

Issue: Business

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: Sales improve for Mitsubishi

Date: 07-2-14

Time: 8 a.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

Mitsubishi Motors continued its strong year this past month by seeing an overall sale increase of 13.7 percent compared to June 2013.

Year-to-date sales are up 30.2 percent compared to this time last year, making for the best first six months of sales Mitsubishi has seen in three years.

Why has 2014 proved to be so good for the company? Spokesman Alex Fedorak said it can be summed up in one word: confidence.

The Outlander Sport, produced in Normal, continues to lead the way in overall units sold and has seen a 23.1 percent sales increase so far in 2014. That's the best January through June total in the model's history.

Issue: Business

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: Coliseum suffers operating loss

Date: 07-9-14

Time: 10 a.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

U.S. Cellular Coliseum officials are touting the downtown venue's economic impact, which they say overshadow an operating year in the red.

The coliseum lost close to \$184,000 in operating revenue in the fiscal year that ended in April.

But Coliseum manager Bart Rogers said the venue's true dollars and sense come in the revenue it generates for Bloomington-Normal.

Rogers said the venue's concerts, sporting events and conventions generate \$17 million a year for the community, counting things like restaurant visits and hotel stays and other shopping.

The coliseum had nine sold out shows during the last budget year, including Jason Aldean's two shows, Carrie Underwood, Chicago, Bassnectar and Rock to the Rescue featuring REO Speedwagon, Styx, Ted Nugent and others.

Issue: Business

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: Durbin makes stop in Normal to talk business

Date: 08-13-14

Time: 1 p.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

The beginning of construction for the latest Uptown Normal hotel has been marked by a visit from Illinois' senior senator.

The Hyatt Place Hotel is now under construction and U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) toured the site Wednesday afternoon. He said he's impressed every time he visits Uptown.

"This town is cooking," said Durbin. "I've visited a lot of downstate communities that the downtown is dead as a doornail. Not here."

The initial phase of the \$27 million Hyatt Place project is expected to be completed by May 2015.

Durbin praised Normal Mayor Chris Koos and the town council for having a vision and pushing it to its limit.

"Mayor Chris Koos and the council came together on a bipartisan basis with a plan and said 'we can build it around transportation.' Look at what we have. This magnificent multi-model terminal," Durbin said.

Durbin said investing in America's infrastructure is an investment in the economy, and that's exactly what's happening in Uptown.

Issue: Business

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: CIRA announces non-stop service to Tampa - St. Pete

Date: 08-20-14

Time: 1 p.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

Central Illinois Regional Airport has added a new Florida destination as Allegiant Air will fly non-stop from Bloomington to Tampa-St. Pete starting Nov. 21.

The airport's Fran Streibing told WJBC's Scott Laughlin the Monday and Friday flights will be year-round, but they can be especially convenient for snow birds, holiday travelers and spring breakers.

The flight offers access to the mid-section of the Gulf Coast, including Sarasota, Bradenton and Anna Maria Island. This will mark the first time CIRA will have nine non-stop destinations at one time.

Streibing said the flights will begin with a discounted rate of \$76 one way. Streibing says the service is geared toward holiday travelers, snow birds and those on spring break, but the Tampa - St. Pete service will be year-round.

Issue: Business

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: Brady says state has less jobs

Date: 09-22-14

Time: 8 p.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

PONTIAC - State Sen. Bill Brady (R-Bloomington) is advising Illinois residents to be cautious when they look at the state unemployment numbers.

Illinois unemployment rate fell to 6.7 percent in August, down from 9.2 percent a year ago.

However Brady told WJBC's Tim Lewis the number citizens should be concerned with is the total number of jobs in the state.

Until those jobs are back, Brady said the state will continue to struggle financially.

"The key is how do we do that? How do we keep people from leaving the state?" said Brady. "I happen believe that means holding the line on taxes and growing our economy. That'll give us the fiscal strength we need. That'll give us the resources we need to fund the pensions and move ourselves out of the red and into the black."

