

# Southern Illinois News



January 2026



## Southern Seven Health Department and Head Start announces new executive director

Southern Seven Health Department and Head Start is pleased to announce the appointment of Jennifer Parks as its new Executive Director.

Jennifer Parks has been a dedicated leader within Southern Seven for many years, serving most recently as the Early Childhood Administrator and Interim Co-Executive Director. Her leadership has guided the agency through critical transitions, strengthened community partnerships, and supported the continued delivery of high-quality health and early childhood services across the seven southernmost counties of Illinois.

In her new role as Executive Director, Parks will oversee all public health, WIC, environmental health, health education, and Head Start/Early Head Start operations. She will lead the agency's long-term strategic initiatives focused on expanding access to family services, enhancing early childhood outcomes, and maintaining excellence in public health programming throughout the region.

"I am honored to serve the communities of Southern Illinois in this capacity," said Parks. "Southern Seven



has a long history of supporting children, families, and public health. I am committed to strengthening our programs, supporting our dedicated staff, and ensuring our agency continues to be a trusted resource for the people we serve."

The Southern Seven Health Department Board expressed confidence in Parks' vision, professionalism, and commitment to the agency's mission of promoting health, safety, and school readiness for all families in the region.

Southern Seven Health Department is a public health department that serves communities of the seven southernmost counties in Illinois focusing on disease prevention, promoting healthy lifestyles, ensuring access to healthcare services, and serves as the Head Start Grantee for the region.

## Training at Camp Ondessonk prepares Outdoor Education Team to visit Catholic schools

By Tony Vrooman  
Camp Ondessonk

Camp Ondessonk recently hosted a week-long Promotions Training designed to sharpen one mission-critical skill: communicating the value of Camp to Catholic school communities with clarity and confidence.

Led by Tony Vrooman, Senior Director of Communications, alongside Jess Horvath, Program and Hospitality Director, and Isabelle Linn, Program Coordinator, the training functioned like a graduate communications course with a practical outcome.

Each Outdoor Education staff member developed and refined a presentation explaining why students in Catholic schools benefit from Camp Ondessonk Summer Camp programs.

This was not a "read the brochure" approach. Staff were coached to translate Camp's mission into outcomes that matter to educators and families, including student confidence, healthy independence, friendship, leadership development, and stewardship rooted in faith. The training emphasized how to speak to different audiences, from principals and priests

to parents and PSR leaders, while staying consistent, accurate, and inviting.

Throughout the week, the team strengthened the fundamentals of effective presentations. They practiced message structure, storytelling, and delivery. They refined visuals and key talking points. They rehearsed responses to common questions, including safety, program fit, cost, and what sets Camp Ondessonk apart for Catholic families. The result is a repeatable presentation framework that can be adapted to different grade levels and school cultures without losing its

core message.

Now the work goes on the road. Camp Ondessonk Outdoor Education staff will be visiting more than 100 schools across four states, helping Catholic school communities understand how Summer Camp can support formation, joy, and belonging for their students.

If you have a Catholic school or PSR program you would like Camp Ondessonk to visit and present to, contact us at [camp@ondessonk.com](mailto:camp@ondessonk.com).

Visit <https://ondessonk.com/summer-camp/> to learn more about Camp Ondessonk Summer Camp Programs.

## SIC Forensic Falcons earn top community college honor at UIndy 500 Speech Competition

HARRISBURG, Ill. (Dec. 9, 2025) -- The Southeastern Illinois College Forensic Falcons brought home the title of Top Community College after competing at the UIndy 500 Speech Competition on Saturday, Dec. 6, at the University of Indianapolis.

More than a dozen colleges and universities from Ohio, Indiana, Missouri and Illinois participated in the tournament. Despite not taking a full squad, SIC held its own in a competitive field that differed from the traditional community college circuit.

"University competitions can be super difficult. It's an entirely different can of worms from the community college circuit," said sophomore Frankie Messerschmidt. "Our team really showed

see **SPEECH**,  
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SIC Forensic Falcons competed in the UIndy 500 last weekend. Pictured (l-r) are Frankie Messerschmidt (Harrisburg), Tristyn Franks (Gallatin Co.), Dacey King (Pope Co.), Jenann Woods (Marion), Mary Floyd (Pope Co.), Christopher Webb (Pope Co.), Callie Belford (Hardin Co.), and Gracie Miller (Harrisburg).



# Putting farm waste to good use

Agricultural waste poses a challenge for farmers, even if the subject does not garner a lot of attention outside of rural areas. Farms generate enormous amounts of organic waste, including crop residues, fruit peels, sawdust, and livestock manure. Farmers must decide how to get rid of agricultural waste legally and economically.

If not disposed of properly, farm waste can pollute the environment, particularly the air and waterways like rivers and streams. It is best for everyone to mitigate agricultural waste to create further hazards. Farmers may not have considered recycling some agricultural waste, but it is a way to transform this potential hazard into something that can be used on the farm itself or sold commercially. The following are some considerations for putting farm waste to good use.

**Compost**  
Animal waste, crop residues and additional organic material can be combined to create nutrient-rich compost. Compost is utilized to improve soil structure, fertility and water retention. This helps reduce reliance on chemical fertilizers. By investing in large-scale composting tools, farmers can process hundreds or even thousands of tons of organic matter each year. While some can be used on the farm, the excess can be sold at a profit.

**Biogas**  
Biogas production is carried out through a process known as anaerobic digestion (AD). The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency says AD involves bacteria breaking down organic

matter, such as animal manure, wastewater biosolids and food wastes in the absence of oxygen. As the bacteria digest the waste, they generate biogas, which is mostly comprised of methane. Capturing biogas can reduce greenhouse gas emissions on a farm, and the biogas can be turned into a renewable energy source to power electricity, heating or transportation, according to Prime Dumpster Incorporated.

**Digestate**  
Anaerobic digestion does not only produce biogas. Digestate is the solid and liquid effluent remaining after the process, says the EPA. Digestate can be used

in many applications, including animal bedding, fertilizers and a foundation material for creating bioplastics and other bio-based products.

**Recycling**  
Certain items used on farms cannot be turned into compost or fertilizer. However, recycling containers, tires, cardboard, rubber, and plastics offers the potential for these products to be made into new items. Western Packaging says recyclable items can be kept separate from other waste so they can have new life outside of landfills. Seeing farm waste as an asset and not a problem can help farmers save money and resources.

