

THE NEWS SUN

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State
Flu season
nearing
end, A2



73, sun
MORE WEATHER, PAGE A6.

TUESDAY MAY 24, 2022

Kendallville, Indiana

NEWS - SUN . COM

\$1.50

Kendallville shooting included in FBI national report



Police tape cordons off the entry to the Gallop's gas station at U.S. 6 and S.R. 3 in Kendallville in June 2021. A shooting that left one dead and two wounded was included in the FBI's 2021 active shooter report, detailing mass-casualty shootings in public places.

STEVE GARBACZ

FBI: Active shooter incidents up 52.5% in 2021

BY STEVE GARBACZ

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WASHINGTON — National active shooter incidents showed a sharp increase in 2021, rising 52.5% year-over-year, with more than 100 deaths recorded.

That included a shooting at the Gallops gas station in Kendallville, which was included in this year's national report.

In 2021, the FBI designated 61 shootings as active shooter incidents. In these incidents, 103 people were killed and 140 wounded, excluding the shooters.

The FBI logs an "active shooter" incident as one that

occurs in a public place, at one or more locations, the shooting incident is not a byproduct of a separate criminal act, the shooting results in a mass killing, one in which the shooter hunts out additional victims and where the apparent goal is to kill people and not simply damage buildings or property.

Incidents that are not included in the count are incidents such as gang or drug violence, domestic disputes, controlled hostage situations or shootings involving other criminal acts.

The FBI defines an active shooter as one or more individ-

uals actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a populated area. Implicit in this definition is the shooter's use of a firearm. The active aspect of the definition inherently implies the ongoing nature of an incident, and thus the potential for the response to affect the outcome, whereas a mass killing is defined as three or more killings in a single incident.

For the period 2017-2021, active shooter incident data reveals an upward trend. The U.S. recorded 31, 30 and 30 mass shooter incidents in 2017, 2018

SEE SHOOTINGS, PAGE A6

Dierick takes plea deal, will serve 32 years for boy's death

BY PATRICK REDMOND
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LAGRANGE — Dylan Dierick, the Iowa truck driver accused of causing the August death of a 4-year-old child in his



Dierick

care, will be heading to prison in June.

On Monday, Dierick formally accepted the plea deal offered

to him by the LaGrange County Prosecutor's office that calls for the Iowa man to serve 32 years in an Indiana prison for causing the death of 4-year-old Brantley Welford, his girlfriend's child who was Dierick's custody at the time he was fatally injured. Dierick was arrested and charged with neglect of a dependent causing death, a Level 1 felony in Indiana. A Level 1 felony is punishable by 20 to 40 years in prison with a state advisory sentence of 30 years.

Dierick appeared in LaGrange County Superior Court Monday afternoon alongside his attorney Seth Tipton. Monday's hearing was the final pretrial conference for Dierick on the court's calendar before his planned three-day June jury trial.

In a brief statement before he sat down at the defense table, Tipton said his client had agreed to accept the prosecutor's plea deal. Tipton said he wasn't happy with the plea deal, but that it offered him a way to "negotiate away" an anticipated murder charge Tipton said the prosecutor's office was

planning to file against Dierick before the start of his scheduled June trial.

