

Issue: Business

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: Salvation Army to celebrate Christmas in July

Date: 7-7-16

Time: 2 p.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

BLOOMINGTON - Christmas Day might not be for several more months, but the Salvation Army in Bloomington is preparing to celebrate Christmas in July on Friday.

Director of Development Angie Fulton explained the annual event helps raise awareness for Salvation Army during a time of year people might not be thinking of them.

"Specifically in the holidays, obviously everyone's thinking about us, but we're here year round in McLean County helping those in need," said Fulton. "Christmas in July is just a time for us to get back out into the community, and to raise a little money, and to raise some awareness as well."

Bell ringers will be out collecting donations from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at all Bloomington-Normal Kroger stores, Jewel on Cottage Avenue, Jewel on Veterans Parkway, HyVee, and Walmart in Normal.

Volunteers will also be at the Normal Cornbelters game.

"The CornBelters have their Christmas in July game that night, so we'll be at the gates there ringing bells," Fulton said.

Last year, the event brought in about \$2,500. Donations can be made year round at [sabloomington.org](http://sabloomington.org).

Issue: Business

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: Jaycees gearing up for Bruegala

Date: 7-20-16

Time: 2 p.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

NORMAL - Next month will see the return of the charity music festival Bruegala, sponsored by the Bloomington-Normal Jaycees, which will be held on the 26th and 27th of August at the Corn Crib.

The event will offer over 300 types of beer, more than 50 variations of wine, food vendors, and music throughout the two days. Bruegala spokeswoman Leslie Romagnoli explained that they wanted to use last year as a reference for how to improve the festival this year.

"We're really excited, we've been working hard all summer making sure we have polished up some details that we wanted to make better from last year, and just getting everything organized," said Romagnoli.

Romagnoli also said how, with the amount of alcohol at the event, buses and shuttles will be available for the public to use to get from the Corn Crib to Uptown Normal safely.

"This year we've got it worked out with First Student to have buses and shuttles running from the Corn Crib to Maggie Miley's and Fat Jack's, so that will be an option for people. Also, Connect Transit's bus line is going to run right from Uptown to the Corn Crib," said Romagnoli.

Friday night will be a more rock-oriented night, with a line-up that includes Nicotine Poetic, Dan

Hubbard, and Trippin Billies. Saturday will see country performers like Old Smoke, Whiskey's Gone, Lindsey Ell, and Brett Young.

Issue: Business

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: CIRA directs Delta customers to airport

Date: 8-8-2016

Time: 2 p.m.

Description:

BLOOMINGTON - Central Illinois Regional Airport officials are recommending passengers who are scheduled to fly Delta Airlines to still go to the airport as the airline works to fix a computer glitch which has grounded all flights worldwide.

"That's the best place to get the information," CIRA spokeswoman Fran Strebing told WJBC's Scott Laughlin. "Once things get back up and running again, they'll probably start moving folks pretty quickly in and out. I would hate for anyone to miss out if their flight is running on schedule later today." Strebing noted Delta is CIRA's largest carrier. It runs several daily flights to and from Atlanta and Minneapolis.

She added the airline officials hope to have the computer problems resolved later this morning.

"It could possibly affect a few hundred people today coming in and out of CIRA," Strebing said. "As you can imagine it has backed things up worldwide, so it will take some time to untangle the schedule."

Delta has issued social media messages to its customers indicating that its IT systems are down everywhere. The airline is promising waivers and refunds to some customers who are severely affected. Delta says flights enroute have been operating normally.

Issue: Business

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: AM General not buying Mitsubishi

Date: 8-22-2016

Time: 2 p.m.

Description:

NORMAL - It appears automaker AM General is not going to be buying the now-closed Mitsubishi Plant in Normal.

That's according to an announcement over the weekend. Despite this, Normal City Manager Mark Peterson told WJBC's Dan Swaney he's not giving up hope on the deal.

"But by the same token I haven't talked with those folks at all, so I don't know some of those issues," said Peterson. "We're going to work on it as a community to try to attract a buyer."

