



WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS

NEWSLETTER

JULY 2026



**JENNIFER
BERTINO-TARRANT**
WILL COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Throughout the week, many parts of the county have been recovering from the impacts of severe weather after three rounds of storms passed through the region on Monday. With winds reaching 100 mph in some areas, the severe weather has resulted in property damage and thousands of residents without power for several days.

Our dedicated Will County Emergency Management (EMA) team has been coordinating with local officials, first responders, non-profit agencies, and other community partners to respond and coordinate assistance, particularly in the Eastern Will County areas that were hit the hardest. This includes a 24/7 shelter that has been established at 3501 Hopkins St. in Steger, which has been utilized for short- or long-term stays, as well as a pick-up point for storm cleanup supplies.

Will County EMA is advising any residents in need of assistance to contact the 2-1-1 hotline, overseen by the United Way of Will County. Local officials have been keeping hotline staff apprised of resources that are available, including tree cleanup assistance, emergency shelter, cleanup kits, or other resources. Residents are also invited to fill out a self-assessment damage survey to report home or business damage at www.WillCountyEMA.org/Storm.

I very much appreciate the strong collaboration that has been occurring over the past week to ensure that residents have the resources they need to recover. This response demonstrates the best of Will County, with several local agencies working together to support people in need. To all our emergency management personnel, first responders, non-profit partners, and everyone who stepped up this week: Thank you!

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



Will County Interns Make a Difference

This summer, Will County welcomed a talented group of high school and college interns who gained hands-on experience across several departments. These included County Executive Office, Animal Protective Services, the Division of Transportation, the Community Mental Health Board, and ICT. Working alongside county staff, elected officials, and community partners, the interns developed professional skills, explored career paths, and made meaningful contributions to county initiatives.

Each internship offered unique opportunities for learning and growth while giving students valuable insight into careers in public service. Below are some of the highlights from our interns:

Makenna Shanahan - County Executive Office

"Working alongside an attorney, so many dedicated staff and meeting elected officials strengthened my interest in public service and confirmed my goal of attending law school."

Samara Tumvavichakul - Animal Protective Services

"This internship only confirmed that this is the path I want to pursue in life and made me more confident to learn, ask questions, and take every opportunity offered."

Taryn Sarver - Division of Transportation

"Observing how transportation and engineering come together to solve real-world problems has been the most rewarding part of my internship."

Joshua Clem - ICT Department

"This internship supports my long-term goals by giving me practical experience in IT. It helped me gain a better understanding of IT operations and build my own confidence in a professional technical environment."

Read more about the Summer 2026 Class of Interns below!

Read More: willcounty.gov/News/will-county-interns-make-a-difference

Manhattan-Monee Road

PROJECTS

PUBLIC INFO MEETING

Monee Western Limit to I-57

TUESDAY, AUG 5 | 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Fireman's Park Building & Pavilion

DOT to Hold Manhattan-Monee Road Open House Meeting on August 5

The open-house meeting will be held from 4 to 7 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 5, at the Fireman's Park Building and Pavilion, 5130 W. Court St., Monee. Residents may stop by at any time during the meeting to review project information and speak with members of the project team.

Attendees will have the opportunity to review the preferred improvement alternative, proposed construction staging plans, and information regarding temporary and permanent right-of-way acquisitions. Project representatives will be available throughout the evening to answer questions and gather public feedback.

The Manhattan-Monee Road improvement project is part of the Will County Division of Transportation's ongoing efforts to enhance safety, improve mobility, and reduce congestion along one of the county's growing transportation corridors. The project is aimed at widening this portion of the roadway to two lanes in each direction, with a median to accommodate turn lanes at warehouse entrances and Ridgeland Avenue.

Learn More: www.manhattan-monee-study.com/public-involvement



WILL COUNTY AWARDS

OVER \$129,000 IN SCHOOL SAFETY GRANTS



Will County Awards Over \$125K in School Safety Grants

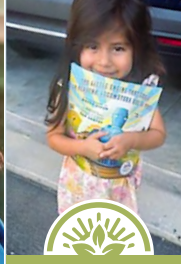
Will County has awarded more than \$129,000 in grants aimed at strengthening school safety. The Will County School Safety Grant, which has been awarded to 33 middle and K-8 schools, will support the installation of main entrance reinforcements and improved visitor and attendance management systems.

The security improvements will take place at schools in 18 Will County school districts. Of the 33 schools awarded grants, 19 schools are receiving funding to install main entrance security reinforcements that improve resistance to forced entry and ballistic threats. The remaining 14 schools will receive funding for enhanced visitor and attendance management systems, including modernized check-in and visitor badging systems.

The \$129,777 in grant awards are funded by State of Illinois Cannabis Sales Tax Revenue received by the County and allocated in the Fiscal Year 2026 budget. The grant was created to support multi-faceted strategies to enhance school safety, specifically at main entrances.

Schools receiving grant funds will be reimbursed for their improvements and are expected to complete their improvements by the end of the Will County fiscal year on November 30, 2026.

Learn More: willcounty.gov/News/will-county-awards-over-129000-in-school-safety-grants



1 YEAR OF PUTTING BOOKS IN KID'S HANDS

Imagination Library of Will County Celebrates First Year!

