



COAL CITY COURANT.com

WEDNESDAY, JULY 22, 2026

A FREE PRESS NEWSPAPER • (815) 634-0315



FIRST PLACE ENTRY at the Coal City Area Club's Venetian Night went to the pirate ship.

Water,
sun
& fun
thrive
during
CC Area
Club's
Venetian
Night



Courtesy photos

COAL CITY AREA CLUB held its 2026 Venetian Night boat parade on Saturday with several clever entries. Second place winners went to this America 250 entry with a patriotic theme.



COAL CITY AREA CLUB'S third place entry for Venetian night went to the World Cup boat with a soccer theme.



Photo by Eric Fisher

FULL STEAM AHEAD—Union Pacific's legendary Big Boy No. 4014, the world's largest operating steam locomotive, passes through the North Kankakee Street crossing in Wilmington on Friday. As it thundered through the crossing, whistle blaring, it was enough to frighten one youngster pictured at lower right.

Crowds get a glimpse of railroad history

BY ERIC FISHER
PUBLISHER

For just 15 unforgettable seconds, history thundered through Wilmington on Friday afternoon.

Hundreds of residents, families and railroad enthusiasts lined each of Wilmington's four railroad crossings to witness the passage of Union Pacific's legendary Big Boy No. 4014, the world's largest operating steam locomotive. Cameras and cell phones were raised high as the massive 1.2 million-pound locomotive emerged on the horizon at 1:11 p.m., its unmistakable steam whis-

tle echoing through town.

Escorted by two modern diesel locomotives and pulling 15 baggage and passenger cars, the historic train rumbled south through Wilmington before continuing on to Braidwood, Braceville and Gardner on its way to a brief scheduled stop in Dwight.

The moment passed almost as quickly as it arrived.

In less than two min-

SEE BIG BOY PAGE 2



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& Wilmington
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LIMIT 8
LIMIT 1 OFFER*
Price without coupon: \$11.99ea

USDA Choice
Angus Boneless Ribeye Steak
10oz portion

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\$2.99
LB
LIMIT 10 LBS
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Price without coupon: \$4.99lb

Sweet Washington Cherries

DIGITAL COUPON

\$9.99
EA
LIMIT 2
LIMIT 1 OFFER*
Price without coupon: \$11.99

Pepsi Family or 7Up Family
24pk cans

Big Boy, continued from page 1

utes, Big Boy had crossed through Wilmington, leaving behind a lingering cloud of smoke, a reminder of coal-fired history and hundreds of smiling faces.

As the locomotive approached each crossing, there were a few cheers while conductors waved from the train. Parents lifted children onto their shoulders, longtime railfans snapped photos with professional cameras and countless smartphones captured video of a once-in-a-lifetime sight.

The atmosphere was more celebration than train watching, with many treating the event as a community gathering centered around one of the most iconic locomotives ever built.

Some visitors had staked out their viewing spots hours before the train arrived. Big Boy departed South Holland, IL later than anticipated and encountered delays while navigating the busy rail network through Summit before turning south onto Union Pacific's Springfield Subdivision.

Despite the wait, few seemed disappointed.

For many, the anticipation simply made the brief appearance even more memorable.

Others timed their visit almost perfectly.

Wilmington resident Will Slayton, 18, said he learned about the historic trip only a short time before the locomotive was scheduled to arrive. He quickly made plans to escort his grandfather so they could experience the rare event together.

"I thought it was something we couldn't pass up," Slayton said. "It's not every day something like this comes through Wilmington."

The excitement continued a few minutes later in neighboring Braidwood, where another large crowd gathered at designated viewing areas established by the Braidwood Police Department to provide a safe place for residents to watch the train pass.

Throughout the route, Big Boy's deep whistle announced its arrival well before the enormous locomotive came into view. The engineering marvel, built in the early 1940s to haul heavy freight over the steep grades of the Wasatch Mountains, remains one of only eight Big Boy locomotives still in existence and the only one restored to operating condition.

Friday's excursion gave communities across Illinois a rare opportunity to see living railroad history in motion.

While the locomotive's visit lasted only seconds, the memory of seeing the world's largest operating steam locomotive rolling through the region is one many spectators are likely to remember for years to come.



Courtesy photo
MEMBERS OF TROOP 466 attending summer camp include (front row) Cele Gordon and Elle Gordon. Back row: Scott Patterson, Mason Joyce, Noah Himes, LJ Rowader, Presley Carman and Carrie Gordon.

Family Troop structure makes way for new camp experiences

Scouting America Troop 466, a Coal City based group with members from surrounding communities, including Diamond, Dwight and Gardner, attended their first summer camp as a family troop at the beginning of July.

Youth participants, aged 11 to 17, chose historic Owasispe Scout Reservation, the nation's oldest scout camp, to attend this year.

The camp is located in Western Michigan, and is part of Pathway to Adventure Council, which serves Chicago and Northwest Indiana. In its inaugural years, scouts traveled across Lake Michigan by steam ship or around the coast by train and hiked the rest of the way to camp.

Troop 466 was grateful to have automotive trans-

portation, including a trailer of shared gear for their week of adventure and learning.

The scouts earned several merit badges, including archery, art/sculpture, camping, canoeing, communication, cooking, environmental science, first aid, fishing, horsemanship, mammal study, search & rescue, swimming and shotgun shooting.

First year campers also participated in a half-day program called Pathfinders to learn scouting basics,

including knife and fire safety.

In total, six area scouts earned 25 new badges in five days. While trekking the sandy dunes of Michigan proved challenging for most of them, all persevered and achieved the goals they had set for themselves for the week.

Know someone who would enjoy scouting? Look us up at beascout.scouting.org or stop by any Tuesday evening meeting at 490 S. Illinois Street in Coal City at 7p.m.

Village of Coal City seeking proposals to acquire and develop surplus real property

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT OF SURPLUS REAL PROPERTY IN THE VILLAGE OF COAL CITY, ILLINOIS

PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that the Village of Coal City duly enacted Resolution No. 26 08, entitled A Resolution AUTHORIZING THE SALE OF SURPLUS REAL PROPERTY BELONGING TO THE VILLAGE OF COAL CITY (the "Resolution") at a regular meeting of the Village Board of Trustees on May 27, 2026. The Resolution authorized the sale of vacant and unimproved real property bearing tax identification numbers 06-35-429-002, 06-35-431-003, and 06-35-431-004. This property is located along the west side of Fifth Ave and is commonly described as the property to include 0.77 acres of irregularly-shaped, vacant and unimproved land situated between the Union Pacific ("UP") and Burlington Northern Santa Fe ("BNSF") railroad tracks in the Village's C-5 Highway Commercial zoning district.

The Village is accepting proposals to acquire and redevelop the Property. The Village has negotiated the terms of a redevelopment agreement for the Property with Big Storage Solutions LLC. Information concerning the Property and a copy of the draft redevelopment agreement and exhibits thereto by and between the Village of Coal City and Big Storage Solutions LLC concerning the Property are available for review upon request at Coal City Village Hall, 515 S. Broadway, Coal City, IL 60416 during normal business hours. The Village welcomes alternate proposals for the purchase and redevelopment of the Property to be submitted on or before August 18, 2026. Any person may submit a written sealed bid for the Property. There is no minimum bid. Proposals should include a purchase price and a development plan for the Property that details the proposed structure(s) or other improvements, if any, to be constructed and an estimated project schedule. The Village will consider development proposals consistent with the Village's Zoning Ordinance, Comprehensive Plan, and the terms of this Notice. The terms of this Notice shall govern in the event of conflict or inconsistency. The Village favors development of the Property that will complement existing uses in the vicinity of the Property. The Property is being sold as-is and the Village makes no representation as to the condition of the Property.

This notice is provided pursuant to the Illinois Tax Increment Allocation Redevelopment Act (65 ILCS 5/11-74.4-4(c)). Questions concerning this notice should be directed to the Village of Coal City Administrator, Matt Fritz via email at <mfr Fritz@coalcity-il.gov> or via phone at (815) 634-8608. Sealed bids for the Property shall be marked "SEALED PROPERTY BID" and be sent to Administrator Matt Fritz, Coal City Village Hall, 515 S. Broadway Street, Coal City, IL 60416. Said bids must be received on or before August 18, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. The bids shall be opened and considered in accordance with 65 ILCS 5/11-76-2 at the regular meeting of the Village of Coal City Board of Trustees on August 26, 2026, commencing at 7:00 p.m. at the Village Hall, 515 S. Broadway Street, Coal City, IL 60416.

Respectfully submitted,
Kayla Melvin, Village Clerk

Published in the Coal City Courant on July, 15, 22 and 29, 2026.

Attorney Wharrie files Reeves estate claim notice

PUBLIC NOTICE

STATE OF ILLINOIS)
)SS:
COUNTY OF GRUNDY)
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE)
THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT)
GRUNDY COUNTY - IN PROBATE)
IN RE: THE ESTATE OF)
JEWEL J. REEVES)
Deceased)
Case No.: 2026PR47)
NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION CLAIMS

Notice is given of the death of JEWEL J. REEVES. Letters of office were issued on July 10, 2026 to DOUGLAS REEVES, 10342 Kalen Ln. NE, Hanover, MN 55341, as Independent Administrator, whose attorney is Wharrie, Kielian, P.C., 105 S. Broadway, Coal City, IL 60416.

Notice is given to all known and unknown heirs that the estate will be administered without court supervision, unless under 755 ILCS 5 28-4, any interested person terminates independent administration at any time by E-filing or delivering a Petition to Terminate to the Circuit Clerk.

E-filing is now mandatory for documents in civil cases with limited exemptions. To E-file, you must first create an account with an e-filing service provider. Visit <http://efile.illinoiscourts.gov/service-providers.htm> to learn more and to select a service provider. If you need additional help or have trouble E-filing, visit <http://www.illinoiscourts.gov/FAQ/gethelp.asp> or talk to your local circuit clerk's office.

Claims against the estate may be filed in the office of the Clerk of the Probate Division, at Grundy County Courthouse, 111 East Washington St., Morris, IL 60450 or with the representative, or both, within 6 months from the date of issuance of letters of office. Any claim not filed within that period 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 had been filed.

Dated: July 13, 2026
DOUGLAS REEVES
Independent Administrator
Larry G. Wharrie
Wharrie Kielian, P.C.
105 S. Broadway,
Coal City, IL 60416
Phone: 815-634-8990
ARDC #2996146

Published in the Coal City Courant on July 15, 22 and 29, 2026.

Meents Law P.C. files Lukowski estate claim

PUBLIC NOTICE

STATE OF ILLINOIS)
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE)
THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT)
GRUNDY COUNTY, ILLINOIS)
IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF LESTER JOHN LUKOMSKI, Deceased;
No. 2026 PR 54
CLAIM NOTICE

Notice is given of the death of LESTER JOHN LUKOMSKI, Letters of Office as Independent Administrator was issued on July 16, 2026, to Michelle Lukowski, whose address is 1070 E. Southmor Road, Morris, Illinois 60450; whose attorney is Meents Law, P.C., 25158 W Eames Street, Unit A, Channahon, Illinois 60410. Claims against the estate may be filed in the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court at the GRUNDY County Courthouse, 111 East Washington Street, Morris, Illinois 60450, or with the representative, or both, on or before January 24, 2026, or if mailing or delivery of a notice from the representative is required by Section 18-3 of the Probate Act of 1975, the date stated in that notice. Any claim not filed on or before that date is barred. Copies of a Claim filed with the Clerk must be mailed or delivered by the claimant to the representative and to the attorney within ten (10) days after it has been filed.

E-filing is now mandatory with limited exemptions. To e-file, you must first create an account with an e-filing service provider. Visit <http://efile.illinoiscourts.gov/service-providers.htm> to learn more and to select a service provider. If you need additional help or have trouble e-filing, visit <http://www.illinoiscourts.gov/faq/gethelp.asp> or talk to your local circuit clerk's office. If you cannot e-file, you may be able to get an exemption that allows you to file in-person or by mail. Ask your circuit clerk for more information or visit www.illinoislegalsaid.org.

Michelle Lukowski
Independent Administrator of the Estate of LESTER JOHN LUKOMSKI, Deceased

Dylan J. Hakey
Meents Law, P.C.
25158 W. Eames Street, Unit A
Channahon, Illinois 60410
Telephone: (815) 534-9515
Facsimile: (815) 534-9516
Attorney Code: 6352259
E-mail: Dylan@MeentsLaw.com

Published in the Coal City Courant on Wednesday, July 22, 29, and Aug. 5, 2026.

Public hearing to consider permit expansion for Airgas USA

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that a Public Hearing will be held by the Coal City Zoning Board of Appeals on the Zoning Ordinance on the 17th day of August, 2026, at 7 o'clock p.m. in the office of the Board of Appeals, Coal City Village Hall, 515 South Broadway, Coal City, Illinois on the following matter:

To consider: Expansion of existing conditional use permit through installation of gaseous Argon recondensing system at site.

At the following address: 2860 South Broadway Road, Coal City, IL 60416

Legal description of property: Part SouthWest laying West of railroad section 15-32-8.

Request for the above appeal was applied for by: Airgas USA LLC. Said Board of Appeals will be at said time and place to hear all persons in support of such matter or any objection thereof.

Persons may appear in person or by agent.

