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Diamond to offset water rate increase with gaming revenue

BY MIKE LOOMIS
CORRESPONDENT

The Village of Diamond is using proceeds from video gaming to offset an increase in water rates for residents. Costs for water use are typically about \$50 every month for homeowners, but that amount is increasing to just under \$56. The rate increase is necessary for the village to qualify for a \$1.5 million community development block grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Diamond Mayor Terry Kernc said the village needs the funds to replace an aging water main north of Route 113. "[Diamond residents] will not pay that additional cost," Kernc said Monday, adding that she expects the new rate to take effect in August. Residents will see a credit on their bills that comes from the money the village receives from video gaming. The village board discussed the issue at their meeting on June 23 and have already started the permit and grant application process. The grants, which do not require municipalities to provide match-

ing funds, are used to repair and replace outdated utilities and infrastructure. Upgrading the water system in Diamond has been a recent priority, the mayor said. "We just spent \$600,000 about two years ago to replace a water main [on the south side] of the village," Kernc said. A new water main north of Route 113 will leave the village "in excellent shape and prevent any more leaks," she said. The village's water treatment plant, north of Route 113 and east of Will Road, was built in 2009. It treats over 200,000 gallons daily.

Revenue from video gaming is divided among terminal operators, the state local municipalities and licensed establishments. There are 9,000 licensed gaming establishments in the state and over 49,000 machines. According to the Illinois Gaming Board, there are 41 video gaming terminals at seven different locations in Diamond. Over the months of May and June, those locations saw \$339,744 in wagering activity. The village's share during that period was \$17,005.

Big Boy to chug through area

BY ROSE PANIERI
STAFF WRITER

Rail enthusiasts and history buffs will have a rare opportunity to witness one of the world's most famous steam locomotives in history when Union Pacific's Big Boy No. 4014 rumbles its way through our area on Friday, July 17. Restored in 2019, Big Boy is one of eight giant steam locomotives still in existence, and the only one in operation. Big Boy's appearance marks one of the rare occasions the legendary steam locomotive will traverse through northeastern Illinois, giving residents the rare opportunity to witness American railroad history. Last March, Union Pacific Railroad—founded by Abraham Lincoln in 1862 when he signed the Pacific Railway Act—unveiled plans for an East Coast tour in honor of the country's 250th anniversary. "Union Pacific is honored to take part in the 250th anniversary of this great nation," Union Pacific CEO Jim Vena said. "Each of these commemorative locomotives symbolizes the important moments in the history of Union Pacific and the U.S. Our shared history shows the vital role railroads have played and will continue to play for generations to come." **The grand tour** Big Boy is touring as part of Union Pacific's America 250 Celebration, commemorating the nation's 250th anniversary. According to Union Pacific's pub-



THE BIG BOY steam locomotive will pass through the area on tracks parallel to Route 53 and Route 66 on Friday, July 17. The tour is part of Union Pacific's celebration of the 250th Anniversary of the U.S. Photo courtesy Union Pacific Railroad

Pilot Travel Center will bring 40 jobs to the area

BY ROSE PANIERI
STAFF WRITER

After years of negotiations and a few false starts, construction of a new Pilot Travel Center in Gardner is finally becoming a reality. Gardner Mayor Mike Serena provided an update on the long-awaited project during a recent appearance on WCSJ's "People Are Talking," stating the development will bring new jobs, increased tax revenue and additional economic opportunities to the village. The travel center will be built on approximately 5.5 acres of village-

owned property near Interstate 55, just north of Gardner Road, west of Illinois Route 129 and east of the interstate. Serena told WCSJ that the village originally hoped to attract a grocery store to the highly visible site but was unsuccessful despite extensive outreach. "We tried to get grocery stores there," Serena said. "I personally went to different places and tried to woo them. We had all kinds of deals set up. Nobody would take it. They all said there wasn't enough foot traffic." **Guessing game**

Pilot first expressed interest in the property several years ago before abandoning plans, leaving village officials uncertain whether the project would ever materialize. "They offered us money for it, and then out of nowhere they just up and left," Serena said. "We kind of thought maybe they were dangling the carrot in front of Dwight. Then they didn't build there either." After the company revisited the project, Serena admitted he remained cautiously optimistic until construction plans became final. "I was excited, but not really because I've been to this dance before," he said. "They finally went

Registration starts Thursday for new Coal City students

The Coal City School District will host walk-in registration for students new to the school district on Thursday, July 9 from 7:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. and Tuesday, July 14 from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. The first step to register is to complete pre-registration online through the New Student Registration link located on the district website at www.coalcityschools.org. Be sure to read through the informational page for additional requirements. Before a student can

attend, families must provide proof of residency; driver's license or state ID [does not need the correct address, but needs to be valid], and Illinois State Board of Education Student Transfer Form issued by prior school [does not apply to students who are entering Illinois from another state or new Pre-K/Kindergarten students].

SEE NEW STUDENTS PAGE 2



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Coal City teachers put in the time to update curriculum

The Coal City Board of Education praised the work of District Unit #1 teachers who logged almost 1,000 hours in curriculum work before summer break.

During the July 1 board of education meeting, they were told of the teachers from various departments and grade levels who completed summer curriculum work in June.

Jennifer Kenney, the district's director of curriculum and instruction, noted that educators collectively logged over 950 hours in June 2026, to strengthen student learning experiences, focusing on new assessments, updating curriculum and converting over to the Illinois State Standards.

This important work plays a vital role in preparing our schools for the year ahead and supporting high-quality instruction across all grade levels.

Sincere thanks was extended by Kenney to the Board of Education for their continued support in making this essential work possible.

In other matters: • Superintendent Chris Spencer and the Board honored the memory of staff member Amie DePodesta, who passed away on June 25 after a brief battle with cancer. DePodesta dedicated 19 years of service to Coal City Schools, beginning as a recess aide and concluding her career as assistant secretary at Coal City Middle School.

Her commitment to the school community touched the lives of countless students, staff, and families, and she will be deeply missed. The Board

extended its condolences to her family, friends, and co-workers.

• The Board accepted the tentative budget and placed it on file for public inspection until the scheduled public hearing on Wednesday, Sept. 2. The tentative budget can be viewed on the district website within the financial operations page.

• Amanda Herrera-Ford was appointed the district's Title IX and Non-Discrimination Coordinator, Sex Equity Hearing Officer and Freedom of Information Act and Open Meetings Act officer for fiscal year 2027.

• Luke Krippel, director of student services, was appointed liaison for student records for the Department of Children and Family Services for the 2026-2027 school year.

• The Board approved the proposal from Raymond James & Associates, Inc. to provide the district with the annual Continuing Disclosure Report at a fee of \$1,750.

• Board members approved the job description for the head of technology, and approved the transfer of Heather Kruszewski to the position.

• At the recommendation of the superintendent, the Board approved a five year agreement with ARC Facilities to provide instant access to facilities information. The annual cost of the service is \$16,500.

• The Regional Office of Education annual inspection report was presented by the superintendent.

• Supt. Spencer provided the Board with an update on four FOIA requests received by the district.

• Kenney, director of curriculum and instruction, presented the five-year plan that will begin with the 2026-2027 school year with a focus on math and continue until all subject areas have been reviewed.

• Spencer informed the Board that Illinois SkillsUSA State Champion Blake Ness, a recent high school graduate, placed 23rd at the National Competition.

• Employment was extended to John Cherry, high school athletic director; Kristina Lardi, math interventionist for the district, and Renee Bergmark, food server at the high school.

Employed as permanent substitute teachers for the 2026-2027 school year were—Gabriel Barla, early childhood center; Peggy Feeney, elementary school; Tarra Draino, intermediate school, and Katie Hulbert, middle and high schools.

Special education one-on-one aides employed for the coming school year were Olivia Barrientos and Taylor Oswald, intermediate school, and Cassidy Gazda, middle school.

The transfer of Ashley Reszel from classroom aide to library/physical education aide at the early childhood center was approved.

• A 29-day FMLA leave was approved for high school social worker Natalie Casey from approximately Aug. 31 to Monday, Oct. 12.

• Extra-curricular assignments approved included—Tracy Fritz, 6-12 ELA department leader; Aimee Wren, Pre-K-5 ELA department leader; Colin

Hart, JV boys soccer coach, and Cade Mueller, sophomore baseball coach.

At the recommendation of Kenney, the following certified staff members were approved as new teacher mentors—Andrew Brimm mentoring David Lange; Tommy Fatigante mentoring Margaret [Meg] Marlin; Robin Fincher mentoring Alexander Smith; Rebecca Himes mentoring Taylor Gunier; Savannah Jacobs mentoring Natalie Gill; Katie Ludes mentoring Kristina Lardi; Kailee Marketti mentoring Madison Phillips; Kassandra Marsala mentoring Natalie Casey; Brenna Noffsinger mentoring Jacquelyn Henrichsen; MaryKay Stahy mentoring Emily Bonnell; Angie Phillips mentoring Jennifer Durkee; Sarah Veronda mentoring Moree Harney, and Lori Watson mentoring Kristin Wills.

• Supt. Spencer reported Nathan Conrad and Ryan Wisneski, students at Illinois State University, will complete their student teaching in Coal City this fall. Conrad will work with physical education teachers Branden Petersen and Mark Masters, while Wisneski will be working with Dave Sinkular at the high school.

The next monthly meeting of the Board of Education will take place on Wednesday, Aug. 5 with a Study Session of the Whole meeting scheduled for Wednesday, Aug. 29. Meetings of the Board are held at the District Administration Center, 550 S. Carbon Hill Rd., beginning at 6 p.m.

Big Boy, continued from page 1

lished schedule, Big Boy No. 4014 will depart South Holland, IL at 9 a.m. before traveling southwest across Illinois.

