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LOCAL NEWS... LOCAL VIEWS

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2020

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## KNOW IT TODAY



### Voting in Ogle County

Ogle County Clerk discusses  
Vote by Mail procedures,  
deadlines as well as voter  
registration and early vot-  
ing. **See page 8**



### Home on the lanes

Dan Wyka has made many  
memories since becoming  
the owner of T-Byrds.  
**See sports**

### WEATHER

FRIDAY	SATURDAY
HIGH LOW	HIGH LOW
64 38	64 41
SUNDAY	MONDAY
HIGH LOW	HIGH LOW
67 42	71 47

### INSIDE

State News.....2  
Local News.....3, 4, 5, 7, 8  
Opinion.....6  
County News.....10

## Special edition highlights importance of community newspaper

**ROCHELLE** — If you are reading this special Rochelle News-Leader edition, you may be wondering why you received it in your mailbox today.

Well, you aren't alone, because every household in the Rochelle zip code (61068) is receiving a mailed copy of the "Hub City's" hometown newspaper, as a thank you to our residents for staying strong and vigilant during pandemic and also to remind citizens



of the important role newspapers continue to play in small town communities.

We have compiled several interesting feature stories in this edition to give all readers a glimpse at what we deliver on a regular basis, and we have also given many local businesses a great low-cost opportunity to share what is going on with their businesses as we all try to keep moving forward during these unprecedented times.

Please take some time to read through this special edition and appreciate the timely

news and features we produce every week at the News-Leader with our print and digital editions. If you don't already subscribe, we encourage you to give us a try by taking advantage of one of the big discount subscription deals highlighted in this edition that will fit any budget for both non-subscribers and current customers.

Thank you to all of our subscribers and advertisers who help support our efforts and allow us to continue informing, educating and entertaining Rochelle area residents - now more than ever we all need each other.

## Drive-thru for FFA

Pork chop dinner to celebrate  
what would-be high school's  
Homecoming weekend

**BY RUSSELL HODGES**  
STAFF WRITER/SPORTS EDITOR

**ROCHELLE** — COVID-19 has forced Rochelle Township High School to go without many of its usual Homecoming festivities. One tradition that won't change, however, is the Rochelle FFA Chapter serving pork chops, and the chapter recently announced it will be hosting a drive-thru pork chop dinner for the community on Friday, Sept. 25 from 5-6:30 p.m.

While the Rochelle FFA Chapter normally serves pork chops during Friday night football games, students are changing course this year due to the ongoing pandemic. The dinner includes a pork chop, applesauce, chips and a cookie for \$10. Pre-orders are due Monday, Sept. 21, and orders can be placed online at <https://rochelle-ffa-drive-thru-porkchop-sale.cheddarup.com>.

"We thought it would be a great way to generate some community involvement and celebrate what would have been our Homecoming weekend," Rochelle FFA Advisor Donna Page said. "We wanted to raise morale and do something nice for our community...

It's been great to see the FFA members get excited about hosting an event that will feel close to normal."

The money raised from the drive-thru dinner will go toward the Rochelle FFA Chapter, which uses the money to fund supplies and chapter activities such as conferences. The money also goes toward providing goods and services including first-aid kits for local farmers. Those who place their orders online can add extra pork-chops sandwiches to their meals for \$5 each.

"We're looking forward to seeing a great turnout," Page said. "We highly encourage using the link to order online so we can know how many chops we need to provide for Friday night."



(FILE PHOTO)

**Rochelle senior Mary  
Coglianese promotes  
pork chops.**



2021

*From The Heart*  
Calendar

## Funds support non-profits

**BY JENNIFER SIMMONS**  
MANAGING EDITOR

**ROCHELLE** — Rochelle Rotary Club's 'From the Heart' event will celebrate its 14th year in 2021 and its anchor fundraiser is now underway.

The Rochelle Rotary Daily Cash Calendars are now available for purchase. For those unfamiliar with the club's annual fundraiser, the Daily Cash Calendar is a way to give back to eight local non-profit organizations that benefit from the club's From the Heart fundraiser as well as a chance to win a cash prize every day for a year.

Every calendar purchase gives a chance at winning daily cash prizes — a total of \$18,250 for the year. Prizes range from \$25 daily, \$50 each Sunday to \$250 and higher on holidays. Those whose names are drawn for New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Fourth of July and Christmas are awarded \$1,000.

The eight area non-profit organizations who receive large contributions

**"These non-profits  
need our help...  
With future funding  
uncertain, it's  
especially important  
to buy these calendars  
and support our  
community through  
these services."**

**Greg Folmar**

from the sales of the calendars — and the From the Heart event held in February — are the Hub City Senior Center, Focus House, CASA, Shining Star, YMCA Child Care Center, Rochelle Christian Food Pantry, Rochelle Area Community Foundation, and HOPE of Ogle County.

**See CASH page 5**

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# STATE NEWS

## Agency leaders urged to prepare for cuts

Without federal action, services could see budget reductions, Pritzker says

By JERRY NOWICKI

CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS/JNOWICKI@CAPITOLNEWSILLINOIS.COM

**SPRINGFIELD** — State agency heads are preparing to cut 5 percent of their budgets in the current fiscal year and 10 percent next fiscal year should the federal government fail to provide aid to state and local governments, Gov. JB Pritzker said Tuesday.

The governor made the announcement at a Chicago restaurant during a news conference called to announce another \$245 million in grants aimed at giving a boost to businesses hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic and civil unrest.

That includes \$220 million in Business Interruption Grants for businesses suffering losses due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The funding comes from the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security, or CARES, Act.

That was a more than \$2 trillion stimulus package passed by Congress and signed into law in March. Partisan disputes in Washington, D.C., however, have stalled follow-up legislation, which several U.S. governors, including Pritzker, have said needs to focus on aid to states.

“Let me repeat that every state in the nation has suffered, every municipality in the nation has suffered from the fiscal effects of COVID-19,” Pritzker said. “However, until Republicans in Washington decide otherwise, middle class, working class and poor families across our state and across the nation will likely suffer from cuts to public safety, education, human services and environmental safety, and the potential layoffs will make the economic recession worse.”

He called the potential for cuts a “nightmare scenario” for entities such as schools, hospitals, universities, law enforcement, health care workers and firefighters. “This is about support for local and state governments across the nation,” he said. “This is about support for our nation’s economic recovery that only the federal government can provide, just like it did for the corporate sector already.”

While the state has already distributed more than \$49 million in federal BIG funding, applications for the next \$220 million will open Thursday. Application information for the second round of funds can be found on the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity’s website at [Illinois.gov/dceo](http://Illinois.gov/dceo).

Grants will range from \$5,000 to \$150,000 to each business based on revenue losses incurred due to the ongoing pandemic and the size of the business.

Businesses and nonprofit entities with \$20 million or less in revenue last year will be eligible, with a focus on



“Let me repeat that every state in the nation has suffered, every municipality in the nation has suffered from the fiscal effects of COVID-19...However, until Republicans in Washington decide otherwise, middle class, working class and poor families across our state and across the nation will likely suffer from cuts...”

Gov. JB Pritzker

businesses located downstate or in disproportionately impacted areas, according to the governor’s office. At least \$100 million will go to businesses in downstate and rural areas of Illinois.

Of the funding, \$60 million will go to “heavily distressed industries” such as movie theatres, performing arts venues, concert venues, indoor recreation, amusement parks, event spaces located at banquet halls and hotels, and more.

Disproportionately Impacted Areas will see \$70 million set aside. Those are defined by zip codes identified by the General Assembly for communities seeing the most economic distress due to the pandemic. Another \$5 million will be set aside for businesses facing livestock production disruptions.

Another \$25 million made available through the Rebuild Illinois capital infrastructure plan will go toward helping businesses in communities damaged during civil unrest following the killing of George Floyd by a police officer in Minneapolis in May. Projects may range in size from \$1,000 to \$200,000, based on the extent of the damages.

Applications will be available “in the coming weeks,” according to the governor’s office.

### Other COVID-19 news

Pritzker also signed he is not willing to make a “political decision” to allow high school football to resume.

“This isn’t a political decision. I know that there are people who would like me simply to make a political decision to allow people to endanger themselves,” he

said, noting that surrounding states allowing football to be played have higher positivity rates than Illinois.

“If they’ve decided to endanger children and families in those states by allowing certain contact sports to take place, that’s their decision. That’s not something that’s good for the families, the children of Illinois,” he added.

The news conference came as the state reported another 1,466 new confirmed cases of the virus among 39,031 test results reported over the previous 24 hours. The Illinois Department of Public Health also reported another 20 deaths in people from their 60s to their 90s.

The rolling seven-day statewide positivity rate remained at 3.6 percent for the second straight Tuesday.

At the end of Monday, 1,584 people in Illinois were reported hospitalized with COVID-19, including 373 in intensive care units and 144 on ventilators. Those were all slightly above pandemic lows and significant increases from the previous day.

The state’s two regions that have seen increased mitigations due to high positivity rates both saw their numbers drop, according to the latest data from IDPH. Region 7, which includes Will and Kankakee counties, has a 6.9 percent rate as of Sept. 12. That’s still slightly above the 6.5 percent needed to remove mitigations such as closure of indoor dining, but it’s a decrease of three-tenths of a percent from the day prior.

In the Metro East region, known as Region 4 in the reopening plan, the rate decreased two-tenths of a percentage point to 9.2 percent as of Sept. 12. That region was still far away from mitigations being lifted despite the progress.

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# LOCAL NEWS

## The 'Hub City' is growing

**ROCHELLE** — From street, curb and gutter work to other projects including Well 12, the airport taxiway and the Rochelle Railroad expansion, the City of Rochelle has been improving infrastructure throughout the 'Hub City' over the past year.

### City of Rochelle road work

Reconstruction of North Sixth Street from the Fourth Avenue intersection to the Fifth Avenue intersection along with the alleys east of North Sixth Street between Lincoln Avenue and Fifth Avenue, and the Municipal Parking Lot No. 4 south of the Flagg Township Museum began in early June.

The project involves upgrades to the water main system, removal and replacement of curb and gutter, pavement and base course, sidewalks, storm sewer, streetlights, and other related improvements. The project will require periodic partial and full closures to vehicle and pedestrian traffic within the project area. Private drives will be closed for much of the project and alternate access and parking will be required in other locations adjacent to businesses fronting these streets. The project is expected to be complete by mid-October.

The Dement Road project is nearly complete as striping work is expected to be completed next week. The road has been closed from First Avenue to past the overpass since mid-summer for bridge approach and pavement repairs on the south side of the road.

South Main Street construction continues and is expected to be complete by mid-October. Construction is taking place on South Main Street from Steam Plant to Steward Road. The project is the beginning of a year's-long process to overhaul South Main Street to include resurfacing, curb, gutter, street lights and a multi-use path.

