OCTOBER 2026

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Tennessee Wildland fire personnel support response across 14 states



NASHVILLE — This summer, the Tennessee Department of Agriculture Division of Forestry (TDF) deployed 128 wildland fire personnel and 44 pieces of equipment to support wildfire suppression operations in 14 states.

"Deployments play a vital role in our wildland fire program, providing an opportunity for our firefighters to develop and hone skills that they bring back to wildfire suppression here at home," State Forester Heather Slayton said. "We are proud to support wildfire suppression nationwide and of the expertise our crews bring to wildland fire operations in Tennessee and beyond."

Since 2020, TDF has deployed more than 1,000 wildland fire personnel and 168 pieces of equipment, including dozers and wildland fire engines, to support emergency operations ranging from wildland fire suppression to flood, hurricane and tropical storm response.

Despite Tennessee's high summer temperatures, wildfires are rare from June through September because humidity is high and vegetation is green and moist. This allows TDF wildland fire personnel to deploy out of state without putting Tennessee communities and landscapes at risk. Tennessee's wildfire season typically runs from mid-October to mid-May, with fire activity peaking in fall and spring when humidity and precipitation are low and dry leaves and debris cover the ground.

TDF personnel also deploy in-state to respond to emergencies beyond wildfire, including winter storms, tornadoes and hurricanes. For example, TDF deployed more than 80 personnel and 30 pieces of equipment to East Tennessee for storm response after Hurricane Helene in 2024, and more than 150 personnel to Middle Tennessee for storm cleanup after Winter Storm Fern earlier this year.

"While on deployment, our personnel work in a wide range of roles, dealing with diverse weather, fuel types and topography," Director of Forest Protection Wade Waters said. "These experiences enhance their ability to stay calm under pressure and expand their qualifications and skill sets."

Wildland fire deployments function within the incident management team (IMT) framework, with qualified teams rotating into wildfire incidents to direct, coordinate and carry out emergency response operations. Each IMT provides command, communications, logistics, planning, operations and finance personnel to manage the incident. After deployments end, the federal government reimburses TDF's costs.

Out-of-state assignments also help TDF personnel broaden and deepen their capabilities. In wildland fire, nationwide training

see **SUPPORT,** page 6

UT Martin announces future Skyhawks Roadshow schedule

MARTIN, Tenn. – The University of Tennessee at Martin announced the schedule for its Future Skyhawks Roadshow, set to begin Tuesday, Oct. 6. The Roadshow will make stops at cities across the state of Tennessee through October and November, culminating with an event in Martin on Nov. 16.

The Future Skyhawks Roadshow provides prospective students and their families with information about UT Martin and helps them with the application process.

Remaining schedule of events for the Future Skyhawks Roadshow includes:

• Monday, Oct. 19, 6 p.m., Jackson.

• Tuesday, Oct. 20, 6 p.m., Dyersburg.

• Thursday, Oct. 29, 6 p.m., Nashville.

• Monday, Nov. 2, 6 p.m., Memphis.

• Monday, Nov. 16, 6 p.m., Martin.

"These dates were strategically selected to encourage students to take important next steps in the enrollment process before the December holiday break," said Sydney Roney, admissions outreach coordinator. "Our goal is to help students apply for admission and housing, complete the Scholarship Aviator, file the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid and connect with academic departments and student engagement.

"We also want these events to be fun and engaging. We're planning scholarship drawings, UTM swag giveaways and more."

For information about participating in a Future Skyhawks Roadshow event, contact the UT Martin Office of Undergraduate Admissions at 731-881-7070.

For information about scheduling a visit to UT Martin or about taking a virtual tour, go to www.utm.edu/visit. For more information about admissions at UT Martin, visit www.utm.edu/admissions.

For more information about UT Martin, visit www.utm.edu or call 1-800-829-utM1 (-8861).



ROADSHOW – A potential UT Martin student is shown speaking with a faculty member during a Fall Preview Day event Oct. 4. Like Preview Days, the Future Skyhawks Roadshow will provide students considering attending UT Martin the opportunity to gather more information, but the Roadshow stops will bring the information to students across the state.

Photo submitted

Farmers grateful for diesel tax relief

American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall tonight applauded the executive order signed by President Trump to ease limits on the use of tax-exempt dyed diesel fuel to give farmers a break.

"We thank President Trump for recognizing that what happens at the fuel pump directly affects what happens on the farm and therefore at dinner tables across America. Allowing dyed diesel fuel to be used over-the-road will bring welcome relief for farmers because every cent per gallon matters when you're running a fleet of grain trucks or hauling cattle hundreds of miles.

"As we detailed in a letter to the president last week, this effort will bring much needed price relief for farmers as they work to complete harvest across the U.S. The federal highway diesel tax is currently more than 24-cents per gallon, so it's a big deal to farmers to be able to use tax exempt diesel more broadly to get their harvest to market. We appreciate that the president listened to farmers and responded."

Read a Farm Bureau Intel on the impact of diesel prices during harvest at https://www.fb.org/intel/markets/diesel-costs-increase-for-harvest



photo credit: Arkansas Farm Bureau, used with permission



Tips to winterize a home as cold weather approaches



It's not uncommon to spend a lot of time out of the house when the weather outside is warm. The popularity of outdoor living spaces has made it easier than ever to enjoy nature without leaving home, which can generally be done from late spring to mid-fall each year in many regions. But as fall creeps toward winter and temperatures drop, it's time to head back indoors.

As millions prepare to go back inside with winter approaching, it can be beneficial to winterize a home so interior spaces are more comfortable and exterior spaces are better able to withstand potentially harsh winter weather.