Brady added losing 200,000 jobs has meant over \$1 billion less revenue.

Issue: Business

How Issue Was Treated: News Story

Title: CIRA experiences few difficulties

Date: 09-29-14

Time: 10 a.m.

Duration: Story runs for 12 hours

Description:

Last Friday's fire at a Chicago-area air traffic control facility is still causing delays nationally and locally.

Central Illinois Regional Airport is still experiencing cancellations and delays on a few outgoing and inbound Chicago flights. Spokeswoman Fran Streibing said other flight schedules seem to be getting back to normal.

For Monday, an American Airlines 8:10 p.m. arrival from Chicago has been cancelled. The same goes for a 5:25 p.m. departure.

Streibing explained when problems like this happen it can take awhile to get back on track.

The Federal Aviation Administration said it will take about two weeks to fully reopen the control facility, which is located in Aurora. Those air traffic controllers are, for now, at other FAA offices in the Midwest.

Issue: Crime

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title:

Date: 07-1-14

Time: 8 a.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

A Bloomington man has pleaded guilty to armed robbery. Emer Henderson, 20, was arrested in October 2013 for robbing two people with a deadly weapon at an apartment in the 1700 block of North School St. in Normal. As part of his plea deal, Henderson had a lesser misdemeanor charge dropped. He faces six to 30 years in prison when he's sentenced in late September.

Issue: Crime

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: Trio charged in homeless man's death

Date: 07-10-14

Time: 10 a.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

A trio of Bloomington men have been formally charged with murder in relation to the death of a homeless man. Willie Chambers and Anthony Davis Dickson, both 18, and Tory Washington, 19, allegedly beat Ronald Smith, 56, on June 2 in O'Neill Park. Smith was taken to Advocate BroMenn Medical Center where he died July 3 from his injuries. The three are also accused of robbery and aggravated battery for separate incidents which also took place early in June. They are being held in the McLean County Jail on \$3 million bond and will make their next court appearance July 25.

Issue: Crime

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: Guilty plea in Pontiac officers death

Date: 08-26-14

Time: 1 p.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

The South Carolina man involved in the accident that took the life of Pontiac Police Officer Casey Kohlmeier pleaded guilty yesterday to all charges. Livingston County State's Attorney Seth Uphoff says the plea is another step toward seeing that justice is done in the case. Jason Collins was driving his pickup truck on I-55 last October after a long period of drinking in Bloomington.

His vehicle left the roadway and struck Kohlmeier's police vehicle in the median, killing Kohlmeier and his canine partner Draco. Uphoff says there was no plea agreement in the case, and Collins will be sentenced on October 15th. The most serious charge he faces is Aggravated Driving While Under the Influence-which carries a sentence of 3 to 14 years. Under Illinois's Truth-in-Sentencing laws, Collins will be required to serve 85 percent of his sentence.

Issue: Crime

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: DNA testing will be allowed in Bloomington murder

Date: 08-26-14

Time: 1 p.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

A McLean County judge has ruled DNA testing on several pieces of evidence in the case of a man convicted of murdering his daughter in 1998 will be allowed.

Barton McNeil is currently in prison for the death of his daughter, Christina McNeil. Judge Scott Drezewski ruled on Tuesday DNA testing will be allowed on stains found on the victims bed sheets, a latent finger print found at the murder scene and a window screen found at the scene. The judge also said testing on stains found on Christina's clothing can be tested, but testing will NOT be allowed on the actual clothing itself.

McNeil has also claimed he did not murder his daughter. He has said his girlfriend at the time, Misook Wang, might be the true murderer. Wang was convicted in 2012 of killing her mother-in-law.

McNeil and his defense attorneys believe this new DNA testing might show the presence of someone else the night of Christina's death.

