



# COAL CITY COURANT.com

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A FREE PRESS NEWSPAPER • (815) 634-0315

## Lilleys to be Homecoming grand marshals

BY MICHELE MICETICH  
SPECIAL TO THE  
COAL CITY COURANT

Carbon Hill's 75th Homecoming Week will be June 18-22, and this year we will honor long-time residents Allan and Ruth Anne Lilley as our Grand Marshals.

Mr. and Mrs. Lilley join a long list of neighbors who over the years have served the community during homecoming weeks and throughout the years.

The Lilleys live in their neat and tidy home on the north side of Judson Street. Their shady lot is noticed for its cheerful well tended border garden of roses and daylilies set among other annuals and perennials and larger shrubs in the landscape.

It seems like when anyone is asked how they came to live in tiny Carbon Hill everyone has a unique story.

Allan David Lilley was born nine miles north of Mattoon, IL in Humboldt IL, near Amish country and Arthur, IL. Allan is often called Joe. He explains this is because when he was born his Mom was reading a book with a character named Jody and started to call him Jody; the nickname stuck but got shortened to Joe.

The Lilley family moved to land between Seneca and Marseilles when Allan was 7 or 8. Allan attended rural Fall River School and declares he didn't cause any trouble in school. The class had three boys and six girls. Allan went to Seneca High School.

Living in Norman Township he farmed for Bud and Maxine Burroughs off DuPont Road and also tended their 500 livestock cattle until he was called into service in 1964.

Allan served in the Signal Corps at Fort Carson Colorado. He was in line getting his shots when he got called into HQ. They asked if he wanted to go to Vietnam. He said he'd go wherever they sent him; they pulled his orders and he didn't go to Vietnam. Allan said our generals didn't want to get our soldiers stuck offshore bobbing in the water at sea for their tours of duty. So Allan did his entire service stateside in Colorado and came back home.

Meanwhile, Ruth Anne Matteson was working at Morris



Courtesy photo

**ALLAN AND RUTH ANNE LILLEY** are being honored as Grand Marshals of the 75th annual Carbon Hill Homecoming. The Lilleys live in their neat and tidy home on the north side of Judson Street with its cheerful, well-tended border garden of roses and daylilies set among larger shrubs. The long-time Carbon Hill couple will be recognized at 6 p.m. Wednesday, June 18 at the flagpole in the park when village officials will present them with a plaque as they kickoff the five-day festival.

Saving and Loan. She and her friends would ride around Morris buzzing the gut after work. Allan and Ruth Anne were country neighbors who really didn't know each other until they pulled their cars over to talk and the rest is history. That's the short story of how they got together.

Ruth Anne Matteson attended rural Woodbury School. She was the only one in her class. Her Eighth grade Graduation ceremony

was held in Center School in Morris for all the rural school graduates. Ruth Anne attended High School in Morris for two years and then moved to Mazon High School.

Rural kids back then were driven to and from school by local women hired by the township or county to get the kids to and from school. So Ruth Anne went to school in a big old station wagon driven by Mrs. Hazel Thomas.

Ruth Anne's Dad worked at the DuPont plant on DuPont Road. Her family rented on Buffalo Road and for a time on Shabbona Road. Her grandmother was Tess Phillips. The Phillips family farm was on Carbon Hill Road.

Ruth Anne said, "dad, mom, and I lived there for a while when I was about 2 or 3 and likely mom was the housekeeper as the uncles were single men." Great

Uncle George was a kind man, Ruth Anne says, and she was sort of spoiled. She noted her parents found a house of their own to rent well before the 1948 tornado whipped through the Phillips farm property.

Allan and Ruth Anne married on Feb. 3, 1968 in Morris' Immaculate Conception Church. Ruth Anne's sister Mary (Mrs. Bill

**SEE GRAND MARSHALS PAGE 2**

## Coal City board gives special recognition to students

Before the Coal City Board of Education got down to business for its June 4 meeting, administrators and board members honored students for outstanding performances on the stage and on the field.

The Board recognized Illinois High School Musical Theatre Awards (IHSMTA) actor nominee, Mason Natyshok. As well as the Best Production nomination for Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street.

Natyshok and Sam Vota were recognized for earning the opportunity to participate in the Illinois All-State Musical.

The board recognized Middle School Track Coaches, 8th grade Girls State Track and Field Team

Champions, 8th grade Boys Third place Team, IESA state qualifiers and IESA state placers.

The Board also recognized High School Track coaches and state qualifiers as well as High School Tennis coaches and state qualifiers.

Superintendent Chris Spencer provided the board with an update on staff openings for the FY26 school year.

The board approved One Source Mechanical's bid for the boiler replacement at the Early Childhood Center in the amount of \$153,500.

The board approved the final draft of the revised District Policies and approved a MS/HS activities/athletic secretarial

position and a .5 high school secretarial position.

The addition of a physical education teacher position at the high school was also approved.

Coal City agreed to an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) with Reed-Custer School District to provide AP Calculus instruction for Reed-Custer students.

Also approved was the hazardous bus routes as presented; the renewal of the PRESS Plus annual subscription for \$4,505; the FY26 membership renewal with the Illinois Association of School Boards at a cost of \$7,854; the Title I Schoolwide Plan for Coal City Unit School District 1; and the filing of the quarterly Dropout Report.

Board members discussed the 2025 Financial Designation perfect score of 3.9 and the per capita tuition charge for the FY26 school year of \$16,862.99.

The board established the fiscal year and approved the 2025 - 2026 Board of Education meeting dates and Board Study Session of the Whole meeting dates.

An agreement with Sunbelt Staffing, LLC to assist the district with nursing service over the summer was approved.

The board accepted the school site donations from the Grundy County of \$2,053.13.

Approved the donation from the Unit 1 Educational Foundation for students to attend the FBLA

National Leadership Conference in the amount of \$750.

Approved the one-year extension agreement with Telesolution Consultants, LLC in the amount of \$4,200.

Approved were the hiring of certified staff including Matthew Felbein - HS/MS chorus teacher to replace Mr. Kren who resigned; Karen Koca as science teacher at the Middle School to replace Mrs. McMurtrey, who is transferring to a Special Ed Teaching position at the Middle School.

Support Staff hires including: Gin Brooks - private duty nurse at the Middle School; Kali Roed - assistant secretary/health aide at the Early Childhood

Center; Megan Stoudt - health aide at the Middle School to replace Mrs. Meyer, who is transferring to the High School.

Student teachers for the District will include Isabelle Figarelli, from Illinois State University who will complete her student teaching with English teacher Cindy Gerber at the high school during the fall semester; and Kayla Kodat, a student at Illinois State University, who will complete her student teaching with P.E. Teacher Brad Schmitt, at the high school during the fall semester.



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OVER 100 STUDENTS from area high schools applied for 40 positions that were open for the 2025 Grundy County summer intern program. State Senator Sue Rezin (center) met with the students recently during a kickoff breakfast.

# Interns from area schools line up for summer jobs

A kickoff breakfast was held to formally recognize and congratulate the 40 students selected for the 2025 Grundy County Internship Program. Nancy Norton, President and CEO of the GEDC opened the event by thanking the businesses, students, and educators in attendance.

Lance Copes, Director, Grundy Area Vocational Center, addressed the students and discussed the benefits and opportunities that will be afforded to them as part of this program. Copes challenged students to take advantage of the opportunities given to them this summer, while Kameron Dransfeldt from Busey Bank, a former intern, addressed the value of the program to local businesses taking part in the program.

Senator Sue Rezin, one of the founding champions of the program, emphasized that the students should take pride in being chosen for this opportunity, and that the internships offer a chance to gain meaningful professional work experience and learn more about the many different

employment options within Grundy County.

The 40 paid internships this year are with 13 different companies, offering a diverse set of opportunities for local students. The program began in 2013 with just 12 internships and three companies. The program continues to become more competitive as over 100 students applied for the positions.

The Grundy County Internship Program was based on a mutual desire expressed by leaders in education and industry to highlight local employment opportunities and retain local talent in Grundy County. Senator Rezin and the GEDC partnered with local industry and education to launch the program in 2013.

