

Year in Review

The Mendota Reporter
Wednesday, December 25, 2024

JANUARY

Jan. 3, 2024

Mendota has been through a lot over the last year and a half. It started with a fire on Main Street in August 2022 and another fire on Illinois Avenue in December 2022. The two fires took businesses, historical buildings, and faith in Mendota's motto, "The World's Greatest Little City." The disasters also opened eyes and brought people together as Reimagine Mendota spread into the Community Heart & Soul Seed Grant Program, which has seeped into the community and into the City of Mendota. Through government, non-profit organizations, business owners, and residents, efforts are being made to repair and improve the city.

More than 300 new laws

took effect Jan. 1, ranging from a ban on book bans to the regulation of "deepfake porn" and prohibitions on videoconferencing while driving.

The Rosenberg Moon Habitat was named 2023's "Coolest Thing Made in Illinois" in a contest hosted by the Illinois Manufacturers' Association. The habitat is manufactured by Ingersoll Machine Tools in Rockford, in collaboration with the Institut auf dem Rosenberg of Switzerland.

DEATHS – Peter Tan Hai Phung, 34, of Compton, Dec. 13, 2023; Lisa A. Thompson, 56, of Mendota, Dec. 26, 2023; Darlene F. Klein, 94, of Metamora, Dec. 28, 2023; Colin A. Corrigan, 38, Nov. 30, 2023; Robin L. Hedgspeth, of LaSalle, Dec. 29, 2023.

Jan. 10, 2024

The Mendota City Council approved a project bid and was introduced to a new police officer at its Jan. 2 regular meeting. Alderman Jim Fitzpatrick said only one bid was submitted for the construction of new restrooms at Blackstone Park and Lake Mendota Park near the west shelter. Huffcutt Concrete of Chippewa Falls, Wis., was awarded the bid in the amount of \$125,625 for each restroom facility. Matthew Kristensen was sworn in as a new police officer.

The nonprofit Tax Foundation found Illinois residents have the highest wireless taxes in the country at 33.8% of total bills. Idaho residents pay the lowest wireless taxes at 13.7%.



An incredibly gorgeous sun dog was seen in the southeastern sky during a clear and frigid winter morning in the Mendota area on Jan. 14.

Illinois health officials are raising a red flag about a triple threat of respiratory illnesses this winter. Across the state, there has been a seasonal uptick for the flu, COVID-19 and Respiratory Syncytial Virus, or RSV. As a result, mask mandates are back at several Illinois hospitals.

With winter in full swing in Illinois, the Illinois Department of Transportation is reminding the public to visit and bookmark GettingAroundIllinois.com for continually updated information on road conditions.

DEATHS – Jeffrey Howard Morehead, 72, of

Harmon, Jan. 6, 2024; Betty A. Jacobs, 97, of Bellevue, Iowa, formerly of Mendota, Dec. 2, 2023; Roberta Jean (Morris) Corl, 88, of Abilene, Kan., Jan. 1, 2024; Terry Grant Mills, 68, of Mendota, Jan. 4, 2024.

Jan. 17, 2024

The Internal Revenue Service announced Monday, Jan. 29, 2024, as the official start date of the nation's 2024 tax season when the agency will begin accepting and processing 2023 tax returns. The IRS expects more than 128.7 million individual tax returns to be

filed by the April 15, 2024, tax deadline.

First State Bank, Mendota, announces a special conference for area farmers. The 24th Annual First State Bank Ag Conference is scheduled for 10 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 25 at the Mendota Civic Center.

Starting in the fall of 2024, a new state law, the Wellness Checks in Schools Program Act, will require yearly mental health screenings for Illinois' 2 million school students.

The Mendota City Council rejected a request and heard a citizen complaint about the condition of a dwelling at its Jan. 15 regular meeting. The request was from the Illinois Freedom Alliance for a hotel/motel tax fund contribution for its convention scheduled for Saturday, March 9 from 1-5 p.m. at the Mendota Civic Center.

DEATHS – Joel David Johnson, 77, of rural Compton, Jan. 11, 2024; John Noel Prentice, 86, of Paw Paw, Jan. 2, 2024; Betty Lou Croisant, 87, of Mendota, Jan. 10, 2024.

Jan. 24, 2024

When the Illinois Music Educators Association (ILMEA) All-State selections were made in November, Mendota High School Choir Director James Younger and four of his vocal musicians were excited. Senior Trekker Klema was selected for all-state vocal jazz, senior Dagen Setchell and junior Nick Reyes were chosen for all-state choir and junior Jillian Younger found her

name under honors choir.

During the summer and fall food trucks came to downtown Mendota every other Monday to offer different food options. Although the sun and heat have been replaced by snow and cold, the good times and good eats don't have to stop. Reimagine Mendota is introducing Winter Dine Around during the month of February.

Illinois once again produced some of the largest crops of any state in the nation despite drought and other weather challenges last year, according to USDA's crop production report released Jan. 12. Prairie State farmers produced 648 million bushels of soybeans in 2023 (down from 2022 but the most of any state nationwide) and 2.27 billion bushels of corn (up slightly from the previous year and the second-most nationwide behind Iowa).

DEATHS – Judith Marie Lysland, 62, of Paw Paw, Jan. 8, 2024.

Jan. 31, 2024

Through many streams of ideas and information, the merging of a lake of activity has taken shape as the First Saturday Hike is a 2024 community project offered at Lake Kakusha. Amy Brewer, a co-director of the Community Heart & Soul Seed Grant Program in Mendota and a member of Reimagine Mendota, heard numerous complimentary remarks toward the town's lakes and the desire for community projects while the groups were gathering data.

More than a year after it closed, Peru's hospital is re-

opening as OSF HealthCare Saint Elizabeth Medical Center-Peru. The hospital, located at 925 West St., is tentatively scheduled to open April 7.

Karol Vaughn grew up on a farm. As she got older, she decided she wanted to be a teacher. When she applied for and accepted the role as the LaSalle County Ag in the Classroom coordinator, she soon found a perfect position where agriculture and education mix.

DEATHS - Hugh McWhirter Jackson, 87, of Rancho Cucamonga, Calif., January 2024; MaryJane Harris Howard, 90, of Charleston, S.C., Jan. 22, 2024; Barbara A. Walzer, 87, of Mendota, Jan. 26, 2024; John Edward Scott, 79, of rural Gratiot, Wis., Jan. 25, 2024; Terry Kent Neal, 79, of Compton, Jan. 25, 2024.

FEBRUARY

Feb. 7, 2024

Plungers will return to Mendota and the chilly the waters of Lake Mendota for the Region A Polar Plunge on Saturday, Feb. 24. Registration will begin at 9:30 a.m. and participants will start plunging in the lake at noon. For 25 years, the Polar Plunge has become the signature winter fundraising event, engaging the community on the importance of inclusion, and raising critical funds to support the life-changing programming of Special Olympics Illinois.

The Mendota City Council created several ordinances dealing with city ordinance violations and gave its support to the values of the Reimagine Mendota organization at its Feb. 5 regular meeting.

The Illinois State Board of Education endorsed a budget request recently that

includes a \$653 million increase in funding for PreK-12 public schools.

A loud chorus of cicadas is coming to Illinois this spring. Illinois will be in the bullseye of a rare cicada emergence that hasn't happened since Thomas Jefferson was president. Two different broods of cicadas have synced up for the first time since 1803 and are expected to appear beginning in May.

DEATHS - Lorraine (Fritts) Moore, 94, of Mendota, Jan. 25, 2024; Dennis L. Sears, 74, of Mendota, Jan. 27, 2024.

Feb. 14, 2024

Students from Mendota High School competed against area schools in the Academic Challenge Regional competition on Feb. 2 at IVCC. Mendota finished in second place as a team in Division 700 (schools with enrollments between 300 and 700) and will advance to the Eureka Sectional in March.

LaSalle County Emergency Management Agency is excited to announce the return of the National Weather Service's Severe Weather Spotter Training, a comprehensive program designed to equip individuals with the skills and knowledge necessary to identify and report severe weather conditions effectively.

The Carroll family of Mendota recently donated \$10,000 to the nonprofit organization leading revitalization efforts in Mendota: "Reimagine Mendota." 'Reimagine' received the Carroll gift through the Starved Rock Country Community Foundation.

