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SPORTS, 1B

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The News - Messenger

SATURDAY-MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 4-6, 2021 | FREMONT, OHIO | THENEWS-MESSENGER.COM

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HAPPY LABOR DAY!



Labor Day employment

How has COVID-19 hit employment sectors across the nation?

In honor of Labor Day, this newspaper serves as a combined edition for both today and Monday.

You will be able to find Monday's comics and puzzles in Monday's e-edition, and Monday's crossword and Sudoku also will be in Tuesday's newspaper



Jessica Vallejo is a Native American mother who pulled her children from the Canal Winchester school district because of the Native American mascot. JEFF LANGE/AKRON BEACON JOURNAL

NATIVE MASCOTS IN OHIO SCHOOLS

A LOOK INTO CONVERSATIONS HAPPENING IN K-12 DISTRICTS

Grace Deng Columbus Dispatch | USA TODAY NETWORK

When Javier Vallejo's family moved schools, the Native American student was faced with a difficult decision: Wear Canal Winchester's Indians mascot on his baseball uniform or quit baseball.

Vallejo quit.

After Vallejo graduated this year, his mother Jessica Vallejo, pulled her other two kids out of the school. The mother of six said the school district was unresponsive to her requests to provide a welcoming environment for her family.

"The psychological effects that have happened to my child are just a micro example of what is happening across the country to athletes who identify as Native," said Jessica Vallejo.

In light of the Cleveland Guardians name change, two Democratic representatives introduced a resolution encouraging Ohio's schools to retire Native American mascots. Jessica Vallejo, who consulted with the representatives on the resolution, wants an outright ban.

There are about 2,000 Native American or Alaska Native students in Ohio, equaling 0.1% of the state's students. Devon Shults, one of those students, said going to school in an environment missing their culture and traditions can be difficult for Native American students, and the mascots don't help.



Native American student
Javier Vallejo's senior portrait is hung in front of a painting of a Native American child representing the Canal Winchester mascot.

JESSICA VALLEJO

"The psychological effects that have happened to my child are just a micro example of what is happening across the country to athletes who identify as Native."

Jessica Vallejo
Mother of Canal Winchester graduate Javier Vallejo

"I'm going to school among my people's colonizers," said Shults, a citizen of the Muskogee Nation and a student at Oberlin High School.

Studies show Native American mascots have a negative impact on Native American students' self-esteem and present stereotypical images which undermine the educational experiences of all students.

"Native people understand how much tradition there is around sports. Native people invented one of the first team sports - it's stickball, the grandfather of lacrosse. So we get it," Shults said. "But sports is supposed to bring people together, not divide them."

While Black Lives Matter protests and racial reckoning prompted schools across Ohio to reconsider their Native American mascots, the National Congress of American Indians said few K-12 schools have changed their mascot since the summer of 2020.

Ohio has 195 schools with Native American mascots - the most of any state, according to the group's national database. Area schools on the list include the Port Clinton Redskins and the Bellevue Redmen.

USA TODAY Network Ohio took a look at three schools across the state that have had a conversation about

See MASCOTS, Page 8A

Workforce shortages continue as pandemic spreads

Craig Shoup Fremont News-Messenger USA TODAY NETWORK

Union work is going strong amid a pandemic heading into its second year.

Rob Monak, a customer solutions adviser for North American ContractorLink, has been helping keep those jobs filled with recruiting efforts and educational tours of many projects that helped employ hundreds of workers, like the new Kroger store on Cedar Street and the current project of the new Ross High School.

Monak also represents Local 55 ironworkers union, after being a former journeyman ironworker.

When the pandemic hit locally in March 2020, many businesses had to shut down. Thankfully for many union workers, jobs stayed steady or picked up, as union jobs like ironworkers were considered essential and able to continue work while office jobs went remote or to a staggered schedule.

See WORKFORCE, Page 4A

Fremont City Council, mayor grapple with homelessness

Coalition is trying to put a plan together

Daniel Carson Fremont News-Messenger USA TODAY NETWORK

FREMONT — Mayor Danny Sanchez acknowledged Thursday that he and other city officials face a dilemma regarding the city's rising homeless population.

An affordable rental unit shortage and lack of shelter space and staffing at Community Fortress means there's nowhere to go for some of the homeless people in Fremont who would like to live in transitional or permanent housing.

And more residents and business owners are alleging illegal drug use and inappropriate behavior in certain

See FREMONT, Page 2A

No Parade magazine today

Parade published a combined edition on Aug. 29. See next Sunday's paper for your next issue.

USA TODAY

Recovery in Louisiana: Power being restored to New Orleans, other areas devastated by Hurricane Ida. 7A

Weather

High 79° | Low 66°
Cloudy. Forecast, 2A



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