

QUARTERLY ISSUES/PROGRAMS LIST

Station WJBC-AM

Location: 236 Greenwood Avenue, Bloomington, Il. 61704

For quarter beginning:

<u> X </u>	January 1, 2020
<u> </u>	April 1, 2020
<u> </u>	July 1, 2020
<u> </u>	October 1, 2020

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

Quarterly Issues First Quarter – January – March 2020

ISSUE: Community

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Twin City couple search for a donor

Date: 01//2020

Time: 6 am

Duration: 12 hours

The New Year finds one couple in the Twin Cities desperate for a gift from an organ donor.

According to our News partner Heart of Illinois - ABC, roughly a dozen signs line the roadway of Bloomington as one woman took this message to the street to try and find someone who will provide a kidney for her 71-year old husband Taj.

Nisha Mohammed said anytime the phone rings, they hope it's the answer to their prayers. Right now, Taj has painful gout in his legs and he's on dialysis...

If they can get a kidney from a donor with type O positive blood, they'll have the surgery at O-S-F in Peoria.

ISSUE: Community

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Bloomington ranks in the top ten for fitness

Date: 01/03/2020

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 hours

A new year means resolutions and a popular one is getting to the gym. A recent study shows Bloomington is a top location for exercise instructors.

AdvisorSmith conducted a study and it ranked Bloomington as the 6th best midsize city for fitness trainers. 312 cities were analyzed based on fitness trainer salaries, cost of living, and job availability.

The study showed Bloomington hosts 20 percent more jobs for fitness trainers on a per-capita basis compared to the U.S. average.

The average annual salary for a fitness trainer in Bloomington is over 45-thousand dollars, which is 2 percent higher than the national average.

According to the study, Bloomington was ranked higher than Peoria, Champaign, and Chicago. Rockford came in at number two behind Charlottesville, Virginia.

ISSUE: Crime

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Baker looks to new attorney for appeal

Date: 01/03/2020

Time: 6 am

Duration: 12 hours

A woman from Normal who was found guilty of killing her 8-year-old stepdaughter has had her sentencing vacated after hiring a new attorney.

Cynthia Baker, who was found guilty in November of first-degree murder in the death of Rica Rountree, has hired Phil Finegan to represent her, according to our news partner Heart of Illinois-ABC.

Finegan said he is requesting more time to gather information.

A delay was granted, with the next status hearing to be held February 24th. Baker was scheduled to be sentenced on January 31st.

A jury found Baker guilty on November 19th and prosecutors argued during the trial she had kicked Rountree so hard in the stomach that the child ultimately died of the injuries.

Finegan (FIN-igan) said last month he had plans to ask the judge to vacate her sentencing and ask for time to review court transcripts to file a motion with allegations of ineffective counsel.

Through her trial, Baker was represented by Todd Ringel.

Although Baker was found guilty, investigators in a post-trial press conference said the investigation into Rountree's death is ongoing.

ISSUE: Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Liquor Commission set to vote on theatre license

Date: 01/04/2020

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 hours

A movie theater on Normal's north side is hoping to sell alcohol to moviegoers.

AMC Classic, located at 201 McKnight Street, is asking for a Class R liquor license to sell various draft and bottled beer, wine, frozen margarita's and other items.

The Normal Liquor Commission will vote on the license Monday night before the town council meeting.

A staff report to the commission say the license would not be issued until inspection reports are approved by the McLean County Health Department, Normal Fire Inspection Division, and the Normal Building Inspection Department.

ISSUE: Crime

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Father of murdered girl arrested

Date: 01/07/2020

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 hours

Normal Police have arrested Richard Rountree for circumstances surrounding the death of his 8-year-old daughter Rica.

In a news release Tuesday, authorities said Rountree was taken into custody for allegedly endangering the life or health of a child under the age of 18, and is accused of conduct which makes him eligible for an extended-term sentence.

Rountree's girlfriend, Cynthia Baker, was found guilty in November of first-degree murder in the death of her stepdaughter. Her sentencing was vacated January 3rd and has hired Phil Finegan to represent her.

Prosecutors argued during Baker's trial she kicked Rica so hard in the stomach that the girl ultimately died of her injuries.

The circumstances surrounding Rica's death remains an open and active matter, according to Normal Police and the McLean County State's Attorney's Office.

