

Second Quarter 2020 WGLT ISSUES AND PROGRAMS

April 2020 – June 2020

The following issues were addressed during WGLT Newscasts during MORNING EDITION from 5 to 9 am M-F and during ALL THINGS CONSIDERED from 3-6PM, M-F, The story lengths range from one minute to six minutes.

Health and Medicine

[Red Cross Offers COVID-19 Antibody Tests After Donating Blood](#)

By [Christopher Stoinev](#) • Jun 17, 2020

The American Red Cross has a new way to encourage blood donation: Anyone who donates also will be tested to see if they have developed COVID-19 antibodies.

The Red Cross on Monday began testing donors for COVID-19 antibodies in the hope that more people would offer to donate. The test has been authorized for emergency use by the FDA.

Red Cross officials say donation is especially important now that hospitals are starting to resume surgeries and other treatments that require blood.

[Complaints Filed Against Pizza Ranch For Premature Reopening](#)

By [Charlie Schlenker](#) • Jun 12, 2020

Three complaints have been filed against Pizza Ranch in Bloomington for [opening indoor food service](#) ahead of the end of the month target in the Restore Illinois pandemic recovery plan.

Indoor Restaurants Start To Open In B-N

By [Charlie Schlenker](#) • Jun 11, 2020

Some Twin City restaurants have not waited until the recommended end of June to reopen indoor dining.

ISU Plans Fall Term With Fewer Students In Dorms

By [Charlie Schlenker](#) • May 28, 2020

Up to 1,000 Illinois State University students who would normally live in residence halls may have to rent apartments for the fall semester. ISU President Larry Dietz said Thursday that's one social-distancing goal.

B-N Businessman Pivots To Temperature Scanners To Ease Reopening

By [Ryan Denham](#) • May 28, 2020

A Bloomington businessman says his new company's temperature scanners may help speed up reopening the economy by giving workers and customers peace of mind.

Historical Parallels In B-N To 1918 Flu Pandemic

By [Charlie Schlenker](#) • May 26, 2020

The influenza pandemic of 1918 claimed the lives of some 600,000 Americans and perhaps more than 50 million people worldwide. Bloomington-Normal also felt profound effects.

McLean County Museum of History Librarian and Archivist Bill Kemp said you could hardly think of a worse year for that flu disaster to happen.

[Birth Center Sees More Interest From Expectant Moms During COVID-19](#)

By [Ryan Denham](#) • May 22, 2020

Birth Center of Bloomington-Normal

Those running a standalone birthing center in Bloomington-Normal say they've seen increased interest from expectant moms who have concerns about delivering at a hospital because of COVID-19.

[Health Board Asks For Resource Estimate To Reopen](#)

By [Charlie Schlenker](#) • May 22, 2020

The McLean County Board of Health neither endorsed nor rejected the [11-county Heart of Illinois plan](#) to reopen businesses during the pandemic, but during a nearly three-hour meeting Thursday night members expressed reservations and pointed out unknowns.

[Parsing Executive Order Enforcement Not Easy For McLean County](#)

By [Charlie Schlenker](#) • May 11, 2020

The McLean County state's attorney and sheriff said it's not so easy to say how they will enforce executive orders from Gov. JB Pritzker.

[Regulators Check Boxes On Carle-BroMenn Deal](#)

By [Charlie Schlenker](#) • May 8, 2020

Urbana-based Carle is closer to acquiring Advocate BroMenn and Eureka Healthcare.

[McLean County Reaches 99 Coronavirus Cases; Plans More Testing Outreach](#)

By [Eric Stock](#) • May 1, 2020

McLean County health officials announced four new coronavirus cases on Friday to bring the county's total to 99.

[Back To Work: B-N Doctors Prepare For Elective Procedures To Resume](#)

By [Ryan Denham](#) • May 1, 2020

Robert F. Bukaty / AP

A major part of Bloomington-Normal's health care system—elective procedures—will resume this month. But don't expect to see a flood of pent-up surgeries on Day 1.

[Rural Illinois Not Immune To COVID-19 Impacts, Despite Fewer Cases](#)

By [Eric Stock](#) • Apr 30, 2020

Leaders and residents in many rural counties in Illinois have begun to push back against Gov. JB Pritzker's stay-at-home order. The response has been a mix of frustration, fear of economic harm, and the contention that their communities are largely free of COVID-19.

[Illinois Deaths Above Average - Not in McLean County](#)

By [Charlie Schlenker](#) • Apr 29, 2020

In some areas of the country, demographers point to so-called hidden deaths from the pandemic. Those are deaths far above expected average death rates, even considering confirmed COVID-19 fatalities.

