

# ROCHELLE News-Leader

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LOCAL NEWS... LOCAL VIEWS WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5, 2025 \$1.25

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**Record results for bull sale**

There were record results posted for the 2025 Illinois Performance Tested Bull Sale. **Page 8**

**WEATHER**

**WEDNESDAY**  
HIGH 48 LOW 27

**THURSDAY**  
HIGH 42 LOW 24

**FRIDAY**  
HIGH 39 LOW 29

**SATURDAY**  
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**OBITUARIES**

- STEVEN WILLIAM 'STEVE' JULIFS
- MARILU MARIE MONTGOMERY
- IDA HENRIETTA (HOWE) HALL
- TERESA LYNN MELVIN

**See page 3**

**INSERTS**

SUBLETTE TOY SHOW

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Community.....7



## Palatine man pleads guilty to 1st degree murder of Rochelle woman

Devin K. Gibbons, 28, passed away Sept. 18, 2022 at 7th Avenue residence in Rochelle

BY JEFF HELFRICH  
MANAGING EDITOR

**OREGON** — In a Feb. 28 press release, Ogle County State's Attorney Mike Rock announced that a 29-year-old Palatine man pleaded guilty to the charge of first degree murder of a Rochelle woman in 2022.

Gary C. Freeman, 29, of Palatine was then sentenced to serve 35 years in the Illinois Department of Corrections.

On Sept. 18, 2022 at 10:46 a.m. Rochelle Fire and Police Departments were dispatched to an apartment located at 503 7th Ave. for smoke in a residence. Upon entry into the residence, fire personnel located a deceased female. The fire was deemed suspicious, and additional investigators arrived on scene.

The victim was identified as Devin K. Gibbons, 28, of Rochelle. During the course of the investigation, Freeman was developed as a suspect. In March 2023, Freeman was arrested in Schaumburg and transported to the Ogle County Jail and charged



(COURTESY PHOTO)

**Gary C. Freeman, 29, of Palatine was then sentenced to serve 35 years in the Illinois Department of Corrections.**

with four counts of first degree murder, one count of residential arson and one count of concealment of a homicidal death.

Freeman was sentenced by Judge Anthony W. Peska. His term of imprisonment will be served at 100 percent and is followed by three years of mandatory supervised release. The plea of guilty followed an extensive criminal investigation and prosecution. Rochelle Police Department led the investigation. Rock and Assistant State's Attorneys Allison Huntley and Heather Kruse handled the prosecution.

**See MURDER CHARGE page 2**



(COURTESY PHOTO)

**In a letter to the community on Feb. 24, From the Heart President and Founder Dave Eckhardt said the organization would be ceasing operations after 18 years.**

## From the Heart to cease operations after 18 years

BY JEFF HELFRICH  
MANAGING EDITOR

**ROCHELLE** — In a letter to the community on Feb. 24, From the Heart President and Founder Dave Eckhardt said the organization would be ceasing operations after 18 years.

From the Heart raises money for nine area non-profits: the Rochelle Area Community Foundation, HOPE of Ogle County, Rochelle Christian Food Pantry, Pegasus Special Riders, Hub City Senior Center, Shining Star Children's Advocacy Center, CASA, Community Action Network (CAN) and Foundation for Focus House. It most recently

held its 17th annual gala on Feb. 1 and saw record attendance and tied a fund-raising record of \$90,000. Each of From the Heart's member organizations will receive a final check for \$10,000 from this year's gala.

"With sad but grateful hearts, we announce that after 18 very successful years, From The Heart is ending our fabulous run," Eckhardt's letter said. "We could not have done it without all of our generous donors. I'd also like to thank all the groups and their directors who helped make our fundraiser the success it was."

**See FROM THE HEART page 2**

## Ogle County farmers in need of moisture, seeking clarity on Farm Bill and federal changes

'These farmers are going to have to have a really sharp pencil this year'

BY JEFF HELFRICH  
MANAGING EDITOR

**OGLE COUNTY** — After a dry fall, Ogle County farmers have seen lower-than-expected moisture over the winter months so far, Ogle County Farm Bureau Manager Ron Kern said Feb. 26.

Kern said farmers are currently finalizing input costs for the year and preparing planters to get crops into the ground likely in early April or late March depending on the weather. Fertilizer application will take place before that.

"We're dry headed into spring and we could probably use some moisture in the next month to recharge the soil," Kern said. "We're not critically dry, but we are dry. It doesn't sound like it in April, but when we get to July, that will make a difference."

Ogle County farmers are currently awaiting a new federal Farm Bill, which Congress passes every five years to set comprehensive agricultural programs and policies. The current Farm Bill, passed in 2018, has been extended for a year twice, most recently in December. The federal Farm Bill allocates funding for crop insurance, disaster assistance and conservation programs for farmers.

Kern said that in a new Farm Bill, farmers would like to see adjustments on payment price points, particularly with current commodity prices being lower than desired. They would also like to see adjustments to the crop insurance program, along with conservation initiatives that include grant money, and research dollars put towards developing domestic uses for commodities so the U.S.



(PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)

**After a dry fall, Ogle County farmers have seen lower-than-expected moisture over the winter months so far, Ogle County Farm Bureau Manager Ron Kern said Feb. 26.**

is less dependent on the export market.

"The farm bill affects every farmer in one way or another," Kern said. "The bottom line is, we really do need to get in there and start getting our hands dirty and working on getting bipartisan agreement on a new farm bill that's more reflective of modern agriculture and some of these price points. The thing is, you

have a new senate and a new house agriculture committee and chairman. There's some getting used to each other there. And with the new Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) it's hard to really say what kind of a farm bill package we'll be looking at here."

**See FARMERS page 8**

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# LOCAL NEWS

## MURDER CHARGE: Palatine man pleads guilty in death of Rochelle woman

**From page 1**

“I would like to thank the Rochelle Police Department’s Detective Sgt. John Kaltenbach (retired) and Detective Elvis Baneski and Assistant State’s Attorneys Allison Huntley and Heather Kruse for their hard work on this case,” Rock said in the press release.

Back at a March 2023 press conference in Rochelle, Rock said that Gibbons and Freeman knew each other prior to the murder and that officials believed she was already deceased before the fire. RPD narrowed its investigative search to Freeman within a short amount of time.

The Ogle County Sheriff’s Office, Illinois State Police, State Fire Marshal’s Office, The Red Cross, Illinois State Police Crime Scene Investigators, Ogle County Coroner’s Office, Ogle-Lee Fire Protection District, Federal Bureau of Investigation (Rockford and Chicago Offices), Schaumburg Police Department, Palatine Police Department, Sterling Police Department and Shining Star Children’s Advocacy Center assisted with the investigation.



(PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)

**Back at a March 2023 press conference in Rochelle, Ogle County State’s Attorney Rock said that Gibbons and Freeman knew each other prior to the murder and that officials believed she was already deceased before the fire. RPD narrowed its investigative search to Freeman within a short amount of time.**

## FROM THE HEART: Rochelle organization has raised around \$900,000 over its run

**From page 1**

“I’d like to send a very special thank you out to Chuck Watkins, Sarah Flanagan, and Tonja Greenfield for all their hard work behind the scenes, they work tireless hours volunteering their time every year to raise money for these nonprofits. Thank you, Rochelle, for 18 very successful years of From The Heart.”

Foundation for Focus House Executive Director Jeni Hardin handles public relations for From the Heart and said Feb. 25 that the decision to end From the Heart was not made lightly. The organization will also be ending its yearly cash calendar sales.

“There were a lot of reasons,” Hardin said. “The thought process had been ongoing for a few months and Dave and Chuck have been doing this for 18 years. It takes a lot of work to put the event on each year along with everything else. Everybody just got tired. It became hard to find volunteers. We

had a record year with attendance this year and raised \$90,000 and Dave wanted to go out on top. It was not an easy decision to make.”

Hardin also worked with From the Heart as a director of one of its recipient organizations. From the Heart raised around \$900,000 over its 18 years. It started out raising \$30,000 in its first year for three area nonprofits and grew to have nine benefiting nonprofits and raised \$90,000 in each of its final two years.

Hardin called being part of From the Heart “an honor.”

“As a group, they just worked tremendously to raise money for Focus House and the other nonprofits,” Hardin said. “Accepting the check every year for my organization was so incredible. It was humbling. The work was done by people that didn’t have to help. It’s getting harder to raise money today and knowing there was a group like From the Heart was great. It’ll be a hard loss and a hit to

the foundation. Hopefully something else like this comes along in the future.”

From the Heart’s board is made up of Eckhardt, Watkins, Flanagan, and Greenfield along with the directors of the nine nonprofits. Hardin said that along with their work, the community’s support is what made From the Heart thrive for 18 years.

“We’re very aware of the fact that From the Heart couldn’t have happened without the support of the community,” Hardin said. “We had sponsors and community members step up to help. Planning the gala was a year-round job. 18 years and around \$900,000 raised does not happen without the community.”

From the Heart’s cash calendars also became a staple of the community over the years with area residents donating \$20 to have a chance at daily prizes throughout the year. That money became supplemental funding for From the Heart, helping out with its



(PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)

**Foundation for Focus House Executive Director Jeni Hardin handles public relations for From the Heart and said Feb. 25 that the decision to end From the Heart was not made lightly. The organization will also be ending its yearly cash calendar sales.**

large gala event that included dinner, games, prizes and silent and live auction items.

The Rochelle Rotary Club was the sponsor of the From the Heart cash calendars, which were sold by Rotary members.

Hardin said work on From the Heart’s gala and operations took place year round, and that it will be strange for her not to be a part of it in the coming year.

“My office won’t be filled with auction baskets for it in the winter anymore,” Hardin said. “Dave is emotional about this and it’s bittersweet for him. He lives and breathes From the Heart. It just ran its course. Maybe it’s time for something else.”

