



BRAIDWOOD JOURNAL.com

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 26, 2026

A FREE PRESS NEWSPAPER • (815) 476-7966

A PERFECT START



Photo by Angela Rose

MR. CONSISTENT—A two-hour storm delay didn't phase Reed-Custer kicker Brody Alexander (1) who came out to finish 6-for-6 in extra point attempts to help the Comets to a 42-6 victory over Harvard in the season opener at Harvard. The Comets were impressive all night with several explosive scoring plays as they rolled to a decisive victory. Comet fans will get to cheer in their team in the home stands on Friday when they host St. Teresa-Decatur. Turn to sports for more game details.

Lawsuit by former city administrator dismissed

BY ROSE PANIERI
STAFF WRITER

A lawsuit filed by former Braidwood City Administrator Tony Altiery against the City of Braidwood has been dismissed with prejudice, according to a statement released by the city on Aug. 19.

The ruling means Altiery is barred from refileing the same lawsuit, although he retains the right to appeal the decision within 30 days.

According to the city, the court determined that Altiery did not have an employ-

ment contract with the City of Braidwood and that Mayor Todd Lyons, acting with the approval of a majority of the city council, had the authority to remove him from the position at issue.

The lawsuit stemmed from political turmoil that followed the April 2025 municipal election. Altiery, who had served as Braidwood's city administrator, was appointed by the outgoing city council on April 8, 2025, to newly created positions overseeing streets and public improvements. The positions carried a salary of \$119,000 along with benefits including vacation time, sick leave, clothing and

boot allowances, and health insurance.

Following the election, the newly seated city administration moved to terminate Altiery. According to court filings reported at the time, Altiery was notified that his employment was at-will and could be terminated with or without cause.

Altiery's lawsuit was filed in Will County Circuit Court in late July 2025 by attorney John Schrock. The complaint sought injunctive relief, arguing that the city's action was improper and requesting that Altiery be reinstated to his position. The suit also sought damages for lost wages, benefits, attorney fees and costs.

The legal challenge centered on whether the city had lawfully terminated Altiery and whether he possessed employment protections beyond those afforded to an at-will employee. Court filings argued that certain council votes taken during the transition in city government were ineffective and that Altiery should be restored to his position.

In announcing the dismissal, city officials emphasized that the court found no employment contract existed between Altiery and the city and upheld the mayor's authority, with council approval, to remove him from the position.

Tornado's path of destruction confirmed



THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE issued the path of a EF1 tornado that hit Wilmington on the morning of Tuesday, Aug. 11. The path of destruction is highlighted in green.

STAFF REPORT

The National Weather Service in Chicago released a map last week tracing the 1.52-mile path of an EF1 tornado that cut through Wilmington on Aug. 11, leaving damaged buildings, uprooted trees and downed power lines in its wake.

The tornado touched down around 10:38 a.m. in the 500 block of West Baltimore Street, where it tore a section of roof from the Tire Tracks building. It traveled south for a short distance before turning southeast and crossing the Kankakee River.

National Weather

SEE TORNADO PAGE 2



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Braidwood eases approval for small lot consolidations

BY ROSE PANIERI
STAFF WRITER

Some future land use decisions in Braidwood may be made with less public input and fewer procedural hurdles following the Braidwood City Council's approval of an ordinance revising the city's subdivision regulations. The council approved an ordinance updating portions of the city's subdivision code and creates a streamlined approval process for certain small lot consolidations and subdivision requests. While city officials described

the changes as an effort to modernize regulations and reduce unnecessary bureaucracy, one provision could significantly alter how some property-related decisions move through City Hall. Under the new rules, conforming subdivisions and lot consolidations involving fewer than five lots and requiring no new streets, water mains, sanitary sewers or storm sewers may bypass public hearings, public notices, public meetings and formal Planning and Zoning Commission votes. Instead, qualifying applications may be reviewed administratively by city staff and the

planning commission chair before being forwarded directly to the city council for final consideration. In practical terms, neighboring property owners and residents may no longer receive public notice of certain lot consolidation requests that previously would have been reviewed through a more public process. Supporters of the amendment argue that minor consolidations involving existing lots and no new infrastructure do not warrant the same level of review as larger development projects. The ordinance retains public hearings and Planning

Commission review requirements for subdivisions involving five or more lots, requests for variances, or developments requiring new public infrastructure. The ordinance also reduces filing fees for smaller conforming subdivisions and lot consolidations from \$750 to \$350 and updates a number of definitions within the city's subdivision code. The changes arrive as Braidwood continues a broader effort to update municipal ordinances and position itself for future growth. However, the measure also represents a shift

toward administrative review for some land-use decisions that historically would have received a more public airing before city boards and commissions. For residents who closely follow development issues, the ordinance may prove more significant than its technical title suggests. While major projects will still face public scrutiny, smaller lot consolidations can now take a faster route through the approval process, with fewer opportunities for public comment along the way.

Tornado, continued from page 1

Service investigators determine a tornado's path by conducting ground surveys of damaged areas and combining their findings with eyewitness accounts, photos, videos and reports from the public. The direction in which trees, structures and other debris fall can help survey teams identify where a tornado began, the route it followed and where it eventually lifted. South Island Park was among the hardest-hit locations. Fencing was knocked down, plywood signs were destroyed and nearly two dozen trees sustained extensive damage. Two weeks after the storm, the city-owned park remains closed. The tornado continued through Oakwood Cemetery, uprooting trees and snapping large branches from mature oaks. An estimated 40 trees in the cemetery were destroyed or damaged. Power was knocked out to homes near South Water Street and throughout the downtown district at 10:39 a.m. when a massive tree fell onto a utility line and transformer in the 800 block. The fallen tree also blocked traffic along Illinois Route 102. Wilmington wasn't the only community where tornadoes were confirmed from the Aug. 11 storms. National Weather Service survey teams also identified two EF0 tornadoes in Grundy County near Morris. One touched down on the northeast side of Morris, damaging crops before eyewitnesses reported seeing it cross Interstate 80. The tornado then struck a trailer retailer along U.S. Route 6, peeling sheet metal roofing from the main office and damaging about 50 trailers, some of which were rolled by the wind. A semi-truck was blown into a ditch and power lines were knocked down. The tornado continued southeast, damaging trees near the Grundy County Rod and Gun Club. A second EF0 tornado touched down in Norman Township northwest of Dupont and Verona roads. Investigators found a narrow path of damage through a cornfield before the tornado struck a property along Dupont Road, tearing away a large portion of a barn roof, pushing a grain bin off its foundation and downing several trees. Additional tree damage was found near Dupont and Gorham roads before the tornado lifted. No injuries were reported from either of the tornadoes.

Illinois shatters tornado record as storm season continues to brew

BY ROSE PANIERI
STAFF WRITER

Illinois has already experienced more tornadoes in 2026 than in any other year on record, with more than 203 confirmed twisters reported across the state before the middle of August. As of Aug. 12, the National Weather Service confirmed more than triple the state's annual average of approximately 66 tornadoes. The previous state record was 142 tornadoes, set in 2024. The extraordinary number of tornadoes follows months of unusually severe weather across Illinois. Meteorologists have pointed to a combination of persistent heat and humidity and weather patterns that repeatedly brought favorable conditions for severe thunderstorms and

tornadoes to the Midwest. The activity continued Aug. 11 when a powerful derecho swept across northern Illinois and northwest Indiana. **Wilmington tornado** Wilmington was among the communities struck on Aug. 11. The National Weather Service confirmed an EF-1 tornado touched down just north of Wilmington at about 10:35 a.m. Aug. 11 and traveled 1.52 miles before lifting about two minutes later east of the city. The tornado had estimated peak winds of 90 mph and a maximum width of 150 yards. The tornado spawned near West Baltimore Street and North First Street, where it removed part of the roof of Tire Tracks automotive shop, and threw the roofing material into an adjacent strip mall. It then crossed

the Kankakee River before moving through Oakwood Cemetery, resulting in uprooted trees and other debris that damaged grave makers. The tornado eventually tracked east along Ridge Street before lifting near the Forked Creek Preserve. The Wilmington tornado was one of several confirmed tornadoes produced by the Aug. 11 derecho. The National Weather Service ultimately confirmed eight tornadoes within the Chicago-area area including two in Grundy County north and then south of Morris. **Not necessarily over** For Illinois, the Aug. 11 tornadoes represent only part of an extraordinary year. The state's 2026 tornado count has already surpassed the previous annual record by more than 60 tornadoes, and tornado season is not necessarily over.

City waives competitive bidding for emergency repair of primary well

BY ROSE PANIERI
STAFF WRITER

Clean drinking water starts long before it reaches the tap, and city officials aren't taking chances with one of Braidwood's key water supply components. The Braidwood City Council approved Ordinance 2026-52, authorizing nearly \$40,000 in repairs to Well No. 3 and waiving the competitive bidding process to expedite the work. The ordinance approves a proposal from Water Well Solutions Illinois, LLC, in an amount not to exceed \$39,980 for repairs to the municipal well. During discussion of the repair, Public Works Director Ron Sikora said the Aug. 3 failure significantly reduced the well's production capacity and underscored the importance of acting quickly. "We were only pumping about 350 to 380 gallons a minute tops. Usage is about 500," Sikora said. Despite the reduction in capacity, the city was able to avoid service interruptions because water

storage towers were full when the failure occurred. "Luckily, the towers were full when it happened. We had about a three or four-day buffer," he said. **Emergency repair** According to project documents, the work centers on replacing a failed variable frequency drive (VFD), a critical piece of equipment that regulates the operation and output of the well's pumping system. The project includes installation of a new ABB variable frequency drive, removal of the existing unit, wiring, programming, testing and expedited shipping of replacement components. City officials determined it was necessary and expedient to waive competitive bidding requirements and move forward with the repair through a direct proposal from the company. The approved cost includes \$35,500 for the replacement drive, \$3,680 in labor and \$800 in expedited shipping charges, bringing the total project cost to \$39,980.

Infrastructure investments The action marks the latest in a series of infrastructure investments approved by the council in recent weeks. Along with upgrades to Well No. 5 and improvements at the Light House Cove lift station, the Well No. 3 repair reflects the city's ongoing effort to maintain critical water and wastewater systems before minor issues become major problems. At the Aug. 11 council meeting, Sikora reported that the replacement has been completed and the system has returned to normal operation. "Everything's all up and running, and hopefully, it's going to stay that way," he said. The emergency repair also revealed the age of some of the city's infrastructure. Sikora said technicians who inspected the failed equipment remarked on how long the original drive had remained in service. "They're like, 'Oh, you got your money's worth out of this,'" Sikora said. **Future challenges**

However, the incident also highlighted potential future challenges for the city's utility systems. Sikora said he was surprised to learn that the equipment has a finite service life and noted that several similar components throughout the system are approaching the same age. "I didn't know there was a life expectancy, which scares me because ServePlax is coming up 15 years old," Sikora said. He added that some additional units have already begun showing signs of wear. "I've already had a couple VFDs already start to go, and I've got 17 of them," Sikora said. Sikora's comments suggest the Well No. 3 failure may serve as a reminder that maintaining reliable water service often requires ongoing investment in aging infrastructure long before problems become visible to the public. And while many were without power after the Aug. 11 storm, the town's water supply was abundant.

PERSONAL INJURY

BKM

Block, Klukas & Manzella & Shell, P.C.

Attorneys at Law

Michael D. Block • Elizabeth A. Klukas • Thomas J. Manzella
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WORKERS COMPENSATION

Attorney Hanson files
Fistler estate claim

Attorney Hanson files
Cryder estate claim

PUBLIC NOTICE
STATE OF ILLINOIS
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE
TWELFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS
IN PROBATE
**IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE
OF DONALD J. FISTLER, Deceased
Case No. 26 PR 422**
CLAIM NOTICE
Notice is hereby given of the
death of DONALD J. FISTLER, of
Willow Springs, Illinois, Cook County.
Letters of Office were issued on
August 10, 2026 to Richard E. Fistler,
5214 Adams Street, Burlington, WI
53105, whose Attorney is Mark E.
Hanson, 116 N. Chicago St., Ste. 200,
Joliet, IL 60432, (815) 727-5445 ext.
1303.

