As an incentive to get its students, faculty and staff vaccinated, Indiana University is offering prizes including free books, season tickets for the Indianapolis Colts and even a full year of in-state tuition, worth up to $22,200.

To get the prizes, participants must upload their vaccine verification card. Thirty weekly winners in random drawings will be announced through the end of June. Winners of the grand prize will be revealed July 2.

The university decided to offer the incentives after waterlining down its requirements that all faculty, staff and students be vaccinated by the fall. The university initially said all staff, faculty and students would be required to be vaccinated, but after public backlash and criticism from the state’s attorney general, the university decided to still require vaccinations — but no longer required for vaccination.

“We’ve found that an incentive program for people who haven’t quite made it in to date at the fence … would help them get over that hump,” said Kirk White, assistant vice president for strategic partnerships. 

The prizes are to arrive as the number of Monroe County residents who are getting their first inoculation continues to fall sharply.

At the end of May, weekly first-shot vaccinations fell below 1,000 for the first time this year.

In early April, the number of people who got their initial vaccination in Monroe County exceeded 7,000, but that number fell below 2,000 in early May as the vaccine availability to 12- to 15-year-olds in mid-May boosted authorized pushes through the past year.

While more than half of Monroe County’s 133,000 eligible residents now are fully vaccinated, the remaining interest among the remaining population — mostly young, working and struggling to benefit from vaccinations — is falling.

The vaccination effort has been scaled back already, and health and IU officials said Friday that likely will continue, though an end to the vaccine campaign has not been set. As

Incentives include drawings for books, tickets, tuition

Protests, one year later

What Indianapolis activists say has, and hasn’t, changed since last year.

Laura Lane
The Herald-Times
USA TODAY NETWORK

It was 40 years ago when a few women who volunteered at the Monroe County History Center, called the “historical society” back then, organized its first garage sale fundraiser.

There had been a fire at a southern Indiana quakertown store, and the unamaged contents were donated to the local group. “We decided we’d sell it,” said Mary Lee Deckard, one of those early volunteers.

She and fellow history center supporters Kathy McFall and Gayle Cook arranged the merchandise inside what then was the old Senior Frouday on South BGenes Street, where metal tools were made for generations. The Cook Family Medical Clinic is there now.

The brick building was abandoned, and the women — now in their 80s — remember metal sheeting painting with dust swirling in the air. “We didn’t have

“We save all of these things, find a new place for them, and the money, it goes right back to benefit a good cause. And, we have a lot of fun.” Gayle Cook

any tables, so I put the dress patterns and books along a ledge,” Deckard recalled.

“I did do this here, and I’m still in charge of books,” she said.

For the past year, she, McFall, Cook and other volunteers have been accumulating, sorting, cleaning, pricing and laying out on display the thousands of items that are part of this year’s garage sale, the history center’s 40th.

Oh how things have changed since

Sycamore Land Trust's Cedar Preserve closes

Another Monroe County natural area is now closed to the public after a significant increase in people visiting the preserve has severely affected plants and animals at the site.

Lawrence said prior to the pandemic, visitation to the 40-acre preserve was increasing, but even more people visited as they searched for ways to recreate to physically distanced ways.

Sycamore Land Trust already had closed the popular Amy Weinschlag Borein Peninsula Preserve on weekends and weekdays because of increased use in 2020. One of the problems at the peninsula preserve — which happens at times — is that the small parking lot fills up and parking spots along the roadside are nowhere to be seen. Access to the preserve is now limited to those with a posted parking pass.

The trail through the Cedar Preserve has been closed since May 2020. One of the biggest impacts has been a sharp drop in visitor use in the past year.

By the time COVID reached Monroe County, visitation to the 40-acre preserve was already down significantly, as overuse of the preserve included loss of vegetation, erosion along trails, and people walking off trail and forming unauthorized paths through the preserve.

While the Cedar Preserve closure is more recent than others, it’s a problem most natural areas have been facing in the past year.

“The problem is getting worse, not better,” said Joseph Lawrence, executive director of the land trust.

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“Visitation really has grown up a lot in the past year, during COVID,” said John Lawrence, executive director of the land trust.

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Those who are not ready, which can affect the

"Leave it like you found it or better,"

and the parking lot at the preserves or another outdoor area is full, Lauer

if you want

...hat increases nitric oxide availability was recently proven in a clinical trial to boost blood flow 275%.

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Guidance for recreating responsibly The Hotline has shared these guidelines for people who are

Follow the guidelines provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to prevent diseases like the coronavirus.

Adhere to your local in the preserve, such as social distancing and other precautionary steps.

If an area is closed, please search elsewhere.

Consider avoiding the forest during high-use periods.

Avoid visiting the preserve and search or access operations may be limited due to high-risk activities should be avoided.

Always check status before planning your trip.

Avoid visiting the forest you're interested in and/or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.

Take your trash with you when you leave. Trash overcapacity at the preserves or just on the ground because the preserve is harmful to wildlife and attract pests.

Dispose of human waste properly. It is hazardous for our employees and for other wildlife.

Keep campfires small, never leave them unattended and always follow Leave No Trace safety best practices.

Follow Leave No Trace guidelines.