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Coalers still in the hunt for ICE title



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Vol. 122, Issue 17
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WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26, 2023 | A FREE PRESS NEWSPAPER • (815) 634-0315

Coal City investing \$6.1 million in water

BY ANN GILL
EDITOR

A \$5.3 million expansion of Coal City's water treatment will get underway and with that comes a secondary project—a new raw water well—that drew comment about one of the contractors.

The project has been in the planning for over two years and during a special meeting on April 20, town trustees approved bids for expansion of the plant, as well as drilling a new well and connecting it to the system at an additional cost of over \$878,900.

D Construction, the company that built the existing treatment plant some 30 years ago, submitted the lowest responsible bid for the expansion work at a price of \$5.6 million.

The expansion work will be underwritten by a low interest loan through the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency [IEPA]. As previously reported, the loan will come with \$1 million of principal forgiveness from the state agency and the total borrowed will be paid back through utility fees that include a monthly surcharge collected from users.

Payroll compliance of well driller questioned

Following the opening of four bids, the village engineer worked with the contractor to identify possible savings in order to align the total cost of construction closer to the amount being borrowed.

A change order was submitted reducing the construction cost by \$284,810 to a final approved cost of \$5,315,190.

The expansion of the treatment plant represents 86% of the total project cost of \$6.19 million.

Located on North Broadway, the treatment plant expansion will include a block building addition to house new, modern equipment including water softeners, high service pumps, filters, electrical service and a new radium removal process that is necessary when pumping water from underground aquifers within this region.

Overall, the project will expand the town's treatment capacity and ability to meet demand with future growth. The plant currently has the ability to treat 1.75 million gallons per day and upon completion that will increase to around

2.16 million gallons per day.

With the bid for the expansion approved, trustees took up the matter of drilling a well adjacent to Coal City Fire Station 1 on the east side of DeWitt Place.

This item dominated the majority of discussion at the 17 minute meeting that began, as all Board meeting do, with public comment.

Mayor Terry Halliday recognized a request from Mike Lingl, a representative of the Indiana, Illinois and Iowa Foundation for Fair Contracting, to address the Village Board with regard to an expected contract award to Municipal Well & Pump.

Lingl noted his comments were a follow up to documents he had sent to the village a week earlier in regard to "issues," with Municipal Well that date back nearly 20 years.

His comments to trustees were focused on violations he said the company had with the Illinois Department of Labor regarding wage rates from prior municipal work and what he currently sees as underpayments on certain projects based on a review of the state agency's

records.

"Where this is relevant to you, I was very pleased to see that Coal City has a responsible bidder ordinance and you guys actually took the time back in 2000 to codify what a responsible bidder is and one of the components of that is compliance with the Illinois Prevailing Wage Act. I submitted to you substantial evidence that shows that Municipal Well has a long history of not complying and I hope you consider that tonight when you make your decision as to who is the lowest responsible bidder is for your project," Lingl said.

Village engineer Mike Perry told village officials the Department of Labor was asked to go back to Jan. 1, 2020 to see if in the past three years there were any recent violations by the company with regard to compliance with the state's wage act.

What came back was there was no information at their level.

To further clarify with the Village Board, attorney Mark Heinle outlined the role of the state agency and how changes over the past few

SEE WATER, PAGE 2

Surplus property

Coal City declares three residential lots as excess

BY ANN GILL
EDITOR

The village of Coal City has declared three residential lots on Big Timber Drive as surplus property, hoping potential developers may bid and secure the land to build residential homes.

Coal City acquired the land, "due to the former developer failing to meet all of the requirements for development within the subdivision," according to Village Administrator Matt Fritz.

It was in the early 2000s that the development began, a combination of single and multi-family [duplex] homes.

The plan for the subdivision was for a cul de sac at the west end of the street and the village attempted to require

the original developer to complete the street. But that individual declared bankruptcy and the cul de sac never went in.

However, the village did secure the outlet set aside for the cul de sac and a couple of plans were developed to extend the street—one to North Broadway and another to North Street—but both plans were met with resistance from neighboring property owners and the street went without its final improvements.

So the land remained undeveloped, the village waiting for some to express interest in the Big Timber Drive property.

"I think that time has

SEE PROPERTY, PAGE 2

Three in custody following manhunt

An alert of a stolen motor vehicle resulted in a chase, manhunt and the arrest of three individuals—two with criminal histories.

Around 12:39 a.m. on Sunday, April 23, Grundy County Sheriff's deputies were alerted by a Flock camera that a vehicle stolen in Joliet was in the area of Route 129 in Gardner.

The vehicle was spotted by a deputy who then attempted to make a traffic stop. But the suspect vehicle took off, entering the northbound lanes of Interstate 55 at the Gardner exit.

According to the Grundy County Sheriff's Office, stop sticks were deployed at mile post 233 [Reed Road] and the vehicle hit them stopping a short time later.

Four people in the vehicle fled on foot leading to a manhunt with a Grundy County K-9 tracking and locating three—Roxie A. Boling, 40, of Wilmington; 42-year-old Ivan S. Davis, of Joliet, and Melissa M. Ferguson, 34, of New Lenox. The fourth individual remains at large.

Boling was transported to a local hospital after she informed police she had ingested two grams of heroin, and Davis was transported to the hospital after complaining of chest pain.

SEE ARREST, PAGE 2

Play ball!



Photo by Ann Gill

THE COALER YOUTH League—Coaler Youth Baseball and Coaler Youth Softball leagues—opened the 2023 season with an opening day celebration on Saturday, April 22. Hall of Fame baseball coach Jerry McDowell had the honor of tossing out the first pitch. McDowell has coached at the middle, high school and semi-professional level and is currently back on the field as the varsity coach for the Coal City Coalers. He also serves on the youth league's board of directors. Additional opening day photos on page 2.

Future educators in the national spotlight

BY ANN GILL
EDITOR

A new student organization at Coal City High School is training future educators, two of them earning state recognition and an opportunity to showcase their knowledge at the national level.

Educators Rising, a nationwide career and technical student organization, prepares high school students for careers as future teachers.

A goal outlined in the school district's strategic plan is to access and explore opportunities to ensure career and college readiness, and Superintendent Chris Spencer said, "this program for future educators is part of that."

Spencer noted that the faculty union, Coal City Community Unit Education Association, is working with administration in support of the new group advised by high school history teacher Ben Baer.

Baer told members of the Board of Education this is only the second year the organization has existed statewide.

"It has been seen as an important way to address teacher shortage as 60% of educators end up working within 20 miles from the place they graduated high school," said Baer, who graduated from Reed-Custer High School in Braidwood.

"This is something we've needed for a long time. We are going to need good teachers

SEE EDUCATORS, PAGE 2



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Water

years have put the requirements for monitoring company payroll for compliance is now in the hands of the state. "You really have not role in terms of scrutinizing certified payroll. Now that's not to say you can't take a look at them, but it's not part of the typical municipal role, that enforcement is left to the Department of Labor," Heinle said.

The attorney went on, "what the Department of Labor does do when they find a violation, they public a list of contractors and if they have to violation in the past four or five years they appear on a list and they can not be eligible to be awarded public works contracts for the next four years." Municipal Well is not on the list. The attorney told trustees they had the option to select the other bidder, however if that was their choice it needed to be made clear why Municipal was not deemed to be the responsible bidder.

All of the bids submitted for the project were reviewed by the IEPA without question before being presented to trustees for approval.

When offered an opportunity to respond to the comments about their company, a representative of Municipal Well & Pump simply said, "our record speaks for itself."

Without question, trustees unanimously accepted the bid and awarded the well drilling contract to Municipal Well & Pump at a cost of \$696,253. This represents 11% of the total project costs. Village Administrator

Matt Fritz noted the location of the well on DeWitt Place, "is advantageous because the village's raw water main is already located alongside this property allowing the source water to be delivered efficiently to the water treatment plant."

Some additional savings comes with this location due to assistance provided by the Coal City Fire Protection District.

"The last portion of construction due to the different components of the water treatment plant expansion project include the improvements at the well head. This construction completes the source of electrification to the raw water pump and connects the raw water retrieved from the well into the village's raw water conveyance system," Fritz said.

Where the fire protection district comes in is that instead of constructing a separate well house for necessary electrical equipment, fire officials have offered for the components to be installed on the southwest corner of a storage garage they own and is accessible from their parking lot.

Due to the fire district's generosity, the village will save over \$231,000 on the well head improvement that will be completed by Gene Wren Construction at a final cost of \$182,690.52.

