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Informational meetings held

Informational meetings for the Steward-Caron Road Industrial Corridor were held this past week.

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OBITUARIES

NONE

INSERTS

- RUNNINGS
- MENARDS

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Ogle County ERT team ruled justified in June Lost Nation shooting incident with barricaded Dixon man

Use of deadly force ruled justified, no criminal charges will be filed against law enforcement

BY JEFF HELFRICH
MANAGING EDITOR

OREGON — The Ogle County Emergency Response Team's use of deadly force in a June 12 incident at a home in Lost Nation that left a barricaded Dixon man and three officers shot has been ruled justified, a Sept. 27 press release from Ogle County State's Attorney Mike Rock said.

Jonathon Gounaris, 32, of rural Dixon is currently in custody due to the incident and his next scheduled court appearance is Oct. 17. He faces charges of four counts of attempted first degree murder, three counts of aggravated discharge of a firearm, three counts of aggravated battery and two counts of possession of a firearm without a Firearm Owner's Identification (FOID) card.

The Ogle County ERT team was called to Gounaris' home in Lost Nation on June 12 after a report of someone threatening to commit suicide, when police entered the home, Gounaris and Ogle County ERT Members Tyler Carls (Rochelle Fire



(PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)

The Ogle County Emergency Response Team's use of deadly force in a June 12 incident at a home in Lost Nation that left a barricaded Dixon man and three officers shot has been ruled justified, a Sept. 27 press release from Ogle County State's Attorney Mike Rock said.

Department), Lt. Jason Ketter (Ogle County Sheriff's Office) and Sgt. Tad Dominski (Oregon Police Department) were shot. ERT members were transported to area hospitals and later discharged. Gounaris underwent surgery and survived his injuries.

The use of force by law enforcement was reviewed by Winnebago County State's Attorney J. Hanley due to the Ogle County

State's Attorney's Office handing the prosecution of Gounaris.

The Illinois State Police, Zone 2, Major Crimes Investigation Unit conducted an investigation into the use of force and on Sept. 27, Hanley issued a memorandum concluding that the officers acted reasonably and lawfully.

Dominski, Ketter, Ogle County Sheriff's Office Sgt. Justin Diehl and

Deputy Jon Shippert were ERT members that fired weapons in the incident. The investigation into the incident consisted of interviewing witnesses, and reviewing police radio transmissions, police in-car cameras, body cameras, private surveillance video, photos of the scene, police reports, and results of forensic evaluations.

See SHOOTING pg 8

Village moving toward water tower cleaning

BY JEFF HELFRICH
MANAGING EDITOR

CRESTON — At its monthly meeting Tuesday, the Creston Village Board of Trustees heard a report from Village Engineer Kevin Bunge on moving forward with water tower cleaning work in the future.

Bunge said that work on the project is underway and he's been reaching out to firms that specialize in water tower cleaning work. The work would include cleaning of the interior and exterior of the water tower. Painting will not be part of the project, Bunge said.

Trustees expressed a desire to look into the water tower cleaning last month when discussing rust issues that have been seen recently in the village's water system. It's been estimated the water tower hasn't been cleaned in 4-5 years.

See CRESTON pg 3



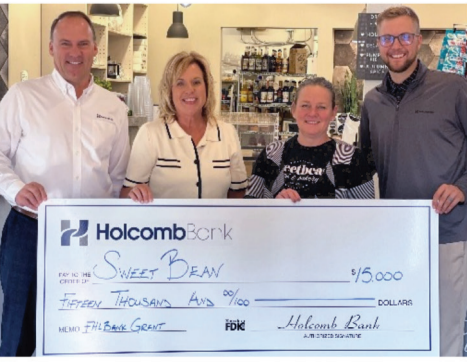
Rochelle Township High School crowns 2024 Homecoming Court on Thursday evening

Rochelle Township High School crowned the 2024 Homecoming Court during its Pep Rally on Thursday evening. Seniors Francisco Diaz and Arline Villanueva were named Homecoming King and Queen, while juniors Wyatt Worthington and Annaliese Koziol were named Prince and Princess. Sophomore Court winners were Adam Cobos and Briel Metzger. Freshman Court winners were Saul Avila and Carol Carpenter. Congratulations to all of the Homecoming Court winners this year. (Photo by Russell Hodges)

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LOCAL NEWS

RPD investigating suspicious death after 41-year-old man found Sept. 27 in downtown area

BY JEFF HELFRICH
MANAGING EDITOR

ROCHELLE — The Rochelle Police Department is currently investigating a suspicious death after a 41-year-old Rochelle man was found deceased at 101 N. Washington St. the morning of Sept. 27, RPD Chief Pete Pavia said.

RPD and the Rochelle Fire Department were called to that location around 8:15 a.m. Friday morning, Sept. 27, for a report of an unresponsive male, who was later declared deceased and identified as Manuel Penaran, 41, of Rochelle. The Illinois State Police crime scene unit was called and processed the scene. The investigation, which Pavia said is still in its early stages, is being conducted by RPD and ISP.

Penaran was found outside behind the Ornament

tal Plasterwork Services building at 101 N. Washington St. Pavia said he was unable to comment on whether or not Penaran's body showed evidence of foul play.

Several witnesses have been interviewed in relation to the case, Pavia said. As of now it is not a homicide investigation, just a suspicious death, he said. RPD and ISP are waiting on autopsy and toxicology reports.

"Our detective came in and took a look at the body and after speaking with individuals in the area it became suspicious that it could potentially be more than a natural cause death and that's when the investigation started," Pavia said. "We then called the ISP crime team to process the whole scene. We did everything we could to preserve the scene and get all the evidence we could and now the case is running

its course. I anticipate there will be more information upon completion of the autopsy."

Pavia said there is video footage of Penaran in the area from the night before he was found, but a timeline has not yet been set in the investigation. The Ogle County Coroner's Office did not provide investigators with a time frame of how long Penaran had been deceased for before he was found.

"The ISP and our detective division are out now doing neighborhood canvasses and looking for additional camera footage and things like that," Pavia said. "We're looking at this as an isolated incident. As far as we're concerned, there's no danger to the public. We'll continue to work the case."

Anyone with information about the incident is asked to contact RPD at (815) 562-2131.

Habitat for Humanity of Ogle County groundbreaking on Davis Junction home scheduled for Oct. 26

DAVIS JUNCTION — On Saturday, Oct. 26 Habitat for Humanity of Ogle County will break ground on its 15th home build since 2002. This will be the affiliate's first build in Davis Junction. The home, which will be built primarily by Habitat construction volunteers and board members, will help a well-deserving partner family achieve the dream of homeownership.

Habitat for Humanity of Ogle County's groundbreaking ceremony will take place on Saturday, Oct. 26 at 10:30 a.m. at the lot located at 117 Prairie

Moon Drive, Davis Junction. Sponsored/decorated studs from Habitat's Stud-a-thon will be on display and light refreshments will be served. The build, which had initially been planned to begin late this summer, will take place early 2025 due to some delays in construction planning. Many community organizations, businesses and individuals have donated to the build as well as to Habitat for Humanity of Ogle County's many Brush with Kindness projects (critical home repairs) for the year. Major donors for this year's housing

programs include the Village of Davis Junction (lot donation), the Community Foundation of Northern Illinois, Rochelle Area Community Foundation, the Blazer Foundation, CHS, Woodward Foundation and Etnyre Foundation.

The public is invited to the groundbreaking ceremony to celebrate the build as well as Habitat's continued mission to build homes, community and hope. For more information regarding Habitat for Humanity of Ogle County, please call 815-222-8869, or visit the website at www.habitatofoglecounty.org.



(PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)

Two public information meetings were held on Sept. 30 and Oct. 1 on the ongoing Steward-Caron Road Industrial Corridor (SCRIC) study, which is being conducted by Blackhawk Hills Regional Council at the request of the City of Rochelle, Village of Steward and Lee County regarding the development between Rochelle's southeastern industrial area and Steward.

Steward-Caron Road Industrial Corridor Study meetings held

BY JEFF HELFRICH
MANAGING EDITOR

STEWARD — Two public information meetings were held on Sept. 30 and Oct. 1 on the ongoing Steward-Caron Road Industrial Corridor (SCRIC) study, which is being conducted by Blackhawk Hills Regional Council at the request of the City of Rochelle, Village of Steward and Lee County regarding the development between Rochelle's southeastern industrial area and Steward.

The study aims to improve conditions around

current and future development for the best interests of the area. The Sept. 30 meeting was held at Steward Elementary School and saw attendance by about 40 residents, including city, village and Lee County officials.

The study will yield findings on the impact of trucks and trains on local communities, proposals to move people and freight safely through the corridor and recommendations on how to improve transportation systems and other key infrastructure. It is currently gathering com-

munity feedback and plans to finish its recommendations by the end of 2024.

"This study set out to try to focus on what we can do to make sure that future industrial projects in this area are win-win and that the impacts are as minimal as possible," Lee County Industrial Development Association CEO Tom Demmer said. "What can we do when the next project comes to try to have a plan in place for how we can improve safety, quality of life, and the flow of traffic?"

See STEWARD pg 5

The 2025 From The Heart Cash Calendars are NOW AVAILABLE!!

The proceeds of the sale of the calendars benefit our From The Heart recipients:
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RFD wins 2nd Annual Battle of the Badges
The Rochelle Fire Department and the Rochelle Police Department played the 2nd Annual Battle of the Badges game on Saturday night at Helms Field. RFD prevailed 18-12 in the game. All proceeds from the event will benefit the Community Action Network (CAN). (Courtesy photos)

LOCAL NEWS

CRESTON: Golf cart/UTV ordinance discussed by trustees Tuesday

From page 1

Village officials are also investigating other potential fixes for the village's rust issue, including hydrant flushing and changing the layout of Creston's water system.

Village President Tom Byro mentioned during the meeting that he's been speaking with Comcast about the company's interest in potentially installing an antenna on Creston's water tower and leasing an acre of land on the ground for a shed and infrastructure to support the antenna.

After speaking with village trustees and officials, Byro said he would continue to work with Comcast on potentially coming to an agreement to bring to the board for approval. The proceeds from a potential agreement in the future could be used for upkeep of the water tower, Byro said.

Golf carts/UTVs
Trustees had a discussion Tuesday on potential changes to its current golf cart/UTV ordinance.

Creston currently requires the owners of golf carts and UTVs to register them with the village for a fee and to have certain features such as turning

signals, insurance, and slow-moving vehicle signs. The village does not allow four-wheelers, dirt bikes, mini bikes or go carts.

The village has encountered issues with enforcement, people not registering their golf carts, unlicensed drivers, and speeding. Trustees expressed a desire Tuesday to keep its current ordinance, but do away with the fee it involves so as to not punish those who have been paying it so far. Trustees also directed Creston's village attorneys to change the name of the ordinance to make sure it reflects that it applies to UTVs as well as golf carts.

Enforcement of the ordinance is the biggest hurdle the village has because of the fact that it doesn't have a police department.

"I think the problem is everybody knows we're not enforcing it," Village Trustee Steve Katzman said. "They know there's an ordinance, but we don't enforce it, so they don't pay. And I think there's a misconception because we call it the golf cart ordinance, but it's for golf carts and UTVs."

Storm sewer
Bunge said during the meeting that plans are



(PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)

At its monthly meeting Tuesday, the Creston Village Board of Trustees heard a report from Village Engineer Kevin Bunge on moving forward with water tower cleaning work in the future.

complete on a planned storm sewer project in the village. The next step in the process is talking to property owners to secure easements to allow for the work, which will take place in the next couple of weeks. After that step, the project will go out for bid.

"We're ready to bid the project," Bunge said. "But there's no point bidding the project until we have

the easements agreed to so we don't have to change something. We'll focus on getting the door knocking done and getting the easements under control."

The project will consist of 36-inch storm sewer pipe being put in to replace broken drain tile and improve drainage in Creston. The storm sewer work will consist of adding pipe on both sides of the railroad

tracks, but the current phase of it will not go under the tracks. The work was suggested due to issues with stormwater overflow.

Bunge said in August that the work could be done this year, and if not it would begin in the spring of 2025. He's estimated in the past that the project could roughly cost \$180,000-200,000.

Food vendors
Trustees discussed a

possible future ordinance for food vendors during the meeting. Creston currently does not have anything in its code for food vendors and food trucks on public property.

Trustees expressed a desire Tuesday for vendors on public property to have insurance and health department certification, and to not be blocking sidewalks or traffic.



