

Coaler speaksters win conference



A double win for the Coalers



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Multi-year road plan coming for Diamond

BY ANN GILL EDITOR

When the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning [CMAP] put out a call for projects, the village of Diamond requested help with road improvements so that the village could get the most bang for its buck.

CMAP granted the town's request and a multi-year plan to improve the town's roadways is forthcoming.

"I'm really excited about this grant," Mayor Terry Kernc said about the written plan.

The process will begin this spring with a survey vehicle traveling village streets to collect digital imagery of the pavement surface and roadside assets.

Data collected from the drive will be used to develop a 10-year paving plan.

According to the mayor, the village really doesn't have any excellent road surfaces—most falling in the moderate to below category—but the hope is that will change in the years ahead.

The village has completed various pavement and patching projects over the years, however no large scale improvements have

taken place at a single time.

Moving forward the mayor would prefer to see larger sections completed at one time and said the plan should facilitate that.

"If you do one road in a subdivision that's great. But later when you have to go in and do more, then you have all of this heavy equipment coming in and going over roads you already did. To me it just makes more sense to do a whole neighborhood at a time and then move on to the next and at the end of the 10 years, create a schedule where you go back and maintain those roads," Kernc said.

When road improvements do take place, the village's plan is to complete required ADA ramp improvements per its ADA transition plan—a state requirement.

Along with the ramps, Kernc said the idea is to also repair and or replace any cracked or heaving sidewalks in that neighborhood.

And, while the work is being done, the mayor wants to see about reinforcing the sides of the road closest to the curb. Kernc said there is a noticeable wearing down of the roadway

SEE ROADS, PAGE 2

Diamond to improve water flow

BY ANN GILL EDITOR

Close to \$1 million will be invested in the village of Diamond's water and sewer infrastructure.

The village received \$340,000 from the American Rescue Plan [ARP] which will be combined with a federal earmark of just over \$600,000 to replace approximately 2,000 feet of aging and failing water main, rehabilitate lift stations and replace service line connections to a handful of homes along Division Street [Route 113].

According to Mayor Terry Kernc, the village will replace an old water main located in the area of School Street and Perona Court, a project that has been on the village's to-do list for a long time.

"We use about 240,000 gallons of water a day and we used to use more. But we've located leaks and we've got them down as much as possible so we are not wasting water. If you keep your mains in shape you have a better chance of doing that," Kernc said.

"WE USE ABOUT 240,000 GALLONS OF WATER A DAY AND WE USED TO USE MORE. BUT WE'VE LOCATED LEAKS AND WE'VE GOT THEM DOWN AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE SO WE ARE NOT WASTING WATER. IF YOU KEEP YOUR MAINS IN SHAPE YOU HAVE A BETTER CHANCE OF DOING THAT."

TERRY KERNC VILLAGE OF DIAMOND MAYOR

A 1.5 inch water service line that runs along the north side of Division Street from Dewey Street west to McGinty Street will be abandoned and the homes serviced by that line will be connected to a larger main located on the southside of the roadway. That will require the village to bore under the state highway to make the connection.

The rehabilitation of lift stations include pumps and installation of a supervisory control and data acquisition

SEE WATER, PAGE 2

Ching, ching, ching Illinois cashes in on video gaming

BY ANN GILL EDITOR

The bright lights of Las Vegas might be a draw, but you don't have to travel far to hear the distinctive ring of slot machines.

There are 43 locations within the communities of Braidwood, Coal City and Wilmington where individuals can wager a dollar in a video gaming machine. And in 2022 more than \$40 million in the three communities went into those machines.

While that is a lot of cash, it's pocket change compared to the \$10.53 billion fed into gaming machines across the state, a 9.2% increase from the year before.

The Illinois Gaming Board [IGB] reports over \$31.8 billion was played with individuals cashing out \$7.82 billion.

In 2022, the state of Illinois collected \$786 million in gaming taxes, an increase of around 9.5% from the prior year.

The increases seen in the past year can be attributed to additional licenses and machines going on-line, amounts being played and cashed out. Whatever the reason, the state continues to cash in and that means local municipalities are too.

A portion of the net terminal income collected by the state goes back to the municipalities where gaming is allowed and last year that amounted to \$135.5 million

Braidwood's cut was \$70,544.17 while the city of Wilmington's share was



Courtesy photo

MORE THAN \$10.5 billion—\$40 million of that locally—was pumped into Illinois video gaming terminals according to reports posted by the Illinois Gaming Board.

\$216,133.34.

When it comes to the trio of towns that make up the Coal

City area, the village of Carbon Hill received \$33,730.50, Coal City's came in at just under

\$98,000 and Diamond collected over \$112,200 which went toward utility reimbursements for its residents—ultimately eliminating the debt surcharge from the bill.

Video gaming went on-line in September 2012 and in that time Illinois residents and visitors to the Land of Lincoln have pumped \$53.3 billion into gaming machines located in bars, restaurants and even gas stations—especially those located along the state's highways and interstates.

Over 10 years and three months, those players have cashed out \$39.55 billion and contributed over \$4.4 billion to the state and local communities—that's about 8% of Illinois' 2023 budget.

At the close of 2022, Illinois had 8,693 licensed establishments operating 47,378 gaming terminals—figures that increased throughout the year.

Just last week, IGB posted the December 2022 gaming report that put the final totals on how much money went in, how much was played and the amount cashed out over the course of 12 months, as well as the state and local municipalities share.

Here's what is reported locally:

Braidwood—seven establishments with 37 terminals. Amount in \$5,590,767, \$1,498,928.16 played, \$4,179,886.29 cashed out, state share \$409,156.33, municipality share \$70,544.17. Emmy's Cafe generating the most play and Joneseze Bar-B-Que

SEE GAMING, PAGE 2

Coal City taking a new look at solar panels

BY ANN GILL EDITOR

A homeowner's request to install solar panels is prompting a fresh look at the town's code.

When Sarah Stroner's permit application was denied because it failed to comply with Coal City's rules for small scale solar energy conversion

systems, she filed a variance request.

Prior to a scheduled public hearing on Feb. 6, Stroner appeared before the Planning and Zoning Board to layout her request that seeks relief from the rules that govern the placement of solar panels' alignment, surface area and inset from the roof edge.

At a meeting last week,

Stroner told planning commissioners that when she tried to comply with the code she discovered the rules place the inset of the panels at 48 inches [4 feet] from the edge of the roof rather than the industry standard of 3 feet or 36 inches.

For that reason her permit was denied, however the plan for installation on her home in the 1000 block of North Street

doesn't quite meet some other terms outlined in the code such as the alignment of the panels on her roof.

Stroner's request is that the panel installation be in a, "singular concurrent L shape," that follows the shape of her roof.

The code states panels must be aligned in a rectangular shape and in her particular

case, the panels need to be mounted on the street side of her south-facing home which also appears to be a deviation from the rules.

"We've kinda restricted ourselves into a box and we need to make some corrections," said Maria Lewis, the Board's chairman.

Stroner told commissioners that in order to achieve the

maximum offset of her energy costs, she needs 22 panels on her roof. However, based on its

SEE SOLAR, PAGE 2



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Roads

edges due to the weight of the garbage trucks.

"The trouble is if we get in there and start paving and don't reinforce that part alongside the curb and gutter, we are going to have to replace curb and gutter in those neighborhoods," Kernc said.

Where the improvements begin will be based on recommendations put forth in the pavement management plan.

The mayor has an idea of what areas are in the most need—Orchard Park, Clark, Stellan, Hugh and McGinty and Meadow Lane.

"I can't wait to get [the report]. I can't wait to see if they agree," Kernc said. The plan takes personal opinion out of the decision making process and puts it all on technical and factual data.

"I think it lends credibility and gives the village an actual plan to move forward with and stick to," Kernc said.

The CMAP grant doesn't come with any funding for improvements, therefore any upgrades would come from general fund dollars.

Kernc said there is also a

donation that has been agreed to for the village. The funds coming from the developers of a large scale solar farm going in between Gardner and Dwight that is utilizing the town's enterprise zone.

Although not a requirement, Kernc said the developers graciously offered the funds.

"The idea is to fuel that money right in from the get-go and kick this [improvement] off and try to get a big chunk done and continue from there," Kernc said.

CMAP is supporting 20 projects out of 64 applications submitted. Seven of the approved projects were for pavement management planning—Diamond and the city of Wilmington among them.

"The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning has a long history of preparing communities for better futures. These projects foster collaboration throughout the region, making our communities safer and more prosperous. We look forward to building a stronger region where all communities can thrive together," said CMAP executive director Erin Aleman."

Unit 1 Students of the Week



Courtesy photos
COAL CITY ELEMENTARY
 Students of the Week for Jan. 23 in row one are (from left): Brady Shaw, Aubrey Czaja, Keeley Conrath, Logan Frese and Jameson Lindley. Drew Poeschel starts off row two along with Gabriel Watters-Lopez, Nolan Frederiksen, Anden Gagliardo, Ainsley Viano and Slater Hill.



Courtesy photo

A COAL CITY homeowner's request to install solar panels on their home in the 1000 block of North St. is prompting a fresh look at the town's code. A subcommittee of the Planning and Zoning Board has been established to review and recommend possible changes to the rules.



