



# The JOURNAL



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## Journal Entries

*"There is nothing in the world so irresistibly contagious as laughter and good humor." -Charles Dickens*

### Homes for the Holidays

GFWC Tuscola Women's Club "Homes for the Holidays" house walk tickets are now on sale. This year's event will be held on Dec 8 and features seven locations and downtown shopping. The ticket cost is \$15 and may be purchased at the following places: all banks, Flesor's, Joe's Pizza, and Winterberry.

### Shop with a Cop

The Tuscola Police Department will be accepting applications through December 6, 2019 for the "Shop with a Cop" program. Applications can be picked up at the Tuscola Police Department Office or Tuscola City Hall, to be returned to the same. The number of applications to be chosen will depend on the donations made to the program. Applicants who have not applied before, that qualify, may be chosen over an applicant who has received help through "Shop with a Cop" in previous years.

### Sav-Mor Christmas Open House

Sav-Mor and Friends are hosting a Christmas Open House on December 7. Come and check out our Christmas gifts and home decor, there are many unique Christmas items to choose from. There are also specials for photo an Christmas photo cards through January 15. Stop by for refreshments from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. The Angel Tree will also be on display.

### Villa Grove Christmas Light Judging

Get your decorations ready! The Villa Grove Chamber of Commerce is hosting a Christmas Light Judging for all members of the town on December 18. Contact Bruce at 217-832-2500 with any questions.

### Be a Santa to a Senior

A Bloom Above and Beyond will be collecting items for Tuscola and Arcola Healthcare Centers for Christmas. Items in need are fleece lap blankets, socks, slippers, and toiletries. You can drop your items off at our new location 204 E. Southline Road Suite C in Tuscola. We will be accepting donations until December 16.

### Family Night Out

Tuscola MOPS will be presenting a night of comedy and magic with Family Night Out, featuring the magic of Taylor Hughes. The event will be held on December 12 at the Tuscola United Methodist Church. Doors open at 6 p.m. and the event begins at 6:30 p.m. Tickets are \$17 for adults and \$12 for children ages 3-12. A limited number of tickets will be available to purchase and are available at tuscolafamilynightout.ticketleap.com.

### Santa Paws

On December 7, Hands-for-Paws will be hosting Santa Paws, photos with Santa for pets and kids. Pictures will take place from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Jarman Center, located at 704 North Main Street in Tuscola in the Summer camp room (enter the door under the blue striped awning off Park Street) There is a \$5 donation for pictures. Call 217-508-5310 to set up your appointment, and walk-ins are welcome.

### Sock Drive for the Homeless

Allied Capital Title Tuscola is hosting a sock drive for the homeless. Please drop off donations at the office, located at 108 West Sale Street. They will be collecting donations until December 20.

### Drive Through Live Nativity

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Tuscola, will host a drive-through live nativity on December 8, 4:30-6:30 p.m. Please come and help celebrate the season! 600 E. Northline Rd., Tuscola

## Tuscola will transform into Christmastown Dec. 5 to 8

By Kendra Hennis

Tuscola's Christmastown celebration will take place December 5 to the 8, and all are welcome to join in on the holiday festivities.

On Thursday, December 5, a Santa Shop will be held at the community building for kids to shop for their families. The event starts at 4 p.m. until supplies last. The Santa Shop allows children to cross some names off their list with the help of volunteer personal shoppers.

On Friday, December 6 from 4 to 8 p.m. Becky's Buddies' will

be hosting their annual Holiday Vendor Fair, featuring Cookies by Julie Tiezzi, POC Christmas Ornaments, Scentsy, LMB Art, NorweX, Perfectly Posh, PartyLite Gifts, Honey Bee Design, TCHS Class of 2021 Warrior Scarves, TCHS Class of 2022 Warrior Items and More, Woman's Club Nuts and Wreath Auction, Eighth Grade Washington, DC Trip Bake Sale, and so much more.

Also at the community building from 6 to 7:30 p.m. there will be a performance by the Jane Pickett Music Students.

New this year, the Tuscola

Public Library will hosting heated trolley rides through downtown Tuscola from 6 to 8 p.m. Line up starts at Festival Corner, and then the route will go down Sale, Parke, Pembroke, and Niles, to end up back downtown.

Also downtown, there will be make and take ornaments at the Downtown Design Studio and pictures with Santa. Sweet Soul Boutique will also be open late on Friday for additional holiday shopping.

The fun begins early on Saturday, Dec 7 with the annual Santa Chase 5K run/walk, sponsored by

Alpha & Omega PowerTraining. Registration takes place at 7:15 a.m. at the community building and the race begins at 8 a.m.

Also beginning at 8 a.m., the Douglas County Museum will welcome children in for Breakfast with Santa until 11 a.m. In the community favorite event, each child will receive a gift and a visit with Santa over breakfast. While human babes enjoy breakfast, the fur babies and their owners

See CHRISTMASTOWN page 6



Photo: Kendra Hennis

The Tuscola Public Works Department gets Tuscola ready for Christmastown. Thank you for all that you do.