AM General is based out of Indiana and produces a number of vehicles, including the Humvee. The company also has facilities in Michigan, Ohio and Virginia.

"If, ultimately, that plant is dismantled that's not the end of the world either. We're still going to have, still, a wonderful area out there that's got great services that could become maybe an industrial business park or something of that nature," Peterson said.

Maynards Industries is the current owner of the property. The company has an auction planned for Oct. 18-21, where it will sell the contents of the plant, buildings and real estate.

Caterpillar visitors center and has worked with the Chicago Bears and the University of California. They are the best in the country and we can't wait."

Myre says the facility will celebrate Illinois hoops heritage with an eye on the future.

"This is about kids because our future means everything," said Myre. "It will be interactive, computerized and the future of Illinois high school basketball. I don't want to set up any dates yet, but we're official and we've just got to go to work."

Issue: Business

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: Normal places moratorium on video gaming

Date: 9-6-16

Time: 2 p.m.

Description:

**NORMAL** - The Normal Town Council has unanimously voted to place a moratorium on video gaming licenses until the end of 2016.

The council was concerned about the number of venues which now have video gaming. Councilman Jeff Fritzen said nearly \$6 million was placed in the machines between January and July this year.

"That's money that is not spent elsewhere in entertainment that actually does create jobs and more hard goods than gambling does," he said.

The council plans to discuss the issue at its retreat later this year.

"I think it's good just to hit the pause button, have some further discussions about it, maybe some public input and then figure out where we go from here," Councilman Rich McBride said.

Also on Tuesday, the council approved bringing a bike sharing program to the town. The program will be run by Zagster Inc. at a cost of \$84,000 per year. The town hoped to have the program operational by sometime in October.

Issue: Business

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: VenuWorks focuses on transparency

Date: 9-12-2016

Time: 2 p.m.

Description:

**BLOOMINGTON** - The current managers of the U.S. Cellular Coliseum are focused on transparency as the former managers are being investigated by the City of Bloomington and Illinois State Police. VenuWorks took over the Coliseum in April.

"I think how it's going to affect us is people are going to ask more and as for more documentation and we're fine giving that," said Executive Director Curtis Webb. "In fact, it helps you make sure everything you do is transparent and open.

"Everything the city requires from us, of the public, requires from us in the future, hopefully, we'll provide in a quick, timely fashion."

Central Illinois Arena Management had operated the Coliseum since its opening in 2006. The city asked ISP to investigate CIAM after conducting an audit of the group earlier this year.

"I've seen facilities change hands, but I've never anything like this," Webb said.

Webb added from their standpoint, they're trying to "pick up the pieces where they were left off." He believed VenuWorks has done a good job of that so far, although it's taken a bit longer to get everything running smoothly than he wanted to.

GOVERNMENT

Issue: Government

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: Brady claims disagreements derail budget process

Date: 7-5-2016

Time: 9 a.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

State Senator Bill Brady says disagreement among lawmakers or a small percentage of issues derailed the budget process, but hopes those in Springfield remember the benefits of compromise.

Brady says working toward the deadline to put a stopgap spending plan into place helped bring lawmakers together.

"All in all, in 90 percent of the issues, we generally agree," the Bloomington Republican told WJBC's Patti Penn. "It's some of the bigger issues that divide the special interests that create the problem. The division had grown so great that the legislature was falling apart, and I think this brought us a bit together."

Brady says compromise is key and cites debate on unemployment insurance as an example.

"Business needs workers compensation reform and labor needs jobs," Brady said. "So we need to draw the parallel that allows people to get together and give a little bit up of what they've been fighting for to get a little bit of what they've been fighting for."

Issue: Government

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: Normal mayor testifies before Congress

Date: 7-15-2016

Time: 11 a.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

WASHINGTON - Normal's mayor testified to Congress this week the importance of investing in rail draw transportation.

Mayor Chris Koos said the success of Uptown Normal has been driven by investment in rail in the form of Uptown Station.

"Thus far, public investment of approximately \$85 million in federal, state, and local moneys in the transportation arena has generated over \$150 million in private investment in the Uptown district," he said.