The locomotive is estimated to travel through the region between 9:50 and 10:20 a.m. However, Union Pacific encourages the public to use its online Steam Tracker (up.com/about-us/history/steam/track) in the event of changes or delays.

According to Union Pacific's official America 250 tour route map, Big Boy No. 4014 is expected to travel through Wilmington before continuing south through Braidwood, Braceville, Gardner and onto Dwight. Though there will be no public stops in the area, folks can catch a gander of Big Boy as it passes through.

Viewing Opportunities

Public areas near the North Kankakee Street railroad crossing, where the depot use to be, should provide excellent viewing opportunities in Wilmington. In Braidwood, public viewing is also available from public areas where the railroad parallels Route 53. Other strategic locations include Route 53 and Route 129 roadside locations in Braceville and in downtown Gardner where parking is available along Depot and Liberty streets.

Behemoth proportions

Big Boy No. 4014 is the world's largest operating steam locomotive and the only operational example among the eight surviving Big Boy locomotives. Twenty-five of the massive engines were built for Union Pacific beginning in 1941 to haul heavy freight between Ogden, Utah, and Cheyenne, Wyoming in support of the nation's World War II effort.

The locomotive measures 133 feet in length and weighs approximately 1.2 million pounds. Its articulated, hinged frame allows negotiation of curves despite its enormous size. The locomotive's distinctive 4-8-8-4 wheel arrangement made it one of the most powerful steam locomotives ever constructed.

After traveling more than one million miles during its original career, No. 4014 was retired in December 1961. Union Pacific reacquired the locomotive from the RailGiant Train Museum in Pomona, California, in 2013 and completed a multi-year restoration in 2019 to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the completion of the transcontinental railroad.

Since returning to service, the locomotive has traveled thousands of miles across Union Pacific's 23-state rail network as a rolling ambassador for American railroad history.

Safety Reminders

Union Pacific urges spectators to stay at least 25 feet from all railroad tracks, stay off railroad property, and never assume a track is inactive. Freight and passenger trains can approach at any time from either direction, making it essential to observe all railroad safety precautions.

Information and tips

Wilmington is approximately 42 track-miles southwest of the South Holland yard. Operating at standard freight speeds of 35 to 45 mph, the train will take roughly 50 to 70 minutes to clear the outer Chicago rail junctions, pass Joliet, and roll south into this area.

To guarantee a clear view of the rail line while easily maintaining the required 25-foot safety boundary, consider the north end of the North Island Park which offers a full view as it crosses the rail bridge over the Kankakee River.

In Braidwood, the Braidwood Zoo on Route 53 offers parking as well as the Berkot's lot and a clear view of the locomotive as the train passes through.

Big Boy will travel parallel to Route 53/Route 66 to just north of Pontiac, where the legendary locomotive will head to Springfield and St. Louis, MO, ultimately returning to Cheyenne, WY, where the eastern leg of its journey began back in May.

Coal City Library to receive state grant for security improvements

BY ROSE PANIERI
STAFF WRITER

The Coal City Public Library District is set to receive a \$32,073 state grant to improve security through a new statewide library security initiative.

Library Director Leah Bill said she was surprised and delighted to learn of the grant.

"Because this grant is for security, we're planning to upgrade and add additional security cameras," Bill said. "We also plan to install additional door controllers and enhance our internal network."

Coal City was the only library district in our readership area to receive this grant.

Threats to freedom

Funding was announced by the Illinois

Secretary of State's Office as part of more than \$3.6 million in grants to improve public library facilities, increase accessibility, and strengthen security for library patrons and staff.

Nearly \$2.8 million of the total funding will be distributed through the newly created program which will provide grants to 60 public libraries across Illinois.

The grant program was established following a series of bomb threats directed at Illinois libraries in 2023. The threats forced evacuations and prompted law enforcement responses in communities throughout the state, highlighting the need for enhanced security measures.

"Libraries are one of the best investments we can make in our communities," Giannoulas said in June. "They help children discover a love of reading,

connect job seekers with new opportunities, provide critical access to technology, and serve as trust spaces for millions of Illinoisans."

Public safety

According to the Secretary of State's office, the grants can be used for projects including security assessments, surveillance cameras, motion sensors, silent alarms, access-control systems and staff training designed to improve

emergency preparedness and public safety.

"We must join together to stand up to fringe elements that resort to threats of violence and seek to destroy the fundamental freedoms that our nation was founded on," Giannoulas said.

Alexi Giannoulas spearheaded the legislation creating the grant program, saying it was designed to help libraries address evolving security challenges.

New students,

continued from page 1

dents].

This can be done during the new student in-person registration that will take place at each academic building.

Intermediate School registration will be held at the Elementary School and Early Childhood

Center will be at the District Administration Center due to ongoing mechanical projects.

Families with students in multiple buildings only need to visit one school to complete registration.

Registration for returning students for the 2026-2027 academic year is open and accessible on the district website www.coalcityschools.org. Registration information is located within the Parent tab.

Attorney Black files Varland estate claim notice

PUBLIC NOTICE

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT GRUNDY COUNTY - IN PROBATE No. 2026 PR 50

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF ERLING JAY VARLAND, DECEASED

CLAIM NOTICE

NOTICE is given to creditors of the death of Erling Jay Varland. Letters of office as Independent Executor were issued to Patricia Tesdal, N 4385 State Road 89, Jefferson, Wisconsin 53549, whose attorney is FRANK J. BLACK, BLACK & BLACK LAWYERS, 201 Liberty Street, Suite 211, Morris, Illinois 60450. The Resident Agent for the Independent Executor is Frank J. Black, 201 Liberty Street, Suite 211, Morris IL 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.

Patricia Tesdal
Independent Executor
Frank J. Black
Black & Black Lawyers
201 Liberty Street
Suite 211
Morris, IL 60450
815-942-0594
Published in the Coal City Courant on June 24, July 1 and 8, 2026.

Hometown Storage to dispose of property

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice of Lien

Hometown Storage, 2920 E. Division St., Diamond, IL 60416, 815-634-3333 hereby is asserting a Possessory Lien in pursuant to your contract and the State of Illinois Self-Service Facility Act.

Tenant: Sebrina Beach, PO Box 2, 202 S. Peck St., Gardner, IL 60424. If unpaid rental charges, late fees and associated charges are not paid for in full by Aug. 1, 2026, the property within Unit #G21 will be sold to satisfy the lien.

Published in the Coal City Courant on July 8 and 22, 2026.

Hometown Storage to dispose of property

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice of Lien

Hometown Storage, 2920 E. Division St., Diamond, IL 60416, 815-634-3333 hereby is asserting a Possessory Lien in pursuant to your contract and the State of Illinois Self-Service Facility Act.

Tenant: David Miller 111 W. Waupansie, Dwight, IL 60420. If unpaid rental charges, late fees and associated charges are not paid for in full by Aug. 1, 2026, the property within Units #G43, G53, E80 and E81 will be sold to satisfy the lien.

Published in the Coal City Courant on July 8 and 22, 2026.

Coal City CUSD#1 to hold hearing on fiscal year budget

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN by the Board of Education of School District No. 1 in the County of Grundy/Will, State of Illinois, that the Budget for said School District for the Fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026, will be on file and conveniently available for public inspection at 550 South Carbon Hill Road, Coal City, Illinois from and after 8:00 a.m. on Monday, July 13, 2026.

NOTICE IS FURTHER HEREBY GIVEN that a public hearing on said Budget will be held at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday the 2nd day of September 2026, at the Coal City CUSD #1 District Office, 550 South Carbon Hill Road, Coal City, Illinois.

Dated this 8th day of July 2026.
Board of Education of School District No. 1 in the County of Grundy/Will, State of Illinois.
By: Cynthia Klein
Secretary, Board of Education
Coal City Community Unit School District #1
Published in the Coal City Courant on July 8, 2026.



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Eric D. Fisher, publisher

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Is there a doctor in the house?

Students of area history know that coal mining meant coal-mining injuries. But the other side of that coin, meant business for men of medicine, whether legitimate or not.

The earliest reference to any type of medicine men was very early in local history. On August 6, 1865 the Wilmington Advocate reported the following, "A prominent physician of this city has said that with three weeks of dry weather, there would not be doctors enough in Braidwood to attend the sick." Just who that prominent doctor was or what dry weather has to do with it, we do not know, but it shows that doctors were some of Braidwood's earliest citizens.

But were they legitimate physicians, or were they quacks? The next reference to doctors I found may answer that question.

In August of 1872 the Joliet Republican reported the following, "A certain physician (?) of Braidwood is reported as having discovered a new remedy in the world of cures. An infant was sick but all his professional wisdom failed to discover the cause; medicine failed and as a last resort he fell back upon the powerful cure



TIME WAS....
Sandy Vasko

of witchcraft, had four black cats skinned and the poor little sufferer wrapped tightly in the skins. The funeral was attended by most of the friends of the family."

The Wilmington Advocate reprinted the article and asked if anyone in Braidwood could verify the story. As far as I know, no one could.

I do know of one very serious doctor who practiced in Braidwood. Dr. E. R. Willard was the son of one of Wilmington's earliest citizens and prominent doctor himself. We hear of Willard's work in March of 1875, "Dr. E. R. Willard, of Wilmington, lately amputated the leg of Mr. John Blair, injured by being caught in cage of "E" shaft. On Saturday last, while working in "G" shaft, Benj. Morrison was in some manner caught between the loaded cars, causing a bad fracture of the thigh and dislocation of the knee."

This speaks of amputation. It is by far the most common practice mentioned in the newspaper file from Braidwood in the 19th century.

Sometime the accident itself caused amputation. Such as in 1876 when we

read, "Our worthy station agent, Mr. Corey, of the C. & A. R. R., had two fingers of his right hand mashed, on Wednesday morning, while coupling cars. The middle finger was amputated just above the first joint. The miserable cars that are sent into this place was the cause of the accident."

