

Fourth Quarter 2020 WGLT ISSUES AND PROGRAMS
October 2020 – December 2020

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

ARTS AND CULTURE

Datebook: ISU Printmakers Take Exhibition And Sale Online

By LAURA KENNEDY • DEC 31, 2020

In a typical year, art collectors have just two days to snap up prints during the Annual Printmakers' Exhibition and Sale at Illinois State University.

As we've all noticed, this is not a typical year.

Datebook: The Past Is Present For Heartland Theatre (For 10-Minutes, Anyway)

By LAURA KENNEDY • DEC 23, 2020

Every theater has had to find its way to reach audiences during the pandemic. For Heartland Theatre Company, that includes reaching into its own past.

Children's Discovery Museum To Host Noon Year's Eve In A New Way

By CATRINA PETERSEN • DEC 22, 2020

The Children's Discovery Museum will partner with more than 12 other museums and science centers in Illinois and Indiana to continue its annual tradition of providing local children with a Noon Year's Eve countdown.

Chess Sets Fly Off Shelf After Airing Of 'Queen's Gambit'

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • DEC 18, 2020

A popular Netflix miniseries has helped game merchants in central Illinois.

How Central Illinois Musicians Have Adapted To The Pandemic

By JON NORTON • DEC 18, 2020

The pandemic has hit full-time performing musicians especially hard. There are very few places to perform and in-person audiences are sparse, at best.

Datebook: Community Players Theatre Finds A Virtual Home For The Holidays

By LAURA KENNEDY • DEC 17, 2020

There isn't much the pandemic hasn't impacted, including the schedule at Community Players Theatre.

Yippee Ki Yay: Normal Theater Launches Holiday Film Face-Off

By RYAN DENHAM • DEC 17, 2020

America is polarized. For evidence of that, look no further than ... well, everywhere. But sometimes, a good old-fashioned disagreement can be fun. Like, John McClane or George Bailey? Clark Griswold or Buddy the Elf?

Medal Of Honor Recipient Chronicled In Rise Of Black Middle Class

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER & CATRINA PETERSEN • DEC 15, 2020

Andrew Jackson Smith was born a slave in Kentucky in 1842, the probable son of a slave holder. He escaped to the Union Army, became the servant of an officer from central Illinois, and later a soldier who distinguished himself for bravery "even in the cannon's mouth."

Duncan Manor Outside B-N Makes Cameo In ' Fargo ' TV Series

By CATRINA PETERSEN • DEC 9, 2020

If you watched the mostly black-and-white Episode 9 of FX's "Fargo," you might have recognized a historic Italianate farmhouse where some of the action was set.

Central Illinois Opera Singer Wins International Competition Amid COVID

By CATRINA PETERSEN • DEC 9, 2020

A central Illinois opera singer has won a prestigious singing competition.

Normal Couple Flush With Cash After Deal On 'Shark Tank'

By CATRINA PETERSEN • DEC 4, 2020

Two Normal residents are a long way from where they were in 2017 with their Toilet Timer, when they first visited WGLT.

ISU Student Finds Voice Through Poetry, Wins National Honor

By TIFFANI JACKSON • DEC 3, 2020

An Illinois State University student with a gift for words and a heart for equality has been nationally recognized for her poetry skills.

Datebook: Heartland Theatre Takes Holiday Classic To The Air

By LAURA KENNEDY • DEC 3, 2020

A gold watch chain and a woman's crowning glory are at the center of a classic tale being told anew by Heartland Theatre Company.

Leah Marlene Defies Expectations On Debut LP

By JON NORTON • DEC 3, 2020

Singer-songwriter Leah Marlene's first full-length album is quite a curveball for those that came to her through her 2018 up-tempo, hook-laden debut EP “Arrows.”

Datebook: The Art Of Original Gift-Giving

By LAURA KENNEDY • NOV 25, 2020

Art meets the retail experience at a venerable holiday event hosted by the McLean County Arts Center in Bloomington.

Datebook: Festival Of Trees Rings In Hybrid Fundraiser

By LAURA KENNEDY • NOV 19, 2020

A venerable holiday charity tradition is adapting to the current uncertain times.

COVID-19 On Screen: How The Pandemic Has Changed Ads And TV

By DANA VOLLMER • NOV 17, 2020

COVID-19 is now so entrenched in daily life that some may not have noticed how it's bled onto the screen. From subtle mask wearing to celebrations of essential workers, the coronavirus pandemic has made its way into commercials and entertainment alike—sending different messages along the way.

WGLT's Blues Doctor Frank Black Dies At 79

By JON NORTON • NOV 16, 2020

WGLT Hall of Famer and longtime blues host Gilbert Frank Black died Sunday of COVID-19-related complications. He was 79. Black served as a blues music host from 1985 until he retired in 2013.

Datebook: Virtually - And Literally - Everywhere Is A Stage

By LAURA KENNEDY • NOV 13, 2020

High school students from across Bloomington-Normal have dropped their crosstown rivalries to unite and send COVID-19 a message: You can't stop us from performing!

Tina Sparkle Edges Toward Optimism On 'Southern Hospitality'

By JON NORTON • NOV 13, 2020

The leader and front-woman for the Peoria-based rock outfit Tina Sparkle says she feels fortunate to be married to someone who understands a musician's life, and that she could be the muse for many a song.

Pandemic Acting More Subtle Than Stage Performance

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • NOV 10, 2020

Actors act, even in a pandemic. But what high school students are doing now is more subtle than the way they usually tread the boards.

British Punkers Idles On Turntable At Waiting Room Records

By JON NORTON • NOV 6, 2020

The pandemic ground live music to a standstill through much of 2020, but great albums continue to be released. That includes the third studio album from the British punk outfit Idles.

Datebook: MIOpera Boosts Singers On The Rise With Role Study Performances

By LAURA KENNEDY • NOV 5, 2020

MIOpera is filling a big opera-sized hole in the arts community by offering a chance to enjoy performances by some up-and-coming singers.

Datebook: Community Players Goes Mega Meta For Live Stream Production

By LAURA KENNEDY • OCT 29, 2020

Community Players Theater is going mega meta with its latest production--a show that looks behind the curtain and reveals the pains and pleasures of creating a new musical.

Bloomington Council OKs Public Arts Commission, Changes to Public Safety Board

By MICHELE STEINBACHER • OCT 26, 2020

The Bloomington City Council on Monday narrowly approved a change to how the city's Public Safety and Community Relations Board makes recommendations and handles outreach. But before the 5-4 vote, council members disagreed in a lengthy discussion about whether the change constituted slightly amending bylaws to clarify the board's purpose, or significantly broadening its mission.

Datebook: Heartland Theatre Revives Classic Radio Drama

By LAURA KENNEDY • OCT 22, 2020

There's an old joke in public broadcasting: When is the best time to air a radio drama? 1938.

Datebook: ISU's 'Richard III' Goes Full On Corporate

By LAURA KENNEDY • OCT 15, 2020

Illinois State University's School of Theater dives into the winter of our discontent in a new production of Shakespeare's "Richard III."

Datebook: University Galleries 'Reflects' Artist/Poet's First Survey Of Work

By LAURA KENNEDY • OCT 8, 2020

Poetry and textiles entwine in a new exhibition by an interdisciplinary artist who draws her inspiration from the words we read and the materials we caress.

Datebook: Evergreen Cemetery Walk Comes Alive Online

By LAURA KENNEDY • OCT 1, 2020

hewett and anthony debate

CORONAVIRUS

McLean County's COVID Testing Positivity Rate Up Sharply

By RYAN DENHAM • DEC 31, 2020

McLean County's COVID-19 testing positivity rate continued to worsen on Thursday, reaching its highest level in four weeks.

McLean County Tops 100 COVID-19 Deaths

By ERIC STOCK • DEC 30, 2020

McLean County health officials announced four more deaths related to COVID-19 on Wednesday, pushing the county's death toll since the start of the pandemic to 101.

McLean County Hits Record COVID-19 Monthly Death Total

By TIM SHELLEY • DEC 29, 2020

McLean County is reporting 84 new cases of COVID-19 on Tuesday, bringing the community's total probable and confirmed cases to 11,355.

Town Of Normal To Consider First COVID Fines Against Liquor License Holder

By RYAN DENHAM • DEC 28, 2020

The Town of Normal could soon issue its first penalties against a business for violating state COVID rules.

Half Of Bloomington-Normal Hospital Workers Have Received First Vaccine Dose

By RYAN DENHAM • DEC 28, 2020

About half of Bloomington-Normal's hospital workers have already received their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, officials said Monday.

McLean County ICU Beds Still Near Capacity; 2 COVID-19 Deaths Added

By JOE DEACON • DEC 28, 2020

Two new deaths linked to COVID-19 in McLean County bring the death toll to 88, while the county's hospitals still report 96% of intensive care beds in use.

MVC Postpones ISU-Valparaiso Series Due To COVID

By ERIC STOCK • DEC 23, 2020

The first home weekend series of 2021 for the Illinois State men's basketball team won't happen as scheduled.

Nursing Homes 'Eager' For COVID Vaccine Arrival in McLean Co.

By ERIC STOCK • DEC 23, 2020

Long-term care facilities in McLean County hope to ring in the new year with the new COVID-19 vaccine.

Nearly All ICU Beds Taken In B-N; New COVID Cases Drop

By ERIC STOCK • DEC 23, 2020

Bloomington-Normal's intensive care beds have nearly reached capacity even as the county's active coronavirus caseload drops to its lowest level in six weeks.

Durbin: State Aid Negotiations To Continue After Relief Bill Passage

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • DEC 22, 2020

U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin said Tuesday he believes the issue of direct pandemic relief aid for states, cities, and small units of government will come back, after it was not included in the \$900 billion package Congress just approved.

The Illinois Democrat said during an online news conference the Biden camp has a different position than the Trump administration on that aid.

McLean Co. Adds 75 COVID Cases; Testing Site Moves To CIRA

By ERIC STOCK • DEC 22, 2020

McLean County health officials say the rate of new coronavirus cases has dropped in recent weeks, but they are calling for more vigilance as another holiday approaches.

Restaurant Asks Illinois Supreme Court To Throw Out Indoor Dining Ban

By SARAH MANSUR / CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS • DEC 21, 2020

Lawyers for a Kane County restaurant are asking the Illinois Supreme Court to overturn an appellate court decision that found the governor's indoor dining ban was lawfully imposed.

McLean County's Positivity Rate Drops; Hospitalizations Remain Issue

By DANA VOLLMER • DEC 21, 2020

McLean County's COVID-19 testing positivity rate continues to drop, but hospitalizations and other metrics are trending in the wrong direction.

'Surreal' Experience For First Healthcare Workers Getting Vaccine In Bloomington-Normal

By RYAN DENHAM • DEC 19, 2020

Tracy Sondag has been on the front lines of COVID as a nurse manager at Carle BroMenn Medical Center in Normal, where 23 coronavirus patients are now hospitalized.

McLean County Health Care Workers Get First Doses Of COVID Vaccine

By RYAN DENHAM • DEC 18, 2020

The first COVID-19 vaccine has officially arrived in McLean County.

Unit 5 Waits For State On Vaccine Requirement Decision

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • DEC 18, 2020

The Unit 5 school district said it is seeking guidance from the Illinois State Board of Education before deciding whether to require vaccinations for staff and students.

Capacity Strains Rural Hospitals As Pandemic Rages

By ERIC STOCK • DEC 18, 2020

Many rural areas avoided the worst of the pandemic in its early stages. Now, it seems the coronavirus is everywhere, straining hospitals that have fewer resources to address an ongoing health crisis.

McLean Co. Tops Last Week's Record For COVID Deaths

By ERIC STOCK • DEC 18, 2020

McLean County has set a new record for weekly COVID-related deaths, while health officials report progress in some regional metrics and the arrival of a COVID vaccine that for some health care workers.

ISU Employees Can Use Free On-Campus COVID Testing Starting Next Month

By RYAN DENHAM • DEC 17, 2020

Illinois State University will provide its employees with free on-campus COVID-19 testing for the first time, starting next month.

B-N Faith Community Celebrates Christmas Mostly Virtual Amid Pandemic

By ERIC STOCK • DEC 17, 2020

The holiday season is about family, friends, food and, for many, faith. Houses of worship usually are full around Christmas, but most will be empty this year.

McLean County Adds 8 COVID Deaths, A New One-Day Record

By RYAN DENHAM • DEC 17, 2020

McLean County health officials on Thursday reported eight new COVID-related deaths—a grim new record that echoed a surge in deaths nationwide.

