



BRAIDWOOD JOURNAL.com

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Illinois breaks record for tornadoes

Rainfall total tops 11 inches over 15 days

BY ROSE PANIERI
STAFF WRITER

Tornado sirens have become the soundtrack of our lives here in Illinois. As tough as Illinoisans are when it comes to weather, most of us have grown weary of scurrying to our “safe place” as 80 mph winds descend upon us with terrifying regularity.

From EF3 tornadoes resulting in devastation in Kankakee and Streator, to monsoon-intensity rain flooding roads and making the Kankakee and Illinois river jump their banks, 2026 is rapidly becoming one of the most memorable severe weather years in state history.

Weather history

Meteorologist Kevin Jeanes of NBC 5 Storm Team recently commented on the increase of severe weather in Illinois.

“This is the third time in the last four years Illinois has led the country in tornadoes,” he said.

He's right. Illinois is in the midst of yet another record-setting tornado season, continuing a trend of unusually active severe weather that has persisted for several years. The state recorded 136 preliminary tornado reports in 2023, followed by 126 in 2024 and 147 in 2025.

In addition to tornadoes, derechos and straight line winds have wreaked havoc across several counties over the past several years, destroying property, resulting in millions of dollars in damage.

Certainly Illinoisans were due for a break in 2026. Instead, Mother Nature



Photo from NOAA Central Library

POTENTIALLY DEADLY TORNADOES like this one have taken lives and destroyed property in Kankakee, Streator, and downstate this season.

kicked it into high gear.

As of Monday, Illinois has recorded a staggering 164 preliminary tornado reports in 2026, the highest total ever documented in the state's history. The figure surpasses the previous record of 147 tornadoes set just last year by 17 reports, cementing Illinois' status as one of the nation's most active tornado regions.

Shifts in patterns

Meteorologists say the state's location at the crossroads of warm, moisture-rich

air from the Gulf of Mexico and cooler northern air masses has created increasingly favorable conditions for severe weather outbreaks. In recent years, experts have noted a shift in tornado activity eastward from the traditional Great Plains into portions of the Midwest, including Illinois.

A soggy season

Residents of Will and Grundy counties have also endured a seemingly endless procession of rainstorms.

Following a battering of between six

and eight inches of rain during April, May was a benevolent month, dropping a total of only 2.52 inches. The idyllic ended with the arrival of June.

Total rainfall over the past 15 days was a whopping 11.04 inches. With predictions of rainfall this week, odds are the area will get socked with more than a foot of rain before the month is over.

The latest round of severe weather swept through the area Sunday night and into Monday morning, delivering nearly two inches of rainfall across portions of Grundy County.

According to the Grundy County Emergency Operations Center, rainfall totals for the 24-hour period ending Monday morning included: Morris — 1.80 inches, West Morris — 1.78 inches, and Coal City — 1.86 inches

The rainfall is only the latest chapter in what has been an exceptionally soggy spring. Repeated storms have saturated fields, raised water levels in creeks and rivers, and left many residents with a flooded basement.

For emergency managers, farmers and homeowners alike, the pattern has become all too familiar. Threatening clouds gather on the horizon, weather apps begin issuing warnings, and another round of severe weather sweeps across the region.

With summer just beginning and peak tornado season not yet over, forecasters caution that Illinois could add even more tornadoes to its record-breaking total before year's end.

For now, communities across Will and Grundy counties remain on alert, watching the skies and hoping for the best.

Carbon Hill Museum to exhibit the work of ‘rockstar’ Tom Testa

BY MICHELLE MICETICH
SPECIAL TO THE
COAL CITY COURANT

Often our neighbors are seen only from a distance as they go about their lives quietly focused on what sparks enthusiasm and brings joy and satisfaction to their lives.

Sometimes their efforts spill over to enrich everyone's lives. So it has been with the life of Thomas Vincent Testa (May 31, 1952- June 25, 2025) whose curiosity and passion - especially for mazonia fossils - became his legacy.

With devoted tenacity Testa patiently and meticulously searched, studied, inventoried and protected his collection and then offered the best of that collection to the Field Museum in Chicago, thereby becoming a rockstar, so to speak.

Today five of his curated specimens now bear his name. There likely will be more.

Tom is recognized as a valued prolific contributor whose collection is studied by students and scientists around the world. His work is documented both by museums and by ESCONI. It brings us a smile of respect to know his worth.

Tom was born to Wilbur and Helen Testa, third and youngest of this gentle family's siblings.

Pam, Dan and Tom learned to be (or were born to be) observers of the world around them.

Wild mushrooms, pet squirrels, rhubarb patches, grape arbors, snapping turtles, rocks and fossils, all made their family's backyard a natural classroom. Beyond Catholic school and parish rituals, it was day trips to Starved Rock, Chicago museums, or time spent trekking into local coal mine pits—turned area clubs—which were

routine.

Time spent with TV, comic books, hardbound classics, science fiction, interesting artwork, plus dozens of brochures, with records on grandmother's Victrola, extended their world beyond Carbon Hill.

Tales from Grandma Rose Testa and Grandma Gisella Maher who experienced their own extraordinary lives added magic, just like Wilbur's tales of the CCC and WWII and Helen's scrapbooks

nudged Tom to, in his own way, pass on his gifts to all of us. We are grateful.

The Carbon Hill Museum will be displaying Tom's life in fossils and his life growing up in Carbon Hill with digital slides and stories and an exhibit of his fossils. Saturday, June 27, at 1 p.m. will be the first date of display for visitors to see and add your own stories of Tom in our memory book.



MAZONIA FOSSILS collected by Carbon Hill native Thomas Testa were given to the Field Museum. His collection is studied by students and scientists from around the world.

City approves \$725,000 to pay its bills

BY ROSE PANIERI
STAFF WRITER

On June 9, the council approved more than \$725,000 in expenditures Monday night, including payment of city bills totaling \$625,066.51 and payroll expenses of \$100,360.10.

The approved payroll covered the pay period ending May 31, with employees receiving a combined net pay of \$64,952.96 after taxes and deductions. City records show total payroll taxes and employer liabilities amounted to more than \$28,000.

Among the heftier expenditures approved by the council was a \$20,349.72 payment to Axon Enterprise Inc. for the Braidwood Police Department's Body-Worn Camera Basic License Pro subscription.

The council also approved several payments related to building and zoning services provided by B&F Construction Code Services Inc.

Those payments included \$3,282.29 for April inspections and plan reviews, \$1,252.50 for a self-storage facility

review, \$700 for a residential inspection and \$992.50 for a Reed Township office remodeling project. The combined payments to B&F Construction totaled \$6,227.29.

The council also approved a \$9,002 payment to Gulden & Associates Consulting for May consulting services. Steve Gulden serves as the city's administrative consultant.

A few of the more modest payments included \$40.97 to Galls LLC for uniform line-of-duty OC spray used by public safety personnel, and \$350 to Pamela Hysel for cleaning services at city hall and the police department.

Routine utility, maintenance, contractual service and operational expenses made up the remainder of the bills approved by the council.

Finance Commissioner Liz Dixon reported the city has amassed \$6,700 in fines from the Comptroller's

SEE CITY COUNCIL PAGE 2



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City Council,

continued from page 2

office as a penalty for not completing the 2025 budget on time. She said she anticipates completion of the budget by the end of June, at which time fines will add up to approximately \$8,000.

Special events

Mayor Todd Lyons appointed Regena Crompt and Annie Wicke to the Special Events Committee for the City of Braidwood

Police report

Commissioner James Mikel reported that between May 26 and June 8, Braidwood Police Department received 284 calls which resulted in 32 reports. There were eight arrests with 18 charges during that time period. Police made 89 traffic stops and doled out 17 citations and 27 written warnings.

The five vehicles ticketed for code violations were brought back into code.

D'Orazio Ford requests variance for height of sign

PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

A PUBLIC HEARING WILL BE HELD AT A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CITY OF BRAIDWOOD PLAN COMMISSION HELD ON MONDAY, JULY 13th, AT 7:00 P.M. AT CITY HALL OF BRAIDWOOD, 141 W. MAIN STREET, BRAIDWOOD, ILLINOIS 60408.

A PUBLIC HEARING WILL BE HELD ON THE FOLLOWING MATTERS:
1. ROGER D'ORAZIO, D'ORAZIO FORD, THE OWNER OF PROPERTY DESCRIBED BELOW, REQUESTS THE CITY OF BRAIDWOOD APPROVE A VARIANCE TO VARY THE REGULATIONS FOR MAXIMUM SIGN HEIGHT AND MAXIMUM SIGN AREA FOR A POLE SIGN. COMMON ADDRESS: 891 EZ STREET, BRAIDWOOD, IL 60408; PIN NOS. 02-24-06-202-004-0000 LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

LOT 2 IN BRAIDWOOD COMMERCIAL SUBDIVISION, BEING A SUBDIVISION OF PART OF SECTION 6, TOWNSHIP 32 NORTH, RANGE 9 EAST OF THE THIRD PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, IN WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF RECORDED ON MARCH 26, 2025 AS DOCUMENT R2025015279.

ALL PERSONS INTERESTED IN ATTENDING ARE INVITED TO DO SO AND WILL BE GIVEN AN OPPORTUNITY TO BE HEARD. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON SUCH A REQUEST CAN BE OBTAINED FROM THE CITY OF BRAIDWOOD AT 141 W. MAIN STREET, BRAIDWOOD, ILLINOIS 60408 1-815-458-2341.

SARAH WEAVER
CITY CLERK
CITY OF BRAIDWOOD
Published in the Braidwood Journal on Wednesday, June 24, 2026.

City of Braidwood invitation to submit contract proposals for sale of property

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF SALE OF PROPERTY BY THE CITY OF BRAIDWOOD AND INVITATION TO SUBMIT CONTRACT PROPOSALS

Take notice that the mayor and commissioners for the City of Braidwood will receive sealed contract proposals for the purchase of the City's fee simple interest in the following property:

Common Address: 585 W. Main Street, Braidwood, Will County, Illinois 60408
Parcel Identification Number: 02-24-07-407-033-0000
Legal Description: LOT 1 OF CARLSON'S SUBDIVISION A RESUBDIVISION OF LOT 6 AND THE WEST 15 FEET OF LOT 5 IN BLOCK 16 IN EUREKA COAL COMPANY SUBDIVISION IN THE SOUTH 1/2 OF SECTION 7, TOWNSHIP 32 NORTH, RANGE 9 EAST OF THE THIRD PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, RECORDED JUNE 5, 1996 AS DOCUMENT NO. R96-049690, WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS.

Said property is currently zoned for use as a single family residence. The property is improved with a single family residence that shall be demolished within sixty (60) days of the purchase of the Property. The sale of the property will be as-is. The single-family residence on the Property shall be demolished and replaced with top soil and seed within ninety (90) days of the purchase of Property, unless otherwise agreed upon by the Parties. The City will waive the demolition permit fee. A single family residence shall be completed within three years of the purchase of the Property. The City will not be providing title insurance or a survey, but purchaser may obtain these items at their expense. The closing on the sale of the Property must be completed no later than August 14, 2026, unless otherwise agreed upon by the Parties. The purchase and sale agreement shall be in substantially the same form as the purchase and sale agreement that is on file with the City Clerk.

The City shall accept sealed contract proposals for the purchase of the Property on or before until July 28, 2026 at 4:30pm. All contract proposals shall be delivered to the City Clerk at Braidwood City Hall located at 141 W. Main Street, Braidwood, Illinois 60408. Unsealed contract proposals and proposals delivered after July 28, 2026 at 4:30pm will not be considered. All contract proposals shall fully comply with the City's Ordinance that authorized this notice to be published, that is available for inspection with the City Clerk.

All bids received will be publicly opened and read aloud at the regular meeting of City Council for the City of Braidwood on July 28, 2026 at 7pm.

City Council may review and choose to accept any contract proposal determined by them to be in the best interests of the City. City Council is not limited to accepting the high bid, and may accept either the high bid or any other bid that three fourths of the corporate authorities then holding office determine to be in the best interests of the City. By a majority vote of those holding office, they may reject any and all bids. City Council reserves the right to waive any informalities or irregularities and to review and study the contract proposals and to make a contract award within forty five (45) days after the contract proposals are publicly opened.

Additional information, including a copy of the required purchase and sale agreement, may be obtained by contacting the City Clerk. For any questions, contact Sarah Weaver, City Clerk, at sweaver@braidwood.us or at 815-458-2333 ext. 203.

Sarah Weaver, City Clerk
City of Braidwood

Published in the Braidwood Journal on Wed., June 10, 17, and 24, 2026.

Sheriff's sale of 812 Western Ave.

PUBLIC NOTICE

PURSUANT TO THE FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT YOU ARE ADVISED THAT THIS LAW FIRM IS DEEMED TO BE A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE.

STATE OF ILLINOIS)
COUNTY OF WILL) SS.
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE TWELFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS

Planet Home Lending LLC
Plaintiff,
vs.
Dino Presti as Co-Independent Administrator of the Estate of Anthony J. Presti, Deceased; et. al.
Defendant.
No. 26 FC 0053

NOTICE OF SHERIFF'S SALE

Public notice is hereby given that pursuant to a judgment entered in the above cause on the 6th day of May, 2026, MIKE KELLEY, Sheriff of Will County, Illinois, will on Thursday, the 2nd day of July, 2026, commencing at 12:00 o'clock noon, at the Will County Courthouse, 100 W. Jefferson Street, Room 1001, Joliet, IL 60432, sell at public auction to the highest and best bidder or bidders the following-described real estate:

LOT 50 IN THE PLAT OF RESUBDIVISION OF THE TOWNES OF THE BRAIDWOOD PHASE 2 P.U.D., BEING A SUBDIVISION OF PART OF THE SOUTHWEST QUARTER OF SECTION 6, TOWNSHIP 32 NORTH, RANGE 9, EAST OF THE THIRD PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF RECORDED NOVEMBER 24, 2014 AS DOCUMENT R2014-103896, IN THE CITY OF BRAIDWOOD, WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS.

