

Fieldcrest Eliminates Staff To Reduce Budget Costs

by MJ Langner

The Fieldcrest School Board has continued with their plans to reduce costs to the district. At their February board meeting last Wednesday, Superintendent Dave Johnson outlined their Reduction in Force plan, eliminating several positions in an attempt to reduce their 2026-2027 budget by between \$600,000 and \$700,000.

The reductions are all staff related and Johnson said during the meeting, "These positions are all useful positions and so the district will feel in a variety of ways each one of these positions being gone."

He continued describing these as not easy cuts to make, but necessary financially. The cuts will require the district to make adjustments now and as they go forward.

While some reductions on the list were previously discussed at January's board meeting, including the day care staff and assistant positions and curriculum director position, others were newly introduced at this meeting.

The full list of positions being eliminated includes, Curriculum Director, one Primary School 1st Grade Teacher, Daycare Director, Daycare Teacher, Two Daycare

Assistants, Part-Time Custodian, High School Reading Interventionist, High School Math Interventionist, Middle School Interventionist and 7th Assignment and Six Teaching Assistants (from various buildings).

"By making these changes, Fieldcrest should be able to provide proper funding for our educational mission. As we continue in the future, we will always assess what our needs are and consider the financial resources we have to support those needs to make decisions," Johnson stated in the memo presented at the board.

The total proposed savings to the district with this plan is \$660,000. This plan will not be approved until the March board meeting, but was presented to board members at this meeting and staff was informed via a memo the previous week. Board members did not make any comments at this time regarding the plan.

In other business, the board approved a tuck pointing bid for work at the Fieldcrest Intermediate School. They received several bids, and awarded the work to RL Contractors. This was the lowest

bid for the work coming in at approximately, \$119,000. The work will begin at the end of May, with plans for completion in the first week of June.

The board also approved a mowing bid from Kuehn Lawn Services for \$11,980. They have had the winning bid for the past three years.

Additionally, the district received donations to two extracurriculars at the high school. This included a \$600 donation to the eSports team by SMF and a \$1,000 donation by Candi Mangan to the track team.

Also discussed at the meeting was an upcoming Internet Safety seminar being offered at the high school in conjunction with Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul's office.

Emory Burdette told the board the event will take place on Tuesday, April 14th at 6 pm and touch on topics including the impact of screen time, predatory tactics, sextortion scams, generative AI, and reporting and resources.

Aside from the presentation there will be an opportunity for questions as well. All are welcome to attend.

Fieldcrest Knights Season Ends In Regional Championship Game

The Fieldcrest Knights closed out their season this week as they fell to Brimfield in the championship game of the Knoxville Regional.

In the semi-final round on Wednesday, Fieldcrest had little trouble with Peoria Heights as they cruised to a 67-45 win over Patriots.

Fieldcrest's Layten Gerdes tallied 8 first quarter points, sparking the Knights to a 14-4 first quarter lead. The Knights led 31-18 at the half and 50-35 heading into the final quarter.

With those 8 first quarter points, Layten Gerdes led the Knights with 16 points. Eli Gerdes chipped with 14 points while Kash Klendworth and Drew Overocker added double figure scoring with

13 and 10 points respectively. The Knights season came to an end on Friday night when they dropped a 66-37 decision to Brimfield in the championship game. Box scores were not available at press time.

FIELDCREST 67, PEO. HEIGHTS 45

	FG	FT	PTS
Bryden Lohr.....	0	0-0	0
Braden Hahn.....	0	2-3	2
Lucas Anson.....	0	0-0	0
Kash Klendworth.....	4	4-6	13
Layten Gerdes.....	5	4-4	15
Ethan Vallazza.....	0	0-0	0
Alden Alexander.....	0	0-0	0
Eli Gerdes.....	4	2-2	14
Drew Overocker.....	5	0-0	10
Lucas May.....	1	0-0	2
Kayden Eilts.....	3	0-0	6
TOTALS.....	24 (7)	12-15	67

PEO HEIGHTS (17-13)	4	14	17	10	45
FIELDCREST (18-13)	14	17	19	17	67

Gateway Services Announces 8th Annual "Egg My Yard" Fundraiser For Delivery This Easter

We all know the Easter Bunny is incredibly busy! Why not let Gateway's "bunnies" do some of the work?! Order your candy-filled eggs to be scattered around your yard in time for Easter morning fun. Egg delivery will begin at dark (approximately 8 p.m.) and will continue until all eggs are delivered (last year, it was around 5 a.m.)