PUBLIC NOTICE
STATE OF ILLINOIS
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE
TWELFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS
IN PROBATE
**IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE
OF DAVID E. CRYDER, Deceased
Case No. 26 PR 421**
CLAIM NOTICE
Notice is given of the death of
DAVID E. CRYDER, of Joliet, Illinois,
Will County. Letters of Office were
issued on August 10, 2026 to Carol
Galskoy, 1507 Chigwall Lane South,
Webster, NY 14580, whose Attorney is
Mark E. Hanson, 116 N. Chicago St.,
Ste. 200, Joliet, IL 60432, (815) 727-
5445 ext. 1303.

Attorney Black files
McPherson estate
claim notice

PUBLIC NOTICE
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT
OF THE TWELFTH
JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
WILL COUNTY - IN PROBATE
No. 2026 PR 413
**In the Matter of the Estate of
MORRIS L. McPHERSON
a/k/a MORRIS LEE McPHERSON
Deceased**

CLAIM NOTICE
NOTICE is given to creditors of
the death of Morris L. McPherson a/k/a
Morris Lee McPherson. Letters of
office as Independent Executor were
issued to Roger L. McPherson, 3410
Country Club Lane, Morris, Illinois,
60450 whose attorney is DONALD F.
BLACK, BLACK & BLACK LAWYERS,
201 Liberty Street, Suite 211, Morris,
Illinois 60450.
Claims against the estate may
be filed in the Office of the Clerk of the
Court at River Valley Justice Center,
3208 McDonough St., Joliet, IL 60431,
with the representative, or both, within
six months from the date of the first
publication of this notice or, if mailing
or delivery of a notice is required by
Section 5/18-3 of the Probate Act of
1975, the date stated in that notice.
Any claim not filed on or before that
date is barred. Copies of a claim filed
with the clerk must be mailed or delivered
to the representative and to the attorney
within 10 days after it has been filed.

ROGER L. MCPHERSON
INDEPENDENT EXECUTOR
**DONALD F. BLACK
BLACK & BLACK
201 Liberty Street
Suite 211
Morris, IL 60450
815-942-0594**
Published in the Braidwood
Journal on Aug. 26, Sept. 2 & 9, 2026.

Petitions for Godley
election made available

PUBLIC NOTICE
The Village of Godley will have
petitions available beginning August
25, 2026, for the following positions for
the April 6, 2027 consolidated election.
President: 4-year term
Trustee: 3 for a 4-year term
Office hours are Monday,
Wednesday and Friday 9 - noon to
pick up petitions.
Tamara Branum
Village of Godley - Village Clerk
Published in the Braidwood Journal
on Aug. 26, 2026.

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Eric D. Fisher, publisher

Traveling history's highways looking for our roots

Most of my gentle readers know that the land upon which we live did not always belong to the United States, it also belonged to the English and before then it was France. That history seems so long ago that most of us have forgotten it. Most think that there are no traces left of this ancient past of ours. They would be wrong. Today we take a road trip to a place not all that far away, where you can still see traces even today. We are traveling to Vincennes, Indiana.



TIME WAS....
Sandy Vasko

At first, when the French came to the Midwest, their only interest was fur trading, but it soon became evident that this new land was unguarded, ripe for an attack by the English, long before the enemy of France. Soon they built forts, or outposts at Kaskaskia, Cahokia and Peoria. Another was built on the banks of the "Oubache" (now known as the Wabash) in 1702 at Vincennes, Indiana. Illinois remained

French territory until the end of the 7 Years War in 1783 when France ceded the whole Northwest Territory to England. Those living in the area immediately became English citizens.

And while the Revolutionary War was being fought in the east, it was also being fought in the Northwest Territory. The English established posts at Kaskaskia and Cahokia, only to lose them to one of the least known heroes of the Revolution. George Rogers Clark, older brother to William Clark of the Lewis & Clark expedition.

Clark was known as an Indian fighter and a man others could rally around. He took the English fort at Kaskaskia on July 4, 1778 240 years ago without firing a shot.

He had also taken Vincennes, but it was retaken by British General Hamilton who made it his base. Hamilton then settled in for the winter, not believing warfare was possible in the fierce Midwest blizzards. He was wrong. George Rogers Clark,

in one of the most courageous marches on military record, took 170 men in February of 1879 through the frozen flooded swamps of southern Illinois, 200 miles to Vincennes. The last week of the trip the men were in water up to their chests the entire time, and without food or fire.

By sheer force of will they all made it through and convincing the English that they had a bigger force than they really had, convinced General Hamilton to surrender without a shot. Clark intended to move on to Detroit, but the treaty of 1783 gave the Northwest Territory to the Americans.

The Territory was split up, Vincennes became the capital of the Indiana Territory with William Henry Harrison serving as its first governor. He built a fortress of a home along the Wabash, calling it Grouseland for the many upland birds in the area.

Completed in 1804 it is one of the most interesting homes that I have personally toured. The walls are 4 bricks thick, the windows have shutters inside and out, there is a well in the lowest level and an armory built into the hillside accessed through the basement. Almost all of the

interior walls are curved, an amazing feat for such an early building. This was done to help conduct the breezes around a room, instead of trapping them in a corner.

The DAR can be credited with saving the building and succeeding caretakers have done an amazing job of restoration and furnishing the home with the original artifacts. This historic home is open to the public and is certainly well worth the trip.

Also, in Vincennes is the George Rogers Clark memorial, a massive granite structure erected at the site of Clark's victory over Hamilton. Inside murals depict the scenes of Clark's life and march, while you listen on headphones to the story of his life.

I found hotels and restaurants in the area very reasonably priced, but the best deal that I found was a small, old fashioned motel in Lawrenceville, across the Wabash from Vincennes in Illinois. Its name intrigued me, the Gas Lite Motel. I found that it was clean, had a refrigerator and microwave, and a television - all for a reasonable price.

Happy traveling!



A PAINTING of George Rogers Clark.



THE CLARK MEMORIAL in Vincennes Indiana.

Healthy finances, future dog park, and new events highlight Braidwood updates

BY ROSE PANIERI
STAFF WRITER

Keeping a city running requires more than roads, parks and public works projects. It also depends on an unending cycle of audits, financial reporting and often receive little attention, but play a critical role in municipal operations.

On that note, the Braidwood City Council approved \$199,022.07 in bills and \$105,058.03 in payroll expenses during its Aug. 11 meeting. Among the larger expenditures were \$53,100 to LRS for garbage collection services, \$13,200 for Wescom police dispatch services, \$10,700 for consulting work by Gulden & Associates and an \$11,000 final payment to WIPFLI LLP for the city's fiscal year 2025 audit. Additional expenses included \$4,700 for water system repairs by Core & Main, \$4,700 for water treatment chemicals from Hawkins Inc. and approximately \$4,300 to RVI Inc. for ongoing park and dog park planning efforts.

Account news
Finance Commissioner Elizabeth Dixon reported that the city continues to maintain a strong financial position early in the 2026-27 fiscal year.

"The city remains in a positive financial position through the first two months of the fiscal year," Dixon told council members.

According to the council's financial summary, governmental fund revenues total approximately \$2.22 million compared with \$956,000 in expenditures, resulting in a net increase in fund balance of about \$1.27 million. The General Fund is operating with a surplus of approximately \$696,000, while the city's overall cash balance is roughly \$1.5 million higher than it was a year ago.

Dixon said General Fund revenues are approximately \$70,000 higher than last year. Property tax revenue increased by about \$37,000, while income tax receipts are running roughly \$67,000 above projections. Sales tax revenue remains approximately \$31,000 below budget expectations, and water and sewer revenues continue to be monitored as they remain below benchmark levels.

Dixon also reported

that the city's Illinois Funds account grew from \$10.33 million on May 31 to \$11.25 million on June 30, reflecting \$886,030.78 in deposits and \$32,756.37 in interest earnings during the month.

"Overall, the city continues to maintain a positive financial position with revenues exceeding expenditures and cash balances remaining stronger than the prior year," Dixon said.

GASB 75

The council also approved Ordinance 2026-49 authorizing an engagement agreement with Menard Consulting, Inc., Actuaries & Consultants, to provide GASB 75 actuarial services for fiscal year 2026-2027.

The actuarial study is required under Governmental Accounting Standards Board regulations and helps municipalities calculate and report long-term obligations associated with Other Post-Employment Benefits, including retiree health insurance benefits. The information is incorporated into the city's annual financial reporting.

Auditor Services

In another financial matter, council members approved Ordinance 2026-50 authorizing an agreement with WIPFLI, LLP to conduct the city's annual audit for the fiscal year ending April 30, 2026.

The independent audit reviews the city's financial records and accounting practices and is used to verify the accuracy of financial reporting. WIPFLI recently presented Braidwood's fiscal year 2025 audit to city officials.

Dixon noted that the city's fiscal year 2025 audit reports have been uploaded to the Illinois Comptroller's website. She also reported that the city received a second delinquency notice related to state filing requirements and is seeking abatement of any associated fines.

Community Events Committee

Dixon also provided an update on the city's Community Events Committee, which recently held a brainstorming session and collected feedback from residents during National Night Out.

The committee is planning a variety of activities throughout the remainder of the year, including an Autumn Harvest Festival in September, Nightmare on Main Street in October, trick-or-treating outside

City Hall on Halloween, a Community Goose Decorating Contest and Kids Coloring Contest in November, and a Holiday Parade and Santa Dog Parade in December.

Residents are encouraged to submit ideas for future events and volunteer to assist with planning and organizing activities. Event surveys and informational flyers are available, and interested residents can contact the committee by emailing events@braidwood.org.

Dog Park

Dixon also provided an update on the city's long-discussed dog park project, which remains in the planning stages.

In response to a comment by resident Tony Altieri about whether residents would be charged to use the facility, Dixon said she was unaware of any plans for a user fee. She noted, however, that dogs would likely need to be current on vaccinations before being allowed to use the park.

"We are trying to find a way that we can let the dogs in there where it's safe, where they've been registered, we know they have their shots," Dixon said.

She explained that city officials are exploring ways to ensure the facility remains safe for both pets and their owners.

"You might have to come register your dog and get a swipe card, but at least you know when you bring your dog in there that

it's not going to get anything from the other dog that's in there," Dixon said.

Mayor Todd Lyons said that although the budget for the dog park is \$300,000, he was not certain the project would ultimately require that much funding.

The expenditure report also included a \$4,300 payment to RVI Inc. for work related to park and dog park planning as city officials continue developing both projects.

While the agenda items generated little discussion, they represent the routine financial oversight and accountability measures that help ensure the city remains in compliance with state reporting requirements and accepted governmental accounting standards.

Police statistics

Commissioner James Mikel presented statistics from the Braidwood Police Department covering the period from July 28 through Aug. 10. During that time, officers responded to 375 calls for service, resulting in 36 cases, 10 arrests and 18 charges.

Police conducted 148 traffic stops, issuing 63 citations and 83 written warnings. Officers also issued 11 parking tickets.

The city's code enforcement officer investigated six code violations during the reporting period, all of which were brought into compliance.

City of Braidwood will receive sealed proposals for demolition of residential buildings at 585 W. Main St.

PUBLIC NOTICE

CITY OF BRAIDWOOD
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS
NOTICE TO CONTRACTORS

The City of Braidwood will receive sealed proposals for the following improvements at the City of Braidwood Clerk's office, 141 West Main Street, Braidwood, Illinois, 60408 until 10:00 A.M. on September 8, 2026.

CITY OF BRAIDWOOD DEMOLITION OF EXISTING RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS 585 W. MAIN STREET

Proposals will be publicly read aloud after 10:01 A.M. on September 8, 2026. No bid shall be withdrawn after the opening of the proposals without the consent of the Mayor and City Council for a period of forty-five (45) days after the scheduled time of closing bids.

