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RCHS students of the month

COMET SPORTS

Comets place second in ICE tourney

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Braidwood to install license plate readers near schools

Cameras part of State's Attorney program

BY MARNEY SIMON
EDITOR

The Braidwood Police Department is getting another tool for law enforcement investigations, this time with an emphasis on keeping the area safe where school is in session.

On Jan. 18, Will County State's Attorney James Glasgow presented the Braidwood Police Department with a check for $5,000 to install a Flock Safety camera, which is expected to be placed near the high school and middle school campus.

The presentation was made during the regular monthly meeting of the Reed-Custer Board of Education, since the camera will be located near the school district grounds.

"In our more urban area up north, we catch so many offenders with these cameras," Glasgow said. "Especially for schools, once the word gets out that you have them, there is a huge deterrent effect. Because the offenders know we're going to be able to know they are there."

The contribution is part of Glasgow's countywide public-private partnership initiative to encourage communities throughout Will County to deploy Flock cameras.

Developed first in suburban Atlanta by a resident of a Home Owners Association in an attempt to capture the culprits who had burglarized several cars, the cameras have now become a nationwide law enforcement tool. The cameras can assist law enforcement in proactively preventing crime by sending real-time alerts to law enforcement when a stolen car or known wanted suspect from a national crime database enters the jurisdiction. When any type of disturbance or crime is reported, a review of the camera date can yield the license plate or plates of those responsible.

Flock cameras allow police to search by vehicle make, color, type and license plate; identify the state of the license plate; capture temporary plates, vehicles with a missing, covered or paper plate, unique vehicle details like roof racks, and bumper stickers; and even vehicles without plates.

"This is about protecting our citizens from people who do not live in the city of Braidwood," Police Chief Todd Lyons said, noting that much of the crime investigated by the BPD over the past year was at the hands of folks passing through, rather than locals.

"We put a couple [of these cameras] up and we didn't tell anybody that we did, and we solved a couple of cases. On one occasion someone report-

SEE CAMERAS, PAGE 2

Photo by Marney Simon

KEEPING AN EYE ON OUR SCHOOLS — The Will County State's Attorney James Glasgow (center) has donated $5,000 for the Braidwood Police Department to install a Flock Safety license plate reader camera near the campus of RCMS and RCHS. Accepting a ceremonial check during the Jan. 18 Board of Education meeting is Superintendent Mark Mitchell (left) and Braidwood Police Chief Todd Lyons.

Muak Muak Muak, Comet fans!

Photo by Zadie Sims

GOTTA LOVE THEM—The student section during the Reed-Custer boys basketball games have been entertaining to watch during home games. They cheer on the team Tuesday while dressed as Minion movie characters. Their spirit must be working as the varsity Comets defeated Herscher 36-31. Reed-Custer will host Grant Parkat 6:45 p.m. tonight (Jan. 25). Turn to sports for more on the Comets.

School board gives green light to 23/24 calendar

BY MARNEY SIMON
EDITOR

The dates are set for students and staff for the next calendar year at the Reed-Custer School District.

On Jan. 18, the board of education approved the calendar for the 2023-2024 school year.

Superintendent Mark Mitchell said the calendar was presented to staff as well as the board in the month prior to final approval. The school year will kick off on Aug. 14 as the first day of student attendance. Teachers will attend two institute days the week prior to the return of students.

One area that the district knows can be contentious is snow days. When possible, the district will continue with the policy of e-learning on days where school is called off due to weather, rather than engage in traditional snow days.

"If we can plan for emergency days in advance, now that we have one-to-one technology, we can do that through e-learning," Mitchell said. "We have a specific e-learning plan that we follow."

Mitchell said that while he knows some families might

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R-C facility improvements near the finish line

BY MARNEY SIMON
EDITOR

The warmer than normal January weather has allowed work to continue on the facility improvements at the Reed-Custer School District.

Superintendent Mark Mitchell reported to the board of education on Jan. 18 that the last portion of the slated work is well underway.

"We have the final stage of the outdoor field improvements, the bleachers and press box," Mitchell said. "They have those demo-ed, and they've been in the process, luckily the January weather has let them pour some concrete pillars. They've done a nice job."

Mitchell did say that there had been a few minor setbacks with the work.

"They've learned that Braidwood's water table is fairly close to the top of the ground, so they're battling that and filling every hole they dig," he said. "So, they've had their challenges but they're doing a really nice job, it's just going to take a little longer than they thought. But, as soon as that's done, they anticipate if we keep getting decent weather, they'll have it built this winter."

The outdoor improvements are part of the district's $2.4 million makeover for outdoor facilities, which was approved in

SEE PRESS BOX, PAGE 2

Illinois cashes in on video gaming

BY ANN GILL
EDITOR

The bright lights of Las Vegas might be a draw, but you don't have to travel far to hear the distinctive ring of slot machines.

There are 43 locations within the communities of Braidwood, Coal City and Wilmington where individuals can wager a dollar in a video gaming machine. And in 2022 more than $40 million in the three communities went into those machines.

While that is a lot of cash, it's pocket change compared to the $10.53 billion fed into gaming machines across the state, a 9.2% increase from the year before.

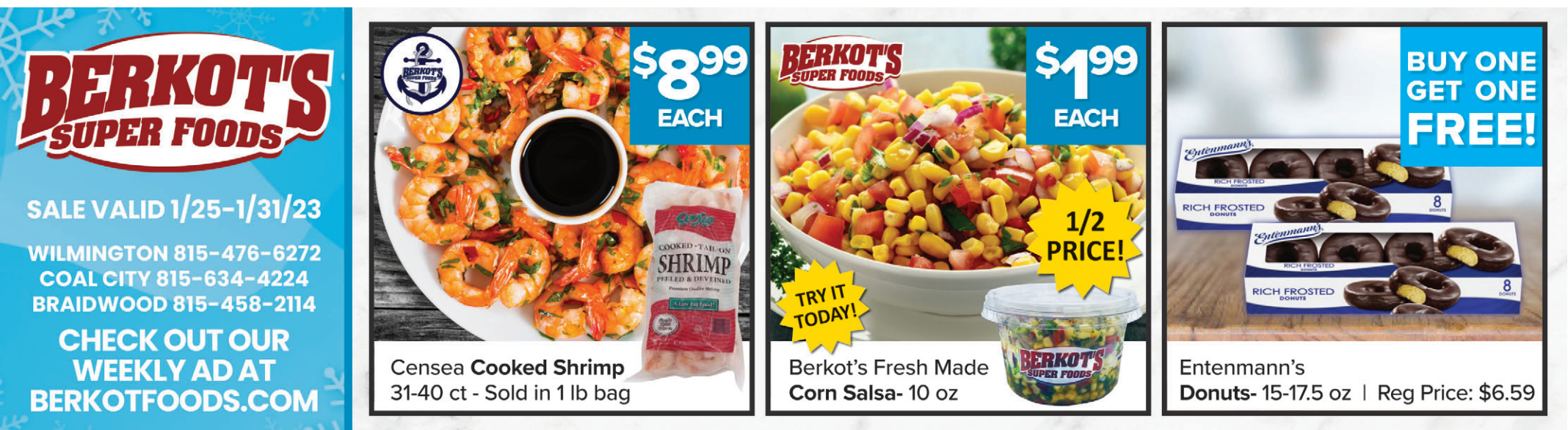
The Illinois Gaming Board [IGB] reports over $31.8 billion was played with individuals cashing out $7.82 billion.

In 2022, the state of Illinois collected $786 million in gaming taxes, an increase of around 9.5% from the prior year.

The increases seen in the past year can be attributed to additional licenses and machines going on-line, amounts being played and cashed out. Whatever the reason, the state continues to cash in and that means local municipalities are too.

A portion of the net terminal income collected by the state goes back to the municipalities where gaming is allowed and last year that

SEE GAMING, PAGE 2



Cameras

ed that their brother was missing," Lyons said. "So, we started up an investigation and we put his license plate into the database, we got a hit on the database, we were able to track down the individual vehicle, and [the victim's body] was discovered. So, we were able to provide closure for a family."

Lyons said after that case and utilizing the cameras the city already has to solve some car burglaries, the decision was made to look into installation around the schools, where the administration was on board with the idea.

"I think it's awesome that we're going to have cameras around the schools to protect our kids," Lyons said. "If there's a sex offender, or someone is wanted on a warrant or a stolen vehicle, we will immediately get notification that there is somebody near our schools. It's just a great tool for law enforcement."

The cameras are installed by the company, which also hosts the server. Data is uploaded to the cloud, where it can be downloaded by local law enforcement. Those files are purged every 30 days.

Glasgow also addressed the accusation that the cameras are a little bit too "Big Brother."

"We're not spying on anybody," Glasgow said. "This is used only to find offenders."

Glasgow said the cameras have become an important tool in law enforcement investigations, and were recently utilized to help capture an alleged carjacker from Chicago who fled to Will County.

"The reason we were able to catch the individual is that the Flock camera picked him up after he did the carjacking," Glasgow said, adding that the cameras were also able to catch a murder suspect in Joliet who was seen on the cameras close to the scene of the crime.

"We would have never solved it, we would have had no witnesses, no evidence whatsoever. But, he went around the corner and got caught on a Flock camera," Glasgow said.

The cameras are currently utilized in 40 states, with more than 1,4000 cities using the technology in law enforcement, on campuses, and in local HOAs.

In addition to the new cameras in Braidwood, the State's Attorneys office has also donated the costs of Flock cameras to Shorewood, Lewis University, Beecher, Elwood, Homer Glen, Manhattan, Mokena, and Wilmington.

School

prefer a snow day, the use of an e-learning day in place of a snow day makes the overall calendar more predictable.

"It's worked well because it's allowed us not to use emergency days," Mitchell said. "When you look at the calendar, those emergency days are built in to the end, and last year fortunately we didn't have to use any of those because we were able to plan ahead. It doesn't mean we won't [have any snow days], but as it sits, school ending for [the 2023-2024 year] would be on the 23rd of May for staff."

The district is required to include 174 days of student attendance, and two days of parent-teacher conferences in the calendar. Now approved, the calendar will be sent to the Regional Board of Education for approval, and will be sent back if there were any issues or corrections needed.

First day of student attendance will be Aug. 14, with winter break scheduled for Dec. 22 through Jan. 4 for students. Spring break will take place March 25 through April 1, with the last day of student attendance on May 22.

Gaming

amounted to $135.5 million

Braidwood's cut was $70,544.17 while the city of Wilmington's share was $216,133.34.

When it comes to the trio of towns that make up the Coal City area, the village of Carbon Hill received $33,730.50, Coal City's came in at just under $98,000 and Diamond collected over $112,200 which went toward utility reimbursements for its residents—ultimately eliminating the debt surcharge from the bill.

Video gaming went online in September 2012 and in that time Illinois residents and visitors to the Land of Lincoln have pumped $53.3 billion into gaming machines located in bars, restaurants and even gas stations— especially those located along the state's highways and interstates.

Over 10 years and three months, those players have cashed out $39.55 billion and contributed over $4.4 billion to the state and local communities—that's about 8% of Illinois' 2023 budget.

At the close of 2022, Illinois had 8,693 licensed establishments operating 47,378 gaming terminals—figures that increased throughout the year.

Just last week, IGB posted the December 2022 gaming report that put the final totals on how much money went in, how much was played and the amount cashed out over the course of 12 months, as well as the state and local municipalities share.

Here's what is reported locally:

• Braidwood—seven establishments with 37 terminals. Amount in $5,590,767, $17,498,928.16 played, $4,179,886.29 cashed out, state share $409,156.33, municipality share $70,544.17. Emmy's Cafe generating the most play and Joneseeze Bar-B-Que ceased gaming operations in February.

Courtesy photo

MORE THAN $10.5 billion—$40 million of that locally—was pumped into Illinois video gaming terminals according to reports posted by the Illinois Gaming Board.

• Carbon Hill—two establishments with 11 terminals. Amount in $2,274,429 in, $8,136,930.67 played, $1,599,821.14 cashed out, state share $195,636.67, municipality share $33,730.50. Bum's Tavern—the first local establishment to go on-line in 2013—generated the most play.

• Coal City—seven establishments operating 38 terminals. Amount in $7,668,834, $22,585,275.19 played, $5,714,161.65 cashed out, state share $566,855.81, village share $97,733.76. Emmy's Cafe generating the most play.

• Diamond—seven licensed establishments operating 41 terminals. Amount in $7,986,685, $25,141,472.77 played, $5,742,131,94 cashed out, state share $650,921.20, village share $112,277.77. Generating the most play was Minit Mart, LLC.

• Wilmington—20 establishments with 108 active terminals. Amount in $16,759,358, $52,025,562.79 played, $12,436,695.61 cashed out, state share $1,253,574.58, city share $216,133.34. TA Operating LLC generated the most play with 10 terminals.

• Grundy County—six establishments with 33 terminals, Amount in $4,932,485, $15,054,250.52 played, $3,710,157.70 cashed out, state share $354,475.91, county share $61,116.55 .

• Will County —21 licensed establishments with 115 terminals. Amount in $23,998,423, $74,868,207.72 played, $17,571,739.96 cashed out, state share $1,863,740.13, county share $321,334.29.

• Essex —three establishments with 18 active terminals, Amount in $2,026,623, $6,648,696.43 played, $1,496,553.91 cashed out, state share $153,720.63, municipality share $26,503.55.

• Godley—one establishment with six terminals. Amount in $1,319,015, $4,068,461.29 played, $964,911.56 cashed out, state share $102,690.21, village share $17,705.20.

• Braceville—one establishment with six terminals. Amount in $697,643, amount played $2,122,104.94, $486653.74 cashed out, state share $61,187.19, town share $10,549.51.

Press box

late 2021.

Those improvements include the new artificial turf field including a shock pad to meet the safety standards set by the NFL, a new video scoreboard, and the improvements to the bleachers and press box.

The bleacher and press box renovations will bring the home bleacher seating to safety/handicap code, increase seating capacity by almost 50%, and provide a much more comfortable seating environment.

