One of the fastest growing counties in the United States

Will County, Illinois

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Will County 2017 Year in Review

What A Year!

Will County breaks ground on new State-of-the-Art Courthouse

Will County officials gathered to break ground on the county’s new modern courthouse on Dec. 19. The state-of-the-art courthouse will be filled with the latest technology and will accommodate the county’s predicted growth.

“Will County has experienced record growth over the past 20 years and we are proud to be able to build this new courthouse to serve our residents,” said Will County Executive Larry Walsh. “We have worked together with all the stakeholders to advance this project from a concept to reality.”

The new courthouse will be 10-stories and will contain 38 courtrooms. There will also be a four-story administrative building directly in front of the tower which will house the Circuit Clerk and Sheriff offices. Non-court functions will be handled in the administrative building.

“As our population has grown, so has the need for additional courtrooms,” said Chief Judge Richard Schoenstedt. “Our current courthouse served us for 48 years. We anticipate the new courthouse will serve our population for at least that long.

Added Walsh, “Part of the county’s largest capital campaign in its history, the new courthouse will keep Will County in pace with the 21st century.”
Will County – Year End Review

2017 was a great year in Will County. We saw the completion of several new programs and exciting studies that will help shape the future of our county.

All of these new efforts are focused on our primary objective: serving the residents of Will County and being responsible stewards of taxpayer dollars. We have been very successful doing more with less and we are committed to continuing to provide the best services possible.

Will County is moving forward and preparing for our projected population of more than 1 million people by 2040. We are being recognized on a national level for our efforts and are proud to be an example to other counties across the state and the nation.

Please enjoy this look back at the examples that made 2017 a great year in Will County.

Will County Safe Passage Initiative; New program to connect opiate users with treatment

The Will County Executive’s Office was pleased to announce the launch of the Will County Safe Passage Initiative, another critical strategy to reduce the number of heroin deaths in the county. The Mokena, Lemont, Lockport and Braidwood Police Departments are working together with the county to establish the Safe Passage Initiative that will connect opiate users with treatment providers.

www.willcountyillinois.com/County-Offices/Special-Services/Substance-Use-Initiative

Will County receives funding for Community Friendly Freight Mobility Study

Will County accepted $750,000 in funding from the Illinois Department of Transportation to support a comprehensive freight study that will help guide future planning and decision making regarding the continued growth of the freight industry in Will County. The Will County Community Friendly Freight Mobility Study seeks to be a holistic planning approach covering freight mobility, land use integration, workforce development and community livability.

www.willcountyfreight.org

Will County recipient of five-year DHS grant to reduce opioid overdose deaths

Will County received a five-year grant from the Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS). DHS is the recipient of a federal grant from SAMSHA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) to reduce the number of prescription drug/opioid overdose-related deaths.

With the support of the Will County Board, Dr. Kathleen Burke was hired as full-time project director to expand the availability of Narcan, a powerful antidote that can reverse a heroin overdose; continue educational efforts across the county and within the school system; and establish long-term sustainability of the project.

www.willcountyillinois.com/County-Offices/Special-Services/Substance-Use-Initiative

Will County chooses new Director of Transportation; Former Director Bruce Gould retires after 40 years with county

At the February meeting of the Will County Board, longtime employee Jeff Ronaldson was named Director of Transportation, replacing Bruce Gould who retired after 40 years of service to the county. Continued on page 3
Ronaldson has spent his entire career with the Will County Division of Transportation, joining the county upon graduation from the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana in June 1997. Ronaldson worked directly under Gould for more than 19 years where he learned firsthand how to manage the county’s growing highway department.

Will County Adopts 2040 Plan; Long Range Transportation Plan identifies multimodal priorities
At the March meeting of the Will County Board, members voted to adopt the Long Range Transportation Plan known as Will Connects 2040. This plan will be a blueprint to transform the county’s transportation plan over the next 22 years.

The Will Connects 2040 plan outlines the investment priorities for county roadways. These projects will move forward based upon existing and anticipated revenues through 2040 while maintaining the funding commitment to existing county roads.

Will County launches emergency preparedness smartphone app; Ready Will County will enable residents to create portable emergency plan
The Will County Emergency Management Agency has announced the launch of a new emergency preparedness smartphone app titled Ready Will County. This application will enable residents to create and manage personal emergency plans in the palm of their hands.

