

Progress, continued from page 1

exhibits at the city zoo and renovations to storage and restroom facilities.

Oiling the machine

Lyons also detailed several infrastructure projects aimed at improving utility systems. The city launched an inflow and infiltration study to identify deteriorated sewer lines that allow groundwater and stormwater into the sanitary sewer system. Officials also allocated more than \$100,000 toward replacing aging water meters and hired Robinson Engineering to design and bid a major \$800,000 water main replacement project.

"Construction is expected to begin this fall," Lyons said of the water main project, which is intended to restore proper water flow to three fire hydrants that have been out of service for several years.

Financial efficiency

On the financial side, Lyons said the city has focused on accountability and efficiency. Efforts included reorganizing the finance department, implementing a new purchase order system, collecting more than \$25,000 in delinquent water bills while establishing payment plans, and adopting a purchasing policy requiring multiple approvals and competitive bidding for projects exceeding \$25,000.

The city also standardized hiring procedures, sought competitive bids for garbage hauling services, and negotiated an agreement with LRS to keep hauling costs competitive with neighboring communities.

Lyons highlighted measures intended to reduce costs for residents, including lowering the automatic annual water rate increase from 4% to 2%, which he said saves the average household about \$25 annually. He also noted the city's tax rate was reduced from 4.9 to 4.5.

"We remain committed to responsible government, fiscal accountability, and efficient operations," Lyons said.

The mayor concluded by emphasizing that the city's recent accomplishments are intended to create a foundation for future growth.

"While there is still much work ahead, we have built a strong foundation that will benefit our residents for generations to come," Lyons said.

The city has also developed a brand new economic development brochure which can be viewed on the city's website.

The heart of Reed-Custer: Vern Reed retires from Braidwood Police Department

BY ROSE PANIERI
STAFF WRITER

For the many students who passed through the halls of Reed-Custer High School over the last 12 years, Officer Vern Reed was more than a school resource officer. He was a mentor, a trusted confidant, a friendly face in the hallway and, for some, a father figure when they needed one most.

On Aug. 25, Reed officially retired from the Braidwood Police Department after 14 years of service, including 12 years as the school resource officer for Reed-Custer School District. During a tribute at the Aug. 24 Braidwood City Council meeting, colleagues reflected on a career defined not by arrests or statistics, but by the lives he touched.

In many ways, Reed became such a fixture in the district that one might think he put the "Reed" in Reed-Custer.

Police Chief Eric Allen noted that Reed joined the department in 2012 after retiring from the Will County Sheriff's Department.

"He came to us in 2012 after he retired from the Will County Sheriff's Department," Allen said. "I learned recently that he

actually came in originally as a part-time investigator with a caseload."

Champion of Children

A few years later, Reed accepted the role that would define the next chapter of his career.

"And then a couple years later, he took the assignment of school resource officer," Allen said.

Reed's impact extended far beyond the classroom. In 2024, he was recognized by the Illinois School Resource Officer Association as first runner-up for Best School Resource Officer in the state. In 2022, he joined fellow school resource officers Todd Flint and Mike Miller as grand marshals of the Summerfest Parade.

But those honors only tell part of the story.

Braidwood Sgt. Chris Altiery, who worked closely with Reed, delivered an emotional tribute during the council meeting.

"Over 12 years, Vern became far more than just a police officer assigned to their school," Altiery said. "He became a trusted presence, a familiar face, and an important part of the community."

Someone who listened

For students, Reed was often the person they turned to when they needed advice, encouragement or simply someone to listen.

"For many of those students, Vern wasn't simply the police officer assigned to their school," Altiery said. "He was their officer. He was someone they trusted, someone they went to for advice, someone they joked with in the hallways and someone they ate with in the cafeteria."

His commitment didn't end when classes let out.

According to Altiery, Reed attended athletic events, cheered students on from the sidelines, chaperoned dances and became woven into the everyday fabric of school life.

"Vern has an incredible ability to recognize when a kid needed something," Altiery said.

If he noticed a student wearing worn-out shoes or knew a family was struggling, Reed quietly found a way to help. He never sought recognition, and he made sure students could maintain their dignity.

Bad decisions don't make bad people

One letter submitted when Reed was nominated for School Resource Officer of the Year described how students from every background sought him out for guidance.

"Students saw Vern less as a police officer and more as an advocate, a guide, a role model and occasionally a father figure," Altiery said.

Altiery said Reed understood a lesson that can be difficult to teach in law enforcement.

"You can hold people accountable while still caring about them," he said. "You could investigate a situation, get a student to tell the truth and accept responsibility, and at the same time, make sure the student understands that making a bad decision did not make them a bad person."

When emergencies arose, Reed could instantly



VERN REED, WHO served as School Resource Officer for Reed-Custer schools, embraces Braidwood Police Sgt. Christopher Altiery. Reed was honored during the Aug. 24 Braidwood City Council meeting following his retirement.

shift from the approachable officer joking with students in the hallway to the calm professional everyone depended upon.

Setting the standard

For Altiery, Reed's legacy could be summed up in a single phrase: The standard.

"For 12 years in that high school, Vern was the standard," he said. "He set the standard for what a school resource officer should be. He set the standard for how a police officer can become part of the school community without ever forgetting the responsibility that comes with wearing the badge."

Altiery said the true measure of Reed's career cannot be found in reports, arrests or years of service.

"There is no statistic for the student who made a better decision because Vern took five minutes to talk to them," he said. "There is no statistic for the kid who walked a little taller because somebody quietly bought them a new pair of shoes."

As his remarks concluded, Altiery's voice turned personal.

"Police departments lose officers to retirement every year. Eventually, all of us take off this uniform for the last time," he said. "But some people are much harder to replace than others."

"Tonight, the police department, our school district and the City of Braidwood are losing one of their most valuable assets. And I'm losing someone I've been fortunate enough to serve alongside, and even more fortunate to call my friend."

Dedication and selflessness

The department pre-

sented Reed with a plaque that read:

"Vern Reed, you have served the City of Braidwood and your school district with honor, dedication and selflessness. Now as the day dawns on the next chapter in your life, may God's blessings be upon you. Thank you for your 14 years of service."

Fighting back tears, Reed thanked the department, city officials and school community that welcomed him over the years.

"I'm just happy that you guys accepted me; you trusted me," Reed said. "You allowed me to work in the school with you, with the kids and the community."

He said the partnership between the police department, school district, and community was key to his success.

"We've worked well together," Reed said. "And I think that's important, to have that relationship with law enforcement and with the school and the community."

As he reflected on his career, Reed offered a humble, heartfelt message.

"I just want to say thank you guys so much for everything that you guys have done to make my job easier," he said. "It's been great."

For thousands of Reed-Custer students, Officer Vern Reed was a reassuring presence during some of the most formative years of their lives. Long after his patrol car leaves the school parking lot for the last time, the lessons he taught through kindness, compassion and quiet service will remain.

That may be the greatest legacy of all.

Additional electrical upgrades deemed necessary for city's water treatment systems

BY ROSE PANIERI
STAFF WRITER

A major upgrade to strengthen emergency power capabilities at Braidwood's water and wastewater treatment facilities will move forward after city officials determined existing electrical equipment could not adequately support the new system.

The Braidwood City Council approved Change Order No. 1 for the water treatment plant and wastewater treatment plant electrical transformer and panel upgrades, increasing the cost of the standby generator replacement project by \$19,683.40.

The change order raises the project's total contract amount from \$803,500 to \$823,183.40.

The work is being completed by Excel Electric as part of the city's ongoing standby generator replacement project.

The upgrades became necessary after the contractor reviewed the electrical infrastructure at both

facilities and determined existing transformers and electrical panels were undersized for the new backup generators.

The city is replacing obsolete generators at both plants with new 500-kilowatt units designed to provide reliable emergency power during outages.

City Engineer Sean Kelly provided details.

"These generators have a heater on them and they have a battery charger and everything else is part of the current technology," Kelly said. "They need one hundred amp service dedicated to that to at least get them running."

Kelly explained that existing infrastructure cannot handle the load.

"What we have is essentially a lightning panel and a small transformer right now," he said. "Those need to be replaced and swapped out with a larger transformer and a larger panel."

The new generators require 100-amp, 120/240-volt electrical feeds to power heaters, battery chargers and control elec-

tronics. To accommodate those requirements, the change order includes the installation of new 100-amp transformers, upgraded electrical panels, conduit work and related improvements at both facilities.

The largest portion of the additional cost is associated with improvements at the water treatment plant, where limited space availability increases installation complexity. Upgrades total \$11,344.78, while improvements at the sewer plant account for \$8,338.62.

City records indicate construction on the overall generator replacement project began July 27 and is expected to be completed by Nov. 9.

Send news
and photos
by emailing
freepress604
@gmail.com

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, 524 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.

Claims against the Estate may be filed in the office of the Clerk of the Circuit Clerk in the Will County Courthouse, 100 West Jefferson St., Joliet, Illinois, 60432. Or with the administrator, or both within (6) months from the date of the first publication Notice, and any claim not filed within that period is barred. Copies of a Claim filed with the Clerk must be mailed or delivered to the administrator and to said attorney within ten (10) days after it has been filed.

E-filing is now mandatory with limited exemptions. To e-file, you must first create an account with an e-filing service provider. Visit <http://efile.illinoiscourts.gov/service-providers.htm> to learn more and to select a service provider. If you need additional help or have trouble e-filing, visit <http://www.illinoiscourts.gov/faq/gethelp.asp> or talk with your local circuit clerk's office. If you cannot e-file, you may be able to get an exemption that allows you to file in-person or by mail. Ask your circuit clerk for more information or visit www.illinoislegalaid.org.

Mark E. Hanson
116 N. Chicago Street, Suite 200
Joliet, IL 60432
Phone: (815) 727-5445
BY: s/s Mark E. Hanson,
ARDC 01124501

Richard E. Fistler - Representative
Mark E. Hanson - Attorney
Published in the Braidwood Journal on Wed., Aug. 19, 26, and Sept. 2, 2026.