Mendota High School Parent/Teacher/Student Conferences will be held Tuesday, Feb. 20 and Thursday, Feb. 22, from 4-7 p.m. both days.



DEATHS - Janet Kay Keefer, 67, of Mark, Feb. 4, 2024; Neal Eugene Drummer, 87, of LaMoille, Feb. 5, 2024; Kevin J. Cassidy, 66, of Mendota, Feb. 8, 2024.

Feb. 21, 2024

Holy Cross School players, coaches and fans celebrated after the eighth-grade team won the IESA Class 1A State Basketball Tournament on Feb. 15 at Warrensburg. The Warriors defeated Pana Sacred Heart, 41-33, in the championship game to finish the season with a 21-2 record. Holy Cross won over Griggsville-Perry, 46-29, in the opening round of the state tournament and then defeated Lincoln Chester-East Lincoln, 39-29, to make it to the title game.

The Mendota City Council approved an ordinance for a redevelopment agreement with Black Bros. Co. for construction of a new building on the BBCO property. The Mendota company will construct an additional 18,000 square feet of manufacturing space near its north parking lot.

If spring can't get here fast enough, neither can the 42nd Annual Sublette Antique Tractor & Toy Show.

From  706 Washington St. & 1403 13th Ave. Mendota 815.538.2265 

Joree 9 4th Lincoln
Greeting Created By Age Grade School



Holy Cross School players, coaches and fans celebrated after the eighth-grade team won the IESA Class 1A State Basketball Tournament on Feb. 15 at Warrensburg. The Warriors defeated Pana Sacred Heart, 41-33, in the championship game to finish the season with a 21-2 record.

This year's event is going to be held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, March 16 and Sunday, March 17 in five different buildings in Sublette.

For a real February thrill, Bob Bryerton, program manager of the Forest Preserve District of Will County's Plum Creek Nature Center near Beecher, recommends taking a short winter hike to do some eagle spotting. More eagles spend the winter in Illinois than in any other state except Alaska.

DEATHS – Helen M. Algieri, 88, of Mendota, Feb. 5, 2024; Marion Lois Barnickel, 94, of West Brooklyn, Feb. 17, 2024.

Feb. 28, 2024

The state champion Holy Cross Warriors showed off their hardware at a reception for the team on Feb. 20 in the school gym. The eighth graders won three games in the IESA Class 1A State Basketball Tournament in Warrensburg to bring the first-ever team state championship back to Mendota.

The Mendota High School District 280 Board of Education met in regular session on Feb. 20. During Superintendent Denise Aughenbaugh's report, the Board approved to let bids for cleaning, sealing and striping the front parking lot, the road to the auditorium, and the small parking area between the vocational and main buildings.

Gov. JB Pritzker on Feb. 21 proposed growing state spending by over \$2 billion in the upcoming fiscal year while making a handful of corporate, sports wagering and other tax changes to pay for the increase.

DEATHS – David Scott Erbes, 60, of Mendota, Feb. 20, 2024; John H. "J.B." Burrig, 59, of Rockford, Feb. 21, 2024; Elaine Mae (Hackman) Jacox, 97, of Steward, Feb. 25, 2024.



The state champion Holy Cross Warriors showed off their hardware at a reception for the team on Feb. 20 in the school gym. The eighth graders won three games in the IESA Class 1A State Basketball Tournament in Warrensburg to bring the first-ever team state championship back to Mendota. Members of the champions, front row, left to right, are Ross Sondgeroth, Maddox Rosales, Will Aughenbaugh, Cal Doyle and Diego Diaz. Back row, assistant coach Aaron Eddy, Quinn Eddy, Corbin Doll, Cole Tillman, Bear Fitzpatrick, Joe Cackley, Shea Kreiser and head coach Luke Tillman.

noting the number of farms plummeted by 142,000 from 2017 to 2022, and the country lost 20 million acres of farmland during that same period.

DEATHS – Barbara A. Bender-Draves, 61, of Mendota, Feb. 26, 2024; Keith D. Collings, "Moose" or Papa Keith to his friends, "Bud" to his family, 71, Feb. 28, 2024; Michael Carl Martens, 79, of Hermann, Mo., Feb. 26, 2024.

March 13, 2024

Teachers from Mendota schools will spend the afternoon of Wednesday, March 20 in the Mendota High School Auditorium for professional development. The collaborative afternoon time will be spent with the Illinois' 2023 Teacher of the Year, Briana Morales.

Black Bros. Co. is excited to announce progress

has begun on an additional 18,000-square-foot of manufacturing space at its headquarters. The new building will house the company's roll department, where the complete process of steel-roll machining and rubber vulcanization takes place.

With millions of tax refunds going out each week, the Internal Revenue Service reminded taxpayers that recent improvements to "Where's My Refund?" on IRS.gov provide more information and remains the best way to check the status of a refund.

State Representative Bradley Fritts (R-Dixon) welcomed Haley Brill of Rochelle and Sam Setchell of Mendota to the Emerging Women Leaders event in Springfield on March 5. The event consisted of a brunch, listening session, and informational seminars

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of Mendota for economic vitality and prevent further deterioration by enhancing and enforcing contract registration, building permits and business registration.

Visiting his grandparents and enjoying the views at Lake Mendota have become fond memories for Owen Simkins. When the now-18-year-old was thinking of his Boy Scout bon voyage, Mendota was thought of. With the duck house project done, it was only right for Mendota to be the last stop on his journey.

As the Illinois Valley braces for the onset of severe weather conditions, LaSalle County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) urges all citizens to take proactive measures to ensure their safety and well-being.

USDA's 2022 Census of Agriculture released Feb. 13 serves as a "wake-up call" to policymakers, said USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack,

March 6, 2024
Municipal codes are established for safety purposes and are meant to be adhered to. City leaders are taking a tougher stance to make sure that happens in Mendota. At the March 4 regular meeting of the Mendota City Council, Mayor David Boelk outlined procedures that he described as "an effort to revitalize the city

Merry Christmas and Have a holly Jolly Christmas!

From **ZIGGIE'S** FAMILY RESTAURANT **1212 1st Ave, Mendota**
815-539-5060

Jada Scott 9 4th Lincoln
Greeting Created By Age Grade School

from other women in leadership roles.

DEATHS – Benjamin William Sutton, 73, of Hiawasse, Ga., Feb. 27, 2024; Patricia “Patty” Kay Bilkey, 80, of Bloomington, Minn., March 4, 2024; Ruth Ann Payne of Sugar Hill, Ga., and formerly a resident of Schaumburg, Feb. 27, 2024; Kathy Joeger, 84, of Mendota, March 8, 2024; Philip Ralph Zinke, 76, of Mendota, March 7, 2024.

March 20, 2024

Mendota High School will present “Mamma Mia!” with music by Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvaeus of the Swedish musical group ABBA, some songs with Stig Anderson, and book by Catherine Johnson, originally conceived by Judy Craymer, March 22-24 in the auditorium.

In less than a year the

Mendota Area Christian Food Pantry and the Mendota community has raised nearly \$380,000 for a new building. The new food pantry, located at 710 Sixth Ave., is almost complete. In fact, H&H Contractors told food pantry director Tracy Cooper the building should be ready by the second or third week in April.

When Bryon Walters was voted in as president of the Mendota Museum & Historical Society in November 2022, he wanted to make a difference and help the organization grow. Fruits of labor from Walters and the 14-member board of directors are officially showing as they’re honoring the first 30 years of the society and building for the next 30 years with new hires, purchasing buildings at 907 and 909 Washington Street, and overall expansion.

State regulators are once again considering massive electric utility spending plans that would affect the state’s climate goals – and 5.4 million electric customers’ monthly bills – after rejecting previous versions late last year.

DEATHS – Earnest Larue Serr, 92, of Waco, Texas, March 7, 2024; Dr. Richard Louis “Dick” Pommier, 88, of Arlington, March 11, 2024; Shirley Ann Bogren, 90, of Springfield, formerly of Bloomington and Mendota, March 6, 2024; Judith Ann (Bailey) Burkardt, 81, of Mendota, March 15, 2024.

March 27, 2024

After three of the most profitable years in history, Illinois corn and soybean farmers are bracing for a slowdown. Prices have tanked. Demand from China



Work began at Black Bros. Co. in Mendota for an additional 18,000 square-feet of manufacturing space near its north parking lot. The new building will house the company’s roll department, and is expected to be completed in the fall.

and other importers has yet to catch up. And storage bins are full of last year’s unsold corn.

