



Lady Comets improve record

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**SENIOR SPOTLIGHT**  
 REED-CUSTER HIGH SCHOOL WOULD LIKE TO RECOGNIZE  
**Joe Stellano**

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Photo courtesy Will County UAS Team

**RIVER RELIEF**—After almost a week of warm water discharge from Dresden cooling lake (at left), two channels of open water have appeared in the ice that has backed up on the Kankakee River. Will and Grundy County EMA services have been monitoring the river from the Will-Grundy county line to Custer Park as the threat of flooding continues. The photo is looking west (downstream) from the railroad bridge toward Bardwell island. Cottage Road is along the tree line left of the river.

## Ice breakup next

## Perfect Panthers

**Will County declares disaster from flooding**  
 BY ERIC FISHER  
 PUBLISHER

The threat of flooding along the Kankakee River continues after an ice jam near the Grundy-Will line has caused the river to back up all the way to Custer Park.

Flash flooding in Phelan Acres, Cottage Road, Kelly Road and the Des Plaines Conservation Area occurred throughout the week as ice jams formed at various sections, stretching east and west of Interstate 55.

Above-freezing temperatures expected the rest of this week should allow for gradual melting of ice. The question is what will happen once it begins to break up.

To hurry up the process, the Will and Grundy County EMA opened one line of warm water siphoning on Wednesday from the nearby Dresden cooling lake.

Will County Executive Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant signed a disaster declaration later that day due to flooding levels reaching 13.5 feet of water, surpassing previous incidents in 2019, 2021, and the major flooding event of 1985.

By noon on Thursday they coordinated with Constellation Energy to open all three siphon lines. And by Friday morning the three siphons had already cut three channels in the ice, allowing open flow of water.

“By opening all three lines of warm water into the river, we can begin melting the historic levels of ice that has created a public safety risk for nearby residents,” said Bertino-Tarrant.

While the warm water siphons will only partially impact the ice jams along the river, they are expected to accelerate the melting of ice and minimize the negative impacts of rapidly melting ice once the weather warms.

“Thank you to Constellation Energy for being a good neighbor and supporting the full release of warm water to address this crisis,”

said Will County Board member Joe VanDuyne of Wilmington. “The activation of all three siphons will provide relief to the impacted communities, including the City of Wilmington. I appreciate the efforts of County Executive Bertino-Tarrant and Will County EMA to coordinate with local officials and residents during this emergency.”

Wilmington residents are advised to continue to monitor conditions over the next two weeks and to be prepared to evacuate quickly if needed. Precautions include preparing a “to go kit” for family members and pets, including cloth-

ing, important documents, medications, and insurance information.

“If rising waters are surrounding your home, business, or vehicle, please do not try to pass through it on your own,” said Will County EMA Director Allison Anderson. “Contact 911 immediately and first responders will assist with your evacuation. Local officials will be monitoring conditions until the river water begins flowing normally again.”

The threat of flooding is serious enough that Wilmington students were instructed to take Chromebooks home with

SEE FLOODING PAGE 2

RCMS end regular season without a loss

The 8th grade Panthers capped an impressive 20-0 regular season record on Thursday, defeating Elwood in a very scrappy, hard fought game by a final score of 21-13.

Leading the way in scoring was Kaiden Klein with 10 points. Matt Kuban added 5 points. Eddie Bryan chipped in with 4 points, and Chase Isaac rounded out the scoring with 2 points.

They now turn to post-season play where they will get the #1 seed in their regional, which begins on Jan 27.

Final home game

The 8th Grade Panthers defeated Gardner 39-28 in their last home game of the season for 8th grade night.

Matt Kuban led the way in scoring with 18 points. Chase Isaac and Kaiden Klein finished with 7 points each. Eddie Bryan and Carson Lowe rounded out the scoring with 2 points each. Bryan was also big in the post collecting 12 rebounds total.

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Photo by Eric Fisher

**ON HIGHER GROUND**—The South Island Park was flooded early Wednesday morning when ice backed up along the Kankakee River through Wilmington. Will County and Wilmington ESDA had been monitoring the river near the Will/Grundy line all day Tuesday as portions of Phelan Acres and the DesPlaines Conservation Area flooded. Within 24 hours the ice through Wilmington was backed up, diverting river water through the island park. The city crew brought in the equipment needed to haul picnic tables to higher ground. The newer tables were under the pavilion as water continued to rise.

## Support your back, Reed-Custer music at mattress fundraiser

If you are looking to replace a bed in your home, now is the time. Reed-Custer Music Department is hosting its 3rd annual one-day Mattress Fundraiser on Sunday, Feb. 11, from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., at the Reed-Custer High School Commons.

For one day only, the High School Commons will be transformed into a mattress showroom. For information about the sale, go to bit.ly/beds4reedcuster24.

There will be 30 mattress

styles on display in all sizes and styles for customers to try, priced below retail. Adjustable power bases, premium pillows, bed frames, and mattress protectors will be available as well.

The brands include Simmons Beautyrest, come with full factory warranties

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