

Year in Review

The Mendota Reporter

Wednesday, Dec. 30, 2020

J
A
N
U
A
R
Y

Jan. 1, 2020

Small business owners around the state are preparing for two minimum wage hikes in 2020. The minimum wage for most employees in Illinois will increase to \$9.25 on Jan. 1 and then will jump to \$10 an hour in July.

A Mendota man was charged with two offenses after police officers investigated burglaries to motor vehicles on Dec. 25 and Dec. 26. Anthony J. Kaufman, 42, of 507 ½ 15th St., Mendota, was charged with two counts of burglary to a motor vehicle and two counts of criminal trespass to a motor vehicle. The charges are the result of an investigation by the Mendota Police Department into a complaint of burglary to a motor vehicle in the 1200 block of Susanna Street at 11 p.m. Dec. 25. Upon further investigation into several other burglaries to motor vehicles during the early hours of Dec. 26, Kaufman was arrested and charged.

After decades of discussions about legalizing recreational marijuana, in 2020 Illinois becomes one of 11 states where marijuana is legal for use by adults over the age of 21. The new law (P.A. 101-0027), which takes effect on Jan. 1, is just one of over 255 new laws to hit the books this year. Everything from a minimum wage increase to vehicle licensing fees and baby changing tables in restrooms has been addressed.

DEATHS – Joseph H. McNally Sr., 89, a resident of the Illinois Veterans Home, LaSalle, formerly of Mendota, Dec. 25, 2019; Harley Dean Hoag, 88, of Compton, Dec. 22, 2019; Steven D. Dewey, 67, of Rio, Wis., formerly of Mendota, Dec. 22, 2019; Florine B. Fischer, 94, of LaMoille, Dec. 20, 2019; William Richard “Dick” Setchell, 73, of Mendota, Dec. 28, 2019; Susan K. Hall, 70, of Earlville, Dec. 26, 2019.

BIRTHS – Mr. and Mrs. Lucas Garcia (Janaya Wyatt) of Mendota, girl, Dec. 24, 2019; Mr. and Mrs. Jesse Fenwick (Colleen Lawler) of Mendota, girl, Dec. 27, 2019.

Jan. 8, 2020

The city of Mendota welcomed a new firefighter and handled several other items of business at the first Mendota City Council meeting of 2020 on Jan. 6. Under alderman Kyle Kim’s business, Dalton Huftel was sworn in as a new full-time firefighter with the Mendota Fire Department. Bill Kobilsek of the Mendota Police & Fire Commission delivered the oath of office.

Two Waltham Curling Club junior teams were victorious at the Midwest Curling Association U18 Regional Playdowns held on Dec. 27-28 at the Waltham Curling Club in Triumph. The Midwest Regional Girls’ Champions are Waltham

Curling Club’s Team Hagenbuch, which includes Bella Hagenbuch, Genevieve Salander, Mae Hagenbuch and Faith Geake. The Midwest Regional Boys’ Champions are Team Salander of the Waltham Curling Club, with team members Maxwell Salander, Logan Brandner, Logan Fahr and Dagan Setchell. The Waltham teams will be among 10 girls’ teams and 10 boys’ teams from the other regional competitions held around the nation who will compete at the National event from March 17-22 in Wausau, Wis.

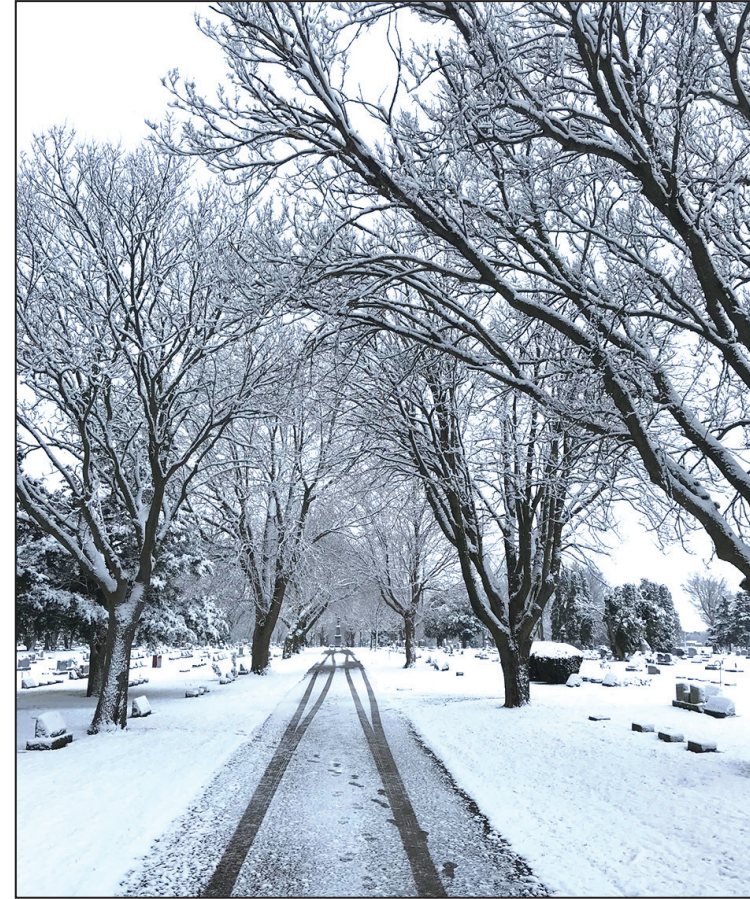
Two of the state’s largest electric utilities owe their customers a combined \$543 million in refunds, according to state regulators, but there is sharp disagreement over how much time the companies should have to pay it back. At issue for Ameren Illinois and Commonwealth Edison, also known as ComEd, is money they collected to pay future tax bills before federal tax cuts, which took effect in 2018 lowered those anticipated rates.

DEATHS – Dale R. Kidd, 72, of Leland, Jan. 1, 2020; Tiffany Marie Schrock, 31, of Amboy, Dec. 28, 2019; William Bruce Oberschelp, 79, of LaSalle, formerly of Mendota, Dec. 30, 2019; Loriann Griswold (Tanis) Yung, 56, of Traverse City, Mich., formerly of Mendota, Dec. 27, 2019; Clata E. (Schumacher) Brumley, 94, of LaMoille, Dec. 28, 2019; Sandra S. Coss, 63, of Mendota, Dec. 28, 2019; Eddie Jo Shaw, 59, of Mendota, Jan. 3, 2020.

BIRTHS – Andrew LeFevre and Andrea LeFevre of Sublette, boy, Dec. 19, 2019.

Jan. 15, 2020

Ready to try something new in 2020? This year’s Polar Plunge at Lake Mendota is the perfect



A light covering of snow that fell on the Mendota area on Jan. 4 created a winter wonderland scene at Restland Cemetery with the snowcapped trees and headstones illuminating nature’s wonder. Warmer temperatures caused the snow to quickly disappear.

opportunity to make a splash while contributing to a good cause. The 2020 Polar Plunge will take place on Saturday, Feb. 29. Presented by the Law Enforcement Torch Run and GEICO, this is a fun way to support Special Olympics of Illinois by taking a quick dip the chilly water of Lake Mendota.

The Internal Revenue Service confirmed that the nation’s tax season will start for individual tax return filers on Monday, Jan. 27, 2020, when the tax agency will begin accepting and processing

2019 tax year returns. The deadline to file 2019 tax returns and pay any tax owed is Wednesday, April 15, 2020.

A task force formed to study ways to reduce property tax burden on Illinois residents is calling for consolidation of school districts and other local units of government and a boost in the state’s share of funding for K-12 education. Those and other recommendations are part of a draft report circulated among the 88-member Property Tax Relief Task Force that state

lawmakers formed during the 2019 session.

DEATHS – Elaine M. Setchell, 91, of Mendota, Jan. 7, 2020; Jane C. Kuczek, 88, of Mendota, Jan. 10, 2020; Melvin Edwin Stamberger, 93, of Rochester, Ind., formerly of Mendota, Jan. 12, 2020; Tamra L. Bierbom, 59, of Utica, Jan. 8, 2020; John W. “Jack” Deery, 68, of Amboy, Jan. 12, 2020; Nancy L. Crane, 71, of LaSalle, Jan. 7, 2020; Joel Koopersmith, 64, of Grants Pass, Ore., formerly of Mendota, Jan. 6, 2020.

BIRTHS – Dick Ewing and Amber Engel of Peru, girl, Jan. 3, 2020.

Jan. 22, 2020

The days of 600-650 students at Mendota High School are over in the opinion of Superintendent Jeff Prusator. Reporting at the

Jan. 20 District 280 Board of Education meeting, Prusator said he knew there was going to be a steady, but small, decline in enrollment, and then it would start to level off again.

The Mendota City Council renewed the city’s health insurance and discussed several requests at its Jan. 20 regular meeting. Alderman John Holland presented the health insurance renewal information for the council’s consideration. The insurance premium with Blue Cross and Blue Shield was approved at a 4.5 percent increase for health, 7 percent increase for vision and 6 percent increase for dental.

Illinois farmers will get a much-needed lift from two international trade agreements approved by the federal government last week, but experts are uncertain if their situations will improve

in the long term. The state’s climatologist is predicting Illinois farmers are likely to endure more burdensomely wet weather while they try to plant cash crops this spring after suffering major losses as a result of a record-wet planting season last year. April through June is likely to be wetter than normal in Illinois, according to rainfall projections from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, posing a challenge to corn and soybean farmers in the heart of planting season.

The Mendota Fire Department’s 147th annual Card Party & Dance will be held on Saturday, Feb. 1.

DEATHS – Robert E. Olson, 82, of Amboy, Jan. 14, 2020; Montie L. Melau, 61, of Troy Grove, Jan. 16, 2020; Robert F. Moffett, Jr., 66, of Mendota, Jan. 18, 2020; Larry D. Pritchard,

70, of Dixon, Jan. 9, 2020; James E. LeMat, 71, of Compton, Jan. 11, 2020.

Jan. 29, 2020

Illinois continues to top the annual crop production report estimate for soybean production, according to 2019 USDA estimates. Despite a tough growing season for most of the Midwest, Illinois farmers consistently produced strong soybean yields, all while remaining committed to stewardship and efficient crop management. Illinois soybean farmers raised 532,440 million bushels of soybeans in 2019 on 9,860 million harvested acres with an average yield of 54 bushels per acre.

The Internal Revenue Service is warning of “ghost” tax preparers who promise big returns. As the tax-filing season begins, the IRS said some tax preparers

are promising bigger returns that might seem tempting.

Last year’s record rains took a toll on the state’s farmers. Instead of planting in the spring, they had to wait until June and even July just to get started. Soggy soil was not the best growing medium, harvests happened late and in colder weather, and many fields were harvested so late that the ground was frozen before farmers could till it for the next planting. Some climate specialists are predicting more of the same in 2020, which has already seen higher-than-average rainfall in most of the state.

The Social Security Administration launched a new Public Service Announcement (PSA) campaign to continue warning people about the ongoing nationwide telephone impersonation scheme. The scammers mislead victims

into making cash or gift card payments for help with purported identity theft, or to avoid arrest for bogus Social Security number problems.

DEATHS – George T. McMahon, 94, of Rockford, formerly of Mendota, Jan. 23, 2020; Cynthia R. “Cindy” McCoy, 58, of Amboy, Jan. 20, 2020; Nellie J. Cook, 95, of Streator, Jan. 26, 2020; Dale H. Frey, 74, of Bayou Vista, Texas, formerly of Mendota, Jan. 22, 2020; Darlene I. Fischer, 96, of LaMoille, Jan. 27, 2020; Mari Jo (Safranek) Dettore, 59, of Salol, Minn., formerly of Paw Paw, Jan. 19, 2020.

BIRTHS – Kyle Beavers and Lindsay Burash of Mendota, girl, Jan. 26, 2020.



