

## Third Quarter 2021 WGLT ISSUES AND PROGRAMS

July 2021 – September 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)

### **Politics and Government**

#### [Normal Council Approves Love's Truck Stop, RV Park On 30-Acre Site](#)

[Michele Steinbacher](#)

September 20, 2021

On Monday night, the Normal Town Council unanimously approved a project to develop a 30-acre truck stop, convenience store and recreational vehicle (RV) park off of Interstate 55 in the town's northwest corner.

#### [Bloomington Council Signals Using Existing Aid Programs First To Help Flood Victims](#)

[Charlie Schlenker](#)

September 20, 2021

Bloomington City Council members signaled to staff Monday night they would like to use existing aid and improvement programs to help flood victims before considering direct aid from the city. That will come back for a vote next week.

#### [Town Begins Firefighter Coronavirus Testing](#)

[Charlie Schlenker](#)

September 20, 2021

The Town of Normal is starting coronavirus testing this week for firefighters who have not been vaccinated. City Manager Pam Reece said it's in response to an executive order from Gov. JB Pritzker.

[McLean County Nursing Home Staff Get Paid To Get COVID Vaccine](#)  
[Eric Stock](#)

September 17, 2021

McLean County government wants to provide a financial incentive to staff at the county-run nursing home to get the COVID vaccine. Nearly 40% of staff at the McLean County Nursing Home in Normal have not been vaccinated, according to state data.

[Federal COVID Relief Boosts McLean County's \\$129M Budget Plan](#)  
[Eric Stock](#)

September 16, 2021

McLean County government is looking at a budget increase of about 25% next year as the county uses federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds, and additional revenue from retail and cannabis sales and other sources to fuel more pandemic relief and a major boost in highway work.

[Illinois Lawmakers Question Enforcement Of School Mask Mandates](#)  
[Peter Hancock / Capitol News Illinois](#)

September 14, 2021

Expressing concern that the Illinois State Board of Education might have overstepped its bounds by threatening to withhold funding from school districts that do not enforce its mask mandate, a legislative panel on Tuesday urged the agency to put its policies into formal rules.

[Report Measures Impact of Eliminating Cash Bail In Illinois](#)  
[Charlie Schlenker](#)

September 13, 2021

A new report from the Chicago Civic Federation shows most county circuit court clerks in Illinois will lose about 11% of their general fund fee revenue when cash bail is eliminated in 2023. Bond payments can go to a variety of things, including court-ordered fees, fines, restitution, and bond processing fees. It's that last category that helps fund circuit clerk operations.

[Illinois Energy Bill Heads To Pritzker, Who Says He Will Sign It](#)  
[Jerry Nowicki / Capitol News Illinois](#)

September 13, 2021

The Illinois Senate put the final legislative stamp on an energy regulation overhaul bill Monday, sending it to Gov. JB Pritzker, who says he will sign it.

### [An Advocate Fights For Equity In New Energy Legislation](#)

[Sarah Nardi](#)

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September 13, 2021

Reverend Tony Pierce helped steer new energy legislation in Illinois toward a focus on equity.

### [Bloomington To Consider Utility Shutoff Ban Through End Of September](#)

[Eric Stock](#)

September 10, 2021

The City of Bloomington could restore its moratorium on utility shutoffs, but only for a few weeks. The city council on Monday will consider a request to stop utility shutoffs through the end of September.

### [House Passes Energy Bill With Labor, Environmental Groups On Board](#)

[Jerry Nowicki / Capitol News Illinois](#)

September 10, 2021

The Illinois House approved an energy regulation and decarbonization bill Thursday, a major step forward for a wide-ranging omnibus bill that had eluded lawmakers throughout the legislative session and the governor's three years in office.

### [Normal Library Collects, Shares Personal 9/11 Stories In New Exhibit](#)

[Eric Stock](#)

September 9, 2021

The Normal Public Library has opened an exhibit that includes an oral history from McLean County residents recounting their 9/11 stories 20 years after the attacks.

### [Afghanistan War, 9/11 Are Entwined In B-N Veteran's Mind](#)

[Charlie Schlenker](#)

September 9, 2021

Some people have moved beyond the anguish of 9/11. For others, the pain is raw and new two decades later. For many 9/11 is history that has shaped the nation. Others believe it continues to echo in our national image and policies.

[9/11 Impact On Civil Liberties Runs Deep After Two Decades](#)  
[Charlie Schlenker](#)

September 9, 2021

Two decades after the 9/11 attacks, the nation has not yet deeply reconsidered the national security response to the tragedy and whether the rights of citizens have eroded, according to the ACLU of Illinois.

