

AI coming to Wilmington

Exol confirms it's building AI-powered robotics logistics center here

BY ROSE PANIERI
STAFF WRITER

Artificial intelligence-powered logistics giant Exol has confirmed plans to establish its Chicago-area fulfillment center in Wilmington, bringing one of the company's next-generation robotic logistics facilities to the city's rapidly growing industrial corridor.

Amber Rubin, Exol's senior account director, confirmed to the *Free Press Advocate* that the company's planned Chicago facility will be located at 30542 S. Elion Blvd., ending speculation fueled by city permit records and industry databases that link Exol to the site.

City permit records show a permit valued at more than \$19 million is currently being reviewed by the City of Wilmington for the installation of product storage racking inside the facility.

Previously, City



AI LOGISTICS GIANT Exol has plans to open a robotic order fulfillment facility at 30542 S. Elion Boulevard, Wilmington in 2027.

Administrator Melissa Wiak, responding on behalf of Mayor Ben Dietz, said the permit covered installation of storage racking and that the city did not have additional information regarding the company's operations.

Opening planned for 2027
Rubin said the Wilmington facility is expected to become operational in 2027 as part of Exol's nationwide expansion strategy. The company plans a network of six phys-

ical AI fulfillment centers that together will provide approximately six million square feet of automated fulfillment capacity serving retail, wholesale and consumer goods companies across the United States.

"The Wilmington facility will serve as a strategic Midwest hub for companies seeking a more flexible alternative to traditional fulfillment," Rubin said in a written response. "The goal is not to replace existing logistics networks, but to provide companies with a faster, more scalable way to serve the region while tapping into a broader national fulfillment footprint."

Robotic order fulfillment services
Unlike a traditional warehouse, Exol operates what it describes as a "Robotic Logistics Platform," offering order fulfillment-as-a-service. Rather than requiring manufacturers and retail-

SEE EXOL PAGE 2



DOWN THEY GO! A pair of youngsters race down the giant tube slide Thursday evening during the Catfish Days carnival in Wilmington. Youngsters escaped the crazy Fun House by exiting down the slide.



Perfect weather attracts large crowd for successful Catfish Days



Photos by Eric Fisher
FRIDAY NIGHT FIREWORKS—Catfish Days were a bang on Friday night when RKM Fireworks put on a display on the North Island park.





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Exol, continued from page 1

ers to build and operate their own automated distribution centers, companies can use Exol's network for robotic storage, order fulfillment, transportation management and AI-driven logistics.

According to Exol, its technology is designed to automatically receive freight, identify and store inventory, retrieve products using robotic systems and optimize shipping while maintaining more than 99.5 percent order accuracy.

Rubin said the Wilmington operation will join Exol's expanding national network, allowing businesses to handle business-to-business, direct-to-consumer, and retail fulfillment through shared automated infrastructure without building and managing their own facilities.

Job opportunities

While hiring projections have yet to be determined, Rubin said Exol expects the facility to create jobs in five different fields.

"We are still finalizing hiring projections for the Wilmington facility, but we expect to create opportunities across engineering, technical, robotics support, automation and operations roles," Rubin said.

"More broadly, the facility reflects the evolution of modern logistics, where automation takes on repetitive and physically demanding tasks while creating opportunities for employees to develop technical skills and work with advanced robotics and AI-enabled systems. As the site ramps up, we expect to build a team that supports both local operations and the future of technology-driven supply chains."

Billions in backing

Exol has raised enormous support and is building a nationwide network of AI-powered fulfillment centers. The Wilmington facility represents one of the first "Physical AI" investments in the region

Exol is backed by SoftBank Group and warehouse automation company Symbotic, which have committed billions of dollars toward developing a nationwide network of AI-powered fulfillment centers. The company's fulfillment-as-a-service model is intended to give its customers access to sophisticated robotic warehouse technology without a major investment.

The Wilmington facility is located within the Elion Logistics Park 55 near Interstate 55 and Lorenzo Road, major rail connections and the CenterPoint intermodal facilities.

The industrial corridor has attracted major employers including Amazon, Michelin, Post Brands, Lineage, Batori Foods and other national companies.

Worker stranded for hours is rescued



Photo courtesy Wilmington Fire Protection District

A BOOM LIFT is lowered after rescuing a worker who was stranded for several hours high on a sign near Interstate 55 and Lorenzo Road. Firefighters were unable to reach the worker with their ladder truck so a second left was rushed to the scene.

A worker stranded 130 feet high on a highway sign was rescued by the Wilmington Fire Protection District Tuesday afternoon, July 14.

Fire District personnel responded to the intersection of Lorenzo Rd and the Southwest Frontage Rd at 1:55 p.m. to find that a contractor conducting work was stranded 12 stories high inside an enclosed sign structure toward the top of a sign pole.

The telescopic boom lift used by the worker had malfunctioned and Fire District personnel were told he had been at the elevated position for around three hours.

MABAS Division 15's Technical Rescue Team specializing in confined space, collapse, and high angle rescue, was activated to assist with the incident, noted Deputy Fire Chief Todd Friddle.

No ladders or stairs built into the sign pole were present, eliminating the possibility of rescue team personnel ascending to the victim's location as would normally occur in a high angle rescue. The victim's location was also beyond fire department ladder truck capabilities.

Friddle said a drone was launched hovering near the sign opening to maintain visual contact with the victim while command staff developed a rescue plan. The malfunctioning lift was able to be lowered and removed from the base of the tower while a replacement machine was located in the Joliet area.

An Illinois State Police escort was used to bring the new boom lift to the scene where it was then moved from its trailer and into place. Division 15 Technical Rescue Team members along with a machine operator ascended to the victim's location and transferred him from the sign to the lift. The victim was returned to safety with no victim or rescuer injuries.

Assistance was provided at the scene by Wilmington Police, Wilmington & Braidwood ESDA, Joliet Fire Department and the Troy, Gardner, Elwood, Joliet, Manhattan, Minooka, Coal City and Plainfield Fire Districts. Change of quarters companies from the East Joliet, Manteno, Coal City Fire Districts and Dwight Ambulance District assisted handling multiple calls in progress during the technical rescue incident.

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Village of Symerton amends building code ordinance

PUBLIC NOTICE

Legal Public Notice of the Village of Symerton, Will County, Illinois pursuant to 65 ILCS 5/1-2-6 amending the Village of Symerton Code of Ordinances: **AN ORDINANCE RE-ADOPTING AND AMENDING CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF THE VILLAGE OF SYMERTON BUILDING CODE AND ORDINANCE**, was approved and passed on the 13th day of July, 2026, by the Village Board of Trustees at their regular monthly Board Meeting.

A copy of the ordinance can be viewed by contacting the office of the Village Clerk, Village Hall, 18385 W. Commercial Street, Symerton, Illinois during regular working hours at (815) 476-6266.

Dated this 13th day of July, 2026.

Eli Geiss, Mayor

Published in the Free Press Advocate on July 29, 2026.

Attorney Meents files Dunn estate claim

PUBLIC NOTICE

STATE OF ILLINOIS
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE TWELFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS
IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF BILLY HOWARD DUNN, Deceased;
No. 2026 PR 344

CLAIM NOTICE

Notice is given of the death of Billy Howard Dunn, Letters of Office as Independent Administrator, Will Annexed, were issued on July 9, 2026, to Kimberly Ann Dunn, whose address is 34204 S Lakeside Terrace, Wilmington, Illinois 60481; whose attorney is Meents Law, P.C., 25158 W. Eames Street, Unit A, Channahon, Illinois 60410. Claims against the estate may be filed in the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court at the Will County Courthouse, 100 West Jefferson Street, Joliet, Illinois 60432, or with the representative, or both, on or before January 25, 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/faq/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.

Kimberly Ann Dunn
Independent Administrator,
Will Annexed
of the Estate of
Billy Howard Dunn, Deceased

Frank J. Meents
Meents Law, P.C.
25158 W. Eames Street, Unit A
Channahon, Illinois 60410
Telephone: (815) 534-9515
Facsimile: (815) 534-9516
Attorney Code: 06298859
E-mail: Frank@MeentsLaw.com

Published in the Free Press Advocate on Wednesday, July 15, 22, and 29, 2026.

Triangle Mini Storage gives notice of disposal

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF POSSIBLE SALE AND DISPOSAL

To: **Kenneth Moore and Melanie Peters**

Notice is hereby given that a possible sale or disposal of personal property will take place as allowed by the IL Self Storage Facility Act 770 ILCS 95.

This property includes household goods. It is in spaces 377 and 323 at Triangle Mini Storage, 24616 W Stripmine Rd, Wilmington, IL 60481.

Any potential sale will take place online.

Listing Date: July 31, 2026 at 12 p.m.

Ending Date: August 14, 2026 at 12 p.m.

Location: storagetreasures.com

Auction IDs 6522823 and 6522832.

This notice is being given by Anthony Miceli of Triangle Mini Storage.

Published in the Free Press Advocate on Wednesday, July 29 and August 5, 2026.

District 209U to hold hearing on tentative budget

PUBLIC NOTICE

RESOLUTION NO. 4-26

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN by the Board of Education of School District No. 209-U in the County of Will, State of Illinois, that a tentative budget for said School District for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026 will be on file and conveniently available to public inspection at the Office of the Superintendent of Schools, located in the Wilmington High School, 209U Wildcat Court, Wilmington, Illinois in this school district from and after 8:00 o'clock A.M. on the 1st day of August, 2026.

Notice is further hereby given that a public hearing on said budget will be held at 6:15 P.M. on the 14th day of September 2026 at Wilmington High School in this School District No. 209-U.

Dated this 8th day of June, 2026.

Board of Education of School District No. 209-U in the County of Will, State of Illinois.

by: Peggy Kunz, Secretary

Published in the Free Press Advocate, Wednesday, July 22 and 29, 2026.

