

# The Vindicator

An edition of the Tribune Chronicle

**CRIME SCENE • CRIME SCENE • CRIME SCENE • CRIME SCENE**

## Menace of meth

ABOVE AND RIGHT: These images from the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration show a methamphetamine laboratory, with large crystals, being processed by agents.



LEFT: Buckets of crystal methamphetamine are confiscated by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration from a home.

LEFT: The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration's Clandestine Drug Laboratory Cleanup Program focuses on the removal and disposal of hazardous chemicals, contaminated apparatus and equipment seized from clandestine drug laboratories.

Submitted photos / DEA

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## Illicit stimulant's use 'exploding' in Valley

By GUY VOGRIN  
Staff writer

Methamphetamine is one of the most prevalent drugs now being abused by area addicts, law enforcement at all levels say.

"Meth is exploding now," said Charles Morrow, a Trumbull County assistant prosecutor. "Carfentanil may kill you, but meth will make you look like a drug addict."

Sgt. Larry McLaughlin, commander of the Mahoning Valley Drug Task Force, agreed that meth is becoming popular with addicts to other substances.

"Meth use is on the rise now, and we were alerted that it was gonna be coming in from across the Mexican border," McLaughlin said. "They can get it cheaper by bringing it in, so they don't have to worry about the risks in making it or getting someone getting busted buying the needed Sudafed."

Morrow said he heard a story at a recent seminar about the effects of meth. He said the drug can cause delusions, hallucinations and unexplainable actions.

"This out-of-state prosecutor told the story of young parents on meth who killed their 10-month-old baby in its crib because they thought he was an undercover drug informant," he said.

You never know where

*"In a blink of an eye, I lost everything ... the next thing I knew, we were living out of my truck in the streets of Youngstown, ending up going days without eating."*

— Jen, 38, a 22-year meth user

methamphetamine will turn up. A Howland police report from Dec. 22, 2020, illustrates this point.

During a traffic stop, officer Adam Rios noticed the female passenger acting strange as well as the smell of burnt marijuana. Eventually, a bulk amount of meth — about 3 grams — was found in the woman's bra. She was charged with a third-degree felony that sees a potential for a maximum three-year prison term. Those possessing five times the bulk amount could face as much as 16 1/2 years in prison as first-degree felons, prosecutors note.

The meth-making process, which hasn't changed much over the years, is very



### Meth and the courts

According to figures provided by the U.S. Attorney's office for the U.S. Ohio Northern Ohio District Court, a total of 272 criminal cases involving methamphetamine production or possession have been filed with the court since fiscal year 2016.

Below are the methamphetamine cases prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney's office for the federal Northern District Court of Ohio:

Fiscal year	Cases	Percentage of drug cases
2016	2	0.90%
2017	37	15.90%
2018	48	12.20%
2019	34	7.50%
2020	89	18.10%
2021*	62	14%

\*Through end of March

SOURCE: Daniel Ball, U.S. Attorney's Office in Cleveland

combustible, McLaughlin said. The one pot or "shake and bake" method using lithium batteries and plastic bottles can burst if it becomes over-pressurized, McLaughlin said.

He also noted that most of the time, meth

See **Meth**, A3

## 2 convicted in methamphetamine scheme

By GUY VOGRIN  
Staff writer

YOUNGSTOWN — Two Mahoning Valley women charged with being part of a local methamphetamine trafficking ring pleaded guilty Tuesday in federal court.

Mary E. Clearwater, 39, of Westgate Drive in Braceville, and Courtney P. Wilson, 30, of Youngstown, both went before U.S. Judge Donald C. Nugent. Each was convicted on one count of conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine, while Wilson also pleaded guilty to one count of distribution of meth.

The two women will submit to background investigations before being sentenced by Nugent on Nov. 16,

See **Convicted**, A3



Clearwater



Wilson

## Schools eye path to local control

Youngstown panel, CEO, board aim for a unified approach

By RAYMOND L. SMITH  
Staff writer

YOUNGSTOWN — The three Ohio school districts, including Youngstown, under state control because of multiple years of failing grades on state report cards now will get their long-awaited chance to return to local control.

Some local critics of state academic oversight have waited to have this opportunity, and now are saying all parties — the Youngstown Academic Distress Commission, city schools Chief Executive Officer Justin Jennings and the elected board of education — need to be at the table to create a workable way out.

Jennings, meanwhile, says he'd welcome the chance to stay on as district superintendent should the school board choose this option, as provided by new state legislation.

Youngstown, East Cleveland and Lorain can have a path away from state control because Gov. Mike DeWine approved a two-year state budget that includes steps these districts can take to emerge from oversight from academic distress commissions.

But the path to local control is neither quick nor simple because school boards in the three communities must fulfill specific requirements. Districts will have to develop and implement three-year academic improvement



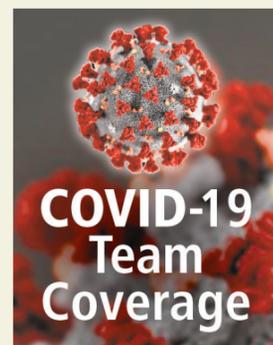
Jennings



DeWine

See **Schools**, A4

### Also inside



**UPDATE:** For the first time in several days, the number of daily new COVID-19 cases in Ohio fell below 300 to 299, **A2**

**LOCAL:** The Youngstown Rotary Club hosted a craft beer festival Saturday to benefit community projects, **A8**

**INFLATION:** Businesses in America, particularly small businesses, are struggling to deal with inflation without passing the cost on to consumers, **D4**

**INSIDE**

- Bridge . . . . . **D3**
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- Classified . . . . . **C8**
- Community **A10**
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- Society . . . . . **D1**
- Sports . . . . . **C1**
- Stocks . . . . . **C6**

**FORECAST**

High **80** Low **70**  
Details: **D6**

**POLL**

YESTERDAY: Should legislators override Gov. Mike DeWine's veto of bill to legalize fireworks?

Yes **37%** No **63%**

Vote at vindy.com until 9 p.m.

TODAY: Will Youngstown schools emerge from local state control?

