

Turner increase awareness of work incentives

State Senator Doris Turner is leading a measure to increase awareness of work incentives for students with a disability by requiring schools to share informational materials with parents and guardians. “Students with disabilities deserve to know the career options that are available to them,” said Turner (D-Springfield). “We have to ensure families and students have the support to guide the journey to work and greater independence.” The Work Incentives Planning and Assistance program is a federally funded initiative created to help individuals receiving Social Security Disability Insurance and/or Supplemental Security Income make informed choices about employment. House Bill 4581 would require informational materials on the Work Incentives Planning and Assistance program to be provided to a student and the student’s parent or guardian at both the initial transition planning meeting

convened for a student with a disability by the school district and during the student’s final year in high school. Turner’s measure specifies that school districts would be required to collaborate with the Work Incentives Planning and Assistance program servicing their area to determine the process of obtaining and disseminating informational materials. There are three active cooperative agreements in place for eligible beneficiaries who are residents of Illinois, including Volunteers of America of Illinois, Disability Rights Iowa and the Illinois Assistive Technology Program. “By providing more information on employment opportunities for students with disabilities, we are opening a door to build a strong career plan,” said Turner. “We need to set students up for future success in the workforce, no matter their disability.” House Bill 4581 passed the Senate Education Committee.

Route 66 Recharged Electric Journey along the Mother Road

Route 66 Recharged, a 2,400-mile, 100% electric expedition along America’s historic Mother Road, has been officially designated a Route 66 Centennial project, recognizing its role in celebrating Route 66’s past while showcasing its sustainable future for the next generation of travelers. Led by Patrick Anderson and Liv Leigh of The Electric Duo, a leading electric vehicle YouTube channel, the project will document a cross-country journey in an electric vehicle while highlighting the evolving accessibility of Route 66 for modern transportation. The initiative serves as a bridge between the road’s storied legacy and its emerging role in sustainable tourism. “We are deeply honored to be a part of the Route 66 Centennial, and we approach this electric journey with immense reverence for the storied history of this iconic highway,” said Patrick. “The current state of EV charging across the country

means the Mother Road is fully ready for the next generation, allowing us to focus on the living legacies along the journey. We’re thrilled to show that the spirit of exploration on Route 66 is more vibrant and accessible than ever, proving that you can respect the past while driving toward a cleaner future.” Throughout the expedition, Route 66 Recharged will produce a seven-part YouTube video series and ongoing social media content featuring iconic landmarks, local businesses, historic attractions, and the expanding EV charging infrastructure that now supports long-distance electric travel. The project will also host community meetups along the route, engaging with fans, travelers, and local communities. Aligned with the Route 66 Centennial strategy, the initiative supports both celebrating and honoring the highway’s history and generating tourism demand among the rapidly

growing population of electric vehicle drivers. By demonstrating that Route 66 is fully accessible to electric vehicles, the project aims to strengthen economic opportunity for small towns, historic businesses, and roadside attractions across all eight states. “Route 66 has always represented innovation, movement, and the American spirit of exploration. Route 66 Recharged is a powerful example of how the Mother Road continues to evolve,” said Bill Thomas, Chair of the Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership and Commissioner for the Route 66 Centennial Commission. “By showcasing electric travel across the entire corridor, this project connects the road’s historic legacy with its sustainable future while encouraging new generations to experience Route 66 firsthand.” For more information about Route 66 Recharged, visit, theelectricduo.com.

Illinois turkey hunters set new record for spring

The numbers are in, proving that this year’s Spring wild turkey hunting season has been one for the books, with harvest numbers reaching a record high statewide. Illinois hunters harvested a preliminary record total of 20,821 wild turkeys during the 2026 spring turkey season, surpassing the previous record of 18,189 birds harvested in 2025. Here in Macoupin County there were 356 turkeys harvested this spring, up slightly from last year’s 350. The top counties for turkey harvest during the 2026 season were Jefferson and Jo Daviess counties, tied with 646 birds harvested; followed by Marion, 530; Pike, 525; and Wayne, 464.

Across Illinois, hunters purchased 94,704 permits this year compared to 89,580 in 2025. The state also recorded a youth spring turkey season harvest of 2,326 birds, compared to 2,099 last year. A total of 70,158 individual hunters purchased permits for the 2026 spring turkey season. Spring turkey hunting was open in 100 of Illinois’ 102 counties during the 2026 season.

Ticks and Mosquitoes and Bats, Oh My!

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) is reminding Illinoisans that warmer weather means an increased potential for exposure to several illnesses that can be carried by animals or biting pests. While enjoying outdoor activities, people should take appropriate precautions to reduce their risk of contracting serious illness. “Spring and summer provide so many opportunities for outdoor fun all across Illinois,” said IDPH Director Dr. Sameer Vohra. “It is important to remember that some common biting pests and animals may be carrying disease that can cause serious human illnesses. Illinois residents should take precautions like wearing bug repellent and vaccinating their pets against rabies, among other measures, to keep themselves and their communities healthy and safe.” There are three main categories of concern this time of year: **Mosquitoes and West Nile Virus** Each year, IDPH and local health departments test mosquito samples for the presence of West Nile virus. The first positive mosquito batches for 2026 were recently found in Cook County. While no human cases have been reported so far this year, in 2025 there were 150 total human cases and ten fatalities across Illinois. West Nile virus is transmitted through the bite of a Culex mosquito, commonly called a house mosquito, that has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. Common symptoms include fever, nausea, headache

and muscle aches. Symptoms may last from a few days to a few weeks. Most people infected with West Nile virus will not show any symptoms; however, in rare cases it can lead to severe illness including paralysis, meningitis or encephalitis (i.e. brain and nerve infections), or even death. People older than 60 and those with weakened immune systems are at highest risk for severe illness. IDPH urges the public to Fight the Bite by practicing the three “R’s” – reduce, repel, and report:

