



Journal Entries

"Be happy, and a reason will come along"

From the Editor
Please send us your pictures of you sheltering-in-place with your identification and what you are doing in the picture to kendra@thetuscolajournal.com.

Journal Office
In compliance with the Illinois Department of Public Health and adopting the policies set by the State of Illinois, our office is temporarily closed to the public. Our office continues to be staffed. To contact us, please call 217-253-5086, email us at kendra@thetuscolajournal.com or office@thetuscolajournal.com, Facebook message, or use the drop box by the front door.

Lock-in Rate Extended
The deadline to lock-in your current Journal subscription rate has been extended until April 8. Please call our office, or drop off or mail a check to extend.

Tuscola Tourism Information
As local businesses adjust hours and offer new solutions, we're keeping track so you can continue to support them. Stay tuned to our website on curbside pick-up and delivery options at restaurants, business hour changes, and additional community related info. We currently have information listed for restaurants, local businesses, banks, and churches. Please check back frequently as we will continue to update daily. tuscola.org/covid-19-information

Residents are also encouraged to join our community email list at Tuscola.org (sign-up form located at the bottom of the page) We hope to keep residents informed that do not utilize social media.

SAMS Food Pantry
The SAMS Food Pantry, located inside the Methodist Church in Tuscola, will continue to serve residents of Douglas County from 8 to 10 a.m. on Wednesday and Friday. Please use the main driveway at the church and stay in your car, a volunteer will come out to assist you. Please do not block the gravel parkway on the north side of the church.

Tuscola Public Library Closed
The Tuscola Public Library will be closed until March 31 as the situation allows. Please keep all the items you have regardless of due date for the duration of the shelter-in-place: do not put them in the book drop. There will be no fines or other fees. Please stay safe and healthy. Updates will be posted on the Tuscola Public Library Facebook page.

Tuscola Museum Closed
For the safety of our visitors, staff, and volunteers, the museum is closed to the public and volunteers until March 30th. We will keep you informed of any updates or changes to this date.

Postponed Events

- McTeacher Night
- Kiwanis Fish Fry
- Miss Tuscola Pageant
- Miss Maddy's Dance Recital
- NW Dine to Donate at Texas Roadhouse
- Tuscola Museum Annual Meeting
- Tuscola FFA Banquet

Canceled Events

- ERBA Money-Saving Workshop
- Tuscola Easter Egg Hunt



The Tuscola Community came together to create rainbows on their windows to spread community cheer in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and Governor Pritzker's stay-at-home order until April 7, 2020. Photos: Rachel Ray

Douglas County Board declares a state of emergency

By Kendra Hennis
The monthly meeting of the Douglas County Board was called to order on Wednesday, March 18 at 9 a.m. The board began the meeting with a presentation from their IT Specialist, Jason, on how the board will do their meetings moving forward. They hope to minimize the number of people who need to be at a meeting by recording the meetings on Zoom, and then uploading them to the website. They are also looking at live streaming options. The board hopes to receive feedback from this meeting so they can make adjustments for the next meeting. Mr. Mikeworth asked if this procedure would also be followed for the subcommittee meetings and Mr. Munson said that they would. Munson noted that "there is a learning curve, but we're trying to stay ahead."

The board then approved the local agency agreement for federal participation for Cronus, section 13-000106-00-PV. This was necessary because the Douglas County Board entered into a Local Agency Agreement for State Participation for construction of County Road 750 E and 1050 N in support of Cronus infrastructure improvements, as per the State of Illinois Department of Transportation on August 28, 2015. The agreement was executed by the Illinois Department of Transportation on August 28, 2015. The agreement was for an amount of \$5,688,200 (state funds) for the proposed roadway improvements. Since the total cost of this section of work is \$1,000,000 the original agreement is only valid for five years from the date of execution by IDOT. The Illinois Department of Transportation requested that the Douglas County Board revise the ending date of the agreement, extending it to August 28, 2024.

The board also approved an amendment to extend local agency agreement for state participation for section 13-00106-02-PV. This was necessary because the Douglas County Board entered into a Local Agency Agreement for State Participation for preliminary Engineering Services for the Cronus infrastructure improvements, as per the State of Illinois incentive package for the proposed fertilizer plant on February 2015.

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Threats of COVID-19 virus brings a low voter turnout

By Kendra Hennis
DOUGLAS COUNTY - On Tuesday, March 17, there was a 30 percent voter turnout for the primary election. There were high reported numbers of absentee and early voters. Most ballots have been counted, with the 14-day period available for ballots still coming in. County Clerk Judi Pollock considers the day a success though noting "I expected a really low percentage, maybe 10, so 30 was really high. The judges and voters were all comfortable with the sanitation measures we had put in place. All things considered, I am pleasantly surprised."

Donald Trump and Joe Biden lead the area in the race for President, with Biden receiving 521 votes and Trump getting 2,516 votes.

Peggy Hubbard led the Republican race for Senator with 823 votes and Richard Durbin received 744 winning the Democratic side.

For the Congressional race for Representative, on the Republican side, Mary Miller leads the 15th District spot with 55 percent of the vote. For the Democrats, Erika Weaver received 60 percent of the vote. For the delegates, Natalie Phelps Finne leads the Democrats with 454 votes and Thomas Chapin Rose leads the Republicans with 2,451 votes.

In a very close race, Philip Morris will continue to hold his seat on the Douglas County Board, receiving 50.5 percent of the vote.

The race for Circuit Clerk for Douglas County was a big one, with Circuit Clerk Julie Mills retiring after 22 years in the office. Newman Police Chief Nathan Burton will take over the office, receiving 46 percent of the vote. On the election, Burton said "I would like to thank all the voters of Douglas County who came out to vote on March 17. I am truly overwhelmed by the amount of support I received across the county. We are facing uncertain times with the COVID-19 pandemic; however the election process in our county was completed without a hitch. Judi Pollock (our County Clerk) and her team of deputy clerks and election judges should be so proud of themselves for a job well done. The Douglas County community is strong so as we move forward in the days and weeks ahead I leave you with a quote to remember. "Comfort and prosperity have never enriched the world as much as adversity has" - Rev. Billy Graham."

Newly elected officials will be sworn in on December 1, 2020. Additional election information can be found on the Douglas County website.



Scenes from inside the Douglas County Courthouse following the Primary Election on March 17. Photos: Kendra Hennis

VG City Council meets to enact emergency measures

The Villa Grove City council met on Friday March 20 at 6 p.m. for the specific purpose of creating a pair of ordinances regarding emergency procedures in response to the current COVID-19 pandemic. Ordinance number 2020-MC04 granted the city administrator the power to conduct city business, including making payments in excess of the allowed amount without Council approval. Ordinance number 2020-MC05 was created to allow emergency meeting procedures in order to allow for the City Council to hold their meetings electronically. Finally, in response to the current pandemic, Mayor Cassandra Eversole Gunter declared a state of emergency for the city of Villa Grove.

The Mayor and council approved all actions unanimously. The mayor's declaration as well as the ordinances can be read in their entirety online.