



WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS

# NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2024



**JENNIFER BERTINO-TARRANT**  
WILL COUNTY EXECUTIVE

This was a busy and exciting August for our office and I'm excited to share an update on our initiatives in this month's newsletter! First, I had the opportunity to present my official State of the County address to the Will County Board. This is our annual opportunity to outline the steps that we've taken to improve services for residents and prepare the county for continued growth.

Will County remains an excellent place to work, live, and raise a family. Whether it's thriving agricultural communities, growing neighborhoods, or vibrant local communities, we offer something for everyone. As the state's leading job creator, our local economy continues to grow and attract innovation. With continued growth on the horizon, I focused my presentation on the efforts that county government has been taken to prepare for the future.

Additionally, my office participated in a variety of outreach activities throughout the month with a focus on "Back to School" events. From welcoming Kidz Fest to our downtown Joliet parking lot, to supporting backpack and resource giveaways throughout the county, we've been working closely with partners to support students going back to school and their parents. Thank you to the community organizations who have stepped up and organized these important events!

In closing, I want to thank all the volunteers who represented us at the Will County Fair this past week. Thanks to you, we were able to share a variety of county services with residents, ranging from animal welfare to transportation. Congratulations to the Will County Fair Association on another successful event!

Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant | Will County Executive



### The State of Will County "Remains Strong"

County Executive Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant focused on the future of the region in her annual State of the County and Budget Address, which was delivered to the County Board on August 15. Her speech emphasized the importance of county government preparing for continued growth in the region by improving county services, investing in local communities, and strengthening the economy.

"We are at a point where the decisions we make today will determine the direction of our county for years to come. As County leaders, we need to challenge ourselves to expand our vision and think proactively about how we address issues and changes in our communities." – County Executive Bertino-Tarrant.

The address highlighted several steps that have been made in recent years to modernize county government and empower communities, including increased public safety resources, transformational local investments through the American Rescue Plan Act, improved delivery of county services, the completion of several long-term capital plans, and the construction of Chicagoland's first Renewable Natural Gas Plant at the County-owned Prairie View Landfill.

Additionally, Bertino-Tarrant shared several steps her administration has taken to modernize service delivery, implement more forward-looking transportation strategies, improve local relationships, and strengthen Will County's support for neighborhood infrastructure improvements.

**Learn More At:** [willcounty.gov/News/will-county-executive-bertino-tarrant-focuses-on-the-future-in-state-of-the-county-address](http://willcounty.gov/News/will-county-executive-bertino-tarrant-focuses-on-the-future-in-state-of-the-county-address)



## WILL COUNTY Healthy Lifestyle Event

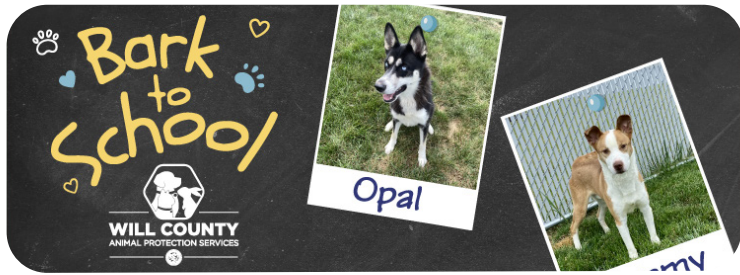
### Health and Wellness Event - University Park

Come stop by our next health and wellness event – Thursday, Aug. 29 from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m. in University Park! The event will take place at University Park Village Hall, located at 90 Towncenter Dr.

The Will County Executive Office is partnering with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois and the Will County Health Department to provide wellness checks, pediatric immunizations (from birth to 15 months old), care coordination, and healthy literacy resources. Fresh produce will also be distributed to all attendees.

For more information, please call (815) 740-4678.





## “Bark to School” Adoption Promo

Will County Animal Protection Services (WCAPS) is waiving adoption fees for dogs until the end of August as part of their “Bark to School” program. The program is valid from August 19-30 and applies to dogs age 1 and older that are available for adoption.

“When kids go back to school and the summer winds down, the house can start to feel quiet and a little lonely,” said WCAPS Administrator Anna Payton. “We encourage people to celebrate back to school by adopting a dog. Stop by our shelter and meet your new best friend!”

