



Hoke

Hoke named state pageant director

The Illinois Association of Agricultural Fairs announced that Sandy Hoke of Tuscola has been named Illinois County Fair Queen director succeeding Cathy Redshaw, who retired after 13 years in the position.

Hoke has been pageant director for the Moultrie-Douglas County Fair.

"We are certain that San-

dy is the best choice for the position with her overall experience with 30 years in the county queen pageant," said Bill Jennings, pageant chairman and Southern zone director-at-large. "We wish to thank the other candidates for the interviews and impressive conversations with the committee."

Ag in the Classroom teaches about fruits and vegetables

This month in Douglas County Ag in the Classroom, students learned about fresh fruits and vegetables available at farmers' markets. Illinois farmers grow over 40 different types of specialty crops. Illinois ranks third in the nation for the number of farmers' markets. Farmers' markets are a great way to purchase local, fresh foods, and meet the farmers that grow them. These markets have a wide array of unique and tasty produce.

Older students learned about the importance of livestock health. Farmers use many biosecurity measures to help protect livestock from diseases. These include

keeping germs from entering livestock facilities by using clean drinking water, preventing wild birds from entering buildings, keeping buildings clean, and sanitizing equipment. Students then did an experiment with developing a time-released tablet to dissolve in water.

Many thanks to all who supported the Douglas County Ag in the Classroom program this year. We look forward to next fall and more fun and learning in the classroom! Douglas County Ag in the Classroom is supported by Douglas County Farm Bureau, Douglas County Ag Center, and Illinois Ag in the Classroom.

Cannabis regulatory reform bill fails to advance in spring legislative session

By NIKA SCHOONOVER
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SPRINGFIELD – A proposed cannabis reform bill won't get further consideration until at least the General Assembly's fall veto session after stakeholders failed to come to an agreement during the spring session's final stretch.

Rep. La Shawn Ford, a Chicago Democrat and the bill's sponsor, told Capitol News Illinois last week that Senate Bill 1559 didn't pass in part due to disagreements around delta-8 THC, a synthetic psychoactive substance typically manufactured from hemp-derived CBD. "We need to regulate it, make it safe, make sure that it's taxed and treat it just like cannabis," Ford said in an interview.

But advocates for the cannabis industry are pushing for a full ban. Ford said he refused to rewrite the bill to include a ban "without any serious

dialogue from the public and from the state regulators."

Delta-8, found in small traces of hemp and cannabis plants, is an easily accessible substance that can be purchased in licensed dispensaries but also in convenience stores that otherwise are prohibited from selling cannabis. Unlike the more well-known form of THC, delta-8 is often derived from CBD and causes a much milder high. But concerns over the substance's safety have arisen across the country because it remains unregulated, and consumers of delta-8 have gotten sick after consumption.

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COVID testing continues but not for free

By Colleen Lehmann
Douglas County Health Dept.
Public Health Liaison

With the COVID-19 emergency declaration having officially expired last month, many things we have taken for granted will come to an end at some point, including free COVID testing, vaccines, and treatment. This does not mean these things cease to exist, only that there may now be a charge associated with them. Exactly how much and when is still uncertain at this point, though Medicaid programs will continue to cover COVID-19 treatments without cost sharing through Sept. 30, 2024. Telemedicine will continue to be available to all Illinois residents, with the Telemedicine Test to Treat Program through SIU School of Medicine staying operational into early 2024. Recommended guidance on what to do if you are sick or exposed will essentially stay the same, according to IDPH. As far as COVID vaccine clinics at DCHD, we are now going to a once-a-month model, the second Thursday of the month. At this time they are still free of

charge, but how long that will be the case is uncertain.

DoCo Health Center, now entering its fifth month of operations, is going strong. In addition to the original team of healthcare provider Matya Riley, CMA Dayse Brenes Villala, and mental health counselor Wade Stark, we recently hired a second mental health counselor, Casey McClain. The medical team is spending Fridays in June at various Douglas County communities doing school and sports physicals by appointment, at greatly reduced cost (\$10/\$5).