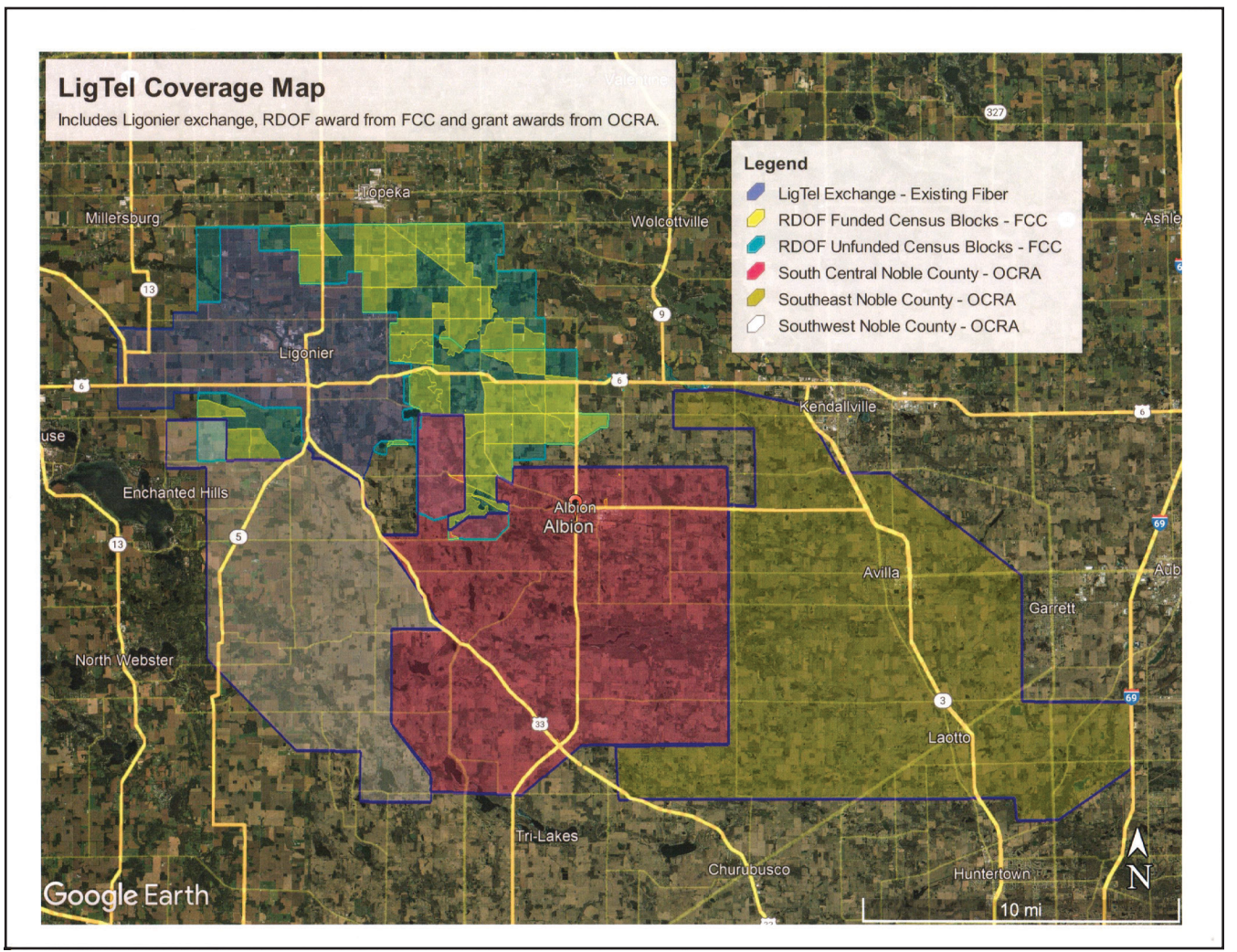
During Monday's hearing, Dierick, seated next to Tipton at the defense table, looked straight ahead and spoke clearly when he answered a series of questions about his current address by Superior Court Judge Lisa Bowen-Slaven. But later on, when Tipton asked Dierick a series of questions about Welford's death, Dierick dropped his head and spoke in a muted voice. Dierick admitted he voluntarily assumed custody of Welford last August. When asked if he failed to seek the proper medical attention for Welford after he was injured on their trip from Iowa to Shipshewana, he quietly answered "yes."

Dierick was arrested on Aug. 19 after police responding to a 911 call placed by the truck driver found Welford seriously injured and unresponsive in the sleeper cab of Dierick's truck. Welford was taken by helicopter from Shipshewana to Parkview Regional Medical Center in Fort Wayne where he died four days later due to his injuries.

Dierick was in Shipshewana to pick up a load of livestock.

According to probable cause documents submitted to the LaGrange County Superior Court shortly after Dierick's arrest, Welford's preliminary medical investigation indicated he was suffering from a multitude of injuries, including fractures of his clavicle and shoulder blade, bruises

SEE DIERICK, PAGE A2



CONTRIBUTED

LigTel provided this map showing planned upgrades in Noble County in the coming years.

The need for speed

LigTel investment, grant monies bringing more broadband

BY MATT GETTS

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ALBION — Fast broadband speeds are coming to rural Noble County. And they're coming quickly.

