

First Quarter 2023 WGLT ISSUES AND PROGRAMS

January 2023 – March 2023

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, 5p.m.-5:30 p.m., 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

Politics and Government

[These Bloomington-Normal high schoolers are voting for the first time Tuesday](#)

[Ryan Denham](#) March 31, 2023

Three Bloomington-Normal high schoolers say they're excited to vote for the first time this week.

[Illinois Senate passes bill to expand tax base for Central Illinois Regional Airport](#)

[Ryan Denham](#) March 31, 2023

The Illinois Senate has passed a bill that would expand the property-tax base for Central Illinois Regional Airport – from Bloomington and Normal city limits to the entire county.

[Illinois Senate votes to lift nuclear construction ban](#)

[Andrew Adams](#) March 31, 2023

The Illinois Senate approved a measure on Thursday that would lift a 1980s-era moratorium on nuclear power plant construction.

[Illinois Democratic lawmakers want to crack down on 'crisis pregnancy centers'](#)

[Mawa Iqbal](#) March 29, 2023

CPCs are accused of deception — and steering patients away from abortions despite an Illinois law requiring facilities to refer patients for services they don't provide themselves.

[Democratic Party of Illinois enters a politically crowded Unit 5 school board race](#)

[Ryan Denham](#), March 28, 2023

The Democratic Party of Illinois says it's spending an "unprecedented" \$300,000 to try and swing school board races in favor of 84 candidates statewide, including four running for the Unit 5 school board on April 4.

Heartland Community College board candidates push outreach to boost nontraditional enrollment

[Eric Stock](#), March 28, 2023

The Heartland Community College Board of Trustees has two open seats on the ballot for the April 4 election. Two incumbents and one challenger are running. The terms are for six years.

Bloomington council OKs Constitution Trail extensions in Hershey Grove subdivision

[Michele Steinbacher](#), March 27, 2023

Bloomington will use a \$500,000 state grant to build out sections of Constitution Trail along the north side of Hamilton Road, and the west side of Hershey Road.

6,000+ voters in McLean County have cast ballots for the April 4 election

[Colin Hardman](#) March 27, 2023

As the April 4 election draws closer, McLean County election officials say voter turnout may be higher than expected. More than 6,000 people have already voted.

Illinois House members pass hundreds of bills onto the Senate

[Camryn Cutinello](#), March 27, 2023

Representatives were racing to beat a Friday deadline to get bills out of the chamber, with about 2 months left in the spring legislative session.

Illinois House approves bill to clarify Normal's town status after legal challenges

[Lyndsay Jones](#), March 27, 2023

A bill filed by General Assembly newcomer Sharon Chung aims to prevent future legal challenges in the Town of Normal over its form of government.

Advocates push for tax credit aimed at increasing affordable housing

[Nika Schoonover](#), March 24, 2023

Would cost state \$35 million annually for 10 years

Illinois House passes bill prohibiting book bans

[Peter Hancock](#), March 23, 2023

The Illinois House passed a bill Wednesday that would prohibit libraries from banning books or other material because of partisan or doctrinal pressure, prompting strong opposition from Republicans who called it an assault on local control.

Normal eliminates vehicle use tax; OKs \$1M-plus in tech upgrades

[Michele Steinbacher](#), March 20, 2023

Normal residents buying vehicles after June no longer will have to pay a one-time “vehicle use” tax, after the town council voted Monday to eliminate it.

Board: In Bloomington, trend of stopping more Black drivers is declining

[Philip Walker](#), March 20, 2023

IDOT has conducted yearly traffic stop demographic studies since 2004. Statewide, Illinois police were 2.7 times more likely to pull over Black drivers than white drivers in 2020.

The Illinois EPA has issued drinking water violation notices to 10 state-run prisons

[Mawa Iqbal](#), March 20, 2023

Prisoner rights groups have complained about unsafe water. In recent months, the state has sent water violation notices to nearly a dozen prisons.

Illinois House panel debates ranked choice voting

[Peter Hancock](#), March 17, 2023

Illinois lawmakers are debating whether the state should join a growing list of jurisdictions in the United States that allow voters to pick more than one candidate for an office, ranking them in order of preference rather than choosing just one.

Two blocs of Normal Town Council candidates have two very different visions

[Charlie Schlenker](#), March 17, 2023

The Normal Town Council election next month might sound a lot like the election in 2021, or the one in 2019, or even the one in 2017. The issues are similar and some of the faces are the same.

McLean County approves delayed wind farm agreement

[Eric Stock](#), March 16, 2023

Houston-based EDP Renewables will put \$6 million into an escrow account to cover costs associated with the decommissioning of two wind farms in eastern McLean County.

McLean County conducting survey on rural high speed internet expansion

[Eric Stock](#), March 16, 2023

McLean County is one of five Illinois counties chosen to take part in Broadband Breakthrough, an effort to improve internet access in rural areas in the county.

Pritzker: Tax cuts on the table if state revenues continue to exceed expectations

[Jerry Nowicki](#), March 15, 2023

Forecasting commission last week upped its projections by a combined \$1 billion

Candidates share personal reasons why they ran for Unit 5 school board

[Ryan Denham](#), March 15, 2023

There are more “sides” than is typical in a Bloomington-Normal school board election. Yet all despite those political entanglements, each candidate also has deeply personal reasons for running, in many cases shaped by their own experiences with Unit 5.

Pritzker pushes higher ed funding increase in visit to Heartland Community College

[Eric Stock](#), March 14, 2023

Heartland Community College President Keith Cornille said Gov. JB Pritzker's proposed budget would enable the college to grow existing programs without a need to raise taxes or tuition.

Justices consider constitutionality of SAFE-T Act's pretrial detention provisions

[Jerry Nowicki](#), March 14, 2023

Abolition of cash bail was placed on hold in December pending appeal to Supreme Court

Bloomington council reviews proposed \$290M budget; approval expected next month

[Michele Steinbacher](#), March 13, 2023

The Bloomington City Council heard a presentation Monday on the proposed \$290 million budget, expected to be adopted in April.

Pritzker signs measure guaranteeing five days paid leave for Illinoisans

[Nika Schoonover](#), March 13, 2023

Gov. JB Pritzker signed Senate Bill 208 into law Monday, ensuring at least 40 hours of paid leave for Illinois workers.

It's not Madigan's trial, but the feds' big upcoming case is all about the former speaker

[Jon Seidel](#), March 13, 2023

Michael J. Madigan will likely never step foot in the federal courtroom where four former political power players are about to face trial, accused of trying to bribe the longtime Illinois House speaker to benefit ComEd.

