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LOCAL NEWS... LOCAL VIEWS

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Stillman Bank recently donated to the Rock River Valley Blood Center's Fund the Bus campaign. **Page 2**


WEATHER



WEDNESDAY

HIGH LOW


41 25



THURSDAY

HIGH LOW


37 32



FRIDAY

HIGH LOW

33 25



SATURDAY

HIGH LOW

36 20



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OBITUARIES

- CONNIE S. AVERY
- CHRYLENE JUSTICE REYNOLDS
- KAROL AUSTIN HUMMEL

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City creates experience builder and job board

‘We really want to help our industries and our people find good jobs’

BY JEFF HELFRICH
MANAGING EDITOR

ROCHELLE — The City of Rochelle has plans to soon unveil its new experience builder and job board, both created for its economic development department to attract and retain businesses.

The online applications were crafted by City Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Coordinator Casey Heuer. The experience builder acts as a centralized source of information on the city and its resources for businesses interested in locating in Rochelle along with current businesses and residents. The job board is available to businesses in town, which can post openings directly and find prospective new employees.

“We were looking for a tool that had more information than just a basic website,” City Industrial Development Manager Peggy Friday said. “We spend a lot of time answering questions about available buildings and properties and filling out requests for information through the state on projects that are



(COURTESY PHOTO)

The City of Rochelle’s new experience builder site will contain resources for current and prospective local businesses.

looking to possibly locate in Rochelle. We needed a one-stop shop for all that information.”

Heuer worked with a company called Geospatial to develop the experience builder over the course of a year. Users can click on any part of the experience builder and gather information specific to what they’re looking for. It shows available rail services, access to highways and the logistical reach of Rochelle along with zoning location maps.

Friday said the city is excited to fully launch the experience builder “in

a month or so.” She said being able to do the work on it in house was valuable and Heuer will be able to customize it to meet future needs.

Heuer called creating the experience builder “a learning experience,” as it was her first time working on a task of its scale.

“I’ve made smaller versions of what’s called story maps before at a previous employer, but nothing to this level of customization and how interactive it is and how complicated it is behind the scenes,” Heuer said. “We were able to make it

user friendly where users can hit a button and have the history of rail, Union Pacific, BNSF or various industrial parcels or demographics. It really gave me an opportunity to learn about the city because I’m not from here originally. It allowed me to dive into Rochelle’s history and what makes it unique and a gem.”

Friday said the city wants to use the experience builder in partnership with industries. Part of that will include the job board function.

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Duncan serves as Illinois Farm Bureau VP

‘I’ve always believed farmers are small in numbers, but vital in importance’

BY JEFF HELFRICH
MANAGING EDITOR

POLO — Since 2017, Polo farmer Brian Duncan has served as vice president of the Illinois Farm Bureau. Duncan and his wife, Kelly, raise corn, soybeans, wheat, pigs and cattle.

The Duncans have been involved in farm bureau work locally and statewide since the 1980s and have served on various committees. Duncan was Ogle County Farm Bureau president for 13 years.

“I represent the state, but I always represent my own farm and the farmers close to me in Ogle County,” Duncan said. “They remain very important to me. The issues Ogle County farmers face are very similar to the rest of the state. I have the chance to do a lot of advocacy and do quite a bit of work with the media. It’s given me the privilege to be a spokesman.”

The IFB’s main office is in Bloomington and Duncan spends about a week there per month during board meetings. He also serves as vice president of



(PHOTO BY CATRINA RAWSON)

Illinois Farm Bureau Vice President and Ogle County resident Brian Duncan reviews policy resolutions during a past delegate session.

Country Financial, which has board meetings occur at the same time.

Duncan’s IFB work involves overseeing the policy development process for the organization. He spends “a lot of time” traveling around the state

and meeting with county farm bureaus and talking about issues and policy. He’s also chairman of the IFB governance committee, which involves working with human resources departments of both the IFB and Country

Financial.

“I’m very fortunate to have a great team at the farm of family and employees that can keep the farm running really well while I’m gone,” Duncan said. “I’ve got a partner in the hog business, Keith

Poole, who does a lot of heavy lifting there when I’m gone. A lot of the logistical work for the farm I can do remotely. The work for IFB really is a full-time job.”

See DUNCAN page 3

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LOCAL NEWS



Stillman Bank donates to Rock River Valley Blood Center's Fund the Bus campaign

In the past two decades, the Rock River Valley Blood Center has been able to expand their reach within the stateline region thanks to the purchase and operation of their iconic pink Bloodmobile. However, the current bloodmobile is aging out and the RRVBC is making arrangements to purchase a new state-of-the-art bus. Stillman Bank was honored to contribute \$5,000 to the Rock River Valley Blood Center Fund the Bus Campaign! Pictured here is Stillman Bank Executive Vice President and COO David Mecklenburg presenting our contribution check to the Rock River Valley Blood Center CEO Lisa Entriokin. Interested in contributing to this campaign? Visit www.rrvbc.org/fund-the-bus/ to help RRVBC reach their goal and serve our community with a new Bloodmobile for years to come.

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 Please email shall@stpaulrochelleil.org to schedule a visit.
St. Paul Lutheran School
 1415 10th Ave., Rochelle, IL.

Northern Rehab hosts food drive Feb. 13-24 for area food pantries

ROCHELLE — Northern Rehab Physical Therapy Specialists is hosting a food drive Feb. 13-24 to collect non-perishable food items to benefit food pantries that serve the Rochelle community. Donations will support the Rochelle Christian Food Pantry.

Non-perishable items needed include canned meat (chicken, tuna), pasta, dry goods, canned foods (soups, sauces, fruits or vegetables), rice,

beans, applesauce, paper goods, personal care items, cleaning products, or any non-perishable items that have a longer shelf life.

Items may be dropped off at any of the four Northern Rehab locations in Rochelle (1211 Currency Court), DeKalb (3266 Sycamore Road or 232 W. Lincoln Highway) or Genoa (540 E. Main St.) For more information, please visit northernrehabpt.com or call 815-

562-3299. Thank you in advance for your support and contribution!

Northern Rehab Physical Therapy Specialists, voted Ogle County's Best Physical Therapist for four years, is a physical therapist owned and operated physical therapy practice dedicated to providing clients with the very best one-on-one customized care and has built a solid reputation and strong relationships within the communities they serve.



(PHOTO BY SCOTT SWARTZ)

On Feb. 4, Rochelle Township High School hosted the IHSA Regional Speech Tournament and won the Regional championship. This qualifies them to compete in the Sectionals at DeKalb High School on Saturday, Feb. 11.

Rochelle wins IHSA Regional Speech championship Feb. 4

ROCHELLE — On Feb. 4, Rochelle Township High School hosted the IHSA Regional Speech Tournament and won the Regional championship. This qualifies them to compete in the Sectionals at DeKalb High School on Saturday, Feb. 11. Moving on to Sectionals are the following Regional champions: Paul Swartz/ Mikayla Preston (dramat-

ic duet acting), Mikayla Preston (dramatic interpretation), Karma Lidren (humorous interpretation), Paul Swartz (informative speaking), Aiden Ramsey (radio speaking) and Pigeon Burgholzer/Brooklyn Hull (humorous duet acting).

Others qualifying for Sectionals are: Vi Hull (second place in prose reading and special

occasion speaking), Olive Nauman (second place in oratorical declamation as well as original oratory), Karma Lidren (third place in original comedy), Jimmy Chavez (third place in extemporaneous speaking) and Ashes Glover (fourth place in poetry reading).

Coaches Laurie Piller and Scott Swartz declared Jimmy Chavez as speaker of the week.

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LOCAL NEWS

Ogle County farmers utilizing more solar power

Farm Bureau Manager Kern: 'I think we'll see more farmers using it in the future'

BY JEFF HELFRICH
MANAGING EDITOR

OGLE COUNTY — Ogle County Farm Bureau Manager Ron Kern said Jan. 30 that "quite a few" county farmers have installed their own solar panels to help with operations.

While Kern said he didn't have a ballpark number of Ogle County farms utilizing solar, farmers have put them to use for powering livestock buildings and running dryers and fans when working with grain. "There's a savings because you're in essence generating your own electricity," Kern said. "I imagine your electrical costs are stable, because you're generating your own and there's no grid you really have to go on because it's right there on your own operation. A lot of farmers are going in that direction. It seems like it's saving them money on their energy costs."

Farming operations requiring large amounts of energy to run have caused Ogle County farmers to look for ways to reduce power costs, especially with electricity costs up in the market and rising natural gas prices, along with other higher input costs for those in the agricultural industry.

"It's not like putting panels on the roof of your home or in your backyard," Kern said. "It takes a lot of energy to run a farm. To be able to install solar panels like that and generate your



(PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)

Ogle County Farm Bureau Manager Ron Kern said Jan. 30 that "quite a few" county farmers have installed their own solar panels to help with operations.

own power and understand your costs, it's probably going to save you money in the long run."

Kern believes Ogle County will see more farmers utilizing solar panels in the future, especially due to movements on the state and federal levels towards more tax credits for those that utilize renewable energy.

"I know they're already talking about different tax credits in Springfield this year for people that are

using renewable energy," Kern said. "If you start putting incentives out there for people to convert to solar and that type of thing, I think you'll see a lot more of it."

In a different way, solar panels are also being seen in Ogle County in developments such as the one in Mt. Morris with farmers and/or landowners leasing their land to developers for large-scale solar projects to put power onto the electric

grid.

Kern said there are currently "dozens" of solar companies across the state looking to do that work and much of the county and state would lend itself well to a development like that, unlike wind power developments, which are usually only seen in windier areas that lend themselves best to them.

"With larger solar developments, it comes down to where they'd like to

do a project and working with landowners to see if anyone is interested," Kern said. "And if they are, you start developing the project and take it to the county to get it zoned. There's a lot of interest in it. It's no different than anything else. Some landowners are very interested in it and some have no interest in it at all. It's a personal preference of those with private property."