Commonly known as: 812 Western Ave, Braidwood, IL 60408
Description of Improvements: Residential
P.I.N.: 02-24-06-301-035-0000

Terms of Sale: ten percent (10%) at the time of sale and the balance within twenty-four (24) hours. No judicial sale fee shall be paid by the mortgagee acquiring the residential real estate pursuant to its credit bid at the sale or by any mortgagee, judgment creditor, or other lienor acquiring the residential real estate whose rights in and to the residential real estate arose prior to the sale. All payments shall be made in cash or certified funds payable to the Sheriff of Will County.

In the event the property is a condominium, in accordance with 735 ILCS 5/15-1507(c)(1)(H-1) and (H-2), 765 ILCS 605/9(g)(5), and 765 ILCS 605/18.5(g-1), you are hereby notified that the purchaser of the unit, other than a mortgagee, shall pay the assessments and legal fees required by subdivisions (g)(1) and (g)(4) of Section 9 and the assessments required by subsection (g-1) of Section 18.5 of the Illinois Condominium Property Act.

Pursuant to Local Court Rule 11.03 (J) if there is a surplus following application of the proceeds of sale, then the plaintiff shall send written notice pursuant to 735 ILCS 5/15-1512(d) to all parties to the proceeding advising them of the amount of the surplus and that the surplus will be held until a party obtains a court order for its distribution or, in the absence of an order, until the surplus is forfeited to the State.

FOR INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

Codilis & Associates, P.C.
15W030 N. Frontage Road Suite 100
Burr Ridge, Illinois 60527
P: 630-794-5300
F: 630-794-9090
Plaintiff's Attorney

MIKE KELLEY

Sheriff of Will County

Published in the Braidwood Journal on Wednesday, June 10, 17 and 24, 2026.

Braidwood water meets federal standards according to Consumer Confidence Report

BY ROSE PANIERI
STAFF WRITER

Braidwood residents can continue to drink their tap water with confidence, according to the city's 2025 Consumer Confidence Report, which found that the community's water supply met all federal and state drinking water standards during the year.

The annual report, released this spring, details the quality of drinking water supplied to the city and the results of extensive testing conducted for a variety of contaminants.

Braidwood's drinking water comes from five groundwater wells located throughout the city. The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency has determined that the city's well system is not susceptible to contamination based on monitoring data, hydrogeologic conditions, and other factors.

Testing performed during 2025 detected several naturally occurring minerals and treatment-related compounds, including chlorine, fluoride,

nitrate, arsenic, selenium and trace amounts of radioactive materials. All detected contaminants were below federal maximum contaminant levels.

Within regulatory limits

The report noted that arsenic was detected at 7.8 parts per billion, below the federal limit of 10 parts per billion. Fluoride was measured at 1.04 parts per million, well under the federal standard of 4 parts per million. Nitrate levels were also significantly below regulatory limits.

Lead and copper sampling also remained within acceptable levels. Testing conducted in 2023 found a 90th percentile lead concentration of 1.92 parts per billion, far below the federal action level of 15 parts per billion. No sampling sites exceeded federal action levels for either lead or copper.

Reporting violation

The report did disclose a reporting violation related to the federal Lead and Copper Rule. According to the notice, the city failed to certify to the Illinois EPA by the required dead-

line that annual notifications had been delivered to customers with known, potential or unknown lead service lines. The violation was administrative in nature and did not involve water quality or contamination.

City officials stated that notices were ultimately mailed on Dec. 19, 2025, and that Braidwood is working with 120Water to complete its service line inventory.

The report states the city is no longer in violation and emphasized that the reporting issue did not pose a public health risk.

The Consumer Confidence Report is published annually to inform residents about the source and quality of their drinking water and to provide information about potential contaminants and health effects.

Residents may view the complete report at www.ilrwa.org/CCR/braidwood.pdf or contact Braidwood City Hall at (815) 458-2333, Ext. 301 for additional information.

City approves request for 6-foot fence

BY ROSE PANIERI
STAFF WRITER

Owners of Secure Truck Lines at 435 Enterprise Drive will have far less to fear from vagabonds, vandals, and thieves after being granted approval to fence their business.

On June 9, the Braidwood City Council approved a variance allowing a six-foot-tall fence to be constructed in the front yard of the commercial property.

The variance was requested by Secure Truck Lines Inc., which owns the approximately 11.7-acre property in the city's Route 66 Business Park. The site is zoned I-2, General Industrial.

Commissioner James Mikel asked if there was a deadline for the fence to be constructed.

Administrative Consultant Steve Gulden

explained that the business never had an agreement with the City of Braidwood, and an official agreement is being formalized after the fact.

"We are still finalizing the development agreements because it was never officially passed by this council," Gulden said. "There's really no authorization to do some of this stuff. It's already been done. So, we're creating a development agreement that has all these different things we want done..."

Under Braidwood's zoning code, fences located in front yards are generally limited to a maximum height of three feet. The approved variance allows the company to install a six-foot fence in the front yard area as part of ongoing improvements to the property.

Security concerns

According to city planning documents, the prop-

erty was developed with truck parking and related industrial uses after being subdivided back in 2011.

Secure Truck Lines purchased the property in 2024 and is seeking to improve security and operations at the site.

City staff noted that the fence would prevent unauthorized access and trespassing while protecting vehicles and equipment stored on the property. The applicant indicated that security concerns have increased due to the presence of truck parking, landscaping investments, and utility improvements on the site.

Planning documents also state that a portion of the property fronts Illinois Route 53 and that the proposed fence would occupy roughly 25 percent of the property's frontage. The fence would be set back approximately 45 feet from the roadway right-of-way

and would include screening designed to reduce its visual impact.

Fencing regulations

In recommending approval, city staff concluded that the variance met the standards required under Braidwood's zoning ordinance. Staff found that the request would not alter the essential character of the area, impair neighboring properties or create a hardship for nearby landowners.

The Braidwood Plan Commission reviewed the request during a public hearing and recommended approval before forwarding the matter to the City Council.

Council members subsequently approved the variance, allowing Secure Truck Lines to proceed with construction of the fence subject to final engineering review and other required permits and approvals.

BAHCC seeking volunteers as Summerfest baby contest returns for the 45th year

BY ROSE PANIERI
STAFF WRITER

One of Summerfest's longest-running traditions is set to return next month, and organizers are seeking volunteers to help make the event a success.

Danita Morgan of the Braidwood Area Healthy Community Coalition (BAHCC) shared that the contest will take place Saturday, July 18 at the Lions Pavilion at Old Smoky City Park.

The contest, coordinated by BAHCC, is scheduled to begin promptly at 9:45 a.m. and will once again showcase some of the area's youngest residents.

Morgan said the coalition is currently looking for

volunteers to assist with the event.

The annual contest is open to children residing within the Reed-Custer School District boundaries. Participants compete in several age divisions, traditionally including 0-3 months, 4-7 months, 8-11 months, 12-15 months, 16-19 months and 20-24 months, along with a category for twins and multiples.

Contestants are evaluated based on appearance,

Illinois Wesleyan dean's list

Illinois Wesleyan University's named the Dean's List for the spring semester.

To qualify for the Dean's List, students must earn a GPA of 3.50 or better during the semester, based on 4.0 for straight As.

Local students include Anthony Guerra of Braidwood.

personality and general disposition.

First-place winners in each category receive a trophy, ribbon and certificate. Winners are also invited to ride on the Baby Contest Winners float during the Summerfest Hometown Proud Parade on Sunday, July 19.

The Baby Contest has become a popular fixture of the annual Braidwood Lions Club Summerfest, drawing families from throughout the community and providing parents the opportunity to showcase their little darlings as part of the four-day festival celebration.

Residents interested in entering a child in the contest are encouraged to watch for registration information and entry deadlines as Summerfest approaches. Entry forms and event updates are expected to be available through the Braidwood Lions Club Summerfest page and the Braidwood Area Healthy Community Coalition.

Individuals interested in volunteering to help with the contest may contact the coalition office at (815) 390-5024.

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Eric D. Fisher, publisher

Law and order on the frontier of Illinois

The history of Braidwood is a wild one, full of murders, beatings, and lynch mobs. But Braidwood is not alone with that scenario. This area was once the wild west. Before we talk of our own town let us step away from Will County to Iroquois County and the town of Watseka where our first story is ready to start. Lights, camera, action.

The scene is a familiar one; the sheriff has brought in the prisoner to await trial. But before that he must protect the poor man from the lynch mob that has gathered outside. They call for the death of the helpless prisoner, but the valiant sheriff holds the mob off, and talks them out of it.

This story was recorded in the July 15, 1871 issue of the Wilmington Advocate. It takes place in the town of Watseka, just south and east of us. "Martin Mera, a man 44 years old, residing in comfortable circumstances on a farm near Gilman, Iroquois county, and who had been in good repute in his neighborhood, except as to his violent temper and cruelty to animals, was taken to Watseka, on July 1st, and placed in jail, for the murder of one of his children - a boy 14 years of age - whom he whipped unmercifully with a black snake whip, while naked, after having previously laid him naked upon a hot stove and roasted his back terribly."

"The mother witnessed the whipping and death of her boy, but was helplessly sick in childbed, and could not help the little victim. The brutal father buried the body in a hedge, and



TIME WAS....
Sandy Vasko

These suspicions were subsequently confirmed on search being made, the roasted and bruised body of the lad was found buried four feet deep in a secluded part of Mera's premises."

"The murderer was at once arrested, acknowledged to the crime, and was taken to Onarga, where the indignant citizens threatened to lynch him, and the officers, in order to save him, took him to Watseka, where on the 5th, he was taken from the jail and hung by an incensed mob of 300 armed men, followed by 1,000 men, women, and children."

"Mera gave the Masonic signal of distress, which was not responded to, and he renounced the craft. He was given an opportunity to speak and pray, and confessed his guilt in his address to the crowd. He refused the benefit of prayer by a Protestant clergyman, and begged for mercy." Mera was hung.

Our second story involves an incident in Braidwood just a month later. We read, "A family of Sullivan's, consisting of the old man, James, and two sons, Dennis and Mike, resided near Braidwood across the county line between Will and Grundy counties. They are regarded as an extremely quarrelsome family"

"The parties were miners. On

next day went to Gilman and posted a public notice, offering a reward to any person giving information of his run-away boy."

"This was intended as a blind, but it had the contrary effect, arousing the suspicion of his neighbors that he had killed the boy.

the day named, a constable from Braceville had seized some property of the Sullivan's on an execution, and the matter had been arranged so that they were left in possession of the property. The event was celebrated by the Sullivan's in a drunken spree, which made them more than usually quarrelsome."

"After the return of Newell and his companions from work in the evening, the quarrel that had been waging among the Sullivan's during the day found new vent. Mike went over to the premises of Newell and succeeded in getting into a quarrel with him and stabbing him in several places; which resulted in his death in a few hours."

"As soon as the news was spread through the neighborhood, between two and three hundred people surrounded the house of the Sullivan's and threatened vengeance upon the murderer. About this time the constable, James Ward, arrived on the ground with warrants for the arrest of all the parties, including Thomas McCarty,, Dennis O'Brien and William Crowley, friends of the deceased. He agreed to have the prisoners ready for trial on Wednesday morning at Braceville, and the assassin, too glad to make his escape from the mob, was taken to Braidwood."

"On Wednesday morning the mob reassembled when the examination was to be held, with the avowed determination of lynching Mike. Constable Award and Deputy Sheriff Brown, seeing the excitement of the mob, secured a special train and brought the prisoners to Joliet, where they were safely lodged in the county jail."

New emergency alert system launched across Will County

Will County residents will have a new way to receive emergency alerts and important community information as Will County 9-1-1 launches an enhanced public notification system.

The new "Smart 911" alert system replaces the current Everbridge system utilized by several Will County municipalities to send out public safety messages to registered residents via text, phone, email, or application alerts.

In addition to traditional emergency notifications, participating communities may also send out additional alerts such as road closures, public safety information, community event information, service disruptions, and other important local updates.

"This new system gives Will County agencies and participating communities a modern tool to quickly share critical information with the public," said Will County 9-1-1 Chief Administrator Brian Van. "By registering for Smart911, residents can receive timely, reliable alerts in the way that works best for them. Adding multiple addresses can help residents receive alerts for places that matter most to them beyond their home address."

Residents who currently receive notifications via Everbridge will need to register through Smart911 to continue to receive local community alerts. Local governments

transitioning to the new alert system include Braidwood, Diamond, Manhattan and Wilmington.