• Check your carbon monoxide detectors. Fall is a great season to open the windows in many regions that feature prototypical autumn air. But the crisp air of fall will eventually give way to much colder air, at which time the windows will be closed and likely remain shut for months to come. The Minnesota Department of Health notes that carbon monoxide (CO) is an odorless, colorless gas that cannot be detected by the senses. When windows remain closed for long periods of time, such as in winter, the buildup of CO, which can come from sources like water heaters, gas stoves, fireplaces, and clothes dryers, can poison residents over time. CO detectors are a safety net against such a fate, but they must be operating at peak capacity in order to be effective. As fall winds down, check all CO detectors to make sure they're working properly and replace any that are not.

• Check for drafts. Check around windows and doors throughout the home to see if there are any gaps that are allowing air from outside to enter the home. If daytime temperatures are mild well into the fall, then it can be difficult to see if there are any drafts before the sun goes down. Conduct this check in the evenings when temperatures are a little more chilly and leaks are easier to detect. If drafts are detected, apply weather stripping around doors and windows that do not require replacement. If there's drafts around aging windows and doors, consider replacing them.

• Call a chimney sweeping service. Cozying up beside a fire can make anyone forget the cold weather outside. But fireplaces should be subjected to a thorough cleaning by a skilled professional before each winter. Animals might have nested in the chimney since the fireplace was last used, and you will want any nests cleared prior to lighting your first fire of the season. In addition, the tar-like substance creosote, which forms when wood is burned in a fireplace, can build up and harden over time. That's a dangerous prospect, as creosote is highly flammable, which can lead to chimney fires. Creosote also can block the flow of air through a chimney, and that can trap gasses, including CO, in a home.

• Reverse your fans. It's a simple step but one people may not even realize they can make. In homes with ceiling fans, residents can reverse the fans so the blades spin clockwise. This simple step pushes trapped warm air hovering around the ceiling into the living space below. This can make home interiors warmer without requiring residents to turn up the thermostat and increase their energy bill.

• Replace your HVAC air filter. Replacing the air filter on your HVAC prior to winter can make the unit operate more efficiently, which can help reduce your wintertime energy bill. Replacing the filter prior to winter also improves indoor air quality, which is a notable benefit during a time of year when the windows typically remain closed for months.

Winterizing a home is not a significant undertaking, but it can be very effective at making homes healthier and more comfortable once windows are closed for the season.

The benefits of a professional gutter cleaning



Gutters serve an important role on a building, catching rainwater from the roof and channelling it away from the structure. Without properly functioning gutters and downspouts, basements can flood, foundations may become cracked and soil can erode. Gutters also help maintain roof and siding longevity, ensuring that rainwater will not pool under shingles or siding. Wet leaves also create habitats for pests to live, notably for mosquitoes, termites, rodents, and birds.

Homeowners can clean their own gutters, but the job is often best left to professionals. Here are some of the reasons to leave gutter cleaning to an expert.

• **Pros have the equipment.** As with any project, having the right equipment means it will be done correctly. Handyman services and professional gutter cleaners already have the gear to reach gutters and tackle the mess, unlike some homeowners who will have to purchase tools.

• **Pros are trained in safety.** Gutter cleaning professionals are trained in proper safety procedures and have the right equipment to safely scale homes. Gutter cleaning involves climbing ladders, walking on roofs, and handling slippery debris. It also may require working close to electrical and cable wires entering the home. Homeowners who don't know how to navigate these conditions safely risk falls or other injuries.

• **Pros can spot other damage.** Professionals may spot damage to a home that homeowners do not see. This may include cracked seams, loose fasteners, sagging sections, and even roof damage. This allows homeowners to get a jump on the problem early on before it progresses to something more serious.

• **Pros save homeowners time.** One of the obvious perks to letting a professional clean the gutters is that it saves homeowners time. The expert can get the job done in less time and more efficiently than a novice weekend warrior.

Mr. Handyman, a home improvement service, says the general recommendation is to get the gutters cleaned at least twice a year: once in the spring after trees have dropped their seeds, and again in the fall after all leaves have fallen. People with heavier amounts of natural debris may need more frequent cleanings. A professional gutter service will typically include inspection of the entire gutter system; removal of all debris from gutters and downspouts; flushing of gutters and downspouts to ensure water flows correctly; assessment of water being directed away; and identification of areas in need of repair.

Gutter cleaning is an important step that safeguards a home by keeping gutters and downspouts in working order.

VICTORIOUS *Living* ...in a troubled world

CHOOSE THE PATH

By Teresa LeNeave
leneave2@comcast.net



t is hard to understand why some things happen in this world.

Why are there mass shootings? Why does God allow genocide and starvation? Why are children sexually or mentally abused while perpetrators sometimes escape justice? And why doesn't God simply destroy those who commit such terrible acts so they can no longer harm their victims? These are difficult questions. They are questions many people ask, especially when confronted with suffering and evil.

There is another question many people ask: "Why don't I feel like I'm saved?" We can't change the terrible things happening in the world, but we can know we're saved.

In Ephesians, the Apostle Paul writes that we were once in darkness, but now we are light in the Lord. He encourages believers to "walk as children of light." The Apostle John also teaches about the difference between walking in darkness and walking in the light.

So, what exactly are "darkness" and "light"? In the simplest terms, darkness keeps you from seeing. Light allows you to see.

Perhaps some people don't "feel saved" because they don't act saved. They go on in life as before, but that just doesn't work out very well. We've all heard it said, "If there has been no change, there was no change." When a person truly comes to Christ, something changes within.

That does not mean a Christian becomes perfect or never struggles with sin again. We are human, and we still face temptation and problems in our sinful nature. But there should be an internal check that warns us when we are tempted to go against God's nature of goodness.

If you are walking in the light and intentionally want to cause someone harm, inflict pain or destroy another person's reputation, something inside you should tell you that it is wrong.

Walking in the light allows us to see. It opens our eyes. When we see clearly, we have an advantage. You can recognize obstacles and understand where choices lead. Light helps us make better decisions because we are aware of the consequences of our actions.

There is a danger when walking in darkness, one of the most obvious problems is that we cannot see the dangers, obstacles or consequences ahead of us.

