Unit 1 honors its Students of the Week



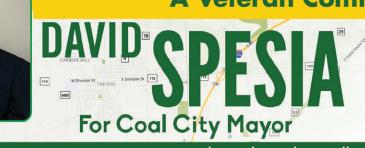
Warriors take second at IESA state





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Coal City Village Trustee - 2018 To Present

Streets & Alleys Committee Chairman Broadway Reconstruction Project Completed Reed Road Reconstruction Project Completed Alley Paving Construction Projects Restarted New Waste Hauler Contractor In 2020 (Weekly Recycling & Yard Waste Tote Pickup) **United States Marine Corps (4 Years)** Honorable Discharge As Corporal Overseas Service In Okinawa, Japan

Small Business Owner for 23 Years Family Roots Planted In Coal City Area In 1890 Married To Lisa With Four Children Jessica, Megan, Zachary, Abbey & Five Grandchildren

Fastrak Construction Management

Endorsed By The Will & Grundy Counties Building Trades Council

Paid for by friends of David Spesia

COALCITY COURANT &

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15, 2023

A FREE PRESS NEWSPAPER • (815) 634-0315

Tentative budget outlines increase in revenue, expenses

As a new budget year approaches for the village of Coal City, town leaders will be spending time over the next three weeks reviewing the details of the 2024 spending plan. In its tentative form, the budget for

the upcoming fiscal year—effective May 1— is \$15.4 million, an increase of 16% from the current year.

"Overall expenditures are up, but so are revenues," Village Administrator Matt Fritz said.

tallied at \$13.39 million, up \$1.3 million from the \$12 million budgeted for fiscal

Fritz said the tentative budget revenues include American Rescue Plan [ARP] dollars that will be expended in the coming year on a water main proj-"There are plenty of projects hap-

pening in other departments, we are doing what we can to improve the village across all departments," the administrator said. The tentative budget includes

scheduled projects, required expenses and requests from the various depart-

t Fritz said. "We go through a process of meet-Anticipated revenues for 2024 are ing with department heads and discussing the budgets and that is what we will be doing over the next few Wednesdays," Fritz said.

The first budget hearing is set for last week. tonight, Wednesday, March 15, and will focus on the police department and emergency service and disaster agency

Additional meetings will address administration, parks and public works-water and sewer.

The annual budget meetings also serve as a time that the Village Board takes a look at utility rates and determines if increases are needed to sustain

We're trying to reduce some of the fees as we are moving forward with these projects and utilize some of the tax increment financing. All of that is in here and we will talk about it over the next three weeks," Fritz told trustees operations.

The budget presented to the Board calls for the utilization of \$1.1 million in TIF funding for qualified projects.

Details concerning the various projects and departmental requests will be addressed during the budget meetings, as well as public hearing on the spending plan that is set for Wednesday, April 12. The Board could adopt the budget at the public meeting that follows, however it must be approved prior to the end of the current fiscal year that ends on April 30.

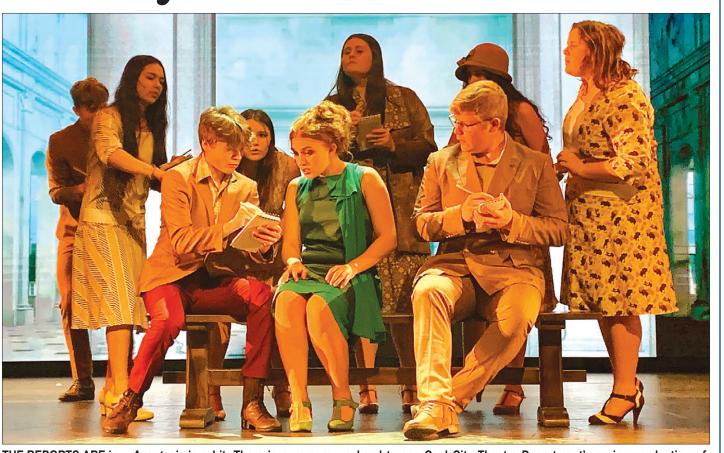
As proposed the 2024 budget includes \$3.9 million for personnel expenses up \$276,677 and \$11.54 for

"THERE ARE PLENTY OF PROJECTS HAPPENING IN OTHER DEPARTMENTS, WE ARE DOING WHAT WE CAN TO IMPROVE THE VILLAGE ACROSS ALL DEPARTMENTS."

MATT FRITZ

VILLAGE ADMINISTRATOR

Have you heard the news?



THE REPORTS ARE in... Anastasia is a hit. There is one more weekend to see Coal City Theatre Department's spring production of Anastasia, The Musical taking the stage Friday, March 17 and Saturday, March 18 at 7 p.m. and Sunday, March 19 at 2 p.m. in the Coal City Performing Arts Center. The musical tells the story of a young woman's journey through the past to find her future. The show features Eliana Patten in the title role and a talented cast that includes [seated from left]: Dane Noffsinger, Izzy Kostbade as Countess Lily Malevesky-Malevitch and Logan Hawkins. Standing are Mason Hamilton, Eliana Chernesky, Kat Huston, Elsa Bunton, Adaline Dowling and Kayla Connelly. Reserved seat tickets are available at bit/ly/CCTDTickets or at the door beginning one hour prior to each performance. On-site ticket sales are cash only.

Arrest made in carjacking investigation

STAFF REPORT

A Chicago man was booked into the Will County Adult Detention Facility on Monday, March 13, after an arrest for allegedly carjacking a vehicle days earlier at Division Street and Coal City Road in

Braidwood.

Jamiyah Johnson, 20, was arrested after the Braidwood Police Department obtained an arrest warrant, following the investigation into the incident that took place on Friday, March 10.

According to the police report,

Johnson had traveled from Bloomington north on I-55 before the vehicle he was in

stopped near Coal City Road. According to a witness, Johnson and a female passenger got into an argument

SEE ARREST, PAGE 2

Coal City conveys support for TIF districts

BY ANN GILL

Legislation introduced in the Illinois House and Senate propose significant changes to the Tax Increment Financing [TIF] Act, measures opposed by municipalities from across the state.

The village of Coal City is incentives to spur growth that produces jobs, additional tax revenue and increases a community's assessed valua-

"Coal City's TIF has provided annual capital payment to the Coal City Community Unit School District related to residential properties located within the TIF boundaries on an annual basis since the beginning of the district's incorporation, Fritz said.

One of the changes presented to the Illinois legislature is outlined in HB 1115.

According to Jacob & Klein and The Economic Development Group, the proposal is "to modify the default formula in the TİF Act as it relates to authorizing municipalities to assist elementary, secondary or unit school districts with addressing increased costs attributable to assisted housing units located within a TIF redevelopment project area that generates new enrollment." student

HB 1115 was filed in January by Rep. Lance

Yednock, D-Ottawa, and is currently assigned to the Finance Revenue

Committee. Jacob & Klein and The Economic Development Group serve as the village's TIF consultants since the district was established more than a decade ago.

When a TIF district is on record in support of established, a base tax rate is maintaining TIF financing, a set on property within the program that, according to district. Tax revenue generat-Village Administrator Matt ed above the base rate on Fritz, allows towns to provide those properties is then those properties is then directed to the TIF fund for capital projects within the district's boundaries like building roads, sewers and water lines.

"This year, planned to provide large subsidies to decrease the total amount of debt collected from residents for the annual payment required for the sanitary moderinzation project and the water treatment plant expansion project, Fritz said, adding that TIF funds will cover the engineer ing related to a quiet zone.

This is something we have used to success in Coal City and we have used it pretty well," Fritz said.

A second piece of legislation directed at TIF was filed last month by Senator Ann Gillespie, **D-Arlington**

Heights. According to the TIF consultants, SB 1391, "pro-

SEE TIF, PAGE 2











More rain than snow in February

STAFF REPORT

Lots of rain but just a trace of snow were recorded in Grundy County during February, a stark departure from one year earlier when just under 14 inches of snow fell on the area.

The Grundy County Emergency Management Agency's weather data division reports 3.15 inches of rain fell on the area. There were nine days in the month of February with measurable precipitation, the highest daily liquid amount recorded at one inch on Feb. 27 bringing the total rainfall for the year to 5.11

Grundy's monthly climatological data summary further reports the average daily temperature for the month was 41.9 degrees with a high of 57.3 degrees on Feb. 27 and a low of just one degree on Feb. 3.

The report notes a peak wind gust of 38 mph during a storm system that came through on Feb. 27.

The monthly weather data is collected by the weather data

division of the GCEMA based on data complied from records on file at its offices in the Grundy County Administration Center in

Three Warriors advance to conference spelling bee

Coal City Middle School will be represented at the Illinois Valley Conference Spelling Bee by three students—Max Christensen, Brady Pierson and Glenda Morris.

The students were the top spellers in their respective grade levels from the recent school-wide competition.

Christensen will represent sixth grade with Gavin Roudis as the alternate, Pierson will compete as a seventh grade with Jaiden Leman as the alternate and Morris is the eighth grade representative with Delanie Winke as the alternate.

The conference bee is scheduled for this week.

WIC program assists families

Department is reminding local families of the WIC program availability located at the Health Department.

Women, İnfants and Children [WIC] is a public health nutrition program under nutritionist or participant may be able to the US Department of Agriculture [USDA] providing nutrition education, nutritious foods, breastfeeding support, and healthcare referrals for income-eligible women children will choose their food benefits who are pregnant or post partum, infants package which will be uploaded onto an and children up to 5 years old. Families in electronic benefit card to be used to pur-

County Health Grundy or a neighboring county may be chase eligible foods from a grocery store. seen at the Grundy Health Department for this service. During a WIC appointment, a partici-

pant will either be seen in person by a complete an online visit through WIChealth.org.

At the appointment, the mom and/or

Foods provided through the WIC program include eggs, milk, cheese, yogurt, cereal, fruits, vegetables, 100% juice, jar baby foods, formula, infant cereals and whole grains.

If you are a pregnant or postpartum women, or have children in your home under 5 years old, please call our WIC office at 815-941-3118 to find out if you are eligible to be a WIC participant.

Best of Grundy businesses honered during annual dinner

Development Council and Grundy County Chamber of Commerce & Industry came together to celebrate the county's local business economy.

More than 209 business and municipal leaders, and guests attended the organizations' annual dinner on March 8. The evening began with a champagne toast in celebration of the GEDC's 30th anniversary.

"When GEDC started, economic development organiza-Thanks to vision from the Chamber, Grundy County Board, and business leaders, our organization was started. So I hope you all will have a glass and join me in toasting our partners and board mem-

Grundy bers, past and present. Thank ness when pregnant at the age opment you for your vision, your sup- of 26? An amazingly couraport, and commitment to economic development," said Pete Brummel, GÊDC Board chair and senior vice president of Grundy Bank.

In keeping with the 30th anniversary celebration, the GEDC recognized its investors that have been with them since the beginning, recognizing the 30-year partners for this year's Partnership Award. The GEDC has 39 original investors.

"Thank you so much to this group that has been the fabric of Grundy County for many, many years," said Nancy Norton, president and CEO of the GEDC. The organization went on

present Procter & Gamble with its Welcome to Grundy County Award. Located in Morris, Procter

& Gamble operates a 1.35 million square-foot facility and employs 500. "Businesses have choices

and when they choose to become part of our community, we want to give them a big Grundy County welcome,' Norton said.

GEDC's Business of the Year Award went to Mack & Associates, a professional accounting firm owned by Tawnya Mack. The firm handles more than 160 municipal audits, 30 school district audits and thousands of individuals' returns annually for clients from Springfield to the suburbs.
"Who buys their first busi-

It's been a busy start to the

month for members of the

Grundy Area Vocational Center

[GAVC] agriculture program

GAVC students

Easter Bunny

The Easter Bunny will

Coal City Fire Station 1 at

This free community

Prior to visiting with chil-

make a special visit to Coal

City as a guest of Grundy

35 S. DeWitt Place will host the

visit from 1-3 p.m. on

event is sponsored by Heroes

dren in Coal City, the bunny

will be at the Gardner Fire

Station, 206 Depot St., from 10

a.m. to noon on Sunday,

March 19 and from 2-4 p.m. at

the Mazon Fire Department,

Helpers, Inc. is a charitable not-for-profit organization

comprised of law enforce-

ment, first responder person-

nel, their families and commu-

together to enhance the lives

of children and families in

need across Grundy County.

volunteers

Grundy County Heroes &

Saturday, March 25.

& Helpers.

700 Park St.

County Heroes and Helpers.

plans a visit

and Grundy Area FFA.

the state contest in May.

of 26? An amazingly courageous person, that's who, and by her own admission, a bit crazy," Norton said of Mack, who accepted the award.

The Chamber also celebrated a recent anniversary and ended the year with a new record for membership.

"In 2022 the Chamber celebrated 75 years of helping local businesses. We celebrated our diverse history throughout the year and with an anniversary bash in August. We ended 2022 with the biggest reason to celebrate brought on 60 new members in one year—a record for the Chamber in recent history. This is a testament to the Chamber team, its volunteers, supporters and our business community as a whole," said Christina Van Yperen, president and CEO of the Grundy Chamber.

Cutting Edge Landscaping was presented with the Business of the Year Award. The business is owned by Blake Becker who began the business as a way to make money after high school while he waited to get into the trades. Before he knew it, the side work turned into a full

"Today Cuttin Edge has 20 employees who not only provide lawn services and landscaping, but also do hardscapes, excavation, and commercial snow removal. In 1022 they landed their first municipal contract doing snow

Grundy Area FFA takes top honors

They are proudly now offering shoreline renovation as well, Van Yperen said. Maggie and Eric Schutz

Christen and Colt Snodgrass of Iron & Glass were named the Chambers Entrepreneurs of the Year.

The partners started out as neighbors and developed a friendship that found them opening a tap house in Romeoville and then expanding to their hometown of Minooka.

Organization of the Year was bestowed on WeCare of

In 2022, the agency served over 4,500 individuals through the food pantry. It gave more than \$100,000 in rent or mortgage assistance and served nearly 700 children through its Christmas and back-to-school programs with an additional 118 people receiving assistance through their education and Pathway to Hope pro-

The Chamber also recognized Christine Mendez, of Bank, as Grundy Ambassador of the Year.

The Ambassador of the Year award is presented annually to an individual who has most effectively fulfilled their responsibilities as a Chamber Ambassador.

This year's dinner was sponsored by CPV Three Rivers Energy and Old National Bank, as well as Comcast, Busey Bank and McCullough Implement.

COAL CITY PUBLIC LIBRARY NEWS Preschool Storytime, 11a.m.

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

In-Person Adult Exercise, Iondays, Tuesdays, and Mondays, Thursdays 9-10 a.m. Youth Art Month - Mar. 1 thru

Mar. 28 - CCPLD in conjunction with the Coal City Unit #1 Art Dept. will be displaying artwork created by students in our district. Stop in the Library between March 1st-28th to see of the artwork displayed. If you would like to showcase a piece of art you created, please see someone in Youth Services. Join us on Tuesday, March 7th between 5:30 and 7 p.m. for Youth Art Peeps Contest - We want you

to participate in our CCPLD Peeps Contest. Create a diorama using peeps as the main display. Starter kits will be available at the front desk in the Library from March 13 thru March 17 Make a diorama and drop it off at the front desk on or before Tuesday, March 28 by 8 p.m. Voting will take place at CCPLD from Thursday, March 30 thru Tuesday, April 4 with winner announced Wednesday, April 5. Winner will receive a gift card to the local business of their choice. There will be a Child, Teen, Adult and Family winner. Only one entry per person. Must be a CCPLD cardholder to participate. Supplies are limited and colors may vary.