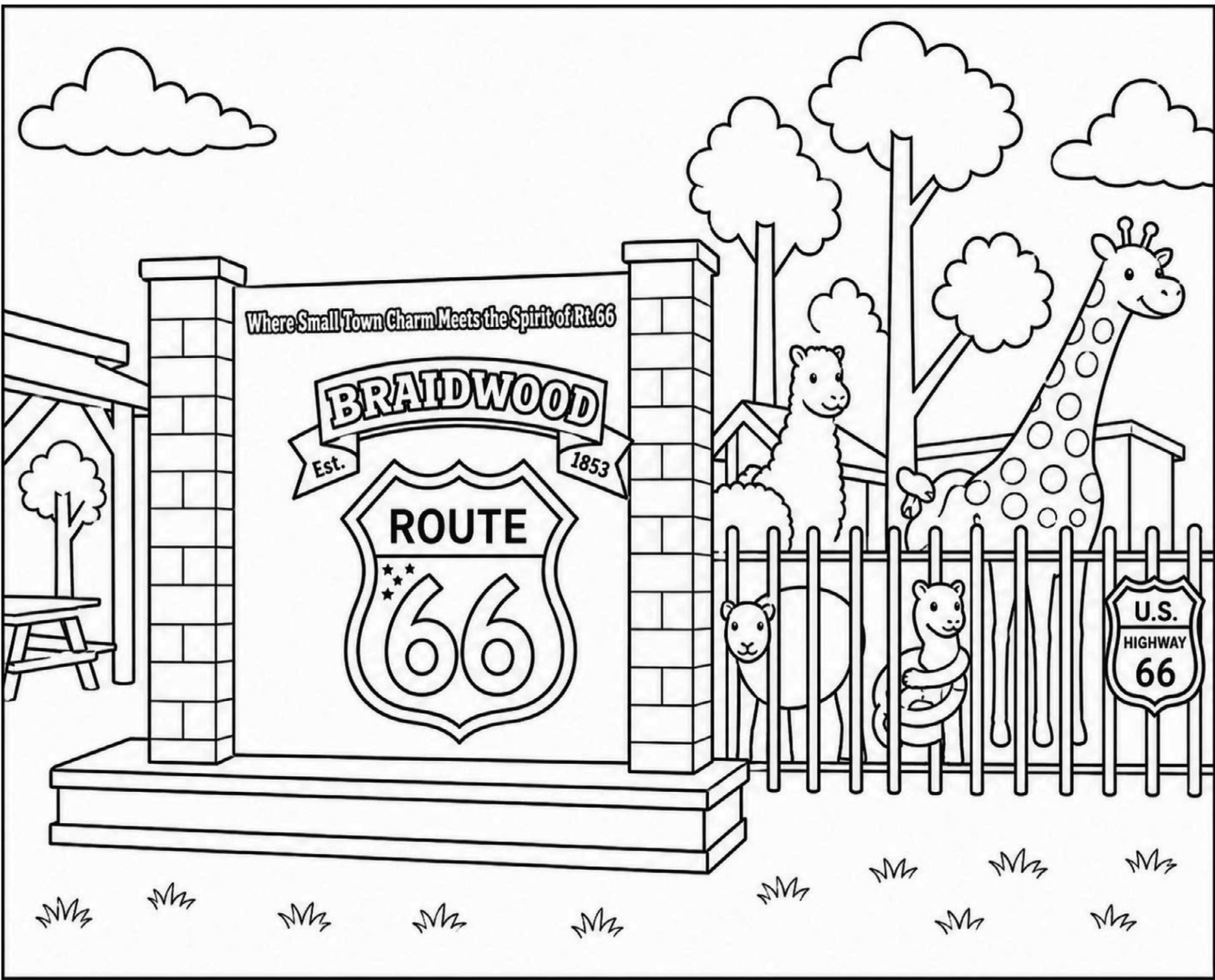
The current Everbridge system has been maintained by the Will County Emergency Management Agency, who will also be transitioning to the new Smart911 system to send out important emergency alerts for registered users. Existing Everbridge subscribers will receive a notification about the transition and will be encouraged to register for the new system. The transition is expected to be completed by July 1, 2026.

"Signing up for alerts is one of the easiest and most important steps residents can take to stay informed and prepared," said Will County Emergency Management Agency Director Allison Anderson.

Residents are encouraged to create a Smart911 Safety Profile to provide important information that may help 911 dispatchers and first responders during an emergency. Residents can include details such as household members, medical information, pets, vehicles, emergency contacts, and additional addresses, including work, school, or a family member's home.

Residents can register for the new alert system by visiting <https://willcounty911.gov/smart-911/>.

2026 Braidwood Lions Club Summerfest COLORING CONTEST "100 Years of Mother Road Kicks" A Route 66 Centennial Celebration



Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Age Group (circle): 4yrs. & Under 5-8yrs. 9-12yrs.

Drop off entries at the Fossil Ridge Public Library during regular business hours.

Deadline: Monday July 13, 2026

Free Press Newspapers readers

SOUND-OFF

To voice your opinion 24 hours a day, go to
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Sound-Off is a 24-hour phone line provided to give readers a chance to voice their opinions. The Free Press Newspapers reserves the right to edit remarks for taste, length, personal attacks, racism, threatening, calls for boycotts and libel. The comments stated are the opinions and ideas of the callers and not that of the newspaper. Information may not constitute the actual events or facts of a particular topic. Submissions by email to: courant@gmail.com with "soundoff" in the subject line or visit www.freepressnewspapers.com, 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. There can be only one submission of 250 words or less per person during any given week.

E-scooter rules needed

WILMINGTON—The e-scooter and e-bike problem is happening in more towns that just Braidwood. The city aldermen and the police department should start a campaign to educate parents on the rules of letting their 12-year-old riding an e-scooter traveling 25 mph down a sidewalk in School Meadows subdivision. It's illegal! We've got children riding these things on the streets or sidewalks. It was 9 p.m. and there, in the middle of Kahler Road, was a kid on an e-bike with no lights riding between cars like he had a right like a motorcycle. It's becoming a serious danger that needs some type of local enforcement.

Cemetery looks great

DIAMOND—I would like to compliment the people of Braceville-Gardner Cemetery for how nice the cemetery looks. It is appreciated by my family who has our parents buried there. Keep up the good work.

Billions wasted

WILMINGTON—\$300 billion to rebuild Iran after spending \$80 billion bombing it. Yet we slash spending on pediatric cancer because we can't afford it? Vote for common sense this time.

Coal City a ghost town

COAL CITY—Looks like it's time for a change at the village hall. Not enough board members stand for the voters and a mayor who hasn't kept to his talk about bringing in businesses for a business district. All we have is a ghost town. A data center is not a business. We are coming full circle. People want to shop in town. Between the cost of gas and convenience of staying local, this is wanted. When you speak to locals who grew up in this town they describe a business district to be proud of. Not proved in this town or its board, Mayor or Village administrator.

Send illegals home

MORRIS—I have a solution to the immigration problems about the children being separated from their families. Why don't all of these Democratic politicians tell these people to apply legally and not come over illegally. What don't these Democrats understand about the definition of illegal. They can't even take care of the United States citizens that are on welfare and need medical care. It is illegal to come into the United States, why don't these Democratic people take their illegal immigrants home with them and let them live with them if they want to and pay for them.

Respect neighbors

WILMINGTON—Can't we all be more considerate to others. Some people have no consideration for others by starting lawnmowers and other yard equipment early on Sunday morning. Respect others around you.

Clueless blabbing

WILMINGTON—For your information the cemetery in Custer township is

run by the township. It's on the tax rolls through the county. So please know what you are talking about before you blab about things you have no clue about.

Take care of your pets

BRACEVILLE—There is a barking dog problem in Braceville. What is wrong with pet owners? How can people tie up their dogs outside and leave them out barking day and night? We do not own a pet ourselves so it is really annoying to have to listen to non-stop barking from a neighbor's dog. The same is true for cats. People who own cats should keep their cats inside their own homes. Exactly what gives them the right to allow their cats to roam the neighborhoods, using kids' sandboxes for a litter box and smelling up other people's property? Bottom line is pet owners need to be responsible for their own pets and stop sharing their duties with others who are pet free and choose to be. The bottom line is it's not the pets that are the problem, it's the owners who neglect to properly take care of them.

Before spouting off

COAL CITY—People who contact Soundoff to criticize others and call them stupid need to get their facts straight before they spout off.

Free CapTel phone

SHADOW LAKES—Dan Hill from Shadow Lakes. My wife passed away December 30th. I have a CapTel phone which you do not need a land line for. I will give away free for anyone who can use it.

Big Pharma ads

SHADOW LAKES—Dan Hill again. I watch television around this time every night. Drug companies are multi-billion dollar companies. Do you know how many ads in one hour they have on television? I would not trust any of them because they are sucking money off of us. Also watching the news and two million people will turn out for the Knicks game. Why don't 2 million people turn out for Jesus Christ? That shows you where people are going.

Awesome celebration

COAL CITY—The 250 celebration was awesome. Everyone connected to this event should be congratulated on a great job. Hopefully this can become a annual event. KL

Thanks to planners

COAL CITY—The celebration uptown Saturday was phenomenal. It was so nice to see so many turn out for the parade and all the other activities. The drone show and fireworks were outstanding! Thanks to all who planned this and made it happen.

He knows he's guilty

WILMINGTON—Have you noticed that Trump always claims he has been "exonerated" when asked about the Epstein scandal? But do you hear the fear in his voice sounding like a piercing primal scream? It's because Trump knows he



is guilty. And that's why his toady Todd Blanche was given responsibility for carrying out the Epstein Transparency Act which explains why nothing made sense. And considering the many redactions of prominent men every time the DOJ released a of Epstein files, it's possible Trump was one of the darkened figures. And then came a breakthrough. Persistent legal minds noticed a missing link in DOJ's fragmented Epstein files and announced it publicly knowing they were on to something. And then what happened very suddenly? Trump abruptly started the Iran war to distract us all and kept the war going as long as possible. And now the Trump team is scrambling to continue the cover-up.

Irene

Immigrants vs slaves

WILMINGTON—The Democratic party always says immigrants do the work white people won't do. Funny that's the same they said about slavery.

Searching our history

What happened in Coal City when Heiman's requested a building permit for a business that paid below-minimum wage to a gaggle of women sewing upstairs all day while men downstairs cut patterns and filled the building with steam? What happened when Atlas Wallpaper received approval to build an entire industrial complex under one roof—warehouses, printing presses, boilers, paint shops, shipping facilities, and offices—requiring the city to build new wells, roads, railroad access, and tolerate noise 24 hours a day, seven days a week? What happened when Peabody Coal simply moved to town and started digging up thousands of acres of surrounding farmland and leaving behind sulfur-polluted land that was virtually uninhabitable? (Their secret to getting township roads abandoned was simple: Hire the road commissioner and his relatives.) One thing happened in all these cases; progress was damned, not denied. What words were spoken on those important days? The words FOIA, Zoning, PUD, SUP, TIF, Energy, Water, Sewer, Drainage, Noise, Vibration, Air Pollution, and Lowballing either did not exist or were barely part of the public conversations. Where did those new words come from? They came from generations of educated children who grew into educated adults because their families worked in every business imaginable, under every condition. Families who struggled through the so-called bad things in life while continuing to build, improve, and move their communities forward. Is life better today? Continually a debatable yes. Dealing with the hope of today is a struggle for educated people trying to make sense of adults acting like children. People who read half a document and suddenly believe they have a Sherlock Holmes answer. Then the next person doubles down by being snippy. They want their piece of the bully pie. People who do not understand the complexity of society today all because of the continuing taming of progress. People who twist isolated facts into conspiracy theories because they do not know what they do not know. People who copy and

paste fragments of nonsense onto a page and call it research, expertise, and freedom of speech when it is only an ugly attempt at making a collage. People who believe the new word, Facebook, allows them a podium to feel confident without facing reality. People who will act respectfully talking face to face but all of a sudden fall to the dark side of humanity when using Facebook or emails. Billy Idol was ahead of his time in 1983. He described Facebook perfectly in the lyrics of "Eyes Without a Face." Go read the lyrics. Then look in the mirror and ask yourself how far you have drifted from being a respected person?

Train horn update?

COAL CITY—Whatever happened to the Silencing of the Train Horns that was promised by the village? All we hear about now is the data center. What happened with trying to improve the quality of life of the Coal City residents from the obscene amount of trains that blow their horns all hours of the day, every five minutes? There's been no update in a very long time. Did the village forget about this?

Trillionaire parasite

WILMINGTON—He might be a trillionaire but Elon Musk will always be remembered for bringing back the screwworm which is a parasite that screws itself deep into the flesh of livestock. Yes, Musk's stupidity during his DOGE chain-saw days resulted in the elimination of many beneficial programs. For example, during the 1960s scientists figured out how to wipe out the existence of the deadly screw worm from livestock, but now, thanks to Musk, the screwworm is back with cases in Texas which are sure to spread elsewhere. The progress made by scientists 60 years ago took only eighteen months to be wiped out by two idiots, Musk and Trump. Farmers and consumers pay the price.

Gloria

Remember cover-up

WILMINGTON—On Nov. 19, 2025 the President signed the Epstein Transparency Act, a law to be fully implemented in 30 days. This law would fully release all the Epstein files. It has been six months and they, aka Trump still refuses to comply with a law he signed. What could possibly be the reason? Why do those victims have to live like this? What if it was your daughter, sister, cousin or neighbor? This stain must be held accountable for all his crimes. Only the rich and entitled could delay justice, not you or I. Remember this cover-up in the voting booth.

Party of haters

WILMINGTON—President Trump, like him or hate him, is trying to clean up Washington DC for Americans 250 anniversary. It's all about how the greatest country in history looks but now the national guard has to be deported to protect the reflecting pool and monuments not from foreign terrorists but left wing social Democrats. The Democratic Party now is not the party FDR or JFK or Bill Clinton it's a party of haters.

Resources available for food, meals

CLA Food Pantry. Christian Life Assembly, 2960 E Division St Diamond IL. Available Tuesday 2:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., Wednesday 11:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and Friday 9:00 a.m. to noon. By appointment only 815-578-5441.

Braidwood Food Pantry at Community Care Center. Open Tuesdays 8 to 11:45 a.m. 112 S. Center Street, Braidwood. Info: 815-325-0779

Ignite Christian Church, 1180 W 1st St. Braidwood. Micro-pantry open 24 hours front of church Info: (815)-390-5040

Secret Pantry, for hours and location see: The Original Secret Pantry

Facebook page

Coal City Food Pantry at Coal City United Methodist Church. (Use south entrance) Closed all Federal holidays. Open Mondays 9-11 a.m. and Thursdays 1-3 p.m. 6805 E. McArdle Road, Coal City. Information: 815-216-3288.

We Care of Grundy County Food Pantry. Office Hours: Mon.-Wed. and Fri.: 8:30 a.m.-12 p.m. and 1:00-4:00 p.m. Pantry Hours: Monday-Friday 1:00-3:00 by appointment. Please call to schedule your time to come 815-942-6389. 530 Bedford Rd., Morris.

