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DAR Patriot Tree at Wills Chiro

Wills Chiropractic hosted the Rochelle DAR Patriot Tree for the month of October. **Page 3**

WEATHER

WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
HIGH LOW	HIGH LOW
72 41	73 48
FRIDAY	SATURDAY
HIGH LOW	HIGH LOW
68 57	64 51

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OBITUARIES

• JOHN WESLEY ATKINSON

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- LIFELINE
- FARM & FLEET

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Hansen house celebrates Halloween

'It's a fun holiday. It brings a lot of smiles to people's faces'

BY JEFF HELFRICH
MANAGING EDITOR

ROCHELLE — Over the weekend and into Halloween on Monday, Karl and Dhana Hansen and family celebrated the holiday with the community at their home on Fourth Avenue.

The family-friendly attraction, known as Hansen's Halloween House, invited all ages to take part in Halloween activities such as a path through the family's yard that revolved around a murder mystery of 'Who killed the Stay Puft Marshmallow Man?'. The home also featured animatronic decorations and projectors and lights set to a radio station with music.

The free event took donations to raise money for the Rochelle Area Community Foundation and took food donations for the Rochelle Christian Food Pantry.

"2019 was the first time we did it as a fundraiser," Karl said. "The last two years we did it, but it wasn't a fundraiser due to COVID-19. We've been growing every year. We've been doing it like this for



(COURTESY PHOTO)

Over the weekend and into Halloween on Monday, Karl and Dhana Hansen and family celebrated the holiday with the community at their home on Fourth Avenue.

at least over 10 years. It started off on one side of the yard and grew across the yard and into the garage. We decided to make it a

community event and try to raise funds for different charity groups."

The Hansens' yard was filled to the sidewalks with

Halloween decorations, lights and attractions including a graveyard and a swamp. Karl said the setup process takes about

a month and the family worked on it right up until Halloween.

See HANSEN page 3

Groundbreaking held for new Rochelle home

'We have a dedicated team and we're going to get this started'

BY JEFF HELFRICH
MANAGING EDITOR

ROCHELLE — On Sunday, Oct. 30, a groundbreaking event was held by Habitat for Humanity of Ogle County for its latest home in Rochelle.

The new home at 110 S. 9th Street will be the county organization's 13th overall and third build in Rochelle. Ashlie Minton, a mother of four, has been chosen as the homeowner. Work on the site began in early October and Habitat is hoping to make significant progress before winter comes into full swing. The home is slated for completion by early summer of 2022.

"We're excited," Habitat Board President Gail Tuttle said. "We have a dedicated team and we're going to get this started."

Habitat is seeking donations of money and materials and volunteers for the project. Those that are interested in helping can contact Habitat Executive Director Vanessa White-Broome via email at vanessawhite82@yahoo.com or Tuttle at ysp867@aol.com.



(PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)

On Sunday, Oct. 30, a groundbreaking event was held by Habitat for Humanity of Ogle County for its latest home in Rochelle. The new home at 110 S. 9th St. will be the county organization's 13th overall and third build in Rochelle. Mayor John Bearrows (above) was present for the ceremony.

"We'll need building materials and the cost of those is high," White-Broome said. "We always need donations. It's been hard for us to have fundraisers in the past few years. Donations are al-

ways appreciated and go directly to the build. Everything goes towards our mission. If people want to donate building materials, they can contact us and ask what we need. That helps greatly. We need volun-

teers. The more bodies we have on this, the quicker we can get this build put together. They don't have to have a special skill level. We have skilled people that will help and supervise."

Habitat Board Member

and Construction Lead Don Roberts said the foundation of the home is complete and the next steps are back filling, decking and framing.

See HOME page 5

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LOCAL NEWS

City hosts ribbon cutting for Well 4 project

‘In 50 years, your hard work and dedication will still be here’

BY JEFF HELFRICH
MANAGING EDITOR

ROCHELLE — On Monday morning, the City of Rochelle and Rochelle Municipal Utilities hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony for the completion of their Well 4 project on Second Avenue, a \$1.87 million investment in Rochelle’s water infrastructure.

The cash-funded project began in 2018 and navigated the pandemic, supply chain issues and a workforce shortage. It features a new, larger well house and state-of-the-art equipment that will work to ensure clear water production for residents of Rochelle.

“This is another amazing project for the city,” Mayor John Bearrows said. “Since I’ve been mayor, I’ve been able to attend a lot of ribbon cuttings and groundbreakings and all of those things. That shows how the city has always had the foresight to think ahead. When it comes to the radium removal portions and all the things we’ve seen with

that, it’s just amazing that we are able to stay ahead of the curve when it comes to our infrastructure. And that applies to a lot of different infrastructure, all of the things that people can sometimes take for granted.”

Bearrows thanked city council members for their support of the project and City Manager Jeff Fiegenschuh and city staff for their work on Well 4.

“All these parts come together because of our city staff,” Bearrows said. “We’ve been able to use many grants in our work at the city, and we wouldn’t get those without our staff. That’s a huge part of being able to better our infrastructure position. Everyone has done an amazing job and I’m very thankful.”

Fiegenschuh said the Well 4 project is an example of the emphasis that the city places on its values of core service delivery and quality of life. The city manager thanked the project’s leaders, Adam Lanning and Jay Mulholland of RMU and Project



(PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)

On Monday morning, the City of Rochelle and Rochelle Municipal Utilities hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony for the completion of their Well 4 project on Second Avenue, a \$1.87 million investment in Rochelle’s water infrastructure.

Engineers Noah Carmichael and Jason Stoll of Fehr Graham.

The project was finished in a timely manner, despite the unprecedented circumstances that went on during its planning and construction, Fiegenschuh said.

“I’ve worked in city government for 20 years

and this project was one of the most complex because of the environment we found ourselves in,” Fiegenschuh said. “Think about the fact that each of you were part of this project that is bigger than any one individual. In 50 years, your hard work and dedication will still be here. This will still be here

and you’ll have an imprint on the community.”

Stoll said it was a good feeling to attend the ribbon cutting Monday and to see the project completed.

“The previous facility was about 100 yards away and about the size of a big closet,” Stoll said. “The building we’re in today represents the latest, state-

of-the-art equipment and the best technology we can find to produce clean water for the people of Rochelle. This was a team effort. We want to thank everyone at the city. These are fun projects for us. It’s right in our backyard and it benefits the community. That’s what we’re in business for.”





High Performer
November 2022

To read Felicia’s nomination, go to the RCH Facebook page or rochellehospital.com

Felicia Miller
Laboratory
Length of Service: 10 Months

The 2023 From The Heart Cash Calendars are NOW AVAILABLE!!

The proceeds of the sale of the calendars benefit our From The Heart recipients: Pegasus Special Riders, Rochelle Christian Food Pantry, HOPE, Focus House, Shining Star Children’s Advocacy Center, CASA, Rochelle Area Community Foundation, Hub City Senior Center & Rochelle Rotary.

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(COURTESY PHOTO)

At a Habitat for Humanity of Ogle County groundbreaking ceremony Sunday, Oct. 30 in Rochelle, St. John’s Church of Ashton presented a donation of quilts to Ashlie Minton and her four children, Habitat’s newest family.

