

## Second Quarter 2021 WGLT ISSUES AND PROGRAMS

April 2021 – July 2021

The following issues were addressed during WGLT Newscasts during MORNING EDITION from 5 to 9 am M-F and during ALL THINGS CONSIDERED from 3-6PM, M-F, and during Sound Ideas, Noon-1pm, and 6-7pm, M-F. The story lengths range from one minute to 59 minutes. Other examples of WGLT addressing community issues can be found at [www.wglt.org](http://www.wglt.org).

### ARTS AND CULTURE

#### [Pride Fest Is Back For 3rd Annual Bloomington Street Party](#)

Dana Vollmer

June 24, 2021

Pride Fest returns to the Twin Cities this weekend, after a one-year COVID hiatus. This is the third annual celebration of LGBTQIA+ Pride Month hosted by The Bistro in downtown Bloomington.

#### [Heartland Theatre Company Returns With 'Out of the Box: Diverse Storytelling'](#)

Dana Vollmer

June 23, 2021

What do an Iranian dancer, a Chili's waitress, an Arabic Jedi, a sweaty ballcap, a racially insensitive delivery man and a closeted Thai Buddhist have in common? Audience members can find out by attending Heartland Theatre Company's "Out of the Box: Diverse Stories of How We Think. Feel. Live." on Friday, June 25 and Saturday, June 26.

#### [SARAH AND THE UNDERGROUND'S 'RIPPLE SONGS' A FAMILY LOVE AFFAIR](#) [JON NORTON](#)

June 23, 2021

PEORIA-BASED FOLK/SOUL TRIO SARAH & THE UNDERGROUND'S "RIPPLE SONGS" EP WAS RELEASED ON FATHER'S DAY. IT'S A LOVE NOTE FROM BAND MEMBERS SARAH MARIE DILLARD AND BRANSON MOOBERRY TO EACH OTHER, AND THEIR FAMILY.

#### [Datebook: Prairie Fire Theatre Invites Community To Give Opera A Try](#)

[Breanna Grow](#)

June 18, 2021

Musical theater fans are no doubt eager for the return of live performances. In the meantime, Prairie Fire Theatre Artistic Director Bob Mangialardi suggests Bloomington-Normal residents give opera a try.

### [Darius Exorcized Demons On New Album 'Left Alone'](#)

[Jon Norton](#)

June 17, 2021

Bloomington-based hip-hop artist Darius Williams says his new album was self-therapy during a difficult time. He says it's his most personal work to date.

### [Juneteenth To Become Weeklong Commemoration In B-N This Year](#)

[Jack Graue](#)

June 8, 2021

The Bloomington-Normal Black History Project is sponsoring a series of virtual discussions next week to mark Juneteenth, a holiday commemorating the end of slavery in the United States.

### [What The Data Shows On When Arts Patrons Will Come Back](#)

[Ryan Denham](#)

June 8, 2021

A new study shows arts patrons are more likely to be vaccinated than the general public and are increasingly comfortable returning to cultural events, though a “significant minority” are still not ready.

### [Marine Vet, Heartland Alum Honored For Using Art To Help Others Heal](#)

[Dana Vollmer](#)

June 4, 2021

Marine veteran and Heartland Community College graduate Richard Casper is a Purple Heart recipient, artist and entrepreneur. Now, Casper dedicates himself to helping other veterans heal through art.

### [The Something Brothers Go Big](#)

[Jon Norton](#)

June 4, 2021

Legendary Bloomington rockers The Something Brothers unveil their new 3-disc, 60 song album "FLAK."

### [Datebook: Neither Time, Distance Nor COVID Can Keep The Honey Chasers Apart](#)

[Breanna Grow](#)

June 4, 2021

It's been two years since The Honey Chasers last played before a live audience.

### [B-N's Houseplant Scene Flourishes, As 'Plant Parents' Grow Collections](#)

[Dana Vollmer](#)

June 1, 2021

You've heard of "dog moms." Now get ready for "plant parents." More people are discovering their green thumb as interior design and social media trends expose people to beautiful flora in all shapes and sizes.

[Datebook: After A COVID Year, Steampunk Fest Marks The Return Of Whimsy](#)

[Breanna Grow](#)

May 28, 2021

Dust off your top hat and fire up the airship: Cogs & Corset—A Central Illinois Steampunk Happening, is happening June 4-5 in downtown Bloomington.

[Spotify Playlist: New Music For June On Highway 309](#)

[Jon Norton](#)

May 27, 2021

A Spotify playlist of all the new music added to Highway 309 in 2021, including the latest from Robert Finley, Dom La Nena, and Guided by Voices.

[Recording Album During Pandemic Therapeutic for John Aulabaugh](#)

[Jon Norton](#)

May 27, 2021

John Aulabaugh's new album merges dark themes with a Wilco/Radiohead backdrop.

[NFTs: Digital Art's Latest Trend Makes Its Way to Central Illinois](#)

[Michele Steinbacher](#)

May 26, 2021

Central Illinois digital artists are watching the format's rapid rise in popularity, with some joining in.

[Increased Capacity, New Schedule For Illinois Shakespeare Festival](#)

[Breanna Grow](#)

May 26, 2021

Improved COVID-19 numbers means a bigger audience at Ewing Theater than previously allowed for this year's Illinois Shakespeare Festival.

[Children's Discovery Museum Reopening With New Exhibit](#)

[Eric Stock](#)

May 21, 2021

The Children's Discovery Museum in Normal will welcome visitors back starting next Thursday, after a 14-month shutdown because of COVID-19.

### [Saxophonist Frank Catalano's Confidence Won Mom Over](#)

[Jon Norton](#)

May 20, 2021

Saxophonist Frank Catalano and Smashing Pumpkins drummer Jimmy Chamberlain play The Castle Theater in Bloomington Saturday night.

### [Datebook: Climate-Inspired Exhibition Sparks NCHS Student Works](#)

[Breanna Grow](#)

May 14, 2021

Starting June 1, the works of 53 of Stefen Robinson's students at Normal Community High School will be featured at University Galleries in Uptown Normal.

### [Nolan Kelly Explores Loss On New Album 'It's Gonna Be OK'](#)

[Jon Norton](#)

May 10, 2021

Bloomington singer-songwriter Nolan Kelly's new album exploring "loss" was released on the 10th anniversary of the suicide death of his best friend.

### [Brandon Santini Continues To Move Blues Music Forward](#)

[Jon Norton](#)

May 7, 2021

Springfield blues musician Brandon Santini continues to move blues music forward. He plays Jazz UpFront in Bloomington on May 8.

### [Datebook: Artist Jim Neeley's 'Fertile Mind' Bears Cut-Paper Fruit](#)

[Breanna Grow](#)

May 7, 2021

When the pandemic hit, Twin City artist Jim Neeley needed a place to escape to. And he found one.

### [Datebook: No Such Thing As Too Big, Too Different at Hangar Art Co.](#)

[Breanna Grow](#)

May 6, 2021

At first blush, a pandemic doesn't sound like a great time to open a gallery. But if there is such a thing as a silver lining when it comes to COVID-19, ...

### [ISU Composer's Latest Work Tells Story Of Energy & Memory](#)

[Dana Vollmer](#)

May 5, 2021

Illinois State University professor and composer Martha Horst has been busy making music throughout the pandemic—a task complicated by the inability to get musicians together and hold in-person performances.

[Datebook: No Such Thing As Too Big, Too Different at Hangar Art Co.](#)

[Breanna Grow](#)

April 30, 2021

At first blush, a pandemic doesn't sound like a great time to open a gallery. But if there is such a thing as a silver lining when it comes to COVID-19,...

[Datebook: No Such Thing As Too Big, Too Different at Hangar Art Co.](#)

[Breanna Grow](#)

April 30, 2021

At first blush, a pandemic doesn't sound like a great time to open a gallery. But if there is such a thing as a silver lining when it comes to COVID-19,...

[Datebook: Photographer Catalogs The 'Stuff' That Kept Him Alive With Type I Diabetes](#)

[Breanna Grow](#)

April 23, 2021

In "Punctuation: 35 Years of Diabetic Debris," on display now through June 4 at the McLean County Arts Center, photographer Karl Smith documents life as a...

[Old Smoke Band Finds Purpose, New Dynamic During Pandemic](#)

[Jon Norton](#)

April 16, 2021

Like many bands, the Bloomington-based quintet Old Smoke used downtime during the pandemic to write and record a new album. The EP "Onward" is musically...

[Datebook: Experimental Sound Artist Brings McLean County's Black History To Life](#)

[Breanna Grow](#)

April 16, 2021

After the atrocities against people of color in 2020, Chicago-based experimental sound artist Allen Moore wanted to find a way to mark the moment. "I think...

[Datebook: Gamma Phi Student Performers Ready For Their Close-Up](#)

[Breanna Grow](#)

April 9, 2021

Don't lower your expectations for this year's Gamma Phi Circus home show just because it's virtual. Actually, Circus Artistic Director Ivan Stoinev thinks...

Datebook: CDM Reaching Bigger Audience With 2nd Virtual Doctors In Concert

Breanna Grow

April 2, 2021

It's been more than a year since the Children's Discovery Museum closed its doors, just weeks before it was set to hold its 16th annual Doctors in Concert...

## CORONAVIRUS

MCHD Reports 2 More COVID Deaths; Vaccinations On The Rise

Dana Vollmer

June 30, 2021

McLean County health officials report two more COVID-related deaths, as the numbers of new and active coronavirus cases continue to drop.

Bloomington Council Votes To End 15-Month Emergency Ordinance

Samira Kassem

June 28, 2021

The Bloomington City Council voted Monday night to end an ordinance that declared a local emergency and allowed emergency measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The ordinance had been in place for just over 15 months.

ISU Offers Scholarship Lottery For Vaccinated Students

Dana Vollmer

June 25, 2021

Illinois State University is following the state's lead, using money to encourage people to get vaccinated. ISU is offering \$1,000 scholarships to 100 students who submit proof of vaccination before the start of the fall semester.

Clock Is Ticking On Debate Over Requiring COVID Vaccination At ISU

Jack Graue

June 25, 2021

The window of time for Illinois State University to mandate vaccines is rapidly closing.

