



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

WJBC Issues Summary for Quarter 2/2019

During the second quarter of 2019, WJBC-AM addressed numerous news and local issues including, but not limited to:

Women's Health Night

Rock the Block

MC Strong 5k Classic

YWCA Women of Distinction

St. Jude Golf Classic

Special Olympics Ill Summer Games

BN By The Numbers

Relay for Life

CDM Pushcart Derby

Sugar Creek Arts Festival

WJBC News covered numerous stories with a direct impact on the local community.

(See below for more details on events and news stories.)



Quarterly Issues/Programs List

Issue: Women's & family health issues

How Issue Was Treated: PSA's & Day Of mentions

Title: Family/Women's Health Night

Date: April 2

Time: 3p-7p

Description: WJBC aired 30 second, 60 second and live promotional announcements regarding the event. We had a contingent of people present at the event as well to promote.



Quarterly Issues/Programs List

Issue: Local United Way Agencies

How Issue Was Treated: PSA's & Day Of mentions

Title: Rock the Block

Date: April 27, 2019

Time: 4p -7p

Description: WJBC aired 30 second, 60 second and live promotional announcements regarding the event. We had a contingent of people present at the event as well to promote.



Quarterly Issues/Programs List

Issue: Benefit for numerous local agencies including Big Brothers, MADD, St. Jude, etc.

How Issue Was Treated: PSA's, in-studio interviews & Day Of mentions

Title: MC Strong 5k Classic

Date: April 20, 2019

Time: 7:30a

Description: WJBC aired 30 second, 60 second and live promotional announcements regarding the event. We had a contingent of people present at the event as well to promote.



Quarterly Issues/Programs List

Issue: Highlighting women who have made their mark on our community

How Issue Was Treated: PSA's, in-studio interviews & Day Of mentions

Title: YMCA Women of Distinction Banquet

Date: June 25, 2019

Time: 6:30pm

Description: WJBC aired 30 second, 60 second and live promotional announcements regarding the event. We had a contingent of people present at the event as well to promote.



Quarterly Issues/Programs List

Issue: Childhood disease research

How Issue Was Treated: PSA's, in-studio interviews & Day Of mentions

Title: St. Jude Golf Classic

Date: June 10, 2019

Time: 11am

Description: WJBC aired 30 second, 60 second and live promotional announcements regarding the event. In addition, we offered and online presence on our WJBC.com website.



Quarterly Issues/Programs List

Issue: Empowering differently abled people

How Issue Was Treated: PSA's & Day of Mentions

Title: Special Olympics Summer Games

Date: June 7, 8, 9, 2019

Time: All Day

Description: WJBC aired 30 second, 60 second and live promotional announcements regarding the event. In addition, we offered an online presence on our WJBC.com website.



Quarterly Issues/Programs List

Issue: Childhood Education

How Issue Was Treated: PSA's & Day of Mentions

Title: Children's Discovery Museum Pushcart Derby

Date: June 15, 2019

Time: 8a-1p

Description: WJBC aired 30 second, 60 second and live promotional announcements regarding the event.



Quarterly Issues/Programs List

Issue: Benefitting local arts community

How Issue Was Treated: PSA's, in-studio interviews & Day Of mentions with live reports.

Title: Sugar Creek Arts Festival

Date: July 13 & 14, 2019

Time: All Day

Description: WJBC aired 30 second, 60 second and live promotional announcements regarding the event. In addition, we offered and online presence on our WJBC.com website.



Quarterly Issues/Programs List

Issue: Cancer research fundraiser

How Issue Was Treated: PSA's, in-studio interviews & Day Of mentions with live reports.

Title: Relay for Life

Date: June 21, 2019

Time: All Day

Description: WJBC aired 30 second, 60 second and live promotional announcements regarding the event. In addition, we offered and online presence on our WJBC.com website.

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The Voice of Central Illinois

NEWS

Quarterly Issues Second Quarter – April-June 2019

ISSUE: Crime

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Years in the making, Zimmerman murder to begin in McLean County Court

Date: 4/1/2019

Time: 5 am

Duration: 12 hours

BLOOMINGTON - One of McLean County's highest profile criminal cases in years goes to trial Monday, starting with the sometimes tedious, but crucial process of picking a jury.

Kirk Zimmerman, 60 is free on bond for allegedly killing his former wife Pamela Zimmerman in November 2014. The well-known financial planner, who was found dead in her office on East Washington Street with multiple gunshot wounds.

Jury selection might take most, if not all, of this week. Prospective jurors have filled out questionnaires. Many are likely to say they've heard about the case, but that's not enough to be excused from service. Lawyers will ask if they can set aside what they've heard and reach a verdict based only on what they hear in court.

The state is expected to present a circumstantial case alleging the Zimmermans had a contentious divorce, and he was worried that child support payments would prevent him from retiring from his job at State Farm.

Other prosecution witnesses include friends and relatives who claim Pamela Zimmerman feared her ex-husband, and cell phone data that reportedly put him at the crime scene, and prior to that, in Indiana where he allegedly bought a gun.

Authorities have not found the murder weapon.

Zimmerman is represented by St. Louis attorney John Rogers. He said on his website that he's tried "well over" 125 jury trials in state and federal court, "representing individuals and businesses charged with white collar, murder, sex, and drug offenses."

The trial is expected to last about six weeks.

ISSUE: Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Normal Council candidate raises "huge property rights" issue on election eve

Date: 4/1/2019

Time: 10am

Duration: 12 hours

NORMAL - A challenger for one of three Normal Town Council seats up for grabs in Tuesday's election managed to have the last word before voters go to the polls.

Candidate and property owner Stan Nord's dispute with the town over sewer connection fees was the main topic at Monday night's Normal Town Council meeting.

Nord owns a little more than 15 acres at 2012 W. College Ave. He's protesting almost \$12,000 in fees that were unpaid by previous land owners.

Nord said the dispute is a "huge" property rights issue.

"What you are telling every voter, taxpayer, property owner, and potential property owner is property purchased in Normal can not be trusted," said Nord.

"Your checkbook will always be at risk for government to search the property records for a fee that was either in error, or is now interpreted differently, and make you pay for it," Nord also said.

Town attorney Brian Day said Nord knew about uncollected tap-on fees before buying the land. As long as the property remains undeveloped, Nord does not have to pay the money.

Mayor Chris Koos said Nord is making wild accusations about the fee's impact on the local economy.

"The notion that property will not be sold in Normal and banks will not loan money to properties in Normal I find ridiculous," said Koos.

The council voted to send the matter to the planning commission to see if the matter can be resolved without a lawsuit. Nord has hired a lawyer.

Town staffers noted they have tried to work with Nord, reducing various fees by about 70 percent.

One of the other nine council candidates, incumbent Kathleen Lorenz, said she's puzzled by the "odd timing" of bringing the matter to the council.

ISSUE:Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE:Municipal Elections Underway

Date: 4/2/2019

Time: Duration: 12 hours

Polls across Central Illinois will remain open several more hours for today's municipal elections.

McLean County Clerk Kathy Michael, whose office handles all voting in the county, except Bloomington, says voter turnout has been relatively low.

The latest update from the Bloomington Election Commission at four o'clock shows just over 2,000 voters have been to the polls.

In the Twin Cities, Normal has three of its town council seats up for grabs with eight candidates running, while the Bloomington City Council has contested races in its even wards.

Polls will remain open until 7 p.m.

Stay tuned for updates once the polls close with WJBC's Greg Halbleib at the top and bottom of the hour here on AM 1230 WJBC. We'll also have live updates on social media with WJBC's Howard Packowitz, and a complete rundown later tonight on WJBC.com.

ISSUE: Crime

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Neighbors look out for each other after latest Orchard Road killing

Date: 4/3/2019

Time:5 am

Duration: 12 hours

BLOOMINGTON - A Bloomington woman said she feels safe living in her east side neighborhood despite a second deadly shooting there in less than a year.

Julie Hinthorn was in the basement, and her mother was in the living room watching TV Tuesday night at their home on Orchard and Wildwood Roads.

An SUV crashed into two parked vehicles and Hinthorn's house. Inside the SUV was gunshot victim Juan Nash, 25, who died from his wounds.

Hinthorn is thankful the SUV hit a metal flag pole on her property, which sent the vehicle in the direction of her cars and garage, instead of striking a part of the house that might have badly injured her mother.

"It may have veered him off towards our vehicles and the garage. If not, he may have (gone) into the living room and my mother would've been sitting in her chair," Hinthorn said.

Two other men, Nathaniel Caldwell, 26, and Scotty Allen, 18, were in critical, but stable condition. It's believed they were they were shot about a block away in the 1200 block of Orchard Road.

That's the same block where Tanehlea Brown, 20, and Steven Alexander Jr., 18, were shot to death, and two other people were wounded in June of last year. Bloomington Police arrested Hammet Brown, 27, who's jailed on \$3,000,000 bond while awaiting trial in that case.

Police have not made an arrest in Tuesday night's shooting, and they're still asking for the public's help to solve the case.

Meantime, Hinthorn said her neighbors help one another to stay safe.

"This neighborhood right here is a safe neighborhood," Hinthorn told news partner, WMBD-TV.

"Neighbors, quite a few of them, have been here, lived here for several years. My mother and father moved here in 1979. We know each other, and watch out for one another," Hinthorn also said.

Just like last year, Bloomington Police Public Information Officer John Fermon said the department is providing extra patrol for the neighborhood.

Anyone with information is asked to contact Bloomington Police Detective Jared Bierbaum at (309) 434-2807, emailing Bierbaum at jbierbaum@cityblm.org, or calling the department's main line at (309) 820-8888.

McLean County Crime Stoppers accepts tips from anonymous callers at (309) 828-1111. The Crime Stoppers organization pays rewards of up to \$1,000 for information leading to arrests and indictments.

ISSUE:Crime

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED:News Story

TITLE: Hotel builder seeks incentives from Normal for extended stay suites

Date: 4/5/2019

Time: 10 am

Duration:12 Hours

NORMAL - The builder who wants to put up an extended stay hotel in north Normal hopes the town government considers tax breaks to help fund the project.

Normal Mayor Chris Koos is reluctant to offer incentives because the community already has plenty of hotel rooms.