The improvements were funded by a combination of money that remains in the Capital Projects Fund from coming in under budget on the construction of both Reed-Custer Elementary School and the Reed-Custer High School Cafeteria addition and budgeted Operations and Maintenance Fund (District Improvement) expenditures from fiscal years 2022, and 2023.

Byrne & Jones Sports Construction constructed the field, and Dant Clayton is responsible for the bleacher/press box portion. Local union contractors have been subcontracted and/or directly hired by the District for both electrical and excavation work.

Route 113 crossing to close for repairs

COAL CITY — The Illinois Department of Transportation announced Route 113 (Division Street) will be closed for approximately two days next week in order to complete repairs to the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad crossing in Coal City.

Work will begin Tuesday, Jan. 31.

A detour will direct eastbound motorists around the work area using North Broadway to North Street and east to First Avenue where they will turn south back to Route 113. Westbound traffic will use the same route just in the opposite order of travel First Avenue to North Street, west to Broadway and south to Route 113.

Motorists can expect delays and should allow extra time for trips through the area and be prepared for slow and stopped traffic. Motorists should avoid the work area, when feasible, use of alternate routes should be considered.

Drivers are urged to pay close attention to changed conditions and signs in the work zone, obey posted speed limits and refrain from using mobile devices and be alert for workers and equipment.

Multi-year road plan coming for Diamond

BY ANN GILL
EDITOR

When the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning [CMAP] put out a call for projects, the village of Diamond requested help with road improvements so that the village could get the most bang for its buck.

CMAP granted the town's request and a multi-year plan to improve the town's roadways is forthcoming.

"I'm really excited about this grant," Mayor Terry Kernc said about the written plan.

The process will begin this spring with a survey vehicle traveling village streets to collect digital imagery of the pavement surface and roadside assets.

Data collected from the drive will be used to develop a 10-year paving plan.

According to the mayor, the village really doesn't have any excellent road surfaces—most falling in the moderate to below category— but the hope is that will change in the years ahead.

The village has completed various pavement and patching projects over the years, however no large scale improvements have taken place at a single time.

Moving forward the mayor would prefer to see larger sections completed at one time and said the plan should facilitate that.

"If you do one road in a subdivision that's great. But later when you have to go in and do more, then you have all of this heavy equipment coming in and going over roads you already did. To me it just makes more sense to do a whole neighborhood at a time and then move on to the next and at the end of the 10 years, create a schedule where you go back and maintain those roads," Kernc said.

When road improvements do take place, the village's plan is to complete required ADA ramp improvements per its ADA transition plan—a state requirement.

Along with the ramps, Kernc said the idea is to also repair and or replace any cracked or heaving sidewalks in that neighborhood.

And, while the work is being done, the mayor wants to see about reinforcing the sides of the road closest to the curb. Kernc said there is a noticeable wearing down of the roadway edges due to the weight of the garbage trucks.

"The trouble is if we get in there and start paving and don't reinforce that part alongside the curb and gutter, we are going to have to replace curb and gutter in those neighborhoods," Kernc said.

Where the improvements begin will be based on recommendations put forth in the pavement management plan.

The mayor has an idea of what areas are in the most need—Orchard Park, Clark, Stellon, Hugh and McGinty and Meadow Lane.

"I can't wait to get [the report]. I can't wait to see if they agree," Kernc said. The plan takes personal opinion out of the decision making process and puts it all on technical and factual data.

"I think it lends credibility and gives the village an actual plan to move forward with and stick to," Kernc said.

The CMAP grant doesn't come with any funding for improvements, therefore any upgrades would come from general fund dollars.

Kernc said there is also a donation that has been agreed to for the village. The funds coming from the developers of a large scale solar farm going in between Gardner and Dwight that is utilizing the town's enterprise zone.

Although not a requirement, Kernc said the developers graciously offered the funds.

"The idea is to fuel that money right in from the get-go and kick this [improvement] off and try to get a big chunk done and continue from there," Kernc said.

CMAP is supporting 20 projects out of 64 applications submitted. Seven of the approved projects were for pavement management planning—Diamond and the city of Wilmington among them.

"The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning has a long history of preparing communities for better futures. These projects foster collaboration throughout the region, making our communities safer and more prosperous. We look forward to building a stronger region where all communities can thrive together," said CMAP executive director Erin Aleman."

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Post 1336 continues holiday tradition

St. Juvin Post 1336 Veterans of Foreign Wars visited with veterans in assisted living, skilled care and memory care facilities in Wilmington, Dwight and Morris over the holidays, with its Blankets for Vets program.

Since 2013, when the first blankets were distributed to Post members World War I vet Bill Finn, Korean War vet Sheridan Bailey and Vietnam vet Gary Simons as a trial to see if the personalized tapestry throws with branch of service logo would be a good replacement for the usual monetary gifts or gift packages presented to vets, hundreds have been handed out to recognize the military service of area vets.

The program was conceived by Kathy Brown, the wife of former post commander Charlie Brown. Thegift proved to be well received by veterans.

While the bulk of the throws are presented during the Christmas season, the program spans the entire year. Each blanket has a custom label that reads "The members of St. Juvin Post 1336 veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States present this throw to you as a symbol of your service to a grateful nation"

This year 32 blankets were awarded at Christmas and an additional four during the year for a total of 36 raising the nearly decade long program to almost 600 representing about $33,000 raised by the Post's Buddy Poppy events, raffles and generous donations from special benefactor Tom Fulton and the entire community.

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Eric D. Fisher, publisher
Marney Simon, editor

1890's, a scattering of information here and there

Sandy Vasko

We have been looking at typical weeks in the life of the Braidwood community. I would like to do the same for the 1890's, but I can't. My information mostly comes from the Wilmington newspapers.

At one time the editor and publisher of the Wilmington Advocate also had a newspaper called the Braidwood Republican. He often used some of the same stories in both papers. Hmmm, this sort of sounds familiar to me, oh well, on with the story.

For some unknown reason, Wilmington newspapers from the 1890's are scarce. So today I am giving a scattering of stories through several years of that decade, all of which come from Joliet newspapers.

Our first comes from 1890, and involves feuding between the Democrats and the Republicans of Will County. Hmm, that sounds familiar too.

April 11, 1890 - Joliet Republic - We met Mr. Joe Kain, of Braidwood, yesterday. Joe was mad. He was very mad indeed. "I want the Republic and Sun (another Joliet newspaper) to tell the people that I have always been a Republican, and am a Republican yet.

From a complication of affairs, I was put on the Democratic ticket as supervisor, and came within one of being elected; now you just state that I, Joe Kain, of Braidwood, am not, and never have been a Democrat."

"The facts of the case are these," continued Kain, "During the miner's strike I warmly espoused the cause of the laborers. Having once been a miner myself and knowing their sufferings, I aided them in every way I could.

"For this action the Republicans threw me over board and would not nominate me, and the Democrats put me up against my will. While the entire Republican ticket was elected, I came within one vote of election. Every trick and every fraud that could be resorted to was tried to defeat me. Money was freely spent to defeat me, the laboring man's champion."

"See here, I got this letter, sent from Joliet, and I know where it came from too. It came from a certain newspaper office, or, and employee of one. How would you like to get such a thing?" the letter shown us is a bad one and reads as follows: "To Joseph Kain, the great Monarch of Braidwood: You no doubt think you are the great gun of Braidwood, but I want to tell you that you are left, and we as the White Caps, tell you that if you do not withdraw from the Republican Party we will come and burn you out and tar your rotten carcass.

You will be watched on Tuesday and if you are seen to assist at the polls you will likely as not get popped over. Go to the Democrats where you belong. The Republicans do not want you. Now beware! - The White Caps"

This just proves that bullying and intimidation are not something new in the realm of politics.

The next article comes from four years later. We know that by that time shaft mining was starting to peter out. January 19, 1894 - Joliet Daily News Benjamin Dalzell, Jr. met with a serious accident Monday at the O shaft, Braidwood. A large stone fell from the roof crushing him and he was taken from under it in an almost lifeless condition. He died Tuesday."

And from one month later: February 9, 1894 - Joliet News It was Braidwood's turn Monday to have a sensation and a dozen or more men have excellent cause to be thankful they are living inside of whole skins today. To those who were within seeing or hearing distance it seems miraculous that only one man should have a painful souvenir of the excitement."

"The cause of the rumpus was the blowing out of a flue in one of the Q shaft boilers. Ten men were at work in the boiler house at the time, but all these escaped injury.

"A man named John Harrop who was shoveling coal out of a box car directly opposite the boiler was in line with the scalding jet and it was first thought he was dangerously injured. After examination by a doctor it was found he was not badly hurt."

"Sept. Zoller's team caught the full force of the blow. They were standing hitched to a post nearby and were sent to the ground and rolled over several times. The buggy was demolished.

The cap that had been blown off the flue was found several hundred feet from the boiler house. Excitement ran high for a few minutes in expectation of a grand blow up but Engineer Paul Leslie hastened to disconnect the opened boiler from the others of the set. Some of the masons at work on a boiler seat at the opposite end of the building are said to be missing yet."

We will continue our look at the last decade of the 19th century next time.

RCMS students earn recognition from Board of Education

Photos by Marney Simon

A SINGING SUCCESS — Reed-Custer Middle School student Hayley Meyer was acknowledged at the Jan. 18 meeting of the Board of Education by Superintendent Mark Mitchell (left) and RCMS Choir Director Austin Rupert. Meyer, along with her classmates Kirstin Klein and Michael Faletti, who could not attend the board meeting, were selected for the Illinois Music Education Association (ILMEA) District 1 Choir last fall, and participated in the ILMEA District 1 Festival Nov. 5 at Lincoln-Way Central HS. "They worked diligently to learn the materials and practice their musical skills needed to join this choir," Rupert said. "They spent an entire Saturday rehearsing with students from all across District 1 of similar dedication, and put on an amazing performance that afternoon. I'm proud to be here to acknowledge that accomplishment that displays their skill, hard work and dedication to your music and to yourselves." All three students were given a certificate of recognition for outstanding achievement by the School Board.

SPEAK UP! Reed-Custer Middle School speech team member Logan Bean was honored by members of the Board of Education on Jan. 18. Logan's judge at the IESA speech contest chose his performance in Impromptu Speaking as the best that they had seen in the contest. "In impromptu, Logan had eight minutes to write and deliver a speech in one of two topics shared by the judge," Superintendent Mark Mitchell said, reading from a letter written by speech team sponsor Julie Nelson. "The ability to speak and write extemporaneously is enormously helpful not only in school, but also in the work world." Logan plans to continue to participate in speech in high school. Logan was presented with a certificate of recognition for outstanding achievement by Superintendent Mark Mitchell.

RCHS names students of the month for December

REED-CUSTER HIGH SCHOOL named the students of the month for December. Students include (from left): Addison Brown, Delaney Bruciak, Landen Robinson, Brock Billingsley, Karyssa Cinotti, Kamryn Marschner, Tori Loomis, Abi Sunday and Sarah Schulte.

Terms extended in Elion annexation agreement

Water, sewer to two properties must be installed by 2026

BY MARNEY SIMON
EDITOR

WILMINGTON — The extension of water and sewer lines for properties annexed into Wilmington more than a decade ago will take a bit longer.

On Jan. 17, the members of the Wilmington City Council approved three ordinances, authorizing amendments to the annexation agreements with Adar Ridgeport Industrial Partners, the parent company for Elion Logistics Park, and two additional landowners who are part of that annexation agreement.

One of those adjoining properties is owned by Tameling Management and Investment Series, the other owned by Rink Agricultural and Investment Partnership.

The amendments are in regard to the time period permitted for the installation of water and sewer lines within the annexation agreement between the city and the industrial park, as well as the two additional properties.

The city entered into annexation agreements with Tameling and Rink partners in February of 2010. The two parcels are located along Route 129, just south of Elion Logistics Park, previously known as Ridgeport .

A condition of the agreements is for the city to extend water and sewer lines, while Elion will pick up the tab for those extensions, as the improvements will directly benefit the logistics park.

In 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the city requested a three year extension to the plans, but to date has been unable to assemble the proper easements from the state to begin the project.

Ben Schuster, who represents Elion Partners, told members of the council that all parties involved were essentially in a waiting game, with the state of Illinois holding things up.

"The issue is, as it has been for quite some time, is that Elion is ready and desires to fulfill its obligations to put in water and sewer lines. We're obligated under our annexation agreement," Schuster said. "The issue is, in order to do it, we need to get the easement. The easement has to be acquired by the city for us to [install] the lines. In order for the city to get the easements, they need to know exactly where the IDOT road is going to be."

The Illinois Department of Transportation is currently studying potential improvements to I-55 at Lorenzo Road and at Illinois Route 129. Those proposed changes will mainly serve the City of Wilmington along with the industrial developments in the area.

State improvement projects are conducted in three phases: Preliminary engineering and environmental studies; Contract plan preparation and land acquisition; and Construction. Public outreach was conducted in December 2020, and the study currently remains in Phase I. The long term goal of the project is to improve safety, facility condition, and interchange operations at I-55 at Lorenzo Road and Route 129.

"At the moment, the city has not acquired the easements, and it's probably a waste of effort and time and money until all the IDOT work is finalized and so forth and we know where it's going to go. And so, as soon as that's done, Elion can come in and put in water and put in the sanitary sewer," Schuster said.

"Now the [agreement] is being changed to 16 years, and that way this can all get worked out with IDOT and once they're fine with the location of what they're doing, then the other dominos can fall and everything fits into place neatly. It makes no sense for the city to go ahead and acquire easements when they may need to be moved."

The amendment granted the three year extension for installation of those utilities from Elion to the Tameling and Rink properties, which now must be installed by 2026.

Building a bigger branch

STAFF REPORT

DIAMOND — Midland States Bank has gone vertical, as the structural steel framing has been set in place for its new, bigger branch office in the village of Diamond.

After weeks of little to no activity at the site, the frame was set onto the foundation, a sign that the project is gaining speed.