The Noble County Commissioners on Monday received an update from LigTel CEO Randy Meade regarding the Ligonier-based provider's plans to bring buried broadband to approximately 8,000 households in Noble County.

LigTel is putting more than \$7.7 million into the project, with the Office of Rural and Community Affairs providing an additional \$11.5 million NextLevel Broadband Grant. The grant's purpose is to bring broadband internet to underserved, rural areas.

Earlier in the meeting, the commissioners approved a pair of permits to allow LigTel to bury fiber cable within county-owned rights of way along Old S.R. 3 from Avilla to LaOtto and inside the town itself. Meade said the project involving rural LaOtto homes should be completed in October with in-town getting connected later next winter.

"We feel this is a great thing for Noble County," Meade said. "We're excited about it."

So were the commissioners. Commissioner Dave Dolezal pointed out that the 2020 census revealed Noble County actually lost residents from the 2010 census. Enticing young people to stay would require better internet.

"Young people won't stay around if there isn't high-speed internet," Dolezal said.

"What a huge blessing for Noble County," Commissioner Anita Hess said.

Noble County Economic Development Corp. Executive Director Gary Gatman also applauded the move, saying it could be a game changer in not only census figures, but enticing people and businesses to relocate to Noble County.

"It's not going to happen without this kind of effort," Gatman said. "We're thrilled. We knew broadband was an issue."

After the LaOtto area work is

completed, the plan for the OCRA monies is to spread broadband service in a northwestern direction, totalling 3,200 funded addresses and 1,800 unfunded addresses.

Funding addresses are those in rural areas with low speed Internet access currently. The money to bring fiber to these areas will come from LigTel and the grant. Unfunded addresses are those between sections of funded addresses, and will also become available for broadband.

Albion will be one of the communities to receive access to the lines.

LigTel also received \$384,000 in grant funding over a 10-year period from the Federal Communications Commission to provide service to an additional 750 addresses in northwest Noble County. LigTel is investing \$1.516 million in that project.

LigTel also is spending \$4.2 million in Noble County to bring broadband to 2,400 homes in areas not included by the grants.

SEE BROADBAND, PAGE A6

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Unemployment rates drop in April

LaGrange County still has state's lowest rate

BY STEVE GARBACZ

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INDIANAPOLIS — More than half of Indiana counties have unemployment rates below 2%, including most of northeast Indiana,

as employers continue to tap the local labor force to nearly empty.

Unemployment rates dropped in April, staying near all-time lows, even as employers still struggle to find workers to fill open positions.

Indiana's unadjusted unemployment rate dropped to 2.2% from 2.7% last month, but the seasonally adjusted jobless rate remained at 2.2% in April.

Local counties across northeast Indiana saw reductions in their

unemployment numbers.

LaGrange County continues to boast the state's lowest jobless rate at just 1.3%, tied with Boone County for state best, and down from 1.7% in March.

Steuben County was right behind at 1.4%, down from 1.9% in March, and tied for third-best in the state after LaGrange and Boone counties.

DeKalb County's rate also dropped a half percentage point to 1.6% from 2.1%, while Noble County was the only local

county above 2% at 2.1% joblessness, also down a half percentage point from 2.6% last month.

Whitley County's unemployment rate was 1.8% in April, down 2.2%, while Allen County sits at 2.3%, down from 2.6%.

The drops were driven by both a drop in the state's labor force size but also pickups in employment. Indiana's labor force decreased in size to 3,358 million workers in April,

SEE UNEMPLOYMENT, PAGE A6

LIVE DOPPLER 15 FURY 10 DAY FORECAST

TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU
0%	40%	40%	30%	0%	0%	0%	30%	30%	20%
73	77	71	70	77	84	89	85	80	74
56	63	55	56	63	68	68	65	61	

Monday's Statistics
LOCAL
 HI 62
 LO 44
FORT WAYNE
 HI 63
 LO 46
SOUTH BEND
 HI 65
 LO 46
INDIANAPOLIS
 HI 68
 LO 50

Partly cloudy skies on tap for today with a high of 73 and low of 56. Temperatures will remain in the 70s with a chance of rain Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

Sunrise Sunday 6:12 a.m.
 Sunset Sunday 9:03 p.m.

Forecast for Tuesday, May 24, 2022
 Bands separate high temperature zones for the day.