Low-Income Senior Citizens Assessment Freeze Homestead Exemption

PUBLIC NOTICE

Application and Affidavit for Low-Income Senior Citizens Assessment Freeze Homestead Exemption

Per the Illinois Property Tax Code (Sec. 15-172).

Beginning in taxable year 1994, a senior citizen's assessment freeze homestead exemption is granted for real property that is improved with a permanent structure that is occupied as a residence by an applicant who (1) is 65 years of age or older during the taxable year, (2) has a total household income of **\$75,000 or less in taxable year**, (3) is liable for paying property taxes on the property or has a legal or equitable interest in the property as evidenced by a written instrument.

The Chief County Assessment Officer is giving notice that the **2026 Application and Affidavit for Low-Income Senior Citizens Assessment Freeze Homestead Exemption (PTAX -340)** is available upon request and the deadline to submit the completed application is **October 1, 2026**.

Applications may be obtained at your local township assessor's office or the Chief County Assessment Office, 302 North Chicago Street, Joliet, IL, 60432; or by calling (815) 740-4648 for further information. In addition, please visit our website at www.willcountysao.com for senior assistance event scheduling.

Dale D. Butalla, CIAO-M, IAAO-P
Chief County Assessment Officer
Will County
Published in The Free Press Advocate on Wednesday, July 29, 2026.

Second accident with injuries occurs nearby

BY ROSE PANIERI
STAFF WRITER

Multiple people were

Elwood Board of Education hearing on FY27 school budget

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given by the Board of Education Community Consolidated School District #203 in the County of Will, State of Illinois, that a public hearing for the presentation of the FY27 School budget will be held at 6:00 p.m. on the **8th day of September, 2026**, at Elwood School, 409 North Chicago Avenue, Elwood, Illinois.

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF ELWOOD SCHOOL DISTRICT 203 in the County of Will, State of Illinois.

Published in the Free Press Advocate on July 29, 2026.

Vasquez petitions for name change

PUBLIC NOTICE

STATE OF ILLINOIS
COUNTY OF WILL, SS
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE TWELFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS

IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION TO CHANGE THE NAME OF Daniel Vasquez TO Daniel D. Solaris.

Case No. 2026MR000284

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the undersigned on behalf of himself, Daniel Vasquez, adult, shall appear in the Will County Court Annex Building, 100 W. Jefferson St., Room 905 at 9:00 a.m. on the 21st day of August, 2026 before the judge assigned to hear said matter, and then there present a petition requesting the name of Daniel Vasquez be changed to Daniel D. Solaris.

/s/ Daniel Vasquez
Published in the Free Press Advocate on Wednesday, July 15, 22 and 29, 2026.

Elwood School District #203 to hold hearing on district's e-learning

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice

At 6:00 pm on Tuesday, August 11, 2026, the Elwood School District Board of Education will hold a meeting / hearing to review the basic components of an e-learning program to be available for use whenever necessary, beginning with the 2026-2027 school year.

Published in the Free Press Advocate on July 29, 2026.

Root & Rise Studios files as new business

LEGAL NOTICE

Assumed Name Publication Notice

Certificate 35609 was filed in the office of the County Clerk of Will County on July 14, 2026 wherein the business firm of Root & Rise Studios, located at 302 N Chicago St., Joliet, IL 60432 was registered; that the true or real name or names of the person or persons owning the business, with their respective post office address(es), is/are as follows:

Owner's name: Jennifer M. Prueitt

Home Street Address: 302 N. Chicago St., Joliet, IL 60432

Dated this 29th day of June, 2026.

Ranae Damaschke,

Notary Public

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Eric D. Fisher, publisher

Never underestimate the water, the result may be death

A few years back I was called to the South Island by a television reporter who was reporting on the death of an elderly woman and her relative, who had both drowned in the river near the dam. They wanted a historians' take on it, asking me how many people have drowned there. I couldn't give them a number, nor had I kept track. It came to my mind again, so I did look back in my files. Warning, some descriptions in this article may not be for the faint of heart. Today's topic - death by drowning. Another note, for the most part, I am refraining about writing about the deaths of children.

The first drowning I have documented was in 1852. From July 13, Joliet Signal, "Henry Dusenbury, aged 10 years, a son of Mr. Dusenbury of Lockport, was drowned in the Kankakee River, at Wilmington, on the 7th inst. He was bathing in the river, and ventured where the water was too deep. He was a bright boy, and the day previous, had been sent from his home to attend school in



TIME WAS....
Sandy Vasko

Wilmington." The next is a drowning not associated with swimming from 1867. "On Wednesday evening last, a man named Elias Bemis, who was employed by the Chicago & Alton railroad in stretching a foot bridge across the Kankakee River, at Wilmington, in returning from his work, with five other men, the boat was capsized, and he was drowned. His companions succeeded in keeping themselves above water until boats came to their rescue. It is said no effort was made to recover the body of Bemis."

In 1873 the Kankakee Company had built a dam and lock on Bridge Street, immediately behind the Eagle Hotel. Pedestrians had to walk over the top of dam, and no railing on either side. In December of that year that figured in the deaths of two men.

"On yesterday morning at about nine o'clock, our city was thrown into some degree of excitement from the fact that a man's cap and handkerchief was seen near the canal lock (near the White cloud Mills), and suspicions of foul play were rife. Shortly

afterward the body of an unknown man was discovered in the lock, and another cap and hat." "The Mayor was notified at once, and the body placed upon a barge to await the action of the coroner, who was summoned by telegraph. That a hat and two caps should be found seemed unaccountable, so search in the lock for other bodies was instituted and resulted in finding the body of James Biggs, a journeyman butcher, lately in the employ of Henry Steffan, butcher, of the city. The bodies were laid out on the barge at once and a jury empanelled immediately by Esquire Jackson."

Various people who had seen the two victims were sworn and testified. Some of the testimony was, "I saw the stranger on Tuesday or Wednesday; he seemed crazy; made speeches; he was alone at Heck's (a local saloon); I didn't understand him." "Biggs came in my shop Wednesday afternoon; was shaved; was intoxicated; stranger came in three hours later and asked for a penny." "Stranger came into my place on Wednesday evening and asked for a penny; he spoke in broken English; I thought he was crazy." "Biggs worked for me eight months; he quit last

Tuesday week, and I paid him up, \$7; Biggs would spend money whenever he had any."

And finally, "The bodies were removed to the undertaking rooms of A. Krause, and the persons and clothing of each examined. Nothing was found on the person of the stranger by which his name could be ascertained. He had six shirts and two pairs of pants on, and various trinkets; also 29 cents in money, and three white handkerchiefs. Biggs' pockets contained 2 keys and a wallet containing 15 cents."

Coroner's jury entered a verdict of accidental drowning.

Many times, the foolish actions on the part of the victim lead to the tragedy. In 1874 a boat full of young men were playing around in the river near the railroad bridge. The boat capsized and one man drowned. A coroner's jury was not called, but the paper wanted to know details. "The people want to know the minute particulars. Had the boating party been indulging in drink? If so, to what extent? Were they engaged in the reckless sport of "rocking" the boat or not? It is said that two of the party occupied the rower's seat and rowed irregularly. Why? Let the simple truth be told



A PHOTO THE the dam under construction, paid for mostly by the paper company who needed the water higher in the mill race.

and not "crushed to earth" in the fact that "dead men tell no tales." The warning is a terrible one and should be profited by."

By the turn of the century the Island became a popular camping, fishing and swimming place. But it also continued to be a place where people did extraordinarily dumb things. From July 28, 1905, "Last Saturday evening Vincent Barrowitz drove to this city with a party of four friends to spend Sunday fishing near the little dam above the island."

Sunday morning at about 8 o'clock the party concluded to have a swim, they had been in the water for some time and were about to come out when

Barrowitz, who was in the middle of the river, got up on the dam and made a dive into the water. He never came up, and it is supposed he was drawn under the dam by the suction."

"At about 5 o'clock Nick Lonn located the body underneath the dam. By 6 o'clock the next day, the body which was hanging over a beam underneath the dam, was taken from the water. It took six men to pull it from underneath on account of the suction which held it tightly to the beam."

Hopefully, fencing off the dam area and the warning signs will mean that I will add no more names to the list.

Fee Day a reminder that student physicals are due by Aug. 5

Fee Day for returning Wilmington School District 209-U students who have not completed online registration and/or paid their school fees will be held on Wednesday, Aug. 5, from 2 p.m.-6 p.m.

Those attending should report to their child's attendance center, beginning with their oldest child, to complete the registration process and/or pay school fees.

Completed school physicals for students entering pre-school, early childhood, kindergarten, sixth and ninth grades should be submitted to the school nurse during these times.

Fees not paid by Aug. 7, will be subject to a \$25 late fee. Students registered after August 5 are not guaranteed bus service for the first week of school. Any Kindergarten student that did not pre-register must call Bruning Elementary School after Aug. 5 at 815-926-1706 for an appointment.

Physical exam and immunization requirements

Early Childhood or Project Sunrise (program pending grant approval) must have a physical exam completed by an Illinois physician within one year prior to the date of entry into school. They include completed evaluation for lead poisoning risk and up-to-date immunizations.

Requirements from the state include:

Kindergarten:

- Must have a physical exam which includes a Social & Emotional Screening (SB 565, Public Act 99-0927) completed by an Illinois physician within one year prior to the date of entry into school

Students must have completed an eye exam within one year prior to the first day

of Kindergarten - due by Oct. 14.

- Completed evaluation for lead poisoning risk

- Dental Exam - due by May 14, 2027

2nd Grade:

- Dental Exam - due by May 14, 2027

6th Grade:

- Must have a physical exam which includes a Social & Emotional Screening completed by an Illinois physician within one year prior to the date of entry into school

- Dental Exam - due by May 14, 2027

- Tdap and Meningococcal (MCV) immunizations required

9th Grade:

- Must have a physical exam which includes a Social & Emotional Screening completed by an Illinois physician within one year prior to the date of entry into school

- Up-to-date immunizations

12th Grade:

- Meningococcal (MCV4) required after age 16

Note: A completed IESA/IHSA sports form can not be accepted as proof of a physical examination for mandated physicals (EC, Project Sunrise, Kindergarten, 6th Grade or 9th Grade). The Department of Human Services Health Examination form must be thoroughly completed by both the physician and parent/legal guardian to be valid.