Dated this 22nd day of July, 2026.

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

Faletti applies for variance for fence

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a Public Hearing will be held by the Coal City Zoning Board of Appeals on the Zoning Ordinance on the 3rd day of August, 2026, at 7 o'clock p.m. in the office of the Board of appeals, Coal City Village Hall, 515 South Broadway, Coal City, Illinois on the following matter:

To consider: A Variance to allow a secondary structure on a lot without a primary structure.

At the following address: 710 E, Division, Coal City, IL 60416

Legal description of property: Orig. Town of Eilean, Lots 13 and 14 Block 6 Section 33-33-8.

Request for the above appeal was applied for by Brian Faletti.

Said Board of Appeals will be at said time and place to hear all persons in support of such matter or any objection thereof.

Persons may appear in person or by agent.

Dated this 16th day of July, 2026.

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

Village of Coal City to host public hearing on housing rehab grant

PUBLIC NOTICE

Village of Coal City Public Hearing Notice

The Village of Coal City completed the scope of work associated with a Community Development Block Grant, (CDBG) #22-243004 a housing rehabilitation grant used for rehabilitating 10 single-family, owner-occupied homes in the Village of Coal City. The grant was awarded and administered by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO).

Accordingly, a notice is hereby given that a public hearing will be held on **Monday, August 3, 2026, at 3:00 p.m., at Coal City Village Hall at 515 S. Broadway St., Coal City, IL.**

The purpose of the hearing is to afford all citizens the opportunity to provide oral and/or written comments concerning the grant and overall project performance. Those attending the public hearing will be provided with information including but not limited to: (1) project and grant costs, (2) time schedules, (3) project outcomes, and (4) completed scope of work. The CDBG grant to finance housing rehabilitation costs is related to the rehabilitation of 10 single-family owner-occupied homes in the Village.

David Spesia, Village President
Village of Coal City
Published in the Coal City Courant on July 22, 2026.

Coal City Library to host annual budget hearing

PUBLIC NOTICE

COAL CITY PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT

The Coal City Public Library District Board of Trustees will hold a public hearing on the proposed Annual Budget and Appropriations Ordinance for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026 and ending June 30, 2027. The public hearing will be held on the 8th day of September 2026 at 6:15 p.m., at the Coal City Public Library District in the Library Annex, 70 N. Irving Street, Coal City, Illinois.

The proposed Annual Budget and Appropriations Ordinance is available for public inspection during normal business hours at the Library Office, 85 N. Garfield St., Coal City, Illinois.

Carol Crawford, Secretary
Coal City Public Library District
Published in the Coal City Courant on July 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: Sebrina Beach, PO Box 2, 202 S. Peck St., Gardner, IL 60424.

If unpaid rental charges, late fees and associated charges are not paid 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.

Gardner annual audit report available

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE TO TAXPAYERS Village of Gardner, Illinois Annual Audit Report Available for Public Inspection

An audit of the funds of the Village of Gardner, Illinois for the year ending April 30, 2026, has been completed by the audit firm of Mack & Associates, P.C., Certified Public Accountants. A copy of the audit report has been filed with the Grundy County Clerk and is available for public inspection between the hours of 8:00 am and 4:00 pm at the Gardner Village Hall, located at 302 North Center Street, Gardner, Illinois 60424.

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

The Coal City Courant USPS No. 120-060

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Subscription rates: \$46 Grundy & Will counties; \$53 other Illinois counties and \$60 out of state

Coal City Methodist to hold senior gathering

Coal City United Methodist Church will hold their August senior citizens gathering on Wednesday, Aug. 5, from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m. All seniors are invited to join them for devotions at 11 a.m., followed by lunch at 11:30 a.m.

Activities will begin at

12:30 p.m. This is a free event. If you are interested in attending, please RSVP by noon on Monday, Aug. 3, by calling the church office at 815-634-8670.

In-town rides will be provided if needed, just let them know when you RSVP. All senior citizens are welcome.

Thank you for reading your community newspaper

Notice of Supervisor of assessments exam

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Department of Revenue, Springfield, Illinois has fixed August 27, 2026 as the date for an examination for the office of Supervisor of Assessments.

The examination will be held at the Grundy County Admin Building, EOC Room, 1320 Union Street, Morris, IL 60450 at the hour of 11:00 a.m.

Application forms and information may be obtained by contacting Mary Kucharz at 1320 Union Street, Morris IL 60450. Individuals interested in taking the examination should contact Mary Kucharz at 815-941-3458 or mkuharz@grundycountyll.gov by 10:00 a.m. of the day before the examination to register.

To be eligible for election or appointment to the office of Supervisor of Assessments, an individual must meet the eligibility criteria set forth in 35 ILCS 200/3-5 of the Property Tax Code.

The examination and facilities will be accessible to persons with disabilities in compliance with state and federal laws. Persons in need of special accommodations should notify Mary Kucharz at 815-941-3458 by August 20, 2026 to make the necessary arrangements.

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

Coal Bin to dispose of property

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 29, 2026 1 p.m. 1 p.m. to sell or dispose of the personal property of the following person, Santonio Sarabia, 34658 S. Lakeside Terrace, Wilmington, IL, Unit 422/Location #2 to enforce a lien for storage pursuant to the self-storage facility act, in the amount of \$775 plus attorney fees and costs.

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Eric D. Fisher, publisher

I owe my soul to the company store

The above statement is not just a line from a popular Tennessee Ernie Ford record; in the late 1870's it was true for most of the population of Braidwood, Coal City, and Diamond. For those too young to be acquainted with Mr. Ford's works, Google him, you might like what you hear.

The great coal strike of 1877 had taken its toll on the miners that was hard to make up. Most had used what meager savings they had to keep their family fed, many had moved on, but some were too poor even to do that. And the great coal companies knew this all too well. And what they gave to the miners in higher wages and benefits, they were determined to take back. So they turned to a scheme that had worked so well in Great Britain, the company store.

When the mines first opened in Braidwood, merchants from Wilmington and Joliet hurried to open stores to provide for the incredible influx of people. And at first, all was well. But then came those nasty strikes. During that time, stores had no choice but to sell on credit as most of their customers were out of work. And the endless cycle of strikes made it hard to get ahead. The only places doing really well



TIME WAS....
Sandy Vasko

were the saloons. After the long and painful strike of 1877, merchants in the coal towns were down to their last pennies. Most went to a "cash only" system, in an effort to get some real money in their pockets. But having just gone back to work, the miners had very little ready cash available. It was then that the big coal companies stepped in and created "truck stores."

At first these company owned stores would sell at prices cheaper than regular merchants in town could afford. And in addition, any miner who was working for the company could buy goods, the cost of which would be taken out of his future paycheck. When all the other merchants in town had been run out of business, the prices would sky rocket, leaving the miner no choice but to buy expensive goods and continue building up a debt he would never be able to work off.

Coal companies used this scheme all over the country. In Ohio, legislation was considered that would punish companies who issued script to be used at their stores instead of legal tender. But the legislation did not pass, as the big conglomerates used their political influence to

vote it down. On January 8, 1878 we read in the Joliet Signal, "Rumor says orders have been issued compelling everyman employed by the company to trade at their store or be discharged, that more negroes are enroute for Braidwood and that the company unable to transact their immense trade in the limits of one truck store will at once start a second one in the business part of the city. This means war to the knife, and bankruptcy to the business community of the city, caused by the miners for desiring a termination of the strike. They are now double cursed by the companies. "This is hard."

In the January 25, 1878 Wilmington Advocate we read, "Many branches of trade in Braidwood are being utterly paralyzed. The coal companies co-operative or "truck" stores are directly responsible. The result is the bankruptcy threatens every second businessman in the city."

And on March 1, 1878, "The Braidwood businessmen are nigh driven to desperation. They have trusted the miners and will lose several thousand dollars. Now that the miners have resumed work they are obliged to trade at truck stores operated by the companies. Ten-fold unhappy Braidwood."

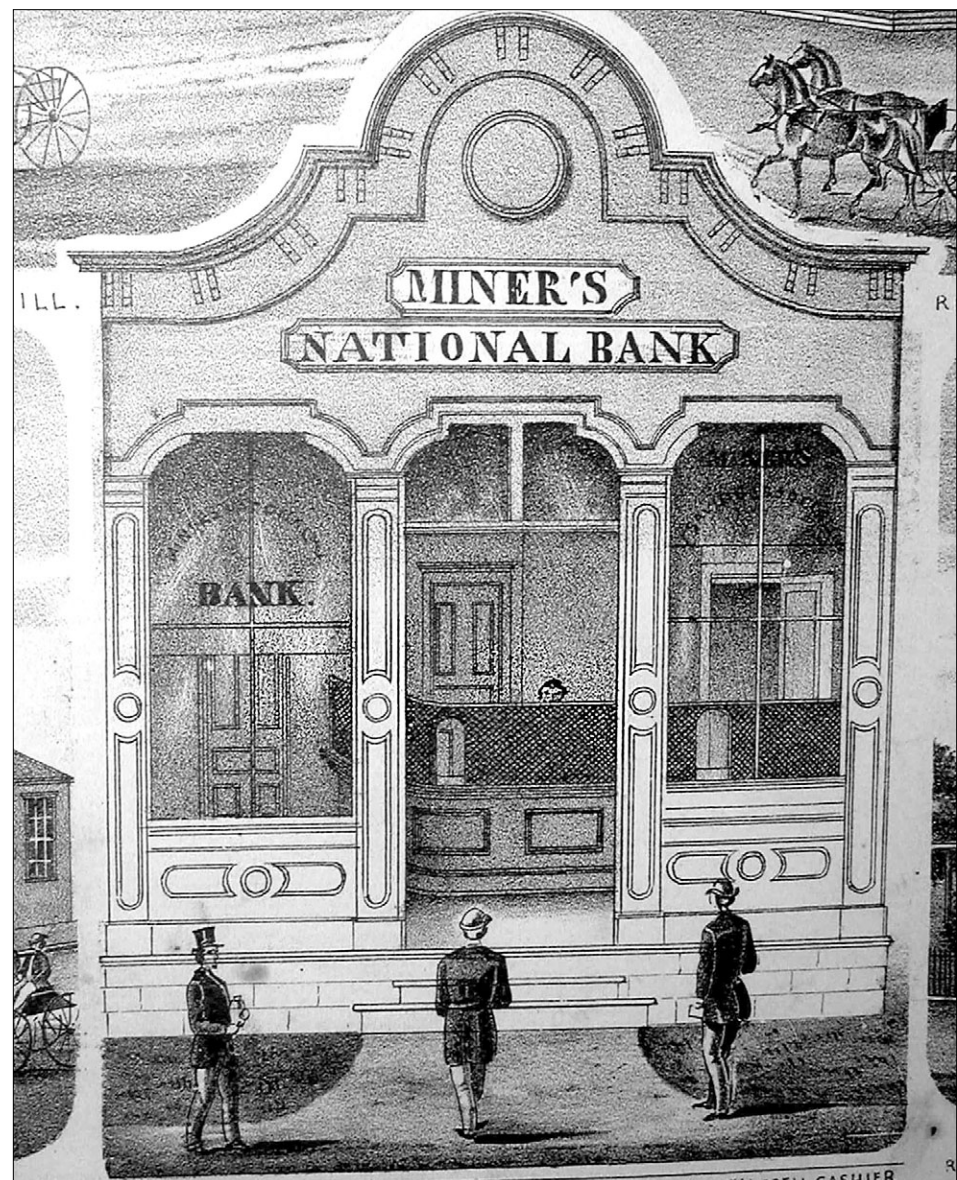
Some merchants went out of business entirely, while others moved. One of these was the Miners National Bank, started by

Wilmington's first mayor John Daniels. He had sold his interest in it just before his bank in Wilmington went under. In March of 1878 the Miners Bank of Braidwood officially became the Commercial National Bank of Wilmington. It moved into what was known as the Empire Block on Water Street where the Corner Tap is now. The entrance at the time was on Jackson Street. Ironically, John Daniels was being considered for the position of Federal Bank

Examiner, and had he gotten the job, would have been responsible for looking into the books of his former possession.

It was a very troubled time in this country. The robber barons that ran the huge companies were living off workers that were working for starvation pay. The Native American population was being killed off by whites in the West. Washington was a mess and in Wilmington, farming and canal boats kept the economy moving slowly

but frustration had set in. Ed Conley wrote in March of 1878, "Perhaps one of these days J. Madison Wells will die, and Sitting Bull will be hung, and Charley Ross be found, and Carl Schurz and J. Gould will kill one another in a duel, and Rutherford B Hayes will resign, and Samuel J. Tilden will be married, and Braidwood will kill off its colored population, then this distracted country will know the blessings of peace."



A DRAWING OF the Miners' Bank of Braidwood, one of the first businesses to leave, becoming the Commercial Bank of Wilmington.



A PHOTO OF Shulla's General Store in Lower Braidwood, an example of a privately owned store.

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 23
10am - Krull Farm Petting Zoo - registration is required.

Friday, July 24
10am - Family Caregivers Support Group - Catholic Charities is providing an education and support group for family caregivers.

6pm - Bunco
9pm - Movie on the Lawn - Hoppers - Everyone can join us on the Library's front lawn to watch the movie "Hoppers." Candy, popcorn and water will be provided. Bring your lawn chairs and/or blankets.

