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YOUR FREE HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 12, 2025



STOCKTON FFA CHAPTER FACEBOOK PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

## Stockton FFA

Congratulations to the Stockton FFA meats judging team on their second-place finish at the section contest held on Saturday, Feb. 8. In addition to the team win, several members placed individually as well. Kendra Robledo placed third, Maggie Carter placed fifth, and Marley Morgan placed ninth.

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# M P C I

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# Obituaries

## PENNY DUCHOW

Penny Marie Duchow, age 57, of Stockton, IL passed away Wednesday, Feb. 5, 2025, at UW Health Swedish American Hospital in Rockford after a short battle of cancer. She was born in Freeport, IL on Sept. 22, 1967, to Burdelle "Fuzzy" and Marlene (Keller) Steffens. Penny married Richard Duchow on May 24, 1986, at St. John's Lutheran Church in Lena.

Penny was a lifelong member of St. John's where she was very active throughout the years. She graduated from Stockton High School in 1985. She was a member of the National FFA Alumni and the Stockton Music Boosters. Penny loved working with



children and enjoyed her time as a paraprofessional for the Stockton School District. She enjoyed reading, music, and spending time with her family, especially her grandson, Robert. Penny would also help anyone at any time.

She is survived by her mother, Marlene Steffens of Mt. Carroll; her husband, Richard Duchow of Stockton; her son, Randall (Tiffanie) Duchow of Stockton; her daughter, Rebecca (Matthew) Mott of Rio Rico, AZ; her grandson, Robert Duchow; her brother, Lee

(Eugenia) Steffens of Shoreview, MN; and several nieces, nephews and cousins.

A funeral service will be held on Saturday, February 15, 2025, at St. John's Lutheran Church in Lena at 10:30 a.m. with a visitation beginning at 9 a.m. There will be a visitation on Friday, Feb. 14, 2025, from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. also at St. John's Lutheran Church in Lena. Interment will take place at Ladies Union Cemetery in Stockton. A memorial fund has been established. The family would like to thank the staff at UW Health Swedish American Hospital for their phenomenal care. Condolences may be shared at [www.hermannfuneralhome.com](http://www.hermannfuneralhome.com).

## MILDRED LARSEN

Mildred Larsen, 100, of Lena, IL, passed away on Feb. 2, 2025, at Allure Nursing Home in Mt. Carroll. She was born on Feb. 17, 1924, in Pleasant Valley, IL, to Walter and Pearl (Althoff) Schubert. On Nov. 19, 1946, she and Harold Larsen were married. She was a farmwife and later a waitress. She was a member of Berreman Church of God, and a 50-year member of Pearl City Auxiliary.

Survivors include 1 daughter, Connie (Doug) Brady of Pearl City, 2 grandchildren:



Lisa (Larry) Musser of Pearl City, and Jeff (Kate) Brady of Erin, WI; great-grandchildren: Ethan (Paige) Luzzar

of Lanark, IL, Katlyn Musser (Justin Hughes) of Bettendorf, IA, James Brady and Ben Brady; great-great-grandchildren: Owen Lartz, Emily Lartz, Isla and Ivy Lartz; and several nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death

by her husband Harold Larsen, sister Phyllis Newton, brother Morrall Schubert, parents Walter and Pearl Schubert, a sister in infancy, brother-in-law Lewis Newton, and sister-in-law Crystal Schubert.

A visitation was held on Thursday Feb. 6, 2025, at the Russell-Frank Funeral Home in Lanark, IL. Funeral service followed with Pastor Bob Phelps officiating. Private burial was held at Chapel Hill Memorial Gardens. A special thank you to her niece Jeanne Jordan.

## DOROTHY JEAN PHILLIPS

Dorothy Jean Phillips, age 82, of Stockton, IL passed away Saturday, Feb. 8, 2025, at Galena Stauss Senior Care Community. She was born June 18, 1942, in Freeport, IL to the late Merle and LaVerne (Yeoman) Wise. Dorothy married David Phillips on June 11, 1965.

Dorothy dedicated her early years to being a stay-at-home mom to her two beloved children, Jeff and Pam. Later in life, she found joy in working at the Warren Schools cafeteria, where she made many friends and cherished memories.

Dorothy had a passion for baking, sewing, painting, gardening, camping and watching birds. She was deeply involved with her church,



where she made lifelong friendships, especially with the Women of Calvary. Above all, Dorothy adored her grandchildren and loved spending time with them, whether it was baking cookies, making forts, or attending their various activities. She also spent much of her time caring for others and was known for her amazing popcorn, a favorite snack among family and friends.

Dorothy is survived by her husband, David of Stockton; her daughter, Pam (Tom) Ackerman of Winslow; her son, Jeffrey (Rachel) Phillips of Stockton; her grandchildren,

Keegan Phillips of Daytona Beach, FL, Jace Phillips of Stockton and Zack (Chelsey DeVries) Ackerman of Pearl City; her great granddaughter, Miah Ackerman; and her brothers, Donald (Elaine) Wise and Carl (Sharon) Wise. She was preceded in death by her parents; her mother-in-law and father-in-law; her brothers, Ivan, Lester and Gerald; and her sister, Joyce Zipsie.

A memorial service will be held on Saturday, Feb. 15, 2025, at Calvary Church of Stockton at 2 p.m. with a visitation beginning at 12 p.m. Interment will take place at Chapel Hill Memorial Gardens at a later date. A memorial fund has been established. Condolences may be shared at [www.hermannfuneralhome.com](http://www.hermannfuneralhome.com).

## DAVID KLENTZ

David Lee Klentz, age 52 of Freeport, IL passed away on Saturday Feb. 1, 2025. He was born on Aug. 16, 1972, in Freeport, IL to Howard and Carol (Shumaker) Klentz. David was a die-hard Green Bay Packer Fan. He also enjoyed watching wrestling and any

house flipping shows.

David is survived by his parents Carol Klentz of Pearl City, IL and Howard (Marcy) Klentz of Cedarville, Illinois; one sister Marsha (Jim) Black of Tennessee. He was preceded in death by his infant sister Linda and sister LouAnn Busker.



A celebration of life will be held at a later date. Cremation rites have been accorded. A memorial has been established in his memory. Condolences may be sent to the family at [www.leamonfh.com](http://www.leamonfh.com).

He has involved family members, a lawyer and his support team. Delphi told *FarmWeek* he's learned a lot during the process, studying the easements, learning about equipment and construction and details about decommissioning. "I'm in my 70s. This project will last at least 40 years," he said of the care he is taking for his three sons and five grandchildren.

# Shedding light on solar panel contracts

By Phyllis Coulter  
*FARMWEEK*

Allan Delphi, a LaSalle County farmer and landowner, felt the heat of the sun shining on him when making decisions that would affect him, his children, grandchildren and possibly others who work his land in the future.

"I have had five solar companies approach me. Each one told me what they would do for me. I even had one more today," he said while attending a recent farmland owners conference in Oglesby.

At the event, sponsored by the University of Illinois Extension at Illinois Valley Community College, he gathered more information. Delphi said he is thankful that the responsibility of making the decision isn't his alone.

He has involved family members, a lawyer and his support team.

Delphi told *FarmWeek* he's learned a lot during the process, studying the easements, learning about equipment and construction and details about decommissioning.

"I'm in my 70s. This project will last at least 40 years," he said of the care he is taking for his three sons and five grandchildren.

The company they have chosen practices agrivoltaics, the dual use of land for solar energy production and agriculture. They will likely graze sheep initially, but more research is being done on short corn varieties and other crops that might be compatible with the solar system, said Delphi, who likes the idea of the contracted land still being used for farming.

During his presentation, Garrett Thalgot, assistant general counsel for Illinois Farm Bureau, emphasized the importance of asking questions and having a good team when considering signing a solar project contract.

Insurance is something to consider. It is important to discuss a solar contract with your insurance company and attorney and see what is covered by the energy company and what changes might need to be made to the farmer's or landowner's policy.

Also, be sure to look at the acreage guarantees. It's important to know if five or 50 acres are guaranteed to be involved in the contract.

In terms of compensation for land rented, it is important for landowners to have an escalation provision, so the rental price keeps up with rising rates of rent over the next 50 years, the IFB attorney told *FarmWeek*.

Thalgot agreed it is important to be clear on the details of decommissioning when in some cases it won't happen for as many as 60 years. The energy company might be

sold by then and other generations might be farming.

Some landowners may be against putting solar farms on agricultural land, but eminent domain is not available to solar developers. The landowner has the right to choose what is right for his farming operation for the future and how to use his or her property rights, Thalgot told *FarmWeek*.

Mary Ludwig, an attorney and partner with Johnson & Taylor in Pontiac, compared property rights to a "bundle of sticks." That bundle includes air, water and mineral rights in the present and future, she told landowners at the conference.

As for solar and wind contracts, Ludwig offered many of the same cautions as the IFB counsel. She said to make sure attorney fees are considered in the contract costs to understand the contract length and provisions of decommissioning.

"About one-third of landowners receive a letter from an energy company," Elizabeth Strom, an Accredited Farm Manager and vice president of Murray Wise Associates LLC in Champaign told landowners in attendance.

"Before you sign, make sure you fully understand the contract," Strom said.

This story was distributed through a cooperative project between Illinois Farm Bureau and the Illinois Press Association. For more food and farming news, visit [FarmWeekNow.com](http://FarmWeekNow.com).

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# Blackhawks fall to Panthers in boys basketball matchup

By Trenten Scheidegger  
CORRESPONDENT

The 2024-2025 high school boys' basketball season has been a grind for the Stockton Blackhawks. When they played host to the Lena-Winslow Panthers on Feb. 8, they held an overall record of just 6-17. They were also riding a four-game losing streak, including a recent 59-50 loss to River Ridge.

