

# An invitation to all Illinoisans to nominate a statesman or stateswoman

By Jim Edgar and John Shaw

We announced last fall that we established the Paul Simon-Jim Edgar award to celebrate statesmanship in Illinois. While we have no formula to offer that magically ends partisanship in Illinois, quiets rancor, and forges a sense of shared destiny, we believe this award will affirm and honor the Prairie State's best traditions.

Given our current political climate, it is easy to forget that statesmanship, while unusual, has been a critical feature of the Prairie State's politics and history

and has been demonstrated by Republicans, Democrats, and independents alike.

Illinois has been blessed with statesmen and stateswomen over the decades: governors who risked their careers to solve critical problems and prepare the state for the future; mayors who crafted bold and imaginative plans for their cities and took political gambles to bring their dreams to fruition; city council members who prepared creative and constructive long-term strategies for their communities; and state legislators and constitutional officers who broke from party orthodoxy

and political comfort zones to advance solutions to improve the lives of fellow Illinoisans.

The annual Simon-Edgar Statesmanship Award will be presented to an elected state or local government official in Illinois who has demonstrated a pattern of public service characterized by vision, courage, compassion, effectiveness, civility, and bipartisanship.

As we prepare to present our inaugural award, we seek guidance from fellow Illinoisans. We urge citizens from the Prairie State to nominate someone from state or local government in

Illinois who has displayed exceptional leadership. We are not seeking the perfect public servant, but a leader who has consistently endeavored to serve the public good and prepare his or her constituents for future challenges and opportunities.

To nominate a candidate or candidates, please send us a letter at the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute, Southern Illinois University, Attn: Paul Simon-Jim Edgar Statesmanship Award, Mail Code 4429, 1231 Lincoln Drive, Carbondale, IL 62901-4304. You may also go to [PaulSimonInstitute.org/SimonEdgarAward](http://PaulSimonInstitute.org/SimonEdgarAward) to

complete and submit your nomination through an electronic form. Please submit your nominations by June 15.

An advisory committee will review the nominations and recommend finalists for our consideration. The award will be announced at the August meeting of the Edgar Fellows Program. The recipient will be recognized and invited to give remarks there as well as at an event hosted later in the year by the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute.

It is our hope that the award will shine a spotlight on remarkable leader-

ship that is taking place in our communities and state. We believe this award will inspire current and future public servants to act in the best traditions of Illinois. We invite your help in selecting the first recipient of the Paul Simon-Jim Edgar Statesmanship award.

*Jim Edgar was the 38th governor of Illinois. He founded the Edgar Fellows Program at the University of Illinois's Institute of Government and Public Affairs. John Shaw is the director of the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale.*

## Douglas County Board holds special meeting for bridge funding

By Jim Allen

The Douglas County Board met for a special meeting on May 5, 2021 at 11:00 a.m. The meeting was called to execute an agreement for federal funding for the major bridge project over the Hays Road over the Kaskaskia River and for review of bids for the reconstruction of roads in the Industrial Wind Complex in Newman and Murdock townships.

The second order of business, the approval of a construction contract for road repairs of the "Harvest Ridge Wind Farm" was not completed. Advertisement for bids for this project was out on April 8, 2021. After the project was bid, an addendum was sent out to bidders on 4-15-21. After the addendum was sent, a pre-bid conference was held on 4-19-21. On

4-22-21, a second addendum was sent. The bid opening was on 4-28-21.

Six contractors that were pre-qualified, and would have been prime contractors for the job, took bid documents for the job. However, the only bid for the work was given by Beniach Construction Company Inc and Earl Walker Company Inc as a joint venture. Detailed amounts for labor and materials was given for each section of the contract. However, the bid was \$12,430,896.24 which was more than 5 percent over the revised estimate of \$7,787,917.27. Since there was no other bidder, the bid was not acceptable. If a competing bid had been received, a contract could have been awarded. The bid was acceptable within the original Engineers Es-

estimate, but was higher than the revised estimate.

This project is being rebid with an opening date of May 18, 2021. If at least two bids are not received, the parties will likely move to Article 3(F) of the Road Use Agreement and engage a "Neutral Engineer" to develop an Engineers Estimate that reflects the actual estimated cost to repair the road damage to the wind farm roads. The "Neutral Engineers" would include, but not be limited to: Andrews Engineering of Springfield, IL, Kaskaskia Engineering Group LLC of Champaign, IL, and WHKS & CO. of Springfield, IL. As of now, EDPR has full responsibility to maintain the roadways.

In the open session of the meeting, a question was asked as to whether the poor construction work

on the roads in the initial phase contributed to the present cost of reconstruction. In some areas the roads were widened to 26 feet from an original width of 12 feet. Also, as mentioned in previous articles, excess rock was applied which then moved over time into the ditches. This makes the material cleaned from the ditches unusable for adjoining fields. Therefore, instead of placing the soil back into the fields, it must be loaded and sent to other locations for fill or recycling. This may have had an effect on the changes in the estimates. I think that to compare the costs for the road recovery on this project to the costs on other projects is not correct.

The original Engineers Estimate was in the \$13,000,000 range with a

large contingency.