Saturday, July 25
9am-2pm - Midtown Market - CCPLD will be hosting an outdoor farmer's market. Vendors will include farmers, crafters, and artisans. We will highlight the vendors prior to each market. July 25th vendors include: A&M Cookie Co., ALBO Acres, Blue Ribbon Books, Buddy Macs Eat N Run (food vendor), ClusterKnacks, Create Crochet By Bria, Empowered Beauty Studio, Fancy's Crafts, Frannie Cat

Studio, JP Creations, I&T's Backyard Bees, LG Cards, Little T's Boutique, Love & Earth Soap, Moonlight Fizz, Scentsy (Maria), Tastefully Simple (Kimberly), and Wooden You Know It.

Monday, July 27
1pm - Kids Monster Inc. Fun - Kdg.-3rd graders can register to have some fun with a Monsters Inc. party where they will have some themed snacks, craft, and activities.

Tuesday, July 28
9am-4pm - Paper & More

Wednesday, July 29
9am-12pm - Senior Health Insurance Program
10am - Story and Play Time - Join us for themed stories, songs, and time to play. No registration required.

Berkot's roundup results in \$1,350 for local VFW



BERKOT'S SUPER FOODS store manager Gary Onsen (center) presents a donation of \$1,350 to St. Juvin Post 1336 Commander James "Hoppy" Phillips as Quartermaster Keith Roseland (left) looks on. Proceeds were the recent result of a month long "roundup" conducted by the store on retail sales. Berkot's has been a longtime donor to the Post and is one of the reasons St Juvin VFW Post is able to do what we do for local veterans and their families.

Coal City Coalers Team Pride

#1 Sports Fans Weekly Internet Winner

Megan Tabler

Winner of a large 2-item Pizza, carry-out only

Must redeem by July 27, 2026

"Proud to be serving the community for the past 41 years!"

We will have a new Internet winner each week throughout the school year, so watch the Courant each week for the lucky Coaler Fan Winner.

"Support Coal City High School Athletes"

Missouri S&T dean's list

Missouri University of Science and Technology announces the names of students who made the dean's list for the spring 2026 semester.

The dean's list recognizes undergraduate students who earned at least a 3.5 grade point average for the semester and passed all classes.

Local students named on the list are Addison Brown, of Braidwood, civil engineering sophomore and Kaelan Natyshok, of Coal City, electrical engineering senior.

Email news and photos to your community newspaper
news@fpnusa.com

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It takes a village

COAL CITY— This proposed AI Data Center is not a done deal. It's time for all surrounding citizens against this massive 300 acre data center campus to come together. Time to show up at the next village board meeting. There is a comment section in which you can address your concerns in person or write a short letter to be read by the city clerk during that segment. You can sign anonymous. If you are in favor of higher electric bills, water bills and constant noise levels just stay home and say nothing. This board is not working for you, only the land owners and people tied to making money in the future. More research is needed and at least a four month pause should be placed on all construction going forward at this time.

Talk respectfully

BRAIDWOOD— So the city of Braidwood and police want to kick people out on the street instead of helping or even talking to residents about property. They say they try but all police do is come banging on door, trying break it and harass homeowners. Maybe talk respectfully find out issue like insurance won't help, one person trying do work on house or money issue. Time to move and take businesses with it.

Study, then vote

BRAIDWOOD—Politics are not a team sport. It's not the same as sticking with the Bulls or the Bears no matter how bad the season. The political process is about choosing the right people who can lead a government in ways that support its citizens. Our infant mortality is the fifth worst rate in the country. Who is suffering from our loyalty to a political team? Our children. In sports the owners of the teams can spend millions to "buy" the players. In politics, we the people can vote in who we want. The vote is our currency and can be more powerful than all the money billionaires spend on TV ads and social media. The one thing sports owners who buy players do better than voters who elect leaders is the key -- owners scout the players, study their plays and assess their strengths. We voters tend to forego this work and let others decide for us. It's time to act like citizens instead of sports fans. Get to know your candidates. Get to know the voting records of elected officials. Do they reflect your values? Are you and your family thriving under their leadership or barely surviving? Do you want to keep them or is it time for a trade?

Art of the deal

BRAIDWOOD—Franchise, kit, tyrannical dictator, greedy everyday common stock individuals, art of the deal, and that group that is or is trying to run the world, amount to the voters. If there are extraterrestrials trying to decode radio transmissions they need to know our so-called

public service ads are very much the devil preaching from the pulpit.

Fine these people!

SHADOW LAKES— This is a memo to the Shadow Lakes HMO, that I am paying dues to; who does nothing. It has come to my attention, that our rules and regulations require home owners, to upkeep their homes and all their properties. Maybe these board members should start around and looking at these properties. I feel like I am living in an unkempt prairie. No one pulls their weeds or sprays them. Weeds in the front of some homes are two feet high. It is beginning to look like some abandoned slum area. Don't this people have any pride in their home? I like the people who have stone driveways, with all the weeds growing in them. There should be a person, riding around; and this is there only job, taking photographs of these properties. Here it comes... the big one... FINE THESE PEOPLE!

Heat index nonsense

SHADOW LAKES— My name is Dan Hill. I'm watching the weather and all of this BS heat index and heat is no different than when I grew up on the south side of Cook County. And after being in Vietnam these temperatures are comfortable. In Vietnam we had 100-110 degrees temperatures and 100% humidity. I grew up on the south side of Chicago in Mount Greenwood and later worked in Illinois and things are really no different. People need to exercise and get off the stupid computer. Thank you.

Take a look

BRAIDWOOD—So-called educated administrators, designer, and professional whatever appear to need to be brought out to the Braidwood Recreation Club to see what the professional city center developers can do. They are costly out of town professionals trying to be less on our money.

Thank God for Trump

WILMINGTON— Hey Irene, I just read your post that you don't like Donald Trump or his policies. How about Joe Biden and Kamala Harris with the wide open borders. How many have died because of illegal aliens. How about the Fentanyl trafficking that Donald Trump is now trying to stop and Joe Biden and Kamala Harris denied even existed. How about lying with Fauci about the vaccines and the origin of the COVID virus. Remember the bat that bit somebody at the wet market that was all your buddy Joe Biden and Kamala Harris and Fauci. Thank God for Donald Trump. Tom

Regurgitated lies

WILMINGTON— Last Thursday evening I was foolish enough to waste 30 minutes of my life listening to Trump again repeat several nonsensical lies



already rejected 60 times in the Federal Court System about voter fraud. But it did remind me of Trump himself on a recorded line asking the Secretary of State of Georgia to "just find me 11,780 votes, that's all I need." Now that was indeed a fraudulent act. But nothing happened. This country is way worse than just a mere 18 months ago, a distraction war, inflation, affordability, but his personal wealth has more than doubled in that same time frame from corruption. He knows, his advisors know, the entire administration knows this fall Congress and likely the Senate will be lost. Now he tries actively to disrupt the elections with lame, disproven, and regurgitated lies. Stay strong vote for your best interest not propaganda fears. I want my country back, peacefulness, kindness, affordability. And justice for those poor girls with the prosecution of all those rich people who did the unspeakable.

Prices are NOT lower

COAL CITY— Grocers blowing smoke. They need to remove false advertising signs like rolling back prices, when everything is climbing higher monthly. I guess the rich think we're stupid. Right Donald.

What have they done?

WILMINGTON—Whenever I see politicians with an American flag lapel pin, I want to ask them what have you done to help me and other Americans have a safe and happy life? Supporting a war the majority of Americans don't want? Keeping prices high on gasoline and groceries? Shooting innocent people while wearing masks to hide your identity? Keeping Epstein files hidden because big names are in them? Let's add that weasel Speaker Johnson wants to screw with Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. Again, please tell us what politicians have done to help us. I imagine I'll be waiting till the midterms are over, if there are even midterms to be held.

Stop being stupid

WILMINGTON—For those who don't realize what is the main product of Trump's signature Big Beautiful Bill which he self proclaims is fantastic. It handed \$1 trillion in tax cuts and corporate subsidies to the top 1% in this country. (The Billionaires) In order to accomplish this he cut \$1 trillion from Medicaid and food assistance from poor people. I don't know if you are either of these class of people, but I am willing to proclaim if you read this you associate with more the poor than the filthy rich. Stop being stupid, vote for yourself and your family this time.

Sick of blatant lies

WIMINGTON—On Friday two more United States Servicemen were killed and one still missing from Iranian ballistic missiles in Jordan. Remember this is squarely Trump's war of distraction from the Epstein/Trump Case. Don't want to hear anything about Iranian nuclear anything for 47 years. BS. Sick of his blatant lies, deception and corruption. Only a guilty person would not testify under oath to the American people to clear himself from such heinous, sadistic and disgust-

ing accusations. (so far) RIP to the innocent American Soldiers who lost their lives for a draft-dodging con man to stay out of prison. Sick of his blatant lies, deception and corruption.

New lawyer needed

WILMINGTON—Trump has shamefully hijacked law enforcement services which should be dedicated to serve the people. For example, in January Trump demanded that the Department of Justice sue the taxpayers to the tune of \$10 billion this past January which was not resolved until May and then turned into a \$1.8 billion slush fund to reward his goons for attacking Capitol police. How could this happen? Trump ignored official standards whereby the President steers clear of the DOJ and allows the Attorney General to serve everyday people only. But Trump is a megalomaniac who follows no protocol other than self-aggrandizement, arrogance and corruption. Thus the people of this country are unfortunately deprived of the services of the Attorney General who is busy serving Trump. We will never forget Todd Blanche's answer during the Senate confirmation hearing when Blanche referred to his relationship with Trump as, "I'm his lawyer" instead of being the lawyer for all Americans.

Irene

Whose speed trap?

BRAIDWOOD— Has anyone else noticed while traveling North on Division Street by 3rd Street speed limit sign is 45 mph, but traveling south it's 40 mph. Told Braidwood Police about it and was told that's a state sign not city. But if you get pulled over for speeding it's a city issue not states. Wonder if state would agree with that statement about it being their issue not Braidwood's?

A fun family outing

COAL CITY—Well, it is the height of the mosquito breeding season and with that in mind it is nice that Unit 1 has opened its breeding area to the public located at the corner of South DiPaolo Drive and West Oak Street. The best time for viewing is at dusk. For the best experience you are advised to wear light clothing. This will help with the breeding cycle. There is ample parking available and lawn chairs are permitted. Please enjoy the opportunity as much as we the neighborhood do. Ouch.

Dying for distraction

WILMINGTON— Final "weekend" update as of Sunday night a total of four U.S. military troops were officially reported killed in a contrived war to distract from the fallout of the world's largest child pedophile ring. So far only two people ever arrested in a case of over 1,200 known victims. Hold the rich and powerful accountable. If it was anyone else they would of been in prison years ago.

Stop the burn

SHADOW LAKES—When are the people of Braidwood going to stand up to their politicians and have them take care of their citizen's health? Shadow Lakes continues to burn their garbage. When are they going to hold these people accountable?

Letter to the editor

Renewing the call for ethics reform in Illinois

Once again this spring House Republicans filed legislation and called for ethics reform, and once again those calls were ignored. Now that call is being renewed, yet again, following the resignation of one Democratic state representative and the indictment of another.

Former Representative Harry Benton resigned a couple of weeks ago after the Legislative Inspector General found "clear patterns of conduct" that were "outrageous, unethical, and unbecoming of a member of the Illinois House." Facing the prospect of expulsion, Rep. Benton chose to resign after the inspector general's investigation was completed.

Then last week another Democratic state representative, Carol Ammons,

was indicted by a federal grand jury charged with wire fraud, making false statements, and obstruction. Prosecutors are alleging that she used campaign contributions for personal reasons, including paying herself and family members for services that were not legitimate, and orchestrated cash kickback schemes by directing inflated payments to third parties who then returned the money to her.

House Republicans have been making this call for stronger ethics laws for years. It was hoped that the high-profile trial and conviction of former House Speaker Mike Madigan last year would have woken up state leaders to the need for reform, but it did not.

Maybe, at long last, this will be the scandal that forces those in power in

Illinois to finally clean up the mess in Springfield.

House Republican ethics reform proposals include legislation to prohibit the use of campaign funds for a criminal defense related to misconduct as a public official, suspend pension benefits to public officials if they are charged with a felony related to their public service (and permanently withhold those benefits if they are convicted), and allow the Legislative Inspector General to issue subpoenas without prior approval and require completed reports to be made public within 60 days.

The people of Illinois deserve better.

Jason R. Bunting
State Representative
District 106

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Getting away from harmful pesticides

Dear EarthTalk: What can we do to get away from hazardous agricultural fertilizers and pesticides?

-- Mark Winston, New York, NY

EARTH TALK

Questions & Answers About Our Environment

Hazardous agricultural fertilizers and pesticides have had a long history. A previously commonplace and insidious pesticide, Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane, or DDT, was determined to be an ecosystem and human life disruptor. These scientific findings, supported by public outcry through the tireless work of individuals like Rachel Carson (author of Silent Spring), resulted in 1972 legislation that still exists today.

However, other haz-

ardous agricultural chemicals, like Paraquat and Phorat have yet to be fully regulated, leaving gaps within the move away from these harmful pesticides and fertilizers.