The Mendota High School District 280 Board of Education addressed building repair items and handled numerous personnel matters at its March 18 regular meeting.

Illinois’ veterans affairs director told a legislative panel that while state-run veterans’ homes have better policies in place following a COVID-19 outbreak that killed 36 residents at the LaSalle Veterans Home in 2020, understaffing remains a challenge.

Gov. JB Pritzker recently announced the official launch of the state’s partnership with Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library, a program founded by the country music legend in 1995 in her home county in east Tennessee. It now sends free books every month to nearly 3 million children in the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia and Ireland.

DEATHS – Elizabeth Jane Wagner Sondgeroth, 99, of Austin, Texas, March

12, 2024; Philip Dean Wood, 77, of Sandwich, March 22, 2024; Randy J. Morris, 67, of Mendota, March 22, 2024.




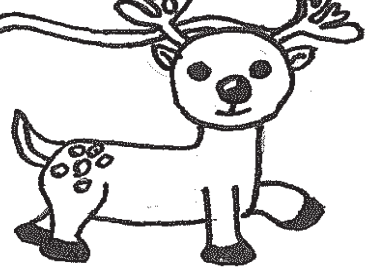
April 3, 2024


Preparations are underway to host thousands of visitors in Illinois for the Monday, April 8, 2024, total solar eclipse that will pass over the state. People in northern Illinois will experience an estimated 94% totality. The eclipse will enter the country and begin moving into Southwest Texas at around 12:30 p.m. In northern Illinois, parts of it will begin at 12:51 p.m. with the peak time around 2:07 p.m. By 3:22 p.m.,



*Mendota
it's a new year
so let's cheer!*

2025!

From  **1401 W Main St, Mendota**
Graves-Hume Public Library **815-538-5142**

Cecilia Ortiz	9	4th	Holy Cross
Greeting Created By	Age	Grade	School

the eclipse will move out of the area.

The Mendota City Council approved several bids and requests, and heard more feedback into the city's code enforcement plans at its April 1 regular meeting.

Illinois continues to suffer from a shortage of teachers and other education professionals, although recent efforts by the state to ease the strain have made an impact. That's according to the latest annual survey of school officials from the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools, which has been conducting the survey every year since 2017.

DEATHS – Judy Phillips, 68, of Mendota, March 29, 2024; Fay E. Jeanblanc, 73, of Sikeston, Mo., March 27, 2024; Mitchell Holman Olson, lovingly known as "Mitch," 44, of Clarksville, Tenn., March 29, 2024; Stephen M. Dufour, 62, of Peru, March 29, 2024; A. Allen Cox, 90, of Pocahontas, Ark., April 1, 2024.

April 10, 2024

Northbrook Middle School students gazed up at the sky to view the solar eclipse that passed over northern Illinois on April 8. People in northern Illinois experienced an estimated 94% totality. The eclipse entered the country and began moving into Southwest Texas at around 12:30 p.m. In northern Illinois, parts of it began at 12:51 p.m. with the peak time around 2:07 p.m. By 3:22 p.m., the eclipse moved out of the area. The next total solar eclipse will be on Aug. 22, 2044, and will only occur over North Dakota and Montana. The next coast-to-coast total solar eclipse spanning the lower 48 states will be Aug. 12, 2045.

A few of Megan Kneebone's family members have been extras in TV



Northbrook Middle School sixth grade students gazed up at the sky to view the solar eclipse that passed over northern Illinois on April 8. People in northern Illinois experienced an estimated 94% totality.

shows filmed in Chicago. When she saw a casting call for 5- to 10-year-old kids for the hit TV show Chicago Fire, she decided to send in a reply for her son, Grayson. Not only was Grayson asked to be an extra, Megan and her husband Andy were allowed to be part of the experience too.

Illinois Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias is spearheading legislation to enhance penalties against people who threaten libraries.

The Illinois Department of Transportation announced that construction on the Illinois 251 bridge crossing the Illinois River in Peru was to begin April 8, weather permitting.

DEATHS – Lois V. Molln, 94, of Ohio, March 31, 2024; Marilyn M. Neff, 90, of Mendota, April 2, 2024; DeLois (Dee) Ann Gallisath, 95, of Daytona Beach Shores, Fla., April 2, 2024.

April 17, 2024

The Mendota City Council increased the number of video gaming licenses allowed in the city from 22 to 27 and approved several ordinances and requests at its April 15 regular meeting.

Lake Kakusha became a little richer on Sunday, April 14. The LaSalle County Soil and Water Conservation District (based in Ottawa) the Homesteaders 4-H Club, and members of the Friends of Lake Kakusha group planted 25 trees on the grounds to help bolster the natural habitat.

Jill Wohrley of Mendota is the winner of Illinois Valley Community College's Connie Dzierzynski Skerston Memorial Award for Support Staff Distinguished Service.

The first week of April was cold, windy and wet but the start to planting season is still on the radar for Illinois farmers. And safety is key. With slow-moving vehicles on roadways, the driving public and farmers should

be extra careful to prevent accidents and ensure everyone gets home safely at the end of the day.

DEATHS – Barbara A. Guilfoyle, 74, of Mendota, April 10, 2024; Elaine Rose (Williams) Cain, 97, of Mendota, April 1, 2024,

April 24, 2024

Mendota residents and nearby community members are encouraged to safely dispose of unwanted and expired prescription drugs with an upcoming event.

Expect to see a lot of noisy, two-inch flying cicadas in Illinois this May. But don't worry. "It's not going to be cicada-geddon," naturalist Katie Dana with the Illinois Natural History Survey said.

The Mendota High School District 280 Board of Education moved forward on several buildings and grounds

maintenance projects at its April 15 regular meeting.

Under current law, every township in Illinois with combined revenues over \$850,000 is required to pay for a yearly audit performed by a Certified Personal Accountant. House Bill 501 will change the requirement to once every four years for townships that generate a revenue of less than \$1.4 million per year and every two years for those that generate more than \$1.4 million per year.

DEATHS – Ruth V. Molln, 96, of Walnut, April 17, 2024; Laura J. Roeder, 77, of Mendota, April 18, 2024; Edward Wayne Erbes, 85, of Sublette, April 19, 2024; Jerome C. "Jerry" Henkel, 76, of Mendota, April 20, 2024; Harold (Junior) Becker, 83, April 21, 2024; Madrick L. Musgrove, 16, of Mendota, April 18, 2024.

Celebrate
2025

From *Cindy's on 34* **1300 Raymond Dr, Mendota**
Fantastic Home Cookin' **815-539-9000**

Ashlynn 9 4th Lincoln
 Greeting Created By Age Grade School

M A Y



The Mendota Fire Department recently received a new ambulance. The 2022 Ford Side Door is a pickup truck instead of a van like the MFD's other two ambulances.

May 1, 2024

The very popular Crafters Market Place and Flea Market will again be featured at Mendota's 77th Annual Sweet Corn Festival. The dates and times have been set for Saturday, Aug. 10 & Sunday, Aug. 11 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day.

Black Bros. ownership and key team members gathered with Mendota city

officials and employees of Phalen Steel Construction Company for a commemorative ground-breaking photo Thursday, April 25.

The Illinois Valley Hispanic Partnership Council (IVHPC) will be holding its annual Cinco de Mayo festival on Friday, May 3, starting at 5 p.m., at Northbrook Middle School, 1804

Guiles Ave., Mendota.

Nearly 200 years after Native Americans were forced out of Illinois, the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation has become the first federally recognized tribal nation in the state after a recent decision from the U.S. Department of the Interior.

A recent stretch of warm, dry weather allowed area

farmers to begin the arduous task of putting seeds into the ground for the 2024 growing season. With the planting season underway, everyone should be reminded that safety is key.

DEATHS – Rolin E. Smith, 74, of Mendota, April 24, 2024; Melanie J. Schroeder, 82, of Mendota, April 24, 2024; Monica Marie Dewey (nee Blackburn), 66, of Mendota, April 25, 2024; Gerald "Jerry" Prokuski, 89, of Mendota, April 28, 2024; Beverley J. Moore, 97, of Mendota, April 27, 2024; Ginger Lane (Nelson) Duffy, 75, of Serena, April 25, 2024.