Issue: Crime

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title:

Date: 09-24-14

Time: 8 p.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

A former official at the Illinois Department of Public Health faces federal charges of bribery, theft and tax evasion as part of a \$13 million grant fraud case.

Federal prosecutors in Springfield charged Roxanne Jackson of Olympia Fields on Monday, according to a report in the Chicago Sun-Times. Jackson served as a top human resources official in the public health department in 2003 and 2004.

She is accused of participating in a kickback scheme with the department's former chief of staff, Quinshaunta Golden of Homewood, who pleaded guilty in April to bribery and taking kickbacks. Golden is awaiting sentencing.

When Jackson left the health department, she went to work for a security company, which received about \$2 million from the department to conduct background checks on nursing home residents. Monday's court filing said the security company got \$300 for each background check and that Jackson agreed to pay Golden between \$35 and \$40 in kickbacks for each check, the Sun-Times reported.

Issue: Crime

How Issue Was Treated: News Story

Title:

Date: 09-30-14

Time: 10 a.m.

Duration: Story runs for 12 hours

Description:

A rise in burglaries and attempted burglaries on Bloomington's east side has drawn the serious attention of the city's police department.

There's been close to 15 reports of burglaries, or attempted burglaries, in the area of Prospect Avenue, East Washington, Lincoln Street, and Hershey Road.

"The latest incidents of reports of attempted burglary, and burglary, have been on Broadmoor and Morningside," said BPD spokeswoman Sara Mayer. "So, typically from that target area moving south."

The typical time of these incidents is difficult to pinpoint because the residents haven't always been home at the time. Mayer said citizens should be on alert.

"Anytime you can make your home look occupied is, obviously, going to increase the likelihood that burglar is going to go to the next house," she said.

Mayer added the department has dedicated a large amount of resources to ending the string of crimes.

"Across our patrol division, our crime scene division, as well as our criminal investigations division and our intelligence division," Mayer said,

Anyone who notices suspicious activity is asked to call the BPD at 309-820-8888 for non-emergencies. If immediate assistance is needed, citizens should call 911.

Issue: Government

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: Paradigm shifts focus to Normal

Date: 07-21-14

Time: 8 a.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

A facility that converts waste into jet fuel could come to the Twin Cities.

Paradigm BioAviation is moving to set up shop in Normal. The town council will consider creating a site process for waste facilities at its meeting Monday night. City Manager Mark Peterson said town currently relies on state regulation. The new rules will look to ensure safety for residents.

"It involves public hearing and public testimony and so forth to ensure that a pollution control facility doesn't create any kind of adverse impact on health, safety and well-being of the community," Peterson said.

Peterson said the state regulation is already burdensome, so the company is likely committed to Normal

"It's a pretty involved process that can get pretty expensive," Peterson said. "Obviously anyone that wants to go forward with this is pretty serious about it because there are some pretty significant costs."

The company has worked with local governments for the part two years to create the green energy facility. Peterson said the town needs to look to options like Paradigm as nearby landfills near their limits.

Issue: Government

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: Rep. Pontiac examines immigration issues

Date: 07-25-14

Time: 10 a.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

Livingston County Chief Deputy and Sheriff-elect Tony Childress had an opportunity to travel to Texas to see some of the country's immigration and border control issues first-hand. He describes the visit as an "eye-opener."

Issue: Government

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: Rep. Rauner stops in Normal

Date: 08-16-14

Time: 1 p.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

The road to the governor's mansion goes through Normal.

Republican Gubernatorial Candidate Bruce Rauner turned the Twin Cities into a whistle-stop this weekend as a part of a ten stop bus tour of the state. The trip was made on a bus called the Shakeup Springfield Express. Rauner said the bus represents the goal of his campaign. Rauner explained his goals for the office to local Republicans. He also addressed a recurring issue in the race, his wealth.

"I made a lot of money. I'm proud of it," Rauner explained. "And I'm not going to take a salary. I want you guys, the taxpayer to keep the money. I'm not going to take a pension, I want the taxpayers to keep the money."

