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WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2025

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Photo by Eric Fisher

RISING WALLS—Construction of the new Mastodon fueling stop at Illinois 113 and Coal City Road has reached new heights with walls taking shape for the main building. According to Dave Smith of Ridgeway Petroleum, the target date for completing the station will be in June of 2026.

Mastodon fuel stop has a target date with construction underway

BY ROSE PANIERI
STAFF WRITER

The walls are taking shape for the Mastodon Station in Braidwood as construction workers make progress on what will be the city's largest fueling center.

According to Dave Smith, CEO of Ridgeway Petroleum, the target date for the grand opening of the Mastodon station at Division Street and Coal City Road will be late spring, 2026.

"The projected opening date, I would just say is dependent upon the weather," Smith said. "If there would be a date, it would be June 1. It may be sooner, but I think that's the fairest number I can give."

Smith said he hopes to complete the building, including the roof, before winter weather sets in.

According to Smith, planning and construction are going according to schedule, with the exception of approval from the Illinois Dept. of Transportation.

There have been a couple of snafus concerning IDOT's approval of road work, curbs, and signage being proposed for the area surrounding the station.

Braidwood engineer Sean Kelly said that both Division Street and Coal City Road will be widened, and dedicated right and left turn lanes will be added to keep traffic moving through an already challenging intersection.

Smith has been in business long enough to know he'll need to roll with the punches with regard to IDOT.

"I think it's typical, but every time we make a submission to what their recommendations are, they change the recom-

mendations," Smith said.

Fuel for vehicles and patrons

In July 2024, the city council approved Ridgeway Petroleum's request to annex 28 acres for the travel center.

The proposed development consists of a gas station with a car wash, convenience store, and a restaurant, as well as three diesel fuel lanes for trucks.

The convenience store will offer standard mini mart fare such as prepared sandwiches, snacks, and beverages, including a roomy beer cave. At a previous city council meeting, Smith said his staff will be creating unique specialty sandwiches.

For guests that prefer casual dining, Mastodon will offer a casual restaurant with seating featuring homemade gour-

met pizza.

Additionally, a video gaming room will be onsite for those who wish to indulge.

Full steam ahead

Following approval, Smith's team got busy preparing the location of the former Good Table restaurant.

Within the past week, noteworthy progress has been made, with the walls of the station being erected. However, Smith won't relax until the walls are complete and roofed. He's gambling on snow and bitter cold conditions to hold off until the station has been completed—or at least until the roof is in place.

"The caveat through the whole thing is it's just weather," Smith said. "We may have a mild winter, we may get a lot of snow and very cold. The weather is driving the timeline."

Lions Club to host Halloween hot dog giveaway Oct. 31

The Braidwood Lions Club will be hosting its annual community Halloween Hot Dog Giveaway on Friday, Oct. 31 under the Lions pavilion in the Braidwood City Park from 5 to 8 p.m.

The event will run in conjunction with the established Trick-or-Treat hours for the city of Braidwood.

Free hot dogs, chips, popcorn, hot chocolate, and lemonade will be provided, while supplies last, complements of the Lions Club.

The Braidwood Knights of Columbus Council 1574 will also be on hand passing out free Halloween treats for the kids, while supplies last.

The entire community is invited, so bring your friends and family down to the park for some good community spirit. Costumes are encouraged but not required.

For more information, please visit www.braidwoodlionsclub.org.

Federated Bank welcomes Smith to Braidwood branch

Federated Bank is pleased to announce that Dustin Smith has joined the team as Vice President, Ag & Commercial Loan Officer and will serve clients out of the Braidwood branch.

Smith has nearly two decades of experience in commercial and agricultural lending across Central Illinois.

Smith began his banking career in 2006 after graduating from Southern Illinois University. He joined First Financial Bank in 2007, where he served as Vice President and Senior Commercial & Agricultural Lender.

He originated, underwrote and closed loans for clients in Pontiac and Bloomington, IL, while managing staff and ensuring compliance with lending policies and regulations.



DUSTIN SMITH

"Dustin brings deep experience in agricultural and commercial lending, along with a strong commitment to community involvement. His leadership and customer-first approach make him a great fit for our team in Braidwood," said Matt Clark, President of

Federated Bank.

Smith is committed to building long-term relationships and tailoring financial solutions to fit each client's needs.

"When I met with David Albin and Matt Clark to discuss this new venture, I immediately recognized that this is a bank my clients will truly value working with. They offer all the technology and lending power of the big banks, but what truly sets them apart is their lenders' ability to make swift, on-site lending decisions and close loans quickly," Smith said.

He is active in the local 4-H and FFA programs and has served in leadership roles with the Livingston County Agricultural Fair Board, University of Illinois Extension Council, Greater Livingston County Economic Development

Council, and Central Illinois Mounted Search and Rescue. He is also the Illinois State Director for the National Pole Bending Association.

Smith lives with his wife and son, who competes nationally in horse racing. In their free time, the family enjoys snowmobiling, fishing and UTV trail riding.

Federated Bank is proud to welcome Smith and looks forward to the experience and community focus he brings to the Braidwood branch.

Federated Bank was founded Jan. 16, 1918, as Onarga State Bank. Federated Bank operates five branches in Illinois.



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RCHS Department of the Month keeps kids moving

As a new school year has started and fall sports are in full swing, Reed-Custer High School has added some new faces to the P.E. and Driver Education department.

The department of five brings a variety of teaching and coaching experiences throughout the district.

New additions this year include Josh Loomis and Joe Turek.

Loomis enters his first year of teaching and is a longtime Braidwood resident and former student at Reed Custer High School.

He is currently teaching Driver Education and plans on coaching wrestling in the winter at Reed-Custer Middle School and will continue to coach baseball in the spring at the high school. Students had the following the following to say about Mr. Loomis: "Nice, cool, does a fantastic job, uses real life examples, and hardworking."

Coming from Manhattan School district and new to the district is Joe Turek. With eight years of teaching experience,



THE SEPTEMBER FEATURED Department of the Month at RCHS is PE/Health/Driver Education. Pictured from left are Joe Turek, Josh Loomis, Taylor Meents, Ben Fatlan (student teacher), Tyler Graham and Ryan Marketti.

Turek is currently teaching physical education and also assisting with the LRI/STARS program. In addition to his teaching experience, Coach Turek has multiple years of coaching football and volleyball at multiple levels.

Turek is now paving

the way for success in his first year as head football coach for the Comets. Students had the following to say about Mr. Turek: "Has fit in perfectly, awesome to talk to, keeps us in check, cool guy, and open minded."

In addition to Loomis

and Turek, the department is also joined by veteran teachers Taylor Meents, Tyler Graham, and Ryan Marketti.

Ms. Meents is entering her fourth year of teaching physical education and personal fitness at RCHS. Not only does Meents

coach girls softball and basketball at RCMS, but she also is class sponsor of the Senior Class of 2026. Students had the following to say about Ms. Meents: "Positive, high energy, likes to join in on the games, greets students every morning, and understand-

ing." Tyler Graham enters his 15th year of teaching and his third year at RCHS. Graham teaches athletic physical education which focuses on improving strength and agility for all students, not just athletes.

Coach Graham is also the strength and conditioning coach of athletics and coaches football at RCHS. Students had the following to say about Mr. Graham: "Empowering, motivational, pushes students to do their best, helps me when I need it, and I look forward to his class each day."

Ryan Marketti is entering his 20th year of education and his third year at RCHS. Marketti teaches Health and behind the wheel driver education. Coach Marketti is also the head golf coach at RCHS.

Students had the following to say about Mr. Marketti: "Makes me laugh, kind-hearted, loves what he does, patient and supportive, and keeps it real."

Braidwood native presented with a Quilt of Valor



RETIRED STAFF SARGENT Robert Kilpatrick was presented with a Quilt of Valor from Montgomery Lone Stars recently in Montgomery, Texas. Robert is a 1985 graduate of Reed-Custer High School. He joined the National Guard after high school in October 1988. His active duty began January 1989 at Fort Knox serving until January 2011. As a part of the armored division, he served during Desert Storm. Under the First Calvary division, Robert was a part of Operation Enduring Freedom in Kuwait. During his time in the military, Robert received 13 Army achievement medals, Southwest Asia Service Medal with Bronze Star and Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal. After retiring from the Army, Robert remained living in Texas. The Quilts of Valor Foundation began in 2003 from a literal dream founder Catherine Roberts had one night. While her son was deployed in Iraq, Catherine had a dream about a soldier sitting on his bed. There was an overwhelming feeling of despair from this soldier. As if watching a movie, she then saw him wrapped in a quilt. The feeling went from despair to hope providing comfort. She took this as a message that quilts equal healing. The first quilt was presented to a soldier at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in November 2003. From there it grew across the nation. Quilts are made by volunteers and given to our military members via nomination that can be done through website: qovf.org. There are a multitude of quilt patterns used for these quilts. A selection can be viewed on the foundation's site. As of September 30,2025, the number of soldiers comforted with a Quilt of Valor is 424,428.

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Hometown Storage to dispose of property

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice of Lien

Hometown Storage, 2920 E. Division St., Diamond, IL 60416, 815-634-3333 hereby is asserting a Possessory Lien in pursuant to your contract and the State of Illinois Self-Service Facility Act.

Tenant: Tiffany Daughenbaugh, 288 S. English, Braidwood, IL 60408, Unit #325.

If unpaid rental charges, late fees and associated charges are not paid for in full by Nov. 15, 2025, the property will be sold to satisfy the lien.

Published in the Braidwood Journal on Oct. 15 and Oct. 29, 2025.

Newsstand price change

Beginning Nov. 5 the price per single copy of this newspaper will be \$1.50. It's been 14 years since a price adjustment has been made. Thanks for understanding.

Duck hunters will see split season starting in 2026

Waterfowl hunters in the Central zone asked for later season dates and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) is giving it a try, resulting in split seasons for five years starting in 2026.

"Illinois is a large, diverse state with weather and climate patterns that change significantly from north to south," said Doug McClain, IDNR's wetland wildlife program manager. "Taking this reality into account, along with the federal waterfowl framework and the diverse hunting styles and opinions of waterfowl hunters, these dates and zone lines offer opportunity for all waterfowl hunters across the state. Illinoisans hunt in different habitat types and with different styles, necessitating compromises on these regulations."

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) regulations require states to establish zone lines for a five-year period, and the USFWS establishes the frameworks within which states must select their regulations.

Since 2011, Illinois has

had four waterfowl hunting zones without split duck seasons. Over the past several years, hunters have shown increasing support for alternative options.

For the 2026-2030 seasons in Illinois, the former South-Central and South zones have been combined to form one South Zone. All other zone boundaries will remain the same because 90% of waterfowl hunters surveyed across the state indicated their county is in the correct zone.

Waterfowl hunters expressed considerable support to incorporate a split within the duck season. This included hunters who responded to the Illinois Waterfowl Hunter Survey, as well as those who attended one of seven public meetings during the spring.

"A split duck season is not permitted under the federal framework if Illinois had continued with four zones, so these changes went hand in hand," McClain said. "In addition, hunters generally preferred later season dates, so splits were implemented in all zones to allow for later end

dates for duck seasons. Those preferences were balanced with biological data to avoid mismatches of season timing and peak waterfowl abundance."

In general, duck season start dates are similar to those used previously for the North and Central zones, with seasons ending slightly later through the use of a split. The South Zone structure will look different, with a duck season start date similar to that of the former South-Central Zone and with the second segment of the season ending in late January every year.

