



Times-Tribune

667-3111

507 O'Hara, Ste 1., Troy, IL
Office Hours 8-4:30, M-F

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\$ 2.00

www.timestribunenews.com

Thursday, January 12, 2023

Volume 41 Week 51

USPS 642200

CUSD 10 breaks ground for new Caseyville Elementary School

By Devese "Dee" Ursery
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Collinsville Community Unit School District 10 broke ground last week on the new Caseyville Elementary School.

The new school will be built directly behind the current building and face Second Street. When the new school is completed, the existing building will be demolished and used for parking and green space. There will also be a public library built to connect onto the existing library that is already in place.

At 11 a.m. Jan. 5, district officials, supporters and members of the community held a ceremony to commemorate the beginning of the new school. There will also be a public library built to connect onto the existing library that is already in place.

CUSD 10 Superintendent, Dr. Mark B. Skertich spoke on what it took to get to this point.

"We are excited to see the construction of a new Caseyville Elementary begin," Skertich said. "We look forward to the positive impact the facility will have on our students, staff and community for years to come."

Skertich said that the project was a team effort between the board of education, district staff and partners from FGM Architects and Holland Construction.

See SCHOOL Pg. 12



Holland Construction Superintendent James Bearden poses alongside Sammy Shafer of Shafer Excavating and his son Seth, a 4th grader at Caseyville Elementary School, as they stand at the site of the new elementary school. Photos by Devese "Dee" Ursery

City again tables zoning issue pending planning commission review

By Times-Tribune staff
The Troy City Council met briefly Jan. 3, again tabling a contentious zoning issue as it awaits additional review by the planning commission.

In question is the zoning status of 2466 Formosa Road. Developer James Malecek, of St. Louis, is seeking to build a storage business there. The business will include storage units as well as boat and recreational vehicle storage.

The property had been zoned as agricultural historically, until it was annexed by the city in October. City officials have said that the current status of residential is a default position for all new annexations.

During a Dec. 8 meeting of the Troy Planning Commission, members of that board voted 4-1 to change zoning of the property from residential to commercial. The planning commission vote included a caveat there will be a 100-foot "green space" buffer between the business and the neighborhood.

However, at the Dec. 8 planning commission meeting, the issue met with fierce opposition by members of a 55-plus living community which adjoins the property. Many voiced concerns at the meeting that the

business would affect quality-of-life issues in their neighborhood.

At the Dec. 19 meeting of the Troy City Council, members sent the issue back to the Troy Planning Commission for further review. City engineer Tom Cissell at that meeting told members a better fit for the property would be light industrial, as opposed to commercial, as less traffic would be generated.

Thus, pending the Jan. 12 planning commission meeting, the issue was again tabled at the Jan. 3 meeting of the Troy City Council.

Police Chief Brent Shownes gave his monthly report during the meeting. He told council members during the weekend of Dec. 31 police located a stolen vehicle, however, warrants were pending and further details could not be released at this time.

Shownes also said installation has begun on a new license plate reader. He estimated the reader should be ready in about a week, depending on the weather.

Director of Public Works Rob Hancock also offered the department's monthly report. He said the department fought a frozen water line for some controls in the wastewater treatment plant. The department also had to repair a water main break on Kimberlin and High streets.

See ZONING Pg. 3

Kyle's Tree benefits Madison County CEO students

By Pat Pratt
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A new organization is helping make the holidays a little brighter for students at the Madison County ROE 41 Center for Educational Opportunities.

Leslie Klaus, of Maryville and formerly of Troy, is the food service manager at COE and is the founder of Kyle's Tree. The organization is named after her mother, Kyle Converse, who died two years ago and whose favorite holiday was Christmas.

"I wanted to do something special for these kids and I didn't know how to start," Klaus said. "So I wanted to do something to honor my mom, as I was kind of having emotional struggles and I wanted to help these kids. So I put them together and formed Kyle's Tree."

Klaus put together a wish list of items the students could use and circulated it to get the word out. This year through the Kyles Tree and the contributions of donors, 60 gift boxes were provided to students at the school. The boxes contained personal hygiene items, holiday treats and other items to brighten the season.