Things weren't getting any easier for the Blackhawks when the 16-8 Panthers came to town. Le-Win was feeling good, having just beat the Orangeville Broncos 72-21 just two days prior. The Panthers jumped out to an early lead in the first quarter. Both teams' leading scorers went back and forth to get the game started. Carter Blair had seven first quarter points for Stockton, while Aiden Wild had eight for Le-Win. By the end of the first, Stockton was already trailing 18-11.

The second quarter saw Le-Win expand their lead. Stockton's offense struggled to produce as they combined for just five points in the quarter. Blair scored three of those five points as he remained the only consistent part of Stockton's offense. Le-Win held a massive 33-16 lead coming out of the second half. After the getting doubled up in the first half, Stockton came out looking like a new team in the second. Albeit too late, the Blackhawks made a valiant comeback effort against a solid Panther squad.

Offensively, it was Blair who continued to lead the

way. The biggest difference in the third, was that four other Blackhawks scored in the quarter. Only one other Stockton player besides Blair had scored in the first and second quarters. Larson hit a three-pointer as the Blackhawks combined for 15 in the third, nearly matching their first half total.

Stockton also stepped up their game defensively. Not only did they double up the offensive production on their end, but they nearly cut Le-Win's production in half. Stockton held the Panthers to just eight third quarter points, which allowed them to cut into the lead.

Heading into the final quarter, Le-Win still held a 41-33 lead. That was as close as the Panthers were going to let the Blackhawks get. Stockton was held to just three points in the fourth quarter, while Le-Win put up 16 themselves.

In the end, Stockton fell by a final score of 57-34. They were led in scoring by Blair, who finished with 16 points. Ari Zink was next up with eight points. Morgan Haas added four points in the loss. The Panthers were led by Michael Mowery, who finished with 17 points.

With the loss, the Blackhawks fell to 6-18 for the season. The Blackhawks are on the road to wrap up the regular season. On Thursday, Feb. 20 they travel to take on the West Carroll Thunder at 7 p.m. West Carroll is 5-19 on the year. That includes a 52-38 loss to the Blackhawks in late January.



SUBMITTED PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

## Little Blackhawks

Pictured are Stockton Elementary's Little Blackhawks for the week. These students were recognized for following the Blackhawk Way.

# Warren Warriors lose to Scales Mound Hornets by two

By Trenten Scheidegger  
CORRESPONDENT

The Warren Warriors and the Scales Mound Hornets faced off in a late season basketball matchup last week. Warren played host to the Hornets on Tuesday, Feb. 4. The Hornets came into the game with a record of 13-12, while the Warriors were 19-6.

One of those six losses came in a matchup with the Hornets earlier this season. Despite Warren having a much prettier record on paper, Scales Mound has had their number in the 2024-2025 campaign. Back in early January, the Hornets stung the Warriors with a heartbreaking 69-67 defeat.

Although Warren was looking to avenge themselves on Feb. 4, they suffered from a slow start. Scales Mound's defensive efforts paid off early as Warren was held to just eight points in the opening quarter. That allowed the Hornets to get out to an early advantage. Aidan Soppe got his night started with a three-pointer and he was already at seven points by the end of the first. The junior helped Scales Mound take a 12-8 lead into the second.

Scales Mound continued to separate themselves from the Warriors in the second quarter. Soppe remained red-hot as he hit two more three-point shots. Payten Van Lent hit a three of his own as he added five second quarter points. By the break, Scales Mound held a 31-20 lead.

Warren would spend the entire second half trying to erase that deficit. Alex Niemann and Jordan Kohl came out strong in the third quarter. They each hit three-pointers as they combined for 10 points in the quarter. Bryce VanRaalte added five third quarter points of his own, including a successful and-one trip to the line. The Warriors combined for 17 points in the quarter, nearly matching their first half total.

Scales Mound did just enough to maintain their advantage. For every shot the Warriors made, the Hornets had an answer. Van Lent hit his second three-pointer of the night as he had seven points in the third. The Hornets combined for 18, allowing them to take a 49-37 lead into the fourth. The fourth quarter was an exciting display of offensive

production, but Scales Mound always maintained their lead. Both teams combined for 39 points in the quarter as Warren outscored the Hornets 20-19. Despite all those buckets, Warren still lost by a score of 68-57.

Scales Mound was led in scoring by Soppe, who finished with 23 points. Van Lent, Kaden Deurr, and Derrick Distler each finished the game with 14 points. Warren was led in scoring by VanRaalte, who finished with 23 points. Treyton Pafford was next up with 11 points, and Niemann added 10 in the loss.

With the win, the Hornets improved to 14-12 on the year. They went on to fall to the Galena Pirates in their next matchup. Scales Mound

returns to action on Friday, Feb. 14 when they travel to take on the East Dubuque Warriors.

Warren fell to 19-7 with the loss, but they went on to beat the West Carroll Thunder in their next game, giving them 20 wins on the season. The Warriors will be back on the road this Friday, Feb. 14 as they travel to take on the Galena Pirates.



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# OPINION



## Slices of life

# Dream big, it's worth it



By **JILL PERTLER**  
Columnist

Dreams and goals - I think it's safe to say we all have both.

And that's wonderful, and necessary. Because what would life be without dreams and goals?

In a word: hollow.

I used to set very specific goals for myself. I used to dream of what I wanted to accomplish with those goals. I set goals that were substantial and significant. In that I was proud and happy with myself. I was being proactive and moving forward.

I will earn more money. I will acquire a bigger house. I will buy a better car. I will lose weight. I will adopt a new exercise routine. I will feed my family healthier meals with food cooked from scratch. I will go on a big vacation. I will be better about helping the kids with homework. I will publish this column in more papers than I did last year.

I've heard of people doing this same type of thing with a "vision board," where they post actual images of the goals they want to achieve - the logic being that if you see it, you will be more likely to create it.

I never had a vision board, but I certainly envisioned the goals I hoped to achieve.

And in many ways, it worked. Over the years I've been successful in meeting many of my goals.

Which is good. Except for one thing.

I've come to believe I was approaching the whole goal thing all wrong. I don't want to point any fingers, but when it comes to dreams and goals, I think many of us are missing the mark.

For most of my life - for decades - I focused my goals on the world around me: my income, the size of my house, luxury vacations and the newness of my car. I thought those things proved success and would lead to happiness, and (honestly) they often did.

But they never, ever should have been the focus of my goals or my dreams.

Because goals and dreams are so much bigger than things.

Therein lies the lesson. Therein lies the awesomeness of goals and

dreams.

Don't dream of a new house or a better job. Dream bigger.

When you dreamt of that big house and bigger job, what were you desiring, really? What were they supposed to bring into your life?

Dream of that. Set that as your goal.

Don't dream of things. Dream of a state of mind, because in the long run, it doesn't matter what you have.

What matters is how you feel.

Let that sentence steep for a moment because it is huge.

Is someone living in a glass-walled house overlooking spectacular views of the ocean automatically happier and more fulfilled than someone living in a trailer park on a busy street on the wrong side of the tracks in some crowded urban city?

We all know the answer.

Happiness isn't contingent on environment or the things we spend so much time and energy attempting to acquire. Happiness comes from somewhere beyond mere things. And deep down we all realize this.

When setting goals - when living your life - think about what brings you joy. What brings you peace. What makes you feel loved.

Seek that. Pursue that.

And understand that despite what the world is telling you, despite what other people tell you about all the possessions they have that they claim make them happy, none of it matters unless it matters to you.

If a bigger house truly brings you joy, then seek it to your full potential. But if not, stop.

Just stop and find your joy. Find your peace.

When you have those two entities - truly encompass

## Weekly connection

# Never quit exercising

I had a birthday in December and when I did the math, I realized that I was all of sixty-three years of age. It's hard to believe that I could be that old, but when I rechecked the math, it proved to be true. A few months ago, I was feeling my age in my hips and knees, and I got to thinking that this must mean my athletic life was pretty much over. Then a friend of mine asked me if I wanted to play in a fifty-five and older softball league up in Verona on Wednesday mornings.



By **SCOTT CERNEK**  
Columnist

Since he was older than I am and he was still playing, I figured I had better give it a try and not let him show me up. Upon arriving at the first game, I couldn't believe how many guys older than me were still playing ball

in this league. The hardest thing about starting to play ball again was that after I hit the ball, I wanted to sprint like a racehorse to first base like I had always done. Sure enough, during the first game I pulled a calf muscle and a quadriceps muscle and could hardly move for the next couple of days. However, by the next gameday a week later, I was feeling better, so I wrapped my calf and quad and tried again. It seemed like each game I pulled some new muscle or tweaked a different part of my back, but somehow, I made it through and loved every minute of it. When the season got over, I decided to start getting my muscles back into shape so that they would be ready to go come spring.

Since my hips and knees seemed pretty fragile, I didn't know what was going to happen if I started running again. I decided to start by jogging a 5K race which my son, daughter and her husband were going to run. For those of you who don't know a 5K is actually 3.1 miles. I was sure that my hip was going to be screaming at me, and it would be the last time I ever ran that kind of distance. To my great surprise, my hip actually felt better after the race than it had felt in months. The pain that I had been feeling was gone, so I decided to run another 5K a week later.

Again, to my surprise my hips and my knees started to feel stronger and the pain and discomfort that I thought was going to be with me for the rest of my life was disappearing. I even improved my time by five minutes. Since those two races last fall, I have put myself on a regiment of running three 5K's a week on my treadmill. On the days I don't run, I hop on the stationary recumbent bike and do a thirty-minute ride. Being a gym teacher, exercise like this has always been a regular part of my life. It was only in the past six or seven years that I had stopped running. I'm sure glad that I decided to give it one last try before purchasing a cane and conceding to age.

