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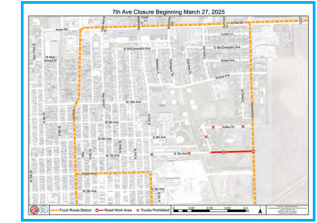
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LOCAL NEWS... LOCAL VIEWS WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26, 2025 \$1.25

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## 7th Avenue closure underway

7th Avenue from Caron Road to Kelley Drive will be closed from March 27 through April 10. **Page 4**

**WEATHER**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <br>WEDNESDAY<br>HIGH LOW<br><b>51 30</b> | <br>THURSDAY<br>HIGH LOW<br><b>57 36</b> |
| <br>FRIDAY<br>HIGH LOW<br><b>73 46</b>    | <br>SATURDAY<br>HIGH LOW<br><b>67 56</b> |

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**OBITUARIES**

• DAVID WILLIAM WEDIG

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## Mural design approved, work to start soon

Luna redevelopment agreement approved

BY JEFF HELFRICH  
MANAGING EDITOR

**ROCHELLE** — At its meeting Monday, the Rochelle City Council gave the go ahead on a new mural design that will be painted in the downtown area.

The city shared a request for proposal to attract mural submissions from local and regional artists in 2024. A complete response was submitted by the deadline and the city's arts committee began working with the artist. The location of the mural will be on the south side of the second story of ALM Fine Cabinetry. The location will enable traffic coming from the south on the overpass to see the mural.

The mural design depicts the words "Rochelle, Illinois: The Hub City!" with a train, skydiver, hub and corn also depicted. City council members chose a color scheme Monday.

City Community Development Director Michelle Pease said work on the mural would start immediately.



(COURTESY PHOTO)

At its meeting Monday, the Rochelle City Council gave the go ahead on a new mural design that will be painted in the downtown area.

### Luna

The council unanimously approved a resolution authorizing a redevelopment agreement with Luna at 531 S. 7th St. The city previously entered into redevelopment agreements with the owners of Luna to assist with the costs of replacing the building roof, clubhouse, outdoor patio and gravel parking lot. Most recently, its ownership approached the city about unexpected extensive and essential sewer improvements needed. The problems related to the original sewer piping resulted in an estimated \$115,000 in construction repair costs. The agreement approved Monday allowed Luna to be eligible for up to 50 percent of the estimated \$115,000 sewer repair (\$57,500).

Upon proof of completion of the work, the city will provide payment of 50 percent of the costs over three years, with \$19,166.67 payments at the end of 2025, 2026 and 2027.

Luna adjoins Fairways Golf Course, which is jointly owned by the city and the Flagg-Rochelle Community Park District.

See CITY COUNCIL page 2



(PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)

In an effort to keep the community informed and safe, Rochelle Community Hospital recently released information on measles, as the United States is currently experiencing its largest measles outbreak in decades.

## RCH releases information on measles amid largest outbreak in U.S. in decades

BY JEFF HELFRICH  
MANAGING EDITOR

**ROCHELLE** — In an effort to keep the community informed and safe, Rochelle Community Hospital recently released information on measles, as the United States is currently experiencing its largest measles outbreak in decades.

Dr. Kendall Vogeler of the RCH Family Healthcare Clinic spoke with the RochelleNews-Leader and Ogle County Life about measles on March 20. Measles is an acute respiratory illness that is highly contagious and can be deadly. In the early decades of the 20th century, thousands

of fatal measles infections were reported each year. Measles was eradicated in the U.S. in 2000.

"There are no cases of measles in Ogle County or the greater Rockford area that have been reported," Vogeler said. "As of March 13, the two largest areas are still Texas and New Mexico. There are a total of 15 states that have had Measles outbreaks. The closest one to us would probably be Kentucky. To date, there's 301 total reported Measles cases and 95 percent of those people were either unvaccinated or had an unknown vaccination status."

See RCH page 3

## VCCT to present 'The Shawshank Redemption' Production scheduled for March 28-30, April 4-5 at local arts center

BY JEFF HELFRICH  
MANAGING EDITOR

**ROCHELLE** — The Vince Carney Community Theatre will present 'The Shawshank Redemption' at the Lincoln Arts Center at 108 S. Main St. in Rochelle on March 28-30 and April 4-5. The March 30 show will take place at 2 p.m. and all other shows will start at 7 p.m. Tickets are on sale online at <http://www.vccetrochelle.org/>

'The Shawshank Redemption' is written by Stephen King and was adapted for stage by Dave Johns and Owen O'Neill. VCCT will be bringing King's award-winning novel to the stage. 'The Shawshank Redemption' was brought to the silver screen in 1994 with a movie starring Tim Robbins and Morgan Freeman. The story set at a prison is one of friendship, persistence and redemption. The VCCT production is recommended for mature audiences due to strong language and adult



(PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)

The Vince Carney Community Theatre will present 'The Shawshank Redemption' at the Lincoln Arts Center at 108 S. Main St. in Rochelle on March 28-30 and April 4-5.

themes. The Shawshank Redemption is presented by arrangement with Dramatist Play Service.

"It's the story of a group of prisoners," Director Michael Hynek said. "We chose this show

because it's something I wanted to direct and something I wanted to see on the stage. I'm not quite sure what people can expect. This isn't a typical VCCT show. And this is a stage show, not the novela

or the movie adaptation of it. Our cast has been working so hard on it. We'll have to see how it comes off on the stage."

See VCCT page 9

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# LOCAL NEWS

## CITY COUNCIL: Ordinance for new restaurant liquor license approved

**From page 1**

City Manager Jeff Fiegenschuh said the dollars for the agreement will come out of the city's Downtown & Southern Gateway tax increment financing (TIF) district, which is made up of increment funds generated by property value increases.

Fiegenschuh and Council Members Rosaelia Arteaga and Tom McDermott expressed a desire Monday for more work to be done to make other businesses aware of TIF dollars available to them.

"A lot of people in small businesses that aren't aware of the TIF are losing out because we keep giving the TIF funds to the same people that know the TIF is there," McDermott said. "I would like to see a lot of small businesses come here and get their chance."

Mayor John Bearrows said TIF funds have been used to help businesses in the past.

"This money in the TIF district is from their taxes," Bearrows said. "It becomes city money, but it's also money that all of the businesses in the districts pay in real estate tax. We do need to get more people to apply. In a sense, they're getting some of their own money back when we fund these projects."

### Liquor license

The council unanimously approved an ordinance for a new restaurant (R-2) liquor license for a new business at 1310 N. 7th St. The business will be Birrieria Las Tapatias. The council also deleted the liquor license for the previous business at the location, Barrio Agave.

The class R-2 license allows for the retail sale of alcoholic beverages for consumption on the premises by restaurants without a bar. Additionally, the class R-2 license permits the retail sale of packaged alcoholic beverages, provided that such sales do not exceed 10 percent of the total sales of all alcoholic beverages.

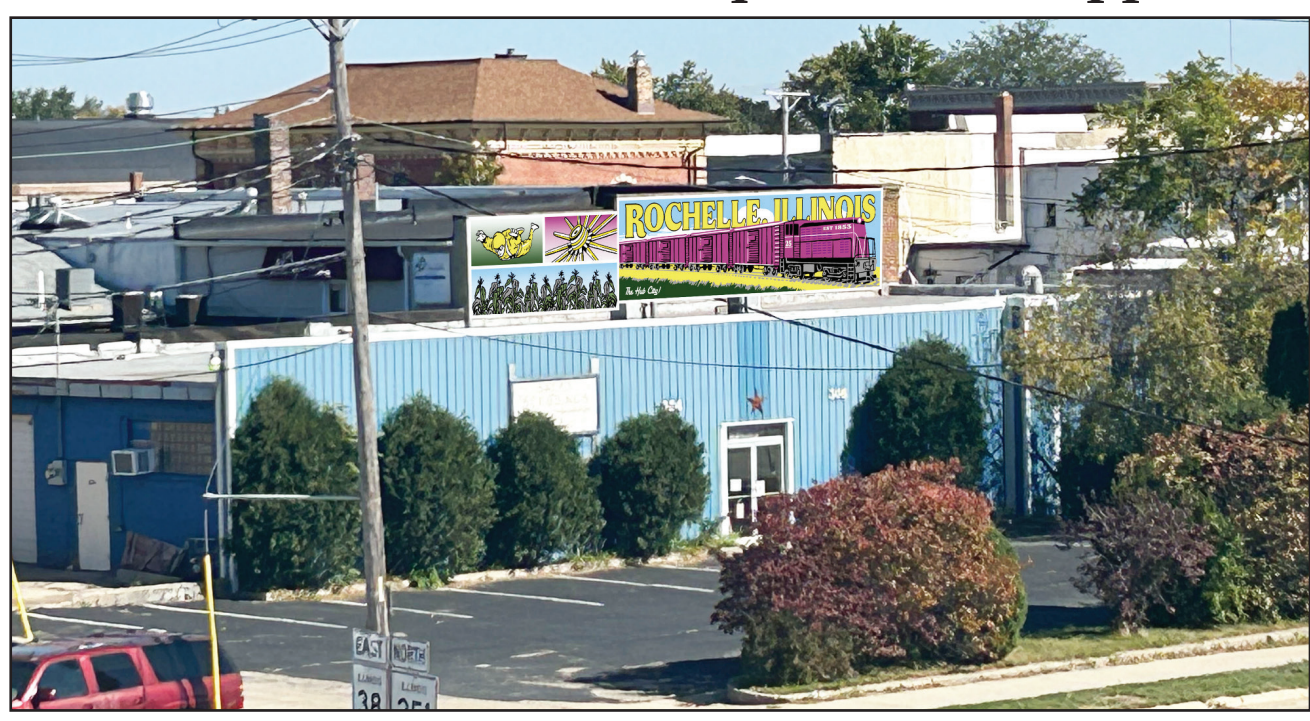
### Bus

The council tabled an agenda item for a potential lease agreement for a 2024 Chevrolet 3500 Starcraft Bus due to Council Members Ben Valdivieso and Kate Shaw-Dickey being absent Monday. The council wanted to have all members present for a future bus vote, which will now take place April 14.

The city has had previous discussion about purchasing a 12-passenger shuttle bus for community events and tours.

### Cameras

The council unanimously approved a res-



(COURTESY PHOTO)

**The city shared a request for proposal to attract mural submissions from local and regional artists in 2024. A complete response was submitted by the deadline and the city's arts committee began working with the artist. The location of the mural will be on the south side of the second story of ALM Fine Cabinetry. The location will enable traffic coming from the south on the overpass to see the mural.**

### MOU

The council unanimously approved a resolution accepting a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the union that represents the Rochelle Fire Department. The MOU is to inform the city of a change to the collective bargaining agreement (CBA) with the union.

The CBA required the city to bring total RFD staffing to 18. Those personnel members were hired and those employees will be undergoing training. The MOU will allow

for staffing during the training of new firefighters to allow the city to save on overtime expenses.

The MOU also allows the city to bring back a fully-certified firefighter by converting his previous resignation to an unpaid leave of absence. It also includes verbiage for the new rank structure the council recently put in place for RFD to now have the rank of captain.

### RMU

During his mayor's comments portion of the meeting, Bearrows

thanked the Rochelle Municipal Utilities electric department for its work on outages due to windstorms in recent weeks. The mayor said storms resulted in over 40 poles going down and that utility crews from Batavia and St. Charles were called in to help.

"I think they did an amazing job of regrouping as fast as they could," Bearrows said. "We want to thank the mutual aid we had. I'm happy everybody stayed safe and we got everybody's power back on."