The financial institution currently operates a drive-thru banking center at the southeast corner of Route 113 and Berta Road and the new facility will expand operations at that location as the new building is being constructed just west of the existing building.

At 2,058 square-feet, the new walk-in facility will feature two drive-thru lanes on the east side of the building with parking to the west.

Construction of the banking facility was announced in 2021 and came shortly after the company closed the doors to its location in downtown Coal City.

Village officials say the project was slowed due to several factors, but is back on track and moving along.

Diamond to improve water flow

BY ANN GILL
EDITOR

Close to $1 million will be invested in the village of Diamond's water and sewer infrastructure.

The village received $340,000 from the American Rescue Plan [ARP] which will be combined with a federal earmark of just over $600,000 to replace approximately 2,000 feet of aging and failing water main, rehabilitate lift stations and replace service line connections to a handful of homes along Division Street [Route 113].

According to Mayor Terry Kernc, the village will replace an old water main located in the area of School Street and Perona Court, a project that has been on the village's to-do list for a long time.

"We use about 240,000 gallons of water a day and we use to use more. But we've located leaks and we've got them down as much as possible so we are not wasting water. If you keep your mains in shape you have a better chance of doing that," Kernc said.

A 1.5 inch water service line that runs along the north side of Division Street from Dewey Street west to McGinty Street will be abandoned and the homes serviced by that line will be connected to a larger main located on the southside of the roadway. That will require the village to bore under the state highway to make the connection.

The rehabilitation of lift stations include pumps and installation of a a supervisory control and data acquisition [SCADA] system—a cloud based communication software program designed to monitor equipment.

The improvements being undertaken by the Village Board will prepare the community for the next 20 years or so, the mayor said.

The federal earmark was secured by U.S. Senators Tammy Duckworth and Dick Durbin who secured more than $182 million for Illinois projects as part of the fiscal year 2023 Omnibus Appropriations Act.

The North Central Illinois Council of Governments [NCICG] assisted the village in applying for the funds. Kernc and the Village Board are looking to gain additional funding to support the planned improvements through a grant being offered by Will County—the money coming from its share of ARP dollars.

Kernc said the request will seek funding to support the installation of the SCADA system at the water and wastewater treatment plants and three lift stations.

The secured system would provide the village with 24/7 monitoring of the facilities and equipment, providing staff with off-site monitoring and immediate notification of system failures.

Free Press Newspapers readers

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Submissions by email to: courant@fpnusa.com with "soundoff" in the subject line or go to www.freepressnewspapers.com, -> Submit Soundoff or call 815-634-0317. Please state the town in which you are calling from or in regards to. Mail comments to Sound-Off, 271 S. Broadway, Coal City, IL 60416 or 111 S. Water St., Wilmington, IL 60481.

Karma for Joe

SHADOW LAKES—I have only one thing to say about Joe Biden and the documents: Karma. Joe is a Hillary. Eddie

Minutes of meetings

BRAIDWOOD—Someone called in last week complaining about the city not posting the minutes of the city council meetings. I don't care how long or short the meetings are and I don't think other taxpayers care too. So don't waste a city worker's time and expense of paying somebody to keep track of how many minutes the meetings are. Some people will complain about anything.

Too much control

WILMINGTON—Ever since an Iowa farm was donated to the Wilmington Area Historical Society, it seems some want to control the land for their own benefit. According to the bylaws and constitution it's illegal for anyone to use the land as a benefit to themselves or otherwise. When the land came up for possibility being donated to the museum, many questions still lurked in the minds of others. The Board was not told the truth and why was the property tax put in an WAHS officer's name and sent to their home address? Some have not been honest in the beginning. Is this how a Board of Directors act towards each other? Each time a question is raised about the acquisition this individual gets upset? It's because the Board had questions that needed to be answered and the vice president did not want anyone's opinion except theirs. It's been a battle since the land became the museum's. Seems like there are two different Boards: One that does the correct thing and the other who aren't honest. What will happen to this land if the museum was to fold? Please residents of Wilmington. Come to the meetings. Ask questions. The land is at stake. The only twist words were wrote in the Sound Off last week. See who is telling the truth and who is lying to the public. It's your history at risk.

Running out of money

SHADOW LAKES—Every day that I watch the news it brings a tear to my eyes. That tear is caused by our elected officials who can't solve the problems of this country. The mayor of New York received $9 million so far to care for illegals shipped there. Mayor Lighthead is asking Washington for millions of dollars for the same problem. Here is the rub: What happens when this money runs out? Answer to the problem is to close the border. Also, did everyone receive their Social Security check? I am waiting for the government to tell us. At this rate Social Security will run out of money. Maybe, they don't understand, to make this system work, you have to pay in. If you look at the US debt clock, you will see 10 million people who are capable to work are not. That is 10 million not paying into the system. What do you think these people are doing for money?

Religion is dying

WILMINGTON—I found last week's Soundoff page hilarious. Evangelical Christians love to portray themselves as persecuted martyrs when the opposite is actually true. Historically speaking the church tortured and killed what they deemed heretics and blasphemers. Today the Evangelicals persecute the LGBTQ community as if they have the right to enforce their own dim view of morality. Religion is used as a weapon because this is the new inquisition. When these people whine about Christianity is under attack they ignore the statistics that show it's still the dominant religion in America but is losing influence due to the rise of other forms of spirituality, especially the "nones" who don't belong to any organized religions. The younger people are not signing on to the old orders. Religion is dying out all by itself. But the irony on display is these people claim to have faith in God and Jesus but are so terrified of the future. Where is that sense of serenity they were promised? They get heaven and their enemies get hell, yet that doesn't comfort these doubters. In closing, religious freedom is not under attack but is being perverted from a hateful minority angry that the world is changing and they are becoming more irrelevant every day. Amen.

Frivolous spending

COAL CITY—In answer to Better Things. I was glad to see your comments about the school spending. Thought I was the only one in Coal City who thinks the School Board's frenzied spending should be curtailed. I ask myself are they nuts? Real estate taxes are out of sight now. We do not need the extra and frivolous spending which the Board and others are pushing. Maybe we need a whole new Board who puts taxpayers first.

As you are told

SHADOW LAKES—First, it's your gas stove. Then it's your gas fireplace. Then your wood fireplace, then burning outside. Remember the government knows what's best for you. Do as you are told. Eddie

School choice

SHADOW LAKES—Why is it parents can't use school choice across the country and use their tax money they paid for education to be put toward the school of their choice? Is this a communist, Democrat plan to indoctrinate children? After all, a parent should be able to choose where their money goes to educate their own children. Can anybody answer this? Dan Hill.

Corruption costs

BRAIDWOOD—Thank you king Mike Madigan. He controls the politicians in Illinois. Thank you for your corruption with ComEd. Each and every family in Illinois will pay $218 more a year for their electric bill thanks to the proposed rate raise ComEd is asking for. Thank you king Madigan. Thank you for your corruption.

A foreign invasion

DIAMOND—Dear Cindy and Ryder from Wilmington. The states of Arizona and Texas are on the border with Mexico. In the last two years over two million illegal aliens have come across these borders. That doesn't include the boat loads coming from Cuba and some Asians to Florida's borders. New York City is the only U.S. city having a larger population than that. U.S. citizens from Arizona and Texas live extremely close to these borders. Imagine living one of these homes where you and your family carry on your daily lives the best you can. Hoards of people trespass on your land every single day. Your land and home have been vandalized, entered and stolen from and terrorized you and your family. Would you want protection from local police or the National Guard? Would you want your Governor to intercede and act on your behalf. If your Governor acted to protect you would you still question their Christianity at this point? Who is the least of us in this daily event, you as a homeowner and family or these daily multitudes of interlopers? Never judge another until you walked a mile in their shoes. These strangers trespassing on people's yards and homes have a different perspective than you or I sitting comfortably in our own homes. These are not immigrants. My late husband was a first generation from his family born in the United States. They made preparations and agreed to all requirements to be here. Praise God for that. Please pray for these citizens dealing with this terrible situation 24/7 through no fault of their own. Sharon

Know the facts

BRAIDWOOD—In response to the five negative soundoffs about Braidwood. Fact, yes there is an election coming and the only thing this group has is to write fictitious posts trying to make this administration look bad. Fact, the city is in great shape: Businesses are coming to Braidwood and there are plenty of new houses going up that are selling as quickly as they are being built. We now have a great police department that cares about the community. People are moving to Braidwood instead of leaving. Fact, Mr. Smith has been in office 16 years. He continually tells us how much good he does. Why didn't he purchase these much needed vehicles before this council took office? Could it be that when this council took office he was $55,000 over budget and since this council took over he has been held accountable. Post the bills. Fact, since the city does not have a full time webmaster it is not required to post on the city's website. Men who served. Fact, not one person on the council disagreed with Ms. Dixon about a street named after her father. There is protocol that has to be followed and an ordinance must be passed just like when Wayne Saltzman's was done. Residents in the dark. Do you work in the city office to know what goes on? It is a fact that Ford, Chevy and Ultimate Rides will be built here. It is also a fact that there are corporate offices, engineers, architects and many other people involved in building these businesses. There is also a colored rendering available at city hall for anyone to see these future buildings. I don't see you complaining the Jewel in Diamond isn't being built yet. The only business the last administration brought in was an ice machine. And yes several of you are involved in writing these fictitious soundoffs in hopes of getting back into office to finish the destruction you started. As Senator Moynihan once said, "You are entitled to your own opinion but not your own facts."

The yes men

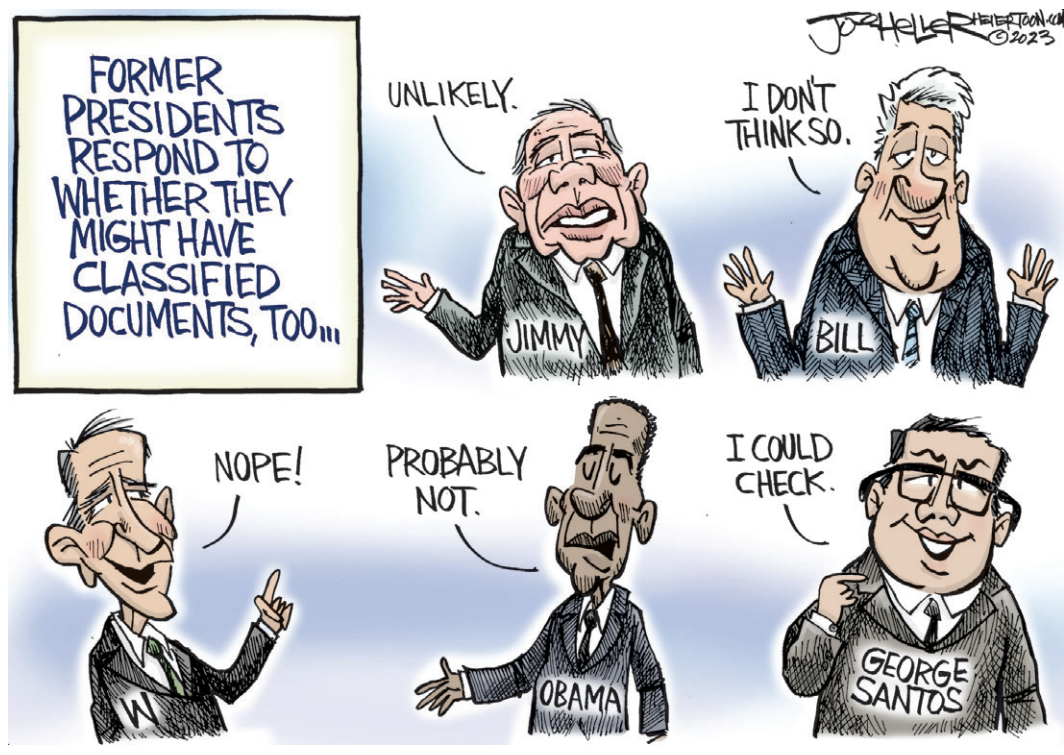
BRAIDWOOD—After reading the "Infrastructure Projects" article in the Jan. 18 Braidwood Journal, one thing became very clear to me. The city engineer has confirmed everything that commissioner Smith has been saying for years. The article contains a list of at least 10 projects that the engineer participated in. Not a single one dealt with the Street Department. Commissioner Smith was apparently correct when he kept protesting the depletion of his budget in order to inflate other departments, in particular the Administration Department. After all, the huge raises that other city council members voted for themselves have to be paid for. And you can bet that they will vote a big raise for the administrator if they are all back in office. Of course that raise won't happen until shortly after election day. I suppose though that some of this is Commissioner Smith's fault. If only he could have learned to not question anything that the administrator wants and say "yes sir" just as the other council members do at every meeting.

The national debt

WILMINGTON—Trump added $8 trillion to the national debt so I hope the readers understand that the debt ceiling needs to be raised to cover the debt incurred during the Trump administration and not the current one. After all they raised the ceiling for Trump three times with no concessions.

A special time

BRAIDWOOD—For decades, the time period between Jan. 1 and the municipal Consolidated Election held on the first Tuesday in April has become a gruesome reminder to everyone on just how crooked and underhanded our local elected officials are. Small town politics are often worse than politics on a national level. Lies, baseless accusations, finger pointing, name calling, fear tactics and more get caked in mud and thrown over the heads of the residents and all that happens is that our community gets torn apart. Targets get put on the backs of those who don't agree with the powers that be and their appointed henchmen in an attempt to silence any possibility of reality or truth from seeping through the walls of city hall and giving our current leaders a black eye.



Wasting tax dollars

WILMINGTON—Other than a vendetta or retaliation, how does investigating Hillary, Trump, Biden, Hunter and all the rest help you and me? My wallet doesn't show any help. Think how all the investigation money spent could help people. It's all for political theater.

Majority wants it

WILMINGTON—Since when do county sheriffs pick and choose what laws they are going to enforce and not enforce. A majority of Illinoisans want assault weapons banned. So, once again, the minority whines and the squeaky wheel gets all the grease.