ISSUE: Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Credibility of NPD comes into question

Date: 01/12/2020

Time: 6 am

Duration: 12 hours

The McLean County Libertarian Party is questioning the credibility of the Normal Police Department.

The party voted unanimously to create a resolution asking the Normal Police Department to address specific events that have happened in the last few months, according to Party Chair Steve Suess.

Suess says the arrest of a Normal police officer for allegedly stealing \$12,000 during a 9-1-1 call shows corruption within the department, according to our news partner Heart of Illinois-ABC reporter Stephanie Rodriguez. That and a social media post--on NPD's Facebook page the party feels was "making light of the war on drugs"--have led them to ask the department for "accountability."

Heart of Illinois-ABC reached out to Normal Police Chief Rick Bleicher for comment but he declined. Suess says the party wants an acknowledgment from the department that they screwed up.

The Facebook post the party is referring to is still on the department's page while the criminal investigation into the Normal Police officer who allegedly stole the money has been handed over to state police.

ISSUE: Education

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED:News Story

TITLE: New Unit 5 superintendent under consideration

Date: 01/14/2020

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 hours

A recommendation has been made for the next superintendent of Unit 5.

The Unit 5 School Board is expected to approve Dr. Kristen Kendrick-Weikle as the district's 13th superintendent during a special meeting Monday, according to a news release.

Kendrick-Weikle has been an educator for 23 years and is currently the Superintendent in the Warrensburg-Latham School District, which is northwest of Decatur.

If approved, Kendrick-Weikle would begin her new position July 1st, replacing Dr. Mark Daniel, who has been in Unit 5 since July 2014.

ISSUE: Crime

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED:News Story

TITLE: Not guilty plea from father of murdered girl

Date: 01/17/2020

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 hours

The father of Rica Rountree has pleaded not guilty to a charge of causing child endangerment resulting in death.

Richard Rountree was in McLean County court Friday for his arraignment when he made the plea. He was arrested earlier this month on the charge and is being held at the McLean County Jail.

He is scheduled to be back in court February 26th.

Cynthia Baker, Richard Rountree's girlfriend, was found guilty in November of first-degree murder in the death of Rica Rountree, but saw her sentence vacated on January 3rd when she hired a new attorney with plans to argue for ineffective counsel in her murder trial.

A status hearing for Baker is scheduled later this month.

ISSUE: Health

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED:News Story

TITLE: New clinic opens in Bloomington

Date: 01/20/2020

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 hours

A new urgent care clinic will start seeing patients in Bloomington this week.

OSF Urgo will open its third location in the Twin-Cities Tuesday at 508 I-A-A Drive. The others are located on Greenbriar Drive and Bradford Lane, both in Normal.

The urgent care clinics are near neighborhoods and shopping centers, where historically, health care providers have not been located, according to Senior Vice President of Digital Health Jennifer Junis.

OSF Urgo providers offer basic urgent care services such as treatment for cold, cough, flu, sprains, minor lacerations and fractures, sports physicals, and more.

ISSUE: Community

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED:News Story

TITLE: Fix-It Café returns to city's west side

Date: 01/21/2020

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 hours

A one-stop shop for all things broken, the West Bloomington Revitalization Project (WBPR) is launching its second Fix-it Cafe.

Aimed at eliminating waste, WBPR Project Manager Armando Baez said the goal of the Fix-it Cafe is not only to bring the community together but to fix broken items.

"There are other ways of using all of the resources that we have. I think there is just access of stuff everywhere in the world," added Baez. "This attitude that if it's broken, we should just throw it away has to stop. So if there is something that you have, whether it be again, it's pretty open."

With a team of fixers to help fix broken items, Baez said the first Fix-it Cafe at the Normal Public Library was a hit.

"At the Normal Library, it was funny to see what people brought in," said Baez. "We will have people that know how to fix stuff, and we will do our best to fix it. It's just a place where people can get together and get some things repaired."

The Fix-it Cafe will run from 4 p.m. until 7 p.m. on Jan. 30th at the WBRP Tool Library located at 724 W. Washington St. in Bloomington. The event is free of charge.

ISSUE: Crime, Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Camera key to catching criminals

Date: 01/22/2020

Time: 6 am

Duration: 12 hours

In evidence gathering, Bloomington police say there's one thing that's brought them evidence in 29 shootings, four stabbings, seven robberies and even a homicide conviction.

Meet the public safety camera.

