



WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS

# NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2026



**JENNIFER BERTINO-TARRANT**  
WILL COUNTY EXECUTIVE

As we enter July, we do so at a truly historic moment for our nation. The Semiquincentennial is a unique opportunity to celebrate the legacy of independence, reflect on our history, and come together in a moment of unity.

America's 250th anniversary coincides with a variety of local celebrations and commemorations of the role our region has played in the national story. With our "Will County at 190" milestone, we've been working to shine a light on how the people of Will County have contributed to the progress of America since our incorporation in 1836. One such example is visible with the year-long spotlight of the Route 66 Bicentennial, which honors Will County's role as the "Crossroads of America." These anniversaries are more than just numbers. They are moments of reflections on our history and the stories of those that came before us.

But America 250 is not just a celebration of our past, but an opportunity for unity in our present and hope for our future. Our nation has persevered through great challenges over two and a half centuries, which have brought us together and made us stronger. We've maintained our core principles and have maintained national unity. As we celebrate this milestone of independence, let us reflect on those values and on what the next 250 years should look like.

Please enjoy and celebrate Independence Day safely and responsibly.

Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant | Will County Executive



## Every Pet Deserves a Victory Lap!

Will County Animal Protection Services (APS) has partnered with the Chicagoland Speedway to celebrate both the return of NASCAR to Joliet and America 250 with a special "Every Pet Deserves a Victory Lap" adoption campaign, which includes waived adoption fees, free pet microchipping, and a special adoption event.

Through the partnership campaign, adoption fees for all available pets will be waived until July 10, 2026. Adoptable pets will be available for meet-and-greets at the Will County APS shelter in Joliet and through participating shelter partner locations in Shorewood and Aurora. All adoptable pets are spayed, neutered, up to date on vaccines, and tested for Heartworm and FeLV/FIV. Meet-and-greets with adoptable pets must be scheduled in advance. Interested adopters should email [Adopt@willcounty.gov](mailto:Adopt@willcounty.gov), call (815) 462-5633, or submit an inquiry on the online adoption tool Petfinder.

To support current pet owners, the campaign will also offer free microchipping for dogs, cats, rabbits, and ferrets for Will County residents through July 10. Appointments for free microchipping can be scheduled online or by calling (815) 462-5633.

**Adoptable Pets:** [petfinder.com/member/us/il/joliet/will-county-animal-protection-services-il1035](https://petfinder.com/member/us/il/joliet/will-county-animal-protection-services-il1035)

**Read More:** <https://willcounty.gov/News/will-county-animal-protection-services-and-chicagoland-speedway-partner-for-every-pet-deserves-a-victory-lap-adoption-campaign>



## Don't Miss Out, Water Conservation Night at the Joliet Slammers!

Will County, the City of Joliet, and the Joliet Slammers have teamed up to host Water Conservation Night during the Joliet Slammers Game on Tuesday, July 7 at Duly Health and Care Field in Joliet. Bring the family for a fun evening of baseball and helpful tips about conserving water at home!

The annual event aims to raise awareness of the importance of water conservation and provide cost-saving tips to reduce water waste in the home. Attendees are encouraged to sign a "water conservation pledge" at the game to be eligible for raffle prizes, including rain barrels and WaterSense-labeled efficiency tools.

Several local government agencies and non-profit organizations will have information booths and family-fun activities to promote water saving tips. Attendees can collect a variety of water conservation-themed baseball cards by visiting each booth on the concourse.

Gates open at 5:35 PM and the game starts at 6:35 PM. Admission cost starts at \$9 for lawn and \$15 for seats the day of the game.

**Buy Tickets:** [ticketreturn.com/prod2new/BuyNew.asp?EventID=356185](https://ticketreturn.com/prod2new/BuyNew.asp?EventID=356185)

**Learn More:** [willcountygreen.com/slammers2026](https://willcountygreen.com/slammers2026)

# ALWAYS BE NOTIFIED

## Register Now For Emergency & Community Alerts!



# GUIDE WILL



Take the Survey

Survey Ends on July 13!

VISIT [GUIDEWILL.CO](https://guidewill.co)

### New Will County Alert System Launched

Will County residents will have a new way to receive emergency alerts and important community information! Will County 9-1-1 has launched an enhanced public notification system designed to keep people informed before, during, and after emergencies.