Hardin thanked Eckhardt, Watkins, Flanagan, Greenfield and everyone else that helped with From the Heart over its 18-year run.

“The people of this community are amazing,” Hardin said. “Dave deserves so much praise. He has such a love for the community and a passion for helping others. He didn’t make this decision lightly. He deserves all of the thanks and praise for helping raise almost \$1 million for the community over 18 years.”

## Illinois students could benefit from UNI proposal to offer in-state tuition

**CEDAR FALLS, Iowa** – The University of Northern Iowa is taking a bold step to benefit students

across the Midwest with a plan to offer in-state tuition to students in all six states bordering Iowa, including

Illinois.

This initiative, pending approval by the Iowa Legislature, aims to help students from neighboring states access affordable, high-quality education while enhancing workforce-ready skills and addressing job shortages in Iowa.

affordable public institution in Iowa and has long been recognized for helping first-generation college students achieve their educational and professional goals. It is consistently ranked No. 2 on U.S. News and World Report’s annual list of the Best Regional Public Universities in the Midwest, underscoring

UNI’s ongoing commitment to academic excellence and student success.

In 2024, the David W. Wilson College of Business continued its long streak of being named a Best Business School by the Princeton Review for more than a decade. The Wilson College of Business is accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business International, a distinction that can be boasted by fewer than 5% of business schools worldwide.

west with more health care professionals. UNI also boasts three new engineering programs: a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering Technology, a Bachelor of Science in Materials Science & Engineering, and a Bachelor of Science in Materials Science Engineering Technology.

By drawing in students from neighboring states and providing them with a high-quality education at an affordable cost, UNI plays a pivotal role in attracting young professionals who will choose to build their careers and lives in our region.

The University of Northern Iowa will welcome its 150th class of students in August 2025 as the institution celebrates its sesquicentennial over the next two years. The Iowa State Normal School was established in 1876 and has consistently evolved to meet the changing needs of students and the workforce in Iowa and the Midwest.

UNI continues to be widely recognized for its esteemed reputation in teacher education. More than 10,000 educators can trace their roots back to UNI as the institution ranks in the top 1% of teacher education programs nationwide in terms of size and quality.

In addition to these signature programs, UNI launched its standalone Bachelor of Science in Nursing program in 2024 to help supply the Mid-

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# LOCAL VIEWS

## Letter: The government spent my tax dollars on what?

DEAR editor,  
Rather than respond to the handwringing, pearl-clutching and sobbing of the last “Consider DOGE” article, let’s just cut to the facts.

Do you want your tax dollars spent that DOGE has identified and stopped funding for? You might be asking what some of those expenses are, so you can understand whether they are worth it to you, as a taxpayer.

To help you decide, here are some good examples of horrible government spending I mined from National Review and DOGE:

\$45 million for a Diversity and Inclusion Scholarship in Burma. The rest of the world calls this country Myanmar, and why are we sending \$45 million of our US tax dollars there for this? How does this help the people of the United States or Illinois?

\$1.5 million to New York to expand the multi-billion-dollar video game industry. In 2023, the video game industry made at least \$183 billion in revenue. Why does the US government think they need \$1.5 million of our tax dollars to expand them? Benefit to taxpayers – zilch – again.

\$28 million of your tax dollars for licensing

fees for a green camouflage pattern for Afghan National Army uniforms. I understand military aid, but Afghanistan is controlled by the Taliban after President Biden’s disastrous pullout, where his rush to leave left the Taliban with \$74 billion dollars in US military gear by the way. The Taliban oppress women, doesn’t allow women to go to school and are a cruel and vicious regime – why was the US government funding licensing fees for their military uniforms?

\$2.5 million for a Super Bowl ad for the Census. It’s 2025 – the Census is five years away. And we, the people paid for an ad for the Census? How does this make any sense at all? And did any of you roll your eyes and not pay attention when it was played – be honest.

The National Comedy Museum in New York received \$1.7 million to create holograms of dead comedians. Apparently, nobody has been to Disney lately, where you can get stuff like this for around \$20. Again, why is the United States government funding this from our tax dollars?

\$750,000 to study if the statement made by Neil Armstrong as he stepped on the moon was “One Small Step for Man” or

“One Small Step for A Man.” No, I’m not kidding, and there are still recordings of it around, and you don’t need \$750,000 to listen to them or even put them on a computer screen to see what was said. What is the benefit to we, the people? None! Oh, and for \$750,000, the study was inconclusive?

\$3 million for Girl Centered Climate Action in Brazil. I guess this would be really good if Brazil was part of the United States – well, no it wouldn’t be. Again, how does this help the taxpayers?

Almost \$1 million to see if cocaine makes Japanese quail more “sexually promiscuous.” Okay, I’m not interested to see what happens to Japanese quail (or US quails for that matter) taking illegal drugs. How would a Japanese quail even find a dealer for this drug? I guess in some shady tree top? Sorry, again, this has zero benefit for taxpayers.

\$100,000 for a study to see if tequila or gin makes sunfish more aggressive. This is like a bad science fair project from the eighth grade. How do you even measure sunfish aggression? It isn’t like there is a dipstick or clear measure,

so this is basically taking your money on a subjective project which has no measurable benefit for taxpayers.

A taxpayer grant of \$388,000 to Columbia University (which has a \$14.6 billion endowment fund by the way.) Why do they need taxpayer money?

\$289,000 for Diverse Bird Watcher Groups. This isn’t about diversity in the birds – it’s about the bird watchers themselves. Why do our tax dollars go to this effort? It isn’t noble in any way, shape or form. So, what if bird watchers are all one race? Why is that a problem that the government needs to step in and address?

\$125,000 for the National Institute of Health to examine anti-racist healing in nature. Another waste of our tax dollars funding a subjective study which has no discernable value.

\$151,000 on perceived racism and its impact on cardiovascular risk and neurological aging. Another bad science fair project with no measurable benefit as it isn’t possible to objectively measure “perceived” racism.

\$516,000 to study the effects of racism on the brain and pathways to

health disparity. This makes no sense at all, but we are giving someone over half a million to look at it. I guess it’s good money if you can get it, but how does it benefit the people of our nation?

\$611,000 to evaluate microaggressions against Latinx people with obesity. Yet another bad science fair project, wasting the taxpayers’ limited and valuable tax dollars.

Wow – is this what you want the US government spending your hard-earned tax dollars on? Sadly, there is a lot more of these being funded by our government, and some of them are worse, but I think this makes the point well enough. Of the above \$84 million in funding paid for by the US taxpayers, which of these would you, as a taxpayer, want to pay for?

That people are hand-wringing and pearl clutching against the “unelected bureaucrats” of DOGE for looking into what the unelected bureaucrats of the government are spending our hard-earned tax dollars on, or that some of these unelected bureaucrats might (gasp) lose their jobs is quite frankly absurd to me, and I suspect to the rest of the residents of Ogle County.

When I look at all the

fuss, pearl-clutching and crying about DOGE, I remember this quote from the movie “Moneyball”

“I know you’ve taken it in the teeth out there, but the first guy through the wall — it always gets bloody — always. It’s the threat of not just the way of doing business, but in their minds, it’s threatening the game. But what it’s really threatening is their livelihoods, it’s threatening their jobs, it’s threatening the way they do things. And every time that happens, whether it’s the government or a way of doing business or whatever it is, the people are holding the reins, who have their hands on the switch. They go bat-s--t crazy.” And honestly, that’s what we are seeing here.

Do you want to know more and see more of what is being found and cut – Look here at the DOGE Website at <https://doge.gov/savings>

Take some time and learn about this waste of your taxpayer dollars. For those of you living on pensions with the still high inflation of the Biden/Harris administration, you owe it to yourself to be informed and to let your lawmakers know you support the elimination of this wasteful spending.

George Wilhelmsen,  
Rochelle

## Mayor Bearrows: Projects, events and an award

WARMER weather and spring are on the horizon so numerous city projects will be starting soon. The bandshell and restrooms project begins this year. Our team anticipates construction to commence once the weather stabilizes. In January, I had the opportunity to attend the US Mayors Alliance in Washington. While attending the meeting, I had numerous interactions with executives from across the country. They provided me with many ideas for projects and programs that could be very productive for Rochelle. A mayor from California told our group about a program called “feed the children.” The program involves the local

high schools in their respective communities creating a large fruit & vegetables garden, with the harvest benefiting a local food pantry, or a pantry within the school. Any extra food that is not donated is then sold to the general public. The funds received by these sales go to the school system to assist funding of early morning breakfast programs. This program is something I would like to see us locally investigate at some point to see if the need is there, and could it fit our community.

Several months ago the city purchased a home directly east of the fire station. The intent of the purchase is to increase the parking for the fire department. This increase

in parking is needed when the spots south of the fire station are utilized for the community area with the band shell. This property has also been added as an additional training area for firefighters, until such time as it is razed. The 400 blocks downtown between Lincoln Highway and North Main Street will really begin to look much better once the construction begins. All the power lines, wires and poles will be removed, with the infrastructure being moved underground. This will clean up the entire area. This project will be aesthetically pleasing and will increase safety and reliability. Hats off to all that have worked to make this project come to fruition for the benefit of

our community.

The destination committee has been working on a new community event at the Rochelle Airport coming closer to fall. This event will be similar to the “Fly in-Drive in” event. Plans and coordination are still being determined, however I truly feel this will be a great event with events for the entire family. Full details of this event to follow. There have been many ideas kicked around about other events that could ultimately bring more visitors to our community. Many of those ideas will be looked at moving forward and prioritized according to what events are realistic and doable, not to mention what the cost may be to host them.

We do, as a city, have a budget established and passed by the city council for 2025. If there are items to add, we can keep those events in mind as we prepare the 2026 budget. That budget is brought to the city council in late November or early December.