Police posted on Facebook to let people know they're replacing old cameras as well as adding more.

News partner, Heart of Illinois ABC reports, that right now, they have eight cameras that are clearly marked, as well as two more that are able to be deployed for large events or in a rapid response situation.

BPD Chief Dan Donath says the cameras were first implemented in 2013 and can be programmed so they don't record someone's home life.

Donath said they want to upgrade older units and add five to seven more public safety cameras each year, with locations driven by crime statistics.

At this point, police don't need any additional funding from the city.

ISSUE: Crime

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED:News Story

TITLE: New judge in Rountree trial

Date: 01/28/2020

Time: 6 am

Duration: 12 hours

The attorney for Richard Rountree filed a motion in McLean County Court asking for a new judge on his jury trial.

News partner Heart of Illinois ABC reports the motion alleges that judge William Yoder "is so prejudiced against the Defendant that the Defendant will be unable to receive a fair hearing if this case is heard before Yoder."

Rountree is accused of child endangerment in connection to his 8-year-old daughter's death January of last year.

Rountree's girlfriend, Cynthia Baker, was found guilty in November of first-degree murder in the death of Rica Rountree, but saw her sentence vacated on January 3rd when she hired a new attorney with plans to argue for ineffective counsel in her murder trial.

The motion by Rountree's public defender specifically asks for the case to be transferred to the Chief Judge for reassignment.

ISSUE: Business

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Union looking for a place at Rivian

Date: 02/3/2020

Time: 6 am

Duration: 12 Hours

The United Auto Workers Union wants to represent employees who will make electric vehicles at the Rivian plant in northwest Normal.

Our news partner, Heart of Illinois -ABC reports about 1,000 people will work there, and the company recently announced it's helping Lincoln Motor Company develop luxury electric vehicles. Lincoln's parent company is Ford, which is investing \$500 million in Rivian.

In a statement, UAW Region 4 Director Ron McInroy noted the union's history at the former Mitsubishi Motors plant in Normal, and with Ford.

McInroy says there are a lot of skilled and talented workers around Normal who will make an excellent Rivian workforce and build a world class quality product.

Adding that the union looks forward to these jobs returning and UAW members having the opportunity once again to organize and form their local union which has meant so much to that community.

Rivian plans to start producing its R1T pickup truck and R1S sport utility vehicle later this year.

ISSUE: Business, Community, Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Second round of microloans coming from WBRP

Date: 02/3/2020

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 Hours

A local organization is offering an alternative to traditional loans to bring small businesses to Bloomington's west side.

The West Bloomington Revitalization Project microloan is a lending option specifically designed for operations that may not qualify for loans from traditional lending institutions. The organization gave its first microloan to the former Rosy's Grill on West Market Street. The restaurant has moved to Farmer City as a local group hopes to build a new grocery store in the West Market Street plaza.

WBRP Secretary Bevin Choban says the microloan to Rosy's was successful as the business was able to pay back the money.

Choban says the organization wants to spur growth in the neighborhood and creating economic development in the area is a key focus in the city's comprehensive plan.

WBRP is considering awarding up to two or three microloans. A link to the application and more information is available at WJBC.com. The deadline to apply is February 15th.

ISSUE: Government, Business

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Medical dispensary can now sell recreational pot as well

Date: 02/4/2020

Time: 6 am

Duration: 12 Hours

Bloomington-Normal's only business licensed to sell marijuana for medical use has permission from local leaders to become the first dispensary in the Twin Cities to sell cannabis for recreational use.

Our news partner, Heart of Illinois ABC reports the Normal Town Council voted unanimously Monday night to approve a special use permit for The Green Solution on Northtown Road, mirroring a 6-0 vote last week by Normal's Zoning Board of Appeals.

It became legal on New Years Day for Illinois businesses to sell marijuana for recreational purposes, but Bloomington-Normal residents must go to Peoria, Champaign, or Springfield to purchase the drug.

Nathan Wang, new markets manager for parent company, Jushi says the group is excited about all the support from the community and the town council.

The business owner is seeking a dual-use license from the state government.

The dispensary will be open daily from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., there won't be a drive-thru, and video cameras will be posted at building entrances and in the parking lot.

The Green Solution does not anticipate odor problems because the business won't be growing marijuana. However, if the smell does become a problem, the owner plans to install a charcoal filter to the building's heating and air conditioning system or use another air treatment.

