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MOSTLY SUNNY 91° • 74° FORECAST, B10

MONDAY, AUGUST 27, 2018

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#TogetherDecatur

SPECIAL REPORT: SAFETY ON THE SMALL FARM



CLAY JACKSON, HERALD & REVIEW

Grant Noland, treasurer of Noland Farms, talks with Ryan Burrows at Noland Farm in Blue Mound. Burrows is in a tractor hooked to a grain cart. Raised on the family farm, Noland learned safety procedures early and plans to ensure his own children do the same.

STAYING PROTECTED

For family farms, challenge in balancing safety, traditions

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Few settings speak to the American way of life quite like the family farm, where children have long been expected to contribute to the collective well-being by learning with their hands the tools and skills of a trade that settled the prairie.

But despite the iconic status, small farms are also just that — farms, with serious dangers unique to any other business. The nature of farming means heavy machinery, blades and chemicals are part of life. And while virtually every American industry has undergone rapid changes in child labor rules over the past century, the small family farm — which are generally exempt from Occupational Safety and Health Adminis-

About this story

This story was reported by Donnette Beckett, Jaylyn Cook, Claire Hettinger, Tom Lisi, Tony Reid, Valerie Wells and Ryan Voyles of the Herald & Review; Kevin Barlow of the Bloomington Pantagraph; and Jarad Jarmon of the Journal Gazette & Times Courier.

stration regulations — are a unique holdout. Here, amid tractors and combines ramping up for this harvest season, boys and girls learn the family business, risks and all.

It is a sizable population.

The National Children's Center for Rural Health and Safety estimates about 893,000 youth lived on farms in 2014, and 51 percent worked on their farm. More than 265,600 nonresident youth were hired in agriculture in 2014. Accidents happen in all workplaces, but from 2001 to 2015, 48 percent of all fatal injuries to young workers occurred in agriculture.

Learning on the job begins at a young age, and while many families say great attention is given to proper instruction, the fact is, farming is as dangerous an occupation as any, and the given that children should participate is weighed against the very hard nature of the work, requiring respect for machine and nature.

"Most family farms, at least the way we grew up and other farmers that I know that are smaller farmers, they do not necessarily go through that formal training," said University of Illinois Extension specialist Robert "Chip" Petrea. "A lot of it (training) is modeling, like, 'Watch me' and this is what happens when I do this, and do not do that.' But it's not formal in the sense where that person is there with others and there is research to suggest that being with their peers and hearing it from there, there's this peer pressure where it's like, 'OK, we should all be

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Safety on the small farm

This story is part of a series on the hazards on small agricultural operations in Illinois.



SUNDAY: While virtually every place of employment is getting safe, agriculture remains the deadliest industry in the country.

MONDAY: How do families balance helping young people learn the trade with staying safe?

TUESDAY: Safety improvements are often costly, putting operators in a juggling act.

WEDNESDAY: What farmers and groups are doing to keep the industry safe moving forward.

Visit herald-review.com to see photos and videos of the farmers featured in our series. Join the conversation on the Dialogue page by sending comments to letters@herald-review.com.

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■ INSIDE: A look at the highlights of John McCain's lengthy public service career. **NATION, A8**

WEATHER ISSUES

Schools releasing students earlier

Heat indices spiking in triple figures

HERALD & REVIEW

Decatur public schools will release students after three hours of instruction on Monday and Tuesday because of forecast heat conditions, the school district said Sunday.

The National Weather Service at Lincoln on Sunday issued a heat advisory until 7 p.m. Tuesday. High temperatures are expected to be in the lower 90s, with heat indices spiking from 100 to 107 degrees Fahrenheit in the afternoon.

Spokeswoman Maria Robertson said in a statement that students would be dropped off at their normal bus stops. Pershing Early Learning Center morning programs will dismiss at noon, and the afternoon program will not be in session.

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■ CLOSINGS: For up-to-the-minute school announcements, see www.herald-review.com

TOGETHER DECATUR

Promotion idea hidden in plain sight

Theatre 7 rocks downtown with contest to kick off new season

DECAUTUR — Theatre 7 director Tanya Haubner may know her way around a theater, but she said she isn't crafty when it comes to selling the show.

To introduce the community to the theater's new productions, she discovered her inner Martha Stewart: "I don't usually come up with ideas for marketing," she said.

Her crafty side uncovered, Theatre 7 members have placed decorated rocks at various locations in down-



town Decatur. The rocks are hidden under benches, in flower beds or among other rocks as part of a contest to win theater tickets.

"But we didn't put any up in trees or places people can't get them," Haubner said.

When someone finds a painted rock, they simply take a picture of the rock and post the find on the Theatre 7 Facebook page. The deadline for entering the contest will be Oct. 1.

"We are putting their name in for a drawing for two tickets to the (first) show," Haubner said.

The community theater will open with "Young Frankenstein The Musical" on Oct. 12 at the Decatur Civic Center Theater.

About 30 rocks have been hidden throughout downtown Decatur for more than a week.

"They are near the library, Central Park, the streets around them and Merchant Street," Haubner said.

A few of the rocks have already been found, but Haubner encourages the finders to rehide the little pieces of art so other people can find them and enter the contest.

"Rehide them downtown, otherwise people aren't going to know

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CLAY JACKSON, HERALD & REVIEW

Theatre 7's Tanya Haubner shows off some painted rocks that she created Thursday at the theater's office on North Water Street in Decatur.

The Rock Hunt

If you find one of Theatre 7's painted rocks, visit their Facebook page and post a photo of the rock. www.facebook.com/Theatre7Decatur



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