## Rep. Fritts honors B'lush Salon for March Local Business Highlight

**STERLING** – For his March 2025 local business highlight, State Representative Bradley Fritts (R-Dixon) chose to highlight B'lush Salon in Sterling. Fritts spent time touring the business and presented the owner with a certificate of appreciation for her contributions to the community.

"This month, I chose to highlight B'lush Salon

in Sterling," Fritts said. "B'lush Salon is a locally owned and operated salon that provides incredible service to their customers. They are also very involved with efforts to support and improve our local community."

B'lush Salon has been owned and operated by Janette and Chris Garza for eight years. Janette attend-

ed Educators of Beauty in Sterling and has been doing hair for 28 years.

Fritts continued, "One thing that struck me when touring this business is how much it feels like family. The seven stylists who work here foster an incredible environment and community and I think their hard work deserves to be recognized."

B'lush Salon is located at 806 E. 3rd St. in Sterling. For more information or to book an appointment, you can find B'lush Salon on Facebook.

To nominate a local business in District 74 for a future highlight, visit Rep-Fritts.com and select Local Business Highlight Submission Form under Resources.



(COURTESY PHOTO)

**For his March 2025 local business highlight, State Representative Bradley Fritts (R-Dixon) chose to highlight B'lush Salon in Sterling. Fritts spent time touring the business and presented the owner with a certificate of appreciation for her contributions to the community.**

## Illinois Extension to train new wave of community compost leaders

**OREGON** — Composting plays a vital role in creating sustainable communities, from reducing waste to enriching soil. This spring, learn to be a composting leader with University of Illinois Extension's Compost Ambassador program.

The five-week training program, which began in Cook, Lake, and McHenry counties in 2022 and has since expanded to central Illinois, including Boone, DeKalb, and Ogle counties, returns with an enhanced hybrid curriculum designed to create knowledgeable home and community composters and provide community education. Virtual sessions run on Wednesdays from 6 to 8

p.m., beginning April 2.

"Composting is a practical way for everyone to make a positive environmental impact right in their own backyard," says Gemini Bhalsod, Extension horticulture educator. "Our ambassadors learn the science of composting and become advocates for sustainable practices in their communities."

Participants will explore composting funda-

mentals, home systems, scientific principles, quality testing, and community engagement through interactive online sessions and hands-on activities. The program includes access to Learn at Extension's virtual classroom for supplemental materials and peer connections.

The training culminates in demonstration workshops provided at three different locations: Prairie State College, University of Illinois Student Farm, and University of Illinois Extension's Lake County Office, where local participants will build compost piles, explore different systems, and connect with fellow composting enthusiasts. Lunch is provided.

The course fee is \$40, and registration is required. Participants can register at [go.illinois.edu/CompostLeader](http://go.illinois.edu/CompostLeader). If you need reasonable accommodation to participate in this program, please contact Alex Landberg at [landberg@illinois.edu](mailto:landberg@illinois.edu). Feel free to call the Ogle County Extension office at 815-732-2191 for more information.

**\$9 per ticket**

Children 14 and under with adults Free

**Kiwanis Pancake Day**  
Saturday, April 5  
7am-1pm

Contact your favorite member, call 815-884-9240 or email [rochellegoldenk@gmail.com](mailto:rochellegoldenk@gmail.com)  
(Tickets also available at door)

**At First Presbyterian Church of Rochelle**

**Happy Birthday**

*Happy 40th Birthday, Rachel Livingston!*

**From Eric, Julia, Rebecca, Dash, and Dolly**

Shirley LeMar, loving mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother will celebrate her 90th Birthday on April 9th with her family and close friends.

Let's make this incredible milestone day extra special and unforgettable by showering her with birthday cards & greetings! Let's fill her mailbox with the same kindness and warmth that she's given us by sending wishes to:

Shirley LeMar, c/o Ken LeMar, 1104 McCall Court, Rochelle, IL 61068



# LOCAL NEWS

## RCH: 'I don't believe we will see measles cases locally. Our area is pretty well protected'

From page 1

Measles is still very common in other parts of the world. The recent surge likely began due to people traveling in and out of the country. Most of the current measles cases in the U.S. are unvaccinated children and young adults. It is widely believed the measles outbreak will continue to spread across the country.

The most important populations measles is a concern for are infants and children. One to three in 1,000 children contracting measles will develop encephalitis (swelling of the brain) concurrent with the measles infection. 10-15 percent of those children will die and a further 25 percent of patients will be left with permanent brain damage or deafness.

Measles is spread through coughing and sneezing. The virus can live for up to two hours in an airspace. If other people breathe the contaminated air or touch the infected surface, then touch their eyes, noses, or mouths, they can become infected. Measles is so contagious that if one person has it, up to 90 percent of the people close to that person who are not immune will also become infected.

"A 90 percent exposure rate is a scary thing and something to be prepared for," Vogeler said. "And even if someone has had Measles in the past, they can still get Measles, but it will be a less serious version of that."

Symptoms of measles appear 7-14 days after contact with the virus and typically include high fever, cough, runny nose, and watery eyes. Tiny white spots (Koplik spots) may appear inside the mouth 2-3 days after symptoms begin. Measles rash appears 3-5 days after the first symptoms. Infected people can spread measles to others from four days before through four days after the rash appears.

Once people have been exposed to measles, it can incubate in their body 6-21 days with an average of 13 days. After people are exposed, they reach a state where they start to have symptoms. People can have fevers up as high as 105 degrees. Other symptoms are fatigue, and pink eye with no discharge.

"The rash will be a flat red circular rash that turns white when you push on it," Vogeler said. "It's not necessarily itchy. It will begin by the hairline by the face and work its way

down into the back and arms. The rash will not be on palms or soles of feet. Other symptoms are swollen lymph nodes or sore throat at that time. People typically start feeling better about 48 hours after the rash. The rash will get darker and then fade within a week."

Measles is caused by a virus, so there's no specific medical treatment for it. The virus must run its course.

Children that get vaccinated against measles get MMR vaccines when they're between 12-15 months old and again when they're 4-6 years old. If you have received those vaccines, you should not need another dose, Vogeler said. Those that received a measles vaccine during the years of 1963-1967 may need another dose due to lower potency in measles vaccines during that time. Those with questions can check vaccine records or get a blood draw to determine their need.

"MMR vaccines are still recommended to be given to infants at 12-15 months old unless they are 6-11 months old and there are plans for that child to be taken out of the country," Vogeler said. "That is the policy because measles is



(PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)

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not common in the U.S. The issue is still minor enough for that to be the case."

Vogeler does not believe measles cases will be seen in Rochelle or the Ogle County area, due to vaccination rates. In the 2023-2024 school year, the 26 schools in Ogle County as a whole had a 95.6 rate of vaccine coverage for measles. Herd immunity protects the unvaccinated when that number is at least 85-95 percent, Vogeler said.

"We were taught about

measles in medical school as more of a hypothetical topic," Vogeler said. "I've never seen a patient with measles in person. It's good as a refresher to know what to look for and what precautions are in place to ensure that we don't have a measles outbreak here locally. We have good data that says Ogle County is doing pretty well to prevent that. But we are prepared if someone comes in with those symptoms to make sure that they are isolated and people are protected."

To get a measles vac-

cine, contact local pharmacies and the local health department. The Ogle County and Lee County Health Departments have vaccines available. If measles did come to the area, the community would be made aware of it through the health department.

Learn more about measles by visiting the CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/data-research/>. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the measles and your health, contact your primary care provider.

## Wed on the Rock scheduled for May 4 in Oregon

**OREGON** — Calling all engaged couples! Wed on the Rock, Ogle County's newest wedding showcase, is making its debut, bringing together the best wedding vendors in Northern Illinois for an unforgettable event designed to make wedding planning effortless and convenient.

This inaugural showcase will take place on Sunday, May 4 at The

River's Edge Experience in Oregon from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Admission to this brand-new event is free! Whether you're newly engaged or finalizing the finishing touches for your big day, Wed on the Rock is the perfect place to meet top-tier wedding professionals, discover the latest trends, and gather fresh ideas for your dream wedding.

From breathtaking floral arrangements and

stunning bridal gowns to expert photographers and gourmet catering, Wed on the Rock features a curated selection of industry experts ready to bring your vision to life.

Attendees will have the opportunity to meet with some of the best wedding vendors in Northern Illinois, take advantage of exclusive event promotions, and even win exciting giveaways!

"Planning a wedding can feel overwhelming, but Wed on the Rock will make it easy and enjoyable by connecting couples with trusted local vendors in one convenient location," Grace Druen, event organizer and Ogle County wedding photographer, said. "This event goes beyond just wedding planning — it's about creating unforgettable moments and turning

wedding dreams into reality."

For more information, visit [www.mysaving-gracephotography.com/wed-on-the-rock](http://www.mysaving-gracephotography.com/wed-on-the-rock).

Let us know you're

coming! Join our Facebook event and RSVP to stay updated on all the latest details and vendor announcements: <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1593zX3aCG/>.

## OCHD's Community Baby Shower Event is April 11

**ROCHELLE** — Please join Ogle County Health Department on Friday, April 11 for an open house style community baby shower at 510 Lincoln Highway in Rochelle from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. This is a free event open to all families. Below is a list of everything offered the day

of the event:

Free infant and maternity products (diapers, wipes, care products, clothing); raffle baskets, giveaways, refreshments; resource booths represented by the following organizations: Lutheran Social Services, HeadStart, 4C's, Regional Office of Education, Birth

to Five, Early Intervention (Child & Family Connections), Riverstone Christian Church, Shining Star, HOPE of Ogle County and DCFS.

We will also have Wellness on Wheels mobile unit available for the following services that will also be free: Blood pressure

check; cholesterol screening; HIV and hepatitis C testing; sexually transmitted infection testing and Narcan training and distribution.

Questions can be directed to Events Coordinator Tarah Ziegler, at 815-562-6976 ext. 2299 or [tziegler@oglecountyil.gov](mailto:tziegler@oglecountyil.gov)

## County recycling and shredding event is April 12

**OREGON** — The Ogle County Solid Waste Management Department (OCSWMD) will be hosting a Latex Paint/Aerosol Can Recycling and Document Shredding Event on Saturday, April 12 at 909 Pines Road in Oregon. This event is for Ogle County residents only and identification is required. No permits are required for this recycling event.

Latex paint will be collected for recycling from 8 a.m. until noon. The first 10 containers of latex paint per vehicle will cost \$1 per quart-sized container, \$2 per gallon-sized container, and \$10 per five-gallon paint. The OCSWMD will subsidize the remaining cost to recycle the latex paint. Any additional containers of latex paint will be charged the full price to recycle, which is \$3 per quart, \$6 per gallon, and \$20 per five-gallon paint. Cash, credit card, or checks payable to "Earth-Paint" will be accepted for payment.

spray cans will also be accepted. Residents will have to cover the full cost for recycling oil-based paints, stains, and varnishes. Visit [www.earthpaint.org](http://www.earthpaint.org) for pricing. Cash, credit card, or checks payable to "Earth-Paint" will be accepted for payment.

No business or contractor paints accepted. No bulking or combining of latex paint. Bulk latex paint cannot be recycled in this program.

EarthPaint is a non-profit business in the Chicago area that works with adults with special needs and disabilities to sort and recycle unwanted latex paint into new paint or other products.

