

All in the family



Whitmore Ace Hardware
adds seventh store in Coal City

PROGRESS 2019

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Whitmore Ace family adds Coal City store

Brothers have affinity for town, addition made sense

BY PAM MONSON
EDITOR

The Whitmore Ace Hardware stores welcomed the former Coal City Matteson Ace Hardware store into the family last week, and the new owners want the store to be an important part of the community.

"A big initiative, no matter what town we go in, is to be a part of the community — a big part of the community, to where if we weren't there, there would be a big gaping hole. That's our goal," co-owner David Cripe commented.

David and his brother Michael, who describe themselves as goal-oriented and driven people, co-own the Whitmore Ace Hardware stores that have their roots over 120 years deep in Wilmington. They have a plan for growing the business, and ideas how to attain that goal, but they've also made sure the plan follows their philosophy of dedicating themselves to family and community first, which in turn provides opportunities for all of their employees.

"Coal City is obviously in our wheelhouse, it's right next to our first two stores and where we grew up," David explained. "My brother and I have an affinity for this area; growing up here, we would spend our summers at the Wilmington Rec Club right down the street, and obviously for lunch or after we'd travel to Coal City ... couple that with the fact that my brother and I have a growth strategy that we want to attain in the coming years, it just made sense [to acquire the Coal City store]."

"And, along the lines that we exist to help people, as owners of the business we want to create as many opportunities for our existing employees and any employees who come on board, so this fits in with that plan as well," he added.

Coal City makes seven stores for the group, which includes stores in Braidwood, Manteno and Manhattan,



LEADING THE WHITMORE Ace Hardware team's new Coal City store will be assistant manager Felicia Duran-Yeates (left) and manager Nicole McDaniels. The Coal City Ace Hardware is the seventh store in the chain of local family businesses whose growth model was initiated by owner Mike Cripe (center).

which were added when their father Mike Cripe was in charge. The Manteno and Manhattan additions in 2002 and 2003, were an opportunity for the brothers, recent college graduates, to experience managing a store.

Mokena and New Lenox, which came into the family in 2016 and 2017 respectively, were purchased under Michael and David's leadership.

At 17,000 square feet, the Coal City store, their third acquisition, is the second largest in the family-owned chain, coming in behind the Wilmington location.

The building is only 10 years old, so there are only some maintenance and merchandising improvements to be made. The physical layout of the store will change very little, just enough to allow the addition of new brands and a bigger presence of existing brands, of which there is a good variety.

The brothers plan to bring in

Carhartt and other workwear, and they're also planning to add a garden center to Coal City, including a greenhouse.

Under the Whitmore Ace flag, the hardware store's hours of operation will be expanded to better serve the community. The previous hours were too limited for how people's lives are scheduled now, Michael Cripe noted.

Services will not change and charge accounts will not be affected.

Most of the Matteson Ace Hardware employees were retained. There will be a significant emphasis on training, the brothers said.

"We believe we have a pretty good training program that puts the customer first, and really, anybody who walks in the store first," said David.

While they believe their employees exist to help the people who come in the store, whether they purchase anything or not, the Cripe brothers also believe they exist to help their employees as well as

their customers, in any way, shape or form.

"Anybody who works for us is family, and we believe we should treat them as such. But we also want our employees to know that they exist to help people, even if they're not a purchaser, we're here to help. It's great that we can sell products, but the bigger picture is helping people," David explained.

One experienced cashier, a manager and assistant manager were transferred from the Wilmington store. Nicole McDaniel, the assistant manager of the Wilmington store is now the manager of the Coal City Whitmore Ace. Felicia Duran-Yeates is the assistant manager.

The residents of Coal City don't just gain great customer service at their neighborhood hardware store, they gain the benefit of business owners who are committed to giving back to the community. The Coal City store will participate in the Dollars for Dogs fundraising program, which brings a tremendous amount of money to local organizations.

And they'll bring in other sponsorship programs used in all of their other stores, such as rounding up purchases the few cents to the next dollar, which allows the family hardware stores to donate tens of thousands of dollars to the Ann and Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital every year. Lurie's is the philanthropic focus for Ace Hardware, and the local stores piggyback on the corporation's efforts. Many youngsters from the communities where the stores are located have been treated at Lurie's.

The Cripe brothers feel participating in this fundraiser gives local youngsters a chance to have an amazing hospital within reach.

The purchase of the Coal City store was finalized on March 7, and the community has been welcoming.

"We're excited to be in Coal City," Michael concluded.

"Yeah, I would say that, too. In only a day and a half of operating here the customer feedback is awesome, as far as the excitement," David added.

On the cover

THE WHITMORE Ace Hardware stores are a family business, operated by Mike and Mary Cripe (center), and their sons and daughters-in-law: Kim and David Cripe (on the left) are pictured with their children Colin, Owen, and Sylvia; and Michael and Claire (on the right) are pictured with their sons Will and Cory (Sylvia and Cory are front, center).

Try something new, creative at Dragon's Breath Raku

Dragon's Breath Raku at 219 N. Water St., Wilmington, is an art gallery showcasing local artwork, and pottery studio that also offers clay, and watercolor and acrylic painting classes.

Owner Chris Mazur says his shop gives people access to art classes, the opportunity to try something new.

Mazur specializes in raw clay and is building a raku (gas-

fired) kiln in the back to make raku pottery. An open house will be held when the outside kiln is ready.

He hopes to add a second kiln, an electric one.

Mazur has an extensive ceramic and sculpture background. He is also schooled in horticulture so he can help you create pots for your plants that have special requirements.

Mazur just began volunteering at the Wilmington Public Library helping with the DIY teen craft days.

He would like to reach out to scouting and 4-H groups and invite them to take a class.

Mazur's favorite part of his business is meeting people who come in to see the shop and making new friends.

Stop by and see the stained

glass windows that have been repaired.

Dragon's Breath Raku is open from noon to 6 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. Classes are from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday, and 1 to 4 p.m. on Saturday.

Follow him on Facebook and Instagram. Mazur can be reached at dragonsbreathraku@gmail.com.



DES ROCHERS BACKYARD POOLS & Spas staff (from left) Sarah Kingman, Lindsay Godsey, Kristina Attaway, Brooke Rossi, Mallory Wachowski and Jerry Daniels provide the best customer service with one-on-one consulting.

DesRochers Backyard Pools & Spa can creatw the perfect backyard oasis

DesRochers Backyard Pools & Spas is a family owned and operated local business that has specialized in the pool and spa industry for over 35 years.

Michele and Mike DesRochers started their business out of their garage and it has grown to a thriving construction and service department, including three retail stores in Wilmington, Morris and Shorewood.

In recent years, Brooke Rossi and Brian DesRochers, daughter and son of Michele and Mike, have taken over the family business.

This family owned business has always strived to provide the best customer service with our one on one consulting and professionalism.

This company's exemplary work and community outreach has not gone unnoticed. In 2018 they received a number of awards including, Fiberglass Pool of the Year, Bioguard Retailer of the Year, The Association of Pool and Spa Professionals Retailer of the Year, Best Promotion, and Best Store Renovation.

Service Manager, Eddie Rossi, received the award for Service Tech of the Year and Retail Operations Manager, Mallory Wachowski, received the award for APSP Young Professional of the Year.

In 2019 they received awards for Fiberglass Pool of the Year, Best Store Display, Best Promotion, and Best in Customer

Satisfaction. DesRochers Backyard Pools & Spas were also recognized for their community outreach.

In 2018, they teamed up with My Hope Chest to raise funds for reconstructive surgery for breast cancer survivors by collecting donations and hosting a one-night silent auction event.

The company also collaborated with the local Kiwanis chapter to collect coats, socks, hats, and gloves for those in need in the community.

Backyard Pools also supports the local sports teams by donating raffle items to assist in raising funds.

DesRochers Backyard Pools & Spas truly cares for the residents in the community and will go above and beyond to ensure that every customer's needs are met.

