



WJBC-AM Bloomington/Normal, Illinois  
Quarterly Issues  
Third Quarter 2019



## Quarterly Issues/Programs List

Issue: Children

How Issue Was Treated: Live Liner and personal appearance

Title: Children's Discovery Museum - Craft Beer & Jazz

Date: July 20, 2019

Time: 4 -10pm

Description: Summer is a great time to enjoy brews and blues and there's no better place to enjoy them than Uptown Normal! On **July 20, 2019** Medici will host the 6th Annual Craft Beer and Jazz Street Fair on North Street from 4:00 to 10:00 p.m.

This year's event will feature over 45 craft beers, many of which are limited release or products not typically available in Central Illinois. All of the beer will be served in a four ounce pour so attendees are able to sample different selections.

In addition to the beer tasting, a wonderful line up of jazz will be featured on the stage.

For \$5, attendees will receive a commemorative glass (while supplies last) live entertainment, and a program that includes a listing of all brews, with proceeds benefiting the Children's Discovery Museum and Uptown Partners, an association of Uptown businesses. Beer tickets will be for sale for \$0.50 each. Most samples will require two to eight tickets.



## Quarterly Issues/Programs List

Issue: Youth Education Programs

How Issue Was Treated: Live liner

Title: McLean County Fair - Hogwild 5k

Date: July 28, 2019

Time: 8-10a

Description: Come preview the McLean County Fair with a 5K Run & 1 mile walk that will take you out around and through the fairgrounds. Plus enjoy a delicious pork burger after the race!

Early bird registration by July 15 – \$25 for the 5K or \$20 for the walk includes 4 single day 2018 McLean County Fair admission tickets & t-shirt

Late registration (July 16 or later) \$30 for the 5K or \$25 for the walk includes 2 single day 2018 McLean County Fair admission tickets, t-shirts while supplies last

Race time: 8 a.m.



## Quarterly Issues/Programs List

Issue: Children's Cancer

How Issue Was Treated: Live Liner, Recorded PSA

Title: St. Jude - generic

Date:

Time:

Description:



## **Quarterly Issues/Programs List**

Issue: Local History

How Issue Was Treated: Live liner, interviews & recorded PSA

Title: McLean County Museum of History - Lincoln's Festival on Rt. 66

Date: July 20, 2019

Time: 9am

Description: Activities during the festival weekend to include; living history performances, a cruise-in for car enthusiasts around the Museum Square, period crafts and children's activities on the Museum's lawn. Civil War skirmishes and cavalry encampment, walking tours, a vintage bicycle display, plus speakers and musicians to share the journey along the prairie path on the Mother Road.



## Quarterly Issues/Programs List

Issue: Local charities

How Issue Was Treated: Live Liner, Recorded PSA, Live Interview

Title: MCstrong - Golf Outing

Date: July 25, 2019

Time:

Description: Golf tournament to raise funds for the support of the Michael Collins Foundation.



## **Quarterly Issues/Programs List**

Issue: Children & Poverty

How Issue Was Treated: Live Liner, Interview

Title: Sunrise Rotary - Brats & Bags event

Date: Aug. 3, 2019

Time: 11a-10p

Description: 11AM-1PM: Lunch and live entertainment on the square in downtown Bloomington

Take a break on the lawn or lounge at the picnic tables over a fresh grilled brat, chips, and a soft drink while listening to the tropical tones of Toocan. Drive Thru Service and Lunch Delivery is available! Treat your team or your clients!

3:30PM: Bags tournament area opens for team registration and warm-up

5PM: Double elimination bags tournament begins

Join in the Double Elimination Bags Tournament or just cheer on your favorite team. Outdoor beer, bags and a DJ make a great Summer night in downtown Bloomington



## **Quarterly Issues/Programs List**

Issue: Women's Health

How Issue Was Treated: Live Liner, Interviews

Title: Baby Expo - OB-Gyn Care

Date: Aug. 3, 2019

Time: 9a-1p

Description: The Baby Expo Bloomington is the premiere event that connects families with the best baby, toddler and parent products, businesses and services in central Illinois.





## **Quarterly Issues/Programs List**

Issue: Families

How Issue Was Treated: Live liner, Appearance

Title: ISU - Hancock Stadium Movie Night

Date: Aug. 9, 2019

Time: 6:30pm

Description: As a thank you to loyal Redbird fans and supporters in the community, Illinois State Athletics will host a FREE screening of the hit animated feature Incredibles 2 on Friday, August 9, beginning at 6:30 p.m., at Hancock Stadium. The main gates on the East side of the stadium will open at 6 p.m.



## **Quarterly Issues/Programs List**

Issue: Ecology, Pets, Legal Service, Families

How Issue Was Treated: Live liners. Recorded & Appearance

Title: Bloomington-Normal Jaycees - Bruegala

Date: Aug 16 & 17, 2019

Time: 6p-11p & 2p-8p

Description: Bruegala is a charity beer and wine festival run by the [Bloomington-Normal Jaycees](#). The 20th annual Bruegala will be held on Friday, August 16th and Saturday, August 17th at the Corn Crib.

Bruegala offers over 100 craft beer samples, more than 50 wines, a variety of food vendors, music and more throughout the two-day event. In the past 5 years, more than 20,000 people have attended Bruegala and the event has raised over \$220,000 for local organizations.



## **Quarterly Issues/Programs List**

Issue: Local Catholic School

How Issue Was Treated: Live liners, Appearance

Title: Marcfirst - A D'vine Affair

Date: Sept. 19, 2019

Time: 5:30p-9:30p

Description: A D'Vine Affair for Marcfirst, formerly known as D'Vine Martini with features from Martinis for Marcfirst!  
This event will be held at a new location this year – Epiphany Farms Estate in Downs! The event will feature a Small Bite Fight between Chef Troy of Biaggi's and Dr. Jack Capodice and a fall feast!



## **Quarterly Issues/Programs List**

Issue: Women's Health – Breast Cancer

How Issue Was Treated: Live liners, recorded PSA, interview

Title: Susan G. Komen - More Than Pink Walk

Date: Sept. 7, 2019

Time: 9am

Description: Fundraiser walk for breast cancer.



## Quarterly Issues/Programs List

Issue: Small Town Living

How Issue Was Treated: Live liners

Title: Danver's Days

Date: Aug 16 & 17, 2019

Time: 11a-3p

Description: Venture deep into God's country and surround yourself with family, friends, delicious food, live music, fun rides, bossy bingo, a bags tournament, tractor pulls...and so much more- all located within this wholesome community that is Danvers, IL.



## Quarterly Issues/Programs List

Issue: Student/school issues

How Issue Was Treated: Live Liner, recorded PSA, interview, appearance.

Title: "Stay 4" Project - Day of the Dozer

Date: Aug 24, 2019

Time: 10a-4p

Description: The event was created in memory of William F. Brady in 1999. Since that time, more than 10,000 kids have enjoyed an experience of a lifetime...a chance to ride on heavy construction and farming equipment! This is a one of a kind opportunity for kids and their families to explore the fascinating world of heavy equipment. The event will take place Saturday, August 24th 2019 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the McLean County Fairgrounds located on Route 9 West in Bloomington.



## Quarterly Issues/Programs List

Issue: Disability Recreation

How Issue Was Treated: Live Liner

Title: S.O.A.R. - Backyard Battles

Date: Aug. 25, 2019

Time: 1p-4p

Description: Teams of two will compete in a battle of classic backyard games for a prize from Destihl Brewery! This unique experience will feature several outdoor games, music, a silent auction and Destihl's own "DUB-PUB" mobile taproom. Have fun while raising awareness and funds to provide recreation opportunities for people with disabilities in our community through the SOAR program.



## Quarterly Issues/Programs List

Issue: Red Cross Support

How Issue Was Treated: Live Liner

Title: American Red Cross - Saluting Our Heroes Breakfast

Date: Sept. 9 – Oct. 6.

Time: 6a-6p

Description: Soliciting community nominations to recognize local community leaders.





## **Quarterly Issues/Programs List**

Issue: Children's Health

How Issue Was Treated: Live interview, liners

Title: Shriners Hospitals for Children - Snyder Shriner 5k Run/Walk

Date: Sept. 13, 2019

Time: 3:13pm

Description: Promoting 5K run to raise funds for the Shriner's hospital.



## **Quarterly Issues/Programs List**

Issue: Youth Activities

How Issue Was Treated: Live Liner, Interview, Appearance

Title: Boys & Girls Club & Child Protection Network - Over The Edge

Date: Oct. 12, 2019

Time: 9a-11p

Description: YOU can go OVER THE EDGE and make [#MissionsPossible2019](#) for the Boys & Girls Club of Bloomington-Normal and the Child Protection Network.



## **Quarterly Issues/Programs List**

Issue: Children's Disease/Cancer

How Issue Was Treated: Live liner, interviews

Title: St. Jude - Walk/Run

Date: Sept. 21, 2019

Time: 7:30a

Description: Join us for the *St. Jude Walk/Run* during Childhood Cancer Awareness Month in September, to raise money for the kids of St. Jude, where families never receive a bill for anything. Let's end childhood cancer. Together.



## Quarterly Issues/Programs List

Issue: Youth Services

How Issue Was Treated: Live Liner

Title: Normal Rotary – Oktoberfest Pre-Promotion

Date: Sept. 23, 2019 – Oct. 20, 2019

Time: 6a – 6p

Description: Pre-promotion of event!

Every third Sunday in October we will be holding our Annual Oktoberfest 5K Run and 1 mile Fun Walk! This run/walk is a fundraiser to support BN Sunrise Rotary's Youth Services and Central Catholic High School's Rotaract Club.



## **Quarterly Issues/Programs List**

Issue: Alzheimer's Awareness & Fundraiser

How Issue Was Treated: Live Liner, Interview, Appearance

Title: Alzheimer's Association - Walk to End Alzheimer's

Date: Sept. 14, 2019

Time: 7am

Description: All funds raised through Walk to End Alzheimer's further the care, support and research efforts of the Alzheimer's Association. The Alzheimer's Association is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization. All donations are tax-deductible as allowed by law.



## Quarterly Issues/Programs List

Issue: Children's Education

How Issue Was Treated: Live Liner, Interviews, News Coverage

Title: Children's Discovery Museum - 25th Anniversary

Date: Sept. 12, 2019

Time: 7:30a-9:00a

Description: We are excited to share memories of our past and celebrate **25 years** of play, **15 years** in Uptown Normal, and **2 million** visitors!

Tickets to attend the breakfast are \$25 each. If you are interested in hosting a table please contact Beth Whisman at 309-433-3447 or a current board member to get started.

We hope you join us to celebrate these major milestones in our history and look to the future of the Children's Discovery Museum in our community!

We will have special hours on September 12<sup>th</sup> to continue the celebration. From 1:00 – 8:00 pm we will offer throwback pricing with \$3 Admission to the museum which includes special 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary activities, Door Prizes that include a year of free ice cream from Emack & Bolio's, Zoo Lady Face Painting and Meet Curious George! Fun for all ages!