Five things to know as the Safe-T Act goes to the Illinois Supreme Court

[Shannon Heffernan](#), March 13, 2023

The future of cash bail in Illinois is in the hands of the state's Supreme Court.

Bill would give 'child influencers' a share of parents' vlogging revenue

[Peter Hancock](#), March 12, 2023

Measure would apply state's Child Labor Law to 'influencer' videos

Citing job gains, Koos is optimistic Normal will see continued revenue growth

[Eric Stock](#), March 9, 2023

Normal Mayor Chris Koos expects the increased tax revenue the town saw in the last year will continue into the future.

Illinois Supreme Court grants expedited appeal in assault weapons ban case

[Peter Hancock](#), March 8, 2023

The Illinois Supreme Court agreed this week to fast-track the state's appeal of a Macon County judge's ruling against parts of a recently passed state ban on assault weapons and high-capacity magazines.

Bloomington Ward 6 city council candidates share visions for downtown

[Eric Stock](#), March 8, 2023

Incumbent De Urban is not seeking a full term in Ward 6. Jordan Baker and Cody Hendricks are running for that council seat. Hendricks teaches civics at Olympia High School in Stanford. Baker recently served as an aide to Republican state Sen. Jason Barickman.

State revenue projections increase again in fiscal year's final stretch

[Jerry Nowicki](#), March 7, 2023

With two months to go before the adjournment of Illinois' spring legislative session, Gov. JB Pritzker's state budgeting task may have gotten easier Tuesday.

Director of Illinois Department of Corrections resigns

[Shannon Heffernan](#), March 7, 2023

Illinois Department of Corrections Director Rob Jeffreys is stepping down after nearly four years heading up the state's prison system. Department of Corrections Chief of Staff Latoya Hughes will serve as the acting director while the state searches for a permanent replacement.

Bloomington Ward 4 candidates focus on historic neighborhoods and infrastructure

[Eric Stock](#), March 7, 2023

John Wyatt Danenberger and Steven Nalefski are running to replace Julie Emig in Bloomington's Ward 4 that includes many of the city's older neighborhoods east of downtown.

Illinois craft cannabis growers get much needed extension

[Alex Degman](#), March 7, 2023

Social equity craft growers get an extension to open, but financing their facilities is still a hurdle.

Normal council OKs new \$209M budget that's 10% higher than last; spring street projects announced

[Michele Steinbacher](#), March 6, 2023

The Normal Town Council on Monday adopted the next annual budget, reflecting a year of economic growth.

Bloomington mayor hopes new vacant building ordinance improves city's building stock

[Charlie Schlenker](#), March 3, 2023

The mayor of Bloomington hopes a beefier ordinance covering vacant properties will improve the building stock in the city. Mboka Mwilambwe said in a WGLT interview the recently-passed rules increase fines for dilapidated structures and require vacant buildings be listed with the city.

Pritzker touts \$70 million plan for addressing teacher shortage

[Nika Schoonover](#), March 3, 2023

Grant program targets vacancies in 170 school districts accounting for 80% of vacancies

Bloomington commission rejects west side Starbucks over traffic concerns

[Eric Stock](#), March 2, 2023

Bloomington Planning Commission chair Tyson Mohr said the proposed Starbucks would have only one access point, in a high-traffic area along West Market Street, a state highway.

Mendoza pushes for law requiring greater deposits in 'rainy day' fund

[Nika Schoonover](#), March 2, 2023

Highest-ever balance slated to exceed \$1.9 billion by end of fiscal year

Meet the candidates running for District 87 school board

[Lauren Warnecke](#), March 1, 2023

Election season is in full swing. WGLT sat down with each of the candidates running for the District 87 school board. Here is what they had to say about some the issues they hope to address in the next term.

[Paul Vallas and Brandon Johnson head to Chicago mayoral runoff](#)

[Dave McKinney | WBEZ](#), March 1, 2023

Former Chicago schools CEO Paul Vallas and Cook County Commissioner Brandon Johnson advanced to an April runoff Tuesday in the nine-way Chicago mayoral contest, bringing to a close the historic and tumultuous reign of Mayor Lori Lightfoot.

[Bloomington council extends incentive agreement for One Main Plaza; OKs Villas development](#)

[Philip Walker](#), February 27, 2023

The Bloomington City Council on Monday agreed to extend an economic incentive agreement with Jamie and Kelly Mathy for their redevelopment of One Main Plaza downtown.

[City Manager Pam Reece confident in town's capacity to develop Uptown South](#)

[Charlie Schlenker](#), February 24, 2023

The draft of the strategic plan for Uptown South in Normal has a lot in it — a large footprint public building, housing, an Amtrak platform and so on. City Manager Pam Reece said you can fit quite a bit into those 7.5 acres south of the railroad tracks.

[Illinois earns 7th credit upgrade in less than two years](#)

[Peter Hancock](#), February 23, 2023

S&P cites recent early debt retirement, buildup of rainy day fund

[Rep. Sorensen wants strict controls for carbon dioxide pipelines](#)

[Eric Stock](#), February 22, 2023

U.S. Rep. Eric Sorensen, a Democrat from Moline, said he's also not sure how much benefit the pipelines will provide in reducing CO2 emissions.

[Normal council reviews Uptown South plans and approves Kerrick Road project](#)

[Colin Hardman](#), February 21, 2023

The Normal Town Council heard plans for new development in Uptown South on Monday night. The plan includes mixed-use buildings, parks and other public spaces. New parking and road access also would be added.

Rep. Sorensen 'optimistic' Congress can beat farm bill deadline

[Eric Stock](#), February 20, 2023

Central Illinois congressman Eric Sorensen says he's optimistic Congress can come to agreement on a farm bill this year. The Democrat from Moline was recently appointed to the U.S. House Agriculture Committee.

Normal council to hear about Uptown South plans and vote on \$1.7M Kerrick Road project

[Michele Steinbacher](#), February 18, 2023

The future of Normal's Uptown South will be the focus of a special Normal Town Council work session Monday, just before the council's regular meeting.

Several small towns in area to get first sewer systems

[Charlie Schlenker](#), February 17, 2023

Several small towns in central Illinois will get \$11 million in state money to build sewer systems, or extend existing ones.

A 'mission since birth': Normal Town Council member Chamberly Harris named to national equity council

[Eric Stock](#), February 17, 2023

The first person of color ever elected to the Normal Town Council will work on race and equity issues on a national stage. The National League of Cities has appointed Chamberly Harris to its new Race, Equity and Leadership (REAL) Council.