Some of the latest trends you can expect to see for 2019 are advanced LED pool lighting, tanning ledges and benches in inground pools, fire features around the pools and darker surfaces for a more natural looking backyard oasis. Be on the lookout for their virtual Pool School.

Make sure to follow their Facebook at DesRochers Backyard Pools and Spas for more details.

About Progress 2019

The Free Press Newspapers appreciate the businesses and organizations who responded by placing advertisements and articles in Progress 2019.

While this special section contains many of the businesses in the Braidwood, Coal City and Wilmington area, it does not contain all of them. Those absent from this issue were not intentionally overlooked.

The newspaper focused on those who replied to promotional advertisements and mailed correspondence. The newspaper staff hopes its readers enjoy this special section just as much as we enjoyed putting it together. It's always nice to read of local businesses who are proactive in giving customers more.



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Reeves Funeral Homes, Ltd. in Coal City 815-634-2125, Morris 815-942-2500
& Gardner 815-237-2526

The Flower Loft offers boutique-style shopping in Wilmington

The philosophy at The Flower Loft is simple - to provide high quality and unique floral creations, as well as all occasion gifts.

The Flower Loft has established a beautiful boutique-style shop in downtown Wilmington that is constantly changing. Fresh flowers and plants are available daily, new merchandise weekly and specials seasonally. All of the above is available, while interacting with an extremely friendly and knowledgeable staff.

The Flower Loft is the only local full service florist in the area, and it is Cecilia Storbeck, Kim Wilcoxson and Lauren Brummel who are behind the professional floral designs delivered daily.

Since re-opening the doors in May of 2014 following a fire that destroyed the original business in April of 2006; the shop has definitely taken on more than fresh flowers and plants.

Several lines of unique gifts, merchandise, jewelry

and home decor items are ever changing on the floor at The Flower Loft.

One of their staples, and best selling lines continue to be Maison Berger Paris (formerly Lampe Berger) - home fragrances.

Other familiar and regularly updated offerings include: LightLi Moving Flame - Flameless Candles; Darren Gygi - home décor artwork for the home, hobby and holiday; Kindred Hearts Authentic - American Made Gifts, that inspire the soul; Lizzy James Jewelry, Handmade in California; My Saint My Hero, Wearable Blessings Jewelry handmade in Medjugorje; Willow Tree Figurative hand painted sculptures; Gratitude Jars for all occasions (one of Oprah's favorites).

Also, Maple Leaf custom engraved cutting boards and glassware; Visser Art Collection featuring Swarovski crystals, Kinzig Designs lamps, which are each hand made by accomplished artisan

sisters in San Francisco, and the highly talked about 3-D Creative Crystal Art which can turn any photo into a three dimensional piece of crystal art. This is all in addition to seasonal home decor.

Nick Facchina, the shops manager said, "Another one of our unique lines is Mova Globes. These rotating globes, powered by light, are like something you've never seen before. The unique spinning globes combine power from ambient light and torque from the earth's magnetic field to create soothing rotations. No batteries are required and no sloppy cords to detract from your enjoyment. Elevate your decor or gift the unexpected."

In 2018 The Flower Loft also welcomed Lapis and Leather to the shop, with locally handmade jewelry by Wilmington native Anna (Meents) Walsh who is consistently changing out and adding to her private collection of jewelry.

The Flower Loft is proud to be a part of the Downtown Merchants Association, and the Wilmington Chamber of

Commerce. The Flower Loft participates in the Route 66 Red Carpet Corridor Event, Bewitched on Route 66, The Chamber of Commerce Holiday festivities, and late night shopping events, and as well as the regular summer flea markets, and ongoing attractions that draw visitors and residents to the downtown.

"We are honored to be a dominant provider of flowers for all events: weddings, birthdays, funerals, memorials, anniversaries, baptisms, get well, thinking of you, congratulations, new home, loss of a pet, just because, thank you, holiday, new neighbor, new baby, welcome home, bar/bat Mitzvah, homecoming, prom, and the list goes on..." said Facchina. The perpetual arrangement program has also become quite popular. The program serves a variety of needs from cemetery services to holiday, special date and regular floral orders on a weekly, monthly, quarterly or seasonal plan.

The Flower Loft also hosts private parties. From wreath making workshops to seasonal floral design get togethers that include

light snacks and drinks, The Flower Loft can accommodate small groups for a great night out.

In 2018, The Flower Loft attended the International Home and Gift Show in Dallas, TX, a demonstration of how they like the inventory to be unique and constantly changing. The staff is also always open to suggestions to what customers would like to see in the shop.

Social media marketing continues to be a great success, and has brought excitement of The Flower Loft's offerings to more than 1900 followers and counting. It is through Facebook that they give 'sneak peaks' to their followers while at the buyer's market, and also keep followers first in the know of specials, sales and promotions. The Flower Loft also has followers on Twitter and Instagram.

The Flower Loft doesn't only serve Wilmington but Braidwood, Channahon, Coal City, Diamond, Elwood, Gardner, Goose Lake, South Wilmington and everywhere in between.

Deliveries are made to

local hospitals in Joliet, Kankakee and Morr. Orders are taken in shop, by phone and on the web at www.tfloft.com. Flowers can also be sent worldwide.

The Flower Loft takes pride in re-commerce and loves it when their valued customers return to the shop with their own vases and containers. The floral designers on staff have designed countless arrangements not only with fresh flowers, but also with high quality silks.

"If you have a favorite container, bring it in, and we will refresh or replenish it," said Wilcoxson. "We also have many reclaimed items throughout the shop that are used as display and prop pieces."

"We are humbled and most appreciative of the support and patronage that Wilmington and the surrounding communities continue to show us. Our shop has grown, as has our staff and offerings to meet the needs and desires of our customers."

The Flower Loft is located in the heart of historic downtown Wilmington, and is open seven days a week.

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If you dream of a brighter smile, remember the office of Dr. Garrett B. Smith, DDS, also offers esthetic dental care, including teeth whitening treatments. Their professional-grade products and in-depth treat-

ments provide visible results. Don't hesitate to ask about the different options available for gleaming pearly whites.

The dental care professionals will be happy to answer all questions about your oral health. They can explain how to take better care of your teeth every day at home, suggest a treatment plan and offer advice.

Make an appointment now and take advantage of the warm welcome awaiting you. Their mission is to help you enjoy good oral health for the rest of your life.

Dr. Smith's office is located at 220 S. Main St., Wilmington. You can get more information about services provided or make an appointment by calling 815-476-9715.

Busey - your partner for progress

Since opening their doors as a small community bank more than 150 years ago, Busey is guided by a vision of service excellence.

Outstanding service - the implicit promise of Busey's brand - is the organizations' commitment to associates, customers, shareholders and communities.

Upon merging with First Community Bank in 2017, Busey expanded its footprint into DuPage, Grundy and Will counties.

Although relatively new to the area, Busey's history of providing premier customer service, building trusted relationships that span generations and bridging the needs of local communities remain unchanged.

At Busey, it's not just about doing business, but doing good. Busey reinvests in communities one project at a time. Within Grundy and Will counties, Busey Bank has built and maintained strong community relationships through Grundy County We Care, Angels of Hope, the VFW and Habitat for Humanity.

"Busey is invested in our local communities," shared Debbie Durando, Vice President and Branch Manager of Busey's Diamond, Mazon and Braidwood locations.

"With the backing of nearly \$10 billion in assets, more than 1,300 associates and 63 locations, Busey has the capabilities of large, regional banks. What sets us apart are our local priorities and building relationships with customers and communities that span generations. Local decision-making allows the team at Busey to prioritize your needs and invest in your future."

From volunteerism and charitable giving to financial education and beyond, Busey works to strengthen local communities. From supporting the arts to advocating for our youth and helping those in need, Busey and its associates give more than \$1 million and 20,000 volunteer hours annually to the places we call home.



BUSEY BANK OFFICERS are (from left) Vice President and Commercial Portfolio Manager Don Johnson, Vice President/Branch Manager Deb Durando and Senior Vice President and Commercial Market President for Grundy and Will counties Jeff Rzasa.

