

## Growth continuing in Orange Twp.

By Gary Budzak - December 6, 2023



My Salon is located in the former Giant Eagle shopping center.

LEWIS CENTER — Orange Township and the Olentangy Local School District continue their growth in Delaware County.

Those driving along U.S. Route 23 will notice a lot of retail businesses gearing up to open in the area. The former Giant Eagle shopping center has a My Salon suite next to the Staples, and three other businesses will occupy the former grocery store's space. A Chick-fil-A is said to be going in the parking lot, competition for the Popeyes Louisiana Chicken across the street.

Further up Route 23, BJ's Wholesale Club is about to open at 8425 Orange Centre Drive, and the Sheetz at 8056 Columbus Pike has opened. Grismer Tire & Auto Service is coming soon to 95 Orangepointe Drive.

Artesian Run, near Shale Hollow Park, now has a Tropical Smoothie Cafe, and forthcoming Hammer & Nails Grooming Shop for Guys, and possibly a McDonalds near FriendShip Kitchen.

Olentangy Local Schools has two of its four high schools in the township, and Trustee Erica Fouss recently attended the district's Key Communicators meeting.

"Olentangy's student enrollment is projected to continue to grow by 21% over the next ten years, adding over 5,000 students to our current preschool – 12th grade student enrollment," Fouss posted on her Facebook page Nov. 12. "Of our 26 school buildings, 16 are being utilized at 100% or higher of their maximum capacity, with Cheshire Elementary at 136% capacity."

Fouss said Olentangy "will need five additional school buildings over the next 5-10 years to serve the area growth: three more elementary schools, a fifth high school and a seventh middle school. Delaware County's property reappraisal process is increasing property values in the Olentangy school district attendance area by 25%-35%; however, Olentangy property taxes will NOT increase at that same rate. Property taxes in the Olentangy Schools attendance area are forecasted to increase by 4%-7%. This is due tax stabilization factors implemented by House Bill 920, which serves to reduce voted tax rates as home values increase."

Residents in the district will get to vote March 19, 2024, “for a 4.25 mill combined levy (3.00 mills operating levy and 1.25 mills permanent improvement levy),” Fous said. “The district will also seek authority to issue up to \$350 million in bonds to construct high school 5, middle school 7, and elementary schools 18, 19 and 20. The District expects that these bonds will be issued without the need to collect additional mills to pay debt service. This is the lowest levy ask by the district in more than 30 years, a result of the Fair School Funding Plan increasing the amount of state funding allocated to Olentangy Schools.”

In other news, the Orange Township Fire Department is collecting seasonal items for People In Need, Inc. of Delaware County Ohio. “Items of need are new toys, new outside winterwear, non-perishable food, toiletries,” said a notice from the fire department. “Items can be donated from now up to Dec. 8 at 1 p.m.” in the vestibule of the station at 7700 Gooding Blvd., Delaware.