



The JOURNAL



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Journal Entries

Congratulations

Congratulations to Anna Spillman for making it on the Dean's List High Honors and for the Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College in Indiana. Spillman was also recognized as an outstanding Pre-Art Therapy Student.

Dine with a Doctor

Senior Education Ministries will host "Dine with A Doc" at the Tuscola First Christian Church on April 27 from 11:30-1:30 p.m. The program welcomes seniors, which lets them hear an educational topic while enjoying a complimentary lunch. For this event, Rodney Wildman from Sarah Bush Lincoln will join as a guest speaker. The event will happen every fourth Thursday of the month.

Tuscola FFA Plant sale

The FFA plant sale will take place April 17-20, 27 and 28 from 3:30-6 p.m. April 29, from 8-10 a.m. and April 30 from 9 a.m.- 1 p.m. The sale will take place at the greenhouse at Tuscola High School.

Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Awareness Walk

The Tuscola Woman's Club is inviting the community to participate in the Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Awareness Walk on April 29. The walk will meet at 9:30 a.m. behind the pool at Ervin Park and start at 10 a.m. Golf carts are welcome.

Derby

Ta'Carbon is hosting the Keli Adkison Memorial Fund annual Motor Vehicle Show May 6. Spectator parking is located in the north-west corner of the outlet mall. The event features a Kentucky Derby, Derby hat contest, awards, prizes, DJ music and a Chicago-style silent auction. The event provides scholarships to Tuscola High School seniors.

CTDL & Korner Beehive bingo

Camargo Township District Library and the Korner Beehive are partnering to offer Bingo the first Wed. of every month from 1 to 2 p.m. for anyone over 50. No cash but a lot of fun prizes to give away!

Listening ear ministry

Come worship with us! Listening Ear Ministry every Wed. at 6 p.m. at Murdock UMC. Also visit our facebook page Listening Ear Ministry Ted Shearer.

Story time

Camargo Township District Library will be holding story time every Thurs. from 3:30 to 4:30.

\$1.50



TUSCOLA SENIOR PROM candidates gathered together for a photo in the front row, left to right, Mia Hausmann, Anna Rauguth, Molly Macaulay, Ella Boyer and Hailey Downs. In the second row, left to right, Colton Musgrave, Benjamin Hornaday, Tyson Macaulay, Grant Kauffman and Hunter Branca. The coronation is open to the public and will happen at 5 p.m. on Saturday April 29. More photos of the court and the candidates can be found on Page 10. Photo by Christy Hoel.

School board approves contract with TESPA

By Dominik Stallings

The Tuscola School Board approved the contract with Tuscola Education Support Professionals Association (TESPA) at its April 24 School Board meeting.

In a prepared statement, TESPA President Katherine Burlew said, "We would like to thank the countless community members, parents, and teachers for their support. As paraprofessionals, we believe it is an honor and a privilege to work with our students, oftentimes, the students most vulnerable. We hold ourselves to the highest standards to provide our students with the support they need and deserve. Our working conditions are our students' learning conditions. We

look forward to working with our district, parents, and community members in the future to continue to put our students first."

"It was a startup contract and the process takes a while. It took over a year but I believe it is a fair contract," said Superintendent Gary Alexander.

The 27-page document outlines employee compensation, health insurance, holiday pay and sick leave as well as other considerations.

Tuscola paraprofessionals will receive hourly wages based on years of experience.

Employees with one year of experience will receive \$14.86 per hour going up to \$15.61 after five years, then \$17.11 after 10 years,

\$18.36 after 15 and \$19.61 after 20 years.

Employees will receive 3 percent raises for each school year until the contract expires in 2025.

Employees with more than 21 years of experience move off the schedule. Those employees will receive a 4 percent raise in 2023-24 and a 4 percent raise in 2024-25.

The Board will pay paraprofessional's individual health insurance premiums as follows:

"December 2022-December 2023, inclusive: The Board shall pay \$569 per month health insurance premium to the carrier plus a Board contribution not to exceed \$891.96 annually to the paraprofessional to offset the deductible in-

crease as set forth below. Paraprofessionals who take the district's insurance shall no longer have a deduction toward their health insurance premium taken out of their paycheck for the amount of \$53.05/pay. This will assist in offsetting the increase to the deductible in the health plan (previously \$600, now \$2,500). The Board's contribution not to exceed \$891.96 annually to the paraprofessional for accrued deductible expenses or dependent coverage shall be distributed quarterly."