[Crisis Hotline Sees Spike In Calls As Pandemic Continues](#)

By [Eric Stock](#) • Apr 29, 2020

A crisis hotline in Bloomington is handling a sharp increase in calls as anxiety grows due to the pandemic.

[Statewide Confirmed COVID-19 Cases Close to 42,000](#)

By [Charlie Schlenker](#) • Apr 25, 2020

McLean County reported [one new confirmed cases of COVID-19](#) on Saturday while the state logged 2,119 new cases and 80 additional deaths. Two of those deaths were in central Illinois: one in Macon County, the other in Kankakee County.

[Far From COVID-19, Eye Care Businesses Put On Hold](#)

By [Ryan Denham](#) • Apr 20, 2020

[Hospitals aren't the only](#) parts of the health care industry hurting in Bloomington-Normal.

[One More COVID-19 Case Brings McLean County To 83](#)

By [Eric Stock](#) • Apr 17, 2020

McLean County health officials announced one more COVID-19 case on Friday, bringing the county's total to 83.

[Bike Shops Pedal Through Pandemic](#)

By [Charlie Schlenker](#) • Apr 16, 2020

This time of year is usually a peak period for bicycle stores as warmer weather prompts central Illinois residents to buy a set of wheels or fix up what they have in the garage. Gov. JB Pritzker's shutdown order designates bicycle stores as essential businesses. And even with the pandemic, the bicycle business is, well, peaking as usual.

[Davis Doubts ACA Enrollment Move Would Help](#)

By [Charlie Schlenker](#) • Apr 15, 2020

Many Democratic governors and a few Republican ones have called on the federal government to re-open the enrollment period for Affordable Care Act insurance programs.

U.S. Rep. Rodney Davis is skeptical whether that would do much.

"I think it's obviously open to discussion, but let's not kid ourselves, just opening up the ACA is not going to provide affordable health care coverage to people who are going to have to pay outrageous amounts on the exchanges," said Davis, the incumbent Republican in the 13th Congressional District.

[State Expands Digital Medical Access For Suspected COVID-19 Cases](#)

By [Charlie Schlenker](#) • Apr 11, 2020

Gov JB Pritzker / Facebook

State officials have set up digital medical programs with several partner outlets for people with COVID-19 symptoms to keep them in their homes until advanced medical services might be needed.

[HHS Funding Continued For Bloomington COVID-19 Test Site](#)

By [Charlie Schlenker](#) • Apr 9, 2020

U.S. Reps. Rodney Davis and Darin LaHood said Thursday federal funding to operate the regional COVID-19 testing site in Bloomington will not end on Friday as previously planned.

[Lawsuit: Release Sex Offenders Who Have Served Their Time](#)

By [Edith Brady-Lunny](#) • Apr 9, 2020

Sex offenders who have completed their sentences but are still being held in Illinois prisons should be released as part of the effort to reduce the state's prison population during the COVID-19 crisis, according to a lawsuit filed in federal court.

[Mask Makers Churn Out Protective Cough Covers In Central Illinois](#)

By [Charlie Schlenker](#) • Apr 6, 2020

Members of the [central Illinois Facebook group COVID-19 Mask Making](#) said they have already made and delivered more than 1,000 masks to dialysis centers, long-term care facilities, rural hospitals, and other healthcare outlets.

[Bloomington Mayor: Please Get Serious, People - Now!](#)

By [Charlie Schlenker](#) • Apr 4, 2020

The mayor of Bloomington said Saturday evening he plans to issue an executive order expanding police power to ticket those who assemble in large numbers or who fail to abide by social distancing practices ordered by Gov. JB Pritzker to slow the flickering progress of the coronavirus through the population.

[When Health Issues Become Politicized, Public Learning Falls Like A Rock](#)

By [Charlie Schlenker](#) • Apr 1, 2020

“This week is critical,” said Illinois Wesleyan University Professor Greg Shaw.

[Illinois Considers Temporary Roles For Student Nurses To Help With COVID-19 Fight](#)

By [Ryan Denham](#) • Apr 1, 2020

The dean of Illinois State University’s nursing college says she supports a plan being considered to temporarily allow graduating seniors to enter the workforce early to help during the coronavirus pandemic.

[Addiction Relapse Risk Rises As Coronavirus Isolation Continues](#)

By Sarah Nardi • Mar 30, 2020

Millions of Americans struggling with addiction rely on the support of groups like Alcoholics Anonymous. But due to the strict social distancing measures of COVID-19, many groups have suspended face-to-face meetings. The changes in procedure have some experts worried that people in recovery may be at risk.