[One Year After Teachers' Retirement System Head's Departure, Report Details More Turnover At Top](#)  
[Hannah Meisel](#)

September 8, 2021

One year after the head of Illinois' largest public employee pension fund resigned due to what the fund has only described as "performance issues," a recently published report by the state's chief ethics officer reveals the circumstances behind the departures of two more former high-ranking officials at the pension fund in 2020.

[Audit: Normal Finances In Good Shape](#)  
[Michele Steinbacher](#)

September 7, 2021

Moviegoers visiting the historic Normal Theater now can add a brew to their view. On Tuesday, the town council voted to allow alcohol sales at regular events there, as well as in surrounding areas in Uptown, during certain town-sponsored events and festivals.

[Davis, LaHood Eager To See COVID Jobless Benefits Expire](#)  
[Eric Stock](#)

September 3, 2021

Expanded jobless benefits in the U.S. are set to expire next week. The two U.S. House members who represent Bloomington-Normal told McLean County business leaders they believe allowing those benefits to expire will put more Americans back to work.

[LaHood Calls For Resignations After Afghanistan Troop Withdrawal](#)  
[Eric Stock](#)

September 2, 2021

Central Illinois congressman Darin LaHood says two top Biden administration officials should resign over the U.S. troop withdrawal from Afghanistan.

[Democrats Forge Ahead With Redistricting Redo; Community Advocacy Groups Claim Deja Vu](#)  
[Hannah Meisel](#)

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August 31, 2021

Just three months after Democrats pushed new legislative maps through the General Assembly in the waning days of spring legislative session, lawmakers are back in Springfield on Tuesday week to fix those same maps, lest a federal court take mapmaking power out of their hands one way or another.

[Masks Mandated Indoors In Illinois; Vaccines Required For Teachers, Health Care Workers](#)  
[Jerry Nowicki / Capitol News Illinois](#)

August 26, 2021

The statewide mask mandate indoors is back, and educators and health care professionals will be required to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, Gov. JB Pritzker announced Thursday amid an ongoing surge in the pandemic that first arrived in Illinois in March 2020.

[Local News](#)  
[Help Arrives For People Who Represent Themselves In Court](#)  
[Charlie Schlenker](#)

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August 20, 2021

Not everybody has a lawyer when they go to court, but a new grant from the State Supreme Court Commission on Access to Justice will help increase collaboration and resources for people who represent themselves in McLean County and around the Eleventh Judicial Circuit.

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## [Rep. Davis: Light U.S. Presence Could Have Prevented Taliban Takeover In Afghanistan](#) [Eric Stock](#)

August 19, 2021

Central Illinois congressman Rodney Davis believes Americans would support maintaining a footprint of a few thousand soldiers in Afghanistan indefinitely to help keep the peace.

## [Rep. Brady Wants Disaster Relief Rules Eased Following Flooding](#) [Eric Stock](#)

August 19, 2021

An Illinois lawmaker from Bloomington says the government should lower loss requirements for financial relief after severe storms and other emergencies.

## [Normal Council OKs Zoning Changes For One Normal Plaza](#) [Michele Steinbacher](#)

August 16, 2021

After a vote delayed more than a year, the Normal Town Council on Monday changed zoning rules in the One Normal Plaza development, stopping short of allowing any wine and liquor shops there.

## [Bloomington Council Signals More Sewer Spending And Research On Direct Flood Aid](#) [Charlie Schlenker](#)

August 16, 2021

The Bloomington City Council Monday evening expressed an appetite to expedite the next two phases of the Locust-Colton sewer separation project and other

measures in the wake of record flooding and sewage backups during heavy rainfall in late June.

[Bloomington PD Chief Finalists Discuss Trust, Collaboration, Leadership](#)  
[Eric Stock](#)

August 16, 2021

Bloomington's two finalists for police chief discussed public trust, legal immunity for officers and sending social workers on police calls as they got their first introduction to the public and the media on Monday at the Government Center.

[10 Candidates File For Bloomington Council Vacancy](#)  
[Eric Stock](#)

August 16, 2021

Bloomington Mayor Mboka Mwilambwe will interview 10 candidates who filed to fill a city council vacancy. That's how many Ward 6 residents who applied for the city ahead of the deadline.

[McLean County Board To Resume Streaming Committee Meetings](#)  
[Eric Stock](#)

August 12, 2021

The McLean County Board has approved paying for overtime to enable county IT staff to resume video livestreaming of all committee meetings.

[SBA Approves 11 Home Loans In McLean County Following June Flooding](#)  
[Eric Stock](#)

August 10, 2021

Nearly a dozen McLean County homeowners have received Small Business Administration loans to help pay for damages to their property caused by heavy flooding in late June.