Regulation doesn't necessarily mean removal of a chemical. Fifty years after DDT's banning in the U.S. and global efforts to move away from it in select anti-malaria uses, concern from historical use still remains.

Effects persist for decades after the last wide-scale use-making regulation as urgent as can be.

In regulating hazardous fertilizers and pesticides, understanding the importance of agriculture is key. Agriculture has long served as the basis for the global economy, providing products that are vital to human life as well as employment.

Fertilizers and pesticides are undoubtedly harmful, but they are often essential to farming operations to meet demand. Recognizing the environ-



MANY FARMERS ARE working hard to move away from hazardous fertilizers and pesticides.

mental effects presented by the use of these chemicals, many farmers have moved to sustainable practices, making eco-friendly switches within their farming operations.

Dr. Jose Ramirez, an expert in entomology expounded upon the viability of eco-friendly alternatives to agricultural chemicals: "Microbial pesticides and parasitic insects offer an environmentally-friendly alternative with the potential to alleviate huge economic losses to U.S. agriculture and benefit public health."

With these scientific advances, the global community has been able to continue its crack-down on hazardous agricultural chemicals without severely impeding agricultural production.

Though most regulation is "patchwork," meaning that it varies from country to country, governing

bodies in most nations have taken charge in regulating the most harmful substances previously used.

Looking ahead, the best way to move away from these fertilizers and pesticides is through innovation and regulation. By empowering scientific efforts to find sustainable yet equally if not more effective alternatives, the agricultural community can remain strong and eco-friendly.

Regulation can be supported through similar outreach and advocacy efforts, encouraging stronger limits and rules about hazardous chemicals, specifically based on what science dictates to be safe.

EarthTalk® is a 501(c)3 nonprofit EarthTalk. See more at <https://emagazine.com>. Send questions to: question@earthtalk.org.

Experiment Day at the Forest Preserve

The Forest Preserve of Will County will be hosting Experiment day on Wednesday, Aug. 5, at the Four Rivers Environmental Education Center in Channahon, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Celebrate the final days of summer break by taking part in hands-on science experiments. Each day of the Aug. 5-7 Summer Finale will feature a different theme. Ages 5 and older; free.

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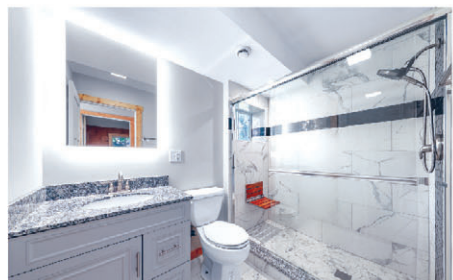


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Mystery promo revealed:

Legend Jesse Barfield to return to Joliet Slammers for celebration

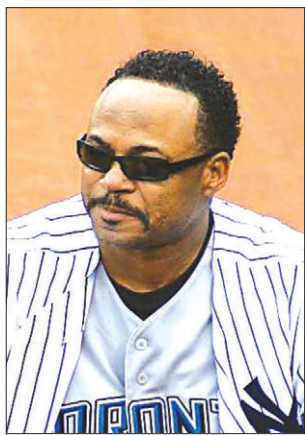
The Joliet Slammers have officially revealed on Friday, July 31, the Slammers, in conjunction with the City of Joliet, will welcome hometown baseball legend Jesse Barfield back to the city where his baseball journey began for a celebration honoring his remarkable career and impact the area.

A Joliet native, Barfield began his baseball journey with Joliet's own Belmont Little League before going on to enjoy a distinguished 12-year Major League career.

A two-time Gold Glove Award winner, he established himself as one of baseball's premier right fielders, and his return to Joliet provides a special opportunity for fans of all generations to celebrate one of the city's most accomplished athletes while inspiring the next generation of local ballplayers.

His statue has stood outside Slammers Stadium as a tribute to his accomplishments and connection to the Joliet community.

Prior to the evening's game, The Slammers and The City of Joliet will host a special ceremony to unveil a new plaque rededicating the Jesse Barfield statue located outside Slammers Stadium, further recognizing



ing his contributions to the community and the game of baseball.

"Joliet has a proud baseball tradition, and it's always exciting to welcome legends of the game to our community," said Mayor Terry D'Arcy. "Jesse Barfield's accomplishments on, and off, the field have inspired countless fans, and we're honored to celebrate his legacy alongside the Slammers. I encourage everyone to come out on July 31 to enjoy a great night of baseball and be part of this special tribute."

Fans attending the game will be part of the celebration from the moment the Slammers open the gates. The first 1,000 fans entering the ballpark will receive an exclusive Jesse

Barfield Replica Statue, created to commemorate the occasion and one of Joliet's greatest baseball ambassadors.

Barfield will also participate in a special in-game autograph session from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. on the left field concourse, giving fans a chance to meet the hometown legend and celebrate his return to Joliet.

"This is exactly the type of night our organization loves to create," said Night Train Veeck, Executive Vice President of the Joliet Slammers. "Jesse Barfield's baseball journey started on the fields of Belmont Little League before taking him all the way to the Majors, and that's a story every young player in our community can look up to.

It's incredibly special to celebrate not only everything Jesse accomplished on the field, but also the

pride Joliet continues to have in one of its own. We're grateful to be in such a fun position to welcome Jesse home and create a memorable evening for our fans and community."

As an added tribute, the Slammers will offer complimentary tickets to anyone named "Jesse."

Fans simply need to visit the Slammers Box Office with a valid photo ID to claim their free ticket.

The newly revealed Jesse Barfield Night will take place at Slammers Stadium on Friday, July 31st against the New York Boulders with first pitch set at 6:35pm.

Single game, season, group, and suite packages are available for the 2026 season! To see the full 2026 promotional schedule, information on ticket packages, and more, visit www.jolietsslammers.com or call 815-722-2287 today!

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.

Blood donors needed to offset critical shortage

Did you know that every 2 seconds, someone in America requires a blood transfusion? Coal City United Methodist Church, located at 6805 E. McArdle Road, will hold a Community Blood Drive in their fellowship hall with Versiti Blood Center on Wednesday, Aug. 12, from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.

To register for a pre-

ferred time, go online at Versiti.org/il or contact Karen Hart at 708-217-5808. Walk-ins are welcome, but appointments are recommended.

Be sure to bring a photo ID, drink plenty of water, and eat a healthy meal before donating. Please consider donating blood and help save a life.

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. VanDuyne (779) 227-9013. Email: jroark76e906.com or vanduyne110@comcast.net Facebook: Wilmington High School Class of "76"

BYOB Dusk at Braidwood Dunes

The Forest Preserve District of Will County will be offering BYOB Dusk at the Dunes from 7:30-9 p.m. Thursday, July 23, at the Braidwood Dunes and Savanna Nature Preserve, on Illinois 113 in Braidwood.

Stroll the savanna, then relax with a beverage as the sun sets and evening wildlife emerges. Beer and wine only. Ages 21 or older; free. Register by July 22, online under the event calendar at ReconnectWithNature.org.



Schedule of Events:

★ Thursday, July 23rd : Family Night Sponsored by Riverfront Lanes

9AM Medallion Hunt Clue

6PM-11PM Carnival by Zeilers Amusements - Wrist Band Night \$25 all you can ride 6pm- 10 pm

6PM St. Rose's Dunk Tank

6PM Fear Factor Hosted by St. Rose & Wilmington Coalition

6PM-8PM MC: Roy Gregory

6PM-8PM Face Painting by Kids Party Paint

6PM-9PM Jump Houses & Obstical Course- Free Event Hosted by the Park District

7PM-10PM Bingo on the Island Hosted by the Youth Catfish Days Committee

7:30PM Tug of War

8PM-10PM Foam Party by Fun Bounce Rentals

8PM Entertainment by 3RD Shift DJ's

6PM-Midnight Glow Bowling- \$10 all you can bowl at Riverfront Lanes

★ Friday, July 24th : Country Night

9AM Medallion Hunt Clue

6PM-11PM Carnival by Zeilers Amusements

6PM-8PM Hay Rack Rides Hosted by Wilmington Park District

6PM-11PM Beer Garden

6PM-10PM Free Shuttles Available

7PM Line Dancing - Doug Pfaff

8PM-11PM Entertainment by Buckwild Band

8PM Late Night Food on Water Street

9:30PM Fireworks by RKM

★ Saturday, July 25th: Rock Night

9AM Medallion Hunt Clue

9AM-4PM Craft Show Hosted by The Women of Wilmington on Water Street

10AM Skinners Pet & Bike Parade

10AM-4PM Free Shuttles Available

12PM-11PM Carnival by Zeilers Amusements

12PM-Midnight Beer Garden

12PM-5PM MC: Roy Gregory

Performances on the Island

12PM River Valley Defensive Arts

12:30PM Chi City Tumblers

1PM Wilmington Cheer

1:30PM Jason Kollum's Big Bubble Blast

2PM-5PM Talent Show

1PM-5PM Millers Petting Zoo

2PM-5PM Pickle Ball at the Kayak Launch Hosted by the Park District

2PM-5PM Youth Bean Bag Tournament Hosted by the Park District

2PM-5PM Face Painting by Kids Party Paint

3PM Reptile Show- Crosstown Exotics

3PM The MAR Theatre Presents Wild Hogs - Canned item for admission, all proceeds will be donated to Kuzma

4PM-6PM Entertainment by Raine Christian

6PM-10PM Free Shuttles Available

8PM Late Night Food on Water Street

8PM Entertainment by Audio Dog

9:30PM Laser Light Show

★ Sunday, July 26th: The Finale

8AM-Noon VFW Breakfast Buffet - VFW

10AM-4PM Rusty Nutz Car Show

Noon-1PM Sensory Hour at the Carnival

1PM-6PM Carnival by Zeilers Amusements - Wrist Band Night \$25 all you can ride 1pm- 5pm

12PM-6PM Beer Garden

1PM Catfish Days Parade on Water Street

2PM-6PM Entertainment by The Baked Potatoes

3PM Fear Factors Finals

3:30PM Color Contest Winners Announced

6PM Wilmington Community Band Presents Happy

Birthday Route 66 at Veteran's Memorial Park

6PM Ice Cream Social at Veteran's Memorial Park

Catfish Days Website:



Additional Details:

- ★ Events will be located at the Wilmington North Island, unless specified
- ★ Shuttles will stop at Wilmington City Hall, Nelly's Parking Lot & Wilmington's South Island
- ★ All events are subject to change without notice

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. McArdle 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.

Drawing for waterfowl blinds

Hunters should mark their calendars for July 25 if interested in obtaining a waterfowl hunting blind at one of three area state parks.

Random drawings will be held Saturday, July 25 for blinds allocated for one year at:

- Des Plaines State Fish and Wildlife Area, Will County with registration from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the site office, 7705 E. Huston Road, two miles southeast of Braceville.

Duck and goose hunters must register in person for waterfowl blind site drawings and must be present at the drawing to claim their blind sites. Mail-in registrations are not accepted.

To participate in a drawing, all applicants must present a 2025 or 2026 regular Illinois hunting license (no apprentice or youth license), an 2025 or 2026 Illinois Migratory Waterfowl Stamp at the time they register, unless exempted by law, and valid

- Kankakee River State Park and Momence Wetlands, Kankakee and Will Counties with registration from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. for both sites at the Kankakee River State Park office on Illinois Route 102. Hunters will be allowed to register for only one of the

two sites.

• Mazonia State Fish and Wildlife Area, Grundy County with registration from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the site office, 7705 E. Huston Road, two miles southeast of Braceville.

Duck and goose hunters must register in person for waterfowl blind site drawings and must be present at the drawing to claim their blind sites. Mail-in registrations are not accepted.

To participate in a drawing, all applicants must present a 2025 or 2026 regular Illinois hunting license (no apprentice or youth license), an 2025 or 2026 Illinois Migratory Waterfowl Stamp at the time they register, unless exempted by law, and valid

photo identification. Applicants must be at least 16 years old by the date of the drawing.

Applicants who need to purchase new licenses and stamps should do so prior to the drawing. Licenses and stamps are available at any DNR Direct license and permit vendor or the IDNR website at www.dnr.illinois.gov.

Registrants are no longer required to possess a valid Illinois Firearm Owner's Identification (FOID) card from the Illinois State Police to participate in blind drawings.

More hunting information and maps can be accessed at www.dnr.illinois.gov/hunting/FactSheets/Pages/default.aspx.

Mixed-Up Medley Day free event

The Forest Preserve of Will County is hosting Mixed-Up Medley Day on Thursday, Aug. 6 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Four Rivers Educational Center in Channahon.

Celebrate the final days of summer break with crafts, games, outdoor adventures and, weather permitting, a solar-powered snack. Ages 5 and older; free.

Wilmington Area Community Band to close out Catfish Days

The Wilmington Area Community Band will perform the fourth concert of the 19th season on Sunday, July 26, at 6 p.m. at Veteran's Memorial Park.

Arrive early and order dinner from "Yanira's Grill" food truck! Please 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 "Happy 100th Route 66".

- Star Spangled Banner
- vocalist, Lynette Ross
- Holiday Road
- California Here I Come
- Born To Run
- By The Time I Get To Phoenix
- Lone Star March

INTERMISSION

- WACB Jazz Ensemble:
- Day Tripper
- Route 66
- Highlights From "Cars"

- The Surrey With The Fringe On Top

- St. Louis Blues
- The Belle Of Chicago
- The Blues Brothers

Revue

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.