Koos told Congress an additional \$45 million in private investment is still planned.

"Uptown Normal is now a vibrant neighborhood with residential, commercial, and entertainment opportunities," said Koos. "Local transit ridership is up 34 percent and transit oriented development continues to abound."

Koos was introduced by U.S. Rep. Rodney Davis (R-Taylorville), who called Koos a national leader and advocate for transportation.

Issue: Government  
How Issue Was Treated: News story  
Title: Normal council approves agreement with Metronet  
Date: 8-15-2016  
Time: 11 a.m.  
Duration: Story runs 12 hours  
Description:

**NORMAL** - The Normal Town Council on Monday gave approval to a 10-year cable and internet franchise agreement with Metronet.

The agreement allows the company to operate in the public right-of-way. City Manager Mark Peterson said a major feature Metronet will bring to the community is the ability to offer fiber internet to residents.

"We already have fiber providers in this community. I'm very familiar with CIRBN (Central Illinois Regional Broadband Network), I'm on their board, but CIRBN is a fiber provider," said Peterson. "But CIRBN limits their customers to simply businesses and institutional organizations, like schools."

Peterson added the agreement includes a five percent franchise fee the town will collect on Metronet's revenue.

"And there are some other provisions. For example, they've agreed, as part of our negotiations, to provide free services to schools and government buildings if they're within a certain proximity to those," he said.

Peterson explained it will likely be about 24 months before Metronet services are officially operational, but the group should begin installing its hardware soon. Metronet has already started construction work in Bloomington, which previously approved its own franchise agreement with the company.

Also Monday night, Normal authorized town staff to begin negotiating a contract with Parsons Brinkerhoff for future construction of an underpass at Uptown Station's railroad tracks.

Issue: Government  
How Issue Was Treated: News story  
Title: Bloomington mayor to run again  
Date: 8-23-2016  
Time: 11 a.m.  
Duration: Story runs 12 hours  
Description:

**BLOOMINGTON** - Bloomington's mayor is expected to announce his re-election bid at a press conference Wednesday.

"Tomorrow I'm going to be making an announcement in the heart of downtown Bloomington in front of our Route 66 Visitors Center," said Mayor Tari Renner. "It's a great anchor in our downtown. And so I'll be making an important announcement, I think, tomorrow."

Renner was elected in April 2013, after winning a three-way race between himself, Lex Green and John Hanson. Renner took the place of Steve Stockton, who chose not to run for re-election after serving two terms as Bloomington's mayor.

Issue: Government  
How Issue Was Treated: News story  
Title: McLean County seeks funding for mental health  
Date: 9-8-2016  
Time: 11 a.m.  
Duration: Story runs 12 hours  
Description:

BLOOMINGTON - McLean County is looking at ways to fully fund its mental health programs. That was the discussion at Wednesday's Board of Public Health meeting.

Laura Beavers is manager of Behavioral Health Services at the McLean County Health Department. She said tax revenue from a referendum passed in 1989 still isn't enough to cover the County's mental health needs.

"What we have generated through the nickel that was approved through referendum in 1989 and that falls in line for the Board of Health of go ahead and administer," Beavers said. "That's not sufficient funding to cover everything that we have."

Beavers added a proposal from McLean County Court Services to contract behavioral health services would see a cost savings of more than \$20,000.

"What Chestnut Health Systems was requesting was \$208,000 and with the switch to contracting with to court services, is \$186,000 so its about \$22,000 (in savings)," Beavers said.

Even with that cost savings, \$200,000 in cuts must be made to the proposed mental health funding as budget to bring it into balance. The board did not make a recommendation Wednesday, though a final proposal must be submitted by Nov. 9.

Issue: Government  
How Issue Was Treated: News story  
Title: Balmer to run for Bloomington council  
Date: 9-20-2016  
Time: 11 a.m.  
Duration: Story runs 12 hours  
Description:

BLOOMINGTON - A member of the Bloomington Planning Commission is making a run at the City Council.