Bloomington Election Commission seeks new member following resignation

[Eric Stock](#), February 17, 2023

Board member Robert Felton is stepping down due to health reasons. Applicants must declare their political affiliation because the three-member board must include at least one Democrat and one Republican.

McLean County seeks money owed from decommissioning wind farms

[Eric Stock](#), February 16, 2023

McLean County Board Chair John McIntyre says if there's no resolution by March 16, he will direct the board to take action against the wind energy companies.

Pritzker hits the road to sell his budget plan

[Peter Hancock](#), February 16, 2023

Preschool, child care investments top list of proposed spending increases

Pritzker pledges more money for education and child care in his budget address

[Dave McKinney | WBEZ](#), February 16, 2023

Building on a “remarkable” fiscal rebound, Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker proposed a \$49.6 billion state budget Wednesday, prioritizing increased spending on everything from early childhood initiatives to education to reproductive health care.

Video: Pritzker gives Bloomington Mayor Mboka Mwilambwe a shoutout during State of the State speech

[Ryan Denham](#) February 16, 2023

Bloomington Mayor Mboka Mwilambwe got a shoutout from the governor during Wednesday's State of the State and budget address.

Pritzker's second-term agenda buoyed by ongoing strong revenue expectations

[Jerry Nowicki](#), February 15, 2023

Gov. JB Pritzker proposed a state budget Wednesday that anticipates continued strong revenue receipts even as federal COVID-19 stimulus funds dry up, allowing for increased spending across all levels of education and most of state government.

Dan Brady adjusts to private life and urges party change

[Charlie Schlenker](#), February 14, 2023

Former state Rep. Dan Brady is establishing a new routine in life without politics. Brady said he also is still recovering from a year and a half of a statewide campaign for Secretary of State.

Pandemic leads IWU alum into politics, and later the lieutenant governor's office

[Megan Spoerlein](#), February 14, 2023

Illinois Wesleyan University alum Sara Rodriguez won a seat in the Wisconsin State Assembly in 2020. Last November, Rodriguez was elected lieutenant governor as Democrat Tony Evers won reelection as governor. It's an unlikely outcome for a neuroscience major and psychology minor.

Bloomington council OKs 17-building apartment plan; tackles vacant properties

[Michele Steinbacher](#), February 13, 2023

The Bloomington City Council on Monday OK'd preliminary plans to create a 17-building apartment complex off Ireland Grove Road, and authorized an expansion of rules surrounding vacant commercial properties.

Advocacy groups push for expansive paid family, medical leave in Illinois

[Hannah Meisel](#), February 10, 2023

Railroad-caused traffic jam irritates mayor of Normal

[Charlie Schlenker](#), February 9, 2023

The mayor of Normal said he's had it with lengthy traffic jams caused by freight trains. Chris Koos said this has been an issue before and the Union Pacific Railroad has addressed it, but there has been backsliding.

Livingston County prosecutor named an associate judge

[Charlie Schlenker](#), February 7, 2023

Judges in the 11th Judicial Circuit in central Illinois have chosen Livingston County State's Attorney Randy Yedinak to fill a vacant associate judge's position.

Illinois agencies prepare to help uninsured as Medicaid pandemic protections end

[Camryn Cutinello](#), February 7, 2023

More than 300,000 Illinois residents could lose health insurance coverage when Medicaid pandemic protections end on March 31.

Normal council rejects plan for 2nd cannabis dispensary; OKs Infiniti Pointe subdivision plan

[Michele Steinbacher](#), February 7, 2023

The Normal Town Council on Monday night rejected a plan to open a cannabis dispensary near College Avenue and Veterans Parkway, with a consensus forming among council members to revisit regulations about such operations.

Farmer and Livingston County Board member named to 106th Illinois House seat

[Eric Stock](#), February 6, 2023

McLean County's newest state lawmaker is from Livingston County. Republican party leaders have chosen Jason Bunting to fill the 106th Illinois House District seat.

At Reagan dinner, Rep. LaHood touts rule changes installed after dispute over speakership

[Colleen Reynolds](#), February 3, 2023

U.S. Rep. Darin LaHood, who represents parts of Bloomington-Normal, said he is not worried about the far-right members of his conference who withheld their votes until they received several concessions.

Duckworth urges Congress to try police reform again after Tyre Nichols' killing

[Eric Stock](#), February 2, 2023

U.S. Sen. Tammy Duckworth said she wants any police reforms to

DeVore intervenes in Rep. Caulkins' assault weapons ban lawsuit over campaign donations

[Eric Stock](#), January 31, 2023

Attorney Tom DeVore wants a judge to order state Rep. Dan Caulkins to return all donations linked to a lawsuit over the state's assault

Amid 'unprecedented' prolonged revenue boom, state finds budget breathing room

[Jerry Nowicki](#), January 31, 2023

Billions in budget surpluses have led to repayment of old, new debt

Bloomington plans to increase roadwork spending in next annual budget

[Eric Stock](#), January 30, 2023

Bloomington Deputy City Manager Billy Tyus said tax revenue is up and the public has said road improvements should be a priority.

45 years later, the Normal firefighters strike is unlike any other

[Ryan Denham](#), January 30, 2023

Here's the story of a strange strike in which everybody went to work, and everybody got paid, and everybody went to jail.

Fertility fraud calls man from Normal to action

[Charlie Schlenker](#), January 27, 2023

Curt Richardson of Normal found out as an adult that a fertility doctor had defrauded his parents decades earlier. Now, he's working to pass laws to "take some of that power back for victims."

Gun rights advocates are suing over Illinois' weapons ban. Here's what to know.

[Mawa Iqbal](#), January 25, 2023

The challenges keep coming in reaction to a new state law that gun owners say violates their Second Amendment rights.

Judge rules Normal clerk not obligated to certify petitions for non-elective offices

[Lyndsay Jones](#), January 25, 2023

McLean County circuit court judge Mark Fellheimer on Wednesday dismissed a legal action filed against Normal Town Clerk Angie Huonker in an effort to get some Normal residents on the April ballot.

High interest rates stall Uptown Normal building project

[Charlie Schlenker](#), January 24, 2023

Rising interest rates have blocked the hoped-for start of construction this spring on a flagship development project in Uptown Normal.

Healthy revenue and inflation drive Town of Normal budget increases

[Charlie Schlenker](#), January 24, 2023

Town of Normal Finance Director Andrew Huhn said during a daylong budget workshop for the town council that a lot of the increase will be funded by projected double-digit revenue growth, mainly in sales and income tax receipts.