"I was mind-blown, I had no idea it was going to do that," Klaus said. "I wasn't expecting it to explode. We were able to package and wrap gifts for 60 kids, everything from winter wear, to hygiene stuff, journals and pens. It turned out fabulous."

Klaus said the new program would not have been possible without the help of many in the community who donated, including Dunkin' Donuts of Troy, which adopted the school for the holidays. Other businesses were very generous as well, such as Pete's Market, who donated fresh fruit to the



An organization started this year named Kyle's Tree has proven a success in helping Madison County Center for Educational Opportunities students. Pictured is Leslie Klaus, who started the organization in honor of her late mother Kyle Converse.

students, and many other churches and individuals.

"This would not have become a reality if not for this wonderful community and all of its generosity," Klaus said.

The program will continue again next year following its success this holiday season, Klaus said. She may change it up to include a holiday meal in 2023, if possible.

Through all of her efforts this year and moving forward, Klaus said she keeps at the forefront the generous spirit of her mother.

"If she was able, she would have been standing right by my side helping me do those boxes," Klaus said.

29th annual Let's Go Fishing Show sees another successful year

By Devese "Dee" Ursery
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Fishing enthusiasts Bishop Coleman and Bob White both have attended the Let's Go Fishing Show at the Gateway Convention Center show for as long as it's been happening, describing the event now in its 29th year as "a part of life."

For Coleman, he enjoys being around boats and fishing equipment, as well as checking out the latest gear.

"I've been coming to the fishing show almost every year since they've been having it," he told the Times-Tribune on Friday afternoon, the first day of the weekend-long event.

White added that the show is pretty good and that he hasn't missed one in the last 20 years. He comes down specifically for the deals.

"Fishing is in my blood," White said. "I'm 62-years-old and I've been fishing since I was eight; it's just a part of life now."

Jamie Lane, general manager of the Gateway Convention Center and producer of the fishing show, explained that the show was family-friendly and had plenty of stuff to do for the kids and adults.

"It's meant for all ages and all skill levels of fishing and people, in general, that like the outdoors," she said.

Lane said around 120 vendors showed up to show off and sell their wares to visitors of the fishing show. Bass Pro Shops, Boat Works, Canoe Canada Outfitters, Bait Cave Customs were just a few of the vendors that flood the convention center with goods every year. The event brings people in from all over.

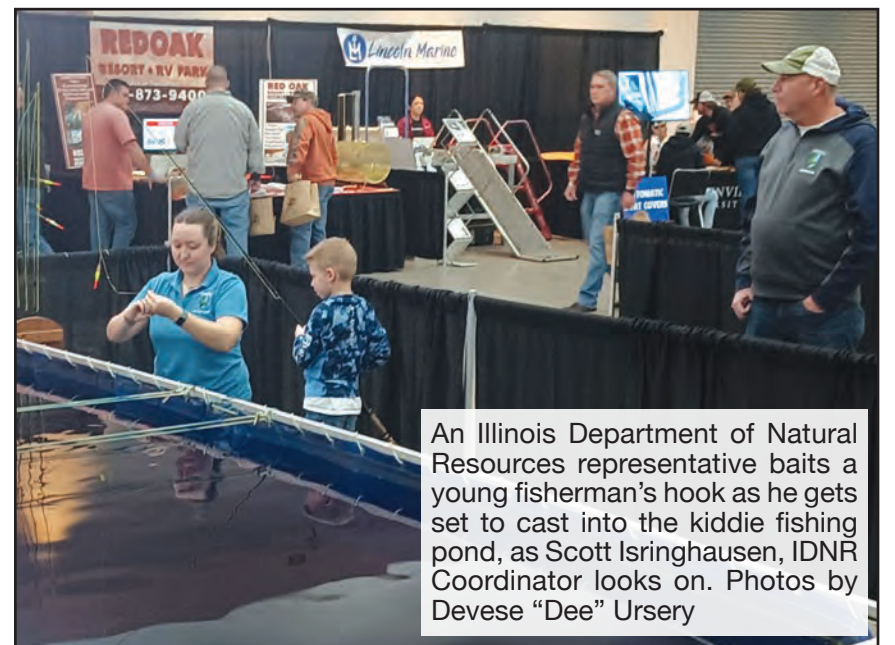
"Vendors from 14 states and Canada showed up for the event," Lane said. "They are fishing-focused, so it's all fishing products and services. The event featured everything a fishing enthusiast could ever want."