New zone lines and season dates will not take effect until the 2026 season.

Season dates in 2026 for the Central zone, which includes Braidwood Lake, will be Sept. 5-13 for teal; Canada geese Sept. 1-15, Oct. 31-Dec. 13 and Dec. 19 - Jan. 31; all ducks Oct. 31 - Dec. 13 and Dec. 19 - Jan. 3.

North Zone 2026 dates, which includes Heidecke Lake will be all ducks Oct. 24-25 and Oct. 31 - Dec. 27; Canada geese Sept. 1-15, Oct. 24-25, and Oct. 31 - Jan. 26.

Football Euchre night

The Braidwood Knights of Columbus is having a Sunday Football Euchre Night on Nov. 16 at the Berst Center, 180 S. Kankakee Street in Coal City

Doors open at 3:45 p.m.. The game starts at 4:30 p.m.. Entry fee to play is \$20. Wear your favorite football attire for a chance to win a prize.

Bring your own alcohol and extra cash for sidepots. RSVP to TJ Sforza (815) 608-2110 or KofCBraidwood@gmail.com prior to Nov. 14 to secure your spot.

PETITIONS FOR ELECTION OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Petitions will be available beginning on Saturday, November 1, 2025, for any Resident Member of the Braidwood Recreation Club who wishes to be placed on the Ballot for the Position of Director. Petitions may be obtained at the Club Office during the regular hours 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Tuesday-Friday and 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Saturday. The Office is closed between 11:00 a.m. and 12:15 p.m. on weekdays.

Petitions must be picked up and returned by the individual who is running for the position of Director. All Petitions must be turned in at the Club Office before the deadline of 4:00 p.m. Tuesday, December 2, 2025.

The Braidwood Recreation Club will hold its Annual Meeting and Election on Saturday, January 10, 2026, at the Club Office at 7:00 p.m.

Rich Bolatto
Administration Director
Braidwood Recreation Club



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Deadline for The Free Press Advocate, Braidwood Journal and Coal City Courant

Display Advertising: Friday, noon
News and Classified Advertising: Monday, noon

E-mail: News & News Photos: news@fpnusa.com
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Eric D. Fisher, publisher

Orion Security Training files as new business

PUBLIC NOTICE

Assumed Name Publication Notice

Certificate 35443 was filed in the office of the County Clerk of Will County on October 8, 2025 wherein the business firm of Orion Security Training, 1703 Hidden Oaks Ct., Plainfield, IL 60586 was registered; that the true or real name or names of the person or persons owning the business, with their respective post office address(es), is/are as follows:

Jerald D. Shadowens
1703 Hidden Oaks Ct.
Plainfield, IL 60586

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and Official Seal at my office in Joliet, Illinois, this 8th of October, 2025.

Annette Parker
Will County Clerk
Published in the Braidwood Journal on Wednesday, Oct. 15, 22 and 29, 2025.

Dr. James Backus, left his mark in Braidwood

Frequently we have spoken about the brave miners who were injured in the mines. Many a miner had to fight for his life against the odds. But he was not alone; fighting on his side was a doctor. One of the most successful doctors in early Braidwood was Dr. John Backus.



Sandy Vasko

Backus was born in 1845 at Ontario, Canada to wealthy parents. His father is described like this, "He was educated as a lawyer, but was a retired gentleman." John got his first medical degree at McGill University at Montreal and a second medical degree at College of Physicians and Surgeons at Ontario.

We know little else about his background other than he came to Braidwood in 1871 and by 1878 he had been married twice.

The first time his name appears in my files is in June of 1873 in a letter to the editor of the Wilmington Advocate. A previous edition had credited Drs. LeCaron and Willard for amputating the arm of young Simon Jones when his hand was crushed

while coupling railroad cars. The writer of the letter corrected that and said it was Dr. Backus who had done the amputation; and a retraction was printed. From that time on, Dr. Backus was frequently reported to be setting broken arms, legs, collar bones, etc.

He must also have been admired for more than his medical skills. In April of 1879 we read, "It appears that 1,030 votes were polled in Braidwood on Tuesday - the occasion being the municipal election. Five tickets - the Republican, Democratic, National, Socialistic and temperance were in the field, and it is estimated that out of 45,000 tickets that were printed at least one-half of that number were splits. Dr. Backus was elected mayor by 176 majority over the combined votes given for John Keir and Wm. Douglass."

Then as now, the job of Mayor was not a full time job. He continued practicing medicine, often in partnership with other physicians of Braidwood. We read on May 23, 18879,

"Andrew Bowvitch met with severe injuries - a dislocated spine and fractured ribs - at 3 p.m. on Thursday, while "brushing" in the H shaft. A portion of the "roof" weighing probably a ton, fell, striking him on the back. Drs. LeCaron and Backus opine that his recovery is doubtful, although he may recover. The muscular power of nine men was required to reduce the fractures in the spinal column, and if he survives it will be the third case of like character on record here. Bowvitch's wife is now en route to this country, it is said."

Though Backus' services were often sought after, most of the people he treated were tragically poor. Chances are that the living he made, including his mayor pay probably did not make him rich. Luckily his daddy did.

In May of 1879 he took a trip along with E. W. Felton to Leadville, Colorado. Miners had been leaving Braidwood for Leadville by the train car load. Silver strikes, lead strikes, and even rumored gold had recently been found there, but the land was still cheap. It was the kind of investment that could make a man rich.

He did invest, and did make good money. But

instead of becoming a "retired gentleman" like his father, he continued to practice medicine, and some of it, way ahead of his time.

In 1880 we read, "Last Saturday Dr. Campbell of this city, and Dr. Backus, of Braidwood, performed the operation of lithotomy upon a little boy, two years old, residing at Braidwood. The stone which was removed from the bladder, was half as large as a hen's egg. The little fellow stood the operation nicely, and at last accounts was doing well."

Frequently Dr. Backus name was in the papers for another reason. He seemed to attend every ball and soiree, every party, every celebration that Braidwood had. He also was a frequent host. We read in 1886, "Duncan Ranking returned from a two years' stay in California the other day, and on Wednesday night they were given a rousing reception at the home of Dr. Backus. A fine supper, singing, music, etc. entertained the 25 couples that were present."

The last time I have placed Dr. Backus in Braidwood is 1886. By 1900 he had moved his family to Chicago, and was still practicing medicine.

Braidwood church to host Nite at the Races

Immaculate Conception church in Braidwood will host its annual "Nite at the Races" Saturday, Nov. 8. Doors open at 5 p.m. with first race at 6:30 p.m. in Fr. White Hall, 110 S School St.

This year's theme is 'Run for the Roses' with prizes for the "Best Ladies Hat" and most "Dapper Dan".

Racing activities, food,

affles, and games will make the night race by. A \$10 ticket will get you in the door and \$10 in fun money. Cash bar will be available. This is a 21 and over event. Tickets are available in advance or at the door. please call Sara at 815-341-5946, or Tami 815-405-0982 or contact anyone on the stewardship committee with any questions.

Football Euchre night

The Braidwood Knights of Columbus is having a Sunday Football Euchre Night on Nov. 16 at the Berst Center, 180 S. Kankakee Street in Coal City

Doors open at 3:45 p.m.. The game starts at 4:30 p.m.. Entry fee to play

is \$20. Wear your favorite football attire for a chance to win a prize.

Bring your own alcohol and extra cash for sidepots. RSVP to Tj Sforza (815) 608-2110 or KofCBraidwood@gmail.com prior to Nov. 14 to secure your spot.

Darby O'Shea graduates

This past summer, Darby O'Shea, of Braidwood, graduated from Marquette University in Milwaukee, WI. O'Shea earned a bachelor of arts degree in Psychology.

Tax Deed filed on Braidwood parcels

PUBLIC NOTICE

TAX DEED NO.: 2025TX000267
FILED: October 2, 2025
TAKE NOTICE

TO: ANNETTE PARKER, WILL COUNTY CLERK; FAMILY DOLLAR; JPM ASSOCIATES LLC; OCCUPANT; UNKNOWN OWNERS OR PARTIES INTERESTED; AND NONRECORD CLAIMANTS.

This is NOTICE of the filing of the Petition for Tax Deed on the following described property:

PARCEL 1:
LOT 1 IN THE CONSOLIDATION PLAT FOR PRESSLEY SUBDIVISION RECORDED DECEMBER 31, 2014 AS INSTRUMENT NUMBER R2014111762.

PARCEL 2:
EASEMENTS FOR THE BENEFIT OF PARCEL 1 FOR STORM SEWER EXECUTED BY THE CITY OF BRAIDWOOD AND CASEY'S RETAIL COMPANY, AN IOWA CORPORATION AND RECORDED JUNE 23, 2015 AS DOCUMENT NUMBER R2015052258, OVER THE FOLLOWING DESCRIBED PARCELS: (A)

A 35 FOOT BY 50 FOOT EASEMENT IS GRANTED ON THE FOLLOWING DESCRIBED PROPERTY:

ALL THAT PART OF THE SOUTHEAST QUARTER OF SECTION EIGHT (8), TOWNSHIP THIRTY-TWO (32) NORTH, RANGE NINE (9) EAST OF THE THIRD PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, LYING EAST OF THE WEST LINE OF TWENTY-FIVE (25) FOOT RIGHT-OF-WAY ORIGINALLY SERVING THE MINES OF THE CHICAGO AND WILMINGTON COAL COMPANY, AND NORTH OF A LINE PARALLEL TO AND ONE HUNDRED SEVENTY (170) FEET DISTANT NORTH OF BY RECTANGULAR MEASUREMENT OF THE NORTH LINE OF MAIN STREET IN THE VILLAGE OF BRAIDWOOD; WEST OF THE WEST LINE OF ROUNDHOUSE STREET IN SAID VILLAGE AND SOUTH OF A LINE DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS: COMMENCING AT A POINT ON THE NORTHWEST RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF THE CHICAGO AND ALTON RAILROAD COMPANY, SIX HUNDRED EIGHTY-FOUR (684) FEET SOUTHWEST FROM WHERE SAID RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE INTERSECTS THE EAST LINE OF SECTION EIGHT (8); THENCE ON A LINE SOUTH EIGHTY-FOUR (84) DEGREES THIRTY (30) MINUTES WEST TO THE WEST LINE OF ROUNDHOUSE STREET FOR A PLACE OF BEGINNING; THENCE CONTINUING WESTERLY ON SAME STRAIGHT LINE TO THE WEST LINE OF THE ORIGINAL TWENTY-FIVE (25) FOOT RIGHT-OF-WAY ABOVE DESCRIBED, ALL BEING SUBJECT TO THE RIGHTS OF THE PUBLIC IN AND TO THAT PART HEREOF TAKEN, DEDICATED OR USED AS A PUBLIC ROADWAY, ALL IN WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS, THE ABOVE MENTIONED PARCEL DESCRIBED IN A DEED RECORDED AS DOCUMENT NUMBER R2006073697 IN WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS, THAT PORTION OF THE PROPERTY GRANTED FOR EASEMENT IS DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

COMMENCING AT THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF LOT 1 IN CASEY'S CONSOLIDATION PLAT LOCATED IN THE SOUTHEAST QUARTER OF SECTION 8, TOWNSHIP 32 NORTH, RANGE 9 EAST OF THE THIRD PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN RECORDED AS DOCUMENT NUMBER R2013049159 IN WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS; THENCE SOUTH 01 DEGREES 17 MINUTES 38 SECONDS EAST ALONG THE WEST LINE OF SAID LOT 1, A DISTANCE OF 10.00 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING; THENCE SOUTH 01 DEGREES 17 MINUTES 38 SECONDS EAST, A DISTANCE OF 50.00 FEET TO A POINT ON THE NORTH LINE OF LOT 1 IN THE CONSOLIDATION PLAT FOR PRESSLEY SUBDIVISION BEING A SUBDIVISION IN THE SOUTHEAST QUARTER OF SECTION 8, TOWNSHIP 32 NORTH, RANGE 9 EAST OF THE THIRD PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN RECORDED AS DOCUMENT NUMBER R2014111762 IN WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS; THENCE SOUTH 88 DEGREES 36 MINUTES 38 SECONDS WEST ALONG THE NORTH LINE OF SAID LOT 1 IN THE CONSOLIDATION PLAT FOR PRESSLEY SUBDIVISION, A DISTANCE OF 35.00 FEET; THENCE NORTH 01 DEGREES 17 MINUTES 38 SECONDS WEST, A DISTANCE OF 50.00 FEET; THENCE NORTH 88 DEGREES 36 MINUTES 38 SECONDS EAST, A DISTANCE OF 35.00 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING.

