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MESSENGER-INQUIRER

Vol. 144, No. 88

THURSDAY, MARCH 29, 2018

Owensboro, Ky. • \$1.49

Science and History Museum, visitors bureau could relocate

BY AUSTIN RAMSEY

A new plan city leaders say they are considering could result in several notable downtown institutions relocating in the wake of the muchgrass Music Center grand RiverPark Center. opening this fall.

ence and History could be forced to downsize and move from its current location at the former S.W. Anderson Building across the street into space where the bluegrass museum anticipated International Blue- currently resides inside the

Sources say the museum Details of that plan revealed may no longer be able to this week indicate that the in a contract signed more nity," he said. "Moving the

Owensboro Museum of Sci- than two decades ago mak- museum would be a piece of ing it a free tenant of the city's the puzzle downtown, and it 90,000-square-foot historic building at Second and Daviess streets. According to Mayor survive without the city's

'We're trying to figure out to the Messenger-Inquirer meet specifications outlined what's best for the commu-

would also ensure that they stay downtown."

Another part of that puz-Tom Watson, museum officials zle would involve moving the have told him they couldn't Owensboro-Daviess County Convention and Visitors annual stipend of more than Bureau inside the new International Bluegrass Music Center and transforming that space

SEE RELOCATE/PAGE A2

RIVER VISIT



Photo by Greg Eans, Messenger-Inquirer.com | geans@messenger-inquirer.com

Michael Morris of Princeton takes a photograph looking out over the Ohio River on Wednesday as a barge passes by Smothers Park in a dense fog covering the river. Morris was visiting Owensboro and stopped to visit the park. "This is where I proposed to my fiancee," Morris said.

City will host new tourneys

Kentucky 2-A championships set for January 2019

BY KEITH LAWRENCE

Owensboro has landed the inaugural Kentucky 2-A Championships for basketball, baseball, softball, volleyball and soccer.

"It's a very big deal," Jared Bratcher, sports marketing director for the Owensboro-



teams from across Kentucky competing in the boys' 2-A basketball

ter and eight more competing in the girls' tournament. That means 16 teams and their fans will be in town on

championship at the Sportscen-

what's normally a slow weekend in Owensboro. Bratcher said each tournament will feature the winners and runners-up from four sectional tournaments across the

The idea behind Owensboro's bid is to fill hotel rooms during the slowest time of the year.

The 2-A schools have enrollments between 500 and 1,000 students, Bratcher said.

Kentucky has had All "A" Classic tournaments for smaller schools since 1980.

This year, a group of midsized schools decided to create a series of similar tournaments.

Bratcher said neither the All "A" or the 2-A tournaments

SEE CITY/PAGE A2

OCTC to launch Tech X

Initiative seeks to establish multi-craft technologists

BY BOBBIE HAYSE

Owensboro Community & Technical College has been awarded

\$400,000 by the KCTCS Entrepreneurial/Innovation Initiative for Non-Traditional Studies, which will be used by the school to unfold Tech X, a new program that will be geared toward helping students master

several trades in the amount of time it could take them to earn one certification.

The Tech X initiative will provide training for a multi-craft technology program in a real-world and industrial environment that "will encourage participants to develop both technical and analytical thinking skills related to work flow and production output,' according a release sent by the college.

David Ashley, OCTC director of external education programs who is helping to kick-start Tech X, said these multi-craft technologists will be trained knowing they are embarking on life-long learning and adjustments as technologies change.

"Having a singular skill is rapidly becoming outdated, but having a multiple skill foundation is marketable in a 'skills gap' world," he said.

SEE OCTC/PAGE A2

Atmos lowering rates 3.06 percent

BY KEITH LAWRENCE

Last fall, Atmos Energy asked the Kentucky Public Service Commission for a 5.7 percent rate increase that would raise the average residential customer's

bill by \$3 a month. Mark Martin, Atmos' vice president of rates and regulatory affairs, said Wednesday that the company doesn't expect a final ruling on that request until late spring or summer.