St. John’s Church of Ashton donates quilts to newest Habitat family

ROCHELLE — At a Habitat for Humanity of Ogle County groundbreaking ceremony Sunday, Oct. 30 in Rochelle, St. John’s Church of Ashton presented a donation of quilts to Ashlie Minton and her four children, Habitat’s newest family. The home has begun

construction and is slated to be completed by next summer.

“We’ve been blessed to have the women that quilt at St. John’s Church in Ashton make special quilts that they pray over and pass onto our families that work with Habitat,” Habitat for Humanity of

Ogle County Executive Director Vanessa White-Broome said. “We’re blessed again today to share these quilts with Ashlie and her children. They put so much time and effort into them. We’re appreciative of the support of St. John’s and everyone else in the community.”

Health screenings coming Nov. 16

ROCHELLE – Residents living in and around the Rochelle area can learn about their risk for cardio-

vascular disease, osteoporosis, diabetes and other chronic, serious conditions with affordable screenings

by LifeLine Screening. The REC Center will host this community event on Nov. 16. The site is located at 802 Jones Road in Rochelle.

Screenings can check for: The level of plaque buildup in your arteries, related to risk for cardiovascular disease, stroke and overall vascular health, HDL and LDL cholesterol levels, diabetes risk and kidney and thyroid function and more.

Screenings are affordable and convenient. Free parking is also available. Special package pricing starts at \$159, but consultants will work with you to create a package that is right for you based on your age and risk factors.

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LOCAL NEWS



(PHOTOS BY JEFF HELFRICH)

The family-friendly attraction, known as Hansen's Halloween House, invited all ages to take part in Halloween activities such as a path through the family's yard that revolved around a murder mystery of 'Who killed the Stay Puft Marshmallow Man?'. The home also featured animatronic decorations and projectors and lights.

HANSEN: Halloween House provides entertaining experience

From page 1

"It's a fun holiday," Karl said. "It brings a lot of smiles to people's faces. My wife is a teacher and I work in a cemetery, so go figure. It just kind of kept growing. I guess it's our art form. We have projectors in all the windows so there's different scenes going up in the house. We've been doing this for quite a while. My wife was the

one who came up with the creative thing of the murder mystery. I added the radio station because it seemed interesting and I always liked the house on the other side of town that does that around Christmas. We did it with a projector instead."

During the rest of the year, the Hansens' storage area is filled with Halloween items. They incorporate vehicles and their garage into the spooky

setup around Halloween. "We got a barrel from Kennay Farms Distilling for decoration," Hansen said. "It pours 'boo bon' into a skeleton's mouth. We decorate our sprinklers. Everything."

The purpose of Hansen's Halloween House is to give kids and the community something to enjoy around the holiday, Karl said. Dhana sees a lot of her students come to enjoy the event.

"It's fun to watch everyone's reactions," Karl said. "Minivans full of kids will pull up just to come to our house. I think in 2019 we had 500+ people come through. The last two years were less, but last year picked up quite a bit after COVID-19. We expect about the same this year and we've had a lot of publicity. We've had a lot of people come by at night and watch the show with the radio station on."

RACF Executive Director Emily Anaya thanked the Hansen family for their work to raise money for the foundation. "It is an honor to be the recipient of donations made to the Hansen's Halloween House this year," Anaya said. "We appreciate that the Hansen Family has found a creative way to fundraise while delivering a spooky family experience for all. It just shows how much

they, and others, truly care and support our Rochelle community."

Putting on the attraction is a bonding experience for the Hansen family. They have family members come into town that help with setup.

"We already have our theme for next year, which is iconic movie scenes," Karl said. "We have other themes we'd like to feature in the future."

Wills Chiropractic hosts DAR Patriot Tree

ROCHELLE — Special thanks to Wills Chiropractic for joining with the America 250 Commission and the Rochelle Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution to bring attention to the upcoming 250th birthday of the United States on July 4, 2026.

Wills Chiropractic has been hosting the Patriot Tree for the month of October. Ornaments on the Rochelle DAR's Patriot Tree recognize some of the men and women who aided the cause of the American Revolution - not only those who signed the Declaration of Independence, pledging their lives, fortunes and sacred honor, but also including those who served as soldiers and sailors, those who aided the



(COURTESY PHOTO)

Shown left to right: Andrew Ludeman, Katie Kilburn and Bryan Wills.

military, those who were taking an oath of allegiance to the new republic.

City hosting fall electronics recycling drop-off and pumpkin smash Nov. 5

ROCHELLE — The City of Rochelle plans to host a fall electronics recycling drop-off and pumpkin smash on

Saturday, Nov. 5 from 8 a.m. to noon for Rochelle residents only at the city street department at 251 E. 1st. Ave.

Don't trash your pumpkins, smash them. Compost your pumpkins at this event. Please remove decorations, candles, etc.



(COURTESY PHOTO)

The Roberts Armory World War II museum will be open from 1-4 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 6.

Roberts Armory WWII Museum open Nov. 6 for Veterans Day

ROCHELLE — The Roberts Armory World War II museum will be open from 1-4 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 6.

The Higgins Boat will be available for viewing, weather permitting. The museum displays artifacts from WWII, specializing in the history of the 70th Tank Battalion, 10th

Mountain Division and local area veterans of WWII.

The museum is open to the public three times each year: Memorial Day, the Lincoln Highway Heritage Festival and the Sunday before Veterans Day. There is no admission charge. The museum address is 2090 Brush Grove Road, Rochelle.

To find the museum, go to the intersection of Illinois Route 251 and Intermodal Drive in Rochelle (an Army truck is at this intersection.) Just follow the signs, west about three miles to the museum.

More information is available at <http://www.robertsarmory.com>

Tails PET OF THE WEEK Humane Society 815.758.2457 www.tailshumanesociety.org



Peppermint



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LOCAL NEWS

Obituaries

John Wesley Atkinson

ROCHELLE — John Wesley Atkinson, 86, passed away on Oct. 30 at the Rochelle Community Hospital. He was born on Jan. 1, 1936, in Big Mound Township, the son of William and Inez (Cantrell) Atkinson. John married Norma Capes on Aug. 28, 1954.

John worked for Del Monte for over 33 years. He loved spending time with family, especially at cookouts. He was very fond of spending time outside, mowing lawns and playing softball with the kids and grandkids.

John is survived by his wife, Norma; three children, Susan (Mark) LeMay of Hillcrest, Cindy Goldman of Ashton and David Atkinson of Oregon; eight grandchildren, John

(Trisha) Vaughn, Christi (Dan) Batsch, Amber (James) Schuster, Amy (Jason Breeden) Goldman, William “Bo” Goldman, Emily Goldman, John David (Mandy) Atkinson and Mandi Atkinson; two brothers, Grover Atkinson and Andy (Laura) Atkinson; one sister, Louella (Doug) Blackburn; 17 great-grandchildren; four great-great grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews.

John is preceded in death by his parents; an infant child, Johnny Lee Atkinson; two sisters, Irene Forristall and May Pierce; three brothers, Donald Atkinson, Lester Atkinson and Ray Atkinson; son-in-law, Paul Goldman; and great-grandson Dakota Piper.

Visitation will be on



Friday, Nov. 4 from 5-7 p.m. at the Unger Horner Funeral Home, 400 N. 6th St., Rochelle.