Kuzma Care Cottage, food pantry. 635 S. Main Street, Wilmington. Hours: M-F 9-11 a.m. and 1-3 p.m. and the 2nd Saturday of each month, 8-11 a.m. 815-476-2030

Local Meals:

St. Vincent Table Hot Meals. Coordinators Cindi Grove 815-735-1432 and Laura Marizza 815-325-8605. Hours for pickup for shut ins 4:00-4:30 p.m. Dine in hours 4:30 until 5:30 p.m.

Updated Meal Schedule for remainder of 2026: June and July- Assumption of the BVM, 180 S. Kankakee St., Coal City. Aug. through Oct.- Immaculate Conception, 220 S. School St., Braidwood. Nov. - Assumption of the BVM, 180 S. Kankakee St., Coal City. Dec. through Feb. - Closed and will resume in March, 2027.

If you would like to help with this ministry or know of anyone in need of meals, please contact our coordinators for more information.

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Interior/Exterior

Conerns about polyester and microplastics

Dear EarthTalk: Is it true that polyester clothing might be a significant factor in the microplastics in our bodies and blood-streams?

-- Steve Wilson, New York, NY



Plastic in the 21st century can be described simply: ubiquitous. We see it in food packaging and water bottles, but it is also present in cosmetics and clothing. The invention of plastic in 1907 ushered in a new era of convenience. A story in Life magazine from 1955, "Throwaway Living," encouraged housewives to ditch chores and turn to single-use disposable kitchenware, and plastic use never looked back. In the past few decades, plastic production skyrocketed to 8.3 billion tons as of 2021; According to the United Nations, polyester production alone has increased

900 percent since 1980. When reflecting on plastic pollution, co-founder of Stanford Medicine's Plastics and Health Working Group, Desiree LaBeaud, put it perfectly: "Plastic never goes away-it just breaks down into finer and finer particles." Polyester fibers are extreme offenders when it comes to shedding microplastics. The fibers from polyester and nylon easily travel through air and water making them difficult to avoid. One shocking headline says that we consume a credit card's worth of plastic each week, while a less eye-catching article disputed that claim, estimating 23,000 years to ingest that amount. The reality of these vast differences is that there are no standardized methods to measure microplastics yet. When reviewing microplastics in 2022, The World Health Organization explained they could not come to a conclusion on their impact because of a lack of reliable data. Nonetheless there is evidence that microplastics accumulate in the human body. We ingest it in our food and water, and



SOME RESEARCHERS think microplastics may be accumulating in your body if you wear a lot of polyester.

it's in our air. Per the Chair of Environmental Toxicology at City University in Hong Kong, small enough particles can even enter the body through the skin; not something you want to hear while wearing a polyester shirt. Initial observations suggest that microplastics may negatively impact digestive, respiratory, endocrine, reproductive and immune systems. This is mostly observed in nonhuman animals thus far. Kara Meister, who studies microplastics' roles in pediatric disease at Stanford Medicine says "probably within the next

year or two we'll have a couple more big landmark papers [which will inform us on the impacts of microplastics in humans]." Meister urges people not to succumb to "doomsday" thinking because we have plastics in our bodies. She instead encourages people to live a healthy lifestyle with good sleep, diet and stress management, saying "Giving your body the best shot to deal with whatever might come along is the best you can do." EarthTalk® is a 501(c)3 nonprofit EarthTalk. Send questions to: question@earthtalk.org.

A fun adventure on Route 66

The Route 66 Association of Illinois is offering half-day car cruise events once a month at no charge. It is their way to help celebrate the 100th birthday of the famous Mother Road. Here is your chance to experience special places on historic Route 66 that the whole family will enjoy. This tour is about 60 miles long. The July 11th

cruise will start just south of Springfield. The tours are limited in size and must be reserved. This is an outstanding free opportunity. Call Route 66 board member Misty LeBlanc at (618) 504-9095 for complete information and to sign up. Every kind of vehicle is welcome. This tour goes rain or shine

Bus trip to see a White Sox game

Deadline is July 6

Come and be part of the White Sox winning season! The deadline is fast approaching to sign up for a fun-filled bus trip to see the Chicago White Sox take on the Cincinnati Reds on Thursday, Aug. 13 with the Wilmington Public Library for only \$20! This outing is open to teens ages 13 and up with a parent or guardian, as well as adult participants. Fans will meet at the library at 10:45 a.m. and travel together by school bus to the ballpark for the

1:10 p.m. game. After cheering on the White Sox, we will head back and expect to return to the library around 6 p.m. Tickets are just \$20 per person for school bus transportation and entry into the game. Space is limited to 40 participants, so be sure to sign up early to reserve your spot. Sign up in person at the library by July 6 to be a part of this great opportunity to enjoy a summer day at the ballpark with friends and family.

Community band concert to feature 'Our Mother Earth' tunes

The Wilmington Area Community Band will perform the second concert of the 19th season on Sunday, June 28, at 6 p.m. at Veteran's Memorial Park. Arrive early and order dinner from "Fo' Sizzle" food truck. Please bring a lawn chair, mosquito spray, snacks, and water and relax in the shade as the band performs the following music in a beautiful outdoor setting. This concert's theme is "Our Mother Earth."

Star Spangled Banner
- Teri Cummings, vocalist
Mt. Everest
Snow In A Silent Wood
Summer's Rain
After The Storm
Blue Moon (Teri Cummings, vocals)
INTERMISSION
Wilmington Area Jazz Ensemble
-Breezin'
-Old Devil Moon
Earth And Sky
Down By The Riverside
Down In The Valley
Earth, Wind And Fire

In Concert
Walking On Sunshine
Veteran's Memorial Park is located at the intersection of Williams and Vine Streets - across from Oakwood Cemetery and Island City Baptist Church. The Wilmington Area Community Band is a volunteer group of local musicians from ages 13 up. In the event of rain or excess heat, our alternative concert location is Wilmington High School and signs will be posted at the park.

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LIL VEGAS 6 Machines Private Room COME TRY YOUR LUCK! Must be 21 yrs or older.	LoveBug Hard Cream Soda \$3⁰⁰ OFF 8 pk cans

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OBITUARIES

Bob Harrington

 MORRIS — Bob "Boomer" Harrington, 86 of Morris, passed away peacefully Monday, June 15, 2026 at Churchill Place Memory Care Community in Glen Ellyn, IL. Born June 18, 1939 in Morris, Robert Francis Harrington was the son of Harry H. and Mabel G. (Patton) Harrington. A lifelong Morris resident, he graduated from Morris Community High School in 1957. He honorably served his country in the US Army Reserves. On Aug. 22, 1964, he married Carol Jean Manning at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Kinsman, IL. Together they built a loving home in Morris and raised their two sons. Bob was always a 'numbers' guy. He worked for Grundy Bank for decades, starting as a teller and retiring as one of their Vice Presidents. After retiring from the bank, he started BH Accounting Services, keeping the books for local businesses for many years. He was a member of Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Morris, Fraternal Order of Eagles and Morris Country Club. Bob was an avid golfer and do-it-yourself-er. He enjoyed boating, fishing, and relaxing at the family's lake home in Delavan WI. He could often be found on the deck listening to music and watching the boats on the water. He was an avid cook, working alongside Carol on holiday meals, and a master of the grill at the lake. During Carol's final years, Bob was a devoted and tireless caregiver. Survivors include his sons: Mark (Karla) Harrington of Naperville, IL; and



Michael (Susan) Harrington of Wheaton, IL; six grandchildren: Brandon (Janet) Harrington, Josh (Haley) Harrington, Emily Harrington, Justin (Kylee) Harrington, Mikayla (Zach) Colangelo, and Alyssa Harrington; one great granddaughter, Lizzie Colangelo; one sister, Carole Harrington of Morris; two sisters-in-law: Mary Beth Walsh and Sr. Marjorie Manning, and several nieces and nephews. Bob was preceded in death by his parents; wife Carol on Oct. 29, 2024; brother, Harry Harrington; sister, Betty (Herb) Clark and one brother-in-law, Frank Walsh. The family will receive friends for a visitation at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, 600 East Jackson Street in Morris on Monday, June 22, 2026 from 10:00 a.m. until time of funeral Mass at 11:00 a.m. Burial will follow in Mount Carmel Catholic Cemetery in Morris, IL where Bob will be laid to rest with his late wife, Carol. Their grandchildren will act as pallbearers. In lieu of flowers, please consider supporting your local youth golf organization or enjoy a day on the links with your loved ones. Family and friends are encouraged to log onto www.FrulanFuneral.com to sign the guest book, upload photographs and share Bob's memorial page online through social media. Funeral services and arrangements have been made under the direction and care of Reeves, Frulan & Baskerville Funeral Homes and Crematory.

Betty Jean Lemke

BELLINGHAM, WA—Betty Jean Lemke passed away peacefully May 18, 2026 in Bellingham, WA. She was born in Leitchfield, KY leaving behind a legacy of creativity, advocacy, friendship, and love. Betty raised her family of five children in Resthaven in Wilmington, IL, where many cherished summers were spent along the Kankakee River. She took great pride in her family's business, Lemke's Plaster Paradise and Ceramics, where she shared her passion for art by teaching oil painting classes. Painting remained one of her greatest joys throughout her life. Betty had a gift for making things grow, whether it was her enormous gardens, her artistic talents, or the friendships she nurtured over the years. She was a writer, an activist, and someone who was never afraid to stand up for what she believed was right. She helped bring attention to the dangerous conditions on Route 102, advocating for improvements that made the road safer for others. Later in life, Betty and her beloved husband, Robert, moved to Prescott, AZ. There, she became a welcoming presence in the community, helping newcomers feel at home by forming a Newcomers Club. In her late fifties, Betty discovered a new passion—tap dancing—and helped form the famous Dancing Grannies, bringing smiles and laughter wherever they performed. Betty and Robert spent their final years in Bellingham. Robert passed away Oct. 20, 2018. While she treasured her



many accomplishments and friendships, nothing brought her greater joy than her family, especially her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Betty is survived by her children, Stephanie Bell, formerly Steven Lemke, David Lemke (Donna), of Mesa, AZ; and Susan (John) Long, of Gulf Shores, AL. She also leaves behind seven grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren, all of whom brought her tremendous pride and joy. She is preceded by Robert Lynn and Laurie who had previously passed. Betty is now reunited in Heaven with her loving husband, Robert. Their story also leaves an important lesson for those they loved. In their later years, decisions made by others left them with less control over family relationships than they would have wanted. Betty would encourage everyone to carefully consider their estate plans, powers of attorney, and end-of-life wishes, and to choose trusted individuals who will honor their desire to maintain connections with the people they love most. Though Betty and Robert are gone, their lives remind us that family time is precious and should never be taken for granted. She will be remembered for her artistic spirit, determination, compassion, advocacy for others, and the love she shared with everyone fortunate enough to know her. Forever loved. Forever missed. Forever in our hearts.

Kathy Wilkey

BRACEVILLE—Kathy M. Wilkey, 73 of Braceville, passed away on Tuesday, June 16, 2026 at Endeavor Health Edward Hospital in Naperville, IL. Born June 23, 1952 in Aurora, IL, Kathy Mae was the daughter of Edward M. and Marion (Vago) Olson. She was raised and educated in Plattville, IL and Braceville, where she graduated from Gardner South Wilmington High School with the Class of 1970. On July 18, 1981, Kathy married Herbert Stanley Wilkey at the Braceville United Methodist Church, and together they made their home in Braceville and raised their family. She was a member of Braceville United Methodist Church and was employed by RR Donnelly in Dwight for over 35 years, retiring as a mail router. Kathy loved bringing people together by cooking delicious meals. She was well known for her cabbage rolls and stuffed peppers, as well as her pumpkin squares and cherry cheesecake for dessert. Kathy also had a love of classic cars, a passion that she shared with her brothers. She was an animal lover who supported local shelters, having a soft spot for her four-legged companions. Kathy was an incredibly brave, strong and resilient woman who faced many health challenges with incredible courage and unwavering strength. She inspired everyone who knew her with her grace and resilience, never once complaining about the challenges life sent her way. Her gracious heart was open to anyone in need, with her kindness and selfless attitude always apparent to those who knew and loved her. Kathy had a deep love for family and cherished any and all time spent with them. She set a great example for any to follow and will be deeply missed by those lucky enough to be her family and friends.



Survivors include her husband, Herbert S. Wilkey of Braceville; daughter, Krystal Wilkey (Jason Buchanan) of Gardner; and granddaughter, Jayden Buchanan; one brother, Larry (Debbie) Olson; brothers and sisters-in-law: Janice "Pinky" Olson, Sue Olson, Virginia Olson, Kathy (the late Dave) Curl, William (Jeanette) Wilkey, Duane (Aggie) Wilkey, Su (Robert) Thompson, James (Kelly) Wilkey, Doug (Julie) Wilkey, Nancy Wilkey, and Nora "Dottie" Wilkey; and numerous nieces and nephews. Kathy was preceded in death by her parents; three brothers: Edward "Butch" Olson, Roger Olson and Rocky Olson; mother and father-in-law: William and Beata (Benson) Wilkey; and brothers and sisters-in-law: Wayne Wilkey, Wes Wilkey, Patsy (Jim) Wilkey-Perry, Sandra (Don) Jensen, Terry Wilkey, and Randy Wilkey. Cremation rites are being accorded, and the family will receive friends for a memorial visitation at Reeves Funeral Home, 203 North Liberty Street, in Gardner on Thursday, June 25, 2026 from 4:00 p.m. until the time of memorial service at 7:00 p.m. A private inurnment will be held at Braceville Gardner Cemetery. Memorial donations in Kathy's name may be made to a local animal shelter or St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. Family and friends are encouraged to log onto www.ReevesFuneral.com to sign the guest book, upload photographs and share Kathy's memorial page online through social media. Cremation services and memorial arrangements have been made under the direction and care of Reeves Frulan & Baskerville Funeral Homes and Crematory.

