



WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS

NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2024



JENNIFER BERTINO-TARRANT
WILL COUNTY EXECUTIVE

As March comes to a close, I would like to take a moment to reflect on the importance of celebrating Women's History Month. This annual occurrence is an opportunity to spotlight significant contributions of women in history and to recognize women who are continuing to make an impact in our communities every day. It has been powerful to see celebrations of women throughout the county.

As an elected official in Will County, I'm proud to work with diverse leaders from all our communities. Having voices from multiple backgrounds and viewpoints in leadership positions strengthens all organizations. Earlier this week, I saw this in action when I joined Lewis University's 6th Annual Women's Leadership Forum. It was an honor to be on stage with some of the women leaders in Will County and hear their perspectives on how we can continue to break down barriers and inspire further inclusivity in the workforce.

While so much has been achieved in recent years, there remains a great amount of work to be done to both promote inclusivity and recognize the important role that women played in our history. While March is an opportunity for us all to reflect on the important women in our lives, I invite everyone to continue to shine this spotlight on the important topic of women history throughout the year.

Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant | Will County Executive



Spring Events Schedule: Recycling and Energy Savings

The Will County Resource Recovery & Energy Division has announced their Spring calendar for events dedicated to recycling and energy savings! The calendar includes Will County Green collection events for electronics, textiles, household hazardous waste, and several other items for recycling events:

- Recyclepalooza and Household Hazardous Waste | April 27 | Joliet
- Texting Collection Week at County Office Building | May 6 - 10 | Joliet
- Electronics and Household Hazardous Waste | May 11 | Beecher
- Book Reuse and Recycling Event | May 31 - June 2 | Joliet

The Division is also hosting presentations on solar energy and home energy conservation. Attendees will learn information about implementing home solar power systems and practical tips, tools, and incentive programs that can help homeowners and renters reduce energy costs. Register in advance by clicking the links below:

- Solar Energy Presentation | April 6 | Plainfield
- Energy Efficiency Presentation | April 18 | Plainfield
- Solar Energy Presentation | April 25 | Mokena

Learn more about the Division's events with the link below!

Learn More At: willcountygreen.com



"Pathways to Professions" Expo

Hundreds of high school students and job seekers attended the second annual Pathways to Professions Expo, with over 100 vendors on-hand to share information about a wide range of career opportunities in and around the region. The primary goal of the event was to provide a hands-on experience for high school students to learn about future educational and professional "paths" to career success.

Congratulations to the entire Workforce Services Division team and all of the volunteers, vendors, and participating high schools that made this event a success!

Learn more about the Will County Workforce Services Division with the link below!

Learn More At: jobs4people.org



Capital Projects Update: “Pardon Our Dust”

Our Facilities Department’s Capital Programming Team has been hard at work with various large-scale building projects that are nearing completion. Here’s a brief update on the progress of some of the most high-profile projects:

Old Courthouse Demolition – If you’ve driven through downtown Joliet, you may have noticed that the demolition of the Old Will County Courthouse is over halfway complete. Demolition of the structure is scheduled to be completed in April and the site will be fully clear and restored by July. The County Executive Office is in conversations with the City of Joliet to determine how this future open space can best serve residents while the long-term plans for the site are decided.

New Home for the CAC – The Children’s Advocacy Center has moved into their new and improved home on Cedarwood Drive in Crest Hill. A converted daycare center, this new space will create a more welcoming environment for the CAC’s important work of supporting victims of child abuse. County leaders will be cutting the ribbon on the new building in early April!

ADF Roof Replacement – A large-scale roof replacement project is in progress at the Will County Sheriff’s Adult Detention Facility, built in 1989. This project will help ensure the long-term safety and viability of the facility. Will County is using this project as an opportunity to recycle existing materials, by using the existing stone roofing material for use by Will County DOT on various roadway maintenance projects.



Will County Accepting Community Development and Housing Grants

The Will County Community Development Division has opened applications for local governments, community organizations, and developers to apply for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and Home Investment Partnership Program (HOME) Consortium funds.

All projects and programs must be in low-moderate income areas or serve low-moderate income households. Applications are available for community services, capital improvements, housing services, rental projects, and homebuyer projects. Last year, Will County received \$3.2 million for CDBG and HOME projects that benefited local communities. The exact total for this program year has yet to be determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Applications are due by April 15, 2024 at 11:59 PM. Will County will be hosting a technical assistance workshop in hybrid format to assist potential applicants (both in-person and virtual) on April 3, 2024 from 9:00 AM until 12:30 PM in the County Board Room at 302 N. Chicago St., Joliet.

Any questions about the applications or process can be sent to lugrants@willcountylanduse.com.

Apply For A Grant At: gotomygrants.com/Public/opportunities/35648

Apply For The Workshop At: willcountyillinois.webex.com

Women’s History Month Celebration

In honor of Women’s History Month, County Executive Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant is celebrating women-owned businesses throughout Will County. She asked them what inspired them to start their own business:

Twanette Adams | Amaezing Creations Event Décor | Crest Hill

Twanette’s personal history prepared her for being a successful business owner: “I am inspired by and dedicate my business to my mother Mae, whose creative style and love for all things done with sophistication and class I’ve inherited. As a former Elementary School Teacher, I love to nurture, inspire, educate, and entertain while creating an atmosphere of love. Every day is a reason to celebrate.”

Lauren O’Donnell | Lauren Marie Boutique | Mokena

Lauren is about to celebrate the one-year anniversary of opening her business. She opened on April 1, 2023 after being inspired to follow her dreams: “I decided to open Lauren Marie Boutique when I was studying Social Work in college and realized I was paying less attention to the studies and more about writing down my ideas of one day opening a clothing store. With the encouragement of my husband and family I was able to turn those dreams into a reality!”

Judy Petrunaro | Crete Country Store, The Ice Cream Shoppe, Vintage Treasures, and Vintage Oak | Crete

“Making a difference” is what inspires Judy: “‘Making a difference’ in many people’s lives. ‘Making a difference’ in my community, my family and my own life. ‘Making a difference’ in people’s attitudes and the way we live and think... In Crete, where I operate four businesses, I believe I have ‘made a difference.’”



WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

CELEBRATING WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESSES

Marguerite Ruminski | The Vegan Café | Lockport

Marguerite’s passion for healthy food options started after receiving a diagnosis of Multiple Sclerosis in 1997: “After researching treatment options and identifying the potential side effects, I had decided to try a more holistic approach first. I’ve always been a believer in the power of food as medicine. My thought was, if I could heal myself, I could work with others to do the same. Ultimately, what inspired and persuaded me to become an entrepreneur was the MS diagnosis. Changing my career, lifestyle and diet saved me. After almost 27 years, I am completely symptom free and still walking.”

Brenda Wood | The Sewing Café | Joliet

Brenda opened The Sewing Café last September, saying “I’ve always wanted to work for myself. I want to teach people the joy of sewing and how to make beautiful handmade items.”