Thursday evening, the planning commission approved plans for Home 2 Suites by Hilton in the northwest portion of Constitution Trail Center at Main Street and Raab Road, adjacent to Bradford Lane.

Jacob Horve of Horve Hospitality Management in Forsyth told planning commissioners extended stay suites don't compete with run-of-the-mill hotels.

"This has a full kitchen in every room. It's designed for people to stay for months, or in some cases, years," said Horve.

"We've had people stay for five to six days a week for years at a time in some of our extended stay properties," Horve also said.

Horve said the Decatur and Champaign extended day hotels built by his firm were aided by government incentives.

"We know what it takes to do these projects," he said.

"Any incentives definitely help. The last few we've done personally here in Central Illinois have been incentivized heavily by the community. You get your hotel-motel taxes from the facility itself, so that obviously reimburses the community for any incentives that are provided," Horve added.

He said Home 2 Suites in Normal would be four stories with 104 rooms. Horve said there would be up to 60 construction workers. Once it's built, the hotel would employ up to 25 full and part-time workers.

The Normal Town Council vote is set for April 15.

Howard Packowitz can be reached at howard.packowitz@cumulus.com

ISSUE:Crime

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Trial delayed in Bloomington triple murder case

Date: 4/5/2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 Hours

BLOOMINGTON - A Bloomington triple murder suspect won't stand trial next month because his new lawyer says he needs time to review the prosecution's evidence.

Sydney Mays' trial was supposed to start May 13, but last week, Mays hired Chicago lawyer Michael Jarard. Mays initially insisted that he act as his own attorney, but he changed his mind.

Before hiring Jarard, Mays chose to have the judge, instead of a jury, decide the case. Jarard said he hasn't decided yet if Mays should ask again for a jury trial.

Mays is charged with shooting to death Juan Carlos Perez-Macedo, Corey Jackson, and Nathaniel Pena, and gravely wounding Pena's young son June 18 in an apartment in the 300 block of Riley Drive.

No new trial date has been scheduled, but Mays is expected to appear for a status hearing May 21.

ISSUE: Crime

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Names from Goodfield Fire Released

Date: 4/6/2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 Hours

The Woodford County Coroner said preliminary autopsy results for the five people killed in the Goodfield fire over the weekend suggest they experienced carbon monoxide intoxication.

Coroner Tim Ruestman identified the victims as 69-year-old Kathryn Murray, 34-year-old Jason Wall, two-year-olds Rose Alwood and Damien Wall and one-year-old Ariel Wall.

All were pronounced dead just before midnight Saturday.

Two others in the home, Katrina and Kyle Alwood, were taken to a local hospital, where they were treated and released.

Eureka-Goodfield Firefighters were called to Cypress Court at 11:15pm, where they arrived to find the trailer engulfed in flames.

The fire remains under investigation.

ISSUE: Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Asphalt and concrete fund not yet set in stone

Date: 4/6/2019

Time: 6 am

Duration: 12 hours

BLOOMINGTON - Bloomington aldermen spent most of their time Monday night discussing whether a proposed fund to pay for asphalt and concrete should include more than just asphalt and concrete.

City staffers propose to set up the fund as another layer of transparency to show how the government is spending local gas tax revenue to fix streets and sidewalks.

The council delayed action for two weeks on Alderman Kimberly Bray's idea to include language that gas tax dollars should be spent exclusively on asphalt and concrete projects, and not for more costly brick street repairs.

Alderman Joni Painter sided with Bray that asphalt and concrete work is a higher priority.

"We've got such a severe problem with the asphalt and concrete that we have right now, and we have limited funds to spend on that," said Painter.

"I think we need to move ahead with this and figure out how we're going to pay for the brick streets going forward," Painter added.

Alderman Amelia Buragas said the council should not limit spending options.

"We have streets in the city that desperately need maintenance. They desperately need work," said Buragas.

"To remove them from a funding source, I think is saying to those residents that we're not talking your needs seriously because your needs are different than some other people's needs."

The council's lengthy discussion followed a unanimous vote adopting the \$227.5 million budget, which is up 8.3 percent from the previous fiscal year, due to increased infrastructure spending.

ISSUE: Crime

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Zimmerman Trial Enters Day Two

Date: 4/9/2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 Hours

Jurors Tuesday in the Kirk Zimmerman murder trial watched five hours of interrogation footage from Zimmerman's first interview with Bloomington Police detectives after his former wife's death.

Our news partner WMBD-TV reports Sergeant Tim Power conducted the initial interrogations of Zimmerman, who is charged for the 2014 murder of his ex-wife Pam Zimmerman.

In the video, Zimmerman answered questions with lengthy responses when it came to his alma mater the University of Iowa — his kids, and even about the divorce agreement.

But when asked what he did the night of Pam's death - or if he left his house that night ... he paused for some time before saying, "I'm just tired, I need to recharge, I just want to see my kids," said Zimmerman.

This angered Power who responded, "Every time we ask you about the time frame we need you to give us, you say I need to see my kids," said Power.

Zimmerman responded by saying a doctor told him he might have cancer and he wanted to see his kids because they just lost their mom and now they might lose their dad.

Testimony began Monday, as the trial is expected to last four to six weeks.

ISSUE: Education, Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED:

TITLE: Unit 5 board asked to approve first phase of Brandt tax breaks

Date: 4/9/2019

Time: 6 am

Duration: 12 Hours

NORMAL - Another local taxing body is expected to vote today whether to make good on an agreement to cut property taxes for a Canadian firm that's making agricultural equipment at a factory just north of Normal.

The Unit 5 School Board is being asked to abate all 2018 property taxes on two parcels of land and half of the taxes on three other parcels owned by Brandt Industries.

District administrators said Brandt has satisfied required conditions of the first year of a multi-year agreement to provide Brandt with tax incentives. Earlier this year, Brandt had 77 full-time workers, exceeding the company's pledge to employ 50 full-timers by now.

The Heartland Community College Board took similar action in Brandt's favor last month.

The Unit 5 School Board meets Wednesday at 7 p.m. at Normal West High School.

ISSUE: Business, Community

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED:

TITLE: DESTIHL Expands in Alaska

Date: 4/09/2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 Hours

DESTIHL Brewery announced today it's expanding beer distribution to Alaska and Maryland.

In May of 2017, DESTIHL opened its 47-thousand square foot production facility in Normal. Co-Founder, CEO and Brew master, Matt Potts said in a statement the new brewery has allowed for growth in new and exciting markets.

The brewery has teamed up with Bill's Distributing in Alaska and DOPS, Inc. in Maryland, which already distributes DESTIHL beers in Delaware and Washington D.C.

In February, the brewery announced it's building a new location at the Carle at The Fields development in southwest Champaign in the summer of 2020, moving from its original downtown Champaign building, which opened in 2011.

DESTIHL was founded in Normal in 2007.

ISSUE: Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED:

TITLE: City Council will see culture change

Date: 4/10/2019

Time: 6 am

Duration: 12 Hours

BLOOMINGTON - Bloomington Mayor Tari Renner is excited to work with newly elected city council members and is anticipating a bit of change.

The municipal elections resulted in four new alderman elected in Bloomington. They include Donna Boelen in Ward 2, in Ward 4 Julie Emig, Jenn Carrillo in Ward 6 and in Ward 8 Jeff Crabill.

"Almost half the council is new because we have four coming in out of the nine," Renner told WJBC's Scott Laughlin. "If you have one new alderman elected that makes a change, have two and that makes a pretty big change. Now we go all the way up to four and that will most likely make a pretty big culture change."

"Regardless, I think we'll be poised to make important progress over the next few years in Bloomington as we've already made some, but I think we can make even more," Renner added.

The new aldermen will be sworn in May 1.

ISSUE: Education

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED:

TITLE: Unit 5 board hears calls for transparency in harassment allegations against former HR director

Date: 4/10/2019

Time: 6 am

Duration: 12 Hours

NORMAL - A supporter of Unit 5's former director of human resources said Wednesday the allegations of workplace harassment that led to his resignation are the result of vicious lies and rumors.

Melinda White said she's an acquaintance of James Harden, whose alleged misconduct came to light last Friday when public radio station WGLT published a story on its website.

White attended Wednesday night's Unit 5 school board meeting at Normal West High School, sitting next to Harden's mother, Mary.

"Every charge against Dr. Harden was an all-out lie, which led to a false conclusion," White said.

White was one of three people who spoke to the board during the public comment portion of the meeting. She said Harden accepted a buyout and non-disclosure agreement because he was under pressure from accusers who wanted to ruin his career.

According to White, Harden is a man of "impeccable" character.

Political activist Jodie Slothower said Unit 5 has a long history of not knowing how to address bullying and harassment.

"I worked for some of you to be elected on this board, and I'm disappointed that I have to be speaking here reminding you that Unit 5 should have a policy of no harassment, of no bullying of anyone, no matter who they are, and that you should be able to carry out that policy," Slothower said.

Local NAACP member and former Unit 5 Citizens Advisory Council member Jerry James asked for the whole truth to come out, not just partial information.

"A lot of things are being said without a full explanation of exactly what happened, without the other side of the story being told," said James.

"I think it's absolutely critical, if you're going to impugn the person's reputation, that at least all the information is out there so people can make a sound judgment about exactly the behavior that everybody's talking about," James also said.

Unit 5 Superintendent Mark Daniel declined comment, citing confidentiality when dealing with personnel issues.

ISSUE: Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Unit 5 finalizes first year of Brandt tax breaks

Date: 4/11/2019

Time: 6a

Duration:12 hours

NORMAL - Canada's Brandt Industries, which builds agricultural equipment just north of Normal, is receiving its first in a series of tax breaks from Unit 5.

The school board Wednesday night voted unanimously to abate all 2018 property taxes on two parcels of land and half of the taxes on three other parcels. That amounts to \$39,383.77, according to the school district's attorney Curt Richardson.

Brandt and local governments signed a development agreement in which the company receives a series of tax breaks over 10 years in return for meeting certain hiring objectives.

Brandt has exceeded those expectations, with 77 full-timers working at the factory earlier this year. Brandt pledged 50 full-time workers by now.

The Heartland Community College Board took similar action in Brandt's favor earlier this month.