From opening a first business account and applying for a loan to expand a business or farming operation, Busey works hand-in-hand with people to make these big financial decisions.

"Busey uniquely combines a community banking culture with local decision making," explains Chip Jorstad, Executive Vice President and Regional President for Busey's Central Region.

"Our capacity to serve clients with relationships of all sizes, combined with our mix of products and knowledgeable and trustworthy lenders sets us apart, helping customers make the best financial decisions for their futures."

Experienced, local bankers with the ability to make quick, nimble decisions set Busey apart. With more than 60 full-service locations across Illinois, Missouri, Indiana and SW Florida, Busey's strength is in the numbers.

Customers benefit from increased banking capabilities across five lines of business-retail, mortgage, commercial, cash management and wealth management-meeting individual needs with best-in-class products.

Busey's team of trusted advisors specialize in personal banking, com-

mercial lending and wealth management partner to make investments work hard for you. Whether retirement is on the horizon, you want to spend more time traveling or take a business to the next level, Busey Wealth Management has more than 100 wealth professionals who can help make financial dreams a reality.

For farmers and agribusiness owners, Busey can provide the resources to manage production costs or to purchase land and equipment. From the day-to-day operations to planning for future generations, Busey's knowledgeable team understands the unique challenges producers face.

Busey Ag Services & Farm Brokerage-operated under Busey Wealth Management-manages more than 91,000 acres of farmland across 30 counties in Illinois. Busey's farm managers have more than 130 years of combined experience working in the agriculture industry.

These associates are committed to maximizing value for landowners through farm management, farm brokerage, ag lending and industry research and insights.

To learn more Busey's expanded expertise and solutions to your personal,

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The Clubbs enjoy serving the community and acquiring new clients as well as friendships.

Clubb Construction plans to speculate on homes that are affordable and attractive to the first-time home buyer, as well as continue to remodel kitchens and bathrooms.

"We take pride in every project that we perform and we make sure that every customer is completely satisfied when the job is completed," said Dave Clubb.

Clubb Construction can be reached at 815-634-2544 or e-mail clubb23@yahoo.com.



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2019 will bring expansion for Morris Hospital

Just a few weeks after breaking ground on a new, \$7.1 million medical facility at 1450 E. Division St., Diamond last November, Morris Hospital & Healthcare Centers announced that it received approval from the Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board to proceed with \$33.5 million in renovations that will modernize the main hospital campus at 150 W. High St., Morris.

These two significant projects are Morris Hospital's major highlights for 2019.

Located immediately west of McGinty Street on the north side of Route 113, the new Morris Hospital Diamond-Coal City Campus will provide office space for primary care and specialty physicians, as well as walk-in immediate care, laboratory, diagnostic imaging, physical therapy and occupational medicine services for area employers.

Construction is

expected to take 10 months, with a grand opening anticipated in fall 2019.

While construction is underway for the Diamond-Coal City Campus, significant improvements will be taking place at the hospital main campus in Morris that will result in a new emergency department, infusion therapy center, and women's imaging center, along with renovations to the diagnostic imaging and cardiology departments.

The target completion date for the hospital main campus renovations is March 2021.

According to Mark Steadham, President and CEO of Morris Hospital & Healthcare Centers, modernization of Morris Hospital's main campus will help address increased volumes in the emergency department and aging facilities while enhancing patient privacy and the overall patient experience.



UPCOMING RENOVATIONS AT Morris Hospital include a new infusion therapy center that will feature all private treatment rooms with outside windows to enhance the patient and family experience. The new infusion therapy center is part of a \$33.5 million modernization plan that will also result in a new emergency department by the end of 2019, with additional phases of construction slated into 2021.

"One of our goals is simplifying access so all patients and visitors enter on the east side of the campus whether they're here for surgery, diagnostic testing, emergency care, or visiting. We are also making modifications that will enhance patient privacy during registration and improve routes for transporting patients to tests and procedures.

"The enhancements will enable us to deliver high quality healthcare and exceptional customer service for decades to come."

Construction will begin in April, with phase one focusing on a new emergency department that will increase the number of emergency exam/trauma rooms from 11 to 17 and create a separate fast track area within the emergency department for low acuity visits, all designed to minimize wait times and increase patient privacy.

The new emergency department will be located on the northeast side of the hospital campus, with a dedicated emergency

entrance immediately north of the hospital main entrance.

Phase one also includes construction of a new infusion therapy center on the southeast side of the hospital campus. The new infusion therapy center will feature all private rooms with outside windows to enhance the patient and family experience, as patients having infusion therapy can spend as much as eight hours at the hospital for each treatment.

Both the new emergency department and infusion therapy center are targeted for completion by the end of 2019.

Subsequent phases of the modernization project will begin in 2020 with a spring 2021 target completion.

"This is a very exciting time for Morris Hospital & Healthcare Centers," says Steadham, encouraging community members to check the hospital website frequently for construction progress.

"We are taking an important step forward as we position Morris

Hospital for the long term future."

Serving patients at 26 locations, Morris Hospital & Healthcare Centers includes the 89-bed Morris Hospital, as well as physician offices in Braidwood, Channahon, Coal City, Dwight, Gardner, Marseilles, Mazon, Minooka, Morris, Newark, Ottawa and Yorkville.

Through the services of over 1,700 healthcare professionals, physicians and volunteers, Morris Hospital provides lifesaving cardiac intervention with angioplasty and stents, a radiation therapy center for cancer patients, state-of-the-art intensive care unit, sleep center, and immediate care services at three locations. Morris Hospital is a Level II trauma center and a Level II perinatal care provider with an intermediate care nursery.

For more information, visit www.morrishospital.org.

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Stephen Francis originally began a tax prep business. When client needs became apparent, financial planning and insurance options were offered.

After intensive training and adding the appropriate professionals in the appropriate positions, the company has morphed into what, in 2019, is a one-stop shop for those offerings.

The team at Oak Knoll Financial Strategies is charged with being a financial life planning business with a mission to help clients sustain their independence and dignity for as long as possible. They will do that by organizing, planning and coaching.

As Steve Francis, Certified Financial Planner™ and Branch Manager, reminds his

team frequently, "I enjoy coming to work here every day. I am proud of the opportunities we can offer our clients daily, not just for the financial aspect of their retirement plan, but we consider the total picture. We want this to be a one-stop shop for our clients."

Being connected to Raymond James keeps the business current on financial developments. The insurance part of the business, Oak Knoll Insurance Strategies, Inc., helps clients protect the assets they already have.

As Francis reminds clients who sit across the desk from him, "When we discuss your retirement plans, insurance needs or map out tax strategies, we don't just offer textbook advice. We have real life experiences that may benefit you. There are ways to

help protect the results of your hard work and savings. A hospital stay or chronic illness should not overwhelm you financially. We have choices for you."

The Trusted Choice insurance portion of the business keeps Craig Long busy, offering a substantial menu of policies to choose from, including farm, home and auto coverages, long-term care, life insurance, umbrella policies, flood insurance, business, and RV protection.

Insurance carriers include AAA, MetLife, Travelers, Progressive, The Hartford and others. Craig also leads seminars open to the public, on making suitable Medicare choices.

A farmer himself, Trent Munson works with farmer clients in selecting suitable crop insurance from either ProAg or RCIS. Like the rest of the staff, Trent is available for appointments.

It's busy during tax time as Bill Francis, Laura

Martin and Chris Francis help clients file income taxes, from the simplest to the most complex, for 2018.

Michael Manner is experienced in discussing all features of corporate retirement plans, including 401(k) options, with business owners.

"We get great satisfaction when we see the mission statement come to life...when clients thank us for guiding them and offering options of which they may not have been aware," said Francis.

Oak Knoll management has made a serious effort to focus on the financial and retirement planning portion of the business. When clients make an appointment and aren't even sure of the questions to ask, they know they must put their collective business options to work for good results.

Female financial advisors are uncommon, and Oak Knoll is looking for-

ward to having at least one officially on staff soon.