Bloomington Seeks To End Emergency Ordinance; Some Changes Could Stay

Eric Stock

June 25, 2021

Bloomington could lift its COVID emergency ordinance on Monday, but some changes caused by the pandemic could become permanent.

COVID Delta Variant Concerns McLean County Health Officials

Eric Stock  
June 23, 2021

COVID vaccinations in McLean County have dropped to their lowest levels since mid-January.  
Project Oz Plans COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic To Reach Young People

Ryan Denham  
June 23, 2021

A Bloomington nonprofit will host a free clinic Thursday in hopes of chipping away at low COVID-19 vaccination rates among young people.

VA, Pritzker Promise Fix For Veterans Initially Left Out Of Vaccine Lottery  
Hannah Meisel

June 22, 2021

The U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs is deploying a fix so the more than 89,000 veterans, veteran spouses and others who received their COVID vaccines at federal VA facilities have a chance at winning Illinois' vaccine lottery.

McLean County Reports 2 More COVID Deaths; None Hospitalized

Eric Stock  
June 16, 2021

McLean County has had 233 COVID-related deaths since the start of the pandemic.

ISU Signs Onto COVID-19 College Vaccine Challenge

Dana Vollmer  
June 15, 2021

Illinois State University is part of a national push to get as many students, faculty, and staff as possible vaccinated against COVID-19 before the start of fall semester.

[B-N Families From India Share Challenges And Hope Amid COVID Outbreak](#)

[Dana Vollmer](#)

June 14, 2021

COVID-19 caseloads, hospitalizations, and deaths have steadily dropped recently in the United States. As Illinois moves into a full economic reopening, it's easy for some to act like the pandemic is over. But in India, a major crisis rages on. Bloomington-Normal's Indian community wants others to pay attention.

[COVID Vaccination Rates Are Slowing. Where Does That Leave McLean County In The Fall?](#)

[Dana Vollmer](#)

June 11, 2021

It took McLean County six months to get to 40% of the population fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Health officials say they're optimistic the rate will climb through the summer and fall, even as the number of residents getting doses dwindles.

### [Some B-N Shoppers, Businesses Still Cautious As Full Reopening Begins](#)

[Eric Stock](#)

June 10, 2021

Businesses in Illinois can fully reopen starting Friday, but some plan to maintain strict mask enforcement.

### [Local Tensions Run High During Public Comments At District 87 Board Meeting](#)

[Samira Kassem](#)

June 9, 2021

It was anything but a normal meeting of the District 87 school board Wednesday night.

### [McLean County COVID Caseload Drops To 11-Month Low](#)

[Eric Stock](#)

June 9, 2021

McLean County's active coronavirus caseload fell to its lowest level since last July.

### [B-N Bike Shops Weather Pandemic-Driven Shortage](#)

[Dana Vollmer](#)

June 9, 2021

Bike rides are a summer staple. But those looking for a new set of wheels are having a hard time finding them. Bicycles are among the growing list of supply-and-demand issues emerging from the pandemic.

### [What The Data Shows On When Arts Patrons Will Come Back](#)

[Ryan Denham](#)

June 8, 2021

A new study shows arts patrons are more likely to be vaccinated than the general public and are increasingly comfortable returning to cultural events, though a “significant minority” are still not ready.

### [Regular Hospital Business On The Rise As COVID Cases Recede](#)

[Charlie Schlenker](#)

June 7, 2021

Business is coming back to hospitals in central Illinois, but it's not all the way back.

### [McLean County Government To Get \\$33 Million In COVID Relief](#)



[Eric Stock](#)

June 3, 2021

McLean County expects to receive \$33.3 million through the federal American Rescue Plan.

[ISU To Require Coronavirus Testing For Unvaccinated Students](#)

[Charlie Schlenker](#)

June 3, 2021

Illinois State University will require periodic coronavirus testing in the fall for students who are not vaccinated, according to new guidance released by the school.

[Bloomington Nonprofit Seeks More Utility Help For Struggling Families](#)

[Eric Stock](#)

June 3, 2021

A Bloomington non-profit that's helped provide pandemic relief wants more help for families who have fallen behind on utility payments.

[Why We're No Longer Reporting On COVID-19 Cases Every Day](#)

[Ryan Denham](#)

June 1, 2021

By continuing daily stories that report low numbers, we run the risk of turning COVID data into background noise that is easily ignored.

McLean County Hits Lowest Active COVID Caseload Since August; 40% Of Population Fully Vaccinated

Dana Vollmer

May 28, 2021

The McLean County Health Department (MCHD) is reporting just six new COVID-19 cases, marking the lowest single-day count since mid-October.

Country Financial Survey Finds Big Summer Travel, Spending Plans

Dana Vollmer

May 28, 2021

People are making big plans this summer, as vaccination rates tick up and COVID restrictions ease. A recent survey by Country Financial found that after a year of conservative saving, people are ready to let loose.

ISU Rolling Out Saliva-Based SHIELD Testing Next Week

Ryan Denham

May 28, 2021

## B-N Adds Nearly 5,000 Jobs Since Peak Of COVID Shutdowns

Eric Stock

May 27, 2021

Bloomington-Normal added about 1,300 jobs last month as the economy continues to recover.

## Child Care Expert Says Pandemic Exacerbated Broken System

Dana Vollmer

May 26, 2021

The COVID-19 pandemic has been highlighting structural problems in the way communities care for people—including those providing the care. Early childhood education is no exception.

## MCHD Reports Another COVID Death, As Hospitalizations And Active Cases Drop

Dana Vollmer

May 26, 2021

Another McLean County resident has died from COVID-19 complications. The McLean County Health Department (MCHD) reports it is a woman in her 60s who did not live in long-term care.

## Housing Starts In Normal Are At The Edges Of Town

Charlie Schlenker

May 25, 2021

Housing Starts In Normal Are At The Edges Of Town

## MCHD Reports 14 New COVID Cases; Active Caseload Drops

Dana Vollmer

May 25, 2021

The McLean County Health Department (MCHD) is reporting 14 new confirmed or probable COVID-19 cases on Tuesday.

## Unit 5 Considers Spending Pandemic Relief Funds On Student Mental Health

Jack Graue

May 24, 2021

## MCHD Reports 58 New COVID Cases; Positivity Rate, Active Caseload Drop

Dana Vollmer

May 24, 2021

McLean County health officials reported 58 new confirmed or probable COVID-19 cases Monday, as the county's testing positivity rate dropped half a percentage point to 2.4%.

## B-N Turns To Nontraditional Health To Ease Pandemic Strain

Charlie Schlenker

May 21, 2021

### Children's Discovery Museum Reopening With New Exhibit

Eric Stock

May 21, 2021

The Children's Discovery Museum in Normal will welcome visitors back starting next Thursday, after a 14-month shutdown because of COVID-19.

### McLean County Addresses Confusion Over 'Fully Vaccinated'

Eric Stock

May 21, 2021

McLean County's weekly COVID caseload on Friday dropped to its lowest level since mid-March.

### McLean County COVID Hospitalizations, Active Caseload Rise

Dana Vollmer

May 20, 2021

McLean County health officials added 25 new confirmed or probable COVID-19 cases on Thursday. The county's testing rate held at 3.1%, while the number of hospitalizations and active cases increased.

### Indian Coronavirus Variant Found In B-N

Charlie Schlenker

May 20, 2021

### Illinois Board of Education Moves To Require In-Person Learning For Upcoming School Year

Christine Hatfield

May 19, 2021

The Illinois State Board of Education is supporting a full return to in-person learning in K-12 schools starting this fall, even as members of the board are concerned the resolution leaves certain students behind.

### MCHD Reports 2 More COVID Deaths; 41 New Cases

Dana Vollmer

May 18, 2021

McLean County health officials report two more deaths linked COVID-19. Both were women—one in her 60s and the other in her 70s—who did not live in long-term care facilities. Their deaths bring the county's total since the start of the pandemic to 227.

### Normal Leaders Review COVID Relief Funds, Police Reforms

Michele Steinbacher

May 17, 2021

The Normal Town Council on Monday discussed how to spend nearly \$11 million in COVID-relief heading to the community. The meeting also included a report from Normal Police Chief Rick Bleichner about the state's new police reforms.

Pritzker Rescinds Mask Mandate For Those Fully Vaccinated In Accordance With Federal Guidance

Sarah Mansur / Capitol News Illinois

May 17, 2021

Gov. JB Pritzker issued a new executive order Monday that allows fully vaccinated residents to not wear masks inside and outdoors.

McLean County Sees Steep Drop In COVID Hospitalizations, Active Caseload

Dana Vollmer

May 17, 2021

McLean County's COVID-19 hospitalizations, active caseload and testing positivity rate are down, as health officials report 70 new confirmed or probable coronavirus cases over the weekend.

Q&A: What Does The New CDC Mask Guidance Mean For You?

Tim Shelley

May 17, 2021

New CDC guidance says fully vaccinated people can now go maskless in most settings - outdoors or indoors. Tim Shelley speaks with Dr. Steve Hippler, chief clinical officer for OSF HealthCare, about what that means for you.

McLean County's Weekly COVID Caseload Drops To 2-Month Low

Eric Stock

May 14, 2021

McLean County Health Department administrator Jessica McKnight says the county is still waiting for formal guidance from state on the CDC's new mask guidelines.

Q&A: B-N Lawyer Says Employers Can Require Vaccination. But Will They?

Eric Stock

May 13, 2021

B-N, McLean County Governments Don't Track Staff Vaccinations

Eric Stock

May 13, 2021

Government officials in Bloomington, Normal and McLean County say they don't plan to require the COVID-19 vaccine for staff and they don't plan to ask if employees have received the shots.

#### McLean County Tops 18,000 COVID Cases; New Cases Slow

Eric Stock

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May 13, 2021

As of Thursday, McLean County has topped 18,000 coronavirus cases since the pandemic began, but the rate of new cases has slowed.

#### McLean County Board of Health Extends Contact Tracer Program

Michele Steinbacher

May 12, 2021

The McLean County Board of Health voted Wednesday to continue its contact tracer program, at least through November.

