

GOVERNMENT

Issue: Government

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: Brady won't run for Congressional seat

Date: 4-6-2015

Time: 9 a.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

BLOOMINGTON - A local businessman who had been considering a run for the 18th Congressional seat says he won't run.

Ed Brady said it would be difficult to build up the same name recognition as State Sen. Darin LaHood, R-Peoria, in such a short time frame.

"Darin represents five of the counties (in the 18th Congressional district)," Brady said. "My name ID was relatively low, maybe building off of Bill's name ID, the Brady name ID, who has represented a large part of the district and has obviously run for Governor statewide."

Ed Brady's brother is State Sen. Bill Brady, R-Bloomington, who has also announced he won't run. Ed Brady is endorsing LaHood.

Issue: Government

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: Bloomington names Ryan director of water

Date: 4-23-2015

Time: 11 a.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

BLOOMINGTON, IL- Bloomington has named Patrick Ryan as Director of the water department.

Ryan served in leadership positions in the Public Works departments of several Chicago-area municipalities since the 1990s, including the communities of Riverside, Lake in the Hills and Homewood. He holds a bachelor's and master's degree from Northern Illinois University. He is an Illinois Class C Water Operator and a Certified Arborist.

"His breadth and depth of experience in the areas of public works and water will serve our community well, and I look forward to him joining our team," said city manager David Hales.

Ryan's first day on the job is anticipated to be April 27.

Issue: Government

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: Brady wants prisons re-opened

Date: 5-4-2015

Time: 1 p.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

BLOOMINGTON - State Sen. Bill Brady said it's time Illinois consider reopening prisons its closed in recent years in the wake of new reports which detail deplorable conditions at a southern Illinois prison.

A watchdog group reports inmates at the Vienna Correctional Center have complained of mold, rodents, broken windows and spiders.

"We don't need the National Guard (brought in), but I certainly understand the concerns people have," Brady said. "I think it's going to require opening facilities up that (Gov.) Quinn closed and remanaging our entire prison population."

Brady told WJBC's Scott Laughlin, prisons are overcrowded since lockups in Dwight and Tamms, the super-max security prison in Tamms were shut down to save money. He said prison guards are overworked as they state's overtime costs continue to mount.

Issue: Government

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: Hamm thinks City should accept best offer

Date: 5-26-2015

Time: 9 a.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

BLOOMINGTON - One of the key players in a downtown Bloomington redevelopment plan says the city should be willing to let developers decide what's best for the property that the city is considering demolishing.

CEO of the Bloomington-Normal Economic Development Council Kyle Hamm told WJBC's Scott Laughlin, the city could simply accept the best offer while still maintaining a measure of control over what happens to four downtown buildings.

"It should be open to the development world... and to the community," Hamm said. "The good thing about this proposal is the city has the full say about what goes in there."

The city is considering an offer to tear down four properties, then buy the land for \$8.2 million and take proposals for redevelopment.

Hamm said the city might want to save the historic Commerce Bank building, but says that would cost more.

Hamm has been a vocal supporter for the redevelopment plan, but he's not pushing any particular proposal.

"It could be lots of things; mixed use, restaurants... a hotel that's been talked about lot. I don't think we should be limiting it to anything," Hamm said.

As for the question of whether the city should even get involved in the property, Hamm says the Front 'N Center building has become dilapidated and has sat empty for years without a public private partnership.

Issue: Government

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: County to set up advisory council

Date: 6-16-2015

Time: 9 a.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

BLOOMINGTON - McLean County will be setting up a new advisory council to address gaps in mental health care in the community.

The County Board approved creation of the council was approved in a 14-4 vote on Tuesday. It's just one of many recommendations a county task force created to address mental health needs.

County Board member Chuck Erickson, R-Bloomington, objected to the set up - having the council of experts serve as advisers who he said might truly be advocates - possibly for their own interests.

Issue: Government

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: Durbin calls for trade promotion authority

Date: 6-23-2015

Time: 9 a.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., has called Trade Promotion Authority 'the most significant giveaway of congressional authority to the president in modern memory.'

Those were Durbin's words when he voted against the measure in 2002 under President George W. Bush and voted against it on Wednesday, though it was adopted by a 60-38 vote in the Senate and is headed to President Barack Obama's desk.

Durbin told WJBC's Scott Laughlin, Congress should retain the right to amend trade agreements.