## Quarterly Issues/Programs List

Issue: Heart Health

How Issue Was Treated: Live Liner, recorded psa, interview

Title: American Heart Association - Heart Walk

Date: Sept. 29, 2019

Time: 2:00p

Description: By participating in the Heart Walk, you're joining a million Heart Walk Heroes from across the nation raising funds for lifesaving science. Science that can teach us all how to live longer and be Healthy For Good.

Take a few minutes to consider the lives you are going to help change for the better through your leadership and donations. We're talking more moms, dads, brothers, aunts and babies' lives saved. Help keep hearts everywhere beating. Let's take steps together to cure heart disease and stroke.



## **Quarterly Issues/Programs List**

Issue: Small town living

How Issue Was Treated: Live liner

Title: El Paso Corn Festival

Date: Sept. 6 & 7, 2019

Time: 6-10p

Description: Welcome to the El Paso Corn Festival 2019! The theme this year is “National Lampoons El Paso Vacation!” So take a day to binge watch all the Vacation movies, get in touch with your inner Cousin Eddie, and get to work on some awesome parade floats! Decorating your tent spaces should be a breeze with the Griswold family influence. Once again we will have the Carnival all three days, entertainment in the Library Park, and of course the parade on Saturday at Noon.





## Quarterly Issues/Programs List

Issue: Youth Recreation

How Issue Was Treated: Live Liner, Interview

Title: Normal Parks & Rec - "To The Max" Obstacle Course Challenge

Date: Sept. 15, 2019

Time: 1p

Description: The "To the Max" Obstacle Challenge is a youth and family 2K course (approximately 1.25 miles), highlighted by approximately 15 obstacles! This event is for ages 5+ and is hosted in the fall. We provide a large spectator area (approximately 80% of course visible from this area) for this chip-timed event. **During the inaugural race in 2018, we had 154 registered participants.**



## Quarterly Issues/Programs List

Issue: Local History

How Issue Was Treated: Live Liner, recorded psa, interview

Title: McLean County Museum of History - Cemetery Walk PRE-PROMOTION

Date: Sept. 23, 2019 - Event

Time: 6a-6p

Description: Every year the *Evergreen Cemetery Walk* brings the voices of McLean County's history to life. Costumed actors portray individuals representing all walks of life from the county's past on the beautiful grounds of Evergreen Memorial Cemetery. This event serves about **3,500 people (mostly students) every year**. To date, we have featured **183 different individuals** from all walks of life, whose stories illustrate the impact the people of McLean County have had on history – locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally. In addition, the impact of the *Evergreen Cemetery Walk* can be felt throughout the state and nation.



## Quarterly Issues/Programs List

Issue: Crisis Hotline Support

How Issue Was Treated: Live Liner, Interview

Title: PATH Crisis Center - Just A Call Away 5k

Date: Sept. 28, 2019

Time: 9a

Description: The proceeds from this event will go to The Adult Protective Service program in aiding the investigation and prevention of abuse of older adults, ages 60+ and adults with disabilities, ages 18-59.



## **Quarterly Issues/Programs List**

Issue: Cancer Research

How Issue Was Treated: Live Liner, recorded PSA, interview

Title: Community Cancer Center - Comedy4Cancer PRE-PROMOTION

Date: Sept. 23, 2019

Time: 6a – 6p

Description: The Community Cancer Center cordially invites you to Comedy4Cancer! Comedian Tyler Mason returns with an all-new, lighthearted look at everyday life in our modern world. Mason's offbeat blend of comedy, ventriloquism, rock music, and puppetry helps audiences spot the humorous irony in today's situations.



## Quarterly Issues/Programs List

Issue: Local History

How Issue Was Treated:

Title: La Salle County Historical Society - Burgoo Festival PRE-PROMOTION

Date: Oct. 12-13, 2019

Time: 11a-6p, 9a-5p

Description: Established in 1969, the Burgoo Festival is one of the longest-running and largest fall festivals in northern Illinois. The Burgoo Festival is an annual village street party featuring flea marketers, craftsmen, musicians, and other entertainment. More than 350 vendors will present their wares at this craft show and flea market. Sponsored by the non-profit LaSalle County Historical Society, it is the organization's major fundraiser.

## **Quarterly Issues Third Quarter – July-September 2019**

ISSUE: Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: Barickman: Safeguards in place for recreational marijuana

Date: 7/01/2019

Time: 5 am

Duration: 12 hours

BLOOMINGTON - Now that recreational marijuana will become legal in Illinois a local lawmaker feels measures have been taken to keep Illinois residents safe.

The new law allows residents 21 and older to possess up to 30 grams of cannabis, five grams of cannabis concentrate and edibles with up to 500 milligrams of THC.

Sen. Jason Barickman (R-Bloomington) said while the passage of recreational weed seemed inevitable, it was important to make sure the bill had proper safeguards in place.

"I was an advocate that we need protections for our youth and from an individual user who puts the public at risk by driving or otherwise and I feel those protections are in place," said Barickman.

The law creates a special task force to look at methods like roadside swabs to test drivers for pot impairment.

Barickman added there are also workplace protections for employers to make sure employees don't show up to work impaired.

Recreational weed becomes legal Jan. 1.

ISSUE: Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: Normal Council reveals post-election discord on Rivian street name change

Date: 7/01/2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 hours

NORMAL - The Normal Town Council backed the idea Monday night of renaming Mitsubishi Motorway after the company that's taken over the Mitsubishi plant and intends to build electric vehicles there.

However, the vote and lengthy debate was another example of glaring differences among the elected leaders following April's council election.

The council voted 4-2 to approve renaming the section of U.S. Route 150 Rivian Motorway.

Recently-elected council members Stan Nord and Karyn Smith voted no.

Nord said the change will confuse out-of-town travelers looking for the Interstate Center, or truckers who might get lost looking for warehouses in the area.

They may plug it in their GPS, the navigation system in their car or their phone, and they're going to be driving along, looking for Mitsubishi Motorway. They're not going to see it. They may just pass it on by," said Nord.

"The trucks that are serving all the warehouses out there, those trucks come in from all over the place as well. That's what they're going to be looking for."

According to Nord, the government should not be renaming major roads after anything temporary like a business.

The buildings and the street remain, and then it puts us in a spot where maybe we have to change that again in the future," said Nord.

That road was originally Diamond Star Parkway, then it was Mitsubishi Motorway, now we're going to change it to Rivian. All this is a lot of unnecessary change," Nord added.

Council member Chamberly Cummings says it's "a little insane" arguing about a street.

"I don't see what the issue is in allowing a company who's coming here to invest their dollars to have a street named after them," Cummings said.

Council member Scott Preston said the name change is "a great sign of progress."

Council member Kevin McCarthy said the change is a small token of community support for Rivian.

"We believe in a business that's investing millions in our community, growing jobs in our community, one of the small things that we can do is rename a road to help show our local support of a business that's investing so heavily in our local community," McCarthy said.

New street signs won't go up until the Bloomington City Council, the McLean County Board and the Emergency Telephone System Board, which oversees McLean County 911 service, approve the change.

ISSUE: Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: Pontiac Mayor Resigns

Date: 7/02/2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 hours

PONTIAC - The mayor of Pontiac has announced his resignation.

Bob Russell made the announcement at Monday's city council meeting. He will step down as mayor starting July 31.

"Having served as mayor of the city of Pontiac for the past 10 plus years has been an unbelievably wonderful experience that I will never forget," said Russell in his letter of resignation.

Russell, who has been mayor since 2009, told WJBC's Todd Wineburner he didn't serve in the position for the money.

"This is something you do because you love the community. The people in this community work together so well and what I've seen happen here in the last 10-15 years is nothing short of a miracle," said Russell.

In his letter of resignation, Russell said he is proud of the business development around the city and especially the downtown area. He also notes the development of the Route 66 phenomena that brings people from all over to visit Pontiac.

Prior to becoming mayor, Russell served as a city council alderman for 17 years.

The city council will have 60 days to name a new mayor.

ISSUE: Crime and Courts

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: McLean County Drug Court receives Supreme Court certification

Date: 7/02/2019

Time: 10 pm

Duration: 12 hours

BLOOMINGTON - A 10-year old program aimed to keep McLean County drug offenders in treatment and out of jail has received a certification from the Illinois Supreme Court.



Certification of the McLean County Drug Court took two years and ensures the program is up to date with best practices to help addicts get treatment, avoid jail, and provide an environment for them to become active and productive members of society, according to Mark Fellheimer, who is chief judge of the circuit that includes McLean County.

Drug court is an intensive probation program requiring drug defendants to attend court regularly, submit to heavy monitoring, and drug testing. They're also required to undergo treatment and obtain employment.

In a statement, Judge Fellheimer said, "Becoming certified by the Illinois Supreme Court is something to be celebrated and is the culmination of countless hours spent by the entire McLean County Drug Court team led by Circuit Judge Casey Costigan with the assistance of many others, including, but not limited to, McLean County Court Services Director Cassy Taylor and her staff. This certification ensures that the McLean County Drug Court Program is up to date with best practices to assist those that have a drug addiction to get help, avoid jail and foster an environment to allow them to become active and productive members of society. This also reduces the rising costs of incarceration to McLean County and society as a whole. Drug Court is an intensive probation program involving the McLean County State's Attorney Office, McLean County Public Defender's Office, treatment providers and Probation staff requiring defendants to attend court on a regular and heavily monitored basis, undergo treatment, obtain employment, and be drug tested over a sustained period of time to promote and foster change in the defendant's life."

McLean County's Recovery or Mental Health Court and Veterans Treatment Court are also under Supreme Court review.

ISSUE: Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: Working group's Connect Transit inquiry seen as "worthwhile" effort

Date: 7/02/2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 hours

BLOOMINGTON - Mayors of Bloomington and Normal have issued a joint statement expressing their hopes for what a working group will accomplish to guide the transit system's future, while a pair of Connect Transit critics like what they see so far.

The letter from Mayors Tari Renner and Chris Koos highlights the working group's dilemma, whether to focus on short-term changes or look at longer-term solutions.

The mayors acknowledged many people see the group's main task is to fix things, but the leaders see this as a chance to help make Connect Transit "a cutting edge 21st century transit system that serves all of its users."

"Do not fear to be bold," the mayors said.

"The conversation has become divisive in the community, yet clear needs for improvement have emerged," they added.

The mayors said the top priority is to meet the needs of transit-dependent riders, but they also urged the group to come up with ways to attract potential passengers who have a choice whether to ride the bus.

"In a world of changing climate, rising greenhouse gas emissions, and the rise of the use of alternative transportation, we see the role of public transit expanding and we see the definition of users expanding as well," the mayors added.

Normal Town Council Member Karyn Smith, who's been critical of local transit operations, said she's impressed with the diversity of the Connect to the Future working group.

"It looks like it's going to be a very worthwhile opportunity for everybody to provide input on this very vital decision that will support our economic development," said Smith.

Stan Nord, another Normal council member, encouraged people to participate in the process.

"Many of the folks that are on that work group voiced that they do want to address the current issues in addition to what the future of Connect is, so get involved soon," said Nord.

The working group meets on the third Saturday of the month. The next meeting is July 20.