Johnson brings more mortgage loan knowledge to Federated Bank

Federated Bank is pleased to welcome Andrew Johnson as a Mortgage Loan Officer at its Braidwood branch, strengthening the bank's lending team and commitment to serving customers across the region. "I look forward to joining Federated Bank, as a resident of Essex being able to help our local community with the home lending needs has always been a main priority," Johnson said. Johnson brings nearly two decades of mortgage lending experience, with a strong background in loan origination, customer service, and relationship development. Throughout his career, he has worked closely with borrowers, realtors, and internal teams to guide loans from application through closing while maintaining compliance with lending standards. Prior to joining Federated Bank, Johnson served as a mortgage banker with Green State Credit Union, where he focused on building a strong pipeline through relationships with realtors



ANDREW JOHNSON

and past customers while managing all aspects of the loan process. His previous experience includes roles with Busey Bank, Chase, and NuMark Credit Union, where he consistently grew his book of business through purchase and refinance transactions while delivering strong customer service. Andrew has earned recognition for his performance, including National Achiever honors and customer service

scores exceeding 95 percent. In his new role, Johnson will work with customers throughout the mortgage process, help grow the bank's lending portfolio, and support the continued development of relationships in the Braidwood community. "Andrew brings deep lending experience and a strong focus on customer relationships. His ability to develop business and guide customers through the loan process will support continued growth at Federated Bank," said David Albin, Chairman of Longview Capital Corporation. Matt Clark, President of Federated Bank said: "Andrew understands the mortgage business from end to end. He knows how to build relationships, manage the lending process, and deliver results for customers. His experience will strengthen our Braidwood team." Federated Bank looks forward to the experience Johnson brings to the team and the continued growth of its lending services.

Basset training to be offered in Wilmington

BY ROSE PANIERI
STAFF WRITER

A state-mandated alcohol server training course will be offered later this month for anyone who sells or serves alcoholic beverages, including volunteers during summer and holiday events. The Wilmington Coalition for Healthy Communities, in partnership with other agencies, is bringing BASSET training

to the area. BASSET, (Beverage Alcohol Sellers and Servers Education and Training), is the State of Illinois' mandatory responsible alcohol server training program regulated by the Illinois Liquor Control Commission. The program teaches participants how to properly check identification, recognize signs of intoxication, and understand liability issues as well as state liquor laws. The training session

will be held Monday, June 29, from 4 to 8 p.m. at the Wilmington Lions Club, 805 E. River St., Wilmington. Participants who complete the entire four-hour course will receive their Basset certification. The training is particularly important as communities prepare for a busy season of festivals, fundraisers and other events where alcohol may be served.

REPORT:

2.1 million Illinoisans face \$500 cut as Social Security faces 2032 fiscal cliff

BY SEAN REED
THE CENTER SQUARE

New data and reports from the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget have shown that if no legislative action is taken soon, Social Security could run out of money as soon as 2032. Other recently released data from within the federal government reflected the projection agreed the Old-Age and Survivors Insurance and Disability Insurance funds are now set to run dry a year sooner than anticipated. Roughly 2.1 million Illinois retirees, or 16.5% of the state population, who receive benefits would be impacted by a statutory cut to benefits if the program goes insolvent, according to Ben Tomchik, vice president with the CRFB. That cut would result in a newly estimated \$507 reduction in benefit payments per month for Illinoisans, based on previous years data. Tomchik told The Center Square that work to find a solution in Congress needs to happen soon. "We have to agree that any solution has to be bipartisan in nature. Seventy million Americans receive benefits as a part of social security. For 40% of seniors, it makes up the majority of their income. So, both parties have to come together on a solution," Tomchik said. Tomchik said the process to finding a solution isn't new, and lawmakers can look to the last time

Social Security faced insolvency, which was in the 1980s under President Ronald Reagan. "This is where you would have members from both parties come together along with outside experts. They would look at the problem, what is driving social security's fiscal challenges, and then put forward a series of solutions," Tomchik said. The Greenspan Commission, organized in 1981 under Reagan, did exactly what Tomchik described. Two congressmen, U.S. Reps. Tom Cole, R-OK, and Tom Suozzi, D-NY, introduced House Resolution 9187 early last week to create a current day commission similar to that of the 1980s. As for specific solutions, Tomchik said a few considerations may be raising the cap on how much money Americans pay into the program, lift the payroll tax cap, or the limiting of benefits. "The good thing with Social Security is that there's a ton of options to save the program. The bad thing is we just need leaders who have the political courage to do it," Tomchik said. U.S. Sen. Tammy Duckworth, D-Ill., co-signed a letter to President Donald Trump this week that criticized his administration's handling of Social Security, such as policies in HRI, or the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act," a tax and spending package. Federal trustees that oversee the program's status attributed the projection to some of the same

problems Duckworth cited, including reduced projected immigration levels and policies within HRI. One consideration within the Trump administration Duckworth sought clarity on in the letter is a potential increase on the age of eligibility. Multiple members of the administration have floated a potential change to the retirement age, which is currently set at age 67. In a post, SSA Commissioner Frank Bisignano reiterated that both he and President Trump seek to protect Social Security recipients, rather than making cuts. Bisignano went on to later tell Fox News that he instead planned to cut wasteful spending and target fraudulent and abusive payments. "Under the Trump Administration, Social Security is serving more Americans better, faster, and with higher quality. We have made it a priority to have a pristine control environment and to eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse," Bisignano said in a statement last week. Tomchik told The Center Square that Illinoisans interested in securing future funds that they have paid into during their careers should pay attention to congressional candidates running in the November general elections. He noted that the next elected U.S. senator from Illinois will serve a term that will end the same year as when benefit payments would be reduced.

Thank you for reading your local newspaper

Family owned (and sometimes argued over) the past 46 years

WWII-era collection of rare Harley-Davidsons on display

Six rare Harley-Davidson motorcycles dating from 1941-1944 are now on display at the Harley-Davidson Museum in Milwaukee, WI.

Preserved in authentic condition and displayed as history left them, the collection offers visitors a unique opportunity to experience Harley-Davidson history through motorcycles that have retained the wear, patina and stories earned over decades of use.

On loan from actor, filmmaker, and motorcycle enthusiast Jason Momoa, and featured in HBO Max series On the Road, the collection showcases a pivotal era in Harley-Davidson history when civilian production became increasingly limited and American manufacturing was trans-

formed by World War II.

Rather than restoring these motorcycles, Momoa sought examples that still carried visible evidence of the roads they traveled and the people who rode them. Their value lies not only in their rarity, but in the stories etched into every surface.

The collection includes a 1941 TA, 1943 FL, 1943 EL, 1944 E, 1944 U, and a unique 1941 EL transformed into a 1949 service truck. Together, these motorcycles tell the story of Harley-Davidson from the years immediately before, during and after World War II.

Unlike restored showpieces, these motorcycles remain in authentic survivor condition. Their faded paint, worn controls, and earned patina offer a

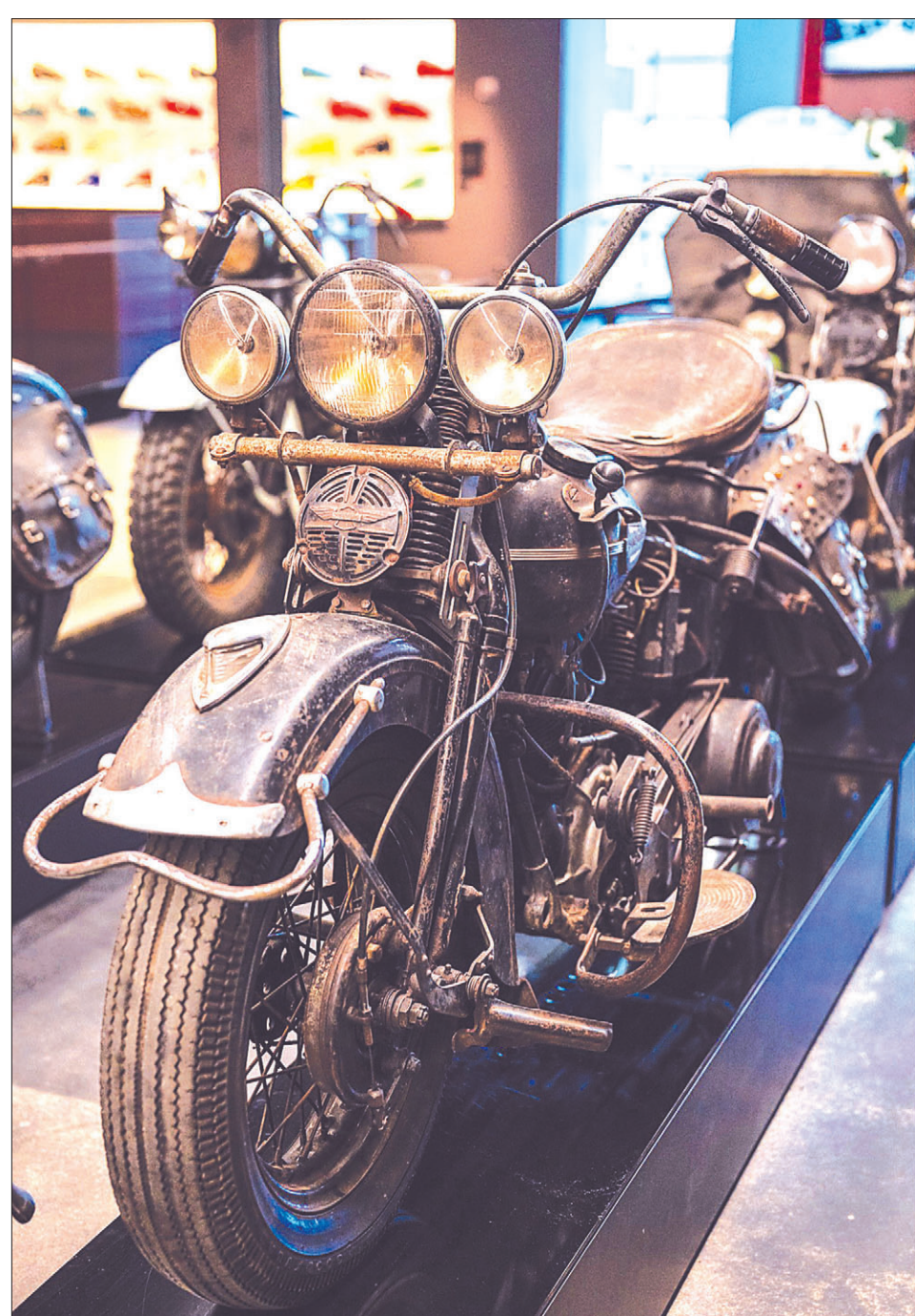
rare opportunity to experience history exactly as it was left behind.

Built during a period when civilian production became increasingly limited and American manufacturing was focused on supporting the war effort, these motorcycles represent a pivotal chapter in Harley-Davidson history.

The exhibit explores:

- Harley-Davidson during WWII
- The evolution of civilian motorcycles during wartime
- The value of preservation versus restoration
- Jason Momoa's pursuit of authentic motorcycles with stories to tell

The exhibit remains on display through June 2027 and is included with museum admission.



ONE OF THE VINTAGE unrestored Harley-Davidsons from the World War II era is on display at the Harley-Davidson Museum in Milwaukee.

Breakfast on the go

It's important to fuel up to start the day. Breakfast helps improve brain function, blood sugar levels, fatigue and the urge to overeat later, says Jill Heitzig, APRN, a family nurse practitioner with OSF HealthCare.

But sometimes life gets in the way. How can you work a healthy breakfast into a busy lifestyle?

Weekend preparation

Heitzig says egg bites with vegetables are an option that will stay fresh in the refrigerator for a few days. Overnight oats topped with dried fruit or nuts are another good choice. Two cups of fruits and three cups of vegetables are good goals, Heitzig says.

"Keep things simple with a protein shake. If you're having a busy day, a protein shake is a quick option to get some calories

and protein to make your morning go a little bit better," Heitzig says.

Choose healthier versions of breakfast staples. For example, pass on the syrup that has added sugar.

What about those sugary mainstays like cereal? Heitzig admits they're tough to resist, especially for kids, in part because they're advertised so much.

"Once in a while, it's totally fine," Heitzig says. "But I highly recommend adding a protein, like a breakfast meat. Or, add a fruit. This helps stabilize those blood sugar levels so we don't have those spikes and dips over time."

When can parents trust kids to have a healthy breakfast on their own? There's no set age, Heitzig says. Every child is different. But, make it a conversation and set expectations early.

"Encourage those bet-

ter decisions. Push them to make better choices," Heitzig says. "Give them more options. Kids love to choose. Maybe they'll keep leaning toward those [healthy] options rather than reaching for those sugary cereals and Pop Tarts."

"Also, let them be involved," Heitzig adds. "Let them make their own yogurt parfait or eggs. I know mornings can be busy, and it's not always possible. But letting them be involved when you're there leads to better decisions on their own later in life."

For adults on the go, research healthier options.

"Drive thru breakfast shouldn't be a daily thing," Heitzig cautions. But, you can make better choices. Skip the deep-fried morning dish in favor of something with egg whites or Canadian bacon.

CPR, AED and First Aid training class offered

Morris Hospital & Healthcare Centers is offering several opportunities to take the American Heart Association's Heartsaver CPR AED & First Aid Training course this summer. The course will be

offered on June 24, July 14, or August 11 from 4-8:30 p.m. at Shabbona School, 725 School St., Morris.

Heartsaver CPR AED & First Aid is for individuals interested in learning skills that could save the life of a loved one, friend, co-worker, or community member.

Participants will learn the skills needed to perform high quality CPR, proper use of an automated external defibrillator (AED), relief of foreign-body airway obstruction, and basic first aid. The cost is \$110 and includes American Heart Association materials.

Register online at www.morrishospital.org/ev ents. For more information, call 815-705-7360.

Local honor students at UAlabama dean's list

A total of 14,306 students enrolled during Spring Semester 2026 at The University of Alabama were named to the dean's list with an academic record of 3.5 (or above) or the president's list with an academic record of 4.0 (all A's).

Area students named to the Dean's list include: Makayla Wilkins of Braidwood, Jennifer Pruim of Coal City and Jackson Wilcock of Coal City.