Leasing land for a solar

farm is another way to diversify income for farmers, if the land is available for it and it wouldn't disrupt desired operations.

"If you're possibly an older farmer that's maybe looking to retire, it's a pretty decent income that you probably wouldn't make on farming," Kern said. "There's certainly economic benefits to it for folks. It's just a matter of whether it fits in with what they want to do or not."

DUNCAN: Ogle County resident reflects on career with farm bureau

From page 1

"I'm on the road or busy with farm bureau work probably 150 days a year. It really is rewarding and a job that needs to be done."

Duncan believes members of the agriculture industry need to speak with a unified voice and he believes IFB is "very effective" at making life better for members on their farms.

"I've always believed farmers are small in numbers, but vital in importance to the country and the world," Duncan said. "Our voices can sometimes be muted because we're small in numbers. It's important to work together and more effective to speak in one voice. IFB is an extremely credible organization and we're a nonpartisan organization. We research our issues and are respected by both sides of the aisle for how

we advocate."

According to Duncan, the most important issues facing farmers in Ogle County and the state include: private property rights, the regulatory environment, farm profitability, international trade and the future of renewable fuels.

In recent years, farmers have seen rising input costs, inflation and supply chain issues as many other industries have. Those issues are interconnected and a number of factors play into them, Duncan said.

"There's no easy answer," Duncan said. "And unfortunately farmers are price takers. We can't pass costs along. The dialogue continues about how we make sure the supply chain functions and that involves everything from labor availability and immigration reform to availability of natural resources and

petroleum-based resources to keep farms running at a profitable level. We have dialogue with fertilizer companies and manufacturers. They're facing increased global demand and the war in Ukraine certainly has driven some of these things. And we're continuing to see a growing population and growing demand for food. That also increases the demand for inputs. There's just a lot of moving parts on those issues."

Duncan will be involved with the writing of a new farm bill this year and spent much of last year on background work in preparation for it. The election year of 2022 brought the opportunity for Duncan and others at IFB to build relationships and work with new representatives at the state and federal levels.

Back at his own farm and in Ogle County, Dun-

can said 2022 was a "very fortunate" year.

"We finally caught some very timely rain," Duncan said. "We'd had two years with short rainfall in 2020 and 2021 and it was nice to see the rain fall at the right time this year and we grew very good crops. For livestock, I'm also an independent hog farmer, and that market was good. 2022 was a good year on the farm. Finally. It's amazing what a little rain at the right time can do."

Duncan believes his IFB work has helped him in his farm work since he first became engaged with the organization. It's aided him with leadership training, exposure to different ways of thinking and new ideas along with business training.

"It allows me to see how large companies go about their business," Duncan said. "It's helped me to

have a fresh look and given me a fresh perspective for our family farm as we plan for the future. It's helped with my personal development. And we've made great relationships. That's

really where it becomes invaluable. The friendships we have across the state and the people we've met, that's really made our lives so much richer in so many ways."

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LOCAL NEWS

Obituaries

Connie S. Avery

CONNIE S. Avery, 71, passed away peacefully Thursday, Feb. 2 at Franklin Grove Living and Rehabilitation Facility, Franklin Grove. Connie was born Nov. 11, 1951 in Shelbyville, Illinois to W.C. (Rip) and Lila Storm. She graduated from Stewardson-Strasburg High School and Eastern Illinois University. Connie married Minor July 31, 1976, at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Compton. Connie began her professional career at Paw Paw High School, continued at North Lawn Junior High in Streator, and then Northern Illinois University Library. She accepted the position as the first full-time library director in Paw Paw and served there for 17 years. Connie completed her professional career at Flagg-Rochelle Public Library District as assistant library director and youth services director, retiring in December 2021. Connie was active in church and community organizations. She served on church council, altar committee, worship com-

mittee, secretary of Women of the ELCA at Immanuel Lutheran Church and was church librarian. She was a board member of the Rochelle Community Action Network (CAN) and was a member of the Franklin Creek Conservation Association education committee. She was also a member of Eastern Illinois Alumni Association. She enjoyed being a professional storyteller.

Connie enjoyed being "mother" to rescued Saint Bernards for over 40 years. She enjoyed attending college sporting events at both the University of Illinois and Eastern Illinois University.

Connie is survived by her husband of 46 years, Minor and two Saint Bernards, Dolly and Lincoln; sister Linda Oakley (Joe), brother David (Debby) Storm, brother Doug (Jane) Storm, sister Jill (Steve) Layton, sister Kathy (William) Eckstein, brother Kurt Storm. There are also numerous nephews, nieces, grand-nephews and grand-nieces.

Connie was preceded in death by her parents, brother Larry Storm and



sister Carol Manhart.

Cremation care has been provided by Torman Funeral Home, Paw Paw. Visitation will be Saturday Feb. 11 from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at the Immanuel Lutheran Church, 398 Church Road, Compton. A memorial service will follow at 11:30 a.m. with Pastor Jeffery Schlesinger officiating. Burial will follow in Immanuel Lutheran Church Cemetery following the service. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Immanuel Lutheran Church New Roof Fund or the Flagg-Rochelle Public Library District.

Please visit www.TormanFuneralHome.com to sign the online guest book.

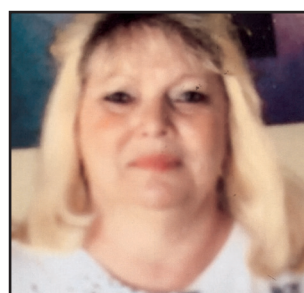
Chrylene Justice Reynolds

TULSA, O.K. — Chrylene Justice Reynolds passed away Friday, Jan. 20 at Hillcrest Hospital South in Tulsa, Oklahoma. She was 64 years old. She was born May 18, 1958 in Piqua, Ohio. She was the seventh child of William H. Justice, Sr. and Stella Rowlett Justice. She lived in Ohio the first four years of her life until the family moved to Rochelle.

Rochelle was her home for about 16 years until she moved to Las Vegas. Before moving to Las Vegas she had her only child and daughter Andrea, in 1975. She met and married Jerry Reynolds in Las Vegas, a union that lasted 27 years. They moved around some, Texas, Oklahoma and Las Vegas and eventually settled in Oklahoma.

Loved ones left to cherish her memories are her daughter, Andrea Justice; granddaughters Taje (Oklahoma) and Eva (Indiana); great granddaughters Clover and Rosie both of Oklahoma; stepsons, William (Stephanie) Goins (Amarillo, Texas), David Reynolds (Big Island, Hawaii) and Sterling Hayden (Las Vegas, Nevada); stepdaughter

Mary (Tim) Hardin (Boise, Idaho); brother-in-law Mike Reynolds (Redbird, Oklahoma); sisters-in-law Bobby Jo Dansbury (Redbird, Oklahoma), Glodene Reynolds (Amarillo, Texas), Sharon Carter (Dallas, Texas), Wanda (Ron) Astwood (Corpus Christi, Texas); brother, Tim (Joyce) Justice (Franklin Grove); sisters Elaine (Bill) DeVault (Marble Hill, Missouri), Brenda (Donnie) Ming (Vienna, Illinois), Sherry (Floyd) Smith (Rochelle), Tami (Dwight) Jett (Hazard, Kentucky) and Teresa Watson (Clarks Hill, Indiana); and a host of nieces, nephews and cousins. Aunts Gladys Rowlett and Ruby Graham of Ewing, Virginia and many friends. Predeceased by husband, Jerry Reynolds. Jerry was hospitalized on Dec. 21, 2022 and Chrylene was hospitalized on Dec. 22, 2022, both with COVID-19-related illnesses. Jerry passed away on Jan. 6 and Chrylene passed away on Jan. 20, the day of Jerry's funeral. Chrylene was also predeceased by her parents; infant grandson, Mony; brother, Bill Justice; sister,



Pam Ritchie and a baby sister, Cecelia.

Graveside services were held on Jan. 24 at Fort Gibson National Cemetery in Fort Gibson, Oklahoma. Per National Cemetery procedure, Chrylene was laid to rest with her husband in the same grave. That's what she would have wanted. Goodbye for now my dear sister. You are no longer suffering with pain, sickness or unhappiness. Rest in peace until Jesus comes. You will be missed greatly and you are still loved very much.

Cards and/or condolences may be sent to Sherry Smith, 10936 E. Illinois Route 38, Rochelle, IL 61068.

The family wished to thank Biglow Funeral Directors in Muskogee, Oklahoma and Hillcrest Hospital South in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Karol Austin Hummel

ROCHELLE — Karol Austin Hummel, 92, passed away Monday, Jan. 30 at his home in Rochelle. Karol was born on April 2, 1930 to George E. and Dorothy A. (Rummel) Hummel in Fremont, Ohio. He married Joan Reitz in Rochelle. He proudly served with the United States Air Force during the Korean Conflict. Karol loved to travel, and was an Ohio farm boy through and through. He worked at the Del Monte canning plant prior to

retiring.

Karol is survived by two children: Dawn Holmes of Rochelle and Mike Locke; sister, Donna and three grandchildren: Austin Holmes, Amber and Sarah Hummel.

In addition to his parents, Karol was preceded in death by his wife, Joan on Sept. 28, 2022; son, Bob Locke; brother, George "Juney" Hummel and sister, Pauline.

Visitation will be from 5-7 p.m. Thursday, Feb.



9 at the Unger-Horner Funeral Home, 400 N. 6th St., Rochelle. The funeral service will be held at 11 a.m. Friday, Feb. 10, at the Unger-Horner Funeral Home. Burial will follow the service at Ashton Cemetery in Ashton provided by the Eastern Lee/Ogle Honor Guard. A memorial will be established.

Visit www.ungerhorner.com to sign the online guest book.