Courtesy photo

COAL CITY EARLY Childhood Center Students of the Week for Jan. 23 in row one are Bella Shaw and Addison Reszel. Amelia Olszewski is in row two with (from left) Makenna Aspel, Ailbe McCants, Larkyn Kaluzny and Eleanor Egeland. Standing in row three are Zayden Palmer, Martina Pruiim, DJ Murphy, Blakely Riley and Fiona Shabani.



Courtesy photo

COAL CITY INTERMEDIATE School Students of the Week for Jan. 23 are (from left): Rylan Davy, Sienna Ruffato, Liam Cheney and Aubrie Kavanaugh.

Solar

size, the most she can have put up is 16. Although she would like the full 22 panels, she is asking for at least 20 and that would still achieve 100% offset on the cost, but 105% is currently allowed.

Lewis pointed out that a move to solar power is something that is being pushed at the state and federal levels, even with electric suppliers such as ComEd.

"In looking at our code that we have, we have a little bit of work to do bring this into more conformity. This is the wave of the future," Lewis said.

Before the code can be amended, the Planning and Zoning Board needs to review what's on the books and present a recommendation for consideration among its members.

Lewis and commissioner John Hawkinson will take on that task.

"I'm sure this is the way it's going to move in the future for a lot of people and this gives us an opportunity to review our code and make corrections and make it a little smoother process," Lewis said.

In the meantime, Stroner's plan for solar panels is on hold until the public hearing and a final approval from the Village Board that will come based on a recommendation from the town planners.

"I would love to get it approved for that original design, but I would also be happy with even putting 20 in a rectangle with the 36 [inset]," Stroner said.

Water

[SCADA] system—a cloud based communication software program designed to monitor equipment.

The improvements being undertaken by the Village Board will prepare the community for the next 20 years or so, the mayor said.

The federal earmark was secured by U.S. Senators Tammy Duckworth and Dick Durbin who secured more than \$182 million for Illinois projects as part of the fiscal year 2023 Omnibus Appropriations Act.

"Our state and our nation are stronger when we invest in our communities and families—and that's what this bipartisan funding agreement does," Duckworth said.

Durbin adds, "the use of Congressionally directed spending provides members of Congress, who know their states and districts better than federal agency personnel in Washington, with the ability to direct federal funding to priority projects in their communities."

The North Central Illinois Council of Governments [NCICG] assisted the village in applying for the funds.

Kernc and the Village Board are looking to gain additional funding to support the planned improvements through a grant being offered by Will County—the money coming from its share of ARP dollars.

Kernc said the request will seek funding to support the installation of the SCADA system at the water and wastewater treatment plants and three lift stations.

The secured system would provide the village with 24/7 monitoring of the facilities and equipment, providing staff with off-site monitoring and immediate notification of system failures.

Attorney Black files Pilch estate claim

PUBLIC NOTICE
 IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT GRUNDY COUNTY - IN PROBATE
 No. 2023 PR 1
 In the Matter of the Estate of ALBERT J. PILCH, Deceased

Attorney Black files Younger estate claim

PUBLIC NOTICE
 IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT GRUNDY COUNTY - IN PROBATE
 No. 2023 PR 2
 In the Matter of the Estate of ELMO RAY YOUNGER, Deceased

CLAIM NOTICE
 NOTICE is given to creditors of the death of Albert J. Pilch. Letters of office as Independent Co-Executors were issued to Laura Holman, 24 Lakewood Court, Morris, Illinois 60450 and Denise Haug, 849 E. North St., Morris, IL 60450, whose attorney is FRANK J. BLACK, BLACK & BLACK, 201 Liberty Street, Suite 211, Morris, Illinois 60450.

Claims against the estate may be filed in the Office of the Clerk of the Court at Grundy County Courthouse, 111 E. Washington St., Morris, IL 60450, with the representative, or both, within six months from the date of the first publication of this notice or, if mailing or delivery of a notice is required by Section 5/18-3 of the Probate Act of 1975, the date stated in that notice. Any claim not filed on or before that date is barred. Copies of a claim filed with the clerk must be mailed or delivered to the representative and to the attorney within 10 days after it has been filed.

LAURA HOLMAN
 DENISE HAUGE
 INDEPENDENT CO-EXECUTORS

Frank J. Black
 Black & Black
 201 Liberty Street
 Suite 211
 P.O. Box 148
 Morris, IL 60450
 815-942-0594

Published in the Coal City Courant on Jan. 11, 18 and 25, 2023.

CLAIM NOTICE
 NOTICE is given to creditors of the death of Elmo Ray Younger. Letters of office as Independent Executor were issued to Raymadiel Younger, 220 W. Spring Rd., Coal City, Illinois 60416, whose attorney is FRANK J. BLACK, BLACK & BLACK, 201 Liberty Street, Suite 211, Morris, Illinois 60450.

Claims against the estate may be filed in the Office of the Clerk of the Court at Grundy County Courthouse, 111 E. Washington St., Morris, IL 60450, with the representative, or both, within six months from the date of the first publication of this notice or, if mailing or delivery of a notice is required by Section 5/18-3 of the Probate Act of 1975, the date stated in that notice. Any claim not filed on or before that date is barred. Copies of a claim filed with the clerk must be mailed or delivered to the representative and to the attorney within 10 days after it has been filed.

RAYMADIEL YOUNGER
 INDEPENDENT EXECUTOR

Frank J. Black
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 201 Liberty Street
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 815-942-0594

Published in the Coal City Courant on Jan. 18, 25 and Feb. 1, 2023.

Gaming

ceased gaming operations in February.

- Carbon Hill—two establishments with 11 terminals. Amount in \$2,274,429 in, \$8,136,930.67 played, \$1,599,821.14 cashed out, state share \$195,636.67, municipality share \$33,730.50.
- Bum's Tavern—the first local establishment to go on-line in 2013—generated the most

play.

- Coal City—seven establishments operating 38 terminals. Amount in \$7,668,834, \$22,585,275.19 played, \$5,714,161.65 cashed out, state share \$566,855.81, village share \$97,733.76. Emmy's Cafe generating the most play.
- Diamond—seven licensed establishments operating 41 terminals. Amount in \$7,986,685, \$25,141,472.77 played, \$5,742,131.94 cashed out, state share \$650,921.20, village share \$112,277.77. Generating the most play was Minit Mart, LLC.
- Wilmington—20 establishments with 108 active terminals. Amount in

\$16,759,358, \$52,025,562.79 played, \$12,436,695.61 cashed out, state share \$1,253,574.58, city share \$216,133.34. TA Operating LLC generated the most play with 10 terminals.

- Grundy County—six establishments with 33 terminals. Amount in \$4,932,485, \$15,054,250.52 played, \$3,710,157.70 cashed out, state share \$354,475.91, county share \$61,116.55.
- Will County —21 licensed establishments with 115 terminals. Amount in \$23,998,423, \$74,868,207.72 played, \$17,571,739.96 cashed out, state share \$1,863,740.13, county share \$321,334.29.

- Essex —three establishments with 18 active terminals. Amount in \$2,026,623, \$6,648,696.43 played, \$1,496,553.91 cashed out, state share \$153,720.63, municipality share \$26,503.55.
- Godley—one establishment with six terminals. Amount in \$1,319,015, \$4,068,461.29 played, \$964,911.56 cashed out, state share \$102,690.21, village share \$17,705.20.
- Braceville—one establishment with six terminals. Amount in \$697,643, amount played \$2,122,104.94, \$486,653.74 cashed out, state share \$61,187.19, town share \$10,549.51.

Attorney Wheeler files Xolio adoption notice

PUBLIC NOTICE
 IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, GRUNDY COUNTY, ILLINOIS
 Case No. 22AD8

IN RE THE ADOPTION OF MICHAEL XOLIO, A MINOR, AND ELIZABETH RODRIGUEZ-PEREZ AND JHONATAN VALVERDE-HILDAGO PETITIONERS, AND FRANCISCO XOLIO, RESPONDENT

ADOPTION NOTICE
 To: All Whom It May Concern
 Take notice a Petition for Adoption was filed in the Circuit Court of Grundy County, Illinois on November 16, 2022, for the adoption of Michael Xolio.

Now therefore, unless any person whom it may concern files an answer to the Petition in said action or otherwise files an appearance therein in the said Circuit Court of Grundy County, 111 E. Washington Street, in the City of Morris, Illinois, on or before the 13th day of February, 2023, a default may be entered against you at any time after that day and a judgment in entered in accordance with the prayer of said petition.

Dated: 1/3/2023, 12:59 PM, 2023
 Corri Trotter SM
 Circuit Clerk of Grundy County
 Garret Wheeler - Atty. # 6270818
 Wheeler Law Firm, Ltd.
 Attorney for Petitioners
 305 E. North St.
 Morris, IL 60450
 815-942-5555
 Gwheeler23@hotmail.com

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Eric D. Fisher, publisher
 Ann Gill, editor

Mayor looking to beautify town with grant funds

BY ANN GILL
EDITOR

On the corner of her desk is a stack of grant applications requesting funds to improve roads, municipal infrastructure and beautify the community.

It's not uncommon to see the mayor's car parked outside the Diamond Village Hall on a weekday

evening or weekend. It's her time to put down in writing funding requests for projects that would benefit the community.

One of the grants Mayor Terry Kernc is working on seeks money to purchase and install an electronic marquee sign.

"My plan is to tear out all the landscaping at the front of Village Hall, install the new sign and create a courtyard in that space with pavers,

benches and flowers, a place where people can stop and relax while out walking," Kernc said.