The Ready Will County app allows users to create individual and family emergency plans, which include important data such as emergency phone numbers. The app contains information on local hazards including tornadoes, terrorism events, and public health emergencies. During emergencies, maps can be turned on to provide information on important information such as road closures and shelter locations. The map also shows locations of local police and fire stations. www.willcountyema.org

Will County lauded for effectively ending homelessness among veterans; Success attributed to local and federal partnerships
The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Department of Veterans Affairs has confirmed that the Will County Continuum of Care has effectively ended homelessness among veterans in the county.

In 2016, 59 veterans, who averaged 58 days of homelessness, were connected to permanent housing in the local community. Since the beginning of 2017, 45 veterans have been connected to permanent housing in the county.

Illinois – The beginning of America’s Mother Road; New pocket guide highlights iconic destinations in Illinois along historic Route 66
A partnership between Will County and the Heritage Corridor Convention and Visitors Bureau (HCCVB) has produced a new pocket guide which highlights locations along the Illinois portion of historic Route 66. The guide gives a detailed listing of restaurants and other iconic sights along the first interstate roadway in the United States.

Also known as Main Street of America, Route 66 was established in 1926 and runs from Buckingham Fountain in Chicago, through Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, Continued on page 4
Arizona, ending in Santa Monica, California. The 2,448 mile highway served as a major path for people moving to the West. The new pocket guide highlights local points of interest along this route.

Will County participates in Governor Rauner’s Opioid Task Force listening tour

Lt. Governor Evelyn Sanguinetti and Illinois Department of Public Health Director Nirav Shah co-chaired a public hearing by the Governor’s Opioid Prevention and Intervention Task Force in Chicago. The task force is visiting communities across the state in search of information and partners to further the state’s Opioid Action Plan in response to the state’s escalating opioid overdose epidemic. Will County’s Director of Substance Use Initiatives Dr. Kathleen Burke was invited to be part of a panel to discuss the county’s response efforts.

Will County passes 2018 budget; Board makes further cuts to county departments

At the Nov. 16 meeting, Will County Board members voted unanimously to accept the 2018 budget. The $556 million budget reflects a lower tax rate of .5933 percent. Due to a $2.4 million shortfall in revenue from the State, the budget the County approved includes significant spending cuts in each county department. The budget funds future infrastructure and capital projects while maintaining county services.

Will County raises Illinois Bicentennial flag celebrating 200th birthday

Will County Executive Larry Walsh and other local officials honored the 200th birthday of the State of Illinois by raising the Illinois Bicentennial flag at the Will County Office Building, 302 N. Chicago St. in Joliet. A yearlong celebration will commemorate the state’s milestone birthday.

The official birthday of the state of Illinois is Dec. 3, 1818. The event marked the beginning of the yearlong campaign, Born Built, & Grown, which will honor the people, places, and things that make Illinois strong, kind, and beautiful. Numerous flag-raising events occurred simultaneously across the state.

Will County reaches top tier solar designation by The International City/County Management Association

Just five short months after being named the only entity in Illinois to be named a SolSmart community, Will County has achieved Gold Level, the highest level of the 2017 SolSmart program, an initiative funded by the U.S. Department of Energy, a national effort to drive down the cost and regulatory obstacles of home and business solar practices. Continued on page 5

MWC schedule

Workforce Services Division of Will County’s Mobile Workforce Center stops in six communities each week.

The mobile unit travels throughout Will County to help residents with resume development, cover letters and job applications.

With the exception of holidays or maintenance, the schedule is as follows:

It will be at Fountaindale Public Library, 300 W. Briarcliff, Bolingbrook, from 9:30 a.m. to noon and from 1 to 3:30 p.m. Mondays.

The unit will be at University Park Village Hall, 698 Burnham Drive, from 9:30 a.m. to noon and from 1 to 3 p.m. Tuesdays.

Plainfield Public Library, 15025 S. Illinois St., Plainfield, will host MWC from 9:30 a.m. to noon and from 1 to 3:30 p.m. Wednesdays.

MWC can be found at the Wilmington Public Library District, 201 S. Kankakee St., Wilmington, from 9:30 a.m. to noon and from 1 to 3 p.m. Thursdays.