The Bible makes a reference to physical training as being of some benefit, but knowing Jesus is the most important thing we can do. Of course, this is true, but I still think being fit is pretty important. I Timothy 4:8 tells us, Physical training is good, but training for godliness is much better, promising benefits in this life and in the life to come. I'm just glad that God has made these bodies of ours to continue to be strong even when we are past our prime. When softball season rolls again this spring, I'm hoping that I can sprint to first base without pulling something. Until next week, God bless.

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# IN\*CI\*DENTAL\*LY

## Teaching your child to brush and floss

February is National Children's Dental Health Month (NCDHM). The theme for this year's celebration is "Healthy habits for healthy smiles". To reinforce this theme, this week's column will focus on brushing and flossing your children's teeth and guiding them to develop and maintain this healthy habit throughout their lifetime.

Most of you have heard the saying, "Children thrive on structure." When it comes to establishing a daily oral hygiene routine it is important to start early and create a routine that is consistent and predictable. If you start by wiping your baby's mouth out with a damp cloth after each feeding, they will come to accept this as a normal, expected routine.



By **DR. STEPHEN PETRAS**  
Illinois Licensed General Dentist

As soon as your child's first tooth erupts, brush it gently, twice a day with a child-sized, soft bristle toothbrush and a drop of fluoridated toothpaste the size of a grain of rice. When your child turns three you can increase the drop of toothpaste to the size of a small pea. As soon as your toddler has teeth that are in contact with each other, it is time to add flossing to your routine. This will occur in their front teeth first. Your dentist or hygienist will be happy to demonstrate how to do this. You can also find

a helpful video that teaches parents tips on brushing infants' and children's teeth at <https://toothtalk.org/portfolio-view/brushing-is-fun-how-to-brush-young-childrens-teeth/>.

You can find a video on flossing your child's teeth at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uqmNqu926iE>. The important thing to remember is to be consistent. Resist the temptation to "just skip it" when you are tired, on vacation or your toddler suddenly decides to say "no" to everything. If you have or are currently raising children, you will know what I am talking about. Sometimes they are determined not to get their face washed, their diaper changed, or their teeth brushed, but you do it anyway to keep them healthy. Your consistency helps them to learn that hygiene is just a

part of their daily life.

While it is non-negotiable, it does help to add a little fun. Give your toddler a toothbrush with their favorite character on it to hold while you brush their teeth. Never let your toddler have a toothbrush when they are not supervised. This can lead to severe injury. Try some of the various kinds of "kid flavored" ADA-approved fluoride toothpaste. Most importantly, make sure that your child sees you brushing and flossing.

To help your child brush for the recommended two minutes, the ADA has provided a variety of toothbrushing songs and videos. You can find these at <https://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/Kids-Brushing-Playlist>. Videos and books that teach children why we brush and floss our teeth offer a fun way for them to learn about oral hygiene.

There is also a free app called Chompers that you can find on any podcast service or Alexa. Chompers keeps track of how often your child brushes and provides awards, games, songs riddles and fun facts to entertain them as they brush. Some parents find it helpful to create their own two-minute song or story brushing playlist. Some parents just use the timer on their phone and sing. All of these help your child become aware and accustomed to

how long two minutes is.

The ADA suggests adopting the "Brush, Bath, Book" routine as an effective way to establish and maintain the nighttime session of their oral hygiene habit. This can easily be adapted to the morning session as breakfast, brush, book (or favorite activity.)

Even the most cooperative toddler can have an off day. If your little one suddenly decides to clamp his mouth shut, turn it into a game. Ask him or her to roar like a lion while you brush or be the superhero who saves your teeth from the plaque monsters. As they brush and floss the germs away on your teeth, play it up. Some overdramatic "oohs" "aahs" and "go away germs" can turn a "no" to a "my turn

now."

As your child grows, learning how to brush and floss is just one of the many ways they are learning to take care of themselves. While your child may be starting to learn how to brush, it does not mean that they are ready to fly solo. At this point you let them brush and floss, then you help guide and assist them to reach the places they are missing.

Remember, parents apply toothpaste, not children. Keep toothpaste and toothbrushes out of your child's reach. Parents brush and floss until children are able to tie their shoes, but they will still need to supervise and assist. Each child is unique and the age at which they have the dexterity to brush and floss effectively on their own will vary.

### • Slices (Continued from page 4)

them and hold them in your heart – you will understand that nothing else matters. When you have peace and joy you have something much, much bigger than anything this physical world will ever give you.

And here's the really cool part. When you have peace and joy, you somehow stop thinking about all the

extraneous noise beyond that and it's exactly then that all the other "stuff" seems to fall into place.

Almost like that was the plan all along.

*Jill Pertler is an award-winning syndicated columnist, published playwright and author. Don't miss a slice; follow the Slices of Life page on Facebook.*

## Around the Northern Hills

We need to replenish our farm toys used at Farm Fun Days this summer and thought who better to ask than our members. If you have gently used farm toys that are no longer being used, we would love to put them to good use. We would rather bring new life to old toys than buy new. If you can help us out, please drop them off at our office. Thank you in advance!



By **ANNETTE EGGERS**  
Jo Daviess County Farm Bureau

### IAA Foundation scholarships

The IAA Foundation has announced the lineup for the 2025 IAA Foundation

Scholarships. This includes 120 scholarships totaling \$210,251. We have had several winners from Jo Daviess County in the past, so I would encourage anyone interested to not miss this great opportunity. The link is on the IAA Foundation website.

### Farm Fun Fact

There are approximately 72,000 farms in Illinois.

### Family Farm Signs

As it starts inching closer to spring, we are all thinking of planting and sprucing things up around the farm. Why not add a "This is a Family Farm" sign to your landscape? The signs are 17.5" X 23" and cost \$30.

### Farm Bureau Foundation's scholarship

The Jo Daviess County Farm Bureau Foundation has its scholarship applications available. We again have two different scholarships for those students majoring in an agricultural related field. The first scholarship is geared specifically to Highland Community College Ag students. High School Seniors or those already enrolled at HCC can apply. The second scholarship is a general scholarship for any post-secondary school. For this scholarship, the student needs to be currently in their first year of college. This scholarship is only available to Jo Daviess County Farm Bureau members and their children. You can find the application on our website.

## News briefs

### American Legion Auxiliary meeting

The February meeting of the American Legion Auxiliary will meet on Wednesday, Feb. 12 at the Lena American Legion Home at 6 p.m. Delegates will be selected to attend American Legion Auxiliary Illini Girls State. Dues will be collected. New members are always welcome. Kathy Pignato is in charge of the social hour. Junior members will meet on Feb. 15 at 10 a.m. at the American Legion Home.

### Lena American Legion Auxiliary

The Lena American Le-

gion Auxiliary will honor female veterans with a brunch on Saturday, March 29, 2025, at 316 W. Main St., Lena. There will be no charge for this brunch. Please join for fellowship and entertainment. Please call 815-369-4684 or email jamcps54@yahoo.com to make reservation or with any questions. Reservations are due by March 20.

### McConnell American Legion Auxiliary meeting

The McConnell American Legion Auxiliary Meeting will be held at the McConnell Legion on Feb. 19, 2025. Social time will begin at 5:30

p.m. with the meeting starting at 6 p.m. Anyone who is interested in the Auxiliary is welcome to attend.

### Blackhawk Unit of the SCAHCE meeting

The February meeting of the Blackhawk Unit of the SCAHCE will be held on Thursday, Feb. 20, 2025, at 1 p.m. at the Pearl City Library. Roll call will be, "How do you waste food?" Janet Ferguson will give a lesson on food waste. Marsha Erwin and Paula Gerke will bring items for the raffle. All are invited to join to share ideas on reducing food waste.



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# Stephenson and Carroll County Farm Bureau news

By Victoria Hansen

With the first month of 2025 complete I wanted to share the many ways that Illinois Farm Bureau served

our members. The Farm Bureau contributed to all four of Illinois' policy submittals were approved by delegates at American Farm Bureau, the Federation's national convention, including renewable energy and agriculture policies, the Everything Local Conference brought together more than 700 attendees and 80 vendors for three days of networking, career development and help growing profit opportunities for the state's specialty growers. The Illinois Farm Bureau Board of Directors approved the organization's local, state and national

legislative priorities, includ-

ing estate tax reform, finalizing a five-year farm bill, new trade deals for farmers, and private property protection. The IAA Foundation supported agriculture students by offering 120 scholarships worth more than \$210,000. To learn more about Illinois Farm Bureau visit [www.ilfb.org](http://www.ilfb.org).

## Cubs vs Brewers Bus Trip

Each year our Cubs vs Brewers bus trip is a member favorite. This year we are trying something new. Tickets are now available by calling our office. To reserve your spot, you will need to pay for your tickets at the time of registration. As a first and ending March 7 tickets sales will only be available for active Illinois Farm Bureau members. For more details view the attached flyer to this

website or visit the "upcoming trips" tab at [www.stephenson-cfb.org](http://www.stephenson-cfb.org).

## Freeze Meal Fundraiser

Orders are now being accepted for Spring Freezer meals. Those who order will get 10 meals each serving four people. The menu includes Hickory Smoked Pulled Pork, Hickory Smoked Pulled Chicken, Pulled Pork, Mac N Cheese, Chicken and Biscuits, Smoked Meatloaf, Chicken Fajitas w/ Peppers and Onions, Cheesy Ham and Potatoes, Cowboy Baked Beans, Beef Mostaccioli, and Soup (flavor to be determined).