"I've voted for about half of the trade agreements that have come my way since I have been in the House and Senate and voted against the other half," Durbin said. "I want to judge them on the merits. I don't think fast-track was the way to do it."

Trade Promotion Authority strips Congress of the ability to amend trade agreements.

President Obama considers the measure a key piece to brokering the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement. He said the president called him three times and met with him for an hour to urge him to support fast-track trade.

PM

Second Quarter Report 2015

BUSINESS

WJBC – AM

Issue: Business

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: Mitsubishi reports great sales year

Date: 4-1-2015

Time: 2 p.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

BLOOMINGTON - It's the same story, just in a different month for Mitsubishi Motors. The company reported March sales were up 8.5 percent versus March 2014. Spokesman Dan Irvin said Mitsubishi also marked its fifth straight quarter of double-digit sales increases as first quarter sales were up almost 20 percent over the same period last year. "It's the end of our fiscal year and I think we think our dealers have a good product and they're really delivering for us," Irvin said. The Twin Cities produced Outlander Sport continued to lead the company in sales, but Irvin said Mitsubishi's success goes beyond that vehicle. "The Mirage had its best month ever since we introduced that vehicle in 2013," said Irvin. "That's a little compact car that gets extraordinary gas mileage."

Issue: Business

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: Senator wants Sunday car sales

Date: 4-20-2015

Time: 11 a.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

BLOOMINGTON - A state senator hopes to move on his measure allowing car dealers to be open on Sundays, but he's got some staunch resistance--car dealer associations. Senator Jim Oberweis says Illinois' 32-year-old law mandating car dealers be closed on Sunday could come up for committee consideration in the next couple of weeks and he's encouraging consumers to reach out to their lawmakers to show support for lifting the ban. But, Pete Sander of the Illinois Automobile Dealers Association says there are a host of reasons to mandate car dealers be closed on Sunday, including banking, insurance and staffing concerns. Sander says if the law isn't broke then why try to fix it? However Oberweis says the bill is about doing the right thing by getting rid of special interest legislation and being more consumer friendly.

Issue: Business

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: Mitsubishi continues sales momentum

Date: 5-4-2015

Time: 3 p.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

BLOOMINGTON - Mitsubishi Motors continued its sales momentum in April.

The company reported sales were up 25.6 percent compared to April 2014. Spokesman Dan Irvin said the Twin Cities built Outlander Sport led the way once again.

"A little bit more Outlander Sports than Mirages in the month of April," said Irvin. "A little bit more than a year ago, up 2 percent and up 5 percent for the year."

Irvin said Mirage sales are up 65.4 percent year-to-date.

"Even though the gas prices are down compared to where they were a year ago, the little Mirage compact car is really, I think, resonating with consumers," he said.

O'Brien Mitsubishi in Normal also continued to see strong numbers, after having its best ever sales month in March.

"Top five finish - I believe they were fourth in the nation," said Irvin. "But they also were the top seller of Outlander Sports. So a nice marriage there between the local dealer and the fact that we build the product here."

Issue: Business

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: BPCA sets schedule for season

Date: 5-28-2015

Time: 11 a.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

BLOOMINGTON - The Bloomington Center for the Performing Arts has set the stage for what it hopes will be an exciting year.

The BCPA's new season includes 27 concerts and festivals. Director Tina Salamone told WJBC's Susan Saunders, there acts are expected.

"We have offers out in country, in comedy and in pop rock that we hope to announce in the next four to six weeks," Salamone said.

Those already scheduled to perform include David Cassidy, Hal Holbrook as Mark Twain, 'All My Children' alum Walt Willey as 'Wild Bill' Hickock, a Frank Sinatra tribute on his 100th birthday and the Vanderbilt Melodores, the former NBC 'Singoff' champions who are led by Normal Community alum William Woodard.

BCPA will be hosting a new beer festival in late August, similar to Bruegala which moves to the Corn Crib in Normal this summer. Another outdoor show is planned in October - the Northern Exposure Music Fest which will feature eclectic music.

Issue: Business

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: Economic outlook good for McLean County

Date: 6-18-2015

Time: 11 a.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

BLOOMINGTON - Busey Bank presented its economic projections for this year at the 17th Annual Economic Outlook for McLean County at Illinois Wesleyan University.

Tom Good, executive vice president of Busey Bank, is predicting agriculture output in McLean County to be \$427 million dollars in 2015, down from \$500 million in 2014 and \$570 million in 2013. The bank came to that conclusion because of the relatively low commodity prices this year, Good said.