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The 30th ANNUAL SPRING FARM CONSIGNMENT AUCTION will be an online auction through [DASONLINEAUCTIONS.HIBID.COM](https://dasonlineauctions.hibid.com). All equipment will be lined up and staged at the Warwick County 4-H Center as usual. We will not be accept: hand tools, boxed lots, tires, or small barn and garage related items that are usually lined up along the barn. DAS has the writer refusal of any Merchandise Items will be lined up and staged outside in the order they come in the commission is on a sliding scale per each item and a \$15 fee will be charged for each item with a title.

DAS WILL TAKE CONSIGNMENTS FROM SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28 THROUGH THURSDAY, MARCH 5 FROM 7 AM TILL 5 PM.  
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# USDA announces commodity payment rates for farmer Bridge Assistance Program

(Washington, D.C., – Recently, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke L. Rollins announced the next phase in the Farmer Bridge Assistance Program (FBA), the eligible commodity per-acre payment rates.

As announced earlier this month by President Trump and Secretary Rollins, \$12 billion will be paid to American farmers in 2026. Of that amount, \$11 billion consists of one-time FBA program payments.

This is in response to four years of disastrous Biden administration policies that created record-high input and production costs, zero new trade deals, and a forgotten rural America.

“President Trump committed to increase certainty in the farm economy, and farmers can count on these payment rate calculations when going to the bank as they plan for the spring planting season. Putting Farmers First means delivering real relief when it matters. Farmers who qualify for the FBA Program can expect payments in their bank accounts by February 28, 2026,” said Secretary Brooke Rollins.

“These one-time payments give farmers the bridge to continue to feed and clothe America and the world while the Trump Administration continues opening new markets and strengthening the farm safety net. USDA is making this process as simple and seamless as possible so producers can focus on what they do best – feeding and fueling our nation.”

*Eligible Row Crop Commodities and Payment Rates:*

Below are the payment rates for the FBA eligible commodities that triggered a payment.

Commodity, Per Acre Payment Rates

- Barley: \$20.51
- Canola: \$23.57
- Chickpeas (Large): \$26.46
- Chickpeas (Small): \$33.36
- Corn: \$44.36
- Cotton: \$117.35
- Flax: \$8.05
- Lentils: \$23.98
- Mustard: \$23.21
- Oats: \$81.75
- Peanuts: \$55.65
- Peas: \$19.60
- Rice: \$132.89
- Safflower: \$24.86
- Sesame: \$13.68
- Sorghum: \$48.11
- Soybeans: \$30.88
- Sunflower: \$17.32
- Wheat: \$39.35

*Eligibility, Program Applications, and Crop Insurance Linkage*

FBA payments are

based on 2025 planted acres, Economic Research Service cost of production, and the World Agriculture Supply and Demand Estimate Report. Double crop acres, including all initial and subsequently planted crops, are eligible. Prevent plant acres are not eligible.

All intended row crop uses are eligible for FBA except grazing,

volunteer stands, experimental, green manure, crops left standing and abandoned or cover crops.

Crop insurance linkage is not required; however, USDA strongly urges producers to take advantage of the new risk management tools provided for in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) to best protect against

future price risk and volatility. The OBBBA federal crop insurance improvements include expanding benefits for beginning farmers and ranchers, increasing coverage options, and making crop insurance more affordable.

*Specialty Crop Assistance*

Of the \$12 billion being provided by the

Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act, up to \$11 billion is being directed to eligible row crop producers and the remaining \$1 billion of the \$12 billion in assistance is reserved for specialty crops and sugar. Timelines for payments to producers of these crops are still under development and require additional understanding of

market impacts and economic needs. Producers, including specialty crop producers and stakeholder groups, can submit questions to [farmerbridge@usda.gov](mailto:farmerbridge@usda.gov).

More information FBA is available online at <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/fba> or you can contact your local USDA FSA county office.



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# VICTORIOUS *Living* ...in a troubled world

## Light Exposure

By **Brandon Bramlett**  
Pastor - Bandana Baptist Church

Skunk spray is easy to smell, but difficult to see. When we lived in Murray, Kentucky, our dogs were sprayed by the gag-inducing gas (nothing out of the ordinary), and I had difficulty expelling the odor from our home because I couldn't tell where it was. I could no longer endure identifying it with my nose,

so I purchased an ultraviolet flashlight to do so. Because the flashlight emits fluorescent rays that detect mold, pet urine, and other stains, I thought skunk spray (which is an oil) would undoubtedly glow neon green under its light.

Unfortunately, it did not. However, when I strolled around the house with the handheld light, it uncovered spots and stains I never saw

before. It highlighted tiny specks of food residue near the trash can and small drip lines of condensation by the stovetop fan. The light exposed grime I could not see with the naked eye. And, while I was frustrated to discover that we had even more to clean than before, I am grateful that the light revealed previously unseen dirt. Don't buy an ultraviolet flashlight unless you

are prepared to break out the Clorox for a thorough cleaning! The blazing light of holy Scripture also exposes grime we cannot see with the naked eye. The Holy Spirit uses the Bible to reveal stains that we would never detect by ourselves. When you read and study God's word, it shines a brilliant beam on sin's residue in your heart and life. Paul wrote, "But all things become visible when they

are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light" (Ephesians 5:13). Apart from Scripture's radiant light of truth shining upon us, we will stumble in the darkness of evil and error. The psalmist declared, "The unfolding of your words gives light" (Psalm 119:130). Solomon likewise proclaimed, "For the commandment is a

lamp and the teaching a light, and the reproofs of discipline are the way of life" (Proverbs 6:23). The light of Scripture does not uncover our sins so the Lord may see them, for even "our secret sins [are] in the light of your presence" (Psalm 90:8). Instead, the Bible's gleaming light exposes our sins so we can see them for what they truly are.

## Being honest with God and ourselves

Dr. Billy Holland

In the field of psychology, cognitive dissonance is the perception of contradictory information and the mental toll of it. Relevant items of information include a person's actions, feelings, ideas, beliefs, values, convictions, and things that are going on all around us. Cognitive dissonance is typically experienced as mental and emotional stress when an individual participates in an action that goes against what they know is right. According to this theory, when two desires or ideas are not consistent with each other, people will try to justify and compromise until they become consistent enough to be accepted. This discomfort is triggered by the person's knowledge clashing against new information when it's introduced, wherein the individual tries to find a way to resolve the contradiction to reduce their guilt. This might sound like a lot of

psychological gobbly goop, and you might be asking, what does all of this have to do with me and the way I live? I'm glad you asked. We all have a lot of personal and secret thoughts going on in our minds and how we deal with it goes a long way toward being a more stable, balanced, and spiritually content person. I'm not excited about it, but we are constantly exposed to negative voices and influences that we might consider, but I hope we refuse. The point is coming to the place where we are honest with God and ourselves. Many of our headaches and anxieties are self-inflicted and our temptations often come from areas where are weak and vulnerable. The devil has been watching us for a long time and there is no reason for him to stop using tactics against us that are always successful. Take for example, we know that we should stop wasting so many hours each day playing on our phones and television, but we do it anyway. Why?



