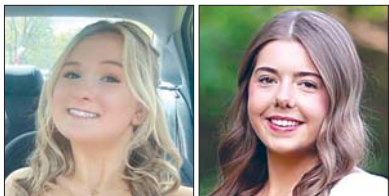


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Grant opportunity could help boost services for local seniors

BY MARNEY SIMON
EDITOR

The city of Wilmington will seek grant funds aimed at better understanding and addressing the needs of seniors in the area.

This month, Sheryl Puracchio, a founding member of Build Up Wilmington, approached the members of the City Council with information on that grant opportunity.

"We've been working with Kuzma Care Cottage and some community organizations, and [city administrator] Jeannine [Smith] pointed out some issues that she's been facing with seniors. So, I started doing some

research on some grants and came across this one," Puracchio told members of the Wilmington City Council gathered for their bi-monthly meeting on Oct. 3.

Puracchio said she began researching grant opportunities for Wilmington's senior population right after this year's Sharefest. She said Wilmington is lacking in reaching the needs for the senior population, including housing, transportation, healthcare, and economic security, and there is a disconnect when it comes to the services that are available, and what local seniors are actually receiving.

The grant is available through the Retirement Research Foundation for

the Aging. Puracchio said the organization, which is based in Illinois, prefers requests from Illinois that develop focused and strategic efforts to address the systemic problems facing seniors, as well requests that aim to create partnerships with the organizations to better use those resources.

Puracchio said the grant requires a letter of inquiry due on Nov. 1, which acts as a mini-grant application.

The application would include a survey of Wilmington seniors, which would involve hiring out for that service which must meet certain scientific standards. Such a survey would involve research on academic practices on surveying seniors, followed

by survey development specific to Wilmington seniors, and lastly analysis of the data collected. That data will provide a comprehensive plan that would not only serve the purpose of the grant application, but could also be used to apply for additional funding opportunities.

"Research Foundation is one of the only ones in the nation, and it's nice that they're located here in Illinois," Puracchio said. "We've been building a community collaborative from this grant that would be specific to our area, and it covers the 60481 zip code, not just the city. With that data that we're going to collect from this, it's going to be very good, as you know what a comprehensive plan

does. You can get a lot more funding opportunities, and what we want to do is get the state more involved in what's happening here."

Puracchio is seeking assistance from the city in the amount of up to \$500 to help pay for that survey creation and analysis. The funds will be reimbursed if Wilmington is awarded the grant.

"The first part of the grant is just doing the research," Puracchio said. "The second part of the grant is setting up the community collaborative. So, when the community collaborative is done, then you have your goals."

SEE GRANT, PAGE 2

Fall fun takes over North Island Park!



Photos by Eric Fisher

THAT'S A RINGER! Jayden Brisco of Channahon tries out the ring toss, one of a handful of games that were offered during the Wilmington Chamber's annual Autumn Festival of Crafts held Sunday on the North Island park.



PUMPKIN DECORATING was offered to kids of all ages Sunday as part of the activities for youngsters during the 3rd annual Wilmington Chamber Autumn Festival of Crafts.



Catfish Days carnival secured for next three years

BY MARNEY SIMON
EDITOR

As fall gets underway, the next Catfish Days festival feels like it's just a vision board and a dream away.

But, organizers are already working hard to get plans in place for next summer's signature event on the North Island.

On Oct. 3, the members of the Wilmington City Council approved an agreement with Zeiler Amusements for the Catfish Days carnival over the next three years. Zeiler has been the carnival provider for more than two decades of the festival, but most years the Catfish Days committee locked into a single event contract.

But, this year, the provider asked to increase the commitment to three years.

Council members approved the contract with attorney modifications to be made, mostly involving some unclear language inside the document, including non-

specific dates to be clarified.

Catfish Days chair Kirsten VanDuyne said the city needs to lock in the carnival, because finding a provider needs to be done sooner than later, because the carnival has options outside of providing for Catfish Days.

"[The carnival] is looking for a three year contract instead of a one year, which is why it's changed," VanDuyne told the council. "Typically the contracts have been for one year, but another municipality is looking for three years and so they aren't going to sign unless it's a three year."

VanDuyne said she reached out to more than two dozen carnival providers but could not find a company that was free for next year's Catfish Days.

Per the agreement, Zeiler Amusements will provide the carnival for the next three years of Catfish Days, and will agree to payment of 25% of gross sales after a fuel sur-

SEE COUNCIL, PAGE 2

Lyons exits role as Braidwood Police Chief

BY MARNEY SIMON
EDITOR

BRAIDWOOD — After 33 years in law enforcement, Braidwood Police Chief Todd Lyons has left the police force.

When asked by the *Braidwood Journal* what prompted his decision to leave, Lyons said Mayor Karen Hart approached him on Tuesday, Oct. 10 asking him to consider retirement, effective immediately.

Lyons said it was not necessarily an expected move, though he was not surprised since he's been working without a contract since May.

"She [Hart] asked me to retire, she said it might be best for everyone and the citizens of Braidwood," Lyons said. "I was surprised but not surprised because I was never given a contract. I wasn't totally thrown off because they didn't renew my contract after the city administrator

was given a contract."

The chief was first appointed under Mayor Bob Jones in 1919, and was reappointed to the position after Hart was sworn in as mayor in May. While a contract agreement was placed on the agenda for a vote from the full City Council over the summer, that agreement was tabled, and never brought back for a vote.

Lyons said there is no bitterness in his departure, but rather a sense that he helped build up and serve the community that he loves.

"It was a true honor to be the police chief in the community where I raised my family and my kids, it was just a great opportunity," Lyons said. "I

SEE LYONS, PAGE 2



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