



The Navigator

CHARTING A COURSE FOR OUR COMMUNITIES

\$1.00

www.navigatorjournal.com | (618) 445.2355 (618) 375.7502 | Volume 23-150, Number 30-50

ECHS ACES takes 2nd in Academic Challenge

The Edwards County ACES team, coached by ECHS instructor Janette Zurliene, took 2nd place in the regional Academic Challenge in Engineering and Science competition, held virtually via Eastern Illinois University on Tuesday, Feb. 6. The team will advance and compete in sectionals virtually via Eastern Illinois University in March. Individual team winners were:

Biology: Jack Krouse - 1st, Emma Wiseman - 2nd, Sam Speir - 4th, Landon Greatline - 5th and Kassidi Metcalf - 11th.

Chemistry: Landon Greatline - 3rd, Max Fieber - 4th, Hannah Moore - 4th, Sam Lynch - 5th and Rylan Robb - 8th.

Computer Science: Jack Mecum - 1st, Jason Nguyen

See ACES, page 5A

Area libraries receive CARES Act funding

By LEN WELLS
Of The Navigator

Four area public libraries are the recipients of a \$500 CARES Act grant through the Illinois Secretary of State's office. Local libraries awarded \$550 grants include the Groff Memorial Library in Grayville and the public libraries in Mount Carmel, McLeansboro and Harrisburg. The funding was provided to the Illinois State Library from the Institute of Museum and Library Services to prevent, prepare for and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In all, 292 Illinois libraries, school districts and library systems shared in \$1,142,645 in CARES Act funding. The funding can be utilized to address the unforeseen consequences of COVID-19, including the purchase of PPE supplies such as masks and acrylic barriers to ensure the safety of staff and patrons.

Lincoln Day Dinner postponed by EC Republicans

The Edwards County Republicans have decided to postpone our Lincoln Day Dinner.

The dinner, which was originally scheduled to take place this Friday evening, will now take place exactly one week later. The Edwards County Republicans released the following statement in relation to the move:

With the uncertainty of the weather, having enough parking cleared of snow, general safety, etc we felt this the best decision. The dinner will be Friday, Feb. 26, still at the Exhibition Building at Albion. All but one speaker has confirmed they will be there. We appreciate your understanding and look forward to seeing you all there. If you have any questions,

See MOVED, page 5A

Buy the Barrel

The posted price for a barrel of Illinois Basin crude oil stood at \$52.47 as of Tuesday up \$1.50 cents from the last posted price, according to Countrymark Cooperative.



Texas winter crisis could jack up national gas bills

By T.J. HUG
Of The Navigator

A winter storm crisis in Texas could have catastrophic effects throughout the entire American Midwest, and may boost the cost of heating homes throughout the country's heartland, including southern Illinois.

In an email sent from Gray-

ville City Hall to the city's municipal gas customers, it was announced that a winter storm has knocked out power throughout the state, leading to nature gas processing plants losing power. Residents of the city are being asked to keep their thermostats set below 68 degrees Fahrenheit, with warnings that natural gas prices could jump be as much as 100-300 times higher due to

the crisis. This could lead to gas bills rising to far beyond what some customers are able to pay, according to the email.

"It is impossible at this point to determine where the future gas production losses will occur," the email states. "Without your help, future natural gas bills will be more than most residents will be able to afford."

It is also requested in the

email that "industrial and commercial businesses stop production and turn down their thermostats," as well as asking schools to close for the time being.

"There is a chance if you take this action that you will minimize the financial impact and possibly eliminate the

See CRISIS, page 5A



Grayville High School Homecoming King Brayden Hatcher and Queen Madelyn Cunningham share the first dance at GHS Homecoming over the weekend. Photo by Tricia Cunningham.

Winter Storms cause chaos, drop temp to single digits

By AMY WINTER
Of The Navigator

Last week, schools and businesses across the region shut down due to weather on Tuesday. This week, more of the same.