If a student is entering an Illinois school at any grade level from out of state, the child must have:

- A physical exam which includes a Social & Emotional Screening completed by an Illinois physician within one year

prior to date of school entry

- Immunizations must comply with the State of Illinois requirements

- Transfer students have 30 days from date of entry to comply with physical and immunization requirements

- Dental and eye exams (see above due dates).

All students in the 2026-2027 school year entering a grade not listed above, who wish to play extra-curricular sports, must still receive a sports physical.

Parents/Guardians of students (Grades 1-12) new to the district should call the individual schools after Aug. 5 for an appointment to register as follows: Bruning (Pre-School-1) -815-926-1706; L.J. Stevens Intermediate School (2-5) -815-926-1689; Wilmington Middle School (6-8) -815-926-1687 and Wilmington High School (9-12) - 815-926-1752.

Two documents to prove residency in the district, legal guardianship, and appropriate immunizations will be required to place students in classes for the 2026-2027 school year.

An Open House/Meet the Teacher Night will be held at each school on Monday, Aug. 17:

Bruning School 4 p.m. - 5 p.m. P r e - school, Kindergarten, 1st grade

L.J. Stevens Intermediate School 4:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m. 2nd through 5th grade

Wilmington Middle School 5 p.m.-6 p.m. 6th through 8th grade

Wilmington High School 5:30 p.m.-6:30 p.m. ***Freshman & New Students only***

The first day of class for all students in grades Pre-K-12, including bus transporta-

tion, will be Wednesday, Aug. 19. There will be no transportation on August 19 for Preschool. Preschool parents are asked to attend school with their student.

School lunches will be served starting on Aug. 19. The school lunch program is fully automated with only prepaid lunch cards accepted instead of cash. Parents are urged to prepay for lunches during Fee Days or prior to the first day of school in the individual school buildings.

If you have any questions regarding bus transportation, contact Yellow Bus Group at 815-409-4417. Bus route information will be available in Skyward closer to the start of the school year. Please note that no changes to bus pick-up or drop-off locations will be permitted during the first 10 days of school.

Dismissal times for School Improvement Days will be: Bruning-11 a.m.; L.J. Stevens Intermediate-11:20 a.m.; Wilmington Middle School-11:20 a.m.; Wilmington High School-11:15 a.m. on the following dates: Sept. 9, Oct. 7, Oct. 30, Feb. 3 and April 14.

Dismissal times for early release days will be: Bruning-1:30 p.m.; L.J. Stevens Intermediate-1:50 p.m.; Wilmington Middle School-1:50 p.m.; Wilmington High School-1:45 p.m. on the following dates: Sept. 25—Homecoming parade; Nov. 4—Parent Teacher Conferences; Dec. 18,—Last day before Winter Break and May 27—Last day of school (tentative)

The website for the Wilmington School District, including pages for the individual schools, can be found at the following address: www.209u.net.

June included 14 days of rain

BY ROSE PANIERI
STAFF WRITER

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

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

According to the June climatological summary from the Grundy County Emergency Management Agency Weather Data Division, the month packed a bit of everything into 30 days.

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

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

Nearly 10 inches of rain — 9.95 inches, to be precise — walloped the area, with measurable rainfall recorded on 14

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

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

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

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'Big Boy' drew crowds

COAL CITY—I enjoyed the stopover of "Big Boy" in Dwight on July 17. The Village did a great job considering they had a short notice that the train was going to stop in Dwight instead of Pontiac. I met a father, son and granddaughter from the Indianapolis area as well as people from Eileen. The stop drew a nice friendly crowd. The Dwight Fire Department set up their aerial platform to spray a mist down on the kids who wanted to cool off and have fun (there were a few 50+ year old kids taking advantage of it also). I was surprised to hear that I was the first person to thank them for their gesture. It is sad to hear that many people have forgotten how to say "Thank You." I heard there was a lot of people lining the tracks along the route. I believe "Big Boy" made a brief stop at the Abraham Lincoln Veterans Cemetery to honor the Veterans and those who Served. Included in the train, there was the Union Pacific Heritage, America 250 "Abraham Lincoln" locomotive, an added touch for that stop.

Fix the issues

BRAIDWOOD—Do the police do anything besides harass residents? I've seen and heard them doing that a lot now. Maybe let us try to fix the issues you make up first.

In our best interest

COAL CITY—I applaud the Coal City Village Board for their work on the proposed data center, this for the village and all its residents could be a huge win if it proceeds. Their job is a thankless one and I believe they are looking out for the residents that live in the Village of Coal City. It is apparent that many of those against the data center did not take time to attend the informational display at the high school to see the water usage, noise and footprint of the center plans. This proposed data center uses the most up-to-date and modern components that use much less water and is more quiet. Expressing their views that are not correct on the facts, I believe is hindering what is the truth vs what is not correct. This center, if it moves forward, would be life changing for village residents. The income provided would enable the village to continue to upgrade services, provide water and sewer, police protection, pay down city debt and more. If you care to be honest, look down main street as things are not changing for the better. Everyone wants low taxes, Walmart, fast food and all the great things that would be nice, but those things are not happening and will not happen with the way the town is now. Without new income, pressures will always be to raise taxes or cut services. I would bet the same people against the data center would be the same to lead the charge against tax increases. The city does not receive any revenue from Dresden Station but our schools, library and fire district receive over 50% of their income from the station. A couple years ago when Governor Pritzker wanted to close all the nuclear plants in Illinois, the closing would have basically destroyed Coal City and had a huge impact on Grundy and Will County. If the Governor decides again he wants to do things to close them down, income from a data center located in the village limits would help bridge the gap financially and at least the village would have a huge increase in income. We all would like the town to remain small, but remaining small means continued tax increases. The city fathers have shown they spend our tax dollars wisely and the huge increase in income provided by the data center would be put to good use for all citizens of the Village of Coal City. This proposed data center is a modern design using much less water, much less noise and is located to the south of town in an undeveloped area of farm ground. Many of the data centers are actually located in subdivisions which would not work out here. Everyone is entitled to their own opinions, but it is in everyone's best interest to know the facts and not spread rumors and untrue facts. I sure hope the data center officials and our city officials work out an agreement and the project becomes a reality.

Show compassion

BRAIDWOOD—So the city of Braidwood and police are now kicking out residents to the streets! If they don't like how your house looks they want to demolish it. They have no compassion or hearts. And once they do this where are the resi-

dents to go? Streets is only option and this city is worse than Chicago. Fight now people or they wont stop.

WILMINGTON—If you wake up daily worrying about utility bills, job security, paying for groceries, paying for gas, school clothes and supplies, and this Trump Distraction War with no end in sight and getting worse every day, NEW Medicare and Medicaid cuts by law taking effect on January 1 you thank every single Republican who voted intentionally for Donald J Trump. Not Biden, not Harris and not Obama, they have not been the President for last 21 months. Republicans have complete control of Presidency, Senate, and Congress also a 6 to 3 advantage in the crooked and paid-for Supreme Court. Next time vote for yourself and your family. Use your head, you see what this country has devolved into in less than 2 years. And Epstein/ Trump files are not going away, they did evil things to innocent children. Never forget.

Blame Republicans

WILMINGTON—Did Republicans flunk economics in high school? They don't know what the premise is behind communism. In communism, there are no rich people or poor people. It's called divide the wealth. In communism, the government runs everything, including industry, although some might say the Republicans are attempting to do that with the help of the President's family and friends. In most communist countries, the ruler is a dictator. We have that now but he's not a Democrat. So if the United States is truly leaning towards communism, blame the Republicans!

Let's clean up

SHADOW LAKES—In defense of Braidwood making people clean up their property, the same could be said in Shadow Lakes. Regardless of income level it is no cost to throw out items in disrepair or trash, or to mow your lawn and trim your weeds. Those are all things that can be done at little to no cost. So Kudos to Braidwood for enforcing these actions. I only wish Shadow Lakes would be as strong. It is embarrassing to have people come over and see vehicles that are inoperable, pontoon boats that are taken apart, lawnmowers that cannot be driven and golf carts that are inoperable. It's just embarrassing.

Are people weak?

SHADOW LAKES—My name is Dan Hill, I am 76 years old. I went to Carl Sandburg High School in Orland Park. There were a couple people, one was shot another died. We did not counseling. Why do people today need counseling if one of their high school members died? Are people that weak today? Or mentally unstable?

