

QUARTERLY ISSUES/PROGRAMS LIST

Station WJBC-AM

Location: Studio: 236 Greenwood Avenue, Bloomington, Il. 61704
 Office: 236 Greenwood Avenue, Bloomington, Il. 61704

For quarter beginning:

<u> X </u>	January 1, 2021
_____	April 1, 2021
_____	July 1, 2021
_____	October 1, 2021

Attached hereto are descriptions of local issues addressed by the station and descriptions of how each issue was treated through the stations most significant issues-responsive programming or announcements during the report period.

Quarterly Issues/Programs List

Issue: Childhood Cancer

How Issue Was Treated: WJBC-AM St Jude Rocks Radio-Thon for 2-days to raise money for Childhood Cancer

Title: St. Jude Children's Hospital Radio-Thon

Date: February 11, 2021 – February 12, 2021

Time: 6am-5pm and 6am-3pm

Description:

WJBC-AM held a two-day radio-thon to raise money for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. This two-day radio-thon included interviews with local children and family members with cancer and being treated at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. This event was held Thursday, February 11th from 6am-6pm and Friday, February 12th from 6am-3pm. 20-total hours dedicated to promoting the mission of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital and Childhood Cancer. This year's event raised a total of \$91,426.

Quarterly Issues/Programs List

Issue: Local Public Service Announcements

How Issue Was Treated: WJBC-AM ran a total of 440
Recorded PSA Mentions to promote
local charity events in McLean County

Title: Public Service Announcements

Date: January 1, 2021 – March 31, 2021

Time: Midnight - Midnight

Description:

WJBC-AM scheduled a total of 440 (60-seconds each) recorded promotional announcements to promote local charity events in McLean County. These announcements included:

- St Jude Children’s Research Hospital
- Special Olympics of Illinois “Polar Plunge”
- American Cancer Society
- Faith In Action “Volunteer Help”
- Miller Park Zoological Society “Zoo Stampede 5K”
- McLean County Humane Society Gala
- Best Buddies of Illinois “Friendship Walk”
- United Way of McLean County “Mini Online Auction”

WideOrbit Traffic Order: 335492 “WJBC-AM PSA Rotator”

Quarterly Issues/Programs List

Issue: McLean County Sportsmen Banquet

How Issue Was Treated: WJBC-AM ran live liners to talk about this annual event

Title: Public Service Announcements

Date: March 18, 2021 – March 31, 2021

Time: Midnight - Midnight

Description:

WJBC-AM ran live liners for the on-air hosts to talk about the 31st annual McLean County Sportsmen Banquet. Due to COVID protocols this year's event was held online virtually. The money raised goes to local children's charities in McLean County.

Quarterly Issues/Programs List

Issue: McLean County Humane Society Gala

How Issue Was Treated: WJBC-AM ran live liners to promote the 10th Annual McLean County Humane Society Gala

Title: “Masked Madness” Gala

Date: February 15, 2021 – March 5, 2021

Time: Midnight - Midnight

Description:

WJBC-AM ran live liners for the on-air hosts to talk about and promote the 10th Annual McLean County Humane Society “Masked Madness” Gala. Due to COVID this annual event had to be held virtually.

Quarterly Issues First Quarter – January – March 2021

ISSUE: COVID-19, Politics, Medicine

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Dentists hope to help in vaccination delivery

Date: 01/04/2021

Time: 6am

Duration: 12 hours

The Illinois State Dental Society hopes the Pritzker administration will give them the opportunity to help administer COVID-19 vaccines. Members know the state will need all hands on deck when vaccines become widely available.

Illinois dentists already have the ability to provide vaccinations under state law. However, they must go through specific training created for pandemics.

News partner, Heart of Illinois ABC says roughly 10,000 dentists and about 8,000 dental hygienists work in Illinois, so ISDS feels the state should include them in mass vaccination teams.

Gov. Pritzker’s recent emergency proclamation took the current state law allowing dentists to provide flu vaccines in their office and altered it by including COVID-19 vaccines.

I-S-D-S sent language for an updated emergency proclamation to the governor’s office and the Department of Public Health. They also filed the language as an amendment to a bill that was previously introduced but never moved out of committee as legislative leaders cut the spring session short due to COVID-19 concerns.

ISDS members hope lawmakers can present that plan during the “lame duck” session set to start on January 8.