[Bloomington council OKs plan for waste disposal site, rejects proposal for D.C. lobbyist](#)

[Michele Steinbacher](#), January 23, 2023

Henson Disposal's proposal to build a waste transfer station south of the city advanced Monday, with the Bloomington City Council approving a preliminary plan, and agreeing to extend sewer and water mains to the property.

[Rep. Caulkins plans lawsuit against the assault weapons ban after limited court order](#)

[Eric Stock](#), January 23, 2023

Republican state Rep. Dan Caulkins says he's collecting names from gun owners and firearms dealers who want to challenge the ban. A judge last week issued a temporary restraining order, but that only applied to about 860 plaintiffs in the case.

[Sen. Durbin says he's 'open minded' about budget cuts to end debt standoff](#)

[Eric Stock](#), January 19, 2023

The Illinois Democrat said it will take bipartisan cooperation to keep the federal government from defaulting.

[Bloomington council hears about city's new ADA plan and police ideas for spending \\$500K grant](#)

[Philip Walker](#), January 18, 2023

During Tuesday's non-voting meeting, the Bloomington City Council and Mayor Mwilambwe were presented with the city's Americans with Disabilities Act Transition Plan as well as the Bloomington Police Department's ideas for using a \$500,000 violence prevention grant.

[Normal's annexation agreement clears way for nearly 500 new apartments, townhouses at future Carden Springs](#)

[Michele Steinbacher](#), January 17, 2023

As expected, the Normal Town Council on Tuesday OK'd the annexation agreement of 36 acres for the planned Carden Springs development, making way for nearly 500 new apartments and townhouses, near Interstate 55.

State Sen. Turner plans to propose a voter ID law

[Eric Stock](#), January 17, 2023

State Sen. Sally Turner, a former county clerk, said she's not seen evidence of election fraud in Illinois, but she said some voters may feel disenfranchised.

LaHood says House Republicans want to put all spending on the table in upcoming fight over raising debt ceiling

[Tim Shelley](#), January 17, 2023

U.S. Rep. Darin LaHood (R-Dunlap) said "there's real frustration" in his party over federal spending, including the \$1.7 trillion omnibus bill passed by the Democrat-controlled lame-duck Congress last month.

Normal mayor supports zero-fare concept for transit buses

[Charlie Schlenker](#), January 13, 2023

Normal Mayor Chris Koos is conditionally endorsing doing away with bus fares in the Twin Cities, but says he still wants to see a concrete proposal before fully committing.

Former congressman Davis gets new job with a D.C. lobbying firm

[Eric Stock](#), January 13, 2023

Former central Illinois congressman Rodney Davis was not out of work long. Davis has been hired as a managing director for a Washington, D.C. lobbying firm.

Judge to hear cases of 3 Normal residents in election dispute

[Lyndsay Jones](#), January 13, 2023

The issue of whether three people can run for offices in Normal that are currently non-elective is now in the hands of the McLean County Circuit Court.

Pritzker signs reproductive rights expansion

[Peter Hancock](#), January 13, 2023

Bill expands access to abortion, gender-affirming treatments

McLean County approves energy efficiency audit through Ameren

[Eric Stock](#), January 12, 2023

Ameren will pay for an energy audit for the Government Center, the McLean County Nursing Home, the Law and Justice Center, and the building at 200 W. Front St. that houses the McLean County Health Department.

McLean County sheriff won't go 'door to door' to check for assault weapon registrations

[Eric Stock](#), January 12, 2023

McLean County Sheriff Matt Lane has joined dozens of Illinois sheriffs in refusing to enforce at least part of the state's new assault weapons ban.

New Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias visits Bloomington

[Lyndsay Jones](#), January 12, 2023

A spokesperson said the stop at the driver services facility on Market Street is one of several Alexi Giannoulias is making in his first days in office.

103rd Illinois General Assembly begins session

[Camryn Cutinello](#), January 11, 2023

After a busy lame duck session which included the passage of an assault rifle ban, the 103rd Illinois General Assembly was sworn into office Wednesday afternoon.

Among those sworn into the 103rd General Assembly: B-N's Sharon Chung

[Lyndsay Jones](#), January 11, 2023

Sharon Chung, a Democrat, is the representative for the new 91st House District that includes a significant part of the Twin City area.

Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker signs assault weapons ban as lawmakers shore up abortion rights

[Dave McKinney | WBEZ](#), January 11, 2023

Illinois Democrats put the finishing touch on a hectic lame-duck legislative session Tuesday by handing themselves and Gov. JB Pritzker headline-grabbing victories on gun-control and abortion rights while steamrolling vastly outnumbered Republicans in the process.

Pritzker signs ban on assault weapon sales and manufacturing

[Peter Hancock](#), January 10, 2023

On the first full day of his second term, Gov. JB Pritzker on Tuesday signed a bill banning the sale, distribution and manufacture of high-power assault weapons, .50 caliber rifles and ammunition, and large-capacity magazines while still allowing people who already own such weapons to keep them.

Legal protections for abortion providers and seekers poised for Pritzker's signature

January 10, 2023

Democrats in the General Assembly on Tuesday approved a wide-ranging measure aimed at shoring up Illinois' position as a "haven" for abortion access in the Midwest, including legal protections for health care professionals and patients traveling from states where abortion access is illegal or restricted.

IG report shows systemic flaws in Illinois prison hiring

[Charlie Schlenker](#), January 10, 2023

It started with a single simple case of nepotism. But an investigation by the state Executive Inspector General's office shows a much more pervasive problem of preferential hiring practices and a startling lack of hiring policy within the division of the Department of Corrections tasked with keeping prisons safe and investigating alleged misconduct within the agency.

Rep. Tom Bennett slams assault weapons ban and pay raise as his move to the Senate awaits

[Eric Stock](#), January 10, 2023

A central Illinois lawmaker who was just appointed to an Illinois Senate seat says lawmakers don't deserve the pay raise they just gave themselves.

How 23-year-old Nabeela Syed wants to make space for more people in Illinois state politics

[Mawa Iqbal](#), January 10, 2023

Nabeela Syed was a senior in high school when she decided to go into politics.

[Illinois lawmakers reach a deal on assault weapons ban](#)

[Dave McKinney | WBEZ](#), January 10, 2023

Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker and Democratic legislative leaders reached a deal Monday on a landmark assault weapons ban shaped by the July 4th mass shooting in Highland Park, stifling GOP cries that gun owners' rights are being trampled.

[Gov. JB Pritzker sworn in for a 2nd term](#)

[Camryn Cutinello](#), January 9, 2023

Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker on Monday was sworn into office for a second term alongside Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton and four other state constitutional officers.