Aerosol cans, small 14-16 ounce propane cylinders, and small butane cylinders will also be accepted by Flatcan Recycling. There is no cost for up to 10 containers. For over 10 items aerosol cans will be \$1 each and propane and butane cylinders will be \$4 each for recycling. Most aerosol spray products will be

accepted for recycling. Flatcan Recycling will also accept alkaline batteries for recycling for \$4 per pound and one child car seat at no charge. Additional child car seats will be \$10 per seat. Flatcan will also accept old clothing and textiles at no charge. Clean clothing, shoes, bedding, towels, and other household textiles will be accepted. Items can be in any condition as long as they're not wet or moldy. Items with rips, tears, stains that won't wash out, missing buttons, zippers, etc. are acceptable.

In addition, secure, on-site document shredding will be conducted by Illinois Valley Document Destruction from 9 a.m. to noon. There is a limit of three boxes per vehicle. No business or institutional material accepted. There is no cost to residents for paper shredding, because the OCSWMD will cover the cost of the Illinois Valley Document Destruction truck and staff.

Please call the OCSWMD at 815-732-4020, email [solidwaste@oglecountyil.gov](mailto:solidwaste@oglecountyil.gov), or visit

[oglecountyil.gov](http://oglecountyil.gov), or visit [www.oglecountyil.gov](http://www.oglecountyil.gov) or the Ogle County Solid Waste Management Department on Facebook for more information about this recycling opportunity.

### BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

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# LOCAL VIEWS

## Roberts: Our tyrannical judicial system

OUR judicial system is drifting toward tyranny. For instance, on March 17, a U.S. District Judge (local judge) ordered the current administration to turn around aircraft carrying Venezuelan gang members (Tren de Aragua) being sent to a supermax prison in El Salvador. Apparently, the order came down when the aircraft was still in the air over international waters. If this type of order stands, then why can't a judge order a U.S. Destroyer in the Red Sea to stop attacking Houthis rebels in Yemen? The current administration ignored the order because it came down while the aircraft was in international airspace, the

assertion that the jurisdiction of the district judge does not cover international airspace, and that the aircraft was about to land and probably did not have enough fuel to return. The district judge argued that his verbal oral order had legal force. A signed order was delivered later. Most legal experts agree that a court order is in force only when signed by the judge and filed with the clerk's office. Oral orders don't count. Presently, the administration is adhering to the injunction, unlike the past administration, which planned to circumvent the Supreme Court ruling on forgiving student tuition loans. Lawfare (using the legal system to oppose

political opponents) is alive and well. Leftist organizations, acting in coordination with judges, are abusing judicial power to push their ideology. Since they can't win at the ballot box, they use the court system to attempt to get their way. Probably the most significant abuse of judicial power occurred when multiple lawsuits were brought against the current President to thwart his election effort. According to scholarly writings of some jurists and attorneys, district judges ordering nationwide injunctions is an inappropriate use of judicial

power. Others believe that nationwide injunctions are a way to block the federal agency (the President) from overreaching. In the past, district judges would avoid ruling on national events, but this has recently changed. According to the Harvard Law Review, Bush received six injunctions, Obama 12, and Trump (first term) 64. Presently, after only two months in office, there are over 127 injunctions attempting to stop the actions of the current President. The Harvard Law Review has recognized the problem with nationwide injunctions and has suggested three ways to solve the problem. The first is to reform the court system so that district judges only have authority in their district, not nationwide. The second is the theory that the courts can be trusted to self-regulate their use of nationwide injunctions because they are well suited to impose self-disciplining rules. The third recommendation is to require nationwide injunctions be handled by a panel of at least three judges. This would make it more difficult to go judge shopping since the other two or more judges could outvote a radical judge. Congress has ignored reforms of this nature. Article III of the U.S. Constitution gives Con-

gress significant discretion in determining the structure and shape of the federal judiciary. In recent years, judges legislating from the bench have become a part of the legislative process, which is not their role. Most judges exercise judicial restraint, but a few go overboard in their rulings, showing extreme bias in favor of leftist ideology, which leads to judge shopping. Certainly, jurisprudence (the study, knowledge, or science of law) is under assault by this overuse of nationwide injunctions initiated by a minority of judges. Judicial restraint is typically rooted in morality. However, in this day and age, morality is a value set that is subject to change without notice.



Chuck Roberts

## Alcohol and substance abuse will not take away your fears

USING drugs and alcohol will not take away your problems and fears. In the short run, they might make you feel better, but in the long run these addictions will only make things worse. As a result, here are eight tips on how to manage your persistent fears and anxieties without using drugs and alcohol. 1. Take it one day at a time: Instead of worrying about how you will get through the rest of the week or month, try to focus on today. Each day can provide us with different opportunities to

learn new things and that includes learning how to deal with your issues. In addition, you will not feel overwhelmed with everything if you focus on one thing at a time. 2. Learn how to manage your fearful thoughts: When experiencing a negative thought, read some positive statements and affirmations that will help lift your spirits and make you feel better. Remember that your fearful thoughts may be exaggerated so balance these thoughts with realistic thinking and common sense. 3. Do not do everything

all at once: Learn how to break your fears into a series of smaller steps. Completing these smaller tasks one step at a time will make the stress more manageable and increases your chances of success. You will also feel more confident in getting things accomplished rather than worrying about what you need to do. 4. Drugs and alcohol are not the answers to your problems: Getting the help you need and learning how to deal with your situation are the most effective ways in managing your fears, anxieties, and addictions. In time,

you will become better able to maintain your mental health. 5. Managing your anxieties will take some hard work: Trying to avoid your addictions will do nothing in getting rid of your fears and anxieties. Sooner or later, you will have to confront your mental health issues. Remember that all you can do is to do your best each day, hope for the best, and take things in stride. 6. Drugs and alcohol can make things difficult: Drugs and alcohol can make your problems even more complicated. Many professionals have said

that substance abuse will only add more misery to your situation. Be smart and learn how to cope with your mental health issues the right way. 7. Talk to a former addict: If you think that drugs and alcohol will solve your problems, then try talking to someone who has already been down that road. By talking to a former addict, you will get the truth on how substance abuse can ruin your life. 8. Take advantage of the help that is available around you: If possible, talk to a professional who can help reduce your fears

and anxieties. They will be able to provide you with additional advice and insights on how to deal with your current situation. By talking to a professional, a person will be helping themselves in the long run because they will become better able to deal with their problems in the future. Stan Popovich is the author of "A Layman's Guide to Managing Fear" which covers a variety of techniques that can drastically improve your mental health. For more information, please visit Stan's website at <http://www.managingfear.com>

## Letter to the Editor: Liberty is fragile

DEAR Editor, If the meaning of America could be expressed in a single word, it would surely be "Liberty". The Declaration of Independence declared Liberty to be an "unalienable right" with which we are endowed by our Creator. Our Constitution declares that it was established "...

to secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our posterity." The founders believed that Liberty belongs to the People individually and collectively — and that the enemy of Liberty is government with unbridled power. The great genius of our Constitution was the division of governmental power between three branches — the

legislative (to enact laws), the executive (to carry out those laws), and the judicial (to interpret the laws and the Constitution) — a system of checks and balances designed to prevent the concentration of government power in one person. Now, it seems, this Constitutional system may be

in grave danger. Congress seems to have ceded much of its legislative power to the President. At the same time, the President seems to be on the verge of usurping the judicial power of the courts by simply ignoring unfavorable court rulings and attempting to remove the judges who have made

them. If successful, these actions, in combination, would concentrate all legislative, executive and judicial power solely in the President. Our Constitutional Republic would be no more. Where this will all lead remains to be seen. But Liberty is fragile and, once lost, would be difficult to regain. At the conclusion of the

Constitutional Convention in 1787, Benjamin Franklin was asked "Well, Doctor, what form of Government have we got, a Republic or a Monarchy?" to which he famously replied, "a Republic, if you can keep it." That remains an open question. Alan Cooper, Rochelle



### How to contact government officials

U.S. Con. Darin LaHood  
1424 Longworth HOB  
Washington, D.C.  
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  
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| Eileen Braski   | <a href="mailto:ebraski@hillcrestil.us">ebraski@hillcrestil.us</a>   |
| Patricia Garcia | <a href="mailto:pgarcia@hillcrestil.us">pgarcia@hillcrestil.us</a>   |

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|--------------------|--|
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| Joanna Patrick     | <a href="mailto:flaggtwpclerk@rochelle.net">flaggtwpclerk@rochelle.net</a> |
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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.





# Honoring our American Hero

## Rochelle's Plumb served in U.S. Marine Corps from 1955-1959

BY JEFF HELFRICH  
MANAGING EDITOR

**ROCHELLE** — Thomas Plumb of Rochelle served in the United States Marine Corps from 1955-1959. He was in charge of a motor pool at 29 Palms Marine Base in California for most of his time in the service. Plumb grew up in Lisle, Illinois and graduated from high school and went to work for a railroad. Six months after that, he chose to enlist in the Marines after his selective service status was 1A, which he figured would cause him to be drafted at some point soon. In 1955, Plumb reported to boot camp at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego in California for 10 weeks of training. He spent an additional two weeks on rifle training at the nearby Camp Matthews.

"I was very good at rifle and rated high expert at that," Plumb said. "Back then we used open-sight rifles. We

shot from 200, 300 and 500 yards. At 500 yards, one click of wind will move your bullet three feet. You had to be pretty accurate to shoot in those days. After rifle training and graduation, I went to Camp Pendleton in Oceanside, California for five weeks of recon training. That was an elite group. We really went through hell for five weeks. We went up and down mountains and they'd take us out in the ocean and dump us five miles out and tell us to swim to shore. It was just constant for five weeks. And then I graduated from that."

Plumb was then assigned to 29 Palms Marine Base in California in the Mojave Desert. He was assigned to a gun battalion there, but was placed in an office before being moved to driving in a motor pool less than a month later. He drove a 10-ton truck and picked up rounds from the Navy base in San Diego to be shot in the field at 29 Palms, which is 50 square miles in the desert and provided a lot of room for firing weapons.

"I did well in the motor pool and the staff sergeant there liked me," Plumb said. "He had to move on to supply and wanted me to take over the motor pool section, but I was only a corporal. They granted me special movement up to staff sergeant for just that time. That's where I stayed up until I was discharged. I then left the service in 1959 and came back home to Illinois and went back to work for the railroad."

Plumb said he chose to enlist because he didn't want to get drafted at an inopportune time, and because he didn't want to serve in the United States Army.

"I chose the Marines because I probably thought I was tough," Plumb said. "I'm not sure why. There was just something about the Marines. I read that they were the best trained. When I was at 29 Palms we packed our bags. That's when Eisenhower sent the troops to Lebanon for an uprising and we were attached to the First Division Marines. Then they sent another division instead of us. That was the only time I thought I may be deployed."