There has been a noticeable increase of walkers in the village, and Kernc expects that will amplify once the village completes a sidewalk project that will increase the width of walkways from five to six feet—a project that is also projected to be completed with grant dollars.

"I think we will see more people

out walking with the new sidewalks and this would be a nice place to stop and relax for a while," Kernc said.

The project is being submitted to T Mobile's Hometown Grant program, a five year initiative by the company that will award a total of \$25 million to small towns and rural communities across the United States.

The concept of the grants is to assist individuals and organizations make their communities stronger.

"I THINK WE WILL SEE MORE PEOPLE OUT WALKING WITH THE NEW SIDEWALKS AND THIS WOULD BE A NICE PLACE TO STOP AND RELAX FOR A WHILE."

TERRY KERNC
VILLAGE OF DIAMOND MAYOR

Conference champion speaksters

STAFF REPORT

The Coalers are the top speaksters in their conference. With eight individual first place finishes and 19 medals overall, the team won the conference championship title in the Illinois Central Eight.

In a rare weekday tournament, 19 members of the speech team traveled to Wilmington High School for the conference meet on Wednesday, Jan. 18.

Individual conference champions were Kevin McDonnell and Chessa Kuhel in humorous duet acting [HDA], Izzy Kostbade in humorous interpretation [HI], Amelia Fritz in informative speaking [IS], Corinna Barkley and Karli Pierson tied for first in special occasion speaking [SOS] and Logan Hausman and Madison Wilson also tied for first in dramatic interpretation [DI].

Additional members of the conference team were Melody Kinder, Kayla Connelly, Gio Bruno, Jada Moore, Lana Larson, Alyssa Parks, Jacob Cimino, Sam Vota, Angie Seeley, Dominic Cimino and Grey Vanek.

A few days prior to the conference meet, the Coalers captured second place at the Waubonsie Valley tournament.

First place medals were won by Kostbade, HI; Kuhel and McConnell, HDA, and Barkley, SOS.

Second place finishers were Hausman and Bruno, dramatic duet acting [DDA] and McConnell in original



Courtesy photo

COALERS ARE CONFERENCE champions in speech. The team captured the title at the Illinois Central Eight [ICE] Conference Speech tournament at Wilmington High School on Wednesday, Jan. 18. The winning team is comprised of [from left, row one]: Jada Moore, Lana Larson, Madison Wilson, Kayla Connelly, Izzy Kostbade, Kevin McConnell, Jacob Cimino and Karli Pierson. Standing are: Melody Kinder, Gio Bruno, Alyssa Parks, Logan Hausman, Chessa Kuhel, Kate Promis, Carrina Barkley, Sam Vota, Angie Seeley, Grey Vanek and Dominic Cimino.

comedy [OC]. Fritz earned a third place finish in informative speaking [INF] and Vanek in HI.

Vanek and her speaking partner Sam Vota took fourth place in DDA and Cimino, Wilson and Kinder all earned a fifth place finish in extemporaneous speaking [ES], radio [RS] and original oratory [OO] respectively.

The team also had to sixth place finishes with Pierson in SOS and Wilson in DI.

Additionally, Kinder and

Dominic Cimino were finalists in oratorical declamation [OD] and Kuhel in prose [PR].

The team finished out the week at the Sandwich Invitational on Saturday, Jan. 21.

Seeley captured second place in OC and Dominic Cimino was third in ES.

Fourth place medals went to Vanek and Vota in DDA, Moore in INF and Pierson in SOS. Vanek also earned a medal in HI.

Fifth place finishes were

posted by Grace Heatherwick in INF, Moore in poetry reading and the HDA duo of Seeley and Connelly.

Heatherwick and Connelly also earned sixth place finishes in ES and OD respectively.

The Coalers are preparing for the upcoming state series that begins with regional action Feb. 4 followed by the sectional tournament and the state finals in Peoria the weekend of Feb. 17 and 18. Reed-Custer is set to host the regional and Morris the sectional.

Coaler cheer takes third in conference



Photo by Zadie Sims

THE COAL CITY CHEERLEADERS (from left) Ava Garrelts, Cambree Davidson, Gabby Babcock and Brooklyn Labanowski perform during the start of their routine during the I.C.E. conference at Reed-Custer. The Lady Coalers finished in third place.



Photo by Zadie Sims

COALER CHEERLEADERS Carlie Ellena and Addy Ritchie embrace after getting third place during the ice conference competition held at Reed-Custer.

Johnson named to president's list at Iowa

Preston Johnson, of Coal City, was among the more than 800 undergraduate students at the University of Iowa named to the president's list for the 2022 fall semester.

Johnson is a fourth year student in Iowa's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and is majoring in Neuroscience.

UNFORGETTABLE
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Route 113 crossing to close for repairs

The Illinois Department of Transportation announced Route 113 [Division Street] will be closed for approximately two days next week in order to complete repairs to the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad crossing in Coal City.

Work will begin Tuesday, Jan. 31.

A detour will direct eastbound motorists around the work area using North Broadway to North Street and east to First Avenue where they will turn south back to Route 113. Westbound traffic will use the same route just in the opposite order of travel First Avenue to North Street, west to Broadway and south to Route 113.

Motorists can expect delays and should allow extra time for trips through the area and be prepared for slow and stopped traffic. Motorists should avoid the work area, when feasible, use of alternate routes should be considered.

Drivers are urged to pay close attention to changed conditions and signs in the work zone, obey posted speed limits and refrain from using mobile devices and be alert for workers and equipment.

Building a bigger branch

STAFF REPORT

Midland States Bank has gone vertical, as the structural steel framing has been set in place for its new, bigger branch office in the village of Diamond.

After weeks of little to no activity at the site, the frame was set onto the foundation, a sign that the project is gaining speed.

The financial institution currently operates a drive-thru banking center at the southeast corner of Route 113 [Division Street] and Berta Road and the new facility will expand operations at that location as the new building is being constructed just west of the existing building.

At 2,058 square-feet, the

new walk-in facility will feature two drive-thru lanes on the east side of the building with parking to the west.

Construction of the banking facility was announced in 2021 and came shortly after the company closed the doors to its location in downtown Coal City.

Village officials say the project was slowed due to several factors, but is back on track and moving along.

"It's looking good and I can't wait to see it," Diamond Mayor Terry Kernc said.

The existing brick structure will be demolished once the new bank is up and running.

Midland States Bank operates over 50 banking locations throughout Illinois and portions of Missouri.

Senator Rezin renamed Deputy Minority Leader

SPRINGFIELD— As the 103rd General Assembly begins its work in Springfield, State Senator Sue Rezin (R-Morris) has been renamed as the Deputy Minority Leader for the Illinois Senate Republican Caucus.

"It is my great honor to remain the Deputy Minority Leader for the Illinois Senate Republicans under the new leadership of Leader John Curran," said Rezin. "I am grateful for Leader Curran's confidence and eagerly look forward to working with him as we strive to make Illinois a better place for everyone who calls it home."

Senator Rezin previously served as the Deputy Minority Leader during the 102nd General Assembly and has

served as state senator since December 2010.

"Senator Rezin has shown a true commitment to the people of our state and improving Illinois government on their behalf," said Leader Curran. "I have full trust in her leadership abilities and know that she will continue to be a tremendous asset to me and our entire Caucus."

Senator Rezin, who previously represented the 38th Senate District during the 102nd General Assembly, will continue to serve as the state senator for the District in the 103rd General Assembly. The new 38th District contains parts of Bureau, Dekalb, Grundy, LaSalle, Kendall, and Will counties.

COAL CITY PUBLIC LIBRARY NEWS

Check online event calendar at ccpld.org for a description of the events and to register.

Check out our digital services available 24/7 on our website at www.ccpld.org.

Curbside Pick Up - Monday thru Thursday 9 a.m.-8 p.m., Friday 9 a.m.-6 p.m., and Saturday 9 a.m.-4 p.m. For more information on the procedures for curbside pick up go to our website at www.ccpld.org.

In-Person Adult Exercise, Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays 9-10 a.m.

Winter Read Challenge. Calling CCPLD library cardholders of all ages to "Cozy up With CCPLD" this winter. From now thru Feb. 20 log your reading and complete activities through the Beanstack app. Don't want to use the app? Pick up a paper copy at the front desk in the Library. Get prizes for completing the challenge and enter to win a grand prize. Keep going for more chances to win.

Thursday, Jan. 26- Terrific Tots, 10 a.m.

Terrific Tots, 6 p.m.

Friday, Jan. 27-Storytime at The Cove, 10 a.m.

Fun Fridays, 3 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 28-Teen Hygge Day, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Teens 6th thru 12th grade can register to drop in the Teen Zone to experience a cozy Hygge day of self care, relaxation, and a sugar scrub craft.

Monday, Jan. 30-Makerspace

Cart Mondays, All Day

Terrific Tots, 10 a.m.

Preschool Storytime, 11 a.m.

Eager Readers Homeschool Edition, 1 p.m.

Eager Readers, 4 p.m.

Family Lapsit, 6 p.m.

Preschool Storytime, 6 p.m.

Tuesday, Jan. 31-CCPLD Local History and Genealogy Resources, 1-2 p.m. Join the head of reference, Bryan Gilligan, to explore a little local history and some of the genealogical resources that you can find here at the Library. Refreshments will be served

Wednesday, Feb. 1-Senior Health Insurance Program (SHIP), 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

Family Lapsit, 10 a.m.