Now that all of the bids have been reviewed and accepted, Fritz said the village will move forward to finish the required debt obligation documents to finalize the loan.

Construction of the treatment plant, well drilling and connection is expected to commence in the weeks ahead.

Home run derby jump starts youth baseball, softball players

The Coaler Youth Baseball and Coaler Youth Softball opened the 2023 season with a day of activities that included a home run derby, games and scrimmages.

Founded separately in 2022, the two non-profit organizations offer recreational programs for kids interested in the two sports. The focus is on providing a place for kids to build skills and develop an appreciation for the game.

The season opened with a ceremonial first pitch tossed by Hall of Fame coach Jerry McDowell, who serves on the board of directors for the baseball group and is the current head coach of the Coal City High School varsity baseball team.

A highlight of the day was the home run derby with three top finishers in each category.

In the Shetland division the top batter was Beau Hines followed by Elliott Munsell and Benny Bailey.

In the Pinto boys division, Drew Novak finished in first place. Brock Bailey was second and Andrew Vironda placed third.

Emmy Hall was the first place batter in the Pinto girls division followed by Kensley Schomig and Larkyn Kaluzny.

Among Mustang players, in the boys division the top hitter was Andrew Becker with Liam Wynn finishing second and Rylan Davy third.

Girls Mustang derby fin-



Photo by Ann Gill

ANDREW VIRONDA TAKES a swing during the homerun derby hosted by the Coal City Youth Leagues. Vironda finished third among Pinto boys.

ishers were Haleigh Case in first place, Ryleigh Kargle in second and Hailey Fisher finished third.

In the Bronco division the

top batter in softball was Promise Walker. Sophia Smith came in second and Lila Symons was third.

And, the top hitters

among boys in the Bronco division were Hunter Lamphier with first place, Rylan De Michele in second and Patrick Osipavicius was third.

Property

come. There has been some interest, but prior to the sale of those outlots we have to surplus it and make it available to anyone else that might want to make a bid on it," Fritz said.

The Village Board declared the land as surplus property when it met on April 12. This, the administrator said, was the first step in selling it off.

The property will be offered through sealed bid upon announcement by the village through an advertisement. The winning bid will be determined by the Village Board.

The lots are zoned RS-2—medium density single family residential—and at this time are non-conforming.

In responding to a question posed by Trustee Tim Bradley, Fritz said the village code outlines how many homes can be located on a cul de sac street and therefore a variance would be needed for the lots to be considered conforming.

"If someone has a winning bid that would then go before Planning and Zoning for approval and gain the variance approvals needed from the code, there is just no other way around it."

The administrator told trustees he anticipates two single family homes being constructed on the property in the future.

Arrest

Davis is charged with criminal trespass to a stolen motor vehicle and resisting arrest. He was on parole from the Illinois Department of Corrections [IDOC]. According to the state agency's inmate data, Davis was released April 12 on a conviction out of Cook County for possession of a controlled substance.

Boling is being held on a warrant from the U.S. Marshals Office for failure to appear, possession of narcotics, and a Will County war-

rant for failure to appear on larceny charges. She now faces additional charges in Grundy County for possession of a stolen motor vehicle, criminal trespass to a stolen motor vehicle and resisting arrest.

As for Ferguson, she was transported to the Grundy County Jail and charged with felony possession of a controlled substance, resisting arrest and criminal trespass to a stolen motor vehicle.

Grundy County was assisted by several agencies including the Illinois State Police, Will County Sheriff's Department and Braidwood Police Department.

Educators

and as a former teacher I understand that. I am so thrilled we have some of our own people going into this and hopefully will come back to us," Board president Ken P. Miller said.

In its first year at CCHS, the organization recorded 15 members with three serving as chapter officers—president Rachel Hall, vice president Mia Ratajczak and Adaline Dowling, secretary/treasurer.

"I see my role as a sponsor to facilitate the meetings. The officers plan the agenda, the questions and run the meeting and I think that is a very valuable experience for them. I feel that this has served our students in a variety of ways," Baer said.

Taking part in various conferences and presentations have also proved beneficial to members of the group. The organization has hosted teacher panels focused on various topics in education including early career teachers and middle level education, "because that can be a challenging [area] to fill," Baer said.

The panels included local teachers, retirees and award winning educators.

Members have also took part in two statewide Educator Rising Conferences, the most recent being the state leadership conference and competition.

Ratajczak and Hall entered the competition to learn more about the programs, "they went in as a learning experience just to see what it like and they drove in full steam. There were four categories [of competition] and we participated in two and Coal City won both of them," Baer said.

The victories earned Hall and Ratajczak a

spot in the national contest to be held this summer.

Hall competed in children's literature and in doing so she was required to write and illustrate a children's story that she performed for judges at the contest.

The story penned by Hall was titled, "Seasons Change," and was a bout young children and how they have to be resilient.

Ratajczak competed in the Educator Rising Moment that requires participants to deliver a speech describing why they want to become a teacher. She spoke of her work with the school's PALS program that finds general and special education students working together.

Baer commended both students for their work in preparing for the contest and their individual presentations.

Now that they have won the state competition they move on to nationals set for June 29-July 2 in Orlando, FL.

"I think through a variety of funding we will be able to get them to that conference," Baer said.

The Board offered its support providing \$250 to each of the students to assist with their travel and conference expenses.

Future educators from across the country will be at the national conference to take part in 21 competitive events, participate in sessions, network with other future teachers and hear remarks from the 2022 National Teacher of the Year.

Baer looks to build the organization in the coming year and is hopeful the district will continue to support the program with funding.

"I feel this had served our students in a variety of ways," the advisor said.



SWINGING INTO A second place finish in the Pinto league homerun derby was Brock Bailey.



THE NEWLY ESTABLISHED Coaler Youth Baseball League and Coaler Youth Softball League came together over the weekend to host an opening day event that featured a homerun derby contest. Trevor Reeb was among the participants in the event.

Veteran outreach events scheduled for May

The Edward Hines Jr. VA Medical Center Outreach Team with assist veterans during two outreach events in May.

Staff from the Grundy County Veterans Assistance Commission and the US Department of Veterans Affairs Edward Hines Medical Center will be able to answer questions about VA health care, the PACT Act, Camp Lejeune water and many other veterans benefits and programs.

They can also discuss any other federal, state and local veterans benefits and services.

Representatives will be available Monday, May 1 from 10-2 p.m. at the Morris American Legion Post 294, 212 W. Washington St., Morris and Wednesday, May 31 at the Grundy County Health Department Senior Expo held at Jennifer's Garden, 555 Gore Rd., Morris.

"There have been several significant changes to the benefits and services provided by the US Department of Veterans Affairs as a result of legislative acts by Congress last year. The Grundy County VAC and Hines VA Outreach are available to help answer questions and assist with applications for these new benefits," said Ken Buck, superintendent of the VAC.

If a veteran is interested in enrollment in the VA Health Care System, bring a copy of their DD214 and a government issued photo ID. One may be


eligible for VA health care benefits if they served in the active military, naval, or air service and didn't receive a dishonorable discharge.

Those who enlisted after Sept. 7, 1980, or entered active duty after Oct. 16, 1981, must have served 24 continuous months or the full period for which you were called to active duty. There are other condi-

tions under which you might be eligible, attending these outreach events will allow you to discuss your situation with the enrollment coordinator directly.

For general questions or to schedule an office appointment with the VAC call 815-941-3152 or e-mail vac@grundycountyil.gov

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Deadline for The Free Press Advocate, Braidwood Journal and Coal City Courant
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The Coal City Courant
USPS No. 120-060
Published weekly, 52 times a year, on Wednesdays by
G-W COMMUNICATIONS, INC.,
271 S. Broadway St.,
Coal City, IL 60416
Periodicals postage paid at Coal City, Illinois

Postmaster: Send address changes to: Free Press Newspapers; 111 S. Water St.; Wilmington, IL 60481

Subscription rates: \$43 Grundy & Will counties; \$50 other Illinois counties and \$57 out of state

Eric D. Fisher, publisher
Ann Gill, editor

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New hope

BRAIDWOOD—Braidwood is becoming a ugly town; no bank, now no laundromat; very few restaurants. Why do they need another gaming place? Let's see what this new mayor does.

Works both ways

WILMINGTON—If women can't have Mifepristone, men shouldn't be able to have Viagra, or Cialis or any other medication to give them an erection. Erectile dysfunction is God's way of telling old men they are done with sex plus if they can't impregnate women that means less abortions. It's a win-win. Penny Lane

Just making sure

WILMINGTON—OK Margo, let me get this straight. All of these mass killers and school shooters are agents of God and acting in his name? I'm just making sure I got your point.