About the same time that Willard was practicing, the infamous Dr. Le Caron was also earning his living in medicine. It turned out later that he was a British spy, looking at the many Irish organizations in Braidwood. But, despite that, he appears to have been very competent.

We read in October of 1875, "About midnight Tuesday last, a wedding ball at Jas. Kane's saloon ended in a shooting affray - Hugh Carney being shot by a stranger from Maryland named Maloy, for some fancied or real insult. The bullet went in at the nose passing through the cheek behind the eye from which delicate place Dr. Le Caron extracted it; it is a pretty close call."

Until 1879 regular physicians cared for dental patients. But in August of 1879 we read in the Braidwood section of the Wilmington Advocate, "Dr. E. D. Keef, dentist, will be at the Caledonian House on Aug. 20, to remain one week." Itinerant dentists were commonplace at that time.

By 1880 another doctor is mentioned

in the news, and both seem to have been quite competent. We read in the Joliet News, "Last Saturday Dr. Campbell of this city, and Dr. Backus, of Braidwood, performed the operation of lithotomy upon a little boy, two years old, residing at Braidwood. The stone which was removed from the bladder, was half as large as a hen's egg. The little fellow stood the operation nicely, and at last accounts was doing well."

That is most impressive for the time. Especially when you consider that the operation was probably performed in the boy's home.

Several other doctors are mentioned in 1880, one of them, Dr. Gray, started his practice in his hotel suite at the Caledonian. Dr. Gray seems to have been a quack and later was known more for his antics in the saloon than in the office.

Another mention of a Braidwood doctor seems puzzling to me. We read on September 10, 1880, "On Monday Dr. Cottel successfully abstracted a small lizard, or species of snake, from a young lady in this city." Just where did Dr. Cottel extract this lizard or snake from? And how did it get there? I am afraid the answer to these questions is lost to history.

June included 14 days of rain in Grundy Co.

BY ROSE PANIERI
STAFF WRITER

Weddings are often planned for the month of June since Mother Nature is typically her most benevolent. The month is less likely to put a literal damper on the blushing bride, groom and guests.

Unfortunately, this season, Ma Nature was apparently out of sorts. June 2026 ran the gamut between cold, hot, stormy, and extremely soggy.

According to the June climatological summary from the Grundy County Emergency Management Agency Weather Data Division, the month packed a bit of everything

into 30 days.

The month began on a relatively cool note, with the mercury dipping to 51 degrees on June 3 before steadily climbing into full summer mode. By June 30, temperatures peaked at 92 degrees, capping off a month that averaged a comfortable 80.2 degrees.

Despite flirting with summer's hottest days, June stopped short of triple digits. There were three days with temperatures reaching 90 degrees or higher, but none climbed to 100. Perfect for an outdoor wedding, right? Not exactly.

Nearly 10 inches of rain — 9.95 inches, to be precise — walloped the area, with measurable

rainfall recorded on 14 days. The heaviest single-day rainfall totaled 1.91 inches on June 11.

The weather also kept emergency managers busy watching the skies. A peak wind gust of 49 mph was recorded on June 10, and weather logs noted several days of thunderstorms, along with damaging winds and tornado warnings, which everyone is taking seriously these days.

In the end, June delivered a classic Midwestern weather sampler: Cool mornings, sweltering afternoons, soaking rains, gusty winds, and enough thunder to keep everyone glancing at the radar before firing up the backyard grill.

Coal City Back to School Bash seeks sponsors, donations

Organizers are already gearing up for another successful Back to School Bash and are calling on local businesses, organizations and community members to help ensure Coal City students start the new school year with the supplies they need.

The Coaler Drive Festivals and Events Committee has announced that the 2026 Back to School Bash will be held from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 1, at Campbell Park, 580 S. Broadway in Coal City.

The annual event provides school supplies to students in Coal City School District Unit 1, serving children from kindergarten through high school. Committee members are currently seeking financial sponsors, supply donations and community support to

help make the event a success.

Every little bit helps, organizers noted in promotional materials for the event, encouraging residents and businesses to contribute whatever they can.

School supply donations can be dropped off at several community locations, including Babe's Tap, Bob's Advanced Auto, the Coal City Public Library and Coal City Village Hall.

Those wishing to donate online can purchase items through the committee's online supply drive, with products shipped directly to event organizers.

The Back to School Bash has become a popular community tradition, helping ease the financial burden many families face as the start of the school year

approaches. Through donations and sponsorships, students receive essential classroom items such as notebooks, folders, pencils, markers, glue, scissors and other school necessities.

Organizers are encouraging area businesses to become event sponsors. Sponsorship opportunities help offset event costs while allowing additional supplies to be distributed to local students.

Businesses interested in supporting the event are encouraged to contact the

Coal City Public Library calendar

Check online event calendar at ccpld.org for a description of the events and to register.

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

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

Thursday, July 9

10:30am - Family Lapsit

11:30am - Summer Tots

12-7pm - Laki Hawaiian Ice Truck - will be here in the Library's south parking lot selling a variety of flavors of their shave ice. Make sure to stop and buy a cool treat.

1pm - Jr. Artists

3-4:30pm - Story Stroll in the Garden - Families can join us in the garden area to read the story "Here We Go Digging For Dinosaur Bones" while doing fun activities along the way.

Register only the child participating.

Friday, July 10

9pm - Movie in the Park at Coal City North Park - The Library in collaboration with the Village of Coal City will show the movie "Zootopia 2." Popcorn, water and candy will be served.

Monday, July 13

Summer Reading Challenge "Unearth a Story" ends - so turn in your log sheets or enter your progress into Beanstack so you don't miss out.

10am - Country Meadows Book Group
10am-7pm - Adult Make and Take Craft

Tuesday, July 14

9am-4pm - Paper & More
6:30-8pm - CCPLD Board Meeting

Wednesday, July 15

9am-12pm - Senior Health Insurance Program
10am - Story and Play Time
6pm - Evening Bingo

Summerfest ride armbands on sale now

Coaler Drive Festivals and Events Committee for information on sponsorship levels and donation opportunities. Contact the Coal City Village hall.

With just a month remaining before the new school year begins, organizers hope the community will once again rally behind local students.

Residents are encouraged to mark their calendars for Aug. 1 and help spread the word.

The Summerfest Carnival is right around the corner. That means it's time to to get your ride armbands early and save some money.

Ticket sales are underway through Thursday, July 16 at 3p.m. before the midway opens. Unlimited ride armbands are \$25 each, a savings of \$5 when purchased ahead of time.

These arm bands can be used on one of the following sessions:

Thursday, July 16, from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m.; Friday, July 17, from 6 p.m. to 11 p.m.; Saturday, July 18, from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. or 6 p.m. to 11 p.m.; and Sunday, July 19, from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. or 6 p.m. - 10 p.m.

We will once again be offering the Mega Pass wristbands. They are \$70 each. On the midway they will be sold for \$80 each. 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.

The First Presbyterian Church of Braidwood is coordinating the pre-sale campaign and will receive a percentage from every pre-sale armband and mega-pass sold in advance. Not only are you helping yourselves you are helping the Braidwood Lions Club and the Presbyterian Church.

These pre sales items are available at these fine locations. In Braidwood at Berkot's Super Foods, 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 at Midland State Bank.



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Look closer

BRAIDWOOD—To the resident on S. English Street complaining in sound off about the "code enforcement car" parked two blocks down from them. Maybe you need to get your eyes checked because that vehicle doesn't say anything about code enforcement. Look closer and you'll be able to read what it actually says. And, fun fact... The Code Enforcement Officer doesn't live anywhere near there either. Make sure your facts are correct before you go making accusations or assumptions.

Golf cart restrictions

BRAIDWOOD—The Braidwood Recreation Club needs to tell its members that they cannot drive their golf carts across the railroad tracks from one side of town to the other in order to get to the club entrance or their proposed new golf cart only entrance. Golf carts cannot... repeat... cannot... cross over the railroad tracks at Main St. or Center St., or drive down any state, county or township roadway. It's against the law. Golf carts also cannot cross over on a sidewalk. The only legal way for anyone to get their golf cart across the railroad tracks is to tow it on a trailer. So in all reality, only less than 10% of resident members will actually be able to drive their golf carts from their homes to the rec club using this new golf carts only gate.

Depends on the person

SHADOW LAKES—My name is Dan Hill. Watching the weather on 2, 5 and 7 and they're talking about what the heat really feels like. How does the heat feel to each individual? They're saying today feels like 105. To me it does not feel like that. So it actually depends on the person. Weather forecasts are BS. Thank you.

Data center coming

COAL CITY—So, our so-called leaders kicked us in the teeth, again. Despite residents overwhelmingly not wanting a data center, they betrayed us and unanimously voted for one. Not only that, but it's on TIE, so no one benefits except people whose pockets are being lined. Vote these suckers out. They stabbed us in the back.

No more excuses

COAL CITY—I just retired a year ago, I worked for over 45 years. No one gave me anything, I earned everything through hard work. I didn't have the fanciest car, or all the toys like a motorcycle, RV, or boat. When I started working I got paid \$3.25 a hour and worked my way up to \$21.50 a hour. I worked part time while going full time to community college. No student loans, no free housing, no free phone, no free food, no free heat, electric, or cable! I am so sick of all these whining self-entitled brats that think everything is free! It's not someone else pays for it. I'm also sick and tired of self important, pompous, lying, thieving politicians who pretend they care for their voters. The Democrats liberal clowns have been in control of this state and city of Chicago for over 50-60 years! Nothing changes... bad schools, poverty, drugs, violence and crime. They all say they have the answer we just need more money! We have highest property taxes, highest gas taxes, highest sales tax. More fees, more fines, everyone wants my money! Just leave me alone. Go get a job, no more excuses! Kl

What a con man

WILMINGTON—Last week it was publicly released that President Donald J Trump made in excess of \$1.4 billion in his first 16 months of his second term. How about that for him? For those of you that

wisely invested \$10,000 on January 25, 2025 in one of his Trump coins it is now worth \$415. How about that for you? Are you possibly, maybe, just a teeny weeny bit seeing the light of what a conman he truly has been for 80 years? For the hardcore, go ahead make up some cockamamie excuse to justify in your mind plain willful ignorance.