Wes Smith and Charlie Schad are part of the planning and investment team. They work in concert with Steve Francis and the insurance and tax team members to present the "big picture" to clients and prospects.

They know because the three businesses are so inter-related, that clients can get beneficial options for making the best decisions.

Kara Mason is a knowledgeable liaison with Raymond James and provides support to the advisors.

Jackie Danalewicz works with Raymond James compliance, marketing, advertising and general office support. Jordyn Larson is the newest member of the team, providing receptionist duties.

Getting the word out to prospects at an appropriate time in their lives is a challenge. Is 30 too soon?

Maybe, but not always. Is 60 too late? Probably not, but options certainly will be different from someone in their 50s. The Oak Knoll suite of businesses take on these challenges with eagerness.

Oak Knoll generously and proudly supports Wilmington school functions, sports, music and of course scholastics.

Just curious about the business? Visit www.oakknollfinancial.com.

Make an appointment Monday through Thursday, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., or Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. by calling 815-476-2105.

Or stop by the office at 205 S. Water St., Wilmington, for a 2019 calendar. Ask Jordyn at the reception window for a copy of Five Wishes, a living will written in simple layperson's terminology and a good starting point for making important decisions.

Braidwood Area Historical Society to celebrate 12th year

The Braidwood Area Historical Society (BAHS) will celebrate its 12th anniversary in March as a not-for-profit, and its eighth year of occupying the museum in April.

President George Kolek said he enjoys great conversations with people and helping them with research. "We enjoy working with and supporting other local historical society and community event."

This year the BAHS obtained the First Baptist Church property and monument on Cermak Street dating from 1875.

As usual, BAHS participated in many community events including the Red Carpet Route 66 Corridor event the first Saturday in May, the June Braidwood Garage Sale Days and the July Braidwood Lions Summerfest festivities and plan to do so again this year.

Plans are being made for the Reed-Custer Alumni Reunion and special

exhibits including the auto show in August.

The museum, at 111 N. Center St., had approximately 200 visitors in 2017. It features artifacts from the area's coal mines and historical displays of local churches, schools, businesses, industries and the railroad.

"Braidwood Sesquicentennial - 15 Decades of Work and Play" and "The Braidwood Story" are available for purchase at the museum along with small bags of coal, vintage postcards and informational booklets.

The museum is open every Saturday from noon to 3 p.m., and from May through August will also be open on Sundays from noon to 3 p.m.

Appointments to visit can also be made by calling 815-458-9010. There is never an admission charge but donations are appreciated.

For more information visit www.braidwoodhistoricalsociety.org.



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Braidwood Lions celebrating 50

This year marks a year of achievement for the Braidwood Lions Club as they celebrate their 50th anniversary of service to the Braidwood, Godley and Shadow Lakes communities.

The club was chartered on Feb. 24, 1969, with its members embarking on a mission to bring sight and sound humanitarian services to those in need.

Today, the club's members and volunteers continue that mission and have become the most active community service organization in the Braidwood community.

Currently comprised of 30 members and dozens of non-member volunteers, the club has expanded its mission over the years to provide community events and beautification projects on top of their sight and sound services.

Each year, the club assists dozens of residents and school children in need with obtaining eye exams and glasses as well as hearing screenings and hearing aids.

Funds generated from the various fundraisers that the club holds throughout the year help to make these services and projects possible.

Over the past 50 years, the club has established yearly traditions and activities which the Braidwood community has come to know and love. From hosting the annual Halloween Hot Dog Giveaway in October and decorating Braidwood's Main Street during the holiday season, to holding the annual Christmas Tree Sale fundraiser in December and annual Summerfest in July, the club's members and volunteers are active year-round in the com-

munity.

The club's most well-known tradition, the annual Braidwood Lions Club Summerfest will celebrate its 38th year of fun in the sun July 18-21 in the Braidwood Park District's Old Smokey City Park.

The four-day festival, with a theme this year of "A Safari Adventure", will once again feature loads of family and community-oriented fun including carnival rides, games, food vendors, bingo games, free live entertainment, kids' activities and much, much more.

There's something for everyone to enjoy during what has become the largest event of the summer season in Braidwood and the club's largest fundraiser of the year.

On top of preparing for their annual summer festival, the Braidwood Lions continue their efforts to raise funds for new playground equipment at the Lions Kiddie Park on Lincoln Street in Braidwood.

Over the past couple of years, the club has held numerous fundraisers, with proceeds earmarked for the purchase of playground equipment and they are planning to continue their fundraising efforts for this project throughout the year ahead.

Be sure to visit the club's website www.braidwoodlionsclub.org or check out its Facebook page for updates on the club's activities, Summerfest and progress throughout the year.

The Braidwood Lions are grateful to the residents of Braidwood, Godley and Shadow Lakes for their continued support and look forward to continuing their legacy of community service for years to come.

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From Left: Alyssa Howard (admin), Jerriek Longest (broker), Ivana Longest (broker), Jenny Nelson (broker)

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Excellence in dance instruction at Broadway Dance Center

Broadway Dance Center (BDC), under the direction of Kim Scerine, has had the same philosophy for over 30 years - to provide dance instruction by integrating body, art and intellect.

Through discipline students gain many skills which are highly valued in dance, life and academic circles. A disciplined dancer also develops a strong sense for the musical, theatrical and aesthetic elements of dance.

BDC offers a standard of excellence not to be compromised. Age appropriate classes are available for students as young as four years old. Classes include ballet/contemporary, jazz, tap, hip-hop and pointe. All classes are taught by adult teachers with extensive dance training.

There are no hidden costs at Broadway Dance Center. Tuition is reasonable and the dance center does not charge recital, evaluation or choreography fees. It even encour-

ages potential dancers to try a class for free before registering.

Broadway Dance Center is the home of the On Broadway Dancers (OBD), a not-for-profit, Youth Performance Company that averages 12 shows each year including half-time shows for the Chicago Bulls, DePaul, ISU, Loyola and Northern Illinois universities.

They are also the three time Dance Chicago Dance Slam champions.

On an international level, the On Broadway Dancers have toured and performed overseas six times. Their most recent trip to Europe in 2016 included five performances in Poland and Austria.

Another staple is the OBD annual Christmas show that serves not only as a fundraiser for the dance company but also an opportunity to help local families in need.

To date, the shows have generated over \$33,000 to provide cloth-



ON BROADWAY DANCERS Sr. Company performing a Prince tribute included (from left) Claire Lardi, Grace Lardi, Macey Spencer, Jada Frazier, Emma Charle and Maggie McCollough.

ing, gifts and food to local families in need during the holiday season.

OBD Christmas shows are held over Thanksgiving weekend at Coal City Performing Arts Center.

Another highlight is the OBD college scholarship. Each year a graduating senior in the dance troupe is selected to receive the financial award to be placed toward their

college education. Since 2011, OBD has handed out \$17,000 in scholarships.

Scerine is the resident choreographer for Small Town Theatrics. She also serves as the choreographer for the Unit 1 School

District's middle and high school musical productions and her recent theater work includes "Newsies" and "Tuck Everlasting."

Want to know more and how to try a dance

class for free? Stop by or visit Broadway Dance Center's website at www.onbroadwaydancers.com or like them on Facebook.



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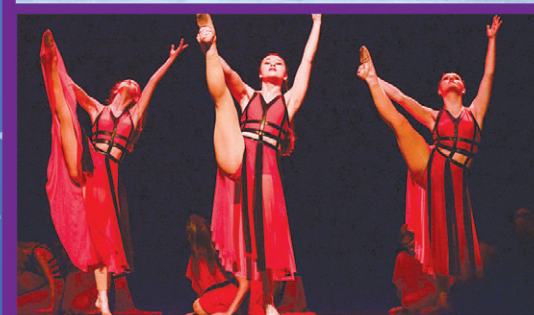
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facebook

The Wine Cafe is the place to be

Looking for a unique experience for a night out? Go to the Wine Cafe located at 130 Bridge St. in Wilmington. The Wine Cafe is celebrating its second anniversary this March.