ISSUE:Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED:

TITLE: Fire station plan, subdivision changes set for "routine" Normal Town Council vote

Date: 4/13/2019

Time: 6 am

Duration: 12 Hours

NORMAL - A controversial plan that includes rezoning for a northeast side fire station in Normal is back on the town council's agenda Monday night.

This time, Normal town staffers are placing the issue on the council's "omnibus" agenda, which is considered one of several routine items grouped together and adopted on a single vote.

Each council agenda explains "omnibus" votes this way:

"All items under the Omnibus Vote Agenda are considered to be routine in nature and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussions of these items unless a Council Member so requests, in which event, the item will be removed from the Omnibus Vote Agenda and considered as the first item after approval of the Omnibus Vote Agenda."

In January, a half-dozen people, including council member-elect Stan Nord, voiced opposition to the redesigned Blackstone Trails subdivision which includes plans for smaller, higher-density homes. It also allows for construction of a fire station at Hershey and Shepard Roads.

Two council members, Kathleen Lorenz and Scott Preston, voted against the plans after residents complained there would be too much noise, and they would see reduced property values.

The council will now vote on amending the 10-year old annexation agreement, which includes changing the zoning to public use for the fire station, and an "anti-monotony" clause requiring the developer to vary the height and styles of the smaller and higher-density homes.

The council voted last November to buy from the developer nearly two acres of land for the fire station, to be located at 1438 Hershey Rd, at a cost not to exceed \$450,000.

Council members who want the fire station located there said it's needed to improve response times east of Veterans Parkway.

The council Monday night will also vote on a proposal to build an extended stay hotel, called Home 2 Suites by Hilton, in north Normal. It would be built on the northwest part of Constitution Trail Center at Main Street and Raab Road, adjacent to Bradford Lane.

It's the last meeting for long-time council member Jeff Fritzen, who did not run for re-election, and for R.C. McBride, who was defeated in his bid to win a second council term.

ISSUE:Charity

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Friends of BCPA, Children's Discovery Museum launch major fundraising drives

Date: 4/15/2019

Time: 6am

Duration: 12 Hours

BLOOMINGTON - A couple of prominent organizations in the Twin-Cities are kicking off major fundraisers. One of them aims to encourage the arts, while the other is intended to show kids the doctor's office is not such a scary place.

Friends of the Bloomington Center for the Performing Arts is launching a \$5 million capital campaign to finish the city's Creativity Center, which has been about 16 years in the making.

The Children's Discovery Museum Foundation seeks to raise \$350,000 for a new "Healthy Me" exhibit, which would be located on the first floor of the museum, located in Uptown Normal. It would replace the medical exhibit which was introduced when the museum first opened its doors 15 years ago.

According to a news release, the foundation has raised 60 percent of its fundraising goal thanks to a lead gift from OSF HealthCare St. Joseph Medical Center and OSF HealthCare Children's Hospital of Illinois, in addition to many individual donations.

Beth Whisman, the museum's executive director, said play helps calm fears and anxieties about going to the doctor and dentist. She said the museum staffers are working with local healthcare professionals to make sure the 1,000 square foot exhibit is relevant to what kids experience in the real world.

In Downtown Bloomington, completing the Creativity Center has been a goal since 2003 when the city bought the former Scottish Rite Temple and the 32,000 square foot former medical building on Locust Street.

The \$1 million raised so far will pay for roof work, and improving heating, ventilation, and air conditioning units, all to be done this summer.

Work on other projects, including a black box theater, classrooms, dance, music, and recording studios will start after Friends of BCPA raise three million dollars.

Friends of BCPA aim to support arts education for at-risk youths and improve accessibility of the arts to the elderly, the disabled, and low-income people.

In the words of Friends of BCPA Board President Vicki Tilton, "When we teach people to create, they are less likely to destroy."

ISSUE:Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Brady to host "Graduate Tax" town hall meeting

Date: 4/15/2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 Hours

NORMAL - A local lawmaker wants constituents to be fully aware of Governor JB Pritzker's plan to implement a graduated income tax system.

Rep. Dan Brady (R-Bloomington) will host a town hall meeting Tuesday night in Uptown Normal to discuss and answer questions about the proposed graduated income tax.

A Senate committee approved the amendment to the state's constitution, which would move the state from a flat tax to a graduated tax where rates are based on income.

Governor Pritzker said only those making above \$250,000 a year will see a tax increase. The amendment now moves to the full Senate for approval.

Brady told WJBC's Scott Laughlin if the amendment is approved by the legislature, voters will then have a say on the November 2020 ballot.

"Once the General Assembly is done and working towards putting this on for a constitutional question on the ballot, the voters will have a say, and hopefully educating voters will be to their advantage," said Brady.

Rep. Randy Freese (R-Paloma) will join the discussion along with a presentation from Americans for Prosperity.

Tuesday's town hall meeting starts at 6 p.m. in Uptown Station.

ISSUE: Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Two Normal council members regret partisanship as they bid farewell

Date: 4/16/2019

Time: 6 am

Duration: 12 Hours

NORMAL - Two Normal Town Council members, who attended their final council meeting Monday night, lamented the divisiveness that's plagued national politics has spread to the local level.

Jeff Fritzen decided not to run for re-election after serving 32 years on the council, and also running and losing a race for mayor against incumbent Chris Koos.

Fritzen regretted the past two municipal elections have become very partisan even though though local races are for non-partisan positions.

According to Fritzen, one of the Normal council's strengths is that its elected leaders and staff are able to reason through difficult issues.

"Our ability to disagree without being disagreeable. If somebody asks me what's your hope? That would be my hope, that we return to that. That we set aside the negativism," said Fritzen.

First-term council member Chamberly Cummings said Fritzen is a grandfather-like figure and mentor who reminds her of the late President George H. W. Bush.

Council member Kathleen Lorenz praised Fritzen for being the "true statesman" of city government.

Also bidding farewell to the council is R.C. McBride, who was defeated in his re-election bid.

"In a world where and in a point in our country's history where so many are so angry about so much, so much of the time, and many times with very good reason, that feeling of anger is pervasive," said McBride.

"We need more Jeff Fritzens," McBride added.

McBride congratulated council newcomers Stan Nord and Karyn Smith, who attended Monday night's meeting. McBride warned them they're going to upset people no matter what they do. That's what makes the council position a hard job, McBride also said.

ISSUE: Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Board picks Health Director Rodriguez as next McLean County Administrator

Date: 4/16/2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 Hours

BLOOMINGTON - McLean County government will soon have a new administrator.

The county board Tuesday night agreed to hire McLean County Health Department Director Camille Rodriguez to manage all of county government.

With one member abstaining, the board approved a five-year contract for Rodriguez with a \$130,000 annual salary.

She replaces Bill Wasson, who retires June first with an annual salary of \$145,720.

Rodriguez is only the fifth county administrator, and the first woman to hold the job, a fact not lost on her three daughters.

"They think it's a pretty big deal that their mother is the first woman to hold this position," said Rodriguez.

"I just think it's an honor to be tapped for the position. McLean County has a history of hiring highly qualified candidates. That's what I consider myself to be, a highly qualified candidate," Rodriguez also said.

Rodriguez also worked for the Wisconsin's Department of Health Services. She was an investigator for two state agencies in Illinois -- the Department of Children and Family Services and the Executive Inspector General.

Rodriguez believes the Blue Ribbon panel and the county board's executive committee were impressed with her energy, her positivity, and her desire to collaborate with others.

"Government cannot exist without the participants of all, and so our ability to listen to what people in McLean County feel are the needs, our

ability to use data to drive our decisions, and my ability to serve this county board is going to be all the right combination to continue on with the successes," Rodriguez said.

Republican County Board member George Wendt, who represents District three covering south and west of Bloomington, declined comment why he abstained from voting for the new administrator.

ISSUE: Crime

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: One person injured in Miller Park stabbing

Date: 4/16/2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 hours

BLOOMINGTON - Bloomington Police said they were questioning a suspect for a stabbing that happened Tuesday night at Miller Park.

Police said they were called about 7:40 p.m. A man was taken to a local hospital for what police said was non-life threatening injuries.

Police said the suspect and victim know each other. Investigators are not releasing other details.

Police officers were seen Tuesday evening near Miller Park Pavilion using flashlights to search for evidence.

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

ISSUE: Crime

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: BPD denies tainting Zimmerman evidence

Date: 4/17/2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 Hours

BLOOMINGTON - Bloomington Police detectives investigating Pam Zimmerman's murder deny defense claims that they may have contaminated evidence.

Two detectives were on the stand Wednesday in the trial of Kirk Zimmerman to describe their search of Zimmerman's home, his car, and the office where his ex-wife was shot to death in November 2014.

Our news partner, WMBD-TV, reports some of the detectives' testimony centered on the gear shift in the middle console of Zimmerman's car, the only place where they found gunshot residue.

The defense tried to show one of the police officers may have touched that gear shift. One of the officers said he was the only person to go into the car two days after the murder, but never touched the gear shift. The officer said he wore protective gloves and only touched the door handle and steering wheel.

Police also said tests showed Zimmerman's fingerprints were not on a bullet shell casing found at the crime scene.

ISSUE: Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Arena contract change aims to limit taxpayer losses

Date: 4/18/2019

Time: 6 am

Duration: 12 hours

BLOOMINGTON - Bloomington's city government is looking to limit the amount of money it's losing from owning Grossinger Motors Arena.

Arena management firm VenuWorks would compensate the government if annual losses are more than \$350,000, according to a contract amendment to be considered by the Bloomington City Council Monday night.

A staff report to the council said VenuWorks agreed to the contract change even though the arena's executive director, Lynn Cannon, told aldermen last September the best the city could hope for is an annual

deficit of \$500,000. The arena lost almost \$665,000 the last fiscal year and \$673,000 the previous year.

VenuWorks would also begin charging a "market rate" for parking at events expected to attract more than 500 people. The city would receive \$1.50, instead of 50 cents for each parked car.

For the fiscal year starting May 1, the downtown venue will have 30 more open dates because the Central Illinois Flying Aces hockey team won't play next season. Cannon said the team's departure gives her flexibility to book more popular events on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays when the team usually had home games.