Ogle County Sheriff's Department

Deputies respond to two-vehicle accident with multiple injuries

OREGON — On Feb. 3 at approximately 8:35 p.m. deputies responded to the 7,000 block of East Gurler Road in reference to a two-vehicle accident with multiple injuries. Upon arrival, EMS was attending to the occupants from both vehicles. Once on scene, deputies learned a Dodge Ram driven by Matthew Brown, 32, of Ashton, was traveling westbound on Gurler Road and was cresting a hill. At the same time, a Chevrolet Equinox driven by Diana Padela, 75, of Rochelle, was traveling eastbound on Gurler Road and was also cresting the same hill. The two vehicles

then collided causing heavy front and driver's side damage after the Dodge had drove partially into Chevrolet's lane. Brown, Padela, and Anna Loan, 66, of Rochelle who was a passenger in Padela's vehicle, were all transported to Rochelle Community Hospital for non-life threatening injuries. Brown was later placed under arrest for driving under the influence of alcohol at the hospital and released on an I-Bond. Brown was additionally issued citations for operating an uninsured vehicle and not driving on the right side of a two-lane road. Rochelle Fire/EMS, Ashton Fire/EMS and the Lee County Sheriff's Office all assisted with the accident.

On Feb. 4 at approximately 7:42 p.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop on Interstate 39 at mile marker 106 northbound. After investigation, deputies placed Jonqueze Adams, 22, of Rockford under arrest for no valid driver's license and improper container of cannabis. Adams was also issued citations for operating an uninsured vehicle, expired registration and an equipment violation. The passenger, Aaron Freeman, 24, of Rockford was also placed under arrest for improper container of cannabis. Both Adams and Freeman were released on an I-Bond at the scene and given a future court date.

On Feb. 5 at approximately 7:14 p.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop in the 6,000 block of North Illinois Route 2. After investigation, deputies placed Joshua Shank, 37, of Polo

under arrest for no valid driver's license. Shank was additionally issued a citation for an equipment violation. Shank was released on an I-Bond at the scene and given a future court date.

On Feb. 5 at approximately 12:52 a.m. deputies had learned of a driving complaint southbound on Interstate 39 near mile marker 111, which was all over the roadway. A short time later deputies located the vehicle and conducted a traffic stop on the vehicle at approximately 1:03 a.m. near mile marker 99. After investigation, deputies placed Deon Body, 27, of Rockford under arrest for driving under the influence of alcohol and unlawful use of a weapon. Body was additionally issued citations for improper lane usage and operating an uninsured vehicle. Body was transported to the Ogle County Jail, where he was held in lieu of bond.

On Feb. 5 at 7:47 a.m. deputies responded to the 1,800 block of South Daysville Road for a one-vehicle rollover crash. After a short investigation, deputies arrested Mason Hayenga, 34, of Oregon for driving under the influence. Hayenga also received citations for failure to reduce speed to avoid a crash, improper lane use, driving on the shoulder and no insurance. Hayenga was transported to KSB by Oregon Fire/Ambulance for minor injuries. Hayenga was released on an I-bond and will appear in court at a later date.

All individuals are considered innocent until proven guilty.

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Any arrests listed in this paper are merely charges and the defendants are presumed innocent unless proven guilty in a court of law. Please note that all police reports received from the

Rochelle Police, the Ogle County Sheriff's Department and the Illinois State Police, will be printed without exception. Requests to omit particular reports will not be considered or honored at any time.

LOCAL NEWS

FTH: Annual gala accomplishes fundraising goal for 2023

From page 1

“There were 300 people, the most we’ve ever had, and we had 37 tables, which was also a record. The room was busy all night long with a great crowd and the weather cooperated. We did tremendous. We hit \$80,000, which was our goal. It’s a real testament to the support of the community and it gets better and better each year.”

The event included dinner, games, prizes and silent and live auction items. Representatives from each nonprofit spoke at the event about their causes and banners were displayed in their honor. A special tribute to the late Todd Smith took place at the event, which was attended by his family.

“Todd was our photographer for the gala for quite a few years and we miss him,” Eckhardt said. “He and his wife never asked for anything in return and they are very special to us. We miss Todd dearly.”

Eckhardt was surprised during the gala when

Mayor John Bearrows presented him with a key to the city for his work on From the Heart. The organization has raised over \$710,000.

“It was a shock,” Eckhardt said. “I was speechless. The gala and From the Heart is not just something that one person does. The group works so hard. For example, we’re going to meet this week to talk about 2024. It was nice of John and the city to do that. It meant a lot to me.”

When From the Heart started, it only benefited two groups along with the Rochelle Rotary Club. The goal at that time was to raise \$10,000 for each group. That’s why Eckhardt set the goal at \$80,000 this year to give that amount to each of the now-eight groups. He said he expects that to be a goal each year going forward.

The checks will be presented to the nonprofits in March and the money can be used as the organizations see fit with no restrictions.

“I’ve done this for 15 years,” Eckhardt said. “The best part of it is



(NEWS-LEADER FILE PHOTO)

From the Heart hosted its 15th annual gala and auction on Saturday at Flight Deck Bar & Grill and raised \$80,000 for eight area nonprofits, From the Heart President and Founder Dave Eckhardt said.

giving out the checks. That’s the coolest part of it all. With the event, people move in and out

of town over the years and the characters change. It’s been interesting. It’s amazing that we’ve been

able to keep it going with new people each year. All of our live auction items went well. Our credit card

sales at the end of the night were \$10,000 higher than they’ve ever been. That’s pretty cool.”

CITY: Job board and experience builder created to foster economic growth

From page 1

The city created an industrial task force and the need for a job board was discussed in its meetings. Employers will have secure logins in order to post jobs themselves instantaneously.

The job board will link directly to companies’ job applications and employers will have the opportunity to create a profile on the homepage of the site and load pictures and videos on what it’s like to work there and information on history and opportunities.

“It’s a way for us to share this technology as a part of business retention,” Friday said. “We take business retention really seriously. This job board and experience builder and the industry

taskforce are ways that we can help. I think it’s a tangible way because obviously the workforce has changed since the pandemic.”

The city has worked in recent years to help remedy a workforce shortage that came about during the COVID-19 pandemic, including hosting multiple job fairs in conjunction with Rochelle Township High School, Kishwaukee College and local industries.

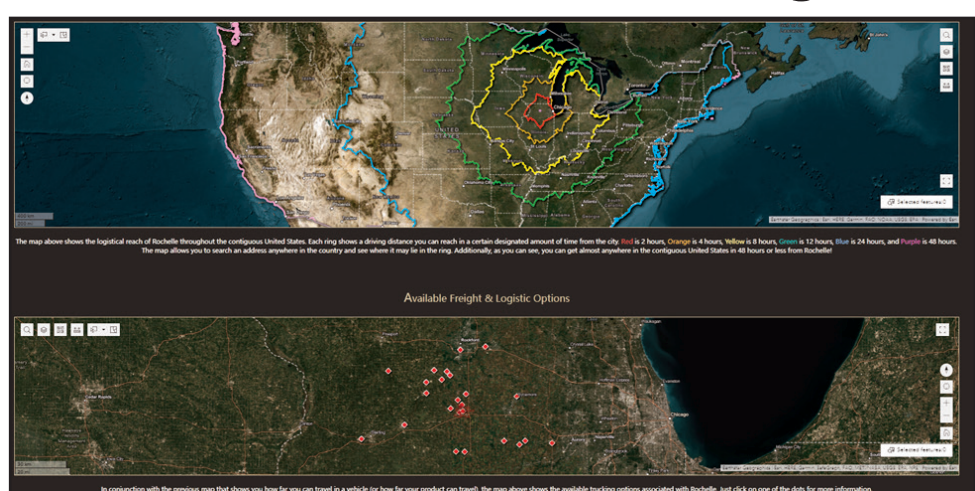
Friday said the city’s workforce levels are doing “a little bit better” than they were previously. Another job fair will be held March 10 and over half of 40 available spots for employers were filled as of Jan. 30 including commercial businesses, retail, service organizations and the hospital. The job board

will be fully launched in about 30 days.

“I still think there’s definitely a shortage,” Friday said. “I think the experience builder will help to educate the people who are here, because I don’t think people know what all amenities are here and what businesses offer. It will help us to market the assets we have.”

Friday said industry partners of the city are excited about the job board and have provided feedback on it. The city plans to distribute information to human resources managers locally and host a short training session on how to use the job board in coming weeks.

The experience builder also includes area amenities such as healthcare facilities and education institutions. Heuer spent



(COURTESY PHOTO)

The city’s new experience builder includes information for current and prospective local businesses. The map shown at top shows logistical reach from Rochelle. The second map shows regional logistical options for freight transport and each point is clickable and will give details for each trucking company.

time researching and adding information such as phone numbers, hours, addresses and services provided. She pulled data from individual resources the city previously used and put it all in one place

and made sure it was current.

“The research and everything was done so people don’t have to do it themselves,” Heuer said. “It’s a living, breathing application. As I learn

more or industries want to put different things out there, it can be adjusted as needed. As time goes on, it’s going to adapt to what the current environment is. It will progress with us.”

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LOCAL VIEWS

Guest column

Chatbots: The new pain in the bot

A chatbot is a computer program that uses natural language processing (NLP) and artificial intelligence (AI) to converse with humans on various topics while sounding like a human being. The word bot is derived from the word robot suggesting an automated system performing a certain function. Chatbots obey Isaac Asimov's three laws of robotics: A robot may not injure a human; a robot must obey orders from a human as long as they do not conflict with the first law, and a robot must protect its own existence as long as it does not conflict with the two previous laws.