Protecting Social Security

WILMINGTON—It's that time again when we must protect the middle class. Now that the GOP once again controls the House, Social Security and Medicare are threatened. When President Bush tried to privatize them in 2006, voters kicked Republicans in the backside because nobody messes with these sources of financial support and gets away with it. So Republicans know they must be sneaky by using the excuse that the national debt should be eliminated. And what does this mean? It means everyday people must tighten their belts and sacrifice what they have worked their entire lives to attain, Social Security and Medicare. So when House Speaker McCarthy and company pretend to be looking out for the country, remember that the welfare of our nation was the last thing on their minds not so long ago. Irene

Electioneering

BRAIDWOOD—Maybe city employees shouldn't be giving their candidates papers or any city documents that should be FOIA'd by the candidates if they're wanting information. All city employees should be remaining neutral during this campaign on city time or on city property or using city computers. By state statute 10 ILCS 5/17-29, Electioneering is influencing voters/soliciting votes and political persuasion are prohibited. So two of the candidates chosen by the administrator who were in and out of city hall in his office behind closed doors and leaving with paperwork before turning in their petitions for nomination should not have happened. Once again, who's going to stop him? Question is, why didn't this city clerk put a notice in the Braidwood Journal about upcoming election like previous city clerks have for the last 30+ years? This notice would give a timeline of when petition packets could be picked up in city hall, what the filing dates were for those petitions, filing of objections to those petitions, withdrawing of a candidate, etc. The mayor stated at a meeting that anyone wanting petition packets would have to go to the county to pick up or go online. Once again he had no clue what he was talking about. Stop listening to the administrator. I inquired with the county clerk's office and they advised that packets are to be distributed by the municipality where they were running for office as it has always been. The county does not hand out petition packets. So question is, why had individuals who were persuaded by the administrator to run for office come to city hall, met with him behind closed doors and walked out with papers and other candidates who would be running against these individuals not of his choosing, not being given the same privilege? One of his candidates got their petition signatures within one day, next day had to go to Will County Clerks office to record their Statement of Economic Interest, then back into city hall to notarize petitions by clerk's clerical staff and filing the petition for nomination on the same day with the city clerk. Boy that was quick, one day? Once your petitions for nomination are filed with the city clerk you're considered a candidate in the April 4 General Election. With that being said, no candidate running for office should be allowed to come and go inside city hall behind the administrator's closed door with their petitions, paperwork or any reports or documentation he wants them to have without doing an FOIA for any public records and walks out of city hall. If you're handing them reports or any documents they should be given to all candidates. All city employees should be remaining neutral, no comments about candidates on city time, city property, city Facebook discussing the upcoming election. Unfortunately there were city employees that have been posting on social media the week after petitions were filed. Others were persuading and influencing candidates to run when they heard who the opposing candidates were. The latest posting by the administrator for his four candidates says "Moving forward with integrity." Not sure about the use of the word integrity. Integrity means "Quality of being honest and having strong moral principals, moral uprightness." Are you sure about integrity?

Viva Las Braidwood

BRAIDWOOD—How many gaming businesses do we really need? The city currently has eight gaming businesses in town: Marathon, Freaks Top Fuel, Hog Wild, Abbi's Video Slots, Korner Keg, Emmy's, BP and Golden Mine. The newest Liquor and Gaming going up now in the old laundromat location on Rt. 129. Just heard it's not the newest one folks. Heard our administrator is bringing in another liquor and gaming business into Braidwood, Birdie's from Wilmington. Of course our administrator is all for them coming to town. So we are going to have 10 gaming businesses here soon. In last week's sound-off someone stated that in order to have a gaming license you have to have a liquor license with both the city and the state to get gaming through the state. This doesn't include the liquor license only for Braidwood Liquors. Also in last week's sound-off it said the administrator knows this brings in the most revenue with the state. It may be bringing in more revenue to the city but how is this helping to lower our property taxes? We need more retail business here. Maybe if we keep bringing in businesses from Wilmington to Braidwood one day we'll have the retail sales tax like they do.

The first thing

WILMINGTON—McCarthy said the first thing the 118th Congress would do would be to read the Constitution on the house floor. That didn't happen so is there any reason to believe he would punish George Santos for lying?

Opposed to dues hike

COAL CITY—Shame on the Coal City Area Club board members for the ridiculous hike in dues which will hurt senior citizen members. All their excuses for doing this make no sense and we all know they depend on nobody attending the meetings. That's exactly what they needed to get that passed. And did they even have enough board members present to legally pass a vote? Something on the agenda that important should have been announced in the newspaper so members could have been present to voice their opinions about it. Time to get some new board members in there who actually care about the senior citizens because this board sure doesn't.

Hard drive in question

WILMINGTON—Some people need to be reminded there is no Hunter Biden laptop. There's a hard drive that Rudy Giuliani brought back from the Ukraine that has all kinds of chain of custody problems.

Both bad

WILMINGTON—A lot of people say guns don't kill people. Neither does Fentanyl. Just curious. How many of you gun owners are members of a well regulated militia?

So blessed

WILMINGTON—This town is so blessed. We have many wonderful restaurants: Hayden's, The Island, the Chick-A-Dee, the Chinese Restaurant and El Patron's dine in. We have many places to have a nice glass of wine or any other kind of drink. We have two grocery stores, our amazing Rt. 66 attraction Nelly's, banks, dollar stores, a bowling alley, a movie theater, all the denominations of houses of worship where we can worship God in our own ways. We have an amazing school system. This town is really amazing and we are so blessed. I have been fortunate have to meet five men who held or are holding the title of mayor and all the men and women who have served as aldermen over the years. All of you have my admiration, thanks and appreciation for the job that you do. I know their job is not easy and they are criticized more than they are thanked. If anybody thinks they can do a better job then by all means run for office. We have so many organizations in this town that care about the community and help people. I'm very fortunate that I'm able to help organizations in town. My two major projects are helping the rotary get the playground done in Linda's memory and the Historical Society in Roger's memory. I'm not a perfect person. I don't claim to be and I never will be. And to anyone in Wilmington if I've ever hurt you in any way in something that I said or did it was not intentional and I apologize from the bottom of my heart and I hope that you can forgive me for anything I may have hurt your feelings about. I will always be so happy that I moved to Wilmington and you all will always hold a special place in my heart. God bless you all.

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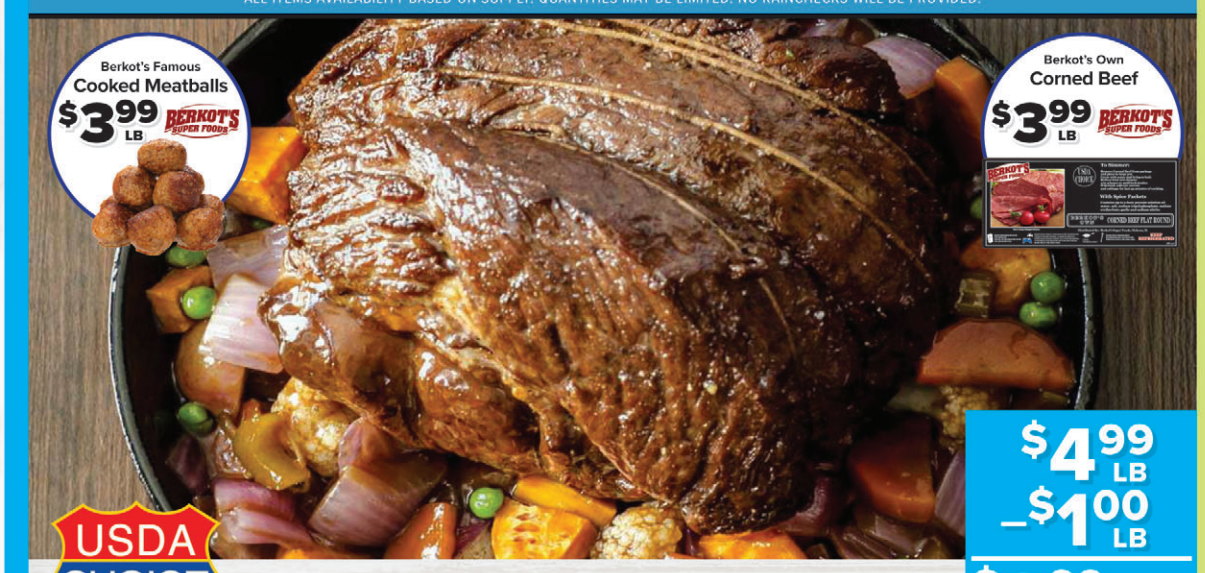

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Stranded drivers on tollways can call *999

While the Illinois Tollway prides itself on its ability to keep drivers moving, it also quickly provides help to customers who suddenly find themselves stopped or stranded along the Tollway system.

Dialing *999 should be the first call made by any driver whose vehicle becomes disabled or who needs help while using the Tollway system.

The Tollway's staff of telecommunicators and call takers responds to those calls 24 hours a day, seven days a week to rapidly dispatch H.E.L.P. trucks, maintenance vehicles or Illinois State Police District 15 troopers to provide assistance to customers stopped or stranded along the road.

Last year, nearly 37,000 drivers dialed *999 for assistance, whether it was changing a flat tire, arranging for a tow or diverting traffic away from a stalled vehicle.

Drivers on other major highways in northern Illinois also can dial *999 to receive assistance from the appropriate transportation or law enforcement agencies.

Drivers may also use *999 to report other non-emergency situations, including unsafe drivers, roadway debris or even pedestrians on the road.

For Tollway customers, help is always only a four-digit phone call away--*999.

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Essex Township Request for Proposal for Cemetery Mowing and Trimming

Essex Township is requesting proposals for cemetery mowing services at the two township cemeteries for the period April 1, 2023-March 31, 2024. The two properties total 4.5 acres combined.

Please supply quote on a per-time basis to include mowing, trimming, small debris cleanup, and blowing clippings off markers/monuments. All services will be done on an as-needed basis, not to exceed 3 times per month. Also supply quote for spring and fall cleanup as well as outlining any additional costs or fees. Provider must include proof of liability insurance with proposal.

Quotes due no later than January 30, 2022

Mail quotes to:
Essex Township Supervisor
PO Box 309, Essex, IL 60935
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Packed with a punch, try this Derby Daiquiri

THE SUNDAY COCKTAIL
Brian Rung

It has been a rough ride for the bar and restaurant business over the last three years. A shut down during a global pandemic followed by uncertainty around rules and regulations for reopening proved to be too much for many bars.

Fort Lauderdale's legendary Mai Kai Polynesian Restaurant and Tiki Bar has been closed since late 2020 for a myriad of reasons, and its future was in doubt until a South Florida-based investment group teamed up with the Thornton family to save one of the world's greatest bars.

While there is no official reopening date posted on the Mai Kai's website, they plan to reopen in 2023. Renovations are likely running in the millions of dollars. Yes, the Mai Kai is that special. This week we toast the legacy of the king of Polynesian bars with one of their own creations, the Derby Daquiri.

Tiki lore is built on legendary bars, innovative bartenders, and amazing rum drinks. The Mai-Kai is 3 for 3 and is regarded by many (including myself) as the best tiki bar in the world.

Everyone wearing a Hawaiian shirt today knows the names Trader Vic and Donn Beach, they may not be familiar with Chicago natives Bob and Jack Thornton.

Bob and Jack Thornton were captivated by tiki culture as children during the 1940's during which time the Thornton family frequently visited Don the Beachcomber's Chicago location at 101 E. Walton Place.

The Thornton brothers would go on to attend Stanford where they were regular visitors to Trader Vic's San Francisco further fueling their dream of opening a Polynesian-themed restaurant.

After completing their military service in 1955, the brothers opened the Mai-Kai in 1956 during the post-war Florida vacation boom when roadside attractions were popping up all over the Sunshine State.

The Mai-Kai wasn't just a bar with some bamboo décor and the occasional hula dance routine, it was an experience. It still is. Once you cross the wood slat bridge you will find an island escape complete with waterfalls, tropical gardens, world-class tiki drinks, authentic Polynesian artifacts, and top-notch nightly Polynesian floor shows.

Behind every great tiki bar is a great tiki bartender. Trader Vic's had Vic Bergeron, Don the Beachcomber had Donn Beach, and the Mai-Kai had Mariano Licudine.

Bob and Jack Thornton did not leave Chicago empty handed on their venture to create what would become the world's greatest tiki bar. They lured master mixologist Licudine away from the Don the Beachcomber's Chicago location giving the Mai-Kai instant credibility in the tiki world.

Licudine built the Mai-Kai menu from tiki drinks made in the tradition of Don the Beachcomber. Donn's classic Zombies, Mai Tais, Daiquiris, and Grogs are still served daily in Fort Lauderdale.

The Mai-Kai was in continuous operation for over 60 years prior to its temporarily closure in 2020 and is the only operating establishment with a direct connection to tiki's golden era. In 2015 the Mai-Kai was added to the National Register of Historic Places.

Licudine is credited with inventing a laundry list of tiki drinks and spin-offs of existing tiki drinks before his retirement in 1980.

He was known for his innovative approach to the Daiquiri platform, particularly with his Derby Daiquiri which put him in the national spotlight after winning a 1959 contest to create a drink to promote the Florida Derby.

I hope that everyone has an opportunity to sip a Derby Daiquiri at Mai-Kai at some point, but if that just isn't possible we'll have to make one at home. Good news all around for the Derby Daiquiri. It's easy to make, easy to drink, and the ingredients are easy to come by.

Daiquiris are drinks that are often made and rarely made well. There are a few basic principles to follow when turning out a quality Daiquiri. The two keys to the Daiquiri (and every other blended drink) are flavor and consistency.

Flavor is no-brainer. Use fresh ingredients whenever possible, mix with good rum and the end result will be a great drink. This means using only fresh squeezed lemon and lime juice, "100% juice" options if you must use canned or bottled fruit juice, and rum that doesn't taste like it belongs in your gas tank.

Consistency in recipes is tough to gauge in blended cocktails because blenders aren't just blenders anymore, some are super juicing vitamin extracting machines that can liquefy just about anything.