ISSUE: Politics

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Brady replacement could come from Tazewell County

Date: 01/04/2021

Time: 3pm

Duration: 12 hours

Tazewell County Clerk John Ackerman says he has been approached concerning the upcoming appointment of the Illinois Senate seat left vacant by Bloomington Republican Bill Brady.

Ackerman, also a Republican, made the statement in a Facebook post Monday morning, saying he will not accept as he still has work to do in the clerk's position.

On New Year's Eve, Brady announced he would resign from the state Senate's 44th District, which covers parts of McLean, Tazewell and Logan counties.

ISSUE: COVID-19, Business

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Candy maker partners with state

Date: 01/05/2021

Time: 3pm

Duration: 12 hours

A Bloomington candy maker is partnering with the state to offer free COVID-19 testing.

Ferrero USA will host a drive-thru testing site TODAY outside its facility at 2501 Beich Road.

Tests are free, available to all ages, and available to people who are both symptomatic and asymptomatic.

Tests will be available TODAY from 9 until 5.

ISSUE: COVID-19, Politics

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: House heads back to Springfield

Date: 01/05/2021

Time: 6am

Duration: 12 hours

For the first time in almost eight months, that old gang is coming back to Springfield. After a four-day session in May, the Illinois House has scheduled lame duck session days for at least Friday and Saturday.

“We are going to be focusing on the four pillars of the Black Caucus agenda,” said House Majority Leader Greg Harris (D-Chicago), referring to justice and police; education and workforce; economic equality; and healthcare and human services. He said representatives would also tackle “some COVID-related items regarding healthcare and other items necessary for the pandemic.”

Saturday’s agenda includes a hearing on the state veterans’ home in La Salle, where more than thirty residents have died, reportedly from coronavirus.

Wednesday, Jan. 13, is the inauguration of the new General Assembly, and there will likely be a new speaker, given that at least nineteen Democrats in the 73-member caucus have declared their defection from longtime Speaker Mike Madigan (D-Chicago). It takes sixty votes to win the election for speaker.

Harris, noting no business in the 102nd General Assembly can be conducted unless a speaker and minority leader are elected, said he believes the matter will be settled in a House Democratic caucus -- that is, in private, as opposed to a floor fight.

Madigan, speaker for all but two years since 1983, has seen his support erode since news came out of his implication in a bribery scheme in which Commonwealth Edison admitted attempts to bribe him. A “deferred prosecution agreement” includes a \$200 million payment by ComEd, though Madigan remains unindicted.

As was the case in May, House members will meet at the Bank of Springfield Center, a convention center about seven blocks from the Capitol. The Senate has not formally scheduled a lame duck session, but its members have been told to be available.

ISSUE: COVID-19, Business, Politics

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Local bar fined again

Date: 01/06/2021

Time: 3pm

Duration: 12 hours

A Normal Town Council member says he's hoping a local business is not penalized for defying Gov. JB Pritzker's COVID-19 regulations.

A hearing is scheduled Tuesday at 4 p.m. at Normal City Hall as Joe's Station House and Pizza Pub at The Shoppes of College Hills Mall is contesting charges alleging it violated terms of its liquor license by serving customers indoors twice in November and another time in December.

Joe's owners, the Wargo brothers, were recently fined \$600 by the Bloomington Liquor Commission for similar offenses at their bar on G. E. Road.

News partner Heart of Illinois ABC reports at Monday night's council meeting, council member Stan Nord said the bar owners were following the law, just not all of Pritzker's recommendations.

Mayor Chris Koos, who's the town's liquor commissioner, will not attend Tuesday's hearing saying he has a designated hearing officer who is impartial and will make a recommendation of whether or not the license holder was in compliance.

Just like the Bloomington hearing, the Wargos will be represented by prominent downstate attorney Thomas DeVore.

ISSUE: COVID-19, Business, Education

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Rivian donates to Unit 5

Date: 01/08/2021

Time: 6am

Duration: 12 hours

Thanks to one million dollars from Rivian and Reditus Laboratories, Unit 5 will offer COVID-19 testing for students and staff.

Speaking with WJBC's Scott Miller, Superintendent Dr. Kristen Weikle says testing will be completely voluntary and it will allow the district to monitor the virus.

Weikle says staff from Reditus will administer the tests and testing locations on Unit 5 are still being determined.

McLean County's largest school district will begin the second semester in a hybrid format with students attending class in-person twice a week.