(B)
A 7 FOOT WIDE EASEMENT IS GRANTED ON THE FOLLOWING DESCRIBED PROPERTY:

ALL THAT PART OF THE SOUTHEAST QUARTER OF SECTION EIGHT (8), TOWNSHIP THIRTY-TWO (32) NORTH, RANGE NINE (9) EAST OF THE THIRD PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, LYING EAST OF THE WEST LINE OF A TWENTY-FIVE (25) FOOT RIGHT-OF-WAY ORIGINALLY SERVING THE MINES OF THE CHICAGO AND WILMINGTON COAL COMPANY, AND NORTH A LINE PARALLEL TO AND ONE HUNDRED SEVENTY (170) FEET DISTANT NORTH OF BY RECTANGULAR MEASUREMENT OF THE NORTH LINE OF MAIN STREET IN THE VILLAGE OF BRAIDWOOD; WEST OF THE WEST LINE OF ROUNDHOUSE STREET IN SAID VILLAGE SOUTH OF A LINE DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS: COMMENCING AT A POINT ON THE NORTHWEST RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF THE CHICAGO AND ALTON RAILROAD COMPANY, SIX HUNDRED EIGHTY-FOUR (684) FEET SOUTHWEST FROM WHERE SAID RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE INTERSECTS THE EAST LINE OF SECTION EIGHT (8); THENCE ON A LINE SOUTH EIGHTY-FOUR (84) DEGREES THIRTY (30) MINUTES WEST TO THE WEST LINE OF ROUNDHOUSE STREET FOR A PLACE OF BEGINNING; THENCE CONTINUING WESTERLY ON SAME STRAIGHT LINE TO THE WEST LINE OF THE ORIGINAL TWENTY-FIVE (25) FOOT RIGHT-OF-WAY ABOVE DESCRIBED, ALL BEING SUBJECT TO THE RIGHTS OF THE PUBLIC IN AND TO THAT PART HEREOF TAKEN, DEDICATED, OR USED AS A PUBLIC ROADWAY, ALL IN WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS, THE ABOVE MENTIONED PARCEL DESCRIBED IN A DEED RECORDED AS DOCUMENT NUMBER R2006073697 IN WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS, THAT PORTION OF THE PROPERTY GRANTED FOR EASEMENT IS DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

COMMENCING AT THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF SAID LOT 1; THENCE SOUTH 88 DEGREES 36 MINUTES 38 SECONDS WEST ALONG THE NORTH LINE OF SAID LOT 1, A DISTANCE OF 15.89 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING; THENCE CONTINUING SOUTH 88 DEGREES 36 MINUTES 38 SECONDS WEST ALONG THE NORTH LINE OF SAID LOT 1, A DISTANCE OF 7.00 FEET; THENCE NORTH 02 DEGREES 15 MINUTES 35 SECONDS WEST, A DISTANCE OF 115.64 FEET; THENCE NORTH 24 DEGREES 01 MINUTES 03 SECONDS EAST, A DISTANCE OF 53.02 FEET TO A POINT OF THE WEST LINE OF MITCHELL STREET; THENCE SOUTH 02 DEGREES 27 MINUTES 37 SECONDS EAST ALONG THE WEST LINE OF MITCHELL STREET, A DISTANCE OF 15.70 FEET; THENCE SOUTH 24 DEGREES 01 MINUTES 03 SECONDS WEST, A DISTANCE OF 37.33 FEET; THENCE SOUTH 02 DEGREES 15 MINUTES 35 SECONDS EAST, A DISTANCE OF 114.11 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING.

(C)
A SEVEN FOOT WIDE PUBLIC UTILITY EASEMENT IS GRANTED OVER THE FOLLOWING DESCRIBED PROPERTY; THAT PORTION OF LOT 1 IN CASEY'S CONSOLIDATION PLAT LOCATED IN THE SOUTHEAST QUARTER OF SECTION 8, TOWNSHIP 32 NORTH, RANGE 9 EAST OF THE THIRD PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN RECORDED AS DOCUMENT NUMBER R2013049159 IN WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS, DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

COMMENCING AT THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF SAID LOT 1; THENCE SOUTH 88 DEGREES 36 MINUTES 38 SECONDS WEST ALONG THE NORTH LINE OF SAID LOT 1, A DISTANCE OF 15.89 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING; THENCE SOUTH 02 DEGREES 15 MINUTES 35 SECONDS EAST, A DISTANCE OF 18.23 FEET; THENCE SOUTH 87 DEGREES 29 MINUTES 32 SECONDS WEST, A DISTANCE OF 191.4 FEET TO A POINT ON THE WEST LINE OF SAID LOT 1; THENCE NORTH 01 DEGREES 17 MINUTES 38 SECONDS WEST ALONG THE WEST LINE OF SAID LOT 1, A DISTANCE OF 7.00 FEET; THENCE NORTH 87 DEGREES 29 MINUTES 32 SECONDS EAST, A DISTANCE OF 184.02 FEET; THENCE NORTH 02 DEGREES 29 MINUTES 32 SECONDS WEST, A DISTANCE OF 11.36 FEET TO A POINT ON THE NORTH LINE OF SAID LOT 1; THENCE NORTH 88 DEGREES 36 MINUTES 38 SECONDS EAST ALONG THE NORTH LINE OF SAID LOT 1, A DISTANCE OF 7.00 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING.

PARCEL 3:
ACCESS EASEMENT FOR THE BENEFIT OF PARCEL 1 CONVEYED BY CITY OF BRAIDWOOD BY DOCUMENT RECORDED JUNE 23, 2015 AS DOCUMENT NUMBER R2015-52257.

Property Index Number 02-24-08-402-048-0000
On February 19, 2026 at 9:15 a.m., Courtroom 904 at the Will County Courthouse located at 100 W. Jefferson St., Joliet, IL 60432 the Petitioner intends to make application for an order on the petition that a Tax Deed be issued. The real estate was sold on December 3, 2024 for general taxes of the year 2023. The period of redemption will expire February 6, 2026.
Heather Ottenfeld, Attorney for Petitioner
(847) 721-4996
Cert. # 23-02783
Published in the Braidwood Journal on Wednesday, Oct. 15, 22, and 29, 2025.

Fossil Ridge Library News

Adult Programs

Fridays, Nov. 7, 14, 21-Bingocise, 10-11:30 a.m. Looking for a fun way to be more active? Bingo + Exercise = Bingocize® BINGOCIZE® is a health promotion program that combines bingo with fall prevention exercise.

Teen & Tween Programs

Monday Nov. 3-Tween Scene-Leaf Pinch Pots, 5:30-6:30 p.m. Get creative this fall at our next Tween Scene. These instructor-led programs are a fun, educational, and social way for tweens to explore their artistic side. In this session, we'll be making leaf pinch pots-a perfect craft to celebrate the season.

Children and Toddler Programs

Tuesdays, Nov. 4 & 18-Play-Doh Playdates, 10:30-11 a.m. Join us for a Play-Doh workshop. Display your creativity using our Play-Doh and tools. This program is for children

aged 2-6.

Wednesdays, Nov. 5, 12, 19, 26, 10-11 a.m. Little Learners is a fun, weekly program where preschoolers can master the alphabet through stories, music, and a craft. Join us as we explore the wonderful world of letters, one week at a time.

Thursdays, Nov. 6, 13, 20-10-11 a.m. Toddler Time. We welcome toddlers and their caregivers to join us weekly to explore various toys and sensory materials. Toddlers can enhance their gross and fine motor skills, social interaction, and language skills. Caregivers must accompany their little ones throughout the program.

Thursdays, Nov. 6, 13, 20--Listen and Create Storytime, 5:30-6:30 p.m. This program is specially designed for children aged 3-5. Every week, children can explore new books and

engage in a fun craft project. Please make sure to dress in clothes that can get messy, as the craft project will involve getting creative with various art materials.

Wednesday, Nov. 5-Movie Matinee-Elio, 1-3 p.m. Join us on half days/no school days for a family movie afternoon. Light refreshments will be served, but feel free to bring your own. Elio, an underdog with an active imagination, finds himself inadvertently beamed up to the Commiverse, an interplanetary organization with representatives from galaxies far and wide. Mistakenly identified as Earth's ambassador to the rest of the universe, he starts to form new bonds with eccentric aliens while discovering who he's truly meant to be.

Registration is required for all programs. For more information call 815-458-2187.

From Blossom to Bushel:

Getting to the core of apple breeding in the Midwest

BY NANCY DEVAULT
ILLINOIS FARM

The Midwest Apple Improvement Association (MAIA) is a collaborative organization dedicated to developing new apple varieties specifically suited to the region's unique growing conditions. Founded by a small group of friendly, forward-thinking farmers in the mid-1990s, MAIA now boasts more than 1,100 members committed to combining traditional and modern breeding techniques with rigorous field testing for improved outcomes.

The process of developing new fruit varieties is both an art and a science. In 2009, Bill Dodd, a fourth-generation farmer who operates Hillcrest Orchards in Amherst, Ohio, assumed the role of MAIA president to champion its core mission.

"Our goal is to increase, per capita, consumption of apples," Dodd says. "That's not an easy task as grocery aisles are full of other competitive commodities. Ultimately, we'd like to make apples so good that people choose them as the go-to snack - even over candy - because they're so delicious and healthy."

An MAIA member, test grower and fourth-generation farmer, Craig Tanner of Tanners Orchard in the north-central Illinois community of Speer values the organization's effort to create apples with superior taste, texture and disease resistance.

"It's important for the development of new varieties to continue as consumer preferences have changed over the years and will continue to do so," Tanner says.

Fresh development The first step begins with selecting parent apple varieties that have desir-

able traits. These varieties are cross-pollinated to produce seeds carrying genetic material from both parents. Once the seeds are collected, they are germinated and grown into young trees. Since each seed represents a unique genetic combination, thousands of seedlings must be planted and evaluated.

These trees take several years to mature before they can bear fruit, at which point Midwest Apple Improvement Association growers assess their characteristics, including taste, texture, shelf life and resilience to diseases.

