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The Kitchen Table continues to provide weekly meals. See page 3

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Honoring the senior class

Plans underway for graduation ceremony, virtual prom for Rochelle seniors

BY ANDREW HEISERMAN
STAFF WRITER

ROCHELLE – With the current social distancing guidelines and the recent decision to extend school closures, Rochelle Township High School has found a way to abide by all CDC recom-

mendations, while still honoring as many students as it can in the safest way possible.

To honor as many 2020 graduating seniors as possible, before they move onto the next chapter in their life such as the workforce or military, RTHS has plans to hold a modified outdoor gradua-

tion ceremony and a virtual prom. The virtual prom will be held on Saturday, May 16 and the graduation ceremony will be held as scheduled on Saturday, May 23.

For the current ceremony plans, students will drive up with their families dressed in their cap and gown. Then, the student will be

able to get out of the vehicle to walk up on a stage to receive their diploma and hear their name read aloud. Parents will be able to take photos and videos from the vehicle and then the next student and family will come through.

See RTHS page 4

Pool to remain closed for summer

BY RUSSELL HODGES
STAFF WRITER

ROCHELLE — Directors and commissioners with the Flag-Rochelle Community Park District decided Monday evening that Spring Lake Pool will not open for the 2020 season.

While the park district will move forward with its plans to use its OSLAD Grant and improve the Spring Lake facilities this summer, the ongoing coronavirus pandemic has made it difficult for officials to determine a date in which the pool can open safely and be properly staffed. July 1 had been viewed as a possible opening date, but the park district will keep Spring Lake closed in order to start on the improvement project and fully prepare the facility for the 2021 season.

“Delaying the opening would cause quite a few problems staff-wise,” aquatic director Marianne Swanson said. “There’s no guarantee that we would have the staff to open on July 1. Another concern would be whether or not parents will allow their kids to be helped by our lifeguards because of social distancing. Even swimming lessons would put both kids and our staff in positions where they wouldn’t be safe. In

“...Even swimming lessons would put both kids and our staff in positions where they wouldn’t be safe. In addition to cleaning and everything else, there are so many uncertainties that opening the pool this summer worries me.”

Marianne Swanson

addition to cleaning and everything else, there are so many uncertainties that opening the pool this summer worries me.”

Executive director Jackee Ohlinger said that improvements could begin as early as June, with a larger Grand Opening of the renovated facility scheduled for the start of the 2021 season. Ohlinger said the current shelter-in-place order has limited the park district’s ability to train staff members for this summer, and she said that, if Spring Lake Pool were to open this summer, additional measures would need to be taken in order to ensure safety for all.

“I’ve been on several Zoom meetings with other park district directors, and none of them have opening dates for their pools,” Ohlinger said. “Everybody has been on hold as they wait to see what happens if

and when restrictions are lifted... Spring Lake Pool is near and dear to our hearts, but this is a great way for us to make lemonade out of lemons. We can move forward right away with our project and check it off our list so we don’t miss a beat next summer.”

Action items

Park district commissioners unanimously approved a resolution allocating \$12,940 in spending for lockers to be used inside the 24-hour fitness facility at the recreation center that’s currently on scheduled to be completed in September. Commissioners also approved a change to its sound system, which will cost around \$87,000, as well as the purchase of a zero-turn mower for \$9,279.

Bringing home the silver

BY ANDREW HEISERMAN
STAFF WRITER

ROCHELLE – Last month, before the current stay-at-home order was issued, Kennay Farms Distillery of Rochelle won two silver medals at the Denver International Spirits Competition.

The competition took place on March 14 and 15, in Denver, Colorado and included over 450 entries from 11 different countries. For the competition, each spirit is judged in a blind taste test, by three judges.

Judges then choose their favorites and awards are given out for the best of the show, double gold, gold, silver and bronze, Kennay Farms won a silver medal for both its vodka and its gin. Along with a top-notch team of workers, Kennay Farms also knows high quality ingredients are necessary to make great spirits.

“Our vodka is made with 100 percent corn from our farm that passes through 20 distillation sites and is carbon filtered for a smooth finished product,” said Aubrey Quinn, daughter of owners Rick and Doris Kennay and manager of marketing. “Then, our gin has subtle juniper notes, crisp coriander, lemongrass and bitter orange balance with cracked black pepper and orris root.”

As well as its award-winning vodka and gin, Kennay Farms has a rye whiskey and a bourbon they plan to release in the future. The whiskey is aging in the Rickhouse and will be ready in the fall of 2020 and the bourbon will be barreled in summer of 2020 to be released after three to five years of aging.

The distillery has shifted its focus to making hand sanitizer during the current COVID-19 pandemic, but has plans for an agave spirit and rum when it converts production back to making liquors. For anybody that would like to pick up any of the spirits, hand sanitizer or growlers of craft beer, Kennay Farms is offering carry-out service. More information and carry-out hours can be found online at kennayfarmsdistilling.com.



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LOCAL NEWS

Board gets update on remote learning

Board approves employment requests

BY ANDREW HEISERMAN
STAFF WRITER

ROCHELLE – Due to the current COVID-19 situation, the monthly high school board meeting had a short agenda.

After approving the consent agenda, board members received an update from the superintendent on the recent extension of school closures for the remainder of the academic school year. He addressed the upcoming virtual prom, modified outdoor graduation ceremony and finals.

“During the special report portion of the meeting, I gave an update on remote learning, what the kids have been doing and what the teachers are doing,” said Jason Harper, district superintendent. “As well as extracurricular activities and special events at the end of the year.”

During the superintendent’s re-

port, board members approved the resignation request of a math teacher and the retirement request of a bus driver. Employment requests were also approved by the board for three department chairs, two teachers and a bus aide.

Another topic of interest discussed during the superintendent’s report, was the resurfacing of the bus barn parking lot and driveway. The school will be working with Fehr Graham & Green Associates to determine the best course of action moving forward. A motion was also approved by the board to move forward with updating and improving many security cameras located on the school’s campus.

Finally, board members were presented with a packet including all new board policy updates provided by the Illinois Association of School Boards. Board members will make a decision on the packet at next months meeting.

Several drivers cited for speeding

On April 17 at 9:30 a.m., Rochelle police cited Alexis Moreland, 44, of Rochelle, for speeding 48 m.p.h. in a 30 m.p.h. zone. She posted a promise to comply and was given a June 12 court date.

On April 17 at 1:57 p.m., Rochelle police cited Jacqueline Campos, 42, of Rochelle, for speeding 52 m.p.h. in a 30 m.p.h. zone. She posted a promise to comply and was given a

June 12 court date.

On April 18 at 9:23 a.m., Rochelle police cited Vidal Mancillas, 44, of Rochelle, for speeding 50 m.p.h. in a 30 m.p.h. zone. He posted a promise to comply and was given a June 12 court date.

On April 18 at 4:40 p.m., Rochelle police cited Ricardo Ballesteros, 24, of Chicago, for speeding 54 m.p.h. in a 30 m.p.h. zone. He posted a promise to

comply and was given a June 12 court date.

On April 20 at 12:28 p.m., Rochelle police arrested Scott Cook, 33, of Rochelle, on an Ogle County warrant. He posted an I-bond and was given a June 29 court date.