Paper & More, 9 a.m.-10 a.m.

Preschool Storytime, 4 p.m.

Early Dismissal Day, 11:45 a.m.-2 p.m.

Teen Hot Cocoa Bar, 2:30-4 p.m. Teens 6th thru 12th grade can drop in the Teen Zone and have a cup of hot cocoa with all the fixings.

Teen Anime Club - 4-5:30 p.m.

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Stranded drivers on tollways can call *999

While the Illinois Tollway prides itself on its ability to keep drivers moving, it also quickly provides help to customers who suddenly find themselves stopped or stranded along the Tollway system. Dialing *999 should be the first call made by any driver whose vehicle becomes disabled or who needs help while using the Tollway system. The Tollway's staff of telecommunicators and call takers responds to those calls 24 hours a day, seven days a week to rapidly dispatch H.E.L.P. trucks, maintenance vehicles or Illinois State Police District 15 troopers to provide assistance to customers stopped or stranded along the

road. Last year, nearly 37,000 drivers dialed *999 for assistance, whether it was changing a flat tire, arranging for a tow or diverting traffic away from a stalled vehicle. Drivers on other major highways in northern Illinois also can dial *999 to receive assistance from the appropriate transportation or law enforcement agencies. Drivers may also use *999 to report other non-emergency situations, including unsafe drivers, roadway debris or even pedestrians on the road. For Tollway customers, help is always only a four-digit phone call away--*999.

Packed with a punch, try this Derby Daiquiri

It has been a rough ride for the bar and restaurant business over the last three years. A shut down during a global pandemic followed by uncertainty around rules and regulations for reopening proved to be too much for many bars. Fort Lauderdale's legendary Mai Kai Polynesian Restaurant and Tiki Bar has been closed since late 2020 for a myriad of reasons, and its future was in doubt until a South Florida-based investment group teamed up with the Thornton family to save one of the world's greatest bars.

While there is no official reopening date posted on the Mai Kai's website, they plan to reopen in 2023. Renovations are likely running in the millions of dollars. Yes, the Mai Kai is that special. This week we toast the legacy of the king of Polynesian bars with one of their own creations, the Derby Daiquiri.

Tiki lore is built on legendary bars, innovative bartenders, and amazing rum drinks. The Mai-Kai is 3 for 3 and is regarded by many (including myself) as the best tiki bar in the world. Everyone wearing a Hawaiian shirt today knows the names Trader Vic and Donn Beach, they may not be familiar with Chicago natives Bob and Jack Thornton. Bob and Jack Thornton were captivated by tiki culture as children during the 1940's during which time the Thornton family frequently visited Donn the Beachcomber's Chicago location at 101 E. Walton Place. The Thornton brothers would go on to attend Stanford where they were regular visi-

tors to Trader Vic's San Francisco further fueling their dream of opening a Polynesian-themed restaurant. After completing their military service in 1955, the brothers opened the Mai-Kai in 1956 during the post-war Florida vacation boom when roadside attractions were popping up all over the Sunshine State. The Mai-Kai wasn't just a bar with some bamboo décor and the occasional hula dance routine, it was an experience. It still is. Once you cross the wood slat bridge you will find an island escape complete with waterfalls, tropical gardens, world-class tiki drinks, authentic Polynesian artifacts, and top-notch nightly Polynesian floor shows.

Behind every great tiki bar is a great tiki bartender. Trader Vic's had Vic Bergeron, Donn Beach had Donn Beach, and the Mai-Kai had Mariano Licudine. Bob and Jack Thornton did not leave Chicago empty handed on their venture to create what would become the world's greatest tiki bar. They lured master mixologist Licudine away from the Don the Beachcomber's Chicago location giving the Mai-Kai instant credibility in the tiki world. Licudine built the Mai-Kai menu from tiki drinks made in the tradition of Donn the Beachcomber. Donn's classic Zombies, Mai Tais, Daiquiris, and Grogs are still served daily in Fort Lauderdale. The Mai-Kai was in continuous operation for over 60

years prior to its temporarily closure in 2020 and is the only operating establishment with a direct connection to tiki's golden era. In 2015 the Mai-Kai was added to the National Register of Historic Places. Licudine is credited with inventing a laundry list of tiki drinks and spin-offs of existing tiki drinks before his retirement in 1980. He was known for his innovative approach to the Daiquiri platform, particularly with his Derby Daiquiri which put him in the national spotlight after winning a 1959 contest to create a drink to promote the Florida Derby. I hope that everyone has an opportunity to sip a Derby Daiquiri at Mai-Kai at some point, but if that just isn't possible we'll have to make one at home. Good news all around for the Derby Daiquiri. It's easy to make, easy to drink, and the ingredients are easy to come by. Daiquiris are drinks that are often made and rarely made well. There are a few basic principles to follow when turning out a quality Daiquiri. The two keys to the Daiquiri (and every other blended drink) are flavor and consistency. Flavor is no-brainer. Use fresh ingredients whenever possible, mix with good rum and the end result will be a great drink. This means using only fresh squeezed lemon and lime juice, "100% juice" options if you must use canned or bottled fruit juice, and rum that doesn't taste like

it belongs in your gas tank. Consistency in recipes is tough to gauge in blended cocktails because blenders aren't just blenders anymore, some are super juicing vitamin extracting machines that can liquefy just about anything. Take this into consideration when following this, or any recipe that requires blending for any amount of time. You have to know your blender. Try not to over-blend or under-blend. The best way to do this is to pulse in 5 second increments, checking after each pulse until you get a feel for your machine. It is best to use crushed ice in your blender and blend less as opposed to using large ice cubes and blending more. Large ice cubes will take longer to blend, turning out a watered-down flavor with the occasional irregular chunk of ice. The original Derby Daiquiri used light Puerto Rican rum, but genuine Puerto Rican rum has largely disappeared from the mixology landscape even though Bacardi is labeled Puerto Rican rum. In recipes that call for Puerto Rican rum use the entry level offerings from Cruzan, Flor de Cana or Mount Gay. The Derby Daiquiri is built in a blender and served in your favorite cocktail glass. Combine in blender: 1 1/2 ounces light rum 1/2 ounce fresh lime juice 1/2 ounce simple syrup 1 ounce fresh orange juice Handful of crushed ice Blend on high until smooth, usually 15 seconds Pour unstrained into cocktail glass



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Essex Township Request for Proposal for Cemetery Mowing and Trimming

Essex Township is requesting proposals for cemetery mowing services at the two township cemeteries for the period April 1, 2023-March 31, 2024. The two properties total 4.5 acres combined. Please supply quote on a per-time basis to include mowing, trimming, small debris cleanup, and blowing clippings off markers/monuments. All services will be done on an as-needed basis, not to exceed 3 times per month. Also supply quote for spring and fall cleanup as well as outlining any additional costs or fees. Provider must include proof of liability insurance with proposal.

Quotes due no later than January 30, 2022

Mail quotes to:
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PO Box 309, Essex, IL 60935
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Federal suit file against Illinois' assault weapons ban

BY PETER HANCOCK
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

SPRINGFIELD - The Illinois State Rifle Association has joined forces with other gun rights advocates in filing a federal lawsuit challenging the state's new ban on the sale and manufacture of semiautomatic weapons and high-capacity magazines. It's the latest legal challenge to the law, which went into effect upon Gov. JB Pritzker's signature on Jan. 10, and the first filed in federal court. The case, which will be heard in the Southern District of Illinois, was filed within a week of a similar case being filed in state court in Crawford County. Additionally, Thomas DeVore, a private attorney and unsuccessful candidate for attorney general in 2022, has filed suit in Effingham County and is seeking an emergency injunction to block the new law's enforcement. "Gov. Pritzker and the legislators who voted for this law did this for self-serving political purposes and are not upholding the United States Constitution," Richard Pearson, executive director of the ISRA, said in a statement. "The Second Amendment is fundamentally about self-defense, and the 14th Amendment is about not having our rights infringed. This new law makes criminals out of law-abiding citizens."

The law bans the sale and manufacture of a long list of firearms - including certain rifles, shotguns and handguns - that it categorizes as "assault weapons." It also requires people who currently own such weapons to register them with the Illinois State Police by Jan. 1, 2024. It also bans the sale and manufacture of magazines capable of holding more than 10 rounds of ammunition for a long gun or 15 rounds for a handgun. Those who already possess such devices would be able to keep and possess them on private property, on a gun range, at a licensed gun shop to undergo a repair, or while traveling to one of those locations, provided the magazine is unloaded and kept in a case. The assault weapons ban also prohibits the use, sale and possession of devices - including items known as "switches" and "bump stocks" - that increase the rate at which a gun fires by either converting it into a fully automatic weapon or making it fire like one. A fully automatic weapon continues firing as long as the user squeezes the trigger, while a semiautomatic weapon fires only one round for each trigger pull. But plaintiffs in the federal lawsuit argue that the weapons banned under the law are commonly used in the United States, that they have been traditionally accepted as lawful firearms, and that they