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.

Remembering Patriot Day Here for you.

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The Braidwood Journal
USPS No. 550-940

Published weekly, 52 times a year,
on Wednesdays by
G-W COMMUNICATIONS, INC.,
111 S. Water St., Wilmington, IL 60481
Periodicals postage paid at
Wilmington, Illinois

Postmaster:

Send address changes to:
The Braidwood Journal,
111 S. Water St., Wilmington IL 60481

Subscription rates: \$46 Grundy & Will
counties; \$53 other Illinois counties and \$60
out of state

G.W. Communications, Inc publishes
the weekly subscription newspapers named
The Free Press Advocate, The Braidwood
Journal and The Coal City Courant.

Advertising and Business Offices:

• 111 South Water St., Wilmington, IL 60481
(815) 476-7966
• 271 South Broadway, Coal City, IL 60416
(815) 634-0315

Deadline for The Free Press Advocate,
Braidwood Journal and Coal City Courant
Display Advertising: Friday, noon

News and Classified Advertising:
Monday, noon

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Eric D. Fisher, publisher

Darkness, cold, and mud- welcome to Braidwood 1873

Will County in the 19th century had its pockets of crime and drunkenness, fighting and stabbing. But nothing in our history compares to early Braidwood. Why? Because, like the wild west, it was a mining town; it doesn't seem to matter whether its gold or coal. In 1873 Braidwood incorporated and none too soon. Let's go back to get the full picture.

"When'er I take my walks abroad mud, mud! At the present writing Braidwood is what I hope and believe to be the most dismal place ever seen by mortal. The streets and roads are, to the pedestrian, well-nigh impassable; and in their present condition, and are the cause of converting otherwise peaceful and solid citizens into vessels of wrath, who, with wailing and gnashing of teeth, shower maledictions upon the ruts, bogs, and quagmires which beset them on every side. But the longest road has a turn. We are now incorpo-



TIME WAS....
Sandy Vasko

Braidwood Journal. He was a bit too optimistic; the mud would linger for quite a while. He was the inquisitive sort, so he decided to see exactly what it was like to be a miner.

"We were there on last Tuesday. Provided with a bodyguard, in the person of Mr. Wharton of the Joliet Republican, we proceeded to the Star coal mine in Braidwood. A gentlemanly foreman received us with every courtesy, and explained the various mysteries connected with harvesting the black diamonds. Wouldn't we like to go down the shaft? Of course, we would; so, Wharton acts on the suggestion of a miner, and doffs his plug hat, and we mount the cage, cautioning the engineer, by all his future hopes, to let us descend slowly.

rated, and by another winter shall mend our ways, and have the luxury of sidewalks. So, ring up the curtain; enter city council, and exit mud."

That was the hope of the editor of the Braidwood Journal. Here truly is darkness, but without chaos. Several miniature railroads lead from the mouth of the shaft in different directions, and these have switch tracks diverging to all points of the compass. Here we learn to stoop and follow our guide, whose only light gleams from a miner's cap lamp, holding less than two ounces of oil.

We proceed quietly along the dark, damp hall, and stop occasionally to admire the well-defined walls of soapstone, in which is embedded many a beautiful fern. Further along, we come to tight board doors, which, our guide explains, are for the purpose of controlling the ventilation. After groping our way some 400 feet - sometimes walking erect, again on all fours - we spy a live miner, delving at the

face of the strata of coal; he looks like an imp of his Satanic majesty, crowned with a miner's lamp, and black as the heart of a salary-grabbing congressman. Who can he be?

In a moment he salutes us by name, and lo - we behold our friend and fellow citizen, James Creeley, one of the most popular ladies' men in Braidwood. The clever, black looking cuss talked United States fluently, and gave us much interesting information about things generally "down among the coals." How they pick out the bottom of a vein, when the natural pressure of the earth above loosens the whole; how one miner in each "room" or separate apartment has to shovel the coals to the track and load the small cars; how small boys or mules then push or pull these cars to the cage at the mouth of the shaft, when the whole is raised at a given signal, by the ponderous engine above.

After a sojourn of half an hour we "about face" and retrace our steps through the subterranean hall and soon catch a faint glimmer of daylight. Again at the shaft, we are led to



A TYPICAL "ROOM" in a shaft mine, taken in 1912 at the "G" shaft mine.

expect a demand from the miners, requiring us to furnish a keg of beer, as is customary, but they probably suspected our newspaper of a Bohemian character, and we were unmolested. Stepping upon the cage, the bell taps, and we ascend to Will County again.

Columns might be written, descriptive of our observations, but our remarks are limited to a certain space. Our conclusions are that a practical miner earns every cent he

gets and that his vocation is one of the most dangerous pursuits on earth or below it."

Shaft mining had all but disappeared by the 1900's, soon to be replaced by strip mines with their huge machinery. Almost every remnant of those days has disappeared, but ask anyone from Braidwood, they will tell you that under the ground the shafts are still there, just waiting to cave in. Or so the story goes.



REED-CUSTER Middle School ACE winners for the month of August are (from left) Riley Hone (6th grade), Jaxzyn Lewakowski (8th), Liam Jones (8th), Robert Peacock-Knight (7th), Hunter Kaufmann (6th) and Judah Johnson (7th).



REED-CUSTER Middle School Student of the Month winners for the month of August have been announced. The characteristic trait that was focused on throughout August was responsibility. Selected were (front, from left) Keith Pocius (7th grade), Arleen Garcia-Diaz (7th), Dillen Hertz (7th), Liam Jones (6th), Daniel Whittum (7th) and Savannah Countryman (6th). Back row: Brandon Kuchar (8th), Maxx Hayducak (8th), Bailey Vaughn (8th), Eleanor Plummer (6th), Abigail Hilton (6th) and Autumn Brown (8th).

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.

Panthers rule with in the park homers

The Reed-Custer Middle School Panther A baseball team faced off against Herscher-Limestone and got a huge 15-4 win against a solid team.

Copper Dvorak, Josh Forsythe, Mathias Martinez, and Mauricio Hueramo all pitched a solid game with a great defense behind them.

Leading the way on offense was Abel Rodriguez with two inside the park home runs and a single. Also on offense, Cooper Dvorak had an inside the park home run while Josh Forsythe had 2 hits.

Mathias Martinez and Eamon Roberts each added a hit a piece. All around Panther's did a great job of putting the ball in play, making the defense work, and taking advantage of some long at bats.

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.

Fossil Ridge Library calendar

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, Sept. 3- Art For Impact: 6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. Get ready to paint, build, sculpt, draw, and create! Join our Art for Impact High School

Mentors each month for an exciting art adventure where imagination takes the lead.

Every class features a brand-new theme designed to spark creativity, build confidence, and encourage positive self-expression in a fun, welcoming space. Perfect for: 4th-8th Grade Students New Theme Every Month. All Supplies Included. No Art Experience Needed. Sponsored by Braidwood Area Healthy Community Coalition.

Tuesday, Sept. 8 & 22-Playdoh Playdates 10:30-11am. Join us for a Play-Doh workshop! Display your creativity using our Play-Doh and tools. This program is for children aged 2-6, and registration is required.

Sensory Tuesday 5:30-6:30 pm. Dive into a world of texture, color and hands-on fun with our new Sensory Bin program! Perfect for little hands and growing minds, our rotating themed bins let toddlers and preschoolers explore, scoop, and play while building critical fine motor and language skills. Registration is required.

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

Free Press Newspapers readers

SOUND-OFF

To voice your opinion 24 hours a day, go to
www.freepressnewspapers.com or call 815-634-0317

Sound-Off is a 24-hour phone line provided to give readers a chance to voice their opinions. The Free Press Newspapers reserves the right to edit remarks for taste, length, personal attacks, racism, threatening, calls for boycotts and libel. The comments stated are the opinions and ideas of the callers and not that of the newspaper. Information may not constitute the actual events or facts of a particular topic. Submissions by email to: coalcitycourant@gmail.com with "soundoff" in the subject line or visit www.freepressnewspapers.com, or call 815-634-0317. Please state the town in which you are calling from or in regards to. Mail comments to Sound-Off, 271 S. Broadway, Coal City, IL 60416 or 111 S. Water St., Wilmington, IL 60481. There can be only one submission of 250 words or less per person.

Thieving idiots

COAL CITY—So brain surgeons in Springfield just passed a rate increase for tolls starting in 2027. It DOUBLES the current rate of .45 cents to .90 cents! And who gets the major blame for this? The incompetent and thieving idiots running the CTA. The CTA ran up millions in deficits and needed state help to bail them out. So the same brain surgeons that just passed the toll increase, said we will just take the gasoline taxes we collect and give it to the CTA. Problem solved. But the gas taxes are for fixing and repairing roads in IL. Not bailing out the CTA. That is how this state is run by liberal Democrats.

Stop Flock and Axon

WILMINGTON—The police and spy corporations have an ulterior motive to "educate" us on the "importance" of Flock and Axon spy devices." Private tech corporations have built a digital dragnet over our public streets. Every day, thousands of automated cameras log our license plates, map our daily routines, and track our vehicles based on color, make, and even bumper stickers. This information is funneled into interconnected law enforcement databases, allowing movements to be searched and tracked without a judicial warrant. This isn't speculative science fiction; it is a direct assault on our constitutional right to privacy. I resent funneling money into an increasingly militarized police force that spies on its citizenry. Enough with the police spying, "pit maneuvers" and playing judge, jury, and executioner. FLOCK AND AXON MUST BE STOPPED.