Darkness can cause people to make decisions without understanding the future consequences of those choices: the mental, physical and emotional pain they may cause themselves and others. Darkness hides the long-lasting effects of our actions.

Being a Christ follower has many benefits. If you want the best outcome for your life, choose to live in the light of God. It's a faith walk. There is no better way to say it than, "believe with your heart and confess with your mouth" (Romans 10:9).

When you walk in Light, by faith, you know the blood of Jesus cleanses us from sin. We may not understand everything that happens in this world. We may never have satisfactory answers to all the disturbing question about suffering, evil and injustice, but we can choose the path we walk on. Darkness or Light which will it be?

Who wants a lifestyle of spiritual awareness?

By William F Holland Jr.
billyhollandministries.com

Have you noticed that when we are bombarded with negativity and told that the world is falling apart at the seams, it drains our joy and hope? Of course, we are concerned about our nation, the world, and the future of our family, but may we look beyond the veil of doom and gloom and realize the world is also filled with good news, whether we want to accept it or not. Like you, I scan information from the newspaper, radio, television, internet, and even the religious voices, and mostly what I gather are those obligated to relay how bad everything is. Actually, we can make as much difference in the world as we choose. When someone relays a story, we should be aware they are relaying a view of what they personally believe or what they've been told. For example, when someone declares that no one can be trusted and that society is evolving into a mass of mindless zombies, we should realize this is a "glass half-empty" view. In reality, many kind-hearted and loving individuals are demonstrating what Jesus is saying.

Perspective is a key word to consider because we have an obligation to discern and think carefully about not only what we say, but what has been said. We were not created to be simple-minded souls who are gullible and easily deceived. Since God is all-wise and lives within His children, He wants us to manifest the highest intelligence and spiritual sensitivity as possible. First Corinthians 2:16: "For, who can know the Lord's thoughts? Who knows enough to teach him, but we understand these things, for we have the mind of Christ." It's important to realize that all human communication is presented through an individual's personal way of thinking, whether it be positive or negative. This is why spiritual discernment is so important, so that we can filter out the personal bias from the facts. Listening to anyone speak about something (including what you are reading now) is a personal responsibility and a challenge when we comprehend this.

Since we have the opportunity to express our free will to establish our own interpretations and opinions about everything, including our religious views, we are faced with the most serious point of our conversation. To what extent has the information we have learned been demonstrated as obedience unto God? What good would it be if a person listened to Biblical sermons for 50 years, and never allowed God's word to change them into a genuine disciple of Jesus Christ? It's as if many churchgoers have convinced their conscience that simply believing there is a God qualifies them for eternal life.

Change is a popular word when associated with personal transformation, but usually considered a necessity for others and not for ourselves. What we have decided to believe is indeed the hill we will die on, so to speak, which reminds us that we need to make sure our thoughts are correct. There is an old saying, "What is down in the well will come up in the bucket," as our conversations are a direct extension of our thoughts. As the glass being half-full or half-empty can describe our positive or negative attitudes, we seldom examine which type of personality we are. Much of who we are is based on the complex nature of how we process what we hear and learn. Within this system of cognition, it encompasses various mental activities such as reasoning, problem-solving, and decision-making.

The truth is that not everything in our world is doom and gloom, and all is not lost. Each soul can choose to be the type of person they have a passion to be and make as much difference in the world as they want, good or bad. Some pray to be a light of truth, while it seems that others enjoy spreading fear and darkness. Just because we do not know these people or see their good deeds does not mean they do not exist. It simply means that a pessimist bases their worldviews and judgments on their own opinions and what they have experienced. Many will ask, "What does personal spiritual transformation include?" Now that is a good question. We've already mentioned how the mind must be renewed, which, by the way, is a very important aspect of spiritual warfare, and as we will talk more in the coming weeks, it will come down to whether we really want to become totally committed to what Christ died for us to be.

Dr. Holland is an ordained minister, chaplain, and Christian author. Read more about the Christian life at billyhollandministries.com.

Simple ways to curb heating costs

As fall gives way to winter, air conditioners typically get turned off and heaters get turned on. Home heating costs can quickly add up for homeowners. According to data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration, heating a space is the single largest energy expense for American households, accounting for roughly 42 percent of total residential energy consumption. However, individuals can implement certain strategies to cut down on heating costs and optimize energy efficiency.

Manage the thermostat

Managing a home thermostat is a cost-effective and simple adjustment. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, turning a thermostat back by 7° to 10° F from its normal setting for eight hours a day can save up to 10 percent a year on heating bills. Utilizing the automated scheduling capabilities on programmable or smart thermostats enables people to program a lower baseline temperature when out at work or school and while sleeping.

Seal up the home

Warm air from indoors can easily escape through unsealed gaps in a home. Similarly, cold air from outdoors can infiltrate through the same spots. This causes heating units to work overtime. Studies from the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy indicate combining window upgrades with high-efficiency heating systems can cut heating demands considerably.

Also, applying weatherstripping and caulking can prevent drafts, while ensuring adequate attic insulation will create a tight thermal barrier.

Change the heat delivery

Upgrading a heating system to a more efficient one can save homeowners money. According to research by Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, replacing traditional fossil-fuel furnaces with electric heat pumps can drastically reduce energy expenditures. Modern heat pumps deliver more thermal energy than the electrical energy they consume.

Homeowners have different options that may help them reduce their heating and energy bills.



Potential fireplace problems

Fireplaces are often a centerpiece of an interior living space. Homeowners often laud the ambiance a fireplace can provide, and the supplemental heat a fireplace can provide can be just what people need to stay warm on a cold day. The Northeast Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association says an estimated 57 percent of homeowners in the United States own some type of fireplace, freestanding stove or hearth product. However, fireplaces are not without their potential for problems.

Issues that can affect a fireplace will depend on the type of system, as problems that affect wood-burning fireplaces will differ from those that can affect gas units. The following are some potential issues homeowners can look out for when using their fireplaces.