Funeral mass will be celebrated at 11 a.m. on Saturday, Nov. 5 at St. Patrick Catholic Church, 244 Kelley Drive, in Rochelle with Father Jesus Dominguez officiating. Interment will follow at the Ashton Cemetery. Memorials may be directed to St. Patrick Catholic Church Please sign the online guest book at www.UngerHorner.com

Rochelle Police Department

Officers make arrests

ROCHELLE — On Oct. 25 at 7:46 p.m. Amanda Hagadus, 40, of Rochelle was arrested for violating an order of protection and transferred.

On Oct. 25 at 6:51 a.m. Joseph E. Coons, 50, of Chesterton, Indiana was cited for disobeying a traffic control device. He signed a promise to comply and was given a Dec. 16 Rochelle court date.

On Oct. 26 at 9:34 a.m. Anmarie R. Kuntz, 32, of Rochelle was arrested for criminal trespass to residence and transferred.

On Oct. 26 at 3:23 p.m. a 16-year-old male juvenile of Rochelle was arrested for unlawful possession of ammunition and transferred.

On Oct. 26 at 3:33 p.m.

Richard W. Major, 55, of Rochelle was arrested on an Ogle County warrant and transferred.

On Oct. 27 at 5:31 p.m. Dakota S. Ryun, 28, of Rochelle was arrested on an Ogle County warrant and transferred.

On Oct. 29 at 10:37 a.m. a 16-year-old male juvenile of Rochelle was cited for failure to yield right of way. He signed a promise to comply and was given a Dec. 16 Rochelle court date.

On Oct. 30 at 1:04 a.m. Elias Xelhua, 35, of Rochelle was arrested for domestic battery and transferred.

On Oct. 30 at 11:05 a.m. Shelby Westart, 29, of Chicago was cited for speeding 35 m.p.h. or more. She signed a



promise to comply and was given a Dec. 16 Rochelle court date.

On Oct. 30 at 11:41 a.m. Philip J. Horvath, 19, of Rochelle was cited for speeding 35 m.p.h. or more. He signed a promise to comply and was given a Dec. 16 Rochelle court date.

All individuals are considered innocent until proven guilty.

Ogle County Sheriff's Department

Deputies respond to reported vehicle accident

OREGON — On Oct. 26 at approximately 6:35 p.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop in the 15,700 block of East Creston Road. After a brief investigation, deputies arrested Matthew E. White, 33, of Rochelle, for driving while license suspended. White was taken into custody without incident and released on a \$2,500 individual bond with a return court date set. White was additionally cited for no lights when required.

On Oct. 27 at approximately 10:30 p.m. deputies initiated a traffic stop on Interstate 39 at mile marker 101 for illegal window tint. Upon further investigation, deputies arrested Arabany

Valle, 36, of Rockford, for driving while her license was suspended. Valle was released on an individual bond with a future court date given.

On Oct. 28, at approximately 11:47 p.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop in the 4,000 block of North Illinois Route 251. Upon further investigation, deputies placed Ruben A. Romero-Carreno, 39, of Rockford, under arrest for driving under the influence of alcohol. Romero-Carreno was transported to the Ogle County Jail without incident and held in lieu of bond. Romero-Carreno was additionally cited for Improper lane usage and operating an uninsured

motor vehicle.

On Oct. 28 at 7:32 p.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop at U.S. Highway 52 and South Freeport Road. As a result, Jamie W. Howard, 38, of Durand was arrested for driving while license revoked. Howard was additionally issued citations for operating an uninsured motor vehicle and no rear registration light. Howard was transported to the Ogle County Jail and held in lieu of bond.

On Oct. 28 at approximately 10:29 p.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop in the 15,000 block of West Brick Church Road. After investigation, deputies placed Nathaniel Davis, 19, of Sterling under arrest for no valid driver's license and a valid Lee County contempt of court failure to appear warrant. Davis was additionally issued a citation for operating an uninsured vehicle. Davis was released on an I-Bond for the no valid driver's license and held in lieu of bond for the Lee County warrant.

On Oct. 29 at approxi-

mately 2:39 a.m. deputies responded to the intersection of East High Road and Junction Road, for a reported vehicle accident. Upon arrival, deputies located a disabled and unoccupied Ford Fusion. During the investigation, deputies discovered that Alex J. Anderson, 19, of Davis, Illinois, was traveling east on High Road when he failed to reduce speeds to avoid an accident. Anderson was located and placed under arrest for aggravated driving under the influence, driving under the influence and driving while license suspended. Anderson was additionally cited for failure to reduce speed to avoid an accident operating an uninsured motor vehicle. Anderson was transported to the Ogle County Jail without incident, where he was held without bail, pending an appearance before a judge.

On Oct. 29 at approximately 12:49 a.m. deputies responded to a check welfare of a male passed out in a vehicle in the middle of the roadway near the

intersection of Pines Road and Lowell Park Road. The vehicle then fled the scene and came to a stop approximately one mile west of the intersection. After investigation, deputies placed David Bergeson, 40, of Polo under arrest for aggravated driving under the influence, possession of a controlled substance (cocaine), driving under the influence and driving while license suspended. Bergeson was additionally issued citations for improper parking on the roadway, fleeing to elude a police officer, improper lane usage and operating an uninsured vehicle. Bergeson was transported to the Ogle County Jail where he was held pending a court appearance in front of a judge.

On Oct. 29 at approximately 9:03 p.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop at the intersection of Mount Morris Road and Midtown Road. After investigation, deputies placed David Zeller, 61, of Leaf River under arrest for driving while under the influence of alcohol. Zeller was also issued citations for speeding 35 m.p.h. over the posted speed limit and improper container driver. Zeller was transported to the Ogle County Jail where he was held in lieu of bond.

On Oct. 29 at approximately 1:55 p.m. deputies along with Stillman Valley Fire and EMS responded to the intersection of North Meridian Road and East Scott Road for the report of a two-vehicle accident.

After investigation, it was learned that a black Dodge van, driven by Heather Lee, 43, of Stillman Valley, was northbound on Meridian Road when it rear ended a silver Chrysler van, driven by Stuart Johnson, 59, of Stillman Valley. Lee and two juvenile occupants were transported to Swedish American Hospital for non-life threatening injuries. Johnson was also transported to Swedish American Hospital for non-life threatening injuries. Lee was cited for failure to reduce speed to avoid an accident.

On Oct. 31 at approximately 12:18 a.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop in the 9,000 block of North Meridian Road. After investigation, deputies arrested Kaylie Barber, 33, of Stillman Valley, for driving while license revoked. Barber was also issued a citation for operating an uninsured motor vehicle. Barber was transported to the Ogle County Jail where she was held in lieu of bond.

On Oct. 31 at approximately 6:36 p.m. deputies initiated a traffic stop at 403 E. 3rd St. in Leaf River for a speeding violation. Upon further investigation, deputies arrested Kraig Lindquist, 44, of Leaf River, for driving while license suspended. Lindquist was released on an individual bond with a future court date given.

All individuals are considered innocent until proven guilty.

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LOCAL NEWS

HOME: Habitat for Humanity begins new project in Rochelle

From page 1

Volunteers will be needed starting the first weekend in November.