Area students named to the President's list include: Gavin Chernesky of Coal City, Riley Dehler of Coal City and Izabella Rivera of Wilmington.

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Wilmington museum open Saturdays

The Wilmington Area Historical Society will open its museum for visits from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturdays through the end of July. The exception will be July 4th, a national holiday. Everyone is welcome to come see items of local significance on display at 114 N. Main St., Wilmington.

Wilmington taverns battling for 'Best Bloody Mary' title

Final week to cast your vote

Bloody Mary lovers will have the chance to sample, score and crown the city's top cocktail during a month-long competition designed to support a good cause.

The Wine Cafe is organizing the "Who Has

the Best Bloody Mary in the Wilmington City Limits?" contest, which will run through June 30 and feature 12 participating establishments.

Participants can purchase a \$25 passport book, which includes a half-priced Bloody Mary at each participating location. After visiting each establishment, participants will rate the drink on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest score. Completed ballots can be torn from the passport book and submitted at each location.

According to contest organizers, each establishment will serve its standard Bloody Mary recipe. Customers may request different heat levels, but no special garnishes or alcohol upgrades will be included as part of the competition.

The participating businesses include The Wine Cafe, Old School Brewing, The Rustic Inn, Tuffy's Lounge & Patio, The Corner Tap, The Blue

Horse Martini Bar, The Garage on Water, Riverfront Lanes, the VFW Post 5422, Birdie's Gaming Cafe, Hayden's Crossing and Route 66 Bar & Grill.

The winner of the competition will be announced on July 4.

Beyond the friendly rivalry, the event also serves a charitable purpose as proceeds raised will benefit the Wilmington School District Assisted Lunch Program, helping provide meal assistance to local students.

Passport books are available for purchase through participating establishments, and organizers encourage residents to visit all 12 locations throughout June to determine who truly serves Wilmington's best Bloody Mary.

It's a fun way to support local businesses, enjoy some friendly competition and help a worthwhile community cause at the same time.

Morris Hospital offers babysitter's training course

Morris Hospital is offering a Babysitter's Training Course for youths age 11 and older on July 10 or August 6 from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the training classroom at Shabbona School, 725 School St., Morris.

The class is a great opportunity for those interested in acquiring the information and education needed for a safe babysitting experience including interviewing for a babysitting job, choosing safe and age-appropriate toys and games, performing first aid, practicing diapering

and feeding techniques, and handling bedtime issues. Participants should bring their own lunch and an afternoon snack.

Those who complete the course will earn certification in American Red Cross Babysitter's Training and American Heart Association Infant and Child CPR.

The class fee is \$60, and the class size is limited to 10 students. Registration can be completed online at www.morrishospital.org/events. Select the Kids Classes category.



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WE CARE BEYOND THE REPAIR!

Fossil Ridge to offer hunter safety course

Interested in learning safe and responsible hunting practices? Join the Fossil Ridge Public Library in Braidwood for a free two-day Hunter Safety Course taught by certified volunteer instructors from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

It will be offered on Saturday, June 27, 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and Sunday, June 28, 8 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

This course includes at least 10 hours of in-person instruction and is required for many individuals who plan to hunt in Illinois. It's a great opportunity to learn about firearm safety, conservation and responsible outdoor practices.

Registration is required and must be completed through the IDNR website at dnr.illinois.gov/safety/hunter-safety.html

The library will be providing refreshments during both days of the course. Questions can be directed to Sarah Hopf at shopf@fossilridge.org or (815) 458-2187 ext. 103.

Library program on What is AI anyway?

Artificial intelligence (AI) seems to be everywhere these days, but what exactly is it, and why has it become such a major topic of conversation?

Join the Wilmington Public Library on Wednesday, June 24, at 6 p.m. for "What is AI Anyway?", an informative presentation by Wright to Learn, LLC.

Participants will learn what we mean when we talk about AI, where it already appears in everyday life, what it does well (and not so well), and why it is generating both excitement and concern.

This program is free and open to the public. Registration is required. To register, call 815-476-2834.

Bird viewing at Lake Renwick

The Forest Preserve District of Will County is hosting Lake Renwick Migratory Bird Viewing on Saturdays through Aug. 9 from 8 a.m. to noon, at Lake Renwick Heron Rookery Nature Preserve, Plainfield.

View nesting herons, egrets, cormorants and bald eagles from the viewing platform while staff and volunteers answer questions. All ages; free.

WHS Class of 1976 to hold 50-year reunion

Wilmington High School Class of 1976 is having a class reunion on Aug. 1, at the Wilmington VFW from 6 p.m. - 10 p.m.

Looking for contact information of graduates.

Please contact Jodi Roark (815) 557-8584 or Gary L. VanDuyne (779) 227-9013. Email: jroark76e906.com or vanduyne110@comcast.net Facebook: Wilmington High School Class of "76"

SUNDAY FUNDAY!

DOORS OPEN AT NOON! FIRST RAFFLE AT 2PM!
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QUEEN of HEARTS

Every TUESDAY at 553 W. Kennedy Rd. Braidwood
You must play BINGO to participate.

Doors open at 4pm. Drawing is held at intermission.
Queen of Hearts Pot is \$8,775.00

For BINGO players only on Tuesday nites and see the QUEEN rules at the BINGO hall for rules and regulations.

Braidwood Post 039 BINGO

Tuesday Night Flash Max Bingo

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Doors Open	4:00pm	Braidwood, IL 60408

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BINGO

Wed. - Fri., 6 p.m. - 10 p.m.
Saturday, 3 p.m. - 10 p.m.
Sunday, 3 p.m. - 9 p.m.

Fireworks
Sunday, 9:30 p.m.

Sign up for
BEAN BAG TOURNAMENT

Thursday at 6:30 p.m.
Tournament
7:15 p.m. Contact
George Reader
815-953-3110

CARBON HILL MUSEUM

Saturday Opens @ 1:00 p.m.
Sunday Opens @ 11:00 a.m.
Call (815) 347-0810
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Mark your calendars!

15th Annual Josh Cumming Memorial Softball Tournament
Mon., June 22 - Sun., June 28
Bracket Schedule Posted on Food/Beer Stands

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Tickets Purchased At Carnival
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Saturday - \$40 Daily Ticket Per Person
Friday & Sunday - \$35 Daily Ticket Per Person

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ENTERTAINMENT

Fri., June 26
NEXT THING SMOKIN'
9:00 p.m. - Midnight

Sat., June 27
NO DECISIONS
8:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.

Carbon Hill Homecoming — Don't Miss It!!! — June 24th - 28th

Midwest tick activity reaches highest level in nearly a decade

Tick bites are sending Americans to emergency rooms at rates not seen in a decade, according to the CDC.

With Lyme disease, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, and alpha-gal syndrome all on the rise, outdoor protection brand Sawyer is urging families to take simple, proven steps to stay safe this season.

The scale of this season's surge is striking: during the fourth week of April 2026, approximately 114 out of every 100,000 emergency department visits in the U.S. were for tick bites, the highest rate for this point in the year since at least 2017. Compounding the concern, an estimated 476,000 people are treated for Lyme disease, the most common tick-

borne illness, every year in the United States (CDC).

According to Harvard Health, about 90% of U.S. Lyme disease cases have been reported in just 14 states including Minnesota and Wisconsin in the Midwest.

"Awareness matters more than panic," said Kurt Avery, Founder of Sawyer. "Simple steps can go a long way in protecting your family from diseases spread by ticks."

Ticks cannot fly or jump. They "quest" at the tips of tall grasses and brush, extending their front legs to latch onto passing hosts.

Staying on marked trails and away from leaf litter dramatically cuts exposure.

In yards, short grass and wood chip barriers at lawn edges limit tick habitat close to home.

Wear long sleeves and pants, tuck pants into socks, and do quick checks during outdoor breaks. After coming inside, a hot shower and full body scan catches ticks before they attach.

Apply Picaridin to exposed skin. Sawyer's 20% Picaridin provides all-day protection, is safe for children 6 months and older, and repels over 55 insects without the heavy feel of DEET.

Treat clothing and gear with Permethrin. One treatment with Sawyer's Permethrin lasts up to 6 washes.

Know what to do if a tick attaches.

Use fine-tipped tweezers, pull steadily upward, clean the site, and save the tick. Monitor for fever, rash, or joint pain in the weeks following a bite.

Pet owners are nearly twice as likely to find ticks on themselves as those without pets. Check dogs after every outing. Permethrin-treated dog hair kills ticks on contact after they cross just one inch, preventing them from passing to human family members.

For the full guide on prevention, visit Sawyer's Tick Talk 101 blog post at www.sawyer.com.

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Guzzle Gills – Heritage FS

\$1,000 Cash

\$500 CASH PRIZES

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Solidarity – Kankakee Federation of Labor

Red, White & Bluegill – Angie Serafini, Trustee, Village of Bourbonnais

APBA – Aroma Park Boating Association

Aqua Man – Aqua Illinois, Inc.

Mr. Lifer – Bradley-Bourbonnais Sportsmen's Club

Fallen Sportsman – Bradley-Bourbonnais Sportsmen's Club

Bourbonnais Citizens Party – Bourbonnais Citizens Party

J.R.'s Wally Walleye – Family of J.R. Black

Nimrod – LA Blanchette Agency

Hooli 26 – Holohan Heating & Sheet Metal

Jerry Forbes – Bourbonnais Friendship Festival

Shorty – Kankakee County Building Trades

Baby Huey – Aroma Park American Legion Post

COFU – The Thomas Family

A Fish Named Don – Kankakee Truck Equipment

Black Top – Kankakee Valley Construction Co.

Jackhammer – Laborers Local 751

Levi's Luscious Lunch – Levi's Garage

In Memory of Jack Dugan – Lisa Dugan

MAC – Momence Anchor Club

Foreign Warrior – Kankakee VFW #2857

Jean Alice – Northern Illinois Anglers Association

Grandpa – Northern Illinois Anglers Association

Stop Light – Outson Electric Inc.

Mr. Ringneck – Pheasants Forever of Kankakee County

Big John – Precise Painting

Joe – Rose Gianotti

Every Day's a Holiday – South Wilmington Sportsmen's Club

Dumpster Diver – United Dispos.

"Chach" – Limestone Park District

Ed's Legacy – Family of Ed Mullady

Klem – Herscher Auto Tech

MO-GAS – Momence Bottle Gas

Reel Justice – State's Attorney Jim Rowe

Let's Bounce – Bounce With Us

Tall Timbers – Kankakee Forest Preserve

Mr. Whitetail – Kankakee River Valley Whitetails Unlimited

T-Bird, In Memory of Tracy Tofte – The Tofte Family

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The River Rat – Warren's Collision Center

Justice McGill – Spiros Law

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27 PLACE-WINNERS IN 9 CATEGORIES

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DERBY DOLLAR DAYS – \$100 CASH

Fri. June 26..... Rough Fish – Buffalo Roamin Day – X-line Sportsmen's Club

Sat. June 27..... Largemouth Bass – Large Lunker Day – Sons of the American Legion

Sun. June 28..... Smallmouth Bass – Smallie Searchin Day – Kankakee River Trading Post

Mon. June 29..... Rock Bass – Rock Mining Day – Nancy Witthoft

Tues. June 30..... Flathead Catfish – Anderson Family

Wed. July 1..... Channel Catfish – Sons of the American Legion

Thur. July 2..... Northern Pike – Pike Plugging Day – Reed's Rent All

Fri. July 3..... Crappie – Crappie Jigging Day – APBA

Sat. July 4..... Walleye – Wally Walleye Day – Daily Journal

Any Species Excluding Catfish and Rough Fish – Kids Corkin Day – Kankakee Sportsmen's Club

Add 7 days to these dates

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BY: Angelo's Bait & Tackle, Elliott's Bait and Tackle, The Free Press,

Rose Gianotti, Kankakee River Trading Post,

Reed's Rent All, North Walmart Supercenter,

South Walmart, and Nancy Witthoft

4 FISH

\$1000 CASH

DAILY JOURNAL

State-threatened purple wartyback mussel discovered in Forked Creek

A recent study of Forked Creek found 17 mussel species, including the state-threatened purple wartyback and four species of conservation concern.

The discovery highlights the creek's high water quality and elevates it to a resource of statewide significance. The Forked Creek preservation system includes six preserves protecting almost 2,660 acres.

The first hint of a mussel population came a few years ago when a utility company was required to conduct a study for a project.

"They found the purple wartyback and other mussels were present," said Juli Mason, director of conservation programs for the Forest Preserve. "Based on this snapshot study, we commissioned a more thorough inventory to get general data on the species present in our preserves."

According to the 2025 report, mussels representing 17 species were collected. In addition to the purple wartyback, four Species of Greatest Conservation Need were found: elktoe, flutedshell, black sandshell and ellipse.

Declining numbers Finding mussels in a Forest Preserve creek is important because freshwater mussels are indicators of high-quality, healthy streams in Illinois, Mason said.

"Mussels are highly sensitive to pollution, sedimentation and habitat degradation," she explained. "As filter feeders, robust and diverse mussel communities signify clean water and stable ecosystems that contain the specific fish hosts required to complete their life cycle."

Because of its discovery in Will County, Forked Creek now qualifies as a resource of statewide significance. Protecting the



Photo by Clarissa Lawlis, BioSurvey Group

THE PURPLE WARTYBACK mussel is listed as state-threatened.

water that flows into creeks is one of the goals of the Forest Preserve, Mason explained.

"We can protect habitat for mussels by improving water quality entering the stream from the surrounding watershed," she said. "This can include using best management practices to reduce chemical and fertilizer use to prevent runoff and nutrient pollution from lawns and farms. The Forest Preserve also protects portions of the stream and surrounding habitat directly as part of our preserve system."

While the Forest Preserve will work to protect the creek, the mussels also will be improving the water quality for aquatic life by acting as natural filters. They draw in water through siphon tubes, removing nutrients, microscopic organisms and pollutants before releasing

cleaner water back into the stream, according to the Illinois Extension.