#### Daily COVID Vaccinations In McLean County Less Than Half Of Peak

Dana Vollmer

May 12, 2021

The number of COVID-19 vaccine doses administered in McLean County is ticking up slowly, but is still far behind last month's peak in vaccinations.

#### Illinois Aims To Drive Tourism Growth As Full Reopening Approaches

Christine Hatfield

May 12, 2021

A new tourism campaign aims to help rebuild Illinois' economy as more of the state's population becomes vaccinated. Advocacy groups say tourism recovery will help Illinois stay competitive nationally and globally after the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### COVID Baby Bust Has Economic Consequences

Eric Stock

May 11, 2021

Bloomington-Normal hospitals have delivered 6% fewer babies this year as the pandemic fuels a baby bust.

#### How COVID-19 Reshaped Weddings

Dana Vollmer

May 11, 2021

The pandemic forced many couples to cancel or postpone their wedding days. Wedding season is ramping back up as safety guidelines ease and couples get tired of waiting. Ceremonies still might look different than they did before, but those walking down the aisle are okay with that.

#### McLean County COVID Cases, Hospitalizations Down

Dana Vollmer

May 11, 2021

McLean County health officials are reporting the lowest single-day COVID-19 case count in nearly a month and a half, with 24 new confirmed or probable coronavirus cases added on Tuesday.

#### MCHD Reports 3 More COVID Hospitalizations; Positivity Rate Drops

Dana Vollmer

May 10, 2021

McLean County health officials on Monday reported 91 new confirmed or probable COVID-19 cases, as the county's testing positivity rate dips to its lowest level since mid-March.

#### Man In His 30s Among Latest McLean County COVID Deaths

Eric Stock

May 7, 2021

The McLean County Health Department reported Friday that three more people have died from COVID-19 complications.

#### Pritzker: Broader 'Bridge Phase' Reopening To Begin Next Week

Peter Hancock / Capitol News Illinois

May 6, 2021

Gov. JB Pritzker said Thursday that Illinois will enter the "bridge" phase to full reopening on Friday, May 14. And barring any reversal of current trends, Phase 5, or full reopening, will begin on June 11.

#### Sound Health: Getting The COVID Vaccine For Pregnant Women

Eric Stock

May 6, 2021

A obstetrician in Normal recommends the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines for her clients, even though the CDC has removed its objections over the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

#### Judge Vacates Nationwide Eviction Moratorium, Doesn't Impact Illinois

Sarah Mansur / Capitol News Illinois

May 6, 2021

A federal judge invalidated a nationwide eviction moratorium on Wednesday but the decision will not impact the moratorium on rental evictions in Illinois, according to housing attorneys.

#### McLean County Active COVID Cases Fall To 6-Week Low

Eric Stock

May 6, 2021

For the first time since late March, McLean County's active coronavirus caseload has dropped below 400.

#### ISU Student Government Supports COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate

Ryan Denham

May 5, 2021

Illinois State University's student government has endorsed the idea of requiring students to be vaccinated for COVID-19 if they want to attend classes next fall.

#### McLean County COVID Vaccines Continue To Slow; 43 New Cases Reported

Dana Vollmer

May 5, 2021

The McLean County Health Department reports 43 new confirmed or probable COVID-19 cases, as the county's testing positivity rate ticked up slightly to 4.5%.

#### Nursing Home Residents 'More Like Themselves' As Facilities See End To COVID Lockdowns

Dana Vollmer

May 4, 2021

Residents and staff at long-term care facilities feel hopeful the worst of the pandemic is behind them, as life in those facilities returns to some semblance of pre-pandemic normal.

#### Sound Health: Working From Home Can Lead To Bad Habits, Injury

Eric Stock

May 4, 2021

It's been a year since employers sent many of their workers home to protect them from COVID-19. In the first installment of the Sound Health series on...

#### MCHD Reports 3 More COVID Deaths; Adds 9 Hospitalizations

Dana Vollmer

May 4, 2021

McLean County health officials report three more COVID-related deaths. All were women—one in her 60s and the other two in their 80s. None lived in long-term care facilities.

#### County Adds 124 COVID Cases; B-N Hospitals Nearly Full

Eric Stock

May 3, 2021

Bloomington-Normal hospitals are nearly full as the McLean County Health Department reported 124 new coronavirus cases Monday.

Demand For COVID Vaccine Slows Down In McLean County

Eric Stock

April 30, 2021

UPDATED 4:00 P.M. | McLean County health officials hope walk-in, evening and drive-thru vaccination clinics will help get more people vaccinated against...

MCHD Reports 25 Hospitalized COVID Patients; Amends Previous Data

Dana Vollmer

April 29, 2021

The McLean County Health Department reports 25 residents are hospitalized with COVID-19—less than half the 61 patients reported on Wednesday.

McLean County Tops COVID Hospitalization Record, Confirms Another Death

Dana Vollmer

April 28, 2021

Another McLean County resident has died from COVID-19 complications -- a man in his 80s who did not live in a long-term care facility.

COVID Testing, Vaccinations Slow In McLean County

Dana Vollmer

April 27, 2021

McLean County health officials report 87 new confirmed or probable COVID-19 cases, as the county's testing positivity rate bounced back up a full percentage point.

Children, Young Adults Drive New COVID Cases In McLean County

Eric Stock

April 23, 2021

UPDATED 4:25 P.M. | Children and young adults are driving up coronavirus cases in McLean County. Data from the McLean County Health Department show over...

McLean County Tops 17,000 COVID Cases; Hospitalizations Still Rising

Eric Stock

April 22, 2021

UPDATED 4:10 P.M. | McLean County has set a new record for COVID hospitalizations for the third consecutive day, with the county surpassing 17,000...



Social distancing sign

## McLean County Reports 2 More COVID Deaths, Record Hospitalizations

Eric Stock

April 21, 2021

UPDATED 2:45 P.M. | McLean County health officials reported two more COVID-related deaths on Wednesday while the county's total of COVID-19...

## McLean County Active COVID Caseload, Hospital Capacity Down

Dana Vollmer

April 20, 2021

The McLean County Health Department is reporting 52 new COVID-19 cases and an additional hospitalization. There are now 54 county residents being treated...

## COVID Hospitalizations And Active Caseload Stabilize

Dana Vollmer

April 19, 2021

McLean County added 212 new COVID-19 cases over the weekend—the highest weekend case count reported since mid-January. Data from the McLean County Health...

## Illinois Prison Watchdog Organization Leader Glad About Restart Of In-Person Visits

Christine Hatfield

April 16, 2021

The leader of the independent oversight organization for Illinois prisons says the state is in "uncharted territory" as the Department of Corrections...

## McLean County To Host Spanish-Language Vaccine Forum

Eric Stock

April 16, 2021

UPDATED 4:05 P.M. | The McLean County Health Department (MCHD) has announced its first Spanish language virtual town hall to address COVID vaccine...

## McLean County Reports Another COVID Death, Rising Hospitalizations

Dana Vollmer

April 15, 2021

McLean County's COVID-19 hospitalizations and death toll continue to climb. The latest death is a woman in her 50s who was not associated with a long-term care.

## McLean County COVID Hospitalizations Climb To 51

Dana Vollmer

April 14, 2021

McLean County health officials report a record 51 residents hospitalized with COVID-19. That comes as Bloomington-Normal hospital bed capacity constricted.

Illinois Prisons To Restart In-Person Visits, Over A Year After COVID Stoppage

Christine Hatfield

Within a month, Illinois prisons will be allowing in-person visitation again. It's been over a year since the Illinois Department of Corrections stopped allowing people in.

MCHD Reports 3 More COVID Deaths; Pause On J&J Vaccine

Dana Vollmer

April 13, 2021

Three more McLean County residents have died from COVID-19 complications. All three were men -- one in his 60s and one in his 70s who did not live in long-term care.

Bloomington Council Adopts \$251.7M Budget

Michele Steinbacher

April 12, 2021

The Bloomington City Council on Monday adopted a \$251.7 million budget, up 9.3% over last year's plan. The vote was 8-1, with Ward 6 alderwoman Jenn Carrillo voting no.

McLean County Adds 164 COVID Cases, 9K Vaccine Doses Over Weekend

Dana Vollmer

April 12, 2021

McLean County health officials on Monday reported 164 more COVID-19 cases confirmed over the weekend, as the county's testing positivity rate dipped.

McLean County Schools Report More COVID Cases, Quarantined Students

Ryan Denham

April 10, 2021

UPDATED 12:50 p.m. | Hundreds of Unit 5 students were quarantined in the past week as McLean County faces a third wave in coronavirus cases, this time...

Children Drive Spike In McLean County COVID Cases

Eric Stock

April 9, 2021

UPDATED 4 p.m. | Children make up the largest percentage of new coronavirus cases in McLean County, with the number of weekly cases reaching a three-month...

### MCHD Reports 2 More COVID Deaths; Extra Vaccines Going To Students

Dana Vollmer

April 8, 2021

Two more McLean County residents have died from COVID-19 complications, as the county climbs past 16,000 confirmed cases since the start of the...

### McLean County Sees COVID Hospitalizations, New Cases Rise

Eric Stock

April 7, 2021

McLean County added to its record total of COVID-19 hospitalizations on Wednesday as 97% of Bloomington-Normal hospital beds are occupied. The McLean...

### McLean County Sees Record COVID Hospitalizations; Active Caseload Down

Dana Vollmer

April 6, 2021

McLean County has set a new record for COVID-19 hospitalizations. There are currently 42 county residents being treated for coronavirus complications. The...

### McLean County's COVID Positivity Rate Down; Remains At Warning Level

Dana Vollmer

April 5, 2021

McLean County health officials are reporting 138 more COVID-19 cases confirmed over the weekend. That comes as the county's testing positivity rate...

### McLean County Reports 2 COVID Deaths, Rising Hospitalizations

Eric Stock

April 2, 2021

UPDATED 4:10 P.M. | McLean County health officials reported two more deaths related to the coronavirus pandemic on Friday as hospitalizations rose to...