All proposals shall be sealed in an envelope addressed to the City of Braidwood, attention City Clerk. The name and address of the bidder and the name and number of the project shall also appear on the outside of the envelope. Proposals must be submitted on the forms provided.

The project Proposal Specifications are available upon request from the City of Braidwood, 141 West Main Street, Braidwood, Illinois, 60408 (phone 815-458-2333). However, they may only be obtained electronically via email. Email reladministrative@reld.com to obtain an electronic digital set. The proposal specifications will be issued for requests received until 4:00 PM of the business day prior to bid opening.

A certified check/bank draft drawn on a solvent bank, cashier's check or bid bond, payable without condition to the City of Braidwood in an amount not less than ten percent (10%) of the bid shall be submitted with each proposal, as a guarantee that, if the proposal is accepted, a contract will be entered into and the performance of the contract is properly secured.

A performance bond in a sum equal to one hundred percent (100%) of the amount of the bid, with sureties to be approved by the City Mayor and City Council for the faithful performance of the contract, must be furnished by the successful bidder. All bids or proposals shall contain an offer to furnish bond upon acceptance of such bid or proposal.

The right is reserved to reject any or all proposals, to waive technicalities, to postpone the bid opening, or to advertise for new proposals, if in the judgment of the City Mayor and City Council their best interests will be promoted thereby.

The Contractor will be required to pay not less than the prevailing wage rates on this project as established by the State of Illinois Department of Labor. He shall also comply with all applicable Federal and local regulations.

The Contractor shall have sufficient experience, as determined by the Owner and his representatives, with building demolition to perform this work. If in the opinion of the Owner, an applicant would not be able to serve the best interest of the City, a proposal will not be issued to the applicant.

City Mayor and City Council
City of Braidwood
Will County, Illinois

Published in the Braidwood Journal on Wednesday, August 26 and September 2, 2026.

Blood drive scheduled Sept. 17

The City of Braidwood will host its next community blood drive on Thursday, Sept. 17, from 2 to 6 p.m. in the meeting room at Braidwood City Hall, 141 W. Main Street.

Pre-registration is highly recommended, although walk-in donors

will also be accepted.

To register, please visit the online registration link provided by the city or contact Blood Drive Coordinator Josh Bolatto at (815) 458-2342 between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Fossil Ridge Library News

Adult Programs

Bingocize, 1-2 p.m. Every Tuesday starting Sept. 1. Looking for a fun new way to be more active?

Bingo + Exercise = Bingocize®, a health promotion program that combines the game of bingo with fall prevention exercise. Play bingo with us and meet new people while learning about techniques to reduce falls.

Tuesday, Sept. 8-Well-Read Book Club, 1:30-2:30 p.m. Dive into thought-provoking reads and engaging discussions with the Well-Read Book Club. We'll explore books that challenge your perspectives each month and ignite meaningful conversations. Join us and connect with

fellow book lovers. September's Title: True Story by Kate Reed Petty. Copies are available at the front desk or online in our digital consortium.

Children & Toddler Programs

Thursday, Aug. 27-Toddler Time, 10-11 a.m. 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.

Registration is required for most programs.

City of Braidwood gives notice of complaint filed on 360 N. Mitchell St.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Publication Notice to: NONRECORD CLAIMANTS

The requisite affidavit for publication having been filed, notice is hereby given you, NONRECORD CLAIMANTS of the following:

CITY OF BRAIDWOOD, an Illinois Municipal Corporation, has filed a four count Complaint against Defendants DELORES FISK, SHARON MELROSE, WILLIAM MELROSE, and NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS in the CIRCUIT COURT OF THE TWELFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS.

Said Petition prays that the Court (1) enjoin the Defendants from occupying the structures located at 360 N. Mitchell St., Braidwood, IL 60408 ("Subject Property"); (2) order Defendants to demolish or repair or enclose the residential structure and detached shed on Subject Property within fourteen (14) days, and if Defendants fail to do so within fourteen (14) days, without further order of this Court needed, Plaintiff shall have the right to enter onto Subject Property and may immediately proceed with demolishing the structure and detached shed on Subject Property; that the Plaintiff be granted leave to record a lien against Subject Property for the cost of the demolition, repair, enclosure, or removal incurred, including court costs, attorney's fees, and other costs related to the enforcement of this action, in accordance with 65 ILCS 5/11-31-1(a); that the Court reserve jurisdiction to enter judgment in favor of Plaintiff against Defendants for the cost of the demolition, repair, enclosure, or removal incurred, including court costs, attorney's fees, and other costs related to the enforcement of this action, in accordance with 65 ILCS 5/11-31-1(a); that the Court order such other relief which the Court deems fair and just; and (3) that the Court order fines not less than twenty five dollars (\$25.00) and not more than seven hundred fifty dollars (\$750.00) for each violation, with each day a violation exists constituting a separate violation; and (4) enter a search warrant granting the Plaintiff access to enter onto Subject Property and into the residence and shed structure for the purpose of inspection, assessing the total condition of each structure, the extent of damage, and approximating costs to repair the residence and shed.

The Petition involves the following:

1. Plaintiff: City of Braidwood, an Illinois Municipal Corporation
2. Case Number: 2026CH000161
3. Court where the action is pending: Twelfth Judicial Circuit, Will County, Illinois

4. Title holders of record: Delores Fisk and Sharon Melrose

5. Legal Description of property at issue: LOTS 1 AND 2, IN BLOCK 6, IN MCCRAGG AND FORSYTHE'S SUBDIVISION OF THE NORTHEAST QUARTER OF SECTION 8, IN TOWNSHIP 32 NORTH, AND IN RANGE 9 EAST OF THE THIRD PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, EXCEPT THEREFROM THE COAL AND OTHER MINERAL RIGHTS BENEATH THE SURFACE AND THE RIGHT TO MINE AND REMOVE THE SAME, IN WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS.

6. Common description of property at issue: 360 N. Mitchell Street, Braidwood, IL 60408

7. The names of the parties to be served by publication: NONRECORD CLAIMANTS.

8. The date on or after which default may be entered against NONRECORD CLAIMANTS: September 18, 2026.

Notice is also hereby given you that said Petition prays for other relief, that summons was duly issued out of said Court against you as provided by law, that the said suit is now pending.

NOW, THEREFORE, unless you, said above-named Defendants, file your response to the Complaint in said suit or otherwise make your appearance there in the office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of the Twelfth Judicial Circuit, 100 W. Jefferson Street, Joliet, Will County, Illinois on or before September 18, 2026, default may be entered against you at any time after that day and a judgment entered in accordance with the prayer of said relief.

CITY OF BRAIDWOOD

A Municipal Corporation, Plaintiff

Bryan M. Wellner -06321702

Attorney for Plaintiff

Mahoney, Silverman & Cross, LLC

822 Infantry Drive, Suite 100

Joliet, Illinois 60435

(815) 730-9500

bweller@msclawfirm.com

Published in the Braidwood Journal, Aug. 19, 26 and Sept. 2, 2026.

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Not even a thank you

BRACEVILLE—The Braceville Fire Department has been outstanding for many years. A trustee volunteers for a three year term. If the firemen approve they send his name to County Board for approval. They are paid nothing for their service. Randy Berry was talked into volunteering and spent over 30 years doing this. He was staying another three years to break someone in to learn the banking and procedures. During all this time he improved the department with training and getting money and help build a new station. A person came to a fire meeting and said he was a county board member. He told Randy he was done and was no longer needed and could leave. After 30 years and more of service not even a thank you. Many felt we should have had a meeting at our village hall to thank Randy. If someone in your family got sick or was in an accident you would realize how important they are. After the meeting the County Board member told me, not the board that they we're going to make changes. He talked someone into taking Randy's place. I wonder if the person was approved by the board. When this was presented to the board most seemed unaware. After the meeting he told me changes were going to be made. To this day no changes have been made and more money is being spent before and he said nothing to the board. The Village of Braceville would like to know of any changes, we have seen none yet. Hoping the best for the people and Village of Braceville.

Biden deserves credit

WILMINGTON—Trump is now touting the 3.1% drop in prescription drug prices, biggest drop since 1963. Medicare first negotiated drug prices kicked in this year cutting prices 38%- 79% on 10 drugs. The out-of-pocket cap came from same law. Which law you ask? Biden Inflation Reduction Act. Not one Republican voted for it. That's right Joe Biden gets credited for this reduction. Not the guy who actually does get credit for being mentioned 38,000 times in Epstein Files.

What's the difference

SHADOW LAKES— My name is Dan Hill. Watching Channel 7, they are showing an aircraft carrier. A destroyer was without power for many, many days, I believe in the Pacific. But what did they show? An aircraft carrier. Of course most people today even the news would not know the damn difference.

Is city center a park?

BRAIDWOOD—I see the mayor got his city center passed under the guise of it being a park. Is it, though? Got that big old master plan which is a bunch of nothing because let's face it, Berkot's sales tax will amount to a big nothing. And you'd better believe that the mayor and his sidekick will grab the tax money — before the park district knows it's there — to build a city center in an alley where no one can even see it.

Join us, Braidwood

COAL CITY/BRAIDWOOD—Why aren't you people in Braidwood joining us people in Coal City in rejecting the huge data center? It's going to be right on the border of Braidwood. Do you honestly believe your electric and water won't also go sky high? Come on people, Let's fight

this corporate takeover.

Let's be real

BRAIDWOOD— Glad to see everyone survived the storm even if there was damage to property. The city handled it well. Braidwood always has. The idea of money to update and build new parks is great. Let's be real though. There isn't a lot of money going to come from Berkot's. Do we get money from Mastodon, too? Berkot's here in Braidwood is like a two out of 10. I don't know who runs that store, but the employees all seem down in the dumps. You don't have sale products in stock. I bought some marked down lunch meat and it was absolutely rotten. Throw it out don't mark it down.

Same old stuff

BRAIDWOOD—Pizza burgers! I like pizza burgers and like the author of last weeks comment, I am also sick of hearing all the political rants. He is our President, like it or not. He cannot run again. If he could, I doubt he would be elected. Let's give it a break and have positive posts that are pleasant to read instead of the same stuff every week.

Election time chaos

BRAIDWOOD—Who's looking forward to enduring seven months of local election mud slinging? Candidates for all five seats on our local City Council will soon be circulating their petitions and filling voters heads with nothing but hatred for their opponents. Our local elections have gotten more and more vicious with each cycle and the amount of lies, mud slinging, name calling, finger pointing and trash talking has been taken to a whole new level. Our community was left in absolute political ruins after the last election, and the amount of division and contention in the community reached a whole new high. Unfortunately, our community has not even had a chance yet to recover from the special election two years ago and now we are going to be forced to endure it once again.

A knife in the back

WILMINGTON—America, America First, Buy American, Only American, hahaha, Trump personally approved importation (Trump Tariff Free) 300 Metric tons of foreign beef, to temporarily lower prices before midterm elections. Put another knife in the backs of American ranchers. Aren't you glad you voted for this bs artist again?

Storm entitlement

BRAIDWOOD—Why do Braidwood residents absolutely lose their minds whenever a storm comes through resulting in major damage and power loss in our town? Just browse through Facebook and you'll find tons of absolutely absurd comments, demands, and expectations. Apparently whenever the power goes out so does people's ability to use whatever common sense they have. Don't expect special attention from the power companies, don't demand an exact time when your power will be turned back on, don't rely on everyone else to solve your problems. Patience, patience, patience. That's what's needed. Prepare yourselves for the next storm because it will probably happen again and again. Chances are there's a ton of other things that 1st responders and utility crews have to worry about before



they can get your power turned back on so you're TV, Xbox or laptop will work. Just imagine what people did before they had electricity. And, somehow, miraculously, they survived.