[Birth Center Sees More Interest From Expectant Moms During COVID-19](#)

By [Ryan Denham](#) • May 22, 2020

Those running a standalone birthing center in Bloomington-Normal say they've seen increased interest from expectant moms who have concerns about delivering at a hospital because of COVID-19.

[Back To Work: B-N Doctors Prepare For Elective Procedures To Resume](#)

By [Ryan Denham](#) • May 1, 2020

A major part of Bloomington-Normal's health care system—elective procedures—will resume this month. But don't expect to see a flood of pent-up surgeries on Day 1.

[Some OSF Employees To Face Unpaid Leave As Revenue Sinks](#)

By [Ryan Denham](#) & [Charlie Schlenker](#) • Apr 7, 2020

OSF HealthCare said Tuesday that some employees will be forced to take unpaid leave or use their paid time off as the system faces a substantial decline in revenue tied to the coronavirus pandemic.

[GOP Chair Raises Concerns With Business Boycott List](#)

By [Ryan Denham](#) • Jun 26, 2020

UPDATED 5:45 p.m. | Two Bloomington City Council members on Friday denied creating or endorsing a so-called "boycott list" of conservative-owned businesses, after facing criticism from the McLean County Republican Party chair.

[Davis, LaHood Vote Against Police Reform Bill; Support GOP Plan Instead](#)

By [Ryan Denham](#) & [Claudia Grisales](#) • Jun 26, 2020

House Democrats made good on their plans to respond to a national outcry for reform of the nation's law enforcement departments, with the chamber on Thursday [approving wide-ranging efforts to overhaul the way police do their jobs](#).

[New Guidelines Lay Out How Illinois Schools Can Reopen In August](#)

By [Ryan Denham](#) • Jun 23, 2020

Students will be allowed to return to K-12 schools for in-person instruction in August, state officials said Tuesday as they released guidelines for how that will work.

[Rep. Davis Pushes 'Compromise Bill' On Health Insurance After Job Loss](#)

By [Ryan Denham](#) • May 28, 2020

U.S. Rep. Rodney Davis said he wants Congress to do more to help people who have lost their job afford health insurance through COBRA—just not as part of a larger coronavirus relief package supported by Democrats.

[Child Care Options Expand With Next Phases of Restore Illinois](#)

By [Maureen Foertsch McKinney](#) • May 27, 2020

Child care facilities will be able to operate again once Illinois enters the [third phase of its reopening plan](#), which is expected Friday.

Workers Compensation Bill Passed In House

By [Mike Smith](#) • May 25, 2020

Workers who caught COVID-19 on the job will be eligible for workers compensation benefits.

Fact Check: Pritzker Off The Mark With Explaining Bloomington Testing Site Closure

By [Ryan Denham](#) • May 12, 2020

As Bloomington-Normal residents scratch their heads about [why their local drive-through COVID-19 testing site is closing](#) this week, Gov. JB Pritzker has offered inaccurate and incomplete information about why the state is doing it.

Governor Unveils Plan To Open Up The State, With Caveats

By Bill Wheelhouse • May 5, 2020

On the same day the state announced a record number of COVID-19 deaths, [Gov. J.B. Pritzker released a five-part regional plan](#) that would allow parts of the state to open up to more activity in the coming weeks and months.

Sen. Brady: Return To Springfield Could De-Escalate Stay-At-Home Order Tensions

By [Ryan Denham](#) • May 1, 2020

One of Illinois' top Republicans said Friday that bringing lawmakers back to Springfield could help de-escalate mounting tensions over the governor's stay-at-home order.

[Judge Rules Against Pritzker's Stay-At-Home Order](#)

By [Sam Dunklau](#) & [Mary Hansen](#) • Apr 27, 2020

UPDATED 7:05 p.m. | A Clay County judge is lifting Illinois' extended stay-at-home order for a single state representative.

[Pritzker Extends Stay-At-Home Order But Loosens Restrictions](#)

By [Ryan Denham](#) • Apr 23, 2020

Gov. JB Pritzker on Thursday extended his stay-at-home order for another month, although state parks, golf courses, and more businesses will be able to open with certain restrictions. Face-coverings will also be required in public indoor spaces.

[Pritzker: Looking For 'The Right Balance' Before Re-Opening The State](#)

By Sean Crawford • Apr 22, 2020

With a week to go before Illinois' stay-at-home order is set to expire, Gov. JB Pritzker said there are some areas the state needs to improve before lifting restrictions.