But, in the meantime, the utility is getting ready to cut the average residential bill by 3.06 percent roughly \$1.76 a month.

That's because of the

Astrology/Region, B4

Comics/Region, B5

Classifieds/Health, D3-5

Crossword/Health, D4

Dear Abby/Region, B4

Jobs Act — also known as

tax reform

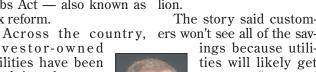
investor-owned utilities have been applying for rate cuts to compensate for the tax savings they'll see this year.

The New York Times reported in Ianuary that economists at the Penn

at the University of Pennsylvania estimated that the new law would reduce the power companies' federal tax bill by \$1 billion this year.

In 2021, it said, the sav-

recent federal Tax Cuts and ings would grow to \$5 bil-



to use "part of their savings to fund infrastructure upgrades or to offset future rate increases. And utilities may challenge regulators' findings

Wharton Budget Model about how much they have saved as a result of the tax

Kaye Coomes, Atmos' public affairs manager, said because of the tax savings

SEE ATMOS/PAGE A2





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Mark Martin





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Service aims to follow users across multiple devices

BY ANICK JESDANUN

NEW YORK — Some 60 companies including such leading brands as Subway, Sprint and the NFL are joining forces to help each other follow you around online.

Adobe, a company better known for Photoshop and PDF files, says the new Device Co-op initiative it is organizing will help companies offer more personalized experiences and make ads less annoying by filtering out products and services you have already bought or will never buy. Under the initiative, Adobe can tell you're the same person on a home PC, a work laptop, a phone and a tablet by analyzing past sign-ins with member compa-

The initiative comes amid heightened privacy sensitivities after reports that Facebook allowed a political consulting firm, Cambridge Analytica, to harvest data on millions of Facebook users to influence elections. Facebook also has been criticized for collecting call and text logs from phones running Google's Android system.

Adobe's initiative underscores the role data plays in helping companies make money. Many



Associated Press | Alan Diaz

Adobe software is displayed at a store June 21, 2017, in Hialeah, Fla.

of the initial uses are for better ad targeting.

hosting this week in Las Vegas. Adobe executives said they believed their initiative offers strong privacy safeguards and weren't worried about a back-

"With this stuff coming out the program links about 300 milnow around Cambridge Analyti- lion consumers across nearly The company timed Wednes- ca and Facebook, the bar has to 2 billion devices in the U.S. and day's announcement to a digi- be so high in terms of privacy," tal marketing conference it is Adobe executive Amit Ahuja

Adobe says no personal data is being exchanged among participating companies, which also wouldn't get a promotion to include Allstate, Lenovo, Intel, lash in light of the Facebook Barnes & Noble, Subaru and but might get instead a phone the Food Network. Adobe says upgrade offer. Or if Mary has of it.

Canada.

The program would let Sprint, for instance, know that Bob is already a customer when he visits from a new device. Bob switch from another carrier, declared herself a Giants fan on the NFL's app, she might see ads with Giants banners when visiting NFL.com from a laptop for the first time.

All this might feel creepy, but such cross-device tracking is already commonly done by matching attributes such as devices that from the same internet location, or IP address. Consumers typically have little control over it.

Adobe says it will give con-

sumers a chance to opt out of such tracking. And it's breaking industry practices in a few ways. Adobe says it will honor opt-out requests for all participating companies and for all devices at once. It's more typical for such setups to require people do so one by one. All companies in the initiative are listed on Adobe's website, a break from some companies' practice of referring only to unspecified partners.

"We're doing everything we can not letting brands hide themselves," Ahuja said.

But in taking an opt-out approach, which is common in the industry, Adobe assumes that users consent. And it places the burden on consumers to learn about this initiative and to figure out how they can opt out

FROM THE **FRONT PAGE**

are affiliated with the Kentucky High School Athletic Association, whose tournaments include all teams in

"Sometimes, the smaller schools feel that they are at a disadvantage in the KHSAA tournaments," he said. "Most of them still participate in KHSAA tournaments, but having their own tournaments gives them a chance to compete against schools their size.'