Thursday, Mar. 16- Terrific Tots, 10 a.m.

We Remember, 1 p.m.

Jr. Artists, 3:30 p.m. Terrific Tots, 6 p.m.

Cooking Demo with Heather Shouse, Breakfast, 6 p.m.

Friday, Mar. 17- Bingo, 1 p.m. Fun Fridays, 3 p.m.

Dungeons & Dragons Game

Saturday, Mar. 18- Stitch Group, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday, Mar. 20- Makerspace

Cart Mondays - All Day Terrific Tots, 10 a.m.

JAMIYAH JOHNSON

by Braidwood officers and the

Illinois State Police unoccu-

pied in the 6800 block of

South Paxton in Chicago. The

vehicle was towed back to the

Braidwood Police Department

several witnesses were inter-

viewed and Johnson was posi-

tively identified as the suspect

in this case. Johnson is cur-

rently on parole for posses-

sion of a stolen motor vehicle

and aggravated unlawful use

of a weapon for cases out of

was signed, Braidwood inves-

tigators traveled to Chicago

After the arrest warrant

Over the next 48 hours,

for processing.

The vehicle was located

Mahjong, 1 p.m. Eager Readers, 4 p.m.

Edition, 1 p.m.

Tuesday, Mar. 21-Mini Artists Wooden Čhick Sign, 4 p.m. and 6

Health Insurance (SHIP), 9 a.m.–12 p.m.

Family Lapsit, 10 a.m.

Teen Shadow Box. 4 p.m. Teens 6th thru 12th grade can register to make a Shadow Box. Space is limited. Registration is required and must be CCPLD cardholder.

Easter Egg Door Sign, 6 p.m Create your own Easter Egg door sign. Cost is \$5 per person. Must be a CCPLD cardholder. Colors can be done online or in-person at the Library.

Arrest

and the female passenger walked away northbound on

At approximately 7:29 Johnson allegedly entered into a vehicle without permission on Division Street at Coal City Road. According to the police report, Johnson brandished a firearm and put it to the female victim's head. pressing the gun against her temple telling her to drive.

After driving a short distance, Johnson then told the female victim to exit the vehicle, then fled onto I-55 northbound.

Johnson was pursued by several area police agencies, however, he was able to elude police.

According to a press release from the Braidwood Police Department, Johnson was later tracked by BPD officers who were in communication with the vehicle's owner, who had the car equipped with the anti-theft device LoJack.

Felix Township to hold annual town meeting

PUBLIC NOTICE

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING APRIL REGULAR MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN

cers and decide on such measures as

may, in pursuance of law, come before the

5. Approval of Annual 2022 Meeting

Resident request to be on Agenda

Published in the Coal City Courant

Motion to Adjourn
 Directly after the Annual Town

Meeting the regular April meeting of the Felix Township Board of Trustees will

Call to Order
 Pledge of Allegiance

Election of Moderator

4. Reading of 2022 Minutes

6. Annual Financial Report

Dated March 09, 2023

Megan Wharrie

Township Clerk

7. Date for 2024 Annual Meeting 8. Open Discussion

meeting. Agenda

To the legal voters of the Township poses numerous changes to of Felix in the County of Grundy and the State of Illinois, the ANNUAL TOWN MEETING of said Township will take place on: TUESDAY, APRIL 11, 2023 Being the second Tuesday of said month. At the hour of 6:00 p.m. at Felix Township Hall 6525 E. counterproductive Whitetie Rd. Coal City, Illinois For the transaction of miscellaneous business of said township; and after a Moderator having been elected, will proceed to hear, and consider reports of offi-

In the past, Coal City's TIF has been used to assist in the development of the O'Reilly Auto Parts store, continuing road improvements including Reed Road, and to assist in the

"It's defanitey a tool we used successfully,' have Mayor Terry Halliday added.

Coal City School District accepting bids for 2023 Weight Room Flooring Project

PUBLIC NOTICE

High School Weight Room Flooring Project. Plans and Specifications are available on March 16, 2023 from Cordogan Clark & Associates, Inc. plan room www.cordoganclark planroom.com. Sealed Bids, conspicuously marked, shall be received until 11:00 am CST on April 4, 2023 at the District Office, 550 S. Carbon Hill Road, Coal City, IL 60416, at which time they shall be opened and read aloud. A pre-bid meeting is scheduled for 9:00 am, March 21, 2023 at the front entrance of Coal City High School, 655 W Division St, Coal City, IL. Prevailing wage rates shall apply to this Project. Each bid must conform and be responsive to all pertinent bidding and contract documents including Contractor qualifications as specified in said documents.

along with the Grundy County Sheriff's Office ProAct Unit to locate and take Johnson into custody for his outstanding

Paxton where a male identified as Johnson was located. At 2:19 p.m. on Monday. Johnson was taken into custody without incident by BPD, Grundy County ProAct, and IDOC Parole Agents, and transported to the Will County Adult Detention Facility.

Johnson was charged with aggravated vehicular hijacking (Class X Felony), armed habitual criminal (Class X Felony), aggravated unlawful possession of a stolen motor vehicle (Class 1 Felony), unlawful possession of a weapon by a felon (Class 2 Felony), aggravated unlawful restraint (Class 3 Felony), and parole violation.

He is due next in court on April 4.

South

solving natural resource competition for high school students in grades 9-12 throughout the United States and Canada from July 23-29.

Teams of up to five stu- named the Land Use Council 3 named the top raking team at dents work together on a writthe regional Envirothon competition and will move on to areas of aquatics, forestry, soils, wildlife and current envi-Envirothon is a problemronmental issues that change each year. For 2023, the fifth

> The winning team will compete next at the Illinois reports it competed in the Envirothon competition on Section 7 FFA vet science will be 15 other teams contenting for the title.

will also develop and present a in the top 10 with the meat problem solving oral presentation to a panel regarding the current environmental issue, this is in addition to the written exam and practicals.

winner will move on to com- by in the

Envirothon at Mount Allison University in New Brunswick, Grundy Area FFA was

champion at the regional conten exam and a practical in the test held March 6 at Seneca High School. The council is comprised of chapters from 14 programs that include Kendall, LaSalle, Livingston, Seneca, topic is adapting to a changing Ottawa and Newark to name a Grundy Area FFA further

May 3-4 at the University of career development event Illinois' Allerton Park. There [CDE] and the meat evaluation CDE on March 1. Cassie Fuhrman, a stu-

At the state event, teams dent in the ag program, placed evaluation team taking fourth place overall. The vet science team finished the contest in sixth place.

The GAVC ag program and The Illinois Envirothon Grundy Area FFA are overseen instructed/advised by National Brandy Biros.

Offered a lump-sum pension buyout? Let's talk.



Tammy Johnson, AAMS* Financial Advisor

12 East North Street Coal City, IL 60416 815-634-0205

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working

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Eric D. Fisher, publisher Ann Gill, editor

Family Lapsit, 6 p.m. Preschool Storytime, 6 p.m.

Eager Readers Homeschool

Wednesday, March 22. Senior

Preschool Storytime, 10 a.m.

vary. Registration is required and

arrest warrant.

Surveillance was set up on the 6800 block of South

"I want to say, great job to Detective Sergeant Chris Altiery, who worked diligently on this case," Braidwood Police Chief Todd Lyons said.

Bond was set by a Will County Circuit Judge at \$2.5

Cook County.

the TIF Act which will be in calcuable or impossible to administer, and generally to municpality's authority and use of tax increment fiancing throughout Illinois."

redevelopment of Broadway.

Coal City Community Unit School District #1 will be accepting bids for 2023 Coal City

Published in the Coal City Courant on Wednesday, March 15, 2023.

Parking lot beautification project forthcoming

BY ANN GILL

A small portion of a \$1 million grant will be used by the village of Coal City to complete a parking lot project that began

with the South Broadway reconstruction. Last week, the Village Board awarded a bid for parking lot improvements to 4 Seasons Landscaping, Inc. at a cost of

Village Administrator Matt Fritz said

located on the north side of the post office in order to install permeable pavers within the area that will allow grass to grow through the block, but still allow overflow parking to occur on that space when nec-

The village purchased the property and established the space as a public parking area as part of the road reconstruction project.

"Due to the cost of the low bidder,

of gravel that exists within the parking lot come from local match in addition to the DCEO funding," Fritz said.

> The dollars received from the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity [DCEO] will be used for multiple projects including storm water improvements in the area of Second Avenue and a phase one engineering study of Reed Road from South Broadway west to Gorman Road.

The low bid was \$5,975 less than the the work will involve removing a portion 11% of the project will be required to second bid received by the village.

Five Coalers earn honors at GAVC

Five students from Coal City High School have been selected to receive one of the highest honors a student can Grundy at Vocational Center [GAVC] the Director's Award.

Instructors from each of the center's program areas recognize exceptional students. The honor is based on attendance, leadership skills, citizenship, professional attitude, ability in practicum activities and classroom assignments, teamwork and

Coal City students selected for the award in February were Audrey Cooper, agriculture; Angelina Morales, cosmetology; Tabetha Greene, criminal justice; Jadyn entrepreneurship Cassani. and Alaina Gill, health occu-

awards for their work.

school include:

Fifth grade

fourth place, Gus Cimino.

for more information

Fine Arts Festival in February. The event is a cel-

ebration of the fine arts programs in the district

including band, chorus and various levels of art

courses offered at each of the five school build-

the festival and several students received

A piece titled, "It's a Pie!" by Damona Rutherford, an eighth grader at Coal City

Middle School, was named Principal's Choice.

were Vanna Liebermann, eighth grade, for 'Under the Sea"; Kennedy Larson, seventh

grade, "Kennedy's Inspirations," and Cash Wetenkamp, sixth grade, for his piece "Spongeball."

Student created artwork was on display at

Additional middle school award winners

Award recipients from the intermediate

Navajo rugs—Best of Show, Aubrey

Graffiti Name—Best of Show, Cianna

Kindergarten registration for the 2023/2024 school year will be held Wednesday, April 26 at the Early Childhood Center. Visit

the Coal City School District Early Childhood webpage and click on the kindergarten registration appointment link to make an appointment. This includes the students attending our pre-

school program who are going into kindergarten. Call the office

before Sept. 1, 2023. Call 815-634-5042, ext. 1301 for further

birth certificate, driver's license or state ID for notary purposes,

proof of residency: Mortgage paper, real estate tax bill, real

estate sales agreement or lease agreement and any legal docu-

ments such as custody, power of attorney or protection orders.

information or visit the website at www.coalcityschools.org.

In order to be eligible, a child must be five years of age on or

Registration documents needed at Round-up are a certified

Olszewski; first place, Kenney Loughran and Lila Molloy; second place, Reese Poeschel and Derek Maxwell; third place, Chase Clubb, and

McKee; first, Tristan Brncich, Cody Allen and Jaxson Shats; second, Fiona Lindley, Devon

Fatlan and Zack Babcock; third, Caleb Hall and

Early voting, mail-in voting for April consolidated election

Grundy County Clerk, Thursday, March 30, 8:30 Kay Olson, would like to a.m.-6 p.m.; Saturday, April remind voters that Early Voting for the upcoming April 4, 2023, Consolidated Election runs through Monday, April 3.

Offices to be elected include Municipal District vote by mail ballot in the offices, Fire Protection upcoming Consolidated Trustees, Park Commissioners, Library District Trustees, Unit School District Board Members, Grade School Board Members, High School Board Members, Community College Trustees, and Regional Board of School Trustees.

Early voting takes Office, located in the Grundy County 111 Courthouse, Washington St., Morris. Early voting hours are Monday thru Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Additional Early Voting hours: Thursday March 16, 8:30 a.m.-6 p.m.; Saturday, March 18, 8 a.m. to Noon; Tuesday, March 21, 8:30 a.m. - 6 p.m.; Thursday March 23, 8:30 a.m. - 6 p.m.; Saturday, March 25, 8 a.m. to Noon: Tuesday,

Students earn honors in annual art contest

The Unit 1 School District held its annual Cali Ness, and fourth, Abby Hitchcock and

Cannon Wills.

Fourth grad e

a.m.-6 p.m.; Saturday, April 1, 8 a.m. to Noon. and Sunday, April 2, 8 a.m. to Please Cellphones are not allowed inside the courthouse. Voters wishing to cast a

upcoming Consolidated

Election, should contact the County Clerk's Office at 815-941-3222, to obtain the necessary application, or they may find the application under 'Election infor-mation' on the Grundy County website www.grundycountyil.gov. No excuse is needed to vote by mail, and voters are place at the County Clerk's encouraged to apply as early as possible to make sure they receive their ballot in time to vote.

Ballots must be postmarked no later than election day and received at the Grundy County Clerk's Office within 14 days after election day. The last day a ballot may be mailed is Thursday, March 30, 2023. Voters with questions or wanting more information should contact the Grundy County Clerk at 815-941-3222, #1, or email elec-March 28, 8:30 a.m. -6 p.m.; tions@grundycountyil.gov.

Architectural Block-Best of Show, Katie

Koi Pond —Best of Show, Lily Connor-Mikos; first place, Olivia Beach; second, Noah

Gumball Machine-Best of Show, Athena

Rothko-Best of Show, Lexi Henderson;

Weaving baskets—Best of Show, Savanah

honor's list

Skyler Wickiser, of Coal

City was among more than

5,100 Baylor University stu-

dents named to the fall 2022

dean's academic honor list,

which recognizes Baylor

undergraduates for their out-

standing academic work dur-

Denny and Kristi Wickiser.

She is the daughter of

at Baylor

ing each semester.

Bergmark; first, Nalia Caslte, Ty Gigler and

Teigan Trofimchuck; second, Liam Bakii, Emalyn Williams and Isabella Hernandez; third

place, Keegan Keer and Mel Leman, and fourth

Moser; third Jett Johnson and Willow

Weathersby, and fourth place, Charles Eden

Libner; first place, Grayson Marizza and Madilynn Williams; second, Sienna Ruffatto and Kennedy Murphey; third place, Clare

Haberzetle and Cody Olson, and fourth place

first place, Era Bakii; second, Jaycob Wilson and

Rosey Matthews; third place, Grayson Bailey and Raye Aldridge, and fourth Amelia Blustein

Dick; first place, Lily Harding; second, Addy

Hines; third, Lilly Harney, and fourth place, Jase

Jake Benson and Grady Jensen.

place, Kaylie Brodnick and Ben Manering.

Students of the Week



COAL CITY INTERMEDIATE School Students of the Week for March 15 are (from left): Emma Hamilton, Harper Lardi, Ayden Swore and Ace Haberzetle.



COAL CITY ELEMENTARY School Students of the Week for March 8 in row one are (from left): David Blatzheim, Corrine Gibson, Hunter Sharwarko and Daxton Carey. Completing the group in row two are: Brantley Monshau, Peyton Thompson, Roy Marsh, Owen Koehn, Talon Studer and Mason Hubb.



COAL CITY ELEMENTARY School Students of the Week for March 15 are: Blaine Poeschel, Addilyn Janczak, Kayden Krueger, Noel Rodriquez, Myles Marketti, Lilliana Beach, Faye Thompson, Charles



Local students named on Mizzou dean's list

Mizzou recognizes the following area students to the fall 2022 dean's list:

Anna Schulte, Braidwood; Joseph Piatak, of Coal City; Harley Felker, Courtney Meyer and Joshua Michalak, all of Diamond; Mazie Meyr, of Essex and Rhianna Brown, Raelene DesRochers, Rebecca Horton and Emily Watson, all of

EARLY VOTING SITE - GRUNDY COUNTY COURTHOUSE CONSOLIDATED ELECTION – APRIL 4, 2023

Kindergarten registration April 26 Wickiser on

continue through Monday, April 3, 2023.