Gold Star Mission 500 stops at Rochelle VFW

On Saturday, the Gold Star Mission 500 bike ride passed through Rochelle and made a stop at Rochelle VFW Post 3878. The riders rode 500 miles in five days to honor Illinois' fallen soldiers, beginning in Metropolis, Illinois and finishing in Rockford. The Gold Star Mission is a nonprofit that seeks to honor and support Gold Star Families by preserving the memory of our fallen heroes. Mayor John Bearrows spoke at the event at the VFW and Post Commander Dennis Orlikowski was presented with an autographed poster from Gold Star during the visit. (Photos by Jason Hardin Photography)

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LOCAL NEWS

ROCHELLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

ROCHELLE — On Oct. 1, Adrian C. Gomez, 37, of Byron was cited for expired registration. He signed a promise to comply and was given a Nov. 1 Rochelle court date.

On Sept. 29, Warren Ellison, 37, of Chicago was cited for obstructing driver on the highway. He signed a promise to comply and was given a Nov. 1 Rochelle court date.

On Oct. 1, Daniel Cervantes, 18, of Rochelle was cited for speeding 58 in a 40 miles per hour zone. He signed a promise to comply and was given a Nov. 1 Rochelle court date.

On Oct. 1, Nay Lin Aung, 38, of Rockford was cited for disregarding a stop sign. He signed a promise to comply and was given a Nov. 1 Rochelle court date.

On Oct. 1, Susana Bel-

monte, 34, of Rochelle was cited for failure to reduce speed to avoid an accident. She signed a promise to comply and was given a Nov. 1 Rochelle court date.

On Oct. 2, Aidan Rodriguez, 19, of Rochelle was cited for failure to reduce speed. He signed a promise to comply and was given a Nov. 1 Rochelle court date.

On Oct. 1, a 17-year-old juvenile of Creston was cited for operating an uninsured vehicle. She signed a promise to comply and was given a Nov. 1 Rochelle court date.

On Oct. 1, Brittany Longoria, 35, of Los Fresnos, Texas was cited for disobeying a traffic control device. She signed a promise to comply and was given a Nov. 1 Rochelle court date.

On Oct. 3, George Thompson, 18, of Waun-

kee, Wisconsin was cited for speeding 53 in a 35 miles per hour zone. He signed a promise to comply and was given a Nov. 1 Rochelle court date.

On Oct. 3, Shannon Tully, 45, of Franklin Grove was cited for speeding 68 in a 45 miles per hour zone. She signed a promise to comply and was given a Nov. 1 Rochelle court date.

On Oct. 3, Juan Hernandez, 69, of Dixon was cited for speeding 70 in a 45 miles per hour zone. He signed a promise to comply and was given a Nov. 1 Rochelle court date.

On Oct. 3, Allen Evans, 30, of Chicago was cited for operating an uninsured vehicle. He signed a promise to comply and was given a Nov. 1 Rochelle court date.

All individuals are considered innocent until proven guilty.

OGLE COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

OREGON — On Sept. 30 at 3:03 a.m. deputies responded to Casey's General Store in Hillcrest (215 Powers Road). After investigation, deputies placed Dealon J. Williams (age 45) under arrest for trespassing on real property. Williams was transported to the Ogle County Jail before being released on a notice to appear with a future court date.

On Sept. 30 at approximately 10:26 p.m. deputies responded to the 1,000 block of North River Road for the report of a single-vehicle accident with unknown injuries. Deputies arrived and located a black Kia Sorento overturned in the north ditch approximately five to 10 yards off the roadway resting on its roof. The driver, Shaunda R. Thompson, 35, of Byron, was trapped inside of the vehicle. Oregon Fire Department and EMS personnel were requested to the scene to tend to Thompson. Thompson was transported to a local area hospital for further treatment. After investigation, it is believed that Thompson was traveling northbound on River Road and failed to negotiate the curve before crossing over the double solid yellow center line. Thompson exited the roadway, entered the north ditch, and overturned in the heavy brush and trees. The Kia sustained totaling damage with multiple airbags deployed. Thompson was placed under arrest for driving under the influence of alcohol and released from custody on a notice to appear with a return court date set for mid-October. Thompson was additionally cited for improper traffic lane usage and failure to reduce speed to avoid an accident.

On Sept. 30 at 7:23 a.m. deputies responded to a two-vehicle accident at the intersection of North Mulford Road and Illinois Route 72. Upon arrival, it was determined that Brenda Rivera Alvarado, 20, of Rockford had failed to yield to an eastbound semi tractor trailer driven by Jose Romo, 23, of Stone Park, Illinois. No injuries were reported. Rivera Alvarado was issued citations for driving while suspended and failing to yield at a stop intersection. She was released at the scene on a notice to appear.

On Sept. 30 at approximately 10:49 p.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop at Illinois Route 2 and

Townhall Road. After investigation, deputies placed Tristen M. Austin, 22, of Mt. Morris, under arrest for an outstanding Stephenson County warrant. Austin was transported to the Ogle County Jail, where she was held in lieu of bond.

On Oct. 1 at approximately 11:43 p.m. deputies responded to a 911 hang up at 122 N. Main St. Apt. A in Leaf River. Upon arrival, deputies learned a domestic had occurred and began to speak with all parties involved. While investigating the incident, Jennifer Albright, 44, of Leaf River, struck a deputy and was placed under arrest for aggravated battery to a police officer (class-two felony). Albright was transported to the Ogle County Jail, where she was released on a notice to appear and given a future court date.

On Oct. 1 at 10:17 a.m. the Ogle County Sheriff's Office responded to a motorcycle accident in the 7,100 block of North River Road. Investigation revealed that a 16-year-old male had lost control of his motorcycle while traveling southbound and had gone into the southbound ditch. The 16-year-old sustained injuries and was taken by the Byron Fire Department Ambulance to a Rockford hospital. Charges are pending.

On Oct. 2 at approximately 12:34 a.m. deputies conducted a traffic on a blue Honda on Interstate 39 northbound, near mile marker 105. After a brief investigation, deputies arrested Jose W. Hernandez-Sanchez, 36, of Rockford, for operating a vehicle without a valid driver's license. Hernandez-Sanchez was also issued citations for operating an uninsured motor vehicle with no rear registration light. Hernandez-Sanchez was released with a notice to appear with a future court date.

On Oct. 2 at approximately 4:24 p.m. deputies responded to the 19,000 block of East South Malta Road in reference to a check welfare of a vehicle that was parked on the roadway with a male that was very lethargic. Upon arrival, Rochelle and Creston EMS had been contacted and responded to the scene. Rochelle EMS then transported the male to Rochelle Community Hospital for a mental evaluation. After investigation, deputies placed Justin Chaney, 50, of DeKalb under arrest for driving under the influence

of alcohol. Chaney was additionally issued citations for unlawful parking and operating an uninsured vehicle. Chaney was released on a notice to appear at the hospital and was given a future court date.

On Oct. 2 at approximately 2:09 p.m. deputies and the Dixon Rural Fire Department responded to the 7,000 block of South Ridge Road for the report of a single-vehicle crash. After an investigation, it was learned Michael Essex, 29, of Franklin Grove, was traveling southbound when he drove off of the roadway, through the east ditch before crashing into a creek embankment. Essex was transported to KSB Hospital for his injuries. Essex was issued citations for driving under the influence of alcohol, illegal transportation of alcohol, improper lane usage, failure to reduce speed to avoid an accident, and failure to wear a seat-belt. Essex was released on a notice to appear.

On Oct. 3 at approximately 9:27 p.m. deputies responded to a domestic in the 2,000 block of Rogene Drive in rural Oregon. After investigation, deputies placed Gabrielle Sandell, 18, of Oregon under arrest for two counts of domestic battery. Sandell was transported to the Ogle County Jail, where she was held pending a court appearance in front of a judge.

On Oct. 3 at approximately 9:08 p.m. deputies responded to the 3,000 block of South Freeport Road in reference to a physical domestic. After an investigation, Shelly R. Mummert, 73, of Polo, was arrested for domestic battery. Mummert was transported to the Ogle County Jail and held awaiting an appearance before a judge.

On Oct. 3 at about 10 a.m. after a lengthy investigation, the Ogle County Sheriff's Special Operations Unit, with the assistance of the Illinois Conservation Police, conducted a search warrant at 308 N. Mix St. in Oregon. As a result of the search, The Ogle County Sheriff's Special Operations Unit placed Brandon Scott Miller, 30, of Oregon, under arrest for unlawful production of cannabis sativa plants, a class-four felony. Miller was transported to the Ogle County Jail and, due to the SAFE-T Act, was subsequently released on a notice to appear. The investigation is ongoing, and further charges are pending.



Rochelle DAR Chapter hears presentation on Revolutionary War nurses

The Rochelle Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution recently enjoyed a program given by member Jean Kroupa (shown seated, first row, center) about the role of nurses in the Revolutionary War. Many women followed their family members on the battlefields and cared for injured soldiers. They also took on other tasks, such as cooking and laundry. Of particular interest was the role of Abigail Hartman Rice, a nurse at Yellow Springs Hospital near Valley Forge, Pennsylvania — the only hospital commissioned by the Continental Congress during the war — where she helped care for the sick and wounded. Like many nurses during the war, she simultaneously cared for her family, which included 21 children. Six years after the Revolutionary War ended, she died at age 47 from complications of typhoid fever that she had contracted while serving at the hospital. Some of the innovations developed by the nurses at that time included stone hot-water bottles, food warmers, and "go-chairs" known today as wheelchairs. (Courtesy photo)

Illinois Route 64 work begins Oct. 7

OREGON — The Illinois Department of Transportation announces today that weather permitting, construction will begin Monday, Oct. 7, on Illinois Route 64 in Ogle County. The 4.5-mile work zone is from the

Illinois Railway crossing in Mt. Morris to west of Illinois Street in Oregon.

Work will mill, patch and resurface the road. There will be daily lane closures using flaggers, and access to homes and businesses will be main-

tained. This \$2.4 million project is expected to be completed by the end of November.

Motorists can expect delays and should allow extra time for trips through this area. To avoid the work area, when feasible, use of alternate routes should be considered. Drivers are urged to pay close attention to changed conditions and signs in the work zones, obey the posted speed limits, refrain from using mobile devices and be alert for workers and equipment.

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Rochelle Lions Club Candy Day fundraiser is Oct. 11-12

ROCHELLE — The Rochelle Lions Club will be conducting its 2024 Candy Day fundraising event on Friday, Oct. 11 and Saturday, Oct. 12.

Lions will be located at Walmart, Ace Hardware, Walgreens, and in downtown Rochelle from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 12 collecting donations in return for a roll of mints or a Tootsie Roll Pop. We will also be located at Petro and

Wal-Mart on Friday, Oct. 11 from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m.

All funds collected are utilized to provide vision and hearing services to those in need within the greater Rochelle area.

The Lions thank you in advance for supporting their efforts to provide these vision and hearing services. Donations may also be sent to Rochelle Lions Club, PO Box 283, Rochelle IL 61068.

ROCHELLE News-Leader

211 IL Route 38 East, Rochelle, IL 61068
(815) 562-4171

USPS (467-820) ISSN (1075-2811)
Published every Wednesday and Sunday by Rochelle Newspapers Inc. at 211 E. State Route 38, Rochelle, IL 61068. Periodical postage paid at Rochelle, IL 61068. Postmaster send address changes to the Rochelle News-Leader, P.O. Box 46, Rochelle, IL 61068. Subscription rates are \$139.99 per year by mail in Ogle County. Outside county rate is \$149.99 per year. The circulation department is open Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Friday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. For subscription information, contact Kelly White at 562-4171.

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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.

LOCAL NEWS

STEWARD: Informational meetings held at Steward Elementary School

From page 1

The SCRIC Strategic Plan focuses on Steward and Caron Roads and areas accessed by the roads and considers activity within a five-mile corridor. It looks to address current transportation issues, such as truck traffic through the Village of Steward, and to keep them from getting worse in the future. The area of the study has seen industrial development in recent years and it's expected it will see more, with seven current ongoing projects at various levels for new development. "Of all the counties that we represent, this is the hottest county for industrial development," BHRC Executive Director Daniel Payette said. "That's because of the assets that are here today like the highways and interstate system

and railroads. We have to start planning to mitigate concerns that arise with things like traffic." The study reviewed truck flows and counts, including those that travel down Main Street in Steward, which has been a concern for the village due to pedestrians and children near the school and trucks' impact on the quality of life of residents. Per 24 hours, 30 percent of the traffic on Steward's Main Street is trucks. The Sept. 30 presentation detailed a concept plan to ease truck traffic through Steward that would relocate Interstate 39 southbound on and off ramps to bypass the village. The bypass would be shorter, faster and avoid rail crossings. There would still be access to the village from Interstate 39 under the concept plan,

which is awaiting Federal Highway Administration feedback. City of Rochelle Economic Development Director Jason Anderson said the potential change to road infrastructure would be a long process, but large economic development investments coming to the area would make it attractive for government funding. "If Rochelle grows like I think it's going to, and I know it will, and then something isn't done to change how things are, truck traffic through Steward will quadruple," Steward Village President Hugh McKiski said. Village of Steward Trustee Laura Salazar said she wants to see a balance in the future of quality of life, safety and growth in Steward. "One thing I think all



(PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)

The study aims to improve conditions around current and future development for the best interests of the area. The Sept. 30 meeting was held at Steward Elementary School and saw attendance by about 40 residents, including city, village and Lee County officials.

of Steward can agree on is the fact that we don't want trucks going through town on Main Street creating noise and pollution and going by our school," Salazar said. "It has to be addressed. But development and opportunities to fund better things for the village have to be in our minds as well."

