

The Sidney Scoop

By Ann Rhoton
Phone 217-688-2812



Your correspondent was informed on Friday, April 3 that the Monday, April 6 Village of Sidney Board of Trustees meeting was postponed until Monday, April 13 so the next regular monthly meeting of the Village of Sidney Board of Trustees will take place on Monday, April 13 at 7:00 p.m. in the Sidney Community Building located at 211 East Main Street in Sidney. All monthly meetings, unless otherwise posted, are held in the Sidney Community Building meeting room.

The Sidney Spring Dumpster Day scheduled to take place on Saturday, April 11 from 7:00 - 11:00 a.m. at Witt Park is upon us at last. Some of the prohibited items are: tires, yard waste, paints, oils, chemicals, batteries, or electronics of any kind (televisions, computers, monitors, microwaves, etc.).

You must be a Sidney resident to participate. The Village of Sidney will verify that you are a Sidney resident so be prepared with an ID if they don't know you.

"The State of Illinois Woman's Christian Temperance Union" meeting will take place on Saturday, April 18 at 10:00 a.m. at the Coles County Memorial Airport located at 432 Airport Road, Mattoon, Illinois on Route 16 between Mattoon

and Charleston. A program will be presented by variety of speakers.

New members (men and women) are welcome and folks can call Vice President Marjorie Miller at (217) 202-4397 for more information.

The Sidney American Legion Post 433 will hold their next monthly meeting at the Post Home located at 221 South David Street in downtown Sidney on Monday, April 20 at 6:00 p.m. Prospective new members are always welcome and encouraged to attend and all monthly meetings, unless otherwise posted, are held at the Post Home.

The Sidney Lions Club will host their 67th annual donations accepted fish fry on Saturday, May 2 from 4:00 - 7:00 p.m. at the Sidney Community Building located at 211 East Main Street in Sidney.

Alaskan pollock with all the fixings, pork and beans, coleslaw, potato salad, desert, and more are on the menu. Proceeds from the fish fry go toward Sidney Lions Club college scholarships and their eye glasses program.

The Sidney Lions Club will also be giving the community an opportunity to purchase Sidney Lions Club 2026 Christmas Cash - New Year's Dash raffle tickets at their fish fry. Tickets

are \$10.00 each and can be purchased at the fish fry from Sidney Lions Club President Bill Hensch, or from any Sidney Lions Club member.

The inaugural Sidney Spring Fling event brought to you by The Goose & The Gander, LLC and the Sidney Improvement Group will take place on South David Street in downtown Sidney on Saturday, May 9 from 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. The event will take place the day before Mother's Day so vendors will focus on gifts for Mom and more.

Anyone interested in being a vendor can visit The Goose & The Gander, LLC website at <https://www.tgandtg.com/> for more information and for a vendor contract form or reach out to Brett Franzen at The Goose & The Gander, LLC at (217) 530-5696 or by email at tgandtgllc@gmail.com with questions concerning the event.

Have a great week!
If you or your organization have news items you want published drop a line to Ann Rhoton at P. O. Box 491, Sidney, IL 61877 or call (217) 688-2812 between 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Don't hesitate to leave a message if there's no answer.

News items must be turned in by 10:00 a.m. each Friday to be published in the following week's paper.

Final 4 local ties: Cheerleader Cameran Hansen

A cheerleader with ties to her hometown of Tolono is coming off a stellar season with the Fighting Illini Basketball Team coming off their Final 4 game on April 4th in Indianapolis. Cameran Hansen graduated from Unity High School in 2022 and will be graduating from the University of Illinois in 2026 then going into their Master's program. More memorable moments on the cheering squad came with the past few women's basketball seasons and the last two bowl game appearances for U of I football! Reflecting on past influences at Top Star Academy, former coaches Steve Dale and Melody Dreger come to mind with owner Stephanie Denby helping her decide to train to be a "flyer". As a mentor in the Athlete to Athlete program and assistant coach at Unity for their refreshed Cheer program, her mother, Amy Hanson can remember her being a baby in her orange and blue uniform in 2005 during the "March to the Arch" run in the last Final 4 experience! Grateful for the opportunity to be part of such an exciting season, Cam has been a great support as we all watched Coach Brad Underwood and his team do so well with their 28-9 season that came to a close with a 71-62 loss to Connecticut in the national semifinals.

Rocket Nation

By Diane Ducy



Cameran Hansen

Infrastructure

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Pending rail merger

Farmers and ag groups also are watching the proposed \$85 billion merger between Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern, which could significantly alter rail competition, shipping costs and service reliability for agricultural shippers if approved by federal regulators.

