

# Solar

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on it. We've got a few more little odds and ends to do on the actual building. The data center is nearly complete and ready to be operational. It was kind of timed to be ready to turn on at the same time as the solar was ready, and they're pretty close to each other. We have some additional office space that's still to be completed inside the building, but that's always kind of the bottom priority. Then, you know, we're trying to dress the property up and make it stop looking

so much like a construction site. Coincidentally, we've got some guys out there today, trying to get some rental equipment returned to vendors. We're stashing some stuff, getting it ready for long-turn storage, and we're cleaning it up and getting ready to put some grass seed in. The spring cleaning that has to happen anywhere is going on to try and make it presentable.

*Was it always your intention to remove the old depot and to grow that, or did this kind of grow organically?*

We're very fluid and organic people, and we kind of roll with it. We expected that

it would be the plan, but we had to wait for Ameren to confirm. We also had to wait for some of our consultants to confirm that there was no saving the buildings, and it all kind of came in. The consultants said that the buildings were no good and Ameren said, "Yes, do more solar," and like you said, it kind of grew organically.

*When we spoke before, the hope was to save the north end of the old seed company. What happened there?*

The seed company was three separate buildings, and I initially wanted to save all three, the building that we have, the part up

by the road, and the elevator portion. The problem is that the elevator portion was basically good for nothing, inside. It had so many supports, I-beams here and posts there, that it just wasn't a usable space. We removed that early on and it actually worked out pretty well because it allowed us to put our cooling equipment on that concrete pad. I initially expected to save the front part of it. The roof was leaking really bad from the trees that had grown up through it and so I had a crew go out and they tore off the shingles and we were going to get a new metal roof to match the building, and before long, they found a piece of rotten wood here, a piece there, and it ended up being that the entire west side of that building was all rotted out. We were going to try and save it, but by the time we got there, we found that several of the trusses had rotted out and we decided to go ahead and take it out now. We're left for a concrete pad and if we ever want to rebuild over it, we can, but it makes a pretty good little parking lot, honestly.

*Is it still the plan to use Villa Grove as a training center for future sites, as we originally discussed?*

Exactly. We have a couple of different sites that we're looking at, and it will all depend on timing, frankly, but as of right now, it will work out really well. We're trying to get the office space finished. We can have a training room where you can go out and look at the solar panels and then come in and do some things. It won't actually be our only one. We'll have them scattered around

because there will be several different crews running in different locations.

*You mentioned a few surprises. Has the project pretty much gone the way you anticipated?*

Honestly, I think it's gone really smooth. It's been awesome. The demo project is moving along. The solar array went smoothly. The railroad has been easy to work with as we worked right up near them. The building on site looks amazing. I'm super happy with how that turned out. I'll be even happier when it's not wet and muddy and sloppy everywhere, but it's all in due time. There's only so much you can do in the middle of winter.

*You're hauling off a hundred years of bricks, and other materials, right?*

Right. The brick recycler hauled off about 80,000 bricks, so that was pretty cool.

*Do you have any idea where those bricks are headed?*

A firm out of Chicago buys them and he installs them for various applications. They're used for accent walls in restaurants or basements or maybe you want a real brick patio, things like that. It's really cool. He sent a crew down and they pulled the bricks out. It's really cool that they're going to be used like that and not just end up in a landfill somewhere.

*Are you on schedule, and when do you think the project will be complete and you'll be coming online?*

I would assume that the data center will be online by the end of March. Phase one of the solar is done, and for all practical purposes, it's

online. I don't have a good estimate yet for phase two of solar. It's just now starting. Once we determined that the buildings weren't going to be salvageable, we knew we had to get them out, and we kind of started phase two.

*Overall, would you say that this project has gone the way you expected?*

Yeah, I think it's been great. We've been able to hire quite a few people from the Villa Grove area, so that was neat. We've established a couple of team members, guys who will be able to grow with us and continue on and maintain the field for years to come.

*Will there be permanent employees here in Villa Grove?*

Absolutely. It's not a set-it-and-forget-it thing when you think of the array. There will always be landscaping things to do. Spraying weeds, mowing and that sort of thing. Maybe an inverter stops working once in a while and someone has to go out and check those types of things. Sometimes we'll need spot checks, just walking around and checking the nuts and the bolts and making sure that those types of things are tightened up. Then, we'll have a couple of people in the data center, monitoring that and making repairs and that sort of thing.

*Looking west along the array, it certainly is impressive, isn't it?*

This is the first time we've done a system like that, and it looks so cool! It will be really cool when it's done. Even things like getting grass to grow. I know some people were upset when the depot was torn down, but I think most people realize that the building had sat empty for 50 years. We saved a bunch of the old timbers and things like that. The city has been awesome to work with. I couldn't have asked for a smoother experience, and I can't wait to finish it up and have an everyday, usable site.