Grundy County Election Authority 111 East Washington Street, Room 12

Morris, IL 60450

TIME – Monday – Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (unless noted below)

3222, Option #1 if you have any questions.

Please note: Cell phones are not allowed in the **Grundy County Courthouse.**

KAY T. OLSON

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Smith earns dean's list honors

Illinois at Chicago's College of Applied Health Sciences dean's

list for a seventh consecutive semester.

Kinesiology and Nutrition studying kinesiology.

Zachary Smith, of Coal City, was named to the University of

Smith, a senior at UIC, is enrolled in the Department of

PUBLIC NOTICE

Early Voting will begin on Friday, March 10th and LOCATION – Grundy County Courthouse (Lobby)

Saturday	March 11th	8:00 a.m. to Noon
Tuesday	March 14th	8:30 a.m 6:00 p.m
Thursday	March 16th	8:30 a.m 6:00 p.m
Saturday	March 18th	8:00 a.m. to Noon
Tuesday	March 21st	8:30 a.m 6:00 p.m
Thursday	March 23rd	8:30 a.m 6:00 p.m
Saturday	March 25th	8:00 a.m. to Noon
Tuesday	March 28th	8:30 a.m 6:00 p.m
Thursday	March 30th	8:30 a.m 6:00 p.m
Saturday	April 1st	8:00 a.m. to Noon
Sunday	April 2nd	8:00 a.m. to Noon
Please call the Grundy County Clerk's Office at (815) 941		

GRUNDY COUNTY ELECTION AUTHORITY

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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 courant@fpnusa.com with "soundoff in the subject line or go to www.freep ressnewspapers.com, -> Submit Soundoff 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 o. 111 S. Water St., Wilmington, IL 60481.

Worse than before

BRAIDWOOD-As a 50-year resident of Braidwood I can honestly say that this is the most vicious local election that our community has ever seen. So many people thought the 2019 election was bad but this one is 10% worse. It is extremely sad to say that our beautiful community is heavily divided by small town political warfare right now. I think we all can't wait for April 4th to come and go so we can pull up the hundreds of campaign signs and move on with our lives.

Retraining

SHADOW LAKES—The Woke left has banned Zip a Dee Doo Dah as a Racist song. If you hear anyone singing this report them to your local Democrat HQ for retraining. Eddie

Bring back Sammy

Memo to the Cubs. Bring Sammy Sosa back to Wrigley Field. Retiring #21. 545 homers, enough said. Thank you.

Rest of the story

BRAIDWOOD—Last week's Sound-Off regarding the City of Braidwood wanting to annex the Braidwood Recreation Club only told half of the story. Consider the following: At present the club pays absolutely nothing to the city in real estate taxes simply because it is not within city limits. But if it was, there would be substantial taxes to pay. I can only guess at what the value of a golf course and pro shop are worth in tax revenue to the city. Add to that a beautiful beach, beach house, campgrounds, etc., all located on hundreds of acres of prime real estate and you can quickly see that the city would stand to make a small fortune at the expense of the club. In fact, the only way the club could meet that burden would be by greatly increasing membership dues. Additionally, the club would be subject to Braidwood zoning and building ordinances and regulations. Braidwood city officials would actually be able to dictate what, if any structures are built and how and where they are built. Nothing could be

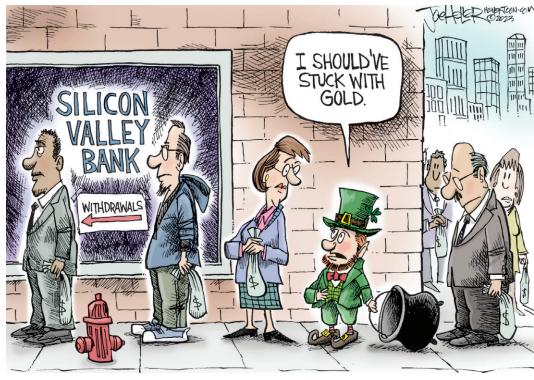
done on club property without the approval of the city through its appointed officials and special comittees/boards. The Braidwood Recreation Club has been doing just fine for more than 70 years without the interference of the city of Braidwood. I want to keep it that way. And to the present Braidwood Recreation Club board who had the good sense to reject the idea, thank you for doing what is in the best interests of the Club and its members.

Spewing false info BRAIDWOOD—The Braidwood communi-

ty is in a state of utter embarrassment right now. All of the political candidates and their supporters are spewing false information from every direction. You can tell this is going to be a close election because the mud being thrown is caked in spurs for added leverage. Don't believe everything you read, but then again no matter what you read chances are it will contain some sort of falsities.

The right direction

BRAIDWOOD-There's something to be said about the fact that residents who have had a negative experience, certainly none like Kim E, are choosing to stay in our city. There's something to be said about the fact that houses that pop into the market aren't available for long. There's something to be said about the fact that rooftops are going up at an amazing rate. More has happened in Braidwood, for the good in the last four years than perhaps in the last two decades. The bank statements don't lie. The new equipment purchased on grant money speaks for itself. The countless "We Support Our Police" signs within yards and windows speaks volumes, and, in my opinion, the city just has a different feel from times past. A step in any other direction than forward would be disappointing and a disservice to prosperity. I hope others feel Kim's passion and follow suit of seeing Braidwood for what it has become and what it truly can be with right people at the



Coal City Area Club

COAL CITY—I have belonged to the Coal City Area Club for years. This year we got socked with a substantial raise our senior dues. We had no notice the dues were going to be raised for us. You would think that something this important would be made known so we could voice an opinion. What are we getting for this raise? Absolutely nothing. As a senior member I cannot hunt, have a dock or pontoons or a fishing boat. I can't take my 10 foot jon boat out to fish in. They say there are a little over 500 senior members, and I don't think our dues raise is going to make a difference in money received for repairs. Are you trying to get us seniors to turn in our membership? If

you need more income for repairs, consider adding another 50 or 100 members. Our club isn't crowded. You assume we hardly use the club, but we do enjoy it. Add some more members. You won't even know we are there.

Just spend less

SHADOW LAKES—Biden wants to raise the taxes on corporations \$8 billion. This is how it works. You tax business more, they raise the price of the things they sell to make up for the new taxes. We get more inflation that the middle class pays for. Simple. Biden will blame Maga white supremacists. That makes no sense. How about just spending less money?

Commentary

A budget hawk fighting for fiscal sanity

BY JOHN HENDRICKSON

The national debt is at \$31 trillion and rising. Congressional Budget Office has recently estimated that the Fiscal Year 2023 deficit could hit \$1.4 trillion. The economy is still struggling with high inflation, which is a direct result of reckless and out-ofcontrol spending.

Under President Biden, the national debt has increased over \$3.7 trillion. assuming office. President Biden has increased spending by over \$10 trillion.

Both political parties can share the blame for the national debt and the broken budget

Nevertheless, U.S. Sen. Mike Braun (R-IN) is one of a select few policymakers who is trying to seriously address the debt crisis. Braun is a rare budget hawk in Congress and his efforts to address both the national debt and rein in spending should be seriously considered.

Progressives and liberals have embraced the radical Modern Monetary Theory, which states that since the federal government has the ability Act of 2023 and the Make Rules to print money it does not have to worry about deficits or debt. This theory argues that the federal government can have a spend without any consequences.

As an example, having the United States Mint produce a platinum coin that would be worth" \$1 trillion.

Modern Monetary Theory repeals the laws of economics and fiscal sanity. It also ignores the numerous examples from history that demonstrate what happens to nations when they simply just print money.

This is why Braun has introduced a measure that Modern would condemn Monetary Theory.

It is this reckless philosophy that has led to record high inflation. Consumers across the nation continue to not only pay more at the grocery store, but inflation is destroying their earnings and purchasing power. Families and businessdifficult decisions about their

This is why Sen. Braun has Act through Balanced Budgets manent, which when passed

Matter Act. For too long, Congress has not only sidestepped fiscal responsibility, but through institutional rules, "blank check" to continue to is able to waive budget rules in order to increase spending.

> Braun is attempting to correct this by making it more difficult to waive budget rules.

> Sen. Braun is also calling for the federal budget to be balanced and has proposed a plan to meet this objective. The Braun Budget plan would place a cap on total spending and would balance the budget over a 10-year period and save taxpayers \$4.5 trillion. The Braun Budget proposal would also require much needed transparency and force Congress to review government programs.

> A large portion of the federal budget is on auto-pilot and this not only increases spending, but allows wasteful and unnecessary programs to

Sen. Braun's proposal is es are forced every day to make also respectful of Social Security and Medicare, and it would extend the life of both trust funds. It would also make introduced the Fight Inflation the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act per-

and provided much needed tax relief for families and busi-Opponents of the Tax Cuts

and Jobs Act argue that it has led to massive deficits, but the opposite actually occurred. Revenues increased as a result of the tax cut, which demonstrates that the federal government has a spending problem.

Braun's budget proposal would make other meaningful reforms to the federal government, but it would provide a path forward for fiscal sustain-

The national debt is not just a serious economic problem, but it is also a threat to national security. Sen. Braun should be commended for his leadership in trying to restore fiscal conservatism to the federal government.

Further, Braun has not forgotten that the Republican Party, the conservative party, must be the champion for sound economic policies and to stop the economic insanity of Modern Monetary Theory.

John Hendrickson serves as policy director for Iowans for Tax Řelief Foundation

Illinois drivers would get \$50 fine for lap dogs with new legislation

BY KEVIN BESSLER THE CENTER SQUARE

Legislation advancing at the Illinois statehouse would get motorists in hot water for letting their pet ride on the driver's lap.

House Bill 2910 provides that a person who holds an animal in the person's lap while operating a motor vehicle is guilty of a petty offense. The bill's sponsor, state Rep. Jawaharial Williams, D-Chicago, said pets aren't covered under distracted driving laws.

"The new law would allow police officers to pull

you over if they see that you are driving with an animal in your lap, whatever the animal may be," Williams said.

Williams cited a AAA survey that showed that 31% of drivers with pets said they have been distracted by their pets while driving, and 20% of drivers who have admitted to driving with the pet on their lap have been involved in accidents.

Offenders would be subject to a \$50 fine. The measure moved out of the transportation committee and is headed to the House

floor.

Commentary

Campaign contributions a concern ahead of high-profile cases

BY GREG BISHOP THE CENTER SQUARE

Attention on judicial integrity has been raised with the focus on \$2 million in campaign contributions Gov. J.B. Pritzker made to two Illinois Supreme Court justice candidates who won in November. The court hears cases next week. In one high-profile case, Pritzker is a top defendant.

Pritkzer downplayed his \$1 million donation to each of two then-supreme court candidates who are now on the bench of seven. He gave half a million from each of his political campaign and his revocable trust to Supreme Court candidates Mary O'Brien and Elizabeth Rochford. That's despite the governor signing into law last year limiting contributions to such campaigns to \$500,000 from single indi-

"If you're suggesting that the fact that I gave money to let's say the Democratic Party or the committees that supported candidates means that everybody who's received any money has to recuse themselves from anything to do with the state of Illinois, that's ridiculous," Pritzker said at an unrelated event in Springfield. "And I've certainly never asked anybody to vote a certain way or decide on a case a certain way. I would never do that. I never have and I never will."

Pritzker said the justices are independent jurists.

Yesterday the high court was to hear the appeal of a Kankakee County court's ruling that the no-cash bail provision of the SAFE-T Act is unconstitutional. In May, justices hear oral arguments in the gun-ban challenge from Macon County where Pritzker

is a lead defendant.

In talking about ethics, state Rep. Blaine Whilhour, R-Beecher City, raised a red flag.

'It's important to point out that that kind of stuff is inappropriate, he did circumvent the rules basically by doing that, giving from different entities," Wilhour said.
"The governor should lead by example in those kinds of

State Rep. Ryan Spain, R-Peoria, said campaign spending is growing, but there are other issues of fairness like the redistricting iudicial Democrats approved in 2021.

'Let's remember, 600,000 voters said we need to change how we deliver redistricting in the state of Illinois, [former Illinois Supreme Court Justice Tom Kilbride was the deciding vote to squelch the wishes of

those voters," Spain said. Killbride lost retention

before new districts were drawn and approved in 2021, which Spain said moved the courts more in Democrats'

Longtime politics professor Kent Redfield said electing judges can cause problems.

Then the general public starts to think of judges once they get elected as any other elected official," Redfield told The Center Square.

Any appearance of conflict like campaign contributions can foster distrust in the judiciary, Redfield said. 'That calls into people's

minds the legitimacy of the court in general or the specific rulings of the court," he said.

Čhanging Illinois' elected judiciary into an appointed one would require a constitutional change but Redfield said appointing judges also has pitfalls of perceived bias.

Illinois Bankers Association says Illinois banks insulated from collapse in other states

BY GREG BISHOP THE CENTER SQUARE

With two major banks collapsing in other states, the Illinois Bankers Association is reassuring Illinoisans they are secured, and not by taxpayers. Silicon Valley Bank in California and New York

Signature Bank were both taken over by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation over the weekend. President Joe Biden announced Monday the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation took the banks over and management there

will be fired. And while depositors will secured through FDIC, bank investors won't.

"They knowingly took a risk and when the risk didn't pay off, investors lose their money," Biden said. "That's how capitalism works.

Bankers Illinois Association Vice President of Government Relations Ben Jackson reiterated Biden's insistence that taxpayers are not impacted by the FDIC support of depositors.

"The funds there to back-

· Elder Law/Nursing homes

· Wills & Trusts, Estate Planning

Mediation (custody and divorce)

Agency pursuant to an act of Congress.

Asset Conservation

Family Law & Divorce

Medicaid

stop Americans' deposits are funded by banks so banks pay quarterly assessments based on a very specific formula, Jackson told The Center

Square. He doesn't expect there to

be a cascade.

These were banks that generally had clients that were in areas that pose some risks such as startups, cryptocurrencies, that type of thing, and they had situations where depositors pulled out and the banks didn't necessarily have

the liquidity," Jackson said. Illinois banks and thrifts are strong, Jackson insisted, and they are insulated from bank failures in other states. Anyone with concerns should reach out to their bankers, he

"A banker wants their customer to feel secure that their deposits are going to be insured and that they're going to be available when they need

them," lackson said. Jackson said the reforms that were put in place since the housing and banking crisis 15 years ago have helped insulate banks from when other

banks may collapse. THE LAW OFFICES OF

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Mobile food pantry to visit Kuzma Cottage

Catholic Charities of Joliet tribute food. will be hosting Mobile Food Pantry at Kuzma Care Cottage on Monday, March 20, at 635 S. Main St., Wilmington from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

When you arrive, please line up in the St. Rose Church parking lot by entering on the Main Street side. (Please do not arrive before 9 a.m.) All Mobile Food Pantries will use a "drive thru" method to dis-

Please clear space in your trunk or backseat so volunteers can load boxes of food directly into your vehicle. Food is free to neighbors in need; no ID, proof of address or income is required. Everyone is welcome.

Food is distributed on a first-come, first served basis, while supplies last.

Wheeler Ave. bridge over I-80 closing

The Illinois Department of Transportation announced that a project to replace the Wheeler carrying Avenue over Interstate 80, in Joliet, will require a full closure of Wheeler Avenue, between Woods and Park avenues beginning March 20 through early November.