Last week, the Connect Transit Board attempted to ease some of pressure on the working group by delaying until January a series of fare hikes, and coming up with alternatives for disabled riders who said they would be negatively impacted by eliminating of the Olive bus route in north Normal.

ISSUE: Government , Education

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: ISU AD: 'I'm concerned about edibles' with student-athletes

Date: 7/03/2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 hours

NORMAL - Despite the legalization of marijuana in Illinois, one local Athletic Director is sharing how new legislation will impact Illinois State University athletes.

Speaking with WJBC's Scott Miller and Katherine Murphy, ISU AD Larry Lyons said before student-athletes put on a Redbird jersey, there will be conversations with administration.

"The quick response is we are going to have to do some really good education and having some pretty frank conversations with our student-athletes," said Lyons. "If I understand the law, if you're under 21, it's not legal for you, which that certainly helps most of our student-athletes out. Obviously we have the NCAA and Federal laws to deal with, but it will be an education process and we will hit that pretty hard.

Lyons added that what concerns him the most is edibles, which are food products infused with marijuana.

"The new normal of legal recreational marijuana, I think that everybody is going to have to adjust to it in some way," said Lyons. "I'm most concerned about the edibles, accessible they are going to be, how do you regulate the dose or how strong it is.

I think that society is going to have to deal with this, not just us and college athletics," said Lyons. "To me that opens up a whole new spectrum that we are going to have to get used to dealing with."

Although marijuana is legal for persons age 21 and over, ISU student-athletes are held to a zero tolerance policy. Additionally, athletes are subjected to random drug testing.

ISSUE: Governemnt

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: Vacant county board seat attracts five candidates

Date: 7/03/2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 hours

BLOOMINGTON - The McLean County Board's Executive Committee will interview five people who are interested in filling a vacant county board seat.

The District 2 county board seat opened up last month when Republican Scott Murphy resigned because he moved out of the district, which covers much of southeastern McLean County.

Murphy's replacement also has to be a Republican until the seat is next up for election.

The candidates are Heyworth farmer William Friedrich, who's the Bloomington Township Water District chairman, farmer and tax accountant Clarence Thomas from Heyworth, State Farm retiree Ruth Novosad of rural Bloomington, Blue Ridge School Board member Chelsie Leffelman of Bellflower, and retired teacher, letter carrier, and insurance sales person Martin Tipsord of Saybrook.

The executive committee will interview the candidates next Tuesday.

ISSUE:Government , Education

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: ISU's Dietz joins Pritzker on Rebuild Illinois victory tour

Date: 7/04/2019

Time: 5 am

Duration: 1 2 hours

Illinois State University President Larry Dietz participated in Governor Pritzker's Rebuild Illinois victory tour on Wednesday, expressing deep gratitude for the billions of dollars earmarked for higher education.

At an Urbana event, Dietz praised Pritzker and both parties in the legislature for a \$2.9 billion capital plan correcting previously neglected maintenance issues on college campuses.

"At Illinois State, Rebuild Illinois allows us to be responsive to the maintenance and construction needs of our students, faculty, and staff at our Fine Arts complex and Milner Library that have gone unaddressed for far too long," said Dietz.

Dietz calls the spending a solid investment in Illinois' future.

"We know from our research that the students who receive their higher education in Illinois tend to stay in Illinois, work and become engaged in Illinois, and pay taxes in Illinois to support those who are coming after them," Dietz said.

Joining Dietz and Pritzker on Wednesday were Southern Illinois University President Kevin Dorsey, University of Illinois President Tim Killeen, and Chicago State University President Zaldwaynaka Z Scott.

ISSUE:Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: Blumenshine seeks 2020 primary rematch with Rep. Brady

Date: 7/08/2019

Time: 5 am

Duration: 1 2 hours

BLOOMINGTON - For the second straight election, State Rep. Dan Brady (R-Bloomington) will again have to fend off a primary challenge, assuming he decides to run again in the 105th District.

Local realtor David Paul Blumenshine took to social media to announce over the weekend that he wants to unseat the nine-term lawmaker in the GOP primary next March.

"Rep. Brady left the last legislative session at the end of May, and he voted yes to increasing our gas tax by double. He also voted to increase 20 other taxes," Blumenshine said.

"It is time for people who have made Springfield a career to leave," Blumenshine also said.

Brady won almost 75 percent of the vote in his 2018 primary against Blumenshine.

According to Brady, the budget includes \$1.2 billion to catch up with the backlog of unpaid bills, and there's a lockbox protecting gas tax dollars to pay only for repairing crumbling infrastructure.

Brady said House Republicans, who have super-minority status in Springfield, succeeded in beating back many Democratic-backed taxes, including for bottled water, beer, wine, and liquor, and rental cars.

"All in all, the taxes we were able to beat back as House Republicans, I think is very, very strong," said Brady.

"It was an overall package that there's some good and there's some bad, but in compromise government, you never get your way," Brady added.

Brady won almost 75 percent of the vote in his 2018 primary race against Blumenshine, then defeated Democrat Ben Webb in the general election.

Brady, who is also a local funeral home director, is the Deputy Republican Leader in the Illinois House.

He expects to make a reelection announcement later this summer or early fall.

The 105th District covers all of Normal, Bloomington's east side, and eastern McLean County, and part of Livingston County, including Fairbury.

ISSUE: Government , Police/ Law, Health

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: County panel backs legal action to recoup costs of opioid epidemic

Date: 7/10/2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 hours

BLOOMINGTON - McLean County government is a step closer to suing drug manufacturers and distributors to compensate taxpayers for opioid epidemic costs.

The County Board's Executive Committee Tuesday night recommended the full board hire a law firm to handle the litigation.

Committee member and retired Judge William Caisley was the only no vote. He worried about a conflict of interest if elected officials voting on the proposal have a financial stake in any of the long list of companies accused of not stopping the flow of the highly-addictive painkillers.

Caisley also doesn't want the county involved in a long-term legal fight, citing decades-old McLean County lawsuits seeking damages for asbestos exposure.

"There still is a file cabinet over in the circuit clerk's office that's filled with those files, and then some," said Caisley.

"I don't think we can be convinced that this is going to be a short-term thing," Caisley added.

Lawyer Melissa Sims says out-of-court settlements are possible as soon as this fall, depending on the outcome of a couple of Ohio cases.

We are going to be asking for actual damages, plus punitive damages. Punitive damages are three times the actual cost. That is what has already been alleged in the litigation," said Sims.

"There are over 2,000 lawsuits currently on file, so there's a myriad of damages, penalties that we will be asking for."

About a third of Illinois counties have sued the various companies, according to Sims. In McLean County, she found 35.5 million opioid doses between January 2012 and October 2017.

"It's not the people who are legitimately going to their Doctor, it's those that are being funneled into the black market that (McLean County Sheriff) Jon Sandage and the state's attorney have to deal with, the ramifications of that, and put a burden on your court system," Sims said.

The county would pay Sims, and the Sanders Phillips Grossman law firm in which she is a partner, 25 percent of damages awarded in a lawsuit.

ISSUE: Education

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: Unit 5 seeks task force feedback before asking voters for tax hike

Date: 7/11/2019

Time: 5 am

Duration: 12 hours

NORMAL - A Unit 5 school board member said Wednesday night the board has a mountain to climb before deciding by year's end whether to seek voters' approval for higher taxes to reduce growing budget deficits.

After Wednesday evening's board meeting, Taunia Leffler said she strongly favors creating a community task force to help gather information about the public's priorities and expectations for the district.

The education fund deficit rose above \$6 million the last fiscal year ending June 30, and is projected to reach about \$20 million in five years as Unit 5 raises teachers' pay and the district contends with only modest gains in taxable land values.

The board decided last fall on a two-year stop-gap measure by selling \$16.5 million in bonds, a borrowing plan costing an extra \$205 a year in property taxes for the owner of a \$177,000 home, according to Unit 5 administrators.

Leffler said something has to give in the form of staff reductions and larger class sizes if the district can't find adequate funding.

She said a task force of community leaders can help determine what the public wants and expects from Unit 5.

"At the end of the day, if our students come out and they're educated, our businesses are going to hire our students. They're going to then buy properties, (and) pay taxes," said Leffler.

"It's a great thing for our community to make sure that these students are educated and ready to help be part of the community, and build our community," Leffler said.

Unit 5 staffers are assessing what the district will receive from the state's new evidence-based funding formula, which is key to determining the size of the tax referendum should the board decide to take the issue to voters.

ISSUE: Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: Safety, parking worries seen as IDOT considers Route 9 bike lanes

Date: 7/12/2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 hours

BLOOMINGTON - Bloomington city leaders have until the end of this month to offer their blessing for the state to add bike lanes on one of the city's busiest roadways.

The Illinois Department of Transportation and the city hosted an open house Thursday at Bloomington City Hall to hear what the public has to say about the project.

Route 9 would lose as many as 250 parking spaces if bike lanes are added. An IDOT representative helped ease Angela Kerr's concerns about reduced parking near Bloomington High School.

"The gentleman explained on this map there's only a few areas where they would have to take parking away, and of that, there's just a subset where they would really need to work with the homeowners," said Kerr.

"So, it looks better than what I was worried that it was going to be," she added.

Kelly Rumley rides her bicycle to-and-from work every day, but would feel unsafe if she uses Route 9 to go downtown. She says Emerson Street, Regency Drive, and Fairway Drive are safer options for cyclists.

"That's a much wider, less heavily-trafficked route, and it's much safer for cyclists," Rumley said.

"Also, if you have kids using (Route 9) to get to the middle school (or) high school, I think it will be only a matter of time before one of them get hit," Rumley warned.

R.J. McCracken countered that adding bike lanes is a great idea.

"Our residents who want to be more mobile on bicycles are going to have better access to the downtown area, and be able to go there without falling through potholes and not having a route to access our community," McCracken said.

IDOT doesn't need city approval to do the work, but the state agency is requesting feedback from residents and city leaders.

ISSUE:

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: EDC Names New CEO

Date: 7/12/2019

Time: 5 am

Duration: 12 hours

BLOOMINGTON-- After 15 months without a permanent CEO, the Bloomington-Normal Economic Development Council has selected Patrick Hoban to lead the organization.



Hoban comes to the Twin-Cities after serving as the economic development manager for the Village of Tinley Park since February 2017. He starts his new position August 1st and takes over for former CEO Kyle Ham who left the EDC in April of 2018.

EDC board chair John Hesse says Hoban's economic development background and ties to the area made him a prime choice.

Hoban served as vice president of business development for the Economic Development Corporation of Decatur and Macon County.

Hesse says Hoban's salary will be in the range of 180 and 200-thousand dollars, which was listed as the starting salary in the job posting.

EDC vice president Mike O'Grady served as the interim CEO for over a year and recently retired in June after seven years with the organization. Hesse says it will be up to Hoban (Ho-bin) and the board to decide if the organization will fill O'Grady's position.

ISSUE: Police/ Fire

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: Blaze tears through Bloomington apartment house

Date: 7/15/2019

Time: 5 am

Duration: 12 hours

**BLOOMINGTON** - A fire caused heavy damage to an apartment house late Sunday night on Bloomington's near east side.

Bloomington Firefighters were called shortly before 11 p.m. to a house with three apartments at 319 E. Locust St., between McLean and Prairie Streets.