Many of us are familiar with the widely-used chatbots such as Siri,

Alexa and Google assistant. Some chatbots are developed from simple software programming, resulting in limited simple answers to questions and are called task-oriented chatbots. Others can be very sophisticated with detailed responses as they gather and incorporate information about you (machine learning, ML) and become more personalized, called data-driven chatbots. Sophisticated chatbot apps can create a speech or report based on a set of input criteria. Businesses have found chatbots to be beneficial when interacting with customers. When banking, chatbots save an average of four minutes per inquiry when compared to traditional call centers. When traveling, one can

query a chatbot and find the location of the nearest gas station, restaurant or motel. The benefits of chatbots are numerous. They are cost effective; advanced versions have well-developed AI resulting in the sensation that the chatbot is almost human; they can handle many more customers at once, unlike human staffed call centers; and interaction with advanced versions can allow users to perform tasks correctly and efficiently.

Conversing with a human may not always be the gold standard for communicating with a business or service. I have often been frus-

trated when interacting with humans who are not properly trained, are not knowledgeable or are difficult to understand. Chatbots also have some drawbacks. They can't answer all questions, which makes them sound like a computer and not a person; many chatbots are associated with slower computers, causing delays in answering which can be annoying; and chatbots are not very good at making decisions.

Chatbots access and collect data on you to help better answer your questions. For example, Siri uses your contact list to place a call and uses your location information to locate nearby services.

A topic you search on Google may appear as an ad on Facebook. It is not clear on where this data ends up or who it is sold to. Chatbots have gotten a bad rap as a result of hackers using bot-oriented software. Nevertheless, many large corporations are investing heavily in chatbot technology, suggesting that they think this is the way of the future.

There is an interesting aspect to chatbots that is not often discussed. Data shows that about 10-15 percent of the human interactions with chatbots are abusive (swearing at the chatbot). This may become unacceptable in tomorrow's work place. This behavior suggests that a person who abuses a chatbot may be abusive to other humans and contrib-

ute to a hostile work environment. If your human resources department at work finds out about this abusive behavior, or if you're overheard at work being abusive to a chatbot, it could be interpreted as inherent hostility and result in a reprimand or getting fired.

Chatbots save time and money and augment human involvement with customer service. Technologies such as artificial intelligence, machine learning and augmented reality (digital enhancement in real time) are propelling chatbots into many aspects of daily life. Avoid getting upset with a chatbot.

Utilize it as a tool for better service. They are not intended to be a pain in the bot.



Chuck Roberts

Consider this: Promotions

SEVERAL people have come up to me in the past and asked if I felt that they had a chance at getting a promotion. Some are just wondering in general, and some are thinking about applying for a position that has been posted at their work. What they are saying to themselves is one of two things. They are wondering if they have the potential to advance and/or they are concerned about failing.

My reply has always been that same. I tell them that they won't get a promotion unless someone knows they are looking. One of the ways to make it known that you are looking is to let your boss know. It is true

that the boss may make a statement that doesn't make you feel good or give you much incentive, but it is only one person. You may have failed at making one person aware of your wishes, but it has nothing to do with potential and everything to do with someone's singular belief. Now it's time to let others know.

As for applying to an open position, my response is always to tell them if they don't apply, it's guaranteed that they will not get the position. Yet many still will not apply because of their personal belief that they must not fail. Failure is somehow a deficiency in their mind. But is it really? We all fail many times in our

lives. This does not make us deficient in some way, it only makes us a student. Now we must get back to the books and study hard to learn the information we need to succeed the next time.

But many of us are done studying. We studied for as much as of 18 to 28 years of our lives. No more for us. Yes, the structure of school has been put in the past, but learning must go on. Because growing must go on. Because life must go on. The will to live has a lot to do with the will to learn. About ourselves, our surroundings, our world and our role in this

world. We were once told what to do, shown what to do, taught what to do. Now we are free to learn what it is that we want to do. How far we want to take ourselves.

Most of the synonyms for the word failure are hyper negative. Take disaster for instance. Is it really disastrous for us to apply for a job and get turned down? Hardly. I like the synonym of stoppage better. This one applies because failure, at any time, can cause stoppage. This is the word that says to us either we are done, or we must go on and learn to do better, to learn more so we can try again.



Reed Harris

I guess if we keep this in mind, then we never truly fail. We just keep learning until we get to the next job listing, the next challenge. If we can just look at what others call failure as steps in learning, and we keep this positive outlook, then the word doesn't really mean much anymore. I'm not sure how many times I took the next step in learning so I could move on. But I eventually made it to where I wanted to be and that was success in the end. I do remember one time when I was applying for a job that would be my recovery since my current job was being eliminated. I was very nervous because of the circumstances, but felt I was doing good. I got to

the interview point when I was asked the fairly prominent question of where I saw myself in five years. My mind spun for a bit then I told my interviewer, who would be about two levels above me if I got the job, that I saw myself in his position. I got the job, but I'm still not sure if this was a good answer. It didn't matter. I felt good about it.

So, the next time you are feeling that you want to be promoted, remember, that you must tell someone. This is another step in the learning process. You won't get promoted otherwise. And if that position you want opens, go for it. Not doing so only guarantees you will not be doing that job.

Submit a letter to the News-Leader

THE News-Leader would like to remind the public and our readers that responsible letters to the editor on subjects of interest to our readers are encouraged. Letters to the editor must abide by the

guidelines that you will find at the bottom of this page.

Those that want to make their voice heard can send their letters via email to news@rochellenews-leader.com, in the mail to PO Box 46, Rochelle, IL 61068 or drop them off at

211 Illinois Route 38 East, Rochelle, IL 61068. Questions? Call 815-561-2151.

Jeff Helfrich
Managing Editor

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The Rochelle News-Leader encourages responsible letters to the editor on subjects of interest to our readers.

Editing may be necessary for space, clarity or to avoid obscenity or libel, but ideas will not be altered. All letters must bear the handwritten signature of the writer and include address and phone number or e-mail address for verification purposes. Neither the street address nor phone number will be printed. Letters should be typed or legibly handwritten,

and no anonymous letters will be published. Any letters from boards or organizations must include at least one name of an individual. Any criticism of public officials should be limited to issues related strictly to their position or actions made in office, as personal attacks will not be published. Letters involving private disputes between the writer and a business will not be published. Political endorsements will be published, however letters from

candidates endorsing themselves will not be printed. Letters may be dropped at the Rochelle News-Leader office (211 Illinois Route 38 East), mailed to the News-Leader (P.O. Box 46, Rochelle, IL 61068) or e-mailed (news@rochellenews-leader.com.) The Rochelle News-Leader reserves the right to edit or reject any letter to the editor for any reason, and letters chosen for publication do not necessarily reflect the views of this newspaper.

COMMUNITY

Rock River Valley Blood Center partnering with area high schools for Save Lives challenge

ROCHELLE — The Rock River Valley Blood Center (RRVBC) has partnered with area high schools for the Schools Unite to Save Lives challenge through May 21.

The challenge was initiated in 2021 by the Guilford High School Health Science Academy, designed to support the blood center after COVID-19 canceled

high school blood drives.

Donors are asked to mention Rochelle Township High School whenever they donate blood between now and May 21. The school receiving the most blood donations earns bragging rights and a trophy.

To donate, schedule an appointment at rrvbc.org, on the myRRVBC app, or

call 815-965-8751. Walk-ins are welcome, too.

Nearby blood drives are planned for Feb. 22 at Rochelle & Ogle-Lee Fire Departments (noon to 6 p.m.) and on March 2 at Rochelle Community Hospital (noon to 6 p.m.).

The blood bank needs to see 800 donors weekly to supply enough blood to serve 13 regional hospitals.

Donating blood is simple. One unit can save up to three lives.

After you complete a questionnaire and register, a donor care specialist will check your vitals (temperature, blood pressure, pulse and hemoglobin). Then you can sit, relax and give. The donation lasts about 10 minutes and refreshments follow.

Kishwaukee College invites prospective students to Visit Day on Feb. 20

MALTA — Kishwaukee College will host Visit Day on Monday, Feb. 20, at the college for prospective students and their families.

"It's important to find the college or career path that's right for you, and we want you to have all the information you need

to make that decision," Graciela Horta, coordinator of student outreach at Kish, said. "By attending our Visit Day, you will find Kish has great academic programs, support services, career development, flexible class offerings and more — all at an affordable cost."

Visit Day will have two sessions for students to choose from. The morning session will be from 9 a.m. to noon and focus on students looking to pursue a transfer degree. The afternoon session will be from 1-4 p.m. and focus on students pursuing career technology or allied

health programs. Both sessions will offer campus tours and an information fair. The sessions will also cover getting started at Kish, financial aid and scholarships, student involvement and athletics.

For more information on Visit Day or to register, visit kish.edu/visitday.

ISP Troop 1 announces monthly activity for January

STERLING — Illinois State Police Troop 1 troopers issued 585 citations, 613 written warnings and made 23 criminal arrests during the month of Jan-

uary. Troopers issued 271 citations for speeding and 15 citations for distracted driving violations. There were 13 arrests for no valid driver's license or driving

while license suspended/revoked.

Troopers investigated 66 traffic crashes, assisted 262 motorists, and conducted 291 commercial motor

vehicle inspections. There were seven arrests for driving under the influence.

Troop 1 investigated one fatal traffic crash in January.

