

THE VILLAGE OF DIAMOND so far likes the concept plan for 53 single family homes and 36 duplexes presented by developer Bill Slavik of E.E.C. IL for a site located off North McGinty Street and south of Valerio Road. The project is still in the planning stages and needs full approval before construction would begin in 2026.

Village likes developer's plan for 89-unit subdivision

BY MIKE LOOMIS
CORRESPONDENT

Officials in Diamond got a first look at a proposed residential subdivision for the village's north side.

Developer Bill Slavik presented a concept plan for 53 single family homes and 36 duplexes for a site located off North McGinty Street.

Slavik - whose company, E.E.C. IL, developed Creekside Estates in Channahon - appeared at a recent meeting to see if the village board would be receptive to his proposal.

"We're willing to listen," village board member Denise Brown said, adding that the new subdivision could be beneficial for Diamond.

"I'm interested in seeing what he has to bring to the board next."

The proposed development would first need to appear before the village's planning commission. If eventually approved by the village board, construction would probably not start until 2026, officials estimate.

"I like what he's planning," Mayor Terry Kernc said of the proposal, shown at the June 10 meeting. The mayor said plans for the 40-acre property, which is near the senior living community Country Meadows, include two retention ponds, a multi-use path and a small area for green space.

The "zero entry" design of the homes means there are no steps at the

entrances. The aging-in-place feature is meant to accommodate new parents pushing baby strollers as well as seniors who may have limited mobility.

"It looks like a good use for that property," Village Engineer Mike Perry said. He noted that the plans are in the preliminary stage and would need further review to be sure they comply with building regulations in Diamond.

Board member Jeff Kasher said that while he's open to more homes in Diamond, he cautioned against too much development that could lead to problems like traffic congestion.

"I don't have a problem with listening to what [Slavik] has to say, as long

as he follows the rules," Kasher said. "At this stage, it's just a proposal."

Village board member Dave Warner said that Slavik's proposal fits with Diamond's comprehensive plan and would be complementary with the homes nearby in Country Meadows.

Mayor Kernc, stressing the importance of a balance between building new homes and new businesses, said there are also new commercial projects coming to Diamond, with two national names showing an interest in the village.

"If you want to keep your residents happy, give them the stores they want," she said.

Felix Township asks IDNR to install guardrails

Felix Township Trustee Chuck Boyd is urging the state of Illinois to install guardrails along three area roadways fronted by strip mine lakes.

Boyd said Thursday that the Abandoned Mines Lands Reclamation Division of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources may provide free guard rails to improve safety for motorists who travel portions of White Tie Road near the Coal City Area Club, Coal City Road along Lincoln Lake and the east side of Jugtown Road along the lake where Alexis Kay Higgins-Weatherhead, 18, of Coal City, died when her vehicle entered the water 200 yards north of Deerfield Dr.

The incident was discovered at approximately 11 p.m. Sunday, June 1.

According to Boyd, Bryan Johnsurd, project management supervisor of Abandoned Minds Lands Reclamation Division Office of Mines and Minerals has talked to various road commissioners and township officials regarding the roadways in need of guard rails.

The AMLR will pay for engineering, material and installation of the guard rails on Road

District/Township right of ways.

"AMLR will locate and quantify the specific area that Felix Township and or Goose Lake Township, Grundy County, and the Coal City Area Club, or Claypool Drainage Levee District would like the AMLR to address with construction funding," Boyd said.

Funding would be in the form of reimbursement for actual expenditures as detailed in a cooperative Reclamation Application Form.

"I will do what I can to get the RAF to the right people. The listed projects need to be addressed while the money is still available," Boyd said.

Some of the areas needing attention are, but not limited to:

- North side of White Tie Road along the Coal City Area Club
- West side of Coal City Road along Lincoln Lake
- East side of Jugtown Road along the lake.

"This is the second death from running off this road into the water since 2018. Let's not have more babies grow up without mothers. Thank you for your support in this effort," Boyd concluded.



Photo submitted

A MEMORIAL CROSS marks the spot where Alexis Kay Higgins-Weatherhead's vehicle went off the road and into a lake along Jugtown Road. Township officials are working with the state to install guard rails along this and two other roadways close to water.



Village says man's home-grown veggies are in violation

BY ROSE PANIERI
STAFF WRITER

For several years, Ralph Brooks, 70, of Coal City, has shared the bounty of his garden. His veggies have been popular with those wishing to enjoy healthy food while saving a buck or two.

Brooks also donates a considerable portion of his harvest with those less fortunate.

"Through this effort I have consistently donated fresh produce to

churches, food pantries, and residents in need," Brooks said.

Brooks also sells his produce at a stand at his home at 110 N. First Avenue in Coal City. His prices are far less than what grocery chains charge for quality produce.

Brooks said he doesn't even recoup costs for his gardening supplies, seeds, and the effort he puts into growing his garden.

"This practice has long been public, well known, and embraced by many community members, and was

understood by the village staff in previous conversations," Brooks said.

All was well until June 6 when Brooks received notice from the Village of Coal City, stating he had committed code violations that must be corrected. The village claims the produce stand is "no longer a charitable organization," referring to it as an "unlawful business operating in a residential zone without a business license."

The letter warns that if the property is not brought into compliance,

SEE GARDEN PAGE 2

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Jumbo Sweet Juicy Seedless Watermelon

Garden, continued from page 1

Brooks will face a fine of up to \$750 for each day his property is in violation.

On June 24, he was sent a reminder that all violations must be remedied by July 8.

"You know, I've worked my butt off in the garden and they want to shut me down," Brooks said. "It isn't like I'm making a fortune, but I'm trying to get rid of stuff and defray some of the costs."

It isn't as if Brooks is attempting to pull a fast one on city officials. After all, he has given away and sold produce for several years. He also is a well-known, upstanding citizen who ran a business, Brooks Carpentry, for half-a-century. And, he has gone out of his way to contribute to the welfare of society.

"I've coached and umpired countless local children, some of whom may be family members seated on this board," Brooks said. "My dedication to this town runs deep."

Unfortunately, that dedication appears to be largely one-sided, which frustrates Brooks.

Due to health issues, Brooks has had help with his garden from friend and neighbor Madyson Togliatti. She believes in his good work, and is determined to help him by working in his garden and promoting his produce stand.

"There were no issues until this year—until I started posting about it on social media—and we put up additional signs just to liven up his yard," Togliatti said. "He's gone through a lot over the last few years, and he wanted to get his home back in order. I began posting things about his garden on my Facebook Page."

The marketing was noticed by Coal City officials.

"Last week, the village came and handed over a ton of violations," Togliatti said. "If we're going to get down to the nitty-gritty, one sign we put up was two inches out of code."

Brooks is one of those fellows who believes in making the most of his property, growing cost-effective, nutritious produce rather than grass.

A portion of Brooks's garden extends to his front yard—where officials prefer to gaze upon well-mown grass. Some argue grass lawns are worthless due to high costs and maintenance.

Brooks's sprawling garden resulted in yet another code violation.

Togliatti learned the charges could be appealed. She prepared a speech and headed for the June 25 Coal City Board Meeting in the hope of appealing to the board's sense of compassion. She was especially determined to speak to village administrator, Matt Fritz.

"At the board meeting, they were real dismissive," Togliatti said.

After being summarily dismissed, Togliatti took to social media to speak out on what she views as oppression and possible age discrimination against Brooks.

"I'm learning someone apparently has an even bigger issue with this than I thought..." Togliatti posted on Facebook. "It's one thing about me, I'll prove a point."

And prove a point she did, citing state laws that support Brooks's right to sell his produce without interference.

"JB Pritzker has passed state laws allowing the ability to sell," she posted.

Indeed, four state laws, including the Illinois Cottage Food Law, Illinois Direct Farm Sales Act, Illinois Farm



COAL CITY RESIDENT Ralph Brooks stands near his vegetable garden in the 100 block of First Avenue which has drawn the attention of village officials who believe he's running a business in a residential neighborhood with improper signage and accessory structures.

Products Marketing, and Illinois Department of Agriculture Promotion Law state individuals may sell produce directly to consumers without commercial licenses.

Overreach

This incident—and one in Braidwood giving city officials the right to go onto private property to ticket violations—have residents upset. To many, including Brooks and Togliatti, it's overreach by representatives who work for the citizenry.

Togliatti finds herself perplexed and angry at the village's unwillingness to simply listen to taxpayers.

"They're getting very nitpicky, and I don't know if it's something personal," Togliatti said. "There's a lot of other people in our town who have much more severe violation that they kind of just turn a blind eye to."

Village Administrator Matt Fritz explained that at this time, the city is not attempting to force Brooks to obtain a business license.

"We are aware of Ralph's garden over the last few years, and it seems as though it has changed," Fritz said. "Now, he's got these accessory structures in the corner of the side yard, which isn't allowed, and signage in a residential district, which is also not allowed. He would need

to move that stand to his backyard, and get rid of the signage."

According to Fritz, the garden stand structure must be moved to the rear yard, and 10 feet from other structures and must have the sheet metal siding replaced.

Fritz also said that Brooks's garden is encroaching on city property. However, since the deed is already done, it will not be considered a code violation this year.

As far as the statement in the June 24 letter:

"This vegetable stand is now an unlawful business operating in a residential zone without a license," Fritz said the city does not intend to attempt to force Brooks to apply for a business license.

"I guess if we come to the bridge in the future, we'll cross it," Fritz said about the possibility of insisting on a business license. "But, that hasn't been what our concern has been on this."

Fritz said the city is attempting to achieve compliance as opposed to having to follow through with issuing fines. However, as the June 24 letter from the village to Brooks states:

"The property must be brought into compliance by July 8, 2025, or tickets will be issued to the owner of the property."

Forest Preserve buys Hidden Lakes

STAFF REPORT

The Forest Preserve District of Will County has completed its first major land acquisition under its 2025-2030 Capital Improvement Program,

purchasing a Custer Township property long known as the Savage Farm.

The 241-acre purchase, located near Coal City Road and Route 53, was finalized June 13 bringing the District's total land holdings to 23,449 acres. The acquisition is near two state-owned preserves, Hitts Siding Prairie Nature Preserve and Wilmington Shrub Prairie, and three Forest Preserve properties.

The property is part of a broader ecological region known for its rare sandy soils and rare plant and animal communities.