May 8, 2024

Mendota High School held its 2024 Prom festivities on May 4. Members of the Senior Court were Josh Figueroa, Bryan Herrera, Izaiah Nanez, Logan Dewey, Jace Baird, King Mason Koch, Queen Bria Frey, Madelyn Becker, Ava Jones, Lily Leifheit, Ana Ramirez and Grace Wasmer.

It's always fun to have a bright, shiny, better-than-you-had-before type of toy or piece of equipment. Just

ask Mendota Fire Chief Dennis Rutishauser about the new ambulance the Mendota Fire Department recently received.

The Mendota City Council approved several requests and heard about the return of a popular food attraction at its May 6 regular meeting. Alderman Vicki Johnson informed the council that the first Food Truck Mania will be held on Monday, May 13 on Main Street in downtown Mendota.

The United Pentecostal Church celebrates its 50th anniversary on Friday, May 17 and its 20th pastoral anniversary of Rev. Charles Yeakel and his wife Devra Yeakel on Sunday, May 19.

DEATHS – Candace (Candy) Huss Buchanan, 76, of Independence, Wis., formerly of Mendota, April 15, 2024; Willis D. Vietz, 85, of Mendota, April 28, 2024; Steven Charles "Grizz" Lemmer, 69, of Mendota, April 27, 2024; Leota E. Joerger, 111, of Mendota, May 2, 2024; Connie L. Stanfield, 63, of Princeton, May 1, 2024; Mary Corinne "Renny" Tweddell Miller, 101, of Mendota, April 27, 2024; James "Jim"

R. Wiley, 75, of Mendota, May 4, 2024.

May 15, 2024

Mendota High School granted diplomas to 98 graduates of the Class of 2024 at commencement ceremonies on May 11 in the MHS gymnasium.

Wild Bill! An afternoon with James Butler Hickok, will take place Saturday, May 25 and Sunday, May 26 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Hume-Carnegie Museum, 901 Washington St., Mendota, in conjunction with the area's "Wild Bill Hickok Day" celebration of this legend's birthday.

The Mendota Memorial Day program will be held Monday, May 27, at 10:30 a.m. at Restland Memorial Gardens, Mendota.

Bryon Walters of Mendota captured stunning images of the Aurora Borealis Northern lights on May 11 southeast of the ADM flour mill on U.S. 34 in Mendota.

DEATHS – Nora Elia Mendez, 75, of Chicago, May 6, 2024; Daniel A. Vargas, 44, of Mendota, May 6, 2024.

From From all of us at
The City of Mendota

Emilia Phillips 9almost 4th Linsden

Greeting Created By Age Grade School



Members of the Class of 2024 flung their caps into the air after officially becoming graduates of Mendota High School at commencement on May 11 in the MHS gym.



Mendota High School athletic director Brock Zinke led the applause for Mariyah Elam, left, during a school assembly on May 20 to honor the MHS freshman for winning the Class 2A state championship in the high jump at the IHSA State Track & Field Meet on May 17-18 in Charleston.

May 22, 2024

Mendota High School athletic director Brock Zinke led the applause for Mariyah Elam during a school assembly on May 20 to honor the MHS freshman for winning the Class 2A state championship in the high jump at the IHSA State Track & Field Meet on May 17-18 in Charleston.

There is going to be a new police chief in town after Chief Greg Kellen announced his retirement at the regular meeting of the Mendota City Council on May 20. Kellen has been the police chief since 2018.

Sophomores Rosalinda Lopez and Addyson Allensworth are going to have a different type of summer than they've ever had before. It starts with boarding a plane to spend a month in a different country in part of the Rotary Youth Exchange.

DEATHS – Valery C. “Larry” Leffelman, 85, of Sublette, May 14, 2024; Steven J. McPheeters, 59, of Mendota, May 14, 2024.

May 29, 2024

The Mendota High School District 280 Board of Education set fees and prices for the next school year at its May 20 regular meeting.

Mendota’s Memorial Day Service was conducted in front of a large crowd at Restland Memorial Gardens on May 27. The Veterans’ Memorial Council, The Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 4079, its Auxiliary, American Legion Post 540 and the Mendota Alumni Band participated in the program, the purpose of which is to honor and remember all veterans resting on domestic or foreign soil for their commitment and unselfish contribution to our present way of life with liberty and

freedom for all. Bill Hunt, Navy veteran, was the master of ceremonies. Eva Beetz was guest speaker as the 2023 Patriot Pen essay winner.

Five Mendota High School students will attend Boys State and Girls State this summer.

James Butler Hickok, also known as Wild Bill, returned to Mendota over Memorial Day weekend in the form of actor Walt Willey, who brought Wild Bill back to life in his portrayal of the Troy Grove-born Hickok. Willey presented Wild Bill!, an afternoon with James Butler Hickok, “My Time in Illinois,” during six performances at the Hume-Carnegie Museum in Mendota on May 25 and 26.

DEATHS – Mary Ellen (West) Jennings, 74, of Punta Gorda, Fla., May 24, 2024; Edmund Robinson Jr., 70, of Mendota, May 25, 2024.

JUNE

June 5, 2024

Children going to school and the Mendota community as a whole will benefit from the city being the recipient of two Safe Routes to School program grants announced at a press conference attended by Illinois Transportation Secretary Omer Osman and other state

and local dignitaries on May 30 in front of Lincoln School in Mendota.

Mendota’s Heart & Soul Group co-directors Annie Short and Amy Brewer didn’t leave any stone unturned as they involved the youth as well as adults. They partnered with Northbrook eighth grade social studies teacher, Sarah Gehant, to feature the process the adult volunteer group did as part of a class for the eighth-grade students to work through the same exact process.

The Mendota City Council appointed at interim police chief and handled several ordinances and requests at its June 3 regular meeting. Mayor David Boelk announced the appointment of Tyler Kent as interim chief of the Mendota Police Department effective June 21.




The Mendota Area Chamber of Commerce is seeking candidates for the upcoming Sweet Corn Festival Mini Royalty Pageant. Plano Molding Company of Mendota will be sponsoring the Sweet Corn Festival Mini King and Queen Pageant. Advanced registration is necessary for the pageant.

DEATHS – Allen E. Aughenbaugh, 87, of Fort Collins, Colo., formerly of Mendota, Dec. 19, 2023; Thomas R. Whalen, 69, of Mendota, June 3, 2024.

June 12, 2024

Mendota Community Theatre will present “Little Shop of Horrors” on Friday, June 21 and Saturday, June 22, at 7 p.m., and Sunday, June 23, at 2:30 p.m., at the Mendota High School auditorium.

The promotion ceremony for the Northbrook Mid-

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Morgan Hopp Age 9 Grade 4th Holy Cross School

Greeting Created By



Illinois Transportation Secretary Omer Osman spoke at a press conference on May 30 at Lincoln School announcing that Mendota is the recipient of two Safe Routes to School program grants that will help boost the health and safety of children by making walking and biking to school safer and more accessible.

dle School Class of 2024 was held June 4 at Mendota High School. A total of 107 eighth graders received their diplomas.

Three operatives of former President Donald Trump were charged with felony forgery in Wisconsin on June 3. Among them was James R. Troupis, 70, of Cross Plains, Wis., formerly of Mendota.

A ribbon cutting ceremony announcing the naming of the Jeff Prusator Athletic Complex at Mendota High School will take place at 5 p.m. Monday, June 17. The public ceremony will be held behind the main high school building.

DEATHS – Alan C. Schammel, 78, of Compton, June 4, 2024; Glen Theodore “Tad” “Barney” Wamhoff, 69, of LaMoille, June 5, 2024.

June 19, 2024

Wednesday, June 12 will go down as a day of reshaping, renovating, and progress for the City of Mendota, Reimagine Mendota, Black Bros., and the citizens of Mendota. In a press conference on the 800 block of Main Street and Illinois Avenue, it was announced a U.S. EPA Brownfields Cleanup Grant was received for \$1,270,305 to help fund the demolition of the former Car Quest Auto Parts store and the remediation cleanup of the former Campbell Cleaners property.

The Mendota City Council approved several donation requests and got the ball rolling on the annual street maintenance program at its June 17 regular meeting.