Each set costs \$190 if paying with cash or check and \$195 if paying with credit card. Orders are due before Feb. 26 at 12 p.m. with pickups taking place Monday, April 7 in Carroll County from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. and in Ogle County from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. To place an order online visit [www.carrollcfb.org/events/](http://www.carrollcfb.org/events/)

Illinois Farm Bureau

## announces new Farm Bureau Advantage Conference

Gain valuable insight and knowledge on emerging issues in agriculture during Illinois Farm Bureau's first-ever Farm Bureau Advantage conference. The conference, held March 14 through March 15 at the Embassy Suites in East Peoria, seeks to empower IFB members through opportunities to learn, connect with experts and build new relationships.

Attendees will hear five keynote presentations from agriculture experts, political strategists and motivational speakers, including Peter Zeihan, a geopolitical strategist and author. Other speakers include Eric Snodgrass, a principal atmospheric scientist with Conduit Ag; Josh Sundquist, a Paralympic ski racer, author and motivational speaker; and representatives with Illinois Corn, Illinois Soybean Association and the University of Illinois Center for Digital Agriculture.

The conference will open with an evening social event

featuring a dueling piano show and opportunities to support the IAA Foundation. A hotel room block is available at the Embassy Suites. For more information or to register, visit: <https://www.ilfb.org/get-involved/events/farm-bureau-advantage-conference/>.

## Rules for the Road meeting

Save the for a March 11 Rules for the Road meeting

hosted by Whiteside County Farm Bureau. This meeting will begin at 8 a.m. at the Sauk Valley Community College Riverview Conference Center, Dixon IL. Learn more about CDL and Trucking Regulations to help you stay legal and safe when you hit the road. Registration opens on Feb. 1 and can be completed by reaching out to your county Farm Bureau. Carroll, 815-244-3001 and Stephenson 815-232-3186.

## Church news

### Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

All are invited to worship at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 118 E. Mason St. Lena, IL. Join on Sunday, Feb. 16, 2025, for Worship Service at 9:30 a.m. This week will be the sixth Sunday after Epiphany. This week's gospel reading is from the Gospel Luke 6:17-26.

On Wednesday, Feb. 19, The Peace Corps Quilting group will meet from 8 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. All are welcome to join and no quilting experience necessary.

All the services will be recorded and be available on church's Facebook page and website. Please visit our website and (<http://goodshepherdlena.org/>) and Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/GSLCLenaIL/>) for information. Please contact the church office at 815-369-5552 with any questions.

are interested in donating to this ministry, reach out to the church office for more information.

The next Men's Breakfast will be on Wednesday, March 5 at 7:30 a.m. at the Beltline Restaurant in Freeport.

The Healthy Wolves group will be packing backpacks on Thursday, Feb. 13 at 3:15 p.m. If you are interested in donating to this ministry, reach out to the church office for more information.

St. John's Lutheran Church of Pearl City is an ELCA parish and is located at 229 First St. in Pearl City. We are handicapped accessible. If you need to contact the pastor or church, you may call 815-443-2215 for information.

### Salem United Church of Christ

All are welcome to join for a service led by Pastor Christopher Ham at Salem United Church of Christ, 8491 West Salem Road, Lena, IL, every Sunday at 10 a.m. Sunday School for children five years and older is held during church service, and nursery is available for children under five years.

For more information on any Salem related items, you can contact 815-369-4511 or [ruth.dake@gmail.com](mailto:ruth.dake@gmail.com).

### Evangelical Free Church of Lena

The Evangelical Free Church of Lena welcomes

an additional pastor on Feb. 16, 2025. Jeffrey DeLay will serve as Pastor of Worship and Pastoral Care. DeLay has



**Pastor Jeffrey DeLay**

an extensive background in sacred music and a deep heart for God's Church. The Evangelical Free Church of Lena is delighted to welcome DeLay aboard the staff and invites the community to his installation service on Feb. 16 at 10 a.m. with cake reception to follow.

### St. John's Lutheran Church

St. John's Lutheran Church, Pearl City, will celebrate the sixth Sunday after Epiphany at worship on Sunday, Feb. 16 at 9 a.m. There will be a Children's Message during the service.

Everyone is welcome to come play cards and dominoes on Thursday, Feb. 27 at 1 p.m. and to play dominoes on Tuesday, March 4 at 9 a.m.

All kids in grades K-5 are welcome to come to St. John's in Pearl City on Wednesday, Feb. 19 from 3:15 p.m. to 5 p.m. to be a part of the Kids Klub. All children in the Pearl City community are welcome to come. For more information or to register your child, please contact Pastor Roger Bronkema at [rbronkema18@gmail.com](mailto:rbronkema18@gmail.com) or call 815-291-6261.

The February Grace Meal will be on Sunday, Feb. 16. The menu is chili, ham salad sandwich, potato chips, and chocolate pudding. Reservations are due in the church office by Thursday, Feb. 13. Meals can be picked up at the church on Feb. 16 between 11 a.m. and 12 p.m. If you

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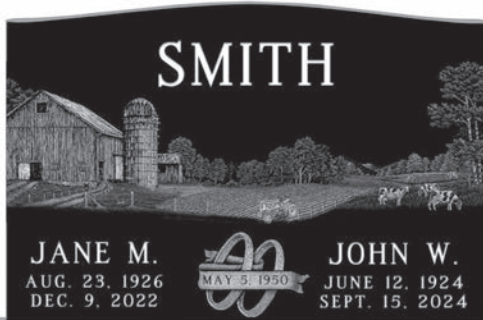
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# Weegens to play baseball at University of Dubuque

By Trenten Scheidegger  
CORRESPONDENT

Lena-Winslow has become a factory for developing future college athletes. Another Panther added his name to the list when Lena-Winslow senior, Cohen Weegens, committed to playing baseball at the University of Dubuque last week. Weegens was a bit of a breakout player for the Panthers last season.

Coming into the year, Le-Win head coach, Nick Werhane, had pegged him as one of the key newcomers to the squad. By the end of the season, Weegens was one of their most reliable hitters. In a late season, 8-7 win over

Pearl City, Weegens went one for three at the plate with a double and three runs batted in. In the playoffs, and their final game of the season, Weegens was one for three with one run batted in.

Weegens wound up finishing fourth on the team in runs batted in with 19. He also became one of the team's better pitchers. In just under 14 innings pitched, Weegens sported a 2.56 earned run average. He also struck out 18 batters in those innings.

Weegens is poised for a solid senior season, but he is pleased to know he will be able to continue his baseball career at the college level. "It means a lot to know

where I will go next year," Weegens shared, following the commitment. "Knowing I am going to a great school and program definitely lets me focus on and enjoy my senior season," Weegens added.

Weegens has been looking for the right opportunity at the next level, and it was easy for him to decide on the University of Dubuque. "I chose UD because I was really impressed with their facilities, as well as the great reputation of Coach [Andrew] Redman and Coach [Dan] Spain," Weegens shared.

Spain became the head coach of the UD Spartans in 2024. He inherited a good

team, as the Spartans had set a school record, winning 29 games in 2023. The team went 24-18 in Spain's first year as head coach. It is safe to say, Weegens is joining a program that knows how to win.

"I would like to thank all my coaches and teammates for helping and pushing me to be the best version of myself. I would also like to thank my family for always sacrificing their time to watch and support me throughout the years," Weegens added after committing.

Le-Win baseball opens their 2025 season on March 19, when they travel to take on the Erie Panthers.



ANGELA SCHULTZ PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing  
Cohen Weegens throws a pitch for the Lena-Winslow Panthers, during their 2024 baseball season

## Lena-Winslow boys basketball team wins three in a row

By Trenten Scheidegger  
CORRESPONDENT

Last week the Lena-Winslow Panthers boys basketball team had three games slated on their schedule. They were fresh off a frustrating home loss to the Dakota Indians just a few days prior. That loss dropped the Panthers' record to 14-8 before last week's games.

The Panthers opened the week with a home game

against the Warren Warriors on Feb. 3. While the Panthers were coming off a loss, Warren was riding a three-game winning streak ahead of their matchup.

The Panthers came out strong in front of their home crowd. Koby Kearns has had some explosive quarters for Le-Win this year, and he did so again in the second quarter against Warren. Kearns put up eight points in the quarter,

including a successful and-one opportunity and a three-point shot. Miles Mahon added seven points of his own in the second, including going three-for-three at the line.

Coming out of the half-time break, the Panthers held a 36-28 lead. A dominant third quarter allowed them to run away with this one as they outscored Warren 21-7. In the end, the Panthers had five players in double figures

as they beat Warren 73-50. Mahon led the way with 17 points, while Jaylen Rakowska was next up with 15. Kearns and Aiden Wild each finished with 12. Michael Mowery added 11 in the victory.

Three days later, the Panthers were back on their home court. They played host to the Orangeville Broncos on Thursday, Feb. 6. Orangeville

See WINS, Page 8



# Northwest Illinois Aerial Combat Memorial



If you have gone on Route 20 past Rafter's during the past few weeks, you may have noticed that the F-4 jet that has been parked there for five years is gone. It has been moved to its permanent home on West Main Street, (across the street from the historical water tower and American Legion Home) in Lena. This being done is quite an accomplishment.

The jet had to be secured from the GSA, moved here from New Mexico, prepared for painting, lettering and moving and mounting on the pylon that had to be manufactured. The NW Illinois Aerial Combat Memorial is not yet finished. We still have pavers to be laid, landscaping, fencing, signage, lighting, and cement work for major things to be done.

We are still fundraising to finish the project and are still selling pavers to honor or memorialize loved ones, places, events, etc.

Questions can be addressed to: jamcps54@yahoo.com or vpbergman@yahoo.com. Contributions can be mailed to PO Box 290, Lena, IL 61048.

Pavers can still be purchased at \$150 each. Donations and pavers can be paid for by check or Venmo.

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- Up to 14 characters per line (including spaces)
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# Panthers fall to Pearl City on senior night

By Trenten Scheidegger  
CORRESPONDENT

The Lena-Winslow Panthers hosted senior night for the 2024-2025 girls basketball season on Friday, Feb. 7. The Pearl City Wolves made the short trip to Lena to take on the Panthers in the game.