Rauner also promised to make the GOP more competitive on ballots across the state. He was joined by Rep. Dan Brady and State Sen. Jason Barickman, both of Bloomington, at the event. He promised to be an active governor if elected.

Issue: Government

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: Rep. McLean County, Chestnut reach deal on new family health center

Date: 08-19-14

Time: 1 p.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

McLean County is making plans for a new health campus.

A new family health care facility would be built next to the County Nursing Home and juvenile detention center in Normal, under an memorandum of understanding the County Board has approved. County Administrator Bill Wasson said the \$4.5 million site could be a full service health center to serve the needs of many, including medical and behavioral health.

"It's not simply just one component in somebody's life, and so the ability to bring all of these things together can be of significant benefit." Wasson said.

The county would build the facility at the old Fairview Building site, while Chestnut Health Systems would lease the building from the county so the county could recover the cost. Chestnut Chief Operating Officer Alan Sender said the center would be a much needed expansion of services it currently runs in Bloomington.

Issue: Government

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: Hausman to fill council vacancy

Date: 09-11-14

Time: 8 p.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

Bloomington's mayor has made his recommendation for Rob Fazzini's replacement on the city council.

Tari Renner has recommended Diana Hausman to fill the vacancy left when Fazzini resigned late in August. Renner said the city is at a crossroads and he knows there is dysfunction. He believed Hausman's long record of bipartisanship will be a great asset.

Hausman will fill the seat until April 2015, which is when Fazzini's term was to end. In that time, she wants to see better teamwork on the city council.

Hausman added for local government to be effective, the council needs to be "brilliant at the basics."

Issue: Government

How Issue Was Treated: News Story

Title: McLean County strikes down medical marijuana proposal

Date: 09-16-14

Time: 10 a.m.

Duration: Story runs for 12 hours

Description:

The McLean County Board has said 'no' to a medical marijuana production facility, but board members said their objections aren't with the drug itself. Most of the board members who voted against the plan said they object to its location in rural Downs in an agricultural district. Board member William Caisley, R-Normal, said the facility is not really a farm, it's an industrial plant. Tim Jones of MWAA Inc., had applied to set up the farm on 55 acres of County Highway 36. He said after the meeting he was disappointed by the board's ruling.

Issue: Schools

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: District 87 offers summer lunch program

Date: 07-3-14

Time: 8 a.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

District 87 is expanding its summer nutrition program - by giving kids more than just something to eat.

School nutrition director Julie McCoy said the program which is now a decade old wants to fill more than just their tummies, but also fill their minds and give them a good time.

Representatives from local Girls Scouts, University of Illinois Extension, the Bloomington Public Library Bookmobile and the city's Parks and Recreation Department will all be putting on programs at the summer lunch sites - Irving and Sheridan grade schools, Boys and Girls Club and Second Presbyterian Church in Bloomington.

The lunch program is open to anyone from anywhere. It's free to children 17 and under, adults can eat for \$2.

The Illinois State Board of Education is administering a USDA program to hand out 4 million meals this summer.

Issue: Schools

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: Unit 5. Pontiac schools to receive on-time payment

Date: 07-9-14

Time: 10 a.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

Unit 5, along with other public school districts in Illinois including Livingston County, is benefitting from the state's timely payments for specialized grants and programs - something which hasn't happened in a few years.

Unit 5 interim business manager Marty Hickman said the state's \$1.5 million payment for special education categorical programs and transportation made a big difference in the budget for the fiscal year which concluded June 30.

All purpose state aid to schools had been on time in recent years, but grant money for programs like transportation has been lumped with Illinois' backlog of unpaid bills.

After Unit 5's school board meeting on Wednesday, Hickman explained how behind Illinois had been.

Hickman added this on-time payment won't be something the district will be able to continue to count on.