The business also will put in place special procedures to handle potentially higher traffic during the first two weeks that recreational marijuana is sold at the location.

ISSUE: Government, Health, Education

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: University restricts travel to China

Date: 02/4/2020

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 Hours

Illinois State University is restricting travel to China for any school business or academic credit due to the coronavirus.

In an email Tuesday to students, faculty and staff, ISU says there are no reported cases of coronavirus at the university and the overall threat to campus remains low.

The Centers for Disease Control and the U.S. Department of State has issued a Level 4 Travel Advisory for China. As a result, ISU is restricting travel to China until the CDC changes the travel advisory.

The Illinois Department of Public Health says symptoms of coronavirus include fever, cough, and trouble breathing.

ISSUE: Crime

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: BPD asks for help in retail theft

Date: 02/6/2020

Time: 6 am

Duration: 12 Hours

Bloomington Police asking for the public's help in finding and identifying a person of interest.

The case involves the theft of an electronic device at a Bloomington restaurant on January 30.

The suspect is a tall, thin black male between 18 and 24 years of age with shoulder length black hair.

If you have information related to this crime, please contact B-P-D or McLean County Crime Stoppers.

ISSUE: Crime

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Rountree sentenced in daughters death

Date: 02/6/2020

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 Hours

The father of murder victim Rica Rountree pleaded guilty today (Thursday) in McLean County Court to a felony charge of endangering his daughter's life.

Our news partner Heart of Illinois ABC reports Richard Rountree was sentenced to eight-years in prison for his guilty plea to a felony child endangerment charge.

A jury late last year found Rountree's girlfriend, Cynthia Baker, guilty of fatally beating the eight-year-old girl in Normal in 2019. Baker has not been sentenced yet.

As for Rountree's punishment, McLean County State's Attorney Don Knapp issued a statement and said "acknowledging that no sentence can ever adequately counterbalance the loss of life, we believe this sentence is appropriate."

ISSUE: Education, Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: First Student may stick around for another school year

Date: 02/13/2020

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 Hours

McLean County's largest school district may wind up sticking with the same school bus company next school year even though the school board, administrators, and parents are far from satisfied with the current provider.

The school board will consider extending its multi-million dollar contract with First Student for another year to provide more time to study a consultant's report about various transportation options.

Our news partner Heart of Illinois ABC reports those options include hiring another bus operator, or the district setting up its own bus system, which could take up to two years, according to School Board President Barry Hitchins.

First Student was criticized at the start of this school year for late buses, not having enough drivers, and communication breakdowns.

Hitchins released the following statement:

"At the Unit 5 Board of Education meeting in January we heard a presentation from a transportation consultant. That presentation included a cost benefit analysis and proposed timeline of 18-24 months for potential insourcing. This raised some concern about the timeline needed for potentially changing transportation service providers. This timeline concern as well as the general risk associated with changing transportation service providers lead the Board to direct to Unit 5 administration to seek a one-year extension with First Student. This extension will provide the time needed to assess the full report provided by the transportation consultant and determine the best solution for Unit 5 student transportation going forward."

Unit 5 would boost its subsidy to First Student by 3.75 percent from the current year to about \$9.5 million. The proposed contract extension includes financial penalties for lack of performance.

The board will vote on the contract extension in the coming weeks.

ISSUE: Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: A raise for Reece

Date: 02/14/2020

Time: 6 am

Duration: 12 Hours

The Normal Town Council is expected to decide Monday night whether to give the city manager a pay raise that would boost her salary above her predecessor's pay.

Mayor Chris Koos is recommending the council raise Pamela Reece's salary by 55-hundred dollars to just over 190-thousand dollars, according to our news partner Heart of Illinois ABC.

The town council promoted Reece two years ago from her previous job as assistant city manager to replace retiring city manager Mark Peterson. Peterson made 189-thousand dollars in his last year on the job. He was Normal's city manager for 20 years.

Reece is entering the final year of a three-year contract. Mayor Koos said in a memo to the council that the proposed salary increase for Reece "reflects a fair and competitive wage" for the city manager's position.

Reece is only the third city manager in Normal's history, and is the first woman to hold the position.

ISSUE: Crime

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Stabbing investigated in Bloomington

Date: 02/18/2020

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 Hours

Bloomington Police confirm one man is in the hospital with a stab wound.

Police say they were called to the 400 block of McLean Street just after 10 Monday Night on the initial report of a shooting.