[Union for Bloomington police sergeants, lieutenants gets new contract with pay raises](#)

[Michele Steinbacher](#), January 9, 2023

The Bloomington City Council on Monday OK'd a four-year contract that increases pay for police sergeants and lieutenants, who have been working without an agreement since April 2020.

[Pritzker strikes optimistic tone and lays out second-term priorities in inaugural address](#)

[Nika Schoonover](#), January 9, 2023

Gov. JB Pritzker was sworn in to his second term Monday with the state's other constitutional officers, promising a bold and ambitious agenda for the next four years.

[Lawmakers advance state government pay raises and Pritzker's 'closing fund'](#)

[Jerry Nowicki](#), January 8, 2023

Officials at the highest levels of state government appear set to receive substantial pay raises this month after the House and Senate passed a budget bill that would also advance a \$400 million business incentive fund proposal pushed by Gov. JB Pritzker.

[GOP party leaders pick Tom Bennett to fill Barickman's Illinois Senate seat](#)

[Jim Stahly Jr.](#), January 7, 2023

A state representative from Gibson City who already represents about half the 53rd Senate District will step into the Illinois Senate seat being vacated by Jason Barickman of Bloomington.

Normal Planning Commission endorses 2 housing projects

[Colin Hardman](#), January 6, 2023

The town of Normal Planning Commission has endorsed two plans for new housing developments.

Illinois House votes to ban assault weapons and broaden abortion protections

[Dave McKinney | WBEZ](#), January 6, 2023

About six months after the Highland Park mass shooting, Illinois lawmakers advanced a bill to ban assault weapons.

\$1.7 trillion federal spending plan includes earmarks for McLean County projects

[Ryan Denham](#), January 4, 2023

The new \$1.7 trillion federal spending plan just signed into law includes millions in earmarks for projects in McLean County, including Illinois State University's nursing college, a new pedestrian and bike path along College Avenue, and a sewer project in Heyworth.

McLean County Nursing Home sees financial rebound as its census grows

[Eric Stock](#), January 4, 2023

The McLean County Nursing Home in Normal is seeing growth that has significantly improved the finances for the county-run facility.

Normal council adopts \$175M capital projects plan, moves on Gregory Street trail extension

[Michele Steinbacher](#), January 4, 2023

Normal's latest five-year outlook calls for putting \$175 million toward hundreds of capital projects — about \$18 million more than last year's plan.

Normal city manager: Fare-free bus proposal deserves discussion

[Charlie Schlenker](#), January 3, 2023

It could be time to discuss one of the proposals in a 2019 Connect Transit special working group report, says Normal City Manager Pam Reece, because it's an unusual development — an organization asking for less money instead of more.

[Electoral board throws out attempts to remove 2 Unit 5 school board candidates from the ballot](#)

[Eric Stock](#), January 3, 2023

Two candidates for Unit 5 school board will be on the ballot this spring after an electoral board on Tuesday struck down objections to their paperwork.

[Electoral Board to hear challenges to Unit 5 school board candidates' paperwork](#)

[Ryan Denham](#), January 2, 2023

Two candidates for Unit 5 school board are trying to get two fellow candidates kicked off the ballot.

Education and Schools

[Heartland Community College board candidates push outreach to boost nontraditional enrollment](#)

[Eric Stock](#), March 28, 2023

The Heartland Community College Board of Trustees has two open seats on the ballot for the April 4 election. Two incumbents and one challenger are running. The terms are for six years.

[Heyworth junior high teacher removed over LGBTQ+ sex education book](#)

[Colin Hardman](#), March 24, 2023

A controversy that ignited with a book entitled This Book is Gay available in an eighth grade classroom in Heyworth has led to a teacher's resignation. The book is a sexual education text focused on LGBTQ+ experiences. Some parents were strongly opposed to the book due to explicit material seen as inappropriate.

[This Unit 5 homeowner and parent really wants to vote on the tax referendum. But legally he can't.](#)

[Ryan Denham](#), March 23, 2023

Unit 5's non-citizen stakeholders are largely left out of the public debate over the tax referendum — the outcome of which will impact them just like everyone else. Non-citizens can't vote in Illinois elections, although a bill in Springfield would change that.

Stan Nord chided for Unit 5 referendum meddling as police review electioneering complaints

[Lyndsay Jones](#), March 21, 2023

While Stan Nord's actions have drawn particular attention due to his status as an elected official, they are not the first instance of community members attempting to use communication, or contact with the Normal Police Department to impact the electoral process.

Revered for its top-notch programs, music is on the Unit 5 chopping block (again)

[Lauren Warnecke](#), March 21, 2023

Despite reputation and results, Unit 5 schools will make cuts to its highly regarded music programs this fall if a referendum aimed at closing the district's \$12 million funding gap fails a second time. Here's a look at the broad impact of cutting fifth grade band and orchestra.

Parents, students and coaches in Unit 5 sports explain what's at stake in referendum vote

[Eric Stock](#), March 20, 2023

Students who play junior high and freshman sports in Unit 5 could turn to club sports if those programs don't come back. But some parents say that's not a practical option for them.

Unit 5 presents referendum case to local business leaders

[Colin Hardman](#), March 16, 2023

While a few of the approximate 35 attendees spoke explicitly for or against the referendum, far more were interested in details of the district's financial strategy.

How Unit 5 school board candidates are approaching the race's biggest question

[Lyndsay Jones](#), March 16, 2023

Informally, the candidates are grouped together by their support, or lack of support, for a referendum question on the ballot.

Unit 5 shares tale of two districts, outlining impact of upcoming referendum vote

[Michele Steinbacher](#), March 16, 2023

Unit 5 leaders spent much of Wednesday's meeting — the last before the April 4 election — telling a tale of two districts: the one where a referendum passes, and another where it's rejected.

Drinking from the 'WELL': Twin Cities summit spotlights Illinois women in educational leadership

[Lauren Warnecke](#), March 15, 2023

WGLT's Lauren Warnecke visits the WELL Summit, an annual gathering for Illinois women in educational leadership. Hundreds of women from across the state heard featured speakers Lauren Sisler and Cheryl Watkins, with a panel discussion and breakout sessions aimed at building comradery among women in a male-dominated part of the education sector.

Pritzker pushes higher ed funding increase in visit to Heartland Community College

[Eric Stock](#), March 14, 2023

Heartland Community College President Keith Cornille said Gov. JB Pritzker's proposed budget would enable the college to grow existing programs without a need to raise taxes or tuition.

State's Bilingual Teacher of the Year Ricky King says NCHS students navigating 2 worlds inspire him

[Michele Steinbacher](#), March 13, 2023

Normal Community High School's Ricky King says he was blindsided to learn he's Illinois' new Bilingual Teacher of the Year. After all, the 2020 ISU graduate is only in his third year of teaching.