ISSUE: Community

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Local brush schedule modified

Date: 01/11/2021

Time: 6am

Duration: 12 hours

Because of the large amount of brush generated from the snow and ice events that took place the first few days of January, Bloomington brush and bulk waste collection will follow a modified schedule until crews can catch up with the demand.

The city says it has allocated additional resources to assist and accelerate the process of brush and bulk waste collection during this time.

Some collection has already started and crews are projected to be in each solid waste area for two to three days.

The solid waste pickup map can be found on WJBC.com.

ISSUE: COVID-19, Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Vaccination distribution

Date: 01/11/2021

Time: 6am

Duration: 12 hours

Local health officials provided an update on the COVID-19 vaccine and its distribution.

McLean County and the entire state are still in phase 1A of the vaccination plan, according to health department administrator Jessica McKnight.

McKnight says the McLean County Health Department has vaccinated around 800 people.

Phase 1B of distribution will start in some areas of the state later this week. That will include first responders, essential frontline workers, and those 65 and older.

ISSUE: COVID-19, Politics, Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Moving toward mitigation move

Date: 01/18/2021

Time: 3pm

Duration: 12 hours

The administrator of the McLean County Health Department says there has been a lot of progress over the last few months when it comes to COVID-19, but we still have a ways to go.

State health officials Sunday announced that Region 2, which includes McLean, Livingston, Woodford, and Tazewell counties, is now under Tier 1 mitigations, which allows indoor dining at a 25% capacity.

The region is meeting certain health metrics to be under Tier 1, which includes a rolling positivity rate under 8% and hospitalizations have been decreasing. Here's McLean County Health Department Administrator Jessica McKnight.

Region 6, which is east-central Illinois, and Region 1 in the northern part of the state are also operating under Tier 1 mitigations.

ISSUE: Government,, Politics, COVID-19

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Welcoming City Status one step closer

Date: 01/20/2021

Time: 3pm

Duration: 12 hours

A welcoming city ordinance aiming to protect undocumented immigrants in Bloomington from deportation is a step closer to a city council vote.

However, as it has been for the past few years, the council is deeply divided on the issue.

At Tuesday night's committee of the whole meeting, a slim majority of five council members said they're willing to consider a resolution that would set guidelines preventing local police from cooperating with federal immigration agents.

Passing a welcoming city ordinance is one of the remaining goals of Mayor Tari Renner, who's not running for reelection. He said the measure should have been adopted years ago.

Council member and mayoral candidate Mboka Mwilambwe voiced opposition, saying immigration is extremely complex and should be handled by the federal government.

Joining Mwilambwe in attempting to kill the proposal were council members Kimberly Bray, Donna Boelen, and Joni Painter.

Renner asked welcoming city co-sponsor, Jenn Carrillo, to work with city staffers to develop a resolution for a final council vote.

ISSUE: COVID-19, Community, Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: COVID Call center now open

Date: 01/20/2021

Time: 6am

Duration: 12 hours

If you have questions about coronavirus the McLean County Health Department's COVID call center is now up and running.

Health department administrator Jessica McKnight says the call center is in conjunction with the contact tracing program and additional staff were hired specifically for the call center. She says a lot of the questions are about isolation, quarantine, and now vaccination.

The health department's COVID call center is open Monday through Friday from 9 until 4. Again the number is 309-888-5600.

ISSUE: Government, Community, Business

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Beyond Hello Growing

Date: 01/27/2021

Time: 3pm

Duration: 12 hours

A multi-state adult use cannabis dispensary is planting additional roots in the Twins Cities. Jushi Holdings opened a second 'Beyond Hello' location in Bloomington on Tuesday

Bryan Lloyd, Vice President of Retail, said with the demand for recreational pot, comes a need for security. Lloyd says they have strict rules to make sure anyone buying cannabis is old enough.

The Bloomington "Beyond Hello", located on Veterans Parkway, serves both recreational and medical marijuana users.

ISSUE: Crime

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: West side shooting investigation

Date: 02/01/2021

Time: 3pm

Duration: 12 hours

Police are investigating a shooting that damaged a residence and a vehicle on Bloomington's west side.

Bloomington police were called around 6:50 Sunday night to the area of North Livingston and Forrest Streets. Police say they located physical evidence that a shooting occurred and gunfire hit a residence and vehicle in the area.

Authorities say no injuries were reported, no arrests have been made, and the shooting remains under investigation.

Anyone with information about the incident is asked to contact Bloomington Police.