### Positivity Rate Down For First Time In 2 Weeks

Dana Vollmer

April 1, 2021

McLean County health officials report 77 more confirmed or probable COVID-19 cases, as the county's testing positivity rate decreased for the first time...

## EDUCATION AND FAMILY

### College Athletes Can Be Paid For Name And Likeness In Illinois Starting Thursday

Jerry Nowicki, Capitol News Illinois

June 30, 2021

Lawmakers, collegiate athletes and athletic directors from some of the state's most prominent universities on Tuesday hailed the governor's signing of a bill allowing college athletes to be paid for the use of their name and likeness as innovative and equity centric.

ISU Offers Scholarship Lottery For Vaccinated Students

Dana Vollmer

June 25, 2021

Illinois State University is following the state's lead, using money to encourage people to get vaccinated.

ISU Expungement Clinic Helps People With Criminal Records Get A Fresh Start

Dana Vollmer

June 25, 2021

A pilot program at Illinois State University that helps low-income people get their lives back after a conviction will continue, with the help of university funding and an endowment.

Clock Is Ticking On Debate Over Requiring COVID Vaccination At ISU

Jack Graue

June 25, 2021

The window of time for Illinois State University to mandate vaccines is rapidly closing.

University Of Illinois To Require Vaccines For Those On Campus This Fall

Sean Crawford

June 21, 2021

The University of Illinois system will require that all students receive a COVID-19 vaccination if they plan to be on campus for fall semester 2021.

ISU Board Of Trustees Approves \$40,000 Bonus For Retiring President Dietz

Samira Kassem

June 19, 2021

The Illinois State University Board of Trustees held a special meeting Saturday morning to discuss a bonus for President Larry Dietz and to vote on a resolution to officially hire Terri Goss Kinzy as the university's 20th president.

Unit 5 Deficit Reduction Plan Coming In Autumn

Charlie Schlenker

June 18, 2021

The \$12.5 million structural budget deficit for Unit 5 schools has been growing slowly for years. It's currently about 6% of the total \$203 million budget. District Superintendent Kristen Weikle said she hopes to bring a plan to deal with the imbalance to the school board in the fall.

#### Unit 5 School Board Hears From Another Group Of Passionate Speakers

Samira Kassem

June 17, 2021

After last Wednesday's District 87 School Board meeting saw over two hours of public comment and 50 attendees, the Unit 5 School Board and Superintendent were prepared for a large turnout of passionate speakers.

#### B-N Students Defend Inclusive Curriculum, As Conservatives Mobilize Against It

Dana Vollmer

June 16, 2021

Bloomington-Normal high school students say they reject the idea that making curricula more inclusive "divides" students. That comes in response to a conservative campaign against the way students are taught about race, American history and sexual health.

#### Heartland Community College To Pursue \$23 Million Ag Building

Charlie Schlenker

June 15, 2021

Heartland Community College is moving ahead with a proposal for a \$23.4 million agriculture building — the first major item included in the college's new strategic plan.

#### Heartland Community College Budgets \$1 Million For Cybersecurity After Ransom Attack

Charlie Schlenker

June 15, 2021

Heartland Community College cybersecurity improvements continue in the wake of a ransomware attack Oct. 5 that encrypted more than 120 computer servers on the campus in Normal.

#### District 87 Pushes More 'Inclusive' Curriculum, Not Critical Race Theory

Eric Stock

June 15, 2021

District 87 officials say they are focused on incorporating more diversity into their curriculum, but it doesn't include Critical Race Theory.

#### ISU Signs Onto COVID-19 College Vaccine Challenge

Dana Vollmer

June 15, 2021

Illinois State University is part of a national push to get as many students, faculty, and staff as possible vaccinated against COVID-19 before the start of fall semester.

#### B-N NAACP Reacts To Conservative Fight Against Teaching Of Racism In America

Dana Vollmer

June 11, 2021

Bloomington-Normal NAACP leaders say a conservative campaign of pushback against the way Black history is taught in schools shows a need for more honest conversations about what divides the community.

#### Tensions Run High During Public Comments At District 87 Board Meeting

Samira Kassem

June 9, 2021

It was anything but a normal meeting of the District 87 school board Wednesday night.

#### Marine Vet, Heartland Alum Honored For Using Art To Help Others Heal

Dana Vollmer

June 4, 2021

Marine veteran and Heartland Community College graduate Richard Casper is a Purple Heart recipient, artist and entrepreneur. Now, Casper dedicates himself to helping other veterans heal through art.

#### Landlord Rent Recovery Grant Applications Popular In Central Illinois

Charlie Schlenker

June 4, 2021

The Immigration Project in Normal said there has been significant demand for the Illinois Rental Payment Program to help landlords recoup money tenants have not been able to pay during the pandemic. The Project said it has already taken in more than 200 applications for landlord pandemic relief grants. Sarah Mellor is the social services director for the project.

#### Millions Of Women Haven't Rejoined The Workforce — And May Not Anytime Soon

Andrea Hsu

June 3, 2021

Millions of women who lost their jobs in the pandemic have yet to return to work, even though the economy has improved. What's keeping them back is a mix of factors that may not be resolved quickly.

#### ISU To Require Coronavirus Testing For Unvaccinated Students

Charlie Schlenker

June 3, 2021

Illinois State University will require periodic coronavirus testing in the fall for students who are not vaccinated, according to new guidance released by the school.

#### New Playground Will Help Kids Navigate An Unpredictable World

Sarah Nardi

June 2, 2021

In addition to the money, donor Charlie Jobson presented Unit 5 with what he called a “dream team” of international experts to lead the natural playground project.

#### New State Budget Holds ISU Funding Steady

Christine Hatfield

June 1, 2021

As Illinois emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic, a spokesperson for Illinois State University said the institution is "grateful that there were no reductions" to state funding in the new state budget.

#### IWU Administration Rejects AAUP Report on Program Changes

Charlie Schlenker

May 28, 2021

#### Bill Passed Out of General Assembly Lets Special Ed Students Who Turn 22 Finish Their School Year

Christine Hatfield

May 28, 2021

A bill to allow special education students who turn 22 to continue with their classwork until the end of the school year has passed unanimously through the State Senate.

District 87 School Board meets Wednesday, May 26, 2021.

#### District 87's Food Services Staff Gets Shoutout For Their Pandemic Pivot

Michele Steinbacher

May 27, 2021

The District 87 School Board heard details of how food service staff revamped their system to meet pandemic year needs.

#### Almost All Unit 5 Students Headed Back to Classrooms This Fall

Sarah Nardi

May 26, 2021

Unit 5 is anticipating next year to look a lot more like a regular school year. But that may not be good news for all families.

## Child Care Expert Says Pandemic Exacerbated Broken System

Dana Vollmer

May 26, 2021

The COVID-19 pandemic has been highlighting structural problems in the way communities care for people—including those providing the care. Early childhood education is no exception.

## Bill To Expand Parental Leave For Teachers, School Workers Passes State Senate

Christine Hatfield

May 26, 2021

Teachers and other school workers would receive 30 days of paid sick leave after becoming parents under legislation that passed the Illinois Senate on Wednesday. The bill follows an Illinois Supreme Court ruling last year that limited how new mothers can use maternal leave.

## Unit 5 Considers Spending Pandemic Relief Funds On Student Mental Health

Jack Graue

May 24, 2021

## Children's Discovery Museum Reopening With New Exhibit

Eric Stock

May 21, 2021

The Children's Discovery Museum in Normal will welcome visitors back starting next Thursday, after a 14-month shutdown because of COVID-19.

## District 87 Program Helps Students Of Color See Themselves As Teachers

Dana Vollmer

May 20, 2021

A new "grow your own" teacher initiative in District 87 aims to empower young students of color to picture themselves as future educators.

## Sex Education Standard Update Bill Advances Out Of State Senate Along Party Lines

Christine Hatfield

May 20, 2021

A bill updating Illinois sex education standards passed through the Illinois Senate Thursday after a contentious debate.

## Bloomington Junior High Adjusts To Give Music Students More Options

Eric Stock

May 20, 2021

District 87 has changed its music program at Bloomington Junior High next year to allow those students to also take a class in the arts. But their school day will be a half-hour longer.



## Illinois Board of Education Moves To Require In-Person Learning For Upcoming School Year

Christine Hatfield

May 19, 2021

The Illinois State Board of Education is supporting a full return to in-person learning in K-12 schools starting this fall, even as members of the board are concerned the resolution leaves certain students behind.

## Heartland Community College Hopeful As More New Students Register For Fall Term

Jack Graue

May 19, 2021

After a sharp decline in enrollment earlier in the pandemic, Heartland Community College officials say early signs point to a rebound in new students for the fall term.

## Fraternity To Close At IWU After Suspension For Hazing

Eric Stock

May 19, 2021

Illinois Wesleyan University said it will conduct a "systemic review" of its campus climate to determine if changes should be made, including to its hazing policies.

## COVID Vaccine Surveys Help McLean County Schools Plot Future

Eric Stock

May 19, 2021

McLean County schools have asked teachers and staff to share if they have received the vaccine, but say it is only voluntary.

## Q&A: District 87 Aims For All In-School Classes By Fall

Eric Stock

May 18, 2021

Over 90% of District 87 teachers who responded to a survey said they have received the COVID vaccine or intend to soon.

## Q&A: District 87 Aims For All In-School Classes By Fall

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## As COVID Restrictions Ease, Staff Shortages Mean Child Care Options Remain Limited

Dana Vollmer

May 17, 2021

Child care programs have fewer restrictions than they did last summer when COVID-19 was fresh and uncertain. But parents could still have a hard time finding somewhere to send their kids.

Western Michigan VP Terri Goss Kinzy Named ISU's 20th President

Ryan Denham

May 14, 2021

Terri Goss Kinzy was named Friday as Illinois State University's next president. She will be the first woman to serve as president.

Unit 5 Hires Director Of Diversity, Equity And Inclusion

Sarah Nardi

May 12, 2021

Dr. Kristal Shelvin has been hired to head Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Unit 5 school district.