The leadership of Kentucky 2-A Championships includes Jeremy Tackett, athletic director at Union County High School, chairman; Eddie Browning, ath-

letic director at Perry Countournaments on the commusports," Bratcher said. ty Central High School, vice chairman; Matt Bell, athletic director at Webster County High School, treasurer; and Michael Melton, athletic director at Letcher County Central High School, secre-

There are 46 high schools eligible to participate in the 2-A tournaments, Bratcher

He said the agreement is for three years and automatically renews for three more years — if both the CVB and Kentucky 2-A agree to the extension.

Bratcher said the CVB, a founding member of the new organization, bid \$1,000 for the tournament and agreed to absorb any losses.

It's too soon to estimate the economic impact of the ried history of world-class

nity, he said.

expected to bring a large number of fans to town.

Owensboro will also host two 2-A baseball state championships, two softball state championships, one volleyball state championship, one boys soccer state championship and one girls soccer state championship during the first three-year agreement.

If the contract is renewed for three more years, Owensboro will host state championships in each of those sports each year for three years, Bratcher said.

Each tournament will see eight teams competing in

"Owensboro has a sto- 7301, klawrence@messenger-

In 2004, Sports Illustrated But the tournaments are named Owensboro "Kentucky's Sportstown USA."

"We're one of the best places in the country for high school sports," Bratch-

Baseball and softball championships will start in 2020-21 and volleyball and soccer championships, in 2021-22, he said.

"This agreement will give the schools in the Kentucky 2-A Championships an opportunity to play in terrific facilities with fantastic atmospheres, while keeping the expenses minimal to the participating schools," Tackett said in a news release.

Keith Lawrence, 270-691-

ATMOS

FROM THE **FRONT PAGE**

the utility will see from the legislation, it is "seeking to decrease our rates by approximately \$5.6 million."

She said customers should see the decrease on their next bills.

That would mean that if the PSC gave Atmos the 5.7 percent increase it sought last fall, the average residential customer would only see a \$1.24 per month increase after the reduction related to the tax reform legislation.

But Martin said earlier that utilities never get as much of an increase as they ask for.

Last month, Andrew Melnykovych, the PSC's director of communications, said that in all the requests for rate increases, the agency is "looking at the immediate effect of the corporate tax reduction on current taxes and how that flows through to a reduction in rates.'

Keith Lawrence, 270-691-7301, klawrence@ messenger-inquirer.com

FROM THE **FRONT PAGE**

into a one-stop destination for regional tourism information. Officials say a draft contract making the CVB a sublessee of the bluegrass museum could be signed as early as April. While the rationale for

that shift remains hotly contested — city leaders claim its partially due to a vulnerable business plan the bluegrass museum submitted late last year — what remains certain is that the government's comprehensive downtown relocation strategy could be enormously consequential.

Facing what could be an additional \$3 million pension bill next fiscal year, the city could liquidate the S.W. Anderson Building, a prime piece of real estate most recently assessed at \$3.4 million. But true also, however, is the significant space the science and history museum could lose in the deal. The bluegrass museum's current home at the southwestern corner of the RiverPark Center is just a quarter of the size of the Anderson building, leaving the fate of at least some of the OMSH collec- rebrand. A portion of the

tion uncertain.

tor Elizabeth Griffith said the organization's board that would best fit programming needs, but offia decision on where that future location may be.

Watson said he wants to include OMSH in these discussions, but most of its board and Executive Director Kathy Olson have pushed back against the idea because of the limited "If you would take the

actual square footage that they're using, versus the actual square footage that they've got stuff stored in, you can pare it down," Watson said. "If we move forward with the idea of putting the Anderson building on the market, I want them to stay downtown if they want to stay downtown ... I would rather them get in the game with all the rest of the players so they continue this synergy they have with the community.

It's a chance, he said, to be, Watson said.