Can't afford his lies

WILMINGTON—Who would repeatedly say? "We won the Iran War and this is why we are going to bomb the hell out of them. "Huh? He got us in this mess as another distraction from the Epstein Files, the blundering tariffs mess, the loss of promised manufacturing jobs, the Epstein Files, the Family grift of taxpayers money to new made-up Family businesses, the ICE run amok fiasco, the disregard of the U.S.S. Lincoln record deployment and terrible conditions, affordability of life to struggling US families, the Epstein Files, the lies of potential nuclear threats. He promised no new wars, now defend him logically. People are finally realizing we can't afford his lies and blatant deceit.

Being eaten alive

BRAIDWOOD—Why isn't the Reed Township Mosquito Abatement District spraying for mosquitoes? We can't even sit outside on our patios to enjoy the evening without being bitten alive by mosquitoes. Maybe it's time for them to start doing the work they get paid to do instead of just maintaining the lawn outside of their building. The Reed Township Mosquito Abatement District is a taxing body. Maybe it's also time for residents to start holding them accountable for spending our tax dollars for the purposes that they are supposed to be. They also do not have a website to share public information or finances like they should be. Talk about a lack of transparency. They have a Facebook Page that indicates they will inform residents when and where they will be spraying for mosquitoes, but the page hasn't been updated since 2021.

We can't afford this

WILMINGTON—This is our current fiscal situation in the United States. National Debt \$40 Trillion, Mortgage rates 6.7%, Diesel fuel over \$5 gallon, food up 3% from last year and shelter up 3.2% from last year, inflation at 3.5% and rising.

Trump Administrations so far, in less than six total years account for \$11.6 Trillion or 29% of the total debt of 250 years. of America's existence. We can't afford Republican policies.

No Islamic influence

WILMINGTON—The Democratic Party now supports Islam thinking that they can control them for votes, look at Europe. Don't let this happen to America.

All we got is war

WILMINGTON—\$40 TRILLION in debt. What did we get? Healthcare no, cheaper housing no, groceries, gas, clothes. Nope, prices going up. We got more bombs, tanks and Humvees putting all that defense budget cash directly into pockets of the billionaires that own vast majority of those companies. Some of those same billionaires are in those Epstein files like the guy who approved this distraction war.

Toys for Tots success

I want to give a shout out to Freak and Al is staff at Top fuel as well as IBEW for another Toys for Tots Run as well as Coal City PD, the Sheriff's Department and fire department. They did a phenomenal job in escorting and blocking for all the bikers. Thank you for keeping us all safe for this great charity event and I also want to thank IBEW for all their hard work blocking and keeping the bikers safe. See ya next year.

D from Braidwood

Yard waste in landfill

COAL CITY—I just watched the yard waste and garbage all go into the same truck for the fourth week in a row. I don't know why we have yard waste pickup when it goes to the landfill. I reported it to the village hall, but it didn't seem to do any good.

Reduce costs and taxes

BRAIDWOOD—To all the elected officials, shouldn't part of your job be how to reduce costs and taxes, not just raise taxes to buy another forest preserve, another new fire truck, or put synthetic grass on the football field? It's hard to like Illinois any more. It's really a bad state and I'm sorry for it.

Governor recently signs 87 new bills into law

BY BEN SZALINSKI
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

Most Illinois retailers will be required to accept cash payments beginning in 2028 under a bill Gov. JB Pritzker signed Friday.

House Bill 4592 requires retailers that employ someone to process in-person consumer transactions must accept cash payments on purchases under \$500, though the businesses do not have to accept bills larger than \$20.

The requirement does not apply to self-checkout machines, overnight sales, if a business runs out of cash, membership-only businesses, or phone or internet purchases. Businesses that do not follow the law will have to pay fines.

The measure is one of 87 bills Pritzker signed into law last week.

Jury pay

Employers will now have to pay their employees their full rate of pay while they are serving on jury duty. Businesses with 25 or fewer employees are exempt from the requirement, which begins Jan. 1, 2027.

CPR practice

House Bill 4788 requires schools, beginning in the

2028-2029 school year, to provide breasted and non-breasted manikins for CPR practice in middle school and high school. The goal is to give students more practice with female victims, who studies show are less likely to receive help from bystanders when suffering cardiac arrest. Illinois bill aims to address gender discrepancies in CPR training

Workload report

Senate Bill 3314 requires higher education institutions to provide more transparency about how many credits their faculty members are teaching.

The law requires the state's colleges and universities to, beginning in Sept. 2028, report annually the number of credit hours being taught by full- and part-time faculty members. The reports would be organized by tenure status and discipline.

Lawmakers supporting the bill said the goal is to provide more transparency for students and educators about the higher education system and ensure faculty members are receiving necessary support.

Human trafficking

Drivers on Illinois interstates will soon notice more information about human trafficking at rest stops.

House Bill 4654 requires the Illinois Department of

Transportation to install signs with resources for human trafficking victims in bathrooms at all rest areas, beginning immediately.

Airport noise

Senate Bill 4041 requires O'Hare and Midway airports in Chicago to conduct noise studies at least every five years beginning by the end of 2030. The study must map out how sound is distributed around the airport and forecast how noise will be distributed going forward.

Mental health treatment

House Bill 5193 allows more patients to be transported by ambulance to a mental health institution rather than a hospital emergency room beginning immediately. The law now allows people under the influence of drugs or alcohol to be transported to approved mental health facilities if EMTs determine that's a more appropriate location and it is approved by their supervisors.

Capitol News Illinois is a nonprofit, nonpartisan news service that distributes state government coverage to hundreds of news outlets statewide. It is funded primarily by the Illinois Press Foundation and the Robert R. McCormick Foundation.

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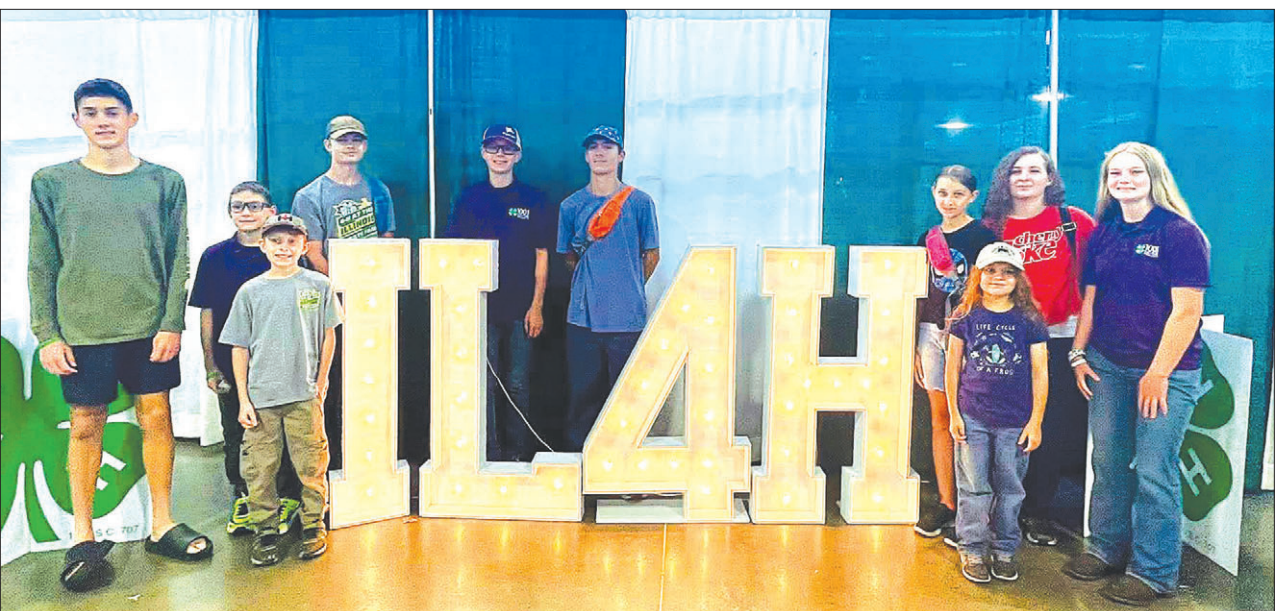
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Interior/Exterior



Courtesy photo
MEMBERS OF THE Wesley 4-H Hustlers prior to judging at the Orr Building on the Illinois State Fairgrounds in Springfield (from left) Jacob Floyd, Caleb Floyd, Caleb Merkel, Josiah Merkel, Benjamin Floyd, Henry Merkel, Charlotte Merkel, Caroline Merkel, Samantha Merkel and Tracy Jones.

Wesley 4-H Hustlers represent southern Will County at State Fair

Members from the Wesley 4-H Hustlers club of Wilmington and Braidwood attended and competed in the 173rd Illinois State Fair in Springfield.

On Saturday, Aug. 15, club members that had their projects selected at the Will County General Project Show, to represent Will County, at the state fair, competed against 4-H members from around the state in their respective project categories.

The results from their showing at the state fair are:

- Samantha Merkel;

Beekkeeping 3 – 2026 Champion Award

- Josiah Merkel; Woodworking 3 – 2026 Reserve Champion

- Tracy Jones; Tractors – 2026 Champion Award

- Caleb Floyd; Visual Arts/Mixed Media – 2026 Reserve Champion

- Benjamin Floyd; Civil Engagement – 2026 Champion Award

The state fair is always a time of reflection for 4-H'ers as the activity year ends on Aug. 31 each year. With the 2027 4-H year starting in September, new members are always welcome, as the Wesley 4-H

Hustlers continue on the tradition that 4-H in general has had of "Individual Learning and Development; through Group Service", and follow the 4-H motto of "To Make the Best Better".

Membership is open to any youth between those ages of 5-18 years old.

About Wesley 4-H Hustlers

Wesley 4-H Hustlers is one of the oldest continuously operating 4-H clubs within the State of Illinois; dating back to 1928.

This club was formed

in Wesley Township, and today is based out of Wilmington. The primary area of focus for this youth organization is Wilmington, Wesley, Florence, Reed, and Custer Townships in Southern Will County, but is open to all individuals regardless of location of residence.

Learn more about 4-H at www.4-H.org, find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/4-H.

Higgins graduates Coe College

Max Higgins was among a group of truly exceptional graduates this past year at Coe College in Cedar Rapids, IA.

Higgins, of Wilmington, was awarded a Bachelor of Arts, majoring in computer science and data science.

aged to register. Registration includes an event T-shirt, finisher medal, admission wristband to Elwood Community Days beer ticket for participants 21 years of age or older, and the opportunity to honor America's heroes while supporting a meaningful cause.

Community members can purchase an official In Memory of Our Fallen Heroes event T-shirt online. Shirts are available for anyone who wants to proudly wear them throughout Elwood Community Days while honoring our Fallen Heroes.

Community members who are unable to participate are also encouraged to support the event through sponsorships, volunteer opportunities, or donations.

Registration is now open. For race registration, sponsorship opportunities, volunteer information, donations, or to purchase an official event T-shirt, visit: <https://runsignup.com/Race/IL/Elwood/ElwoodCommunityDaysK>.

Library to hold book sale

The Wilmington Public Library District will hold a used book sale on Friday and Saturday, Aug. 28 & 29 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Sunday, Aug. 30 from noon to 4 p.m. Patrons can fill a library-provided bag with books for just \$3 per bag.

The library will accept donations of clean, smoke-free, and mold-free books and DVDs until Aug. 26.

Please note that encyclopedias, VHS tapes, outdated medical or textbooks, and other obsolete materials will not be accepted.

All proceeds from this book sale will benefit ShareFest of Will County. Thank you for supporting the library and helping us give great books a second chapter.

P.E.O. walk day held

P.E.O. Chapter GK participated in an international "Walk Today for Women Tomorrow" event.

This event was both a friend raiser and a fundraiser as members walked and visited as well as raised money for P.E.O. Educational programs and services for women around the globe. Members were able to choose the area they walked in.

Mum flower fundraiser

The First Presbyterian Church of Braidwood is holding a Fall Mum Flower Sale.