Minton and her family will be a part of the home's construction as part of Habitat's "sweat equity" process. Habitat prides itself on its policy of "hands up, not a hand-out." Those that receive homes make mortgage payments to Habitat. The organization stays engaged throughout the mortgage and provides counseling on how to pay for and maintain a home. Those that apply for Habitat homes are usually unable to receive a loan due to credit issues.

Minton and her family attended Sunday's groundbreaking event and carried out the ceremony with Tuttle and Rochelle Mayor John Bearrows.

"I think I speak for us all when I say we're very excited to be doing this," Minton said. "Thank you everybody. This is a really big deal for us."

Habitat's last new home was built in Rochelle on the same block. Bearrows said that during that process, he was "amazed" at the volunteerism, organization and willingness of everyone involved to step up.

"What's unique about this is that it impacts a very specific group,"



(PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)

Ashlie Minton, a mother of four, has been chosen as the homeowner. Work on the site began in early October and Habitat is hoping to make significant progress before winter comes into full swing. The home is slated for completion by early summer of 2022.

Bearrows said. "A family. That makes this very special. From the city's standpoint, we want to welcome you to our community. If you have problems, I want to know about it so we can get them fixed. I'm just very excited about it. Thank you to Habitat for

Humanity. They change peoples' lives one house at a time. And that's an amazing, amazing feat. The city is thankful to be a small part of it."

White-Broome said Habitat's projects in Rochelle have seen success and have been supported

by the city, local businesses and individuals in town. Along with new home builds, Habitat takes part in Brush with Kindness projects that include adding ramps and making other improvements to homes of those in need.

"We're blessed to continue to have a lot of the local merchants help us like ALM Cabinetry, CNS Flooring, Anderson Plumbing and more," Broome said of Habitat's work in Rochelle. "All those businesses will come together and help us.

We're lucky that we have people that come forward and help us as volunteers. The donation of materials is always helpful. We try to keep the cost of the house down. We're excited to work with this family. Her kids are going to be able to play outside."

Remember Your Veteran

Veteran's Day, Nov. 11 is a special day to honor America's Veterans, living and deceased. Honor your veteran with a photo to be published on Wednesday, November 9th, 2022.

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To remember your veteran fill out the form below, enclose your picture and check for \$10.00 and mail or drop off at:

ROCHELLE News-Leader

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LOCAL VIEWS

Guest column

Fall weather brings motorists out during harvest

THE nip in the air of a cool fall morning and crunch of leaves underfoot are hallmark characteristics of autumn weather in Illinois. For many Illinoisans, these indicators prompt a visit to a local pumpkin patch or apple orchard. For farmers, they mean it's time to head to the field down the road for harvest, with hopes that other drivers use caution while navigating around large farm equipment.

With so many people traveling on rural roads this season, it takes every motorist acting responsibly to ensure each of us

gets home safely at the end of the day.

If you've never ridden in the cab of a combine or tractor, you may not know how difficult it can be for farmers to see other vehicles while maneuvering from field to field. Limited visibility means that when other drivers on the road get in a hurry and fail to slow down or choose to quickly pass our equipment, situations can become treacherous and, in some cases, deadly.

So how can drivers stay safe around slow-moving vehicles?

Look for the bright orange triangle that indicates a vehicle is slow

moving. When traveling behind large equipment, people should immediately slow down and leave the distance of several car lengths between their vehicle and the one in front of them.

Before passing, the driver should always look for a clear signal from the person in the cab of the combine or tractor, only passing when it is safe and legal to do so. Remember that slow-moving vehicles make wide turns, so if you see the driver swinging to the right, do not assume they

are moving out of your way; they may be preparing for a left turn. Be prepared to encounter slow-moving vehicles at



Richard Guebert Jr.

all times of the day and night. Many farm families work well into the evenings to harvest their crops and transport them to local storage facilities.

In addition to watching for agriculture equipment on the road, drivers should also keep a lookout for semi-trailers hauling goods.

Truck drivers play a critical role in the supply chain of food, fuel and

fiber that each of us depends on. Transporting a large amount of goods means these drivers are often tasked with carrying heavy loads that slow their abilities to pick up speed or come to immediate stops. Giving these drivers room and being aware of their blind spots is essential.

This time of year means long shifts in the field for many Illinois farm families, but it's also a time for agriculture to celebrate a bountiful harvest. As we prepare for upcoming holiday festivities that often include sharing a meal with friends and family, we must all work together

to keep the roads safe. This harvest season, remember to slow down, use caution and take your time traveling around slow-moving vehicles and agriculture equipment. You never know when taking these actions might mean the difference between one or both parties making it home safely.

Richard Guebert Jr. is the president of the Illinois Farm Bureau. This story was distributed through a cooperative project between Illinois Farm Bureau and the Illinois Press Association. For more news, visit FarmWeekNow.com.

Supporting a great cause

ONE of the great pleasures I have in my role as the city manager is being involved in numerous community organizations. One of the things I love most about Rochelle is the number of organizations and people who work tirelessly to better the situation of those around them.

When I moved to Rochelle in 2017, I immediately became a member of our local Rotary Club. I believe in the mission of Rotary, which is to eradicate Polio. Further, I was impressed with the number of members they had and their leadership, specifically the president and board. The unified message of the club at the time, and still today, is giving back to the community. Each week, the members give donations to specified community groups such as the Vince

Carney Community Theatre, Boy/Girl Scouts clubs, Rochelle Junior Tackle and many more. It feels good to give!

In early 2018, I began hearing about selling calendars for the From the Heart community fundraiser. I'll admit I really don't like selling things, and for the first few years I did my part to sell 10-15. However, during the pandemic I chose to become more involved in helping sell calendars. With the cancellation of the banquet the calendar sales became even more important.

Just a bit of history, the From the Heart group has been raising money for community organizations for 15 years. To date, the group has raised over \$630,000. The funds are generated through the

From the Heart Gala and calendar sales.

The funds raised go back to support the following organizations: Shining Star, the Rochelle Christian Food Pantry, Hope of Ogle County, CASA (Court-Appointed Special Advocates), Pegasus Special Riders, the Hub City Senior Center, Focus House and the Rochelle Area Community Foundation. I have seen first-hand the positive impact each of these organizations has had on the lives of people in Rochelle. Each year the goal is to raise enough money to give each of these organizations \$8,000. This year the goal is \$10,000 each.

I am so amazed at the number of volunteers who brave the elements to sell the calendars. Last year

we sold over 4,600 of them and the previous year we sold over 3,700. Our goal this year is to sell even more. The calendars are only \$20 each and contain coupons from generous local businesses. Please consider purchasing a calendar this year (they make a great holiday gift) to help support some great organizations. It's amazing how far the \$20 can go to help those in need.

"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." -Mahatma Gandhi

"Without community service, we would not have strong quality of life. It's important to the person who serves, as well as the recipient. It's the way in which we ourselves grow and develop." -Dorothy Height

Jeffrey A. Fiegenschuh, ICMA-CM, MPA, is the city manager of the City of Rochelle.



Jeffrey Fiegenschuh

Thanks for support of Peanut Day

DEAR editor, The Kiwanis Golden K Club of Rochelle would like to extend a sincere thanks to the Rochelle community for making our recent Annual Peanut Days an outstanding event. With your support we can continue our mission of providing student scholarships as well as funding many local youth activities.