Illinois Comptroller Judy Baar Topinka's office said the timely payments are due to an influx of \$1.3 billion in revenues the state hadn't originally budgeted for.

Issue: Schools

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: Lt. Gov. impressed with BJHS students

Date: 08-26-14

Time: 1 p.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

Lt. Gov. Sheila Simon is impressed with what Bloomington Junior High School is doing to educate students, especially when it comes to using technology.

Students in 6th and 7th grade at the school have been working in a one-to-one laptop computer program this year. During a visit to BJHS on Tuesday, Simon loved seeing how engaged the students were.

"Students either working with each other or working in a back and forth way," said Simon. "This is not just a teacher standing in front of a classroom and telling students what they need to know."

District 87 superintendent Barry Reilly said the goal is to eventually have 8th graders involved in the laptop program as well. He added the district is working with a local internet provider to help give low-income students home Internet access through the school's secure network.

Simon having students work in this type of classroom is helping push the state towards her goal of 60 percent of residents being college educated by 2025.

Issue: Schools

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: Unit 5 sets tentative budget

Date: 08-27-14

Time: 1 p.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

Unit 5's school board took its first look at the tentative 2014-2015 budget on Wednesday.

It's a balanced budget, but superintendent Mark Daniel said it wasn't easy to do. Many cuts had to be made, especially in the \$94 million education fund, where the district is expecting a small surplus of \$86,000.

"We know it impacts our teachers. We know it impacts our building level administrators and central office administrators," said Daniel. "If it impacts that group it also impacts our students." Daniel realized making cuts is difficult but explained finding a balance in the funding is necessary

"You can't continue spending down your balances," said Daniel. "It's a good thing, but at the same time it's not really what we want."

Daniel called the tentative budget "bitter sweet."

"We haven't replaced 28 teachers. We actually have some larger classrooms," he said.

Not every aspect of Unit 5's budget is balanced. The \$8 million transportation fund is showing a deficit of about \$1.2 million. Daniel explained this is because of the district being misappropriated \$3 million from the state.

Issue: Schools

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: ISU student body growing

Date: 09-5-14

Time: 8 p.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

Illinois State University's student body is getting larger.

A near-two percent rise in enrollment this fall pushes the student population to about 20,600.

About 18,000 of those are undergraduates.

ISU's Vice President of Enrollment Management Troy Johnson said a higher percentage of high-achieving high school seniors chose ISU this year.

"We continue to look for a solid student at our school to keep our average test scoring and class rank and GPA (grade point average) in the range that leads to these students graduating at high rates."

ISU officials said the increase is modest enough that it can keep its student to faculty ratio at 19-to-1, so the university can keep smaller class sizes while meeting housing needs.

Illinois State has a 35-percent increase in the number of incoming freshman who have an ACT score of 30 or higher. ISU's student body also becoming more diverse - a 13-percent increase in African-American students and a 35-percent rise in Hispanics this fall.

Issue: Schools

How Issue Was Treated: News Story

Title: Unit 5 teacher finalist for award

Date: 09-9-14

Time: 10 a.m.

Duration: Story runs for 12 hours

Description:

A Unit 5 teacher has been named a finalist for Illinois Teacher of the Year.

MaryLynn Meredith teaches art at Prairieland and Towanda elementary schools. She has taught at Unit 5 for 21 years and has also spent time working at Sugar Creek, Brigham, Oakdale, Fairview, and Carlock schools.

Meredith said she has mixed feelings about being a finalist.

"It's been exciting, obviously, and very nerve racking," said Meredith. "I'm representing so many awesome teachers."

Meredith is one of 12 finalists for Teacher of the Year. 230 teachers were nominated for the award this year.

This marks the third time in four years a Unit 5 teacher has been named a finalist.

"I want to make sure that I do represent their voice well," said Meredith. "There are some wonderful teachers out there, so I always wonder 'how did I get here?'"

District superintendent Mark Daniel said after speaking with Meredith it's obvious why she is a finalist.