The 2025 Grundy County businesses and their summer interns include:

Aux Sable—Aidan Martinez and Joel Zavala  
Chamlin & Associates—Luke Brown  
City of Morris—Sam Mateski

Coal City Public Library—Jordan Olson  
GEDC—Ethan Scrogam  
Grundy County Chamber—Kalyn Bebej and Anna Bibly  
Grundy County—Avery Reda and Rhaina Vanek  
Grundy County Community Foundation—Devon McVey  
Mack & Associates—Britney Fatlan  
Morris Hospital—Kedzie Auwerda, Lucy Conroy, Nathan DeBold, Emilee Doss, Karson Dransfeldt, Amani Elateeq, Caitlin Gile, Kora Kotowski, Addison Lanahan, Sydney Larson, Brandon Legner, Culan Lindemuth, Lillian Mateski, Trey Olson, Madalyn Petersen, Gwyneth Pfeifer, Sophie Sanders, Mackenna Stewart, Ella Urbasek, Brandy Valencia-Farias and Paityn Valentine.  
SPACECO—Aric Huetteman  
US Cold Storage—Ariel Cedrillo, Abigail Henson, Robert Mondragon and Adan Mondragon.

# Grundy County collecting used children's books

The Grundy County Land Use Department will be collecting used chil-

dren's books for Bernie's Book Bank through July 11, at the Administration Building, 1320 Union Street, Morris, from the hours of 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Practicing one of the four Rs is reuse. Children's books that are no longer being used can find their way into the hands of a child who needs a book. Studies have shown that

reading is the most important skill a child needs to learn. However, studies also show that 61% of low-income families don't have any children's books for their families.

Bernie's Book Bank provides books to 25,000 children annually. Since 2009, Bernie's Book Bank has distributed more than 24 million children's books. Bernie's Book Bank will provide at least 12 books per year for each child that

they serve. They do ask that donations do not include educational textbooks or religious books.

Grundy County has been most generous in these events since 2017 and has given over 21,000 books to needy children. Last year, they had the highest number of books given, a total of 6,000 books which is amazing.

Please help this worthy cause by donating children's books from preschool through 6th grade. If you should have any questions please feel free to contact Beth Skoff or 815-941-3228, bskoff@grundcounty-il.gov or Heidi Miller at 815-941-3229, hmill@grundcountyil.gov.

**Attorney Black files Phillips estate claim notice**

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
GRUNDY COUNTY - IN PROBATE  
No. 2025 PR 44

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF KENNETH R. PHILLIPS, DECEASED

**CLAIM NOTICE**  
NOTICE is given to creditors of the death of Kenneth R. Phillips. Letters of office as Independent Executor were issued to Chandra Winsor, 5175 W. O'Malley Road, Verona, Illinois 60479, whose attorney is FRANK J. BLACK, BLACK & BLACK LAWYERS, 201 Liberty Street, Suite 211, Morris, Illinois 60450.

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

CHANDRA WINSOR  
INDEPENDENT EXECUTOR  
Frank J. Black  
Black & Black Lawyers  
201 Liberty Street  
Suite 211  
Morris, IL 60450  
815-942-0594

Published in the Coal City Courant on June 4, 11 and 18, 2025.

**Attorney Black files Kneller estate claim**

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
GRUNDY COUNTY - IN PROBATE  
No. 2025 PR 47

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF NED D. KNELLER, DECEASED

**CLAIM NOTICE**  
NOTICE is given to creditors of the death of NED D. KNELLER. Letters of office as Independent Executor were issued to Jeffery D. Kneller, 117 Big Sky, Burnet, TX 78611 whose attorney is FRANK J. BLACK, BLACK & BLACK LAWYERS, 201 Liberty Street, Suite 211, Morris, Illinois 60450.

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

Jeffery D. Kneller  
Independent Executor  
ATTORNEY FRANK J. BLACK  
BLACK & BLACK LAWYERS  
201 Liberty Street  
Suite 211  
Morris, IL 60450  
815-942-0594

Published in the Coal City Courant on June 11, 18 and 25, 2025.

**Village of Coal City seeks bids for demo of properties**

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
Invitation to Bid  
Residential Demolitions

The Village of Coal City will accept sealed proposals at the Coal City Village Hall, 515 S Broadway Street, Coal City, IL for the demolition and removal of two residential properties in the Village of Coal City until 10:00 am on July 3, 2025, and at that time will be publicly opened and read at Village Hall.

The contractor will be required to comply with the Illinois Department of Labor Prevailing Wage Law. Each of the residences are not suspected of possessing any asbestos; however, should asbestos be discovered, the contractor shall transport all friable asbestos containing material (ACM) and nonfriable asbestos containing material (ACM) to an approved disposal site.

The work will be known as Locations 2 & 3 and consist of the complete removal and disposal of the residential structures upon each property. Detailed specifications and bid instructions including instructions upon participating in a pre-inspection may be obtained from the Executive Secretary by email at lsula@coalcity-il.gov or by calling 815-634-8608.

The Village reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids and to waive any informalities in the bidding.

By order of: Village President and Village Board, Village of Coal City.

Published in the Coal City Courant on June 11, 2025.

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**Attorney Longest files Bunzel estate notice**

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
GRUNDY COUNTY, ILLINOIS  
PROBATE DIVISION

**In the matter of the estate of: RUTH R. BUNZEL, Deceased, Case No. 2025PR36**

**CLAIM NOTICE**  
Notice is given to creditors of the death of RUTH R. BUNZEL Letters of Administration were issued to Sandra J. Bunzel-Hennessy, 2680 N. Rt. 47, Morris, IL 60450 and Bobby R. Bunzel, 455 N. Shabbona St., Coal City, IL 60416, as Independent Co-Executors, whose attorney of record is GLORIA M. LONGEST, 385 S. Broadway Street, Coal City, Illinois.

Claims against the estate may be filed in the Circuit Clerk's Office, Grundy County Courthouse, 111 East Washington St., Morris, IL 60450, or with the representative, or both, on or before the 11th day of December, 2025, or if mailing or delivery of a notice from the representative required by Sec.18-3 of the Probate Act of 1975, the date stated in that notice. Any claim not filed on or before that date is barred. Copies of a claim filed with the Clerk must be mailed or delivered by the claimant to the representative and to the attorney within ten (10) days after it has been filed.

E-filing is now mandatory for documents in civil cases with limited exemptions. To file, you must create an account with an e-filing service provider.

Visit <https://efile.illinoiscourts.gov/service-providers.htm> to learn more and to select a service provider. If you need additional help or have trouble e-filing, visit <http://www.illinoiscourts.gov/FAQ/gethelp.asp>, or talk with your local circuit clerk's office.

Sandra J. Bunzel-Hennessy and Bobby R. Bunzel  
Independent Co-Executors of the Estate of  
RUTH R. BUNZEL  
Gloria M. Longest #6194360  
385 S. Broadway Street  
Coal City, Illinois 60416  
(815) 634-0000  
(815) 634-2641 - facsimile  
[glorialongestlaw@gmail.com](mailto:glorialongestlaw@gmail.com) - email

Published in the Coal City Courant on Wednesday, June 11, 18 and 25, 2025.

**Attorney Black files Lemanta estate claim notice**

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
GRUNDY COUNTY - IN PROBATE  
No. 2025 PR 38

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF PAUL W. LEMONTA, DECEASED

**CLAIM NOTICE**  
NOTICE is given to creditors of the death of Paul W. Lemonta. Letters of office as Independent Executor were issued to Stephanie Banach, 26909 W. Hemlock Road, Channahon, Illinois 60410, whose attorney is Donald F. BLACK, BLACK & BLACK, 201 Liberty Street, Suite 211, Morris, Illinois 60450.

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

Stephanie Banach  
Independent Executor  
Donald F. Black  
Black & Black Lawyers  
201 Liberty Street, Suite 211  
Morris, IL 60450  
815-942-0594

Published in the Coal City Courant on May 28, June 4 and 11, 2025.

**Attorney Black files Herman estate claim notice**

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
GRUNDY COUNTY - IN PROBATE  
No. 2025 PR 39

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF DELORES E. HERMAN, DECEASED

**CLAIM NOTICE**  
NOTICE is given to creditors of the death of Delores E. Herman. Letters of office as Independent Executor were issued to Gregg D. Herman, 216 Meadowbrook Lane, Morris, Illinois 60450, whose attorney is Donald F. BLACK, BLACK & BLACK, 201 Liberty Street, Suite 211, Morris, Illinois 60450.

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

GREGG D. HERMAN  
INDEPENDENT EXECUTOR  
Donald F. Black  
Black & Black Lawyers  
201 Liberty Street, Suite 211  
Morris, IL 60450  
815-942-0594

Published in the Coal City Courant on May 28, June 4 and 11, 2025.