ISSUE: Crime

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Police still looking for suspects in shooting

Date: 4/19/2019

Time: 6 am

Duration: 12 Hours

Bloomington Police are asking for the public's help in identifying two suspects who held up a Subway restaurant in the 2300 block of East Oakland Avenue on Thursday.

Both suspects are being described as black males wearing dark clothing. Pictures and a short video of the incident can be found at wjbc.com.

Police were called to the scene around 8:30 Thursday morning. Nobody was hurt as one of the two suspects displayed a knife and they made off with an undisclosed amount of cash and an employee's cell phone.

Anyone with information is asked to contact BPD or McLean County Crime Stoppers.

ISSUE: Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: City and union partner to limit "pension spiking"

Date: 4/23/2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 Hours

BLOOMINGTON - Bloomington's city manager is crediting a union representing about 100 city government employees with helping to curb so-called "pension spiking" that costs taxpayers millions of dollars.

The city council Monday night voted unanimously to accept a three-year deal with the union representing workers in Human Resources, Public Works, Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Arts Departments.

City Manager Tim Gleason said the contract with the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees Local 699 will effectively end accelerated sick-leave buyback payouts by May 1, 2020.

"AFSCME came to the table ready to negotiate, fought for items important for their membership, understood the financial impacts of how sick-leave buyback is paid out for employees hired before 2012, and were an integral part of the solution," said Gleason.

AFSCME Staff Representative Renee Nestler said she appreciated Gleason sitting at the bargaining table instead of an outside attorney.

"Our task as a union was to minimize the harm to our members," said Nestler.

"While the perfect solution for all is unknown, we believe we were successful in meeting both the city's and union's objectives. This is a prime example of how the city can work together with the union to resolve problems," Nestler also said.

The contract calls for annual raises of up to three percent, and a larger signing bonus of a thousand dollars for workers not taking advantage of the inflated buyouts.

Nestler said AFSCME workers overwhelmingly ratified the contract.

ISSUE: Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Council backs agreement to limit arena losses

Date: 4/23/2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 Hours

BLOOMINGTON - Bloomington aldermen, tired of owning a downtown arena that's hemorrhaging taxpayer dollars, took action Monday night aimed at reducing those losses.

Aldermen voted 8-1 amending the city's agreement with VenuWorks in which the firm managing Grossinger Motors Arena will assume some of the risk when losses exceed \$350,000.

The deal comes seven months after VenuWorks Executive Director Lynn Cannon told the council a best-case scenario is for the indoor venue to lose \$500,000 a year.

Alderman Scott Black voted no, saying he wants more dramatic deficit reduction.

City Manager Tim Gleason said the new deal with VenuWorks is a step in the right direction.

"We have a five year agreement with VenuWorks. We're at the point to where we have two years and remaining. (We're) definitely not satisfied," said Gleason.

"VenuWorks is very much a partner and believe we've got opportunities," Gleason added.

Those opportunities include increased flexibility to schedule weekend events with the departure of the arena's hockey team, the Central Illinois Flying Aces.

The city will also collect more for parking when events are expected to attract more than 500 people. The government will get \$1.50 for each parked car, instead of 50 cents.

The city is paying VenuWorks \$114,000 a year to manage the arena.

ISSUE:Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Connect Transit Board panel formed to seek input after controversial fare hikes, route changes

Date: 4/23/2019

Time: 6 am

Duration: 12 Hours

BLOOMINGTON - Faced with community backlash for raising fares and eliminating a bus route, the Connect Transit Board of Trustees on Tuesday created a working group to develop transit system recommendations.

Members of the Connect to the Future panel will be named at a special meeting May 14. Trustee Judy Buchanan will chair the working group and develop recommendations this fall, about the time fare hikes are supposed to take effect.

"There has probably been more conversation about local transit in the recent months than I can recall in a very long time, so that's the good news. The bad news is of course we do have challenges," said Buchanan.

"We are here to tell you, we hear you," she added.

Trustee Julie Hile will also serve on the panel. Earlier, seven of the eight speakers addressing the board at its monthly meeting voiced their opposition to the fare increases and elimination of a low-ridership route taking passengers from Main and Orlando in Normal to east of Veterans Parkway.

Normal Township Trustee Arlene Hosea pleaded with Connect Transit trustees to reconsider their decisions by taking into account about 40 emails that they didn't see prior to last month's votes.

"It is not shameful for you to go back and to say let's revisit this. Let's meet with those individuals, only those individuals who wrote those emails. Let's talk to them and let's show that we do care about the people. This is your moment," said Hosea.

Connect Transit Trustee John Bowman blasted the transit system for "very muddy" communication that led to the backlash.

"I don't think anyone really articulated why the Olive (route) needed to go away beyond the fact that focusing on one or two stops and the count numbers there, said Bowman.

"There has got to be a better reason, frankly, for cutting a route, and that's got to be communicated or you're going to have a negative reaction from the community every time you try to do this," Bowman added.

Bowman's comments won applause from the audience, but Board Chairman Mike McCurdy countered there were 14 community engagement sessions before the board took action.

ISSUE: Education

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: School lunch costs go up in Unit 5, board picks its leaders

Date: 4/25/2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 Hours

NORMAL - It will cost a little more next school year to buy lunch at Unit 5 schools.

The school board Wednesday night voted to increase the regular meal price by five cents to \$2.20 for elementary students, \$2.25 for middle school kids, and up to \$2.90 for high school students. Adults will pay \$2.70 to \$3.40 per meal.

The reasons for the increase, according to Unit 5 Business Manager Marty Hickman, are rising costs and meeting Federal Paid Lunch Equity requirements.

"When you go to the grocery store yourself, you see the prices are rising for all the food items. It's the same for our school lunches, and rising wages," said Hickman.

There's no change for reduced price meals, breakfast, and extra milk.

The board also approved a \$5.00 increase for instructional supplies, ranging from \$60 for half-day kindergarteners to \$155 for high schoolers.

In other business, Unit 5 Board President Barry Hitchins will serve in that capacity for another year, and the board picked Amy Roser to be vice president.

ISSUE: Crime, Community

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Local rape survivor departs Twin-Cities to escape painful memories

Date: 4/25/2019

Time: 6 am

Duration: 12 Hours

BLOOMINGTON - For a former Illinois State University student, Thursday evening's Take Back the Night event in Downtown Bloomington may have been her farewell to the Twin-Cities.

She was among about 60 people who gathered for a rally, march, and candlelight vigil capping activities tied to Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

The woman, 21, said she's leaving to continue her education in Utah after someone she knew raped her January 31.

She was one of the featured speakers outside the McLean County Museum of History.

"I shouldn't have to worry about being assaulted by my friends. I should be able to go out and have fun, and even get a little drunk if I want to without worry that one of my friends is going to hurt me," she said.

"I shouldn't be blaming myself for something that I did not do," she added.

The woman said considered suicide and checked herself in to the mental health unit at Advocate BroMenn Medical Center. She said it's a shame that she has to leave Bloomington-Normal.

"I couldn't handle being around here," she said.

"The person who assaulted me knew where I lived, and I didn't feel safe anymore."

The woman said she loved the sense of community in the Twin-Cities.

Take Back the Night activities were organized by YWCA McLean County.

ISSUE: Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Uptown mural group seeks injunction

Date: 4/26/2019

Time: 6 am

Duration: 12 Hours

Artists who created a mural in Uptown Normal have filed a federal lawsuit against the town government and Trail East developer Bush Construction to protect the mural, which is set to be demolished when construction starts on the \$30 million building on Beaufort Street.

The lawsuit filed in Peoria claims federal copyright law, called the Visual Artists Rights Act, does not allow the mural to be destroyed without the artists' permission.

Chicago lawyer William McGrath is representing the 13 artists who filed the lawsuit.

The artists' seek an injunction prohibiting the "destruction, distortion, mutilation or other modification" of the mural, in addition to financial damages.

The Trail East project includes offices, residences, and a food court. Three buildings on the northeast portion of Uptown Circle, including the attached mural would be knocked down.

Normal Mayor Chris Koos, who has backed tax incentives for Trail East, declined comment on the lawsuit.

City Manager Pam Reece said, "We are evaluating the lawsuit and will appropriately defend the town's position."

ISSUE: Crime

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Local man charged with DUI after car hits pedestrians in Normal

Date: 4/28/2019

Time: 6 am

Duration: 12 Hours

NORMAL - Authorities now report two people were hospitalized, and a third person was arrested for drunken driving late Friday night after a car struck pedestrians crossing College Avenue in Normal.

The police report said a witness reported seeing several people crossing College Avenue, near railroad tracks where the road splits with Mulberry Street.

The witness reportedly said the car did not have its break lights on when it swerved and struck the pedestrians about 10:10 p.m.

Normal Police said a woman, 22, and a man, 24, were transported to Advocate BroMenn Medical Center. Police said they did not suffer life-threatening injuries.

Prosecutors charged Robert Fisher, 62, of Bloomington with DUI and failing to reduce speed to avoid an accident.

The police report indicates Fisher failed a field sobriety test, slurred his words, and couldn't remember his address.

Police said using a portable breath test device, they found Fisher's blood alcohol level was at 1.777, which is above the legal limit in Illinois of 0.08. Police said Fisher refused to provide investigators with a blood sample.

Police said they used a portable breath test device to determine Fisher's blood alcohol level was at 1.777, which is above the legal limit in Illinois of 0.08. Police said Fisher refused to provide investigators with a blood sample.

He was released from the McLean County Jail on a \$5,000 personal recognizance bond.

ISSUE:Community, Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Sgt. Rodgers family "blessed beyond measure" by community's support

Date: 4/29/2019

Time: 6 am

Duration: 12 Hours

BLOOMINGTON - The mother of the late U.S. Army Sgt. Josh Rodgers is thankful Bloomington-Normal has lifted up Rodgers' family and friends as they grieve, but also celebrate his life.

Vonda Rodgers said other communities have not been as supportive of Gold Star families who've lost loved ones in battle.

"We are blessed beyond measure that our community recognizes the valor that happened that night, recognized that Josh didn't have to be there, and that he wasn't there for himself. He was there for us, so we have an awesome community," she said.

Mrs. Rodgers said she's living the life Josh wanted her to live, by continuing his fight for freedom.