Individual employees may set up personal health savings accounts (HSA) in which the district will make quarterly deposits to

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Tuscola City Council passes the 2024 budget

By David Porter

The Tuscola City Council passed its budget for 2024 Monday night with little fanfare. There were no changes from the previous meeting and no public comment.

The general fund budget shows deficit spending of \$2.3 million largely due to planned capital improvements, which include a new fire station and remodeled police

station as well as a new street shed. It was noted previously that the city has funds on hand to pay for the expenses, so no additional taxes are anticipated. The city will start the year with an estimated \$4 million surplus in its operating fund and, despite the planned improvements, is expected to end fiscal year 2024 with a \$1.8 million surplus.

As usual, the city budgets high

on expenses and low on income. The 2023 budget reflects that with income estimated to end up nearly \$440,000 higher than was budgeted and expenses to finish the year \$2.1 million under budget.

Last year's budget projected a \$1.2 million loss but is now expected to end with a \$1.3 million gain.

The water budgeted income for 2024 is expected to nearly double

from 2023, largely due to an expected Illinois EPA loan of \$1.1 million. There was also a rate increase that room effect in March, which is expected to add about \$215,000 to the revenue side

Expenses for the water department are also budgeted a little more than \$1 million higher, mostly due to capital improvements, including

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Women's club organizes walk for awareness

By Dominik Stallings

You might have seen the blue pinwheels lined outside of several institutions across the state. They are placed each April to bring awareness to domestic violence and child abuse and provide support for those who need it.

The Tuscola Women's Club is hosting their awareness walk April 29. They will gather in Ervin Park at 9:30 a.m. and leave at 10 a.m. The walk will go until the center of downtown Tuscola and then loop back around.

"The walk is important. Its

awareness. Making people and kids aware of some of this child abuse and violence that takes place and other places," said, Darla Gardener, former club president.

The Juniores and Gentlemen, the high school branch of the Women's Club, were invited by the Women's Club to join in the walk. The middle school JETS club were also invited to come and show their support. According to Gardener, the Juniores and Gentlemen are only high school women's club in the state which includes boys.

Gardener said she thinks it's important to include everyone in the Women's Club nowadays.

The high school club meets monthly and invites guest speakers during the lunch hour such as Aikman Wildlife from Arcola, the Honor the Chief society or other influential figures in the community.

Gardener said Students in the high school and middle school clubs often participate in projects that help teach kids to take care of each other and the environment. They've made spirit signs, bird

feeders, made breakfast for Tuscola teaching staff and many other events for the schools and community.

The Women's Club hands out a \$1,000 scholarship each year with money collected from Women's Club events such as the house walk during the holiday season. Gardener said the club helps students attend summer camps, especially ones focused on the visual arts.

"Kids are the future of our club. We are very proud of that," said Gardener.

Lincoln's Challenge offers alternatives for education

By Tony Hooker

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, someone with a high school diploma will earn, on average, \$200-250 more per week than someone who doesn't graduate. Still, for some, high school completion isn't an option. Disciplinary issues and financial and family situations can lead to student dropout, regardless of potential long-term consequences. For these reasons, the



Sven Gosnell

Lincoln's Challenge Academy came to be in 1993. For those reasons, and because high school isn't for everyone, even right here in Douglas County, I arranged a visit with Sven Gosnell, a former Marine Corps Major who is LCA's Chief of Staff.

Where do your cadets come to you from?

Most of the cadets are coming from underserved academic areas. The program as it exists now is dif-

ferent than it was 30 years ago. Most of our summer cadre will come to us from Cook and the collar counties, while most of our winter cadres seem to be spread across the entire state.

Did LCA start as a diversion program?

Not really. Under our national guard bureau regulations, any student that comes to the academy cannot have charges pending. Sometimes, we get students

who are told that if they complete the program, their charges will be vacated, but if they fail out here, we call back to their state's attorney. We're not going to take a young man or woman who is coming out of prison or a juvenile detention facility. We can't take them if they've had a felony. When the program started, it was almost 100% GED. Now we're at about 50% GED and 50% high school reintegration

and we actually do graduate a few graduates every class who finish their high school diploma.

It's more for students who are struggling with school rather than with the legal system?

Yes. That's the intent. We have seen, especially recently, high school students who should be juniors who have never even stepped foot in a high school. Covid struck

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