\$5 Million 'World Class' Playground Coming to Colene Hoose Elementary

Sarah Nardi

May 12, 2021

Colene Hoose Elementary School in Normal will be home to an innovative natural playground.

Bone Student Center Becomes ISU's New 'Front Door'

Eric Stock

May 7, 2021

Illinois State University has officially opened the renovated Bone Student Center — what it calls the new front door of campus.

ISU Trustees Advance Engineering College, Freeze Tuition, Hike Housing Costs

Eric Stock

May 7, 2021

Illinois State University trustees on Friday took what university president Larry Dietz called a "beginning step" toward establishing a new engineering college on campus.

Pritzker Now Says Budget Can Include Added \$350 Million For K-12 Schools

Jerry Nowicki / Capitol News Illinois

May 7, 2021

Citing an “improved” economic outlook, Gov. JB Pritzker announced Thursday his support to increase evidence-based education funding in the state by \$350 million in fiscal year 2022 which begins July 1.

## ISU Works With Central Illinois Community Colleges On New Elementary Teaching Program

Christine Hatfield

May 7, 2021

As Illinois schools continue to deal with a teacher shortage, Illinois State University is working on a program to bring educators to communities across central Illinois for elementary education. ISU is collaborating with five community colleges to make it possible.

## ISU Student Government Supports COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate

Ryan Denham

May 5, 2021

Illinois State University's student government has endorsed the idea of requiring students to be vaccinated for COVID-19 if they want to attend classes next fall.

## ISU Tuition Freeze, Room/Board Increase Proposed

Charlie Schlenker

May 5, 2021

Illinois State University's Board of Trustees meets Friday to consider increasing room and board fees by 3%, but holding the line on tuition.

## Study Shows Working Mothers Hard Hit By Pandemic-Related Child Care Burdens

Grace Barbic / Capitol News Illinois

May 4, 2021

New research shows pandemic-related child care burdens have magnified economic inequalities for women in the workforce in Illinois.

## Chicago State Senator Seeks To Stop School Dress Code Restrictions On Hair

Christine Hatfield

May 4, 2021

A Chicago state senator wants to withhold funding from schools that apply dress codes to hairstyles. School associations and the Illinois State Board of Education are worried the bill's punishment mechanism goes too far.

## D87 Facilities, Finance Chief Looks Back On 25 Years Of Transforming Schools

Eric Stock

May 4, 2021

District 87's head of facilities and finances Colin Manahan has overseen \$80 million in school improvements over the last 25 years.

## HEALTH AND MEDICINE

## Longtime Center For Human Services Director To Retire

Charlie Schlenker

June 14, 2021

Five years into implementation of the county mental health action plan, the head of the McLean County Center for Human Services in Bloomington said community leaders are trying to identify the next priorities.

## Rodriguez Reflects On 'Whirlwind' Time in McLean County Government

Eric Stock

June 4, 2021

McLean County administrator Camille Rodriguez says her three-plus years in McLean County government have been a whirlwind.

## Senate Republican Leader Pushes For Expanded COVID-19 Liability Protections

April 1, 2021

The top Republican in the state Senate has introduced a bill to shield healthcare providers and others from being held responsible for injuries or deaths related to COVID.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

### Hold On Water Shutoffs Spells Big Bills For Bloomington Landlords

Dana Vollmer

April 12, 2021

Some Bloomington landlords are getting stuck with huge water utility bills their tenants aren't paying during the pandemic.

### Heritage Health To Mandate COVID Vaccines For All Employees

Eric Stock

June 3, 2021

A company that owns more than 50 senior care facilities in Illinois is now mandating all staff get the COVID vaccine.

## HIGHER EDUCATION

### University Of Illinois To Require Vaccines For Those On Campus This Fall

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The University of Illinois system will require that all students receive a COVID-19 vaccination if they plan to be on campus for fall semester 2021.

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Ryan Denham

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### ISU To Name New President Friday; Finalists Not Disclosed

Charlie Schlenker  
May 12, 2021

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Ryan Denham

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Charlie Schlenker

May 5, 2021

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#### Three Students Earn WGLT Scholarship

April 9, 2021

Congratulations to this year's WGLT Scholarship winners! They are Camberyn Kelley, Tiffani Jackson, and Catrina Petersen. Camberyn, Tiffani and Catrina are...

#### ISU Gets Creative To Craft No-Crowd Commencement Experience

Camberyn Kelley

April 9, 2021

Illinois State University is bringing back a few parts of the traditional commencement experience this spring, even if looks and feels a little different.

#### Lawmaker Wants To Bring Early Childhood Bachelor's Programs To Community Colleges

April 8, 2021

A bill that would allow community colleges to grant bachelor's degrees for early childhood education is awaiting consideration before the Senate Higher...

#### POLICE AND COURTS

##### NPD: Shooting Victim May Have Been Targeted

Eric Stock

June 16, 2021

Police in Normal said a man is in stable condition following a shooting Tuesday night.

##### Bloomington Man Sentenced For Supplying Heroin In Overdose Death

Charlie Schlenker

June 7, 2021

A federal judge in Peoria has sentenced a Bloomington man to 20 years in prison for selling heroin to a man who died of a drug overdose. Jacob Schultz, 36, also will serve five years of supervised release after he gets out of prison.

Jamie Snow Gets First Hearing In A Decade In Push For Exoneration

Edith Brady-Lunny

June 28, 2021

Lawyers for Jamie Snow and the state agreed Monday that both sides need more time to discuss issues related to more than 8,000 pages of documents linked to his 2001 conviction on murder charges in the death of William Little.

Insight Into Defense Witnesses Sought Ahead Of B-N Murder Trial

Edith Brady-Lunny

June 22, 2021

The defense lawyer for Amari McNabb must provide prosecutors with opinions from two expert witnesses by July 1, a judge ruled on Tuesday, after prosecutors complained that they have not been told specifics about the experts' opinions ahead of McNabb's July 26 trial on murder charges.

After 18 Exonerations, John Hanlon To Retire From Illinois Innocence Project

Edith Brady-Lunny

June 16, 2021

John Hanlon will retire June 30 as executive director of the Illinois Innocence Project at University of Illinois Springfield. Over the past 12 years, Hanlon and a team of lawyers, students and volunteers has helped exonerate 18 defendants.

McLean County's Longest Pending Criminal Case Inches Forward

Edith Brady-Lunny

June 9, 2021

The rape and child pornography cases against Jeffrey Martin took a baby step forward on Tuesday after a judge gave Martin 45 days to continue his search for a new lawyer in the county's longest pending criminal case.

Report: Patient Was Given Toxic Level Of Medication

Edith Brady-Lunny

June 7, 2021

A Bloomington man received toxic levels of medication during his 2019 stay at a state mental health center, according to recent findings by the Regional Human Rights Authority, based on the agency's investigation into allegations of abuse.

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## Sheriff Sandage Reflects On Changes And Achievements

Charlie Schlenker

June 4, 2021

McLean County Sheriff Jon Sandage said when he leaves office at the end of next year he hopes society will continue improving programs to reduce repeat crimes. Sandage said he thinks reducing penalties for drugs is a bad direction society is taking, but so is ignoring needs for treatment.

## Survey On Attitudes Toward Bloomington Police Useful Despite Apparent Data Manipulation

Jack Graue

June 4, 2021

A survey designed to find out how Bloomington residents feel about their police department came back with some odd data that call into question the reliability of the effort. But those who conducted the survey said there remain useful elements from the responses.

## McLean County Sheriff Jon Sandage Won't Seek 3rd Term

Charlie Schlenker

June 1, 2021

McLean County Sheriff Jon Sandage said Tuesday he'll call it quits after his second term is over at the end of next year. He was last elected in 2018.

## Ex-Ridgeview Teacher Gets 8 Years In Prison For Sexually Assaulting Former Student

Edith Brady-Lunny

June 1, 2021

A former Ridgeview High School teacher was sentenced to eight years in prison Tuesday for sexually assaulting a former student.

## State Cites Low Vaccination Rate Among Prison Workers In Mental Health Litigation

Edith Brady-Lunny

May 25, 2021

In a response filed Monday, the state notes that just 13 prisoners – down from 20 when the injunction request was made April 26—have COVID-19 and 76 cases are reported among staff.



## Lawyers: Ruling May Not Impact State's Young Offenders

Edith Brady-Lunny

May 14, 2021

A recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling considered a disappointing setback for efforts to spare young offenders from a life in prison without parole is expected to have little impact in Illinois, where changes in the law shield most youth from a lifetime behind bars.

## BCPA Director Pleads Guilty To Battery

Edith Brady-Lunny

May 7, 2021

## Rural Police Officer Reaches Plea Deal In Misconduct, Computer Tampering Case

Edith Brady-Lunny

April 26, 2021

A rural McLean County police officer pleaded "no contest" on Monday to official misconduct and computer tampering in a plea deal.

## Bloomington Man Pleads Guilty To Hate Crime In Motorcycle Attack

Ryan Denham

April 23, 2021

UPDATED 4:50 p.m. | A Bloomington man has pleaded guilty to a hate crime after riding his motorcycle into a group of protesters during a 2020 protest.

## House Passes Bill To Reclassify Small-Amount Drug Possession As Misdemeanor

April 22, 2021

A bill to lessen penalties for possessing and selling small amounts of drugs, including heroin and cocaine, narrowly passed out of the state House of Representatives.

## Suspect Arrested In Fatal Stabbing On Bloomington's West Side

Charlie Schlenker

April 9, 2021

UPDATED 2:20 p.m. | A 44-year-old Normal man has been arrested in connection with a fatal stabbing on Bloomington's west side, police said.

## 2 Men Booked For October Murder In Bloomington

Charlie Schlenker

April 1, 2021

Authorities have served murder warrants on two people in connection with an October killing on Bloomington's west side, and are still seeking a third.

## POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

Mayor Koos: Underpass Likely In Next Year's Budget

Charlie Schlenker

June 8, 2021

The Town of Normal is poised to move ahead in the next budget year with the long-debated underpass project in Uptown Normal. The project first came up 12 years ago and it will be another two or three years before it's done.