"Josh wouldn't want me sitting around, hiding in the dark, and pretending it didn't happen. He would want me to continue his fight for freedom. I'm not going to Afghanistan, but I will fight for freedom here," she added.

Josh Rodgers died two years ago from wounds he suffered in a battle against ISIS in Afghanistan. Last week, the U.S. Post Office in Normal was

named in Rodgers' honor, as was a section of Airport Road on Bloomington's northeast side.

State Representative Dan Brady, who's been a family friend for years, said Rodgers' loved ones have turned a terrible tragedy into a positive by keeping the soldier's name alive.

"They have caused awareness. They have gone out on many causes in the name of Sgt. Josh Rodgers," said Brady.

"They have tried to do so many good things out of this terrible situation and take the positives, making sure Josh is remembered, making sure that good could come out of this, and making sure that others can be helped in the name of Sgt. Josh Rodgers," Brady also said.

ISSUE:Police/ Fire, Crime

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Coroner: Rural Chatsworth crash burns driver "beyond recognition"

Date: 4/29/2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 Hours

CHATSWORTH - The Livingston County coroner said dental records or DNA will be used to positively identify the charred remains of a driver whose car struck a guard rail and burned just north of Chatsworth.

The body was burned beyond recognition, according to Coroner Danny Watson.

In a news release, Watson said a passerby made the discovery about 10:10 Monday morning. The burned out 2003 Buick four-door automobile was impaled on the guard rail at 3225 East and 1000 North Road in Charlotte Township, which is in far southeastern Livingston County.

Authorities believe the fire burned out sometime during the night.

The coroner said there will be an autopsy performed on the body, and the Livingston County Sheriff's Department is also investigating the accident.

ISSUE: Crime

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Prosecutors use cell phone data to cast doubt on Zimmerman's alibi

Date: 4/29/2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 Hours

BLOOMINGTON - McLean County prosecutors were trying to show on Monday that there are holes in Kirk Zimmerman's alibi of what he was doing when his former wife Pam was shot to death at her office on East Washington Street.

Zimmerman claims he was so tired after doing yard work that he fell asleep until about 7 p.m. on November 3, 2014. Pam Zimmerman is believed to have been killed that day between 5 and 7 p.m.

FBI Special Agent Greg Catey is an expert in cell phone technology and historical cell site analysis. Catey said Zimmerman's car was moving during that two hour span.

Catey said Zimmerman was likely at home until 4:30 p.m., but after that, his car connected to several cell phone towers, eventually landing at one near Pam's office.

Catey also said Zimmerman could have been at home, or he could have been near the crime scene at about 6:12 p.m., according to news partner WMBD-TV.

Once all the prosecution witnesses are called, defense lawyers are expected to ask the judge for a directed verdict, claiming the state presented insufficient evidence. It's rare for the defense to win a motion to end the trial before the case goes to the jury.

Defense Attorney John Rogers has not indicated publicly whether Zimmerman will testify in his own defense.

ISSUE: Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: State of McLean County addressed in downtown Bloomington

Date: 4/30/2019

Time: 6 am

Duration: 12 Hours

BLOOMINGTON - Economic development, intergovernmental cooperation and quality of life were all topics discussed during the State of McLean County address.

The event hosted Tuesday by the McLean County Chamber of Commerce included a panel of County Board members, administrators, and other partners in the community.

County Board Chairman John McIntyre discussed economic development and businesses that have come to the area like Rivian and Brandt Industries.

"The people that came from Rivian and Brandt are good people and they came here because they like our community," said McIntyre.

"People can feel confident that those businesses aren't coming here with high ideas of what they only want to accomplish, they want to work with us," McIntyre added.

Unit 5 Superintendent Mark Daniel said growing school districts in the county starts with a partnership among several groups.

"It has been very eye-opening to me in regards to how all of our taxing bodies need to work together with our government units and county units in order to grow," said Daniel. "It's a critical partnership and I'm very grateful for how we've worked together and I think the results are showing."

McLean County Mayors Association President Tom Caisley (Mayor of Danvers), and Vice President Chad Walden (Mayor of Arrowsmith) said many smaller towns are preparing to work on infrastructure repairs after a rough winter.

"Rural areas make up 25 percent of our county," said McIntyre. "It's imperative we continue to work with our Mayors Association and provide services for those areas to the best of our ability."

County Administrator Bill Wasson also touched on mcplan.org, a site that shares plans, programs, projects, and data for all residents in the county.

Other discussion included services currently and soon to be offered such as a business micro-loan program, a mental health triage center, and different youth initiatives.

This is the first event of a four-part advocacy series through the Chamber's office which will include the State of Bloomington-Normal, State of the State, and the State of Congress.

ISSUE: Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Delay to upgrade Rivian plant costs company large tax break

Date: 4/30/2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 Hours

NORMAL - Rivian Automotive has taken a little more time than originally expected to renovate the former Mitsubishi Motors factory in Normal, which means the electric vehicle maker won't get the property tax break it hoped to receive this year from local governments.

The performance-based incentive deal with local taxing bodies had the company pledging to invest \$10 million last year to restore the plant. The company did not reach that amount, so it will pay about \$657,000 in property taxes.

The Unit 5 School District's share of Rivian's tax bill is \$389,000.

Zach Dietmeier, Vice President of the Bloomington-Normal Economic Development Council, said the delay is disappointing, but does not temper all the good things happening at Rivian, including recent investments from Amazon and Ford.

"They've had that huge \$700 million investment from Amazon. They've had the \$500 million commitment from Ford. So, people know they are legitimate, and that they're going to keep pressing forward, but delays happen," Dietmeier said.

"The assembly lines will be in place here in 2019 heading into 2020. The production is going to start at the factory," Dietmeier added.

"We're going to see employment at the factory continue to grow exponentially here in the next couple of years as they get up and running. So it's important to focus on the positives of that story," Dietmeier also said.

According to Dietmeier, Rivian pledges to invest \$22 million in the plant this year to receive next year's tax break.

Rivian almost doubled the number of employees that it agreed to hire in 2018. The company now has a full-time workforce of 60 to 70 people, Dietmeier said.

Rivian plans to build the R1 T pick up truck and R1 S sports utility vehicle in Normal.

ISSUE:Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Alderman-elect Carrillo's victory lap includes visit to nation's capital

Date: 5/01/2019

Time: 6 am

Duration: 12 Hours

BLOOMINGTON - On the eve of her swearing-in as Bloomington alderman, local activist Jennifer Carrillo was in Washington on Tuesday appearing on the same stage with Presidential candidate Bernie Sanders.

They were among the featured speakers at "The People's Wave" Convention.

Carrillo said her priorities include free public transportation, improving community policing, and affordable housing.

"Tomorrow is the day that we start co-governing to deliver what folks in our community want, need, and deserve; free and clean energy-powered public transit, real community policing, affordable housing, protections for local workers and their families, a sustainable and green new infrastructure for our city, and so much more," Carrillo said.

The alderman-elect also talked about her election victory against 20 year council veteran Karen Schmidt.

"We went toe-to-toe with neoliberal establishment politics, and we won," Carrillo said.

"So tomorrow, I'm going to fly back home and have the honor of being the first Latinx person in our city council's history to be sworn-in," she said.

Carrillo will be sworn-in Wednesday evening as Ward 6 alderman, covering the city's west side.

Also taking their city council seats are Donna Boelen in Ward 2, Julie Emig in Ward 4, and Jeff Crabill in Ward 8.

ISSUE: Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Unity shown as Bloomington welcomes four new aldermen

Date: 5/01/2019

Time: 6 am

Duration: 12 Hours

BLOOMINGTON - It was a great day for new beginnings, according to Bloomington Mayor Tari Renner.

The four city council members elected April 2nd were sworn into office in front of family members, friends, and supporters who packed council chambers Wednesday evening.

"We have a new team and we have lots of challenges, and a lot of hard work ahead," said Renner.

Donna Boelen, the new alderman in Ward 2, held a Bible when she recited the oath. Boelen also hugged new Ward 6 Alderman Jenn Carrillo even though the two appear to be political opposites.

We've met and shared a couple of hours talking to each other," said Boelen.

"To be honest, she reminds me of my own children. She's got a lot of passion. I remember having a lot of passion at her age," Boelen said.

Carrillo said she respects Boelen and thinks the two will work together.

"I don't think we're as different as people want to think that we are," said Carrillo.

"We are serving because we have the public's best interest at heart, and we're going to grapple with what that means and how we negotiate what that looks like," Carrillo added.

Also taking office Wednesday were Ward 4 Alderman Julie Emig and Ward 8 Alderman Jeff Crabill.

None of the new aldermen favored reconsidering the four-cent a gallon gasoline tax increase that went into effect Wednesday, but all wanted to make sure gas tax revenue is spent on fixing streets and sidewalks.

All but Boelen favored revisiting a proposed "Welcoming City" ordinance for undocumented immigrants. Boelen said immigration is a federal issue.

ISSUE: Crime

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Gunmen rob Bloomington mobile phone store

Date: 5/03/2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 Hours

BLOOMINGTON - Bloomington Police report three people wearing masks robbed a business at gunpoint Friday night just south of Downtown Bloomington.

Two of the robbers were said to have displayed handguns as the trio took an undisclosed amount of cash and merchandise from the Boost Mobile store at 603 S. Center St. about 7:30 p.m.

The employee was not hurt.

A description of the suspects is not available. Anyone with information is asked to contact Bloomington Police at 309-820-8888 or McLean County Crime Stoppers at 309-828-1111.

ISSUE:Crime

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: State's Attorney, BPD to discuss Zimmerman murder probe after not guilty verdict

Date: 5/03/2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 Hours

BLOOMINGTON - McLean County's chief prosecutor said it's not his call whether police will actively investigate the killing almost five years ago of Bloomington financial planner Pamela Zimmerman.

A jury on Monday acquitted Zimmerman's former husband, Kirk, of her murder that happened in November 2014.

State's Attorney Don Knapp said the investigation's status will be a topic of conversation in the coming weeks involving his office and Bloomington Police investigators.

"How they dispatch their resources is not open to me. Those will be conversations we'll have. After we debrief with this case, that will be an ongoing conversation we have," said Knapp.