Our city just received another prestigious award from the Government Finance Officers Association for our 2024 audit. Congratulations to our entire finance department for their continued work towards excellence. The city manager and I will be presenting the “State of the City” presentation on March 5 at 2 p.m. – This event could be attended live in council chambers or watched live on the

cities Facebook page. Our intention is to keep our residents informed and be completely transparent to those we represent. Don’t forget that the Lincoln Highway Heritage Festival will be held this fall at Atwood Park, due to the construction in the downtown area. The parade route will be announced as we get closer.

In closing I hope everyone enjoys the warmer, spring type weather. As always, I will close with another great quote: “The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members.” -Unknown author

John Bearrows is the mayor of the City of Rochelle.

### How to contact government officials

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20515  
(202) 225-6201

IL Sen. Li Arellano Jr.  
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@rochellenews-leader.com](mailto:news@rochellenews-leader.com)

### KEEPING YOU IN TOUCH WITH YOUR LOCAL LEADERS

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### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR POLICY

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

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

however letters from candidates endorsing themselves will not be printed. Letters may be dropped at the News-Leader office (211 IL Route 38 East), mailed to the News-Leader (P.O. Box 46, Rochelle, IL 61068) or e-mailed ([news@rochellenews-leader.com](mailto: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



**RPD's Owen, K9 Odie present at Kiwanis Golden K meeting**  
Rochelle Police Department Officer Trevor Owen and K9 Odie recently made a presentation at the Rochelle Kiwanis Golden K meeting on Feb. 27. Owen discussed his day to day workings and introduced Odie to the Kiwanis group. His presentation was very informative and welcomed by all those attending. Kiwanis Golden K meets weekly on Thursdays at 8 a.m. at the Presbyterian Church. (Courtesy photo)

## Illinois State Police Troop 1 announces monthly activity for February

**STERLING** – Illinois State Police Troop 1 Captain Joseph Blanchette has announced enforcement figures and activity for February.

Illinois State Police Troop 1 Troopers issued 912 citations, 886 written warnings, and made 16 criminal arrests during February. Troopers issued 302 citations for speeding, 39 citations for distracted driving violations, and 58 citations for occupant restraint violations.

Troopers investigated 94 traffic crashes, assisted 305 motorists, and conducted 364 commercial motor vehicle inspections, of which 54 were placed out of service for safety reasons. There were 14 arrests for driving under the influence.

Troop 1, which encompasses Boone, Carroll, Jo Daviess, Lee, Ogle, Stephenson, Whiteside, and Winnebago counties, investigated one fatal crash in February.

### BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

March 5 Briggs Bridgeman	March 16 Christy Oleson	March 25 Chaz & Kathy Conant (anniversary) Liz Danekas Shaun Rosenbach
March 6 Nicole King	March 19 John Overstreet	
March 8 Chaz Conant Donna Sassaman	March 20 Jesse Lopez Rachelle Phillips	March 26 LeeAnn Komadina Kim Dougherty Bernie & Anna Sexton (anniversary)
March 9 Minia Waters	March 22 Wakely Peterman	
March 13 Veronica Lopez	March 23 Kristi Gonzales	March 30 Grace Olson
	March 24 John Wooten Lanie McPherson	

Call 815-561-2151 to submit names for birthdays and anniversaries



- Feb. 7 - Kailey Pifer, Rochelle, \$25
- Feb. 8 - Sharon Watkins, Sycamore, \$25
- Feb. 9 - Roger Meyer, Mt. Morris, \$50
- Feb. 10 - Elsie Johnson, Rochelle, \$25
- Feb. 11 - Xoe LeMay, Dixon, \$25
- Feb. 12 - Tom Myrick, Rochelle, \$25
- Feb. 13 - Juan Luna, Rochelle, \$25
- Feb. 14 - Bill Cash, Roscoe, \$25
- Feb. 15 - Alyssa Perez, Rochelle, \$25
- Feb. 16 - Eva Chu, Rochelle, \$50
- Feb. 17 - Rocio Belmonte, Rochelle, \$25
- Feb. 18 - Bridget Schott, Dixon, \$25
- Feb. 19 - Mark Wanner, Rochelle, \$25
- Feb. 20 - Leslie Ramsey, Roscoe, \$25
- Feb. 21 - Rajiji Sud, Rochelle, \$25
- Feb. 22 - Doris Parks, \$25
- Feb. 23 - Tracy Alford, Rochelle, \$50
- Feb. 24 - Shelly Crouch, Rochelle, \$25
- Feb. 25 - Patti Doyle, Rochelle, \$25
- Feb. 26 - Ashley Lawrenz, Rochelle, \$25
- Feb. 27 - Jessica Huerta, Rochelle, \$25
- Feb. 28 - HOPE of Ogle County, \$25
- Mar. 1 - Gary Tarvestad, Rochelle, \$25
- Mar. 2 - Danica Rogers, Rochelle, \$50
- Mar. 3 - Jim Neisel, St. Charles, \$25
- Mar. 4 - Stacey Ansteth, Rochelle, \$25
- Mar. 5 - Zoey Schabacker, Rochelle, \$25



## Coffee Break

### King Crossword

ACROSS

1 Rug cleaner, briefly

4 500 sheets

8 Nursery cry

12 — -de-France

13 "Prometheus" actor Idris

14 Tehran's country

15 Pottery

17 Dweeb

18 Ecol. watch-dog

19 Church meet-ups

21 Mellow yellows

24 Calendar abbr.

25 Train unit

26 Actress Catrall

28 Rural build-ings

32 Pharmaceut-ical

34 Crosses (out)

36 Cranny

37 "The Stranger" author

39 Drone

41 Roman 1006

42 Judge in 1995 news

44 Polite denial

46 Height

50 Sunbather's goal

51 Part of N.B.

52 Mob bully

56 Composer Stravinsky

57 Baltic feeder

58 Big bird

59 Brady and Hanks

60 Scatters seeds

61 Filch

6 Grade-school basics

7 Brick worker

8 SUV's kin

9 Location

10 Crumbly earth

11 Common conjunctions

16 Mimic

20 Male swan

21 Outlet letters

22 Actress Kate

23 Half dozen

27 "Whatever"

29 Lothario

30 PBS science show

31 Nonfat

33 Fender instru-ments

35 Heat source

38 "Rugrats" dad

40 Engines

43 Two-tone cookies

45 Scratch

46 Tizzy

47 Takeout request

48 Physics bit

49 Within (Pref.)

53 Hardly any

54 Punk-rock subgenre

55 Massage

DOWN

1 London's Old —

2 Pub serving

3 Part of the brain

4 Comment

5 Inventor Whitney

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### Weekly SUDOKU

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

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

**DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦**

♦ Moderate   ♦♦ Challenging  
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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### CryptoQuip

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

Clue: **A** equals **G**

MW Q BGSL YQEE EGAH  
DYSVRYVSG MD YHCCEMTA  
HBGS, M DVCCHDG WHEXD UQL  
GTRHVTYGS YVUNEMTA NEHRXD.

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Answers

King Crossword

Weekly SUDOKU

Answers

CryptoQuip

encounter tumbling blocks.

over, I suppose folks may

structure is toppling

If a very tall Lego

answer



# LOCAL NEWS

## FARMERS: Kern details current farming climate, status of new legislation

**From page 1**

“I do think there’s motivation on the part of congressmen and U.S. senators to get something done before the end of the year. I just don’t know when we’ll see results.”

President Donald Trump’s planned tariffs could also have an impact on area farmers when and if they come to fruition. Kern said tariffs almost always include farm commodities and the looming potential economic impacts of the tariffs have Ogle County farmers feeling uncertainty.

During President Trump’s first term, tariffs were also seen which resulted in negative financial impacts to farmers. The Trump administration then allocated payments to help mitigate and offset those impacts.

“I don’t know if this time around we’ll see those types of payments or mitigation,” Kern said. “I have no idea. But I do know this, if you start including agricultural commodities in these tariffs, this isn’t the 1950s anymore. South America is a huge competitor. If China can’t source soybeans for the right price from the U.S., they’ll get them from somewhere else. And they’ll source them from South America. Once you start playing that game and once you start being known across the world as an unreliable supplier, regaining markets that you lost becomes a no-win proposition. It’s a very delicate issue right now.”

Kern said that potential economic impacts could also be seen on prices of inputs and equipment that farmers use. The industry has seen John Deere lay off employees due to farmers not placing orders for new equipment, Kern said. With higher input prices looming and the outlook for commodity prices being lower, farmers will be looking to cut back on expenses such as fertilizer and fuel.

“These farmers are going to have to have a really sharp pencil this year,” Kern said. “When farmers sit down and they’re penciling out their cash rent and inputs, and they’re penciling out what they believe their yield is going to be, I’m sure they’re probably penciling out a lower return for commodity prices. At least

I hope they are. Because I don’t foresee there being a lot of glee in the farm sector next year when we’re all said and done.”

Kern said current lower fuel prices are a positive for farmers, and they worked to lock in prices on anything they could for the year before potential changes could be seen. Farmers are always at the mercy of mother nature, but they now face uncertainty with the Farm Bill and other changes at the federal level.

“There’s people who like to go to Las Vegas and gamble,” Kern said. “Our farmers do it every day.”

Over the next few weeks, Kern said he hopes Ogle County farmers can pick up some moisture in fields, and then have warm and dry enough conditions to start planting and get it wrapped up by late April or early May.

“Hopefully from there, we’ll have a relatively normal growing season,” Kern said. And from there, I hope we can pull out the bushels we’re anticipating. Then it’s a matter of whether or not we have a place to sell them.”



(PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)

**OCFB Manager Ron Kern said farmers are currently finalizing input costs for the year and preparing planters to get crops into the ground likely in early April or late March depending on the weather. Fertilizer application will take place before that.**

## Extension’s Wits Workout program promotes brain health in older adults

**MT. MORRIS** — Our brains control essential executive functions, such as speaking, thinking, learning, making sound decisions, and remembering. In addition to physical exercise, getting at least seven to eight hours of quality sleep and eating a heart-healthy diet improves brain fitness for maintaining long-term cognitive health in older adults.

University of Illinois Extension developed Wits Workout based on brain health and aging research. “Just like muscles, our brains need exercise to maintain flexibility and strength,” says Wits Workout’s co-author, Chelsey Byers. “Challenging ourselves with new and diverse activities promotes cognitive health.” Join others to challenge your brain and learn more about keeping your brain healthy.

The free, in-person Wits Workout sessions will be offered at the Mt. Morris Senior and Community Center, 9 E. Front St. on Thursdays, from 10-11 a.m. starting March 13, and will continue for 12 consecutive weeks. Participants will try a variety of fun and interactive intellectual challenges that encourage the use of different cognitive processes, such as memory, attention, and reasoning. In addition to intellectual challenges, each session features brain health education and discussion of strategies, tips and techniques, providing an opportunity for participants to connect and socialize with one another.

Register for the series by calling the Mt. Morris Senior and Community Center at 815-734-6335 or online at [go.illinois.edu/wits25](http://go.illinois.edu/wits25).

If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate in programming, contact Extension Program Coordinator Jan Saglier at 815-544-3710. We strongly encourage early requests so we can meet your needs.



(COURTESY PHOTO)

**Wits Workout participants engage in a variety of fun and interactive intellectual challenges that encourage the use of different cognitive processes.**

## Record-high results for 2025 Illinois Performance Tested Bull Sale

**URBANA** — Strong tradition leads to strong results at the Illinois Performance Tested Bull Sale at the Illinois State Fairgrounds. The sale held during the Illinois Beef Expo averaged \$7,096 on 33 lots, reaching an all-time record-high average for the sale.

“This sale continues to be one of the best sources for total performance genetics in the Midwest,” said Travis Meteet, IPT sale manager, commercial agriculture educator, and beef cattle specialist at University of Illinois Extension. “During the past 57 years, the sale has sold 5,030 bulls valued at over \$10 million.”

The IPT Bull Sale is a multi-breed sale offering both older age-advantaged bulls and yearlings. Meteet said the high-selling bull was a yearling Angus bull, selling for \$13,000. The bull, Kramer Farms Goalkeeper 2348, was sold by Keith and Brady Kramer, Farina, Ill., to Crosby Farms, Roachdale, Ind. The high-selling senior Simmental bull consigned by Haven Hill Simmentals, Milan, Ill., was sold for \$11,000 to Kevin Hildebrand, Ohio, Ill. The high-selling senior Angus bull, consigned by Joe Curtin Cattle Company, Stonington, Ill., sold for \$9,000. The high-selling yearling Simmental bull, consigned by Rincker Simmentals, Shelbyville, Ill., sold for \$10,500. The high-selling Polled Hereford bull, consigned by Lowderman Cattle Company, sold for \$6,500.

Sale sponsors include University of Illinois Extension, the Department of Animal Sciences at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, and consigning breeders. Industry support included Axiota, Vita-Ferm, ABS, Zoetis, Dearwester Grain, FerAppease, Illinois Angus Association, and Illinois Simmental Association.

Producers interested in viewing a breakdown of all the prices can visit the IPT Bull Sale website at [IPTBullSale.com](http://IPTBullSale.com). The site also includes individual bull prices from the 2025 sale and the numbers and averages from previous sale years.

Seedstock breeders interested in consigning to the 2026 IPT Bull Sale should contact Travis Meteet at 217-430-7030 or [wmeteet2@illinois.edu](mailto:wmeteet2@illinois.edu) or request a copy of the rules and regulations and nomination form. Nominations need to be made by Nov. 15.

For more information, visit Illinois Extension’s beef cattle site at [go.illinois.edu/BeefCattle](http://go.illinois.edu/BeefCattle) and featured articles from The Cattle Connection blog.



(COURTESY PHOTO)

**Strong tradition leads to strong results at the Illinois Performance Tested Bull Sale at the Illinois State Fairgrounds.**

## Music scholarship aid auditions scheduled for April 5

**FREEPORT** — State-line Music Foundation of Freeport has scheduled scholarship aid auditions for high school seniors graduating in 2025 who will enroll in a music major curriculum in a junior college or a four-year college or university.

Auditions will be held Saturday, April 5, 2025, in the Freeport Arts Center, 121 N. Harlem, Freeport, and are open to high school seniors who reside or attend high school or home school in one of the following counties: Jo Daviess, Carroll, Stephenson, Winnebago, Boone, Ogle, DeKalb, Whiteside, and Lee in Illinois or Lafayette, Green and Rock counties in Wisconsin.

Application forms and repertoire requirements are available by writing Kenneth Drake, ([keos-drake@gmail.com](mailto:keos-drake@gmail.com)).

## Fall archery season yields record harvest of 1,045 wild turkeys

**SPRINGFIELD** — Hunters in Illinois harvested a preliminary record statewide total of 1,045 wild turkeys during the 2024-2025 fall archery turkey season. The total compares last year’s harvest of 803 and the 5-year average of 763 birds harvested. The previous record total for fall archery season was in 2015 when 851 turkeys were taken.

This season 27,422 permits were sold (excluding landowner permits) compared to 25,741 for the 2023-2024 season. The season dates were Oct. 1, 2024 through Jan. 19, 2025 and all 102 counties were open for hunting.

Harvest reports were 51% male and 49% female compared to 54% males and 46% hens last year. A total of 62% of hunters reported using crossbows versus 37% using compound bows and 1% using traditional bows.

The top five counties for fall archery wild turkey harvest this season were Fayette, 37; Jefferson, 28; Pike, 25; Marion, 24; and Jo Daviess, 23. Ogle County saw 17 turkeys harvested this year and 17 harvested last year.



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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5, 2025

ROCHELLE NEWS-LEADER • SECTION 2 • PAGE 1

# SPORTS



## STEWARD WINS TITLE

Steward School won the 2025 Meridian  
Conference Girls Basketball Championship.

See page 2 for more details

RTHS Wrestling

# Atkinson medals at state meet

## RTHS senior concludes historic wrestling career in IHSA State Championship

BY RUSSELL HODGES  
SPORTS EDITOR

**BLOOMINGTON** — Dempsey Atkinson's historic high school wrestling career concluded at the IHSA State Championship, where the senior overcame her first loss of the season and battled through the wrestlebacks to become Rochelle's first two-time state medalist in girls wrestling.

An IHSA regional and sectional champion this season, Atkinson carried an undefeated record into the state tournament, where she cruised through the first round of the 145-pound bracket after a dominant victory over Gibson City-Melvin-Sibley's Avery Schlickman. As she's done all season, Atkinson controlled the match from the opening period and scored plenty of bonus points, compiling two takedowns and three four-point near falls for a 20-4 technical fall.

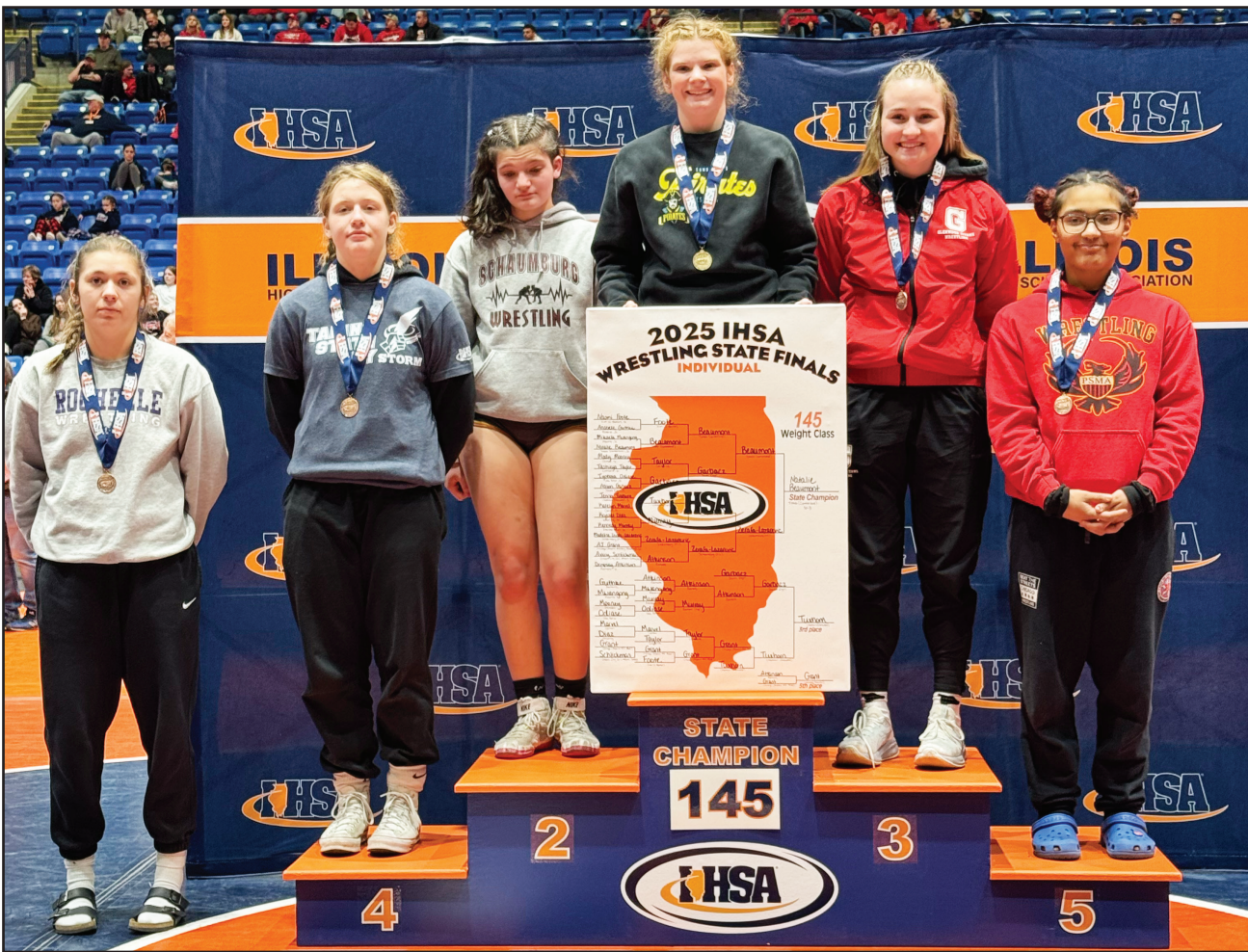
Atkinson appeared to be on her way to the semifinals, as a first-period takedown enabled the senior to build a 3-0 advantage over Schaumburg's Madeline Zerafa-Lazarevic. But a strong effort from the top position led to a pair of near falls for Zerafa-Lazarevic

that placed Atkinson in an 8-3 hole going into the third period. Despite finding a takedown early in the third period to cut the deficit to two points, Atkinson ultimately suffered her first loss, conceding a 9-6 decision.

