

# Solar fight flares up

*Utilities favor legislation changing economics of rooftop panels*

By **Kathleen McLaughlin**  
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In the estimation of electric utilities, rooftop-solar users like Joe Bowling are freeloaders. They receive credits for producing energy beyond their own needs, and they still have access to the grid whenever they need it. The problem, utilities argue, is that the cost of maintaining the grid doesn't go down; it shifts to the rest of the customer base.

That's why investor-owned utilities are lobbying for a bill authored by House Utilities and Energy Committee Chairman Eric Koch that would allow them to change the economics of generating energy on-site and selling back to the grid, which is known as net metering.

Currently, utilities like Indianapolis Power & Light and Duke Energy have to give net-metering customers credit at the retail price of electricity. If a customer

pays 10 cents per kilowatt-hour, he will be credited at that rate for any excess. Koch's bill, House Bill 1320, would allow the utilities to pay lower rates and to charge additional fees for connecting solar or wind systems to the grid.

"For sure, they provide a real service in maintaining the grid," Bowling said of the utilities. "Whatever that true cost is, we ought to pay it. No one here is trying to put  
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*Joe Bowling is executive director of the Englewood CDC, which has solar panels on the roof of its Rural Street offices.*



IBJ photo/Eric Learned

# Pacers telecasts going mobile

*Fox Sports hopes to score with fans and advertisers*

By **Anthony Schoettle**  
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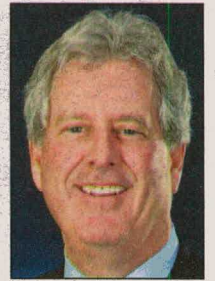
For many Indiana Pacers fans, there's a new way to watch the games.

This season, Fox Sports Indiana started live streaming home and away games—as well as pre- and post-game shows—to mobile devices.

Pacers officials are hopeful the viewing option will grow the team's fan base and increase ticket and other sales. Fox Sports executives are optimistic it will increase advertising revenue.

The Fox Sports Go app is available free at the iTunes store, and if Fox Sports has cut a deal with your cable provider, you can get the games on the go for free—or at least at no additional charge to your cable subscription.

There's only one hang-up. While Fox Sports has reached deals with  
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*Fox Sports Indiana General Manager Jack Donovan is still negotiating with cable providers.*

# Conner Prairie's goal: Take balloon exhibit to new heights

*Attraction plans upgrades, snags new sponsor for ride*

By **Andrea Muirragui Davis**  
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In the six years since Conner Prairie's 1859 Balloon Voyage launched, the orange-and-yellow tethered balloon has become a real-life map pin hovering above Fishers, marking a destination that draws more than 300,000 visitors a year.

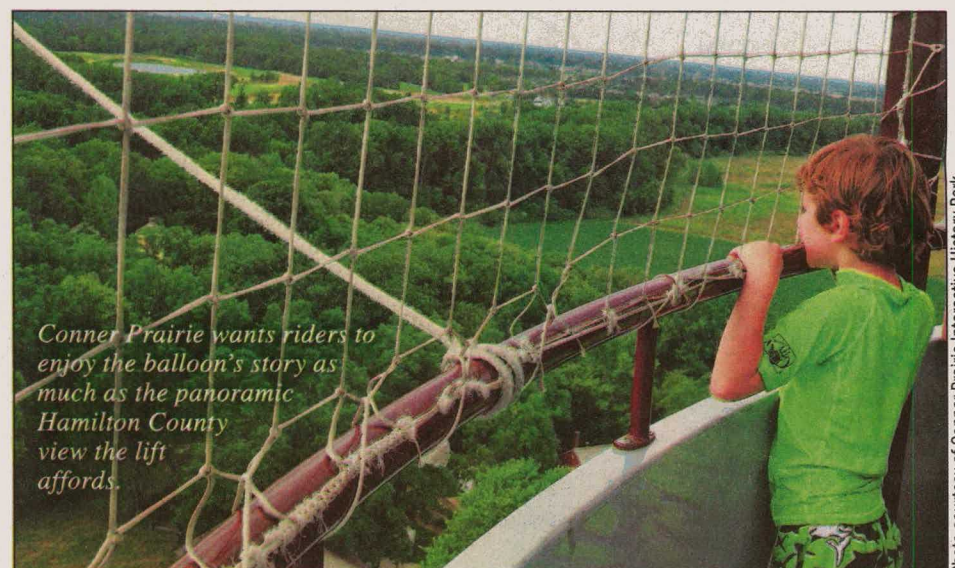
So far, almost 91,500 of them also have ridden in a basket beneath the 140-foot helium balloon while it climbs as high as 377 feet, offering 360-degree views of the historic grounds and surrounding community. (Weather permitting, of course.)

