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KPERs takes  
another hit — A3



## Sports: Area players earn All-State honors

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# THE IOLA REGISTER

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## Finding workers often a struggle

By RICHARD LUKEN  
The Iola Register

Russell Stover Candies in Iola has more than 350 employees.

Across the street, Iola's Advantage Computer Enterprises is much smaller with 31.

Both, however, face similar challenges in finding quality employees in a shrinking labor pool.

Both would expand immediately if more quality workers are found.

Russell Stover would hire 20 employees immediately, to deal with high-demand seasonal candy production, Iola plant manager Darrell Weick told Iola and Allen County officials last month.

Likewise, "We're looking at needing probably two or three more right now," said Steve Prasko, co-owner at Advantage.

Weick and Prasko spoke



Steve Prasko, co-owner of Advantage Computers, speaks about the difficulties in finding quality employees.

REGISTER/RICHARD LUKEN

separately with the Register about several topics facing industries today.

Russell Stover has a 40-percent employee turnover rate. That is, it must replace 40 percent of its employees, each year.

The number sounds high, Weick said, but requires some perspective.

"The level of employee turnover we experience is typical of the candy and food business and does not impact our production," Weick said. "The 40 percent rate reflects seasonal workforce impact."

Russell Stover's business is dictated by the calendar. Employees are busiest at this

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## Classroom focus shifting to careers

By KAYLA BANZET  
The Iola Register

Somewhere at some point in time, came the formula for the "perfect life."

Go to school, get good grades, advance to college and get the perfect job.

Except that idea doesn't work for everyone.

Educators at Iola High School and Allen Community College are aware of this and in response have put plans in place to provide different maps for those following divergent paths.

Principal Stacey Fager has been at Iola High for eight years. He's seen programs come and go.

He, like most educators, wants to see his students succeed in the best way possible, either in the classroom or in



A in-depth series looking at Iola and Allen County's workforce environment

the work force.

Fager has worked to develop internship possibilities with local businesses.

One such partnership is with Mark and DeAnn Burris of Precision Pump, an oil pump equipment manufac-

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From left, Regina Christenson, Dana Daugharthy and Angela Whitmore read a scene in Iola Community Theatre's "It's A Wonderful Life." REGISTER/KAYLA BANZET

## It's a 'Wonderful' show

By KAYLA BANZET  
The Iola Register

The Iola Community Theatre will present the Christmas classic, "It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play," this weekend.

This play isn't staged like most audiences are used to. Before television became popular families would gather around the radio in their living rooms and tune in to hear live actors perform shows.

Six Iola actors are re-enacting this acting style by performing in front of a live audience while reading the play. There are commercial breaks and sound effects. Actors will play multiple roles.

The play tells the story of George Bailey, a kind-hearted

man who puts everyone before himself. When his Uncle Billy accidentally misplaces company funds, George faces financial ruin and almost certain imprisonment. George panics and decides the only way out is by jumping off of a bridge. His guardian angel, Clarence, comes to George's rescue by granting his wish that he had never been born.

Tickets are available at Sophisticated Rose. Call 620-365-6278 to reserve tickets. Adult tickets are \$15 and student tickets are \$10. Tickets include a dessert prior to the show. The doors open at 6:30 p.m. with dessert served at 7 on Saturday. On Sunday doors will open at 1 p.m. with dessert served at 1:30. The show will start at 2 o'clock. Shows will also run Dec. 20 and 21.

## Scholars qualify for TV show

By RICHARD LUKEN  
The Iola Register

After several years of near misses, Iola High School's scholars bowl squad earned a slot in one of the toughest academic competitions around.

The IHS squad of Sarah Gonzalez, Jonathan Tidd, Andrew Waldman and Clara Wicoff has qualified to appear and compete in KTWU's "Quest Academic Competition."

The competition is a slightly modified version of a traditional scholars bowl. Teams of four compete against other teams on everything from language arts, science, social studies and math to such things as current events, sports and television shows.

Iola was one of 51 high schools competing in Satur-



Iola High School students, from left, Jonathan Tidd, Clara Wicoff and Andrew Waldman will compete in an academic competition on KTWU television in January. Not pictured is Sarah Gonzalez. REGISTER/RICHARD LUKEN

day's qualifier at Washburn University in Topeka.

The qualifying process involved answering rapid-fire questions for more than an hour.

The top 16 scores advanced to the televised portion.

Iola's score was the second best among Class 4A teams,

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## Iola tots need toys for holidays

By RICHARD LUKEN  
The Iola Register

The Iola Police Department has some work to do in order to make Christmas a bit merrier for 50 area youngsters in need.

The department's annual Project Care campaign has some funding, and assorted clothing donations, but no toys, organizer Mike Ford said. Through Project Care, donors purchase essentials such as pants and shirts, "need" gifts, and finally "wants," Ford explained.

He estimated donors spend about \$50 for each child.

"We've not received a single toy yet this year," Ford said, and time is running short. Gifts will be distributed Dec. 19.

Help is on the way. Project

Care is the designated local beneficiary of KOAM TV's Toy Box Campaign, which has a drop box set up at Iola's Community National Bank.

Ford gets the names of recipients from Iola's Adopt-A-Child program.

"They do all of the screening to ensure families truly are in need," Ford said, "plus, it prevents somebody from receiving gifts from two charities at once."

Helpers have three ways to give.

They can purchase clothes or new toys at random, then deliver them to the police department or CNB during business hours; they can stop by the police department to get a specific child's wish list; or they can simply donate money.

Some have stepped up already.

"The Iola Senior Citizens, Inc. group has been great for us each year," Ford said, and recently donated \$500.

Another mom came in with her three children, each of whom received \$100 to spend on Christmas gifts this year.

"They agreed it would be best for the kids if they spent the money to help others," Ford said.

That money was used to purchase clothes.

Without a single toy or donation, Ford estimated about \$2,500 was necessary to fully fund Project Care this year.

Boys and girls from 3 months to 17 years are in need of help this season, Ford said.

"And we're not just serving kids in Iola," Ford said. "We're helping kids in LaHarpe and Gas, too."



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Quote of  
the day

"Believe and act as if it were impossible to fail."

— Charles Kettering



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