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January 2, 2026  
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# The Prairie News

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## Illinois' grocery tax to end, aquifer protections begin

By **BEN SZALINSKI**  
and **BRENDEN MOORE**

Capitol News Illinois

The on-again, off-again Illinois statewide 1% grocery tax will go away on Jan. 1, though many people will continue to pay it at the local level.

Data compiled by the Illinois Municipal League shows that 656 municipalities – a little more than half of the state's number – have passed an ordinance establishing their own grocery tax. Those communities are home to 7.2 million people, or 56.5% of the state's population. Three

counties – Washington, Wabash and Moultrie – have also approved countywide grocery taxes.

Gov. JB Pritzker signed a bill in 2024 eliminating the 1% statewide grocery tax, which he touted as a measure to ease residents' tax burden. But because the revenue from the state grocery tax went to municipal governments rather than state coffers, the measure allowed local governments to levy their own 1% tax via ordinance, rather than a referendum to voters.

Here are some other laws that

will take effect in the new year:

### Hotel soaps phased out

The phase-out of small, single-use plastic bottles in Illinois hotel rooms continues.

Senate Bill 2960, passed and signed into law in 2024, bars hotels from providing toiletries such as shampoo, conditioner and bath soap in less than six-ounce plastic containers unless specifically requested by the hotel guest.

The ban took effect in hotels with 50 or more rooms on July 1 and takes effect for all hotels starting in 2026. Hotels in viola-

tion will receive a written warning for the first offense and be subject to fines of up to \$1,500 for each subsequent violation.

The legislation is intended to spur the state's hospitality industry to reduce its plastic footprint by shifting to either refillable toiletry containers or larger plastic bottles.

Similar laws have been enacted in California, New York and Washington.

### Squatter removal

Senate Bill 1563 will make it easier for authorities to remove squatters who are illegally stay-

ing at someone else's residence.

The law clarifies that a court-ordered eviction is not required for police to remove squatters from a person's home, and police can enforce criminal trespassing charges against a squatter.

Pritzker signed the bill in July after squatters moved into a home next door to Rep. Marcus Evans in Chicago. According to ABC-7, Chicago Police told homeowners they couldn't remove the squatters from the home and the homeowners would have to go through the

*Continued on Page 2*

## BEEF PRICES STILL RISING

### Cattle supply remains low

Possible increases in domestic herd in 2026

By **RHIANNON BRANCH**

FarmWeek

Livestock markets in 2025 have been more favorable than in recent years compared to crop markets, but a high-price environment does not mean producers should ease up on risk management.

Brittney Goodrich, assistant professor of ag economics at the University of Illinois, points to the cattle industry where several years of drought have drastically cut domestic beef supplies and border closures due to New World Screw-worm have interfered with imports, pushing prices higher.

“During this last year, we haven't decreased the herd size as much as we had previously. We've also not



Tight supplies of cattle in the U.S. continue to keep pressure on the markets heading into 2026. Photo by Catrina Rawson of FarmWeek.

slaughtered as high of a percentage of cows and heifers as we had in previous years. So, there may be some modest indications that we're starting to think about expansion, but it's going to be slow,” Goodrich told FarmWeek. “USDA projects

no real significant expansion until between 2026 and 2027, then we might start to see herd sizes increase, which would put downward pressure on feeder and fed cattle prices.”

*Continued on Page 4*

## Deck in custody

In Bureau County Jail after arrest on outstanding Stark County warrant

By **JEFF LAMPE**

For The Prairie News

The saga of Caleb A. Deck continues.

The man whose alleged criminal activity helped permanently close the Wyoming Drivers and Motor Vehicles Facility was recently arrested by Chillicothe police.



Deck

Deck, 48, was wanted on a Stark County warrant and is being held in the Bureau County Jail. He is serving a 120-day sentence for driving on a suspended license, Stark County State's Attorney Austin King said.

Deck is scheduled to ap-

pear Jan. 12 in Stark County Circuit Court. He had been on the lam since failing to report to Stark County Jail on June 2. At that time, a warrant for his arrest was issued.

Deck faces other charges, ranging from unlawful use of a weapon by a felon, burglary, aggravated assault of a peace officer, theft, criminal trespass to state land, domestic battery and escape from a penal institution.

The decision to close the Wyoming DMV was made in March 2025 after Deck was arrested in front of the building. Deck was also arrested there Oct. 15, 2024, when police found drugs, stolen items and a homemade explosive device in his apartment above the DMV office.

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# NEW LAWS: Include safer gear for firefighters

*Continued from Page 1*  
 eviction process in Cook County court, which can take months.

## Drinking-water protections

Senate Bill 1723 bans carbon sequestration – the process of capturing and storing carbon by injecting it underground – within an area that overlies, underlies, or passes through a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency-designated sole-source aquifer.

The new law applies to the footprint of the Mahomet Aquifer, which is the main source of drinking water for more than 500,000 people across a 15-county area in central Illinois.

It comes as Illinois, especially downstate, is targeted for carbon sequestration projects due to the state's favorable geology and the availability of federal tax credits.

Studies, including those conducted by researchers at the University of Illinois, have found minimal risk to water sources from sequestration activity.