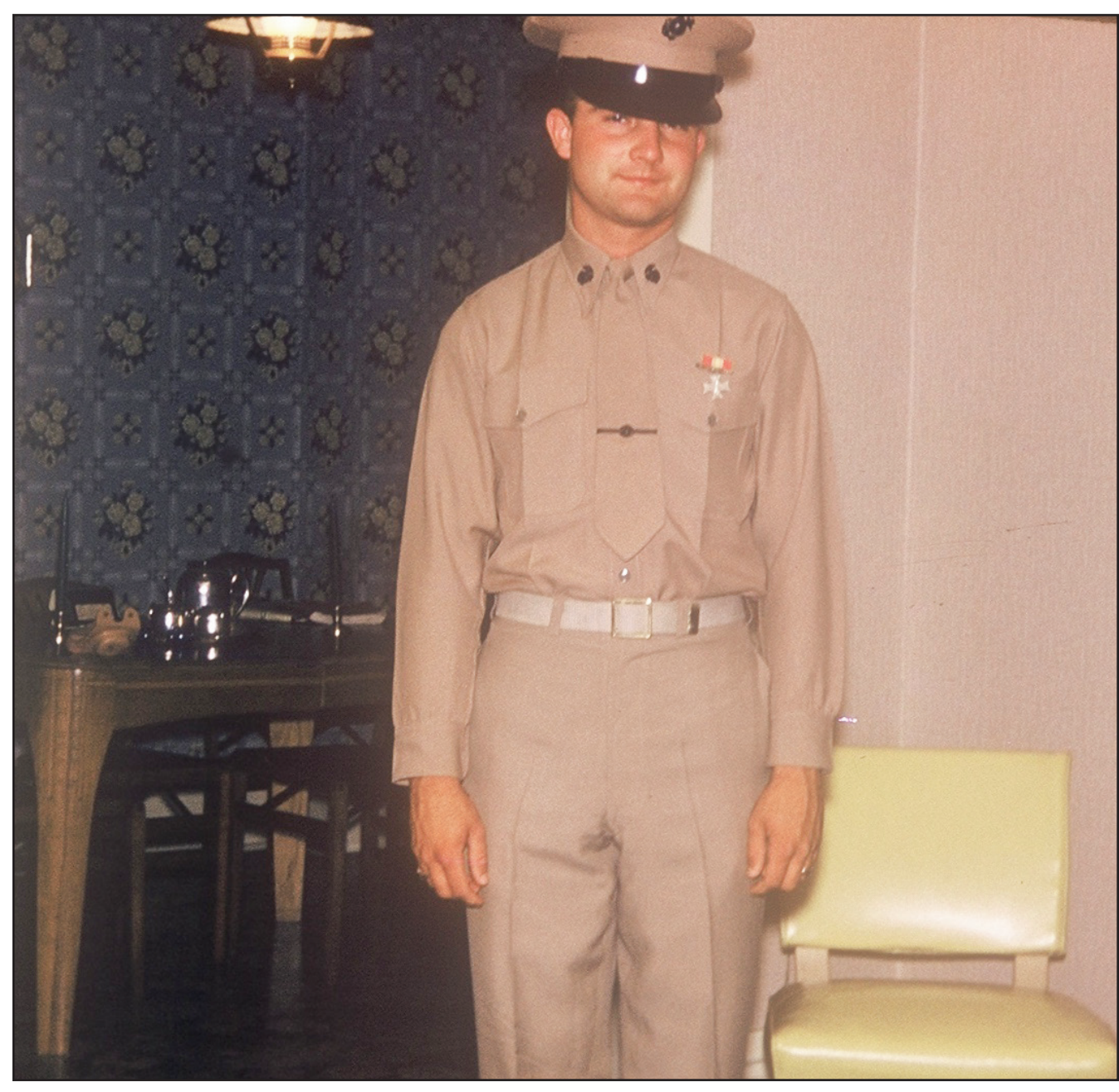
Plumb called the Marine Corps training "tough" and said from the time he got off the bus from the airport, he knew he was in the Marine Corps. His platoon started with 68 men in boot camp and only 43 remained at graduation. "The rest didn't make it," Plumb said. "A lot of them got out on medical conditions. Some went over the fence and just left. It weeds people out. It's a mental thing. What they do is completely tear you down and then build you back up. It takes a lot of discipline. You better know your military book of what you're supposed to do. You don't go into a building with your hat on unless you're under arms. If you're out on the sidewalk and you meet an officer, you'd better damn well salute them."

Plumb was on several trips to take equipment to San Diego to load onboard Navy ships. He was also onboard ships for training exercises in the Pacific, such as going on the ocean and "attacking" Camp Pendleton.

One of the more unique experiences related to Plumb's service was returning home to Illinois to get his car before driving it all the way back out to California on Route 66, or as he called it, "The Mother Road."

Plumb's civilian career included working as an executive and investigator for the railroad before working in the freight forwarding industry. When he retired and his daughter lived in the area, he decided to move to Rochelle and buy a pickup truck, a bass boat and a set of golf clubs. He's lived in the Hub City since 2001. He's involved with the Rochelle Kiwanis Golden K and American Legion clubs. He's 88 years old.

"I've really enjoyed being out here all this time," Plumb said. "It's peaceful here. I think my service and everything



Thomas Plumb of Rochelle served in the United States Marine Corps from 1955-1959. He was in charge of a motor pool at 29 Palms Marine Base in California for most of his time in the service. Plumb grew up in Lisle, Illinois and graduated from high school and went to work for a railroad. Six months after that, he chose to enlist in the Marines after his selective service status was 1A, which he figured would cause him to be drafted at some point soon.

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# LOCAL NEWS

**VCCT: ‘This is a welcomed challenge for us and our cast and we’re excited to have something different’**  
*From page 1*

The assistant director of the production will be Amy Frank. The cast includes Terry Camplain as Andy Dufresne, Norm Read as Red, Ken Manning as Warden Stammers, Hynek as Hadley, JR Peach as Bogs, Doug Kroupa as Brooksie, Steve Frank as Entwistle, Camryn Whitaker as Rooster, Jason Crowell as Rico, Zach Crabtree as Tommy, and Kim Ekes as Dawkins. Hynek will be marking his directorial debut with the show. The cast of 11 is a mixture of theater veterans and members that will perform on a stage for the first time.

“I’ve enjoyed that because you can see the veteran cast members providing guidance to the new people,” Hynek said. “Doing a stage show that’s a well-known movie can be tough, because you know people will be expecting the movie. But it just can’t be that. It will be more like the novela. We’ve done shows that were movies before. It’s just a different approach.”

Amy Frank said a strong drama isn’t a typical production for VCCT, as the community theater group



(PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)

**The assistant director of the production will be Amy Frank. The cast includes Terry Camplain as Andy Dufresne, Norm Read as Red, Ken Manning as Warden Stammers, Hynek as Hadley, JR Peach as Bogs, Doug Kroupa as Brooksie, Steve Frank as Entwistle, Camryn Whitaker as Rooster, Jason Crowell as Rico, Zach Crabtree as Tommy, and Kim Ekes as Dawkins.**

does a lot of comedies and family-friendly shows. She also serves as the VCCT board president.

“This is a welcomed challenge for us and our

cast and we’re excited to have something different,” Amy Frank said. “What’s tough about acting in dramas is you can’t rely on the crowd’s

laughter. You’re on your own up there.”

Amy Frank said she’s excited to see how crowds react to ‘The Shawshank Redemption’.

“It’s an interesting show because of the conflict people may feel about the characters,” Frank said. “It’s a story where you may like the charac-

ters but they’re not good people. It’s set in prison, where people have done bad things to get to. You have to come to terms with that when you watch it.”

## Ogle County youth rank high at the Northwest Regional Horse Competition

**DIXON** — Five Ogle County 4-H local youth competed in the Northwest Regional Competition for Illinois 4-H Horse Bowl and Hippology earlier this month and were rewarded for their efforts. This event was held at Sauk Valley Community College in Dixon.

The 4-H Horse Bowl and Hippology provides an opportunity for youth enrolled in 4-H horse projects to demonstrate their knowledge of equine-related subject matter in a competitive setting. These contests provide an educational experience for both participants and spectators. Youths work as a team to answer questions and compete against other teams in the same class. They also work

individually to answer questions. Some 4-H’ers also complete a written exam based on their knowledge.

The Ogle County 4-H Junior Horse Bowl team placed first out of nine teams and will compete at the Illinois State 4-H Horse Bowl contest next month. The Junior team members are Adalyn Bocker, Kenzie Hongsermeier, Lily Hongsermeier, and Stella Lombardozzi. Addison Diehl is also a team member but wasn’t at the Regional competition. In Junior Individual points, Adalyn ranked second, Lily ranked fifth, and Kenzie was eighth.

Addison Yordy competed for her first year in the Senior Horse Bowl



**Ogle County 4-H Junior Horse Bowl and Hippology team members (left) pictured left to right: Kenzie Hongsermeier, Lily Hongsermeier, Adalyn Bocker, Stella Lombardozzi, and Addison Yordy. Ogle County 4-H Junior Horse Bowl Regional champions (right) pictured left to right: Adalyn Bocker, Stella Lombardozzi, Kenzie Hongsermeier, and Lily Hongsermeier.**

division and was placed on the Bureau County team. She scored fourth place overall for Senior Individual points. She also placed first in the In-

termediate Horse Judging portion.

In Hippology, Kenzie Hongsermeier placed fifth in the Junior division. Addison Yordy placed

second, and Adalyn Bocker placed third in the Intermediate division. Adalyn also placed third overall in the Intermediate Oral Questions. In April, all

three girls will compete at the Illinois State 4-H Hippology contest.

Congratulations to all, and good luck with the state contests.



(COURTESY PHOTOS)

## Kish College unveils Artificial Intelligence Implementation Playbook

**MALTA** — Kishwaukee College has created an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Implementation Playbook to address changing technology advancements in higher education. The playbook was officially unveiled during the March Kishwaukee College Board of Trustees meeting.

The AI playbook provides steps and goals to help use AI and explore new technologies at the College. Kish will use the tools within the playbook to improve teaching and learning, student experiences, and overall organizational effectiveness by taking a planned and collaborative approach.

“The AI Implementation Playbook is a responsive and evolving resource that reflects Kishwaukee College’s commitment to innovation and excellence in education. This plan is very adaptable and will be updated to address chang-

es in technology and the needs of our students,” said Dr. Laurie Borowicz, president of Kishwaukee College.

Over the past year, the college has developed the AI playbook through conversations with industry leaders, organizations and other colleges on the forefront of AI technology. From these discussions, Kish outlined a four-step approach to implementing AI — researching industry best practices, tracking AI-related activities, developing a technology integration and product development process, and fostering a culture that promotes experimentation, awareness, literacy and adoption.

Various college departments have already started using AI tools to improve workflows. Several faculty members are integrating AI into the classroom to enhance student learning by offering personalized



(COURTESY PHOTO)

**Kishwaukee College has created an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Implementation Playbook to address changing technology advancements in higher education.**

writing feedback, fostering critical analysis of AI-generated content, and

supporting research. The college has also provided many professional devel-

opment opportunities to help empower employees to utilize AI technologies.

Learn more about Kishwaukee College at kish.edu.

## Ogle County Sheriff’s Office announces St. Patrick’s Day enforcement results

**OREGON** — The Ogle County Sheriff’s Office announced it issued 103 total citations during the St. Patrick’s Day enforcement period. Citations

were issued for various offenses including: One arrest for driving under the influence, 11 arrests for suspended, revoked or no valid driver’s licenses;

19 citations for uninsured motorists; 34 citations for speeding violations; 36 citations for other violations; two citations for cannabis violations and

three citations for seat belt violations.

“We strongly enforce traffic laws for one reason — to save lives,” Sheriff Brian VanVickle said.

The Ogle County Sheriff’s Office joined forces with state and local law enforcement and highway safety partners in the St. Patrick’s Day enforce-

ment campaign.

The safety effort was funded by federal highway safety funds administered by the Illinois Department of Transportation.





