



# Dayton Daily News



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WRIGHT-PATT TODAY, B2  
**AIRMAN ASCENDS RANKS  
FROM MODEST START**

NATION & WORLD, A4  
**CYBERATTACK ON PIPELINE  
LINKED TO CRIMINAL GANG**



SPORTS, C1  
**RAIN POSTPONES  
OHIO CUP FINALE**



## ONLY IN THE DAYTON DAILY NEWS



Neighbors say the pile of fire debris at 154 S. Irwin Ave. in Dayton attracts illegal dumping and is an eyesore. CORNELIUS FROLIK / STAFF

# Fire piles in Dayton a costly nuisance

City reduced funding for nuisance demolition in its 2021 budget.

By **Cornelius Frolik**  
Staff Writer

Dayton has 189 fire-damaged properties the city wants to bulldoze and clean up, but hefty removal costs likely means many of these eyesores aren't going away anytime very soon.

The city knocked down and disposed of 16 fire-damaged properties last year, a dozen of which were "piles" – the rubble left behind after emergency demolition, said Dennis Zimmer, Dayton's supervisor of the office of

nuisance abatement and rehabilitation.

Clearing away piles are a priority, city officials said.

But removal costs for piles and some structures damaged by blazes are much higher than other blighted properties, because they must be treated like they contain asbestos, Zimmer said.

"Nobody wants to live next to a pile of fire debris," he said. "We're doing our best to keep up."

Some residents who live near piles and fire-destroyed properties said they have grown impatient waiting for the sites to be cleared because they are unsightly and attract other nuisances.

"It makes the neighborhood look bad," said Jacob Singleton,

18, who lives a few doors down from a pile site at 154 S. Irwin Ave.

Debris from the pile on South Irwin Avenue from a fire earlier this year blows into neighbors' yards, said Singleton and other residents. The pile is an eyesore, they said, and people have been illegally dumping couches and other trash on the property.

Cleanup, however, is not cheap, and Dayton reduced funding for nuisance demolition in its 2021 budget, which called for significant citywide spending cuts to address revenue losses from the COVID-19 economic crisis.

Clean-up and removal costs for piles and some fire-damaged

**Properties continued on A4**

## DAYTON DAILY NEWS IN-DEPTH

# Pandemic hits 1st county hotel tax collection

Officials expect it to take years to reach pre-crisis projections.

By **Chris Stewart**  
Staff Writer

A lodging tax enacted in March to support the Dayton Convention Center may not generate revenue predicted at pre-pandemic levels for years, officials said.

Projected to bring in more than \$3 million annually, the first month of a new 3% hotel bed tax brought in about \$140,000 from 53 of the county's 72 hotels, said Pam Plageman, executive director of the Montgomery County Convention Facilities Authority (CFA).

"When we get back, that's going to take a couple of years," she said. "What we are looking at optimistically is 75% of that for 2022 and 2023. By 2024 we expect to be 100%."

Plageman said the first month's collection indicates county hotels had about 50% occupancy, which shows they are faring better than hotels in other markets.

### MORE DETAILS

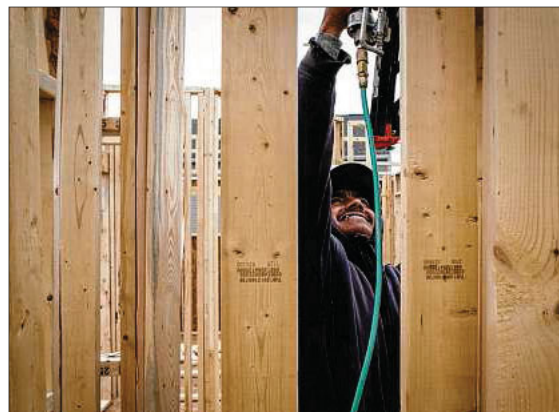
#### MOTEL TAXES IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Generally in Ohio, jurisdictions levy a 3% hotel/motel tax while the county collects another 3% for a maximum 6%. But language added to a 2019 state budget bill allowed county commissions to pass a resolution to create a convention facilities authority — but only if passed between July and December of 2019. Montgomery County commissioners passed such a resolution, which allowed the convention facilities authority to be formed and collect an additional 3% lodging tax, for a total of 9% in Montgomery County.