These huge 9 inch pots will be delivered to the church on Wednesday, Sept. 16, and will be ready to bloom beautifully for your fall decorating.

They are \$12 each and are available in orange, yellow, purple, pink, bronze & white.

Call or text LuAnn Bolatto at 815-790-7134, Lora Grant 815-955-9927 or Joyce Bauer at 815-584-7239, by Sept 9 to order.

Registration underway for Fallen Heroes run & walk during Elwood Community Days

The Bradley Veerman Charity Fund is proud to announce the annual In Memory of Our Fallen Heroes 5K Run & Walk, taking place on Friday, Sept. 1, at Lloyd Erickson Park in Elwood.

The event begins with a special remembrance ceremony at 5 p.m., followed by the 5K Run & Walk at 6 p.m.

This year's event holds special significance as the nation commemorates the 25th anniversary of September 11, 2001.

Participants will gather to remember the lives lost, honor the courage and sacrifice of first responders and public servants, and celebrate the enduring spirit of service that continues to unite communities across America.

Hosted in conjunction with Elwood Community Days, the event benefits the Bradley Veerman Charity Fund, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting first responders, advancing public safety initiatives, providing EMS education, and assisting charitable organizations that serve our communities.

The charity was established in memory of Bradley Veerman, a dedicated firefighter, paramedic, police officer, Executive Director of the Laraway Emergency Telephone System Board (Will County 9-1-1), and public servant whose passion for helping others continues to inspire the organization's mission.

The Bradley Veerman Charity Fund has provided educational scholarships, supported emergency responders and partnered with organizations committed to improving public safety throughout the region.

"Our goal is to bring our community together to remember those who have made the ultimate sacrifice while continuing Bradley's legacy of compassion, service, and commitment to helping others," said April Veerman, President of the Bradley Veerman Charity Fund.

"Every participant, volunteer, sponsor, donor, and supporter helps us honor our fallen heroes while making a lasting difference in our communities."

Participants of all ages and abilities are encour-

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OBITUARIES

Bruce S. Kester



PONTIAC—Bruce S. Kester, 90, of Pontiac, IL, passed away Sunday, Aug. 16, 2026, at Aperia Care in Wilmington. Born Feb. 3, 1936, in White Haven, PA, Bruce was the son of Gilbert and Amanda E. (née Wagner) Kester. On Feb. 15, 1958, Bruce married Flora Smith in California. Together, they shared 68 years of marriage and a lifetime of memories. Bruce proudly served his country in the United States Air Force from July 1954 until his honorable discharge in April 1958. During his nearly four years of active-duty service, he served as a Still Photographer, using his skills in photography in support of Air Force operations. He was stationed with the 3535th Air Base Group at Mather Air Force Base in California and attained the rank of Airman First Class. In recognition of his honorable and dedicated service, Bruce was awarded the National Defense Service Medal and the Good Conduct Medal. Throughout his career, Bruce worked as a project manager for several chemical companies. He was an avid reader and particularly enjoyed the works of John Grisham and Tom Clancy. Bruce was of the Presbyterian faith. Surviving are his wife, Flora Kester; five children: Sherry (Robert) Kontes, of



Idaho Falls, ID; Brian (Trenna) Kester, of Idaho Falls, ID; Aaron (Corinne Ptacek) Kester, of Roselle, IL; Amanda (Jim) Passafiume, of Channahon and Sidney (Jennifer Williams) Kester, of Mazon; nine grandchildren: Deanna Riggs, Brayden (Marie) Passafiume, Quintin Kester, Joshua Passafiume, Ema Kester, Sean Reavley, Kevin Reavley, Kaitlyn Mainard, and Makenzi Williams and two great-grandchildren, Reese Stukel and Brooklyn Stukel; and one brother, Carl (Alice) Kester, of Florida. Bruce was preceded in death by his parents, Gilbert and Amanda Kester and five siblings: Clayton Kester, Berle Kester, Janet Snyder, Gilbert Kester, and Raymond Kester. In accordance with Bruce's wishes, cremation rites will be accorded. A memorial visitation will be held Thursday, Aug. 27, 2026, from 2 p.m. until 5 p.m. at R.W. Patterson Funeral Home & Crematory in Braidwood. To share memories or offer condolences, please visit Bruce's online guestbook at www.rwpattersonfuneralhomes.com or find them on Facebook. R.W. Patterson Funeral Home & Crematory, 401 E. Main St., Braidwood is in charge of arrangements.

Nancy Skowron

ROMEONVILLE—Nancy Amalie (Rehor) Skowron, 94, of Romeoville, IL, passed away peacefully on Aug. 20, 2026, in Joliet. She was born on Nov. 22, 1931, in Chicago, to Frank and Ana (Pokorny) Rehor, and grew up in the Chicago area. Her parents eventually moved to Hayward, WI, where they operated a fishing resort. This is where she met the love of her life, Mitchell J. Skowron. She was working seasonally for the resort and he was there with his fishing buddies. They were married on Oct. 5, 1951, and were married for 63 cherished years until his passing. They lived in Chicago for a few years before moving to a home that they built in Lyons, IL. After raising a family of six children in Lyons, they retired to life in the country in Wilmington. Nancy loved gardening, and she turned a three acre cornfield into flower gardens, vegetable gardens, and fruit tree orchards. She put many miles on her golf cart riding around the property. She was very proud of the 50 foot long stone wall that she built, rock by rock. She worked as a librarian in Lyons, and then at the libraries of Morton College and Argonne National Laboratory. Nancy loved reading, and probably read hundreds of books in her lifetime. She was always up for a game of cards with friends and loved ones, but above all, she treasured every moment spent surrounded by her family. Eventually, Nancy moved to assisted living at StoryPoint in Romeoville, IL. While it was not the dream home she built



in Wilmington, it was home because the nurses and aides were friends as well as caretakers. She was a devoted mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother. Known for her positive outlook, sharp humor, and uplifting nature. Nancy had a gift for offering wise, caring advice to those around her. Nancy is survived by her loving children: Robert (Rebecca) Skowron, of Franktown, CO; Loretta Skowron, of Champaign, IL; Annette Skowron, of Salem, OR; Paul (Nancy) Skowron, of Loveland, CO and Janet (Skowron) (Dan) Jay of Wilmington; 10 cherished grandchildren: Michael Skowron, Nicolette Day, Joseph Taylor Gooch, Mitchell Benjamin Gooch, Natalia (Gooch) Newman, Svetlana Gooch, Elizabeth Skowron, Mariah Skowron, Cody Jay, and Shane Jay and four beloved great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her husband, Mitchell Skowron; her daughter, Natalie Skowron and brother, Franklin Rehor. A graveside burial service will be held at 12 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 29, 2026, at Resurrection Cemetery, 7201 Archer Rd., Justice, IL. Family and friends will have an opportunity to share their memories during the service. A reception meal will follow; please RSVP to Janet. Casual attire is fine. In lieu of flowers, please donate to the charity of your choice. Funeral arrangements are provided by Damar-Kaminski Funeral Home. For more information or to leave online condolences, please visit www.KaminskiFamilyFuneralHomes.com.

Mary T. Grygiel

BRAIDWOOD—Mary T. "Pee Wee" Grygiel, of Braidwood, passed away Aug. 17, 2026. Born June 26, 1929, she was the daughter of Mabel and History Danzero. She went to Reed-Custer High School and was a member of Immaculate Conception Church. She lived in Braidwood her entire life. On June 26, 1948 she married Chester Grygiel. They together had two sons Michael (Karen) and Gregory (Sue) and one daughter, Mary Ellen (Gary) Sanches. She worked for Grinchucks Pants

Factory then the Joliet Arsenal making bombs for WWII. After that she went to work for Reed-Custer School District and retired from there. She has one special brother-in-law, Jerome Grygiel, 10 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren. Mary was preceded in death by her husband, Chester; son, Gregory and son-in-law, Gary Sanches. Cremation Rites were accorded by her request. A celebration of life will be held at a later date.

High schoolers can compete in Voice of Democracy contest

High school students from Wilmington, Coal City and Reed-Custer now have an opportunity to compete for scholarships through the Illinois VFW Auxiliary's 2026-2027 Scholarship Program, which recognizes students for their patriotism, creativity and commitment to honoring America's veterans. Among the opportunities available to area students is the Voice of Democracy Audio-Essay Competition, which is open to students in grades 9-12. This year's theme is "What a Veteran Taught Me About America." Students will submit an original recorded essay reflecting on the topic. The deadline to enter the Voice of Democracy competition is Oct. 31, 2026. Students with artistic talents may also participate in the Young American Creative Patriotic Art Contest, open to grades 9-12. The contest invites students to create original patriotic artwork, including both traditional two-dimensional pieces and three-dimensional art. Entries for the art competition are due by March 31, 2027. In addition to student competitions, the VFW Auxiliary offers a Continuing Education Scholarship for VFW Auxiliary members and their immediate family members pursuing higher education, technical school, trade school or vocational training. Applications for that scholarship are due Feb. 15, 2027. The scholarship program is sponsored by the VFW Auxiliary Department of Illinois under the theme, "Their Fight. Their Story. Our Voice." The organization says the program is designed to honor veterans while inspiring students through education, patriotism and community involvement. Students interested in entering any of the competitions or learning more about eligibility and application requirements can contact Barbara Sweger, Department Scholarship Chairman, at deputy-louth@yahoo.com or 815-481-8288 for additional information. Local contacts include Kathryn Keller at 815-823-4324 or Barb Howard, 815-685-0399.

The new laws, which take effect July 1, 2027, prohibit companies from charging "excessive, inadequate, or unfairly discriminatory" rates and prohibit them from shifting the cost of losses in other states onto Illinois consumers. The new laws come a little more than a year after State Farm announced it was raising homeowners insurance rates an average 27.2% statewide. They also come two years after Illinois motorists saw an average 18% hike in their auto rates, according to Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias. In both cases, insurance industry officials said the rate increases were necessary due to inflation, the rising cost of repairs and, in the case of homeowners insurance, the increasing frequency of extreme weather. In addition, State Farm recently noted that auto insurance rates have been

Lynn Kratochvil



COAL CITY—Lynn W. Kratochvil, 84 and a lifelong resident of Coal City, passed away Aug. 20, 2026 at his home. Born June 16, 1942, in Morris, Lynn Wayne was a son of Frank James and Irene (Emanuelson) Kratochvil. He was raised in Coal City, a community he was proud to call home throughout his life. Lynn graduated from Coal City High School with the Class of 1960 and went on to honorably serve his country in the United States Army. Following his military service, Lynn built a long and dedicated career with Mobil Oil Corporation, retiring after more than 20 years of service. Lynn was a member of Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Roman Catholic Church in Coal City, the Coal City Area Club, Area #1 Miners Recreational Club, the National Rifle Association, and Ducks Unlimited. He also gave back to his community through his service on the board of the Braceville-Gardner Cemetery Association. Those who knew Lynn will remember a man who found great happiness in the simple things in life. He loved being outdoors, whether hunting, fishing, tending to his garden, or simply enjoying the world around him. He also enjoyed cooking and sharing what he made with the people he loved. Above all, family was at the heart of Lynn's life. Time spent with his family, and especially with his grandchildren, brought him some of his greatest joy. The memories made around the table, outdoors, and during the ordinary moments of everyday life will remain a treasured part of his legacy.



Lynn will be remembered for his love of family, his connection to the Coal City community, his appreciation for the outdoors, and the many traditions and memories he leaves behind. Survivors include his sons: Alan (Jennifer) Kratochvil of Braceville and Brian Kratochvil of Coal City; step-children: Keith (Terri) Scerine, Kristy (Chip) Cerovac and Joe Vinyard; granddaughter, Brianna Kratochvil; grandson, Paul Wilczak; several step-grandchildren; his sister, Cathy (Henry) Kuchenbacher of Wilmington and numerous nieces and nephews, as well as cousins. Lynn was preceded in death by his parents Frank and Irene Kratochvil; wife Cathy (nee Skubic) on March 10, 2006, and his sister, Joanne Ulivi. Funeral services were Tuesday Aug. 25, 2026 at the funeral home with Deacon William Dunn from Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish presiding. Burial was in Braceville-Gardner Cemetery, where Lynn will be laid to rest with his late wife, Cathy. Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Lynn's memory to the Braceville-Gardner Cemetery Association, P.O. Box 246, Braceville, IL 60407. Family and friends are encouraged to log onto www.ReevesFuneral.com to sign the guest book, upload photographs and share Lynn's memorial page online through social media. Funeral services and arrangements have been made under the direction and care of Reeves Fruland & Baskerville Funeral Homes and Crematory.

