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The Prairie News

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LOCAL STUDENT RECOGNIZED

IHSA nominates SC's Best for honor

By **MATT TROHA**

Illinois High School Association

TOULON – Sometimes a name just fits.

That's the case for Stark County High School senior Lauren Best.

Best is the most decorated musician in the history of Stark County High School, a school of approximately 230 student.

She is an academic standout who is in contention to be her class valedictorian this spring, while also partaking in a laundry list of extracurricular and community involvement, including robotics, Girl Scouts and volunteering at her church, just to name a few.

“Lauren's name literally says it all, she really is the best!” said Stark County Music Director Sophia Elswick. “I didn't get the honor of seeing her grow up, but I have seen her grow so much over the last year. I am going to cry when she graduates.”

Despite the growth that Elswick has witnessed in Best over the last year, it's important to note that the senior started from an uncanny position of maturity for someone her age. Best is the Illinois High School Association's 2025 nominee for the NFHS Heart of the Arts Award, based on the leadership and unbridled passion she showed in helping to keep the Stark County



Stark County High School senior Lauren Best is the IHSA's nominee for the 2025 NFHS Heart of the Arts Award. Photo courtesy of the IHSA.

music program afloat during the first semester of her junior year.

“I think the main thing that led me to step up was that I was, and still am, very passionate about the program,” Best said. “I had already been somewhat of a leader in the music program previously. It just came naturally to me to step up, and nobody had any opposition to it.”

Following Best's sophomore year, Stark County's long-time band and choir director retired, but her replacement quit unexpectedly just a few weeks into the 2023 school year.

From September of 2023 until January of 2024, when Elswick stepped in to take over the role, a group of then juniors led by Best filled the leadership role to keep the Stark County High School music programs going.

“Teacher shortages are a growing concern, particularly in specialized

fields like art and music,” Stark County Principal Megan McGann said. “The hiring pool is exponentially slimmer in small rural communities and districts like our own. As our administration worked diligently to fill the music teacher's role, the shortage weighed heavily on our fine arts students. Lauren's leadership, alongside her fellow classmates, made all the difference during that time.”

While there was always a substitute teacher in the room, some were not musically inclined, which led Best to take the reins and help guide the class. From pulling out the music, to making sure the instruments were set up, to planning the songs they would practice and deciding when they sounded good enough, Best and a few other students took the lead.

“There were some days where it was hard to get everyone moti-

Continued on Page 2

Stark County board shifting ARPA funds

By **JOHN A. BALLENTINE**

For The Prairie News

TOULON – The Stark County Board of Supervisors has been told to change how it allocates \$508,816 of its remaining American Rescue Plan Act funds.

Last November, the county board voted to allocate that \$508,816 toward the purchase of land and the construction of a new county highway building.

On Tuesday, the board was informed not to allocate ARPA money for the highway department proj-

ect.

The board will have to vote to rescind the November vote for ARPA funds for the highway project. The board plans to reallocate the \$508,816 toward public safety salaries and overtime pay, as per a directive from Office of Emergency Management director Mat Schnepfle.

“Use it to reimburse yourself for public safety salaries from last year and the sheriff's office overtime payments,” Schnepfle recommended.

A total of \$1,037,000 in
Continued on Page 2

Toulon planning city street-paving projects

By **JOHN A. BALLENTINE**

For The Prairie News

TOULON – The Toulon City Council on Monday approved funding for asphaltting and sealing various city streets.

The council approved using up to \$120,000 in Motor Fuel Tax funds plus up to about \$45,000 in local or city funds to pay for the milling, asphaltting and sealcoating of East Court Street from Main Street to Jefferson Street and part of Jefferson Street from Franklin to Henderson Streets.

The board also heard that Toulon has \$85,000 in its MFT fund.

“I'm trying to think if we could use TIF funds for the Court Street project,” Mayor Larry Hollis said. “It's a possibility. TIF funds can pay for road construction.”

But an internal Illinois Department of Transportation disagreement could change the entire project's payment method.

After a lengthy discussion with a Toulon property owner, the city agreed to work with the Boatmans concerning a part of their property that was damaged by fire last week. During a demolition project at 213 E. Greenwood St., the

Continued on Page 2

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BEST: Made sure Christmas show went on

Continued from Page 1
 vated,” Best said. “In band, I knew that we just needed to continue to play. It was more of a problem in choir. I was the only student in the class who played piano, so I was able to play piano and lead rehearsals that way.”

Best’s responsibilities didn’t end at school either, as she helped to coordinate the band for home football games, including serving as the conductor of the National Anthem.

“I had to communicate a lot with our principal (McGann),” Best said. “There were a lot of details that our teachers took care of that we never thought about. Our home football games are played near the Stark County Elementary School in Wyoming, so things like having a bus to transport the instruments and music were new challenges. We built a bridge between the band and administration to make sure those things happened.”

One thing that was not going to happen as fall turned to winter in 2023 was the annual school Christmas concert program. But Best saw to it that the show would go on. She also credits one of the substitute teachers, Wally Parks, for his assistance

in making sure the program happened. The Christmas concert gave Elswick, who had already been hired by Stark County, but was still awaiting her college graduation to officially begin teaching, a sneak peek at her future students.

“I didn’t know what I was going to see that night, but I came away really impressed, especially knowing what was going on behind the scenes,” said Elswick. “During the interview process, I was told I was inheriting a dedicated group of students, as well as being told specifically about Lauren and her awesomeness. Short of taking attendance and grading, Lauren was doing my job while being a high school student and getting her associate degree (from Blackhawk College).”

Elswick’s arrival didn’t necessarily bring an end to Best’s leadership, as the new teacher worked out a plan with the district to have Best serve as her teacher assistant with the burgeoning junior high music program, which boasts over 50 members.

Best believes the leadership and passion that she showed during what should have been a trying semester can be traced to three seminal musical influences in her life. She cites

her childhood piano teacher Jennifer Nutzhorn, as well as her school music directors Brenda Macke and Angie Roark as her “musical inspirations.”

Elswick is quickly gaining ground as well.

“It was such a relief when Ms. Elswick arrived,” said Lauren. “She brought a lot of leadership and fun back into the band and choir programs.”

That has allowed Best to be a student, mostly, throughout her senior year. She is looking forward to the IHSA Music State Series Solo & Ensemble State Series this spring. A gifted clarinet player, pianist, and singer, she has performed 33 total solo and ensemble pieces thus far in her IHSA Music career, receiving a perfect rating of 1 on all 33.

She plans to set her attention to industrial engineering at Iowa State University next fall, but music will always be a big part of her life.

“I enjoy being in the music room every day,” Best said. “For me, music is a stress reliever. Music is where I met so many of my close friends. Music has given me so much and will always be an important part of my life.”

TOULON: Fire spread from demolition project

Continued from Page 1
 work was being performed by city employees to save money on the demolition cost.

City workers set fire to a pile of brush and debris while working at the site and checked the fire to make sure it was out before they left the site. Later, the fire reignited and spread to 223 E. Greenwood, the Boatman property. An unoccupied trailer and camper were damaged by the fire.

The Toulon Fire Company was called to extinguish the fire, then was called a second time after it reignited.

The city has agreed to pay for dumpsters and haul debris away from the 223 E. Greenwood property when the owner tears down his fire-damaged property.

A legal agreement between the Boatmans and the city will be drafted by City Attorney Kate Carter for the parties to sign.

Only one bid to mow the city’s cemetery was received from Bock’s Lawn Care, of Victoria. The cost for the 2025 mowing season is \$29,897, which is the same as last year. It was approved.

A donation of \$1,500 to the Stark County After-Prom Committee was approved. Also, the council approved a cost of up to \$1,700 to pay American Legal Publishing for the codification of updated city ordinances.

An ordinance was passed to sell the 2008 city police pickup truck. Hollis said that there are several buyers interested in purchasing the truck. Also, a cost of up to \$2,100 to purchase lights for the new city maintenance pickup truck was approved. These would be yellow flashing lights.

The council agreed to participate with the Toulon Lions’ Club and Toulon Civic Association in the cost of a digital sign. The sign’s location

and cost is yet to be determined. It will display ongoing and upcoming events.

The Toulon Police Department is looking to hire two new officers to attend a police academy with a projected cost to the city of \$5,000 to \$6,000 per candidate. Police Chief Gary Bent said this was a notification of cost to the city if it is decided to pay for the new officers.

Discussion concerning the former Faith Baptist Church building at Vine and Olive streets occurred without resolution with regard to refurbishing the building.