"This addition helps protect the rare sand communities of the Braidwood Dunes], Sand Ridge Savanna and Kankakee Sands Preserve complex and creates future possibil-

ities for public fishing and recreation in Wilmington," said Cori Crawford, the Forest Preserve's real estate and data supervisor. "It's a true win for both conservation and the community."

The \$2.8 million acquisition was funded through a \$50 million general obligation bond issue approved by the Forest Preserve Board of Commissioners in 2024. Of that total, \$25 million is dedicated to land preservation, \$12 million to regional and local trail connections and new access areas, and \$13 million to habitat restoration.

The land closes a key gap between local, state and federal open space holdings, contributing to a corridor of more than 8,200 acres of ecologically significant habitat that includes private hunting and fishing clubs, the Des Plaines River Conservation Area, Goose Lake Prairie Nature Preserve in nearby Grundy County and Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie.

The property known as

Hidden Lakes was leased by George Savage for fishing and duck hunting. In 2022, representatives from ED3N, Inc. approached the Braidwood City Council interested in buying the land and developing it into a cannabis resort.

Their presentation to Braidwood included a concept plan for the resort which would include overnight accommodations, retail, restaurants, spas, parking, and outdoor activities, including the use of legalized cannabis while on site, designed to bring people in for a several day stay.

Obviously, that plan, which sought annexation into Braidwood, never evolved.

The Forest Preserve says the property still has strong recreational potential, with possible uses including hiking, fishing, kayaking and picnicking, as well as future access to equestrian and group camping.

Planning will begin

soon, with a land use plan and conceptual master plan expected by 2030.

"With these foundational plans in place, the Forest Preserve will be well-positioned to pursue external funding opportunities - such as the Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development program or other grant sources - to support the phased development of the preserve," said Colleen Novander, the Forest Preserve's director of planning and land preservation for the Forest Preserve.



THIS MAP SHOWS the location of the Forest Preserve District of Will County's recently acquired parcel of land located at the southeast corner of Highway 53 and Coal City Road.

Attorney Black files Shay estate claim

PUBLIC NOTICE

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
GRUNDY COUNTY - IN PROBATE
No. 2025 PR 52

In the Matter of the Estate of STEVEN G. SHAY, Deceased

CLAIM NOTICE

NOTICE is given to creditors of the death of STEVEN G. SHAY. Letters of office as Independent Executor were issued to MARGARET I. SHAY, 953 E. North Street, Morris Illinois, 60450 whose attorney is DONALD F. 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.

MARGARET I. SHAY
INDEPENDENT EXECUTOR
ATTORNEY DONALD F. BLACK
BLACK & BLACK
201 Liberty Street
Suite 211
Morris, IL 60450
815-942-0594

Published in the Coal City Courant on July 2, 9, and 16, 2025.

Attorney Black files Ehrman estate claim

PUBLIC NOTICE

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
GRUNDY COUNTY - IN PROBATE
No. 2025 PR 50

In the Matter of the Estate of ROSE MARY EHRMAN, Deceased

CLAIM NOTICE

NOTICE is given to creditors of the death of ROSE MARY EHRMAN. Letters of office as Independent Executor were issued to FRED JOSEPH EHRMAN, 270 S. Broadway Street, Coal City Illinois, 60416 whose attorney is DONALD F. 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.

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815-942-0594

Published in the Coal City Courant on July 2, 9, and 16, 2025.

Coal Bin to dispose of property

PUBLIC NOTICE

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given, that pursuant to Section 40 of the Self-Storage Facility Act, State of Illinois a sale or other disposition of property by COAL BIN STORAGE INC will be held online at www.BID13.com, auction ending on July 9, 2025 1:00 PM, to sell or dispose of the personal property of the following person, James Gotz III, 8123 Davy Drive SE, Olympia, WA Unit 316/Location#2, to enforce a lien for storage pursuant to the self-storage facility act, in the amount of \$815.00 plus attorney fees & costs.

Published in the Coal City Courant on June 25 and July 2, 2025.

Webb Workforce Grant Consulting files as new business

LEGAL NOTICE

Assumed Name Publication Notice

Public Notice is hereby given that on June 13, A.D. 2025, a certificate was filed in the Office of the County Clerk of Grundy County, Illinois, setting forth names and post-office addresses of all of the persons owning, conducting and transacting the business known as Webb Workforce Grant Consulting, located at 240 W. Elm St., Coal City, IL 60416

Dated this 13th day of June, A.D. 2025.
Kay T Olson, Grundy County Clerk
Published in the Coal City Courant on June 18, 25, and July 2, 2025.

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Eric D. Fisher, publisher

Mosquitoes test positive for West Nile Virus

Village of Diamond begins spraying

The Grundy County Health Department has confirmed that mosquitoes collected in the city of Morris on Thursday, have tested positive for West Nile Virus (WNV).

In response, the health department urges all residents to take preventive measures seriously to avoid contracting WNV or other mosquito-borne illnesses.

To help reduce risks, the Village of Diamond announced Monday it was treating catch basins and spraying for mosquitos at dusk when they are most active. The village reminded residents who have breathing issues, children and pets to take precautions by moving indoors when spraying is underway.

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) recommends following the "Three R's" of mosquito protection: Reduce, Repel, and Report.

Reduce Exposure

- Avoid being outdoors between dusk and dawn,

when mosquitoes are most active.

- Ensure that doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace damaged screens.
- Eliminate standing water around your home where mosquitoes can breed—this includes flowerpots, wading pools, old tires, and birdbaths (change water weekly).
- Repel Mosquitoes
 - When outdoors, wear shoes, socks, long pants, and long-sleeved shirts.
 - Apply insect repellents containing DEET, Picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR 3535, following product label instructions.
 - Consult a physician before using insect repellents on infants or young children.
- Report Potential Breeding Areas
 - Report standing water in places such as roadside ditches, flooded yards, and abandoned properties to your local mosquito control agency. Additional information about West Nile Virus can be found on the IDPH website.

Santa Claus coming to Grundy County for July 19 Touch-A-Truck event

Santa Claus is Coming to Grundy County is excited to announce its first-ever Touch-a-Truck event, set for Saturday, July 19, 2025, at Lions Park in Coal City. The event promises to deliver a fun-filled day for families across the region while raising funds for the organization and for the Heroes & Helpers (https://gchhinc.org/about-us/) initiative.

This interactive experience will feature an impressive lineup of vehicles for children (and adults!) to explore, including:

- Fire and police vehicles from Coal City FD and Coal City PD
- A Grundy County EMA Command Van
- A military vehicle from the Joliet Marine Reserve Base
- A big tow truck courtesy of Bob's Advanced Auto & Tire
- A combine and tractors from Mark Wills
- A road construction truck from D Construction
- Water fight equipment brought by Mazon Fire Department

In addition to the truck showcase, attendees can enjoy fun and games on the ballfield, including:

- A dunk tank
- Easy Striker and Pit



SANTA will make a summer visit to the Touch-A-Truck event for Saturday, July 19 at Lions Park in Coal City. The family-oriented event will raise funds for Heroes & Helpers

To bring even more excitement to the day, organizers are working with WCSJ Radio to host a live remote broadcast, including promotional radio ads in the week leading up to the event.

"This is truly a community event," said Dave DiVincenzo, Board President and our very own Santa Claus. "We've worked with local partners, first responders, and volunteers to create something special for Grundy County and beyond."

The event was rescheduled to July 19 to avoid overlapping with the Coal City Back-to-School Bash, which will now focus on residents of Coal City, Diamond, and Carbon Hill. In contrast, the Touch-a-Truck event will be open to everyone.

For updates and more details about the Touch-a-Truck event, follow Santa Claus is Coming to Grundy County on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/santaclausiscomingtogrundycountry.

Join us on July 19th at Lions Park in Coal City for a day of family fun, community spirit, and support for our Heroes & Helpers initiative. We look forward to seeing you there!

Explore the great outdoors during Girl Scout camp

Join Girls Scouts from Grundy County for four exciting days of nature, friendship and fun in a supportive, girl-led environment.

This day camp is open to all girls entering kindergarten through 5th grade this fall, whether you're a current Girl Scout or brand new to the fun.

Each day, girls will build outdoor skills, cook their own meals, and take part in hands-on activities and creative nature-inspired crafts.

Love the Outdoors with Girl Scouts in Grundy County will be held July 21-

24, from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at Gebhard Woods State Park in Morris.

Whether you're an experienced adventurer or trying something new, this program is the perfect way to connect with the outdoors and other girls who love it too.

Thanks to the generous support of the Community Foundation of Grundy County, we're able to offer this enriching camp experience at a reduced cost.

To register, go to: https://girlscout.info/grundy

CCHS Scholarship recipients



COAL CITY ATHLETIC BOOSTERS Scholarships—\$7,500 in total—presented to : Naomi Rodriguez, D'Arcy Ness and Corinna Barkley. Standing; Calleigh VandeWerken, Emma Rodriguez, Will Johnke, Dylan Young, Alec Waliczek, Trevor Perino, Landin Benson, Chloe Pluger, Madi Petersen and Kylee Kennell.

Alzheimer's caregiver support group to meet

If you or someone you know is caring for a loved one with memory problems, you are invited to attend a caregivers support group that meets the second Tuesday of every month at 7 p.m. at the First Baptist Church of Coal City, 4470 E. Route 113 in Coal City.

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

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, value support groups as a place to learn 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.

Furthermore caregiver depression decreases as caregiver education about dementia increases, and when caregiver depression decreases, patient outcomes improve.



AIMEE GERHARDT OUTSTANDING Human Scholarship—\$1,000 each—was presented by Debbie Davis to: Kylee Kennell, Chloe Pluger, Mackenzie Croxton and Naomi Rodriguez.



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Endrst makes president's list

Georgia Southern University recently recognized approximately 2,420 students on the spring 2025 President's List. Rylee Endrst, of Diamond, has been named to the list for excellence in academics. To be eligible for the President's List, a student must have at least a 4.0 grade point average and carry a minimum of 12 hours for the semester.

Local students on dean's list

Aurora University has named Hannah Coster, of Braidwood, Stephanie Dropski, of Coal City, Johnny Stasiak, of Elwood, and Mia Castillo, of Godley to the Dean's List for the spring 2025 semester. The Dean's List recognizes full-time undergraduate students who have earned a 3.6 grade-point average or higher.



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Buying Hidden Lakes

WILMINGTON—Thank you Will County Forest Preserve for buying up land and making wildlife corridors. I am proud of what you are trying to do for the earth and wildlife. Again, great job and keep going. I know protecting the land and wildlife is not at all a priority of the majority of humankind. I am thankful for you.