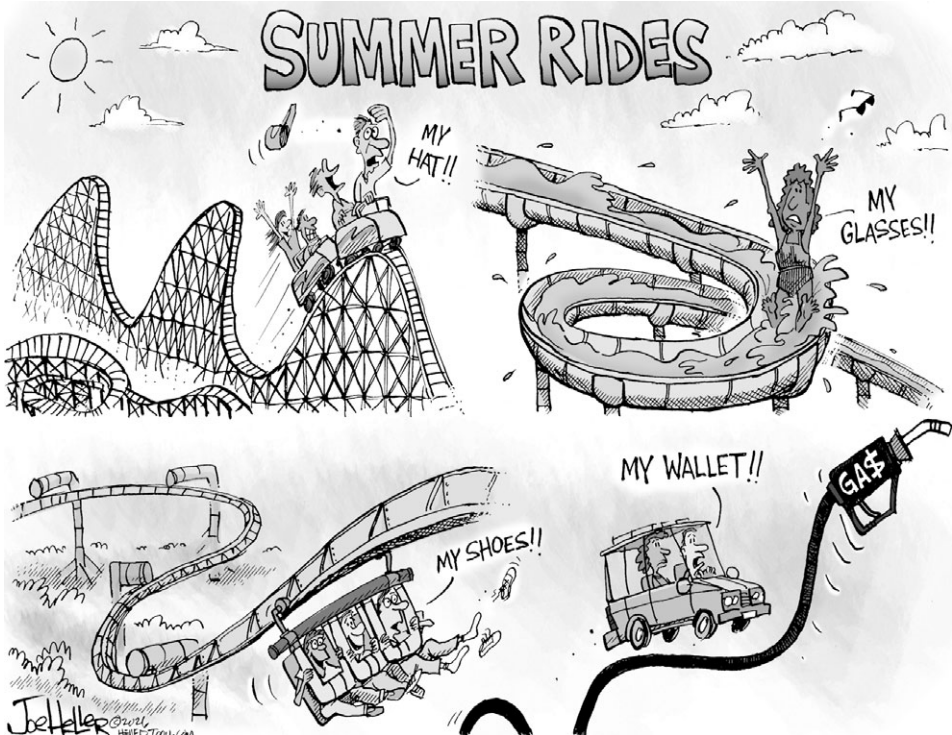
Pig in front of city hall

BRAIDWOOD—Since the very first union started in the police department with Mayor Girot in the late 90's, followed by Local 150 coming to Street Dept. by Comm. Cole and Local 73 to city hall, there has never been a rat or a pig being displayed in front of city hall or the PD in regards to Union Negotiations. Maybe our mayor should have addressed the union issues several employees have been having for a long time that you ignored and allowed to be handled in an improper manner by your so-called administrator that you thought would be great for Braidwood. Just a more educated administrator than our last one. You need to realize he's not helping your position with residents who got you elected as our mayor.

Beyond corruption

WILMINGTON—Last week the con man signed an agreement with Saudi Arabia to enrich uranium, but we are at War with Iran for doing the same thing? Saudis won't agree to any inspection protocol? Great. Saudis gave son-in-law Kushner \$100M services and invested \$2B in his "family" company. This is beyond corruption, why isn't someone screaming BS? Because it's just another time he blatantly commits a crime and it's just another day. Don't be so stupid (R) voters. Didn't 9/11 perpetrators all come from Saudi Arabia? Didn't Saudis chop up a journalist and nitwit said meh? How many US soldiers pay the ultimate this week? And those files still scream Trump.

Cleaning up the mess



WILMINGTON—If Jimmy Carter had any backbone Trump would not be dealing with a 45-year war now. If Obama and Dr. Fault had not funded the Wuhan lab we would not have had the pandemic. If trader Joe had not opened the border we would not have ICE. Some times a man has to clean up the mess of traders.

A sinking ship

BRAIDWOOD—With all of the negative publicity lately for our community, hopefully everyone who voted for "the change Braidwood needed" during the last election is happy with their choice. Inflatable union rats in front of city hall, numerous residents being harassed over the conditions of their private property, local ordinance fines being handed out left and right, public commenting abilities being disabled on posts from the city's Facebook page, and frivolous spending on wants vs. needs. Candidates will soon be circulating petitions for the April 2027 election so just keep all this in mind when someone currently at the helm of our sinking city ship comes knocking at your door for a signature on their nomination paperwork.

Summerfest kudos

BRAIDWOOD—Our family moved to Braidwood earlier this year, so this was the first time that we attended the Braidwood Lions Club's Summerfest. We were very delighted at the atmosphere and really felt welcomed by this small town festival which had such a hometown USA feel. It wasn't too big and it wasn't too small. Our family had a blast all four days. We even got a chance to talk with a few of the volunteers who were there and discovered just how much work actually goes into putting on their festival. We were astonished to learn how many volunteers and hours it takes, we were very much blown away and appreciative for all their efforts. We moved to Braidwood from a larger city because we wanted to find that small town charm. After experiencing the Lions Club's festival, we know we have made the right decision. Thank you to the Lions Club and all of the volunteers who made us feel so welcome and for all of their hard work.

Rich control society

WILMINGTON—We are the richest country in the world. The richest. Why do 60% of Americans live paycheck to paycheck? Why do the top 10% of this country own 90% of all this country's wealth? In the last 40 years the middle class has been demolished and the top 10% has quadrupled (their wealth). They have a beautiful roof here, a summer roof in Wisconsin or Michigan a winter roof in Florida or Arizona and the vast majority reading this squeak by just to replace their shingles every 25 years. Now the defense dept. wants a \$500 billion increase in their yearly budget and \$68 billion immediately to pay for a war never approved by Congress and zero strategy for any outcome. Middle and lower class are asked to help the country because it's the "patriotic" thing to do, but billionaires and millionaires aren't asked for extra that they don't need. Outrageous how the rich have taken control of everything and the rest of us argue about liberals and Maga. This was their plan and currently working. Poor and

middle class can't afford Republican Administrations.

Blatant lies

DIAMOND—Let's talk about blatant lies someone submitted last week. Anyone who has ran and won the presidency of the U.S. has stepped on throats all the way to the top and told blatant lies on the way up and continued well into their presidency. It's been going on forever. Like the old saying says, when it comes to politics at that level, the names change but the crap stays the same. Our current president is doing just as good as the last one. Remember the last guy who left our borders wide open and now we have American citizens getting raped and murdered by some of these people? Remember the Oct. 7, 2023 attack on Israel by the Iran sponsored terrorist group Hamas? Twelve hundred people killed and 251 taken hostage by the Iran backed terrorists. What did the last president do to help? Nothing, he went to sleep. A year and a half later Trump gets elected and gets the remaining living hostages immediately released. War is never good and the current one is no different. Although, Iran would like to see us perish and they have never been shy about saying it. So, maybe a slap in the face is what they need occasionally. The worse part is always the need to put our brave service men and women in danger. Don't forget about the last president who had thirteen of our service people killed in the botched withdrawal from Afghanistan. Then there is the expense of war that we pay with our taxes. Although, it just seems like yesterday during the Ukraine war the liberals were telling us it was our "patriotic duty" to pay \$5 a gallon for gas and sending over two hundred billion of our taxes dollars overseas for "the good of humanity."

No socialists wanted

WILMINGTON—Remember when the labor movement was the backbone of the Democratic Party? Now over 50% of union workers may vote for a socialist. One of the first things socialists do is abolish unions guns and free speech. Wake up.

Thanks to Wilmington

WILMINGTON—I would like to thank the people who helped me during Catfish Days showing the Wild Hogs movie. First and foremost Debbie and the Mar Theater for allowing me to show the movie. To Marty Orr for making the fliers to promote the movie and Jake Ragan for putting it on the Facebook Page. It meant more to me than you will ever know and the businesses who posted the fliers to promote the movie and to Eric Fisher thanks for putting the article in the Free Press. I heard everyone had a great time and enjoyed the movie. Most of all thank everyone for donating the food donations for Kuzma. It truly brought tears to my eyes.

Sherri Michaels

Please explain

SHADOW LAKES—With the war with Iran which is about the size of Alaska, why is there such a problem with wiping out the military? I don't understand why this is still going on. It's like the Vietnam war. Nobody is running it right. Can anyone explain to me in Soundoff?

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Conserving the snake population

Dear EarthTalk: How are the world's snakes faring these days? Are they on the decline like so much wildlife and what can we do to help them survive?

-- Rick Finch, Pittsburgh, PA



Snakes play a critical role in their ecosystems as well as in human society. They keep rodent populations in check and have had a large role in medicine. Proteins in snake venom have helped develop medications used to treat cardiovascular disease, including blood thinning medications.

The negative perception of snakes has led to the neglect of their conservation value. As agricultural expansion and habitat loss threaten snakes, snake research receives little funding and conservation needs receive little attention.

Snakes are ectotherms, cold-blooded animals. They can't generate their own body heat, meaning that they have to move to suitable environments to regulate their

body temperature. They can thrive in a range of habitats including forests, swamps, deserts, grasslands and salt, as well as fresh water.

As agricultural expansion increases, snakes have been increasingly migrating. Nicolette L. Cagle, a Senior Lecturer in Ecology & Environmental Education at Duke University conducted her own field research on snakes, concluding that, "nearly two thirds of snake species are threatened by agricultural expansion."

Also, many snake species cannot respond flexibly to habitat destruction. Certain species have narrow geographical distribution, making them especially vulnerable to the risk of local extinction. Large snakes are particularly sensitive to habitat loss.

Conservation Science Partners, a non-profit that specializes in helping other conservation groups conduct various kinds of quantitative analysis, conducted a project on the *Thamnophis gigas*, also called the giant garter snake, in California's Central Valley.

They monitored the population dynamics of the species and the survival rates over a three-year period. Their research revealed that in California's Central Valley,



AS AGRICULTURAL EXPANSION and habitat loss threaten snakes, snake research receives little funding and conservation needs receive little attention.

land-use change has destroyed more than 85 percent of wetlands. The giant garter snake has now declined so greatly that it is now listed as a threatened species.

Helping snakes can be challenging. Their populations aren't easy to detect, and our attention to their conditions is a significant factor in helping them survive.

By taking small initiatives on learning about snakes, we can help with the success of conserving snake populations. The Journal of Ethnobiology and Ethnomedicine conducted research on the awareness and knowledge of snakes in an effort to better understand challenges to snake conserva-

tion.

They found that the attitude and participation of the public toward snakes largely affects the success or failure of snake protection. Thus, participation and research will be encouraged if we make efforts to adjust our current perceptions of snakes.

Simple acts such as calling a wildlife expert to relocate a snake in your backyard instead of killing it, or donating to efforts protecting endangered snakes, such as to save the snakes, have long-term effects on snake populations.

EarthTalk® is a 501(c)3 nonprofit EarthTalk. Send questions to: question@earthtalk.org.

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 surround-

ing 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.

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,

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>.

