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## Making a difference

Elledge honored for exemplary service, dedication to the Unit I School community

BY ANN GILL  
EDITOR

"Far and away the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing."  
—Teddy Roosevelt

The words uttered some 120 years ago by the 26th President of the United States, is a favorite quote of Tammy Elledge, an individual who has worked hard at work worth doing.

In her 33 years as an educator and school administrator, Elledge has never avoided work. If anything, she sought it out.

In 1990, fresh out of college with a degree in business education, Elledge accepted a one year maternity leave position at Coal City High School that turned into 16 years as a classroom teacher.

Along with teaching business classes, she took on additional duties—department chairperson, tech support specialist, yearbook advisor and wrestling cheer coach.

Elledge gives credit to her father for taking on a full load. "He taught me about work ethic and that I could do anything that I set my mind to," she said.

Even with all of her duties at work and home—she is the mother of two—she went back to college to get a master's degree in educational administration and followed that with a superintendent endorsement, all from her alma mater—Illinois State University.

It was at the start of her 17th year in education that she moved from teacher to administrator.

Dr. Kent Bugg was the district's new superintendent and one of his goals was to establish a standards-based curriculum and assessment system and he tapped Elledge to head up that effort.

"I would like to thank Kent Bugg for having the vision to create this position and for convincing the school board at that time to hire me. Not many superintendents would take a chance on taking a teacher straight from a classroom to fill a district level position. I am grateful for his confidence in me, for mentoring me and being my friend," said Elledge, who has served as the district's director of curriculum, instruction, assessment and instructional technology ever since.

However, that title is set to be transferred onto someone new at the end of the month, as Elledge will close out her career in education on June 30.

As she enters retirement she is reminded of lessons taught by her mom on, "how to take time off."

Over the past 17 years, Elledge has not only met the Board of Education's goal to provide an aligned K-12 curriculum and assessment program, she has worked to develop and implement a district mentoring program for new staff members and organized and directed the district professional development program.

With a dedication on teaching and



Photo by Ann Gill

**TAMMY ELLEDGE, the Unit 1 School District's director of curriculum, instruction, assessment and instructional technology, will close out a 33-year career in education on June 30. The first 16 years were as a classroom teacher in the high school's business department. Over her tenure she has taken on many duties from cheer coach and yearbook adviser, to department chair and webmaster. A resolution recognizing her exemplary service and dedication to the students, staff and school community was read into the record at the Board of Education's meeting on June 7**

learning, Elledge has helped propel the district to excellence as witnessed by the accolades received over the years.

The district was once on the state's academic watch list due to poor performance on state testing. Now it's one of the highest performing district's in the state of Illinois.

Elledge has worked to ensure students have the ability to participate in advanced placement and dual credit courses, have access to foreign language instruction and the instructional time and materials needed to be successful.

Her contributions have ensured students across all grade levels can safely get to school each day though her work to partner with outside agencies to secure a Safe Routes to Schools grant.

And, more recently to ensure that

despite a global pandemic, students could return to in-person learning.

"There are 17 years of students and many more that are coming in future generations that are going to benefit from the work you have done and executing that vision," Board vice president Shawn Hamilton said to Elledge.

And while people might not be able to identify who she is when they pass by her in the store, Hamilton made it clear they have her to thank for what she has done to better their children, "and for that we are forever grateful," he said.

In recognition of her years of dedicated and exemplary service, the Board of Education approved a resolution in her honor during its June 7 meeting.

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## House fire claims life of Diamond resident

STAFF REPORT

When an off-duty firefighter observed smoke coming from a residence he did what he was trained to do, he took action.

At 5 p.m. on Friday, June 9 the Coal City Fire Protection District was dispatched to a structure fire at the residence of Richard and Valerie Morris at 1245 Heritage Drive in Diamond's Farmstone Subdivision.

When fire crews arrived, one of their own was already on the scene. That individual, identified by Coal City Professional Firefighters Local 4884, was firefighter/paramedic William Perry.

"In an act of selfless dedication and bravery, he was able to perform a rescue of one of the occupants of the residence prior to the arrival of the first-due companies," Local 4884 posted on its social media

page. According to the Office of the Illinois State Fire Marshal the fire started in or around the reclining chair where Valerie Morris was sitting.

In an attempt to extinguish the fire, Richard Morris was overcome by smoke and taken out of the home by Perry.

Due to the heavy smoke, Valerie, age 77, was unable to be rescued and was pronounced deceased at 5:38 p.m., according to Grundy County Coroner John W. Callahan.

Richard was transported to Morris Hospital in good condition.

The exact origin of the fire that remains under investigation, Callahan said.

Coal City Fire Protection District was assisted by the Braidwood, Wilmington and Morris fire departments, as well as the Grundy County Sheriff's Office.

## Body of missing man pulled from rec club lake

STAFF REPORT

A body discovered floating in a lake at the CECO Recreation Club near Coal City early Saturday morning was that of a Manhattan man who had been missing for two weeks.

Grundy County Sheriff's deputies were called to the members only recreation club located at 1210 N. Dresden Rd., at 6:30 a.m. About 10 minutes later the Coal City Fire Protection District was dispatched for a water incident/body in the lake.

The body was recovered from the lake and the Grundy County Coroner's Office took possession and transferred the body to the Grundy County morgue.

Later that day the coroner's office identified the victim as that of 47-year-old Anthony Fehrenbacher, who had been missing from his Manhattan home since May 26.

According to published reports, Fehrenbacher was last seen walking in his neighborhood around 7 p.m. that evening, and after not hearing from him a wellness check was conducted on June 1.

Fehrenbacher was entered into state and national law enforcement data bases and the Manhattan Police



Courtesy photo

**THE BODY OF Anthony Fehrenbacher, 47, of Manhattan was discovered in a lake at the CECO Recreation Club on June 10.**

Department was investigating his disappearance looking at cell phone and banking records.

An extensive search, led by his family, took place around the Manhattan area the weekend prior to his discovery in the lake.

The sheriff's office reports

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