Photo: Anna Nelson

Photo from the 2018 Christmastown Parade. This year's Parade is on Saturday, Dec 7 at 11 a.m.

## City Council prepares for Illinois Motor Fuel Tax increase

By Kendra Hennis

As a part of the State of Illinois budget for the current year, the Motor Fuel Tax (MTF) rate has doubled. The current understanding of the City Council is that Tuscola will receive a 68 percent increase of about \$78,000 due to the Motor Fuel Tax increase. The Council also stated that Tuscola is projected to receive \$295,000 of additional Motor Fuel Tax funds over the next three years, as a part of the Rebuild Illinois capital plan. Although this is a one-time disbursement, the Council believes that it will be split into three of four actual payments.

Earlier in the week were the annual required meetings of the Joint Review Boards of all three TIF districts. The Joint Review Boards are made up of representatives of each of the other tax dis-

tricts and an "at-large" member. The purpose of these meetings are to review the annual reports and to provide an opportunity for them to comment or even make a written report to the City Council that concerns the conduct and administration of the TIF districts. As is usually the case, there were no attendees at any of the meetings.

City Administrator Drew Hoel noted that three voluntary annexations will be presented at the December meeting. The parcels on US Route 36 where the Ta'Carbon is opening and the soon-to-be-developed Love's Travel Center, which will be two parcels.

In other news, developments have been made at the North Ward Square. The City has officially closed on the sale of the old North Ward School site. Develop-

ers Mike Carroll and Mark Petty will begin building at the site, with water and sewer installation happening as soon as this week.

The Property Tax Levy is still available for public inspection and comment. Currently, the board has not received any comments and the ordinance that enacts the levy will be available at the December 9 meeting.

As mentioned at the public hearing last month, we are still in the middle of the sixty-day objection period for the establishment of the Special Service Area to address the drainage issues at Ironhorse. If there are an insufficient number of objections received, then a Special Meeting will be scheduled for December 30 to present an ordinance to establish the SSA. However, if a sufficient number of objections are filed, there will be no need for a meet-

ing or ordinance since the process will end at that point.

The Council also:

- Approved the minutes from the previous meeting on November 12.
- Approved the payment of bills in the amount of \$164,315.17.
- Approved the purchase of a new sewer pump at the South Sewer plant in the amount of \$11,929.
- Approved to lease the Community Building with alcohol on January 24 for the National Wild Turkey Federation Banquet.
- Approved to lease the Community Building with alcohol December 13-15 for a Wedding reception.
- Adjourned until their next meeting on Monday, December 9 at 7:30 p.m.

## A look inside what's to come at Villa Grove schools

By Tony Hooker

Norm Tracy stepped into a firestorm in 2015 when he agreed to "temporarily" serve as Superintendent of Villa Grove School District 302. Through the guidance of his steady hand, the Board and Administration have worked closely with the staff and families of the district to fight through the tough times and bring about a new era of growth for the school community. He recently took the time to share his thoughts about some of the new, exciting things that are taking shape.

Can you give me a short synopsis of all the projects that are either in the planning stages or beginning to take shape around Villa Grove Schools?

We had a couple of things that we could do that needed



Photo: Tony Hooker

taken care of pretty quickly. One of them was replacing the kitchen floor that had been there

for many years. We did that and replaced the high school lockers because with the size of today's

books and Chrome books, they simply wouldn't fit in the old

See VG SCHOOL page 8

## Tuscola School Board sets Truth in Taxation hearing

By Kendra Hennis

The Tuscola School Board met for their monthly meeting at 7 p.m. on November 25.

The 2019 Tax Levy and Resolution will be voted on at the December 19 board meeting. Due to the fact that there are a lot of unknowns associated with the levy, the board is opting to hold a Truth in Taxation hearing. The hearing necessary since the estimated increase in the levy is over five percent, which requires a mandatory hearing.

The board is also still in the process of going through stacks to fill the vacant seat.

In his Superintendent's Report, Gary Alexander announced that the budget is in line with what was expected, the heat in the High School weight room was replaced, the air in the East Prairie computer lab was fixed, and that the Board Retreat will be held before the December meeting to discuss policy and procedures. He also reported that the Schools received a commend-

able rating on this year's state report card. State and federal laws require public school districts to release report cards each year. The Illinois Report Card is an annual report released by the Illinois State Board of Education that shows how the state, and each school and district, are progressing on a wide range of educational goals. The full report card is available to view on the School District's website. In his Principal's Report, High School Principal Steve Fiscus reported to the Board

that the Blood Drive on November 12 was very successful. They received eleven pints over their goal, and had twenty new donors. He also announced that this year's Christmas Band and Choir concert will be held on December 8. The event begins at 2 p.m. and will feature both East Prairie and the High School. Finally, he told the Board that the High School will change how they do their finals schedule this year. In years past,

See BOARD page 8