Pandemic Deaths Among Seniors Rise In McLean County

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • DEC 16, 2020

The rapid rise in COVID-19 cases in McLean County before Thanksgiving is now tracking through to a rise in deaths among older residents.

McLean Co. Issues 1st Round of COVID Business Loans

By ERIC STOCK • DEC 16, 2020

McLean County's retooled COVID relief program has approved its first round of business loans.

McLean County Adds 101 COVID Cases; 2 Deaths

By ERIC STOCK • DEC 16, 2020

The strain on Bloomington-Normal's hospital capacity eased slightly Wednesday as more intensive care beds became available. But capacity still remains below targets the state of Illinois has set for the coronavirus pandemic.

City Fines Business For Pandemic Violation Under Liquor Code

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • DEC 15, 2020

Bloomington Liquor Commissioner and Mayor Tari Renner issued a \$600 fine against Joe's Pub for a violation of Gov. JB Pritzker's executive order banning indoor service to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus.

McLean County Awaits Impact Of State Budget Cuts

By ERIC STOCK • DEC 15, 2020

McLean County Board Chairman John McIntyre isn't counting on any federal stimulus money to provide COVID-19 relief, but said the county is well positioned to handle fiscal uncertainties the pandemic could bring next year.

B-N COVID Rulebreakers Say They're Victims, Not Villains

By DANA VOLLMER • DEC 15, 2020

Bloomington-Normal restaurant owners who shirked the governor's executive orders say they're being painted as villains. But they argue they should've had a seat at the table when COVID-19 mitigations were being developed.

McLean Co. Sees 4 COVID Deaths, New High In Hospitalizations

By ERIC STOCK • DEC 15, 2020

McLean County health officials said Tuesday four more county residents have died of COVID-19 complications, while hospital capacity has become increasingly strained by a rise in more serious cases.

OSF Workers In Peoria To Receive First Vaccine Doses On Tuesday

By RYAN DENHAM & JERRY NOWICKI / CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS • DEC 14, 2020

Gov. JB Pritzker is expected to visit Peoria on Tuesday as OSF HealthCare Saint Francis Medical Center employees become the first in Illinois to receive the new COVID-19 vaccine.

McLean County Preps For COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution

By ERIC STOCK • DEC 14, 2020

Two years after McLean County health officials led a full-scale disaster drill for a mass vaccination, the real thing will soon be here.

McLean County Hits 10,000 COVID-19 Cases

By RYAN DENHAM • DEC 14, 2020

More than 10,000 people from McLean County have now tested positive for COVID-19 since the start of the pandemic.

With SHIELD Lab Stalled, ISU Pivots To In-House Rapid Test

By BREANNA GROW • DEC 12, 2020

With plans for saliva-based testing held up at the federal level, Illinois State University will begin in-house rapid antigen testing in January.

McLean Co. Nursing Home Sees Latest COVID Outbreak

By ERIC STOCK • DEC 11, 2020

The McLean County Nursing Home in Normal is seeing a spike in coronavirus cases.

McLean Co. Added Morgue Space To Prep For COVID Deaths

By ERIC STOCK • DEC 11, 2020

McLean County has had additional morgue space since the start of the pandemic, but Coroner Kathy Yoder said the county has only needed it once.

McLean County Logs Deadliest Week; 4 More COVID Deaths Reported

By DANA VOLLMER & ERIC STOCK • DEC 11, 2020

December is now the deadliest month for COVID-19 in McLean County. Health officials reported four more deaths on Friday, bringing this month's death toll to 19. Sixty-nine people from McLean County have died since the start of the pandemic.

Pandemic Pushes Smaller Retailers Online

By ERIC STOCK • DEC 10, 2020

The pandemic has hurt many small businesses, but it's been especially tough for those that rely mostly on foot traffic. The pandemic has forced many mom-and-pop businesses to learn how to sell online.

Illinois Heart And Lung Foundation Becomes Latest COVID Casualty

By ERIC STOCK • DEC 10, 2020

A non-profit that has provided defibrillators to schools, churches and businesses in McLean County for two decades is shutting down at the end of the year.

3 More COVID Deaths In McLean County, All Tied To Long-Term Care Facilities

By RYAN DENHAM • DEC 10, 2020

The McLean County Health Department on Thursday reported three more COVID-related deaths tied to long-term care facilities.

Unit 5 Dismisses Teacher In Abuse Case; Passes Tax Levy

By SARAH NARDI • DEC 9, 2020

The Unit 5 school voted Wednesday night to formally dismiss a teacher charged with sexually abusing his students. Those charges were later dropped.

MCHD Reports 117 More COVID Cases; Positivity Rate Stays Steady

By DANA VOLLMER • DEC 9, 2020

The McLean County Health Department reported 117 new confirmed COVID-19 cases on Wednesday, as the county's testing positivity rate remained just above 9%.

Courthouses Remain Open With Precautions; Fellheimer Re-Elected Chief Judge

By RYAN DENHAM • DEC 9, 2020

Reinforced precautions are in place at Eleventh Judicial Circuit courthouses, including in McLean County, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Bloomington Mayor Tests Positive For COVID-19

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • DEC 8, 2020

Bloomington Mayor Tari Renner is isolating at home after receiving a positive test for the coronavirus on Tuesday. Renner said he immediately sought a test after his son tested positive. Renner told WGLT in an interview Tuesday evening he "sort of lost his voice" the day before Thanksgiving and had some upper respiratory symptoms six days later.

5 Bloomington Bars, Restaurants Pay Fines For Indoor Dining During COVID

By ERIC STOCK • DEC 8, 2020

Five Bloomington businesses have paid \$400 fines to the city for violating the state's ban on indoor dining during the coronavirus pandemic, city officials said Tuesday.

4 More Nursing Home Residents Die From COVID-19 In McLean County

By DANA VOLLMER • DEC 8, 2020

McLean County health officials on Tuesday reported four more COVID-19 related deaths. The three women in their 80s and man in his 90s were all residents of long-term care facilities. The McLean County death toll is now 62 since the start of the pandemic. Twelve of those deaths have come since the start of the month. October was the deadliest month so far, with 15 coronavirus-related deaths.

The McLean County Health Department (MCHD) reported 108 new confirmed cases on Tuesday. Those positive results were found from a batch of about 900 tests returned in the past 24 hours.

Newly Released Hospital Data Show 2nd COVID Wave Hitting B-N

By RYAN DENHAM • DEC 8, 2020

A batch of newly released government data shows just how quickly McLean County's second wave of COVID-19 hit Bloomington-Normal's two hospitals.

COVID Drives Retirements, But It's Not Best Time For Everyone

By DANA VOLLMER • DEC 7, 2020

Retirements have accelerated in the last year, as the pandemic closes businesses, cuts hours and puts workers at risk of contracting the novel coronavirus.

LaSalle Veterans Home Administrator Fired, Nursing Director Placed On Leave

By SARAH MANSUR / CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS • DEC 7, 2020

The Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs announced Monday that LaSalle Veterans' Home Administrator Angela Mehlbrech has been fired after a deadly COVID-19 outbreak at the LaSalle facility has resulted in at least 32 resident deaths.

Rep. Davis: PPP, Airline Help Are Top Priorities In Next COVID Relief Package

By RYAN DENHAM • DEC 7, 2020

U.S. Rep. Rodney Davis said Monday he is "pretty pessimistic" that a deal on more coronavirus relief is imminent, though if it happens he wants assistance for small businesses and airlines to be front and center.

MCHD Reports 263 New COVID Cases; Testing Positivity Rate Falls

By DANA VOLLMER • DEC 7, 2020

The McLean County Health Department on Monday reported 263 new confirmed COVID-19 cases, as the county's testing positivity rate dropped to 9.3%.

With Potential Vaccine Approval Looming, Pritzker Warns Of Long Process

By RYAN DENHAM • DEC 4, 2020

Health officials gave an update on the state's COVID-19 vaccine plan Friday with potential federal approval anticipated as early as next week.

ISU Closer To Rapid Saliva Testing For COVID-19

By CATRINA PETERSEN & CHARLIE SCHLENKER • DEC 4, 2020

Illinois State University plans up to 20,000 rapid coronavirus tests per week with the help of a new lab.

County Adds 167 COVID Cases; Positivity Rate Below 11%

By ERIC STOCK • DEC 4, 2020

McLean County's COVID-19 testing positivity rate dropped below 11% on Friday after a week of gradual increases.

B-N Homeless Shelters Face More Costs To Stay COVID-Free

By ERIC STOCK • DEC 3, 2020

Bloomington-Normal homeless shelters have kept the coronavirus out of their living quarters, but the safety precautions come at a cost at a time of year when demand for services is greater than ever.

Just 3% Of B-N Hospital Beds Available; 2 More COVID Deaths Reported

By RYAN DENHAM • DEC 2, 2020

Bloomington-Normal hospitals are almost completely out of space for new patients.

IWU: Education, Enforcement Key To COVID Response

By ERIC STOCK • DEC 1, 2020

The head of Illinois Wesleyan University's coronavirus response said COVID-19 compliance on campus was generally good during the fall semester, but it was a learning process for both students and staff." class="wysiwyg-break drupal-content" src="/sites

Unit 5 To Keep Students All-Remote Until After Holidays

By RYAN DENHAM • DEC 1, 2020

Significant community spread of COVID-19 will keep Unit 5 students in all-remote learning through the holidays.

6 New COVID Deaths Reported In McLean County

By DANA VOLLMER • DEC 1, 2020

The McLean County Health Department on Tuesday reported six more COVID-19 related deaths. That's the highest single-day death toll since the start of the pandemic.

Contact Tracer Hiring Push Nearly Done In McLean County

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • NOV 30, 2020

The McLean County Health Department is getting closer to its target of having enough contact tracers available to deal with the rise in novel coronavirus infections in Bloomington-Normal and around the region.

COVID Causes Health Care Logjam As Hospital Stays Increase

By ERIC STOCK • NOV 30, 2020

COVID-19 has created a health care logjam as new cases rise, but hospitals aren't the only ones strained for space and staffing."

More ICU Beds Open; COVID Positivity Rate Back Over 10%

By ERIC STOCK • NOV 30, 2020

Bloomington-Normal hospitals have a few more intensive care beds available than they did heading into the Thanksgiving weekend, but a rise in COVID testing positivity could increase demand for those beds soon.

96% Of ICU Beds Now Occupied At B-N Hospitals

By RYAN DENHAM • NOV 27, 2020

Nearly all of Bloomington-Normal's ICU beds are now in use, and McLean County's COVID-19 testing positivity rate ticked up again Friday after several days of improvement.

5 More Bars, Restaurants Accused Of Breaking COVID Rules In Bloomington

By RYAN DENHAM • NOV 25, 2020

Five additional bars and restaurants in Bloomington are accused of violating the state's COVID-19 ban on indoor service, city officials said Wednesday.

'I Thought I Was Going To Die': One B-N Family's Experience With COVID

By SARAH NARDI • NOV 25, 2020

In late October, Adam and Nia Hoefler of Normal and their two children got the news that we've all come to dread: the entire family had tested positive for COVID-19. But despite having the same virus, the Hoeflers each displayed very different symptoms.

Senate Committee Grills Veterans Affairs Officials On LaSalle Home Outbreak

By SARAH MANSUR / CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS • NOV 24, 2020

Members of the state Senate Veterans Affairs Committee had pointed questions for officials with the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs about the agency's response to an outbreak at the LaSalle Veterans' Home that has resulted in at least 27 resident deaths from COVID-19-related complications.

Town Of Normal To Launch Small Business Relief Program

By CATRINA PETERSEN • NOV 24, 2020

The Town of Normal is using federal funds to launch a Small Business Relief Program that will offer companies with 50 or fewer full-time employees up to \$15,000 in grants.

The town has received \$450,000 from the Local CURE Economic Support program that uses federal dollars allocated to Illinois through the CARES Act. The City of Bloomington has a similar program.

McLean County Logs 49th COVID Death, New Nursing Home Outbreaks

By DANA VOLLMER • NOV 23, 2020

The McLean County Health Department is reporting 321 new confirmed COVID-19 cases and one death over the weekend, as the county's testing positivity fell to 8.3%--the first time in more than a week the rate has been in the single digits.

Stress Managers Staying Flexible To Help Cope With COVID

By ERIC STOCK • NOV 20, 2020

If your business is stress management, then 2020 is your year.