Only one of the seven people believed to be living in the building was home at the time. That person escaped unharmed, but a cat died in an upstairs apartment. A pet iguana survived, according to Deputy Fire Chief Eric West.

No firefighters were hurt. They were allowed to take breaks to cool off in the warm and humid air.

West said there was major fire damage upstairs, with smoke and heat damage to the rest of the building.

"They had heavy fire blowing out of the windows on the east side of the building on the second floor," said West.

"They made good progress and got up to the second floor, and made a good hit on it, and got the majority of the fire knocked down before it spread anywhere else," said West.

Firefighters continued to pour water on hot spots long after they extinguished most of the fire.

West would not speculate where the fire started. He said investigators will be looking into the cause.

"They want to talk to the individual that was here, and see what he saw when he came out of his apartment," said West.

"Through the investigation process, they should be able to determine what happened," the deputy chief also said.

ISSUE:

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE:

Date: 7//2019

Time: 5 am

Duration: 1 2 hours

ISSUE: Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: Connect Transit working group gets Normal council backing despite mayoral hopeful's criticism

Date: 7/15/2019

Time: 5 am

Duration: 1 2 hours

NORMAL - The working group studying public transit's future in Bloomington-Normal won the backing of Normal's Town Council in a unanimous vote, but the discussion at Monday night's meeting included criticism of recent Connect Transit board actions.

Addressing the council, mayoral hopeful Marc Tiritilli said the son of Connect Transit trustee Julie Hile should not have been named to the working group because he's too close to someone who's been involved in making bad decisions. Hile's son has a disability

and is dependent on Connect Transit service. Working members and trustees are not paid for their service.

Tiritilli also blasted the decision to hire a professional facilitator to guide the working group at a cost of up to \$53,425. That money could be better spent on giving every full-fare Connect Mobility riders free rides for a year, according to Tiritilli.

Mayor Chris Koos described Hile's son, Dylan Hile-Broad, as a "very outspoken and thoughtful man." Koos said it's unfair to pre-judge the group before it finishes its job.

Town council member Karyn Smith voted for the resolution supporting the working group, but she believes the transit board is moving too quickly on buying large, electric-powered buses. Koos noted the electric buses don't come from local funds.

"There really is no expense for the electric buses. Those are funded completely by a federal grant, so it's a budget-neutral item for Connect Transit," the mayor said.

Council member Smith responded "Well, it maybe a budget-neutral item for Connect Transit, but the tax dollars come out of our pockets whether they're federal dollars that fund those grants or local tax expenditures."

The resolution encourages the working group to come up with common sense solutions to serve transit-dependent riders, while also finding ways to attract potential passengers who have a choice whether to ride the bus.

ISSUE: Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: Panel okays Park Pantry alcohol sales, west side council member opposes license

Date: 7/16/2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 hours

BLOOMINGTON - Despite opposition from residents, the Bloomington Liquor Commission is recommending the city council allow a convenience store owner to sell packaged liquor at his business near Miller Park.

The commission's decision is not the final obstacle for Ajeet Singh's license request. Park Pantry at 906 S. Morris Ave. is in City Council member Jenn Carrillo's ward. She told WJBC she's siding with neighbors, and will vote no at Monday night's council meeting.

Mayor and Liquor Commissioner Tari Renner, who broke a tie in favor of granting the license, does not want the former West Side Food and Beverage to remain vacant.

"From the standpoint of being mayor and liquor commissioner, everything is my fault. So, since everything is my fault, and I have to look at people in the eye," this is just a very, very difficult decision to make," Renner said.

Renner said the city would closely monitor if Singh is being a good neighbor.

"We're putting a lot of faith in you. Frankly, as a mayor, I'm putting a lot of risk in you because there are people here who I've known for years, and I have a great deal of respect for, who live in this neighborhood, and this is a neighborhood that I want to thrive," said Renner.

The commission attached several conditions to the license, including the latest requirement that Park Pantry would not be allowed to sell single servings of less than 24 ounces.

The business would also have to close by 11 p.m, install security cameras and outdoor lighting, plus limit alcohol sales to 50 percent of Park Pantry's revenue.

Singh's lawyer Rich Marvel told the commission Singh shares the same concerns as neighbors.

"If Ajeet is going to invest his dollars to have a convenience store, the absolute worst thing that he can have are drunks in his store. The absolute worst thing he can have is loitering with drinking outside. It will kill his business, and he knows that," said Marvel.

ISSUE: Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: Local Republican head denounces "Jihad Squad" post on State GOP group's social media page

Date: 7//2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 hours

BLOOMINGTON - Illinois Republicans, including the leader of the McLean County Republican Party, are denouncing a now-deleted social media post referring to four Democratic Congresswomen criticized by President Trump as the "Jihad Squad."

Friday night's posting was on the Illinois Republican County Chairmen's Association Facebook page. It showed images of the four lawmakers, all women of color, on a poster that said: "Political jihad is their game," and "if you don't agree with their socialist ideology, you're a racist."

Jihad is a struggle or fight against enemies of Islam.

In a Facebook post, McLean County Republican Chair Connie Beard praised state GOP leaders for quickly condemning the post, which she described as demeaning.

According to Beard, it's the party's policy to allow free and open discussion on social media, yet keep posts civil and respectful.

"It is important to keep the focus on the issues of policy," said Beard on the county GOP's Facebook page.

The president of the GOP County Chairmen's Association, Mark Shaw, said he did not authorize the posting, and he says the organization has a multi-stage approval process for all social media posts. He says the Chairmen's Association is re-evaluating its internal review process to insure future posts represent the "big-tent" nature of the party.

"This unauthorized posting is an unfortunate distraction from the serious debate surrounding the policies advocated by these four socialist members of the United States House of Representatives of which I strongly disagree," said Shaw.

"Republican opposition to their proposed "Green New Deal", elimination of all private health insurance, open borders and anti-Semitic posturing has nothing to do with these representatives' races or religion," Shaw also said.

Illinois Republican Party Chairman Tim Schneider said he strongly condemns evoking race and religion as the basis for political disagreement.

"Bigoted rhetoric greatly distracts from legitimate and important policy debates and further divides our nation," said Schneider.

"My intense disagreement with the socialist policies and anti-semitic language of these four congresswomen has absolutely nothing to do with their race or religion. I urge everyone who also opposes them to keep the rhetoric focused on policy and political ideology," Schneider said.

McLean County Democratic Party Chair Erik Rankin issued a news release Sunday saying the posting was "inappropriate, bigoted, and sickening."

"Our state and our country are better than this. Graphics supporting the President's racist tweets and policies should have no place in our politics. We call on the McLean County Republican Chair to denounce this image," said Rankin in the news release.

ISSUE: Crime , Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: Lawsuit filed in fatal van-motorcycle crash

Date: 7/25/2019

Time: 5 am

Duration: 12 hours

BLOOMINGTON - A wrongful death lawsuit filed in McLean County Court alleges the driver of a van and the van's owner were negligent in the crash last month in Bloomington that killed motorcyclist Corey Cottrell from Normal.

Jose Rodriguez, 27, already faces a possible prison sentence on a criminal charge for allegedly failing to report the June 22 accident at Main Street and MacArthur Avenue.

The lawsuit seeks in excess of \$50,000 in damages. It accuses Rodriguez of running a red light, driving over Cottrell, 39, as he lay on the pavement, then fleeing before first responders arrived.

Authorities said Rodriguez surrendered to Bloomington Police the next day.

The lawsuit also names the van's owner GR Framing Construction Incorporated and German Javier Rodriguez as defendants. The lawsuit claims they should have known Jose Rodriguez did not have a valid driver's license and that he was unfit and unqualified to drive the van.

A judge earlier this month ordered Rodriguez jailed in the criminal case on a \$100,035 cash bond because of a federal immigration warrant. Rodriguez is from Honduras, but has lived with relatives in Bloomington for at least five years, according to his lawyer.

LeRoy attorney Thomas Pliura filed the lawsuit on behalf of Cottrell's former wife, Violetta Hinojosa Cottrell, who is the administrator of the estate and mother of his two daughters.

ISSUE: Crime

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: NPD probe apparently unrelated Sunday night robbery and shooting

Date: 7/29/2019

Time: 5 am

Duration: 12 hours

NORMAL - Normal Police are investigating an armed robbery of a taxi driver and a separate shooting that happened a little more than a half-hour apart Sunday night, but the crimes are apparently not related.

Police said the cab driver suffered minor head injuries after one of two passengers displayed a handgun and demanded money in a parking lot in the 200 block of South Linden Street, across from the Normal Police Department.

The suspects ran away after stealing an undisclosed amount of cash. Police are looking for two black males, but have not released a more detailed description of the suspects.

The hold-up happened a little after 9 p.m., about 30 minutes after shots were fired in northwest Normal, damaging a car.

Police said no one was wounded, but officers said they found three or four bullet holes in a car parked in a lot in the 700 block of South Golfcrest Road in Normal.

Investigators say they found at least one bullet casing from a handgun. There have been no arrests. The shooting happened about 8:30 p.m.

Authorities are asking anyone with information about the robbery or shooting to call Normal Police at 309-454-9535, or McLean County Crime Stoppers at 309-828-1111.

ISSUE: Crime

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: Arena theft defendant pleads guilty, agrees to aid prosecutors

Date: 8/2/2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 hours

BLOOMINGTON - A second person has pleaded guilty and sentenced to probation in a scheme to defraud Bloomington's city government of revenue generated from the city-owned indoor sports arena.

Paul Grazar, 52, pleaded guilty Thursday to a felony charge of conspiracy to commit tax evasion for under-reporting to the state food and beverage sales at the arena between 2013 and 2016.

Grazar agreed to testify against the remaining defendants, including John Butler, 59, President of Central Illinois Arena Management. CIAM used to run the venue, now called Grossinger Motors Arena.

A grand jury indicted Butler two years ago for allegedly orchestrating the plot to steal about \$1.1 million.

Grazar might also testify against another top CIAM executive, Bart Rogers, 49.

Co-defendant Jay Laesch, 39, pleaded guilty last November, and like Grazar was sentenced to 30-months probation.

Grazar and Laesch won't pay restitution because prosecutors say the pair didn't benefit financially from their crimes.

It's not clear whether prosecutors will re-file charges against a fifth defendant, Kelly Klein, 58. A judge dismissed charges against her in May.

Butler is scheduled to appear for a two-day hearing on motions to suppress evidence August 27 and 28. A pre-trial hearing for Rogers is set for October 2.

ISSUE: Government , Business

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: Residents ponder the future with or without the State Farm building

Date: 8/3/2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 hours

**BLOOMINGTON** - The demolition of State Farm's former Downtown Bloomington headquarters would signal a loss of faith in the city, according to one of the participants in a listening and strategy session conducted Friday evening at City Hall.

City Council member Jenn Carrillo organized the meeting, attended by about 30 people. The high-rise that dominates the downtown skyline is in Carrillo's ward.

Carrillo played the role of facilitator, asking what she described as a devil's advocate-type question of participants who don't want city tax dollars spent to save the building.