[McLean County Democrats, Libertarians Choose New Party Chairs; GOP Leader Re-Elected](#)

By [Ryan Denham](#) • Apr 16, 2020

Nikita Richards claimed victory Wednesday and will take over as chair of the McLean County Democrats heading into the November election.

[Democratic Party Chair Hopeful Wants To Use Expertise To Ease Growing Pains](#)

By [Ryan Denham](#) • Apr 14, 2020

A second candidate running for chair of the McLean County Democrats says she would tap into her expertise in organizational management to limit growing pains in a party still feeding off the election of President Donald Trump four years ago.

[McLean County Political Parties Gather \(But Not In Person\) To Choose Next Leaders](#)

By [Ryan Denham](#) • Apr 14, 2020

UPDATED 8:45 a.m. | Things will be a little different Wednesday when McLean County's political parties choose their leaders for the next two years.

[Scott Black Won't Seek 3rd Term On Bloomington Council](#)

By [Eric Stock](#) • Jun 26, 2020

Scott Black has announced he won't be seeking a third term on the Bloomington City Council next year.

[City Council Meeting Rescheduled After Technical Issue](#)

By [Joe Deacon](#) • Jun 22, 2020

The Bloomington City Council meeting that was scheduled to take place virtually Monday night was rescheduled to 7:30 p.m. Wednesday.

[B-N Mayors: Combating Racism Begins With Support For Youth](#)

By [Breanna Grow](#) • Jun 18, 2020

Both Bloomington and Normal's mayors agree: To address systemic racism in the Twin Cities, start by investing in young people of color.

[Normal Water Rate Increase Pushed Back Again](#)

By [Joe Deacon](#) • Jun 15, 2020

While Normal residents will start seeing higher utility bills next month, a planned water rate increase has been delayed another three months.

After narrowly adopting an amendment proposed by Karyn Smith, the town council voted unanimously Monday night in favor of an ordinance implementing the previously approved water, sewer and waste collection fees. Smith's amendment pushed the water fee increase to Oct. 1, while the other fee hikes will take effect July 1.

[Complaints Filed Against Pizza Ranch For Premature Reopening](#)

By [Charlie Schlenker](#) • Jun 12, 2020

Three complaints have been filed against Pizza Ranch in Bloomington for [opening indoor food service](#) ahead of the end of the month target in the Restore Illinois pandemic recovery plan.

[Protests And Riots Dissimilar But Not Unconnected](#)

By [Charlie Schlenker](#) • Jun 10, 2020

Recent looting in Bloomington-Normal and in many states since the death of George Floyd may have something in common with race riots of the 1960s.

[City Council Addresses Police Reform, Race Relations](#)

By [Joe Deacon](#) • Jun 8, 2020

Bloomington Mayor Tari Renner stressed public safety remains the city's top priority while pledging to improve law enforcement practices. City Council member Jenn Carrillo advocated for a complete overhaul of police departments.

[McLean County Board Tables HOI Reopening Plan Resolution](#)

By [Breanna Grow](#) • May 28, 2020

After nearly two hours of discussion, McLean County Board members voted 12-8 Thursday night to table a [resolution to implement the Restore Heart of Illinois plan](#).

[Bloomington May Close Streets For Business Expansion During Pandemic](#)

By [Eric Stock](#) • May 25, 2020

The Bloomington City Council votes Tuesday on a plan to allow the city manager to temporarily close streets, city parking lots and alleys to

allow for businesses to expand their outdoor footprint during the pandemic.

[B-N Lawmakers Pan State Budget](#)

By [Charlie Schlenker](#) • May 24, 2020

The Illinois General Assembly passed a \$40 billion state budget along party-line votes Saturday night in the House and early Sunday morning in the Senate: 68-44 in the House and 37-19 in the Senate.

[Health Board Asks For Resource Estimate To Reopen](#)

By [Charlie Schlenker](#) • May 22, 2020

The McLean County Board of Health neither endorsed nor rejected the [11-county Heart of Illinois plan](#) to reopen businesses during the pandemic, but during a nearly three-hour meeting Thursday night members expressed reservations and pointed out unknowns.

[Bloomington Council OKs Plan To Prorate Liquor Licenses](#)

By [Joe Deacon](#) • May 11, 2020

Some Bloomington restaurants and bars are getting the chance to have the cost of their liquor licenses reduced.

[Normal's First Recreational Cannabis Dispensary Opens For Business](#)

By [Charlie Schlenker](#) • May 11, 2020

A half-dozen people lined up to buy McLean County's first recreational cannabis at the first opportunity Monday morning.