Renner: Licenses of Bars Violating COVID Rules Safe, For Now

By BREANNA GROW & CHARLIE SCHLENKER • NOV 20, 2020

The liquor licenses of 12 Bloomington bars recently cited for violating the governor's emergency orders banning indoor service are safe, for now.

Stay Home Or Go Out: College Student Choices Under Scrutiny

By CATRINA PETERSEN • NOV 19, 2020

Twelve Bloomington bars go before the liquor commission hearing Friday over alleged violations of the ban on indoor service to slow the spread of the coronavirus. However, there wouldn't be violations without customers.

Pandemic Strains Bloomington-Normal Hospital Staffing

By ERIC STOCK • NOV 19, 2020

The head of OSF St. Joseph Medical Center in Bloomington says staffing remains "solid" despite the need for increased personnel to care for more coronavirus patients.

Testing Positivity Rate Drops; County Logs 47th COVID Death

By DANA VOLLMER • NOV 19, 2020

McLean County's testing positivity rate dropped to 11.3% on Thursday, down more than 3 percentage points from the day before.

McLean County Hits New Highs For COVID Hospitalizations, Positivity Rate

By ERIC STOCK • NOV 18, 2020

McLean County's testing positivity rate rose to a record 14.9% on Wednesday as the county surpassed 7,000 confirmed coronavirus cases and reached a new high for hospitalizations.

McLean County Keeps Tax Rate Level In \$104M Budget

By ERIC STOCK • NOV 17, 2020

The McLean County Board has approved keeping the property tax rate the same, as part of next year's \$104.5 million budget.

COVID-19 On Screen: How The Pandemic Has Changed Ads And TV

By DANA VOLLMER • NOV 17, 2020

COVID-19 is now so entrenched in daily life that some may not have noticed how it's bled onto the screen. From subtle mask wearing to celebrations of essential workers, the coronavirus pandemic has made its way into commercials and entertainment alike—sending different messages along the way.

Town Of Normal Warns Pandemic Scofflaws Of Liquor License Suspensions

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • NOV 17, 2020

The mayor of Normal said he's had to eat his words from a couple weeks ago when he argued McLean County didn't need mitigation efforts that were as stiff as those in counties with higher COVID-19 testing positivity rates.

State Issues Stricter Mitigations Amid Hospitalization Surge

By JERRY NOWICKI / CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS • NOV 17, 2020

Gov. JB Pritzker announced the entire state would enter Tier 3 of his mitigation plan starting Friday as he noted the best way for Illinoisans to avoid another stay-at-home order was by staying home.

12 Bars In Bloomington Accused Of Breaking COVID Rules

By RYAN DENHAM • NOV 17, 2020

The owners of 12 bars in Bloomington will face possible suspension or revocation of their liquor licenses for allegedly defying the state's latest COVID restrictions.

'Substantial Community Spread' As McLean County Sets New COVID Records

By RYAN DENHAM • NOV 17, 2020

McLean County public health officials on Tuesday urged people to celebrate Thanksgiving only with those living in their household, as they announced sobering new records for hospitalizations and testing positivity rate.

Renner: City To Investigate 'Totally Irresponsible' COVID Rule-Breakers

By RYAN DENHAM • NOV 16, 2020

The City of Bloomington is gathering evidence to use against businesses that have defied the state's COVID restrictions on indoor bar and food service, officials said Monday.

1,500+ Active COVID Cases In McLean County As Positivity Rate Tops 13%

By RYAN DENHAM • NOV 16, 2020

McLean County reached its worst point in the pandemic yet on Monday, with the testing positivity rate and active case numbers reaching record highs. Two more deaths were reported.

ISU To Sell Fan Cutouts For Home Basketball, Volleyball

By ERIC STOCK • NOV 14, 2020

Illinois State University athletics is selling photo cutouts that fans can buy to help fill the seats at Redbird Arena during the basketball and volleyball seasons.

Restaurant, Bar Compliance Remains A Struggle As COVID Cases Surge

By ERIC STOCK & RYAN DENHAM • NOV 13, 2020

McLean County's head of COVID enforcement says there's a frustrating disconnect between the governor's office and local officials in enforcing the ban on indoor dining.

COVID Forces Dozens Of Layoffs At Epiphany Farms Group

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • NOV 13, 2020

Epiphany Farms Restaurant Group in Bloomington laid off more than 80 people Friday. Three of its four restaurants are effectively closed.

Unit 5 Calls Time Out On In-Person Instruction

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • NOV 13, 2020

Unit 5 schools will move to all-remote learning starting next Wednesday because of rising coronavirus infection numbers.

'Serious Situation' As COVID Patients Pack B-N Hospitals

By ERIC STOCK • NOV 13, 2020

Bloomington-Normal hospitals are running low on available beds as the coronavirus pandemic continues.

Lawmakers Seek Public Hearing On LaSalle Veterans' Home Outbreak

By SARAH MANSUR • NOV 12, 2020

Republicans on the Illinois House Veterans' Affairs Committee called for a hearing this week to investigate a COVID-19 outbreak at the LaSalle Veterans' Home where at least nine residents have died after testing positive for the virus.

Data Gap Leads To Confusion About B-N Hospitals' COVID Capacity

By RYAN DENHAM • NOV 12, 2020

How many people with COVID-19 are being treated right now at Bloomington-Normal's two hospitals? It's a simple question that apparently can't be answered right now.

County Tops 6,000 COVID Cases; Positivity Rate Exceeds 10%

By ERIC STOCK • NOV 12, 2020

McLean County health officials announced 421 new coronavirus cases and the 42th COVID-related death on Thursday, as the county's testing positivity rate jumped to 10.9%. That's the highest rate since Sept. 6, following a surge of new cases when Illinois State University students returned to campus.

Surge In COVID Cases Lands McLean County On NYT 'Bad News Ahead' List

By RYAN DENHAM • NOV 11, 2020

The Bloomington-Normal area is the No. 3 metro area in the country, per capita, for where new COVID-19 cases are increasing the fastest, according to a New York Times analysis.

IHSA Invites State Officials To 'Collaborate' On Basketball Plans; Many Schools Opt Out

By ERIC STOCK • NOV 11, 2020

The Illinois High School Association has invited Gov. JB Pritzker's office and representatives from the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) to discuss the association's plans to hold a basketball season this winter, against the state's recommendation.

B-N Hospitals Urge COVID Precautions Amid More Patients

By RYAN DENHAM • NOV 11, 2020

Bloomington-Normal's hospitals are urging the public to follow public health guidance as they see more and more patients being admitted due to COVID-19.

County Adds 167 Cases; Positivity Rate Rises, Hospitalizations Drop

By ERIC STOCK • NOV 10, 2020

McLean County health officials announced 167 new coronavirus cases on Tuesday as the county topped 1,000 active cases for the first time since September, following outbreaks on the Illinois State University campus after students returned to campus.

Rep. Caulkins Questions State's COVID Restrictions On Bars, Restaurants

By RYAN DENHAM • NOV 10, 2020

A Republican lawmaker who represents parts of McLean County said the state's own contact tracing data does not support such a hard crackdown on indoor service at bars and restaurants.

'Go For It': B-N Restaurants Weigh In On Defying COVID Restrictions

By SARAH NARDI • NOV 10, 2020

As McLean County enters the second week of indoor dining restrictions, restaurant owners are facing increasingly difficult decisions.

More McLean County Schools Shift To Virtual As COVID Cases Spike

By ERIC STOCK • NOV 9, 2020

Not long after District 87 and Unit 5 started to bring students back to the classroom, several other McLean County districts had to pull their kids out of school as coronavirus cases surged.

2 More COVID Deaths In McLean County; Positivity Rate Crosses Warning Line

By RYAN DENHAM • NOV 9, 2020

Two more people from McLean County have died from COVID-related complications, as the county's testing positivity rate climbed to its highest level in almost two months.

Remembering Dani Kater, COVID's Youngest McLean County Victim

By DANA VOLLMER • NOV 7, 2020

Names and faces get lost in the din of COVID-19 statistics. It's easy to become numb to it. But the family of McLean County's youngest coronavirus victim wants to make sure that doesn't happen.

State Releases Contact Tracing Data As One-Day COVID-19 Caseload Tops 10,000

By JERRY NOWICKI / CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS • NOV 6, 2020

Gov. JB Pritzker's administration unveiled a new central location for COVID-19 contact tracing data on the Illinois Department of Public Health's website Friday.

Testing Positivity Rate Climbs Again; 118 New Cases

By DANA VOLLMER & ERIC STOCK • NOV 6, 2020

The McLean County Health Department on Friday reported 118 new confirmed COVID-19 cases, as the county's testing positivity rate climbed to 7.5%.

Pritzker Warns Of Additional Restrictions As New COVID-19 Cases Soar

By PETER HANCOCK / CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS • NOV 5, 2020

Gov. JB Pritzker warned Thursday that additional social and economic restrictions may need to be imposed statewide in the near future if the surge in new COVID-19 cases continues on its current path.

Latest COVID Death Is Woman In Her 30s; Positivity Rate Jumps Above 7%

By DANA VOLLMER • NOV 5, 2020

A McLean County woman in her 30s is the latest person to die from COVID-19 related complications.

Some Restaurants Say They'll Stay Open Despite COVID Restrictions

By ERIC STOCK • NOV 4, 2020

Some McLean County restaurants kept their dining rooms open on Wednesday, in defiance of Gov. JB Pritzker's order to stop indoor dining in regions with high COVID-19 positivity rates.

MCHD Reports 133 New Cases; Active Caseload Rises

By DANA VOLLMER • NOV 4, 2020

McLean County health officials on Wednesday reported 133 new confirmed cases of COVID-19, after taking Election Day off from crunching the numbers.

A LeRoy Family's Case For Caring About COVID

By DANA VOLLMER • NOV 2, 2020

A LeRoy family is pushing back against the narrative that young people don't have much to worry about with COVID-19.

New COVID Restrictions On Restaurants, Bars Begin Wednesday

By RYAN DENHAM • NOV 1, 2020

Indoor service at bars and restaurants in Bloomington-Normal and the Tri-County area will be prohibited starting Wednesday, as new COVID-19 mitigations go into effect.

McLean County Adds 88 COVID Cases, Records 38th Death

By ERIC STOCK • OCT 30, 2020

McLean County health officials announced a 38th death due to coronavirus complications on Friday as the county's seven-day testing positivity rate topped 6%, potentially putting the region closer to further mitigations.

Sen. Brady Calls For Business Consideration As Virus Rates Rise

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • OCT 28, 2020

Bloomington state Sen. Bill Brady is calling again for Senate hearings on mitigation rules as coronavirus positivity rates spike statewide.

Barickman Urges Close Study Of Election Lessons

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • OCT 27, 2020

A Republican state senator from Bloomington said Tuesday that suburban Chicago candidates need to localize their elections.

County Adds 42 COVID Cases; Positivity Rate Tops 5%

By ERIC STOCK • OCT 27, 2020

McLean County's seven-day testing positivity rate for the coronavirus has topped 5% for the first time since a late summer surge tied to Illinois State University students' return to campus.

COVID Precautions Impose Hardship On Pekin Prison Inmates

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER & CATRINA PETERSEN • OCT 26, 2020

There have been multiple lockdowns in a Pekin federal prison to reduce the spread of the coronavirus in the facility, with many inmates losing contact with families during the times they are confined to their cells.

And the family of one inmate said the impact on the family and the inmate is high.

Small-Business Growth Resumes In McLean County.

By CAMBERYN KELLEY • OCT 26, 2020

The Small Business Development Center at Illinois Wesleyan University has seen improvement in the last three months after a big drop in activity during the early part of the pandemic.

34th McLean County Resident Dies; Tied To Long-Term Care Facility

By DANA VOLLMER • OCT 26, 2020

A 34th McLean County resident has died from COVID-19 complications. The woman in her 80s was a resident of a long-term care facility.

B-N Doctors: COVID Treatments Have Improved; Still Trial And Error

By ERIC STOCK • OCT 23, 2020

Top doctors in McLean County say they have a better handle on how to treat COVID-19 patients than they did at the start of the pandemic, but also say patient care is still very much trial and error.

County Sees 2 More COVID Deaths; Reaches 4,000 Cases

By ERIC STOCK • OCT 23, 2020

McLean County reported two more COVID-related deaths of nursing home residents on Friday, bringing the county's death toll from the coronavirus to 33.

