

Vincennes University Trailblazer Tournament : Broadcasting News Program (Rounds 1 & 2)

Rounds 1 and 2-News Program (5 minutes): Students will select at least three (3) news stories (international, national, local) with music selection and commercial prompt to create a 5 minute News Program. Weather is optional. You may cut portions, or even all, of a story, but you may not update or paraphrase the news copy. Your edited newscast should consume about 3 to 3.5 minutes of your 5-minute News Program. The total performance target time is 5 minutes. The material below is the only allowable subject matter for the tournament.

Round 3-Breaking News (2 minutes): Students will have 2 minutes to sight-read a news story that they will be “breaking news live.” Students are encouraged to have an intro/outro that results in no more than 30 seconds. The total performance target time is 2 minutes.

Final Round-Editorial (2 minutes) with 30 minutes prep. Topic released on the day of the tournament.

News Program – Music Genres & Artists

Choose one of the music genres below and use the artists listed to write your original music lead-in and lead-out segments. Your original music lead-in and lead-out should consume about 30 seconds-1 minute (total) of your 5-minute News Program. The options below are the only allowable subject matter for the invitational.

Alternative Rock

Radiohead
Twenty-One Pilots

Musical

Mean Girls
Wicked

Country

Beyoncé
Morgan Wallen

60s

Aretha Franklin
Bob Dylan

News Program – Original Commercial

Use the information below to create your original commercial. Your original commercial should consume about 30 seconds-1 minute (total) of your 5-minute News Program. Please follow the guidelines for the invitational.

Prompt: Vincennes University (Fall 2025 Enrollment)

- Ignite Your Journey: Apply Now and Blaze Your Trail with Vincennes University!
- VU is a small university which allows your instructors to give you individualized support. You will be known by your name and connected with resources to meet your goals. Here you will be respected, listened to, and cared about.
- Motto: Learn in Order to Serve.
- Founded in 1801, VU is Indiana’s first college.
- VU offers over 180 programs and 21 bachelors degrees on its main campus. VU also offers a Distance Education Program with over 400 courses and more than 27 degrees that can be completed entirely online.
- Vincennes University continues to offer the lowest tuition of any residential college in Indiana.
- VU offers in-state tuition for Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, Michigan and Ohio.

(Consider researching for more information)

News Program – News Copy Selection

International

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukraine on Wednesday halted Russian gas supplies to European customers through its pipeline network after a prewar transit deal expired at the end of 2024 and almost three years into Moscow’s all-out invasion of its neighbor.

Even as Russian troops and tanks moved into Ukraine in February 2022, Russian natural gas kept flowing through the country’s pipeline network —set up when Ukraine and Russia were both part of the Soviet Union — to Europe, under a five-year agreement.

Russia’s state-owned energy giant Gazprom earned money from the gas and Ukraine collected transit fees.

Ukraine’s energy minister, Herman Halushchenko, confirmed Kyiv had stopped the transit “in the interest of national security.”

“This is a historic event. Russia is losing markets and will incur financial losses,” Halushchenko said Wednesday on the Telegram messaging app. “Europe has already decided to phase out Russian gas, and (this) aligns with what Ukraine has done today.”

At a summit in Brussels last month, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy vowed that Kyiv would not allow Moscow to use the transits to earn “additional billions ... on our blood, on the lives of our citizens.” However, he briefly held open the possibility of the gas flows continuing if payments to Russia were withheld until the war ends.

Before the war, Russia supplied nearly 40% of the European Union’s pipeline natural gas. Gas flowed through four pipeline systems, one under the Baltic Sea, one through Belarus and Poland, one through Ukraine and one under the Black Sea through Turkey to Bulgaria.

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israeli airstrikes killed at least 50 people, including several children, across the Gaza Strip, hitting Hamas security officers and an Israeli-declared humanitarian zone.

As the bombardment continued on Thursday and into Friday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s office said he had authorized a delegation from the Mossad intelligence agency, the Shin Bet internal security agency and the military to continue negotiations in Qatar toward a ceasefire deal.

Israeli media said the delegation would depart on Friday. There was no immediate Hamas comment. The U.S.-led talks have repeatedly stalled during 15 months of war.

The Israeli strike in the seaside humanitarian zone known as Muwasi occurred as hundreds of thousands of displaced Palestinians have been huddling there in damp winter weather.

“Everyone was taking shelter in their tents from the cold, and suddenly we found the world turning upside down. Why, and for what?” said Ziyad Abu Jabal, displaced from Gaza City.