Once a promising seedling is identified, it is not propagated by seed but instead through grafting, a technique where a cutting from the desired apple tree is attached to a hardy rootstock, or root system of a tree. This process ensures the resulting trees maintain the exact genetic traits of the original selection. Grafting not only speeds the production process but also allows trees to be grown with consistent quality and adaptability to different soil types.

MAIA then distributes these newly developed apple trees to orchards across the Midwest and beyond. Farmers cultivate these apples, contributing valuable feedback on their performance in various growing conditions.

Crisp results

Dodd says Midwest Apple Improvement Association has released eight apple varieties so far, with the most successful being MAIA-1, trademarked as EverCrisp, which is a cross between Honeycrisp and Fuji. Known for its crunch and long storage life, EverCrisp has quickly become a favorite among both consumers and growers, including Tanner and fellow MAIA member Chris



Photo by Jeff Adkins

TANNERS ORCHARD in the north-central Illinois community of Speer values the Midwest Apple Improvement Association's effort to create apples with superior taste, texture and disease resistance.

Eckert, a seventh-generation apple grower in Belleville.

Eckert says Eckert's, the largest family-owned and -operated U-pick orchard, grows 15 apple varieties, including five selections developed by MAIA. In addition to EverCrisp, which Eckert says revolutionized the apple industry, Eckert's also grows the association's trademarked selections of Sweet MAIA, Ludacrisp, Rosalee and, most recently planted, EverCrisp-Mitchell. Plus, Eckert says his family orchard is one of the most aggressive MAIA testers with another 20 varieties in its test plot.

"MAIA is one of the largest apple breeding programs in the United States with thousands upon thousands of new seedlings in the ground today that we're evaluating," Eckert says. "We are learning ways to speed that process up through our partners at Reality Research so that we can find tastier varieties of apples that thrive in warmer, wetter climates and are easier for growers to manage."

With a commitment to innovation and sustainability, MAIA is shaping the current and future of apple cultivation in the Midwest and the country. For exam-

ple, Tanner credits MAIA - and, specifically, Dodd - with encouraging the use of a tall spindle growing system, which has resulted in earlier fruit production and higher yields per acre.

By working closely with growers and researchers, the MAIA ensures new apples not only meet the demands of modern consumers but also support a thriving agricultural industry. As MAIA continues to push the boundaries of apple breeding, apple lovers can look forward to an ever-expanding selection of crisp, flavorful varieties that redefine what it means to enjoy an exceptional eating experience.

Dodd says he's excited about an up-and-coming MAIA selection called Red Zeppelin (MAIA-RZ). However, because apple breeding takes about 15 years, this new apple likely won't hit the marketplace for another five years.

To learn more about the Midwest Apple Improvement Association, visit maiaapples.com.

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

Free Press Newspapers readers

SOUND-OFF

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

In the spotlight

BRAIDWOOD—Pages 2 and 3 of the Oct. 15 Braidwood Journal were a good read. Congratulations to Mark Martinez for his recognition in the Senior Spotlight Section. I wish him much success with his undergraduate and legal studies and his professional career. It was also great to see the article on the Reed-Custer Social Studies Department and its focus on critical thinking. I hope Mr. Wolf can get a fair trial.

The cover-up

BRAIDWOOD—Isn't it outrageous that Trump hates immigrants but likes pedophiles, even protects them? "I just wish her well, frankly. I've met her numerous times..." were Trump's words when Epstein's collaborator, Ghislane Maxwell, was arrested for sex trafficking. And upon Maxwell's conviction and sentencing in 2022, Trump said he would be allowed to pardon her if he again becomes president and in 2025 he transferred Maxwell to a better prison with close proximity to her family. But Republican Speaker Johnson refuses to swear into Congress newly elected Adelita Grijalva because she would be the tie-breaking vote to expose the Epstein files. Johnson blames the shutdown, claiming it prevents him from sweating Grijalva into Congress despite the fact that she was elected on Sept. 26th before the shutdown began on Oct. 1st. A lawsuit is filed to force the installation but it's sad that Johnson refuses to do his job.

Has to be some good

COAL CITY—Been meaning to address several articles that have been in the paper in the sound off column lately. This paper should be called Coal City sports page. If I ever see anything more then just the Coal City school sports or special students it would be shocking. This town has to be the most boring place in Illinois. And now with the price increase. I don't think I will be buying it anymore. I commend the Mayor of Diamond she is getting businesses that people can actually use and not have to run 15 to 30 miles to buy something. Coal City on the other hand loses again. All they seem to think about is getting industry places in. We do not need more trucks or trains in our area. We need places we can shop and do things. Come on think of your people not your pocketbook. Lastly for everyone waiting to the Trump to release the Epstein files. Well, that will never happen. Why? Because Biden had them and wouldn't do it either, because both sides have important political people on that list and don't want it released. Nope, it will never happen. While at a party I was with a big group of friends all talking politics. If you're going to talk it make sure you know what your saying is true and can back it up. Not just I heard this I heard that. Do your homework. I was amazed at some of the things being said and it was all because they heard something but did not check it out. Also, that said I think most of the articles written in sound off are by the same person or persons every week. I'm tired of all the whining as I think most people. We need to find something good and uplifting to write about, not all negative. There has to be something good in this world.

Lunacy

WILMINGTON—When the President of the United States post AI videos of him piloting a fighter jet dumping feces on Americans that's not leadership, that's lunacy.

Gas at some stations under \$3

Average gasoline prices in Illinois have risen 16.4 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$3.22/g Monday, according to GasBuddy's survey of 4,378 stations in Illinois.

In Wilmington, gas ranges from \$2.94/g at Love's, up to \$3.09/g at BP.

Braidwood is \$3.29/g across the board, and Coal City's price range is from \$3.37/g at Shell to \$3.39/g at Gas N Wash.

Morris gas runs the gamut from \$2.89/g at Casey's, all the way up to \$3.39/g at Amoco.

In Bourbonnais, gas is \$2.84/g across the board.

"The national average saw a slight rise over the last week, as gas prices surged in parts of the Midwest after a refinery fire

Poison pill

WILMINGTON—Demolition of the East Wing of the White House, buying beef from Argentina to offset shortage in America. Argentina with \$40 billion bailout from America that is selling their soybeans to China because Trump tariffs caused China to stop buying any soybeans from America. Confused? Release the Epstein files, this is not going away. He did evil things to innocent children. That's why Donald Trump will not agree to releasing his poison pill.

Drive and save

COAL CITY—Today I went shopping in Morris, and low & behold gas was .40 cheaper a gallon. Coal City citizens can also go to Lorenzo & I-55 for same savings. JP in CC.

Just smile

COAL CITY—Just like to say, for as much as you pay for a drink and a dinner it sure would be nice to have a smile while being served wouldn't it. Boy times have changed aren't they. Becky

Stunning corruption

WILMINGTON—What is the take-away from the peaceful march of seven million protesters? Buyer's remorse against the incompetent and shockingly corrupt Trump who is running a criminal enterprise from the White House itself. But why are we so shocked? This is the real Trump, the one without the guardrails, the one who drove his three casinos into the ground despite the fact that the 'house' always wins. This is the raw Trump who refused to pay his employees and creditors, who defrauded the students at Trump University, who used his Trump Foundation as his own personal slush fund and declined to pay taxes on the Trump Organization. Did we forget? No, we have political experts in both parties and in the universities whose job it is to remind us. No, we looked the other way. But no longer. From this point onward, decency and integrity must be the hallmark of every presidential candidate. Irene

Protest at home

MORRIS—All these people that are protesting about no king. Why don't they protest against these lawmakers that vote for high property taxes in the state of Illinois. Give senior citizens a tax break. Senior citizens are paying high property taxes. There was a property tax bill that was suppose to be for senior citizens. All these politicians want to do is help it's employees and county employees and state employees five percent pay raises. Grundy County employees just got a five percent pay raise. Let's get off your butts and protest the property taxes.

About the water

WILMINGTON—This is in response to what's that smell, about Wilmington water. As a local plumber I found that interesting that someone is having problems with Wilmington water. If they are having a bad smell, if I was them I would check the anode rod in the water heater. If their water heater is a few years old a lot of times the anode rod will go bad. Being a plumber in the local area I can tell you, Coal City, Diamond, and most of the surrounding communities their water heaters don't last four or five years where I have had 10 years in Wilmington. You should check that. I read in the Free Press a few years ago Wilmington won an award for their water quality.

pushed wholesale gasoline prices sharply higher in the region," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy.

"While the spike in prices in affected areas was significant, relief is likely in the weeks ahead as the situation stabilizes. For now, the possibility of a U.S.-China trade deal could lift oil prices on optimism that it would increase trade and reduce tariffs—potentially keeping the national average slightly above the \$3-per-gallon mark for a couple more weeks before slipping back below \$3 ahead of Thanksgiving."

The lowest price in the state is \$2.57/g while the highest is \$4.49/g.

Sound-Off is a 24-hour phone line provided to give readers a chance to voice their opinions.

The Free Press Newspapers reserves the right to edit remarks for taste, length, personal attacks, racism, threatening, calls for boycotts and libel.

The comments stated are the opinions and ideas of the callers and not that of the newspaper.

Information may not constitute the actual events or facts of a particular topic.

Submissions by email to: courant@fpnusa.com with "soundoff" in the subject line or visit www.freepressnewspapers.com, or call 815-634-0317. Please state the town in which you are calling from or in regards to. Mail comments to Sound-Off, 271 S. Broadway, Coal City, IL 60416 or 111 S. Water St., Wilmington, IL 60481. There can be only one submission of 250 words or less per person during any given week.



"I DON'T KNOW WHETHER TO BE ANNOYED BY THEIR LAZINESS OR AMAZED AT THEIR INGENUITY."

Tit for tat

SHADOW LAKES—Why are so many people against ICE wearing facial coverings? Antifia and Black Lives Matter also wore the same thing to prevent identification. To me it's called tit for tat. What is the problem with that. If they can do it, ICE can do it. Dan Hill

Pray for driver too

ELWOOD—No where in all the articles about the death of two boys in Manhattan has the do gooders ever mentioned pray for the truck driver. I'm sure when he started out his job that day he didn't think a kid would ride out in front of him. Prayers and thoughts, Go Fund Me efforts but no mention of the driver or his family. Just saying.

Crackdown needed

WILMINGTON—Just wondering what is going on with the police in town of Wilmington. People are parking their cars and trucks on sidewalks where people can't get by and you've got to walk in the street. And people texting and on their phones while driving, blowing stop signs and another is the bank parking lot over there on south Main, no lights. It has been a couple weeks and they have had no lights. It's just another safety issue. What is going on with this town? The ATVs especially with young kids. Are people not thinking? People are lazy? What's happening here.

Distract and chaos

WILMINGTON—In August when Trump announced his ballroom project he said the existing structure would not be touched but be built next to White House at a cost of \$200M being funded by him. Fast forward to today, entire East Wing has been demolished and the cost is \$300M being paid by billionaires and big corporate donors. Why does he have to lie about everything? Everything has to be breaking news to distract from what is actually happening. Release the Epstein files.

Need help

WILMINGTON—Great game Friday. Too bad whoever runs the food stand can't figure it out. Somebody should tell them there are lots of pizza places that will deliver. Maybe get a food truck.