[ISU President Asks For Budget Cut Planning](#)

By [Charlie Schlenker](#) • May 11, 2020

Illinois State University President Larry Dietz has asked staff to plan for budget cuts of 10% and 20%. In a message to staff who plan budgets at several levels, Dietz said the guidance to develop the scenarios comes amid uncertainty of state support and the impact of the pandemic on future costs.

[McLean County Mail-In Ballot Legislative Proposal Advances](#)

By [Charlie Schlenker](#) • May 6, 2020

National debate over expanding mail-in ballot efforts has come to McLean County.

[Normal Projecting \\$10M Hit From COVID-19](#)

By [Joe Deacon](#) • May 4, 2020

Projections made by the Town of Normal's finance department anticipate a \$10.4 million loss in the general fund, but officials say a strong fiscal position entering the pandemic will enable the town to get through the economic downturn.

[Sen. Brady: Return To Springfield Could De-Escalate Stay-At-Home Order Tensions](#)

By [Ryan Denham](#) • May 1, 2020

One of Illinois' top Republicans said Friday that bringing lawmakers back to Springfield could help de-escalate mounting tensions over the governor's stay-at-home order.

[Davis And Brady Call For Phased Downstate Lift Of Pritzker Order](#)

By [Charlie Schlenker](#) • Apr 28, 2020

Central Illinois lawmakers have reacted to a lawsuit by a southern Illinois state representative by pointing to what it might influence rather than any legal result it might have.

[Speakers Call On City Council to Reconsider Direct Aid Proposal](#)

By [Joe Deacon](#) • Apr 28, 2020

The Bloomington City Council heard presentations Monday night from several social service agencies addressing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as numerous citizens upset over last week's vote against a possible direct aid program.

[Bloomington Passes Budget With Room For Adjustment](#)

By [Breanna Grow](#) • Apr 22, 2020

With a unanimous vote, no public comment and little discussion beyond praise for city staff, the Bloomington City Council passed the city's fiscal year 2021 budget Wednesday night.

[Normal Revokes Businesses' Liquor Licenses](#)

By [Joe Deacon](#) • Apr 20, 2020

The new owners of two video gambling businesses in Normal will need to apply for new liquor licenses after the town revoked the current permits.

[Bloomington Estimates \\$5-10 Million Financial Hit From Pandemic](#)

By [Charlie Schlenker](#) • Apr 20, 2020

“The city is in a good position, but it’s not in a great position,” City Manager Tim Gleason said Monday night in terms of the city withstanding the economic impact of COVID-19.

[Bloomington Council Not Ready For Direct Aid To Pandemic Needy](#)

By [Charlie Schlenker](#) • Apr 20, 2020

Bloomington City Council members signaled by a 5-4 vote Monday night they are not in favor of approving direct payments to people disadvantaged by the pandemic shutdown.

[Rep. Brady, Local Economic Leaders Outline Available Employment Assistance](#)

By [Breanna Grow](#) • Apr 15, 2020

During a public conference call Tuesday night, state Rep. Dan Brady, R-Bloomington, said his office has been inundated with calls from individuals and businesses looking for help applying for unemployment benefits through the [Illinois Department of Employment Security](#).

Fond Remembrances Of Former Agriculture Director And State Rep. Gordon Ropp

By [Charlie Schlenker](#) • Apr 14, 2020

A giant of Illinois agriculture has died. Former state representative, state agriculture director and longtime 4-H booster Gordon Ropp was 87 years old.

Bloomington Extends Broadened Package Liquor Rules To Clubs

By [Joe Deacon](#) • Apr 13, 2020

Club organizations like the VFW can now offer delivery and curbside pickup of alcohol in Bloomington.

The City Council granted the permission during its virtual meeting Monday night, voting to modify the local emergency order approved on March 26. The amendment extends the temporary curbside and delivery alcohol allowance for restaurants and bars to club liquor license holders during the state's shelter-in-place directive.

Central Illinois Congressmen Highlight Business Aid For Next Relief Bill

By [Charlie Schlenker](#) • Apr 13, 2020

Two Central Illinois congressmen said they expect debate over a [fourth coronavirus disaster recovery bill](#) to be bipartisan, though they also preferred GOP drafts originating in the Senate.

HHS Funding Continued For Bloomington COVID-19 Test Site

By [Charlie Schlenker](#) • Apr 9, 2020

U.S. Reps. Rodney Davis and Darin LaHood said Thursday federal funding to operate the regional COVID-19 testing site in Bloomington will not end on Friday as previously planned.