The railroads have informed the Surface Transportation Board (STB) they intend to file a revised merger application on April 30 following the STB's rejection of the railroads' initial merger application for being incomplete.

The deal would create the nation's first coast-to-coast freight railroad. The board could make a decision by 2027.

In 2023 alone, US railroads carried more than 80 million tons of corn, much of it originating in the Midwest and Northern Plains and moving toward coastal ports or major processing hubs.

Mexico is the top export market for U.S. corn. About two-thirds of the grain the US ships to Mexico moves by rail. Disruptions in rail transport to Mexico could erode the US's proximity advantage, cause storage backups and weaken basis.

"For agriculture and rural America, the central question is not whether railroads could operate a larger network, but how further concentration

would affect pricing power, service reliability and accountability in markets where shippers already have limited alternatives," American Farm Bureau Federation Economist Daniel Munch wrote in a recent Market Intel.

When rail rates rise, farmers have limited ability to offset the increase, Munch wrote. Commodity prices are set in global markets; input costs are largely fixed in the short run and production decisions cannot be easily adjusted after harvest. As a result, higher rail rates will be absorbed directly into farm margins.

"The risk of the UP-NS merger is clear. It would leave farmers more dependent on fewer railroads at a time when they already have almost no ability to walk away from higher costs or poor service," Munch said.

— **Rhiannon Branch contributed to this story**
This story was distributed through a cooperative project between Illinois Farm Bureau and the Illinois Press Association. For more food and farming news, visit FarmWeekNow.com.

PUBLIC NOTICE

LEGAL NOTICE - INVITATION TO BID
Heritage Community Unit School District #8 is accepting sealed bids for Health Life Safety (HLS) Fire Alarm System Improvements at Heritage High School and Heritage Elementary/Junior High School.

The project consists of electrical and fire alarm system upgrades in accordance with the District's Health Life Safety Survey, including but not limited to installation of smoke detectors, heat detectors, pull stations, horn/strobes, control panel upgrades, and system testing and commissioning.

Work will occur at:
• Heritage High School, Broadlands, Illinois
• Heritage Elementary/Junior High School, Homer, Illinois

Sealed bids will be received until April 13, 2026, at 10:00 a.m., at the District Office, 512 W. First Street, Homer, Illinois 61849, at which time bids will be publicly opened and read aloud.

Bid documents and specifications will be available beginning April 8, 2026, at the District Office located at 512 W. First Street, Homer, Illinois 61849. Any questions may be addressed to Dr. Kimberly Norton at norton.kimberly@heritage8.org. All bids must be submitted in a sealed envelope clearly marked: "HLS Fire Alarm Improvements Bid - Heritage CUSD #8"

Bidders are responsible for compliance with all applicable laws, codes, and regulations.

The Board of Education reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any informalities in the bidding process, and to accept the bid deemed most advantageous to the District.

Published by order of the Board of Education, Heritage CUSD #8.
published 04/08/2026



Many native wildflowers known as "Spring ephemerals" are blooming, and more are on the way.

The purple flowers of common violets (*Viola sororia*) are still blooming. So are the 5-petal star-shaped flowers of the Eastern Spring Beauty (*Claytonia virginica*). Both are native plants that can naturalize in lawns. Generally speaking, violets need no encouragement. They can stay in my lawn, but not in my garden beds. Stands of Spring Beauties in lawns can be encouraged by putting off mowing over them until the seeds are ripe, which is some time around Mother's Day.

Virginia Bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*) are blooming. Trout lilies are blooming.

And now, the Eastern Redbuds (*Cercis canadensis*) are joining in.

Among our non-native interlopers, some of the most widely-despised lawn weeds in these parts are also blooming. Dandelions

(*Taraxacum officinale*) are blooming. After blooming and going to seed, they become quiescent, and remain fairly inconspicuous. To me they are merely a nuisance. I've gotten them down to a low enough level that I can simply dig them out as they give away their positions by blooming. My principal objections to their presence are that they wage chemical warfare against other plants, and their taproots serve as winter homes for aphids. In its native Europe, it was long valued for providing some of the first fresh greens people had seen for months, heralding the end of the privations of Lent.

Creeping Charlie is also blooming. Its flowers are differently-shaped than violets, and their color is also slightly different. Its scallop-shaped leaves are also easy to spot - especially early on, when they are green but the lawn isn't. It is much more invasive than dandelions, sending runners over the

ground which take root at any leaf node that touches the ground. Any plant parts cut off by mowing that subsequently touch the ground, can also take root. It can cover open areas with incredible speed. Once established, it is difficult to control in lawns. It can, however, be ripped out of open areas fairly easily. And it is well to do so, because it promotes rot in plants inundated by its green tide. Irises are usually considered to be tough as nails, but being swaddled in Creeping Charlie can kill them in short order.