Innocent until proven

WILMINGTON—This country is teetering on a Constitutional crisis. If ICE has probable cause or a warrant then arrest that person and give them a trial. Everyone is innocent until proven guilty in a court of law. It's been that way for hundreds of years. Just snatching people to make an arbitrary quota is against the Constitution. No discussion needed, it's the Constitution. Don't tell me about all these murderers and rapists and drug dealers. More than 40% of people being detained have nothing on their record.

Being left behind

WILMINGTON—They have had the Affordable Care Act for 15 years now. It offers health insurance coverage regardless of pre-existing conditions, No lifetime caps on coverage, free cancer screenings and more. It is not perfect but in those 15 years Republicans have not come up with

any alternative options. We were told on several occasions "my great health care plan is coming out in 2 weeks." How many times have we heard "2 weeks?" On Jan. 1, 18 million individuals and families will not have insurance because by not offering subsidies to regular Americans. That money will now be paying for another tax cut for ultra wealthy permanently. No insurance for regular Americans but a permanent tax cut for billionaires. Are you sick of being left behind yet? Are you happy for your billionaire friends? We are having mac n cheese with hot dogs for dinner, how about you?

The good things

WILMINGTON—The stock market is at record highs. Inflation is down, gas is under \$3 a gallon, the all important eggs are cheap. We have peace in the Middle East but all you hear is about is a ballroom being built for free so when the president has a party for the head of state it's not under a tent with porta potties. The left said nothing when Obama spent almost \$4 million in taxpayers dollars when he moved in. Look it up. He's just getting started.

Imaginary enemies

WILMINGTON—What will MAGA voters do when they realize they have no imaginary enemies and have to re-evaluate their own lives?

The shakedown

WILMINGTON—Trump is extorting \$230 million from American taxpayers despite the fact that many are furloughed without pay and standing in lines at food banks. Why? Simply because Trump is angry. A shakedown like this used to be illegal, but since the corrupt Supreme Court gave presidential immunity last year on July 1, 2024, there is nothing to stop it. The result is the destruction of our American democracy, our institutions, our economy, our allies and everything that made our nation great.

Reagan on tariffs

WILMINGTON—When you release an artificial video of feces being dropped on Americans that's totally acceptable, but releasing a video that is factual showing Reagan giving his negative thoughts on tariffs, well that's just BS and I'll increase tariffs as punishment. This is what a spoiled child would do.

In response

COAL CITY—In response to the newspaper comment from two weeks ago regarding the cannabis dispensary being located near the church and soccer field. I find it surprising that this issue has raised such concern. For over two decades, adults in this community that attend church have regularly brought their teenagers and young adults into the local taverns without similar outrage or scrutiny. I also agree with the comment from last week about changing up the board members of the Coal City area club.

Debt keeps growing

WILMINGTON—The national debt has increased by \$2 trillion since January. What happened to all the great work DOGE was going to do? Where did that savings go? We've been lied to again.

Wilmington Moose 241 Scholarship Fundraiser
- Open to the Public -
Saturday, Nov. 8 • 5pm-10:30pm
Food 5-7:30pm
32050 W. River Rd., Wilmington

Ribeye Steak or Pork Chop Dinners
Chicken Strips or Nuggets available
• Raffles • Baskets • etc.
Music by
"FLIP SIDE BAND"
7:30 - 10:30pm

If you would like to donate a basket or items to raffle, please drop off @ Moose Lodge
M-F 3-9pm • Weekend Noon-9pm

All proceeds go to the Wilmington Moose Scholarship Fund benefiting both Wilmington and Reed Custer schools.

Moose Family Center

Sincere Thanks from Knights of Columbus
Fr. George Kuzma Council of the Knights of Columbus would like to extend their sincere thanks to all who attended and donated to the Boiler Breakfast fundraiser for St. Rose. We hope you enjoyed the breakfast!

Special thanks to the following supporters:
Jonnie Vanderhyden of Village Realty Inc., Berkot's Super Foods, Free Press Advocate, Ron & Patty Hedrick of Raceway Pizza, Ryan & Ashley Hopkins of Hopkins Towing, Victor & Samantha Salinas of Salinas Solutions, Tracey "Gert" Thompson, and Bill Woolwine.

Thanks also to KC family members and friends who assisted in any way! It is the team work that makes these projects enjoyable.

SUNDAY FUNDAY!
DOORS OPEN AT NOON! FIRST RAFFLE AT 2PM!
It's NOT BINGO but a RAFFLE like BINGO... You play it like BINGO!! Lots of cash prizes!!! BIG PRIZES!!!

QUEEN of HEARTS
Every TUESDAY at 553 W. Kennedy Rd. Braidwood
You must play BINGO to participate.
Doors open at 4pm. Drawing is held at intermission.
Queen of Hearts Pot is \$15,315.00
For BINGO players only on Tuesday nites and see the QUEEN rules at the BINGO hall for rules and regulations.

Braidwood Post 039 BINGO
Tuesday Night Flash Max Bingo

Pull Tabs	6:30pm	Hot Food, Snacks & Beverages
Bingo	6:30pm	553 Kennedy Road
Doors Open	4:00pm	Braidwood, IL 60408

Home of the "Big Guy"
Commander Bill Kiley
815-216-2570

Claims of more efficient batteries

Dear EarthTalk: What's new regarding more efficient batteries that can help usher in a new age of renewable energy?

-- Paul Beckman, Marion, OH



Batteries are everywhere-in your phone, your car-even the artificial organs that many depend on for life. But behind this universal usage is extensive ecological damage-the battery-making process requires intensive mining for heavy metals, leaks toxins into soil and water, and depletes local water sources in communities. But new and innovative ways to increase the efficiency and sustainability of batteries.

One of the most novel innovations out this year is iron-air batteries, those that use a sustainable rust-based reaction to produce energy. As air passes through the cathode (the negatively-charged portion of the battery) and reacts with the liquid, a water-based electrolyte, ions subsequently latch onto the positively-charged iron anode, producing rust.

The movement of ions through this rust produces electricity, a process that can be repeated by continually unrusting the battery after each reaction. Form energy co-founder and Chief Scientist Yet-Ming Chiang notes the economic viability of iron-air batteries for large-scale usage: "Air is still free and iron is one of the most widely produced, lowest cost materials in the world." In Minnesota, a 1.5 megawatt pilot project was shown to be able to power 400 homes for 100 hours, a clear example of how iron-air batteries

could be the next big innovation for large-scale battery usage.

Besides iron-air batteries, solid-state batteries are what George Crabtree, director of the Joint Center for Energy Storage Research, believes to be "very likely... the next big thing at the commercial level."

Solid-state batteries use electrolytes like argyrodite, garnet and perovskite that are more efficient than liquid-electrolytes in nearly all aspects: they're lighter, take up less space and can hold more energy per unit of mass. These qualities make them effective for Electrical Vehicle (EV) usage and grid-scale energy storage.

However, researchers like University of Houston professor Yan Yao, who recently developed a glass-like electrolyte, are still looking for materials that fulfill all four factors for viability in the market: low-cost, easy-to-build, having a high degree of mechan-

ical stability, and chemical stability.

With lithium-based batteries being so ubiquitous, some scientists are looking to improve on the existing model rather than supplanting it entirely.

Batteries made out of Lithium-Sulfur, for example, exhibit four times greater energy density than traditional lithium batteries due to their usage of light, active materials. Ultimately, innovations in batteries are a cornerstone to shaping a more sustainable future.

According to associate professor of materials science at Columbia University Yuan Yang, making renewable energy more reliable will help stabilize energy grids and support a more sustainable energy future.

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

Free electronics, scrap metal drop-off in Wilmington

Will County's next free electronics drop-off event will be Thursday, Nov. 13 from 5-7 p.m. in the parking lot at the city hall, 1165 S. Water St., Wilmington.

All electronic items (broken or obsolete) are accepted. Items include: televisions (limit 2), computers and monitors including desktops, laptops, notebooks, tablets, e-readers), printers, electron-

ic keyboards, fax machines, videocassette recorders, portable digital music players (iPods, MP3s), CD/DVD/Blu-ray players, DVD players/recorders, video game consoles, small scale servers, scanners, electronic mice, digital converter boxes, cable receivers, satellite receivers, computer cable, computer speakers, portable digital assistants

(PDAs) and zip drives.

Also accepted are small scrap metal items including cookie sheets, pots and pans, car jacks, chains, keys, copper pipe and fittings, nuts, bolts, screws, hand tools, metal door knobs, silverware, tool boxes, watches, wire hangers, wire screens and more.

Participants drive up, show ID if asked and then allow staff to remove items from each vehicle.

Wilmington Moose to host steak dinner fundraiser

The public is invited to come eat steak or a pork chop dinner to help send a WHS or Reed-Custer high school graduate off to college.

Wilmington Moose 241 is holding a scholarship fundraiser Saturday, Nov. 8 at the Moose Family Center, 32050 S. West River Rd., Wilmington.

The evening will be from 5 p.m. to 10:30 p.m., serving steak or pork chop dinners from 5 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Chicken strips or nuggets will also be avail-

able.

Music by the Flip Side Band will be from 7:30 p.m. until 10:30 p.m. There will be raffles and gift baskets available so bring a pocketful of cash.

Anyone who would like to donate a basket or items to raffle can drop them off at the Moose Lodge, weekdays, 3 p.m. to 9 p.m. or on the weekend noon to 9 p.m.

All proceeds will go to the Moose Scholarship Fund for Wilmington and Reed-Custer schools.

Forest Preserve to host Homeschooler Day

The Forest Preserve is hosting Homeschool Day - Getting Ready for Winter on Wednesday, Nov. 5, at Four Rivers Environmental Education Center, Channahon, from 10-11:30 a.m.

Elementary-aged homeschoolers will explore how animals adapt to seasonal changes through

interactive demonstrations at McKinley Woods - Kerry Sheridan Grove. Ages 5-10; free. Register by Friday, Oct. 31.

Older homeschoolers will learn how animals adapt to survive winter and how seasonal changes influence evolution. Ages 11-18; free. Register by Friday, Oct. 31.

Oakwood Cemetery cleanup

Oakwood Cemetery in Wilmington is in need of volunteers for its fall cleanup on Saturday, Nov. 1, starting at 8 a.m., rain or shine.

Anyone who can help is asked to meet at the shed for coffee, doughnuts and instructions.

Oakwood Cemetery is located at Williams and Oak Streets.

Reed Township is accepting bids for an outdoor covered pavilion

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Reed Township Office at 440 N. Division St. Braidwood IL. is accepting bids for an outdoor covered pavilion with bathrooms and small kitchen measuring 60 ft x 40 ft. Call the township office for details and plans at 815-458-6068. Bid will be accepted until Nov. 24, 2025 at 4:00 P.M. The bids will be opened Nov. 25, 2025 at 4:15 at the Reed Township Office. The Reed Township reserves the right to accept any or no bids.

Published in the Free Press Newspapers on Wednesday, Oct. 22, 29, Nov. 5, 12, & 19, 2025.

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Fri., Oct. 31, 8pm-12am

Halloween Party

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OBITUARIES

Joe Bexson

MADISON, WI—Joe M. Bexson, 56, of Madison, WI and formerly of Gardner, IL passed away unexpectedly on Oct. 19, 2025, at St. Francis Hospital in Muskogee, OK.

Born on Aug. 20, 1969, in Morris, Joe is the beloved son of Kay Bell and Joe Bexson, Sr. both of Gardner. He was raised in Gardner and graduated from Gardner-South Wilmington High School with the Class of 1987.