\$800 million more

WILMINGTON—July 1 marked the beginning of the new state fiscal year. With it came the largest state budget in Illinois' history and nearly \$800 million in new taxes to cover the additional spending. Billionaire Gov. JB Pritzker and the Democrat majority in Springfield keep taxing and spending more and more each year – it is an unsustainable cycle. The Governor ignores the warnings and proposed an even bigger budget than last year's record-setting spending bill. Democrats in the legislature then rammed the budget through in the middle of the night, and raised taxes to make up the difference. Then they lie about making Illinois a more affordable place to live. We're already paying high taxes. There are people leaving Illinois to avoid all these tax increases. That just puts additional burden on those of us who can't afford to move. The only way this cycle will stop is by voting them out of office.

Wake up

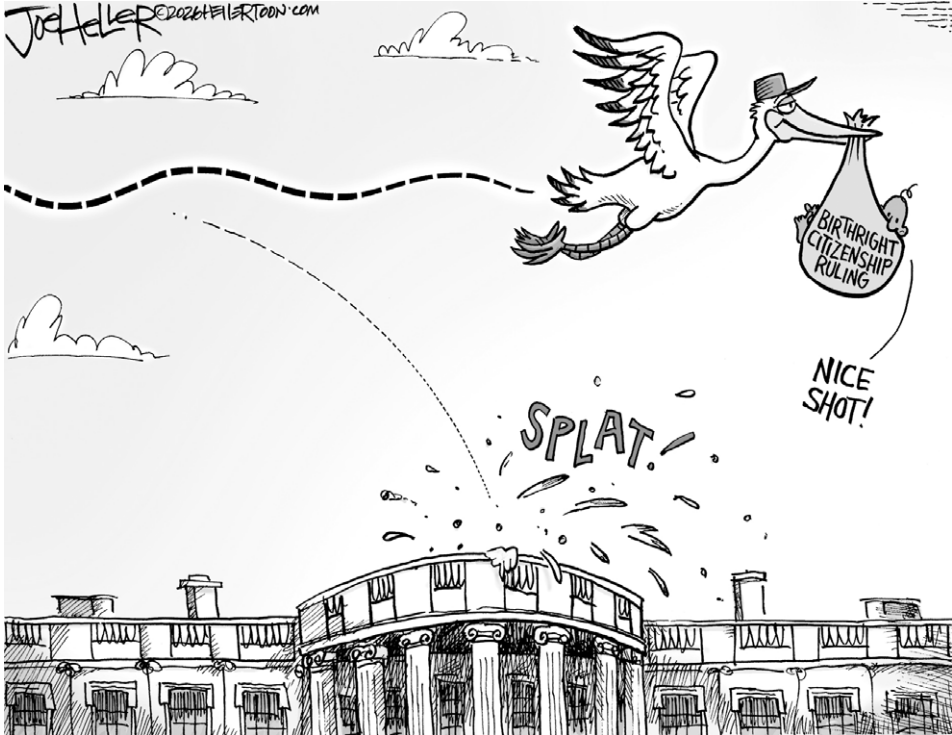
WILMINGTON—If people keep voting Democratic the dollar bill will not say in God we trust it will say Allah Akbar and your 14 year old great-grandchild will be married to a 50 year old man named Mohammed. Wake up

We all survived

WILMINGTON—As the celebration of our 250th Anniversary slowly winds down just a reminder we all survived. All of us together. Weather tried to distract but we are still here. I did notice about 400 White Nationalists in DC tried to be relevant, but again, their right to look as foolish as they want, meh. I also noticed this administration is trying to introduce a new/old catch phrase the dreaded "communist" word. Socialist, libtard, and immigrant are worn out. Just like that kid in school that wasn't very bright but he craved attention and had to be loud to be popular. This world won't have staying power, it's no longer 1950. Stay positive, this mess won't last much longer. His schtick is getting boring, repeating same speeches, same lies, same fearmongering fallacies. Reality is things are too expensive, hard to save a nickel and vacations are now local destinations or don't happen. He had two chances to help the middle and lower class but things got worse. On the other hand stockholders are happy and millionaires are buying their fourth vacation home. Meanwhile in desperation he is actively trying to disrupt voting in midterms as a last gasp to hang on to power. People understand he is another failed president that only helped himself, his family and his fat cat friends, notably in this second term. Time is running out for him, people had enough, people crave a fair shake, a piece of that pie and a morning of just peace and quiet. Enjoy your day, stay strong, don't fall for his BS and understand that justice will come for all who participated, and projected him from indictments and protection. And why is he adamant about hiding the Epstein files? That's an easy one to answer.

Wants are also needs

BRAIDWOOD—In response to the person who wrote needs versus wants in last week's Sound off. Wants are also needs. Citizens of Braidwood want to be



proud of the things in the city. Improving the looks are not only wants, they are needs. Everybody wants to be proud of their city. The lights that were put up on Main Street look amazing, I can't wait to see what else is done to improve the look of this city. Infrastructure is also getting done, but there's nothing wrong with improving looks along with it.

Like a circus tent

WILMINGTON—The Democratic Party now calls themselves the big tent party. They claim to take in all views, socialists, communist and I think it's more like a circus tent, clowns and freaks.

Why allow fireworks?

WILMINGTON—Fireworks at 10:30 p.m. continuously for 45 minutes? To Wilmington school officials- Why are you allowing these fireworks on school property?

Smells like garlic

COAL CITY—Nona got her free ice cream in Coal City and true to her heritage, she had to send a gift back to the Data Center. They liked the idea so much they said they will do it when the wind blows from Coal City to South Willy to bring the town to life. She told them she heard computers get viruses so do like they did with kids going to school. Hang peeled garlic necklaces around the kids' necks for five days. If it was healthy for the kids so why not for the computers in the Data Center. She says a few times a month the town will smell like everyone is cooking bagna (bunya to Muggles). What a wonderful world we live in when we think of something good for our new neighbors instead of making up stories of hate.

Make believe world

COAL CITY—That is a real word for a public meeting place where both sides debate. Not building a wall with anyone having opposing views. But in Coal City's case, it also means a fictitious person without fame, integrity, or fortune that lives in a world of make believe. A person who knows all the answers and only bar stool ideas of what is best. They have no clue what makes the world advance and never pay attention to what humanity has learned, educated people with, or paid attention to anything bearing the mark of academic studies, professional license, or science. They only praise the voice from beyond, Facebook.

Get a life

COAL CITY—To the lady who thinks Coal City is treating data center sewage water to become drinking water, get a life besides Facebook.

Buy it

COAL CITY—Suggestion, all you naysayers, pool money instead of speaking then buy a doghouse and barn instead of slamming someone for the heck of it.

Conspiracy naysayers

COAL CITY—Is this a Hail Mary pass in the 4th quarter? Suggesting a one-sided town Alliance meeting in a public building held by a coven of conspiracy naysayers is the solution? How can that be the way to understand consensus. It is basically flipping the bird to reality.

There sat an ESDA car

BRAIDWOOD—There was a sound off last week that really intrigued me. So, I took a ride around town to check it out. The first inaccuracy I attempted to find was the code enforcers vehicle. I thought at one time I had seen the code enforcers' vehicle was parked in the trailer park on Center Street. There it was. I far as I know the city only has one code enforcer car. So, I decided that the car they were talking about had to be parked on English Street. My curiosity was peaked. Score, there sat an ESDA car in a driveway. As everyone knows this organization helps both the fire department and police department with traffic control and other duties as needed. I am pretty sure that this car has moved several times in the last eight months. On to the ditch with the flowers. So, I started to drive north on English Street. There they were in all their colorful glory. They are beautiful. They look like natural wildflowers from Illinois. They also look like they are planted along the back of the ditch. Let those bees pollinate. The last comment was a little harder to find. Since Division Street and English Street run parallel to one another it would be hard to find a corner of Division and English Street. As far as I could see there was no sidewalk blocked on Kennedy and English, so I continued my slow drive heading north on English looking at every corner. It wasn't until I came to Main and English that I saw any type of sidewalk blocked. I guess I must give the person that one, but maybe a lesson on the streets of Braidwood would help. Moral to this story: Make sure you have your facts straight before you decide to put them in writing.

Price at pump falling

Average gasoline prices in Illinois have fallen 12.5 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$3.95/g Monday, according to GasBuddy's survey of 4,378 stations in Illinois.

Prices in Illinois are 58.3 cents per gallon lower than a month ago but are 56.7 cents per gallon higher than a year ago.

The price reduction is reflected locally, as gas at all area gas stations was under \$4/g.

In Wilmington, gas was \$3.61/g at Amoco, \$3.63 at Love's and up to \$3.79/g in

town. In Braidwood, all reporting stations were at \$3.85/g. Same with Coal City, except at Gas N Wash which reported \$3.69/g.

In Morris, you'll spend anywhere from \$3.69/g at Pilot, up to \$3.84/g at BP.

Finally, Bourbonnais is offering gas from \$3.59/g at Gulf, up to \$3.71/g at BP.

"Average gasoline prices fell in nearly every state over the last week, with diesel declining in all 50, pushing the national average to approximately \$3.74 per gallon this July 4 — the third most expensive Independence Day on record, but well off the peak of \$4.57 per gallon seen in May," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy.