"I kept a strong mindset and kept positive thoughts," Atkinson said. "I kept reminding myself that I could do this and nothing was going to stop me. I worked so hard to get to state and I saw so much that I could accomplish in the future. I know to keep working hard and setting goals."

Having to scrape through the wrestlebacks for the first time all season, Atkinson found herself two victories away from sealing a top-6 state medal finish. Her first opponent was Macomb's Mikaela Mwangong, a regional champion who Atkinson defeated 7-2 during the sectional meet. Undeterred from her loss, Atkinson went back to work, dominating all three periods to earn her second technical fall of the weekend, winning 19-2 behind two takedowns and three near falls.

Needing one more win to clinch a medal, Atkinson squared off against Evanston's Kennedy Murray in the quarterfinal wrestle-



Senior Dempsey Atkinson finished sixth at 145 pounds during the IHSA State Championship at the Grossinger Motors Arena in Bloomington on Saturday. Atkinson concluded her season with a 24-3 overall record.

backs. Unlike her previous matches, Atkinson and Murray wrestled a scoreless opening period. Although Murray held strong in the first period, Atkinson found an opening late in the second period, turning a takedown into a pin at the 3:23 mark.

The victory moved Atkinson into the semifinal wrestlebacks and guaranteed her a state medal.

"My goal was that I needed to place," Atkinson said. "I had it in my head that I needed to do whatever it took to place and work

my hardest throughout the match. It's an amazing feeling to know that I was able to place at state more than once. It was really exciting for me."

Atkinson's state tournament concluded with a pair of tough losses, conceding a

10-1 major decision against South Elgin's Allison Garbacz before falling 15-0 against Chicago Phoenix's AJ Grant in the fifth-place consolation bout.

See **WRESTLING**  
page 3

RTHS Boys Basketball

# Boylan stuns Rochelle in IHSA 3A Regional Championship

## Titans sink 3-pointer with 6.4 seconds left as Hubs suffer 64-63 loss Friday night

BY RUSSELL HODGES  
SPORTS EDITOR

**FREEPORT** — Senior guard Elijah Harley caught an inbounds pass around the half-court line and dribbled full speed toward the Rockford Boylan basket as the Rochelle Hubs attempted to avoid a devastating loss during the IHSA 3A Freeport Regional Championship on Friday.

Harley raced to within 7 feet of the hoop and hoisted a right-handed floater toward the rim. As the final seconds of the fourth quarter wound down, fans, coaches and players on the Rochelle side all watched the ball, which sat on the rim for about two seconds, only to fall away as the buzzer sounded and Boylan fans stormed the court in celebration. It was a heartbreaking defeat for the Hubs, who saw their regional championship hopes dashed in a 64-63 loss to the Titans.

"It was a tough loss," head coach Tim Thompson said. "Elijah came and got the ball and he got to the rim. He did everything he could. In a situation like that, all we can ask for at the end of the game is to get a shot up and he did. My heart breaks for him because it was close to going in."

While it was a heartbreaking loss for the Hubs (13-20, 3-7 Interstate 8), it was an improbable comeback from the Titans (6-26, 3-16 NIC-10), who drained three 3-point shots in the final minute-plus to erase a five-point deficit and emerge as regional champions. Trailing 60-58, Boylan suffered a significant loss to its backcourt, as standout guard Madden Fuehrer missed an open layup to tie the game before fouling sophomore forward Brody Bruns on the rebound.

It was the fifth foul for Fuehrer, who led all scorers with 23 points on Friday evening. With Fuehrer forced to watch from the sideline, Boylan found itself down 63-58 after Bruns went 1-of-2 from the free-throw line and Harley put home a fastbreak layup during the final minute. But the Titans answered on their next possession, as Jayven Golden buried a 3-pointer from the corner, his only triple of the night, to make it a two-point game with roughly 20 seconds left.

A costly mistake on Rochelle's ensuing inbounds play resulted in a deflection and a turnover that gave Boylan a chance to tie or take the lead. On Boylan's next series, the ball found its way into the hands of Christian Kennedy, who overcame a double team



Sophomore Brody Bruns is guarded by Rockford Boylan's Christian Kennedy during the Rochelle Hub varsity basketball game against the Titans on Friday. Bruns finished with 21 points as Rochelle fell 64-63.

and heaved a deep shot from well beyond the 3-point line that swirled around the basket before going down to give the Titans a one-point lead with 6.4 seconds to go. It was only Kennedy's second three of the game.

"They caught us in some mismatches or they caught

us helping on defense when we shouldn't have been," Thompson said. "We were up two and we were helping off when we should've been playing the 3-point line. Those are little mistakes we make in the challenge of a game. All we can do is keep putting ourselves in

these situations. We played in a regional championship last year and we played in a regional championship this year. We're going to come through."

Boylan, who overcame a fourth-quarter deficit during its overtime victory over host school Freeport in the

regional semifinals, took control of the championship game early in the first quarter, where the Titans went on an 11-0 run before a triple from junior guard Van Gerber put Rochelle on the scoreboard.

See **BASKETBALL**  
page 3



# SPORTS

Meridian Conference

(COURTESY PHOTOS)



## Steward School wins 2025 Meridian Conference Girls Basketball Championship

Eswood School hosted the 2025 Meridian Conference Girls Basketball Championship tournament this past week. The final round was held on Thursday, with the Steward Eagles defeating the St. Paul Lutheran Crusaders 31-11 to finish the season undefeated and take home this season's tournament championship. The team is coached by Don Romes and assisted by Erik Kedzie and Jack Tarvestad. The team includes Jamie Riddell, Mayson Smardo, Evi O'Rorke, Molly Kedzie and Barbara Palmer.



Kishwaukee College

## Kougar baseball team preparing for 2025 season

Rochelle alums Rodriguez, Metzger among players set to compete this spring

**MALTA** — The Kishwaukee College Baseball team is set to begin their 2024-2025 season this Saturday March 1. Head Coach Joe Maskivish enters his second year at the helm, supported by assistant coaches Jeff Marcle and Ryan Gillfillan. Leading the Kougars

are sophomore captains Daelen Figueroa (Waukegan East HS) Lenox Estremera (Proviso West HS) and Will Baumgartner (Sycamore HS). Figueroa, coming off a strong fall, will anchor the infield and set the tone at the plate. Baumgartner, who will play at Monmouth College

next year, led the team in on-base percentage and was third in innings pitched last season. Freshmen pitchers PJ Patrick Jasinski (Oswego HS) and Alex Prince (DeKalb HS) are expected to play crucial roles in solidifying the young staff. "Throwing strikes, making

routine plays, and utilizing our speed will be the recipe for success this season," stated Maskivish, emphasizing the team's focus on continued improvement. Kish will open on the road in Alton, Illinois versus Lewis and Clark College and East Central (MO) College over the March 1st

weekend. They will go on their annual southern swing through Tennessee to take on perennial top ranked teams in Volunteer State CC, Motlow State CC and Columbia State CC before returning home to take on the tough Region 4 schedule that includes such teams as South Suburban,

Waubonsee, McHenry County College, and Milwaukee Area Tech. The Kougars will also have to battle through their tough Arrowhead Conference home and away DH action against Black Hawk, Highland CC Illinois Valley, Sandburg College and Sauk Valley CC.

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# SPORTS

## WRESTLING: Atkinson finishes sixth at IHSA State Championship

From page 1

Atkinson (24-3), who won six tournaments this season including the Interstate 8 Conference title, concludes her high school career as Rochelle's first-ever three-time IHSA state qualifier and first two-time IHSA state medalist in girls wrestling.

"I love the coaches and it's a very productive room," Atkinson said. "We get a lot done and we work really hard. I've learned how to have a great work ethic from being a part of the Rochelle wrestling program. It's been an amazing ride and I couldn't imagine what my life would be like without it. It's taught me a lot about toughness and it's helped me grow thicker skin because wrestling takes a lot, mentally and physically. It's taught me to be tough throughout my life."

In addition to earning a state medal, Atkinson was one of six wrestlers in her weight class to receive IWCOA All-State honors. Atkinson, who finished first in tournaments at Rockford East, Ottawa and Mahomet-Seymour this season, intends to wrestle at the collegiate level.



Senior Dempsey Atkinson earned All-State honors for her sixth-place finish during the IHSA State Championship at the Grossinger Motors Arena over the weekend. Atkinson is pictured at left with RTHS head coach Alphonso Bruno and assistant coach Nelson Baker.