Take this into consideration when following this, or any recipe that requires blending for any amount of time. You have to know your blender. Try not to over-blend or under-blend.

The best way to do this is to pulse in 5 second increments, checking after each pulse until you get a feel for your machine.

It is best to use crushed ice in your blender and blend less as opposed to using large ice cubes and blending more. Large ice cubes will take longer to blend, turning out a watered-down flavor with the occasional irregular chunk of ice.

The original Derby Daiquiri used light Puerto Rican rum, but genuine Puerto Rican rum has largely disappeared from the mixology landscape even though Bacardi is labeled Puerto Rican rum.

In recipes that call for Puerto Rican rum use the entry level offerings from Cruzan, Flor de Cana, or Mount Gay.

The **Derby Daiquiri** is built in a blender and served in your favorite cocktail glass.

Combine in blender:
1 1/2 ounces light rum
1/2 ounce fresh lime juice
1/2 ounce simple syrup
1 ounce fresh orange juice
Handful of crushed ice

Blend on high until smooth, usually 15 seconds

Pour unstrained into cocktail glass

Federal suit file against Illinois' assault weapons ban

BY PETER HANCOCK
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois State Rifle Association has joined forces with other gun rights advocates in filing a federal lawsuit challenging the state's new ban on the sale and manufacture of semiautomatic weapons and high-capacity magazines.

It's the latest legal challenge to the law, which went into effect upon Gov. JB Pritzker's signature on Jan. 10, and the first filed in federal court.

The case, which will be heard in the Southern District of Illinois, was filed within a week of a similar case being filed in state court in Crawford County. Additionally, Thomas DeVore, a private attorney and unsuccessful candidate for attorney general in 2022, has filed suit in Effingham County and is seeking an emergency injunction to block the new law's enforcement.

"Gov. Pritzker and the legislators who voted for this law did this for self-serving political purposes and are not upholding the United States Constitution," Richard Pearson, executive director of the ISRA, said in a statement. "The Second Amendment is fundamentally about self-defense, and the 14th Amendment is about not having our rights infringed. This new law makes criminals out of law-abiding citizens."

The law bans the sale and manufacture of a long list of firearms – including certain rifles, shotguns and handguns – that it categorizes as "assault weapons." It also requires people who currently own such weapons to register them with the Illinois State Police by Jan. 1, 2024.

It also bans the sale and manufacture of magazines capable of holding more than 10 rounds of ammunition for a long gun or 15 rounds for a handgun. Those who already possess such devices would be able to keep and possess them on private property, on a gun range, at a licensed gun shop to undergo a repair, or while traveling to one of those locations, provided the magazine is unloaded and kept in a case.

The assault weapons ban also prohibits the use, sale and possession of devices – including items known as "switches" and "bump stocks" – that increase the rate at which a gun fires by either converting it into a fully automatic weapon or making it fire like one. A fully automatic weapon continues firing as long as the user squeezes the trigger, while a semiautomatic weapon fires only one round for each trigger pull.

But plaintiffs in the federal lawsuit argue that the weapons banned under the law are commonly used in the United States, that they have been traditionally accepted as lawful firearms, and that they are, in fact, among the most popular weapons among gun owners, accounting for approximately 20 percent of all firearms sold in recent years.

They also challenge the use of the term "assault weapon," arguing that it was coined by "anti-gun publicists" and that the weapons covered by the law are vastly different from those used in the military.

The suit alleges that the law violates the plaintiffs' constitutional rights under the Second and 14th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution.

The law was prompted in large part by the July 4 mass shooting at an Independence Day parade in Highland Park that left seven people dead and dozens more injured or traumatized.

The alleged shooter in that case used a Smith & Wesson M&P 15 rifle with three magazines of 30 rounds each, items that are included within the scope of the new law.

That weapon is similar to AR-style rifles that have been used in numerous mass shootings in the U.S. But the plaintiffs in the lawsuit argue that those weapons actually account for only a small percentage of overall gun crimes in the country.

When Pritzker signed the legislation, Illinois became the ninth state in the nation to enact some form of assault weapons ban. But those laws are now under scrutiny amid shifting legal and political opinions about the meaning of the Second Amendment, which reads: "A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed."

As far back as 1938, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld indictments against a pair of Oklahoma bank robbers charged with transporting a sawed-off double-barrel shotgun across state lines, holding that such weapons had no reasonable relationship to a well-regulated militia and thus were not protected by the Second Amendment.

Seventy years later, however, the court struck down a Washington, D.C., ordinance banning the possession of handguns in the district, holding that the Second Amendment does guarantee an individual's right to keep and bear arms. That ruling held that the clause referring to well-regulated militias was only "prefatory" in nature and does not limit or expand the "operational" clause that guarantees a right to keep and bear arms.

Even in that case, however, former Justice Antonin Scalia wrote that the Second Amendment is not absolute and that it does not guarantee a right to keep and carry any type of weapon for any purpose.

"We think that limitation is fairly supported by the historical tradition of prohibiting the carrying of 'dangerous and unusual weapons,'" he wrote.

But then last year, in a case striking down the state of New York's requirement that people had to demonstrate "proper cause" for a concealed carry permit, the court said the Second Amendment protects the right to keep and bear arms that are "in common use," and that restrictions violate the amendment if they are not "consistent with the Nation's historical tradition of firearm regulation."

As of Jan. 18, the federal court in the Southern District had not yet set a schedule for hearing the case.

Custer Park Fire Dept. offering smoke detectors

The Custer Park Fire Department is teaming up with the Illinois Fire Safety Alliance to provide safety education as well as free 10-year sealed battery smoke detectors.

This program was started by firefighter/paramedic Leslie Crum who was the victim of a house fire in 2018 and suffered smoke inhalation after going back inside for a family pet and noticed the smoke detectors that previously had worked, were not.

Thankfully Crum saved the dog, but almost lost her life due to being overcome with smoke. She was taken to a local hospital where she was placed on a ventilator to breathe and then was flown by Life Flight to a burn center in Rockford, IL.

Now Leslie has a passion for public safety and education and wanted to bring a smoke detector program to her fire department.

The smoke detector program is designed to educate Illinois residents on the dangers of home fires and how to prevent fires from occurring as well as making sure residents have the proper working smoke detector.

The 10-year sealed battery detector ensures that the power source can not be removed from the detector. If properly maintained, these detectors will last their 10-year lifetime.

For more information on the smoke detector and installation program, please contact Leslie at 815-252-4768 or paramediclcrum@yahoo.com.

Gigantar welcomed to Route 66

Photo by Marney Simon

LIGHTING THE WAY – Gigantar made its way to Joliet and the Rock & Roll Museum on Route 66, with an official lighting ceremony held on Friday, Jan. 20. Hundreds of visitors showed up to watch the ceremony despite the freezing temperatures.

STAFF REPORT

It's the largest handmade guitar sculpture ever created. And now, it's nestled into its home as part of the marquee at the Illinois Rock & Roll Museum on Route 66 in downtown Joliet.

On Jan. 20, hundreds of rock & roll fans waited in the cold for the official opening ceremony at the museum at 9 W. Cass St. in downtown Joliet, as the lights were turned on by Cheap Trick frontman Rick Nielsen, with help from local dignitaries, sign designer Shannon MacDonald, and singer-songwriter Jim Peterik, founder of the rock band Survivor.

The 24-foot-long guitar that was fashioned for the museum even has a name: Gigantar The Illinois Rock & Roll Museum on Route 66 is a public charity 501c3 nonprofit organization that exists to preserve the history of musicians and bands with ties to Illinois while educating visitors about the state's rich music history.

The mission of the museum is to meet their goals through operation of a world-class museum that collects, preserves and exhibits artifacts of artists who have reached national and international recognition, and by providing enlightening educational programs.

The museum is currently undergoing renovations. The building will include exhibit space, a performance music hall and the Illinois Rock & Roll Museum on Route 66 Music Hall of Fame, gift shop, and is the home of the Road To Rock Radio online streaming radio station.

Prior to installation at the museum, Gigantar made a short tour of Route 66 from Springfield to Chicago, stopping in towns along the way, including a quick stop in front of the Gemini Giant.

Wilmington Freemason's chili cook-off seeks entries

The Wilmington Freemasons Lodge #208 will be having their 13th annual Chili Cook-Off to fund the Pedals for Progress program on Sunday, Feb. 26 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Tasting and a bowl of house chili $10 for adults, $5 for kids over 11 and free for kids 11 and under. There will also be $1 hot dogs available.

Wilmington Masonic Lodge is located at 311 Main St., Wilmington.

Think you have what it takes to be the Chili King? Register to be a contestant. Call Ben Stickel 815-370-7331 or Matt Lohmar 815-210-9606.

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Gas prices continue to rise

Average gasoline prices in Illinois have risen 3.8 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging $3.52/g, according to GasBuddy's survey of 4,378 stations in Illinois.

Prices in Illinois are 36.5 cents per gallon higher than a month ago and stand 5.8 cents per gallon higher than a year ago.

According to GasBuddy price reports, the cheapest station in Illinois was priced at $2.99/g while the most expensive was $4.49/g, a difference of $1.50/g.

Locally, prices jumped 16 cents per gallon in Braidwood ($3.52/g. Monday), 12 cents (average) in Wilmington to $3.49 and remained unchanged in Coal City at $3.49/g average.

"Gasoline prices continued their upward trajectory last week as oil prices pulled them higher across the majority of the country, and continued refinery challenges kept supply of gasoline from rising more substantially," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy.

"Macroeconomic factors have continued to weigh on oil and refined products, as strong demand in China hasn't been slowed much by a surge in new Covid cases. In addition, releases of crude oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve have wrapped up. Concerns are increasing that without additional oil, supply will tighten in the weeks ahead, especially as the nation starts to move away from softer demand in the height of winter. Moving forward, it doesn't look good for motorists, with prices likely to continue accelerating."

The national average price of gasoline has risen 11.3 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging $3.39/g. The national average is up 30.2 cents per gallon from a month ago.

The national average price of diesel has risen 2.6 cents in the last week and stands at $4.60 per gallon.

Epilepsy Support Group forming in Coal City

Illinois Epilepsy Support and Resources provides support to people with epilepsy in Central and Northwest Illinois.

These include but are not limited to: peer support, caregiver support, support in accessing benefits, navigating insurance, identification and linkage to medical professionals, access to counseling, and help coordinating transportation.

An introductory meeting will be held Tuesday, Jan. 31, beginning at 10 a.m. in New Hope Presbyterian Church, 80 N. Garfield St., Coal City. Beans-and-Bite will be hosting the group.

For more information visit the Illinois Epilepsy Support and Resources Facebook page, streatorunlimited.org/epilepsy or contact Stephanie Harcharik at 815-673-5574.

Streator Unlimited, Inc. administers this project under a grant from the Illinois Dept. of Human Services.

Goal: draw, color and create your own artwork to express encouragement, positive attitude, funny humor, or just feelings from past memories.
Sponsored by Gymshoe Art©
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Drawing by Graham Dillon
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OBITUARIES

Troy C. Dixon

MORRIS—Troy C. Dixon, 49, of Morris, passed away peacefully on Thursday, Jan. 19, 2023.

Born Sept. 6, 1973 in Joliet, Troy Christopher was a son of Karen Jean (Willett) Dixon, of Coal City and the late Jimmie Melvin Dixon. He was raised in Morris and in past years attended Phelan Acres Bible Church. Troy worked as a mechanic; was employed by Meineke Car Care Center in Crest Hill for several years, as well as other local automotive repair shops. Troy took pleasure in fishing, and cherished the time spent with his son, Dakota.

Survivors include his mother, Karen; son, Dakota Christopher and the mother of his son, Caryl Dixon, both of Stafford, VA; brother, Sean (Suzanne) Dixon, of Morris; half-brother, Josh; half-sister, Felicia; two nephews, Justin and Noah; four aunts: Martha McKinnis, of Texas; Linda Gray, of Oklahoma; Joyce Jackson, of Texas and Wanda Davis, of Morris and numerous cousins.

Troy was preceded in death by his father, Jimmie Dixon on Feb. 8, 2016 and his grandparents: Ida and Jimmie Dixon, formerly of Texas and Charles and Wilma Willett, formerly of Kentucky and two uncles, Gary Dixon and Danny Dixon, both formerly of Texas.

Private family visitation and services were held at Reeves Funeral Home in Coal City with Pastor Rodney Chappell officiating. Cremation rites were accorded at the conclusion of the services, and Troy will be laid to rest in Evergreen Cemetery in Morris.

Preferred memorials may be made as contributions to his family for their distribution.

Family and friends are encouraged to log onto www.ReevesFuneral.com to sign the guest book, upload photographs and share Troy's memorial page online through social media.

Funeral services and arrangements were made under the direction and care of Reeves Funeral Homes, Ltd. in Coal City.

Pauline Pelton

WILMINGTON—Pauline Pelton, 98, of Wilmington, passed away on Monday, Jan. 23, 2023 at Park Point in Morris.

Born July 11, 1924 in Mattoon, IL, she was a daughter of Robert and Jessie (Fritchley) Erwin. Pauline was raised and educated in Wilmington. On Aug. 30, 1941 she married Raymond Pelton in Beecher, IL and together they cherished 45 years until his passing on April 22, 1987. Pauline worked as a furniture buyer for DeYoung Furniture in Wilmington for many years. She was a member of the First Presbyterian Church in Wilmington and served as past treasurer for the church. Pauline enjoyed volunteering her time at Kuzma Care, liked gardening and quilting, and loved traveling.

Survivors include two children, Raymond K. (Darlynn) Pelton, of Wilmington and Linda M. (Gene) Kinder, of Coal City; five grandchildren: Hope Becker, Heather Jurzak, Amy Best, Shawn Kinder and Derek Kinder; 11 great-grandchildren, 10 great-great-grandchildren, two sisters-in-law, Joan Erwin, of The Villages, FL and Joanne Erwin, of Indiana; one daughter-in-law, Bonnie Pelton and numerous nieces, nephews and cousins.