This year's Panther squad has four seniors on the roster. Rachael Setterstrom, Ava Vlasin, Alyssa Daughenbaugh, and Shayleigh Albright. They have all devoted years of their athletic careers to the Lena-Winslow basketball program. The Le-Win community gathered to pack the Panther den and celebrate their seniors last week.

Le-Win had their work cut out for them with the Wolves coming to town on senior night. Back in January, the Panthers went to Pearl City and lost by a score of 50-44. At that time, the Panthers

were coming off a devastating loss to the number one team in 1A girls basketball in the Pecatonica Indians. Fittingly, the same could be said about Le-Win's second meeting with Pearl City.

Just before hosting senior night, the Panthers suffered a brutal 57-19 loss to Pecatonica, their second of the year. Both times the 2024-2025 Panthers faced off with the Wolves, they were coming off their worst loss of the season. In order to defeat the Wolves, Le-Win would have to quickly bounce back from demoralizing defeat.

Early on, it looked like Le-Win had done just that. The Panthers couldn't have asked for a much better start in front of their home crowd. Aubrey Rodebaugh had the hot hand early as a trio of baskets led her to six first quarter points. Setterstrom added four points

of her own as the Panthers jumped out to an early lead.

Pearl City hung around thanks to the efforts of Fallyn Endress who put up seven first quarter points. Makenzie Ihus hit an early three-pointer as she added five points of her own. After one quarter played, the Panthers held a 20-16 lead over the Wolves.

Things only got better for Le-Win in the second quarter. The Panthers combined for a trio of three-pointers in the quarter, two of which came from Vlasin. Le-Win outscored Pearl City 15-9 in the second, allowing them to take a big 36-25 lead into the break.

Facing a big deficit, the Wolves came out in the second half with a new plan. They looked to erase the gap from three-point range, and they did just that. Kendra Kuhlemeier sunk three third

quarter three-pointers to help spark the comeback.

Le-Win still managed their own success from deep. Vlasin and Lila Grindey each hit third quarter threes, helping the Panthers maintain their lead. Still, the Wolves had cut the deficit, as Le-Win took a 53-46 lead into the fourth.

Both teams lived and died from three-point range in the second half. Le-Win hit two more three-pointers in the

fourth, giving them four in the second half. Pearl City flourished from range. The Wolves combined for seven second half threes. Kuhlemeier remained hot with two more threes in the fourth. Danica Stager added a pair of threes of her own in the final quarter.

It was the perfect recipe for success for the Wolves. After facing a double digit deficit at the break, the

Wolves shot their way back for a 66-63 victory over Le-Win. Pearl City combined for nine threes in the game, five of which came from Kuhlemeier. Endress led the Wolves in scoring with 16 points. Kuhlemeier was right behind her with 15, and Stager added 10 in the win. Le-Win was led by Rodebaugh, who finished with 19. Vlasin added 14 and Grindey had 11 for the Panthers.

## • Wins (Continued from page 7)

has struggled this year, and they came to Lena with an overall record of just 2-23.

It didn't take long for the Panthers to separate themselves from the Broncos. By halftime, Le-Win already held a 37-10 lead over Orangeville. The Broncos scored just two points in the second quarter.

The Panthers scored 21 second quarter points on their end. Rakowska blew up for 12 points in the quarter, including a pair of three-pointers. Rakowska finished the day with 19 points, which led all scorers. Mahon was next up with 10 points. Le-Win didn't have anyone else in double figures, but they did have 12 total players register a basket as they beat the Broncos 72-21. Orangeville was led in scoring by Boden Gustafson, who finished with six points.

The Panthers capped off their week with a weekend matchup against the Stockton Blackhawks. On Saturday, Feb. 8, Le-Win made the short trip to Stockton to take on the Blackhawks. Stockton has had their own share of struggles throughout the year, as they came into the game with a record of 6-17.

The Blackhawks would suffer their eighteenth loss of the season in front of their home crowd that day. The Panthers were bolstered by a quick start, led by an eight-point first quarter from Wild. Kearns and Luke Madigan each hit three-pointers in the opening quarter as well.

Le-Win continued to have impressive individual performances in the second quarter. This time, it was Mowery who couldn't be stopped. Mowery

put up 10 points in the second quarter as he helped the Panthers take a 33-16 lead into the break.

With the big lead, perhaps the Panthers let off the gas too soon. Stockton came out and dominated the third quarter, outscoring Le-Win 15-8. The Panthers would respond by scoring 16 in the fourth, however, as they went on to win 57-34.

Mowery led the Panthers in scoring with 17 points. Wild was next up with 13, and Kearns added 10 in the victory.

Le-Win improved to 17-8 on the season with the win. This week, the Panthers are on the road. On Friday, Feb. 14 Le-Win travels to take on the Pearl City Wolves. Last time they faced off, Pearl City won by a score of 71-63. That game is set to tip off at 6:45 p.m.

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## Lena American Legion Auxiliary held Pie Baking Contest and Soup Tasting Fundraiser

The 13<sup>th</sup> District of the American Legion Auxiliary held their annual Pie Baking and Soup Tasting Fundraiser in Lena, IL. The winner of the Pie Baking Contest, held

on Saturday, Feb. 1, was Amy Mulliken from Shullsburg, with her peach pie. Debbie Gierke, from Shullsburg, WI, took second place with her rhubarb, straw-

berry, and raspberry pie. Third Place went to Marsha Tessoroff from Lena, IL with her rhubarb pie. Judges were Marlee Andrews, Bob Buss, and Joy Gerbode. There were 13 pies entries in total.

The Soup Tasting was held on Sunday, Feb. 2 with 22 different soups. Voted best soups were Bonnie Campbell with her Chili, Lillian Seffrood with her Swamp Soup, Karen Heller with her One-Pot Cheese Steak Soup w/Bacon, Amanda Akins with her Vegetable Beef Soup, and Carol Buss with her Cauliflower Sausage Soup. Thank you to all who participated and helped with the fundraiser.

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# Highland honors faculty and staff with Opel and Excellence Awards

Highland Community College recognized four outstanding colleagues at its spring semester kickoff with the 2024 Opel and Excellence Awards. The Excellence Awards recognize employees for demonstrating work quality, creativity, honesty, integrity, self-development and excellence in their professional relationships. The Opel Award is named after Don Opel, who helped establish the Highland Community College Foundation. It recognizes the outstanding effort and commitment of an employee who goes "above and beyond" to support the College while contributing to a positive environment.

A committee made up of award recipients from the previous two years selected winners in the following categories: Administrative/Professional Excellence, Part-Time Employee Excellence, Classified Excellence and the Opel Award.

Madonna Keeney (Winslow) — Administrative/Professional Excellence Award: As bookstore manager, Keeney is credited for her exemplary organizational and customer service skills, ensuring instructors and students can access the highest quality educational materials and products. She demonstrates respect, courtesy and kind-

ness and is highly valued by her staff and student workers.

Jackie Schultz (German Valley) — Part-Time Employee Excellence Award: Schultz is an administrative assistant for Lifelong Learning. She manages a substantial amount of work details and performs a wide range of duties while providing excellent service and communication to her customers. She recognizes that everyone, whether internal or external to Highland, is her customer.

Stacey Benkert (Freeport) — Classified Excellence Award: Benkert is a student accounts coordinator who tirelessly pursues improvements in student-facing processes through education and technology. She is an efficient and reliable team player who investigates and simplifies complicated issues, gathers feedback and implements helpful changes.

Karla Giuffre (Freeport) — Opel Award: Giuffre is a biology instructor who is also an active co-advisor and recruiter for Women+ in Science and Student Senate. Outside of her normal classes and labs, she provides extensive support to her students. She ensures they have the resources and understanding they need to be successful in her classroom, even when it requires hours of work outside of it.



SUBMITTED PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

Highland Community College recently recognized Madonna Keeney, Jackie Schultz, Stacey Benkert and Karla Giuffre for their outstanding contributions as faculty and staff members. Pictured is Stacey Benkert.



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Karla Giuffre



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## Free wellness event for seniors

The Senior Resource Center, in partnership with Fitness Lifestyles, is excited to host a Senior Wellness Event on Wednesday, Feb. 19, at 1 p.m. at the Senior Resource Center. This special event is designed to help older adults improve their stability, flexibility, and overall health through expert guidance, assessments, and interactive demonstrations.

At the event, Fitness Lifestyles staff will offer free balance screenings and assessments to improve stability and prevent falls. Free mini chair massages from licensed massage therapists. Personal training interactive demos to enhance strength, flexibility, and overall fitness. Interactive exercise demonstrations featuring Silver Sneakers Circuit, Strength and Tone, Chair Yoga, and more.

In addition, Fitness Lifestyles General Manager Laura Kreiger will discuss free and discounted membership options for seniors and provide informational handouts about services available at Fitness Lifestyles. Space is limited.

Call 815-235-9777 to reserve a spot. For more information about the Senior Resource Center and its services, visit [www.seniorresourcecenter.net](http://www.seniorresourcecenter.net).