The new "Smart 911" alert system replaces the current Everbridge system utilized by several Will County municipalities to send out public safety messages to registered residents via text, phone, email, or application alerts. In addition to emergency notifications, participating communities may also send out community alerts, such as road closures, public safety information, community event information, service disruptions, and other important local updates.

Residents who currently receive notifications via Everbridge from their municipality will need to register through Smart911 to continue to receive local community alerts. The transition is expected to be completed by July 1, 2026.

In addition to the new alert system, residents are encouraged to create a Smart911 Safety Profile to provide important information that may help 911 dispatchers and first responders during an emergency. Residents can include details such as household members, medical information, pets, vehicles, emergency contacts, and additional addresses, including work, school, or a family member's home.

**Learn More:** [willcounty.gov/News/new-alert-system-launched-for-emergency-notifications-and-community-updates-across-will-county](https://willcounty.gov/News/new-alert-system-launched-for-emergency-notifications-and-community-updates-across-will-county)

**Register:** [willcounty911.gov/smart-911/](https://willcounty911.gov/smart-911/)

### Survey Extended for "Guide Will" Planning Effort

There is still time to share your thoughts on the future of Will County! The online survey for the "Guide Will" planning initiative has been extended to July 13 to facilitate more feedback from the public.

The survey is part of Will County's update to its Land Resource Management Plan, which shapes future land use and development decisions. The "Guide Will" effort is the first comprehensive update to the plan since 2002, offering the public an opportunity to voice their thoughts with local policymakers. The six primary topic areas being addressed include housing and development; economy and employment; agriculture and rural character; open space and environment; transportation and infrastructure; and regional coordination.

Residents are invited to share their thoughts online, including through a visioning survey and an interactive comment map to pin ideas, priorities, and concerns.

**Help Shape Will County:** <https://guidewill.co/>

## LOCAL LANDMARK SPOTLIGHT



**PIONEER MEMORIAL CEMETERY**  
MOKENA, ILLINOIS



### Will County at 190 June History Spotlight

To celebrate Will County's 190th anniversary, the Executive Office is spotlighting local historic landmarks and milestones under the theme "Celebrating 190 Years of Community." This month's spotlight celebrates America's 250th Birthday with a local Revolutionary war connection and a memorial to all war veterans.

#### Pioneer Memorial Cemetery – Mokena

The cemetery represents one of the few local landmarks with connections to the Revolutionary War and America's founding. Charles Denny, who served during the New York militia during the revolution, is buried there and is one of four Revolutionary War veterans interred in Will County. Charles Denny arrived in Will County in 1838, just two years after the county was incorporated.

Allen Denny, the cemetery's namesake, fought the British during the War of 1812. An active community leader, Allen Denny was an early settler in the region in 1834 and was instrumental in Mokena's founding. History remembers Allen as a tangible link to the anti-slavery sentiment that existed in eastern Will County before the Civil War. He and his brother-in-law, Samuel Haven, have been documented as early supporters of the Underground Railroad who used their homes as stations to help escaped slaves on their way to freedom.

The cemetery is an official Will County Landmark due to its importance in local history. It appears in the earliest map of Mokena and residents have prioritized its upkeep since the late 1800's.

#### North Island City Memorial Flagpole Monument

Wilmington The Joliet Army Ammunition Plant (Joliet Arsenal) was a significant local employer and economic engine in Will County from the early 1940's until its closure in 1977. The Joliet Arsenal played a significant role in ammunition productions for the United States Army both during and after World War II. At its peak, it employed 12,000 people, produced nearly 60% of the Army's supply of TNT, and sprawled across 37,000 acres of four Will County townships.

The 100-foot Joliet Arsenal flagpole was located at the entrance of its administrative area, prominently symbolizing the property as a United States Government facility. Wilmington resident Bert Niehls proposed that the flagpole be moved prominently near Route 66 and made a Will County Landmark, honoring the importance of the Joliet Arsenal in Will County's 20th Century history, the role it played during three international conflicts, and as a monument for local veterans. In his nomination letter, Mr. Niehls stated that the flagpole would honor "the arsenal workers and families and veterans of all Wars and all who served to protect our freedom."

The North Island City Memorial Flagpole was designated as a Will County landmark on May 16, 2013 and can be found on the North Island of the City of Wilmington.



**NORTH ISLAND CITY MEMORIAL  
FLAGPOLE MONUMENT**  
WILMINGTON, ILLINOIS