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Vol. 19, No. 49

The Prairie News

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Construction projects finalized at Stark County schools

By **JOHN A. BALLENTINE**
For The Prairie News

WYOMING – After several busy years of construction, Superintendent Brett Elliott told the Stark County Board of Education on Jan. 17 that several projects are now completed.

The new library at the Toulon campuses is now open, along with the new corridor and restrooms. Furniture for the new library is due in late February.

Also completed is a flooring

project at the Junior High building to install new carpeting and hard flooring in the hallways and classrooms.

Elliott said the high school gymnasium has been painted and new conference banners for both gyms have been ordered. New outdoor signage for the Wyoming Athletic Complex is to arrive in the next few weeks.

The school district is contacting individuals who formed a committee of 10 to establish the

new Stark County school district as part of a 30-year celebration. They will be honored at halftime at the Feb. 10 home basketball game.

The board conducted the first reading without action on the school calendar for 2023-24. The first day of school will be Aug. 15 and eighth grade promotion is May 15, 2024 with the high school graduation set on May 12, 2024.

The last day of school will be

May 23, 2024. Thanksgiving break is Nov. 22-24, winter break is Dec. 20 to Jan. 5, 2024 and spring break is March 29 to April 5, 2024. Early release (1:45 p.m.) will be from Aug. 15 through Labor Day.

High School Principal Megan McGann presented a first reading of a proposed 2023-24 high school curriculum guide to the board.

Also, the board approved the transfer of funds in the amount

of \$141,954 to pay off the final construction costs of the new high school building.

After executive closed session, the board announced the resignations of Kylie Schaub as elementary school preschool aide and bus aide effective May 26; the resignation of SCAC supervisor April Hall-Sies effective Jan. 13; and the resignation of Shawna Cassidy as a school nurse, Barb Ingels of the kitchen staff and

Continued on Page 2

First lawsuits filed regarding weapons ban

By **HANNAH MEISEL**
Capitol News Illinois

SPRINGFIELD – A trio of gun owners and a firearms retailer in southeastern Illinois have filed the first two lawsuits in what's expected to be a flurry of litigation against the state's new law banning the sale and manufacture of assault weapons in Illinois.

Democratic leaders who pushed the ban had expected legal challenges. Senate President Don Harmon, who sponsored the legislation during lawmakers' "lame duck" session last week, even closed his arguments during floor debate with a pithy "see you in court."

Even before Gov. JB Pritzker signed the bill into law, the Illinois State Rifle Association responded in a statement saying, "challenge accepted."

As of Tuesday afternoon – nearly a week after Pritzker's signature on the legislation – the group still hadn't filed its lawsuit, but ISRA's executive director Richard Pearson said he'd be "filing a federal lawsuit imminently."

Continued on Page 2

STARK COUNTY QUEEN

Wilson competing in state pageant

By **JOHN A. BALLENTINE**
For The Prairie News

WYOMING – Stark County Fair Queen Maddie Wilson, of Wyoming, will compete in this year's 2023 Miss Illinois County Fair Pageant, in Springfield, at the Crowne Plaza this weekend. The State-wide pageant is part of the 112th Annual Convention for the Illinois Association of Agricultural Fairs.

Wilson, 21, is one of 73 county fair queens from Illinois vying for the title of 2023 Miss Illinois County Fair Queen. The pageant is a five-day event that started Wednesday and concludes with the Queen's crowning on Sunday, Jan. 22.

The 73 queens will be trimmed down to final 15 contestants.

"I go there Wednesday night and then we have some practices going on. My interview will be on Friday morning and then Saturday will be the preliminary competition where I am contestant



Maddie Wilson of Wyoming will compete in the 2023 Miss Illinois County Fair Queen pageant in Springfield.

number three in the afternoon group at 1 p.m.," Wilson explained.

"Sunday will be the finals of the top 15 contestants. I would do my speech

Continued on Page 2

Wyoming funds improvement of three buildings

By **JOHN A. BALLENTINE**
For The Prairie News

WYOMING – The City of Wyoming approved at its Jan. 17 council meeting measures and resolutions to improve and upgrade three downtown buildings.

Economic Development Advisor Denny Rewerts presented an application for Melody Anderson, owner of A Few of My Favorite Things, to add the "barn-like" building at 108 S. 7th Street that is located just north of her current business building.