# Mother Nature delivered dust and destruction during month of May

The Merry Month of May was a study of the changing moods and sheer potentially destructive power of Mother Nature.

The most significant weather event reported by the Grundy County EMS weather summary was the storm that roared through the area, knocking down trees, downing power lines, and wreaking havoc in Will and Grundy counties on May 15.

It began in the early evening hours with scattered severe thunderstorms developing in central Illinois.

According to the National Weather Service,

hail up to two inches in diameter hit the area, and destructive wind gusts up to 80 mph caused a swath of notable wind damage, including downed power lines, wide spread tree and property damage, and power outages.

On May 16, Mother Nature added insult to injury, with a dust storm sweeping the area, making travel difficult.

The dust storm was caused by strong winds originating from a cluster of thunderstorms moving across central Illinois. The winds picked up dust across dry farmland, and visibility dropped to near

zero as winds gusted over 60 mph.

May 16 also brought the hottest day of the month with temperatures at 95 degrees.

May was also relatively rainy with a total of more than 2.5 inches over nine days, nearly an inch of that was delivered to the area on May 21. The total liquid precipitation for the year is right at 8.19 inches.

The coldest day of May clocked in at 42 degrees Fahrenheit on May 11.

Aside from the May 15 and 16 havoc, May was mostly pleasant with an average temperature of 61 degrees Fahrenheit.

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Eric D. Fisher, publisher



# Senior athletes recognized during end of year banquet

The Coal City High School Athletic Department held its second annual Senior Sports Banquet on Sunday, May 4. The event served to recognize senior athletes for their contributions to the program and honor select members of the class of 2025 for outstanding achievements.

“The amount of success in the gym today is pretty outstanding. We have students who have accomplished some incredible feats,” said Coal City High School Athletic Director Brad Boresi.

“When I met with athletes in the fall I shared with them this year’s slogan ‘new success.’” Boresi said. The slogan reflected new facilities, new coaches and new expectations including doing something individually or as a team that they have not done before—finding new success.

The athletes and coaches embraced the theme. “In the fall our girls golf

team won its first regional championship in school history, our boys soccer team won the most games in a season in over 20 years, our volleyball team won 20 matches for the fourth consecutive seasons and our football team advanced to the semi-finals,” Boresi said.

Boresi noted that for the first time in school history both the girls and boys basketball teams won 20 games in the same season. “And, in one of the most exciting weekends of high school sports that I have witnessed, our wrestling team won its second state championship in the last three years.”

This spring the Coaler baseball and softball teams are well on their way to another 20 game season. The girls soccer team is in a great position to win the regional and members of the boys and girls track teams continue to set records.

And looking ahead, Boresi said, “our boys ten-

nis team, along with our girls tennis team from the fall, have a lot of young talent that should be competing for state qualifiers in the next few years. And that is not to mention our cheer team from both the fall and winter who excelled under new leadership.

“As a whole I think our athletic programs are as strong now as they have ever been and I am excited to see where things go,” Boresi said.

Recognition was giving to student-athletes who intend to continue their athletic careers at the collegiate level, as well as those who have earned All-Conference and All-State honors, and the individual and team state qualifiers and state place winners.

Members of the class of 2025 who participated in athletics during their senior year were: Anthony Aultz, Corinna Barkley, Landin Benson, Nathan Brodnick, Jerry Carlson, Aylie Castle, Jacob Cerutti, Hayden Clark, Dakota Clubb, Brittinae Combes, Juliana Covington, Mackenzie Croxton, Blaine Doss, Ella Edwards, Lilly Feisley, Alysins Fite, Peyton Gibson, Rey Gonzalez, Kaycee Graff, Fianna Gregory, Addison Hodgen, Ayden Housman, and Sydney Hughes.

Also, William Johnke, John Keigher, Kyle Kennell, Owen Kent, Culan Lindemuth, Deborah Lynch, Anayi Mayorga, Avery McConnell, Gabe McHugh, Zander Meents, Ava Meyer, Robert Mitchell, Alaina Morales, Mason Natyshok, D’Arcy Ness, Hunter Nettles, Trevor Perino, Madi Petersen, Chloe Pluger, Katherine Promis, Emma Rodriguez, Naomi Rodriguez, Sam Sterba, Will Thompson, Calleigh VandeWerken, Abby Viano, Alec Waliczek, Mayson Wantroba, Jackson Wharrie, AJ Wills, Griffin Winke and Dylan Young.

All senior athletes in attendance were presented with a certificate noting each of the sports they participated in.

Special recognition was given to:

Landin Benson—Career Achievement Award who graduates as one of the school’s most decorated athletes in wrestling and football.

“The amount of hardware and jewelry he is leaving with having been a member of state championship teams and individual victories is impressive,” Boresi said. Benson was a four year member of both programs becoming the all-time leading rusher in Coal City High School football history. He earned All-Conference and All-State honors in both sports.

He has two first place dual team state wrestling championship medals and two state dual team wrestling runner-up medals for his participation on the Coaler wrestling team and he closed out the 2023-2024 wrestling season as the Class 1A 165 pound champion.

Benson was also named the Male Athlete of the Year

Emma Rodriguez was presented with the Female Athlete of the Year

Rodriguez is an All-Conference volleyball and basketball player, and had an overall outstanding athletic career as a Coaler. “I anticipate that happening in the next level as well,” Boresi said, noting she will continue her volleyball career at the University of St. Francis.

Recipients of the Athlete of the Year Awards were nominated and voted on by their peers.

Aylie Castle—Female Teammate of the Year

Alec Waliczek—Male Teammate of the Year

“One of the best compliments you can get as a high school student-athlete is that you are a good teammate,” Boresi said. “I think both of these two have displayed that throughout their careers.” Aylie participated in Coalers volleyball and soccer and Waliczek was a member of the football and wrestling teams.

Gabe McHugh—Male Best Competitor

Kylee Kennell—Female Best Competitor



Coal City School District photos  
COALER ATHLETES OF the Year are [from left]: Emma Rodriguez and Landin Benson.

“If you ask the coaches these two compete every night whether it’s in practice or at a competition and they do it year round as they are both three-sport athletes,” Boresi said.

Kennell is a member of the golf, basketball and soccer teams while McHugh participated in football, basketball and baseball.

“I can tell you the female winner of this award, having been around her, has an amount of competition and fierceness about her and I know the boys coaches would say the same about our male recip-

ient,” Boresi said.

Recipients of the Coaler Pride Award were Juliana Covington, Culan Lindemuth, Madi Petersen and Will Johnke.

They are student-athletes who have made significant contributions to their various athletic pursuits, while embodying what it means to be a Coaler. Boresi had this to say about each of the honorees:

Juliana Covington is an individual he got to know as a student who was always late to school—a fact she readily admits. But he said something changed and

SEE SPORTS AWARDS PAGE 12



ZANDER MEENTS was recognized with the Coalers’ Comeback Athlete Award.



COALERS WRESTLING COACH Mark Masters [left] was recognized for earning his 500th Dual Team Career win and Francis Loughran [right] named the 2025 Coach of the Year.



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## Smell Gas? Act Fast!

Natural gas is a colorless and odorless fuel. For safety reasons, a chemical odorant called mercaptan is added for easy detection of a suspected natural gas leak. This odorant has a distinctive “**rotten egg**” type odor. Natural gas odors should be reported immediately.

¿Hay olor a gas? ¡Actué rápido! El gas natural es un combustible incoloro e inodoro. Por razones de seguridad, se le agrega un aromatizante químico llamado mercaptano para que se pueda detectar fácilmente. Este aromatizante tiene un olor característico a “huevo podrido.” Los olores a gas natural deben informarse de inmediato.

If you detect even a small amount of this odor in the air:

Si detecta este olor en el aire, por mínimo que sea:

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# A.I. might be a threat to climate change

Dear EarthTalk: Why do some environmentalists fear that Artificial Intelligence may be the biggest threat to our efforts to stave off cataclysmic climate change?

-- Kyle Baldwin, Paris, TX



Artificial Intelligence (AI) is quickly becoming a part of our everyday lives—we now have chatbots and search engines and virtual assistants that can mimic real conversation. But as AI technologies grow, so do environmental concerns. Environmental advocates warn that AI's rising energy use, increased emissions from building infrastructure, and the potential to slow down clean energy efforts may become serious threats in our fight against

climate change.

AI systems, including generative models like Stable Diffusion XL or ChatGPT, use tons of power to run. Creating a singular image can use as much energy as fully charging a smartphone.