"If we do have higher than expected yields, our estimate will be off," Good said. "But if you bundle it all together, we look at it as a relative negative for agriculture in 2015."

Good said they're also estimating that farm ground prices will drop slightly in 2015. The current average price per acre in McLean County is \$12,000 dollars.

Retail sales in the county are expected to be \$2.5 billion this year, an increase of \$500 million from last year. Good said retail sales have been on the decline in recent years.

"But we still are expecting a slight upturn in 2015 and the reason is because we think people have a little bit more spendable income both here in McLean County and nationwide," Good said. "Primarily due to the price of gasoline, which has stayed low."

The number of businesses in McLean County is holding steady. 4,006 businesses paid sales tax in McLean County last year, an increase of one business from 2013.

Issue: Business

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: Renner not happy with redevelopment consulting firm

Date: 6-24-2015

Time: 11 a.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

Bloomington's mayor isn't happy with the role that a consulting firm played - or didn't play - in the city's negotiations for a downtown redevelopment plan.

Mayor Tari Renner told WJBC's Scott Laughlin the National Development Council was to review a proposal from Jeff Geibelhausen to renovate two blocks of downtown.

"I didn't see that they did anything helpful except maybe sabotage everything," Renner declared.

The city council backed off that plan earlier this month saying it needed more information from the developer.

Renner suggests the city is wasting the \$5,000 per month it pays the NDC.

"To say I've been underwhelmed with their performance is an understatement," Renner said.

The city is on a month-to-month contract with the New York-based firm after its last agreement ended in April.

Renner suggested the city would be better served paying the Bloomington-Normal Economic Development Council to provide some consulting help.

PM

Second Quarter Report 2015

CRIME

WJBC – AM

Issue: Crime

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: Car thefts up in Twin Cities

Date: 4-14-2015

Time: 9 a.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

BLOOMINGTON - The Twin Cities have had a recent increase in car thefts.

Bloomington Police Chief Brendan Heffner told WJBC's Susan Saunders between Bloomington and Normal over 20 vehicles have been stolen over the past month.

"We are working with Normal PD to stem the tide of this" said Heffner. "Unfortunately, as I've discussed before, a vast majority of these vehicles are unlocked and keys are in the vehicle."

Heffner asked residents to be vigilant and make sure to lock your cars.

"If you leave your vehicle unlocked, throwing your keys on the floorboard, people just walk by and look," said Heffner. "Even if you're not thinking about it, people who are out to do wrong, they're going to take advantage of that."

Heffner said these are crimes of "opportunity" and the best deterrent is to lock your vehicle.

Issue: Crime

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: Compton gets life in prison sentence

Date: 4-23-2015

Time: 11 a.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

BLOOMINGTON – Nicholas Compton was sentenced Thursday to life in prison for murder charges plus 39 years for other charges stemming from the death of three-year-old Robbie Cramer in March 2013.

"As far as the law allows, justice was done," Assistant State's Attorney Adam Ghrist said. "The case was very difficult to present, but it was put together very, very well by the investigating agencies: The Normal Police Department and the Department of Children and Family Services."

Numerous family and friends, including Compton's mother, testified at the sentencing hearing about how good Compton's character was and how good of a father he was to his own child, Anthony. Ghrist responded with the fact that Compton was convicted of domestic battery in July 2011.

Compton was dating Cramer's mother, Danielle Fischer, at the time of Cramer's death. Compton moved in with Fischer and Cramer roughly 19 days before Cramer's death, and Judge Charles Feeney said Cramer was living in "an imprisoned hellhole" for those 19 days.

Issue: Crime

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: Snow case goes to appellate court

Date: 5-11-2015

Time: 11 a.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

SPRINGFIELD - A man currently serving a life sentence for the murder of a gas station attendant in 1 1 will have his case heard by an appellate court Tuesday.

Jamie Snow was convicted in 2001 for the death of Billy Little on Easter Sunday 1 1. Little died from a gunshot wound suffered during a robbery.

Tara Thompson, an attorney with the University of Chicago's Exoneration Project, says Snow is innocent.

Sno w has continued to fight and to seek information through the Freedom of Information Act that shows more information about what was happening during the investigation of his case than he originally received at trial, Thompson said.