"GasBuddy is now tracking 41 states with average gasoline prices below \$4 per gallon, while 37 states are seeing average diesel prices below \$5. However, continued Ukrainian attacks on Russian refinery infrastructure have forced Russia to shift from fuel exporter to importer, tightening global supplies and putting upward pressure on crack spreads — explaining why pump prices haven't fallen as sharply as oil prices might suggest. Until the refining supply picture improves, significant further drops at the pump may be limited."

The lowest price in the state is \$3.09/g while the highest is \$5.99/g.

WHS Class of 1976 to hold 50-year reunion

Wilmington High School Class of 1976 is having a class reunion on Aug. 1, at the Wilmington VFW from 6 p.m. - 10 p.m. Looking for contact information of graduates.

Please contact Jodi Roark (815) 557-8584 or Gary L. VanDuyn (779) 227-9013. Email: Jroark76e906.com or van-duynel110@comcast.net Facebook: Wilmington High School Class of "76"

See a movie to support Kuzma

During Catfish days come to the Mar Theatre, 121 S. Main St., Wilmington, on Saturday, July 25 and see "Wild Hogs" starring Tim Allen and John Travolta highlighting a trip on the Mother Road, Route 66. Admission is a dona-

tion of a food item for Kuzma Care Cottage, the local food pantry. Doors open at 2:30 p.m. and the movie starts at 3 p.m.

Concessions will be available to purchase. Come enjoy a great movie and support Kuzma.

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Battling to protect the Amazon rainforests

Dear EarthTalk: How are conservationists encouraging reforestation in the Amazon?

Peter Smyth, Tempe, AZ

EARTH TALK

Questions & Answers About Our Environment

The Amazon Rainforest covers eight million kilometers of land and spans nine countries across South America, making it the world's largest rainforest.

The Amazon is home to 400 billion trees, contributing greatly to global carbon storage and climate regulation. In addition, 10 percent of the Earth's known species live in the Amazon, which also provides essential food and medicine to nearby communities.

Despite such overwhelming benefits, the Amazon is gradually becoming barren land. According to Global

Citizen, a leading international advocacy organization, 20 percent of the rainforest has been lost to mining, forest fires, agricultural expansion, land grabbing and cattle ranching in the past 50 years.

Indigenous communities have taken on initiatives to reforest and preserve the Amazon. Farmers have integrated agroforestry systems, a method of sustainable farming that preserves biodiversity.

Local-led ecotourism is another way communities have worked to protect the Amazon's acreage. Sani Warimi, a Kichwa indigenous women's organization in Sani Isla, Ecuador, operates the Sani Lodge and leads traditional cooking and craft lessons for tourists, protecting 76,600 forest acres.

And the U.S.-based Alliance for a Sustainable Amazon works with locals in Peru to re-plant native land species.

Others, like Brazilian parachutist Luigi Cani, have made it their mission to revitalize barren parts of the Amazon. In 2022, Cani completed his "100 Million Seeds Amazon Project" by



Photo by Roddy Scheer

CONSERVATIONISTS FACE an uphill battle in the fight against deforestation of the Amazon river basin.

skydiving while scattering seeds across parts of the Amazon. "... the seeds were released precisely where we wanted them to be," he says.

"We need huge changes to make the world better than it is today. The possibility for growth is incredible, but more people need to be willing to learn and work together." The seeds germinated at a rate of 95 percent, making the project a successful and eye-catching demonstration of individual activism.

There are also larger global strategies protecting the Amazon. The Brazilian government launched the Amazon Fund, which has raised over \$1.4 billion from contributing countries across the world.

And experts are improving technology to monitor deforestation. The Colombian Amazon is being observed by an AI-powered satellite and drones to prevent illegal deforestation.

Readers interested in helping to reforest the Amazon, you can support Amazon Rainforest preservation organizations such as the Alliance for a Sustainable Amazon by donating on their website.

Send questions to: question@earthtalk.org.

Morris Hospital offers babysitter's training course

Morris Hospital is offering a Babysitter's Training Course for youths age 11 and older on July 10 or August 6 from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the training classroom at Shabbona School, 725 School St., Morris.

The class is a great opportunity for those interested in acquiring the information and education needed for a safe babysit-

ting experience including interviewing for a babysitting job, choosing safe and age-appropriate toys and games, performing first aid, practicing diapering and feeding techniques, and handling bedtime issues. Participants should bring their own lunch and an afternoon snack.

Those who complete the course will earn certifi-

cation in American Red Cross Babysitter's Training and American Heart Association Infant and Child CPR.

The class fee is \$60, and the class size is limited to 10 students. Registration can be completed online at www.morrishospital.org/ev ents. Select the Kids Classes category.

Bird viewing at Lake Renwick

The Forest Preserve District of Will County is hosting Lake Renwick Migratory Bird Viewing on Saturdays through Aug. 9 from 8 a.m. to noon, at Lake Renwick Heron Rookery Nature Preserve, Plainfield.

View nesting herons, egrets, cormorants and bald eagles from the viewing platform while staff and volunteers answer questions. All ages; free.

Next Concert in the Park July 9

The Wilmington Park District's next Concert in the Park will be July 9 - Don't Matter to Me band with food served by Bennett Curtis Catering and a wiffleball tournament.

All Concert in the Park events are scheduled from 5 to 8 p.m. at North Island Park and are free to attend thanks to the support of local sponsors and community partners.

Future dates include"

Aug. 13 - St. Jupiter along with a home run derby at the North Island ballfield and the Route 66 Mobile Diner.

Sept. 10 - The Clients with a Touch-a-Truck display for families and children.

Bring lawn chairs or blankets and enjoy an evening of music and community fellowship.

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OBITUARIES

Judy Michael

WILMINGTON—Judy Michael, 82, of Wilmington, formerly of Brookfield, IL, passed away peacefully on Wednesday, March 11, 2026 at her home.

Born July 11, 1943 in Los Angeles, CA, Judith Ann was the daughter of Casimir and Norma (Niemand) Pszczola. She was raised and educated in Lyons, IL where she graduated from Morton West high school with the class of 1961. It was in Lyons where Judy met Keith Orville Michael, and together they were married on March 16, 1963 at Zion Lutheran Church in Lyons. She and Keith made their home and raised their family in Brookfield, IL for many years until they relocated to Wilmington in 2004.

Judy was a devoted employee of Fanny May Candies, and also worked as a secretary and a lunch mom when her children were young. She was an avid reader, enjoyed showing her creative side through painting and drawing, as well as taking pleasure in bowling. Much of Judy's life was spent devoted to being a wonderful wife, mother, and grandmother. She was an inspiration to her children and was blessed to see her daughters grow into strong women with families of their own. Being the family-oriented woman that she was, there was never a holiday spent without every family member attending. She was her families biggest fan, always attending her children's and grandchildren's events. Judy's legacy of love and family will be carried on for generations to come, built on the strong foundation laid by her and her beloved Keith.

Survivors include four children:



Michele (Tim) Lantvit, of Bolingbrook, IL; Pamela (Richard) Tworek, of Wilmington; Sheri (Brandon) Evans and Colleen (Rob) Henderson, both of Plainfield; grandchildren: Nicholas (Veronica) Capozziello, Tyler (Elissa) Lantvit, Christopher (Alyssa) Tworek, Morgan (Nick) Lantvit, Madyson Lantvit, Nathan Tworek, Sydney Henderson, Ethan Evans, Payton Henderson, Nora Evans, Lucy Evans, and Tori Henderson; seven great-grandchildren: Alivia and Sylvia Capozziello, Savana, Theo and Montana Ehlen, Easton Lantvit, Preston and Hudson Henderson; brothers and sisters-in-law: Nadine (the late John) Pankow, Donna (the late Wayne) Holous, and Duane (Karen) Michael and a beloved aunt and great-aunt to many cherished nieces and nephews.

Judy was preceded in death by her parents and her husband and one brother, Raymond (Stefa) Pszczola.

Per Judy's wishes, cremation rites are being accorded.

Judy will be laid to rest with her husband at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery on Friday, July 10, 2026, at 11 a.m. All are welcome to attend.

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

Funeral services and arrangements were made under the direction and care of Reeves, Fruland & Baskerville Funeral Homes and Crematory.

Summer garden series at the Wilm. library

The Wilmington Public Library will host its second gardening presentation series featuring Nancy Kuhajda, master gardener, naturalist, and composter.

Mid-Summer Gardening Tips and Tricks, will be held on July 15 at 6 p.m.

The series concludes on August 5 at 6 p.m. with Preparing the Garden for Fall and Composting.

Whether you are an experienced gardener or just getting started, these informative and engaging programs are designed to help gardeners make the most of the growing season.

All programs are free and open to the public. Registration is encouraged. To register or learn more, call 815-476-2834. The library is located at 201 S. Kankakee St.

IL lawmakers dropped the ball on budget

About a week after the state budget passed both chambers in the dark of night, Attorney General Kwame Raoul spoke to the City Club of Chicago to complain that his budget was cut by \$10 million.

"For every dollar of General Revenue Fund spending on the attorney general's office, we return \$21. Anybody who has that in their portfolio is rich, but we can't do this type of work without adequate investment and, unfortunately, at approximately 3 a.m. in the morning a week ago Monday, we were shorted about \$10 million from what our overall appropriation was for fiscal year '26, and I can't imagine why what came about at 3 a.m. in the morning."

During Gov. JB Pritzker's press conference in June to sign a package of bills supported by AG Raoul to ban hidden junk fees and prohibiting ticket resellers from offering tickets they don't actually have, the governor heavily praised Raoul for his work on not only consumer protection, but also for defending Illinoisans against constant attempts by President Trump's administration to take away various rights and funding from people in this state.

So, my colleague Isabel Miller decided to ask Raoul about his budget cut. "Have you talked to the governor



CAPITOL FACTS
Rich Miller

about restoring that \$10 million in budget cuts from your office?" she asked.

After a w k w a r d pause, Raoul said he'd had "several conversations with members of the legislature, and I've spoken to the governor just today."