Phase I is now underway and Phase II is slated to begin in 2021 from Steam Plant Road to Veteran's Parkway, completing the multi-use path from Steward Road to Veteran's Parkway. This majority of this nearly \$3 million project is being funded by the State of Illinois.



(PHOTO BY JENNIFER SIMMONS)

**Work on Steward Road just off South Main Street has been underway and includes street widening and sidewalks as shown above on Tuesday morning.**

Other street projects expected to be complete soon include Mulford Road and West Second Avenue. Mulford Road is expected to be complete by the end of September once striping work and guardrail work is complete. West Second Avenue is expected to be complete and open by the end of September.

### Rochelle Railroad expansion

The City of Rochelle recently completed its three-part, \$7 million Rochelle Railroad expansion project.

The project consisted of building the new Rochelle Trans Loading Center, a four-track wide bridge with an adjacent detention pond, and expanding the old track to create new unit change interchange tracks. Construction on the project began in August 2018 and was expected to take nine months, but due to an excess amount of rain last spring and an early winter, the project took about two years.

The railroad system serves many industrial businesses and was in need of expansion since it had reached its capacity. The railroad is one of the main driving forces behind economic development in the community and the city hopes the new expansion will attract even more businesses to Rochelle.

"The City of Rochelle railroad is an economic development engine," economic development director Jason Anderson said. "It drives industrial development because of the many benefits of having easy access to two class one railroads. And what the city of Rochelle has uniquely done is being able to create its own railroad and from that, attract industry that creates jobs, tax base, and customers for RMU."

When train cars are loaded at the Rochelle Trans Loading Center, they then connect to either the Union Pacific Railroad or the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad to reach their final destination. Having access to two Class 1 railroads doubles the amount of business the city is able to serve.

This also helps provide leverage to businesses who use the railroad over the railroad companies because it forces the railroads to place bids rather than choosing

a set price. In addition to the railroads and loading center, Rochelle also has the resources businesses are looking for when choosing a new location.

"When it comes to economic development, a community needs to have every utility that is needed for a business," Anderson said. "You may have an abundance of water and that is great, but do you have the sewer treatment or enough power to support it. A community needs to have it all and Rochelle has all of the infrastructure in place to attract new businesses and industries."

In addition to the Trans Loading Center, the city built a new four-track-wide bridge and extended the old railroad by laying three new tracks, each 3,300 linear feet in length. This extension provides the Rochelle Railroad with additional space that is currently used for storage, but will eventually be utilized by new businesses.

These tracks were built with the end goal of extending the railroad to Elva Road in Steward and eventually looping it back around. When building the bridge and unit change interchange track, a 3,300-by-160-foot detention pond also had to be dug to prevent flooding. New drainage tiles also had to be placed under the farmers field next to the pond.

"Whenever we do a big industrial project like this, we always look at the impact it will have on the environment," Anderson said. "When laying the tiles under the farmers field, they actually made the land more rich and valuable, so it was a win-win situation for both of us."

The City of Rochelle is currently working on more economic development projects around town and more details will be released in the coming future.

### Rochelle Airport renovation

The Rochelle Municipal Airport recently completed a \$3.2 million three-phase runway and taxiway renovation project.

See CITY page 4



**The City of Rochelle recently completed its three-part, \$7 million Rochelle Railroad expansion project. The project consisted of building the new Rochelle Trans Loading Center and a four-track wide bridge.**

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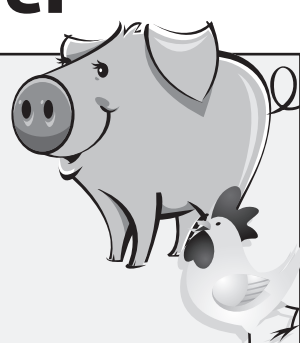
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# LOCAL NEWS



(FILE PHOTO)

City Manager Jeff Fiegenschuh, RMU Superintendent Adam Lanning and fellow RMU staff members cut the ribbon on the recently completed \$3 million dollar investment into the city's drinking water system. Pictured left to right (front row) are Fiegenschuh, Lanning, Jay Mullholand, Kyle Bridgeman, Dwayne Rangel and Joe Kinney.

## CITY: Projects keep 'Hub City' hopping

From page 3

The first phase of the project involved tearing up the old asphalt ramp leading to the taxiway and runway and rebuilding it out of much stronger and longer lasting concrete. The second phase of the project was tearing up the old runway that was beginning to fall apart to resurface, repaint and implement new groove drainage technology for the new runway.

The final portion of the project involved relocating the old taxiway from the beginning of the runway toward the middle to act like a speed bump for planes entering the runway. This entire project ensures the safety of the pilots as well as updates the quality of the runway itself.

"The main reason was to maintain the infrastructure of the airport because those areas were beginning to wear out and the surfaces were beginning to break down," airport manager Mike Hudetz said. "We also

implemented new drainage grooving technology instead of the previously used, friction course, so the runway drains quicker and last longer."

All the lights along the runway were also rewired with a special lightning suppression system since they had been hit by lightning twice in the last two years. The total cost of the project was \$3.2 million, but 90 percent was paid for by the federal government, 5 percent through the state and the city paid the remaining 5 percent.

The airport has been working towards getting the runway redone since 2016 and work finally began last fall. The ramp was completed last fall, the taxiways in April and the runway took the duration of April, May, June and was finished in mid-July.

"The runway had to be closed down on and off during the entire process, but we are back to normal now and it was very worth it in the long run,"

Hudetz said. "It really gives the whole airport a new makeover and this is one of the most active airports in the area for general, commercial and sport aviation. We have skydiving, pilot training and even the restaurant. It is a really good airport for people to enjoy aviation by observation or to actually get involved in it."

The airport is already planning its second-phase ramp project of turning its other asphalt ramp into concrete, as well as rebuilding certain airplane hangars that were originally built in 1963.

### Well 12

Rochelle city officials, Rochelle Municipal Utilities staff and both local radio and television news outlets gathered outside Rochelle Well 12 at the end of August to celebrate the completion of a \$3 million investment into city's drinking water system.

Well 12 was completed and went live in 2017, but in 2018, it began showing radium levels



Improvements at Rochelle's Municipal Airport included grooving work on the runway (at right).



higher than the required amount set by the Illinois EPA. The recent project was completed to bring the radium levels down to the required amount as well as remove any iron in the water and update much of the technology used.

"With the new requirements, we decided to use the same Hydrous Manganese Oxide (HMO) technology used at the well by the high school," said RMU Superintendent Adam Lanning. "We are using all state of the art monitoring and automation so the water quality is continually analyzed. All monitors are also connected to a SCADA system that will automatically shut off the water and call out to a worker if an alarm goes off."

Along with the new automation, an employee will come out once a day to manually check the water quality. Work began on the project in the fall of 2019 and was recently completed this summer of 2020.

The cost of the plant itself was about \$1.9 million, extending the sanitary sewer line from town

was about \$650,000, rehabilitating the well was around \$100,000 and design and construction management was around \$400,000 for a total of approximately \$3 million. The work was contracted through Larson and Larson Builders Inc. and was funded through an Illinois revolving loan program through the IEPA at a 1.38 percent interest rate over the period of 20 years.

"I think that this will be a great addition to our water system and will be able to offer lots of high quality water for the next many years," said Lanning.

Along with increasing the quality of the

city's drinking water and technology at the well, this investment will also help the city attract new businesses to the area. Without this well and water access, businesses would not be able to set up in this area of town.

"Now with all of this water and sewer capacity, we are moving south with our industrial development," said Jason Anderson, Rochelle economic development director. "There is about 1,000 acres here that this will serve immediately and without this you don't develop. This has a huge impact on the growth of our industrial base because the infrastructure is here."



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The City of Rochelle radium removal plant is located on Hayes Road and was constructed over a two-year period.



# LOCAL NEWS

## CASH: Calendar money benefits non-profits

From page 1

“These non-profits need our help. The money raised with these calendars is given with no strings attached and allows the organizations to use it where they need it most,” Rochelle Rotary Club President Greg Folmar said. “With future funding uncertain, it’s especially important to buy these calendars and support our community through these services.”

The cash calendars cost \$20 each and along with the chance to win the daily cash prize there are more than \$100 in savings in the form of coupons from participating sponsors as well.

“The main goal of this program is to help the non-profit organizations that partner with From the Heart,” explained David Eckhardt, From the Heart coordinator and Rotary Club member. “Where else can you spend \$20 and help out eight organizations?”

Calendars are available for purchase from any Rochelle Rotary Club member, Holcomb Bank in Rochelle, Stillman Bank, First State Bank, HOPE Chest and through the Rochelle Rotary From The Heart website at <http://fromtheheartrochelle.org>.

Plans are currently underway for the 2021 From the Heart event.

### About the non-profit organizations

**Hub City Senior Center:** The Hub City Senior Center offers a variety of activities and programs to meet the diverse interests of local seniors age 60 and up. The center offers a variety of activities including pool, card games, Bingo and games. The center also offers a monthly birthday party, a monthly movie day and important services for seniors including regular visits from a local podiatrist, eyecare technicians and hearing specialists. Daily lunches are also provided. Several groups meet at the center as well.

**Focus House:** The mission of Focus House is to provide a safe, nurturing and structured environment for youth. Through the commitment of Focus House to children, youth will be given the opportunity to develop self worth, responsibility and respect — enabling them to successfully return to their families and communities. The primary goal of Focus House is to return each child to his/her family, avoiding further — and more severe — court-mandated actions.

**CASA:** The Ogle County CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) program recruits, screens and trains volunteers from the community to become a voice for an abused and/or neglected child involved in the local juvenile court system. After completion of our training class, volunteers are sworn in by the Judge as a Guardian ad Litem. As a direct party to the

“The main goal of this program is to help the non-profit organizations that partner with From the Heart. Where else can you spend \$20 and help out eight organizations?”

Dave Eckhardt

case, the volunteer has court authority to look into the child’s situation, submit findings and recommendations in the form of a court report and ensure that the best interests of the child are served. Ogle County volunteers are appointed to one case at a time. Free from the burden of a heavy case load and bound only to protect the child’s best interest, volunteers often bring information to the judge that otherwise might not be heard. CASA seeks to shorten the time a child is in foster care and ensures that child’s prompt placement into a safe, nurturing, permanent home.

**Shining Star Children’s Advocacy Center:** Since 2002, Shining Star Children’s Advocacy Center has been providing services for child abuse victims and their families. The mission of Shining Star is to transform victims of child abuse into survivors. The vision is to reduce the trauma of child abuse through identification, offender accountability, advocacy, counseling, and education on the path to eliminating child abuse. The purpose of the program is to provide forensic interviewing, case management and follow-through, and coordinated services to child victims of sexual and physical abuse and their non-offending family members in Lee and Ogle Counties as well as minimizing the trauma experienced by child victims by providing a comfortable and child-friendly environment for the interview and investigations of child abuse crimes.