Area students named on USF's Dean's list

The University of St. Francis (USF) congratulates the following students who have been named to the Dean's List for the spring 2026 semester. Students who have attained a grade point average of 3.5 or higher at the end of a semester in which they have taken at least twelve credit hours are named to the Dean's List. Local students include:

James Sheridan of Braidwood; Elsa Bunton, Maya Dimitrijevic, Claire Ellena, Mae Finch, Carter Garrelts, Peyton Gibson, Natalie Gill and Clayton

Hannig, all of Coal City.

Also Kaela Francisco and Macaya Garner of Diamond; Alyssa Coldwater and Samantha Coldwater of Gardner; Jadyan Read of Godley; and William Juster and Allan Richards of Wilmington.

Seated Yoga event

The Forest Preserve District of Will County will be offering Seated Yoga and Seasonal Sights, 11 a.m.-noon on Sunday, July 26 at the Four Rivers Environmental Education Center in Channahon.

Enjoy an all-levels seated yoga session followed by a brief exploration of the natural world. The free program is open to anyone ages 14 or older. Participants younger than 18 must be accompanied by an adult. Register by July 25, online under the event calendar at ReconnectWithNature.org.



Catfish Days

July 23 - 26

FRIDAY NIGHT BANDS

VANCURA BROS - 9PM INSIDE
UNUSUAL SUSPECTS - 7PM TENT
WARPATH - 10PM TENT
SILVERSTRINGS - 5PM EAGLE
RISKEY WAYGER - 8PM EAGLE

SATURDAY NIGHT BANDS

LORETTA&LARRY - 3PM INSIDE
NONLINE - 3PM -4PM EAGLE
DAVID ELGER - 4PM - 6 P.M. EAGLE
SUPERFLY REDNECK - 7PM TENT
DONE DIRT CHEAP - 10PM TENT
ROUTE 66 BAND - 8PM EAGLE
HORIZONTAL HOLD - 9PM INSIDE

SUNDAY AFTERNOON starting at 1 p.m.

THE RUSTIC INN PROUDLY PRESENTS OUR ANNUAL **BLUES FESTIVAL**

FEATURED ON THE EAGLE STAGE WILL BE
KING CHAMAELEON 2-4
CHICAGO BLUE ANGELS 4-6
DON GRIFFIN BAND 7-9



108 N. Water St., Wilmington • 815-476-7290



Have fun at Catfish Days!



Front Row: Grace Smith, Dayna Vargocko, Samantha Olson.
Back Row: Sherry Yakima, Dr. Garrett B. Smith, Sara Daniels and Kelly Olson

DR. GARRETT B. SMITH D.D.S.

- 33 years of gentle family dentistry -

220 S. Main St. • Wilmington
815-476-9715

WE ACCEPT CARE CREDIT

COME TO THE CORNER TAP

THE CORNER TAP

Entertainment Every Night during Catfish Days!

THURS., JULY 23	FRI., JULY 24	SAT., JULY 25	SUN., JULY 26
JAKE VAUGHN 9:00 p.m. - midnight	DJ SKOOB 7:30 p.m. - 10:30 p.m.	VICTOR RAUL CONTRERAS 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.	JAKE VAUGHN 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
	DFX 11:00 p.m. - 1:30 a.m.	DJ SKOOB 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.	JOHNNY TRUSSEN 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
		HYPER DJ & DRUMMER JOHN PAUL GRAY 10:00 p.m. - 1:30 a.m.	HYPER DJ 9:00 p.m. - 12:30 a.m.

201 N. Water St., Wilmington
815-476-6146



CATFISH DAYS

WILMINGTON, IL

JULY 23RD - 26TH, 2026

★ 4 DAYS OF LIVE MUSIC, GREAT FOOD & WATERFRONT FUN! ★

THURSDAY JULY 23	FRIDAY JULY 24	SATURDAY JULY 25	SUNDAY JULY 26
 CATFISH DAYS	 LIVE MUSIC	 LIVE MUSIC	 LIVE MUSIC
JACK WIEMELER & JUSTIN WATT 8:00 PM - 11:00 PM	JOHN DAVID DAILY BAND 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM	ELROY ELROY 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM	
 CATFISH DINNER SPECIAL	 CATFISH DINNER SPECIAL		 SHARK RACE ON THE MILL RACE
\$18 CATFISH DINNER Includes 2 Fried Catfish Fillets, Tartar Sauce, and Lemon Wedge PLUS YOUR CHOICE OF: Hush Puppies, Fries, or Tots	\$18 CATFISH DINNER Includes 2 Fried Catfish Fillets, Tartar Sauce, and Lemon Wedge PLUS YOUR CHOICE OF: Hush Puppies, Fries, or Tots		\$10 PER SHARK PURCHASED AT THE GARAGE
 LIVE MUSIC	 It's FORKIN' Good!	 It's FORKIN' Good!	 WE LET THE SHARKS SWIM!
ZAZZLE BAND 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM	BLACK WALNUT BBQ 4:00 PM - 10:00 PM	BLACK WALNUT BBQ 11:00 AM - 4:00 PM	SUNDAY 2PM AT CATFISH DAYS FROM THE GARAGE!
			FIRST SHARK THAT MAKES IT WITHOUT GETTING EATEN BY CATFISH TO THE RUSTIC WINS!

4 DAYS. LIVE MUSIC. CATFISH. GOOD TIMES.
ONLY AT THE GARAGE ON THE WATER!
A PORTION OF ALL CATFISH DINNERS WILL BE DONATED TO WILMINGTON CATFISH DAYS COMMITTEE

OBITUARIES

Dorothy C. Turner

WILMINGTON—Dorothy C. Turner, 96, of Wilmington, passed away Wednesday, July 15, 2026 at Lightways Hospice in Joliet.

Born Sept. 3, 1929 in Chicago, Dorothy was a daughter of John and Marie (Chalus) Schaefer. She was raised and educated in Chicago, and completed training to become a nurse, working for Silver Cross Hospital in Joliet. Once becoming a mother, Dorothy set aside her career to devote herself to raising her children.

She was a woman of many interests, particularly in regards to fashion and decorating, as well as cooking. Dorothy was always eager to explore new recipes and was famous for her carrot cake. She also loved birds and enjoyed keeping them as pets in her home. Dorothy's sense of humor was iconic and a trait she shared with all of her daughters. Family was the center of her universe, beloved by four generations that she considered her greatest accomplishment. Dorothy gave all of herself to her family, leaving a legacy of love with each of her children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren that will stay in their hearts forever.

Survivors include three children: Barbara Kozlowski, of Wilmington; Dorothy (Gerry) Ludtke, of Wilmington and Kathleen Olson, of Colorado; seven

grandchildren: Victoria (Win), Celeste (Gerry), Jenny, Charles (Kristina), Gina (Shawn), Angela (David), and Tommy; 14 great-grandchildren: Clinton, Rosie, Johnny, Tommy, Robert, Taylor, Spencer, Kyle, Brandon, Ally, Madison, Anthony, Daniel, and Brady; four great-great-grandchildren: Natalie, Oliver, Inara, and Tommy J; and two sons-in-law: Clinton (Chriss) Murphy and Jerry Johnson.

Dorothy was preceded in death by her parents; three children: Margaret Murphy, Victoria Tash, and Patricia (Richard) Harden; one sister, Margaret Ringenberg, and one brother, John Schaefer Jr; and one great-grandson, Kevin J. Olson.

The family will receive friends at Baskerville Funeral Home, 700 E. Kahler Road, in Wilmington on Wednesday, July 22, 2026 from 2 p.m. until the time of funeral service at 4 p.m.

Cremation rites will be accorded following the services.

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

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



Billingsley presented Chamber trophy



Wilmington Chamber photo

CAROLE BILLINGSLEY (right) at the Landing Pad Gift Shop was recently presented with the Wilmington Chamber of Commerce's Employee of the Month Trophy. She was nominated by the public for her friendliness and exceptional customer service. Presenting the trophy is Chamber Ambassador Wendy Hill of the Wilmington Coalition for a Healthy Community.

Catfish by the ton



Courtesy photo

THE HIGHLIGHT of Wilmington's Catfish Days, which will be held Thursday through Sunday, are the catfish dinners served at area restaurants and taverns. Mark Nielsen, owner of The Rustic Inn, helps to unload almost 1,800 pounds of flash-frozen farm raised catfish on Monday afternoon from a refrigerated trailer at Berkot's Foods. The fish were processed on Sunday and driven 621 miles to Wilmington by America's Catch, a premiere fish processor in Itta Bena, Mississippi. The Rustic orders so many catfish they borrow a little cooler space at Berkot's.

Morris Hospital Centers select Daisy Award winner

Morris Hospital & Healthcare Centers has recognized Emergency Department Nurse Jessica Allen as the second Daisy Award recipient of 2026.

The Daisy Award is an internationally recognized honor that celebrates nurses for the exceptional, compassionate care they provide to patients.

The award was established by the family of J. Patrick Barnes, who was profoundly moved by the care and compassion shown to their entire family while their son was in the hospital. Out of gratitude, they created the Daisy Award as a lasting tribute to Patrick's legacy of positivity and as a way to honor nurses everywhere.

In nominating Allen for the award, a patient's mother wrote: "What stood out most was how Jess seemed to lead the room with quiet confidence. Her quick response and coordination with the rest of the Emergency Department team ensured my son received prompt care when every minute felt critical," the nominator wrote.

"Jess's compassion, clinical judgment, leadership, and advocacy that night embody exactly what the Daisy Award is meant to recognize," the nominator continued.

"She provided extraordinary nursing care not



Courtesy photo

NURSE JESSICA ALLEN has been recognized as Morris Hospital & HealthCare Centers second Daisy Award recipient of 2026.

only through her clinical skill and quick action, but also through the reassurance, patience, and humanity she showed our family during one of the most frightening moments of our lives.

"Morris Hospital is incredibly fortunate to have someone like Jess caring for patients in the middle of the night while the rest of us are home asleep."

The next Daisy Award winner at Morris Hospital & Healthcare Centers will be announced during the

third quarter of 2026. Nominations are accepted from patients, family members, staff, and physicians who have experienced or witnessed a nurse providing extraordinary, compassionate care.

To nominate a nurse for this award, paper nomination forms are available at the Daisy boxes located throughout the hospital main campus and healthcare centers, or via the electronic form on the Morris Hospital website.

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SINCE 1980

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10am **OPEN** **6pm**

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BIG Thanks

Thank you to American Legion KOCA Post 39 members & Volunteers, the Braidwood Lions Club and the GREAT Braidwood Summerfest staff that worked long hours in the heat!! It was a huge success. The American Legion Commander Bill Kiley really cares about the Community & the VETERANS, he too was there day after day in the heat. It was really nice to see how many turned out for the fest.

See you all next year!!!

Bigger n better!!

IL Republicans campaigning on scraps

The Illinois Republican Party filed its quarterly campaign finance report on the July 15 deadline. The party reported having just \$223K in the bank.

The next day, the party sent a letter to the Illinois State Board of Elections saying they were "reconciling" their records after a leadership change, and then noted that their actual end balance was \$101K higher than it had reported the day before.

But that bit of found money was basically the end of the "good news" for the GOP last week.

Republicans no longer have a pet billionaire. Bruce Rauner and Ken Griffin have fled the state. The legions of wealthy business titans who once contributed and raised money have either retired to sunnier climes or passed away.

Several prominent party members have publicly shunned labor unions and their hefty political war chests, although the state GOP legislative leaders have at least tried to rebuild ties to trade unions and even the Illinois Education Association. But the heavily gerrymandered legislative map combined with the current political climate mean they'll mostly receive



CAPITOL FACTS
Rich Miller

scraps. And, yes, the House Democrats are struggling this month with scandals, including a state Representative who resigned under pressure and another who was indicted. I'm not trying to downplay that at all. But Democrats have the national political environment, the local infrastructure and tons of cash behind them. The Republicans have little to none of that.

The GOP's gubernatorial candidate Darren Bailey raised \$1.3 million in the second quarter, which ended June 30th. That sounds like a lot, but he spent almost all of that on direct mail fundraising costs. The huge expenditures do give him a prospect list for future fundraising, but he ended the quarter with a mere \$128K in the bank. That was still a whole lot more than the rest of the statewide ticket.

Attorney General nominee Bob Fioretti, a perennial candidate, raised \$31K, spent \$39K and had \$28K on hand at the end of the quarter along with almost \$15K in recent debt. Secretary of State candidate Diane Harris raised \$6K,

spent a bit over \$4K and had a paltry \$1,816.42 in the bank.

Treasurer candidate Max Solomon, who ran as a write-in during the primary because the party failed to recruit anyone, raised less than \$3K, reported no spending and ended the quarter with less than \$8K.

Comptroller candidate Bryan Drew raised \$30K, and received \$47K in in-kind contributions from a company owned, ironically, by independent gubernatorial candidate Collin Corbett, spent less than \$3K, ended with \$54K and had \$25K in debt from earlier this year.

Man, that's just downright pathetic.

But I suppose it doesn't really matter anyway unless we see a massive sea change in national opinion in the coming months or the federal government finds a way to not certify certain election results.