Bird viewing at Lake Renwick through Aug. 9

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

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

Mixed-Up Medley Day free event

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

Celebrate the final days of summer break with

crafts, games, outdoor adventures and, weather permitting, a solar-powered snack. Ages 5 and older; free.

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OBITUARIES

Donald Tucker Jr.



LAFERIA, TX—Donald Gene Tucker, Jr., “Tucker,” 68, of LaFeria, TX and formerly of Wilmington, passed away unexpectedly on Nov. 21, 2025 at his home in LaFeria.

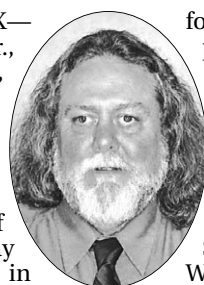
Born Sept. 1, 1957, in Joliet, Donald Gene was the son of Donald Gene Sr. and Marilyn Kay (Niehls) Tucker. He was raised in Wilmington before relocating with his family during his high school years to Miramar, FL, where he completed his education and graduated from high school.

Following graduation, Tucker proudly answered the call to serve his country by enlisting in the United States Air Force. He honorably served as an Aircraft Environmental Systems Mechanic, applying his technical skills with dedication until receiving his honorable discharge.

Over the course of his career, Tucker was employed by the United States Postal Service, Fermilab in Aurora, IL, and later PCI in Wilmington.

Tucker embraced life with a wide variety of interests and hobbies. He had a lifelong passion for motorcycles and NASCAR, enjoyed spending time at the shooting range, and could often be found with a good book in hand. He also had a fascination with the space program and never missed the opportunity to watch a rocket launch. After relocating to South Texas in recent years, he found great enjoyment in the beauty and tranquility of South Padre Island, where he appreciated the coastal lifestyle.

Above all, Tucker will be remembered



for his love of country, his independent spirit, and the pride he took in being an American. His memory will be cherished by those who knew and loved him.

Survivors include his wife, Janelle (nee Greenan) whom he married Oct. 31, 2018; siblings: Kay Ann (Mike) Attaway and Susan Faye (Frank) Kiper, both of Wilmington; Bob (Rowie) Watson, Scott (Sandra) Watson and Stacia (John) Best; two uncles: Bert (Charlene) Niehls and Charlie Schumacher; his stepchildren: Donald Robert Norman III, Christopher Wayne Norman and Jessica Renee Norman; brother-in-law, Cecil Greenan and sister-in-law, Donna (Kyle) Goetch and numerous nieces and nephews.

Tucker was preceded in death by his parents.

Cremation rites have been accorded. Family and friends are invited to assemble at Baskerville Funeral Home, 700 E. Kahler Rd. in Wilmington on Monday, Aug. 3, 2026 at 1:30 p.m. A procession will depart at 2 p.m. for Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood, where Tucker will be laid to rest with full military honors.

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

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

CC Methodist to hold senior gathering

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

Activities will begin at 12:30 p.m. This

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

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

Commentary

Celebrate farmers market week

BY RHEA LANDHOLM

Once a week in the summertime, brightly colored 10x10 tents pop up in a corner parking lot in my community. Under each one of those tents is a producer, crafter, or small business owner who has tables of goods for sale.

We celebrate these farmers markets during National Farmers Market Week, Aug. 2 to 8.

My farmers market often includes fruits and vegetables, prepared food, arts and crafts, cut flowers, baked goods, and handcrafted items. I tend to go for the fresh potatoes, green spinach, juicy red tomatoes, and I might pick up a handcrafted bar of

soap or jar of jelly.

These events not only offer locally grown and created items, but they are an important gathering place for the community.

Did you know that humans have been buying and selling farm-fresh food (and more) at markets for thousands of years?

In North America, Indigenous peoples established vast trading networks, exchanging food and other goods with neighboring Tribes and then European traders, setting the stage for permanent markets.

The first recorded “farmers market” in the U.S. opened in 1634 in Boston. Others soon followed.

In the 1800s, markets became fewer and farther between as transportation improved. However, in the mid-1900s, as families sought extra income and self-sufficiency, more markets popped up. Today, that number is growing.

In 2026, there are 8,863 U.S. Department of Agriculture-listed farmers markets, plus CSA (community supported agriculture) programs and farm stands, according to Mendeley Data. Counting smaller, seasonal, or newly established local community stands, estimates are as high as 10,000.

This rising number represents a growing interest in “local”—preserving local farmland, protecting the livelihood of local growers, and diversifying local economies.

What will you buy from your farmers market this week?

Rhea Landholm is the media and marketing manager for the Center for Rural Affairs, a private nonprofit organization working to strengthen small businesses and family farms.

The next farmers market in Wilmington will be Aug. 20 from 5-8 p.m., downtown Water Street; and in Coal City, Aug. 29 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Coal City Public Library District, 85 N. Garfield St.

Summer beach party with Dave Rudolf

The Wilmington Public Library, 201 S. Kankakee St., invites residents to a night of music, fun and laid-back vibes with award winning singer/songwriter Dave Rudolf on Wednesday, July 29 at 6 p.m.

Dave will bring the music of Jimmy Buffet, Bob Marley, Harry Belafonte, along with his own originals to the free event.

Refreshments for the evening will include a dirty soda bar where you can mix up a Sunset Swirl or a Blue Lagoon to sip while you sit back and enjoy the tunes.

There is no fee for the program, but registration is required. To register, please stop by the library or call 815-476-2834.



A NEW FOUR-WAY stop has been installed at the intersection of Route 113 and West River Road to reduce the number of accidents in the area.

Hazardous intersection now a four-way stop

BY ROSE PANIERI
STAFF WRITER

A new four-way stop has been installed at the intersection of Illinois Route 113 and West River Road/Zilm Road in Wilmington, one day after a multi-vehicle crash at the location.

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) installed stop signs for motorists traveling Route 113 last Wednesday. Traffic using West River /Zilm Road previously had to stop.

The new traffic control includes flashing red lights on the stop signs, advanced warning signs in both directions on Route 113 alerting motorists to the upcoming stop, and temporary electronic signboards to increase driver awareness during the transition.

The intersection has long been considered a dangerous crossing with frequent accidents, some even fatal.

The new traffic controls come after the Braidwood Fire Protection District responded to a three-vehicle crash at the intersection at approxi-

mately 3:30 a.m. Tuesday, July 21. Initial reports indicated one person had been ejected from a vehicle.

When firefighters arrived, they found a box truck in a ditch with a passenger vehicle wedged beneath its rear, while a tanker truck had come to rest in the front yard of a nearby residence.

Emergency crews determined six people were involved in the crash. Additional ambulances were requested due to the number of patients. Five people were transported to area hospitals for evaluation and treatment. The

tanker truck driver was evaluated at the scene, was not injured, and declined medical treatment.

The tanker truck was carrying a soybean product, but the collision ruptured its diesel fuel tanks, releasing an estimated 150 gallons of diesel fuel into the front yard of the residence. The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and a contracted hazardous materials cleanup company responded to oversee environmental remediation.

Fire officials reported that no life-threatening injuries were sustained.

WMS to hold baseball tryouts

Wilmington Middle School boys baseball tryouts will be held at the Wilmington High School baseball field on Monday, August 3 and Tuesday, August 4 from 8 a.m.-10 a.m.

All participants must have a current athletic or school physical on file with

the school, or a copy can be brought the day of tryouts. There will be a hat fee upon making the team.

Players must be in attendance on the tryout dates. No alternative tryout date will be available. Tryouts and practices are for players only, no spectators will be allowed.

Is diet soda bad for you?

Few beverages spark as much debate as diet soda. One week it's linked to a new health concern, the next it's defended as a helpful substitute for sugary drinks. So, what's the truth?

Despite many studies and plenty of opinions, the answer isn't as simple as yes or no. Health experts say for most people, an occasional diet soda isn't going to hurt you – but it also shouldn't be a substitute for healthier beverages like water.

One thing is certain: more research is needed, especially on diet soda's impact on dementia risk. A recent study published by the Journals of Alzheimer's Disease, shows an association. The results question a potential increased dementia risk associated with frequent consumption of diet soda.

Another recent unpublished study suggested a possible link between daily diet soda consumption and nonalcoholic fatty liver disease. However, experts warn that unpublished research isn't conclusive and doesn't prove that diet soda causes liver disease.

“I thought it was rather interesting, because when I did research on it, and looking into more medical articles and reliable sources, it actually found that it was inconclusive whether or not diet soda increased the risk,” says Erin Wojewodzki, APRN, a nurse practitioner with OSF HealthCare.

While research continues, most experts agree that moderate diet soda consumption is generally fine for healthy adults. The bigger issue is what else is happening in a person's diet and lifestyle.

People may choose diet soda over regular soda to help manage blood sugar

levels, lower the risk of tooth decay or manage weight. But diet soda typically lacks ingredients that your body needs. That's when it's time to turn to other options such as water, sparkling water, seltzer, skim milk, and unsweetened tea or coffee.

Wojewodzki says it's important to meet her patients where they are when it comes to trying to reduce diet soda consumption. “We have to look at the patient as a whole,” she says. “If you're essentially healthy but you like to drink 10 diet cokes a day, let's work together.”

Wojewodzki adds recommendations can change depending on a person's overall health. Someone dealing with obesity or Type 2 diabetes, for example, may require a different plan than someone who is not.

Nicole O'Neill is a dietitian with OSF HealthCare. Like Wojewodzki, she agrees with the adage ‘everything in moderation.’

“I personally like the idea of a diet soda for a good majority of my patient population,” she says. “So, if you can take a high-calorie regular soda and replace it with a non-calorie diet soda, it gives you a calorie deficit that leads to weight loss. One or two, I'm OK with that.”

There are other factors to think about, according to Wojewodzki. “Diet does play a big role,” she says. “Are we eating healthy? Are we eating out a lot? Are we eating fast food? Are we eating a lot of sugar, a lot of unhealthy food? We need to be taking care of our body and eating healthy and exercising as well.”