ISSUE: COVID-19, Government, Politics

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Joe's fined for staying open

Date: 02/01/2021

Time: 6am

Duration: 12 hours

The penalty for a Twin-Cities restaurant and bar will run in the thousands of dollars for defying Gov. JB Pritzker's COVID-19 restrictions by providing indoor service.

The Normal Town Council, acting as the the town's liquor commission, voted 5-2 to affirm hearing officer Todd Greenburg's recommendation for a \$1,750 fine against Joe's Station House and Pizza Pub at The Shoppes of College Hills on Veterans Parkway.

The financial penalties are more than that because Joe's also has to pay \$2,420 for the hearing officer and court reporter. Plus, the business will have to pay the town its regular liquor license fee. The town council recently waived that fee for establishments complying with regulations.

The business violated Pritzker's executive order by serving customers indoors three times late last year.

Commissioners Stan Nord and Scott Preston were the two members who voted against imposing the fine.

Nord said Joe's "only real crime" was remaining open in Normal, and Nord said the commission's action hurts economic development and the government's relationship with businesses.

Preston also voted no saying the establishment did not sell alcohol to minors, or some other direct infraction of the town's liquor code. He said it should be up to the state government to enforce the governor's order.

Voting with the majority was Karyn Smith, who said Joe's owners felt they were above the law according to our news partner Heart of Illinois ABC.

Kevin McCarthy also voted for the penalties, saying all the other liquor license holders were playing by the rules.

Joe's attorney Thomas DeVore indicated he will appeal the local commission's findings to the Illinois Liquor Control Commission, and possibly file a lawsuit against the town.

ISSUE:COVID-19, Governemnt, Politics

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Vaccination shortage in Illinois

Date: 02/08/2021

Time: 3pm

Duration: 12 hours

GOVERNOR J-B PRITZKER SAYS THERE STILL ISN'T ENOUGH COVID-19 VACCINE COMING TO ILLINOIS, BUT THAT SITES ACROSS THE STATE ARE WORKING HARD TO ADMINISTER AS MANY DOSES AS POSSIBLE.

THE STATE IS AVERAGING ABOUT 51 THOUSAND SHOTS PER DAY, WITH NUMBER ESPECIALLY HIGH THURSDAY WHEN NEARLY 75-THOUSAND DOSES WERE ADMINISTERED. THE GOVERNOR URGES PATIENCE AND SAYS HE'S HOPEFUL A NEW VACCINE BY JOHNSON AND JOHNSON WILL BE APPROVED SOON.

PRITZER SAYS YOU CAN FIND A VACCINATION LOCATION AT: CORONAVIRUS DOT ILLINOIS DOT GOV. NEW DAILY COVID CASES HAVE BEEN UNDER FOUR THOUSAND FOR A WEEK NOW IN ILLINOIS AND ALL REGIONS OF THE STATE ARE IN PHASE FOUR OF THE RESTORE ILLINOIS PLAN.

ISSUE: COVID-19, Business, Community

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: More liquor fines for Bloomington businesses

Date: 02/09/2021

Time: 6am

Duration: 12 hours

Two more liquor license holders in Bloomington face possible fines after Mayor Tari Renner filed complaints charging them with violating Gov. JB Pritzker's COVID-19 guidelines.

Renner also serves as the city's liquor commissioner. He's ordered the businesses to appear before the liquor commission Tuesday at 4 p.m.

Meantime, a half-dozen other establishments are scheduled to appear Tuesday on charges they failed to pay thousands of dollars worth of food and beverage taxes last year.

Parkview Inn on South Morris Avenue is accused of serving customers indoors on January 8, before Pritzker loosened restrictions.

A similar complaint was filed against Spotted Dog Tavern on Morrissey Drive for serving customers indoors on January 12.

News partner, Heart of Illinois ABC reports, this is the second time Parkview has been ordered to appear before the liquor commission for breaking COVID rules. Parkview Inn agreed to pay a \$400 fine in December.

Fines collected by the city are being sent to District 87 families who've faced financial hardships because of the pandemic.

Six businesses ordered to appear for not paying city taxes are the owners of Drifters, Aroma Indian Restaurant , Hacienda Leon , Cheeks Bar and Grill, Las Margaritas Mexican Bar and Grill and Mickey's Kitchen.