CHURCH DIRECTORY

Ashton Bible Church, corner of Main and Paddock in Ashton. Pastor Farrel Stauffer, church phone is (815)453-2190, church website www.ashtonbible.org. Sunday School for all ages 9:00-10:00am, Morning Worship 10:15am, Wednesday Prayer Meeting/Bible Study 6:30-8:00pm.

Calvary Lighthouse Church, Assemblies of God, Senior Pastor, Dr. James Horvath. 14409 Hemstock Rd., Rochelle. Sunday Morning: Sunday Worship & Children's Church 10:00 A.M., Wednesday Evening 7:00 P.M. – Adult Teaching, Missionettes & Royal Rangers Childrens Classes, Nursery available for all services. HE-Brews Cafe is open before and after services. For further information, please call the CLC office at 815-562-7701, or email us at staff@calvarylighthouse.com

Rochelle Church of Christ, Keeping Christ at the center in the Hub City. We meet Sundays at 9:00am for Bible Study and 10:00am for worship. We also have a Wednesday Bible Study at 7:00pm. 206 Erickson Rd, Rochelle, IL 61068. You can call us at (815) 562-6572 or visit us on the web at rochellechurch.com. We also have a radio program Sundays just after 8am on WRHL 1060AM. Minister Dominic Venuso.

Creston United Methodist Church and Steward United Methodist Church - Rev. Ilhan You, Creston: 126 West South Street, P.O. Box 209, Creston, Illinois 60113. Sunday morning worship 9:00am. Coffee fellowship at 10:15am. Steward: 507 Main Street, P.O. Box 80, Steward, IL 60553. Adult Sunday School, 10:00am. Sunday morning worship and Children's Sunday School 11:00am. Contact the church office at 847-730-4370 for more information. facebook.com/crestonumcil facebook.com/stewardilumc

Elim Reformed Church, 140 S. Church Road, Kings, IL 61068. Phone: 815-562-6811. Email goelimchurch@gmail.com Website www.goelimchurch.org Sunday Morning Worship 10:00 Rev. Marv Jacobs

Faith Lutheran Church – (14206 E. Flagg Rd.) – “Making Christ Known Through Lives of Faith.” In-person worship is available each Sunday at 9:00 a.m. or online at “Faith Lutheran Social” on YouTube. Worship resources are also available on our Facebook page - ‘Faith Lutheran Church ELCA.’ You may also e-mail Pastor Joy Alsop at Pastor@faithlcrochelle.org for more information. All are welcome to join us!

First General Baptist Church, 500 S. 12th St, Rochelle. Phone: 815-562-5221. Email: fgbcrochelle@gmail.com. Website: www.fgbcrochelle.org. Facebook: www.facebook.com/fgbcrochelle. Pastor: Rev. Angelo Bonacquisti. **Sunday worship services:** 8:30 am, 11:15 am and 6:00 pm. **Sunday school:** 10:00 am. We'd be honored to have you join us as we worship JESUS and continue to grow in truth and love for God and each other. A nursery, children's church, youth group and small groups are available. If you need a ride please contact our church bus driver, John, at (815) 262-4275 by 8:30 am on Sunday. “For if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” Romans 10:9

First Presbyterian Church – An Amazing Place for Amazing Grace- Rev. Doug Forsberg, Senior Pastor. 1100 Calvin Road, Rochelle. Email: info@placeforgrace.com. Sunday morning worship 9:00am and 10:30am. In person or streamed online. On our Website and Facebook Live. www.placeforgrace.com/ www.facebook.com/placeforgrace

Grace Fellowship Church — Pastor Jeff Ardisson, 2128 Il Route 38, Ashton, 815-453-7464. Sunday School 8:30 a.m. Sunday Worship Service 9:45 a.m. www.graceisforyou.com

Harvest Baptist Church 241 Scott Ave. (Hillcrest). Rev. Duane Boehm, pastor. Email duane712@hotmail.com, cell 815-757-3427. Visit us on Facebook! Service times: Sunday morning worship with Children's Church at 10 am. Wednesday night worship at 7 pm.

Immanuel Lutheran Church Missouri Synod 16060 E. Lindenwood Road, Lindenwood, IL 61049. Rev. Dr. Matthew Rosebrock. Church Phone 393-4500. Church Worship 9:00 a.m. Sunday School Christian Education Hour at 10:30 a.m.

Living Water Community Church 405 N. Main St, Downtown Rochelle. Phone 815-561-6249, Website: www.lwccr.com, Like us on Facebook. We are Non-Denominational, Christ Centered, Casual dress, Christ Centered Live Band Worship. Mike Vogeler - Outreach and Seven C's Pastor, Chris Bender- Teaching Pastor and Doug Bunker - Missions and Children's Pastor. Sunday Worship Service- 10:00am. Nursery/Toddlers Ages 0-5 available during the service in the Splash building. Swim- Grades 1st-5th worship with the adults then break out for age appropriate teaching. Youth groups, Small groups, Life Groups and Workshops meet throughout the year for Bible teaching. 7C's Mission- serves the community physically & spiritually each month from 1135 Lincoln Hwy, providing lightly used clothing, Hygiene items, a light lunch and Elder Prayer open the second Saturday from 10am-2pm and the 4th Thursday from 4pm to 7:00pm and by appointment.. [f](#)

New Hope Fellowship (Church of God - Anderson, IN), 1501 10th Ave., Rochelle, IL 61068. Service: Sunday at 9 a.m. 10:30 a.m., (815)561-8400, www.NHFchurch.net Pastor: Dan Sergeant and Pastor Nick Tornabene. (Classes for children through age fifth grade during service.)

Rochelle United Methodist Church welcomes everyone to their worship service, and practices openness for all activities including communion. Worship is at 9:00 am. Sunday school for children begins around 9:15, following the Children's Time in worship. A fellowship time with food and space for conversation occurs in Hicks Hall every week following the worship service. We celebrate communion with an open table on the first Sunday of every month, and on other appropriate occasions. Youth group is on Sunday evenings from 5:30-7:30. Our youth program includes service projects, discussion topics, Bible Study, and lots of fun and fellowship together. Some of our activities include packing meals at Feed My Starving Children, helping at Rochelle Christian Food Pantry and 7C's, working with animals at Barn on Baseline, Mystery trips (Destination Unknown!), and Interactive experiences on Dating boundaries, refugees, and homelessness. Youth group is for grades 6-12 and friends are always welcome. Recorded services are available on our YouTube channel and our website at www.rochelleumc.com. Our services are on the radio (93.5 FM) on Sunday mornings at 9:00 am. Our Facebook page is www.facebook.com/rochelleumc. **Our pastor is the Rev. Dr. Katherine Thomas Paisley.** Our address is 709 Fourth Ave. (815) 562-2164. Email is admin@rochelleumc.com. At Rochelle United Methodist Church, everyone is welcome and loved!

St. John's Lutheran Church, 126 E. South Street, Creston. Phone 815-384-3720, Email: StJohnsLutheran@aol.com, members of NALC/LCMC. Worship is led by **Pastor Terese Whitten** 231-878-4150. St. John's Lutheran Church is a part of God's Family, planting hope, nurturing faith and harvesting love. Worship time begins at 9 a.m. followed by fellowship at 10 a.m. Sunday school is conducted during worship service except during the summer.

St. Patrick Catholic Church Rev. Jesus Dominguez; Deacon Fermin Garcia; Deacon George Schramm; 244 Kelley Dr. (Corner of Kelley & Caron Rd.), PO Box 329, Rochelle, IL 61068. **Office Hours:** 9:00 AM- 4PM Monday-Thursday, Phone: 815-562-2370. **Mass times:** 8:00 AM Monday-Thursday, Saturday Vigil Mass 5:00 PM English, 7PM Spanish, Sunday Mass 7:30 AM, 9:00 AM in English and 11:00 AM in Spanish. **Confessions:** Monday 8:30AM & 6:30PM, Tuesday 8:30AM, Saturday 8:30am & 4:00-4:45 PM Or by appointment. **Religious Education:** Deacon George Schramm, Director of Religious Education. 903 Caron Road, Rochelle, IL 61068, 815-561-0079; Website: stpatricksrochelle.com Email: stpatrick-rochelle@rockforddiocese.org Facebook.com/StPatrickRochelle

St. Paul Lutheran Church “Building Relationships in Christ, Now and Forever!” Steven Hall, Principal, Parish Nurse-Marcia Schnorr. 1415 Tenth Ave., Rochelle. Church Office-562-2744. Worship times: 6:00 p.m. Saturday, 9:00 a.m. Sunday. Our service is broadcast over WRHL 1060AM at 10:00 a.m. Sunday. Sunday School 10:15-11:15 a.m. Call 562-6323 for more information about the school.



LOCAL VIEWS

Ogle County Farm Bureau's Ron Kern: Fall is settling in

FALL is settling in. Soon combines will be rolling through fields harvesting grain. High school football fills the Friday evening air with excitement. On weekends you can drive through the countryside and catch the smell of smoke rising from a campfire. It's my favorite time of year.

Looking across the golden fields of Ogle County one can tell it will be a very productive harvest this year. However, looking deeper through that harvest and into the complexities of agriculture one can see trouble on the horizon. Low commodity prices will again test the resolve of farmers and weigh heavily on their profitability.

Reading through various articles the other day I found this one published by the American Farm Bureau. It deals with farm bankruptcies, something no one on the farm ever wants to think about let alone face. But with sinking commodity prices for yet another year and outlooks grim it is something we need to keep a steady watch over.

Chapter 12 bankruptcy provides family farmers with flexibility to carry on normal business operations while making reasonable payments towards their debt load, even when facing the risk and uncertainty of agricultural production. The measure was introduced into law as a temporary measure in 1986 but became permanent in 2005 due to its success streamlining the filing process and addressing the large debts of farming operations.

The good news for 2023 is that farm bankruptcies have once again reached a

record low since Chapter 12 became permanent. According to the U.S. Courts, 139 farm bankruptcies were filed in 2023, down 18% from 2022. This continues a four-year decline since the decade high of 599 filings in 2019. Unfortunately, this downward trend in farm bankruptcies is unlikely to continue.

Farm finances are a dark spot right now. The total number of farms in the U.S. declined by over 140,000 between the 2017 and 2022 Census of Agriculture. Five thousand more farms were lost from 2022 to 2023. Additionally, in February, net farm income for 2024 was projected to be down nearly 40% from 2022, and many key commodity price expectations have fallen further since then. The government safety net that normally supports farmers when markets hit bottom is currently undermined by inflation and an outdated 2018 farm bill. So, just because Chapter 12 farm bankruptcies have been falling in recent years does not mean farms are not facing devastating financial struggles now.

Most regions had decreases in bankruptcy filings last year after more than doubling in 2022. Regions that had double-digit percentage decreases in Chapter 12 filings were the Northwest, mid-Atlantic, Midwest and Southeast. The Midwest and Southeast had the most filings of any regions with 42 and 40 filings, respectively. Both the Northeast and West saw no change from 2022 to 2023, but the Northeast tied for the least number of filings compared to the West's 11 filings.

On a state level, the total number of bankruptcies widely varies. While 17 states/territories had no bankruptcies, some states had as many as 11 cases filed. Twelve states had no filings in 2023: Alaska, Alabama, Connecticut, Hawaii, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Nevada, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia and Wyoming.

In less fortunate circumstances, 14 states had increases in 2023 filings. Texas had the largest increase in filings with 10 cases – eight more than 2022. Three other states had a double-digit number of filings: California (11), Georgia (11) and Kansas (10). Of the 14 states with increased cases, nine increased by only one case (Georgia, Idaho, Massachusetts, Maine, Minnesota, Mississippi, North Dakota, New Jersey and Ohio). The other states that had increases include Missouri (six, up from one), North Carolina (six, up from four) and Tennessee (four, up from one).