A ribbon cutting and naming ceremony for The Jeff Prusator Athletic Complex was held on June 17 at Mendota High School. A large sign indicating the new name of the athletic complex has been erected behind the main building at

the entrance to the stadium parking lot. A smaller sign is located on the road leading to the baseball and softball fields.

Celebrate the 4th of July with food, fun and fireworks at the Mendota Fireworks Show on Saturday, June 29 at Lake Mendota.

DEATHS—Larry Truckenbrod, 90, of Sublette, and formerly of Mendota, June 10, 2024.

June 26, 2024

Sublette resident and 2024 Amboy High School graduate Emma Dinges has spent the last four years enthralled in the National FFA Organization. Well, another year has been added to her tenure. Dinges was elected as the Illinois FFA Treasurer for 2024-25 at the Illinois FFA State Convention on June 13.

The Mendota High School District 280 Board of Education handled several items of business at its June 17 regular meeting. Prior

to the start of the regular meeting, a public hearing was held for the renewal of the e-Learning Plan from 2024-2027. During regular session, the Board of Education chose not to renew the e-Learning Plan. Any inclement weather days will now be traditional “snow” days and will be made up with emergency days.


Illinois’ second-highest in the nation gas taxes will go up again July 1 as the state motor fuel tax hits 47 cents per gallon.

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) is reminding the public that along with the start of summer, mosquito season is underway in Illinois and with that comes the risk of West Nile virus (WNV), which has been reported in 13 counties around the state so far, including in LaSalle County.

DEATHS – Donald M. Cassidy, 76, of Indianapolis, Ind., June 22, 2024.



Julie McGee, manager, Brownfields Redevelopment Program US EPA, Region 5, spoke to a gathering in the 800 block of Main Street and Illinois Avenue where it was announced that Mendota has received a U.S. EPA Brownfields Cleanup Grant in the amount of \$1,270,305 to help fund the demolition of the former Car Quest Auto Parts store and the remediation cleanup of the former Campbell Cleaners property.

From  **Mendota Monument Company**
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J U L Y

July 3, 2024

A large group of Mendota residents with a passion for soccer filled the city council chambers to show their support for a soccer sports complex that was first proposed for Mendota but may have been lost to Princeton.

Mendota School District 289 Superintendent Brad Cox has alternative energy projects in his background. So when he heard about an opportunity to supply Lincoln Elementary, Blackstone Elementary, and Northbrook School with solar panels, he brought it to the school board's attention and it quickly hopped on the idea.

The Mendota High School Board of Education had a special board meeting on June 24. The only discussion and action item was the board resolution for amendment #6 with ENGIE (Energy Savings Performance Contractor). The board approved Amendment #6 with ENGIE at the cost of \$781,462.

One statement said by Mendota residents a gazillion times over the years is, "There is nothing for the kids to do during summer vacation." Liam's Marketplace, the Mendota YMCA, and the City of Mendota have partnered to form the Gaming Club to give the youth another option.



Mendota Elementary School District 289 Board president Theresa Komitas helped young school children cut the ribbon during a ceremony for the completion of the district's solar project in which panels were installed on the roof of all three schools. Looking on were eighth grade science teacher Jordan Zoelzer, left, and Rep. Brad Fritts, right.

DEATHS – Randy "Flip" J. Phillips, 69, of Mendota, June 28, 2024.

July 10, 2024

Justin Bend, a Mendota native with children in the fifth and first grade, brought the idea of phone-free schooling to both the Mendota School District 280 Board of Education on June 17 and the Mendota School District 289 Board of Education on June 30.

There is always at least one change from one Mendota Sweet Corn Festival to the next. For 2024, one main difference is a person—Neal E. Drummer. Drummer, who passed away on Feb. 5, 2024, after a battle with cancer, had been the man behind the steam engine boiling the free sweet corn we love to eat on Sunday afternoon of the festival for over 30 years.

Selecting the Queen to reign over the festivities of Mendota's 77th Annual Sweet Corn Festival will not be an easy task. There are 14 young ladies to choose from in this year's pageant. The girls have been selected

by Mendota not-for-profit organizations to represent them in this year's event. The pageant will be held Friday, Aug. 9 at 7:30 p.m. on the First State Bank stage on Washington Street in downtown Mendota.

DEATHS – B. Joyce Setchell, 91, formerly of Mendota, June 30, 2024; Fern Wangler, 98, of Mendota, June 30, 2024.

July 17, 2024

The Mendota City Council took steps toward the summer street maintenance program and sidewalk work at its July 15 regular meeting.

When VetsRoll.org notified Bill Giberson and son-in-law John Myers of Mendota they were accepted and had a seat alongside other United States of America veterans on a Charter Bus leaving Beloit, Wis., to tour the Air Force Base Air Museum in Ohio, and the World War II Memorial, Korean Memorial, Arlington Cemetery, and the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C., they quickly and excitedly packed their bags for

the trip May 19-22. Despite wild weather fluctuations in recent

months, USDA pegged planted acreage at 91.5 million acres of corn and 86.1 million acres of soybeans in Illinois. The corn estimate is down 3% from last year but more than a million acres above the average trade guess while the soybeans estimate is up 3% from a year ago.

Fourteen young women are busily preparing for this year's Sweet Corn Festival Queen Pageant, which will be held on Friday, Aug. 9 beginning at 7:30 p.m. The pageant will take place on the First State Bank stage on Washington Street in downtown Mendota.

DEATHS – Del Bonnell of Phoenix, Ariz., June 18, 2024; Marlene Jane Kent, 72, of Mendota, July 6, 2024; John J. Gehant, 94, of West Brooklyn, July 11, 2024; Vernon Eugene Setchell Jr., 82, of St. Petersburg,

Fla., June 7, 2024; Mickey "Slink" Lamkin, 69, of Troy Grove, July 14, 2024.

July 24, 2024

The members of the Holy Cross eighth grade boys' basketball team have been the talk of the town since their magical, state championship run. Now the boys have been bestowed another type of recognition – the 2024 Mendota Sweet Corn Festival Parade Grand Marshals.

Mendota Elementary School District 289 has entered the age of solar. The district made it official at a ribbon-cutting ceremony on July 18 in front of Northbrook School, welcoming in an era of using the rays of the sun to help power the district's schools. Solar panels have been installed on the roof of all three of the district's schools – North-

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brook Middle School, Lincoln School and Blackstone School.

Preparations by the candidates are winding down as the 77th annual Sweet Corn Festival Queen Pageant is fast approaching. Fourteen young ladies will participate in this year's pageant set for Friday, Aug. 9 at 7:30 p.m. on the First State Bank stage on Washington Street in downtown Mendota. All of the candidates will be receiving Mendota Gift Certificates.

DEATHS – Gene W. Brunner, 87, of Mendota, June 21, 2024.

July 31, 2024

If you've noticed new posts and a fresh coat of paint on the two train towers in Mendota, you have good eyes or are observant. Hopefully at the same 20/20 vision and complete focus a

camera system is going to have from the towers, which sit in front of the Breaking the Prairie Museum (north tower) and alongside Setchell Insurance Agency (south tower).

Last June, letters were sent out to the community about helping the Mendota Area Christian Food Pantry build a new building. In under a year, the idea went from a piece of paper in the mail, to a blueprint, to a contract, to the health inspector approval on June 18, to an opening on June 19, to an official grand opening from 1-4 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 4 with a ribbon cutting at 2 p.m.

A very short time remains before the 2024 Sweet Corn Festival Queen will be chosen to reign over the festivities of Mendota's 77th Annual Sweet Corn Festival to be held Aug. 8-11.

DEATHS – Janet Alene (Brown) Rusk, 89, of Lawrence, Kan., July 15, 2024; Mark Lawrence Salander, 72, of Dexter, Mo., July 15, 2024; Susan Marie (Leffelman) Ennenbach, 69, of Eureka, Mont., formerly of Sublette, July 18, 2024.



AUGUST

Aug. 7, 2024

From April to July, citizens of Mendota answered a survey – Mendota Community Needs Assessment, which was produced in partnership between the City of Mendota and the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IDHA). The survey asked residents questions about the current housing opportunities and conditions as well as what they would like the housing situation to be in the city moving forward. On July 29, Kristopher Walton, a community revitalization planner within IDHA came to the Mendota Civic Center to discuss the results of the 61-question survey, which

was answered by 354 Mendota residents, 5.1 percent of the population.