**YMCA Child Care Center:** The YMCA Child Care Center, formerly the Rochelle Child Care Center, has been dedicated to the enrichment of children since 1965. The YMCA Child Care Center offers accredited day care, pre-school, and school age programs in a safe, clean, and nurturing environment staffed with loving, caring, and qualified professionals.

**Rochelle Christian Food Pantry:** The Rochelle Christian Food Pantry serves families in the Rochelle Township High School district who are needing temporary help obtaining food. The pantry receives food and cash donations and is a volunteer driven ministry. Food is distributed on Tuesdays and Fridays.

**Rochelle Area Community Foundation:** The Rochelle Area Community Foundation offers an opportunity for individuals, families, and businesses to leave a legacy for future generations that will continue to grow in perpetuity and grant money each year to improve the Rochelle Area. The Community Foundation is a public, charitable organization designed to attract

gifts that will be shared with Rochelle area non-profit organizations for the benefit of the entire community.

**HOPE of Ogle County:** HOPE of Ogle County’s mission is to advocate on behalf of domestic violence victims and their children in a welcoming environment. Our caring professionals provide safety planning, support, shelter, and referrals while empowering survivors to build a safe and peaceful future. Those experiencing domestic abuse can contact HOPE of Ogle County 7 days a week/24 hours a day. This service is available in most languages. Domestic violence advocates are there to listen, offer support and provide information on ways to increase personal safety. HOPE provides temporary emergency shelter for adults and their minor children who are experiencing domestic abuse. Safety, shelter, support and goal related services are provided to help individuals make their own choices about the next steps to take. Transitional housing is also available by application to families who access our emergency shelter. Adult and child counseling services are provided by appointment. Weekly support groups are available for adults and their children. HOPE staff also provides public education to local schools, colleges, service organizations, and businesses. Court advocates are also available to assist those experiencing domestic violence, in obtaining court Orders of Protection in Ogle County.

### COUPONS INSIDE CASH CALENDAR

The Rack Bar & Grill	Merlin’s Flowers & The Other Side Boutique
Super Lube	Anderson Plumbing & Heating, Inc.
The Cypress House	Alfano’s Pizzeria and Italian Restaurant
Baked with Tiff	The Pit Stop Bar & Grille
Moose Knuckle	L.O.T.S.
Steve’s Complete	Hope Chest
Automotive	Colonial Flowers & Gifts Shoppe
Flight Deck Bar & Grill	
Hidden Timber Gardens	
Iron Skillet/Hub City Express	*More than \$100 in savings

## Daily Specials

**DINE-IN, CARRYOUT OR DELIVERY**

<b>Sunday</b> <b>50¢ Boneless Wings</b> <b>75¢ Jumbo Bone-In Wings</b>	<b>Monday</b> <b>25% off any pizza of your choice*</b>
<b>Tuesday</b> <b>Buy one pizza &amp; get the same size cheese pizza for FREE**</b>	<b>Wednesday</b> <b>One 16" Thin Crust 1-Topping Pizza only \$10.99**</b>
<b>Thursday</b> <b>Buy One Pasta Dinner, Get a 2nd for 1/2 Price*</b>	<b>Friday</b> <b>Free dough nuggets with any order over \$20</b>
	<b>Saturday</b> <b>Free 12" cheese pizza with purchase of any 18" pizza.</b>

\*Limit 2 per customer per day some restrictions apply. Daily Specials not valid with other coupons/offers/catering

\*\* Additional Toppings Extra

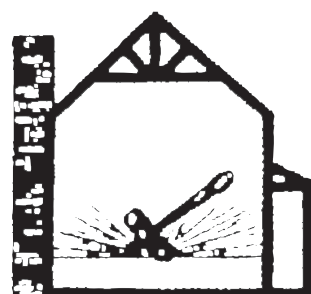
**ROCHELLE | 1233 N. CARON RD.**  
**815.562.5000**  
**ORDER ONLINE @ MYROSATIS.COM/ROCHELLE.COM**

**We are pleased to announce that Bearrows Real Estate & Auction Co. who has been providing complete live and on-line auction services since 1975, will be expanding their services to include a complete Brokerage Service division effective September 1, 2020**

Whether buying or selling, the complete Real Estate Brokerage will include Residential, Commercial and Ag Land. Their location has not changed, they are still at 361 W IL Rt#38, Rochelle IL. Their focus will be to continue the professional service you have known over the past 25 Years since opening the first Bearrows office in downtown Rochelle in 1995. The staff and Agents at Bearrows Real Estate & Auction Co. look forward to providing brokerage services that will be focused on the details and customer service. Owners are John & Dina Bearrows, and John will be the Managing Broker, Debra Hansen will be the administrative assistant.

Local ownership, local management and local agents is how this change will be beneficial to everyone that they work with. Owner John Bearrows states “I am extremely excited and look forward to the times ahead for everyone at Bearrows Real Estate & Auction Co.”

**BEARROWS**  
REAL ESTATE & AUCTION CO.



**361 W. IL Rt. 38 • Rochelle, IL 61068**  
**815-562-5113 • [www.bearrows.com](http://www.bearrows.com)**



# LOCAL VIEWS

## Letter to the Editor

### Don't forget to be counted by the 2020 Census

Dear Editor,

Do you enjoy when roads are redone in your town, when there is a new park with fresh mulch, or when art and band supplies are available at the schools? Do you want to keep this uptake going in your community?



Here's how: the 2020 Census. It takes a quick 15 minutes to change our community. The Census takes place once every 10 years. It is a form that every household needs to fill out. There are only nine simple questions to fill out.

Many people avoid the Census because they believe that their names, addresses, and personal information will be given to the public, but this is not true. The Census is so secure that even the White House does not receive your name. The point of the census is for D.C. to know how our population is spread across the country so they can send proper funding out for the next 10 years.

This funding helps redo our roads and keep our community safe.

We only have until Sept. 30 to get as many Ogle County residents as possible to fill it out. We need you to remind your neighbors, your church congregation and people you work with. Respond or we lose money for a full decade. We have less than 90 percent of our community who have responded. We need to get this number up to 100 percent.

Go to [2020census.gov](https://2020census.gov) to respond.

Sincerely,

**Abby Duke,**  
**OHS Class of 2022**  
**Eric Morrow,**  
**Ogle County States attorney**  
**Laura Cook, Ogle County Clerk and Recorder**  
**Brian VanVickle,**  
**Ogle County Sheriff**  
**John Frinfrock, Ogle County Board Chairman**  
**Ivy Hood, Region 1 Planning council**

## VOICE ON THE STREET

### Question:

*Ogle County Clerk Laura Cook is accepting applications for Vote by Mail ballots for the Nov. 3 General Election and will begin mailing Vote by Mail ballots Sept. 24 for those who request them. Do you plan to vote in person in the fall election or vote by mail? Do you think there will be any election issues across the nation due to more voting mail?*

***"We, in Colorado, vote solely by mail and have done so for years. All the research and studies show little fraudulent votes. It's around the same percentage as in-person voting."***

Richard Myroth

***"In person but early."***

Cathy Horton

***"Of course there will be a lot of issues. It's too easy to cheat and guaranteed lost ballots. Go in person to vote only, people."***

Richard Oleson

***"We choose to vote in person with ID in hand to show that we are a registered voter."***

Ann Andersen

***"We, in Oregon, have been 100 percent vote by mail for many years — safe and no lines. Fraud is not an issue. We have drop boxes too."***

Laurie Heltness Russell

***"Vote by mail. Proud American."***

Kay Chapman

***"Vote by mail is a scam - much like this 'scamdemic'."***

David Reish



## Guest column

# Reality check on five claims used to boost 'Fair Tax' plan

BY ORPHE DIVOUNGUY, ADAM SCHUSTER and BRYCE HILL  
THE CENTER SQUARE

VOTERS can expect to be bombarded by claims about the 'fair tax' until Nov. 3 — but what are the facts? Proponents have made misleading claims in hopes of convincing Illinoisans to do away with the flat tax.

Gov. J.B. Pritzker so far put \$56.5 million of his own money into convincing voters they should scrap Illinois' constitutionally protected flat income tax on Nov. 3. Most of that money will buy ads boosting what have been the progressive tax backers' most popular — and deceptive — spins.

Here are the top claims Illinoisans can expect to hear, and the realities they should remember.

Claim 1: It is just as difficult to raise taxes under a progressive tax as it is under a flat tax.

Reality: It is easier to raise taxes under a progressive income tax than it is under a flat tax.

A flat tax makes it far harder for politicians to raise taxes. A progressive income tax allows politicians to divide and conquer. They can segment Illinoisans into small income groups and increase taxes on each, one at a time.

They can hold taxes constant for the majority in any given year, while gradually raising taxes on everyone — one group at a time. They can go after retirees. They can tax the same \$1 multiple times. Division allows lawmakers to skirt backlash from voters.

The flat tax encourages political accountability. Many of the politicians who voted for the 2017 tax hike were either forced to retire or voted out of office.

In the 32 states with progressive income taxes, 18 of them subject middle-class families to the highest tax rate. All of them tax retirees.

Claim 2: We can fix inequality with this "fair tax."  
Reality: Income inequality is higher in progressive tax states, and the gap between rich and poor in those states has not been shrinking.

Illinois imposes the nation's third-greatest tax burden on those in the lowest 20 percent of wage earners, or about \$1,800. The progressive tax would save the average person in that group only \$6 — while decreasing their job prospects.

Poverty rates skyrocketed after Connecticut enacted a progressive income tax, and that was while poverty rates were falling in most other states. Connecticut in 1996 was the last state to scrap its flat tax for progressive rates.

Not only is income inequality, measured by the Gini coefficient, higher in states with progressive income taxes, those states haven't been any more effective at combating rising inequality. The difference in income inequality between progressive and non-progressive income tax states remains unchanged when the two are compared over the past decade.

Because Pritzker is unwilling to consider structural reforms to the state's cost drivers, the lowest income Illinoisans under his tax plan pay the greatest share of their income in state and local taxes — compared to other income groups — and suffer the most from a lagging economy.

Claim 3: A graduated income tax hike won't harm the state's economy.

Reality: The vast body of peer-reviewed academic literature shows tax hikes and progressive income taxes hurt the economy.

There are claims that the \$3.7 billion "fair tax" increase will have no effect on the economy, but there is significant consensus among academic experts that tax hikes do harm the economy. More than that, economists and policy experts are in near-unanimous agreement that the financial chaos created by COVID-19 is exactly the wrong time for a new tax. As former President Barack Obama said, "You don't raise taxes in a recession."