Only your God

WILMINGTON—Dear Sharon, you are free to believe anything you want. You can read your Bible, pray and go to any church you choose. Your kids can carry a Bible and wear a cross but teachers and coaches aren't allowed to proselytize on school time. I don't know why everyone has to be exposed to the Ten Commandments when various Christian and Jewish faiths have different versions. But the point is still, you can practice any belief you choose and yet you still feel compelled to force your way into the public's square and demand that everyone kneel to your God and only your God. I don't need a weather vane to tell me which way the wind blows and I don't need to see a nativity to know it's Christmas. By the way I don't have a problem with Jesus, in fact I quote the Doobie Brothers "Jesus is just all right with me." I just don't like his fans.

Computer chaos

COAL CITY—Recently the computer system at a local medical facility wasn't working correctly and quite a few people could not get their prescriptions refilled and the pharmacies refused to refill any doctors' prescription refill orders by telephone. Then the facility stated that only computer authorizations are allowed by law to refill prescriptions. But our leaders were warned years ago, look what happened. But they didn't care because they receive everything they need under priority status along with medical personal. After arguing about my prescriptions with the hospital, pharmacy and doctor's office, all three basically stated that there is nothing they can do to help me get my medication because my life is being controlled by a machine. How do you like knowing that a computer determines if you are allowed your medication for survival? It's damaging my life. If the truth doesn't rattle your brain then watch the movie "The Net" with Sandra Bullock and that movie might shake every apple from your tree. Computers aren't the truest form of man to man pushed into usage by our Congress with no thought about human life. There is no appreciation for being treated like scum by the medical profession and the public servants.

Crook helping crooks

DIAMOND—There is a law that some people in Congress want to pass to stop transgender males from competing in woman's sports

because of the disadvantage that women have physically in competition with men. But our president has already stated that he will not sign any bill into law that will stop a transgender man from women's sports or being allowed in women's locker rooms or women's restrooms. There's a phrase that says one crook will always help another crook. So does that mean one pedophile will always help another pedophile? If the shoe fits, you wear it.

Gone too progressive

SHADOW LAKES—The GOP house voted to ban biological man from playing in girls sports. Not one Democrat voted for it and Biden said if it passed he would veto it. This is not your father's Democratic party. Think about this if you have a daughter in sports. Eddie

Inconsistent

WILMINGTON—Have you noticed that the trans phobic Republicans only care about trans girls in sports. What about the trans boys in sports? It seems inconsistent. So what's up with that?

Lost touch

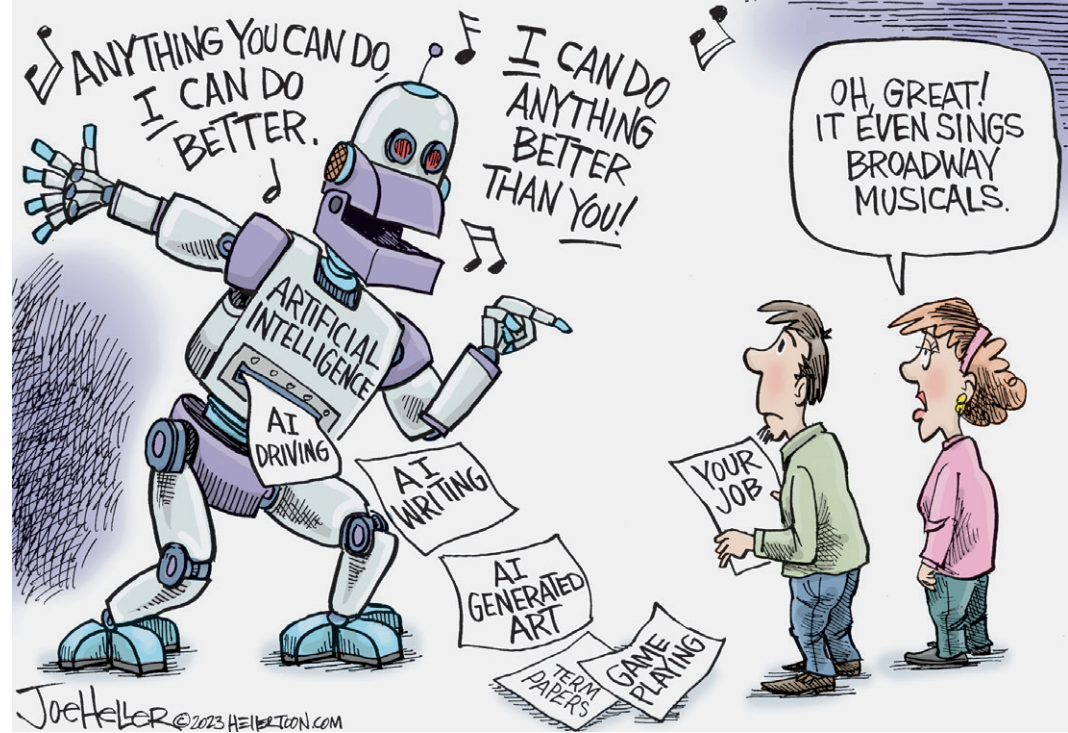
DIAMOND—It has been across the news media that minor children are being taught that a boy can become a girl and a girl can become a boy with surgery and pills. But this can never change the eternal structure of any human being or completely change a human being's DNA. But the adults pushing this twisted idea will not undergo the surgery or have their children undergo the same mutilation process that can never be reversed. All it shows is that some adults have lost touch with reality and are sick deviates that should be put into prison instead of being allowed to be involved in the tax payers funded education program and the politicians that allow this to continue should be forced to undergo the mutilation surgery they want for the children in the U.S.A. before one more minor child becomes a victim of this sadistic, inhumane mentality that causes extreme harm to the welfare of mankind as a complete abomination to life.

So now what?

BRAIDWOOD—It's 4-20 so the buds and I were celebrating. One of the buds asked if the cannabis resort is still coming to Braidwood now that we're getting a new mayor and all. We were stoked about it coming and being legal and all. Would be a cool venue for people up north or any state wanting to come chill at a destination. Although I heard now that Missouri turned legal and pot's is half the price it is in Illinois, the resort planners have bugged out and are going to Missouri. Hope that ain't true. Later dude!

Higher again

GARDNER—Just wondering if anyone else in the area is sick and tired of the price gouging by Waste Management. I filed a complaint with the Attorney General after getting nowhere with the company last year. They helped me get a refund. They lie about being able to choose another company, but they know they are the only one who handles recycling. Just got my bill this morning and it was a lot higher again. I don't know if anyone on a fixed income is able to pay this huge amount. Do you pay their ridiculous bills every year or do you pay for



your other essentials like prescriptions, food, utility bills, and toss your garbage along the road? This company makes billions every year. Sad.

Pitiful politics

BRAIDWOOD—In response to "More harm than good", maybe the hard look should be to the person who sent out the postcard with the lies about one of the candidates running and then stood in front of Berkot's the night before the election telling people not to vote for that person and telling them a horrible lie. When that's how you have to win an election it's pitiful. I hope the person who stood in front of Berkot's gets sued for slander. Yes, we know who you are.

Targets women

WILMINGTON—The Republicans claim to believe in states' rights yet they say nothing about the judicial overreach of a white male Trump-appointed Texas judge with no background in science or medicine passing judgments that affect the whole country and targets only women.

The Shroud of Turin

DIAMOND—New evidence indicates that Jesus of Nazareth's burial cloth believed to be the Shroud of Turin is not only real but points to the occurrence of a supernatural event after His death. Recent analyses of the shroud using only modern science can provide some machines that study deep space to nanoscopic parts of the human cell are revealing surprising information. In 2011, Italy's national agencies for new technologies energy and sustainable economic development assigned a world team of 35 researchers with seven tons of equipment to understand how the image on the shroud was made. A number of key findings about the images make sharing this wonderful information concise and to the point: It was not painted, no pigment found. It was not scorched or burned. It is a two-dimensional image with encoded three-dimensional information. The distance between body and cloth is captured in the density of the image, closer is darker. The image did not come from contact with the cloth. The image appears to be created by an oscillating strobe of high intensity light with a simple wave length. This light came from "inside the body." The event happened in 1/40th of a billionth of a second like a laser beam moving 2.5 billion watts. To create a similar light one would need all the electric power generated on earth. The report said "In the end, we could not determine an image formation mechanism that could make an image with these properties on the Shroud of Turin." As for me, this miracle of God's love confirms my faith that Jesus, the son of God was crucified, died and was buried. He then rose from the dead on the third day. One of science's accepted laws states that energy can neither be created nor destroyed. But over 2,000 years ago our all powerful God created an energy of like equal to all the power generated on present day earth in the briefest of time and that regenerated the life in Jesus. What an affirmation of faith to all Christians. Recognition that Jesus was the long awaited Messiah of the Jews. I sincerely believe all agnostics and atheists have some extremely new scientific facts to consider. Praise the Lord

Commentary

Stay calm when the wheels fall off

THE FOUNDATION FOR A BETTER LIFE

At 17 years old, most people are still struggling to parallel park. Yes, it takes a bit of practice. And once the car is parked, the day is packed with school activities and homework and just hanging out with friends. But at 17, Maggie Taraska had an outrageous goal in mind: Fly solo across the United States.