Winter Weather Advisories, Watches and even Ice Storm Warnings have impacted the area for the past week. They also have affected a large portion of the Midwest, the Northeast and some of the South. And we're not quite done yet, though Tuesday morning seemed like the end of the tunnel.

Governor JB Pritzker issued a disaster proclamation early Tuesday afternoon, for all 102 counties in the State of Illinois. The press release noted that "as of 10:30 a.m. on Tuesday, approximately 7,000 Illinois households were without power, and that number is expected to fluctuate as the strain of arctic temperatures and extreme weather continues..."

Last week's storm, Winter Storm Shirley, didn't exact-

See STORM, page 5A

Local schools weigh remote learning vs cancellation decision

By T.J. HUG
Of The Navigator

With the COVID-19 pandemic driving efforts to prepare for remote learning for students, the decision of what to do in cases of inclement weather has become a bit murkier.

During the previous week, which saw most districts suspend in-person learning for their students, some school systems elected to implement remote learning in place of

traditional snow days, also known as emergency days.

Grayville Schools Superintendent Julie Harrelson explained that her district blended emergency days and remote learning days during last week's weather-related difficulties.

"We did e-learning days Tuesday and Wednesday and traditional snow days on Thursday and Friday."

David Cowger, superintendent of schools for Edwards County Community Unit School District #1, explained his district's philosophy

when determining whether to go remote learning during inclement weather days.

"Our approach is to utilize the built-in emergency days prior to using Remote Learning Days," said Cowger. "We feel in-person instruction is by far the most effective instructional method, and it is Edwards County (Schools') belief that it is in the best interest of the students to have as many in-person educational opportunities as possible during this academic school year."

"Whether you use five

emergency days or five remote days, in the end, you will have the same number of instructional days since school calendars are required to build in five additional days which are in the form of emergency days. If they are not used, calendars are adjusted, and these days are removed."

However, the Edwards County district does intend to keep one emergency day available for use in a case

See REMOTE, page 5A

White County leads state of Illinois in crude oil production

By LEN WELLS
Of The Navigator

White County lead the state in oil production during 2020, with producers recovering more than 2 million barrels of crude oil. While oil production in the Illinois Basin dropped nearly 9 percent in 2020, White County saw a 7.6 percent increase in production by being the only county with new oil field

development.

Officials with the Illinois Petroleum Resources Board report White County producers recovered 2,206,100 barrels of oil last year, eclipsing number two Marion County which recovered 815,213 barrels.

Across the state, 7,513,835 barrels of crude oil were pumped out of the ground in 2020, a drop of 8.9 percent. "The decline we saw was mostly attributable to the pandemic and decline

in demand and oil price," said Seth Whitehead, Executive Director of the Illinois Petroleum Resources Board. "I would expect production to bounce back pretty strongly in 2021. Prior to the pandemic, it was holding pretty steady in the 8-9 million barrel a year range." Whitehead added, "I believe it was April of last year that production was down about 50 percent."

In Southeastern Illinois, some 2020 production numbers by county include: Ed-

wards - 102,507 bbl; Wayne - 281,945 bbl; Wabash - 363,255 bbl; Hamilton - 216,554 bbl; Lawrence - 433,904 bbl; Crawford - 585,705 bbl; Gallatin - 142,761 bbl and Jefferson - 135,954 bbl.

Crude oil prices higher today than all of 2020. The February 12, 2021 crude oil price from Countrymark was \$52.47 per barrel. The highest price in 2020 came in January

See OIL, page 5A

FAIRFIELD MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
EXCELLENCE IN COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE

HORIZON HEALTHCARE
Caring Through A Lifetime.

Carmi Medical Clinic
1103 West Main Street
Carmi, IL. 62821

Jeff Wood, LCSW Courtney Robertson, APN, FNP Wesley Thompson, MD Stephen Welty, RN, CDE