

## Lifetouch

From page 1A

our upcoming spring picture day and graduation picture day until additional information is available and our concerns are fully addressed.”

He noted that the top priorities are both student safety and privacy, and ensured that a vendor that the school partners with would align fully with the “expectations for safeguarding student information and maintaining the trust of our families.”

Ewing Elementary School will assist families in securing refunds if spring pictures have been pre-ordered or if any fees have been paid with either Lifetouch or Shutterfly.

“We will communicate clear next steps as soon as they are available and will work directly with the company to ensure families are supported,” said Watts. “In the meantime, we are actively exploring alternative options and reviewing our procedures to ensure alignment with district expectations and student privacy standards. We will provide an update as soon as a decision is made.”

According to Watts, if there are any concerns or questions, he can be contacted at 606-267-2601 or todd.watts@fleming.kyschools.us.

“Thank you for your understanding and for partnering with us in prioritizing the well-being and privacy of our students,” said Watts.

# Quinn Minute: Wild animals as pets

Rix Quinn

Many towns now prohibit citizens from housing jungle animals.

What, exactly, is a “wild pet?” That depends on your town, and what its council considers more dangerous than a roving bachelors’ party.

For instance, some communities term boa constrictors “wild.” In others, they’re considered “non-poisonous reptiles with a lethal hug.” That’s reminds me of my great aunt, who visited us on holidays.

Coyotes, wolves and hyenas are also wild, even though

they disguise themselves as loveable, giant-fanged dogs. My neighbor Charlie once owned a wolf, and it ate four parakeets and two of Charlie’s toes before he wised up and sold it to the sister he never liked.

Extremely large animals, like elephants or rhinos, don’t fit well in back yards. Also, walking an elephant is awkward, and cleaning up after it might require that pet owner to pull a wagon, too.

How about chickens? One community outlawed them, even though few are aggressive, and most are toothless.

They were banned not for aggression, but for crowing. No city person wants to hear anybody mouth-off at dawn, especially a birdbrain. (Maybe that’s why they forced my friend Dave out of town, too.)

Bottom line: If you want to view carnivorous animals, visit the zoo. If you want to hear a loud animal, invite my friend Dave to a dinner party.

Rix thinks 300 words are the ideal story length. He’ll tell you why in this inexpensive report. For more details, go to this link: <https://payhip.com/b/dGTFf>

## Data

From page 1A

included tax summaries for a data center and a manufacturing center. The tax models examined the one-time construction impacts, ten years of machinery and equipment, and annual labor costs.

The data center tax model showed the generation of \$154 million in Federal taxes and \$43 million in State taxes with Local/County Taxing Districts estimated to generate \$35 million.

The manufacturing center tax model showed the generation of \$62 million in Federal taxes and \$19 million in State taxes with Local/County Taxing Districts estimated to generate \$15 million.

The analysis report also showed, using hypothetical 250,000 sq ft projects, 9.6K total project jobs with 30% ongoing post-construction in relation to a data center, while it showed 3.6K total project jobs with 56% ongoing post-construction in relation to a manufacturing facility.

The analysis report also showed \$1.0B to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for a data center, compared to a \$477M to Ohio GDP for a manufacturing facility.

Could actions by Mt. Orab Village Council significantly limit the tax revenue from the development of a data center on the mega-site?

Mt. Orab Village Council met in regular session on Feb. 6, 2024 with then council members Darrin Schneider, Fred Hansen, Herm Scott, Jay Shaw, Shane Ogden (who still currently serves on council), and Mt. Orab Mayor Joe Howser in attendance.

It was during the Feb. 6, 2024 meeting that Scott moved to approve the setup of a Community Reinvestment Act Area (CRA) program on the mega-site to incentivize a tax exemption for the development. The motion was seconded by Hansen, and all members voted in favor of the move to setup a CRA program on the mega-site.

Mt. Orab Village Council met in regular session on Dec. 3, 2024 with Howser and council members Barry Eyre, Shaw, Ogden, Hansen, Scott, and Schneider in attendance. It was during this meeting that council member Scott offered Resolution No. 850, a resolution implementing sections 3735.65 through 3735.70 of the Ohio Revised Code, establishing and describing

the boundaries of the 2024 Community Reinvestment Area in the Village of Mt. Orab and declaring an emergency. Council member Schneider moved to suspend the rules (three readings rule) on the reading of Resolution No. 850. The motion was seconded by Scott, followed by council voting all in favor. Resolution No. 850 was then read a second and third time during the Dec. 3, 2024 meeting by title only, and then adopted by council with all voting in favor of its adoption.

