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WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 12, 2026 | A FREE PRESS NEWSPAPER • (815) 634-0315

## Reviews mixed on data center

BY MIKE LOOMIS  
CORRESPONDENT

The reviews are mixed from residents who attended an open house held by a company planning to build a data center in Coal City.

Representatives from Aligned Data Centers presented information about their proposed development and fielded questions from residents who signed up for 30-minute question-and-answer sessions offered throughout the day on Aug. 6 in the auditorium at Coal City High School.

The open house occurred about two weeks after the Texas-based company filed a planned unit development (PUD) application with the Village of Coal City.

The project includes 11 buildings on 300 acres near Carbon Hill Road and Reed Road. The phased development will span seven to 10 years, said Rick Sparkman, the company's vice

president of data engineering. He said construction would start in spring 2027 if approved by the village.

Since first surfacing in late 2024, plans for the proposed data center have been a divisive issue for the village, with many residents concerned about how the project will affect power and water use and if it will harm the environment. Others contend it will offer economic benefits to the village, which has about 5,500 residents.

"I'm excited for the tax advantages it could bring to the village," said Randy Alderson, who serves as president of the Coal City Fire District.

"[A data center] is better than something else like a chemical plant or a trucking terminal. We could have a lot worse on that property."

Marvin Perrino, a retired electrician and former longtime owner of local tavern Babe's Tap, said a data center could mean welcome employment opportu-

nities for the area.

Other residents like Tom Crawford cited concerns about the noise a data center would emit and questioned if village officials are being fully transparent about the project.

"It's a shame the way this is being presented. I don't think they're saying the truth about the noise, and about the impact this is going to have on the wildlife."

According to materials provided at the open house by Aligned, their data centers must comply with local noise ordinances and the systems they use to cool the servers are "engineered for minimal acoustical impact."

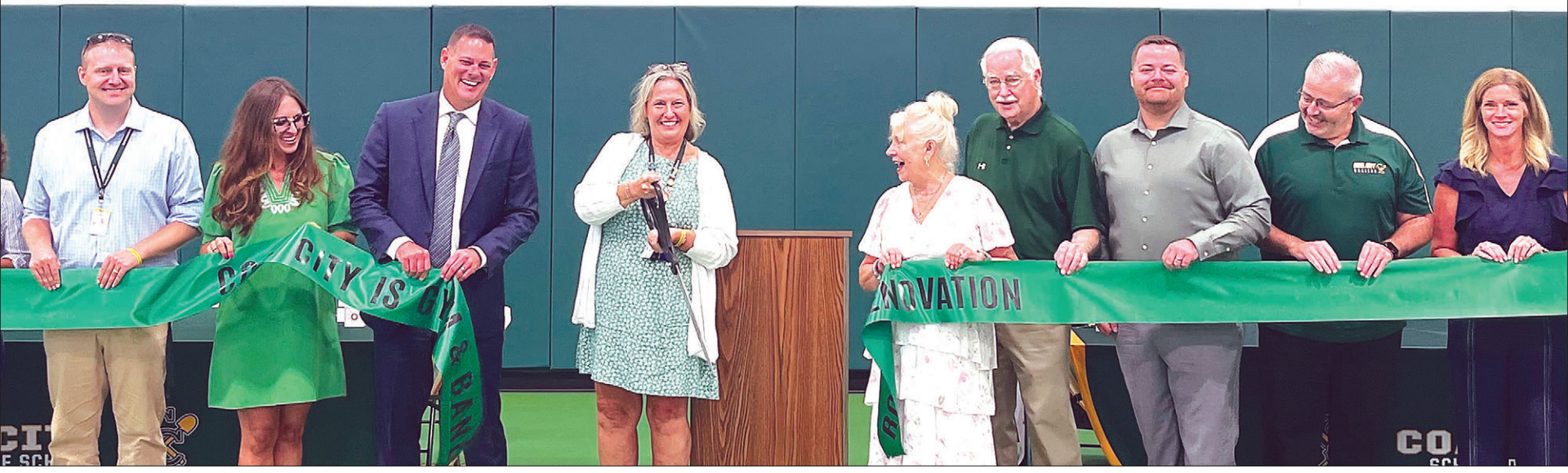
Kristin Kurdenok, owner of a dog boarding facility on property that borders the site of the proposed data center, said the project is going to disrupt her business and may even force her to move. Lori Cora, who also owns and operates businesses close by, said she's facing the same problems and worries construction



KRISTIN KURDENOK and Lori Cora attended the open house held by Aligned Data Centers on Aug. 6, where the company presented its plans for a campus on a 300-acre site at Carbon Hill Road and Reed Road in Coal City.

SEE DATA CENTER PAGE 2

## SCHOOL'S RE-OPENING NOW OFFICIAL



Coal City School District photo

A RIBBON CUTTING was held Wednesday, Aug. 5 to mark completion of the Coal City Intermediate School repair and renovation project. Principal Tracy Carlson had the honor of cutting the ribbon. She was joined by [from left]: Luke Krippel, director of student services; Jennifer Kenney, director of curriculum and instruction; Superintendent Chris Spencer; Cindy Klein, board of education secretary; Ken P. Miller, board of education president; and board members Ryan VanDuyne, Dan Englehart and Mindy Rampa. When the school building closed on October 30, 2024, the decision was made out of an abundance of caution and in consultation with the Regional Office of Education, structural engineers, and architects who had been investigating structural issues in the north gymnasium—specifically a significant crack in the north wall. Upon further investigation it was determined the wooden roof trusses had sustained damage during a significant storm that summer. The estimated cost of the Intermediate School repair and renovation project is approximately \$5 million. A portion of that cost is being funded through life safety funds, with the majority covered by working cash bonds the district secured two years ago for facility improvements/capital projects. Insurance covered the \$150,000 cost to stabilize the building following the incident. Students and staff return to the building next week.



Coal City School District photo

THE REPAIR AND renovation of Coal City Intermediate School included a new band room. The space for instrumental music instruction was built in the area that once housed the school's stage.

## Sheriff warns residents of phone scam

BY ROSE PANIERI  
STAFF WRITER

The Grundy County Sheriff's Office is warning residents about a phone scam involving a caller falsely claiming to be a lieutenant with the Sheriff's Office Civil Division.

According to the Sheriff's Office, the scammer has been calling peo-

ple about alleged outstanding warrants. One of the phone numbers used in the scam is (815) 249-2428.

Authorities emphasized that the Sheriff's Office will not call individ-

SEE SCAM PAGE 2



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# Data center,

continued from page 1

traffic from the data center is going to affect her livelihood.

"It's emotional to say the least," Kurdenok said, noting that components of the data center will be "150 feet from my house." She and Cora are planning to have engineering studies done on their properties before development starts on the data center so they will be able to compare the impact it has on their locations after it's operational.

"But it's going to cost a lot, that's money out of pocket," Kurdenok said.

Aligned Data Centers Executive Vice President of Brand Strategy Joanna Soucy said about 70 people attended the open house last week.

Company representatives estimate that the data center will eventually create about 680 jobs, which would include security personnel and other vendors. Building the facility will generate about 2,000 construction-related jobs, Sparkman said. Along with its core purpose of housing servers, storage drives and networking equipment, the campus will also have space available for other businesses to lease.

The proposal submitted to the village includes details on building design, layout, utilities, landscaping and other site details, Coal City Village Administrator Matt Fritz said.

The village announced the formation of a PUD Review Committee that will analyze the proposal and provide input about the project. The committee includes Fritz, Coal City Village Engineer Ryan Hansen, Village Attorney Mark Heinle, Public Works Director Daryl Olson and other village officials in addition to local residents Terry Halliday and Gary Grunauer.

Fritz said the committee is going to meet over the next several weeks to discuss the data center proposal. Their findings will then go to the village zoning board of appeals and the plan commission. Those officials will schedule public hearings where residents can provide their views on the project, Fritz said.

The development proposal and other information about the data center are available on the Village of Coal City's website.

# 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 preferred time, go online at [Versiti.org/il](http://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.

## Wagner applies for Setback variance

## 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 8th day of September, 2026 at 7 o'clock pm. 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 of 4ft to the rear yard setback for a garage. At the following address: 980 S. Mazon St. Coal City.

Legal description of property: Lots 1 and 2, Excepting therefrom the West 35 feet of said lot 2, in Block 2 of Woods Subdivision, in the East part of the Southeast of Section 3, Township 32 North, Range 8 East of the Third Principal Meridian as recorded in Plat D at Page 19 (Except Coal and other Minerals underlying said premises with the right to mine and remove the same); in Grundy County, Illinois.

Request for the above appeal was applied for by Jerome Wagner. 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 7th day of August 2026.

Published in the Coal City Courant on August 12, 2026.

## Attorney Hanson files Ronald 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 SUZANNE LEE ODOM A/K/A SUZANNE MARIE LEE ODOM  
Deceased;  
No. 2026 PR 56  
CLAIM NOTICE

Notice is given of the death of SUZANNE LEE ODOM A/K/A SUZANNE MARIE LEE ODOM, Letters of Office as Independent Administrator was issued on July 29, 2026, to William Zacharias Jr., whose address is 20926 Charlotte Ave, Custer Park 60481; whose attorney is Meents Law, P.C., 25158 West 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, #30, Morris, Illinois 60450, or with the representative, or both, on or before February 12, 2027, 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/fac/gethelp.asp> or talk with 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.illinoislegalaid.org](http://www.illinoislegalaid.org).

William Zacharias Jr.  
Independent Administrator of the Estate of SUZANNE LEE ODOM  
A/K/A SUZANNE MARIE LEE ODOM, 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](mailto:Dylan@meentslaw.com)  
Published in the Coal City Courant on Wednesday, Aug. 12, 19, and 26, 2026.

Mark E. Hanson  
Hanson, O'Connor & Kurnat PLLC  
116 N. Chicago Street, Suite 200  
Joliet, IL 60432  
Phone: (815) 727-5445  
BY: s/s Mark E. Hanson,  
ARDC 01124501  
Jason R. Ronald - Representative  
Mark E. Hanson - Attorney  
Published in the Coal City Courant on Wednesday, July 29, Aug. 5 and 12, 2026.

# Sheriff office warns of increase in gaming machine burglaries

BY ROSE PANIERI  
STAFF WRITER

An increasing number of vandals wearing masks and brandishing sledge hammers have been breaking into gaming facilities after hours.

The Grundy County Sheriff's Office (GCSO) and other local law enforcement agencies are urging local business owners and residents to remain alert following a recent increase in overnight burglaries targeting taverns and other businesses with video gaming machines.

The warning comes as break-ins have also been occurring in neighboring Will County, where authorities have investigated a string of burglaries involving gaming machines and cash.

"The crimes typically occur during overnight hours when businesses are closed," a press release from the GCSO stated.

Investigators said the offenders target video gaming machines, often causing significant property damage in the process.

The sheriff's office noted it has investigated similar incidents over the past several years in the Goose Lake area, Gardner, Braceville, and South Wilmington.