The event draws between 8,000 to 10,000 visitors a year through the course of three days and is a big event for the city of Collinsville, Lane said. Those patrons are sleeping at the hotels, eating at the restaurants and shopping at the stores in town, so the direct and indirect economic impact is huge.

The intent, according to Lane, is to bring fishing fanatics together to experience a great time of shopping, mingling and talking shop.

"We often call the show a fishing family reunion because it's one of those things people enjoy coming to every year because it's so much fun," Lane said. "Whether you're a first time visitor or a regular who comes every year, people continue to come back because it's an enjoyable experience to be here."

Wildlife conservationists like Treehouse Wildlife Center and organizations



An Illinois Department of Natural Resources representative baits a young fisherman's hook as he gets set to cast into the kiddie fishing pond, as Scott Isringhausen, IDNR Coordinator looks on. Photos by Devese "Dee" Ursery

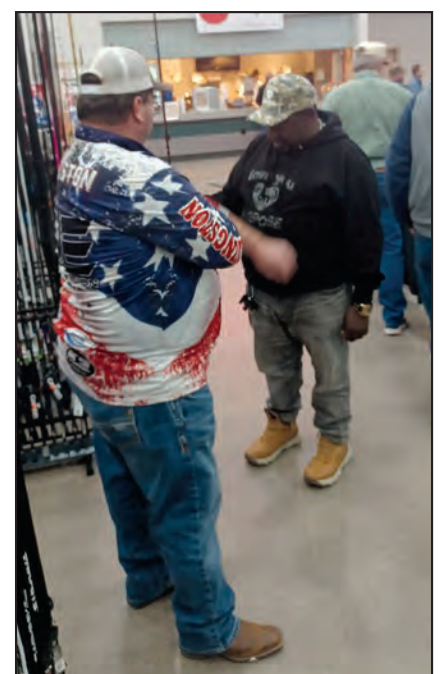


Treehouse Wildlife Center representative Seth Fitz poses with Maorga, a wildlife ambassador for their educational outreach program.

like the Illinois Department of Natural Resources were on site to educate and help promote the joys and wonders of wildlife.

Seth Filtz, representative for Treehouse spoke of the work that Treehouse does in regards to rescuing wildlife in danger. Maorga, a Peregrine Falcon, is one of the permanent residents and wildlife ambassadors of Treehouse. Maorga is a rescue that was found along the side of the road in October 2019 suffering from a wing injury that could not be repaired.

Now she serves as an education outreach ambassador. Wildlife education ambassadors are permanent residents



Bob White, a 20-year regular of the fishing show looks at some new rod and reels in search of a deal.

and native rescues of Treehouse that have been injured in a way that prevents them from returning to the wild.

Scott Isringhausen, urban fishing coordinator for the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, ran the kiddie fishing pond where children were able to fish for live fish minnows.

"It's so exciting to see a youngster catch a fish for the very first time and see their eyes light up, it's just totally awesome," Isringhausen said. "I like to tell people, if we get kids hooked on fishing then maybe they'll stay away from the less desirable things when they get older."



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36 Triad High School students recognized for academic excellence



Triad High School Principal Kelli Barbour this week announced 36 Triad High School students have been recognized as “2023-2024 Illinois State Scholars.”

Illinois State Scholar winners rank in the top ten percent of high school seniors from 749 different high schools across the state. Selection

is based on SAT, ACT and/or Prairie State Achievement Exam scores, and/or class rank at the end of the junior year. High school guidance counselors work in conjunction with ISAC to determine the winners.

“We are very proud of these terrific Triad students and congratulate them on this significant accomplishment. Many of these students not only excel in the classroom, but also in extracurricular activities, they exemplify the qualities of well-rounded

students,” THS Principal Kelli Barbour said.