Everyone from Nobel Prize winners such as Edward Prescott to former chairs of the Council of Economic Advisors — including Christina Romer in the Obama Administration, the Director of the Congressional Budget Office Douglas Holtz-Eakin, George W. Bush economic advisors Harvey Rosen and Greg Mankiw, whose textbooks are the most widely used in macroeconomics — agree. They say higher taxes hurt economic growth and that higher marginal tax rates reduce small business employment, the wages of their employees and their growth. New studies are consistently confirming these results.

Even the left-leaning Tax Policy Center admits that in the long-run, "High marginal tax rates can discourage work, saving, investment and innovation, while specific tax preferences can affect the allocation of economic resources." They also state that in the short run, "Tax cuts boost demand by increasing disposable income and by encouraging businesses to hire and invest more. Tax increases do the reverse."

To say that tax hikes don't harm the economy is simply wrong. The governor's \$3.7 billion tax hike will hurt the economy.

There is also a broad consensus that the optimal income tax — i.e. the one that hurts the economy the least — is a flat tax. Even UC Berkeley economist Emmanuel Saez agrees optimal income taxes should be "progressive on average but not on the margin." Illinois' current flat tax accomplishes this goal because of the value of exemptions and deductions for lower-income tax filers.

As if more proof were needed to show that people respond to tax policy, Illinoisans need only look at the

governor himself. Pritzker is currently under federal investigation for removing the toilets from his Gold Coast mansion in order to receive \$331,000 in property tax breaks. The governor also has been widely criticized for utilizing offshore trusts to avoid paying taxes on his multi-billion dollar fortune.

Claim 4: We need this tax to pay for education — or else.

Reality: Despite billions in increased education funding each year, most of these funds have been diverted from classrooms to pay for pensions.

During the past 20 years, state education spending, adjusted for inflation, has increased by \$5.4 billion annually. However, two-thirds of this increase has gone to pensions instead of classrooms. Despite the syphoning of state education funds by pensions, Illinois still spends more per pupil than every Midwestern state except for North Dakota, but yields below average educational outcomes. Bloated district-level administration is a major reason why more dollars are not advancing students. Without structural reforms, a progressive income tax will be a tax for pensions — not for school funding.

Claim 5: The choice is simple, either raise revenue through the "fair tax," a flat tax increase for everyone or enact spending cuts of 15 percent across the board.

Reality: This is a false choice. Illinois can balance the budget and fund services without higher taxes.

Illinoisans have been paying higher and higher taxes every year. Meanwhile, the fiscal condition of the state has continued to sink and the COVID-19 recession is pushing it deeper. New revenue can't fix a broken state system.

Illinois leaders should learn from past mistakes instead of constantly presenting a false choice to lawmakers and residents. The governor claims there are only three ways to close the state's daunting \$4.6 billion deficit: a federal COVID-19 bailout, massive tax hikes or slashing core government services such as education, public safety and social services.

That's not true. Another option exists: Illinois can make structural spending reforms to the core cost drivers of its overspending, protect essential services and reduce the tax burden on Illinois residents at the same time. The Illinois Policy Institute's five-year plan, Illinois Forward, could accomplish all three through commonsense reforms that have received bipartisan support in the past.

Structural spending reform would enable lawmakers to balance the state budget immediately. In fewer than five years, they could eliminate the state's bill backlog and finance a deficit-neutral income tax cut. Contrary to the governor's claims, this can be accomplished without cuts to core services that provide value to Illinois residents.

Illinois can build a new reality that draws new residents and heals injuries sustained during COVID-19, but political leaders first need to stop claiming they can tax their way to prosperity.



**Orphe Divounguy**



**Adam Schuster**



**Bryce Hill**



# COMMUNITY

## Mobile food pantry is coming to Oregon

**OGLE COUNTY** — Lifeline Food & Self-Help Project in partnership with the Northern Illinois Food Bank is hosting two Mobile Food Pantries.

The Mobile Food Pantry will be in Oregon on Monday, Sept. 28 and again on Monday, Oct. 19. The truck will be parked in St. Mary's parking lot at 300 N. 3rd St.

The Oregon Lifeline Food & Self-Help Project is just one of over 800 food

pantries in 13 counties that partners with the Northern Illinois Food Bank to provide food for those in need. These two mobile food pantries are open to anyone in Ogle County who is in need of nutritious food. The mobile food pantry provides an extra distribution of food that does not effect a Lifeline client's eligibility to receive their normal monthly allotment of food.

The food pantry at Lifeline is open on Tuesdays from 1:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. and on Fridays from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. In addition, clothing may be purchased at very low prices during these same hours, plus on Thursdays from 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. and on Saturdays from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Both food and clothing are provided through the generous donations of many people in the area.

The proceeds from the clothing sales all benefit the food pantry.

Please be aware that clients need a picture ID each time they pick up food. Also, in accordance with Health Department restrictions, a properly worn face mask is required for anyone entering Lifeline.

You can follow us on Facebook at Lifeline Food & Self-Help Project, Oregon, IL.

## Serenity Hospice offering free course

**OREGON** — Serenity Hospice and Home is pleased to announce they will be starting an eight-week class entitled, "Understanding Your Grief."

This class will run each Tuesday evening from Sept. 29 through Nov. 17. The group will meet at The Serenity Hospice Home located at 1658 S. Illinois Route 2 just south of Oregon from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

The structure of the group will follow the book by Dr. Alan D. Wolfelt which covers 10 touchstones in the areas of physical, emotional, cognitive,

social, and spiritual growth to help you through the grief process. Wolfelt has written many books about healing after the loss of a loved one and is considered a leading grief educator.

The class will be facilitated by Cathy Warren, Serenity Hospice's Bereavement Coordinator.

"I am very excited to offer a class like this one," Warren said. "Our grief groups are usually open-ended and people come and go as they travel through their own journey of grief. This is a more structured approach and the participant will know exactly

when it will end."

Each participant will receive a free copy of the book by Dr. Wolfelt.

Be aware that in an effort to contain the spreading of the COVID-19 virus, participants will be asked to take your temperature upon entering the building. Social distancing will also be practiced as well as wearing facemasks.

Call Serenity Hospice at 815-732-2499 to find out more information about this class.

Class sizes are limited so call today.

### The Kitchen Table menu

Sept. 22 (Tuesday) Shredded pork over Hoe Cakes, baked beans, coleslaw  
Sept. 24 (Thursday) Lemony chicken over pasta with capers, salad, dinner rolls  
Sept. 29 (Tuesday) Balsamic pork with roasted carrots and potatoes, green bean and dinner rolls

\*The Kitchen Table is located at 7034 S. Klondike Road, Rochelle. The suggested donation is \$5 unless

otherwise stated. A kid's menu is available each serving date and includes peanut butter and jelly, corn dog with chips or chicken nuggets. Please note that all menus are subject to change. Serving is from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday and Thursday. Sunday brunch is served from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. The menu is always available on the answering machine by calling 815-561-9074 or visit [www.KitchenTableRochelle.org](http://www.KitchenTableRochelle.org).

### Birthdays & Anniversaries

**Sept. 18**  
Amie Eggenburg  
Terry & Teresa Dodillet  
**Sept. 19**  
Leland & Lucy Hazlip  
Madison Wooten

Ben Shank  
**Sept. 22**  
Krew Sullivan  
**Sept. 23**  
John Worley  
Chris Doering

Maria Shank  
**Sept. 27**  
Ron & Freda Ankney (57)  
**Sept. 28**  
Ashley Bunker



### FROM THE HEART DAILY CASH WINNERS

Aug. 27 - Denise Johnson, Rochelle, \$25

Aug. 28 - Emily Whitaker, Rochelle, \$25

Aug. 29 - Roger & Susie Ahlensdorf, Kings, \$25

Aug. 30 - Terry Harvell, Rochelle, \$25

Aug. 31 - Betty Dearth, Rochelle, \$50

Sept. 1 - Judy Etchason, St. Charles, \$25

Sept. 2 - Charley Boosta, Dixon, \$25

Sept. 3 - Taylor & Loren May, Westminters, Colo., \$50

Sept. 4 - Abigail Erwin, New York, New York, \$25

Sept. 5 - Dave & Judy Stadler, Forest, Virginia, \$25

Sept. 6 - Duane Alcock, Monroe Center, \$50

Sept. 7 - Sunshine Bakery, Rochelle, \$1,000

Sept. 8 - Gabe Garcia, Chana, \$25

Sept. 9 - Carol Koch, Rochelle, \$25

Sept. 10 - Sandra Chasm, Oregon, \$25

Sept. 11 - Ron Schabacker, Rochelle, \$25

Sept. 12 - Jackie Cutts, DeKalb, \$25

Sept. 13 - Linda Sanderson, Creston, \$50

Sept. 14 - Joe & Norma Thiele, \$25

Sept. 15 - From the Heart Auction, Rochelle, \$25

Sept. 16 - Jimmy Gilbert, Rochelle, \$25

Sept. 17 - David Sprung, LaMoille, \$25

Sept. 18 - Bobby Clausen, Rochelle, \$25

Checks to winners will be mailed out at the end of each month



## Coffee Break

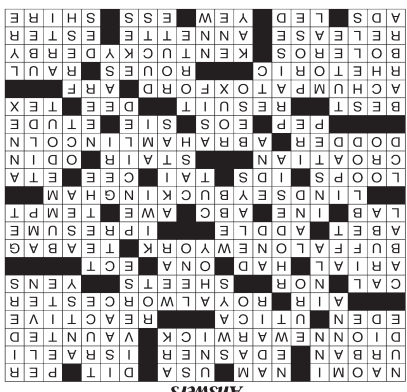
### MAGIC MAZE

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

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions forward, backward, up, down and diagonally. Unlisted clue hint: **After Sunrise, Before Sunset**

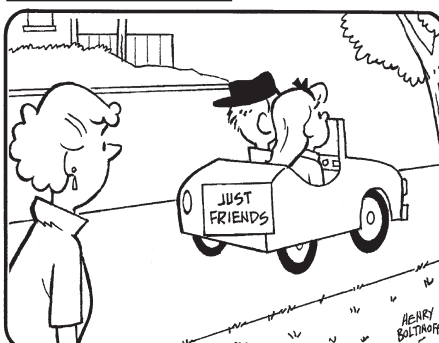
Airtime      Flextime      Mistime      Teatime  
Anytime      Halftime      Onetime      Uptime  
Bedtime      Lifetime      Pastime      Wartime  
Downtime      Mealtime      Ragtime

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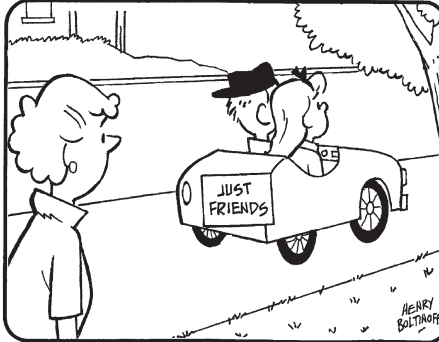


### HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTIKOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.

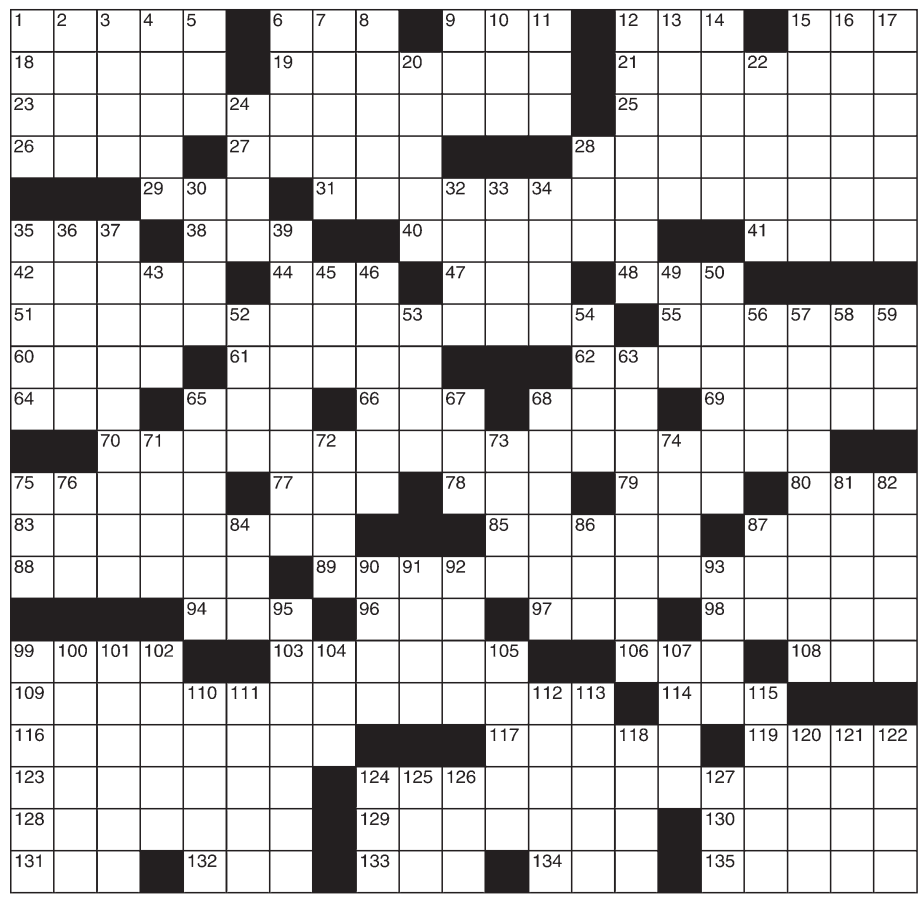


Differences: 1. Tree is larger. 2. Fence is missing. 3. Hubs are different. 4. Earring is different. 5. Windshield is gone. 6. Wall has been extended.

## Super Crossword

### COUNTY EXTENSION

**ACROSS**  
1 Singer Judd  
6 1960s war zone  
9 Old Glory's country  
12 Morse click  
15 For each  
18 City-related  
19 He played Lou Grant  
21 Haifa native  
23 "Alfie" singer  
25 Boasted of  
26 Idyllic spot  
27 City east of Syracuse  
28 Not inert  
29 See 71-Down  
31 Longtime porcelain brand  
35 Hitler Ripken  
38 Fish-fowl link  
40 Some linens  
41 Desires  
42 Typeface option  
44 Gave birth to  
47 Put — show  
48 Outer: Prefix  
51 City on the eastern shore of Lake Erie  
55 Pouch near a kettle  
60 Aid in crime  
61 Mix up  
62 "It's my guess ..."  
64 Workshop  
65 Ending for opal  
66 "Quantic" network  
68 Overwhelm  
69 Be inviting to  
70 Former Fleetwood  
75 Belt holders  
77 They often show DOBs  
78 — chi  
79 Not-so-great grade  
80 Greek "H"  
83 Zagreb native  
85 Part of a flight of steps  
87 Aesir god  
88 Walk shakily  
89 Follower of James Buchanan  
94 Energize, with "up"  
96 Dawn deity  
97 You, in Germany  
98 Piano exercise  
99 Optimal  
103 Provide with a new outfit  
106 Not-so-great grade  
108 La. neighbor  
109 Laurel and Hardy film  
114 "Woof!"  
116 Effective use of language  
117 Lascivious guys  
119 Cuba's Castro  
123 Spanish dances in 3/4 time  
124 Race held every May  
128 Let go  
129 "Being Julia" star Benning  
130 Diglyceride, e.g.  
131 Some inserts  
132 Steered  
133 Topiary tree  
134 Suffix with shepherd  
135 English county (it can be added to the ends of this puzzle's seven longest answers)  
145 Plus  
146 Postpones  
149 Hub: Abbr.  
150 Grow incisors, e.g.  
152 Nation  
153 Jack of "Dragnet"  
154 Fuzzy fruit  
156 Voyaging  
157 Feeling blue  
158 Energize, with "up"  
159 Figure out  
161 La. neighbor  
162 Very varying  
163 Designer Mizrahi  
164 Fight stopper  
165 Pint-size  
166 Nine and two  
167 Bill add-ons  
168 Put on  
169 Plotters' plot  
170 Caribbean island  
171 Vital factor  
173 Zimbabwe, before 1979  
174 Astern  
187 Mo. #10  
190 Paul Anka's "Eso —"  
191 Butter-and-flour mixture  
192 "Dream on!"  
193 — do-well  
195 Glorified  
199 Diva  
200 Resounded  
201 Turtles' tops  
202 Private pupil  
204 "That kinda thing": Abbr.  
205 Rich cake  
207 "Piece of cake!"  
210 Virtuous  
211 It isn't poetry  
212 Travel plan  
213 Body tubes  
215 Smart-alecky  
218 Barely earns, with "out"  
220 Intro painting class, maybe  
221 Rival of Lyft  
222 Old stringed instrument  
224 Singer Starr  
225 Suffix with ethyl  
226 Florida-to-Indiana dir.  
227 Moines lead-in





# LOCAL NEWS

## Registering to vote in Illinois can be confusing: Here's a breakdown

**Mindy Ruckman | Government Affairs  
Legislative Analyst | Illinoispolicy.org**

**T**HIS Election Day is significant in Illinois because voters will have the chance, for the first time in 50 years, to tell state leaders whether they want their taxes raised and whether they trust state lawmakers with greater power to set their tax rates.

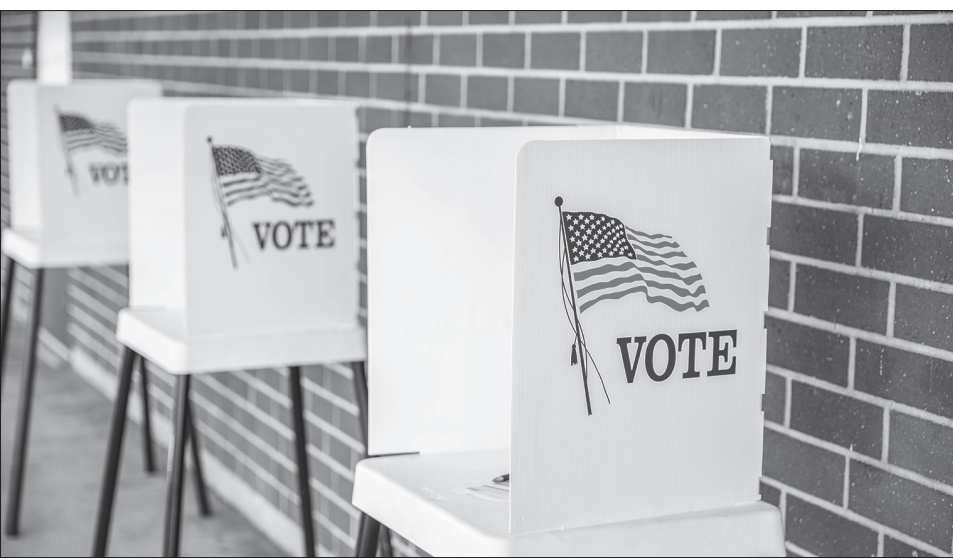
But before anyone gets to cast that vote, they may need a guide to navigating the confusing voting process. The important first step in making anyone's voice heard is registering to vote.

### Who can vote in Illinois?

You must:  
Be a citizen of the United States  
Be a resident of Illinois and of your precinct at least 30 days before the election  
Be at least 18 years old on or before the next election  
Cannot be serving a sentence in prison  
Cannot be voting anywhere else  
How can I tell if I'm registered to vote?  
Not sure if you're already registered? The easiest way to see if you've registered to vote is by checking online. The Illinois State Board of Elections has an online tool Illinoisans can use. To check, you simply add in your name, date of birth and address. If you are already registered, you are good to go.

### How do I register to vote in Illinois?

There are a couple routes you can take to register to vote. Regardless, you must ensure you're registered in a timely manner. Regular registration



is open year-round, but ends 27 days prior to the election, on Oct. 6.

### What do I need to register to vote?

Federal law requires some form of identification for first-time registration. Valid identification could include a state-issued ID or a copy of a utility bill, bank statement, paycheck, or another government document showing your name and address.

Illinois does not require a voter to declare a political party to vote in a General Election. Although the option exists to pick a party, it is not required.

You will be required to sign your voter registration card.

A person who is 17 may register to vote if they will turn 18 on or before Election Day.

### How do I register online to vote?

Online registration is available until 16 days before the election on the Illinois State Board of Elections website. In order to register online, a person must have completed their registration

by 11:59 p.m. on Oct. 18. When filling out the registration form, the voter will need to input some personal information such as their driver's license, age, name and address.

### How can I register by mail to vote?

To register by mail, you may print out this form from the U.S. Election Assistance Commission and mail it to the Illinois State Board of Election at

this address:

State Board of Elections  
2329 S. MacArthur Blvd.  
Springfield, IL 62704

You will be required to submit identification with your mail-in form. If you do not submit the necessary identification, you will be required to show it in person when you vote, and you will not be eligible to vote by mail.

Additionally, mail-in registration forms must be postmarked by Oct. 6.

### How do I register in person to vote?

If you miss the online or mail-in voter registration windows, you may also register in person during the "grace period" starting Oct. 7 and extending through Election Day, Nov. 3.

Each county has designated locations where a person can register to vote. It is best to check out your local county clerk's website or call their office to find a place near you. Typically, in addition to the county clerk's office, you can register in-person at city and village offices, public libraries, and locations that are set up as permanent and temporary voting locations.