[First Lawsuit Filed Over Pritzker's School Mask Mandate](#)  
[Hannah Meisel](#)

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August 9, 2021

Prolific anti-COVID mitigation attorney Tom DeVore on Monday filed suit over Gov. JB Pritzker's mandate requiring all students, faculty and staff at Illinois

schools wear masks in the face of COVID's more contagious Delta variant spreading across the state.

### [CIRA To Receive Almost \\$2.9 Million In Pandemic Relief](#)

[Charlie Schlenker](#)

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August 5, 2021

The Central Illinois Regional Airport in Bloomington will get almost \$2.9 million in pandemic relief money from the federal government, U.S. Sens. Tammy Duckworth and Dick Durbin announced Thursday.

### [GOP Candidates Oppose New COVID Masking Guidelines](#)

[Jennifer Fuller](#)

August 5, 2021

Three men running for the GOP nomination for Illinois governor say they're opposed to new masking and vaccination rules being implemented.

### [Normal Council OKs Plan to Standardize Economic Incentives](#)

[Michele Steinbacher](#)

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August 3, 2021

The Normal Town Council on Monday gave the thumbs up to a plan to standardize economic incentives for companies locating in the area's enterprise zone.

### [Normal Council To Consider Uniform Economic Incentive Package](#)

[Charlie Schlenker](#)

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July 30, 2021

The Normal Town Council will take up a long-awaited economic development initiative on Monday.

### [Q&A: Bloomington's City Manager Talks Infrastructure Timetable And Denied Flood Claims](#)

[Ryan Denham](#)

July 27, 2021

City Manager Tim Gleason says Bloomington is in an "infrastructure chapter" of its history right now. But after last month's historic rains, some residents want to skip to the end of the story a little quicker.



[Bloomington Seeks Applications For Ward 6 Council Vacancy](#)  
[Eric Stock](#)

July 27, 2021

Bloomington is accepting applications for a city council vacancy in Ward 6.

[SBA Approves Disaster Loans For McLean County Residents, Businesses, Nonprofits](#)  
[Eric Stock](#)

July 26, 2021

The U.S. Small Business Administration has approved a disaster declaration for McLean County.

[Governor Seeks Disaster Declaration For McLean County Flooding](#)  
[Eric Stock](#)

July 23, 2021

McLean County residents and business owners whose property was damaged or destroyed in last week's flash flooding may be able to apply for relief through the Small Business Administration soon.

[Lorenz Hesitant But Hopeful On Uptown Underpass](#)  
[Charlie Schlenker](#)

July 21, 2021

Normal Town Council member Kathleen Lorenz keeps expressing reservations about a \$24 million Uptown underpass project and yet keeps voting for it over a period of years. She said during a WGLT Sound Ideas interview, she is taking a leap of faith.

[ISU Wants To Sell Long-Dormant Shelbourne Apartments](#)  
[Charlie Schlenker](#)

July 20, 2021

Illinois State University is getting ready to sell 26 acres of prime real estate in the heart of north Normal. On Friday, trustees will decide whether to declare the decommissioned Shelbourne Apartments as surplus property.

[Central Illinois Affordable Housing Shortage Unchanged By Pandemic](#)  
[Charlie Schlenker](#)

July 20, 2021

It takes pay of more than \$16.40 an hour for a full-time worker to afford a two-bedroom apartment in Bloomington-Normal and Peoria. That's according to a new report from Housing Action Illinois and the National Low Income Housing Coalition.

[Duckworth Calls On Congress To Immediately Reimburse National Guard For January 6 Deployment Costs](#)  
[Tim Shelley](#)

July 20, 2021

U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth says Congress needs to get the National Guard reimbursed for the half billion dollars it spent responding to the January 6 insurrection on Capitol Hill.

[Bloomington Leaders Learn More About June Floods, Sewer Line Issues](#)  
[Michele Steinbacher](#)

July 19, 2021

How Bloomington responded to extensive flooding last month, and how the disaster impacts infrastructure improvement plans, continue to dominate city leaders' public discussions.

[Carrillo To Resign From Bloomington City Council](#)  
[Eric Stock](#)

July 19, 2021

Bloomington City Council member Jenn Carrillo plans to resign at the end of August.

[Smaller McLean County Communities Wait For \\$2.3M In COVID Relief Funds](#)  
[Eric Stock](#)

July 19, 2021

Illinois cities and towns of fewer than 50,000 residents are still waiting on the last round of COVID relief funding.

[New Tech Tool To Help Normal Street Repair](#)  
[Charlie Schlenker](#)

July 16, 2021

A van with laser scanners will drive all 400-plus lane miles in the town to see just how good or bad the streets are. Town Engineer Ryan Otto said the mapping can detect differences in depths of just a few millimeters. That's a lot less than the average pothole. Otto said there's a reason for that.