Heyworth educator broadening dual credit programs is among Teacher of the Year finalists

[Michele Steinbacher](#), March 9, 2023

A Heyworth educator who colleagues call a student favorite, and a real innovator, could be Illinois' next Teacher of the Year.

With election less than a month away, Unit 5 hosts another information session on referendum

[Michele Steinbacher](#), March 8, 2023

The series of in-person and virtual meetings on the district's financial instability is meant to provide more opportunities for the public to learn about the impact of a successful referendum.

Complex proteins and superheroes all the same to 3D animation

[Charlie Schlenker](#), March 3, 2023

Biologists try to understand complex sub-molecular processes by creating movies in their heads. They're getting more help with that these days from Janet Iwasa, a biochemist at the University of Utah who uses 3-D animation software to visualize how cells and proteins work.

Bleach, music, Western culture examined in ISU's 3MT competition

[Megan Spoerlein](#), March 2, 2023

An Illinois State University graduate student has been recognized for her research in how the body fights off bacteria with bleach that our body creates. Sadia Sultana won first prize at ISU's annual Three Minute Thesis competition at the Normal Theater.

Meet the candidates running for District 87 school board

[Lauren Warnecke](#), March 1, 2023

Election season is in full swing. WGLT sat down with each of the candidates running for the District 87 school board. Here is what they had to say about some the issues they hope to address in the next term.

Some Unit 5 school board candidates are touting e-learning as a solution to the district's budget crisis

[Lyndsay Jones](#), February 28, 2023

Several Unit 5 school board candidates opposed to the referendum say a pivot to more e-learning would save the district millions. District officials and teachers say it's not that simple.

As Unit 5 lays out cuts, school board candidates weigh in on referendum

[Colin Hardman](#), February 24, 2023

The referendum on the April 4 ballot is the second attempt to raise more property tax revenue for Unit 5, after voters rejected the same proposal in November.

Prison classrooms in Illinois open doors to graduate degrees

[Edith Brady-Lunny](#), February 22, 2023

During the first seven months of the state's current fiscal year, 38 inmates have earned associate degrees and nine have completed bachelor's degrees, according to the Illinois Department of Corrections.

Budget cuts and school board races animate new players in Unit 5 referendum debate

[Ryan Denham](#), February 21, 2023

Budget cuts are partly responsible for animating many new influencers looking to shape public opinion on the Unit 5 referendum, expanding the political playing field to include school board candidate slates, student-led organizing, and PTOs.

Heartland Community College considering tuition hike of nearly 5%

February 20, 2023

Heartland Community College has proposed a nearly 5% tuition increase for the next school year. The school's Board of Trustees is scheduled to vote on the plan Tuesday night. Heartland staff cite several factors in seeking the increase, including uncertainty in tax revenue and state funding.

ISU hopes to have University Farm in Lexington fully operational by fall semester

[Lyndsay Jones](#), February 20, 2023

The repairs to University Farm were one of several renovation-related items and expenditures receiving board approval during trustees' Feb. 17 meeting.

After cuts, pro-referendum Yes For Unit 5 group says it's being bombarded with offers to help

[Ryan Denham](#), February 20, 2023

In an interview with WGLT, new Yes for Unit 5 chairperson Corin Chapman and group spokesperson Patrick Mainieri explain what they think they has changed from November to now.

District 87 seeks applicants for school board vacancy following Samedy resignation

[Eric Stock](#), February 16, 2023

District 87 is accepting applications through April 7 for its school board vacancy.

Unit 5 board OKs E-Learning Day plan; announces tax referendum info sessions

[Michele Steinbacher](#), February 15, 2023

The Unit 5 school board on Wednesday renewed its formal E-Learning Day program, a state-approved plan for how the district approaches remote learning on days when schools can't meet in person.

The Twin Cities are growing — and so is a demand for English language services at STAR Literacy

[Lyndsay Jones](#), February 14, 2023

A boost in immigration is one reason why an Illinois Secretary of State-funded adult literacy program is seeing a higher number of people seeking to hone their English skills.

ISU's College of Engineering has its founding dean. What's next?

[Lyndsay Jones](#), February 6, 2023

Incoming College of Engineering dean Thomas Keyser and ISU Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Aondover Tarhule lay out what's next for the first department created at ISU in decades.

District 87 expands social emotional learning to K-5 schools

[Eric Stock](#), February 6, 2023

District 87 schools will have a new social emotional learning curriculum at all of its grade schools starting next fall.

Irving Elementary School in Bloomington to start nurse academy

[Erik Dedo](#), February 2, 2023

The Mini Nurse Academy, hosted by the Black Nurses Association of Central Illinois, is a new after-school program offered to students in grades 3-6 at Irving Elementary School in Bloomington. The program's goal is to teach students all about being a nurse, from basic first aid to what classes to take.

Elgin schools chief named new state superintendent

[Camryn Cutinello](#), February 1, 2023

For Tony Sanders, becoming state superintendent was a natural career progression and a “longtime dream.”

Heartland Community College expands program to serve students with learning challenges

[Megan Spoerlein](#), February 1, 2023

HALO focuses on providing a college experience for students ages 18 to 28 with intellectual and developmental disabilities as well as other learning challenges.

Unit 5 board OKs list of cuts, reversal hinges on April 4 tax referendum

[Michele Steinbacher](#), February 1, 2023

Starting next fall, there’ll be no more sports or clubs for Unit 5 junior high students — no sports teams for freshmen, and no band/orchestra for fifth-graders.

Unit 5's budget cuts plan includes sports, music, larger class sizes and the closure of Carlock Elementary School

[Ryan Denham](#), January 30, 2023

Unit 5 has released Superintendent Kristen Weikle’s proposal for two years of budget cuts, which will be discussed at Tuesday’s school board meeting.

'A huge honor': Unit 5 paraprofessional is one of 2 Illinoisans nominated for national education award

[Lauren Warnecke](#), January 24, 2023

Susan Naber, a paraprofessional at Brigham Early Learning Center, was nominated by Gov. JB Pritzker for a national education award for her work setting young children with disabilities on a path to school success.

ISU academic head advises ‘vigilance not fear’ as education adapts to ChatGPT

[Eric Stock](#), January 20, 2023

Illinois State University provost Aondover Tarhule says faculty are discouraged from allowing students to use the artificial intelligence platform ChatGPT as part of their coursework.

Unit 5 board discusses possible cuts if voters reject referendum a 2nd time in April

[Michele Steinbacher](#), January 19, 2023

The Unit 5 school board spent more than three hours Wednesday digging into which stark cuts to potentially make — given the district’s \$11 million deficit.