Semi after semi

BRAIDWOOD—I don't understand why the Braidwood Police does nothing about the semi's coming down N. Division St. I personally have called to complain when it is semi after semi coming down the road. I never see any police and I only see 2 to 3 tickets issued to these semi's in the police reports. Heck I see 2 to 3 semi's per hour on the street. Earlier this week when I was on my way to work, I seen a Braidwood Police car pulled over by the Mastodon Gas Station land taking radar. I also seen a semi turn to come down Division St. right in front of police car that did not move. I don't understand this. Do your jobs and stop the semis from coming down this street before someone gets hurt trying to get their mail from across the race track called Division St.

He knows now

SHADOW LAKES—My name is Dan Hill, I just saw about an hour ago a neighbor helping a relative, a teenager that had a Wilmington High School T-shirt on change a tire. I said to him "don't you know how to change a tire?" The gentleman said "now he does." What is wrong with kids today? They can't even change a tire?

Has my vote

WILMINGTON—It's been very difficult to watch the news lately because the news is so depressing. Today, I finally heard some really good news. Governor Pritzker announced he is going to run for a third term. That is the best news I've heard in a long, long time. He has done an excellent job as governor, especially during the pandemic with COVID and having to shut the state down. I know it was a very difficult decision for him to do, but it was one that was necessary. I lost a loved one during COVID. When Will County had to be shut down again I could not go in to see my loved one in a nursing home when the person passed away the visitation was limited but I still respected the governor for what he did. Especially the fact that Mr. Trump kept saying there was no COVID and it was fake news. When he got sick they kept it quiet. He was very close to death and that was kept out of the media. So it was not a joke. So I truly appreciate the governor for everything he's done and God willing next year I will vote for him again.

Bummer man

BRAIDWOOD—Dude, so bummed Will County people bought the Hidden Lakes. Was stoked when we heard it was going to be a cannabis resort. Still, it's pretty cool we'll someday get to fish there free.

Archery range

BRAIDWOOD—After reading in last week's paper about the Will County Forest Preserve buying the old Savage property the first thing I thought of was it would make for a good archery course. I saw someone suggested a disc golf course but I bet you an archery course would get more use. Besides there are other disc golf courses in the area but no archery course.

Third time Pritzker

WILMINGTON—I see JB is running for a third term. This should not be a surprise if you look at him you see he always goes back for thirds

Full disclosure

BRAIDWOOD—It's a shame Trump foolishly ripped up the Iran nuclear treaty (JCPOA) in 2018 and put the world in danger of a Middle East war which we all know is difficult to stop once started. But when Trump dropped the bunker busting bomb on June 21, the operation seemed successful and Trump deserves credit for that. However, confirmation of the details after the fact is routine and always necessary after any military operation. Period. Everybody knows that. Why is Trump throwing a temper tantrum? Why doesn't Trump allow full disclosure of the outcome? What is Trump hiding?

Trump's mental state

WILMINGTON—I read that the Republicans in the Senate are going to hold hearings to investigate Biden's mental state as president. I would certainly hope the Senate Democrats return the favor because this current president doesn't have a clue what's going on. Since he doesn't read, his flunkies feed him anything they want, like the word obliterated. I'd love to see the president try to spell that word.

Mosquito haven

COAL CITY—Coaler Drive mosquitoes breeding area is now open to the general public. The homeowners that surround this flood plain are more than happy to share it with all residents. The best time to visit the area is in the later part of the day to catch the height of breeding activity. They only hope that the drain tile never gets cleaned out.

Ukraine and the prize

WILMINGTON—Clearly Trump has abandoned his policy of isolationism promised during his campaign obvious by his bombing of Iran. But why? Does it have something to do with his aspirations for the Nobel Peace Prize? Visions of the cherished accolade have long run through Trump's head and perhaps that explains his desperation for seeking credit in the recent Iran attack. But the place most deserving of peace is the beleaguered nation of Ukraine because Putin, the 'man without a face,' started the butchery of independent Ukraine and has continued it for the past 3 years. Trump has been scolding Putin publicly about the horrors endured by Ukraine and perhaps Trump sees Ukraine as low-hanging fruit with easy pickings as the plum for his pudding in achieving the most prized accolade, the Nobel Peace Prize among world leaders. And it doesn't hurt that Trump will finally even the score between himself and Obama who is also a Nobel Prize recipient. We can only hope that Trump can carry home the award that he covets if and only if, peace finally and deservedly comes home to Ukraine.

Losing integrity

COAL CITY—Over the past week we have witnessed a lot of angry residents related to how the village of Coal City is treating a resident who has a large garden and sells some of his excess produce. The village leadership, mayor, trustees and administrator's ethical standards seems to be evolving over the past few years and in many cases not for the better. Take for instance a new clerical position has been created in the Coal City Police Dept. I have been trying to locate the 'help wanted' advertisement for this new village position without success. Two years ago a young lady ran for and was elected to fill the Coal City Village Clerk position. This position has a commitment of four years. Reading the Coal City Courant and Facebook posting over the last few weeks, shows this young lady had been selected to be the new full time clerk in the Coal City Police Dept. I'm interested to see how this job was posted, what were the



requirements/experience required, how many applications were submitted for this new position, how many interviews were conducted. The appearance of impropriety is damaging to the public's trust and the integrity of government. The village leadership must weigh the integrity of their actions to allow an elected village official to resign their position and be rewarded a full time employee as being truly unethical. Ethics refers to well-founded standards of right and wrong that prescribe what humans ought to do, usually in terms of rights, obligations, benefits to society, fairness, or specific virtues.

Pork barrel projects

SHADOW LAKES—"Illinois Policy Institute, June 19. Action from our beloved Gov. J.B. Pritzker. He has chosen not to strike \$237 million in pork barrel projects that benefit only Democratic lawmaker's districts from his record 2026 budget. Here is the breakdown of the money: 78 Illinois House Democrats will receive \$117,000,000, 40 Illinois Senate Democrats will receive \$120,000,000 and the 59 House Senate Republicans will receive \$0." This is the man who is running for a third term, and looking to run for president. The left really knows how to spend your tax money.

Obediently yours, Margot Lane

Rotten stench

COAL CITY—Anyone who doesn't know the difference between an immigrant the illegal immigrants are not interested in picking our fruits and vegetables. Why should they when the former administration put them up in hotels and other organizations provided them with cell phones (wonder who paid those phone bills), free health care, etc. Our president is trying to run our country in spite of people who take everything he says Trump did not tell anyone to drink bleach to kill Covid. Read what he actually said.

Don't believe them

COAL CITY—There was an article in the Braidwood Journal on June 25 on page seven about the opening of a new Veteran's center that is going to be run by the VA and the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs and if anyone believes that these two organizations are going to give any Veteran a little help they are living in a fantasy world. These two veterans organizations will not do anything for the Veterans now, so what makes anyone believe that these things will change? All they care about is their wallets. These two organizations are controlled by the Democrat Party and their treatment of

Veterans is a disgrace to humanity. Everyone believes that the Veterans are treated fair but that is an illation put out by a group of dishonest government employees.

A little humor

WILMINGTON—The best thing about the good old days was I wasn't good and I wasn't old. JoAnn

Faith in God

SHADOW LAKES—I'm watching a St. Jude's commercial and people claim that some day with St. Jude's children will be free of cancer. That will not happen until the second coming of Jesus Christ. That is if you believe in God. Satan will be put away for a thousand years but then he will be loose and he will come back again until God destroys him. To people, put your faith in God. Dan Hill

A good bill

MORRIS—I urge all senior citizens to call their senators and state representatives to tell Springfield to pass Senate Bill 1862. This bill is for senior citizens who have been paying property taxes on their single home that they've lived in for 30 years in a row a pass on paying property taxes. This is a good bill because senior citizens have been paying property taxes living in the same home for 30 years and they should not have to pay property taxes.

Veterans without help

SHADOW LAKES—The government calls a war but they do not take care of the wounded warriors even through the VA. But yet we need Wounded Warriors, VFW, American Legion and Disabled Veteran to take care of people. What is wrong with this government? Dan Hill

Important history

WILMINGTON—I would like to congratulate the members of the First Presbyterian Church of Wilmington for having their building receive landmark status. I was so happy to attend the services on Sunday but it was very difficult for me. I sure wish that Roger could have been there to see his church being honored. But I was glad I got to go and represent him in his memory and I know he was looking down on his parishioners and friends from his church in heaven. This protects the church in case something happens and they would have to close their doors having landmark status and nothing will happen to the church building. I know the parishioners are very grateful. It was nice to see people I haven't seen in a long time. Sheri Michaels

Tai Chi class begins

The Wilmington Lions Club is offering a 12-week session of Tai Chi for beginners on Fridays, starting July 11, at the Lions Hall, 805 River St., Wilmington.

Class begins promptly at 9:15 a.m. The fee for the 12 weeks is \$35. Seniors and veterans pay \$30 or students who have completed a previous 12-week session will pay \$30.

This Tai Chi class is part of a fall prevention and health benefit curriculum. Studies have shown that Tai Chi is great for improving balance. The movements are slow, methodical and repetitive.

The beginning Tai Chi student will be introduced to the basics of Tai Chi, and perfect their practice by experiencing the flowing "meditation in Motion" which produces the many health benefits of Tai Chi.

Participants should arrive at 9 a.m. to register. Dress comfortably. For more details call Wayne 815-478-4016.

Coal City Library seeks bids for parking lot improvements

PUBLIC NOTICE

INVITATION TO BID

Sealed Bids will be received by the Coal City Public Library District for "2025 Parking Lot Improvement" and is further described as follows: the removal and replacement of Hot Mix Asphalt pavement in the parking facilities located on the south side of the Coal City Public Library. The improvements include HMA Surface Removal, HMA Leveling Binder, HMA Surface Course, and Paint Pavement Markings.

Bids shall be submitted no later than 10:00 a.m. at the office of the Coal City Public Library, at 85 N. Garfield, Coal City, IL 60416 on Tuesday, August 5, 2025. Proposals will be opened and publicly read in the Annex located at 70 N. Irving, Coal City, IL 60416 at that time.

Plans and specifications may be accessed on-line at: www.chamlin.com

Full-size plans and specifications are available from Chamlin & Associates, Inc., 221 West Washington Street, Morris, Illinois 60450 at the non-refundable cost of \$50.00 per set. Bidders are advised that this Contract will be subject to the Illinois Prevailing Wage Act.