• **Smoke spillage:** Fireplaces are supposed to vent up and out through a chimney or exhaust pipe. But if a damper is closed or blocked, if the chimney is dirty, or if there is negative air pressure in a tightly sealed home, smoke cannot escape and will enter the living space.

• **Creosote formation:** Creosote is a flammable, tar-like substance that is the result of burning wood. Creosote significantly increases the risk of a chimney fire. Creosote can build up in the flue over time if it is not remediated.

• **Odors:** A dirty chimney from creosote or moisture damage can result in a foul odor emanating from the fireplace. This also may occur if a bird or rodent nests in the chimney.

• Ignition failure: Gas units may not always light properly. Doctor Flue says it could be the result of a malfunctioning pilot light or an improperly placed log set. In addition, if the pilot light goes out as soon as the button is released, it may indicate a dirty or faulty thermocouple or thermopile, which are sensors that keep the gas valve open.

• **Cracked masonry:** Any cracks in the mortar, firebricks or chimney crown are major hazards. Cracks in such components increase the risk of a house fire and should be immediately addressed.

• **Drafts:** Cold air coming through the fireplace may indicate a damaged or missing damper.

• **Carbon monoxide:** Grill Parts Replacement says poorly vented fireplaces can lead to a buildup of carbon monoxide inside the home, which is a health hazard.

Oftentimes homeowners should leave fireplace troubleshooting to a professional. Annual inspections of units can head off potential problems to ensure safer operation.





SUPPORT,
from page 1

and mentoring allow personnel to develop expertise in new areas. This year, TDF deployed personnel in command, operations, planning, logistics, finance, dispatch, aviation and communications roles.

Behind the scenes, TDF employees, other Tennessee Department of Agriculture staff and Tennessee Department of General Services personnel coordinated the large-scale deployment of TDF personnel. This



cross-functional, cross-agency team included TDF's fire logistics coordinator and staff from finance and administration, human resources, and vehicle and asset management. Together, they handled the moving pieces required for a successful deployment season.

TDF protects and promotes the responsible use of forest resources in Tennessee. Focus areas include assisting landowners with a variety of services, providing quality tree seedlings, supporting forest health programs, collecting forest inventory data, assisting forest industries and fighting wildland fires.

Translation and interpretation services for this press release are available free of charge. Please contact Kim.Doddridge@tn.gov.

UT Martin to celebrate Family Weekend October 17th & 18th



FAMILY WEEKEND – UT Martin celebrates Family Weekend on Oct. 17-18, an opportunity for students to share the campus sights and activities with their families. Photo submitted

MARTIN, Tenn. – The University of Tennessee at Martin will celebrate its annual Family Weekend with a slate of events and celebrations Saturday, Oct. 17, and Sunday, Oct. 18.

Family Weekend welcomes current students and their families to campus by sharing athletics events, campus events and other activities.

Family Weekend begins Oct. 17 with check-in from 9 to 10:30 a.m. at the Paul Meek Library, where students and families can pick up their pre-ordered T-shirts or bundles. The library will also have Donuts with the Deans during that time, a come-and-go event in the North Windows area of the building. Students and families will be able to meet the university's academic deans and enjoy complementary coffee and donuts.

From 10:30 to 11:30 a.m., the Phillip W. Watkins Auditorium in the Boling University Center will host "Skyhawk Family Showdown," a "Family Feud"-style game show where Skyhawk families compete for prizes.

The Family Weekend Tailgate Party will be held prior to the football game from 11:30 a.m. to 1:45 p.m. in the Grove at Veterans Park adjacent to Hardy M. Graham Stadium. Free food and a performance by Traveling Max, along with games, a balloon artist and a photo booth are part of the pregame fun. Pre-ordered T-shirts and Family Weekend bundles may also be picked up at this event.

The Skyhawks take on Ohio Valley Conference rival Gardner-Webb at 2 p.m. at Hardy M. Graham Stadium. Tickets are $20 at the gate, and students get in for free.

The Skyhawk Drive-In Movie, "Project Hail Mary," will close out the Saturday activities at 8 p.m.

On Oct. 18, the Family Weekend Brunch will be provided from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Skyhawk Dining Hall in the Boling University Center. Meals are $15.10 plus tax, and meal plans will be accepted from UT Martin students.

Families can take in a Skyhawk men's basketball exhibition game against Central Arkansas at 2 p.m. in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center, the first home competition for the team for the 2026-27 season. Tickets are $10 at the gate and students are admitted free.

For any questions regarding UT Martin Family Weekend, contact John Abel, assistant vice chancellor for student affairs and dean of students, at jabel1@utm.edu. Information can also be found at www.utm.edu/familyweekend.

For more information about UT Martin, visit www.utm.edu or call 731-881-7000.





#BeTheGood: The Heart behind local heart care

Heart problems have a way of making everything else stop. Maybe it's the tightness in your chest that won't go away. Maybe it's the racing heartbeat that keeps you awake at night. Maybe it's the blood pressure reading you've been trying to ignore. Whatever it is, one question usually follows. Now what?

That's a question Teresa Fowler, a nurse practitioner with West Tennessee Medical Group Cardiology, hears almost every day.

As a nurse practitioner with West Tennessee Medical Group Cardiology, Fowler sees patients in both Paris and Martin. But for her, caring for patients in this part of West Tennessee is about more than cardiology. It's personal.

Raised just down the road in Camden, Fowler's family has called this area home for more than 175 years. Their century farm has been part of the community for generations, and coming back to serve the people who live here wasn't just a career move.

It was coming home. "I always wanted to be closer to home so I could serve people in my community," Fowler said. She understands small-town communities. She understands the people who call them home. And she understands how easy it is to put your own health on the back burner.

People are busy raising families, working long hours, taking care of aging parents, cheering from the sidelines and trying to keep up with everyday life.