J. Alan Balmer is challenging Ward 3 incumbent Mboka Mwilambwe in the April 2017 election. Balmer has been on the Planning Commission for five years and has been vice chairman since earlier this year. He told WJBC's Terry James the divisiveness on the council has improved in recent years, but it can still be better.

"I've got a fairly feasible history in terms of consensus building over the years and I think that I can continue to do that on the City Council," Balmer said.

Balmer added he wants to see Bloomington's comprehensive plan put in place the way it was intended. "I also want to make sure that we proceed in a growth period that makes sense for all of Bloomington, and not just for parts of Bloomington," he said.

Mwilambwe has been on the council since being appointed to the position in March 2011.

PM

Third Quarter Report 2016

CRIME

WJBC - AM

Issue: Crime

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: Court rules cyberstalking unconstitutional

Date: 7-7-16

Time: 9 a.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

SPRINGFIELD - Illinois' protection on cyberstalking is unconstitutional.

An Illinois appellate court ruled last month that Illinois' 2008 law on online harassment, or cyberstalking, violates free speech and due process rights. The ruling involves a conviction of a man for harassing a radio station employee in Chicago. State Sen. Linda Holmes, D-Aurora, says the bill she co-sponsored addresses a very common type of harassment.

"The purpose of this bill was to bring Illinois into the 21st century and start addressing some of these issues," she said. "It's very easy, with modern technology, to go after someone electronically."

Holmes said the General Assembly should pass new legislation soon.

"It's a very real, modern-day problem. If we don't address it in veto session, let's make sure we address it as soon as we're back in session," she said. "Let's not wait for too much criminal activity and someone actually getting hurt before we go ahead and try to address this."

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, 3.3 million people reported being stalked in the United States in a calendar year. About 1 in 4 stalking victims reported some form of cyberstalking such as e-mail or instant messaging.

Issue: Crime

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: Bloomington police chief says officers have rights

Date: 7-8-25-16

Time: 9 a.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

While many Americans are calling for swift justice for officers involved in shooting deaths of two black men this week, Bloomington Police Chief Brendan Heffner reminds us that officers are entitled to the full legal process.

"It certainly does not look good," Heffner told WJBC's Susan Saunders in reaction to citizen video of shootings of two black men in Louisiana and Minnesota. "But we still have to wait for all of the information, and police officers deserve due process just like anyone else."

Heffner says although private citizens often take cell phone videos of controversial incidents, those videos are not a complete record of what happened.

"They're videoing from just that moment," Heffner said. "There are things that occur before that that are not on there. There are other things that have happened before that, and we don't get to see that." Heffner says despite anger directed at officers over recent shootings, police are still the one constantly serving the public.

Issue: Crime  
How Issue Was Treated: News story  
Title: Police investigation shooting suspect  
Date: 8-5-2016  
Time: 9 a.m.  
Duration: Story runs 12 hours  
Description:

Bloomington Police are trying to determine whether a men they have arrested on a weapons charges might have had a role in a shooting that left three people injured earlier this week. Police spokeswoman Sara Mayer says officers with the Bloomington SWAT team and its criminal investigative division served a warrant at a home in the 900 block of West Washington Street this morning, but they say they have determined whether there is a connection with that shooting. 21-year-old Derrick Blakely was jailed on a charge of having a gun without a valid Firearm Owner I-D card. Police were called to the area of Washington and Howard streets early Monday morning after a report of shots fired. Two men, ages 19 and 43, were shot in the arm. A 16-year-old boy was shot in the leg. None of the injuries were considered life threatening. Police say the investigation is ongoing.

Issue: Crime  
How Issue Was Treated: News story  
Title: Sorenson to change guilty plea  
Date: 8-31-2016  
Time: 9 a.m.  
Duration: Story runs 12 hours  
Description:

In four weeks, Matt Sorensen will be back in court as his attorneys are expected to disclose a plea agreement that the former McLean County board chairman has reached with federal prosecutors in his wire fraud case. The deal was announced in federal court in Chicago yesterday but the terms have not been disclosed. Sorensen and co-defendant Navdeep Arora allegedly ripped off a number of clients, including State Farm by billing hundreds of thousands of dollars in unearned consulting fees. Arora's case is expected to go to trial after he gets a mental health evaluation. Both men are free on bond. The charges are unrelated to Sorensen's work on the County Board.