Unhealthy cravings O'Neill concurs – people who drink diet sodas tend to crave other

unhealthy treats at the same time.

“Most people want a diet soda with something like peanut M&Ms, pizza, a cheeseburger,” says O'Neill. “If you're drinking a diet soda and it's just a drink, it's not a big deal. But if every time you have a diet soda, you want a bag of chips, I would say we need to talk about alternatives.”

For people who are trying to cut back on their diet soda, O'Neill offers a few tips. Try substituting diet soda with sparkling water, flavored seltzer or unsweetened tea. Gradually reduce caffeine instead of going cold turkey. And determine what your triggers are – like certain times of the day that make you reach for a can of diet soda.

“We have to find alternatives, though, and it really is person specific,” says O'Neill. “If you hate water, we were going to try some water flavoring. If you hate water flavorings, because it's also got some artificial sweetener in it, maybe we talk about fruit infusions or herbs or something, just to give your water flavor.”

Zero sugar soda also contains no sugar or calories but is often formulated to taste more like the original sugary version. It may use a blend of sweeteners, such as aspartame, acesulfame potassium or sucralose, depending on the brand. Health experts don't consider one category healthier than the other. The same advice applies to both.

Wojewodzki says there's no magic drink for better health. Whether you drink diet soda occasionally or every day, the bigger picture is what's important. Eat a balanced diet, stay active and make water your primary drink of choice.

MILKWEED MATTERS

What this native wildflower has to do with one of nature's most remarkable migrations

THE ONLY PLANT
Monarchs lay their eggs **exclusively on milkweed** and their caterpillars eat only its leaves. No other plant will do!

THE FLOWER
Swamp Milkweed blooms June through August in **clusters of pink and mauve flowers**, growing two to four feet tall!

IT'S NOT ALONE
Swamp Milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*) is just one of the **24 species native to Illinois** and is a natural fit for wetland restoration.

THE “MILK” IN MILKWEED
Break a stem and a white latex sap drips out. **It's toxic so don't drink it!** Monarchs store those toxins in their bodies, making themselves poisonous to predators.

IN WETLANDS
Its deep roots **stabilize wet soil and help filter runoff**, while its nectar-rich flowers support dozens of pollinators, not just monarchs!

80%+
drop in monarch populations since the 1990s, largely due to milkweed loss across the Midwest.

THE WETLANDS INITIATIVE

Will County launches new pet assistance program

HOPE offers free spay, neuter and microchip services

Will County Animal Protection Services (Will County APS) has launched their Helping Owners & Pets Equitably (HOPE) Program, a free program for eligible Will County households to spay, neuter and microchip their dogs and cats.

The program aims to ensure healthy outcomes for Will County pets, help control pet overpopulation by reducing the number of unplanned litters, and lower the number of pets in area shelters.

The program is eligible to Will County residents who either participate in the Illinois LINK program or receive Social Security

Disability Insurance. Eligible residents can apply for a voucher directly through Will County APS for their dog or cat to receive a free spay or neuter surgery at one of 14 participating veterinary offices.

Will County APS will also provide a free microchip for pets, ensuring that families can reunite with their lost pets quickly and safely.

"We are proud to have 14 HOPE Veterinary Partners in and around Will County participating in this impactful program," said Will County APS Administrator Anna Payton. "Together we are working to keep pets in the home with the people who love them."

Residents interested in the program can apply directly at the Will County

APS office at 22452 South Cherry Hill Road in Joliet, or by emailing wcaps@will-county.gov. Applicants will need to provide the following:

- Their signed LINK card or their Social Security Benefit Verification Letter
- A valid driver's license or state ID or other proof of Will County residency
- A current rabies certificate for their dog or cat if it is 4 months of age or older

Once eligibility has been verified by staff, applicants will receive a voucher authorizing the free spay or neuter surgery for their pet and a confirmation letter with additional instructions.

The HOPE Program will be in effect until November 30, or until all funds have been expended. The program is funded completely by rabies registration fees and the Will County Animal Population Fund.

For more information on the HOPE Program or other animal assistance programs visit WillCounty.gov/AnimalServices or call 815-462-5633.

Mistie Hill Vineyard to host First Responders BBQ fundraiser Aug. 9

Mistie Hill Vineyard will honor local firefighters, police officers and emergency medical personnel during its "BBQ for the Red, White and Blue" event on Saturday, Aug. 9, with proceeds benefiting the 100 Club of Will County.

The event will be held from noon to 6 p.m. at the vineyard, 36921 Ohlhues Road in Custer Park.

According to vineyard owner Rich Strylowski, first responders from the Braidwood, Wilmington and Coal City fire and police departments, along with the Will County Sheriff's Office, have been invited to attend. Several departments are expected to bring emergency vehi-

cles for display.

Firefighters, law enforcement officers and EMTs who present a badge or proper identification will receive two complimentary meal and drink tickets. The event is open to the public, with food, wine and donations helping support the 100 Club of Will County, which assists the families of first responders who lose their lives in the line of duty.

"We want to get as many people to attend as possible to boost donations," Strylowski said, encouraging area residents to come out in support of the men and women who serve their communities.

Wilmington museum open Saturdays

The Wilmington Area Historical Society will open its museum for visits from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturdays through the end of July.

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

Seated yoga and seasonal sights

The Forest Preserve of Will County is hosting "Seated yoga and seasonal sights" on Sunday, Aug. 16, from 11 a.m. to noon at the Four Rivers Educational Center in Channahon.

Enjoy an all-levels seated yoga session followed by an exploration of the natural world. Bring water and wear comfortable clothing. Ages 14 and older; free. Register by Aug. 15.

Get on the bus to Drury Lane Theatre

The Wilmington Public Library is planning a bus trip to Drury Lane Theatre in Oakbrook on Saturday, Sept. 19, for "The Buddy Holly Story."

The bus will leave the library at 11:30 a.m. and return at approximately 6:45 p.m. The \$75 fee includes the performance, a meal of either grilled chicken or cheese ravioli with salad and dessert, and school bus transportation.

Register in person at the library, 201 S. Kankakee St., Wilmington. Availability is limited so reserve your place today.

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Aligned Data Centers Invites Coal City Residents to an Open House

THURSDAY, AUGUST 6, 2026

**Coal City High School
655 W Division St.
Coal City, IL 60416**

Our dedicated team will be **available all day**, ensuring you have the flexibility to stop by, ask questions, and review the plans at whatever time best fits your busy schedule.

Please use the QR code below to lock in your preferred time before slots fill up.

The future of our prospective **Coal City campus** is taking shape, and we want your voice to be a part of it. We've officially filed our proposed plans, and as we continue working to become part of the community, we value having your ongoing input. Join us to explore the designs, meet the project team, and get your questions answered.

INFORMATION STATIONS WILL COVER:

- Careers and Workforce Development
- Ownership Operations
- Energy and Water Sustainability
- Community Investments
- Site Plan & Project Overview
- Potential Sound Generated From the Site

Secure your preferred time slot:



Learn more about the proposed project:



Policy change needed in Illinois House

By now you've probably read at least something about the scandals surrounding former state Rep. Harry Benton (D-Plainfield).



CAPITOL FACTS

Rich Miller

In a nutshell, a young female district office staffer alleged Benton sexually harassed her in 2023. Two of House Speaker Emanuel "Chris" Welch's top staffers asked her to file a complaint with the Legislative Inspector General, but she refused.

Welch's caucus committee, Democrats for the Illinois House, then contributed \$1.4 million to Benton's reelection campaign.

Earlier this year, Speaker Welch quietly kicked Benton out of the House Democratic caucus, and stripped Benton of all his committee assignments and staff access. Then, in early July, Welch announced that he had received the Legislative Inspector General's report and called on Benton to resign or be expelled from the House. Benton stepped down.

Subsequent reporting by the Chicago Tribune found that Benton had made some highly inappropriate comments to a female lobbyist, which was also reported to the IIG. The Tribune also tracked down the former female

staffer, who detailed Benton's behavior but also said that when she'd subsequently asked Welch for career advice, he suggested they meet at a local restaurant's bar.

Welch went into damage control and met privately with most of his members in groups. Some of his members were skeptical of his answers and his future is at least somewhat uncertain.

One member asked, for example, if any other stories would come out about him. He said that since he didn't realize he had made the young woman uncomfortable by posting "heart-eyes" emojis on her online photos and suggesting a meeting in a swanky bar, he had no idea if more might come out.

Another member pointed out that Welch was willing to meet with the young woman, but House Democrats are regularly told to meet with staff if they have an issue.

If House Democrats are looking for ways to help prevent another fiasco, they could make a policy change that might help.

One structural problem is that House district office employees, like that young woman, do not have the right to expect the

chamber's Human Resource Office will do anything for them.

For the past several years, individual House members have been directly in charge of their district office operations. Their district staff, unlike legislative policy or clerk staff, do not work for and are not controlled by the House Speaker's office.

And that means if a problem arises at the district level, the person responsible for resolving the issue is the House member. Complaints are supposed to go to the member, who is in charge of resolving them.

But if you're a district staffer being sexually harassed by your employer, that is not an ideal system, to say the least.

According to the House Clerk's Office, district office employees are given the option of talking to the chief of staff, the chief legal counsel, the Legislative Inspector General, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the Illinois Department of Human Rights.

They can also go to the Human Resource Office. But that office is designed to only cover employees of the House Speaker. They can offer advice, but they have no real authority over district-level employees.

It just makes no sense that legislators act as their own HR officers. And it also doesn't seem fair to subject these district staffers to intimidating and

even expensive legal processes when they have a complaint.

I get that members want autonomy over their staffs without direct interference from the Speaker's office, but that's exactly what happened with Benton when Speaker Welch's chief of staff and chief counsel swooped in to meet with the young woman who accused Benton of going way over the line.