The first yellow flower of mock strawberry (*Potentilla indica* AKA *Duchesnea indica*) for the year has appeared in my lawn. There were plenty of them this year that never got the chance. This alien perennial plant, sold as a ground cover, is invasive, spreading over the ground like Creeping Charlie, taking root at nodes. It is tough to dig out. Its berries are unpalatable. It also harbors rusts, fungi which harm many plants, especially in the rose family - roses, strawberries, raspberries, and blackberries, for example.

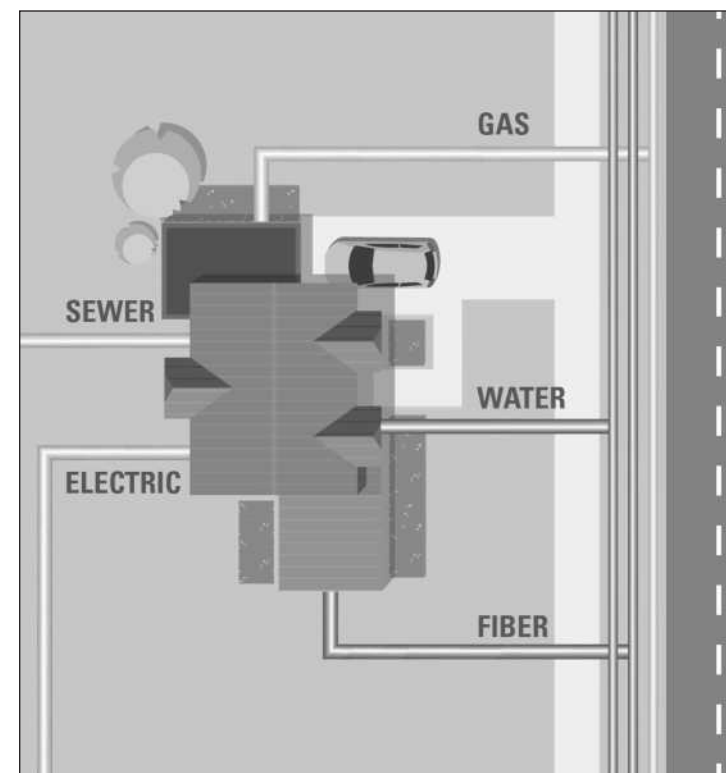
The flowers of purple dead nettle (*Lamium purpurea*) are creating a purple haze along the edges of farm

fields. Henbit (*Lamium amplexicaule*) is also blooming. These undesirable aliens at least are annuals, and can be controlled in residential areas by thorough weeding.

The on-deck circle of our undesirable alien plants includes garlic mustard and asiatic bush honeysuckles. Garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*) is a biennial which in its second year sends up a flower stalk with scalloped leaves topped by small 4-petal white flowers. They overwhelm woodland flower areas and wage chemical warfare that suppresses the native flowers and soil organism. This plant should be yanked at any opportunity.

Asiatic bush honeysuckles cast so much shade they suppress native woodland flowers. Cutting them down won't kill them, but if it's done around blooming time, it may keep them from flowering that year, preventing their further spread. And it will definitely allow more light to reach the ground, which will revive long-dormant natives. The stumps can be dealt with later.

By the time you read this, Easter will have come and gone. I hope you had a happy one.



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PUBLIC NOTICE

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN

To the legal voters, residents of the Town of Tolono in the County of Champaign and the State of Illinois, that the Annual Town Meeting of said Town will take place on Tuesday April 14, 2026, Being the second Tuesday of said month at the hour of 6:30 P.M. at Tolono Township Shed, 1081 CR 900N, Tolono IL, for the transaction of miscellaneous business of the said town, and after a Moderator having been elected, will proceed to hear and consider reports of officers, and decide on such matters as may, in pursuance of law, come before the meeting, and especially to consider and decide the following:

Pledge of Allegiance
Call Meeting to Order
Call for nominations for Moderator
Election of Moderator
Read and approve minutes from previous town meeting
Read the Supervisor's Annual Financial Statement
New Business
Discuss/Vote on allowing alcohol in Tolono Township Hall
Adjournment
Dated March 23, 2026

Tolono Township Clerk,
Doug Stierwalt
published 04/08/2026