When something doesn't feel quite right, it's easy to tell yourself you'll deal with it later. Sometimes later turns into months. Sometimes fear keeps people from making the call. Others assume they'll have to travel long distances or wait months just to see a heart specialist.



That's where Fowler hopes she can make a difference.

"I see people who are worried and simply don't know what their next step should be," she said. "Sometimes they just need someone to listen, answer their questions and help them understand what's happening."

When patients walk into Fowler's office, they aren't simply waiting to see a cardiologist. They're already beginning their heart care.

She evaluates patients experiencing chest pain, heart palpitations, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and other heart-related concerns. She can order testing, review results and help determine the next steps... all while working closely with the West Tennessee Medical Group Cardiology team.

She also provides cardiac clearances before surgery and follows patients after hospital stays, procedures, and other heart-related treatments. One of the biggest advantages she offers patients is the ability to get started sooner. Appointments are often available much more quickly than many people expect, allowing testing and evaluation to begin without months of waiting.

That team approach allows patients to begin care sooner while remaining connected to the specialists and advanced heart care available throughout West Tennessee Healthcare. For families across Henry and Weakley counties, that means expert heart care starts closer to home.

After earning her nursing degree from the University of Tennessee at Martin, Fowler earned her doctorate in nursing practice from UT Health in Memphis before spending years in emergency medicine and later working alongside cardiothoracic surgeons. Those experiences prepared her to care for patients with complex heart conditions... but they also taught her something just as important.

People facing heart problems often carry fear long before they walk through the door. "Heart problems are scary," Fowler said. "Whether the testing shows everything is okay or we find something that needs attention, I want patients to understand what's happening and know what comes next." Fowler understands that some patients may feel uncertain when they learn they'll be seeing a nurse practitioner.

She understands. In fact, watching that uncertainty turn into trust has become one of her favorite parts of the job. "My favorite thing is when I walk into a room and they're unsure at first," she said. "Then I leave and they're saying, 'I want to see you again.'"

That trust doesn't happen because of a title. It happens because patients feel heard. For Fowler, that conversation matters just as much as the diagnosis. She wants patients to feel comfortable asking questions. She wants them to feel heard.

She wants them to leave knowing someone is walking beside them... not just through one appointment, but throughout their heart care journey. Before every patient encounter, Fowler tries to remember one simple thing. Treat every patient the way she'd want her own family treated.

Outside the clinic, you'll often find her on the family farm, riding horses or simply enjoying the outdoors... simple reminders of why coming back home mattered in the first place.





She knows she can't take away every worry that walks through her door. But she can listen. She can help patients find answers. She can offer reassurance when it's needed most. And she can remind them they don't have to face it alone.

Because sometimes the best medicine isn't just expert heart care. It's knowing the person helping care for your heart understands yours.

For a hometown girl whose family has called this corner of West Tennessee home for generations, caring for neighbors in Paris and Martin is simply what it means to #BeTheGood.



-Amanda Smiles
WTH Media Relations

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Illinois Dept. of Ag announces Illinois Product Expo-Chicago

CHICAGO, IL – The Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) is excited to announce the first-ever Illinois Product Expo in Chicago, taking place Friday, Oct. 16, and Saturday, Oct. 17, at the Isadore & Sadie Dorin Forum on the East Campus of the University of Illinois Chicago.

"The expansion of the Illinois Product Expo to Chicago marks a major milestone in the ongoing investment to support and uplift Illinois' agricultural community," said Governor JB Pritzker. "The inaugural Chicago Product Expo will allow residents to sample and shop high-quality, home-grown products by Illinois' farmers, entrepreneurs, and small businesses. By connecting local businesses with a broader consumer base, this event will help spur local job creation, bolster communities throughout the state, and showcase what Illinois has to offer."

"Agriculture is our number one industry—from farm to table, it touches so many aspects of life in Illinois," said Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton. "Coming to Chicago for the first time, this Expo is a wonderful opportunity for Chicagoans to explore the diverse range of products crafted right here at home and to see what makes Illinois agriculture so special."

Expanding the long-standing success of the Springfield Illinois Product Expo and Du Quoin Illinois Product Expo, the Chicago Illinois Product Expo 2026 brings more than 70 Illinois vendors together for a two-day celebration of Illinois products. More than 5,000 attendees are expected to join this inaugural event, offering Chicago-area consumers a unique opportunity to sample, shop, and connect with producers from across the state.

"The Illinois Product Expo has long been a staple event showcasing the incredible diversity and quality of Illinois-made products," said IDOA Director Jerry Costello II. "We're thrilled to bring this experience to Chicago and connect even more consumers with the farmers, makers, and small businesses who drive Illinois' agricultural economy."

"This first Chicago Expo opens the door for new audiences to discover what makes Illinois products special," said Jackie Sambursky, Bureau Chief of Marketing, Promotion, and Grants. "Whether it's finding a new favorite snack, meeting innovative entrepreneurs, or revisiting beloved brands, the Expo offers something for everyone."

Advance tickets are available online for $10 (plus fees), providing attendees with a convenient and cost effective way to secure entry ahead of time. Tickets purchased at the door will be $15 (plus fees). Guests are encouraged to buy tickets in advance to ensure quicker entry and a smoother Expo experience.

What to Expect:

More than 70 Illinois vendors

Product samples throughout the Expo

Opportunities to meet Illinois producers

New and unique Illinois products

FREE Illinois Product bag (while supplies last)

Event Details

Friday, October 16

12 p.m. – 7 p.m.

Tickets: Purchase Friday Tickets – www.illinoisproductexpo.com

Saturday, October 17

10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Tickets: Purchase Saturday Tickets – www.illinoisproductexpo.com

Location:

Isadore & Sadie Dorin Forum

University of Illinois Chicago, East Campus

725 W. Roosevelt Rd.

Chicago, IL 60608

For vendor listings, updates, and additional details, visit www.illinoisproductexpo.com.