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# HUB NEWS 2025

## April @ RTHS

### National Honor Society Induction – March 17, 2025

#### 2024 Inductees

Jessica Marin, Annaleigh McKinney, Caleb Wyssbrod, Xitlali Brizuela, Cash Budde, Sydney Carmichael, Manuel Cruz, Riley Doyle, Olivia Faivre, Viviana Fulgencio, Emma Kennay, Julia Livingston, Abby Metzger, Erin Murphy, Ali Ohlinger, Jacob Ost, Frankie Pelan, Taelynn Rodeghero, Jackson Smith, Yaretzi Villalobos, Zoe White

#### 2025 Inductees

##### Seniors

Evileth Mendez-Arguelles, Luis Blas, Jocelyn Cervantes, Isabella Chavez, Logan Frye, Trent Kreider, Lucas Smardo, Brisa Zepeda

##### Juniors

Isabella Biggs, Addison Bingham, Ryelee Bogle, Abigail Bozinovich, Meredith Bruns, Hailey Bunger, \*Rafaela Canaan, Mary Chadwick, Kyrie Cragin, Jaydin Dickey, Kyler Dickson, Matilda Gonser, Mark Green, Bobbie Henning, Emely Hernandez, Brooklyn Hull, Cambrey Rodeghero, Aubry Simms, Rylie Thomas, Ashley Villanueva, Levi Waddle

\*Honorary NHS member



### Congratulations to the RTHS Art Interstate 8 participants

RTHS proudly hosted the exhilarating 2025 I-8 Conference, bringing together talented students from Sycamore, Ottawa, Kaneland, Morris, and LaSalle-Peru for an inspiring showcase of artistic excellence! A huge congratulations to our incredible artists who earned top honors in the competition: 1st Place – Alejandra Garcia (Photo Altered); 2nd Place – Bella Biggs (Sculpture No Clay), Sawyer Stockton (Printmaking) and Abby Losoya (Jewelry, Textile, Crafts); 3rd Place – Elyse Manning (Ceramics Wheel Thrown), Izzy Dorwaldt (Drawing Neutral) and Denia Rincon (Mixed Media). We are so proud of our talented students for their hard work and creativity! Way to shine, RTHS!



## WHAT'S HAPPENING IN APRIL

- April 1** Renaissance Breakfast
- April 3** RTHS FLEX Schedule Release 2:15pm/3:05pm
- April 8** ACT Test Day grades 9-11 8:05-11:30am - NO SENIOR Attendance
- April 10** RTHS FLEX Schedule Release 2:15pm/3:05pm
- April 10-12** Spring Play Performance 7:30pm
- April 17** RTHS FLEX Schedule Release 2:15pm/3:05pm

**April 18 & 21 NO SCHOOL**

- April 22** RTHS Board Meeting 5:30pm
- April 24** RTHS FLEX Schedule Release 2:15pm/3:05pm  
Vocal Jazz Night 7pm
- April 25** AG Day  
Renaissance Study Hall Release
- April 26** RTHS Prom



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\*Northern Illinois Federal Credit Union is compensated by ISL Education Lending for the referral of student loan customers.

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RTHS Track & Field



Senior Erin Murphy (left), along with junior Andrew Nuyen and senior Jack Tilton (right), have qualified for the 2025 Illinois Top Times Indoor State Meet at the Shirk Center in Bloomington this coming weekend. The trio led Rochelle's boys and girls track and field teams to third-place finishes at the Warrior Invitational in Sterling.

# Rochelle trio advances to indoor state meet

## Murphy sets new school record as RTHS teams take third at Warrior Invitational

BY RUSSELL HODGES  
SPORTS EDITOR

**STERLING**—Astron-ger and bouncer Jack Tilton set a new personal record in the high jump competition on Saturday, when the Rochelle senior finished first at the Warrior Invitational in Sterling while also punching his ticket to the 2025 Illinois Top Times Indoor State Championship.

Entering Saturday's meet within leaping distance of the state qualifying standard, Tilton soared to new

heights, placing first with a personal-best clearance of 1.94 meters (6 feet 4 1/4 inches) and taking home one of two field event victories for the Hubs. Tilton, who helped lead Rochelle to third out of six schools in the boys competition, is one of three RTHS athletes who will head south for the indoor state meet, which will be held at Illinois Wesleyan University's Shirk Center.

"The feeling was unreal to have waited so long and been so close to competing at the state level multiple

times," said Tilton, who was within inches of advancing to the outdoor state meet last season. "It felt so rewarding to complete that goal. I would love to keep the train rolling and try and set another PR and go for a medal at the indoor state meet. I'm most looking forward to the atmosphere there. From what I have seen, it's electric and I'm excited to be a part of it."

Saturday's meet marked the third high jump victory of the season for Tilton, who has been right on the cusp

of qualifying for the IHSA state meet over each of the last two years. Already a full inch over his season record from last year, Tilton is continuing to strive for greater heights.

"I think I have improved most in my strength," Tilton said. "I feel much stronger and bouncier than last year, and my goals for the rest of the year are to try and keep moving up that all time leader board for high jumpers and compete at the state level again in May. I have great people around me and

my teammates, coaches and family always believe in me and support me."

Junior Andrew Nuyen will join Tilton at this year's indoor state meet, which runs from March 28-29 at the Shirk Center in Bloomington. Having already qualified for the indoor state meet prior to the Warrior Invitational on Saturday, Nuyen finished first in the pole vault over the weekend, clearing a height of 4.65 meters (15 feet 3 inches). The defending indoor state champion in the pole vault, Nuyen will

attempt to repeat at the state meet this weekend.

"It's great to be able to compete at the Shirk Center," Nuyen said. "It's a great environment and I hope to jump well. I don't want to put a number on what I want to jump, but it would be great to win again. Winning last year was a crazy turn of events that I'll remember forever. It will mean a lot not just for me to win again, but for my parents to see that excitement one more time."

See TRACK page 3

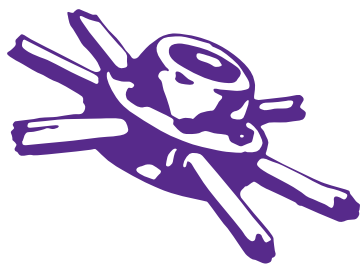
RTHS Boys Basketball



### Hubs receive RTHS and Interstate 8 Conference awards at team banquet

The Rochelle Hub basketball program held its season-ending awards banquet this past Wednesday evening. Among the Academic All-Conference honorees (above) were Mason Ludwig, Jack Tilton, Elijah Harley, Carson Lewis, Brode Metzger, Van Gerber, Martiese Pogue, Reece Harris and Warren Schweitzer. RTHS award winners (bottom left) were Elijah Harley (McFadden Award), Cohen Haedt (Hall Free Throw Award), Carson Lewis (1,000 points), Mason Ludwig (Defensive Award) and Brody Bruns (Hoffman Rebounding Award and Hackett MVP Award). Carson Lewis (Honorable Mention) and Brody Bruns earned All-Conference honors (bottom left).





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### HUB SPOTLIGHT



**Gwendolyn  
O'Dell**

*Year: Freshman*

*Sport: Track*

**Q: How many years have you been playing this sport?**

*A: Two years.*

**Q: What do you enjoy most about this sport?**

*A: Learning from myself and getting better.*

**Q: What is your favorite school subject and why?**

*A: Agriculture and biology because I learn a lot more about things and they are interesting.*

**Q: Who is your biggest role model and why?**

*A: My older brother because I*

*see how hard he works and that makes me want to work harder.*

**Q: What is your dream job and why?**

*A: I don't really have any jobs in mind yet but I'm exploring new things.*

**Q: Where would your dream vacation be and why?**

*A: Iceland because it's so pretty.*

**Q: What is your favorite thing about being a student-athlete at RTHS?**

*A: I can do the sport I love to participate in.*

**Kara  
Hull**

*Year: Freshman*

*Sport: Track*



**Q: How many years have you been playing this sport?**

*A: This is my second year in track.*

**Q: What do you enjoy most about this sport?**

*A: I enjoy the feeling of accomplishment after each practice.*

**Q: What is your favorite school subject and why?**

*A: Photography because I really like the teacher and we do fun projects in this class.*

**Q: Who is your biggest role model and why?**

*A: My older sister because she's involved in a lot of extra*

*curriculars, but she still keeps good grades and excels in school.*

**Q: What is your dream job and why?**

*A: To become a physical therapist because I think I would enjoy it.*

**Q: Where would your dream vacation be and why?**

*A: Going camping in Michigan with my family.*

**Q: What is your favorite thing about being a student-athlete at RTHS?**

*A: I love the culture that the various sports at RTHS have. Everyone respects and helps each other.*

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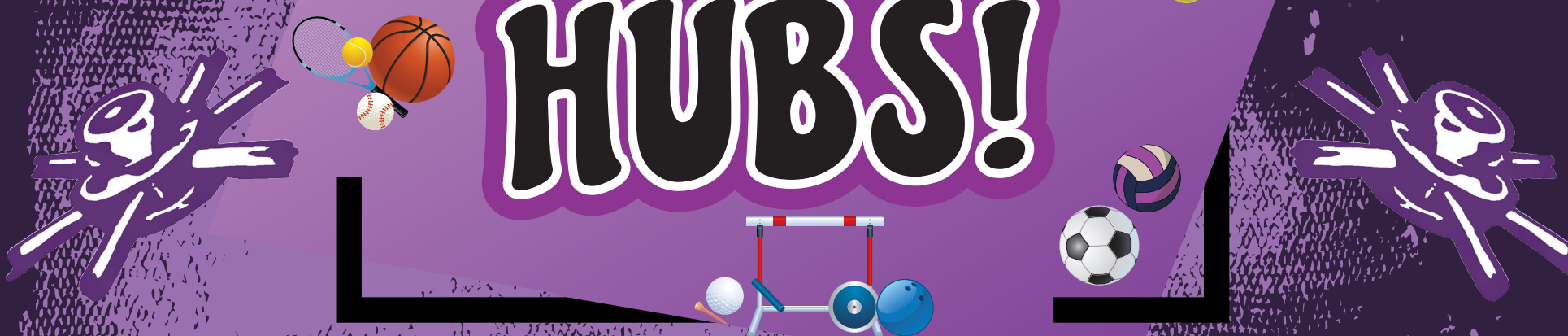
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**GO, HUBS!**

Good luck to our local student athletes!





# SPORTS



(COURTESY PHOTOS)

The Rochelle Hub track and field team finished third during the Warrior Invitational in Sterling on Saturday. The Rochelle Lady Hub track and field team also took third, with freshman Carol Carpenter (below) winning the 1600-meter run. The Hubs scored 80 points and the Lady Hubs tallied 83 points in the meet.

## TRACK: Rochelle teams take third at Warrior Invitational in Sterling

From page 1

Rounding out Rochelle's indoor state qualifiers is senior Erin Murphy, who set a new school record for the Lady Hubs during Saturday's meet. Just a second-year track and field athlete, Murphy won the shot put competition with a personal record of 10.94 meters (35 feet 10 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches), shattering the previous school record of 35 feet 2 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> inches established by Stephanie Orlikowski in 1994. Murphy has earned top-3 finishes in all four of her indoor meets this year.

"I was really excited," Murphy said. "My goal was to qualify and I was really hoping for a PR. I've been looking for a PR all year and something clicked. Coach [Zach] Miller has been working with me a lot, which has been great. ... I'm really excited and it'll be good to see where I am against some really good competition. Being around a bunch of girls who are at the same level or better than me will be good for me to see because I can watch and learn from them too."

Murphy's PR from Saturday's meet eclipsed her indoor PR from last season by nearly eight inches. Murphy, who finished third in the shot put with an outdoor PR of 10.51 meters (34 feet 5 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches) during the IHSA

2A Sectional last year, said her goals for the rest of this season include breaking the outdoor school record of 37 feet 1 inch set by Deanne Kester in 1986.

"I wanted to make the indoor and outdoor state meets this year, so we're halfway to that goal," Murphy said. "I want to hopefully hit 12 meters and break the outdoor school record, so we're getting close to those. I wasn't expecting to break the indoor record, so I want to keep pushing and see what distance I can get. We're moving faster than I expected. ... I've been working on getting my shot up higher and that's something that clicked for me on Saturday."