That includes testimony from witnesses that said Snow was not at the scene of the crime - a direct contradiction of other witnesses, including Danny Martine , that said Snow was the man who fired the fatal shot. Thompson says one of the witness statements could have been from Martine s saying Snow wasn't at the scene, but the names were redacted by authorities.

Snow has said he was at home eating dinner with his children at the time of the murder. His appeal has been denied numerous times, including once from the Illinois Supreme Court in 2012.

Issue: Crime

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: Coprich gets probation

Date: 5-22-2015

Time: 10 a.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

BLOOMINGTON - Illinois State running back Marshaun Coprich will serve two years of probation for selling marijuana.

He pleaded guilty Friday to a Class 4 felony charge of unlawful delivery of cannabis. Coprich was arrested earlier this month after selling marijuana to an undercover police agent.

As part of the plea, Coprich will also serve 30 hours of community service and pay a 170 fine.

Less than an hour after Friday's hearing, the football team announced Coprich's indefinite suspension has been lifted.

As a pr ogram, we will monitor the situation closely and comply with any and all University requirements set forth for Marshaun moving forward, Head f ootball coach Brock Spack said in a statement.

The university said no further comment will be given.

Issue: Crime

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: Blood test for first-time DUI offenders

Date: 6-17-2015

Time: 10 a.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

BLOOMINGTON - What do police officers do when a person pulled over on suspicion of driving under the influence refuses to do a breathalyzer test? McLean County State's Attorney Jason Chambers said the next step is to obtain a warrant to test the person's blood for alcohol.

"First time DUIs, a lot of times when people get stopped the officers do their investigation, they ask them to blow, they ask them to do a field sobriety test, and they go along with that," said Chambers.

"After they've gone through that process the first time, then they get told - in the process they get told by their attorneys - next time, don't blow."

Chambers told WJBC's Dan Swaney they have a system in place to somewhat quickly get permission for a blood test.

"They can't say we're going to get a warrant, but they can say, 'We're going to go to an assistant state's attorney. We're going to ask them to petition for a warrant.' And that's what we do," he said.

Chambers explained the whole process usually takes less than two hours.

Issue: Crime

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: Jury convicts Newton on drug charges

Date: 6-18-2015

Time: 10 a.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

A McLean County jury has convicted a Bloomington man on drug delivery charges.

Jafaria Newton, 41, was found guilty on Wednesday two counts of delivering crack cocaine near a church. He was arrested by Bloomington Police Department's Vice Unit in January.

McLean County State's Attorney Jason Chambers said drug dealers are treated differently than simple users because those who are dealing are preying on those who are struggling with addiction.

Newton has three prior felony convictions - two for dealing drugs and one for criminal damage to property. McLean County Judge Robert Freitag will sentence Newton on July 30.

PM

Second Quarter Report 2015

SCHOOL

WJBC – AM

Issue: School

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: Cuts to hurt Unit 5 budget

Date: 4-8-2015

Time: 3 p.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

NORMAL - The 2.25 percent across the board cuts made to fix the state's budget is going to take a toll on Unit 5's budget.

The district expects to miss out on \$350,000 as a result of the cuts. Finance Director Marty Hickman said during Wednesday night's school board meeting this is something the district can handle - what he's really worried about are the state categorical payments.

"The categoricals, or the special education (and) transportation, that's more alarming, however," said Hickman. "Because that would be \$3 million and that's something that no budget could absorb."

Hickman said it could be the end of June before the district finds out if those payments will come through.

"What's happened in past years is you don't really know until June 30," he said.

If the payments do not happen, Unit 5 would likely have to adjust its current budget to show a \$3 million loss.

Issue: School

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: Heartland fundraiser nets \$400,000

Date: 4-30-2015

Time: 3 p.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

NORMAL - The Heartland Community College "American Dreams: Local Results" fundraising campaign earned almost \$400,000 more than expected.

Campaign chairman Julie Dobski says money and help came from all over the community.

"The best thing about this campaign was we had lots of people," Dobski said. "We did a lot of planning. The staff helped with a lot of groundwork. We were all able to work as a team, and that's what brought it all together."

Some of the money will go to scholarships, like the one given to Wendy Johnson, who is graduating this month.

"Going to college is not an easy task and to have somebody believing in you helps you believe in yourself," Johnson said. "Even in those moments where you feel like you don't have another ounce to give."

The campaign started in February 2014 and has raised nearly \$7.7 million for the college.