"Most of the industry is hovering in those 30% marks, so I was pleasantly surprised," she said.

**Hotel tax continued on A5**

## ONLY IN THE DAYTON DAILY NEWS



Framer Eddie Arreola nails up a wall on a house on Gulf Stream Place in Huber Heights. Record-high lumber prices have added \$12,000 to the price of a new single-family U.S. home.

# Lumber price spike hammers home buyers

'Crisis' adds \$12K to U.S. home; Dayton-area impact is unclear.

By **Nick Blizzard**  
Staff Writer

Record-high lumber prices have added \$12,000 more to the cost of a new single-family home, a 50% increase from last month, a national industry group says.

How high Dayton-area home prices will rise appears unclear in what one local industry leader called a nationwide lumber "crisis" that's "beginning to

impact the consumer more so than ever before."

Unprecedented lumber prices have caused the average price of a newly constructed, single-family home to increase in the past year by nearly \$36,000, up from \$24,000 this April, the National Association of Home Builders said last week.

"Although the housing sector continues to be a leader in the nation's economic recovery, these sharp price increases threaten housing affordability for all Americans," according to the NAHB.

**Home prices continued on A8**

## DIGGING DEEPER

# Anxious about cicadas? You're not on your own

Brood X soon to emerge in region; experts offer tips to reduce anxiety.

By **Bonnie Meibers**  
Staff Writer

Local people may be feeling anxious about the impending emergence of cicadas this month, and mental health experts say that's totally normal.

Anxiety about the cicadas is

common, said Dr. Christina Waite, the medical director for psychiatry at Miami Valley Hospital.

"These insects are very, very noisy, which is something we're not used to, and they don't occur often, so we don't become accustomed to them at all," Waite said. "Some anxiety is normal given the rarity of the situation."

Brood X is scheduled to emerge to mate and lay eggs in southwest Ohio, affecting the Dayton area, beginning around mid-May.



An adult cicada sheds its nymphal skin. Trillions of cicadas are about to emerge from 15 states in the U.S. East. CAROLYN KASTER / AP

A brood is a large population of cicadas that emerges around the same time.

**Cicadas continued on A4**



LOCAL & STATE, B1  
**Huber council may vote on skate park, bike trails**

Council is expected to vote on authorizing city staff to get final bids to complete the work for skate park and bike park.

BUSINESS, A6  
**3D printing's challenge: Solve housing shortage**

A new generation of startups wants to disrupt way houses are built by automating production with industrial 3D printers.

SPORTS, C1  
**Churchill Downs suspends Baffert**

Medina Spirit's victory in the Kentucky Derby is in serious jeopardy because of a positive post-race drug test.

INDEX  
Life C5 Ideas & Voices A7  
Classifieds C6-7 Lottery A2

Volume 144, Number 209



# ORIGINAL LOCAL NEWS



## FROM PAGE ONE

### Cicadas

continued from A1

Other broods have emerged at other times around Ohio. The last time Brood X emerged was 2004. Brood X will also emerge in parts of Pennsylvania, Michigan, Maryland and Indiana, according to the National Forest Service.

Chelse Prather, who teaches ecology and biology at the University of Dayton, said cicada eggs live and mature underground for 17 years, which is when the next brood emerges.

They eat fluids that run through the vascular system of trees and other plants and emerge from the ground to mate, lay eggs and die. The cicadas are only out for five to six weeks.

Prather said that instead of thinking about the cicadas as scary, noisy bugs, Miami Valley residents should view them as a natural phenomenon.