Because we want to. Of course, if we really believe this is a serious problem, we would turn them off, but instead, it's much easier to ignore it with a compromising and enduring attitude. This is cognitive dissonance. The general idea of living on purpose is to examine every aspect of our lives and develop a desire to become the best version of ourselves we can be. Or in other words, it should be important to us that we are the person that Jesus died for us to be. The subconscious discomfort we are talking about is an

internal misery that does not need to be a part of our lives. We want peace and the more we please God and follow His voice, the less we are convicted and condemned for our willful disobedience. We realize we need to take control of our mental and spiritual condition instead of allowing our fleshly desires and emotions to control us. In the same way that Adam and Eve were ashamed in the Garden, we also feel that guilt when we do not obey what God is saying. It's an illusion to expect spiritual joy, and contentment to fall

out of the sky. Rather, since we have been given free will to make our own decisions, our destiny has everything to do with whose voice we follow. This is not to say that God does not have a plan for us or fails to intervene, but much of the time He blesses what we give Him. Our responsibility to serve Him is refusing sin and being willing to guard our most precious assets...our mind, spirit, and the Holy Spirit within us. What about how we feel about food and its association with our weight? Some analyze every bite and go to the gym to

maintain a healthy lifestyle. Counting calories gives them the security to know they are being good. Others could care less about being healthy and are willing to take as many medications as necessary to maintain their existence. Those who smoke realize it's linked to cancer, but are convinced they can get away with it. The same is true with alcoholism. And what about the ones who secretly watch pornography and then try to secretly justify their behavior? Whatever our vices and struggles, our contradictions are trying to convict and warn us. God sees and knows everything, and when His truth does not line up with our actions, asking Him for help is the best decision we could ever make. ----- Dr. Holland is an ordained Christian minister, community chaplain, and author. Discover more about the Christian life at [billyhollandministries.com](http://billyhollandministries.com). You can help support this ministry at PayPal. Me/psalmz103

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.



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International Field Cultivator - Hydraulic folding, hydraulic raise and lower, 5 bar drag harrow  
John Deere 922F Platform Head - 22 Ft. cutting width, metal snouts, poly reel, SN:H00922F635286  
Custom Built Header Dart - Lights, rear hitch  
1978 Ford 8000 Grain Truck - 260,988 miles, tri axle, 1 lift axle, Cat engine, tarp, VIN:U80DVBA8541  
Ficklin 400 Gravity Wagon - Center dump, front & rear ladder, Pro-Lock tarp, lights, Killbros running gear  
Bradford 225 Gravity Wagon - Side dump, lights, rear hitch  
Ficklin 400 Gravity Wagon - Center dump, lights, rear ladder, Killbros running gear with hitch  
HAMMER & GUMP 225 Gravity Wagon - Side dump, unload auger, rear lights, rear hitch  
1989 Ford C8000 Truck - 29,599 miles, Cab and chassis truck, Cat 3208 Engine, manual transmission, this truck is from the Pittsburg fire department, dually, cab, heat, air, VIN:1FDYD80UXKVA29435  
White 6100 28% Applicator - 8 row, 36in spacing, 500gal poly tank  
Hay Wagon - 16 Ft X 7 Ft, rear rack  
Remlinger 500 Harrowgator - 16 Ft working width, 3 Ft wings, hydraulic raise and lower  
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# Summer Camp

## Getting Ready for Summer Camp this Winter

By Whitney Strang  
Director of Development

During the cold winter months, warm summer days feel far away. With three excited Ondessonk campers this year, we are using the early months of the year to ensure everyone is ready for Summer Camp when the time comes. I've found myself leaning heavily on the Parent Resources page on Camp Ondessonk's website, which has been an invaluable guide as our family gets ready.

One of the first things on our checklist to tackle this winter was swimming. Knowing my three campers are very excited to swim in the lake, I want all of them to feel confident and ready to complete the swim assessment early, with a lifeguard, or when they arrive. We signed them up for winter swimming lessons so they can



build skills and stamina now, setting them up to fully enjoy swimming and the Shawnee Screamer once summer rolls around.

We're also working on a "Camp nighttime routine" at home. Since electronic devices aren't allowed,

we're practicing falling asleep without TVs or music. We'll use small fan or a noise machine to help recreate the natural sounds they'll hear at night, and we've been encouraging them to get comfortable sleeping in complete darkness. Each

child is keeping a flashlight by their bed to practice finding and using it at night, something I know will come in handy at Camp.

To help with homesickness, we're easing into time away from home. A sleepover or two

with a trusted friend has been a great way to build confidence and independence, especially for my first-time campers. It's reassuring to see how capable they are when given the chance.

We're also planning a weekend trip to Camp Ondessonk

so my oldest can spend the night in a treehouse unit. Having that familiarity before the summer begins feels like a big step in helping him feel prepared for this next chapter of his Camp journey.

Finally, I've made sure to sign up for the first Learning More About Camp Webinar on February 11 to help answer any questions my campers have.

Ensuring campers are prepared for Camp isn't just about packing; it's about building skills, confidence, and excitement. Between the Parent Resources page, webinars, and a little preparation at home, I feel confident my kids will be ready for Camp. I know that as we drive down the Camp Road this summer, they'll be ready for the adventure, friendships, and growth that await them.

# Refuge volunteers needed

Stuck in a rut? Looking for something meaningful to do? Enjoy the outdoors? This opportunity may be just the thing you are looking for.

The Friends of Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge are looking for volunteers to help with maintenance at the Refuge. The Refuge

Staff has been cut to the bare bones and are relying on volunteers to help keep the Refuge up and running. Workdays are typically held once a month during the week, and generally, in the mornings. Activities could include trail maintenance, trimming and mowing, trash pick up, invasive species removal, helping at

special events, and other odd jobs that may come up. Native garden maintenance is also a possibility. Tools are supplied by the Refuge.

If you think you might be interested or have any questions, please contact Nancy Gehlhausen at naturegirl.gehlhausen@gmail.com.

Please help us make a difference.



**HAPPY NEW YEAR**

Time flies in the company of good friends, and we're so pleased to be welcoming another new year here with all of you. Thanks for giving us so much to celebrate!