The early morning strike killed at least 10 people, including three children and two senior Hamas police officers.

Israel's military said it targeted a senior police officer, saying he was involved in gathering intelligence used by Hamas' armed wing in attacks on Israeli forces.

Another Israeli strike killed at least eight people in Deir al-Balah in central Gaza. The men were members of local committees that help secure aid convoys, according to Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital, which received the bodies. An Associated Press journalist there confirmed the toll.

There was no immediate comment from Israel's military.

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope Francis warned that bullying in schools prepares students for war rather than peace, in a speech to Catholic educators gathered at the Vatican on Saturday.

Speaking to about 2,000 Italian teachers, educators and parents, Francis stressed his message against bullying, asking the audience to pledge to fight against it both at school and at home. The pontiff praised educational efforts at schools to promote peace, noting that "imagining peace" lays the foundations for "a more just and fraternal world" through "every subject taught and through the creativity of children and young people."

"But if, at school, you wage war among yourselves or engage in bullying, you are preparing for war, not for peace," he said.

The pope also called for more dialogue within families, emphasizing that "it is dialogue that makes us grow."

BERLIN, Germany (AP) — For the elephants and others at the Berlin Zoo, it's finally time to unwrap their Christmas presents.

Trees that didn't find a home this festive season were given to some of the animals on Friday in what has become an annual event. Elephants tore off branches with their trunks, lobbing them around their enclosure or eating the greenery. The zoo takes only fresh, unsold trees from select vendors. It doesn't accept trees from the public, which could contain chemicals or leftover decorations.

"They don't just serve as food, they are also used to keep the animals occupied," said Florian Sicks, the zoo's curator for mammals.

"The animals can fight with them, they can rub themselves against them, they can throw themselves over them and do various other things with these fir trees," he added. "And so we enrich the animals' everyday lives, which they are very happy about."

While the elephants eat up much of the tree, other animals take a more cautious approach. This year, the giraffes got the belated stocking-fillers for the first time — suspended upside down at the height of their heads. Max enjoyed more than a taste of the greenery, but companion Mugambi appeared unconvinced after inspecting it.

National

ATLANTA (AP) — Jimmy Carter 's extended public farewell began Saturday in Georgia, with the 39th U.S. president's flag-draped casket tracing his long arc from the Depression-era South and family farming business to the pinnacle of American political power and decades as a global humanitarian.

Those chapters shone throughout the opening stanza of a six-day state funeral intended to blend personalized memorials with the ceremonial pomp afforded to former presidents. The longest-lived U.S. executive, Carter died on Dec. 29 at the age of 100.

“He was an amazing man. He was held up and propped up and soothed by an amazing woman,” son James Earl “Chip” Carter III, told mourners at The Carter Center late Saturday afternoon, referring also to his mother, former first lady Rosalynn Carter, who died in 2023. “The two of them together changed the world. And it was an amazing thing to watch so close.”

Grandson Jason Carter, who now chairs the center's governing board, said, “It's amazing what you can cram into a hundred years.”

Carter's children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren accompanied their patriarch as his hearse rode first Saturday through his hometown of Plains, which at about 700 residents is not much bigger than when Carter was born there Oct. 1, 1924. The procession stopped at the farm where the future president toiled alongside the Black sharecroppers who worked for his father. The motorcade continued to Atlanta, stopping in front of the Georgia Capitol where Carter served as a state senator and reformist governor.

Finally, he arrived for his last visit to the Carter Presidential Center, which houses his presidential library and The Carter Center where he based his post-White House advocacy for public health, democracy and human rights, setting a new standard for what former presidents can accomplish after they yield power.

“His spirit fills this place,” Jason Carter told the assembly that included some of the center's 3,000 employees worldwide. “You continue the vibrant living legacy of what is my grandfather's life work,” he added.

Pallbearers on Saturday came from the Secret Service that protected the Carters for almost a half-century and a military honor guard that included Navy service members for the only U.S. Naval Academy graduate to reach the Oval Office. A military band played “Hail to the Chief” and the hymn “Be Thou My Vision” for the commander in chief who also was a devout Baptist.

Jimmy Carter will lie in repose at the Carter Presidential Center from 7 p.m. Saturday through 6 a.m. Tuesday, with the public able to pay respects around the clock.

LOS ANGELES (AP) — LeBron James broke Michael Jordan's NBA record for 30-point games during the Los Angeles Lakers' victory over Atlanta on Friday night.