But the legislation was a priority for central Illinois community activists, environmental advocates and a bipartisan cadre of local lawmakers with zero risk tolerance due to the lack of a clear alternative water source if the aquifer were tainted.

## Safer gear for firefighters

Illinois will take first steps towards requiring

safer gear for firefighters.

Under House Bill 2409, manufacturers of firefighter turnout gear starting in 2026 must provide written notice if their products contain PFAS, also known as “forever chemicals.”

Numerous scientific studies have linked exposure to PFAS to an increased risk of developing various forms of cancer.

Manufacturers will be banned from selling turnout gear and personal protective equipment containing PFAS altogether starting on Jan. 1, 2027.

## Lift-assist fees

House Bill 2336 allows municipalities or fire districts to charge assisted-living facilities or nursing homes for calls to fire departments requesting help lifting a resident when it is not an emergency.

The bill was an initiative of the Illinois Municipal League, which argued the calls to fire departments for the nonemergency service are a burden on local governments and shift liabilities for injuries that happen during the process to fire departments rather than the facility.

## Stadium funding

Senate Bill 2772 adds women's professional sports to the types of facilities the Illinois Sports Facilities Authority can oversee. Current law only allows the ISFA to oversee sports facilities for baseball, football and auto racing.

The bill is not designed to move any team's stadium proposals forward, though the Chicago Stars women's soccer team has previously been reported to be interested in building a new stadium with help from state funding.

The bill was the only

one related to sports-stadium funding that advanced in Springfield in 2025. The Chicago Bears committed earlier this year to building a stadium in Arlington Heights but are still waiting for approval from the village and struggling to find support in Springfield for funding.

## Public-official privacy

House Bill 576 allows state lawmakers, constitutional officers and state's attorneys, among others, to request that their personal information be redacted on public websites.

Public officials would be able to use their campaign funds to pay for personal security services and security upgrades to their home, including security systems, cameras, walls, fences and other physical improvements.

## Rewilding

House Bill 2726 allows the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to implement rewilding as a conservation strategy for the state.

This could entail the restoration of land to its natural state and the reintroduction of native species, especially apex predators and keystone species like bison and beavers.

Illinois is believed to be the first state to codify the strategy into law.

## Reservation app regulations

State lawmakers voted this year to crackdown on third-party restaurant reservation apps.

House Bill 2456 prohibits third-party reservation services from selling reservations without a restaurant's permission. Restaurants are still allowed to partner with the services.

## Paid time off to pump breast milk

Senate Bill 212 man-

dates employers to compensate mothers who take breaks at work to pump breast milk for up to a year after their child is born. The bill prohibits employers from requiring employees to use paid leave time for pumping.

## Naloxone in libraries

House Bill 1910 requires that libraries maintain a supply of opioid-overdose medication, like naloxone. This drug is often administered through a nasal spray like Narcan. The law also requires that at least one staff member be trained to identify overdoses and administer the drug.

## Police training on sexual assault

Senate Bill 1195, also known as Anna's Law, requires police officers in training to participate in trauma-informed programs, procedures and practices that are designed to reduce trauma for victims. The bill is named after Anna Williams, a suburban resident who brought the initiative to lawmakers following her own experience with a sexual-assault investigation. The bill takes effect in January.

## Predatory towing

Senate Bill 2040 gives the Illinois Commerce Commission new powers to punish predatory towing companies which sometimes tow cars under false pretenses only to charge drivers afterwards. The ICC-backed law allows the agency to revoke towing licenses, impound tow trucks and more.

*Jerry Nowicki contributed to this story.*  
*Capitol News Illinois is a non-profit, nonpartisan news service that distributes state government coverage to hundreds of news outlets statewide. It is funded primarily by the Illinois Press Foundation and the Robert R. McCormick Foundation.*

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Small towns across America are facing a slow but steady decline, and Wyoming is no exception. As more spending shifts to online retailers and big-box chains, local businesses struggle to survive. The reality is simple: small towns are dying if we don't support them.

When we choose to shop locally, we do far more than make a purchase. We keep our dollars circulating within our own community. Local businesses hire local workers, pay local taxes, and reinvest in the town. That money strengthens Wyoming's economy in a way outside retailers never can.

But the impact isn't just financial. Our local shops give Wyoming its identity — the familiar storefronts, the friendly greetings, the places that make our town feel like home. When a business closes, we lose more than a service. We lose a piece of who we are.

Local businesses also support the heartbeat of community life. They sponsor youth sports, donate to school events, contribute to fundraisers, and show up when the town needs them. They are not just businesses; they are neighbors. Choosing to shop local is choosing to invest in the future of Wyoming. It is choosing a community over convenience. If we want our town to stay strong, vibrant, and alive, it will be because we support the businesses that support us.

**The future of Wyoming is in our hands — and in our shopping choices.**

## PUBLIC RECORD

### Incidents & Accidents Stark County

**12-15** - Tiara R. Henderson, 26, Toulon, was cited for speeding 75 mph in a 55 zone.

**12-16** - Hannah E. Robinson, 18, Toulon, was cited for speeding 80 mph in a 55 zone.

**12-18** - Jerry E. Sander, 52, La-Fayette, was arrested for domestic battery. Sander was taken into custody and extradited to the Bureau County Jail. On Dec. 19, Sander appeared in court and was released with conditions to have no contact with the victim. He was scheduled with a new court date.