On April 21 at 3:21 p.m., Rochelle police arrested Scott Cook, 33, of Rochelle, for domestic battery. He was transported to jail.

Rochelle Community Hospital
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If you have symptoms such as loss of smell and taste, cough, fever, chills, runny nose, sore throat, diarrhea, vomiting or muscle aches, you could have a virus. This virus COULD BE COVID-19. We are still in the midst of flu season as well.



WHEN THE TRIAGE LINE IS UNAVAILABLE

If you have general questions about COVID-19 and the triage line is closed, please call the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) hotline at **1-800-889-3931** which is available 24 hours a day/7 days a week. You can also email **dph.sick@illinois.gov**.



Hospital implements visitor screenings

ROCHELLE — To coincide with a newly adopted employee screening program, visitor screening will be implemented at Rochelle Community Hospital beginning Wednesday, April 22.

All RCH patients and visitors will be screened upon arrival for symptoms of COVID-19 or flu, including a temperature check. Any visitor who shows an indication or signs of illness during this screening process will not be allowed to visit or accompany the patient. Patients with fever, cough or possible exposure will be required to wear a mask throughout their visit.

RCH would like to encourage the public to wear their own masks into the building if they are able in order to save quantities of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for hospital staff. Visitors are also encouraged to reuse their own masks on repeat visits.

If your symptoms are not severe in nature, please call the RCH Triage Line at 815-561-8829 for further instructions. This line has been activated to answer any questions you may have about COVID-19. You can reach one of our nurses Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

If you have symptoms such as a cough, fever, chills, runny nose, sore throat, diarrhea, vomiting or muscle aches, you could have a virus. This virus could be COVID-19. We are still in the midst of flu season as well.

If you have general questions about COVID-19 and the triage line is closed, please call the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) hotline at 1-800-889-3931 which is available 24 hours a day/7 days a week. You can also email **dph.sick@illinois.gov**.

LOCAL NEWS

Continuing to feed the community

BY ANDREW
HEISERMAN
STAFF WRITER

AMID the current coronavirus situation, local pay-what-you-can café The Kitchen Table continues to serve those in need within its community.

While all restaurants including The Kitchen Table were forced to close their dining rooms, The Kitchen Table continues to serve roughly 70-to-80 people a night, three days a week. The Kitchen Table is offering pick-up and local delivery service on Tuesdays and Thursdays, as well as drive-thru service for take-and-bake meals on Fridays from 2-5 p.m.

Carry-out and delivery meals can be ordered and paid for by phone at 815-561-9074, or online through its Facebook page and website at www.kitchentablerochelle.org. For take and-bake meals, families drive up and are served one or two pans of food based on the size of the family.

Each pan of food serves four to six people and is served with salad and dinner rolls as sides. While adjusting to the changes was



The Kitchen Table has set up a system for pick-up of meals outside on Tuesday and Thursday evenings.

challenging at first, everything is now running smooth and safe for everybody involved.

"The families drive up, we load it in their car and send them on their way," said Carolyn Brown, founder of The Kitchen Table. "It enforces social distancing for both us and them and the delivery helps a lot of people who shouldn't be out of their homes."

Another precaution taken at The Kitchen Table is only having five employees working at a time, to ensure proper distance between workers. The Kitchen Table is also finishing up a dining room expansion project that it hopes to utilize soon after dining rooms reopen.

The outside of the building is almost done, an electrician recently installed the lights and a quote to



The dining room expansion project is nearly complete.

get the floors done is coming in next Tuesday. Once the building is finished, The Kitchen Table will be able to use it to continue following social distancing guidelines in the future.

"Hopefully when everybody reopens, we should be able to

utilize that space for additional seating," said Brown. "People aren't going to want to be close together and that could be a concern for a long time to come. So, I would like to get that building open to be able to enforce a 6-foot distance between people."

"The families drive up, we load it in their car and send them on their way. It enforces social distancing for both us and them and the delivery helps a lot of people who shouldn't be out of their homes."

Carolyn Brown

Sinnissippi Centers Services during the Coronavirus outbreak

Sinnissippi Centers is continuing to provide care and offer hope to individuals with a behavioral health concern during the COVID-19 outbreak.

We are taking advantage of technology and are able to use video and phone to provide most of our services at this time.

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LOCAL NEWS

Obituaries

Orville Kurz

LINDENWOOD — Orville Henry Kurz, 90, died Sunday, April 19, 2020, in Rockford from Covid-19.

Born Sept. 8, 1929 in Ashton, he was the son of Henry and Grace (Schaffer) Kurz. He was a graduate of Rochelle Township High School and served in the U.S. Army during the Korean Conflict.

He married Barbara Ann Bunker on Feb. 5, 1955. Orville and Barbara farmed in Ogle County for many years and were long time members of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Rochelle.

Orville's wife, Barbara, passed away on May 30, 2016. Orville and Barbara were married for 61 years. Orville was also preceded in death

by his parents, Henry and Grace Kurz, and his brother, Harold Kurz.

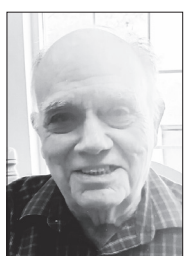
Survivors include sons Richard Kurz of Lindenwood and Dennis (Katie) Kurz of Rockford; brother-in-law, Lorenz Metzger of Davis Junction; sisters-in-law, Mary Bunker of Rochelle, and Louise Kurz of Byron; and many nieces and nephews.

There will be a private family graveside service at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, April 22 with Pastor Greg Hoffmann officiating. Burial will be in Lawnridge Cemetery.

Memorials may be sent to St. Paul Lutheran Church, 1415 10th Ave., Rochelle.

There will be a celebration of Orville's life at a later date.

Visit www.ungerhorner.com for online guest book.



RTHS: Plans still in the works for virtual prom

From page 1

The school will be filming the entire ceremony to put together a traditional graduation video afterward and has also partnered with WRHL radio to livestream the event on the radio and online.

Another way the school is honoring its seniors, is by including signs to put in the family's front lawn with the cap and gown the student receives. While the school knows this will be very different, it is the safest way to honor as many possible students.

"We want the kids to dress up and have that moment where they walk across the stage and the parents hear their kids name read aloud," said Jason Harper, district superintendent. "We want to give that opportunity to as



many students as we can, before they start moving on."

Prom

The school is still working on many details for the virtual prom, but knows for certain that it will be partnering with WRHL to provide the best possible prom experience. WRHL will play student selected music and read off the nominations for prom court royalty in the junior and senior

classes.

Students will be able to dress up and take pictures, then later in the night, WRHL will announce the prom court winners. While the school understands this is far from normal, it is doing everything it can to provide the tradition of prom to its students during these very different times.

"We are trying to honor our students with as many ways as we can, while providing all of our students an opportunity to participate," said Harper.

As for final examinations, students will not be taking formal tests and will be receiving more project-based assignments as teachers see fit. Teachers will be assigning work and assessments through the end of the school year at their own discretion.

Pritzker predicts smaller mid-May COVID-19 peak

Says president is 'fomenting some violence' with 'liberate' tweets

BY JERRY NOWICKI
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

SPRINGFIELD — Gov. JB Pritzker said Tuesday the state's COVID-19 peak could come in mid-May and he is examining the current stay-at-home order for potential changes.

