



SECTION

BRIEFS

Blood drive

Four Acre in Arthur is hosting a blood drive Feb. 28 at 553 N. County Rd. 240 E. To donate, schedule an appointment by calling 1-800-RED CROSS or rising redcrossblood.org.

Lake Land honors

Lake Land College in Mattoon announced its fall semester honor list. Area honorees are Kaleb Byard and Kade Herschberger of Arcola, both on the President's List; Tyler Green of Arthur on the President's List; Austin Season and Freedom Westfall of Arthur on the Dean's List; Nikolas Miller of Arthur on the Honor's List; Wyatt Romine and Logan Streible of Atwood on the President's List and Kolby Schable of Atwood on the Dean's List; Alexa Miller of Cadwell on the President's List; Jamie Kern of Camargo on the Honor's List; Cassidee Pantier of Hammond on the President's List; Natalie White of Hindsboro on the President's List, and Jackson Hoel of Hindsboro on the Dean's List; Tyson Gass of Humboldt on the President's List and Joleigh Cougill of Humboldt on the Honor's List; Madison Barrow of Newman on the Dean's List; Jenna Rekart of Oakland on the President's List; Marissa Russo of Tuscola on the President's List, Cassandra Carlson, Jamison Roche, Mackenzi Bowles and Parker Norman of Tuscola on the Honor's List; and Chelsea Williams of Villa Grove on the President's List.

Weather forecast

Wednesday: Rain and possibly a thunderstorm. High near 64. Windy, with a south wind 13 to 18 mph increasing to 26 to 31 mph in the afternoon. Winds could gust as high as 46 mph. Chance of precipitation is 100%. New rainfall amounts between three quarters and one inch possible.

Wednesday Night: Rain likely before midnight. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 55. Windy, with a south southwest wind 27 to 32 mph decreasing to 20 to 25 mph after midnight. Winds could gust as high as 47 mph. Chance of precipitation is 60%. New precipitation amounts between a tenth and quarter of an inch possible.

Thursday: Sunny, with a high near 60. Windy.

Thursday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 20. Breezy.

Friday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 37.

Friday Night: A chance of rain. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 31.

Saturday: Mostly cloudy, with a high near 51.

Saturday Night: A chance of rain. Partly cloudy, with a low around 34.

Sunday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 50.



CAMERON MCGILL FROM ARTHUR won the Douglas County Spelling Bee, Wednesday, Feb. 15, at Yoder's Kitchen in Arthur. Margot Howard from Villa Grove was the runner-up of the competition. McGill and Howard will continue on the regional spelling bee March 11 in Decatur. Twelve students from Arthur, Arcola, Tuscola and Villa Grove participated in the competition. Lydia Koch from Tuscola made third place, Josiah Hout from Arcola made fourth, and Ella Oye from Arthur and Emma Price from Villa Grove both shared fifth place. The participants received gift baskets after the end of the competition.

Douglas County participants, left to right, back row: Cameron McGill, Ella Oye, Trinity Shrock and Laila Sanchez from Arthur. Josiah Hout, Erin Jones, Hanna Roberts and Oliver Diaz from Arcola. Front row, left to right, Lydia Koch, Well Pettry, Frances Burlew and Beau Whitson from Tuscola. Margot Howard, Emma Price, Ethan Vail and Matthew Montgomery from Villa Grove. *Photo by Dominik Stallings.*

DAR/SAR bestow Good Citizenship awards

The Villa Grove United Methodist Church hosted the 67th annual Stephen A. Douglas Chapter, DAR/SAR (National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution/Sons of the American Revolution) Good Citizens' Luncheon on Saturday, Feb. 11. There were approximately 50 in attendance including the awardees, parents, DAR members, and guests. Joni Smith, Front Street Market, catered the meal.

Regent Martha Burris gave the welcome and Chaplain Marlene Lincoln gave the invocation. Arcola Joines, Flag Chairman led the Pledge to the American flag and Jane Faust, 1st Vice Regent led the group in the American's Creed.

Program speaker was Tracy Lillard of Villa Grove. Her inspiring remarks centered on the benefits of being a "Really Good Human Being." She encouraged the students to Think Big, Do not be afraid to fail, Have a positive mental attitude, and Do not be afraid of new ideas. In life, you need to be Brave, Courageous, Have Integrity, Be a Good friend, and Learn to manage your time.