According to police, a growing wave of burglaries



Lockport Police

SECURITY CAMERAS SHOW burglars vandalizing gaming machines and other property on Aug. 6 at a Lockport restaurant.

is also hitting Will County, with several businesses targeted just days apart by masked thieves armed with sledgehammers.

On Aug. 6, burglars broke into Villa Nova Pizza in Lockport, smashing gaming machines and the cash registers.

## Reducing risks

"To reduce the risk of becoming a victim, business owners are encouraged to make sure doors, windows and other access points are securely locked, verify that alarm systems and surveillance cameras are operating properly, improve exterior lighting

where possible, and review security procedures with employees," police advised.

Authorities also recommend limiting the amount of cash left inside gaming machines and elsewhere on the premises overnight whenever practical.

## Hyper-vigilance

The Grundy County Sheriff's Office is asking residents to keep their eyes open.

"Residents are being asked to remain vigilant during overnight hours," according to police. "Anyone who observes suspicious people or vehicles

near a tavern, gaming establishment or other closed business is urged not to confront those involved."

Instead, residents are urged to call 911 and provide as much information as possible, including descriptions of any individuals or vehicles and the direction in which they traveled.

The Grundy County Sheriff's Office said prompt reporting from the public can play an important role in preventing additional burglaries and helping investigators identify those responsible.

# Scam,

continued from page 1

uals to discuss warrant information.

Residents are urged not to return calls to the number and not to provide any personal or financial information if they receive such a call.

Anyone who receives a suspicious call claiming to be from the Grundy County Sheriff's Office is encouraged to hang up immediately and contact the Sheriff's Office directly using its official phone number, (815) 942-6645 if they have concerns.

## South Wilmington Grade School District hearing on budget

## PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice of Public Hearing  
South Wilmington Grade School,  
District 74C

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN by the School Board of School District Number 74C, in the County of Grundy, State of Illinois, that tentative amended budget for said School District for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026, will be on file and conveniently available to public inspection at 375 5th Avenue, South Wilmington, Illinois in this School District from and after 8 o'clock am., on the 21st day of August, 2026. Notice is further hereby given that a public hearing on said budget will be held at 7:25 pm., on the 17th day of September 2026, at South Wilmington Grade School, in this School District Number 74C. Dated this 12th day of August, 2026. School board of School District Number 74C, in the County of Grundy, State of Illinois.

By Cindy Gerber, Board Treasurer.

Published in the Coal City Courant on Wednesday, August 12, 2026.

## Attorney Black files Christensen estate claim notice

## PUBLIC NOTICE

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
GRUNDY COUNTY - IN PROBATE  
No. 2026 PR 60

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF MICHAEL THEODORE CHRISTENSEN, DECEASED

## CLAIM NOTICE

NOTICE is given to creditors of the death of Michael Theodore Christensen. Letters of office as Independent Administrator were issued to Jessica M. Christensen, 3 Schmitt Drive, Streator, IL 61364, whose attorney is TIMOTHY J. BLACK OF BLACK & BLACK LAWYERS, 201 Liberty Street, Suite 211, Morris, Illinois 60450.

Claims against the estate may be filed in the Office of the Clerk of the Court at Grundy County Courthouse, 111 E. Washington Street, Morris, Illinois, 60450. Or with the administrator, or both within (6) months from the date of the first publication Notice, and any claim not filed within that period is barred. Copies of a Claim filed with the Clerk must be mailed or delivered to the administrator and to said 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/fac/gethelp.asp> or talk with 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.illinoislegalaid.org](http://www.illinoislegalaid.org).

JESSICA M. CHRISTENSEN  
INDEPENDENT ADMINISTRATOR  
Timothy J. Black  
Black & Black Lawyers  
201 Liberty Street  
Suite 211  
Morris, IL 60450  
815-942-0594  
Published in the Coal City Courant on July 29, Aug. 5 and 12, 2026.

# Village residents can help prevent flash flooding

Keep leaves and yard debris out of the street, drains

As severe weather becomes more frequent, residents are being reminded that a few simple yard maintenance practices can make a significant difference in protecting neighborhoods from flash flooding.

Storm sewer systems are designed to carry rainwater safely away from streets, homes and businesses. However, when leaves, grass clippings, branches and other yard debris are swept or blown into the street, they can accumulate over storm sewer inlets and prevent water from draining properly.

During periods of heavy rainfall, blocked storm drains can cause water to back up quickly,

resulting in flooded streets, damaged property, hazardous driving conditions, and unnecessary strain on the village's stormwater infrastructure.

Residents can play an important role in preventing these problems by taking a few simple steps throughout the year:

- Rake and collect leaves instead of pushing them into the street.

- Bag or compost leaves and other yard waste whenever possible.

- Sweep sidewalks and driveways rather than using leaf blowers to direct debris into roadways.

- Keep grass clippings, branches, dirt, mulch, and other materials away from storm drains.

- Before and after major storms, check the storm drain near your property and safely remove any loose debris that could restrict water flow.

These small efforts help reduce localized flooding, protect public and private property, improve roadway safety, and reduce maintenance costs for the entire community.

Residents are also reminded that storm drains are intended only for rainwater. Yard waste, trash, construction debris and other materials should never be placed in streets, ditches, or storm sewer inlets.

The village appreciates the continued cooperation of residents in maintaining clean neighborhoods and protecting our community during severe weather. Working together, we can help ensure that stormwater systems function as intended and reduce the risk of flash flooding during intense rain events.

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Eric D. Fisher, publisher

# Greener construction and maintenance of roads

Dear EarthTalk:  
What's new in terms of making the construction and maintenance of roads and highways more efficient and greener?  
-- Wendy Streeter, Exeter, NH

## EARTH TALK

Questions & Answers About Our Environment

Highways are changing as engineers look for ways to make roads last longer while reducing pollution. Instead of relying only on carbon-heavy paving methods and fixing potholes after they appear, many road agencies are using recycled materials, smarter technology, and artificial intelligence (AI). These new ideas help roads better handle extreme weather while cutting waste and lowering construction costs. One of the biggest changes is the use of recycled materials. TechniSoil Industrial has developed its "Neo" paving system, which mixes recycled plastic into road construction. The company says the process can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 90% while using about 150,000 recycled plastic

water bottles for every lane mile of roadway. Rather than sending plastic to landfills, it becomes part of a stronger road surface. Old tires are also finding a new purpose. Along Interstate 85 in Georgia, The Ray serves as an 18-mile "living laboratory" where new transportation technologies are tested, including Rubber Modified Asphalt (RMA), which uses crumb rubber made from discarded tires. Texas Materials has also created its Super Sand Mix, replacing more than 42% of traditional asphalt binder with recycled tires and roofing shingles. These roads are more resistant to cracking, provide better traction, and even reduce traffic noise. As Allie Kelly, Executive Director of The Ray, explained in CNN's report on the project, "We see waste as a resource." Scientists are also improving the pavement itself. Some new asphalt contains tiny capsules filled with bio-based oils that automatically seal small cracks before they grow. Other roads use embedded steel fibers that can be heated with magnetic induction to extend pavement life up to three times longer. Porous asphalt and permeable concrete allow as much as 80% of rainwater to pass through the sur-



INNOVATIVE NEW TECHNOLOGIES in the way we make and maintain roads promise greener travel all around.

face, reducing flooding, preventing hydroplaning, and helping replenish groundwater. Technology is making road maintenance smarter as well. Intelligent Compaction rollers use GPS and onboard sensors to ensure pavement reaches the correct density during construction. Embedded sensors continue monitoring concrete long after it is poured, while AI-powered cameras and automated repair machines can detect and fix small cracks before they become costly potholes. New temperature-sensitive paint and glow-in-the-dark lane markings can also improve driver safety during icy conditions. Looking toward the future, government agencies are also beginning to integrate renewable energy directly into the trans-

portation grid. Solar panels and piezoelectric energy harvesters are being installed along highway shoulders and beneath surfaces to capture clean electricity from passing vehicular traffic and sunlight. As Sean Weaver, founder and CEO of TechniSoil Industrial, noted when discussing modern eco-friendly paving methods, "I'm captivated by the idea that roads are one of the first downstream applications for recycled plastic that is bigger than the size of the plastic problem itself." EarthTalk® is a 501(c)3 nonprofit EarthTalk. Send questions to: question@earthtalk.org.

## Mum flower fundraiser

The First Presbyterian Church of Braidwood is holding a Fall Mum Flower Sale. These huge 9 inch pots will be delivered to the church on Wednesday, Sept. 16, and will be ready to bloom beautifully for your fall decorating. They are \$12 each and are available in orange, yellow, purple, pink, bronze & white. Call or text LuAnn Bolatto at 815-790-7134, Lora Grant 815-955-9927 or Joyce Bauer at 815-584-7239, by Sept 9 to order.

# U of I announces dean's list

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign has announced 9,005 Dean's List students, awarded for the 2026 spring semester. Local students include: August Burns of Coal City, Thomas Kemp of Elwood and Kyndal Smolenski of Wilmington.

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# Electronics dropoff in Wilmington

Will County's next free electronics drop-off event will be held Thursday, Aug. 13, from 5-7 p.m. at the Wilmington City Hall parking lot, 1165 S. Water St. Participants are reminded to remain in their vehicles, show ID by holding it to the window for staff to see and then allow staff to remove items without assistance from each vehicle. Items accepted

include: Televisions, monitors, printers, computers (desktops, laptops, notebooks, tablets), electronic keyboards, fax machines, videocassette recorders, portable digital music players, DVD players, DVD recorders, video game consoles, small scale servers, scanners, electronic mice, digital converter boxes, cable receivers, satellite receivers, cell phones, computer cable, portable digital

assistants (PDAs) and zip drives. Electronic items contain materials that can be recycled countless times while other materials in items are considered hazardous. Scrap metal like pots and pans, baking sheets, car jacks, chains, keys, copper pipe and wire, door knobs silverware and more.

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## We get bupkis

WILMINGTON—Supreme Court declared Trumps Tariff nonsense illegal and ordered that cash returned. Ordinary citizens bought the tarified products from Trump's Big Corporations that eagerly donated multiple millions for his elections. But ordinary citizens received nothing, nada, not a dime. Meanwhile Apple got \$2.2B, Costco \$2B, Target \$2B, Home Depot \$2B, Nike \$1B, and America's favorite Trump donors the Walmart with \$10B. Keep voting like fools expect to get treated like fools. Wake up.

## Let that sink in

SHADOW LAKES—Let this sink in. The legal name of Hitter's Party in 1932 was "The Democratic Socialist Party." Let that sink in. Obediently,

Margot Lane

## Where the money is

BRAIDWOOD—I'm writing in response to the SoundOff Nothing New Here. This city council has now been in office over a year. From what I see the only new business is a self-storage and that's related to one of the car dealerships that came to town before this council was elected. What I see is a big raise in water and city hall getting all sorts of technology that makes THEIR jobs easier. I mean, really? We already pay them to do a job, but on top of that they buy technology and hire consultants to do a job they're already paid to do. I heard Dunkin wanted to open a shop in Braidwood, but no one returns their call. This manager isn't interested in getting businesses in town. He'd rather bring in consultants. That's where the money is.