The project is part of advance work leading to the \$1.2 billion reconstruction of I-80 through Will County.

A posted detour will direct motorists to Meadow Avenue, Larkin Avenue (Illinois 7) and Jefferson Street (U.S. 52). Motorists should also expect occasional overnight lane closures on I-80 at the bridge during that time.

The \$5.7 million project will replace the existing bridge accommodate the widening of I-80 under the bridge, new

storm sewers and ADA-compliant sidewalk ramps will also be installed. The project is anticipated to be completed in

The overall I-80 project will redesign and rebuild 16 miles from Ridge Road, in Minooka, to U.S. 30, in Joliet and New Lenox, while adding or extending auxiliary lanes to improve safety and reduce congestion.

Interchanges will rebuilt or improved at Interstate 55, Illinois 7, Center Street, Chicago Richards Street and Briggs Street, with a new flyover ramp linking southbound I-55 to eastbound I-80 to improve traffic flow and safety. More than 30 bridges will be rehabilitated or replaced, including those over the Des Plaines

The cocktail that made tequila popular

Brian Rung

I am a big fan of classic rock, and the social media advertising algorithm knows this very well. I regularly receive updates in my news feed when my favorite bands release new music, or go on

I was happy to see the Eagles Hotel California tour is still going strong into 2023. If you are a fan of the iconic Hotel California album, you're in luck as the band performs the album in its entirety at every show as part of this tour.

How "iconic" is Hotel California? Well, the December 1976 release is one of the bestselling albums of all time with certified sales of over 26 million copies in the US and over 32 million copies worldwide.

In addition to performing the Hotel California album from start to finish the band will also play a "greatest hits' set on this tour. The band has been touring and recording in various forms off and on for over 50 years, let's toast the country/rock pioneers with the classic Tequila Sunrise. I had always assumed that

the Tequila Sunrise cocktail was named after Tequila Sunrise the song. Though the cocktail and song were popular in the early 1970s, it is actually the song that is named after the cocktail. The late Glenn Frey and

Don Henley wrote the song together, and Glenn Frey almost nixed the title because he felt that the drink was too popular and the title would be too cliché. Henley insisted that they keep the title and told Frey to look at it from the point one watching the sunrise drinking tequila all night.

The stuck and the song became one of the band's signature songs. It is safe to assume that the Henley and Frey were Tequila Sunrise as

the Tequila Sunrise craze of the early 1970s. The drink originated in

northern California at the Trident, a bar in Sausalito. Young bartenders Bobby Lozoff and Billy Rice created the cocktail in late 1971 or early 1972 while working at the One evening in 1972, leg endary Bay Area promoter Bill

Graham rented the Trident for

a private party to kick off the

Rolling Stones North American Mick Jagger fell in love with the Tequila Sunrise at the party and spent the entire tour drinking Tequila Sunrise cock-

tails with his entourage.

In 2023, we take our selection of quality tequila for granted. În 1972 tequila was difficult to find on US store shelves, and when you did find it Iose Cuervo was more than likely your only option. Large scale imports of premium 100% agave tequila was still

The Tequila Sunrise is responsible for giving tequila

years away in 1972.

Cuervo seized the moment and began to print the recipe Tequila the Sunrise on every tequila shipped to the US. The song was so popular in the spring of 1973 that everyone wanted to make their very

Tequila Sunrise. California was ground zero for The recipe was simple, the ingredients were easy obtain, and anyone with ice and a glass could make one.

> Start with a tall, ice-filled glass. Pour in tequila, top with orange juice, slowly pour in grenadine. Wait a few seconds for the grenadine to settle to the bottom, and do not stir the drink. The red grenadine at the bottom will remain separated from the drink creating a "sunrise" effect in the glass. If you stir the drink it will become a reddish-orange drink that will taste great, but will not have the trademark sunrise. The drink was likely made

with Jose Cuervo Gold tequila in the early days, but higher quality 100% agave tequilas are your best bet both for presentation and taste.

Start with a blanco (white) or plata (silver) tequila. The blanco tequilas tend to be drier and leave very little aftertaste and are better suited for mixing. A good 100% agave blanco or plata tequila will set you back about \$20 depending on state and local taxes.

Pour your tequila over ice the boost that it needed, and and top with a quality orange

use Minute Maid juice for mixing. The ratio of orange juice to tequila is 2 to 1, so you will want to use a quality orange

The best grenadine for a tequila sunrise is the brightest, reddest grenadine that you can get your hands on. Even though Rose's Grenadine is more of a red dyed cherry syrup, it works remarkably well

bright red color. Monin makes a wonderful grenadine, Sonoma Syrup Company turns out quality grenadine as well. However, these newer craft cocktail grenadines are made from real pomegranate which makes them a bit dull in color.

in a Tequila Sunrise due to the

dine available in most markets back in 1972, so it is safe to assume that the Tequila was created using Sunrise Rose's. Pour yourself a Tequila Sunrise and spin (or stream)

Rose's was the only grena-

your favorite Eagles album, be sure to catch the show when it comes to your town. The Tequila Sunrise is

built and served in a Collins (tall) glass. Fill a tall glass with ice,

then add: 1.5 oz. tequila

3 oz orange juice

Slowly pour 1/2 oz. grenadine into the middle of the glass, allow grenadine to sink to the bottom to form the "sun-

Until next week, enjoy





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Chicago fastest growing city in U.S. for auto thefts tion programs for at-risk youth." BY GLENN MINNIS Police Department crime statistics.

THE CENTER SQUARE

states at 35%.

The city of Chicago easily outpaced the rest of the country as the fastest growing city for auto thefts in 2022 with larce-

nies rising by 55%. With such acts of vandalism on the rise across the country as part of an ongoing pandemic-fueled outbreak, a new National Insurance Crime Bureau (NCIB) annual study found Illinois had the largest percentage increase among larger

"Over one million vehicles were stolen nationwide in 2022," NCIB president and CEO David Glawe told The Center Square. "States that saw the largest increase in vehicle thefts were Illinois, Washington and New York. There is little deterrence with vehicle thefts treated as property crimes. Organized gangs and juveniles steal vehicles and use them to facilitate other crimes. To stop this lawless behavior, we must re-invest in our law enforcement partners, support community engagement and policing programs and implement successful early interven-

Just last week the Braidwood Police reported a carjacking at a gas station at Illinois 113 and I-55. The suspect drove off on northbound I-55 with police in pursuit. They backed off to later find stolen vehicle driven to southeast Chicago. The suspect ran off, leaving the vehicle behind where it was recovered and brought back to Braidwood. Across the country, thefts were up

7%, pushing the number of stolen vehicles over 1 million for the first time in more than 15 years. Overall, including carjackings, Chicago had 21,516 reported auto thefts over the year, up by nearly 8,000 from 13,856 the previous year.

As part of its campaign to stem the tide, the Chicago Police Department over the past several months has instituted an expanded vehicular hijacking task force. Through February, there were 232 reported carjackings across the city this year, a 23% decline over the same period in 2022.

At the same time, overall motor vehicle thefts are sharply up over the first twoplus months of this year, with 5,375 reports of stolen vehicles through March 5, a 138% increase, according to Chicago

"Vehicle crime is certainly still a

major issue across the nation and while there are many reasons for this, NICB data does not point to one specific reason," staffers at the Des Plaines-based organization added. "We know that criminals steal vehicles to commit other crimes, sometimes vehicles end up in chop shops, get shipped overseas, or cross the border into Mexico." Glawe added at least part of the epi

demic can be traced to supply chain issues that have made used cars more valuable and the job of upkeep for them more costly. Over the last 36 months alone, catalytic converter thefts have jumped by 1,200% and a recent study by online auto search site iSeeCars details that in Illinois, the average price of a used car now tops \$35,000.

In January, the CPD began hosting vehicle safety events where they passed out steering wheel locks for Kia and Hyundai vehicles as part of a plan aimed at making it easier to identify catalytic converters, which makes them harder to

Illinois bill would require personal finance class

BY GLENN MINNIS

THE CENTER SQUARE

State Senator Kimberly Lightford is pushing a bill that would require all high school students to take a semester-long personal finance course before graduating.

Senate Bill 1266 strives to make sure students learn about managing money before earning a high school diploma, with the course covering everything from banking, to bill payment, to investing, to managing credit and paying for college.

The bill would affect the freshman class of the 2024 to 2025 school year, with those students required to take the course as a junior or senior before receiving their diploma.

The proposed bill comes on the heels of a new Wirepoints report that outlines how Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) data shows not a single student at no less than 53 schools across the state can do math at grade level. The numbers are nearly just as bleak in reading, where the report looked at 30 schools with at least 22 of them being part of the Chicago Public Schools sys-

Overall, researchers found that only 1 out of 10 kids or fewer

can do math at grade level in 930 schools. Wirepoints President Ted Dabrowski, who co-authored the website's schools report, isn't sure how much difference

Lightford's proposal will make, even if it becomes law. Every kid should learn about finances and how to manage their financial future, but the first priority for Illinois leaders should be to assure that kids can read and do math and today that's not happening," he told The Center Square. "Instead of adding another mandate for this they should mandate that schools massively elevate the percentage of kids who can read

and do math in Illinois schools.' Despite Wirepoints' findings, many of the schools where some students are struggling the most were rated "commend-

able" by ISBE.

SB 1266 is now awaiting a hearing in the Senate Education

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Saturday, March 25 from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

This one-hour event is designed to increase awareness of energy use. To participate, all you need to do is turn off your lights from 8:30 to 9:30 pm on March 25.

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Rummage sale

A rummage sale will be

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p.m. at Braceville United

Methodist Church, 106 W.

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SIGNATURE RETINA CONSULTANTS has open in the former U.S. Bank building in Braidwood. Dr. Sumit Bhatia and staff members Nichole Olson (left) and Cherie Watts (right) have been busy setting up the new medical offices. They stand in the reception area after entering the building.

Signature Retina Consultants opens in Braidwood

wanted to be at the forefront

of diseases you could barely

treat or not treat at all. So now,

in the 15 years I've been in

practice, we have treatments

for wet macular degeneration

and we can help people initial-

ly improve their vision and

then maintain it for years.

Normally with that disease

you'd lose your vision in about

something for you, prolong

your vision' when in their par-

ents' generation that wasn't an

last few weeks a new drug has

become available that can prolong vision for dry macular

degeneration. Before, there was little more than vitamins

amazing advances for retina

diseases. On one hand there

are diseases which you don't

have necessarily the ability to

regain perfect eyesight. But we

can help people maintain and

even improve it somewhat.

You can keep it going much

longer than the natural dis-

knowing he can do more for

his patients today than he

in the morning and keeps me

wanting to come to work every

day. It's being able to do more

for my patients. Like getting

this office open for patients.

It's got a special place in my

heart to get my own building.

could 15 years ago.

Bhatia said it's rewarding

"That's what gets me up

option," Dr. Bhatia said.

"So it's nice to be able to say to people 'we can do

He noted that just in the

"There have been some

four months.

BY ERIC FISHER **PUBLISHER**

A world-class retina specialist is feeling right at home with a recent move to Braidwood.

Dr. Sumit Bhatia opened new offices on Main Street in the former U.S. Bank building. In three short months and still a work in progress, the feeling of moving to a small town with regional appeal has settled in.

"We love the small town feel. It just feels so cozy and everybody has been kind and knows each other," Bhatia said.

Like the other day when a delivery for his office went to a wrong address. "The guy who got it actually came by and dropped it off for us. You don't get that kind of hospitality in every town."

Bhatia is a board-certified ophthalmologist and retina surgeon who has been in private practice since 2007 and comes with a wealth of experience having done over 33,000 in-office and operating room based surgical procedures.

He's is a native of Illinois having grown up in Peoria. He received his undergraduate education from the University of Illinois at Urbana

Champaign. He earned his Doctor of Medicine from the University of Chicago in 2001. Following a one year internship at MacNeal Hospital in Berwyn, IL, he completed his ophthalmology residency at the University of Chicago in 2005. He then obtained his Retina Medical and Surgical fellowship at the esteemed Boston University Medical Center in Boston, MA.

Dr. Bhatia has 15 years of experience in the treatment of surgical and medical diseases such as age related macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, retinal occlusion, retinal tears and detachments, vitreous hemorrhages, epiretinal membrane

and macular holes. He helped patients in Bloomington, Peoria, Decatur, Danville, Springfield, Peru, Champaign and Galesburg

before opening his own prac-He lives in Bloomington with his wife and two children

so his commute is a little more than one hour. "I drove up here, drove

around and found a couple of properties that were available. I worked with a realtor who mentioned a bank branch that had been closed and was immediately available. After looking over the town and surrounding communities I felt it could work.

The first month was spent renovating the building. The indestructible bank vault and bullet-proof drive-up window are still there, but the rest of building has been converted into a spacious waiting room, reception area, four patient rooms with state-of-the-art laser and optical equipment, break room and new rest-

rooms. "It was a long month, we were always here while this place was being worked on. We were going to Casey's like two times a day. So we've got to know all the staff. We've gotten to know the people at Rosati's Pizza, eating there sometimes two, three times a week," joked Bhatia. "But you know that small town feel just really welcomes you and lets you know that everybody is really happy to have you in

As a retina specialist his patients are mostly by referral. He does not perform cataract surgery, nor general eye exams or dispense glasses, instead specializing on treating eye

"I wanted to focus on, at that time, diseases where

there were no great cures. I But what really brings me in day after day and has been for can now call world-class eve 15 years is seeing the patients and being able to talk with them and being able to encourage them that we will keep this vision going for as long as we can. That's what I hope to be doing here for the next 20-25 years.

As for hobbies Dr. Bhatia says other than family he has none. He loves family time, eating together, watching movies or being outdoors. But now that he's practicing on his own there are new demands.

"It definitely has brought on new challenges the last six months and I'd say they're starting to ease a bit. But you learn a lot about how to run a business and you appreciate all the other small businesses that are around in town, especially what it takes to keep them going. I see a lot of hard working people in these small towns and I've come to appreciate them more now that I am a business owner too," he commented.

Ideally he'll draw patients from a 60-mile radius.

'There are not a lot of retispecialists outside of Chicago in this part of Illinois or even down in Central Southern Illinois. The people I treat are usually a little bit older who need to sustain the vision they have. They may feel more comfortable coming to a small town than going to Chicago. We've got the latest medicines and equipment being used anywhere in the U.S. and we're able to treat them right here."

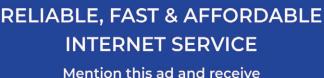


DR. SUMIT BHATIA, a retina surgeon, uses state-of-the-art optical quipment and medicines to examine and treat patients. Here he tests the eyes of his receptionist Nichole Olson.

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BITUARIES

Victor R. Issert

WILMINGTON-Victor Roger Basil Issert carefully parked his beloved 1206 tractor in the tool shed for the last time on March 10, 2023. Wow, Dad packed so much into his life since his birth on June 12, 1933 in Kankakee. Jules and Marie Ange (Fortin) Issert nurtured and instilled morals and strong work ethics in Gramps, along with his sister, Therese and brothers, Leon and Tony on the family farm in Peotone Township. Dad raised Chester White hogs and show hens

along with working the farm. These animals were blue ribbon and Grand Champion winners in the Will and Kankakee County Fairs many times, and Pops was quite proud of this. It didn't take Dad and Mom long to start

their family once they graduated from Peotone High School in 1951. Pa earned extra money for his young family while farming, and as a custom fertilizer applicator. Dad was not content with that, so he built and operated the first handoperated carwash in Joliet in 1965. The love of the outdoors, farming, and raising livestock refocused his efforts, and his energy was poured into the family farm on Ballou Road in Wilmington.