Judith Grygiel

Wilmington—Judith Grygiel, a woman who was truly beautiful inside and out, peacefully began her next journey on Aug. 15, 2026, at the age of 83. Born on Nov. 1, 1942, in Joliet, she was a deeply loving mother, a remarkably gifted artist, and a bright light to everyone who knew her. Judith approached life with an independent, hands-on spirit and a heart full of imagination. She loved taking on home improvement and DIY projects, finding pure joy in transforming spaces with her own two hands. Her incredible artistic talent shone brightly through her paintings and sketches, leaving a beautiful, lasting reflection of her soul. Her greatest joy was her family, and she loved nothing more than bringing everyone together. She was the heart of family gatherings, creating warmth and laughter through holiday celebrations, as well as joyful outdoor family picnics. Throughout her life, Judith found her greatest happiness in the simple, wonderful pleasures of the world. She loved the music she listened to, the pages of good



books, camping under the stars, and the thrill of catching a big fish. More than anything, she filled her children's lives with beautiful, unforgettable memories and a foundation of love that they will hold dear in their hearts forever. In keeping with her naturally generous heart and lifelong desire to help others, Judith made the beautiful, selfless decision to donate her body to medical science. Rather than a traditional funeral, Judith wished for her life to be honored with smiles and happy memories. A joyful celebration of her life will be scheduled at a later date, where family and friends can gather to share stories and celebrate the wonderful woman she was. She leaves behind a legacy of love in her children: Joseph Tafoya, Monica Grant, Marcie Tafoya, and Megan Stevens; her cherished grandchildren; and her dear brothers and sisters. She is reunited in peace with her parents, Leroy and Wilma (Mallott) Purdy, and her brother, Leroy Purdy, who preceded her in death.

New law will allow state to review insurance rate hikes

BY PETER HANCOCK
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

Gov. JB Pritzker signed legislation that will give the Illinois Department of Insurance authority to review and approve rate changes for homeowners and automobile policies. "It's not asking too much to say to insurance companies, if you're telling your customers that rate hikes are necessary, you should be able to prove why," Pritzker said at a bill signing ceremony in Chicago. Prior to the bill signings, Illinois was one of only two states, with Wyoming, that did not exercise regulatory control over insurance rates. The new laws, which take effect July 1, 2027, prohibit companies from charging "excessive, inadequate, or unfairly discriminatory" rates and prohibit them from shifting the cost of losses in other states onto Illinois consumers. The new laws come a little more than a year after State Farm announced it was raising homeowners insurance rates an average 27.2% statewide. They also come two years after Illinois motorists saw an average 18% hike in their auto rates, according to Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias. In both cases, insurance industry officials said the rate increases were necessary due to inflation, the rising cost of repairs and, in the case of homeowners insurance, the increasing frequency of extreme weather. In addition, State Farm recently noted that auto insurance rates have been

falling in Illinois and that it lowered its premiums by an average 15% in 2025. Insurance Department Director Ann Gillespie agreed there often are legitimate reasons for rate increases. But she said the new laws will help make sure that rate increases in the future are justified by reliable data. "While no state legislation can fully eliminate these impacts to insurance premiums, these bills today hold insurance companies accountable for addressing their cost increases by requiring rates to reflect Illinois-specific losses and considerations," she said. House Bill 4273, the homeowners insurance bill, requires companies to give their customers 60 days' notice before raising premiums more than 10%. It also requires them to use credible state-specific claims data to develop their rates when it is available, but companies will be able to supplement that data with national, regional or out-of-state data if needed to meet actuarial standards of credibility. Companies will still be able to charge new rates once they are filed with the Insurance Department. But the new law gives the department authority to review those rates and order rebates of any excess premiums collected if the rates are found to be excessive or unfairly discriminatory. Senate Bill 714, the auto insurance bill, requires companies to give customers 30 days' notice before raising premiums more than 10%. It also gives the department authority to review rates and order rebates if the rates are

found to be excessive or unfairly discriminatory. Giannoulias pushed for that bill, criticizing companies for basing rates on factors unrelated to a person's driving record, such as their credit score or ZIP code. But while those practices are not specifically prohibited in the final legislation, the new law does ban rates that are "unfairly discriminatory." Insurance industry organizations, however, remain opposed to the new laws. In a joint statement issued after the bill signing, the Illinois Insurance Association, the American Property Casualty Insurance Association and the National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies warned the new laws will lead to higher costs and fewer choices in the insurance market because they do not address the economic realities behind premium increases. "Instead, the laws impose a fundamental shift in Illinois' regulatory environment, moving the state toward a more rigid rate approval system similar to struggling insurance markets like California," the organizations said. "This shift will make it harder for insurers to respond in real time to market conditions and adjust rates up or down based on actual claims experience." *Capitol News Illinois is a nonprofit, nonpartisan news service that distributes state government coverage to hundreds of news outlets statewide. It is funded primarily by the Illinois Press Foundation and the Robert R. McCormick Foundation.*

Good or bad? Concerns over bird feeders

Dear EarthTalk: How has the prevalence of bird feeders in the U.S. affected birds' evolution? Is putting up a bird feeder good or bad for ecosystems and the planet?

-Estelle Louis, Twin Falls, ID

EARTH TALK

Questions & Answers About Our Environment

In America, an estimated 50-60 million people maintain backyard bird feeders, a device often hung on yard trees or outdoor decks. Residents deploy these to intend to supply birds with the necessary foods.

Although many hang up these feeders in hopes of helping wildlife through harsh seasons, research suggests that this well-intentioned habit may reshape bird behavior beyond the intended benefits.

Feeders are one of the

most significant factors in modern bird evolution, contributing to new selective pressures found in urban and suburban environments. For example, the access point of many feeders has caused physical and genetic adaptations among many birds.

Studies suggest that some urban bird populations have been found with altered beak shapes and bolder foraging behaviors, a shift researchers attribute to bird feeders. Though this trait may help them exploit human-provided food, it can also significantly reduce their survival in the wild.

Many feeders also favor certain species over others and can cause population instability. Dominant, more adaptable birds such as jays or house finches can gain a competitive advantage over human-provided resources, often at the expense of shyer or less aggressive birds.

As a result, feeders can contribute to biodiversity loss and significantly marginalize quieter species,

contributing to unbalanced ecosystems across bird populations.

Environmentally, feeders create artificial dense areas that introduce several well-documented risks. Domestic cats, raccoons, and predatory birds hang around these food sources in addition to the targeted birds, often as unwanted guests that can threaten vulnerable bird populations.

In addition, illnesses such as avian influenza, salmonella, and conjunctivitis can spread more easily in these crowded spots. Excess seeds and droppings beneath feeders can contribute to localized nutrient pollution.

Researcher Andrew Abraham, from Aarhus University in Denmark, notes that when "the nutrients in bird feed are washed into rivers...they may also exacerbate issues of eutrophication." (Eutrophication is an excessive growth of algae that is suffocating for all wildlife.)

That said, bird feeders should not be entirely abolished from backyards.

Indeed, they can provide a huge survival boost for bird populations after natural disasters, helping wildlife through tough winter storms, droughts, or other severe conditions.

Moreover, bird feeders can partake in citizen science, allowing scientists to track and monitor bird populations through local resident feeders.

The final verdict on bird feeder viability is complicated, but having attentive responsibility over feeders is one of the best ways to manage its benefits and consequences.

Observers should clean them and provide proper food to avoid disease, while also ensuring that they only supplement natural sources and not replace it. If you would like to learn more about how to eco-consciously set up a bird feeder, consider contacting local wildlife centers or Audubon Society chapters near you.

EarthTalk® is a 501(c)3 nonprofit EarthTalk. Send questions to: question@earthtalk.org.



Courtesy photo
YOU MAY NOT be doing birds a favor giving them access to your bird feeder.

Illinois State Police seeks public assistance on anniversary of Tammy Zywicki murder

The Illinois State Police (ISP) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) have a new lead regarding the kidnapping and murder of Tammy J. Zywicki. Aug. 23, 2026 marked the 34th anniversary of Tammy's disappearance.

Her case remains active as ISP and FBI continue exploring new leads, examining 200 pieces of evidence, and retesting items with modern DNA technology.

Tammy was reportedly last seen with her car on Interstate 80 at mile marker 83 in LaSalle County, IL between 3:10 and 4:00 p.m. on Aug. 23, 1992. She left Evanston, IL for college in Grinnell, IA where she was expected to arrive that evening. Later that day, Tammy's car, a 1985 White Pontiac T1000, was found by an ISP Trooper and marked as being abandoned. On August 24, 1992, ISP towed the vehicle.

That same evening,



TAMMY ZYWICKI was last seen Aug. 23, 1992 while driving Interstate 80 on her way to college.

Tammy's mother contacted ISP and advised that her daughter had not arrived at college. On September 1, 1992, Tammy's body was found along Interstate 44 in rural Lawrence County, MO, which is located between Joplin and Springfield, MO.

She had been stabbed

to death. It was also reported that a semi-truck was seen near Tammy's vehicle during this time period. The truck driver was described as a white male between 35 and 40 years old, over six feet tall, with dark, bushy hair.

Special agents are looking for information about a person who may have a connection with the unknown truck driver. Theresa "Teri" Belenske (maiden name Theresa Vega) was known to hitch hike and may have been traveling with the unknown suspect at some point prior to Tammy's death. Belenske would have been 32 years old at the time of Tammy's death. She passed away in 2014 at the age of 54.

Belenske is not a suspect, but a person of interest. Special agents are looking for information about Belenske from the late 1980's through the mid 1990's. Belenske has ties to cities in California, including Oceanside, Vista, Pomona, San Bernadino, and Fontana.

Anyone with information about Tammy's killing, or Belenske and who she traveled with during the late 1980's and early 1990's, can leave a crime tip at our ISP Investigative Tips [4] page or call 1-800-CALL-FBI.

Callers can remain anonymous.

The FBI is offering a reward of up to \$50,000 for information leading to the



THERESA "TERI" BELENKE

identification of the individual or individuals responsible for this crime.

Below are photos of Tammy and some of her personal property known to be missing, along with a photo of Belenske taken in 2009, as well as an AI generated image of what she may have looked like in 1992.

Missing items include a Cannon 35mm camera and a Lorus brand musical wristwatch, which played the tune "Raindrops Keep Falling On My Head." Also taken was a red and white soccer patch monogrammed with "St. Giles Soccer Club, Greenville, SC."

To hear more about the latest in the investigation, listen to the Illinois State Police Podcast, which can be found on many streaming platforms. <https://lnk.bio/illinois-statepolicepodcast>.



TAMMY ZYWICKI was reportedly last seen with her car on Interstate 80 at mile marker 83 in LaSalle County, IL between 3:10 and 4:00 p.m. on Aug. 23, 1992.

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Wilmington EST 1836
 THE ISLAND CITY ILLINOIS

Inspector General deems another sexual harassment allegation as unfounded

Yet another sexual harassment allegation has been made against an Illinois House Democrat. But this time, the House Speaker's operation is fully supporting its incumbent.

Rep. Murri Briel's former deputy chief of staff Laura Jackson claims that, among other things, Briel (D-Ottawa) sexually harassed her, supplied "unlimited" amounts of Adderall to her and the campaign staff and gave "bonuses in marijuana," Jackson said she ultimately had a three-hour meeting with the Legislative Inspector General.