(COURTESY PHOTOS)

## BASKETBALL: Hubs fall to Rockford Boylan in IHSA 3A Regional Finals

From page 1

Gerber, who finished with 11 points on Friday, drained three triples in the opening half and was one of four Hubs to reach double figures during the title game.

"I thought there were some nerves at the beginning of the game," Thompson said. "Boylan had some open looks and our kids were feeling out what the pace of the game would be. We had some turnovers early, but we made some threes and next thing we know, we're flying up and down the court... It was a back and forth battle in the second half and we have to give Boylan credit because they made a play at the end to win the game. That's March Madness."

Rochelle fought its way back late in the first quarter and throughout the second quarter, where Gerber and senior guard Carson Lewis, who totaled 10 points on Friday, sparked the offense with quality

passes, fast pacing and perimeter shooting. Despite Fuehrer challenging the Hub defense with his athleticism and dribble-drive ability, Rochelle took a 31-30 halftime lead.

"I thought Carson's effort was a senior saying, 'I'm going to do whatever I can to make sure we play another home game,'" Thompson said. "He had energy, he shot the ball well, he went to the hole, he guarded and he handled the ball for us. He did a ton of different things for us and we feel for him. It hurts so bad because the kids wanted it so bad. I thought Carson was fantastic."

Neither squad created much separation during the second half, as Rochelle nor Boylan led by more than single digits as the game wound down. Although the Hubs went without a 3-point make in the second half, Rochelle maintained slim leads by playing inside, where Bruns found more rhythm after a quiet opening quar-

ter. The 6-foot-5 sophomore scored 21 points, all of which came after the first quarter, helping the Hubs hold a 49-45 lead after the third quarter.

"Boylan's really quick in their half-court defense and they were helping down on Brody," Thompson said. "It was physical down there and it was tough for us early on to get him inside touches. They were sending double teams from other areas and we really wanted to get the ball inside, but we had other guys make plays to give us a chance to win... Brody's a special player and he's only scratched the surface. If he can give us a little bit of time during the summer, then he can progress from being a 17-point-per-game scorer to a 25-point-per-game scorer."

A win would have enabled the Hubs to play on their home floor next week, as Rochelle will host the IHSA 3A Sectional Championship tournament. Instead, it will



(PHOTO BY RUSSELL HODGES)

Junior Van Gerber protects the ball from a Rockford Boylan defender during the Rochelle Hub varsity basketball game against the Titans on Friday evening.

be the Titans advancing to take on Kaneland in the semifinal round. Despite a shocking defeat, Thompson had a positive postgame message for his seniors including Harley, who finished with 14 points in the game.

"The message to our kids after the game was that our seniors were awesome," Thompson said. "Elijah and Carson kept this team together. It's very easy for a team that's under .500 to give up and not do what they're supposed

to, but they didn't let that happen. No matter how low we got, they always came back to practice and made sure everyone was working. That helped us get our younger guys up to speed and we had a nice last two weeks of our season."

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here. Which do you want when you've had a bad day: A face-to-face meeting with your local agent, or a machine answering the phone at that big national insurer that advertises on TV?



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# ON THE FARM

## Addressing hunger with diverse food systems

BY HANNAH SPANGLER  
FARMWEEK

A diverse food system can help address nutritional deficits nationwide, but not everyone has access to the food needed for a balanced diet.

"The reality is, the affordability of a diverse diet, for 45 million Americans is not a daily choice," said Ertharin Cousin, former ambassador to the U.N. Agencies for Food and Agriculture. "That is the face of hunger in the United States of America."

Speaking at the From Food to Flowers: Everything Local Conference in Springfield, Cousin emphasized the importance of solutions to grow a diverse food system for all. These solutions need to support farm income, local processing and ultimately feed communities.

Creating more markets that allow farmers to produce a variety of products, and fostering communication between policymakers, researchers and the agriculture community are some ways Illinois is addressing hunger throughout the state.

"The work the state has done is significant, but we can't stop. This is just the beginning of what is necessary," Cousin told conference attendees.

Cousin stressed that without consumer demand, farmers can't afford to grow and remain sustainable. Supporting diverse markets is crucial, and farm-to-school programs, which connect



(PHOTO BY HANNAH SPANGLER OF FARMWEEK)

**Ertharin Cousin (left), CEO of FSF Ventures and former ambassador to the UN Agencies for Food and Agriculture, speaks on how a diverse food system can help address nutritional deficits nationwide during the Everything Local Conference in Springfield.**

schools with local farmers to provide fresh, healthy food to students, are one of the markets that support farmers' efforts toward a diverse food system.

She also highlighted the importance of supporting farmers who implement practices to preserve soil health. Financial incentives for rotational crops and cover crops can help preserve the land for future generations.

"We need to get farmers paid for how they produce, to catalyze the change in production methodologies, to catalyze and change for more mixed agriculture," Cousin said.

Grants are one method of support for specialty growers and other producers. Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) Director Jerry Costello II said that IDOA is committed to farmers, the regional food system and food-insecure communities. The department is doing everything it can to ensure grant funding

is available.

In January, Gov. JB Pritzker announced \$14.7 million in funding for the Local Food Purchase Assistance Program (LFPA). This program sources fresh local food from farmers at a fair market value and helps deliver that food to food-insecure communities throughout the state. The increase in funding extends LFPA's ability to transform the Illinois food system.

"This program is making participants self-sustainable through the creation of new markets," Costello said about LFPA during the Everything Local Conference. "This is a one-of-a-kind program in the United States that supports underserved farmers."

*This story was distributed through a cooperative project between Illinois Farm Bureau and the Illinois Press Association. For more food and farming news, visit FarmWeekNow.com.*



(PHOTO BY CATRINA RAWSON, ILLINOIS FARM BUREAU)

**The U.S. Department of Energy released an updated model evaluating lifecycle greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions for biofuel feedstocks under the 45Z Clean Fuel Production Credit.**

## U.S. DOE releases updated GREET model for biofuel feedstocks

BY TAMMIE SLOUP  
FARMWEEK

The U.S. Department of Energy released an updated model evaluating lifecycle greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions for biofuel feedstocks under the 45Z Clean Fuel Production Credit.

The release of the 45ZCF-GREET (Greenhouse gases, Regulated Emissions, and Energy use in Technologies) model follows the U.S. Department of the Treasury and Internal Revenue Service guidance on the 45Z released on Jan. 10.

Under 45Z, tax credits are provided for the production of transportation fuels with life cycle

greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions below certain levels. The credit applies to eligible transportation fuel, including sustainable aviation fuel (SAF), produced domestically after Dec. 31, 2024, and sold by Dec. 31, 2027.

The 45ZCF-GREET model includes feedstock-specific fuel production pathways for SAF and non-SAF fuels. The model is designed specifically to evaluate life cycle GHG emissions to meet the requirements of section 45Z.

DOE also released the 45ZCF-GREET user manual, which describes how the 45ZCF-GREET model characterizes life cycle GHG emissions of transportation fuel production pathways and provides

guidance for using the model to determine emissions rates for clean fuels under section 45Z.

The updated GREET model allows certain foreign feedstocks to be used to make U.S. biofuels, including Canadian canola oil and Brazilian sugarcane ethanol for SAF. Under the 45Z guidance previously published, foreign unused cooking oil is currently not allowed.

For more information, visit [bit.ly/3E7UPuw](https://bit.ly/3E7UPuw).

*This story was distributed through a cooperative project between Illinois Farm Bureau and the Illinois Press Association. For more food and farming news, visit FarmWeekNow.com.*