“ We appreciate our valued customers!
We’re all in this together and giving thanks! ”

Eureka Savings

BANK



250 Marquette St.
LaSalle, IL 61301
Ph. 223-0700

1300 13th Ave.
Mendota, IL 61342
Ph. 539-5656

101 N. Columbia Ave.
Oglesby, IL 61348
Ph. 883-3354

2959 Peoria St.
Peru, IL 61354
Ph. 223-9400

www.eurekasavings.com

F
E
B
R
U
A
R
Y

Feb. 5, 2020

The Mendota City Council handled several items of business at its Feb. 3 regular meeting. Alderman Bill Hunt served as vice mayor in the absence of Mayor David Boelk. Alderman John Hesenberger presented a request from Beck Oil Company for a sign height variance for a new high-rise sign at Beck's I-39 location. The request will be sent to the Zoning Board for its consideration at a meeting set for Monday, Feb. 24 at 5 p.m. The council approved two requests from the Mendota Area Chamber of Commerce – one to hold a tag day for fireworks on June 20 and the other to use Lake Mendota Park for the fireworks celebration on June 27.

Old homes have many stories to tell. Anyone who has lived in a home that is over 100 years old has surely wondered what hidden tales their historic dwelling would share if it could talk. But in many cases, those stories have been partially or completely lost over time. Such was the case for Bob

and Betty Jones of Sublette.

Soybean farmers in Illinois cannot catch a break. After a promising trade deal with China last month gave farmers hope amid an intense trade war, the deadly Wuhan coronavirus currently overwhelming China is also damaging its economy. The country's economic slump is now sowing fears that China might not be able to buy all of the \$32 billion of U.S. agricultural goods it promised for 2020, including soybeans from Illinois, America's top soybean-producing state.

DEATHS – Berniece G. Bonnell, 104, of Mendota, Jan. 29, 2020; Kathleen M. Goldsworthy, 100, of Mendota, Feb. 3, 2020; Russell B. Crews, 98, of Mendota, Feb. 3, 2020; Robert F. Moffett, Jr., 66, of Mendota, Jan. 18, 2020; Charles Rogers, 96, of Sycamore, Feb. 2, 2020; Roger D. Anderson, 84, of Paw Paw, Jan. 28, 2020; Al S. Ablett, 89, of rural Granville, formerly of Peru, Jan. 30, 2020.

Feb. 12, 2020

Thanks to the efforts of historic preservation advocates in Illinois, 12 sites in the state were added to the National Register of Historic Places during 2019, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) announced recently. Among the sites added to the National Register of Historic Places is the Rollo Congregational United Church of Christ north of Earlville in DeKalb County, listed Aug. 27, 2019.

If a bill in the Illinois Senate becomes law, carnivals would no longer be allowed to award live animals—such as fish, reptiles and hermit crabs – as prizes.

The Mendota High School Concert Band will present the 61st Annual Symphony Band Concert at 2:30 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 16 at the Mendota High School



It was announced that the Mendota Lutheran Home would be ceasing operations after 67 years.

Auditorium. This year, MHS will be joined on stage by composer, percussionist and educator Olivia Kieffer.

DEATHS – Dale R. Peters, 86, of Mendota, Feb. 3, 2020; MaryLou Reeser, 76, of Oregon, Feb. 5, 2020; Adeline E. Peterson, 97, of Earlville, Feb. 7, 2020; Mary Ann Cardot, 78, of Maytown, Feb. 6, 2020.

BIRTHS – Troy Cunefare and Ashley Montgomery of Mendota, girl, Jan. 17, 2020; Erin McCoy of Mendota, girl, Feb. 3, 2020; Mr. and Mrs. Tony Munoz Jr. (Vanessa Terrazas) of Mendota, boy, Feb. 7, 2020; Chris Sondgeroth and Mary Wright of Mendota, girl, Feb. 7, 2020.

MARRIAGES – Michaela Denault and Isaac Olson, Dec. 7, 2019 at First United Methodist Church, Mendota.

Feb. 19, 2020

A Mendota alderman submitted his letter of resignation at the Feb. 17 meeting of the Mendota City Council. Bill Hunt, who has served the Fourth Ward since 2009, resigned from his seat on the council effective Feb. 29.

Heavy machinery has been moved in as the cleanup continues of what was an old gas plant located at the southeast corner of Ninth Avenue and Fifth Street in Mendota.

Nicor Gas and ComEd are partnering to clean up the area under the oversight of the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency. Cleanup of the property began in November 2019 and the targeted conclusion is the fall of 2021.

The Mendota Lutheran Home announced on Feb. 11 that it will be closing. The following notice was posted on the Lutheran Home's Facebook page "It is with heavy hearts the Administration, Staff and Board of Mendota Lutheran Home announce the closing of the facility. Our dedicated staff have faced: community rumors, an aging facility, dwindling census, rising costs, and low reimbursement rates. In these changing times, stand-alone, non-for-profit homes face difficulty remaining a viable choice. While change is always difficult, we are especially saddened by these circumstances. A reasonable transition period is expected. The Mendota Lutheran Home sincerely thanks the families and community for 67 wonderful years."

DEATHS – La Vern "Skip" N. Klinefelter, 79, of Utica, Feb. 11, 2020; Raymond D. Schallhorn, 84, of LaMoille, Feb. 15, 2020; Sarah E. Cruz, 35, of Spring Valley, Feb. 13, 2020; Emma Louise Kay Norton, infant daughter of Mariah Ambler

and Dylan Norton, Feb. 11, 2020; Mark L. Wallis, 58, of Mendota, Feb. 12, 2020; Daniel J. Colangelo, 63, of West Brooklyn, formerly of Chicago Ridge, Feb. 13, 2020.

BIRTHS – Mr. and Mrs. Cody Phalen (Ashley Piskie) of Mendota, boy, Feb. 13, 2020; Mr. and Mrs. Jeremy Beetz (Lyndsey Kramer) of Mendota, boy, Feb. 14, 2020.

Feb. 26, 2020

A new school safety program called MHS SAFE Team was approved by the District 280 Board of Education at its Feb. 18 meeting. Superintendent Jeff Prusator said the state has mandated that schools have a Threat Behavior Assessment Team in place and introduced three members of the MHS team – Heath Raley, Assistant Principal Joe Masini and Officer Chad Hochstatter. All three attended an all-day training at IVCC.

ComEd workers prepared to take down a damaged electric pole and replace it with a new one at the corner of 12th Street and Augustine Avenue. The pole was severely damaged after being struck by a hit and run driver on Feb. 18.

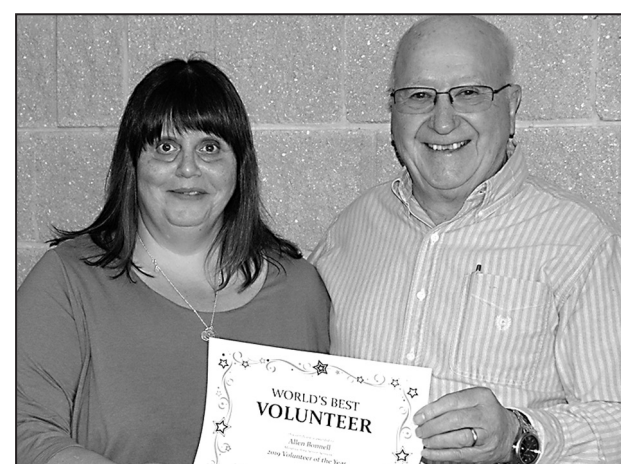
State Sen. Jim Oberweis, R-Sugar Grove, filed Senate

Bill 2565 to change the maximum speed limit from 70 mph to 75 mph on any interstate highway outside of an urban area. He also filed Senate Bill 2564 to change the maximum speed limit outside an urban district from 55 mph to 60 mph.

Education funding is once again top of mind at the Capitol, with a key cog of Gov. JB Pritzker's fiscal year 2021 budget proposal addressing the matter already facing pushback. At issue is the state's three-year-old K-12 education funding system, known as the evidence-based model. For the fourth straight budget year, lawmakers are discussing how many hundreds of millions of dollars in additional funding that formula will receive as compared to a year ago.

DEATHS – Charlotte I. Erwin, 93, of Earlville, Feb. 19, 2020; Martha Fuller, 75, of Silvis, Feb. 22, 2020; Gary Donnell McConville, 66, of Ottawa, Feb. 17, 2020; James C. Christmann, 74, of rural Utica, formerly of Mendota, Feb. 20, 2020.

BIRTHS – Sebastian Carreon and Diana Rivera of Mendota, boy, Feb. 19, 2020; Jorge Moreno Jr. and Monica Avila Reyes of Mendota, girl, Feb. 14, 2020.



Allen Bonnell was recognized as the Mendota Area Senior Services Volunteer of the Year by executive director Rayanne Sester.

M
A
R
C
H**March 4, 2020**

The swearing in of two police officers was among the items handled by the Mendota City Council at its regular meeting on March 2. Abram Yucus took the oath of office to join the Mendota Police Department as a full-time officer. He will have several months of training before beginning his duties with the department. Yucus

is a native of the Ohio, Ill., area and graduated from the University of Mary in Bismarck, N.D. Clint Thulen was sworn in as a part-time officer. He will be appointed to the TRIDENT Drug Task Force assigned to the drug interdiction team concentrating on the I-80 area in Bureau County. Thulen is a retired Illinois State Trooper having served in that capacity for 27 years.

A large contingent of brave souls made a big splash while contributing to a great cause when they took a leap into Lake Mendota during the 2020 Polar Plunge on Feb. 29. Allison Nichols, Region A Assistant Director of Development, announced that 302 plungers participated in this year's event and they raised \$63,742.77. The total number of plungers was an increase of 60 from last year.

Holy Cross School seventh graders recently partnered with Hume-Carnegie Museum staff to do research on local history for their History Fair projects. The resulting projects will be featured in the display at the Museum when it opens for the 2020 season at 1 p.m. on Saturday, March 7.

DEATHS – Frances Kay Ambler, 78, of Mendota, Feb. 28, 2020; Susan “Sue” J. Pakenham, 71, of Triumph, Feb. 29, 2020; Delwyn Franklin Lawrence, 61, of LaMoille, Feb. 24, 2020; Ronald O. Boltz, 92, of Earlville, Feb. 29, 2020; Patricia C. Jones, 80, of Mendota, Feb. 25, 2020; Melody S. Dumas, 74, of Mendota, Feb. 26, 2020; Nora M. Prather, 63, of Mendota, Feb. 25, 2020; Stuart Eldon Faber, 64, of LaMoille, March 1, 2020; Charles “Chuck” Harmon,

83, of Oak Ridge, Tenn., Feb. 28, 2020.

March 11, 2020

Jerry Costello II has some decorating to do in his office. The new director of the Illinois Department of Agriculture still has framed pictures stacked against a wall in his mostly empty corner office in Springfield. You could forgive him, though. He's been on the job since only last week. Costello, 51, is just getting settled in, but he says he has a clear vision for the department, including uniting stakeholders, expanding the department's initiatives and working with Gov. JB Pritzker to support farmers and rural communities.

This year, the Mendota High School Drama Club and Choral Department are excited to bring the campy, cult-classic musical, “Little

Shop of Horrors” to the MHS stage on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, March 20-22. All members of the Choir and Drama Club are taking part in creating, producing and performing this production, which is a true team-building experience for all MHS Fine Arts students.

The Sublette Farm Toy and Antique Tractor Show annual casual dinner will be held at 6 p.m. Saturday, March 14 at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Hall. The dinner is open to the public. This year's Farm Toy Show will take place March 14-15.

DEATHS – Helen S. (Shannon) Reppin, 94, of Peru, March 5, 2020; Ruth Marie (Dhuse) Grosshans, 98, of Plano, Texas, March 2, 2020.