Pauline was preceded in death by her parents, husband, Raymond; son, George Pelton and three brothers: Clifford (Sarah), Bernard and Marion Erwin.

A private family service will be held and burial will follow in Oakwood Cemetery in Wilmington where Pauline will be laid to rest beside her husband, Raymond.

Preferred memorials in Pauline's memory may be made as gifts to the First Presbyterian Church, 301 N. Kankakee Street, Wilmington, IL 60481 or Lightways Hospice.

Friends and family are encouraged to log onto www.BaskervilleFuneral.com to sign the online guestbook, submit photos and share Pauline's memorial page via social media.

Funeral arrangements have been made under the direction and care of Baskerville Funeral Home in Wilmington.

Lori Regan-Suski

BOURBONNAIS—Lori Regan-Suski, 59, of Bourbonnais, and formerly of Romeoville, passed away Friday, Jan. 20, 2023 at the home of her brother in Coal City.

Born July 2, 1963 in Chicago, Lori Ann was a daughter of Eugene Robert and Louise Ann (Mareczyk) Regan. She was raised and educated in Romeoville and graduated from Romeoville High School with the class of 1981. Lori was a compassionate caregiver, who throughout the years was active with A.B.A.T.E, volunteered with Toys for Tots and was always a tremendous supporter of Veteran Organizations. She had a love of animals; enjoyed motorcycles and traveling, and cherished her nieces and nephews. Lori's life was always centered on family, and she was fortunate to have many dear friends who were like family.

Survivors include her fiancé, and the true love of her life, Eddie Anderson, of Bourbonnais; three brothers and sisters-in-law: Robert and Cheri Regan, of Coal City; Kevin and Gidget Regan, of Yorkville and Christopher and Bridget Davis, of Forsythe, MO; nieces and nephews: Laura Regan, Loren (Jason) Klinker, Darius (Gabby) Regan, Amber (Ryan) Jerz, Cheyenne (Sean) Conn, Faith Regan (fiancé, Aaron Harrison) and Dakota Regan; several great-nieces and great-nephews, and aunts and uncles: Cathy Albright, of Plainfield; Ronald (Penny) Pilarczyk, of Clarendon Hills, IL; Robert (Joyce) Pilarczyk, of Naperville; June Swiec, of Chicago and Nancy DiChiria, of Northlake, IL.

Lori was preceded in death by her grandparents, parents, step-father, William Davis and nephew, Brandon Regan.

Per Lori's wishes, cremation rites have been accorded.

The family will receive friends for a memorial visitation and open house at Reeves Funeral Home, 75 N. Broadway, one block north of IL Route 113 in Coal City on Saturday, Jan. 28, 2023 from 1 p.m. until the time of Life Celebration at 4 p.m. Lori's cousin, Pastor Thomas Nowaczyk will officiate.

Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Lori's memory to her family for their distribution in offsetting final expenses.

Family and friends are encouraged to log onto: www.ReevesFuneral.com to sign the guest book, upload photographs and share Lori's memorial page online through social media.

Cremation services and memorial arrangements have been made under the direction and care of Reeves Funeral Homes, Ltd. in Coal City.

Paul Stein

GERMANTOWN HILLS—Paul Daniel Stein, 41, of Germantown Hills, formerly of Chillicothe, found eternal peace on Friday, Jan. 20, 2023.

Born April 27, 1981, Paul Daniel was the son of Mark Stein and Diane Perkins. He was an idea guy with clear focus on his professional goals. Paul worked tirelessly to earn supervisory and managerial jobs throughout his long tenures with Mediacom and most recently Sherman's. He won the respect of all who worked with him and made many friends during his life. Paul had many shared interests with friends and was an avid concert goer who was committed to every mosh pit he could find. He will be forever remembered for his sense of humor, humongous heart, and willingness to help friends. To know Paul was to love Paul.

He is survived by his sweetheart, Lauren, married in 2017, and their daughter, Ava, born in 2019; his parents, Mark (Nancy) Stein and Diane (Dave) Perkins; his sister, Gretchen (Brandon) Williams and step-siblings: Erin (Chris) Rebholz and Carl Whitecotton; nieces and nephews: Taylor, Logan, Spencer, Gabrielle, Wyatt, Haylee, Haven, Skyla and Aeris; and numerous aunts, uncles, and cousins.

Paul was preceded in death by his grandparents: Harry and Carolyn Stein and Homer Jr. and Jean Smith.

"Changes come…Keep your dignity…Take the high road…Take it like a man" -- Puscifer

The family will receive friends for a visitation on Friday, Jan. 27, 2023 at Great Oaks Community Church, 515 IL Route 116, in Germantown Hills from 3 to 6 p.m. A celebration of life will follow at 6 p.m., officiated by Pastor Jason Roton.

Cremation rites will be accorded following the services.

Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Paul's memory to the family in order to establish an education fund for his daughter, Ava.

Family and friends are encouraged to log onto ReevesFuneral.com to sign the online guest book, upload photographs, and share Paul's memorial page via social media. Those who wish to access Paul's services virtually are also welcome to join the live stream or watch on-demand by following the link on Paul's memorial page.

Funeral services and arrangements are being made under the direction and care of Reeves & Baskerville Funeral Homes in Coal City.

The best apps to help identify the wild

EARTH TALK
Questions & Answers About Our Environment

Dear EarthTalk: What are some of the best apps out there for helping identify plants and/or wildlife?

-- J. Moser, Summertown, SC

Not surprisingly in this day and age, you don't need a PhD to identify plants and animals out in the natural world. All you need is a smartphone and an app.

One of the best known and most downloaded of this new breed of ID apps is iNaturalist, a joint initiative of the California Academy of Sciences and National Geographic.

You can use it to take a photo of a plant or animal and get a list of possible species based on your location. And if that doesn't work, you can escalate to a community of expert naturalists via the app to help identify more obscure species.

If footprints are all you have to identify wildlife passing through your area, check out the iTrack Wildlife app.

To use it, simply input a few basic descriptors (size of the track, number and shape of toes, claws visible or not, etc.) and then get back a list of likely matches. The app is also searchable offline if you're beyond cell range.

Bird enthusiasts will appreciate Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Merlin Bird ID. You can upload a photo and/or enter information about the bird you saw, such as its size, location, and colors observed, and the app uses artificial intelligence (AI) to give you back a list of possible species.

Meanwhile, the Birdnet app, also from Cornell's ornithologists, utilizes recordings of birdsong to tell you which avian species are nearby.

When you launch Birdnet, it records the noise in your surroundings and can zero in on a specific chirp or call to identify which bird is making it. So far, the app has cataloged more than 1,000 of the most common bird species in North America and Europe.

Want to identify that creepy crawly making its way across the path? Picture Insect uses AI to match the insect you have photographed against its database of insect photos contributed by some three million users to make a match and let you know just what you're dealing with.

Likewise, the company behind Picture Insect (Glority) also offers Picture Fish, Picture Bird, Picture Mushroom, Picture Animal and Picture This (for plants), all of which use AI to help ID different types of living things from your photos.

Meanwhile, the LeafSnap app, developed by the Smithsonian Institution, Columbia University and the University of Maryland, uses visual recognition technology to identify thousands of plants, flowers, fruits and trees from user-submitted photos of leaves.

LeafSnap's developers report that the app can recognize 90 percent of all known flora species on the planet. You can download the app to your phone and make use of it even without an Internet connection.

Another app beloved to help identify plants and trees is PlantSnap, which uses machine learning technology and AI to determine the species of the plant, flower or shrub pic you have just snapped. The Colorado-based start-up behind this app has collected upwards of 475 million plant images in its database which it has leveraged to identify more than 650,000 plants for users around the world.

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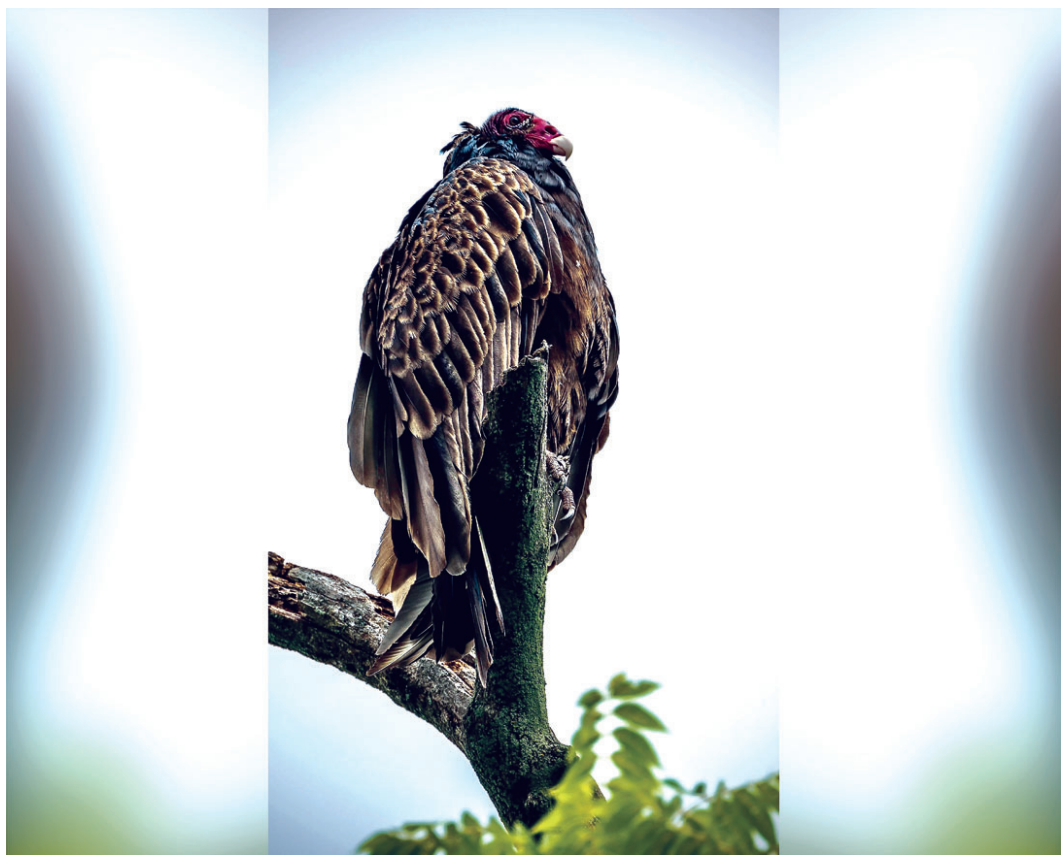

Courtesy photo by: Joe Viola

SHOREWOOD RESIDENT Joe Viola's photo of a turkey vulture at Rock Run Rookery in Joliet won first place in the Forest Preserve District of Will County's 2022 Preserve the Moment Photo Contest. The vulture picture was a monthly finalist photo that won the overall contest after receiving the most votes on Facebook.

Vulture photo victorious in photo contest

Shorewood resident Joe Viola's turkey vulture photo was the big winner in the Forest Preserve District of Will County's 2022 Preserve the Moment photo contest.

Viola's vulture picture was one of eight monthly finalists chosen throughout the course of the contest from May through December 2022. His photo went on to win the overall contest after receiving the most votes on Facebook in early January 2023. Viola will receive a $500 MasterCard gift card for his first-place finish.

"I took that photo on Route 6 at Rock Run Rookery on the way home from work," Viola said via email after being notified of his win. "I saw it sitting in the trees along the water's edge and was able to pull over and get the shot. At first I thought it was a juvenile eagle until I looked into the camera and was able to see the red head. It was still great to see."

The photo's detail and painting-like quality immediately drew the attention of online voters in the contest, who called it a "majestic" and "glamorous" photo.

Chad Morsch of Romeoville will receive a $250 MasterCard gift card for his second-place photo of a fox squirrel. Naperville resident Bertrand Leclercq will receive a $150 MasterCard gift card for his third-place photo of an eagle.

Facebook voters picked monthly finalists after Forest Preserve judges narrowed the entries to the top five. For the final round of voting, all eight monthly finalists competed for top honors, and more than 1,250 votes were cast on the Forest Preserve's Facebook page, Facebook.com/WillCoForests.

Monthly finalists received $75 gift cards. Three contest participants chosen at random to receive $75 MasterCard gift cards were: Tiffany Adams of Chicago, Robert DesCamps of Plainfield and Emilie Brazinski of Plainfield. All prizes are funded by The Nature Foundation of Will County, willcountynature.org.

During the 2022 contest, almost 1,000 photos were submitted for consideration. To view all contest entries, visit the Forest Preserve District's Flickr account, Flickr.com/WillCoForests.

For more information on the Forest Preserve District of Will County, visit ReconnectWithNature.org.

Lawmakers fired up over sheriffs' dissent on weapons ban

CAPITOL FACTS

Rich Miller

"All they are saying," claimed Illinois Sheriff's Association executive director Jim Kaitschuk about dozens of his members, "is 'We're not going to knock on people's doors to ask whether they have registered their firearms. And if they're arrested solely on that charge, we will not house them in our jails until ordered to do so by a competent authority."

Springfield's WICS TV reported that Kaitschuk also believes the reaction to what those sheriffs have said about refusing to enforce the state's new assault weapons ban law because of their constitutional objections has been "overblown."

Well, when you put it that way, maybe so. But if that's the case, then why even facilitate the release of a nearly identical statement by as many as 90 (according to Kaitschuk) county sheriffs saying they won't enforce a law?

Kaitschuk admitted to Chicago's ABC 7 TV that there's nothing in the law mandating local compliance checks. "That is not a charge that is provided to us, or mandated to us in the bill that passed and was signed by the governor."

What the sheriffs have basically done is to deliberately inflame the public for no good reason, and then tossed in an empty threat to not house violators in their jails, unless they have an order from a judge.