Rewerts said that Anderson plans to incorporate the building into her existing business. She will be covering the outside of the structure with metal. Total cost of this project is \$11,500 with \$3,000 from a TIF Grant.

Ernie Unhold has applied for a grant of \$13,000 and a loan of \$5,000 at 2 percent interest rate for three years to refurbish the building at 112 S. 7th Street. The plan is for the building to be used by an auto mechanic. No gasoline will be sold there, but auto repairs will make up the majority of the business.

The former Curry's Pizza building at 104

Continued on Page 2

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Terms: This home will sell in "as-is" condition, property will sell subject to seller confirmation (this is not a absolute auction), a \$2,500 non refundable earnest money deposit will be due at the conclusion of the auction, balance will be due at closing which will be around February 28, taxes will be pro rated to that date and possession will be given at closing. Purchasing this home is not contingent on you getting financing or any inspections. Financing and inspections should be made prior to the auction.

For pictures, updates and a virtual tour please go to auctionzip.com or my facebook page.

Arvilla Scollon executor Virgil Thurman attorney



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LAWSUITS: Lawyer cites democratic idealism

Continued from Page 1

Meanwhile, Wood River-based attorney Thomas Maag filed suit Friday afternoon in Crawford County on behalf of three gun owners. Despite longer odds for success in a non-federal court venue, Maag on Tuesday framed his 16-page lawsuit as democratic idealism.

"State court is the court that's closest to the people," Maag said. "The people affected by this (law) are people in the state of Illinois. We think state court can clean up the mess created by the governor and

legislature of the state of Illinois."

The assault weapons ban, which will ban Illinoisans from buying new assault-style rifles in the state, will require those who already own such firearms as of Jan. 1, 2024, to register those guns with the state police.

Illinois is the ninth state to enact some form of a ban on assault weapons, all of which have survived legal challenges so far. But gun rights advocates are counting on the U.S. Supreme Court's decision last year striking down New York state's handgun-licensing law to usher in a

more permissive interpretation of the Second Amendment.

Along with Maag's lawsuit, unsuccessful Republican attorney general candidate Tom DeVore filed suit over the assault weapons ban in Effingham County, and on Tuesday touted a preliminary hearing in the case expected Wednesday. DeVore, who made a name for himself filing lawsuits over Pritzker's COVID-19 restrictions in 2020 and 2021, filed suit on behalf of Effingham-based gun retailer and shooting range Accuracy Firearms LLC.

WYOMING: Curry's Pizza building to be renovated

Continued from Page 1

E. Williams St. will be rehabilitated and renovated to make into a rental property. Marcus Wilson has requested a \$13,000 grant from the Wyoming TIF district to help defray the renovation costs.

The council approved a payment of \$12,559 to Leander Construction, Inc. for work completed on Wyoming's Wastewater Treatment Plant refurbishing project.

A \$1,000 donation to the Stark

County Parents' Club to sponsor prizes for a Read-A-Thon was approved. This is part of the club's

fundraising effort for the benefit of the Stark County Elementary School.

SCHOOL: Board held winter retreat

Continued from Page 1

Morgan Coats as custodian.

Approved was Chad Acree as girls' basketball assistant coach and Austin Pinon as bass fishing coach.

The board held a winter retreat on Jan. 17 and took a tour of the high

school and junior high school classrooms and the new construction in Toulon. They toured, in Wyoming, the Athletic Complex and elementary school classrooms. The board discussed short and long term goals for the school district.

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WILSON: Plans include teaching

Continued from Page 1 and everything," said Wilson, who plans to speak on mental health as it pertains to college athletes.

If she advances, Wilson will participate as a final 15 contestant in a four-minute interview and will model an evening gown and a one-piece swimsuit. Her gown is a brilliant red with a long train, while her interview suit is emerald green. The swimsuit is a

bright turquoise blue.

Wilson will reign for one year if chosen and would attend the Illinois State Fair and the DuQuoin State Fair, among other appearances.

At the pageant, Wilson will be chaperoned by Miss Stark County Fair Queen Pageant Co-Director Taylor Edge. Friends and family will make up an entourage accompanying Wilson to the pageant. Wil-

son's parents are Matt and Suzanne Wilson.