If an Illinois food company would like to learn more about the Illinois Product Expo or other programs offered by the Illinois Department of Agriculture, contact the Illinois Department of Agriculture Bureau of Marketing, Promotion and Grants at 217-782-2581 or agr.illinoisproduct@illinois.gov



BLUEGRASS SOUTH STOCKYARDS
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COMPLIMENTARY LUNCH AT NOON

• 300 ANGUS & HERFORD BASED BRED FEMALES
• AI BRED TO START CALVING FEBRUARY 15TH
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MILFORD, IL AUCTIONS
DECEMBER 21ST
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Auctions start at 8:00 A.M. CST

LEVEL Equipmentfacts

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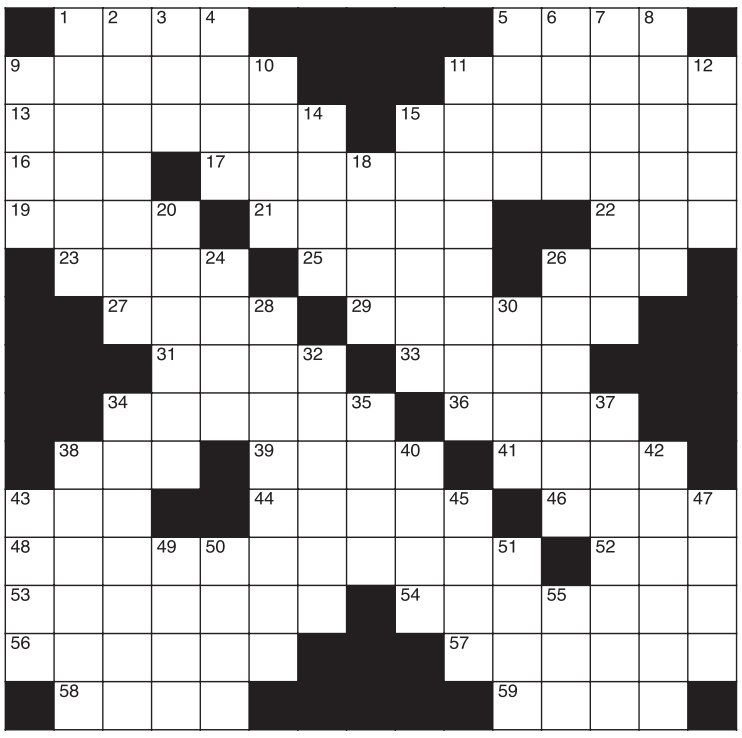


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Crossword Puzzle



CLUES ACROSS

1. Difficult
5. Coarsely ground corn
9. A group of similar things ordered one after another
11. Loved Romeo
13. Something to solve
15. Pelvic areas
16. Informal debt instrument
17. Ineffective
19. A device attached to a workbench
21. Related on the mother's side
22. "Fresh Prince of __ Air"
23. Astronomer Sagan
25. C. Utah city
26. Turkey
27. Informal terms for money
29. Awakens
31. Those who favored Prohibition
33. Blabbed
34. Looked through
36. Rhode Island rebellion
38. A type of "cast"
39. One's duty
41. Where golfers begin
43. Make a mistake
44. Semitic Sun god
46. Ancient Greek City
48. Removed someone's head
52. A place to stay
53. Unwise
54. Most unnatural
56. "Dennis" is a notable one
57. Ointments
58. Examination
59. Leaked fluid

CLUES DOWN

1. Brave
2. A state of excitement
3. Jest at
4. Sandwich store
5. Chapter of the Koran
6. Dismounted from a horse
7. Small vehicle
8. Irked
9. A disreputable man
10. Monetary unit of Samoa
11. A list of woes
12. Weight unit
14. Alone, single
15. Broadway legend Bernadette
18. Monetary unit of Serbia
20. Worn by exposure to the weather
24. A body of traditions
26. Students seek one
28. Hydrophilic amino acid
30. Nasal mucus
32. Branch of U.S. Congress
34. Swinish
35. Russian assembly
37. Grant an exemption to
38. Set up in advance
40. Satisfy
42. Felt
43. Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls
45. Witnesses
47. Strong insects
49. Gasteyer and de Armas are two
50. One of an ancient people inhabiting Scotland
51. Cheerless
55. Unhealthy

PUZZLE SOLUTION

■	H	A	R	D	■	■	■	■	■	S	A	M	P	■
S	E	R	I	E	S	■	■	■	J	U	L	I	E	T
P	R	O	B	L	E	M	■	P	E	R	I	N	E	A
I	O	U	■	I	N	O	P	E	R	A	T	I	V	E
V	I	S	E	■	E	N	A	T	E	■	■	B	E	L
■	C	A	R	L	■	O	R	E	M	■	D	U	D	■
■	■	L	O	O	T	■	A	R	I	S	E	S	■	■
■	■	■	D	R	Y	S	■	S	A	N	G	■	■	■
■	■	P	E	E	R	E	D	■	D	O	R	R	■	■
■	P	O	D	■	O	N	U	S	■	T	E	E	S	■
E	R	R	■	■	S	A	M	A	S	■	E	L	E	A
D	E	C	A	P	I	T	A	T	E	D	■	I	N	N
A	S	I	N	I	N	E	■	E	E	R	I	E	S	T
M	E	N	A	C	E	■	■	■	S	A	L	V	E	S
■	T	E	S	T	■	■	■	■	■	B	L	E	D	■