Bidders are advised that this Contract will be subject to the Illinois Steel Products Procurement Act. The successful Bidder shall provide at least 40% of all labor required for the completion of this project.

Bids may be held by the Coal City Public Library District for a period not to exceed 30 days from the date of the opening of Bids for the purpose of reviewing the Bids and investigating the qualifications of Bidders, prior to awarding of the Contract.

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

BY ORDER OF:

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COAL CITY PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT
Published in the Coal City Courant on July 2, 9, 16 and 23, 2025.

Coal City C.U.S.D. 1 seeking bids for asbestos removal at intermediate school gym

PUBLIC NOTICE

INVITATION TO BID

Coal City C.U.S.D. 1 will receive sealed bids for Asbestos Abatement for 2025 Gymnasium Restoration at Coal City Intermediate School, 305 E. Division Street in Coal City, IL.

The work is to remove walls, ceilings and flooring from the stairwells to the east and west of the stage; and terrazzo from below the stairwells utilizing gross removal methods and to remove pipe and fitting insulation from the west gymnasium wall extending into the attic space above the gymnasium utilizing glovebag removal methods.

The Date of Commencement is July 28, 2025. The Date of Substantial Completion is August 15, 2025.

The Mandatory Prebid Meeting is on Thursday, July 3, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. The Prebid Meeting will be held at Coal City Intermediate School, 305 E. Division Street in Coal City, IL 60416.

Please visit IDEAL Environmental Engineering's website at www.idealenvironmental.com to register, confirm pre-bid attendance and order the project manuals, project manual costs are listed on the website. Costs are non-refundable and must be ordered through the website. Manual may be viewed at Owner or Engineer offices.

The Bid Opening will be on Friday, July 11, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. at Coal City C.U.S.D. 1, 550 S. Carbon Hill Road in Coal City, IL 60416.

Published in the Coal City Courant on Wednesday, July 2, 2025.

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How to participate in pollinator month

Dear EarthTalk: What is Pollinator Month all about and how can I participate?

-- E.T., via email



Every June, people around the world celebrate Pollinator Month. It's a time to recognize the huge role that bees, butterflies, birds, bats and others play in keeping our environment and food systems going. A big part of that is Pollinator Week, usually held during the third week of June.

It kicked off back in 2007, when the U.S. Senate officially approved it. Since then, it's really taken off, thanks to groups like Pollinator Partnership and local conservation initiatives across the country.

Pollinators help around 75 percent of all flowering plants reproduce. That means everything from wildflowers to crops like apples, almonds, coffee and chocolate. In fact, more than a third of the food we eat depends on them in one way or another. According to the U.S.

Department of Agriculture (USDA), pollinators contribute over \$20 billion annually to the U.S. agriculture industry.

However, there is a problem with pollinators. Their numbers are dropping. Some causes of the decline include habitat loss, heavy pesticide use, disease, invasive species and climate change. Pollinators are under stress. That's where Pollinator Month comes in. It's not just a celebration; it's a push to do better by these species and the systems they support.

There are several ways that one can join Pollinator Month. You don't need to be a scientist or farmer. One of the best ways to help is to plant a pollinator-friendly garden. Native plants that bloom across different seasons work best, like milkweed, lavender, wildflowers and mint. You can skip the harsh chemicals, too. Neonotinoids, in particular, are known to harm bees and other helpful insects.

There are also plenty of local events to get involved with during June. Garden walks, library story times, seed swaps, even community cleanups and workshops. People are also adding bee hotels, bat boxes or simple water dishes in their yards to support pollinators where they live. Online toolkits from groups

like Pollinator.org offer region-specific advice.

"We are determined to be part of the solution," said Josette Lewis, Chief Scientific Officer at the Almond Board of California. "Pollinators are crucial for our food production and for our entire ecosystem." Laurie Davies Adams, CEO of Pollinator Partnership, adds, "Each of us can take meaningful action and it starts in our own backyards."

Beyond just gardens and local events, Pollinator Month also gets schools, businesses and parks involved by encouraging them to plant native flowers and cut back on pesticides. Lots of groups are pushing for pollinator corridors too. These help connect habitats so pollinators can move safely through cities and countryside.

By supporting things like this and sharing what you learn, everyone can chip in to help slow pollinator declines and protect the important work they do. Even small things like planting a few native flowers or skipping pesticides really do add up over time. Together these small efforts make a big difference for pollinators and honestly for all of us.

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Summerfest carnival ride arm bands, mega passes on sale

It's time to buy Braidwood Summerfest Carnival ride armbands early and save some money!

Ticket sales begin Thursday, July 3 and ends Thursday, July 17 at 3 p.m. before the midway opens.

Unlimited ride armbands are \$25 each, a savings of \$3 each when bought ahead of time. They will cost \$28 on the midway.

These armbands can be used on one of the following ride sessions: Thursday, July 17, 5 p.m. to 10 p.m.; Friday, July 18, 6 p.m. to 11 p.m.; Saturday, July 19, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., or

6p.m. to 11 p.m.; or Sunday July 20, 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. or 6 p.m. to 10 p.m.

A Mega Pass wristband is also being offered. They are \$70 each in advance. At the midway they will be sold for \$80. These special wristbands may be utilized for the entire time of the carnival.

Mega Pass wristbands must remain on the person's wrist for the entire duration of the festival in order to be valid. But oh so much worth the savings of \$10 each.

The First Presbyterian Church of Braidwood is coordinating the pre-sale campaign and will receive a

percentage from every pre-sale ticket and armband sold in advance. Not only are you helping yourselves, you are also helping the Braidwood Lions Club and the Presbyterian Church.

These pre-sale items are available at these fine locations until Thursday, July 18, at 4 p.m. in Braidwood: Berkot's Super Foods, Whitmore Ace Hardware, Hairagain, Rockin Robin's Hair Salon, Fossil Ridge Library and Braidwood City Hall. In Godley at Clip & Sip Hair Salon and Shelley's Hair Salon. In Diamond visit the Midland State Bank.

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Deadline for vendors for Lions Summerfest is Thursday

The Lions Club of Braidwood is seeking vendors for the Braidwood Lions Club Summerfest flea market and arts and crafts show on Saturday and Sunday, July 19-20 at Braidwood City Park, 245 W. First St., Braidwood.

Vendor applications and payment must be postmarked or time stamped by Thursday, July 3. No late applications will be accepted.

Vendor packets may be found online at www.braidwoodlions.org under the Summerfest page.

Vendors may also con-

tact Elaine Burd at (603) 762-8872 or via email, ebelawske@gmail.com.

Please note that no more spots with electric are available.

The 44th Annual Braidwood Summerfest will take place July 17 through July 20. The festival includes a carnival, entertainment, parade, baby contest, car show, pie eating contest, flea market and arts and craft show, bingo and a food court.

Visit the Braidwood Lions Facebook page for information.

‘Protecting’ Illinois is one thing, but making it better is another

“I ran for governor in 2018 to change our story,” Gov. JB Pritzker told a Chicago crowd last Thursday morning as he announced his bid for a third term. “I ran for governor in 2022 to keep telling our story. And I am running for governor in 2026 to protect our story.”

This general theme of protecting what Gov. Pritzker maintains is Illinois’ progress from damage by President Donald Trump will be the foundation of the governor’s reelection bid - at least for the foreseeable future.

The governor’s state office provided an example of this potential harm earlier in the week, when it warned of a provision in the congressional budget proposal to shift billions of dollars in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program costs from the federal government to the states.

“For Illinois, that shift could mean taking on more than \$1.2 billion in additional costs annually, placing a massive strain on



CAPITOL FACTS

Rich Miller

Illinois’ budget and threatening funding for other essential services like education and healthcare,” the statement read.

The US Senate’s parliamentarian had originally ruled against the SNAP provision in the chamber’s budget reconciliation bill, but the majority Republicans revised the language and it was approved Thursday.

That \$1.2 billion will likely pale in comparison to expected Medicaid cuts. Illinois simply doesn’t have the recurring revenue needed to make up the difference.

“Earthquakes are coming,” Pritzker warned in his address about the coming months and years.

So, for now, it’s “Pritzker the Protector.” But, eventually, it would be nice to see some fresh and new ideas.

The governor’s 2021 reelection announcement was all about looking back at his leadership during the pandemic. Four years later, his latest announcement was heavy on his accomplishments and little about the future, except that it looks really bleak

under Donald Trump and he will do his best to shield the state from it.

The Trump references were so thick that you could conceivably call this the first kick-off speech of the 2028 presidential campaign.

“The workers of today and tomorrow choose Illinois because we built an iron wall around their freedoms — and because we told the fascist freakshow fanatics to run their experiments on ending democracy somewhere else,” the governor said.

Except Pritzker’s currently only running for reelection. Maybe try one election at a time. And while 2019 - his first year in office - was a whirlwind of activity, much more still needs to be done.

For example, the Illinois Economic Policy Institute and the Project for Middle Class Renewal at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign released a study this week showing the state has an existing housing shortage of 142,000 units and needs to build 227,000 new homes over the next five years “to keep pace with demand.”

The governor said housing costs too much during his speech, but didn’t say what he’d do about it.

You may recall that Pritzker demanded action on the housing shortage during his State of the State address in February, saying his special task force on housing affordability had come up with some solutions and those should be enacted. But, after some progress, the bill stalled out.

One of the panel’s

short-term ideas was to require the state’s pension funds to invest in housing development. But the provisions to require or incentivize local governments to remove barriers to new housing was a big sticking point.

Pritzker’s implementation record leaves much to be desired. Six years after legalizing cannabis, for instance, the original equity promises are nowhere near fulfilled. If they were, it would be a whole lot easier to convince the Illinois House to regulate the intoxicating hemp “gray market.”

And the governor was right when he said, “the answer starts with growing Illinois’ economy.” But economic growth as a whole has most definitely lagged here.

“Let me be clear,” Pritzker said, “There is no Mission Accomplished banner to stand under today. Yes, we have addressed so many of our old problems — but new ones always arise. History is an endless relay race. Our job is not to look for the finish line but to protect the baton as we run our assigned leg.”

Are we better off as a state than we were in 2018? Governmentally, yes.

Of course. I would never want to revert to the state governments we had during the first 18 years of this century.

Could we as a state be much better? Absolutely. And it’s time to try.

But that requires some concrete plans.