We would like to es-

pecially thank the City of Rochelle, Walgreens and Walmart for allowing us to take donations at their places of business.

The following businesses and individuals provided additional support: Bearrows Real Estate and Auction Company, Central Bank, City of Rochelle, Edward Jones Financial (Brad Stojan),

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T-Byrd Lanes, Tess and Crull LLC, Unger Horner Funeral Home, Wills Chiropractic Center and Smile Brands.

Again, on behalf of the officers, board members and members of Rochelle Kiwanis Golden K, thank you for all of your continued support. It is appreciated.

Chet Olson
Kiwanis Golden K



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- After changing a diaper or helping a child use the toilet
- Before and after exposure to someone who is sick
- After coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose
- After touching an animal or picking up animal waste
- After handling pet food or treats
- After handling garbage or garbage cans
- Before and after attending to a cut or wound

Information resource: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

ROCHELLE News-Leader

Proper handwashing helps all of us stay healthy, so remember to be aware and do your part to help protect yourself and others!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR POLICY

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 News-Leader office (211 IL Route 38 East), mailed to the News-Leader (P.O. Box 46, Rochelle, IL 61068) or e-mailed (news@rochellenews-leader.com). The 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.

LET'S TALK TURKEY!



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2. Entries must be returned to their corresponding business sponsor by 10am on Monday, November 14th.
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WEDNESDAY, NOV. 2, 2022

ROCHELLE NEWS-LEADER • SECTION 2 • PAGE 1

SPORTS



LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The Rochelle Hub soccer team finished with an 11-9 overall record this season.

See page 3 for more details

RTHS Football

Overtime thriller

No. 7 Rochelle wins 4A first-round playoff game over No. 10 Dixon 42-36

BY RUSSELL HODGES
SPORTS EDITOR

ROCHELLE — Friday's IHSA Class 4A Playoff matchup between the Rochelle Hub varsity football team and the Dixon Dukes will be one that fans on both sides remember for a long time.

Four quarters weren't enough to decide a winner, forcing the Hubs to brace for their first overtime playoff game since falling one point short against Kankakee in 2008. On an evening where multiple senior starters were sidelined with injuries or illnesses, Rochelle's sophomores stepped up and delivered two of the biggest game-changing plays of the first-round matchup.

The first moment came during overtime, where Dixon moved the ball to the 2-yard line and attempted to throw for the endzone on fourth down. Sophomore cornerback Xavier Villalobos read the inside slant all the way, stepping in front of wide receiver Ethan Hays and recording the last of his team-high and season-high three interceptions to end Dixon's offensive series.

"I had a feeling they

were going to throw the ball on fourth down," Villalobos said. "I had the inside position and their receiver ran a slant route so the quarterback threw the ball right to me. We knew we had to go out there and make plays. I had faith in myself and my teammates."

Rochelle took the ball with the score tied at 36-36 and a chance to win with a touchdown. On the first play from scrimmage, sophomore wingback Grant Gensler took a carry off the left side, knifing through Dixon defenders before stretching the ball over the goal line for a 10-yard touchdown run that clinched Rochelle's 42-36 overtime victory over the Dukes. The Hubs (8-2, 4-1 Interstate 8/Kishwaukee River Blue) will advance to the second round with the win.

"We knew we had to stay calm and continue to do what we had been doing all game," Gensler said. "My offensive line did a great job of blocking and Garrett [Gensler] ran through the hole and made a block for me."

See HUBS page 7



(PHOTO BY RUSSELL HODGES)

Sophomore Erich Metzger (left) runs behind sophomore teammate Kaiden Morris (right) during the Rochelle Hub varsity football game against Dixon on Friday. Rochelle won 42-36 in overtime to move to 8-2 overall.

RTHS Girls Basketball

Lady Hubs back on the hardwood for winter season

Rochelle shooting for 20 wins and regional title during 2022-23 campaign

BY RUSSELL HODGES
SPORTS EDITOR

ROCHELLE — As Ryan McQuade prepares to begin his second season as head coach of the Rochelle Lady Hub varsity basketball team, expectations are to win at least 20 games and compete for an IHSA Regional Championship title during the upcoming 2022-23 campaign.

"We have such a great group of girls and I'm really excited to get back into the season," McQuade said. "We want to compete for regional championships and we want to strive for 20 wins on a yearly basis. I really like our chances of achieving those goals this season. I know these girls are going to put in the work because I know they want to succeed. We took a big step forward last season and I'm hoping we can take an even larger leap forward this season."

The Lady Hubs tipped off the season with their first practice on Monday. Rochelle will open its season with a road matchup against Guilford on Wednesday, Nov. 16 before traveling for the Forreton Thanksgiving

Tournament. The Lady Hubs are looking to build on a 15-17 overall record and a 7-7 record in the Interstate 8 Conference, where Rochelle tied for fourth place.

"I think we have a well rounded team," McQuade said. "We have a good mix of guards and forwards and we have a couple of good shooters. I think we're going to excel on the defensive side of the ball and that's what we want our identity to be. We want to be the best defensive team on the floor every night and we want to be one of the hardest working teams in the region."

Rochelle will begin the Interstate 8 schedule with a home game against Kanehl on Saturday, Dec. 3 at 2:30 p.m. The Lady Hubs return multiple key players from last season's varsity roster including senior Torrin Nantz as well as juniors Alivia Henkel and Sydney Tabor. Junior Kennedy Adamski and senior Bailey Jackson could also see bigger roles on the varsity team this season.

"I think Torrin is going to have a huge season for us," McQuade said. "Her shot looks better than I've ever seen it and I'm really excited to see how much



(PHOTO BY RUSSELL HODGES)

Senior Torrin Nantz headlines a group of key returning players for the Rochelle Lady Hub varsity basketball team this season. Rochelle will face Guilford on Wednesday, Nov. 16 for its first game of the season.

she's progressed from last season. Sydney moved up to the varsity level during

the Dixon tournament last season and really came on strong defensively. Alivia

has put in a ton of work and she's extremely dedicated. We need some size

this season and I'm hoping Kennedy can give us some really good minutes."



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HUB SPOTLIGHT



Owen Tooley

Year: Freshman
Sport: Bowling

Q: How many years have you been playing this sport?
A: Around eight months.

Q: What do you enjoy most about this sport?
A: It can bring families together.

Q: What is your favorite school subject and why?
A: P.E. or conditioning.

Q: Who is your favorite athlete and why?
A: Jason Belmonte because he's a good bowler and he's one of few two-handed bowlers.

Q: Who is your biggest role

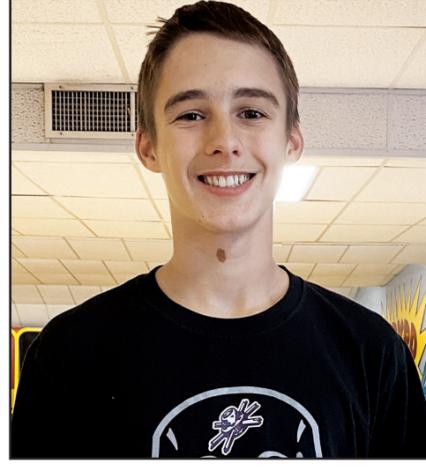
model and why?
A: My brother because we get along really well.