Oh how he enjoyed raising Hereford, Shorthorn, and Angus cattle. Calves sprinting about were one of the things that slowed Dad down and brought a smile to his face. Pops continued to farm into his mid-80's. And how many times did you pass Victor, and wave, as he drove that red 6-wheeler all over several Illinois counties? Fifty plus years have been shared with family and friends at the "Ballou Cabin." What glorious memories. If you have been lucky enough to share time there, you know. If you wanted something created from wood, Dad was your man. Look around at various family farms and homes and you will spy a Gramps creation.

Oh Family. How Dad loved his family, and here they are along with the words that each chose that best describe their relationship with him. His five kids: Stephen and Debbie Issert, "We tilled earth together," Denise Marie (Rick Smith) Issert, "My little baby French girl," Phillip Issert, "Honest, thoughtful, motivated, plowboy, father," Jeffry and Jan Issert, "Best man I ever knew," and Joel and Angie Issert, "Super Dad, inspiration to all;" 13 grandchildren: Janene (Jon Floyd) Issert, "Je vous aime beaucoup," Raechel and Eric Girardot, "Loving, servant heart, sweet, thoughtful," Lauren and JJ "Loving, servant Schmidt, "Handsome, dry wit, loving, dedicated," Andy and Tiffany Harned Pilbeam, "I've always bragged about him," Jared Pilbeam, "Organic man of high standards," Hayley Marie-

Ange and Greg Henke, "Strong, smart, loving, special, wise," Garret Victor and Cara Pilbeam, "Hours in the combine together," Brittany and Jong Kim, "Wise, generous, loving, reserved," Ian and Kelly "Generosity, kind, loving, thoughtful, ingenious," Paige Issert and Aaron Medina, "Always kind to me," Sean Jeffry Issert and Taylor Lawless, 'Homemade truck and homemade bread," Alex Issert and Tyler Rys,

"Welcoming, genuine, carefree, family-oriented, hardworking," Tyler Issert and Nicole Simmons, "Funniest straight-faced grandpa ever;" 19 great-grandchildren: Jacob, Benjamin Stephen, and Caleb Victor Floyd, Amelia Marie and Gage Girardot, Owen and Evan Schmidt, Grace, Gunner, Keely Jynna Marie, and Scotland Henke, Finley Pilbeam, Avery Rogowski, Jacobie, Paxton, and Leo Kim, Ian, Ryker, and Rowan Issert.

Victor is also survived by his big brother, Leon Issert, "He was the do it guy," and also many nieces, nephews, family, and friends.

He was preceded in death by the mother of his children, Marie (Barthelme) Issert.

Dad will be planted, in a small country cemetery in Peotone Township facing the same rising sun he saw each morning as he grew up, and the same sun his children saw each morning as they grew up just a 1/2 mile east down the gravel road.

Donations may be made, in memory of Dad, to Uplifted Care Hospice of Kankakee County that was awesome with Pa. Don't send flowers to his service. Grandpa wouldn't want that. Save your money he would say. Plant a garden and raise some beautiful tomatoes instead. Pops would love that. And please make an effort to thank a farmer!

The family will receive friends for a visitation on Thursday, March 16 from 4-7 p.m. at Baskerville Funeral Home, 700 E. Kahler Road, Wilmington. Funeral Services will follow on Friday, March 17 at 9:30 a.m. with a drive past the Ballou Farm to West Peotone Cemetery, 11700 Kennedy Road, rural Peotone.

Following the gravesite get together, lunch will be served at the VFW Malcolm J. Mayo Post 5422, 557 W. Baltimore St., Wilmington.

Family and friends are encouraged to log onto www.BaskervilleFuneral.com to sign the guest book, upload photographs and share Victor's memorial page online.

Funeral services and arrangements have been made under the direction and care of Baskerville Funeral Home in Wilmington.

Dr. Charles W. Birch _

Dr. Birch graduated life with High porter, coach, and biggest fan for so many students in his 59 years in the public schools. He was always "Glad to be here" each and every day and it showed. More importantly, he was a son, brother, cousin, uncle, husband, father, grandpa, and great-grandpa. Charles William Birch was born on

Aug. 24, 1941. He was preceded in death by his parents, William and Ethel Birch. He was raised in his beloved home at Calhoun Farms in New Berlin, WI with his sisters, Catherine (George) Balles, his Irish twin, Jean (Bob) Kissinger, and MaryJo (the late Del) Kaatz.

He met Lorie Hatten at the University of Wisconsin-Lacrosse, and they married in 1965. They soon welcomed their children, Patrick (Cheryl) Birch and Courtney (Caleb) Moore. Their greatest joy was being grandparents to Kristen, Katie, Kenzie (Jeff), Kelly (Junior), Avery, Hunter, Gehrig, and Cate. The greatgrandchildren are even more special, Reni and www.fredcdames.com.

Recently Chuck and Lorie moved to Ottawa, making it their 13th home that they shared together. Their homes were always welcoming to all, and over the years they opened their doors and hearts to many. If you entered their home as a friend you left as part of the family. In each town where they lived, Dr. Birch made his presence known. He was a friend to all that he met and treated everyone with kindness and compassion.

The "Fighting Irish" in him took on the recent diagnosis like a champ. This time he had the support of his fans; Cancer is a Birch that's for sure. Reading each and every message brightened his spirits.

To honor his legacy of caring about the community in lieu of flowers we ask you to donate to We Care of Grundy County in his

For more information or to leave an online dolence, visit his Memorial Tribute page at

Donald Kundert

MORRIS— Donald Gene Kundert, 83, of Morris, passed away peacefully Thursday, March 9, 2023 at home with family by his side. Born June 9, 1939 in Burns, OR to Olga (Otterby) & (Walter) LaVelle Kundert. He graduated from high school in Hills, MN with the class He began working at Caterpillar in Joliet and retired in 1990 after 33 years. On June 11, 1961 he married Connie (Drum) Kundert in the First United Methodist Church in Morris.

his time to wood working in his shop, making gifts for many family and friends. He was also the custodian of the First United Methodist Church of Morris for over 10 years. He enjoyed reading, doing word search puzzles and spending time with his family.

Don is survived by son, Steve (Cheryl) Kundert, of Minooka; ďaughter, Julie (Toďd) Pierce, of Coal City; four grandchildren: Fruland Funeral Home, 121 W. Jeff Stephanie (Josh) Foster, Carla (Kevin) Kundert in Morris is in charge of arrangements.

Mendez, Drew Pierce and Marissa Pierce; one great-grandson, Elliott Foster; one brother, Wally Kundert, of Sisters, OR; one sister-in-law, Sherry Doyle, of Oswego; niece, Amy Doyle; two nephews, Barry (Megan) Kundert and Jeff (Melissa) Kundert.

Funeral Services will be held Saturday March 18, 2023 at 11 a.m. at the First United Methodist Church in Morris with Rev. Ayla Samson and Rev.

Deborah Kang officiating. Visitation will be After retiring from Caterpillar he devoted held on Saturday from 9 a.m. until the time of service at the church. Interment will be at

Memorials can be made in Don's name to Lightways Hospice in Joliet or First United Methodist Church of Morris.

For more information or to sign the private online guestbook go to www.frulandfuneral-

Fruland Funeral Home, 121 W. Jefferson St.

Proposed law would ban the declawing of cats

the House committee vote on last week, which means the practice of declawing cats may soon be outlawed in the state if the bill can pass further legislative hurdles.

Veterinarians in Illinois are thrilled about the prospect of this much-needed law to protect cats.

Dr. Debra Teachout, who lives near Chicago, says there's good reason for declawing to be banned as the procedure leads to short- and long-term behavioral and medical prob-

lems.
"Declawing often increases biting and house soiling, which are proven reasons for Veterinary cats to be relinquished to shel-

Illinois' HB 1533 passed ters," Dr. Teachout says. "Even emails to members encouragwhen cats are destructive, I've found there are always workable solutions that do not involve declawing, relinquishing to a shelter, or euthanasia."

While ISVMA President Dr. Joanne Carlson was quoted in My Journal Courier as saying, "veterinarians perform feline onychectomies infrequently, and any suggestions that this is a common practice are untrue," statistics don't seem to support her claim. Pawproject.org estimates between 25 and 43 percent of cats are declawed in the

United States. The State Medical Association recently sent

ing opposition to HB 1533. An unsigned email sent March 10 read, "This bill threatens the veterinary profession, belittles your credentials and restricts your ability to use sound medical judgment."

Dr. Teachout finds such inflammatory accusations absurd. "If there's no law banning declawing," she says, "many veterinarians are pressured into declawing cats in response to their human customers' demands, and, if one veterinarian turns down a client, that client will simply look for another willing to go

Amy M. Farcus

COAL CITY-Amy M. Farcus, 98, of Coal City, passed away peacefully at her home on Monday, March 13, 2023.

Born in Felix Township, Grundy County, Amy Martha was a twin daughter of John "Fred" and Alice (Williamson) Brunner. She attended Short Grade School and graduated from Coal City High School with the class of 1941. On April 28, 1956, Amy married Richard Farcus in St. Thaddeus Catholic Church in Joliet, and together they made a home and raised their son in Coal City. A talented seamstress, Amy's employment

entailed working for Hyman Clothing Factory and Raymond Lyons Draperies before going into business with her twin sister, Alice as A&A Draperies. She retired in 2000. Amy was a member and past Elder at New Hope Presbyterian Church in Coal City and belonged to the Area #1 Recreation Club. In addition to sewing, Amy took great pleasure in gardening and bird watching. Survivors include her son and daughter-in-

law, Alan and Cindy Farcus, of Coal City; three grandsons: Adam Farcus, of Bloomington, IL; Matthew (Jenna) Farcus, of Wilmington and Benjamin Farcus, of Coal City; three greatgrandchildren: Athena Elizabeth Farcus, Everett Alan Farcus and Evelyn Mae Farcus; two sistersin-law, Patricia (the late Richard) Sandretto and Helen Farcus, both of Ioliet and one brother-in-law.

Raymond (Cheryl) Farcus of Coal City, as well as numerous nieces and nephews. Amy was preceded in death by parents; husband, Richard on

March 22, 2021; two brothers, Roy Brunner and John (Eleanor) Brunner and her twin sister, Alice Dinger. The family will receive friends for a visat Reeves Funeral Home, 75 N. Broadway, one block north of IL Route 113 in Coal City on Thursday, March 16, 2023 from 9 a.m. until time of funeral service at 12 p.m.

Wilmington, where Amy will be laid to rest with her late husband, Richard. Preferred memorials may be made a gifts in Amy's memory to New Hope Presbyterian Church, 80 N. Garfield Street, Coal City, IL 60416

Burial will follow in Oakwood Cemetery,

or to Lightways Hospice of Joliet. Family and friends are encouraged to log onto www.ReevesFuneral.com to sign the guest book, upload photographs and share Amy's

Funeral services and arrangements have been made under the direction and care of

Reeves Funeral Homes, Ltd. in Coal City.

Linda Odo

COAL CITY-Linda Odo, 73, of Coal City, passed away Thursday, March 9, 2023 at Advocate Good Samaritan Hospital in Downers Grove, IL. Born April 24, 1949 in Joliet, Linda

Lou was a daughter of John and Rita (Girot) Endrst. She was raised in Coal City and graduated from Coal City High School with the class of 1967. On Aug. 17, 1970, Linda married Peter Odo in Morris, and together they made a home and raised a family together. Linda's career entailed working in the med-

ical field her entire career following being at home to raise her daughters. She was employed with various local physician offices over the years, and most recently worked for Dr. Alex Spadoni in Joliet. Linda loved her job, and she treated the patients in the doctor's office as her Anyone who knew Linda recognized that

her family came first and foremost. Though she took pleasure in working in the yard, being in the pool, fishing and following the Chicago Cubs, her greatest hobby was anything that involved her family and being together. Linda will be remembered as a devoted, wife, mother, grandmother, sister and friend, who was truly a selfless soul. Gone from our sight, Linda Odo leaves behind a priceless legacy, in which those who knew and loved her can be proud to carry

Survivors include her daughters: Kimmy Odo (Guy Lawrence), Tami Maland, Shari Talkington and Gina (Keith) Wharrie, all of Coal City; grandchildren: Dakota Collins (Dawn Szatmari), Carson (Dom) Principe, Rita Maland (Chase Mincey), Peter Maland, Charles Maland, Gwen Wharrie and Thor Wharrie; one sister, Janice "Pinky" (the late Butch) Olson, of Coal City and Lou Ann "Mimi," of Kankakee, who was

nephews, as well as Tony Maland (Megan Anderson) who were like family. Linda was preceded in death by her parents, John and Rita Endrst; husband, Peter Odo,

like a sister; her brother-in-law, Dave Powell, of Coal City and numerous special nieces and

and one sister, Janet Powell. Per Linda's wishes, cremation rites have been accorded.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made as gifts in Linda's memory to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, 501 St. Jude Place, Memphis,

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

Cremation services and arrangements have been made under the direction and care of Reeves Funeral Homes, Ltd. in Coal City.

Donald O'Brien ____



in Joliet.

REDDICK—Donald Lawrence O'Brien, 90, of Reddick, passed away peacefully Friday, March 10, 2023 at Lightways Hospice Home

Born Jan. 17, 1933 in Reddick, he

vas the son of William T. and Loretta

(nee Clodi) O'Brien. Donald lovingly married Norma Masching April 27, 1933 in Campus, IL. He was a member of the Sheet Metal Workers Local Union #265 in Carol Stream, IL. His passion was farming, proudly owning and operating O'Brien Trucking. Donald was a former Highway Commissioner for Norton Township for 16 years and member of the Township Officials of Illinois (TOI). He was also a member of the Dwight Loyal Order of the Moose Lodge #2503, VFW Post #2608, American Legion Post #486, charter member of the Union Hill Lions Club and devout member of the St. Mary's Catholic Church in Reddick. He looked forward to his many trips to Ireland and also enjoyed collecting antiques, antique farm equipment, playing a competitive game of euchre, dancing, and was a proud lifelong Democrat.

Surviving are his beloved wife of 65 years, Norma O'Brien, of Reddick; two daughters, Mary Kay (Todd) Gereaux, of Essex and Melinda (Dan) Hogan, of Buckingham, IL; three sons: William (Cheryl) O'Brien, of Reddick; John (JoAnne) O'Brien, of Buckingham and Patrick

(Karen) O'Brien, of Reddick; 14 grandchildren; four great-grandchildren with one on the way; one brother, Paul (the late Lois) O'Brien, of Reddick and numerous nieces, nephews, and their fami-

Preceding him in death were his parents, William and Loretta; son, Donald Lawrence O'Brien; two sisters, Marie Wood-Berns and Phyllis (Glenn) Buza and two brothers, Gerald O'Brien and Francis (Aldine) O'Brien.

Cremation rites will be accorded. Family and friends are welcome to meet at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Reddick, Saturday, March 18, 2023 for a Memorial Mass of Christian Burial at 10 a.m. Inurnment with military honors will immediately follow at Sacred Heart Cemetery, Campus, IL. Guests are also welcome to attend the Celebration of Life for Donald that will follow at Station 343 Firehouse Restaurant in Dwight with a luncheon at approximately 12:30

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations in his name to the St. Mary's Catholic Church or Lightways Hospice would be appreciated.

For more information and to visit his online guestbook, please log on to www.rwpattersonfuneralhomes.com or find them on Facebook.