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[Local News](#)

[McLean County Approves 5th Wind Farm; Names Rogal To Board Vacancy](#)  
[Eric Stock](#)

July 15, 2021

The McLean County Board on Thursday approved construction of a \$350 million wind farm project in the southeastern corner of the county.

[Bloomington Mayor: Don't Reach 'Conclusions In Haste' Over Flooding, Sewer Backups](#)  
[Eric Stock](#)

July 15, 2021

Bloomington Mayor Mboka Mwilambwe says he empathizes with residents who are still cleaning out flooded basements following last month's heavy storms, but he asks the public not to "reach conclusions in haste" about the city's response.

['We Have Zero Leverage': Eviction Ban Leaves Landlords Few Options](#)  
[Sarah Nardi](#)

July 13, 2021

For some landlords, the end to the eviction moratorium can't come soon enough.

[Flood Victims to Bloomington City Council: Fix Sewers Now](#)  
[Michele Steinbacher](#)

July 12, 2021

Nearly a dozen residents of a neighborhood hit hard during last month's flooding addressed the Bloomington City Council on Monday, with many emotionally recounting flooding and sewers backing up. Several blamed the city for not fixing that area's combined sewer system before other areas.

[Rogal Poised To Join McLean County Board After Pyne Withdraws](#)  
[Eric Stock](#)

July 12, 2021

Jim Rogal is expected to be named to fill a McLean County Board vacancy after the only other candidate withdrew from the race and endorsed him.

[Career Deputy Running For McLean County Sheriff](#)  
[Charlie Schlenker](#)

July 12, 2021

A 24-year McLean County Sheriff's Deputy said Monday he will run for Sheriff. Lieutenant Matt Lane is the Support Services Commander of the Department.

[Mayor Koos: Fire Pension Changes Erase Previous Savings](#)

July 12, 2021

The Mayor of Normal said lawmakers helped with fire pension funding a couple years ago and during the spring session of the General Assembly. It now appears they neutralized the benefit from the action.

[McLean County Still Compiling Flood Damage Reports; Relief Unknown](#)  
[Eric Stock](#)

July 12, 2021

McLean County Emergency Management is still compiling damage claims from last month's severe storms and its acting director says it's not clear how much money might be available for flooded-out home and business owners

[Durbin Pushes For Lower Drug Costs, Movement On Infrastructure](#)  
[Eric Stock](#)

July 9, 2021

U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., has proposed a bill to require drug manufacturers to list their drug prices in their consumer ads.

[2 File For Vacant McLean County Board Seat](#)  
[Eric Stock](#)

July 9, 2021

Two candidates filed for a McLean County Board vacancy for areas of west and northwest Normal.

[Libertarian-Leaning Think Tank Branches Out To Candidate Recruitment](#)  
[Hannah Meisel](#)

July 8, 2021

The libertarian-leaning Illinois Policy Institute will be trying its hand at candidate recruitment this summer and fall.

[Lt. Gov. Stratton Talks Food Access And Equity With Midwest Food Bank](#)  
[Dana Vollmer](#)

July 6, 2021

The COVID-19 pandemic isn't over, and neither is the increased community need for food. Lt. Gov. Juliana Stratton visited the Midwest Food Bank (MFB) in Normal on Tuesday to discuss the continued challenge of food insecurity, which has been exacerbated by the pandemic.

[Rep. Davis Heralds Federal Help For CIRA; Says Infrastructure Plan Misses The Mark](#)  
[Dana Vollmer](#)

July 6, 2021

Airports around the country, including Central Illinois Regional Airport (CIRA), are struggling with short staffing of air traffic controllers. A bipartisan bill sponsored by U.S. Rep. Rodney Davis, R-Taylorville, aims to address that.

[McLean County Tallies Flood Damage Ahead Of Deadline](#)  
[Charlie Schlenker](#)

July 1, 2021

McLean County emergency officials said Thursday time is already running out to register damage from last weekend's flooding.

## **Arts and Culture**

### **McHistory: Early Settlers Battled Prairie Fire To Tame The Land**

[Charlie Schlenker](#)

September 27, 2021

There is not much prairie left in Illinois. Once, there was a waving sea of tall perennial flowers and grasses across much of the state. Now there is .01% of the original prairie left in Illinois.

### **Datebook: MIOpera Showcases 'La Traviata' On Film**

[Charlie Schlenker](#)

September 24, 2021

MIOpera had great success earlier this year with a live production of the "The Barber of Seville," a classic comic opera. Now, the company that brings a sometimes hard-to-find artform to Bloomington-Normal is putting on Giuseppe Verdi's "La Traviata," a very different work.