Q: What is your dream job and why?
A: To be a carpenter because it's hands on and makes good money.

Q: Where would your dream vacation be and why?
A: South Carolina because it's beautiful there.

Q: What is your favorite thing about being a student-athlete at RTHS?
A: Getting out of school early.

Wyatt Worthington
 Year: Freshman
 Sport: Bowling



Q: How many years have you been playing this sport?
A: This is my first year of competitive bowling.

Q: What do you enjoy most about this sport?
A: I enjoy that it's not as strenuous as other sports I play.

Q: What is your favorite school subject and why?
A: History and geography because I have loved learning about them since I was a child.

Q: Who is your favorite athlete and why?
A: Walter Payton because he was really tough.

Q: Who is your biggest role

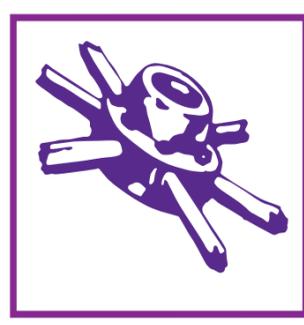
model and why?
A: My grandfather because he's always been a kind man and a hard worker.

Q: What is your dream job and why?
A: To be a pilot because I love aviation and aircrafts.

Q: Where would your dream vacation be and why?
A: The Fjords of Norway because I've always been fascinated by the Vikings.

Q: What is your favorite thing about being a student-athlete at RTHS?
A: The excitement it brings and how it helps me stay in shape.

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SPORTS

RTHS Golf

Hubs bounce back with five-win 2022 season

BY RUSSELL HODGES
SPORTS EDITOR

ROCHELLE — After failing to record a single victory last season, the Rochelle Hub varsity golf team showed significant improvement this season. While the Hubs will lose four senior starters including three four-year players, head coach Glen Mehrings has optimism for the future.

Rochelle finished with a 5-9 overall record and a 2-5 record in the Interstate 8 Conference this season. The Hubs finished sixth in the LaSalle-Peru Invitational and fourth in their division at the Rocket Invitational in Rock Falls. Rochelle's season concluded at the IHSA 2A Mendota Regional, where the Hubs took fifth and qualified two individuals for the sectional series.

"We were competitive in a lot of matches and we were really close to having our team make it to the sectional meet this season," Mehrings said. "The kids were eager to play and they wanted to win... Seeing two first-year players make it to the sectional meet was really exciting. It was great to see some accomplishments this season and it's fun when the kids realize that they're able to be competitive because it motivates them to practice harder and they understand they can win."

Rochelle will lose four seniors from the varsity roster including First-Team All-Conference honoree Griffin Ohlinger as well as Damen Harrington, Wade Smith and David Wanner, who advanced to the IHSA 2A Sterling Sectional in his first season with the program. Ohlinger was named the Most Valuable Player and Wanner was named the Most Improved Player this fall.

"It was great to count on



(PHOTO BY RUSSELL HODGES)

Senior Damen Harrington is one of four players who will depart from the varsity roster after this year.

those kids every season," Mehrings said. "They loved golf and they improved so much from where they started as freshmen. They wanted to compete and they wanted to get better. Golf is a sport where the kids can be on an island sometimes and they need to grow up quickly, but our kids showed up to practice everyday and they played a lot of golf during the summer. It was fun to see a group of seniors who really loved the sport."

Freshman Ian Metzger, who also made it to the sectional meet this season, and junior Cale Workman headline eligible athletes who could return to lead the varsity team next

season. Other players who could earn varsity roles next season include junior Parker Lenkaitis and sophomore Jacob Ost. Rochelle also rostered two girls this season in juniors Elise Horner and Haley Bozinovich. Mehrings said he's hopeful that more girls will come out for the golf team next year.

"We'll definitely have a younger group next season," Mehrings said. "We have smart and athletic kids who just need some time to develop. We'll hopefully work with them over the summer and we know they like to work hard. Hopefully those kids will be able to step up for us next season."

RTHS Boys Soccer



(PHOTO BY RUSSELL HODGES)

Senior Christian Harding was one of three captains for the Rochelle Hub varsity soccer team this season. Rochelle finished with an 11-9 overall record.

Rochelle returns to winning ways this fall

BY RUSSELL HODGES
SPORTS EDITOR

ROCHELLE — The Rochelle Hub varsity soccer team successfully bounced back from its first losing season in six years this fall. Although several seniors will depart from the varsity roster, head coach Brad Male has been pleased with the versatility of his eligible returning players.

Rochelle finished with an 11-9 overall record and a 5-2 record in the Interstate 8 Conference this season. The Hubs took third in the conference tournament and played a difficult schedule, conceding losses against multiple IHSA Regional winners including Genoa-Kingston, Sycamore and Mendota. Rochelle scored 76 goals and allowed only 45 goals during the season.

"I was pleased with the way we progressed throughout the season," Male said. "Our kids had a tremendous work ethic

and I'm looking forward to seeing more of that next season. I'm sad to see our seniors go because they were an integral part of our success this season."

The Hubs will lose eight seniors from the varsity roster including three First-Team All-Conference honorees (Jace Whitehead, Jared Montano and Christian Harding) as well as two starters (Nolan Fonfara and Jarett Milan) and three reserves (Diego Cincire, Jack Anderson and Caleb Johnson). Whitehead (four goals, two assists), Montano (one goal, eight assists) and Harding (one goal) were Rochelle's three captains this fall. Milan finished with 95 total saves.

"It's always a pleasure to have a group of seniors like we did this season," Male said. "They maintained our team atmosphere and our captains put in a lot of effort to keep our team together. They did a great job of keeping the team moving

and motivated this season."

Junior Diego Salazar (22 goals, four assists) and sophomore Alberto Casillas (25 goals, one assist), both All-Conference Honorable Mentions this season, headline eligible players who could return next season. Sophomores Bryan Garcia (two goals, two assists), Luis Milan (one goal) and Fernando Diaz (nine goals, four assists) as well as freshmen Heilly Zepeda (three goals, four assists) and Kevin Orozco (nine goals, five assists) could also return next fall.

"We'll lose a lot on our back line, but I think we're capable of moving some players around like we did this season," Male said. "Our strongest area this season was our offense and we maintained possession in a lot of our matches. We'll have a lot of those players returning next season and I'm hoping those kids continue to build on what they were able to do this season."

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ASHTON NEWS



Ashton-Franklin Center eighth-graders work in the shop this past week

(COURTESY PHOTOS)

This past week, the Ashton-Franklin Center eighth grade class worked in the shop. They used the drill press to make rings, learned how to weld on the augmented reality welder, took care of the rabbits and made some festive pumpkin decorations.



Ashton Lions Club Halloween costume parade and contest takes place

On Sunday, the annual Ashton Lions Club Halloween Costume Parade & Contest took place and started in front of the Lion's Center and ended at the Mills & Petrie Gymnasium, where judging of the costumes took place.

Lady Raider volleyball teams face Amboy, Polo

ASHTON — The Ashton-Franklin Center volleyball teams faced Amboy on Thursday, Oct. 13. The varsity girls won 20-25, 25-23, 30-28 while the JV girls fell 23-25, 14-25 and the fresh-soph girls won their first set 26-24.