R.W. Patterson Funeral Home & Crematory, 401 E. Main St., Braidwood, has been entrusted with arrangements

Elaine Testa

SOUTH WILMINGTON-Elaine E. Testa (nee Donna), 97, of South Wilmington, passed away March 10, 2023, at Heritage Health in Dwight.

Born in Braidwood on Sept. 27, 1925, Elaine was the daughter of Peter and Effie Donna. She was raised and educated in Braidwood and graduated from Reed-Custer High School Following high school, Elaine worked at Grinchucks pants factory. On Aug. 19, 1947, she married Carl W. Testa. They lived one year in Braidwood before moving to South Wilmington, where they took over the local school bus business from her brother-in-law. They successfully ran the business for nearly 20 years. After Carl's passing in 1974, Elaine went to work as the manager of the Braidwood Recreation Club golf course pro shop, where she remained for 18 years. She then worked in the deli department at Markettis grocery store in South Wilmington for a few years until transi-

tioning into retirement. Elaine's favorite pastime was baking pies, cakes, and cookies. If there was an occasion to be celebrated, she always made the "goodies." She also loved to give cookies to her friends and neighbors. Elaine also enjoyed watching sports, particularly the Chicago Cubs and Bulls along with professional golf and tennis. Most of all, she was a lifelong Cubs fan and got to attend Game 7 of the 1945 World Series between the Cubs and the Detroit Tigers. Elaine was also an avid golfer, having played in ladies' leagues at Braidwood Fairways, High Point Golf Course and Dwight Country Club. Elaine was a member of St. Lawrence Catholic Church in South Wilmington, where she belonged to the Alter and Rosary for many years, baking pies, cakes,

and cookies for parish funerals.

Surviving, is her daughter, Lynn (Scott) Allison, of Braidwood, grand-son Sean (Jody) Allison of Braidwood; grandson, Shane (Mary) Allison and their sons, Wade and Sam, of Temecula, CA. Also surviving are nephew, Richard (Jeanette) Kusper, of Newport Beach, CA; nieces Kay (Glen) Studley, of Essex; Donna (Bill) Shockey, of Carmel, IN; Pat Testa, of Moline, IL; nephew, Jim (Raelene) Testa, of Mesa, AZ and numerous great-nieces, great-nephews and

Elaine was preceded in death by her parents, her husband, Carl Testa; her brother and his wife, Vincent (Margaret) Donna, sister and husband, Mary (Frank) Huml; sister and husband, Josephine (Jim) Barnett; sister and husband, Connie (Bruno) Muzzarelli and sister and

husband, Dolores (LeRoy) Kusper. Visitation will be at the R.W. Patterson Funeral Home & Crematory on Thursday, March 16, 2023 from 4-8 p.m. Funeral services will be Friday, March 17, leaving in procession from the funeral home at 9:40 a.m. to the St. Lawrence Catholic Church in South Wilmington for Mass of Christian Burial at 10 a.m.

Donations may be made in her name to the South Wilmington Fire Department or the St. Lawrence Catholic Church.

For more information and to visit her online guestbook, please log on to www.rwpattersonfuneralhomes.com or find them on

R.W. Patterson Funeral Home & Crematory, 401 E. Main St., Braidwood has been entrusted with arrangements.

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2022 dean's list:

Anna

Named on fall dean's list

lowing area students to the fall

Braidwood; Joseph Piatak, of

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Mizzou recognizes the fol- Michalak, all of Diamond;

Coal City; Harley Felker, and Emily Watson, all of

Mazie Meyr, of Essex and

Rhianna Brown, Raelene

DesRochers, Rebecca Horton

Gerald Gresham 815-729-3570 815-476-6364 863 Center Ct., Unit B Shorewood, IL 60404 teamgresham@amfam.com Email: ggresham@amfam.com



BATHING SUITS, SWIM trunks and even some Hawaiian skirts might look normal on the beach at the

Braidwood Rec Club in July, but it was not your typical refreshing dunk in the water on Saturday, March 11. Hundreds of participants including law enforcement and fire department officials from Braidwood, Wilmington, Will County, and the Illinois State Police, as well as residents and fun seek-Eye Care ers, took the plunge for the 2023 Law Enforcement Torch Run Polar Plunge to support Special Olympics Illinois athletes. The polar plunge, which takes place at multiple sites across the nation, raises funds for Special Olympics. The Illinois Law Enforcement Torch Run is the statewide presenting sponsor for the 2023 Polar Plunge. The Law Enforcement Torch Run has raised more than \$61 million since 1986 while increasing awareness of Special Olympics Illinois athletes and their accom-Specialist



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DIVERS FROM THE Braidwood Fire Protection District coax some polar plungers into the water at Braidwood Rec Club. The divers were on hand to ensure a safe event.

AUDREA HUSTON

Local author

book signing

Huston, of Diamond, will be at

Lori Bonarek Realty, 640 S. Broadway in Coal City on

Thursday, March 16, 6-7:30

p.m. Sway is the first book

written by Huston who writes

under the pen name Kathleen

Lacie. Join us on Thursday,

March 16, 6-7:30 p.m. Limited books will be available for

sale, or bring your own book

port a local author" stated Bonarek. For more informa-

"We are so excited to sup-

to be signed.

Local author Andrea

Gas prices rise despite drop in price for oil

Average gasoline prices in per gallon in the last week, averaging \$3.62/g, according to GasBuddy's survey of 4,378

stations in Illinois. Prices in Illinois are 11.4 cents per gallon higher than a of gasoline has risen 8.0 cents month ago and stand 95.2 cents per gallon lower than a

With the transition to more expensive summer gasoline underway coast to coast, wholesale gasoline prices continue to inch up at a rate typical for this time of year, reflected in the national average rising for the second straight to slowly decline as we see week," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy.

According to GasBuddy price reports, the cheapest station in Illinois was priced at \$3.13/g while the most expensive was \$4.69/g.

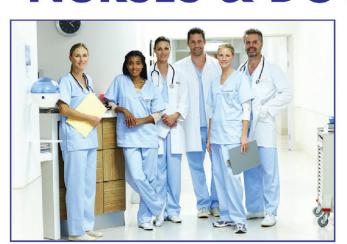
Locally gas prices varied Illinois have risen 12.2 cents from \$3.33/g at Mohsen on Lorenzo Rd., Wilmington, \$3.41/g in Braidwood, \$3.46/g in Wilmington and \$3.59/g in

Coal City. The national average price per gallon in the last week,

averaging \$3.44/g. While oil prices edged slightly lower on weaker outlooks for economic growth, continued refinery maintenance and the higher cost of seasonal blends of fuel are offsetting oil's decline. The price of diesel, however, continues consumption for diesel lighten. The best news for both gasoline and diesel prices is how significant a drop we've seen from year-ago levels, with more disinflation to come in the weeks ahead, even as gas prices are likely to inch up.



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Last Will and Testaments, Trusts, Durable Power of Attorney and Health Care Power of Attorney are serious concerns that need to be addressed while you are living. Gain peace of mind knowing your affairs are in order by calling for an appointment in taking care of these important life decisions.



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CLASSIFIED DEADLINES

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

Phone (815) 476-7966 or (815) 634-0315

<u>Cost</u>

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

1 wk.- \$15; 2 wks.- \$19; 3 wks.- \$22; 4 wks.-\$25 \$1.00 Extra per line for bold or caps on classified

APARTMENTS FOR RENT

Wilmington - Beautiful 2 bedroom with all new carpet, 1 car attached \$1,200 garage. 618-383-6330 month. cc10-13

AUTOS

Accepting International 4900 as is 4x2 single axle, 26,000 miles, 11R/22.5 tires. fixed bed, V Box with conveyor, spreader, Monroe 11 Ft Poly Snow Plow. Repairs needed. Contact Highway Commissioner Jeff Sorensen at 815-476-7869 questions. Sealed bids due to Wesley Town-ship Hall by 3:00 PM on April 11, 2023 and will opened at the monthly township meeting later that evening at 7:00PM. Wesley Township Road District 21333 W Ballou Rd

Wilmington, IL 60481 ch9-11 **DUPLEX FOR RENT**

2 bedroom, 1 bath, 2 car garage. 140 W. Fourth Street, Coal City. \$1,200/month plus security. 815-210-9220. ca9-11

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Kittens, free to a loving home, litterbox trained. Male & females. Wilmington. 618-383-5870.

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Teresa's Family Styling has been serving the Wilmington community for the last 23 years on the corner of Water St.(102) & Kahler Rd in Wilmington. We are looking to hire a LI-We are CENSED STYLIST. An individual who is upbeat, hardworking & honest. A steady clienpreferred but tele is we're willing to work with the right candidate. Commission % based on experience. Please call 815-476-1955. ca11-14

Office help wanted. Experience perience with excel, QuickBooks and pay-Approximately 30 flexible daytime hours per month. Send resume to P O Box 181, Gardner, IL 60424 or email admin@gardnerfpd.co

<u>m</u> ch9-10

HELP WANTED

Coal City Area Club, positions. hiring all Gateguards. Lifeguards, Area Maintenance and Main Office Admin. \$15. LG Supervisors, \$16. Applications @ our website or main office. 285 S. Street. Broadway www.coalcityareaclub. net ch8-11

Office help needed at a local sportsmen's club. Seasonal part time Experience with hours. computers and knowledge of Excel and Access preferred. Please inquiries send wcsc1946@gmail.com

The Braidwood Recrea-

tion Club is hiring for

the 2023 Season. Concession Stand - Must be at least 16 years old. are Operating hours Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day. Open daily 10:30am to 6:00pm, 7 days per week. Must be willing to work flexible hours and duties include stocking, cleaning, and customer service. Shifts will be approximately 5 hours Custodians Must be at least 16 years old and be open to a flexible schedule. Certified Lifeguards All applicants must be and Lifeguard Certified and be at least 16 years of age. Proof of certification must be provided at time of application. Gate Guards -Average 5 hour shifts. Applications can be printed off the club club website (on Club Documents page) at braidwoodrecclub.com

HOMES FOR RENT

and emailed or picked

up at the office. Please

questions

with

815-458-2150. ch9-12

Braidwood area, 3 BR, 2 bath, stove, refrigerator, C/A, W/D hookup, storage shed. Large lot & deck, 169 N Vernon Dr., Godley. \$1,250/mo. 1st, last, security, credit check. 815-476-6462. cc10-13

House for rent: 3 bedroom, 2 bath, attached garage. Cottage Rd. on Kankakee River with boat launch. \$2,200/ boat launch. month. 708-205-4826. ck10-13

> **SHOP YOUR** LOCAL **BUSINESSES!**

an application unless otherwise provided by state or federal law

Possess a valid class B non CDL driver's license in the State of Illinois

Oral Interviews: Monday, April 24th and Wednesday, April 26th, 2023.

Have a high school diploma or equivalent (GED)

Marshall in the State of Illinois prior to conditional offer.

Be a citizen of the United States

candidate will be given.

Seeking Qualified Applicants

for Firefighters/Paramedics

The Wilmington Fire Protection District is seeking qualified applicants to establish an

eligibility list for the position of Firefighter/Paramedic with the District.

Starting Salary: \$59,731.88

QUALIFICATIONS

Applicant must be at least 21 years of age and under 35 years of age at the time of submission of

Be certified as a Basic Operations Firefighter or Firefighter II through the Office of the State Fire

Be certified as a Paramedic in the State of Illinois (IDPH EMT-P) prior to conditional offer.

Applications will be available to qualified candidates March 13th, 2023 - April 17th, 2023 between

A valid driver's license must be presented in order to obtain an application. Only one application per

Completed application shall be returned to the above address no later than 3:30 pm on April 17th, 2023. Failure to complete the application in its entirety shall be grounds for rejection from the process.

Orientation/Written Exam: Monday, April 17th, 2023 at 6 pm Sharp (No one will be allowed in

Physical Ability: Must have a CPAT card with ladder climb issued no more than 365 days prior

The Rules and Regulations of the Board of Fire Commissioners, Wilmington Fire Protection District,

will govern all facets of the hiring process, a copy of which is available for viewing at the District's

the hours of 8:00am-3:00pm, Monday-Friday at Station #1, 501 N. Main Street, Wilmington, IL.

LOST & FOUND

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

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reclining Electric loveseat, gray, like new, \$250; solid oak Tressle dining table with two leaves, w/chairs, needs a little TLC. \$400 obo. Call 815-476-2972. cr10-12

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and Cat Food, treats, accessories. aids, clothing, Birthday treats, wall art, jewelry gifts, greeting cards and Home of Fritters for Critters Pet New! Brew and Chew Dog Treats. Trinity Barkery 240 W. Balti-Wilmington., more 815-476-5104 slewis@trinityservices.org. ch22b-tfn

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REAL ESTATE

SHERIFF'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE of 265 E 1St Street, Braidwood, IL 60408 (Residential). On the 6th day of April, 2023 to be held at 12:00 noon, at the Will County Court-house Annex, 57 N. Ot-tawa Street, Room 201, Joliet, IL 60432, under Case Title: **M&T** Bank Plaintiff V. William S. Allen; et. al. Defendant. Case No. 22 FC 1024 in the Circuit Court of the Twelfth Judicial Circuit, Will County, Illinois. Terms of Sale: ten percent (10%) at the time of sale and the balance within twenty-four (24) hours. No judicial sale fee shall be paid by the mortgagee acquiring the residential real estate pursuant to its credit bid at the sale or by any mortgagee, judgment creditor, or other lienor acquiring the residential real estate whose rights in and to the residential real estate arose prior to the sale. All payments shall be made in cash or certified funds payable to the Sheriff of Will County. In the event the property is a condominium, in accor-ILCS and ILCS with 5/15-1507(c)(1)(H-1) (H-2), 765 ILCS 605/9(g)(5), and 765 ILCS 605/18.5(g-1), you are hereby notified that the purchaser of the unit, other than a mortgagee, shall pay the assessments and legal fees required by sub-

divisions (g)(1) and (g)(4) of Section 9 and the assessments required by subsection (g-1) of Section 18.5 of the Illinois Condominium Property Act. Pursuant to Local Court Rule 11.03 (J) if there is a surplus following application of the proceeds of sale, then the plaintiff shall send written notice pursuant to 735 ILCS 5/15-1512(d) to all parties to the proceeding advising them of the amount of the surplus and that the surplus will be held until a party obtains a court order for its distribution or, in the absence of an order until the surplus is forfeited to the State. For Information Please Contact:
Codilis & Ass Associates,

15W030 Frontage Road Suite 100 Burr Ridge, Illinois 60527 P: 630-794-5300

F: 630-794-9090 PURSUANT TO THE FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT YOU DEBT ADVISED THAT LAW FIRM DEEMED TO BE A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPT-ING TO COLLECT A
DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED PURPOSE. FOR THAT Published in the Free Press Newspa-pers on Wednesday, March 15, 22 & 29, 2023.

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Words **Photography** 385 N. Second Ave.