Our news partner Heart of Illinois ABC reports it was there they found the man with a stab wound.

He was taken to the hospital with what are being described as non-life threatening injuries.

No one is in custody at this time.

Anyone with information is asked to call Bloomington Police or McLean County Crimestoppers.

ISSUE: Education, Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Tuition hikes for a third year at Heartland

Date: 02/19/2020

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 Hours

For the third straight year, trustees of Heartland Community College are raising the cost of attending the school.

The board voted unanimously Tuesday night to boost tuition and fees by \$5 per credit hour to \$163, with the increase expected to generate about \$500,000 for the fiscal year starting July 1.

The board chose to enact a series of smaller tuition and fee hikes rather than a larger one-time increase.

Our news partner, Heart of Illinois ABC reports administrators noted in a report to the board that more money is needed because of anticipated salary increases, a deficit in the current budget, and volatility in projected tax revenue.

A task force released a report last year that called on the district to keep the overall property tax rate unchanged, while at the same time maintain students' costs at "reasonable" levels.

In a report to the board Heartland staff said at the new rate it expects Heartland to continue to be the most affordable higher education option in the district.

The Heartland Community College District covers McLean, Livingston, and Logan Counties.

ISSUE: Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Early voting underway in McLean County

Date: 02/20/2020

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 Hours

Early voting is underway for the March 17th primary in Illinois, but in McLean County, early voting has been "very light."

That's according to McLean County Clerk Kathy Michael, but she says it's not unusual for it to be light at this point. Vote by mail ballots, however, seem to be heavier than usual. Michael says her office has received over 1,000 ballots with another 300 to 400 requests for ballots to be mailed. That does not include the Bloomington Election Commission.

Early voting at the Government Center in downtown Bloomington has been going on since February 6th. Early voting hours are currently 8:30 to 4:30 Monday through Friday.

This weekend early voting can be done at Eastland Mall. Voting areas will be set up in the corridor area in front of the former JC Penny store along with the Bloomington Election Commission. Those will be open both Saturday and Sunday from noon to 6 p.m.

More information for voting can be found at mcleancountyil.gov/elections

ISSUE: Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Community garden looking to expand outreach

Date: 02/24/2020

Time: 6 am

Duration: 12 Hours

Sunnyside Community Garden and Food Forrest has been a part of Bloomington for the last several years.

It offers gardening education to youth and supplies healthy food to under served residents.

Everything grown in the garden is donated to local food banks and organizations including the Boys and Girls Club, Home Sweet Home Ministries, Salvation Army and Veggie Oasis.

Farm Manager Caleb Phillips explained why he's passionate about the cause, stating everyone should have access to healthy, fresh food.

Sunnyside also runs summer programs to introduce children to healthy food at an early age and to also teach kids about farming practices.

At tonight's Bloomington City council meeting, a proposed license between the city and Sunnyside is on the agenda, possibly widening the scope of the community garden reach.

ISSUE: Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Downtown garage on the list of repairs

Date: 02/25/2020

Time: 6am

Duration: 12 Hours

Bloomington's proposed \$230.3 million budget for the next fiscal year includes a money to repair a downtown parking garage that at least two city council members would like to see torn down.

Our news partner, Heart of Illinois ABC reports city staffers recommend the council approve \$1.3 million to repair the 46-year old Market Street garage, which has 350 spaces. The staff said repairs would give the garage another 5-7 years of use.

A couple of council members said Monday night they're tired of spending money for temporary solutions.

Council member Jamie Mathy says enough is enough

A couple of years ago, a council majority rejected the idea of turning the Market Street deck into a new public library and Connect Transit transfer center.

Also in the budget, to be finalized in the coming weeks, is \$738,000 for design work on a new O'Neil Park swimming pool on Bloomington's west side.

The aluminum pool is 45 years old, but was supposed to last 25 years. City staffers said there have been enough repairs to open the pool again this summer.

The proposed budget is 1.2 percent more than the current fiscal year's budget, but city staffers recommend property taxes remain unchanged. The next fiscal year starts May 1.

ISSUE: Education

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story, Government

TITLE: Campus projects on the horizon

Date: 02/26/2020

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 Hours

Administrators of the Wonsook College of Fine Arts at Illinois State University have been planning for a huge renovation project for years and now they have \$52.3 million to get it done.