Multiply that by millions of users generating images and text daily, and the eco-impact grows fast. The International Energy Agency says that electricity uses from AI, data centers and cryptocurrency could double between 2022 and 2026.

That's like adding "at least one Sweden or at most one Germany" to global energy demand. AI also causes more pollution because of the buildings and equipment needed to run it. Big tech companies like Microsoft spend huge amounts of money—Microsoft plans to spend \$50 billion in a year just to build more data centers, giant buildings full of powerful computers that use a lot of energy.

Building these data centers also calls for car-

bon-intensive materials: steel, cement and semiconductors that add even more emissions. These developments also go against company claimed climate promises. Microsoft, for example, pledged to reach net-zero emissions by 2030.

But according to NPR tech correspondent, Dara Kerr, "Microsoft has also reported surging emissions because of data centers. It says its greenhouse gas emissions are up nearly 30 percent since 2020." Google also reported that AI has significantly increased its emissions, mainly because of the electricity that is used to power data centers.

One major concern is how we'll meet this growing electricity demand. If fossil fuel plants are used to supply the energy needed for AI, it could roll back the progress made on cutting carbon emissions.

While there's hope that AI could push innovation in clean energy and efficiency, that path is very expensive and not fully guaranteed. According to Friends of the Earth, AI could in fact delay

the clean energy transition if governments and companies fail to regulate it.

Not all experts believe that AI is the biggest climate threat. Some argue that other sectors, like electric vehicles and factories, also drive up energy demand. Still, how we power and manage AI will determine whether it helps or harms the climate.

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

## Fish for free in Illinois June 13-16

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) has set June 13 through 16 as Illinois free fishing days for 2025.

During these four days, anglers can fish without purchasing a fishing license, salmon stamp or inland trout stamp in Illinois. The goal is for non-anglers to discover or rediscover the fun of fishing and to introduce children to the activity.

Outside of the free fishing days, Illinois requires anyone over the age of 16 to have a fishing license to fish. Exclusions apply to active-duty military and people with disabilities.

Standard fishing licenses can be purchased for \$15 at vendors throughout Illinois (or online).

Learn more about fishing in Illinois at [ifishillinois.org](http://ifishillinois.org). [3]

The Illinois

Department of Natural Resources is celebrating 100 years of conservation and service to the people of Illinois throughout 2025. The department was established July 1, 1925, as the Illinois Department of Conservation, bringing under one umbrella oversight of fish and game, forestry, public works, and lakes.

Today, IDNR's work encompasses management

of about 400 sites across Illinois, including state parks and historic sites; wildlife, fisheries, forestry, and natural heritage; Lake Michigan water allocation and coastal management; conservation police; mines and minerals; oil and gas; issuance of licenses, permits, and numerous grants; the World Shooting and Recreational Complex in Sparta; and the Illinois State Museum.


## Dulcimer Festival returning June 14-15

The annual Gebhard Woods Dulcimer and Traditional Music Festival will take place at Goold Park in Morris on Saturday and Sunday, June 14 and 15.

Family-friendly opportunity to enjoy live music in

a beautiful park setting. Main stage and workshop events every hour. There will be a children's tent.

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Tyler Mann	Rotaract Club of Morris
Alberto Duran	Breaking Away
Greg Struck	Grundy County Heroes & Helpers
Mike Urbanec	United Way of Grundy County
Ryan Ties	Morris Police Benevolent Society
Eric Fisher	We Care of Grundy County
Marcus Biederstedt	Grundy Area PADS
Paul Wagner	Grundy Veteran's Assistance Commission



## GRUNDY BANK

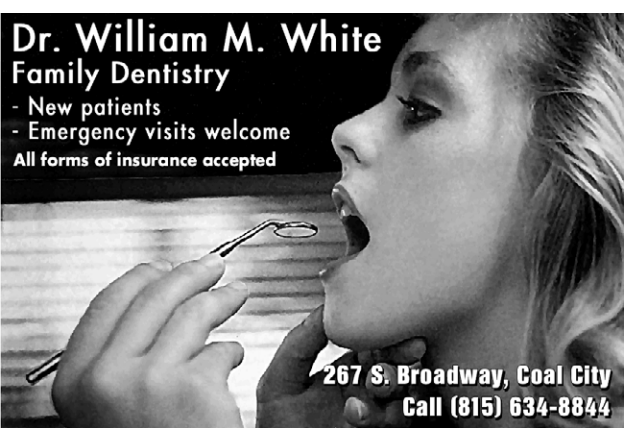


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# Lawmakers run out of time on energy bill

I asked Illinois House Speaker Chris Welch last week about the failure to pass an omnibus energy bill (the Clean and Reliable Grid Affordability Act) during the just-ended spring legislative session.



Rich Miller

"I think the same thing that happened on energy happened on all the things, you know. Big bills take time," Welch said. "And I really do believe it's important that we take the time to get it right and make sure we produce the best results for everyone."

Welch compared the delay to his first spring session as House Speaker, when another energy omnibus bill crashed and burned and then they came back in the fall and "passed one of the biggest

pieces of legislation that ever passed in this state."

Gov. JB Pritzker told reporters much the same thing last week.

"You don't get everything done in one year," Pritzker said. "(S)ometimes they spend two years, four years, six years trying to get something big done," Like

Welch, he also pointed to the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act, which he noted took about a year and a half to pass.

Senate President Don Harmon, on the other hand, pointed to this summer's expected temporary spike in electricity costs due to capacity charges by regional grid managers as a reason. Some of the proposals (like battery storage) would cost more in the short term, "so we're trying to figure out how to respond to that anticipated spike," Harmon told the 21st Show.

In the end, though, Harmon said, "we just couldn't keep the Christmas tree standing this year" — apparently meaning that the bill fell under its own weight.

But other factors were important as well, according to numerous people who worked on the bill. Stakeholders would agree to changes and then the drafts would come back which inexplicably looked little like what people had

agreed to, which not only delayed the end, but also injected a lack of trust into the process. This was particularly true with energy efficiency requirements, I'm told.

A deal was finally cut with ComEd, and Ameren decided to move off its opposition, but there simply wasn't time left to get that drafted before the clock ran out.

Many issues had been on the table for months, but a legislative working group came up with some ideas which couldn't find quick consensus.

People were spread too thin across too many major items (including mass transit reform and the state budget) and, as a consequence, way too much fell through the cracks.

The American Petroleum Institute blasted the energy storage portion of the bill for costing \$9 billion for about one to two hours of peak electricity supply per day.

Proponents vehemently disputed the API's figure, saying the estimate was way too high and that cost increases wouldn't begin for a few years and cost decreases would start a few years later.

But that and other things helped drive the pipe trade unions away from the bill. The unions represent workers at a massive Metro East coal-fired power plant and a major refinery, both of which are heavy industrial electricity consumers. And their decision to oppose the legislation on May 31 meant that there wasn't enough time to fix that

problem and bring the final language to the two Democratic caucuses.

The pipe trades have now officially declared themselves as neutral, as has Ameren, Constellation Energy and the Illinois Energy Association.

And some environmental lobbyists think the language on the table has a good shot at passage during the October veto session (or perhaps in January), even though their attempts to rein in power-hungry data centers were left out of the bill.

Whatever the case may be, the legislature goes through this almost every year. They put all the big stuff off until the end, and then they don't have the bandwidth to deal with a multitude of issues at once, although this year was particularly difficult.

Human beings tend to wait until the last minute to do things. But the leaders need to start enforcing earlier deadlines for giant issues like this energy proposal so they can deal with other time-sensitive things (the budget and revenues, for instance) at the end. Or maybe the other way around.

Far too many major issues were left to May 31st. And that procrastination led to problems like a poorly drafted revenue bill which could imperil some TV and film projects in Illinois.

A buddy of mine who's been at the Statehouse for decades grumped last week that the leaders tried to do a five-month session in five days.

That's no way to run a railroad.

## Wandless named to dean's list

Loras College has announced Rachel Wandless, of Wilmington, has achieved Dean's List status for the 2025 spring semester. A student must earn a 3.5 grade point average and carry a minimum of 12 credit hours to be recognized.

## Mobile food pantry coming to So. Wilm.

Catholic Charities' mobile food pantry will be distributing food Monday, June 16, at 4 p.m. until 5:30 p.m. at St. Lawrence Church, 135 Rice Rd., South Wilmington in the church parking lot (rain or shine).

