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Officials: Shahadey will receive sheriff's pension

They say law is clear, applies even if convicted

By **SUE LOUGHLIN**
TRIBUNE-STAR

Frank Shahadey, former Vigo County Sheriff's deputy who has been indicted on federal charges in connection with a school district kickback scheme, will receive his

sheriff's department pension, Sheriff Greg Ewing said this week.

Ewing said he did not know how soon the pension will take effect but the paperwork had been filed, and Shahadey is entitled to the pension even if he is convicted of the federal charges.

"That's my understanding from my attorney," Ewing said, basing his view on a discussion with attorney Howard Williams of South Bend, who represents many sheriffs

throughout Indiana.

Once Shahadey resigned, the Vigo County Sheriff's Department merit board no longer had jurisdiction in the matter, Ewing said.

The merit board has three primary functions: hiring, promotion and termination. "When



SHAHADEY

he [Shahadey] resigned, he effectively took any jurisdiction away from the merit board," Ewing said.

Because it has not been finalized, Ewing said he could not provide a specific amount that Shahadey will receive, but it is based on the former deputy sheriff's highest three years of pay. According to the auditor's office, Shahadey's salary was \$56,980 in 2014; \$59,504 in 2015 and \$66,597 in 2016.

According to the plan, the normal

or standard retirement benefit "is not to exceed 74 percent of the final average monthly salary [based on the three highest years] plus \$20." That excludes any beneficiary selection, which would reduce the monthly amount, Ewing said.

The pension is funded through the county by appropriation; employee contribution (1 percent of salary), and process service fees.

Turn to **PENSION**, A4

Northern visitors



Tribune-Star/Jim Avelis

Gaggle: Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Canada geese gather at the J.I. Case Wetlands east of Terre Haute Wednesday afternoon. Flocks of the huge waterfowl can be seen around the valley now, with colder weather north of here forcing them south.

Locals hoping for a share of road money

Proposal includes \$15 more for license plates

By **MAUREEN HAYDEN**
CNHI STATE REPORTER
Indianapolis

As lawmakers search for more money for highways, local officials are hoping for an infusion, too.

An ambitious plan to hike gas taxes and other vehicle-related fees, including highway tolls, could mean millions of dollars more for cities, towns and counties that have fallen behind in fixing aging roads.

Divvying up the dollars could help make the gas-tax plan more palatable to the public, since about 80 percent of the state's roads are maintained locally.

"People want to know, 'Is this going to fix my street, or the road I drive on to get to work, or the road the bus that my child takes to get to school?'" said Brian Gould, government affairs director for the Indiana Association of Cities and Towns.

The answer is maybe.

Turn to **ROAD**, A4

Death of endangered whooping crane 'a great blow'

IDNR seeks person who shot, killed protected bird

By **DAVE TAYLOR**
TRIBUNE-STAR

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources says the weekend death of a whooping crane has hindered efforts to replenish the population of the endangered species.

A member of the International Crane Foundation found the remains of a 5-year-old female crane Tuesday in a field along Indiana 67 south of Lyons in Greene County, very near the Goose Pond State Fish & Wildlife Area.

Preliminary evidence suggests the bird was shot during the New Year's Day weekend, according to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement website. Another crane was killed in the same area

a few years ago.

The death "has struck a great blow with the Crane Foundation and the biologist involved" in efforts to save the distinctive animals, said Conservation Officer Nathan Lutz.

"This female had been tracked for several years with a radio transmitter and was banded. She hatched a chick last spring in one of the first successful hatches in this area. However, the chick did not survive, and the Crane Foundation had high hopes for another successful hatch this year," Lutz said.

Only about 120 whooping cranes are known to exist nationwide, he said.

Their numbers are highest in Indiana, according to the website savethecranes.org. About 35 of the white-bodied, five-foot-tall birds are known to nest in the Hoosier state, as of Jan. 1. Alabama has the second highest number at 28.

Turn to **CRANE**, A4



Submitted photo

Endangered: Someone shot and killed this endangered, 5-year-old female whooping crane, which was found after the holiday weekend along Indiana 67 in Greene County.

Franklin Fennell asks judge for later trial date

Fed prosecutors don't oppose defense motion

By **LISA TRIGG**
TRIBUNE-STAR

A continuance is being sought in the trial of two former public employees accused of bilking the Vigo County School Corp. of more than \$80,000.

Franklin Fennell, former VCSC facilities and transportation support director, appeared Wednesday in federal court in Indianapolis, where defense attorney Charles Hayes asked for a continuance, or delay of,



FENNELL

the start of the trial.

The trial is currently set for Feb. 21 at the federal courthouse in Terre Haute.

U.S. Magistrate Judge Denise LaRue did not rule on the continuance request.

There was no opposition from Assistant U.S. Attorney Tiffany McCormick.

The request came in Fennell's brief initial hearing after indictment. LaRue advised Fennell of the penalties he faces if convicted of the charges.

Turn to **FENNELL**, A4



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A8

FRIDAY

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