815-791-2913

REAL ESTATE

OUTER DR., TON, IL 60

LAKEVIEW Title: Case little: LANGUAGE LOAN SERVICING, LLC Plaintiff V. JULIE WHIT-Plaintiff V. JULIE WHIT-MER; CITY OF WILMING-TON; UNKNOWN OWN-ERS AND NON-RECORD
CLAIMANTS; Defendant.
Case No. 22 FC 0498 in
the Circuit Court of the Twelfth Judicial Circuit, Will County, Illinois. Terms of Sale: ten percent (10%) at the time of sale and the balance within twenty-four (24) hours. No judicial fee shall be paid by the mortgagee acquiring the residential real estate pursuant to its credit bid at the sale or by any mortgagee, judgment creditor, or other lienor acquiring the resi-dential real estate whose rights in and to the residential real estate arose prior to the sale. All payments shall be made in cash or certified funds payable to the Sheriff of Will County. In the event the property is a condominium, in accordance with the condominium, in accordance with the condominium, in accordance with the condominium. dance with 735 5/15-1507(c)(1)(H-1) ILCS and (H-2), 765 ILCS 605/9(g)(5), and 765 ILCS 605/18.5(g-1), you are hereby notified that the purchaser of the unit, other than a mortgagee, shall pay the assessments and legal fees required by sub-divisions (g)(1) and (g)(4) of Section 9 and the asof Section 9 and the assessments required by subsection (g-1) of Section 18.5 of the Illinois Condominium Property Act. Pursuant to Local Court Rule 11.03 (J) if there is a surjustion of the control of the court o plus following application of the proceeds of sale, then the plaintiff shall send written notice pursuant to 735 ILCS 5/15-1512(d) to all parties to the proceeding advising them of the amount of the surplus and that the surplus will be held until a party obtains a court order for its distribution or, in the absence of an order until the surplus is forfeited to the State. For Informato the State. For informa-tion Please Contact:AN-SELMO LINDBERG OL-IVER LLC. 1771 W. Diehl Rd. Suite 120 NAPERVILLE, ILLINOIS 60563

P: 630-453-6960 F: 630-428-4620

PURSUANT TO THE FAIR COLLECTION DEBT PRACTICES ACT YOU
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COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A
DEBT AND ANY INFOR-PRACTICES COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A
DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL
BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. Published in the Free Press Newspapers on Wed., March 8, 15 & 22, 2023.

REAL ESTATE

1802 N. Division St.,

SHERIFF'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE of 404 N Dr, Wilmington, IL (Single Family Home). On the 6th day of April, 2023 to be held at 12:00 noon, at the Will County Courthouse Annex, 57 N. Ottawa Street. Room 201, Joliet, IL 60432, under Case Title: Nationstar Mortgage LLC Plaintiff V. Ryan L. Zelek; et. al. Defendant. Case No. 22 FC 1131 in the Circuit Court of the Twelfth Judicial Circuit, Will County, Illinois. Terms of Sale: ten percent (10%) at the time of sale and the balance within twenty-four (24) hours. No judicial sale fee shall be paid by the mortgagee acquiring the residential real estate pursuant to its credit bid at the sale or by any mortgagee, judgment creditor, or other lienor acquiring the resi-dential real estate whose rights in and to the residential real estate arose prior to the sale. All payments shall be made in cash or certified funds payable to the Sheriff of Will County. In the event the property is a condominium, in accordance with 735 ILCS dance with 735 5/15-1507(c)(1)(H-1) ILCS and (H-2), 765 ILCS 605/9(g)(5), and 765 ILCS 605/18.5(g-1), you are hereby notified that the purchaser of the unit, other

than a mortgagee, shall

pay the assessments and

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legal fees required by sub divisions (g)(1) and (g)(4) of Section 9 and the asrequired sessments subsection (g-1) of Section 18.5 of the Illinois Condominium Property Act. Pursuant to Local Court Rule 11 03 (J) if there is a surplus following application of the proceeds of sale, then the plaintiff shall send written notice pursuant to 735 ILCS 5/15-1512(d) to all parties to the proceeding advising them of the amount of the surplus and that the surplus will be held until a party obtains a court order for its distribution or. in the absence of an order until the surplus is forfeited to the State. For Information Please Contact: Codilis & Associates,

N. Frontage Road Suite 100 Burr Ridge, Illinois 60527 F: 630-794-9090 PURSUANT TO THE FAIR DEBT COLLECTION
PRACTICES ACT YOU
ARE ADVISED THAT
THIS LAW FIRM

ARE ADVIOLATION IS LAW FIRM IS DEEMED TO BE A DEBT ATTEMPT-COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFOR-PURPOSE. Published in the Free Press Newspapers on Wednesday, March 15, 22 & 29, 2023.

Shawn Hornsby, 1802 N. Division St. Designated Managing Broker Morris, IL 60450

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Entry-Level Police Officer Hiring Process



Wilmington Police Department, Wilmington, Illinois The Wilmington, Illinois Board of Police Commission is accepting applications for

the position of police officer with the Wilmington Police Department. **Starting Salary:** \$61,530 - \$73,376

Population: 5,735 Sworn Police Officers: 22* (17 Full-Time and 5 Part-Time)

accepted.

Will add four (4) full-time within next 2 years.

The Wilmington Police Department is proud to announce that they are now certified by the United States Department of Veterans' Affairs for the Police Officer on-the-job Training Program. Please visit http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/onthejob_ apprenticeship.asp

All applicants must meet the following minimum requirements established by the City of

Wilmington:
• U.S. citizenship;

 No felony convictions; Possess a valid state-issued driver's license with good driving record;
 Must be a minimum of 21 years of age and UNDER 35 years of age at the time of

application unless otherwise exempt by State Statute 65 ILCS 5/10-2.1-6; Possess a high school diploma or G.E.D. equivalent;

• Possess a valid NIPSTA card – **OR** - equivalent criteria as per the State standard, issued within 12 months of the written exam date (April 15, 2023); • POWER Test Cards issued by NIPSTA, Triton College or Joliet Junior College will be

· Applicants must present the POWER Test card NO LATER than the written exam date (April 15, 2023).

• Any applicant who would like to schedule a ride along with a Wilmington police officer

may contact Sergeant Dan Brimer at 815-476-2813.

Successfully pass a written examination with a minimum passing score of 70% on each of the (4) sections;

Successfully complete an oral interview with the Board of Police Commission; Successfully complete a background investigation, polygraph, and psychological

 Successfully complete a medical physical, to include drug and alcohol screening; There is no application processing fee.

Applications must be submitted prior to April 3, 2023 at 4:00 p.m.

To apply for this position or obtain additional information, please visit the following website: http://www.applytoserve.com The City of Wilmington is an Equal Opportunity Employer.



3 6



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2

9

Wilmington Fire Protection District 501 N. Main Street Wilmington IL. 60481

Applicants must attend the following:

the room after 6 pm)

to conditional offer.

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Station#1. If you have any questions please call (815)-476-6675.

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for details.

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



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Coal City **Mandy Eaton**

SHERIFF'S CALL REAL ESTATE OF 306 S WILMING-

60481

TON, IL 60481 (Single Family Residence). On the

30th day of **March**, **2023** to be held at 12:00 noon,

at the Will County Court-house Annex, 57 N. Ot-tawa Street, Room 201, Joliet, IL 60432, under

P.C. 15W030

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Illinois must get smarter with mental health

last week when announcing formation of the Behavioral Health Workforce Education Center that the state was building "the best behavioral health system in the

It was quite a bold thing to say. So, my associate Isabel Miller and I asked a couple of follow-up questions: How long will this take and how much

The response from a spokesperson was kinda underwhelming: "Under Governor Pritzker's leadership, the state has invested hundreds of millions of dollars to rebuild our behavioral health infrastructure and Governor is committed to continuing these critical investments year after year to build the best system in the nation. Illinois has climbed in the national rankings by putting our people first and we're on the right path if we continue to make generational change. With our statewide partnerships and continued investment Illinois will soon serve as the national standard for a behavioral health system that prioritizes workers and provides the best possible care for those who need it."

That obviously didn't answer either of our questions. And no Brownie Points for brevity, either. Sorry to make you read it.

Also, the background information the governor's office sent about the administration's progress didn't quite governor's flowery rhetoric.

R e c e n t national rankings issued by Mental Health America, a group more than a century ago, show Illinois has moved from an 11thplace overall mental health back in 2018 to 9th place this year. An over-

to the organization, "indicates lower prevalence of mental illness and higher rates of access However, the state's rank-

ing for adults actually slipped during that time period from 8th to 9th, and the ranking for youth remained at 13th. This despite spending hundreds of millions of additional dollars since the start of 2019 on mental health initiatives. Even so, a key stakeholder

heaped praise on the governor's plan to use the new Behavioral Health Workforce Education Center to lead the revamp of the long-troubled Choate Mental Health and Developmental Center in deep southern Illinois. Equip for Equality issued

an investigative report back in which documented numerous horrors at Choate. The group called for the facility's closure at the time. "Nearly two decades later," the group claimed last week via press release, "enhanced monitoring



Rich Miller

munity "without receiving the necessary services to actually address why they ended there." Residents, group said, continue to be "afraid all ranking of 1-13, according of staff and peers, and afraid of retaliation if they report staff

> abuse.' "Many of the recent news tories are about incidents that happened a year or more ago,' said Stacey Aschemann, Equip for Equality's vice president in charge of monitoring the conditions at Choate. "Based on our recent monitoring, we can say without a doubt that these continue to be ongoing issues.'

> So, why has it taken so long for the state to act? The governor told reporters that the state simply hadn't had the financial resources to do enough about the problem.

> new Behavioral The Health Workforce Education Center has been in the works for five years and will hopefully help the state increase the workforce size enough to deal with the issues, not only at Choate, but throughout the state. With more tax revenues coming in, the state can start getting a handle on things.

And, make no mistake, the

what national rankings may show. Currently, 15,000 people are on a waiting list for community-based intellectual and developmental disabilities placement, according to a report last week by Capitol News Illinois, Lee Enterprises and ProPublica Illinois. Those outlets' reporting on Choate, by the way, sparked the recent intense interest in the facility's

> There are, of course, parochial concerns about any changes at Choate. Sen. Terri Bryant (R-Murphysboro), who represents the area, claimed the central problem is with facility management (a good point) and said she opposed moving residents out of the facility (not so good). AFSCME, of course, is worried about the future of its members at Choate.

many problems and helped

push the administration into

action, a fact which Pritzker

himself has acknowledged.

The bottom line is that the state just has to get smarter. These problems have existed for decades and decades, but the folks at Choate and thousands of others across this state deserve care and help. not physical abuse and neglect. The people in charge need to be better than this, so this attempt to bring new workers into the system and keep them there cannot fail.

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

Bill to end moratorium on building nuclear plants in Illinois advances

SPRINGFIELD -Sue Rezin has advanced legislation putting Illinois one step closer to finally lifting its moratorium on building new nuclear reactors.

"For over 35 years, our state has had an archaic and arbitrary ban on the construction of new nuclear power plants," said Senator Rezin. moratorium remained in place despite the fact that Illinois has efficiently and safely received carbonfree energy from our state's six nuclear stations for roughly four decades.'

Senate Bill 76 would delete the language that provides that no construction shall commence on any new nuclear power plant to be located within the state. Under Rezin's legislation, public utility and energy companies would be given the option to choose whether they want to invest in the construction of both traditional, large nuclear reactors or new, small modular reactors (SMRs) that could be placed in existing infrastructure such as factories or

State pre-existing coal-fired power plants that are already connected to the electric grid.

"New nuclear power plants, whether SMRs or the traditional, offer our state the ability to increase its energy capacity and potentially lower future energy cost with carbon-free, reliable, and resilient nuclear power," continued Rezin. "They would also have the potential to help local economies of traditional coal communities that are currently or will be struggling from the loss of their decommissioned coal-fired

Senate Bill 76 advanced out of the Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee on March 8, and now awaits a vote by the full Senate cham-

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State police see alarming trend in road rage shootings • Illegally driving on the shoulder of them pass or they kept tailgating.

The Illinois State Police (ISP) is warning the public about what appears to be an increasing trend in road rage.

While the number of shootings on Chicago area expressways continues to decrease compared to the height in 2021, victims are increasingly reporting road rage as the reason behind the expressway shooting.

In 2022, road rage was reported in approximately 40% of Chicago area expressway shootings handled by ISP. This is up from 12% in 2021. Already in 2023, road rage has been reported in at least nine Chicago area expressway shootings. This is in addition to other types of road rage-associated violence such as crashes and physical fights.

Watch for the following signs of road rage, aggressive driving:

- Following too closely or tailgating • Improper or erratic lane changing

- the road (emergency lane), in a ditch/median, or on sidewalk
 - Passing where prohibited
- Operating the vehicle in an erratic, reckless, careless, or negligent manner or suddenly changing speeds
 - Failure to yield right of way
- Failure to obey traffic laws, signs, and devices
- Failure to yield to emergency personnel and construction zone speed lim-
 - Failure to signal
- Driving too fast for conditions or in excess of posted speed limit
 - Racing
 - Making an improper turn

According to a AAA Foundation study, when drivers explained why they became violent, the reasons were often trivial such as the other driver wouldn't let

If you are in the left lane and someone wants to pass, move to your right and allow them to pass.

When merging, make sure you have plenty of room and use your turn signal. If someone cuts you off, slow down

and give them room to merge into your If a speeding driver is tailgating you,

safely change lanes when able. Making gestures might anger the

other driver; create distance and avoid

If another driver is acting angry, don't make eye contact. Call the police if you believe a driver is following you or harassing you. Call 911 and/or go to the nearest police department to report it.

Soup Supper, talent show A soup supper and talent

show will be held at Braceville United Methodist Church, 106 W. Gould St., Braceville on Saturday, March 18. Supper will be from 4-6 p.m. with talent show starting at 6 p.m. Admission is donation.



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Rain barrel, compost bins to be available in Wilmington

Conservation Foundation to offer compost bins and rain barrels this Order them on-line by

April 30 and pick them up in Wilmington on Saturday, May A rain barrel will capture

70-90% of a typical rain fall, allowing some overflow to cascade across your lawn to

Will County is teaming up storm drains in the street or swales in some subdivisions.

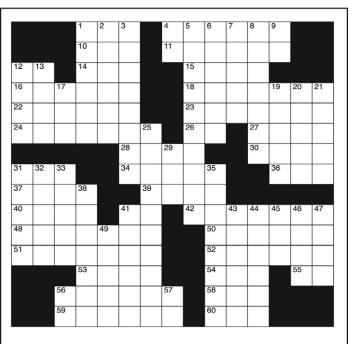
You may use the water vou captured for watering your garden, plants, trees, and bushes between rain events. This saves you money and reduces pressure on our drinking water sources.

To place an order go to the event calendar at willcounty-

Take a Marvelous hike

The Forest Preserve will be hosting a Marvelous March Hike Friday, March 24, from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. at Four Rivers Environmental Education Center in Channahon.

Explore ephemeral ponds, emerging buds and other ecological wonders on a 1.5-mile hike with a naturalist. Free, all ages. Register by March 23.