Heartland Community College approves cannabis certificate program

[Eric Stock](#), January 18, 2023

Heartland Community College has approved a new certification program for cannabis production and delivery.

ISU names founding dean for new College of Engineering

[Charlie Schlenker](#), January 13, 2023

Thomas Keyser will become the dean of the Illinois State University new engineering college in April. He currently serves as dean of the College of Engineering, Technology, and Management at the Oregon Institute of Technology.

Unit 5 to specify cuts if voters say 'no' to a 2nd referendum

[Charlie Schlenker](#), January 12, 2023

The second Unit 5 tax referendum campaign in six months will be a lot more specific on what happens if it doesn't pass than the first one was. Before the failed November referendum, school district leaders said they didn't want to get into the details of what they would do if it failed because they wanted to make a positive case for preserving the schools as they are.

Student mental health emerges as key issue as UIC faculty strike date looms

[Lisa Philip](#), January 12, 2023

The ballooning mental health crisis affecting college students across the country has become a focal point of stalled faculty contract negotiations at the University of Illinois Chicago.

[Unit 5 board votes to give referendum another try in April; \\$12M deficit keeps growing](#)

[Michele Steinbacher](#), January 11, 2023

The Unit 5 school board voted Wednesday to return to voters in April with a referendum asking for an increase to a key fund's tax rate.

[Unit 5 school funding referendum could return to the ballot in April](#)

[Ryan Denham](#), January 9, 2023

Unit 5 school board will meet Wednesday to decide whether to ask voters for a second time whether to raise a key property tax rate to address a growing multimillion-dollar budget deficit.

[IWU announces \\$16.5 million residence hall project](#)

[Charlie Schlenker](#), January 9, 2023

Illinois Wesleyan University has scheduled a big dorm renovation project for the buildings that house first-year students.

Environment and Nature

[Several small towns in area to get first sewer systems](#)

[Charlie Schlenker](#), February 17, 2023

Several small towns in central Illinois will get \$11 million in state money to build sewer systems, or extend existing ones.

[Normal mayor supports zero-fare concept for transit buses](#)

[Charlie Schlenker](#), January 13, 2023

Normal Mayor Chris Koos is conditionally endorsing doing away with bus fares in the Twin Cities, but says he still wants to see a concrete proposal before fully committing.

[Lost lemur lurks in Bloomington garage](#)

[Charlie Schlenker](#), January 13, 2023

A Bloomington family found a ring-tailed lemur in a garage, a long way from its native Madagascar.

Arts and culture

Heartland Theatre's 'Tiny Beautiful Things' explores huge, tough themes

[Lauren Warnecke](#), March 29, 2023

Veteran Twin City director Don LaCasse leads the Heartland Theatre Company in a new production of "Tiny Beautiful Things." The play follows advice columnist "Sugar" as she navigates various letter writers' traumas — and her own.

It's the final days for Skate N Place, leaving Bloomington-Normal with nowhere to roll

[Lauren Warnecke](#), March 23, 2023

The 50-year-old roller rink known as Skate N Place will close April 2. Remaining skates include theme nights, kids sessions and a tribute to the longstanding Twin City hangout.

The 'last great regional style of art' was in 1970s Chicago. And it's on display now at University Galleries

[Lauren Warnecke](#), March 21, 2023

An exhibit and accompanying film screening at University Galleries share Chicago's 1970s "Imagism" movement. Though not a formal collective, the imagists share some aesthetic distinctions.

Revered for its top-notch programs, music is on the Unit 5 chopping block (again)

[Lauren Warnecke](#), March 21, 2023

Despite reputation and results, Unit 5 schools will make cuts to its highly regarded music programs this fall if a referendum aimed at closing the district's \$12 million funding gap fails a second time. Here's a look at the broad impact of cutting fifth grade band and orchestra.

Listen to Highway 309's new World Poetry Day playlist on Spotify

[Terrance Jones](#), March 20, 2023

WGLT celebrates World Poetry Day 2023 by taking a look at a couple of artists that open their souls to the world.

[New album from Bloomington's Darius utilizes music as therapy](#)

[Jon Norton](#), March 17, 2023

The new album from Bloomington's Darius drops March 23. He says he thinks of "Perception" as therapeutic.

[By exploring history, blues drummer Andrew Thomas found a new way to hear music](#)

[Ryan Denham](#), March 17, 2023

Andrew "Blaze" Thomas is now pursuing his master's degree in history at Illinois State University. His thesis is an oral history of Black musicians talking about race, based on his interviews with Chicago-area talent. Thomas said it's the first research of its kind.

['Still Here' after 20 years: Chicago Farmer kicks off milestone Midwest tour at the Castle](#)

[Lauren Warnecke](#), March 16, 2023

Chicago Farmer and the Fieldnotes kick off their 20th anniversary Midwest tour this week. The band makes a quick stop home for a set at the Castle Theatre on Friday night. Before heading out on the road, front man Cody Diekhoff stopped by our studios to chat with WGLT's Lauren Warnecke.

[After 100 years on stage, a final curtain call for the 'American Passion Play'](#)

[Lauren Warnecke](#), March 10, 2023

The 100th year of the "American Passion Play" will be its last. The production is the longest-running passion play in the country and runs four Saturdays in Bloomington before closing for good.

[A tale as old as time: 'Cinderella' set to premiere at Community Players](#)

[Lauren Warnecke](#), March 10, 2023

Community Players Theatre launches its latest family-friendly show with a witty and whimsical musical based on the ancient tale about the girl with the glass slipper. With no dancing mice in sight, CPT employs Rogers and Hammerstein's 1957 score with Douglas Carter Beane's updated book, created for the 2013 Broadway smash hit.

B-N transplant Bruce Moon creates community with a microphone and a guitar

[Lauren Warnecke](#), March 3, 2023

A new open mic night at Crafted is just the spot for amateur and seasoned singer/songwriters

Spotify Playlist: Celebrating Women - A look at the artists from the Midwest

[Tanvir Kaur](#), March 2, 2023

WGLT kicks off Women's History Month by taking a look at the great artists from the Midwest.

Normal teenager makes an 'impact' with exhibition highlighting local artists of color

[Lauren Warnecke](#), February 24, 2023

Normal Community High School senior Myra Saulat hosts an art exhibition on March 4 focused on teen artists of color, part of a school assignment called "The Impact Project."