Every night is an event at the Wine Cafe. Whether it's the Happy "Hookers" crocheting group, a pop-up crafter show, Bunco, Bingo, Jeopardy, Family Feud, Trivia, comedians, entertainers, fundraisers, card nights, wine tastings or beer tastings, there's always something happening.

A premium selection of fine wines are offered at reasonable prices along with an extensive beer menu with everything from Bud Light to IPAs and APAs.

The Wine Cafe is currently in the middle of an

exciting gaming give-a-way with a drawing once a month for a 65-inch Samsung flat screen television.

The Wine Cafe offers a monthly wine club and sells many unique wine-related items. The Cafe is open 7 days a week for those who need a gift for a birthday, first date or anniversary.

Retail wine and beer to go is offered for parties or just for dinner. You can also purchase gift certificates for any occasion.

Bring your own snacks, order from Nelly's or have a potluck at the Wine Cafe.

A large assortment of board games, cards and other popular games will be at your disposal, so gather your friends, order some refreshments and play some

games.

The Wine Cafe is also available for private parties and showers.

The owners and staff are excited about upcoming events. Travelers on the legendary Route 66 will bring hundreds of visitors from many foreign lands. Catfish Days plans are also coming together.

With the opening of the new craft brewery right next door, it makes the Island a destination for a great day or night.

The Wine Cafe is open from 10 a.m. to midnight, Monday through Saturday, and 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Sunday.

Follow the Wine Cafe on Facebook or call 815-476-9009.

Wilmington Garden Club open to new members

The Wilmington Garden Club was founded in May of 1937.

It's mission statement is to cultivate the spirit of gardening in the fullest sense together with an appreciation of civic beauty and betterment, in and about Wilmington.

The club met in homes in the early days so membership had to be limited to only 15 with usually a waiting list of many. It was Wilmington's social group.

The teas were usually either early or late on the same day. Attire was always hats and gloves and there were a lot of fashion shows.

The Wilmington Garden Club did flower shows at Navy Pier in Chicago because of its affiliation with the Garden Clubs of Illinois and the National Garden Clubs of America (NGCA) which dictated it.

Members went to their NGCA schools, became judges and shared their knowledge with many garden club in the Chicagoland. The Wilmington Garden Club had a lot to do with the landscaping at Personal Products when they came to town.

Thirty-two years ago the garden club started a Christmas housewalk every

other year on the first Saturday in December. The last one was in 2005. Featured homes were The Andrews Manor bed and breakfast, the Mar Theater with an invitation to come back to see a classic 1937 film later in the day.

Also showcased was the garden club's video of old photographs of Wilmington from the 1930s and 1940s, most donated by Ruth Glenney.

Other homes on the walk were the Tyler's, the Holm's, the historic Shultz's and the famous Shuten octagon home. Garden club ladies dressed in period costumes of the year of the homes origin, making it a great event for Wilmington.

The garden club was instrumental in planting the Blue Star Marker Garden at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in 2001, took over the plantings at the cemetery's main garden the following year, and began doing the arrangements for its Memorial Day celebrations in 1996.

The club paid for two-thirds of the cost of the water fountain at Claire's Corner at Water and Baltimore streets and also paid for the first light on the Millrace.

In June of 2006, with the unlikely death of Riley Fox, the City of Wilmington helped the Wilmington Garden Club to create the Riley Fox Garden and the Children's Memorial Garden. It took seven weeks of devotion and love from the community to dedicate it on July 17, 2006.

The Blue Star Marker Garden was dedicated to the military heroes at the Wilmington VFW 5422 on Nov. 11, 2006. The history behind the Blue Star Markers dates back to World War II.

The NGCA had decided to set up a program which garden clubs could honor our veterans with Blue Star Ribbons all over our national highways. Wilmington's was the first to be installed on Route 66.

The garden club will host an Arbor Day garden rummage sale on Saturday, April 27, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., at Water Street Fitness Center, 315 N. Water St.

The Wilmington Garden Club meets on the third Wednesday of the month at 1 p.m. at Water Street Fitness Center. Join them to learn more about gardening from guest speakers and garden enthusiasts. For more information call Carol at 815-476-2469 or Judy at 815-476-1875.

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Warren's Collision Center will be moving this spring

Warren's Collision Center, currently at 242 N. Front St., Braidwood, will move to 860 EZ St. in the late spring.

The new building under construction boasts 5,000 square feet which will help with the work flow and repair cycle times. It will also have all new equipment to accommodate customers.

After repairing and managing many shops since 1974, owner Warren Wietting opened his own shop 8 years ago, taking all those years of experience to serve customers. Quality repairs and a great staff of six drive his business.

The collision repair business enjoys being part



WARREN'S COLLISION CENTER will relocate late this spring to its new building at 860 EZ St. in Braidwood. The new 5,000 square foot building will have all new equipment.

of the communities and is there to help make the repair process as simple as

possible while providing quality repair. Services include

mobile estimating, free loaner when available, paintless dent removal,

windshields and glass work, rentals and personal claims assistance.

They work with all insurance companies to help customers with life-time warrants.

Staff includes Deanna

McDowell - general manager; Don Paetsch - body, frame and paint tech; Bill Horsley - body and frame tech; Jeremiah Medlon - body and paint tech; and Tim Duran Jr. - parts manager.

All of the staff goes through ongoing training and certifications to keep up on the newest technology on vehicles.

The experience and quality of Warren's staff is the backbone of its great reputation and why the business thrives.

Warren's Collision Center sponsors many area events and several baseball teams.

For more information visit warrenscollision.com, email warren@warrenscollision.com or call 815-458-3300.

Business hours are Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Saturday by appointment.

Let J&C turn your footprints into memories

Angie Hutton at J&C Travel, Inc. can assist you with your travel wishes.

With almost 18 years in the travel industry she is always learning. Although personal hands-on training is her preferred method of learning, she relies heavily on webinars, conferences, trade shows and networking.

This past August Hutton had the privilege of traveling to Jamaica with the Jamaican Tourism Board and AmStar. They did site inspections of some beautiful resorts, but the main

focus was on excursions which they experienced first hand.

Hutton did river rafting, tubing down a river, rode a segway and went to the Appleton Rum Factory. The highlight was swimming with the dolphins and doing the dolphin push. Zip lining and climbing Dunn River Falls was available, as well as eating from roadside vendors.

These excursions are available to book while in Jamaica. Imagine stopping along the road to get corn on the cob.

Travel can be done in many

ways. Take a flight to your destination or choose a cruise that departs from the U.S. and drive to your port of call. How about a train across the U.S., or across Canada? For those who like to cruise but are just tired of the big ships and so many people, try a river cruise.

Hutton is a home based agent. There are 12 agents so if she is out of town there is always someone there for assistance.

By being home based, Hutton sets her own schedule and is available evenings and weekends by appointment. Or let her know if you need a "before work" time to talk.

Agents are often asked "Why use an agent if I can do it myself?" The answer is yes you can, but who will be there to answer your questions?

Would you like a little information on the airport or the area you are going to? Would you like some tips on flying so you can be a little more comfortable? If you are planning a destination celebration do you want some assistance in making sure all your plans are in order and do not change?

Angie can make your trip as stress free as possible.

She will be going to Cancun on a work trip in the next couple of months. Just ask if you have questions about the area.

J&C Travel, Inc has a website...jctravelinc.com

Find Hutton on Facebook at Angie Hutton - J&C Travel. She is located in Braidwood. Contact her at angiehutton@sbcglobal.net or call 815-353-3053 to find a place to meet.

Our roots were planted here 82 years ago and we've been beautifying the community ever since



The Wilmington Garden Club

We are proud to help beautify public gardens like Riley's Park, Claire's Corner, the entrance to Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery and two Blue Star Memorial Marker gardens. Join us April 27, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. for our Arbor Day Garden Rummage Sale - Water St. Fitness Center, 315 N. Water St.