Southern Illinois Could Be Target For Congressional District Loss

Eric Stock

April 28, 2021

A political scientist predicts southern Illinois will lose a congressional district when the Democrat-controlled Illinois legislature redraws the maps.

Heartland Community College Receives \$7.5 Million State Investment To Fund Manufacturing Programs

Christine Hatfield

April 28, 2021

Normal's Heartland Community College is one of two schools set to receive millions of dollars in investments from the state to set up new training in EV manufacturing.

Illinois To Lose Congressional Seat Based on 2020 Census

Tim Kirsininkas / Capitol News Illinois

April 26, 2021

The U.S. Census Bureau announced Monday Illinois will lose a seat in Congress based on the results of the 2020 census.

Sen. Barickman: Voters Will Determine Republican Party's Direction

Christine Hatfield

April 26, 2021

It's been three months since former President Donald Trump left office. Even now, he continues to shape the modern Republican Party.

COVID Funeral Assistance Program Causes Headaches For Applicants

Dana Vollmer

April 26, 2021

The federal government is offering reimbursement to cover funeral expenses for those who have died from COVID-19.

#### Bloomington Owes Normal Over Dropped Sewer Bill Remittance

Charlie Schlenker

April 22, 2021

A nine-year oversight means the City of Bloomington owes money to the Town of Normal.

#### McLean County Hears Several Ideas To Reshape Board Districts

Eric Stock

April 21, 2021

A McLean County Board committee heard several recommendations Tuesday to reshape the county's top governing body.

#### Bloomington Council: Special Meeting On Possible Carrillo Censure

Charlie Schlenker

April 16, 2021

The Bloomington City Council will have a special meeting on Monday to talk about censuring council member Jenn Carrillo.

#### Fruin Won't Challenge Narrow Bloomington Council Result

Eric Stock

April 8, 2021

It appears there won't be a recount in Bloomington's closest city council race. Retired Illinois State University professor Tom Crumpler leads Realtor Jim Fruin.

#### Q&A With Rodney Davis On What Democrats' Election Bill Would (And Wouldn't) Do

Dana Vollmer

April 8, 2021

Republicans and Democrats are at odds over a sweeping election bill that seeks to reform voting, campaign finance, and ethics laws.

#### Bloomington Progressives Regroup, See Positives Despite Election Losses

Eric Stock

April 8, 2021

It's easy to see that the municipal election in Bloomington did not go well for progressives. The People First Coalition went 0-for-4 at the ballot box.

#### Higher City-Town Voter Turnout Still Comparatively Puny

Charlie Schlenker

April 7, 2021

In Normal, 2,000 more voters cast ballots Tuesday than have ever voted in a town election before. And yet, that's still just over 25% of registered voters.

Democrats Pick Up Normal Township Clerk, Split Trustee Spots With GOP

Charlie Schlenker

April 7, 2021

Unlike most city and town council races Tuesday, township races were partisan. And in contests for Normal Township trustee, voters elected two Democrats.

SBE Director On Leave After Attempted Online Extortion, Agency Reports

April 6, 2021

One day before Tuesday's consolidated election, the Illinois State Board of Elections executive director was placed on administrative leave.

State Awards Road Grants To McLean County

Charlie Schlenker

April 5, 2021

The Illinois Department of Transportation has awarded \$883,000 to McLean County to upgrade stretches of two roads to handle local truck traffic.

Election 2021: Normal Council Candidates On Pandemic Recovery

Charlie Schlenker

April 2, 2021

Normal Town Council candidates turn the question of pandemic recovery efforts into a litmus test on the past response to the pandemic.

McLean County Panel Rejects Cost Sharing For Drop-Off Recycling

Eric Stock

April 2, 2021

A McLean County government panel doesn't want the county to help fund a drop-off recycling program.

Big Money, New PACs, More Slates: High-Stakes Local Election Cycle Nears Finish Line

Ryan Denham

April 1, 2021

We're nearing the end of a local election cycle unlike any other in recent history. The pandemic has limited the personal contact that's typically the center of campaigns.

## After The Deluge: McLean County Sets Disaster Declaration

Eric Stock

June 30, 2021

McLean County Board Chair John McIntyre has issued a declaration of local disaster following last weekend's storms that caused substantial flooding and other damage to homes, businesses and roads.

## Barickman Questions Significance Of Bond Outlook Change

Charlie Schlenker

June 25, 2021

The Pritzker administration is making too much out of an improvement in the state credit rating, according to a Bloomington state senator.

## Rep. Davis: Biden, Dems Holding Infrastructure Bill 'Hostage'

Eric Stock

June 25, 2021

Congressman Rodney Davis said the Biden administration's bipartisan deal on infrastructure isn't really a deal at all.

## ISU Expungement Clinic Helps People With Criminal Records Get A Fresh Start

Dana Vollmer

June 25, 2021

A pilot program at Illinois State University that is helping low-income people get their lives back after a conviction will continue, with the help of university funding and an endowment.

## Bloomington Seeks To End Emergency Ordinance; Some Changes Could Stay

Eric Stock

June 25, 2021

Bloomington could lift its COVID emergency ordinance on Monday, but some changes caused by the pandemic could become permanent.

## U.S. Marshal And Attorney Recommendations Made For Central Illinois

Charlie Schlenker

June 23, 2021

The U.S. Marshal for central Illinois could continue in that job under the Biden administration.

## Legislative Proposal Would Allow Noncitizens To Vote In School Board Elections

Derek Cantù

June 23, 2021

A proposal in the Illinois Senate would allow noncitizens to vote in local school board elections. But even supporters of the proposal say the legislation is not yet ready for primetime.

#### Normal Council Extends Outdoor Dining Program

Michele Steinbacher

June 21, 2021

The Normal Town Council voted Monday to continue a program that allows on-street dining areas in front of some Uptown restaurants.

#### Reece Satisfied With Council Response To Nord

June 21, 2021

Normal City Manager Pam Reece said she is satisfied with the public way the town council debunked council member Stan Nord's unfounded ethics allegations against Reece during a special meeting on the topic last week. Reece said it was important for the morale of town staff to hear council members respond to Nord because such statements have an impact on any group.

#### B-N Could See Crowded Democratic Primary For Its New Illinois House Seat

Eric Stock

June 21, 2021

Illinois' new political maps could lead to a crowded field of Democrats who want to represent Bloomington-Normal.

#### Q&A: Sen. Dave Koehler On His Plans For Serving Bloomington-Normal

Christine Hatfield

June 21, 2021

The new redistricting maps for state House and Senate seats in Illinois make some significant changes to the boundaries of some legislative districts. Bloomington-Normal and Peoria have not been spared.

#### EEOC Finds State Farm Workers Discriminated On Basis Of Race

Charlie Schlenker

June 19, 2021

The Bloomington Normal NAACP on Juneteenth highlighted what a leader says is a federal government finding of discrimination, retaliation, and racism against Bloomington-based State Farm.

#### Streetside Dining To Become Permanent In Some Parts Of Normal

Charlie Schlenker

June 18, 2021

The Town of Normal will consider making outdoor dining arrangements on streets or sidewalks permanent for some restaurants that began the practice during the pandemic.

#### Normal City Manager Set To Receive Retroactive Pay Raises

Charlie Schlenker

June 18, 2021

A week after most Normal Town Council members publicly backed the professionalism and ethics of City Manager Pam Reece, the council will consider giving her two retroactive pay raises. The lump sum in back pay would be about \$6,900. Reece made \$190,550 in 2019 when the council last renewed her multi-year contract.

#### Q&A: Mayor Mwilambwe On Bloomington's Police Chief Search and Open Meetings Act Violation

Ryan Denham

June 18, 2021

Bloomington's mayor says the city's next police chief will need to have significant experience and be able to navigate the "friction" around policing that's been more prominent since George Floyd's murder.

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#### Bloomington Releases Audio, Minutes From 2017 Closed-Door Meeting On Tax Deal

Eric Stock

June 15, 2021

A majority of Bloomington city council members seemed more concerned with political fallout than any potential litigation when it terminated a tax-sharing agreement with Normal four years ago.

#### Normal Council Members Reproach Nord On Ethics Statements

Charlie Schlenker

June 14, 2021

Six members of the Normal Town Council excoriated the seventh, Stan Nord, for what some called bullying and others slander of City Manager Pam Reece.

## Bloomington Council OKs Buying New Guns For Police

Michele Steinbacher

June 14, 2021

The Bloomington City Council on Monday approved a police request to buy 140 new handguns that police leaders say allows the department to switch to a smaller 9mm model, and have enough weapons on hand to issue city-owned guns to all officers.

## Rep. Brady Still Studying Possible Secretary of State Bid

Eric Stock

June 14, 2021

State Rep. Dan Brady, R-Bloomington, said he's still doing his "homework" on a possible run for Illinois Secretary of State.

## Illinois On Its Way To Allowing Name Changes For Trans People On Marriage Certificates

Christine Hatfield

June 14, 2021

Most states don't allow transgender people to correct their names on marriage certificates, even after going through a legal name change. Legislators and advocates hope to make Illinois the second state to permit marriage certificate name changes.

## McLean County Board Member Resigns

Jack Graue

June 11, 2021

McLean County Board member Logan Smith has announced his resignation from the board, effective immediately. Smith said he has a new job with the City of Mesa, Ariz.

## McLean County Names Interim Administrator; Delays Redistricting

Eric Stock

June 10, 2021

The McLean County Board has named Cassy Taylor interim administrator for six months.

## New Redistricting Maps Create Frustration For Area Political Scientists, Opportunity For County-Level Democrats

Christine Hatfield

June 10, 2021

Gov. JB Pritzker has signed off on new redistricting boundaries for state legislators. Those maps mean some Bloomington-Normal and Peoria residents will see changes in who represents them in state government.



### State To Fund Constitution Trail Extension In Normal

Charlie Schlenker

June 9, 2021

The Illinois Department of Transportation has announced a \$1.205 million grant to build a new section of Constitution Trail in Normal. It will run from Adelaide Street west to Maxwell Park.

### Republican Leaders Sue Over New District Maps

Peter Hancock / Capitol News Illinois

June 9, 2021

Republican leaders in the Illinois House and Senate filed a federal lawsuit Wednesday challenging the constitutionality of the new legislative district maps that Gov. JB Pritzker signed into law June 4.