## Televised meetings

WILMINGTON—About the article about our aldermen and mayor making city council meetings more user friendly, I'm one of those people who can't make it to meetings because of illness. It would be great to have a video of the meeting on YouTube. What do you have to hide gentlemen? There should be a state law that requires city council meetings be televised. This groups is sneaky.

## Only fooling yourself

WILMINGTON—Remember, every bad thing that is going right now the Republican Party is in full leadership of. The President, the Senate the House of Representatives and even the Supreme Court is fully controlled by Republicans. They have majority in every governing body. Save the Democratic blame bs, they have been boss for 20 months. Tired of hearing the blame on a party with zero control. Distraction war, gas, food, housing, clothes, Medicare and Medicaid all controlled by greedy Republicans. Quit pretending you have Republican values and goals when reality says you are BROKE or just getting by paycheck to paycheck. You are only fooling yourself. Who else was involved in Epstein child rape ring of pedophilia? You dam well know admit it.

Or are you just a hypocrite?

## Isn't that strange?

COAL CITY— Fun fact, the class of 1981 turns 63 this year and were born in 1963. The class of 1972 turns 72 this year. Isn't that strange?

Sue B.

## Beware of AI

SHADOW LAKES— It has been brought to my attention that the doctors that operate on human beings have become so lazy that now they are using robots to operate on people. What people don't understand is that a computer glitch or wrong button pushed on the key board or if there is even the slightest change in voltage could cause permanent damage. Medical profession has turned into a corporation that only wants money and patients are secondary. It seems that their oath has turned into a financial goal. The hospital administrators look at people like they are nothing but numbers. Robots can be rebuilt and last for eternity. Human beings are not made with wire and metal parts and are not cyber like RoboCop. Maybe people will be used by the hospitals like in the movie Soylent Green and will be put on a conveyer belt. Human life has become less important than a computer. How do you sterilize a robot? It would not be able to pass under inspection to a patient when their in surgery. Beware of AI.

## Help injured vets

SHADOW LAKES—My name is Dan Hill. I have a Vietnam Recon Specialist 1969-1971. I watch these ads with the Wounded Warrior project the government calls a war. The government should take care of 100% of their injured veterans without these additional people.

## Trump toilet paper

We all know that Donald Trump craves money and has to have his attention, name or face on everything and has sold everything from Bibles to golden sneakers and who knows what else. There is a perfect product idea that Trump should promote. What would be better than Donald Trump toilet paper? He could have is name and his smiling face or mugshot on every sheet. The senile or corrupt old fool could once again line his pockets with money by selling this wonderful new product. His brainwashed followers would happily purchase it and his more numerous opponents would buy it so they could honor him in true patriotic fashion at least daily.

## Not such a nice guy

WILMINGTON—The more I see of this Donald Trump I'm beginning to think he's not such a nice guy.

## Provide Proof

SHADOW LAKES—To Sherrie Michaels... your comment about Carl Sandberg High School. Quote, "Most of the parents of students there are doctors, lawyers, etc." Would you please provide proof for this statement? Obediently yours, Margot Lane



## Watch out for yourself

BRAIDWOOD— Not sure why the police department dropped their efforts to control our huge e-bike problem just because the state has a bill coming. Meanwhile school is starting and we're going to have kids on e-bikes and e-scooters all over the place. I'm tired of "Start Seeing Motorcycles" and watching out for reckless kids. It's time they start watching out for themselves, and it's time the cops do something about it.

## Enjoy your ignorance

WILMINGTON—Can you look your children or grandchildren straight in the eyes and comfortably say, "You are going to have a better future than I did?" Politicians openly stealing and grifting right before our eyes and we can't do a thing because that party (R) holds the majority in every single department of the government and they refuse to even acknowledge the shameful situation that occurs on a daily basis. Iran no longer even cares what idle bs threat comes out of his mouth. He talks smack to make people feel better and then he mysteriously invests millions in the stock market to get sudden windfall gains and his great news about ending his Distraction War suddenly falls apart. Back to school time, have fun shopping, a lot of you voted for him so enjoy what your willful ignorance has brought upon all 360M Americans.

## They'll be outed

WILMINGTON—Senators Bill Cassidy, Thom Tillis and John Cornyn after openly saying they could never vote for Trump's personal attorney (for years) to be the next Attorney General caved and did vote for him. Cowards for the rest of their days on earth. Hiding, manipulation and deception of the Epstein files will contin-

ue, but it will not go away. Those evil monsters will eventually be outed and no sane person will be surprised who that one chosen guy definitely is.

## Taxes are unreal

BRAIDWOOD—Groceries and gas prices are driving many to food banks. People are in desperate situations. Ah, but our fire department wants a tax referendum, our leaders want a city center, utilities want more money. Our taxes are unreal. Keep going. Who are you going to tax when we all lose our homes?

## Try being grateful

BRAIDWOOD—People of Braidwood are such hypocrites. There's a lot of "we want, we want, we want, we want"... but the same people doing the wanting are the same ones who don't want to support the efforts of others or pay a little more in property taxes for all of the things they want. They want to have their cake, eat it too, but not pay for it. This town is so full of miserable people who dislike living in Braidwood because they want more, more, more. Maybe they should just try being grateful for what we actually have in town.

## America comes first

WILMINGTON—For 10 years the Democrats have said Trump would end democracy but now we see the Democratic Socialist Party, the left arm of the party, is saying if they win we will destroy Democratic way of life with government control of everything. No ICE, no police, open borders, no jail, no holiday government because they are white supremacy. We have been told 911 never forget the new Democratic Socialist Party says America had it coming. If you are a Democrat please please get back to your roots, America first, not party.

## Commentary

# U.S. needs to make Head Start stronger, not lower expectations

BY KENDRA DAVENPORT

Head Start has helped generations of children grow up healthier, safer, and better prepared to succeed because the federal government made early childhood development a national priority.

That federal commitment has helped ensure that a child's access to strong early learning, health screenings, family support, and a safe classroom does not depend entirely on where they live or what their state is able to provide.

Easterseals supports reducing unnecessary paperwork so educators and local programs can

spend more time serving children. But cutting red tape cannot become an excuse for cutting the standards that keep children safe and ensure families receive consistent, high-quality support.

The changes under consideration will weaken expectations around class sizes, developmental and health screenings, family engagement, staff preparation, and basic safety.

The consequences of this are very real: fewer educators in classrooms, developmental delays going unnoticed, families receiving less help accessing healthcare, and fewer protections for children who need additional sup-

port. Head Start is strong because it has been treated as a national commitment. Abandoning that commitment leaves a child's development up to their ZIP code.

Families and community organizations are already being asked to absorb the impact of cuts across healthcare, education, food assistance, and other essential programs.

They need a federal government that's committed to making Head Start stronger, not one looking for ways to lower expectations and call it reform.

Kendra Davenport, President and CEO of Easterseals

## HELP FOR VETERANS



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

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# The overly narrow informal probe

House Speaker Chris Welch sat down for interviews with some selected reporters last week. He told most of them that his office had conducted an “informal investigation” into sexual harassment allegations against former Rep. Harry Benton (D-Plainfield) in 2023.

Welch's staff has not responded to our request for an interview (same goes for the Chicago Tribune). But nobody asked whether he and his staff spoke to anyone other than Benton and the 22-year-old district office staffer who accused Benton of sexual harassment during that informal investigation after she'd resigned to avoid more harassment.

Benton resigned last month. Jessica Dixon Heitman also worked in Benton's office at the time and has said she left because of the treatment of the young woman. But, as far as I can tell, nobody talked to her in 2023. Heitman was recently appointed to replace the disgraced Benton.

So, based on talking to just two people, Welch concluded that this was a he-said, she-said dispute and, therefore, since no formal complaint was filed, Benton “was entitled

to a constitutional right to due process,” Welch told WGN. “I had to support a member, and I supported a member.”

His caucus committee contributed \$1.4 million to Benton's reelection campaign.

Set aside for a moment the constitutional right to receive \$1.4 million in campaign contributions after an overly narrow informal probe. Speaker Welch also told WGN, “we had to respect the wishes of the survivor, even though she didn't want to go through a formal complaint process.”

However, as the Tribune has reported, the accuser's main reason for coming forward was to make sure that no other woman would be harassed by Benton.

At least two more women were sexually harassed by Benton after that, according to the Legislative Inspector General.

And despite what House Speaker Chris Welch reportedly told the House Democratic Women's Caucus last month and then WGN TV last week, the Illinois AFL-CIO issued a remarkably forceful response to a question I asked by releasing a statement saying, “Any suggestion that Harry Benton — or any elected official — controlled labor's support for a candidate or caucus is

false.” Last month, I informed subscribers that Speaker Welch told members of the Women's Caucus, “Harry Benton went around telling union people that the Speaker retaliated against him and should have given more support in his last [2022] race,” a member paraphrased Welch's response at the time.

The Tribune reported last week that the paper had learned from participants in the meeting that “Welch assisted the now-disgraced former lawmaker's 2024 reelection campaign with \$1.4 million to prevent Benton from actively working to curb organized labor support to the speaker's war chest.”

And Welch told WGN TV last week that, while he regretted supporting Benton, “labor was a big advocate of Representative Benton. As a union member himself, he had a lot of support.”

Some folks I talked to said it looked like Speaker Welch was throwing labor under the bus, so I reached out to the Illinois AFL-CIO and asked for its react to last week's stories.

“The Illinois AFL-CIO has no tolerance for sexual harassment, in the workplace or anywhere else,” the labor umbrella organization declared.

“We were deeply disturbed by the Legislative Inspector General's report and by recent reporting on former Rep. Harry Benton's egregious conduct, and we agree with his decision to resign. Any

suggestion that Harry Benton — or any elected official — controlled labor's support for a candidate or caucus is false. It is clear the General Assembly needs to take further action to strengthen its policies and procedures to combat harassment and support the brave victims who come forward.”

The Tribune also quoted some Democrats close to organized labor who accurately noted that “Benton had little power to influence organized labor or its massive fundraising apparatus.”

Labor did support Benton in 2024, and a big reason was Benton's Republican opponent was Gabby Shanahan. At the time, Shanahan worked for the anti-union Illinois Policy Institute. I've written several times (including in my syndicated newspaper column in 2024) that there was no way on this Earth that organized labor wanted an IPI staffer in the General Assembly. Shanahan is running again this year, but she no longer works for the IPI.

Now, a question could be asked about what would've happened if Speaker Welch or someone in his organization had told union leaders about the 2023 sexual harassment allegations against Benton by a 22-year-old district staffer.

But remember, Welch's “informal investigation” included talking to only Benton and the staffer. And then the matter was closed.

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

# Free concert with 38 Special & Warrant at the Illinois State Fair

Music fans are invited to experience an unforgettable night at the Illinois State Fair when legendary southern rock band 38 Special performs a free Grandstand concert on Monday, Aug. 17. The concert will kick off with special guest Warrant.

For more than five decades, 38 Special has brought their signature blast of guitar-driven southern rock to audiences around the world. Known for their infectious blend of muscle and melody, filled with the arena-rock pop hooks, the band has produced a long list of hits that have stood the test of time, including “Hold On Loosely,” “Caught Up in You,” “Rockin' Into the Night,” “If I'd Been the One,” and “Second Chance.”