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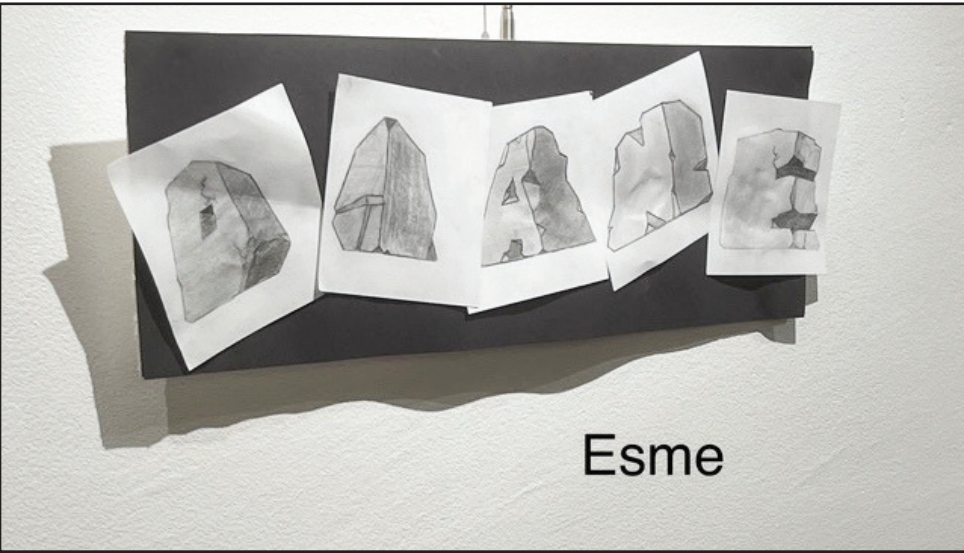
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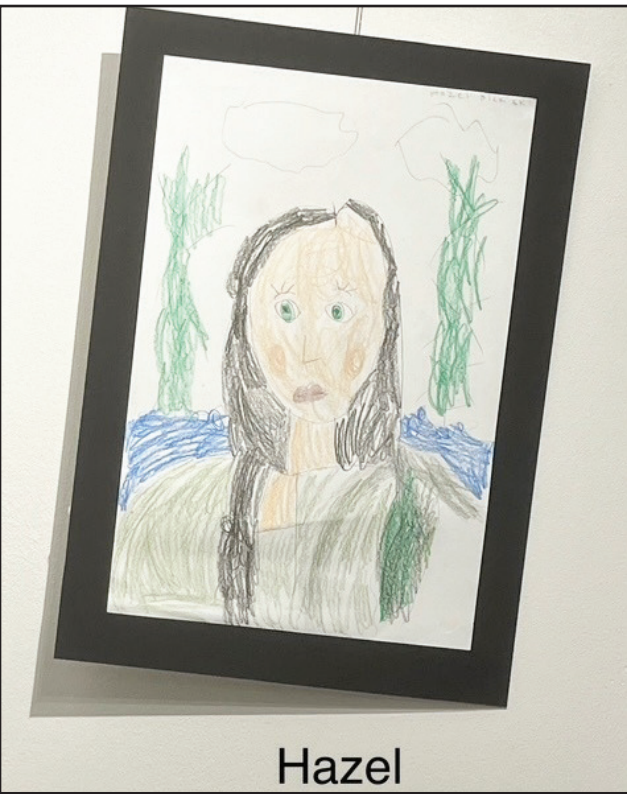
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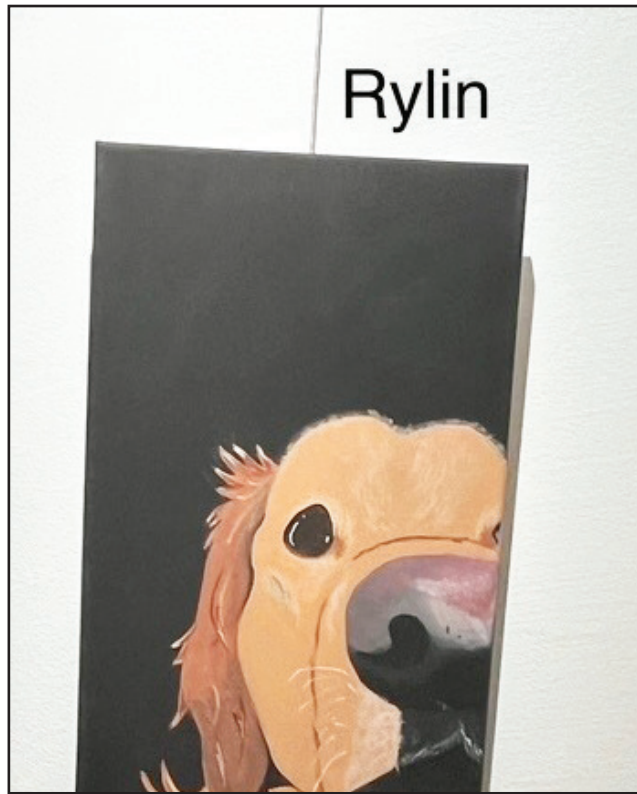
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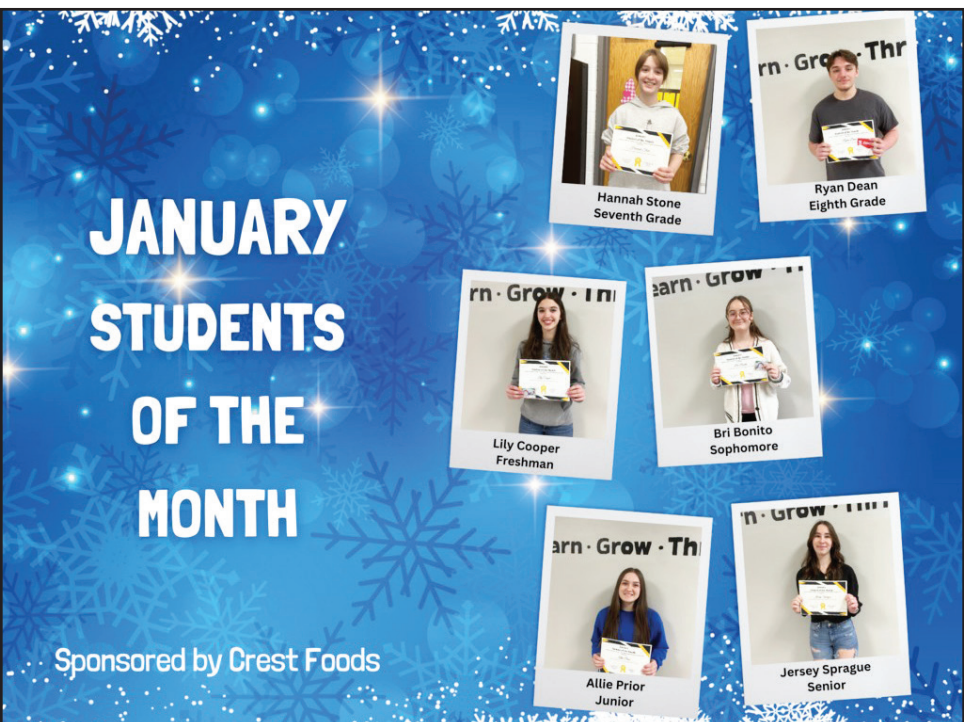
Hazel



Rylin

## AFC School District students enter Woodlawn Student and teacher Art Show

Feb. 21 was the opening for the Woodlawn Student and teacher Art Show. The Ashton-Franklin Center School District has four students with work in the show: Hazel from kindergarten, Esme from sixth grade, and Rylin and Lauren, both freshmen. The show will have the public vote for their favorite pieces and the top entries will be made into lamp post "flags" to be mounted on the bridges between Sterling and Rock Falls. Last year Nivea, currently a sophomore, had a work selected and it is currently hanging. (Courtesy photos)



## AFC School District names January Students of the Month

The Ashton-Franklin Center School District recently named its January Students of the Month. They included Hannah Stone (seventh grade), Ryan Dean (eighth grade), Lily Cooper (freshman), Bri Bonito (sophomore), Allie Prior (junior) and Jersey Sprague (senior). The award is sponsored by Crest Foods. (Courtesy photo)



## Kloss, Hoff place 4<sup>th</sup> as a team

AFC FFA members Xavier Kloss and Madison Hoff recently placed fourth as a team in the Section 2 FFA Poultry Judging Career Development Event. Xavier also finished as the fifth place individual overall. Contestants were tested on their knowledge of the poultry industry and egg quality. (Courtesy photo)



## Kate, Elsie Viall participate in Food Science CDE

Ashton-Franklin Center FFA members Kate Viall and Elsie Viall recently participated in the Food Science Career Development Event. Kate placed third as an individual and as a team they placed third in Section 2. Elsie placed third as an individual in the middle school division and placed second as a team. The Food Science Career Development Event consists of nutrition calculations, customer inquiry, triangle tests, identifying aromas and a team problem. (Courtesy photo)

# COMMUNITY MATTERS



## Mills & Petrie Memorial Library and Gymnasium



704 N. 1st St. | PO Box 308

Ashton, IL 61006

815-453-5048 | 815-453-5058 (fax)

[mplibrary@ashtonil.com](mailto:mplibrary@ashtonil.com)

Mon-Thu 1pm-6:30pm | Sat 10am-1pm | Closed Fri & Sun



Call 815-973-8397 or [millsandpetrierentals@gmail.com](mailto:millsandpetrierentals@gmail.com) to rent the gym, Legion room, entry hall and/or commercial kitchen

## Community Building Mills and Petrie Memorial Building

Hourly, daily rentals for your event  
815-453-5048

## Funeral Home

Beverage Lyons Funeral Home

601 Richardson Ave.,  
Ashton, 815-453-2441  
[beveragefamilyfh.com](http://beveragefamilyfh.com)

## Public Library

Mills and Petrie Memorial Library

704 First Street  
815-453-2213

## Real Estate

Lori Patterson Real Estate

811 Main St., Ashton  
815-751-0510

## Schools

Ashton-Franklin Center

CUSD #275

611 Western Ave., Ashton  
815-453-7461

## Village Hall

Village of Ashton

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815-453-2241

[www.ashtonil.com](http://www.ashtonil.com)

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## 101 LEGAL NOTICE

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIFTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OGLE COUNTY, ILLINOIS**  
**IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF IDA M. HINTON, Deceased.**  
NO. 2025PR10  
**CLAIM NOTICE**  
Notice is given of the death of IDA M. HINTON, of Mount Morris, Illinois. Letters of Office were issued on February 18, 2025, to EARLEEN A. HINTON, whose address is 412 N. 6th St., Oregon, IL 61061, and whose attorneys are Fearer, Nye & Chadwick, 420 4th Avenue, PO Box 117, Rochelle, IL 61068. Claims against the Estate may be filed in the office of the Circuit Clerk of the Court at Ogle County Courthouse, Oregon, IL 61061, or with the representative, or both, no later than August 26, 2025, and any claim not filed within that period is barred. Copies of a claim filed with the Clerk must be mailed or delivered to the representative and to the attorney within 10 days after it has been filed.  
FEARER, NYE & CHADWICK, Attorneys for EARLEEN A. HINTON, Executor of the Estate of IDA M. HINTON, deceased  
No. 0221  
(Feb. 26, Mar. 5 and 12, 2025)