But too few of the guests connected

the high-flying attraction to the related exhibit, which tells the story of renowned balloonist John Wise's 1859 attempt to make the nation's first air mail delivery from Lafayette, Indiana, to New York City.

So while the balloon is out of commission this winter before getting a new skin and a new sponsor, construction crews are working on a six-figure overhaul intended to make the exhibit more immersive.

"A lot of the history wasn't hitting home," said Brian Mancuso, Conner Prairie's director of exhibits. "This wasn't pretend, 'Wizard of Oz' stuff. It was a real event. John Wise was a real pilot. Subtly  
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*Conner Prairie wants riders to enjoy the balloon's story as much as the panoramic Hamilton County view the lift affords.*

Photo courtesy of Conner Prairie Interactive History Park



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## PACERS

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AT&T Uverse, Mediacom, Time Warner Cable and Wow! cable TV providers, it hasn't yet with central Indiana's two biggest cable providers: Comcast and Bright House Networks. Nor with DishTV or DirecTV in this market.

"Those talks are ongoing," said Fox Sports Indiana General Manager Jack Donovan. "We're optimistic a deal will get done with those providers soon."

Meanwhile, Fox Sports and the Pacers have started promoting the new viewing option. The Pacers recently began running in-arena ads at Bankers Life Fieldhouse and ads on their website and through social media and direct email to ticket buyers. Fox Sports is promoting its app and live streaming during Pacers games and other sporting events.

Officials for Fox and its regional cable channels launched mobile streaming of sports events last year. They have widened that this year to their regional sports networks, including Fox Sports Indiana, which airs the majority of Pacers games.

The move is good for Fox Sports in a number of ways. First, it gives cable providers one more reason to carry Fox channels in their lineup.

It also gives Fox leverage to broker better rights-fee deals with sports teams and gives it something more to sell to advertisers.

Teams are clamoring for as much fan exposure as possible. Live game-streaming gives them one more avenue to reach fans.

For now, Fox is running the same ads through the mobile feed as it does on television. If viewer numbers are significant through mobile devices, that could allow Fox to bump up its ad rates.

Or, the network could choose to sell separate ads for the mobile feed.

"We certainly have the capability to sell



Photo courtesy of Fox SportsNet

## Viewing options

Here's how to watch Pacers games on your mobile phone, tablet or computer:

1. On your phone, download the **Fox Sports GO** app from the iTunes store. On the Web, go to **FoxSportsGo.com**.
2. Click on a participating pay-TV provider and sign in. (If you don't know your account info, contact your pay-TV provider.)
3. Select **Fox Sports Midwest**.

Source: IBI research

digital-only ads," said Clark Pierce, Fox Sports' senior vice president of mobile and advancement platforms. "That's a business decision that will have to be looked at. But I think down the road we'll see more digital sales."

"With digital advertising, you can achieve a level of interactivity that's just not possible with TV or radio," said Larry DeGaris, director of academic sports marketing programs at the University of Indianapolis. "For one, you can link straight to the opportunity to purchase, and that's big. You can certainly charge more to advertisers to provide that level of interactivity."



Bryant

Bruce Bryant, president of locally based Promotus Advertising, said he wouldn't "place much value" on ads that

appeared only on Pacers live streamed games—yet.

"I would have to see the numbers," Bryant said. "For most of my clients, I'm

not convinced there are going to be enough viewers to warrant a stand-alone buy."

But as a complement to a TV ad purchase, Bryant said, "It's a great value add."

"You're reaching a young, educated and tech-savvy audience," he added. "Obviously, as this type of viewing grows—and I think it will, the value of this exposure grows."

Pacers games on Fox Sports Indiana this season are averaging a 2.8 household rating, according to New York-based Nielsen Media Research.

That means about 30,000 households are tuned into each game. That's on track to be Fox Sports' second-best rating in the last nine seasons, behind only last season.

Network officials declined to reveal how many people are watching Pacers games via mobile phone or tablet, but media experts estimate the number at a few hundred to a couple thousand. That would likely grow significantly if Fox finalizes deals with Comcast, Bright House, DishTV and DirecTV.

"The audience may not be there now, but as more people grow up with this technology and the technology matures, it will be," DeGaris said. "With regards to sports, digital has the potential to be a big revenue stream, so I think Fox is making a smart move here."

Fox is already considering adding features to the digital stream, including the ability to choose from multiple camera angles and access views of the arena not available through the conventional TV broadcast.