A load of malarkey

BRAIDWOOD—I was listening to the Braidwood council meeting on August 18. The police chief was yapping about how Flock cameras and license plate readers are NOT an invasion of privacy. And one of the councilmen said something about data centers being harmless and innocuous — that only "paranoid people" caught up in conspiracy theories worry. That's a load of BS, folks. As far as I'm concerned, the police chief either wasn't totally honest or he doesn't understand that Flock records simply don't — POOF! — vanish. When expired on the local level the information is uploaded into a central database and stored, but also sold to just about any corporation who wants personal information on people. And that's everyone, not just criminals. Data centers innocuous? Are you people crazy? A strain on utility grids, air pollution, noise pollution, light pollution, electronic waste, contributions to climate change - the list goes on. We all know politicians are looking to have their palms greased, but don't think the rest of us are stupid enough to fall for your load of malarkey.

A burning issue

BRAIDWOOD—The amount of burning complaints in Braidwood is absolutely absurd. I have a scanner and I think the fire department gets called at least 3-4 times a week for burning complaints. We are a

rural community, people are going to burn stuff, if you don't like it then maybe you people shouldn't have moved to a town like ours. Stop moving out of a community you dislike just to try and turn your new home into something you fled.

It's a double standard

MORRIS—I see the city of Morris is having their big beer fest over at Gould Park by the swimming pool area and there are signs up there no alcohol allowed in the park. I guess they just want it for the big politicians to make a big deal and raise money. I guess it's double standards for all the politicians, big wheels and show-offs in Morris. Also what's the big deal about the Catholic schools or private schools having the kids play football from one school to another. South Peru to Morris to play football. It's no big deal. Everybody wants a winning record, it's a double standard isn't it between Catholic and privates. Everybody is just suppose to be quiet about all this stuff I guess. Money, money is a big deal, even in high school.

No worse than most

DIAMOND—Someone says Biden deserves credit for the Inflation Reduction Act and that is probably true. Although, in 2022 consumer prices rose to the highest in 40 years. Food was up 10.4%, energy prices increased 41.6% including gasoline that was up 59.9%, mortgage rates reached 7% and finally, investment totals dropped like a rock. I know this because I was there and I watch my portfolio closely. So, this all started under Biden and is why he had to create the act to save face. Now, are things better under Trump? They are better than the above numbers but I agree he is not doing so hot himself and his party will pay for it just like the last party did. I can say one thing no one can take from me. Even with Trump's stupid war that definitely rocked the economy in a negative way, my personal retirement portfolio has still skyrocketed immensely since January 1, 2026. Then the Epstein thing. Many people are guilty of that situation and Trump very well may be too. Although, why did this not come up during the last presidential election or during his first term? Because the Democrats just keep coming up with more and more crap and most of the past allegations are not sticking. I guess you have to give them credit for trying again and again. There are to many prestigious people in those files that will make sure they are never released, both Democrats and Republicans. Trump is no worse than most other politicians at that level as they all came up the ranks the same way. I found a magazine from the 1980's in my attic that had a political article inside. You know, the politicians at that level now are saying all the same things as they did back then. The only things that has changed are the names.

Flock stalkers

ELWOOD—On Aug. 27, I came across an article about an officer on the village of Channahon Police Department on administrative leave from work as a result of a



Flock camera investigation. A Joliet officer has also been put on leave for cyber stalking a female officer. Flock cameras and other spyware promote crimes against women, making it easy to stalk and find personal information. Since male police officers have a higher than normal rate of domestic abuse and aggression in general, Flock is bad idea.

Vote for your family

WILMINGTON—On June 18, 2026 Donald J. Trump bought approximately \$500,000 worth of stock in Boeing. What a coincidence that on the same June 18, 2026 the United States Dept. of Defense awarded Boeing a contract valued at \$880,000,000. How's your spending at the Dollar Store doing? Vote for your family this time, swallow that pride. We all make mistakes.

Against the law

BRAIDWOOD—When is the Reed Custer School District going to start cracking down on these youth sporting organizations that use their facilities? Specifically on the parents who consistently smoke or vape on school grounds? Just take a walk around the field perimeter fence during a youth football game and you'll smell smoke from cigarettes and vapes. Why are they allowed to get away with this? I thought using tobacco products or vapes on school grounds was against state law?

He wants data centers

WILMINGTON—In case you were not aware of Donald Trump's complete and utter allegiance to building data centers in every community in America he reiterated it again on Sunday. Your electricity bill, water supply and quiet serenity of life is fully being destroyed by Donald J. Trump. So all you backers of this guy be aware again he wants billionaire owned data cen-

ters throughout every town. Enjoy your vote even more, you intentionally voted for him.

Nix with the fireworks

BRAIDWOOD—Hey, if Braidwood wants to be fancy like Naperville and have a city center and splash pad they should also follow suit and enforce the no fireworks ordinance. They, the morons started shooting them off in April and it's still going on at the end of August. People are sick of hearing it and the mayor of Braidwood needs to man up and do his job and do something good for this community. As far as a lot of people here are concerned, Lyons picked up where Altiery left off. He's no better. Do your job, police included, and by the way, Naperville started issuing fines starting at \$750.

Half-mast not right

WILMINGTON—I feel very bad that we lost Dolly Parton and when my daughter was nine years old that was the first 45 record she bought, Islands in the Stream with Dolly and Kenny Rogers. But the president giving the order that flags be at half-mast was totally wrong. Does that mean when Garth Brooks, Willie Nelson, Clint Eastwood, John Travolta Al Pacino or any celebrity passes away that all the flags will be at half mast? When Whitney Houston passed away the governor of New Jersey ordered the flags will be lowered at half-mast. Does that mean when Bruce Springstein and John Bon Jovi pass away the flags will be at half- mast? In my opinion, and I know that doesn't mean a lot, I think that the flag at the top of the Capitol should be flown at half-mast and remain that way in honor of all first responders and all the military people who gave their lives for their cities and countries. I doubt this will ever happen but I feel it would be a great tribute. Sherry Michaels

Demand for free books jumps with passing of Dolly Parton

The Imagination Library of Will County has experienced an influx in enrollments for children to receive free books in the mail following the passing of the national program's founder, Dolly Parton.

The local program is urging that parents be patient as both the online registration system and local volunteers manage the high level of traffic.

"Dolly Parton's legendary life has positively impacted millions and inspired us to make a difference in the lives of others," said Will County Executive Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant, who partnered with the Will County Center for Economic Development to launch the program locally.

"We've been heartened by the increase in donations and enrollments for the program over the last few days and ask for patience as we manage the increase in interest."

The Imagination Library is the signature program of the Dollywood Foundation, a nonprofit organization

founded by Dolly Parton in 1988.

Since launching in 1995, the Imagination Library has become the pre-eminent early childhood book-gifting program in the world.

The Will County program launched in July 2025, allowing local families to register for free, high-quality, and age-appropriate books mailed directly to their children from birth until their fifth birthday.

Since then, over 8,800 children have been enrolled in the program.

Since the news of Parton's passing on August 26, over 350 children have been enrolled in the program. This coincides with a growing national interest in the program, which has caused high traffic and delays on the online registration system managed by the Dollywood Foundation.

Parents can learn more and register for the program by visiting WillCountyImaginationLibrary.org.

Individual sponsorships can also be made online to sponsor children enrolled in the program.

What goes up, might (or might not) come down

Average gasoline prices in Illinois have fallen 12.4 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$4.23/g Monday, according to GasBuddy's survey of 4,378 stations in Illinois.

Prices in Illinois are 11.8 cents per gallon lower than a month ago and stand 73.0 cents per gallon higher than a year ago.

If you hurry, you might catch gas under \$4/g this week.

For example, Mohsen in Wilmington is charging \$3.98/g, but expect to pay up to \$4.14/g at Shell.

Braidwood gas is \$4.23/g at Casey's up to \$4.29/g at Marathon.

Coal City's Gas N Wash is offering gas at \$4.23/g, but gas will cost you

\$4.49/g at Shell.

In Morris, expect to pay anywhere from \$3.99/g at Casey's all the way up to \$4.49/g at Shell.

Bourbonnais stations are charging anywhere from \$4.09/g at Casey's, up to \$4.49/g at Speedway.

"Average gasoline prices fell in slightly more than half of states over the last week while diesel declined in roughly half, as oil prices moved lower and offered some modest relief at the pump," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy.

"Over the weekend, the Trump administration struck a major deal with Venezuela, a signal that the White House remains concerned about elevated fuel

prices — though in reality, any benefits from increased Venezuelan output will take years to fully materialize and are unlikely to move the needle in the near term.

The factors with the most immediate impact on where prices go from here remain the ongoing developments between the U.S. and Iran and continued Ukrainian attacks on Russian oil refineries, both of which continue to exert outsized influence on global fuel markets. Motorists should expect continued volatility in the weeks ahead."

The lowest price in the state Monday was \$3.49/g while the highest was \$5.69/g.

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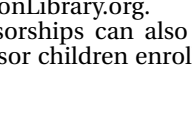
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Are pets bad for the enviroment?

Dear EarthTalk: Is owning a cat or dog bad for the planet?
-Missy Teahan, Acton, MA

EARTH TALK
Questions & Answers About Our Environment

While all cat and dog owners know the financial and time costs of caring for a pet, many do not know about or consider the environmental costs.

As almost one-third of all households on Earth own at least one dog and nearly one-fourth of all households own at least one cat, the environmental effects of these pets have become incredibly significant and impactful globally.

Specifically, an average-sized cat produces around 310 kilograms of carbon dioxide annually, while an average-sized dog produces 770 kilograms.

One impactful factor of this phenomenon is pet food production. As pets often depend on other animals' protein as food to survive, producing pet food requires farming animals like cattle and poultry.

This production adds

up; in America, the production of dog and cat food leads to around 390 kilograms of climate pollution annually per animal, a number that is worsened by many pet food companies neglecting sustainable pet food ingredient sourcing.

Beyond production, the overall consumption of pet food contributes to climate pollution. In fact, one quarter of the environmental impacts of U.S. meat production are tied to pet food, taking into account the use of land, water, phosphates, pesticides, and fossil fuels, according to UCLA geographer Gregory Okin.