Rich Miller

Before we go any further, you should know that Jackson made her claims in a 44-minute video released by Linc Strategy, a Republican consulting group that has worked for Rep. Briel's Republican general election opponent Liz Bishop.

The interview was conducted by Marjorie Kline of Wilson Grand Communications, a national Republican advertising agency.

A district office employee in former Rep. Harry Benton's office claimed she resigned after repeated sexual harassment by Benton in the spring of 2023. His ultimate resignation this summer set off a firestorm of criticism against House Speaker Chris Welch for waiting so long to do anything, which has metastasized into criticism of Welch's service as House Speaker.

Ironically, a Benton staffer reached out to Benton's Republican opponent around the time of her fellow staffer's resignation, saying via text that Benton "needs to go." A meeting never took place, however, and that staffer, Jessica Dixon Heitman, eventually replaced Benton in the House.

According to Jackson, "Rep. Briel almost daily told me that I needed to take an older woman lover," telling the Republican consultant Kline it was "difficult to focus on tasks while knowing that my boss has these feelings that she's openly sharing."

"It was probably every day that I talked to her there was something about me that was sexualized, to the point that on the night of inauguration, I stood in front of her with tears in my eyes and said that I wish that she would see me as something more than just my looks, than just physically," Jackson said during the GOP interview.

"During the campaign, there was a lot of extreme Adderall use," Jackson claimed in the Republican video. "I take accountability on my part for taking it, but there was also a supply of unlimited Adderall to keep us going through that campaign," she told Kline, referencing Rep. Briel's first Illinois House campaign in 2024.

Briel won by a slim margin of just 595 votes in 2024. Jackson told Kline that the Adderall kept coming while votes were being counted. "After that, Rep. Briel never gave me another Adderall at all, which made it very difficult for me because, yes, I was partaking."

Jackson also claimed that Briel "would give bonuses in marijuana, up to two ounces that she would drive back from Michigan."

Rep. Briel released a statement a day later claiming these were all disproven allegations.

"The statements in the video produced by her MAGA political operatives were previously taken to the Legislative Inspector General in 2025 and were found to be without merit. I am calling for the immediate release of the Legislative Inspector General's report on this matter," Briel said.

Legislative Inspector General Michael McCuskey told the Sun-Times last week that he deemed Jackson's complaint unfounded a month after she filed it in April of last year.

Jackson has a different version of events. "[The LIG office] just told me

that I was an at-will employee and that there wasn't really anything that they could do for me," she told my colleague Isabel Miller last week, adding, "I was never told that anything was unfounded or anything like that. I was just told the at-will employee part."

The "unfounded" declaration gives the House Democrats license to move full speed ahead. The Sun-Times quoted the executive director of the House Democrats' political operation as saying, "We will not allow a misleading political attack to distort Rep. Briel's record or diminish our commitment to the values she has consistently fought for."

However, the Republican Bishop's campaign spokesperson Steven Shearer made it clear that the LIG's decision will not be accepted as the final say. "It should not be up to one man to be the cross-examiner, the judge, the jury," Shearer said of the inspector general.

"We're going to let the voters be the jury on this, and they can decide how credible it is that Rep. Briel hired her twice, hired her on her campaign and then hired her as the chief of staff in her legislative office."

If the House Republicans can raise the money, this could be one of the hottest legislative races of the fall campaign.

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

Deadline is Aug. 29 Mazonia-Braidwood State Fish and Wildlife Areas to host youth firearm deer hunt

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources invites youth hunters to participate in the youth firearm deer hunt Oct. 10-12 at Mazonia-Braidwood State Fish and Wildlife Area in

Braceville. To participate, applicants must mail a letter with the hunter's and guardian's names, address, email address and phone number to the site superintendent at Mazonia State

Fish and Wildlife Area, P.O. Box 126, Braceville IL 60407. The deadline to apply is Aug. 29.

A random drawing will be held, and successful applicants will be contacted and provided with site rules, regulations and maps. Participants will be required to purchase a youth firearm deer permit from an over-the-counter vendor.

The youth firearm deer hunting season is open only to hunters who have not reached their 18th birthday by Oct. 10, the opening day of the 2026 season. For more information, call the site office at 815-237-0063.

Seated Yoga at the Forest Preserve

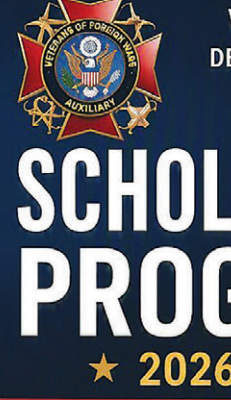
The Forest Preserve of Will County is hosting Seated Yoga and Seasonal Sights on Sunday, Sept. 13 from 11 a.m. to noon at Four Rivers Environmental Education Center in Channahon.

Take part in a 30- to 35-minute all-levels seated yoga session followed by a 25- to 30-minute exploration of the natural world. Bring water and wear comfortable clothing. Ages 12 or older; free. Register by Sept. 12.

VFW AUXILIARY DEPARTMENT OF ILLINOIS

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LEARN MORE
 Barbara Sweger
 Department Scholarship Chairman
 deptyouth@yahoo.com
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SBA offers relief to those affected by severe storms

The U.S. Small Business Administration announced the availability of low interest federal disaster loans for Illinois small businesses, private nonprofit organizations, and residents affected by severe storms occurring July 27.

The SBA issued a disaster declaration in response to a request received from Governor JB Pritzker on Aug. 17.

The declaration covers Illinois counties of Grundy, Kankakee, Will and four others, which are eligible for both physical damage loans and Economic Injury Disaster Loans from SBA.

Businesses and private nonprofits are eligible to apply for business physical disaster loans and may borrow up to \$2 million to repair or replace disaster-damaged or destroyed real estate, machinery and equipment, inventory, and other business

assets.

Homeowners and renters are eligible to apply for home and personal property loans and may borrow up to \$100,000 to replace or repair personal property, such as clothing, furniture, cars, and appliances. Homeowners may apply for up to \$500,000 to replace or repair their primary residence.

Applicants may also be eligible for a loan increase of up to 20% of their physical damage, as verified by the SBA, for mitigation purposes. Eligible mitigation improvements include strengthening structures to protect against high wind damage, upgrading to wind rated garage doors, and installing a safe room or storm shelter to help protect property and occupants from future damage.

"When disasters strike, SBA's Disaster

Loan Outreach Centers play a vital role in helping small businesses and their communities recover," said Chris Stallings, Associate Administrator of the Office of Disaster Recovery and Resilience at SBA. "At these centers, SBA specialists assist business owners and residents with disaster loan applications and provide information on the full range of recovery programs available."

The SBA's Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) program is available to eligible small businesses, small agricultural cooperatives, and private nonprofits — including faith-based organizations — impacted by financial losses directly related to this disaster. The SBA is unable to provide disaster loans to agricultural producers, farmers, or ranchers, except for aquaculture enterprises.

Interest rates are as low as 4% for businesses, 3.625% for private nonprofits, and 2.875% for homeowners and renters, with terms up to 30 years. Interest does not begin to accrue, and payments are not due until 12 months from the date of the first loan disbursement. The SBA determines eligibility and sets loan amounts and terms based on each applicant's financial condition.

SBA customer service representatives are on hand at the Disaster Loan Outreach Centers in Will County to answer questions about SBA's disaster loan program, explain the application process, and help individuals complete their application. Schedule an in-person appointment in advance at appointment.sba.gov.

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



HELP WANTED

RELIABLE FARM WORKER needed full-time. Duties include cutting grass, small engine maintenance and repair, dog training and more. Year-round position pays hourly wage. Wilmington. Call 630-399-4982. ch34-36

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.

PETS

Large Selection of Dog and Cat Food, treats, accessories, health aids, clothing, Birthday treats, wall art, jewelry, gifts, greeting cards and Home of Fritters for Critters Pet Treats. New! Brew and Chew Dog Treats. Trinity Barkery 240 W. Baltimore Wilmington., IL 60481 815-476-5104 slewis@trinityservices.org.

SERVICE & REPAIRS

Mike Collins Roofing, re-shingles and gutter cleaning, aluminum gutter screen, no repair to small or too big. Free roof inspection. Low prices. Lic #104.007296 Ask for Mike at 815-730-1303.

Bubbles Cleaning Service

Dawn Boardman Business and Home Cleaning Service. Weekly, bi-weekly, monthly. Many references available. Please leave message 815-661-6180.

Run a classified ad and get results!

HELP WANTED HELP WANTED HELP WANTED

HELP WANTED

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE, ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE & PAYROLL CLERK

CITY OF BRAIDWOOD, ILLINOIS is seeking a dependable and detail-oriented individual for a full-time union position in the Finance Department. This position will report to the City Clerk, City Administrator and Finance Commissioner.

Responsibilities include accounts payable and receivable, invoice and payment processing, payroll, deposits, account reconciliations, financial recordkeeping, and assistance with audits and financial reporting. The position will also provide customer service to residents, employees, and vendors. Responsible for other tasks assigned.

Qualifications: High school diploma or equivalent required.

Associate's or Higher in Accounting, Finance or Business preferred. Previous accounting, bookkeeping, accounts payable/receivable, or payroll experience required. Municipal or governmental accounting experience preferred. Strong computer, Excel, organizational, communication, and math skills required. Must be able to maintain confidentiality and meet deadlines.

Pay Scale: \$20.75-22.04

Benefits: Insurance, PTO, and IMRF

Applications can be found on the city website, or you may get a paper copy at City Hall. Submit resume and completed application to:

CITY OF BRAIDWOOD

Attn: Finance Department

141 W. Main Street

Braidwood, IL 60408

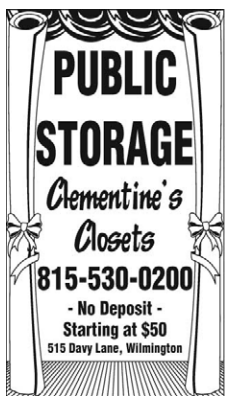
ldixon@braidwood.gov

www.braidwood.gov

Application Deadline: September 4, 2026

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WANTED SCRAP METAL

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- Garden Tractors
- Snowmobiles
- Appliances
- Anything Metal

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7 days
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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

Top Fuel Saloon Food Pantry. Open Fridays from 1 to 2 p.m. 275 S. Hickory St., Braidwood.

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.

From August through October meals will be distributed at 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.

We are always looking for more churches or organizations to help.

Cieszkiewicz named to president's list

Camdyn Cieszkiewicz, of Wilmington, was named to University of Bridgeport's Spring 2026 President's List.

To be named to the President's List, a student must maintain a term grade point average of 3.7 or higher.

Gas at highest level ever recorded this late

Average gasoline prices in Illinois have risen 7.6 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$4.36/g Monday, according to GasBuddy's survey of 4,378 stations in Illinois.

Prices in Illinois are 10.7 cents per gallon higher than a month ago and stand 97.5 cents per gallon higher than a year ago.

That means saying farewell to gas under \$4/g, with Mohsen in Wilmington charging \$4.06/g (cash), all the way up to \$4.19/g (cash) at BP.

In Braidwood, expect to pay from \$4.29/g at Casey's to \$4.49/g at BP.

Coal City gas runs the gamut from \$4.29/g at BP up to \$4.49/g at other nearby stations.

Traveling to Morris or Bourbonnais won't save you much, with gas ranging from \$4.07/g at Pilot to

\$4.39/g at Shell in Morris.

Bourbonnais prices are unusually high with gas ranging from \$4.24/g at Gulf to \$4.29/g at Kroger.

"Average gasoline prices moved higher in the majority of states over the last week, with fewer than 10 states seeing declines, while diesel surged nearly 17 cents per gallon nationally, leaving it less than 25 cents away from an all-time record high," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy.