are, in fact, among the most popular weapons among gun owners, accounting for approximately 20 percent of all firearms sold in recent years. They also challenge the use of the term "assault weapon," arguing that it was coined by "anti-gun publicists" and that the weapons covered by the law are vastly different from those used in the military. The suit alleges that the law violates the plaintiffs' constitutional rights under the Second and 14th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution. The law was prompted in large part by the July 4 mass shooting at an Independence Day parade in Highland Park that left seven people dead and dozens more injured or traumatized. The alleged shooter in that case used a Smith & Wesson M&P 15 rifle with three magazines of 30 rounds each, items that are included within the scope of the new law. That weapon is similar to AR-style rifles that have been used in numerous mass shootings in the U.S. But the plaintiffs in the lawsuit argue that those weapons actually account for only a small percentage of overall gun crimes in the country. When Pritzker signed the legislation, Illinois became the ninth state in the nation to enact some form of assault weapons ban. But those laws are now under scrutiny amid shifting legal and political opinions about the meaning of the Second Amendment, which reads: "A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed." As far back as 1938, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld

indictments against a pair of Oklahoma bank robbers charged with transporting a sawed-off double-barrel shotgun across state lines, holding that such weapons had no reasonable relationship to a well-regulated militia and thus were not protected by the Second Amendment. Seventy years later, however, the court struck down a Washington, D.C., ordinance banning the possession of handguns in the district, holding that the Second Amendment does guarantee an individual's right to keep and bear arms. That ruling held that the clause referring to well-regulated militias was only "prefatory" in nature and does not limit or expand the "operational" clause that guarantees a right to keep and bear arms. Even in that case, however, former Justice Antonin Scalia wrote that the Second Amendment is not absolute and that it does not guarantee a right to keep and carry any type of weapon for any purpose. "We think that limitation is fairly supported by the historical tradition of prohibiting the carrying of 'dangerous and unusual weapons,'" he wrote. But then last year, in a case striking down the state of New York's requirement that people had to demonstrate "proper cause" for a concealed carry permit, the court said the Second Amendment protects the right to keep and bear arms that are "in common use," and that restrictions violate the amendment if they are not "consistent with the Nation's historical tradition of firearm regulation." As of Jan. 18, the federal court in the Southern District had not yet set a schedule for hearing the case.

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March 4th
9am-1pm

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Custer Park Fire Dept. offering smoke detectors

The Custer Park Fire Department is teaming up with the Illinois Fire Safety Alliance to provide safety education as well as free 10-year sealed battery smoke detectors. This program was started by firefighter/paramedic Leslie Crum who was the victim of a house fire in 2018 and suffered smoke inhalation after going back inside for a family pet and noticed the smoke detectors that previously had worked, were not. Thankfully Crum saved the dog, but almost lost her life due to being overcome with smoke. She was taken to a local hospital where she was placed on a ventilator to breathe and then was flown by Life Flight to a burn center in Rockford, IL.

Now Leslie has a passion for public safety and education and wanted to bring a smoke detector program to her fire department. The smoke detector program is designed to educate Illinois residents on the dangers of home fires and how to prevent fires from occurring as well as making sure residents have the proper working smoke detector. The 10-year sealed battery detector ensures that the power source can not be removed from the detector. If properly maintained, these detectors will last their 10-year lifetime. For more information on the smoke detector and installation program, please contact Leslie at 815-252-4768 or paramediccrum@yahoo.com.

Gigantar welcomed to Route 66



Photo by Marney Simon

LIGHTING THE WAY – Gigantar made its way to Joliet and the Rock & Roll Museum on Route 66, with an official lighting ceremony held on Friday, Jan. 20. Hundreds of visitors showed up to watch the ceremony despite the freezing temperatures.

Gas prices continue to rise

Average gasoline prices in Illinois have risen 3.8 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$3.52/g, according to GasBuddy's survey of 4,378 stations in Illinois.

Prices in Illinois are 36.5 cents per gallon higher than a month ago and stand 5.8 cents per gallon higher than a year ago.

According to GasBuddy price reports, the cheapest station in Illinois was priced at \$2.99/g while the most expensive was \$4.49/g, a difference of \$1.50/g.

Locally, prices jumped 16 cents per gallon in Braidwood (\$3.52/g, Monday), 12 cents (average) in Wilmington to \$3.49 and remained unchanged in Coal City at \$3.49/g average.

"Gasoline prices continued their upward trajectory last week as oil prices pulled them higher across the majority of the country, and continued refinery challenges kept supply of gasoline from rising more substantially," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at

GasBuddy.

"Macroeconomic factors have continued to weigh on oil and refined products, as strong demand in China hasn't been slowed much by a surge in new Covid cases. In addition, releases of crude oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve have wrapped up. Concerns are increasing that without additional oil, supply will tighten in the weeks ahead, especially as the nation starts to move away from softer demand in the height of winter. Moving forward, it doesn't look good for motorists, with prices likely to continue accelerating."

The national average price of gasoline has risen 11.3 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$3.39/g. The national average is up 30.2 cents per gallon from a month ago.

The national average price of diesel has risen 2.6 cents in the last week and stands at \$4.60 per gallon.

Epilepsy Support Group forming in Coal City

Illinois Epilepsy Support and Resources provides support to people with epilepsy in Central and Northwest Illinois.

These include but are not limited to: peer support, caregiver support, support in accessing benefits, navigating insurance, identification and linkage to medical profession-

als, access to counseling, and help coordinating transportation.

An introductory meeting will be held Tuesday, Jan. 31, beginning at 10 a.m. in New Hope Presbyterian Church, 80 N. Garfield St., Coal City. Beans-and-Bite will be hosting the group.

For more information visit the Illinois Epilepsy Support and Resources Facebook page, streatorunlimited.org/epilepsy or contact Stephanie Harcharik at 815-673-5574.

Streator Unlimited, Inc. administers this project under a grant from the Illinois Dept. of Human Services.

Wilmington Freemason's chili cook-off seeks entries

STAFF REPORT

It's the largest hand-made guitar sculpture ever created. And now, it's nestled into its home as part of the marquee at the Illinois Rock & Roll Museum on Route 66 in downtown Joliet.

On Jan. 20, hundreds of rock & roll fans waited in the cold for the official opening ceremony at the museum at 9 W. Cass St. in downtown Joliet, as the lights were turned on by Cheap Trick frontman Rick Nielsen, with help from local dignitaries, sign designer Shannon MacDonald, and singer-songwriter Jim Peterik, founder of the rock band Survivor.

The 24-foot-long guitar that was fashioned for the museum even has a name: Gigantar. The Illinois Rock & Roll Museum on Route 66 is a public charity 501c3 nonprofit organization that exists to preserve the history of musicians and bands with ties to Illinois while educating visitors about the state's rich music history.

The mission of the museum is to meet their goals through operation of a world-class museum that collects, preserves and exhibits artifacts of artists who have reached national and international recognition, and by providing enlightening educational programs.

The museum is currently undergoing renovations. The building will include exhibit space, a performance music hall and the Illinois Rock & Roll Museum on Route 66 Music Hall of Fame, gift shop, and is the home of the Road To Rock Radio online streaming radio station.

Prior to installation at the museum, Gigantar made a short tour of Route 66 from Springfield to Chicago, stopping in towns along the way, including a quick stop in front of the Gemini Giant.

The Wilmington Freemasons Lodge #208 will be having their 13th annual Chili Cook-Off to fund the Pedals for Progress program on Sunday, Feb. 26 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Tasting and a bowl of house chili \$10 for adults, \$5 for kids over 11 and free for

kids 11 and under. There will also be \$1 hot dogs available.

Wilmington Masonic Lodge is located at 311 Main St., Wilmington.

Think you have what it takes to be the Chili King? Register to be a contestant. Call Ben Stickel 815-370-7331 or Matt Lohmar 815-210-9606.

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Lawmakers fired up over sheriffs' dissent on weapons ban

"All they are saying," claimed Illinois Sheriff's Association executive director Jim Kaitschuk about dozens of his members, "is 'We're not going to knock on people's doors to ask whether they have registered their firearms. And if they're arrested solely on that charge, we will not house them in our jails until ordered to do so by a competent authority.'"



CAPITOL FACTS
Rich Miller

Springfield's WICS TV reported that Kaitschuk also believes the reaction to what those sheriffs have said about refusing to enforce the state's new assault weapons ban law because of their constitutional objections has been "overblown."

Well, when you put it that way, maybe so. But if that's the case, then why even facilitate the release of a nearly identical statement by as many as 90 (according to Kaitschuk) county sheriffs saying they won't enforce a law?

Kaitschuk admitted to Chicago's ABC 7 TV that there's nothing in the law mandating local compliance checks. "That is not a charge that is provided to us, or mandated to us in the bill that passed and was signed by the governor."

What the sheriffs have basically done is to deliberately inflame the public for no good reason, and then tossed in an empty threat to not house violators in their jails, unless they have an order from a judge.

And while there has been much rejoicing in some Downstate areas over their local sheriffs' performative "virtue signaling," there has been some strong

pushback in the suburbs, where, for instance, DuPage County Sheriff James Mendrick released one of those boiler plate statements vowing not to enforce the new registration law because he believed the statute was unconstitutional.

In response, DuPage County's 15 Democratic state legislators released a statement saying they were "dismayed and angered by the recent pronouncement by the DuPage County Sheriff to unilaterally direct his office to flout and disregard the duly passed and signed Protect Illinois Communities Act. The Sheriff has no authority to determine the constitutionality of a law - that is up to the courts."

"The Sheriff's words send a clear message that lawbreakers are welcome here," the statement read.

One of the signatories was Rep. Maura Hirschauer (D-Batavia), who introduced an assault weapons ban and worked her bill for months before it was taken over by more experienced hands.