We hope you'll continue to count on us in the year ahead. **Serving our students is a pleasure, and we look forward to making new memories together in 2026!**

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**SPEECH**, from page 1

up and stood their ground.”

Messerschmidt, of Harrisburg, advanced to the Communication Analysis Finals—referred to as Rhetorical Criticism at UIndy—and placed fifth. Teammate Tristyn Franks, of Gallatin County, also reached the Rhetorical Criticism Finals, finishing sixth and earning the Top Novice award for the

highest-placing freshman in the event. Gracie Miller, of Harrisburg, broke into Prose Finals and placed sixth.

The Forensic Falcons will resume competition in January 2026 as they prepare for the Phi Rho Pi National Tournament in April in Bethesda, Maryland. SIC's team is coached by Jenny Billman, Rachel Parish, and Angie Dunk.



USDA News

USDA advances Farm Security Action Plan to protect U.S. Farmland and Federal programs from foreign adversaries

Washington, D.C., – As committed to under USDA’s National Farm Security Action Plan (PDF, 1.2 MB) U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke L. Rollins today announced a number of coordinated actions to continue to emphasize American agricultural research and innovation by ensuring ideas stay in America or among our allies, not with hostile nations and that we are putting American farmers and ranchers first in every USDA program, period.

These historic actions strengthen transparency around foreign ownership of U.S. agricultural land and ensure federal programs and purchasing preferences do not support supply chains controlled by foreign adversaries. The actions include opening up an Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM) on the Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) to allow the public an opportunity to comment as USDA moves to improve the regulation and strengthening the implementation of USDA’s BioPreferred Program to ensure federal programs and purchasing preferences prioritize American producers and manufacturers and rid out foreign adversaries.

“Strengthening national security starts with knowing who owns our farmland and where federal dollars are flowing,” said Secretary Rollins. “These actions close long-standing gaps in oversight and enforcement by improving transparency around foreign land ownership and ensuring USDA programs support American farmers and manufacturers, while prioritizing domestic supply chains – not foreign adversaries.”

AFIDA  
Modernization



AFIDA requires foreign investors who acquire, transfer, or hold an interest in U.S. agricultural land to report such holdings and transactions to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). USDA’s National Farm Security Action Plan (PDF, 1.2 MB) calls for aggressive implementation of reforms to the AFIDA process including improved verification and monitoring of collected AFIDA data.

USDA seeks input on potential regulatory or other changes that may improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its AFIDA reporting and filing requirements which will result in improved tracking of foreign adversary agricultural land purchases to the public and will further enhance USDA’s Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) (PDF, 164 KB) with Treasury which memorializes cooperation on CFIUS (Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States) cases involving the transfer of agricultural land.

Foreign adversary linked entities currently control at least 277,000 acres of agricultural land in the United States. Each acre represents a threat to our food supply chains, a vector for agroterrorism, and a potential platform for surveillance and sabotage of our military bases and critical infrastructure.

BioPreferred  
Program Updates

USDA will advance the Administration’s efforts to end market-distorting subsidies for unreliable, foreign-controlled energy sources and strengthen domestic supply chains by updating the BioPreferred and Guaranteed Lending Programs, consistent with USDA’s National Farm Security Action Plan, to protect the integrity of federal purchasing and ensure American producers come first.

The BioPreferred Program supports domestic manufacturing, increases the purchase and use of U.S. biobased products to spur economic development, create new jobs and open new domestic markets for crops grown by American farmers and producers. Moving forward and effective immediately entities and products from foreign adversary countries are no longer eligible for the BioPreferred Program or USDA guaranteed lending programs. Current participants must comply with audits or risk removal.

The USDA BioPreferred Program is currently funded through September 30, 2026.

Taken together, these actions reiterate USDA’s historic commitment to American agriculture as a key element of our nation’s national security, addressing urgent threats from foreign adversaries and strengthening the resilience of our nation’s food and agricultural systems.

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# Farms contribute significantly to nation's GDP

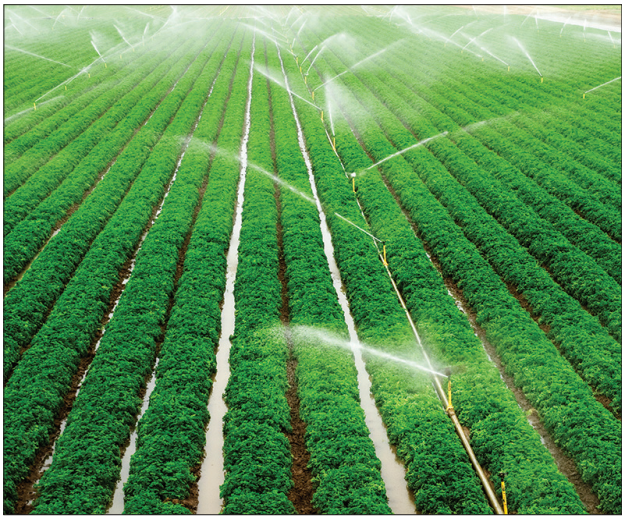
Data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis indicates the significance of farms in relation to the gross domestic product of the United States economy.

In 2023, farms contributed \$222.3 billion, or roughly 0.8 percent of the nation's GDP. Though that's a significant contribution in its own right, it only tells a small part of the role farms and farmers play in establishing a healthy national economy.

Additional sectors, such as the food and beverage industry and textiles, apparel and leather products, rely on the agricultural sector to contribute to their own success. Without a thriving agricultural sector, those industries would falter, thus creating a domino effect that could prove devastating to the nation's economy.

That link is why the BEA estimates the agricultural sector

is an even bigger contributor to the nation's GDP than it may seem. Indeed, the BEA indicates the agricultural sector, in conjunction with food and related industries, contributed around \$1.54 trillion to the U.S. economy in 2023, a contribution that accounts for roughly 5.5 percent of the nation's GDP.



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## AgTech plays big role in venture capital

Agricultural technology, often referred to as “AgTech,” is playing an increasingly bigger role on modern farms, and that role is evident when examining AgTech startups’ growing access to venture capital.

Data from PitchBook and the National Venture Capital Association’s PitchBook-NVCA Venture Monitor, a quarterly report

on venture capital activity in the entrepreneurial ecosystem, indicates that AgTech startups received \$6.1 billion in VC investments in 2024.

That reflects a nearly 60 percent increase in investment over 2019.

Weaknesses in the agricultural and food supply chain revealed during the pandemic undoubtedly

drove some of that investment.

Widespread recognition of a need for improvements within the agricultural sector so it can meet the demands of a global population that the United Nations estimates will increase by two billion people by 2050 also likely contributed to the considerable rise in VC investment in AgTech startups.