Wilson is a junior at Monmouth College and is pursuing a bachelor's degree in elementary education. She plans to teach after her 2024 graduation in a rural school district.

Wilson's future plans include earning a master's degree and a doctorate to gain a rural school district administration position.

"I'm really excited to be able to represent Stark County with the best of my ability. I want to thank everybody for all the good wishes," Wilson said.

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PUBLIC RECORD

**Incidents & Accidents
Stark County**

1-9 - Israel Retamoza, 19, Wyoming, was cited for not having a valid driver's license, driving with no insurance and having a non-valid vehicle registration.

1-13 - Rachel W. Newton, 46, La-Fayette, was arrested on a Henry County warrant for failure to appear on the original charges of driving without insurance and for depositing material on a roadway. Unable to post \$100 cash bond she was extradited to the Henry County Jail.

1-14 - Gregory G. Whittaker, 81, Warsaw, Mo., was cited for failure to transfer a vehicle title, driving with no vehicle insurance and unlawful use of a vehicle registration. He was released with a notice to appear.

Galva Report

Officer dispatched:

1-9 - Officer followed up on a theft complaint from last week. The suspect and the victim had made arrangements on their own and resolved the issue.

1-10 - to the 200 block of SE 3rd Ave. for a complaint involving a loose and aggressive dog coming after him. The animal owner was warned and reminded it is their responsibility to keep dog contained.

1-10 - Officer was notified that a repossession was taking place in the 200 block of NW 1st Ave. There were no issues and the vehicle was recovered.

1-10 - to the 400 block of NW 3rd Ave. for a complaint involving damage to property from a vehicle driving through neighbor's yard.

1-10 - Officer spoke to a subject by telephone who wanted to report a civil issue involving personal property.

1-11 - As the result of a traffic stop in the 00 block of SE 2nd St., Patrick Hammons, 66, Galva, was cited for operating a vehicle with suspended registration. He was released with a required court date.

1-11 - to assist the fire department with a call involving the odor of natural gas in the 800 block of NE 2nd Ave.

1-11 - to the 600 block of NW 1st St. to investigate a suspicious car that was seen on security camera parked in the driveway. Officer checked the area and was not able to locate vehicle in question.

1-11 - Officer was advised on a traffic complaint involving a pedestrian being "bumped" by a vehicle in the 200 block of Morgan Rd.

1-11 - to the 400 block of SE 1st St. to assist a subject having a mental health crisis.

1-12 - to the 400 block of NE 1st St. in reference to a theft complaint. This is still pending.

1-12 - to the 400 block of SE 1st St. to assist a subject having a mental health crisis.

1-12 - Officer was flagged down in the 100 block of Market St. for a child-custody dispute.

1-12 - to the 400 block of SE 1st St. for a harassment/threat complaint.

1-12 - to the 00 block of SE 2nd Ave. for a trespassing complaint. This complaint was unfounded.

1-13 - to the 400 block of SE 1st St. to remove an unwanted subject.

1-13 - along with the fire department, were dispatched to investigate the odor of natural gas in the 400 block of W. Division St.

1-14 - Officer was advised that a citizen needed their water turned off at a residence after a pipe broke in the 300 block of NW 1st St. Owner was able to get the valve shut off before water department arrived.

1-14 - along with the fire department, were again dispatched to investigate the odor of natural gas in the 400 block of W. Division St. The leak was located and Ameren shut gas off.

Peoria County report

1-5 - Ice was a factor in two two-vehicle accidents that took place within about 45 minutes of each other at the same location south of

Edelstein. No injuries were reported in either accident. Both took place on Illinois Route 40, about one-quarter mile north of Hallock Hollow Road.

About 8 a.m., Angela M. Janey of Bradford was driving a 2005 Pontiac Vibe south on Route 40 when the vehicle began to slide, according to a Peoria County Sheriff's Office report. Eventually it slid into the rear of a 2018 Jeep Grand Cherokee driven by Carrie L Thomas of Princeville.

Not long thereafter, Charity N. Turnbull of Toulon was driving a southbound 2012 Buick LaCrosse that slid into the rear of a 2019 Honda Civic driven by Cassidy R. Halsne of Henry.

Janey and Turnbull said they attempted to slow their vehicles, to no avail, according to sheriff's office reports. In both accidents, more than \$1,500 in damage was reported, but no vehicles were towed.