Sheriff Mendrick barely won election in 2018, but the Democrats didn't field a candidate against him in 2022, which turned out to be an even stronger year for the local party.

Elections obviously have consequences.

But the sheriffs currently have significant powers in state statutes, and legislative elections can have consequences, too. And some legislators are obviously starting to get pretty fired up over the sheriffs' behavior of late.

During the 2019 cannabis legalization debate, for instance, sheriffs disseminated tons of disinformation (one even claimed that sheriffs would be forced to euthanize all their drug-sniffing dogs). Several sheriffs sided with the far right during the COVID-19 mitigation period and refused

to enforce executive orders, and many eagerly contributed to the hysteria over the SAFE-T Act. And now, this.

Many legislators are former local government officials, so they've traditionally been reluctant to take up issues like consolidation, the limits of local authority, etc. I do not know if this latest blow-up will change anything. But, at the same time, I don't recall ever seeing a reaction quite like the one issued by those 15 state legislators today.

Lake County's sheriff issued a statement in favor of the law, and one of the principal sponsors who helped drag the bill across the finish line, Lake County-based state Rep. Bob Morgan (D-Deerfield), had this to say on the radio the other day about the other sheriffs' statements: "I keep coming back to the fact that I think it's embarrassing for them. They really literally only have one job. Their job is to follow the law and enforce the law. And they're saying, 'We're not going to do that.' And so, I think they should be pretty embarrassed."

State statute requires sheriffs, acting as their counties' supervisors of safety, to enforce all state traffic laws. But there is no requirement to enforce other laws. And their state-mandated oaths of office require them to support the U.S. and Illinois constitutions, but not individual laws.

Law enforcement discretion is a long-accepted policy. But sheriffs issuing written statements flatly declaring that they will not enforce a state law no matter what, sure does appear to go well beyond that.

Crafting a law to deal with the problem, though, could be difficult.

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

Report predicts billions in motor fuel tax revenue losses if state meets EV goals

BY NIKA SCHOONOVER
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

SPRINGFIELD - Despite Illinois' efforts to smoothly integrate electric vehicles into the state's economy, a new report from the Illinois Economic Policy Institute is warning of a potential steep decline in transportation revenue as more EVs hit the road.

The primary issue is motor fuel taxes, which will see a significant drop as more electric vehicles make their way to the road and fewer people fill their cars with gas.

Since motor fuel taxes make up the backbone of state funding for road and bridge projects, ILEPI, which has strong ties to organized labor, warned in a report that new revenue sources will have to be identified to ensure the state's 10-year capital improvements plan remains on track.

"There's absolutely a benefit to having EVs but it will ultimately have a strong impact on transportation funding," Mary Tyler, the author of the report, said in an interview. "It's something that I

don't think is talked about enough."

Motor fuel tax is the state's leading source of transportation funding and makes up 52% of Illinois' total transportation revenue and 82% of its contributions to the federal highway trust fund.

The report's main policy recommendation is implementing a vehicle miles traveled, or VMT, fee which would replace the existing motor fuel tax with a fee determined by the number of miles a car travels on Illinois roads.

The idea has been floated in the past, including by Gov. JB Pritzker in an interview with *The Arlington Heights Daily Herald* during his initial gubernatorial campaign in 2018.

"In some states (such as Oregon), they have done tests recently for a VMT tax because we have more and more electric cars on the road, more and more hybrids, and because gas mileage is rising," then-candidate Pritzker told the outlet. "It's only fair if you're on a road and traveling on that road that you should pay your fair share."

In his four years as governor, however, Pritzker has not made a serious legislative push for a VMT.

It's an issue that ILEPI says will become more pressing as the state moves toward its goal of putting 1 million electric vehicles on state roads by the end of the decade - a goal written into law with the passage of the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act in 2021.

Even before this promise was made, Illinois was seeing a yearly increase in electric vehicles. From 2017 to 2021, electric vehicle registrations have increased from 8,255 to 36,482. The most recent data from the Illinois Secretary of State's office shows that, as of December 2022, there are 57,311 electric vehicle registrations.

"Looking at the growth we're seeing, we're seeing it grow at a faster rate than what we ever have before," Tyler said.

According to Tyler's estimate, Illinois would have to add 119,000 electric vehicles every year in order to meet their goal of one million by 2030. If that came to fruition, the state would lose \$765 million in combined sales and motor fuel tax when accounting for added EV fees. Counting federal revenues, that figure would jump up to \$1.1 billion.

Electric vehicles aside, Tyler said fuel-efficient vehicles pose an additional threat to the state's transportation revenue. Roughly 10% of registered vehicles in Illinois are electric, while the rest of the 11 million are increasingly becoming more fuel-efficient.

"If you take a look at the picture of all the vehicles on

the road, as newer vehicles come out that are more fuel-efficient, that means we're just having overall, on average, a more fuel-efficient fleet," Tyler said.

Tyler calculated that the total state and federal revenue loss over the next decade would be about \$4.3 billion.

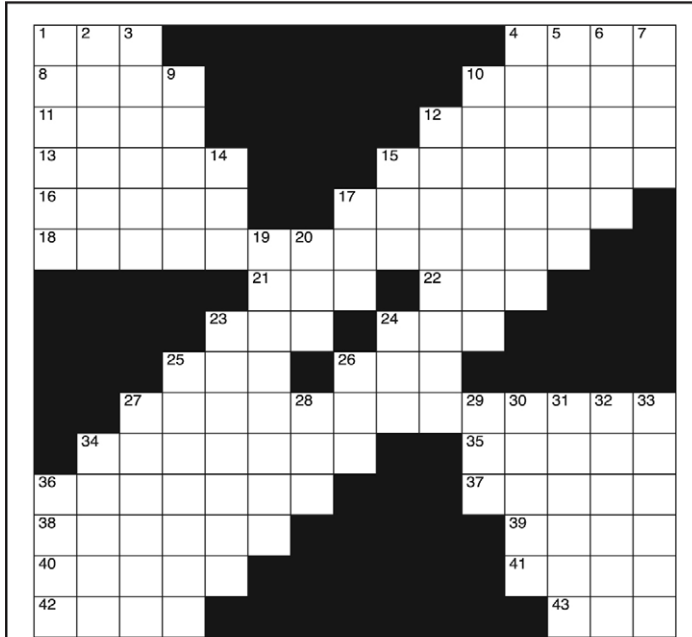
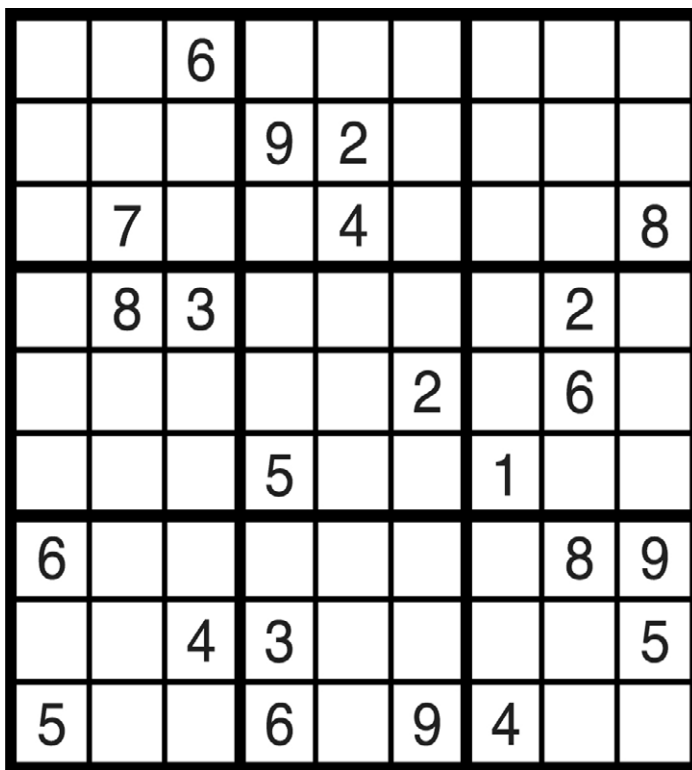
That loss would be especially threatening to the back half of Pritzker's historic 10-year, \$45 billion capital infrastructure plan known as Rebuild Illinois.

The roads-and-bridges portion of the 2019 program was made possible in large part by doubling the state's motor fuel tax, which hadn't seen an increase since 1990, then tying it to inflation in subsequent years. The infrastructure plan also increased Illinois' annual electric vehicle registration fee by \$100 annually.

Tyler said while the fee hike helped replace some of the lost revenue, it won't go far enough.

"As soon as the change can be made, the better," Tyler said. "Even to this day, there are EVs on the road that are not paying as much as they would be on motor fuel tax. So there is an impact, it's just right now the impact isn't as big as what it will be in the future."

Other policy areas to explore, Tyler suggests, include increasing existing registration fees even further, implementing a separate hybrid vehicle fee and creating an electric vehicle-specific kilowatt-per-hour fee.