March 18, 2020
The Mendota Chamber

of Commerce Executive Directors along with the Board of Directors have been working diligently to make sure that the Annual Sweet Corn Festival will continue to have hot buttered sweet corn along with fresh sweet corn throughout the weekend. MACC would like to thank the donor who has agreed to provide our festival with sweet corn this year as well as upcoming years. For certain reasons, this donor has asked for anonymity at this time.

A new alderman was appointed and another step forward was taken in the Illinois Avenue project during items handled at the regular meeting of the Mendota City Council on March 16. Mayor David Boelk began the meeting by appointing Vicki Johnson as the new alderman in the Fourth Ward to replace Bill Hunt, who



“During these trying times, we'd like to thank you for your unwavering support of local businesses like ours!”

See our website at www.sullivansfoods.net for our Groceries2Go service!



1102 Meriden St., Mendota • 815-539-9341
Open 6 am-9 pm 7 days a week

resigned in February. Alderman Jim Fitzpatrick presented the bid sheet for the Illinois Avenue Streetscape and miscellaneous street and alley improvements. Four bids were submitted and Universal Asphalt of LaSalle had the lowest bid at \$497,057, which was accepted by the council.

Fund transfers and an intergovernmental agreement were among the items discussed at the Mendota High School District 280 Board of Education meeting on March 16. The board approved a transfer of \$130,000 from the Working Cash Fund to the Capital Projects Fund for upcoming projects planned at the high school. They also approved \$25,000 to the Operation and Maintenance Fund for the cost of a truck and plow that was purchased for in-house snow removal and \$20,000 to the Transportation Fund for the purchase of a new mini van to transport students who need out-of-district services.

People throughout the United States can begin filling out their census forms online now, and state officials in Illinois are pulling out all the stops to make sure the state gets an accurate headcount.

DEATHS – Elizabeth Ann “Betty” (Burke) Widolff, 87, of Sterling, March 8, 2020; Charles Christopher Rowe, 29, of Mendota, March 6, 2020.

March 25, 2020

LaSalle County Health Department (LCDH) has confirmed three cases of COVID-19 in LaSalle County. The two most recent cases are a female in her 30s who had traveled to a known area of high exposure and confirmed cases, and a male in his 40s with no history of travel or contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19. Both

individuals are recovering at home in isolation. The first LaSalle County case, a female in her teens without a history of travel to an affected area and no connection to a known case of COVID-19, was announced on March 19. Federal privacy restrictions prohibit the release of any additional information regarding these cases.

Gov. JB Pritzker detailed the state’s efforts to stock up on personal protective equipment and said President Donald Trump was “responsive” to the state’s needs in a phone call March 23, one day after the pair feuded on Twitter. During his daily COVID-19 briefing in Chicago, the governor also announced a new partnership with the manufacturing and biotech industries in the state to produce needed supplies and called for donations of personal protective equipment, or PPE.

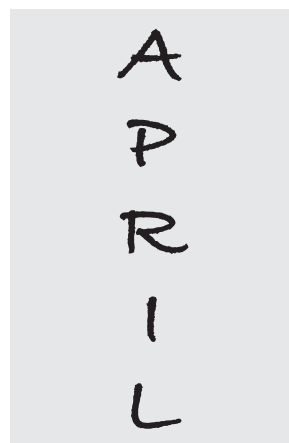
An Otterbach Excavating backhoe began excavation of the former Campbell’s dry cleaning and laundry building on Illinois Avenue in downtown Mendota on March 23. Campbell’s started in Mendota in 1907, but the business has been closed for some time. After the site is cleared, the city of Mendota, which owns the property, will have the soil tested to see if there is any contamination, which could take several months. Once that is resolved, the city will offer the lot for sale.

Local governments are being encouraged to apply for Rebuild Illinois funding to help them invest in public infrastructure projects and economic development programs in their communities, according to State Sen. Chuck Weaver (R-Peoria).

DEATHS—Kevin Corrigan, 67, of Mendota, March 16, 2020; Harriett Ann Baker, 100, of Peoria, formerly of Mendota, March 19,

2020; Donna Jean Linder, 74, of Mendota, March 21, 2020; Elaine S. Bradley, 95, of St. Paul, Minn., formerly of Mendota, March 20, 2020; Judith F. Bentley, 70, of Mendota, March 18, 2020; Paul F. DeArmitt, 79, of Amboy, March 23, 2020.

BIRTHS – Seth Schwemlein and Alyssa King of Mendota, girl, March 16, 2020.



April 1, 2020

Resilience can be described as the ability to roll with the punches even in the midst of great adversity and to find a way to keep functioning despite the stress one is feeling. When Illinois residents were ordered to stay at home temporarily due to the spread of COVID-19 two weeks ago, their way of life was transformed in ways most people never imagined and managing that stress was put to the test. In Mendota, and throughout the state, resiliency has not only been displayed by schools, businesses and individuals, but also by churches. With churches unable to hold in-person services during this time, many local pastors quickly began embracing technology to help church members keep a safe distance while still connecting with each other.

To protect the health and safety of patients, visitors, and employees, OSF HealthCare facilities

in Mendota, Ottawa, and Streator will implement a strict NO VISITOR policy effective March 31, 2020, with a few exceptions.

LaSalle County Health Department (LCDH) has confirmed an additional COVID-19 case in LaSalle County. The case is a male in his 60s. The individual was hospitalized, but is now home in isolation. The county’s first two cases announced in mid-March, a female in her teens and a man in his 40s, have recovered and have been released from isolation. In addition, all close contacts with these two cases who had been placed under a quarantine order by LaSalle County Health Department have also been released.

The Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation issued guidance for lenders and borrowers March 30 regarding debt collection during the COVID-19 pandemic. Evictions are suspended for homes and rental units in Illinois per an executive order by Gov. JB Pritzker, and IDFP is urging all mortgage servicers to defer payments for 90 days for those suffering hardship as a result of the pandemic.

DEATHS – Dorothy W. Wieman, 94, of Mendota, March 28, 2020; Terrence “Terry” Michael Dobberstein, 67, of Berea, Ohio, March 8, 2020; Mildred B. Ulmer, 94, of Mendota, March 24, 2020; Luis S. Gonzalez, 58, of Mendota, March 25, 2020; Joanne P. Ferguson, 76, of Peru, March 24, 2020.

April 8, 2020

Work is continuing with the cleanup process of the former manufactured gas plant at 501 Ninth Ave. in Mendota, on the Black Bros. Co. property. Nicor Gas and Commonwealth Edison are partnering in the cleanup

effort with oversight by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency in the Site Remediation Program. Crews are installing a temporary fabric enclosure over most of the area to be cleaned up. It will be constructed in sections using a large crane, which then will be moved off-site. The temporary enclosure will help minimize dust and potential odors during the majority of the cleanup.

Despite projected increases in corn and soybean plantings this year after a disastrous 2019 planting season, farmers are gripped by uncertainty surrounding spring weather and the economic downturn from the COVID-19 pandemic. The U.S. Department of Agriculture released its annual prospective plantings report last week, which shows how many acres farmers of major crops intend to plant this spring. Illinois farmers are expected to plant 11.3 million acres of corn and 10.5 million acres of soybeans this planting season, according to the report.

LaSalle County Health Department (LCHD) has confirmed two additional COVID-19 cases in LaSalle County. Both cases are males in their 40s. The individuals are in isolation. The total number of cases in LaSalle County are at 13.

DEATHS – Lorraine J. Lang, 94, of Princeton, formerly of Mendota, April 4, 2020; Gerald “Jerry” Cassidy, 66, of Peachtree Corners, Ga., formerly of Mendota, March 30, 2020; Mary Louise Simpson, 77, of Mendota, formerly of Earlville, April 6, 2020; Helen R. Davis, 98, of West Brooklyn, March 31, 2020; William “Will” David Etzbach, 53, of Menomonie, Wis., March 29, 2020.

BIRTHS – Kyle and Emily (Gilmore) Kofoid of Compton, girl, March 19,

2020; Mr. and Mrs. Zidow (Kerber), boy, March 30, 2020.

April 15, 2020

The State of Illinois has developed the Downstate Small Business Stabilization Program for Non-Essential Businesses in wake of the shutdown of non-essential businesses due to the COVID-19 crisis. To demonstrate, businesses must have been operating continuously with the same ownership since January 1, 2017 (at a minimum) and provide documentation on the financial health of the business in 2017, 2018, 2019 and currently. This documentation will be available to the public as part of the application process and is subject to FOIA. Benefiting businesses should have solid commitments to remain open or reopen, and retain or re-employ permanent jobs.

When Illinois schools closed their doors last month due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in some ways Mendota High School was fortunate. Being a one-on-one school, all MHS students are routinely issued Chromebook computers at the beginning of the school year and they have become accustomed to doing at least some class assignments online. One thing no one planned for, however, was a statewide “stay-at-home” order and the indefinite closing of all schools due to a deadly virus outbreak. Over the past four weeks, school administrators, teachers, students and parents have scrambled to keep providing education through remote learning and to offer some semblance of a routine.

The warming spring weather means an onslaught of activity in farm fields across Illinois. This means a lot more farm vehicular traffic on Illinois’ roadways

over the next few weeks. While the state's stay-at-home mandate has reduced vehicular traffic overall, it doesn't change the fact that spring planting season is one of the most dangerous times for farmers – both on the roads and in the fields.

DEATHS – Kenneth G. Kurth, 84, of Mendota, April 10, 2020; Kimberly Kay Opsal, 61, of Oglesby, April 9, 2020; Carol M. Kerchner, 89, of Mendota, April 9, 2020; Henry Walter Antosiak, 79, of Sublette, April 13, 2020; Ralph L. Weekly, 62, of Mendota, April 7, 2020.

April 22, 2020

A fresh blanket of early spring snow blanketed the ground around Lake Mendota on April 17 as a sign reminded that there is no fishing allowed at the lake until further notice. By late

afternoon, the snow was just a memory.

The Social Security Administration announced that Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients will receive automatic Economic Impact Payments directly from the Treasury Department. Treasury anticipates these automatic payments no later than early May. SSI recipients with no qualifying children do not need to take any action in order to receive their \$1,200 economic impact payment. The payments will be automatic.

In the week ending April 11, another 141,049 Illinoisans filed initial unemployment claims, bringing the total number during the latest four weeks of the novel coronavirus pandemic to more than 634,000 in the state.

State lawmakers put mental health on center

stage last week during a virtual town hall in which medical professionals offered advice to Illinoisans struggling with the mental and emotional pressures of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A farmer took advantage of a day filled with sunshine to work the ground in preparation for planting near Mendota on April 19.

DEATHS – Irene Clayton, 86, formerly of Compton, April 16, 2020; Paul William Fitzgerald, 77, of Mendota, April 15, 2020; Georgia Magdalene Mathesius, 75, of Mendota, April 15, 2020; Ronald D. King, 73, of Amboy, April 14, 2020; Philip C. Yenerich, 77, of Sahuarita, Ariz., formerly of Mendota, March 29, 2020; Harry D. Conkey, 84, of Mendota, March 26, 2020.

BIRTHS – Dustin and Amanda (Paul) Bieser of

Pontiac, boy, April 6, 2020; Robert Lucas III and Sarah Corpus, boy, April 14, 2020; Mr. and Mrs. Matthew Sondgeroth (Kaitlynn Wujek) of Mendota, girl, April 19, 2020.

April 29, 2020

Mendota Area Christian Food Pantry executive director Tracy Cooper wants everyone to know they are still providing food and household items to area residents. There are some changes in how food is distributed, however. For everyone's safety, clients no longer come inside the building. Instead, all distributions are done outside and they are all prepackaged.

