



WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS

NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2024



JENNIFER BERTINO-TARRANT
WILL COUNTY EXECUTIVE

We're getting closer and closer to warm weather in Will County! As the signs of Spring fully blossom (and before the Cicada's make their noisy appearance), our local and state transportation agencies are also working to accelerate their efforts to improve the condition and safety of our vast road network.

There will be no shortage of construction projects this Spring and Summer, including large-scale improvements being made to Interstates, County Highways, and local roads. This includes the massive I-80 project, which is entering major new phases. With this increased activity, I'm asking all drivers to exercise extreme caution and follow posted work zone speed limits when driving through construction zones.

"Slow down and move over in construction zones." It is a crucial message as we start seeing orange and yellow signs and vests along our roadways. Construction crews are performing vital improvements and repairs to our roadways that will help improve the safety and comfort while commuting and driving around town, so let's make sure we are all a little more aware, especially around workers.

Together, we can make a pledge to drive cautiously and slow down in work zones. Simple precautions protect the safety of construction workers and other drivers, ensuring that everyone makes it home safe.

Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant
Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant | Will County Executive



Grants Available to Support Early Childhood Development

Will County is proud to allocate \$225,000 to licensed childcare providers as part of the Elevate Will County – Child Care Provider Grant initiative. This vital funding will help support Will County parents through allowing providers to improve and expand services while ensuring child care is accessible and affordable.

"Our childcare providers are one of the first experiences for our children," said Will County Executive Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant. "Investing in early childhood development is critical for ensuring positive long-term educational outcomes. This grant helps ensure that providers throughout the county have the resources they need to be successful."

Learn More At: willcountyillinois.org/child-care-grant



Will County Animal Protection Services Now Offering Adoptions

Will County Animal Protection Services (WCAPS) is now offering dog and cat adoptions!

The new adoption program allows residents to adopt pets directly through the department for the first time in agency history. This follows sweeping changes to Will County's animal welfare policies in response to a nationwide increase in animal shelter populations.

WCAPS has already connected four dogs and two cats with their new "forever homes" after launching the program. This includes their first adoption, Lucy, a St. Bernard puppy who was adopted by Toni Renken and her family of four. Toni serves as a Will County Assistant State's Attorney who met Lucy while helping WCAPS staff update county ordinances. Lucy is already adjusting to her new home and is now a certified therapy dog assisting the Will County State's Attorney's Office.

Keep an eye on the WCAPS PetFinder page for current pets available for adoption, and help spread the word so these precious pups and courageous cats can find a loving home!

Learn More At: petfinder.com/member/us/il/joliet/will-county-animal-protection-services-il1035





Will County Cuts Ribbon on New Children's Advocacy Center Facility

The Will County Children's Advocacy Center has moved into their new home in Crest Hill. County leadership cut the ribbon on the new facility at a celebration in early April, which serves as Child Abuse Prevention Month.

The new, larger space was remodeled to suite the needs of the important work of the CAC, empowering their amazing staff to provide relief to children in need. Congratulations to the Will County CAC and Will County State's Attorney James Glasgow on the new facility!



Volunteer Appreciation Month - Thank you, EMA Volunteers!

The dedicated volunteers at Will County's Emergency Management Agency (EMA) were celebrated throughout April as part of Volunteer Appreciation Month. Throughout 2023, these "unpaid professionals" contributed 6,300 hours of time to the organization and its various public safety missions throughout the county.

About 5,300 of these hours were worked by 21 volunteers who received a United States Presidential Service Award for their service. These volunteers, who worked 100 or more hours in 2023, were celebrated at the April meeting of the Will County Board. Additionally, all volunteers were recognized at the annual EMA Volunteer Appreciation Banquet last week.

Thank you so much to our wonderful EMA volunteers who continue to be a shining beacon of light in times of crisis and set an exemplary example for other EMA agencies across the state and country.

Interested in Volunteering?

Will County EMA is segmented into three areas volunteers can contribute: Field Services, Public Preparedness, and Search and Rescue. Volunteers are asked to donate between 5 to 20 hours of time a month for training, work activities, emergency response, and community outreach.

Learn More At: willcountyema.org/becomeavolunteer



Carving Up Creativity at Sunny Hill Nursing Home

The residents at Sunny Hill Nursing Home have a new ornamental fixture in their Sunshine patio! Instead of completely removing a dead tree from the courtyard, Bill Baker from Top Notch Chainsaw Carving helped turn the tree stump into a beautiful wood sculpture of five owls.

This beautiful new artwork will bring joy to residents who frequent the patio during the warmer months!



ARPA Spotlight

Will County allocated \$28.5 Million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to help support health and wellness programs in communities. The funds were distributed to nearly 60 organizations throughout the county to empower health and wellness initiatives.

Below is an update on how two of these organizations have utilized their ARPA funds to support this mission:

Indian Prairie Educational Foundation (\$6,875) - Indian Prairie School District was able to utilize ARPA funding to revive their biennial Free Cardiac Screening Program, which was discontinued during the pandemic. This program ensures that all high school students have the opportunity to have a potentially life-saving heart scan. In the winter and spring screening events of 2023, nearly five thousand students received heart screenings, resulting in diagnosed heart conditions in 32 students who have been advised to seek further testing with their personal physician.

Illinois Partners in Hope (\$684,750) - Due to increased needs in the community, Illinois Partners in Hope needed to purchase several essential items to enhance their operations and increase access to food throughout the county. They utilized their ARPA funding to purchase new essential equipment to deliver vital food supplies to partner pantries. This equipment is empowering them to serve over 40,000 individuals weekly, accept a higher amount of food donations, and distribute over 1,000,000 pounds of food annually.

Learn More At: willcountyillinois.org/dashboard