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Tax collector
- 4. Fishes without the line touching water
- 8. Brooklyn hoopsters
- 10. Actress Lathan
- 11. A metric for athletes
- 12. Food storage location
- 13. Colossus
- 15. Desolations
- 16. Accustom to something unpleasant
- 17. ___ Kubrick, filmmaker
- 18. You might ask this at Thanksgiving
- 21. Arkansas city
- 22. Gave food to
- 23. Request
- 24. V-shaped open trough
- 25. Make lively
- 26. It accompanies feather
- 27. Blonde bombshell
- 34. One who revolves
- 35. Bluish greens
- 36. Charity
- 37. Having the shape of a cube
- 38. Unwind
- 39. Believed by some to be the supreme being
- 40. Checks or guides
- 41. Leak slowly through
- 42. Top-quality
- 43. Midway between south and southeast

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Part of your foot
- 2. It's at the back of the eyeball
- 3. Where things stand
- 4. Offered
- 5. Contains pollen
- 6. Boisterous get-together
- 7. Asserts out loud
- 9. They're in the sky
- 10. Canonized
- 12. A politician's official stances
- 14. It can catch fish
- 15. British thermal unit
- 17. Helps little firms
- 19. Where patients go for treatment
- 20. Large red deer
- 23. Pokes holes in
- 24. "Star Wars" hero Solo
- 25. One in a hospital
- 26. Scandinavian god of battle
- 27. Famous cat
- 28. ___ Angeles: City of Angels
- 29. Type of drug (abbr.)
- 30. City along the Rhine
- 31. Animal disease
- 32. Martini ingredients
- 33. Get away
- 34. Rare species of rodent
- 36. Suppress

Coal City United Methodist Church to host soup supper

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COALER SPORTS



Photo by Alyssa Ohlund

AT 145 POUNDS Coal City's Mataeo Blessing has been a threat all season with a 35-3 record and #4 ranking in the state.



Photo by Alyssa Ohlund

ALMOST DONE—Buddy Widlowski works his opponent for a pin at 138 pounds where he is presently ranked 9th in the state.

Eight Coalers champion ICE tourney

There were few surprises Saturday when Wilmington hosted the ICE conference wrestling tournament.

The state-ranked Coalers easily took the team title with 250.5 points, outdistancing second place Reed-Custer with its 121.5 points and third place Lisle with 112 points. Wilmington finished fifth with 69 points.

Coal City had eight tournament champions, three second placers, two finish third and one fourth.

Coming in first place were Coalers Culan Lindemuth (106), Brody Widlowski (113), Aidan Kenney (120), Brant Widlowski (138), Mataeo Blessing (145), Derek Carlson (170), Joey Breneman (182) and Braiden Young (195). Finishing second were Brock Finch (126), Jack Poyner (160) and Drake Dearth (220).

Claiming third place were Coal City's Evan Greggain (132) and Tyler Porth (285) while settling for fourth place was Zakk Kramer (152).

Reed-Custer brought nine wrestlers and all nine placed including champions Kody Marschner (220) and Gunnar Berg (285). 2nd Place: 170 Rex Pfeifer (170) finished in 2nd place while Jayden Sanchez (113), Kris Budick (126), Jeremy Eggleston (138) and Dominic Alaimo (182) all placed third. Finishing fourth were Judith Gamboa (106), Max Lichaj (120).

Wilmington entered five wrestlers with all of them placing. Coming in second place

were Wildcats Landon Dooley (113), Matt Swisher (152) and Brody Benson (285). Capturing third place at 195 pounds was Hunter Hayes while freshman Logan Van Duyne (170) settled for fourth place.

At 106 pounds, Coal City sophomore Lindemuth (34-9) pinned Ryan Hsu from Lisle (22-8) in 2:46 for the title bout. Reed-Custer junior Judith Gamboa pinned her first opponent in 1:26 before suffering a 1:58 fall to settle for fourth.

At 113 there were just three opponents which meant Brody Widlowski (30-1) had a bye until facing Wilmington's Dooley (33-8) for the championship. Widlowski won it by a 13-8 decision. Reed-Custer freshman Jayden Sanchez (10-16) placed third.

At 120, five wrestlers battled with Kenney (27-11), a Coal City freshman beating Lisle's Alexander Ferrari (24-7) by 7-2 decision. Comet Max Lichaj (14-13), who went 1-2 for the day, was upended by 2:36 fall in the third place match.

At 126, Micah Spinazzola from Peotone came in with a 2-0 record to surprise Coal City's Brock Finch (29-12) with a 2-1 decision in the championship bout. Comet Kris Budick (17-17) earned a 3:34 fall over Bryse Astle (Herscher) to decide third place.

At 132, Coaler Evan Greggain (20-12) lost by 5:44 fall to eventual champion Santino Izzi of Peotone. He then had a pin in the wrestling back and a 4-3 decision over

Coalers own the mat against Reed-Custer

The Comets did what most teams have done when they wrestled against state-ranked Coal City: They lost.

This is Coal City's year as they are 38-2 and the ICE conference winners. The good news is they won't be any weaker in years to come with over 40 on their roster and 14 are seniors. Many underclassmen were on the team that won state as middle schoolers.

Reed-Custer had some highlights during their 69-12 loss to the Coalers. Winners for RC included 170 Rex Pfeifer, 220 Kody Marschner and 285 Christian Mounts. RC is now 17-6.

- Coal City 69, Reed-Custer 12**
- 106—Lindemuth, Culan (CC) over Gambia, Judith, fall 0:39
 - 113—Widlowski, Brody (CC) over Sanchez, Jayden, fall 3:54
 - 120—Kenney, Aidan (CC) over Billingsley, Brock, fall 3:18
 - 126—Finch, Brock (CC) over Budick, Kristofer, fall 1:04
 - 132—Houston, Noah (CC) by forfeit
 - 138—Widlowski, Brant (CC) over Eggleston, Jeremy, fall 0:35
 - 145—Blessing, Mataeo (CC) over Davis, Jason, fall 2:15
 - 152—Kramer, Zakk (CC) over Shultz, Aiden, tech fall 18-2
 - 160—Waliczek, Alec (CC) by forfeit
 - 170—Pfeifer, Rex (RC) over Poyner, Jack, fall 2:00
 - 182—Breneman, Joey (CC) by forfeit
 - 195—Young, Braiden (CC) over Alaimo, Dominic, maj dec 12-1
 - 220—Marschner, Kody (RC) over Dearth, Drake, fall 4:06
 - 285—Porth, Tyler (CC) by forfeit



Photo by Zadie Sims

CULAN LINDEMUTH goes up against Reed-Custer's Judith Gamboa during Thursday's match on the road. The Coalers won 69-12.

Nolan Kelly of Lisle for a third place finish.

At 138, Coal City's Brant Widlowski (16-1) had back-to-back falls in the five-man group to capture first place. Reed-Custer's Eggleston (28-7) battled back after a first round loss with two straight pins to finish in third.

At 145, Mataeo Blessing (35-3) of Coal City had the best record, giving him a bye in the three-man weight class. He had to wrestle only once, beating Ian Kreske (1-1) of Peotone by 11-3 major decision.

At 152, Wilmington junior Matt Swisher (14-14) got by Coal City's Zakk Kramer (6-4) with a 4-3 decision before being pinned 4:43 in the title bout to settle for second place.

At 160, Coaler Jack Poyner (29-10) was edged 7-6 by Carter Watkins (21-6) of Manteno in the championship. It was his only match in the three-man class.

At 170, there were five wrestlers with Coal City's Derek Carlson (29-5) winning the title by defeated Reed-Custer's Rex Pfeifer (32-4) with a 5-1 decision. Wilmington's Logan VanDuyne (14-10) was pinned by Carlson 1:25 for starters before getting a 1:40 on Trevor Miller from Herscher. Van Duyne battled hard against Jackson Bergeron (2-1) from Peotone to decide third place but was pinned 3:50.

At 182, Coaler Joey Breneman (33-5) won both of

his matches by first period pins to claim first place. Dominic Alaimo (21-14) from Reed-Custer lost his first match by 5:54 fall but finished with a 1:31 fall and tech fall 4:00 to earn third place.

At 195, with four wrestlers battling, Braiden Young (33-1) started with a 2:51 fall before taking first place with a tech fall 4:34 over Joe Raineri of Lisle for the championship. Wilmington's Hunter Hayes (23-7) lost to Raineri in the opening round before beating Gavin Collins of Herscher by 3:12 fall to decide third place.

At 220, the five-man field was bested by Comet Kody Marschner (26-1) who started with a 2:53 fall before defeating Coal City's Drake Dearth (30-6)

in :30 seconds for the championship.

At 285, Reed-Custer senior Gunnar Berg (32-2) bumped Coaler Tyler Porth (13-7) with an opening 1:38 fall. Berg the faced Wilmington's Brody Benson (13-12) for the championship, beating him with a 1:13 fall. Porth came back with a 4:59 fall over Tate White of Herscher to settle for third place.

The three teams now join eight others for the Feb. 4 regional which will be held at Reed-Custer. The team with the most points advances to the dual team sectional (Feb. 21) while the top three individuals at regional advance to the Feb. 10-11 sectional at Coal City.

Pack the auditorium Thursday

Pack the auditorium this Thursday night against Plainfield East as the Coalers battle the Bengals on the stage.

Coal City, 38-2, is currently ranked #1 in Class 1A with 10 wrestlers ranked in the top 10 with two others honorable mention.

106 Lindemuth #7

- 113 Widlowski #9
- 126 Finch HM
- 138 Buddy Widlowski #9
- 145 Blessing #4
- 152 Benson #9
- 160 Poyner HM
- 170 Carlson #5
- 182 Breneman #8
- 195 Young #9
- 220 Dearth #4
- 285 Gonzalez #3

F/S Lady Coalers still in I.C.E lead

The fresh-soph Lady Coalers remained undefeated in the Illinois Central Eight conference with a 10-0 record after picking up two more wins last week.