Our J600 location in the Tuscola Outlet Mall has implemented some additional services. These include staying open for appointments until 6 p.m. the second Tuesday of every month, and hosting a breastfeeding support group at 2 p.m. the fourth Friday of the month. We also have a small clothing bank for babies and small children, with gently used items given away as they are available. Monthly diabetes support group meetings continue to be held the fourth Monday at 1:30 p.m. at



Lehmann

the DCHD main location—and attendance can be in person or online. We're also excited to host a monthly food truck fair May-September at the J600 location, on the third Thursday from 11 a.m. to at least 1 p.m. There will be five to six trucks at each event.

The Summer Meals program underwent a change in format this year, and will now be a weekly grocery delivery to students/families identified by school district counselors and other personnel as having a pressing need for a supplemental food source with

school not in session. There are 156 Douglas County students representing 46 families who will be receiving the food, starting the week of June 5.

DCHD is teaming up with Lighten Your Load Laundromat in Tuscola and the Laundry Love organization to sponsor occasional (possibly monthly depending on interest/need) free laundry events for folks having trouble affording this chore. It's in the planning stages, but the laundry detergent has been provided by Laundry Love, and we are seeking donations to cover the cost of machines operation, which is anticipated to be approximately \$100 per event. Folks interested in participating are being asked to pre-register with DCHD.

Summer 2023 will find DCHD involved with a number of outreach events in addition to the aforementioned, including Tuscola Library Summer Movie Nights, Strawberry Jam Festival in Arthur, Mo-Do Fair in Arthur, Villa Grove Ag Days, Country Cheese Festival in Arthur, and Broomcorn Parade in Arcola. Maybe we'll see you there!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The true meaning of the rainbow

It's that time of year when the rainbow is everywhere. It's on flags and signs, shirts and hats, stickers and flyers, in store windows and on merchandise. It's everywhere. It's everywhere because June is the month the world celebrates LGBTQ+ Pride, and the rainbow has been adopted as the emblem of that pride.

But before the rainbow was a symbol of pride, it was God's sign of promise. The first rainbow and every rainbow after it was God's reminder to us that He promised never to flood the earth again because of mankind's sinful pride.

In Genesis Chapters 6-9, Moses records that the pride of mankind had moved God to start over with humanity. He regretted making mankind. God sent a world-wide flood to wipe out the proud and raise up the humble. Noah and his family, who humbly believed God's word, found favor in God's sight. So, God commanded them to build an ark big

enough to hold not only the animals of every kind to replenish the earth, but enough room for anyone who heard the word of Noah and repented of their pride could also find refuge from the coming flood.

Ultimately, only Noah and his family, eight people in all, were saved. And when they came out of the ark, God promised that he would never deal with man's sinful pride in that way again. As a sign of that promise, God put His rainbow in the sky. The rainbow is, and always shall be, a reminder to all humanity of God's promise.

The Bible teaches us that our boasting is not good. Pride leads to destruction (Prov 16:18-19). If we must boast, we boast in the Lord and what He has accomplished (Psalm 44:8; Rom 3:27; 1 Cor 1:31; 2 Cor 10:17-18). And this is what He has accomplished: "God loved the world in this way, that He sent His only-begotten Son that whoever believes

in Him will not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). God is patient toward us in the death, resurrection, and ascension of His Son, Jesus Christ. His patience is meant to lead us to repentance (Rom 2:3-4; 2 Pet 3:9). For God desires that all be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim 2:4). God's Word is truth (John 17:17) and it gives the Spirit and life (John 6:63).

So when you see the rainbow, remember that it is God's

rainbow—God's promise to you. Think not of the pride of mankind, but the lovingkindness of God's promises made and kept in Jesus Christ. This is the true meaning of the rainbow. Immanuel Lutheran Church, Tuscola, will have on display a picture of God's rainbow that reminds us of this promise. And we invite you to come hear the promises of God in Christ Jesus on Sunday mornings at 9:00 AM.

The Rev. Jason M. Braaten



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