) 1,302,912, Kernan (D) 1,113,900, Gividen (L) 31,644. **2008 Forecast:** Former Indiana first lady Judy O'Bannon on Wednesday endorsed Schellinger. "He's energetic, he's committed, he's honest, he's organized, he's businesslike, and he listens," O'Bannon said, adding that she has "great confidence that Jim Schellinger will serve as a wonderful governor of the state of Indiana. I love Indiana. I want to turn it over to the best and brightest Hoosiers can produce." Schellinger said he was humbled by the endorsement (Louisville Courier-Journal). "I can only assure Mrs. O'Bannon and all the people of Indiana that I will do everything within my power to honor and build upon the legacy of Gov. Frank O'Bannon, his legacy of building consensus and of forward progress," Schellinger said. The two made the endorsement announcement in Indianapolis before traveling to Sellersburg and other cities to repeat it.



O'Bannon spoke to a crowd of about 45 iron workers and media in a hangar at Gary/Chicago International Airport, said she supports Schellinger for his commitment to bring cooperation and leadership to Indianapolis (**Post-Tribune**). Schellinger was short on specifics, but promised the union crowd that during his first hour on the job he would reinstate the collective bargaining rights of state employees. Leaning on an anti-Daniels sentiment in the crowd, Schellinger promised that the hallmark of his administration would be listening, contrasting himself with what many critics call Daniels' autocratic governing style.

However, he said little about his position on property tax reform or Daniels' bid to increase sales taxes, saying only that the crisis has occurred under Daniels' watch.

He agreed that the structure of local government needs to be examined but stopped short of



Former First Lady Judy O'Bannon endorsed Jim Schellinger in Indianapolis and several other stops around Indiana. (Louisville Courier-Journal Photo)

saying it needs reform, or of supporting the Local Government Reform Commission proposal that was released Tuesday. Schellinger, who has not previously served in public office, said he decided to run because he saw a need to change the leadership in the state. "Good government doesn't happen on its own. It takes people, every once in a while, to step up out of their comfort zone," Schellinger said. "I've buried both my parents: Whatever happens to this state now is on my watch."

JLT in Clarksville

Thompson plans to campaign in Clarksville today, addressing the Clark County Democrats' annual holiday party. The dinner is at 6 p.m. at the Holiday Inn Lakeview, 505 Marriott Drive.

Daniels to announce labor endorsements

Gov. Mitch Daniels has scheduled a 4:45 p.m. press conference today at the Conrad Hotel in Indianapolis to announce several labor endorsements.

Sources tell **HPI** that former Democratic House Speaker Michael K. Phillips held a fundraiser for Daniels recently.

On Wednesday, Daniels was in Fort Wayne announcing the state will spend \$40 million to make a regional road project safer and more attractive for economic development. He announced that the U.S. 24 Fort to Port project, linking Fort Wayne with Toledo, will now include two interchanges instead of regular intersections. He said the changes

– which increase Indiana's projected cost to \$170 million – came after the state heard from numerous residents and elected officials calling for interchanges. Last December, the Indiana Department of Transportation proposed road-level intersections instead of four planned interchanges along the 11-mile stretch of road between Interstate 469 in New Haven and the Ohio line. The state said the interchanges were too costly and weren't needed based on traffic counts. Bob Alderman, Fort Wayne district commissioner for the Indiana Department of Transportation, said the \$40 million will come from the state's Major Moves money and that it was not taken away from any specific project.

Democratic Primary Status: TOSSUP. **General Status:** TOSSUP ❖



Gov. Daniels during a 2006 Major Moves rally. (HPI Photo)



Tax activists beginning to emerge in Indiana House races

TRENDLINE No. 1: Tax activists are beginning to emerge in primary races on both sides, with State Reps. Charlie Brown and Amos Thomas now facing challengers whose calling card will be centered around high property taxes.



TRENDLINE No. 2: State Rep. Mae Dickinson resigned, becoming the 5th House member to do so this year. One big reason: Time is running out to grab the soon-to-end lifetime health care benefit.