The governor made the comments during a Washington Post Live interview with reporter Robert Costa.

Pritzker said people "have really been abiding by" the state's second-in-the-nation stay-at-home order, which he said led to fewer deaths and hospitalizations than anticipated at this point.

"And so the result of that has been the pushing out of what had been anticipated to be a peaking in the middle or near the end of April, so it's been pushed out now according to the models to maybe mid-May but at a lower level," he said.

Pritzker was asked about differences in the Chicagoland area and downstate Illinois when it comes to fighting the virus, and he said there are

different infection rates depending on region. That could inform changes to the stay-at-home order, the governor said, although he did not directly respond to a follow-up as to whether some counties might reopen before others.

"And now I think we can make some adjustments based upon hospitalization rates, based upon ICU bed availability, based upon infection rates, as we look to, how can we begin to adjust things and work toward — after the peak — really reopening the economy," Pritzker said.

He was also asked about recent tweets from President Donald Trump calling to "liberate" certain states with Democratic governors.

"When he tweets out liberate Michigan or liberate Minnesota, or liberate Virginia, he's fomenting protest and I hate to say that is fomenting some violence and I'm very concerned about what that might mean for the country if he keeps doing things like that," Pritzker said.

The governor said the president "should be pulling people together right now," and he noted recent protests of stay-at-home orders nationwide will likely lead to a wider spread of the virus, including more deaths among those who attended the events.

"They're frankly going to be giving each other coronavirus and people unfortunately will get sick, and some people may die as a result of the president's rhetoric that has brought them out to protest," he said.

While Pritzker praised the federal government's efforts to help set up an alternate care facility at the McCormick Place convention center in downtown Chicago, he said they fell short in other areas. He once again said Trump could have used the Defense Production Act to force greater manufacturing of testing supplies and personal protective equipment. He said Illinois received "maybe 10 percent" of what the state needed from the federal government in terms of PPE.

"None of that has been done at the federal government level," he said. "That's the mistake that has been made all along here, we could have organized this and led this on a federal level."

Harmon Letter

The state's five Republican congressmen responded Monday to a letter sent last week by Illinois Senate President Don Harmon requesting \$40 billion in aid to the state, including \$10 billion for the state's pension system, which has an unfunded liability of \$138 billion.

The GOP members hold five of Illinois' 18 Congressional seats, and they said Harmon, D-Oak Park, should consider pushing structural reforms before requesting "aid that is beyond this immediate crisis."

"We will fight for more aid to support the state and local governments in Illinois, but your letter assumes the federal government will approve aid that is beyond this immediate crisis," the congressmen wrote. "For example, you suggest the state's revenue loss will be approximately \$14.1 billion, but your letter requests aid that is many multiples of the state's loss projections. We fully support federal assistance to help defray some of the state's losses, but we oppose using the crisis as an opportunity for a full-scale federal bailout."

They said the pandemic did not cause the pension crisis in Illinois, but only "further illuminated the one that already existed."

While the GOP members said they will "work with" the state to provide more resources, they said Illinois must reform its pension system, reduce spending and local government mandates, and "withdraw the graduated income tax increase to protect Illinois jobs that are already at risk from the pandemic and to stem the exodus of people and opportunity from our great state."

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LOCAL NEWS

Pritzker faces questioning on prison sentence commutations

Governor says all decisions go through Prisoner Review Board

BY JERRY NOWICKI
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

SPRINGFIELD — Illinois Senate Republicans are calling for greater communication from the governor's office when he commutes prison sentences, but Gov. JB Pritzker has not indicated he will make any voluntary changes to the process, which is spelled out in state law and also goes through the state Prisoner Review Board.

The Chicago Tribune reported Pritzker commuted 17 sentences between March 11 and April 9. Another two commutations were conducted on April 13, according to the Prisoner Review Board.

"We have learned through the media that you have reduced the sentences of some violent criminals, including seven or more convicted murderers," eight Senate Republicans wrote in a letter to the governor on April 16. "We are concerned that you have done so without informing the victims, their families, witnesses who testified against them, local law enforcement leaders, the judges who decided their sentences, or members of the General Assembly. Are all of these commutations because of the COVID-19 crisis? We believe that the public deserves to know."

Pritzker did not directly respond Saturday to a question as to whether recent commutations were related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Illinois Constitution states, "The Governor may grant reprieves, commutations and pardons, after conviction, for all offenses on such terms as he thinks proper. The manner of applying therefore may be regulated by law."

Pritzker pointed out Saturday that all cases also go through the Prisoner Review Board process.

"So I just want to be clear that those go through the PRB," he said. "So they actually have a presentation of each case at the PRB, they vote on those cases



Gov. JB Pritzker, shown here during a bill-signing ceremony Jan. 24 in Springfield, commuted 17 prison sentences between March 11 and April 9, according to the Chicago Tribune. Another two commutations were conducted on April 13, according to the Prisoner Review Board. (Capitol News Illinois photo by Peter Hancock)

before they ever get to my desk."

The review board is an independent body made up of members appointed by the governor. It imposes release conditions, revokes and restores good conduct credits, and conducts parole hearings. It also notifies victims and their families when an inmate is about to be released from custody and makes confidential recommendations to the governor regarding executive clemency petitions.

Public information

But the Senate Republicans said the information about releases from prison should be publicly viewable in an online database and Pritzker should personally reach out to victims' families, local law enforcement leaders, members of the General Assembly, presiding judges, witnesses, and state's attorneys' offices "before making any future commutation decisions."

"We don't even know everyone that they're releasing," Springfield Republican Sen. Steve McClure, who co-signed the letter to the governor, said in a phone call. "So we are not even getting the information. It is not just something that we need so that we know whether or not this is the right thing to do, but also for the safety of the public, particularly

... victims, people who testified against these people."

House Republican John Cabello, of Machesney Park, was also critical. He accused the governor of undermining the criminal justice system in "an unbelievable attempt to protect these prisoners from the coronavirus" as he released the names of 13 recently released prisoners last week.

Prison reform and civil rights groups, however, have praised the actions on medical furloughs and commutations and even called for greater release of at-risk prisoners in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Releasing prisoners from these settings improves safety for other detainees, people who work in the corrections system as guards and administrators and also helps protect the communities where Illinois prisons are located," Colleen Connell, executive director of the ACLU of Illinois, said in a statement. "The people who are being released have served time — some of them years. The release of these names is not another opportunity to create faux outrage and perpetuate a criminal legal system that too often confuses being tough with being smart."

The Pritzker administration also faced a lawsuit from civil rights activists seeking the release of thousands

more prisoners due to health concerns earlier this month, but a judge denied the request to intervene.

According to the IDOC website, as of Monday, 148 incarcerated individuals had tested positive for COVID-19 in Illinois prisons, 62 of whom have recovered, and 135 prison staff had tested positive for the virus, 35 of whom have recovered. Stateville Correctional Center near Joliet accounted for 70 of the staff and 121 of the prisoners that tested positive, with 77 combined recoveries.

In a Thursday news conference, Pritzker said there are "two methods that we're following for thinking about release."