And while I don't believe the evidence in this case shows that Welch's former chief of staff and chief legal counsel did anything wrong, those officers have a built-in conflict of interest.

It seems like common sense to send district staffers to an office which has experience working with these sorts of issues, instead of directing them to a quasi-judicial process while will essentially involve interrogation. The state Senate, by the way, allows district office staff full access to its Human Relations office.

Other ideas have also surfaced, including extending the one-year statute of limitations on reporting sexual harassment. Rep. Stephanie Kifowit (D-Oswego) suggested that all staff should be allowed to join a union. This has to stop.

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

Blood donors needed to offset critical shortage

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

To register for a pre-

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

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

Joyce hunting rifle bill signed into law

A new law carried by State Senator Patrick Joyce will increase the max capacity of centerfire hunting rifles.

"Centerfire rifles are often preferred by hunters due to the stopping power needed to cleanly harvest large game, such as deer and elk," said Joyce (D-Essex). "These hunting rifles are also very reliable in freezing, damp or rugged outdoor conditions."

Senate Bill 2756 will increase the max capacity of centerfire rifles from one to three rounds. This will put Illinois on par with all other states, as Illinois is the only state that institutes a single-shot limit on centerfire rifle capacity. Joyce led previous legislation that formally legalized the use of single shot centerfire rifles for deer hunting season. Since its intro-

duction, centerfire rifle use among youth hunters has jumped to just over 50 percent.

Single-shot rifles increase the possibility of severely wounding a deer without giving hunters the opportunity to humanely put the deer down with a second shot. Non-resident hunters, and some Illinois hunters, either need to modify existing rifles or buy new ones to hunt in Illinois. Joyce's law could increase the number of non-resident hunters visiting the state on hunting trips.

Centerfire rifles are also an easier gun to handle for women and children, which could make hunting more accessible and safe.

Senate Bill 2756 was signed into law Friday and takes effect Jan. 1, 2027.

Illinois offering rebates for EV purchases

If you're considering the purchase of an electric vehicle you may qualify for a rebate from the state of Illinois.

The Illinois EPA is reminding buyers that the next EV Rebate Program application cycle will be Aug. 1 through Dec. 31. Forms and instructions on submitting a rebate application are available at the Illinois EPA's EV Rebate Program webpage.

"Illinois continues to see an increase in electric vehicles registered within the state, and many of those have been recipients of an Illinois EPA EV Rebate," said Director James Jennings. "This incentive program continues to encourage residents to adopt zero-emission transportation for the benefit of Illinois' environment."

Updates that became effective in the last application cycle include:

- Limits on the price of the vehicle: An eligible vehicle, as defined by the EV Rebate Act, is one with a selling price not exceeding \$80,000 as shown on the bill of sale.

- Rebate amount is \$2,000 for an eligible new or used electric vehicle. Low-income applicants are eligible to receive an additional \$2,000 (\$4,000 total rebate). The rebate amount for eligible motorcycles remains the same, \$1,500 for all eligible applicants.

An "eligible applicant" is defined as "persons and families whose income does not exceed 500% of the federal poverty line for the current State fiscal year and who may not be claimed as a dependent."

A "low-income applicant" is defined as "persons and families whose income does not exceed 80% of the regional or county median income for the current State fiscal year, as established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Illinois Income Limits by metropolitan area and county.

Buyers have 180 days from the date of purchase to apply. Applications must be submitted during an open application period. Applications postmarked prior to August 1, 2026 or after December 31, 2026, will be rejected.

The Illinois General Assembly has appropriated \$14 million to the Illinois EPA for the current fiscal year rebates. Actual funding amounts will be determined by the amount

of money available in the Electric Vehicle Rebate Fund.

During the last rebate cycle a total of 3,499 applications were received with 3,001 rebates issued, 1,658 to low-income applicants.

The vehicle must be a new or used all-electric and legally permitted to drive on all public roadways, including interstate highways.

The vehicle must be purchased (not rented or leased) from a dealership licensed by the Illinois Secretary of State.

The vehicle cannot have been the subject of a previous EV rebate under this program.

Only individuals that are Illinois residents can receive a rebate, and an individual can only receive one EV rebate under this program.

The purchaser must retain ownership of the vehicle for a minimum of 12 consecutive months immediately after the vehicle purchase date.

Visit the Electric Vehicle Rebate Program webpage at <https://epa.illinois.gov/to/pics/ceja/electric-vehicle-rebates.html>.

Experiment Day at the Forest Preserve

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

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

Fun & Food trucks at Forsythe Woods

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

Enjoy Mexican cui-

sine from The Grill's Tacos, food from Lil' Deb's, beer from Route 66 Brewing and live music by Zach Foster.

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

American Pickers to film in Illinois

The American Pickers are excited to return to Illinois to film episodes of The History Channel hit television series throughout in September 2026.

American Pickers is a documentary series that explores the fascinating world of antique "picking" on The History Channel. The hit show follows skilled pickers in the business, as they hunt for America's most valuable antiques.

They are always excited to find historically significant or rare items, in addition to unforgettable characters and their collections.

As they hit the back roads from coast to coast, the Pickers are on a mission to recycle and rescue forgotten relics.

Along the way, they want to meet characters with amazing stories and fun items. They hope to give historically significant

objects a new lease on life while learning a thing or two about America's past along the way. The Pickers have seen a lot of rusty gold over the years and are always looking to discover something they've never seen before. They are ready to find extraordinary items and hear fascinating tales about them.

The American Pickers TV Show is looking for leads and would love to explore hidden treasures. If you or someone you know has a unique item, story to tell and is ready to sell...we would love to hear from you! Please note, the Pickers do not pick stores, flea markets, malls, auction businesses, museums or anything open to the public. If interested, send a name, phone number, location, and description of the collection with photos to: americanpickers@cineflix.com or call (646) 493-2184

Gas soars above \$4/g

Average gasoline prices in Illinois have risen 10.3 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$4.23/g Monday, according to GasBuddy's survey of 4,378 stations in Illinois.

Gas prices spiked mid-week and held above \$4/g in many cases through the weekend. In Wilmington the price at the pump ranged from \$3.98/g at Mohson, up to \$4.24/g at Circle K.

Braidwood gas is \$4.19/g at reporting stations.

In Coal City expect to pay \$3.89/g across the board which is the lowest

price in the immediate area.

Morris gas runs the gamut from \$4.19/g at Citgo to \$4.29/g at Casey's.

In Bourbonnais, expect to pay anywhere from \$3.98/g at Gulf to \$4.24/g at BP.

"Average gasoline and diesel prices rose in nearly every state over the last week, as continued escalations between the U.S. and Iran, renewed Houthi attacks in the Red Sea, and fresh Ukrainian strikes on Russian oil refineries combined to keep upward pressure on both crude and refined product markets,"

said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy.

"However, a weekend pullback in hostilities offered some relief, with oil prices opening sharply lower Sunday, suggesting the pace of increases at the pump may moderate in the days ahead. For now, motorists should expect prices to remain elevated, but the intensity of further gains will depend heavily on how the geopolitical situation develops in the coming week."

The lowest price in the state Monday was \$3.49/g while the highest was \$5.99/g.

Prices in Illinois are 11.9 cents per gallon higher than a month ago and stand 88.3 cents per gallon higher than a year ago. The national average price of diesel has increased 17.8 cents compared to a week ago and stands at \$5.25 per gallon.

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REAL ESTATE

SHERIFF'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE OF 631 W 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.

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Oh, my aching leg!

If you break a leg or sprain an ankle during a basketball game, health care providers have a good idea what happened and how to treat it.

But if you have daily aches, pains and swelling in your legs, it will require some investigation.

Causes: Aman Khurana, MD, a vascular medicine physician who sees patients at OSF HealthCare, outlines common causes of leg pain.

Arterial disease: "The arterial cause of leg pain is when people walk, and they get leg, calf, hip or thigh pain. That can be from less arterial flow down in the legs," Dr. Khurana says. "When we walk, the muscles are demanding more blood. But because of blockages, blood doesn't come."

Venous disease: "Venous pain brings heaviness, tiredness and fatigue. Varicose veins and leg discoloration are signs of venous disease," Dr. Khurana explains. "That pain seems to get better when you lay flat or with your legs up."

Arthritis, or inflammation of a joint.

Nerve issues: "We have large nerves that go down from the back," Dr. Khurana explains. When those nerves are irritated, it can cause a condition called sciatica. "Then there's small vessel nerve pain that causes tingling and numbness in the feet." Wounds, such as those associated with diabetes, and lymphedema, a condition where fluid builds up causing swelling, can also contribute to these problems.

Diagnosis and treatment: Dr. Khurana recommends see-

ing a provider at the first sign of leg pain. He says it's hard for people to pinpoint the problem, and waiting can make it worse.

A provider, he says, could check the blood pressure in your arms and legs to gauge blood flow and run a test to check for vein leakage.

"Veins have valves. When blood goes up, the valve should close. Some valves don't close right. Blood goes up, and it keeps coming down. That's how you have the heaviness, tiredness and swelling in the legs," associated with venous disease, Dr. Khurana says. You could be given compression stockings for this problem.

Other treatments include medication, a device (such as a lymphedema pump that massages the legs and aids blood flow to the heart) or an ablation procedure to stop the blood flow in the problematic vein.

Prevention: How do I keep my legs moving? Dr. Khurana repeats advice many doctors have given. Daily healthy habits that prevent cardiovascular disease will help prevent leg issues. Keep your blood pressure, cholesterol and chronic conditions like diabetes in check. Don't smoke.

Exercise and eat a healthy diet to avoid obesity. When your weight impacts your ability to get around, Dr. Khurana says, it's definitely time to see a provider.

Know your family history of health issues, and bring these up to your provider at your regular checkups.