With the school doors being shut since mid-March, children have been scrambling to come up with ways to keep themselves occupied. They will have to continue

to search into the summer after a decision about a summer-time favorite of many children was made at the April 23 regular meeting of the Mendota City Council held via teleconference. Mayor David Boelk announced that due to the current health situation, the Mendota swimming pool will not be open this summer.

Gov. JB Pritzker announced April 23 he is extending Illinois' stay-at-home order through May 30 with certain modifications taking effect May 1, including opening up state parks, expanding essential businesses and requiring masks in public.

Sara Escatel of Mendota, director of Adult Education at Illinois Valley Community College, put her hand to her mouth in shock when she realized the speaker at the podium was actually talking

about Escatel herself. Upon receiving the Administrator of the Year Award, Escatel said, with tears in her eyes, "This is a surprise. Thank you so much." The statewide award was one of several given during the 40th annual Illinois Adult and Continuing Educators Association conference in March.

DEATHS – Edward R. Donovan, 82, of Mendota, April 23, 2020; Conchita Bahena, 81, of Mendota, April 22, 2020.

BIRTHS – Mr. and Mrs. Travis Barkman (Gabrielle Bradford) of Mendota, girl, April 24, 2020; Mr. and Mrs. Brent Kaufman (Mikal Gahan) of Mendota, girl, April 24, 2020.



“ We are so grateful to be a part of this community! Thank you for your support. ”



FIRST STATE INSURANCE



Mendota • 815-539-5651

Earlville • 815-246-8261

Paw Paw • 815-627-8552

Left to Right: Tyler Full, Jackie Near, Mike Wasmer, Mary Ann Baughan, Brandon Pezanoski

M A Y

May 6, 2020

Mendota High School will not have their originally scheduled May 16 graduation ceremony in keeping with the state's current restriction on large gatherings. While considering safe alternatives such as a virtual graduation ceremony, MHS asked this year's seniors their opinion. Although some schools have opted for a virtual graduation, Aughenbaugh said MHS will go along with the seniors' preference and postpone their graduation ceremony

until summer when they hope an in-person gathering can take place.

Parishioners of Zion United Methodist Church drove through the church parking lot as Pastor Kim and his family greeted them from the sidewalk on May 3. Churches all across Illinois have not been allowed to hold their regular Sunday services due to the world health crisis. The latest stay-at-home order that went into effect May 1 in Illinois has been amended to allow for small church services – limiting gatherings to 10 or fewer people and requiring social distancing.

The Mendota City Council held a meeting via teleconference on April 30. Mayor David Boelk spoke about the decision to not open the swimming pool this summer. Because of the current health situation

and groups of people not allowed to assemble together, the lifeguards that would be employed at the swimming pool cannot take the necessary steps to be certified, and thus without lifeguards on duty, the pool cannot open.

OSF HealthCare is taking pro-active measures to ensure the health and safety of patients, visitors, vendors, and Mission Partners (employees). Beginning Friday, May 1, OSF HealthCare facilities in Mendota, Ottawa, and Streator requires anyone entering to wear a mask.

Attorneys for a northern Illinois church said Monday that they have appealed a federal judge's ruling that upheld Gov. JB Pritzker's stay-at-home order as it applies to worship services.

DEATHS – Margaret Louise Lair, 93, of Mendota, April 29, 2020; Sharon

A. Hesik, 75, of Sublette, April 30, 2020; Joel Francis Schroeder, 35, of Melbourne, Fla., formerly of Mendota, April 29, 2020; John James Larsen, 75, of Flossmoor, formerly of Mendota, April 28, 2020; Norma Leah McPherron, 84, of Algonquin, May 2, 2020.

May 13, 2020

Northbrook Middle School will hold its eighth grade graduation ceremony on Thursday, May 28. The ceremony will not be the same as previous years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but Northbrook Principal Paula Daley said the school has worked very hard to make this a memorable celebration for students, parents and the community. Cars will be lined up and timed as they proceed in front of Northbrook and

each student's name will be announced on the speaker system as they drive through the circle. The car will pull in the driveway where students will receive their certificate and any awards they won. Eighth grade teachers will be on the sidewalk to safely congratulate and support the students.

An historic Sublette area home was destroyed by fire under suspicious circumstances on May 4. The home, located on Todd Road just west of U.S. 52, was owned by Thomas Ray and was one of the most historic homes in Sublette Township. The rural Sublette property was the homestead of Prescott Bartlett, who came to Sublette in 1855 from Conway, Mass.

Gov. JB Pritzker unveiled a plan last week for the gradual reopening of the state's economy on a

region-by-region basis, but he suggested it could take several months or even a year before the state fully reopens.

DEATHS – Kenneth Leon Alshouse, 77, a life-long resident of Clarion Township, May 10, 2020; Carol Elizabeth Carnahan Vehrs, 80, of Visalia, Calif., formerly of Compton, May 9, 2020; Doris Rose Billhorn, 86, of Chicago, a longtime resident of LaMotte, May 7, 2020; Ricky Wayne Wlodarchak, 62, of rural Mendota, May 8, 2020.

May 20, 2020

The Mendota High School Class of 2020 graduation ceremony has been rescheduled for Saturday, July 18 in the school gym. The date was approved during the May 18 Board of Education meeting. Superintendent Jeff Prusator

“We cannot thank our customers enough for their continued support through the difficult times of 2020. We look forward to serving you in 2021 and for a future filled with hope and promise!”



Two Mendota locations

2701 12th St.

1503 13th Ave.

Locally owned and operated by Paul and Mary Breznay.



said the senior class was surveyed regarding the type of graduation ceremony they preferred and almost unanimously, they wanted a live ceremony rather than a virtual one. After looking at the calendar and the timeline for when the state hopes to safely begin allowing group gatherings, July 18 was chosen with a time yet to be determined. Prusator said he hopes they can have at least 50 people in the gym at a time for the ceremony, and hopefully more.

Heavy thunderstorms pounded the Mendota area over a two-day period, producing nearly five inches of rain. Flooding and wind damage that took down trees and damaged some structures was reported in Sublette, Paw Paw and Amboy. After a two-day respite, the soggy conditions returned as another three and a half inches of rain drenched

the area on May 17.

A Mendota man was charged with multiple traffic offenses after his erratic driving ultimately led to him crashing his vehicle into a house in the 500 block of 19th Street on May 14. Patrick A. Porter, 43, of 1210 Indiana Ave., was charged with two counts of (failure to report) duty upon damaging unattended vehicle or other property, improper lane usage and reckless driving.

Gov. JB Pritzker last week announced new resources to help the hundreds of thousands of people unemployed in Illinois, unveiling an online portal that will offer job training and connect job seekers with prospective employers.

DEATHS – Tiffany A. Trumbauer, 30, of Dalzell, May 7, 2020; Andrew Lee Beamon, Sr., 62, of Triumph, May 11, 2020.

May 27, 2020

The area at Restland Memorial Gardens in Mendota was empty during the time the annual Memorial Day ceremony would be taking place on May 25. Due to the current restrictions in place because of the pandemic, Mendota VFW Post 4079, Mendota American Legion Post 540 and their Auxiliaries were not able to conduct the Memorial Day Service this year. The flags were still flown in Restland Cemetery, Lutheran Cemetery and Holy Cross Cemetery as in years past. And we all were able to take a moment and reflect on the men and women who have served this nation, and the many who willingly gave their lives to protect us all.

A city of Mendota tradition for more than 70 years will not be the same this year, according to a

statement by Mayor David Boelk during a Mendota City Council meeting held via teleconference on May 21. Mayor Boelk said that although the Mendota Area Chamber of Commerce is holding off until July to make a final decision, this year's Mendota Sweet Corn Festival "will not take place as we know it."

The language of the graduated income tax ballot measure is finalized after the House joined the Senate in approving it May 22. Voters will be asked to vote yes to approve it or no to oppose. A majority of those voting in the Nov. 3 general election or three-fifths of those voting on the question will be needed for the measure to become enshrined in Illinois' Constitution.

COVID-19 has affected several industries around the country including the



Northbrook Middle School graduate Camdyn Becket accepted her diploma from Dr. Kristen School, superintendent, during the eighth-grade commencement ceremony on May 28.

farm industry, and federal organizations such as the United States Department of Agriculture are working to initiate programs to support farmers and small businesses in need of financial assistance.

DEATHS – Dean Lewis, 84, of Peru, May 19, 2020; James R. Stephenitch, 81, of Parker, Colo., formerly of Mendota, May 5, 2020; Doris E. Swanson, 99, of Sterling, May 19, 2020.

We have been here for you in 2020 and look forward to brighter days ahead in 2021!



**800 Washington St.
815-539-7459**

Mayor -
David Boelk
City Clerk -
Emily McConville
Treasurer -
Jeff Simonton
Aldermen -
Jim Fitzpatrick
John Hessenberger
John Holland
Leo Hochstatter
Kyle Kim
Jay Miller
Mark Peasley
Vicki Johnson



J
U
N
E

June 3, 2020

Mayor David Boelk announced the lifting of the state of emergency in Mendota due to the pandemic crisis at the June 1 meeting of the Mendota City Council. Also, the council voted to adopt an ordinance changing the starting time of regular city council meetings from 6:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., effective June 15, 2020.

The pandemic the world is going through has forced

everyone to adapt and change. Administrators at Northbrook Middle School refused to let the trying times we're experiencing prevent them from recognizing the eighth-grade students as they put together a plan to honor them with an improvised commencement ceremony held on May 28 at Northbrook School. Students remained in their family vehicles and then proceeded into the front driveway of the school after their names were read over a loud speaker. The vehicles then stopped just past the front doors to the school where they were presented with their diplomas by Superintendent Dr. Kristen School and school board president Sean Pappas, who were tucked safely under a tent to keep them dry from a steady rain.

The Mendota Police

Department has been investigating approximately 20 vehicle burglaries, a stolen vehicle, and criminal damage to a vehicle over the past couple months in several different neighborhoods. The Mendota Police Department has identified three juveniles that were responsible for these crimes and as of June 1.

Illinois advanced to the "Recovery" phase of Gov. JB Pritzker's plan to incrementally reopen the state's economy on May 29 after almost 70 days of residents living under a stay-at-home restriction.

DEATHS – Brad M. Phalen, 68, of Mendota, formerly of Troy Grove, May 25, 2020; Dean Lubbs, 74, of Mendota, May 26, 2020; Daniel R. Truckenbrod, 79, of Compton, May 26, 2020; Marilyn Ruth Machado, 88, of Pleasanton, Calif.,

formerly of Mendota, May 2, 2020; Edward Cledis Nelson, 67, of Compton, May 30, 2020; Arlene Grace (Yenerich) LeFevre, 96, of Mendota, May 23, 2020; Doris E. Swanson, 99, of Sterling, May 19, 2020; William "Bill" P. Horyn, 74, of Channahon, formerly of Compton, May 27, 2020.

June 10, 2020

What can music teach us? For Lori Schrock, who recently retired from Mendota High School after 26 years as choir director, music was not only a way to enable students to share their talent but it also offered lessons on resilience and how to persevere through life's challenges. In the last few months of school this year, those life lessons would become more important than ever. Schrock had made many plans for her final few

months as choir director at MHS. Then in mid-March, schools were required to shift to remote learning due to COVID-19 and all those plans fell to the wayside. Despite all the cancellations and other disruptions for schools caused by the pandemic, Schrock was able to end her tenure at MHS with one special surprise – being named Teacher of the Year by the Regional Office of Education (ROE).

While new unemployment claims remained historically high in the final week of May, the surge of new claims since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic appears to be starting to slow as a number of businesses begin to reopen after two months of forced closure.

Summer schools can open with safety guidelines in place and state-run COVID-19 testing sites

are now open to everyone. The state made the latest two announcements as it encouraged anyone who has recently attended a mass protest to get tested for novel coronavirus disease.