Birthdays & Anniversaries

Feb. 8 Kaiyah Hayward	Feb. 12 Jennifer Curtis	Feb. 20 Christian Losoya	Feb. 26 Natalie Powell
Feb. 10 Gene & Judy Messer (anniversary)	Feb. 13 Gabby Villalobos	Feb. 21 Kris Oleson Anna Sexton	Feb. 27 Beth Bolhous
Feb. 11 Darrell Bolhous Paige and Samantha Donoho	Feb. 16 Larry Baker	Feb. 22 Jessica South Lucy Hazlip	Feb. 28 Lucas Donoho
	Feb. 18 Sam & Jessica South (anniversary) Sven Norris		

Call 815-561-2151 to submit names for birthdays and anniversaries



2022 From The Heart Calendar

Jan. 13 - Cheri Divine, Frisco, CO, \$25

Jan. 14 - Zekelman Employee, Rochelle, \$25

Jan. 15 - Kyle Kissack, Rochelle, \$50

Jan. 16 - Doris Kay McIlvoy, Rochelle, \$25

Jan. 17 - Calvin M. Jacobs, Rochelle, \$25

Jan. 18 - Autumn Hernandez, Rochelle, \$25

Jan. 19 - The Kitchen Table, Rochelle, \$25

Jan. 20 - Sean Tracy, Byron, \$25

Jan. 21 - Tracy Pointer, Rochelle, \$25

Jan. 22 - Daniel W. Keller, Oregon, \$50

Jan. 23 - Ryan E. Baylor, Rochelle, \$25

Jan. 24 - Kathryn Tyner, Rochelle, \$25

Jan. 25 - RACF, \$25

Jan. 26 - Jacqueline Nass, Naperville, \$25

Jan. 27 - Andrea Svela, Rochelle, \$25

Jan. 28 - Anne Aubry, Whitefish Bay, WI, \$25

Jan. 29 - From the Heart, \$50

Jan. 30 - Alexander Herrera, Dixon, \$25

Jan. 31 - Rochelle Chamber, \$25

Feb. 1 - Deanna Hill, Rochelle, \$25

Feb. 2 - From the Heart, \$25

Feb. 3 - HOPE of Ogle County, \$25

Feb. 4 - Melanie Bonilla, Rochelle, \$250

Feb. 5 - Jesse Johnson, Cambridge, WI, \$50

Feb. 6 - Adlai Schaefer, Rochelle, \$25

Feb. 7 - Marie McNames, Byron, \$25

Feb. 8 - Holly Kubale, Rochelle, \$25



Coffee Break

King Crossword

- ACROSS**
- 1 Niger neighbor
 - 5 Existed
 - 8 Close
 - 12 Timber wolf
 - 13 Rocker Rose
 - 14 — Christian Andersen
 - 15 Modern taxi rival
 - 16 Museum-funding org.
 - 17 Verdi opera
 - 18 Anne who married Henry VIII
 - 20 Funhouse feature
 - 22 Extinct bird
 - 23 Documentarian Burns
 - 24 Island near Java
 - 27 Gymnast's move
 - 32 Brit. record label
 - 33 Continent north of Afr.
 - 34 Bar cubes
 - 35 Olympic skating gold medalist Tara
 - 38 Grand tale
 - 39 "Today" rival, briefly
 - 40 "Fresh Air" airer

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12					13				14			
15					16				17			
18				19			20	21				
			22					23				
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32					33				34			
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		39					40	41				
42	43				44		45			46	47	48
49					50	51			52			
53					54				55			
56					57				58			

- 42 Honeydews
 - 45 Jerry of the Grateful Dead
 - 49 Golf bag item
 - 50 Frazier foe
 - 52 "Heavens!"
 - 53 Spanish ayes
 - 54 Charged bit
 - 55 Mature
 - 56 Try out
 - 57 Schlep
 - 58 Get lippy
- DOWN**
- 1 Golf bag item
 - 2 Vagrant
 - 3 Genesis
 - 4 Moolah
 - 5 Hopefuls
 - 6 Chopping tool
 - 7 Bridge coup
 - 8 "Doctor Zhivago" star
 - 9 Tress holder
 - 10 Nullify
 - 11 Despot
 - 19 "Hey!"
 - 21 Annoy
 - 24 — canto
 - 25 Parisian pal
 - 26 Makeup kit
 - 28 Arctic seabird
 - 29 Shrinking in fear
 - 30 Here, in Dijon
 - 31 Chest muscle
 - 36 "Leave that to me!"
 - 37 Indian bread
 - 38 Goofs
 - 41 Ma's mate
 - 42 Fine spray
 - 43 Canal of song
 - 44 Go yachting
 - 46 — Pet
 - 47 Rapsallions
 - 48 Pro votes
 - 51 Singer Rawls
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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦♦

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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CryptoQuip

This is a simple substitution cipher in which each letter used stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Solution is accomplished by trial and error.

Clue: F equals K

ZV Z FLRX ENHR BDMRO VNOFE
AQG KRRL GZEYQIBARG, Z XNMOG
YDNKQKOW BDW "IAR KDMIZEA
QDR BNHZLU!"

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

Answer

are coming!"

probably cry "The brutish

had been dispatched. I would

If I knew some cruel folks

answer

CryptoQuip

King Crossword

Weekly SUDOKU

Solution time: 25 mins.

Answers

ASHTON NEWS



AFC Vet Science team takes seventh at section competition
Congratulations to the Vet Science team on its seventh place finish in the section last night. Team members were Jack Delhotal, Emma Maronde, Gracee Holmgren and Hailey Mallette. Students had to take a test about their knowledge, identify animal breeds, pests, and equipment along with demonstrating how to make a gauze dog muzzle and give ophthalmic medication.

Lady Raider basketball beats South Beloit

ASHTON — The Ashton-Franklin Center varsity girls basketball team cruised over South Beloit 52-20 on Monday, Jan. 30. Three Lady Raiders reached double figures including Alexis Schwarz (13 points), Brianna Gonnernman (12 points) and Taylor Jahn (11 points). Audree Dorn added seven points and Cameryn Winterland chipped in five points for AFC in the win.

Boys
The Ashton-Franklin Center varsity boys basketball team fell 68-59 against Milledgeville on Tuesday, Jan. 31. Lane Koning led the Raiders with 13 points, while Carson Rueff added 11 points and Jordan Harris scored 10 points. Griffin Bushman totaled nine points and Kaleb Goldman compiled eight points to help lead the AFC offense in the loss to Milledgeville.

The Ashton-Franklin Center varsity boys basketball team played a close matchup against Alden-Hebron on Wednesday, Feb. 1, conceding a 60-55 loss despite 21 points from Kaleb Goldman and 11 points from Carson Rueff. Lane Koning also had 11 points for the Raiders.

The Ashton-Franklin Center varsity boys basketball team edged Stillman Valley for a 61-60 win on Saturday, Feb. 4. Four players reached double figures including Carson Rueff (16 points), Jordan Harris (14 points), Kaleb Goldman (10 points) and Lane Koning (10 points).

AFC looking to hire assistant softball coach

ASHTON — AFC is in search of an assistant high school softball coach. Applicants must have knowledge of softball, ability to work with kids and head coach, and be willing to take the IHSA requirements to coach at the high school level.

If you are interested in the position or have questions, please email athletic director Traci Gittleson at tgittleson@afcschools.net.

Lee Sheriff reminds Super Bowl partygoers of intoxicated driving dangers

DIXON — Super Bowl weekend is here, and the Lee County Sheriff's Office is reminding football fans and partygoers that designated drivers are the best defense against the dangers of impaired driving. If your Super Bowl celebration involves alcohol or cannabis, plan for a ride home with a sober driver. If you're hosting the party, take care of the designated drivers. Fans don't let fans drive drunk.

Whether you're attending a party, hosting a gathering, or going out to a bar, keep safety at the forefront of your day and night. When it's time to leave, make sure your designated driver is sober. If you're walking, ask a sober friend to walk home with you.

Follow these simple tips for a safe celebration: Drunk or high, it doesn't matter. It is never okay to drive impaired. Designate a sober driver or plan to use public transportation or a ride service to get home safely. If you see an impaired driver on the road, contact law enforcement. Have a friend who is about to drive impaired?

Take the keys away and plan to get your friend home safely. Always buckle up.

Buhnow, Henert recommended for State FFA Degrees

ASHTON — On Saturday, Andrea Buhrow and Mallory Henert both interviewed for their State FFA Degree and both members are being recommended to the state for their State FFA Degree.

The State FFA Degree is the highest degree that Illinois FFA can award a member. In order to achieve this, members must keep recordbooks on a Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) throughout their time in FFA, maintain their GPA, participate in community service and show leadership in the organization.

Mallory is being recommended based on her SAE's for food service, managing the farmer's market and hog cooperative. Andrea is being recommended for her SAE involving her u-pick flowers and bouquet subscriptions. In addition to being recommended for her State Degree, Andrea also was recognized as the Section 2 Star in Agribusiness. She will compete at the district level in March.



(COURTESY PHOTO)
Jim Schielein, (right) and his wife, Bernadine (left), accept the Distinguished Service Award.

Schielein honored with LCFB Distinguished Service Award

AMBOY — The Lee County Farm Bureau (LCFB) is honored to recognize Jim Schielein, Dixon, with the Lee County Farm Bureau Distinguished Service Award in recognition for his longtime service to the organization.

Schielein started his farm bureau career as a Young Leader. He later served on the LCFB Board of Directors, including service as the Lee County Farm Bureau president, as well as on the Illinois Farm Bureau (IFB) Board of Directors for 10 years representing Bureau, Lee and LaSalle counties as the District 4 director. He has participated in several IFB programs including Agriculture Leaders of Tomorrow, Leaders to Washington, Grass Roots Issue Teams and more. He is a long-time member, volunteer, and agriculture advocate.

The Distinguished Service Award was established to honor and recognize an individual or couple who has shown exemplary leadership and service to farm bureau, agriculture and farmers in Lee County and beyond.

"Without the time, dedication, passion and vision from many hard-working volunteers, like Schielein, the Lee County Farm Bureau would not exist today," a press release said. "We thank Schielein for his service to our organization and are proud to recognize him as our Distinguished Service Award recipient."

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VALENTINE'S DAY

Valentine's Day gifts couples enjoy together

VALentine's Day is a time to bring smiles to the faces of loved ones — particularly the special someone in a person's life.

Gifts that appeal directly to spouses or significant others may be the standard, but gifts couples can use together can bring them closer together. The following are some great Valentine's Day gifts couples can enjoy together.

Quirky mugs: Mug sets come in all shapes and sizes and express various sentiments. Some even feature interlocking designs designed to symbolize that couples are two pieces of one puzzle. **Kissing mugs,** which look like lips touching when they are brought together, are perfect for couples who enjoy their morning coffee together. Look for them at www.uncommongoods.com.

