

Midland Approves Surplus Budget Of \$9.8 Million

by MJ Langner

The Midland School Board was presented with a balanced tentative budget at their meeting on Wednesday, July 9th. Superintendent Jeremy Gauwitz presented a tentative budget presentation to the board, showing a decrease in spending of approximately \$170,000 from last year.

Overall, for the operating funds, which include Educational, Operations, Transportation and Working Cash, the revenues are expected to come in at just under \$9.8 million, with expenditures estimated at slightly less than \$8.9 million.

When it comes to some of the other funds, like the Municipal/Retirement/Social Security, along with Tort and Fire Prevention, the district has not levied as highly for them in an effort to spend down larger fund balances.

A big savings for the district Gauwitz highlighted is the switch from Arbor Foods to running their own food service. The total spent with Arbor was approximately \$500,000 and the district has spent \$175,000 less.

In his presentation, Gauwitz stated, "This yields a healthy operational surplus of \$1,008,931 across operating funds, positioning the district to maintain strong physical and academic infrastructure moving forward."

The budget has to sit and be made available for viewing for 30 days prior to being approved by the board.

The board also discussed the possible installation of a track base at the high school school by Potter and Sons Blacktopping. Gauwitz told the board this was a follow up to a discussion held at a previous board meeting, regarding moving all outdoor sports for the district to the high school. In order to get the installation accomplished in time for the spring middle school track season, Gauwitz had to be added to

a list. The district was added to Potter and Sons list with installation set for early August should the board approve.

But the installation won't come easy. The board was told this would not be a simple matter of having Potter and Sons come in and lay the base, but will require a surveyor to ensure the location and size of the track is correct. It also means that the existing concrete curbs will have to be removed and there is possible removal and trimming of several trees.

The board was hesitant to approve the \$150,000 cost of the base without knowing what the costs of the other items mentioned would be. And some also questioned why the district might spend so much on a sport they already co-op with Henry for. Midland does co-op with Henry-Senachwine for high school track and field, but has their own team for middle school track.

Ryan Weber said that despite having a co-op agreement, the middle school track is inadequate for the team and this would benefit them.

The middle school track team doesn't have a regulation track to practice on and upgrading the existing dirt track at the high school will give them one. Additionally, the track area can be an eyesore, especially as weeds increase.

This proposed action item would just include the base of the track, not the top coat that is seen on competition tracks. The cost of the top coat Gauwitz said would cost much more, but could be something the district does down the line.

Other questions arose, with Darrell Meffert asking what the ultimate goal is for the area. He said if it comes down to fixing an eye sore and improving the

look of the grounds, there are less expensive ways to do so. If the goal down the line is to have the full track, that could be used to host competitions, more planning and thought should be put into this.

Meffert added that starting a project without knowing the direction was something that made him nervous.

Ultimately the board opted not to go forward at this time, recognizing that far more planning was needed and more time. They did not think it was possible to survey the area, remove the curbs and trim trees in a matter of weeks and meet the early August installation timeline.

In other business, the board filled several positions at the meeting including hiring Chloe Bade as the middle school cheer coach. Bade was recently hired as a fifth grade teacher for the district after spending last year as a district substitute teacher.

The board also hired Sam Martin as the head coach of the high school softball team. Martin has been acting as assistant coach and is the head coach at the middle school. Lexi Shadday's employment as the high school assistant softball coach was also approved by the board.

The district has also found their new athletic director for the high school. Mark Sykes was hired by the district following last month's resignation by Lynn Jason. Sykes is a retired assistant athletic director and educator for DeKalb. His wife works for the district and he will be subbing at the high school a few days per week in addition to his duties as athletic director.

Lucille Knuckey will be taking on the position of NHS advisor at the high school and Christina Koch will move over from a bus transportation aide to a classroom aide at the elementary school.

On the other hand, Mississippi ranked 50th in terms of commuter safety with an average rush hour fatal crash rate of 6.07 per 100,000 residents and 178.8 average annual crashes.

South Carolina, Arkansas, New Mexico and South Carolina. Each state had an average of fewer than 250 annual crashes.