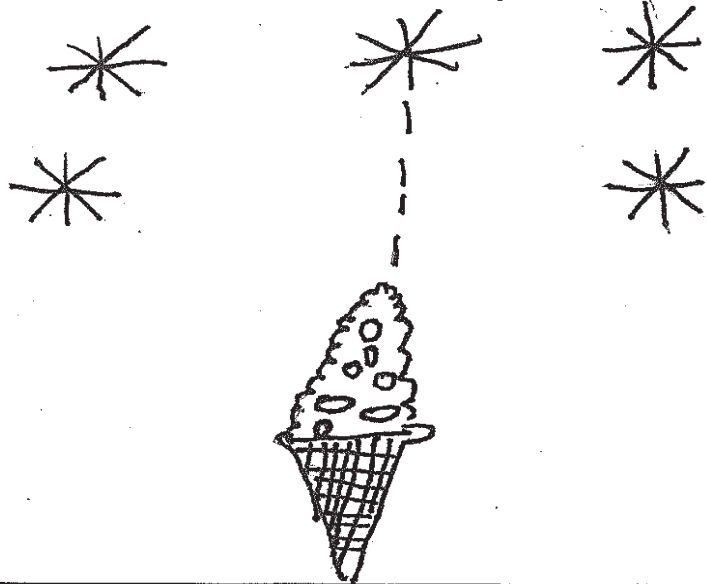
The Mendota City Council is another step closer to beginning its summer street maintenance program after action taken at the Aug. 5 regular council meeting.

The community of Mendota lost an important member on April 10, 2024, when Barbara Guilfoyle passed away. In fitting fashion, just like when she was alive and involved in multiple organizations and activities, she is doing the same from above. Recently the Guilfoyle family, husband Mike Guilfoyle, daughter Kati (Tyler) Stevenson and two grandsons, Gavin and



Madelyn Becker, center, was chosen the Queen of the 77th annual Sweet Corn Festival during the pageant on Aug. 9. Bria Frey, left, and Ava Jones were named attendants.

we need some ice cream
hear it's new year



From



1206 6th Ave, Mendota
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Tiberius Schwink 9 4 HCS
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Connor, and son Kris (Ashli) Guilfoyle made donations to organizations in honor of their beloved wife, mother, and grandmother.

DEATHS – Kathleen Marie Kaiser, 75, of Mendota, July 29, 2024; Linda Kay (Thompson) Grey, 69, of Earlville, July 30, 2024; Donald “Doc” Swope, 89, of Compton, Aug. 2, 2024; Larry M. Christen, 86, of Mendota, July 11, 2024.

Aug. 14, 2024

“We had an extremely successful Mendota Sweet Corn Festival,” said Mendota Area Chamber of Commerce President/CEO Sam Setchell. “That is thanks to the hundreds of volunteers, the Mendota Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, the Chamber Ambassadors, and everyone’s spouses who came to lend a helping hand. We can’t do this without everyone’s help.” What also helped bring out smiles and overshadow any fatigue was the beautiful weather. Many SCF visitors were saying 2024 may have been the best weather the fest has ever had.

The City of Mendota is inviting the public to its first Family Safe Night Out on Friday, Aug. 23 outside the Mendota Civic Center, 1901 Tom Merwin Drive. The night includes bounce houses, face painting, yard games, fire trucks, police cars, safety demonstrations and kick ball games.

Farmers should brace for even tighter margins and implement applicable risk management practices based on the latest crop price estimates from the University of Illinois farmdoc team. Current levels of futures contracts suggest appropriate budgeting for 2024 crop production is down to \$4 per bushel for corn and \$10.50 for soybeans.

DEATHS – Nicholas Jon

Haberbush, 30, of Mendota, Aug. 5, 2024; Matthew J. Wallis, 62, of Mendota, Aug. 2, 2024; Gary Wayne Wulf, 87, of Mendota, Aug. 4, 2024.

Aug. 21, 2024

The Mendota City Council heard an update about progress being made in the 700 block of Illinois Avenue and the status of the swimming pool during its Aug. 19 regular meeting.

A \$30,000 contribution by Mendota-based Black Bros. Co. has helped Illinois Valley Community College to expand and upgrade its computer aided design and manufacturing labs.

The Mendota Museum & Historical Society is thrilled to host a talk on the history of one of Mendota’s important local landmarks, Lake Kakusha, presented by Audrey Moreno, at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 5.

Farmland values continue to rise but show signs of cooling off compared to increases in recent years.

DEATHS – Doris (Blair) Brown, 91, formerly of Paw Paw, Nov. 2, 2023; Thelma L. Shirey, 88, of Mendota, Aug. 14, 2024; Jeffrey Alan Lemmer, 63, of Sublette, Aug. 15, 2024; Richard “Buzz” C. Jackson, 76, of

Mendota, Aug. 13, 2024.

Aug. 28, 2024

Mendota High School is excited to announce six MHS seniors earned academic honors from the College Board National Recognition Program. The programs celebrate the hard work of high school students nationwide to help them showcase their strong academic performance.

The Mendota High School District 280 Board of Education met in regular session on Aug. 19. The board passed a resolution of support for the city of Mendota’s grant application for bicycle and pedestrian improvements.

A winner has been announced in a contest to determine the “coolest thing” made in Illinois. Chosen by voters from an initial field of more than 200 entries, the Komatsu mining truck was crowned the winner.

Record high corn and soybean yield estimates headlined the USDA’s August crop production report.

OBITS – Linda Green-Isles, 66, of Courtland, Minn., formally of Mendota, Aug. 11, 2024; Constance Marie Brown, 76, of Triumph, Aug. 17, 2024; Frederick E. Mende, 83, of Earlville, Aug. 21, 2024.

SEPTEMBER

Sept. 4, 2024

It’s not every year a municipality turns 170. Especially, a thriving precinct. And it’s extraordinary when the census sign reads 450 people. Sublette, Illinois is one of few which can make the claim. And not only make the claim but celebrate its ability to sustain a united community with the ones who help make it a real-life bond instead of a statement, you. Sublette is celebrating its 170th anniversary or birthday, both terms fit, on Saturday, Sept. 7 and Sunday, Sept. 8.

This year’s Tri-County Fair had plenty of activities for the entire family, including a petting zoo and a chance to feed some animals, as this camel enjoys accepting a tasty snack. Beautiful weather descended upon the Mendota fairgrounds for the entire

five-day run of the fair.

The Illinois Department of Transportation announced that construction on Interstate 39 through LaSalle County began on Sept. 3.

In May, The Mendota Reporter published a story about Rosalinda (Rosi) Lopez becoming a foreign exchange student in Italy and Addy Allensworth boarding a plane to France. Both Mendota High School students came back in July. They didn’t return alone as both of them brought back their foreign exchange friend they stayed with across the pond.

DEATHS – John F. McConville, 94, of Mendota, formerly of rural Earlville, Aug. 28, 2024.

Sept. 11, 2024

The buzz around this year’s Mendota Tri-County



From

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Ruby Diaz Sanker
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School

Fest was louder than recent previously years. And deservedly so as a carnival was coming back for the first time since 2018, events were held at the grandstands Thursday through Monday, the list of food and craft vendors was longer than normal, Funky Monkey Wrestling was brought in, and the exhibit halls were packed. All of the above led to the Tri-County Fair on Thursday, Aug. 29 to Monday, Sept. 2 being one of the best in recent memory.

The City of Mendota recognized and honored community partners whose dedication will advance the city's work toward a more walkable and bikeable town at the Sept. 3 Mendota City Council meeting.

The Mendota City Council awarded a bid for a construction project and heard a report on the Walkability



Northbrook School's main gym is one of the areas that has taken on a new look.

Academy Action Plan at its Sept. 3 regular meeting.

Members of the Village of Sublette Board and Sublette 365 had reason to believe Sublette was going to have a swarm of visitors during the weekend of Sept. 7-8. One factor could have

been it was the celebration of Sublette turning 170 and both days had long lists of activities.

DEATHS – Elisabeth “Liz” Zimmermann, 83, of Mendota, Sept. 1, 2024; Pamela S. Gillette, 66, of Mendota, Sept. 2, 2024;

Peggy Ann Barajas, 77, of LaSalle, Sept. 4, 2024.