[Bloomington Mayor: Please Get Serious, People - Now!](#)

By [Charlie Schlenker](#) • Apr 4, 2020

The mayor of Bloomington said Saturday evening he plans to issue an executive order expanding police power to ticket those who assemble in large numbers or who fail to abide by social distancing practices ordered by Gov. JB Pritzker to slow the flickering progress of the coronavirus through the population.

Higher Education

[In Letter, ISU Faculty And Staff Say Reopening Plan Comes Up Short](#)

By [Ryan Denham](#) • Jun 30, 2020

UPDATED 3:05 p.m. | A [letter circulating Tuesday among employees and students](#) argues that Illinois State University's draft reopening plan does not do enough to protect campus—or the Bloomington-Normal community at large.

[IWU Struggles Over Identity And Academic Offerings](#)

By [Charlie Schlenker](#) • Jun 25, 2020

Some faculty members at Illinois Wesleyan University are questioning a process that could lead to further program changes and cuts next month. The stakes could be as high as their jobs. Some faculty also frame the discussion as a defining moment for the culture and identity of the 170-year-old liberal arts institution.

The more-than-yearlong effort to help IWU adjust to a new reality in higher education has created winners and losers, some yet to be determined, and more than a little heartache and grief.

[Faculty, Staff Concerns Emerge As ISU Moves Toward Reopening](#)

By [Ryan Denham](#) • Jun 18, 2020

Illinois State University students are set to return to campus in less than two months—and some faculty are raising concerns about the risk to their own health and whether they've had enough input in the reopening plan.

[ISU's 'New Normal' Takes Shape With Reopening Plan](#)

By [Ryan Denham](#) • Jun 10, 2020

Illinois State University will welcome students back to campus in August but could push many larger classes online and finish face-to-face instruction before fall break, according to a preliminary reopening plan released Wednesday.

[Cop-Turned-Ph.D. Explores Links Between Police Training, Confidence, And Excessive Force](#)

By [Ryan Denham](#) • Jun 4, 2020

Whether you work in an office, drive a forklift or teach kindergarten, the more confident you are in your training, the better you'll perform. Confidence can make it more likely you'll try harder or conquer adversity. A lack of confidence can make you skittish and impair decision-making.

It's the same with police officers.

[ISU Plans Fall Term With Fewer Students In Dorms](#)

By [Charlie Schlenker](#) • May 28, 2020

Up to 1,000 Illinois State University students who would normally live in residence halls may have to rent apartments for the fall semester. ISU President Larry Dietz said Thursday that's one social-distancing goal.

[2 Students Sue ISU Over Fee Refunds During Pandemic](#)

By [Ryan Denham](#) • May 26, 2020

UPDATED 2 p.m. | Two freshmen have filed a lawsuit claiming Illinois State University did not refund enough of their mandatory student fees after abruptly shifting to online-only classes because of COVID-19.

[State Panel To Explore How To Reopen Colleges, Universities](#)

By [Bill Wheelhouse](#) • May 15, 2020

Colleges and universities in Illinois want their campuses to be open to students in the fall, after classes were forced online in March due to COVID-19. A state panel is going to recommend the best approach for the fall semester.

[Surprise Parade Sends B-N College Grad Into Life's Next Challenge](#)

By [Tiffani Jackson](#) • May 14, 2020

This spring, college seniors across the country have faced a graduation experience like never before. For Markus Brooks of Bloomington, his support system helped him push through.

[ISU President Asks For Budget Cut Planning](#)

By [Charlie Schlenker](#) • May 11, 2020

Illinois State University President Larry Dietz has asked staff to plan for budget cuts of 10% and 20%. In a message to staff who plan budgets at several levels, Dietz said the guidance to develop the scenarios comes amid uncertainty of state support and the impact of the pandemic on future costs.

[ISU To Offer Graduation Online](#)

By [Charlie Schlenker](#) • May 2, 2020

Illinois State University said it will offer online commencement ceremonies this year for its approximately 4,327 spring graduates. The

university said it expects to award about 3,601 undergraduate diplomas and 726 graduate degrees in two ceremonies May 8-9. There are usually five such in person ceremonies during [graduation weekend](#). This year those were disrupted by the coronavirus pandemic.

[As Colleges Decide Fall Plans, Students Could Face Tough Choice](#)

By [Tiffani Jackson](#) & [Ryan Denham](#) • Apr 29, 2020

University leaders across the country face a difficult decision in the coming weeks about whether they can safely reopen their campuses in the fall.

If the answer is no, college students will have a choice of their own.