Both of Maggie's parents are Air Force veterans, so the urge to be airborne is in Maggie's genes. So she went to flight school, put in the hours with an instructor and started on her solo hours. But on her first solo takeoff, out of a small airport in Massachusetts, something didn't sound right. The plane had lost one of the landing gear wheels.

"As soon as I took off, I heard something," Maggie said. "I just felt something was wrong instinctively."

The Piper Cub had plenty

of gas, so her instructor had time to talk her through the maneuvers from the ground while she circled a few times to gather herself.

"I was just petrified. I was thinking about all of the bad things that could've happened; I was thinking about how my parents were on the ground and I knew that they were watching."

Stress and panic can cause any of us to make rash decisions. It takes mental practice to calm down. Take a few breaths, focus on the moment, follow the plan. And remember to breathe. "I panicked a bit, but I followed my training."

Maggie was a little shaky as she talked to the tower, but she executed a perfect belly landing that skidded on the infield grass. Her father couldn't be more proud.

"By the time I saw Maggie on her approach, it was a better approach than I could've flown," he said. Cheers erupted in the tower when she land-

ed, and Maggie took a deep breath and climbed out of the plane.

Credit does go to the crew for talking her through the procedure. We all need someone to talk us through challenging times. But in the end, it was all Maggie at the controls.

We could all be forgiven for calling it quits after an ordeal like that. After all, it was a bit traumatic. So walking away would be understandable. But five days later, Maggie was going through her pre-flight safety inspections, checking under the hood, checking the wings, and especially checking the landing gear.

"It feels amazing," she said about being up in the air again. "It feels really freeing."

At some point in our lives, we will all be in a situation for the first time. It's scary. But if you face your fears, the whole world opens up to you.

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Don't feel guilty about making a healthier bolognes sauce

BY ELAINE OHLUND
SPECIAL TO THE
FREE PRESS NEWSPAPERS

In today's busy world it's challenging enough just to get a home cooked meal on the table once or twice a week. But to make it healthy and one that the kids will eat is a whole different ball game.

I came from a family of amazing cooks but family favorites like carmel rolls and spaghetti pie were not exactly the healthiest choices.

It wasn't until I was a mom of three with my youngest being special needs when I really started to consider what I was putting on their plates every night.

I constantly found myself reading endless labels at the grocery store and really doing my research to come to the conclusion that a lot of the food at the grocery store had ingredients in them that I couldn't even pronounce. Or there was one ingredient that kept catching my eye in everything: Seed oils.

Seed oils like canola oil, vegetable oil, and oils made from soy, corn and sunflower have been linked to causing inflammation throughout the entire body which can lead to heart disease, diabetes, autoimmune diseases and a

slew of other health problems.

Now I am no health expert or doctor but I do know that once I started staying away from the seed oils and center isles of the grocery store, I dropped weight and felt so much better. My achy joints and brain fog seemed to slowly disappear.

Which then made me realize I had to also make this work for my kids. There just seemed to be no solution other than going back to homemade basics and Mother Natures remedies of vegetables, fruits and meat.

I mean she is the mother of all mothers, so wouldn't that be the most nuturing for our bodies and souls?

But what kid is willing to eat vegatbles these days when we have sugary snacks available on every isle? So, that's when I realized it was going to have to perform somewhat of a magic trick, disguise them in a bolognese sauce because who doesn't love spaghetti?

Magic trick bolognes sauce

- 1lb of ground beef
- 1lb of Italian sausage
- 1t of red pepper flakes
- 2 T. Olive oil
- 1 green pepper (diced)
- 1 yellow onion (diced)
- 2 stalks of celery (diced)
- 4 garlic cloves (minced)
- 2 carrots (grated)
- 28-ounce crushed tomatoes (with juice)
- 8-ounce tomato past
- 1 cup beef stock
- 1 honey crisp apple (grated)

- 8 basil leaves chopped
- Salt and pepper to taste

1. First brown the meat, both Italian sausage and ground beef in a pan, while the meat cooks, sprinkle the red pepper flakes (if you like a little spice) in with the meat. Once the meat is cooked, drain grease and set aside for later.

2. Grab your favorite pasta sauce pot and heat up 2 tablespoons of olive oil. Once the oil is sizzling add the minced garlic to the pan. Next, add the carrots and celery and saute until they have softened and are fragrant.

My Aunt Joy once told me it's not only important to test by taste but by smell too. Next, add the onion and green pepper and saute until softened.

3. Now you can add the meat back into the pan with the sauted vegetables and add beef stock, crushed tomatoes and tomato paste. Bring to a simmer and lower heat for about 20 minutes.

Make sure to stir throughout the 20 minutes because it's nearly a sin to burn the sauce according to Henry Hill in "Good Fellas".

While the sauce is cooking you can go ahead and prepare your noodles.

Tip: Cooking with tomatoes can lead to an acidic taste so a tip to balance that out is sugar unfortunately. You can add one tablespoon of sugar, stir and let simmer for a minute and taste again.

If it still tastes acidic then add another tablespoon of sugar, usually 3 tablespoons of sugar will do the trick. However, because we are trying to make this a healthier meal, my Aunt Theresa came up with the genius idea of grating a Honey Crisp apple into the sauce and it does just as good of a job as the sugar. Plus you are adding one more of Mother Nature's remedies to the meal.

4. Once the sauce has finished simmering then you can go ahead and add the basil, salt and pepper to taste.

5. Then serve over warm noodles topped with some Parmesan cheese and watch your kids gobble up a good handful of vegetables that they probably won't even notice.

Tip 2: This one is for the moms who are constantly on the go with sporting events at night. Sometimes I make a double batch and freeze half of it in a tupperware for the following week especially if we have a lot of baseball games to go to.

It's so convient to pull out in the morning and let it thaw. Once you get home you can just heat it up in a pan and make noodles.

Now I understand that not everyone has the time to make a homemade sauce so I did find a spaghetii sauce jar that you can purchase that has all healthy ingredients and no seed oils which is called Rao's Tomato Basil. Mixing in the meat and vegetabales will also do the trick.

Considering I am on this health and wellness journey and want to write about it, I welcome your feed back. Or if you have a health version of a recipe your family likes, let's share it! Email me at news@fpnusa.com or drop correspondence off at 111 S. Water St., Wilmington, IL 60481.

And thank you to all of the beautiful aunties and women in my life who inspired my love for cooking.



MY SON Zachary Ohlund grating a Honey crisp apple into a healthy Bolognese sauce. After tricking him into eating the vegetable hidden sauce he liked it so much he now will help me prep it.

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Morris Hospital offers CPR and First Aid training

Morris Hospital & Healthcare Centers is offering the American Heart Association's Heartsaver CPR AED & First Aid Training course on Friday, April 28, from 4-8 p.m. at Shabbona School, 725 School St., Morris.

The course is for anyone interested in learning skills that could save the life of a loved one, friend, co-worker, or community member. Participants will learn the skills needed to perform high quality CPR, proper use of an automated external defibrillator (AED), relief of foreign-body airway obstruction, and basic first aid. The cost is \$110 and includes American Heart Association materials.

Participants should enter through door 22 on the southwest side of the building. The class will also be offered on Tuesday, May 23, from 4-8 p.m. at the same location.

Register online at www.morrishospital.org/events. For more information, call 815-705-7360.

Take a hike with photo expert

The Forest Preserve will be hosting a new program "Photography Bird Hike" on Saturday, May 13, at the Four Rivers Environmental Education Center, Channahon. It will be from 8:30 a.m. to 9:45 a.m.