"How do we generate interest and investment in our downtown if we've allowed arguably the most significant structure downtown to come down?"

"We were told that very same song-and-dance with BCPA, with the Coliseum," participant Gary Lambert responded.

Allen Brokken said if the goal is to attract a tech company downtown, perhaps tied to Rivian Automotive, it might be best to offer a clear space instead of an old building,

Brokken asked, "What does it do to downtown business when a modern building that has amenities, and is configured, and set up to be the next 100 years of Bloomington's history, not the last 100 years of Bloomington's history?"

Ryan Abbott said he worked in maintenance at the building for 13 years, and believes this is a seize-the-moment opportunity for the downtown building that's in the best condition.

"We don't have buildings that are in that good of shape that are maintained by a Fortune 500 company anywhere downtown," said Abbott.



"So it really doesn't make any sense to me to tear the best building down, that you have any chance of doing anything with and revitalizing this downtown," Abbott also said.

Local historian Greg Koos believes the city can use existing ordinances to delay the demolition, giving those wishing to preserve the building more time to come up with other options.

Jeanne Howard wants to see a "bustling" downtown like Champaign that attracts young people, but losing the State Farm building suggests Bloomington's downtown does not have much of a future.

"I feel like we're well on our way to becoming a hallowed-out, empty, meaningless community where there's nothing special about us," said Howard.

"I think one small piece of the answer is saving something that is special right now that's in wonderful shape that makes us distinctive and different," Howard added.

Carrillo is planning another session on Wednesday, to be held at 6 p.m. at the McLean County Museum of History.

ISSUE: Crime

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: Two men picked up on weapons charges

Date: 8/4/2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 hours

NORMAL - After reports of an armed subject on Friday in Normal, Normal Police Chief Rick Bleichner says two men are being held in the McLean County Jail on weapon charges.

NPD responded to the 1300 block of W. Hovey Ave., where Officers arrested Patrick McLellan, 18, of Normal, and Timothy King, 20, of Champaign. Officers recovered a sawed-off shotgun with a defaced serial number during the arrest.

McLellan is charged with Unlawful Use of Weapon, Possession of a Firearm, No FOID Card and Aggravated Assault with a weapon.

King is charged with unlawful use of a weapon and possession of a firearm.

McLellan and King are being held in the McLean County Jail. No bond information is available.

ISSUE: Crime

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: Armed robbery on ISU Campus

Date: 8/5/2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 hours

An armed robbery took place Sunday morning on Illinois State University's campus.

The victim was in his vehicle at the intersection of University and Beaufort streets when three suspects approached the vehicle and asked for a ride.

The victim consented, but once in the car the suspects pulled a stun gun and demanded the victim drive to an ATM to make several withdrawals.

An undisclosed amount of cash was stolen, and then the suspects made the victim enter a south side campus building while they escaped the area on foot.

No other information has been released about the incident, and the NPD continue to investigate.

Anyone with any information is asked to contact the Normal Police Department.

ISSUE:Crime

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: Ex-Unit 5 first-grade teacher remains jailed on child molestation charges

Date: 8/5/2019

Time: 5 am

Duration: 12 hours

NORMAL - A former first grade teacher at Unit 5's Glenn Elementary School remained jailed Monday morning for allegedly molesting two students, while Normal Police investigate whether there are other victims.

Jonathon Hovey, 47, of Forsyth, has to post \$10,035 cash to be released on bond after being charged with two counts of predatory criminal sexual assault and four counts of aggravated criminal sexual abuse.

If Hovey is let go, he can not have contact with the two victims, or anyone younger than 18, except his own daughter. His next court appearance is August 16.

McLean County prosecutors told a judge Saturday that a child's mother emailed Unit 5 in April claiming her daughter disclosed she had been abused.

The girl told authorities inappropriate touching happened almost every day, or more than 50 times.

Police then reopened a 2005 case involving a first grader who made similar claims against Hovey. He was not charged at the time.

Prosecutors said the two alleged victims gave similar accounts of the abuse, including how Hovey positioned his desk so that other students in the class could not see what was happening.

Authorities are asking anyone who believe they may have had inappropriate contact with Hovey to call Normal Police Det. Kendra DeRosa at 309-454-9624. Det. DeRosa can also be reached at [kderosa@normal.org](mailto:kderosa@normal.org).

Meantime, Unit 5 spokesperson Dayna Brown issued a statement over the weekend, saying administrators immediately contacted Normal Police and placed Hovey on paid administrative leave pending the outcome of the investigation. Hovey has not been allowed back in the school since then, according to Brown.

Brown added Hovey underwent a thorough background check like all other district employees.

Here is Unit 5's statement:

“When district officials first learned of the allegations in April 2019, administrators immediately contacted the Normal Police Department and the Department of Children and Family Services.

Mr. Hovey was immediately placed on paid administrative leave pending the outcome of the investigation. He has not been allowed back to the school since. Mr. Hovey has been employed by Unit 5 for 18 years at Glenn Elementary School.

As is a requirement for all employees, he underwent a thorough background check. The district is working closely with authorities to cooperate in the investigation of this case. We understand that these allegations are very disturbing and Unit 5 will support our families. Parents should contact the principal if they have any school-related questions.”

ISSUE: Politics, Crime

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: Davis: Focusing only on guns won't solve mass shootings

Date: 8/5/2019

Time: 5 am

Duration: 12 hours

BLOOMINGTON - After mass shootings over the weekend in Texas and Ohio, a Central Illinois lawmaker said focusing only on firearms won't solve the problem.

Congressman Rodney Davis spoke with WJBC's Scott Miller and said a lot more needs to be done at the federal level, but the issue is not just guns.

"If you only want to focus on the firearm side of the equation, then we're not going to actually solve the problems that get us to the point where we are in this country. These two shootings, in one the person said he didn't like immigrants, that's tragic. How do you not like any human being. In the Dayton shooting it was reported that this person had a fascination with killing," said Davis.

Davis added that federally there should be a fusion center so that departments can better work together to prevent shootings. He said more money needs to be devoted so local school districts can have mental health professionals.

"We also need to do more to change the red flag laws so that we know at the federal level if someone is a threat to themselves those firearms can be taken away so that they aren't a threat anymore," Davis said.

The shootings in El Paso and Dayton killed over 30 people.

ISSUE: Politics

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: New bill said to streamline Medicaid

Date: 8/5/2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 hours

SPRINGFIELD - Gov. JB Pritzker Monday signed a bill touted as a streamlining of Medicaid.

"We are reforming and improving access to Medicaid, the largest single source of insurance in our state," covering about three million people, the governor said at a bill-signing ceremony in Chicago. "This legislation launches one of the most aggressive cross-agency efforts in Illinois history to expand healthcare access and to eliminate the multi-year Medicaid backlog once and for all."

That backlog was as high as 120,000 applications. The Pritzker administration is taking credit for cutting that down to 95,000.

The state's Department of Human Services is to set up a claims clearinghouse and settle disputes between providers and managed care organizations.

ISSUE: Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: Political sparks rekindled from heated 2018 election fight

Date: 8/7/2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 hours

BLOOMINGTON - Old wounds have yet to be healed after a contentious local election last year.

Democrats on the McLean County Board went after Republican County Clerk Kathy Michael at Wednesday's Finance Committee meeting, claiming she's giving the board incomplete information about a request for more taxpayer dollars to fund next year's election.

Tempers flared after committee member Carlo Robustelli wanted more details about Michael's request for \$300,000 to \$400,000 to equip election judges with iPads.

Democrats also questioned how Michael came up with a prediction for about 85 percent voter turnout next November.

"We are pretty far into the process now, and you're not giving us any information," said Democratic board member Shayna Watchinski.

"I don't know if you're withholding that information because you're being intellectually dishonest," Watchinski said.

Finance Committee Chair Jim Soeldner cut off the testy exchange, recommending Watchinski go to Michael's office to obtain the information.

Watchinski responded, "The taxpayers of McLean County aren't interested if her and I are having coffee together or not."

Michael said she won't let critics get away with accusations made a year ago during a combative campaign in which Michael won reelection over Democratic challenger Nikita Richards.

"To try to portray this county as having voter suppression or racial leanings, it's appalling and needs to come to an end," said Michael.

Democrats also claimed Michael disenfranchised Illinois State University students by allowing them to wait in long lines to vote.

Republican Finance Committee member Chuck Erickson commended Michael for working with ISU to shorten the wait. He said it's also a problem in places like Chicago.

"To come in here and try to take it out on this county clerk, I think is a little bit over the board," Erickson said.

ISSUE: Community, Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: Harmony Park opens on city's east side

Date: 8//2019

Time: 5 am

Duration: 12 hours

BLOOMINGTON - A community-wide effort has led to the opening of the first playground in the Twin-Cities where kids with and without disabilities can play together.

Harmony Park officially opened Thursday located at 1002 South Hershey Road in Bloomington. The playground replaced aging equipment at Rollingbrook Park, which was chosen for its size, access to Constitution Trail, and easy road access.

The park features equipment for children of all abilities. Things like the rock-and-raft, a boat like structure, meant for children in wheel chairs, and the merry-go-all, which has a high back molded seat for kids with lower muscle tone.

“It’s truly incredible to see all of these kids playing together,” said Jennifer Brown, a co-chair of the project. “I saw a little girl pushing her brother in a wheel chair up one of the ramps. That’s really what we wanted this park to be, an inclusive space,” said Brown.

“I think the more you bring kids together that are different than each other, you start to break down that fear of the other,” said project co-chair Corin Chapman, who has a five-year old son with a genetic disorder limiting his mobility. “Ultimately, we hope this playground will help build a much better community that understands each other and cares about one another.”

City Manager Tim Gleason said personally, this project hit home.

“I’ve got a seven-year old grandson that my daughter and son-in-law will always be his caregiver because he has a rare syndrome called Pitt-Hopkins. Having places like this in a community are critical for families with children that are special, even more special,” he said.

Over \$250,000 was raised to build the park thanks to local Kiwanis and Rotary clubs, State Farm, the city, and private donations.

ISSUE: Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: ICE agents arrest Bloomington hit-and-run suspect

Date: 8/12/2019

Time: 5 am

Duration: 12 hours

BLOOMINGTON - Federal authorities are a step closer to deporting an undocumented immigrant from Honduras, who's charged with the June hit-and-run death of a motorcyclist in Bloomington.

WJBC News has confirmed that federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents were at the McLean County Jail Saturday to arrest Jose Rodriguez, 27, when he was released on a \$10,035 cash bond.

His arrest came two days after McLean County Judge Scott Drazewski reduced bail to the original amount. Another judge earlier decided to raise bond by ten-fold to \$1 million or \$100,035 cash because of the federal immigration warrant.

Drazewski delayed the bond reduction until Saturday to give ICE agents a required 48 hour notice.

Now that ICE has taken Rodriguez into custody, the status of his criminal case is uncertain. He's accused of driving a van without a license and running a red light at Main and MacArthur June 22, striking a motorcycle and killing its driver, Corey Cottrell, 39, of Normal. Rodriguez allegedly ran from the scene and surrendered the next day at the Bloomington Police Department.