## NOTICE TO BIDDERS

Sealed proposals for

the improvement described below will be received at the office of Fehr Graham, 515 Lincoln Highway, Rochelle, Illinois 61068 at 10:00 a.m. on March 19, 2025. Sealed proposals will be opened and read publicly at the office of Fehr Graham, 515 Lincoln Highway, Rochelle, Illinois 61068 at 10:00 a.m. on March 19, 2025.  
Description of Work: County: Ogle Name: Ogle County Educational Co-Op - Parking Lot Improvements Location: 204 North Main Street, Chana, Illinois Proposed Improvement: The contract work shall consist of the HMA resurfacing of an existing parking lot and driveway for the Education Center. The ditch along the east side of School Street will be regraded to improve drainage.  
Quest eBid: 9569655  
1. Bid documents available electronically at [www.fehrgraham.com](http://www.fehrgraham.com) for a non-refundable fee of \$25.00. Also available at Fehr Graham, 515 Lincoln Highway, Rochelle, IL 61068 for a non-refundable fee of \$100.00.  
2. Prequalification The 2 low bidders must file within 24 hours after the letting an "Affidavit of Availability" (Form BC 57), in duplicate, showing all uncompleted contracts awarded

to them and all low bids pending award for Federal, State, County, Municipal and private work. One original shall be filed with the Awarding Authority and one original with the IDOT District Office.  
3. The Awarding Authority reserves the right to waive technicalities and to reject any or all proposals as provided in BLRS Special Provision for Bidding Requirements and Conditions for Contract Proposals.  
4. The following forms shall be returned by the bidder to the Awarding Authority:  
a. Local Public Agency Formal Contract Proposal (BLR 12200)  
b. Schedule of Prices (BLR 12201)  
c. Proposal Bid Bond (BLR 12230) (if applicable)  
d. Apprenticeship or Training Program Certification (BLR 12325) (do not use for project with Federal funds.)  
e. Affidavit of Illinois Business Office (BLR 12326) (do not use for project with Federal funds)  
5. The quantities appearing in the bid schedule are approximate and are prepared for the comparison of bids. Payment to the Contractor will be made only for the actual quantities of work performed and accepted or materials furnished according to the contract. The scheduled quantities of work to be done and materials to be furnished may be in-

creased, decreased or omitted as hereinafter provided.  
6. Submission of a bid shall be conclusive assurance and warranty the bidder has examined the plans and understands all requirements for the performance of work. The bidder will be responsible for all errors in the proposal resulting from failure or neglect to conduct an in depth examination. The Awarding Authority will, in no case be responsible for any costs, expenses, losses or changes in anticipated profits resulting from such failure or neglect of the bidder.  
7. The bidder shall take no advantage of any error or omission in the proposal and advertised contract.  
8. If a special envelope is supplied by the Awarding Authority, each proposal should be submitted in that envelope furnished by the Awarding Agency and the blank spaces on the envelope shall be filled in correctly to clearly indicate its contents. When an envelope other than the special one furnished by the Awarding Authority is used, it shall be marked to clearly indicate its contents. When sent by mail, the sealed proposal shall be addressed to the Awarding Authority at the address and in care of the official in whose office the bids are to be received. All proposals shall be filed prior to the time and at the place specified in the Notice to Bidders. Proposals received af-

ter the time specified will be returned to the bidder unopened.  
9. Permission will be given to a bidder to withdraw a proposal if the bidder makes the request in writing or in person before the time for opening proposals.  
No. 0303  
(March 05, 2025)

## 101 LEGAL NOTICE

This publication does not knowingly accept fraudulent or deceptive advertising. Readers are cautioned to thoroughly investigate all ads, especially those asking for money in advance.

## 105 BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

"This publication does not knowingly accept fraudulent or deceptive advertising. Readers are cautioned to thoroughly investigate all ads, especially those asking for money in advance."

## 113 FINANCIAL

**NOTICE Advance Fee Loans or Credit Offers**  
Companies that do business by phone can't ask you to pay for credit before you get it. For more information, call toll-free 1-877-FTC-HELP. A public service message from your hometown newspaper and the Federal Trade Commission.

## 119 ANNOUNCEMENTS

"This publication does not knowingly accept fraudulent or deceptive advertising. Readers are cautioned to thoroughly investigate all ads, especially those asking for money in advance."

## 127 SERVICES / REPAIRS

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## 201 DOMESTIC/CHILD CARE

**NO INDIVIDUAL**, unless licensed or holding a permit as a childcare facility, may cause to be published any advertisement soliciting a child care service. A childcare facility that is licensed or operating under a permit issued by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services may publish advertisements of the services for which it is specifically licensed or issued a permit. Your Hometown Newspaper strongly urges any parent or guardian to verify the validity of the license of any facility before placing a child in its care.

## 301 ANTIQUES

## 307 MISCELLANEOUS FOR SALE

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## 307 MISCELLANEOUS FOR SALE

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**GUN SHOW**  
GUN SHOW: March 7-9, 2025, Racine Area/Sturtevant, Fountain Hall-8505 Durand Fri 3-9pm, Sat. 9am-5pm, Sun. 9am-3pm. \$10 (under 14 FREE). More info: 563-608-4401 [www.marvkrauspromotions.net](http://www.marvkrauspromotions.net)

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(COURTESY PHOTOS)

**Benjamin Morris (left) along with Elias Andronic, Teddy Millard, Nehemiah Andronic and Chase Marruffo (right from left to right) all became state qualifiers during the 2025 IKWF North Sectional at Jacobs High School in Algonquin on Saturday.**

# RWC places five champions at IKWF North Sectional

**BY RUSSELL HODGES**  
SPORTS EDITOR

**ALGONQUIN** — The Rochelle Wrestling Club sent 16 athletes to the IKWF North Sectional at Jacobs High School in Algonquin on Saturday afternoon. The club crowned five champions and qualified six wrestlers to participate in the IKWF State Championship at the Peoria Civic Center.

Raya Windham finished first in the Girls Bantam 115 Division and Benjamin Morris finished first in the Boys Senior 164 Division with a 2-0 record. Morris scored a 5-3 decision over Sycamore Wrestling Club's Dean Hanson in the semifinal round before securing a 12-3 major decision against Crystal Lake Wizards Wrestling Club's Matt Wika in the final round of the bracket.

Teddy Millard finished first in the Boys Novice 80 Division with a 3-0 record. Millard earned a fall over Stockton Renegades Wrestling Club's Gannon Kriebs in the quarterfinals before pinning Crystal Lake Wizards wrestler Nathan Swierk in the semifinals. Millard clinched his sectional championship with a fall over Crystal Lake Wizards wrestler Anthony Zalud in the finals.

Nehemiah Andronic finished first in the Boys Intermediate 79 Division with a 3-0 record. Andronic pinned Red Raiders Wrestling Team's Logan Knaus before picking up a 14-0 major decision over Alber Athletics wrestler Jax Teran in the semifinals. Andronic won his sectional championship with an 8-2 decision against Crystal Lake Wizards wrestler Joseph Zuehlke.

Elias Andronic finished first in the Boys Bantam 62 Division with a 3-0 record. Andronic pinned Riot Room Wrestling's Mario Fricano and scored a 10-1 major decision over Rochelle Wrestling Club's Cooper Harris in the semifinals. Andronic sealed his sectional championship with a 16-1 technical fall against Alber Athletics Wrestling Club's Nicholas Jones in the final round.

Chase Marruffo took third in the Boys Intermediate 90 Division with a 3-1 record. Marruffo earned a 4-1 sudden victory over Riot Room Wrestling's Michael Fricano in the quarterfinals before a loss in the semifinals moved him into the wrestlebacks. Marruffo sealed third place with back-to-back falls over DeKalb Wrestling's Jax Lovett and Xtreme Wrestling's Grayson Baker.

Ty Johnson went 1-2 over three matches in the Boys Bantam 43 Division and Eoghan Good went 2-2 over four matches in the Boys Bantam 55 Division. Cooper Harris went 2-2 over four matches in the Boys Bantam 62 Division and Wells Millard went 2-2 over four matches in the Boys Intermediate 64 Division. Grant Cole went 3-2 over five matches in the Boys Intermediate 79 Division and Dominic Escatel went 2-2 over four bouts in the Boys Novice 93 Division.

Dustin Hutcherson Jr. (Boys Novice 86 Division), Matthew Johnson Jr. (Boys Novice 134), Joshua Hernandez (Boys Senior 118 Division) and Montana Contreras (Boys Senior 144) each went 0-2 over two bouts at their respective weight classes and age divisions on Saturday.

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The Morton Buildings logo is a red hexagon with a white stylized 'M' inside. To the right of the logo, the words 'MORTON BUILDINGS' are written in a bold, red, sans-serif font. Below the logo and text, the tagline 'If you can dream it, we can build it.' is written in a red, italicized script font. At the bottom of the advertisement is a photograph of a large, two-story house with a grey roof, white siding, and a prominent chimney. The house has a covered front porch and is surrounded by a green lawn and trees. In the bottom right corner of the advertisement, the text 'HSP2016' is visible.



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An advertisement for Anderson Plumbing & Heating, Inc. The background is red. At the top, the word "ANDERSON" is in large, bold, white capital letters. Below it, "PLUMBING & HEATING, INC." is in slightly smaller, bold, white capital letters. In the center, a list of services is written in white: "Plumbing, Heating & Cooling", "Water Heaters, Water Softeners,", "Drinking Water Systems, Iron Filters,", and "Sewer Rodding & Jetting & More!". To the left of the bottom text is a black, jagged-edged oval containing the text "Since 1976" in white. At the bottom, the address "621 First Ave., Rochelle" and phone number "(815) 562-8784" are written in white. A white graphic of a pipe with a 90-degree elbow is positioned on the right side, partially overlapping the bottom text.

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An advertisement for Country School Drive-In Restaurant. The top half has a red background with white text that reads "Busy Schedule? Leave the cooking to us." Below this, on a white background, is a list of menu items: "Large menu of foods", "Rochelle's famous chicken by the dinner or bucket", and "Hand dipped ice cream (16 flavors)". To the right of the list is a cartoon duck wearing a pink ice cream cone hat and holding a chocolate ice cream cone. Below the list and to the left of the duck is a small logo for "Country School Drive-In Restaurant" featuring a red building. At the bottom, a red banner contains the text "COUNTRY SCHOOL DRIVE-IN RESTAURANT" in white, and below that, another red banner displays the address "251 N. ROCHELLE" and phone number "• 562-6039" in white. The vertical text "HSG 10/16" is on the far right.

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