Hollis has written city employees’ reviews that he said were all positive. The council will vote at next month’s council meeting on employee raises. Hollis said he wants to hire a third full-time employee for outside city work, but added he has no one in mind for the new position.

COUNTY: Funds to pay salaries, OT

Continued from Page 1
 ARPA money allocated to Stark County was \$1,037,000. Approximately half a million dollars was used mostly for the sheriff’s department salaries and overtime payments and also for a few other designated items.

Board Chair Kari Bush asked about grant money for a structure that would include a satellite communication to the Office of Emergency Management.

Schnepple said the FEMA program Building Resilient Infrastructure & Communities supports states, local and territorial governments to receive grants. He said the BRIC program still has to be approved by various government agencies.

Ricky Newcomb, of the Bi-State Regional Commission, gave a lengthy presentation of a Bi-State Hazard Mitigation Plan. The written plan is available for viewing the next 30 days at the county recorder’s office.

Additionally, the board approved a revised Flood Plain ordinance and an Illinois Emergency Services Mutual Aid agreement resolution. This provides aid for Stark County and the county agrees to

help other agencies facing emergencies.

County Engineer Judd Giffin gave a brief highway report but appeared to save most of his words for a 50-minute closed session meeting about the purchase of real property for building a new highway department facility. There was no action or discussion after the closed meeting. This agenda item was first discussed last May and has been on every monthly agenda since then.

Giffin reported that the highway department was prepared for the impending snowstorm on Wednesday. He has performed road and bridge inspections throughout the county and has ordered and received 100 new signs for the installation and replacement of old road signs.

There was a treasurer’s report but no Sheriff’s report. The board passed a resolution to keep previous closed session minutes closed. Next month two health board appointments will be voted upon.

Finally, the board heard that a March 15 Lincoln Day Luncheon will be held from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Toulon Bistro. The event will feature a catered meal, pie auction and keynote speaker address.

PUBLIC RECORD

Traffic citations & Ordinance violations

- 2-3 - Tyler J. Allbright - Uninsured vehicle.
- 2-3 - Chad L. Dean - Expired registration.
- 2-3 - Alexa L. Germosen - Driving 11-14 mph above the limit.
- 2-5 - Robert M. Searle - Improper turn signal, uninsured vehicle and unlicensed.
- 2-9 - Kevin L. Code - Suspended license and registration light..

Incidents & Accidents Stark County

- 2-2 - A deer-related vehicle accident occurred on Illinois Route 17, approximately one-half mile west of the Indian Creek Bridge near Toulon. The driver was James L. Sutton, 40, of Williamsfield. No injuries were reported but the 2018 Dodge Ram pickup truck reportedly sustained estimated damages over \$1,500.
 - 2-3 - Timothy J. Sexton, 33, Aurora, was ticketed for driving on an expired registration and for driving while his license was suspended. He was issued a court date to appear.
 - 2-3 - Shana M. Lewis, 43, Peoria, was cited for speeding 72 mph in a 55 zone.
 - 2-6 - A possible vehicle theft was reported by a rural Toulon resident. Upon further investigation by the Stark County Sheriff's Department the vehicle was located by authorities who reported the situation as not involving an auto theft.
 - 2-7 - Morgan K. Jones, 19, Chillicothe, cited for speeding 70 mph in a 55 zone.
 - 2-7 - Kaylee N. Miller, 27, Sparland, cited for driving on an expired registration.
 - 2-7 - Gregory L. Huene, 54, Alton, cited for speeding 78 mph in a 55 zone.
 - 2-8 - Dominique R. Johnson, 34, Peoria, ticketed for speeding 66 mph in a 55 zone and for driving on an expired registration.
 - 2-9 - Anita M. Will-Jennings, 65, East Peoria, cited for speeding 80 mph in a 55 zone.
 - 2-9 - Wyoming resident Seth Emery of 209 N. Main St. reported an incident of criminal damage to property that was discovered at his residence. The back window of a vehicle owned by Laura Everhart, also of that same address, was found broken.
- Peoria County report**
- 2-8 - Ronald L. Warren, 40, of Toulon was arrested shortly after 8:45 a.m. and was accused of domestic battery/physical contact and violating an order of protection regarding a previous domestic battery, according to the Peoria County Sheriff's Office.
- Galva Report**
- Officer dispatched:**
- 2-3 - to the 1000 block of SW 2nd St. for a 911 hang-up complaint. Upon investigating, it was determined to be a complaint involving a boyfriend who was suicidal. The suspect was located by the Bureau County Sheriff's Office in Mineral.
 - 2-3 - to the 300 block of SW 5th Ave. for a suspicious-vehicle complaint. The officer located the vehicle but had no probable cause for a traffic stop.



- 2-3 - to meet with seven subjects at City Hall who were applying for a solicitor's permit. The permit was issued.
- 2-3 - Officer warned a resident in the 700 block of NW 1st Ave. in reference to a city ordinance violation involving junk in the yard.
- 2-3 - to Stevens Veterinary Clinic for a loose dog brought there. Employees recognized the dog and it was returned to its owner.
- 2-3 - to the 1200 block of NW 3rd Ave. to deliver a message for Knox County in reference to a disabled vehicle near Abingdon. The message was delivered.
- 2-3 - to the 00 block of SW 4th St. for a verbal-disturbance complaint.
- 2-3 - Melody Guynn, 52, Galva, was issued a citation for having expired registration in the 100 block of S. Center Ave.
- 2-4 - to the 300 block of NE 2nd St. for a scam complaint.
- 2-4 - to the 600 block of NW 5th St. for a complaint of telephone harassment/threats.
- 2-5 - As the result of a traffic stop in the 600 block of SE 2nd St., Scott Fann, 36, Kewanee, was arrested for driving while license suspended, operating a vehicle when registration suspended and operating an uninsured vehicle. He was released with a court date.
- 2-5 - to the 00 block of SE 4th St. for an injured-dog complaint. A loose dog was struck by a passing vehicle on S. Center Ave. The officer contacted the owner and helped load the dog to take to the veterinarian.
- 2-5 - to the 00 block of NE 4th Ave. to remove an unwanted subject.
- 2-5 - While patrolling, an officer located a subject sitting on the ground in the 500 block of SE 2nd St. The subject was entered into NCIC as a missing and endangered person. They were transported by ambulance for treatment/evaluation.
- 2-5 - Billy Hammond, 39, Galva, was issued a citation for operating a vehicle with no registration in the 400 block of NE 1st St.
- 2-6 - to the intersection of SW 2nd Street and SW 2nd Ave. for a single-vehicle accident, with only damage.
- 2-6 - to the 300 block of SE 3rd St. for a motorist assist. The subject locked the keys inside a car and was referred to Tarletons for assistance.
- 2-6 - to the 1000 block of SW 2nd St. for a 911 rapid SOS call. It was determined to be a medical call.
- 2-7 - to the 700 block of NW 4th St. to try to assist a subject having a mental-health crisis.
- 2-7 - While patrolling, an officer saw that a train had stopped and was blocking all Galva crossings. BNSF was contacted and the train eventually moved along.

- 2-7 - to the 00 block of SW 4th St. for a complaint involving several suspicious people. They were determined to be solicitors who had a valid permit.
- 2-7 - to the 00 block of SW 4th St. for a verbal disturbance.
- 2-8 - to the 400 block of SE 7th Ave. for a verbal domestic disturbance.
- 2-8 - to the 500 block of SE 2nd St. to assist a motorist who had locked their keys inside the car. Henry Co county was able to unlock it.
- 2-9 - to Route 34 and 1850 East for a motorist assist after a vehicle became disabled. The officer gave the subject a ride to his residence.
- 2-9 - to the 00 block of SW 2nd St. for a gas drive-off complaint. The suspect returned and paid for the fuel.
- 2-9 - to meet with a resident at the Galva Police Department to talk about a written trespassing notice.
- 2-9 - to the 800 block of NE 3rd St. for a domestic disturbance involving juveniles.
- 2-9 - While patrolling, an officer noticed a vehicle door open in the 500 block of NW 3rd Ave. The officer spoke with the owner, who forgot to shut the door. Nothing was taken.