Because of this filtering work, mussels are often called the "livers" of creeks and rivers.

But Illinois mussels are struggling.

"Populations of mussels have declined alarmingly in recent decades because of siltation, pollution, and competition from exotic mollusks like the zebra mussel," the Illinois Department of Natural Resources website states. "Of the eighty mussel species native to Illinois, more than half are currently threatened, endangered, extirpated, or extinct."

Wartyback rarity The Illinois State Museum describes the purple wartyback as a medium-sized mussel with numerous bumps on its outer surface and a purple inner shell called a nacre.

Governor pauses tax incentive agreements for data center projects starting July 1

BY ROSE PANIERI
STAFF WRITER

Gov. JB Pritzker has paused new state tax incentive agreements for data center projects in Illinois beginning July 1, citing concerns about the industry's growing impact on electricity costs, water usage and the power grid.

Locally, numerous towns including Coal City are protesting strong-arm tactics to force data centers on rural communities. Will County Board Member Steve Balich, R-Homer Glen, recently addressed the issue.

"Citizens are getting together all over the United States with the goal of stopping these data centers," Balich said. "We have to stop these things, they're horrible."

The pause does not stop construction of new data centers, but it temporarily halts access to tax breaks offered through the state's Data Center Investment Program while lawmakers consider additional regulations.

Pritzker had proposed a two-year suspension ear-

lier this year, arguing Illinois needs stronger safeguards before continuing to subsidize large-scale developments tied to artificial intelligence and cloud computing.

The decision follows the failure of the proposed POWER Act to advance during the spring legislative session. The measure would have increased oversight of data centers, including requirements related to energy use and environmental impacts.

Consumer advocates praised the move, saying data centers should bear more of the costs associated with their growing demand for electricity. Industry groups, however, warned that suspending incentives could make Illinois less competitive in attracting technology investments.

Illinois remains one of the nation's leading data center markets, but the governor said additional discussion is needed to balance economic development with concerns about energy affordability and infrastructure demands.

Area students named Olivet dean's list

Olivet Nazarene University in Bourbonnais has announced its 2026 spring dean's list.

To qualify for inclusion on the Dean's List, a student must have been enrolled as a full-time undergraduate student and must have attained a semester grade point aver-

age of 3.50 or higher on a 4.00 grading scale.

Area students include Landon Jankus of Braidwood; Melody Kinder of Coal City; Hope Dillinger of Custer Park; and Jessica Castle, Julia McCully, Drake Robertson, Evan Surdey and Grant Wilburn all of Wilmington.

Drawing for waterfowl blinds

Hunters should mark their calendars for July 25 if interested in obtaining a waterfowl hunting blind at one of three area state parks.

Random drawings will be held Saturday, July 25 for blinds allocated for one year at:

- Des Plaines State Fish and Wildlife Area, Will County with registration from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the site office, two miles northwest of Wilmington off exit 241 on Interstate 55.

- Kankakee River State Park and Momence Wetlands, Kankakee and Will Counties with registration from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. for both sites at the Kankakee River State Park office on Illinois Route 102. Hunters will be allowed to

register for only one of the two sites.

- Mazonia State Fish and Wildlife Area, Grundy County with registration from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the site office, 7705 E. Huston Road, two miles southeast of Braceville.

Duck and goose hunters must register in person for waterfowl blind site drawings and must be present at the drawing to claim their blind sites. Mail-in registrations are not accepted.

To participate in a drawing, all applicants must present a 2025 or 2026 regular Illinois hunting license (no apprentice or youth license), an 2025 or 2026 Illinois Migratory Waterfowl Stamp at the time they register, unless

exempted by law, and valid photo identification. Applicants must be at least 16 years old by the date of the drawing.

Applicants who need to purchase new licenses and stamps should do so prior to the drawing. Licenses and stamps are available at any DNR Direct license and permit vendor or the IDNR website at www.dnr.illinois.gov.

Registrants are no longer required to possess a valid Illinois Firearm Owner's Identification (FOID) card from the Illinois State Police to participate in blind drawings.

More hunting information and maps can be accessed at www.dnr.illinois.gov/hunting/FactSheets/Pages/default.aspx.

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Five new laws starting July 1

A list of laws Gov. J.B. Pritzker signed over a year ago take effect July 1. Here's what you need to know.

While Illinois families won't see prices increase July 1, they will see a record billion budget with over \$800 million in tax increases and new laws take effect.

Here are five laws effective July 1:

End-of-life option

Referred to as Deb's Law, patients with a terminal disease may ask a doctor to prescribe aid-in-dying medica-

tion allowing them to end their life "in a peaceful manner."

Senate Bill 1950 was originally titled "Sanitary Food Preparation" and amended in the last week of the 2025 regular session to the "End-of-Life Options for Terminally Ill Patients Act."

Cyber-bullying definition

House Bill 3851 adds to the bullying prevention section of the school code.

"Posting or distributing sexually explicit images" is considered a form of bullying.

Beginning in the 2026-2027 school year, "cyber-bullying" also includes the posting or distribution of an unauthorized digital replica by electronic means" if the post creates fear or harm for the student, hurts the student's physical or mental health, or interferes with the student's academic performance or the ability to participate in other services, activities or privileges provided by the school.

School bus permits

A school bus driver has a new permit option. House Bill 2962 creates a specialized school bus driver permit to operate smaller passenger vehicles and a "multifunction school activity bus" designed to carry up to 15 passengers when being used for curriculum-related activities such as transportation between home and school, to a vocational school or for a field trip.

The bill gives districts more flexibility for curriculum-related transportation while maintaining strict safety standards.

Driving tests for 75+

House Bill 1226 raises the age for in-person license

renewal to 79, up from 75. The bill also adds to the Illinois Vehicle Code that an applicant over age 87, or 75 if the person holds a commercial driver's license, "must prove, by actual demonstration," that they can safely operate a vehicle.

New Department of Early Childhood

Passed in 2024 during the 103rd Illinois General Assembly, Senate Bill 1 streamlines bureaucracy and accomplishes a recommendation from the bipartisan Illinois Commission on Equitable Early Childhood Education and Care Funding.

Two years after Pritzker signed it into law, the new Department of Early Childhood launches July 1, overseeing programs and services that have been handled by three state agencies.

This year, lawmakers had a chance to tackle the state's pension crisis, Illinois' high state and local tax burden, energy affordability and the Chicago Bears stadium situation. They left taxpayers on the hook — and maybe without a beloved Bears.

Gas prices drop, but still higher than a year ago

Average gasoline prices in Illinois have fallen 17.6 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$4.13/g Monday, according to GasBuddy's survey of 4,378 stations in Illinois.

Prices in Illinois are 82.7 cents per gallon lower than a month ago and stand 72.1 cents per gallon higher than a year ago. The national average price of diesel has decreased 19.2 cents compared to a week ago and stands at \$4.99 per gallon.

On Monday, all gas in Wilmington was under \$4/g, with Mohsen offering gas at \$3.64/g. Circle K and others were at \$3.98/g and \$3.99/g.

Braidwood gas ranges from \$3.99/g at Casey's up to \$4.19/g at Marathon.

Coal City is highest in the area, with gas at \$4.29/g at participating stations.

Morris gas starts at \$3.85/g at Pilot, up to \$4.45/g at BP.

In Bourbonnais, the cheapest gas is \$3.93/g at Gulf and the highest is \$4.09/g at BP.

"Average gasoline prices declined in nearly every state over the last week, while all 50 states saw average diesel prices move lower," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy.

"However, the outlook is far from settled. New uncertainty has emerged after Iran suggested the Strait of Hormuz was closed, along with fresh warnings that the U.S. could again strike Iran, developments that could push oil prices higher in the days ahead. Despite this, gasoline prices aren't yet at significant risk of a spike, as some vessels have continued to move through the Strait. Still, should the situation worsen or escalate further, motorists could see that risk change quickly."

The lowest price in the state is \$3.35/g while the highest is \$5.99/g.

Illinois insurance rates on the rise

According to LendingTree's 2026 State of Home Insurance Report, Illinois homeowners are facing rapidly rising insurance costs.

Key findings for Illinois from the State of Home Insurance 2026 report include:

- Illinois ranks #17 for average home insurance premiums nationwide, with homeowners paying \$2,731 annually. The national average is \$2,395.
- Illinois ranks #7 for the largest increase in home insurance rates since 2020, with premiums rising 68.0% over the past five years.
- Illinois ranks #4 for

home insurance rate increases in 2025, with premiums increasing 14.1% this year.

- While many states saw the pace of insurance increases slow in 2025, Illinois continued to experience double-digit premium growth.

According to LendingTree's home insurance expert, Lindsay Bishop, "Many homeowners are feeling the impact of higher insurance costs on their household budgets. When rates rise as quickly as they have in Illinois, it can become a meaningful financial burden, especially for homeowners already facing higher costs in other areas."

Reyes graduates at Iowa State

Iowa State University Graduate and undergraduate commencement ceremonies were held in May.

Among the graduates was Hayden Andrew Reyes, of Coal City who was awarded a Bachelor of Science, Biology, B.S.

CLASSIFIEDS

CLASSIFIED DEADLINES

Pre-payment required for all classified ads unless customer has a pre established business account

Deadlines

Classified Ads & Classified Display Ads

Fridays - 5 p.m.

The Free Press Newspapers will be responsible for the first incorrect insertion, and its liabilities shall be limited to the price on one insertion. The Free Press Newspapers reserves the right to classify correctly, edit, reject or cancel any advertisement at any time in accordance with its policy. All ads must be checked for errors the first week of publication by the advertiser.

Phone (815) 476-7966 or (815) 634-0315 for details.

Cost

Line Ads are up to 30 words (20¢ for each word over 30)

1 wk.- \$17; 2 wks.- \$21; 3 wks.- \$25; 4 wks.- \$29*

\$1.00 Extra per line for bold or caps on classified

*plus .0399% with credit card

The Braidwood Journal — The Coal City Courant — The Free Press Advocate

REAL ESTATE

quiring the residential real estate whose rights in and to the residential real estate arose prior to the sale. All payments shall be made in cash or certified funds payable to the Sheriff of Will County.

In the event the property is a condominium, in accordance with 735 ILCS 5/15-1507(c)(1)(H-1) and (H-2), 765 ILCS 605/9(g)(5), and 765 ILCS 605/18.5(g-1), you are hereby notified that the purchaser of the unit, other than a mortgagee, shall pay the assessments and legal fees required by sub-divisions (g)(1) and (g)(4) of Section 9 and the assessments required by subsection (g-1) of Section 18.5 of the Illinois Condominium Property Act.

Pursuant to Local Court Rule 11.03 (J) if there is a surplus following application of the proceeds of sale, then the plaintiff shall send written notice pursuant to 735 ILCS 5/15-1512(d) to all parties to the proceeding advising them of the amount of the surplus and that the surplus will be held until a party obtains a court order for its distribution or, in the absence of an order, until the surplus is forfeited to the State.

For Information Please Contact: **Codilis & Associates, P.C.**

15W030 N. Frontage Road Suite 100 Burr Ridge, Illinois 60527

P: 630-794-5300 F: 630-794-9090

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REAL ESTATE

FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT YOU ARE ADVISED THAT THIS LAW FIRM IS DEEMED TO BE A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE.

Published in the Free Press Newspapers on Wednesdays June 10, 17, and 24, 2026.

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FOR RENT

Wilmington - Commercial space. 101 E. Chicago St., Unit 2. Call 815-693-6030. Available July 1. ca15-18.

GARAGE SALE

Garage sale- 1815 South Water Street, Wilmington. June 25 - 27, Thurs & Friday 9 to 3, Saturday 9 - Noon. Housewares, Home decor, Holiday Decor, Video games, dvds, and much more!

HELP WANTED

Part-time Groomer Wanted! I'm looking for an experienced groomer to join my team. Flexible schedule and I'm open to negotiating hours and pay. If you're dedicated and easygoing, please contact me. Let's work together! Braidwood, Call Karen at 815-823-3844.

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REAL ESTATE

SHERIFF'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE OF **812 Western Ave, Braidwood, IL 60408** (Residential). On the 2nd day of **July, 2026** to be held at 12:00 noon, at the Will County Courthouse, 100 W. Jefferson Street, Room 1001, Joliet, IL 60432, under Case Title: **Planet Home Lending LLC Plaintiff V. Dino Presti as Co-Independent Administrator of the Estate of Anthony J. Presti, Deceased; et. al.** Defendant. Case No. **26 FC 0053** in the Circuit Court of the Twelfth Judicial Circuit, Will County, Illinois. Terms of Sale: ten percent (10%) at the time of sale and the balance within twenty-four (24) hours. No judicial sale fee shall be paid by the mortgagee acquiring the residential real estate pursuant to its credit bid at the sale or by any mortgagee, judgment creditor, or other lienor ac-

SITUATIONS WANTED

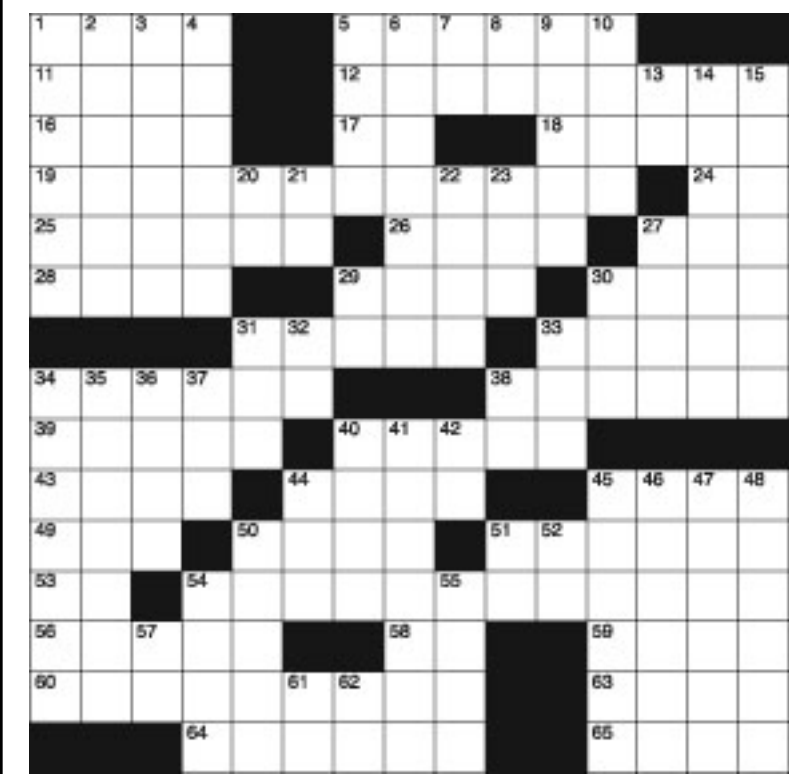
Wanted: Stories about local people, organizations and events. If you know a neighbor with an interesting hobby, collection or cause, give the editor a call at 1-815-634-0315 or 1-815-476-7966. tfn

MISCELLANEOUS

38" Lawn Sweeper, 6 cu. ft. Wheel barrows, 6,500 generic generator, IH Cub Cadet, snow plow and chains, 16" craftsmen chainsaw with 2x chains. Call for details. 815-416-5006.