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

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Iowa State University dean's list

Iowa State University students Ethan Ros Pickard of Braidwood, Caroline Kulach of Custer Park and Christian Koca of Wilmington have been recognized for outstanding academic achievement by being named to the 2025 spring semester Dean's List.

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Wild berries are the way to a hippie's heart

ELAINE FISHER-OHLUND
FOOD FOR THE SOUL

My phone rang the other day and to my surprise it was brother-in-law Matt Ragain calling.

Typically our conversations consist of me asking him how to build something: like a cold plunge or a garden box, and then he usually ends with his best advice on what crypto to invest in. But this time was different.

Anticipating this was the call about our crypto coin hitting. "Hey Matt how's it going?"

I could tell he was munching on something.

"I was just walking my property and found a crap ton of wild black raspberry bushes," he said. "I know your hippie a\$\$ is all about eating from Mother Nature so I figured I would call and let you know you could come picking if you want."

Matt knows I like anything growing wild, with the exception of wild men, of which I was lucky enough to tame one and marry him.

"Thanks Matt I appreciate that."

The next day I called him back to check on how he was feeling.

"Fine, why, are you ok?"

"Yea I just wanted to make sure you didn't poison yourself eating berries off a bush in your backyard, are you sure they are black raspberries?"

"Positive, we use to have them out at Ragainville and my Ma Peggy would make us all go pickin' before we were allowed to go swimmin'."

Smart woman I thought. I wish I could have met her. Sounds a lot like my beloved grandma. God rest your soul Ma Peggy.

Reassured that the wild berries were safe, Layla and I made our way to their property.

This first thing I did was open the plant app on my phone to snap a photo. I love the app despite its \$39.99 a year download.

It's called "Picture this" and you just take a photo of any plant and it will identify it. The app will list all the steps on how to take care of the plant and its needs.

I was shocked at how many medicinal plants I have found on my own property with this app. It led me down a rabbit hole of research to find natural, free remedies.

The picture identification came back as black raspberries so Layla and I began picking. I was surprised she didn't complain about the heat on one of those blistering hot days last week.

We were baking in the sun and I saw a bead of sweat drip from the tip of her nose.

That's when she bent up, held out her hand and exclaimed, "Mom, look at the size of this berry!"

It was big and plump but instead of dropping it into her pail, she popped it into her mouth. Her grin included purple-stained lips.

I laughed as she challenged me into who could find the biggest berry. Which soon turned into a lesson.

"Mom why are the berries at the bottom of the bushes always better?"

"That seems to be the case doesn't it. Maybe it's because they are being shaded and raspberry bushes need shade." Googling later we found out



Photo by Elaine Fisher-Ohlund

LAYLA OHLUND brings her uncle Matt Ragain one of our popsicles we made from his wild black raspberry bush.

that was the case.

"Or maybe it's because they are closer to Mother Earth?"

Which I thought how intuitive because she was correct. Closer to the roots where the bush receives the minerals from Mother Earth, she nurtures so many things.

Feeling the warmth of the sun, listening to birds chirp and picking wild berries, some ending up in our bellies instead of the bucket was sweet peace.

When we were done and walking back to the car Layla spoke up, "Mom I think we deserve a popsicle." I agreed. It had been years since I sat in the shade on a hot day and enjoyed a popsicle, so we did just that.

I don't know if its because I'm on this journey of health eliminating harmful ingredients and going natural as possible, but I immediately tasted artificial sweeteners. It wasn't appetizing to me anymore.

My body and mind have adjusted over time and crave real things. Not to mention the sugar always sends Layla into a rush of dopamine with a crash after. So I started researching and found a raspberry lemon popsicle made with natural sweeteners and only five ingredients.

It took some time to smash and extract the seeds from the berries but before long I had Layla filling up the mixture into a silicone popsicle mold. We made a dozen popsicles and stocked the freezer with them for a perfect treat on a hot day.

Truth be told, I think taking food in it's purest form from Mother Earth and then calling a friend to share it with does something for the soul.

The deeper connection I have with Mother Nature, natural ingredients, friends and family, the better I feel. And the older I get, I realize that's more valuable than any crypto. Thanks uncle Matt for inspiring my popsicles, maybe the hippies were onto something :):Peace

Ingredients

- 2 cups fresh blackberries or raspberries
- 1 cup freshly squeezed lemon juice (about 5-6 lemons)

- 1/2 cup honey or maple syrup (I did 1/4 cup Hodgen Honey and 1/4 cup maple syrup)
- 1 cup water
- A pinch of salt

Directions

Rinse the berries under cold water, drain and let dry well.

In a blender, combine berries, lemon juice, honey (or maple syrup), water, and a pinch of salt. Taste the mixture and adjust sweetness if necessary by adding more honey or syrup. Blend again.

Tip: If you prefer a smoother popsicle, strain

the mixture through a fine mesh sieve to remove seeds. Even though the seeds are a good source of fiber, too many can ruin the fun for youngsters, so this is up to your personal preference.

Carefully pour the mixture into popsicle molds, filling each just below the

top. Place popsicle sticks in the center of each mold.

Transfer the molds to the freezer and allow them to freeze for 6 hours or overnight until completely solid. To enjoy the popsicles, briefly run warm water over the outside of the molds to loosen them.

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Sun. June 29 - Smallmouth Bass - Smallie Searchin Day - Kankakee River Trading Post

Mon. June 30 - Rock Bass - Rock Mining Day - Nancy Witthoft

Tues. July 1 - Flathead Catfish - Mayor Charles Steele Channel Catfish - Dr. Waldschmidt

Wed. July 2 - Northern Pike - Pike Plugging Day - Reed's Rent All

Thur. July 3 - Crappie - Crappie Jigging Day - APBA

Fri. July 4 - Walleye - Wally Walleye Day - Daily Journal

Sat. July 5 - Any Species Excluding Catfish and Rough Fish - Kids Corkin Day - Kankakee Sportsmen's Club

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4 FISH \$1000 CASH

DAILY JOURNAL

Casino Bus Trip New Buffalo, MI July 16, 2025



Bus departs the Wilmington Moose parking lot at 8:30 a.m. & returns approximately 5:30 p.m.

You **MUST** be registered and paid by July 9.

You can register at the Wilmington Moose or call Judy Radosevich at 708-494-8480.



OBITUARIES

Gloria A. Bormet

NEW LENOX—Gloria A. Bormet (nee Perry), 74, of New Lenox, passed away unexpectedly on Monday, June 23, 2025, at Silver Cross Hospital in New Lenox.

She was born in Texas to the late Harold and Ethel Perry. Gloria graduated from Plainfield High School. She loved Elvis and reading books. Gloria retired from First Midwest Bank, where she worked as Supervisor of Account Reconciliation. She was a member of Grace Lutheran Church, Wilmington where she was also part of the PEO. She enjoyed family parties and spending time with family and friends. Gloria will be missed by all who knew and loved her.



She was a beloved wife of the late Warren V. Bormet; loving mother of Jennifer Rosenberg and Amanda (Christopher) Rebout; cherished Grammie of Addison and Alexander Rosenberg, Niall, Callum, and Lucille Rebout; loved aunt, cousin, and friend of many.

Funeral Services were held Monday, June 30, 2025, at 10:30am in the funeral home chapel. Interment followed at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery, Elwood, IL.

Kurtz Memorial Chapel, 102 E. Francis Rd., New Lenox was in charge of arrangements.

Nancy Jacobek

MORRIS—Nancy Jacobek, 84, of Morris, passed away peacefully at home in Chicago on Saturday, June 28, 2025, surrounded by her loving family.

Born Aug. 9, 1940 in Chicago, Nancy was a daughter of William and Mary Bernice (Sullivan) Madden. She was raised in Chicago, graduating from Saint Patrick Academy in Des Plaines in 1958. On June 22, 1963, Nancy married James "Jake" Jacobek at Saint Monica's Roman Catholic Church. After losing her mother to Alzheimer's, Nancy dedicated herself to helping others as a helpline counselor and support coordinator for the Alzheimer's Association.

She was a devout member of Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Catholic Church in Coal City. Nancy found great pleasure in photography, active in both the Photographic Society of America and the Chicago Area Camera Club.

Survivors include her husband of 62 years, Jake Jacobek; three daughters: Theresa (Tony) Kyriazes, Lisa (Greg) Holmes, Julia (Don) Simone; loving Nana



to James, Andrew (Arielle), Steven, Raymond (Nikie), Sean, Megan, Taylor, Joel; proud Gigi to 10 great-grandchildren; loving sister-in-law of Mary Ellen Madden and Ronald (Darlene) Jacobek, a beloved aunt, cousin and friend to many.

Nancy was preceded in death by her parents, brothers: Michael John (Nicky) Madden, William Madden; a sister in infancy, Mary Ellen, who was six months old.

The family will receive friends at Reeves Funeral Home, 75 N. Broadway, in Coal City on Wednesday, July 2, 2025, between 3 and 8 p.m.

A Mass of Christian Burial will follow on Thursday, July 3, 2025, at 10 a.m. at Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Catholic Church, 195 S. Kankakee St. in Coal City, with Father Josh Miller celebrating.

Cremation rites will be accorded following funeral services.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made as gifts in Nancy's memory to the Wounded Warrior Project.

Bruce Filbrandt

MCNABB—Bruce A. Filbrandt, 88 of McNabb, IL formally of Muscatine, IA passed away peacefully Sunday, June 22, 2025 at Liberty Village in Princeton, IL.

Bruce was born Sept. 18, 1936 in Davenport, IA to Herman and Mable (Drescher) Filbrandt. He married Belinda Alderson on May 28, 1994.

Bruce farmed in Muscatine, IA, owned his own Lawncare service and was a member of the Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 25 in Iowa until his retirement in 1994.

Bruce AKA "The Axe-Man- The Brucester," wrote the Keokuk Axe Book which he did all the research, photography and drawings from 1994-1997. The book printed in July 1997. He found his first arrowhead when he was 14 years old. He was the past President of the Iowa Archaeology Society 1988, 1998, 1999. When he moved to McNabb he hosted the Starved Rock Show in LaSalle. He belonged to the Illinois Archeology Society, Ohio State Archeology Society and the Genuine Indian Relic Society.

Bruce was also a 32nd Degree Mason,



Scottish Right, member of the NRA and Crime Stoppers.