Property Transfers

- 2-3 - Elvis Weir to Kurt Krzystofiak - Henderson and Whitaker's Add'n - Pt. Block 31 Lots 4 & 5 - 213 E. South St., Toulon - Consideration = \$60,000.
- 2-4 - Fannie Mae Federal National Mortgage Association to Paige Tracy - Pt. Sect. 35-13-6 SE - 302 N. 6th St., Wyoming - Consideration = \$89,000.
- 2-5 - Paul D. Whittaker, Estate and William E. Whittaker, Ind. Exec. to Rumbold & Kuhn, Inc. - Pt. Sect. 23-12-5 SW - 4305 Township Road 200 N, Toulon - Consideration = \$816,675.
- 2-5 - American Cancer Society, Inc., American Diabetes Assoc., American Heart Assoc. Inc., and American Kidney Fund to Rumbold & Kuhn, Inc. - Pt. Sect. 23-12-5 SW - 4305 Township Road 200 N, Toulon - Consideration = \$816,675.
- 2-5 - Paul D. Whittaker, Estate and William E. Whittaker, Ind. Exec. to Caitlyn B., Carl P. Co-Trustee, Clayton C., and Jeanne C. Ryan Co-Trustee - Pt. Sect. 23-12-5 SW - 4305 Township Road 200 N, Toulon - Consideration = \$425,625.
- 2-5 - American Cancer Society, Inc., American Diabetes Assoc., American Heart Assoc. Inc., and American Kidney Fund to Caitlyn B., Carl P. Co-Trustee, Clayton C., and Jeanne C. Ryan Co-Trustee - Pt. Sect. 23-12-5 SW - 4305 Township Road 200 N. Toulon - Consideration = \$425,625.
- 2-6 - Sheriff of Stark County to Fifth Third Bank - Vg of LaFayette Block 7 Lots 5-8 - 209 Jackson St., LaFayette - Consideration = \$0.

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Answer

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 answer
 No one can do it alone, no matter how great the machines are.
 — Amy Poehler

The Prairie News

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GUEST VOICES



Guthrie wrote songs to his America

Folk singer and songwriter Woody Guthrie is undergoing a welcomed revival with the success of the Bob Dylan biopic, "A Complete Unknown."

In it, Dylan, played by Timothée Chalamet, seeks out Guthrie shortly after arriving in New York City. It's the early 1960s and Dylan finds Guthrie in a nearby New Jersey hospital suffering from Huntington's disease, the neurodegenerative disorder that slowly killed Guthrie's mother and is now slowly killing him.

Although Guthrie is unable to speak, the film portrays the two musical geniuses – one already a lodestar in folk music, the other about to fly light years beyond his mentor's galaxy – communicating through Dylan's guitar and his spare, Guthrie-like lyrics. It's poignant, poetic and peaceful.

Powerful, too; just two people who had never met coming together in a sparsely furnished hospital room over the sound of a single guitar and one reedy voice. The bond is immediate and deep.

Woody Guthrie, like Bob Dylan, was famous for many things but he mainly wanted his songs to be heard for what they were, songs to and about America. Several biographies

note that the footloose Guthrie greatly disliked Irving Berlin's "God Bless America" because he believed it to be jingoistic and exclusive.

Guthrie, who penned hundreds of songs, wrote a musical reply to it that he titled "God Blessed America For Me." That title was supplanted by a later added line to the song's chorus: "This land is your land."

The song wasn't a slander of Berlin's hugely popular hit but a reply to point out how great America already was.

The explanation did little to allay public backlash. Guthrie was called every name in the book including populist, socialist and – of course – communist. If it bothered him, he didn't show it. "Left wing, right wing, chicken wing," he replied, "it's all the same thing to me."

To ensure all understood his view on the pointlessness of political labels, he added, "I ain't a Communist necessarily, but I've been in the red all my life."

Guthrie was no saint and never pretended to be one. He was, as one biographer described, "seemingly afraid of money, or fame ... and he left behind three wives (and) eight children."

He also left musical letter after musical letter to America, because its Constitution-guaranteed promises held so much for every American, native and immigrant alike, that Guthrie just couldn't stop singing about its farms, crops, mountains,

oceans, deserts, cities and people.

His joy didn't mean he served up sugar-soaked patriotism or chest-thumping exceptionalism. "All you can write is what you see," he reportedly said of his songwriting.

According to one biographer, many of Guthrie's unplanned, unmapped Depression-era "trips cross-country opened his eyes to a land where people went hungry, and the lives and health of immigrants and union workers were threatened by moneyed interests."

This unvarnished side of America got its due in the second to last stanza of "This Land" when Guthrie, writing what he saw, penned:

*"In the shadow of the steeple I saw my people,
By the relief office I seen my people;*

As they stood there hungry, I stood there asking

Is this land made for you and me?"

In the next and final verse, Guthrie reminds us that what we make of America is up to us:

*"Nobody living can ever stop me,
As I go walking that freedom highway;*

Nobody living can ever turn me back

This land was made for you and me."

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Trump and God in same sentence is blasphemy

To the Editor:

Dear Mr. Bell, putting Trump and God in the same sentence is blasphemy in my view. He is the opposite of what I think of as Christian.

Don't be fooled by what someone says, look at what they do.

When the Episcopal Bishop Mariann Budde urged Trump with the words of Jesus, what did he do? He insulted her and asked for an apology. Since when does someone of faith apologize for speaking the



words of Jesus?

I know the message must have been foreign to him to hear, but we all must hear the truth.

Please don't mix your faith and politics, that is a toxic brew. And it will lead to a very bad outcome for all of us.

– **Christopher Dean**, Brimfield
The Prairie News welcomes letters to the editor. Email your letter to jeff@wklypost.com or mail to: The Prairie News, 101 West Main St., P.O. Box 240, Toulon, Illinois 61483
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Unique siren attracts group to Yates City

By MOLLY RICHESON

For The Prairie News

YATES CITY – On the first Tuesday of each month at 10 a.m., the Elba-Salem Fire Department tests its weather-warning system, blaring an alarm to alert citizens in the event of a real emergency.

To the surprise of many, the siren song lured six young people from around the country to gather in Yates City for the Feb. 4 monthly test.

Visitors lured to Yates City (who requested that we not give their last names) were Cooper, Ayden and Vince from the Bloomington area; Drew from Cedar Rapids, Iowa; Holly from South Milwaukee, Wis.; and Will, who drove all the way from New Jersey to hear the call of the Elba-Salem siren.

Some of the group met in high school and some of them online via Discord, a popular chatting app. All of them have the same thing in common: a deep appreciation for

weather-warning systems.

“Me personally, I’ve always been into weather and so I think weather-warning systems are really fascinating,” Cooper said. “It originally started with weather radio collecting, and then I was convinced to try out sirens. And then I realized that there are a lot of really cool sirens around here. There’s a remnant of Peoria’s Civil Defense System that’s actually in Russia.”

The Yates City siren is a model Sentry 5V.

“The reason it is so rare is because it has a 16-port rotor and it is one of four still in existence,” Cooper explained. “I know the others are in Inman, South Carolina, New York and Georgia. It’s one of four still in existence, and it’s only been documented once.”

The Sentry 5V is a basic, omnidirectional air-raid siren produced by Sentry Siren from around 1980 to 2000, when it was discontinued and

replaced by the Model 7V8 in the Sentry lineup.

The vast majority of these sirens had an eight-port rotor and stator, but a few were made with the 16-port single tone available only by special order (it can produce 16 different tones or sound variations simultaneously). It is possible that only four sirens like the one in Yates City were ever made in the first place.

Siren enthusiasts brought to Yates City video and audio recording equipment, as well as a drone to document the monthly test. In their excitement, two members of the crew ran toward the siren.

“Sometimes, if I get really excited, I’ll run up to it and touch the pole just to feel it shaking,” Cooper said.

Footage from the visit will be uploaded to the group’s YouTube channel, ILWarnTech. There the sound will be shared with the world and live on through history, much like the mythological sirens of yore.

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BRIEFS

Madigan found guilty on 10 of 23 charges

CHICAGO – Former Democratic Illinois House Speaker Michael Madigan, the longest-serving legislative leader in U.S. history, has joined the list of Illinois political figures who've been convicted on public corruption charges after a federal jury Wednesday found him guilty on 10 of 23 counts.

But the jury, which deliberated for roughly 65 hours over two weeks following a marathon three months of evidence and testimony, was split in its verdict. They acquitted the former speaker on seven other charges and

ultimately deadlocked on six counts. Madigan's co-defendant, veteran Springfield lobbyist Mike McClain, walked free after the jury deadlocked on the same charges.

– *Capitol News Illinois*

President Trump pardons Blagojevich

President Donald Trump on Monday granted a full pardon to former Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich, who was convicted on 18 corruption counts, including for his attempt to sell President-elect Barack Obama's U.S. Senate seat in 2008 – and who holds the distinction of being the state's only impeached governor.

Trump's pardon comes five years after he commuted Blagojevich's 14-year prison sentence in February 2020, sending the disgraced ex-governor home from lockup in a low-security Colorado facility six years early.