Matching robes: Plush terry cloth robes need not be reserved for luxurious stays at premiere hotels. Coordinating robes can be monogrammed and worn on lazy days when gathering in front of a cozy fire.

Charcuterie set: A romantic meal is the start of any Valentine's Day celebration. Invest in a compact charcuterie board with two matching wine glasses and enjoy the set on date nights at home.

MasterClass lesson: Purchase a MasterClass instructional (www.masterclass.com) and learn photography tricks or insider tips from established professionals

together.

Travel excursion: Jet set to an exotic locale with a planned adventure. Parents can arrange for a sitter, friend or relative to look after the children so the trip provides some one-on-one time. This trip can serve as the second honeymoon couples dream about.

Custom cornhole set: Couples who love tailgating or opening up their homes (and yards) to guests can purchase monogrammed or custom-carved bean bag toss boards.

Fancy coffee maker: Couples who spend more time in take-out coffee shops than they probably should can brush up on their barista skills at home. There are plenty of coffee makers on the market that can help couples whip up lattes, cappuccinos or espressos with ease.

Wine club membership: Couples who enjoy sampling the latest vintages and flavors may enjoy a wine subscription. Winc.com is just one of the delivery services available. Or couples who prefer to be a little more hands-on can experiment with winemaking kits.

Hot tub: What can be more relaxing than soaking in a warm bath of bubbling water? A backyard hot tub turns up the heat on relaxation and time spent together.

Tokens of love: Matching or coordinating bracelets, necklaces or even tattoos can serve as enduring symbols of a couple's love.

Valentine's Day gift-



ing may be even more enjoyable when gift-giving focuses on presents couples can enjoy together.

Popular Gifts

Valentine's Day sparks one of the busiest shopping seasons of the year. Though it might not inspire the masses quite like Black Friday, Valentine's Day compels millions of people to find gifts for that special someone in their lives each February. In fact, the National Retail Federation's Annual 2022 Valentine's Day Spending Survey found that the average person expected to devote \$175

to Valentine's Day spending in 2022.

Any heartfelt gift can light up a sweetheart's smile on Valentine's Day, but certain items tend to be more popular than others on February 14. Though Valentine's Day shoppers can always go their own way when shopping for their sweethearts, some of the more traditional gifts remain wildly popular. In its survey, the NRF found that these go-to gifts maintained their status as the most popular items for individuals to show their love for that special someone in 2022:

Candy: Fifty-six percent of survey respondents indicated they planned to buy candy for their sweetheart on Valentine's Day. Though any candy can suffice, chocolates inside a heart-shaped box tend to be especially popular in mid-February.

Greeting cards: Greeting cards will likely never go out of style, as 40 percent of respondents indicated they would give a card in 2022.

Flowers: The appeal of a bouquet is undeniable, prompting 37 percent of shoppers to give flowers on Valentine's Day.

A night out: A romantic night out is perhaps as meaningful as ever in a world still emerging from the pandemic. So it's no surprise that 31 percent of respondents indicated they planned to take their sweethearts out for a night on the town in 2022.

Jewelry: Though it might rank below the others on this list, jewelry remains a go-to gift on Valentine's Day. And with total Valentine's Day spending on jewelry estimated at more than \$6 billion in 2022, this could be where most Valentine's Day dollars go this February.

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VALENTINE'S DAY

Plan a special Valentine's Day this February

COUPLES have been commemorating their love for one another in February for quite some time. Couples may go about such celebrating in their own unique ways, but it's not uncommon to focus on a night out on the town.

Valentine's Day is a busy holiday for many businesses, but especially so at restaurants and other romantic venues. So it's best to plan ahead to ensure a perfect evening. These tips can help you organize a Valentine's experience to remember.

The closer to Valentine's Day, the more likely popular restaurants will be all booked up. If the goal is to dine at a particularly trendy spot — or anywhere but the most obscure establishment — be sure to make a reservation well in advance. Start planning the Valentine's Day dinner in December so you won't have to look far and wide to book a reservation. If a restaurant does not take reservations that far out, ask when they will start collecting names for Valentine's Day and book the moment you can.

One way to make the night more romantic is to snuggle in the back seat of a vehicle and have someone else do the driving. This also is a safer option if you plan to pop a bottle of bubbly or sip some wine while celebrating. Hiring a limousine, luxury car, horse-drawn carriage, or something similar also will require advanced reservations. However, going the extra mile can make the night

memorable.

The person you love may adore a romantic movie, whether it's a classic or more recent tear-jerker. When planning a romantic evening out, consider reenacting a movie scene with you and your special someone in the starring roles. For example, recall when Tom Hanks met Meg Ryan at the top of the Empire State Building in "Sleepless in Seattle." Include a visit to the observation deck or roof as part of a whirlwind Valentine's Day experience.

Music can touch the heart and soul. That makes an evening watching a band play or enjoying a musical on the stage even more memorable if it occurs on Valentine's Day. Select an intimate venue to add to the romantic ambiance of the night.

While dinner and a movie are Valentine's Day favorites, any activity done together can be memorable and romantic. Why not book a couple's cooking class? Or enjoy a winter sport like skiing or ice skating? Or warm up after window shopping on Main Street by sipping hot cocoa and snuggling on the sofa under a blanket at a nearby B&B?

Romantic nights out on Valentine's Day can be made even more special with some forethought and planning.

Destinations

There are many ways to celebrate Valentine's Day, from private dinners at home to a night out on the town at a trendy restaurant. Regardless of how couples celebrate



their love for each other this February, romance is an essential ingredient on February 14.

Few things can set a romantic tone as well as a getaway. Whether it's for a weekend getaway or a longer trip, these locales provide a unique and romantic setting for couples this February.

Griffith Observatory, Los Angeles: Located on the south-facing slope of Mount Hollywood in Griffith Park, the Griffith Observatory has been the site of many a romantic Hollywood scene, including its recent appearance

in the 2016 film "La La Land."

Saybrook Breakwater Lighthouse, Old Saybrook, Connecticut: Constructed in 1886, the lighthouse is ideal for seafaring couples. Privately owned, the lighthouse can be seen on a rented boat for two. Given the New England temperatures in February, this romantic, charming lighthouse may not be for the feint of heart.

Little Palm Island, Florida: Billed as the only private island resort in the United States, Little Palm Island Resort & Spa

is located off the Florida Keys coastline. Guests arrive by seaplane or private boat, making for an ideal excursion for couples seeking a true getaway.

Savannah, Georgia: Separated from South Carolina by the Savannah River, this coastal Georgia city features beautifully manicured parks, horse-drawn carriages and a historic district shaded by stunning oak trees. Couples in town for a romantic getaway won't want to pass up on an opportunity to stroll the cobblestoned waterfront

path along the river.

Tofino, Vancouver Island, Canada: It's not impossible to unwind in a candlelit tub with a view of the mighty Pacific Ocean in the district of Tofino on the west coast of Canada's Vancouver Island. An acclaimed food scene makes Tofino the perfect place to enjoy a romantic dinner for two.

A romantic getaway can be just what couples need this Valentine's Day. These are just a handful of the many places couples can consider as they seek to escape to a romantic locale this February.



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ROCHELLE NEWS-LEADER • SECTION 2 • PAGE 1

SPORTS



SENIORS HONORED

RTHS recognized its senior cheer, dance and boys basketball players Friday night.

See page 5 for more details

RTHS Girls Bowling

Sectional bound

Vincent medals in second place as Lady Hubs finish fourth at IHSA Regional

BY RUSSELL HODGES
SPORTS EDITOR

DEKALB — Junior Faith Adams and her Rochelle Lady Hub teammates were shocked as officials announced the final results of the IHSA Regional at Mardi Gras Lanes on Saturday.

While the Lady Hubs felt confident about their chances to qualify for the sectional tournament, their focus shifted away from the results and moved toward the action on the lanes as the regional tournament progressed. Rochelle’s strong morning series had the Lady Hubs in contention for a sectional berth after three games, but an equally efficient effort over the final three games would be necessary if the team hoped to extend its season for another week.

With three teams vying for the final two sectional tickets, Rochelle conceded the third position to host school Kaneland, but the Lady Hubs held off St. Charles North in the sixth game to secure the fourth and final sectional qualifying berth. Rochelle finished with a 4,782 series score,

while St. Charles North took fifth with a 4,715 and landed just short of the sectional tournament.

“I was shocked that we did it,” Adams said. “I thought we bowled the best that we have throughout my three years here. It didn’t really sink in until afterward that we were going to bowl at sectionals. We knew we had a chance going into the regional, but we were just bowling and we weren’t thinking about making the sectional. We were amazing and we managed to pull ourselves together. I’m looking forward to sharing the sectional experience with my teammates.”

Sophomore Cassidy Vincent medaled in second place individually, firing a 1,221 series score to lead the Lady Hubs in the regional tournament. Rochelle was in contention for a sectional berth after three games, posting a 2,380 team score to sit in fourth out of 12 schools. The Lady Hubs moved into third after rolling scores of 848 and 802 during the fourth and fifth games. Vincent held a 20-pin lead for the individual crown



(COURTESY PHOTO)

The Rochelle Lady Hub varsity bowling team finished fourth in the IHSA Kaneland Regional at Mardi Gras Lanes on Saturday, becoming the first team in RTHS history to qualify for sectionals since the IHSA shifted to a regional-sectional-state format in 2013. Above from left to right are Cassidy Vincent, Mackenzie Burnett, Faith Adams, Kylie McCullough, Makenzie Liezert and Anahi Alanis.

after five games, leading the Lady Hubs with 1,048. “It means a lot to us,” Vincent said. “We went

into the tournament just trying to have fun because we knew it could be our last team meet together.

We wanted to work our hardest and just have a good mindset. I don’t think any of us were expecting

to qualify for sectionals or make history.”