With over 20 million albums sold, 38 Special continues to tour nationwide, delivering high-energy performances that showcase their timeless sound and unmistakable

style. “Our team works hard to make the Illinois State Fair accessible for everyone,” said Illinois Department of Agriculture Director Jerry Costello II. “Governor Pritzker's commitment to adding a free Grandstand concert rounds out an already amazing line up of live music at the fair this summer.”

The free 38 Special concert takes place Monday, Aug. 17 at the Illinois State Fair Grandstand. Gates open at 7 p.m. and no ticket is required, but attendees must go through security screening prior to entering the Grandstand.

Admission is free for kids 12 and under every day of the fair. On Monday, Aug. 17, senior citizens and scouts in uniform get free admission while general admission is \$5.

The Illinois State Fair runs Aug. 13-23 in Springfield.



NANCY "GABY" VALLADOLID'S photo of a two-spotted bumblebee at Isle a la Cache preserve in Romeoville won first place in July's portion of the Forest Preserve District of Will County's Preserve the Moment photo contest.

# Kindergarten teacher gets A+ for contest-winning bumblebee photo

A Romeoville kindergarten teacher won July's portion of the Forest Preserve District of Will County's Preserve the Moment photo contest with a close-up shot of a bumblebee coated in pollen.

Nancy "Gaby" Valladolid photographed the two-spotted bumblebee as it inadvertently spread pollen while sipping nectar from an anise hyssop plant at Isle a la Cache preserve in Romeoville.

One contest judge said the photo was chosen as the winner because it beautifully portrays “one of nature's tiniest creatures doing one of its most important jobs.”

Valladolid said she loves photographing bees, even though they are not always easy subjects.

“Sometimes I follow a bee for quite some time

and it's cool to see the different interactions with each flower,” she said.

Nature photography can be both joyful and educational, she added.

“I worked hard to capture this photo, but not as hard as these bees,” she said. “They are so valuable and precious. Now my 4-year-old son is learning how valuable honeybees and bumblebees are to our planet.”

Honorable mentions went to:

- Amy Miller of Joliet for a moody shot of the sun at Rock Run Preserve in Joliet.

- Mark Hanna of Romeoville for a photo of a 13-lined ground squirrel munching on dandelions at Prairie Bluff Preserve in Crest Hill.

- Joe Viola of Shorewood for a picture of fawns nursing at Rock Run

Preserve.

## Contest continues

The Preserve the Moment photo contest continues through Dec. 31. Monthly winners receive a \$75 gift card. Overall winners will receive Mastercard gift cards worth \$500 for first place, \$250 for second place and \$150 for third place.

The contest is made possible through the support of The Nature Foundation of Will County.

Participants are encouraged to read the rules

at ReconnectWithNature.org before entering. Up to five photos may be submitted per month through the District's contest upload page. All photos must be taken at a Forest Preserve District of Will County location.

# Mobile food pantry coming to Braidwood

Many families are struggling to bring food to the table. That is why The Village is partnering with Northern Illinois Food Bank to host a mobile food pantry at the Reed-Custer Middle School, 407 Comet Drive, Braidwood, on Monday, Aug. 17, at 5 p.m.

Families in the Braidwood and surrounding communities will be able to get enough groceries (bread, dairy, meats, veggies) for about a week. Distribution will be first come first served. There is no registration, proof of income or I.D. required.

The Village is a church that works with the community to help where it is needed the most.

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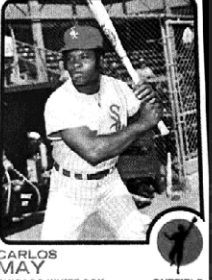
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**Symerton Homecoming 2026**



Tues, August 18 Elwood vs. Symerton—16" Softball game @ 6 pm

Weds, August 19 Manhattan vs. Symerton—16" Softball game @ 6 pm

Thurs, August 20 Manhattan vs. Elwood —16" Softball game @ 6 pm

Fri, August 21 Car/Vintage Tractor Show 4:30-7:30 pm (WEATHER PERMITTING)

Sat, August 22 The Southside Social Club Live Band on the patio—7:00 pm

Sun, August 23 "The Equals" Live Band @ 7:00-10:00 pm on the patio

Volley Ball Tournament Reg. 10am - Start 10:30

Tractor Pull @ noon North side of the park

Kiddie Pedal Pull—Register @ 1 pm/pull starts @ 2 pm

Ice Cream Truck 12 noon—2 pm and "Ice Ice Baby" icees

Billy Gray Music—3:00 pm

Sunday: All day long: Kids activities, face painting & games, animal petting zoo and show, 50/50 raffle and drinks and food at Symerton Tap and Grill.

⇒ Mr. K's Chuckwagon (Serving Saturday from 11 am—8 pm & Sunday 11 am—6pm)

Presented by:

The Village of Symerton

**Symerton Homecoming 2026**

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Courtesy photo

**WESLEY 4-H HUSTLER** Henry Merkel is State Fair Alternate for Woodworking 4.



Courtesy photo

**WESLEY 4-H HUSTLER** Benjamin Floyd is a State Fair Delegate for Civil Engagement and Dog Show – Novice Category.



Courtesy photo

**WESLEY 4-H HUSTLER** Tracy Jones is a State Fair Delegate for Tractor.

# Local 4-H winners advance to State Fair

The annual Will County 4-H General Project show was recently held with seven delegates and one alternate qualifying for the Illinois State Fair.

Each of the projects were selected by the member to learn topics that interest them. This could be anything from learning how to cook, build a robot, or care for the environment.

One of the most important aspects of 4-H project work is that the 4-H member decided what they want to learn and do as they explore their project. This allows the project to be self-paced, and gives children important skills in setting and working towards their goals.

When a 4-H member enters a project in their county show, it is reviewed by a judge; whom interviews the member on why the project was chosen, what was learned, how it was completed. Once rankings are selected of the project in that specific category, some are selected to represent their county at the Illinois State Fair in Springfield; giving them the chance to earn additional awards.

Awards Wesley 4-H members received at the county show include:

- Veronica Boyer; Creative Writing – Blue Ribbon.

- Logan Burmaster; Family Heritage – Blue Ribbon.
- Kenzie Cosgrove; 5th Placing Horse Mare Halter
- Benjamin Floyd; Civil Engagement – Blue Ribbon – State Fair Delegate.
- Benjamin Floyd; Dog Show – Novice Category – State Fair Delegate.
- Jacob Floyd; Visual Arts/Paper & Metal – Blue Ribbon.
- Caleb Floyd; Visual Arts/Wood – Blue Ribbon.
- Caleb Floyd; Visual Arts/Mixed Media – Blue Ribbon – State Fair Delegate.
- Tracy Jones; Tractors – Blue Ribbon – State Fair Delegate.
- Caleb Merkel; Woodworking 2 – Blue Ribbon.
- Caroline Merkel; Cloverbud – Green Ribbon.
- Charlotte Merkel; Visual Arts/Wood – Blue Ribbon.
- Henry Merkel; Woodworking 4 – Blue Ribbon – State Fair Alternate.
- Josiah Merkel; Woodworking 3 – Blue Ribbon – State Fair Delegate.
- Samantha Merkel; Beekeeping 3 – Blue Ribbon – State Fair Delegate.
- Samantha Merkel; Visual Art; Heritage Arts – Blue

Ribbon – State Fair Delegate.

All members of clubs from across Will County that were selected at the general project show will show their projects at the fair in Springfield on Saturday, Aug 15, in the Orr Building.

## About Wesley 4-H Hustlers

Wesley 4-H Hustlers is one of the oldest continuously operating 4-H clubs within the State of Illinois; dating back to approximately 1928. This club was formed in Wesley Township, and today is based out of Wilmington.

The primary area of focus for this youth organization is Wilmington, Wesley, Florence, Reed, and Custer Townships in Southern Will County, but is open to all individuals regardless of location of residence.

4-H, the nation's largest youth development organization, grows confident young people who are empowered for life today and prepared for career tomorrow.

4-H programs empower nearly six million young people across the U.S. through experiences that develop critical life skills.

Learn more about 4-H at [www.4-H.org](http://www.4-H.org), find them on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/4-H](http://www.facebook.com/4-H).



Courtesy photo

**WESLEY 4-H HUSTLER** Josiah Merkel is a State Fair Delegate for Woodworking 3.



Courtesy photo

**WESLEY 4-H HUSTLER** Samantha Merkel is a State Fair Delegate for Visual Art, Heritage Arts and Bee Keeping.



Courtesy photo

**WESLEY 4-H HUSTLER** Caleb Floyd is a State Fair Delegate for Visual Arts/Mixed Media.



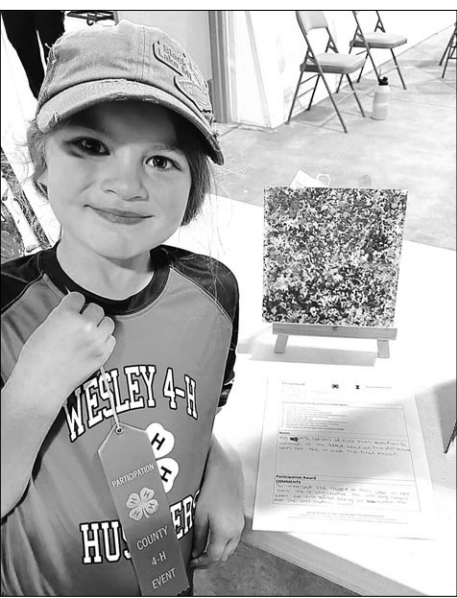
Courtesy photo

**WESLEY 4-H HUSTLER** Jacob Floyd earns Blue Ribbon for Visual Arts/Paper and Metal.



Courtesy photo

**WESLEY 4-H HUSTLER** Charlotte Merkel earns a Blue Ribbon for Visual Arts/Wood.



Courtesy photo

**WESLEY 4H HUSTLER** Caroline Merkel earns Green Ribbon for Cloverbud.



Courtesy photo

**WESLEY 4-H HUSTLER** Caleb Merkel earns a Blue Ribbon for Woodworking 2.

## OBITUARIES

### Everett Wengstrom

PEOTONE—The world became a little quieter on July 29, 2026, when Everett Steffan Wengstrom, 46, of Peotone, left us. Born on Aug. 28, 1979, Everett lived a life filled with loyalty, curiosity, humor, and a deep, unwavering love for his family. He had a presence that made people feel understood and supported, a gift he shared with everyone who knew him.

Everett was the beloved son of Warren Wengstrom and Valerie Mezger Wengstrom, and a devoted brother to LaVonne (Jacob) Kirby and Ericca (Rollin) Hill. To his nephew Steffan (Kendal) Wengstrom, niece Alyssia (Jai) Barajas, and great-nephew Ezra Wengstrom, he was a mentor, a role model, and a quiet hero. His love extended across generations, reaching numerous great-nieces, great-nephews, cousins, and extended family who all felt the warmth of his presence.

