

Stay Alert for Crews, Heavy Equipment as Peak Roadside Mowing Period Begins

Busiest schedule timed to help the environment, agribusiness

With peak roadside mowing season underway, the Illinois Department of Transportation is reminding the public to slow down, proceed with caution and pay extra attention when encountering equipment and personnel. In keeping with the recent practice of timing operations to preserve and promote pollinator habitat, the heaviest mowing period will continue until Aug. 15.

“You’ll see our mowing crews throughout the entire state so please remember to give them room to do their jobs safely,” said Illinois Transportation

Secretary Gia Biagi. “Our top priorities are protecting our workers, the public and the environment.”

During the summer, IDOT conducts two primary types of mowing. Safety mowing occurs directly adjacent to the road as needed. Maintenance mowing, which lasts for approximately six weeks and starts around July 1, includes areas next to culverts, ditches, traffic control devices and other structures, while following the Illinois Monarch Project Mowing Guidelines for Pollinators, protecting as much habitat and nectar resources as possible.

The mowing schedule helps to minimize the impact on the traveling public and encourage pollinator activity, which assists in the reproduction of

flowers, fruits and vegetables that are essential to the state’s ecosystem and agricultural economy. Reducing the amount of land maintained and growing pollinator habitat also protects the endangered rusty patched bumble bee and the monarch butterfly, the official state insect of Illinois.

To view a short video about IDOT’s mowing schedules and its work with pollinators, click here or visit IDOT’s YouTube channel.

In 2020, IDOT joined in the launch of the Illinois Monarch Action Plan as part of the Illinois Monarch Project, a collaborative effort with local and state partners to help ensure the survival and successful migration of monarchs by increasing and protecting habitat.

Red Cross Issues Advice to Stay Safe During Extreme Heat

Heat can be dangerous for anyone. Stay hydrated, stay cool and stay connected

Experts are warning that dangerously high temperatures are headed to the Illinois Region over the follow days. The American Red Cross of Illinois urges everyone to take three critical actions to stay safe:

- 1. Stay hydrated** by drinking a cup of water every 20 minutes, even if you don’t feel thirsty. Avoid sugary, caffeinated and alcoholic drinks.
- 2. Stay cool** by spending time in air-conditioned places. If your home is too hot, go to a mall, library or cooling center.
- 3. Stay connected** by checking on others and asking for help if you need it. Make sure pets have access to fresh water and shade.

“Knowing what to do to protect yourself and loved ones from extreme heat can save lives,” said Kellie O’Connell, CEO of the Illinois Red Cross. “We’re asking everyone to check on friends and neighbors, especially older adults, people with chronic conditions, outdoor workers and athletes. You could make all the difference by sending a text, making a call or knocking on their door.”

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO

Remind everyone to drink water, even if they don’t feel thirsty. Aim for a cup of water every hour and encourage people to avoid

sugary, caffeinated, or alcoholic drinks. Babies should be breast-fed or bottle-fed often. Fewer wet diapers or darker urine can be signs of dehydration.

Encourage athletes and outdoor workers to take breaks in the shade. They should drink a cup of water — or a sports drink — every 20 minutes.

Help those without air conditioning find a safe place to go like a mall, library, or cooling center. They can also take cool showers or baths to help cool off. Remind people to wear lightweight, loose-fitting clothes in light colors.

Never leave a child or pet alone inside a parked car, and make sure pets have access to fresh water and shade.

HEAT ILLNESS SIGNS

Anyone can become ill during extreme heat if their body can’t cool down properly. It’s critical to act fast as some types of heat illness can be deadly.

Heat cramps are signaled by heavy sweating and muscle pain. Take action by stopping what you’re doing, resting in a cool place and drinking a cup of water — or a sports drink — every 20 minutes. If you feel sick to your stomach, pause drinking. Get medical help if cramps last more than two hours or you have heart problems.

Heat exhaustion is signaled by heavy sweating, weakness, cool and clammy skin, muscle cramps, dizziness, fainting, nausea, or vomiting. Take action by

stopping what you’re doing, resting in a cool place and drinking a cup of water — or a sports drink — every 20 minutes. Loosen your clothes and place a cool wet cloth on your body. Get medical help if you’re vomiting, don’t feel better in an hour, or if you have heart or kidney problems.

Heat stroke is a deadly condition signaled by high body temperature, rapid heartbeat, confusion, headache, dizziness, fainting, nausea, or vomiting. Call 911. Move to a cooler place, remove extra clothing and use a wet cloth or a cool bath to cool down. If possible, sip a sports drink or water.

IF THE POWER GOES OUT

When a heat wave and a power outage happen at the same time, it can be even more dangerous. Stay in air conditioning either at home or at a mall, library or cooling center. Keep an ice-filled cooler stocked with food, water, and medicine, so that they don’t spoil. More information is available here.

Finally, download the free Red Cross First Aid app so you’ll know what to do if emergency help is delayed and the free Emergency app for real-time weather alerts and heat safety information. Content is available in English and Spanish with an easy-to-find language selector. Find both apps in smartphone app stores by searching for the American Red Cross or going to redcross.org/apps.

All Children Across Illinois to Receive Blood Lead Testing

Edited By MELISSA LYNN
Enquirer~Democrat Reporter

The Illinois Department of Public Health launched a new initiative to identify children across Illinois who have been exposed to lead and may need health interventions.

