

# AGRICULTURE

## KENT CASSON'S VIEW FROM THE CAB

LOCAL, A6



# SPORTS

## INDIANS CAPTURE HOME-OPENER OVER GREY GHOSTS

SPORTS, B1

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# The DAILY LEADER

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### LOCAL NEWS

## PTHS Dist. 90 approves 2% tax levy

By Luke Smucker  
Staff Reporter

Pontiac District 90 property owners will officially find a 2 percent increase in their property taxes. During Monday's meeting the board accepted the levy, which was made according to data collected through the PTELL formula using the most current estimates provided by the Livingston County Assessor's office. This increase will result in more than \$108,000 in new revenue for the district next year.

"I am pleased with the way our board meeting went with the approval of the tax levy and also the abatement agreement," Kilgore said.

The increase is almost half a percent less than the increase made last year, of 2.46 percent, which was an increase from the 2012 tax rate of 2.43 percent. Kilgore said in a previous meeting that over the years, equalized assessed valuation (EAV) has continued to decrease within the district. As that amount decreases, the tax cap offsets that decrease which leads to an increase on the likely levy.

The board is also doing what it can to help ease future increases by adding its name to the list of public entities in approval of a tax abatement incentive program. In addition to District 429, the Village of Odell and the City of Fairbury — who have approved the

See 'DIST. 90' Page A6

## 15 days until Christmas



Kylie Lauren Miller, 10-month-old daughter of Chris Miller and Kristen Orsowy, is so excited for Santa and her first Christmas she couldn't sit still while visiting the Encore Shoppe. CYNTHIA GRAU/DAILY LEADER

### COUNTY BOARD

## New board prepared for first meeting

By Cynthia Grau  
Staff Reporter

The Livingston County Board will hold its first meeting with its three new members Thursday. The new group brings with it changes to committees.

Board Chairman Marty Fannin was re-elected to his position at the Dec. 1 organizational meeting, said he was blessed to be given the opportunity to serve the county in the position again. Bob Young was voted in as the new vice chairman, replacing Carl Borngasser, who lost his seat in the recent election.



Marty Fannin

New committee assignments were made Dec. 2 and sent to board members that evening. The committees and their respective members are:

- Agriculture and Zoning — Chairman Bill Flott, Vice Chair Bob Young, Justin Goembel, Daryl Holt, Paul Ritter, Mark Runyon and Bill Peterson.

- Elections — Chairman Jack Vietti, Vice Chair Carolyn Gerwin, James Carley, Goembel, Ron Kestner, Runyon and Joe Steichen.

- Finance — Chairman Tim Shafer, Vice Chair David Heath, Kelly Cochran-Cohlman, Gerwin, Bill Mays and Mike Ingles. There is one vacancy.

- Highway — Chairman Daryl Holt, Vice Chair Runyon, Carley, Peterson, Young, Bob Weller and Stan Weber.

- Information and Technology — Chairman Vicki Allen, Vice Chair Cochran-Cohlman, Carley, Gerwin, Goembel, Kestner and Weber.

- Personnel — Chairman Kathy Arbogast, Vice Chair Cochran-Cohlman, Heath, Mays, Shafer and Vietti. There is one vacancy.

- Public Property — Chairman Ingles, Vice Chair Weber, Arbogast, Flott, Mays, Ritter and Weller.

- Sheriff, Jail and License — Chairman John Yoder, Vice Chair Peterson, Allen, Heath, Kestner and Weller. There is one va-

See 'BOARD' Page A6

### LCHS FUNDRAISER

## Humane Society raising funds to keep the lights on

By Luke Smucker  
Staff Reporter

Needing money to help "keep the lights on" at the Livingston County Humane Society has led to a special event that takes place in December.

The society's Light-A-Bulb fundraiser is underway in an effort to help the non-profit organization keep the lights on at the facility and keep it open a place to adopt a pet.

The annual December fundraiser also promotes youth education.

In past years, this fundraiser has garnered upwards of \$5,000 in countywide donations. This is a plus considering at any given time during the winter months, LCHS may house more than 150 animals, costing the organization thousands of dollars per month in

utilities just to heat the facility and keep electricity going at the building in Rowe.

Fourth grade students from area schools decorate the paper bulb shapes used to recognize donors on trees located around the county.

Co-founder Karen Gregory believes the month-long holiday fundraiser affords her the opportunity to talk to students about the realities of pet ownership.

"We reach out to students in order to teach them that the animals we shelter are all homeless," Gregory said. "When students want to know why we are doing this, we explain this is for the animals who have nobody to care and provide for them."

Due to its educational and financial benefits, it is no surprise the fundraiser has been

an annual staple of the humane society for the past 16 years. The event was initially organized out of the society's need to find homes for animals at the no-kill shelter and ease the financial tension brought about by the winter's high bills.