He is survived by his aunts and uncles: LeNore Wengstrom, Kristine Pane, Jeffrey (Sandra) Mezger, and Debra Mezger; and by his cousins: Nikki (Cory) Simon, Crystal (Jake) Rutherford, Randy (Sheryl) Mezger, Alyssa (Eddie) Wendler, Chad Planeta, Steven (Jessica) Pane, Abram (Cindy) Lawrence, Jeff Mezger, Jen (Frank) Lesniak, Nathan (Audrey) Stirling, Angela (Phil) McDonald, Shanae (Chris) Uhalt, Luke (Yasmee) Stirling, and countless other family and friends who loved him deeply.

He was preceded in death by his paternal grandparents, Everett and Helen Wengstrom; maternal grandparents, Richard and LaVonne Mezger; his uncle, Randy (Kathy) Mezger; uncle, Rik Stirling and cousins Valynda Planeta and Adam Lawrence.

Everett's life was defined by devotion — especially to his family. He was the kind of brother and son who showed up without being asked, who listened without judgment, and who loved without conditions. To his nieces and nephews, he was “Funcle,” the fun uncle who made every



moment brighter. He was protective, thoughtful, and quietly heroic. If someone was hurting, he noticed. He carried a fierce loyalty that made his loved ones feel safe in a way only he could provide.

Everett was committed to learning and growth. He earned his Electrical Engineering degree from DeVry University and was actively pursuing his Master's in Business, always pushing himself to achieve more.

Professionally, Everett was respected as a Regional Area Maintenance Manager at C&W Services and over saw 10 sites in the Chicagoland Area. His coworkers admired his intelligence, creativity, and willingness to help anyone who needed it. He approached every challenge with patience, skill, and genuine care.

Everett had a brilliant, curious mind and a heart full of passion for the things he loved. He embraced life with enthusiasm, humor, and a sense of wonder.

Above all, Everett loved life and wanted to live it fully. Everett loved his family. Every gathering, every laugh, every shared moment mattered. He showed up, he protected, he listened, and he cared. He stood up to the bully, helped the unfortunate, and lived with a quiet bravery that made him a hero to many. His legacy is love, loyalty, and the countless lives he touched simply by being himself.

In lieu of flowers, donate to a home-less charity of your choice reflecting Everett's compassion for those in need.

Memorial visitation will be held on Aug. 22, 2026, from noon to 3 p.m. at the Ferrari Funeral Chapel with a Memorial Funeral Service to begin at 3 p.m. A potluck fellowship will take place afterward as the family gathers to honor Everett's life, share memories, and celebrate the beautiful soul he was.

Family and friends are encouraged to sign the online guestbook at [www.ferrari-funeral.com](http://www.ferrari-funeral.com).

Ferrari Funeral Services of Coal City are entrusted with arrangements.

# Taste more for less during the 2026 Illinois State Fair

Big flavors don't come with big price tags at the Illinois State Fair. This year, two food promotions will offer money-saving opportunities for fairgoers, all day, every day of the 2026 Illinois State Fair.

The \$5 Fix is a budget-friendly way to enjoy a variety of food. All day every day in the Reisch Pavilion, food vendors will offer a \$5 food item on their menu.

Whether you're craving corn fritters or a slice of s'mores dessert pizza, the \$5 Fix makes it easy to experience fun fair food without overspending. It's a convenient way for families, students, and anyone looking for a tasty treat to stay on budget.

"When planning the fair, Governor Pritzker shared a priority of making the Illinois State Fair affordable for families," said Illinois Department of

Agriculture Director Jerry Costello II. "These food specials help families enjoy a day at the fair without stretching their budgets."

For those looking to nibble, Small Plates, Big Tastes in the Village of Cultures offers sample-sized portions for just \$3, giving fairgoers the chance to taste a variety of dishes without committing to a full meal.

Whether you are introducing your family to new cuisines, sharing bites with friends, or searching for your next favorite Fair food, Small Plates, Big Tastes lets you experience more for less. It is the perfect opportunity to explore new flavors, support local vendors, and create delicious memories, one bite at a time.

"We want everyone to enjoy the incredible flavors and experiences showcased in the Village of

Cultures without worrying about the cost," said Illinois State Fair Manager Rebecca Clark. "These sample-sized portions are a fun, affordable way to explore cuisines from around the world, discover something new, and come back for a full-sized portion of their favorite."

There will be more than 120 food vendors at this year's fair. Some of the must-try vendors include Backdraft BBQ on Coliseum Lane; Erma's Cinnamon Rolls on Illinois Ave.; Tikka Street in the Village of Cultures; Ben's Soft Pretzels on Central Ave. and Five Star Pickles & Sausages in the Expo Building.

Plan your visit, bring your appetite, and enjoy all the flavors of the 2026 statefair.illinois.gov Illinois State Fair, Aug. 13 through Aug. 23 in Springfield.

# From circus acts to concerts

## More than 160 hours of free entertainment offered at the Illinois State Fair

With free entertainment, daily discounts and attractions for all ages, the Illinois State Fair offers families countless ways to make memories without stretching their budgets.

"We are excited to offer a diverse lineup of free entertainment options," said Jerry Costello II, Director of the Illinois Department of Agriculture. "Our goal is to ensure the Fair remains accessible to everyone, and we're committed to keeping it affordable."

The Double the Fun parking promotion will be offered on Thursday, Aug. 13. If you pay to park on the Illinois State Fairgrounds on Aug. 13, you will receive free parking on a return trip to the fair on the following Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday.

"TWOsday" features \$2 admission for seniors and adults on Tuesday, Aug. 18. To enhance this family-

friendly promotion, North American Midway, the fair's carnival operator, will also offer all rides at \$2 each. This is in addition to honoring all Mega Passes and Jumbo Passes sold before and during the fair.

**State Fair theme and discount days:**

Thursday, Aug. 13: County Fairs & Horse Racing Day, Double the Fun Parking Promotion

Friday, Aug. 14: Agriculture Day

Saturday, Aug. 15: Kids Day

Sunday, Aug. 16: Veterans & Gold Star Families Day (Free admission for veterans and their immediate families)

Monday, Aug. 17: Senior & Scout Day (Free admission for seniors and scouts in uniform)

Tuesday, Aug. 18: TWOsday (\$2 admission for seniors and adults)

Wednesday, Aug. 19: Governor's Day

Thursday, Aug. 20: Republican Day

Friday, Aug. 21: First Responder & Healthcare Heroes Day (Free admission for first responders and healthcare workers with ID)

Saturday, Aug. 22: Park District Conservation Day

Sunday, Aug. 23: Family Day

Stop by the Illinois Department of Agriculture Tent and look for the 8-foot inflatable barn, home to Farmer Betsy and her friends, Pauline the Pig and Chuck the Calf. Fairgoers can interact with these animated characters while learning more about Illinois agriculture in a fun and engaging way.

Big Top Adventures will present free performances every day in Happy Hollow at 2 p.m., 4:30 p.m., and 7 p.m. The 800-seat circus will showcase an exciting lineup of jugglers, clowns, trapeze artists, and other

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# Pheasant hunt reservations underway

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources is accepting reservations online for pheasant hunting opportunities at the Des Plaines State Fish and Wildlife Area near Wilmington and the Kankakee River State Park on Illinois 102.

The daily permit fee for each hunter is \$35 for residents; \$40 for nonresidents. Hunters can reserve permits by using a credit card. The credit card account will be billed when hunters submit an application. A transaction fee of \$1 or 2.25 percent of the permit fee (whichever is higher) will be assessed, except for applications submitted for the Illinois Youth Pheasant Hunt.

Nine sites provide lengthy hunting seasons for hunters, as well as special hunting days for young hunters. Those sites include the Des Plaines State Fish and Wildlife Area, Kankakee River State Park and the Iroquois County State Wildlife Area.

At Des Plaines, hunting opportunities are available for hunters with disabilities where special vehicles are provided to assist with the hunt.

Online permit reservations for the first drawing period on IDNR-operated sites ended Monday. Two additional one-week drawing periods are scheduled thereafter concluding on Aug. 24.

Standby hunting will

be limited this year. Only a few permits may be available daily at each site. Daily standby drawings will occur immediately at the conclusion of the regular check-in time.

Hunters are strongly encouraged to access IDNR-operated controlled pheasant hunting sites by using the online permit reservation system. Online permits are available up until 9:00 a.m. the day prior to the hunt.

A reminder that hunters are required to use non-toxic shotshells at the Des Plaines SFWA.

For complete details, check the controlled pheasant hunting website at <https://dnr2.illinois.gov/controlledhunt>.

talented performers.

Also in Happy Hollow, discover Dinosaur Encounters and step into a prehistoric adventure the whole family will enjoy. Explore interactive activities from 10 a.m. to 8:30 p.m., then catch live stage shows at 1 p.m., 3:30 p.m., and 6 p.m.

Harness Racing, Watershow Productions High Dive Show, Kardenni the Magician, Sky High Balloon Guy, and Street Drum Corps all offer free events throughout the Illinois State Fair.

On Aug. 19, celebrate the fair's top agricultural achievements at the Sale of Champions, where outstanding livestock and exhibitors take place.

Returning is the Dillinois State Fair Pickleball Showdown, a round robin doubles tournament happening Saturday, Aug. 22 in the Orr Building, with youth and adult divisions. Register to compete or just come to watch an exciting day of competition.

Step inside Gate 2 to explore the free Route 66 Experience, an interactive exhibit celebrating the history and culture of America's most famous highway.

Don't miss the free concerts every night of the fair. Head to Grand Central Stage at 7:30 p.m. to enjoy live music:

Thurs. Aug. 13—Casey Donahew; Fri. Aug. 14—Mike Tramp of White Lion; Sat. Aug. 15—The Sweet; Sun. Aug. 16—Lakeview; Mon. Aug. 17—Shake Baby Shake (50s & 60s); Tue. Aug. 18—The Creekers; Wed. Aug. 19—The Band Perry; Thurs. Aug. 20—Rumours - The Ultimate Fleetwood Mac Tribute Show; Fri. Aug. 21—Kobanova.; Sat. Aug. 22—Vertical Horizon; and Sun. Aug. 23—Slater Nalley.

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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



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



### APARTMENTS FOR RENT

Wilmington Studio apartment for rent. \$875/month plus utilities and \$1,000 security. No pets. Call 815-365-2829.

### GARAGE SALE

Wilmington - 955 Maple St. Sat. & Sun., Aug 15th & 16th, 8-4. Little bit of everything, Kids clothes, adult clothes, gaming table, work out bench, kitchen, household, deep freeze, outdoor, decor.