Catholic Charities and the Northern Illinois Food Bank have partnered to deliver meat, produce and

nonperishable items to people in need.

Participants are asked to stay in their cars as a "drive thru" method will be used.

Catholic Charities helps people of all faiths and beliefs. For more information about Catholic Charities, please visit catholiccharitiesjoliet.org.

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 Sunday, 3 p.m. - 9 p.m.

**Fireworks**  
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**Sat., June 21**

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--	--

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**Carbon Hill Homecoming — Don't Miss It!!! — June 18th - 22nd**



# Wilmington Garden Club speaker has passion for photography

The Wilmington Garden Club has scheduled guest speaker Sandra Rust for a 1 p.m. presentation during its Wednesday, June 18 meeting.

The monthly meeting for the club, which is open to the public, will be held at the Wilmington Park District headquarters, 315 N. Water St.

Rust, who grew up in Lockport, studied graphic design, fine art and photography at Columbia



SANDRA RUST

College, Chicago. She provides professional photography services in commercial, industrial, lifestyle, portrait, editorial, advertising, and photography/drone/video production.

Some of her photography clients include: HGTV Dream Homes, Shell Corporation, Oprah, major advertising agency assignments, and local Illinois tourism.

Her work has been

featured throughout the U.S. and Europe through exhibitions, online awards, and has won and been chosen for three years in a row in American Photographer, Wild Planet, Outdoor photographer, WWE, National Wildlife Federation, Student Conservation Association and also in fine art galleries.

In her photography, Rust captures nature, wildlife, architecture, por-

traits, industrial and editorial images. Working on a conservation project in the Florida Everglades years ago ignited her passion to heighten an awareness of the need to protect nature and wildlife.

She hopes to inspire change—laws that give wildlife a chance to move before habitats are destroyed.

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# Outdoor farmers market season is here

BY HANNAH SPANGLER  
FARMWEEK

The outdoor farmers market season is officially in full swing throughout Illinois, giving consumers a taste of what their communities have to offer.

“A farmers market is something that’s very accessible for folks. It gets people in the door to more of the farm-to-table aspect of things with local farmers,” said Hannah Horn, market manager for the Downtown Bloomington Farmers Market in McLean County.

There are more than 8,000 farmers markets nationwide, and Illinois ranks third in the number of markets, according to the Illinois Department of Agriculture.

In Wilmington, farmers markets are planned for the third Thursday of the month from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. in the 200 block of North Water Street, June through September.

These markets offer farm-fresh products such as fruits, vegetables, cheeses, flowers, baked goods, meat and more.

Horn, also a board member of the Illinois Farmers Market Association (ILFMA), told FarmWeek the Downtown Bloomington Farmers Market operates year-round, with weekly Saturday markets from May through October and monthly winter markets. The market also hosts special event days during the outdoor season, including opening day, dog days and National Farmers Market Week.

“We’re definitely a community builder, too,” Horn said. “We work with about 70 community groups every single year to offer two community booth spots - a community information booth and a bake sale.”

The market has 91 vendors and is a producers-only market, meaning vendors must grow, raise or make what they sell. They



Photo by Hannah Spangler

**HUELSKOETTER PORK offers more than 30 pork products and often prepares samples during the market so customers can smell and taste before buying. Vicki Huelskoetter, center, said that’s her secret to keep having customers come back.**

also must be able to explain the production behind all the items they sell.

Huelskoetter Pork (Logan County), Dearing Country Farms (McLean County), and Prairie Fruits Farm and Creamery (Champaign County) are just a few of the producers lining the streets in Bloomington every Saturday. Each offers a variety of products and a chance for consumers to learn more about where their food comes from.

Q: What is peak farmers market season?

A: “We’re year-round farmers market vendors,” said Christina Asklund, farm manager for Prairie Fruits Farm and Creamery, which primarily sells award-winning goat cheese. “Summertime is definitely peak, especially at the beginning of the farmers market, in June and July.”

Summer is also peak season for Brad Dearing, owner of Dearing Country Farms, with May through August showing top sales. However, he can sell his

many products, including different cuts of beef, chicken and eggs, goat and lamb, year-round. He accepts call-in orders, internet orders and is part of a community-supported agriculture (CSA) program.

“We sell year-round,” said Vicki Huelskoetter, owner of Huelskoetter Pork. “We’re here at the Bloomington farmers markets, and then we sell to private individuals throughout the year, and we sell to grocery stores and school institutions.”

Q: Why do people come to farmers markets?

A: “A lot of people want to support their local farmers,” Dearing told FarmWeek, adding that farmers markets offer a chance for consumers to talk face-to-face with farmers.

“I think it’s a wonderful meeting place for people to meet and greet their friends,” Huelskoetter said. “We’ve made lots of wonderful relationships with people here in the area.”

Huelskoetter offers more than 30 pork products

and often prepares samples during the market so customers can smell and taste before buying. That’s her secret to developing repeat customers.

“It’s just such a fun atmosphere, especially at the Bloomington Farmers Market,” Asklund said.

Q: What function do farmers markets serve within the local food system?

A: Horn believes farmers markets are an integral part of the local food system. Through her ILFMA role, she offers educational resources and mentorship to new market managers, helping more markets grow and strengthen their impact.

“Farmers markets are connecting people, connecting the farmers with the public, the communities,” Asklund said.

Dearing said the role of farmers markets is growing, creating a need for more vendors to meet rising demand. He added that farmers markets also keep money in the local economy and help neighbors support each other.

“Hopefully, we’re a good part of it,” Huelskoetter said. “Maintaining and selling a good product that people can depend on and that they can trust. I think that’s our role in it.”

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

# Class on reading labels

On Thursday, June 19, from 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., a registered dietitian from Morris Hospital will explain “How to Read Nutrition Labels.”

Learning how to properly read nutrition labels can help you determine your nutrient intake, including carbohydrates, calories, vitamins and minerals, and sugar.

To register for the nutrition program,

call Morris Hospital’s Wellness Manager at 815-705-7358 or go to [www.morrishospital.org/events](http://www.morrishospital.org/events) and select the Nutrition category.

All programs will be held at the Morris Hospital YMCA, 2200 W. Dupont Ave., Morris.

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# OBITUARIES

## Neal Smolik

BRACEVILLE—Neal Joseph Smolik, known to many as "BBKnees," of Braceville, passed away on June 4, 2025, at Lightways Hospice in Joliet at the age of 67.

A resident of Braceville, Neal was born on April 17, 1958, in Joliet, to Frank "Fritz" J. Smolik and Irene Mary King. He was originally from South Wilmington. On Dec. 26, 2013, Neal married Judy Jones in Joliet. He dedicated his career as a Union Laborer with Local 75 and was a proud member of the South Wilmington Fireman's Club. Neal loved to golf, embracing the game with genuine enthusiasm. He grew up playing baseball and enjoyed watching the Chicago Cubs.

Neal is survived by his beloved wife, Judy Smolik; his son, Douglas Blaser and his daughters, Stephanie (Nathan) Bolz and Nicole Smolik. He also leaves behind his brothers-in-law, Vern Canham and



John Bohac; his sister-in-law, Mary Smolik and his grandchildren: Tyler Bolz, Christopher Kutz and Lillyanna Kutz. He will be dearly missed by several close friends and his cherished golf buddies.

Neal was preceded in death by his parents, Frank "Fritz" J. Smolik and Irene Mary King; his sisters, Jeanne Canham and Patti Bohac and his brother, Jerry Smolik.

Cremation rites have been accorded. A memorial visitation will be held at R.W. Patterson Funeral Homes & Crematory on Wednesday, June 11, 2025 from 4-7 p.m.

To share memories or offer condolences, please visit Neal's online guestbook at [www.rwpattersonfuneralhomes.com](http://www.rwpattersonfuneralhomes.com) or find them on Facebook.

R.W. Patterson Funeral Homes & Crematory, 401 E. Main St., Braidwood is entrusted with arrangements.



Photo by Catrina Rawson of FarmWeek

**ERIK CHRISTENSON, director of operation for Second Story Foundation, is using his contracting skills at the new ranch in Crete that will be home and workplace to men in early recovery from server substance use disorder. He enjoys a visit with horses boarded there.**

## Will County ranch helping addiction recovery

BY PHYLLIS COULTER  
FARMWEEK

An Illinois man who credits a good rehab program and working with horses for saving his life now helps others struggling with substance and alcohol addiction.