After submitting a public records request, *The News Democrat*, *Ripley Bee* and *Brown County Press* were provided a copy of Resolution 2024-850.

Section 4 of the resolution reads, “Within the 2024 CRA, the percentage of the tax exemption on the increase in the assessed valuation resulting from improvements of commercial and industrial real property and the term of those exemptions shall be negotiated on a case-by-case basis in advance of construction or remodeling occurring according to the rules outlined in Section 3735.67 of the Ohio Revised Code. The results of the negotiations as approved by this Council will be set in writing in a Community Reinvestment Act Agreement as outlined in Section 3735.671 of the Ohio Revised Code.”

It states in the resolution that “a tax exemption on the increase in the assessed valuation resulting from the improvements, as described in Section 3735.67 of the Ohio Revised Code, shall be granted upon application by the property owner and certification thereof by the designated Housing Officer for the following periods,” and included in the listed periods of tax exemptions it states “Up to thirty (30) years, and up to seventy-five percent (75%) for the construction of every new commercial or industrial structure which qualifies as a Megaproject as defined in Section 3735.65 of the Ohio Revised Code, the term and percentage of which shall be negotiated on a case-by-case basis in advance of construction occurring.”

A Megaproject is described in Section 122.17 of the Ohio Revised Code as a project that meets the following requirements:

- At least one of the following applies:
  - The project requires unique sites, extremely robust utility service, and a technically skilled workforce.
  - The megaproject operator of the project has its corporate headquarters in the United States, incurs more than fifty per cent of its research and develop-

ment expenses in the United States in the year preceding the date the tax credit authority approves the project for a credit under this section, and builds and operates semiconductor wafer manufacturing factories in this state or intends to do so by the metric evaluation date applicable to the megaproject operator.

(b) The megaproject operator of the project agrees, in an agreement with the tax credit authority under division (D) of this section, that, on and after the metric evaluation date applicable to the megaproject operator and until the end of the last year for which the megaproject qualifies for the credit authorized under this section, the megaproject operator will compensate the project’s employees at an average hourly wage of at least three hundred per cent of the federal minimum wage under 29 U.S.C. 206, exclusive of employee benefits, as determined at the time the tax credit authority approves the project for a credit under this section.

(c) The megaproject operator agrees, in an agreement with the tax credit authority under division (D) of this section, to satisfy either of the following by the metric evaluation date applicable to the project:

(i) The megaproject operator makes at least one billion dollars, as adjusted under division (V)(1) of this section, in fixed-asset investments in the project.

(ii) The megaproject operator creates at least seventy-five million dollars, as adjusted under division (V)(1) of this section, in Ohio employee payroll at the project.

(d) The megaproject operator agrees, in an agreement with the tax credit authority under division (D) of this section, that if the project satisfies division (A) (11)(c)(ii) of this section, then, on and after the metric evaluation date and until the end of the last year for which the megaproject qualifies for the credit authorized under this section, the megaproject operator will maintain at least the amount in Ohio employee payroll at the project required under that division for each year in that period.

Resolution No. 2024-850 also states, “Up to fifteen (15) years, and up to seventy-five percent (75%), for the construction of every new commercial and industrial structure, the term and percentage of which shall be negotiated on a case-by-case basis in advance of construction occurring.”

Current Mt. Orab Village Council members include: Zane Cordrey, Anna Howell, Eric Lang, Shane Ogden, Carl Vineyard, and John Waits.

Among the main concerns for many Mt. Orab residents is the environmental impact a data center could have on the community.

The push continues by concerned Mt. Orab residents to keep a data center from coming to their community, but is it too late?

Lang has been the only council member as of Feb. 13 to take steps to at least put a temporary pause on the development of a data center in Mt. Orab. Lang has also pushed for transparency, proposing all council meetings be live-streamed by the village for the remainder of 2026.

“Being an elected official and sitting at this table doesn’t mean representing a big corporation, and I understand this is a capitalistic country and I understand how business works in this country; but I also know that each one of us has a duty to the people of Mt. Orab that we were elected to sit here and represent,” Lang said during the Feb. 3 council meeting.

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