During his high school years, and throughout his college breaks, Joe worked at Marketti's Grocery Store, where he built lasting friendships and fond memories. He later attended Daytona State University, earning his Bachelor of Science degree.

From an early age, Joe proved himself to be tough. He went on to demonstrate his dedication and leadership through Scouting America, and was proud to have earned the prestigious rank of Eagle Scout. His passion for scouting continued into adulthood as he served as both a Den Leader and Quartermaster, mentoring countless young scouts and fostering their love of the outdoors.

Joe's professional journey led him into healthcare technology, where he dedicated nearly three decades, currently with G.E. Healthcare as a highly respected and talented engineer. His colleagues will remember him for his expertise, dependability, and the quiet pride he took in his work.

Outside of his career, Joe found joy in the simple pleasures of life. He loved camping, fishing, and working on projects—whether repairing family vehicles, crafting through woodworking, building models, or caring for his motorcycle. A true jack of all trades, Joe's hands were rarely idle, and his heart was always set on helping others.

Throughout his life, Joe remained a devoted son, often traveling between Madison and Gardner to be present for his parents. Above all, he was a loving father who deeply cherished his children. Those who knew Joe will remember him for his warm humor, kind spirit, and unwavering generosity. He always carried a smile, greeted life with optimism, and treated his



pets as cherished family members.

Joe's sudden passing leaves a void in the hearts of many. He will be remembered as funny, selfless, hardworking, and endlessly caring—a man whose legacy of love and laughter endures in those who were fortunate to know him. Gone too soon, but forever remembered.

Survivors include his parents:

Kay Bell and Joe Bexson, Sr., both of Gardner; Amy Bexson and their five children: Tyler (Dion) Bexson of Madison, Henry Bexson of Woodward, IA, Riley Bexson (Madi Ziegert) of Stevens Point, WI, and Chloe Bexson (Max Loeder) and Sofia Bexson, both of Madison; three brothers: Michael Bexson of Gardner, David (Angela) Bexson of South Wilmington, IL and Jeffrey (Joy) Bexson of Gardner; his mother-in-law, Teresa Bunce; nieces and nephews: Jayson Turrentine, Cassandra (Jeffrey) Carlson, Kristen (Lucas) Cullmann, Benjamin Bexson, Christopher Bexson, Amelia Bunce and Scarlett Bunce; aunts and uncles: George (Donna) Bexson of Gardner, Lynne (James) Kociss of Morris, and Robert (Sharon) Pickles of Gardner, and his lifelong friend who was like a brother, Tim Perkins.

Joe was preceded in death by his stepfather, Daniel Bell; step-mother, Barbara Bexson and his father-in-law, Mike Bunce.

Funeral services were held Tuesday, Oct. 28, 2025 at Reeves Funeral Home in Gardner. Deacon William Dunn and Pastor Jan Chandler officiated.

A private family burial followed in Braceville-Gardner Cemetery. Pallbearers and honorary pallbearers were: Tyler Bexson, Henry Bexson, Riley Bexson, Chloe Bexson, Sofia Bexson, Jayson Turrentine, Cassi Carlson, Kristen Cullmann, Ben Bexson and Chris Bexson.

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

Funeral services and arrangements were made under the direction and care of Reeves, Fruland & Baskerville Funeral Homes and Crematory.

Allan Vrdsky



WILMINGTON—Allan A. Vrdsky, 91 of Wilmington, and formerly of Chicago, passed away on Wednesday afternoon, Oct. 22, 2025 surrounded by family at his home.

Born Feb. 24, 1934 in Chicago, Allan was the son of Anton and Zdenka Vrdsky. He graduated from Gage Park High School in Chicago in 1952 and continued on for two years of college. Allan pursued a career in tool and die design where over the years became chief engineer at Daystar Manufacturing from where he retired in 1996. Early in his career he entered into the United States Army in December 1956 and served until his honorable discharge in November of 1962. He was a member of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers for 54 years.

In 1997 Allan met his new neighbor Nancy and over time they became close friends until he later decided to make "the girl next door his wife", and they were married on Nov. 12, 2002. Allan was a loving

husband, son, brother, brother-in-law, uncle and friend to many. He was someone you could always count on. Allan was loved and cherished by many and will be greatly missed but always loved and remembered. May he rest in peace until we meet again.

Allan is survived by his loving wife of 22 years, Nancy (Hir) Vrdsky; and brother and sister-in-law, John and Joann Hir.

Allan is preceded in death by his parents: one sister, Laverne (John) Havlice; two brothers-in-law: Robert and Ronald Hir; and one nephew, Dennis Havlice (Joanne).

Friends may sign the online guest book by logging onto www.BaskervilleFuneral.com

Allan was laid to rest in Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood with full military honors.

Funeral services and arrangements have been made under the direction and care of Reeves, Fruland & Baskerville Funeral Homes and Crematory.

Ellis Schott



BRACEVILLE—Ellis Ray Schott, 96, of Braceville passed away peacefully at his home on Oct. 21, 2025.

He was born Nov. 26, 1928 in Pontiac to Howard and Mabel Schott. Ellis married the love of his life, Delores (nee Leonard) on Sept. 18, 1948. They would go on to have seven children.

Ellis was a veteran of the US Army and retired from Ecolab in 1991. He was an exceedingly talented carpenter; he could fix or build anything with meticulous precision. A remarkable man, whose quiet strength and kind heart were reflected in his woodworking. His true joy was spending time with his family. He was a man of strong values, and he taught his family the importance of family, hard work, and helping others in need. Ellis's kindness, generosity, and unwavering love for his family will never be forgotten.

Ellis is survived by his children: Mike (Linda) Schott, Sandi (Carl) Smith, Karen "Susie" Flowers, Randy (Sandy) Schott, Darrell (Cheryl) Schott, Howard (Deniece) Schott and Ellis (Robyn) Schott; grandchildren: Tammy (Tom) Onsen, Jennifer (Jeff) Bjelland, Jeff (Staci) Schott, John (Tawnya) Mack, Jodie (Chris) Crawford, Bill (Paula) Shelly, Lisa (Adam) Havekost, Robert Byerley Jr., Mike (Janna) Byerley, Carrie (John) Byerley, Mike (Staci) Schott, Jason (Nikki) Schott, Raymond Tyree, Diamond McKenna, Beth (Chris) McPherson, Todd (Krysten) Schott, Kelsey (Jacob) Porterfield, Anthony (Rachel) Cavelle, Aidan (Madison) Schott and Kellan Schott.

Ellis is also survived by his great-grandchildren: Cassandra (Will) Clark, Meredith (Johnny) Wren, Madison (Devin) Kolthoff, Austin (Shawn) Small-McBride, Evan Bjelland, Eva Bjelland, Julie (Sam) Gimple, Jenny Harrington, Derek Schott, Allyson (Patrick) Hawley, Ethan Mack, Aiden Mack, Ella Mack, Brock (Miranda) Crawford, Brady Crawford, Gary (Khris)



Schiavo, Brooke (Miguel) Shelly, Ryan (Taylor) Shelly, Jeff Havekost, Emily (Damian) Dotson, Dylan Leonard, Matthew Leonard, Jordan Ramirez, Peyton Byerley, Abbi Byerley, Scottie (Dave) Sayner, Tyler Sayner, Kapri Schott, Palmer Schott, Blayke Schott, Camden Schott, Casen Schott, Ari McKenna, Mia McKenna, Axl McKenna, Maddie McPehrson, Jake McPherson, Laityn Schott, Merik Schott, Griffin Schott, Myla Porterfield, Aniston Porterfield, Emery Fearday and Riley Cavelle; great-great-grandchildren: Cole Russell, Trent Russell, Ryland Russell, Mason Wren, Nolan Wren, Hadley Wren, Weston Kolthoff, Avery Rayburn, Paisley Gimple, Emmy Gimple, Tori Harrington, Kayla Harrington, Addi Harrington, Grayson Hawley, Emmer Step, River Crawford, Claire Crawford, Joseph Schiavo, Lucas Schiavo, Liyah Shelley and Ava Shelley. Numerous nieces and nephews also survive.

Ellis was preceded in death by his parents, Howard and Mabel Schott; his loving wife, Delores (nee Leonard); his siblings: Lloyd, Gail, Donald, Francis, Ivan, Roy, David, Wayne, Doris, Vera, Mary, Shirley; sons-in law, Robert Byerley Sr. and Tom Flowers; grandsons: Mikie Leonard and William Roscoe Byerley; granddaughter, Heidi Byerly and great-granddaughter, Brittani Sayner.

Cremation rites have been accorded. A memorial visitation was held at R.W. Patterson Funeral Home & Crematory on Friday, Oct. 24, 2025, from 3 p.m. until 7 p.m. Funeral services were held at the funeral home the following day, Saturday, Oct. 25, 2025, at 10 a.m. A private inurnment will take place at Braceville-Gardner Cemetery at a later date.

To share memories or offer condolences, please visit Ellis's online guestbook at www.rwpattersonfuneralhomes.com or find them on Facebook.

Mary Anne Sears

WILMINGTON—Mary Anne Sears (nee Kelly), 77, of Wilmington and previously of Bolingbrook, IL and Peekskill, NY, passed away on Oct. 24, 2025.

Born on May 18, 1948, in the Bronx, NY, Mary Anne was the daughter of the late Edwin and Kathryn (Clancy) Kelly and the stepdaughter of Veronica (Ebner) Kelly. She attended Assumption School and Ladycliff Academy in New York, and later a secretarial school in New York City.

Mary Anne is survived by her children, David Sears and his partner, Jen Yanke, of Wilmington and Christine Sears Williams and her husband, Cliff, of Sugar Grove, IL. She was the proud grandmother of 10 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren. She is also survived by her special sister, Veronica Dwyer, of Peekskill, NY and numerous nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her beloved husband, David Sears and her cherished son, Brian Sears, both formerly of Wilmington; her brother, John and his wife, Kay Kelly, of Hingham, MA and her sister, Catherine and her husband, Gus Baffa, of Niceville, FL. Mary Anne's heart



never stopped loving those she lost. Her devotion to David and Brian was a defining part of her life, and she carried their memory with grace and quiet strength. Now reunited with them, she leaves behind a legacy of love, kindness, and faith that will forever live on in the hearts of her family and friends.

Cremation rites have been accorded.

The family will receive friends for a memorial visitation at Reeves Funeral Home, 75 N. Broadway St. in Coal City on Thursday, Oct. 30, 2025 from 5 p.m. until time of service at 7 p.m. Deacon William Dunn from Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Catholic Parish in Coal City will preside.

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

Cremation services and memorial arrangements have been made under the direction and care of Reeves, Fruland & Baskerville Funeral Homes and Crematory.

Economy, disease push turkey prices up

BY RHIANNON BRANCH
FARMWEEK

A combination of challenges on U.S. farms has pushed turkey prices higher as the calendar nears Thanksgiving, with wholesale prices up about 40%.

American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) economist Bernt Nelson pointed to economic challenges and increased disease pressure as the leading causes in a recent Market Intel analysis.

"Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) has had a major impact on the turkey industry, affecting about 18.7 million turkeys and accounting for 10% of all birds affected by the virus since 2022. This includes 2.2 million turkeys affected so far in 2025," he said Oct. 1.