Property Transfers

1-12 - Bonnie L. Kieser, Dec'd to K&K Limited Partnership - Pts 7-14-7 SE & 2-14-6 SE & 11-14-6 NE - Consideration = \$2,451,000.

1-12 - Bertha J. Herrmann & Darlene J. Leman to Jeffrey Alan Kieser, Exec & Robert D. Kieser, Exec - Pt 16-12-7 SW - Consideration = \$0.

1-12 - Jeffrey Alan Kieser Exec & Robert Daniel Kieser Exec to Megan D. Kieser - Pt 16-12-7 SE - Consideration = \$650,000.

1-12 - Angela M. & Randy E. Tuthill to Angela M. & Randy E. Tuthill - Pts 18-12-7 NE, 27-13-6 SE, 27-13-6 SW, 13-12-6 NE, 13-12-6 SE, 34-131-6 NE, & 13-12-6 SW - 12560 Twp Rd 400 N, Wyoming - Consideration = \$0.

1-12 - Angela M. & Randy E. Tuthill to Angela M. & Randy E. Tuthill - Pt 27-13-6 NE - 9768 Grain Bin Road, Wyoming - Consideration = \$0.

1-13 - McCurdy Enterprises, Inc. to Daniel Berchtold Jr. - Pt 5-13-7 NE & Pt Plus Ease 4-13-7 NW - Consideration = \$130,000.

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BRIEFS

Sheriffs want no role in state weapon registry

SPRINGFIELD – Dozens of county sheriffs in Illinois – approximately “80-ish,” per Illinois Sheriffs’ Association head Jim Kaitschuck – say they’ll refuse to enforce a provision of a new assault weapons ban that would require owners of such guns to register them with the state.

In the wake of Gov. JB Pritzker’s signature on the law banning the sale and manufacture of assault weapons in Illinois, many sheriffs have written nearly identical letters expressing their unwillingness to enforce the law’s requirement for registering assault-style weapons with the state.

Beginning next year, a gun owner’s failure to provide the state police with the serial numbers for assault-style rifles they own prior to Jan. 1, 2024, will be a Class A misdemeanor, punishable by up to 364 days in prison. The degree of charges could increase based on the number of unregistered guns.

But Kaitschuck contended it would be impossible for local sheriffs to know who in their county owns assault weapons if those gun owners don’t voluntarily comply

with the law, suggesting it would be ridiculous to go door-to-door to find out.

Winter game nights at Vasa National Archive

BISHOP HILL – Do you have board games, card games, or other games lying around the house that don’t get played as often as you’d like? Are you looking for a fun way to get to know your neighbors during the long winter nights? If you answered yes, come to the Vasa National Archive’s Game Nights this winter.

The Vasa National Archive in Bishop Hill will be hosting Game Nights on Tuesday evenings from 6-8 p.m., weather permitting. The public is welcome to bring their board games, card games or come by themselves to enjoy the fun. Participants are welcomed to bring their own snacks or beverages. Sanitizer will be provided.

Game nights will begin on Jan. 24 and continue through March 28 in the archive’s basement, which is accessible through the south side door. Lift chairs are available for people with mobility issues.

The Vasa National Archives is located at the corner of Knox St. and S. Bishop Hill St. in historic Bishop

Hill. For more information, contact the Vasa National Archives at VasaArchivist@gmail.com, at (309) 927-3898, or on Facebook.

College graduates

• **Matthew Bowen** of Wyoming received a bachelor of science in education in middle level teaching and learning in December of 2022 at Northern Illinois University.

• Several local students completed their respective program requirements at Western Illinois University during the fall 2022 semester. They are: **Shayna Mari Baumann** (Master of Science in Education, Reading) and **Gregory B Knowles** (Bachelor of Science, Construction & Facilities Management) both of Toulon; and **Kaitlyn Marie Nordstrom** (Master of Science in Education, Elementary Education) of Galva.

College honors

Caleb Raineri of Toulon and **Shaunta Teague** of Wyoming made the Dean’s list (3.5 gpa or better) at Bradley University for the fall 2022 semester.

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EVs will cut into motor fuel tax

By **NIKA SCHOONOVER**
Capitol News Illinois

SPRINGFIELD – Despite Illinois' efforts to smoothly integrate electric vehicles into the state's economy, a new report from the Illinois Economic Policy Institute is warning of a potential steep decline in transportation revenue as the process of electrification accelerates.