Today's drawing by: Remington Haney
 Submit your weather drawings to: Weather Drawings, Editorial Dept., P.O. Box 39, Kendallville, IN 46755



STEVE GARBACZ

A sign along the side of Ohio Street in Kendallville advertises an open position at Lewger Machine, showing generous pay and first-shift, no-weekend hours. Unemployment rates in northeast Indiana remain historically low, but employers are still seeking workers.

UNEMPLOYMENT: Employed Hoosiers went up

FROM PAGE A1

down from 3.365 million in March, but the number of employed Hoosiers increased from 3.273 million to 3.285 million.

Rachel Blakeman of Purdue University Fort Wayne noted that it continues to be an employee's market, with workers having a wider array of options and negotiating power as labor markets continue to run extremely thin.

"Local labor markets continue to be favorable to job seekers when measured by the number of people working and those looking for work," said Blakeman, director of Purdue University Fort Wayne's Community Research Institute. "I feel like I've been saying the same thing month over month. We continue to have plenty of open jobs locally yet the number of available workers isn't keeping pace. The labor shortage coupled with inflationary pressures on everything from supplies to wages is putting pressure on smaller employers to hold onto the workers they have while trying to constrain costs and prices so that they retain their customer base."

The shortage in workers is continuing to draw attention toward worker attraction, retention and skill building.

"More and more, various entities in northeast Indiana are focusing on building talent pipelines regionally and launching career awareness or exploration initiatives to ensure skilled workforces for the future," said Rick Farrant, communications director for Northeast Indiana Works. "That doesn't solve the immediate worker shortage challenge, but it is an essential longer term strategy that may insulate us from encountering this problem again."

Unemployment rates

Local jobless rates in northeast Indiana in April are as follows:

- Indiana**
April 2022: 2.2%
March 2022: 2.7%
April 2021: 3.9%
- DeKalb**
April 2022: 1.6%
March 2022: 2.1%
April 2021: 2.8%
- LaGrange**
April 2022: 1.3%
March 2022: 1.7%
April 2021: 2%
- Noble**
April 2022: 2.1%
March 2022: 2.6%
April 2021: 3.5%
- Steuben**
April 2022: 1.4%
March 2022: 1.9%
April 2021: 2.7%

Source: Indiana Department of Workforce Development

SHOOTINGS: Three incidents occurred in Indiana

FROM PAGE A1

and 2019, respectively, but then rose to 40 in 2020 and 61 in 2021.

The number of active shooter incidents identified in 2021 represents a 52.5% increase from 2020 and a 96.8% increase from 2017.

The 61 incidents occurred in 30 states, meaning more than half of the U.S. experienced at least one mass shooting incident in 2021.

Three of those 61 incidents occurred in Indiana, with the April 15 shooting spree at a FedEx facility in Plainfield tying for the highest casualty count in the nation in 2021 with 15 total casualties — eight dead and seven wounded.

The two other Indiana incidents included a May 29 incident in Indianapolis where a male shooter wounded four people including a law enforcement officer at various locations before being taken into custody after a shootout with police and the other was the June 27 shooting at the Gallops gas station in Kendallville, where suspect Matthew Rodriguez

allegedly shot three people, killing one, before fleeing the city and later being captured in southeast Ohio.

Casualty counts, both dead and wounded, are higher for 2021 (243) when compared with 2020 (164), indicating a 48% increase.

The casualties in 2021 represents the third highest total casualty count over the last five years (2017-2021). Last year saw the highest number of deaths (103) since 2017, a 171.1% increase from 2020 and above the average (92.3) for the period 2017-2020. There was an 11.1% increase in people wounded (140) in 2021 compared with 2020 (126), but below the average (253) for the period 2017-2020.

Casualty numbers are partially skewed higher due to the 2017 shooting at the Route 91 Harvest Festival concert shooting in Las Vegas in which 56 people were killed and 489 more were wounded.

For 2021, the FBI observed an emerging trend involving roving active shooters; specifically, shooters who shoot in multiple locations, either

in one day or in various locations over several days.