Last month Governor J.B. Pritzker released the state funds for the university to begin working on structural, electrical and flooding issues.

Wonsook College of Fine Arts Dean Jean Miller told our News partner, Heart of Illinois ABC, that the project is not just about updating the look of their building, but creating spaces for students to use the facilities for a variety of programs.

As of right now, the plan is to create dance studios, facilities for the college's growing video game design program and their glass blowing major, among other things.

ISU Graphic Design Senior Hannah Piemonte said although she will not see the changes, she is excited for the next generation of students.

The project—that is funded by the Rebuild Illinois gas tax—will be broken down into two phases with the first expected to last just over a year and a half and the second about 12 months.

ISU has yet to say when they plan to begin construction.

ISSUE: Crime

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Lexington contractor avoids jail but not repayment

Date: 02/26/2020

Time: 6am

Duration: 12 Hours

A Lexington contractor won't have to go to jail, but he'll have to pay back tens of thousands of dollars to customers for home construction projects he didn't finish.

In an agreement with McLean County prosecutors, our news aptner Heart of Illinois ABC reports, Justin Barr of Post Frame Solutions pleaded guilty to theft by deception of over \$10,000. It's the first felony conviction for Barr, who faces similar charges in Woodford, Livingston, and Marshall Counties.

Barr, 41, will have to pay one of his customers \$25,000 and another customer \$18,000, all from the bond money he posted to be released from jail.

In court, McLean County Assistant State's Attorney David Rossi told the judge one of the victims hired Barr's company in September 2017 to build a house and garage in Kappa.

According to the prosecutor, Barr would come up with a variety of excuses for not finishing the work, including that he was busy with other jobs, he needed to order a different type of screw, and various family members and even his dog had died.

Barr will also have to perform 240 hours of community service as part of his 2 1/2-years on probation.

ISSUE: Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Water tax up for approval

Date: 03/02/2020

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 Hours

The Normal Town Council could approve a water tax hike at tonight's meeting.

The raise would be put into effect to bring in more money to Normal and our news partner, Heart of Illinois ABC reports the hike is projected to increase Normal's revenue by more than \$190,000.

Councilman Stan Nord wants the council to look internally first, to see if money can be saved somewhere else, before costing tax payers more money.

Nord said as public officials, the council should do whatever it takes to limit new taxes. If the council votes yes, the per gallon fee as well as the maintenance fee price would rise by two percent.

ISSUE: Health

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Dental Society and Children's Museum team up

Date: 03/2/2020

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 Hours

In honor of national children's dental health month, the Mclean County Dental Society offered health screenings to the public.

The group teamed up with the Children's Discovery Museum in Uptown Normal and offered free dental screenings with general admission.

Children were encouraged to ask questions and learn about basic tools they might see during a regular check-up.

Museum Innovations Station Supervisor Alex Horton tells our news partner Heart of Illinois ABC some children are often scared of the dentist. She says holding screenings at the museum can help them feel like they're in a safe space.

This was the first time the organizations worked together, but the museum said they hope to continue the partnership in the future.

ISSUE: Community, Business

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: FedEx plane makes emergency landing at CIRA

Date: 03/3/2020

Time: 6 am

Duration: 12 Hours

A spokesperson from Central Illinois Regional Airport confirmed a FedEx plane made an emergency landing at the airport Tuesday morning.

The plane on its way to Indianapolis from Omaha, Nebraska declared the emergency at about 9:10 a.m. because of a possible engine fire, according to our news partner Heart of Illinois ABC.

The Bloomington Fire Department and other agencies were there in case of a fire when the plane landed. CIRA said the landing was safe and they could not see any fire at the time.

CIRA said the plane's captain saw there was a possible engine fire on the instrument panel when they made the call to land in Bloomington. Two crew members were on board and no injuries were reported.

The FedEx plane reportedly left CIRA's airfield again just after noon.

ISSUE: Community

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Three dead in Lexington plane crash

Date: 03/3/2020

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 Hours

The Logan County Coroner has confirmed that all three people on board the plane that crashed on Interstate 55 near Lincoln are dead.

The identities of the passengers are being withheld until family is notified, according to State Police.

Authorities say the southbound lanes of I-55 are reopen.

The lanes were closed for over five hours after the plane crashed around 9 Tuesday morning. State Police say the small plane became fully engulfed upon impact in the middle of the interstate.