# JANUARY 13 14 15





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# How to tell if it’s a cold, the flu, COVID-19 or RSV

There’s much to look forward to at the start of winter. The holiday season starts winter off with a bang, while outdoor enthusiasts know their chances to hit the slopes and ski and snowboard are just beginning. Sports fans know January marks the return of the National Football League playoffs, while travelers who need a little winter warmth often designate February as a month to soak up some sun in a faraway locale.

With so much to do each winter, it’s especially problematic when you come down with a cold. However, winter tends to be cold and flu season in many areas, as viruses tend to spread more easily when people spend more time indoors. This winter, people may wonder if their sniffles indicate they

have a cold, the flu or a sign of something more serious, such as COVID-19 or respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). Anyone unsure of what’s behind a cold-like illness is urged to speak with their physician. In addition, the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases notes that the common cold, the flu, COVID-19, and RSV present some similar symptoms, but also some unique ones. Though each illness is complex, the frequency with which some symptoms present may indicate which issue a person is dealing with. Knowledge of those symptoms and their frequency can help people determine if the culprit behind their winter illness is a cold, the flu, COVID-19, or RSV.

- Cold**
  - Aches: Sometimes
  - Difficulty breathing: Rarely
  - Fatigue: Sometimes
  - Fever: Rarely
  - Loss of taste or smell: Rarely
  - Sore throat: Often
  - Wheezing: Rarely
- Flu**
  - Aches: Often
  - Difficulty breathing: Rarely
  - Fatigue: Often
  - Fever: Often
  - Loss of taste or smell: Rarely
  - Sore throat: Sometimes
  - Wheezing: Rarely
- COVID-19**
  - Aches: Sometimes
  - Difficulty breathing: Often
  - Fatigue: Often
  - Fever: Sometimes
  - Loss of taste or smell: Sometimes
  - Sore throat: Often
  - Wheezing: Rarely
- RSV**



- Aches: Rarely
  - Difficulty breathing: Sometimes
  - Fatigue: Rarely
  - Fever: Sometimes
  - Loss of taste or smell: Rarely
  - Sore throat: Rarely
- Wheezing: Often

Individuals who are concerned by the presence of cold- or flu-like symptoms are urged to speak with their physicians. Though many
- instances of cold, flu, COVID-19, and RSV will go away without medical intervention, each condition can pose a significant health risk in certain situations.

# The benefits of getting your flu shot

Cooler temperatures bring many things, including the arrival of fun and festive holidays. But flu season also kicks into high gear between the months of December and February.

Although flu season runs from October to May, a combination of factors during the chilliest months of winter, such as increased time indoors in close proximity to others who may be ill, tends to escalate the rates of flu infection. Also, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says cold, dry conditions make it easier for the virus to spread.

Individuals can take different steps to reduce their risk of contracting the flu, which includes frequent handwashing, keeping a distance

from others who are sick and eating a healthy diet to help boost the immune system. Getting an annual flu shot is another notable and highly beneficial strategy to beat the flu.

*Reduces risk of getting the flu*

The primary reason to get a flu shot is to train the body’s immune system to recognize and fight off the most common strains of influenza anticipated in a given year. During seasons when the shot is a good match, individuals who get it can reduce their risk of flu contraction by 40 to 60 percent.

*Lessens severity of the flu*

For those who do get the flu, being vaccinated means

the illness is likely to be less severe than it might be for those who are not vaccinated.

*Prevents serious conditions*

The flu can be dangerous

to vulnerable populations, but the virus also can lead to health problems like inflammation of the heart or brain, pneumonia, or the worsening of conditions like asthma

and diabetes. By getting the vaccine, one can reduce their risk of these serious outcomes.

*Offers protection to pregnant women*

Pregnancy increases

risks posed by the flu. The flu shot can reduce the chances of flu-related hospitalization for pregnant women. Also, the mother’s antibodies to the flu will be passed to the fetus, helping to protect the newborn baby for several months during a time when the infant is too young to be vaccinated.

*Protects kids*

A flu vaccine can significantly reduce a child’s risk of pediatric intensive care unit admission and even death from the illness.

The idea of getting pricked by a needle isn’t pleasant, but a flu vaccine is an important tool in building immunity to a common wintertime foe.



# Cervical cancer does not seem to be hereditary

Family history tends to be a risk factor for various diseases, but cervical cancer does not seem to be one of them.

A recent report in

Medical News Today noted that a person is not more likely to develop cervical cancer if a parent or close relative has had the disease.

Data from the World Health Organization indicates that roughly 70 percent of cervical cancer cases can be traced to the human papillomavirus

(HPV), which is often transmitted through sexual intercourse.

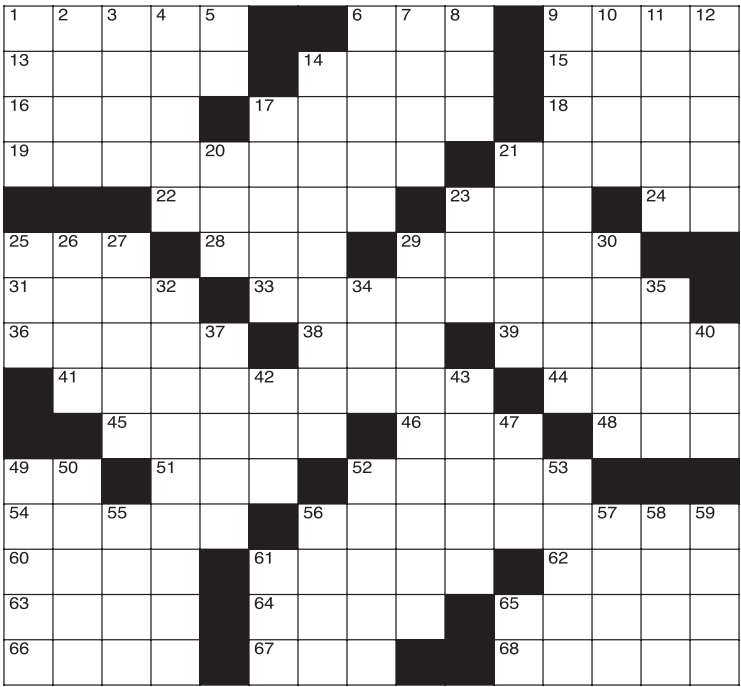
The Cleveland Clinic notes there are more than 100 types of HPV, and

some strains of the virus can lead to cervical cancer. People concerned about cervical cancer are urged to speak with their physicians

about what can be done to reduce their risk, a discussion that may include suggestions on lowering the chances of contracting HPV.