### 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

**Thank you for reading the classifieds. They still get results!**

### REAL ESTATE

SHERIFF'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE of 631 N 2nd St, Braidwood, IL 60408 (Single Family Home). On the 20th day of August, 2026 to be held at 12:00 noon, at the Will County Courthouse, 100 W. Jefferson Street, Room 1001, Joliet, IL 60432, under Case Title: **NewRez LLC d/b/a Shellpoint Mortgage Servicing Plaintiff V. Joshua W Lindsay; et. al.** Defendant. Case No. **25 FC 1283** in the Circuit Court of the Twelfth Judicial Circuit, County, Illinois. Terms of Sale: ten percent (10%) at the time of sale and the balance within twenty-four (24) hours. No judicial sale fee shall be paid by the mortgagee acquiring the residential real estate pursuant to its credit bid at the sale or by any mortgagee, judgment creditor, or other lienor acquiring the residential real estate whose rights in and to the residential real estate arose prior to the sale. All payments shall be made in cash or certified funds payable to the Sheriff of Will County. In the event the property is a condominium, in accordance with 735 ILCS 5/15-1507(c)(1)(H-1) and (H-2), 765 ILCS 605/9(g)(5), and 765 ILCS 605/18.5(g-1), you are hereby notified that the purchaser of the unit, other than a mortgagee,

shall pay the assessments and legal fees required by sub-divisions (g)(1) and (g)(4) of Section 9 and the assessments required by subsection (g-1) of Section 18.5 of the Illinois Condominium Property Act. Pursuant to Local Court Rule 11.03 (J) if there is a surplus following application of the proceeds of sale, then the plaintiff shall send written notice pursuant to 735 ILCS 5/15-1512(d) to all parties to the proceeding advising them of the amount of the surplus and that the surplus will be held until a party obtains a court order for its distribution or, in the absence of an order, until the surplus is forfeited to the State. For Information Please Contact: **Codilis & Associates, P.C. 15W030 N. Frontage Road Suite 100 Burr Ridge, Illinois 60527 P: 630-794-5300 F: 630-794-9090** PURSUANT TO THE FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT YOU ARE ADVISED THAT THIS LAW FIRM IS DEEMED TO BE A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. Published in Free Press Newspaper on Wed., July 29, August 5, and 12, 2026.

### SERVICE & REPAIRS

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### LOST & FOUND

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### REAL ESTATE

SHERIFF'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE of 319 N KANKAKEE ST, WILMINGTON, IL 60481 (not applicable). On the 27th day of August, 2026 to be held at 12:00 noon, at the Will County Courthouse, 100 W. Jefferson Street, Room 1001, Joliet, IL 60432, under Case Title: **NEWREZ LLC D/B/A SHELLPOINT MORTGAGE SERVICING Plaintiff V. MARC OSMANSON; BREANNE OSMANSON; PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS; STATE OF ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE; CHICAGO TITLE LAND TRUST COMPANY D/B/A THE LAND TRUST COMPANY, AS TRUSTEE; SECRETARY OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT; UNKNOWN OWNERS AND NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS; Defendant.** Case No. **25 FC 1093** in the Circuit Court of the Twelfth Judicial Circuit, Will County, Illinois. Terms of Sale: ten percent (10%) at the time of sale and the balance within twenty-four (24) hours. No judicial sale fee shall be paid by the mortgagee acquiring the residential real estate pursuant to its credit bid at the sale or by any mortgagee, judgment creditor, or other lienor acquiring the residential real estate whose rights in and to the residential real estate arose prior to the sale. All payments shall be made in cash or certified funds payable to the Sheriff of Will County. In the event the property is a condominium, in accordance with 735 ILCS 5/15-1507(c)(1)(H-1) and (H-2), 765 ILCS 605/9(g)(5), and 765 ILCS 605/18.5(g-1), you are hereby notified that the purchaser of the unit, other than a mortgagee,

1) and (H-2), 765 ILCS 605/9(g)(5), and 765 ILCS 605/18.5(g-1), you are hereby notified that the purchaser of the unit, other than a mortgagee, shall pay the assessments and legal fees required by subdivisions (g)(1) and (g)(4) of Section 9 and the assessments required by subsection (g-1) of Section 18.5 of the Illinois Condominium Property Act. Pursuant to Local Court Rule 11.03 (J) if there is a surplus following application of the proceeds of sale, then the plaintiff shall send written notice pursuant to 735 ILCS 5/15-1512(d) to all parties to the proceeding advising them of the amount of the surplus and that the surplus will be held until a party obtains a court order for its distribution or, in the absence of an order, until the surplus is forfeited to the State. For Information Please Contact: **ANSELMO LINDBERG OLIVER LLC. 1771 W. Diehl Rd. Suite 120 NAPERVILLE, ILLINOIS 60563 P: 630-453-6960 F: 630-428-4620** PURSUANT TO THE FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT YOU ARE ADVISED THAT THIS LAW FIRM IS DEEMED TO BE A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. Published in the Free Press Newspapers on Wed., Aug. 5, 12, and 19, 2026

## Registration underway for Fallen Heroes run & walk during Elwood Community Days

The Bradley Veerman Charity Fund is proud to announce the annual In Memory of Our Fallen Heroes 5K Run & Walk, taking place on Friday, Sept. 11, at Lloyd Erickson Park in Elwood.

The event begins with a special remembrance ceremony at 5 p.m., followed by the 5K Run & Walk at 6 p.m.

This year's event holds special significance as the nation commemorates the 25th anniversary of September 11, 2001.

Participants will gather to remember the lives lost, honor the courage and sacrifice of first responders and public servants, and celebrate the enduring spirit of service that continues to unite communities across America.

Hosted in conjunction with Elwood Community Days, the event benefits the Bradley Veerman Charity Fund, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting first responders, advancing public safety initiatives, providing EMS education, and assisting charitable organizations that serve our communities.

The charity was established in memory of Bradley Veerman, a dedicated firefighter, paramedic, police officer, Executive Director of the Laraway Emergency Telephone System Board (Will County 9-1-1), and public servant whose passion for helping others continues to inspire the organization's mission.

The Bradley Veerman Charity Fund has provided educational scholarships, supported emergency responders and partnered with organizations committed to improving public safety throughout the

region.

"Our goal is to bring our community together to remember those who have made the ultimate sacrifice while continuing Bradley's legacy of compassion, service, and commitment to helping others," said April Veerman, President of the Bradley Veerman Charity Fund.

"Every participant, volunteer, sponsor, donor, and supporter helps us honor our fallen heroes while making a lasting difference in our communities."

Participants of all ages and abilities are encouraged to register. Registration includes an event T-shirt, finisher medal, admission wristband to Elwood Community Days beer ticket for participants 21 years of age or older, and the opportunity to honor America's heroes while supporting a meaningful cause.

Community members can purchase an official In Memory of Our Fallen Heroes event T-shirt online. Shirts are available for anyone who wants to proudly wear them throughout Elwood Community Days while honoring our Fallen Heroes.

Community members who are unable to participate are also encouraged to support the event through sponsorships, volunteer opportunities, or donations.

Registration is now open. For race registration, sponsorship opportunities, volunteer information, donations, or to purchase an official event T-shirt, visit: <https://runsignup.com/Race/IL/Elwood/ElwoodCommunityDaysK>.

## Wandless earns degree

Rachel Wandless of Wilmington, has earned a degree in MAT, Athletic Training, at Loras College in Dubuque, Iowa.

## Olivet Nazarene University dean's list

Olivet Nazarene University in Bourbonnais has announced its 2026 spring dean's list.

To qualify for inclusion on the Dean's List, a student must have been enrolled as a full-time undergraduate student and must have attained a semester grade point average of 3.50 or higher on a 4.00 grading scale. Local student's include: Landon Jankus of Braidwood, Melody Kinder of Coal City, Hope Dillinger of Custer Park, Jessica Castle, Julia McCully, Drake Robertson, Evan Surdey and Grant Wilburn all of Wilmington.

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**Call Michael Bernhard, Broker or David Klein, Auctioneer, 815-936-8978 Bourbonnais, IL [mbernhard@firstmid.com](mailto:mbernhard@firstmid.com)**

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**For a bid packet, contact: Reid Lichty, Broker or David Klein, Des. Mng. Brk, Bloomington, IL Phone: 309-665-0955 [Reid.Lichty@firstmid.com](mailto:Reid.Lichty@firstmid.com)**

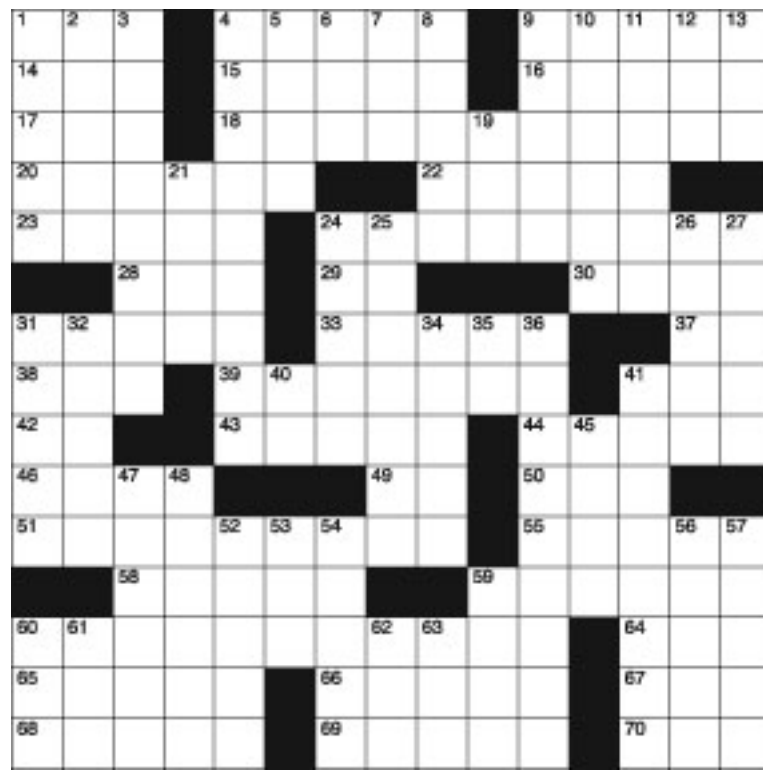
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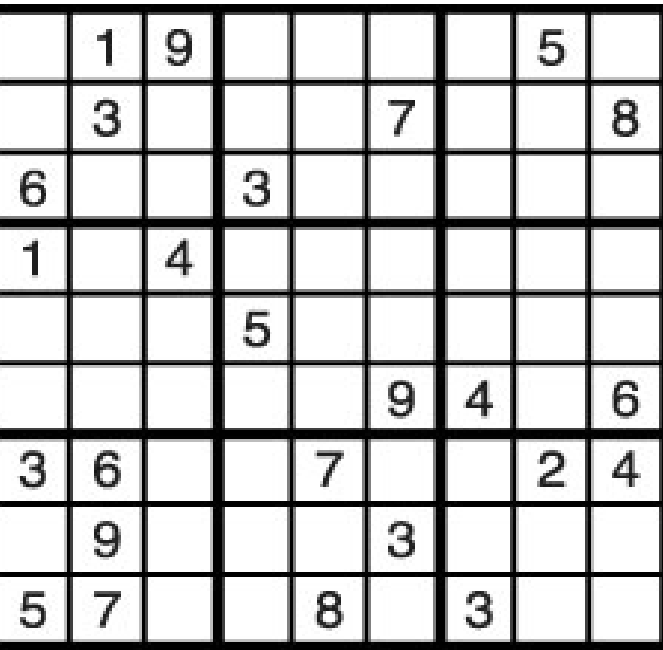