The next day USDA confirmed another 42,000 turkeys were impacted by HPAI on a commercial turkey farm in Calhoun County, Iowa. With fall waterfowl migration in full swing, the industry faces the likelihood of additional HPAI cases in coming weeks.

Avian Metapneumovirus (AMPV) is also infecting turkey flocks, and while it is far less fatal than HPAI, it threatens future production.

"One of the greatest impacts of AMPV is a reduction in egg sets for breeders producing the next generation of turkeys to replace losses from



Photo by Illinois Farm Bureau

USDA RECENTLY predicted the 2025 national average composite wholesale price for a frozen whole hen turkey will be \$1.32 per pound, up 38 cents per pound, or 40%, from the 2024 average price of 94 cents.

HPAI," Nelson said. "Breeders face a tough road with the risk of egg-laying birds becoming infected with either HPAI, AMPV or both."

The intensity of the two diseases is causing contraction in the nation's turkey flock.

As of Sept. 26, USDA estimated turkey production this year could total 195 million birds, which is down 3% from 2024 and marks the lowest estimate in 40 years. The agency predicts total 2025 turkey production will be 4.84 billion pounds, down 1.8 billion pounds, or 5%, from 2024 and down 11% from nearly 5.5 billion pounds in 2023.

But Nelson said even though turkey supplies are lower than historical averages, demand is also down 12% over the past decade, so there will be plenty of turkey for the holiday sea-

son.

USDA recently predicted the 2025 national average composite wholesale price for a frozen whole hen turkey will be \$1.32 per pound, up 38 cents per pound, or 40%, from the 2024 average price of 94 cents.

"It's important to remember prices are still 32% lower than just three years ago," Nelson said. "These production challenges shouldn't have any impact on consumers' ability to get turkey, but they may translate to higher retail prices this holiday season."

This story was distributed through a cooperative project between Illinois Farm Bureau and the Illinois Press Association. For more food and farming news, visit FarmWeek Now.com.

USF to host annual music rummage sale

WCSF-88.7 FM, the radio station of the University of St. Francis (USF), is hosting its annual Mega Music Rummage Sale on Saturday, Nov. 15, 2025 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. The sale will take place at the University of St. Francis' St. Clare Campus (Assembly Hall), which is located at 1550 Plainfield Road in Joliet.

Donated vinyl LPs and 45s, compact discs, cassettes, sheet music, movies, music books, musical instruments, stereo equipment and more music related items will be available for sale starting at \$1. Donations are still being accepted.

For months, students have been organizing and cataloging the treasures for the sale. Admission to the event during its scheduled time is free of charge. Early bird admission at 7:00 a.m. is available with a \$20 donation. All proceeds will be used to operate the nonprofit radio station serving

the Joliet area.

WCSF-88.7 FM is well-known in the greater Joliet area as the home of the popular "Spirit of Christmas" programming that is broadcasted each year from Thanksgiving Day to New Year's Day. During the rest of the year, the station plays a great mix of new, alternative, independent and local music programmed by USF students. The station is available on the radio and online at wcsf.streamon.fm.

The University of St. Francis, in Joliet, Ill., serves close to 3,000 students nationwide and offers undergraduate, graduate, doctoral and certificate programs in the arts and sciences, business, education, nursing and social work. There are over 53,000 USF alumni across the globe. For information, call 800-735-7500 or visit stfrancis.edu.

Become a roads scholar, get your new Illinois highway map

The Illinois Department of Transportation has released the new Illinois Official Highway Map. The map includes updates to listings and locations of colleges and universities, Amtrak service, tourist attractions, recreational areas and more! It also commemorates next year's 100th anniversary of Route 66, with updates that better represent the alignment of the historic road.

"While your first choice for directions these days typically is a phone, paper maps continue to be popular with the public," said Illinois Transportation Secretary Gia Biagi. "They also are invaluable. You never know when cell service will drop in an unfamiliar area. It's good practice to keep a paper copy on hand for these situations as well as for travel planning."

The map's cover features a picturesque sunset along U.S. 34 between Mendota and Princeton, near La Moille.

The photograph was the winner of IDOT's employee map cover contest, submitted by Trisha Thompson, IDOT's Region 2 Engineer.

For easy access to information, the maps come with QR codes to connect to IDOT's Getting Around Illinois for travel conditions, Amtrak, the Office of Tourism's Enjoy Illinois campaign as well as Illinois Department of Natural Resources historic sites and parks.

The Illinois Official Highway Map is funded through the Federal Highway Administration and published by IDOT every two years on recycled paper. The map is printed with vegetable-oil-based inks.

To request a map, contact DOT.maps@illinois.gov. Free copies also will be available at interstate rest areas and other IDOT facilities.

Lawmakers apprehensive about new union pick

At the end of the 2024 spring state legislative session, the Illinois Federation of Teachers issued a decidedly diplomatic press release.

IFT President Dan Montgomery praised the new state budget as “crucial for our state’s success,” and applauded increases in K-12 and early childhood education funding.

Montgomery did criticize the “meager” increase in higher education funding and called on the state to “ensure full funding for PreK-12, higher education, and early childhood” programs now.

“The IFT expresses our gratitude to legislators for their hard work and collaboration throughout this session,” Montgomery wrote in conclusion. He warned, however, that “we are committed to intensifying our efforts and working collectively to identify sustainable revenue streams” to fund public education at all levels.

Well, after another year of status quo funding increases, the IFT leadership has apparently decided that diplomacy doesn’t work.

Chicago Teachers Union President Stacy Davis Gates was elected to succeed Montgomery at



Rich Miller

the union’s convention earlier this month in northwest suburban Rosemont. Montgomery had earlier announced he was leaving the union after 15 years at the helm.

Davis Gates said in a press release that the new IFT leadership is “ready to fight to finally deliver on the promises that politicians in Springfield have made but not kept to our students in every district in Illinois.”

What they want, first and foremost, is full and immediate funding of the Evidence-Based Funding formula, which the CTU claims would instantly send an additional \$1.6 billion in state money to Chicago schools and \$3 billion statewide, which the state does not currently have. They also want a much better, and expensive, pension deal for Tier Two retirees.

Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson spoke at the IFT convention the day Davis Gates was elected and blistered state Democrats for not stepping up.

Johnson, of course, is a former CTU staffer and is super-tight with the union.

After saying “I’ve done my part,” by recently pro-

posing his own budget plan (which relies heavily on one-time revenues and taxes that may not ever pass), Mayor Johnson demanded the state “release” the \$3 billion for the funding formula, as if that money was just sitting around waiting to be spent.

“You either support public education or you do not,” Johnson warned Springfield. “I am tired of lip service when it comes to the education of working people. You will stand for righteousness and stand for public education or get the hell out of the way,” he said to thunderous applause.

“If you believe we have to cut the corporate interest loopholes, then fix it,” Mayor Johnson added, even though corporate tax hikes/loophole closures have been a staple of Pritzker’s annual budgets for years, with more likely on the way during veto session.

“If you believe in a millionaire’s tax, then pass it,” the mayor said, despite the fact that a graduated income tax was rejected by a majority of Illinois voters in 2020.

We haven’t had an IFT president who was also a CTU president in 20 years. Chicago leadership had been the norm at the statewide union for years. Those CTU presidents, though often combative and fierce unionists, were not in the same mold as

the current CTU president. Davis Gates, a progressive activist at heart, is not exactly known for public diplomatic niceties.

I’ve written before how the Chicago Teachers Union’s close progressive allies have tried using aggressive advocacy at the Statehouse similar to what they often do at the Chicago city council.

But it has backfired whenever it was tried. All they succeeded in doing was angering state legislators.

Not surprisingly, President Davis Gates’ election caused more than a few gasps and groans among rank and file legislators last week. She now leads the largest union in the Illinois AFL-CIO. And the Illinois Federation of Teachers has plenty of members in school districts outside Chicago, both suburban and Downstate.

Legislators who looked at what was happening in Chicago with concern from afar could very well now see that happen in their own districts.

And even though the CTU has yet to directly challenge sitting legislators at the ballot boxes, that could change as the statewide union moves into a new era.

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

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Wreaths Across America

Sponsor a wreath for a veteran's grave at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood. The wreath laying will be held on Saturday, Dec. 13. Deadline to order wreaths is Nov. 25. Be sure to include Group ID: M00085P - ILALNE Cemetery ID. Sponsorship is a tax deductible donation and may be made for a specific veteran or any veteran.

Complete the form below. Checks or money orders should be made payable to Wreaths Across America and mailed to: OCP Wreath Project, C/O Will Farm Bureau, 100 Manhattan Rd., Joliet, IL 60433.

Your name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip _____

Grave specific sponsorship

Complete a separate form for each veteran. Sponsors who attend the wreath laying on Saturday, Dec. 13, may place the wreath(s) on that specific grave.

Veteran's name: _____

Section and grave marker (required): _____

Contact phone number (required): _____

Will you be there to place the wreath yourself:
Yes _____ No _____

Non-specific grave sponsorship

One wreath \$17 _____ Two wreaths at \$34 _____

Four wreaths \$68 _____ 10 wreaths for \$170 _____

Corporate: 100 wreaths for \$1,700 _____

To ensure your wreath is placed on a specific grave consider attending Dec. 13 to place the wreath on the grave itself, if at all possible.

Baptist church to host Alzheimer’s caregiver support group

If you or someone you know is caring for a loved one with memory problems, you are invited to attend a caregivers support group that meets the second Tuesday of every month at 7 p.m. at the First Baptist Church of Coal City, 4470 E. Route 113 in Coal City.

This meeting is for caregivers only. For additional information, please contact Becky Haldorson at 815-791-2658.

Alzheimer’s caregiver support groups have many benefits for both caregivers and patients. Caregiving takes a heavy toll on the caregivers’ mental and physical health and the health of the patient with

dementia is directly related to the health of his or her caregiver: the healthier the caregiver, the healthier the patient, and vice versa.

Support group participants, value support groups as a place to learn more factual information about dementia. Increased education about dementia makes caregivers more effective: they are better able to respond to patients’ needs when they understand and can anticipate them.

Furthermore caregiver depression decreases as caregiver education about dementia increases, and when caregiver depression decreases, patient outcomes improve.

CC Methodist to host blood drive

Coal City United Methodist Church, located at 6805 E. McArde Rd., Coal City, will host a Community Blood Drive in conjunction with Versiti Blood Oct. 29 from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.

If you would like to donate blood, please contact Karen Hart at 708-217-5808 to schedule your preferred time or you may register online at versiti.org/il.

Walk-ins are also welcome, but appointments are recommended. Please

bring a photo ID, eat a good meal, and be sure to drink plenty of water before donating. Please consider giving blood, one pint of blood can save up to three lives.

BYOB crafts & crows

The Forest Preserve is hosting BYOB Crafts and Crows on Thursday, Nov. 6, at Four Rivers Environmental Education Center from 6-8 p.m.

Sip and craft while learning about crows and their quirky history with humans. Materials provided;

beer and wine permitted. Ages 21 or older; \$5 per person. Register by Tuesday, Nov. 4.

Village church to host mobile food pantry

The Village is a church that works with the community to help where it is needed the most. Many families are struggling to bring food to the table.

That is why The Village is partnering with Northern Illinois Food Bank and will host a Mobile Food Pantry at the Reed-Custer Middle School, 407 Comet Dr., Braidwood, on Monday, Nov. 10, at 5 p.m.