While some cat owners have tried to opt for a vegan diet, Alexandra Whittaker, an associate Professor at the School of Animal and Veterinary Science at the University of Adelaide, stated, "One challenge that isn't really addressed in this paper is how a vegan cat diet should be safely put together. Previous studies have shown cats on vegan diets to have severe deficiency disorders affecting the muscles."

The environmental effects of pets are also exacerbated by the lack of conscious decision-making from pet owners. For instance, many owners do not think twice about purchasing from breeders, as they do not consider how



OWNING A PET might be good for the pet, but not necessarily for the environment.

this contributes to overpopulation and can increase the impact of pet food production or animal care costs in animal shelters.

Similarly, many of the pet toys that owners purchase are made with toxic dyes, and the pet waste that owners do not pick up can spread deadly parasites to wildlife.

Fortunately, there are various things you can do to mitigate these negative environmental effects. Owners could opt for sustainable food alternatives, such as pet food brands certified by the Aquaculture Stewardship Council or the Marine

Stewardship Council, which indicate that the protein in this food is caught legally and produced responsibly, or insect-based food, which has a smaller carbon footprint.

Pet owners should also manage waste responsibly to avoid spreading toxins to wildlife and to reduce plastic pollution by decreasing the number of unnecessary purchases. With these measures, pet owners can significantly reduce the carbon footprint of their pets.

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

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Electronics dropoff in Wilmington

Will County's next free electronics drop-off event will be held Thursday, Sept. 10, from 5-7 p.m. at the Wilmington City Hall parking lot, 1165 S. Water St.

Participants are reminded to remain in their vehicles, show ID by holding it to the window for staff to see and then allow staff to remove items without assistance from each vehicle.

Items accepted include: Televisions, monitors, printers, computers (desktops, laptops, notebooks, tablets), electronic keyboards, fax machines, videocassette recorders, portable digital music players, DVD players, DVD recorders, video game consoles, small scale servers, scanners, electronic mice, digital converter boxes, cable receivers, satellite receivers, cell phones, computer cable, portable digital assistants (PDAs) and zip drives.

Electronic items contain materials that can be recycled countless times while other materials in items are considered hazardous.

Scrap metal like pots and pans, baking sheets, car jacks, chains, keys, copper pipe and wire, door knobs silverware and more.



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OBITUARIES

George Reader

DIAMOND—George M. Reader, 90, of Diamond, passed away on Wednesday, Aug. 26, 2026 at the Gardens at Park Pointe in Morris. He was born on March 11, 1936 in Mazon, to George L. and Mildred (nee Brooks) Reader. He grew up in the Mazon area and attended Gardner schools. George married Joan Mallaney on March 13, 1965. He worked for the Papermill for several years then worked as a process operator at Lyondell for 19 years until his retirement.

A proud citizen of the town he settled in, he became known as “Diamond George.” Even when he could no longer drive, George would ride his scooter to the Whistle Stop restaurant twice a day for coffee and to socialize. He enjoyed his yard and flowers and was happy to share the fruits of his labor in his vegetable garden with family and friends. George was known to be a veteran card player. He would convince family to play Euchre saying “Let’s play 2 out of 3” ...but the games would always turn into many more. He also loved playing Rummy with his grandchildren. An active man, George took pleasure in fishing and camping with his family and friends.

He is survived by his daughters: Denise (Clay) Webb, Millie (Dave) Henderson, Buffy (Jeff) Blanton; his son, George A. (Cara) Reader; his step-daughters: Cindy Born, Debbie (Dean) Marketti and Carol (Neil) Krull; his grandchildren:

Brandy (Joe) Scheer, Briana (Eric) Franciskovich, Shane Webb, Sandy Haddon, Molly (Tony), Ryan (Kasia), Kailee, Mark (Taylor), Jack (Angelina), Lauren, Megan, Allison, Alaina, Maci and Cade; several great-grandchildren and his brother-in-law, William Weaver. Several nieces and nephews also survive.

He was preceded in death by his wife of 50 years, Joan Reader in 2015 and his brothers and sisters: Roy (Berniece) Reader, Kenneth (Vivian) Reader, Rita (Glen) Oakland, Vivian (Harry) Burke, Wanda (Buck) Peterson, Viola (Donald) Shoemaker, Shirley Weaver, and infant brother Donald Reader.

Memorial donation may be made to the Coal City United Methodist Church, 6801 East McArdle Road, Coal City, IL 60416.

Visitation will be from 1:00 pm until 4:00 pm on Sunday, Aug. 30, 2026 at the Ferrari Funeral Chapel, 1044 Ferrari Drive, Coal City, IL 60416.

Funeral Service will be at 10:00 am on Monday, Aug. 31, 2026, also at the Ferrari Funeral Chapel with Pastor Bradley Watkins officiating. Burial will follow at Braceville Gardner Cemetery.

Family and friends are encouraged to sign the online guestbook at www.ferrari-funeral.com.

Ferrari Funeral Services of Coal City are entrusted with arrangements.



Catherine T. Ferrari

COAL CITY—Catherine T. Ferrari, 78, of Coal City, passed away peacefully at her home, surrounded by her loved ones on Saturday, Aug. 29, 2026.

She was born on June 30, 1948 in Joliet to Leonard and Phyllis (nee Kodat) Fioritto. She grew up in Coal City, graduating from Coal City High School class of 1966 and continued to get together for lunch with her classmates. Cathie married her partner in life, Robert L. Ferrari, in 1972. Together they raised two sons. Cathie owned Ferrari Accounting, retiring after 40 years. She was a devoted mom and grandmother.

She is survived by her two sons, Greg Ferrari and Glenn (Becki) Ferrari; her three grandchildren: Lauren (Conner Huston) Ferrari, Ethan and Olivia Ferrari; her siblings: Leonard (the late Maureen) Fioritto, Mary (Jerry Meece) Trevino and Theresa (Richard) Willis; her caretaker, Carol Judy

and numerous nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her husband of 47 years, Bob Ferrari; her parents, Phyllis and Leonard Fioritto; and her daughter-in-law, Kim Ferrari.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions in Cathie’s name may be directed to the Alzheimer’s Association or the charity of the donor’s choice.

Visitation will be from 9 a.m. until the time of the Funeral Service at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 2, 2026 at the Ferrari Funeral Chapel, 1044 Ferrari Drive, Coal City, IL 60416. Deacon William Dunn will officiate. Burial will follow at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood.

Family and friends are encouraged to sign the online guestbook at www.ferrari-funeral.com.

Ferrari Funeral Services of Coal City are entrusted with arrangements.



Editorial

Flock cameras promise high-tech safety, but who is watching the watchers?

Wilmington Mayor Ben Dietz deserves credit for doing something many elected officials avoid: Stepping into a controversy, inviting public discussion about Flock Safety cameras tonight at 6 p.m. at Wilmington City Hall, 1165 S. Water St., Wilmington.

That’s a great start. But transparency is not the same thing as accountability.

The debate over Flock cameras is not really about whether they’re effective at solving crimes. Virtually every surveillance technology ever introduced has been sold on the premise of keeping the citizenry safe.

The question is whether the benefits justify a system capable of recording, storing and tracking the movements of law-abiding citizens.

Government surveillance rarely comes to town wearing a villain’s mask. It arrives wrapped in public safety campaigns and assurances that only criminals need to worry.

Despite assurances, Dietz’s announcement, led to a social media frenzy, with more than 150 comments on his post. Residents are raising questions about how much surveillance is too much. What happens when today’s safeguards become tomorrow’s loopholes? People worry personal information is being sold.

One commenter argued that automated license plate readers create a searchable database capable of reconstructing months of travel patterns of those who have not committed a crime. When enough data is assembled, authorities can determine where someone worships, what political meetings they attend, what medical specialists they visit and where they spend their evenings.

Officials and supporters typically respond with: “If you’re not doing anything wrong, you have nothing to hide.”

That argument has

always missed the point. Privacy is not about hiding wrongdoing. It is about maintaining personal autonomy in a so-called free society.

Sharing information

The ACLU and other groups warn that Flock Safety vehicle records may potentially be sold or shared to outside groups.

In Texas, deputies used Flock data to investigate a woman suspected of traveling out of state to have an abortion.

According to the ACLU, Flock Safety’s Terms and Condition (T&C) prior to Feb. 2026 stated “Flock does not own and shall not sell Customer Data.” That language is now absent from the corporation’s terms and conditions.

Further, updated T&C grants the corporation a “perpetual” right to use customer data to “support and improve” its services.

Misuse of data

Horror stories abound about law enforcement using Flock data for nefarious purposes, such as stalking a “love interest,” have been increasing.

Last week, a Channahon police officer was placed on paid administrative leave after an internal audit allegedly revealed unauthorized use of the department’s Flock system.

Village officials said the alleged violation was discovered through the department’s own auditing procedures and that additional oversight tools have since been implemented.

The Channahon incident illustrates precisely why residents are revolting. Surveillance systems are operated and accessed by human beings. Every system that collects information carries the risk that someone will misuse it.

Good vs Evil

Nor is Channahon an isolated case. Across the country, officers have been accused of using Flock systems to monitor former romantic partners,

acquaintances, and private citizens without legitimate law-enforcement purposes.

Recent investigations in Georgia, Texas, Massachusetts, and Florida have resulted in suspensions, resignations, criminal investigations, and renewed concerns about oversight.

Supporters frequently point to child abductions, violent offenders, and stolen vehicles to justify spy cameras. One social media commenter challenged that reasoning, arguing that extreme cases should not automatically justify permanent surveillance.

Justification

So, should society build systems around the rarest and most extreme scenarios, or should it evaluate whether the daily costs to privacy are proportional to the actual threats facing a community?