**12-19** - Dustin L. Waldron, 37, East Peoria, was cited for driving without a valid driver's license and operating a vehicle with a suspended registration due to mandatory insurance violation. His vehicle was towed and impounded. He was issued a court date to appear.

**12-20** - Antonysha R. Bailey, 24, Peoria, was cited for driving an uninsured vehicle.

**12-20** - Citations were issued to two Kewanee residents during a traffic stop on Illinois Route 78. Driver Tamia R. Howell, 24, was ticketed for illegal transportation of cannabis by a driver and speeding 67 mph in a 55 zone. Passenger Christiona M. Williams, 28, was cited for illegal transportation of alcohol and illegal transportation of cannabis. Howell was also found wanted on an outstanding Peoria County warrant for failure to appear on an original charge for criminal damage to property. She was extradited to the Peoria County Jail. Both Howell and Williams were scheduled with court dates to appear in Stark County.

**12-21** - Jose F. Aquino, 67, Freeport, was ticketed for speeding 73 mph in a 55 zone.

**12-21** - Tyler J. Epps, 24, Brimfield, was ticketed for driving while his license was suspended. His vehicle was impounded and he was issued a court date to appear.

**12-23** - Jeremiah J. Hamilton, 30, Peoria, was cited for driving while his license was suspended. He was issued a court date.

**12-24** - Nicholas C. Stevenson, 26, Champaign, was ticketed for speeding 88 mph in a 55 zone. He was issued a court date to appear.

### Peoria County Report

**12-18** - Austin J. Scott, 40, of Toulon was arrested shortly before 11:15 a.m. and accused of failure to appear in court, according to the Peoria County Sheriff's Office.

### Galva Report

#### Officer dispatched:

**12-15** - to the 00 block of NE 1st Ave. to assist Ameren with an aggressive dog after a possible natural gas leak was detected.

**12-15** -officer was notified of a disabled vehicle partially blocking Bonham Road near 1900 East. The owner mopped the car to allow snowplows to clean the roadway.

**12-15** -to the 600 block of NW 7th St. for a verbal domestic disturbance and to remove an unwanted subject.

**12-15** - to the 600 block of NW



7th St. for a loose cat inside a building complaint. Officer advised complainant to contact landlord as it wasn't a police issue.

**12-15** - to the 200 block of SW 4th St. for a verbal domestic disturbance.

**12-16** - As the result of a traffic stop in the 500 block of W. Division St., Samuel Abdelkoui, 64, of Galva, was arrested on a Henry County warrant for failure to appear on the charge of driving while license suspended. He was also charged with driving without a valid drivers license. He was released with required court dates for both offenses.

**12-17** - As the result of a traffic stop in the 900 block of W. Division St., Terry Yelm, 33, Kewanee, was cited for operating a vehicle when registration was suspended and operating an uninsured vehicle. He was released with a court date.

**12-17** - As the result of a traffic stop in the 00 block of NE 2nd St., Allison Gillum, 31, Galva, was cited for operating a vehicle when her drivers license was cancelled. She was released with a court date.

**12-17** - to the 500 block of NW 5th Ave. for a loose-dog complaint.

**12-17** - to the 200 block of NW 2nd Ave. for a runaway juvenile complaint. The youth returned home a short time later.

**12-18** - to the 200 block of SW 6th St. to assist a citizen.

**12-18** - to the 200 block of NW 2nd St. for a child-custody dispute. The child was located and returned home.

**12-18** - to the 200 block of NW 2nd St. for a child-custody dispute.

**12-19** - o the 400 block of SW 4th Ave. for a loose-dog complaint. Officer was not able to locate.

**12-20** - to meet a resident at the Galva Police Department to assist a citizen with questions.

**12-20** - to a residence on SW 4th St. to check the welfare of a subject. They were fine.

**12-20** - to the north edge of town to watch for a reckless driver that was reportedly driving southbound toward Galva. As the result, Brandi York, 30, Galva, was stopped in the 600 block of N. Center Ave. and cited for operating a vehicle when registration suspended for mandatory insurance and operating an uninsured vehicle. She was released with a required court date.

**12-20** - to the 00 block of SW 4th St. for a trespassing complaint.

**12-20** - to the 300 block of SE 1st Ave. for a loud-music complaint. The subjects agreed to turn it down.

**12-21** - Officer was dispatched to the 300 block of SW 3rd St. for a civil property dispute.

**12-21** - to the 600 block of NE 2nd St. to assist a citizen.

**12-22** - to the 400 block of SE 1st Street for harassment through electronic communications complaint.

**12-22** - to the 300 block of SW 3rd Street to assist a subject who appeared to be suffering from a mental-health crisis.

**12-22** - to the 100 block of NE 6th Street for a two-vehicle accident with damage only.

**12-22** - While patrolling, officer located a vehicle that appeared to be broken down in the 1000 block of SE 2nd St.

**12-23** - to the 00 block of SW 6th St. for a loose-dog complaint. The owner picked the dog up.

**12-23** - to the 300 block of Front St. to remove an unwanted subject.

**12-24** - to the 200 block of S. Exchange St. to remove an unwanted subject who was causing a disturbance. The subject was a sex offender and was ultimately

transported to the Galva Police Department, where a sex offender registration form was completed. The form was completed and emailed to Henry County for LEADS entry.