Please come join us

We meet the third Wednesday of the month at 1 p.m. at Water St. Fitness Center 315 N. Water St. Learn more about gardening from guest speakers, garden enthusiasts and more. For details Carol 815-476-2469 or Judy 815-476-1875

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Diamond Therapy devoted to health, well being

Diamond Therapy has been devoted to the community's health and well being for over 20 years.

It is a multidisciplinary practice that offers chiropractic care, massage therapy, nutritional counseling and physical therapy.

Diamond Therapy staff believe that "we are treating the cause, not just the symptoms" and are truly vested in their patients' well-being and will do whatever they can to get you to a better state of health.

It is now the only facility in the area to offer (FDA cleared) advanced decompression therapy which is a non-surgical treatment of bulging, herniated, degenerative, spinal stenosis, ruptured disks, as well as failed surgeries in the cervical and lumbar region.

Decompression therapy effectively enhances the healing process and often renders quick, effective and amazing pain relief that enables most patients to return to a more active lifestyle.

Decompression therapy begins with a series of sessions, typically three to four times per week. Each session is approximately eight to 12 minutes.

During each session, electrical muscle stimulation or ultrasound may be applied to help relax the muscles and promote healing of injured tissues.

After treatment, specific exercises may be prescribed that are designed to help regain proper control and strength of the stabilization muscles which can help create long-term benefits.

At Diamond Therapy Center each patient is treated as a unique individual that requires a customized treatment plan taking into consideration each person's own abilities, needs and goals.

Doctors and therapists are committed to stay advanced in their treatment knowledge by attending numerous seminars and continuing education classes throughout the year.

Through extensive training and expertise, the staff can provide individualized treatment options and better quality of care designed to improve flexibility, stability, strength, and endurance, thereby reducing stress and

muscular fatigue, and allowing patients to recover quickly.

Early diagnosis and treatment of any injury is essential for the best recovery outcome. Treatment can help minimize detrimental effects that may occur, even years later, if injuries are not treated as soon as possible.

The staff at Diamond Therapy Center in Diamond is committed to helping their patients fight these detrimental effects, including chronic illness, injury, pain, fatigue, fibromyalgia and degenerative or arthritic conditions.

Diamond Therapy Center is located at 1370 East Division St. in Diamond. The 3,000 square foot facility features state-of-the-art high performance therapy and rehabilitation equipment in a large open setting with six private rooms available and x-rays on site.

Custom feet orthotics are also offered at Diamond Therapy Center. Orthotics help with balance and stabi-

lization problems, which can cause discomfort or pain in the feet, ankles, knees, hips, back, and possibly up to the shoulder and neck regions.

Improved support in the arches of feet can help fight issues such as poor posture, muscle tension, weakness, fatigue, pain, heel spurs, scoliosis, degenerative and arthritic changes, bunions, plantar fasciitis, and even neurologic conditions.

Diamond Therapy Center also carries items for purchase, including Rock Sauce Ice and Fire, KT and RockTape, Biofreeze lotion, custom-made foot orthotics, exercise balls, resistance tubing, neck and back pillows, TENS units, home traction units, vitamins and supplements.

Diamond Therapy Center is committed to providing exceptional care and service to the community.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, call the center at 815-634-0755.

Striving to provide the best coverage

Jerry Hallahan's goal is simple - continue to work hard to ensure his customers receive the best service and coverage.

Jerry Hallahan State Farm opened its doors in downtown Coal City at the old theater in 1992 with two employees.

In 2008 it moved to its current Diamond location and has six employees, two of which have been added this year to encourage strong customer service practices. Team members are specially licensed in all producers offered and participate in yearly continuing education training.

"The most rewarding part about being a small town agent is looking back at the relationships we've built over the past 26 years," said Hallahan.

Many don't know that the agency offers life, business and pet insurance and has multiple banking

products available including credit cards and vehicle and boat loans.

In spite of the trend of consumers viewing insurance as a commodity, Hallahan believes a large portion of the market wants local representation. His doors are always open.

His goal will always be 100 percent customer satisfaction. When a customer is dissatisfied with their rate, claim or customer service, the experience is used to learn from the mistake, train staff and better themselves for future interactions.

Jerry Hallahan State Farm sponsors the Coal City Soccer Club and contributes to the Coal City Police Department Goose Lake Prairie Partners, American Legion Post 796, Coal City Food Pantry, Coal City High School yearbook, Braidwood Knights of Columbus, Unit

#1 Foundation, Braidwood Police Department, Coal City Winter Guard, Promfest and Big Brothers Big Sisters.

"We are so fortunate to be part of this community and are immensely grateful to everyone who has put their trust in us over the past 26 years," said Hallahan.

Business hours are

Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Saturday by appointment at 1350 E. Division St., Diamond. Visit Jerry Hallahan State Farm Agent on Facebook or on the web at www.jerryhallahan.com. To contact the office call 815-634-2222 or email jerryA@jerryhallahan.com



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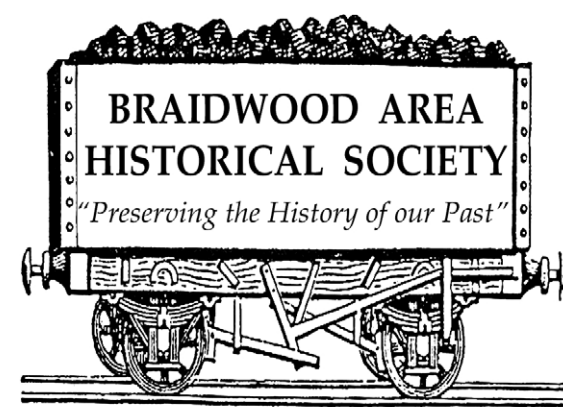
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May - August Sundays Noon - 3:00 p.m.

Longest Realty Group opens local offices

Longest Realty Group in affiliation with @properties is owned by Jerrick and Ivana Longest.

Jerrick and Ivana Longest originally started their business when they lived in Chicago before the housing market crisis.

During that time they decided to move their business back home to their roots and grow from there. They went from working out of their parents' basement, to their home attic, to now - a brand new real estate office at 110 S. Park St.,

Wilmington.

They extensively renovated an old commercial building on the South Island that now houses brand new @properties office which exclusively services their team and its clientele. The newly finished building has two additional office/retail spaces available for lease. Jerrick and Ivana are extremely proud of the finished product and cannot wait to serve clients from the new office space.

Their business is built on relationships, trust and

accountability. It is their utmost responsibility to put our clients' needs and best interests before their own which is why their are a constant presence within the community.

The real estate sales office plans to add to their team and finalizing the design of the office space. They are also excited to host client and community events from our new location.

Longest Realty Group helps its clients buy, sell, invest and rent residential real estate. Marketing

packages are tailored to fit the budget and needs of each individual client.

Unique services include professional photography and videography, virtual staging, home staging consultations, professional print and remodeling advice for a better return on investment. Longest Realty Group is taking its video capabilities and social media presence to the next level.

More than 435 homes have successfully closed and Longest Realty Group have overcome

numerous hurdles along the way by utilizing our vast network of trusted lenders, contractors and service professionals. To date over \$85 million dollars of real estate has been sold.

There are currently over 2,720 licensed brokers with @properties. Since 2013 Jerrick and Ivana been on the top 100 list of their peers for their annual transactional volume. On average they close \$12 million in sales per year.

Online real estate brokers such as Redfin.com, ForSaleByOwner.com, and ByOwner.com promote deceptive ads which only account for the listing portion of the compensation and not the selling portion of the compensation.

Sellers believe they will be getting a full service broker at a deeply discounted rate of 1 percent, but in reality they will pay a total of 3.5 to 5 percent of their sales price for brokerage fees - which is what Longest Realty Group charges for actual full ser-

vice.

The realty group contributes to St. Rose School, Wilmington Baseball and Softball Association, Community Foundation for Wilmington Parks Recreation and Improvement, Wilmington Bobcats, The Wilmington Coalition for a Healthy Community and Promfest.