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Jackie Schultz

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			4	5	3			
6	4	9		7				3
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Level: Advanced

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						7		3
	9					4		
	2	7	6					1
					8			
			2	1				5
			3		7			4

Level: Intermediate

## SUDOKU

### Fun by the Numbers

**Like puzzles?** Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test! **Here's How It Works:** Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

## VALENTINE'S DAY WORD SEARCH



D V L O A V B L V P U M C A Y V O Y F Y  
 E C O H U E G V F V B E V Y G P S H C H  
 V L K D E R O I C L W C U H N D U K L A  
 O R S T I O E I R T E N I T N E L A V O  
 L D O C L D P Y T L E K T O U N U U H O  
 E W Y A E A I T F H F W Y I W A D A T E  
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 G O S W E E T H E A R T R V I S V E I D  
 P U A H A F F E C T I O N E N L D F D N  
 W L N O E T A L O C O H C A H Y S Y C A  
 G B S T F I G S A U P W V O D C K H W C

### WORDS

- ADORE
- AFFECTION
- BELOVED
- BOYFRIEND
- CANDY
- CHAMPAGNE
- CHERUB
- CHOCOLATE
- CUPID
- DATE
- FLOWERS
- GIFTS
- GIRLFRIEND
- HEARTS
- HUG
- KISS
- LOVE
- MOVIE
- POEM
- RED
- ROMANCE
- ROSES
- SWEETHEART
- VALENTINE

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

### CLUES ACROSS

1. Racquet sport group (abbr.)
4. Norse god of thunder
8. Russian industrial city
10. What's good for the \_\_\_
11. Round-ish shape
12. Baltimore MLBer
13. French modernist painter
15. Burned with water
16. Intestinal issue
17. Take the lead
18. Prove oneself worthy
21. None
22. Tax collector
23. Swiss river
24. Gymnast Raisman
25. Baby's dining accessory
26. Canadian beer distributor
27. Iconic American tourist destination
34. More expansive
35. Alert
36. Popular boots Doc \_\_\_
37. Showings
38. Conclusion
39. Share a common boundary
40. Shooting sport
41. Popular side dish
42. Global energy firm
43. Chronicles (abbr.)

### CLUES DOWN

1. Type of bomb
2. Polynesian island country
3. Heavenly body
4. Hard workers
5. Covered
6. Johns Hopkins Hospital founder
7. Plant of the grass family
9. Island person of the Bering

1	2	3					4	5	6	7				
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36										37				
38												39		
40												41		
42													43	

- Sea
- 10. Storehouse
- 12. Scarlet-flowered desert shrub
- 14. A pituitary hormone
- 15. Female sibling
- 17. Monetary unit of Afghanistan
- 19. Empowering
- 20. Space station
- 23. Disorder
- 24. State of fuss

- 25. Footwear for babies
- 26. Nuclear reactor (abbr.)
- 27. Doves
- 28. Affirmative
- 29. Male parent
- 30. Utter obscenities
- 31. Type of verse
- 32. Unpleasant person
- 33. One who settles down
- 34. Founder of source-based history
- 36. A way to snarl

# Lawmakers introduce bills to punish sexual assault in schools, end fossil fuel investments

**Bills are among more than 2,000 filed last month**

By Ben Szalinski, Jade Aubrey and UIS Public Affairs Reporting

Republican lawmakers put forward a proposal to expel students who sexually assault another student at school.

Current Illinois law has no provisions requiring schools to expel a student who commits sexual violence or assault against another student at school. However, the law says that if a student brings firearms, knives, brass knuckles, or any other weapon that can be used to cause bodily harm into a school, they must be expelled for at least a year.

Sen. Steve McClure, R-Springfield, said the goal of Senate Bill 98 is to force schools to confront and deal with issues of sexual assault at a school or any activity or event related to a school.

He said this issue was brought to his attention when he caught wind of an incident that involved a 10-year-old girl in Taylorville.

The girl's mother, Ashley Peden, spoke alongside McClure at a Capitol news conference on Wednesday in support of the bill. Peden, who is a teacher in Springfield, said the way that the Taylorville school district handled the assault against her daughter caused her to rethink her decision to be a teacher.

"The lack of safety of all students has been a concern of mine from the very beginning, so much that at one point I was asked, 'are you worried about your daughter or the other students,'" she said. "To which I quickly replied, 'I'm worried about every single one of them, aren't you?'"

Peden said that between late January and early February 2024, her 10-year-old daughter was sexually assaulted by an older student who was 14 years old on their school bus and at their bus stop. The assaults increased in severity every day until the final assault, where her daughter was chased from her bus stop and raped.

After reporting the incident, Peden said she obtained an emergency order of protection for her daughter and brought it to the principal of Taylorville Junior High School, who made a "safety plan" for her daughter. Peden said the plan prohibited the accused student from coming into contact with her daughter at school, which the order of protection already called for.

"This safety plan was shared with the bus company, my daughter's fifth grade teacher and office staff," Peden said. "No one else

knew of the assaults. No one else knew of the safety plan."

"As an educator myself, I have been a part of a situation where all staff needed to know about something about a student. It was as simple as an email saying, 'Student A should not be in the presence of Student B, we need to keep them apart.' I asked for it to be just as generic as that, and I was not granted that," she said.

Peden said after several meetings with the school board and multiple court orders, the student was removed from her daughter's school and sent to an alternative school for the rest of the spring semester. However, in August, she received a phone call about the student's reentry into her daughter's school and again asked the school to remove the student.

"We have laws where a student gets expelled for bringing a weapon on school grounds, but what about cases like this, when the student's body is the weapon?" Peden said. "This boy continuously brought his weapon to school on the bus and to the bus stop. This is not acceptable. This is not ensuring safety for all students."

McClure said the bill is aimed at stopping schools from sweeping issues of sexual assault under the rug.

"What's happening right now is silence in these schools," McClure said. "Because they're not telling the parents in some cases, and other students aren't even aware of what's happening. That's a danger to them as well."

Rep. C.D. Davidsmeyer, R-Murrayville, filed an identical bill in the House. He said this issue needs to be addressed in schools across the state.

"It's not punishment for the individual who committed the crime," he said. "It's to protect all of our kids and to ensure that the people who committed the crimes get the help that they need."

## Divesting pensions from fossil fuels

Some Illinois Democrats are pushing the General Assembly to pass legislation that would require the state's five pension systems to divest from fossil fuel companies.

Under Senate Bill 130, the pension systems for legislators, state employees, university employees, teachers and judges would be prohibited from investing in any fossil fuel companies or their affiliates. Pension systems would be required to complete divestment in fossil fuel companies by 2030 but would be prohibited from making any new investments in them once

the bill is signed by the governor.

Fossil fuel companies covered under the legislation include subsidiaries, affiliates and parent companies of 200 publicly traded companies with the largest fuel reserves in the world, the 30 largest public companies owning coal-fired power plants and any company with fossil fuel operations at the core of its business.

Supporters of the bill said it is important Illinois not financially support fossil fuel companies as the state moves

toward clean energy goals. Those goals include requiring coal and gas power plants close by 2045.

"It is really imperative for the state pension funds to be more mindful and aligned with the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act that we made a commitment to, and this will align with that," bill sponsor Sen. Adriane Johnson, D-Buffalo Grove, said at a news conference.


Rep. Will Guzzardi, D-Chicago, a budget leader in the House, said he believes divesting from fossil fuel com-

panies will ultimately lead to better investment outcomes for pension systems as lawmakers search for ways to improve pension liabilities. Illinois has a \$143.7 billion unfunded pension liability, according to the Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability.

"Divesting our pension funds from fossil fuels will increase returns in the long run," Guzzardi said. "Not only is it aligned with our goals on climate, but it is aligned with our goals on guaranteeing a safe retirement for all public

employees." Fossil fuel investments underperform other types of investments, according to Guzzardi. A University of Waterloo study found American pension funds would see greater investment returns without investments in the energy sector.

It's not clear how much of Illinois' pensions are invested in fossil fuel companies, Guzzardi said, which is why lawmakers are using the bill to ask the pension systems to disclose their investments in fossil fuels.



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# FROM LENA'S KITCHEN



The not so skinny cook

The Super Bowl has been played, and everyone who had a great spread is recovered. Now we move on to the second big February event, Valentine's Day. There are some good recipes this week to help celebrate. Have a great week cooking!

## So Very Berry Brie

This appetizer is a pretty one for a Valentine's Day dinner. You can also use it for a holiday dinner too. The use of the berries makes for a tasty addition to the Brie cheese.

- ½ C. sugar
- 2 T. water
- ½ C. fresh or frozen raspberries, thawed

- ½ C. fresh or frozen blueberries, thawed
- ½ C. fresh or frozen blackberries, thawed
- 1 T. cornstarch
- 2 T. cold water
- 1 round (8 oz.) Brie cheese, halved horizontally
- Pita Chips or bagel chips

Preheat oven to 400. In a small saucepan, heat sugar and water until sugar is dissolved. Add berries. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer, uncovered, for 3 minutes. Combine cornstarch and cold water in a small bowl until smooth; gradually stir into the pan. Bring to a boil. Cook and stir for 2 minutes or until thickened. Remove from the heat; let stand for 10 minutes.

Place bottom half of cheese in a small ungreased cast iron pan or ovenproof skillet; pour ½ C. berry mixture over cheese. Top with remaining cheese and berry mixture. Bake, uncovered at 400 until cheese is softened, 8 to 10 minutes. Serve with chips.

## Cranberry-Raspberry Jell-O Salad

This Jell-O Salad makes a great side for a Valentine's Day dinner or a Sunday special dinner. It is beautiful in a glass bowl and tasty too.

- 1 pkg. raspberry Jell-O
- 1 can whole cranberries
- ½ C. pecans
- 1 C. sour cream
- 1 C. boiling water

Combine boiling water and canned cranberries with raspberry Jell-O and mix well. Place in a glass serving bowl. When the Jell-O is partly set, fold in pecans and sour cream.

## Lobster Wellington

I have never included a lobster recipe in any of my columns, but someone asked me to find one. This one is for a lobster tail encased in pastry. It also includes spinach, so you have the vegetable included. Someone will want to know if you can substitute imitation lobster for the lobster tail. Everything I have

read says you can. However, you won't have the wonderful taste of lobster. If you want to make something really special, try this recipe for "Heart Day"!