Cottrell's estate has also filed a separate civil lawsuit in McLean County Court on behalf of his daughters. The lawsuit seeks more than \$50,000 in damages from Rodriguez and his employer.

ISSUE: Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: Schaumburg girl has better life thanks to medical marijuana

Date: 8/12/2019

Time: 5 am

Duration: 12 hours

SPRINGFIELD - A Schaumburg girl - hit with cancer and epilepsy before turning five - is now a middle schooler with a future, thanks to medical marijuana.

Her mother, Maureen Surin, told a crowd in a Springfield hospital auditorium Monday as Gov. JB Pritzker signed legislation making the program permanent and adding some conditions -- including chronic pain -- to the approved list.

"We tried many neuro-medicines," said Surin. "After a concussion and brain surgery two years ago, we said we had to take a different path. This little girl is trying to grow, and her poor body can't grow if it's drugged up and she can't think or talk or walk or speak or write."

State Sen. Laura Fine (D-Glenview) told how a car crash changed her husband's life because he lost an arm - then how medical marijuana changed his life again, because opioids prescribed for pain took him out of family activities.

ISSUE: Government , Education

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: Glenn parent: Unit 5 administrators "passing the buck" in Hovey sex abuse case

Date: 8/14/2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 hours

NORMAL - Unit 5 Superintendent Mark Daniel said Wednesday night he and other school administrators are meeting in small groups with concerned parents following the arrest of Glenn Elementary School first grade teacher Jonathon Hovey on charges he molested two of his students.

The mother of a child, who was in Hovey's class last school year, told the school board administrators kept parents in the dark about the charges.

Claire Hedden says her child is not one of the alleged victims. She said she was volunteering in the classroom when Glenn Principal Cari Oester escorted Hovey from the room on a Monday morning in April.

"No one spoke to me in that moment about his leaving. Parents were not communicated to about his absence for weeks until a letter from Principal Oester stated it was for personal reasons," Hedden said.

Parents didn't learn about the details for four more months when there were news reports about Hovey's arrest.

Hedden says administrators seem to be "passing the buck." Administrators pointed out they were not working for Unit 5 when the first sexual abuse allegations were made in 2005. No charges were filed back then, and Hovey resumed his teaching career that came to a halt when a child came forward in April saying Hovey molested her in 2017.

Hedden wants to know how complaints are passed on when there's a change in school administration.

"These concerns apply to every school in Unit 5, every employee of Unit 5, and every child and family in the district. We need communication, clarity, and policy," Hedden said.

She wonders why authorities have not contacted parents of all kids who were in Hovey's class.



"Why has there not been a public or parental meeting with Unit 5, Normal Police Department, and the (Illinois) Department of Children and Family Services?"

Unit 5 placed Hovey on paid administrative leave in April. He is expected to appear for a McLean County Court hearing on Friday.

ISSUE: Crime

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: Jury deliberates in former arena director's theft trial

Date: 8/15/2019

Time: 5 am

Duration: 12 hours

BLOOMINGTON - A judge has ordered jurors to resume their deliberations Friday morning in the trial of a former Downtown Bloomington arena director accused of stealing government funds.

Regardless of the trial's outcome, Curtis Webb faces a separate theft charge in Minnesota, where he was an arena director before taking the job in the Twin-Cities.

Jurors started their deliberations late Thursday morning, but they were not able to reach a verdict on a charge of theft of government property between \$500 and \$10,000.

Webb is accused of using a debit card funded by Bloomington's city government for personal expenses. Defense lawyer Shaun Cusack argued Webb did not intend to permanently deprive his employer of the funds because he continually paid back the money.

Webb faces three to seven years in prison, but he could also be sentenced to probation if he's found guilty.

VenuWorks, which manages the arena for the city, fired Webb in 2016.

Monday, Beltrami County Attorney David Hanson announced he had charged Webb with a single count of theft by swindle.

Webb allegedly made requests for tens of thousands of dollars in fraudulent expense reimbursements when he was arena director in Bemidji, Minnesota from 2013 until the time he left for Bloomington.

Hanson's news release said the Minnesota State Auditor's office found Webb was involved in more than \$100,000 worth of improper or questionable transactions.

ISSUE:Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: Crabill's fashion statement reveals political divide

Date: 8/19/2019

Time: 5 am

Duration: 12 hours

BLOOMINGTON-- West side Bloomington resident Surena Fish didn't expect to speak at Monday night's city council meeting, but she said she was so offended by the shirt Council member Jeff Crabill was wearing that she had to speak out.

Crabill's shirt read, "Keep the immigrants, deport the racists."

"To me, it is very inflammatory," said Fish.

"I don't think he should be allowed to sit at the council chamber desk wearing it."

Fish attends many council meetings, and serves on the high-profile Public Safety and Community Relations Commission.

Frequent city council critic Gary Lambert argued those who accuse others of racism are generally racist themselves.

"I don't know Mr. Crabill's intent was with his shirt. If it was to cause some controversy, congratulations. You succeeded," Lambert said.

"I don't know if this council has a code regarding decorum. If you don't, I would suggest that you adopt one," Lambert also said.

Crabill, who represents Ward 8 on the southeast side, was asked whether he was trying to make a statement. He said he was "just wearing a shirt."

Council member Jenn Carrillo praised Crabill on her Facebook page, saying he's a "real life role model."

ISSUE:Crime

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: Gunfire reported near Downtown Bloomington

Date: 8/20/2019

Time: 5 am

Duration: 12 hours

BLOOMINGTON - Bloomington Police are investigating an shooting early Tuesday morning in which they said multiple shots were fired on the near west side.

Police were called about 1 a.m. to Front and Lee streets where investigators found spent shell casings. No one was wounded, and there have been no arrests.

Anyone with information is asked to call Bloomington Police at 309-820-8888 or McLean County Crime Stoppers at 309-828-1111.

ISSUE:Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: Police chief finalists Donath and Colbrook meet the public

Date: 8/20/2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 hours

BLOOMINGTON - The two finalists vying to become Bloomington's next police chief said Tuesday night they're familiar with virtually every aspect of policing after decades of experience.

Assistant Bloomington Police Chief Dan Donath and the Police Chief of Parkland College in Champaign, William Colbrook, participated in a meet-and-greet event at the city's Center for the Performing Arts, attracting representatives from various community groups, including the local chapter of Black Lives Matter.

Donath has held many positions at BPD, including chief of operations and leading the office of professional standards.

Donath said he's a good listener and has an open mind.

"Everybody has their own perspective to things. You and I can watch the same event, but have a different opinion about it because we have a different perspective about it," said Donath.

"The more you learn to appreciate and respect other peoples' perspectives and understand them, the more successful you are at resolving situations," he added.

Colbrook believes building relationships is a key to fighting crime.

"Just like we say in emergency management, you don't want to wait until a disaster to get to know your emergency management partner. We need to establish relationships ahead of time," said Colbrook.

"We need to trust one another through those frequent communications and those frequent and critical dialogues."

Colbrook's State Police resume includes rising to the rank of Captain, working as the department's internal auditor and assistant bureau chief for human resources, and serving as chief equal employment opportunity officer.

Donath said he wants to start a wellness program because it's a stressful time to be an officer.

"I don't mean just working out and eating right. I mean mental wellness and I mean financial wellness because those are important too," said Donath.

City Manager Tim Gleason said he will choose the new chief early next week.

ISSUE: Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: Lacking hiring powers, Renner trusts Gleason to pick police chief

Date: 8/22/2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 hours

BLOOMINGTON - Bloomington Mayor Tari Renner is singing the praises of City Manager Tim Gleason, who faces the task in the coming days of hiring Bloomington's next police chief.

Renner believes either of the finalists, Assistant Bloomington Police Chief Dan Donath and Parkland College Chief and retired State Police Captain William Colbrook, would be a solid pick.

Bloomington's city manager-form of government works fine, according to Renner, even though elected leaders don't have much of a say in key hirings.

"Tim Gleason is a marvelous city manager," said Renner.

"I certainly trust him. I trust his judgment. Things will work well, and you will make stuff happen if you've got a good city manager," the mayor said.

Under the current system, Bloomington's mayor and council members appoint only the city manager and city clerk. The city manager is responsible for other hirings, but Renner says Gleason has kept elected leaders informed about the status of the chief's selection process.

"Certainly as it happens, and the process unfolds, the city manager keeps us informed about what's going on; the candidate pool, etc., at each point," Renner said.

"Obviously, you're not going to go too far astray from your nine council members, plus mayor, your 10 bosses."

Before becoming a city manager, Gleason spent 21 years with Pekin Police, where he rose to the rank of Lieutenant.

Gleason intends to make his choice for police chief early next week.

ISSUE:Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: Bloomington Council to consider city manager's pay raise after glowing performance review

Date: 8/22/2019

Time: 5 am

Duration: 12 hours

BLOOMINGTON - Bloomington City Council members will vote Monday night whether to give City Manager Tim Gleason a pay raise after he received rave reviews for his first year running the city government.

Mayor Tari Renner is recommending Gleason receive a 3.5% pay increase, retroactive to July 23, which would boost Gleason's annual salary to \$191,475. Gleason would also get an extra week of vacation.

A report to the council reveals Gleason achieved the highest possible ranking, as his performance exceeded expectations.

Gleason's first yearly performance review comes as he makes one of his most important decisions so far. He's choosing between two finalists vying to become the city's next police chief.

Gleason is expected to name Assistant Bloomington Police Chief Dan Donath (DOE-nith) or Parkland College Chief and retired State Police Captain William Colbrook to the post early next week.

ISSUE:Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: Dealmaker gets to work at Bloomington-Normal EDC

Date: 8/23/2019

Time: 5 am

Duration: 12 hours

BLOOMINGTON - The newly-installed head of the Bloomington-Normal Economic Development Council says he's a problem solver.

A perfect day for new President and Chief Executive Officer Patrick Hoban is to show off the Twin Cities for developers he knows from the Chicago area.

"At the end of the day, I'm here to do deals," said Hoban.

"I'm here to match up developers with available land, available buildings in Downtown Bloomington. There's a lot of opportunity in this town. We have to bring people in," Hoban said.

Community leaders officially welcomed Hoban Thursday evening at a Bloomington Country Club reception.

He wants to work with existing local businesses to clear barriers preventing them from expansion.

Hoban leads the EDC as it faces scrutiny from elected officials. They want the organization to become more transparent about it spends taxpayer subsidies.

Hoban said he can provide them with plenty of data, even if specifics about potential deals have to remain confidential.

"We're going to utilize the best practices that I learned at Notre Dame with my business and analytics. We're going to be tracking every activity that we do, whether it's a project or interactions with realtors and developers," said Hoban.

"We won't always say what the business is, but we'll always give the industry, how many jobs are on the line, and what the investment is going to be," he added.

Hoban ran economic development efforts in south suburban Tinley Park, and also worked in Decatur.

His annual EDC salary will be about \$190,000.

ISSUE:Education

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE:ISU Picks Contractor

Date: 8/23/2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 hours

NORMAL-- Gilbane Development Company has been awarded a 100-million dollar project to build new student housing at Illinois State University.

The Rhode Island-based company was awarded the project, according to a procurement document released Friday.