DEATHS – James Fay Overley, 82, of Rockford, formerly of Mendota, May 26, 2020; Mark A. Elston, 66, of Mendota, June 3, 2020; Angela M. Happ, 72, of Sterling, June 5, 2020; Shirley Ann Nowlin, 80, of Princeton, formerly of Mendota, June 4, 2020; Barbara Druen Goken, 81, of DeKalb, formerly of Mendota, June 4, 2020; Herbert R.W. Bialas, 86, of West Brooklyn, June 5, 2020; Jan "Skip" Joseph Thompson, 75, of Dixon, June 1, 2020.

BIRTHS – Mr. and Mrs. Ian Ruppert (Amanda Rediger) of Princeton, girl, May 20, 2020.

“Continue to persevere and keep faith and hope alive!”

 **State Farm**®



Kurt Bruno, Agent

**1103 Main Street
Mendota, IL 61342
Bus: 815-539-3878
kurt.bruno.gtoz@statefarm.com**

**State Farm
Insurance Companies**

Home offices: Bloomington, Illinois

*“Like a good neighbor,
State Farm is there”®*



June 17, 2020

The Mendota Township High School Board of Education announced on June 16 that it had approved a five-year contract extension with Principal Denise Aughenbaugh. As part of the contract, when current MHS superintendent Jeff Prusator retires at the conclusion of the 2022-23 school year, Aughenbaugh will take over that position. She will continue to serve as high school principal through the 2022-23 school year and assume her new role as superintendent on July 1, 2023.

Republic Services, the garbage collector for the city of Mendota, has announced it will decrease its service from four days a week to three days a week effective Monday, June 22. The new service days will be Monday, Tuesday and Thursday.

Two large-scale projects

totaling \$1,242,048 were approved by the Mendota High School Board of Education during its June 15 meeting. Superintendent Jeff Prusator said the projects will include roof replacement and the school's back parking lot.

An 84-year-old LaMoille man was killed in a two-vehicle accident at the intersection of U.S. 34 and Route 92 in LaMoille on June 14. Rex Gott died at the scene of the accident, which occurred at approximately 9:18 a.m.

DEATHS – Ramona J. Noble, 86, of Mendota, June 6, 2020; Rex E. Gott, 84, of LaMoille, June 14, 2020.

June 24, 2020

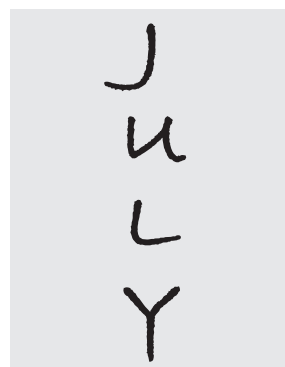
Restaurants across the state are set to open for indoor dining June 26 among other additions to allowable activities under the state's Restore Illinois plan. The

state released new guidance for reopening businesses on June 22. Restaurants must arrange their seating facilities so that tables are 6 feet apart, and parties larger than 10 people will not be allowed, per state guidelines.

Gov. JB Pritzker announced last week he will extend a moratorium on evictions in the state until July 31.

A geyser of water shot high into the air after a water main was ruptured at the construction site of the Illinois Avenue project in Mendota on June 19. Work on the beautification project is happening at a rapid pace and is expected to continue for well over a month or more.

DEATHS – Gerald "Pete" Knowlton, 75, of Mendota, June 17, 2020; E. Raymond Rebholz, 75, of Mendota, June 18, 2020; Stan Erwin, 90, of Mendota, June 19, 2020.



July 1, 2020

The State of Illinois has released basic requirements for the opening of schools in August, but a myriad of details surrounding how the new school year will be handled has been left to each individual district. Those decisions will not be easy. Reporting at the June 25 Mendota Elementary District 289 Board of Education meeting, via Zoom and in-person, Superintendent Dr. Kristen School said the

district has been working to prepare for the opening of school. They have also formed a Transition Committee, which includes teacher representatives from each grade level, administrators and parents.

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity announced this week that it will soon start releasing funds from two grant programs aimed at helping small businesses that have suffered losses due to the COVID-19 pandemic and civil unrest that occurred during recent protests over racial injustice.

Illinois released new guidelines for schools, colleges and universities to return to in-person learning in the fall, but leaders warned those plans could change if health metrics related to the COVID-19 pandemic stop improving. Students and

teachers will be required to wear face coverings if they are medically able.

DEATHS – Anna Mae Bonnell Willavize, 91, of Camdenton, Mo., formerly of Sublette, June 23, 2020; Frank "Dale" Epps, 92, of Texas, formerly of Mendota, June 25, 2020; Piper Marie Cahill, infant, of Mendota, June 18, 2020.

July 8, 2020

The Mendota Area Chamber of Commerce has been hosting the Annual Sweet Corn Festival for more than 70 years. Not a single person could have predicted the unparalleled situation in which we find ourselves in. Identical to every other year, the safety and well-being of every festival-goer is at the top of the Chamber's list. In this ever-changing time, the MACC Board of Directors

“With gratitude for your support through a challenging year!”



FINANCIAL + plus
CREDIT UNION

**Mendota | Peru | Ottawa
Morris | Diamond**
Membership open to the community.

www.financialplus.org



ESI EXCESS SHARE
INSURANCE

has made the choice to still hold certain events of the Sweet Corn Festival as scheduled, including the Queen Pageant, the Mini-Royalty Pageant and the 50/50 drawing.

Mendota will celebrate our nation's birthday with a spectacular fireworks display and music at Lake Mendota Park on the evening of Saturday, July 11. The show is expected to begin at 9:30 p.m.

Exciting things are on the horizon for Starved Rock Wood Products. The Mendota company, which has locations at 1605 Division St. and on Washington Street in the former RR Donnelly building, is planning on adding even more to its operation. Peter Limberger, owner/investor, and Keith Miller, chief executive officer, have announced that SRWP will expand its facilities and add more jobs in the coming years.

Peter Limberger, owner/investor in Starved Rock Wood Products in Mendota, is possibly looking to invest even more in Mendota. Through Tangled Roots Brewing Company, Limberger is in contact with the city to possibly establish a nice restaurant/brewpub into the downtown area.

DEATHS – Jimmy Cleary, 37, of Mendota, June 25, 2020; Charlene Fay Needs Doan, 66, of Mendota, June 29, 2020; Alan Paul Portzen, 76, of Dalzell, June 27, 2020; Michael Lee Arjes, 68, of Earlville, June 27, 2020; Staci Jessica Sessler “Staci J.,” 44, of Mendota, June 29, 2020; Michael Grzetic, 61, of West Brooklyn, June 24, 2020; Viola Wilhelmina Maria (Immel) Strout, 102, of Dimmick Township, June 27, 2020.

BIRTHS – Mr. and Mrs. James (Toby) Setchell (Karrie Knaff) of Mendota, girl, June 18, 2020.

July 15, 2020

At the end of March when Illinois was just starting to see an increase in COVID-19 cases, New York City hospitals were already in crisis, overwhelmed with COVID-19 patients. Nurses and doctors at those hospitals were becoming sick as well, which created staffing shortages and caused New



Escatel

York City hospitals to begin asking for medical personnel from across the country to come and help. That's when Jennifer Escatel, a registered nurse from Mendota, decided to answer the call. Escatel had been getting e-mails requesting the help of ICU (intensive care) nurses willing to go to New York City, so she decided to get more information. A graduate of Mendota High School and the IVCC nursing program, she had been trained as an ICU nurse at St. Margaret's Hospital in Spring Valley before going into healthcare management. After talking with her family about the need for nurses in New York, she received their blessing to go and signed an eight-week contract. Five days later on April 5, Escatel found herself on a plane to New York.

Mendota High School is excited to announce the graduation ceremony plans for the Class of 2020. The Class of 2020 will graduate in one ceremony as a class outside in the Mendota Trojan Athletic Stadium. The ceremony is Saturday, July 18 at 7 p.m.

DEATHS – Charlene Rose Stamberger, 81, of LaMoille, July 11, 2020; James “Jim” George Daul, 60, of LaSalle, July 11, 2020; Darlene Alberta Johnson, 90, of Mendota, July 3, 2020.

July 22, 2020



Mendota High School seniors tossed their caps into the air after graduating on July 18.

It was two months later than originally planned, but the Class of 2020 has graduated from Mendota High School. The 118 seniors – who were apart for 124 days – gathered together one last time and were presented their diplomas in an outdoor ceremony on July 18 at the MHS athletic field.

The approval of the Fiscal Year 2021 budgets was among the items handled by the Mendota City Council at its July 20 regular meeting. Alderman John Holland reported the projected revenue in the General Fund at \$5,904,768 and estimated expenditures at \$6,011,002 for a deficit of \$106,234. Last year, the General Fund was estimated at a deficit of \$41,913.

DEATHS – Mary Catherine Wujek, 90, of rural Mendota, July 17, 2020; Kenneth “Kenny” E. Sondgeroth, 82, of Mendota, July 18, 2020; Nancy J. Michel, 77, of Murrieta, Calif., July 6, 2020; Betty Jane H. Wilhelm, 95, of Mendota, July 16, 2020.

July 29, 2020

On July 22, the District 280 Board of Education approved a plan for Mendota High School students to return to the classroom for the fall semester. But when MHS students begin classes on Aug. 14, it will not be school as usual. Superintendent Jeff Prusator

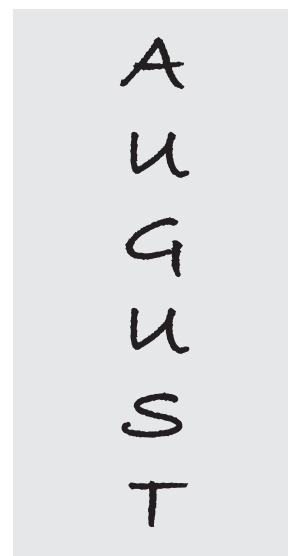
emphasized that part of the reason MHS was able to create a plan for in-person learning was due to the newer age of the building and a lower enrollment, which allows for social distancing. Prusator explained that the maximum capacity at MHS is 750 students and the current enrollment is only 518. Students will attend school Monday through Friday, but the school day will be held in a block schedule.

Selecting the queen to reign over Mendota's 73rd Annual Sweet Corn Festival will not be an easy task. There are 11 beautiful young ladies in this year's pageant. The pageant will be held Friday, Aug. 7 at 8 p.m.

The LaSalle County Health Department is alerting residents that as of Friday, July 24, the County-Level COVID-19 Risk Metrics have been moved to orange. Orange status indicates there are warning signs of increased COVID-19 risk in the county.

DEATHS – Marjorie (Kessel) Sibigroth, 91, of Ohio, July 23, 2020; Theresa Marie Schmitto, 66, of Mendota, July 27, 2020; Rosemary “Rosie” Simpson, 64, of Rochelle, formerly of Mendota, July 25, 2020; Walter M. Delaney, 64, of Peru, July 15, 2020.

BIRTHS – Joshua Nowlin and Jessica Phillips of Mendota, boy, July 24, 2020.



Aug. 5, 2020

Positive cases of COVID-19 are on the rise in LaSalle County and Mendota. Because of that, Mendota Mayor David Boelk issued the following statement: “As of today, Aug. 3, the City of Mendota has experienced a five-fold increase in the number of COVID 19 cases in just over three weeks. We have 106 positive cases out of 1,063 tests. That is a positivity rate of almost 10%. Now is the time that I call on everyone to do their part and stay home if possible, wear a mask and socially distance if you cannot. I am urging you as the Mayor, as a colleague, as a neighbor and as a father to take this seriously. We are in this together and you have an active role in the outcome.”

Due to the current rise in positive COVID-19 cases in Mendota, this year's Sweet Corn Festival Queen Pageant has been postponed. It will hopefully be held at a later date.