Kick off Migration Celebration with a guided photography hike along the best birding trails Four Rivers has to offer. Get tips from an expert photographer on how to capture your favorite birds. Bring your camera and take advantage of the busiest time of the year! Free, all ages.

IDENTITY THEFT TIP

Use ATMs inside banks where it's harder for scammers to install skimming devices. Skimming is when thieves use a device to steal the information from the magnetic strip on the back of your credit or ATM card. They can then use that information to access your accounts or produce a fake credit card using your name and details.

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 available.

Complete the contract below and return it with a check made payable to "Women of Wilmington" to: Women of Wilmington, c/o Brenda Craig-Cherveney, 1235 Chesson Court, Wilmington, IL 60481.

Questions can be directed to Cherveney by emailing brenniej@aol.com.

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

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Future of autonomous farming equipment taking shape

BY DAN GRANT
FARMWEEK

The use of driverless ag equipment might seem like something from a science fiction movie, but it's already gaining ground on farms today. And some of that technology was on display to farmers from around the world at Commodity Classic in Orlando, Florida, as equipment manufacturers set their sights on improved ag efficiencies.

"We are committed to moving forward as an industry," said Matt Olson, precision ag manager for John Deere. "When you look at the future, we continue to evolve at an increasingly fast pace because of technology."

John Deere released its first autonomous tractor for tillage operations last year — 8R tractors with a TruSet-enabled chisel plow, GPS guidance and advanced technologies.

The unit features six pairs of stereo cameras, which enable 360-degree obstacle

detection and calculation of distance.

And it's just the first in what Deere envisions as an entire lineup of autonomous equipment.

"We are committed by 2030 to have a fully autonomous production system for row crops, from planting and spraying to harvest and tillage," Olson said.

And it could radically change how farmers manage their operations.

"We've gone from managing the whole farm, to fields and more recently to zones," Olson said. "When you look at the technology we have now, we're able to manage at the plant level through sensors, machine learning and through automation."

Deere's new See and Spray Ultimate is one example. The new technology can reduce non-residual herbicide use by more than two-thirds by target spraying weeds.

See and Spray Ultimate uses 36 cameras on a 120-foot sprayer boom to scan more than 2,100 feet at once to apply

herbicide only to weeds it detects. Its ExactApply nozzle control technology also helps reduce potential drift.

The latest See and Spray advancements are for model year 2023 John Deere 410R, 412R and 612R sprayers.

Deere also unveiled new ExactRate technology this year to precisely monitor and control applications of liquid fertilizer during planting. ExactRate is compatible with select models of John Deere planters with electric drive, including 1775NT, 1795, DB60, DB44 and DB66 units.

How do farmers prepare for automated technology?

Olson recommends they get comfortable with the JD Operations Center, gain expertise in how to work with a connected machine and make sure their farms have high-fidelity boundaries.

Meanwhile, Case IH advanced its development of autonomous technology when it unveiled its TriDent 5550 sprayer with Raven Autonomy at last year's Farm Progress Show.

Farmers can run the applicator with Raven Autonomy from any mobile device.

"That's considered supervised autonomy," Kendal Quandahl, Case IH precision technology marketing manager from Waterloo, told FarmWeek at Commodity Classic. "You can have multiple machines in one field controlled by one operator."

Case IH introduced the autonomous sprayer through market research with farmers, who identified field applications as one of their top labor pain points, Quandahl noted.

"One of the spotlights for us is the path to autonomy Case IH is working towards," she said. "One of the biggest things we have to help producers understand is it's not just a driverless machine, but rather a series of automated equipment."

Case IH also recognized past achievements in ag equipment design at Commodity Classic as it continued its celebration of the 100-year anniversary of Farmall, an original brand of International

Harvester.

"We're very excited about the past and innovations on farms from 1923 to today," said Joe Miller, Case IH tractor market segment lead. "We're kicking off the next 100 years of Farmall."

Case IH recently launched new Farmall 90 and 120 model tractors, geared toward spe-

cialty markets.

The company is also giving away a Farmall 75C tractor as part of the 100-year celebration. Visit the website, www.farmall100.com for more information about that or go to www.caseih.com to learn about all the latest innovations.



Photo by Daniel Grant for FarmWeek

A JOHN DEERE 8 series tractor, featuring autonomy-enabling hardware, sits on display at the 2023 Commodity Classic in Orlando.

Coal City church to host drive-up dinner

The Coal City United Methodist Church invites the community to their Drive-Up Pork Chop Dinner on Saturday, May 6, from 4 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Each dinner will include: a pork chop, cheesy potatoes, baked beans, coleslaw and

dinner roll. All meals will be packed in carry-out containers to take home and enjoy. The cost is \$15 per meal.

All proceeds will go to the Coal City United Methodist Church Building Fund. Only 125 meals will be available, so stop by early.

Plainfield man pleads guilty in video gaming burglary ring

Attorney General Kwame Raoul said a Will County man pleaded guilty and was sentenced to prison for burglarizing Grundy and Will County businesses and stealing cash from video poker machines.

The plea is part of an ongoing burglary case following a joint investigation with the Illinois Gaming Board, the Illinois State Police (ISP) and several local law enforcement agencies.

Brian Morgan, 42, of Plainfield, was sentenced to nine years in prison in Lee County Circuit Court Thursday after pleading guilty to one count of Class 1 felony theft. Morgan was also sentenced to nine years in prison, to be served concurrently, after pleading guilty to one count of Class 2 felony burglary.

Morgan is currently in prison, serving a separate sentence in connection to unrelated charges.

"Members of this burglary ring allegedly targeted bars, restaurants, social clubs and other small businesses that have video poker

and video gaming machines. They broke into dozens of these establishments in multiple counties and stole hundreds of thousands of dollars in cash out of the machines," Raoul said.

In August 2022, the Attorney General's office filed charges against four individuals, including Morgan, alleging they broke into businesses around Illinois and robbed video gaming machines, stealing approximately \$400,000. Morgan allegedly committed offenses in the counties of Carroll, DeKalb, Grundy, Iroquois, Jo Daviess, Kane, Kendall, LaSalle, Lee, Mason, McLean, Ogle and Will.

The Attorney General's office received support in its investigation from the Illinois Gaming Board and several law enforcement agencies, including the ISP, the DuPage County State's Attorney's office, the Lake County State's Attorney's office, the Joliet Police Department and the Bureau, DeKalb, Grundy, Iroquois, Kendall and LaSalle county sheriffs.

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BY ZETA CROSS
THE CENTER SQUARE

Homeowners can make their yards more friendly for wildlife, ensuring that local wildlife can flourish.

Suburban yards that are mostly empty turf grass do not produce enough caterpillars to feed many of the baby birds that are born in the spring.

Benjamin Vogt, author of "Prairie Up," the new garden design book from University of Illinois Press, said the answer is planting more native plants, shrubs and trees to fill the yard with bird food.

"The way they are traditionally set up in urban and suburban areas, lawns are essentially devoid of wildlife," Vogt told The Center Square.

In the first two weeks of life, fledgling chickadees need 6,000 juicy caterpillars to survive until they fledge. They can't eat birdseed. Naturalists find dead baby birds in nests in the suburbs because the bird parents can't find enough caterpillars.

Since 1970, the North American bird population has decreased by 3 billion birds. About 90% of the missing birds are from 12 widespread bird families, including warblers, sparrows, bluebirds and finches.

Nearly all the plants sold at groceries and big box stores every spring are non-native plants that originated in Asia or some other country. Beneficial insects for birds and pollinators in Illinois have not evolved alongside non-native species.

Think of native plants, shrubs and trees as giant bird feeders, Vogt said.

"Native plants are critical to producing new bees and butterflies and moths," he said.

Concerned about wildlife? Pay attention to the habitat of the yard, Vogt said.

He would like people to reimagine their yards as meadows and prairies.

"Take out boring turf

grass and plant some beds with native species," Vogt said.

Prairie Up has photos and tips on how to make yards wildlife friendly and low maintenance.

"I have a bunch of free YouTube videos to show people native plants and how to group them together," Vogt said. "Even a small garden bed with a few species of plants can make a difference for wildlife."

Do a little research to find plants that match the soil conditions, sunlight, drainage conditions and moisture levels in the yard. Don't plant a plant that needs full sun in an area that gets shady for half the day.

"People put the plants in the wrong place and when they don't grow, they just give up," Vogt sighs. "We don't want that."

Once native plants get established in a yard, they bloom year after year with much less maintenance and less water, Vogt said. No need

for mulch.