"One is the director of the DOC, the Department of Corrections, has the ability on his own to determine that someone can be released and it's the criteria that he's using is non-violent convictions and people who have already served a substantial portion of their term or have a comorbidity or something that makes them especially vulnerable," he said, adding that it is essential that the person would not pose a risk to the community.

April 6 order

On April 6, Pritzker signed an executive order allowing the IDOC director greater authority to grant medical furloughs to prisoners during the COVID-19 disaster declaration.

Pritzker did not have an exact number of releases Monday at his daily briefing but said there were 1,300 fewer persons incarcerated than at the beginning of March for various reasons the last time he checked.

A spokesperson for IDOC said later Monday, "The department's efforts to return people to their communities has led to either the release or home confinement of more than 760 people, and this work is continuing. To reach this number, the department is exercising the legal procedures available while placing an emphasis on maintaining public safety."

Pritzker said the sec-

"We don't even know everyone that they're releasing. So we are not even getting the information. It is not just something that we need so that we know whether or not this is the right thing to do, but also for the safety of the public, particularly ... victims, people who testified against these people."

Sen. Steve McClure

ond method for release is appeals to the governor for clemency.

"And those often are the more difficult cases. These are often people who may have committed a violent crime but it may have occurred many, many years ago, they may have served, for example, decades of a term," Pritzker said, adding he makes decisions in consultation with Lt. Gov. Juliana Stratton and legal counsel.

Asked if the governor was considering adopting some of the procedures suggested by the GOP senators and whether more commutations are in the works, Pritzker's spokesperson said only, "The governor has clemency powers granted to him via the state Constitution. The administration has followed all appropriate procedures."

In their letter, the Senate Republicans specifically mentioned Alma Durr, a mother who was charged with killing her 21-month-old son in 1996 after allegedly using crack cocaine. She was serving a life sentence before it was commuted with nine others on April 7. They alleged that Durr was leaving a prison that had no prisoners confirmed to have COVID-19.

McClure said it and another case regarding the murder of a child that was in youth protective services stood out as hypocritical and dangerous when compared to the governor's previous public comments on reforms needed to the Department of Children and Family Services.

"It just doesn't make

any sense, particularly when the governor seems to be so outraged over DCFS cases," McClure said.

The John Howard Association, an independent prison reform group, released a statement Friday with the Cook County Public Defender's Office saying commutation decisions should be based on "research and data, not politics and emotion."

"Full consideration of all of the public health ramifications of this deadly disease inside prisons makes clear that each person released from prison represents an opportunity to save not one life but many lives," they said in the statement. "Categorically excluding people who have demonstrated their rehabilitation and do not present a threat to society from consideration for release solely due to the offense they were convicted of committing many years prior has long been recognized by experts as an ineffectual and ill-chosen approach to maintaining public safety."

The statement said Pritzker's commutations and executive orders to expedite early release of some prisoners "are steps in the right direction that must be encouraged and increased for everyone's safety and well-being."

The other Republicans who signed the letter are Jason Plummer, of Vandalia; Brian Stewart, of Freeport; Chapin Rose, of Mahomet; Jil Tracy, of Quincy; Paul Schimpf, of Waterloo; Craig Wilcox, of McHenry; and Dan McConchie, of Hawthorn Woods.

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LOCAL VIEWS

Guest column

The U.S. Census and the importance of being counted

DURING this difficult time, many people are looking for ways to help. Perhaps one of these easiest ways to impact our community right now is to complete the 2020 census. A few minutes of your time will ensure that our community receives proper funding from the federal government, that we are represented properly at every level of government, and that research on our community is accurate for the next decade.

Every 10 years, as mandated by the U.S. Constitution (Article 1, Section 2), the U.S. Census Bureau literally counts everyone who lives in the United States and its territories. This year, census day is April 1. It is a snapshot in time. Not only are you required to respond, but responding is in your and your community's best interest.

The census is 10 questions and should take just a few minutes to complete. All information is confidential and protected by federal law. Answers can be used only to produce statistics. Identifiable information cannot be shared with other agencies, even law enforcement.

It has never been easier to respond, whether online at my2020census.gov, over the phone at 844-330-2020, or by mail – all without having to meet a census taker.

The census is important for many reasons. First, an accurate census count is crucial to ensure that you are represented in local, state, and federal government. The count determines each state's number of seats in the House of Representatives and votes in the Electoral College. Exactly where people live in the state influences congressional districts, state legislative districts, and

even city council districts.

Second, an accurate census count ensures that our community receives its share of \$860 billion distributed by the federal government for a host of programs, including Medicaid, Medicare, highway funding, Pell Grants, school lunches and other food assistance, and aid to low-income families. Your response to the census helps to ensure that your community receives the public services it needs.

Finally, researchers in government and universities use census data for all kinds of critical social research to better understand and assist certain populations across the country.

The current census will influence funding and policy decisions until 2030. It is vital that East Central Indiana residents participate.

How can you help? Make sure that you and every person in your household is counted. This includes babies, children, and the elderly. The online form is available at my-2020census.gov. Or you can call to complete the census over the phone.

Encourage family, friends, and neighbors to complete the census. Share with them that not only is it required by law, it does a lot to help their communities.

Share about the importance of the census on social media. Search #2020census for images and posts or share your own reasons for completing the census.

Do you know a college student who lives off campus? Make sure they know that they should complete the census for where they live during the academic year. Students who live in residence halls are counted in a different way and do not need to complete an individual census form.

Chad Kinsella is an assistant professor of political science at Ball State University.



Chad Kinsella

Letter to the Editor

Refinancing Kishwaukee College loan will save taxpayers millions

Dear Editor,
Kishwaukee College's Board of Trustees unanimously approved the refinancing of \$48.5 million of General Obligation bonds at our January meeting. The college was able to take advantage of lower interest rates and save district residents approximately \$14.5 million in today's dollars (or \$20 million with inflation) over the remaining terms of the bonds. The district will save an average of over \$900,000 per year in taxpayer dollars.

Ten years ago, Kishwaukee College made a commitment to taxpayers. The Board of Trustees asked district residents to renew their investment in their community college. Voters approved

a \$52.6 million referendum that, along with student funded alternative revenue bonds and college reserves, paid for the construction and remodeling of 23 classrooms and science labs, enhanced student service spaces and improved infrastructure, including roads and parking lots.

Many of these areas of campus needed to be updated. The referendum made it possible for Kishwaukee College to offer great educational opportunities to future students using state of the art facilities. "Temporary" buildings that were constructed during the first building phase of Kishwaukee College 50 years ago had served

their purpose and needed to be torn down. Campus enhancements have helped Kishwaukee College faculty and staff better serve our students. Student feedback surveys have demonstrated the importance of the college's enhanced physical environment to our learners.

As Kishwaukee College Trustees, we work to ensure transparency and maintain fiscal responsibility. Fulfilling our word and saving millions of dollars for district residents is one way we remain stewards of your community college.

Bob Johnson
Chairman, Kishwaukee College Board of Trustees



VOICE ON THE STREET

Question:

In keeping with social distancing practices, we are asking our weekly Voice on the Street question here. This week's question is: What precautions are you taking when going out in public or to work if you are still working outside of your home?

"I am wearing a mask when I go into stores and practicing social distancing the best I can."