Issue: Crime  
How Issue Was Treated: News story  
Title: Stabbing lands pair in hospital  
Date: 9-3-16  
Time: 9 a.m.  
Duration: Story runs 12 hours  
Description:

Two people have been hospitalized after an apparent fight in Saybrook lead to a stabbing. Police say the suspect is still at large following the McLean County Sheriff's Department responding to the incident Friday night. Police were summoned to the 900 block of West Harrison Street nearly 8:30 pm. A 55 year old man and 47 year old woman were taken to OSF St. Joseph Medical Center in Bloomington. The male's injuries are considered life threatening, though there is no information on the identity or condition of the victims as of Saturday morning. Police say they are seeking the suspect, 47 year old Arthur J (AJ) Corry. Corry is listed at six foot and 210 lbs. The McLean County Sheriffs Department is identifying Corry as armed and dangerous. Corry may be driving a Grey or Copper colored Jeep. Anyone with information is being asked to contact the Sheriff's Office @ 309-888-5019 ext.8.

Issue: Crime  
How Issue Was Treated: News story  
Title: Normal teen faces prison term  
Date: 9-13-2016  
Time: 9 a.m.  
Duration: Story runs 12 hours  
Description:

BLOOMINGTON - A teenager from Normal faces three years in prison after he admitted to helping conceal the death of another teen who died of a heroin overdose. Braxton Smith, 18, pleaded guilty to a charge of conspiracy to conceal a death. He was also sentenced to four years in prison on an unrelated drug charge. Smith will serve the sentences concurrently. Angel Brunson of Normal was found dead at an apartment in the 1400 block of East College Avenue in Normal in April. Cheonte Hinkle, 21, of East Peoria also faces concealment charges in the case. He remains jailed while awaiting trial.

Issue: School

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: Bloomington lawmaker joins school funding group

Date: 7-12-16

Time: 3 p.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

BLOOMINGTON - A Bloomington state senator has joined the newly formed Illinois School Funding Reform Commission.

The commission has been tasked with finding a bipartisan solution to reforming Illinois' school funding formula. State Sen. Jason Barickman (R-Bloomington) told WJBC's Dan Swaney the formula hasn't been changed in 20 years.

"The experience that a child has in a classroom is fundamentally different today than it was 20 years ago," said Barickman. "Kids are connected to the internet and to the world while they're sitting in a classroom."

Barickman said although the commission is bipartisan, this won't be an easy task.

"At the end of the day, we're talking about billions of state dollars. Our taxpayer moneys that are going to Springfield today are routed to school districts," he said.

Issue: School

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: BHS band raising funds for new uniforms

Date: 7-21--16

Time: 11 a.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

The Bloomington High School Marching Raiders work year round to sound good, and now ask for help to look good.

Band director Max Chernick says their current uniforms are 12 years old, four years past their guarantee. He says the band is trying to raise \$80,000 to replace the outfits with a more comfortable and easier-to-maintain model.

"They're beautiful uniforms, likely to be from the same company that we had uniforms from previously so they last a long time," Chernick told WJBC's Scottt Laughlin. "They're machine washable, they're lighter weight so when we have to march in summertime weather it's not so bad. It's not like those old horrible polyester things that I wore when I was in high school."

Chernick says the Marching Raiders Band Aids booster group has raised \$45,000, or a little more than half of the goal. Chernick says anyone can adopt a uniform for \$350.

"Not just one kid in a uniform now but one kid in a uniform for the next dozen years," Chernick said. "They are expensive but they last because our kids take such great care of them and our parents are so helpful in the inventory and care of the uniforms. It's a worthwhile investment, but we welcome any size donation."