### Mayor Koos: Underpass Likely In Next Year's Budget

Charlie Schlenker

June 8, 2021

The Town of Normal is poised to move ahead in the next budget year with the long-debated underpass project in Uptown Normal. The project first came up 12 years ago and it will be another two or three years before it's done.

### McLean County Republicans Focus On Legislation's Local Business Impact At Chamber Of Commerce Event

Christine Hatfield

June 8, 2021

McLean County area lawmakers addressed the concerns of local business owners on topics from clean energy to unemployment benefits at a State of the State event Tuesday morning.

### After Delays, Town Now Plans For \$22.7 Million Uptown Underpass By 2024

Samira Kassem

June 7, 2021

The Normal Town Council held a special work session Monday to discuss progress on the long-planned \$22.7 million Uptown Normal underpass project.

### Sheriff Sandage Reflects On Changes And Achievements

Charlie Schlenker

June 4, 2021

McLean County Sheriff Jon Sandage said when he leaves office at the end of next year he hopes society will continue improving programs to reduce repeat crimes. Sandage said he thinks reducing penalties for drugs is a bad direction society is taking, but so is ignoring needs for treatment.

## Survey On Attitudes Toward Bloomington Police Useful Despite Apparent Data Manipulation Jack Graue

June 4, 2021

A survey designed to find out how Bloomington residents feel about their police department came back with some odd data that call into question the reliability of the effort. But those who conducted the survey said there remain useful elements from the responses.

## Pritzker Signs Redistricting Plans For State Legislative, Appellate Court Districts

Peter Hancock / Capitol News Illinois

June 4, 2021

Gov. JB Pritzker signed a pair of bills Friday that redraw state legislative and appellate court districts, despite the fact that official U.S Census data needed to ensure equal representation has not yet been delivered.

## Rodriguez Reflects On 'Whirlwind' Time in McLean County Government

Eric Stock

June 4, 2021

McLean County administrator Camille Rodriguez says her three-plus years in McLean County government have been a whirlwind.

## McLean County Government To Get \$33 Million In COVID Relief

Eric Stock

June 3, 2021

McLean County expects to receive \$33.3 million through the federal American Rescue Plan.

## B-N Mayors Relieved Over State Income Tax Share

Charlie Schlenker

June 3, 2021

Bloomington-Normal mayors said they're pleased the state didn't grab part of the cities' share of income tax money after all.

## Rep. Davis Urges Senate Reconsideration Of Jan. 6 Commission, Pushes Pritzker Veto Of Legislative Maps

Dana Vollmer

June 2, 2021

U.S. Rep. Rodney Davis, R-Taylorville, fears the Senate's rejection of a proposal to create a bipartisan commission to investigate the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol will leave important questions unanswered.

## LaHood Wants Infrastructure Bill Under \$1 Trillion

Eric Stock

June 2, 2021

U.S. Rep. Darin LaHood said he expects fellow Republicans will go along with an infrastructure bill if the Biden administration get it under \$1 trillion.

## McLean County Sheriff Jon Sandage Won't Seek 3rd Term

Charlie Schlenker

June 1, 2021

McLean County Sheriff Jon Sandage said Tuesday he'll call it quits after his second term is over at the end of next year. He was last elected in 2018.

## Lawmakers Pass \$42.3 Billion Budget In Early Morning Hours

Peter Hancock / Capitol News Illinois

June 1, 2021

Illinois lawmakers worked into the early hours of Tuesday morning to pass a \$42.3 billion state budget plan for the upcoming fiscal year that Democrats say would fully fund K-12 education and the state's pension obligations while also paying down a sizeable portion of the state's debt.

## Bill Aiming To Close 'Puppy Mill Pipeline' For Pet Sales Passes State Senate Despite Some Bipartisan Opposition

Christine Hatfield

June 1, 2021

A bill to limit where Illinois pet stores source their cats and dogs from passed the State Senate in the final hours of the General Assembly's session. Supporters of the bill want to close what they call a puppy mill pipeline.

## Lawmakers Pass Stricter Ethics Standards; Some Republicans Say They're Watered Down

Tim Kirsininkas / Capitol News Illinois

June 1, 2021

The measure passed the House 113-5 Monday and the Senate unanimously early Tuesday morning. The bill will only need a signature from the governor to become law.

## Lawmakers Set To Consider \$42.3 Billion Budget

Peter Hancock / Capitol News Illinois

May 31, 2021

Illinois lawmakers are poised to vote Monday night on a proposed \$42.3 billion state budget for the upcoming fiscal year that Democrats say would fully fund K-12 education and the state's pension obligations while also paying down a sizeable portion of the state's debt.

## Elections Omnibus Bill Would Postpone 2022 Primary To June

Raymon Troncoso / Capitol News Illinois

May 31, 2021

Lawmakers are considering a massive omnibus bill that would push back the date of the 2022 primary elections amid other major changes to the state's election code.

State Rep. Lisa Hernandez (D-Cicero) presents legislation drawing new legislative district boundaries on the House floor Friday.

## Partisan Arguments Over Redistricting Ends In Fight Over Identity As Democrats Push Through Maps

Hannah Meisel

May 29, 2021

Illinois Democrats on Friday pushed through new legislative district maps in a whirlwind 12 hours full of partisan rancor — over the objections of Republicans and many community advocacy organizations.

## Illinois Senate Passes Bill Strengthening Legal Protection For Immigrants

Tim Kirsininkas / Capitol News Illinois

May 28, 2021

The Illinois Senate passed a bill Friday which would strengthen legal protections for immigrants and require the closure of immigrant detention centers in the state.

## Marijuana License Reform Legislation Passes Both Houses; Pritzker Says He'll Sign It

Raymon Troncoso / Capitol News Illinois

May 28, 2021

The Illinois Senate passed a bill Friday creating new licenses and lotteries for marijuana dispensary licenses, addressing issues that have plagued the process set forth by a 2019 law legalizing recreational marijuana.

## Lincoln Club Hopes To Save McLean County From Hollowed-Out Political Center

Ryan Denham

May 28, 2021

A social club that's been dormant since the 1970s has come back to life under new leadership, in hopes of creating a safe, less polarized space to talk about issues facing McLean County.

## Bill Passed Out of General Assembly Lets Special Ed Students Who Turn 22 Finish Their School Year

Christine Hatfield

May 28, 2021

A bill to allow special education students who turn 22 to continue with their classwork until the end of the school year has passed unanimously through the State Senate.

#### Democrats' Slightly Tweaked Remap Plans Serve To Bolster Claims Party Heeded Community Input

Hannah Meisel

May 28, 2021

Democrats in Illinois' House and Senate Thursday evening released a second set of proposed legislative district boundary maps with four days left in the spring session.

#### District 87's Food Services Staff Gets Shoutout For Their Pandemic Pivot

Michele Steinbacher

May 27, 2021

The District 87 School Board heard details of how food service staff revamped their system to meet pandemic year needs.

#### Republicans Tie Democratic Mapmaking Effort To Latest Indictment

Raymon Troncoso / Capitol News Illinois

May 26, 2021

Republicans on Wednesday tried to tie an indictment of a longtime lieutenant of former House Speaker Michael Madigan to the Democrats' effort to redraw legislative district lines ahead of the General Assembly's May 31 adjournment.

#### Peoria Mayor Ali Praises New State Senate District Bringing Peoria, Bloomington-Normal Together

Christine Hatfield

May 26, 2021

Peoria Mayor Rita Ali said Wednesday she's Bloomington-Normal and Peoria being drawn into the same State Senate district in the Illinois redistricting maps proposed by Democrats would be good for both areas.

#### McLean County Board Redistricting Panels Show Diversity, Lack 'Younger Voices'

Eric Stock

May 26, 2021

Two McLean County Board members who helped select the 24 community members to lead the county's redistricting efforts say the advisory panels show political balance and gender and ethnic diversity.

#### Bill To Expand Parental Leave For Teachers, School Workers Passes State Senate

Christine Hatfield

May 26, 2021

Teachers and other school workers would receive 30 days of paid sick leave after becoming parents under legislation that passed the Illinois Senate on Wednesday. The bill follows an Illinois Supreme Court ruling last year that limited how new mothers can use maternal leave.

#### Democrats Release New Supreme Court District Maps

Sarah Mansur / Capitol News Illinois

May 25, 2021

Democrats in the Illinois General Assembly on Tuesday released a new proposed Illinois Supreme Court district map, redrawing district lines to maximize Democrats' chances of keeping a majority on the state's highest court.

#### Lawmakers Could Redraw Illinois Supreme Court District Maps

Sarah Mansur / Capitol News Illinois

May 25, 2021

Drawing new district lines for state and federal elections is the main focus for lawmakers when they begin the redistricting process every 10 years.

#### Bloomington Won't Contest Court Ruling Over Open Meeting Violation

Eric Stock

May 25, 2021

Bloomington City Manager Tim Gleason says the city won't contest a court ruling that the city violated the Open Meetings Act in 2017.

#### In Bloomington, City Sees 'Tremendous' Interest In Residential Construction

Ryan Denham

May 25, 2021

Bloomington's city manager says there is so much interest in new residential construction right now that he's had to outsource plan reviews to local architectural firms just to keep up with demand.

#### Bloomington Council OKs \$5 Million To Resurface Streets

Michele Steinbacher

May 24, 2021

The Bloomington City Council has OK'd spending \$5 million for road resurfacing projects this year, the bulk of its annual street repair budget.

#### 3 Retired Judges To Lead McLean County Redistricting Effort

Eric Stock

May 24, 2021

McLean County Board Chair John McIntyre says the county will have three advisory panels that will draft three County Board map proposals.

### Illinois House Republicans Chastise Democrats Over 'Unfair' Redistricting Map Proposals

Christine Hatfield

May 24, 2021

Republican leaders in the Illinois House say the new district maps released by Democrats Friday evening disenfranchise voters as the end of the legislative session draws closer.