ISSUE: Crime

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: A Whalen rewind

Date: 03/5/2020

Time: 6 am

Duration: 12 Hours

McLean County prosecutors want a Bloomington man behind bars again for his father's murder after a judge granted the man a new trial for the 1991 killing.

However, an appeals court earlier this week determined the judge should have based his ruling on a different legal standard to determine if Donald Whalen should be tried again for beating and stabbing his father William at the family's downtown Bloomington bar almost 29 years ago.

State's Attorney Don Knapp told our news partner, Heart of Illinois ABC Wednesday his office filed a motion to revoke Donald Whalen's bond.

Whalen came up with \$100,000 cash to be released from the McLean County Jail. He was allowed to post bond after Judge Scott Drazewski found new evidence was "more likely than not" to have affected the jury's decision, and "the likelihood of a different result is great enough to undermine the confidence in the outcome of the original trial."

However, justices on the Fourth Appellate Court ordered Drazewski to consider whether it's "probable" or "more likely than not" that the new evidence would have produced a different result.

Whalen was sentenced to 60 years in prison. He spent almost 28 years behind bars, and likely would have been released after serving about two more years because of good time credit.

Whalen is represented by lawyers from the University of Chicago's Exoneration Project, who can appeal the latest ruling to the Illinois Supreme Court.

ISSUE: Education, Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Building upgrades come with big price tag for Unit 5

Date: 03/6/2020

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 Hours

Unit 5 is writing a roughly \$3 million dollar check for upgrades at one of its older buildings.

Our news partner Heart of Illinois ABC reports Kingsley Junior High currently uses a boiler for heat in the winter and room units to cool classrooms in the summer.

Soon, the boiler rooms of the 1950's will be replaced with a geothermal unit, according to Craig Montgomery, Director of Custodial Services.

Kingsley will be the 14th building in the district to get the upgrade and the district says the \$3 million dollar upfront cost is worth every penny. Executive Director of Operations Joe Adelman says the geothermal unit at Parkside Junior High has reduced gas by 98 percent and electricity by 68 percent.

So what does this mean in terms of dollars and cents in the school's operating costs?

By that math, Unit 5 saves just over \$48,000 per month, or just over half a million dollars per year.

The district says the geothermal system at Kingsley will be fully installed and operational in time for next school year.

ISSUE: Crime, Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Local political office vandalized

Date: 03/6/2020

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 Hours

The McLean County Republican Party has experienced repeated vandalism for several months at two different office locations, according to GOP Chair Connie Beard.

Beard tells WJBC's Marc Strauss the vandalism has been happening since last summer at the old Republican headquarters on Bloomington's east side. She says it has continued at the new office located at 211 Landmark Drive in Normal.

Beard says each time it appears to be the same individual putting the pictures on the front door and while the vandalism is minor, the material is disturbing.

Beard says security cameras were installed several months ago and a report was filed with both Bloomington and Normal Police.

ISSUE: Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: New technology for election day

Date: 03/9/2020

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 Hours

Election officials in McLean County have already been working the polls but the day they see the most people is Election Day and they're ready for the crowd thanks to new technology.

Before opening for early voting McLean County Clerk Kathy Michael trained 500 election judges on how to use 156 new iPads for registering and checking voters in.

Michael tells our news partner Heart of Illinois ABC she hopes the iPads, as well as an increase in election judges, will help reduce wait times for large polling places like Illinois State University.

But if you want to skip the lines all together you can still request to vote by mail until Thursday.

ISSUE: Pandemic, Education

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: COVID-19 cases hit double digits

Date: 03/10/2020

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 Hours

The number of coronavirus cases in Illinois has hit double digits and Illinois State University has been meeting for weeks to prepare for the worst.

Even though the overall threat to campus from the coronavirus is considered low, the university is taking steps to ensure the safety of the campus community, according to ISU President Larry Dietz. Dietz tells WJBC's Scott Miller the school's incident management team has been getting together each morning to talk about COVID-19.

As for closing ISU, Dietz says with no reported cases on campus there's no need to shut down. He says ISU plans to start a campus wide campaign to promote healthy habits, like washing your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

The school also has a website with daily COVID-19 updates...that site is IllinoisState.edu/coronavirus.

ISSUE: Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Census starts today

Date: 03/11/2020

Time: 6 am

Duration: 12 Hours

Thursday is the first day you can raise your hand for the 2020 Census.