Crossword Puzzle



CLUES ACROSS

1. Lakes  
6. Electromotive force  
9. Invests in little enterprises  
13. Longtime Utah Jazz coach  
14. Small sailboat  
15. Actor Idris  
16. Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls  
17. System that detects objects under water  
18. Harsh, grating noise  
19. Steward  
21. A fencing sword  
22. Infections  
23. Actress Ryan  
24. Sodium  
25. Swedish castle  
28. A lump of slime  
29. African antelope  
31. Insurance providers  
33. Choosy  
36. Ringworm
38. Unpolished  
39. Drenches  
41. Pant style  
44. Son of Noah  
45. Spiritual being  
46. Upton Sinclair novel  
48. Journalist Tarbell  
49. Popular sports highlight show  
51. Born of  
52. Rich tapestry  
54. S. China seaport  
56. State of being unclothed  
60. Surrounded by  
61. Residue  
62. Away from wind  
63. Dried-up  
64. Visionary  
65. A very large body of water  
66. Garden tools  
67. Screen type  
68. Ancient Scandinavian poet

CLUES DOWN

1. Millisecond  
2. Spanish city  
3. A sudden very loud sound  
4. “The Indiana Jones of beer”  
5. Tin  
6. Sea eagles  
7. Volcanic crater  
8. Type of coat  
9. Women’s apartments in Ottoman palace  
10. Divulge a secret  
11. Norwegian playwright  
12. “It’s a Wonderful Life” director  
14. Poisonous perennial plant  
17. 18-year astronomical period  
20. Clothes  
21. Places to sit  
23. Family of regulator genes  
25. New York ballplayer  
26. Impressive in size or scope  
27. Jacques \_\_, French biologist
29. One from the Big Apple  
30. Genus of woolly lemurs  
32. Songs to one’s beloved  
34. Indigenous person of N.E. Thailand  
35. Supplemented with difficulty  
37. Farewell  
40. Investment account (abbr.)  
42. One from Utah  
43. Begets  
47. A male child  
49. Break apart  
50. Brief appearance  
52. Partner to “oohed”  
53. A light informal meal  
55. Fabric with smooth, shiny surface  
56. One billionth of a second  
57. Ancient Italian-Greek colony  
58. Close tightly  
59. Mail out  
61. Language  
65. Computer characteristic

PUZZLE SOLUTION



Word Search

RESOLUTIONS WORD SEARCH



Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

ANSWERS IN THIS SECTION.

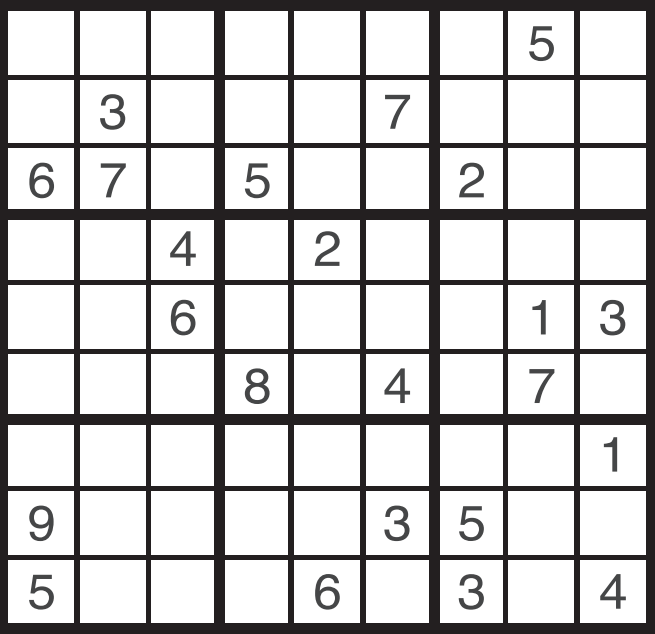
WORDS

- ACCOUNTABILITY  
ACHIEVEMENT  
ASPIRATION  
CHANGE  
COMMITMENT  
DETERMINATION  
DISCIPLINE  
FOCUS  
GOAL  
HABIT  
IMPROVEMENT  
INTENTION  
MILESTONE  
MINDSET  
MOTIVATION  
OBJECTIVE  
PERSISTENCE  
PLAN  
PROGRESS  
PROMISE  
RENEWAL  
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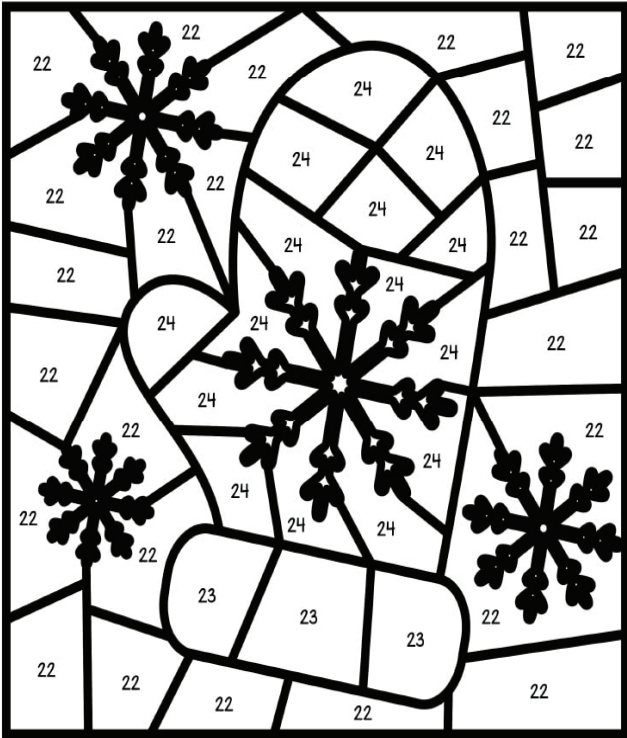
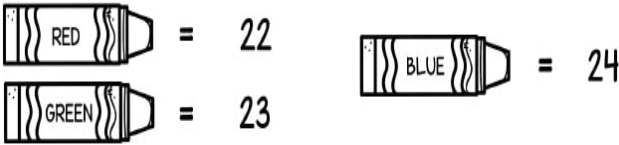
Sudoku Puzzle

How it Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle! Good Luck! **ANSWERS IN THIS SECTION.**



Coloring Fun



Word Scramble

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to resolutions.

K W O S R



Answer: Works

Guess Who?

GUESS WHO ?