Pets Make Pandemic A Little More Bearable For B-N Families

By DANA VOLLMER • OCT 22, 2020

The pandemic is a drag. There's no way around it. One good fix? A fuzzy, clumsy, cuddly puppy. Pet adoptions skyrocketed during the stay-at-home order in March.

County Adds 34 COVID Cases; Region's Positivity Tops 7%

By ERIC STOCK • OCT 22, 2020

McLean County health officials announced 34 new confirmed coronavirus cases Thursday as the county's seven-day testing positivity rate rose to 4.4%.

COVID Penetrates Nursing Homes In McLean County

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • OCT 21, 2020

A third wave of COVID-19 infections in Illinois is pressuring long-term care facilities in the state, including McLean County.

McLean County Adds 62 Cases; Region's Positivity Rate Spikes

By ERIC STOCK • OCT 21, 2020

McLean County's COVID-19 testing positivity rate has stabilized after a late summer spike, but the rate for the 20-county region is approaching a level that could lead to restrictions.

ISU Hopes To Expand COVID Testing By End of November

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • OCT 20, 2020

Illinois State University's president does not have too much concern about a potential spike in COVID-19 cases to start the second semester.

McLean County COVID Death Toll Reaches 31, As Another Nursing Home Resident Dies

By DANA VOLLMER • OCT 20, 2020

A woman in her 90s has become the latest COVID-related death in McLean County. Her death marks the county's 31st fatality caused by the coronavirus since the start of the pandemic.

McLean County Hits New High For COVID Hospitalizations

By ERIC STOCK • OCT 19, 2020

McLean County health officials have announced 76 new confirmed coronavirus cases since Friday, as the county saw an increase in hospitalizations to its highest level since the start of the pandemic.

Unit 5, District 87 Add Bus Safety Rules; Compliance Is 'Trial And Error'

By ERIC STOCK • OCT 19, 2020

Unit 5 and District 87 will soon start busing kids to school for the first time since the pandemic began in March. They are the last districts in McLean County to bring kids back to the classroom, and administrators believe they can keep them safe on the buses as long as students follow the rules.

McLean County Sees 35 New COVID Cases, Recoveries

By ERIC STOCK • OCT 16, 2020

McLean County health officials announced 35 new coronavirus cases on Friday, and an equal number of patients recovering.

COVID Brings Many Unknowns As ISU Hoops Practices Begin

By ERIC STOCK • OCT 15, 2020

Dan Muller is used to dealing with lots of unknowns heading into a basketball season. But his ninth season as Illinois State University men's hoops coach will most certainly include more unknowns than any other.

McLean County COVID-19 Positivity Dips; Hospitalizations Up

By ERIC STOCK • OCT 15, 2020

McLean County saw an increase in COVID-19 hospitalizations on Thursday as its rate of new cases and positive testing dipped.

ISU Wants To Add Covid-19 Surge Space At Local Hotels

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • OCT 14, 2020

Illinois State University trustees will consider a contract to use space in two hotels to house any potential overflow of students who become sick, or who have come in close contact with someone who tests positive for the coronavirus.

Chestnut Health Tests COVID-19 Vaccine Readiness

By ERIC STOCK • OCT 14, 2020

Chestnut Health Systems of Bloomington conducted an exercise Wednesday to test its preparedness to administer a COVID-19 vaccine when it becomes available.

Bloomington High, Junior High To Resume In-School Classes in January

By ERIC STOCK • OCT 14, 2020

Superintendent Barry Reilly has announced District 87 will resume in-school instruction in a hybrid format as an option for students in grades 7 through 12, starting in January.

McLean County Adds 44 COVID Cases; 3 More Hospitalized

By ERIC STOCK • OCT 14, 2020

McLean County health officials announced 44 new cases of the coronavirus on Wednesday as the county's seven-day testing positivity rate reached its highest level in five weeks.

McLean County Sees 3 More COVID Deaths; Total Reaches 30

By ERIC STOCK • OCT 13, 2020

McLean County health officials announced three more COVID-related deaths Tuesday.

McLean County Adds 40 COVID Cases; Positivity Rate Up To 4%

By ERIC STOCK • OCT 12, 2020

McLean County health officials announced 40 new coronavirus cases on Monday as the county's seven-day testing positivity rate rose to 4%.

McLean County Sees 27th COVID Death; 77 New Cases

By ERIC STOCK • OCT 11, 2020

McLean County health officials announced the county's 27th COVID-related death Sunday, along with 77 new coronavirus cases. That's the highest single-day total in a month.

Public Health Response Evolves As Pandemic Wears On

By ERIC STOCK • OCT 11, 2020

Contract tracing has been around since at least the early 20th century and it remains one of health care's most critical infectious disease responses.

Melissa Graven, McLean County Health Department's communicable disease supervisor, said tracing who infected people have been around is more critical during COVID-19 because hardly anyone is immune.

County Adds 35 COVID Cases; Testing Rate Holds Steady

By ERIC STOCK • OCT 10, 2020

McLean County health officials reported 35 new coronavirus cases on Saturday while the county's seven-day testing positivity rate held steady at 3%.

McLean County Sees 2 COVID Deaths, Several Nursing Home Outbreaks

By DANA VOLLMER & ERIC STOCK • OCT 9, 2020

Two more McLean County residents have died after contracting COVID-19, while several McLean County nursing homes are dealing with coronavirus outbreaks.

Pandemic Keeps B-N Home Improvement Businesses Busy

By CATRINA PETERSEN • OCT 9, 2020

The pandemic may be wrecking a lot of things for a lot of people. But one part of the economy that's doing well is home improvement.

McLean County Reports 24th Death, 15 New COVID-19 Cases

By DANA VOLLMER • OCT 8, 2020

A McLean County man in his 80s is the 24th resident to die from COVID-19 related complications. According to the McLean County Health Department (MCHD), he had underlying health conditions and was associated with a long-term care facility.

Davis, Londrigan Want Congress, White House To Resume Talks On More COVID Relief

By RYAN DENHAM • OCT 8

Both candidates running for the 13th Congressional District want to see the White House and congressional leaders continue negotiating on another COVID-19 relief package.

Insurance Shift Raises Questions At COVID Testing Sites

By ERIC STOCK • OCT 8, 2020

A recent change in state of Illinois policy regarding insurance reimbursements for COVID-19 testing has raised concerns that the public may be billed for the tests, but health officials say that's not the case.

McLean County Sees Zero New COVID-19 Cases Overnight

By DANA VOLLMER • OCT 7, 2020

The McLean County Health Department is reporting no new cases of COVID-19 for the first time since June.

MCHD Reports 43 New Coronavirus Cases, 3 More Hospitalizations

By DANA VOLLMER • OCT 6, 2020

The McLean County Health Department reported 43 new confirmed COVID-19 cases Tuesday. That's the second time in a week the daily caseload has exceeded 40, as the county's testing positivity rate climbed to 3.4%.

ISU COVID-19 Email Inquiries Show Confusion, Difficulty In Planning Return To Campus

By DANA VOLLMER • OCT 6, 2020

The start of the fall semester was rocky for Illinois State University. Original plans for COVID-19 test supplies fell through just two weeks before the start of classes. Students saw their once blended schedules moved nearly all online, triggering questions about whether students should move back at all, and why they're paying full price.

Bars, Restaurants Brace For Cold With Limited Indoor Seating

By ERIC STOCK • OCT 6, 2020

Bar and restaurant owners in McLean County have had to get creative to keep customers during the pandemic. But one key feature that's likely been the biggest boost, expanded outdoor dining, is fading fast as fall approaches, and they are now bracing for a long, cold winter with less room for customers.

McLean County Explores Creating COVID Call Center

By ERIC STOCK • OCT 5, 2020

McLean County health officials are looking into creating a call center to answer the public's questions about COVID-19.

McLean County Adds 19 New Coronavirus Cases

By RYAN DENHAM • OCT 5, 2020

The McLean County Health Department reported 19 new coronavirus cases on Monday, as the testing positivity rate ticked up slightly.

After Slowdown, County Sees Uptick In Cases And Positivity Rate

By RYAN DENHAM • OCT 3, 2020

There were 46 new coronavirus cases reported Saturday, as McLean County's testing positivity rate rose a full percentage point.

Some Parents Tell District 87 It's Too Soon To Return To School

By ERIC STOCK • OCT 2, 2020

With District 87 planning a return to in-person learning for elementary students, some parents think keeping the remote learning option isn't enough. They say the hybrid format doesn't sufficiently reduce the risk of COVID-19 infection and stunts progress kids are finally starting to make with virtual learning.

McLean County Reaches New High In COVID Hospitalizations

By ERIC STOCK • OCT 2, 2020

McLean County has reached a new record with 13 COVID-19 hospitalizations, up two from Thursday.

Substantial Numbers Of Unit 5 Students To Stay Remote

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • OCT 1, 2020

Even with COVID-19 case numbers falling in Bloomington-Normal in recent weeks, a lot of Unit 5 school district parents don't want their kids returning to the classroom.

The district has reported parents of 22.6% of students have chosen to stay with remote learning when Unit 5 goes back to a hybrid class schedule starting Oct. 19. That's about 2,829 students roughly evenly distributed across grade levels.

Bloomington, Normal 'Discourage' Halloween Trick-Or-Treating

By RYAN DENHAM • OCT 1, 2020

The Town of Normal and City of Bloomington said Thursday that families are discouraged from door-to-door trick-or-treating this year because of COVID-19. But local officials also offered guidance if families choose to do it anyway.

COVID-19 Hospitalizations Rise; 51 More People Recover

By DANA VOLLMER • OCT 1, 2020

The McLean County Health Department reported 21 new confirmed COVID-19 cases on Thursday.

EDUCATION AND FAMILY

Unit 5 Waits For State On Vaccine Requirement Decision

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • DEC 18, 2020

The Unit 5 school district said it is seeking guidance from the Illinois State Board of Education before deciding whether to require vaccinations for staff and students.

B-N NAACP Launching Youth Council To Fight For Equality

By BREANNA GROW • DEC 17, 2020

Harper Joyner is 6 1/2 years old. Her mom, Tameka Thompson, is co-chair of Bloomington-Normal ACT-SO, an NAACP youth enrichment program for high school students.

Bloomington Receives \$2.3M HUD Grant To Remove Lead From Low-Income Homes

By DANA VOLLMER • OCT 21, 2020

Nearly 100 low-income housing units in Bloomington will undergo lead abatement, financed by a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

B-N Schools Reshuffle Teachers As Families Lock In Remote Plans

By RYAN DENHAM • OCT 8, 2020

Some Unit 5 and District 87 students going back to school in-person will have a different teacher than they've been learning with since August.

Rivian, Reditus Labs Donate \$1M For Unit 5 COVID Testing

By DANA VOLLMER • DEC 23, 2020

Unit 5 schools will receive \$1 million in free COVID-19 testing. It's a joint donation from electric vehicle manufacturer Rivian and testing company Reditus Laboratories.

Keeping Up: Measuring Student Growth During COVID

By DANA VOLLMER • DEC 4, 2020

Remote learning has shaken up the way educators teach—and how teachers measure student growth.

Some worry students may fall behind without in-person instruction. The fear is greater for students already struggling in school. Educators say just because learning looks different during the COVID-19 pandemic, it doesn't mean students do worse. Some argue now is the time to reconsider how to assess students.

ELECTION 2020

McLean Among Few U.S. Counties To Flip In Election

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER & CATRINA PETERSEN • NOV 20, 2020

McLean County is one of only 77 counties in the United States to flip the presidential party preference from four years ago. McLean County went for Joe Biden and last cycle it went for President Trump.

Mail-In, Provisional Ballots Push Democrat Laymon Ahead In County Board Race

By ERIC STOCK • NOV 17, 2020

Mail-in and provisional ballots have flipped the results in a closely contested McLean County Board race.

Some ISU Students As Divided As Nation

By CATRINA PETERSEN • NOV 9, 2020

The road to the presidency was not straightforward. And it has shaken some Illinois State University students, who have some of the same divisions and misinformed beliefs the rest of America has shown during voting.

Dozens Gather In Bloomington To Bid Trump 'Farewell'

By WILLIS KERN • NOV 7, 2020

Nearly 100 people happy with the outcome of the presidential election attended a hastily-organized event Saturday in downtown Bloomington billed as, "You're Fired! A Community Farewell for 45."

McLean County Republican Party Chair Reflects On Big Wins

By DANA VOLLMER • NOV 4, 2020

Republicans logged a lot of wins in McLean County Tuesday night. Congressman Rodney Davis cinched a closely-watched race. County-wide officeholders fended off Democratic challengers. The county board held a Republican majority, despite efforts for a potential Blue Wave.