"It's one of the most confounding biological phenomenon that occurs in the world," Prather said. "These insects are some of the longest lived insects that there are, and it's also the greatest

insect emergence on earth. I hope people can be excited about it and marvel in how cool it actually is that we get to live in a place where we get to witness this."

The cicadas' sole purpose above ground is to mate and lay eggs, Prather said. Then they die.

Prather said people are feeling anxious about the cicadas for a couple of reasons.

One may be because of a misperception that they might cause a lot of damage. Prather said the cicadas won't cause damage to plants or people's homes. They are harmless, she said. Cicadas likely won't fly into a house or building because they are busy looking for a mate, she said.

The only plants in danger of some damage would be trees planted within the past year, because females lay eggs on the branches. A newly planted tree might not be strong enough to hold them yet. Prather said putting mesh that is smaller than half an inch can protect newly planted trees.

Another thing making people anxious could be the noise cicadas make, Prather said. A single cicada can pro-

duce sound as loud as a low jackhammer, or about 90 to 100 decibels loud. Cicadas typically only call during the daylight hours, so Miami Valley residents should be able to rest easy, knowing the bugs won't keep them up at night.

"The other thing (making people anxious) is just not liking insects," Prather said. "The idea of hundreds of thousands of insects being around you at one time, that is a concern to people."

Prather said she would ask people who have that fear, to also keep in mind the cicadas play an important role in the local ecosystem, local food webs and the nutrients in the soil.

Predators that eat the cicadas, like birds, raccoons and possums in the years after the cicadas come out, tend to do really well. Prather said cicadas have a lot of carbon, nitrogen and phosphorus in their bodies, so coming above the ground distributes those nutrients.

"They're so important," Prather said.

The National Institute of Mental Health estimates that 5% to 12% of Americans have phobias, and around 7% to 9% of children have a spe-

cific phobia— such as entomophobia, or fear of insects.

Waite said the biggest thing that people with cicada anxiety can do to alleviate some of their worry is to talk about it with a friend.

Waite also said desensitizing oneself from the cicadas could help reduce anxiety. Desensitizing can look like browsing cicada photos, educating oneself and reading up on them, and then only going outside for a short period of time or only seeing one live cicada at a time before fully exposing themselves to the insects.

Another thing someone with cicada anxiety can do is think rationally about the bugs and teach others, like children, to do the same.

"Examine your thoughts, not just trying to not think catastrophizing thoughts, but look at your thoughts and really look. '... Are my thoughts realistic or are they overblown?' And remember that cicadas are really harmless, totally harmless," Waite said. "And they're gonna be gone in six weeks or so."

Cicada anxiety can be treated both with this kind of "thought therapy" and with medication, Waite said. Cicada anxiety can also be

hereditary.

"There are actual genetic underpinnings, or reasons as to why people may be more or less anxious about insects. It's actually embedded in our genetics, and those particular phobias are passed on genetically. So you might see people in the same household passing out when they see a needle," Waite said. "And it's totally involuntary so you need to be kind to yourself and people around you. Recognize that some people actually have real phobias, and it's not something they can just simply maybe think themselves out of."

The coronavirus pandemic may also be making people feel more anxious about the cicadas.

"They're coming on the heels of the pandemic, where many of us have felt so out of control. This is another place where someone is feeling totally out of control and nature just does it's thing, and I think that's adding to it this time," Waite said. "For people who are already having anxiety disorders and panic disorders, they may suffer a bit more and they may need more support; but they also can help themselves, even without profes-

sional help (talking about the cicadas and desensitizing themselves)."

Waite said she was also a mental health professional the last time the cicadas emerged 17 years ago and she doesn't remember people reacting this way.

"It makes me wonder if perhaps there is some anxiety sort of feeding and growing with the social media access that we have now that didn't really exist before," Waite said. "Some social media certainly can be positive, people can help each other, but it could also feed some of the worry and fear."