Watch for Hump Day Giveaways via Facebook at facebook.com/LongestRealtyGroup. These live videos will air on Wednesday afternoons during the lunch hours of noon to 1 p.m.. Goodies will be given away and the realty group will team up with local businesses to highlight their goods or services.

Office hours are Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Weekends are by appointment only.

Call Jerrick at 815-791-6552 or Ivana at 773-617-8440, email LRG@atproperties.com or visit LongestRealtyGroup.com.

Bob's Advanced Auto & Tire keeps you moving

Since opening Bob's Advanced Auto & Tire in 2010, Bob Davis has experienced a steady growth in business to become one of area's leading auto repair and service specialist.

Davis is always looking out for his customers, his goal is to keep the community moving be it a set of new tires, routine maintenance or an overhaul of your vehicle's engine.

"What a great experience with this business. On the way to Chicago we blew a tire. They were there to help in minutes, had the spare on, and

charged us nothing. So kind, friendly and helpful. Insisted we pay it forward," stated Barbara C.

Bob's Advanced Auto specializes in complete auto and light truck repair, as well as tire repair and replacement.

Services include, but are not limited to, computer diagnostics, engine repairs and overhauls, belt replacement, muffler repairs, electrical diagnosis and repairs, transmission service, repair and replacement and full computerized wheel alignment.

The shop also offers fuel system service, oil changes and filter replacement, as well as battery replacement and towing service.

"We pride ourselves in providing expert auto repair and maintenance service. We dedicate ourselves to doing faster, more reliable services. Most repairs and maintenance is completed the same day. We have the technicians, vendor relationships and the service bays to make sure this happens," said Davis, an ASE master certified tech.

All of the service technicians at Bob's Advanced Auto are ASE certified and utilize state-of-the-art equipment.

"Our customers know we care about them and their cars. Most of our customers have been with us for many years. We have grown our business based on referrals of satisfied customers," Davis said.

Davis, his wife Debbie, and the staff are involved in the community and the shop supports numerous fundraisers and community events.

"They are the family mechanic. We take all nine of our cars there. Very friendly, honest and just great people. The owner, Bob Davis, is very humble and friendly and so is his son. Overall, just a great experience and amazing people," stated Andrew M. Located at 60 E. Chestnut St., the shop is open Monday-Friday from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. To make an appointment or schedule a tow call 815-634-0004.

To keep up with what's going on at the shop like Bob's Advanced Auto & Tire, Inc. on Facebook. A full list of services, testimonials and even a 360-degree view of the shop can be found on the businesses webpage at www.bobsadvancedautoandtire.com.



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THE REEVES AND Baskerville Funeral Homes staff includes (front, from left) John P. Fonck, CPC; Violette Baskerville, CPC, CFC; Mathew Baskerville, CFSP, CPC, CCO, CFC; grief therapy dog Katie; Sheila Allen; Alex P. Nolan and Jim Benuska. Back: Cecillia Storbeck, Robin Cirrencione, Scott Kuriger, Allison Anderson, Ray Baskerville, Kenna Baskerville, Gregory Reeves, Kay Attaway, Leo Reeves, Karen Reeves, Dr. Craig Eckert, Marylou Robertson, Janice Hibler, Sandy Dransfeldt, John Hollmeyer, Karen Guest, Terri Scerine and Ellen Peredetto.

Reeves and Baskerville Funeral Homes dedicated to serving communities

Last year was busy and productive for Reeves and Baskerville Funeral Homes and team members.

In March, Matt Baskerville was invited to be a presenter at the Funeral Service Foundation and National Funeral Directors Association - Meet the Mentors Conference held at Emory University in Atlanta, GA.

Matt was one of three Mentors to present to 50 young, newly licensed funeral directors from across the country and beyond. He was the first Mentor to have been invited who attended the very same program as a "Mentee" at Harvard University in Cambridge, MA.

He presented on "Creating a Legacy from the First Generation".

In May, Funeral Director Alex Nolan attended an Embalming and Restorative Art Seminar at Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science where he spent two days learning techniques from some of the most renowned funeral service professionals in the country.

"You can never stop learning," said Baskerville. "Ultimately our continued knowledge and expertise is for the benefit of the families that we serve."

In October, Matt attended the National Funeral Directors Association International Convention and Expo held in Salt Lake City, UT.

In addition to attending more than 16 hours of continuing education seminars in funeral service, he also participated in a panel workshop on pursuing excellence in your hometown community, and was a presenter for a workshop focused on tragic death and the importance of every life deserving a tribute.

The convention was also a source to introduce hundreds of new funeral products, services and resources as well as to

provide networking among funeral directors across the country and the world.

"I feel it is truly important to be abreast of the newest offerings that we can provide to the families that we serve," said Baskerville.

"I am humbled to know that so many of the offerings and services that our funeral homes piloted and introduced to the communities over the past years, have become service standards locally."

From video tributes, fingerprint and handmade memorial keepsakes, online presence and offerings, personal memorial walls, and interactive social media (to mention a few); to being the first to not only introduce, but offer Green Eco-Friendly Flameless Cremation in the area; you can always count on Reeves and Baskerville Funeral Homes to be at the forefront of current and relative resources.

While in Salt Lake City, Baskerville also had the opportunity to speak at the convention about the importance of being a Certified Prearrangement Consultant (CPC).

"With families choosing to preplan their services more than in years past, understanding our professional and ethical obligations when it comes to serving families is more important than ever," indicated, Baskerville.

"This is why our staff have gone above and beyond to become Certified Prearrangement Consultants."

In addition to having Certified Prearrangement Consultants, Reeves and Baskerville Funeral Homes are also proud to be some of the only local funeral homes to have Certified Crematory Operators and Certified Celebrants on staff.

Baskerville is also designated as a

Certified Funeral Service Practitioner, through the Academy of Professional Funeral Service Practice. Just another simple demonstration of this firm's commitment to life-long learning and excellence in funeral service.

In December of 2018, Reeves and Baskerville released their "Preplanning and Bereavement Guide" which was put together with the assistance of several of the funeral homes friends and business sponsors locally.

This magazine-style publication includes a vast amount of information on practically everything you need to know when planning a funeral as well as details to address following a funeral. The publication is currently being circulated throughout all of the communities, and available at all of the funeral home locations. Everyone is welcome to pick up a copy, or contact the funeral home to have one mailed.

The entire family of staff understand relationships and grief. They possess years of experience, skill, and knowledge to compassionately help survivors through all of the decisions that occur at a time of loss, and can sensibly guide individuals at a time of advance planning needs, as well.

It is the mission, passion and purpose of Reeves and Baskerville Funeral Homes, to provide a personal, meaningful, and healing funeral or memorial experience for every family. They strive to be innovative, progressive, and proactive in designing a tribute to a life lived, and to accomplish this within the framework of one's individual faith, traditions, and customs.

Matt Baskerville, Funeral Director/President, is a Certified Funeral Service Practitioner (CFSP), Certified

Prearrangement Consultant (CPC), Certified Crematory Operator (CCO) and Certified Funeral Celebrant (CFC).

He works alongside funeral director Alex Nolan, CCO; funeral director Jim Benuska; Business Manager and Aftercare Specialist John Fonck, CPC; Advance Funeral Planning Consultant and Celebrant Violette Baskerville, CPC, CFC; and Executive Administrator Sheila Allen.

A host of dedicated support staff who represent their services, welcome you to the funeral homes, and maintain the facilities includes Ray and Kenna Baskerville, Scott Kuriger, Sandi Dransfeldt, Jan Hibler, John Hollmeyer, Kay Attaway, Robin Cirrencione, Don Jensen, Dr. Craig Eckert, Gregory Reeves, Joe Fonck, Cecilia Storbeck, Julie Leiter, Mary Rossio, Jan Issert, Karen Guest and Diane Schaal.

Leo and Karen Reeves, as well as Roger Freitag also continue to be active advisors and continuous support to the operations.