COVID-19 cases are on the rise throughout the state and Gov. JB Pritzker is hoping a new \$5 million state advertising campaign will help slow the spread of the novel coronavirus by encouraging use of face coverings.

DEATHS – Kenneth Eugene Swanlund, 83, of LaMoille, July 29, 2020; Frank Daniel Hesik, 77, of Sublette, July 26, 2020; Ronald R. Vaessen, 80, of Sublette, July 31, 2020; Eva Jean Cunefare, 86, of Mendota, Aug. 2, 2020; Donald Wayne Truckenbrod, 89, of Mendota, July 21, 2020; Evangelina De La Torre, 88, of LaSalle, July 30, 2020; Charlotte Corcoran, 91, of Savoy, formerly of Earlville, July 28, 2020; Dorothy Ferry, 83, of Caledonia, formerly of Mendota, July 25, 2020; Ann (Van Etten) James, 94, of Hanover, N.H., formerly of Mendota, July 31, 2020.

Aug. 12, 2020

The Mendota City Council declared a Local State of Emergency and passed ordinances in regard to that state of emergency and the wearing of face coverings at a city council meeting on Aug. 10. This is in response to a five-fold increase in the number of COVID-19 confirmed cases in Mendota within the last four weeks.

A huge limb off of a tree fell in a good spot in a neighborhood near Northbrook School in Mendota on Aug. 10. The limb landed between two houses, causing only minor damage. Trees were toppled and limbs broken off throughout Mendota and the surrounding area as high winds from a derecho (a widespread, long-lived, straight-line wind storm that is associated with a fast-moving group of severe thunderstorms) swept through northern Illinois around 2:45 p.m.

Mendota High School students will get a few more weeks of vacation after the District 280 Board of Education voted to delay the first day of school until Tuesday, Sept. 8. An Aug. 5 special meeting was called due to a recent steep rise in



A huge limb off of a tree fell in a good spot in this neighborhood near Northbrook School in Mendota after high winds from a derecho swept through Aug. 10.

positive COVID-19 tests in Mendota and throughout LaSalle County. Board president Jim Lauer said school officials have been closely monitoring statistics.

Due to concerns about the increase in COVID-19 cases in Mendota, as well as in the county and state, Mendota elementary school

students will begin the school year on Aug. 24 with remote learning. The District 289 Board of Education approved the changes to the transition plan during a special meeting held Aug. 6.

DEATHS – H. Bruce Carter, 98, of Earlville, Aug. 5, 2020; Gifford “Bugs” Fordham Jr., 72, of Sub-

lette, Aug. 6, 2020; Vera M. Godfrey, 92, of Mendota, Aug. 3, 2020; Richard “Dick” L. Shotliff, 98, of Mendota, Aug. 5, 2020; Ashley Jo Buchanan, 39, of LaMoille, Aug. 6, 2020; Marvin Albert Hess, Jr., 72, of Mendota, July 16, 2020; David “Dave” Piller, 75, of Mendota, Aug. 6, 2020; Margaret “Rosalie” Russell, 101, of Mendota, Aug. 7, 2020; David Ralph Larabee, 69, of Peoria, Ariz., July 31, 2020; Eugene “Gene” Angelotti, 68, of Florida, formerly of Mendota, Aug. 2, 2020; Clifford Wendell Aughenbaugh, 94, formerly of Compton, Aug. 5, 2020; Florence M. “Toots” Kuebel, 93, Aug. 9, 2020; Dennis John Jones, 70, of Mendota, Aug. 5, 2020; Roger A. Hamel, 92, of Troy Grove, Aug. 7, 2020; Gilbert “Gib” E. Crane, 93, of Mendota, Aug.

4, 2020; Fay Dean Vaughn, 97, of LaMoille, Aug. 5, 2020; Francis “Frank” Michael Rapp, 77, a resident of the LaSalle Veteran’s Home in LaSalle, Aug. 8, 2020; Richard “Rick” L. Simpson, 57, of LaSalle, Aug. 5, 2020.

Aug. 19, 2020

The Mendota High School District 280 Board of Education met on Aug. 17. Discussions included the status of student registration, a revised school calendar and the preliminary budget for 2021.

The Mendota Gardening Club partnered with the city of Mendota to purchase and plant trees as part of the continuing Illinois Avenue revitalization project.

The state of Illinois will soon begin distributing \$250 million in federal funds to help cities, counties and other units of local government

pay for pandemic-related expenses.

Gov. JB Pritzker last week announced the release of \$46 million in grant funding for small businesses affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, warned of potential further shutdowns if case counts continue to rise and called widespread use of face coverings the key to preventing such action.

DEATHS—Eleanor Ann Beals, 89, of Mendota, Aug. 10, 2020; Mary P. (Robeson) Ferrell, 96, of Mendota, Aug. 14, 2020; Beverly Duitsman Bassing, 93, of Mendota, Aug. 10, 2020; Allen Edward Novak, 77, of Mendota, Aug. 10, 2020; Verna Lydia (Lindenmeyer) Gordon, 95, of Mendota, Aug. 10, 2020; James “Jim” Armstrong, 96, of Mendota, Aug. 16, 2020; Rosalie McLaughlin, 96, of Mendota, Aug. 14, 2020; Dorothy Jean

Harris, 99, of Mendota, Aug. 14, 2020.

Aug. 26, 2020

The swings and the rest of the playground at Lincoln School are quiet on the first day of school for Mendota Elementary School District 289 on Aug. 24. All students began the 2020-21 school year with remote learning.

Illinoisans suffering economic decline due to COVID now have an extra week to apply for emergency rental assistance.

The Illinois Department of Human Services said the state is poised to have one of the top census response rates in the country despite two tumultuous months of changing deadlines as determined by the Trump Administration.

The Mendota Lions Club has announced the Mendota High School students from

Thank you for your business during this difficult year! We look forward to a better 2021!!



Chevrolet • Buick

Schimmer

Route 251 S., Mendota • (815) 539-9343
www.schimmergm.com

CHEVROLET



FIND NEW ROADS™

the 2019-20 school year that were invited to its annual 2020 Honor Banquet. The students are recognized for their outstanding academic achievement. This year's banquet was not held due to the pandemic health crisis.

DEATHS – Bradley “Brad” Bradford, 62, of Mendota, Aug. 19, 2020; David A. Miller, 59, of LaMoille, Aug. 18, 2020; Lauretta A. Iversen, 107, of Paw Paw, Aug. 23, 2020; Robert “Bob” T. Harmon, 84, formerly of Earlville, Aug. 4, 2020.

BIRTHS – Joseph and Elena (Halverson) Foulk of Compton, boy, Aug. 18, 2020; Benjamin Schmidt and Kelsey Funderberg, boy, July 27, 2020.

S E P T E M B E R

Sept. 2, 2020

A Sterling man was arrested and charged with numerous offenses after leading police officers on a chase through Mendota on Aug. 27. Joshua N. Hamrick, 38, was charged with driving while revoked, fleeing and eluding police,

disobeying stop signs, improper lane usage, reckless driving, improper use of fraudulent registration and operation of a motor vehicle while under the influence of a controlled substance. He was also wanted on warrants from Lee County, Whiteside County and Washington County, Oregon.

The Mendota City Council held a special meeting via online/telephone on Aug. 27. The only action item was to adopt an ordinance authorizing a redevelopment agreement with ADM.

Exelon Corporation on Aug. 27 announced plans to close two Illinois nuclear power plants next year in a decision the company claims is independent of legislative energy policy negotiations. The plants are in Byron and Morris.

Workers from A-Team Recyclers of Shorewood filled up boxes and bins with various electronic devices during the free LaSalle County electronics recycling drop-off at the Governmental Complex in Ottawa on Aug. 29.

DEATHS – Betty M. Fitzgerald, 93, of Mendota, Aug. 28, 2020; Shirlean Langdon Hackman, 67, of Marco Island, Fla., May 23, 2020; Betty J. Sears, 74, of Mendota, Aug. 25, 2020; Raymond F. Schultz, Jr., 79, of LaMoille, Aug. 28, 2020; Betty J. Strouss Smith, 90, of Mendota, Aug. 29, 2020; Mary Margaret Frey, 82, formerly of Mendota, Aug. 27, 2020; Mary Jane Hilt, 83, of DeKalb, Aug. 20, 2020.

BIRTHS – Mr. and Mrs. Chris Kittilson (Ashlee Marruquin) of Mendota, boy, Aug. 26, 2020.

Sept. 9, 2020

Mendota High School students gathered at their lockers in preparation to head off to their first class during the opening day of school on Sept. 8. It is the



Mendota High School students gathered at their lockers in preparation to head off to their first class during the opening day of school on Sept. 8, delayed because of COVID-19.

first in-person learning day at MHS since all schools in Illinois were shut down on March 17 after the initial outbreak of COVID-19.

Remote learning will continue through Friday, Sept. 18 in Mendota Elementary District 289 schools. “After discussions with the health department, our administrative team, the board and the transition committee, we have made the decision to continue with remote learning through Friday, Sept. 18, with an anticipated return to full-day in-person learning on Monday, Sept. 21,” stated Superintendent Dr. Kristen School.

Gov. JB Pritzker promoted the 2020 U.S. Census last week as the Sept. 30 deadline for states to get their residents counted approaches.

Illinois is one of the last states to apply and be approved for a federal program providing an additional \$300 in unemployment assistance per week to qualifying residents.

DEATHS – Barbara A. Sondgeroth, 74, of Mendota, Sept. 5, 2020; Loren K. Rich, 77, of Mendota, Aug. 31, 2020; Lois Arlene (Brandstatter) Etheridge, 87, of Mendota, Sept. 6, 2020.

Sept. 16, 2020

After several days of cool, damp weather, the skies brightened up and the temperatures rose, which created spectacular fishing conditions for people at Lake Mendota on Sept. 13. The actual days of summer are running out as the first day of Autumn is Tuesday, Sept. 22.

Problems with unemployment in Illinois continue to mount nearly six months into the COVID-19 pandemic, and state lawmakers are demanding a seat at the table to find solutions.

If you are a believer in the Farmers’ Almanac winter predictions, you may not want to hear its prediction for Illinois. The publication, founded in 1818, is calling it the “Winter of the Great Divide,” forecasting cold and snow in the north, drought in the west, and wild weather in the south. Illinois is included in the cold and snowy section of the country.

Hispanic Heritage Month, Sept. 15 to Oct. 15, recognizes and celebrates the contributions Americans tracing their roots to Spain, Mexico, Central America, South American and the

Spanish-speaking nations of the Caribbean have made to American society and culture.

DEATHS – Mary Frances Bierwirth, 89, of Mendota, Sept. 7, 2020; Rodolfo Escatel, 75, of Mendota, Sept. 7, 2020; Gary Bauer, 74, of Oregon, Sept. 12, 2020; Ruth B. Locke, 86, of Mendota, Sept. 7, 2020.

BIRTHS – Mr. and Mrs. Wilmer Cuz (Jasmine Diaz) of Mendota, boy, Sept. 11, 2020.

Sept. 23, 2020

After many months of planning and preparation for a safe return to classes at Mendota High School, teachers and administrators agreed that the first week of school went well. One week in, Superintendent Jeff Prusator had many positives to report. “The good news is everyone was very pleased with the first week of school. There were some bumps but we expected that,” Prusator said. “Nobody ever tried to open schools during a pandemic before so this is all new.”

The LaSalle County Health Department is announcing a temporary drive-through COVID-19 testing site sponsored by the State of Illinois, which will be held at the Mendota Civic Center.

Shelby Weide was named the new President and Chief Executive Officer of the Mendota Area Chamber of Commerce on Sept. 9. She takes over the position from Kate Fox, who was the President/CEO since Dec. 1, 2018. Fox resigned to take a job out of state.

Illinois plans to continue withholding federal payroll taxes on behalf of its 62,000 employees despite a program President Trump launched in August that allows workers to defer paying those taxes through the end of the year.