The primary issue is motor fuel taxes, which will see a significant drop as more electric vehicles make their way to the road and fewer people fill their cars with gas.

Since motor fuel taxes make up the backbone of state funding for road and bridge projects, ILEPI, which has strong ties to organized labor, warned in its report that new revenue sources will have to be identified to ensure the state's 10-year capital im-

provements plan remains on track.

Motor fuel tax is the state's leading source of transportation funding and makes up 52 percent of Illinois' total transportation revenue and 82 percent of its contributions to the federal highway trust fund.

The report's main recommendation is implementing a vehicle miles traveled, or VMT, fee which would replace the existing motor fuel tax with a fee determined by the number of

miles a car travels on Illinois roads.

Pritzker has not made a serious legislative push for a VMT, and spokesperson Alex Gough said in an email Monday he has no plans to do so.

The total state and federal revenue loss over the next decade is estimated at \$4.3 billion. That would be especially threatening to the back half of Pritzker's 10-year, \$45 billion capital infrastructure plan known as Rebuild Illinois.

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CHURCH DIRECTORY

Toulon, LaFayette & West Jersey United Methodist Church

Rev. Leon D. Pomeroy
229 W. Main St., PO Box 538, Toulon, IL 61483
(812) 698-9294
Sunday Worship: LaFayette - 9 a.m. 1st & 3rd Sunday
(Pastor), 2nd & 4th Sunday (Lay Speaker);
West Jersey 9 a.m. 1st & 3rd Sunday (Lay Speaker), 2nd & 4th
Sunday (Pastor); Toulon Sunday School: 9:15 a.m., All Ages.
Sunday Worship: 10:30 a.m.
Check us out on Facebook @ Toulon United Methodist Church

Elmira United Presbyterian Church

Rev. Art Blegen
7874 State Route 93, Toulon, IL 61483
(309) 896-3481
Services each Sunday at 9:00 a.m.
<https://www.facebook.com/Elmirachurch1852>

The Gathering Church

Location: 105 N. 7th St., Wyoming, IL 61491
Sunday mornings @ 10:30 a.m.
Mail: PO Box 322, Wyoming, IL 61491
email: info@thegathering.life
web: <https://www.thegathering.life/>
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1st Congregational Church of Toulon

218 N. Henderson St., Toulon
Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m.
Email fcctoulon@gmail.com
website: firstcongregationaltoulon.org

Galva Congregational Church

Pastor Marshall Jones
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204 N. 7th St., PO Box 35, Wyoming, IL 61491
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1-309-932-3346
Facebook: Messiah Lutheran—Galva, IL

Galva First United Methodist Church

Rev. Rebecca Gearhart
214 NW 2nd Ave., Galva, IL 61434
(309) 932-2460
preachinghope@gmail.com
galvafirst@gmail.com
Sunday Worship: 9:00

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OBITUARIES

Robert C. Clark

WYOMING – Robert C. "Bob" Clark, 79, of Wyoming, passed away peacefully at his residence on Friday, Jan. 13, 2023, following a two-year battle with acute myeloid leukemia (AML), a journey shared by his loving wife, children and their families. Bob was born on April 3, 1943, in Chicago to Harry W. Clark and Jeanette I. (McCullough) Clark.



Clark

He married Sandra A. "Sandi" (Ferris) Webber on July 7, 1979, which marked the beginning of a close-knit blended family including his daughter, Terri (Kelvin) Dudley, and Sandi's children, Lynne (Paul) Knobloch, Wendy (Tim) Wagner and Rich (Tanya) Webber.

He is survived by his wife; four children; 14 grandchildren, Zach (Daniela) Knobloch, Chelsea (Derek) Hendrick, Shelby (Kolby) Haars, Logan (Cassidy Baxter) Knobloch, Mark Wagner, Evan (Courtney) Webber, Shailar (Ian Vrooman) Webber, Corbin and Bria Webber, David (Karleena) Wade and Danny (Megan) Wade, Tiffanie (Josh) Cooler, Stephanie (Kylee) Pagan and

A.J. Blackwell; 17 great-grandchildren; and one great-great-grandchild. Also surviving are two sisters-in-law, Eleanor "Peaches" Tiller and Beatrice "Jr." Rachel; and several nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents; one sister, Penny Ann Byrd; three brothers-in-law, Larry Byrd, James Tiller and Charles "David" Rachel; and one great-granddaughter, Rorie Mae Hendrick.