2008 Indiana Congressional

Congressional District 7: Republican: Wayne Harmon, State Rep. Jon Elrod. Democrat: Indianapolis Councilman Andre Carson, Marion County Treasurer Michael Rodman, Councilwoman Joanne Sanders, State Rep. Carolene Mays, State Rep. Greg Porter, State Rep. David Orentlicher. **Geography:** Indianapolis. Media Market: Indianapolis. People: Urban 99.7%; median income \$36,522; poverty 13.5%; race white 63, black 29.4%, Hispanic 4.4%, Asian 1.3%; blue/white collar 26/58%; **2000 Presidential:** Gore 55%, Bush 43%; Cook Partisan Voting Index: D+6. **2002 Results:** Carson 77,478 (53%), McVey 64,379 (44%). **2004 Results:** Carson 121,303, Horning (R) 97,491, Campbell (L) 4,381. **2008 Forecast:** We are hearing from multiple Democratic sources that there will probably be a special election in the next three months. Rep. Orentlicher has let supporters know he is preparing to enter the race. Mays and Sanders are also very busy lining up support. **Status:** TOSSUP

2008 Indiana Legislative

House District 3: Republican: Open. Democrat: State Charlie Brown, George Rogge. **2006 Results:** Rep. Brown (D) 10,505, Willie Brown (L) 3,895. **2008 Forecast:** Miller Beach tax activist George Rogge, who converted from Republican to Democrat last year, is lining up to challenge Rep. Brown. The fact that the party recognizes Rogge as a Democrat is unsettling to Brown. This could become one of the key primary races due to the property tax factor. Rogge said there is a "darn good possibility" that he will announce his candidacy. For 25 years,

that seat has been filled by Rep. Brown, D-Gary. "I've done all I can, just as George Citizen," Rogge said. "I've got to get down there and get the thing done once and for all." "The thing" Rogge is talking about is his proposal for property tax reform in Indiana, specifically in the northwest corner of the state. Rogge and his supporters say he was the first person to offer popular ideas now talked about statewide, including pieces of a reform plan pushed by Gov. Mitch Daniels. "I'm the guy who came up with the caps," Rogge said, referring to property tax caps. Brown, however, said Rogge is a "single-issue" candidate whose defection to the Democratic Party will create trust issues for voters. Rogge was a long-time Republican until earlier this year, when he filled out the paperwork to become a member of the Lake County Democratic Party. In August, Rogge said he will officially become a Democrat on Jan. 1. Lake County Democratic chairman Rudy Clay said Rogge's switch already has been made. "He's a Democrat right now," Clay said. **Status:** Leans Brown.

House District 44: Republican: State Rep. Amos Thomas, Duane Conover. Democrat: Nancy Michael, Richard Thompson. **2006 Results:** Thomas 9,127, Thompson 7,948. **2006 Forecast:** Challengers may smell political blood in the water in the upcoming Indiana legislative elections (**Terre Haute Tribune-Star**). Two challengers for the District 44 seat, which includes parts of Vigo, Parke, Clay and Putnam counties, already have emerged to try and take the seat now occupied by Republican incumbent Amos Thomas of Brazil. Democrat Richard Thompson, a longtime township trustee in Parke County, announced Monday he will try again for the District 44 seat. He lost to Thomas in the race last year, 9,127 to 7,948. "A lot of people are upset over the property tax" situation, Thompson said Monday when announcing his candidacy. He also is concerned about Gov. Mitch Daniels' moves toward privatization, the ISTEP test and daylight-saving time, he said. The other challenger for the District 44 seat is Republican Duane Conover of Rockville, a newcomer to Wabash Valley politics but a former city councilman in the town of Whiting in northern Indiana. Conover, 64, has ideas for economic development and believes the time may be right for a fresh face and fresh ideas in politics, he said. Thomas, 77, first elected to the District 44 seat last year, said he realizes the climate may be bad right now for Hoosier incumbents. Many voters are concerned about property taxes, he said, and they may take it out on anyone currently in office. "We may all be thrown out," Thomas said. "It's not a Republican or Democrat thing," Thomas said of the property tax problem in Indiana. "I really think [dealing with it] will be a bipartisan effort," he said. **Status: LEANS R.** ❖