Residents have reasonably asked whether local crime levels justify a surveillance network. One commenter questioned whether small towns face enough serious crime for these cameras to be a decisive factor in investigations.

Too often, discussions about surveillance become trapped between two false choices: Either support every new law-enforcement tool or be labeled anti-police.

Safety without surveillance

The reality is more nuanced. Citizens can support their police department while opposing expanded surveillance powers. They can want safe streets without accepting that every movement should be recorded and searchable.

Once surveillance infrastructure is built, it rarely shrinks. Databases expand. Information sharing increases. New uses emerge. Future leaders inherit tools they never had to justify creating.

Most residents have little understanding of exactly what information is being collected, how long it is retained, who can access it or how broadly it is shared.

If public trust is the goal, residents deserve clear and detailed answers about what data is being gathered, where it goes, who sees it and when it is ultimately deleted.

History reveals Americans have repeatedly been assured that surveillance powers would be limited, temporary and carefully controlled. Time and again, Americans have been betrayed.

Let’s hope that with Flock cameras, that’s not the case.



RUNNERS LINE UP on the start line during Morris Hospital's 2025 Corn Fest 5K Run. This year's race takes place on Sept. 26 from Morris Grade School.

Registration underway for Morris Hospital Corn Fest 5K

Morris Hospital & Healthcare Centers will host its annual Corn Fest 5K as part of the Grundy County Corn Festival on Saturday, Sept. 26, with runners taking off from Morris Grade School, 2001 Dupont Ave., Morris.

The race begins at 9 a.m. and is preceded by a Youth Fun Run for children 10 and under beginning at 8:15 a.m.

The registration fee is \$30 through Sept. 24. Race day registration is \$35 per person. The first 300 pre-registered 5K participants will receive a t-shirt available in unisex adult sizes.

The 3.1 mile USATF certified course starts on Dupont Avenue in front of Morris Grade School and winds through residential neighborhoods. Awards will be presented to the top three overall male and female finishes, as well as the top 3 male and female finishers in each age group.

The Youth Fun Run is \$10 per child whether registering in advance or on race day. Children ages 6-10 will run a half mile course around the grounds of the school starting at 8:15 a.m., followed by a 100 yard run for children 5 and under at 8:30 a.m. Children reg-

istered for the Youth Fun Run will receive a short sleeve cotton t-shirt available in youth sizes only.

Online registration is available now through Sept. 24 at raceroster.com/100810 or by going to morrishospital.org/events and clicking on the Special Events category for the link to Race Roster.

After Sept. 24, participants may register in person on race day at Morris Grade School between 7:30-8:45 a.m. For more information, call the Morris Hospital Wellness office at 815-705-7358.

Hit the road to join in the Pork Tenderloin Crawl

Food lovers are invited to hit the road this fall as the Illinois Pork Producers Association launches the 2026 Illinois Pork Tenderloin Crawl, a self-guided culinary adventure celebrating one of the Midwest’s most iconic sandwiches while encouraging travelers to discover locally owned restaurants across Illinois.

Running now through Nov. 30, the crawl features restaurants serving their own take on the classic breaded pork tenderloin sandwich. Participants who visit at least eight of the 11 featured locations will earn an exclusive Illinois Pork Tenderloin Crawl T-shirt, and everyone who completes a passport will be entered for a chance to win a \$50 gift card.

This year’s featured restaurants include: Buford’s Pub, Sadorus; River’s Edge Inn, Dixon; Route 66 Motorheads, Springfield; The Dirty Bird, Sycamore; Cindy Bs Café, Murphysboro; Meadow Avenue Tap, East Peoria; LJs Garden Café, Magnolia; Beecher City Pit Stop, Beecher City; The Parkview Inn, Bloomington; Babes on Plum, Havana and The Patio, Jacksonville.

The crawl includes

two restaurants recognized by Illinois pork fans during the 2025 Illinois Best Pork Tenderloin contest. Buford’s Pub in Sadorus earned the title of Illinois’ Best Pork Tenderloin, while River’s Edge Inn in Dixon claimed the runner-up spot, making both must-visit destinations for sandwich enthusiasts.

Participants can complete the crawl using either a printed passport or a digital passport by scanning a QR code available at each participating restaurant.

Digital participants will upload a photo of both their menu and pork tenderloin sandwich at each stop to verify their visit.

Beyond celebrating a beloved sandwich, the crawl recognizes the Illinois pig farmers whose commitment to raising high-quality pork helps make these local favorites possible. Their dedication provides restaurants across the state with the wholesome, flavorful pork that has become a staple on Illinois menus.

Learn about the unsolved murders of Grimes sisters

Step into one of Chicago’s most infamous and haunting unsolved mysteries. In December 1956, sisters, Barbara and Patricia Grimes disappeared after leaving a movie theater, and their murders remain unsolved to this day.

Explore the details of the case, the investigation, and the many theories that have emerged over the years. New information and renewed interest continue to fuel the search for answers to this enduring mystery.

Raymond Johnson,

also known as the “History Cop”, will present the program. A former police officer, military instructor, historian, researcher, and author, Johnson has spent more than 17 years teaching genealogical and historical research.

He has also been featured on programs including American Ripper, Mysteries at the Museum, and A Crime to Remember.

Register for the event to be held Wednesday, Sept. 23, at 6 p.m. at the Wilmington Public Library District. Registration is required.

Program on learning your family history from a DNA test

Have you taken a DNA test and wondered what your results can tell you about your family history?

Learn how to understand your DNA matches, explore your family history, and use your results to make meaningful genealogical discoveries.

Whether you are just getting started or looking to get more from your DNA test, this presentation will help you take the next step

with confidence.

It will be presented by Michelle Wilson, an experienced genetic genealogist and educator known for making complex DNA concepts easy to understand.

Attend the program Saturday, Sept. 12, at 1 p.m. at the Wilmington Public Library District. Sign up to register by stopping by the library, 201 S. Kankakee St. or calling 815-476-2834.

Apples ripen for early picking season in Illinois

BY RHIANNON BRANCH
FARMWEEK

Apples are ready for picking at some Illinois orchards, marking an early harvest.

"Due to the early bloom and warm temperatures this summer, harvest is running at least several days to a week earlier than most years," Molly Christ with Christ Orchard in Elmwood told FarmWeek.

They began picking the first of more than 60 varieties of apples in late July and will offer U-pick apples later this month.

"Despite the close calls we had this spring with the freezing temperatures, we still have a bumper crop of apples," Christ said. "A few apples have frost rings, or rough patches on the skin. This is a type of russetting that does not affect the flesh or taste."

Apple varieties are also maturing about 10 days ahead of schedule at Liberty Apple Orchard in Edwardsville.

Owner Stephen Miller said the early bloom in late March was a driving factor.

"The only other year with a bloom in late March was back in 2012 and then it was followed by a deep freeze in April that just decimated the apple crop here in Illinois," Miller recalled. "Fortunately, this year we had an early bloom, but we also had a fairly warm April, so we didn't have that problem."

Most of their varieties look plentiful with good quality, especially the Honeycrisps.

"The trees are loaded with Honeycrisp. It looks gorgeous. They have a lot of color and a lot of sizing that we haven't seen in the last couple of years, so we're

very optimistic that there'll be a good season," he said.

Miller calls himself an "encore-preneur" having planted his first apple trees in 2008 after retiring from his career. Now he has about 1,000 trees growing 21 different varieties for people to pick. Liberty Apple Orchard also sells at three farmer's markets in southwestern Illinois and eastern Missouri.

"I think this could be the best year we have ever had for apples," Miller said. "Last year was a very good year for us, but this year looks very promising."

Around 545 farms grow more than 2,200 acres of apples in Illinois each year, according to the 2022 Census of Agriculture.

This story was distributed through a cooperative project between Illinois Farm Bureau and the Illinois Press Association.

For more food and farming news, visit [FarmWeekNow.com](#).

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Photo by Rhiannon Branch of FarmWeek

APPLES WERE BEGINNING to turn red in late July at Eckert's in Belleville.

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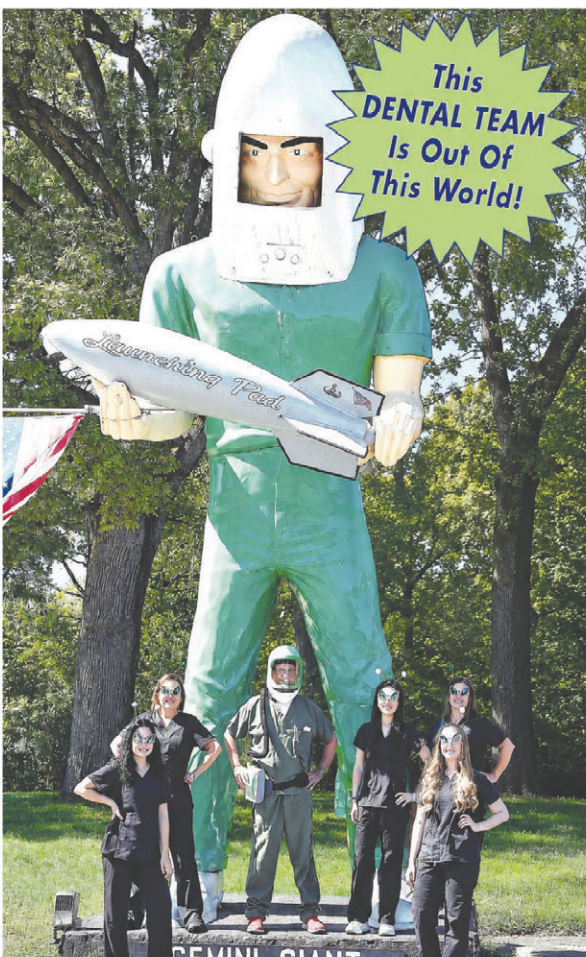
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Left to right: Samantha Olson, Kelly Olson, Dr. Garrett B. Smith, Grace Smith, Sherry Yakima, Dayna Vargocko. Not pictured: Alea Vargocko and Sara Daniels

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Teacher unions demand all of Meta settlement funds

Hours after the social media giant Meta agreed last Wednesday to settle a case brought by 47 state attorneys general and implement reforms to protect children from social media harms, the Illinois Federation of Teachers issued a demand that all of Illinois' portion of the \$17.1 billion settlement - \$768 million - be designated "to address the funding crisis for school districts across the state."