College Honors

• **Avery Gerber** of Toulon made the Dean's List (3.5 gpa or better) at St. Ambrose University for the fall 2024 semester.

• **Levi Nusz**, of Wyoming, made the Dean's List (3.5 gpa or better), as a first year graduate student at Iowa State University for the fall 2024 semester.

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Williamsfield School Board eyeing layoffs

By NICK VLAHOS

For The Prairie News

WILLIAMSFIELD – Layoffs might soon be coming to the Williamsfield School District.

As many as two certified staff members, two food-service employees and all teachers' aides would be let go under a proposal Interim Superintendent Rolf Sivertsen presented Monday night to the Williamsfield School Board.

The cuts would save the cash-strapped district between about \$575,000 and \$680,000, depending on how many aides might be recalled.

Job reductions are part of Sivertsen's three-pronged plan to return the district to financial health. The district is to receive money this week from the first prong, a \$1.1 million working-cash bond issue authorized last month. Adjusting the property-tax levy for the next fiscal year is a third element.

But the proposed move in the middle is proving to be painful.

"This isn't easy for me to stand up here and make these recommendations," Sivertsen told the board. "I met with all the aides and also met with the people in

food service, because I felt I owed them an explanation. It was a very uncomfortable position to be in.

"My first comment was 'I'm sorry we're in this position. Nonetheless, I have a responsibility to make recommendations to the board so we can get out of this mess as quickly as possible.'"

The district faces a projected deficit of at least \$400,000. On March 10, board members are expected to consider Sivertsen's staffing suggestions and/or consider some of their own.

Under his plan, Sivertsen said three or four of the district's 10 aides probably would be rehired for the 2025-26 year. The district has 31 teachers and five food-service employees.

Half a teaching position

and one custodian job already have been eliminated through attrition. The latter action involves not filling the full-time opening left by the resignation of custodian Hanna Rhodes, which the board accepted Monday. A part-timer is expected to replace Rhodes.

If retiring Technology Director Rick Hartz is not replaced, another \$90,000 might be saved, Sivertsen said. Earlier in the meeting, the board affirmed Hartz's retirement, effective May 30.

Sivertsen said he doesn't know which two teaching positions he'll recommend for elimination. He intends to try to determine which eliminations might affect students the least. April 15 is the state-mandated deadline to dismiss teachers.

Board Member Lisa

Hanson asked Sivertsen if other cost-cutting options might be considered.

Non-personnel cuts Sivertsen offered are tuition for students who take classes through Carl Sandburg College in Galesburg and the Galesburg Area Vocational Center.

Statistics Sivertsen provided show Billtown spends more per pupil than nearby districts. Expenses in 2023 were \$19,673 per student, compared to \$11,744 in Elmwood, \$14,868 in Princeville and \$16,373 in Brimfield.

"We can throw more taxes at it, but it doesn't fix our spending problem," Board President Chad Goff said. "We're way too high on per-student costs, and we have to fix that. Regardless of how we do it, we're going to have to fix it."

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LEGAL ADS

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FOURTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT HENRY COUNTY, ILLINOIS

ESTATE OF: PATRICK J. KOGA, No. 2025PR6 Deceased

CLAIM NOTICE (Publication)

Notice is given of the death of Patrick J. Koga. Letters of Office were issued on January 22, 2025, to Rebecca Ann Frank as Executor whose attorneys are Barash & Everett, LLC.

Claims against the estate may be filed in the office of the clerk of the court, Henry County, Cambridge, Illinois or with the representative, or both on or before July 22, 2025. Any claim not filed by that date is barred. Copies of a claim filed with the Clerk must be mailed or delivered to the representative and to the attorney within 10 days after it has been filed.

E-filing is now mandatory for

documents in civil cases with limited exemptions. To e-file, you must first create an account with an e-filing provider. Visit efile.illinoiscourts.gov/service-providers.htm to learn more and to select a service provider. If you need additional help or have trouble e-filing, visit www.illinoiscourts.gov/FAQ/gethelp.asp. Or talk with your local circuit clerk's office.

Name Barash & Everett, LLC
Attorney for Executor
Address P.O. Box 165
City Galva, IL 61434
Phone(309) 932-2001
Email: everetr@barashlaw.com
Published 1/31, 2/7, 2/14/25

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FOURTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT HENRY COUNTY, ILLINOIS

ESTATE OF: Louis Harold Nordeen Deceased

No. 2024PR13

NOTICE TO HEIRS AND LEGATEES AND CLAIM NOTICE

To: Stephan Larson, Becky Larson-Webster, Lisa Larson-Trail, Michael Fischlein, Glenda Fischlein-Lopez, Russell Lee, Mary Lieferman, David Lee, Nicholas Lee, Myranda Lee, Joshua Lee, Rebekka Griffith, Terry Nordeen, Lester Nordeen, Kim Nordeen, and Dan Nordeen AND UNKNOWN HEIRS

Notice is given of the death of Louis Harold Nordeen.

Notice is given to the above named who are heirs or legatees in the above proceeding to probate a will and whose name or address is not stated in the petition.

Letters of Office were issued on January 24th, 2025 to Stewart Nordeen as Administrator whose attorney is Barash & Everett, LLC, P.C., PO Box 165, Galva, IL 61434.

Claims against the estate may be filed in the office of the Clerk of

the Court Cambridge, Illinois 61238 or with the representative, or both on or before July 24, 2025. Any claim not filed by that date is barred. Copies of a claim filed with the Clerk must be mailed or delivered to the representatives and to the attorney within 10 days after it has been filed.

Within 42 days after the effective date of the original order of admission you may file a petition with the court to require proof of the will by testimony of the witnesses to the will in open court or other evidence, as provided in 6-21 of the Probate Act of 1975 (755 ILCS 5/6-21).

You also have the right under section 8-1 of the Probate Act of 1975 (755 ILCS 5/8-1) to contest the validity of the will by filing a petition with the court within 6 months after admission of the will to probate.

E-filing is now mandatory for documents in civil cases with limited exemptions. To e-file, you must first create an account with an e-filing service provider. Visit: <http://efile.illinoiscourts.gov/service-providers.htm> to learn more and to select a service provider. If you need additional help or have trouble e-filing, visit: <http://www.illinoiscourts.gov/FAQ/gethelp.asp>, or talk with your local circuit clerk's office.

Filings are to be made with: Henry County Circuit Clerk Courthouse, Cambridge, Illinois Barash & Everett, LLC Attorney for Executor PO Box 165 Galva, IL 61434 Telephone: 309/932-2001 Facsimile: 309/932-3151 Email: everetr@barashlaw.com Published 1/31, 2/7, 2/14/25

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FOURTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT HENRY COUNTY, ILLINOIS

ESTATE OF Wayne Abbot a/k/a Bernard Wayne Abbott, No. 2025PR16 Deceased

CLAIM NOTICE (Publication)

Notice is given of the death of Wayne Abbott a/k/a Bernard Wayne Abbott. Letters of Office were issued on January 29, 2025, to Theresa Dickerson as Administer whose attorneys are

CLAIM NOTICE
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE TENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF ILLINOIS – STARK COUNTY

In Re **ESTATE OF LEO D. SECKMAN, Deceased.** No. 2025PR1

NOTICE is given to creditors of the death of **LEO D. SECKMAN**, on January 23, 2025. Letters of Office were issued by the above entitled Court to **DEBRA L. SHANE**, of **9282 Township Road 550N, Wyoming, Illinois 61491**, and **DONALD K. SECKMAN**, of **237 Jeb Stuart Drive, Wilmington, North Carolina 28412**, as Executors, whose attorneys of record are **WHITNEY & POTTS, LTD., 118 West Main Street, P. O. Box 368, Elmwood, Illinois, 61529-0368**. Claims against the Estate may be filed in the Circuit Clerk's Office, Stark County Courthouse, Toulon, Illinois, or with the representatives or both on or before the **22nd day of August, 2025** or if mailing or delivery of a Notice from the representatives is required by Sec. 18-3 of the Probate Act of 1975, the date stated in that Notice. Every claim filed must be in writing and state sufficient information to notify the representative of the nature of the claim or other relief sought. **Any claim not filed on or before that date is barred.** Copies of a claim filed with the Clerk must be mailed or delivered by the claimant to the representatives and to the attorney within ten (10) days after it has been filed and the claimant shall file with the Court, proof of any required mailing or delivery of copies.

E-filing is now mandatory for documents in civil cases with limited exemptions. To e-file, you must first create an account with an e-filing service provider. Visit <http://efile.illinoiscourts.gov/service-providers.htm> to learn more and to select a service provider. If you need additional help or have trouble e-filing, visit <http://www.illinoiscourts.gov/FAQ/gethelp.asp>.