ISSUE: COVID-19, Education

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Student athletes testing for COVID

Date: 02/10/2021

Time: 6am

Duration: 12 hours

A group of Unit 5 District parents say they feel that a required COVID-19 test for athletes makes them feel that their kids are being singled out.

Unit 5 School District is requiring all student athletes to get a one-time COVID-19 test as they return to competition.

Parent Chad Berck told our news partner, Heart of Illinois ABC, the policy wastes resources, especially if there is another outbreak.

Another parent, who didn't want her name to be mentioned, said one test does not guarantee safety.

The testing is being made possible due to a \$1 million grant from Rivian and Reditus Labs. Superintendent Dr. Kristen Weikle said they decided biweekly testing would go too far, and added that this plan made the most sense.

Other students and staff also have the option to get voluntarily tested.

The modified season for IHSA spring sports starts next week.

ISSUE: COVID-19, Education

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Smooth return to campus

Date: 02/11/2021

Time: 6am

Duration: 12 hours

Now a couple of weeks into the spring semester for college students, and local university leaders say they've had a smooth return to campus, keeping COVID-19 numbers low.

Not only have Illinois State and Wesleyan kept numbers low, they've also started working with local health departments to vaccinate faculty and staff.

I-W-U Vice President of students, Karla Carney-Hall told our news partner Heart of Illinois ABC the university is working closely with the McLean County Health department to get all eligible employees vaccinated.

And just down the road, Illinois State is doing the same.

Director of media relations, Eric Jome says, as of last Friday, the university distributed 900 vaccinations.

ISU has set up clinic sites on campus to vaccinate those who qualify as quickly as possible. Both universities say with case numbers going down and the vaccine rolling out, they're optimistic for the fall.

As for the remainder of the semester, both ISU and Wesleyan will stick with the plans they have in place, with some classes on campus and most online.

However, both universities are looking to offer as many in person classes as possible in the fall.

ISSUE: Police and Fire, Community, Business

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Train derails in Uptown Normal

Date: 02/13/2021

Time: 10am

Duration: 12 hours

A major freight train derailment occurred early this morning between Vernon Avenue and Fell Street in the Town of Normal.

In a news release the Normal Fire Department said there were no hazardous materials involved, and no injuries, but traffic will be affected on many major rail crossings.

The public is asked to NOT approach the train, or the tracks in an attempt to take pictures or video.

Even though hazardous materials aren't involved, power lines are down, and portions of the train or track may be energized and poses a electrocution hazard.

In addition, the fire department reminds that it is unlawful to trespass on railroad property and may result in fines or arrest.

Railroad crossings are closed at:

University St.

Fell St.

Broadway St.

Linden St.

College Ave.

Mulberry St.

Beech St.

Willow St./Fort Jesse Rd.

The railroad underpass at Vernon Avenue and Beaufort Street is also closed.

This incident will be an extended operation and more updates will be sent as soon as information is available.

ISSUE: Police and Fire

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Bloomington home destroyed by fire

Date: 02/15/2021

Time: 6am

Duration: 12 hours

A home near downtown Bloomington was destroyed Sunday night by a fire.

Fire crews were called around 8:30 to the 300 block of South Gridley Street. Firefighters reported heavy flames coming from the rear of the home.

The Bloomington Fire Department says due to freezing conditions and additional calls throughout the city, off duty personal were called in to supplement the on duty crews.

Units were on scene throughout the night and into the morning with the final unit leaving around 11 o'clock.

Authorities say no injuries were reported, but three adults were displaced and the Red Cross is assisting.

The cause of the fire remains under investigation.

ISSUE: Police and Fire, Community

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE:

Date: 02/16/2021

Time: Busy days for NFD

Duration: 12 hours

It's been a busy few days for the Normal Fire Department, with a train derailment, a large apartment fire, and debris from the train catching fire. Add a heavy snowfall Monday night and things remain busy.

Normal Fire Department spokesperson Matt Swaney says there are still some slick spots on the roadways. He spoke with WJBC's Scott Miller.

You can check the latest road conditions at gettingarondillinois.com.

Swaney says it's also a good idea to check your furnace vents outside your home. Drifting snow can clog up those vents and that leads to calls for carbon monoxide.

ISSUE: COVID-19, Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: McLean County vaccination delay

Date: 02/18/2021

Time: 3pm

Duration: 12 hours

Winter weather across the U.S. has delayed the weekly shipment of COVID-19 vaccines to McLean County, according to health department administrator Jessica McKnight.