### CLUES ACROSS

- Midway between south and southeast
- Fathers
- Wine grape
- Al Bundy's wife
- Derived from ammonia
- Venezuelan state
- Interest rate
- Experts
- Vascular tissues
- Smooth and glossy
- Administrative region in S. Korea
- One from Damascus
- Special interest group
- It cools your home

### CLUES DOWN

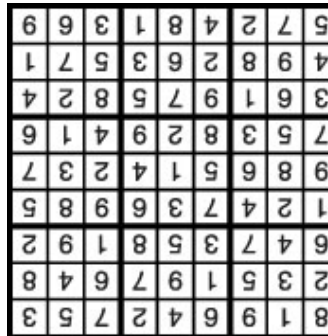
- Involuntary muscular contraction
- Eastern US transit agency
- Leaves a place
- Cease to participate
- Current units
- Cease to exist
- General's assistant (abbr.)
- Earth vibration
- Very strong winds
- For each one
- A bog
- The creation of beautiful or significant things
- Affirmative
- Pie \_\_\_\_ mode
- Nonclerical
- Indonesian island
- Educational environment
- Namibian peoples
- Bring out or develop
- Moves into a place of thought
- Out of the way
- Loads a ship
- Beloved Hollywood alien
- Distinguishes
- The ancient Egyptian sun god
- Secondary or explanatory title
- Relating to a wing
- One who gives a speech
- In the middle
- Loop with a running knot
- Airborne (abbr.)
- Sweet persons
- Put into play
- Small cattle breed
- Millisecond
- Revolutions per minute
- They \_\_\_\_
- Moon crater
- A place to stay the night



Level: Intermediate

### SUDOKU - Here's how it works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle.



# No big company mine, the Young-Oswald mine

One of the worst of times in Braidwood happened when most shaft mines had closed down, and the technology for strip mines had not been perfected yet. Money was scarce as hen's teeth, but there was still one small light for local miners. The locally owned Young-Oswald mine was that light.



Sandy Vasko

David Young was born in Scotland, and emigrated with his wife Margaret, their seven children, and his uncle in 1888. By 1900 he was naturalized, working in a coal mine. However, shaft mining was quickly disappearing. Rather than move elsewhere, David decided to change his fate. In 1909, along with Will Oswald, Jr. he purchased his own mine.

In October of 1916 we read in the Wilmington Advocate, "Officials of the Oswald and Young mine, the only coal mine being operated in this vicinity have completed arrangements whereby the output will be quadrupled during the winter season to take care of the big demand for Braidwood coal."

"About forty men are employed and they are nearing the hundred tons a

day capacity, due to the improved methods of handling the coal on top and in loading of wagons, there being very little delay under the present system. Those who were of the opinion that this mine would not be able to handle the home trade and the farmers who usually hauled Braidwood coal, need but make a visit to the mine, note the many up-to-date improvements, to change their opinions. David Young and William Oswald, Jr. are the owners."

Apparently, there was at least one person who was jealous of the apparent success of the Young-Oswald mine. The editor of the Braidwood Bulletin criticized Young taking his printing jobs to the Wilmington newspaper. As far as I know there are no copies of the Bulletin left in existence. But Youngs reply to that editor was published in the Wilmington Advocate.

"Editor Advocate: May I ask a small space in your columns to call attention to an attack made by the "cackle" editor of the Braidwood Bulletin - printed in Wilmington - on me because I have a little printing job to his com-

petitor who is a Republican, in preference to him a southern Democrat, and no credit to any party at that."

"He tries to mix me up with rat shops and unions. I paid union prices for the job he howls about, and I pay union prices for all work done for me, and the U. M. W. A. had never had occasion to call me on my acts as I have always paid at the mine more than the scale of the U. M. W. A. calls for. Today the lowest prices for mining at our mine is 10 cents per ton higher than the scale."

"He talks about rats quite glibly. I judge he is more familiar with their habits than I am, they do their work at night mostly; they frequent chicken coops and such like but they never make cash settlements for what they carry away, nor make their excuses for their misdeemeanors that they were drunk."

"I have lived here for 35 years. I have a family of which I am proud of. I have made an honest living in those years."

"If he made his attack for political reasons, because I am Republican County Central Committeeman, he has shot wide of the mark, as even Democrats here say he amounts to so little that they would not read his abortion he calls a newspaper."

During the dark days of World War I, coal was in short supply. Strip mining had not ramped up yet. We read in January of 1918, "On account of the scarcity of coal the public and parochial school of Joliet have been closed until Feb. 4." This situation did not get better as the war raged on.

That should have meant that a local supplier like Young should be doing well, however we find that by July of 1920 he had sold the mine to someone else, but was still working there as a miner. "The Illinois coal miners' strike has closed nearly every mine in this state. The former Oswald-Young mine in Braidwood is still hoisting coal and the farmers of this vicinity and citizens of this city are busy putting in their coal supply. Many haulers make trips to the mine and are compelled to return without the black diamonds for the reason of the many customers ahead of them."

We are not sure what happened to him for the next decade, but in 1930 the census shows him owning a house in Oak Park, valued at \$12,000 (\$236,100 today). He died in August of that year at the age of 67. For some reason his death record shows he was an elevator operator at the time.

# 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](http://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, Aug. 13**  
Cooking with Heather Shouse, 6 p.m. Heather Shouse will be here to teach you how to cook meals based on a theme. This month's theme is Jar Joy Home Food Preservation. Registration is required.

**Friday, Aug. 14**  
Gamers Guild, 3:30 p.m.

Munchies and More, 6 p.m.

**Saturday, Aug. 15**  
Ice Cream Social. All ages are welcome to join us for an ice cream provided

by Culver's and a visit from Scoopie. Register to come between 1-2 p.m. or 2-3 p.m.

**Monday, Aug. 17**  
Mahjong in Annex A, 1 p.m.

Dining with Dewey Cookbook Club, 6 p.m.

**Tuesday, Aug. 18**  
Tech Tuesdays. Do you have basic technology questions? The 3rd Tuesday of each month we will have a librarian available upstairs to assist you in 30 minute intervals between 5 and 7 p.m. A librarian will contact you to confirm your appointment and request information about the device and/or technology questions you have.

**Wednesday, Aug. 19**  
Senior Health Insurance Program, 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

Story and Play Time. Join us for themed stories, songs and time to play. No registration required.

Evening Bingo, 6 p.m.

# Tim Bradley appointed to JJC Board of Trustees

The Joliet Junior College Board of Trustees appointed Tim Bradley of Coal City to fill the vacated position formerly held by Jim Budzinski.

The seat will stand for election in April 2027.

Bradley is a Joliet Junior College Alumnus and former three-term (2013-2025) Trustee for the Village of Coal City. He currently serves on the board of directors for the Will-Grundy Medical Clinic and the board of Santa Claus is Coming to Grundy County.

Tim is a graduate of Joliet Junior College as well as Lewis University with a Bachelor of Science degree in finance. He works in wealth management for a local bank.



TIM BRADLEY

Bradley will seek election to a full term in April 2027.

# Unit #1 School board approves \$19,000 playground donation

Coal City Community Unit School District #1 will receive a \$19,000 donation to help offset the cost of a new playground at Coal City Intermediate School.

The donation was among several items approved by the Unit 1 Board of Education during its Aug. 5 meeting that was held following a ribbon cutting of renovations of the gym and band room at the Coal City Intermediate School

Board members formally accepted the \$19,000 contribution for the playground project. The donation was made by the Jeschke family.

The board also approved an easement agreement between the school district and the Village of

Braceville and conducted the first reading of revised board policies.

In curriculum matters, board members approved formal standards-aligned curricula for all subject areas that have been completed and presented to the board.

Several agreements and annual services were also authorized for the upcoming school year.

The district renewed its annual membership with Three Rivers Education for Employment Systems (TREES) at a cost of \$1,121.75 and approved an agreement with Bilingual Therapies to provide American Sign Language services during the 2026-27 school year.

The board also approved the district's Fiscal Year 2027 Threat

Assessment Plan.

An agreement with Cinder Ridge Golf Course to host CCHS golf matches and practices was approved for the 2026-27 school year, along with a three-year agreement with SNAP! Mobile which will provide registration and scheduling for middle school athletics at a cost of \$2,775.

In other action, the board approved a settlement agreement with Judiciocracy LLC and the Coalition Opposing Government Secrecy.

The board also approved its consent agenda, which included meeting minutes, financial reports and a number of personnel actions.

# Unit 1 Board handles personnel matters

The Coal City Community Unit School District #1 Board of Education approved several personnel changes as part of its consent agenda during the Aug. 5 meeting, including resignations, new hires, an employee transfer and coaching assignments.

The board accepted the resignations of Holly Kilgore-Hogg, reading aide at the Early Childhood Center; Cherie Sieger, recess/lunchroom supervisor at the Intermediate School; Calin Wolcott, classroom aide at the Early Childhood Center; and Kaylee Ziolkowski, 1:1 special education aide at the Elementary School.

Fourteen employees were approved for employment pending satisfactory completion of state requirements.

New hires include Alexis Bricco, Joann Eberhard, Karissa Perkins and Megan Vargo as 1:1 special education aides at the Early Childhood or Elementary schools; Abbi Eberhard, Maria Radtke and Julie Watts at the Intermediate School; Brenda Gerber at the Early Childhood Center; Lindsay

McMillan as assistant secretary at the Middle School; Brandi Novak and Robert Terrel as classroom aides at the Elementary School.

Also Crystal Ramirez at the Intermediate School; Desirae Randolph at the Middle School; Megan Tabler as a reading aide at the Early Childhood Center; and Jasimine Winnie as a three-hour reading aide at the Elementary School.

The board also approved the transfer of Jennifer Hall from reading/recess aide to a first-grade classroom aide at the Early Childhood Center.

In athletics, the board approved Kristen Wills as assistant girls tennis coach and Josh Eddy as the new head softball coach at Coal City High School. Eddy replaces Rodney Monbrum. Eric Runions was approved as a volunteer assistant girls soccer coach.

The consent agenda also included the reinstatement of 65 paraprofessionals throughout the district for the upcoming school year.

In other action, the board approved moving

closed-session minutes from meetings held Jan. 7, Feb. 4, April 8, June 10 and June 24 into open session.

The consent agenda also included approval of

the July 1 regular and closed-session meeting minutes and financial reports covering June, July and August.

# K-9 officer sniffs out cocaine tossed from car window

BY ROSE PANIERI  
STAFF WRITER



JOSH SOCHA

A Seneca man is facing felony drug charges after authorities say he threw packages of cocaine from his vehicle during a traffic stop on Interstate 80, only to have them recovered with the help of a Grundy County Sheriff's Office K-9.

Josh Socha, 36, of Seneca, was arrested by the Grundy County Proactive Unit following a traffic stop at approximately 3:30 p.m. Monday, Aug. 3.

According to the Grundy County Sheriff's Office, deputies stopped Socha after observing that he was driving a vehicle displaying registration plates assigned to a different vehicle.

During the stop, a deputy reportedly saw two objects being thrown from the passenger-side window before the vehicle came to a stop. Additional deputies responded to assist with the investigation, and a search of the roadside led to the recovery of one package containing cocaine.