DATED this 31st day of January, 2025.

DEBRA L. SHANE and DONALD K. SECKMAN, Executors of the Estate of LEO D. SECKMAN, Deceased.

ROBERT L. POTTS, Esq. WHITNEY & POTTS, LTD. Attorneys for Executors 118 West Main Street P. O. Box 368 Elmwood, IL 61529-0368 Telephone: (309) 742-3611 becky@whitneyandpotts.com
Published 2/14, 2/21, 2/28/25

Barash & Everett, LLC. Claims against the estate may be filed in the office of the clerk of the court, Henry County, Cambridge, Illinois or with the representative, or both on or before July 29, 2025. Any claim not filed by that date is barred. Copies of a claim filed with the Clerk must be mailed or delivered to the representative and to the attorney within 10 days after it has been filed.

Name Barash & Everett, LLC
Attorney for Administrator
Address P.O. Box 165
City Galva, IL 61434
Phone (309) 932-2001
Published 2/7, 2/14, 2/21/25

PUBLIC NOTICE CITY OF TOULON FIFTH AMENDMENT TO THE TOULON TIF DISTRICT

Pursuant to the Illinois Municipal Code [65 ILCS 5/11-74.4-5(c)], the City of Toulon, Stark County, Illinois, hereby gives notice of an amendment to the City of Toulon Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District Redevelopment Project Area, Plan and Projects by reducing the size of the Area.

The following change has been made to the Redevelopment Project Area:

Ordinance No. 973 was adopted by the Mayor and City Council of the City of Toulon on Feb. 10, 2025, Providing for and Approving the Fifth Amendment to the Toulon TIF District Redevelopment Project Area, Plan & Projects to remove parcel 04-19-402-041 from the Redevelopment Project Area, located at 422 E. Jefferson Street and legally described as Part of the East 1/2 of Lot 3 in Culbertson's Eastern Addition to the City of Toulon, Illinois.

If you have questions regarding the Fifth Amendment to the Toulon TIF District, please contact Ms. Teresa Macy at (309) 286-5042.

Barbara Cantwell
City Clerk

Published 2/14/25

DIVISION 00- PROCEDURAL & CONTRACTING REQUIREMENTS SECTION 001113 ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

DATE: February 17, 2025

PROJECT: Door and Frame Replacement Project at Galva Junior/Senior High School for Galva CUSD #224

LOCATION: Galva Junior/Senior High School 1020 North Center Avenue Galva, Illinois 61434

OWNER: Galva CUSD #224

224 Morgan Road Galva, Illinois 61434

ARCHITECT: Richard L. Johnson Associates, Inc.

4703 Charles Street Rockford, Illinois 61108

(815) 398-1231(815) 398-1280 FAX

SCOPE: Bids shall be submitted for a single contract for all Work.

DATE DUE: Sealed bids will be received until 1:00pm, Monday, March 10, 2025 at the office of the Galva CUSD #224 School District, 224 Morgan Road, Galva, IL 61434 and will be publicly opened and read aloud at that time.

PRE-BID MEETING: All prospective Contractors are urged to attend a pre-bid meeting at 1:00 p.m. on Monday, February 24, 2025, at Galva Junior/Senior High School.

MANDATORY PRE-BID SITE VISIT: Contractors are required to make a mandatory survey of the existing conditions prior to bidding.

ACCESS TO BIDDING DOCUMENTS: Bidding Documents are on file for reference at the following locations: Office of the Architect Rockford, Illinois

Bidding Documents may be secured from the office of the Architect. Plans and Specifications are available for download at www.rljarch.com under "Contractors".

DEPOSIT REQUIRED: Bidders may secure up to two (2) sets of bidding documents by submitting a non-refundable check for \$50.00 per set, or \$60.00 per set if documents are to be mailed.

BID FORM: Bids shall be submitted in duplicate on forms issued by the Architect.

PERFORMANCE BOND: A performance and payment bond for the full amount of the Contract will be required of the successful bidder. All costs associated with the bond shall be included in the bid amount.

BID SECURITY: Bids shall be accompanied by a Bid Security of at least 5% of the total amount of the base bid and all additive alternate bids.

This may be in the form of a certified check, cashier's check, bank draft, or bid bond, payable to the Owner as a guarantee that the bidder will enter into a contract with the Owner and will furnish the proper performance and payment bond within the time limited by the Owner. If the successful bidder so files the contract and performance and payment bond, upon the execution of the contract by the Owner, the Bid Security will be returned to all bidders. If he/she fails to file such contract and performance and payment bond the amount of the Bid Security will be forfeited to the Owner as liquidated damages.

WAGE RULES: The general prevailing rate of wages in the locality in which the work is to be performed for each craft or type of worker or mechanic needed to execute the contract will adhere to all Federal Laws and Laws of the State, and to all local ordinances and regulations applicable to the work hereunder, and having force of law.

RIGHTS RESERVED BY OWNER: The Owner reserves the right to waive any irregularities and/or reject any or all bids when, in the opinion of the Owner, such action will serve the best interests of the Owner.

WITHDRAWAL OF BIDS: No bid may be withdrawn for a period of sixty (60) days after the opening of bids without written consent of the Owner.

By order of the Board of Education for Galva CUSD #224.
Published 2/14/25

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OBITUARIES

Andrew Fickling

WYOMING – Andrew “Earl” Fickling, 66, of Wyoming, passed away on Thursday, Feb. 6, 2025, at 10:18 a.m. after his battle with ALS. Born on June 26, 1958, he was the son of Lawrence Dale and Vera Ann (Ditch) Fickling.

Surviving are two sisters, Luann Martin of Chillicothe and Crystal Bishop of Wyoming; brothers Larry Dale Fickling of Wantagh, N.Y., and Patrick Fickling of Kewanee; many nieces and nephews and great-nieces and great-nephews; his loyal dogs Patches and Rusty; and his Jenday Conure bird, Mango. He was preceded in death by his parents and grandparents.

Earl graduated from Illinois Institute of Technology with a bachelor's degree in computer engineering. He worked as a computer software engineer at VideoJet Technologies in Wood Dale, Ill., where he lived and worked until his diagnosis in 2018. During his career he wrote several patents.

Earl was an avid reader who also enjoyed traveling, playing outdoor sports, trivia and spending time with his family and friends. He especially enjoyed the time he spent helping his friends manage their bar.

Visitation was to take place on Feb. 11, 2025, at Haskell Funeral and Cremation Services in Wyoming. Pastor Rebecca Klemm was to officiate. Burial was to follow at Wyoming Cemetery. Memorial contributions may be made to ALS Association.

To leave condolences for Earl's family, please visit www.haskellfuneral.com.

Larry L. West

TOULON – Larry L. West, 87, of Toulon, passed away peacefully at 10:26 a.m. on Thursday, Feb. 6, 2025. Larry was born at the home of his grandmother in Clinton, Ill., on

March 6, 1937, to the late Raymond and Nellie (Koons) West. He married his wife, Elizabeth Burnside, on May 8, 1960, at the First United Methodist Church in Paris, Ill.

He is survived by his wife, Liz West of Toulon; children, David West of Albuquerque, N.M., Julie (Jerry) Kenney of Toulon and John (Kristy) West of Mount Zion, Ill.; grandchildren, Nakya Ely-West of Grand Junction, Colo., Adam Kenney of Lancaster, Calif., Danielle (Ashley) Kenney of Peoria, Ill., and Bailey and Griffin West both of Mount Zion; and two great-grandchildren, Judah Scotland of Grand Junction, Colo., and Paislee Hall of Peoria. He is further survived by a brother, Norman (Diane) West of Casey, Ill.; sister-in-law, Mary Jane West of Decatur; and many nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents and a brother, Ronald West.

After graduating from Clinton High School in 1954, he continued his education at the University of Illinois. He began his banking career in Princeton, Ill., in 1964.

In October 1970, he started with the State Bank of Toulon as a vice president and cashier. On July 2, 2002, Larry was elected the bank's eighth president. He retired from the bank in 2006, and from the board of directors in 2014, last serving as chairman. He still enjoyed his close ties with the bank as he continued working as a courier and reviewing appraisals. He was proud to have worked in the banking industry for over 50 years.

Larry was a man of strong faith and a true example of what it meant to live your life for God. He was an active member of the First Christian Church in Kewanee for over 50 years, serving as elder, deacon and mentor throughout those years. He was involved in many ministries, including missions, where he felt fortunate to travel and serve in Malawi, Africa and Montana. He looked for-

ward to their after-church lunch with friends.