Rich Miller

"The Governor has said he supports more funding for education but didn't know where it would come from," said IFT president Stacy Davis Gates in the release. "The settlement with Meta just made that answer even easier. Schools from Peoria to Belleville to Chicago are counting on the Governor and the General Assembly to prioritize students the way we've seen them prioritize big tech and billionaire stadium owners."

The Chicago Teachers Union, which is part of the IFT, is demanding that the state come up with \$165 million during the upcoming fall veto session to prevent layoffs at the Chicago Public Schools. A statewide package that helps Chicago and the rest of the state would amount to hundreds of millions of dollars more.

But the \$768 million from the settlement is obviously not a permanent revenue source. So, I asked the IFT why the state should use temporary money to fund long-term education funding.

After all, CPS got itself in big fiscal trouble by using short-term federal COVID funding to pay for long-term school spending. That fateful budgetary decision brought the school district directly to the brink it faces today.

"Permanent solutions of course are better," conceded an IFT spokesperson, pointing to work being done by progressive legislators and stakeholders to find permanent state revenue sources. However, the spokesperson said via email, "if the state is receiving \$768M for the harm big tech companies have done to children, sure makes sense to put it toward the educational institutions that serve them."

Except underfunded schools is not the problem that the settlement money is designed to address.

According to the settlement terms, the cash is supposed to be used for "remedial or restitutive purposes."

Those purposes include: Youth crisis intervention services; after school or summer pro-

grams; digital awareness public education funds; implementing phone-free school zones; hiring digital literacy counselors; digital mental health programming and "grants to school districts or other local government entities to accomplish any remedial purpose encompassed here."

The money is also supposed to be used to reimburse the attorney general's office for costs associated with bringing the lawsuit.

The Children's Funding Project in partnership with the Afterschool Alliance has even developed model legislation designed to help states spend the money to directly address the harms done by Meta under the auspices of its Fund IRL coalition.

A statement from the group said it and its coalition partners "will continue to work to ensure that every available dollar intended to repair harm to young people is tracked, and that state leaders hear directly from young people and the organizations serving them as decisions about those resources are made."

Attorney General Kwame Raoul's office emphasized to me that the money should mainly be used for remediation of the harms done to children by Meta and other large social media companies.

AG Raoul's office also insisted that the money cannot be used for General Revenue purposes, but

should instead be treated like the massive opioid settlement for targeted remediation of the harms caused by the industry, instead of the way the legislature and previous governors used the tobacco settlement money to temporarily patch state budget holes back in the day.

The point here is that the IFT and CTU shouldn't be pouncing on every bright, shiny nickel that bounces into the playing field. The union absolutely must have the support of progressive legislators if it has even a little hope of eventually finding a funding solution. Demanding the Meta money be diverted from other significant progressive priorities for its own purposes will only undermine its goals. This ain't rocket science.

I really think sometimes that the CTU and the Chicago Bears are operating from the same flawed, secret playbook. Both have legit cases to make at the Statehouse, but both constantly step on their own messaging and alienate people who should be their friends.

The Meta settlement will provide some money to CPS and all other school districts. But if the IFT sticks to its guns and insists that the legislature ignore the settlement terms and give them all of the cash, things could get really ugly.

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

Resources available for food, meals

With more families being affected by SNAP program cutbacks, anyone in need of supplement food or meals can get help from the following organizations.

The Christian Life Assembly, 2960 E Division St Diamond, offers a food pantry 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.

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.

Throughout September and 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.

Braidwood blood drive scheduled for September 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 con-

tact Blood Drive Coordinator Josh Bolatto at (815) 458-2342 between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday.

As part of Versiti's September donor promotion, individuals who donate blood will be entered into the Fire Up Your Team Sweepstakes for a chance to win a Chicago Fire FC VIP Team Experience. Participants must be at least 18-years-old to be eligible for the sweepstakes.

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AT THE RECENT Agrivoltaics Field Day, University of Illinois plant breeding, genetics and bioenergy crop agronomist DoKyoung "D.K." Lee discusses how solar panel shade impacts crops.

What to know about farming with solar panels

BY PHYLLIS COULTER
FARMWEEK

Researchers at the University of Illinois brought to light lessons learned about growing crops in the shade of solar panels at the Agrivoltaics Field Day at the Illinois energy farm Aug. 5.

"There's a lot of interest in agrivoltaics," DoKyoung "D.K." Lee, a U of I plant breeding, genetics and bioenergy crop agronomist, told FarmWeek of people wanting to know more about the dual use of land for solar energy production and agriculture. "It's not only about agronomic practices, but also economics."

Sorting out shade impact

Some agrivoltaic research at the farm focuses on how shade affects crop yield. In three years of study, research shows shade caused by solar panels can reduce soybean yields by about half.

However, for grain sorghum, "the yield penalty was minimal as the greater kernel size compensated the lower grain numbers," Lee said.

Based on the recent harvest of winter wheat, Lee said the grain yield was reduced by about 40% due

to shading in the rows directly under the panel, compared with wheat in full sun. The impact of shade on crops also depends on the arrangement of the solar panels, he noted.

The research is part of the Sustainably Co-locating Agricultural and Photovoltaic Electricity Systems project, which aims to blend agriculture and solar power in a way to boost U.S. farmers' resilience and income while maintaining food production and ramping up renewable energy.

While modern commercial-sized equipment cannot be used in the trials with solar panels, small equipment can, "but you have to be careful,"

Lee said. For the arrangement of 20 feet between the panels, a four-row planter can be used with 10 feet of plantable space, and for 40 feet arrangement, a 12-row planter can be used with 30 feet plantable space.

Some testing was done at the U of I energy farm and some at a utility-scale solar farm. The research also involves row crops including soybeans, grain sorghum, winter wheat and horticulture crops including tomatoes and greens,

but not field corn because of its height.

In 2024, researchers added forage crops, including alfalfa, red clover, orchard grass, tall fescue and timothy grass. Forage may be one of the more practical options for larger-scale production on a solar farm, Lee said. When growing forages, some researchers and farmers include livestock, often sheep. "We aren't able to accommodate livestock in research here," he said, but noted the combination may be more profitable.

Other research focuses on the impact the solar panels have on soil quality, carbon intensity and potential for heavy metal contamination.

"We haven't seen any heavy metal in the soil," Lee noted.

Current funding of the five-year project ends this year, but Lee hopes it will be extended because there is more work to be done.

"As we produce electricity on the farm, we need to know the consequences for benefits from the practice," he added.

This story was distributed through a cooperative project between Illinois Farm Bureau and the Illinois Press Association. For more food and farming

news, visit [FarmWeekNow.com](https://www.farmweeknow.com).

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.

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Mobile food pantry coming Monday to So. Wilmington

Catholic Charities' Mobile Food Pantry will be distributing food on Monday, Sept. 21 and Oct. 19 from 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. at St. Lawrence Church (135 Rice Road in South Wilmington) in the church parking lot (rain or shine).

Catholic Charities and the Northern Illinois Food Bank have partnered to deliver nutritious food (meat, produce and non-perishable items) to people in need.

Participants are asked to stay in their cars. The Mobile Food Pantry will use a "drive thru" method to distribute pre-packed groceries.

You do not have to be Catholic to participate. Catholic Charities helps people of all faiths and beliefs. For more information about Catholic Charities, please visit catholiccharitiesjoliet.org.

U of I students earn degrees

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign has announced 12,174 degrees and certificates awarded for the 2026 spring semester.

Local students include: Annika Marchi of Braceville, Cougar Forsythe, Drake Imhof, Kyndal Smolenski and Tyler Willis all of Wilmington.

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- This program is completely voluntary.
- **Do not wait!** Once a Code Enforcement case has been initiated and a citation has been issued for a junk or inoperable vehicle, Broadway Auto Salvage will not purchase the vehicle through this program.
- The City of Wilmington will continue enforcing all applicable property maintenance and junk vehicle ordinances throughout the program period.

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Wilmington
THE ISLAND CITY ILLINOIS

Putting on the brakes

New Illinois law establishes rules for e-bikes, scooters

BY BEN SZALINSKI
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

New rules governing who can use electric bikes and scooters, including where and how fast they go, will go into effect next year following Gov. JB Pritzker's signature last week.

Pritzker signed Senate Bill 3484 which establishes regulations on "micromobility" transportation that include age requirements, speed limits and rules on where they can be operated. The bill takes effect Jan. 1.

The bill passed both chambers with bipartisan support on June 1 following several amendments throughout the spring session.

The new law was one of Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias' top priorities during the legislative session. The Chicago mayoral candidate said unregulated micromobility devices have become a problem.

"As these high-powered devices become faster and more common on our streets and sidewalks, the stakes are simply too high to leave them unregulated and outpacing public safety," Giannoulias said in a statement. "This law brings accountability and common-sense safety standards to our roads while helping prevent serious injuries and ensuring riders, parents and communities understand how to safely share the road."

The state already has some regulations for low-speed electric bikes and scooters, but regulation often varies at the

local level. The bill creates new statewide standards for high-speed electric bikes and scooters, electric motor bikes, and electric unicycles and skateboards.

"Municipal leaders have been responding in real time as new electric devices appear on local streets, sidewalks and bike paths," Illinois Municipal League CEO Brad Cole said in a statement. "A statewide framework gives communities greater consistency while providing local officials and law enforcement with clearer guidance."

Law enforcement groups were also in support of the bill.