See GIRLS page 3

RTHS Wrestling

Hubs take second at IHSA 2A Rockford East Regional

Nine individuals qualify for sectional tournament at Rochelle this weekend

BY RUSSELL HODGES
SPORTS EDITOR

ROCKFORD — One wrestler stood between Kaiden Morris and a regional championship during the IHSA 2A Rockford East Regional on Saturday. That wrestler was Rockford East’s own Lee Smith, who entered the ring against Morris having lost only one match during the entire season.

Morris recalled facing Smith during his days with the Rochelle Wrestling Club, where the Rockford wrestler got the best of him. Saturday was a different story, however, as the sophomore standout Morris controlled the pace against the talented E-Rab wrestler Smith. Both wrestlers earned escapes over the first two periods, but overtime was needed to determine who would take home the regional championship for the 220-pound weight division on Saturday.

Staying patient and waiting for the right opportunity to strike, Morris found his chance midway through the overtime period, working his way inside and successfully taking Smith (37-2) to the mat for the first and only takedown of the match,



(PHOTO BY RUSSELL HODGES)

The Rochelle Hub varsity wrestling team placed second out of eight schools in the IHSA 2A Rockford East Regional on Saturday. Nine individuals will compete in the sectional tournament at Rochelle Township High School, which begins on Friday, Feb. 10.

which resulted in a 3-1 sudden victory and a regional title for Morris (34-7). It was the second sudden victory of the afternoon for Morris, who was one of five Hubs to finish first in their respective weight divisions at the regional tournament.

“It feels great and I came in here knowing that

I wanted to wrestle well,” Morris said. “I continued to tell myself that I belong here and I knew I had to wrestle smart. That helped me get the takedown at the end of the championship match. [Smith] was a big boy and I knew that coming in. I wrestled him when I was younger and it didn’t

turn out so well, so I knew there were things I could do better. I knew his gas tank may not be too good and I used that to my advantage.”

Junior Tommy Tourdot (17-5) brought home the 113-point division crown, scoring back-to-back major decisions including an 11-3 win over Woodstock

North’s Taquildin Baker and a 14-6 victory over Crystal Lake Central’s Dylan Ramsey. Rochelle and Crystal Lake Central went back and forth for the team title throughout the afternoon, but the Tigers ended the tournament in the lead, winning the regional tournament with

234 points. The Hubs took second with 190.5 points.

“I thought we wrestled alright,” head coach Alphonso Vruno said. “We left some things on the table and I thought Crystal Lake Central wrestled a heck of a tournament.”

See HUBS page 3



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HUB SPOTLIGHT

Junior Hubs battle for the shield in St. Charles

BY RUSSELL HODGES
SPORTS EDITOR

SAINT CHARLES — The Rochelle Wrestling Club sent 20 athletes to the St. Charles East Battle for the Shield on Sunday afternoon, with 10 athletes taking home top-4 finishes in the tournament. Teddy Millard emerged as the lone champion for the Junior Hubs in the meet.

Millard won the 65-66 Intermediate Division with a 3-0 record. Millard opened with a fall over Sandwich's Bodee Harmon before scoring a 9-5 decision over St. Charles wrestler Preston Lee. Millard clinched the shield with a 7-0 sudden victory over Hononegah's Owen Lovejoy.

Two Rochelle wrestlers recorded runner-up finishes on Sunday. Eoghan Good finished second in the 41-43 Tots Division with a 2-1 record, opening the tournament with consecutive falls over Fox Valley's Christopher Ontiveros and DeKalb's Bryce Collins. Xander Gonzales finished second in the 97-102 Bantam Division with a 2-1 record, bouncing back from a loss with two straight falls over St. Charles wrestler Will Atkins and Yorkville's David Hernandez.

Five Junior Hubs took third including Elias Andronic, who placed third in the 48-51 Tots Division with a 2-1 record after scoring a 14-0 major decision over Barrington's Bryce Muniz. Easton Huff placed third in the 53-56 Tots Division with a 2-1 record after notching a fall over Barrington's Grady Sargent. Tate Bigelow outlasted Wheaton Warrenville's Benjamin Townsend for a 6-5 double overtime victory to place third in the 61-66 Bantam Division with a 2-1 record.

Chase Marruffo placed third in the 65-71 Bantam Division with a 2-1 record, clinching third with a fall over Morris wrestler Kash Peterson. Rowen Villalobos placed third in the 65-74 Bantam Division with a 2-1 record, sealing third with a 4-2 decision over Toss Em Up's Ezekiel Banda.

Two Rochelle wrestlers recorded fourth-place finishes on Sunday. Nehemiah Andronic took fourth in the 62-62 Bantam Division with a 1-2 record, scoring a 16-0 technical fall against Bulls wrestler Jordan Trimm in his first match. Garrett Miller also took fourth in the 98-111 Intermediate Division with a 1-2 record, winning his first match by fall over DeKalb's Liam Wallin.

Three Junior Hubs finished fifth including Elliot Huff, who placed fifth in the 56-59 Bantam Division with a 2-1 record after holding off Lake Zurich's TJ Gord for a 9-7 sudden victory. Colt Hensley placed fifth in the 88-94 Bantam Division with a 2-1 record after notching a fall over Batavia's Tristan Cortez. Dominic Escatel placed fifth in the 69-77 Intermediate Division with a 2-1 record



(COURTESY PHOTO)

Teddy Millard shows off his first-place shield from the Battle for the Shield tournament in St. Charles on Sunday.

after earning a 5-2 decision over St. Charles North wrestler Rocco Edgcomb.

Three Rochelle wrestlers took sixth including Kolten Anderson, who finished sixth in the 31-35 Tots Division with a 1-2 record. Samuel Navejas finished sixth in the 116-125 Senior Division with a 1-2 record, while Joshua Lassiter finished sixth in the 117-123 Senior Division with a 1-2 record.

Wrestlers who did not place include Quentin Ansteth (84-90 Novice Division), Axel Alsop (118-122 Novice Division), Braxton Rosenthal (60-63 Intermediate Division) and Gavin Smith (69-79 Intermediate Division).

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SPORTS

HUBS: Rochelle hosting IHSA Sectional this Friday and Saturday

From page 1

“They were coached well from top to bottom and they wrestled well from top to bottom. We have some bad habits that we need to break if we want to make a true run at a regional championship next season.”

Sophomore Joseph Nadig (35-6) played spoiler in the 126-pound division, rallying from consecutive deficits to stun Crystal Lake Central’s Greco Rendon and Prairie Ridge’s Mikey Meade with back-to-back third-period falls. Nadig received a medical forfeit to win the division title. Freshman Brenden Voight (33-11) followed an Interstate 8 title with an IHSA Regional title in the 145-pound division, notching a second-period fall against Rockford East’s Ty’Quavion Smart before outlasting Crystal Lake Central’s Zach Carnrite for a 4-3 decision in the finals.

“We had some individuals who looked awesome today,” Vruno said. “Tommy was awesome and Joseph pinned two really good kids. There’s a ranked kid who isn’t even going to the sectional tournament because Joseph destroyed that bracket. Brenden wrestled well and Kaiden beat a kid who was a state placewinner last season. We had some individuals who I’m really proud of.”

Junior Brock Metzger (35-9) rounded out Rochelle’s regional champions on Saturday, cruising over Freeport’s Michael Tillmon and Woodstock North’s David Randecker with first-period falls to meet Crystal Lake Central’s TJ Metz in the finals. The No. 2 seed in the bracket, Metzger held a 4-3 advantage over the No. 1 seed Metz before dominating the third period, where the Hub junior struck two takedowns and a near fall to ultimately clinch the match with an 11-5 decision.

Rochelle fielded two runner-up performers on Saturday including sophomores Xavier Villalobos (35-4) and Grant Gensler (28-14), who finished second in the 120-pound and 152-pound divisions, respectively. Two Hubs including senior Jorge Driggs (9-12) and freshman Freddie Hernandez (9-9) wrestled their way into the sectional tournament with third-place performances. Driggs went 3-1 over four bouts, recording a third-period fall over Rockford Jefferson’s Damein Acaley to earn his place in the sectional tournament. Hernandez needed only 18 seconds to score a first-period fall against Rockford East’s Hayden Roach to punch his sectional ticket.

Three Rochelle wrestlers including sophomores Erich Metzger (15-9) and Robert Stoffel (10-8) as well as freshman Roman Villalobos (29-17) placed fourth in their respective weight classes and fell just short of qualifying for the sectional tournament. Freshman Frank Nasca (15-12) and junior Riley Damask (5-14) also represented the Hubs at the regional tournament Saturday.



(PHOTO BY RUSSELL HODGES)

The Rochelle Hub varsity wrestling team will have nine individuals competing in the IHSA Sectional at RTHS on Friday and Saturday. Above from left to right are Jorge Driggs, Kaiden Morris, Joseph Nadig, Grant Gensler, Brock Metzger, Xavier Villalobos, Freddie Hernandez, Tommy Tourdot and Brenden Voight.

GIRLS: Lady Hubs advance to IHSA Sectional in Carpentersville

From page 1

“I was really shocked that I shot two 600-series scores in the same day and it was a huge deal for me. It really opened my eyes to how much I’ve improved throughout the season.”

St. Charles East’s Lida Burgos threw a 236 in the sixth game to leap Vincent for the individual title. But the Lady Hubs made history on Saturday, becoming the first team from Rochelle to reach the sectional tournament since the IHSA adopted the regional-sectional-state format during the 2013-14 season. Junior Anahi Alanis finished 18th overall with a 968 series, while freshman Kylie McCullough took 24th overall with a 938 series.

“We knew we had a chance toward the beginning because of how high our score was, but we realized during the tournament that we might make the sectional,” McCullough said. “It means a lot to us and I thought we all had a good attitude. I’m excited to bowl with my teammates again.”