Since welcoming Katie, the funeral homes grief therapy dog, the 14 pound King Charles Cavalier Spaniel has already comforted and put smiles on countless family members, attendees and children in the funeral homes.

She is currently still undergoing training, and is anticipated to begin formal grief therapy school later in 2019. Katie has become one of the most popular team members of the funeral home, and as she matures and completes her training, she will be seen more not only in the funeral homes, but throughout the communities.

Century 21 Coleman-Hornsby receives highest customer service award

The year 2018 was a very good one for Century 21 Coleman-Hornsby as they once again proved that they are unsurpassed in sales, service to their clients and dedication to the communities they serve.

Century 21 Coleman-Hornsby finished 2018 as the number one office for home sales in Morris and Grundy County, and in fact sold twice as many Morris homes as any other real estate office and 50 percent more Grundy County homes than any other real estate office.

However, it is not enough to sell far more local homes than any other real estate office because at Century 21 Coleman-Hornsby outstanding sales and client satisfaction are both equally important.

In fact, the office was recently awarded the 2018 Century 21 Quality Service



THE CENTURY 21 Coleman-Hornsby winning team of agents includes (front, from left) Tom Wawczak, Betty Piotrowski, Kelly Adamick, Theresa Lamb, Lorrie Toler, JoEllyn Johnson and Anni Romines. Back: Jim Maskel, Tami Ferguson, Rodney Baudino, Zachary Hornsby, Terri Kief, Kim Garretson, Bruce Flatness and Shawn Hornsby.

Pinnacle Award for outstanding customer service, the highest customer service award bestowed to any Century 21 office.

Besides their sales and service commitment they are also dedicated to giving back to the communities

they serve. In 2018 they raised over \$30,000 for area non-profit organizations and were recognized as the number one supporter of Easter Seals of all the Century 21 offices in Chicagoland and Northwestern Indiana.

Other local groups

they have raised money for include: Grundy County Historical Society, Grundy County Corn Festival, Morris Hospital Auxiliary, Team Make a Difference, Morris High School Athletic programs, local grade schools and numerous other organizations.

A number of agents also serve on the board of directors for several local organizations.

Explaining their success, broker and owner Shawn Hornsby said, "Our agents amaze me. While maintaining the highest level of sales, our agents continue to exceed their clients' expectations and also give back to the communities that they serve.

These are all components of a successful office.

"As a company we are committed to staying on the cutting edge of technology, as well as utilizing the many tools available to us through our Century 21 franchise affiliation."

The winning team of agents at Century 21 Coleman-Hornsby are: Anni Romines, Betty Piotrowski, Bruce Flatness, Christy Schmaedeke, Della Coughlin, JoEllyn Johnson, Kelly Adamick, Kim Garretson, Rodney Baudino, Tami Ferguson, Terri Kief, Theresa Lamb, Jim Maskel, Lorrie Toler, Tom Wawczak, Walter Castelluccio, Zachary Hornsby and Shawn Hornsby. Marni Van Cleave is the Office Coordinator.

Century 21 Coleman-Hornsby is located in the Morris Business and Technology Center at 1802 N. Division St., Morris. They are open seven days a week and specialize in residential, vacant land, farms, commercial and industrial properties.

Reeves/Baskerville

Continued from page 14

The National Funeral Directors Association Chief Executive Officer Christine Pepper commended the funeral homes saying, "Reeves and Baskerville Funeral Homes reflect a clear determination to exceed the expectations of those they serve... Families can be assured of the high-quality, compassionate service they will receive the moment they walk through the funeral homes' front door."

The funeral homes continue to be awarded the National Funeral Directors Associations most prestigious award; The Pursuit of Excellence Eagle Award.

Reeves Funeral Home in Coal City benchmarked its 12th year, and Baskerville Funeral Home in Wilmington was bestowed the award for the 9th year. This prestigious honor is awarded to NFDA-member funeral homes that consistently exceed business standards set forth by the Pursuit of Excellence program.

"This award may not be important to those who read of our funeral homes receiving it year after year, but what is important is what we do to earn it," said Baskerville. "We are extremely proud to be a progressive and innovative leader in funeral and cremation services."

In addition to Reeves and Baskerville being honored internationally in 2018, they were also a recipient of the first annual Illinois Award of Funeral Service Distinction which placed them with only 10 other funeral homes across the state.

Reeves and Baskerville have locations in Coal City, Gardner, Morris and Wilmington.

Through countless professional relationships with other funeral homes, Reeves and Baskerville Funeral Homes can also accommodate out of town arrangements.

"We remain dedicated to the loving and sensitive care of people in times of need, all while honoring and remembering that human life is unique and irreplaceable," Baskerville said.

For more visit www.Reeves-Baskerville.com.

Head to Mustachio's Bar and Grill

Have you eaten at Mustachio's Bar and Grill in Carbon Hill? Try their Hoagie and giant pork tenderloin.

On Sundays bone-in or boneless wings are served. The cod sandwich is one of their most popular items. Prime rib is offered on the first Saturday of each month and crab leg on the third Saturday of each month.

Corned beef and cabbage will be served on Saturday and Sunday, March 16-17.

Mustachio's, at 785 3rd St., was purchased three years ago by Steve and Diane Eartly. The history of the building has been written by Michelle Micetich of the Carbon Hill Museum.

Diane likes the meeting the everyday challenges, conversing daily with regular customer and serving good quality food.

Katie Eartly manages the bar and grill that employs 15. All cooks are Illinois ServSafe and Illinois Food Allergen certified. Bartenders are Illinois BASSET certified.

Kitchen hours are Sunday through Thursday, 11

a.m. to 9 p.m., and Friday and Saturday, 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. The bar is open until 11 p.m. Weekend hours vary.

A new menu with addition items will be introduced this year. And a stone pizza oven is still a possibility. Plans are being made to expand the kitchen, and a covered pavilion off the outside patio is a possibility.

Mustachio's Bar and Grill has hosted weddings, and graduation, birthday and retirement parties.

It will participate in Reunion Palooza in Carbon Hill in July with a food stand and will sell pork chop sandwiches on the corner the Sunday of the Carbon Hill Homecoming. And don't forget the annual Beach Bash on the patio in the late summer.

Mustachio's sponsors a Carbon Hill softball league and supports the Coal City Unit #1 Education, Hope Helps, Coal City High School Promfest, the Carbon Hill Museum and Veterans' Operation Firm Handshake.

Visit Mustachio's Bar and Grill on Facebook, or call 815-518-5411.

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Book your private event at Sunshine Garden Center

Sunshine Garden Center is a second generation garden center located at 2850 E. Division St., Diamond.

Last year, steps were taken to host private events in addition to the growing community events that are hosted. Significant improvements were made to the display areas and gardens.

This year customers will see a more prominent focus product mix, inspiration and ideas, unique items and a more comfortable shopping environment.

With the opening of new businesses in Coal City the focus is turning to gardening and unique gifts with the addition of private event venue space.

Sunshine Garden Center will continue to tweak its layout to make it easier to maneuver and shop.

Last summer two back greenhouses were removed to incorporate a more fluid and enjoyable shopping experience.

Make and Take classes are coming back and evolving with current trends. There are plans to bring educational and how-to seminars into the mix as well. This will be the

fifth year for the Fairy and Pirate Festival in June.

Starting April 13, owner Sarah Beach will start the Kids in the Garden series again. There are also plans for a Meet Me in the Garden series once a month, complete with food trucks and entertainment.

Other events in the planning stage for 2019 are Farm to Table dinners, a Children's Small Business Fair, and the return of Scarecrows on Parade to name a few.

The biggest announcement yet is that the garden center is actively booking private events. Packages range from small gatherings for a girls night out or private make and take class to team building.

There are also packages for larger scale events such as family reunions, weddings and holiday parties. Rent the greenhouse or one of the gardens for a truly unique venue.

Find Sunshine Garden Center at sunshinegarden-center.com, or on Twitter @SLGC, Facebook and Instagram for information about events, classes, seminars, new arrivals and general what's happening now.



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