Regardless of where individual candidates are at this moment, they'll have the money to compete. Unlike the Republicans, the Dems do have a pet billionaire (JB Pritzker) and, I assume eventually for most of them, organized labor.

The Republican legislative leaders have tried to scrape and claw as much as they can, but they're vastly outgunned.

Senate Republican Leader John Curran raised just \$75K in the second quarter. He spent \$71K and

reported having a bit more than \$3 million in the bank. His caucus committee reported having \$160K in the bank.

Leader Curran has three Republican-held districts to defend in the Chicago media market that have all trended Democratic in the last three cycles. Depending how bad things get, he could be defending a couple-two-three more.

The Senate Democrats have a ton of money to do whatever they want. Senate President Don Harmon has about \$20 million in his personal campaign account and \$1.7 million in his caucus account.

Over in the House, Republican Leader Tony McCombie has at least four Democratic-trending or swingy districts to defend and just \$1.3 million in her personal campaign account and another \$363K in her caucus account so far.

In contrast, House Speaker Chris Welch had \$11.4 million in his personal account and \$1.2 million in his caucus account. Like Senate President Harmon, he has more than enough money already, but more is never enough when there's so much out there, so those numbers will likely rise by November.

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

Lawsuit filed against the feds for freeze on Illinois wind projects

At least nine wind projects in Illinois that could help offset the rising cost of electricity are being delayed by the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), prompting Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul and a coalition of 19 attorneys general to file a lawsuit asking for the unfreezing of routine reviews of land-based wind energy projects across the country.

Federal law requires the DOD to review proposed wind projects for potential national security concerns and work with developers to address any issues. In August 2025, the DOD stopped moving projects through this process, blocking wind energy development nationwide.

The coalition is asking the court to set aside the DOD's unlawful freeze and order the agency to resume the review process required by federal law.

"The Trump administration's attempt to illegally freeze land-based wind energy projects will drive up the cost of electricity for consumers and threaten grid reliability during a period of growing demand for electricity," Raoul said. "Wind energy is a key component in Illinois' transition to a reliable, renewable energy future, and I will continue to fight President Trump's attacks on it."

Under federal law, land-based wind project developers must submit any proposed projects with wind turbines over 200 feet tall to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for review. The FAA then refers these projects to the DOD to assess whether they could affect military operations, radar systems, flight paths or national security.

For more than a decade, the DOD has engaged in a predictable review process and worked

with developers to mitigate potential concerns. Mitigation measures often included changes to turbine placement or height, radar upgrades, or agreements to pause generation under certain circumstances.

In August 2025, DOD abruptly stopped following this process. Officials ceased countersigning mitigation agreements, stopped sending completed agreements to developers for signature, and delayed or halted communications with developers about mitigation.

As a result, wind projects across the country have been frozen at various stages of the review process, including those that had already completed mitigation negotiations and were awaiting only final DOD approval.

In Illinois, the nine wind projects being delayed represent at least \$4.332 billion in private investment and putting around 10,664 jobs at risk.

Illinois currently has a robust wind industry, with 13.46% of all electricity generated in 2024 coming from wind projects. Electricity demand is projected to rise sharply. New wind projects are essential sources of clean energy generation needed to meet that demand Raoul said.

The coalition argues that the DOD's refusal to act is causing unreasonable delays and is undermining

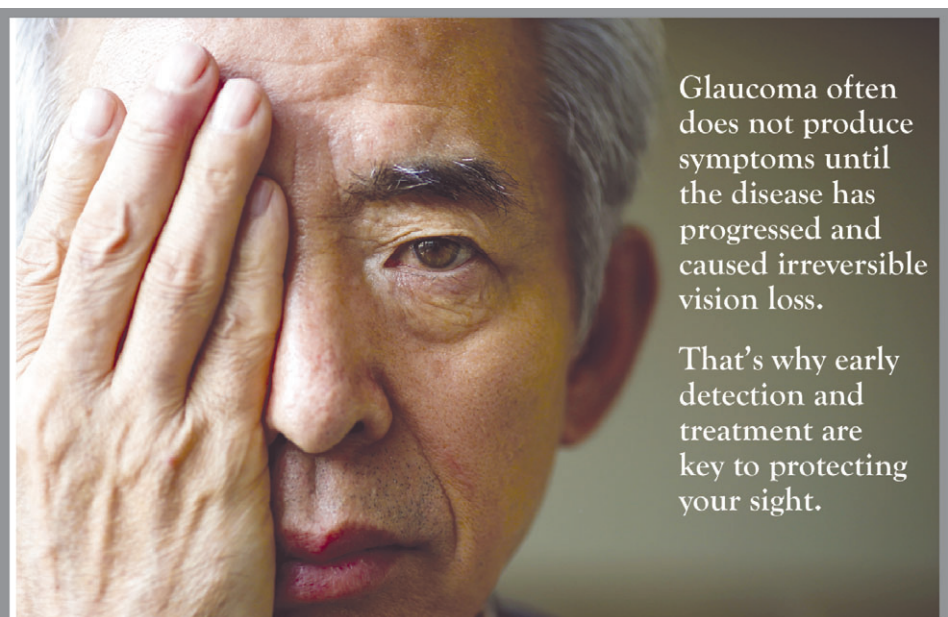
Fun & Food trucks at Forsythe Woods

The Forest Preserve of Will County will be hosting Fun & Food Trucks on Friday, Aug. 7 from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Forked Creek Preserve at Forsythe Woods near Wilmington.

Enjoy Mexican cuisine from The Grill's Tacos, food

from Lil' Deb's, beer from Route 66 Brewing and live music by Zach Foster.

Old National Bank will provide free double-scoop Ben & Jerry's ice cream to the first 150 visitors. All ages; free.



Glaucoma often does not produce symptoms until the disease has progressed and caused irreversible vision loss.

That's why early detection and treatment are key to protecting your sight.

You may not see Glaucoma coming...

But We Will.

If you're age 40 or older, or if you have diabetes, high blood pressure or a family history of glaucoma, talk to us to learn more or to schedule a screening

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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 \$10,580.00
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
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Wilmington Fire Protection District passes ordinance fixing budget

PUBLIC NOTICE

ORDINANCE NO. 26-07-001

AN ORDINANCE FIXING THE BUDGET AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE WILMINGTON FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING APRIL 30, 2027

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees of said WILMINGTON FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT have prepared or caused to be prepared in tentative form, a Budget and Appropriation Ordinance, and the Secretary of this Board has made the same conveniently available for public inspection for at least thirty (30) days prior to the date hereof; and

WHEREAS, a public hearing was held as to such Budget on July 15, 2026, and as said District lies within Will County, Illinois, notice of said hearing was given at least thirty (30) days notice prior thereto by publication in a newspaper published in Will County and having general circulation within said WILMINGTON FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT, and all other legal requirements have been complied with.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE WILMINGTON FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT, in the County of Will and State of Illinois:

SECTION 1: That the following budget containing an estimate of revenue and expenditures and the appropriations contained therein be and the same is hereby adopted as the Budget and Appropriations for said WILMINGTON FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT for the fiscal year ending on April 30, 2027; and the following sums of money, or as much thereof as may be authorized by law, is hereby appropriated to defray the necessary expenses and liabilities of the WILMINGTON FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT for its fiscal year ending April 30, 2027, for the respective objects and purposes, as hereinafter set forth, namely:

ESTIMATED RECEIPTS

Cash on hand at beginning of fiscal year \$	\$1,373,191.24
Taxes received in this fiscal year (corporate)	\$1,142,452.62
Taxes received in this fiscal year (ambulance)	\$1,138,170.07
Taxes received in this fiscal year (tort/liability insurance)	\$747,140.29
Taxes received in this fiscal year (audit)	\$9,882.80
Taxes received in this fiscal year (social security)	\$20,095.04
Taxes received in this fiscal year (pension)	\$322,508.96
County tax adjustment	\$17,130.20
Personal property replacement tax	\$24,000.00
Foreign Fire Tax	\$50,000.00
Ambulance fees	\$1,500,000.00
Interest income	\$35,000.00
Grants	\$10,000.00
Tower Rental	\$17,000.00
Waste Management	\$27,000.00
Annual services fees (Ridge Port)	\$220,000.00
Total Estimated Receipts	\$6,653,571.22

CORPORATE FUND

ESTIMATED EXPENDITURES	BUDGETED	APPROPRIATED
Contractual	\$210,000.00	\$252,000.00
Full Time Salary	\$600,000.00	\$720,000.00
Dispatching Fees	\$55,000.00	\$66,000.00
Medical Insurance	\$190,000.00	\$228,000.00
Maintenance-Equipment	\$7,500.00	\$9,000.00
Maintenance Radio & Pagers	\$1,250.00	\$1,500.00
Maintenance-Vehicles	\$115,000.00	\$138,000.00
Maintenance-Building	\$10,000.00	\$12,000.00
Maintenance-Office Equip	\$7,500.00	\$9,000.00
Utilities	\$25,000.00	\$30,000.00
Gas & Oil	\$20,000.00	\$24,000.00
Office Supplies & Postage	\$1,250.00	\$1,500.00
Operating Supplies & Tools	\$3,750.00	\$4,500.00
Uniforms	\$5,000.00	\$6,000.00
District Signs/Supplies	\$750.00	\$900.00
Office Equipment	\$2,500.00	\$3,000.00
Fire Equipment	\$65,469.16	\$78,562.99
Radio Equipment	\$1,500.00	\$1,800.00
Vehicle Purchase	\$35,000.00	\$42,000.00
Improvements to B & G	\$50,000.00	\$60,000.00
Public Education	\$2,500.00	\$3,000.00
Miscellaneous	\$10,000.00	\$12,000.00
Administrative Expenses	\$20,000.00	\$24,000.00
Loan Payment	\$111,236.31	\$133,483.57
Personnel Benefits	\$15,000.00	\$18,000.00
Grant Expenditures	\$8,116.50	\$9,739.80
Building & Equipment Fund	\$550,065.10	\$660,078.12
Donations	\$6,399.34	\$7,679.21
TOTAL EST.CORP.EXPENSES	\$2,129,786.41	\$2,555,743.69

The foregoing appropriations are appropriated from the above revenue sources including the general property tax for corporate purposes.

AMBULANCE FUND

ESTIMATED EXPENDITURES	BUDGETED	APPROPRIATED
Contractual	\$630,000.00	\$756,000.00
Full Time Salary	\$600,000.00	\$720,000.00
Dispatching Fees	\$55,000.00	\$66,000.00
Medical Insurance	\$190,000.00	\$228,000.00
Ambulance Billing Fees	\$450,000.00	\$540,000.00
Maintenance-Equipment	\$22,500.00	\$27,000.00
Maintenance Radio & Pagers	\$3,750.00	\$4,500.00
Maintenance-Vehicles	\$115,000.00	\$138,000.00

Maintenance-Building	\$30,000.00	\$36,000.00
Maintenance-Office Equip	\$22,500.00	\$27,000.00
Utilities	\$75,000.00	\$90,000.00
Gas & Oil	\$60,000.00	\$72,000.00
Office Supplies & Postage	\$3,750.00	\$4,500.00
Operating Supplies & Tools	\$11,250.00	\$13,500.00
Uniforms	\$15,000.00	\$18,000.00
Medical Supplies	\$40,000.00	\$48,000.00
District Signs/Supplies	\$750.00	\$900.00
Office Equipment	\$2,500.00	\$3,000.00
Radio Equipment	\$1,500.00	\$1,800.00
Medical Equipment	\$83,551.12	\$100,261.34
Vehicle Purchase	\$35,000.00	\$42,000.00
Improvements To B & G	\$50,000.00	\$60,000.00
Public Education	\$7,500.00	\$9,000.00
Miscellaneous	\$30,000.00	\$36,000.00
Administrative Expenses	\$60,000.00	\$72,000.00
Loan Payment	\$111,236.31	\$133,483.57
Personnel Benefits	\$15,000.00	\$18,000.00
Grant Expenditures	\$8,116.50	\$9,739.80
Building & Equipment Fund	\$550,065.10	\$660,078.12
Donations	\$6,399.34	\$7,679.21
TOTAL EST. AMBULANCE EXPENSES	\$3,285,368.37	\$3,942,442.04

The foregoing appropriations are appropriated from the proceeds of a special tax for ambulance service purposes and are in addition to all other Fire Protection District taxes as provided by law.

AUDIT FUND

ESTIMATED EXPENSES	BUDGETED	APPROPRIATED
Audit Expense	\$19,156.13	\$22,987.36
TOTAL AUDIT EXPENSE	\$19,156.13	\$22,987.36

The foregoing appropriations are appropriated from the above revenue sources including the general property tax for audit purposes.

SOCIAL SECURITY

ESTIMATED EXPENSES	BUDGETED	APPROPRIATED
Social Security	\$50,106.03	\$60,127.24
TOTAL SOCIAL SECURITY EXPENSES	\$50,106.03	\$60,127.24

The foregoing appropriations are appropriated from the above revenue sources including the general property tax for social security purposes.