"I understand from serving 14 years in the legislature that come the end of May, there are competing interests, and under this governor's leadership and this legislature we've been passing balanced budgets consistently, which was not a common thing in the past. That means that come the end of May, there's some difficult decisions to make."

But Raoul went on to say, "Our office is burdened, and you know we need to be at least funding to flat level, and I think we'll work our way through it through these conversations."

Isabel then asked the governor, "You've said at multiple press conferences, 'AG Raoul is our defense, he's doing such a great job.' Are you committed to getting that flat level of funding restored?"

After praising Raoul yet again for attempting to keep the Trump administration in check, and thanking AG Raoul for recognizing the state's current budget challenges under this federal administration, the

governor said, "We're not going to let it happen that he can't go to court or that he can't do the things that are necessary to protect the people of the state of Illinois, but we're all tightening our belts."

Three amendments were introduced to the bill the legislature used to pass the budget. The governor's office says it controlled the second amendment, and that amendment prevented a Raoul budget cut.

The third amendment became the actual budget. That amendment, controlled by the Senate, is the one which cut \$10 million from Raoul's spending plan. I haven't been able to find a satisfactory answer as to why Raoul's funding was cut, but some have said that Raoul may have upset some Senators with the way his office lobbied those very bills mentioned above.

Whatever the case, Amendment 3 was a mess. The governor issued an almost unheard of 37 item and reduction vetoes to correct mistakes. And some other passages were so poorly drafted that a follow-up supplemental appropriation bill could be needed to fix its many other problems.

This botched amendment is a metaphor for the entire spring session.

Everything was deliberately back-loaded to the final week and the two chambers were kept apart until May so members couldn't work on fixing problems and, in the end, nobody had enough bandwidth to get everything right.

And if the budget is

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Santa Claus presents Touch the Truck

Santa Claus is coming to Grundy County presents the 2nd annual Touch the Truck.

The free event will be held at the Coal City Lions Hall and Park, 460 S. Illinois St., Coal City. Saturday, July 11, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

This Grundy County summer event is open to residents of all ages.

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Wilmington museum open Saturdays

The Wilmington Area Historical Society will open its museum for visits from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturdays through the end of July.

Everyone is welcome to come see items of local significance on display at 114 N. Main St., Wilmington.

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EVENT CALENDAR

THURSDAY, JULY 16

- 5 to 11:00pm 45th Annual Braidwood Lions Summerfest Begins
Food Court, Lions Beer Garden & Knights of Columbus Council
#1574 Concession Stand Open
- 5 to 7pm 103.1 FM WCSJ Live Remote Broadcast & Giveaways
(next to the Constellation Energy Entertainment Stage)
- 5 to 9pm Christian Life Assembly Outreach & Photo Booth (hospitality area)
- 5 to 10:00pm Carnival Opens – Pay One Price for Unlimited Rides *all night*
- 6 to 10:00pm Lions Club Bingo (under the Lions pavilion) \$0.25 a card
- 6 to 9pm Braidwood Fire Department Fire Prevention Booth & Equipment
Displays
- 7:30-10:30pm Constellation Energy Entertainment Stage:
"The Route 66 Band" Rock-n-Roll Hits

FRIDAY, JULY 17

- 5pm-11:30pm Food Court, Lions Beer Garden & Knights of Columbus Council
#1574 Concession Stand Open
- 5 to 9pm Christian Life Assembly Outreach & Photo Booth (hospitality area)
- 5:30 to 8:30pm Airbrushed Tattoos by Whimsy Face Painting (under the hospitality
tent)
- 6 to 9pm Braidwood Fire Department Fire Prevention Booth & Equipment
Displays
- 6 to 11:00pm Carnival Open: Pay One Price for Unlimited Rides *all night*
- 6 to 10:00pm Lions Club Bingo (under the Lions pavilion) \$0.25 a card
- 6 to 7pm 101.7FM River Country Live Remote Broadcast, Prize Wheel &
Giveaways
(next to the Constellation Energy Entertainment Stage)
- 8:00p-11:30pm Constellation Energy Entertainment Stage: "Hillbilly Rockstarz"
Hottest Country Rock Hits & Classics

SATURDAY, JULY 18

- 9:00am – 5pm Flea Market, Arts & Crafts Show (south end of the city park)
- 10am - Noon Annual Summerfest Baby Contest (under the Lions pavilion)
- 10:00am – 2pm Summerfest Car Show (east side of the skate park)
- 10:00am – 2pm DJ Jeff Saltzman (car show area, east side of the skate park)
- 12pm-Midnight Food Court, Lions Beer Garden & Knights of Columbus Council
#1574 Concession Stand Open
- 12 to 5pm DJ George – Chi-City Enterprises (next to Constellation Energy
Entertainment Stage)
- 12pm to 9pm Ignite Christian Church Baby Changing/Feeding/Cooling Station
& Outreach Booth (north of the hospitality tent)
- 1:00pm Annual Summerfest Pie Eating Contest
(under the hospitality tent)
- 1pm – 11pm Carnival Opens: Pay one price and ride unlimited from 1 to 6pm
OR 6 to 11pm
- 1 to 9pm Christian Life Assembly Outreach & Photo Booth (hospitality area)
- 2 to 4pm Lions Club Bingo (under the Lions pavilion) \$0.25 a card
- 2 to 9pm Braidwood Fire Department Fire Prevention Booth & Equipment
Displays
- 2 to 4pm Linda The Face Painter (under the hospitality tent)
- 4:00 to 7:00pm Chicagoland's FREE Country 98.3 & 102.3 Live Remote Broadcast
& Giveaways (next to the Constellation Energy Entertainment
Stage)
- 4:30 to 5:45pm Dave DiNaso's Traveling World of Reptiles (under the Lions
pavilion)
- 6 to 10pm Lions Club Bingo (under the Lions pavilion) \$0.25 a card
- 8 to 11:30pm Constellation Energy Entertainment Stage: "Cadillac Groove" Funky
fresh blues, soul, rock, and R&B

SUNDAY, JULY 19

- 9:00am – 5pm Flea Market, Arts & Crafts Show (south end of the city park)
- Noon-10:30pm Food Court, Lions Beer Garden & Knights of Columbus Council
#1574 Concession Stand Open
- 1:00pm Hometown Proud Parade: Main & Mitchell Street to RC Elementary
School (S. Walker Street)
- Grand Marshals: Top Fuel Saloon's Freak & Debby
- 2 to 10pm Carnival Opens: Pay One Price for Unlimited Rides from 2 to 6pm
OR 6 to 10pm

**** Purchase or redeem an unlimited ride wristband from the carnival midway
ticket booth on Sunday 7/19 prior to 6pm and receive a chance to win one of two
bicycles!! Winners must be present to win. Drawing will be held at 6:30pm at
the midway ticket booth. Bicycles provided courtesy of A&A Attractions. ****

- 2 to 4pm Linda The Face Painter (under the hospitality tent)
- 2 to 4pm Lions Club Bingo (under the Lions pavilion) \$0.25 a card
- 2 to 6pm DJ Roy Gregory's Summerfest Country, Rock & Blues Dance Party
(next to Constellation Energy Entertainment Stage)
- 2 to 9pm Ignite Christian Church Baby Changing/Feeding/Cooling Station &
Outreach Booth (north of the hospitality tent)
- 2 to 8pm Braidwood Fire Department Fire Prevention Booth & Equipment
Displays
- 3 to 6pm Kroll Farms Petting Zoo (north side of the Bingo pavilion)
\$2.00 Animal Feed Cups
- 6 to 9:00pm Lions Club Bingo (under the Lions pavilion) \$0.25 a card
- 6:30 to 9:30pm Constellation Energy Entertainment Stage: "Wicked Vic"
70's, 80's & 90's Rock and Roll, & Current Hits
- 9:30pm ANNUAL SUMMERFEST FIREWORKS DISPLAY

**SAVE TIME
& MONEY!**

IN ADVANCE

\$70
*MEGA PASS

Pre-Sale Carnival Ride Tickets & Armbands On Sale Now!

****RETURNING FOR 2026****

UNLIMITED RIDE MEGA PASS!

Good For The Entire Festival!!!

Mega Pass wristbands may be utilized for the entire duration of the festival
during Carnival Midway hours. Mega Pass wristbands **MUST** remain on the
person's wrist for the duration of the festival and are non-transferable.

***Pre-Sale Mega Pass: \$70.00 each.**

Mega passes purchased at the Carnival Midway ticket booth cost \$80.00.

Save \$10.00 by buying ahead!!

Participating Pre-Sale locations in Braidwood:

**Berkot's Super Foods - Whitmore Ace Hardware - Braidwood City Hall
Rockin Robin's Salon - Hairagain Salon - Fossil Ridge Library - Midland States
Bank (Diamond) - Clip & Sip Hair Salon (Godley) - Shelly's Hair Salon (Godley)**

**** Pre-Sale Wristbands: \$25.00 each.**

See Daily Schedule of Events for Carnival Hours & Wristband Session Times.
A wristband purchased at the Carnival Midway ticket booth cost \$30.00 each.

Wristbands may only be used during one (1) unlimited ride session.

