



## WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS

# NEWSLETTER

## JANUARY 2026



JENNIFER  
**BERTINO-TARRANT**

WILL COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Earlier this month, we marked a significant milestone as we celebrated the official 190th anniversary of Will County. The county was officially founded on January 12, 1836, when it was incorporated by the State of Illinois.

Will County's history has been defined by vibrant neighborhoods, economic opportunity, and community-driven initiatives that have made lasting contributions locally, regionally, and nationally. This milestone is an opportunity to share stories and celebrate our rich history.

Under the banner of "Celebrating 190 Years of Community," I've announced a partnership between my office and the Will County Historic Preservation Commission to spotlight both our cultural landmarks and moments in history that have defined Will County's story. Throughout the year, we'll be spotlighting many of our 60 Local Landmarks, along with other historic and cultural landmarks throughout the county.

Our 190th anniversary coincides with other significant milestones in 2026, including 250 years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4th ("Semi-Quincentennial") and the Route 66 Centennial Celebration.

I look forward to this rare opportunity to share unique stories about our local, regional, and national history

Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant | Will County Executive



### Will County EMA Launches Preparedness Series

The Will County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) has launched a new Lunch & Learn series aimed at strengthening resident household preparedness. This free virtual series focuses on practical, realistic ways that families and individuals can prepare for emergencies and severe weather.

Each session will take place on the first Tuesday of the month at noon, for easy learning during a lunch break. The upcoming webinars include:

#### February 3

Weathering the Storm Within: Understanding the Emotional Impact of Disasters

#### March 3

Weathering the Storm Together: How Will County Residents Can Stay Safe

#### April 7

The Resilient Chef: Cooking When the Power Goes Out

#### May 5

What's the Big Deal About Heat? (Spoiler: A Lot!)

Will County EMA will also be hosting their third-annual "When Seconds Matter" Public Preparedness Workshop on Saturday, March 28. The free event offers interactive opportunities to learn how to stay safe, informed, and prepared for whatever comes our way! The workshop will take place at Reed-Custer High School Auditorium.

Learn more and register for both events at the links below!

**Lunch & Learn:** [willcountyema.org/learn](http://willcountyema.org/learn)

**When Seconds Matter:** [willcountyema.org/workshop](http://willcountyema.org/workshop)



**FEB 16 | 9 A.M. - NOON**

### You're Invited: Presidents' Day Kids Fair!

Need Presidents Day plans? Will County Executive Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant's 10th Annual Kids' Fair returns to Plainfield on February 16th!

Bring the family for hands-on activities, entertainment, storytelling, and games provided by dozens of local resource providers and businesses. Be there between 10 AM and 11 AM to meet special guest star: Bluey!

The Presidents' Day Kids' Fair will be held from 9 a.m. until 12 p.m. at Troy Middle School in Plainfield. Admission is free and open to all. No registration is required – Just show up and have fun!

# FREE WORKSHOP ON BEP/EEC CERTIFICATION

## Business Owners: Expand Your Opportunities!

Local business owners are invited to attend a free in-person workshop to learn about the Illinois Business Enterprise Program (BEP) and opportunities to pursue projects as an Equity Eligible Contractor (EEC).

The workshop is hosted as a collaboration between the Will County Executive Office, Joliet Junior College (JJC) Entrepreneur & Business Center, the Will County Center for Economic Development, and the State of Illinois. The half-day session will offer business owners an opportunity to attend a session on either topic on Wednesday, February 25th at the JJC City Center, with the BEP session being held from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and the EEC session being held from 12:00 p.m. until 2:00 p.m.

Business owners will have an opportunity to learn about expanded contract opportunities as a BEP- or EEC-certified business. The workshop will share how certification positions businesses for government/utility contracts, supplier diversity opportunities, and clean-energy projects. The recommended audience includes small business owners, contractors, the trades, clean-energy businesses, or entrepreneurs seeking growth opportunities.

**Register Now:** [tinyurl.com/5j694crs](http://tinyurl.com/5j694crs)

# SAFE & CLEAN DRINKING WATER



# ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY

KEEP WILL COUNTY CLEAN

APPLY TODAY!



## Will County Accepting "Adopt-A-Highway" Applications!

Is your organization looking for your next service project? The Will County Division of Transportation's Adopt-A-Highway program is an opportunity for local groups to help create a cleaner environment by volunteering to pick up litter along the county highway system.

The Adopt-A-Highway program is an education program designed to encourage people to stop littering. It is a roadside cleanup program that will give a better first impression of our county to visitors and tourists.

Each volunteer group is responsible for a two-mile section of highway and agrees to remove litter a minimum of four times a year over a two-year period. Will County DOT will erect permanent signs identifying the adopting group and will provide safety vests, trash bags, temporary warning signs, and initial safety training.

229 miles of highway are available for adoption. An interactive map is available on the DOT website for groups to find an available section of highway that is of interest. Learn more and apply at the link below!

**Register Now:** [willcounty.gov/County-Offices/Economic-Development/Division-of-Transportation/Adopt-A-Highway](http://willcounty.gov/County-Offices/Economic-Development/Division-of-Transportation/Adopt-A-Highway)

## Latest Consolidation to Improve Water Services

A recently approved local government consolidation will address years of water quality issues, system breaks, and sewage back-ups in the Preston Heights neighborhood and surrounding areas in unincorporated Joliet Township. This follows final approval of an intergovernmental agreement between Will County, the City of Joliet, and the Southeast Joliet Sanitary District (SEJSD) that will dissolve the district and transfer services to the City.

Under the agreement, the City of Joliet will take responsibility for water and sewer service in the area and immediately begin repairs to the system. Will County has committed funding for much-needed upgrades for the existing system over a ten-year period to ensure stable access to safe drinking water for residents, leveraging a combination of federal funding sources.

"This has been a collaborative process to address water and sewer maintenance issues that have negatively impacted more than 850 households in unincorporated Will County for years. Residents deserve access to clean drinking water and infrastructure that works for them. I'm grateful to the City of Joliet and the leaders in the community who worked with the county to make this transition a reality to better serve our residents."

Will County Executive Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant

The agreement is the third unit of local government that has consolidated within Will County in recent years, creating efficiencies and improved services for residents. These include the consolidation of the Romeoville Mosquito Abatement District and East Moreland Street Lighting District.