The award, given annually by the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC), recognized 16,700 high school students from across the state as this year’s State Scholars.

The following Triad High School students were named Illinois State Scholars:

Katie Barker, Luke Barnett, Kaylee Broadfield, Sophia Cordes, Tristan

Darby, McKenna Dooley, Marc Froidcoeur, Katelyn Godell, Chloe Gough, Madison Harbison, Samantha Hartoin, Riley Heffren, Elliot Jaeger, Kyndra Kelley, Laila Kestur, Collin Littlefield, Ryan Malawy, Emelia McLeod, Alexander Myers, Andrew Neumann, Emilee Prater, Madison Quick, Joshua Raffaele, Greyson Rockwell, Parker Rutz, McKinley Saffel, Isabelle Sandberg, Sydney Sobczak, Jacob Stewart, Tobey Suter, Gianna Viviano, London Weathers, Benjamin Winslow,

Gabrielle Wood, Madeline York and Jordan Young.

“We’re pleased to honor this year’s Illinois State Scholars,” said Eric Zarnikow, ISAC Executive Director. “Not only do they represent the best in educational excellence in Illinois, they also are key to the state’s future economic well-being. The Commission applauds their success and salutes their families and the teachers at Triad High School on this achievement.”

School



CUSD 10 Board of Education members and administrators, Caseyville Public Library District trustees and staff as well as representatives from FGM Architects and Holland Construction pose for the ceremonial groundbreaking of the new Caseyville Elementary School.

(Continued from Pg. 1)

According to a press release from CUSD 10, the new school’s design provides an ADA compliant state-of-the-art learning environment with larger classrooms. The new school will also have sufficient space for support services, a modern gym/cafeteria, dedicated conference room, improved restrooms and better air quality.

In addition, organized pick-up and drop-off areas for cars and buses will improve traffic flow around the school during peak hours, per the release.

Plans for the lobby will feature a huge mural using images of Caseyville students and positive messages shared in both English and Spanish. The goal is to reflect on the spirit of the community and school district, according to the release.

Plans are also in the works to build a new Caseyville Public Library alongside the new school. The side-by-side structures represent a partnership between CUSD 10 and the Caseyville Public library District to better serve the Caseyville community.

Ashley Stewart, library director for Caseyville Public Library District explains the impact of city government and community working together for the greater good of the community.

“This building project is an example of the interconnected systems framework in action,” Stewart said. “Progress is made when local governments share the same vision and work together to meet the needs of the community.”

Stewart also pointed out that services and resources for city residents are provided in a coordinated and coherent way and the impact is viable.

The original Caseyville Elementary School was built in 1935, with additions added in 1948 and 1951-61. Important infrastructure updates and recent demographic trends needed to make the school



Caseyville Public Library District trustees and staff strike a pose for the ceremonial groundbreaking of the new Caseyville Elementary School.



CUSD 10 Board of Education members and administrators pose at the new site of the Caseyville Elementary School.

compliant with modern day learning led CUSD 10 leaders to explore options to finance and construct a new building.

The current library was built in 1998, and sits just outside the existing Caseyville Elementary grounds on Second Street. CUSD 10 acquired the library property through an intergovernmental agreement. Following the official deed transfer in Jan. 2022, part of the intergovernmental agreement between the district and the library is a long term lease agreement for the use of the current building and new facility.

Funds for the new school campus came from local and grant funding. The projected cost of the project is \$20 million. Work on the construction site began in Dec. 2022 and is expected to take about 18

months to complete. FGM Architects designed the campus and Holland Construction will serve as the construction manager.

The endeavor to build a new school from the ground up is the first kind in CUSD 10 since the Collinsville Middle School was built in 2003. Caseyville Principal Chelsea Clark said that this is not only a privilege, but a steady demonstration of support from district administrators and the board of education.

“Their dedication to make this a reality and bring our dreams and needs to fruition is greatly appreciated by all,” Clark said. “I am excited to see the transformation of Caseyville Elementary School today, and the future possibilities that it will provide our students and staff for years.”



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