### **Bloomington Library Pitches Revised Expansion Plan To Council**

[Charlie Schlenker](#)

September 21, 2021

The Bloomington Public Library has presented two options for expansion to the city council. One costs \$20.7 million, the other \$2 million more. The difference is a two-level parking structure.

### **McHistory: Dr. William Hill, A Man Of Many Contradictions**

[Charlie Schlenker](#)

September 16, 2021

A 19th century Bloomington doctor was a respected physician who was accused of stealing corpses.

**[DACA Recipient, Artist Fidencio Fifield-Perez Shares Experiences During Normal Visit](#)**

[Jordan Mead](#)

September 15, 2021

To kick off the first day of Hispanic Heritage Month, the Legalities of Being event at the Normal Theatre will honor the work of Fidencio Fifield-Perez.

LISTEN • 3:44

**[Datebook: Community Players Stage 'The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime'](#)**

[Ariele Jones](#)

September 9, 2021

**[Datebook: Make Music Normal Returns To Uptown](#)**

[Ryan Denham](#)

September 3, 2021

The sounds of great music will once again bounce around Uptown Normal as Make Music Normal returns after a one-year COVID hiatus.

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## **Datebook: Normal Public Library Remembers 9/11 With New Interactive Exhibit**

[Lauren Warnecke](#)

September 3, 2021

Where were you when it happened? That is what Normal Public Library is asking McLean County residents as the 20th anniversary of 9/11 approaches. An immersive exhibit is on public view in the library's gallery from Sept. 7-30.

## **Datebook: ISU's Freestage Theater Explores Arts And AI**

[Charlie Schlenker](#)

August 20, 2021

The new play, "The Hologram in the Mirror," premieres Friday evening in central Illinois and runs through Sunday. It posits artificial intelligence will disrupt the arts.

## **Excitement Takes Center Stage as BCPA Announces New Season**

[Sarah Nardi](#)

August 20, 2021

After a year of COVID shutdowns, the lights are back on at the Bloomington Center for the Performing Arts (BCPA) in downtown Bloomington.

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## **Datebook: Live Music and Medici Together Again With Return of Craft Beer And Jazz Fest**



[Lauren Warnecke](#)

August 12, 2021

Booze and jazz music are common bedfellows. Rarer is the pairing of jazz with craft beer in a family-friendly environment. Saturday in Uptown Normal, Medici revives its popular street festival dedicated to all three with live bands, craft brews, food and fun for the whole family.

### **Datebook: Illinois Art Station's New Home Opens Next Month**

[Ariele Jones](#)

August 11, 2021

Illinois Art Station's new facility at 101 E. Vernon Ave. in Normal opens in September, with plans for a Pop Into IAS artmaking event and grand opening celebration and fundraiser.

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### **First Backyard Tire Fire Album In A Decade Is A Rootsy Gem**

[Jon Norton](#)

September 8, 2021

Backyard Tire Fire's new album drops Friday. They perform at the Black Dirt Music Festival in Bloomington on Saturday. Wilco headlines the fest.

### **Miles Ahead Brings Soul And R&B (And Everything Else) To Cultural Fest**

[Jon Norton](#)

August 18, 2021

The Bloomington soul/R&B/gospel quintet Miles Ahead plays Cultural Fest at Miller Park in Bloomington on Saturday night.

### **Pandemic Vacation Fodder For New Osmium House Album**

[Jon Norton](#)

August 17, 2021

Denver-based psych-rockers Osmium House will introduce their new album “Mendocino County” at Nightshop in Bloomington on Wednesday night.

### **Saxophonist Lisella Martin Embraces Rich Music History of East St. Louis**

[Jon Norton](#)

August 16, 2021

When saxophonist Lisella (pronounced: lee-SELL-ah) Martin headlines this Saturday’s Front Street Music Festival in downtown Bloomington, she’ll proudly bring with her to the stage the rich musical history of East St. Louis, a city often in the national spotlight for various troubles.

### **Author Says 'Americana' Is Grown-Up Rock & Roll**

[Jon Norton](#)

August 11, 2021

Author John Milward connects American music legends like The Carter Family and Hank Williams with today's big stars including Jason Isbell and Brandi Carlisle.

### **Normal Names Mike Matejka As 2021's Citizen Of The Year**

[Charlie Schlenker](#)

August 3, 2021

Normal Mayor Chris Koos has named a former Bloomington City Council member as the 2021 Normal Citizen of the Year.

### **Datebook: MIOpera Presents Timeless Farce With A Clever Barber**

[Charlie Schlenker](#)

July 30, 2021

"The Barber of Seville" has been popular for 300 years give or take. The play was in 1775. Mozart did it and then Rossini did it in 1814. Now, MIOpera is doing it in Bloomington-Normal on Aug. 7 at Heartland Community College's Astroth auditorium.