Rhylee McCaslin and Taylor Jahn each recorded 10 service points for the varsity team, while Brianna Gonnerman added 14 assists. Lillian Searing totaled six service points and Audree Dorn notched three kills for the JV team. Abby Milligan had

11 assists and six service points during the fresh-soph match, while Reese Polk compiled five kills, five service points and five digs.

Polo

The Ashton-Franklin Center volleyball teams took on Polo on Tuesday, Oct. 18. The varsity team lost 17-25, 27-29, while the JV team fell 22-25, 21-25 and the fresh-soph team lost 10-25, 20-22.

Mallory Coffman and Rhylee McCaslin each recorded four blocks for

the varsity team, while Cailin Bogle had five digs and Elena Refatllari totaled four digs. Lillian Searing recorded eight service points and Brianna Gonnerman compiled six service points.

Audree Dorn had six assists and six service points to pace the JV team against Polo, while Reese Polk led the fresh-soph team with eight service points, 11 digs and two kills. Claire Freeman had four kills and six digs for the fresh-soph girls against Polo.

American Legion Veterans Day program set for Nov. 11

ASHTON — The Ashton American Legion Post 345 will host its annual Veterans Day service. The program will be held at the Mills Petrie building on Nov. 11 at 10:15 a.m.

This year's speaker will

be Harrell Wiggins from Freeport. He is a member of the American Legion in Forreton, Post 308. He is a past commander of the Forreton post and current commander of the Sons of the American Legion

Squadron. Harrell served in the Army during the Vietnam War (1971-1973) and was stationed in Korea for 13 months. He achieved the rank of E4 as a specialist with the Charerel Missile Unit.

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ON THE FARM

Things everyone can do to support rural economies

EFFORTS to revive small business sectors have helped countless communities regain their prosperity and sense of community pride. Those efforts have been wildly effective in many urban areas, and they also can help rural economies recover from the many challenges they've been confronting since the Great Recession, which occurred between 2007 and 2009.

Rural communities have faced many unique challenges since 2007. For example, a 2019 study published in the journal Rural Sociology found that 46 percent of remote rural counties were depopulating, while just 6 percent of metropolitan counties were facing population losses. Reviving rural communities does more than help the people who call those communities home. Thriving rural communities can ensure access to fresh foods for people in both rural and urban areas, thus keeping costs down. Thriving rural communities also can reduce reliance on government assistance programs. With access to well-paying jobs, more people in rural communities can live above the

poverty line. That's a significant benefit, as the U.S. Department of Agriculture reports that roughly 85 percent of counties combatting persistent poverty are rural.

Attempts to revive rural economies will require a collective effort on the part of people from all walks of life, and there's much everyone can do to pitch in.

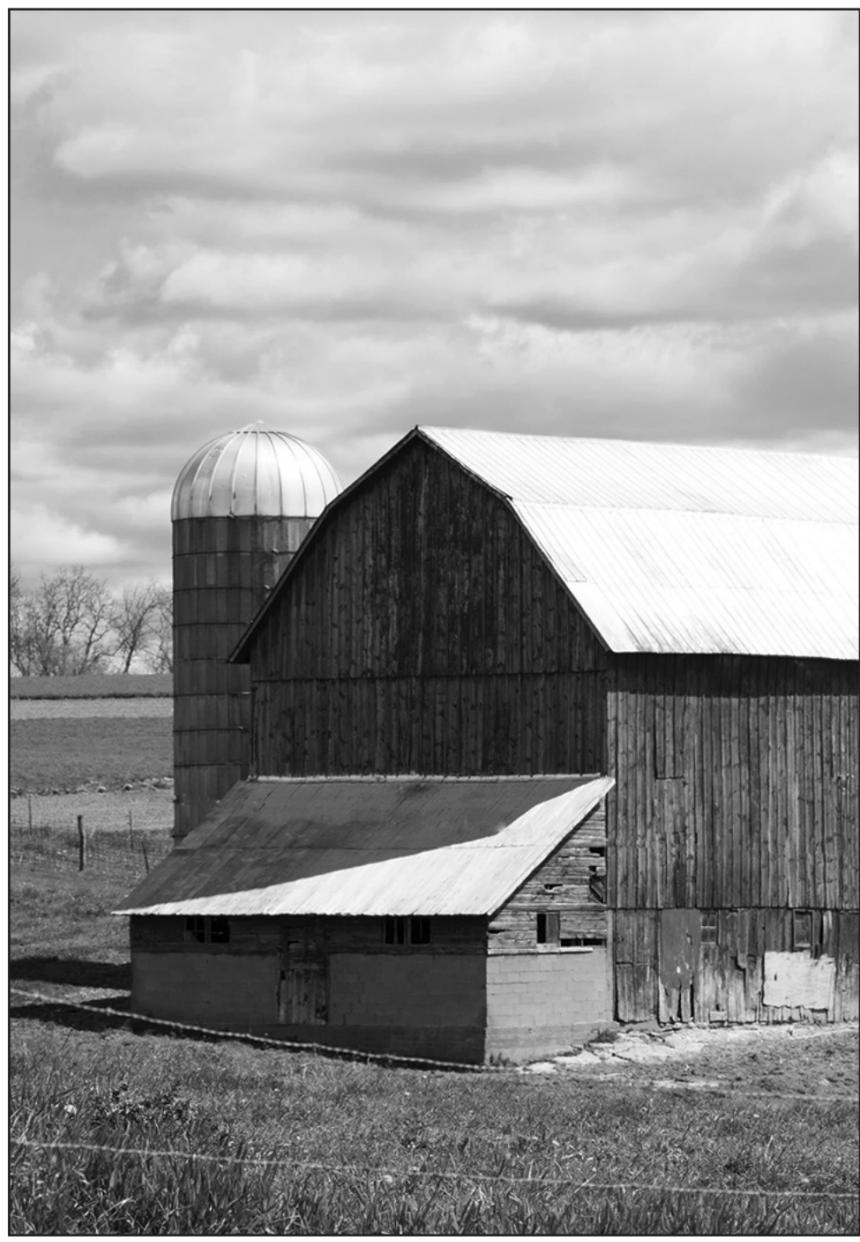
Buy products from local farms. When buying foods, looking for products from local farms and/or domestic farms can benefit consumers in various ways. Many individuals find locally grown foods more flavorful than products imported from foreign countries. And buying local, whether the farm is on the outskirts of the metropolitan area you call home or elsewhere in your own country, provides some much-needed economic stimulation to rural communities.

Look beyond foods. Rural communities produce more than food. Soaps, lotions, candles, decorative items, and other products people use everyday are produced on farms and within rural communities. Choosing these products over mass-produced alternatives

made in other countries or in places where profits are less likely to be funneled back into local communities is a great way to support rural economies.

Support legislation that benefits rural economies. One of the most effective ways to lend a hand to rural economies is to support legislation that can help them. There are many reasons why rural economies have fallen on hard times, and a lack of digital infrastructure has undoubtedly contributed to those struggles. All businesses benefit from a strong online presence, and communities can attract more remote workers if their digital infrastructure is improved. Those improvements are often the subject of local, state and even federal legislation. Individuals who want to help rural economies can urge their representatives to support legislation that can help rural communities build their digital infrastructure so it's on par with that which has already been established in more populous areas.