Adams finished 25th with a 936 series for the Lady Hubs (9-7, 6-4 Interstate 8), who will compete in the IHSA Sectional at Liberty Lanes in Carpentersville this Saturday. Junior Makenzie Liezert added 505 and freshman Mackenzie Burnett chipped in 214 for the team score in the regional tournament.

“We’ve improved so much and having two bowlers in Makenzie and Mackenzie who are new to bowling and are stepping up has been huge for our growth,” Adams said. “We’ve all made huge improvements and we’ve all helped each other get better.”



(COURTESY PHOTO)

Sophomore Cassidy Vincent medaled in second place at the IHSA Kaneland Regional on Saturday. Above with Vincent are assistant coach Shannon Forney (left) and head coach Eric Widick (right).

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SECTION 002000 - NO-
TICE TO BIDDERS

A. City of Rochelle, Illinois (hereinafter referred to as the Owner) will receive a prime contract bid for the following project until 11:00 am, local time, on February 28, 2023 at the City Office, 420 North 6th Street, Rochelle, IL 61068. Project #221054 - RMU SERVICE COUNTER RE-MODEL

B. Bids will be publicly opened and read the time noted above at the City of Rochelle, Illinois City Office.

C. Bid Package documents, drawings, and specifications shall be available on or after February 14, 2023. Bidders may visit the following websites to obtain the bid documents. Printing and shipping costs shall be the responsibility of the bidder:

www.cordoganclark-planroom.com or
www.buildingconnected.com

D. All bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in the form of Bid Bond in the amount of 10% of the Base Bid (plus additive alternates) made payable to the Owner.

E. A pre-bid meeting will be on February 21, 2023 at 11:00 am at the Rochelle Municipal Utilities Office located at 333 Lincoln Highway, Rochelle, IL 61068. Bidders are highly encouraged to attend the meeting.

F. The Contractor shall pay, if applicable, not less than the prevailing rate of wages as established, to all laborers, workmen and mechanics in the performance of Work under this Contract in accordance with "An Act regulating wages of laborers, mechanics and other employed under contracts of Public Works." 820 ILCS 130/1 et seq.

G. The Owner reserves the right to reject any and all bids, to waive any informalities in bidding, and to accept the bid that is the lowest responsive, responsible bidder, which is in the best interests of the district.

H. This Notice is written in the name of the Owner by Cordogan, Clark & Associates.

No. 0208

(Feb. 8, 2023)

**NOTICE TO
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Proposals are now being accepted for the Creston ARPA Water Main 2023 for the water main replacement along Cedarholm and Prairie Streets which includes installation of 6" main, installation of fire hydrant, pavement restoration and site restoration.

Each proposal must be accompanied by a certified check, cashiers check, or bid bond, payable to the Village of Cherry Valley for the amount not less than five percent (5%) of the total amount of the proposal.

All bidders shall note the following: (1) construction monies will be drawn from local funds on hand; (2) the successful contractor will be paid on a monthly basis according to the approved estimate of completed work; (3) the Village strongly urges all contractors to employ the use of local subcontractors, suppliers, and trades as much as possible for this contract.

Labor rates shall be in accordance with the General Prevailing Rate of Wages for the Village of Creston, Ogle County, Illinois, and which are on file in the Office of the Department of Labor, Springfield, Illinois. Such rates shall be paid for all laborers, workman, or tradesman performing work under this contract. The Village reserves the right to reject any or all bids on each proposal, and to waive any information there in or to accept any proposal considered in the best interest of the Village.

No bid shall be withdrawn after the opening of bids without written consent of the Village of Creston for a period of forty five (45) days after the scheduled time of closing of bids.

Bids shall be received at the office of Village Clerk, Village of Creston, 110 N. Main Street until 10:00 A.M. on February 24, 2023 and will be opened and read aloud. Specifications and bid documents shall be obtained from BHFx for a minor fee. Copies of bids may be obtained by calling BHFx at (815) 344-0360 or online at http://www.bhfxplanroom.com.

BY THE ORDER OF:

Village Clerk
No. 0209
(Feb. 8, 2023)

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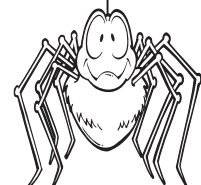
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SPORTS

RTHS Boys Basketball



(PHOTOS BY RUSSELL HODGES)

The Rochelle Hub varsity basketball team hosted Ottawa for Senior Night on Friday, where RTHS honored its senior student-athletes on the boys basketball, cheer and dance teams. Above at left are dance seniors Abby Dall, Macy Ramos and Miranda Dubek (left to right). Above at right are cheer seniors Ava Lynn, Morgan Smardo, Riley White, Lauryn Akey, Anna Harvey (front row), Baylie Sutton, Marisa Whaley, Ava Albers, Rylee Jackson and Rivers Estock (back row). Below at right are boys basketball seniors Felix Schlenbecker (manager), Landon DeLille, Wade Smith, Raul Aguirre, David Gerber and Colton O'Rorke (left to right).

Seniors take the court as Hubs battle Ottawa

RTHS recognizes senior athletes from boys basketball, cheer and dance programs

BY RUSSELL HODGES
SPORTS EDITOR

ROCHELLE — Enthusiasm was high as the Rochelle Hub varsity basketball team looked to celebrate Senior Night on Friday with an Interstate 8 Conference win over the Ottawa Pirates.

Rochelle and Ottawa met earlier in the season, with the Hubs outlasting the Pirates for an overtime victory at the Kingman Gym. Friday's conference rematch looked like it could be headed down to the wire as well, as Ottawa held a slim 36-34 lead at the halftime buzzer. But a fast start from the Pirate offense and a flurry of Hub turnovers in the third quarter quickly allowed

Ottawa to surge ahead, taking a double-digit lead and ultimately handing Rochelle a 70-54 loss.

The Hubs (8-17, 3-9 Interstate 8) recognized their six senior team members including Raul Aguirre, David Gerber, Colton O'Rorke, Landon DeLille, Wade Smith and manager Felix Schlenbecker before the game began. Rochelle will face Oregon on the road Monday at 7 p.m.

"Our seniors are such amazing kids and they've fought through a lot of adversity when they didn't receive a lot of playing time early in their careers," head coach Tim Thompson said.

See **BOYS** page 6




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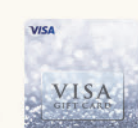
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SPORTS

RTHS Boys Basketball

(COURTESY PHOTO)



Freshman Hubs defeat Sandwich to secure Interstate 8 regular season championship

The Rochelle Hub freshman basketball team clinched the Interstate 8 Conference regular season championship on Wednesday, defeating Sandwich 54-25 at home to move to 12-2 in the conference. Rochelle improved its overall record to 20-2 with the win. The team includes Van Gerber, Martiese Pogue, Ben Foster, Caden Goodwin, Mark Green, Jonny Bearrows, Brode Metzger, Caleb Dreska, Alex Foster, Ian Metzger, Gabe Montes, Andrew Johnson, Reece Harris, Parker Slattengren and Marco Belmonte. The boys are coached by Ryne Vrana and Jeff Dickey.

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ROCHELLE News-Leader

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ROCHELLE News-Leader

City sets district budget award

From the Heart gala scheduled Feb. 4

BOYS: Hubs host Senior Night matchup with Ottawa

From page 5



“They’re getting some more time right now and they had a great experience being a part of our conference championship and regional championship team last season. They’ve been great leaders for our program, especially David and Raul. I’m really proud of how they’ve kept our team together, particularly with the kind of season we’ve had where things can get loose.”

While the seniors shared the spotlight prior to the start of the game, it was sophomores Carson Lewis and Cayden Moore who were the catalysts for the Hub offense during the first half. Lewis caught fire from 3-point range, sinking six first-half triples including four in the second quarter for all of his team-high 18 points on Friday. With Lewis finding his shooting rhythm, Moore attacked the rim and finished a pair of layups in the first quarter for four of his 12 points in the game.

“There’s a huge learning curve as a sophomore and the varsity level is a lot different than playing sophomore level basketball,” Thompson said. “They still have some holes in their game, but they’re out there competing all of the time and they’re learning all of the time. Carson’s a really good shooter and he’s going to continue developing his game, particularly in the mid range and handling the ball. Cayden’s still working on his left hand as well. I see a lot of potential in them, but they’re going to have to put a lot of time in the gym this offseason.”

The Pirates featured 6-foot-4 forward Payton Knoll during the first half, where the talented junior hit three first-quarter field goals including a pair of short floaters in the lane. Knoll controlled the low post in the second quarter, making two more layups and going 3-for-4 from the free-throw line after

drawing a pair of fouls. Knoll scored 16 of his team-high 24 points in the first half.

“I thought we came out fine and we were playing with the tempo that we wanted to,” Thompson said. “We had a few turnovers near the end of the first half, but I thought we were in a good place. We came out and tried to run a few plays to start the third quarter, but after the first minute, they were scoring on every possession and we were turning the ball over. I felt like they won the game in the third quarter. They made things difficult for us and it didn’t matter whether or not we were in man-to-man defense or zone defense. They made a lot of shots tonight.”

Ottawa began pulling away from Rochelle early in the third quarter, where a 43-38 Pirate lead quickly ballooned after a turnover and consecutive missed shots from the Hubs led to run outs and easy layups for Ottawa. The Pirates punished Rochelle in the paint, where 6-foot-5 forward Cooper Knoll made three low-post baskets while guard Levi Sheehan finished a pair of nifty layups. Knoll finished with 12 points and Sheehan totaled 11 points for the Pirates on Friday.

Rochelle burned three timeouts to try and contain Ottawa’s third-quarter outburst, but the Pirates eventually held a 57-43 advantage going into the fourth quarter, where guard Huston Hart buried a triple and a layup to give Ottawa a 22-point lead. Junior Eli Luxton recorded 10 points, while O’Rorke had five points for the Hubs in Friday’s Senior Night defeat against the Pirates.

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