Entry-Level Police Officer Hiring Process



Wilmington Police Department
Wilmington, Illinois

The Wilmington, Illinois Board of Police Commission is accepting applications for the position of police officer with the Wilmington Police Department.

Starting Salary: \$68,218.73
Population: 5,735
Sworn Police Officers: 22* (17 Full-Time and 5 Part-Time)

The Wilmington Police Department is proud to announce that they are now certified by the United States Department of Veterans' Affairs for the Police Officer on-the-job Training Program.
Please visit http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/onthejob_apprenticeship.asp

All applicants must meet the following minimum requirements established by the City of Wilmington:

- U.S. citizenship or compliant with 55 ILCS 5/3-6033;
- No felony convictions;
- Possess a valid state-issued driver's license with good driving record;
- Must be a minimum of 21 years of age and UNDER 35 years of age at the time of application unless otherwise exempt by State Statute 65 ILCS 5/10-2.1-6;
- Possess a high school diploma or G.E.D. equivalent;
- Possess a valid NIPSTA card – OR – equivalent criteria as per the State standard, issued within 12 months of the written exam date (September 11, 2026)
 - POWER Test Cards issued by NIPSTA, Triton College or Joliet Junior College will be accepted.
 - Applicants must present the POWER Test card NO LATER than the written exam date (September 11, 2026).
- Any applicant that would like to schedule a ride along with a Wilmington police officer may contact the Wilmington Police Department at 815-476-2813.
- Successfully pass a written examination with a minimum overall passing score of 70%;
- Successfully complete an oral interview with the Board of Police Commission;
- Successfully complete a background investigation, polygraph, and psychological testing;
- Successfully complete a medical physical, to include drug and alcohol screening;
- There is no application processing fee.
- Applications must be submitted prior to September 1, 2026 at 4:00 PM

To apply for this position or obtain additional information, please visit the following website: <http://www.applytoserve.com>

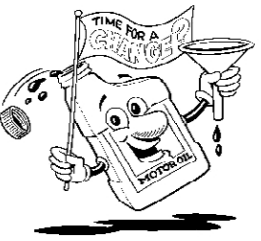
The City of Wilmington is an Equal Opportunity Employer

HELP WANTED

Lube technician wanted

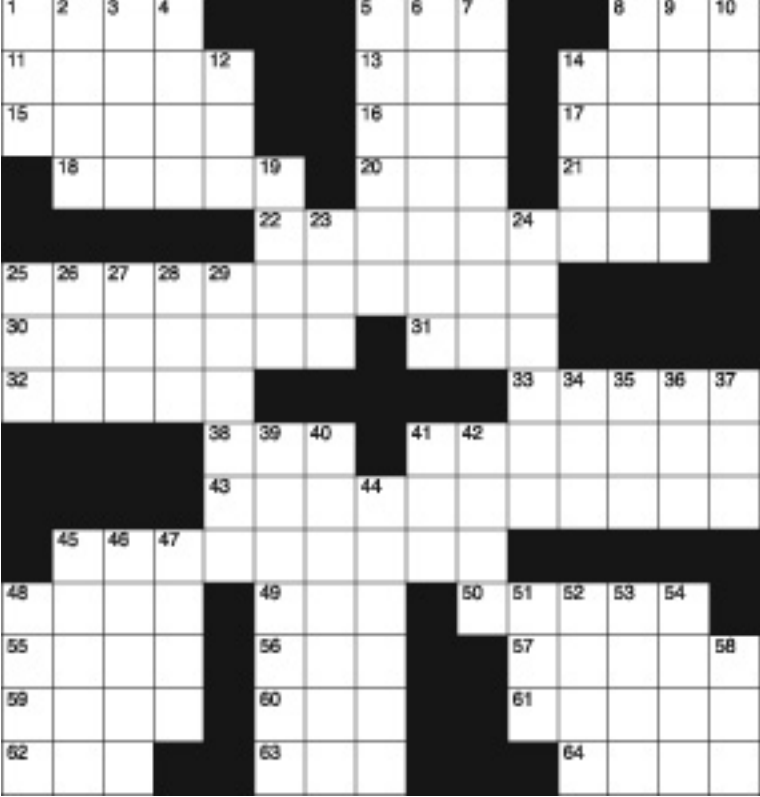
WE'RE EXPANDING!

Reputable, high volume, auto repair shop seeking experienced service and lube technician.
Must have drivers license.



APPLY WITHIN

Bob's Advanced Auto & Tire, Inc.
60 E. Chestnut St., Coal City



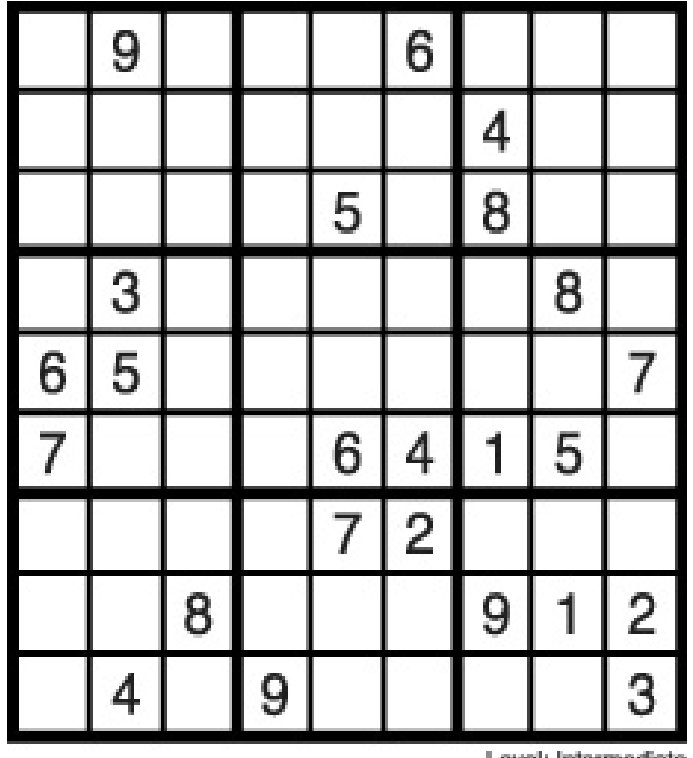
CLUES ACROSS

1. Egyptian bull god
5. Romanian monetary unit
8. Santa's helper
11. Fictional Pink Floyd corporal
13. Sea eagle genus
14. Broad volcanic crater
15. Minneapolis suburb
16. Actual commercial worth (abbr.)
17. Exchange rate
18. Ethnic peoples in Guinea
20. Men's fashion accessory
21. Craft material
22. Offerings

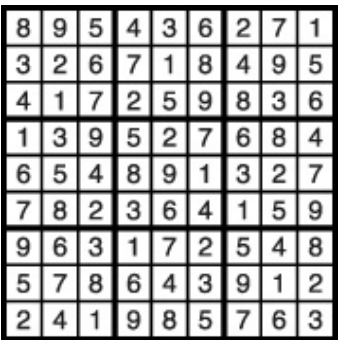
CLUES DOWN

1. Bridge building degree
2. Expression of sorrow or pity
3. Large, stocky, lizard
4. Rumanian river
5. Missive
6. Stout-bodied moths
7. Brings out
8. Bird of prey
9. King of Thebes
10. Cleaving tool
12. African antelope
14. Three are particularly famous
19. Satisfy
23. C. European river
24. Dictator
25. Portion of (abbr.)
26. The 17th letter of the Greek alphabet
27. Consume food
28. Woman (French)
29. Scrape or wear away by friction
34. Popular vegetable
35. Pacific Standard Time
36. Brazilian state capital
37. Paddle
39. Cause to become insane
40. Drier and flakier
41. Mimic
42. ESPN host Kimes
44. One who moseys
45. Secret political clique
46. Behind the stern of a ship
47. Supernatural force
48. Sanctuary in Orthodox churches
51. Swiss river
52. Grayish white
53. Engrave
54. UNC's chief rival
58. Midway between south and south-east

57. Owl monkey genus
59. Lace bug genus
60. Mild expression of surprise
61. Storage devices
62. Keyboard key
63. Make a mistake
64. One-time Korean president



Level: Intermediate



Catfish Days Fun



FATHER-SON THRILLS! Kyle Skoryi and his son, Cayde, share smiles and laughter as they spin high above the midway on a carnival ride during Catfish Days in Wilmington. The annual festival offered families plenty of opportunities to make lasting summer memories together.



TWO FRIENDS enjoy a bird's-eye view of the Catfish Days carnival as they soar through the evening sky on the Umbrella Ride Thursday in Wilmington. The classic midway attraction offered plenty of thrills and laughter during the four-day community festival.



TINY CARS, BIG SMILES! Members of the Shriners entertained the crowd with their signature miniature cars during Sunday's Catfish Days Parade in Wilmington. The four riders looked like they were having fun greeting spectators along the parade route.



HONORING SERVICE and community, Members of Wilmington American Legion Post 191 proudly represented local veterans during Sunday's Catfish Days Parade, waving to spectators and handing out candy as the patriotic float made its way through downtown Wilmington.



A YOUNG CONTESTANT in the Fear Factor challenge slips into a gunnysack while being pointed which direction to complete the course.



A PARADE FOR EVERY PET! Families and their four-legged companions fill Jackson Street on their way to the North Island park during the annual Skinner Animal Clinic Bike and Pet Parade on Saturday as part of Catfish Days. From big dogs to little dogs—and just about every kind of pet in between—the longtime tradition once again drew a festive crowd to celebrate one of the community's favorite events.

Photo by Eric Fisher



BACKWARDS CHALLENGE—The Fear Factor competition held Thursday during Teen Night had fourth grader Aiden Wilking weaving in reverse between cones.



FLYING HIGH! Boone from the Chi-City Tumblers soars over eight volunteers after launching from a trampoline and flipping in mid-air high above their backs. He landed like a pro, feet-first, and kept the Catfish Days crowd clapping with several stunts.