Both the Hubs and Lady Hubs finished third at the Warrior Invitational on Saturday, with the boys scoring 80 points and the girls tallying 83 points. With the indoor season coming to a close, Rochelle will start the outdoor season at the LaSalle-Peru Invitational on Saturday, April 12.

### Varsity Boys

Junior Jonathan Bearrows led Rochelle in the long jump, taking second with a leap of 6.12 meters. Senior Virgil O'Dell, who finished fifth in the long jump with a leap of 5.68 meters, also earned a top-10 triple jump performance,

taking ninth with a mark of 10.74 meters. Senior Jacob Ost was the top thrower for the Hubs, placing 14th in the shot put with a heave of 11.67 meters.

Rochelle landed top-6 finishes in each of the three relays on Saturday. The Hubs took fourth in both the 3200-meter relay (Declan McGee, Elijah Mayen, Pedro Rosales and Tyler Johnson) with a time of 9:11.19 and the 1600-meter relay (Pedro Rosales, Hunter Bivins, Jackson Smith and Aaron DeClerck) with a time of 3:52.17. Rochelle finished sixth in the 800-meter relay (Hunter Bivins, Nathan Rosas, Virgil O'Dell and Richard Pierce) with a time of 1:39.49.

Freshmen spearheaded the charge in the distance events, as Eduardo Cisneros and Gregory Smith went first and third with PR times of 12:51.93 and 13:35.34 in the 3200-meter relay before Tyler Johnson ran a PR time of 4:43.50 for third place in the 1600-meter run. Junior Declan McGee scored a victory in the middle distance area, claiming the 800-meter run with a PR time of 2:11.29 while junior teammate Elijah Mayen finished in fifth place with a time of 2:19.09.

Senior Chris Hickey led Rochelle in the sprints, taking fourth in the 400-meter

dash with a time of 58.77 seconds. Senior Richard Pierce placed eighth in the 200-meter dash with a time of 24.59 seconds and sophomore Jaden Martina finished 10th in the 60-meter dash with a time of 7.50 seconds. Sophomore Hunter Bivins led the charge in the 60-meter hurdles, finishing fifth with a time of 9.31 seconds while junior Wyatt Worthington took seventh in 9.93 seconds.

### Varsity Girls

Senior Dempsey Atkinson brought home two field event victories for the Lady Hubs during Saturday's meet, finishing first in the high jump with a PR clearance of 1.57 meters (5 feet 1 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches) and the triple jump with a PR distance of 9.65 meters (31 feet 7 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches). Sophomore Elyse Manning also shined in the triple jump finishing fourth with a distance of 9.46 meters.

Rochelle recorded top-6 finishes in all three relays on Saturday. The Lady Hubs ran second in the 3200-meter relay (Carol Carpenter, Rose Luxton, Brisa Zepeda and Kyrie Cragin) with a time of 11:41.22 and third in the 1600-meter relay (Gwendolyn O'Dell, Jasmine Walsh, Kyrie Cragin and Elyse Manning) with a time of 4:33.67. Rochelle finished



sixth in the 800-meter relay (Gwendolyn O'Dell, Katie Toczylowski, Dylan Etes and Elyse Manning) with a time of 1:58.18.

The Lady Hubs scored big points in the distance and middle distance events. Freshman Carol Carpenter won the 1600-meter run with a time of 6:08.82, sophomore Vivian Worthington took third in the 3200-meter run with a time of 15:31.22 and junior Rose Luxton placed second in the 800-meter run with a time of 2:53.71. Junior Kyrie Cragin ran an indoor PR to

lead Rochelle in the sprinting events, clocking in at an even 1:06.00 to take second place in the 400-meter dash.

Sophomores Dylan Etes and Elyse Manning led the Lady Hubs in the short sprints, with Etes running a 29.64-second time for ninth in the 200-meter dash and Manning finishing seventh in the 60-meter dash with a time of 8.56 seconds. Sophomore Jasmine Walsh ran Rochelle's top time in the 60-meter hurdles, clocking in with a PR of 10.87 seconds to finish in sixth place.

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## RTHS Girls Soccer

(PHOTOS BY MARCY DELILLE)



The Rochelle Lady Hubs kicked off their varsity soccer season with a nonconference road match against Harlem on Friday evening. Senior midfielder Makayla Lara posted a team-high five shots on goal for the Lady Hubs, who were unable to score during their 7-0 loss to the Huskies. Sophomore goalkeeper Yana Bartkiv recorded two saves for the Lady Hubs (0-1, 0-0 Interstate 8), who returned to action with a home match against Stillman Valley on Monday at 4:30 p.m. Senior defender Betty Flores totaled two shots and one shot on goal, while freshmen Morgan DeLille, Natalie Foster and Evelyn Garcia totaled one shot in the match. Above, senior Betty Flores (left) Betty Flores holds off Harlem's Kendall Zanoni and senior Makayla Lara (right) dribbles around Harlem's Kamila Gomez. Below, freshman Abigail Dougherty (left) races to the ball and senior Anahi Cervantes (right) dribbles the ball forward.

# IHSA Board approves significant changes to classification policy

## Fixed classification cutoffs, waiver process revision and success adjustment approved

**See IHSA page 6**

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# ASHTON NEWS



## AFCHS Band and Choir attend festivals

Ashton-Franklin Center High School Band and Choir students recently attended the NUIC South Festival and the Illinois Route 72 Festival. At these festivals, band and choir students worked with other music students in the area to put together a concert in a day or less. This opportunity allows students to perform in a larger ensemble than they would on a typical day. (Courtesy photos)

## Cultivating Connections Workshop highlights agriculture education programs

**DIXON** – Lee County Farm Bureau (CFB) recently joined forces with Lee County Ag in the Classroom (AIRC), Regional Office of Education (ROE) #47, and Facilitating Coordination in Agriculture Education (FCAE) to highlight agriculture and educational opportunities during the 2025 Cultivating Connections in Agriculture workshop.

Around 50 local school representatives attended the Cultivating Connections in Agriculture symposium, held Feb. 28 at Tetten's Grain in Dixon, to learn more about the value of agriculture education and hear strategies for creating comprehensive agriculture programs.

"Agriculture is Illinois No. 1 industry, yet often those crucial programs are some of the first on the budget line to be cut from a public school district offering," said Ashleigh Erbes, Lee

CFB manager. "Cultivating Connections is intended to bring in administrators and local school leaders who don't necessarily have an ag background or full understanding of the ag industry and provide them with an enriching experience that demonstrates the value of an agriculture education and why it is so important and impactful to highlight agriculture as a career pathway."

Cultivating Connections in Agriculture is intended to provide administrators and local school leaders with an enriching experience that demonstrates the value of agriculture education and why it is important to highlight the industry as a career pathway for students.

During the event, attendees connected with John Heiser, District 1 Facilitating Coordination in Agricultural Education (FCAE) program advisor; Katie Pratt, Lee County

Agriculture in the Classroom (AIRC) coordinator; Stacey Dinges, pathways navigator, Regional Office of Education (ROE) #47; Ashleigh Erbes, Lee CFB manager; and Dr. Jon Mandrell, vice president of Academics and Students Services at Sauk Valley Community. 16 local school districts promoting and showcasing their FFA chapter also attended the event. Additionally, Illinois Rep. Brad Fritts (R-Dixon) and Sen. Li Arellano (R-Dixon) stopped by to share legislation in support of agriculture education promotion.

"Providing support, at all levels, to an agriculture education program, is essential for student success and teacher retention," said Stacey Dinges, Pathway Coordinator with ROE #47. "The Cultivating Connections in Agriculture event brings together all the local lifelines that are eas-



(COURTESY PHOTO)

Lee County Farm Bureau (CFB) recently joined forces with Lee County Ag in the Classroom (AIRC), Regional Office of Education (ROE) #47, and Facilitating Coordination in Agriculture Education (FCAE) to highlight agriculture and educational opportunities during the 2025 Cultivating Connections in Agriculture workshop.

ily accessible for an aged program to thrive."

Katie Pratt, Lee County Ag in the Classroom coordinator, said, "Cultivating Connections is an avenue to connect all the parts of the Ag Ed family- schools,

industry, alumni and community supporters. My hope is that each person left with purposeful information that changes how they see and interact with their school's ag ed program and FFA Chapter."

Lee County Farm Bureau's mission is to be a positive voice for agriculture through leadership and education to improve the quality of life and economic well-being of our members and community.

## Lee County Sheriff's Office arrests 2 after burglary report

**DIXON** — On Saturday afternoon, March 15, the Lee County Sheriff's Office was alerted to a burglary in progress in the area of U.S. Route 30 and Walton Road in rural Dixon. There were two individuals seen on the property going in and out of a garage. Lee County deputies arrived on scene and arrested Thomas E. Ulve and Mariann C. Poff.

Ulve, 46 years old from Rock Falls, was charged with the following: Burglary

(class-two felony), possession of burglary tools (class-four felony), possession of a controlled substance (class-four felony), possession of drug paraphernalia (class-A misdemeanor), criminal trespass to real property (class-A misdemeanor) and driving while license revoked (class-A misdemeanor).

Ulve was also held in custody for an arrest warrant in DeKalb County for retail theft and a contempt of court

warrant out of Lee County.

Ulve is out of custody on pending matters in DeKalb County case number 25CF11 theft (class-four felony), Lee County Case number 25CF55 possession of a controlled substance (class-four felony), possession of drug paraphernalia (class-A misdemeanor) and Winnebago County case number 25CM312 theft (class-A misdemeanor).

Poff, 30 years old, from Rock Falls, was charged

with the following: Burglary (class-two felony), possession of burglary tools (class-four felony), two counts of possession of controlled substance (class-four felony), possession of drug paraphernalia (class-A misdemeanor), criminal trespass to real property (class-A misdemeanor), and driving while license suspended (class-A misdemeanor).

Poff was also held in custody for arrest warrants

in DuPage County for failing to appear for retail theft and DeKalb County for retail theft.

Poff is out of custody in DuPage County case number 25CF34 theft (class-three felony) and DeKalb County case number 25CF10 for retail theft (class-four felony).

In accordance with provisions of the Illinois SAFE-T Act, Ulve and Poff were given a court date and released from custody.

The Lee County Sheriff's Office was assisted by the Amboy Police Department.

All charges are merely an allegation, and the defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

Citizens are reminded to call the Lee County Sheriff's Office at (815) 284-6631 or Crime Stoppers at 1-888-CAUGHT-U. Callers can remain anonymous and receive rewards of up to \$1,000 if their information leads to an arrest.

# COMMUNITY MATTERS





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# SPORTS

## RTHS Girls Track

# Lady Hubs finish sixth at Gary Egler Invitational

## Murphy takes third in shot put to lead varsity team, JV team lands in fifth place

BY RUSSELL HODGES  
SPORTS EDITOR

**SYCAMORE** — The Rochelle Lady Hub track and field team returned to Sycamore for the Gary Egler Invitational on Tuesday, March 18. The varsity girls finished sixth out of 13 schools with 35 points, while the junior varsity girls took fifth out of 12 schools with 36 points in the meet.

### Varsity

Senior Erin Murphy earned Rochelle's top finish in the field events, taking third in the shot put with a throw of 10.07 meters. Senior Dempsey Atkinson and sophomore Elyse Manning each earned fourth-place finishes in the field events, with Atkinson

clearing 1.47 meters in the high jump and Manning leaping 9.65 meters in the triple jump. Sophomore Jasmine Walsh led the Lady Hubs in the 55-meter hurdles, finishing in fifth place with a time of 10.75 seconds.