I am a singer born in England on January 12, 1993. I planned on becoming an English teacher, but a chance audition as a solo artist on “The X Factor” changed my career trajectory. I was later added to a boy band by Simon Cowell.

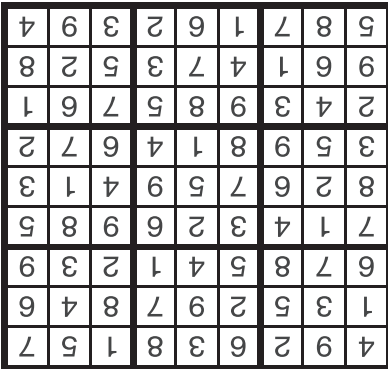
Answer: Zayn Malik

Wishing  
Everyone A  
Great 2026!

Word Search Answers



Sudoku Answers



Never, ever underestimate the importance of having fun.

— RANDY PAUSCH



# OVER 1000 USED TRUCKS IN INVENTORY ALL THE TIME!



**2026 WITZCO CHALLENGER 51 FT x 102 IN**, New 52 ton detach lowboy trailer, air ride with dump valve and lift axle, adjustable ride height, out riggers, D-rings, Honda Pony engine, chain/binder storage, factory warranty. Stk. #26WIT026NGB52.....**\$65,000**



**1997 FONTAINE 48 FT X 102 IN**, Nice 50 ton lowboy, one owner, Southern Ram/no rust, good tires and brakes, excavator package, 4 position ride height, out riggers, detachable neck, very good trailer! Stk. #97FONT50TDETLW.....**\$25,000**



**1973 ROGERS 42 FT**, Nice trailer, good tires, well built, 20 ft well, requires wet kit to detach, ground bearing detach! Detachable neck, tie downs, wood floor, all steel wheels, gross vehicle weight 85,000 lbs. Stk. #73ROG18BLOW.....**\$13,000**



**2011 PITTS 50 FT X20 IN**, Good trailer, good tires, Pony engine, 32 ft. well, 50 ton payload capacity, fixed neck, air ride suspension, tri rear axles, gross vehicle weight 124,200 lb. Stk. #11PITT519TRILOW.....**\$30,000**



**2001 TRAVIS 37 FT**, Nice trailer, good shape, roll tarp, air gate, aluminum, two speed landing gear, air ride suspension, tandem fixed axles, manual tarp, all steel wheels. Stk. #01TRAV706DUMP.....**\$15,000**



**2017 TRAILSTAR 39 FT**, Good trailer, dumps, not rusty, dump valve, air ride suspension, two way gate, aluminum, air gate, side ladder, frameless chassis, aluminum wheels, fixed axle, gross vehicle weight 80,000 lbs. Stk. #17TSTAR597DUMP.....**\$24,000**



**2005 J & J 32 FT**, Nice trailer, good tires, not rusty, electric top hinge tarp, air gate, dump valve, liner, aluminum, half round, 22.5 tires, tandem axles, gross vehicle weight 80,000 lbs., mud flaps and fenders. Stk. #05JJ046DUMP.....**\$17,000**



**2013 CEI PACER 40 FT**, Nice trailer, good tires, excellent shape, aluminum, air ride suspension, aluminum wheels, tandem rear fixed axles. Stk. #13PACE483FEED.....**\$25,000**



**2008 JET 40 FT**, Nice trailer, excellent shape, manual roll tarp, steel composition, hopper operator type, front and rear ladder, spring suspension chassis, all steel wheels, tandem rear axles, gross vehicle weight 68,000 lbs. Stk. #08JET220HOPPER.....**\$17,000**



**2011 WILSON 43 FT**, Nice trailer, roll tarp, good doors, dump valve, front and rear ladder, aluminum, two standard manual hopper, two speed landing gear, catwalk, air ride suspension, tandem fixed rear axles, GVW 65,000 lbs.. Stk. #11WIL740HOPPER.....**\$24,000**



**2013 TIMPTE 42 FT X 96 IN**, Nice trailer, good shape, dump valve, manual roll tarp, good tires, two standard hoppers, two speed landing gear, rear ladder, air ride suspension, aluminum wheels, tandem rear axles. Stk. #13TIM240HOPPER.....**\$27,000**



**2012 TIMPTE 42 FT**, Good truck, runs excellent, pre-emissions, differential lock, cruise, air gate, floats, electric tarp, GVW CLASS 8: 33,001 lbs. or greater, 22.5 tires, Chalmers suspension, very good truck! Stk. #12TIM390HOPPER.....**\$35,000**



**2003 PETERBILT 357**, Very nice truck, fleet maintained, runs excellent, air seat, tilt/tele, differential lock, dump valve, power windows, power door locks, power mirrors, heated mirrors, cruise control. Stk. #03PETE520TADUMP.....**\$30,000**



**1994 KENWORTH T800**, Good truck, runs excellent, double frame, air gate, air seat, differential lock, steerable air lift axle, pre-emissions Detroit, 425 HP, diesel, 13 speed manual Eaton-Fuller transmission. Stk. #94DET347T8TRIDUMP.....**\$27,000**



**2016 KENWORTH T880**, Good truck, runs excellent, nice bed, steerable air lift axle, double frame, full locking rears, electric tarp, air gate, nice cab, 455 HP, diesel, automatic transmission, differential lock, Southern truck not rusty. Stk. #16MX443T8TRIDUMP.....**\$90,000**



**2012 PETERBILT 348**, New truck, runs perfect, clean truck, air gate, electric tarp, air seat, differential lock, double fram, dual steerable air lift axles, new bed, 370 HP, 10 speed, walking beam, 17 ft body length. Stk. #12PETE504QUADDUMP.....**\$65,000**



**2016 FREIGHTLINER 114SD**, Good truck, runs great, very clean, 430 HP, air seat, power windows, full locking rears, power door locks. Everything about this truck is nice/bed/cab, frame no rust, super nice truck. Stk. #16DET363TADUMP.....**\$70,000**



**2011 INTERNATIONAL WORKSTAR**, Very nice truck, low miles, not rusty, Southern ran truck, air seat, differential lock, tarp, air gate, diesel, 350 HP, left hand drive, manual tarp, tandem rear axles, Allison transmission. Stk. #11740054TADUMP.....**\$45,000**



**2012 PETERBILT 365**, Good truck, runs excellent, low miles, power right window, air seat, differential lock, dump valve, heavy duty truck, Cummins engine, manual transmission, sleeper size 36 in, left hand drive, overdrive. Stk. #12PETE254FLAT365.....**\$30,000**