- Four 8 oz. raw lobster tails in the shell, thawed if frozen
- 6 T. unsalted butter
- 1 pkg. (10 oz.) chopped spinach, thawed and squeezed dry
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 t. lemon zest
- ½ lemon cut into wedges
- Salt and pepper
- 1 pkg. (4 oz.) sliced mushrooms
- 2 t. chopped fresh thyme
- 2 sheets puff pastry, thawed
- 1 egg, beaten

Preheat oven to 425. Bring a small pot of water to boil. Put the lobster tails in large heat safe bowl; pour in boiling water to cover and let sit until the shells just begin to turn orange, about 4 minutes. Use kitchen shears to cut the shells and remove the shells from the meat. Insert a wooden skewer lengthwise through each so that the lobster stays flat and does not curl up while finishing cooking. Set tails aside.

Microwave 4 T. butter in a medium microwave bowl in 30 second intervals until melted, about 1 minute. Stir in spinach, garlic, lemon zest, a pinch of salt, and 1/8 t. pepper. Set aside. Melt remaining 2 T. butter in a medium nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add the mushrooms, thyme, a pinch of salt and 1/8 t. pepper and cook, stirring occasionally, until the mushrooms are soft and starting to turn brown in spots, about 5 minutes.

Roll each puff pastry sheet into an 11-inch square; spread half of the spinach mixture on each puff pastry sheet with

half of the mushrooms. Cut each sheet in half, making 4 rectangles. Place a lobster tail on one end of each rectangle, parallel with the short side. Roll the pastry pieces around the lobster and transfer to a wire rack on a baking sheet. Brush the pastry with beaten egg. Bake until deep golden brown, 20 to 25 minutes. Remove the skewers; slice widthwise into pieces and serve with lemon wedges.

## Chicken and Swiss Stuffing Bake

If you can't afford the lobster or are too afraid to try cooking it, this easy chicken recipe will be a great main course for Valentine's Day. It is easy to put together and will make a great entrée.

- 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- 1 C. 2% milk
- 2 pkg. (6 oz.) stuffing mix
- 2 C. cubed cooked chicken breast
- 2 C. fresh broccoli florets, cooked
- 2 celery ribs, finely chopped
- 1½ C. shredded Swiss cheese, divided

Preheat oven to 375. In a large bowl, combine the soup and milk until blended. Add the stuffing mix with contents of seasoning packet, chicken, broccoli, celery and 1 C. cheese. Transfer to a greased 9x13 baking dish. Bake uncovered at 375 for 20 minutes or until heated through. Sprinkle with remaining cheese; bake 5 minutes longer until cheese is melted.

## Strawberry Cream Cake

This extra special dessert will be the "wow" factor for your Valentine's Day celebration. It takes a little time and

effort but is a beautiful cake to serve for the special ones in your life.

- 6 eggs, separated
- 1½ C. sugar, divided
- 3 T. lemon juice
- 3 T. canola oil
- 2 T. water
- 1¾ C. flour
- ½ t. salt
- 2 C. heavy whipping cream
- ½ C. powdered sugar
- ½ t. vanilla
- 3 C. sliced fresh strawberries
- 2 C. whole fresh strawberries

Place egg whites in large bowl and let stand at room temperature for 30 minutes. In another bowl, beat egg yolks until slightly thickened. Gradually add ¾ C. sugar, beating until thick and lemon colored. Beat in the lemon juice, oil and water. In another bowl, combine the flour and salt; add to yolk mixture.

Beat egg whites on medium speed until soft peaks form. Fold a fourth of the egg whites into the batter, then fold in remaining whites. Gently spoon into an ungreased 10-inch tube pan. Cut through batter with a knife to remove air pockets. Bake on the lowest oven rack at 325 for 35 to 40 minutes or until the cake springs back when lightly touched. Immediately invert pan; cool completely, about an hour.

In a large bowl, beat cream until it begins to thicken. Add the powdered sugar and vanilla; beat until stiff peaks form. Run a knife around the sides and center tube of pan; remove cake onto a cutting board. Cut into three horizontal layers. Place one layer on a serving plate; top with some of the whipped cream and sliced strawberries. Repeat.

See KITCHEN, Page 13

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# Illinois schools prepare for immigration enforcement

State board issues guidance after Trump rescinds Biden-era policy limiting actions in 'sensitive locations'

By Peter Hancock  
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

The Illinois State Board of Education is encouraging local school districts to adopt clear policies spelling out how and when their staff should cooperate with federal immigration officials carrying out enforcement actions or seeking information from school officials.

The "non-regulatory guidance" on immigration enforcement actions was issued Wednesday, Jan. 22, two days after President Donald Trump was inaugurated for his second term in the White House.

Almost immediately after the inauguration, Trump's new head of the Department of Homeland Security, acting Secretary Benjamin Huffman, rescinded a Biden administration policy that had limited immigration enforcement actions in or near "sensitive locations" such as schools, playgrounds, child care centers and school bus stops.

"All children in the United States are entitled to equal access to a basic public elementary and secondary education, regardless of their actual or perceived immigration status,

or the status of their parents/guardians," State Superintendent of Education Tony Sanders said in his weekly message posted on the ISBE website.

Sanders cited a 1982 U.S. Supreme Court case, *Plyler v. Doe*, which struck down a Texas statute that barred children who were not "legally admitted" into the United States from enrolling in public schools, saying the law violated the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment's equal protection clause.

In announcing the policy change, however, DHS said the Biden administration's policy had hampered legitimate law enforcement efforts.

"This action empowers the brave men and women in CBP (Customs and Border Protection) and ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) to enforce our immigration laws and catch criminal aliens—including murderers and rapists—who have illegally come into our country," the agency said. "Criminals will no longer

be able to hide in America's schools and churches to avoid arrest. The Trump Administration will not tie the hands of our brave law enforcement, and instead trusts them to use common sense."

During the 2024 presidential campaign, Trump vowed to crack down on illegal immigration into the United States. That included promises to carry out the largest mass deportation operation in U.S. history.

In his message, Sanders reminded school officials that they are not allowed to inquire about a student's or parent's citizenship status. But he said the guidance was being issued to respond to the "numerous requests" for information the agency had received from local officials about how to handle enforcement actions that federal agents might carry out on school grounds.

The guidance notes that federal law authorizes DHS to deputize state and local

law enforcement officers to enforce federal immigration law. But it also reminds school officials that under a 2019 state law known as the Keep Illinois Families Together Act, no Illinois law enforcement agency or official is allowed to take part in such an agreement with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

In addition, the guidance notes, the Illinois TRUST Act restricts the way law enforcement agencies and officials may participate in federal civil immigration matters.

"These pieces of legislation would apply to law enforcement agencies that might otherwise have a relationship or presence on the school's property," the document states.

The document advises districts to name a point person or department where federal authorities can be directed should they arrive on campus. It also advises designating a point person to review records requests or subpoenas from

immigration agencies and to keep track of requests they receive in case that information is needed for future reference.

It also describes the differences between various types of documents that immigration officials might serve on school officials, such as federal court warrants, federal court orders, judicial subpoenas, civil immigration warrants, notices to appear and administrative subpoenas.

"ISBE strongly encourages school districts to work directly with their legal counsel to create board policies and administrative guidelines so school districts can ensure any potential response to a warrant or subpoena described above is legally compliant and aligns with that school district's policies," the document states.

Leaders of the state's two largest teachers unions issued statements criticizing the new Trump administration policy.

See ENFORCEMENT, Page 16

## •Kitchen (Continued from page 12)

Top with remaining cake layer; spread remaining whipped cream over top and sides of cake. Arrange remaining sliced berries on sides of cake. Cut whole berries in half. Arrange on cake top. Store in the refrigerator.

warm place until almost doubled, about 1 hour.

Preheat oven to 350. Bake until puffed and light brown, 15 to 20 minutes. Cool slightly. Beat powdered sugar, butter, vanilla and enough milk to reach a drizzling consistency. Drizzle icing over warm rolls.

## Red Velvet Cinnamon Rolls

This tasty recipe uses a cake mix along with flour and yeast to make some beautiful cinnamon rolls. If you are celebrating Valentine's Day on the weekend with a brunch, this pastry will be beautiful and delicious.

1 pkg. red velvet cake mix  
2½ to 3 C. flour  
1 pkg. (1/4 oz.) active dry yeast

1¼ C. warm water (110 to 115 degrees)  
½ C. packed brown sugar  
1 t. cinnamon  
¼ C. butter, melted  
Icing:

2 C. powdered sugar  
2 T. butter, softened  
1 t. vanilla  
3 to 5 T. 2% milk

Combine the cake mix, 1 C. flour and yeast in a mixer. Add water; beat on medium speed for 2 minutes. Stir in enough remaining flour to form a soft dough (dough will be sticky). Turn onto a lightly floured surface; knead gently 6 to 8 times. Place in a greased bowl, turning once to grease the top. Cover and let rise in a warm place until doubled in size, about 2 hours. In another bowl, mix brown sugar and cinnamon.

Punch down dough. Turn onto a lightly floured surface; roll dough into an 18x10 inch rectangle. Brush with melted butter to within ¼ inch of edges; sprinkle with brown sugar mixture. Roll up jelly roll style starting with a long side; pinch seam to seal. Cut crosswise into 12 slices. Place cut sides up in a greased 8x13 baking pan. Cover with a kitchen towel; let rise in a

## Final Thoughts

Two weeks ago, I attended two great events that were offered in our area. On Saturday I saw the One Book presentation by the Freeport Library of *Dandelion Wine*. It was a Reader's Theater production at the Winneshiek Theater in Freeport. It was free admission where they served dandelion wine, dandelion cookies, and a great performance. You can still participate by checking with the Freeport Public Library for books and events in the month of February.