Rochelle finished ninth or better in each of the three relay races. The Lady Hubs took third in the 3200-meter relay (Rose Luxton, Kyrie Cragin, Carol Carpenter and Brisa Zepeda) with a time of 11:46.28 and fifth in the 1600-meter relay (Kyrie Cragin, Jasmine Walsh, Elyse Manning and Gwendolyn O'Dell) with a time of 4:44.17. The Lady Hubs placed ninth in the 640-meter relay (Alex Neece, Katie Toczylowski, Ryelee Bogle and Zoe Malley) with a time of 1:36.87.

Rochelle fared well in the distance events, where sophomore Vivian Worthington took second in the 3200-meter run with a time of 15:22.28 and freshman Carol Carpenter finished fifth in the 1600-meter run with a time of 6:11.62. Junior Rose Luxton led Rochelle in the middle distance area, placing sixth in the 800-meter run with a time of 2:54.01. Freshman Gwendolyn O'Dell earned Rochelle's best finish in the sprints, taking seventh in the 55-meter dash with a time of 7.99 seconds. Senior Alex Neece ran a 30.68-second time for ninth in the 200-meter dash.

### Junior Varsity

Freshman Zoey Schabacker led the JV squad in the field events, finishing third in the triple jump with a distance of 8.67 meters. Rochelle shined in the relays, taking second in the 3200-meter relay with a time of 13:09.81. The Lady Hubs ran a 5:09.68 for fourth in the 1600-meter relay (Brisa Zepeda, Arline Villanueva, Marley Cherry and Rose Luxton) after posting a 1:38.62 in the 640-meter relay (Kaliyah Cathina, Trinity Jones, Dylan Etes and Reese Kissack) for fifth.

Junior Sam Overton and freshman Emma Metzger went fifth and sixth in the 55-meter hurdles with times of 11.66 and 11.75 seconds. In the distance and middle-distance areas, sophomore Lydia Von Haden took second in

the 1600-meter run with a time of 7:28.58, while senior Brisa Zepeda and freshman Marley Cherry went fourth and sixth with times of 3:05.47 and 3:11.87 in the 800-meter run. In the sprints, sophomore Dylan Etes ran a



31.48-second time for seventh in the 200-meter dash, while freshman Zoey Schabacker and sophomore Ashley Christy went seventh and eighth in the 55-meter dash with respective times of 8.34 and 8.47 seconds.

# IHSA: Classification policy changes approved at board meeting

From page 4

The IHSA Board will review the staff votes and have the discretion to change them.

"The multiplier waiver was initially implemented in hopes of trying to provide greater competitive equity to teams who were being embarrassed in their multiplied class in certain sports," said Anderson. "Our member schools have been nearly unanimous in expressing their concerns that the current waiver system was not working as intended. The formula used to determine the automatic waivers wasn't encompassing enough data, which created too many holes in the

process. The result was often teams who were already highly competitive in higher classifications being granted waivers to play in lower classifications. This new two-tier process to determine waivers will encompass more data that we believe will improve competitive equity overall."

### 3. Success Adjustment

The IHSA Board made an adjustment to the Success Adjustment Policy. The Policy was initially implemented in 2014 and seeks to provide greater competitive equity for non-boundaried schools who achieve certain levels of State Final success by moving them up in clas-

sification. The Policy initially looked at the amount of State Final success that occurred over four years, but was adjusted to two years when the IHSA moved to a two-year classification cycle. Beginning in 2025-26, the Success Adjustment Policy will encompass a rolling three-year period. Entering each school year, if a team has won two state final trophies in the past three years in a sport, they will then be subject to the adjustment and move up one class in that sport. For example, a school who has won two state final trophies in a sport/activity over the course of 2022-23, 2023-24, and 2024-25 will be subject to the

adjustment in 2025-26. In 2026-27, they will only be subject to the adjustment if they have two state final trophies over the course of 2023-24, 2024-25, and 2025-26.

"This Policy has only been in place for a decade, so we can continue to review and explore how it can be best utilized to improve competitive equity," said Anderson. "The Board felt like this slight change in the timeframe for applying this policy was a more accurate measure of a program's current competitive standing. The Board continues to discuss changes to it, including the possibility of applying it to all IHSA member schools based

on the results of the most recent membership questionnaire."

Anderson summarized the action taken by the Board over the past three meetings related to classifications, while indicating that their work may not be done.

"Ultimately, the goal of these changes is to create greater competitive equity by putting more schools in classifications where they will face like competition," said Anderson. "The IHSA Board of Directors has heard the concerns member schools have voiced in recent years, whether through direct correspondence, or indirectly through by-law amendment proposals.

The Board has addressed four areas of Board Policy, which they control. Discussions continue among the membership about the multiplier itself, and whether the 1.65 number remains appropriate in our current classification structure. The 1.65 figure could only be changed via a by-law proposal by a member school, approval from the Legislative Commission, and approval by a member school vote. We believe the changes approved by the Board in December and March will take significant strides in improving competitive equity. As a staff, we will continue to collect and analyze data so that the Board and membership can make informed decisions."



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**1 Youth programs, schools and non-profit groups look to our businesses first when fundraising.** These community-minded businesses donate faithfully to local youth sports programs, community clubs, nonprofit groups and churches – just to name a few. Shouldn't we look to those same businesses first when we need goods and services? Of course we should!

**2 High rate of return.** For every \$100 spent in independently owned stores, \$68 returns to the community through payroll, taxes and other expenditures. Online orders return absolutely nothing to Rochelle, IL.

**3 Seeking health care in your hometown brings the comforts of receiving qualified care from people you know and trust.** Whether it be a trip to the dentist, regular health care screenings, a visit to a specialist or an emergency, you need not travel. It's all right here.

**4 Banking with people who know you is a luxury found only in hometowns.** You don't have to show your ID every time you go in. You can get a loan from people who know you and understand your needs, whether it be money for your first car or to help your business grow. Local banks believe in the value of community members helping one another.

**5 No one wants to have to make an insurance claim, but it's painless when your agent is your neighbor.** You don't have to convince them that there was a hail storm, or that the wind nearly took your roof off. They know because they live 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?

**6 Time is money.** It's simple math (especially when you figure in gas mileage.) Shopping locally can actually save you both time and money!

**7 Customer service after the sale is invaluable.** Local retailers not only take responsibility for the product they sold, they will often fix it or replace it – no questions asked. Appliances, furniture, computers and electronics sometimes have glitches. Would you rather box yours up, send it to who knows where, and wait six to eight weeks, or just go back to the nice guy that helped you when you bought it?

**8 Keeping it local encourages community growth.** By choosing to do business locally, you help maintain Rochelle's diversity, charm and appeal; which attracts new community members.

**9 One word: Jobs.** When you do business of any kind in Rochelle, it creates and maintains jobs for others in our area. A healthy employment rate is the cornerstone of all economies. How can you help the economy recover? Start at home.

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## 101 LEGAL NOTICE

**NOTICE  
INVITATION FOR BIDS**  
Rochelle Municipal Utilities, Ogle County, Illinois will receive sealed bids for:

Ritchie to CHS Line Installation Contract until 2:00 p.m. local time on April 10, 2025, at the City of Rochelle, 420 N. 6th Street, Rochelle, IL 61068.

The plans and specifications are on file with the said City of Rochelle for viewing purposes only. Copies of the documents may be acquired from BHMG Engineers, Inc., 9735 Landmark Parkway Suite 110A, St. Louis, Missouri 63127, Consulting Engineers for the said Board. Please email Amy Wooldridge, AWooldridge@bhmg.com with request.

Bids shall be received for the aforementioned items. A certified check or bank draft on a responsible, solvent bank, or a satisfactory bid bond executed by the bidder and an acceptable surety company, payable to the City of Rochelle, John Bearrows, Mayor or Government Bonds or cash in the amount of not less than five percent (5%) of bid, shall be submitted with each bid.

The bid shall be marked to identify bid package contents, reference specification 3422 K003. The successful bidder will be required to:

- Register as a bidder for this project.
- Furnish **in duplicate** the following executed documents:

- Non-Collusion Affidavit
- Bid Form
- Bid Bond, Certified Check or Money Order
- And any other documents as required by the specifications.

No bid shall be withdrawn after the opening of bids without the consent of the Utility for a period of sixty (60) days after the scheduled time of closing bids.

The said City of Rochelle reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any informalities in bidding, and to determine and accept the bid most advantageous to the Utility.

Date: March 14, 2025  
City of Rochelle, Illinois  
John Bearrows, Mayor  
No. 0321  
(March 19, 26 and April 2, 2025)

**NOTICE TO BIDDERS**  
Public notice is hereby given that the City of Rochelle, IL will receive sealed bids until **2:00 PM on APRIL 23, 2025**

for the construction of an 8-place T-hangar; including site preparation and grading; pre-engineered steel building erection; concrete slab on grade construction; hangar and site electrical; and the application of landscaping and erosion control measures at the Rochelle Municipal Airport, Rochelle, Illinois. An additive alternate is included for the surrounding pavements.

Requests for bidding documents will be filled by contacting Springfield Reprographics, 1620 S. 5th Street, Springfield, Illinois 62703, 217-523-4632, [www.springfieldrepro.com](http://www.springfieldrepro.com). The documents will be purchased by the Contractor, the cost of which will be non-refundable.

The successful bidder shall be bonded, insured, and required to pay the prevailing rate for each trade or craft per the Davis-Bacon Wage Determinations (U.S. Department of Labor) for Ogle County, Illinois and comply with the Federal Provisions

included within the bidding documents.

The successful bidder shall have been in business for a period of not less than five (5) years, undertaking work similar in scale, scope, and cost to that included within the proposed project. Prequalification (required) shall be requested by the proposed bidder (to the Engineer identified in the bidding documents) no later than **5:00 PM on APRIL 9, 2025**.

Bids will be opened and publicly read at the Rochelle Municipal Airport Terminal Building, Rochelle, Illinois shortly after **2:00 PM on APRIL 23, 2025**.

No. 0329  
(March 26, 2025)

## 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

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## 127 SERVICES AND REPAIRS

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## 203 HELP WANTED



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As a multimedia sales consultant, you will service current accounts and also cultivate new clients in the Rochelle/DeKalb region of northern Illinois, helping them market their products and services through a variety of highly visible, popular and effective local media vehicles.

If you have a passion to get out of the office on a regular basis to help clients grow their audience and reach new customers, then we would like to talk to you.

Applicants should possess excellent communication and organizational skills with a positive personality and team-player approach. Previous media sales or related marketing experience is a plus, including print, digital and social media advertising.

The sky is the limit on earning potential and career development in this position. We offer a competitive base salary plus commission.

Qualified applicants should mail or e-mail their resume to the following address:

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Rochelle News-Leader  
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P.O. Box 46, Rochelle, IL 61068  
or email to  
[bmcmacken@newsmediacorp.com](mailto:bmcmacken@newsmediacorp.com)**

**ROCHELLE  
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The Rochelle News-Leader has an opening for a part-time newspaper bundle delivery driver who would load and deliver bundles to the post office, store racks and machines.

The daytime deliveries would be two or three days per week (including weekends) and consist of approximately 4-5 hours per shift depending on the route usually 10-15 hours per week.

Applicants must be at least 18 years old, possess a valid driver's license, proof of insurance and a safe driving record. Drivers will use company vehicles when delivering, and will be trained on the respective routes.

Candidates must be able to load, unload and carry multiple bundles of 5 to 10 pounds each. Driver applicants must be reliable, personable and have a general knowledge of area streets and roads.

This position is perfect for someone looking to supplement their income or retirement.