Knapp said that debriefing will hopefully involve Zimmerman trial jurors to find out what they believe were the strengths and weaknesses of the case.

"Whatever my personal thoughts are of what the evidence showed, it was up to them to make that decision, and we'll debrief with them to the best of our ability. Maybe they'll allow us to, maybe they won't," said Knapp.

Jurors do not have to meet with prosecutors. Several of them declined comment when WJBC News approached them on Monday.

ISSUE:Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Mayoral hopeful Tiritilli wants spot on Connect Transit board

Date: 5/08/2019

Time: 6 am

Duration: 12 Hours

NORMAL - Normal Mayor Chris Koos said he's working on filling a vacancy on the Connect Transit Board of Trustees, and the man who narrowly lost to Koos in the mayoral election two years ago said he would like Koos to appoint him to that position.

Marc Tiritilli said Normal is losing much of its public transit service by the elimination of the Olive bus route, running from near Main Street and Orlando Avenue in Normal to east of Veterans Parkway.

Ending the route saves the system \$156,000 a year, according to Connect Transit General Manager Isaac Thorne, who noted the Olive line had low ridership.

Addressing Mayor Koos and the Normal Town Council, Tiritilli said poor leadership on the board fueled a public outcry after it cut the Olive route and voted for fare increases that are scheduled to start this fall.

"Chris, I've asked you to appoint me to that position," Tiritilli said.

"It's been five weeks. We've had two council meetings with no appointment. If there's a great person, I'm all for it, but we need better representation. We need people that are going to stand up for the values of riders," said Tiritilli.

"It kills me that this spot is sitting vacant," Tiritilli added.

Tiritilli said he understands the importance of public transit because he rode the bus to work when he lived in Philadelphia.

Two current Connect Transit trustees represent Normal. They are Chairman Mike McCurdy and Julie Hile.

Tiritilli said he plans to run for mayor again in two years. In 2017, Koos defeated Tiritilli by only 11 votes.

Meantime, Connect Transit's new working group assigned to develop transit system recommendations meets for the first time on Saturday.

ISSUE: Crime

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Boys and Girls Club volunteer guilty of sexually abusing club member

Date: 5/08/2019

Time: 6 am

Duration: 12 Hours

BLOOMINGTON - A jury returned a split decision Wednesday in the case of a former Boys and Girls Club of Bloomington-Normal volunteer charged with committing sex crimes against a club member.

The jury found Julius Scott, 24, guilty of aggravated criminal sexual abuse for having sex with a girl younger than 17 and he was five years older than her.

The jury found Scott not guilty of a more serious criminal sexual assault charge alleging Scott used force to have sex with the teenager in November 2017.

Scott faces a possible prison sentence of three to seven years, but he could receive probation when he's sentenced July 9.

Scott worked for the Boys and Girls Club as part of his sentence to perform community service for a domestic battery conviction.

The case prompted the organization to take itself off the list of agencies in which people convicted of crimes can perform community service work.

ISSUE: Education

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Unit 5 parents "tired" and "frustrated" about racial disparity in the district

Date: 5/09/2019

Time: 6 am

Duration: 12 Hours

NORMAL - Some Unit 5 parents told the school board Wednesday night that African-American students at Unit 5 are more likely than other children to face discipline, and the district's staff lacks diversity to teach minority children.

Jade Hursey, one of four parents who addressed the board, said she's tired and frustrated about racial disparities.

"What are you doing today to resolve these disparities, and what do you plan to do in the future? My request is that you take heed to the concerns that have been shared, and hire more qualified teachers, staff, and administrators across all of Unit 5," said Hursey.

Superintendent Mark Daniel acknowledged there are disparities among various student groups, based on data compiled from the federal government's "Every Student Succeeds Act."

Daniel said Unit 5 also faces the challenge of enticing Illinois State University graduates to stay in the Twin-Cities instead of finding work closer to home.

"People return to about a 40 to 50 mile radius of where they live," said Daniel.

"So if we do have candidates that come from Chicago, they're graduates here at ISU, where do they go? Back to the Chicago area. We need to

figure out how to tap into those individuals and retain them," Daniel also said.

Parent Kristal Shelvin, also a school psychologist in Livingston County, urged the district to create a task force comprised of parents with African-American kids in Unit 5, who also happen to be educators. These "cultural brokers," as Shelvin calls them, would make recommendations to Unit 5 decision makers.

"To have that conversation with folks who understand what it means to be an African-American parent, or an African-American student, I think adds another layer of authenticity, and it also adds a layer of perspective," said Shelvin.

Daniel is open to the idea of forming a task force.

"It's critical to listen to people who have suggestions, and can also be part of the solution," said Daniel.

ISSUE:Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: "Alderman" seen as "masculine" title for Bloomington council

Date: 5/09/2019

Time: 3pm

Duration: 12 Hours

BLOOMINGTON - Elected representatives of Bloomington's nine wards would no longer be known as "aldermen" in the city code if the council passes a proposed ordinance Monday night.

Bloomington's city code would be updated, referring to them as "council members," which is a "gender neutral" term, according to the staff's report to the council.

The report said requests for the change came from incoming council members, who were sworn into office May first.

The title of "alderman" is considered a "masculine only" reference, according to the staff.

Five of the nine council members are women. They are Julie Emig, Donna Boelen, Jenn Carrillo, Joni Painter, and Kimberly Bray.

The Illinois Municipal Code and City Charter still refer to them as "aldermen," so they'll have to use that title on nominating petitions when they're running for office.

ISSUE: Courts

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Council to vote on \$55K lawsuit settlement against BPD

Date: 5/09/2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 Hours

BLOOMINGTON - Two people, who sued the City of Bloomington and four of its police officers two years ago, will get \$55,000 in an out-of-court settlement if the city council approves the deal Monday night.

Ashley Burrell alleged officers conducted an unreasonable search and seizure of her vehicle, while Donnelly Jackson claimed he was injured when he refused to leave the vehicle.

The staff's report to the council said the city followed the law, and would have prevailed in court. However, anticipated costs of defending the police officers' actions would have been significantly higher than the \$55,000 settlement.

"Litigating the case is simply cost prohibitive," the staff's report said.

A Peoria law firm represented the city in the case.

ISSUE: Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Artists fear Uptown mural demolition could happen soon

Date: 5/10/2019

Time: 6 am

Duration: 12 Hours

NORMAL - The lawyer, representing artists trying to save their mural in Uptown Normal, believes there's a sense of urgency to prevent its demolition.

Chicago attorney William McGrath, representing 13 artists who painted the mural, filed a federal lawsuit last month. He's now asking the judge to issue a temporary restraining order to stop Normal's town government or developer Bush Construction from bulldozing the eight-year old mural or perhaps moving it to another spot.

An order would prevent the town government and the developer from temporarily "taking any actions to destroy, distort, mutilate, or modify" the mural, which adorns the exterior wall of one of the three buildings set for demolition on East Beaufort Street.

In his motion, McGrath contends demolition could start this month because college students have left Normal for the summer.

The town is offering tax increment financing dollars to help build the \$30 million Trail East complex, which would include offices, residences, and a food court.

The lawsuit, filed last month, claims the federal Visual Artists Rights Act forbids demolition without the artists' consent.

The artists seek unspecified financial damages in addition to a ruling protecting the mural.

McGrath said Thursday afternoon there was no hearing date scheduled in Peoria federal court on the temporary restraining order.

ISSUE:Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Bloomington council asked to aid Brandt's growth plans , approve east side chicken coops

Date: 5/13/2019

Time:6 am

Duration: 12 Hours

BLOOMINGTON - The Bloomington City Council is being asked to sign off on a plan to increase the size of the area's enterprise zone to help Canada's Brandt Industries grow its U.S. operations just north of Normal.

Council members are expected to vote Monday night whether to approve a 32 acre enterprise zone extension to help the agricultural equipment maker take advantage of state government incentives for a \$35 million expansion.

The McLean County Board approved the proposal last month, and Normal's Town Council followed suit last Monday night, with the blessing of new council member Karyn Smith.

"I'm very pleased that they're here because I think that we do have a good corporate citizen in Brandt, with what they're hoping to do in this location," said Smith.

"They're attracted to us because we are in the heart of the Corn Belt," Smith also said.

The interim CEO of the Bloomington-Normal Economic Development Council, Mike O'Grady, said Brandt has more than 80 full-time workers at the factory between Normal and Hudson, exceeding its pledge to have 50 full-timers on staff by this time to receive local tax incentives. Brandt expects its workforce to exceed 300 employees in six years.

"They're sales have exceeded their expectations within the United States, just in short time that they've been selling product," said O'Grady.

"They're scrambling to get caught up at this location, and I think we'll see great things to the future," O'Grady added.

Also on the council's agenda is the first request by a Bloomington property owner to raise chickens since the recently-approved zoning overhaul permits the activity.

Karla Lane applied for a special use permit to raise up to 12 chickens at 3402 and 3404 E. Oakland Ave. Lane wants the chickens to provide her family with organic eggs, fertilize her garden, and control insects. She said there won't be a rooster in her flock, which should reduce noise in the neighborhood.

City staffers attached a couple of conditions, including keeping the chicken coops at least 10 feet away from neighboring properties.

The city council Monday night is expected to choose a Mayor Pro Tem, who would take over official mayoral duties when the mayor is not able to perform those responsibilities. Karen Schmidt held that position, but she lost her council seat in last month's municipal election.

ISSUE:Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Sandage: Legal pot proposal is a public safety threat

Date: 5/14/2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 Hours

BLOOMINGTON - McLean County Sheriff Jon Sandage is joining other law enforcement officials to express concern about legalizing recreational marijuana.

Sandage along with the Illinois Sheriffs' Association and Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police are opposing the proposed legislation.

In a statement on Facebook, Sandage said public safety concerns that were not addressed when drafting the proposed measure include impaired driving, increased crime threats, consequences of mass expungement, and not enough resources to keep communities safe.

"Law enforcement across the state is on the front lines of the daily battle with crime and are often the first responders to individuals suffering with mental health and addiction issues. Yet this bill proposes that past-due vendors are more important than keeping our communities and streets safe," said Sandage.

"Worse, the funding is proposed as a grant program, which raises significant concerns about the equitable distribution of new resources without the the taint of political or other motivations," he added.

