

FFA

continued from page 1

His responsibilities include daily feeding and watering, managing the pigs in each stage of the process, and operating machinery on the farm. Over the past four years, Zach has developed many skills and understands what it takes to run a successful swine farm. The Swine Production Placement Proficiency award is sponsored by Illinois Pork Producers.

-State Star in Agricultural Placement Finalist - District 5: Tyler Gerdes is the son of David and Stacey Gerdes of Bartelso. Tyler is a member of the Central Breese FFA Chapter and his FFA advisor is Harley Carlson. For his Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE), Tyler works for a local dairy farm. His duties include mixing feed rations for the cows, administering vaccinations, and milking the cows. Tyler also runs equipment and performs other small maintenance jobs around the farm. He makes sure to work safely when running equipment and work-

ing with the cows. Tyler is thankful for the support and help from his parents, employer, and teachers to continue his SAE through high school.

Wesclin's award included Retiring Advisor Recognition was given to Matt Fisher as a retiring chapter FFA advisor, having served as an agricultural educator for 34 years of his professional career.

The business session was livestreamed May 28. Individual district sessions including State and American FFA Degrees, statewide awards, and the 2020-2021 Illinois State Officer Team retiring addresses were held June 1, 4, and 9 throughout the state at outdoor venues including Bloomington, Carbondale, and Springfield. Stars Over Illinois awards were presented June 8, in Springfield. National FFA Eastern Region Vice President and Illinois FFA alumna Miriam Hoffman addressed attendees and new officers were elected and installed June 10, in Springfield.

PROPERTY

continued from page 1

so that it can be used as a mechanism for the village to recover its costs at some point in the future.

Village Administrator Erika Kennett confirmed that all of the legal processes have been completed including the surveying of the property and a review by the municipal attorney, Village Clerk Teri Crane and Kennett herself.

The contractor for which the bid will be awarded confirms by virtue of submitting it that the site has been visited along with including all costs for the labor, equipment and materials which will be needed, the bid to remain valid for a period of 60 days, thusly leading Kennett to conclude that the property should be restored by sometime this fall if all goes as planned.

POLICE REPORT

continued from page 1

dugouts, scrawling graffiti on bathroom walls, flipping over benches, spinning tires and leaving water spigots turned on without shutting them off.

Investigation is currently under way, Mackin said, involving the police and the Office of the State Fire Marshal concerning suspicious fires at two unoccupied residences located on South Railway and South Adams streets.

Also answered by police, at locations Mackin stated were mostly, if not all, from rental properties, were numerous complaints about domestic incidents and loud noise.

The chief said residents of New Baden were advised by his department last week on social media to lock their vehicles when they are unattended, a factor in this being that there have been four recent situations where those left unsecured were subject to burglaries.

New Baden Police issued a search warrant for a residence where methamphetamine and cannabis were found inside with this case currently under investigation and no charges filed as yet.

The final item included in Mackin's report mentioned the issuance of 14 citations including two involving criminal drug offenses during the month.

Also at Monday evening's New Baden Village Board of Trustees meeting, Mackin's recommendation for the hiring of Douglas A. Danielson as a part-time police officer was approved.

BANKS

continued from page 1

"He was on our advisory board previously and we got to know him during the last six to eight years. He had gotten out of banking a few years ago. Interesting story, I called him to tell him we were coming his way and would he know of anybody who could help us lead our efforts. He said, 'What about me?' We took that as a real compliment. He talks about how we enticed him back."

In Clinton County the bank is now under construction at the corner of State Routes 160 and 161.

"That's two major thoroughfares for the county. You're super close to Breese and Trenton, and even Germantown and to some extent Mascoutah (in St. Clair County). You're within 10 to 15 minutes of a lot of key places," Stephens said.

Stephens said he had been talking for years to Osterhage, a banker in the Waterloo market, trying to get him to join the Bank of Belleville team. It wasn't until he had a Monroe County option that Osterhage made the jump.

"He is a lifelong Waterloo guy, very invested in the

area," he said of Osterhage.

The Bank of Monroe County is going up on an out lot on Illinois Route 3 near the Schnuck's store.