**Interested individuals must fill out an application in person at the Rochelle News-Leader office at 211 Hwy. 38 E., Rochelle.**

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## The benefits of purchasing cattle from a live auction

A live auction can be a great place to source cattle. If you're on the fence about going to a cattle auction in your area, here are four good reasons to attend.

- 1. You'll have access to a variety of animals.**  
You'll be able to view and bid on a large variety of cattle of different breeds and pedigrees. If you buy cattle privately, you'll have to visit numerous farms to see the same kind of selection.
- 2. You'll get good value for your money.** At a cattle auction, you'll be able to negotiate a fair price for the cattle you want. Conversely, if you buy cattle from a private farmer, they set the price and often won't consider negotiating.
- 3. You'll be certain of your investment.** If you purchase cattle from a live auction, the animals come with health papers. This allows you to rest assured knowing the cattle you buy are in good health. These papers aren't required when selling cattle privately.
- 4. You'll be able to network.** Attending a cattle auction will give you the opportunity to get to know other people and organizations in the agricultural industry. This can be useful for promoting and expanding your business.

If you're still hesitant about attending a live cattle auction, don't be afraid to ask the more seasoned farmers in your area for their advice.

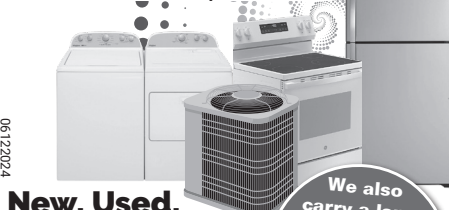


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Announcement



# SEVERE WEATHER AWARENESS

## How to create a backup plan for an outdoor wedding

A wedding day is a magical and memorable day for a couple and their family members. Months or even years of planning may go into making a wedding day special.

For some, an outdoor wedding and celebration amid the beauty of nature is the ultimate setting in which to tie the knot. When Mother Nature is your decorator, the setting can be hard to match. Perhaps that's why 62 percent of couples opted for outdoor nuptials in 2023, according to The Knot 2023 Real Weddings Survey. However, there may be some extra work involved when exchanging vows outdoors, hosting a reception outside or both. That work includes having a contingency plan in place if the weather does not cooperate. Here's what couples should know about having a backup plan for their outdoor weddings.

- Identify a second location. Couples who book outdoor receptions at catering halls can inquire how they handle inclement weather. Many will have a clause built into the agreement to move the

party indoors in the event of bad weather. Others may enable the wedding to move to a different space for an added fee. Smaller, less formal weddings taking place at other locations may require a bit of ingenuity when looking for a backup space. Perhaps a friend has a large house where everyone can gather, or an employer may have a warehouse, loft or even a barn that can be transformed into unique venues at the last minute?

- Choose outdoor spaces with covered areas. The wish might be to have blue skies overhead, but it's impossible to control the weather. So it's safe to select outdoor spaces that offer a measure of weather protection, such as a pavilion in a park or a covered deck at a beachside locale. Such sites offer a little security without detracting from the ambiance.

- Look into a tent rental. A tent is a great investment because it keeps everyone out of the elements rain or shine. Even on a lovely summer day, the blazing sun can make being outdoors uncomfortable. A tent is the solution. Couples should coordinate



with a wedding planner or the venue itself to be sure that a tent is allowed on the grounds.

- Think about event insurance. Special event insurance may protect against financial loss in the event that severe weather throws a wrench into outdoor wedding plans. Poor weather may make moving around the venue

treacherous and might force a postponement. Liability and cancellation protection in an insurance policy helps couples avoid financial hardship.

- Hire a wedding planner. The Knot suggests hiring a wedding planner or coordinator who can pivot to plan B in the event of bad weather. This helps take some of the stress off

of the couple so they can enjoy the day.

- Plan wardrobe and hair/makeup accordingly. Brides and bridesmaids can choose fabrics for dresses that will be comfortable and not become blown around or see-through due to rain and wind. The wedding party can ask hair stylists to create a wedding hair-

style that is somewhat weatherproof. Experienced makeup artists likely know some tricks to keep makeup looking flawless even when the weather isn't.

Outdoor weddings can be beautiful events, but it is important to have a backup plan in place in case weather doesn't cooperate.

## What anyone can do to prepare for a wildfire

IMAGES of the wildfires that struck areas throughout Los Angeles in early 2025 were compared to something moviegoers might see in a big-budget Hollywood production. But the images of devastated communities in Pacific Palisades, Altadena, Pasadena, and elsewhere were all too real, prompting an outpouring of support for the tens of thousands of displaced individuals who were forced to evacuate.

The wildfires also led millions to investigate how to prepare for situations like the ones that unfolded across Los Angeles in January. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security ([ready.gov/wildfires](https://www.ready.gov/wildfires)) offers an array of wildfire preparation tips that might prove lifesaving should such a tragedy unfold again.

- Be ready to receive warnings and alerts. Images of abandoned cars on roadways out of Pacific Palisades and stories of coastal evacuations on foot along sandy beaches were among the most startling to emerge from the LA wildfires. The DHS urges everyone to be ready to recognize warnings and alerts and to arrange for several ways to receive such notifications. The DHS recommends downloading the FEMA app and signing up to receive real-time alerts from the National Weather Service.

The Emergency Alert System (EAS) and the Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) are additional ways to receive wildfire notifications.

- Prepare an emergency plan. The LA wildfires forced hundreds of thousands of southern California residents to evacuate, and it's imperative that everyone prepare an emergency plan and make sure each person in their household recognizes and understands what to do if they need to quickly evacuate. The DHS notes it's important to develop an evacuation plan for home but also for the office, children's daycare facilities, schools, and any other locations people visit in a typical day. The DHS also urges individuals to know their evacuation zone and learn their local evacuation routes, even practicing them from time to time to ensure familiarity should a fire occur.

- Go over important documents. Periodically examine insurance policies to ensure they're up-to-date and offer sufficient coverage. In addition, make sure personal documents like a primary form of identification, such as a driver's license, are current. The DHS recommends making copies of such documents and storing them in a password-protected digital space that can be accessed from a remote location should



the physical forms perish in a fire or prove difficult to access.

- Strengthen your home. The DHS recommends using fire-resistant materials when building, renovating or making repairs. Locate an outdoor water source that can reach any area of a

property and designate a fire-resistant area that is free of leaves, debris or flammable materials for at least 30 feet from your home.

- Gather supplies. The DHS recommends individuals maintain a first aid kit and store a go bag in a vehicle trunk as part of a

wildfire preparation strategy. Ensure each person has his or her own N95 mask at home and in a go bag to protect against smoke inhalation. Extra chargers for devices also can increase the chances individuals can stay connected in the case of evacuation. Chargers may not be

storable in a car trunk, as warm temperatures may affect how they function, but store them near the door that you would likely use to exit your home during an evacuation.

Wildfires can appear suddenly, which only underscores the need to prepare in advance.

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A main sign of roof damage is missing, cracked, loose, or broken shingles. Missing shingles can expose your roof to water damage.

If you notice any of these signs of storm damage, it is best to call a local, trusted roofing company.



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# SEVERE WEATHER AWARENESS

## How to handle driving in heavy rain

THE road is filled with variables that change each time drivers get behind the wheel. Whether it's aggressive drivers, road construction crews or some other unknown, drivers can never say with certainty what they will encounter while on the road.

Mother Nature is as significant a variable as any drivers will face, and many conditions can turn otherwise ordinary trips into ordeals that put motorists' skills to the test. Though heavy rain might not seem as difficult to navigate as snow, it's vital that drivers recognize the threat posed by such conditions. In fact, the Federal Highway Administration reports that each year 75 percent of weather-related vehicle crashes occur on wet pavement, while 47 percent, or nearly half, happen while rain is falling.

Such statistics are sobering and underscore how dangerous it can be to drive in rain or when roads are wet. Drivers are not helpless in such conditions, especially when they exercise caution in wet conditions.

- Slow down. The Na-

tional Highway Traffic Safety Administration notes that drivers will have a harder time controlling or stopping their vehicles on slick roads than dry roads. And that's the case for both experienced and novice motorists. When driving in the rain or on wet roads, drivers should slow down, even if it requires driving a little below the speed limit. Though it can be dangerous to drive too slowly on highways, drivers can use the far-right lane on such roads, which is not considered a passing lane and is often seen as the lane designated for vehicles moving more slowly.

- Leave extra room between your car and other vehicles. The NHTSA also advises increasing the following distance between your vehicle and the one in front of you when driving in rain or on wet roads. An extra couple of car lengths ensures you will have more time to react and stop if vehicles ahead of you encounter issues.

- Be mindful of pedestrians and cyclists. Though pedestrians and cyclists typically avoid walking or cycling in heavy rains, that does not



mean there will be none on the road. That's especially so when heavy rains fall suddenly, leaving pedestrians and cyclists already on the road with little options but to continue. Visibility can be especially compromised in heavy rains, which makes it even harder to see pedestrians and cy-

clists. So drivers should not assume the roads are only populated by fellow motorists and must be especially vigilant to avoid hitting pedestrians and cyclists.

- Travel familiar roads. Though familiarity does not mean motorists can be less vigilant when driving in rain, knowing

the roads you're on and the route you're taking can ensure your eyes are focused on the road at all times and not periodically glancing at GPS maps on your dashboard. If you're planning a road trip and know heavy rain will factor in at some time, familiarize yourself with evacuation routes

along the way to your destination. The NHTSA also recommends drivers learn which local radio stations to tune into for emergency alerts.

Driving in heavy rain is no small task. But drivers can approach such conditions with caution to ensure they make it home safe.

## A brief rundown on tropical storm watches and warnings

PREPAREDNESS is of paramount importance when storm seasons kick into high gear. Supplies are the first thing many people think of when preparing for storms, and rightfully so. But it's equally important that people living in areas vulnerable to certain types of storms learn to distinguish the differences between storm watches and storm warnings. The National Weather Service (NWS) offers the following breakdown to help people learn what makes a storm watch different from a storm warning.

- Hurricane watch: The National Hurricane Center (NHC) is the division of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association/ NWS that is responsible for tracking and predicting tropical weather systems. When the NHC issues a hurricane watch, that means hurricane conditions, which are defined as sustained winds of 74 miles per hour or greater, are possible within the area where the watch is issued. The NWS notes it may not be safe to prepare for a hurricane once winds reach tropical storm force, so the NHC issues hurricane watches 48 hours before it anticipates the arrival of such winds.

- Hurricane warning: A hurricane warning is issued 36 hours in advance of the arrival of tropical-



storm-force winds (sustained winds of 74 miles per hour or greater).

- Tropical storm watch: A tropical storm watch is declared when sustained winds between 39 and 73 miles per hour are possible within a specified area. A tropical storm watch

indicates such winds are possible within 48 hours.

- Tropical storm warning: A tropical storm warning is issued when sustained winds between 39 and 73 miles per hour are expected within a specified area within 36 hours.

- Storm surge watch: A storm surge watch is issued when there is a possibility of life-threatening inundation from rising water moving inland from the shoreline within a specified area. The storm surge watch is generally issued within

48 hours of the expected arrival of such conditions.

- Storm surge warning: A storm surge warning indicates the danger of life-threatening inundation from rising water moving inland from the shoreline within a speci-

fied area within 36 hours.

Storm watches and warnings are issued to help people prepare for the potential arrival of serious storms that could prove dangerous and deadly. More information is available at [weather.gov/safety/hurricane](https://weather.gov/safety/hurricane).



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We have an established plan and safe area designated to ensure the safety of our employees, should we ever again be faced with the threat of tornadoes. Rochelle Foods encourages all area industries, businesses, and residents to secure a safe area and make employees and family members aware of the protocol if the threat of imminent weather should occur.

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