**12-24** - to the 300 block of Front St. to remove an unwanted patron.

**12-24** - to the 300 block of Commercial St. for a disturbance involving a patron damaging property.

**12-25** - to the 300 block of Commercial St. to remove an unwanted subject who was causing a disturbance. The subject was removed and transported to a nearby town.

**12-25** - to the 900 block of SE 2nd St. for a criminal damage to vehicle complaint after a rear window was found to be broken.

**12-25** - to the 800 block of NE 1st Ave. for an illegal fireworks complaint.

**12-25** - along with Henry County deputies, to the 900 block of SE 2nd St. to attempt to serve a warrant. As a result, Matthew Reges, 29, Galva, was arrested on a Henry County warrant for failing to appear on a theft charge. He was also given a notice to appear in court on a charge of obstructing justice after giving officer a different name on an earlier complaint. He was taken to the Henry County Jail.

**12-26** - to the 00 block of SW 2nd St. for a civil standby to exchange property.

**12-26** - to the 100 block of Main St. for a loose pit bull complaint. The dog was secured by its owner.

**12-27** - to the 600 block of NW 7th St. for a loose dog complaint.

**12-28** - to the 700 block of NW 4th St. to assist a subject who appeared to be suffering from a mental health crisis.

**12-28** - to the 200 block of NW 2nd Ave. for a disturbance complaint involving an out-of-control juvenile.

**12-28** - to the 700 block of NW 4th St. to assist a subject apparently having a mental-health crisis.

**12-28** - to the 200 block of SW 2nd Ave for an activated burglar alarm.



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# CATTLE: New World Screwworm a consideration

Continued from Page 1

USDA reported an estimated 11.7 million head of cattle on feed as of Dec. 1, down 2% from last year. Placements in feedlots (1.6 million head) declined 11% while marketings of fed cattle (1.52 million head) were down 12% from a year ago.

Despite slow progress to rebuild the U.S. cattle herd, beef markets experienced some downward price movements this year and recently fell from the peaks seen in September.

“I think that was just a seasonal thing that we kind of expected to happen, it was just much more drastic than we’re used to seeing,” Good-

rich said. “But that’s kind of highlighting that even in these relatively good times, there can be huge price swings that we need to be prepared for.”

Goodrich said all livestock producers should keep in mind even in times of high prices there is downside price risk.

“Things like knowing your cost of production and hedging, if you’re large enough in futures and options markets, can be good tools to use,” she said. “There’s also a relatively new risk management tool provided by USDA that is basically a subsidized option for hogs, feeder cattle

and fed cattle. Folks can use that to protect against some of that downside price movement if they’re not big enough to be a player in the futures and options markets.”

Livestock producers should continue to monitor the situation with New World Screwworm into 2026.

“If they open live cattle imports back up from Mexico, that may put some downward pressure on our beef prices here in the U.S., particularly on the feeder and fed cattle side,” she said.

*This story was distributed through a cooperative project between Illinois Farm Bureau and the Illinois Press Association. For more food and farming news, visit FarmWeekNow.com*

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- Pt SW ¼ of Sec 24, 12N 5E, West Jersey Twp.
- PI: 119.7

**January 23<sup>rd</sup>: Juanita Murray Auction; 98.23 Acres Stark County**

- Pt of Ne ¼ of Sec 22, 13N 5E, Goshen Twp.
- PI: 129.3

**January 30<sup>th</sup>: Jacobson Auction; 63.2 Acres Stark County**

- Tract 1: Pt SW ¼ of Sec 34, 13N 6E, Toulon Twp.
- PI: 107.2

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## OBITUARIES

### Crystal D. Clair

CHILLICOTHE – Crystal Diane Clair, 70, of Chillicothe, Ill., formerly of Loraine, Ill., passed away at 2:37 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 23, 2025, in Peoria.



Clair

She was born on Nov. 16, 1955, in Kewanee, to James and Martha (Peterson) Mock. Crystal graduated from Toulon High School where she was a member of the cheer team.

She married Darrell King in 1976. Together, they raised two sons, Nic and Thad. She served as the library media center specialist at Victoria Grade School and later as secretary at ROWVA High School.

She later married Randy Clair on Jan. 1, 2002, at Centennial Ebenezer Church in Loraine. Crystal went back to college at John Wood Community College and worked as the bookkeeper for the Village of Mendon. Alongside her husband, Randy, Crystal was dedicated to managing their organic farm, where she continually developed her skills in operating equipment for their composting and farming business.

Crystal was an active member of Madison Park Church in Quincy, Ill., and the Illinois Stewardship Alliance. Her hobbies included sewing, reading, gardening, mowing and farming. She was an avid fanatic of her grandchildren's sporting and music events.

She is survived by two sons, Nic (Karin) King of Bates City, Mo. and Thad (Alison) King of Chillicothe; seven grandchildren, Isabella, Kaiser, Miles, Kason, Blair, Lily and Blythe; sister Cynthia (Robert) Hatfield of Toulon, Ill.; brothers-in-law Dan Clair of Loraine and Ted (Sylvia) Clair of Pueblo, Colo.; special sisters-in-law Crystal (Dean) Mock Rosebecke of Lafayette, Ill., and Rosemary (Gary) Brickman of Ursa; many nieces and nephews; and several close friends.