He enjoyed volunteering his time, most recently at the Toulon Food Pantry, Saint Luke's Hospital in Kewanee, delivering Meals on Wheels and helping with the Stark County Good Samaritan Fund. He was a member of the Toulon Lions Club.

Larry loved sports. Playing and watching golf and cheering on the Fighting Illini were some of his favorite pastimes. He enjoyed traveling and vacationed to many wonderful locations on family trips and with friends. Above all, he loved spending time together with his family and loved watching all of his grandchildren's events.

Visitation will take place on Monday, Feb. 17, 2025, at the First Christian Church in Kewanee, from 5-7 p.m. A funeral service will take place at the church on Tuesday, Feb. 18, 2025, at 10 a.m. with Pastor John Reside, officiating. Burial will follow at Toulon Cemetery. Memorial contributions may be made to First Christian Church – Kewanee, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, or to the Stark County Good Samaritan Fund. Haskell Funeral and Cremation Services in Wyoming is assisting the family with arrangements.

To leave condolences for Larry's family, please visit www.haskellfuneral.com.

Helen Jeffriess

GALVA – Helen Jeffriess, 81, of Galva, died Feb. 4, 2025 at OSF Saint Luke Medical in Kewanee.

She was born Sept. 14, 1943, in Brisbane, Australia, the daughter of Bernard and Mabel (Cooper) Jeffriess. Survivors include her two adopted daughters, Eloise and Isabella; four siblings, Ann, Janet, John and Joanne; and a dear friend, Inge Collins. She was preceded in death by her parents.

Helen had worked mainly as a social worker and also as a nurse.

Cremation will be accorded and a memorial service will be held at a later date. Memorials may be directed to the Henry County Humane Society-Kewanee Chapter. Rux Funeral Home in Galva is in charge of arrangements.



Fickling



West



CHURCH DIRECTORY

Toulon Methodist Church

229 W. Main St., P.O. Box 538, Toulon, IL. 61483
Phone (309) 286-2224
Pastor Glenn Corbly Phone (309) 286-2224 or (217) 778-1591
Toulon Sunday School 9:15 a.m., all ages & Sunday Worship: 10:30 a.m.

LaFayette Methodist Church

Illinois Highway 17, P.O. Box 147, LaFayette, IL. 61449
Phone (309) 995-3371
Pastor Glenn Corbly Phone (309) 995-3371 or (217) 778-1591.
LaFayette Sunday Worship: 9 a.m.

West Jersey United Methodist Church

Illinois Highway 78, West Jersey, IL. Rev. Pablo Marty
Phone (217) 425-5707
Sunday Worship: 9 a.m.

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/>
<https://www.facebook.com/thegatheringchurch.life>

1st Congregational Church of Toulon

(309) 286-4901
218 N. Henderson St., Toulon
Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m.
Email fcctoulon@gmail.com
website: firstcongregationaltoulon.org

Galva Congregational Church

Pastor Marshall Jones
211 N.W. 3rd Avenue, Galva, Illinois 61434
(309) 932-3733
Service Time 10 a.m.

First Baptist Church

"faith in truth"
211 NW 4th Ave GALVA
Main Service: Sun 10:30
Rev. Bryan Griem, Pastor
(309) 932-2713 • GalvaBaptistChurch.com

Wyoming Nazarene Church

517 N Madison Ave. Wyoming, IL 61491
Rev. Shawna Marsh
Sunday School: 10:00, All ages
Sunday Worship: 11:00
Wednesday Night Fellowship & Prayer 5:30
Kids Club 309 5:15 checkin to 7:00 p.m.
Check us out on Facebook: Wyoming Naz

First Congregational Church

202 N. 7th St., PO Box 35, Wyoming, IL 61491
(309) 695-4091
Sunday Worship 9 a.m.
Check us out on Facebook
First Congregational Church of Wyoming, Illinois

Toulon First Baptist Church

110 W. Jefferson St. Toulon
(309) 286-4611
Sunday School 9 a.m. • Worship 10 a.m.
Sunday Youth Group 5-7 p.m.
Wednesday Kid's Club 5:30-7 p.m.
Wednesday Virtual Prayer Meeting 7 p.m.
Email: pastor@toulonbaptist.com
www.ToulonBaptist.com
www.facebook.com/FirstBaptistChurchToulon
Call us for Salvation Army Assistance

St. Timothy Lutheran Church

Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m.
16883 State Route 17, PO Box 158 - Wyoming, IL 61491
allsaintsil.com

Galva Messiah Lutheran Church (ELCA)

317 SW Third Street, Galva, IL
Casual, family friendly
Rev. Katie Gallagher
Wednesday: 4:30 p.m. Adult Discussion Group, 5:30 p.m.
Worship (in Luther Hall)
Sunday: 9 a.m. Worship, 10 a.m. Children's Sunday School
Contact: messiahlutherangalva@gmail.com
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

Holy Trinity National Catholic Church

Father John Cramer
716 N. Tremont, Kewanee, IL
Mass - Sat. at 5 p.m., Sun. at 9 a.m., Mon. - Thurs. at 9 a.m.
Rectory Phone: 309-852-5191
Fr. Cramer Phone: 574-329-9292

Wyoming United Methodist Church

Pastor Rebecca Klemm
302 North Main Street PO Box 287 Wyoming, IL, 61491-0287.
309-606-9027
Email: WyomingUMCPastor@gmail.com
Service is held at 10:30 Sunday morning.

Bradford Leet United Methodist Church

Boyd's Grove United Methodist Church
Leet UMC 118 E. Main St., Bradford, IL 61421
Services on Sundays at 10:15 a.m.

Boyd's Grove UMC 1976 Wyand Walnut Rd, Bradford, IL. 61421
Services on Sundays at 9 a.m.
Rev Dan Wright
309-897-8113 309-507-1626
thewrights62@hotmail.com

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Princeville solar project to start

By NICK VLAHOS

For The Prairie News

PRINCEVILLE – Construction of a solar-energy array proposed for north-west Princeville might begin as soon as March.

The 2-megawatt solar project along West North Street near Princeville Township Cemetery received Village Board approval in January 2024. The developer, Highland Park-based Trajectory Energy Partners, has submitted its construction plans, according to Village President Jeff Troutman.

“As soon as the weather breaks, they’ll probably be starting,” Troutman said following a Village Board meeting Feb. 3. “Our lawyer is reviewing the overall building plans. Once he gives his OK, they’re pretty much ready to go.”

Construction at the 17-acre plot had been expected to begin in late 2024 and finish in early 2025. A state-mandated change in how solar developers secure funding resulted in a delay of about four

or five months, according to Troutman.

Last week, trustees authorized a six-month extension – through July 3 – of the special-use permit that facilitates project development.

The solar project is expected to generate at least \$16,600 in first-year property-tax revenue, an increase of more than \$14,000, according to Trajectory. The company estimated Princeville subscribers might save more than \$40,000 in utility charges annually.

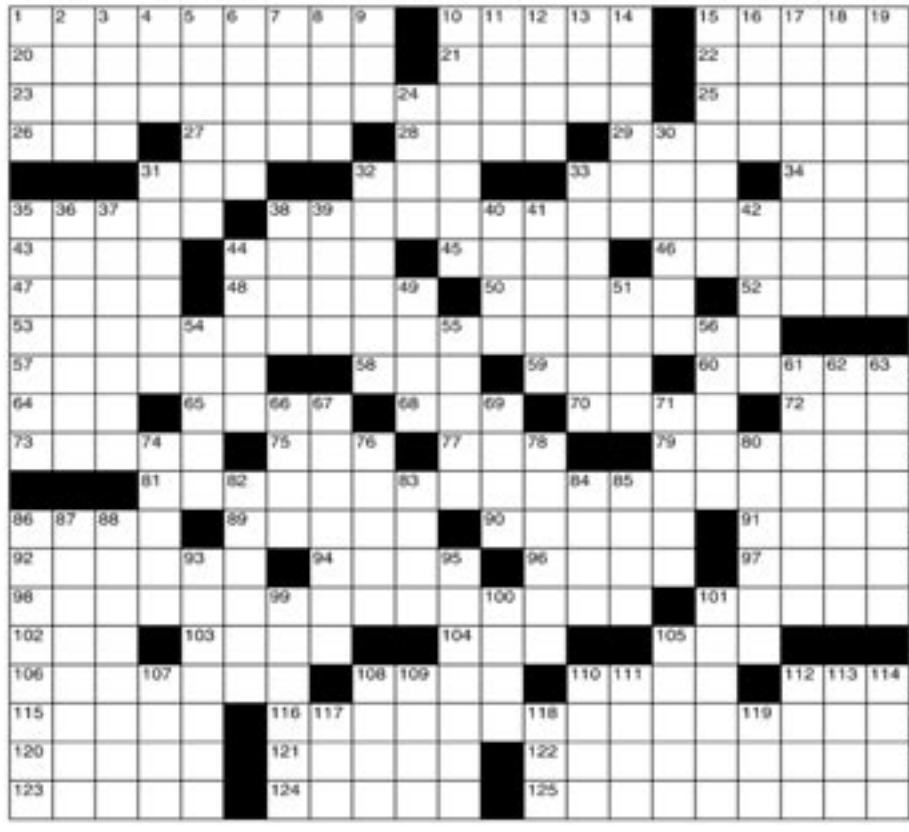
Damage the construction equipment might do to Princeville thoroughfares is Trajectory’s responsibility, Troutman said. The project first was proposed in 2018 and revived in late 2023.