Analysis: We Are A Divided Society And Likely Will Stay That Way

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • NOV 4, 2020

Those who expected a blue wave in Tuesday's election had a grave disappointment. Those who hoped for a ratification of the Trump presidency and for Republican gains likewise ended up unsatisfied.

How Rep. Rodney Davis Won So Handily In The 13th Congressional District

By RYAN DENHAM, CHARLIE SCHLENKER & DANA VOLLMER • NOV 4, 2020

If you were surprised by size of U.S. Rep. Rodney Davis' margin of victory over his two-time Democratic challenger, you aren't alone. So was Davis.

Presidency In Flux, But Biden Won McLean County

By RYAN DENHAM • NOV 4, 2020

Joe Biden defeated Donald Trump in McLean County—the first time a Democrat has won here since Barack Obama in 2008.

Sommer Re-Elected To 88th House District Seat

By WILLIS KERN • NOV 4, 2020

Veteran Republican Keith Sommer won his 12th term in the Illinois Statehouse, topping Democratic challenger Karla Bailey-Smith and Libertarian Ken Allison on Tuesday.

McLean County Voters Reject Graduated Income Tax Proposal

By RYAN DENHAM • NOV 4, 2020

McLean County voters didn't want to switch to a graduated income tax — and neither did voters statewide.

LaHood Defeats Petrilli To Earn 3rd Term in Congress

By MICHELE STEINBACHER • NOV 3, 2020

Republican U.S. Rep. Darin LaHood easily won a third term in the 18th Congressional District, defeating Democrat George Petrilli.

McLean County Auditor Wins 3rd Term

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • NOV 3, 2020

Republican McLean County Auditor Michelle Anderson was not hampered by a history of contention with county officeholders of her own party, or a medical leave that took her away from a portion of the campaign.

Anderson defeated Democrat Rob Fazzini and Libertarian Kevin Woodard on Tuesday to win her third full term.

Rep. Brady Wins 11th Term, Defeats Democrat Cummings

By BREANNA GROW • NOV 3, 2020

Voters in the 105th House District have re-elected Dan Brady to an 11th term as state representative.

Yoder Wins 2nd Full Term As McLean County Coroner

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • NOV 3, 2020

A battle between two nurses for the office that investigates deaths in McLean County ended in a win for incumbent Republican Kathy Yoder.

Rep. Davis Defeats Democrat Londrigan To Win Re-Election

By RYAN DENHAM & MARY HANSEN • NOV 3, 2020

U.S. Rep. Rodney Davis has won re-election in his rematch against Democratic challenger Betsy Dirksen Londrigan. The Associated Press called the race around 10:30 p.m. Tuesday.

Sen. Durbin Wins 5th Term Over Lesser-Known Challengers

By RYAN DENHAM • NOV 3, 2020

Democratic Sen. Dick Durbin cruised to re-election Tuesday, handily winning over four lesser-known challengers.

Election Day Voter Turnout Steady At ISU

By ERIC STOCK • NOV 3, 2020

Illinois State University students said in-person voting on Election Day has been relatively quick and easy so far.

The McLean County Clerk's office added a second polling site for ISU at Watterson Towers this year to reduce long wait times that voters have encountered during previous presidential and midterm elections.

What's Driving First-Time Peoria Voters To Cast A Ballot This Year?

By OLIVIA STREETER • NOV 2, 2020

Many young people are casting their first-ever ballots this November in what's shaping up to potentially be one of the highest-turnout elections in recent memory.

McLean County Turnout Close to 40% Before Election Day

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • NOV 2, 2020

McLean County and City of Bloomington election officials said Monday they have received more than 42,457 ballots through early voting and vote by mail. That is about 37.7% of the roughly 112,600 registered voters in the county, even before polls open Tuesday morning. Just 10 days ago, the votes cast figure was closer to 20%.

Police in McLean County Taking No Chances On Election Night

By ERIC STOCK • OCT 31, 2020

Police in Bloomington-Normal say they don't expect any trouble on election night, but during this time of high tension, they also say they aren't taking any chances.

Big Crowd, Enthusiasm For Final Early Voting Day At Eastland Mall

By COLLEEN REYNOLDS • OCT 31, 2020

The parking lot outside the northwest entrance to Eastland Mall was so busy Friday that it resembled a classic Black Friday crowd. But instead of shoppers, they were voters.

Democrat, Libertarian Challenge Incumbent For County Board District 3 Seat

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • OCT 30, 2020

McLean County Board District 3 takes in the western part of the county and portions of west and south Bloomington. Participating in a WGLT forum were Democrat RJ McCracken and Libertarian Derek Evans.

Multiple County Board Races Put Party Control In Play

By ERIC STOCK • OCT 30, 2020

McLean County Democrats have their sights set on something that once seemed unimaginable -- gaining majority power on the county board.

Londrigan Makes Final Push To Rally ISU Student Support

By DANA VOLLMER • OCT 30, 2020

Democrat Betsy Dirksen Londrigan is making a final push for college students to support her at the polls.

To Each His Own: Neighbors Cordial Despite Political Differences

By ERIC STOCK • OCT 29, 2020

A stroll through a west Bloomington neighborhood shows the deep political divide that grips much of the country as election day approaches.

Barickman Urges Close Study Of Election Lessons

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • OCT 27, 2020

A Republican state senator from Bloomington said Tuesday that suburban Chicago candidates need to localize their elections.

All Eyes On Toss-Up 13th District As Davis Faces Londrigan Again

By RYAN DENHAM • OCT 27, 2020

Just like it was two years ago, Illinois' 13th Congressional District is one of the most closely watched House races in the country.

Video: Rep. Dan Brady Faces Challenge From Democrat Chamberly Cummings

By RYAN DENHAM & CHARLIE SCHLENKER • OCT 22, 2020

State Rep. Dan Brady faces a challenge from Democrat Chamberly Cummings this fall in an Illinois House district that includes parts of Bloomington-Normal.

1 In 5 McLean County Voters Has Already Cast Their Ballot

By RYAN DENHAM • OCT 21, 2020

One in five registered voters in McLean County has already cast their ballot, and a local election official says it's possible overall turnout will top 80%.

Heartland Panel: Modern Voter Suppression Alive And Well

By BREANNA GROW • OCT 16, 2020

Panelists in a Heartland Community College discussion on voter suppression said just because governments no longer explicitly bar African Americans, women or the poor from voting, it doesn't mean there aren't active efforts to control who shows up at the polls.

Video: Londrigan Tries To Tie Together Davis, Trump During 2nd Debate

By RYAN DENHAM • OCT 13, 2020

Democratic challenger Betsy Dirksen Londrigan tried repeatedly Tuesday to link Rep. Rodney Davis to President Donald Trump's track record on the pandemic, tax reform, and incivility in politics during the second debate of their high-profile rematch.

Video: Party Chairs Make Their Case For And Against Graduated Income Tax

By RYAN DENHAM • OCT 13, 2020

McLean County's top Democrat and Republican are making their case for and against the graduated income tax—one of the biggest issues facing voters this fall.

GOP Lawmakers Tout Federal Environmental Research Grant In Tour Of ISU Farms

By CATRINA PETERSEN • OCT 12, 2020

U.S. representatives from central Illinois and Illinois State University President Larry Dietz said they have high hopes for a common plant they believe will be a "wonder weed," during a tour of the ISU Farms near Lexington.

Jail Voting Participation Remains Low, Despite New Law

By DANA VOLLMER • OCT 12, 2020

This is the first general election when Illinois jails are required to give detainees the opportunity to vote. But early signs show little change in how many ballots are actually cast from behind bars.

BEC Gets Nod To Begin Mailing Supplemental Ballots

By ERIC STOCK • OCT 8, 2020

The Bloomington Election Commission plans to begin mailing supplemental mail-in ballots starting next Monday to about 9,000 voters whose initial ballots mistakenly omitted two judicial retention questions.

Davis, Londrigan Want Congress, White House To Resume Talks On More COVID Relief

By RYAN DENHAM • OCT 8, 2020

Both candidates running for the 13th Congressional District want to see the White House and congressional leaders continue negotiating on another COVID-19 relief package.

AARP, Senior Groups Stump For Graduated Tax, Address Retirement Income Claims

By JERRY NOWICKI / CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS • OCT 7, 2020

A group of retirees organized through the senior advocacy group AARP held a virtual news conference Wednesday to express support for a graduated tax constitutional amendment and opposition to a tax on retirement income – two things that they note are mutually exclusive.

Bloomington Election Commission Awaits Courts OK Before Issuing Supplemental Ballots

By ERIC STOCK • OCT 7, 2020

The Bloomington Election Commission is seeking an emergency court order to allow it to mail 9,000 supplemental ballots to voters who received ballots in which two judicial retention questions were mistakenly omitted.

13th District Debate Fact Check: Rodney Davis And Betsy Dirksen Londrigan

By ILLINOIS NEWSROOM • OCT 6, 2020

Republican U.S. Rep. Rodney Davis and Democratic challenger Betsy Dirksen Londrigan debated for the first time this election cycle on Monday night in Champaign.

ISU Student Faces Libertarian In McLean County Board Race

By ERIC STOCK • OCT 6, 2020

An Illinois State University student who is running for McLean County Board defends the county's handling of the pandemic, but she suggested more could have been done to prevent a large spike in coronavirus cases when college students returned to campus in August.

'Common Sense' Political Action Committee Makes First Moves In B-N

By RYAN DENHAM • OCT 6, 2020

The priorities of a new political action committee are starting to take shape.

Sen. Brady: Trump 'Completely Mishandled' White Supremacist Remarks

By RYAN DENHAM • OCT 2, 2020

One of the state's top Republicans said Friday that President Donald Trump "mishandled" his response to a question at this week's debate about white supremacists.

BEC Sketches Out Plan To Fix Ballot Error For 9,500 Voters

By RYAN DENHAM • OCT 2, 2020

The Bloomington Election Commission says it will seek a judge's approval of its plan to fix a ballot error that has temporarily halted early voting in the city.

NAACP Candidate Forum: Language Surrounding Race Differs In Local, State Contests

By BREANNA GROW • OCT 1, 2020

Participants in Thursday night's virtual Bloomington-Normal NAACP candidate forum were unified in denouncing white supremacy.

Bloomington Election Commission Halts Early Voting Due To Ballot 'Glitch'

By RYAN DENHAM & ERIC STOCK • OCT 1, 2020

The Bloomington Election Commission said Thursday it has suspended early voting after learning of a "glitch" with its ballots.

Candidate For Coroner Says Office Is About Service, Not Politics

By DANA VOLLMER • OCT 1, 2020

The candidate challenging incumbent McLean County Coroner Kathy Yoder is urging voters to listen to ideas over partisan ties.

Candidate Forum: 88th Illinois House District

By DANA VOLLMER • OCT 1, 2020

The candidates for the 88th Illinois House District have different ideas on how the state can aid recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. But all three agree on one thing: state government should have acted sooner to blunt the financial blow of the virus.

HEALTH AND MEDICINE

Scott Commission Hikes This Year's Health and Wellness Grant Amount

By DARNYSHA MITCHELL • DEC 10, 2020

McLean County Tops 100 COVID-19 Deaths

By ERIC STOCK • DEC 30, 2020

McLean County health officials announced four more deaths related to COVID-19 on Wednesday, pushing the county's death toll since the start of the pandemic to 101.

McLean County Hits Record COVID-19 Monthly Death Total

By TIM SHELLEY • DEC 29, 2020

McLean County is reporting 84 new cases of COVID-19 on Tuesday, bringing the community's total probable and confirmed cases to 11,355.

McLean County ICU Beds Still Near Capacity; 2 COVID-19 Deaths Added

By JOE DEACON • DEC 28, 2020

Two new deaths linked to COVID-19 in McLean County bring the death toll to 88, while the county's hospitals still report 96% of intensive care beds in use.

Nearly All ICU Beds Taken In B-N; New COVID Cases Drop

By ERIC STOCK • DEC 23, 2020

Bloomington-Normal's intensive care beds have nearly reached capacity even as the county's active coronavirus caseload drops to its lowest level in six weeks.

Capacity Strains Rural Hospitals As Pandemic Rages

By ERIC STOCK • DEC 18, 2020

Many rural areas avoided the worst of the pandemic in its early stages. Now, it seems the coronavirus is everywhere, straining hospitals that have fewer resources to address an ongoing health crisis.

