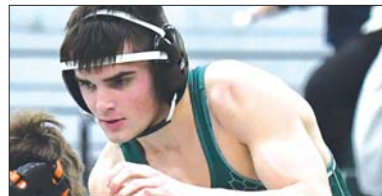




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SITE WORK IS began in July for the Jewel-Osco that will anchor the new Diamond Marketplace Shopping Center at Route 113 and Will Road. The 62,000 square-foot grocery store will include a pharmacy and Starbucks, and is slated to open in the fall of 2024. It was the most-read story posted by the Coal City Courant in 2023.



A NEW MAYOR - Dave Spesia was elected mayor for the Village of Coal City. He was sworn into office in early May.

The year that was: 2023 in Coal City, Diamond

It was a busy year in this portion of Grundy County, with new development, new leadership, and new champions leading the way in 2023.

Here, a look at the stories that kept Coal City talking in 2023:

Diamond's new Jewel

After nearly 20 years of anticipation, Jewel-Osco announced in 2023 that the grocer and pharmacy chain is moving forward with plans to construct a 62,000 square-foot grocery store on the southeast corner of Route 113 and Will Road.

The store—complete with a pharmacy and Starbucks—

will serve as the anchor of the new Diamond Marketplace Shopping Center, a site Mayor Terry Kernc expects will begin to develop now that Jewel is under construction.

The site includes five outlots of a little over one acre that front Route 113. There is enough space for another anchor type store.

The entire 40 acre site was acquired in 2004 by TBS Development Services Group, Inc., for Albertsons, the parent company of Jewel. Even with changes in the company's corporate structure over the past two decades the concept of operating a store in Diamond never wavered.

The company's invest-

ment in Diamond is around \$30 million and it did receive an incentive package from the village that includes tax increment financing funds and sales tax reimbursement, as well as the ability to utilize economic incentives that come with the village's enterprise zone such as sales tax exemptions on purchases of building materials and manufacturing equipment.

The village also committed funds toward site development.

Construction of the building will commence once the site work has been completed, with a completion date slated for the first quarter of 2024.

For Kernc the goal has

always been to provide for the residents and that means securing the services they need and want.

"If they don't want to leave town to go to Joliet, Morris or Kankakee and just want to get their food and pharmacy here in Diamond they are going to be able to do that. If they want to go to the doctor's office here in Diamond, they can do that," Kernc said.

Heroes West Sports Grill announced in November plans to open a restaurant inside the development.

Wrong way driver

Tragedy struck a young family from Livingston County

in June when a head-on traffic crash on I-55 just north of Coal City Road claimed the lives of a mother and father traveling with their children.

For the children who range in age from 12 years to two years, "their lives have been turned upside down at this point," said Jennifer Jones, of Coal City, a witness to the crash that killed Ronald Dube, 35 and his wife, Kelly Quinlen-Dube, 34, of Emmington.

On June 27 that the Dubes' GMC Yukon was struck head-on by a wrong-way driver in the southbound lanes of Interstate 55 at the 238 mile marker—Route 129—in Wilmington Township.

The Dubes and three of their children—seven year old twins and a two year old boy—were heading home after visiting family in Plainfield.

The children's physical injuries consisted of broken bones, cuts and bruises.

Michael Trinkka, 34, who resides in Shadow Lakes, was arrested on July 12 for allegedly causing the crash. Police believe Trinkka entered southbound I-55 at Route 113 even though there are six "Do not enter" and "Wrong way" signs at the off-ramp, and traveled north two miles still unaware he was in the southbound lanes.

Trinkka remains in the Will County Adult Detention Center in Joliet on a \$3 million bond, facing 14 felony charges, including aggravated DUI resulting in death, reckless homicide, aggravated DUI causing bodily harm. His next court appearance is scheduled for Jan. 18, 2024.

Unit 1 challenges GE Hitachi assessment

In December, the Coal City Community Unit School District 1 Board of Education filed a complaint against the assessed value of the GE-Hitachi Nuclear Energy Morris Operation, which it believes is under assessed. The board directed the superintendent and chief school business officer to file the complaint with the Grundy County Board of

Review.

The GE-Hitachi Morris Operation was originally constructed by GE to reprocess spent nuclear fuel but that did not happen. Instead, the site has operated as a spent fuel storage facility and, for more than 50 years, GE-Hitachi Nuclear Energy has been providing nuclear plant operators from around the country with storage space at its facility on Collins Road in Goose Lake Township.

The facility's deep water pools hold 3,217 fuel assemblies, that's 773 metric tons or 1.7 million pounds of spent nuclear fuel. The majority of that was shipped to the facility from nuclear generating facilities located in California, Connecticut, Minnesota and Nebraska, as well as some from the neighboring Dresden Nuclear Generating Station.

The GE-Hitachi Morris Operation, located within the boundaries of the Coal City School District, is the only permanent high-level nuclear waste storage site in the nation. There is no other property like it anywhere in the country.

"The Board of Education firmly believes that GE-Hitachi is not paying its fair share of the property taxes required to educate our schoolchildren and that is unfair to homeowners and small businesses," said Superintendent Christopher Spencer.

The Board of Education previously filed objections to the assessed value of the spent nuclear fuel storage facility in tax years 2021 and 2022. For tax year 2021, the county's three-member Board of Review increased the assessed value of the site from \$3.2 million to \$6.13 million.

There was no change in the assessed value in 2022 and, when the assessor published the county's assessments on November 8, the assessed

SEE TOP STORIES PAGE 2



ONE OF OUR favorite stories for 2023 appeared in the May 10 edition of the Coal City Courant. It featured Bradley Burla who won the Oscar Take Me To Prom contest which included a free ride to prom inside the famous Oscar Mayer Wienermobile. Burla is pictured with his date Lexi Robbins before hopping aboard the Wienermobile and relishing every moment.



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