With a turnaround jumper with 5:58 to play for the last of his 30 points, James reached at least 30 points in the regular season for the 563rd time in his career, surpassing the mark established by Jordan in 2003. Jordan set his record in 1,072 games over 15 seasons, while James surpassed it in his 1,523rd appearance over 22 seasons.

“It’s very humbling,” James said. “Anytime I’m mentioned with any of the greats, and arguably the greatest ever to play the game, super-cool. It’s someone I idolized in my childhood, and I wear 23 because of him. So to know that I can sit here and be in the room or in the conversation or whatever it is, you mention MJ, it’s like super-duper dope for me, being a kid where I’m from.”

James turned 40 last week, and he is among the few remaining active players who personally witnessed Jordan in his 1990s prime with the Chicago Bulls. He studied and admired Jordan during his childhood in Akron, Ohio.

When James passed Jordan for fourth place on the NBA’s career scoring list back in March 2019, the moment moved him to tears on the Lakers’ bench. He called Jordan “an inspiration” and “the lightning in a bottle for me, because I wanted to be like him.”

Coincidentally, James also passed Dirk Nowitzki (1,522) for the fourth-most games played in the regular season in NBA history Friday night. James has already played the most postseason games (287) in NBA history.

But James shows absolutely no signs of slowing in his record-tying 22nd season: He scored 38 points against Portland one night earlier to tie Jordan’s 30-point mark.

James hit seven 3-pointers against the Blazers while putting up the third-most points ever scored by a player over 40 — trailing only two games played by Jordan shortly after he turned 40 with Washington.

Only three players have scored at least 30 points in an NBA game after turning 40. Jordan did it four times, Nowitzki did it once — and James has already done it twice in the first five days of his 40s.

James became the NBA’s career scoring leader last season, and he holds several additional longevity records. He has scored at least 10 points in 1,253 consecutive games over the past 18 years, obliterating the record set by Jordan from 1986 to 2001 (866).

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — The man responsible for the truck attack in New Orleans on New Year’s Day that killed 14 people visited the city twice before and recorded video of the French Quarter with Meta smart glasses, an FBI official said Sunday.

Shamsud-Din Jabbar also traveled to Cairo and Canada before the attack although it was not yet clear whether those trips were connected to the attack, Deputy Assistant Director Christopher Raia said at a news conference. Federal officials believe Jabbar, a U.S. citizen and former U.S. Army soldier, was inspired by the Islamic State militant group to carry out the attack.

Police fatally shot Jabbar, 42, during an exchange of gunfire at the scene of the deadly crash of the rented pickup truck on Bourbon Street, famous worldwide for its festive vibes in New Orleans’ historic French Quarter.

Federal investigators so far believe Jabbar acted alone, but are continuing to explore his contacts.

“All investigative details and evidence that we have now still support that Jabbar acted alone here in New Orleans,” said Raia. “We have not seen any indications of an accomplice in the United States, but we are still looking into potential associates in the U.S. and outside of our borders.”

WASHINGTON, D.C. (AP) — President Joe Biden on Sunday signed into law a measure that boosts Social Security payments for current and former public employees, affecting nearly 3 million people who receive pensions from their time as teachers, firefighters, police officers and in other public service jobs.

Advocates say the Social Security Fairness Act rights a decades-old disparity, though it will also put strain on Social Security Trust Funds, which face a looming insolvency crisis.

The bill rescinds two provisions — the Windfall Elimination Provision and the Government Pension Offset — that limit Social Security benefits for recipients if they get retirement payments from other sources, including public retirement programs from a state or local government.

“The bill I’m signing today is about a simple proposition: Americans who have worked hard all their life to earn an honest living should be able to retire with economic security and dignity — that’s the entire purpose of the Social Security system,” Biden said during a signing ceremony in the White House East Room.

“This is a big deal,” he said.

Local

VINCENNES, Ind. (WTHI) — From the parks to the trolley system to increased wages, Mayor Joe Yochum says he looks forward to maintaining the success 2024 brought.

2024 held a lot of different improvements for Vincennes, but it has even more in store for 2025.

At the beginning of the year the teen center opened. Yochum says it's one of his favorite projects to come this year. He hopes it will continue to thrive in the new year. The animal shelter has also made headway on its addition. Yochum says construction will be done in the next few months.

The skate park was also one of the major projects last year: a hot spot completely renovated and now more popular than ever. Each park will continue to get updated as funds come in. Yochum wants them to be more modern and ada compliant by the end of 2025.

"Not just kids, but young adults also enjoying that," said Yochum.