Kiely, IMA urge Blue Ribbon proposals before property tax reform

INDIANAPOLIS - Today, the Indiana Manufacturers Association praised Governor Mitch Daniels and the members of the Indiana Commission on Local Government Reform for their leadership in putting the issue of local government modernization squarely before the Indiana legislature and Hoosier voters. "While the focus of discussion of late has been property tax reductions, up until now no roadmap existed allowing us to reduce property taxes while not adversely impacting local government services," noted IMA President Patrick Kiely. "The commission's report shows Hoosiers how we can reduce taxes in a meaningful and lasting manner." "It has been clear for some time that the answer to the tax problem is local government modernization," Kiely continued. "Until the cost of providing local government services is reduced, tax restructuring will continue to be a process of shifting taxes among property owners with nothing actually accomplished." Kiely urged the Indiana legislature to fully review the commission's recommendations prior to making property tax decisions. "The order of how events must proceed is clear. First, Indiana needs to streamline its property assessment process. Indiana property owners need to have confidence in an assessment system that treats properties uniformly. Next, Indiana needs to get its cost of providing services in line. Indiana property owners can no longer afford to pay for duplicative, inefficient and antiquated forms of local government. After that has occurred, Indiana can have a meaningful discussion of how



best to pay for what is needed."

Rep. Hinkle resists consolidating Speedway

SPEEDWAY - Rep. Phil Hinkle issued the following statement about the Indiana Commission on Local Government Reform's report. "there is no justifiable reason to consolidate Speedway schools into another district. It has less than 2,000 students, just been recognized by the Indiana Chamber of Commerce as one of the 'Best Buys', it has one of the highest achievement rates in the state, kids walk to their neighborhood school and it is less than 40 percent of the tax bill, which is far better than most school districts."

ISTEP scores flat

INDIANAPOLIS - Scores on the state's proficiency exam showed minimal improvement over last year, but the state's top educator thinks her plan to test students throughout the year will help boost scores (**Fort Wayne Journal Gazette**). The Indiana Department of Education released this year's ISTEP+ scores Wednesday, showing that statewide the number of students passing both language arts and math exams increased less than 1 percent over last year. The average passing rate for the language exam rose from more than 71 percent in 2006-07 to 72 percent this year. The passing rate for math scores increased from nearly 74 percent last year to nearly 75 percent in 2007-08. The percentage of fifth-graders considered proficient in science dropped by 1 percent from last year, with 65 percent of students performing at grade level, and rose by 3 percent in seventh grade, with 57 percent of students passing the science exam. "Though we will not be satisfied until every student passes ISTEP+, it is encouraging to see scores moving in the right direction for the state as a whole," Superintendent of Public Instruction Suel-

len Reed said. "What the statewide numbers don't reflect are the larger gains being made by many of our local schools, even those with challenging student populations."

Daniels orders budget cuts

INDIANAPOLIS - Gov. Mitch Daniels has ordered state agencies to hold back spending 5 percent of their current budgets because Indiana's slumping economy means state government will take in less revenue than previously forecast (**Indianapolis Star**). An updated revenue forecast presented today to the State Budget Agency forecasts the state will take in tens of millions dollars less in tax revenues over the current biennium, which ends in mid-2009. State budget director Christopher Ruhl says under the current forecast the state would still take in \$91 million more than it would spend during the current budget cycle.

Assessors speak out against abolishing office

INDIANAPOLIS - Dixie Packard, the Clay Township assessor in Hamilton County, disputed previous assertions that abolishing township assessors would result in a huge savings of tax dollars (**Evansville Courier & Press**). Packard noted that in 827 mostly rural townships, the assessor and trustee positions are held by the same person. And since the combined trustee-assessor focuses primarily on providing fire protection, relief for the poor and cemetery maintenance, the county assessor typically handles the assessing duties, she said. In only 181 Indiana townships are there elected assessors who do not also serve as township trustees, she said. Eliminating the township assessors would not eliminate the cost of hiring outside professionals to assess property. "I just want to know who they're going to replace us with," said Glen Tornatta-Koob, Perry Township assessor in Vanderburgh County.