McKnight says about 900 people who were scheduled for tomorrow's clinic will be contacted to reschedule the appointment.

The Illinois Department of Public Health has notified the health department that weekly shipments of the COVID-19 vaccine will be primarily for second doses the next few weeks. Due to the limited supply, McKnight says the health department will not schedule any first-dose appointments for next week.

Over 24,000 vaccines have been administered in the county with just over 3% of the population fully vaccinated.

ISSUE: COVID-19, Education, Technology

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Online learning not as fun as it used to be

Date: 02/19/2021

Time: 6am

Duration: 12 hours

After almost a year, the novelty of online learning seems to have worn off.

"A recent study that came out of Lurie Children's Hospital at Northwestern University said one in five children are dealing with a mental health disorder because of the pandemic," said Dr. Sameer Vohra during a webinar put on by the University of Illinois Springfield Friday. "Mental health disorders are routinely underreported, so we know that number is probably higher."

And Springfield Public Schools superintendent Jennifer Gill can count three times the number of F's students have earned; a further indication online learning may not be all that effective.

ISSUE: Crime, Government, Police and Fire

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE:Crime down across the Twin Cities

Date: 02/24/2021

Time: 6am

Duration: 12 hours

The McLean County State's Attorney says despite the recent uptick in murders in the area, crime stats are actually trending in the right direction.

Over the past 21 months, 11 murder cases have gone to trial in McLean County.

That's compared to a total of 11 cases in the entire decade of 2000 to 2010.

State's Attorney Don Knapp told our news partner Heart of Illinois ABC things locally haven't been too bad.

Knapp's comments come on the heels of Monday's guilty verdict against Hammet Brown.

Brown, 29, was convicted on 8 counts - including murder and attempted murder - stemming from an incident in June 2018.

And earlier this month, Sydney Mays, 24, was found guilty in connection with a triple-homicide.

Knapp and other county attorneys took the time to thank police officers Tuesday.

ISSUE: Business, Community

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE:Cannabis workers look to unionize

Date: 03/03/2021

Time: 3pm

Duration: 12 hours

If Briana Rodriguez' bosses try to tell her they can't afford to improve her working conditions, she's not here for it.

She works for Ascend, at its medicinal and recreational cannabis dispensary in downtown Springfield.

"I bring in enough money to pay off my whole college tuition in one shift," she told a news conference Wednesday, "in a few hours of it."

The employees who want to align with Local 881 of the United Food and Commercial Workers say there's much room for improvement when it comes to paid sick time and consistent, predictable scheduling. The election is being conducted by mail of the 41 employees downtown.

The news conference, outside the dispensary, was about the election for just the one store's employees, but UFCW wants to eventually pick up all cannabis employees in the state.

Ascend's parent company chose not to comment. Ascend operates a second, recreational-only dispensary along I-55 in Springfield.

ISSUE: Business, Community

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: OSF starts work on new facility

Date: 03/05/2021

Time: 6am

Duration: 12 hours

OSF HealthCare leaders broke ground Thursday for what they say is a key component of its cancer center in the Twin-Cities.

OSF is building a new radiation technology facility in Bloomington, which will house the TrueBeam system by Varian Medical Systems.

It's state-of-the-art equipment combining imaging, beam delivery, and sophisticated motion to accurately, precisely, and quickly target tumors, OSF said in a news release.

Patients will have more treatment options, and there will be opportunities to participate in upcoming clinical trials.

The facility also enables doctors to consult their medical colleagues in the Peoria area in real time.

President of OSF St. Joseph Medical Center in Bloomington, Lynn Fulton, told news partner Heart of Illinois ABC the new facility has big benefits

The center is expected to be finished in September, and OSF staff would start seeing patients in October.

ISSUE: COVID-19

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: State numbers continue to grow

Date: 03/08/2021

Time: 6am

Duration: 12 hours

Just over one thousand new cases of COVID-19 statewide were reported Sunday.

Public health officials also announced 14 additional deaths in Illinois.

The Illinois Department of Public Health says over the weekend laboratories conducted a little more than 68-thousand coronavirus tests, resulting in a seven-day positivity rate of 2.3%.

Nearly 1.2 million COVID-19 cases have been reported in Illinois since the start of the pandemic, including 20,763 deaths.

As of late Saturday, state officials said nearly 3.4 million doses of vaccine had been administered.

A \$10 Million public awareness program has been launched by the state to encourage members of the Black and Latino communities to be vaccinated.

