



Journal Entries

"Never regret anything that made you smile." – Mark Twain

Tuscola Spring Citywide Sales

April 16 and 17 are Tuscola's Spring Citywide sales and it's not too late to your star on The Journal Spring Citywide Garage Sale map. For \$15 you get a star on the map, your address, day and time of sale, and description of items. Deadline for being included on the map is Wednesday, April 7. Map with sale descriptions will publish on in the April 14 edition of The Journal. Ads must be prepaid and mailed to PO Box 170 Tuscola, IL emailed to kendra@thetuscolajournal.com.

April Subscription Special

The Journal is running an April subscription donation special. We will be making a donation to each local school program for all new and returning subscribers for the month of April. Subscriptions can be started online at www.thetuscolajournal.com, by emailing kendra@thetuscolajournal.com or by calling us at 217-253-5086.

COVID Vaccine Sign-Up

The Douglas County Health Department is opening appointment signups to anyone age 18 and older who lives or works within the county borders. Recent clinics have not maxed out on first dose appointments within the eligible population demographics, so DCHD officials have made the decision to allow residents 18 and above who want the vaccine to schedule an appointment. As always, vaccine supply will determine how many people can be accommodated. Check the DCHD website or Facebook page for the registration links.

Douglas County COVID Count

On Monday, April 5, the Douglas County Health Department announced four newly confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Douglas County, bringing the county's total since March 2020 to 2,605 confirmed COVID-19 cases. On March 25, DCHD reported three new deaths from COVID-19 in the county, bringing the total to 42 lives lost. Anyone can be an asymptomatic carrier of COVID-19. Reduce the spread of COVID-19 in Douglas County with the three w's: wash, watch, and wear. Wash your hands for twenty seconds often throughout the day. Watch to keep six foot distance between yourself and others. Wear a face cover/mask.

SAM Food Pantry Update

The SAM Food Pantry is open as a drive-thru only. Volunteers and clients will be required to wear a mask, or the pantry risks getting shut down. If you have any questions, please call Tuscola United Methodist Church at 217-253-4232.

DCHD COVID Testing

The Douglas County Health Department is holding curbside COVID-19 testing Monday through Thursday from 8:30 to 4 p.m. and Friday and Saturday from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. testing site J-600 at the Outlets of Tuscola (between Old Navy and Vanity Fair). No appointment is required. Curbside testing will be completed. Please bring a mask/face cover, ID card, and your insurance/medicaid card. Uninsured individuals will be referred to Market Place Shopping Center in Champaign.

2021 Project Graduation Donations

The Tuscola High School Class of 2021 is accepting donations from local businesses who would like to assist with Project Graduation. Your help would be greatly appreciated. Please send donations or information to Kim Beachy (217-202-8230) or Kim Martin (217-253-3678)

Tuscola Public Library Virtual Events

- * StoryTime with Miss Marta every Tuesday at 10 a.m.
- * Exploring Cinema - Before Trilogy on April 14 at 6 p.m.
- * Cooking with Marla - Spanakopita on April 22 at 6 p.m.
- * Poetry Discussion on April 28 at 6 p.m.
- * More information about events can be found on the Tuscola Public Library Facebook Page under events.

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Photo: Rachel Ray

Members of the GFWC Tuscola Woman's Club created pinwheel gardens at the Tuscola Library and two other locations. April is Child Abuse Prevention month. Pinwheels for Prevention was created in 2008 where pinwheels became the national symbol for child abuse and prevention. The pinwheel represents our hope that every child will be raised in a healthy, safe and nurturing environment. It is also a call to action, encouraging people everywhere to recognize that children are our future and that we all have a role to play in keeping them safe. All children deserve great childhoods. Pictured from left to right are Darla Gardner, Dee Lenzi, and Becky Carlton (Kay Higgins not pictured).

Regional Planning Office continues to operate in Tuscola

By Kendra Hennis

The Champaign County Regional Planning Commission Workforce in Tuscola is under new leadership with Case Manager Joshua Taylor-Johnson. The office continues to be open at 401 S. Main Street on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., but at this time, it is more efficient to call them at 217-278-9610 or email jtaylor-johnson@ccrpc.org to make an appointment.