**Let's KICK things off right.**

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**Villa Grove BINGO**  
Every Friday Night  
VFW post 2876

**6:30 pm- Early Bird**  
**7:00 pm- Regular Bingo**

**Jackpots:**  
Egg in a Basket Raffle Chance **up to \$2000**  
Blackout Jackpot Chance **up to \$1000**

Bingo Lic# B1934  
Pull Tab Lic# P-48

**VILLA GROVE STATE BANK SENIOR OF THE MONTH**

## William Lawrence Jones

Will Jones has been selected as the Villa Grove High School Senior of the Month for February 2023. Congratulations, Will!

A scholar and class leader, Will has served as an FFA officer, a class officer, and a member of the National Honor Society. He has also participated in track, the Illinois High School Rodeo, and the National Little Britches Rodeo.

In his spare time, Will enjoys hunting, fishing, beekeeping, and making maple syrup. He has also earned his pilot's license. After graduation, he plans to attend Eastern Illinois University in the pre-dental program.

Villa Grove State Bank congratulates Will on his selection as the February Senior of the Month and wishes him continued success!

The Senior of the Month and Senior of the Year program honors Villa Grove High School students who have outstanding records in academics, leadership, and extracurricular activities. School personnel select the recipients, and Villa Grove State Bank presents each monthly winner with \$100. The Senior of the Year receives a \$1,000 scholarship.

**Family:** Parents Phillip and Sara Jones; brother Jack, 13

**Favorite subjects:** Math and Science

**Proudest high school moment:** Winning the school-wide pickleball tournament

**Best thing about being part of the Villa Grove community:** "Attending a small school and getting to know everyone is the best part of living in Villa Grove."

**Villa Grove State Bank**  
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# CHURCH DIRECTORY

**Camargo United Methodist Church**  
103 E. Main Street  
P.O. Box 122, Camargo, IL 61919  
Church—832-9388  
e-mail: umccamargo@gmail.com  
Office Hours:  
Tuesday and Thursday  
8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.  
Pastor - Lenny Summar  
Traditional Worship - 9:00 a.m.  
Contemporary Worship 10:30  
"Come just as you are to worship"  
Open Communion first Sunday of each month  
Prayer Group - Meets after Sunday Service.

**First Christian Church**  
(Non-Denominational)  
"Come Rejoice With Us"  
701 N. Sycamore St.  
Villa Grove, Illinois  
Phone(217)832-5231  
Fax (217)832-9348  
Website: www.fccvg.com  
E-mail: fccvg@frontier.com  
Minister- Mike Zylstra  
E-mail: fccvgmin@frontier.com  
Open communion observed weekly  
Morning Worship Service: 9:30 a.m.  
Sunday School (all ages) 10:45 a.m.  
Jr. & Sr. High Youth Group  
1st & 3rd Sundays 6:00 p.m.

**First Christian Church**  
100 E. Church St., Tuscola  
253-2394  
Sunday Worship services: 8:00 & 10:30 a.m.  
Sunday school: 9:15 a.m.  
Youth Group 7th-12th @ 6:33 Sundays  
After school program  
5th-6th girls, Wednesdays  
www.fctuscola.com

**Tuscola United Methodist Church**  
901 N. Prairie Ave.  
253-4232  
Sunday Worship Services:  
9:00 a.m.

**First United Pentecostal Church**  
1 South Pine Street, Villa Grove  
Wheelchair Accessible  
Where Lives are Changed!  
Pastor Jerry L. Conner  
Church 832-7071 • Residence 832-8577  
Sunday School—10:00 a.m.  
Worship Service—10:00 a.m.  
Evening Evangelistic Service—6:30 p.m.  
Monday, 1st one of each month  
Ladies Auxiliary, 7:00 p.m.  
Monday—Friday  
Ladies Prayer Group—9:00 a.m.  
Tuesday Youth Service—7:00-8:00 p.m.  
Thursday Bible Study—7:30 p.m.  
Free Home Bible Study  
We welcome you to worship with us in all of our services

**Forty Martyrs Catholic Church**  
201 E. Van Allen St  
Tuscola, IL 61953  
Pastor: Rev. Angel Sierra  
Office Phone: 217.253.4412  
Sacrament of Confession:  
Saturdays 5:00 pm  
Or by appointment by calling the church office: 217.253.4412  
Week-day Mass Times:  
8:00 am Monday, Thursday & Friday  
Weekend Masses:  
5:30 pm Saturday  
8:00 am Sunday

**Immanuel Lutheran Church**  
600 E Northline Rd.  
Tuscola, IL 61953  
217-253-4341  
**Services:** Saturday 5:30 pm  
Sunday 9:00 am

**Sacred Heart Catholic Church**  
208 N. Pine Stret, Villa Grove  
Pastor -Rev. Aloy Ndeanafo  
Office: 832-8352  
Hours: M-F 8:30am-1:30pm  
Email: villagrove.hume@gmail.com  
website: sacredheartandstmichael.com  
Mass Times: Saturday: 4pm  
Sunday 10:00am  
Sunday @ St. Michaels in Hume 8:00am  
PSR:  
Sunday 9:00-9:45 am

**If you would like your church featured in our directory, please call Jamie at (217) 369-1398.**