Prather said there are some reports of cicada sightings in the Cincinnati area, but it is still a little too early for them to come out in the Dayton region. The ground has to consistently be at 64 degrees, she said. When they do emerge, Prather said they shouldn't bug people too much.

"Even if you can't appreciate the actual insects, I hope people can appreciate this event," Prather said.

Contact this reporter at (937) 608-3078.

### Properties

continued from A1

properties can be about \$20,000 to \$25,000 for a standard home, Zimmer said, twice the normal demolition costs.

The Dayton City Commission last fall approved a \$219,000 contract with Bladecutter's Inc. to demolish and dispose of 10 residential structures that were fire damaged or piles.

Most of the damaged, vacant properties are residential, but a few are churches and commercial buildings.

Ten properties on the list have been awarded to a demolition contractor, Zimmer said, while two others have been assigned to a contractor and one is expected to



Fire-damaged homes at 2028 and 2030 East Fourth Street. The city is targeting the more severely damaged property for removal. CORNELIUS FROLIK / STAFF

be cleaned up by the owner.

The city also has more than two dozen other fire-damaged properties it is target-

ing for removal, and staff expect to seek contractors for the work that will likely be split up into multiple bids.

Thirty-one of 38 properties awarded or assigned to demolition contractors or that the city hopes to bid out in the near future are piles, according to city data.

The other properties are listed as having major or total damage.

Funding for fire-damaged-property demolition comes out of the city's general fund, which was pummeled by the coronavirus crisis.

Dayton's 2021 budget allocated \$604,900 for nuisance demolition this year, a decline of \$93,700 from last year, according to city budget documents.

In addition to fire-damaged properties, the city also is home to thousands of vacant and blighted properties that city staff and neigh-

bors would like to see torn down. The city late last year said it had flattened about 87 structures, including other blighted properties.

Funding is the main issue to razing more, Zimmer said.

Even when the city removes fire piles, new ones are regularly added to the nuisance list. The city had four emergency demolitions last month.

Zimmer said staffing also has been a challenge because he only has two nuisance abatement specialists. He said there are two unfilled specialist positions. One of their responsibilities is managing demolition contracts.

Jon Cooper, 32, lives at the corner of East Fourth and Bell streets near four fire-damaged vacant properties that he said have been there for years.

He said he used to live in

Louisiana, and properties damaged by fires or storms often were demolished and cleaned up within months – or sometimes within a year.

"I've never seen it take this long," he said. "They need to tear them down already."

He said one of the homes is caving in, and he fears kids from the neighborhood could get hurt if they play or explore inside.

Judy Ritchie, another neighbor, said she is concerned about drug use and illicit activities going on inside the fire-damaged homes.

"I just don't understand why they don't do something with these properties," she said.

Contact this reporter at Cornelius.Frolik@coxinc.com.

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Charges of discrimination can be filed against employers with four (4) or more employees.

The act of discrimination must have occurred no more than six (6) months prior to the date of filing.

### CAN I FILE A CHARGE OF DISCRIMINATION?

To determine if your issue can be investigated by the Ohio Civil Rights Commission, please answer the following questions:

- Is the act of discrimination related to employment that occurred within the State of Ohio?
- Did the act of discrimination happen within six (6) months from the date you are filing the charge?
- Do you think the action taken is related to your race, color, sex, religion, disability, national origin, ancestry, age (40 years or older), military status, or in retaliation for engaging in a protected activity (protesting discrimination)?

If you answered yes to the questions above, you can file a charge of discrimination with the Ohio Civil Rights Commission. If you did not answer yes to all three questions, you can still file a charge and the Commission will determine if the matter is jurisdictional and will proceed accordingly.

If you feel you have been subjected to unlawful discrimination and wish to file a charge of discrimination you may do so at

WWW.CRC.OHIO.GOV or call at 1-888-278-7101.