Joshua serves as the Douglas and Ford County Case Manager under CCRPC. He has a background in emergency medicine and case management, working for four years as an EMT and two in the drug and alcohol rehabilitation field. He is also currently working on

completing his degree in social work. Joshua said he found his passion in this because he "has a strong desire to help others. I find a lot of job and life satisfaction through seeing others succeed and helping them along the way."

Joshua explained that the workforce development program is "an amazing program first of all. It can help so many different people with so many different things. We really look to help people who are looking for work find not only a job, but a career, that they are going to love and stick with for a long time. We want to help both the employees and employers find and keep people in positions so that they no longer bounce around from job to job because that doesn't help anyone. We

also save companies money by providing training programs and employment programs that offset their costs."

Some of the programs and services provided by the workforce development program include career services, which are essentially just for training people and helping them find a job; programs to help people go to school to get degrees in high-demand industries; "on the job training" where they would help someone get hired at a business and then augment the cost of bringing them on, making it easier for an employer to justify the risk in hiring someone; help at-risk youth stay in school, find out what careers they like, and help set them up for success.

An additional way the

workplace works to assist the youth is through incentive programs. For example, if a student is struggling with a class, they could set up a homework day at the office where they could come work on homework. If they increase their grade in a certain class or all of their grade, they could be provided with a cash incentive or other reward. Incentives are case by case and can be developed for each youth to best help them succeed. The workplace also provides experience programs for youth where they would place them at a local volunteering agency or non-for-profit, where they would then be paid to volunteer.

Joshua says "he is just ex-

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Buisness keeps growing for Poe's mowing service

By Tony Hooker

Tom Poe wasn't the biggest mowing fan when he was younger.

It's a good thing his attitudes changed as he got older, or else his company, Poe's Mowing, would never have happened. For a growing list of satisfied customers, that would be too bad. Tom recently sat down to answer a few questions about how all of this came to be, and what the future might look like for Poe's.

What's the name of your company?

Poe's mowing.

How long have you been in business?

This is the third year.

What did you do before that?

I was a delivery person for a company called Aramark. I delivered towels and uniforms and things like that.

How many years did you do that?

Twenty years.

Did you retire from there or just change careers?

Changed careers.

What was the big push? Why did you decide to start your own business?

I had a couple of injuries at work, and seeing other people doing it gave me the idea. I've always kind of wanted to work for myself. I started out doing it on the side. Believe it or not, when I was twenty years old, I hated the thought of mowing grass. Now,



Photo: Tony Hooker

Tom Poe of Poe's Mowing

I absolutely love doing what I do. <smiles> The best thing is, it's not really the mowing, it's the independence. If I have to be somewhere at six o'clock, or if I have to quit at 10 or 11 and come back at 3 in the afternoon, I can do that. There's a feeling of satisfaction when you walk up to a property and it looks ragged and the grass is long and the shrubs need trimmed, and at the end of the day when you leave, it looks really good. That's a feeling of satisfaction. The best satisfaction is you know that next week it's going to look bad and you'll get

to do it again! <laughs> It's like a guaranteed income.

What services do you offer?

I do mowing, trimming, which is weed whacking, I blow everything off. I do light landscaping, small mulch beds. Pretty much anything that has to do with lawn care. I don't fertilize because I don't have to licenses you need. I will apply roundup when there are too many weeds.

Let's backtrack a bit. Did you grow up in Villa Grove?

No, I grew up in a town called Neoga, Illinois.

When did you come to VG?

1984.

When you were growing up, did you ever think that you were going to own your own business?

No. There are people who have careers. They're the people that really think and plan ahead. And then there are people who just have a job. I was one of those guys who just had a job. I think of this as more of a career. It's just me and my wife, Traci. She takes care of all the paperwork and helps me mow, when she's feeling merciful! <both laugh>

Is there a succession? Are any of your kids interested in the business?

No, but my youngest son is interested in landscaping so we've talked about him coming and expanding the landscaping end. He knows how to do landscaping and he's actually done hardscaping, which I don't have a clue how to do. I don't think the hardscaping will be super busy at first and then he could help me mow and we could grow the business, and then eventually, he would like to just do all the hardscaping. If it works out that way.

Hardscaping is putting down stone?

Yeah, putting down pavers, things like that.

After three years, is the business growing?

Business has just about doubled every year. Of course, the first year there wasn't much, so

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