### **Familiarity Breeds Harmony For Good Morning Bedlam**

[Jon Norton](#)

July 28, 2021

The Minneapolis-based Americana-folk trio Good Morning Bedlam is tight — personally and professionally.

### **Saxophonist Christopher McBride Embraces The Entire African American Music Experience**

[Jon Norton](#)

July 21, 2021

When saxophonist Christopher McBride and his band “The Whole Proof” play Jazz UpFront in Bloomington Saturday night, they’ll bring “the entire African-American experience with them.”

### **Adie Mendez Says Confidence Comes From Jazz Background**

[Jon Norton](#)

July 14, 2021

Adie Mendez won't release her debut album until later this year. But raves for her collaborative songwriting with other Bloomington-Normal artists and her live performances are already trickling in. The 17-year old U-High student - an IMEA All-State Vocal Jazz selection for 3 years running - said that strong jazz foundation is a common thread through all her music.

### **Blues Traveler Still Living The Dream**

[Jon Norton](#)

July 9, 2021

Blues Traveler guitarist Chan Kinchla explains how band members are still living dream they had as teenagers in New Jersey.

### **Psych Geeks: 'Black Widow' And Marvel's Next Phase Of Cultural Influence**

[Ryan Denham](#)

July 9, 2021

Marvel returns to the multiplex this weekend with the release of the long-awaited "Black Widow," starring Scarlett Johansson. The Psych Geeks are here to dissect it.

### **Obsidian Lit: Black Literary Ecosystem Is Healthy, But Underfunded**

[Dana Vollmer](#)

July 3, 2021

A Normal-based Black literary organization is calling for financial support of African and African diaspora artists and the publications that uplift them.

### **Bloomington-Normal Youth Learn To Understand Complex Emotions Through Hip-Hop**

[Jon Norton](#)

July 2, 2021

Youth in Bloomington-Normal are getting an opportunity to understand complex emotions through hip-hop music.

### **Bloomington Attorney Donates 1854 Lincoln Letter To Museum**

[Charlie Schlenker](#)

July 1, 2021

A Bloomington attorney and Lincoln scholar has given an 1854 letter Lincoln wrote to a Peoria Attorney to the Abraham Lincoln Library and Presidential Museum in Springfield.

### **Science and Technology**

### **Bloomington Airport Director Sees 'Constant Evolution' In 20 Years Since 9/11**

[Charlie Schlenker](#)

September 9, 2021

Of all the many shifts and twists in U.S. society since the twin towers fell 20 years ago, none may be quite as profound as in the aviation industry. Now 35 years into his career, Central Illinois Regional Airport Director Carl Olson was an airport director on 9/11 as well, in upstate New York.

### **Health and Safety**

### **Chestnut, OSF Get State Grant To Lower Health Care Barriers**

[Charlie Schlenker](#)

September 23, 2021

Central Illinois health providers will receive a \$5 million chunk of \$18 million in new state money to transform health care for people on Medicaid and other underserved populations. It's part of the so-called Illinois Healthcare Transformation collaborative.

### **A Bloomington Mom Fights To Raise Awareness For Rare Disease**

[Sarah Nardi](#)

September 17, 2021

Lexi Riordan is raising awareness for a rare genetic disorder that affects her son.

### **IWU Vaccination Rate High At Start Of Fall Term**

[Charlie Schlenker](#)

August 19, 2021

Illinois Wesleyan University staff and students have even higher vaccination rates than Illinois State University students and staff, and the rates are above the averages for the state and for McLean County.

### **ISU Student Vaccination Rate 61% As Classes Begin**

[Charlie Schlenker](#)

August 18, 2021

An Illinois State University spokesperson says 61% of students have provided proof of vaccination. That's higher than the 51% vaccination rate of the general population in McLean County.

### **ISU, Town Of Normal Prep For Student Return As COVID Cases Rise**

[Charlie Schlenker](#)

July 28, 2021

Illinois State University said Wednesday everyone on campus must wear a mask in indoor public spaces.

### **McLean County Pandemic Orange Alert Prompts Question About Behavior Choices**

[Charlie Schlenker](#)

July 26, 2021

The Illinois Department of Public Health recommends McLean and Piatt County residents consider whether to curtail public activity now that certain metrics have prompted an orange alert pandemic status there.

### **McLean County Sees Rise In COVID Cases, 2 Deaths**

Eric Stock

July 14, 2021

McLean County health officials report their highest weekly total in new coronavirus cases since Memorial Day, though even with the increase caseloads remain far lower than the area encountered in the spring.