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Belonging to a thing
- 4. Pass or go by 10. Partner to cheese
- 12. U.S. State (abbr.)
- 14. Bits per inch 15. Forest-dwelling deer
- 16. Illinois city
- 18. A salt or ester of acetic acid 22. Wholly unharmed
- 23. Cuddled
- 24. Bane
- 26. Global investment bank (abbr.) 55. For instance
- 27. Oh my gosh! 28. Arrive
- 30. Famed Spanish artist
- 31. Home of "Frontline"
- 34. Group of quill feathers

36. Keyboard key

41. Football play

42. Makes unhappy

48. Island in Hawaii

50. Back in business

51. Of an individual

54. Matchstick game

58. Popular beverage

60. Time units (abbr.)

56. Even again

59. Evaluate

52. Painful chest condition

53. Tropical American monkey

39. Detail

37. Army training group

40. Pole with flat blade

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Stain one's hands 2. Nocturnal hoofed animals
- 3. Back condition 4. Popular movie alien
- 5. City of Angels
- 6. Peaks 7. Infantry weapons
- Left 9. Atomic #99
- 12. Told a good yarn 13. Vale
- 17. Resistance unit
- 19. Aquatic plant 20. Bluish greens
- 21. About some Norse poems
- Reinforces

- 33. Expired bread

29. Egyptian mythological

- 31. Supportive material 32. Subatomic particle

- 35. Cereal grain
- 38. Goes against 41. Walkie
- 43. One who does not accept
- 44. Beliefs
- 45. Indicates near
- 46. Brazilian NBA star 47. Grab quickly
- 49. Romantic poet
- 56. College dorm worker
- 57. Set of data

How upgrading your phone can effect the planet

bad for the planet to upgrade my phone every two years? – A.J., Ďarien, CT

Smartphones have certainly become ubiquitous, with some 85 percent of Americans and 67 percent of adults worldwide possessing Manufacturers sell almost 1.5 billion of them per

And every year these manufacturers come out with upgraded models to lure customers into trading in their old models to get the latest technology at their fingertips. According to the Consumer Electronic Association the average lifespan of a smartphone is 4.7 years, but the average American user average replaces their smartphone within three years.

This can be, in part, attributed to planned obsolescence by manufacturers. As new smartphones are manufactured, new software updates accompany them; these updates can lead to older phones becoming unusable if they do not have the capacity to accommodate the new soft-Regarding pollution creat-

ed by the industry, 95 percent of emissions come from the production phase. A culture that requires constant replacements results in ongoing growth of manufacturing emissions. In addition, continuously

replacing phones creates ewaste in the form of the phones themselves. In 2019, 50 million tons of waste came from smartphones which constitute about 10 percent of ewaste globally.

One way to combat ewaste is to recycle. However, according to the World

damaging your home or run-

Homeowners can save up to

10% on their water bills by cor-

recting common and easy-to-

fix water issues like leaking

valves and worn toilet flap-

9

3

your

up

Fix that leak and save water

Stop water leaks from pers, according to the U.S.EPA.



Economic Forum, only about 20 percent of global e-waste is recycled. The Basel Action Network used radio tracking to verify where shipments of ewaste were sent.

They found that nearly 40 percent of e-waste from the . United States was exported illegally to developing nations where it was unsafely processed or even burned in where the open air.

There are steps manufacturers can take to alleviate the environmental burden, one being to introduce "repairable" phones. Currently manufacturers hamper smartphone repair with very high repair prices and restricting third parties from having access to the needed parts. Europe is leading the

economy surrounding smartphones that encourages repairs, refurbishments and upgrades instead of replace-Various European countries have instituted programs

charge on embracing a circular

to address the problem. France maintains a publicly accessible phone repairability index to help consumers there make smart choices about their smartphone purchases.

Meanwhile, Sweden and Austria both offer financial incentives for device repairs to encourage fixing instead of junking old smartphones and

Water usage greater than

12,000 gallons (16 CCF) a

month for a family of four in

the winter is a sign of serious

leaks! Check your monthly

water bill for your usage.

3

9

6

2

2

KEEPING A smartphone for more than two years could yield dividends for the environment.

other electronics.

Whether or not such programs exist in your neck of the woods, you can be part of the solution by simply waiting longer to upgrade your phone, which will help reduce the demand on production while lowering your environmental footprint.

While it may not seem like much at first glance, keeping your phone for an extra year can reduce your lifetime

device usage by 25 percent. When it is finally time to get a new phone, an eco-conscious consumer can turn to compa nies like Fairphone and SHIFT that offer easily changeable parts and support software upgrades throughout the phone's lifespan.

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Red Carpet Corridor Festival Craft show and flea market Wilmington, IL • Saturday, May 6

Become a vendor in the craft show and flea market planned for Saturday, May 6, in downtown Wilmington during the Red Carpet Corridor festivities, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

A non-refundable permit fee for a 10x10 space is \$35 on or before April 22; \$50 postmarked April 24-29. Do not mail after April 29. For vendors who make payment the day of show the fee will be \$65 (first come, first served). Must arrive by 8 a.m. to set-up. Even non-profit organizations must pay for a spot.

For fresh food vendors (for all who prepare food on site): \$100 fee for a 10x20 space and contract must be postmarked by April 29; \$130 fee if space is paid for after April 29. Set-up can begin as early as 6:30 a.m. Arrive by 8 a.m. and

remove all vehicles by 8:40 a.m. Check in will be at the north end of Water St. Unfortunately, no electricity will be avail-Complete the contract below and return it with a check

made payable to "Women of Wilmington" to: Women of Wilmington, c/o Brenda Craig-Cherveny, 1235 Chesson Court, Wilmington, IL 60481.

Questions can be directed to Cherveny by emailing bren-

The Red Carpet Event Committee and Women of Wilmington will not assume liability for any losses, damages or injuries sustained by exhibitors or spectators.

Contact Person: ___ E-mail Address:

6

Craft Show and Flea Market Application __ City: ____ _____ Zip Code: _____ List of what will be sold: How many spaces? (circle one): 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

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COALER SPORTS

State Champions, parents honored on Senior Night



COAL CITY SENIOR wrestler Joey Breneman is escorted by his parents Jill and Mike Breneman. He was a four-year starter and finished third at state. Joey had to overcome more adversity than anyone on the team. He is as resilient as they come. He has participated in football for 4 years and his future plans are join Local 150 Operating Engineers.



COAL CITY SENIOR wrestler Braiden Young is escorted by his parents Brooke and Kevin Young. Braiden, a four-year wrestler, finished fourth at state. He is a 2-year starter and a captain on the team. He has participated in football and baseball for four years. His future plans are to attend a four year university.



COAL CITY SENIOR wrestler Mateo Blessing is escorted by Josh Wilson, Danille Wilson and Tony Blessing. He is a 4 year varsity starter and a 2-time team captain. He also played soccer and football at CCHS and future plans are to study business and wrestle.



COAL CITY SENIOR wrestler Jack Povner is escorted by his parents Gretchen and Clinton Povner, Jack has done 4 years in the program. He is a two-year varsity starter for the Coalers. Jack has also participated in football for four years and one year of golf.



COAL CITY SENIOR wrestler Derek Carlson is escorted by his parents Tracy and Chris Carlson. Derek is a returning state qualifier. He is a threeyear starter and a two time captain. He has also been involved in football, baseball and Theatre while attending CCHS. His future plans are to attend a four year university.



COAL CITY SENIOR wrestler Jake Piatak is escorted by parents Vince and Gina Piatak. Jake is a returning state qualifier in 2021. He is a twoyear varsity starter. Future plans are to attend college and major in electrical engineering.



COAL CITY SENIOR wrestler Drake Dearth is COAL CITY SENIOR wrestler Tyler Porth is escorted by his parents Kelly and Jason Dearth escorted by his parents Stephanie and Mike Porth on Senior Night. Drake is a four-year wrestler and state qualifier. He participated in football for four the program. He has participated in football for years and his future plans are to be a railroad engineer for BNSF Railway.



during Senior Night. Tyler has done four years in four years and his future plans are to join the trades and become an operator or mechanic.



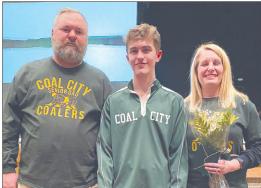
COAL CITY SENIOR wrestler Andrew Feisley is escorted by his parents Melinda Feisley and Will Feisley. Andrew has done 4 years in the program. He participated in football for 4 years and future plans are to be a lineman for ComEd.



COAL CITY SENIOR wrestler Michael Gonzalez is the son of Venesa Gonzalez and Alan Calderon. Michael, a two-year starter, has wrestled three years at CCHS. He has participated in football for 4 years and his future plans are to become a truck



COAL CITY SENIOR wrestler Chris Lassiter is escorted by his parents Samantha and Charles Lassiter. Chris is a first year guy who is as coachable as they come. Chris is a musician at heart and has focused on music at CCHS. He is undecided about his future plans.



COAL CITY SENIOR wrestler Bohden Vanek is escorted by parents Brian and Julie Vanek. Bohden has done 2 years in the program, is a goal oriented person who comes to practice daily with the idea and plan to make himself and his workout partner better than they were the day before. Future plans are to attend Western Michigan University to study business.



COAL CITY SENIOR wrestler Zakk Kramer is escorted by his parents Heather and Jeff Kramer. Zakk, with three years as a wrestler, has been a part time starter with 10 career wins. He has a good work ethic and improves his wrestling skills daily. Zakk has also participated in soccer and plans on attending Joliet Junior College to study criminal justice.



COAL CITY SENIOR Jocie Widlowski is escorted by her parents Joe and Misty Widlowski. She is a 3 year stat girl for wrestling. She has a tremendous amount of knowledge of wrestling and has done a great job mentoring other statisticians. She has participated in golf, basketball, and softball at CCHS. Her future plans are to attend the University of South Alabama and major in nurs-



Cooper honored on Senior Night

AUDREY COOPER, point quard for the Lady Coalers basketball team, is escorted by her parents Kim and Tim Cooper. Audrey has spent four years in the program. She also participates in soccer and her future plans are to attend college to study environmental sciences.



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"Support Coal City High School Athletes"

Milestone met for **YMCA**

The Morris Community YMCA capital campaign celebrated a significant milestone last month when the city of Morris Development Review Committee approved the site and facility plan for a new Morris Hospital YMCA.

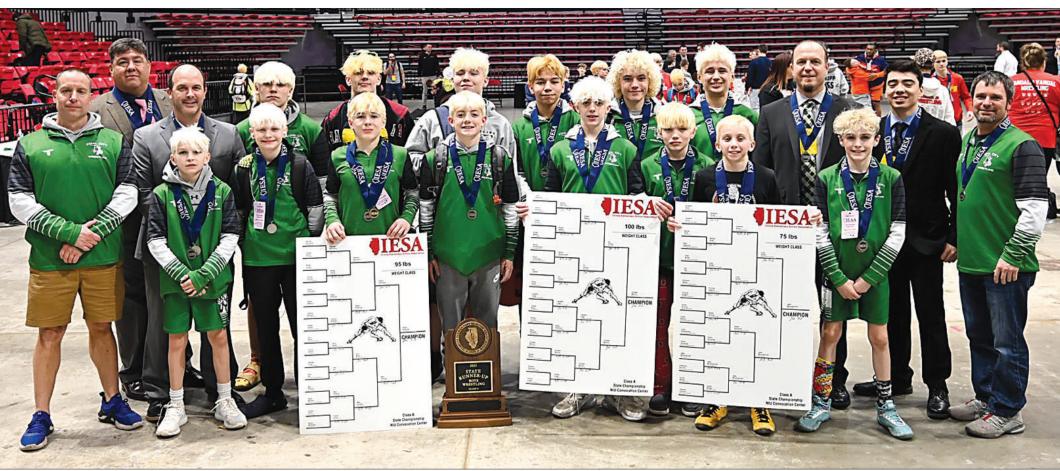
Construction of the facility, built in partnership with Morris Hospital & Healthcare Centers, will begin later this year on land adjacent to Morris Grade School.

The agency announced in 2018 plans for the development of a 50,000-square-foot YMCA and healthcare center in partnership with the hospi-

While the YMCA plans to open this new facility within the next several years, the size, scope, and timing will ultimately be determined by the generosity of the community in support of this project.



COALER SPORTS



SECOND IN STATE and three state champions were awarded to the Coal City Middle School wrestling team on Saturday. Bring home the trophy were (from left, front) Ryder Gill, Landon Bomba, Owen Petersen, Tyson Price, Cooper Morris, Jason Piatak, Jake Munsterman, and Brantley Brooks. Back row: Coach Piatak, Coach Rodriguez, Coach Morris, Brody D'Orazio, Aidan Edmonds, Cole Russell, Fabian Hernandez, Theo Fritz, Alex Carlson, Coach Petersen, Coach Rivera and Coach Lindemuth.

State runner-up

CCMS matmen finish with three state champions

The Coal City Middle School wrestling 1991, 1985), four thirds (2018, 2011, 2001, 1989) team had six of 14 state qualifiers place on Friday and Saturday during the IESA Class 1A state finals held in DeKalb, IL.

Seventh grader Jake Munsterman (75) and eighth graders Owen Petersen (95) and Cooper Morris (100) were crowned state champions.

Placing second for the Warriors was sixth grader Ryder Gill (65) while Brody D'Orazio (167), eighth grade, won the third place medal and Brantley Brooks (70) finished sixth.

As a team, the two-time defending state champions brought home the second place tro-phy after Vandalia finished with 164 points while Coal City had 149.5.

Since the IESA began the state-sanctioned tournaments in 1980, the Warriors have claimed two firsts (2022, 2019), four seconds (2023, 2003,

and two fourths (2017, 1981).

While a Munsterman (4-0) shutout Cole Smith (Port Byron Riverdale) 7-0 to claim the championship at 75 pounds. He started with a quick:39 second pin before advancing from the quarterfinal with a 14-8 decision. His semifinal victory was over Owen Sowards (Taylor Ridge Rockridge) by 9-0 major decision.

Jake was a 2022 state runner-up. He ends his season with a perfect 47-0 record.

Petersen (4-0) started with a 23-8 tech fall over Henry Watson (Eureka) before getting a 13-1 major decision and 11-4 decision. In the first place match he shutout Max Philpot (Vandalia) 3-0.

Peterson was a state runner-up in 2022 and finishes his season with a 47-1 record.

the second straight year with a opening fall 2:54 and quarterfinal 6-0 decision. His semifinal win against Landen Lage (Gibson) was by 1-0. His championship match against Ej Chaon (LeRoy) was just as close as he won it 1-0.

Morris is now a two-time State champion and finishes the season with a 47-2 record.

Gill (3-1) put up a heck of a battle at 65 pounds where he finished second for the second year in a row. His only loss was by sudden victory when Miles Davis of (Johnsburg JHS) slipped away for an escape in a 4-2 loss. Gill was quick in his first three wins, getting pins of :19, :25 and :27 seconds.

At 167, D'Orazio (4-1) placed 3rd after loosing his semifinal to eventual state champion Ben Buis (El Paso-Gridley). D'Orazio won his

Morris (4-0) ruled the 100-pound class for first two bouts by 1:54 and 1:57 pins. He came out of the wrestlingback semi a 12-1 winner over Liam Kilgore (Mackinaw Dee-Mack). In the battle to decide third place he stiffed Kegan Dean (Roxana) in 1:59.

Brooks had the longest road to travel, hav-

ing to wrestle five times in order to reach the fifth place match. Brooks (3-3) started with a 4-

0 win, then lost 12-2, then won 4-2 and 3-2. He made the cons. semifinal but lost 7-3, placing him in the 5th place match against Julian Rodriguez (Gibson City) who won it 8-0.

Warriors who qualified for state but did not place included 70—Landon Bomba (1-2); 80— Jason Piatak (1-2); 95—Tyson Price (2-2); 126— Alex Carlson (2-2); 135—Fabian Hernandez (0-2); 145—Theo Fritz (0-2); 155—Aidan Edmonds (1-2) and 185—Cole Russell (1-2).



STATE CHAMPION! Coal City's Cooper Morris stands at the top after capturing first place at 100 pounds during the IESA state tournament held Saturday in DeKalb.



EIGHTH GRADE WARRIOR Owen Petersen claimed first place at 95 pounds during the IESA state wrestling finals on Saturday.



COAL CITY MIDDLE SCHOOL seventh grader Jake Munsterman became a state champion on Saturday when he went 4-0 in the state tournament at 75 pounds.

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