Sept. 18, 2024

The Mendota City Council approved several ordinance agreements and heard about the start of the leaf pickup program at its Sept. 16 regular meeting.

Over the last two school years, Northbrook School students, their families, and visiting teams have seen some changes. This year, additions have continued as Northbrook has new bleachers in the gym and has a new sport offered to student-athletes, cross country.

With a large amount of last year's grain still in the bin and high yield expectations for the 2024 corn and soybean crops, industry representatives are questioning the availability of grain storage capacity heading into fall harvest.

A new Tax Foundation study details how Illinois shoppers now pay the seventh highest sales tax rate in the country as combined state and average local sales tax now total 10.25%. The state's rising sales tax rate also ranks as the highest among most populous states.

DEATHS – Paula Frances (Hilbert) Graff, 76, of San Marcos, Calif., Feb.

6, 2024; Billy (Bill) Gene Graff, 76, of San Marcos, Calif., May 2, 2024; Thomas G. Truckenbrod, 83, of Mendota, Aug. 23, 2024; Jerry L. Reger, 83, of Peru, Sept. 14, 2024; Dorothy E. Becker, 93, of Mendota, Sept. 11, 2024.

Sept. 25, 2024

Mendota High School had its 2024 Homecoming assembly on Sept. 23 where the King, Queen and Court were announced - King Angil Serrano and Queen Ella Martin.

For LaSalle County residents, there is now another place to get registered, the Graves-Hume Public Library in Mendota as staff members Holly Christman and Jen Bresley are now certified registrars.

Illinois Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias announced a change in DMV facility operating hours across the state to align with higher customer demand in the morning.

Patrick Doughty put on Mendota High School cap and gown in 2009 and then left for University of Wisconsin-Platteville knowing he wanted to get a degree in construction management and create buildings, structures, staples of cities and communities. Somewhere in the mix, he decided he wanted to be part of air sports and parachute sports.

DEATHS – Dolores H. Jones, 93, of Mendota, Sept. 19, 2024; Keith A. Minder, 60, of Mendota, Sept. 10, 2024; Patricia L. Rich, 82, of Mendota, Sept. 21, 2024; Earl John Smith, 87, of Mendota, Sept. 22, 2024.




OCTOBER

Oct. 2, 2024

“Radium Girls” had been on the back burner for a few years at Mendota High School. Director James Younger thought it was a good play, but it just wasn't the right time. Now it is, as MHS welcomes you to “Radium Girls” at 7 p.m. Friday, Oct. 4 and Saturday, Oct. 5 at the MHS Auditorium.

The Mendota High School District 280 Board of Education approved the Fiscal Year 25 budget at its Sept. 23 meeting. The total estimated revenue for FY25 is \$11,029,445 with expenses at \$12,159,651 for a deficit of \$1,130,206.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has announced this year's theme for Fire Prevention Week Oct. 6-12: “Smoke alarms: Make them work for you!”™ The goal of this year's campaign strives to educate everyone about the importance of having working smoke alarms in the home.

From  1102 Meriden St.
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Connor Reppin 9 4 Holy Cross

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Brian Nelson, CEO and Chairman of the Board for HCC, Inc. applied the company decal to the Manufacturing Express, representing Mendota, as the bus continued its journey across the country.

A free electronics recycling event is scheduled for Saturday, Oct. 5 from 8 a.m.-noon at the LaSalle County Government Center, 707 E. Etna Road, Ottawa.

DEATHS – Keith Stuart Althaus, 81, of Mendota, Sept. 28, 2024; Sherril Walburn, 85, of Mendota, Sept. 29, 2024; Christopher H. Faletto, 71, of Mendota, Sept. 27, 2024.

Oct. 9, 2024

The Mendota City Council set Trick-or-Treat hours and created a Mendota Public Arts Commission at its Oct. 7 regular meeting.

HCC, Inc., a leading manufacturer of agricultural harvesting equipment components, hosted a stop of the AEM (Association of Equipment Manufacturers) Manufacturing Express on Oct. 3 at its facility in Mendota. This event was part of a national tour celebrating the critical role of equipment manufacturing across the U.S., highlighting HCC's long-standing contributions to the agriculture sector and local community.

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) congratulates Board member Dr. Christine Benson on receiving the 2024 Distinguished Service Award from National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE).

With no end in sight for negotiations on a new federal farm bill, harvest season is in full swing in Illinois.

DEATHS – Kenneth Andrew Arjes, 75, of Mendota, Oct. 3, 2024.

Oct. 16, 2024

For National Fire Prevention Month in October and Fire Prevention Week (Oct. 6-12), the Mendota Fire Department gassed up both a fire truck and an ambulance to deliver pizzas to raise awareness for how important an active smoke alarm is in homes and businesses.

Children in costume are invited to “Trick-or-Treat” at Mendota Businesses and Shops on Thursday, Oct. 31 at participating businesses located throughout the town.

Shop owners will be passing out treats from 3-5 p.m. on Halloween.

The Mendota Area Chamber of Commerce will hold its annual Dinner & Awards Night on Friday, Nov. 1 at the Mendota Elks Lodge.

Social Security benefits and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments for more than 72.5 million Americans will increase 2.5 percent in 2025, the Social Security Administration announced. On average, Social Security retirement benefits will increase by about \$50 per month starting in January.

DEATHS – Joanne Woelfel Wacker, 97, of Madison, Wis., July 24, 2024.

Oct. 23, 2024

On Oct. 10, Holy Cross met its goal of collecting 500 boxes of cereal to donate to the Mendota Area Christian Food Pantry. With the accomplished goal, it was time for principal Mike Struna to hold up his end of the bargain he had promised

the students – a cereal domino line.

Children in Mendota will have plenty of opportunities to fill their bags with candy during Halloween Trick-or-Treating on Oct. 31.

The Mendota Historical Society will honor those who have served our country at a special open house event on Sunday, Nov. 10. Hume-Carnegie Museum in Mendota will open its doors from 1-3 p.m. to Veterans, current service members, their families, and the general public.

The Mendota City Council approved a resolution and an agreement at its Oct. 21 regular meeting.

Already this harvest season, grain entrapments, utility task vehicle (UTV) crashes and other farm accidents have been reported across the state. The RFD Radio Network talked to a

farm safety specialist to get relevant safety tips.

DEATHS – Josephine (Rosolia) “Josie” Mrowicki, 101, of Peru, Oct. 20, 2024; Frank G. Holbrook, 86, of Mendota, Oct. 14, 2024; Debra Ann Phalen (Castenson), 65, of Mendota, Oct. 18, 2024; Chad Louis Martinson, 53, of Prospect Heights and Arlington Heights, Sept. 30, 2024.

Oct. 30, 2024

Mendota Area Senior Services has been struggling financially. With the continual stress, MASS has made a change in its weekly schedule to help the problem. MASS is temporary suspending all services on Wednesdays beginning Nov. 1.

The Mendota Veterans Day program will be held Monday, Nov. 11, at Veterans Park, downtown Men-

dota. The program starts promptly at 11 a.m.

The Mendota High School District 280 Board of Education met in regular session on Oct. 21.

If the Farmers’ Almanac is correct with its forecast, this winter is going to be unpleasant in Illinois. The publication has been around since 1818, and has provided weather forecasts since day one.

DEATHS – Judith Ann Rapp, 82, of Mendota, Oct. 25, 2024; Kenneth Herbert Saylor, 80, of Mendota, Oct. 22, 2024; Mark A. Morris, 62, of Mendota, Oct. 18, 2024.



Happy ... new year
... 2025 ...

★ FIRE
WOODS

★

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Aerie Falcon

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9

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Nov. 6, 2024

The Mendota City Council took action for the improvement of streets and heard a preliminary report on the city's tax levy at its Nov. 4 regular meeting.

For his continuous dedication to the City of Mendota and the Mendota Area Chamber of Commerce, Brian Basil was named the 2024 Horace Hume Outstanding Service Award Winner at the MACC Annual Dinner & Award Night on Nov. 1 at the Mendota Elks Lodge.

For not only taking on, but thriving, in his role at the Mendota Area YMCA, Omar Espinoza was named the 2024 Tom Merwin Gold Star Employee Award winner at the Mendota Area Chamber of Commerce Annual Dinner & Awards Night on Nov. 1.