EDPR did not feel the amount was accurate and in the last three weeks, after Hanson Professional Services (engineering firm for EDPR) and Chastain & Associates (engineering company for Douglas County) met, the amount was revised. The original engineers estimate of \$13,000,000, which was noted to have a high contingency, was reduced to approximately \$9,000,000, then further reduced to \$7,787,917.27. This amounts to a 40 percent reduction in the original estimate. I do note that as the addendum were created, the meetings between Chastain and Hansen that lowered the Engineers Estimate were taking place. Perhaps this is normal.

*Writer's Note: I have contacted Chastain and*

*Associates regarding the changes but at this time have not received a reply. I have also contacted Chris Brooks of EDPR, but again have received no reply. I am not disappointed as this was what I expected. I would like to know the reason for such a major change in the Engineers Estimate. The contractor who submitted the bid submitted an itemized list of costs. I do not see how an "estimate" can refute this. The only question that remains is how long the roads in Newman and Murdock Townships will remain in poor condition.*

*As a final note, as of 5-5-21, Newman Township has not received maintenance funds from EDPR that were due 4-1-21. The total amount of these funds would be approximately \$36,000.*

## Vaccination sites across Illinois ready to administer Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine to youths ages twelve through fifteen years old

State mass vaccination sites, local health departments, and providers offering Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) today announced vaccination locations across the state are prepared to administer the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine to youth ages 12 through 15 years after the Advisory Committee on Immunizations Practices (ACIP) voted today to recommend its use. The announcement comes following the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) recent expansion of the emergency use authorization for the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine in those youths.

"The expanded use of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine brings us one step closer to getting back to our

daily lives and ending this pandemic," said Governor JB Pritzker. "Our state-supported mass vaccination locations, along with local health departments and other providers, are ready to vaccinate young people immediately, providing kids and families with a sense of relief after a difficult year."

Previously, the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine was authorized for use in individuals ages 16 years and older. The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is administered as a series of two doses, three weeks apart, for all eligible individuals.

"The goal is to vaccinate as many Illinoisans as possible to decrease new

cases of disease and prevent mutation to more dangerous variants," said IDPH Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike. "The expanded authorization for use of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine in youth ages 12 through 15 years will not only help protect our younger population, it will help us get back to in-person learning across the state."

COVID-19 vaccinations for those 12 years and older are available at state-supported mass vaccination and mobile clinics, local health departments, pharmacies, Federally Qualified Health Centers, and from other providers who offer the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. IDPH is work-

ing to enroll pediatricians into the State immunization registry so they can administer COVID-19 vaccine to their patients. Additionally, schools may partner with the local health department or pharmacy to set up vaccination clinics for students.

Individuals should check with their local health department or health care provider about whether a parent or guardian must be present for an individual under the age of 18 to receive the vaccine, or whether some other form of written consent is required.

In clinical trials, the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine was found to be 100% ef-

fective in preventing COVID-19 among participants ages 12 through 15 years. The side effects in adolescents were similar with those reported in clinical trial participants 16 years of age and older and included pain at the injection site, tiredness, headache, chills, muscle and joint pain, and fever.

According to the FDA, at this time, there are limited data to address whether the vaccine can prevent transmission of the virus from person to person and how long the vaccine will provide protection.

Pfizer Inc. will continue to monitor the safety of the vaccine and will be required

to report to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System, along with providers, all serious adverse events, cases of Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome, cases that result in hospitalization or death, and vaccine administration errors. This is the same system that was able to quickly identify a small number of adverse events that have been associated with the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

Both the Moderna and Johnson & Johnson (Janssen) COVID-19 vaccines are authorized for use in individuals 18 years and older and will continue to be available to adults.

## REFUNDS

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that they will need to file an amended return to qualify for any refund due.

For taxpayers who filed electronically on or after March 15 and included the unemployment exclusion on their federal and state individual income tax returns, no additional filing changes are required. For taxpayers who filed electronically on or after

March 15 but did not include the unemployment exclusion when calculating their AGI, an amended return must be filed to adjust their AGI.

Illinois tax filers who claim the Illinois Earned Income Credit (EIC) may also be eligible for an additional refund due to the newly enacted federal unemployment compensation tax exemption. IDOR estimates any additional refunds because of an increase to EIC will be issued late in 2021 once

federal Earned Income Tax Credit data is provided to the state by the Internal Revenue Service.

*Additional information from the IRS may be found in their article New Exclusion of up to \$10,200 of Unemployment Compensation. For Illinois specific information on unemployment compensation, including different filing scenarios, visit IDOR's website [tax.illinois.gov](http://tax.illinois.gov).*

*to be announced by the College President during the public comment portion of the meeting. Email submissions should be submitted*

*by 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, May 19, 2021, and sent to [officeofthepresident@lake-landcollege.edu](mailto:officeofthepresident@lake-landcollege.edu)*

## LLC

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Return to Campus Plan. For more information, please visit: <https://www.lakelandcollege.edu/covid-19/>.

*Citizens, faculty and staff will be offered an opportunity to speak to the Board during the public comment portion per the agenda and in alignment with Board Policy 03.17 – Public Comment at Board Meetings. Citizens, faculty and staff may also submit public comments by email prior to the Board meeting*



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