## Voting in Ogle County

**OREGON** — Ogle County Clerk, Laura J. Cook, announced that her office complies with the Federal Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act.

The Ogle County Courthouse is accessible to disabled citizens for voter registration. If you are unable to go to a Deputy Registrar, we will send a deputy registrar to the residence of any person who wishes to register to vote.

For information on this service, please call the County Clerk's Office at 815-732-1110.

### Voter Registration

Any Ogle County resident who has never registered in Ogle County, has moved within the county, or has had a change of name since the last election must be registered with the correct name and address if they wish to vote in this election. First time registrants shall (by Nov. 3, 2020 General Election) have resided in their precinct for 30 days and must be 18 years of age on or before the Nov. 3, 2020 General Election.

The last day to register to vote or change your address for the November 3, 2020 General Election is Oct. 6 (with the exception of grace period voter registration beginning Oct. 7 and ending Nov. 2 in the office of the Ogle County Clerk.)

### Vote by Mail

All properly registered voters are eligible to Vote by Mail. An Application to "Vote by Mail" can be downloaded by visiting the Ogle County official website at [www.oglecounty.org](http://www.oglecounty.org) by going to the "I Want To" tab, select "Application for Vote by Mail." This application must be filled out and mailed or hand delivered to the county clerk's office, who will then mail the Vote by Mail ballot to the voter. After voting the Vote by Mail ballot it must be mailed or hand delivered back to the county clerk's office so it can be counted on Election Day.

The first day to apply for a Vote by Mail ballot was Aug. 5 for the Nov. 3 General Election. The first day to mail a Vote by Mail ballot is Sept. 24 with the last day for mailing a ballot from the county clerk's office being Oct. 29. Early voting in person at the county clerk's office may be done through Nov. 2 until 4:30 p.m.

### Early Voting

Early voting will be conducted at the

Ogle County Clerk's Office located at the Ogle County Courthouse, 105 S. 5th Street, Oregon, Sept. 24 thru Nov. 2 for all Ogle County precincts. Voting hours are Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Saturday, Oct. 31 from 9 a.m. to noon.

Early voting will be conducted at the Flag Township Building located at 303 W. Illinois Route 38 in Rochelle Oct. 28 thru Oct. 30 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Oct. 31 from 9 a.m. to noon, for Flag and Dement precincts only.

If there are any voters in Ogle County who cannot get into the polling place, we can send two Judges of Election within 50 feet of the polling place with the ballot. A request should be made prior to the election on a form provided by the county clerk's office.

Regular office hours are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Call 815-732-1110 for more information.



"We have accepted 6,013 Vote by Mail applications which is about 19.5 percent of registered voters in Ogle County. There will be a secure drop box for Vote by Mail ballots installed on the west side of the courthouse. Due to the security requirements needed for a drop box location, this will be the only one in Ogle County."

**Laura J. Cook**

\*The last date a requested Vote by Mail ballot can be mailed is Oct. 29 to a voter - This will NOT be enough time for the voter to receive their ballot and have it POSTMARKED by Nov. 3, 2020. We ask that they apply for the Vote by Mail ballot as soon as possible due to the mail time.

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# COUNTY NEWS

## The Shed celebrates fifth anniversary

Oregon bereavement center continues to help community

BY BRAD JENNINGS  
OGLE COUNTY LIFE EDITOR

**OREGON** — It was five years ago in August that Serenity Hospice and Home opened The Shed in Oregon.

The idea was to give grieving people a chance to get together and work on projects. It is now an important part of the community. Cathy Warren, bereavement coordinator and manager of The Shed, recently sat down to answer some questions about its the past, present and future. Warren stared at Serenity in April, 2008.

**Question: What was the original idea of The Shed?**

Answer: When people think of bereavement or grief groups, it seems that most of them picture very sad people sitting in a circle crying and sharing. And sometimes that is what a group is and that can be very effective, but some people are not comforted by this type of group. Actually many people find that they find comfort when busy or productive using their hands or being creative.

With this in mind, a widower in Australia started inviting the men from his hospice grief group to his garage to work on projects. Sometimes it was silent as then worked together on a project, but they worked together and

that was what brought comfort. Sometimes while they worked they began to talk and share. That was how the first concept of a "shed" type therapeutic place was born. This story was on YouTube and an employee at Serenity Hospice saw it and shared it with our CEO. It became a vision and a goal to try and create this type of center here in Oregon free and open to the public.

**Q: How has the reality been compared to the original idea?**

A: I think the biggest surprise to us all was that we immediately saw that The Shed could help people experiencing any type of loss ... not just death. Loss of a job, a relationship, loss of a way of life, loss of their youth ... it became obvious from our first few encounters that this type of creative therapeutic work was healthy for anyone. We now have regular volunteers that come in and haven't experienced any type of huge loss, they just enjoy the comradery and want to help Serenity Hospice. We try to make it a comfortable place to be. We have food and coffee and sitting areas that have nothing to do with working on a project. We have a retail room where the items are sold and we have a meeting room where we can talk privately with anyone.

Another big surprise is

that the two of us who run The Shed, Denise Watts and myself, were never that crafty and we have learned to operate equipment, paint, have visions for donated furniture and our own creative sides have flourished! Another surprise has been the response to our classes, particularly Ladies Night Out and our kids programs and camps. We have been able to team up with the Oregon Park District and offer some camps for grieving kids. Our plan for 2020 was to expand the programming for kids and teens and unfortunately covid-19 put a halt to that, but we look forward to the future when more younger people can be served by The Shed.

**Q: What has surprised you the most about The Shed, or the reaction to it?**

A: People are continually surprised that something so innovative and yet quite simple is available right here in the Oregon community and open to all the surrounding areas. The quality of our products are always surprising and once people purchase a piece of furniture or a decorative item or sign they always return for more. It's also nice to have an alternative place to offer our grief groups instead of the hospice home.

We also have had so many people stop by and



Patrick Keaty (center) and his sons Michael (left) and Jimmy (right). Patrick and his family have been a part of The Shed from the beginning. They are pictured here at the five-year celebration.

say they have no creative spirit or craftiness, but it doesn't take long until we find what that person is good at and it always surprises us and them. Maybe they find out that their attention to detail makes them an excellent person to apply the top coat sealant or to do the initial sandpapering. Many people have surprised themselves by learning to use a handsaw to create stars or hats. We couldn't operate without the generous donations of items such as spray paint, paintbrushes, etc. ... The Shed has something for everyone and a way for everyone to help.

We are also finding that the stuff we make which is almost always one-of-a-kind items sells well at other venues. Currently you can find our items at Berryview Orchards in Mt. Morris.

**Q: What programs does The Shed offer, and what is most popular?**

A: We have had a very positive response to our creative classes, partic-

ularly Ladies Night Out and our kids programs and camps. We have been able to team up with the Oregon Park District and offer some camps for grieving kids and we had two camps planned for the summer with Pegasus Special Riders which have had to be put on hold. Our plan for 2020 was to expand the programming for kids and teens and unfortunately covid-19 put a halt to that, but we look forward to the future when more younger people can be served by The Shed.

We have hosted many programs at The Shed as well over the years from interior design classes to travel experiences. We hosted a very popular program featuring James and Karen Brown after their trip to Israel. We had food and wine tastings and they shared their experience. We have also been the meeting place for Girl Scout groups and other civic organizations. We have had Crest

foods and other large corporations bring groups of employees and we have been a site for the Oregon High School service day.

**Q: What does the future hold for The Shed?**

Serenity Hospice is committed to keeping this resource available and we find comfort and motivation by the many lives impacted by The Shed. Sometimes people come and continue to come daily or weekly. Sometimes people stop by only once or maybe just a few times and that's ok too. We want to meet people where they are. There is no judgement at The Shed and people are accepted for who they are and where they are on their journey.

The future at The Shed is exciting we have many great classes we are ready to host in the future. The Shed is a place for Oregon to be proud of and everyone should stop by, take a tour and be amazed by what is being accomplished right here in Northern Illinois.



Above is a photo from the children's camp held in February for grieving children who recently lost a parent or sibling. They swam, played games, learned pickleball, ate pizza, made crafts and spent some time exploring their grief. Many volunteers train and work together to make this camp successful.



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# SPORTS



**OHLINGER STEPPING UP**

Sophomore golfer Griffin Ohlinger is playing at a high level for the Hubs.

See page 4 for more details

# Home on the lanes

Wyka turns childhood passion for bowling into successful career

BY RUSSELL HODGES  
SPORTS EDITOR

DAN Wyka has been a bowler for nearly his entire life. As a kid, Wyka used to travel to bowling centers with his grandparents, watching them and learning the sport alongside them.

Wyka spent many days bowling during his teenage years, hitting the lanes when he would travel to his family’s summer home on Lake Summer-set. Wyka enjoyed bowling so much that he signed up for two men’s leagues after high school, and he hasn’t stopped bowling since.

“I enjoy the people and having fun,” Wyka said. “I was much more competitive when I was younger, but I enjoy being with people, and that’s the main reason why I still bowl.”

While Wyka loved the sport, he didn’t consider making a career out of bowling until the early 2000s, when he and his wife Deb saw an opportunity to purchase T-Byrd Lanes in Rochelle. Wyka had over 30 years of experience in the printing industry prior to owning the bowling center, and he co-owned a company called Edison Press with his older brothers Rich



(PHOTO BY RUSSELL HODGES)

**Local bowler Dan Wyka has made the Hub City his home since purchasing T-Byrd Lanes with his wife Deb in 2004. Wyka made the transition to owning a bowling center after spending 30 years in the printing industry.**

and Ken.

But Wyka knew deep down that it was time for a change. Wyka’s godfather owned a bowling center in California, and Wyka had considered buying a bowling center for roughly 10 years before making the

move to purchase T-Byrd Lanes from Tom and Linda Carter in 2004.

“My wife and I fell in love with T-Byrds when we first saw it,” Wyka said. “Buying T-Byrds was probably the best thing I’ve ever done... My wife

thought I was crazy that I wanted to leave printing and purchase a bowling center, but we love it here and we love the bowling industry.”

Dan and Deb had lived near Elgin before purchasing T-Byrds, but within

six months of buying the bowling center, the Wykas relocated to Rochelle and have made the Hub City their home. Throughout his 16 years as an owner, Dan said the camaraderie he’s built with the community and the change of

pace are what he’s enjoyed most about running the bowling center.

“I think it comes down to the folks who come here who I can sit down and laugh with,” Wyka said.

**See T-BYRDS page 3**

# Eckardt, Pence share special tennis bond

Lady Hub grad takes coaching reigns from RTHS Hall of Fame father

BY RUSSELL HODGES  
SPORTS EDITOR

KRISTY Eckardt could only help but smile as she watched her father, long-time tennis coach Mike Pence, receive his induction into the Rochelle Township High School Hall of Fame in 2017.