"Illinois's rush-hour fatal crash rate is more than twice as low as South Carolina's and New Mexico's, nearly two and a half times lower than Arkansas's, and almost three times lower than Mississippi's," the report read.

South Carolina had an average annual fatal crash rate of 4.54 per 100,000 residents, followed by New Mexico with 4.66 and Arkansas with 5.16 per 100,000.

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Marshall Co. Sheriff's Office Announces Results Of The "July Fourth Traffic Enforcement" Detail

The Marshall County Sheriff's office announced the results of the "July Fourth Traffic Enforcement" detail. During the campaign, the Marshall County Sheriff's Office took the following actions: 25 hours of focused patrol, a total of 50 stops were conducted with 16 speeding citations issued, 13 petty or registration related citations issued, 1 distracted driving citation, and 1 arrest for driving revoked. Additional efforts by patrol Deputies resulted in 56 other traffic stops during this period.

The Marshall County Sheriff's Office joined forces with more than 200 other state and local law

enforcement agencies conducting the crackdown, which featured high-visibility enforcement combined with a variety of outreach activities including a media campaign.

The Illinois Independence Day enforcement campaign is funded with federal highway safety dollars administered by the Illinois Department of Transportation and supported by the Illinois State Police and local law enforcement agencies across the state. It's reinforced with IDOT's "It's Not a Game" media campaign, which shares real stories of Illinois residents lost in fatal crashes.

Discover The Fascinating World Of Illinois Bats At Program At The Lacon Public Library Aug. 3

The public is invited to learn more about one of Illinois' most misunderstood and important wildlife groups during Battastic Illinois!, an engaging educational program scheduled for August 3, 2026, from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. at the Lacon Public Library (205 6th St, Lacon, IL 61540).

Bats may be creatures of the night, but their impact on Illinois ecosystems is anything but hidden. This program will introduce participants to the bat species found in Illinois, highlighting their unique life histories, behaviors, and the essential services they provide. In addition to learning what makes bats so remarkable, attendees will explore the challenges these mam-

mals face today.

The session will also highlight current citizen science efforts that allow individuals to support bat conservation efforts in Illinois. From reporting bat sightings to participating in acoustic monitoring projects, participants will learn simple, meaningful ways to get involved.

To register, visit go.illinois.edu/BatLacon.

For questions or if you need an accommodation to participate, please contact Emily Hansen at emhansen@illinois.edu or 815-433-0707. Early requests are strongly encouraged to allow sufficient time to meet your access needs.

A Local Treasure In Marshall County

A little-known gem of American culture can be found at the Marshall County Historical Society and Museum in Lacon, Illinois. Though it may be unfamiliar to some residents, the museum offers a rich and engaging look at the history of homes, schools, work, and everyday life of Marshall County.

Visitors can explore two floors of exhibits that continue to grow and change as new artifacts are donated. Highlights include: A model schoolroom from the early 1900s, a Victorian parlor and bedroom, a vintage kitchen set as if dinner is ready to be served, a children's playroom filled with toys, games, dolls, and keepsakes that may spark childhood memories.

Another interesting display showcases early settler life and farm tools that show how the county was built. A variety of textiles of dresses, hats, shoes, uniforms plus

many unusual items difficult to identify. There are just too many displays to list.

Volunteers work tirelessly to maintain family histories, expand the Museum's collections and provide educational programs of the communities that make up Marshall County Illinois.

The Museum is open Tuesdays and Saturdays from 9:00 to noon and is handicap accessible.

Check out our new website at marshallcountiymuseum.org.



NOTICE

The Lacon Home Journal will have limited hours of 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. the week of July 13-17. We will be back to regular hours on Monday, July 20.

Taste Of Marshall Putnam Fair

Saturday, July 18th
10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Hunt Building- M-P Fairgrounds, Henry

Demonstrations

Charcuterie- 10 am
Flower Arranging- 10:30 am
Smoked Meats- 11 am

Style Show

11:30-12:30
The 505 • Midwest Farm Charm
Hippie Cowgirl- 5th St. Revivals

Cook Off Massages Dirty Sodas Vendors

Swag Bags For The First 50 Attending

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