The Clinton County and Monroe County banks are being built from scratch and will be identical in appearance, he said.

"They are significantly inspired by the design of the main building in Belleville," he said noting the same architect (Hurford Associates of Edwardsville) is doing the work. Plocher Construction is building the bank in New Baden, while D&F Construction is building the one in Waterloo.

All the market presidents have something in common.

"One thing they all saw - similar to what Kevin (Pesko) and I saw when we opened Bank of Belleville 16 years ago - was this is a once-in-a-career chance. Starting something from scratch was very appealing to them."

A lot of big banks have expertise but customers can't always access it, he said. Many small banks don't have depth of expertise.

"What we try to do is blend both," Stephens said.

Starting June 11: Full Reopening Of Businesses Expected In Illinois

With continued progress on vaccination rates, all businesses and industries to fully reopen as state concludes Restore Illinois Plan

Outdoor mask requirement to be lifted in schools following CDC guidance

Following weeks of steady decreases in new positive COVID-19 cases and with over 67 percent of residents age 18 and older receiving their first vaccine dose, Gov. JB Pritzker released guidelines for Phase 5 of the Restore Illinois plan, which will go into effect on Friday, June 11, and marks a full reopening of all businesses and activities.

The guidance will mean businesses, large-scale events, conventions, amusement parks, and seated-spectator venues, among others, will be able to operate at full capacity for the first time since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The State is also lifting the

outdoor mask requirement in schools in accordance with the Centers for Disease Control.

This guidance comes as Illinois has recently reached a test positivity rate of less than 2 percent, more than half of the population has been fully vaccinated, and key hospitalization metrics have been declining since early May.

"After a tremendously challenging year, Illinois has now reached a defining moment in our efforts to defeat COVID-19," said Pritzker. "Thanks to the hard work of residents across the state, Illinois will soon resume life as we knew it before - returning to events, gatherings, and a fully reopened economy, with some of the safety guidelines we've adopted still in place. As we fully reopen, this administration remains laser focused on ensuring a strong recovery for our small businesses and communities. Our FY22 budget invests \$1.5 billion in small business relief, tourism, job-

Last year, the bank saw its best year of growth ever, despite the pandemic, he said.

The new banks will have autonomy, and he stressed that they are banks and not "branches."

"They are meant to be involved in the community. The president decides who is his team," he said, adding that each will be making decisions on giving back to the community.

"Each is a bank with a local president and a local team," he said.

In April, Bank of Belleville concluded a \$3.6 million stock offering as part of the concept of eliciting community support.

"We sold stock in our company, and we did it for two reasons. You have to have a certain amount of capital if you want to grow. Growth is exceeding what we can fund with earnings alone, which is not atypical for a bank going through a rapid growth phase.

"The second reason: The Bank of Belleville is owned by 350 'mom and pop' shareholders, none of which is a double-digit percentage owner. We wanted to take that concept and duplicate

that as well. We wanted shareholders in each of the markets we are expanding to. We also wanted to increase our shareholder depth in St. Clair County. The last time we sold shares was in 2010," Stevens said.

The bank has gained a lot of clients in the last 10 years who have not had the opportunity to buy stock, he said. More people wanted stock this time around than was available, he said.

"We picked up probably another 150 shareholders between the four counties," he said.

The bank conducted an independent evaluation on the bank's worth earlier this year and is awaiting those numbers.

The bank's team overall is nearing 60 50 employees. Around 15 or so people have been added since the pandemic started, and around 24 in the last two years.

"That's all part of the plan to get everything staged to support the expansion we are working on," he said. "I'm proud when people decide to make us their professional home. It says something about us and their perception of us."



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<i>Regional Manager</i>	Scott Hoskins	
<i>Managing Editor</i>	Pamela Rensing	To Reach Us By:
<i>Business Manager</i>	Katrina Crabtree	Phone: 566-8282
<i>Account Manager</i>	Emilee Hutman	Fax: 566-8283
<i>Advertising</i>	Carleen Johnson	E-mail: ccn@heraldpubs.com
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