Chapter 12 farm bankruptcies in 2023 fell to a record low since the program was made permanent, but this year, farmers face decreased revenues and higher costs. As a result, we are likely going to see increased filings in 2024 and beyond. After record-high grain prices and farm incomes in 2022, 2023 net farm income (farm income minus expenses) is forecast at only \$155 billion, down from \$185.5 billion in 2022. However, a drop in 2023 grain prices is expected to continue into 2024. USDA estimated that 2024 net farm income would be \$43 billion lower than 2023. As a result, the \$21-billion drop

in farm cash receipts for crop and livestock sales in 2024 that USDA expected in February is now likely to be even greater.

Another element of the farm financial struggle is production expenses that continue to increase to record highs for the fourth consecutive year. In the February net farm income forecast, production expenses were expected to increase \$17 billion. The Purdue University-CME Group Ag Economy Barometer has recorded higher input costs as farmers' biggest concern for their farming operation for many years. Looking to the future, USDA forecasts that total production costs will continue to increase into 2025 for all major field crops. To accommodate these costs, it is crucial that farmers have access to capital. Agricultural debt nationwide increased in 2023 due to growing demand for production loans to cover surging supply costs. However, farm capital investment is approaching record lows, according to the Purdue University-CME Group Ag Economy Barometer's Farm Investment Index. That same report has shown growing concern for interest rates' impact on long term farm well-being.

According to data from the Kansas City Federal Reserve, farm debt at commercial banks reached over \$744 billion in 2023, up from \$709 billion in 2022. Much of this debt has been made more expensive after 11 interest rate increases by the Federal Reserve between March 2022 and January 2024. So, farmers have been hit by both the inflation that increased

many of their costs and the interest rate hikes that have been aimed at curbing that inflation. The double-edged sword of inflation and the interest rates that the Federal Reserve Bank is using to combat it have raised operating costs for farmers, increasing the need for credit to provide farm liquidity.

Filing for bankruptcy is a last resort after all other options have been exhausted to pay back debts. Therefore, bankruptcy filing may not always be a solution for farms facing financial hardship. Many farms may choose to close before reaching the point of bankruptcy when faced with such uncertain futures for farm finances. Recent declines in the number of U.S. farms are just the latest in a trend of losses in farms and farmland beginning in 1950. Smaller farms with under \$50,000 in agricultural product sales and government program payments face the highest rates of closure, likely due to the high costs of sustaining these businesses with limited farm revenue. These smaller farms are also, naturally, more reliant on off-farm income. Eighty-four percent of all U.S. farms earn the majority of their household income off-farm and use that to cover farm expenses. To be eligible for Chapter 12 filings, more than 50% of the filer's gross income must have come from farming. As a result, many struggling farms may not even have Chapter 12 bankruptcy as an option.

Farmers are relying on the 2018 farm bill, written and passed in an era of stable prices, to serve as sup-

port against the uncertainty of the current market. That farm bill operated through six years of market volatility, a global pandemic and exceptional price inflation that was not adequately addressed by many of the farm bill's programs. The 2018 farm bill, still in place in 2024 under a 12-month extension, is based on outdated reference prices that lower the safety net to the financial floor and offer very little protection against bankruptcy. Farms continue to face lower income from the dropping commodity prices that are leading to farm losses, but – for many farmers – with no support from outdated farm bill provisions, we may be facing a near future of heightened farm financial hardships.

It has been encouraging to see four straight years of fewer Chapter 12 filings. Keep the greater farm financial environment in mind, though, when looking to the coming years. Rising production costs, difficulty attaining capital and falling crop prices all threaten long-term farm well-being. Farm bankruptcies are only one indicator of farm financial health. Other farm closures, sales and consolidations can also show that farms are financially struggling, short of the last resort of a Chapter 12 bankruptcy. Farm finances will almost certainly weaken in 2024 and 2025, based on high credit costs, rising land costs and falling commodity prices.

"The hardest thing in life is knowing which bridge to cross and which to burn."

-Anonymous

Ron Kern is the manager of the Ogle County Farm Bureau.

Letter: Thankful for RCH and park district

DEAR editor,

We are extremely fortunate to be living in this area where we have the excellent healthcare by Rochelle Community

Hospital and its staff of medical professionals and we can exercise or engage in sports at the park district's new facility. Both of these facilities are the envy of many communi-

ties our size which have lost their local small town hospital and may not even have an exercise/sports facility. I speak from my own experiences having stayed a few days at the

hospital going to the emergency room and needing to spend some time at the hospital. My care was top notch.

When I need medical tests run, I have them done

locally instead of driving to another county. I love the convenience and how fast they process the results. At the park district, I have the choice of different exercise equipment

which are spaced apart and uncrowded. These two facilities are a blessing for our community.

Dr. Pam Farris
Rochelle

New political letter policy for Rochelle News-Leader

THE Rochelle News-Leader is implementing a new political letter policy. We will now be accepting election letters endorsing or advocating for or against a ballot measure, party or candidate as paid advertising announcement. The fee is \$25 minimum for a 200-word letter and

10 cents a word for additional words over 250. Like other letters to the editor, the writer's name, address and phone number are required. Phone numbers and exact addresses are not published. We have the right to reject letters which don't meet publishing standards and will determine if the letter qualifies as a paid

endorsement. Paid letters will be identified with a label and may or may not appear on the opinion/letters page.

Most newspapers that have adopted this approach cite one main reason: Political campaigns for years have used newspaper opinion pages for what amounts to free advertising. As these

letter-writing campaigns become more widespread and sophisticated - some campaigns even pay people to write letters to the editor - newspapers are flooded with requests to publish them, especially in the run-up to elections.

Will we still publish letters complaining about the county board or school

board? Yes. But if you want others to vote for or against a candidate, or for or against an issue on the ballot, you will need to pay a fee. Not a large fee - \$25 for up to 200 words.

Some key dates to keep in mind for political endorsement letters:

The primary election is Tuesday, Nov. 5, 2024.

The last batch of letters that endorse candidates for this election will be printed in the Wednesday, Oct. 30, 2024 issue of The Rochelle News-Leader must be received by noon on Monday, Oct. 28, 2024.

To submit a letter, email Managing Editor Jeff Helfrich at jhelfrich@rochelle-news-leader.com.

How to contact government officials

U.S. Con. Darin LaHood
1424 Longworth HOB
Washington, D.C.
20515
(202) 225-6201

IL Sen. Win Stoller
Stratton Office Bldg
Springfield, IL 62706
(217) 782-1942

IL Rep. Bradley Fritts
Stratton Office Bldg
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

* Denotes Chairman/President

<u>Rochelle City Council</u>	
*John Bearrows	jbearrows@rochelleil.us
Kathryn Shaw-Dickey	ksshaw-dickey@rochelleil.us
Bil Hayes	bhayes@rochelleil.us
Rosaelia Arteaga	rarteaga@rochelleil.us
Dan McDermott	dmcdermott@rochelleil.us
Tom McDermott	tmcdermott@rochelleil.us
Benjamin Valdivieso	bvaldivieso@rochelleil.us
<u>Rochelle Elementary School Board</u>	
*Trisha Vaughn	tvauhn@d231.rochelle.net
Dave Casey	dcasey@d231.rochelle.net
Steve Builtta	sbuiltta@d231.rochelle.net
Ashley Jackson	ajackson@d231.rochelle.net
Stephanie White	swhite@d231.rochelle.net
Javier Zepeda	jzepeda@d231.rochelle.net
Jennifer Thompson	jthompson@d231.rochelle.net
<u>Rochelle Township High School Board</u>	
*Tom Huddleston	tom.huddleston@rthsd212.org
Bill Ravnaas	bill.ravnaas@rthsd212.org
Jeff Tilton	jeff.tilton@rthsd212.org
Bobby Chadwick	bobby.chadwick@rthsd212.org
Brent Ohlinger	brent.ohlinger@rthsd212.org
Laurie Piller	laurie.piller@rthsd212.org
Joel Thompson	joel.thompson@rthsd212.org

<u>Flagg-Rochelle Park Board</u>	
Brent Carmichael	bcarmichael@rochelleparkdistrict.org
John Dobbs	jdobbs@rochelleparkdistrict.org
Dale Wells	dwells@rochelleparkdistrict.org
*Tim Hayden	thayden@rochelleparkdistrict.org
Jodie Hart	jhart@rochelleparkdistrict.org
Joe Lenkaitis	jlenkaitis@rochelleparkdistrict.org
Kristi Gonzales	kgonzales@rochelleparkdistrict.org
<u>Ogle County Board Dist. 3</u>	
Austin Gillis	agillis@oglecounty.org
Dan Miller	dmiller@oglecounty.org
Joseph Simms	jsimms@oglecounty.org
<u>Ogle County Board Dist. 4</u>	
Jackie Ramsey	jramsey@oglecounty.org
Skip Kenney	skenney@oglecounty.org
David Williams	dwilliams@oglecounty.org
<u>Creston Village Board</u>	
*Tom Byro	tommyb_47@yahoo.com
Greg Hopkins	ghopkins522@comcast.net
Steve Katzman	skatzman@essex1.com
Mike Kerns	ac.kerns@comcast.net
Curt Ward	caward92@comcast.net
Mark Hibshman	
Reid Elliot	
Jennifer Payton	

<u>Hillcrest Village Board</u>	
*Richard Rhoads	rrhoads@hillcrestil.us
Pam Pittman	ppittman@hillcrestil.us
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Jose Huerta	jhuerta@hillcrestil.us
Eileen Braski	ebraski@hillcrestil.us
Joe Thompson	jthompson@hillcrestil.us
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Sue Messer	flaggtwp@rochelle.net
Joanna Patrick	flaggtwpc@rochelle.net
Susan Rothenberger	assessor@rochelle.net
Scott Seebach	scottseebach@gmail.com
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Eric Gruben	egruben@comcast.net
Susan Hager	susanhager303@comcast.net
Jim Kenney	jimk@rocketsupply.com
<u>Flagg-Rochelle Library</u>	
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*Teresa Haggstad	haggstads@comcast.net
Kelly Johnson	kellyjohnson0927@yahoo.com
Lanning Nicoloff	nicoloff118@comcast.net
Sheri Klindera	alwayslefty2@gmail.com
Susan Sevedge	nit1prl22@yahoo.com
Darci Waltrip	doobs12@comcast.net

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



(PHOTOS COURTESY OF DEPUTY CHIEF WILSON, MONROE TOWNSHIP FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT)

On Sept. 29, 2024, at 4:17 p.m. the Monroe Township Fire Protection District was dispatched for a reported structure fire involving a barn in the 3,000 block of Bennett Rd in Esmond.

Area departments respond to barn fire in Esmond

ESMOND — On Sept. 29, 2024, at 4:17 p.m. the Monroe Township Fire Protection District was dispatched for a reported structure fire involving a barn in the 3,000 block of Bennett Rd in Esmond. Monroe Township Fire Protection District responded with an engine, tender, and deputy chief. Ogle County Dispatch immediately upgraded the alarm to a second-level MABAS Box which requests additional resources from Kirkland with an

engine and chief, Lynn-Scott-Rock with a tender and chief, and Stillman Valley with an engine and chief.

The first unit on scene within 10 minutes was Monroe Township Fire Deputy Chief Richard Wilson reporting a barn on the ground with active fire and no exposures and keeping all units coming into the scene. Within three minutes of the first engine on the scene, water was applied to the burning pile. A supply line to the first engine on

the scene was established. As additional resources arrived, crews were assigned to extinguishment. After extinguishment, all crews aided in picking up the hose and tools and returned to service.

The roadway at the fire scene was closed so that crews could operate around the fire apparatus safely. An Ogle County Sheriff's Office deputy was on the scene to aid in any capacity needed.

The cause of the fire was due to a bonfire the night

before that the occupant had thought was burned out. Due to the elevated winds embers were blown into the collapsed barn from previous years and ignited unknown combustibles. The Monroe Township Fire Protection District advises all occupants to limit any fires during dry and windy days; if burning during any windy days to fully extinguish the burning area with water and not think it's completely extinguished due to not seeing any smoke.