Several options are available. Twenty-five eggs are available at a cost of \$25, 50 eggs are \$45, 75 eggs are \$65, and 100 eggs are \$85. All deliveries include a letter from E. Bunny. A treat-filled egg for the family dog or family cat can be purchased for \$5. Orders are now being taken for Bureau, Marshall, and Putnam County ad-

resses, as well as LaSalle, Peru, Oglesby, Tonica, and Cedar Point addresses. Pick-up is also available at the Princeton office.

The order deadline is March 31st at 4:00 p.m. Additional information and an online order form can be found at <https://forms.gle/dGCK1y-8t7G43oaB27>, or anyone interested can call (815) 875-4548, Ext. 221 or visit Gateway's Facebook page. All proceeds will benefit Gateway Services.

Gateway Services, Inc. has provided a variety of services to adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Bureau, Marshall, and Putnam Counties for 56 years. For more information, please visit the website at www.gateway-services.org or follow them on Facebook.

Illinois Is 2026's 8th Most Sinful State

Red states and blue states may like to point to one another as the source of all that is wrong with the U.S., but the truth is that each of the 50 states has its own virtues and vices. For example, New Mexico has the worst drug problem, and it certainly comes as no surprise that Nevada is the most gambling-addicted.

Some states are more well-behaved than others, though. In order to determine the states that most give in to their desires, WalleHub compared the 50 states across 54 key indicators of immoral or illicit behavior. Our data set ranges from violent crimes per capita to excessive drinking to the share of the population with gambling disorders.

"People across the nation have their own moral struggles, from violent outbursts and bullying to compulsive gambling, excessive lust and self-destructive consumption. While individual cases of

negative behavior may only affect a few people, when these behaviors are exhibited by a high share of a state's population, the majority of the state's residents suffer as a result. States should invest in resources to help people curb vices, such as robust rehabilitation programs for people with gambling and drug addictions."

Chip Lupo, WalleHub Analyst

Most Sinful Cities In America	
City	Score
1. Nevada.....	60.98
2. California.....	53.15
3. Louisiana.....	52.02
4. Florida.....	52.00
5. Texas.....	49.49
6. Tennessee.....	48.16
7. Mississippi.....	48.14
8. Illinois.....	47.70
9. Arizona.....	47.57
10. New York.....	47.56
11. Georgia.....	47.51
12. South Carolina.....	46.75
13. Oklahoma.....	45.43
14. New Jersey.....	45.27
15. Pennsylvania.....	44.85

Sinfulness of Illinois	
(1=Most Sinful; 25=Avg.)	
◆ Overall Rank: 8th	
◆ 12th: Anger & Hatred	
◆ 10th: Jealousy	
◆ 22nd: Excesses & Vices	
◆ 15th: Greed	
◆ 13th: Lust	
◆ 12th: Vanity	
◆ 24th: Laziness	

Least Sinful Cities In America	
36. Alaska.....	34.77
37. Kansas.....	34.19
38. Hawaii.....	33.40
39. North Dakota.....	33.26
40. Connecticut.....	33.26
41. South Dakota.....	32.43
42. Nebraska.....	30.80
43. Iowa.....	30.54
44. Utah.....	30.06
45. Minnesota.....	30.06
46. Maine.....	28.41
47. Vermont.....	27.86
48. Idaho.....	27.82
49. New Hampshire.....	25.42
50. Wyoming.....	24.49

Marshall County Court News

LAND TRANSFERS

Grantor: Denise C. Herout, Kenneth E. Herout. Grantee: Raymond Graham, Erin Myers. Lake Wildwood Development Lot 1229, Lot 1230. Warranty Deed.