Crystal was preceded in death by her parents; brother Randy Mock; and her husband, Randy.

A visitation will be held on Friday, Jan. 2, 2026, at 1 p.m. at the Triplett Funeral Home in Mendon, Ill. A celebration of Crystal's life will follow at 2 p.m. Pastor Keith Ehresman will officiate. Inurnment will immediately follow at the Ebenezer Cemetery. Memorials may be made to the Christian Center at 4100 N Brandywine Dr, Peoria, IL 61614 to benefit youth sports.

You are invited to share your condolences at [www.triplettfuneral-homes.com](http://www.triplettfuneral-homes.com).

### Jennie L. Garms

ESTHERVILLE, Iowa – Jennie Lynn Garms, 61, of Estherville, Iowa, died Dec. 18, 2025, surrounded by her loved ones at Avera

Health in Sioux Falls, S.D.

She was born on April 3, 1964, in Kewanee, the daughter of Louis and Kathryn (Cass) Garms. She graduated from Kewanee High School and Blackhawk College with a degree in nursing.

Jennie is survived by her son, Craig Garms of Silvis; daughter, Courtney Garms of Peoria; granddaughter, Natalie Powers, and Natalie's father, Mason Powers of Estherville; and two siblings, Christina (Brian) Carlson of Galva and Bill (Jackie) Garms of Kewanee.

She was preceded in death by her parents; a granddaughter, Lauren Trussen; and brother-in-law Brian Carlson.

A private funeral will be held at a later date.

### Betty A. Graves

BRADFORD – Betty Ann (Clevenger) Graves, 59, of Bradford, passed away suddenly and unexpectedly on Dec. 20, 2025, days before her 60th birthday.

Betty Ann was raised on the family farm outside of Walnut, Ill., by her parents, Herman "Tex" Clevenger and Donna Clevenger (Full). It was there that she grew up riding and showing horses—learning responsibility, resilience and a love for the simple, steady rhythms of life.

She lived a life rooted in love, faith and generosity, and nowhere was that more evident than in her marriage to her beloved husband, Mark Allen Graves. Married on June 2, 1990, they shared 35 years of devoted partnership. Their love was singular and steadfast – marked by loyalty, tenderness and a shared faith. Together they built a home that felt safe, warm and full of love. No one loved Betty Ann the way Mark did and he mourns her deeply.

On the morning of her passing, she made Mark biscuits – an ordinary, tender act that perfectly reflected the quiet way she loved.

Betty Ann was nurturing in the way that shapes a life. As a mother, she was steady, present and endlessly giving. She played board games every day, read bedtime stories every night and almost always said yes to "just one more." Trips to the grocery store always included choosing a special snack. If someone was hungry, she fed them – no questions asked. Her care was instinctive and constant.

Mornings often began with country music playing loudly as it

floated up the stairs. She loved music and was an avid reader, finding comfort, joy and companionship in both. Her love showed up quietly – doing the dishes, sweeping the floor, leaving small trinkets behind, or arriving with strawberries or treats in hand.

She had the sweetest giggle – a soft, joyful "hehehehe" that bubbled up when something truly delighted her. She loved to joke and laugh, and her warmth put people instantly at ease. She never had a bad word to say about anyone and had a rare gift for making people feel seen, remembered and loved.

Her faith was central to her life. For 15 years, Betty Ann faithfully served as the pastor's wife alongside Mark at the First Baptist Church of Bradford. She volunteered countless hours preparing funeral luncheons, helping with Vacation Bible School, Awana, youth activities and wherever help was needed. During the construction of the church building, she quietly organized meals for workers – content to serve without recognition. Many underestimated her, but those who knew her understood how much she carried, how much she gave and how deeply she loved. Her church family grieves her loss profoundly.

Her heart for service extended beyond her home and church. She worked as an in-home aide for individuals with disabilities, a role perfectly suited to her patience, compassion and ability to form deep, genuine connections. She treated every person with dignity and care. She also served as a children's librarian in Sheffield, Ill., where her gentle presence and love for children left a lasting impression.

She was creative in quiet, thoughtful ways – arranging flowers, crafting beauty from simple materials, including a wreath made from a garden hose that still hangs proudly as a reminder of her ingenuity and care.

She loved long phone calls with the people she cherished, faithfully remembered birthdays and sent cards to mark life's moments. She adored her cat, especially when it curled up contentedly on her chest. She was patient, kind, loyal, protective, intelligent and joyful – a woman whose presence alone could light up a room.

She treasured her role as a grandmother. Caring for her granddaughter, Everly, from the time she was a baby was one of the greatest joys of her life. Their days were filled with board games, laughter, backyard adventures, and plenty of treats – especially strawberries. It was a gift not only to Everly, but to her family, who knew she was always surrounded by love.