And while there has been much rejoicing in some Downstate areas over their local sheriffs' performative "virtue signaling," there has been some strong pushback in the suburbs, where, for instance, DuPage County Sheriff James Mendrick released one of those boiler plate statements vowing not to enforce the new registration law because he believed the statute was unconstitutional.

In response, DuPage County's 15 Democratic state legislators released a statement saying they were "dismayed and angered by the recent pronouncement by the DuPage County Sheriff to unilaterally direct his office to flout and disregard the duly passed and signed Protect Illinois Communities Act. The Sheriff has no authority to determine the constitutionality of a law - that is up to the courts."

"The Sheriff's words send a clear message that lawbreakers are welcome here," the statement read.

One of the signatories was Rep. Maura Hirschauer (D-Batavia), who introduced an assault weapons ban and worked her bill for months before it was taken over by more experienced hands.

Sheriff Mendrick barely won election in 2018, but the Democrats didn't field a candidate against him in 2022, which turned out to be an even stronger year for the local party.

Elections obviously have consequences.

But the sheriffs currently have significant powers in state statutes, and legislative elections can have consequences, too. And some legislators are obviously starting to get pretty fired up over the sheriffs' behavior of late.

During the 2019 cannabis legalization debate, for instance, sheriffs disseminated tons of disinformation (one even claimed that sheriffs would be forced to euthanize all their drug-sniffing dogs). Several sheriffs sided with the far right during the COVID-19 mitigation period and refused to enforce executive orders, and many eagerly contributed to the hysteria over the SAFE-T Act. And now, this.

Many legislators are former local government officials, so they've traditionally been reluctant to take up issues like consolidation, the limits of local authority, etc. I do not know if this latest blow-up will change anything. But, at the same time, I don't recall ever seeing a reaction quite like the one issued by those 15 state legislators today.

Lake County's sheriff issued a statement in favor of the law, and one of the principal sponsors who helped drag the bill across the finish line, Lake County-based state Rep. Bob Morgan (D-Deerfield), had this to say on the radio the other day about the other sheriffs' statements: "I keep coming back to the fact that I think it's embarrassing for them. They really literally only have one job. Their job is to follow the law and enforce the law. And they're saying, 'We're not going to do that.' And so, I think they should be pretty embarrassed."

State statute requires sheriffs, acting as their counties' supervisors of safety, to enforce all state traffic laws. But there is no requirement to enforce other laws. And their state-mandated oaths of office require them to support the U.S. and Illinois constitutions, but not individual laws.

Law enforcement discretion is a long-accepted policy. But sheriffs issuing written statements flatly declaring that they will not enforce a state law no matter what, sure does appear to go well beyond that.

Crafting a law to deal with the problem, though, could be difficult.

Rich Miller also publishes Capitol Fax, a daily political newsletter, and CapitolFax. com.

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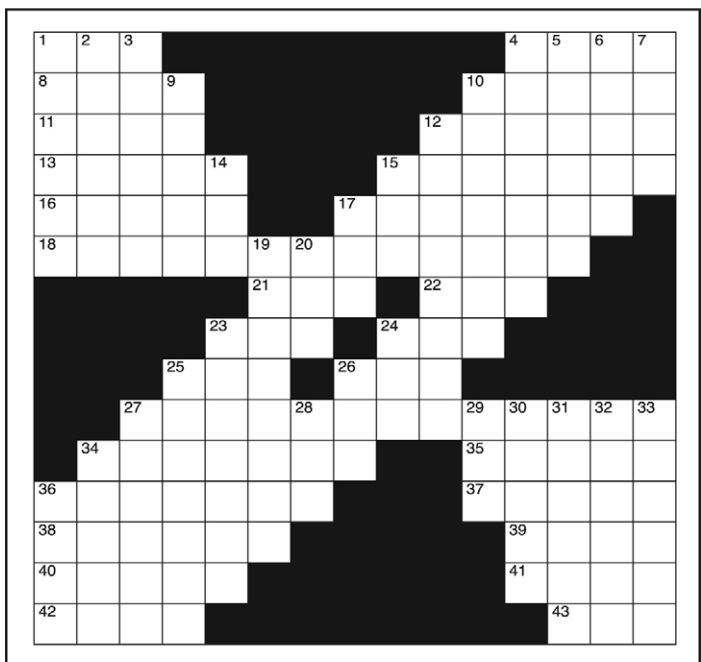

Report predicts billions in motor fuel tax revenue losses if state meets EV goals

BY NIKA SCHOONOVER
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

SPRINGFIELD – Despite Illinois' efforts to smoothly integrate electric vehicles into the state's economy, a new report from the Illinois Economic Policy Institute is warning of a potential steep decline in transportation revenue as more EVs hit the road.

The primary issue is motor fuel taxes, which will see a significant drop as more electric vehicles make their way to the road and fewer people fill their cars with gas.

Since motor fuel taxes make up the backbone of state funding for road and bridge projects, ILEPI, which has strong ties to organized labor, warned in a report that new revenue sources will have to be identified to ensure the state's 10-year capital improvements plan remains on track.

"There's absolutely a benefit to having EVs but it will ultimately have a strong impact on transportation funding," Mary Tyler, the author of the report, said in an interview. "It's something that I don't think is talked about enough."

Motor fuel tax is the state's leading source of transportation funding and makes up 52% of Illinois' total transportation revenue and 82% of its contributions to the federal highway trust fund.

The report's main policy recommendation is implementing a vehicle miles traveled, or VMT, fee which would replace the existing motor fuel tax with a fee determined by the number of miles a car travels on Illinois roads.

The idea has been floated in the past, including by Gov. JB Pritzker in an interview with *The Arlington Heights Daily Herald* during his initial gubernatorial campaign in 2018.

"In some states (such as Oregon), they have done tests recently for a VMT tax because we have more and more electric cars on the road, more and more hybrids, and because gas mileage is rising," then-candidate Pritzker told the outlet. "It's only fair if you're on a road and traveling on that road that you should pay your fair share."

In his four years as governor, however, Pritzker has not made a serious legislative push for a VMT.

It's an issue that ILEPI says will become more pressing as the state moves toward its goal of putting 1 million electric vehicles on state roads by the end of the decade – a goal written into law with the passage of the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act in 2021.

Even before this promise was made, Illinois was seeing a yearly increase in electric vehicles. From 2017 to 2021, electric vehicle registrations have increased from 8,255 to 36,482. The most recent data from the Illinois Secretary of State's office shows that, as of December 2022, there are 57,311 electric vehicle registrations.

"Looking at the growth we're seeing, we're seeing it grow at a faster rate than what we ever have before," Tyler said.

According to Tyler's estimate, Illinois would have to add 119,000 electric vehicles every year in order to meet their goal of one million by 2030. If that came to fruition, the state would lose $765 million in combined sales and motor fuel tax when accounting for added EV fees. Counting federal revenues, that figure would jump up to $1.1 billion.

Electric vehicles aside, Tyler said fuel-efficient vehicles pose an additional threat to the state's transportation revenue. Roughly 10% of registered vehicles in Illinois are electric, while the rest of the 11 million are increasingly becoming more fuel-efficient.

"If you take a look at the picture of all the vehicles on the road, as newer vehicles come out that are more fuel-efficient, that means we're just having overall, on average, a more fuel-efficient fleet," Tyler said.

Tyler calculated that the total state and federal revenue loss over the next decade would be about $4.3 billion.

That loss would be especially threatening to the back half of Pritzker's historic 10-year, $45 billion capital infrastructure plan known as Rebuild Illinois.

The roads-and-bridges portion of the 2019 program was made possible in large part by doubling the state's motor fuel tax, which hadn't seen an increase since 1990, then tying it to inflation in subsequent years.. The infrastructure plan also increased Illinois' annual electric vehicle registration fee by $100 annually.

Tyler said while the fee hike helped replace some of the lost revenue, it won't go far enough.

"As soon as the change can be made, the better," Tyler said. "Even to this day, there are EVs on the road that are not paying as much as they would be on motor fuel tax. So there is an impact, it's just right now the impact isn't as big as what it will be in the future."

Other policy areas to explore, Tyler suggests, include increasing existing registration fees even further, implementing a separate hybrid vehicle fee and creating an electric vehicle-specific kilowatt-per-hour fee.

CLUES ACROSS

1. Tax collector
4. Fishes without the line touching water
8. Brooklyn hoopsters
10. Actress Lathan
11. A metric for athletes
12. Food storage location
13. Colossus
15. Desolations
16. Accustom to something unpleasant
17. __ Kubrick, filmmaker
18. You might ask this at Thanksgiving
21. Arkansas city
22. Gave food to
23. Request
24. V-shaped open trough
25. Make lively
26. It accompanies feather
27. Blonde bombshell
34. One who revolves
35. Bluish greens
36. Charity
37. Having the shape of a cube
38. Unwind
39. Believed by some to be the supreme being
40. Checks or guides
41. Leak slowly through
42. Top-quality
43. Midway between south and southeast

CLUES DOWN

1. Part of your foot
2. It's at the back of the eyeball
3. Where things stand
4. Offered
5. Contains pollen
6. Boisterous get-together
7. Asserts out loud
9. They're in the sky
10. Canonized
12. A politician's official stances
14. It can catch fish
15. British thermal unit
17. Helps little firms
19. Where patients go for treatment
20. Large red deer
23. Pokes holes in
24. "Star Wars" hero Solo
25. One in a hospital
26. Scandinavian god of battle
27. Famous cat
28. __ Angeles: City of Angels
29. Type of drug (abbr.)
30. City along the Rhine
31. Animal disease
32. Martini ingredients
33. Get away
34. Rare species of rodent
36. Suppress

Coal City United Methodist Church to host soup supper

Coal City United Methodist Church, located at 6805 E. McArdle Road in Coal City, will hold a Hallelujah" Soup Supper on Saturday, Feb. 4 from 4 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

They will be serving their delicious homemade Chicken Noodle & Stuffed Green Pepper soups. Each meal includes your choice of soup, a sandwich, crackers, a beverage, ice cream & dessert.

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COMET SPORTS

Comets find their groove against Hall

It was all Comets Saturday when the hosted Hall for an afternoon contest. They defeated the visitors 66-34 to improve to 16-4 overall.

Reed-Custer built a 15-11 lead in the first quarter and expanded it to 33-22 by halftime. They went on a 21-10 in the third to send Hall home losers.

Comet highlights included six three-pointers all made by Jake McPherson who ended up with 22 points, two steals, four assists and nine rebounds.

Wes Shats put 20 points on the board, with one assist and 11 rebounds. Jake Reardon had a great defensive game with 10 rebounds, he also helped with two assists and 10 points. Josh Bohac, Cooper Smith and Connor Eggleston chipped in with 4 points each while Colin Monroe made two points.

Loss at Manteno

The Comets were edged by Manteno 48-47 on Friday to spoil their chances of staying tied for first in the conference standings.

Reed-Custer needed a bucket or two after a dismal third quarter when they were out-scored 14-5. They fought back in the closing minutes but didn't get the break they needed.

Jake McPherson and Wes Shats both led the Comets defensively with nine rebounds each. McPherson also had 17 points, one block, one steal and four assists while Shats put up 11 points, had one steal and two assists. Josh Bohac added 10 points, four steals, one assist and one rebound. Colin Monroe (six points) and Jake Reardon (three points) also had a good defensive game with seven rebounds each.

Credit Manteno for making eight treys and going 6-for-10 at the line when they needed their free throws most.

RC vs Herscher

It was a low scoring affair for both teams on Tuesday when Herscher came to town.

The Tigers tried to hold onto the ball to compensate for Reed-Custer's running offense but in the end the Comets prevailed 36-31.

Reed-Custer trailed 5-4 after one but rallied by halftime to go up 18-11. Herscher stayed within striking distance in the third, narrowing the Comet lead to 27-26 before the hosts were tested at the line with 5-for-9 shooting to win it.

Reed-Custer shot just 33 percent (13-39) from the field while Herscher ended up 12-42 for 28 percent so there were plenty of misses on both ends of the court.

Jake McPherson led the Comets in scoring with 13 points, one steal, four assist and four rebounds. Wes Shats crashed the boards for 11 rebounds, one assist and 4 points. Jace Christian chipped in 8 points, four steals, one assist and one rebound. Lucas Foote scored 7 points and contributed two steals, two assists and two rebounds. Bohac finished with four points.

The Comets host Grant Park tonight (Wednesday) before participating in the Beecher Shootout on Saturday. On Monday they'll host El Paso in a rare Monday night game and then Peotone on Wednesday.

Photo by Zadie Sims
GETTING THE BALL away from Herscher is Reed-Custer's Josh Bohac playing at home on Tuesday.

Photo by Zadie Sims
CONNOR EGGLESTON looks for an open teammate during the second quarter of the game against Herscher.

Photo by Zadie Sims
TAKING THE BALL down the court for Reed-Custer is senior Brooklyn Harding with the Lady Comets in the lead.

Lady Comets get the win at Lisle

The Reed-Custer girls basketball team picked up a great road win Monday against conference foe Lisle, 55-34.

The Comets were down 24-21 at the half, but came out with huge energy the second half scoring 34 of their 55 points.

Lead scorer for the game was Kaylee Tribble with a career-high 22 points, 12 rebounds, 1 steal, and 3 blocks. Sam Sprimont had 8 points, 7 rebounds, 3 assists, 2 steals, and 1 block. Caelan Cole added 7 points, 5 rebounds. 3 assists, and 2 steals. Laci Newbrough had 7 points, 4 rebounds, 1 assist and 1 steal. Brooklyn Harding also added 7 points, 2 rebounds, 5 assists, and 2 steals. Gwen Stewart chipped in 2 points, 6 rebounds, and 2 assists. Leah Grace had 2 points and 1 assist. The Lady

The Lady Comets are now 12-13 on the season. They host Peotone on Thursday before playing at Wilmington Monday.

Loss to Beecher

The Lady Comets dropped a tough non-conference game on the road on Saturday to Beecher, 34-27. Reed-Custer led 14-13 at half and lost momentum in the second half.