Vogt is a promoter of Homegrown National Park, entomologist Doug Tallamy's non-profit organization to make suburban yards more productive for the environment. Tallamy's goal is to convert as much lawn as possible.

"If we could combine all the suburban lawn space in the country, we'd have a square acreage that is the size of the state of Georgia," Vogt said.

The goal is to knit all the backyards together by planting more wildlife-friendly plants, trees and shrubs. Chickadee parents can only travel so far to find the 6,000 caterpillars that each of their babies need to survive the fledgling stage. Not a garden? Plant an oak tree. It's easy to grow one from an acorn. One mighty oak tree supports an astounding 500 species of caterpillar, many more by far than any other species of tree.

Visit Vogt's website Monarch Gardens for more information

WHS Class of '80 planning reunion

Save the date as the Wilmington High School Class of '80 Reunion will take place June 24, at the Holiday Inn & Suites at 1471 Rock Creek Blvd., Joliet. It will start at 4:30 p.m. and end at 11 p.m.

Admissions will be \$65 for single and \$125 for couple.

Dinner will be served at 6 p.m. and there will be a DJ and cash bar.

If you have any questions call Lyn Reese-Allot at (815) 999-2121 or email LREESE1962@yahoo.com or contact Dawn Hansen-Norris at dawnnorris@comcast.net.

Support group helping Alzheimer's caregivers

The Alzheimer's Association, Greater Illinois Chapter would like to invite anyone caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's or dementia to a monthly Caregiver's Support Group held the first Tuesday of every month at 7 p.m. at the First Baptist Church of Coal City, 4470 E. Rt. 113 in Coal City. The church is located one mile west of Coal City on Highway 113.

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

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

Support group participants benefit from social and emotional support while learning more factual information about dementia. Increased education about dementia makes caregivers more effective: they are better able to respond to patients' needs when they understand and can anticipate them.

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

Blood donors needed in Coal City

The Coal City United Methodist Church will host a Community Blood Drive in conjunction with Versiti Blood Center on Wednesday, May 16, from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Anyone willing to donate blood should contact Karen Hart at 708-217-5808 to schedule a preferred time. Or register online at www.versiti.org.

Walk-ins are also welcome, but appointments are recommended. Please bring a photo ID and eat a good meal before donating. Please consider giving blood, one pint of blood can save up to 3 lives.



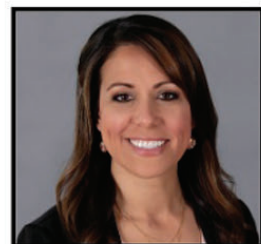
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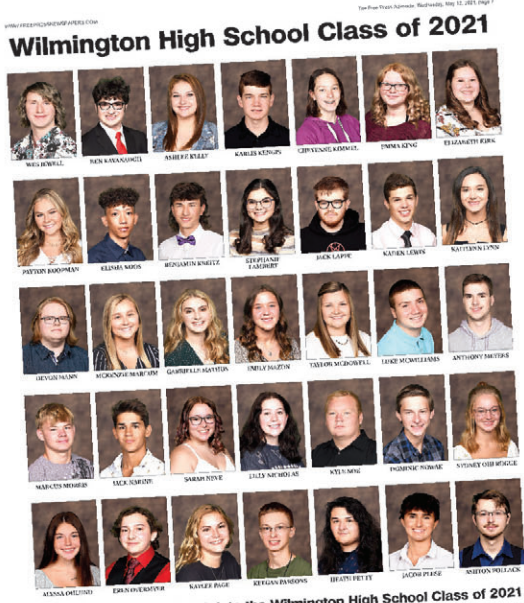
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Authorities have the tools to curb youth riots

The now-notorious violent youth riot in downtown Chicago during a recent weekend got me to thinking of a press conference way back in 2010. Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley voiced frustration about what he said were large groups of suburban kids causing trouble on Chicago's lakefront, even though plenty of Chicago kids were also participating, including six teens who brutally attacked an 18-year-old suburban woman.

Daley complained that the youths would text each other to organize their mayhem.

Three years later, downtown's problems with unexpected group violence hadn't gotten any better. So, then-Gov. Pat Quinn held a splashy press conference on Michigan Avenue to sign a bill sponsored by then-Sen. Kwame Raoul and then-Rep. Christian Mitchell which doubled the prison sentences (to 6 years) for those who use social media to "incite organized mob violence."

"We don't want flash mobs harming anyone, anywhere, but especially where many people come from other states, other countries," Quinn said. Their promised crackdown never materialized. However, that penalty enhancement is still in state law books.

Illinois has also had a statute on its books since 1969 known as the Parental Responsibility Law. Parents

and guardians can be sued for "actual damages for the willful or malicious acts of such minor which cause injury to a person or property." Damages under 740 ILCS 115 are recoverable up to \$20,000. The law has only rarely been used.

Ed Yohnka at the Illinois ACLU told me that his group was "not aware of a specific constitutional deficiency" with the law, and said the courts "long have recognized that one can be held responsible for the actions of others based on specific legal relationships, and recognized the authority of state legislatures to make parents responsible for the torts of their minor children."

Yohnka did say that the law was "bad policy," partly because impoverished parents would be hurt the most. "Many of these families are struggling to make ends meet in communities that lack services and resources that help support strong families."

The state and the City of Chicago also spend millions of dollars a year, and plan to spend much more, on violence prevention programs. In the past, violence interrupters have described being overwhelmed by the sheer numbers of young people breaking the law during the flash mobs



CAPITOL FACTS
Rich Miller

or trends or whatever you want to call them.

Last week, we barely heard from anyone in that sector about how they helped during the weekend violence or how they can help in the future if properly deployed.

In 2019, WBEZ actually went out and talked to some of the kids who were causing some of the disruptions. The youths understandably complained that parks and recreational facilities in their own neighborhoods on the South and West Sides were decrepit. "There is usually vandalism over the swings, over the slides, there is usually broken material ... there is trash and there is a lot of people soliciting," according to Tyrianna Rodgers, who was on a "girls-only afternoon" in downtown at the time. "It just doesn't look like the place where you would send your kids and say OK, 'You could chill here.'" Four years later, many of those facilities are still a disgrace.

The public radio station also reported at the time that Chicago police were bragging about their ability to monitor the online organization of what are now called "trends," which the station defined as "large teen-led gatherings that are particularly popular

among Black teens." Yet, CBS 2 reported last week that the Chicago PD had no clue how the mob violence was organized. And credible reports have emerged since then about police ignoring calls for assistance.

There are really two points here. The first is that all those loud folks pretending that the violence is somehow a new and mysterious thing and a fresh test for a mayor-elect who hasn't even been sworn in yet really ought to take a breath.

The second is that law enforcement and local leaders have been given plenty of legal, investigatory and prevention tools (and there are more than just those listed above) to address these issues, but those leaders appear to be allowing those tools to just rust away in a drawer somewhere.

Rep. Kam Buckner (D-Chicago) had it absolutely right when he complained that nobody has a plan to deal with the violence and that nobody has had a real plan since he was a teen.

"That has to change!" Rep. Buckner rightly roared on social media.

Yes, it does. And it starts with the people in authority doing their actual jobs.

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

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Illinois to receive \$67.6 million in settlement with Juul e-cigarette manufacturer

BY PETER HANCOCK
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

SPRINGFIELD – Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul announced April 12 that he and six other attorneys general have settled a lawsuit against e-cigarette manufacturer Juul that will net Illinois \$67.6 million.

That amount represents Illinois' share of a \$462 million multistate settlement in a lawsuit that accused the company of illegally marketing its products to children.

"Directing my consumer division to initiate an investigation into Juul was a day-one priority for me after I was sworn in in February of 2019," Raoul said. "Within months of taking office we served an extensive civil investigative demand on the company and before the end of 2019 we had filed suit. We've been aggres-

sively litigating against them in Illinois since."

The lawsuit was just the latest in a string of cases Juul has settled in recent months. Since 2019, the company said in a statement, it has reached settlements with 47 states and territories, paying out more than \$1 billion.

As part of its settlement with Illinois, Juul also agreed not to market its products to people under 21, not to use social media influencers to promote its products and to require consumers to be age verified before they can view any of its website content, among other restrictions.

"This settlement with seven state attorneys general represents another critical part in our ongoing commitment to resolve issues from the company's past," the company said. "The terms of the agreement, like prior settlements, provide

financial resources to further combat underage use and develop cessation programs and reflect our current business practices, which were implemented as part of our company-wide reset in the fall of 2019."