Garms



Graves

Continued on Page 6

## 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

7874 State Route 93, Toulon, IL 61483 • (309) 896-3481  
Services each Sunday at 9 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](mailto:info@thegathering.life)  
website: [www.thegathering.life/](http://www.thegathering.life/)  
[www.facebook.com/thegatheringchurch.life](http://www.facebook.com/thegatheringchurch.life)

### 1st Congregational Church of Toulon

Reverend David Graham  
218 N. Henderson St., Toulon • (309) 286-4901  
Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m.  
Email [fcctoulon@gmail.com](mailto:fcctoulon@gmail.com)  
website: [firstcongregationaltoulon.org](http://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

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211 NW 4th Ave GALVA  
Main Service: Sun 10:30  
Rev. Bryan Griem, Pastor  
(309) 932-2713 • [GalvaBaptistChurch.com](http://GalvaBaptistChurch.com)  
**Wyoming Nazarene Church**  
517 N Madison Ave. Wyoming, IL 61491  
Rev. Shawna Marsh  
Sunday School: 10 a.m., All ages • Sunday Worship: 11 a.m.  
Wednesday Prayer & Fellowship 5:30 to 6:30  
Thursday Kids Club 5:30 to 7 p.m.  
Baby Connection: Wednesday and Thursdays 9 - 11 a.m.  
Facebook: Wyoming Naz

### First Congregational Church

204 N. 7th St., PO Box 35, Wyoming, IL 61491  
(309) 695-4091  
Sunday Worship 10 a.m.  
Check us out on Facebook  
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### 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](mailto:pastor@toulonbaptist.com)  
[www.ToulonBaptist.com](http://www.ToulonBaptist.com)  
[www.facebook.com/FirstBaptistChurchToulon](http://www.facebook.com/FirstBaptistChurchToulon)  
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### St. Timothy Lutheran Church

Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m.  
16883 State Route 17, PO Box 158 - Wyoming, IL 61491  
[allsaintsil.com](http://allsaintsil.com)

### Galva Messiah Lutheran Church (ELCA)

317 SW Third Street, Galva, IL  
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Sunday: 9:00 a.m. Children's Sunday School, 9:00 a.m. Adult Discussion Group, 10:00 a.m. Worship  
Contact: [messiahlutherangalva@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:preachinghope@gmail.com)  
[galvafirst@gmail.com](mailto:galvafirst@gmail.com)  
Sunday Worship: 9:0 a.m.

### 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  
Father 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](mailto:WyomingUMCPastor@gmail.com)  
Service is held at 10 a.m. 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 Wyonet Walnut Rd, Bradford, IL. 61421  
Services on Sundays at 9 a.m.  
Rev Dan Wright  
309-897-8113 309-507-1626  
[thewrights62@hotmail.com](mailto:thewrights62@hotmail.com)

### Bradford Apostolic Christian Church

440 E Main St Bradford IL 61421  
9:45 a.m. Sunday Worship Service and simultaneous Sunday School pre-K thru 12+  
11:00 Lunch and Fellowship, 12:15 2nd Sunday Worship  
Wednesday Worship Service 7:15 pm  
[www.bradfordacchurch.org](http://www.bradfordacchurch.org); [info@bradfordacchurch.org](mailto:info@bradfordacchurch.org)

### LIST YOUR CHURCH HERE

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[ruxfuneral@yahoo.com](mailto:ruxfuneral@yahoo.com)

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**OBITUARIES**

**Continued from Page 5**

Coming just weeks after the passing of her mother, Donna Clevenger, Betty Ann's death leaves an immeasurable ache in the hearts of those who loved her. She will be remembered for her gentleness, her quiet strength, her faithful heart and the countless unseen ways she cared for others.

She is survived by her devoted husband, Mark Allen Graves, of Bradford; her daughter Beth Ann Elmore and son-in-law Daniel Elmore and her beloved granddaughter, Everly, all of Dover; her father, Herman "Tex" Clevenger, of Walnut; her sister Denise Hinojosa and brother-in-law Angel Hinojosa; her brother, Joe Clevenger and sister-in-law Maricela Clevenger; and many extended family members and friends who loved her dearly.

Visitation was Friday, Dec. 26, 2025 at First Baptist Church in Bradford, Ill. A Funeral Service was Saturday, Dec. 27, 2025, at First

Baptist Church in Bradford, with Pastor William Carter officiating. Burial was to follow in Bunker Hill Cemetery in Buda, Ill.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be given to the First Baptist Church of Bradford, to be used at the discretion of the church.

**Diane K. Gradert**

GALVA – Diane K. Gradert, 86, of Galva, died at 3:50 p.m., Wednesday, Dec. 17, 2025, at OSF Richard L. Owens Hospice Home in Peoria.

She was born Nov. 29, 1939, in Kewanee, the daughter of James and Maureen (Jones) Durick. She married Delmar L. "Del" Gradert on Oct. 18, 1958, in Kewanee. Survivors include her husband of Galva; her three children, Kurt (Jennifer) Gradert of Somonauk, Ill., Mike Gradert

of Galva and Lisa Lutz of Arkdale, Wis.; nine grandchildren; and 27 great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her parents; sister, Mary Beth Hulslander; and her daughter, Leslie Wooten.


Diane attended Villa de Chantal in Rock Island and graduated from Kewanee High School in 1957. She was a member of Saint John Paul II Parish in Kewanee. She enjoyed crafting and oil painting and had taught painting classes in Sandwich.