The agency’s Childhood Lead Program, taking effect July 1, expands blood lead testing to all Illinois children. The program is the result of a years-long effort to expand the number of children who receive such testing to identify those at risk.

“There is no safe level of lead in the blood,” said IDPH Director Dr. Sameer Vohra. “Through our Childhood Lead Program,

IDPH has identified thousands of children who have been exposed to lead, allowing for early intervention to address negative health effects and implementation of efforts to limit further exposure. With this move to universal childhood blood lead testing, IDPH is taking another step towards protecting the health and safety of Illinois’ youngest residents.”

Previously, Illinois required lead testing only for children living in high-risk ZIP codes. Under the new standard, all Illinois children are to be tested automatically at 12 and 24 months. All children ages six and younger are required to be assessed for lead exposure

through a questionnaire administered by a health care provider.

Under Illinois law, blood tests showing lead levels above 3.5 micrograms per deciliter (µg/dL) require a public health intervention. The health intervention includes a home inspection to determine the source of the lead contamination. If lead is found, the inspector works with the resident to eliminate the lead. In addition, a public health nurse will provide education on reducing exposure.

Lead exposure can damage the brain and nervous system, slow growth, and cause developmental, behavioral, and learning difficulties.

America’s 250th Fourth of July Celebration in Litchfield

Edited By MELISSA LYNN
Enquirer~Democrat Reporter

The City of Litchfield is inviting the community to its America’s 250th Fourth of July celebration with food, live music, a kids foam and bubble party, and a fireworks display on Saturday, July 4, at Lake Lou Yaeger.

The celebration will kick off at 5 p.m. in the upper parking lot by the lake shed at Marina 1, located at 4943 Beach House Trail. A varitety of food and beverage vendors will be available including ShugSmoke Shack with smoked brisket and pulled pork; Little Dicky’s with tacos, salsas, and chips; the Litchfield VFW serving ribeye

sandwiches, brats, pork burgers, and hot dogs; and Sweet P’s Shakeups with paninis, mini donuts, and icy shakeups available in a variety of flavors. Eads Treats will also be on the lower parking level serving shaved ice with a wide selection of flavors.

Live music by Griffin and the Gargoyles will take stage from 7 p.m. until 9:30 p.m. The band is known for playing a variety of music including classic rock, 80s retro, hip hop and dance, pop, alternative, funk, R&B, disco, standards and swing, country, and oldies.

Foam & Flight is bringing their ultimate Foam and Bubble Party to the upper level parking area from 6:30 p.m.

until 9 p.m. During the final 30 minutes, the party will transform to glow in the dark. A portion of the proceeds from the activity will benefit United Cerebral Palsy.

The evening will conclude with a fireworks display beginning at 9:30 p.m. The show can be viewed from the parking lots, the area near the dam, or the cleared area behind the pavilion at Picnic Area 3.

Admission is free. Accessible parking for vehicles displaying a handicapped parking tag will be available in the upper parking lot. All other parking for the event will be in the two lower lots. For more information, call the Litchfield Tourism Office at 217-324-8147.

Celebrating The Mother Road’s Centennial

To celebrate the 100th anniversary of historic U.S. Route 66, visitors at the Illinois State Museum’s new Route 66 exhibit in Springfield can earn free weekday admission to the 2026 Illinois State Fair, happening Aug. 13 through 23.

Each visitor to the Illinois State Museum’s “Miles of Memories: Stories of Route 66” exhibit can receive a voucher for one adult weekday admission to the Illinois State Fair. Vouchers will be collected at the fair entrance gates. Children ages 12 and under already receive free admission to the fair. The promotion runs until August 13th.

The Illinois State Museum’s “Miles of Memories: Stories of Route 66” exhibit celebrates the experience of living, working, and traveling along U.S. Route 66 during its heyday. The exhibit features Route 66 memorabilia as well as a Route 66 oral history project that consist of a collection of 100 interviews with people who

experienced the road when it served as a primary route between Chicago and Los Angeles.

This year’s state fair theme is “Miles of Smiles” to commemorate the Mother Road’s centennial. The Illinois State Fairgrounds sits along a leg of historic Route 66 and features the Route 66 Experience inside Gate 2.

“This summer, we’re excited to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Route 66 at the Illinois State Fair and

show visitors all that our great state has to offer,” said DCEO Director Kristin Richards. “From historic landmarks and roadside attractions to communities that continue to keep the Mother Road’s legacy alive, Route 66 offers unforgettable experiences for travelers of all ages.”

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Illinois Valley Senior Citizens Menu

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<u>Monday, July 6</u>	<u>Tuesday, July 7</u>	<u>Wednesday, July 8</u>	<u>Thursday, July 9</u>	<u>Friday, July 10</u>
BBQ Pork / Bun, Chickpeas, Brussel Sprouts, Apricots	Teriyaki Chicken, Rice Pilaf / Bread, Oriental Vegetables, Tropical Fruit	Chili w/ Ground Beef & Beans, All Beef Frank / Bun, Creamy Coleslaw, Peaches & Pears, Tapioca Pudding	Ham & Au Gratin Potato Casserole, Dinner Roll, Mixed Vegetables, Banana	Country Fried Steak, Bread, Mashed Potatoes / Country Gravy, Peas, Mandarin Oranges

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