Surviving is his son Paul Filbrandt of LeClaire, IA; Stepdaughter Kristen (Bob) Kirkland of Godley, IL; Granddaughters: Jessica Kirkland of Joliet; Clarissa Kirkland of Wilmington; Savannah Tague of LeClaire, IA; Cheyanna Tague of Davenport, IA; son in law Kenny Tague; Greatgrandchildren: Kaydon, Blake, Colton and a special peanut coming soon.

Also surviving are his very special friends: Sue, Jim, Tabitha, Matt, Lacey, Tinlee, Addie, Marcus and Torri.

Bruce was preceded in death by his parents Herman and Mable, wife Belinda, daughter Pam Tague and his in-laws Clarence and Ferena Blottiaux.

In memory of Bruce and for his love of feline friends Midnight and Missy please make donations to Friends Of Strays in Princeton, IL.

Private family services will be held. The Helmer-Shields Funeral Home in Granville is entrusted with the arrangements.

Kerri Ann Kinnett

MORRIS—In Loving Memory of Kerri Ann Kinnett- March 30, 1988- June 26, 2025. The world lost a little color, a lot of laughter, and a whole lot of heart when Kerri Ann Kinnett, of Morris, passed away far too soon at the age of 37. A beloved mother, daughter, sister, friend, and walking ray of sarcastic sunshine, Kerri's spirit was one-of-a-kind, and frankly, we're still not sure how we're supposed to carry on without her witty comebacks and surprise pinches.

Kerri was many things in this life-first and foremost, a devoted Catholic and a fiercely loving mother to her three incredible children: Micaela, Benjamin (Benny), and Lillian (Lilly). Her kids were her world, her pride, and, often, the subjects of her many camera rolls. Whether striking a goofy pose or capturing a quiet, meaningful moment, Kerri was a constant in front of the lens and a master behind it-creating memories everywhere she went.

She and her younger brother, Josh, shared a bond that went beyond blood. They both loved to skateboard-often racing each other down sidewalks or challenging each other to try new tricks. Somehow, without planning it, her partner said they'd show up in matching converse more times than they could count, shaking their heads and laughing at their unintentional twining moment. It was just one of many examples of the quiet, joyful connections Kerri had with the people she loved.

Professionally, Kerri was a crisis hotline worker, a job that required strength, empathy, and a gift for connection. She gave comfort to strangers on their worst days, and in doing so, changed more lives than she ever realized. It was just her nature to help-to listen without judgment, and to love without conditions.

A traveler by heart and foot, Kerri never passed up a good hike, a scenic walk with her dogs, or an excuse to get "just a little lost" on the long way home. If she wasn't exploring the outdoors, she was diving into the pages of a new book-libraries and bookstores being some of her favorite places on earth. If it smelled like old pages and whispered adventure, Kerri was there.

Kerri earned her bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice from Hawaii Pacific



University (yes, she went to school in paradise). She was currently working towards her master's degree in Psychology to work as a therapist. Her sharp mind, sense of justice, and ability to sniff out nonsense from a mile away were all hallmarks of her personality-along with her firm belief that being late was just another form of punctuality. "Right on time" was whenever Kerri arrived.

She was hilarious. Her humor could defuse any situation or make you laugh until you cried. She called her best friend's kids her "practice kids" and proudly carried the title "Auntie Kerri" for life. And she had this uncanny ability to deliver an "OMG" moment with a perfectly timed random pinch-no one was safe, and we're all better for it.

Kerri is survived by her three children: Micaela, Benjamin, Lillian Burbank; her mother, Kimberly Kinnett; father, John Kinnett and girlfriend, Tina McMahon; younger brother, Josh Kinnett, Noa, Pierce, and Reyna; Godmother, Lisa Hager, her partner, Josh Cockream; many aunts and uncles; a pack of cousins who doubled as best friends and her ride-or-die soul sisters: Rheanon Hicks, Nicki Perveiler, Jennifer Garrison, Heidi Shemberg, Mallory Schutt, and Allison Wolf.

She was preceded in death and joined in His Grace by her beautiful niece, Jordyn Dumont and Don and Kay Kinnett.

While we mourn the loss of this beautiful, irreverent, radiant woman, we take comfort knowing Kerri is off somewhere hiking the most scenic path imaginable, dogs at her side, coffee in hand, book in her bag, and probably running fashionably late to meet the angels-who, by now, have surely been pinched.

A visitation for Kerri will be held on Wednesday, July 2, 2025, at U.C. Davis Callahan Funeral Home in Morris from 3 to 7 p.m. A celebration of Kerri's life will be held on Thursday, July 3, 2025, at 10 a.m. at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Morris.

In honor of Kerri, the family encourages everyone to share a story, a song, or a spontaneous "OMG!" and to remember her exactly as she was: hilarious, brave, beautiful, and unforgettable.

Rest easy, Kerri. Heaven just got a little louder-and a lot more fun.

Daniel Seybert

COAL CITY—Daniel L. Seybert, 58 of Coal City passed away peacefully at home Wednesday, June 25, 2025.

Daniel was born Nov. 17, 1966 in Joliet. He was the son of Jerome Seybert and his mother Sandy Bell of Coal City. He was



raised and educated in Coal City.

Daniel is survived by his mother; sister, Kim Marchese of Coal City; four nephews and one niece.

There will not be any services.

Recycling involves more than just placing items in the bin. The internet is filled with creative people repurposing materials in innovative ways. For example, cardboard egg cartons can be transformed into seeding planters.

State Police arrest woman for I-57 semi-tractor crash

Illinois State Police (ISP) Division of Criminal Investigation arrested Lisa E. Cotton, 31, from Blue Island, for aggravated reckless driving resulting in injury (Class 4 Felony) during an semi-tractor trailer crash on Interstate 57 near Kankakee.

On June 26, at approximately 5:48 a.m., ISP responded to a rollover crash that occurred on I-57 southbound, near exit 312 in Kankakee.

The preliminary investigation revealed that a truck-tractor had overturned and became engulfed in fire.

The sole occupant of the vehicle, 57-year-old James C. Denton, was transported to the hospital with significant injuries.

After a thorough investigation, ISP special agents identified Cotton as the at-fault driver. They determined Cotton had left the area immediately after the crash.



LISA COTTON

That same day, ISP patrol units located and apprehended Cotton at her residence in Blue Island.

The Kankakee County State's Attorney's Office reviewed the facts of the case and approved charges including aggravated reckless driving, leaving the scene of a crash resulting in injury (Class 3 felony), and failure to report a crash resulting in injury (Class 2 felony).

Cotton is currently detained at the Kankakee County Jerome Combs Detention Center.

Essex resident is exceptional CT Technologist at Morris Hospital

For CT Technologist Megan Horn, a career in diagnostic imaging is more than a profession; it's a family tradition.

Inspired by her sister, an X-ray Tech who often shared stories of helping patients, Horn developed an early interest in health care. That interest continued to be fueled by her

experience working as a CNA throughout high school, solidifying her desire to make a difference in patients' lives.

Over the past four years at Morris Hospital, Horn has earned a reputation of being a compassionate CT Tech who is always willing to learn and help others learn. In recognition

of her unwavering commitment to excellence, Horn has been named Morris Hospital's June Fire Starter of the Month.

"Megan is an excellent technologist who provides outstanding care to our patients," says Jeff Thompson, Manager of Imaging Services at Morris Hospital & Healthcare Centers.

"She's incredibly hard-working, brings a positive attitude every day, and helps ensure things run smoothly whenever she's on shift. She is incredibly deserving of the fire starter award and embodies everything a fire starter should be."

Horn's journey into healthcare began early in her life when she enrolled in the CNA program through the Wilco Area Career Center. After high school, the Essex resident completed a two-year radiography program at Kankakee Community College.

She had planned to return to school for CT when a friend working at Morris Hospital encouraged her to apply for a role in the Imaging Services Department. What caught her attention was the opportunity to work as an X-Ray Tech while being cross-trained in CT and learn directly from experienced technologists.

"I was really excited to join Morris Hospital," says Horn. "The cross-training in CT was a big draw for me because I knew that was something that interested

me. As I researched more about Morris Hospital, I became more and more impressed by everything the hospital does for the community. After interviewing and meeting the staff I would be working with, I knew this was the place I wanted to be."

When nominating Horn for Fire Starter, CT Technologist Jessica Gerard wrote that Horn is a role model for her coworkers.

"Megan pays great attention to details and is always willing to share information and knowledge with her coworkers," wrote Gerard. "Megan's positive attitude, exceptional work ethic, and dedication to excellence make her highly respected by her peers. Her calm presence when dealing with critical trauma patients is a huge asset to our department."

Horn's leadership and contributions have not gone unnoticed, as she received seven separate fire starter nominations. Across the nominations, her coworkers praised her for her dependability, compassion, and ability to work seamlessly within teams.

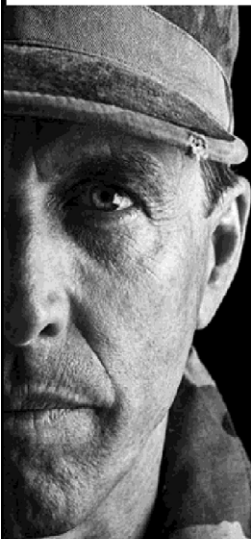
When asked about the best part of her job, Horn is quick to reflect on the people she works with.

"I am so lucky to work with such incredible people who are always a support system to me," says Horn. "We all work so closely together and with that we all depend on each other to provide patients the best possible care. That is what I strive for every day."



MEGAN HORN

HELP FOR VETERANS



BE THE ONE is the suicide prevention part of the American Legion. Vets can call: 779-206-8391, The Wilmington Help Line to talk with a Veteran who has had PTSD. There is help, only a phone call away.

In an emergency text the Veterans CRISIS LINE 988 THEN PRESS 1

Free electronics, scrap metal drop-off in Wilmington

Will County's 1165 S. Water St., next free electronics drop-off event All electronic items (broken or obsolete) are accepted. Items include: televisions

HELP WANTED

The Coal City Public Library District is accepting applications for the following part-time position:

Job Title: Youth Services Librarian

Pay: \$21.25 per hour – Non-Exempt

Hours: 30 hours per week

Benefits: Flexible scheduling, paid time off, and IMRF participation.

Qualifications: Bachelor's Degree preferred. Enjoys working with all children and teens. Creative, dynamic, and organized. Plan and conduct programs for children from birth through teens. Ability to work with computers. Experiences in field of teaching or librarianship is desirable.

Please submit your application and resume

(limit 2), computers and monitors including desktops, laptops, notebooks, tablets, e-readers), printers, electronic keyboards, fax machines, video-cassette 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, Insta-pot, 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.