In April 2019, Gov. JB Pritzker signed a law raising the minimum age to purchase tobacco products from 18 to 21. And in 2021, he signed another law applying the same age limit to vaping products and banning advertising that promotes vaping as a method of quitting tobacco use.

Proceeds of the settlement will be used for enforcement of vaping laws, treatment and programs aimed at preventing underage nicotine use.

The other states involved in the suit were New York, California, Massachusetts, New Mexico and Colorado, as well as Washington, D.C.

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COALER SPORTS

Scoring in twos giving Lady Coalers the win

Scoring for the Lady Coalers came in pairs on Monday when they shutdown Herscher 12-5.

Coal City scored a pair of runs in the second, third, fourth and fifth innings to take a commanding 8-3 lead. They put an exclamation point on their win with four runs in the sixth to improve to 19-5 overall, 9-0 in the conference.

Coal City finished with 14 hits compared to seven for Herscher as Jady Shaw went 4-for-4 with a double for three RBIs. Khloe Picard went 3-for-3 and walked with one RBI. Makenzie Henline hit a triple while Makayla Henline has two hits. Hitting a double and a single was Masyn Kuder while Kerian Copes had a pair of singles.

Kuder pitched all seven innings for the win, allowing five runs (four earned) off seven hits, three walks while striking out four.

Left on base

On Saturday, Coal City left nine players stranded on base against LaSalle-Peru, scoring only one run in the bottom of the second, losing 7-1.

Mayson Kuder pitched five innings for Coal City and gave up seven hits, two errors and three walks. Kuder didn't have one strikeout. Bri Combes relieved her in the sixth inning with three strikeouts, gave up four hits and zero walks.

Mia Ferrias led in hits for Coal City going 2-for-3. Makayla Henline went 2-for-4. Jady Shaw had a big hit with a triple and went 1-for-3. Abby Gagliardo went 1-for-3 also.

Seesaw battle

On Friday, the Lady Coalers put up a good fight against JCA but lost 12-11.

JCA took an early 2-0 lead. However, Coal City started swinging in the top of the third putting three runs on the



Photo by Amy Walker

DIVING TO THIRD base and beating the tag is Coal City's Mia Ferrias.

board while JCA only scored to tie it 3-3. Both teams each scored two runs in the fourth inning making the score 5-5.

JCA took back the lead in the bottom of the fifth scoring one run making it 6-5. The Lady Coalers tallied three runs in the top of the sixth taking the lead back but it wasn't enough for JCA's five runs in the bottom of the sixth.

In the top of the seventh Coal City never gave up, scoring three runs to tie it up. But JCA got the walk-off run to win it 12-11.

"I'm proud of the way our girls battled tonight against a very good JCA team. They knocked us off 12-2 a month ago and we competed with them for 7 innings. Abby

Gagliardo had a career night hitting a game tying seventh inning homer and adding 4 RBIs on the evening. Khloe Picard went 3-for-5 on the evening as well. To be sitting at 19 and 5 right now being proud is an understatement," said coach Rodney Monbrum.

Abby Gagliardo and Khloe Picard were the big hitters for Coal City each going 3-for-5. Gagliardo also had a home run while Picard contributed with a triple. Jady Shaw went 2-for-4 with one RBI.

Bulldog sweep

On Wednesday, Coal City defeated the Streator Bulldogs for the second day in a row, 9-6.

Streator took an early lead scoring one run back to back in

the first and second innings while Coal City was only able to score one run in the bottom of the second, starting the third with a score 2-1. Coal City hitting well and playing smart scoring innin after inning taking the lead.

It was Masyn Kuder who pitched 6.0 innings and did it well and kept Streator scoreless with eight strikeouts and only giving up two runs in the first two innings. Bri Combes relieved her in the seventh, she had given up six hits and four runs in the seventh but it still wasn't enough to take the lead from Coal City.

Kuder also did well offensively for the Lady Coalers in hitting going 2-for-3 and hit a double. Makayla Henline also went 2-for-3 with 2 RBIs. Khloe



Photo by Amy Walker

SWINGING AWAY for a hit is Lady Coaler Abby Gagliardo.

Picard went 2-for-2 with one RBI. Addison Harvey went 1-for-2 and had a double.

On Tuesday, Coal City needed only five innings to get the job done, winning over Streator, 14-4.

Coal City and Streator tied in the first inning however things picked up for Coal City when they scored a total of 12 runs in the third and fourth innings. At the bottom of the fourth Coal City had the lead 14-1. The game ended with the Mercy rule at the end of the fifth because Streator was only able to put three more runs on the board for a final of 14-4.

Masyn Kuder pitched three innings and had three strikeouts and only gave up four hits. Bri Combes relieved Kuder and pitched two innings and had one strikeout and gave up four hits.

Makenzie Henline led the Lady Coalers in hitting going 3-for-4 with 3 RBIs. Kerigan Copes followed going 2-for-3. Makayla Henline went 2-for-4 and both Henline sisters each had a double.

The Lady Coalers play at Seneca tonight (Wednesday). On Monday they host Reed-Custer before traveling to Braidwood Tuesday.



Photo by Eric Fisher

COAL CITY KEEPER Chloe Plueger makes the save. Plueger recorded five saves in the Lady Coaler Shootout.

Lady Coalers finish first in own shootout

The Coal City girls soccer team suffered a 3-0 loss to Joliet Catholic Academy on Monday, making their record 7-4-2 overall.

Lady Coaler goal keeper Chloe Plueger had 10 saves.

Lady Coaler Shootout

Coal City took first place in the tournament over the weekend. Peotone and Beecher tied for 2nd place.

Coal City 3, Beecher 3. Coal City goals were scored by Audrey Cooper 2, Kylee Kennel 1. Keeper Chloe Plueger has three saves.

Coal City 7, Princeton 0. Goals for the Lady Coalers came from Audrey Cooper 2, Cara Planeta 2, Kylee Kennel 1, Maddie Gomez 1, Ava Meyer 1.


Coal City 1, Peotone 0. Goal was scored by Cara Planeta, assisted by Maddie Gomez. Keeper Chloe Plueger had two saves and earned her 5th shutout of the season.

All tournament awards went to Aylianna Castle, Cara Planeta, and Audrey Cooper.




Photo by Amy Walker


LADY COALER Kerigan Copes tags the Streator baserunner out at first base.



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"Support Coal City High School Athletes"

Military signing day set for June 3

There are sports signing days for athletes, so why not one for young men and women committing to serving their country in the United States military.

Local veterans will host a military signing day to honor area graduates committing to serve in the various branches of the armed forces. The event will take place Saturday, June 3 from 1-3 p.m. at the Morris American Legion Post 294, 212 W. Washington St., Morris.

All Grundy County graduates are invited to participate and asked to register by May 22 through the online registration form available at www.eventbrite.com/e/military-signing-day-for-grundy-county-il-high-school-graduates-tickets-619433611607

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Photo by Eric Fisher

GETTING THE WIN over Seneca on Thursday at Slammer's Field in Joliet was Coal City junior Joe Watson.



Photo by Eric Fisher

FIELDING A BUNT on Thursday at Slammer's Field in Joliet is catcher Danny Olson.