TORT/LIABILITY

ESTIMATED EXPENSES	BUDGETED	APPROPRIATED
Liability Insurance Expense	\$100,000.00	\$120,000.00
Workmen's Compensation Expense	\$135,000.00	\$162,000.00
Legal Fees	\$25,000.00	\$30,000.00
Training Expenses	\$25,000.00	\$30,000.00
Risk Care Management	\$561,645.32	\$673,974.38
TOTAL TORT/LIABILITY EXPENSES	\$846,645.32	\$1,015,974.38

The foregoing appropriations are appropriated from the above revenue sources including the general property tax for liability insurance purposes.

PENSION

ESTIMATED EXPENSES	BUDGETED	APPROPRIATED
Pension	\$322,508.96	\$387,010.75
TOTAL PENSION EXPENSES	\$322,508.96	\$387,010.75

The foregoing appropriations are appropriated from the above revenue sources including the general property tax for pension purposes.

RE-CAP OF ESTIMATED BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS for the fiscal year 2026/2027

	BUDGETED	APPROPRIATED
CORPORATE	\$2,129,786.41	\$2,555,743.69
AMBULANCE	\$3,285,368.37	\$3,942,442.04
AUDIT	\$19,156.13	\$22,987.36
SOCIAL SECURITY	\$50,106.03	\$60,127.24
TORT/LIABILITY	\$846,645.32	\$1,015,974.38
PENSION	\$322,508.96	\$387,010.75
TOTAL	\$6,653,571.22	\$7,984,285.46

SECTION 2: It is estimated that no cash will be on hand at the end of said fiscal year.

SECTION 3: All unexpended balance of any item or items of any general appropriation made by this Ordinance may be expended in making up any deficiency in any item or items in the same general appropriation made by this Ordinance.

SECTION 4: If any item or any portion thereof of this Ordinance shall for any reason be held invalid, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this Ordinance.

PASSED in lawful session of the Board of Trustees of said WILMINGTON FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT on July 15, 2026.

Attest:

/s/ Robert Brand
Secretary, WILMINGTON FIRE
PROTECTION DISTRICT

/s/ Jesse W. Cruitt
President, WILMINGTON FIRE
PROTECTION DISTRICT

Published in the Free Press Advocate, Wednesday, July 22, 2026.

City of Wilmington seeking request for extension of Tameling Annexation Agreement

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WILMINGTON, IL
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT ON AUGUST 18, 2026 AT 7:00 P.M., A PUBLIC HEARING WILL BE HELD BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WILMINGTON AT THE CITY HALL LOCATED AT 1165 S. WATER STREET, WILMINGTON, ILLINOIS, PURSUANT TO 65 ILCS 5/11-15.1-1 ET SEQ., FOR THE PURPOSE OF RECEIVING AND CONSIDERING TESTIMONY AND PUBLIC COMMENT ON THE PETITION OF TAMELING MANAGEMENT AND INVESTMENT SERVICE, LLC(WILMINGTON CAMPGROUND SERVICE), LP FOR AN AMENDMENT TO THAT CERTAIN ANNEXATION AGREEMENT DATED FEBRUARY 16, 2010 BY AND BETWEEN THE CITY OF WILMINGTON, ILLINOIS AND TAMELING MANAGEMENT AND INVESTMENT SERVICE, LLC (WILMINGTON CAMPGROUND SERVICE) ("PROPOSED AMENDED ANNEXATION AGREEMENT"), WITH RESPECT TO AN EXTENSION OF TIME FOR THE INSTALLATION AND CONNECTION OF CERTAIN POTABLE WATER AND SANITARY SEWER LINES TO THE PROPERTY SUBJECT TO THE PROPOSED AMENDED ANNEXATION AGREEMENT AND WITH RESPECT TO AN EXTENSION OF TIME FOR A PROPERTY TAX ABATEMENT RELATIVE TO THE PROPERTY SUBJECT TO THE PROPOSED AMENDED ANNEXATION AGREEMENT, THE FORM OF THE PROPOSED AMENDED ANNEXATION AGREEMENT IS ON FILE WITH THE CITY CLERK. YOU ARE FURTHER NOTIFIED THAT THE PROPOSED AMENDED ANNEXATION AGREEMENT MAY BE CHANGED, ALTERED, MODIFIED, AMENDED OR REDRAFTED IN ITS ENTIRETY AFTER THE PUBLIC HEARING. ALL INTERESTED PARTIES ARE INVITED TO ATTEND THE PUBLIC HEARING AND WILL BE GIVEN AN OPPORTUNITY TO BE HEARD. THE PROPERTY TO BE SUBJECT TO THE PROPOSED AMENDED ANNEXATION AGREEMENT IS AS FOLLOWS:
THE NORTHEAST QUARTER OF SECTION 33, IN TOWNSHIP 33 NORTH, AND IN RANGE 9, EAST OF THE THIRD PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, ALL IN WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS [03-17-33-200-001 & 03-17-33-200-002]
Published in the Free Press Advocate on Wednesday, July 22, 2026.

City of Wilmington seeking request for proposals for rebuilding website

PUBLIC NOTICE

CITY OF WILMINGTON REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS WEBSITE REDEVELOPMENT, ACCESSIBILITY COMPLIANCE, HOSTING AND SUPPORT SERVICES

The City of Wilmington will receive sealed proposals from experienced vendors who specialize in Website Redevelopment, Accessibility Compliance, Hosting, and Support Services.

Proposals shall be submitted no later than 1:00 PM at Wilmington City Hall, 1165 S. Water Street, Wilmington, IL 60481 on Friday, August 7, 2026. Proposals will be opened and publicly read at that time.

Proposal documents may be obtained from Wilmington City Hall, located at 1165 S. Water Street or downloaded from the City's website at www.wilmington-il.gov

Questions should be directed to: Melissa Wiak, City Administrator
cityadmin@wilmington-il.gov

Published in the Free Press Advocate on Wednesday, July 22, 2026.

City of Wilmington seeking bids for Civic Center Roof Project

PUBLIC NOTICE

INVITATION TO BID

Sealed Bids will be received by the City of Wilmington for "Civic Center Roof Project" and is further described as follows: Installation of 20-year fully-adhered TPO roof system with polyisocyanurate insulation and required copings and flashings; shingle roof section replacement; gutter installation; and miscellaneous siding repairs/replacement.

Bids shall be submitted no later than 11:00 a.m. at Wilmington City Hall, 1165 S. Water Street, Wilmington, IL 60481 on Friday, August 7, 2026. Proposals will be opened and publicly read at that time.

Bid documents may be accessed on-line at: www.chamlin.com
Bidders are advised that this Contract will be subject to either federal prevailing wage (Davis-Bacon) or Illinois prevailing wage rates, whichever is the higher rate at the time of the project. This project is also subject to the Build America, Buy America (BABA) Act.

This project is subject to the Employment of Illinois Workers on Public Works Act.

The successful Bidder shall provide at least 40% of all labor required for the completion of this project.

Funding for this project has been provided (in whole or in part) by Will County through the use of Community Block Grants made available by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Contractors must maintain active registration in SAM.gov. Contractors must comply with all applicable federal requirements including applicable provisions of 2 CFR 200, Equal Employment Opportunity requirements, non-discrimination requirements, and all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

The Bid shall be accompanied by a certified check or bid bond, in the amount of five percent (5%) of the gross amount of the bid and be payable to the order of the City of Wilmington.

A mandatory Pre-Bid Meeting has been scheduled for Monday, August 3, 2026 at 11:00 a.m. at the project site located at 805 River Street, Wilmington, IL.

Bids may be held by the City of Wilmington for a period not to exceed 60 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:

MAYOR & CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF WILMINGTON, ILLINOIS

Published in the Free Press Advocate, Wed., July 22, 2026.

City of Wilmington to hold hearing to amend Rink properties agreement

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WILMINGTON, IL

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT ON AUGUST 18, 2026 AT 7:00 P.M., A PUBLIC HEARING WILL BE HELD BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WILMINGTON AT THE CITY HALL LOCATED AT 1165 S. WATER STREET, WILMINGTON, ILLINOIS, PURSUANT TO 65 ILCS 5/11-15.1-1 ET SEQ., FOR THE PURPOSE OF RECEIVING AND CONSIDERING TESTIMONY AND PUBLIC COMMENT ON THE PETITION OF ROBERT RINK, MARTHA RINK, ROBERT F. RINK, JACQUELYN K. RINK AND RINK AGRICULTURAL AND INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP, LP FOR AN AMENDMENT TO THAT CERTAIN ANNEXATION AGREEMENT DATED FEBRUARY 16, 2010 BY AND BETWEEN THE CITY OF WILMINGTON, ILLINOIS AND ROBERT RINK, MARTHA RINK, ROBERT F. RINK, JACQUELYN K. RINK AND RINK AGRICULTURAL AND INVESTMENTS, LP ("PROPOSED AMENDED ANNEXATION AGREEMENT"), WITH RESPECT TO AN EXTENSION OF TIME FOR THE INSTALLATION AND CONNECTION OF CERTAIN POTABLE WATER AND SANITARY SEWER LINES TO THE PROPERTY SUBJECT TO THE PROPOSED AMENDED ANNEXATION AGREEMENT AND WITH RESPECT TO AN EXTENSION OF TIME FOR A PROPERTY TAX ABATEMENT RELATIVE TO THE PROPERTY SUBJECT TO THE PROPOSED AMENDED ANNEXATION AGREEMENT, THE FORM OF THE PROPOSED AMENDED ANNEXATION AGREEMENT IS ON FILE WITH THE CITY CLERK. YOU ARE FURTHER NOTIFIED THAT THE PROPOSED AMENDED ANNEXATION AGREEMENT MAY BE CHANGED, ALTERED, MODIFIED, AMENDED OR REDRAFTED IN ITS ENTIRETY AFTER THE PUBLIC HEARING. ALL INTERESTED PARTIES ARE INVITED TO ATTEND THE PUBLIC HEARING AND WILL BE GIVEN AN OPPORTUNITY TO BE HEARD. THE PROPERTY TO BE SUBJECT TO THE PROPOSED AMENDED ANNEXATION AGREEMENT IS AS FOLLOWS:

PARCELS A & B

TRACT 1: THAT PRT OF THE SW1/4 OF SEC. 28, T33N-R9E, LYG S'LY OF THE CNTRLN OF FEDERAL AID RTE. 77, (SECTION 90-R COMMONLY KNOWN, AS RTE. 66), (EX THAT PRT CONVEYED BY DOC 412009 TO GULF, MOBILE & OHIO RR), & ALSO (EX THE E'LY 502 FT OF THE S'LY 605 FT OF SD SW1/4) & (EX THE E'LY 142 FT OF THE N'LY 605 FT OF THE S'LY 1210 FT OF THE E1/2 OF THE SW1/4), REM AFTER DIV PER PET#2013-38 NDA:

TRACT 2: THAT PRT OF THE W1/2 OF THE SE1/4 OF SEC 28 T33N-R9E LYG S'LY OF THE S'LY ROW LN OF THE N BOUNDARY LN OF FAI 77 (RT 66 AS SHOWN ON PLAT DOC 783636) (EX THAT PRT DAF: BEG IN THE CNTR OF THE PUBLIC ROAD AT A PT IN THE S LN OF SD E1/2 OF THE W1/2 OF THE SE1/4 SEC 28 THAT IS 75 FT W OF THE E LN OF SD E1/2 OF THE W1/2 OF THE SE1/4, THC N 225 FT, THC W 150 FT, THC S 225 FT, THC E TO THE FOB) & (EX THAT PRT OF THE W1/2 SE1/4 SEC 28 DAF: BEG AT THE SE1/4 OF SD W1/2 OF THE SE1/4, THC W ALG CNTRLN OF PUBLIC ROAD 75 FT, THC N 225 FT, THC E 75 FT TO THE E LN OF SD W1/2 OF SD SE1/4, THC S'LY 225 FT ALG THE E LN OF SD W1/2 OF THE SE1/4 TO THE POB) & (EX THE WLY 578 FT OF THE S'LY 605 FT OF SD SW1/4) & ALSO (EX THE WLY 218 FT OF THE N'LY 605 FT OF THE S'LY 1210 FT OF THE SE1/4). REM AFTER DIV PER PET#2013-38 NDA.
PIN'S: 03-17-28-400-013-0000 AND 03-17-28-300-013-0000

PARCEL C

TRACT 1 THE WLY 578 FT (EXCEPT THE WLY 218 FT THROF) OF THE S'LY 605 FT OF THE W1/2 OF THE SE1/4.OF SEC 28, T33N-R9E. REM AFTER DIV PER PET #2008-177 NDA:
PIN : 03-17-28-400 -014-0000

PARCEL D

TRACT 3: THE E'LY 142 FT OF THE S'LY 605 FT OF THE SW1/4 OF SEC 28, T33N-R9E; & THE WLY 218 FT OF THE S'LY 605 FT OF THE W1/2 OF THE SE1/4 OF SEC 28, T33N-R9E. DIV/CONS PER PET#2013-38 NDA.
PIN: 03-17-28-400-015-0000
Published in the Free Press Advocate on Wednesday, July 22, 2026

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Haircuts & Color for men & women

450 Davy Ln., Wilmington
(708) 465-3198

Hrs. Tues., Wed., Fri 9-6,
Thurs. 9-5 & Sat. 8-3

Explorer Day at Forest Preserve

The Forest Preserve of Will County will be hosting Explorer Day on Friday, Aug. 7 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Four Rivers Enviromental Education Center in Channahon.