Bob served in the U.S. Air Force from 1960-70, which included a tour of duty in Vietnam. Following his military service, he spent several years in law enforcement, last serving in that field as Wyoming chief of police. Later he worked as a maintenance technician in various area hospitals, retiring from OSF in 2012.

Bob was a member of the Wyoming American Legion for 44 years, serving as both Post 91 commander and 16th District commander. He was part of the Central Illinois WW II Reenactors and sought to keep the history of World War II alive for future generations. He served many years as Boy Scout master for local Boy Scout Troop 142.

A gifted musician, Bob sang and played country-western music for over 60 years including performing at many local events with Country

Edition, a band organized by Bob and a group of musician friends.

Most importantly, Bob had a love for the Lord. Spending time with his growing family and his friends was his greatest joy.

His funeral will be at 10 a.m. Friday, Jan. 20, 2023, at Haskell Funeral and Cremation Services in Wyoming. Pastor Ross Wyman will officiate. Visitation was Thursday, Jan. 19, 2023, from 5-7 p.m. also at the funeral home. Burial will be in Wyoming Cemetery.

Memorial contributions may be made to Illinois Cancer Center or the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Condolences may be left for Bob's family at www.haskellfuneral.com.

Evangelia N. Fontana

GALVA – Evangelia N. Fontana, 86, of Galva, died Jan. 10, 2023, at her home. Cremation will be accorded and no services will be held. Memorials may be directed to her family. Rux Funeral Home in Galva is in charge of arrangements.

She was born Dec. 12, 1936, in Greece, the daughter of Pete and Mary Barkegene. She married Gerald Fontana in 1966 in Greece. Survivors include her son Robert and two brothers, Mike and Mitch.

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The Prairie News Sports

Rebels win on buzzer beater

By NICK VLAHOS and JEFF LAMPE

For The Prairie News

Daniel Kieser had 22 points Tuesday night, including a put-back basket with 7 seconds left, to give Stark County a 42-41 boys basketball victory over West Central.

The Lincoln Trail Conference decision at Toulon was the fourth consecutive victory for the Rebels (10-9, 4-1). They trailed by five with less than two minutes to play.

Kieser had 18 points to lead a trio of double-digit Stark County scorers in a 64-56 LTC victory on Jan. 13 over Wethersfield in Kewanee. Luke Rewerts had 16 points, including 10 in the first half as the Rebels took a 28-21 lead.

"We got off to a strong start but couldn't shake them," Stark County Coach Dusty Browning stated. "They shot well, especially from 3. They went to a zone (defense) in the second quarter, and it took a little while to figure out, but we pulled it out in the end."

Wethersfield had seven 3-pointers overall, as did

Stark County. Ross Saner had 11 points for the Rebels.

Stark County is host tonight to ROWVA-Williamsfield.

• **Stark County Girls** – The Lady Rebels dropped two at the LTC tourney, falling on Jan. 12 to Wethersfield, 49-30.

Stark County also dropped a 38-24 decision to No. 2 seed Princeville on Jan. 11. Payten Hillier and Paige Rewerts scored seven points apiece and Kylee Frisby tallied four for the Lady Rebels. Destine Harwood scored 27 to lead Princeville.

Stark County was to play against Galva on Thursday and will see action Saturday at United depending on that result.

• **Galva Girls** – Seeded sixth, Galva was upset in its first game of the Lincoln Trail Conference Tournament on Jan. 12 by Mercer County, 58-50.


Galva then lost to Knoxville, 35-26. Lexi Stone led Galva with 12 points and Kali Yelm added 7.

The Lady Wildcats were to play Thursday and then return to action Saturday at

United, with foe and time to be determined.

• **Galva Boys** – A visit Tuesday night to Princeville resulted in a 68-32 defeat for Galva (0-20). The Wildcats trailed 35-20 at intermission. Blake Stahl had 11 points to lead Galva, including eight in the first half.

On Jan. 13, Ridgewood visited Galva and headed home with a 61-20 victory. Carter DeVenney had six points to lead the hosts.




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