Diane loved her dog, Edee, and was devoted to her family and cherished the time spent with them.

Cremation will be accorded and no services are planned. Private inurnment will be held at a later date. Memorials may be directed to OSF Richard L. Owens Hospice Home in Peoria. Rux Funeral Home in Galva is assisting the family with arrangements.



Gradert

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**LEGAL ADS**

**CLOVER TOWNSHIP FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT ANNUAL REPORT**  
 Statement of cash receipts and disbursements for the year beginning May 1, 2024, through April 30, 2025.

**SUMMARY OF CASH RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS**

Cash Balance, May 1, 2024	\$278,857.81
Cash Receipts, Schedule I	\$241,164.33
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$520,022.14</b>
Cash Disbursements, Schedule II	\$383,847.20
<b>Balance, April 30, 2025</b>	<b>\$136,174.94</b>

**SCHEDULE I**

IL Comptroller/replacement tax	\$8,491.61
Bank Checking Interest	\$276.30
HC Prop Tax	\$217,515.49
Bank Orion - int savings	\$50.70
Firemen	\$14,131.15
Savings Interest	\$85.02
CD interest	\$437.64
Adjustment for balance purposes	\$176.42
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	<b>\$241,164.33</b>
Cash Balance:	
Farmer's State Bank checking	\$51,021.72

Farmer's State Bank savings	\$22,669.87
Bank Orion Savings - 60181366	\$ 50,840.37
CD - 33955	\$11,642.98
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$136,174.94</b>

**SCHEDULE II**

Alexis Fire	\$2,070.36
Ambulance	\$80,366.08
Ameren	\$7,785.33
American Express/Visa	\$9,256.51
Bank Orion-loan	\$116,374.70
Barash & Everett	\$3,868.00
Cabinet/Concrete	\$35,603.67
Don McDowell	\$650.00
Dues	\$450.00
Electrical	\$6,976.00
Fire Catt LLC	\$3,090.00
Fuel	\$1,755.27
Ideal-underwriters-insurance	\$13,773.00
Lampe-legal ads	\$211.50
Larry Cowser	\$500.00
Larry Goff	\$400.00
Legacy Fire	\$ 504.56
McDowell Const	\$13,751.74
MES-SCBAS	\$5,970.83

Mike Berry	\$300.00
Misc	\$1,428.56
Motorola	\$240.00
Other	\$6,874.04
Pest Control	\$1,117.32
Plumbing/Heating	\$29,029.06
Point Builders	\$25,092.43
Shanie Brown	\$1,515.16
Supreme radio	\$493.06
Telephone	\$1,125.02
Tim Blaine	\$500.00
USPS	\$403.00
Vicker Consulting	\$50.00
Water	\$1,692.00
Woodhull Firemen	\$9,630.00
<b>TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS</b>	<b>\$383,847.20</b>

\_/S/ Tim Blaine, Treasurer  
 Subscribed and sworn to before me this 18th day of December 2025  
 \_/S/ Jacqueline L. Salz, Notary Public

Published 1/2/26

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

Kewanee Municipal Airport Authority  
 An Illinois Municipal Airport, Plaintiff  
 Vs 2025 EV 130  
 Rusty Ott., Defendant

**NOTICE BY PUBLICATION**

The requisite Motion for Service by Publication having been filed, notice is hereby given to you, **Rusty Ott**, Defendant in the above-entitled cause, that the above-entitled action was filed and is now pending.

- The names of all Plaintiffs, the Court in which this action was brought, and the Case Number are identified above.
- The name of the landlord is: **Kewanee Municipal Airport.**
- The premises in which this matter pertains is **Hangar #3A, Kewanee Municipal Airport, 3769 Midland Road, Kewanee, Illinois 61443.**

NOW, THEREFORE, unless you, all Defendants, file your answer to the Complaint for Forcible Entry and Detainer in this cause or otherwise make your appearance therein, with the Henry County Circuit Clerk, 307 W. Center Street, Cambridge, Illinois 61238, on or before 30 days after the date of this publication, a default may be entered.

/s/ Terilyn A. Motley  
 Circuit Clerk

Zachary L. Lessard (ARDC #6325734) of  
 Barash & Everett, LLC  
 Attorney for Petitioner  
 211 W. Second Street  
 Kewanee, IL 61443  
 Telephone: 309/852-5555  
 Fax: 309/853-8153  
 E-mail: zac@barashlaw.com

Published 12/19/25, 1/2, 1/9/26

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

ESTATE OF  
 NORMAN ALLEN ANDERSEN,  
 Deceased.  
 No. 2025PR121

**CLAIM NOTICE**  
 (Publication)

Notice is given of the death of **Norman Allen Andersen**. Letters of Office were issued on **December 8, 2025, to Reynolds M. Everett, Jr. 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 **June 8, 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](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 [www.illinoiscourts.gov/FAQ/gethelp.asp](http://www.illinoiscourts.gov/FAQ/gethelp.asp). Or talk with your local circuit clerk's office.