Learn wilderness exploration skills indoors and then head onto the trails to put them to the test. Ages 5 and older; free.

AUTO • HOME • LIFE • BUSINESS • PROPERTY

Jerry Hallahan - Agent

1350 E. Division St., Diamond
(815) 634-2222 jerry@jerryhallahan.com

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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

HELP WANTED

Bartender needed. Hot Shotz, 725 S. Broadway, Coal City. Apply in person in afternoons, any day. cc 26-29

HELP WANTED

Help Wanted: Bob's Advanced Auto & Tire, Inc. Seeking lube technician for our high volume auto repair shop. Must have drivers license. apply within at 60 E. Chestnut St. Coal City. 815-634-0004

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.

SERVICE & REPAIRS

A Thousand Words Photography
385 N. Second Ave.
Coal City
Mandy Eaton
815-791-2913

Bubbles Cleaning Service

Dawn Boardman
Business and Home Cleaning Service.
Weekly, bi-weekly, monthly.
Many references available.
Please leave message
815-661-6180.
cc28-56

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. cc19-44

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

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.

No gas bargains as prices rise

Average gasoline prices in Illinois have risen 8.0 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$4.13/g Monday, according to GasBuddy's survey of 4,378 stations in Illinois.

Prices in Illinois are 2.2 cents per gallon lower than a month ago and stand 73.2 cents per gallon higher than a year ago.

Indeed, gas prices are creeping up, including Wilmington, with a low of \$3.79/g at Amoco and \$4.04/g at Circle K. In Braidwood, you'll be paying \$3.89/g across the board.

Coal City Gas N Wash has the cheapest gas around, at \$3.69/g with a high of \$3.99/g at BP.

Traveling to Morris or Bourbonnais won't save you a dime, with gas from \$3.89/g at Pilot, up to \$4.19/g at BP in Morris. Bourbonnais is a bit cheaper, but not worth the drive at \$3.95/g at Gulf and \$3.99/g at all other stations.

"Average gasoline and diesel prices rose in nearly every state for the second straight week, with the national average

price of gasoline likely to reach \$4 per gallon within the next 48 hours and diesel already back above \$5 per gallon nationally," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy.

"While the ongoing U.S.-Iran situation continues to weigh on markets, the story is increasingly less about crude oil and more about global refining capacity—the Strait of Hormuz remains closed while continued Ukrainian attacks on Russian refineries further squeeze an already strained supply picture.

"With WTI crude approaching \$85 per barrel in Sunday night trading, price-cycling markets are likely to see another jolt higher in the coming days, and motorists should brace for a rougher stretch ahead."

The lowest price in the state yesterday was \$3.39/g while the highest was \$5.99/g, a difference of \$2.60/g.

The national average price of diesel has decreased 22.3 cents compared to a week ago and stands at \$5.07 per gallon.

High schoolers can compete in Voice of Democracy contest

High school students from Wilmington, Coal City and Reed-Custer now have an opportunity to compete for scholarships through the Illinois VFW Auxiliary's 2026-2027 Scholarship Program, which recognizes students for their patriotism, creativity and commitment to honoring America's veterans.

Among the opportunities available to area students is the Voice of Democracy Audio-Essay Competition, which is open to students in grades 9-12. This year's theme is "What a Veteran Taught Me About America." Students will submit an original recorded essay reflecting on the topic.

The deadline to enter the Voice of Democracy competition is Oct. 31, 2026.

Students with artistic talents may also participate in the Young American Creative Patriotic Art Contest, open to grades 9-12. The contest invites students to create original patriotic artwork, including both traditional two-dimensional pieces and three-dimensional art. Entries for the art competition are due by

March 31, 2027.

In addition to student competitions, the VFW Auxiliary offers a Continuing Education Scholarship for VFW Auxiliary members and their immediate family members pursuing higher education, technical school, trade school or vocational training. Applications for that scholarship are due Feb. 15, 2027.

The scholarship program is sponsored by the VFW Auxiliary Department of Illinois under the theme, "Their Fight. Their Story. Our Voice." The organization says the program is designed to honor veterans while inspiring students through education, patriotism and community involvement.

Students interested in entering any of the competitions or learning more about eligibility and application requirements can contact Barbara Sweger, Department Scholarship Chairman, at deputyloth@yahoo.com or 815-481-8288 for additional information. Local contacts include Kathryn Keller at 815-823-4324 or Barb Howard, 815-685-0399.

Illinois opens \$63 million road test and research facility

The Illinois Department of Transportation and Capital Development Board recently celebrated the completion of the new \$63 million Materials Testing and Research Center.

The cutting-edge facility, on the grounds of IDOT's headquarters next to the Harry R. Hanley Building, will continue to propel the state in the field of highway construction materials and keep Illinois at the forefront of industry research.

"Under Gov. JB Pritzker, IDOT has more work taking place than ever before throughout the state. High-quality construction materials are at the foundation of almost everything we are doing," said Illinois Transportation Secretary Gia Biagi.

The new building stretches across 81,000 square feet, nearly half of which is dedicated lab space. Construction started in late 2024. In addition to housing IDOT's Bureau of Research offices and library, the building will be home to the Bureau of Programming's traffic instrumentation laboratory, meeting rooms, a loading dock and the materials lab for District 6, which serves 15 counties in Central Illinois.

The new location puts the lab within walking distance of both District 6 headquarters and the Hanley building on South Dirksen Parkway, centralizing IDOT's test-

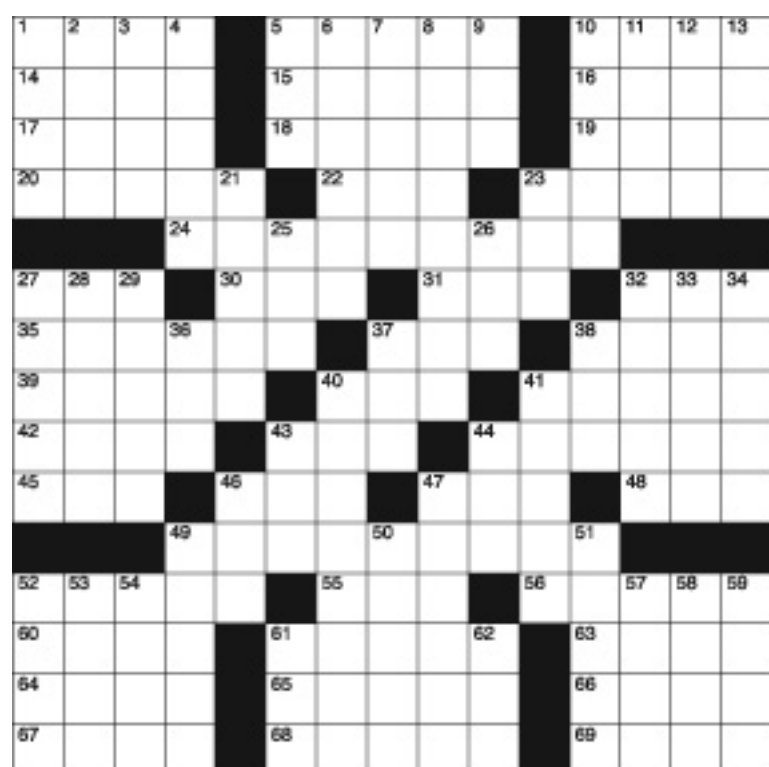
ing operations in Springfield.

The building replaces facilities at First and Ash streets in Springfield built in 1934. The outdated structures required frequent expensive repairs and lacked the space needed to efficiently handle samples and equipment.

Each year, IDOT spends more than \$1.5 billion on construction materials, which account for about half of all construction costs. Through its lab facilities, IDOT tests a wide range of these materials, including asphalt, concrete, crushed stone, sand, gravel, soil, steel reinforcement, structural fasteners, bridge components, pavement marking and striping materials, reflective sign sheeting, and much more.

The Materials Testing and Research Center is accredited in more than 100 test methods by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, which develops standards and protocols for the country's state departments of transportation.

The lab's impact will reach far beyond IDOT. Local agencies throughout Illinois refer to IDOT's list of tested and qualified materials lists for improvements in cities, towns and rural areas outside of the agency's jurisdiction.



CLUES ACROSS

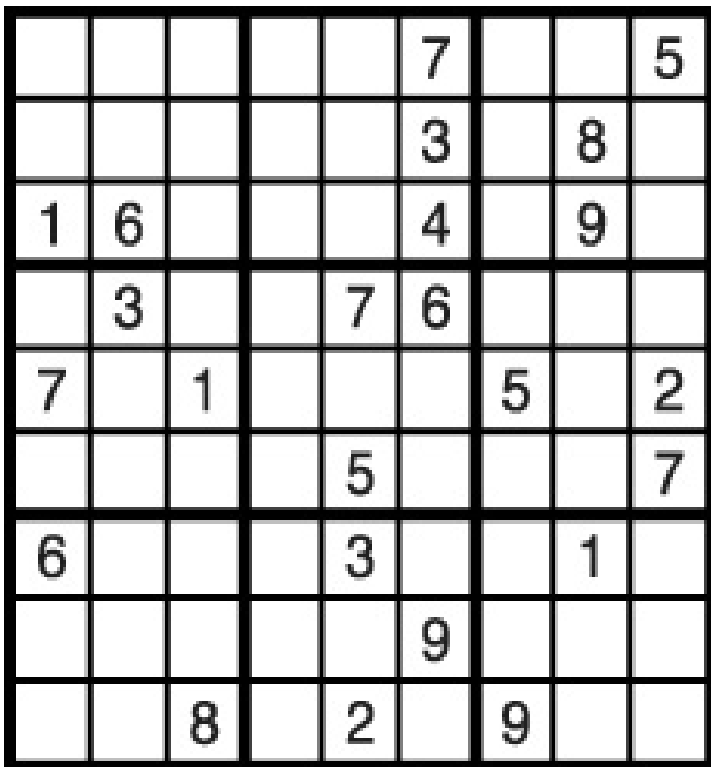
1. Listen to
5. Presents
10. A type of guitar
14. Actor Idris
15. A citizen of Iran
16. Pretentiously artistic
17. Harness
18. Diamond weight measurement
19. "Better Call ___"
20. Fervent support
22. Male cat
23. Jewish spiritual leader
24. Disposed to venture or take risks
27. A way to nail
30. Cool!
31. Women's ___ movement
32. "Losing My Religion" rockers
35. Step-shaped recess

37. A princess can detect it
38. Tractor-trailer
39. Leslie and Leon are two
40. Color at the end of the spectrum
41. Lines where fabrics are sewn
42. Dodgers great Hersheriser
43. Floor covering
44. Traveled aimlessly
45. Rocker Stewart
46. Body art
47. Congressman (abbr.)
48. No seats available
49. Breaks apart
52. Hand gesture
55. Ballplayer's tool
56. Sword
60. Baseball team
61. Upper bract of floret of grass
63. Italian Seaport

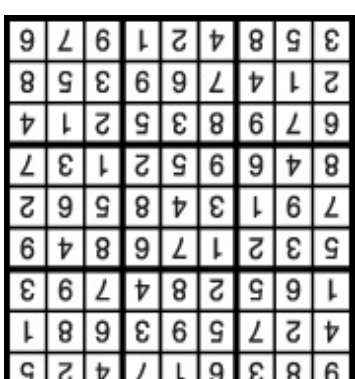
64. Mars crater
65. Tube on a shoelace
66. U. of Miami mascot
67. South American nation
68. Video game series "Max ___"
69. Upper body part

CLUES DOWN

1. German courtesy title
2. Ancient Greek personification of mercy
3. Jewish calendar month
4. Family of long-legged frogs
5. Photo
6. Delivered a speech
7. Lute used in Indian music
8. Decorated
9. Cease to stand
10. The bottom layer
11. Member of a Semitic people
12. Part of a ticket
13. Defunct monetary unit
21. Challenges
23. Body part
25. Tell on
26. By way of
27. Shady green alcove
28. Egyptian city
29. ___ and flowed
32. Widens a hole
33. Eurasian wheat
34. Act incorrectly
36. "Be back later"
37. Al Bundy's wife
38. Ocean
40. Large root eaten as a vegetable
41. Units of subjective loudness
43. Music genre
44. A way to drench
46. Popular hot beverage
47. Silk-like cotton fabric
49. Rumanian city
50. Come back
51. Vaccine developer
52. Canadian law enforcers
53. Wings
54. Observational comedian Bill
57. Small fry
58. ___ Clapton, musician
59. Take a chance
61. Semi-liquid food for babies
62. Consumed food



Level: Intermediate



Judges select the best during sand castle contest



COAL CITY AREA CLUB held its sand castle contest on Saturday. First place went to Team Pikachu which featured a prehistoric-looking dragon.



SECOND PLACE of the sandcastle contest at the Coal City Area Club went to team Beach Please with their sea turtle work of art.



COAL CITY AREA CLUB'S third place of the sandcastle on Saturday went to Butt Frogs with their creation of a butt frog.



COAL CITY AREA CLUB'S concession stand choice for the sand castle contest on Saturday went to Beach Bums and their creation of a hammerhead shark.



ANOTHER SAND CASTLE featuring a shark.



COAL CITY AREA CLUBS'S Honorable Mention for the sandcastle contest went to Halliday Mermaid.