Each session requires a different wristband**

Carnival Midway Provided By A&A Attractions

*No Refunds on pre-sale purchases or tickets/armbands/mega
passes purchased at the carnival midway ticket booth*

**Pre-sale ends
Thurs., July 16 at 3 p.m.**

IN ADVANCE

\$25
**WRISTBAND

**Save \$5.00 by
buying ahead!!**



THANK YOU TO OUR OFFICIAL SUMMERFEST SPONSORS

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Ford, Braidwood Park District, Kozol Brothers Inc.,
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Braidwood American Legion Koca Post #39
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Co., City of Braidwood, Braidwood Fire
Department, Lakeshore Recycling Services,
Midland States Bank, Braidwood Police
Department, Braidwood American Legion
Commander Bill Kiley, Free Press Newspapers,
Core & Main

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Solutions, Arnie Bauer Chevrolet & GMC

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J&S Vinyl Designs, Bradburry Plumbing & HVAC
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ASSOCIATE SPONSORS

**(Various community groups, organizations &
agencies who provide support, activities and
events during the festival)**

Braidwood Knights of Columbus Council #1574,
Braidwood Baseball/Softball Association,
Braidwood Area Historical Society,
Braidwood Area Healthy Community Coalition,
Fossil Ridge Public Library, RC Gridiron Club,
Reed Township Mosquito Abatement District,
Braidwood E.S.D.A., Will County Sheriff's
Auxiliary Police, Christian Life Assembly Church,
1st Presbyterian Church of Braidwood, Ignite
Christian Church

Thank You!

SPECIAL SAFETY NOTICE

Please be aware of the restrictions below which apply to ALL areas within the
festival grounds footprint including, but not limited to: carnival midway,
entertainment/food court area, parking lots, baseball fields, and flea market.
Noncompliance can result in removal from the festival grounds. ** No Pets
Allowed On Festival Grounds (Only ADA Service Dogs Will Be Permitted)

** No Face Coverings Allowed On Festival Grounds (except standard PPE
masks covering the mouth & nose only)

** No Display of Motorcycle Club-Related, or Gang-Related Colors, Patches,
or Any Other Insignia Allowed On Festival Grounds. This applies equally to all
groups and/or organizations. Individuals wearing such items will be asked to
remove them or secure them in their vehicles.

CLASSIFIEDS

CLASSIFIED DEADLINES

Pre-payment required for all classified ads unless customer has a pre established business account

Deadlines

Classified Ads & Classified Display Ads
Fridays - 5 p.m.

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

Phone (815) 476-7966 or (815) 634-0315 for details.

Cost

Line Ads are up to 30 words (20¢ for each word over 30)
1 wk. - \$17; 2 wks. - \$21;
3 wks. - \$25; 4 wks. - \$29*
\$1.00 Extra per line for bold or caps on classified
*plus .0399% with credit card



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



FOR RENT

Wilmington - Commercial space. 101 E. Chicago St., Unit 2. Call 815-693-6030. Available July 1. ca15-18.

HELP WANTED

Bartender needed. Hot Shotz, 725 S. Broadway, Coal City. Apply in person in afternoons, any day. cc26-29

HELP WANTED

WE ARE HIRING — Full time teller in Wilmington. Send resume to info@grundy.bank or in person at 120 S Main St., Wilmington. ch26-27

HELP WANTED

Part-time Groomer Wanted! I'm looking for an experienced groomer to join my team. Flexible schedule and I'm open to negotiating hours and pay. If you're dedicated and easygoing, please contact me. Let's work together! Braidwood, Call Karen at 815-823-3844.

LOST & FOUND

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

MISCELLANEOUS

2011 Harley Davidson, road glide, sedona orange, \$6,500. 110 volt fuel transfer pump with meter, new, \$500. 24 gallon yard sprayer with boom, used once, \$200. 815-210-1669, leave message. ch26-28

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.

RECREATIONAL VEHICLES

For Sale - 2006 Gulfstream 32 ft. long, sleeps 8 with shed. Currently at Lake Point Resort. \$5,000 or best offer. 928-715-7395. cc 26-27

SERVICE & REPAIRS

Mike Collins Roofing, re-shingles and gutter cleaning, aluminum gut-ter screen, no repair to small or too big. Free roof inspection. Low prices. Lic #104.007296 Ask for Mike at 815-730-1303. cc19-44

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STORAGE

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WANTED

WANTED SCRAP METAL

- Farm Machinery
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- Anything Metal

Free pickup 7 days 815-210-8819

Come listen to 'Christmas in July' Wilm. band concert

The Wilmington Area Community Band will perform the third concert of the 19th season on Sunday, July 12, at 6 p.m. at Veteran's Memorial Park.

Arrive early and order dinner from "Truckin' Delicious" food truck! Bring a lawn chair, mosquito spray, snacks and water and relax in the shade as the band performs the following music in a beautiful outdoor setting.

This concert's theme is "Christmas In July".

Star Spangled Banner - David Conrad, vocalist
I Saw Three Ships
White Christmas
Cowboy Christmas
Faeries (Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairies)
Santa The Barbarian

INTERMISSION
Santa The Barbarian:
Snowpocalypse
Grandma Got Run Over By A Reindeer
Christmas On The Town Square
How The Grinch Stole Christmas Concert Medley
Sleigh Ride
Veteran's Memorial Park is located at the intersection of Williams and Vine Streets - across from Oakwood Cemetery and Island City Baptist Church.

The Wilmington Area Community Band is a volunteer group of local musicians from ages 13 up. In the event of rain or excess heat, our alternative concert location is Wilmington High School and signs will be posted at the park.

Resources available for food, meals

CLA Food Pantry. Christian Life Assembly, 2960 E Division St Diamond IL. Available Tuesday 2:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., Wednesday 11:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and Friday 9:00 a.m. to noon. By appointment only 815-578-5441.

Braidwood Food Pantry at Community Care Center. Open Tuesdays 8 to 11:45 a.m. 112 S. Center Street, Braidwood. Info: 815-325-0779

Ignite Christian Church, 1180 W 1st St. Braidwood. Micro-pantry open 24 hours front of church Info: (815)-390-5040

Top Fuel Saloon Food Pantry. Open Fridays from 1 to 2 p.m. 275 S. Hickory St., Braidwood.

Secret Pantry, for hours and location see: The Original Secret Pantry Facebook page

Coal City Food Pantry at Coal City United Methodist Church. (Use south entrance) Closed all Federal holidays. Open Mondays 9-11 a.m. and Thursdays 1-3 p.m. 6805 E. McArde Road, Coal City. Information: 815-216-3288.

We Care of Grundy County Food Pantry. Office Hours: Mon.-Wed. and Fri.: 8:30 a.m.-12 p.m. and 1:00-4:00 p.m. Pantry Hours: Monday-Friday

1:00-3:00 by appointment. Please call to schedule your time to come 815-942-6389. 530 Bedford Rd., Morris.

Kuzma Care Cottage, food pantry. 635 S. Main Street, Wilmington. Hours: M-F 9-11 a.m. and 1-3 p.m. and the 2nd Saturday of each month, 8-11 a.m. 815-476-2030

Local Meals:
St. Vincent Table Hot Meals. Coordinators Cindi Grove 815-735-1432 and Laura Marizza 815-325-8605. Hours for pickup for shut ins 4:00-4:30 p.m. Dine in hours 4:30 until 5:30 p.m.

During July meals will be offered at Assumption of the BVM, 180 S. Kankakee St., Coal City. From August through October meals will be distributed at Immaculate Conception, 220 S. School St., Braidwood; Nov. - Assumption of the BVM, 180 S. Kankakee St., Coal City. Dec. through Feb. - Closed and will resume in March, 2027.

If you would like to help with this ministry or know of anyone in need of meals, please contact our coordinators for more information.

We are always looking for more churches or organizations to help.

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

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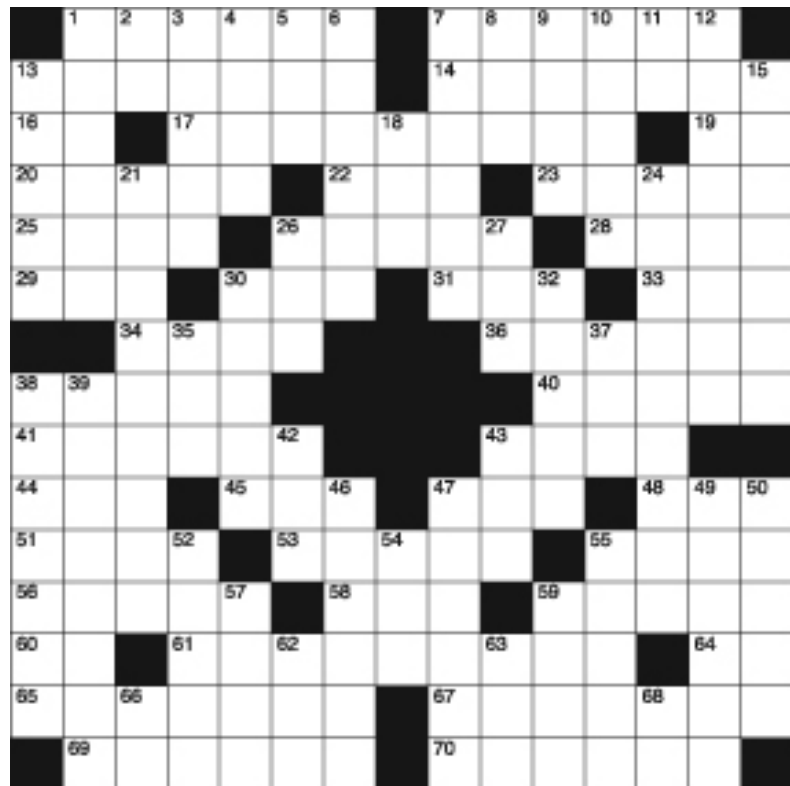
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Interior/Exterior



CLUES ACROSS

- Mended
- Hymns
- Commercial transport of goods
- Poked holes in the ground
- They precede C
- Branch of knowledge concerned with wealth
- Larry and Curly's pal
- Injured
- Popular type of dance
- Moon crater
- American state
- Places to lock valuables
- Stalk that supports the capsule
- Keyboard key