What's changing

It creates a new tier of regulations for "high-speed" e-bikes, which have electric motors and can travel faster than 28 mph. Those would be regulated similarly to motorcycles and require users to have a driver's license, insurance, an ownership title and register the vehicle with the state. They also must be driven on roads.

"Low-speed" e-bikes are already regulated by the state, but the law creates new tiers that govern how old a person must be to drive them.

Drivers must be 15 years old to operate a Class 1 pedal-assist bike that travels up to 20 mph, such as Chicago's Divvy Bikes, and a Class 2 motor-powered bike that doesn't have to be pedaled. People must be 16 years old to drive pedal-assist bikes that can travel up to 28 mph.

All low-speed e-bikes can be used on streets, bike lanes, paths and trails, but not

on sidewalks.

Some high-speed electric scooters can reach speeds of 50 mph, but the new regulations limit riders to traveling up to 28 mph. Riders would be allowed to operate them on paths, bike lanes, roads with speed limits up to 35 mph, or roads with higher speed limits if there is a bike lane. Users must be 16 years old.

Low-speed electric scooters that top out at 20 mph would also be allowed on paths, bike lanes, and roads by users who are at least 16 years old, down from 18 years old in current law.

Battery-powered devices designed for young children would be unregulated aside from a stipulation they must stay on sidewalks and paths.

Users who violate the regulations could pay fines and have their devices confiscated and impounded by the police. They are also subject to other existing traffic laws and penalties as well.

Safety concerns

Supporters of the legislation say the devices create a safety hazard for both riders and pedestrians because some can travel more than 40 mph and can often be found sharing space on both sidewalks and busy streets.

Several crashes involving young riders on e-bikes have made headlines this summer. A Crystal Lake 15-year-old was left in serious condition in August and was found to be the at-fault driver when he drove in front of a car, according to police. A 14-year-old was killed in July when he crossed in front of an SUV while riding an electric dirt bike in front of Wauconda High School.

In Chicago, a 16-year-old on a Lime scooter was killed when he lost control and was hit by a semi-truck near the intersection of Western Avenue and Irving Park Road in early August. Two other teens were killed in accidents on e-scooters on the city's South Side earlier in the summer.

The Secretary of State's office plans to use a public awareness campaign to make people aware of the new law and will be updating driver education materials.

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.

Grundy Bank announces new scholarship opportunity

Grundy Bank is proud to announce the Grundy Bank Community Impact Scholarship, a new opportunity designed to recognize graduating seniors in the Class of 2027 who demonstrate leadership, community involvement, and a commitment to making a positive difference in their schools and communities.

Two \$500 scholarships will be awarded for the 2027-2028 academic year—one to a graduating senior from Morris Community High School and one to a graduating senior from Wilmington High School.

"We are excited to offer this new scholarship opportunity to recognize students who are making a meaningful difference in their communities," said Ava Terry, Marketing Director of Grundy Bank.

"Giving back and investing in the communities we serve is incredibly important to us, and we believe it's equally important to recognize the

students who have been doing so throughout their high school careers."

Applications are now open and must be submitted by March 1, 2027. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered.

Students interested in applying can find complete eligibility requirements, application details, and official rules and terms by visiting the Community Commitment page on Grundy Bank's website at www.grundy.bank/community-commitment/.

Grundy Bank is proud to invest in the next generation of local leaders and recognize students who are committed to making a meaningful impact in their communities.

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WANTED

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JJC launches new Fire Academy

The Joliet Junior College (JJC) department of public services has launched in fall 2026 a new fire academy that prepares students for the Illinois state certification exam upon completion.

"The new fire academy was created in response to the growing regional need for firefighters and paramedics," said Patricia Binfa, department chair of public services at JJC. "Fire departments and EMS agencies throughout our area are looking for qualified professionals, and our goal is to help address those workforce needs by equipping students with the knowledge, skills and training needed to enter the public safety profession."

JJC's fire academy is a 16-week program with curriculum that aligns with the Illinois Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM).

Students will earn a certificate of completion after successfully completing the academy. The certificate can be applied toward JJC's associate in applied science (AAS) in fire science degree.

"What is different about the new academy is that students will now have the opportunity to complete their OSFM-approved firefighter training and certification requirements directly through JJC in a structured cohort model. Previously, students typically obtained this training through external fire academies or departments. The academy creates a direct pathway for students to earn their BOF certification and then continue into the fire science AAS program if desired."

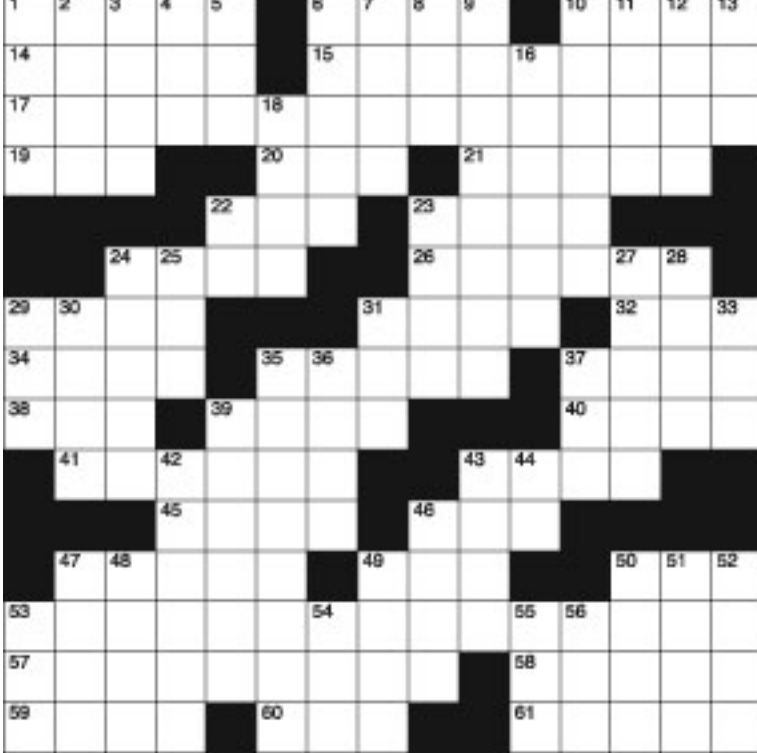
While JJC has a fire sciences program and an emergency medical

services (EMS) program, the fire academy remains separate from EMS.

With a cap of 20 students each semester, the fire academy allows for smaller class sizes, among other benefits.

"The JJC fire science team is excited about the opportunities the academy will provide for students," Binfa said. "The academy will give students more hands-on training and a direct pathway into the profession while helping them build the skills and experience needed to be successful in the field. We are also looking forward to strengthening our partnerships with local fire departments and serving as a resource for the communities we support."

Applications for the spring 2027 fire academy are open now through Sept. 30.

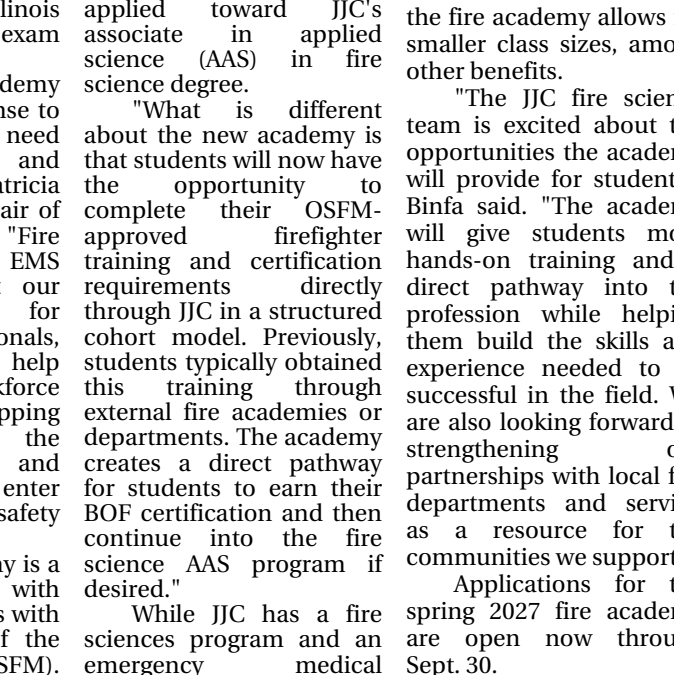


- CLUES ACROSS**
1. Manila hemp plant
 6. Turkish river
 10. Something to read
 14. In a way, initiated
 15. Popular Apple TV series
 17. King Charles is part of it
 19. Earlier
 20. Foot (Latin)
 21. Zodiac sign
 22. A browning of the skin
 23. Remain as is
 24. Turfs
 26. It's used to slaughter animals
 29. Volcanic crater

31. The mother of Jesus
32. One's life story
34. One-time Liverpool coach Slot
35. Counterparts
37. Jacob ____, American journalist
38. Digital audiotape
39. River in South Africa
40. Kimono sashes
41. Rooting somewhere
43. American spy Aldrich
45. A way to call for
46. Taxi
47. Pancakes made of buckwheat flour
49. Swiss river
50. Popular type of video game (abbr.)