DEATHS – Joseph Raymond “Joe” Sester, 81, of

Mendota, Sept. 15, 2020; John T. Hartt, 76, of Mendota, Sept. 17, 2020; Clifford W. Schlesinger, 93, of Paw Paw, Sept. 16, 2020; Janet P. Schmidt, 82, of Mendota, Sept. 17, 2020; Richard I. Garland, 90, of Sublette, Sept. 14, 2020; Ronald Lee Rebholz, 63, of Buchanan, Tenn., formerly of Mendota, Sept. 20, 2020.

BIRTHS – Mr. and Mrs. Jose Cruz Orozco (Valentina Leyva) of Mendota, Sept. 19, 2020.

Sept. 30, 2020

Harvest is in full swing in the Mendota area as farmers are in the fields picking corn and soybeans. Corn and soybean production is up from 2019, according to the Crop Production report issued recently by USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). Soybean production is up 21% from last year, forecast at 4.31 billion bushels. Soybean yields are expected to average a record high 51.9 bushels per acre, down 1.4 bushels from last month’s forecast but up 4.5 bushels from 2019.

Expiration dates on Illinois driver’s licenses and state ID cards will be extended another three months, said Secretary of State Jesse White. White announced expirations for licenses and IDs will be extended until Feb. 1, 2021, so the cards will remain valid throughout that span. The extension applies to those who have October, November, December and January expiration dates.

Several state-regulated utilities have voluntarily extended a moratorium on disconnections into next year after requests from the Illinois Commerce Commission.

In a matter of hours, Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker’s administration changed its

guidance on hayrides amid concerns over COVID-19, but haunted houses are still prohibited. Hayrides/haunted can operate at 50% capacity, with parties spaced at least six feet apart and wearing masks

DEATHS – Martha J. (Mitchell) Sloan, 74, of Mendota, Sept. 20, 2020; Emmett Wayne Cantlin, 71, of rural Earlville, Sept. 25, 2020; Nancy F. Momeny, 90, of Mazeppa, Minn., formerly of Stewartville, Minn., Sept. 20, 2020; Judith “Judy” A. Metzen, 78, of Montgomery, Sept. 25, 2020; Retired Capt. Earl James Manning (USMC), 84, of Phoenix, Ariz., Sept. 16, 2020; Angelina Anna “Angie” (Mignone) Truckenbrod, 94, of West Brooklyn, Sept. 24, 2020; Lewis Leroy “Sonny” Miller, 86, of Quincy, formerly of Paw Paw, Sept. 26, 2020.



Oct. 7, 2020

The Illinois FFA Degree is the highest honor that the Illinois Association FFA can bestow upon its members and is one of four degrees

that an FFA member can earn during their high school career. This year, Mendota FFA Chapter Vice President Alison Schlesinger earned her State FFA Degree, which was presented during the 92nd Illinois FFA State Convention. The convention was held virtually this year throughout June and July due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

More than 2 million Illinois voters have requested vote-by-mail ballots and more than 26,000 such ballots have already been returned.

Illinois Valley PADS (IV PADS) has started season 29 in its care of the local homeless in LaSalle, Bureau and Putnam counties. The PADS shelters in Peru and Ottawa opened their doors on Aug. 15 with extended hours.

DEATHS – Joan E. Norton, 87, of Sugar Grove, Sept. 26, 2020; Kenneth E.

Cradduck, 82, of Steward, Oct. 1, 2020; Gigi L. Greer, 58, of Earlville, Oct. 2, 2020; Richard “Dick” A. Erickson, 86, of Lynnwood, Wash., formerly of Mendota, Sept. 28, 2020; John W. Deaner, 77, of Sierra Vista, Ariz., formerly of Mendota, Sept. 30, 2020.

BIRTHS – Benjamin Schmidt and Kelsey Funderberg of West Brooklyn, boy, July 27, 2020; Olivier Carbajal and Claudia Carbajal, girl, Sept. 14, 2020; Chris and Lindsey Borelli of Troy Grove, boy, Sept. 21, 2020; Mr. and Mrs. Blake DeBrock (Brianna Blumhorst) of Princeton, girl, Sept. 26, 2020.

Oct. 14, 2020

The city of Mendota leaf vacuum program will tentatively begin on Monday, Oct. 19. The pickup schedule has changed for this year

and will be done by ward.

The Mendota City Council handled several items of business during a special meeting on Oct. 6, including setting trick-or-treat hours. Mendota will allow trick-or-treating on Saturday, Oct. 31 from 5-7 p.m. The state of Illinois has announced Halloween COVID-19 guidance encouraging social distancing while trick-or-treating.

A report by the National Safety Council is giving Illinois favorable marks on its COVID-19 response, but said the state’s testing program was “lagging.”

Revenues flowing into state coffers from legalized gambling operations plummeted during the fiscal year that ended June 30 as casinos, racetracks and other video gambling venues were forced to close during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Mendota Police Department is conducting a missing person investigation into the whereabouts of Wesley J. Shaver, 33, of Mendota. Shaver was last seen in the Rockford area on Sept. 22 at 11:30 a.m.

DEATHS – Geneva Ann (Schimmer) Ernat, 93, of rural Peru, Oct. 7, 2020; Rocio Contreras, 49, of Mendota, Oct. 9, 2020.

Oct. 21, 2020

Mendota elementary students in grades 2-8 may be switched to an alternate day schedule beginning next month. The new schedule, which was approved by District 289 Board of Education during its Oct. 15 board meeting, would be in effect for the second trimester. Superintendent Dr. Kristen School said parents are being asked this week whether their students will

FIRST STATE BANK

Thank you for SUPPORTING us during these tough times.

We will get through this TOGETHER!

- FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT FSB

firststatebank.biz | 800.362.9623

Member FDIC EQUAL HOUSING LENDER

attend the next trimester in person or remotely. The final decision on scheduling will be determined by the number of students who plan to attend in-person.

The first six weeks of in-person classes at Mendota High School have gone better than expected. Reporting at the Oct. 19 Mendota High School board of education meeting, Superintendent Jeff Prusator said he is very pleased with the start of the 2020-21 school year.

The Mendota City Council awarded several bids and announced the purchase of property at a special telephone/online council meeting on Oct. 15. A series of bid openings were held on Oct. 6 for the South East Mendota Sanitary Sewer Systems Improvements program. Also, the council approved authorization to purchase property at 704 Illinois Ave., the former Meyers Furniture building, in the amount of \$23,000.

Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits for approximately 70 million Americans will increase 1.3 percent in 2021, the Social Security Administration announced.

DEATHS – Agnes A. Ryan, 67, of LaMoille, Oct. 16, 2020; Dennis C. Kuntzi, 69, of Rock Island, Oct. 15, 2020; Gareth Rene Gusse, 72, of Davenport, Iowa, Oct. 16, 2020; Robert J. Godfrey, 92, of Mendota, Oct. 14, 2020; John W. Deaner, 77, of Sierra Vista, Ariz., formerly of Mendota, Sept. 30, 2020.

BIRTHS – Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Milus (Tanya Catalanello) of Mendota, boy, Oct. 14, 2020.

Oct. 28, 2020

The LaSalle County Health Department is alerting residents that as of Friday, Oct. 23, the County-Level COVID-19 Risk

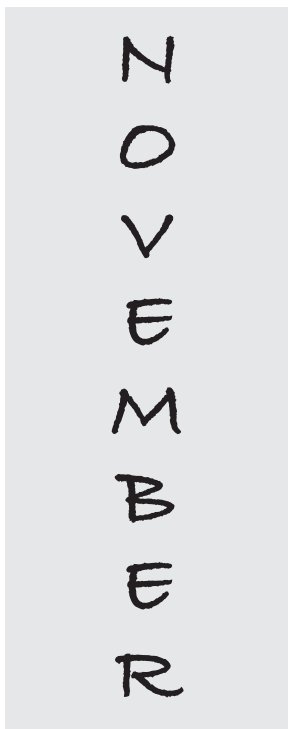
Metrics has been moved back to orange. As a reminder, orange status indicates there are warning signs of increased COVID-19 risk in the county. A warning level means that a county had increases in two or more COVID-19 risk indicators. LaSalle County has seen a concerning rise in the number of cases.

The Mendota Manufactured Gas Plant (MGP) Environmental Cleanup Project is preparing to move into its next phase of work. The site of the project, where a gas plant once stood, is at the corner of Fifth Street and Ninth Avenue, on the Black Bros. Co. property.

Children in costume are invited to “Trick-or-Treat” at Mendota Businesses and Shops on Friday, Oct. 30 at participating businesses located throughout the town. Shop owners will be passing out treats from 3-5 p.m. that day. The Mendota City Council has set the city-wide trick-or treat for Saturday, Oct. 31 from 5-7 p.m.

One of the major questions Illinois voters will answer on Nov. 3 will be on the ballot statewide – whether to amend the state’s constitution to allow for a graduated rate income tax. Strictly speaking, the amendment removes a provision from the Illinois Constitution that requires any income tax to be levied at a flat rate on any level of income – the current rate is 4.95 percent. Passage of the amendment would allow lawmakers to apply different tax rates on varying levels of income.

DEATHS – Sheila K. (Gordon) Duttlinger, 60, of Mendota, Oct. 22, 2020; Tiffany E. Blake, 49, of Sublette, Oct. 18, 2020; Dominican Sister M. Dominic Joerger, OP, 96, of Springfield, Oct. 9, 2020; Louise M. Stremlau, 101, of Normal, formerly of Mendota, Oct. 25, 2020.



Nov. 4, 2020

The Mendota City Council adopted another State of Emergency Declaration at its Nov. 2 meeting in the ongoing battle with the spread of COVID-19. As of Oct. 28, the LaSalle County positivity rate was approximately 6.3 percent, whereas the Mendota rate was at more than 12.2 percent.

Citizens of Mendota cast their ballots during the Nov. 3 general election. A number of local and state issues were on the ballot in addition to the country deciding who will be the President of the United States for the next four years.

The 2020 Mendota Veterans Day program will be held at 11 a.m. Wednesday, Nov. 11 at Veterans Park in downtown Mendota.

All 11 of the state’s mitigation regions will face stricter COVID-19 based restrictions by Nov. 4 due to increasing positivity rates, while opposition grows from some bars, restaurants and other small businesses struggling during the pandemic’s economic downturn.

The private organization that governs high school sports in the state, the IHSA, voted Oct. 28 to begin the basketball season this month — defying the new guidance for winter sports that Gov. J.B. Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Public Health outlined a day earlier.

DEATHS – Betty L. Shaw, 87, of Mendota, Oct. 25, 2020; Dorothy May (Newcomer) Baker, 98, formerly of Mendota, Oct. 30, 2020; Betty Jean Jamison, 90, of Mendota, Oct. 25, 2020; Clara Mae Ansteth, 96, of Amboy, formerly of LaMoille, Oct. 29, 2020; Irene Delores Shaver, 93, of Mendota, Oct. 27, 2020.

BIRTHS – Collin Cromwell and Erika Zimmerlein, boy, Oct. 28, 2020.

Nov. 11, 2020

Todd Martin of Mendota has been elected as the new LaSalle County State’s Attorney. Unofficial totals from the Nov. 3 General Election show Martin edging out incumbent State’s Attorney Karen Donnelly by 1,718 votes out of 50,712 ballots cast. Unlike Martin’s close contest, most other races in LaSalle, Lee and Bureau counties were more one-sided, according to the unofficial tally.

Workers from the city of Mendota and Carriage House Electric balanced a light pole to get it in position for installation at the corner of Illinois Avenue and Jefferson Street.

Gov. JB Pritzker warned that additional social and economic restrictions may need to be imposed statewide in the near future if the surge in new COVID-19 cases continues on its current path.