"A lot of people would be attracted by those types of options," DeGaris said.

The NBA, which, according to Nielsen viewer data, has the youngest fans of any major U.S. sports league, has been encouraging its broadcast partners to push

programming to mobile devices. That effort got a jump start last season when the league dropped its demand for a streaming fee of \$3,500 per game from broadcasters.

Last season, six of 17 Fox regional sports networks with deals to broadcast NBA games started digital mobile broadcasts for a limited number of matchups. This year, all 17—including Fox Sports Indiana—

are digitally streaming all games they air on TV, and are substantially bulking up marketing muscle to promote the offering.

For the Pacers, Fox's move appears to be a win-win. Team officials are convinced it will not hurt TV viewership nor live attendance.

"We have data that shows fans that watch more games [on TV], attend more games," said Rob Laycock, Pacers vice president of marketing. "This is another touch point for fans, so it's great for us."

Laycock pointed out that it's a great way for fans who are out of town or college students who live away from the area to stay connected to the team.

But, he noted, the Pacers are reaching more fans of all ages through the digital stream.

"My grandma uses this app—probably more than anyone," Laycock said. "It's not just for young people. It's so easy to use, we're getting people from a wide spectrum."

Fox Sports' Pierce said the network is closely monitoring Pacers' fans viewing habits. He said the early numbers show that people are streaming the games on mobile devices when they can't access their TV.

"You're not going to choose to watch the game on a phone over a flat-screen TV," Pierce said. "But people may start tuning in when they're at work late or at their kid's sporting event. Then when they get home, they turn on their TV."•



**"My grandma uses this app—probably more than anyone. It's not just for young people."**

Rob Laycock,  
Indiana Pacers vice  
president of marketing

## PROJECT

Continued from page 1

Capitol would be its third in Indianapolis. Trinitas built a \$30 million, 253-unit project at 1201 Indiana Ave., which opened in August 2010, and a small project about 10 years ago near the University of Indianapolis on the south side.

Trinitas has sold both communities to provide it additional capital for more projects, Vencel said.

Its latest development will be split into two levels—an 11-story building at the south end and a five-story building at the north end of the lot. The four-level parking garage at the northeast corner of the property will be wrapped by the smaller residential structure.

Most of the retail space will front the corner of Capitol and Michigan. Trinitas has yet to sign any tenants, Vencel said.

Units will range from one to four bedrooms, with a total of 600 bedrooms available. Rents have not been set. Amenities will include a fitness center and clubhouse for the 18- to 26-year-old target demographic.

To make way for the development,



IBI graphic/Brad Turner and Scott Olson

Trinitas received approval Jan. 14 from a Metropolitan Development Commission committee to vacate Kankakee Street, which runs north-south through the nearly three-acre property bounded by North Street to the north and Muskingum Street to the east. An alley linking Kankakee to Muskingum also will be vacated.

The commission's Regional Center Hearing Examiner is set to consider the

project Jan. 29. Because the site is within the Regional Center overlay district, the project needs to comply with Regional Center Urban Design guidelines and requires initial approval by the city's hearing examiner.

The architect on the project is Ratio Architects Inc. It's also designing the second phase to the 9 on Canal apartment building along the Central Canal, one of the many apartment projects to open lately that target students.

Others include The Avenue along 10th Street, Stadium Lofts and Stadium Flats at the old Bush Stadium on East 16th Street, in addition to Central State Mansion, a dorm-style residence at the former Central State Hospital site on West Washington Street.

George Tikijan, who brokers apartment sales, isn't surprised Trinitas is undertaking another student-housing project, given the increasing need for units near the IUPUI campus.

"Enrollment is growing, and it will probably continue to grow," he said, "because there's demand to go to school in an urban location."•

That demand is just a small driver of the surging downtown housing market. The average downtown rental rate climbed 3.8 percent last year, to \$951 per month, and occupancy held steady at a robust 95.2 percent, according to Tikijan Associates' annual market report.

That's even as 4,200 new units came online throughout the city in 2014, the most since the beginning of the millennium. Another 3,900 are expected to be delivered this year, with downtown again reaping most of the activity, Tikijan's report said.

Trinitas is buying the downtown lot from a group including majority owner OneAmerica Financial Partners, which also owns the Gibson Building across the street on the south side of Michigan.

Adjacent to the lot, at the southwest corner of Michigan and Capitol, Flaherty & Collins Properties is building its \$85 million Axis at Block 400 mixed-use project anchored by a Marsh supermarket that opened in May 2014.

Chicago-based Harrison Street Real Estate Capital LLC is Trinitas' equity partner on the project.•



Vencel

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