Sandage's comments come on the heels of Sen. Jason Barickman (R-Bloomington), who said he also does not support the current proposal.

Gov. J.B. Pritzker wants lawmakers to pass the legislation before the session ends in May.

ISSUE: Crime

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Man badly hurt in west side hit-and-run crash

Date: 5/21/2019

Time: 6 am

Duration: 12 Hours

BLOOMINGTON - Bloomington Police were looking for the driver of a dark-colored sedan who drove off Monday night after hitting a man on the city's west side.

Police and fire crews were called about 9:30 p.m. to the area of Locust Street and White Oak Road.

Police said the man suffered serious injuries, and was taken to an area hospital.

No other details were available.

Anyone with information about the hit-and-run is asked to contact Bloomington Police at 309-820-8888, or McLean County Crime Stoppers at 309-828-1111.

ISSUE: Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Council to vote on empowering city manager to hire police and firefighters

Date: 5/25/2019

Time: 6 am

Duration: 12 Hours

BLOOMINGTON - The authority to hire Bloomington police officers and firefighters would shift from a volunteer commission to the city manager, under a proposal before the city council Tuesday night.

City Manager Tim Gleason was a 21 year veteran of the Pekin Police Department, rising to the rank of Lieutenant before becoming a city administrator in Decatur, and now in Bloomington.

The staff's proposal to hand over hiring authority to Gleason comes as he runs a national search to replace retiring Police Chief Clay Wheeler, whose last day on the job is June 21.

According to the staff's report, a key component to successful recruitment of police and firefighters is to speed up the hiring process, which staffers contend is hampered by waiting for action by the Board of Fire and Police Commissioners.

"Allowing for this restructure of authority will allow city staff to build the eligibility lists without the constraint of coordinating the schedules of volunteer members to the Commission and waiting on formal meetings," the staff report said.

The report said city staff to build eligibility lists without having to coordinate schedules of volunteer commission members and wait for formal commission meetings.

Commissioners would continue to hold hearings on disciplinary matters, and make decisions on promotions for police and firefighters.

ISSUE:Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: City draws cultural district boundaries, leaves out downtown arena

Date: 5/29/2019

Time: 6 am

Duration: 12 Hours

BLOOMINGTON- Bloomington has mapped out the boundaries for its cultural district, but Grossinger Motors Arena is not part of the district.

The city council Tuesday night unanimously approved a map for what's described as an "incubator of creativity" and an "economic driver." However, Cultural Commission Vice Chair Ron Crick said the decision was made to start small, and perhaps include the downtown arena in the future.

"We made the decision to start small so that we could present something that could be successful right away," said Crick.

"Once you start with the big picture, I think you run some serious risks. That's not a risk that we decided to take," Crick also said.

A cultural district map allows the city to seek grants from the private sector and philanthropic organizations, and make it easier for the city to receive state and federal dollars.

"We want to pursue state and federal grants where available because we have all been paying into state and federal taxes, and we would just like some of our money back," said Council member Jamie Mathy, who also serves on the Cultural Commission.

In other business, the council gave City Manager Tim Gleason the authority to hire police officers and firefighters, a job that had been done in the past by a volunteer commission.

The council also approved settlements in which Lakeside Country Club agreed to pay \$3,750 and Killarney's Irish Pub agreed to a \$1,500 fine for not obtaining city licenses last year for their video gaming machines.

ISSUE: Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Nord: Stronger expectations and goals needed for Connect Transit

Date: 6/03/2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 Hours

Normal Town Council member Stan Nord said more specific expectations and goals need to be set when it comes to Connect Transit.

The transportation system has been a hot topic in the Twin-Cities. The transit board voted in March for a series of fare increases which are scheduled to start this fall, along with the elimination of the Olive route, which runs from Main and Orlando in Normal to near Fort Jesse and Hershey Roads, east of Veterans Parkway.

Nord told WJBC's Scott Miller groups like Citizens to Ensure Fair Transit have different expectations and perceptions from those of the transit board.

"After talking to these different groups, I realize the expectation is different. Connect is going along and is thinking that public transportation is to serve one particular need, and not to say they are doing it intentionally to do anything wrong, but their expectations are different than some of these other groups," said Nord.

"As the councils in both towns, we are the ones that set up Connect. It's really our responsibility and obligation to redefine what the goal is and get people on board," Nord added.

Nord added he wants Normal Mayor Chris Koos to fill a vacancy on the transit board.

Two current Connect Transit trustees represent Normal. They are Chairman Mike McCurdy and Julie Hile.

ISSUE: Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Rodriguez urged to trust intuition as she starts county administrator's post

Date: 6/04/2019

Time: 6 am

Duration: 12 Hours

BLOOMINGTON - There's a new administrator running McLean County government.

Bill Wasson's last day as county administrator was Friday. His replacement is Camille Rodriguez, who spent the past two years as the county's health department director.

Wasson advised Rodriguez to trust her intuition.

"Utilize our true believers within the organization, said Wasson.

"Work actively, and communicate actively with our county board members so they can make the best decisions possible, which I'm sure she will," Wasson also said.

The retiring administrator said he's spent a lot of time briefing Rodriguez on various matters since the county board approved her appointment in mid-April.

"She comes with nearly two years of experience with our organization, and a very strong background in management of public service, and also background in the justice system," said Wasson.

"Those combinations of background in justice, background in health has equipped her very well," Wasson added.

Rodriguez is McLean County's fifth administrator, and the first woman to hold the job. Her salary is \$130,000 for the first year of a five year contract.

ISSUE: Community

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Latson departing YWCA, German named interim CEO

Date: 6/04/2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 Hours

BLOOMINGTON - YWCA McLean County President and CEO Dontae Latson has announced his departure for a position in Colorado.

“We are thankful for Dontae’s contributions to YWCA, which have been numerous. He will be missed,” said Barbara Taft, president of the YWCA McLean County Board of Directors.

YWCA Vice President Liz German has been named the Interim President and CEO, effective June 24th.

“We are excited to continue our work with Liz, who has shown visionary leadership in her roles at YW,” said Taft.

Latson, who joined YWCA as CEO in 2013, will begin work with Rocky Mountain Communities, an affordable housing non-for-profit on July 1st.

“I came to this wonderful community with the goal of strengthening the infrastructure of the YW and finding the right person to take the organization to the next level,” said Latson. “We found that person in Liz German. I’m proud of the work our phenomenal team has done and have every confidence in the future of the YW with a great team under Liz’s leadership.”

German joined YWCA in 2007 and held several different positions before being named vice president of operations in 2015.

“The future business model for non-for-profit organizations will focus on the coalitions we build to serve the needs of our communities,” said German. “Strong relationships with our area leaderships, schools, hospitals and others who serve our diverse populations will ensure a strong community.”

German graduated from Illinois State University in 2006 with a bachelor's degree in politics and government.

ISSUE: Community

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Miller Park's Zoo's Tetzloff sought to keep flamingo's death under wraps

Date: 6/05/2019

Time: 6 am

Duration: 12 Hours

BLOOMINGTON - If Miller Park Zoo Superintendent Jay Tetzloff had his way, the public would not have known about the flamingo put down last month after a child threw a rock and hit the bird.

As it turned out, Tetzloff said he heard from about 60 national and international news outlets, including CNN, The New York Times, and Los Angeles Times, as he told Greg Halbleib Wednesday on WJBC's Afternoon Show.

"When the initial story broke, I asked the news organization not to send it out, just because no one wins," said Tetzloff.

"The bird was already gone, nothing I can do about that, and then the family that is affected. We had many conversations with them. They feel horrible about it. We feel horrible about it. It's just a no-win situation."

Tetzloff won't say how he resolved the situation with the second grader's family. Tetzloff said he received hate mail about what happened to the flamingo and for deciding not to press charges against the child or the family.

He hopes Bloomington's zoo will someday get national and international acclaim for its exhibits instead of an unfortunate incident.

ISSUE: Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Connect Transit board nominee asked to step down

Date: 6/06/2019

Time: 6 am

Duration: 12 Hours

BLOOMINGTON - One of Bloomington Mayor Tari Renner's picks to fill future vacancies on the Connect Transit board is being asked to withdraw his name from consideration for the job.

Members of the group Citizens to Ensure Fair Transit are opposed to current Planning Commissioner Justin Boyd's appointment, so that bus riders with disabilities can serve on the board.

Advocates showed up at Boyd's office Wednesday, handing him a letter from group member Jennifer Morsch, who is blind.

She said Boyd is much like current board members who are financially well-off, able-bodied, and don't know what it means to rely on transit as a lifeline.

Morsch said refusing to fill board posts with disabled riders may explain why more than two-thirds of Bloomington-Normal bus stops are not compliant under the federal Americans with Disabilities Act.

"It may also explain why the board has locked us into a trend of reduced services and increased fares in recent years, resulting in our loss of access to more and more of our wonderful community: access to jobs, groceries, medical care, and socialization," the letter said.

Boyd declined comment when contacted by WJBC. He's being asked to respond to the group's request by Monday.

Morsch wrote, "While we do not hold you responsible for the decisions made by the Connect Transit board, we do hold you accountable to your own decision: will you be complicit in the continued rejection of voices of people with disabilities, voices like mine, or will you make room for rider representation by requesting that Mayor Renner withdraw your name from consideration for nomination to the Connect Transit board?"

ISSUE: Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE:Recreational marijuana has no place in college sports

Date: 6/06/2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 Hours

NORMAL - After recreational marijuana passed the Illinois House and awaits Gov. Pritzker's signature, Illinois State University Athletic Director Larry Lyons is speaking out on the side effects it will have on sports.

In an interview with WJBC's Scott Miller on Wednesday, Lyons noted student-athletes will still have to follow NCAA guidelines.

"I'm concerned about it. The education process is going to have to really ramp up," said Lyons. "We do have random drug testing, we take it very seriously. It's about their health and safety, it's about their ability to compete in the classroom and compete on the field of play. So we are going to have to take a really serious stance on this. I think we are going down the path that eventually federally it will not be against the law, and then the NCAA is going to have to react on that. Society is interesting where it goes when you want to chase revenues and there is going to be some side-effects to that, there is no question about that."