- Sept. 10 - Allison Reed, Byron, \$25
- Sept. 11 - Kayla Rios, Rochelle, \$25
- Sept. 12 - Slavoljub Majinovic, Rochelle, \$25
- Sept. 13 - Arely Hickey, Rochelle, \$25
- Sept. 14 - Paige Humphrey, Pecatonica, \$25
- Sept. 15 - DJ and Noeka Williams, Rochelle, \$50
- Sept. 16 - HOPE of Ogle County, \$25
- Sept. 17 - Rebekah Lewis, Rochelle, \$25
- Sept. 18 - Shane Huber, Rochelle, \$25
- Sept. 19 - Betty Mowers, Rochelle, \$25
- Sept. 20 - Mary Sullivan, Rochelle, \$25
- Sept. 21 - Wesley Berogan, Dixon, \$25
- Sept. 22 - Therese Fenwick, Westchester, \$50
- Sept. 23 - Aubrielle Lodico, Dixon, \$25
- Sept. 24 - John Schinzer, Rochelle, \$25
- Sept. 25 - RACF, \$25
- Sept. 26 - Michele Hardcastle, Rochelle, \$25
- Sept. 27 - RACF, \$25
- Sept. 28 - Teagan Meyers, Rochelle, \$25
- Sept. 29 - Timothy Hill, Rochelle, \$50
- Sept. 30 - Chief Dave Sawlsville, Rochelle, \$25
- Oct. 1 - Jan Heal, Creston, \$25
- Oct. 2 - From the Heart, \$25
- Oct. 3 - Marie McNames, Byron, \$25
- Oct. 4 - Kevin Louis, Rochelle, \$25
- Oct. 5 - Chris Berndt, Roscoe, \$25
- Oct. 6 - Monafae Menerey, Peru, \$50

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| Oct. 7
Hadley Voight
Ryan Bunger | Oct. 12
Kyle Bridgeman | Oct. 20
Veda Lopez
Bo Bridgeman |
| Oct. 8
Jose Avila | Oct. 13
Ivan Olson
Jack Olson | Oct. 22
Allie Dolister |
| Oct. 9
John Oleson | Oct. 14
Samantha Zellers | Oct. 28
Bryce Weems |
| Oct. 11
James & Lyndsey O'Brien
(anniversary) | Oct. 17
Kati Johnson
Preston King | Oct. 30
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| | | Oct. 31
Angel Weyhrauch
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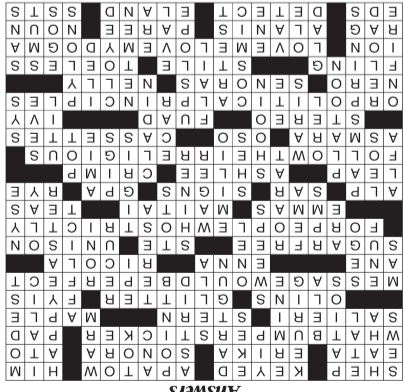
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Y W H V S T S T V D Q F P Y T
N S L K I N C H F L E I C O I
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U R E T R A B K S G R S I D Q
P T I D E R C F O R E T T E L
N M L L A P Y A P T J I S R H

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions forward, backward, up, down and diagonally
Unlisted clue hint: CERTIFICATES OF —

- | | | | |
|-----------------|-------------|------------------|--------|
| Barter | Credit card | Letter of credit | Shells |
| Bitcoin | Gift card | Money order | Silver |
| Certified check | Gold | PayPal | Tokens |
| Chits | IOU | Scrip | |

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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



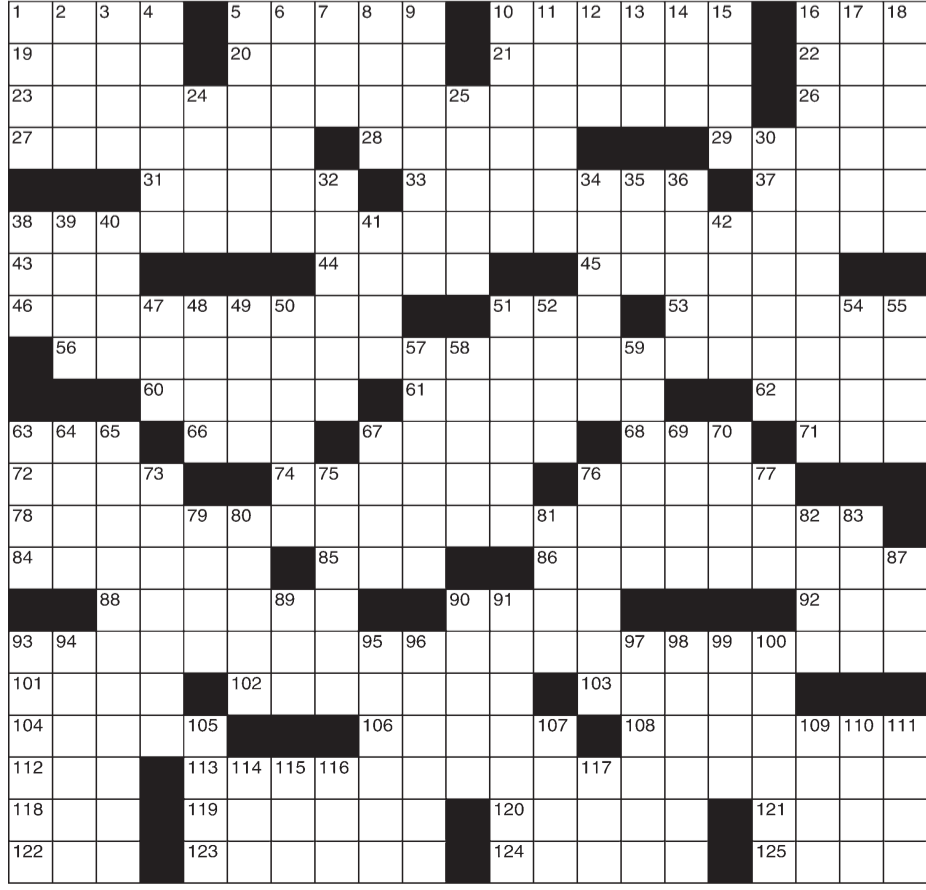
Differences: 1. Dishcloth is larger. 2. Picture on wall is missing. 3. Stack of dishes is shorter. 4. Cabinet handle is missing. 5. Report card is smaller. 6. Upper cabinet is missing.

Super Crossword

"TENETS, ANYONE?"

ACROSS

- 1 Fitting name for a herding dog
- 5 Tense, with "up"
- 10 "This Is 40" director Judd
- 16 That guy
- 19 "... I could — horse!"
- 20 Actress Christensen
- 21 Mexican state
- 22 — Z (totally)
- 23 Start of a riddle
- 26 Cushion
- 27 Composer Antonio
- 31 Actors Ken and Lena
- 33 Sparkly decoration
- 37 "By the way" comments
- 38 Riddle, part 2
- 43 Ending for pent- or prop-
- 44 City in central Sicily
- 45 Brand of cough drops
- 46 Like Diet Coke
- 51 Holy Mle.
- 53 Togetherness
- 56 Riddle, part 3
- 60 Samms and Stone of film
- 61 Luau cocktail
- 62 Lipton drinks
- 63 High peak
- 66 Patriotic org. since 1889
- 67 Symbols
- 68 Scholastic meas.
- 71 Seeded loaf
- 72 Vault
- 74 "Invisible" singer
- 76 Press into folds
- 78 Riddle, part 4
- 84 Eritrean capital
- 85 Spanish bear
- 86 Videotapes, e.g.
- 88 Hi-fi setup
- 90 King of Egypt in the 1950s
- 92 Trellis-climbing plant
- 93 End of the riddle
- 101 Successor of Claudius I
- 102 Tijuana wives
- 103 Poet Sachs
- 104 Throw forcefully
- 106 Subway entry gate
- 108 Like most sandals
- 112 Tiny charged thing
- 113 Riddle's answer
- 118 Tabloid paper
- 119 Singer Morissette
- 120 French capital, in a Cole Porter title
- 121 Word that's pluralizable
- 122 Zine staffers
- 123 Ferret out
- 124 African antelope
- 125 Onetime JFK jets
- DOWN
- 1 Plies needle and thread
- 2 "Very funny"
- 3 List-ending abbr.
- 4 Terraces
- 5 The "K" of K-Cup
- 6 White weasel
- 7 Sharp bark
- 8 Barely earns, with "out"
- 9 Tranquilizer shooter
- 10 Pippi Longstocking creator Lindgren
- 11 Travel destination, generically
- 12 Very old: Abbr.
- 13 "Tik —" (Kesha hit)
- 14 Raw rock
- 15 Very friendly
- 16 Greeting on a Sunday holiday
- 17 Slanting type
- 18 Demure
- 24 Composer Bartók
- 25 — bill of goods (dupe)
- 30 Cause pain to
- 32 Plies a broom
- 34 Missionary "Mother"
- 35 Prefix with dermis
- 36 Be cyclical
- 38 Pas' partners
- 39 Ample, to L'il Abner
- 40 Utah's lily
- 41 Law school newbie
- 42 Rice-A- —
- 47 Is, pluralized
- 48 Tach readings, informally
- 49 U.S. disaster aid org.
- 50 Threaten like a tiger
- 51 Result of a hit to the eye
- 52 Wee kids
- 54 Skin cream brand
- 55 NASDAQ kin
- 57 Estevez of the Brat Pack
- 58 Place a bet
- 59 River in Iraq
- 63 — Romeo (sporty auto)
- 64 Those born in August, often
- 65 Resort city near Los Angeles
- 67 "— a Lady" (1971 hit)
- 69 They oink
- 70 Lady friend, in Lyon
- 73 Combat unit
- 75 Easy winner
- 76 Wearing, as clothes
- 77 Stew holder
- 79 Hersher of baseball
- 80 "— hell" (Sherman assertion)
- 81 Tesla vehicle, e.g.
- 82 Elec. or gas
- 83 Golfer Ballesteros
- 87 Part of DOS: Abbr.
- 89 Summer, in Savoy
- 90 Swing wildly, as arms
- 91 Rising ground
- 93 In flames
- 94 Put more film in
- 95 Of the universe
- 96 Former NBA star Metta Sandiford- —
- 97 Male tennis players
- 98 Was too syrupy
- 99 "— 3 Lives"
- 100 Auto-racing posts
- 105 Ticked pink
- 107 Appraisal, for short
- 109 "I" problems
- 110 Indecent stuff
- 111 — serif font
- 114 Seville cheer
- 115 Very big tub
- 116 Chicago-to-Toronto dir.
- 117 Noted period



LOCAL NEWS

SHOOTING: Use of deadly force during June Lost Nation incident ruled justified

From page 1

The memorandum issued by Hanley lays out a timeline of the June 12 events. At 9 a.m., the Ogle County Sheriff's Office was dispatched to the west entrance of Lost Lake to speak with Gounaris' mother, who was concerned about her son's mental state and wanted deputies to perform a welfare check at her home where he resided.

Gounaris' mother told law enforcement that her son threatened suicide and harm to her and others that would try to talk with him, the memorandum said. She also said that Gounaris carried two pistols with him and she believed he had barricaded himself inside the home. It was learned by the responding deputy that Gounaris' FOID card had been revoked as he had been designated a clear and present danger. The incident was turned over to the Ogle County ERT team.

After delivering a "throw phone" into the home, a total of 75 calls were made to that phone and Gounaris' cell phone by law enforcement without any answer. The ERT

team made the decision at 11:50 a.m. to enter the home, one team from the front and one team from the back.

The front door was breached with a ram and a flash bang was thrown by law enforcement, and at that point multiple shots were heard in video reviewed. Shots were fired at law enforcement and they returned fire, before finding cover and assessing their injuries.

The ERT team members at the back entered the residence after shots had been fired and their body cameras show Gounaris on the ground wearing a bulletproof vest, and saying "Thank you" to law enforcement while being handcuffed and secured. ERT members determined Gounaris had been shot at this time and remained with him until EMS arrived. None of the ERT members that entered through the back of the house fired their weapons.

Two firearms were recovered from the residence. One 9mm handgun was recovered from the living room floor with an empty magazine and was determined to be the firearm Gounaris used to fire at officers, the memorandum said. A 9mm handgun was found in another room and wasn't believed to have been fired.



(PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)

Jonathon Gounaris, 32, of rural Dixon is currently in custody due to the incident and his next scheduled court appearance is Oct. 17. He faces charges of four counts of attempted first degree murder, three counts of aggravated discharge of a firearm, three counts of aggravated battery and two counts of possession of a firearm without a Firearm Owner's Identification (FOID) card.

The memorandum outlined the conclusions drawn after fully reviewing the incident.

"The officers only fired their service pistols into the home after being fired upon by Gounaris," the memorandum said.

"The body cam video clearly shows this and the officers' statements are corroborated by the video evidence. Further, the evidence demonstrates that Gounaris knew, or should have known, that officers were outside his home."

The memorandum also mentions the fact that Gounaris was wearing a

bulletproof vest and his statements to officers after the shooting, which played into the shooting by officers being ruled justified.

"Based upon the totality of the circumstances, the officers' belief that shooting at Gounaris was necessary to protect each of them and others from death or great bodily harm was reasonable," the

memorandum said. "Certainly, Gounaris posed an actual threat of death or great bodily harm to the officers nearby as he fired upon and struck officers. An officer may respond to that actual or imminent threat of death or great bodily harm to himself or others with equal force - in this case, by firing his gun."