Rural economies are struggling. However, there's much everyone can do to pitch in and support efforts to revive rural communities.



The role of the earthworm in sustainable agriculture

HOME gardeners and commercial agricultural enterprises are increasingly integrating more natural and sustainable practices into plant production. Although chemical pesticides and fertilizers can improve crop yields, chemicals can deteriorate soil efficiency and may affect the ecosystem in negative ways. In lieu of turning to a laundry list of products to help the soil, farmers and home gardeners may benefit from relying more heavily on the humble earthworm.

According to CABI, an international, inter-governmental, not-for-profit organization that provides information and applies scientific expertise to solve problems in agriculture and the environment, earthworms are useful for the management of biodiversity. Earthworms are any gardener's friend. These shy, light-sensitive creatures burrow through the soil, pulling leaves and other plant matter deep within. When the earthworms consume this detritus,

the decomposed plants as well as the worms' droppings provide nutrients to the soil. Together with microbes, earthworms convert biodegradable materials and organic waste into nutrient-rich products. They also may help reduce instances of soil-borne diseases.

The benefits to worms do not end there. Earthworms also aerate the soil, enabling water to be absorbed, which helps develop strong plant roots. Earthworm burrows serve as channels where roots can elongate into deeper soil layers, enabling plants to grow more securely and deeply. This, in turn, can help reduce soil erosion. While research is ongoing, there are some reports that the unique talents of earthworms can help convert land that is largely barren into fertile soil.

It may be in gardeners' and farmers' best interests to raise earthworms. According to the science information site Sciencing, earthworms are hermaphrodites, meaning they have both male and female reproductive organs. Despite this, most worms



need a partner to reproduce — although certain types will reproduce alone if partners are scarce. Worms can be purchased or found for breeding. A worm box, which can be made or bought from gardening shops, is a box made from untreated wood. The

earthworms will need a temperature of at least 25 F, and dark, moist soil.

Place moistened paper scraps into one half of the worm box. Place the worms on top and give them opportunities to hide. Place small amounts of organic matter, such

as kitchen scraps, coffee grounds and leaves, on the paper layer every day. Leave the other side of the worm box empty, as this will be where the worm dropping compost will eventually collect. After two or three months, there will be quite a number of

hatched worms to release into the garden along with the compost. Leave some worms behind to continue to reproduce.

Earthworms amend the soil in natural ways that can reduce the need to use chemical products and protect biodiversity.

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SPORTS

HUBS: Rochelle wins first-round playoff matchup in OT

From page 1

“I had one guy I had to run through to get the ball across the goal line. We stuck to our game plan, we toughed it out tonight and it wound up working out for us.”

Rochelle and Dixon (6-4, 6-3 Big Northern) combined for over 800 yards in the game. The Hubs received the opening kickoff and scored on their first possession, capitalizing on a fourth-down conversion from senior wingback Trey Taft before Garrett Gensler plunged forward for a 2-yard touchdown. Villalobos snagged his first interception on Dixon’s opening drive, using all of his 5-foot-4 frame to leap and catch a fade throw into the endzone from quarterback Tyler Shaner.

“I knew they were going to target my side of the field,” said Villalobos, who started in place of senior David Gerber due to an illness. “We all had confidence in each other and we continued to pick each other up, even after we made mistakes. It feels amazing to win this game and our seniors really deserve it. We have to get ready for next week and we’ll see what happens next.”

Sophomore fullback Erich Metzger extended Rochelle’s lead early in the second quarter, refusing to go down and shedding a pair of Dukes for a 26-yard touchdown run. Metzger rushed for a season-high 137 yards on 24 carries for the Hubs, who led 14-0 after the 2-point conversion. Dixon got on the board midway through the second quarter, with Tyler Shaner running for 44 yards before hitting

Cullen Shaner for an 8-yard touchdown pass soon after. “It feels good to step in and perform for my teammates,” Metzger said. “I love my teammates and the way they block for me. I wouldn’t trade it for anything and being out here makes me feel good. We stayed focused on offense and we went hard on every snap. My blockers led me on that touchdown and I saw one defender to beat. I was able to juke him out and that was it.”

Dixon forced its first turnover of the game late in the second quarter, intercepting a third-and-18 pass from senior quarterback Hayden Inman and returning the ball 35 yards for a touchdown. The Dukes then stopped Rochelle on a fourth-and-8 rush during the next Hub series, taking over possession and scoring on a 35-yard touchdown pass from Shaner to Rylan Ramsdell.

Needing an answer before halftime, Inman dropped back after a fake handoff and fired a 15-yard touchdown pass over the middle to a wide open Taft to cap off a six-play, 62-yard scoring drive that utilized only 39 seconds and helped put the Hubs ahead 22-20 at halftime.

The Dukes needed only one play to regain the lead at the start of the third quarter, with Shaner taking a read-option carry and breaking loose for a 75-yard touchdown in what became a second-half shootout between the two teams. Rochelle snuck back ahead after Taft avoided defenders for a 42-yard run and Metzger cashed the drive in with a 6-yard touchdown run. Taft finished with 108



(PHOTO BY RUSSELL HODGES)

Sophomore Xavier Villalobos (left) covers Dixon’s Ethan Hays during the Rochelle Hub varsity football game against the Dukes on Friday. Villalobos recorded three interceptions as the Hubs won 42-36 in overtime.

total yards including 93 yards on 14 carries for the Hubs in the victory.

“It feels good to win this game, but we know we have to get ready for next week,” Metzger said.

Villalobos snatched his second interception of the game on Dixon’s next series, jumping a route over the middle and returning the ball to the 27-yard line of the Dukes. Garrett Gensler, who led Rochelle with 26 carries for 159 yards on Friday, barreled forward for a 2-yard touchdown run as the Hubs turned the Dixon

turnover into points and surged ahead with the new score 36-28.

The Dukes bounced right back, with Shaner finding wide receiver Jath St. Pier for a 44-yard pass before connecting with Ramsdell for a 5-yard touchdown. Shaner completed 15-of-24 passes for 193 yards and three touchdowns while running for 140 yards and one touchdown. With the score tied at 36-36, Rochelle drove all the way to the Dixon 12-yard line, but a fumble on a fourth-and-5 carry that was nearly a

touchdown led to a Duke recovery and a touchback.

Rochelle stood tall on its final defensive series of regulation as fans on both sides began ramping up the crowd noise. Despite Dixon moving the ball to the 36-yard line of the Hubs, a pair of run stops from junior linebacker Brock Metzger and sophomore defensive end Jack Pavlak led to an incomplete fourth-down pass that resulted in a turnover on downs.

The Hubs had one last chance to potentially win near the end of the fourth

quarter, but an interception near the Rochelle sideline with around 15 seconds remaining led to the Dukes kneeling on their final snap to send the first-round matchup into overtime, where key plays from Villalobos and Grant Gensler helped the Hubs seal their wild victory over Dixon on Friday.

“We know we have to get better this week and we need to have a great week of practice next week,” Gensler said. “It feels awesome to win and we’ll be ready for whoever we face next.”

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