With sports gambling legal in the U.S., and Illinois needing to pass a bill, Lyons added there was not much discussion around recreational marijuana surrounding sports as there was gambling.

"It puts us in a really difficult spot. Intriguingly there was not a lot of dialogue back and forth as there was with the sports gaming bill," added Lyons. "It is still against federal law, recreational marijuana, and it's still against NCAA rules and regulations. So we are going to follow NCAA rules and regulations."

ISSUE: Religion

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Remains of El Paso's famed Archbishop set for move to Peoria

Date: 6/10/2019

Time:

Duration: 12 Hours

PEORIA - The remains of famed Archbishop Fulton Sheen of El Paso appear to be headed to Peoria, from his current resting place at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York.

The Diocese of Peoria issued a news release Sunday celebrating a ruling from New York's highest court, rejecting what appeared to be the Archdiocese of New York's final appeal of earlier court decisions -- all favoring the transfer of Sheen's remains to Peoria's St. Mary's Cathedral.

The local diocese also welcomed reports that the Archdiocese is willing to end the three year legal battle.

An Archdiocese spokesperson told the Catholic News Agency that it was a solemn obligation to uphold Sheen's last wishes, as directed in his Will, to be buried in New York.

The Archdiocese said Sheen's niece and closest living relative, Joan Sheen Cunningham, had only recently changed her position and requested his remains be moved to a shrine at Peoria's St. Mary's Cathedral.

According to the report, Cunningham now believes her uncle would have wanted to be interred in Peoria if he knew it would help advance his cause for sainthood.

St. Mary's in Peoria is where Sheen was ordained as a priest 100 years ago. He died in 1979.

ISSUE: Crime

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Human remains found from air crash that killed Tazewell County Marine

Date: 6/11/2019

Time: 6 am

Duration: 12 Hours

TREMONT - Human remains have been recovered six months after a U.S. Marine from Tazewell County and five others were killed when two military planes crashed over the Sea of Japan.

The Marine Corps said Monday the remains were found during a salvage operation conducted from May 27 through June 7.

Cpl. Daniel Baker, a 2015 Tremont High School graduate, died when an F/A-18 and KC130J collided in the air in early December.

Authorities have not determined the number of bodies recovered, or their identities. The remains are being transferred to Dover Air Force Base in Delaware for formal identification.

"We reaffirm our deepest sympathy for all affected by this tragedy and those grieving the loss of the six Marines who perished in this accident. We also would like to express our sincere gratitude for the cooperation and expertise of the underwater salvage team," the Marine Corps said in a prepared statement.

Crews also recovered the KC-130J's cockpit voice recorder and digital flight recorder, which will aid the investigation.

ISSUE: Crime

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: BPD: Two men in custody for Orchard Road murder

Date: 6/11/2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 Hours

BLOOMINGTON - Bloomington Police confirmed on Tuesday they have arrested two men and are looking for a third in connection to a fatal shooting in April.

Exodus Hebert, 18, of Bloomington and Amari McNabb, 22, of Las Vegas each face first-degree murder charges in the April 2 shooting death of 25-year old Juan Nash. Nash was killed in the 1200 block of Orchard Road.

Authorities said they are searching for a third suspect, Scotty Allen, 18, of Chicago, formerly from Bloomington.

Allen was reportedly shot during the April 2 incident.

ISSUE: Government, Education

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Unit 5 in the red as school board adopts amended budget

Date: 6/12/2019

Time: 6 am

Duration: 12 Hours

NORMAL - The Unit 5 school board Wednesday night adopted an amended budget for the fiscal year ending this month, and it shows a multi-million dollar deficit in the education fund.

The deficit is at \$6,416,258, according to Unit 5 Business Manager Marty Hickman. Declining revenue is due to slow growth in property values and higher spending to boost teacher salaries.

The district is temporally borrowing money to fill the budget gap over the next two years, with the board forced to cut spending or ask voters to approve a tax hike referendum to increase revenue.

Unit 5 Business Manager Marty Hickman said conversations about the deficit need to take place.

"It is certainly something that our school board and community as a whole will have to have a conversation very soon about," added Hickman.

"What do we value in K-12 education in our community? We heard some great presentations about some of the course offerings that we have. Our conversation with the community will be about, are we offering everything that we would like to offer, and if so, then how are we going to fund that going forward."

Last fall, the school board decided to barrow money by selling \$16.5 million in bonds over a two-year period. Administrators said the cost of the borrowing to Unit 5 property taxpayers is an extra \$205 a year for the owner of a \$177,000 home.

ISSUE: Crime

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Zimmerman children tell their story in Dateline report about mother's murder

Date: 6/14/2019

Time: 6 am

Duration: 12 Hours

BLOOMINGTON - A Bloomington murder case that held the attention of Central Illinois residents during a five-week trial earlier this spring is about to receive national exposure.

NBC's Dateline has released a minute-long preview of a story that will air Monday at 9 p.m. about the November 2014 shooting death of Pam Zimmerman, and the trial that resulted in a jury finding her former husband Kirk Zimmerman not guilty of her murder.

The Zimmerman's three children, David, Heidi and Rachel, were among those interviewed for the story. All teenagers at the time, they were worried one morning when their mother did not come home from work.

"I walk out into the hallway, the lights were still on. Her bedroom is dark, and looks like no one had been there," David Zimmerman said.

"We made up every possible excuse there could have been for why she wasn't coming home," said one of the Zimmerman's twin daughters.

That same morning, Pam Zimmerman's close friend, Julie Koh, told Dateline she heard from Pam's fiance, Scott Baldwin, who lived a few hours away, and like the children, he too was concerned.

"My home phone rang, and it was Scott. He said, 'I haven't heard from Pam. I've been trying to reach her since last night.'"

Koh testified at the trial that she went to Pam Zimmerman's east side Bloomington office and found her body. Koh was the prosecution's first witness during a trial in which the jury of ten men and two women acquitted Kirk Zimmerman of murder.

ISSUE: Police, Fire

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Woman dies in Bellflower house fire

Date: 6/17/2019

Time: 6 am

Duration: 12 Hours

BELLFLOWER - McLean County Coroner Kathy Yoder has yet to release the name of a woman killed in a house fire early Sunday in far southeastern McLean County.

Sheriff Jon Sandage said in a news release that a deputy on patrol saw a home fully engulfed in flames in the 400 block of First Street in Bellflower about 5:20 a.m.

Sandage says fire crews found the woman's body after putting out the blaze.

Bellflower, Saybrook, and Farmer City firefighters were called to fight the fire.

The sheriff's department and the coroner's office are aiding fire investigators in determining a cause.

Fires claimed two lives in McLean County in less than a week.

Preliminary autopsy results showed Judith Dawson, 76, died from inhaling smoke and soot during a fire last Wednesday in the 1300 block of Baugh Drive in Normal. The cause of that fire is also under investigation.

ISSUE: Government

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Council member: Large Connect Transit buses come at a cost

Date: 6/20/2019

Time: 6 am

Duration: 12 Hours

BLOOMINGTON - A Bloomington city council member believes there's a local cost to the large, electric-powered Connect Transit buses even though they're bought with federal and state dollars.

Council member Jamie Mathy says heavier 40-foot vehicles damage area roads, meaning local tax dollars are spent for road repairs.

"They're heavy enough they're tearing up the roads," said Mathy at this week's committee-of-the-whole council meeting.

"At Front Street, you can literally see where the buses stop because the asphalt and everything shifts from the weight of those buses. If that's the scenario, then I would still rather pay for the 30 foot buses to not have that damage to the road," Mathy said.

In addition to Mathy's concerns, the public transit system continues to hear complaints there are too many empty seats on the larger buses.

Connect Transit General Manager Isaac Thorne says there's not enough room on the smaller 30 foot buses to accommodate the 40 people an hour who board the bus at peak times on nine of the 15 routes.

Thorne addressed Bloomington and Normal councils this week.

Normal council member Kevin McCarthy applauded Connect Transit for saving local taxpayers millions of dollars by securing federal and state aid to buy electric buses.

"As a guy who's responsible for spending taxpayer money, when you start talking about \$10 million to \$12 million dollars in savings, and we're not talking about that? Holy Cow! That's a ton of taxpayer dollars," McCarthy said.

Thorne said an electric bus costs up to \$900,000, compared to \$500,000 for a diesel-fueled bus. However, the transit system would not get federal and state assistance to buy diesel-fueled buses, according to Thorne.

Also, he said electric buses don't need fuel and various other parts, saving \$256,000 over the vehicle's dozen-year life span.

ISSUE: Crime

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Charges pending against man driving erratically through ISU Quad

Date: 6/21/2019

Time: 3 pm

Duration: 12 Hours

NORMAL - Charges are pending against a man who drive erratically through the Illinois State University Quad early Friday morning.

ISU Police Chief Aaron Woodruff said Officers on the Quad noticed a vehicle driving erratically from the south end of the Quad up the sidewalks to Hovey and Multon.

Officers stopped the vehicle and transported the driver to Advocate BroMenn Medical Center for an evaluation.

Woodruff added that the driver was not under the influence of any substance, and there was no criminal damage to property. No one was injured.

ISSUE: Crime

HOW ISSUE WAS TREATED: News Story

TITLE: Prosecutors: Hit and run van driver in fatal crash did not have drivers license

Date: 6/25/2019

Time: 6 am

Duration: 12 Hours

BLOOMINGTON - The driver of a van who allegedly ran off after a fatal crash in Bloomington last Saturday faces a felony charge that could land him in prison for up to 15 years.

McLean County prosecutors on Tuesday charged Jose Rodriguez, 27, with failure to provide information about the accident at Main and Macarthur that killed a motorcyclist, Corey Cottrell, 39, of Normal.

Assistant State's Attorney Andrew Poncer told the judge Rodriguez was the unlicensed driver of a van that ran a red light and collided with the motorcycle.

Poncer said Rodriguez voluntarily surrendered the next day at the Bloomington Police Department.

It was revealed Rodriguez is from Honduras, but no one mentioned in court whether he's legally living in the Twin-Cities.

Attorneys said Rodriguez has lived in Bloomington for five years, and has relatives living here.

He has to post a \$10,035 cash bond to be released from the McLean County Jail.