Word Search

CONTACTS CARE WORD SEARCH

F	D	B	D	O	H	U	A	E	C	P	S	C	C	H	M	I	L	C	U
I	X	A	A	C	E	F	G	G	W	M	A	I	C	U	R	V	E	S	R
E	C	E	H	T	E	U	U	N	V	G	R	L	O	A	N	U	G	S	E
G	A	N	H	Y	P	L	N	E	V	O	L	R	T	S	E	W	O	N	D
I	S	R	D	T	X	E	D	S	T	S	C	L	E	R	A	L	R	O	N
R	E	O	W	I	G	W	E	T	T	A	B	I	L	I	T	Y	D	I	I
B	D	C	O	L	O	C	M	O	C	D	R	Y	N	E	S	S	Y	T	L
A	A	P	B	I	U	P	L	H	T	F	M	M	Y	X	A	I	H	A	Y
X	U	B	N	B	C	M	T	M	W	T	F	S	A	B	V	G	B	R	C
A	L	N	U	A	D	L	T	E	D	N	D	I	W	X	P	M	L	D	O
H	T	V	A	E	W	U	E	F	R	A	T	T	E	G	R	F	N	Y	M
H	N	Y	B	M	I	T	G	D	W	T	H	A	Y	A	E	R	O	H	U
D	P	Y	H	R	S	T	R	H	C	C	T	M	D	I	S	N	I	L	L
E	I	Y	I	E	I	S	X	T	X	E	N	G	E	X	B	V	T	M	T
D	N	A	B	P	X	T	X	E	L	F	P	I	D	O	Y	M	U	S	I
V	I	I	M	B	A	F	F	C	Y	N	Y	T	N	P	O	L	L	G	F
H	C	G	L	E	F	I	E	D	X	I	W	S	E	Y	P	M	O	B	O
G	P	P	I	A	T	S	T	R	B	S	D	A	T	H	I	I	S	U	C
P	B	H	U	R	S	E	F	L	I	I	Y	H	X	X	A	W	V	G	A
I	Y	L	I	A	D	F	R	T	G	D	R	B	E	P	U	P	R	A	L

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

ANSWERS IN B SECTION

WORDS

ASTIGMATISM
AXIS
CASE
CORNEA
CURVE
CYLINDER
DAILY
DIAMETER
DIOPTER
DISINFECTANT
DRYNESS
EXTENDED
HYDRATION
HYDROGEL
HYPOXIA
MULTIFOCAL
PERMEABILITY
PRESBYOPIA
RIGID
SALINE
SCLERAL
SOLUTION
TORIC
WETTABILITY

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 B SECTION

			1			8		
				3	7			4
6	3							
7		2		5	3			
		9	8	1	2			
								6
			9				3	8
	8	7					9	1
5							7	

Coloring Fun

FIRE PREVENTION DAY
OCTOBER 9TH





The effects of cancer on the body

The World Health Organization reports that breast cancer was the most common form of the disease among women in 164 of 186 countries in 2024. The footprint of breast cancer is significant, and millions of women and their families confront that impact each year.

Breast cancer affects women in different ways. While each woman's experience will be different, the following are some of the ways breast cancer can affect the body.

• Increased feelings of tiredness: Fatigue is a side effect of breast cancer and the treatments for it. WebMD notes that the fatigue women may feel while battling breast cancer can last for months after treatment, and sometimes even longer than that. But women may not be helpless against breast cancer-related fatigue. In fact, WebMD notes that eating a well-balanced diet, getting sufficient sleep and staying as physically active as possible are some ways women may be able to alleviate the tiredness that can appear during and even after treatment.

• Changes to the skin: According to Breast Cancer Trials, which is an organization made up of breast cancer doctors and researchers devoted to finding better treatments for the disease, the underlying tumor can affect the skin, blood vessels and the lymphatic system. That can lead to an assortment of skin changes, including some that might be the first sign of breast cancer. Redness, dimpling, thickening of the skin on the breast or underarm, scaliness, and persistent itching are some of the skin changes women may experience while battling breast cancer.

• Swelling in the upper body: WebMD notes that the lymph nodes from the arm near the breast containing the tumor are sometimes removed during surgical treatments. That removal may be vital, but it also can contribute to a buildup of fluid that leads to swelling in the arm, chest, and even abdominal region. Stiffness and soreness in these areas also may develop. Chemotherapy drugs also can lead to the buildup of fluid that eventually can contribute to swelling in the arms and legs.

• Bone loss and vulnerability to fractures: The Endocrine Society notes that hormonal therapy for breast cancer can make patients vulnerable to fractures. Fracture rates may be as high as 20 percent, and post-menopausal women may be particularly vulnerable to broken bones after hormonal therapy for breast cancer. Bone loss also may occur because treatments for breast cancer can decrease estrogen. Lower levels of a type of estrogen hormone known as estradiol has been linked to osteoporosis.

No two women experience breast cancer in the same way. But the disease and treatments for it can produce some similar side effects that women can work to address with their health care teams.

Breast cancer screening FAQ



Preventive health care emphasizes healthy lifestyle choices like eating a nutritious, well-balanced diet and avoiding a sedentary lifestyle. Screening for various diseases, including cancer, is another important component of preventive health care that encourages individuals to be proactive in relation to their overall health.

Women may hear about breast cancer screening as early as adolescence. Despite that, it's not uncommon for women of all ages to have questions about breast cancer screening.

When should breast cancer screening begin?

This is not a one-size-fits-all answer. The American Cancer Society advises women at average breast cancer risk to begin screening between the ages of 40 and 44. Women are considered at average risk if they have no personal history or strong family history of breast cancer. Women also are considered at average risk if they do not have gene mutations linked to breast cancer or a history of chest radiation therapy prior to age 30. While the ACS notes women at average risk have the option to begin screening prior to age 44, the organization advises women to schedule annual mammograms beginning at age 45 and to continue getting them through age 54. If screenings do not show anything by age 54, women can then choose to get a mammogram every other year beginning at age 55.

What if I am at elevated risk for breast cancer?

Women who do not meet the criteria for average risk due to personal or family history will need to begin screening much earlier. The ACS recommends women at high risk for breast cancer get a breast MRI and a mammogram every year beginning at age 30. But the ACS also advises women to make this decision after careful discussion with their health care team. It's also notable that the ACS indicates an MRI should never be substituted for a mammogram, as it's possible an MRI will miss cancers a mammogram will find.

What is a 3D mammogram?