ISP announces monthly activity for September

STERLING — Illinois State Police Troop 1 Captain Joseph Blanchette has announced enforcement figures and activity for September.

Illinois State Police Troop 1 Troopers issued 1,297 citations, 881 written warnings, and made 21 criminal arrests during the

month of September. Troopers issued 458 citations for speeding, 37 citations for distracted driving violations and 146 citations for occupant restraint violations.

Troopers investigated 96 traffic crashes, assisted 247 motorists, and conducted 685 commercial motor vehicle inspections, of which

67 were placed out of service for safety reasons. There were 22 arrests for driving under the influence.

Troop 1, which encompasses Boone, Carroll, Jo Daviess, Lee, Ogle, Stephenson, Whiteside and Winnebago counties, investigated no fatal crashes in September.



3M provides stethoscopes to Kish College nursing students
Five Kishwaukee College students in the Registered Nursing program received the Littmann Stethoscope Award from DeKalb's 3M Community Support Group for the Fall 2024 semester. The students who received the award (pictured left to right) are Nick Hoffman, Nia Burrows, Courtney Felder, Aolani Perez and Madison Rollins. The 3M Community Support Group in DeKalb has awarded Littmann stethoscopes to Kish nursing students each semester since 2010. The Littmann stethoscopes are manufactured by 3M and are considered high-end equipment in the health care field. To learn more about the Kish Registered Nursing program, visit kish.edu/nursing. For information on the 3M Corporation, visit 3m.com. (Courtesy photo)

County residential electronics recycling and document shredding event is Oct. 19

OREGON — The Ogle County Solid Waste Management Department (OCSWMD) will be hosting a residential electronics recycling and document shredding event on Saturday, Oct. 19 from 8 a.m. to noon at 909 Pines Road in Oregon.

This event is for Ogle County residents only and a free permit is required in advance of the event. To obtain a free permit call 815-732-4020 or email solidwaste@oglecounty-il.gov and provide your name, address, phone number and email address by 4 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 18. Identification is required for document shredding, however a permit is only required for the electronics recycling.

Accepted items include all televisions and computer monitors, computers, computer hardware and cables, laptops, tablets, cell phones, printers, FAX machines, scanners, shredders (no tubs), copiers, video gaming equipment, DVD/VCRs, cable/satellite boxes, stereo equipment, radios, digital clocks, cameras, calculators, phone systems, holiday light strands, extension cords, rechargeable batteries, printer ink cartridges, CD/DVDs, and CFL bulbs. Microwave ovens accepted for \$5 per unit. Cash or check accepted.

Limit seven large or bulky items per permit and one permit per county household per month.

Business or institutional electronic materials not accepted at these events. Business or institutional electronics are accepted by the OCSWMD via a separate program. Call the number above for more information and pricing for business electronic recycling, and to make an appointment for drop off of the materials to be recycled.

Secure, on-site document shredding will be conducted by Illinois Valley Document Destruction from 9 a.m. to noon. There is a limit of three banker boxes per vehicle. There is no cost to residents for paper shredding, because the OCSWMD will cover the cost of the shred truck and staff.

Chana UMC Dinner is Oct. 12

CHANA — The Chana United Methodist Church will host a Homemade

Chicken and Noodles Drive-Up Dinner on Saturday, Oct. 12 from 4-6:30 p.m.

Each dinner costs \$12 and includes chicken & noodles, squash and apple crisp.

ROCHELLE

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ROCHELLE NEWS-LEADER • SECTION 2 • PAGE 1

SPORTS



FRESHMEN BEAT DIXON

The Rochelle Hub freshman football team beat Dixon 20-8 at home on Monday.

See page 5 for more details

RTHS Golf

Hubs send two to sectionals

Metzger, Dyer lead Rochelle during IHSA 2A Sterling Regional on Wednesday

BY RUSSELL HODGES

SPORTS EDITOR

STERLING — Ian Metzger didn't let issues with his driver impact his play Wednesday afternoon, when the junior recorded three birdies during his round to medal in third place and lead the Rochelle Hub varsity golf team in the IHSA 2A Sterling Regional at Emerald Hill Golf Course.

Metzger drilled key putts and took advantage of great weather conditions, finishing with a 4-over-par 76 to clinch a sectional berth for the third consecutive season. An All-Conference honoree in the Interstate 8 this season, Metzger overcame a double bogey on his second hole of the round, converting birdies on the par-4 12th and the par-4 16th to shoot 39 on the back nine. Metzger landed six pars and a birdie on the par-4 third for a 37 over the front nine.

"I thought I hit the ball solid," Metzger said. "I struggled with the driver all day and I didn't hit the fairway much, which I thought was the difference between first place and third place. I made some good putts and overall, I did what I needed to do in order to get through. I made a few good putts, I hit a few good shots into greens and I got up and down when I needed to."


Metzger led the Hubs to tie for fifth place out of 10 schools with a final score of 355. Rochelle (11-3, 4-1 Interstate 8) was in the mix throughout the afternoon, sitting as high as third place on the leaderboard before being jumped by Sterling and third-place finisher Geneseo. Now a three-time sectional qualifier, Metzger will look to break through to state during the IHSA 2A Kaneland Sectional, which will be held at Hughes Creek Golf Course on Monday, Oct. 7. The Hubs have not had a boy advance to the state tournament since Noah Griffith in 2017.

"It's a tight course, but the greens aren't bad and I know I'll have to keep the ball in the middle," Metzger said. "There will be some good players there, but there won't be anything I haven't seen before... I need to be consistent, take it one shot at a time and keep mistakes minimal."

Joining Metzger at the sectional tournament will be sophomore Alex Dyer, who took 10th overall and advanced as an at-large individual with an 85 on Wednesday. Also an All-Conference winner in the Interstate 8 this season, Dyer showed consistency throughout his regional round, carding 10 pars and opening with 42 on the back before following with 43 on the front. Now a two-time sectional qualifier, Dyer will also be seeking his first trip to the state tournament.

"I thought I played pretty decently," Dyer said. "There are a lot of things I need to work on going into sectionals. I thought I putted the ball very well, but I struggled from 150 yards and in, which is what I'll need to work on the most going into sectionals. I knew that hitting the fairways was going to be the key to putting the ball on the green."

See GOLF page 5



(PHOTO BY RUSSELL HODGES)

The Rochelle Hub varsity golf team tied for fifth out of 10 schools during the IHSA 2A Sterling Regional at Emerald Hill on Wednesday. Above from left to right are Chris Hickey, Owen Carmichael, Alex Dyer, Ian Metzger, Johnny Chadwick and Connor Lewis.

RTHS Girls Tennis

Rochelle celebrates Senior Night against Mendota

Eleven seniors honored as Lady Hubs take two matches in 3-2 loss to Trojans

BY RUSSELL HODGES

SPORTS EDITOR

ROCHELLE — The Rochelle Lady Hub tennis team has leaned on its senior class for both leadership and production over the last few seasons. That theme has remained consistent this fall, as the Lady Hubs currently roster 11 seniors, eight of which are starting at the varsity level.

Rochelle recognized its senior class on Monday, when the Lady Hubs hosted Mendota for their annual Senior Night match. Both teams battled to the finish, with Rochelle taking two doubles points while Mendota swept both singles points. With a victory on the line, all eyes shifted to the No. 1 doubles court, where seniors Erin Murphy and Catherine Williams played a pair of tight sets before falling just short in a 6-7(5), 5-7 loss to Kylie Goldblatt and Leah Stamberger.


The hard-fought win enabled the Trojans to outlast Rochelle 3-2. The Lady Hubs (3-9, 1-2 Interstate 8) honored their 11 seniors including Erin Murphy, Catherine Williams, Abby Metzger, Lauren Dyer, Sydney Carmichael, Natalie Wagner, Kendyl Darby, Yaretzi Villalobos, Riley Doyle, Zoe White and Viviana Fulgencio in a brief ceremony before the start of the match Monday.

"We have several senior girls who've played on the team for a couple of years," head coach Lizzie Cartwright said. "We had a nice influx of seniors who came out as juniors last year and seniors who came out this year. We have great upperclassman leadership and they've filled varsity spots this year. It's been good for our underclassmen to have these girls as role models."

Seniors Abby Metzger and Lauren Dyer were in firm command at the No. 2 doubles court, defeating Mendota's Lauren Holland and Lidia Hernandez 6-2, 6-3. Seniors Natalie Wagner and Sydney Carmichael took their No. 3 doubles match against Mendota's Lucie Brandner and Lilly Bokus, dominating the opening set and fighting off a second-set rally for a 6-0, 7-5 win.

"We've had some ups and downs this season," Cartwright said. "We've had some really close matches that went down to tiebreakers or very close set scores. It was really nice to see our girls do well and overcome the challenges they've faced throughout the year. We definitely want the girls to finish strong and bring their focus and competitive attitudes to every match."

Senior Kendyl Darby hung tough at the No. 2 singles court, claiming five games in her 2-6, 3-6 loss against Cassie Gonzalez. Senior Yaretzi Villalobos took the court at No. 1 singles, falling 0-6, 0-6 to Mendota's Ella Lewis.



(PHOTO BY RUSSELL HODGES)

The Rochelle Lady Hub tennis team honored its 11 seniors before Monday's Senior Night match against Mendota. Above from left to right are Zoe White, Catherine Williams, Riley Doyle, Erin Murphy, Kendyl Darby, Lauren Dyer, Abby Metzger, Natalie Wagner, Sydney Carmichael, Yaretzi Villalobos and Viviana Fulgencio.

SPORTS

RTHS Girls Tennis



(COURTESY PHOTOS)

The Rochelle Lady Hub varsity tennis team had nine award winners during the Lady Hub Invitational this past Saturday. Above from left to right are Erin Murphy, Catherine Williams, Abby Metzger, Lauren Dyer, Sydney Carmichael and Natalie Wagner. Below are Ashley Lozano-Barragan, Merit Namaste-Rose and Jaicee Ramos.

Rochelle netters shine during Lady Hub Invitational

Nine players earn first or second-place awards at home tournament on Sept. 28

BY RUSSELL HODGES
SPORTS EDITOR

ROCHELLE—There were awards aplenty for the Rochelle Lady Hub varsity tennis team on Saturday, when the girls returned to their home courts for the annual Lady Hub Invitational.

Nine Rochelle players brought home first or second-place finishes in the tournament, where the Lady Hubs took second as a team. Seniors Lauren Dyer and Abby Metzger combined for a 3-1 record at No. 2 doubles, beating Freeport, Kaneland and Newman to finish in second place.

“It shows that what we’ve been practicing has been paying off,” Dyer said. “It was really fun to play well as a team and Abby and I said that we were going to bring home some hardware. We worked really well together and we relied on each other a lot throughout the day. We’ve known each other for a long time and we have a connection. We also communicate really well.”

Seniors Erin Murphy and Kitty Williams went

2-2 over four matches, beating Kaneland and Freeport to finish second at No. 1 doubles. With two teams short on doubles players, juniors Ashley Lozano-Barragan and Merit Namaste-Rose stepped in and finished 3-1 over four matches at No. 3 doubles, claiming three victories including wins over DeKalb and Newman.

“Kitty and I really focus on having fun when we play,” Murphy said. “We try not to get down on ourselves and that was a big focus for us during the tournament. We love to bring home a win and I think the tournament will be a big confidence boost for the rest of the season. We’re all really close with each other and we’ve all grown up and played sports with each other. Our new girls are doing really well and the returning girls are working together to help everyone out.”

Seniors Sydney Carmichael and Natalie Wagner placed second at No. 3 doubles, going 2-2 with victories against Kaneland and DeKalb. Junior Jaicee Ramos was the lone award winner in singles play, finishing 2-2 at No. 2 singles.



ishing 2-2 at No. 2 singles to take second place. Rochelle (3-8, 1-2 Interstate 8) will look to build on its strong tournament performance Monday, when the girls host Mendota.

“Natalie and I have really good chemistry and we give each other a lot of constructive criticism,” Carmichael said. “We’re continuing to get better. Natalie plays well in both the back row and the front row. When she was in the

back row, we used the wind to our advantage and we were able to figure that out by the end of the tournament. We have a great group of girls and a lot of girls, like me, are new. It’s been really fun and we’re building each other up all of the time.”

Rounding out the varsity players on Saturday were seniors Kendyl Darby and Yaretzi Villalobos, who combined for three wins in singles play. Darby



went 2-2 with victories over Newman and DeKalb at No. 2 singles, while

Villalobos went 1-3 with a win against DeKalb at No. 1 singles.