The board also affirmed its decision to install stop signs on Walnut Avenue at Evans Street, to create a four-way stop. The new signs were installed Feb. 4, according to village officials.

Super Crossword

TYKES IN THE SADDLE

- ACROSS**
- 1 Milk-Bone products
 - 10 Legendary masked swordsman
 - 15 "Getting out of it is not possible for me"
 - 20 Stat for a baseball pitcher
 - 21 Mountain nymph of Greek myth
 - 22 Can't get out of it
 - 23 Start of a riddle
 - 25 Santa's little helpers
 - 26 "Delicious"
 - 27 Insect snares
 - 28 Told fibs
 - 29 Attempts to hit, as a fly
 - 31 Hair fixative
 - 32 Ryder Cup org.
 - 33 Manipulator
 - 34 Prefix with angle
 - 35 Felt concern
 - 38 Riddle, part 2
 - 43 Supreme Norse deity
 - 44 California vineyard valley
 - 45 Joust verbally
 - 46 Words before "dream" or "be different"
 - 47 Jazz pianist Allison
 - 48 Loft
 - 50 In a very uncordial way
 - 52 City in Iowa
 - 53 Riddle, part 3
 - 57 Not doolie
 - 58 Serpentine fish
 - 59 Above, in poetry
 - 60 Gabrielle of volleyball
 - 64 Vietnamese New Year
 - 65 Grad's gala
 - 68 Flop
 - 70 Indian royal
 - 72 Camera — (Cannes award)
 - 73 Wear down
 - 75 Actor DeLuise
 - 77 Space
 - 79 Big city in Ontario
 - 81 Riddle, part 4
 - 86 Utah winter vacation spot
 - 89 From Tehran or Tabriz
 - 90 Lade, e.g.
 - 91 Concerning
 - 92 Iris coverer
 - 94 With 108-Down, "Piece of cake!"
 - 96 Memorable periods
 - 97 Squint
 - 98 End of the riddle
 - 101 Cottage cheese bits
 - 102 Hit the slopes
 - 103 Alternatives to coffees
 - 104 Part of LAPD
 - 105 Perp catcher
 - 106 Like fishes without appendages
 - 108 Casino fixture
 - 110 Holier-than- —
 - 112 Rock's Reed
 - 115 Make irate
 - 116 Riddle's answer
 - 120 Crouch down
 - 121 Fill with panic
 - 122 Vacant elected positions
 - 123 1,000-kilo metric unit
 - 124 Conical tent
 - 125 Analyzed to detect the presence of
- DOWN**
- 1 Like a wet lawn at dawn
 - 2 Waikiki locale
 - 3 Protein unit
 - 4 Blasting stuff
 - 5 Kept in check
 - 6 1950s Ford
 - 7 "I smell —!"
 - 8 Yanks
 - 9 — cone
 - 10 Astrological diagrams
 - 11 Writer Sarah — Jewett
 - 12 Scan or skim
 - 13 Aries animal
 - 14 Ukraine port
 - 15 "Tell me about it!"
 - 16 Ale grain
 - 17 Generalized rivalry situation
 - 18 Zinc — (cosmetics ingredient)
 - 19 Brand of tortilla chips
 - 24 Gymnast Korbut
 - 30 Competitor of McDonald's and Burger King
 - 31 Big Swiss city
 - 32 Extol
 - 33 Toward a stream's source
 - 35 Calculate
 - 36 Ornament hanger, e.g.
 - 37 Italian rice dish
 - 38 Lot in life
 - 39 Makes the decision
 - 40 Sheriff Andy Taylor's boy
 - 41 PC shortcut code
 - 42 Barter
 - 44 Consumer advocate Ralph
 - 49 Signaled, as an actor
 - 51 Pre-euro Italian money
 - 54 Bank of China Tower architect
 - 55 Power connectors
 - 56 One of the Muses
 - 61 He played Santa in "Elf"
 - 62 Recoiled in fear
 - 63 Blackboard cleaners
 - 66 Baltic Sea feeder
 - 67 Tile designs
 - 69 Blocks up
 - 71 — Hopkins University
 - 74 Clog-clearing brand
 - 76 Year division
 - 78 Writing assignments
 - 80 Cause to stumble
 - 82 Keaton and Sawyer
 - 83 Not yet final, in law
 - 84 Folk stories
 - 85 Bank offering
 - 86 Gets on it right away
 - 87 Investigate
 - 88 Checking the fit of
 - 93 One of the Muses
 - 95 1984 comedy starring Steve Martin and Lily Tomlin
 - 99 React to with a quick breath
 - 100 Inflict upon
 - 101 Meal division
 - 105 Tally up
 - 107 Boxer Spinks
 - 108 See
 - 94-Across
 - 109 Apollo's instrument
 - 110 Variety
 - 111 Gardening tools
 - 112 Bread unit
 - 113 Film director Preminger
 - 114 Khrushchev's fed.
 - 117 Corrida cheer
 - 119 Actor Danson



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3	2	1	7	6	4	5		
					8		1	
6	9	8		4	7		3	
	3		5			6	7	
	2		6			9		5
		8				3	2	
1	3		6		5			
	5	7		3			9	
	9			1	5			

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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Trivia test

1. GEOGRAPHY: What is the highest mountain in Canada?
2. TELEVISION: Who is the host of the long-running reality series "Survivor"?
3. LITERATURE: Which animals represent the Communist Party in "Animal Farm"?
4. U.S. STATES: Which state is the birthplace of the singer Elvis?
5. ASTRONOMY: How long does it take the moon to orbit the Earth?
6. MOVIES: What is the score Elle receives on her law school admission test in "Legally Blonde"?
7. AD SLOGANS: Which product's slogan is "Is It In You??"
8. LANGUAGE: What is an eraser called in the United Kingdom?
9. SCIENCE: What are the four primary precious metals?
10. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: Valentine's Day arose from which Roman ritual?

Answers

1. Mount Logan.
2. Jeff Probst.
3. Pigs.
4. Mississippi.
5. 27.3 days.
6. 179.
7. Gatorade.
8. A rubber.
9. Gold, silver, platinum and palladium.
10. Lupercalia.

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CryptoQuote

AXYDLBAAXR is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each week the code letters are different.

AT TAG OKA XT LQ KHTAG.
AT BKQQGI CTF VIGKQ QCG
BKOCLAGW KIG.
— KBM STGCHGI

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TOP 10 MOVIES

1. Dog Man (PG)
2. Companion (R)
3. Mufasa: The Lion King (PG)
4. One of Them Days (R)
5. Flight Risk (R)
6. Sonic the Hedgehog 3 (PG)
7. Moana 2 (PG)
8. A Complete Unknown (R)
9. The Brutalist (R)
10. Den of Thieves: Pantera (R)

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SPORTS: Saner scoring well for SC boys

Continued from Page 12
Stahl can do in the tournament, and in the post-season.

“He is starting to hit his stride at the right time,” McClintic stated.

• **SC boys** – Ross Saner had a team-high 19 points Tuesday night for Stark County in a 69-39 Lincoln Trail loss to Princeville. Tucker Sennett had 30 points for the winners, including 12 in the first quarter and 19 in the first half as Princeville opened a 32-19 lead.

“Sennett shot lights out,” Stark County Coach Kane Mastin stated. “We made a run early at them, but they went zone (defense) and we couldn’t adjust.”

The Rebels fell to 7-18, 3-8 in the league.

Saner had 22 points Feb. 10 to lead Stark County past visiting Henry, 57-43. The teams were tied at 34 after three quarters, but Saner and Connor Daum each had eight points in the fourth as the Rebels were 9-for-10 on free throws. Daum and Saner were 4-for-4 each.