Normal Theater to screen 'nature run amok' films as 'Cocaine Bear' is unleashed

[Ryan Denham](#), February 23, 2023

The new movie "Cocaine Bear" goes into wide release Friday. Playing off that renewed interest in animals gone wild, the Normal Theater is screening two of its own nature-run-amok films at 7 p.m. Saturday.

Bloomington museum to mark Presidents Day with Abraham Lincoln document display

[Erik Dedo](#), February 16, 2023

Two documents written by Abraham Lincoln will be on display at the McLean County Museum of History in Bloomington next Monday and Tuesday in honor of Presidents Day.

'Men on Boats' at ISU: A play about John Wesley Powell with neither men nor boats

[Lauren Warnecke](#), February 15, 2023

The theater department at Illinois State University brings to life a satirical (mostly) true telling of local hero John Wesley Powell's 1869 expedition through the American West. Powell's journey with other erudite explorers is hilariously captured in the play, "Men on Boats." The play runs Feb. 17-25 in the Westhoff Theatre at ISU.

[Twin City libraries celebrate Black History Month with activities for kids and kids at heart](#)

[Lauren Warnecke](#), February 10, 2023

The Bloomington and Normal public libraries have interactive activities lined up for kids celebrating Black History Month. WGLT took a trip across town to check them out and chat with the librarians who thought up two of the fun and educational programs.

[Long-forgotten art now up for auction through Bloomington Public Library](#)

[Megan Spoerlein](#), February 8, 2023

All proceeds from the auction will be going toward the library's expansion fund. Starting bids range from \$5 to \$1,000.

[Bloomington's Karen Bridges is the first entry to the 2023 Tiny Desk Contest](#)

[Elle Mannion](#), February 7, 2023

The first entry to the 2023 Contest is "Break Me Down" by Bloomington artist Karen Bridges. If you want to perform your own Tiny Desk concert, submit to the Contest by March 13.

[MIOpera and Illinois Symphony are together at last in a Shakespeare-inspired evening at ISU](#)

[Lauren Warnecke](#), February 6, 2023

In a first-ever collaboration, Bloomington-based opera company MIOpera teams up with the Illinois Symphony on Saturday for a Shakespearean evening of opera and orchestral music.

[Back to Basics: Nashville's Phoebe Hunt strips back to voice and violin for B-N debut at Destihl](#)

[Lauren Warnecke](#), February 3, 2023

Destihl's TourBus Concert Series continues Saturday with the Twin City debut of Nashville singer-songwriter Phoebe Hunt. Hunt tracks her journey from classical violinist to mystical indie folk band leader.

[ISU concert helps students follow their dreams through Camp Broadcast](#)

[Emily Bollinger](#), February 2, 2023

Illinois State University will host a country music concert next week to help aspiring broadcasters follow their dreams. The concert Tuesday night at Braden Auditorium is a fundraiser for Camp Broadcast.

[Spotify Playlist: Songs for Valentine's Day](#)

[Ryan Denham](#), January 31, 2023

[Community Players Theatre's glitzy gala celebrated the past while looking to the future](#)

[Lauren Warnecke](#), January 31, 2023

Community Players' black-tie gala was no ordinary fundraiser for the troupe, who turned out dressed to the nines for a roaring '20s-themed evening of dining, drinking and dancing to celebrate the theater's centennial. But this party was not only about looking backward at the 100-year history of Community Players. It also was about the future.

[Don't underestimate 2 Illinois artists who spent decades doing something else](#)

[Lauren Warnecke](#), January 26, 2023

Matt Jagitsch draws lifelike portraits and wildlife using white-on-black technique called reverse drawing. Rick Decorie takes his camera to Midwest junk yards in search of old cars and architectural artifacts. Both spent decades in different fields. Their concurrent solo shows at their McLean County Art Center prove any time is the right time to kick-start an art career.

[Welcome Home: Understanding history shapes newcomers' image of Twin City community](#)

[Charlie Schlenker](#), January 20, 2023

History connects people through time. And learning how the past links to the present is basic to understanding the human condition. In our series on transplants to the Twin Cities, WGLT has found history matters to several people who have moved to central Illinois.

Broadway's 'Lifespan of a Fact' premieres at Heartland Theatre – and that's a fact

[Lauren Warnecke](#), January 20, 2023

Director Tom Dzurison debuts "The Lifespan of a Fact" at Heartland Theatre Company on Feb. 2. The play, based on a 2012 book of the same name, is about an overzealous "essayist" and the fact-checker of a struggling publication assigned to review his not-quite-true article.

There's a big sound coming from the bluesy-rock duo of Jesse Ray and the Carolina Catfish

[Jon Norton](#), January 13, 2023

Grand Rapids, Michigan-based Jesse Ray and the Carolina Catfish contains two members. But with their big, bluesy-rock sound, you'd guess there were at least four members.

University Galleries is not under construction — the scaffolds are the art

[Lauren Warnecke](#), January 12, 2023

Curator Troy Sherman is rounding the bend on his first year at University Galleries, and the first show he's curated opens next week. The show is called "simplesomethingsimplesomething" — all one word — and features a multimedia installation by Portland-based artist Avantika Bawa.

Destihl TourBus Series features Edward David Anderson in a novel format for B-N, plus new artists and a custom brew

[Lauren Warnecke](#), January 10, 2023

Central Illinois mainstay Edward David Anderson will play a solo set in Destihl's Barrel Room on Saturday, Jan. 14. That's not unusual, but there's a lot that makes the evening unique: Anderson kicks off a four-part series curated by his company, Black Dirt Music, and introducing three Americana heavy hitters to Bloomington-Normal. Plus, there's a new brew exclusively for concertgoers.

Normal Community student organizes a music concert supporting ocean cleanup

[Lauren Warnecke](#), January 6, 2023

In an ultimate example of students going above and beyond, WGLT profiles two Normal Community High School students in January and February who transformed a sociology project into arts events at the Coffeehouse for all to enjoy. The catch? It's got to make an impact.

[NAFTA, brutally honest bar talk – and a lot of heart in 'Sweat' at Community Players](#)

[Lauren Warnecke](#), January 6, 2023

Community Players Theatre presents the company premiere of Lynn Nottage's Pulitzer Prize-winning play, "Sweat." The production runs Jan. 6-15 in Bloomington.

[New president hopes to revive McLean County India Association after it went dormant during COVID](#)

[Ryan Denham](#), January 5, 2023

The new president of the McLean County India Association wants to bring the group back to life after nearly three years of dormancy due to COVID-19.

Environment and Nature

[Several small towns in area to get first sewer systems](#)

[Charlie Schlenker](#), February 17, 2023

Several small towns in central Illinois will get \$11 million in state money to build sewer systems, or extend existing ones.

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