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Ohio News Briefs

NEWS ([HTTP://URBANACITIZEN.COM/CATEGORY/NEWS](http://URBANACITIZEN.COM/CATEGORY/NEWS))

Family files suit after firetruck hits, kills Ohio woman

TIFFIN, Ohio (AP) — The family of an Ohio woman struck and killed by a

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POLL



firetruck that was backing up after firefighters rescued two people from a reservoir have filed a lawsuit against the volunteer fire department and the driver.

Green Springs firefighters were responding in June to a capsized boat and had

(#) pulled two people from the water when one of the firefighters began backing up the truck.

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Lorri Riehm, 53, of Tiffin, was walking on a path along the reservoir at the time; she was wearing headphones and was struck from behind by the truck, authorities said.

The lawsuit, filed in Seneca County this week, said Riehm often jogged and walked on the path because it was closed off to traffic. It said that the firetruck had equipment that obstructed the rear view and that the driver didn't use reasonable care while backing up, failing to use a spotter to help him.

A message seeking comment was left with the Green Springs fire department Wednesday.

Prosecutors this month announced they were not filing charges against the firefighter who was driving the truck. Seneca County Prosecutor Derek DeVine said no drugs, alcohol or reckless driving was involved.

Court upholds cap on damages for Ohio woman abused as teen

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — The state Supreme Court has rejected a request from a woman sexually assaulted by an Ohio pastor when she was 15 years old to boost the amount of damages paid by the church where the minister worked.

Attorneys for the woman and her father argued a state law that limits noneconomic damages to \$350,000 violates the constitutional rights of underage victims of sexual assault.

They argue that sexual abuse is typically more emotionally damaging than physical injury and sexually abused minors often spend years dealing with the trauma.

The court ruled 3-2 Wednesday to uphold the caps with two additional justices saying the court shouldn't have taken the case.

News Quiz: U.S. life expectancy has declined for the first time since what year?

- 1999
- 1993
- 2001
- 2004
- Not sure

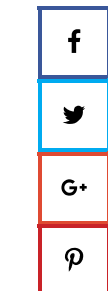
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Attorneys for Grace Brethren Church argued the limits placed on noneconomic damages create a fairer and predictable civil justice system.

Donor buys up Christmas trees from lot at troubled church

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — An anonymous donor has given people who couldn't afford a Christmas tree a chance to take one home after paying for all the remaining trees on a lot at a Catholic elementary school in Columbus.

The Columbus Dispatch reports a man showed up Monday afternoon and paid for dozens of trees priced at \$40 and \$50. People cleared the lot Tuesday morning after the principal of St. Mary School in the German Village neighborhood posted on Facebook Monday night that the trees were free to anyone in need.

Proceeds from the annual tree sale are split between two charity groups, including one that provides the school with supplies and other financial help.

St. Mary principal Kayla Walton says the donor provided a "beautiful expression" of the Christmas spirit.

Owners declined insurance company exam after fatal fire

HAMILTON, Ohio (AP) — Court records show a property owner recently charged with murder and aggravated arson declined to cooperate with an insurance company investigation of his claim for a house fire that resulted in an Ohio firefighter's death nearly a year ago.

The Hamilton-Middletown Journal-News reports an attorney for Lester Parker and his wife Bertha wrote to Cincinnati Insurance Company in May the Parkers were exercising their Fifth Amendment right to remain silent and wouldn't submit to examinations. The newspaper reports the letter was in response to requests by the insurance company.

A Butler County judge in July ruled the insurance company would not have to pay the Parkers anything for the fire in Hamilton.

Parker, 66, pleaded not guilty Tuesday. Hamilton firefighter Patrick Wolterman died fighting the fire.

Feds make parts of Wayne National Forest available for lease

MARIETTA, Ohio (AP) — Despite strong opposition, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management has made roughly 719 acres of Ohio's only national forest available for lease by oil-and-gas drilling companies.

The Cincinnati Enquirer reports the bureau on Tuesday began accepting bids on 17 government-owned parcels, which represents less than 0.3 percent of the southeast Ohio forest.

A BLM spokesman says the federal agency had initially advertised the



auctioning of the leasing rights for approximately twice as much land.

Leases only allow exploration at this time. A lessee would still be required to obtain a permit before any drilling could begin.

Environmental advocates challenged the auction, arguing that fracking threatens public health and local wildlife by polluting the air and water.

Wayne National Forest consists of more than 250,000 acres in the Appalachian foothills.

10 hospitalized following gas leak at Columbus nursing home

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Ten people were hospitalized for treatment of carbon monoxide poisoning after a gas leak occurred at a nursing home on Columbus' Near East Side.

Fire Battalion Chief Steve Martin says firefighters were dispatched to Bryden Place just after 5 p.m. Tuesday following reports that someone was feeling ill.

A medic checked out the sick person at the scene and found a high level of carbon monoxide in their blood. The facility was partially evacuated and at least 10 people showed signs that they were affected by the leak.

The majority of those hospitalized were elderly residents of the home. Several employees also required treatment.

Martin says fire officials believe the leak came from somewhere in the basement. Heating, air conditioning and gas company crews were searching for the source Tuesday night.

Bill gives \$15M for improvements to popular Cincinnati park

CINCINNATI (AP) — A water infrastructure bill that includes \$15 million for improvements to a Cincinnati park has been passed by Congress and awaits the president's signature.

The Cincinnati Enquirer reports the bill would authorize the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to study the viability of new "flood risk reduction, ecosystem restoration and recreation components" at the John G. and Phyllis W. Smale Riverfront Park.

The federal funding requires a \$15 million match from other sources.

The \$120 million park opened in 2012. It has attracted hundreds of thousands of visitors.

Parks officials say the money could be used to build a tree lawn atop a parking garage and a hard edge or wall on the Ohio River to prevent erosion.



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