B-N Congolese Patients Face Health Inequity

By DANA VOLLMER • DEC 17, 2020

A growing immigrant group in Bloomington-Normal faces barriers to getting medical attention.

Pandemic Deaths Among Seniors Rise In McLean County

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • DEC 16, 2020

The rapid rise in COVID-19 cases in McLean County before Thanksgiving is now tracking through to a rise in deaths among older residents.

McLean Co. Sees 4 COVID Deaths, New High In Hospitalizations

By ERIC STOCK • DEC 15, 2020

McLean County health officials said Tuesday four more county residents have died of COVID-19 complications, while hospital capacity has become increasingly strained by a rise in more serious cases.

McLean County Preps For COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution

By ERIC STOCK • DEC 14, 2020

Two years after McLean County health officials led a full-scale disaster drill for a mass vaccination, the real thing will soon be here.

With SHIELD Lab Stalled, ISU Pivots To In-House Rapid Test

By BREANNA GROW • DEC 12, 2020

With plans for saliva-based testing held up at the federal level, Illinois State University will begin in-house rapid antigen testing in January.

McLean Co. Nursing Home Sees Latest COVID Outbreak

By ERIC STOCK • DEC 11, 2020

The McLean County Nursing Home in Normal is seeing a spike in coronavirus cases.

Bloomington Mayor Tests Positive For COVID-19

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • DEC 8, 2020

Bloomington Mayor Tari Renner is isolating at home after receiving a positive test for the coronavirus on Tuesday. Renner said he immediately sought a test after his son tested positive. Renner told WGLT in an interview Tuesday evening he "sort of lost his voice" the day before Thanksgiving and had some upper respiratory symptoms six days later.

Vaccines Still Required, Classroom Or Not

By DANA VOLLMER • DEC 7, 2020

The Carle Mobile Health Clinic made its Bloomington debut Monday, partnering with District 87 to offer physicals and immunizations for students.

ISU Closer To Rapid Saliva Testing For COVID-19

By CATRINA PETERSEN & CHARLIE SCHLENKER • DEC 4, 2020

Illinois State University plans up to 20,000 rapid coronavirus tests per week with the help of a new lab.

County Adds 167 COVID Cases; Positivity Rate Below 11%

By ERIC STOCK • DEC 4, 2020

Reditus testing site

McLean County's COVID-19 testing positivity rate dropped below 11% on Friday after a week of gradual increases.

How COVID Mirrors And Diverges From The AIDS Crisis

By DANA VOLLMER • DEC 1, 2020

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, there was the AIDS crisis—one of the great public health challenges in the country's history. It changed the way we view science, medicine and the role of government during a national emergency.

More ICU Beds Open; COVID Positivity Rate Back Over 10%

By ERIC STOCK • NOV 30, 2020

Bloomington-Normal hospitals have a few more intensive care beds available than they did heading into the Thanksgiving weekend, but a rise in COVID testing positivity could increase demand for those beds soon.

Stress Managers Staying Flexible To Help Cope With COVID

By ERIC STOCK • NOV 20, 2020

If your business is stress management, then 2020 is your year.

Unit 5 Calls Time Out On In-Person Instruction

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • NOV 13, 2020

Unit 5 schools will move to all-remote learning starting next Wednesday because of rising coronavirus infection numbers.

County Tops 6,000 COVID Cases; Positivity Rate Exceeds 10%

By ERIC STOCK • NOV 12, 2020

McLean County health officials announced 421 new coronavirus cases and the 42th COVID-related death on Thursday, as the county's testing positivity rate jumped to 10.9%. That's the highest rate since Sept. 6, following a surge of new cases when Illinois State University students returned to campus.

Remembering Dani Kater, COVID's Youngest McLean County Victim

By DANA VOLLMER • NOV 7, 2020

Names and faces get lost in the din of COVID-19 statistics. It's easy to become numb to it. But the family of McLean County's youngest coronavirus victim wants to make sure that doesn't happen.

A LeRoy Family's Case For Caring About COVID

By DANA VOLLMER • NOV 2, 2020

A LeRoy family is pushing back against the narrative that young people don't have much to worry about with COVID-19.

Sen. Brady Calls For Business Consideration As Virus Rates Rise

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • OCT 28, 2020

Bloomington state Sen. Bill Brady is calling again for Senate hearings on mitigation rules as coronavirus positivity rates spike statewide.

County Adds 42 COVID Cases; Positivity Rate Tops 5%

By ERIC STOCK • OCT 27, 2020

McLean County's seven-day testing positivity rate for the coronavirus has topped 5% for the first time since a late summer surge tied to Illinois State University students' return to campus.

B-N Doctors: COVID Treatments Have Improved; Still Trial And Error

By ERIC STOCK • OCT 23, 2020

Top doctors in McLean County say they have a better handle on how to treat COVID-19 patients than they did at the start of the pandemic, but also say patient care is still very much trial and error.

County Adds 34 COVID Cases; Region's Positivity Tops 7%

By ERIC STOCK • OCT 22, 2020

McLean County health officials announced 34 new confirmed coronavirus cases Thursday as the county's seven-day testing positivity rate rose to 4.4%.

ISU Hopes To Expand COVID Testing By End of November

Illinois State University's president does not have too much concern about a potential spike in COVID-19 cases to start the second semester.

McLean County Hits New High For COVID Hospitalizations

By ERIC STOCK • OCT 19, 2020

McLean County health officials have announced 76 new confirmed coronavirus cases since Friday, as the county saw an increase in hospitalizations to its highest level since the start of the pandemic.

McLean County Sees 35 New COVID Cases, Recoveries

By ERIC STOCK • OCT 16, 2020

McLean County health officials announced 35 new coronavirus cases on Friday, and an equal number of patients recovering.

ISU Wants To Add Covid-19 Surge Space At Local Hotels

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • OCT 14, 2020

Illinois State University trustees will consider a contract to use space in two hotels to house any potential overflow of students who become sick, or who have come in close contact with someone who tests positive for the coronavirus.

Health Department Preparing For Winter COVID Resurgence

By BREANNA GROW • OCT 14, 2020

Members of the McLean County Board of Health looked to health department administrators Wednesday night for reassurance the agency will be prepared for a potential surge in COVID-19 this winter.

Chestnut Health Tests COVID-19 Vaccine Readiness

By ERIC STOCK • OCT 14, 2020

Chestnut Health Systems of Bloomington conducted an exercise Wednesday to test its preparedness to administer a COVID-19 vaccine when it becomes available.

County Adds 35 COVID Cases; Testing Rate Holds Steady

By ERIC STOCK • OCT 10, 2020

McLean County health officials reported 35 new coronavirus cases on Saturday while the county's seven-day testing positivity rate held steady at 3%.

Contact Tracers Work To Build Trust With Skeptical Public

By ERIC STOCK • OCT 10, 2020

Some frontline workers in this coronavirus pandemic are people you never see, but you may hear from them. Health experts say contact tracers are crucial to containing the spread of COVID-19, but only if the public cooperates.

Losing Hair Over The Pandemic? Stress Could Be To Blame

By DANA VOLLMER & OLIVIA STREETER • OCT 8, 2020

Stress is abundant during the COVID-19 pandemic. Job loss, health fears, time spent away from loved ones — it piles up. And that stress takes a toll on the body. For some, the effects are more visible. Some are even losing hair over it.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Coroners See More Suicides Among Black People In McLean, Peoria Counties

By ERIC STOCK • DEC 30, 2020

Suicide rates didn't change much in McLean and Peoria counties this year, despite a pandemic that caused hardship for many.

McLean Co. Adds 75 COVID Cases; Testing Site Moves To CIRA

By ERIC STOCK • DEC 22, 2020

McLean County health officials say the rate of new coronavirus cases has dropped in recent weeks, but they are calling for more vigilance as another holiday approaches.

Unit 5 Waits For State On Vaccine Requirement Decision

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • DEC 18, 2020

The Unit 5 school district said it is seeking guidance from the Illinois State Board of Education before deciding whether to require vaccinations for staff and students.

Pandemic Deaths Among Seniors Rise In McLean County

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • DEC 16, 2020

The rapid rise in COVID-19 cases in McLean County before Thanksgiving is now tracking through to a rise in deaths among older residents.

McLean County Adds 101 COVID Cases; 2 Deaths

By ERIC STOCK • DEC 16, 2020

The strain on Bloomington-Normal's hospital capacity eased slightly Wednesday as more intensive care beds became available. But capacity still remains below targets the state of Illinois has set for the coronavirus pandemic.

With SHIELD Lab Stalled, ISU Pivots To In-House Rapid Test

By BREANNA GROW • DEC 12, 2020

With plans for saliva-based testing held up at the federal level, Illinois State University will begin in-house rapid antigen testing in January.

Illinois Heart And Lung Foundation Becomes Latest COVID Casualty

By ERIC STOCK • DEC 10, 2020

A non-profit that has provided defibrillators to schools, churches and businesses in McLean County for two decades is shutting down at the end of the year.

Bloomington Mayor Tests Positive For COVID-19

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • DEC 8, 2020

Bloomington Mayor Tari Renner is isolating at home after receiving a positive test for the coronavirus on Tuesday. Renner said he immediately sought a test after his son tested positive. Renner told WGLT in an interview Tuesday evening he "sort of lost his voice" the day before Thanksgiving and had some upper respiratory symptoms six days later.

ISU Closer To Rapid Saliva Testing For COVID-19

By CATRINA PETERSEN & CHARLIE SCHLENKER • DEC 4, 2020

Illinois State University plans up to 20,000 rapid coronavirus tests per week with the help of a new lab.

COVID Causes Health Care Logjam As Hospital Stays Increase

By ERIC STOCK • NOV 30, 2020

COVID-19 has created a health care logjam as new cases rise, but hospitals aren't the only ones strained for space and staffing."

Pandemic Strains Bloomington-Normal Hospital Staffing

By ERIC STOCK • NOV 19, 2020

The head of OSF St. Joseph Medical Center in Bloomington says staffing remains "solid" despite the need for increased personnel to care for more coronavirus patients.

Unit 5 Calls Time Out On In-Person Instruction

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • NOV 13, 2020

Unit 5 schools will move to all-remote learning starting next Wednesday because of rising coronavirus infection numbers.

County Adds 167 Cases; Positivity Rate Rises, Hospitalizations Drop

By ERIC STOCK • NOV 10, 2020

McLean County health officials announced 167 new coronavirus cases on Tuesday as the county topped 1,000 active cases for the first time since September, following outbreaks on the Illinois State University campus after students returned to campus.

Sen. Brady Calls For Business Consideration As Virus Rates Rise

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • OCT 28, 2020

Bloomington state Sen. Bill Brady is calling again for Senate hearings on mitigation rules as coronavirus positivity rates spike statewide.

County Sees 2 More COVID Deaths; Reaches 4,000 Cases

By ERIC STOCK • OCT 23, 2020

McLean County reported two more COVID-related deaths of nursing home residents on Friday, bringing the county's death toll from the coronavirus to 33.

McLean County Adds 62 Cases; Region's Positivity Rate Spikes

By ERIC STOCK • OCT 21, 2020

McLean County's COVID-19 testing positivity rate has stabilized after a late summer spike, but the rate for the 20-county region is approaching a level that could lead to restrictions.

ISU Hopes To Expand COVID Testing By End of November

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • OCT 20, 2020

Illinois State University's president does not have too much concern about a potential spike in COVID-19 cases to start the second semester.

McLean County COVID Death Toll Reaches 31, As Another Nursing Home Resident Dies

By DANA VOLLMER • OCT 20, 2020

A woman in her 90s has become the latest COVID-related death in McLean County. Her death marks the county's 31st fatality caused by the coronavirus since the start of the pandemic.

McLean County COVID-19 Positivity Dips; Hospitalizations Up

By ERIC STOCK • OCT 15, 2020

McLean County saw an increase in COVID-19 hospitalizations on Thursday as its rate of new cases and positive testing dipped.

ISU Wants To Add Covid-19 Surge Space At Local Hotels

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • OCT 14, 2020

Illinois State University trustees will consider a contract to use space in two hotels to house any potential overflow of students who become sick, or who have come in close contact with someone who tests positive for the coronavirus.

McLean County Adds 44 COVID Cases; 3 More Hospitalized

By ERIC STOCK • OCT 14, 2020

McLean County health officials announced 44 new cases of the coronavirus on Wednesday as the county's seven-day testing positivity rate reached its highest level in five weeks.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Heartland Begins Design, Seeks Funds For New Campus Ag Complex

By ERIC STOCK • DEC 9, 2020

Heartland Community College has hired an architect to design an agriculture complex on campus, but school officials say the size and scope the proposed complex will depend on available funding.