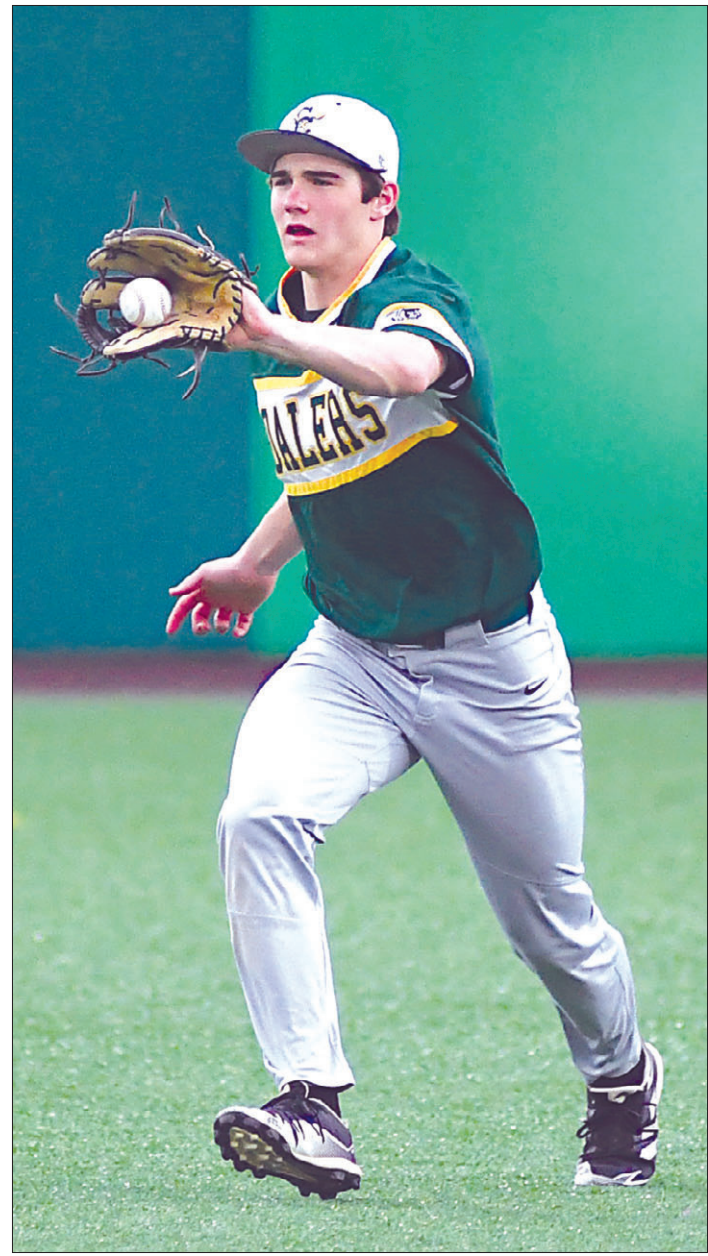


Photo by Eric Fisher

MAKING A CATCH while on the run in center field is Coal City's Jim Feeney.

Coalers still in the hunt for ICE title

The baseball Coalers have won seven of their last eight games, beating Herscher 8-6 in 9 innings on Monday at the Joliet Slammers stadium.

Coal City advances its record to 11-6 and 8-1 in conference play. With Wilmington beating Reed-Custer to give them their second conference loss on Monday, the Coalers still have a shot at claiming the ICE title.

Kayden Kuder threw really well in relief, and picked up the win hurling four innings and allowing no runs one hit and five strikeouts.

Kaelyn Natyshok had a single and a double with the biggest hit of the game in the ninth inning belting in a two-run homer.

Cade Baldauf contributed three singles, Jimmy Feeney scored two runs with two hits and Cason Headley scored two runs while adding a key RBI double. The coalers

Rally time

The Coalers earned a come-from-behind victory on Thursday against Seneca at the Joliet Slammers stadium.

The Coalers rallied from being down three runs to upend the Seneca fighting Irish, 10-6. They got on the board their first turn at bat, scoring a lone run. But Seneca answered with four runs in the top of the second to go up 4-1.

Coal City came through with some clutch hitting and heads up base running to take a 5-4 lead after two.

But the Irish bats did rest, scoring two runs in the top of the third for a 6-5 lead. That's when a rain storm came through causing a 30-minute delay.

The wait didn't delay the Coalers as they scored two runs in each of the fourth and fifth innings plus an insurance run in the six to seal the victory.

Joe Watson started on the mound for Coal City, lasting three innings with six runs and six

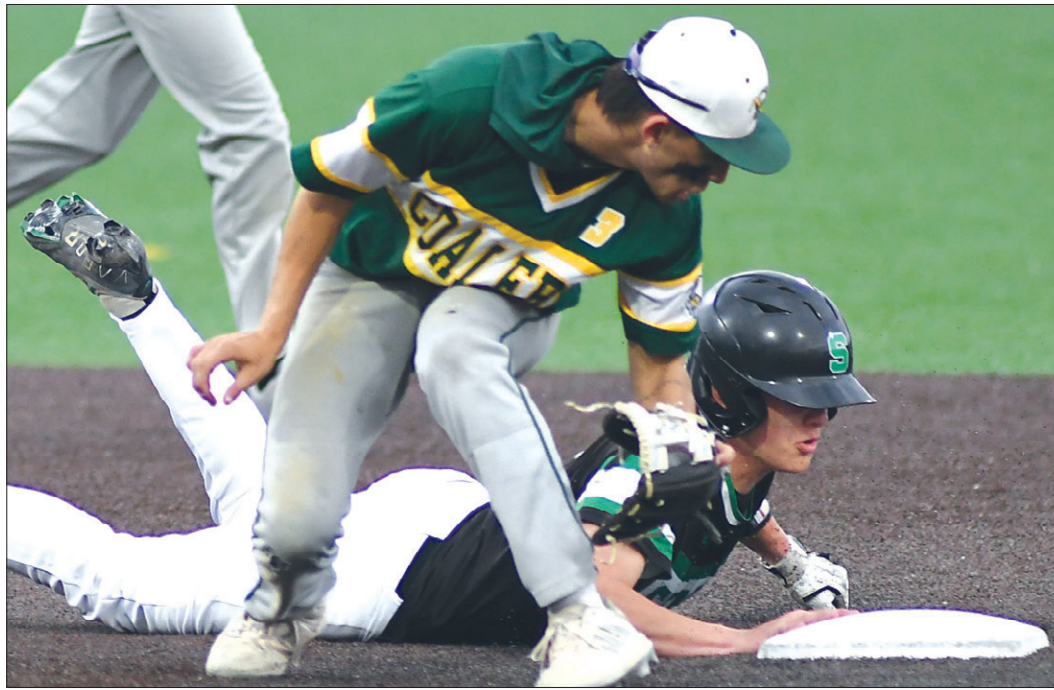


Photo by Eric Fisher

BEHIND THE BACK tag at second base is made by Coal City senior Nolan Eddy on the Seneca base runner who made it back safely.

hits, three walks and two strikeouts. Cayden Kuder pitched four innings in relief, and gave up only one hit, recorded six strikeouts and only one walk for the win.

Coal City junior Jimmy Feeney had two hits and two runs scored. Kaylan Natyshok, and Braiden Young each added RBI doubles. Jack Varnak added an important run in the sixth

inning after getting a stolen base.

Cade Baldauf singled and walked for two RBIs, Creide Skubic singled, walked, stole second and scored twice. Austin Davysingled in a run while Tanner Wallace also had a hit.

All bark no bite

The Coalers swept the Streator Bulldogs on Tuesday and Wednesday after games were

bumped a day due to Monday's lousy weather.

On Tuesday Coal City got a 4-0 shutout from starting pitcher Carter Garrelts who threw 6.1 innings. Joe Watson came on in the seventh to get the final out.

"We played really well today. We laid down four bunts and advanced runners," said Jerry McDowell. "Carter threw the ball real today and Joe Watson got two big outs for the save."

The Coalers took advantage of five Streator errors to put three runs on the board in the second inning. They added a lone run in the seventh for a 4-0 lead before shutting down the Bulldogs in the final frame.

Garrelts recorded six strikeouts and no runs, giving up four hits.

Jim Feeney, Wyatt Wickiser, Braiden Young, Nolan Eddy, Cade Baldauf and Creide Skubic all had one hit.

On Wednesday the Coalers trailed twice early before getting a 15-11 victory at home over Streator.

The Bulldogs rattled off four runs in the top of the first. Coal City rallied for seven runs in the bottom of the frame for a 7-4 lead. But in the second Streator went up 8-7.

Their lead was short-lived as the Coalers scored seven runs in the third and one in the fourth to put them away for good.

The Bulldogs actually out-hit Coal City 13 to 11 but the guys in green made the best of their hits with a grand slam from Braden Reilly in the first inning. He also had a single, a walk and scored three times. Other Coalers with multiple hits included Nolan Eddy (double, single) and Jim Feeney (two RBIs). Baldauf finished with two RBIs with a triple and a walk. Nolan Ness had a hit, two walks and scored a run. Young and Cason Headley each had a hit.

The Coalers host Reed-Custer Monday before playing in Braidwood Tuesday.



Photo by Eric Fisher

IN THE HOT BOX - Coal City junior Jimmy Feeney dives for second base on Thursday at Slammer's Field in Joliet where the Coalers defeated Seneca 10-6. Feeney got caught leading too far off first and was tagged out at second.



Photo by Eric Fisher
SPITTING RAIN—Coal City coach Jerry McDowell heads to the dugout between innings as rain arrived in the third inning on Thursday. After a 30-minute delay, the game resumed and the Coalers rallied to beat Seneca 10-6.



Photo by Eric Fisher

SAFE AT SECOND— Coal City base runner Creide Skubic pops up looking for what happened to the ball while stealing second base against Seneca on Thursday at Slammer's Field in Joliet.