3D mammography is a relatively new screening option that has piqued many women's curiosity in recent years. Brown University Health reports that a 3D mammogram rotates in an arc and takes X-rays of the breast at different angles, ultimately producing a more detailed view of the breast for radiologists to examine. By contrast, a 2D mammogram takes single X-rays at two different angles. But the ACS notes many breast imaging centers do not have 3D mammography. If given the choice between a 2D mammogram or none at all, women should always get the 2D mammogram. If 3D imaging is available, then that might be the way to go, as Brown University Health notes 3D mammography tends to detect more cancers and produce fewer false positives.

Are mammograms foolproof?

While mammograms are highly effective at detecting breast cancer, they are not perfect. The O'Neal Cancer Center notes that dense breast tissue can make breast cancer detection more difficult. Because no screening is perfect, it's imperative that women adhere to screening guidelines even if results are consistently negative and they do not feel anything unusual during self-examinations.

Screening for cancer is an integral component of preventive health care. Women are urged to make breast cancer screening part of their preventive health care routine.



Illinois Wheat Development board to elect three new members October 28th

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – The Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) announced today an election will be held on October 28, 2026, for two (2) board members in the following Illinois Wheat Development Board Districts (IWDB) three (3) and six (6) as well as one (1) statewide At-Large Board Member. As no formal petitions were filed for these vacant board positions, producers of Illinois wheat residing in these Districts may participate in the October 28, 2026, election as a write-in candidate. Producers must be of legal voting age, reside in the district for which they are running and be a qualified producer of wheat. At-large write-in candidates may reside in any of the IWDB Districts.

Absentee ballots are available to those not available to vote in person by contacting IDOA at 217-524-1083 or by email at agr.marketnews.illinois.gov. In-person voting will take place at the county Farm Bureau offices in Illinois during normal business hours.

For more information, call IDOA at (217) 524-1083 or the Illinois Wheat Association at (309) 557-3619.

Illinois Wheat Development Board Representative Districts:

District I: Adams, Boone, Brown, Bureau, Carroll, Cass, Christian, Cook, DeKalb, DeWitt, DuPage, Ford, Fulton, Grundy, Hancock, Henderson, Henry, Iroquois, Jo Daviess, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Knox, Lake, LaSalle, Lee, Livingston, Logan, Macon, Marshall, Mason, McDonough, McHenry, McLean, Menard, Mercer, Morgan, Ogle, Peoria, Piatt, Pike, Putnam, Rock Island, Sangamon, Schuyler, Scott, Stark, Stephenson, Tazewell, Warren, Whiteside, Will, Winnebago, Woodford Counties

District II: Bond, Calhoun, Greene, Jersey, Macoupin, Madison, Monroe, Montgomery, St. Clair Counties

District III: Champaign, Clark, Coles, Crawford, Cumberland, Douglas, Edgar, Effingham, Fayette, Jasper, Lawrence, Marion, Moultrie, Richland, Shelby, Vermilion Counties

District IV: Clinton, Jefferson, Washington Counties

District V: Franklin, Jackson, Perry, Randolph Counties

District VI: Alexander, Clay, Edwards, Gallatin, Hamilton, Hardin, Johnson, Massac, Pope, Pulaski, Saline, Union, Wabash, Wayne, White, Williamson Counties

IL farmers work through the fall harvest

Fall is one of the busiest and most important seasons for Illinois farmers. Across the state, fields turn golden as farmers work long hours harvesting corn and soybeans, two of Illinois' leading agricultural crops.

Harvest typically begins in September and continues through October and sometimes into November, depending on weather conditions and crop maturity. Farmers operate combines, grain carts and trucks to bring in their crops before winter arrives. Dry weather helps keep harvest moving, while rain and wet field conditions can delay equipment and create challenges.

Illinois agriculture plays a major role in the state's economy, providing jobs and supporting grain elevators, transportation companies, agricultural suppliers and food production businesses. Much of the corn and soybeans harvested in Illinois is used for livestock feed, food products, renewable fuels and export markets.

Fall is also an important time for preparing farmland for the next growing season. Some farmers complete fall tillage, apply nutrients when appropriate and maintain equipment before winter. Others plant cover crops to help protect soil, reduce erosion and improve soil health.

As autumn progresses, rural communities across Illinois recognize the hard work and dedication of their agricultural producers. A successful fall harvest helps support farm families, strengthens local economies and provides essential crops for consumers at home and around the world.







How to honor local police

Safe communities allow residents to thrive and live their lives to the fullest. Such communities are sought-after places to live, and maintaining a community-wide sense of safety and security is no small task.

Local police forces do much to keep their communities safe, so it's no great mystery why residents want to show how much they appreciate the people who ensure their towns and cities remain wonderful places to call home. With that in mind, community residents, small business owners and elected officials can consider the following ways to honor local police.

• Small business owners recognize the vital role local police play in keeping Main Street safe. A safe dining and shopping district is beneficial to business owners' bottom line, and that makes it worth their while to offer discounts to local law enforcement and their families.

• Showcase officers on social media. Local governments can get in on the act by highlighting a different officer each month on various social media platforms. Interview a new officer each month and highlight their backgrounds and careers. This can be a great way to showcase the talents of local officers and foster strong connections between community residents and the men and women in law enforcement who keep their towns and cities safe.

• Feature officers during public celebrations. Parades, holiday bazaars and local scholastic sporting events are some examples of events that bring community residents together. Such events provide great opportunities to thank local law enforcement and bring them into direct contact with residents.

• Support police during town council meetings. Attendance at town council meetings is a good way to remain informed about what's going on in a community, and it also serves as an opportunity to support measures aimed at benefitting local law enforcement personnel. Support efforts to increase salaries for local police officers and upgrade their resources so they can continue to do their jobs to the best of their abilities.

There's no shortage of ways for communities and residents to express their appreciation and support for the local law enforcement personnel who keep their towns and cities safe.