It will be at Frankfort Public Library District, 21119 S. Pfeiffer Road, from 9:30 a.m. to noon Fridays. It will be at Mokena Community Public Library, 11327 W. 195th St., Mokena, from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

For additional information about the Workforce Services Division of Will County or the Mobile Workforce Center, go to www.jobs4people.org.
Cadence Premier, Illinois Trucking Association partner with Will County VAC

The Will County Veterans Assistance Commission received a donation from Cadence Premier Logistics and the Illinois Trucking Association. Two semi-trailers filled with water, diapers, cleaning supplies and other items were delivered to the Joliet Armory for distribution to veterans living in Will County.

“This is a perfect gift for our veterans at the holiday season,” said Will County Executive Larry Walsh. “We are grateful to the incredible generosity of Rocky Caylor and Cadence Premier Logistics and the Illinois Trucking Association for gathering these important supplies for the benefit of our veterans.”

Caylor said Cadence wanted to do something to “give back” to Will County, where the company operates its intermodal center. Caylor said he reached out to Walsh for ideas and Walsh suggested working with the Veterans Assistance Commission (VAC).

“Larry’s suggestion of assisting local veterans was a great idea,” Caylor said. “We collected more than 40,000 pounds of goods for our veterans. I served in the United States Marine Corps for six years and I am happy to do anything I can to help our veterans.”

For more information about the VAC, call (815) 740-8389.

Will County was named a Bronze designee in July 2017 for its commitment to developing solar energy options to reduce utility costs and support the environment. The county’s Land Use Department simplified the zoning ordinance language around residential and utility-scale solar with “Alternative Energy” listed on the building permit application.

www.willcountygreen.com

Minooka teen wins America Recycles Day contest

JOLIET – A long ago accident led to a community event to help Ronald McDonald House charities and now to its new collector-in-chief winning the 2017 Will County America Recycles Day photo contest.

Brayden Caraynoff-Haber, 13, of Minooka was presented a refurbished iPad 2 by Will County Executive Larry Walsh for the winning entry.

Ten years ago his sister, Caitlynn Caraynoff, took a hard fall from her bike that resulted in her needing 71 brain surgeries. Their mother, Kelly Caraynoff, stayed in seven Ronald McDonald Houses.

A couple years later, Kelly’s middle son, Alex Caraynoff, decided he wanted to do something to give back to Ronald McDonald House, and he started a recycling effort to benefit the organization.

2018 NEW YEAR NEW LAWS IN ILLINOIS

A brand new year brings a list of new laws. Here are highlights of a few:

Barack Obama Day: Designates Aug. 4 of each year as Barack Obama Day in honor of our 44th president. (SB0055)

Protecting Employees’ Online Privacy: A new law will broaden the 2013 law that prohibits employers or prospective employers from requiring employees or applicants to disclose user names or passwords for social media accounts. (820 ILCS 55)

Providing Homes for Retired Police Dogs: Police K-9 officers will have the first opportunity to adopt their four-legged partners when the dogs retire. (SB3129)

Organ donor registry: Lowers the age of those in the First Person Consent organ and tissue donor registry from 18 to 16. (HB1805)

For a complete list of the new laws, visit the website: www.ilga.gov/.

Will County Executive Larry Walsh, Brayden Caraynoff-Haber and Recycling Specialist Marta Keane

Now Caitlynn, 21, is an EMT and Alex, 19, is a student at Penn State, leaving Brayden in charge of the recycling effort.

The endeavor has grown to involve 45 large collection bins throughout Channahon, where the family has Kidz Korner Daycare, Joliet, Minooka, Morris and Shorewood. There are smaller containers at the Bridgeview Fire Department where Brayden’s father, Rick Haber, works, and at his part-time job, Advanced Critical Transport in Brookfield.
This year is off to a great start in Will County. Our new Public Safety Complex is up and running. Noticeable work has begun on the new county courthouse and private sector job creation in Will County has been recognized as a leader in the region.

Will County remains attractive to people looking for a safe, affordable area to raise a family and to companies looking to start or expand their business.

Will County is also recognized for our ability to work together to get things done. We would not be as successful as we are without the bipartisan, cooperative environment we have all worked hard to foster.

As we look to the rest of 2018, there are many more successes on the horizon. We will see substantial progress on the courthouse and hope to begin plans for a new health department.

Things have moved very fast for Will County in the 21st century and county government is charged with providing the best services possible while being responsible stewards of taxpayer dollars. I am proud we are keeping the faith of our constituents as we keep our county moving forward.