The ceremony was perhaps the pinnacle of a well accomplished career for Pence, who taught at RTHS and coached both the Hub and Lady Hub tennis teams for well over 30 years. Eckardt has since taken over the reigns as head coach of the boys, but much of what she has learned about coaching and the game of tennis stems from the experiences she shared with her father.

“It was a really great experience,” Eckardt said. “We knew he had received a lot of support from the community, and to see him recognized in front of the

whole stadium and to see everybody show their appreciation for what he did through coaching was really special for me.”

Eckardt has enjoyed tennis from the day she first picked up a racket as a little girl. She grew up watching the sport on television with her father, whose coaching career started before she was born, and she still remembers attending summer camps at the high school. When she arrived at RTHS as a freshman in the late 1990s, the two saw their tennis bond grow even stronger.

“He was always very calm and he expected a lot of us,” Eckardt said. “He never got upset with us and that’s something I really picked up on that I keep in mind while I’m coaching. I want the kids to enjoy what they’re doing and be more relaxed while they play.”

**See HUBS page 10**



(COURTESY PHOTO)

**Kristy Eckardt (right) poses with her father Mike Pence and her doubles partner Anne Holbrook after the 2000 Hub Girls Invitational. Pence coached the RTHS tennis teams for over 30 years, with Eckardt taking over the boys program in 2015.**



# SPORTS

## Lodico runs first-ever virtual Boston Marathon

Rochelle resident hustles 26.2 miles around the Hub City

BY RUSSELL HODGES  
SPORTS EDITOR

LOCAL resident Kurt Lodico has completed 10 marathons over the last four years, but none were as unique as his experience this past Saturday, when Lodico ran 26.2 miles around the Rochelle area in a virtual form of the 2020 Boston Marathon.

Lodico started the race at his Hickory Ridge home Saturday morning, and his trek brought him along several local businesses and landmarks including Tilton School, downtown Rochelle, T-Byrd Lanes, May Mart and VFW Park. Lodico's family and friends held signs and cheered him on from various areas of his route, which ultimately brought him back to his driveway, where his stepson Jack held out a 2020 Boston Marathon finish line for him to cross.

"Being able to race under these circumstances... It was definitely different," Lodico said. "There are normally a lot of things going on around me and there's normally a lot more excitement, but this race was nice because I could plot my own course and I could choose what day I wanted to run... There normally aren't many fans that know me outside of my immediate family, but I had some friends who normally don't watch me run who came out and cheered for me."

Lodico qualified for the



Kurt Lodico (right) keeps his pace as his son Jack trails behind him during his virtual Boston Marathon race around Rochelle. Lodico, 56, has completed 11 marathons over the last four years, and he hopes to run the Boston Marathon live next year.

(COURTESY PHOTO)

2020 Boston Marathon, the first Boston Marathon of his running career, after completing the 2018 CNO Financial Indianapolis Monumental Marathon in 3 hours and 23 minutes.

The 2020 Boston Marathon had been scheduled for April, but was postponed to September and ultimately canceled due to COVID-19. However, the Boston Athletic As-

sociation chose to hold the event virtually in order to keep the event's 124-year tradition going.

"I knew the route I was planning to run, and I enjoyed that because I had the

opportunity to run through town and see different sites and different people," Lodico said. "There were people stationed throughout town who cheered me on. There were signs

and a few of my friends put a start/finish line in my driveway, which were unique things I normally wouldn't see."

See RACE page 7

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# SPORTS

## T-BYRDS: Wyka reflects on 16 years of ownership

From page 1

"We go to a lot of the community events and school fundraisers in town as well. I enjoy the people the most, and coming from Chicago, I only knew a certain amount of people. But here, it's almost like everybody in town knows everybody. It was something I needed to get used to, but it's become something that I enjoy most about owning T-Byrds."

The bowling center has seen many changes since Wyka took ownership in 2004. Some of those include the addition of a handicap ramp near the south entrance, an expansion of the seating inside the restaurant and bar area, bathroom remodeling and cosmetic improvements. Two major upgrades Wyka initiated were the installation of a \$70,000 scoring system in 2018 and a \$65,000 project to repave the parking lot so patrons could enter and exit T-Byrds safely.

Although owning the bowling center has brought Wyka many positive memories, there have been challenges along the way. The COVID-19 pandemic forced T-Byrds to shut down for a few months earlier this year, and severe storms several years ago damaged the bowling center significantly, requiring the construction of new steel supports for the structure and roofing. But Wyka has faced his challenges head on, and the 60-year-old has no desire to slow down.

"The day I bought this



(PHOTO BY RUSSELL HODGES)

**Deb and Dan Wyka have made several fond memories at Rochelle's T-Byrd Lanes since taking over the bowling center 16 years ago. The Wykas, who have been married for 29 years, don't plan on slowing down anytime soon.**

place, I was nervous because I had to learn how to fix bowling machines and run the computers," Wyka said. "Coming from the printing industry, it was a challenge transitioning from handling printing equipment to

handling bowling equipment... This year has been challenging because of COVID-19, but it's been challenging for everybody in the industry."

Wyka's fondest memories as an owner include the recent Strike Out Can-

cer fundraiser for longtime Kings Elementary School teacher Tammy Greene. While he hasn't lived in Rochelle for the majority of his life, Dan said he's proud to call the Hub City its home. Dan also acknowledged that

T-Byrd Lanes wouldn't be where it is today without Deb, his wife of 29 years.

"Deb has been a tremendous help and she does a little bit of everything," Wyka said. "I couldn't have done this without her... We can't be owners

unless we're willing to put our time in and sacrifice. We've both done that, and we couldn't be where we are now without each other. I think we do quite a bit in the community and to show our support. Rochelle is home to us."

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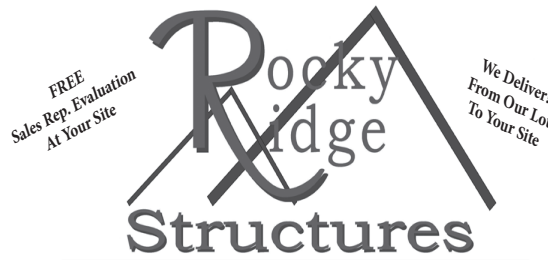
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## HUB SPOTLIGHT

### Short-game strides helping Ohlinger find the hole

BY RUSSELL HODGES  
SPORTS EDITOR

CHIPPING and putting were two skills Griffin Ohlinger knew he needed to improve as he prepared for his sophomore season with the Rochelle Township High School golf team.

Ohlinger spent his summer playing at least nine holes almost every day. Ohlinger also worked with golf instructor Biv Wadden to refine his mechanics and improve his swing and putting stroke. His efforts have certainly paid off this fall, as Ohlinger has become one of Rochelle's best and most consistent players, scoring in the low-to-mid 40s in nearly every head-to-head meet.

"I realized my short game was my weakness," Ohlinger said. "I couldn't putt for much last season but I've put a lot of work into my putting and coach Wadden worked with me a lot over the summer. We had several lessons where we worked on chipping, and we eventually moved up to practicing with my longer clubs before we finished with a lot of putting lessons."

Ohlinger quickly rose to the varsity level as a freshman, carding scores in the upper 40s and lower 50s and shooting scores around 100 in 18-hole tournaments. His confidence has grown significantly since his first varsity match in 2019, and while he still had some goosebumps when the Hubs teed off the 2020 season, the game has started to come easier to him.

"I was still a little nervous during my first few shots this season," Ohlinger said. "After that, I told myself that I had to keep moving forward, and I've been playing better with more experience. I've found myself worrying less and focusing more on my fundamentals."

Ohlinger's game has come a long way from when he first took up golf over two years ago. While he initially didn't take the sport seriously, he gradually warmed up to it as time progressed, and as his passion for the sport has grown, so has his desire to improve and shoot lower scores.

"My parents introduced me to golf and I received my first set of clubs about two and a half years ago," Ohlinger said. "I was only messing around when I first



(PHOTO BY RUSSELL HODGES)

**Rochelle sophomore Griffin Ohlinger has seen his improved short game result in better scores this season.**

started playing and I didn't know much about the game, but I found myself having more fun the better I played. Hitting a good drive, putting the ball in the middle of the fairway and one-putting from a good distance are confidence boosters for me that keep me going as I move forward to the next hole."

Ohlinger has been an integral player for a Rochelle varsity team that has started the 2020 season 6-2 overall, matching its win total from the last two years combined. He said his goals this season are to continue improving his putting and his shots off the tee box.

"I hope to be shooting in the 70s through 18 holes by next season," Ohlinger said. "I haven't been able to do that in tournaments, but I've done that during practice rounds where I'm playing at my pace. I have to learn how to play with more people and handle the pressure."

"Hitting a good drive, putting the ball in the middle of the fairway and one-putting from a good distance are confidence boosters for me that keep me going as I move forward to the next hole."

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# SPORTS

## RACE: Lodico reflects on previous marathon events

From page 2

Lodico began training for his virtual marathon 12 weeks in advance, but his journey didn't come without a few challenges. The 56-year-old started feeling knee pain about six weeks into his training, and the injury sidelined him for 12 days before he could start running again. Although the injury resulted in a slower-than-usual time, Lodico said he was happy to complete the race.

"I usually do a 12-week cycle, but I started feeling soreness on the inside of my left knee," Lodico said. "I tried to run as much as I could on the weekends, and I knew going in that I wouldn't run my usual time, but I wanted to finish because I had been training hard and I knew that it was a rare opportunity. I went out there and I was happy to complete the race."

Lodico has always enjoyed running, but his desire to compete in marathons didn't spark until four years ago. He said he normally tries to run one marathon in the spring and one in the fall. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic setting his schedule back, Lodico said he will be looking to compete in the next Boston Marathon, currently scheduled for April 19, 2021.

"I always wanted to run marathons, so I decided four years ago that I would



(COURTESY PHOTO)

**Kurt Lodico (right) crosses the finish line at his Hickory Ridge home after completing the 2020 Boston Marathon virtually. Lodico, who has always been an avid runner, said he enjoys the camaraderie and the relationships he's build through running marathons.**

give them a try," Lodico said. "I caught the buzz and I've stuck with them ever since. Running helps me stay in shape and I enjoy being out on the road. I like seeing the sites and there are always people driving

by who wave at me, as well as other runners who I can build camaraderie with."

Lodico ran his first marathon in 2016, competing in the Quad Cities Marathon on a warmer-than-usual September day. Motivated

to improve his time, Lodico ran another event just eight weeks later, racing in the Madison Marathon in November 2016. Outside of actually competing, Lodico said the experience of attending Saturday expos,

listening to speakers and meeting other runners are what he has enjoyed since taking up marathon running four years ago.

