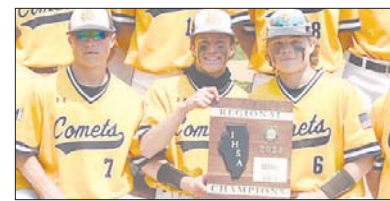


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Photos by Marney Simon

**CLASS OF 2023** — Reed-Custer High School principal Tim Ricketts delivers his final graduation address during the 95th Annual Commencement Ceremony at RCHS on May 21. Ricketts retires this year after 33 years in education.

## Ricketts expresses gratitude in farewell address

BY MARNEY SIMON  
EDITOR

After more than three decades with the Reed-Custer School District, high school principal Tim Ricketts gave his final farewell on Sunday during the 95th Annual Reed-Custer High School Commencement. The 115 graduates of the Class of 2023 walked through the halls for the last time as students on Sunday, May 21.

Ricketts said as he leaves the world of education after 33 years—the past 29 with Reed-Custer—the word to describe his journey is “gratitude,” a quality of being thankful and a readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness.

“I have been very blessed with many things in my life,



JAINA DUBBERT



TYLER WIYNINGER

and I am grateful that I have been able to call Reed-Custer my home for the past 29 years,” Ricketts said. “I have never really felt like I ever went to work.”

Ricketts began as a teacher and coach with the district in 1994, working in those roles for 12 years before moving into administration.

He served as assistant principal for three years before becoming principal. Ricketts is also a Reed-Custer parent, with both of his children proud Comet grads.

“Most of the credit goes to my wife,” he said. “She raised them, she was a 17 year coach’s wife followed by a 17 year principal’s wife. Not too many people would apply for

that job. I am thankful for her because I definitely would not be where I am today if it wasn’t for my wife, Janet.”

Ricketts also thanked teachers, staff, and administration for the years together.

“I have loved every minute of being a teacher, coach and principal here at Reed-Custer, and I will bleed black and gold for the rest of my life,” Ricketts said.

The retiring principal went on to thank the Class of 2023 for a memorable final year.

“I could not have asked for a better class to go out with,” Ricketts said. “It’s not just about the football records, or the conference championships, or the all-state ath-

SEE GREADS, PAGE 3

## R-C says farewell to the Class of 2023

BY MACKENZIE ROMINES  
RCHS STUDENT REPORTER

The Reed-Custer class of 2023 had an extremely notable year, and with the students having graduated Sunday, they are sure to go on to do incredible things in life. The year was nothing short of impressive.

The academic excellence of the Reed-Custer graduates is clear. To be recognized as a board scholar, a student must have over a 4.0 grade point average, and 22 students were awarded this title. Principal Tim Ricketts said that is the largest number of board scholars in the 14 years of being the principal.

Alexandra Bohac graduated with a GPA of 4.2923, and will be attending Augustana College in the fall.

Caelan Cole graduated with a GPA of 4.2346, and will be attending Augustana College in the fall.

Gabriella Davies graduated with a GPA of 4.4158, and will be attending Augustana College in the fall.

Jaina Dubbert graduated with a GPA of 4.3375, and will be attending Olivet Nazarene University in the fall.

Colin Esparza graduated with a GPA

of 4.0691, and will be attending Joliet Junior College in the fall.

Connor Esparza graduated with a GPA of 4.0564, and will be attending Joliet Junior College in the fall.

Kaitlyn Faurot graduated with a GPA of 4.0214, and will be attending Eastern Illinois University in the fall.

Halie LaGrange graduated with a GPA of 4.0891 and will be attending Trinity Christian College in the fall.

Maggie Lantka graduated with a GPA of 4.4036, and will be attending San Diego University in the fall.

Jacob McPherson graduated with a GPA of 4.2091 and will be attending University of Wisconsin at Whitewater in the fall.

Grace Moyers graduated with a GPA of 4.1196 and will be attending University of Mississippi in the fall.

Laci Newbrough graduated with a GPA of 4.3906 and will be attending Bradley University in the fall.

Emily Reardon graduated with a GPA of 4.0509 and will be attending Texas A&M University at Corpus Christi in the fall.

Mackenzie Romines graduated with a GPA of 4.1625 and will be attending

Joliet Junior College in the fall.

Wesley Shats graduated with a GPA of 4.1891 and will be attending Lewis University in the fall.

James Sheridan, salutatorian, graduated with a GPA of 4.4278 and will be attending University of St. Francis in the fall.

Jamon Spikings graduated with a GPA of 4.1071 and will be attending Indiana Wesleyan University in the fall.

Nicholas Stroud graduated with a GPA of 4.1673.

Abigail Sunday graduated with a GPA of 4.3818, and will be attending Augustana College in the fall.

Makayla Wilkins graduated with a GPA of 4.319 and will be attending The University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa in the fall.

Tyler Wiyninger, valedictorian, graduated with a GPA of 4.4927 and will be attending University of Minnesota at Twin Cities in the fall.

To be an Illinois State Scholar, students at Reed-Custer had to score at or above the 95th percentile on the

SEE CLASS OF '23, PAGE 3

## Earley retirement

BY MARNEY SIMON  
EDITOR

Three weeks and three days after being sworn in as Braidwood’s newest mayor, Chris Earley has called it quits.

Earley did not make a formal announcement regarding his resignation, a notarized copy of which was tenured last Friday.

Residents found out about the shake-up to local government when this week’s City Council agenda was posted. That agenda included the announcement of a vacancy in the mayoral seat, and the swearing in of Karen Hart as mayor.

On Sunday, the *Braidwood Journal* was given the following statement from the outgoing mayor:

“I, Chris Earley, on May 19, 2023 resigned from my position as Mayor for the City of Braidwood after careful consideration of which path to

take. “Do I spend my term at odds with the City Council while going against my morals, or resign so the city can still continue to move forward?”

“This is a decision I didn’t make lightly, but the decision I felt was best. I wish to thank all of those who supported me and continue to support me.”

With just one full meeting under his belt, Earley had already been at odds with the other four members of the City Council. Last week, Earley posted letters to each of the commissioners that he had made temporary appointments for city attorney and city administrator, citing frustration that the council members “have repeatedly indicated” they have “no intent” to work with Earley on key positions being filled.

Sources close to the situation told the *Braidwood*

SEE EARLEY, PAGE 2



BPD photo

**HELLO FROM UP TOP!** Braidwood officer Dave Cornelli and Wilmington officer Sean Liaromatis take part in the Cop on a Rooftop event at Dunkin’ Donuts in Diamond on May 19, raising funds and awareness for Special Olympics Illinois.

## Embracing the stereotype Local law enforcement hang around Dunkin, for a cause

BY MARNEY SIMON  
EDITOR

Everyone knows the old stereotype of how much cops love their donuts.

This past week, law enforcement officers with Wilmington and Braidwood decided to embrace the cliché and hang around the Dunkin’ Donuts in Diamond, and all for a good cause.

On May 19, the Wilmington Police Department and the Braidwood Police Department partnered up for the 2023 Dunkin’ Cop on a Rooftop event, an annual event that raises funds to benefit the athletes of Special Olympics Illinois.

This year marked the 20th anniversary that the coffee

and donut franchise teamed up with law enforcement across the state. During the event, officers hang out literally on the roof of the shop, encouraging folks to come in and grab a bite and a cup of Joe.

“We have always been interested in participating in this event, and this year we finally had a local Dunkin’ available and willing to host,” Wilmington Police Chief Adam Zink said. “When we were approached by Braidwood PD, we jumped at the opportunity to partner with them.”

SEE COPS, PAGE 2



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