"In 2016, I came to the end of a road where my life was no longer sustainable in any way, due to severe alcoholism," Jim O'Connor said. "And you know, by the grace of God and some unbelievably loving people, I got the help I needed."

Help began with a 28-day inpatient program and then led to a Palos Park horse farm, where "I was digging out literally and metaphorically."

Today, O'Connor serves as executive director of the Second Story Foundation, which supports men in early recovery by providing stability, purpose and a path forward.

"If you've lived a life of severe substance use disorder for any length of time, it's not always but it's likely, that you kind of find yourself in financial ruin, so we founded the Second Story Foundation to solve that problem," he said of the focus on providing housing and employment.

The foundation asked O'Connor to lead a program like the one that helped him. He agreed on one condition: "Find me a horse farm."

Second Story Foundation did just that.

The foundation bought a scenic, 68-acre working horse farm in Crete, a village of about 8,400 in Will County.

Plans are to build a lodge for future residents to live and work on the farm, with a program patterned after a recovery center where both O'Connor and Erik Christenson, director of operations, found firm footing and purpose to restore their lives.

Christenson calls it "amazing" what working on a farm can do for healing. He's seen it with "hundreds of guys" over the years.

"It saved my life," said O'Connor, who after his long-term recovery experience, became a certified alcohol and drug counselor.

The Second Chance Foundation operates a similar program in Cook County, but there are no horses there. Two years ago, it bought a house in Alsip and "remodeled it with almost all volunteers in the recovery community," said O'Connor, who is part of that effort. Four men at a time live there rent-free, to establish long-term sobriety, work at good-paying jobs off-site, and in one year move to their own places.

Getting your name on a lease is a "really big deal." O'Connor calls it a life marker. "And so many people who suffer from severe substance use disorder miss a lot of life markers," he said.

Likewise, at the Crete farm, while there is plenty of farmwork for residents who live there, when they get ready, they will get an off-farm job and eventually move into their own places. There is no deadline of a year to leave here; residents can stay as long as it takes, he said.

Arranging further funding and construction plans are underway, with the hopes that next year the first residents will move into a 7,000-square-foot lodge with a 2,000-square-foot community center and a commercial kitchen that also serves as a food pantry. It will be home for 15 men early in their recovery who and need housing, work and time.

"We have a site that'll never run out of work," he said. The ranch in Crete is in a "wonderful setting where people will be useful on day one, where they have jobs on day one, and where they can work in a healing environment with people who are compassionate to their needs."

Along with the harness racing horses boarded and trained here, the ranch inherited four to six rescued horses. In recent years, the Illinois harness racing industry has suffered with the closing of prominent tracks like Arlington Park.

O'Connor said they hope to also be a positive factor in the recovery of horses and harness racing, in addition to helping their human residents with the first steps toward their new stories.

One thing O'Connor said he has learned from his experience is, "Things don't get easier; we get stronger."

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

## Midwest Generation donates 50 acres to help with federal invasive carp barrier

The State of Illinois closed Friday on the acquisition of a nearly 50-acre parcel of property in Will County needed for the Brandon Road Interbasin Project, a federal project designed to prevent invasive carp from accessing the Great Lakes.

The property, which includes riverbed access for the Brandon Road lock, was donated to the state by Midwest Generation LLC.

"After receiving the necessary assurances from the federal government, my administration acted quickly and formally acquired the land needed for construction," said Governor JB Pritzker. "I thank Midwest Generation for their partnership in this project - their generous

donation will benefit the Great Lakes region and nation for generations to come."

On May 9, commitments from the federal government to proceed with the real estate closing were secured. The White House issued a memorandum expressing support for continuation of the project. After months of uncertainty around the withholding of federal infrastructure funding from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), the Trump Administration reversed course and offered the certainty required for the State of Illinois to continue as previously planned.

"Today's closing on

this key piece of property takes us another step closer to seeing the Brandon Road Interbasin Project become a reality," said IDNR Director Natalie Phelps Finnie. "I want to thank Midwest Generation for its cooperation and patience in working with us to achieve this goal."

"Invasive carp poses a real economic and environmental threat to one of our region's most valuable resources, the Great Lakes. Completing the Brandon Road Project is one of the most effective ways we can address this threat and protect Illinois' fresh water," said U.S. Senator Dick Durbin.

Illinois has long played a leading role in advancing the Brandon

## Summer reading challenge begins at Coal City Public Library

Summer Reading Challenge "Color Our World" has begun at the Coal City Public Library.

All ages can register for summer classes such as art, cooking, and more and events such as Krull Petting Zoo, Foam Party, and more as well as registering for the Summer Reading Challenge through the Beanstack app or pick up a paper copy in person.

**Thursday, June 12-** Summer Family Lapsit - 10:30am - Drop in class. Babies through almost 23 months old can join us for some summer fun. There will be books, songs, fingerplays and sensory activities.

Sweet Treats & Tasty Eats Pop Up - 10:30-3:30pm - pop up event here in the Library's parking lot. Stop by & purchase some sweets such as cheesecake slices, cookies, cupcakes, cakes & more.

Summer Tot Class - 11:30am - 2-3 year olds not ready to be on their own can join us for some summer fun. There will be books, songs, fingerplays and sensory activities.

Jr. Artists - 1:30pm  
Cooking with Heather Shouse - All About Breakfast - 6pm

Lori Bonarek Realty - Seminar - 6pm - Topic is What First Time Home Buyers Need to Know with Whitney Valdivia of Grundy Bank. Please register for this event.

**Friday, June 13-Fun** Fridays - 1pm - 2 to 5th grade can register to

receive the materials needed to make a different craft. Watch our Facebook page on Fridays for a how to video.

**Euchre - 1pm**  
**Gamer's Guild - 4pm**  
**Saturday, June 14-** Head Shot Photo Op - 9:30am-1pm - Two Moms and a Camera will be here to take outside headshot photos of individuals (only) of all ages. There is no fee for this event. There are still timeslots available at noon and 12:30pm.

**Monday, June 16-** Family Photo Scavenger Hunt all week

**Pre-K and Kdg.** Summer Fun - 11am - Pre-K and kids going into kindergarten can join us each week as we Color Our World in different ways through stories, songs, activities and a take home craft to complete at home. Registration is required.

**Teen Cooking Class - 1pm or 2:30pm**

**Mahjong - 1pm**

**Lapsit and Tot Summer Fun - Babies-3 year olds** not ready to be on their own and their caregiver can join us as we Color Our World through books, songs, fingerplays, and activities.

**Pre-K and Kdg.** Summer Fun - 6pm

**Tuesday, June 17-Pop Up Storytime - 9am** - Join us around our district as we Pop Up for Storytimes. We'll create a Facebook event a couple of days before and put the location on our electronic sign. You can call the library for the

location a couple days before, as well.

**Tween Summer Fun - 11am - 4th and 5th graders** can join us for Tween Summer Fun as we Color our World in different ways. Today we will make tie dye t-shirts. Registration required.

**Teen Summer Fun - 1pm - 6th to 12th graders** can join us for Teen Summer Fun as we Color our World in different ways. Today we will make tie dye t-shirts.

**Tech Tuesdays - 2pm-4pm and 5pm-7pm** - get technical help with your device. Make an appointment.

**Teen Artists - 2:30pm**  
**Kids Summer Fun - 6pm - 1st thru 3rd graders** can join us for Summer Fun as we Color our World in different ways through books, crafts, and activities.

**Wednesday, June 18-** SHIP - 9am-noon - by appointment only.

**Kids Summer Fun - 10am**

**Patriotic Book Stack - 6pm** - Adults can create a fun patriotic decoration using real books.

**Weekly regulars**

**In-Person Adult** Exercise is offered Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays 9-10 a.m. First half hour is cardio and the second half is weights, resistance band and strength training.

Check online event calendar at [ccpld.org](http://ccpld.org) for a description of the events and to register.

## Join BAHCC parking lot sale June 13-14

The Braidwood Area Healthy Community Coalition (BAHCC) will host a parking lot sale during the All-Town Garage Sale on June 13 and 14.

"This is a perfect option for anyone who doesn't have space to host a yard sale at home," Outreach Coordinator Danita Morgan said. "Spaces are available for just \$10 for one space and \$15 for two."

BAHCC is also accepting donations for its community table. New and gently used items will be accepted. No clothing, shoes, or large items.

For every \$10 spent or donated at any table, donors will receive a raffle ticket. Winning tickets will be announced on Saturday, June 14 at 3 p.m.

