Community Initiative & Keynote

- Jillian Duchnowski
  Local editor, The Journal-Standard, Freeport, Illinois
  “Advancing Troubled Neighborhoods”

- Max Jones
  Editor, Tribune-Star, Terra Haute, Indiana
  “A City on the Brink: Terre Haute’s financial crisis”

- Moderator: Joe Hight
  Chairman, APME Awards/Innovations Committee

- S. Mitra Kalita
  Managing editor for editorial innovation, Los Angeles Times

Interviewer: Jennifer Preston
Vice president of journalism, John S. and James L. Knight Foundation
Most shooting incidents happened in one area of Freeport.
Providing context:
Freeport’s crime rates compared favorably with other towns’ rates.

**Violent crime rate**
Incidents per 10,000 people.

**Property crime rate**
Incidents per 10,000 people.

Source: FBI, Illinois State Police crime statistics  GATEHOUSE MEDIA
Providing solutions

• We found many of the key non-profit organizations are struggling to find more volunteers and funding.

• Several already are seeking more partnerships to help remove vacant houses or help school leaders understand challenges students in the neighborhood face.

• City leaders are slowly adding streetlights to the area, a problem some residents identified.
How we used the APME grant

• Contracted with Northern Illinois University to provide statistics on employment, housing vacancy and age broken down by city ward.
• Hosted two community brainstorming sessions to discuss both problems and solutions.
• Increased freelance budget to free up reporter time.
• Increased the project’s reach by boosting posts on social media and lifting our website paywall for several days.
The Impact

The series sparked great discussion on social media.
The Impact

The series sparked great discussion on social media.

Devarius Washington

Once the police learn how to progress on building relationships with members in the community (both kids and parents) as well as the community putting forth effort to do the same with police, all of the small things that you all are trying to accomplish will fall into place. Building relationships meaning interacting in every way possible with kids and parents. Even if it means knocking on the door just to get to learn the neighborhood. Show those people that you care and that you're there to look out for the better for both them and their children. Both neighborhood and police contribute to the stereotypes placed upon them. Working together will be the best solution. Change will follow.

Like · Reply · 11 · Yesterday at 10:51am · Edited

Martha Furst

Thank you JS for an excellent series--

17 minutes ago · Like · Reply
We plan to follow up in six months to see what progress has been made on projects that have just started or are in the planning stages.

Read more at:
Journalstandard.com/rebuilding
Despite warning signs, city descends into pool of red ink

In a seven-year period, Terre Haute's general fund cash balance plunged from a positive $8 million to a negative $8.9 million, with no relief in sight.

Terre Haute's dwindling cash balance

Money received

Money spent

The red-ink result

By Ron Lowrance, Tribune-Star

In September 2008 Terre Haute's cash balance had soared past $8 million. Today it is a negative $8.9 million. Over the past seven years, the city's reserve fund has been reduced by $27.7 million dollars because of cuts to the city's welfare programs. The city has been hit hard by state budget cuts.

During the last City Council meeting, the city's budget was revised to reflect the cuts. The city's welfare programs have been cut by $22 million in the past three years. The city has been forced to cut the budget by $5 million per year.

The city's financial situation has led to a decrease in services to citizens. The city has cut the number of trash pickup days from five to three. The city has also cut the number of public meetings and has reduced the number of public employees. The city has also reduced the number of police officers.

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Revenues shrink, cities scramble

Indiana’s property tax caps forced local governments to change the way they do business.

By Mara numbers, Jacksonville

While many property owners are seeing a decrease in their property tax payments this year, the direct impact of the state’s property tax caps is being felt across the city. Some cities have seen a drop of 20% or more, forcing them to cut programs, raise fees or reduce services.

In Jacksonville, the city council has already approved a series of budget cuts, including a 5% reduction in staff and a 3% reduction in services. The city’s budget was already tight before the property tax cap was enacted, and the reduction in revenue has only made things worse.

“We’re trying to do the best we can with what we have,” said Mayor Robert Gosing. “But it’s definitely been a challenge.”

In some cases, cities have been forced to raise fees to compensate for the loss of revenue. In Clarksville, the city council has approved a 10% increase in water rates.

“Every city is different, and every city has to make its own decisions,” said Clarksville Mayor Jeff Carter. “But we’re doing our best to make sure that we’re still providing the services that our residents need.”

Many cities are also looking at ways to increase revenue. In Muncie, the city council has approved a new hotel tax to generate additional revenue.

“While the property tax cap is definitely a burden, it’s also forcing us to get creative,” said Muncie Mayor Dennis Tyler. “We’re looking at ways to increase revenue without raising taxes.”

The property tax cap was enacted in 2011, and its impact on cities has been felt ever since. While some cities have been able to adjust to the changes, others have struggled.

“In some cases, the property tax cap is forcing cities to make tough decisions,” said State Senator Jim Merrick. “But it’s important to remember that the property tax cap was put in place to protect property owners from overburdening them with taxes.”

As the impact of the property tax cap continues to be felt across the state, cities are looking for ways to adapt. While the future remains uncertain, many are determined to do their best to provide the services their residents need.

“When it comes to yellow jackets, writer never learns

Weekend full of callouts

Q: 20th Ave. and W. 10th St.

By Marcia Johnson

On Saturday, a callout was made at 20th Ave. and W. 10th St., where a yellow jacket nest was found. The nest was still active at the time of the callout, and the beekeeper was called in to remove it.

The beekeeper worked for about 30 minutes to remove the nest, but was unable to find a way to do it safely. He recommended that the nest be removed by a professional beekeeper.

“I’ve never seen a nest like this before,” said the beekeeper. “It’s very unusual, and it’s going to be difficult to remove it safely.”

Many residents were surprised to hear about the nest, and some were concerned about their safety.

“I didn’t know there were yellow jackets in the area,” said one resident. “I’m worried about my kids playing outside.”

The city has set up a hotline for residents who are concerned about yellow jackets. People can call the hotline to report a nest and get information on how to remove it safely.

“We want to make sure that everyone is safe,” said the city’s public relations director. “Our priority is to protect the community.”

The hotline is available 24 hours a day, and residents are encouraged to call if they see a yellow jacket nest. The city will work with professional beekeepers to remove the nests safely.

When it comes to yellow jackets, writer never learns.
Intense concern, no consensus
City Council majority a passive partner in growing financial crisis

Avoid drug crisis, Peace gathers experts to offer remedies

Police nab trio after car runs out of gas on I-70

Lyndy Skybayd coming to Bulman Center for LSU Homecoming concert

Spotlight on Health

Police nab trio after car runs out of gas on I-70

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Crisis sent city hunting for cash
Powerulne's promise of riches has turned into costly legal battle

Praying for Police

CITY DIVIDED
Rebuffed for a reason. New city, approach in the works at 57 meetings

Historic Italian game-taking center court at weekend festival
City in crisis needs its citizens to get involved

The Tribune-Star Editorial Board

What has Trump wrought for being ‘presidential’?

Readers’ Forum

Rational discussion, bold action needed to resolve financial crisis

Mayor, City Council must collaborate to find effective options
YOU SAID IT!

Readers react, respond to series

Despite warning signs, city descends into pool of red ink

Readers' forum

Boosting Bennett not right answer to city's crisis