[Colleges Struggle To Plan Amid Pandemic Uncertainty](#)

By [Darnysha Mitchell](#) • Apr 29, 2020

Central Illinois colleges and universities have no surety in how the next academic year will develop. The pandemic has forced them to plan for a wider range of contingencies than usual, everything from a "regular" school year with in-person classes, to socially distanced courses, to all online.

[ISU Proposes Zero Tuition And Room Increase For Fall](#)

By [Charlie Schlenker](#) • Apr 25, 2020

Illinois State University staff has proposed no tuition or room and board increase for the fall semester. Trustees are likely to vote on the proposal next month.

[Heartland VPs: Enrollment Down, Financial Footing 'Solid'](#)

By [Joe Deacon](#) • Apr 22, 2020

While summer and fall enrollments at Heartland Community College are down about 20%, administrators believe those numbers may improve and the college remains financially sound.

[Coronavirus Rescue Package To Send Millions To ISU, IWU](#)

By [Ryan Denham](#) • Apr 15, 2020

A new estimate suggests the \$2 trillion coronavirus rescue package will send enough money to Illinois State and Illinois Wesleyan universities to help make up for losses from refunded room and board fees.

[IWU Prepares To Cut, Add And Reprioritize Programs](#)

By [Charlie Schlenker](#) • Apr 8, 2020

Illinois Wesleyan University has sent the results of a faculty-driven evaluation of its academic programs to students and families. The exercise includes significant changes that could result in layoffs.

[Heartland Cancels In-Person Commencement](#)

By [Joe Deacon](#) • Apr 1, 2020

Heartland Community College will not hold a traditional graduation ceremony this spring, opting instead for a virtual alternative commencement amid the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak.

Education and Schools

Living Black in Bloomington-Normal: Jayana Fennell

By [Jon Norton](#) • Jun 28, 2020

Bloomington native Jayana Fennell is a Normal Community West High School graduate. She's currently a junior telecommunications major for video production at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana. She's also minoring in French. She spoke with Jon Norton for WGLT's series [Living Black in Bloomington-Normal](#). [Contact us if you'd like to be featured in the series](#).

Living Black in Bloomington-Normal: Christopher Belt

By [Jon Norton](#) • Jun 28, 2020

Christopher Belt is an English teacher at Normal Community High School. The Normal native spoke with Jon Norton for the WGLT series [Living Black in Bloomington-Normal](#). [Contact us if you'd like to be featured in the series](#).

Mask Requirement Is Key Concern As Schools Digest Reopening Guidelines

By [Ryan Denham](#) • Jun 24, 2020

McLean County school districts have a lot of decisions to make now that the [state has released its guidelines](#) for reopening. But one thing they

agree on: Requiring kids to wear a mask all day every day at school is going to be a challenge.

[New Guidelines Lay Out How Illinois Schools Can Reopen In August](#)

By [Ryan Denham](#) • Jun 23, 2020

Students will be allowed to return to K-12 schools for in-person instruction in August, state officials said Tuesday as they released guidelines for how that will work.

[Unit 5 Makes Big Tech Purchase For Students, Teachers](#)

By [Charlie Schlenker](#) • Jun 17, 2020

The Unit 5 school district will buy nearly 8,000 tablets, laptops and Chromebook computers and try to get them into the hands of students and teachers for the new school year.

[Building Crews Stay Busy During Pandemic](#)

By [Eric Stock](#) • Jun 15, 2020

Many buildings in Bloomington-Normal have largely sat idle for months during the pandemic, but maintenance crews still have work to do and in some cases they've taken advantage of the time to work ahead.

[Normal West Students Finish Strong At National Cybersecurity Competition](#)

By [Andie Bernhardt](#) • Jun 12, 2020

Normal Community West High School students and their teacher say the first year participating in a new program aimed at getting more girls interested in cybersecurity was a success—capped off by a strong showing in a national competition.

[IWU Preps For 'Enormous Challenge' If Students Return To Campus In Fall](#)

By [Eric Stock](#) • Jun 8, 2020

Illinois Wesleyan President Georgia Nugent said the university is preparing for at least some online instruction in the fall because of the pandemic that has kept the campus closed since March.

[Heartland Plans In-Person, Online, Zoom Mix In Fall](#)

By [Eric Stock](#) • Jun 2, 2020

Heartland Community College has announced plans to bring some students back to campus in the fall and offer more online interaction with faculty.

[Public TV Partners With Regional Educators On Distance Learning Channel](#)

By [Charlie Schlenker](#) • May 20, 2020

Peoria Public TV and regional offices of education in central Illinois are starting a distance learning television channel.