B-N College Enrollment Off For Spring Term

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • DEC 7, 2020

Spring semester enrollment is lagging well behind last year's pace at most Bloomington-Normal colleges and universities.

Pandemic Acting More Subtle Than Stage Performance

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • NOV 10, 2020

Actors act, even in a pandemic. But what high school students are doing now is more subtle than the way they usually tread the boards.

Some ISU Students As Divided As Nation

By CATRINA PETERSEN • NOV 9, 2020

The road to the presidency was not straightforward. And it has shaken some Illinois State University students, who have some of the same divisions and misinformed beliefs the rest of America has shown during voting.

Illinois Program Aims To Expand Diversity Among College Faculty

By TIFFANI JACKSON • NOV 6, 2020

As calls for representation among the marginalized echo in schools, the Illinois Board of Higher Education has announced the newest student group, Diversifying Higher Education Faculty, for local universities with the goal to increase faculty of color.

ISU Hopes To Expand COVID Testing By End of November

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • OCT 20, 2020

Illinois State University's president does not have too much concern about a potential spike in COVID-19 cases to start the second semester.

Heartland Community College Fills Board Vacancy

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • OCT 20, 2020

The Heartland Community College Board of Trustees Tuesday night chose Jim Drew to fill the vacancy on the board created by the recent death of Greg Chadwick. Drew, of Lincoln, will serve until voters choose a new trustee during the April 6, 2021 election. Two years remain on Chadwick's unexpired term.

Heartland Hackers Attacked For Hours Before College Systems Crashed

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • OCT 20, 2020

Hackers carefully considered the timing of the Oct. 5 cyberattack on Heartland Community College.

ISU Trustees Approve COVID Hotel, Testing Contracts

By DANA VOLLMER • OCT 16, 2020

The Illinois State University Board of Trustees on Friday unanimously approved a contract booking blocks of hotel rooms to quarantine students who are deemed close contacts to a COVID-positive peer.

ISU COVID-19 Email Inquiries Show Confusion, Difficulty In Planning Return To Campus

By DANA VOLLMER • OCT 6, 2020

The start of the fall semester was rocky for Illinois State University. Original plans for COVID-19 test supplies fell through just two weeks before the start of classes. Students saw their once blended schedules moved nearly all online, triggering questions about whether students should move back at all, and why they're paying full price.

ISU Athletics Director Larry Lyons To Retire This Year

By RYAN DENHAM • OCT 2, 2020

Illinois State University Athletics Director Larry Lyons said Friday he plans to retire by the end of the year.

POLICE AND COURTS

Looting Suspects Denied Request For New Judge Over Bias Claims

By EDITH BRADY-LUNNY • DEC 21, 2020

Two people charged in looting incidents that led to more than 40 arrests last summer in the Twin Cities lost their bids for a new judge on Monday after a second judge rejected their bias claim against Judge William Yoder.

Police Arrest Suspect At Gunpoint After High-Speed Chase

By RYAN DENHAM • DEC 20, 2020

An armed-and-dangerous suspect in a string of vehicle thefts was captured Sunday near Minonk, after eluding authorities for several days.

Judge Rejects Request To Seal Records In McLean County Drug Case

By EDITH BRADY-LUNNY • DEC 18, 2020

A former Bloomington college student who faced decades in prison for dealing drugs on campus will have to wait for the public records of his offenses to be sealed, a judge ruled on Friday.

Former Staffer Sues Unit 5, Claiming Harassment And Retaliation

By RYAN DENHAM • DEC 15, 2020

A former Unit 5 staffer claims in a federal lawsuit the district's leadership failed to protect her from an administrator's sexual harassment and then retaliated against her when she raised concerns.

Lawsuit Alleges Farmworkers Sickened After Pesticide Exposure

By DANA CRONIN • DEC 10, 2020

In late July 2019, a group of migrant farmworkers from south Texas was working in a cornfield in DeWitt County, Ill., when suddenly a crop duster flew overhead, spraying them with pesticides. Panicked, the crew, which included teenagers and a pregnant woman, ran off the field with clothes doused in pesticides. Their eyes and throats burned and some had trouble breathing. It happened again two weeks later, this time twice within 30 minutes.

Judge Opts For Prison, Not Probation, For Summer Looting Suspect

By EDITH BRADY-LUNNY • DEC 9, 2020

In a sentence contrary to a state recommendation for probation, a judge on Wednesday sentenced a Bloomington man to 4½ years in prison and ordered him to pay restitution to the Town of Normal for damages to police squad cars caused by looters earlier this year.

Federal Lawsuit Filed Against DCFS Workers In Rica Rountree's Beating Death

By EDITH BRADY-LUNNY • DEC 9, 2020

The beating death of an 8-year-old Normal girl is the focus of a federal lawsuit filed Wednesday against six state child welfare workers, the child's father and the woman serving life in prison for the child's death.

Judge Demands Damage Payments In Looter Cases

By EDITH BRADY-LUNNY • DEC 1, 2020

A McLean County judge delayed sentencing hearings Tuesday for two men charged in connection with last summer's looting after prosecutors could not provide figures for the restitution the judge insisted the defendants pay to the Normal Police Department and two businesses.

Ex-Spokesperson Sues McLean County, Alleging Race Discrimination

By RYAN DENHAM & ERIC STOCK • DEC 1, 2020

A former McLean County government employee claims in a new federal lawsuit that he faced on-the-job discrimination and retaliation after he publicly raised concerns about racism in the workplace.

Man Shot In Apparent Road Rage Incident In Bloomington

By RYAN DENHAM • NOV 26, 2020

A 23-year-old man told police he was shot Wednesday night in a road rage incident in far west Bloomington.

Hearing Set For Boy Charged In Fatal Goodfield Fire

By EDITH BRADY-LUNNY • NOV 18, 2020

A hearing is scheduled for Thursday for a 10-year-old Goodfield boy accused of causing an April 2019 fire that killed five people.

Judge Affirms 45-Year Prison Sentence In Bloomington Murder

By EDITH BRADY-LUNNY • NOV 13, 2020

A judge rejected a request on Friday to reduce the 45-year prison term handed down in September for Anthony Grampsas in the December 2018 slaying of Egerton Dover.

Defendants Will Face Trial Together In Bloomington Murder Case

By EDITH BRADY-LUNNY • NOV 12, 2020

Two men accused in a 2019 murder in Bloomington will be tried together in February, a judge ruled on Thursday.

Harrison Gets 31 Years In Prison For AR-15 Killings In Normal

By EDITH BRADY-LUNNY • NOV 5, 2020

Christopher Harrison was sentenced to 31 years in prison on Thursday for second-degree murder related to a drug-related dispute that ended in a hail of bullets and the deaths of two young men.

Looting Suspect Wants New Judge To Hear His Case

By EDITH BRADY-LUNNY • OCT 19, 2020

One of the more than 40 defendants charged with looting in Bloomington and Normal this summer has asked that a new judge handle his case, based on an alleged bias by the judge currently assigned to hear a majority of the cases.

Woman Gets 23 Years In Prison For Fatal Bloomington Stabbing

By EDITH BRADY-LUNNY • OCT 19, 2020

A Bloomington woman was sentenced to 23 years in prison Monday in the 2018 stabbing death of Quantez Brown.

Baker Defends Child Abuse Video Jurors Saw In Murder Trial

By EDITH BRADY-LUNNY • OCT 9, 2020

Cynthia Baker denied Friday that she killed 8-year-old Rica Rountree, suggesting instead that the child's father was a more likely source of the fatal blow that ended the child's life.

Man Convicted In B-N Murder Now Points Finger At Attorneys

By EDITH BRADY-LUNNY • OCT 8, 2020

The sentencing hearing for a man convicted of murder in the death of Egerton Dover was postponed Thursday after he asked for a hearing on claims that he received ineffective legal help from his lawyers.

Judge: All Sentencing Options Open For Accused Looters

By EDITH BRADY-LUNNY • OCT 1, 2020

Defendants in more than 40 summer looting cases in Bloomington and Normal will not be allowed to present fully negotiated pleas to resolve their cases, a judge said Thursday, in a decision that leaves all sentencing options from probation to prison

POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

Bill Brady Resigns From Illinois Senate, Leaves Door Open For Another Run

By RYAN DENHAM • DEC 31, 2020

State Sen. Bill Brady of Bloomington, who ran for governor three times and led Republicans in the Illinois Senate, has resigned.

Q&A: Rep. Davis On Trump's Denial Of Election Loss

By RYAN DENHAM • DEC 7, 2020

Hundreds of Republicans in Congress have declined to acknowledge that President-elect Joe Biden is indeed the president-elect. President Trump himself continues to falsely claim he won the election, even as he seriously considers launching a bid for 2024.

Rep. Davis: PPP, Airline Help Are Top Priorities In Next COVID Relief Package

By RYAN DENHAM • DEC 7, 2020

U.S. Rep. Rodney Davis said Monday he is “pretty pessimistic” that a deal on more coronavirus relief is imminent, though if it happens he wants assistance for small businesses and airlines to be front and center.

Nikita Richards Resigns As McLean County Democratic Party Chair

By RYAN DENHAM • NOV 26, 2020

After than less a year at the helm, Nikita Richards said Thursday she has resigned as chair of the McLean County Democratic Party.

Rep. Caulkins Questions State's COVID Restrictions On Bars, Restaurants

By RYAN DENHAM • NOV 10, 2020

A Republican lawmaker who represents parts of McLean County said the state’s own contact tracing data does not support such a hard crackdown on indoor service at bars and restaurants.

How Rep. Rodney Davis Won So Handily In The 13th Congressional District

By RYAN DENHAM, CHARLIE SCHLENKER & DANA VOLLMER • NOV 4, 2020

If you were surprised by size of U.S. Rep. Rodney Davis' margin of victory over his two-time Democratic challenger, you aren't alone. So was Davis.

Election Results: No Blue Wave In McLean County

By RYAN DENHAM • NOV 4, 2020

There is a lot we know -- and a lot we don't know -- coming out of a very late election night in central Illinois. Ryan Denham has more.

Sen. Durbin Wins 5th Term Over Lesser-Known Challengers

By RYAN DENHAM • NOV 3, 2020

Democratic Sen. Dick Durbin cruised to re-election Tuesday, handily winning over four lesser-known challengers.

All Eyes On Toss-Up 13th District As Davis Faces Londrigan Again

By RYAN DENHAM • OCT 27, 2020

Just like it was two years ago, Illinois' 13th Congressional District is one of the most closely watched House races in the country.

First Bloomington Mayoral Candidate Touts Business Background, Collaborative Approach

By RYAN DENHAM • OCT 23, 2020

The first Bloomington mayoral candidate to emerge says he would lean into his business background to help the local economy navigate the pandemic.

NAACP, League Of Women Voters Tag Team Voter Engagement

By DARNYSHA MITCHELL • OCT 20, 2020

The Bloomington-Normal NAACP and the McLean County chapter of the League of Women Voters are teaming up to encourage the community to vote.

ISU Class Digs Into Social Media Ads In 13th District Campaign

By RYAN DENHAM • OCT 16, 2020

If you want a sense of just how important the fight is for the 13th Congressional District, look no further than the ads in your own Facebook feed.

Video: Londrigan Tries To Tie Together Davis, Trump During 2nd Debate

By RYAN DENHAM • OCT 13, 2020

Democratic challenger Betsy Dirksen Londrigan tried repeatedly Tuesday to link Rep. Rodney Davis to President Donald Trump's track record on the pandemic, tax reform, and incivility in politics during the second debate of their high-profile rematch.

Video: Party Chairs Make Their Case For And Against Graduated Income Tax

By RYAN DENHAM • OCT 13, 2020

McLean County's top Democrat and Republican are making their case for and against the graduated income tax—one of the biggest issues facing voters this fall.

Davis, Londrigan Want Congress, White House To Resume Talks On More COVID Relief

By RYAN DENHAM • OCT 8, 2020

Both candidates running for the 13th Congressional District want to see the White House and congressional leaders continue negotiating on another COVID-19 relief package.

'Common Sense' Political Action Committee Makes First Moves In B-N

By RYAN DENHAM • OCT 6, 2020

The priorities of a new political action committee are starting to take shape.