Distribution will be first come first served. There is no registration, proof of income or I.D. required.

HALLOWEEN

Trick-or-treat

FRIDAY, OCT. 31

3-7 p.m.
Elwood

4-6 p.m.
Diamond
South Wilmington

4-6:30 p.m.
Mazon

4:30-7:30 p.m.
Wilmington

4-7 p.m.
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Morris

4-8 p.m.
Essex

5-8 p.m.
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CLUES ACROSS
1. El __, Texas town
5. Roker's tool
8. A lot
12. Traveling by ground
14. Spelling competition
15. Two-toed sloth
16. Small perfumed bag
18. "Much __ about nothing"
19. Tough-skinned mollusk
20. Removes from record
21. It warms the planet
22. Leafy green
23. Quality of arriving favorably
26. Living thing
30. "Six of Crows" author Bardugo
31. Got around a rule
32. Resin from burned substance

CLUES DOWN
63. Famous museum
64. Self

1. Bullfighting maneuver
2. From a distance
3. Soul and calypso song
4. Expressions of delight
5. Lower in esteem
6. Inner region of an organ
7. Flowers
8. A bog
9. Remove a fastening
10. Membranes
11. Enormous
13. One who abstains from drink
17. Malayan wild ox
24. Type of student
25. Rejecting all moral principles
26. Sino-Soviet block
27. Egyptian unit of weight
28. Wrong
29. Make a mistake
35. Indicates location
36. Boxing's "GOAT"
37. Where wrestlers compete
38. Timid
40. Disney town
41. Suggesting the horror of death and decay
42. Male parent
43. Remove for good
44. Simple shoes
45. Flowers
47. Hindi courtesy title for a man
48. Not pleased
49. "Atlas Shrugged" author
52. CIA officer and writer
53. Hoodlum
54. __ Von Bismarck, Iron Chancellor
55. Woolen rugs

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COMET SPORTS



RCHS SENIOR soccer players and parents were recently honored during Senior Night. From left are Vinny Bollino, Jayden Bustos, Ethan Hertz, Conor Kochanny, Dylan Maschmeyer, Tristan Randall and Isaiah VanOvermeiren.

R-C soccer seniors give their farewells

RCHS recently recognized senior soccer players who have dedicated themselves to their respective programs throughout their high school careers.

Vinny Bollino is the son of Jason and Courtney Bollino. After graduation, Vinny plans on joining the Army. One of his favorite things about being on the RCHS Soccer team is getting to hang out with his friends every day. Vinny will miss playing Clash with his teammates on the way to matches.

Jayden Bustos is the son of Yazmin Bustos. In the fall, Jayden plans on continuing his education by attending Joliet Junior College or possibly heading off to a 4-year university. His favorite memories are all of the team

bonding activities that they do every year. Jayden will miss being able to step onto the field and playing with teammates he's had by his side all these years.

Ethan Hertz is the son of Jason and Amanda Hertz. After graduation, Ethan plans on entering the trades as an electrician. One of his favorite memories was going to Portillos and playing laser tag for the team bonding day during his freshman year. Ethan will miss the summer practices and getting to meet new friends throughout the season.

Conor Kochanny is the son of Chris Kochanny. After graduation, Conor plans on entering the trades union as a welder. His favorite part of being on the RC Soccer team are all of the bus

rides home singing *Someone Like You* by Adele together as a team. Conor will miss playing soccer and miss all of the memories he gets to make with his teammates. He will also miss the times of dabbing Coach Gleixner up after all of the practices and games.

Dylan Maschmeyer is son of Alicia Vasil and step dad Johnny Ensing. After graduation, although he may be undecided, he knows he would like to find a future in the culinary arts or acting. One of his favorite memories was making the regional finals his junior year as well as the time he scored a hat trick against Bishop McNamara.

Dylan will miss his teammates and coaches who helped him get to where he is today while

playing the sport he loves. He would also like to add - "Enjoy and make the most out of sports while you're in high school because it flies by. Put in the work and you will succeed." Take it from him because he barely played his freshman year and now he's a team captain.

Tristan Randall is the son of James and Armanda. After graduation, he plans on attending a 4-year university to work towards a career in mechanical engineering. His favorite part of being on the RC Soccer team is having a chance to play with the same teammates that he played next to years ago. Tristan will miss having his dad on the sidelines guiding him and playing with the same friends all this time.

Isaiah VanOvermeiren is the grandson of Jerry and Roxanne Alton. In the fall, Isaiah plans on attending Joliet Junior College to work towards a degree in computer science or business and then eventually head out of Illinois to a university.

His favorite memory was going to the escape room last year for a team bonding day. Isaiah will miss the connections he made so fast with his teammates. He would also like to add that soccer gave him the drive to keep going and taught him about commitment even when things get hard.



Photo by Eric Fisher

LADY COMET Gracie Robinson tips the ball over the net during a recent match at Wilmington.



Photo by Eric Fisher
LADY COMET MACKENZIE
FOOTE sets the ball to her
hitter during a recent home
match.

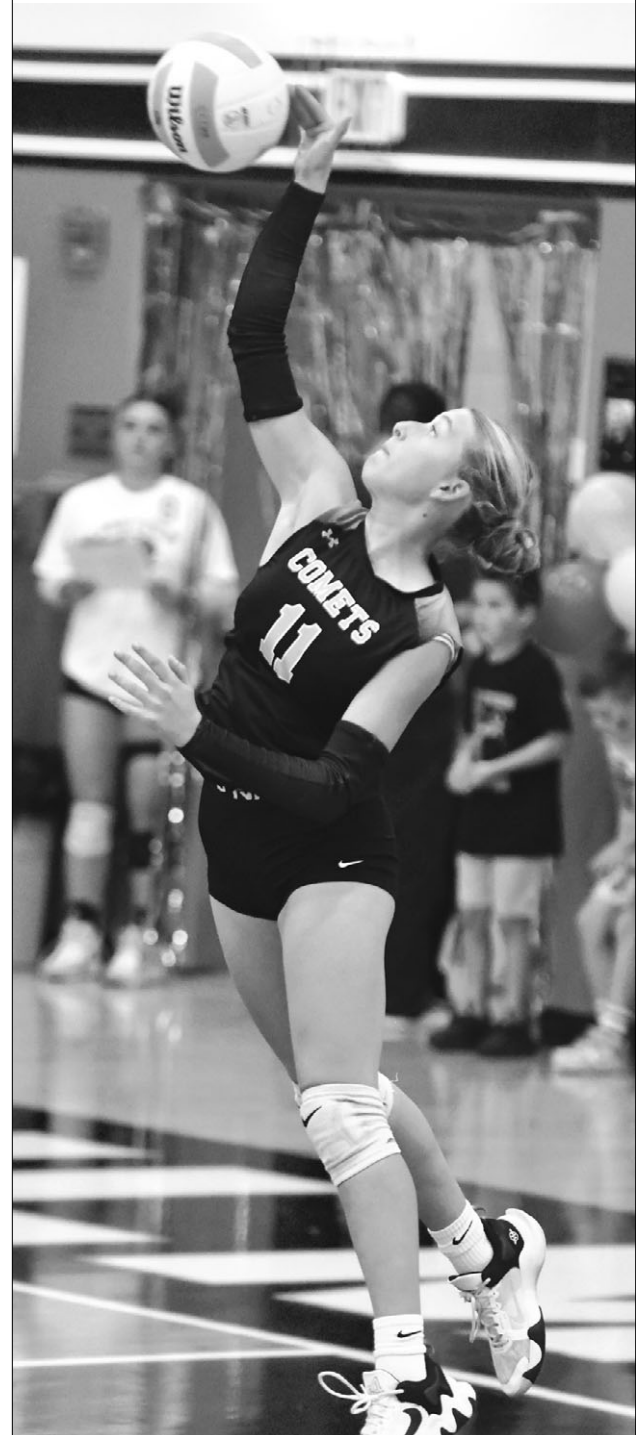


Photo by Eric Fisher

REED-CUSTER'S SOPHIA MOYERS jump serves the ball to during a recent game at Wilmington.



LADY COMET Ella Anderson passes the ball to her teammate to set up a kill.



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COMET SPORTS



TOUCHDOWN! Nathan Vogler (20) and Alejandro Fierro (50) signal a touchdown during Saturday's victory.



COMET RUNNINGBACK Kaiden Klein gets a fine block while sprinting for a touchdown on Saturday during a 57-6 final home victory over Comer.



BLOCKING BUDDIES—Comet Kris Budick finds an opening in the line thanks to teammates Dominic Alaimo (54), Dhane Debelak (65) and Nathan Vogler (20) blocking out Comer defenders.



COMET SENIOR Kris Budick stretches his reach with the ball to score a touchdown during a reception on Saturday during a 57-6 win over Comer.



JUST OUT OF REACH—Reed-Custer's Eddie Bryan makes a valiant effort to catch the ball during Saturday's final game of the season against Comer.

Comer no match for Comets

BY JIM SHELTON
SPORTS CORRESPONDENT

Reed-Custer got the chance to play one more time this year in front of their home crowd and they didn't disappoint, jumping on Comer from the start and rolling to a 57-6 win Saturday afternoon.

"It was a nice ending to the season and everything we put together. I was talking with coaches after the game and we were saying how we can feel the appre-

ciation and enjoyment," said head coach Joe Turek.

"It made us think that we made the right decision to schedule that game."

Kaiden Klein capped the game's opening drive with a short touchdown run and the junior was just getting started.

His 60-yard run made it 16-0 R-C before the Catamounts responded with a 56-yard touchdown pass, cutting the deficit to 10, 16-6.

But that's as close as they would get as Klein recorded his third touchdown of the opening quarter, a 24-yard run, in the final minute of the frame.

A Thomas Emery interception set up a Kris Budick one yard plunge extending the lead to 30-6 with three minutes left in the half.

"It was a solid performance. We were able to run the ball, which is what we've been able to do if we're having succeforand then defensively, we controlled their run and got them into passing situations."

A turnover led to Klein's fourth touchdown of the half and the rout was on.

The junior finished with nine carries for 160 yards and added a five yard catch.

"Klein is really good sideline to sideline and we're looking for him to be a little better cutting it up field and he was able to do that a couple times and

found success," said Turek.

Dominic Alaimo powered in for a score, quarterback Jesse Tresouthick connected with Budick on a 25-yard touchdown pass and Sam Crotty wrapped up the scoring with a touchdown run.

Tresouthick was 4-for-7 passing for 61 yards and had two carries for 20 yards Budick recorded 45 yards on five rushes and Aidan Shultz had a fumble recovery.

"Budick with a touchdown on the ground and through the air. Nice way for him to go out. It's been a kind of coming out party for him and he was one of our mainstays."

The Comets finish the season 4-5 overall and were team 260 out of the 256-man playoff field. 15 seniors played their final game for the gold and black.

"Their personalities are going to be missed. Keeping a positive energy, vibe and attitude the majority of time they were with us helps with what we're trying to do. There's going to be a lot of big holes to fill there without those guys, but it was nice to go out how we did Saturday, even though we didn't get the goal we wanted."

The future is bright for the Comets as they matched their win total from the last two seasons combined and were a play or two away from a return trip to the playoffs.



REED-CUSTER SENIOR Thomas Emery gets a hand on a pass in the end zone despite pressure from a Comer defender. Unfortunately, Emery was unable to hang onto the ball despite the effort, yet the Comets won the contest 57-6.