"We've got some fantastic prizes lined up, and can't wait to draw the winner," Morgan said.

BAHCC will hold its parking lot sale at its facility on June 13 and 14 from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. at 465 E. Reed St., behind the CVS and next to the community garden.

Today is the deadline to arrange for a table. Call (815) 390-5024 or email [braidwoodcoalition@gmail.com](mailto:braidwoodcoalition@gmail.com)

## Scrap metal can be recycled during electronics drop-offs

Don't throw that old frying pan in the trash bin. Take it and other scrap metal items to a Will County electronics waste recycling drop-off held the second Thursday of the month in the parking lot of the city hall, 1165 S. Water St., Wilmington.

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

Will County's next free electronics drop-off event will be Thursday, June 12, from 5-7 p.m.

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

All electronic items (broken or obsolete) are accepted. Items include: televisions (limit 2), computers and monitors including desktops, laptops, notebooks, tablets, e-readers), printers, electronic keyboards, fax machines, videocassette recorders, portable digital music players (iPods, MP3s), CD/DVD/Blu-ray players, DVD players/recorders, video game consoles, small scale servers, scanners, electronic mice, digital converter boxes, cable receivers, satellite receivers, computer cable, computer speakers,

portable digital assistants (PDAs) and zip drives.

Also air fryers, all types of telephones, calculators, camcorders, cell phones, CB radio/CB scanners, digital/SLR cameras, digital photo frames, digital projectors, electric lawn mowers, electric scooters, fans, GPS devices, hands-free phone headsets, Instapot, microwaves, power tools, radar detectors, radios, rice cooker, shredders, stereo receivers, string lights, toasters and toaster ovens, UPS/battery backup devices and vacuums (stick, robot, canister) and tollway responders.

## Berst Center to open for June 14 Euchre Night

The Knights of Columbus #1574 will host a Euchre Tournament on Saturday, June 14 at the Berst Center, 180 S. Kankakee St., Coal City.

Doors will open at 5 p.m. Play begins at 5:30 p.m.

The fee of \$20 per entry includes games, light appetizers and refreshments. (BYOB). Tourney

rules will be explained prior to game play. There will be cash prizes for winners.

Everyone is welcome to come enjoy a fun-filled evening while benefitting KofC charities. RSVP TJ Sforza (815) 608-2110 or email [kofcbraidwood@gmail.com](mailto:kofcbraidwood@gmail.com) prior to June 13.

## Support a kid to attend Bible school

The Coal City United Methodist Church, at 6805 E. McArdle Road, invites all kids entering first to fifth grades to join them for "Road Trip" Vacation Bible School, June 16-19 from 9 a.m. to noon.

Adult, middle school, and high school volunteers are also needed. Registration for students and volunteers is online at [vbspro.events/p/e1b37a](http://vbspro.events/p/e1b37a).

Kids go home with a sack lunch every day.

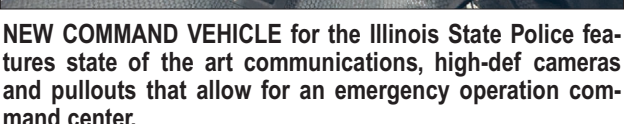
You can sponsor a child or student leader for \$30, which provides a t-shirt, Bible stories, games, crafts, lunch and more!

For any questions, please call the church office at 815-634-8670. Registration deadline is June 1, so be sure to register early.





The Illinois State Police (ISP) is proud to announce the deployment of a new state-of-the-art command vehicle designed to improve emergency response coordination, enhance public safety, and



provide crucial on-site support during critical incidents across the state.

The command vehicle was provided by the U.S. Department of Energy Office of Radiological Security.

The new command vehicle, a 2025 Freightliner replaces an 18-year-old vehicle with antiquated technology.

The new command vehicle is equipped with high-definition cameras and monitors, state-of-the-art communications technology, real-time data access, and dual slide outs for a large conference room.

It will serve as a central hub for ISP officers during emergencies such as natural disasters, large-scale accidents, public events and search-and-rescue operations.

"This command vehicle gives us the ability to respond faster, coordinate more effectively, and better serve our communities during critical incidents," said ISP Director Brendan Kelly. "It's a mobile operations center that puts technology and leadership exactly where it's needed most—right on the ground at the scene of the incident."

Beyond emergency situations, and to further strengthen the connection between ISP and the people we serve, the new command vehicle will be used for community outreach programs, safety demonstrations, and public events. The vehicle will also be used for training ISP officers on response to hazardous materials incidents.

One wakes  
you up  
One opens  
your eyes

Lake Renwick migratory bird viewing will take place from 8 a.m. to noon Saturdays, through Aug. 9 at the Lake Renwick Heron Rookery Nature Preserve, Plainfield.

See nesting herons, egrets, cormorants and possibly bald eagles. The preserve has controlled access during nesting season to minimize disturbances to nesting birds, so the only way to view these

Renwick during this time of year is to attend a viewing program.

Volunteers and staff

form and visitor center to answer questions. Bringing your own binoculars or spotting scope is recom-

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25

## SUMMER SERIES

Events You Don't Want to Miss

13

June

### Summer Concert Series

6:00 PM - 10:00 PM North Island Park

Ryan Craig Band 7pm 🎵 Country Night!

Fast Eddies

19

June

### Farmers Market

5:00 PM - 8:00 PM Downtown Wilmington

Christine Ronna 🎵

Route 66 Diner, Fast Eddies

25

June

### Dan Gogh's Magic & Art Show!

1:00 PM Children's Memorial Park

Register online! \$5/child

27

June

### Let Freedom Rock

5:00 PM - 12:00 AM North Island Park

Mike & Joe 🎵

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Rolls, Route 66 Diner, Cream Crunch &  
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CLUES ACROSS	CLUES DOWN
1. Racquet sports association	1. Consisting of uncombined atoms
4. Places to sleep	2. Island country
8. Native American tribe	3. Heavenly body
10. Small platforms	4. Caribbean island
11. Egg shape	5. Copyread
12. Running out	6. A place to eat
13. French painter	7. Drops down
15. Some are "of the Caribbean"	9. Native group of Alaska
16. Painful intestinal problem	10. Engage in
17. More irritated	12. "Desperate Housewives" lane
18. Prove yourself	14. Thyroid-stimulating hormone
21. Catch	15. Foot (Latin)
22. Supplement with difficulty	17. A place to bathe
23. American automotive giant	19. Animosities
24. Form of "to be"	20. Partner to cheese
25. Boxing's GOAT	23. Venus ____, plant
26. Peyton's little brother	24. A donation
27. Eli's big brother	25. Pokes holes in the ground
34. Capable of producing	26. Midway between northeast and east
35. Reproductive structures in fungi	27. Looked into
36. Allowed to go forward	28. Not young
37. Smiles	29. Annoy constantly
38. Arteries	30. Something one can strike
39. VVV	31. Most glacial
40. Win a series without losing a game	32. Ten less than one hundred
41. This (Spanish)	33. Idle talker
42. Opposites of beginnings	34. Has moved through the air
43. Germanic mythological god	36. Container for shipping



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K - 6<sup>th</sup>  
grades

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Registration is also available at the door.







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

### GARAGE SALES      HELP WANTED      PETS      REAL ESTATE

Braidwood Garage Sale Days. Fri. and Sat., June 13 & 14. 8am to 3pm. Get maps at First Presbyterian Church, Main & Lincoln St. Look for the green pennants. No rain date. cc22-24

Furniture & Craft Sale, 200 S. Division, BRAIDWOOD. Thurs., June 12 & Fri., June 13, 9am-4pm; Sat., June 14, 9am-2pm. Good assortment of household items & kitchen utensils-pots, pans, Pyrex baking dishes, some Corningware. Hand crafted items-quilts, afghans, hats, linens, doilies, other items. Quilting material, some yarn & crochet thread. Barbie dolls, watches, new & used. Too much else to list. ca24

Limestone - 4914 W. Route 113. Friday & Saturday, June 13-14. 8am to 4pm. Big barn & moving sale. Tools, mowers, chainsaw, numerous miscellaneous items. cc24

We're Back! Estate Sale in Braidwood. 388 E Main St., Thurs. & Fri., June 12-13, 9am to 5pm. Sat., June 14, 9am to Noon. Antiques, primitives, women's plus and men's clothing, bikes, crystals, geodes, lamps, furniture, old bottles including Braidwood. Over 15 tables full! ca24