[District 87 Seeks \\$15 Million Bond To Cover COVID-19 Impacts](#)

By [Eric Stock](#) • May 13, 2020

District 87 is looking to issue \$15 million in working cash bonds to cushion the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“In anticipation of the uncertainty, we are looking for make sure we have adequate funds in the bank to be able to cover our expenses,” said Colin Manahan, the district's chief financial and facilities officer. “We’re just concerned about cash flow. We are concerned about the ability to collect property tax revenue. We are concerned about being able to meet payroll expenses.”

[As Colleges Decide Fall Plans, Students Could Face Tough Choice](#)

By [Tiffani Jackson](#) & [Ryan Denham](#) • Apr 29, 2020

University leaders across the country face a difficult decision in the coming weeks about whether they can safely reopen their campuses in the fall.

If the answer is no, college students will have a choice of their own.

[El Paso Teacher Sees Growth In Online Learning Post Pandemic](#)

By [Eric Stock](#) • Apr 23, 2020

School closings caused by COVID-19 have pushed nearly all learning online.

[District 87 To Contest Mall Tax Appeal; Name New Raymond Principal](#)

By [Eric Stock](#) • Apr 22, 2020

District 87 is contesting two property assessments that could impact the school system's share of tax revenue.

[ISU Teacher Educator Sees Room For Equity On Long Road Back From Coronavirus](#)

By [Ryan Denham](#) • Apr 21, 2020

An Illinois State University education professor says the coronavirus has magnified the existing inequities in schools that should have been addressed years ago.

[Schools To Remain Closed For Rest Of The Semester](#)

By [Ryan Denham](#) & AP • Apr 17, 2020

Gov. JB Pritzker has ordered schools throughout the state to remain closed for the rest of the semester because of the threat of the coronavirus.

[Young B-N Students Give Mixed Review To E-Learning](#)

By [Jon Norton](#) • Apr 17, 2020

Turns out kids do miss school. Well, most of them.

[Unit 5, District 87 To Benefit From Coronavirus Rescue Package](#)

By [Ryan Denham](#) • Apr 1, 2020

Unit 5 and District 87 school districts are each expected to receive \$1.6 million from the [coronavirus rescue package](#) signed into law last week.

Civil Rights

Protests And Riots Dissimilar But Not Unconnected

By [Charlie Schlenker](#) • Jun 10, 2020

Recent looting in Bloomington-Normal and in many states since the death of George Floyd may have something in common with race riots of the 1960s.

A Dialogue On Race Begins With Police In Bloomington-Normal

By [Sarah Nardi](#) • Jun 9, 2020

“You probably don’t know this, but a broken tail light is a black man’s biggest fear.”

Around the table, people were silent as Otis Evans Jr. described what it’s like to be a black man in America.

After Public Meeting, Black Lives Matter To Announce Revamped Priorities

By [Breanna Grow](#) • Jun 7, 2020

For Ky Ajayi, it hasn't just been a long week. It's been a long three years.

[Bloomington Mayor Renner Shoved By Crowd Before Looting](#)

By [Charlie Schlenker](#) • Jun 2, 2020

Bloomington Mayor Tari Renner said he was pushed to the ground and a man tried to hit him with his fist near Kohl's about 10:30 p.m. Monday. Renner said he had tried to engage a group of people in dialogue.

[Connect Transit To Shut Down Early](#)

By [Charlie Schlenker](#) • Jun 1, 2020

Bloomington-Normal's bus service will halt service early the next two days. Connect Transit said public and employee safety drove the decision to suspend service at 7 p.m. Monday and Tuesday.

[Impassioned Crowd Confronts Sheriff At Jail After Rally](#)

By [Charlie Schlenker](#) • May 31, 2020

After a [demonstration](#) and [injury of a marcher](#), dozens of demonstrators gathered Sunday night outside the McLean County sheriff's department on the west side of the Law and Justice Center in downtown Bloomington.

[B-N NAACP Calls For Dialogue, Justice Amid Recent Shootings](#)

By [Charlie Schlenker](#) • May 10, 2020

The Bloomington-Normal branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is speaking out against two recent high-profile killings of African Americans and calling for dialogue during a virtual town hall meeting next week.

[Lawsuit: Release Sex Offenders Who Have Served Their Time](#)

By [Edith Brady-Lunny](#) • Apr 9, 2020

Sex offenders who have completed their sentences but are still being held in Illinois prisons should be released as part of the effort to reduce the state's prison population during the COVID-19 crisis, according to a lawsuit filed in federal court.