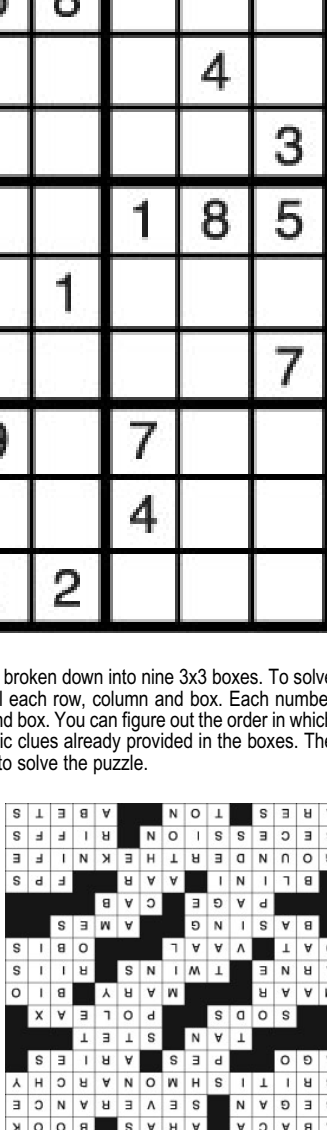
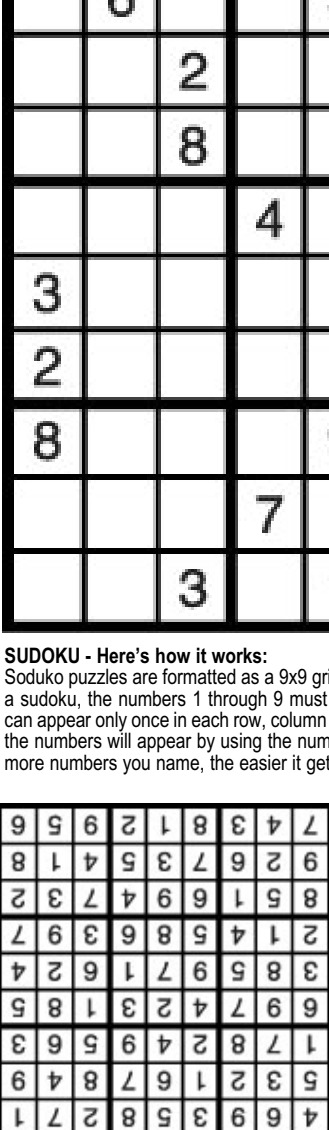
53. Have surgery
57. Formal withdrawal from a union
58. Performs spoken improv
59. Greek war god
60. 2,000 lbs.
61. Helps to evade capture

- CLUES DOWN**
1. Swedish rock group
 2. "Friday Night Lights" director Peter
 3. Currency exchange fee
 4. Feline
 5. Folk singer DiFranco
 6. Ghastly pale from distress
 7. Rapid eye movements
 8. Monetary unit of Macao
 9. Lawmakers
 10. Colorless mineral
 11. At some prior time
 12. American protest singer
 13. Opener
 16. Seldom
 18. Relaxing places
 22. Touchdown
 23. From end to end
 24. Kids love him
 25. Metal-bearing solid
 27. Skin care product manufacturer
 28. Thirteen
 29. Angry
 30. Member of a Semitic people
 31. One-thousandth of an inch
 33. Former CIA
 35. Most lemony
 36. Engage in
 37. Mass of fish eggs
 39. Food supplies
 42. Backbones
 43. American real estate investment firm
 44. Megabyte
 46. "Three Coins in the Fountain" songwriter
 47. Dutch colonist
 48. Full-grown pike fish
 49. Emergency prep expert Edwards
 50. Flute
 51. Dismissive sound
 52. Slang term for marijuana
 53. Young women's association
 54. Cosmopolitan city
 55. Narrow isthmus in Thailand
 56. Pointed end of a pen



SUDOKU - Here's how it works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle.



COMET SPORTS



Photo by Angela Rose

REED-CUSTER'S Nate Vogler (20) is the target of quarterback Jesse Tresouthick during Friday night's game against St. Theresa. Comets fell 41-14.



Photo by Angela Rose

A PACK OF Comet defenders, including Hayden Garcia, make a tackle on Friday.



Photo by Angela Rose

COMET EDDIE BRYAN breaks a pass up by St. Theresa during Friday's game.



Photo by Angela Rose

REED-CUSTER'S TRENT BOUDREAU makes the tackle to stop St. Theresa from gaining more yards.

Bulldogs' bite too much for Comets

BY JIM SHELDON
SPORTS CORRESPONDENT

Friday's home opener against St. Teresa had an inauspicious start.

The opening kickoff was fumbled and St Teresa (2-0) scored on the first play with a 12-yard touchdown pass.

They would score 38 unanswered before the home side broke through in the fourth quarter en route to a 41-14 win.

"It was a theme last year. We beat ourselves. It's going to be a theme this week: self-inflicted wounds," said head coach Joe Turek.

"Obviously, opening kick was not what we wanted and then we had ourselves in situations where we didn't execute the way we wanted to. Kind of some football IQ issues where we were lined up and calling plays correctly, but didn't execute based on down and distance and things of that nature."

The Bulldogs added a touchdown pass and field goal before Luke Rhodes stripped Jesse Tresouthick of the ball and took it to the house for a 24-0 advantage midway through the second, one of three Comet (1-1) turnovers on the night.

"It was a simple desire play. Something we talk about all the time is passion and pride and they just had more

of that on the play that we had. They just basically wanted it a little more than we did and they took it away from us, resulting in a huge play.

"We need to limit those big plays against us and maybe get a couple ourselves, but passion and pride, that's basically what that play came down to."

The Bulldogs would score two more touchdowns before Eddie Bryan broke through with a 12-yard score, part of a six carry, 45-yard night.

Casen Mazeika led the rushing attack with 74 yards on four rushes. His long run set up the game's final score, a George Morgan run. Morgan recorded three carries for 33 yards. Tresouthick added 60 yards on seven rushes and Trent Boudreau had five carries for 38 yards.

The Comets were without junior running back Kaiden Klein who sat out with an illness and the offense definitely missed his firepower.

"Unfortunately he had to be out and when you're without him, things could go south quick and they did for us," said Turek.

Despite missing him, they still ran for almost 275 yards and were a few missed blocks or assignments away from making it a different ballgame.

"Those things add up to big results. The score was not indicative of how close

it was. A couple small issues that turned into big issues that resulted in what the result was, unfortunately.

"It was one minor block here or there that we coached them to do and if we just finished that block, it would have been a better result."

St Teresa quarterback Gavin Paul had three touchdown passes, part of a very efficient 8-for-9 night for 170 yards

The Comets will head on the road to Streator (1-1) for the start of Illinois Central Eight conference play. Streator is coming off an emotional 41-36 win over rival Ottawa where they led 21-0, 17 secs into the second quarter and had to survive two inside kicks.

Quarterback Sam LeRette accounted for all six touchdowns and ran for 108 yards.

Last year's meeting saw R-C jump out to a 28-0 lead after three quarters and had to hold off a furious comeback attempt (28-21).

"We talk about who the opposing team's flag carrier is, and he's definitely theirs. He did some things against us last

year when we got up 28-0 and it was 28-21 before we knew what happened and a lot of it was because of him.

"We need to make sure we take care of him and we know we need to limit him. They're going to be on their high horse a little bit after a big rivalry win at home. They're at home again, so I think vibes are going to be high and we're going to need to be ready to go into there, no doubt about it."

Streator has surrendered 83 points in their first two games and the return of Klein will be a welcome sight for a R-C offense that scored 42 points in the open-

"I think we're in good shape. We knew this would be a challenge. We knew we had a shot if we played well, and we did a couple things not well, and it ended up turning out to be bad for us." "I think we need to get our bearings back underneath us and not panic and know we're still where we need to be. We fix a couple things and I think we'll be okay."



Photo by Angela Rose

COMETS BRYCE LAMB (left) and George Morgan converge on a St. Theresa defender while running the offense during Friday's game.



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COMET SPORTS



Photo by Eric Fisher
DIVING FOR THE ball while protecting the back court is Lady Comet Taylor Bova.



Photo by Eric Fisher
DEFENDING FOR the Lady Comets during a serve is Sophia Moyers.

Comets battle past Dwight for first victory

Reed-Custer rebounds from pair of losses to win thriller

It didn't take long for the Reed-Custer girls volleyball team to find itself in a pressure situation early in the season.

After dropping their first two matches, the Comets traveled to Dwight Wednesday looking to break into the win column. It took three hard-fought sets, but Reed-Custer came through when it mattered, defeating the Trojans 25-19, 20-25, 25-19 for its first victory of the season.

The win improved the Comets to 1-2 after opening the season with losses to Serena and Gardner-South Wilmington.

Reed-Custer got off to the start it needed against Dwight, taking the opening set 25-19. The Trojans

answered in the second, pulling away for a 25-20 victory to force a deciding third set.

With the match on the line, the Comets responded.

Reed-Custer battled its way to another 25-19 victory in the third to close out the match and earn its first win.

Kenzie Foote led the Comets' attack with six kills, while Alyssa Wollenzien contributed five. Madelyn Marschner directed the offense with 18 assists.

Reed-Custer also got some important work at the net defensively. Reese Brown recorded two solo blocks, while Taylor Bova and Gracie Robinson each finished with a solo block and an assisted block.

The victory came one night after Reed-Custer came close to picking up its first win against Gardner-South Wilmington.

After dropping the

first set 25-19, the Comets bounced back in impressive fashion to take the second 25-17. The deciding set was close throughout before GSW prevailed 25-22 to hand Reed-Custer a loss.

Wollenzien had a big night in the defeat with 10 kills and six blocks. Foote and Bova each contributed three kills and two blocks, while Marschner totaled 19 assists and an ace.

The Comets were particularly effective from the service line. Kaidence Vanduyne recorded eight aces and Brown added five. Sophie Moyers chipped in an ace and a kill.

Reed-Custer opened its season Aug. 24 with a two-set loss to Serena before showing improvement in back-to-back three-set matches.

The Comets will now try to build on their first victory traveling to Streator on last night, followed by a trip to Manteno on Thursday.



Photo by Eric Fisher
OUT!!!!!! Lady Comet Kadance Van Duyne calls a serve out for a point against Gardner South-Wilmington.



Photo by Eric Fisher
QUICK TIPPING the ball for the Lady Comets while battling Gardner-South Wilmington is Alyssa Wollenzien.



Photo by Eric Fisher
ATTACKING THE BALL from the right side is Reed-Custer senior Reese Brown.