An issue for many in Vincennes was transportation. Now that the new trolley system is up and running, feedback has been great. The city is now looking to add Saturday hours.

"It'll be a little bit different than the weekly route because [the] weekly route takes them to doctors office, hospital, grocery store, different places," said Yochum.

The final major issue was wage increases for first responders. The city was losing workers to other cities due to low wages. After the wage increase, Yochum says keeping the officers and firemen has been a lot easier.

"In the past we've been short 2, 4, 6 officers because of officers leaving for better pay, and I don't blame them, but now that we've got our pay up we're not seeing that problem as much."

Yochum says 2025 will be a continued year of improving the quality of living in Vincenne

EVANSVILLE, Ind. (WFIE) — An Evansville man won big on Wheel of Fortune Friday night.

Jason Miner is a former public-school teacher of 18 years. Now, he's spinning the wheel for a chance to bring home the cash, and other big prizes.

He says he was so in-the-zone he barely registered a prize even being on the table.

"When I spun the wheel for the bonus round, I was not even thinking about a prize. I was just focused and saying, 'I have to get this puzzle. I have to get this puzzle.' After I solved the puzzle, and I saw Ryan with the envelope, it reminded me that I was about to win a prize. When he turned the envelope over and it said a Mercedes-Benz, I was super excited," said Miner.

He got to celebrate his win alongside friends and family at a watch party.

EVANSVILLE, Ind. (Courier & Press) — Having already endured above-average snowfall and treacherous road conditions, Tri-State residents may soon contend with freezing rain, sleet and a phenomena forecasters refer to as "thundersnow."

According to the National Weather Service's most recent 10-hour forecast, Evansville could be hit with a fresh wave of freezing rain and sleet between 3 p.m. and 7 p.m., before snow is expected to return during nighttime hours.

As of early Sunday afternoon, weather radar showed a band of lightning stretching from Jonesboro, Illinois, to Cape Girardeau southwest of Evansville, laboring in the Tri-State's direction. When a snowstorm produces lightning, forecasters refer to the resulting electrical blasts as "thundersnow."

"Thundersnow can be found where there is relatively strong instability and abundant moisture above the surface, such as above a warm front," the National Weather Service explains. "Thundersnow is sometimes observed downstream of the Great Salt Lake and the Great Lakes during lake-effect snowstorms too."

Tristate Wx meteorologist Shawn Weber, who is tracking the band of freezing rain and lightning, said it may be more accurate to dub the local phenomena "thundersleet" given the icy conditions.

"Part of it is moving through right now, but there is a little bit of instability in the atmosphere," Weber said of the complex weather system. "So that's kind of what's given us our lightning and thunder."

The massive winter storm inundating much of the Midwest and East on Sunday had so far left 60 million Americans under a weather warning or advisory. In Evansville, a snow gauge positioned near Melody Hill measured about 3.5 inches of the white stuff Sunday afternoon, while a gauge in Downtown Evansville logged about 2.8 inches.

Weber was surprised to have seen a snow report from northern Vanderburgh County that topped six inches.

"Now we have all the sleet and freezing rain falling, and then once that load pushes off to the east, we'll see that cold air and it all change back to snow tonight," Webber said.

VIGO COUNTY, Ind. (WTHI) — If you're looking to improve yourself this year, chances are you've made a New Year's resolution. Whether you're hoping to learn more or be more creative, the Vigo County Public Library can help.

The library offers a wide range of programs and services, and all you need is a library card to access them. You can check out books, movies, and crafting kits. Additionally, you can take new courses online or use the library's 3-D printers. It's a fantastic way to expand your knowledge in the new year, all at no cost to you.

Library spokesperson Shaleena Barker says the upcoming cold snap is the perfect opportunity to get a library card.

"The library is the perfect way to beat the cold. You can come in, check out a book, sit down, and have some cozy time. But if you're not interested in leaving your house, the library does offer home delivery services," said Barker.

WEATHER

Today — Partly cloudy skies. High 32F. Winds WSW at 5 to 10 mph.

Tonight — Partly cloudy early with increasing clouds overnight. Low 24F. Winds S at 5 to 10 mph.

Tomorrow — Mostly cloudy. High 34F. Winds SSW at 10 to 15 mph.

Tomorrow Night — Cloudy. Low 23F. Winds W at 5 to 10 mph.

Monday — Mainly cloudy. High 34F. Winds W at 10 to 15 mph. Low 19F.

Tuesday — Considerable cloudiness. High 29F. Winds WNW at 10 to 15 mph. Low 18F.