Sen. Brady: Trump 'Completely Mishandled' White Supremacist Remarks

By RYAN DENHAM • OCT 2, 2020

One of the state's top Republicans said Friday that President Donald Trump “mishandled” his response to a question at this week's debate about white supremacists.

Democrat George Petrilli Pushes Health Care, Student Loan Forgiveness In Bid Against Darin LaHood

By RYAN DENHAM • OCT 2, 2020

A Democrat making a longshot bid against U.S. Rep. Darin LaHood says their district is gerrymandered in such a way that voters never get to truly hash out the issues with their candidates.

Durbin: State Aid Negotiations To Continue After Relief Bill Passage

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • DEC 22, 2020

U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin said Tuesday he believes the issue of direct pandemic relief aid for states, cities, and small units of government will come back, after it was not included in the \$900 billion package Congress just approved.

The Illinois Democrat said during an online news conference the Biden camp has a different position than the Trump administration on that aid.

City Fines Business For Pandemic Violation Under Liquor Code

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • DEC 15, 2020

Bloomington Liquor Commissioner and Mayor Tari Renner issued a \$600 fine against Joe's Pub for a violation of Gov. JB Pritzker's executive order banning indoor service to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus.

Pritzker Calls For \$700M In Cuts; GOP, AFSCME Push Back

By ERIC STOCK • DEC 15, 2020

State employees could see furlough days as a way to help the state of Illinois balance its budget. That's according to a plan Gov. JB Pritzker has laid out to cut \$700 million from the budget.

Main Street Republicans in B-N Mixed On Biden

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • DEC 14, 2020

Main Street Republicans in Bloomington-Normal look ahead to a Joe Biden administration with a combination of fear and optimism. Several GOP members consulted by WGLT, who are not office holders and not involved in political activity, all affirmed traditional values of the party.

At League Event, Ray LaHood's Former Chief of Staff Optimistic About Biden Bipartisanship

By COLLEEN REYNOLDS • DEC 10, 2020

Americans have rarely been as polarized as they are today, but Brad McMillan, chief of staff for former Republican Rep. Ray LaHood, believes the country can return to a new era of civility and compromise.

Rep. Brady On COVID-19 Budget Woes, Transition Of Power

By DANA VOLLMER • DEC 9, 2020

Illinois lawmakers return to Springfield in January, staring down a change in House leadership, the economic fallout of the pandemic and unfinished business interrupted by COVID-19.

Bloomington Mayor Tests Positive For COVID-19

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • DEC 8, 2020

Bloomington Mayor Tari Renner is isolating at home after receiving a positive test for the coronavirus on Tuesday. Renner said he immediately sought a test after his son tested positive. Renner told WGLT in an interview Tuesday evening he "sort of lost his voice" the day before Thanksgiving and had some upper respiratory symptoms six days later.

Bloomington OKs Property Tax Levy, More Money For Monkey Exhibit

By SARAH NARDI • DEC 7, 2020

The Bloomington City Council voted Monday night to approve a property tax levy for the 2020 fiscal year, totaling an estimated \$25.6 million that will result in no change in the property tax rate.

The levy includes financing for both the city and the Bloomington Public Library.

The tax rate is expected to remain \$1.090 per \$100 assessed valuation.

Rep. Davis: PPP, Airline Help Are Top Priorities In Next COVID Relief Package

By RYAN DENHAM • DEC 7, 2020

U.S. Rep. Rodney Davis said Monday he is “pretty pessimistic” that a deal on more coronavirus relief is imminent, though if it happens he wants assistance for small businesses and airlines to be front and center.

County Board Swears In New Members, Reelects McIntyre Chairman

By ERIC STOCK • DEC 7, 2020

McLean County swore in three new County Board members and reelected John McIntyre as chairman during a special meeting on Monday.

Write-In Candidate Seeks 'Servant' Leadership For Bloomington Mayor

By ERIC STOCK • DEC 7, 2020

An educator with no political experience says she would bring servant leadership to Bloomington if she's elected mayor next year.

Barickman Calls For Medicaid Cuts As Part Of Budget Solution

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER & CATRINA PETERSEN • NOV 30, 2020

Now that voters have rejected the income tax amendment to the State Constitution to create a progressive tax structure, Illinois faces hard choices to balance the budget during the spring session of the General Assembly."

Mwilambwe Touts Council Experience In Bloomington Mayoral Bid

By ERIC STOCK • NOV 27, 2020

Bloomington City Council member Mboka Mwilambwe says his experience and temperament make him the best choice to lead the city, starting next year.

McLean Among Few U.S. Counties To Flip In Election

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER & CATRINA PETERSEN • NOV 20, 2020

McLean County is one of only 77 counties in the United States to flip the presidential party preference from four years ago. McLean County went for Joe Biden and last cycle it went for President Trump.

McLean County Board Exits Signal End Of An Era

By ERIC STOCK • NOV 19, 2020

Two of McLean County's longest-serving elected officials are set to exit the stage.

Town Of Normal Warns Pandemic Scofflaws Of Liquor License Suspensions

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • NOV 17, 2020

The mayor of Normal said he's had to eat his words from a couple weeks ago when he argued McLean County didn't need mitigation efforts that were as stiff as those in counties with higher COVID-19 testing positivity rates.

Bloomington Mayoral Field Could Get Crowded

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • NOV 13, 2020

The dust has hardly settled from the last election and candidates already are preparing to file for the next one, the municipal consolidated contests next year.

Some ISU Students As Divided As Nation

By CATRINA PETERSEN • NOV 9, 2020

The road to the presidency was not straightforward. And it has shaken some Illinois State University students, who have some of the same divisions and misinformed beliefs the rest of America has shown during voting.

McLean County Republican Party Chair Reflects On Big Wins

By DANA VOLLMER • NOV 4, 2020

Republicans logged a lot of wins in McLean County Tuesday night.

Congressman Rodney Davis cinched a closely-watched race. County-wide officeholders fended off Democratic challengers. The county board held a Republican majority, despite efforts for a potential Blue Wave.

Analysis: We Are A Divided Society And Likely Will Stay That Way

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • NOV 4, 2020

Those who expected a blue wave in Tuesday's election had a grave disappointment. Those who hoped for a ratification of the Trump presidency and for Republican gains likewise ended up unsatisfied.

Bill Brady To Leave Senate GOP Leadership Role

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • NOV 4, 2020

State Sen. Bill Brady has hinted at another run for statewide office, and has told other Republican senators he will step down as Senate party leader.

McLean County Auditor Wins 3rd Term

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • NOV 3, 2020

Republican McLean County Auditor Michelle Anderson was not hampered by a history of contention with county officeholders of her own party, or a medical leave that took her away from a portion of the campaign.

Anderson defeated Democrat Rob Fazzini and Libertarian Kevin Woodard on Tuesday to win her third full term.

Yoder Wins 2nd Full Term As McLean County Coroner

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • NOV 3, 2020

A battle between two nurses for the office that investigates deaths in McLean County ended in a win for incumbent Republican Kathy Yoder.

McLean County Turnout Close to 40% Before Election Day

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • NOV 2, 2020

McLean County and City of Bloomington election officials said Monday they have received more than 42,457 ballots through early voting and vote by mail. That is about 37.7% of the roughly 112,600 registered voters in the county, even before polls open Tuesday morning. Just 10 days ago, the votes cast figure was closer to 20%.

Democrat, Libertarian Challenge Incumbent For County Board District 3 Seat

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • OCT 30, 2020

McLean County Board District 3 takes in the western part of the county and portions of west and south Bloomington. Participating in a WGLT forum were Democrat RJ McCracken and Libertarian Derek Evans.

Sen. Brady Calls For Business Consideration As Virus Rates Rise

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • OCT 28, 2020

Bloomington state Sen. Bill Brady is calling again for Senate hearings on mitigation rules as coronavirus positivity rates spike statewide.

Barickman Urges Close Study Of Election Lessons

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • OCT 27, 2020

A Republican state senator from Bloomington said Tuesday that suburban Chicago candidates need to localize their elections.

Newcomer Announces Bloomington Mayoral Bid

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • OCT 26, 2020

A political newcomer has announced a run for mayor of Bloomington. He is 29-year-old Nick McClintock, a radio technician for the Illinois Farm Bureau. He also has been a part-time producer and show host for various radio stations in Bloomington-Normal.

Bloomington Receives \$2.3M HUD Grant To Remove Lead From Low-Income Homes

By DANA VOLLMER • OCT 21, 2020

Nearly 100 low-income housing units in Bloomington will undergo lead abatement, financed by a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Renner Won't Seek 3rd Term As Bloomington Mayor

By ERIC STOCK • OCT 21, 2020

Bloomington Mayor Tari Renner announced Wednesday he won't seek re-election to a third term next spring.

McLean County Shifts Emergency COVID-19 Loan Funding

By ERIC STOCK • OCT 20, 2020

McLean County government is shifting its emergency loan program to distributing larger zero-interest, forgivable loans to small businesses struggling during the pandemic.

Health Department Preparing For Winter COVID Resurgence

By BREANNA GROW • OCT 14, 2020

Members of the McLean County Board of Health looked to health department administrators Wednesday night for reassurance the agency will be prepared for a potential surge in COVID-19 this winter.

What To Know About Illinois' Graduated Tax Amendment

By JERRY NOWICKI • OCT 14, 2020

One of the major questions Illinois voters will answer on Nov. 3 will be on the ballot statewide – whether to amend the state's constitution to allow for a graduated rate income tax.

GOP Lawmakers Tout Federal Environmental Research Grant In Tour Of ISU Farms

By CATRINA PETERSEN • OCT 12, 2020

U.S. representatives from central Illinois and Illinois State University President Larry Dietz said they have high hopes for a common plant they believe will be a "wonder weed," during a tour of the ISU Farms near Lexington.

Cline, Segobiano File For Vacant McLean County Board Seat

By ERIC STOCK • OCT 9, 2020

One of McLean County's longest-serving elected officials is seeking a return to public office for one of the shortest stints possible.

ISU Student Faces Libertarian In McLean County Board Race

By ERIC STOCK • OCT 6, 2020

An Illinois State University student who is running for McLean County Board defends the county's handling of the pandemic, but she suggested more could have been done to prevent a large spike in coronavirus cases when college students returned to campus in August.

'Common Sense' Political Action Committee Makes First Moves In B-N

By RYAN DENHAM • OCT 6, 2020

The priorities of a new political action committee are starting to take shape.

NAACP Candidate Forum: Language Surrounding Race Differs In Local, State Contests

By BREANNA GROW • OCT 1, 2020

Participants in Thursday night's virtual Bloomington-Normal NAACP candidate forum were unified in denouncing white supremacy

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

ISU Class Digs Into Social Media Ads In 13th District Campaign

By RYAN DENHAM • OCT 16, 2020

If you want a sense of just how important the fight is for the 13th Congressional District, look no further than the ads in your own Facebook feed.

'Breach' Disrupts Heartland Community College's Computer Systems

By RYAN DENHAM & ERIC STOCK • OCT 6, 2020

Heartland Community College officials said they hope to resume online classes Wednesday as they investigate an online security breach.

CIVIL RIGHTS

B-N NAACP Launching Youth Council To Fight For Equality

By BREANNA GROW • DEC 17, 2020

Harper Joyner is 6 1/2 years old. Her mom, Tameka Thompson, is co-chair of Bloomington-Normal ACT-SO, an NAACP youth enrichment program for high school students.

Medal Of Honor Recipient Chronicled In Rise Of Black Middle Class

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER & CATRINA PETERSEN • DEC 15, 2020

Andrew Jackson Smith was born a slave in Kentucky in 1842, the probable son of a slave holder. He escaped to the Union Army, became the servant of an officer from central Illinois, and later a soldier who distin

TRANSPORTATION

CIRA Thanksgiving Numbers Healthy – Considering

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • DEC 8, 2020

The Central Illinois Regional Airport continued to conform to national patterns in November, Deputy Director for Marketing Fran Strebing told Bloomington-Normal Airport Authority Board members on Tuesday.

Rivian Adds Warehouse Space In Normal; More Hiring Planned

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • DEC 7, 2020

Rivian has leased the Phoenix Investors warehouse in north Normal as part of its ramp-up to production.

Connect Transit Given Capital Grant For Electric Buses

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • NOV 13, 2020

The state transportation department is giving Bloomington-Normal's public bus system \$9.9 million.

Ameren Plans Investment In Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

By RYAN DENHAM • OCT 15, 2020

Ameren Illinois says it plans to help build out a network of public electric vehicle charging stations.