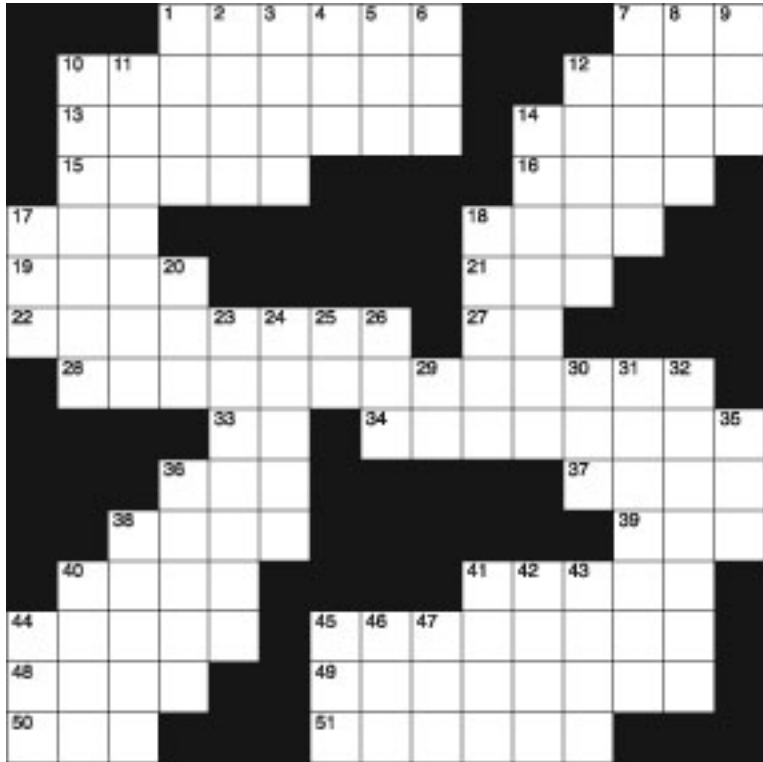
"Gasoline, while not at all-time records, is at its highest level ever recorded this late in the calendar year, meaning Americans could for the first time ever see a national average price of gasoline above \$4 per gallon on Labor Day — eclipsing the previous record of \$3.83 per gallon

set in 2012.

"While some oil shipments are apparently getting through the Strait of Hormuz, the dominant force propping up both gasoline and diesel prices is increasingly the growing loss of Russian refinery capacity, as continued Ukrainian attacks knock more facilities offline and constrain the global supply of refined fuels. Until that refining supply picture improves, both gasoline and diesel prices face continued upward pressure."

The lowest price in the state yesterday was \$3.75/g while the highest was \$5.69/g.

The national average price of diesel has increased 16.6 cents compared to a week ago and stands at \$5.584 per gallon.

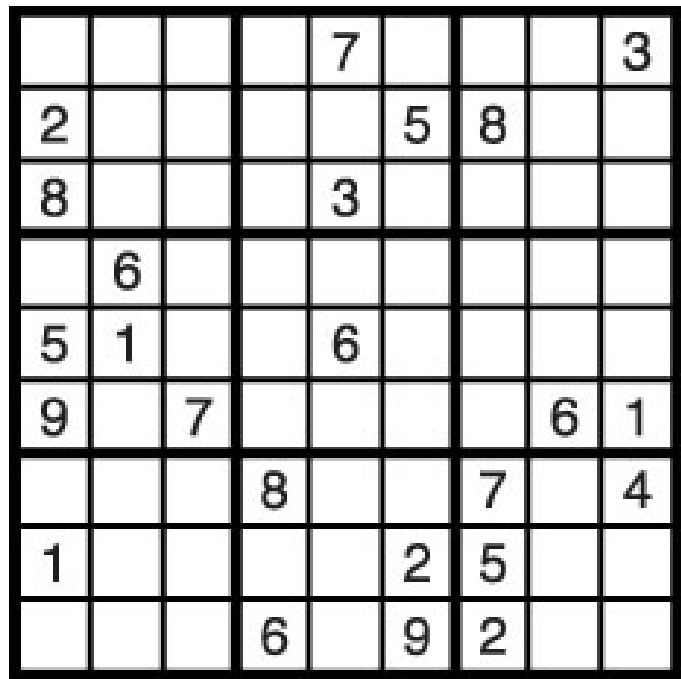


CLUES ACROSS

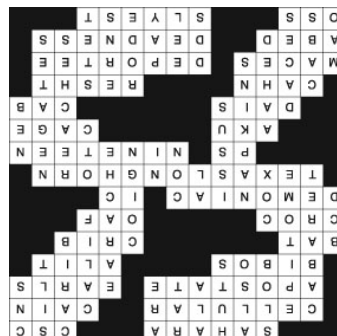
1. A vast desert in Africa
7. Reciprocal of a sine
10. Type of phone
12. Biblical figure
13. One who renounces a religious belief
14. Warren and Monroe are two
15. Wild ox
16. Dismounted a horse
17. Cave dweller
18. Where infants sleep

CLUES DOWN

1. Slovenly person
2. In addition
3. Hovels
4. Pie ___ mode
5. Subway rodent
6. They ___
7. Indigenous S. American people
8. Fine sand
9. Central nervous system
10. Nightclub entertainment
11. The perfect example of something
12. Supreme Islamic leader
14. Pain
17. Binary-coded decimal
18. Projecting corner of an angle
20. "Succession" actor Brian
23. Dinner table decor
24. Ancient settlement in modern Turkey
25. You can call Paul Simon this
26. Opposite of a pro
29. Atomic #28
30. Type of drug (abbr.)
31. Arrives at
32. Nullifies
35. Bird's beak
36. Partner to "oohed"
38. Ray-finned fishes
40. Taxis
41. Sat on and controlled
42. Sea eagles
43. Remain as-is
44. Chinese revolutionary
45. Tooth caregiver
46. Snake-like fish
47. Compensate



Level: Intermediate



COMET SPORTS



THE COMET DEFENSE did a fine job Friday night during a storm-delayed contest at Harvard.

Photo by Angela Rose



CELEBRATING A TOUCHDOWN on Friday is Comet junior Nate Vogler.

Photo by Angela Rose

Comets blitz Harvard in opener

BY JIM SHELDON
SPORTS CORRESPONDENT

Lightning struck multiple times Friday in Harvard. A two hour plus delay caused kickoff to be pushed back until 9:30 p.m.

When it was time for kickoff, the Reed-Custer football team delivered plenty of strikes of their own as they recorded five touchdowns of 25 yards or more and rolled to a 42-6 win.

"It got called right as we were about to take the field from our endzone. It was full go then a complete stop so the kids were frustrated in the beginning," said head coach Joe Turek.

"We went back inside and coach Tyler Graham brought a speaker with so we had the music going and some karaoke sessions, but we wanted to make sure they were together and focused."

Kaiden Klein got the ball rolling with a long touchdown run, one of three total touchdowns for the junior who finished with 249 total yards.

"We talk about explosive plays all the time and we know Klein can do it at any point. It's a nice luxury to have a guy who can break one off, get us going early and kind of settle us in after a goofy start," said Turek.

"Klein is coming into his own and becoming more of a vocal leader. He's putting in the work and then adding that to his natural ability and speed is a good combination to have."

Jeremiah Bragg recovered a Harvard fumble on the next series and quarterback Jesse Tresouthick found a wide-open Donald Bryan for a 69 yard touchdown catch and an early 14-0 lead.

Nathan Vogler added an eight yard touchdown run before Harvard broke through with a reverse pass setting up a five yard score.

Eddie Bryan, not to be outdone by his older brother Donald, broke free for a 46 yard touchdown run with 8:33 left in the half and a 28-6 lead.

"The Bryan brothers are reliable and dependable. It was great to see Donald get that long catch. He hasn't gotten really a whole lot of varsity experience at receiver and the play before he was probably doing some heavy lifting on the blocking front."

"It was good to see him get rewarded with a long touchdown pass and he broke away like he's capable of. He's a pretty strong athlete. Eddie's going to be everywhere. He was making every single call at

the free safety position, and then he snuck away on a run as well, so they've definitely been big for us to get going here."

Tresouthick connected with Klein for a 25 yard touchdown before the speedy

junior broke free for another long score on the ground late in the third. He finished with 192 yards on only 11 carries and recorded two catches for 57 yards.

Tresouthick was a very efficient 3-for-

4 passing for 126 yards with Eddie Bryan (65 yards) and Vogler (26 yards) both adding four carries.

Defensively, the Comets held Harvard in check outside of one big reverse pass and forced three fumbles.

"Turnovers are fun. They put a couple balls on the ground and we were there to pick it up, just running to the football sometimes gives you a nice reward. They had a big back and he was coming downhill at us and we kind of held them in check," said Turek.

"It was good experience for a lot of our guys who don't have much varsity experience. First game under the belt, little jitters, things to fix, but overall it was a very solid effort and proud of what they did."

Tanner Gullquist led the charge with 11 total tackles, three for loss, a sack and a forced fumble. Trent Boudreau was right behind him with 10 stops and Eddie Bryan (forced fumble), Vogler (sack, forced fumble) and Donald Bryan all made eight tackles while Bragg and Kolsyn Payne each recovered a fumble.

The Comets will host St Teresa in the home opener Friday. The Bulldogs were victorious in their opener 16-7 over Quincy Notre Dame. From 2016-2022, they went 76-8 and finished second in 2A in 2016 and won the Class 2A state title in 2022.

The last three years have been a struggle with just nine wins combined.

"They are a prestigious program. There's no room for error. There's no room for lack of preparation, regardless what their record may have looked like the last couple years."

"We know that their expectations are high, and they're going to be coming up to us expecting to win, and we have to be fully prepared, ready to go, and give them our best shot because we're going to be expecting the same."

The Comets were strong at home last season with a 3-2 record. Three of those games were decided by seven points or less.

"I think the kids really enjoy being at home. We're hoping to make Friday night in Braidwood kind of a thing. They are definitely going to come out ready to rock and the first home game is always fun no matter what week it is."

"We're doing a little senior night and youth night to get as many eyes as we can on our task Friday."



REED-CUSTER JUNIOR Kaiden Klein (6) pulls down a pass during the season opening victory at Harvard.

Photo by Angela Rose



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RCMS softball off to a good start

Reed-Custer Middle School's girls softball team wasted little time taking control Thursday, scoring eight runs in the opening inning on the way to a 12-1 victory over Wilmington in Braidwood.

The win improved the Lady Comets to 3-2 overall and 1-2 in conference play.

Reed-Custer jumped ahead 8-0 in the bottom of the first and continued to add to its advantage with one run in the second, two in the third and another in the fourth. Wilmington scored its lone run in the second inning.

The Lady Comets collected 11 hits while taking advantage of six Wilmington errors. Reed-Custer committed just two errors and held Wilmington to four hits.

Ella Povalish provided one of the biggest swings for Reed-Custer, belting a home run and driving in two runs. Madison Boravicka added a triple and an RBI.

Kaelyn Freitas was 2-

for-3 with an RBI and two stolen bases, while Emberlyn Urban collected two hits in three at-bats, scored a run and stole two bases.

Audrey Vanek went 1-for-4 and drove in three runs, while Aubrey Henderson reached base three times on walks, scored three runs and stole two bases.

Reed-Custer was aggressive on the basepaths throughout the game. Irie Aguilar scored twice,

drove in a run and stole three bases, while Alexis Mallanay added a hit, an RBI and two stolen bases. Paisley Sukley also contributed a hit.

Freitas earned the victory in the circle, allowing just one run on one hit over four innings. She struck out three as Reed-Custer kept Wilmington's offense in check.

Reed-Custer coach Lynn Zoltani's squad will carry a 3-2 record into this week's contests.

Hueramo leads with three homers

Panther A Baseball got the win against Coal City 12 - 2.

Mauricio Hueramo hit three huge home runs and drove in six runs. Abel Rodriguez struck out 10 batters on the day through 4 innings. Abel, Gavin Vogler, and Mathias Martinez each had two hits. Eamon Roberts pitched 2 scoreless innings.

An overall team effort win with several others having hits.