Meanwhile, the Wen- of the Anderson build- third-floor restaurant there dell H. Ford Government ing could be used to help may not be. City Manager we've put forward a busilaws. Education Center housed retrofit some of the soon- Bill Parrish said efforts ness plan with conservaalready been considering space, and the mayor said unsuccessful. a move. Executive Direc- he favored creating a children's area on the first floor or even making room has been seeking options for a restaurant that could serve museum patrons.

Repeated attempts to cials are still no closer to reach Olson for comment went unanswered Wednes-

> As for the CVB move, Watson said he is unconvinced by what he called a less-than-optimistic business plan for operations at the bluegrass center.

"We've got to do something to push as many people to that bluegrass center as we can or we're going to have issues with trying to keep it going," he said. "Their business plan was a little conceptual with 55 bluegrass concerts they were going to try to run with just 15 weekends in the summer to do them."

By putting the CVB inside the new center and using the space not only to sell bluegrass music but the community as a whole, perhaps the space can remain the hallmark destination it was intended to

proceeds from the sale tually supposed to be a shared space plan.

the third floor of that building are certainly shifting," he said. "We're becoming less concerned with what occupies that space and more concerned about ensuring that the space generates revenue.

Officials say perhaps an special events room shared between the bluegrass museum and CVB would better suit the

Bluegrass museum **Executive Director Chris** Joslin said he strongly supports sharing the new center's second floor with the CVB, because, although people come all over the world to visit Owensboro for its bluegrass music heritage, there is so much more that Owensboro and Daviess County has to offer. If the space can be designed to maximize dollars spent locally, it's a benefit to all.

But Joslin scoffed at the idea that the move was necessary. His business plan, he said, is solid, and the museum would be per-Plus, what was contrac- fectly fine even without the

rational projections, but I think we've been very conof it is based on the city's own (downtown master of starting the venture was an effort by the city, and I think that's important to remember."

The bluegrass museum is a private nonprofit, Twitter: @austinrramsey

and its business plan is not "I would contend that subject to open records

Although offering space inside the museum has to-be-vacated bluegrass to find a tenant have been tive projections," he said. on the third floor for a res-"I could have constructed taurant still isn't something "Our expectations for a business plan with aspi- Joslin said he's ruled out of the question, it is becoming more unlikely. He said servative. Honestly, some it would likely be retrofitted into a special events space should the CVB sign plan). And even the idea the sublessee contract he's drafted by April.

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Messenger-Inquirer

Published seven days a week by the Owensboro Messenger-Inquirer Inc. at 1401 Frederica Street, Owensboro, KY 42301.

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FROM THE **FRONT PAGE**

Through this initiative, students will work individually and in teams on scenarios related to the overall manufacturing process. There will be hands-on construction, fabrication, fitting, welding and manufacturing training. The learning approach will be a standard module format, with an orientation, instructional/ safety training, skill practices, project assignments and a presentation at the completion of the program. Through each module, and upon completion of the coursework, students will earn a gas welder certificate, arc cutter certificate, produc-

tion line welder certificate and a accelerated, hands-on training and forklift operator's certificate.

The two tracks, which will include daytime and nighttime options, will be offered to help a variety of students, including those who are nontraditional and work full-time or part-time jobs, said OCTC President Scott Williams.

Williams said he and other officials at the school are excited to have been awarded funding to launch Tech X.

This fits perfectly with our mission to not only serve students that can attend during the day, but to also expand our offerings and reach those non-traditional students that may be tied to a job during the day,' he said. "This transformative program will provide individuals with

learning to get them into the manufacturing workforce quickly."

The daytime option allows students to have classes eight hours a day, three days a week, for seven months. The nighttime option allows students to have classes four hours per evening, four nights a week, for nine months. The college is currently in the

process of recruiting students, for which there will be 16 each in the daytime and nighttime classes. For more information about Tech

X contact Ashley at david.ashley@

Bobbie Hayse, bhayse@messengerinquirer.com, 270-691-7315, Twitter: @BobbieHayseMI