



# Tuscola Review

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## Spring preschool program

Let's Not Talk About Bruno...at TCHS Preschool. Applications are being accepted to attend this fun, Encanto-themed preschool program hosted by the Early Childhood Education students. Registration forms are available at the Tuscola High School school office. Registration must be completed by 3:30 p.m. April 20.

Dates will be April 25, 27, 29 and May 2, 4, 6. Please drop off/pick up your child by 12:50 p.m. at East Prairie Middle School. Students will be at the door to greet you and deliver your child back to you. The preschool will end by 1:30 p.m. If you have any questions, email franklind@cusd301.org.



## Easter programs

Looking for a way to celebrate Easter this year? There are several programs and services advertised on pages 2-3.

## Spot risky behavior

The Douglas County ROSC, Be Brave, Shalynn's Hope, Chestnut Health Systems, Hour House Prevention, and the Arcola Jr. Sr. High School have partnered to bring a resource event to parents and caregivers. Hidden in Plain Sight Event at a glance is an initiative to help parents spot signs of risky behavior. The focus is on identifying signs of substance use and being aware of the locations. Parents can learn how to spot the warning signs, prevent easy access to alcohol and other drugs, what to do when you find a substance, and get tips for communicating with your teens.

Please note the walk-through itself is designed for parents or caregivers. However, don't worry because Shalynn's Hope will have great activities to engage the kiddos while the parents participate.

The Hidden in Plain Sight event is 2-6 p.m. May 2 at Arcola Jr. Sr. High School, 351 W. Washington St., Arcola.

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## School dismissals

For Tuscola schools, April 13 dismissal is 2 p.m. April 14 is a teacher institute; no school for students. There is no school April 15 and 18.

## Offices closed

Tuscola city offices will be closed April 15 for Good Friday.

## Blood drive

Tuscola Faith Baptist Church, 300 E. North Line Rd., is hosting a blood drive from 10 a.m. till 1 p.m. Saturday, April 16. To schedule an appointment, call ImpactLife at 800-747-5401 or register online at [www.bloodcenter.org](http://www.bloodcenter.org) using code 71212. Masks and appointments are required.

## Library activities

StoryTime every Tuesday 10:00 a.m. in the library basement—stories and crafts  
 April 13, 4 p.m., Youth Bingo and 6 p.m., Film Discussion—The Master  
 April 18, 5 p.m., Crafter's Corner  
 April 19, 4 p.m. Chess Club  
 April 21, 6 p.m., Cooking with Marla on Facebook live

April 26, 5 p.m., Travel Club  
 April 27, 6 p.m., Book Discussion—Poetry



**THE RACE IS ON.** About 200 children attended the community Easter egg hunt held Saturday at North Ward School. The event was sponsored by The Smith House, Tuscola Chamber & Economic Development, Tuscola IGA, Tuscola Kiwanis Club, Tuscola Rotary Club, Tuscola Stone Co., Tuscola Woman's Club and Tuscola Women of the Moose. Photo by David Porter.

## Teachers dispute payroll withholding Issue unresolved a year after grievance was filed

The Tuscola Education Association filed a grievance with the school district on Feb. 1, 2021, alleging a variety of payroll errors including a failure to pay teachers their correct salaries and benefits. More than a year later, the issue remains unresolved.

On Oct. 14, 2021, the school district agreed to pay for a payroll audit, but citing an inability to find

a willing accountant, the audit has not been started. As part of the agreement, the district said it would "make every reasonable effort to begin the audit on or before Dec. 1, 2021."

The agreement to conduct an audit was through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Tuscola School Board and the Tuscola Education Association

(TEA) although it was never approved in open session. A review of agendas and minutes around the time that the MOU was signed by Supt. Gary Alexander shows no mention of it. All other School Board MOUs in the past two years were signed by the Board president.

The MOU agrees to audit payroll for employees between Sept. 1,

2019, and Oct. 31, 2021. The original grievance asked for an audit of 30 years' worth of payroll records. As part of the MOU, the TEA agreed to lift the grievance.

Besides the pay discrepancy, the grievance alleged that the district failed to report the correct earnings of teachers to the IRS and

See DISPUTE on page 2

## City embarks on largest-ever improvement plan No borrowing on multitude of capital projects

City Treasurer Alta Long on Monday outlined what may be the largest capital improvement budget in the city's history during a City Council study session. The projects total about \$4 million not including a \$1 million pipeline installment for the Joint Water Agency.

Many of the items have been discussed before, including another fire station garage, remodeling the police department, a new street department shed and a dog park as well as several tax incre-

ment financing (TIF)) improvements for downtown alleys, parking spaces and a green space. New on the list is a teen/tween playground and replacement of some city vehicles. The costs are estimates and several of the projects are still in the development stage.

The projected costs show a \$1,191,956 deficit budget for the city, but City Administrator Drew Hoel indicated that the number is misleading. He said the city has been saving money for years and is drawing from those savings to pay for the projects.

There are no loans or bonds proposed, he said. "Only in government would you call that a deficit," he said.

The city also budgets expenditures on the high side and revenues on the low side. For the 2022 fiscal year, the budget showed a deficit of \$544,625. The actual numbers reflect a \$1,078,535 surplus.

Two of the city's TIF districts are expiring, so some of the projects (the downtown improvements in particular) are tapping remaining TIF funds.

Hoel noted that the cash flow is

still positive because the city's fund balances are healthy. Even with the estimated costs of the capital improvement plan, the city's ending operating fund balance is projected at \$1.6 million. The reserve fund balance is projected at just under \$2 million. The capital plan fund is projected to close with \$1.8 million while the street maintenance reserve fund is projected to finish the next fiscal year with a balance of \$540,000.

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**NORTH WARD TEACHER KRISTEN BROWN** grabs her son Jackson after he delivered a pie to her face last week. The safety committee used the event as a fundraiser. Also getting a pie in the face was Michael Bingaman (not pictured) and Angie Bergner, far left. Bergner's pie thrower was Wyatt Herschberger. Photo by David Porter.