ISU announced the project will be built on the southwest corner of campus, the land formerly occupied by the Atkin-Colby and Hamilton-Whitten residence halls. ISU says the development would house approximately 12-hundred students and is expected to open in fall 2021.

The award announcement says the project is estimated at 100-million dollars. ISU says "at this time, the project has not been fully developed and an accurate estimate of cost is not available."

The university and Gilbane will now enter negotiations.

You can find more on this story on our website at [WJBC.com](http://WJBC.com).

ISSUE:Crime

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: Charges filed in weekend stabbing

Date: 8/25/2019

Time: 5 am

Duration: 12 hours

BLOOMINGTON - A man remained jailed Sunday night for allegedly stabbing another man in the neck near Downtown Bloomington.

A judge ordered Elbert Hawkins, 50, to remain in the McLean County Jail unless he comes up with a \$10,035 cash bond.

Prosecutors told the judge Bloomington Police found the victim on the ground early Saturday at 308 E. Jefferson St.

He reportedly identified Hawkins as the man who stabbed him. Hawkins allegedly confessed to the stabbing, saying he and the other man were involved in a fight. A witness also reported seeing Hawkins with a knife.

The victim was taken to a local hospital. His condition is not known.

Hawkins is charged with aggravated battery, which is a felony. Hawkins is not allowed to have contact with the victim if he's released on bond.

ISSUE:Crime

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: Young bike rider hospitalized after west side crash

Date: 9/2/2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 hours

BLOOMINGTON- A child was badly hurt when the bicycle he was riding collided with a car Monday evening on Bloomington's west side.

The accident happened a little after 7 p.m. at Allin Street and Oakland Avenue.

Cayce Hodgson was sitting on her front porch with family and saw what happened.

"Cars are going by, kids are just jumping and riding their bikes through the road, and I keep telling them, 'stop, stop, stop!'"

This one kid just kept going, and I said, 'stop.'" The lady was coming, and bam, he ran right into her," said Hodgson.

"It was not the lady's fault. He never even stopped. He went flying up in the air, and he came down.

Hodgson and her son-in-law went to check on the boy, while her daughter and granddaughter tried to calm down the driver and passenger in the car.

"He was very badly hurt, but my son-in-law Willilam did a pulse on his neck. I put my hand on his chest, and then he gasped for air, then he started breathing," said Hodgson.

"He had tears in his eyes, and I kept telling him, 'it's going to be okay, baby. It's going to be okay.'"

An ambulance took the boy to Advocate BroMenn Medical Center, and he was later transported by helicopter to a Peoria hospital. His condition is not unavailable.

A Bloomington Police accident reconstruction specialist was on the scene investigating the crash.

Police said the driver of the car cooperated with investigators.

ISSUE:Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: Council member, local GOP critical of tax rebate for Uptown business

Date: 9/3/2019

Time: 5 am

Duration: 12 hours

NORMAL-- Tuesday night's meeting of the Normal Town Council may wind up again showing political differences evident since April's election.



The trigger this time is a proposal to rebate up to 150-thousand dollars in sales and food and beverage taxes over 10 years to aid the Fiala brothers, who want to open a brewpub and restaurant in Uptown Normal.

Also on the council's agenda is a presentation about the benefit of tax increment financing as an economic development tool, and the overall financial impact Uptown renewal has had on the community.

On its Facebook page, the McLean County Republican party criticized the rebate proposal. "This is not capitalism. This is the government picking winners and losers in the local economy," the GOP said in its Facebook posting.

The leading vote-getter in the last election, council member Stan Nord, wants to know how the rebate benefits taxpayers.

"A restaurant and bar are not economic engine generators," said Nord.

"We only have so much money. We need to be focusing on bringing economic engine generators. By opening a new restaurant or a bar in our community, the community can only support so many meals to be consumed in any day, week, or month," he said.

Nord remains skeptical about claims that Uptown is a success.

"If that's true, and it is so successful, then taxpayers should not be needing to subsidize businesses going in there," said Nord.

"Just the business alone, the profit potential alone should be able to draw business in," He added.

According to Nord, the council is kept in the dark about the rebate and other issues until the Thursday before council meetings.

Nord said he has yet to see a written report from the town's consultant about TIF districts ahead of Tuesday night's council meeting, so he doesn't have time to review the data and ask questions.

Tuesday council meeting is at 7 p.m. in Uptown Station.

ISSUE: Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: Normal Council hears from key Uptown backers, okays tax rebates for new brewpub

Date: 9/3/2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 hours

NORMAL - The Normal Town Council's use of tax breaks to generate Uptown development won the applause of some community leaders who addressed the council Tuesday night.

Their presentations came before the council voted five-to-two to rebate up to \$150,000 in sales and food and beverage taxes to the owners of a brewpub and restaurant at 127 E. Beaufort St.

Eight of the ten speakers praised the council, including Illinois State University Provost Jan Murphy, who said Uptown helps recruit high-quality faculty and top-notch students.

"We hear time and time again from students, from prospective students and their families, about the many attributes of Uptown Normal," said Murphy.

Other speakers singing the praises of Uptown development were retired Town Council member Cheryl Gaines, Planning Commissioner and local labor leader Mike Matejka, Planning Commissioner and former Council candidate Dave Shields, and Medici General Manager Joe Slane.

Former town council candidate Karl Sila was one of two speakers critical of Uptown tax breaks, raising the ire of Mayor Chris Koos.

"If the council believes that Uptown is such a failure that we won't be able to get anybody in there for the next five years, and the only way to do that is to bribe them, by all means vote yes," said Sila.

"Otherwise, we should stop giving taxpayer money away to pick the winners and the losers," Sila said.

Mayor Koos responded, "I do take personal offense, Mr. Sila, that you refer to our actions as a bribe. That's pretty strong language."

Council members Stan Nord and Karyn Smith voted against the redevelopment agreement, which provides tax incentives to help Ryan and Steven Fiala remodel the old Bill's Key and Lock. That's next door to D.P Dough, also owned by the Fiala's.

ISSUE: Agribusiness

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: Mixed results at this stage for Illinois crops

Date: 9/4/2019

Time: 5 am

Duration: 12 hours

SPRINGFIELD - Illinois' cash crops could be of concern to some, as a relatively large percentage of corn and soybeans are rated poor-to-very-poor. That's 19 percent for corn and 17 percent for soybeans.

Mark Schleusener, state statistician for the USDA in Illinois, says it definitely speaks to a mixed result for 2019, with some very bad pockets -- along with some good ones.

Corn is beginning to mature, with 46 percent denting and 82 percent in the dough stage. Soybeans are almost done blooming and are 84 percent setting pods.

ISSUE: Education, Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: Lyons: Illinois has put student-athletes in bad spot

Date: 9/4/2019

Time: 5 am

Duration: 12 hours

NORMAL - Illinois State University Athletic Director Larry Lyons is making sure student-athletes are prepared for new laws in the state that include sports betting and recreational marijuana.

Lyons told WJBC's Scott Miller he met with all ISU student-athletes before the school year to address both areas. Lyons said he's concerned about sports gambling and how it could impact college athletics.

"The state has put athletes in a bad spot quite frankly. They're now all targets of potential gamblers who want inside information on fellow student-athletes. That's just a really bad spot to put an 18 or 20-year old kid."

Sportsbooks in the state are still not up and running. The Illinois Gaming Board is working on rules and regulations for the expansion. It recently opened a month-long public comment period seeking input from the sports-wagering industry.

Lyons also spoke to athletes about recreational cannabis.

"One of the things I reminded them is the legality of it. Weed is still against NCAA rules, and it's not legal federally. ISU receives federal funds, so that means it's illegal anywhere on campus, I don't think a lot of them knew that."

The recreational marijuana law goes into effect Jan. 1.

ISSUE: Crime

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: ISU PD: Social media contacts lead to alleged dorm room rape

Date: 9/4/2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 hours

NORMAL - A female student at Illinois State University claims another student sexual assaulted her in his dorm room, according to a crime advisory sent out by the school's police department.

ISU Police said the alleged assault happened about 11:30 p.m. Tuesday in Wilkins Hall after the suspect persuaded the young woman to come to his room.

Until then, police said the two had known each other only through social media, but he remained persistent until she finally agreed to meet him in person.

Police are not releasing other information, but they said they're actively investigating the case.

ISSUE: Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: City Council to consider large workers' comp settlement for retired firefighter

Date: 9/6/2019

Time: 5 am

Duration: 12 hours

BLOOMINGTON - The City of Bloomington would pay a retired firefighter almost \$129,000 to resolve a workers' compensation claim, if the city council approves the settlement Monday night.

The staff's report to the council said firefighter John Meckley re-aggravated a lower back injury when he moved a patient weighing more than 350 pounds using a Mega Mover tarp.

According to staff, an arbitrator indicated the amount of money he would award Meckley ranged from the settlement amount of \$128,689.75 to as high as \$165,458.25.

Meckley retired almost a year ago after 22 years of service, according to the fire department's Facebook page.

The money would be paid to Meckley from the city government's escrow account.

ISSUE: Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: Council to vote Monday night on creating cannabis task force

Date: 9/8/2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 1 2 hours

BLOOMINGTON - The Bloomington City Council will decide Monday night whether to form a committee that would come up with ways the city can implement the state's new law legalizing recreational use of marijuana.

The 10 member Cannabis Review and Implementation Task Force Committee would be chaired by City Council member Jenn Carrillo, who brought up the idea last month.

Carrillo said at the time she envisions Bloomington becoming a cannabis-pervasive community taking advantage of the new law's economic benefits.

The task force would consider how to tax marijuana sales and whether to create spot zoning creating specific areas where marijuana could be legally sold and consumed.

The task force would be on a fast-track, submitting a written report with initial findings and recommendations October 21. Illinois' new cannabis law takes effect January 1.

Council member Jamie Mathy said last month the task force would have to work fast because a local entrepreneur had already approached him about opening a marijuana dispensary.

The mayor, with city council approval, would appoint panel members. They would include a pair of council members, two law enforcement officers, two business owners, and three community group representatives. The business owners on the committee could include entrepreneurs wanting to sell marijuana.

ISSUE:Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: Carrillo wins approval for cannabis task force, though council diminishes her role

Date: 9/10/2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 1 2 hours

BLOOMINGTON - Bloomington City Council member Jenn Carrillo will probably not lead a task force guiding the city's decisions how to implement the state's new law legalizing recreational marijuana use, even though forming the task force was her idea.

The council voted 6-3 Monday night to create the cannabis task force, but members backed amendments not to name who will chair the panel. Council member Kimberly Bray said Carrillo might not be an impartial leader.

"With all due respect, council member Carrillo, you've sat before this body and told us that you're very interested in developing a tourism for cannabis here in Bloomington. I just question whether you have the kind of neutrality that a chair for this kind of role would have," said Bray.

Carrillo suggested she chair the task force because she didn't want to impose a heavy workload on others.

Members Donna Boelen and Mboka Mwilambwe also voted no.

Boelen succeeded in keeping off the task force entrepreneurs wanting to open dispensaries or other marijuana-related businesses because she said that would be a conflict of interest.