### Community Members Gather In Uptown For 'Stand for Palestine' Vigil

Samira Kassem

May 23, 2021

Over 50 people attended a "Stand for Palestine" vigil in Uptown Normal Sunday morning.

### Proposed Legislative Maps Could Boost Democrats' Chances In McLean County

Ryan Denham

May 21, 2021

One Democrat and possibly two could wind up representing parts of Bloomington-Normal if the Democrat-drawn state legislative maps released Friday come to fruition.

### Normal Drops Mask Requirements For Fully-Vaccinated People

Dana Vollmer

May 21, 2021

The Town of Normal is relaxing mask and social distancing requirements for public facilities and employees, following guidance from Gov. JB Pritzker's administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

### IWU Professor: New County Board Maps Would Create More Competitive Races

Eric Stock

May 20, 2021

A political science professor at Illinois Wesleyan endorses the concept of a bipartisan commission to draw new County Board maps.

### Sex Education Standard Update Bill Advances Out Of State Senate Along Party Lines

Christine Hatfield

May 20, 2021

A bill updating Illinois sex education standards passed through the Illinois Senate Thursday after a contentious debate.

### State Plans Early Payoff Of Fed Loans

Peter Hancock / Capitol News Illinois

May 20, 2021

Gov. JB Pritzker and other Democratic leaders announced Thursday that they have agreed to a plan to repay the money Illinois borrowed from the Federal Reserve during the COVID-19 pandemic before the end of the next fiscal year.

Davis, LaHood Split On Vote For Commission On Jan. 6 Capitol Attack

Ryan Denham

May 19, 2021

Three House members from central Illinois voted Wednesday for a bipartisan plan to create a 9/11-style commission to investigate the Jan. 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol.

Illinois Board of Education Moves To Require In-Person Learning For Upcoming School Year

Christine Hatfield

May 19, 2021

The Illinois State Board of Education is supporting a full return to in-person learning in K-12 schools starting this fall, even as members of the board are concerned the resolution leaves certain students behind.

Normal Leaders Review COVID Relief Funds, Police Reforms

Michele Steinbacher

May 17, 2021

The Normal Town Council on Monday discussed how to spend nearly \$11 million in COVID-relief heading to the community. The meeting also included a report from Normal Police Chief Rick Bleichner about the state's new police reforms.

Bloomington City Council Begins Discussion On 'Transformative' Federal COVID Relief Funds

Samira Kassem

May 17, 2021

Bloomington will officially receive nearly \$13.4 million within the next year from a federal COVID-19 relief fund, Finance Director Scott Rathbun told the council Monday.

McLean County Administrator Camille Rodriguez Resigns

Eric Stock

May 14, 2021

McLean County Administrator Camille Rodriguez has told County Board members she is resigning.

Bloomington Election Commission Director Departs

Charlie Schlenker



May 14, 2021

## GOP Leaders Say Moderate Governor Candidate Key In 2022

Sarah Nardi

May 14, 2021

The Lincoln Club of McLean County Thursday evening hosted its inaugural event at the Bloomington Country Club. Billed as an educational forum, the event was entitled "Can Illinois Be Fixed?"

## McLean County To Name Redistricting Panel; Joins Drop-Off Recycling Pact

Eric Stock

May 13, 2021

McLean County will turn to a bipartisan advisory panel to help draw new County Board maps.

## As Congress Mulls Infrastructure Bill, Mayor Mwilambwe Pushes For Hamilton Road Funding

Ryan Denham

May 13, 2021

The federal infrastructure bill being considered in Washington might be what finally gets a long-awaited south Bloomington road project to the finish line.

## B-N, McLean County Governments Don't Track Staff Vaccinations

Eric Stock

May 13, 2021

Government officials in Bloomington, Normal and McLean County say they don't plan to require the COVID-19 vaccine for staff and they don't plan to ask if employees have received the shots.

## What Reps. LaHood, Davis Say About Liz Cheney's Ouster From GOP Leadership

Ryan Denham

May 12, 2021

Central Illinois Republican congressmen on Wednesday tried to shift the focus back to policy issues, after a voice vote to remove Rep. Liz Cheney as conference chair shielded them from taking a recorded roll call vote.

## Illinois Aims To Drive Tourism Growth As Full Reopening Approaches

Christine Hatfield

May 12, 2021

A new tourism campaign aims to help rebuild Illinois' economy as more of the state's population becomes vaccinated. Advocacy groups say tourism recovery will help Illinois stay competitive nationally and globally after the COVID-19 pandemic.

## McLean County Board To Keep 10 Districts With 2 Members Each

Charlie Schlenker

May 11, 2021

At a special meeting Tuesday evening, the McLean County Board voted 17-3 to keep the existing structure of the board at 10 districts with two members per district.

## Bloomington To Reopen All City Facilities First Week Of June

Michele Steinbacher

May 10, 2021

All Bloomington government offices should reopen June 1 or 2, City Manager Tim Gleason told the city council during its meeting Monday.

## Barnett: GOP Turns County Redistricting Into A 'Charade'

Eric Stock

May 10, 2021

A Republican on the McLean County Board says his party has not been transparent about proposed district maps.

## Central Illinois County Clerks Raise Concerns Over Housing Grants As Legislature Considers Fee Increase

Christine Hatfield

May 10, 2021

A group of 10 Central Illinois county clerks say they're against a proposal to raise a fee that funds housing authority grants because of discrepancies in data reporting and unequal distribution of grants across the state.

## McLean County 5-District Plan Gets Early Nod With GOP Defector

Eric Stock

May 6, 2021

A McLean County Board committee has endorsed cutting the number of County Board districts in half, but a key defection from Republicans could put the plan in jeopardy.

## Durbin: Central Illinois Can Become 'EV Silicon Valley Of 21st Century'

Charlie Schlenker

May 6, 2021

Democratic Sen. Dick Durbin said the proposed American Jobs Plan puts \$174 billion toward electric vehicle charging stations and buyer tax credits by 2030.

## Pritzker: Broader 'Bridge Phase' Reopening To Begin Next Week

Peter Hancock / Capitol News Illinois

May 6, 2021

Gov. JB Pritzker said Thursday that Illinois will enter the “bridge” phase to full reopening on Friday, May 14. And barring any reversal of current trends, Phase 5, or full reopening, will begin on June 11.

Sen. Turner Announces Legislation Aiming To Standardize State Election Process

Christine Hatfield

May 6, 2021

A Republican state senator from Beason wants to standardize election practices across the state. She says she wants to bring transparency to the election process.

McLean County Redistricting Focuses On Rural, Urban Divide

Eric Stock

May 5, 2021

The once-every decade process of redrawing political maps has divided the political parties, particularly over the urban-rural split in County Board representation.

Chicago State Senator Seeks To Stop School Dress Code Restrictions On Hair

Christine Hatfield

May 4, 2021

A Chicago state senator wants to withhold funding from schools that apply dress codes to hairstyles. School associations and the Illinois State Board of Education are worried the bill's punishment mechanism goes too far.

Normal Council Approves Key Elements of Rivian Expansion

Michele Steinbacher

May 4, 2021

Rivian’s Twin City footprint is growing: On Monday, the Normal Town Council gave the manufacturing facility’s expansion an overwhelming thumbs up.

State's Attorney: 20-District County Board Plan 'Unconstitutional'

Eric Stock

May 4, 2021

McLean County would have to get voter approval to expand to 20 County Board districts this year, effectively killing a plan several Democrats and allies pushed during the county's redistricting hearings.

Illinois Expands Medicaid Coverage For Mothers

Christine Herman

April 13, 2021

Illinois will now provide Medicaid benefits to eligible mothers for up to 12 months postpartum, a major extension from the previous 60-day limit.

Coleman, DeHaai, Gozur Lead In Unit 5 School Board Race

Ryan Denham

April 6, 2021

Three newcomers were elected to the Unit 5 school board on Tuesday. Kentrica Coleman, Jeremy DeHaai and Stan Gozur were the top vote-getters.

Mwilambwe Comes Out On Top In 3-Way Bloomington Mayoral Race

Ryan Denham

April 6, 2021

UPDATED 12:55 p.m. | Mboka Mwilambwe claimed victory Tuesday night after defeating two less-experienced opponents in the Bloomington mayoral election.

## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Top Illinois Military Leader Says Cyber Threats Are Growing, Preparation Is Needed

Dana Vollmer

June 30, 2021

Illinois's top military officer says the growing threat of cyber attacks requires more resources to tackle them.

5 Years Later: How MetroNet's B-N Footprint Has Grown

Dana Vollmer

June 8, 2021

After five years in Bloomington-Normal, MetroNet says it has made good on promises to offer high-speed internet service in virtually every corner of town.

Consumer Group Seeks More Oversight Of Usage-Based Auto Insurance

Ryan Denham

June 7, 2021

A consumer advocacy group has urged state regulators to do more to scrutinize the growing usage-based auto insurance business in hopes of repeating what it calls a pattern of discrimination.

## TRANSPORTATION

Bloomington Council Votes To End 15-Month Emergency Ordinance

Samira Kassem

June 28, 2021

The Bloomington City Council voted Monday night to end an ordinance that declared a local emergency and allowed emergency measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The ordinance had been in place for just over 15 months.

McLean County Rainfall Tops 100-Year Flood Projections

By Dana Vollmer, Eric Stock, Charlie Schlenker

June 28, 2021

Severe thunderstorms and flash flooding in McLean County over the weekend uprooted pavement, stranded drivers, and filled basements with water. South Bloomington, Heyworth, Downs, and LeRoy bore the brunt of it, logging more than 10 inches of rain over the course of three days.

Summer Storms Hit McLean County For 2nd Straight Day

Ryan Denham

June 26, 2021

Summer storms hit McLean County for the second straight day Saturday, with fresh downpours and another series of tornado and flood warnings. McLean County faced at least two tornado warnings Saturday afternoon—the first near northeast Normal and Hudson, the other in the rural east.

Connect Transit Seeks Environmental Assessment Of Former Pantagraph Building

Charlie Schlenker

June 14, 2021

The interim director of Bloomington-Normal's bus system said Monday the timeline on a new \$18-20 million downtown transfer center is unclear, though it remains roughly two years.