### **Sound Health: Health Care Compensation Models Continue To Shift Slowly**

Charlie Schlenker

June 24, 2021

The national conversation about medical compensation has been going on for years. The goal is to transition to a model where revenue comes more from keeping people healthy than from fee-for-procedures in treating specific illnesses. That transition is not complete, but some changes have come.

### **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.

### **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.

## **Education and Schools**

### **Heartland Community College Enrollment Rebounds**

[Charlie Schlenker](#)

September 21, 2021

Heartland Community College reported Tuesday it has returned to pre-pandemic levels of students. As of the 10th day of classes, student enrollment was 4,436, a 2.5% increase from the start of the fall term last year.

### **Kinzy Lauds ISU's 'Resilience' Amid COVID During 1st State Of The University Address**

[Eric Stock](#)

September 21, 2021

Illinois State University President Terri Goss Kinzy said the university will emerge from the coronavirus pandemic more resilient, but COVID has taken a financial toll. In her first State of the University address, Kinzy said ISU's COVID-related costs were \$25 million, even after state and federal funding came in.

### **COVID Quarantines Complicate Coursework In Schools**

[Charlie Schlenker](#)

September 14, 2021

COVID cases and quarantines are increasing in Unit 5 schools, as in the rest of Bloomington-Normal. The most significant bump reported last week was 14 cases at Parkside Junior High and 73 students being sent home to quarantine.

### **IWU Adds Diversity, More McLean County Students As Enrollment Grows 1%**

[Eric Stock](#)



September 14, 2021

The incoming class at Illinois Wesleyan University has more diversity and more McLean County residents than any other in school history.

### **New Hammitt Elementary Leader Shifted Career Goals To Improve Diversity In Education**

[Tiffani Jackson](#)

September 13, 2021

The new principal at Hammitt Elementary in Normal says she never planned to get into education, until she realized schools needed more teachers of color. Latasha Schraeder says she came to realize that when she started law school to become an attorney.

### **Unit 5 Air-Cleaning System Aims to Slow COVID Spread**

[Michele Steinbacher](#)

September 8, 2021

The Unit 5 school board heard a report Wednesday night detailing how a new air-cleaning system installed in district buildings is being used as a pandemic mitigation strategy.

### **Local News**

### **District 87 School Board Hears Pitch For Uniform Economic Development Incentives**

[Maritza Navar-Lopez](#)

September 8, 2021

School officials in Bloomington say everyone benefits when the community grows, gave its support Wednesday night to a uniform tax incentive package developed by the Bloomington-Normal Economic Development Council (EDC).

## **'Freedom Within Structure': Mulberry School Marks 50 Years Of Alternative Education**

[Charlie Schlenker](#)

September 7, 2021

A half-century ago, a group of parents got together and founded something called the New School in Bloomington-Normal. They were largely academics; many from a math and science background, some from the arts. It was and is a small not-for-profit educational setting for kids and parents looking for an alternative to the public schools.

## **ISU Enrollment Drops 2% For Fall Term**

[Charlie Schlenker](#)

September 1, 2021

Illinois State University enrollment dropped 2% from last year to the current fall term. But there are some encouraging signs.

## **Eureka High Esports Instructors: IHSA Addition Brings Credibility**

[Joe Deacon](#)

September 1, 2021

For years, esports have become more and more mainstream – with college programs offering scholarships and marquee tournaments broadcast nationally on TV. That's now trickling down to high schools.

## **ISU's Multicultural Center Aims To Create More Inclusive, Diverse Environment for Students**

[Jordan Mead](#)

September 1, 2021

Illinois State University's new Multicultural Center opened this month. ISU says it's part of its commitment to creating equitable and inclusive opportunities for students.

### **B-N Teachers Unions Back COVID Vaccine Requirement For Educators**

[Eric Stock](#)

August 26, 2021

Teachers' union leaders in Bloomington-Normal say they support Gov. JB Pritzker's vaccine requirement for all teachers. The governor made the announcement on Thursday, citing surges in COVID cases, hospitalizations and deaths.

### **Proposed Unit 5 Budget Inches Toward Reducing Structural Deficit**

[Michele Steinbacher](#)

August 25, 2021

Unit 5 leaders say the district's proposed budget has a \$12.5 million structural deficit, but that's about 20 percent, or \$3.5 million, less than projected.

### **District 87 School Board Approves Contract With Teachers Union**

[Maritza Navar-Lopez](#)

August 25, 2021

The District 87 school board approved a new three-year contract with the Bloomington Education Association teachers' union on Wednesday.

### **'Where Are Our Benchmarks?' As COVID Cases Surge, B-N Parents Question A Return to School**

August 24, 2021

Districts last year relied on metrics to determine whether to hold in-person learning. This year, the State Board of Education says schools will not go remote. That has a lot of parents worried.

