



SECTION

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Connecting our communities

January 25, 2023

BRIEFS

ROSC meeting Jan. 25

The Douglas County ROSC (Recovery Oriented Systems of Care) will meet from 10-11 a.m. Wednesday, Jan. 25, at the Douglas County Health Dept. in Tuscola. For more information, email Leanna Morgan at ceadleannam@ceadcouncil.com.

Weather forecast

Tuesday: Mostly cloudy, with a high near 39. West wind 5 to 9 mph becoming light and variable in the afternoon.

Tuesday Night: Snow likely after midnight. Cloudy, with a low around 31. Light and variable wind becoming east northeast 6 to 11 mph in the evening. Winds could gust as high as 17 mph. Chance of precipitation is 70%. New snow accumulation of 1 to 3 inches possible.

Wednesday: Snow, mainly before noon. The snow could be heavy at times. High near 34. Northeast wind 11 to 17 mph becoming northwest in the afternoon. Winds could gust as high as 26 mph. Chance of precipitation is 90%.

Wednesday Night: Cloudy, with a low around 26. West northwest wind 11 to 17 mph, with gusts as high as 26 mph.

Thursday: Cloudy, with a high near 31.

Thursday Night: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 20.

Friday: Mostly cloudy, with a high near 36.

Friday Night: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 25.

Saturday: Mostly cloudy, with a high near 36.

Saturday Night: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 26.

Sunday: A chance of rain. Cloudy, with a high near 36.

Blood drive

D&M Woodcrafts will host a Community Blood Drive with ImpactLife, the provider of blood components for local hospitals. The blood drive will be from 2-7 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 31 at 421 E. County Road 200N, inside D&M Woodcrafts. To donate, contact Marlin Schrock at 217-268-3266 or visit www.bloodcenter.org and use code 71155 to locate the drive. You may also call 800-747-5401. Appointments are required.

County court upgrades technology

By Dominik Stallings

The Douglas County Courthouse received several technological upgrades to improve and modernize court proceedings.

Douglas County received \$157,286 in grants from the Illinois Court Modernization program to upgrade several systems. Circuit Clerk Nathan Burton said they updated the court's audio-visual equipment, which includes projectors, TV screens, speakers, audio processors for higher quality audio and adjustable volume. The courts also received new hearing equipment for people with disabilities to follow court proceedings.

"The hearing impaired equipment is fantastic. It is a step up from what we had," said Burton.

Along with those hardware improvements, they also upgraded software and servers to store and manage cases. Alone, \$40,000 went towards a new court management server, which helps the

circuit clerk's office manage cases and files.

"We now have the ability to be paperless, which reduces paper waste. It also helps us by being far more efficient," said Burton. "The case-load has not decreased, but the amount of time we have to spend in court has decreased."

The new technology benefits court staff, plaintiffs, defendants and judges. The new equipment allows for remote access to the courts. In an example, Burton explained that, in the past, if someone from another state was pulled over and cited in Douglas County, they would be required to come back to court and answer for their charge.

The Illinois Supreme Court identified this as a burden to the entire system, including the defendant, who would have to take time off work to make an appearance.

The new remote access will make it possible for certain court

appearances, such as initial court appearances and motion hearings, to be made remotely. This also means that inmates won't have to be transported to the courthouse for each court appearance they have to make.

Burton added that some appearances would still have to be in person, such as plea deals, sentencing hearings or trials. Essentially anything involving witnesses.

"Those are still going to be in person to ensure the integrity of the judicial system," said Burton.

Burton said the new projectors and TV screens for the court assists court staff with the evidence presented. Juries have an easier time making decisions with evidence that is presented clearly and concisely.

According to Burton, the state, over the last four or five years, has become focused on standardizing court procedures. The technology upgrades have also come to several neighboring counties, such as

Moultrie, Piatt and Dewitt counties.

The tech upgrades allow an associate or presiding judge to hold court the same way they would in their home court. Associate Judge Webber travels in four counties, including Moultrie, Douglas, Piatt and Dewitt Counties. This helps the entire judicial system in the sixth circuit, since it streamlines court processes.

Burton said that the upgrades aren't completely finished. The circuit clerk's office is still waiting on some components that have been on backorder.

"We try to keep the integrity of the courtroom and keep the decor of the courtroom," said presiding Judge Richard Broch.

Broch said they wanted to be mindful of the look and feel of the courthouse. The new audio-visual equipment is some of the first changes made to the Douglas County courtrooms since the early 1900s.



BENEFIT CONCERT — After a devastating fire in 2021, Sunnyside Mennonite Church has rebuilt and Mackville is hosting a benefit concert to help purchase hymnals for the church. A love offering will be taken. The event is 6 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 5 at the church, 477 IL Rt. 133, Chesterville (between Arthur and Arcola. For more information, contact: Terry Schlabach at 217-460-1439.



ARCOLA #366 AF & AM MASONIC LODGE

111 S. Locust St., Arcola, IL 61910

2023 CHILI DINNER FUNDRAISER

FRIDAY, FEB. 3RD
4:30 - 7:30 PM

\$8 SUGGESTED DONATION

Please join us for dinner to help raise funds for our involvement in community service projects. The dinner includes all-you-can-eat chili, peanut butter sandwiches as well as some delicious desserts. Door prizes will be available.

Music by **TODD FULTZ** with the **ROCKIN' TATER SHOW**



Mackville — Larry Schlabach, Gary Schlabach, Jeff Lee, Lori Schlabach, Terry Schlabach, Mike Waddell.

County Board tables decision on removing ARPA designation for RISE

By Dominik Stallings

The Douglas County Board planned to remove the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) fund designation for RISE behavioral health and wellness during the Jan. 18 meeting. The decision has been tabled to the next meeting in February.

The Board originally decided to drop the designation because they didn't receive any paperwork from RISE outlining a project for the funds.

The Board said RISE should coordinate with the budget and finance committee in order to present a project proposal.

The County Board added

that they do not provide businesses with paperwork to gain an ARPA designation. RISE director Lauren Christina believed she was waiting for the Douglas County Board to provide RISE with documents to continue with the ARPA fund designation.

She was told by Judi Pollock and previous chairman Don Munson to wait for further instruction.

Director Christina said that RISE was planning to use the ARPA funds to fund the 24-hour crisis line, which was previously funded by another grant.

The Sheriff's department recently partnered with ROSC

to provide substance abuse counseling for inmates. Currently, the Sheriff's department uses a service in Mattoon for emergency situations.

In other business, the Board approved the adjusted mileage reimbursement rate to 66.5 cents per mile.

The Board appointed Darrel McCumber for the Union Drainage District No. 2

The board approved a resolution to approve nine bridge funding petitions.

The Board approved an intergovernmental memorandum of understanding of the 2023 Ortho Acquisition between the Douglas and Champaign County GIS consortium.