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SPORTS

RTHS Boys Soccer

Rochelle falls to Kaneland after PK shootout

Diaz scores in regulation time as Hubs suffer tough conference loss to Knights

BY RUSSELL HODGES
SPORTS EDITOR

ROCHELLE—Better teamwork and communication on the field had the Rochelle Hub varsity soccer team in the mix against a pair of tough Interstate 8 Conference opponents this week.

After playing Sycamore to a 1-0 loss on Monday evening, Rochelle returned home for a rematch against Kaneland on Wednesday. Despite falling to the Knights 6-3 earlier this season, the Hubs were in control early and held Kaneland at bay for nearly the entire second half. Rochelle was within minutes of victory, but the Knights eventually broke through, scoring in the 75th minute to even the score at 1-1 and ultimately send the conference match into a penalty-kick shootout.

Senior forward Alberto Casillas converted the lone penalty kick in three tries for the Hubs, but Kaneland made all four of its penalty kicks to win the shootout and hand Rochelle a tough loss. Rochelle (8-10-1, 3-4 Interstate 8) will host a nonconference match with Freeport on Saturday. “Defensively, we were

covering for each other and we cleared the ball a little better,” head coach Brad Male said. “We found more of those outlet passes and that helped us transition into our offense better. We were coming off a tough loss against Sycamore and I thought that put some fire into these boys. We can compete with anyone in our conference and our last two games show that. It was unfortunate to lose today, but I’m pleased with how we stepped up.”

Junior goalkeeper Antonio Hueramo recorded seven saves for the Hubs, who shut out the Knights in the first half after allowing six goals at Kaneland earlier this season. Rochelle took the early lead, scoring in the 15th minute after junior midfielder Heilly Zepeda found senior midfielder Fernando Diaz for a goal to put the Hubs ahead 1-0. The Knights put five shots on goal during the first half, but the Rochelle defensive line held strong to prevent a breakthrough.

“It’s always a boost when we get that first goal and we aren’t trailing or trying to come back,” Male said. “I thought that boosted our spirits knowing that we could score against them. We

moved the ball well and I’m pleased that we were on offense as much as we were today.”

The tide slowly turned in the second half, where Kaneland began to take more possession of the ball in the midfield and pressure the Rochelle defense. Key saves from Hueramo and strong play from defenders like sophomore center back Eliud Lombardia and senior outside back Francisco Diaz kept the Knights off the board until the 75th minute, when a turnover by Rochelle led to a through ball down the far sideline that Kaneland converted to even the score.

With the match tied at 1-1 after 80 minutes, both teams took the field for the penalty-kick shootout. Kaneland goalkeeper Cooper Van Wagoner blocked Rochelle’s first three shots, giving the Knights a significant advantage. Although Casillas cashed in on the fourth attempt for the Hubs, Kaneland made all four to clinch the win as players rushed the field in celebration.

“Our teamwork has improved a lot over the course of the season,” Male said. “That’s what we’ve been striving for during practice



(PHOTO BY RUSSELL HODGES)

Heilly Zepeda, Bryan Garcia, Fernando Diaz, Alberto Casillas and Antonio Ruiz (left to right) all look on during the penalty-kick shootout on Wednesday, when the Rochelle Hub varsity soccer team hosted Kaneland.

and in games. I thought that really showed today.”

Sycamore

One second-half goal was the deciding factor during the Rochelle Hub varsity soccer team’s Interstate 8 Conference road match against Sycamore on Monday evening.

Although the Spartans held a sizable advantage in both shots (24-8) and shots

on goal (17-4), Rochelle stood strong defensively, holding Sycamore scoreless in the first half. But the Spartans finally broke through during the 49th minute, putting in the first and only goal of the match to outlast the Hubs 1-0.

Junior goalkeeper Antonio Hueramo finished with eight saves for the Hubs, who saw senior Bryan Garcia put a shot

on goal during the first minute that was saved by the Spartans. Rochelle had another scoring chance during the 24th minute, when seniors Fernando Diaz and Alberto Casillas each had shots on goal that were turned away by the Sycamore defense. Junior Antonio Ruiz landed Rochelle’s final shot on goal during the 61st minute of play.

RTHS Volleyball

Injury woes continue as Lady Hubs lose to Rock Falls

Rochelle concedes ninth straight loss after 17-25, 22-25 defeat on Wednesday

BY RUSSELL HODGES
SPORTS EDITOR

ROCHELLE — The injury bug took another bite from the Rochelle Lady Hub varsity volleyball team on Wednesday, when the girls hosted a nonconference match against Rock Falls.

Already without senior setter Ali Ohlinger, Rochelle lost another key player early in the match, as senior outside hitter Taelynn Rodeghero suffered an ankle injury and didn’t return for the rest of the evening. With Rodeghero sidelined, the Lady Hubs struggled to find their rhythm in the first set. Despite a better effort in the second set, Rochelle was unable to rally back, falling to the Rockets 17-25, 22-25. The Lady Hubs (9-12, 0-4 Interstate 8) have lost nine straight matches.

“Any time a player goes down, especially a player of Taelynn’s caliber, it creates a really weird vibe,” head coach Molly Sly said.

“The girls were wondering how she is and how serious the injury was, but they bounced back and they saw that Taelynn wanted to see them succeed.”

Junior hitters Audyn Kemp and Jaydin Dickey did their best to step up on the front line, with Dickey scoring a team-high six kills while Kemp added three kills and three blocks from the middle. Senior libero Dempsey Atkinson anchored the Rochelle defense, collecting a team-best 14 digs with Dickey adding eight digs. Junior Meredith Bruns totaled 10 assists and six digs.

“I think Audyn has already stepped up in big ways and she stepped up even more tonight,” Sly said. “Jaydin put the ball away tonight and our setters know that they can count on her. We give her the ball quite a bit on the right side and she does good things with it.”

Despite losing the opening set, Rochelle took an 8-4 lead to start the second set, pressuring the Rock-

ets from the service line, where the Lady Hubs had three aces in the early going. Rochelle was unable to maintain its advantage, however, as receiving and passing errors enabled the Rockets to rally back late in the second set, where Rochelle was forced to burn two timeouts.

The Lady Hubs hung tough down the stretch, getting quality defense from back-row players including junior Emori Mickley, who had four digs in her extended playing time with Rodeghero on the sideline. Rochelle will be back in action at the Sterling Invitational on Saturday.

“Emori puts up a great platform,” Sly said. “As long as she’s dug in with the right mindset, I think she’ll do a lot of great things for us. She’s a hustler out there and it was fun to see her succeed.”

Morris

The Rochelle Lady Hub varsity volleyball team suffered its eighth con-



(PHOTO BY RUSSELL HODGES)

Junior Audyn Kemp challenges two Rock Falls defenders up front during the Rochelle Lady Hub varsity volleyball match against the Rockets on Wednesday evening.

secutive loss, including its fourth straight in the Interstate 8 Conference, during Tuesday’s road match against Morris. Senior Dempsey Atkinson collected a team-high 12

digs, while senior Taelynn Rodeghero notched six kills as the Lady Hubs fell to the Redskins 19-25, 12-25.

Juniors Jaydin Dickey and Meredith Bruns each

earned five assists for the Lady Hubs (9-11, 0-4 Interstate 8). Rodeghero and Bruns each finished with five digs, while Dickey added four digs in the loss at Morris on Tuesday.

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SPORTS

GOLF: Metzger, Dyer advance to IHSA 2A Kaneland Sectional

From page 1

“The rough was really tall and I knew the greens would be really fast. I felt confident coming in and I knew I had to avoid the big number.”

Rochelle came within a few strokes of sending a third player to the sectional

on Monday. Sophomore Johnny Chadwick tied for 21st overall with a 94 after 18 holes and finished in a three-way tie with Sterling’s Maurice DeLaCruz and Princeton’s Kaiden Coomer for the 10th and final at-large qualifying slot. Despite a promising tee shot, Chadwick fell just short in the

end, carding a double bogey while Coomer landed a par to take the final sectional qualifying spot.

Sophomores Owen Carmichael and Connor Lewis finished with respective scores of 100 and 104, while senior Chris Hickey added a 114 to round out the varsity players for Rochelle.

RTHS Football



(PHOTO BY RUSSELL HODGES)

Tyson Pavlak runs with the ball during the Rochelle Hub freshman football game against Dixon on Monday evening.

Hub freshmen defeat Dixon

Rochelle scores 20-8 win on Monday night

BY RUSSELL HODGES
SPORTS EDITOR

ROCHELLE — The Rochelle Hub freshman football team earned its second win of the season on Monday evening, defeating

the Dixon Dukes 20-8. Andrew Eyster rushed for a 2-yard touchdown and a 3-yard touchdown for the Hubs (2-0, 0-0 Interstate 8), whose next freshman game will be against Morris on Friday.

Cohen Haedt connected with Tyson Pavlak for a 3-yard touchdown pass near the end of the first half. Luke Chadwick recorded two interceptions to lead the defense, while Mason Bolhous added one sack.

RTHS Cross Country



(COURTESY PHOTO)

Annaliese Koziol, Declan McGee and Tyler Johnson (left to right) all earned medals for the Rochelle Township High School varsity cross country team during the Matt Walter Invitational at Walcamp Park on Tuesday.

Rochelle trio medals at Matt Walter Invitational

Johnson, McGee and Koziol earn honors

BY RUSSELL HODGES
SPORTS EDITOR

KINGSTON — The Rochelle Township High School varsity cross country team turned in its strongest performance of the season on Tuesday, when nearly all of the Hub and Lady Hub runners set new PRs during the Genoa-Kingston Matt Walter Invitational at Walcamp Park.

The Hubs finished sixth out of 10 schools, while the Lady Hubs took seventh out of eight schools in the 3-mile race. Freshman Tyler Johnson and junior Declan McGee pushed each other throughout the event, with Johnson finishing 12th in 16:14.21 while McGee placed 13th in 16:15.09. Both runners earned medals for the Hubs, who had all of their varsity boys finish in under 20 minutes

for the first time since Dale Bergeson began coaching cross country at RTHS.

“We had a great night last night,” Bergeson said. “Declan and Tyler pushed each other to career bests. They led the whole field at the mile and made other teams change their race plans. The boys responded to a really tough workout on Monday and they used that to get better.”

Sophomore Hunter Bivins took 36th out of 74 varsity boys with a time of 18:20.31, while juniors Levi Waddle and Elijah Mayen landed in 39th and 40th with respective times of 18:36.18 and 18:36.72 to round out the top five scoring runners for the Hubs. Junior Annaliese Koziol was the catalyst for the Lady Hubs, medaling in 11th out of 59 varsity girls with a time of 19:41.28.

“On the girls’ side, they all PR’d as well,” Bergeson said. “Annaliese got a career best time in the 19s and Rose Vivian had a great day getting into the low 23s and Mary broke the 24-minute barrier for the first time. Evi and Bridgett had huge PRs as well. I’m really proud of how well they responded and came out to race other athletes and not just to run.”

Junior Rose Luxton and sophomore Vivian Worthington took 32nd and 37th with respective times of 22:11.53 and 23:04.15. Junior Mary Chadwick and senior Evi Mendez rounded out the top five scoring runners, placing 44th and 51st with respective times of 23:50.00 and 24:28.84. Rochelle will return to action during the Freeport Invitational at Highland CC on Saturday.

Stranger Danger

School has started, and with all of activities going on, there is no better time to discuss the danger of strangers with your kids. Telling them not to talk to strangers is not enough. You want to make sure they know what a stranger is and how to deal with them.

Here are some safety tips to include in your discussion.



- Do not mistake a friendly face for someone you know. Anyone you do not know is a stranger, regardless how nice they seem or what they have to offer. Just because the person has a cute dog or tons of candy does not mean you can trust them. Ask for identification from anyone in uniform.
- Do not walk to school or play outside alone, if you can help it. Strangers are less likely to approach groups of kids.
- Do not go places where strangers could be lurking, such as empty playgrounds or abandoned buildings. Stay in busy areas.
- Do not let your guard down. Always be on the lookout for strangers.
- Do not make contact with strangers. Be quiet and take their questions and pleas for help to an adult you know and trust.
- Do not panic should a stranger approach. Run to a reliable adult and let them know what is going on, whether a teacher in the parking lot, a clerk in a store or a neighbor down the street. If possible, take down the stranger’s license plate number. Should the stranger grab you, do whatever it takes to get away from them and attract the attention of any reliable adults that may be around.
- Do not keep any incidents with strangers to yourself. Let your parents know as soon as possible so they can contact the police.

Tailor your discussion to your kids’ ages and use role-playing to help them understand the gravity of the situation. Their safety is at stake!

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TELLER APPRECIATION

Learn how to budget and save for big-ticket items

WHEN faced with making a significant purchase, or even financing an unexpected emergency expense, consumers are tempted to turn to credit to pay for the goods or services. While credit utilization maintains an important place in building a strong financial reputation, it can quickly put a person underwater financially, and interest fees can increase the price of big-ticket items by a significant amount.

