

# Putnam Herald

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## Impact of removing WV inventory tax varies

By PHIL KABLER  
HD Media

For years, some legislators and business lobbyists have clamored for an end to the personal property tax on manufacturing machinery, equipment and inventory — which they say would encourage more businesses to come to West Virginia.

Lawmakers have never ended the tax for one big reason: They haven't been able to figure out how to replace the money the

tax brings in, which goes to counties to fund school systems, sheriff's departments and more.

As lawmakers grapple again with the issue, a Gazette-Mail analysis of data from the state Tax Division shows that a handful of West Virginia's 55 counties would be hit hard by the removal of the inventory tax, while others would barely be affected at all.

Four counties — Brooke, Hancock, Jackson and Pleasants

— would have lost more than 20 percent of their property tax revenue for the 2018 tax year if the inventory tax wasn't there, according to the data. Two of those counties, Jackson and Brooke, would each have lost more than \$6 million.

Jonathan Adler, executive director of the West Virginia Association of Counties, said it's crucial to have a definite way to replace the lost tax revenue, because losing that much money

each year could be crippling to those four counties and others like them, and they would need to be "made whole."

"I think everybody feels like they want to get rid of the tax because it affects business, but the question is how to pay for it," Adler said. "That's the question nobody seems able to answer."

On the other hand, 12 counties with little in the way of manufacturing businesses would have lost less than \$50,000 each if the

inventory tax had been repealed for 2018.

Natural gas-rich Doddridge County, which collected \$33.64 million in property taxes in 2018, would have lost just \$560, according to the Tax Division.

In all, West Virginia's 55 counties collected \$1.715 billion in property taxes in the 2018 tax year, with personal property taxes on manufacturing machinery,

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Photos by Elisabeth Skolny/The Putnam Herald

The Knuckleheads 10 and under baseball team has an indoor winter training session at the recently opened Alpha Sports Academy in Hurricane. The multi-sports complex offers the space and equipment needed for baseball, football, soccer and fitness training.

## Alpha Sports Academy builds indoor 'field of dreams'

By ELISABETH SKOLNY  
The Putnam Herald

HURRICANE — "If you build it, they will come."

That's what the voices tell Kevin Costner's character in the classic sports film, "Field of Dreams."

Tony Erwin hasn't been hearing voices in his head, but he's built it. And they have come.

Co-founder and CEO of Alpha Sports Academy in Hurricane, Erwin says, "I, along with other local coaches of various sports, have known for quite awhile that our community needs an indoor multi-sports complex. A large, indoor location that offers the space and equipment needed for baseball, football, soccer and

fitness training."

He adds, "Other places didn't have everything we were looking for, so we decided to make our own space."

Erwin, owner of and chiropractor at Putnam Chiropractic Center, father of three, and volunteer for various organizations,

See FIELD | 2A

Tony Erwin, co-founder and CEO of Alpha Sports Academy in Hurricane, opened the indoor sports training facility in November along with partners Steven Petry, Jason Drake and Chris Massey.



## Toyota president joins The Education Alliance

The Putnam Herald

CHARLESTON — The Education Alliance has appointed four new members to its Board of Directors, and among them is Srimi Matam, president of Toyota Motor Manufacturing West Virginia, Inc.

The Education Alliance is a non-profit organization dedicated to strengthening business and community support for public schools and advancing policies and practices that improve student achievement in West

Virginia, according to a news release from the alliance.

The Education Alliance is governed by a Board of Directors whose members represent a diverse range of small businesses, corporations, education, and local communities from across West Virginia. The new members will serve three year terms effective Jan. 1, 2020.

Joining Matam as new board members are:

■ Dana Burns, vice president of Engineering, Potesta & Associates, Inc.

■ Sherrone Hornbuckle, general counsel, Cabell County Schools

■ Jennifer Schwertfeger, 2020 West Virginia Teacher of the Year, Cameron High School (ExOfficio)

"I'm delighted to welcome an outstanding mix of experts to help guide the work of The Education Alliance. Representing a diverse range of industries and



Matam

See BOARD | 2A

## Valley Health strengthens women's health team in Hurricane

The Putnam Herald

Hurricane — A board-certified family nurse practitioner is joining the team of providers at

knowledge and skills will help assure continued growth for our practice."

Nethercutt's clinical expertise

ciation of Nurse Practitioners.

To schedule an appointment with Nethercutt at Valley Health — Hurricane, patients may call

Road in Charleston. The new site will be open from 9:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, for treatment of minor