“They hit timely 3’s in the second and third quarters to keep it close,” Mastin said about Henry, “but we continued with our pseudo-press and forced them to keep taking jumpshots. They started to turn the ball over, and we made free throws.”

In the second half, Abingdon-Avon broke open its 71-39 victory Feb. 7. A-Town outscored Stark County 46-22 after intermission, including 27-7 in the fourth quarter. Daum had a team-high 11 points.

Stark County was scheduled to play Feb. 5

against Elmwood, but bad weather forced a postponement to Feb. 20. The Rebels are to begin LTC tournament play Saturday at Princeville.

• **Princeville boys** – Prior to Tuesday’s win over the Rebels, Tucker Sennett had 26 points, Jake Williams 24 as Princeville beat Peoria Christian 77-69 in double overtime Feb. 8.

The Princes (21-7) trailed 33-26 at halftime. But Williams hit a 3-pointer to force the first overtime, which began with both teams tied at 53. Gavin Walder made a 3 from behind the spike line for Peoria Christian to send the game to the second OT.

Sennett had 10 points in the OTs, including 7-for-8 on free throws. Williams had nine points, all on 3-pointers. According to Princeville Coach Tait Sennett, Jack Lied’s defense helped hold Peoria Christian’s season-leading scorer, Malachi Persinger, to 14 points. Logan Olshawsky scored 10 for Princeville.

The previous night, Olshawsky also had 10 points and Williams had 18 as Princeville beat Kewanee Wethersfield 69-37. Princeville trailed 18-16 after eight minutes but held Wethersfield to only three points the rest of the half.

The victory ended a four-game losing streak Anna- wan extended Feb. 4, when it beat Princeville 56-43. Tucker Sennett had a team-high 18 points.

“We are finally starting to get healthy,” Tait Sennett stated. “Three or four players had sprained ankles during that losing streak. We are playing with more energy and effort, also. It’s exciting to see.”

Princeville’s game that was set for Wednesday at West Central was moved to

Thursday, Feb. 13, because of a snowy forecast, according to Princeville Athletics Director Jeff Kratzer. That game first was postponed Jan. 21.

The Princes also are host to the Lincoln Trail tournament, which begins Saturday, continues Feb. 17 and ends Feb. 19.

• **Boys state tourney**– Sub-sectional seedings were to be posted Thursday at the Illinois High School Association website, ihsa.org. Pairings are to be posted about 4 p.m. today.

• **SC girls** – The No. 8 seeded Lady Rebels (11-19) are hoping for a better result on Saturday at 11 a.m. when they open Class 1A regional action against host Princeville – the third meeting in eight days. The Lady Princes are seeded sixth in the Class 1A sub-sectional.

The winner of Saturday’s game faces the unenviable task of playing at Abingdon-Avon (25-4) in a Class 1A regional semifinal on Monday at 6:30 p.m. A-Town is ranked No. 1 in Class 1A.

“I would put them right up there with the Annawan teams when I first started coaching at Princeville,” Lady Princes Coach John Gross said.

That’s high praise, since Annawan won a state title in 2016-17, which was Gross’ first year.

“They’re not a total team like Lewistown was (under ex-coach Greg Bennett),” Gross said. “But they’ve got three key pieces and role players who know what they have to do.”

Stark County dropped its

two previous meetings against the Lady Princes, falling 59-30 at Princeville on Feb. 7 and 52-14 at home on Feb. 8.

“We have not been playing the greatest ball,” Stark County Coach Bob Bohm said. “Princeville got out to a hot start and we could never recover.”

Coley Johnston scored 13 points for the Lady Rebels in the Feb. 7 game and Sophie Finnegan added nine points.

Paisley Schock led Princeville in that win with 23 points and Sahara Streitmatter tallied 18.

Stark County played better on Monday at home vs. Annawan before falling 52-44. Johnston had 15 points for Stark County and Emily Demetreon tallied nine, but the Lady Rebels could not contain Annawan’s Bella VanOpdorp, who rained in six 3-pointers and 33 points.

“We played pretty good against Annawan, but VanOpdorp just couldn’t miss, hitting 3s from NBA range,” Bohm said.


Stark County led against Midwest Central on Feb. 6 until 50 seconds were left and an opponent drained a 3-pointer. Bohm said the Lady Rebels have lost seven games by three points or less this season. Johnston scored 10 and Finnegan tallied eight vs. Midwest Central.

• **Galva girls** – The Lady Wildcats are seeded 12th in their Class 1A sub-sectional and open regional play Saturday at No. 7 seed Ridgewood at 3 p.m.

Galva (5-21) won at home against West Central on Monday, 62-51.



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✓ **Notice to Stark County Voters**
Early voting for the April 1st Consolidated Election will begin February 20th 2025 and end March 31st 2025 at the office of the Stark County Clerk 130 W. Main, Toulon. Voting hours are Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. We will also be open for early voting on Saturday March 29th from 9 - noon.



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Prairie News Sports



Galva's Stahl bombs in 51

Junior scores 83 points in two games for Wildcats

By NICK VLAHOS and JEFF LAMPE

For The Prairie News

Galva boys basketball player Blake Stahl has had quite a few weeks. The junior had 51 points Feb. 7 to lead his team past Knoxville 87-45. Stahl followed that performance with 32 points in a 77-45 victory Tuesday night at Kewanee Wethersfield. The victories left Galva with a 20-6 record, including 8-3 in the Lincoln Trail Conference.



Galva junior Blake Stahl is shown responding to the crowd after topping 1,000 points for his career on Jan. 28.

Stahl's effort against Knoxville, not long after he eclipsed 1,000 points for his career, represented the fourth-highest single-game point total in Galva boys history, according to Coach Jake McClintic.

Rich Falk, the Wildcats' all-time scoring leader, has the top three spots (57 points and two games with 52).

The point total for Stahl included 26 in the third quarter, three more than he had in the first half.

"At the time, I don't think it really hit me that

was still sharing the ball and taking his open shots, so I gave him the opportunity to finish the third quarter and go for 50. I mean, how many times do you see a high school kid score 50-plus in a game, let alone (in) 24 minutes of playing time?"

Stahl also had 10 rebounds and four steals.

MJ Louck had 33 points to lead Galva against Wethersfield. He scored 17 in the first quarter.

Galva is to play in the LTC tournament, which begins Saturday, continues Feb. 17 and ends Feb. 19. All games are at Princeville. The schedule is to be released today (Feb. 14). McClintic appears eager to see what

Continued on Page 11

he had that many," McClintic stated. "It wasn't until my assistant told me that he was over 40 that I knew how many he had.

"At that point, Blake

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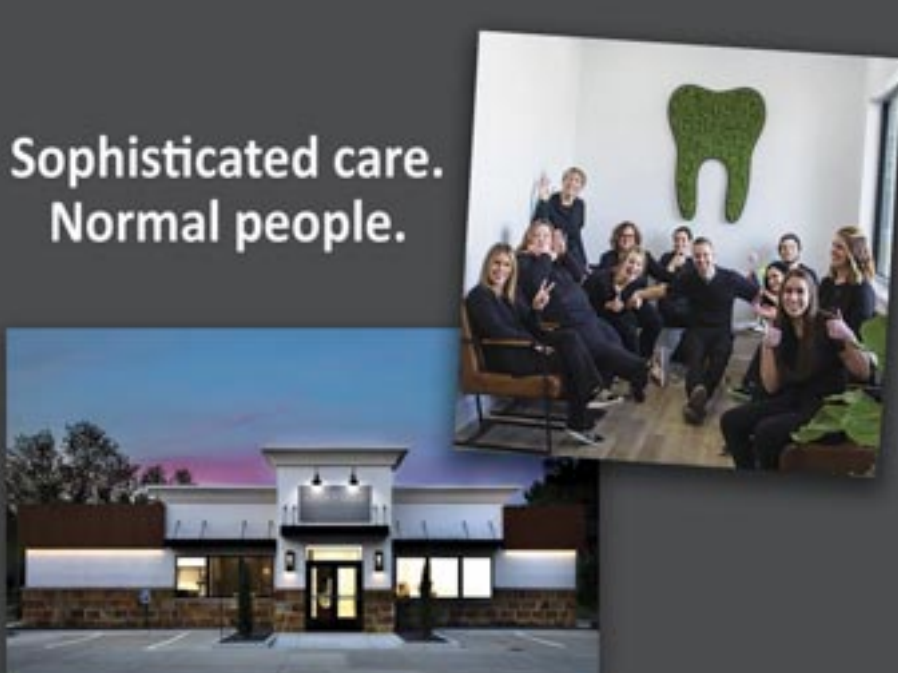
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