Issue: School  
How Issue Was Treated: News story  
Title: Bus problems cause problems for Unit 5 schools  
Date: 8-18-16  
Time: 11 a.m.  
Duration: Story runs 12 hours  
Description:

NORMAL - Unit 5 Superintendent Mark Daniel is trying to calm the nerves of upset parents after a series of problems busing students on the first day of school. Some kids had to ride the bus on the floor because of overcrowding and many buses were late. "I thought we would be better, to be honest," Daniel said. "That I am somewhat disappointed in." Daniel told WJBC's Scott Laughlin the district is looking to shift some students to less-crowded buses as they get a better handle of how many students will ride the bus this year. "Those things you are thinking about, but you don't know truly the actual number until that first day," Daniel said. "That means we have to be on board ready to adjust and to adapt." Daniel said he expects more junior high and high school students will take the bus since their school starts later this year. The district is also adjusting to a new class schedule as a time when it cut close to 20 buses from its fleet to save money. "We are still at 70 percent funding from the state," Daniel said. "We can't have a \$1.4 million deficit. That is not an excuse. That is reality. We have to deal with that." He added the district can only handle so many phone calls at once. Some parents complained they weren't able to get through when they called the Unit 5 offices. Daniel said there were few traffic issues at Normal Community High School where road construction has been ongoing.

Issue: School  
How Issue Was Treated: News story  
Title: Unit 5's Daniel says bus issues improving  
Date: 8-19-16  
Time: 11 a.m.  
Duration: Story runs 12 hours  
Description:

Unit 5 Superintendent Mark Daniel says the timeliness of the buses during the first week of school continues to improve. Reports of overcrowded, late and misdirected buses have clouded the first three days of school. Daniel says some of the crowding issues have occurred because of low estimates of ridership based on surveys of district families on how they expected to use the buses. The superintendent tells WJBC's Patti Penn that changing school start times appears to play a role. "With the changing of the times, that has impacted the number of our secondary students riding," Daniel said. "We're fairly accurate on the elementary, but the secondary numbers are seeing an increase in ridership." Daniel says safety will continue to be the top priority and asks parents to continue to report problems so that he can bring them to the bus company, First Student.

Issue: School

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: Overcrowded buses cause problems for Unit 5

Date: 9-2-16

Time: 11 a.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

BLOOMINGTON - Unit 5 is still working through its various transportation problems, but the district's superintendent says things are improving.

The district has been experiencing overcrowded and late buses since the first day of school.

Superintendent Mark Daniel told WJBC's Terry James they are targeting Sept. 10 as the day to have everything running smoothly.

"We've had a router that was brought on board from First Student. She's made significant impact in our overcrowding," Superintendent Mark Daniel said.

First Student is Unit 5's transportation provider. Daniel explained the overcrowded buses have been their primary focus.

"One of the things we discovered with this process is you need to treat one significant problem at a time," said Daniel. "It (overcrowding) will continue to be the focus and I don't think it's ever going to leave, in regards to our monitoring and focusing."

Daniel added they have been tracking the number of late buses and the number has gone down. However, he wanted to see the number reach zero.

Issue: School

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: Unit 5 bus issues take toll on drivers

Date: 9-14-16

Time: 11 a.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

NORMAL - The struggles Unit 5 is experiencing with its transportation is taking a toll on bus drivers.

A group of drivers offered their perspective Wednesday night during the district's Board of Education meeting. JB Johnson said the drivers are doing the best they can as transportation provider First Student and Unit 5 try to solve the late and overcrowded bus issues.

"You have bus drivers that get on routes that start at 6:30 (a.m.) and probably end at 8:30 (a.m.)," said Johnson. "Now they're coming in at 5:30 (a.m.) to cover extra routes that they did not bid on, not leaving until 5:30 (p.m.), when they are missing other jobs, picking children up."

The drivers union is AFSCME Council 31. Union representative Renee Kessler said the drivers are stressed out.

"They're doing everything they can to pick up additional routes. They're coming in early. They're staying late," Kessler said.

Kessler added the union has yet to sign its first contract with First Student. She believed entering into a fair contract with the company can help alleviate some of the pressure put on drivers.