Adoptions are available Monday through Friday from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Will County Animal Protection Services, located at 22452 Cherry Hill Rd in Joliet. Appointments can be scheduled to visit available pets by calling 815-462-5633 or emailing adopt@willcountyillinois.com.

People are also encouraged to donate items from the WCAPS “Bark to School” supply list, including dog food, toys, and treats. Donations can be dropped off at Will County Animal Protection Services Monday – Friday from 8:30 am – 4:30 pm.

**Find a Friend:** [www.petfinder.com/member/us/il/joliet/will-county-animal-protection-services-ill035](http://www.petfinder.com/member/us/il/joliet/will-county-animal-protection-services-ill035)



## Expanding Dial-a-Ride Access

Will County Executive Bertino-Tarrant joined Pace Suburban Bus and officials from Wilmington and Braidwood to cut the ribbon on the newly expanded “Access Will County Dial-a-Ride” service. The service has been expanded to southwest Will County (Custer, Florence, Reed, Wesley, Wilmington and Wilton Townships), providing safe and convenient transportation to residents aged 60 and over or living with disabilities.

The new service area also coincides with an expansion of the distance that users can travel with the service. Previously, residents could request a ride within a 10-mile radius of the borders of their township. The new expansion allows residents to travel ANYWHERE in Will County and locations within one mile of the Will County border, plus parts of southern Cook County.

Residents in the service area (east and southwest Will County) interested in utilizing Access Will County Dial-a-Ride must fill out a one-page registration form, either by contacting their local municipality, township office, or the Will County Executive Office at (815) 774-6346 or countyexec@willcounty.gov. Once registered, residents can schedule a ride directly with Pace from their home and back for any purpose.

**Learn More:** [willcounty.gov/access](http://willcounty.gov/access)



## Back to School Safety

School busses are on the road, a sign that it’s time for students across Will County to go back to school for the 2024-25 school year!

Please remember to slow down and be cautious when driving around both schools and school busses, especially during usual arrival and dismissal times. Safety first! Remember these basic tips from the National Safety Council when driving with young pedestrians or school busses:

1. Don’t block crosswalks with your car
2. Always stop for a crossing guard when holding a stop sign
3. When flashers are blinking, stop and yield to pedestrians crossing the crosswalk or intersection
4. If you’re driving behind a bus, allow a greater following distance than if you were driving behind a car
5. Never pass a bus if it is stopped to load or unload children
6. The area 10 feet around a school bus is the most dangerous for children; stop far enough back to allow them space to safely enter and exit the bus



## Keep Your Family and Home Prepared

Are you prepared for disasters? If you are interested in extra insight on how to properly prepare and keep yourself and our loved ones safe in emergencies, the Will County Emergency Management Agency (WCEMA) is here to help!

WCEMA is hosting a series of “lunch and learn” virtual preparedness sessions on various topics this August and September. These webinars are open to anyone interested in learning more about staying prepared for disasters.

Check out the session dates and topics below!

**Day / Time: Wednesdays from 12:00-12:30 p.m.**

- August 28 | Preparing for Disaster – Intro to Preparedness
- September 4 | Emergency Readiness for Everyone: Meeting Diverse Needs and Special Considerations
- September 11 | Pets and Disasters...Are you Prepared
- September 18 | Nuclear Safety
- September 25 | Financial Preparedness -Building Resiliency for Life’s Challenges

**Register:** [willcountyyema.org/learn](http://willcountyyema.org/learn)



Visit the link below to complete our brief survey and make your voice heard!

**Learn More:** [surveymonkey.com/r/GRB9W3P](http://surveymonkey.com/r/GRB9W3P)

## Your Trails, Your Voice, Our Future!

As summer shines and our trails come alive with bikes, rollerblades, strollers, and more, your input on local trails is needed! Your experiences and preferences are crucial as we continue to develop our Long Range Transportation Plan: Our Way Forward 2050.

Help us understand which trails you love in our community and how often you visit them by completing our survey. At the end of the survey, share where you’d like to see future trail investments on our collaborative map. Your feedback will play a vital role in guiding Will County’s future investments in active transportation.

The “Our Way Forward” Will County Long Range Transportation Plan will support mobility throughout the County by guiding transportation policies and investments through 2050 with an equitable and resilient framework. The current L RTP was completed in 2017. Since then, there have been changes – from preferences in how we travel and where we work to changing development patterns. This process will review all modes of transportation, including walking, biking, transit, roads, and freight.