Martha Burris, Good Citizens chairman of the Stephen A. Douglas DAR Chapter, presented the DAR awards to the five high school seniors: Eadie Budd - Arcola, Brady Moore - ALAH, Kaylin Williams - Shiloh, Brogan Rennert-Tuscola, and Kyleigh Price - Villa Grove. Mrs. Burris gave a brief description of the nomination and selection process based on dependability, leadership, service, and patriotism.

Each of the DAR Good Citizens is given an opportunity to write an essay for competition. This year, Eadie Budd from Arcola was the chapter's essay winner. She was awarded a monetary gift from the Stephen A. Douglas Chapter and received an American flag flown over the U.S. Capitol.

William McLane of the Piankeshaw Chapter SAR presented the SAR awards to the five high school seniors: Morgan Doud - Arcola, Kaylee Schrock - ALAH, Tyler Hutchinson - Shiloh, Grant Kauffman - Tuscola, and Luke Zimmerman - Villa Grove. Mr. McLane gave brief remarks, telling the students to work hard.

The benediction was in unison.



THIS YEAR'S DAR WINNERS are front row, l to r: Kyleigh Price, Brogan Rennert, Kaylin Williams, Brady Moore, and Eadie Budd. SAR winners are back row, l to r: Luke Zimmerman, Grant Kauffman, Tyler Hutchinson, Kaylee Schrock, Morgan Doud. *Submitted photo.*

Douglas County Board designates \$100,000 for RISE crisis line

By Dominik Stallings

The Douglas County Board designated \$100,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for RISE Behavioral Health and Wellness in Tuscola. The money will be used to fund RISE's 24-hour free crisis line.

In last month's meeting, the Board planned to remove the designation, as they hadn't received a project proposal from RISE for ARPA funds. After a discussion with RISE's director Lauren Christina, the Board tabled the decision.

Since then, RISE has met with the Douglas County budget and finance subcommittee regarding the project proposal for the Board.

Christina explained that the ARPA funds would help pay the wages of mental health workers operating the crisis line. RISE receives payments by charging insurance companies for mental health services for their clients.

Christina said the funding for the crisis line came from the state before July 2021, when the state began moving funds toward the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. The crisis line did not have a loss in service when it lost funding in 2021.

The RISE crisis line offers callers the chance to talk with a local mental health worker if they are experiencing a mental health crisis, whether that be an acute increase in symptoms or suicidal feelings.

"We thought it would be beneficial to keep it in-person," said Christine. "Clients like to call people they know."

RISE works with the sheriff's department to screen calls; caller's names and phone numbers are taken by the sheriff's department and then a RISE worker will call back within five minutes. If RISE determines that a caller needs immediate assistance, they can ask the Sheriff's department or emergency medical services to send someone.

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline is similar to RISE's service but is more anonymous. Callers are directed to call centers across the country. The hotline also has the ability to send a mental health professional to the caller's location.

If you are experiencing a mental health crisis, you can call RISE's free 24-hour crisis line at 217-253-3511. You can also dial 988 to reach the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

In other news, the Board approved the administrative office of the Illinois Courts lease agreement at the Douglas County Annex. The office space will be leased for five years at \$2,400 yearly.

The Board approved resolution 23-R-4, which allows Douglas County Board members to attend Board meetings electronically. Board members will be able to attend via video, audio conference and other "contemporary interactive

988
SUICIDE
& CRISIS
LIFELINE

RISE'S
LOCAL
CRISIS
HOTLINE
NUMBER
217-253-3511

communication" such as electronic chat, mail and instant messaging. Member's votes would be counted the same as if they are physically present.

Jim Higgins, former owner of the Tuscola "Do It Best" hardware store, was appointed to the Douglas County Board of Health.

The Board voted against resolution 23-R-5, the declaration of emergency due to COVID-19. The resolution has been voted on every month since the start of the public health emergency.

Governor JB Pritzker announced Jan. 31 that the state's public health emergency will end on May 11, aligning with the federal government's decision to end the national public health emergency. Illinois aligned itself with the federal government to ensure resources for the state's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Board reappointed the

insurance administrator liaison to Douglas County.

The Board approved the annual stipend for payment and reconciliation of payroll deducted insurance benefits of \$3,000 to staff.

The Board approved resolution 23-R-6, which authorizes the execution and amendment of the section 5311 grant agreement. The funds from the agreement will be used for the new Dial-A-Ride vehicle storage facility, which received \$1.1 million in grant funds by the Department of Transportation.

The Board approved the extension of local agency agreements for job R-95-326-15 and R-95-328-15 to March 2025. The agreements are for Cronus Chemicals Infrastructure improvements.

The Board approved the purchase of a copier for the supervisor of the assessments office, along with a maintenance contract of \$150 per month.