Gay Vickers

"I'm staying home except for a quick weekly trip for groceries and essentials. I wear a mask when outside, sanitize areas of the house once I come home, wash hands after touching anything from the outside, stay six feet from others and Zoom gatherings for work and with family."

Teri Reed

"Wash my hands and don't touch my face."

Michelle Lampson

"My office is closed to the public. We sanitize hands often, don't touch documents dropped off for a couple of days. Staff works different days. When I have to go to public places such as a store I wear a mask."

Silene Q. Walters

"I work mostly alone. I go to work, home and to donate plasma. I live close to Walgreens so I pop in there for milk. That's it."

Emily Page

"I also wear a mask and practice social distancing the best I can."

Kathy Graf Thomas

"I haven't gone anywhere in three weeks. When I do I already have a mask which I will wear."

Sheryl Holden

"I wear a mask if I have to go to the store."

Bobby Jo Leon



How to contact government officials

U.S. Con. Adam Kinzinger
1218 Longworth HOB
Washington, D.C.
20515
(202) 225-3635

IL Sen. Brian Stewart
M104A State House
Springfield, IL 62706
(217) 782-0180

IL Rep. Tom Demmer
314 Capitol
Springfield, IL 62706
(217) 782-0535

Have a letter you want to submit to us? Send it to (news@rochelle-news-leader.com

KEEPING YOU IN TOUCH WITH YOUR LOCAL LEADERS

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR POLICY

The Rochelle News-Leader encourages responsible letters to the editor on subjects of interest to our readers. Editing may be necessary for space, clarity or to avoid obscenity or libel, but ideas will not be altered. All letters must bear the handwritten signature of the writer and include address and phone number or e-mail address for verification purposes. Neither the street address nor phone number will be printed. Letters should be typed or legibly

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

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

COMMUNITY



A special birthday parade

Family organizes treat with help from local fire departments

HILLCREST — Marvin Wagner celebrated his 86th birthday Saturday even while social distancing. His daughters organized a special parade for him with the help of the Rochelle and Ogle/Lee Hillcrest Fire Departments. Wagner, who has always been a supporter of the fire departments and has attended more than 40 Firemen’s Balls over the years, was treated to a parade of fire



Birthdays & Anniversaries

April 24

Lainie Arnold

April 26

Evan Jones

May 1

Bob Caron

May 5

John & Kris Oleson

May 6

Troy & Minia Waters

May 10

Abbie Overstreet

May 7

Barb Aleman

May 8

Ashley Komadina

May 10

Nanci Flynn

May 5

Jamey King

May 6

Diana Dickey

May 10

Waters

May 7

Kane Cromwell

May 8

Barb Aleman

May 10

Ashley Komadina

May 10

Nanci Flynn

May 10

Waters

May 10

Abbie Overstreet

CALENDAR

Cancellations

- The Annual Town Meeting for Flagg Township scheduled for April 14 has been cancelled per Governor Pritzger’s Executive Order 2020-22. The meeting will be suspended through the duration of the Gubernatorial Disaster Proclamation. The Annual Town Meeting will be held at a later date.
- These support groups WILL NOT be meeting at Rochelle Community Hospital until further notice:
 - Alcoholics Anonymous
 - Group Hope
 - Narcotics Anonymous
- Lodge rentals at the Rochelle Wildlife Conservation Club will be suspended for the month of April.
- The monthly meeting the Rochelle Wildlife Conservation Club has been cancelled.

Thursday, April 23
Due to recommendations of the Ogle County Health Department, the regular monthly meeting of the Ogle County Regional Planning Commission scheduled for Thursday, April 23 has been cancelled. The next meeting of the Regional Planning Commission is scheduled for Thursday, May 21 at 6 p.m. at the Old Ogle County Court House, First Floor Conference Room #100, 105 S. 5th St., Oregon.

(Submit items for the calendar to jsimmons@rochellenews-leader.com)



| FROM THE HEART DAILY CASH WINNERS | |
|---|--|
| April 1 - | Brandon Spandet, Fort Hood, Texas, \$25 |
| April 2 - | Yvette Yarbrough, Dixon, \$25 |
| April 3 - | Mary May, Amboy, \$25 |
| April 4 - | Tammy Kettleson, Rochelle, \$25 |
| April 5 - | Scott Rothchild, Chicago, \$50 |
| April 6 - | Karla Steder, Rochelle, \$25 |
| April 7 - | Marge Kuehl, Rochelle, \$25 |
| April 8 - | Anita Bowers, Byron, \$25 |
| April 9 - | Beth Speier, Rochelle, \$25 |
| April 10 - | Marta Pineda, Rochelle, \$25 |
| April 11 - | David Peak, Chicago, \$25 |
| April 12 - | Mary Willett, Dixon, \$300 |
| April 13 - | Cal Jacobs, Rochelle, \$25 |
| April 14 - | Jessica Aldridge, Aurora, Colorado, \$25 |
| April 15 - | City of Rochelle, \$25 |
| April 16 - | Carol Hale, Rochelle, \$25 |
| April 17 - | Patricia Hansen, Rochelle, \$25 |
| April 18 - | Sharon Gardner, Rochelle, \$25 |
| April 19 - | From the Heart auction, Rochelle, \$50 |
| April 20 - | Nel Pitelka, Sandwich, \$25 |
| April 21 - | Robert Lindenmeyer, Sublette, \$25 |
| April 22 - | Rochelle Area Community Foundation, \$25 |
| Checks to winners will be mailed out at the end of each month | |



Coffee Break

King Crossword

ACROSS

1 Resided

6 Things

11 Demosthenes or Cicero

12 Cancel out

14 Ubiquitous fastener

15 Early spring bloom

16 Feedbag tidbit

17 — the manger

19 Owns

20 Press

22 Ballet step

23 — song (cheaply)

24 Force mea-sures

26 Decorum

28 Quite some time

30 Actor Stephen

31 Went sour

35 Contents of some trays

39 Responsibility

40 Court

42 Story

43 Donkey

44 Impostor

46 Sudden turn

47 Traditional usage

49 Love apple

51 Medical prior-ization

52 Portuguese island group

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

11 12 13

14 15

16 17 18 19

20 21 22 23

24 25 26 27

28 29 30

31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38

39 40 41 42

43 44 45 46

47 48 49 50

51 52

53 54

DOWN

9 He-men

10 George

11 Egg-shaped

13 English com-position

18 Leg, slangily

21 Must have

23 Banquet

25 Scale member

27 Part of the Justice Dept.

29 Cronkite, Rather, et al.

31 Work together

32 Doubtful

33 Neighbor of Georgia

34 Female deer

36 Risk

37 Cheers up

38 Some lilies

41 Lash — (berate)

44 Comic strip possum

45 Nap

48 Body art, for short

50 Calendar abbr.

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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging ♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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CryptoQuip

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

Clue: H equals D

R CKILF COULI AJWI BWIU R QKE

EKI ARL IUXH IU XJRPJ.

IOJF HBHW'I LJZPJ LQBZBIL IOJZJ.

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King Crossword

Answers

24 mins.

Solution time: 24 mins.

Weekly SUDOKU

Answers

CryptoQuip

Answers

They didn't serve spirits there.

but was told to leave.