- **REDUCE** - make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or other openings. Try to keep doors and windows shut.
- Eliminate, or refresh each week, all sources of standing water where mosquitoes can breed, including water in bird baths, ponds, flowerpots, wading pools, old tires, and any other containers.
- **REPEL** - when outdoors, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a light-colored, long-sleeved shirt, and apply an EPA-registered insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, IR 3535, para-menthane-diol (PMD), or 2-undecanone according to label instructions. Consult a physician before using repellents on infants.
- **REPORT** – report locations where you see water sitting stagnant for more than a week such as roadside ditches, flooded yards, and similar locations that may produce mosquitoes. The local health department or city government

may be able to add larvicide to the water to remove mosquito larvae. You can learn more on the IDPH website at West Nile Virus (WNV). **Tickborne Illness** Ticks can spread a number of potentially serious illnesses, including Lyme disease, spotted fever group rickettsiosis, ehrlichiosis, and others. Last year, the first confirmed case of Powassan virus, a potentially deadly illness, was diagnosed in an Illinois resident, although it is unclear if the case was contracted within the state. The best protective measure against tickborne illness is preventing tick bites, no matter what state you are in. IDPH has created an interactive Tickborne Disease Dashboard that documents the counties in Illinois where different tick species have been confirmed as well as the diseases they may carry. Additional tips for how to avoid tickborne illnesses are below:

- Walk in the center of trails. Avoid wooded, bushy areas with high grass and leaf litter. Our Camper Checklist provides more details on how to protect yourself.
- Wear light-colored clothing to make ticks easier to find. Tuck long pants into socks and boots.
- Apply an EPA-registered insect repellent containing 20% DEET, picaridin, IR3535, or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus according to label directions. The EPA has a search tool that can help you find the product that

best suits your needs.

- Conduct full-body tick checks on family members (underarms, ears, belly button, behind knees, between legs, waist, hair and scalp) every two to three hours. Also check any gear or pets taken on outings. Talk to your veterinarian about how to best protect your pet from ticks.
- To kill ticks after being outdoors, put clothes in the dryer on high for 10 minutes (or one hour for damp clothes).
- Bathe or shower within two hours after coming indoors. Many tickborne diseases can have similar signs and symptoms. If you get a tick bite and develop fever, chills, headache, muscle aches, joint pain, fatigue, or rash, within a few weeks, see your healthcare provider.
- It is often helpful to keep the tick for species identification. Place the tick in rubbing alcohol or in a sealed bag/container to bring to your healthcare provider or local health department for submission to IDPH for species identification. A submission form can be found on the IDPH website. More information is available on the IDPH website at Tickborne Illnesses. **Rabies in Bats** IDPH also tracks cases of rabies in animals. The disease is most commonly found in bats; so far in 2026, two bats have tested positive for rabies, one in Whiteside County, the other in Sangamon County. The greatest risk of exposure comes from bats that make their way into people’s homes.

The IDPH website has information on steps you can take to keep bats out of your home at Bats and Bat Exclusion. If a bat is found inside a home, try and cover it with a container and contact animal control so it can be tested for rabies. Illinois residents should also make sure that rabies vaccinations are up to date for pets and any valuable livestock and horses for which a rabies vaccine is available. If a pet is exposed to a high-risk wild animal – such as a bat, skunk, raccoons, fox or coyote – pet owners should immediately contact a veterinarian for advice. People can get rabies after being bitten by an infected animal or when saliva from a rabid animal gets directly into a person’s eyes, nose, mouth, or a wound. Bats have very small teeth making their bite marks hard to see. If you find yourself in close proximity to a bat, do not kill or release the bat before calling your local health department to help determine if you could have been exposed to rabies and need preventive treatment. If the bat is available for testing and test results are negative, preventive treatment is not needed. People may also need rabies preventive treatment after bites from untested skunks, raccoons, fox or coyotes. If you have been bitten by any animal, seek immediate medical attention. Bite wounds can become infected and if the animal is high risk for rabies, preventive treatment must begin quickly. Learn more about Rabies on the IDPH website.



Illinois Valley Senior Citizens Menu

Carlinville 217-716-2337

Benld 217-835-3174

Monday, June 15 Mexican Chicken & Rice Casserole w/ Black Beans, California Vegetables, Tropical Fruit

Tuesday, June 16 Sausage Patties, Biscuits & Gravy, Potato Wedges, Carrots, Peaches

Wednesday, June 17 Hamburger, Bun, Baked Beans, Tater Tots, Plums, Cookies

Thursday, June 18 Chicken Fried Steak, Dinner Roll, Red Skinned Mashed Potatoes, Green Beans, Cake w/ Icing

Friday, June 19 CLOSED

Meal reservations must be made by 11:00 a.m. on the day BEFORE you wish to receive a meal.

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