LOST & FOUND

Have you found a lost pet or lost a pet in Will County? Please call Will County Animal Control. We may have your pet. We want to reunite your family, 815-462-5633.



CLUES ACROSS

- Nocturnal S. American rodent
- Requesting
- Give temporarily
- Excitedness
- Armed Forces branch
- Actor Harris
- Middle Eastern capital
- Air hostesses
- Partner to "Pa"
- Percussion instrument
- Popular computers
- Reduce light
- Asian mountain range
- Every one of two or more
- Absence of difficulty

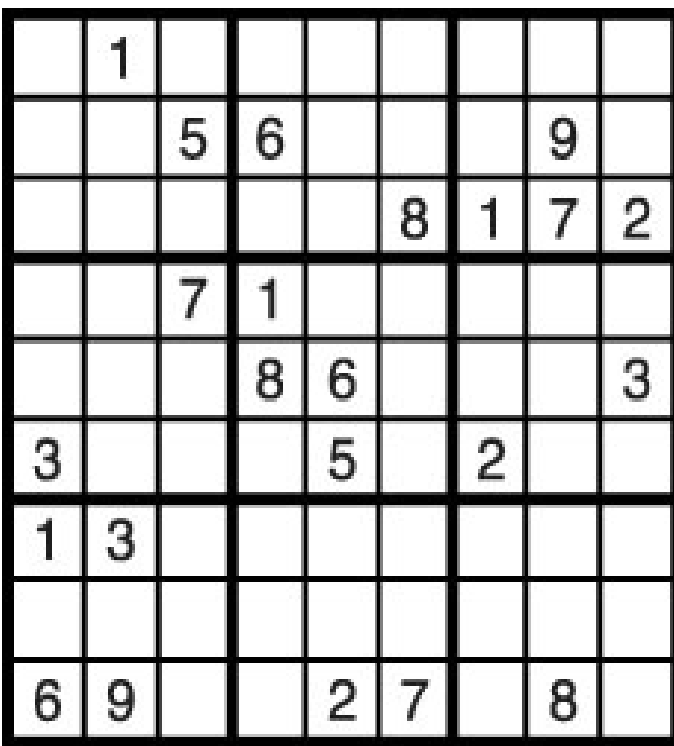
CLUES DOWN

- Colorless fluid
- Of a main artery
- Photographer's tool
- Blues Traveler hit "But ___"
- Grew older
- Not the leader
- ___ Lang (country singer)
- A driver's license is one
- Nests of pheasants
- Wildebessets
- Equal to one quintillion bytes
- Japanese three-stringed lute
- Type of cat
- It cools your home
- The ancient Egyptian sun god
- Pouches
- German trigraph
- Form of Persian
- Measurement unit
- Body part
- Bridge building degree
- Indicates position
- Political action committee
- Snack food
- Front part of a quadruped
- Locate
- Pitching statistic
- ___, myself and I
- City in Utah
- They play in the trenches
- "Can't Touch This" rapper ___ Hammer
- Type of tree
- Performers
- Slang for mistake
- More open
- Most slick
- Needles
- University of Dayton
- Atomic #11
- Large fish of the mackerel family
- Not any
- ___ and behold
- Popular sports highlight show (abbr.)
- "The Great Lakes State"

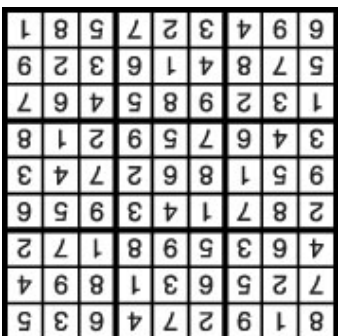
- Former AL MVP Vaughn
- Off-Broadway theater award
- Fencers
- Small Eurasian deer (pl.)
- Relating to passerine birds
- Arrange systematically

CLUES DOWN

- Colorless fluid
- Of a main artery
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Level: Intermediate



Fossil Ridge Library director speaks in Puerto Rico

Recently, Fossil Ridge Public Library Executive Director and Illinois Library Association President-Elect Rene Leyva was invited to serve as the opening keynote speaker and lead an advocacy workshop at the ACURIL 2026 Conference in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

During the conference, Leyva shared ILA advocacy resources available to library workers and spoke about the importance of

advocating for library staff, stakeholders, and equitable access to authoritative information. With participants representing more than 32 countries, the event provided an opportunity to showcase Illinois' leadership in library advocacy on an international stage.

Leyva connected with library professionals from across the Caribbean and around the world, engaging in discussions on advocacy, inclusivity, human rights,

access to information, and the future of libraries. Conversations with colleagues from Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, the Netherlands, and Puerto Rico highlighted both the shared challenges and opportunities facing libraries globally.

In addition, Leyva attended remarks by Puerto Rico's Secretary of State Rosachely Rivera Santana, who spoke in support of libraries, intellectual free-

dom, and the importance of regulation and oversight of artificial intelligence.

The trip reinforced the value of international collaboration and demonstrated that the challenges facing libraries are very similar, requiring advocacy, leadership, and a shared commitment to access and inclusion for all users.



Courtesy photo
RENE LEYVA, Fossil Ridge Library director and president-elect was the opening keynote speaker at a conference in Puerto Rico

Fossil Ridge Library News

Adult Programs

Monday, through Saturday Aug. 1- Disguise a duck-During Library Hours-Description: Disguise a duck for our Rubber Ducky Costume contest! Pick up your rubber ducky from the Adult Services desk. Take your duck home, dress it up, then return it to the Adult Services desk by June 30th. Ducks will be displayed in the library during the month of July and patrons will vote for their favorite duck. The winning duck will receive a \$25 Amazon gift card. You must have a Fossil Ridge Public Library card to participate.

Tuesday, June 30 - Puzzles and Projects- 1- 2 p.m.

Looking for a relaxing and social way to spend an afternoon? Join us for Puzzles & Projects, a casual gathering just for seniors who enjoy crafting, puzzling, and good company. Bring along your favorite craft project-knitting, crocheting, embroidery, scrapbooking, coloring, or anything else you're working on-and enjoy an hour of creativity with others. Prefer puzzles? We'll have a variety of jigsaw puzzles available for you to help complete while chatting and connecting with fellow participants.

Children/Toddler Program

Tuesday, June 30, 4-5 p.m. and Thursday, June 25. Thursdays, 10-11 a.m. Toddler Time-We welcome toddlers and their caregivers to join us weekly to explore various toys and sensory materials. Toddlers can enhance their gross and fine motor skills, social interaction, and language skills. Caregivers must accompany their little ones throughout the program.

Monday, June 29, 10-10:45 a.m. Let's learn our ABC's. "Little Learners" is a fun, weekly program where preschoolers can master the alphabet through stories, music, and a craft. Join us as we explore

the wonderful world of letters, one week at a time.

Friday, June 26-Crafternoons, 1:30-2:30 p.m. Crafternoons is an arts and crafts program for children. Crafts can be done on site or taken home. This program is a safe place for kids to gather, work on social and motor skills and just have fun. Ages 7 and Up.

Monday, June 29, 1-3 p.m. Movie matinees. featuring K-Pop Demon Hunters.

Thursdays, June 25-Listen an Create Storytime, 5:30-6:30 p.m. This program is specially designed for children aged 3-5. Every week, children can explore new books and engage in a fun craft project. Please make sure to dress in clothes that can get messy, as the craft project will involve getting creative with various art materials.

Wednesday June 24-My Parent & Me, 10-11:30 p.m. You're invited to a delightful Parent & Me Tea Party at the library. Children ages 3 and up, along with their grown-ups, are welcome to enjoy a special time together filled with fun and imagination. Guests will sip on tea (and kid-friendly refreshments), listen to a charming story, and create a simple themed craft to take home. Feel free to dress up in your favorite fancy attire-hats, gloves, and all!

Registration is required, as space is limited. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Join us for a sweet and memorable experience celebrating togetherness and creativity.

Registration required for most programs

NIU announces dean's list

Northern Illinois University announces its spring 2026 Dean's List students. To earn this distinction, students must meet a minimum semester grade point average of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale.

Local students include: Chandler Lowe of Braidwood and Azra Malovski of Diamond.

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Newspapers

One wakes you up

One opens your eyes



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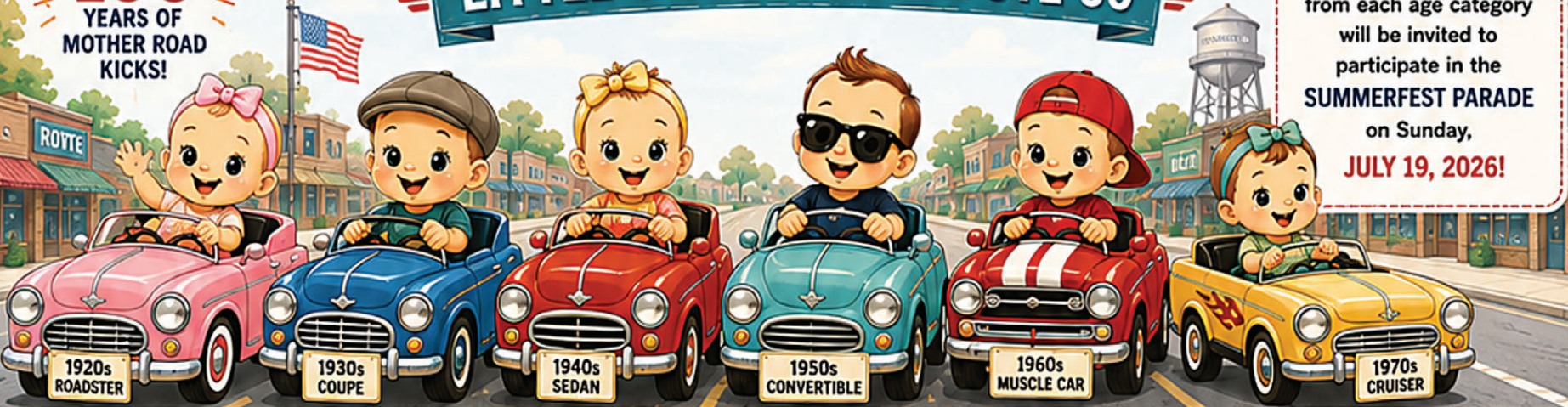
2026 SUMMERFEST

Baby Contest

LITTLE CRUISERS OF ROUTE 66

JOIN US FOR ONE OF SUMMERFEST'S FAVORITE TRADITIONS AS WE CELEBRATE THE ROUTE 66 CENTENNIAL!

FIRST PLACE WINNERS from each age category will be invited to participate in the **SUMMERFEST PARADE** on **Sunday, JULY 19, 2026!**



1920s ROADSTER, 1930s COUPE, 1940s SEDAN, 1950s CONVERTIBLE, 1960s MUSCLE CAR, 1970s CRUISER

★ AGE CATEGORIES & SCHEDULE ★

AGE CATEGORY	CHECK-IN	JUDGING
0-3 MONTHS	9:45 AM	10:00 AM – 10:10 AM
4-7 MONTHS	10:00 AM	10:15 AM – 10:25 AM
8-11 MONTHS	10:15 AM	10:30 AM – 10:40 AM
12-15 MONTHS	10:30 AM	10:45 AM – 10:55 AM
16-19 MONTHS	10:45 AM	11:00 AM – 11:10 AM
20-24 MONTHS	11:00 AM	11:15 AM – 11:25 AM

★ JUDGING CRITERIA ★

- Personality
- Appearance
- General Disposition

★ AWARDS ★

FIRST PLACE WINNERS

- Trophy
- 1st Place Ribbon
- Certificate of Participation
- Invitation to participate in the Summerfest Parade on Sunday, July 19, 2026

SECOND & THIRD PLACE WINNERS

- Winner Ribbon
- Certificate of Participation

ALL OTHER PARTICIPANTS

- Participant Ribbon
- Certificate of Participation

★ REGISTRATION INFORMATION ★

ENTRY FEE: \$10.00 PER CHILD

REGISTER ONLINE BEGINNING JUNE 15, 2026:
www.braidwoodcoalition.org/about-us/events

OR

MAIL COMPLETED ENTRY FORM AND PAYMENT TO:
Braidwood Area Healthy Community Coalition
Attn: Baby Contest
P.O. Box 123
Braidwood, IL 60408

★ ALL ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BEFORE MIDNIGHT FRIDAY, JULY 10, 2026. No late entries or day-of-contest registrations will be accepted. ★

IMPORTANT RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT
Proof of residency within Reed-Custer School District 255U is required at check-in. Examples include: Driver's License, Utility Bill, Water Bill, Rent Receipt, or other official proof of residency.