A gutsy ghost went into a pub

LOCAL NEWS

Caron to celebrate 90th birthday

ROCHELLE — Bob Caron will be 90 years old on May 1.

Those wishing to send a card may send them to 906 N. 15th St., Rochelle, IL 61068. He would enjoy hearing from you on his special birthday.

Bob Caron



CASA advocates for children within Ogle County

CASA – 15th Judicial Circuit is a non-profit, volunteer organization that advocates for the best interests of abused and neglected children within the Juvenile Court system in Lee, Carroll and Ogle Counties.

CASA is instrumental in fulfilling society's most fundamental obligation by making sure a qualified, compassionate adult will protect and fight for a child's right to be safe, to be treated with dignity and respect and to learn and grow in the safe embrace of a loving family.

Court Appointed Special Advocate/Guardian ad Litem (CASA/GAL) volunteers are ordinary people doing extraordinary things to serve children in our abuse/neglect courts each year. Our CASA volunteers are everyday citizens appointed by judges to advocate for the safety and well-being of children who have been removed from their homes due to abuse and neglect.

They stand up for our children and make a difference one child at a time.

What does it take to be a CASA? Commitment to children, Objectivity, Responsibility, Communication skills, the ability to talk with different kinds of people, some of whom will be wrestling with difficult problems, about 8-15 hours a month, and must be 21 years of age or older. No special experience is required. CASA volunteers come from all professions, educational backgrounds and ethnic backgrounds.

Once accepted, volunteers are trained in courtroom procedure, social services, the juvenile justice system and the special needs of children who have been abused and neglected.

For more information on becoming a CASA Volunteer please call 815-222-6780, email casadirector@casal5.comcastbiz.net, visit our website at <http://casal5thdistrict.org/> or find us on Facebook.



Health department updates county board on virus count

Discusses outbreak at Rochelle food plant

By Brad Jennings
OGLE COUNTY LIFE EDITOR

OREGON — Ogle County's health administrator told the county board at its Tuesday meeting that the health department is "working tirelessly" with people who have tested positive with COVID-19.

Kyle Auman said that the county currently has 61 positive cases (as of April 21). He said four people have been hospitalized and one of those people was released. He said to date, only one person has died.

"We're hoping to keep it that way," he said.

The board held a tele meeting on April 21, where board members and the public called into the meeting. The public was also encouraged to email questions before the meeting that could be answered during the public comment section or call in with questions. No one did.

Auman told the board about the "large scale" outbreak at Rochelle Foods, leading the health department to order its closure on April 17. He said his department started working with Rochelle Foods weeks before the

closure, and that the health department asked the business to voluntarily close four times prior to its closure, which it did not.

As of April 17, 24 cases of COVID-19 were linked to the facility. Those included cases in Ogle County, Whiteside County and Winnebago County.

Auman said that the testing of 840 employees was set to begin on April 23. He said there will be a drive through clinic system set up for testing to lower exposure. He said the plan is to get all employees tested in two days.

He also said that the employees will be paid for the two weeks the plant is expected to be closed.

"Everybody's working hard to end this end," county board chairman John Finfrock said after Auman's presentation.

Other business

The board approved a retail tax on marijuana. The tax for businesses selling in unincorporated areas of the county will be 3.75 percent. And the tax on businesses selling in a municipality in the county will be 3 percent.

Report policy

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

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

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TRUSTED
NEWS & INFORMATION

When You Need It Most

In a crisis, journalism matters more than ever.

When the world careens out of control, The Rochelle News-Leader is a calming source of facts and information. At its core, the COVID-19 pandemic is a deeply personal story. We want to know that our family, friends and neighbors are safe.

That's where your local paper delivers. We are reporting what's going on in our schools, our churches, and our hospitals. We are answering your questions every day. Factually and fairly. To keep doing this, we ask for your support, now more than ever. It's always been costly to gather and distribute the news. It's even more challenging when our advertisers face uncertainty.

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ROCHELLE News-Leader

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ROCHELLE NEWS-LEADER • SECTION 2 • PAGE 1

SPORTS



RTHS senior Jordan Dobberstein will continue his bowling career collegiately.

See page 2 for more details

A group of approximately 15 students and staff members are posing for a photo at night on a circular stone platform. In the center, a large purple flag with a white letter 'R' is being held up. The students are dressed in casual winter clothing, including jackets, hoodies, and jeans. Some are wearing purple and white clothing, likely school colors. The background is dark, with some distant lights and a parking lot visible. The platform they are standing on has yellow lines painted on the ground in front of it.

(COURTESY PHOTO)

Rochelle coaches and student-athletes took part in the statewide #LightsForTheFight movement initiated by the IHSA in light of the coronavirus pandemic. Athletes and coaches gathered at the circle drive Friday evening as RTHS illuminated its stadium lights for 20 minutes to honor the Class of 2020.

#LightsForTheFight

Rochelle honors spring student-athletes amid coronavirus pandemic

ROCHELLE — Stadium lights shined across the state Friday evening, as the Illinois High School Association's member schools, including Rochelle, came together to recognize senior student-athletes who have lost their final spring

In an effort to celebrate the IHSA's #LightsForTheFight movement, RTHS illuminated the Douglas A. Creason Athletic Complex for 20 minutes, with the football scoreboard reading "20:20" in honor of the Class of 2020. While prac-

"It was amazing to see the community come to support the seniors," se-

The IHSA Board of Directors announced Tuesday afternoon that the 2020 spring sports season would be canceled as a result of

See LIGHTS page 3

Messer earns IWCOA Academic All-State honors

Junior student-athlete recognized for achievements this season

"I feel honored to be recognized for my hard work in both school and sports," Messersaid. "Both activities drive me to be the best I can be. I utilize my time during school so I can finish my homework and studying before I start practice."



(FILE PHOTO BY RUSSELL HODGES)

Junior Noah Messer grapples with an opponent from Burlington Central during Rochelle's triangular meet at Dixon over the winter. Messer was one of two Rochelle wrestlers to earn Academic All-State honors from the IWCOA this season.

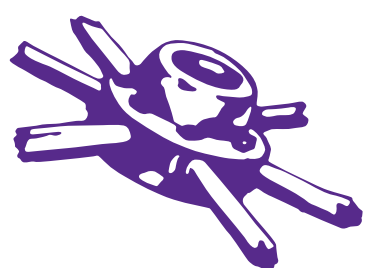
talented juniors expected to return to the Rochelle wrestling program next season. Messer, who also

starts as a two-way lineman on the varsity football team, is already working hard to prepare for his senior

athletics, despite activities around the country being suspended or canceled because of the coronavirus

“I’ve made the most of my time by lifting weights and doing agility drills.”

Messer said. "I can follow the recommendations of my coaches in order to prepare myself for next season."

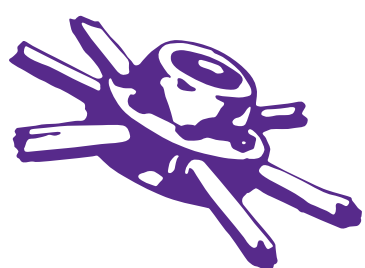


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(COURTESY PHOTO)

Rochelle senior Jordan Dobberstein will continue his academics and his bowling career at Kishwaukee College next year.