Grantor: Alan D. Sunken, Rhonda J. Sunken. Grantee: Nancy J. Breyne. Section 22, Township 30N, Range 1E, Govt Lot--NW, Notes Pt. N 1/2 Ex Pt. Section 15, 30N, 1E, --SW, Notes W 1/2. Quit Claim Deed.

Grantor: Nancy J. Breyne, Rhonda J. Sunken. Grantee: Alan D. Sunken. Section 10, Township 29N, Range 1E, Govt Lot --NE, Notes S 1/2. Section 10, 29N, 1E, -NW-NE. Quit Claim Deed.

Grantor: Nancy J. Breyne, Alan D. Sunken. Grantee: Rhonda J. Sunken. Section 29, Township 30N, Range 1E, Govt Lot--NE, Notes E 1/2, W 1/2. Quit Claim Deed.

Grantor: David C. Lenz, Louis A Lenz III Tr. Grantee: RV Investments LLC. Section 17, Township 30N, Range 2W, Govt Lot --NW, Notes W 1/2. Section 17, 30N, 2W,

--NE-SW. Warranty Deed.

Grantor: Darrah Easton, Zachary Easton. Grantee: Christina L. Sunken, Jeffery Shane Sunken. Subdivision Fowlers Add Lot 2, Notes O/L. Quit Claim Deed.

Grantor: Christina L. Sunken, Jeffery Shane Sunken. Grantee: Darrah Easton, Zachary Easton. Fowlers Add Lot 2, Notes O/L. Quit Claim Deed.

Grantor: Darrah Easton, Zachary Easton. Grantee: Elizabeth M. Nass, Sabastian W. Nass. Fowlers

Add, Lot 2, Notes O/L. Quit Claim Deed.

Grantor: Elizabeth M. Nass, Sabastian W.E. Nass. Grantee: Darrah Easton, Zachary Easton. Fowlers Add, Lot 2, Notes O/L. Quit Claim Deed.

Grantor: Darrah Easton, Zachary Easton. Grantee: Craig R. Meyer, Cynthia S. Meyer. Fowlers Add, Lot 2, Notes O/L. Quit Claim Deed.

Grantor: Linda Feicki, Kelly (Continued On Page 45)

Toluca Public Library Hosts "Its For The Birds: Spring Art Show" Featuring Bird Houses

The Toluca Public Library District is inviting community members of all ages to participate in its 2026 Spring Art Show, "It's For The Birds."

Participants will receive a birdhouse to create an original, family-friendly design. The birdhouse can be colored, painted, or covered with an unexpected material to make it unique. Spring Art Kits can be

picked up at the library from March 1-30, 2026, and completed projects should be returned by March 31.

The birdhouses will be displayed at the library from April 1st to the 30th, 2026, with artwork grouped by age. Projects should be picked up by May 5

The library staff look forward to showcasing the community's creativity this spring.

GriefShare Program Begins Tuesday, March 3 At The Henry United Presbyterian Church

Presbyterian Church, whichever is more convenient for you. You can begin at any time if you miss the first of the sessions.

For more information contact Connie, 309-238-0432, Ida, 815-481-2403; Jonathan 815- 866-0020; or Adelaide, 309-364-2556, Lois, 309-364-3180. You can go online to GriefShare.com for more information and/or register for the session. A small fee of \$20 includes a workbook. Scholarships are available for the workbook.

The church is handicap assessable.

The first meeting is Tuesday, March 3, from 1:30 to 3:30 or 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. at the Henry United

WE ARE ONLINE

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Toluca Star Herald simply log on to: www.lacon-homejournal.com to sign up.



SUNDAY, MARCH 8

It's been a long winter, but one of the first rites of spring will be upon us this weekend. It's time to turn those clocks ahead and get that extra hour of daylight in the evening. Before you go to bed on Saturday night, turn your clocks ahead one hour. Daylight savings time officially starts at 2:00 a.m. on Sunday, March 8th.