COVID-19 has hit both communities hard, but they are still lagging in vaccinations.

ISSUE: COVID-19, Community, Vaccination, Politics, Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: National Guard now on the vaccination front

Date: 03/09/2021

Time: 3pm

Duration: 12 hours

Gov. JB Pritzker Tuesday announced the deployment of additional Illinois National Guard members to assist with COVID-19 vaccination efforts in McLean County.

The state is helping support the McLean County Health Department in expanding operations at the vaccination site located at Grossinger Motors Arena in downtown Bloomington. Health department administrator Jessica McKnight says four National Guard teams will be deployed to McLean County.

Once more vaccines are available, Grossinger Motors Arena can administer 4,600 doses per day for people who live and work in McLean County. As of Tuesday, over 41-thousand doses have been administered in the county.

ISSUE: Business, Community, Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Rivian hopes to grow footprint

Date: 03/11/2021

Time: 6am

Duration: 12 hours

Rivian Automotive is looking to significantly expand its footprint at its plant in west Normal, while adding hundreds of workers to produce electric vehicles.

News partner, Heart of Illinois ABC reports this week, Rivian filed with the town government an amended site plan and rezoning request for expansion just west of the current plant on Rivian Motorway, also known as Route 150.

The new development includes adding up to 10.6 million square feet of building space and 1.5 million square feet for logistics and parking on a 380 acre parcel.

Rivian's plant communications and police manager Zach Dietmeier said the amendment allows the company to think more deeply about the site's evolution over the next few years.

The company is not providing a cost estimate on the additions, and there's no change in Rivian's timetable to produce electric powered pickup trucks, sport utility vehicles and Amazon delivery vans.

According to Dietmeier, there are 890 full-time employees at Rivian's plant in Normal, with plans for a workforce of about 2,700 people by next year.

ISSUE: Education, Community, Politics

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: School Board candidate withdraws from race

Date: 03/12/2021

Time: 10am

Duration: 12 hours

A school board candidate in Bloomington District 87 said Friday evening he's ending his campaign because of backlash to what many view as offensive posts on his social media accounts.

The controversy spilled over to a Bloomington City Council race because a candidate for alderman had a campaign sign backing school board candidate Jon Reed.

A video circulated throughout the Twin-Cities Friday, and there's a website created to inform the community about "The Real Jon Reed."

The video and website were produced by community members including District 87 students, teachers, and parents, said Levi Briggs, a Bloomington High School Senior who appeared in the video.

According to Briggs, production on the video started last Thursday. The website TheRealJonReed.com was launched Friday, just hours before Reed said he would stop campaigning.

The video shows several people reading memes and other posts reportedly from Reed's personal Facebook pages.

The website said Reed's posts contain explicit language, violence, sexual violence, racism, misogyny, transphobia and slurs.

The website also called out Ward 5 City Council candidate Nick Becker, who admitted on his Facebook page Friday that he mistakenly put up one of Reed's campaign signs.

Reed sent a statement to Heart of Illinois-ABC saying he's no longer campaigning for school board, but early voting is underway, and it's too late for Reed's name to be taken off the ballot.

ISSUE: Government, Community

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: West Side parks planned

Date: 03/16/2021

Time: 6am

Duration: 12 hours

The Bloomington City Council heard about two west side parks projects, including plans for the city's second inclusion playground where all kids, including those with disabilities, can play together.

At a committee-of-the-whole meeting, Jay Tetzloff, head of the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Arts, said the fully accessible playground known as Harmony Park on the city's east side has been a big success.

Harmony Park, which opened in August 2019 on South Hershey Road, was funded primarily through private donations, although the city government contributed \$85,000 in public money.

Tetzloff told the city council the department is looking to see if there's someone in the community that would champion this, much like a group before that raised the funds to build a west side inclusive playground.

News partner, Heart of Illinois ABC reports - White Oak Park on North Cottage Avenue is the leading potential site for the new inclusion playground, according to Tetzloff.

The other west side improvement is construction of a new O'Neil Park swimming pool and skate park, but the cost is about \$11.5 million, which is about \$1 million above estimates.

The city plans to borrow money through the sale of municipal bonds to fund the project, which won't have a significant impact on taxpayers, according to City Manager Tim Gleason.