The financial resource The Motley Fool says American households carried a total of \$17.1 trillion in debt as of the second quarter of 2023. A report from Equifax Canada indicated Canadian consumer debt rose to \$2.32 trillion in 2023. Substantial consumer debt can limit financial flexibility, so individuals who

are looking ahead to new vehicles or vacations or even home renovations can first try to save for such expenses in lieu of borrowing. Budgeting and saving may not lead to immediate gratification, but it can help consumers avoid debt and ultimately create more financial flexibility down the road.

- Know exactly what you have. Too often people take a casual approach to their finances. At any given time they may not know whether the money they're making is actually covering all of the bills, and how much money, if any, is left over. Spend a few months cataloging all credits and debits to your accounts. Pay attention to times of year when income is higher or when spending increases.
- Know your goal and price. Rayhons Financial, a financial services com-

pany, suggests identifying exactly how much you'll need for a purchase. Estimate on the high side of expenses so as not to go over budget. Treat a big-ticket item just like a utility bill.

- Create a separate expense account. When all of your funds are together in one bank account, it is easier to spend the money on other purchases rather than the larger one in mind. Open a separate account and move your "extra" earnings into that account to save for your large expense. Automating the savings by setting up an automatic deduction deposited into this account on payday can make savings even easier.
- Review your budget periodically. Figure out if there are areas where you can cut back and allocate more money to your overall savings or the special



savings for the big-ticket item. For example, you may be able to downgrade to a more manageable mobile phone plan or dine out less frequently.

- Time the purchase right. In addition to only buying when you have the money saved, you can look

at the calendar to figure out the best time to make that purchase. Does your state or province offer a sales tax holiday? Some times of year you may get a bonus, tax refund or birthday gifts that can be earmarked for big-ticket items. Avoid purchasing

big items during times when you must pay for other significant expenses, such as tuition, summer camp fees and insurance payments.

Some simple financial planning can help people save and budget for big-ticket items more readily.

Finding the right credit card for you

CREDIT cards are a preferential method of payment for millions of consumers. Credit cards make buying items online convenient and provide more security than debit cards, which are directly tied to a bank account.

The modern credit card was invented in 1950 and was known as the Diners Club card. The idea came from Frank McNamara and business partner Ralph Schneider, who conceived of a way to pay without carrying cash after McNamara had forgotten his wallet while out to dinner in New York. Since that fateful, forgetful night for McNamara, the credit card industry has boomed, and WalletHub notes that consumers now have more than 1,500 credit cards to choose from. Having so many options can make finding the right card somewhat challenging. Explore these methods to narrow down your prospects.

greater the chance of being approved for a card which offers strong perks.

Type of cardholder

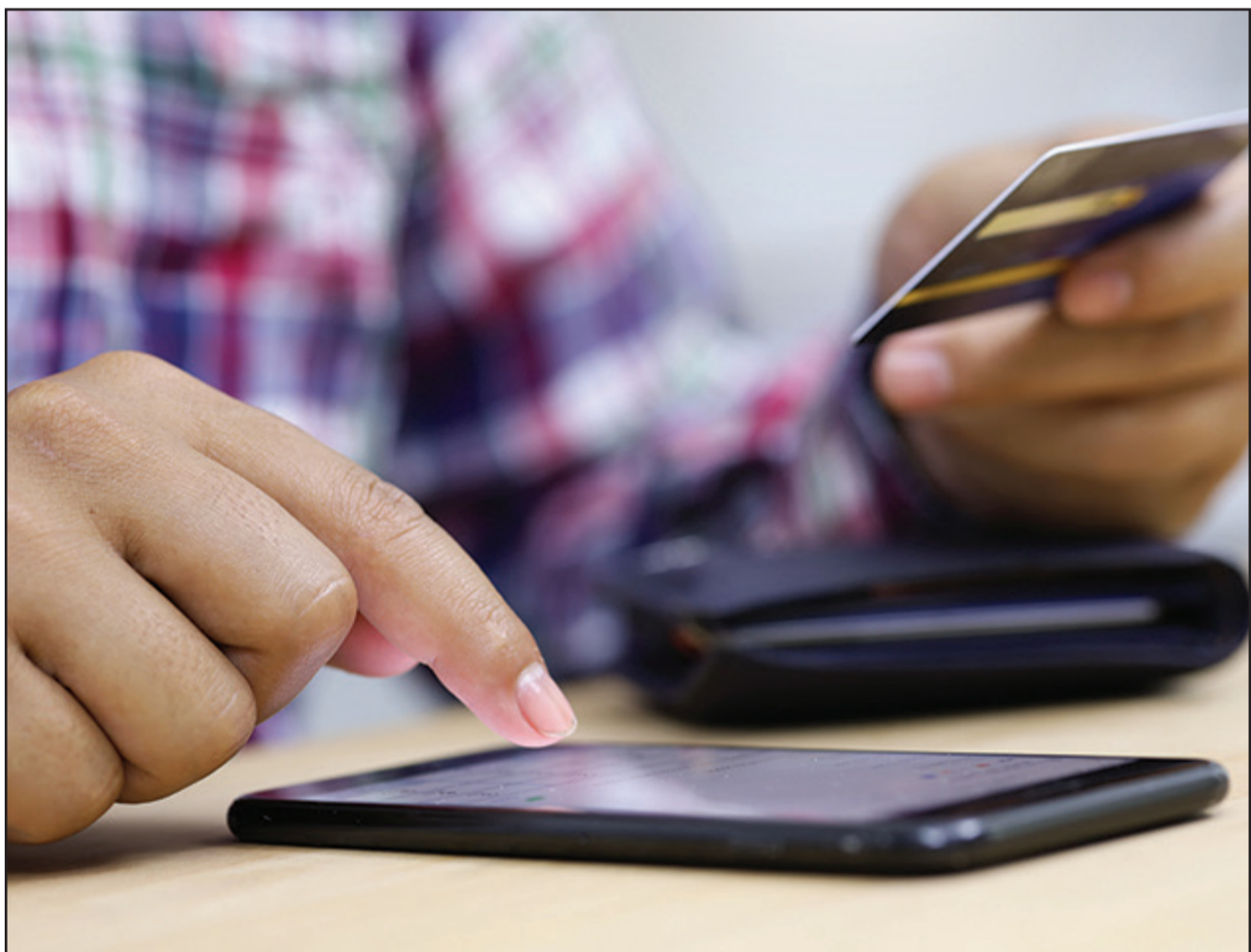
The next step is to identify which type of cardholder you are. WalletHub says cards are designed for specific types of users and are geared toward particular groups' interests and financial needs. These can include cards for students, those for people with poor credit histories, small business cards, or cards for general consumers.

Define your goals

Credit cards also are broken down by their perks. Cardholders need to think about what they want out of a card. For example, some credit cards are marketed to travelers and enable cardholders to earn travel miles or points toward hotel stays. Other cards offer cash back on a percentage of purchases, like 2- to 5-percent back on qualifying categories. Some credit cards help you improve your credit when it's limited or damaged, says NerdWallet.

Balance transfer policies and interest rates

Another consideration on credit cards is whether they offer introductory



low- or no-interest rates on balance transfers that enable you to transfer balances from high-interest cards to the new card. Although it's always best to pay off your credit card balance with each statement, that isn't always

possible. When shopping for a card, it helps to find one with a low annual percentage rate (APR).

Additional features

Some credit cards will offer tools such as charts that can help you keep track of spending cate-

gories or will automatically advise you of your credit score. Secured or student cards can incrementally raise your credit limit as you establish good credit history. A card that has no late fees or penalty interest rate increases also can

come in handy.

There are various factors to consider when shopping for a new credit card. By narrowing down the major points of comparison, consumers can find a card that suits their specific needs.



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TELLER APPRECIATION

Should home equity loans be used to pay off credit card debt?

CREDIT card debt could be compromising the financial security and well-being of millions of individuals. According to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, Americans' total credit card balance in the second quarter of 2023 was more than \$1 trillion, and LendingTree reports that the average credit card balance among U.S. cardholders in December 2022 was \$7,279. Average balances are lower but still a concern in Canada, where data from TransUnion® indicates the average cardholder had an outstanding balance of \$3,909 as of the first quarter of 2023.

Effective credit utilization is a vital component of long-term financial health. The average credit card balance in both the U.S. and Canada suggest many consumers are putting their financial futures in jeopardy by relying too heavily on credit to fund their lifestyles. The good news is consumers tend to have a sense of self-awareness regarding their credit usage, as a recent NerdWallet survey of more than 2,000 adult consumers found that 83 percent of respondents

acknowledged they overspend. Recognition of an over-reliance on credit could be a solid first step toward eradicating debt, and consumers who own their homes may consider home equity loans or lines of credit in an effort to tame their debt once and for all.

What is a home equity loan?

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau notes that a home equity loan allows homeowners to borrow money using the equity in their home as collateral. Equity is the amount a property is currently worth minus the amount currently owed on a mortgage. So if a home is worth \$500,000 and homeowners have a mortgage balance of \$300,000, then their equity is \$200,000.

Why do homeowners consider home equity loans to pay off debt?

One of the biggest concerns when consumers wrack up lots of credit card debt is the likelihood that they will end up paying substantial amounts of interest on that debt. That's because credit cards typically have high interest rates. Indeed, the LendingTree reports that



even consumers with good credit may have an APR around 21 percent on their credit cards. That figure only grows for consumers with lower credit scores. Bankrate notes that the average interest rate for a home equity loan is typically much lower than the rate on credit cards, so homeowners can theoretically save a lot of money by paying off their credit

card debt with a home equity loan.

Are there risks associated with using home equity to pay off credit card debt?

Though lower interest rates and consolidated debt are two advantages to paying off consumer debt with a home equity loan, this option is risky. Perhaps the biggest risk associated with this ap-

proach is the potential of losing a home. Individuals with substantial credit card debt should know that a lack of discipline when using a home equity loan to pay off debt could result in foreclosure. If homeowners cannot make their monthly loan payments on time, they could lose their home. In addition, Bankrate notes that if a home is sold with an out-

standing home equity loan balance, that balance must be repaid at once.

Home equity loans can help homeowners consolidate and ultimately eliminate their credit card debt. However, this approach carries a level of risk, so homeowners may benefit from working with a financial advisor to determine the best way to pay off their existing debts.

Tips to educate young adults to be smart about credit

CREDIT is a necessary component of doing business in the modern world. The credit reporting agency Experian defines credit as the ability to borrow money or access goods or services with the understanding that a person will pay later. Various creditors grant credit based on their confidence that a borrower will repay what is owed.

Many adults learn about credit through trial and error. Financial literacy is not taught in many schools, although lots of people feel it merits space alongside literature, math, science, and other subjects. A recent NextGen study found only one in six high school students are required to take a personal finance class in the United States. In addition, a survey conducted in 2018 by Chase bank found only one-third of Americans were taught what a credit score is by their parents.

It is essential that guardians share information about credit with young adults to help them be financially solvent and successful later in life. Here are some ways to help young adults learn about credit.

Start with credit basics

Speak generally about credit and how it is used. Then explain credit scores, credit bureaus and credit reports. A credit history and credit score is important information for young adults to have early on and check frequently, as having good credit improves the chances they will qualify for loans and earn acceptable terms in the future.

Help them build credit

Having one or more credit accounts can help a person establish and build credit by making payments on time. Credit card companies often advertise student and secured credit card accounts that

come with small or managed credit limits. Making purchases on the cards and paying them in full every month is the best way to improve a credit score or maintain a good one, says the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. Another way teens can build credit is through their student loans. Making small payments on the principal while in school can help establish a strong credit history.

Check their credit reports

The Federal Trade Commission recommends checking a child's credit score around the age of 16 or 17. This will help families figure out if there are any anomalies that may indicate identity theft or inaccurate credit issues.

Know the formula for good credit

Forbes says there are five categories that add up to good credit:

1. Payment history (35



percent): Always pay bills on time.

2. Amounts owed (30 percent): Borrow a low amount compared to the total lines of credit. This also is known as credit utilization.

3. Length of credit history (15 percent): Keeping accounts open for a long time is a win.

4. New credit (10 per-

cent): Do not apply for too much new credit too often.

5. Credit mix (10 percent): Having a balance of different types of credit, such as car loans, credit cards and other types of debt, is advantageous.

Share your own experiences

Sometimes the best way to teach about credit is to be honest about what

a parent or another adult did wrong with his or her finances, and use that as a "what not to do" scenario.

It is important for young adults to learn about credit so they can make smart choices that will positively affect their future. Although talking finances may be uncomfortable, it is vital for families to have these discussions.



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