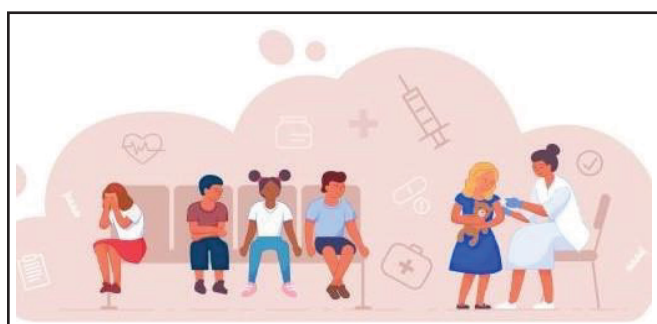
The 61 incidents in 2021 were carried out by 61 shooters. Sixty shooters were male, and one was female. Individual shooters carried out all the incidents. The age range of the shooters was 12 years old to 67 years old.

Most of the shooters were younger, with 42 of them falling between the ages of 19 and 44 and 32 of them between 19 and 34.

Two shooters wore body armor. Thirty shooters were apprehended by law enforcement, 14 shooters were killed by law enforcement, four shooters were killed by armed citizens, one shooter was killed in a vehicle accident during a law enforcement pursuit, 11 shooters committed suicide, and one shooter remains at large.

Since the 2013, the FBI has partnered with the Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance to help deliver Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training (ALERRT) to law enforcement. ALERRT is the national standard for active shooter response, regardless of responder agency, and incorporates tactical best practices and lessons learned from previous active shooter incidents.

The report is part of a series of FBI active shooter-related products published since September 2014. These reports are not intended to explore all facets of active shooter incidents but rather intended to provide law enforcement officers, other first responders, corporations, educators, and the public with a baseline understanding of active shooter incidents.



Don't Wait – Set The Date
 Schedule your child's school shots now.
 Call LaGrange County Health Department for an appointment: 260-499-4182 ext. 1
 For a list of Indiana Required Immunizations, please visit: <https://www.in.gov/health/immunization>



PATRICK REDMOND

A contractor operates a boring machine that allows crews to place two plastic conduits underground that will be used to string a fiber optic network owned by telecom company LigTel around LaGrange. LigTel recently installed in LaGrange and now is planning a large Noble County expansion.

BROADBAND: LigTel starts at \$55 per month

FROM PAGE A1

The town of Rome City will go live with broadband soon, Meade told the commissioners.

Meade said between 50-60% of residents have been signing up for services once the broadband is

installed.

There are four price packages being provided by LigTel for the services. Ranging from a 100 megabit speed plan for approximately \$55 per month up to a 2 gigabit plan for approximately \$190. Those speeds

are symmetrical, according to Meade, meaning the top shelf plan would allow 2 gigabit download and upload speeds. The same is true for the other plans.

Dolezal said he is sure the company will do well. "I think you're going to have a great response," Dolezal said.

Meade credited Indiana Farm Bureau with a rural survey it did, asking residents through the state in rural areas to take part in an internet speed search. The high volume of participants — and the slower speeds reported — really helped LigTel receive the grant for Noble County.

As of Monday afternoon, approximately 1,621 Noble County locations took part in the testing, more than DeKalb (742), Steuben (506) and LaGrange (170) counties combined, according to the testing website.

Dolezal, who lives in the LaOtto area, said his internet is so slow and unreliable, he wasn't even able to complete Farm Bureau's test.

COUNTY LINE STORES

MONDAY – THURSDAY 8:00 – 5:30
 FRIDAY 8:00 – 6:00 ☆ SATURDAY 8:00 – 4:30

SPECIALS FOR MAY 23 - 28, 2022

Pepsi-Cola (6 Pack) 16.9 oz	\$2.79
Eckrich Hot Dogs 12 oz	\$1.29
Lays Potato Chips 7 oz.....	\$2.39
Complete Instant Mashed Potatoes 5 lbs 5 oz.....	\$3.95
"Famous Brand" Saltines 24 oz	\$1.59
Unlabeled Bathroom Tissue 12 Pack	\$3.95
Baked Beans Gallon	\$2.99
Magic Stars Cereal (Seconds) 28 oz	\$1.49
Premium Antibacterial Soap 3.5 oz	3/\$1.00
"Famous Brand" Bold Snack Mix 32.5 oz	\$2.95
Spiral Hams	\$1.19/lb
"Famous Brand" Honey Graham Crackers 14.4 oz	99¢

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