It's only nine questions, and Illinois co-director Oswaldo Alvarez says a big one is left out.

"The Census does not include a citizenship question," Alvarez said Wednesday in Springfield. "We have been working with community-based partners and with non profits so they can deliver the message, they are the trusted messengers and they can go to communities and let them know that of the nine questions none of them include a citizenship question."

Adds Grace Hou, secretary of the Illinois Department of Human Services, "There is an opportunity to do it on your own, and there is assistance that can be accessed virtually, but we understand that some individuals will still need assistance, potentially from a live person."

www.my2020census.gov

ISSUE: Government, Health

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Pandemic pushes polling places

Date: 03/12/2020

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 Hours

In a special meeting Wednesday night, the McLean County Board agreed to move two polling places in Normal due to concerns of spreading the coronavirus.

The board agreed to move Normal precinct 10 from Evergreen Place assisted living to the Cardinal Court Apartments, owned by Illinois State University. The board also approved relocating Normal precinct 21 from the McLean County Nursing home to the nearby Fairview Park Pool.

McLean County Clerk Kathy Michael says all registered voters in these affected areas will receive a new voter card and a letter which will indicate their new polling place for the Tuesday primary election.

Meanwhile, the Bloomington Election Commission changed one of its polling places Wednesday amid concerns of COVID-19. Bloomington precincts 21 and 48 have been moved from Westminster Village to the DoubleTree Hotel.

ISSUE: Business, Pandemic

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: State Farm sends employees home to work

Date: 03/13/2020

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 Hours

State Farm Insurance is urging its employees to work from home to reduce the chance of catching the coronavirus.

The Bloomington-based insurance company, also McLean County's largest employer, wants employees who can to work from home. Those who can't work from home are urged to speak to their leaders about taking paid administrative leave.

State Farm released a statement late Thursday night about who might be eligible to receive paid administrative leave. That statement is on WJBC.com.

Meanwhile, neighboring insurance and financial services firm Country Financial announced Thursday it is restricting all non-essential business travel for employees and insurance agents.

Country Financial employees are also prohibited from scheduling any new business travel until further notice.

ISSUE: Government, Pandemic

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Restaurant owners look for answers

Date: 03/17/2020

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 Hours

In response to Governor JB Pritzker's executive order issued Sunday, State Representative Dan Brady answered questions at Shooters Lounge in Bloomington.

Brady and both Twin City mayors, Tari Renner of Bloomington and Chris Koos of Normal, also attended the Q&A session.

News partner, Heart of Illinois ABC reports the restaurant closure order issued by Governor Pritzker still allows carry out, drive through and delivery services to continue.

Brady stated that if restaurants and bars do not comply, "more trouble will come than good." As for who will be enforcing this, the state representative said that will either be for the public health department or possibly "from the law enforcement side."

Mayor Renner said he will not issue any fines for the time being until he receives more information.

Koos echoed Renner's comments.

ISSUE: Business, Pandemic

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Bridgestone starts temporary shutdown

Date: 03//2020

Time: 6 am

Duration: 12 Hours

Bridgestone Americas announced a temporary phased shutdown at all its manufacturing facilities in North America and Latin America Thursday.

The plant in Normal produces off-road tires for mining and construction equipment and employs over 400 people.

Our news partner, Heart of Illinois ABC reports the temporary shutdown will begin this weekend, March 21.

The company plans to resume normal operations on or around Sunday, April 12, although Bridgestone says they be watching the situation closely and adjusting response plans as necessary.

In a statement Thursday, Bridgestone says they have enough supply of product meet customer demand.

In the meantime, distribution centers, plant warehouses, and logistics teams will continue to fill orders.

The goal of the temporary shutdown is to "align supply to the predicted demand in the market" amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

As of Thursday, there were 422 confirmed cases of the novel coronavirus in Illinois. There was one case in McLean County.

ISSUE: Business, Pandemic

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Rivian closes all locations

Date: 03//2020

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 Hours

Rivian is closing all facilities including its plant in Normal to slow the spread of COVID-19, but the electric vehicle maker pledges to pay its workers.

In a statement on Facebook the company said its committed to everyone on the team and salaried and hourly workers will continue to be paid during the shutdown

A Rivian spokesperson said 300 people work at the factory in Normal where the company plans to start producing a pick-up truck and sport utility vehicle later this year.

It's not known yet how the temporary closure will impact the start of production.