Kaylee Tribble led the Comets with 10 points, 7 rebounds, 2 assists,2 steals, and a block. Laci Newbrough added 8 points and a team high 9 rebounds, 2 assists and 1 steal.

Brooklyn Harding had 6 points, 2 rebounds, 1 assists, 6 steals, and 1 block. Caelan Cole had 3 points and 1 rebound. Sam Sprimont had 5 rebounds, 1 assist and 1 steal. Gwen Stewart had 4 rebounds and 1 assist.

At Coal City

The Lady Comets dropped a tough one on the road Thursday at Coal City, 58-27.

Coal City had a hot hand shooting and shots won't fall for Reed-Custer. Natalie Flores led the team with 8 points and 4 rebounds.

Caelan Cole had 6 points and 1 steal. Laci Newbrough had 5 points, 1 rebound, and 1 assist. Brooklyn Harding had 3 points, 3 rebounds, 1 and 1 assist. Kaylee Tribble had 2 points, 4 rebounds, and 1 block.

Sam Sprimont had 2 points and 2 rebounds. Leah Grace had 1 point. Gwen Stewart added 2 rebounds and 1 assist.

Photo by Zadie Sims
PASSING THE BALL to a teammate is Comet senior Jake McPhearson playing against Herscher at home on Tuesday. The Comets' next game will be on Friday at Manteno.

JV Panthers advance to regional final

The Reed-Custer 7th grade Panthers came away from their regional semi-final game with a blowout victory over the Saratoga Hawks on Monday.

Matthew Kuban led the way with 21 points in just 16 minutes of play. He was very efficient hitting 10 of 12 field goal attempts to go with his three steals and four rebounds.

Kaiden Klein also had a great game scoring 11 points and grabbing four rebounds. Eddie Bryan had another solid game scoring six points. Corbin Stahl chipped in with five points. Trent Boudreau scored two points, and Caedon Baumgartner added a free throw.

The win puts the Panthers in position to play for the regional title on Wednesday night at five o'clock at Morris Saratoga Grade School.

They will look to improve on their 14-7 record and keep their season alive as they battle undefeated Crest Hill Richland. Bring your friends and wear black! Let's black out the gym and cheer on the Panthers!

Regional start

The Panthers open the regional with a 51-12 victory over Peru Parkside. Leading the scoring on Saturday was Matthew Kuban who poured in 18 points while playing only two and a half quarters.

Kaiden Klein also did some damage, scoring 13 points. Chase Isaac and Caedon Baumgartner each scored six points. Corbin Stahl and Carson Lowe each buried a three-pointer. Jayden Cisco rounded out the high output with two points.

Victory at Gardner

Reed-Custer traveled to Gardner last Wednesday and got off to a sluggish start but, ultimately pulled away and didn't look back and left with a victory in their regular season finale.

The final score was 42-23, after the Panthers took a narrow lead of 20-19 into the fourth quarter. Matt Kuban then took over, scoring 15 of the team's 22 points in the last frame. He led all scorers with 28 points and also added six steals.

Eddie Bryan contributed six points and four rebounds. Kaiden Klein scored five points to go with two assists and five rebounds. Chase Isaac rounded out the scoring total with three points to go along with his six steals.

The Panthers conclude their regular season with a record of 12 wins and 7 losses.

They began postseason play Saturday at Morris Saratoga at 1130 a.m. against Peru Parkside.

Loss to Ewood

The Panthers dropped a close to Elwood, 25-24. The team lost an eight point lead in the last quarter and shot just 5-for-12 at the free throw line, including three misses in the last seconds.

Several players had an opportunity to score and many took advantage.

Matthew Kuban led the way with 11 of the team's 24 points. Kaiden Klein, Corbin Stahl, and Jayden Cisco each scored three points. Eddie

Bryan scored two points and Caedon Baumgartner added a free throw.

Panther 8th graders easily defeat Elwood

After a couple tough losses last week in the conference tourney, the 8th grade Panthers got back in the win column by defeating Elwood by a final score of 39-9.

Several Panthers contributed in scoring. Leading the way was Jesse Tresouthick with 14 points. Lucas Walsh had 11. Orion Bergmann added 6, Alex Fierro had 4, and Frank Crotty and Brandon Pries rounded out the scoring with 2 points each.

The team was 9-10 overall prior to playing their final regular season contest at Gardner last week.

COMET SPORTS

Comets finish second in ICE tourney

There were few surprises Saturday when Wilmington hosted the ICE conference wrestling tournament.

The state-ranked Coalers easily took the team title with 250.5 points, outdistancing second place Reed-Custer with its 121.5 points and third place Lisle with 112 points. Wilmington finished fifth with 69 points.

Coal City had eight tournament champions, three second placers, two finish third and one fourth.

Coming in first place were Coalers Culan Lindemuth (106), Brody Widlowski (113), Aidan Kenney (120), Brant Widlowski (138), Mataeo Blessing (145), Derek Carlson (170), Joey Breneman (182) and Braiden Young (195). Finishing second were Brock Finch (126), Jack Poyner (160) and Drake Dearth (220)

Claiming third place were Coal City's Evan Greggain (132) and Tyler Porth (285) while settling for fourth place was Zakk Kramer (152).

Reed-Custer brought nine wrestlers and all nine placed including champions Kody Marschner (220) and Gunnar Berg (285). 2nd Place: 170 Rex Pfeifer (170) finished in 2nd place while Jayden Sanchez (113), Kris Budick (126), Jeremy Eggleston (138) and Dominic Alaimo (182) all placed third. Finishing fourth were Judith Gamboa (106), Max Lichaj (120).

Wilmington entered five wrestlers with all of them placing. Coming in second place were Wildcats Landon Dooley (113), Matt Swisher (152) and Brody Benson (285). Capturing third place at 195 pounds was Hunter Hayes while freshman Logan Van Duyne (170) settled for fourth place.

At 106 pounds, Coal City sophomore Lindemuth (34-9) pinned Ryan Hsu from Lisle (22-8) in 2:46 for the title bout. Reed-Custer junior Judith Gamboa pinned her first opponent in 1:26 before suffering a 1:58 fall to settle for fourth.

At 113 there were just three opponents which meant Brody Widlowski (30-1) had a bye until facing Wilmington's Dooley (33-8) for the championship. Widlowski won it by a 13-8 decision. Reed-Custer freshman Jayden Sanchez (10-16) placed third.

At 120, five wrestlers battled with Kenney (27-11), a Coal City freshman beating Lisle's Alexander Ferari (24-7) by 7-2 decision. Comet Max Lichaj (14-13), who went 1-2 for the day, was upended by 2:36 fall in the third place match.

Courtesy photo

THE REED-CUSTER wrestling team finished second on Saturday during the I.C.E. Conference tournament held at Wilmington. Gunnar Berg and Kody Marschner (center) hold their weight bracket posters showing they finished in first place.

At 126, Micah Spinazzola from Peotone came in with a 2-0 record to surprise Coal City's Brock Finch (29-12) with a 2-1 decision in the championship bout. Comet Kris Budick (17-17) earned a 3:34 fall over Bryse Astle (Herscher) to decide third place.

At 132, Coaler Evan Greggain (20-12) lost by 5:44 fall to eventual champion Santino Izzi of Peotone. He then had a pin in the wrestleback and a 4-3 decision over Nolan Kelly of Lisle for a third place finish.

At 138, Coal City's Brant Widlowski (16-1) had back-to-back falls in the five-man group to capture first place. Reed-Custer's Eggleston (28-7) battled back after a first round loss with two straight pins to finish in third.

At 145, Mataeo Blessing (35-3) of Coal City had the best record, giving him a bye in the three-man weight class. He had to wrestle only once, beating Ian Kreske (1-1) of Peotone by 11-3 major decision.

At 152, Wilmington junior Matt Swisher (14-14) got by Coal City's Zakk Kramer (6-4) with a 4-3 decision before being pinned 4:43 in the title bout to settle for second place.

At 160, Coaler Jack Poyner (29-10) was edged 7-6 by Carter Watkins (21-6) of Manteno in the championship. It was his only match in the three-man class.

At 170, there were five wrestlers with Coal City's Derek Carlson (29-5) winning the title by defeated Reed-Custer's Rex Pfeifer (32-4) with a 5-1 decision. Wilmington's Logan VanDuyne (14-10) was pinned by Carlson 1:25 for starters before getting a 1:40 on Trevor Miller from Herscher. Van Duyne battled hard against Jackson Bergeron (2-1) from Peotone to decide third place but was pinned 3:50.

At 182, Coaler Joey Breneman (33-5) won both of his matches by first period pins to claim first place. Dominic Alaimo (21-14) from Reed-Custer lost his first match by 5:54 fall but finished with a 1:31 fall and tech fall 4:00 to earn third place.

At 195, with four wrestlers battling, Braiden Young (33-1) started with a 2:51 fall before taking first place with a tech fall 4:34 over Joe Raineri of Lisle for the championship. Wilmington's Hunter Hayes (23-7) lost to Raineri in the opening round before beating Gavin Collins of Herscher by 3:12 fall to decide third place.

At 220, the five-man field was bested by Comet Kody Marschner (26-1) who started with a 2:53 fall before defeating Coal City's Drake Dearth (30-6) in :30 seconds for the championship.

At 285, Reed-Custer senior Gunnar Berg (32-2) bumped Coaler Tyler Porth (13-7) with an opening 1:38 fall. Berg the faced Wilmington's Brody Benson (13-12) for the championship, beating him with 1:13 fall. Porth came back with a 4:59 fall over Tate White of Herscher to settle for third place.

The three teams now join eight others for the Feb. 4 regional which will be held at Reed-Custer. The team with the most points advances to the dual team sectional (Feb. 21) while the top three individuals at regional advance to the Feb. 10-11 sectional at Coal City.

Comets find out why Coalers own the mat

Photo by Zadie Sims

FACING HIS OPPONENT - Reed-Custer's Dominic battles Coal City's Braiden Young on Thursday at 195 pounds.

On Monday, the wrestling Comets celebrated Senior night hosting Prairie Central and Ridgeview. The Comets came out hot! The team got two big wins beating Ridgeview, 67-12, and Prairie Central, 48-33.

The team has now achieved a record of 20-6.

Last Thursday, the Comets did what most teams have done when they wrestled against state-ranked Coal City: They lost.

This is Coal City's year as they are 38-2 and the ICE conference winners. The problem is they won't be any weaker in years to come with over 40 on their roster and 14 are seniors. Many underclassmen were on the team that won state as middle schoolers.

Reed-Custer still had some highlights during their 69-12 loss to the Coalers. Winners for RC included 170 Rex Pfeifer, 220 Kody Marschner and 285 Christian Mounts.

Coal City 69, Reed-Custer 12

106—Lindemuth, Culan (CC) over Gamboa, Judith, fall 0:39
113—Widlowski, Brody (CC) over Sanchez, Jayden, fall 3:54
120—Kenney, Aidan (CC) over Billingsley, Brock, fall 3:18
126—Finch, Brock (CC) over Budick, Kristofer, fall 1:04
132—Houston, Noah (CC) by forfeit
138—Widlowski, Brant (CC) over Eggleston, Jeremy, fall 0:35
145—Blessing, Mataeo (CC) over Davis, Jason, fall 2:15
152—Kramer, Zakk (CC) over Shultz, Aiden, tech fall 18-2
160—Waliczek, Alec (CC) by forfeit
170—Pfeifer, Rex (RC) over Poyner, Jack, fall 2:00
182—Breneman, Joey (CC) by forfeit
195—Young, Braiden (CC) over Alaimo, Dominic, maj dec 12-1
220—Marschner, Kody (RC) over Dearth, Drake, fall 4:06
285—Porth, Tyler (CC) by forfeit

Photo by Zadie Sims

GOING UP against Coal City's Drake Dearth on Thursday is Comet senior Kody Marschner who got a fall in 4:06.

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Lady Panthers sweep Channahon

The Reed-Custer 8th grade volleyball team won against Dwight Friday night, 25-20, 20-25, and 25-17.

Mackenzie Foote had seven kills, one block, and five aces. Taylor Bova had seven kills and two aces. Gracie Robinson had three kills. Kayla Schott had four aces and two digs. Kirstin Klein had seven assists, four aces, and one kill. Caysie Esparza had three aces and three digs. Alyssa Wollenzien had two kills.

The 7th grade Lady Panthers lost to Dwight. Madelynn Marschner had 2 aces. Kamryn Wilkey had 4 digs and 2 aces. Sophie Moyers had 1 ace and 2 kills, Adalyn Steichen had 3 aces and Kadence VanDuyne had 2 aces and 2 digs. We look forward to another great week of volleyball.

The Reed-Custer 8th grade volleyball team won against Channahon in three on Thursday, winning 25-23, 19-25, and 25-21. Kirstin Klein had five aces and 10 assists.

Taylor Bova had four kills and four aces. Mackenzie Foote had five kills, three aces, and two blocks. Caysie Esparza had five digs. Alyssa Wollenzien had four aces and a kill. Kayla Schott had two aces and a kill. Great work and effort last night ladies!

The 7th grade squad won their match against Channahon on the same night, making it a sweep for the Lady Panthers.

Peyton Landgraf had 6 aces and 3 digs. Kamryn Wilkey had 2 kills, 3 digs and 1 ace, Sophie Moyers had 4 kills and 4 aces, Adalyn Steichen had 2 aces, Mackenzie VanWinsen had 1 ace and 1 block. Lastly,

Kadence VanDuyne had 2 digs and 4 aces. The girls played a great game against Channahon!

Scratched by 'Cats

The 8th grade Lady Panthers lost to Wilmington earlier in the week, 18-25 and 21-25. Taylor Bova had a seven consecutive serving streak, four aces, and one kill. Caysie Esparza, Alyssa Wollenzien, and Mackenzie Foote each had one kill. They play Channahon Thursday night.

The 7th graders fell to Wilmington too. Madelynn Marschner had 2 aces. Kamryn Wilkey had 2 digs and 4 aces.

Sophie Moyers had 3 aces and Kadence VanDuyne had 4 aces.