On Sunday, the American Legion Auxiliary District sponsored a soup tasting event. They served 15 different soups and had pie from their pie baking contest. It was a tasty event that they should be proud to have put on. It was part of the Winterfest weekend.

This next weekend raps up another Valentine's Day. Last week I mentioned that Lena has beautiful gifts in many stores and great specials for eating out. Hopefully you can support these businesses who work so hard for our community. Have a great week cooking something good for the special people in your lives.

There are only a few weeks left in February. We are still searching for recipes for February (and February means red), so send some favorites our way. We would love to feature some soup recipes. If you find some recipes to share, you can contact us by email or by mail at From Lena's Kitchens, *The Shopper's Guide* at Rock Valley Publishing, 1102 Ann St., Delavan, WI 53115. Have a great week.



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# LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE 15TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT STEPHENSON COUNTY - FREEPORT, ILLINOIS JPMorgan Chase Bank, National Association PLAINTIFF

Vs. Angeline Brechlin; United States of America - Administrator of the Small Business Administration; State of Illinois -

Department of Public Aid; Unknown Heirs and Legatees of Gertrude E. Brechlin; Unknown Heirs and Legatees of Channing Brechlin; Unknown Heirs and Legatees of James Brechlin; Shelia Brechlin; Douglas M. Brechlin; Linda M. Brechlin; Yousou; Angeline Brechlin; Channing Brechlin, Jr.; Eve Brechlin-Harker; Fred C. Brechlin; George Brechlin; Kane Brechlin; Nikki Brechlin; Laura Wells a/k/a Laura Brechlin; William O'Malley; Raymond L. Brechlin; State of Illinois - Department of Revenue; Unknown Owners and Nonrecord Claimants; Kipp Meyers, as Special Representative for Channing Brechlin (deceased), James Brechlin (deceased) and Gertrude E. Brechlin (deceased); Timothy Kudlacik

DEFENDANTS No. 2024FC48 NOTICE BY PUBLICATION YOU: Unknown Heirs and Legatees of Gertrude E. Brechlin Unknown Heirs and Legatees of Channing Brechlin Unknown Heirs and Legatees of James Brechlin Shelia Brechlin Eve Brechlin-Harker Fred C. Brechlin Kane Brechlin Nikki Brechlin Raymond L. Brechlin Unknown Owners and Nonrecord Claimants

That this case has been commenced in this Court against you and other defendants, praying for the foreclosure of a certain Mortgage conveying the premises described as follows, to-wit: COMMONLY KNOWN AS: 1922 N Farwell Bridge Rd

Ridott, IL 61067 and which said Mortgage was made by: Channing Brechlin Angeline Brechlin James Brechlin Gertrude E. Brechlin the Mortgagor(s), to Bank One, Illinois, NA, as Mortgagee, and recorded in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds of Stephenson County, Illinois, as Document No. 9892930; and for other relief; that summons was duly issued out of said Court against you as provided by law and that the said suit is now pending.

NOW, THEREFORE, UNLESS YOU file your answer or otherwise file your appearance in this case in the Office of the Clerk of this Court, Shanelle Bardell Clerk of the Circuit Court 15 North Galena Freeport, IL 61032 on or before February 28, 2025, A DEFAULT MAY BE ENTERED AGAINST YOU AT ANY TIME AFTER THAT DAY AND A JUDGMENT MAY BE ENTERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PRAYER OF SAID COMPLAINT.

CODILIS & ASSOCIATES, P.C. Attorneys for Plaintiff 15W030 North Frontage Road, Suite 100 Burr Ridge, IL 60527 (630) 794-5300 DuPage # 15170 Winnebago # 531 Our File No. 14-24-06006 NOTE: This law firm is a debt collector. I3259466

(Published in The Shopper's Guide Jan. 29, Feb. 5, 12, 2025) 467115

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SUBMITTED PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

Declining production of urea in China and Europe could pressure prices for fertilizer, including anhydrous ammonia, in the U.S. in the months ahead.

## Tight global supply keeping fertilizer prices elevated

By Rhiannon Branch FARMWEEK

As farmers enter another year of predictably tight margins, it does not look like fertilizer prices will grant much relief to the balance sheet.

"The problem is we're starting 2025 with nitrogen and phosphate values looking fairly firm on tight supply and demand," Josh Linville, vice president of fertilizer at StoneX, told FarmWeek. "We're worried about what that means for our prices going into the spring."

Chinese exports and European production of urea are both falling, which means

global prices could push higher.

"That should result in a situation where we have to start doing a lot of work to get the imports coming in that we very desperately need," Linville said. "We're going to have to move our price up quite a bit to make that relationship happen."

He said prices for urea ammonium nitrate and anhydrous ammonia, which are more commonly used in Illinois, usually follow the urea market.

One fertilizer that is well supplied globally and therefore mildly priced is potash,

but that could change now that President Donald Trump has taken office.

"We have to worry about the threat of 25 percent tariffs against Canadian goods," said Linville, who noted Canada is the world's largest producer and exporter of potash. "These tariffs will have real effects on the farm side if they get implemented."

Linville said Trump is known for using tariffs as an "economic weapon," but for a commodity market like fertilizer the benefits aren't likely to outweigh the consequences.

"A lot of times, the farm-

er of the country that implements the tariff is really the one that pays the price," he said. "We are going to have to watch that because it could have an adverse effect on our pricing."

On the other hand, Linville said the world "enjoyed a sense of peace" during Trump's first term with fewer wars and global conflicts from 2016 to 2020, compared to recent years.

"On the flip side, I am very hopeful that if he can bring back a period of tranquility, we can see markets start to

See PRICES, Page 16

### Answers

Down: 1. DECEASED, 2. LEGATEES, 3. UNKNOWN, 4. BRECHLIN, 5. JPMORGAN CHASE BANK, 6. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION, 7. STEPHENSON COUNTY, 8. FREEPORT, 9. ILLINOIS, 10. ANHYDROUS AMMONIA, 11. FERTILIZER, 12. TIGHT, 13. SUPPLY, 14. ELEVATED, 15. CHINA, 16. EUROPE, 17. PRESSURE, 18. PRICES, 19. ANHYDROUS AMMONIA, 20. U.S., 21. MONTHS, 22. AHEAD.

### PUZZLE 1

5	8	1	9	4	7	3	2	6
2	7	6	1	3	5	4	9	8
4	9	3	6	2	8	1	7	5
8	2	7	4	5	3	9	6	1
6	4	9	8	7	1	5	3	2
3	1	5	2	6	9	7	8	4
1	3	8	5	9	2	6	4	7
7	5	4	3	8	6	2	1	9
9	6	2	7	1	4	8	5	3

### PUZZLE 2

5	6	2	4	8	3	9	7	1
7	1	3	9	5	2	6	4	8
4	8	9	1	7	6	2	3	5
1	4	6	8	9	5	7	2	3
3	9	5	7	2	1	4	8	6
8	2	7	6	3	4	5	1	9
9	7	1	5	4	8	3	6	2
6	3	4	2	1	9	8	5	7
2	5	8	3	6	7	1	9	4

### CROSSWORD

Across: 1. TUBULAR, 2. GOOSE, 3. ORIOLE, 4. SCALDED, 5. PIONEER, 6. MUSTARD, 7. NIMBLE, 8. BILLY, 9. BOODS, 10. SIGNS, 11. ROOMIER, 12. AWARE, 13. DEMOS, 14. ABOUT, 15. RICE, 16. CHAIR.

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# CRYPTO FUN

Solve the code to discover words related to Valentine's Day.  
Each number corresponds to a letter.  
(Hint: 3 = R)

A. 23 14 3 18 16

Clue: Greetings

B. 3 9 16 20 16

Clue: Popular flowers

C. 3 9 19 14 24 23 20

Clue: Strong feeling of attraction

D. 17 20 10 3 4 14 3 5

Clue: Second month

Answers: A. cards B. roses C. romance D. February

## Prices (Continued from page 14)

calm down, trade flows return back to normal and get prices back to historic norms," he said.

Linville said as always it will be important for farmers to convey their fertilizer intentions to suppliers in 2025 so they can plan accordingly.

"I understand it's easy to want to bury your head in the sand in these kinds of times, but we need to have more information flowing than less," he said.

And despite a hefty delay to the fall 2024 fertilizer application season, Linville expects the number of spring applications to be about normal.

"It was probably one of the

most unorthodox fall application seasons we've ever seen," he said. "The first several weeks of November, hardly anybody across the Midwest turned a wheel."

But he said the weather opened a window around Thanksgiving and Midwestern farmers took advantage of it.

"We surveyed the industry, and I think we hit about 90 percent of what our expected fall run was," Linville said. "So that is fortunately keeping that horror story that we were talking about for springtime off the table."

Fertilizer prices in Illinois av-

eraged between \$650 and \$775 per ton for anhydrous ammonia as of Dec. 27, up an average of \$9.46 from the previous two weeks, according to the Illinois Production Cost Report. Prices ranged from \$679 to \$760 per ton for diammonium phosphate (up \$3.33), \$400 to \$525 for potash (down slightly) and \$525 to \$554 for urea (unchanged) as of the same date.

*This story was distributed through a cooperative project between Illinois Farm Bureau and the Illinois Press Association. For more food and farming news, visit FarmWeekNow.com.*



## Enforcement

(Continued from page 13)

Illinois Federation of Teachers President Dan Montgomery called it a "sad and shameful day when schools, meant to educate and support students, are turned into sites of fear and chaos."

Illinois Education Association President Al Llorens issued a statement saying all children should have access to "an equitable, high-quality public educa-

tion."  
"Our educators should not be put in the crosshairs of these political policies," he said. "School employees should be allowed to focus on supporting and educating all our students. We will do whatever it takes to protect all students, our teachers, our school support staff, our communities."

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