"We have the chance to have a great end to a successful season. We need to continue to play the same type of basketball we have played since Christmas break," said coach Brad Boreli.

On Monday at home they routed Manteno 33-16 to improve to 14-3 overall.


The young Lady Coalers were led by Kylee Kennell with 10 points. D'Arcy Ness, Emma Rodriguez and Chloe Pluger stepped up for 6 points each. Becca Hall and Sydney Larson tallied two points each while Jori Tucker made a free throw.

Comets come to town
On Thursday the Lady Coalers breezed past Reed-Custer, 40-8, thanks to a game-high 15 points from Emma Rodriguez.

Kylee Kennell hustled for eight points while Naomi Stoudt and Sydney Larson added four points each. Jori Tucker scored three points while Riley Walker, Chloe Pluger and Becca Hall finished with two points apiece.

Next game up is hosting Sandwich tonight (Wednesday) before traveling


to Streator Thursday. They will be back at home Monday against Herscher.



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Double win week for Coalers

It was a good week for the varsity Coalers with a pair of victories to improve to 8-12 overall.

The Coal City boys went on the road Tuesday to beat Peotone 46-39 and then upended Wilmington at home 75-43 on Friday.

The Coalers came out shooting against the Wildcats when they grabbed a 22-12 lead. After going up 31-26 at the half, Coal City enjoyed a 26-9 run in the third thanks to a hot-handed Cason Headley who led the Coalers with 28 points and five rebounds. Headley shot an impressive 7-for-8 at the line.

Carson Shepard was a big help with 14 points, nine assists, three steals and three rebounds. Carter Garrelts had 9 points, nine rebounds, 2 assists and one block. Owen Wren chipped in with 5 points, one steal and one rebound.

Nolan Ness also made five points while scoring four points each were Dillon Harrington and Zander Meents. Making a three-point bucket each were Jim Feeney and Garrett Keeley. Colton Sztapka came off the bench to grab four rebounds and one steal.

At Peotone

While the Blue Devils may have upset Reed-Custer in its bid to win the I.C.E. Conference title, the Coalers were having nothing of it, taking a 16-5 lead and never looking back.

Three Coalers ended up in double figures.

Carter Garrelts played well under the basket with 11 rebounds and had a total of 16 points with one assist. Carson Shepard also scored 16 points for Coal City with one steal,



Photo by Elaine Ohlund

COALER GUARD Carson Shepard drives for the lane during Friday's home contest against Wilmington.

three assists and six rebounds. Cason Headley helped out with 12 points, two steals, two assists and six rebounds. Jim Feeney chipped in 2 points,

one block, one assist and two rebounds.

Coal City will host Pontiac on Friday then travel to Streator on Tuesday.



Photo by Elaine Ohlund

SCRAMBLE FOR THE BALL - Coal City's Dillon Harrington grabs a loose ball and passes it off on Friday during a Coaler home win.



Photo by Elaine Ohlund

DRIVING TO THE BASKET on Friday when he scored 28 points against Wilmington is Coal City's Cason Headley.



Photo by Elaine Ohlund

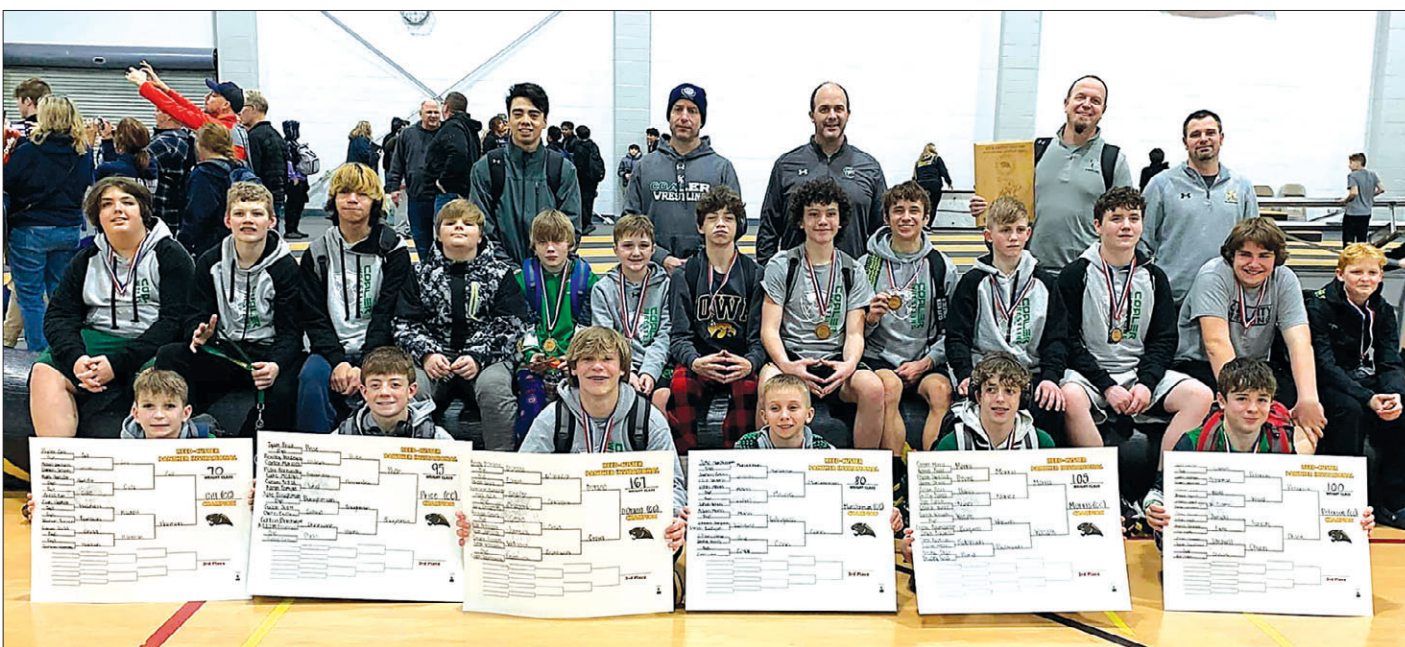
LOOK...LOOK...LOOKING for an open teammate on Friday is Coal City senior Garrett Keeley.



Photo by Amy Walker

GOOD DEFENSE—Coal City's Paige Walker ties up Wilmington's Breanna Horton for the ball during a recent win at home.

Warrior matmen do it again



THE WRESTLING WARRIORS traveled to Reed-Custer for a 16-team tournament over the weekend claiming their third title of the year. The Warriors scored 322 points to surpass Mahomet Seymour with 249, followed by Leroy and Mattoon. The Warriors had six champions including Ryder Gill (70 lbs.), Jake Munsterman (80), Tyson Price (95), Owen Petersen (100), Cooper Morris (105) and Brody D'Orazio (167). The Warriors had 2 runners-up Jason Piatak and Cole Russell. Finishing in third were Alex Carlson and Theo Fritz. Fifth place went to Landon Bomba, Gavin Roudis, Max Christensen, Cameron Minuth, and Chris Groves. Bobby Stoudt finished in 7th. Warrior wrestling include (sitting, from left) Ryder Gill, Tyson Price, Brody D'Orazio, Jake Munsterman, Cooper Morris and Owen Petersen. Middle row: Chris Groves, Wyatt Ricke, Fabian Hernandez, Kyle Odam, Jason Piatak, Gavin Roudis, Bobby Stoudt, Theo Fritz, Alex Carlson, Max Christensen, Cole Russell, Cameron Minuth, and Landon Bomba. Back row: Coach Rivera, Coach Piatak, Coach Morris, Coach Petersen and Coach Lindemuth.

All team effort makes winning easy for the Lady Coalers

Chalk up two more wins for the varsity Lady Coalers as it seems every player was a contributor last week.

"We had a great team win tonight. Proud of how we played in all facets of the game," said Brad Schmitt after beating Reed-Custer on Thursday.

The Lady Coalers (17-6, 6-3) dominated from the get-go, building an 18-5 in the opening frame and expanding it to 35-13 at the half. By the final buzzer eight Lady Coalers scored one or more points while five others had rebounds.

Abby Gagliardo led the Lady Coalers with 13 points, five steals and one rebound. Mia Ferrias was right behind her with 12 points, four steals and two rebounds. Audrey Cooper contributed 8 points.

Makayla Henline added 7 points with two steals and three rebounds. Mackenzie Henline played a great defensive game with eight steals and eight rebounds, she also had 2 points. Paige Walker and Tanna Curry each had 6 points. Kerigan Copes added four points.

Manteno Monday

Coal City steam-rolled Manteno at home Monday, 60-35. It was the second game in a row where they went on a big run in the second quarter, this time to own a 35-15 half-time lead.

Mia Ferrias led the Lady Coalers with 14 points, two of them 3-pointers. She also had five rebounds and three steals. Audrey Cooper followed with 13 points. Makenzie Henline chipped in 8 points and had a great defensive game with four rebounds and three steals.

Kyle Kennell had 7 points. Makayla Henline also added 6 points to the board. Abby Gagliardo had a great defensive game with six steals, two rebounds and 1 point. Abby Stiles chipped in 4 points. Carly Morris had 3 points and Tanna Curry and Kerigan Copes each had 2 points.

The Lady Coalers host Sandwich tonight (Wednesday) before traveling to Streator Thursday. They will be back at home Monday against Herscher.