Backers of a graduated income tax constitutional amendment conceded defeat last week for Gov. JB Pritzker’s marquee policy



Todd Phalen accepted the 2020 Horace D. Hume Outstanding Service Award from Shelby Weide, president/CEO of the Mendota Area Chamber of Commerce.

proposal, which was projected to bring in more than \$3 billion annually to state coffers. Voters rejected the amendment by a 55 percent to 45 percent margin. The deficit was approximately 500,000 votes.

DEATHS – James Burwell Jamison, 89, of Mendota, Nov. 2, 2020; Barbara A. Haub, 84, of Amboy, formerly of West Brooklyn, Nov. 5, 2020; Sherman M. Shaw, 85, of LaMoille, Nov. 5, 2020; Juanita Bernice Koonce, 91, of Mendota, Nov. 7, 2020; Roger A. Chambers, 73, of Mendota, Nov. 6, 2020; Evelyn J. Bonnell, 93, of Dixon, Nov. 8, 2020; Patricia Ann Whitmore, 81, of Mendota, Nov. 8, 2020.

Nov. 18, 2020

Despite the pandemic canceling this year’s Mendota Area Chamber of Commerce Annual Dinner, the Chamber still handed out its annual awards. The recipient of the 2020 Horace D. Hume Outstanding Ser-

vice Award is Todd Phalen.

Every year, the Mendota Area Chamber of Commerce surprises the recipient of the Tom Merwin Gold Star Employee Award during the Chamber’s annual dinner. Nominated by the general public, this award is given to someone who is considered an outstanding employee. With cancellation of the Chamber’s 2020 dinner because of COVID-19, the Chamber still found a way to surprise this year’s winner, Nancy Bogle by presenting the award at her workplace, Stonecroft Village.

Mendota High School students will continue with in-person classes for the second semester. Superintendent Jeff Prusator acknowledged that the past two to three weeks have been difficult due to absences but overall, the first semester has gone well.

Illinois residents are being urged to stay at home as much as possible for at least the next three weeks as the second wave of COVID-19

outbreaks continues to sweep across the state.

DEATHS – Timothy L. “Tim” Pakenham, 64, of Mendota, Nov. 12, 2020; Shirley Ann Klein, 89, a resident of Spring Valley Living Center, formerly of Cherry, Nov. 9, 2020; Steven W. Weidner, 54, of Earlville, Nov. 15, 2020; Betty L. Shaw, 87, of Mendota, Oct. 25, 2020; Angelo L. Martinez, 69, of Woodhaven Lakes Sublette, Nov. 6, 2020; Richard Allan Chapman, 88, of Mendota, Nov. 13, 2020; Laurine (Amfahr) Harms, 92, of Elcho, Wis., formerly of Mendota, Nov. 12, 2020.

BIRTHS – Mr. and Mrs. Joel McComber (Hollis Spanier) of Tiskilwa, boy, Nov. 3, 2020; Mark Fillenwarth and Christina McGee, boy, Nov. 6, 2020; Terry Foster and Jayme Reed of LaMoille, boy, Nov. 9, 2020; Mr. and Mrs. Brandon King (Karisa Dinges) of LaSalle, girl, Nov. 9, 2020; Mr. and Mrs. William Stuepfert (Ashley Greathouse) of Granville, boy, Nov. 9, 2020.

Nov. 25, 2020

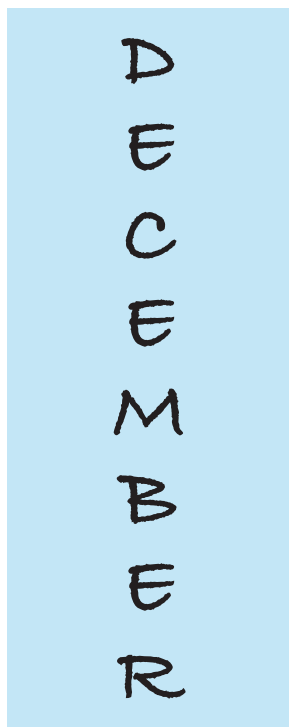
Mendota Elementary School District 289 will remain closed for full in-person learning until Monday, Jan. 18, 2021. This “adaptive pause” is designed to prevent further spread of COVID-19 and reduce the risk for district students, staff and community.

The Mendota Elementary School District 289 Board of Education has announced the approval of a contract for the district’s next superintendent, K. Bradley Cox. He will succeed current superintendent Dr. Kristen School upon her retirement on June 30, 2021. The three-year contract was approved on Nov. 20 at a special board meeting.

Gov. JB Pritzker announced last week that the entire state would enter Tier

3 of his mitigation plan, which began Nov. 20, as he noted the best way for Illinoisans to avoid another stay-at-home order was by staying home. Pritzker, at his daily briefing, said the Tier 3 mitigations stop short of a stay-at-home order, although staying home was the best option for limiting the virus’ spread.

DEATHS – Brad Lee Prentice, 59, of Minot, N.D., formerly of Mendota, Nov. 15, 2020; Therese Marie Blee, 88, of Aurora, formerly of Paw Paw and Holiday, Fla., Nov. 19, 2020; Phyllis V. Thompson, 92, of Mendota, formerly of Belt, Mont., Nov. 19, 2020.



Dec. 2, 2020

Miriam Hoffman of Earlville took one disappointing outcome and turned it into a life-altering victory. The Southern Illinois Carbondale junior will now help oversee the National FFA Organization, which spans nearly 800,000 students across the country. She was chosen from among 40 candidates as the new Eastern Region vice president to the national committee.

Members of the state Senate Veterans Affairs Committee had pointed questions for officials with the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs about the agency’s response to an outbreak at the LaSalle Veterans’ Home that has resulted in at least 28 resident deaths from COVID-19-related complications.

The first shipment of COVID-19 vaccines to the state of Illinois may be less than one-quarter of what officials had originally been told to expect.

The Mendota City Council held a special telephonic meeting on Nov. 25 to discuss the tax levy and pensions. In reporting on the 2021 annual tax levy, alderman John Holland said there is no major change from last year.

DEATHS – Mary Patricia (Fitzgerald) Westfall, 82, of Lemont, formerly of Mendota and Bolingbrook, Nov. 26, 2020; Edith (Longcor) Mitchell, 100, of Byron, formerly of Mendota, Nov. 28, 2020; Mary Kathryn Sondgeroth, 87, of Mendota, Nov. 26, 2020; Karen Lynn Coffman, 70, of Peru, Nov. 22, 2020; Marjorie J. Nance, 87, of Mendota, Nov. 27, 2020; Petra Perez, 66, of Mendota, Nov. 24, 2020; Gerald T. “Jerry” Shannon, 93, of Mendota, Nov. 23, 2020.

Dec. 9, 2020

Health officials gave an update on the state’s COVID-19 vaccine plan Dec. 4 with potential federal approval anticipated as early as this week. Gov. JB Pritzker said the state still expects to get 109,000 doses to be initially distributed in the 50 counties with the highest per capita death rates, but it will be several months until there is an adequate number of vaccine doses available for the general population. City of Mendota employ-

ee Nick Stremlau installed a security camera at the corner of Jefferson Street and Illinois Avenue. Three new security cameras were put up in the downtown area and two were added to Strouss Park.

Republican lawmakers on Nov. 30 renewed calls for a House Veterans’ Affairs Committee hearing into the cause of a coronavirus outbreak at the state-run veterans’ home in LaSalle where about 20 percent of the residents have died of COVID-19 related illnesses. The Illinois House Republicans’ news conference comes about a week after the state Senate Veterans Affairs Committee held a hearing into the outbreak that began on Nov. 1, and resulted in the deaths of at least 28 residents. There are 100 residents currently at the home.

State energy laws passed in 2011 and 2013 allowed Commonwealth Edison to earn huge profits while the utility giant failed to fulfill its promise of consumer savings and benefits, according to a new report issued by an independent public interest group.

DEATHS – Cynthia Sue Burkart, 61, of Princeton, Nov. 30, 2020; Carol A. Abramson, 81, of Prophetstown, Nov. 29, 2020; Marjorie A. Beck, 82, of Mendota, Dec. 5, 2020; Joan E. Schubert, 86, of Naperville, Dec. 2, 2020; Arlene C. Schmidt, 87, of Mendota, Dec. 6, 2020; Martin R. Weber, 68, of Sycamore, Nov. 14, 2020.

Dec. 16, 2020

Mendota High School has announced the winners of the 2020-21 DAR and SAR Good Citizens program, sponsored by the Illini Chapter of NSDAR. Twila Martinson was chosen to receive the DAR award and Perris Stachlewitz was

the recipient of the SAR award. These awards are open to all seniors. The recipients are nominated by fellow senior classmates and the faculty at MHS. Criteria for the DAR and SAR awards include dependability, cooperation, leadership and patriotism.

A coronavirus outbreak at the veterans’ home in LaSalle that has killed a quarter of the residents over the span of a few weeks has prompted the chairman of a state House committee to open an investigation into the deaths.

The first COVID-19 vaccinations have arrived in Illinois as virus metrics continued to trend in a direction that indicates the spread of the virus is slowing.

As the state government attempts to close a multi-billion-dollar budget hole, Democratic House Speaker Michael Madigan has said he is prepared to vote for an increase to the state’s flat income tax rate should the governor request it.

DEATHS – Shirley Ann (McConville) Smith, 83, of Madison, Wis., Dec. 6, 2020; Dorothy H. Elston, 95, of Mendota, Dec. 10, 2020; Elroy W. Swope, 90, of Compton, Dec. 8, 2020; Melvin F. Leffelman, 92, of Dixon, formerly of Amboy, Dec. 9, 2020; June D. (Klatt) Novak, 90, of Earlville, Dec. 10, 2020; Beverly Gentner, 88, Dec. 9, 2020; Norma L. Buster, 95, a resident of Heritage Health, Mendota, Dec. 10, 2020; Frances Grace “Pat” (Hoffman) Hrovat, 95, of Mendota, Dec. 11, 2020.

BIRTHS – Mr. and Mrs. Cole Faber (Katy Henkel) of LaMoille, boy, Nov. 25, 2020.

Dec. 23, 2020

The Mendota City Council adopted its tax levy and renewed insurance premiums during a special meeting held telephonically

on Dec. 16. Alderman John Holland, serving as mayor pro-tem, presented the Fiscal Year 2020 annual audit, and said the city received an unmodified opinion by the auditing firm, which means it was a good report. The FY20 audit has been placed on file. The council adopted the Fiscal Year 2021 annual tax levy. The total levy request is \$1,974,761, which is a 2.3 percent increase from FY20. However, mainly because of TIF VI sunset, the assessed valuation increased and therefore the city’s overall tax rate will decrease. So, homeowners should see a decrease in the city’s portion of their tax bill next year.

Gov. JB Pritzker announced Dec. 18 that more than 17,000 doses of the first coronavirus vaccine have been administered to Illinois frontline health care workers outside of Chicago, up from 3,500 doses the day before. Pritzker said Illinois hospitals could begin to receive shipments of a second COVID-19 vaccine, developed by the drug company Moderna, as early as this week.

Infection control efforts at the LaSalle Veterans’ Home have curbed the spread of the coronavirus since a deadly outbreak began at the facility last month, according to officials who testified last week before a House committee investigating the matter.

DEATHS – Karon Lee (Devine) Baker, 70, of Mendota, formerly of Winfield, Dec. 15, 2020; James Culver Cocanour, 75, of Mendota, Dec. 17, 2020; Dennis Arthur Matz, 75, of Mendota, Dec. 14, 2020; Ralph M. Terry Jr., 63, of Mendota, Dec. 17, 2020; Lorene Verda Eich, 87, of Mendota, Dec. 18, 2020; Carola (Peterson) Englehart, 87, of Hamilton, Ohio, formerly of Paw Paw, Dec. 13, 2020.