Dobberstein signs with Kishwaukee College

BY RUSSELL HODGES
SPORTS EDITOR

The new Kishwaukee College bowling program has added another Rochelle Township High School student-athlete to its roster for the 2020-21 season.

Senior Jordan Dobberstein signed with the Kougars this past week, becoming the first male and the third current or former RTHS student-athlete (Katie Dummer and Cassie Moore) to commit to the Kishwaukee College team. Dobberstein spent one season with the Hubs, and he was one of three seniors to compete for Rochelle this winter under head coach Jim Lyles.

"I'm looking forward to meeting new people and bowling with previous friends of mine," Dobberstein said. "I

chose Kishwaukee College because it's a short drive from home and I've heard good things about the college. My coach at RTHS helped me prepare for college by helping me do my absolute best and work with what I have."

Dobberstein spent most of his lone season with the junior varsity team, but he moved up to varsity during Rochelle's Senior Night matchup against Streator, where he rolled a high game of 185 and helped the Hubs take one game from the Bulldogs. Dobberstein said he plans to study political science in order to pursue a career in politics after college.

"Jordan was a very hard worker and he was always willing to do anything he could to get better," Lyles said. "This season was Jordan's first year of competitive bowling, but I'm very excited that he signed to continue bowling at Kishwaukee College."

"I chose Kishwaukee College because it's a short drive from home and I've heard good things about the college. My coach at RTHS helped me prepare for college by helping me do my absolute best and work with what I have."

Jordan Dobberstein



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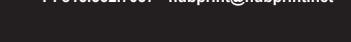
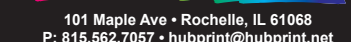
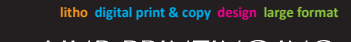
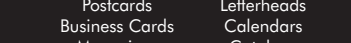
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SPORTS



(PHOTO BY MARCY DELILLE)

The scoreboard at Rochelle Township High School's Douglas A. Creason Athletic Complex read "20:20" Friday evening in honor of the Class of 2020.

LIGHTS: Class of 2020 spring athletes honored

From page 1

"It was nice to have some sort of senior sports moment, even if it was off the court," senior tennis player Sean Flanagan said. "I was understanding of the situation, but it was also very disappointing to have sports canceled. I didn't perform as well as I wanted to during the postseason last year, and I really wanted another opportunity this year. I've had to adjust to keep up with my classes, but my teachers have been amazing throughout this

process."

Although they're unable to compete this spring because of the coronavirus, Rochelle's senior student-athletes were thankful for an opportunity to be recognized Friday evening. While some will be continuing their academic and athletic careers collegiately, others have seen their high school careers come to an abrupt end without any formal send-offs or recognition.

"It was a very emotional night," senior softball player Abby Reish said.

"When I found out about sports being canceled, I was very upset because it's my senior year and it shouldn't have ended this way... Seniors are always looking forward to their last moments because for some students, this year was going to be their last time ever playing a sport, playing an instrument or even walking through the hallways and talking with their friends. We miss seeing our favorite teachers and our friends. In our whole lives, nobody would have expected this to happen."

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Coronavirus Stimulus Guide

How the \$2 trillion CARES Act will assist local residents, businesses



The CARES Act

- \$250 billion to make unemployment insurance available to more categories of workers and to extend the duration of benefits to 39 weeks from the 26 weeks typical in most states. It would also provide an extra \$600 a week for four months.

- \$301 billion in direct payments to households.

- \$349 billion in loans to small businesses, with the amount spent on payroll, rent or utilities converting into grants that don't have to be repaid.

- \$500 billion for loans, loan guarantees or other aid to businesses, states and municipalities—including the possibility that the government will take direct equity stakes in distressed companies. Of the total, \$29 billion is set aside for cargo and passenger airlines, and \$17 billion is for businesses deemed critical to national security, such as Boeing. The remaining \$454 billion would go to backstop losses in lending facilities established or expanded by the Federal Reserve.

- \$32 billion in grants to cover wages at passenger air carriers, cargo air carriers and contractors.

- \$150 billion in direct aid to states, distributed according to population size. A municipality could apply to receive aid directly, reducing the amount available to the rest of the state.

- \$221 billion in a variety of tax benefits for businesses, including allowing businesses to defer payroll taxes, which finance Medicare and Social Security, for the rest of the year. It would also temporarily allow businesses to claim deductions using today's losses against past profits to claim quick refunds for cash infusions.

- \$340 billion in supplemental spending, which includes \$117 billion for hospitals and veterans' care. It also includes \$25 billion mostly for public transit to make up for revenue lost because of dwindling ridership.

Households and Workers

Individual checks

The CARES Act provides for direct payments of \$1,200 to adults and \$500 per child to American households, structured as tax refunds to allow the Internal Revenue Service to distribute the funds quickly.

There is no provision for future direct payments in the event the economic disruption lasts into the later spring. The direct grants are phased out for upper income brackets, starting with \$75,000 of

individual income.

The grants aren't available at all, for example, for individuals without children making more than \$99,000 and married couples without children making more than \$198,000.

Unemployed workers

The CARES Act would extend the duration of jobless benefits to 39 weeks from 26 available in most states, and includes a \$600-a-week increase for the first four months, with the bonus payment avail-

able through July 31.

These benefits would be extended to contract workers, freelancers and other nontraditional workers, who lack benefits in some states. The aim is to replace lost wages as completely as possible.

Freelancers

The CARES Act expands some benefits and grants to independent contractors, such as Uber drivers and freelance film editors, that normally go only to employees or small businesses. For example, it extends unemployment benefits to self-employed

workers, including independent contractors, freelancers and other nontraditional workers who are unemployed, partially unemployed or unable to work because of COVID-19.

It includes a \$600-a-week increase on top of current levels of unemployment benefits for four months. Independent contractors also can apply for the \$10 billion set aside for emergency EIDL—economic injury disaster loan—funds, which are normally available only to a narrower category of small businesses.

Personal Financing and Taxes

Bankruptcy

According to the CARES Act, the law ensures that people who file for bankruptcy don't have to use stimulus checks to repay past debt, and it extends the time that bankrupt people have to repay a portion of their debt as a condition to getting a fresh start. The current repayment time limit is five years; the bill extends the repayment time frame to seven years.

bearance of up to 360 days to borrowers who say they have been harmed by the coronavirus outbreak. Servicers are prohibited from initiating foreclosure and processing foreclosure-related evictions for 60 days beginning March 18. Owners of multifamily properties can request a forbearance of up to 90 days, during which tenants cannot be evicted for nonpayment of rent or other fees.

Credit reports

Under the CARES Act, consumers who fall behind on their debt payments won't necessarily take a hit on their credit reports. The bill requires lenders that allow struggling consumers to defer or skip loan payments to report the borrowers as current on their payments, even if they are not. Most consumers who were behind on their debts before the coronavirus crisis will continue to be reported as delinquent.

Mortgages

The CARES Act requires companies that service federally backed mortgages to grant a for-

Retirement

According to the CARES Act, the law temporarily loosens the rules on hardship distributions from retirement accounts, giving people affected by the crisis access to up to \$100,000 of their retirement savings without a 10 percent penalty. The law doubles the amount 401(k) participants can take in loans from an account for the next six months to the lower of \$100,000 or 100 percent of the account balance. (IRAs don't permit loans.)