The Imagination Library of Will County is celebrating its first year! Launched on July 28, 2025 through a partnership between Will County Executive Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant and the Will County Center for Economic Development, the free book-gifting program for children birth through age 5 has already made strides in promoting literacy throughout the county.

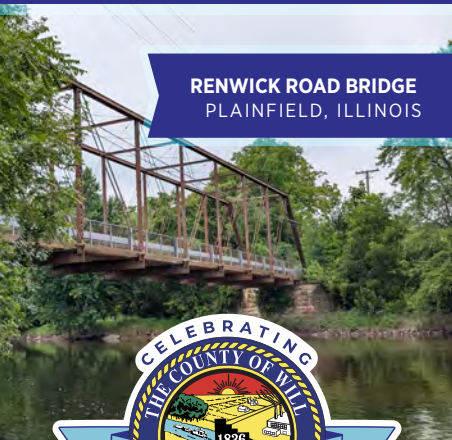
Over 7,400 Will County children have enrolled in the program and 58,000 books have been mailed! Each book mailed empowers our youngest learners by providing access to the wonders of reading, strengthening early childhood education in communities throughout the county.

Help Us Celebrate: If your family is enrolled in the program and want to share your story, send a testimonial and/or photo of how the Imagination Library has made a positive impact for you! Simply email Info@WillCountyImaginationLibrary.org.

You're Invited: To celebrate our first year and to support the growth of the program, you're invited to the Storybook 9-Hole Scramble, a golf outing fundraiser that benefits the Imagination Library of Will County. The outing kicks off with a noon registration and a 1PM Scramble. Each ticket includes nine holes, cart, two drink tickets, and heavy appetizers at the 3PM after party. Tickets cost \$100 for a Single Player, \$400 for a Foursome, and \$40 for only attending the After Party. Register by August 7 for the Early Bird Special of \$350 for a Foursome!

Golf Registration: zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/the-storybook-scramble
Give the Gift of Reading: willcountyimaginationlibrary.org

LOCAL LANDMARK SPOTLIGHT



RENWICK ROAD BRIDGE
PLAINFIELD, ILLINOIS

Will County at 190 July History Spotlight

As part of Will County's 190th anniversary celebration, the Executive Office continues to spotlight local historic landmarks and milestones under the theme "Celebrating 190 Years of Community." This month's spotlight features two landmarks that represent different chapters of Will County's history from the transportation routes that connected growing communities to the agricultural innovations that shaped the county's rural identity.

Renwick Road Bridge | Plainfield

The Renwick Road Bridge has long served as both a transportation crossing and a recognizable landmark in Plainfield. For decades, the steel truss bridge carried motorists across the DuPage River as Will County experienced significant growth throughout the twentieth century. It connected residents, businesses, and neighboring communities, while supporting the expanding transportation network that fueled the area's development.

Although a modern bridge now accommodates vehicle traffic, the historic structure has been preserved as a pedestrian crossing, allowing visitors to experience an important piece of Will County's engineering heritage. Its preservation reflects the county's commitment to honoring historic infrastructure while continuing to invest in modern transportation improvements.

Today, the Renwick Road Bridge remains a lasting reminder of the craftsmanship, innovation, and community connections that have helped shape Will County over the past 190 years.

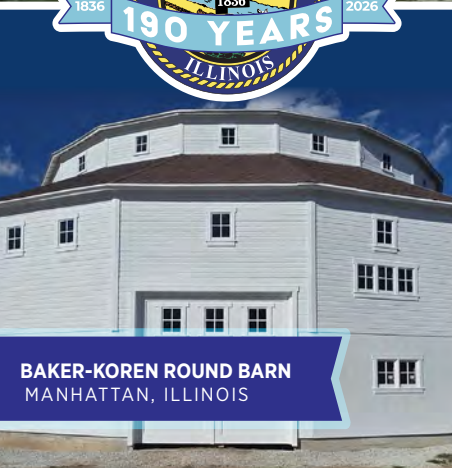
Baker-Koren Round Barn | Manhattan

Built in 1898 by John C. Baker, the Baker-Koren Round Barn is one of Will County's most distinctive agricultural landmarks and one of only a handful of historic round barns still standing in the county.

Constructed using lumber purchased from the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, the four-level barn measures approximately 100 feet in diameter and 60 feet tall. The 20-sided barn is among the largest round barns in Illinois and is recognized for its unique architectural design and exceptional craftsmanship.

The Baker family's roots in Will County extend to John Baker's father, Clark Baker, who settled in what is now Manhattan Township in 1845. A veteran of the War of 1812, Clark Baker became a successful farmer and stock raiser, eventually owning nearly 1,200 acres. He was also a community leader, serving for nearly 20 years as township supervisor and justice of the peace. His contributions helped establish the area's agricultural foundation and left a lasting impact on the development of Manhattan Township.

Designated a Will County Historic Landmark in 1999, the barn continues to preserve an important chapter of the county's agricultural history for future generations.



BAKER-KOREN ROUND BARN
MANHATTAN, ILLINOIS