Mwilambwe argued task forces created in recent years studying downtown redevelopment and budget priorities were cumbersome and created too many decision points.

The council is giving the cannabis task force a three-month lifespan. An initial report is due October 21.

"I think our role here is to engage everyday people to truly be a part of the process," said Carrillo.

"I'm not scared to give power to our residents," she added.

Mayor Tari Renner will pick task force members, with council approval. He said he'll leave it up to the task force to choose the chair.

ISSUE: Crime

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: Sex Crime reported at Hancock Stadium

Date: 9/10/2019

Time: 5 am

Duration: 12 hours

Illinois State University Police are investigating the third sex crime on campus in less than a week. The latest incident happened at Hancock Stadium during Saturday evening's ISU football game.

ISU Police Chief Aaron Woodruff says a woman, who is not an ISU student, said a man forcibly kissed her and groped her in the stands around 8 o'clock Saturday night. Another person reported the abuse to Hancock security staff about 8:50 p.m.

Woodruff says investigators are reviewing surveillance video and they have not made an arrest.

Police are also investigating a reported sexual assault that happened early Friday morning at Watterson Towers, and an alleged rape that occurred late last Tuesday night at Wilkins Hall.

Woodruff says there's no connection to the three sex crimes, other than they happened on campus so early in the school year.

ISSUE: Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: Democratic Party leader hopes to unseat Rep. Kinzinger

Date: 9//2019

Time: 5 am

Duration: 12 hours

LA SALLE - A high-profile lawmaker with McLean County roots is facing a re-election challenge.

LaSalle County Democratic Party Chair Dani Brzozowski announced Tuesday night she's a candidate for the 16th District Congressional seat held by five-term Republican U.S. Rep. Adam Kinzinger (R-Channahon).

The 16th District covers all of Livingston County, and part of Ford County.

"When I decided to run for Congress, which is the thing we're doing now, I did it with the knowledge that some of my own experiences in fighting on behalf of Democratic values for the LaSalle County party were going to really apply to the entire 16th Congressional District," she said.

Brzozowski didn't mention Kinzinger's name, but she said people in the district have been ignored, undervalued, and disenfranchised since Kinzinger took office.

Brzozowski said she's fighting for social, economic, environmental, and political justice.

"What we care about is people being treated like people. We are looking for equality, regardless of where you came from or how you got here, regardless of your gender or sexual identity, regardless of any choices that you're ever made in your life. I'm on your side, Brzozowski said.

Kinzinger was raised in Bloomington, and was elected to the McLean County Board three years after graduating from Illinois State University. He now lives in Channahon, near Joliet.

ISSUE: Education

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: Heartland financial task force eyes stable tax rates and larger reserves, unsure about tuition

Date: 9/11/2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 hours

NORMAL - A Heartland Community College task force on Tuesday recommended the Board of Trustees keep tax rates stable, but it's not clear how that would impact tuition and fees.

Heartland's Financial Sustainability Task Force, which has been meeting since January, presented a series of proposals at a special trustees meeting. However, recommendations about future tuition and fees will come later, according to President Keith Cornille.

"We're going to continue to work on and see that piece fits in to this whole picture of the financial plan for the institution," said Cornille.

"That's the part we did not get to, but we're asking for a continuation of the task force," he added.

The task force will seek student input about tuition, and develop strategies and recommendations before December 1.

In February, trustees voted for an \$8 per credit hour tuition hike, offset in part by a \$3 per credit hour decline in student fees. Tuition has gone up annually at Heartland since 2015.

The panel urges trustees to maintain reserves equal to between 40 and 60 percent of the college's operating fund.

Analysts at Standard & Poor's indicated stronger reserves would help Heartland achieve the highest possible AAA credit rating, which would lower interest rates and make it cheaper for the college to borrow money. Heartland currently has a AA+ credit rating.

"When pressed, (analysts) gave those clear indicators that having a fund balance policy, having stronger reserves than we did at the time of our last rating, and then the volatility of the Illinois environment were all major factors," said Doug Minter, Heartland's Vice President of Business Services.

Large reserves act as a rainy day fund during lean financial times. Reserves also provide resources to take advantage of growth opportunities for the college, President Cornille said.



ISSUE: Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: Museum still inspiring kids to learn through the power of play

Date: 9/12/2019

Time: 5 am

Duration: 12 hours

NORMAL – After 25 years, the Children’s Discovery Museum is still inspiring kids to learn through the power of play.

The Discovery Museum celebrated its 25th anniversary Thursday with former and current board members, staff and the community.

“We are here today to say thank you to the people whose mission, vision, passion and talents decided to come together and figure out a way to build a Children’s Discovery Museum,” said museum director Beth Whisman.

“Ask yourself what am I doing today, that could have an impact like this museum 25 years from now,” Whisman added.

The museum opened in 1994 at the former College Hills Mall, then moved for nine years to Constitution Place, before landing at its current location in Uptown Normal.

The museum has hit many milestones, most recently reaching two-million visitors at its Uptown location.

Whisman also discussed what’s next, such as upgrades to the Luckey Climber and Paint Wall exhibits, and a new space called Healthy Me, which is expected to open next year.

The CDM announced it also has a new partner, Rivian Automotive, who will host the museum’s Pushcart Derby event in 2020.

ISSUE: Education, Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: Superintendent responds after Blue Ridge teachers prepare for possible strike

Date: 9/16/2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 hours

FARMER CITY - Blue Ridge Superintendent Susan Wilson said Monday the district hopes to reach a contract agreement that's fair for both employees and the financial health of the district.

Late Sunday night, the Blue Ridge Federation of Teachers released a statement that teachers overwhelmingly agreed to create a strike exploratory committee because they're unhappy with contract negotiations with the school board.

Wilson released a brief statement Monday.

"We have received word from media sources that the Blue Ridge Federation met Sunday night and voted to form a Strike Exploratory Committee. The Blue Ridge Board of Education respects and values the work of our employees. We remain committed and hopeful that we will come to an agreement that is fair to our employees and maintains the financial health of the school district."

Blue Ridge Community Unit District 18 has three schools. They serve Farmer City, Mansfield, and Bellflower.

ISSUE: Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: Bloomington leaders to decide soon whether to allow marijuana sales

Date: 9/16/2019

Time: 5 am

Duration: 12 hours

BLOOMINGTON-- Bloomington's cannabis task force will be up and running in the coming days as city council members say the first task should be whether marijuana sales should be allowed at all in the city.

Mayor Tari Renner plans to reveal his choices for the 10 member panel later this week, and the council will vote on his picks next Monday.

At Monday night's committee-of-the-whole meeting, council member Kimberly Bray said she's talked to constituents struggling to wrap their minds around the idea that recreational marijuana use will be legal in Illinois.

"I think there's a real struggle about how introducing another potentially addictive and impairing substance into the community will help us achieve our goals," said Bray.

"Haste makes waste," said Bray, while Council member Donna Boelen called for a "methodical" and "thoughtful" process.

However, Council member Jamie Mathy said the need to decide soon about local marijuana sales creates a sense of urgency for the task force to get to work.

"If two members of the Bloomington Police Department are on the task force, I want to hear what they have to say. I want to hear if there's somebody from the Chamber of Commerce that's on there, I want to hear what they have to say," said Mathy.

"I want to hear from all those people sooner than later," Mathy also said.

Mayor Renner said task force members will include Police Chief Dan Donath and Council members Jenn Carrillo and Julie Emig. The mayor will leave it up to the task force to choose its chairman even though Carrillo initially lobbied to lead the group.

ISSUE: Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: Two Democrats oppose "routine" county board appointment

Date: 9/18/2019

Time: 5 am

Duration: 12 hours

BLOOMINGTON - What was intended to be a routine matter for the McLean County Board Tuesday evening turned out not to be so routine.

Former Republican County Board member Ryan Scritchlow's appointment to become an alternate on the County Zoning Board of Appeals was pulled from the consent agenda for a roll call vote, a highly unusual maneuver according to a long-time county official.

The County Board voted 17-2 supporting Scritchlow, but Democrats Laurie Wollrab and Shayna Watchinski voted no.

As a member of the Board's Land Use Committee, Wollrab said Scritchlow should have not have voted on a recycling issue because his business posed a potential conflict of interest.

He is owner of Scritchlow Enterprises, a Bloomington-based landscaping and construction firm.

Scritchlow was appointed to the county board in September 2017, but lost to Democrat Sharon Chung in last year's election for the District 7 seat.

ISSUE: Community, Education

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE: Unit 5 honors Normal West girls basketball team almost a year after traffic crash

Date: 9/27/2019

Time: 5 am

Duration: 12 hours

NORMAL - Unit 5 students and teachers need only look at eight members of Normal West High School's girls basketball team for inspiration as the district focuses this year on improving mental health.

The school board is honoring team members and coaches, almost 10 months after that fateful night when the bus they were riding collided head-on with a wrong-way semi on Interstate 74, near the Twin-Cities.

Beloved Normal West volunteer Charlie Crabtree died in the crash, along with the semi driver. Coach Steve Price and the school bus driver were badly hurt, but Price is teaching and coaching again.

Crabtree's wife Kathy attended Wednesday night's tribute, saying the girls inspire her and deserve recognition.

"On that fateful day, December 5, I think it brought us all together," Kathy Crabtree said.

"We are bonded together for life. I love the coaches. I love the girls. I know that Charlie's watching down from heaven and cheering them on right now," she said.

Varsity Girls Head Basketball Coach Corey Ostling told board members the girls represent all that coaches teach about character.

"All of them could have gone into a really dark place, both psychologically and physically, and they continued to work together," said Ostling.

"They were selfless because they kept each other going. When one was kind of down, someone else was up, and they picked each other up constantly," Coach Ostling also said.

The girls also showed self-awareness, reaching out when they needed help, according to the coach.

"Sometimes, you can't do it by yourself," Ostling said.

Meantime, Kathy Crabtree received another honor in her husband's name, this time from neighboring District 87. Charlie Crabtree was inducted Thursday night into the Bloomington High School Hall of Fame. He graduated from BHS in 1964.

ISSUE:Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News story

TITLE:Brady Announces Re-Election Bid

Date: 9/28/2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 1 2 hours

BLOOMINGTON - State Rep. Dan Brady has announced he will seek re-election for his seat in the 105th District.

Brady (R-Bloomington) has served the 105th District since 2001. He's currently the Deputy Republican Leader in the Illinois House.

"Our campaign will focus on my legislative record of getting results and standing up for our district's values," said Brady in a news release. "I am committed to making sure our budget stays balanced, we continue to invest in education, pursue further job-creating business reforms, get our skyrocketing property taxes under control, and enact good government reforms to make state government work for the people of Illinois."

Brady highlighted the capital bill, which will provide \$160 million for Illinois State University.

Brady will face a GOP primary challenge from David Paul Blumenshine. Brady defeated Blumenshine in the 2018 primary, then defeated Democrat Ben Webb in the general election.

The GOP primary winner will face Democratic challenger and Normal Town Council member Chamberly Cummings in the 2020 election.

The 105th District covers all of Normal, Bloomington's east side, and eastern McLean County. Parts of Livingston County, including Fairbury, are also in the 105th District.