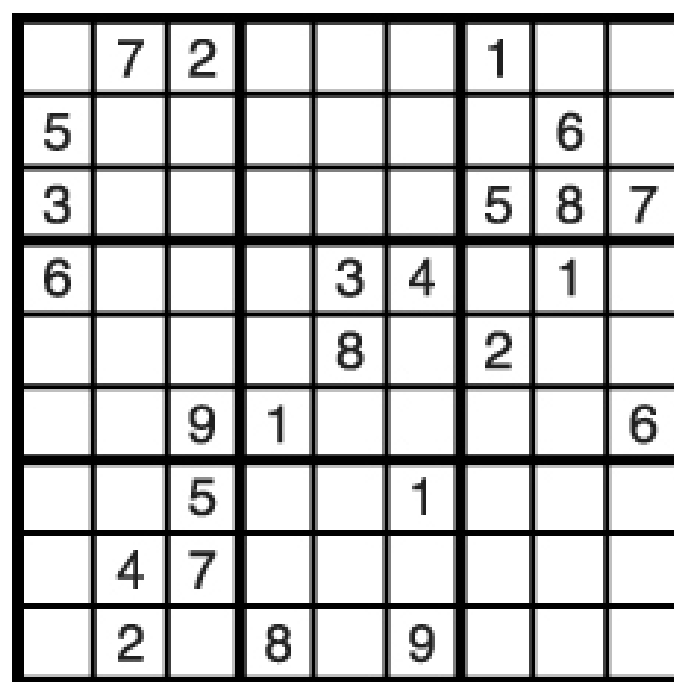
CLUES DOWN

- death do us part
- A type of cage
- A place to sleep
- Annual music awards show
- Made over
- Hard, stony substance
- Incantations
- Long-legged, wading bird
- Breathe noisily
- Congressman
- Rip off
- Golf score
- Popular pickup truck
- Where infants sleep
- Music term
- Small opening in a surface

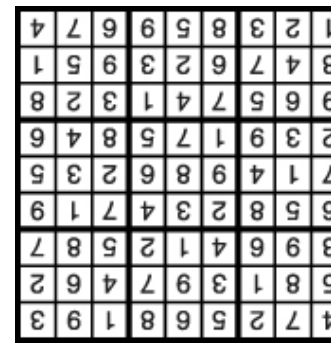
- Musical term meaning "very"
- Soviet Socialist Republic
- Treats with powder
- Email subject line feature
- A British lawyer
- Expression of laughter
- Farmer's calendar
- Seeds used as food
- Eurasian shrubs
- Periods of inactivity

CLUES DOWN

- Hard things to kick
- Collective of countries
- Letter of Hebrew alphabet
- One-time Alabama running back Eddie
- One's sense of self-esteem
- Of the teeth
- Treat with care
- Type of whale
- Curved structure
- Emits coherent radiation
- One of the Gospels (abbr.)
- Smallest interval in western music
- Netherlands seat of government
- Gives to charity
- Lout
- Pastas
- Release from restrictions
- Female sibling
- Title of respect
- Silver coins
- Region in India
- Partner to cheese
- Dark or dusky
- Pacific Northwest tree
- Exaggerate
- Toddler
- Touch lightly
- Fundamentals
- Jeopardies
- Curved structures
- Isolated, flat-topped hills
- Forming the bottom layer
- Reciprocal of sine
- Genus of Old World birds
- New York college
- Cloak
- Kawhi Leonard's team (abbr.)
- Vietnamese offensive
- "The Great Lakes State"
- "_, myself and I"



Level: Intermediate



Symerton hopes car show puts Arsenal landmark in the spotlight

BY ERIC FISHER
PUBLISHER

If everything goes according to plan, the Village of Symerton may experience something it rarely sees — a traffic jam. And Mayor Eli Geiss couldn't be happier about it.

The tiny Will County community of roughly 106 residents is preparing to welcome car enthusiasts, Route 66 travelers and history buffs alike on Thursday, July 16, when it hosts Symerton's Route 66 Road Show Car Show, an event designed not only to celebrate classic automobiles but also to showcase a newly restored piece of local history.

"We're hoping for a big turnout," Geiss said. "This is an opportunity to bring people into Symerton, celebrate the Route 66 centennial and highlight a landmark that many people don't even realize exists."

The event is being made possible through a \$10,000 grant from the Joliet Arsenal Development Authority

(JADA), which awarded funding to help commemorate the 100th anniversary of Route 66 while promoting attractions tied to the region's rich history.

For Symerton, that attraction is the recently restored Joliet Army Ammunition Plant Guardhouse located along South Arsenal Road, near the village.

The octagonal guardhouse once stood as the primary security checkpoint for one of the nation's most important wartime manufacturing facilities. According to information displayed at the site, the structure has been restored to its original 1940 appearance and served as part of the perimeter security system guarding the headquarters area of the former Joliet Arsenal.

The guardhouse was among the first buildings completed when the massive facility was constructed in 1940 as the United States prepared for the possibility of entering World War II. At its peak, the Joliet Army Ammunition Plant employed 10,000 workers



Photo by Eric Fisher

THE RECENTLY RESTORED Joliet Army Ammunition Plant Guardhouse is located one mile east of Route 66 along South Arsenal Road, near the village of Symerton. The guardhouse once stood as the security checkpoint for White Circle Group 60 where the headquarters and 48 other buildings, including housing, were known as the Elwood Ordnance Plant. The restoration was donated by union labor members of the Three Rivers Construction Alliance.

and produced primary explosives, chemical components and finished munitions including artillery shells and aerial bombs.

The installation continued to play a strategic role after World War II, supporting military opera-

tions during both the Korean War and the Vietnam conflict. Although production eventually declined, portions of the facility remained active until 2000 before being decommissioned and redeveloped.

Today, the restored

guardhouse serves as one of the few remaining public reminders of the site's historic significance.

Geiss said the car show offers a perfect way to connect that history with the heritage of nearby Route 66.

The festivities will be

held in the village park. Vehicle owners will compete for \$1,000 in cash prizes, with awards of \$500, \$300 and \$200 going to the top three favorite vehicles. Participants will also receive free food.

Entertainment will include live music from the Billy Gray Band, while food and beverages will be available throughout the evening at the Symerton Tap. Radio station 100.7 FM will broadcast live from the event, with "Freak" on-site from 5 to 7 p.m.

The event is expected to draw a wide range of vehicles, from restored classics and muscle cars to custom builds and modern showpieces, creating a fitting backdrop for a community that sits just a short drive from one of Illinois' most famous stretches of Route 66.

For Geiss, however, the evening is about more than chrome and horsepower.

It's about introducing visitors to a small village with a unique connection to two important chapters of American history — the legendary Mother Road and the former Joliet Arsenal.

"People know Route 66, but many don't know the story of the Joliet Arsenal or the guardhouse," Geiss said. "This gives us a chance to tell that story and bring people together."

The Route 66 Road Show Car Show will be held on Thursday, July 16, with free admission for spectators. Questions can be directed to Geiss at 779-227-5075.

SUNDAY FUNDAY!

DOORS OPEN AT NOON! FIRST RAFFLE AT 2PM!

It's NOT BINGO but a RAFFLE like BINGO... You play it like BINGO!! Lots of cash prizes!!! BIG PRIZES!!!

QUEEN of HEARTS

Every TUESDAY at 553 W. Kennedy Rd. Braidwood

You must play BINGO to participate.

Doors open at 4pm. Drawing is held at intermission.

Queen of Hearts Pot is \$9,735.00

For BINGO players only on Tuesday nites and see the QUEEN rules at the BINGO hall for rules and regulations.

Braidwood Post 039 BINGO
Tuesday Night Flash Max Bingo

Pull Tabs	6:30pm	Hot Food, Snacks & Beverages
Bingo	6:30pm	553 Kennedy Road
Doors Open	4:00pm	Braidwood, IL 60408

Home of the "Big Guy"
Commander Bill Kiley
815-216-2570



Have you seen young turkeys?

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) is asking members of the public to help monitor wild turkey reproduction by reporting wild turkey sightings this summer through the Illinois Wild Turkey Survey. Participants can report wild turkey sight-

ings, including the number of adult females, young turkeys or poults, adult males, and birds of unknown age or sex.

These reports help IDNR track annual reproduction, poult survival and broad population trends across the state.

Summer observations

are one of the few statewide sources of information on wild turkey reproduction outside of the spring hunting season.

Even a single reported observation helps IDNR evaluate wild turkey productivity and is considered alongside spring harvest, hunter success, permit

data, weather, habitat conditions, and other information when assessing Illinois wild turkey status and management needs.

The survey is open through August.

Submit reports to the Hunt Illinois website: <https://huntillinois.org/turkey/#wild-turkey-survey>.

Illinois State Fair unveils theme celebrating Route 66's Centennial

The 2026 Illinois State Fair theme 'Miles of Smiles' celebrates the 100th anniversary of historic Route 66.

The road to the Illinois State Fair officially begins with a state tradition: the Illinois State Fair Twilight Parade, starting at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, Aug. 13. The parade kicks off the 11-day celebration of Illinois agriculture, community, and creativity, winding through Springfield streets and into the heart of the fairgrounds.

From high school bands and community groups to classic cars and creative floats, the Twilight

Parade is an annual tradition.

"The Twilight Parade has always been about bringing people together, and this year's 'Miles of Smiles' theme captures that spirit perfectly," said Jerry Costello II, Director of the Illinois Department of Agriculture. "Just like Route 66 has connected communities and created lifelong memories, this parade invites everyone to take part in a tradition that celebrates the people, places, and pride that make Illinois special."

The Twilight Parade will start at 5:30 p.m. in Lincoln Park and travel

onto Sangamon Avenue, entering the fairgrounds through the Main Gate. From there, the parade marches down Main Street, turns left onto Illinois Avenue, and then marches down Grandstand Avenue to exit through Lot 21.

Mark your calendars for the 2026 Illinois State Fair, Aug. 13 through Aug. 23 in Springfield.

Stay up to date with all the latest news and announcements from the Illinois State Fair by connecting with us via Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

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