Members of the Mendota Trojan soccer team

acknowledged their fans as team member David Casas held the Mendota Super-Sectional trophy up high after the Trojans defeated Aurora Central Catholic, 2-0, on Nov. 2 at the MHS field. The win catapulted the Trojans into the IHSA Class 1A State Soccer Tournament in Hoffman Estates.

DEATHS – Kirby Boner, 71, of Tampa, Fla., Oct. 15, 2024; Michael Allan Bernardin, 74, of West Brooklyn, Oct. 30, 2024; Clifford Leo Schmidt, 91, of Mendota, Nov. 1, 2024; Janet Lea Schmidt, 91, of Mendota, Nov. 3, 2024; Patricia Ann Donahue, 80, of Rockford, Oct. 30, 2024; Ronald Edwin Lilja, 82, of Mendota, Oct. 30, 2024.

Nov. 13, 2024

Members of the Mendota High School soccer team were all smiles with their



Mendota native Brian Basil, holding plaque, was named the 2024 Horace Hume Outstanding Service Award winner at the Mendota Area Chamber of Commerce Annual Dinner & Awards Night on Nov. 1 at Mendota Elks Lodge. He received the award for doing a little bit of everything for the chamber and the community.

medals and trophy as Trojan fans cheered them on after winning third place in the Illinois High School Association Class 1A Boys' State Soccer Tournament on Nov. 8 at Hoffman Estates. The Trojans defeated Columbia, 2-1, on penalty kicks to claim the third-place hardware.

Shoppers are reminded that Mendota's Shop Local Promotion kicks off Saturday, Nov. 21 and will continue through Friday, Dec. 20 at participating businesses.

Ella Lewis, a junior at Mendota High School, gave the Veterans Day address during the Mendota ceremony on Nov. 11 at Veterans Park while school children and others in attendance listened intently.

USDA Secretary Thomas J. Vilsack issued a disaster declaration for three Illinois counties due to losses caused by tornadoes that occurred earlier this year. Tornadoes struck Marshall and Putnam counties July 14 and 15, 2024, and Henry County on July 15. Counties

contiguous to Marshall, Putnam and Henry counties are eligible for the same assistance. The contiguous counties include: Bureau, Knox, LaSalle, Mercer, Peoria, Rock Island, Stark, Whiteside and Woodford.

DEATHS – Lloyd H. A. Bialas, 88, of Steward, Nov. 4, 2024.

Nov. 20, 2024

The efforts to improve Mendota have not stopped since the Heart & Soul Seed Grant Program was brought to the city to investigate what residents thought needed to be addressed first. Through the surveys, sidewalk repair, maintenance, and concern were highly conveyed.

Mendota will get into the holiday spirit with several Christmas-themed events the first week in December, it was announced at the Nov. 18 meeting of the Mendota City Council.

Mendota High School Principal Joe Masini is pleased to announce seven students from the MHS

graduating class of 2025 have been recognized as Illinois State Scholars.

DEATHS – Wanda M. Kunz, 76, of Mendota, Nov. 14, 2024; Beverly A. Bromenschenkel, 85, of Mendota, Oct. 31, 2024; Gary Dale Skaggs, 80, of Eastlake, Ohio, Nov. 6, 2024; Ann Michelle Tastad Montgomery, 55, of Rockton, Nov. 13, 2024.

Nov. 27, 2024

The Mendota Area Chamber of Commerce is hosting "A Mendota Christmas" on Saturday, Dec. 7. This is a holiday celebration inviting everyone to come out and enjoy an afternoon of holiday cheer and begin their Christmas shopping. Mendota shops will be decorated and ready for Christmas, featuring gifts for everyone on your list.

The Mendota High School District 280 Board of Education heard a preliminary report on the 2024 tax levy and handled personnel items at its Nov. 8 regular meeting.

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School



Members of the Mendota High School soccer team were all smiles with their medals and trophy as Trojan fans cheered them on after winning third place in the Illinois High School Association Class 1A Boys' State Soccer Tournament on Nov. 8 at Hoffman Estates. The Trojans defeated Columbia, 2-1, on penalty kicks to claim the third-place hardware.

U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development representatives toured one of Illinois Valley Community College's emerging distance learning classrooms on Oct. 25, and Illinois State Director Pam Monetti presented a recognition of the \$899,855 grant that will launch exciting opportunities for area high school students.

DEATHS – Mike Lauer, 90, of Mendota, Nov. 21, 2024; Kenneth A. Miller, 88, of LaMoille, formerly of Mendota, Nov. 19, 2024; Mary Catherine (Hendrick) Schlesinger, 85, of East Lansing, Mich., Nov. 12, 2024.



2025

From 706 Washington St. & 1403 13th Ave. Mendota 815.538.2265 Member FDIC

Michael G 4th Lincoln

Greeting Created By Age Grade School

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R**Dec. 4, 2024**

It was an open house full of familiar faces and fun Nov. 21 as Black Bros. Co. welcomed nearly 300 attendees to celebrate the completion of its new Roll Manufacturing Building. The 18,200 square-foot addition has been in operation for over a month at the venerable company's headquarters in Mendota.

The Mendota City Council heard an audit report and learned several services offered by the city will be shutting down for the season at its Dec. 2 regular council meeting.

The Mendota Area Chamber of Commerce is hosting "A Mendota Christmas" on Saturday, Dec. 7. This is a holiday celebration inviting everyone to come out and enjoy an afternoon of holiday cheer and begin their Christmas shopping. Mendota shops will be decorated and ready for Christmas, featuring gifts for everyone on your list.

A tree-lighting is set for 6 p.m. Friday, Dec. 6 at Veterans Park.

As winter weather has arrived, LaSalle County EMA has launched a campaign to promote awareness and encourage residents to prepare for the upcoming winter season.

DEATHS – Darlene M. Meisel, 99, of Mendota, Nov. 27, 2024; Laurie Dawn Hoffman, 66, of Mendota, Nov. 22, 2024; Christine M. Mini, 77, formerly of Sublette, Nov. 21, 2024.

BIRTHS – Beau Wixom and Paige Simonton of Mendota, girl, Nov. 8, 2024.

Dec. 11, 2024

Leni Kromm, of Mendota, was excited to tell Santa Claus her Christmas wish list during the 'A Mendota Christmas' event held on Dec. 7 in downtown Mendota. Santa arrived in a Mendota fire truck with miniroyalty Landon Fancher and Maeve Schmidt and then spent many hours greeting young children and hearing all of their Christmas wishes before traveling back to the North Pole to get ready for Christmas day. Some of the other features of the day were an appearance by The Grinch offering donuts to children at the Elks and a holiday cone ring toss, which was one of many activities held in the 700 block of Illinois Avenue. On the eve of 'A Mendota Christmas,' a tree-lighting ceremony was held at Veterans Park to help brighten up Mendota for the holidays.

The OSFM is providing the secret recipe for a fun and safe holiday season; fire safety. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) more than one-third of home decoration fires are started by candles. More than two of every five home decoration fires occur due to decora-



On the eve of 'A Mendota Christmas' celebration, a tree-lighting ceremony was held at Veterans Park to help brighten up Mendota for the holidays.

tions being placed too close to a heat source.

Education officials from five statewide organizations are pushing for fundamental changes in the way student achievement is measured each year and how schools are held accountable for meeting the state's academic standards.

Dec. 18, 2024

The Mendota City Council

approved the annual tax levy and several ordinances at its Dec. 16 regular meeting. Mayor David Boelk presented the tax levy in the amount of \$2,275,459.92, which was approved by the council.

Voting for the Christmas tree decorating contest in Mendota will end on Sunday, Dec. 22. The trees are located in Veterans Park facing Washington

Street. They will be up until Jan. 3.

LaSalle County has been issued a tentative property assessment equalization factor of 1.0000, according to David Harris, director of the Illinois Department of Revenue (IDOR).

The Illinois Flag Commission selected its top 10 finalists for the state flag redesign contest with public voting slated to begin in

January. Members of the commission could select up to 10 of their favorite designs from the nearly 5,000 submissions.

DEATHS – Dr. Charles "Chuck" Edward Lewis, 92, of Mendota, Nov. 14, 2024; Charles Swanson, 85, formerly of Ohio, Dec. 7, 2024; Harold LeRoy Schlesinger, 87, of Mendota, Dec. 10, 2024; Kevin P. Biers, 51, of Mendota, Dec. 13, 2024.