Issue: School

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: ISU students rally against racism

Date: 5-1-2015

Time: 3 p.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

NORMAL - Illinois State University students packed the university quad Friday afternoon to rally against racism.

The rally was organized by the school's NAACP chapter in response to a racially charged tweet sent from an account not associated with the school, but carrying the ISU name. NAACP President Khia Donald says people on campus feel there are issues with race.

"Everyone here agrees that that is a problem and also agrees that there needs to be steps to improve that," said Donald. "And to make it so that people can feel more comfortable on this campus."

Donald added one of ISU's core values is diversity.

"That pillar, that value, is not being upheld because you can't say that a school is diverse and have diverse people feel uncomfortable," said Donald. "And you can't say the school is diverse and white people feel uncomfortable around people of color."

Student Government Association president Ryan Powers said it's important to stand up against hatred.

"And not only today, but continue after today. We can no longer turn a blind eye to it. We must speak up when we see it," Powers said.

Issue: School

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: Heartland-EIU sign transfer agreement

Date: 5-19-2015

Time: 11 a.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

NORMAL - Leaders from Heartland Community College and Eastern Illinois University have signed a reverse transfer agreement.

A reverse transfer allows students to complete their associates degree after leaving community college early by taking similar general education courses at the university level. Currently, only Eastern offers a reverse transfer for students from Lake Land College and now Heartland.

Heartland Vice President for Student Success Rick Pearce said there are a variety of scenarios students face that make this program a good idea.

"Maybe they were part-time or maybe they just took one year (of classes) and then decided to go to Eastern," Pearce said. "Or its possible that they were one or two courses shy, but didn't want to postpone an entire semester, so they went without the (associate's) degree."

Eastern Vice President and Provost Blair Lord said there aren't any difficulties associated with the program.

"None that we anticipate, being because of the IAI (Illinois Articulation Initiative) and the general education curriculum that's already been approved," Lord said. "Its very east for students to know what they need to take and what they need to finish when they get into a four-year environment."

Pearce said the college is working with other universities on similar agreements. There's no cost for students to apply for a reverse transfer, and both Pearce and Lord said there's little cost to the respective schools to administer the agreement.

Issue: School

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: District 87 tabs Hampton

Date: 6-10-2015

Time: 11 a.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

BLOOMINGTON - Former Carlock Elementary principal Alison Hampton wasn't out of a job for long. Hampton has been hired as the new assistant principal for Bloomington Junior High.

Hampton was let go by Unit 5 after Carlock Elementary and Towanda Elementary merged principals.

District 87 superintendent Barry Reilly said he can see Hampton as a principal again in the future.

"We're always looking for people in those assistant principal roles who aspire to be building leaders themselves and certainly she has the qualifications to do that down the road," Reilly said.

Reilly says Hampton's experience with children from low-income families made her stand out amongst the other candidates.

In other action Wednesday, a tentative budget for the McLean-DeWitt Regional Vocational System and the Bloomington Area Career Center was approved by the facility's fiscal agent, District 87.

Both budgets are balanced. The vocational system is expected to spend \$973,000 and the career center is expected to spend \$1.2 million. A public hearing on the budgets will be held in August before they are enacted.

Issue: School

How Issue Was Treated: News story

Title: Attorney Genral, IHSA reach settlement

Date: 6-25-2015

Time: 11 a.m.

Duration: Story runs 12 hours

Description:

Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan announced today (Wednesday) a settlement with the Illinois High School Association ensuring student athletes with disabilities have equal opportunities to compete and earn points for their teams at state meets.

According to the settlement, students with disabilities can compete and earn points toward a team state championship in swimming and diving and track and field. It resolves a 2012 lawsuit brought by Madigan, Equip for Equality and Mary Kate Callahan, a former high school student athlete at Fenwick High School in west suburban Oak Park.

"This settlement is an important step forward in our continued efforts to ensure people with disabilities have equal access and opportunity in all areas of life," said Madigan in a statement. "I am hopeful that this agreement will inspire more student athletes with disabilities to join their schools' sports program and that the IHSA will continue to add more opportunities for these students as they proceed with implementing the terms of the settlement."

IHSA Executive Director Marty Hickman said the agreement is about providing reasonable accommodations to students.

The settlement also requires the IHSA to create an annual road race event open to all Illinois high school students which recognizes the top five finishers in each gender in both the wheelchair and open division.