A second package was located after K-9 Groot, assigned to the Proactive Unit, conducted an article search of the area.

Deputies then conducted a probable cause

search of the vehicle, where they located a third package containing cocaine, along with drug paraphernalia consistent with cocaine use.

Authorities said the recovered cocaine weighed approximately 30 grams in total and was packaged in three separate bags.

Socha was charged with Manufacture and Delivery of 15 to 100 grams of cocaine, a Class X felony, and Unlawful Possession of Cocaine, a Class 1 felony.

He was transported to the Grundy County Jail and was later released under Illinois' pretrial release provisions.

As with all criminal cases, the charges are allegations, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless proven guilty in a court of law.

## Braceville Twp. Road Dist. supervisor report on file

### LEGAL NOTICE

Annual Supervisor's Report  
Braceville Township & Road District  
Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 2026

Township-Revenue Summary:  
Property Taxes - \$47,437; Replacement Tax - \$2,360; Interest Income - \$4,428; Miscellaneous - \$300; Total Revenue: \$54,525.

Township-Compensation Summary:  
Compensation under \$25,000 - Mark Wills, Douglas Boresi, Penny Wills, Michael Campbell, Greg Hodgen, Mike Lareau; Leonard Onsen; Mark Jiskra; Total Compensation: \$26,190.

Township-Expenditure Summary:  
Com Ed - \$3,471; Mack & Associates - \$5,950; All other disbursements less than \$2,500 - \$19,075; Total Expenditures: \$28,496.

Road District-Revenue Summary:  
Motor Fuel Tax - \$28,432; Property Taxes - \$262,869; Replacement Tax - \$6,072; Interest Income - \$24,899; Miscellaneous - \$7,262; Total Revenue: \$329,534.

Road District-Compensation Summary:  
Compensation under \$40,000 - Richard Kibler; Compensation under \$25,000 - Mike Lareau; Total Compensation: \$42,131.

Road District-Expenditure Summary:  
Corrective Asphalt - \$44,098; Denlar Inc - \$15,230; Fatlan Trucking - \$7,500; Grainco FS - \$6,026; Precision Pavement - \$2,990; Premier - \$3,300; Rush Trucks - \$4,081; TOIRMA - \$3,104; All other disbursements less than \$2,500 - \$23,347; Total Expenditures: \$109,676.

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF CONDITION  
(Excerpt from Comptroller Report)

|                                  | General   | Special Revenue |
|----------------------------------|-----------|-----------------|
| Revenues                         | \$43,666  | 340,393         |
| Expenditures                     | (42,483)  | (164,010)       |
| Excess Revenue Over Expenditures | \$1,183   | 176,383         |
| Previous Year Fund Balance       | \$99,367  | \$669,110       |
| Current Year Ending Fund Balance | \$100,550 | \$845,493       |

Special Revenue includes Motor Fuel Tax money which is held by Grundy County Highway Department.  
Subscribed and sworn to this 4th day of August 2026.  
Douglas Boresi-Treasurer  
Published in the Coal City Courant on Aug. 12, 2026

## Braceville-Maine supervisor report on file

### LEGAL NOTICE

Annual Supervisor's Report  
Braceville-Maine Multi Township Tax Assessing  
Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 2026

Revenue Summary: Property Taxes - \$39,117; Interest - \$1,107; Total Revenue: \$40,224.

Compensation Summary: Compensation under \$25,000 - Douglas Boresi, Deb Hauschild, Penny Wills, Pamela Hazzard; Total Compensation: \$200.

Expenditure Summary: Grundy Co. Collector/Treasurer - \$38,738; Mack & Associates - \$3,200; All disbursements less than \$2,500 - \$845; Total Vendors: \$42,783.

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF CONDITION  
(Excerpt from Comptroller Report)

|                                      | General  |
|--------------------------------------|----------|
| Revenues                             | \$40,224 |
| Expenditures                         | \$42,983 |
| Excess of Expenditures Over Revenues | \$2,759  |
| Previous Year Fund Balance           | \$30,511 |
| Current Year Ending Fund Balance     | \$27,752 |

Subscribed and sworn to this 28th day of July 2026.  
Douglas Boresi-Supervisor  
Published in the Coal City Courant on Aug. 12, 2026

**Coal City Coalers Team Pride**

**#1 Sports Fans Weekly Internet Winner**

**Savanna Smith**

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**"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"**

# Coal City athletics gear up for fall seasons

STAFF REPORT

Coal City High School's fall sports season is ready to get underway, and new Athletic Director John Cherry reported to the Unit 1 Board of Education that student-athletes and coaches have been busy preparing for competition.

Cherry provided his first athletic department report to the board during its Aug. 5 meeting, beginning by thanking district staff and the community for the welcome he has received since taking over the position.

"It has been refreshing to have so many people who have been so helpful as I slowly learn my way around the district and its history," Cherry wrote in his report. "Everyone has made this feel like home for me already."

He added that he appreciates the patience shown as he settles into the position and gets acquainted with the district.

One of Cherry's first big events will be Meet the Coalers Night, an opportunity for the community to get its first look at the high school's fall athletic teams.

The event will be held Friday, Aug. 14, beginning at 5 p.m. at the CCHS stadium. Admission is free, with concessions and Coaler apparel available for purchase.

The evening will begin with a boys soccer scrimmage at 5 p.m., followed by

the introduction of all fall varsity teams at 6:30 p.m. The band will perform at 6:45 p.m., followed by the dance team at 6:55 p.m. and cheerleaders at 7:05 p.m. A football scrimmage will cap the evening beginning at 7:15 p.m.

"This is a perfect opportunity to support our talented students, as a new school year gets underway," Cherry stated.

## Busy summer for athletes

Cherry also reported a successful summer of camps and workouts.

Youth camps were offered in football, boys and girls basketball, tennis, wrestling, softball and baseball. Coaches reported strong participation and were pleased with the effort put forth by young athletes.

High school camps and workouts are also wrapping up as teams transition into their regular seasons.

Cherry noted a change in the Illinois High School Association calendar has made that transition easier. The IHSA's summer "dead week" was moved to the week of July 4, allowing coaches to conduct camps closer to the official start of fall practices.

## Football gets early start

Football began practices Aug. 5, with the remainder of the fall teams getting underway Monday.

The football calendar has been moved up one

week this year to accommodate an expanded post-season, which adds an additional week to the playoff schedule.

The Coalers will waste little time getting into action, opening the football season Friday, Aug. 21, on the road against Pontiac.

Boys golf will be the first Coaler team to compete, opening Aug. 17 at the Breeden Classic in Kankakee.

The girls fall sports season begins Aug. 24. Volleyball travels to Prairie Central, girls tennis hosts Morris and girls golf heads to Seneca. Boys soccer will open its season at home against Serena on Aug. 27.

## Digital ticketing considered

Changes could also eventually be coming to the way fans pay their way into Coaler athletic events.

Cherry reported that he and the district administrative team have begun exploring digital ticketing and credit card payment options for athletic events. The district is also considering whether electronic payments could be offered at concession stands.

Administrators have met with several providers to review available systems and are looking at options through vendors the district already uses.



Coal City School District photo

THE NEWLY CONSTRUCTED gymnasium area at Coal City Intermediate School will provide a multi-use space for school physical education classes and programming.

# Mother Nature turned up the thermostat in July

BY ROSE PANIERI  
STAFF WRITER

If July had one job, it was to remind everyone that summer had officially arrived—and it certainly didn't disappoint.

According to the Grundy County Emergency Management Agency Weather Data Division, July brought an average temperature of 77 degrees, along with enough steamy days to keep electric executives grinning from ear-to-ear.

The hottest day of the month hit 95 degrees on July 3, while early risers caught a refreshing 53-degree morning on July 23.

The month featured 10 days with temperatures of 90 degrees or higher, but Mother Nature showed a little mercy by keeping the thermometer below the 100-degree mark.

Rain made regular appearances, too, with 2.41 inches falling over eight days of measurable precipitation.

Total liquid precipitation for the year

was a whopping 26.82 inches of rain.

The most significant soaking came on July 5, when one inch of rain fell in a single day — just enough to send folks out to mow the lawn, and throw a wrench into the final day of the holiday weekend.

Unlike the previous months, wind wasn't much of a troublemaker, although a 36 mph gust on July 3 sent paper plates and a lawn chair or two meandering the neighborhood.

The good news? There was no snow to shovel, no ice to scrape off windshields, and plenty of warm evenings for baseball games, backyard cookouts, and watching fireflies. It was, in many ways, a picture-perfect Illinois summer — hot enough to complain about, but not hot enough to break records.

The monthly climatological report was compiled by the Grundy County Emergency Management Agency Weather Data Division, which tracks local weather conditions throughout the year.

# Advice to parents: Skip the e-bike under the Christmas tree

BY ROSE PANIERI  
STAFF WRITER

Once hailed as a convenient, eco-friendly way to get around town, electric bikes and scooters are increasingly creating challenges for communities.

Riders weaving through traffic and pedestrians to concerns about speeding, safety, fires caused by lithium-ion batteries, and confusion over where these vehicles belong, Braidwood officials are grappling with a growing list of complaints.

Though officials have been studying solutions, a

new Illinois law regulating e-bikes and other micro-mobility devices has prompted Braidwood officials to put local ordinance discussions on hold while police review the legislation before it takes effect next year.

Police Chief Eric Allen told the city council that the city had been working on local regulations governing electronic bicycles, scooters and similar motorized devices but decided to pause those efforts after the General Assembly approved Senate Bill 3336.

"Our discussions have

paused because we learned that the state has passed Senate Bill 3336," Allen said. "It's going into effect Jan. 1, 2027. That bill is going to define and better regulate these micro-mobility devices, define and further regulate e-bikes, further defines motor-driven cycles."

The legislation creates statewide regulations in several categories, providing a more consistent framework for local governments and law enforcement. Allen said the law is extensive and officers will spend the coming months studying it so they are prepared to enforce the new requirements when they become effective Jan. 1.

"Hopefully, parents are reading about this," Allen said. "Perhaps stop purchasing these things right now. I wouldn't recommend buying it for a Christmas present because you're not going to be able to ride them in town."

## Lions Candy Day

The council also approved the Braidwood Lions Club's annual Candy Day fundraiser.

The event is scheduled for Friday, Oct. 9, from 3 to 6 p.m., with a rain date of Friday, Oct. 16, at the intersection of Illinois Routes 113 and 53/129 in downtown Braidwood.



ELECTRONIC SCOOTERS and bicycles will soon be regulated under new legislation passed in the Illinois Senate. Not only should parents consider the dangers of buying ebikes and scooters for children, they may want to wait until the rules are spelling out by lawmakers.



Photo by Eric Fisher

A SUNNY SURPRISE—One sunflower apparently didn't get the memo that this was a cornfield. Growing among towering stalks, the rogue bloom has managed to rise high enough to show off its brilliant colors. Corn commonly reaches 7 to 10 feet, but sunflowers can be formidable competitors, with some varieties topping 10 feet. For now, this one seems perfectly happy just finding its place in the sun.



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