Name Barash & Everett, LLC  
 Attorney of Executor  
 Address P.O. Box 165  
 City Galva, IL 61434  
 Phone(309) 932-2001  
 Email: everetr@barashlaw.com

Published 12/19/25, 1/2, 1/9/26

  
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Lampe Publications LLC must be paid upfront before placing ads.

# SPORTS: Wildcats reach consolation bracket

*Continued from Page 12*  
Brimfield, then again Monday night at Midland.

• **Stark County Girls** – Coley Johnston has been on a scoring surge for Stark County, (8-6) but she's had plenty of help.

The Lady Rebels entered Christmas break with wins over ROWVA-Williamsfield (38-36) on Dec. 17 and Peoria Heights (60-21) on Dec. 18.

Johnston scored 20 against the Heights, Hallie Newton had 14 and Sophie Finnegan added 13.

Once on break, the Lady Rebels lost 47-39 in a nonconference game at Lewistown on Dec. 22 then went to the Watkins Classic at Prophetstown High School after Christmas.

Stark County split games last Saturday at the Watkins Classic, dropping a 55-38 decision to Mercer County in its

opener as the Rebels managed just 11 points in the two middle quarters.

Johnston had 15 and Finnegan scored 11.

Finnegan went for 18 points and Newton had a dozen points with 13 rebounds in a 38-34 win over Stockton.

On Monday (Dec. 29), Johnston and Finnegan scored 20 points apiece and Newton had nine rebounds in a 49-18 romp

over Morrison.

Stark County was scheduled to play Fulton in its finale on Tuesday.

• **Galva Girls** – The Lady Wildcats (3-11) snapped a five-game losing streak with a 73-25 Lincoln Trail Conference rout over West Central on Dec. 17.

After an 80-58 loss to West Prairie on Dec. 22, Galva went 1-2 at the Princeville Holiday Tournament, dropping its

opener to Tremont 71-47 on the day after Christmas.

The Lady Wildcats rebounded with a 73-37 win over Peoria Heights to reach the final of the consolation bracket. Farmington closed out Galva's tournament with a 61-54 victory in that fifth-place game.

Galva is scheduled to play at Peoria Heights on Saturday and at Orion on Wednesday.



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Mon., Jan. 12: NO DRIVER	Thurs., Jan. 8: Kewanee
Mon., Jan. 19: Closed MLK Day	Thurs., Jan. 15: Peoria
Mon., Jan. 26: NO DRIVER	Thurs., Jan. 22: Princeton
	Thurs., Jan. 29: Peoria

**Pick up:**

January 8, Bradford 8:40 a.m. Wyoming 8:55 a.m. Toulon 9:10 a.m.	January 15, 22, 29 Toulon 8:40 a.m. Wyoming 8:55 a.m. Bradford 9:10 a.m.
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# The Prairie News Sports

## New streak for the new year

### Stark County enters 2026 on three-game hot streak

By **NICK VLAHOS**  
For The Prairie News

Stark County boys basketball ended 2025 on a three-game winning streak, helping to offset the seven-game losing streak the Rebels had to begin the season.

The most recent victory came Dec. 23, a 69-59 beating of Putnam County that avenged a loss in November at the Wally Keller Invitational in Kewanee. This time, Connor Daum scored 26 points, including eight in the second quarter as the Rebels opened a 39-24 halftime lead.

Connor Down had 12 points, all in the first half and all on 3-pointers, and Caleb Gentle scored 12. Stark County Coach Kane Mastin credited Down for providing a recent spark.

“So much defensive energy and making shots in crunch time,” Mastin stated.

The initial, truncated Country Roads Classic ended with host Stark County (3-7) as champion. The Rebels won twice Dec. 20, the only day of competition in the four-team round robin.

Stark County beat Manito Midwest Central 68-64 behind 24 points from Tanner Bishop, all after the first quarter, and 17 from Daum. Earlier, Daum scored 13 and Bishop and Ben Browning each scored 11 in a 67-43 beating of Lowpoint-Washburn. Again, Bishop was scoreless in the first period.

In other tourney games, Midwest Cen-

tral beat the Dunlap junior varsity 64-40 and the Dunlap JV beat the Lowpoint-Washburn JV 76-21. The first day of the tournament was to be Dec. 13, but snow forced its cancellation. Subsequently, DePue dropped out.

On Dec. 18, Stark County led Varna Midland by 10 midway through the fourth quarter but lost 65-61 in overtime. Stark County was only 2-for-6 on fourth-quarter free throws. Daum finished with 28 points, Down with 11.

• **Galva** – JP Sloan had 16 points Monday to lead four Galva scorers in double figures in a 74-22 first-round victory over the hosts of the LaMoille Holiday Tournament. MJ Louck had 11 points and Cyrus Hurd and Jay Smith each scored 10 for the top-seeded Wildcats (8-4).

Galva was to face Amboy in the semifinals Tuesday. The eight-team tournament was to conclude Wednesday. Lowpoint-Washburn was the second seed.

On Dec. 17, in its final pre-Christmas game, Galva defeated Bushnell-Prairie City 74-45 behind 23 points, six assists and four steals from Sloan. Smith had 15 points, Louck had 11 points and Reid Harris had 13 rebounds. Two days earlier, Port Byron Riverdale defeated Galva 70-25.



Galva is to play Saturday afternoon at

*Continued on Page 7*

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