

**Weather** Cloudy today with a high of 37. Rain on Sunday, high of 40.  
Page A5

# THE HERALD REPUBLICAN



**Rep. Dick Dodge** files for run at 4th term in Indiana House  
Page A2

Angola, Indiana

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PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Dusty Rhodes is seen in his polar plunge hat before taking the dive at the YMCA of Steuben County last week.

## Senior 'polar bears' take the plunge

ANGOLA — Senior citizens of the YMCA of Steuben County once again took the cold plunge from the warm therapy pool into the chilly main pool at the second annual Leo's Polar Bear Plunge on Friday, Jan. 15.

The jumpers had the option of going down the big red slide, jumping feet first from the starting blocks, or just tip toeing in from the steps. In order for them to be considered a polar bear, they had to be submerged up to their shoulders in water.

Many of the participants are accustomed to the 92-degree therapy pool so the plunge into the 82-degree main pool was quite a shock.

"This is the second year for the event and it is such a fun way to bring in the new year for my aquatic class participants," says Samantha Porter, aquatics director at the YMCA of Steuben County.

"The party was far from over after the jump," said Porter. "With the help of Angola Pizza King and Chris Burd the seniors were able to enjoy a wonderful lunch of pizza, cookies and fellowship."

## UK raises terror threat level

LONDON (AP) — Britain raised its terror threat alert to the second-highest level Friday, one of several recent moves the country has made to increase vigilance against international terrorists after a Christmas Day bombing attempt on a Europe-U.S. flight.

The threat level was raised from "substantial" — where it had stood since July to indicate a strong possibility of a terrorist attack — to "severe," meaning such an attack is considered highly likely.

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#### Index

Classified .....	B7-B8
Life .....	A3
Obituaries .....	A4
Opinion .....	B5
Sports .....	B1-B3
Weather .....	A5
TV/Comics .....	B6

Vol. 153 No. 22



7 06804 15723 9

# Meeks: Casino push in House

BY JIM SHILANDER  
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ANGOLA — Former Sen. Robert Meeks said efforts to bring a casino referendum to Steuben County were likely to pickup during the second half of the state legislature's session.

Meeks said that legislation currently in the state Senate did not include language allowing the Steuben County referendum. Meeks is being paid by the Steuben County Economic Development Corp. as a lobbyist during the session to bring a casino referendum to the local

ballot in November.

Meeks also said provisions and proposed amendments to the Senate bill would likely make it difficult for any casino owner, including Majestic Star owner Don Barden, to move a casino.

"We'll try and insert the language in the bill that will go in front of the House," Meeks said.

The current Senate bill would require casino owners to pay a \$50 million fee to move a riverboat casino onto land, which Meeks called "ludicrous."

"It doesn't make sense if you have someone who wants to

invest \$250 million to \$300 million in the state to penalize them \$50 million," Meeks said, adding that he was sure stockholders in Barden's company would not be happy about it either. The fee could be avoided if one of Barden's two licenses was turned over to the state.

Meeks testified before a Senate committee considering the proposal Thursday. A lobbyist for Fort Wayne made a pitch on behalf of that city as well, but Meeks noted that officials in Steuben County were united

behind a proposal, in contrast to Fort Wayne and Allen County.

Rep. Dick Dodge, R.-Pleasant Lake, said he understood that the Senate would be voting on the bill allowing casinos to move on Monday. He also said he was aware that any House bill was likely to be changed.

"I don't know who's going to be carrying the bill," Dodge said.

While the current bill does not include any provisions for a referendum, it could be added in an amendment to the bill, he said. That can happen after a bill is passed in its original form.

## In Limbo In Cameron



AMY OBERLIN

Greg George sits in a room in the Cameron Memorial Community Hospital Emergency Room where he's been staying since Monday after he was taken to the hospital allegedly by staff of

Wesley Healthcare Center, Auburn, yet was never picked up. Cameron officials are trying to find a new facility to take in George.

# Nursing home patient dumping allegation being probed locally

BY MIKE MARTURELLO  
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ANGOLA — Gregory George has spent a week in the emergency room at Cameron Memorial Community Hospital and advocates for nursing home residents want to know why.

Left at the Angola hospital Monday by his caretakers at Wesley Healthcare Center in Auburn, George, 46, has been

without another home.

He has been kept in an examination room at Cameron's emergency room with around-the-clock care, not admitted as a patient but in limbo after it became clear that Wesley was not going to take him back.

His situation is being investigated by Aisha LaRoche, a certified ombudsman with Long Term Care Ombudsman of Northeast Indiana. The case has also been turned over to Adult

Protective Services Unit 3, which serves northeast Indiana, LaRoche said. It could end up being investigated by the Indiana State Department of Health, which governs nursing homes in Indiana, she said.

"When we receive cases like this we turn them over to the State Department of Health," LaRoche said.

The Indiana State Long Term Care Ombudsman Program is a federal and state funded program

SEE LIMBO, PAGE A5

# Man held for meth making

BY AMY OBERLIN  
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ANGOLA — An Angola man admitted to a methamphetamine problem that dates to 2006 when interviewed by police in December.

Friday morning, 29-year-old Dusty Freed heard a Class B felony charge of manufacturing methamphetamine that was filed Thursday. Freed was already incarcerated in Steuben County Jail, and has eight other pending criminal cases against him.

Public defender Robert Hardy was assigned to the case and a

SEE ARREST, PAGE A5



Freed



JIM SHILANDER

Prairie Heights High School Leo Club members Shelby Kemper, left, and Gabby Engle distribute Boomerang Backpacks to third graders at Milford Elementary School Friday.

# Steuben jobless rate up

FROM STAFF REPORTS

ANGOLA — Steuben County followed the statewide trend by experiencing an increase in unemployment in December, statistics from the Indiana Department of Workforce Development said.

Steuben County's unemployment rate increased to 13.0 percent in December from 12.5 percent in November.

Indiana's preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for December increased 0.3 percent to 9.9 percent, the IDWD reported Friday.

"Indiana and its Midwest neighbors each reported increases or remained virtually flat in December," said Teresa Voors, IDWD commissioner "The two largest factors in the December employment report are a drop in construction employment, possibly attributed to the weather, and an increase in the number of unemployment claims following eight straight months of decline."

Neighboring counties experienced similar increases. DeKalb County's December unemployment increased to 12.3 percent from 12.0 percent. LaGrange County increased to 14.1 percent from 13.9 percent and Noble County increased to 14.7 percent from 14.3 percent.

Ball State economist Michael Hicks said Indiana's slight increase in unemployment in December is evidence that the state's economy is still several months away from consistent growth.

"The slight increase in the unemployment rate is probably

SEE UNEMPLOYMENT, PAGE A5

# Backpacks arrive at Heights

BY JIM SHILANDER  
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SOUTH MILFORD — The Boomerang Backpack program has come to another area school district.

The popular program, which provides food for students on free and reduced lunch programs to eat over the weekend, came to Prairie Heights Schools Friday, as members of the high school Leo Club distributed 37 backpacks to students at Milford Elementary School.

Club adviser Shari Schippers had worked with Mark Cockroft, the Angola resident who started the backpack program in East Noble schools last year. Between speaking with Cockroft and Bill Stockberger, who has helped lead the push to bring the program to Steuben

SEE BACKPACKS, PAGE A5