ISSUE: COVID-19, Vaccination, Community, Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Additional COVID vaccines headed to McLean County

Date: 03/18/2021

Time: 3pm

Duration: 12 hours

McLean County health officials reported some good news this week on the vaccine front; the county received additional doses and vaccine eligibility has expanded to the Phase 1B plus population.

Health department administrator Jessica McKnight spoke with WJBC's Scott Miller.

McKnight says it's too early to tell if this volume will continue over the next few weeks, but they're hopeful.

As for vaccine eligibility, the county is now accepting appointments for anyone in the Phase 1A, 1B, and 1B plus categories. 1B plus is anyone age 16-64 with underlying health conditions.

ISSUE: Community, Politics, Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: New pool may come on borrowed funds

Date: 03/23/2021

Time: 3pm

Duration: 12 hours

The Bloomington City Council is willing to borrow money to build a new swimming pool and make other improvements at O'Neil Park on the city's west side.

The council voted 8-1 favoring what Mayor Tari Renner said is the city's biggest investment since the decision to build an arena in Downtown Bloomington.

Construction of a pool, skate park, and other upgrades is expected to cost \$11.8 million dollars, which is above earlier estimates of \$10.3 million, although city staffers say they'll look for ways to cut costs.

Bloomington Deputy City Manager Billy Tyus spoke with WJBC's Scott Miller.

O'Neil's new pool and skate park are expected to be completed by Memorial Day of 2022.

ISSUE: Politics, Community, Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Juneteenth could be become a state holiday

Date: 03/25/2021

Time: 6am

Duration: 12 hours

Juneteenth, commemorating the end of slavery on June 19, 1865, would become a state holiday in Illinois, under a bill which has passed a committee.

The bill, sponsored by Senate Majority Leader Kimberly Lightford (D-Maywood), passed unanimously after Lightford rebuffed questions from Sen. Jil (cq) Tracy (R-Quincy) about personnel costs for another holiday and whether Juneteenth could simply bump a lesser holiday from the state calendar.

“Juneteenth is considered the longest running African-American holiday in the United States,” said Lightford, “and is considered the second American Independence Day.”

Lightford said Juneteenth has grown from simply the celebration of the end of slavery into a festival of arts, culture, and the impact of the civil rights movement upon the nation.

SB 1965 has passed the Senate Executive Committee.

ISSUE: Education, Government, Politics

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Silent protest ahead on strike

Date: 03/26/2021

Time: 6am

Duration: 12 hours

The union representing more than 400 graduate teaching assistants at Illinois State University plan on staging a "silent protest" Thursday, ahead of a planned strike authorization vote early next month.

Graduate workers seeking their first collective bargaining agreement will gather at 3 p.m. Thursday at Hovey Hall, where university administrators have their offices.

In a news release, union members said their mouths will be taped shut, symbolizing what they claim is ISU's desire to discipline workers who encourage other unions to participate in striking or picketing if a walkout happens.

A strike authorization vote is scheduled for April 2, but that doesn't mean a strike would happen immediately after the vote.

A federal mediator is now involved in contract negotiations, which started in October 2019.

The teaching assistants are represented by Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 49.

In a statement released Thursday night, ISU spokesperson Eric Jome told our news partner, Heart of Illinois-ABC that the university "respects the right of SEIU Local 73 to protest."

"We are awaiting a response from the union on the university's counterproposals," said Jome.

He went on to say, "ISU remains committed to ongoing good-faith negotiations and continues to believe there is progress to be made."

ISSUE: Crime, Police and Fire

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Charges filed against teen in Normal

Date: 03/29/2021

Time: 6am

Duration: 12 hours

Normal Police arrested an 18-year old local man suspected of trying to kill another teenager by shooting him several times last week in an apartment complex in northwest Normal.

Police obtained a warrant and arrested Omarr Parks-Bullock of Normal on Friday. He's jailed on \$750,000 bond, meaning he has to come up with \$75,000 cash to be released.

Parks-Bullock is accused of firing multiple shots, wounding a teenaged boy in Building 4 of Northbrook Estates on West Orlando in Normal.

Normal Police Chief Rick Bleichner told our news partner, Heart of Illinois ABC, the victim suffered serious, but not life-threatening injuries.

Parks-Bullock is charged with two counts each of attempted murder and aggravated battery by discharging a firearm. He's also charged with six counts of aggravated discharge of a firearm in an occupied building, reckless discharge of a firearm, and not having a valid firearm owners identification card.

Police are still investigating, but the chief said authorities are not searching for other suspects.