**2008 PETERBILT 365**, Nice truck, well maintained, runs excellent, dump valve, differential lock, sliding 5th, power right window, power mirrors, heated mirrors, tilt/tele, 445 HP, 8LL speed, flat top 30 in. sleeper, A/C. Stk. #08C13394FLAT365.....**\$24,000**



**1996 PETERBILT 379**, Good truck, runs excellent, air seat, dual exhaust, sliding 5th wheel, differential lock, dump valve, clean truck, 475 HP, dual exhaust, manual Eaton-Fuller transmission, 10 speed, air ride suspension. Stk. #96CAT379DC.....**\$35,000**



**1997 PETERBILT 379EXHD**, Good truck, runs excellent, dual exhaust, dual breathers, air seat, double bunk, differential lock, sliding 5th wheel, tilt/tele, dump valve, 10 speed, air ride suspension, manual Eaton-Fuller transmission. Stk. #97N14379.....**\$30,000**



**2009 PETERBILT 386**, Good truck, runs excellent, clean, air seats, platinum interior, full gauge package, dual exhaust, differential lock, good tires, APU! 13 speed, GVW Class 8: 33,001 lbs. or greater, Cummins engine, 450 HP. Stk. #09ISX104386.....**\$13,000**



**2013 PETERBILT 388**, Good truck, runs great, full gauge package, full locking rears, dual exhaust, dual breathers, dual air ride seats, tilt/tele, power windows/mirrors, heated mirrors, 13 speed, air ride suspension. Stk. #13MX589FLAT388.....**\$45,000**



**2022 VOLVO VNR64T300**, Very nice truck, fleet maintained! Runs excellent, air seat, tilt/tele, differential lock, dump valve, power windows, power door locks, power/heated mirrors, cruise control, 450 HP. Stk. #22AV525VNRDC.....**\$28,000**



**2020 KENWORTH T680**, Very nice truck, fleet maintained, no rust/Southern ran truck! Air seat, air brakes tilt/tele, power window/mirrors, heated mirrors, 45 HP, diesel, 12 speed, Eaton-Fuller transmission, super nice truck! Stk. #20MX535T680DC.....**\$25,000**



**2019 PETERBILT 579**, Good truck, runs great, clean, air seat, fleet maintained, no rust, very nice truck, power windows/mirrors, heated mirrors, differential lock, dump valve, A/S 5th, cruise, tilt/tele, 12 speed, left hand drive. Stk. #19MX631579DC.....**\$25,000**



**2022 FREIGHTLINER CASCADIA 126**, Very good truck, runs excellent, very clean, air seat, differential lock, fleet maintained, power windows/mirrors, heated mirrors, dump valve, 450 HP, Detroit DT12 transmission. Stk. #22DET431CASSADC.....**\$20,000**



**2019 MACK ANTHEM 64T**, Very nice truck, runs great, fleet maintained, very clean, air seat, power windows/mirrors, heated mirrors, power door locks, dump valve, differential lock, tilt/tele, 12 speed. Stk. #19621ANTHEMTADC.....**\$25,000**



**2018 WESTERN STAR 4700**, Very nice truck, runs excellent, air seat, air brakes, differential lock, dump valve, sliding 5th wheel, heated mirrors, 10 speed, tilt/tele, 196 in. wheelbase, air ride suspension. Stk. #18DET560WSDC.....**\$28,000**



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EATING WELL

Fix it and Forget it Mouthwatering Crockpot Recipes



Crockpot Barbecue Ribs

**Ingredients**  
2 cups your favorite Barbecue Sauce  
2 tbsp brown sugar  
3 cloves garlic, freshly minced  
2 tsp Worcestershire Sauce  
1 tsp cayenne pepper, optional  
4 to 5 pounds baby back ribs

**Directions**

**FIRST STEP:**  
In a zip lock bag pour in the Barbecue Sauce  
Add in the brown sugar, garlic, Worcestershire sauce and cayenne if chosen.

**SECOND STEP:**  
Zip the bag closed and using your hands to knead the bag, mix the sauce ingredients together well.  
Open the bag and stick the ribs inside

**THIRD STEP:**  
Close the bag and shake the bag to coat the ribs completely  
Spray the inside of the crock pot.

**FOURTH STEP:**  
Open the bag and place the ribs into the crock pot  
Pour ¾ of the sauce from the bag into the crock pot, making sure to cover the ribs with the sauce.

**FIFTH STEP:**  
Cook on high for 4 to 5 hours for fall off the bone meat, on low for 9 hours for fall off the bone.  
If you prefer the meat super soft, but staying on the bone, cook on low for 7 hours to fall off the bone meat.

**SIXTH STEP:**  
Have some of the sauce available for on the table, then each person can choose if they want more or not.

Enjoy!

Crockpot Hashbrown Casserole

**Ingredients**  
1 package frozen hash browns (about 2 lbs)  
1 can cream of mushroom soup, condensed  
2 cups sour cream  
1 onion, minced  
2 cups grated cheddar cheese  
1 tsp salt  
1/2 tsp pepper

**Directions**  
Mix all ingredients together and dump in a Crock Pot slow cooker.  
Cook on low for 8 hours.



Crockpot Peach Cobbler



**Ingredients**  
2 Cans of Peaches 15 oz each, DO NOT DRAIN  
1 cup Flour  
1 Cup Sugar  
1 Cup Milk  
2 tsp baking Powder  
1/2 cup Butter  
1/4 tsp Salt

**Directions**  
Melt butter and place in the bottom of your slow cooker.  
In a mixing bowl combine the remaining ingredients except the peaches  
Pour batter into the slow cooker  
Spoon peaches and syrup on top of the batter, but do not mix.  
Set slow cooker on high and cook for 1 ½ – 2 hours OR until top of cobbler is set.  
If you find you have excessive condensation, put a paper towel under the lid to reduce the moisture.  
Serve topped with ice cream and enjoy!  
Notes  
Each crock pot cooks differently so adjust the cook time based on your experience with your slow cooker.



Simply Delicious Crockpot Corn

**Ingredients**  
(16 ounce) bags frozen corn  
1/2 cup butter  
8 ounces cream cheese  
1/2 cup sugar

**Directions**  
Put butter and cream cheese in bottom of crock pot.  
Sprinkle sugar top.  
Put all 3 bags of corn on top.  
Cover and cook 6 hours on low.  
If you are home, stir after about an hour.  
If you are not home, it will be fine, just stir before serving.

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618-524-3845 • Hours: 7 A.M. - 9 P.M.

Bakery ★ Deli ★ Meat  
Produce ★ Dairy ★ Frozen  
Beer & Wine ★ Floral