For retirees, the law suspends for 2020 the mandatory distributions the government requires most



to take from tax-deferred 401(k)s and individual retirement accounts starting at either age 70½ or age 72.

Student loans

Per the CARES Act, the law would allow most Americans with federal student loans to suspend their monthly payments through Sept. 30, 2020, without any interest accruing. It would also enable employers to make tax-exempt contribu-

tions toward their workers' student-loan payments.

Taxes

Under the CARES Act, people who don't itemize their deductions would be able to claim up to \$300 for charitable contributions. Businesses get the ability to apply losses from 2018, 2019 or 2020 to past years' profits and claim refunds. Restaurants and retailers would benefit from the

fixing of a mistake in the 2017 tax law that curbed their depreciation deductions on renovations.

Employers would be able to defer paying their share of 2020 payroll taxes. They could then make half of those payments in 2021 and the other half in 2022. In addition, the bill creates a new tax credit for retaining employees that's aimed at companies that are too large to benefit from the

small-business assistance elsewhere in the bill.

Those employers would be able to get a tax credit equal to 50 percent of payroll. That is limited to \$10,000 per employee per quarter, and for employers with more than 100 employees, it is available only to those companies and nonprofits that had their businesses limited or closed by government actions.

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Businesses and Industries

Airlines

Under the CARES Act, for passenger airlines, the bill includes \$25 billion in direct funding for worker salaries and benefits, as well as up to \$25 billion in loans and loan guarantees. The bill hews to what airlines had been asking for. Carriers had lobbied aggressively for direct grants rather than just loans, warning that without an immediate infusion of cash, they would have to make sharp job cuts.

The bill also includes \$3 billion in assistance to keep paying contract workers that provide airline catering, baggage loading, ticketing and check-in, and other services at airports. Cargo airlines will be eligible to receive \$4 billion in loans and guarantees, and \$4 billion in payroll assistance.

In exchange for the payroll grants, carriers must agree not to furlough, lay off or cut pay for employees until Sept. 30. Assistance also hinges on companies agreeing not to buy back shares or pay dividends, and to limits on executive compensation.

The package also allows the Transportation Department to direct airlines to maintain specific flights based on their schedules on March 1, before carriers had instituted the deepest cuts to their flying. This would include services to rural communities and to support delivery of health-care-related cargo.

Banks

The CARES Act delays implementation of a new accounting rule that would have required banks to sock away reserves for any estimated loan losses all at once, instead of spreading them out over the life of the loan. The Act gives the office of the comptroller of the currency the authority to allow banks to make loans that would typically trip up size restrictions. Smaller community banks with less than \$10 billion in assets get more lending flexibility through a higher maximum leverage ratio and more wiggle room if they exceed it. Banks will also get more leeway on how they account for troubled consumer loans,



allowing them to work with struggling borrowers who have fallen behind on their payments.

Energy

The CARES Act contains no major provisions to specifically aid the U.S. energy industry. Beleaguered U.S. oil producers had sought a range of remedies, including preferential tax treatment, direct subsidies and a \$3 billion purchase of oil by the federal government for the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. The renewable energy industry had sought extensions to tax provisions that would have helped wind-and-solar developers secure valuable tax credits even if there were construction delays.

Farmers

The CARES Act directs more than \$48 billion to agriculture and nutrition programs, helping cushion the blow for producers reeling from the latest in a string of hits to the U.S. farm economy, as prices sank for corn, soybeans, wheat and cattle. The law designates \$14 billion to replenish the Commodity Credit Corp., a Depression-era program designed to stabilize farm

incomes, and \$9.5 billion to support producers of specialty crops, livestock and dairy, as well as those who supply farmers markets, restaurants and schools.

Health industry

The CARES Act adds \$27 billion to an emergency fund that could give a boost to dozens of projects by pharmaceutical companies and academic groups developing drugs and vaccines against coronavirus. The emergency fund received a smaller amount of funding under a coronavirus response act signed earlier in March. There is no COVID-19 vaccine, but dozens are in development. The package allows the government to take steps to ensure that products developed with the emergency funding will be "affordable in the commercial market," but that these steps shouldn't delay development of the products.

The bill also includes provisions to increase reporting of potential shortages from drug manufacturers and companies that make active pharmaceutical ingredients, which are the building

blocks of prescription drugs. Many of these raw materials are produced overseas and drawn more attention during the virus outbreak. Companies that make respirators and other medical devices would be required to report to the federal government potential supply chain interruptions.

Hotels

The hotel industry last week asked the White House for a \$150 billion financial-aid package, targeted specifically for hospitality companies. What it got instead from the CARES Act is a patchwork of loans, grants and tax help, much of it through the \$350 billion in loans and grants for small businesses. The majority of U.S. hoteliers qualify as businesses with fewer than 500 employees, making less than \$35 million in annual revenue.

The lodging industry even scored a victory in getting language in the Senate bill that defined each individual hotel as its own business. Hotel owners with several properties had been concerned that they would not qualify as a small business because taken together, all their properties would have

pushed them over the current Small Business Administration's definition.

The federal boost in unemployment insurance will help the many hotel employees who have been furloughed across the U.S. Larger hotel companies can apply for loans through the Treasury Department's economic stabilization fund. But few in the lodging industry expect travel to bounce back by late spring, or even soon after.

Postal Service

Under the CARES Act, the financially strained U.S. Postal Service is getting a \$10 billion Treasury loan to help the mail carrier during the pandemic. That should be welcome news for Amazon.com Inc., United Parcel Service Inc. and, to a lesser extent, FedEx Corp., which rely on postal workers for last-mile delivery in certain places.

The Postal Service is only allowed by law to raise its net debt by \$3 billion a year, so the bill loosens that restriction. But it does come with some strings attached. Mainly, the Postal Service can only use the financing for operating expenses and not to pay down outstanding debt. The bill also requires

the Postal Service to prioritize medical shipments and allows temporary delivery points to protect workers and recipients of mail.

Private equity

According to the CARES Act, private-equity firms will likely find it a challenge to get access to stimulus funds. Based on available details of the stimulus package, private-equity-owned businesses wouldn't be explicitly barred from receiving assistance. But government lending requirements could prevent them from unlocking the aid, say lawyers, lobbyists and regulatory experts.

Railroads

Per the CARES Act, national passenger railroad Amtrak secured about \$1 billion to cover revenue losses related to the coronavirus. The railroad industry won enhanced unemployment benefits that account for its workers not being covered under traditional state-run unemployment programs. Railroad workers instead receive unemployment benefits under a program administered by the Railroad Retirement Board.

The bill removes a seven-day waiting period to collect unemployment and provides \$50 million to cover the benefits tied to that waiver. It also provides \$425 million to double biweekly unemployment payments to \$1,200 through July.

Small

businesses

The CARES Act would allow businesses and nonprofits with up to 500 workers in a single location to apply through qualifying banks for loans backed by the Small Business Administration. The loans would convert into grants that don't have to be repaid for amounts spent on items such as payroll, rent or utilities, with the grants reduced when workers are laid off. The loans would be capped at \$10 million and cover wages up to \$100,000 a year.



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