Also accepted are small scrap metal items 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.

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.

Gas higher, but prices may drop

Average gasoline prices in Illinois have risen 5.3 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$3.46/g Monday, according to GasBuddy's survey of 4,378 stations in Illinois.

Prices in Illinois are 9.6 cents per gallon higher than a month ago.

The national average price of diesel has increased 2.7 cents in the last week and stands at \$3.67 per gallon.

GasBuddy released its 2025 Independence Day gas price forecast, projecting the national average price of gas to fall to \$3.15 per gallon on July 4, down nearly 35 cents from last year's July 4 average.

In Wilmington, you can still buy gas for \$3.18/g at BP. The most you'll pay is \$3.59/g. In Braidwood, Marathon is lowest at \$3.45/g, with Casey's charging \$3.59/g.

The Coal City

Shell is \$3.29/g and Gas N Wash tops out at \$3.59/g.

In Morris, expect to pay \$3.23/g at Pilot, up to \$3.39/g at Citgo. Bourbonnais, which usually has the lowest prices, is also up, with gas at \$3.23/g at Gulf, up to \$3.29/g at Speedway.

"For motorists planning to hit the road for

Independence Day, gas prices are expected to continue falling nearly coast to coast in the lead-up to July 4," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy.

"Relief" could expand as the holiday weekend approaches, with the national average on track to hit its lowest July 4

level since 2021 at \$3.15 per gallon, we project. As long as tensions in the Middle East remain contained and the U.S. avoids a major hurricane, we could see the national average fall below \$3 per gallon later this summer."

The lowest price in the state on Sunday was \$2.75/g while the highest was \$4.79/g.

Food & Fun at Forked Creek Preserve

The Forest Preserve is hosting "Fun and food trucks" on Friday, July 11, from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Forked Creek Preserve at Forsythe Woods in Wilmington.

Enjoy food, drinks, lawn games, live music by Michael C. Hayes and more. Smokin' Z BBQ and Rt. 66 Old School Brewing will be on site. The 2025 series is sponsored by Old National Bank. All ages; free entry. Food available for purchase.

WHS 50th reunion set for July 19

The WHS Class of '75 will hold their 50-year class reunion at the Wilmington VFW on July 19, from 6:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.

All classmates, spouse/guests and friends are invited to attend. There will be a \$25 per person cash fee at the door. Bring memorabilia to share.

The evening before, July 18, there will be an informal get-together at Haydens Crossing at 7 p.m. and for Sunday, July 20 at Symerton Tap.

A tour of the high school has been arranged for 4 p.m. on July 19 for those interested.

Ongoing updates are available on the Wilmington High School Class of '75 Facebook page.

CLASSIFIEDS

APARTMENTS FOR RENT

Coal City, 550 W. Daisy Place Apt. #4, 2 BR, 1 BA, nice kitchen, w/d connection, stove & refrigerator, \$975/mo. No pets. 815-941-4832. cc26-29

BOATS

Boat & Trailer \$500. Wilmington, 12 foot fishing boat with Sears trailer. Have title for both. 815-325-6876. ca27

HELP WANTED

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.spectrumnursesna.com cc20-39

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Julie's Remodeling Siding, soffit, roof repairs, painting, seamless gutters, fencing, tree removal, lawn care, Complete Handyman service! Bonded and Insured, 20 yrs., Call Lee 815-791-5731.

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Mike Collins Roofing, re-shingles and gutter cleaning, aluminum gutter screen, no repair to small or too big. Free roof inspection. Low prices. Lic #104.007296 Ask for Mike at 815-730-1303. ch21-46

A Thousand Words Photography Mandy 815-791-2913

WANTED TO BUY

Cash paid for fossils for old fossil collections. Call Pat 630-632-9292. cc25-28

CITY OF BRAIDWOOD PART-TIME ZONING CLERK POSITION

The City of Braidwood is currently accepting applications for the position of Part-Time Zoning Clerk. This position is 24 hours per week and reports directly to the City Administrator, Mayor, and Finance Commissioner.

Responsibilities: The Zoning Clerk will perform a variety of administrative and clerical duties related to zoning, planning, and general office support as needed. Key areas of responsibility include:

- Zoning and planning
- Code enforcement
- Land use regulations

This position provides essential support to the City Administrator and the Planning and Zoning Commission by assisting in the implementation and enforcement of:

- City ordinances
- Zoning codes
- Land development policies

Applications are available on our website at www.braidwood.us or in person at City Hall. Additional information about this position is available on our website under Job Posting. The deadline for accepting applications is Monday, July 14, 2025, at 3:00 PM.

MISCELLANEOUS

Martin 12 string with case, \$450. Epiphone G400 with case, \$300 (black). Squier telecaster with case, \$300 (natural). Fender acoustosonic 100W amp, \$200. Alto Spectrum PA 200W, \$200. 2 guitar stools with backrests, \$35 each. Epiphone Les Paul Studio with case, \$300 (burgundy). Guitar rack holds 5 guitars, \$50. Call Bob 815-458-3010. cc26-29

PETS

Large Selection of Dog and Cat Food, treats, accessories, health aids, clothing, Birthday treats, wall art, jewelry, gifts, greeting cards and Home of Fritters for Critters Pet Treats. New! Brew and Chew Dog Treats. Trinity Barkery 240 W. Baltimore Wilmington., IL 60481 815-476-5104 slewis@trinityservices.org.

STORAGE

PUBLIC STORAGE
Clementine's Closets
815-530-0200
- No Deposit -
Starting at \$50
515 Davy Lane, Wilmington

WANTED

WANTED SCRAP METAL

- Farm Machinery
- Garden Tractors
- Snowmobiles
- Appliances
- Anything Metal

Free pickup
7 days
815-210-8819

Catfish Days Craft Show and Flea Market

A craft show and flea market is planned for Saturday, July 26, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the downtown antique district during Catfish Days. Spaces are assigned first come, first served with a limited number of spaces available. No electricity available.

Check in as early as 6:30 a.m. at North Water and Van Buren street. Vendors must arrive by 8 a.m. and remove all vehicles by 8:40 a.m. or your spaces will be forfeited.

The non-refundable cost is \$35 for 10-foot x10-foot spaces postmarked on or before July 12; \$50 postmarked July 13-19. Do not mail after July 19. Spaces paid for the day of the event will be \$65. Fresh food vendors who prepare food on site pay \$100 through until July 12 for a 10'x20' space. If paid after July 12 the price will be \$150. Food vendors must also be permitted by the Will County Health Department so be sure to contact them.

All interested parties, including Wilmington non-profit organizations, must pay for a space.

Complete the contract below. Detach and return it with a check made payable to **Women of Wilmington**. Mail to: Women of Wilmington, PO Box 13, Wilmington, IL 60481. Email questions to thewomenofwilmington@gmail.com. Post dated checks will not reserve a space. Confirmations will be emailed the week of the show.

Catfish Days Committee and Women of Wilmington will not assume liability for any losses, damages or injuries sustained by exhibitors or spectators.

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Contact Person: _____

Signature: _____

Email address: _____

List what will be sold: _____

How many spaces? (Circle one): 1 2 3 4 5

Braidwood Lions Club 2025 Summerfest Parade

Sunday, July 20, 1 p.m.

Lineup - 12:30 p.m.

on Mitchell Street near Casey's

Name: _____

Address: _____

City _____ Phone: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

Description of entry: _____

Phone: _____

Put an X only one:

Vehicle _____ Band _____ Float _____

Walking _____ Color Guard _____

Horse _____ Golf Cart _____ Historical _____

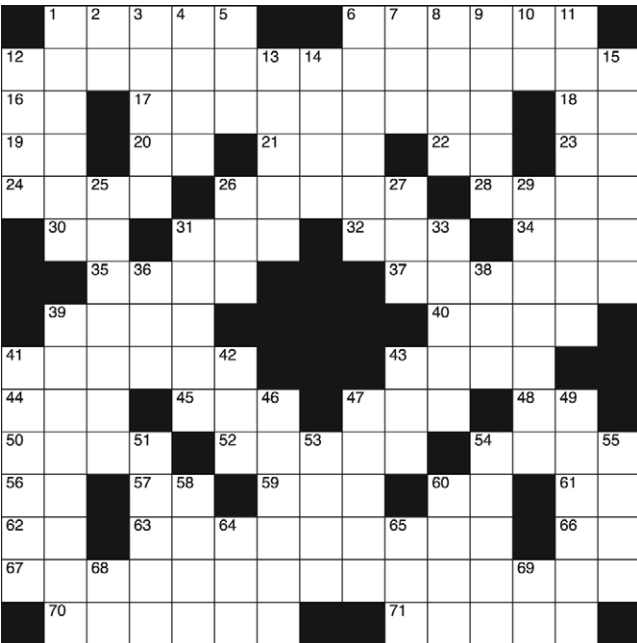
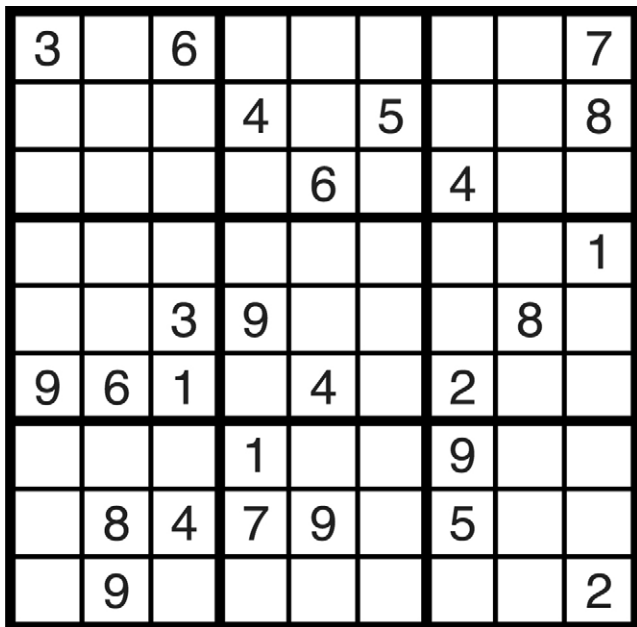
Political: _____ (A monetary donation of \$25 to the Braidwood Lions Club will be appreciated)

The theme for the parade is "An Under The Sea Adventure".