Wilmington - Garage Sale, One day ONLY, Saturday, June 14. 24730 Cottage Rd. 7am-4pm. Something for everyone, multi family. fr24

Offering CNA classes, days, evenings and weekends. Home health nurses needed. CNA instructor needed. Call for class dates, 630-771-1162 or 630-771-9069, www.spectrumnursescna.com cc20-39

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Blacksmith Forge for knives. \$250. Delta 10" table saw, 220v cabinet maker. Like new. \$700. Call 815-458-0907. ck24

Swimming pool accessories for sale: 250,000 BTU pool heater, heavy duty pool stairs, pump, filter, chlorinator, pool aqua-droid vac. Plus, free for dismantling yourself: 27 foot round pool and wood deck. Free pool furniture. 815-252-8241. cc24-26

**Advertise your garage sale here!**

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**REAL ESTATE**  
SHERIFF'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE OF 390 E. Janet Dr., Braidwood, IL 60408 (Single Family). On the 26th day of June, 2025 to be held at 12:00 noon, at the Will County Courthouse, 100 W. Jefferson Street, Room 1001, Joliet, IL 60432, under Case Title: **U.S. Bank Trust National Association, not in its individual capacity but solely as Owner Trustee for VRMTG Asset Trust Plaintiff V. Thomas M. Brown Defendant.** Case No. 22 FC 1019 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 accordance with 735 ILCS 5/15-1507(c)(1)(H-1) 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 subdivisions (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: **Heavner, Beyers & Mihlar, LLC PO Box 740 Decatur, IL 62525 P: 1-217-422-1719 F: 1-217-422-1754** PURSUANT TO THE FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT YOU ARE ADVISED THAT THIS LAW FIRM IS DEEMED TO BE A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. Published in the Free Press Newspapers on Wed., June 4, 11 and 18, 2025.

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### SITUATIONS WANTED

Wanted: Stories about local people, organizations and events. If you know a neighbor with an interesting hobby, collection or cause, give the editor a call at 1-815-634-0315 or 1-815-476-7966. tfn

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## Gas prices cycling lower

Average gasoline prices in Illinois have fallen 3.0 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$3.31/g today, according to GasBuddy's survey of 4,378 stations in Illinois.

Prices in Illinois are 9.7 cents per gallon lower than a month ago and stand 44.3 cents per gallon lower than a year ago. The national average price of diesel has decreased 1.7 cents in the last week and stands at \$3.44 per gallon.

In Wilmington, gas ranged from \$3.25/g at BP up to \$3.29/g at the brand new Love's station.

Braidwood is selling gas from \$3.29/g at Casey's to \$3.49 at Marathon. In Coal City expect to pay \$3.37/g at Shell up to \$3.45 at Gas N Wash.

Expect some relief at the pump in Morris, with gas prices at \$3.14/g across the board. Bourbonnais will save you even more, with gas at \$3.09/g at Kroger and \$3.12/g at BP. "Average gas prices declined in nearly all states over the last week as refineries ramped up output and gasoline supplies surged," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum

analysis at GasBuddy. "While a few states experienced price cycling—a pattern where prices drop sharply and then spike every couple of weeks—the overall gentle downward trend is typical as summer progresses. If oil prices continue to rise gradually, it could eventually impact gas prices, but for now, we likely won't see any major shifts at the pump in most areas this week." The lowest price in the state yesterday was \$2.81/g while the highest was \$4.49/g.

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RECIPIENTS OF THE 2025 Coaler Pride Awards were [from left]: Madi Petersen, Will Johnke, Culan Lindemuth and Juliana Covington.

# CCHS sports awards, continued from page 3

she graduates with a 4.0 grade point average and plans to continue her academic and athletic careers at the college level. She is a good example, he said, "of when it clicks it clicks."

Culan Lindemuth is a multiple state qualifier and although some of his wrestling tournaments might not have ended the way he had hoped, he maintained a positive attitude. Throughout high school he was a part of some pretty impressive teams and success. What really stands out about Culan is that, "he was a leader for some of the younger guys in the wrestling room each night of practice."

Madi Petersen is a two sport athlete who Boresi said, "always does the right thing consistently." He added that he appreciated her level of volunteerism at the high school. Madi will continue her education and softball career at the collegiate level.

Will Johnke embodies what it means to be a student-athlete and a Coaler, Boresi said. Will is at the top of his class academically, and a leader at Coal City High School including serving as president of his class and student council, and holding a captain's position on this year's football team.

Zander Meents—Comeback Athlete of the Year  
An award with multiple meanings, but fitting for the recipient because if you asked Zander, "I think he would tell you his junior season did not live up to his expectations," Boresi said. In the months leading up to the 2024 football season, Zander spent a lot of time improving his game, but then sustained an injury early in the season.

"He battled back. I think that was very evident by the play he had late in the season and the playoff run of the football team," Boresi said. Meents, a quarterback, served as a

captain of the football team and also played basketball for the Coalers.

Three Sport Career Athletes

Kylee Kennell—golf, basketball and soccer

Dylan Young—football, basketball and baseball

Naomi Rodriguez—volleyball, competition cheer and softball

Three Sport Athletes—Senior Year

Gabe McHugh—football, basketball and baseball

D'Arcy Ness—golf, basketball and softball

Calleigh VandeWerken and Kaycee Graf—Student Assistants of the Year

When Coal City High School athletic director Brad Boresi was a student he had the honor of serving as former athletic director John Cullick's teaching assistant, so he understands the duties. "Being the AD's TA might sound great, but there is a little disclosure that says, 'other duties as assigned,'" Boresi said.

And, as his assistants Calleigh and Kaycee often find themselves working on 'other duties' that include setting up for events, picking up lunch, typing or assisting with content for the new video boards. No matter what task is presented, Boresi said they do it well and he is grateful for their assistance and hard work throughout the year. "They really do it all," he said.

Francis Loughran — Coach of the Year

"We have the best coaches in the conference and I am not saying that just because I am the athletic director, but we really do," Boresi said, noting he's heard stories from others in his position that don't have the dedication and spirit of collaboration Coal City coaches do.

One of those outstanding coaches is Francis Loughran who led the Coaler football team to a 10-3 record in 2004. "They had pretty good regular season and during the playoff run I think they

even surprised themselves on how much they achieved and accomplished," Boresi said. The Coalers advanced to the semi-finals falling to the eventual state champions in a close game.

Mark Masters—Career Coaching Accomplishment

Masters is a Hall of Fame Coach who has led the Coaler Wrestling Team to multiple Dual Team State Final appearances over the years with the team being crowned State Champions this year, the second first place win in the past three years. Along the way, the coach achieved a personal milestone as he recorded his 500th wrestling Dual Team coaching win. In recognition of this accomplishment he was celebrated by the Athletic Department.

Brooke Young—Volunteer Appreciation Award

Athletic Director Brad Boresi presented the Volunteer Appreciation Award to Brooke Young in recognition of the countless hours she has put into the athletic program and her dedication to ensuring the student-athletes and coaches have the equipment and support they need to be successful.

"She spends more time here than people realize," Boresi said. Brooke has served multiple terms as president of the Coal City Athletic Boosters and has been part of the parent support group for many years.

Her work with the boosters has also ensured fans attending athletic contests at all levels have concessions—often requiring her to make multiple trips to the store for candy and pop, hundreds of phone calls for piping hot pizza and adding new items that will keep fans coming back to the stand, purchases that ensure the boosters have the funds necessary to support Coalers Athletics.



NAMED AS THE Best Competitors were seniors [from left]: Gabe McHugh and Kylee Kennell.



THREE COALERS WERE recognized as Three Sport Career Athletes. They are [from left]: Kyle Kennell and Dylan Young. Not in the photo is Naomi Rodriguez.




COALER SENIORS Calleigh VandeWerken and Kaycee Graf were recognized as Assistants of the Year.




COALER TEAMMATES OF the Year, an award nominated by students, were presented to Aylie Castle (left) and Alec Waliczek.




COALER CAREER ATHLETE of the Year is Landin Benson who excelled in football and wrestling.




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## Steffes makes dean's list

Ripon College in Wisconsin has announced its dean's list for the spring 2025 semester recognizing academic excellence. To qualify for the dean's list students must achieve a 3.40 grade point average or higher on a 4.00 scale and complete at least 12 credits of regular letter-graded works.

Gracie Steffes, a first year student from Mazon, was named on the list. Her majors are exercise science - PE and health with a minor in adapted physical education.



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