## **Slower Pace Of New Cases As ISU's Student Vaccination Rate Hits 65%**

[Charlie Schlenker](#)

August 24, 2021

As of Monday, 65% of students have provided proof of vaccinations, ISU reported. That's up from 61% a week ago. The vaccination rate also is higher for students living on campus (77%) and employees (83%).

## **Special Education Students, Parents Welcome More 'Normal' School Year**

[Eric Stock](#)

August 23, 2021

The last school year was rough for many students because of remote and hybrid learning. But it was especially tough on students who needed extra attention.

## **Unit 5 Commits To Sustained Work To Reduce Racial Disparity**

[Charlie Schlenker](#)

August 20, 2021

Unit 5 schools recently rolled out a diversity action plan to address racial discrepancies and disparities, coupled with the release of a diversity audit of what the district already is doing.

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[Charlie Schlenker](#)

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## **IWU Vaccination Rate High At Start Of Fall Term**

[Charlie Schlenker](#)

August 19, 2021

Illinois Wesleyan University staff and students have even higher vaccination rates than Illinois State University students and staff, and the rates are above the averages for the state and for McLean County.

### **Bloomington District 87 Superintendent Confident Schools Can Limit COVID Spread**

[Eric Stock](#)

August 14, 2021

District 87 superintendent Barry Reilly says he believes the district's health and safety measures will largely keep COVID-19 out of its classrooms. Those classrooms will be full for the first time since the pandemic began when students return to school next week.

### **Even Reluctant School Districts Likely To Comply With Mask Mandate**

[Charlie Schlenker](#)

August 13, 2021

Some school districts in central Illinois may have school boards that don't agree with Gov. JB Pritzker's mask mandate for students Pre-K through 12. But the regional school superintendent for McLean, Logan, Dewitt, and Livingston counties said this week any superintendent that feels squeezed can lean on the state board of education for backup.

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### **Bloomington District 87 Projects \$5 Million Deficit**

[Eric Stock](#)

August 12, 2021

Superintendent Barry Reilly says District 87 will likely need to dip into cash reserves to help fill a projected deficit of more than \$5 million, but adds the deficit will likely be much smaller than that because the Bloomington district is still waiting on COVID relief money that will trim that number.

### **Unit 5 School Board Approves Plan To Fight Systemic Inequities**

[Michele Steinbacher](#)

August 12, 2021

This week, Unit 5 officially launches a district-wide program to root out systemic inequities — ones that educators say often disadvantage the district's minority students.

### **McLean County Schools Shift As Pritzker Issues Mask Mandate**

[Eric Stock](#)

August 4, 2021

Several McLean County school districts planned to make masks optional this year, before Gov. JB Pritzker made them mandatory on Wednesday.

### **Unit 5 To Start School Year With Universal Masking**

[Charlie Schlenker](#)

July 28, 2021

The Unit 5 School Board voted 6-1 Wednesday evening to require all students, teachers, and other staff to mask in schools at the start of the year to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

## **Environment and Sustainability**

### **[New Central Illinois Farming Co-Op Gets Off To A Better-Than-Expected Start](#)**

[Tim Shelley](#)

September 9, 2021

The newly formed Central Illinois FarmFED Co-op in Logan County met its \$100,000 initial fundraising goal in just one month.

### **[WGLT's Grow: Ken Myszka From Epiphany Farms Talks Fall Gardens](#)**

[Sarah Nardi](#)

August 19, 2021

### **[Illinois State University Solar Car Team Driving Toward Nationwide Race](#)**

[Jack Graue](#)

August 2, 2021

The Illinois State University Solar Racing Team is preparing for an important race in a car members built themselves

### **[Organized Labor Declares Impasse With Environmental Groups Over Clean Energy Overhaul](#)**

[Hannah Meisel](#)

August 2, 2021

A coalition of influential labor unions says negotiations with environmental groups over a massive new clean energy proposal have reached impasse, and is asking Gov. JB Pritzker and lawmakers to step back into talks to broker a compromise.

## **Latest Wind Farm In McLean County Will Use Taller Turbines**

[Ryan Denham](#)

July 30, 2021

The \$350 million Sapphire Sky wind farm will be built in southeastern McLean County. Its 64 wind turbines are expected to produce enough electricity to power about 80,000 homes annually, plus \$79 million in property tax revenue for local taxing bodies over the life of the project.

## **Technology, Sustainability Key For New Connect Transit Boss**

July 14, 2021

Connect Transit is set to bring in a new general manager at a key time in the Bloomington-Normal transit agency's history.

## **Cook Farm Suffers 'Total Loss' in Historic Flood**

[Sarah Nardi](#)

July 8, 2021

Historic flooding resulted in catastrophic loss for one central Illinois farm.