Parade Route: Begins at Main/Mitchell Street, travels west on Main Street, turning south on Walker Street where it will end. Participants will continue South on Walker Street to Kennedy Road and disperse to an unloading location of their choice or pull into the horseshoe drive behind the Reed-Custer Intermediate School to unload.

For more information or questions contact Parade Coordinator Angie Hutton at 815-353-3053 or Jessica Adam-Keymon at (815)274-1498.

Send entry form by email braidwoodlionsclub@yahoo.com or mail to Braidwood Lions Club Summerfest, Attn: Parade Coordinator, 198 N. Lincoln St., Braidwood, IL 60408

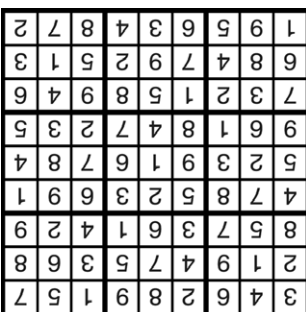


CLUES ACROSS

- Notes
- Long-haired dog breed
- ESPN's nickname
- Spanish be
- Disadvantage
- Of I
- Actor Pacino
- On your way: ___ route
- Fifth note of a major scale
- Companies need it
- News agency
- Faces of an organization
- Ponds
- Samoa's capital
- Partner to "Pa"
- Adult male
- Cool!
- Used of a number or amount not specified
- No No No
- Hosts film festival
- British place to house convicts
- Made of fermented honey and water
- Chief
- College army
- Thyroid-stimulating hormone
- Consume
- One point north of due east
- For instance
- Brews
- Alaskan river
- Not soft
- Atomic #22
- "The Golden State"
- The world's most famous arena"
- Larry and Curly's pal
- One billion gigabytes
- Conducts inspections
- Malaria mosquitoes
- Unit to measure width
- Features
- Affairs
- Letter of Semitic abjads

CLUES DOWN

- Follower of Islam
- Trauma center
- French young women
- Norse god
- U.S. commercial flyer (abbr.)
- Merchant
- Peyton's younger brother
- Jungle planet in "Star Wars" galaxy
- Tree-dwelling animal of C. and S. America
- "Pollack" actor Harris
- Stuck around
- Put on
- Influential Norwegian playwright
- Christian ___, designer
- Fulfills a debt
- Style
- More (Spanish)
- A baglike structure in a plant or animal
- Remedy
- Disturbance
- "The Martian" actor Matt
- Express delight
- Brooklyn hoopster
- 1900 lamp
- Motionless
- One's mother (Brit.)
- Relative biological effectiveness (abbr.)
- Compels to act
- Gardening tool
- Ancient country
- Frightening
- Wimbledon champion Arthur
- Popular plant
- Database management system
- Gasteyer and de Armas are two
- Where soldiers eat
- Tenth month (abbr.)
- Unluminated
- Atomic #18
- Adults need one to travel



City City Strong remembered 10 years later

BY ERIC FISHER
PUBLISHER

Even though 10 years and nine days have elapsed since the biggest disaster to hit Coal City, Village Administrator Matt Fritz, like so many residents, remembers Monday, June 22, 2015, like it happened yesterday.

Around 10 p.m. that night, an EF-3 tornado tore through the village, one of nine to strike north central Illinois that day. A path of destruction, about 3/4 of a mile wide and 16.5 miles long, started northwest of Carbon Hill and ended southeast of Braidwood. It skirted the village's west side near the high school heading southeast, mostly sparing downtown Broadway street north of the tracks.

The National Weather Service (NWS) classified it as the most powerful tornado, with wind speeds of 160 mph, to hit the Chicagoland area in 25 years.

Over 1,300 structures were located within the path of the storm and 884 were damaged. The tornado destroyed 15 homes outright and another 61 were taken down in the days, weeks and months that followed.

Several ComEd high tension metal trusses crumpled, dozens of utility poles and street lights were downed and a certified arborist estimated at least 5,000 trees were lost.

Minutes after the storm passed, first responders descended on the hardest hit areas. As firefighters worked to free those trapped in their homes, police officers and sheriff deputies began house-to-house checks.

It was a miracle that no one was found dead.

Where to start?

"One of the best things Terry (Mayor Halliday) did that first day (June 23) was look over at me and say, 'I don't care the cost, just get the garbage out of here,'" Fritz commented to the Coal City Courant.

The village went into a meeting with its trustees to declare a state of emergency. The action paved the way for the cleanup to begin.

"With the trust and support of the community, we could seemingly accomplish anything," Fritz said as he reflects on the recovery over a decade ago.

He is still thankful for the emergency help the village received from outside agencies including MABAS (mutual aid box alarm system), ILEAS (Illinois Law Enforcement Alarm System), and IPWMAN (Illinois Public Works Mutual Aid Network).

"They were indispensable as well as the local non-profits such as the actions of Catholic Charities and Grundy County COAD."

Even the little things he didn't think about made a difference.

"Like the Village of Diamond letting us entertain the press/media at their village hall for the first week so that part of the day was not occurring at our base of operations within Coal City village hall."

He is grateful too to the people who provided the village quick answers.

"Immediately, I called Will County Executive Larry Walsh and Doug Pryor within Grundy County and we had multiple dumping areas staged because the debris trucks were backing up due to the total number of loads when only one location had been made available."

The total volume of debris was enough to fill 17 football fields and it was done in short order.

The Police Department, along with assisting agencies, kept a tight perimeter in the neighborhoods hardest hit.

"They kept any looting from happening as well as limiting access to gawkers who come along with these types of events. And Public Works' debris management operation was impressive; debris was organized to try and keep appliances and



Photo courtesy Illinois Emergency Management Agency

AN AERIAL VIEW of Qual Run and Pheasant Lane in Coal City shows the extensive damage done to homes by the June 22, 2015 tornado. The photo looking south, was taken by an Illinois State Police airplane the morning following the storm, showing the debris field. The footprint of the inner and out edge of the twister can be seen as it moved from lower right to upper left, moving in a southeast direction.

trees out of the landfills even though the storm debris was great in volume. The grinding of trees operation provided a ton of mulch for the Chicagoland region that year."

He commends Mayor Halliday and the Village Board who stayed focused on the long-term despite having to make quick decisions.

"For example, more dumpsters were ordered up after the original debris hauling deadline, the provision of portable toilets and emergency lighting was extended within the effected neighborhoods. And, despite this tornado occurring at a time when the State of Illinois was without a budget and had no funds to assist us, the Board found a way to provide more funds for more unplanned activities as the response grew in the after-

math," Fritz said.

Still paying

On Day 4 of the response, George Gray, a town manager, was brought in to document the cleanup.

He focused heavily on what would be needed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) to determine possible levels of disaster funding.

The village was told that despite the strong data, it didn't reach the disaster threshold for federal assistance. Even the state said no to covering the \$1 million in immediate costs.

The mayor and village trustees had no alternative but to borrow.

They refinanced \$4.05 million in general obligation bonds (i.e. the 2008 stormwater project bonds) and an additional \$3 million in tornado project relief funds were borrowed.

Fritz said that at this time, \$4,040,000 of principal and \$736,000 of interest remain on that debt. This results in about \$796,000 per year of bond and interest funding from the annual tax levy.

The Federal Highway Authority was the only governmental entity that provided tornado relief funding in the amount of \$90,092. This amount was utilized to repay a portion of the annual debt payment when it was finally received about four years following the tornado.

Homes again

Of the 884 structures damaged, those that were homes have been repaired or rebuilt and are occupied.

"From my recollection there was one acquisition by the Village of Coal City from a homeowner who abandoned their home which was demolished and sold to habitat for Humanity," Fritz noted. "I can think of two of the structures demolished by private owners, and the land beneath sold to their adjacent neighbors in order to make two residential lots larger."

A lasting scar

Evidence of the destruction from a decade ago can be observed with a drive south on Broadway Street.

The canopy of trees is lush from the spotlight south. But cross the railroad tracks and a block later it disappears. It's a lasting scar of the estimated 5,000 trees that were lost.

"Just about everyone who resided within the community prior to that notices the obvious break in the tree density," Fritz said. "It is a very lasting impact from the damage that took place and something that cannot be replaced except with a great deal of time; 10 years has not been enough to replace the canopy."

However, Fritz praised the repeated actions of many agencies, primarily ComEd, to focus upon Arbor Day celebrations following 2015 in which the community was able to participate within planting programs was exceptional and therapeutic.

"So much effort went into repairing the damage in the days that followed the storm that everyone who participated in the tree planting efforts enjoyed rallying around much more positive activities than forcibly cleaning up debris to try and get life back to normal," Fritz commented.

10 years later

As administrator Fritz often reflects back and realizes the village was fortunate to have long-term employees at the time the tornado hit.

"The municipality's focus on retaining good long-term employees as essential to building the knowledge that is necessary when the emergency arrives," he said. "Coal City has focused on that and continues to have a reliable municipal force. The tasks that lie before each of our departments are sizable and tend to continual arise because they are related to seasons, deterioration of infrastructure, or some of the problems that just come with policing a popu-

lation of our size.

"However, we look back on the actions that took place in response to that disaster and are proud of our response to the adversity that was placed before us and the response to it. We believe it is indicative of our mission to serve our community, but we were happy to be one portion of all of the overall response of people who assisted with bringing residents within our community back onto their feet and into their homes."

Coal City Strong

On a personal level Fritz said he takes pride in saying he's administrator of Coal City.

"I was amazed by how steadfast and supportive our residents are for each other. The relief agencies could not believe there was not more problems with displacement than what was being experienced. Friends and family bunked up with others within our community in order to stay close and stay within the community."

"Again, people helped people. Volunteers like Jessica Counterman and Lori Cora just did so much for which this community is eternally grateful and they completed it all without one penny of compensation; there were so many others, but these two ran point and were hour-by-hour involved in the relief effort."

The Long Term Recovery Committee (LTRC) was impressive. Ken Miller was tasked with leading this group, which distributed donations to those in need. Every dollar had been distributed within one year's time, without a dollar of it going to the fund's administration.

"The distributions ranged from smaller at the beginning to tens of thousands to do the work that under-served homeowners had not received from their insurance carriers," Fritz explained. "It was a community taking care of its own. It made us Coal City Strong and I feel 10 years later that hasn't changed."

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\$5

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Courant file photo

THE CLEAN-UP BEGAN the morning after Monday, June 22, 2015 when an E3 tornado swept through Coal City. Family, friends and neighbors banded together to help gather debris and haul it out to the curb for homeowners in the hard-hit areas of Coal City.