

Getting teens to embrace the grill



'Cat golfers already shaving strokes



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City to homeowners: Keep your trees and shrubs maintained

BY MARNEY SIMON EDITOR

Residents in Wilmington who don't take care of their overgrown grass, shrubs, and trees now have less time to get into compliance before the city hands out a fine.

On Aug. 15, the members of the City Council approved an ordinance to amend the city's regulations on the removal of "nuisance greenery" on properties in town.

Nuisance greenery is addressed

in Chapter 91 of the city's code of ordinances, which defines nuisance greenery under four categories:

- Weeds and grass in excess of eight inches in height
- Trees, shrubs, and bushes which are untrimmed including any tree, bush, or shrub growing on such premises that overhang, encroach, or obstruct any sidewalk, street, or other public place in such a manner as to interfere or create unsafe conditions with traffic or travel, or light
- Any dead tree or tree that shows

signs of poor health, including, but not limited to, showing signs of a disease or insect that can cause death, dead or falling branches, holes or cracks in the trunk, decayed roots, no leaf growth in the spring/summer, or a leaning trunk

• Any tree that visibly shows signs that it is at risk of falling or in imminent threat to other trees or property.

Fines for failing to address nuisance greenery can range from \$25 to \$750, but generally are issued at \$100. Under the code previously, once

a property owner was cited under the ordinance, they had 30 days to fix the issue and come into compliance.

The amendment changes the language from 30 days to seven days.

Specifically, owners are required to cut, trim, and remove nuisance greenery. Those who do not maintain that greenery will be notified that removal of nuisance greenery is required, and the property owner has seven days to comply. The property owner can also apply for an extension of an additional seven days.

The change comes as the city continues to deal with some repeat long-term offenders, including the owner of a home at 313 N. Main St.

Overgrowth at the home, which is unoccupied, has been cited multiple times over the years. However, city leaders said it's become a health and safety issue.

"We're at a point where we've been having the code enforcement officer issue compliance tickets, and

SEE GRASS, PAGE 2

Short but determined



Photo by Elaine Ohlund

AT FIVE FEET TALL and 135 pounds, Hannah Bassinger (left) is likely the lightest player on the 2023 varsity football team. Wilmington coach Jeff Reents praised her progress so far during Purple and White night, holding up to other players during practices. Reents commended her for being the first female in his 30 years as head coach to join the team. She and other players were introduced Friday to Wildcat fans before a short scrimmage was held. Wilmington will get down to business Friday when they travel to Seneca for the season opener.

County work on West River Road lands Wilmington a bill

BY MARNEY SIMON EDITOR

The city of Wilmington will pay nearly \$350,000 for a project that city officials aren't too keen on.

On Aug. 15, the City Council approved an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) for proposed improvements on West River Road.

The Will County Department of Transportation is reconstructing West River Road from Route 53 to Coal City Road, despite the fact that the road was recently resurfaced.

Because the project will impact the city's sidewalks and water lines that fall in that area, the city is responsible for replacement.

"It's a county road, we have a water main alongside it," Public Works Director James Gretencord explained. "They want to widen it and when they do so they want to put our main under their

road... The price is for approximately 1,000 feet of 12-inch water main, to route it."

While the city has argued to the county that the project is a financial burden on Wilmington, according to the staff report, the county engineer "maintains that this is a priority project for the County and that they [are] proceeding with the project. They did offer to spread the city's portion of the cost over a period of five years."

Members of the City Council expressed frustration at the project. However, it could have been worse.

"Initially, the cost of this was 100% on the city," Mayor Ben Dietz explained. "But after some negotiation with the county... the county adopted a new program where they are now paying for the sidewalks which lowered some of the costs. The county is also pay-

SEE ROAD, PAGE 2

Wilmington's golf cart ordinance amended, but not yet on the books

BY MARNEY SIMON EDITOR

Residents who own golf carts in the city of Wilmington will be able to legally drive those vehicles across Route 53.

But not just yet.

Earlier in August, the Wilmington City Council's Committee of the Whole held a discussion on changing the language in the city's ordinance on golf carts to allow them to pass over state-owned roads.

When the city's ordinance was created, it specifically prohibited golf carts from crossing any state road unless that crossing was at a stop sign or stop light. That provision meant the only legal place to cross a state route was at Water Street and Kahler Road. It also meant that anyone who lives east of Route 53 was not supposed to cross at all.

Despite the regulations, many golf cart owners still cross. Last year the council conceded that crossing Route 53 within the city limits was legal by state law, and could thus be permitted by the local

ordinance on golf carts if the city decided to amend that ordinance.

But more than a year later, the committee has moved the amended text of the ordinance forward for approval. However, a date for it to become official is still on hold.

On Aug. 15, the city council approved \$3,950 matching in-kind services, for the placement of solar/warning lights at the crosswalks at Route 53 and Joliet Street and Route 53 at the North and South Islands.

Those funds will be matched thanks to a grant from ComEd and the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, and will be used to place solar-powered safety signage along Route 53 to enhance safety by drawing motorists' attention at two crosswalk locations at Joliet Street and between the North and South Islands.

SEE GOLF, PAGE 2

Wilmington continues as part of Heritage Corridor

BY MARNEY SIMON EDITOR

The city of Wilmington has re-upped for another year as a member of Heritage Corridor Destinations Convention and Visitors Bureau.

The city became a member of the Heritage Corridor

last year. City administrator Jeannine Smith said the investment has paid off.

Since joining Heritage Corridor, Wilmington has already been awarded two grants. The first grant, totaling roughly \$250,000, was used to pay for the city's new downtown parking lot and installation of the two electric vehicle

charging stations.

The second grant of approximately \$40,000 will be used to place a Route 66 mural downtown, as well as to create a Route 66 monument, in honor of the historic byway's centennial celebration in 2026.

"They've also been very much involved in events,"

Smith told members of the Committee of the Whole on Aug. 8. "So, I am asking that we continue to have a relationship with them."

The city will pay \$5,000 to be a member for another year.

Heritage Corridor Destinations represents

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