"It's nice to go out to events with your whole family and spend the eve-

nings and weekends together," Lodico said. "I enjoy talking with the other runners before each race and learning about some of their experiences running marathons and what they enjoy about running."

## RTHS grad Brennan excited for new opportunity

### Rochelle native hired as head golf coach at Kishwaukee College

BY RUSSELL HODGES  
SPORTS EDITOR

PLAYING for Kishwaukee College wasn't an option for local golfer Thomas Brennan when he was closing out his accomplished high school career just over a decade ago. That will change this coming school year, however, and Brennan will be tasked with leading the Kougar and Lady Kougar golfers in the program's first season back since prior to 2010.

Brennan has been hired as the head coach of the Kishwaukee College men's and women's golf teams, which will compete during the 2020-21 school year in Region IV of the NJCAA. Brennan, who competed collegiately at the College of Lake County and Hannibal-LaGrange University, an NAIA program, has been coaching for the last several years, spending five seasons at Hannibal-LaGrange and one season at Johnson & Wales University's Denver campus.

"My wife and I were looking to move back to the area and I had been talking with Mitch [Hamilton] at Fairways since I had been planning to help run some tournaments and junior golf camps," Brennan said. "He

let me know that the coach Kishwaukee College had initially hired resigned in June, so I reached out to the athletic director and we had a couple of good interviews. It's a good fit for me, and Kishwaukee will be using Fairways as its home course."

A Rochelle native, Brennan led the Hubs to two straight IHSA 2A Sectional appearances during the 2007 and 2008 seasons. He began his collegiate career at Nicholls State University in 2009 before transferring to the College of Lake County and finishing at Hannibal-LaGrange. Brennan immediately made the leap to coaching in 2014, when HLGU hired him to lead the program.

"It will be a different type of experience with the Kishwaukee College program," Brennan said. "We're going to have a much greater emphasis on recruiting local athletes... What I'm going to enjoy most about coaching at Kishwaukee College is giving local players an opportunity to compete that I didn't have in high school. We had a lot of good players on our team when I was in high school, but we had to spread out because Kishwaukee didn't have a program."

Brennan guided the

HLGU golf program to nine tournament victories throughout his five years as the university's head coach. He was also responsible for doubling the program's men's roster size and for bringing in the No. 1 ranked NAIA freshman class for the 2017-18 season, according to GolfStat. Brennan earned a bachelor's degree in criminal justice in 2014.

A local champion, Brennan has won multiple Fairways club titles, and he continues to compete in tournaments outside of coaching. His experience and vast knowledge of the Rochelle course will be very useful to the Kougar and Lady Kougar players this coming season.

"Coaching gives me time to continue competing while also helping kids improve and become successful golfers," Brennan said. "I know what kids are looking for in a program and I want our program to be as player-friendly as possible while maintaining high standards for work ethic and academics. I want our kids to have fun on the golf course. It doesn't matter what they shoot when they arrive. What I look for is how much they're improving."

Brennan began golfing as a freshman in high school. After eighth grade, Brennan spent countless hours playing over the summer after his parents purchased him a membership with Fairways Golf Course, then known as Rochelle Country Club. Brennan worked his way up to the varsity team very quickly, dropping his scores from the 100s down to the 70s. His competitive nature is something he'll be looking



(COURTESY PHOTO)

**Rochelle native Thomas Brennan was recently hired as the head golf coach at Kishwaukee College. The RTHS graduate is looking forward to giving local players an opportunity to compete collegiately. Above are Thomas and his wife Sarah.**

to share with his players at Kishwaukee College.

"It was definitely a late start for me, but I fell in love with the game right away," Brennan said. "My dad [Marty] is good friends

with [RTHS golf coach] Glen Mehrings and I was looking for a sport to play during the fall, so my parents signed me up for a membership... My parents would drop me off at the

course after breakfast and they wouldn't pick me up until around dinnertime. I'd be out there with about six or seven of my friends all the time and we all loved to play."



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# SPORTS

## Confidence keys Thiravong to Rockford title

Rochelle senior caps off summer season with monumental victory

BY RUSSELL HODGES  
SPORTS EDITOR

LADY Hub senior Megan Thiravong was underwhelmed with her qualifying-round performance in the 2020 Greater Rockford Women's Classic. Thiravong wasn't expecting to make the Championship Flight, but after earning the No. 5 overall seed, the Rochelle Township High School golf standout went to work against some of the best players in the area.

Thiravong, who won the A Flight of the Greater Rockford Women's Classic two years ago, qualified fifth in the Championship Flight after an 81 in the opening

round at Ingersoll Golf Course. Her bracket run wouldn't be easy, though, as she needed to upset three higher seeds to win the championship, with all three players being former tournament champions.

Unnerved and motivated to shine against players she called her role models, Thiravong dominated the Championship Flight, winning three consecutive match-play rounds to claim the 2020 title. Facing No. 2 seed Hui Chong Dofflemeyer in the finals, Thiravong went 15-for-17 on greens in regulation and played the whole round without a three-putt to win 2&1.

"It was an honor to play with some of my golf mentors and idols," Thiravong said. "I have looked up to all the ladies competing in the Greater Rockford Women's Classic, especially Jessica Slattery, Natalie Hooper and Hui Chong Dofflemeyer. These three players all have phenomenal personal strengths engraved into their routine and are role models for younger players like myself on and off the course."

Thiravong opened bracket play with a first-round match against the No. 4 seed Slattery, winning 2 up to advance to the semifinals and face the No. 1 seed Hooper, a four-time state qualifier from Rockford Lutheran who currently plays for Western Il-

linois University. While Thiravong wasn't confident in her qualifying-round performance, her mental toughness and her ability to find the greens fueled her victory over Slattery in the championship bracket.

"I knew I had the potential to play my best and defeat my opponents," Thiravong said. "I had nothing to lose and everything to gain by digging in my heels and packing in the pressure on the course. My keys to victory in the first round were keeping calm and trying my best to stay on the green. Ingersoll is very difficult to play without hitting straight and throwing a

lot of backspin on approach shots... I knew I had to hit my ball on the green to keep up."

Hooper and Thiravong went down to the wire in the semifinal round at Sandy Hollow Golf Course. After Hooper tied the match with a par on the 17<sup>th</sup> hole, Thiravong won the 18<sup>th</sup> hole with an easy two-putt to claim the match 1 up and reach the finals on Sunday.

The semifinal match was never separated by more than one stroke, with Thiravong gaining the first lead after five holes before Hooper took the sixth and seventh holes to surge ahead. After halving the next five holes, Thiravong won the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> holes to reclaim the lead.

"While playing Sandy Hollow against Natalie, my key to victory was playing my own game and staying relaxed," Thiravong said. "Because Natalie could crush her ball much farther than mine, it was clear that I should play my game rather than trying to keep up with her long shots... To win any competition, a player must first have confidence in himself or herself, the motivation to improve and the ambitious mentality to say, 'I will win this tournament.'"

Thiravong started strong against the No. 2 seed Dofflemeyer, taking a two-hole advantage into the final three holes and hanging on to win the first Championship Flight at the Greater Rockford Women's Classic of her career. Despite the ongoing COVID-19



(COURTESY PHOTO)

Rochelle senior Megan Thiravong and her father Chico hold up the championship trophy after Megan won the 2020 Greater Rockford Women's Classic.

pandemic, the 2020 season has been a prosperous one for Thiravong, who won the Ogle County Junior Championship and the Rockford Junior Tournament at Ingersoll earlier this summer.

"In the end, it was keeping a level head and seeking out every open shot I could for a lead in the competition," Thiravong said. "Confidence is a mindset built from years of practice

and competition against players much stronger than I am. Therefore, the win at Aldeen is just one stepping stone in my life to becoming the best golfer and competitor I can be."



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# SPORTS

## HUBS: Eckardt carrying on family tennis tradition

From page 1

“We always got along really well and I was really excited to play for him. He’d bite his sweater a little more when I was playing, but I knew he held me to a high standard which was encouraging.” Eckardt enjoyed a great amount of success during her high school career, spending three seasons with the varsity team and reaching the IHSA State Championships twice. RTHS hired Jeff Truckenbrod as an assistant coach during Eckardt’s sophomore year, and over two decades later, Truckenbrod remains on the coaching staff as Eckardt’s assistant coach. “What I enjoyed most about playing for my dad was the time we spent together,” Eckardt said. “We had a really great core group of players who I grew up playing with since grade school. The times we spent playing over the summer are probably some of my fondest memories.”

Eckardt went on to play collegiately with the Augustana Vikings, ranking fourth on the school’s all-time list in singles victories. She graduated college in 2005 before moving to Kewanee and eventually relocating to Oregon, where she currently lives with her husband Andy and her children David and Sarah. Eckardt, who also played basketball in both high school and college, said she began pursuing coaching opportunities as soon as she graduated college.

“I loved playing sports so much and I didn’t want that to end,” Eckardt said. “I always thought it would be cool to come back to Rochelle and take over for my dad... I had five tennis coaches in college, which was rough, so I always relied on what I learned from my dad growing up. Whether it was staying calm, playing one point at a time or not getting upset... I was also fortunate that Augustana was close to home, so my parents came to a lot of my meets.”

Pence retired from teaching in 2011 and his final year as a head coach was 2014. When Eckardt took over the Hub tennis program in 2015, Pence had the chance to work alongside his daughter, serving as a volunteer assistant until he and his wife Trish moved to Tennessee this past year. Pence knew his daughter would excel in tennis at an early age, and while he may not be around this coming season, he’s extremely proud to see how far his daughter has come.

“It was really fun having the opportunity to coach her,” Pence said. “Kristy played multiple sports growing up, but she really enjoyed tennis all through the years and she picked up on the strategy of tennis really quickly. She always anticipated really well and she still does when we play together. She really understands the game and she knows how to tell kids what they need to try because she can see where kids need to be positioned and where they need to improve.” Nowadays, Eckardt

helps run the youth summer camps at the high school, the same camps she participated in as a kid. She said both of her children have picked up tennis, and while they may be years away from reaching high school, Eckardt said having the opportunity to coach her kids, the same way her father coached her, would be a once-in-a-lifetime experience. “Oregon doesn’t have a team at the moment, but maybe they could co-op with Rochelle,” Eckardt said laughingly. “It would be nice to see David and Sarah play tennis. I would love to have that opportunity and hopefully they’ll be more receptive to the sport in high school.”

**“What I enjoyed most about playing for my dad was the time we spent together,”**  
**Kristy Eckardt**



Pictured above are Kristy Eckardt with her parents Trish and Mike Pence, as well as her children Sarah and David Eckardt. Mike, a long-time tennis coach at Rochelle Township High School, received his RTHS Athletic Hall of Fame induction in 2017.

(PHOTO BY TODD SMITH)

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