"The program has now become our largest fundraiser involving students, three nursing homes and several businesses," Gregory said. "Last year we placed many animals into their forever homes. Once again we are trying to do this, but we find much of the time we are on the receiving end of the animals as the economy is still waiting to rebound."

Once donations are collected, names are placed upon a tree designated to each town.

See 'SOCIETY' Page A6



Livingston County Humane Society's Light-A-Bulb fundraiser helps provide for care of animals at the shelter. Here, volunteer Lily Stevenson bathes Chubby. LUKE SMUCKER/DAILY LEADER

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VIEW FROM THE CAB

# Hitting the farm meeting trail

We are barely into the winter farm-meeting season, yet I have so much news to pass along already.

This is the time of year when those of us in agricultural journalism are jumping for joy because we have so many interesting story ideas to share with our readers. I had the honor of attending the recent Illinois Commodity Conference and the Greater Peoria Farm Show.



**Kent Casson**  
Ag Columnist

During the conference at the Marriott Hotel and Conference Center in Normal, I was really impressed with what communications expert Richard Levick had to say. Levick, who served as a keynote speaker, said farmers need to overcome their fear of social media and need to start communicating what they are doing. Unfortunately, some anti-ag people are already shining a negative online light on agriculture.

"I'm sure the telephone has brought everyone some bad news at some point but it doesn't stop people from using the telephone," Levick said.

I was also impressed with the thoughts shared by the president of the Illinois Renewable Fuels Association, Ray Defenbaugh. He said some things all of the small towns around here should listen to.

"(Young people) are the most valuable asset you've got if you really examine it carefully."

Defenbaugh said discouraging young people from staying in their hometown is hard on a community and deteriorates the local economy. He believes in preserving local communities and providing a good return to his investors.

The following week, the family and I headed west on I-74 to the Greater Peoria Farm Show — the state's largest indoor show. Kasen loved climbing on the tractors and little Kenadee even got her first taste of the farm show circuit. It was great having Rebecca and the kids join me this year.

**For farm news and more, log on to: [www.centralillinoisfarmnetwork.com](http://www.centralillinoisfarmnetwork.com) and become a fan of "Central Illinois Farm Network" on Facebook for the latest ag updates, photos and videos.**

## SOCIETY

Continued from Page A1

This year, trees are located in Pontiac at Ace Hardware, County Market, DeLong's Casual Dining and Spirits, Total FX and Maurices. Trees have also been placed in Fairbury at Dave's Supermarket and in Dwight at the Dwight Veterinary Clinic. The schools taking part in creating paper bulbs include Washington School, STARS at Pontiac Junior High School and St. Mary's in Pontiac. Fairbury and Odell grade school students also participated in making the shapes put on the trees.

"Everything people see when they come to the humane society has been provided by volunteers or donated," Gregory said. "We don't put these trees just anywhere. We place them where we believe our donors visit. The rewarding part for me is knowing people come back to adopt a second animal from us. That tells me we are doing something right."

Without the funds raised annually through the Light-A-Bulb program,

Gregory said the humane society would not be able to exist. The program received its largest donation in the history of the fundraiser last year, but Gregory said it also turned out to be one of the coldest winters since the society opened.

"It costs a fortune to heat this building in the winter. We are out in a very rural area and with very few structures to block the wind, so without the donations the building would be much colder," Gregory said. "We want these animals to have as many comforts as possible

and without the community support we could never do that. Let alone purchase the medicines, foods and supplies for maintenance."

The shelter is frugal. Volunteers cut coupons, buy cages at low prices and give of their time without requesting compensation. Whether in times of abundance or famine in terms of donations, Gregory said the mentality stays the same.

"We make sure everything has its use," she said. "That is what a non-profit organization is, there is nothing left over."



**When people purchase a \$10 bulb for the Light-A-Bulb fundraiser, they are helping animals receive the nourishment they need while waiting for a future home.** LUKE SMUCKER/DAILY LEADER

## BOARD

Continued from Page A1

cancy.

• Veterans Assistance — Chairman Steichen, Vice Chair Kestner and Yoder.

The vacancies are there because Joan Bullard, the top vote getter for District 2, tendered her resignation the day after the organizational meeting.

Bullard said her resignation was hard to do. She met a lot of good people while serving on the board and will miss it.

Bullard also said she is working on some changes with some other county residents, including looking into changing the number of people on the board, as well as trying to change the method of choosing of the board chairman from a vote from the board to a choice made by the voters at large.

"That would take a lot of the politics out of it," Bullard said.

Fannin said he is in the process of looking for people to replace Bullard, but isn't rushing the process. He said he expects to appoint someone by January's meeting.

"She was a good board member. It's a loss for the county, but we'll move on," Fannin said.

Big key items the board will be dealing with in the coming months and throughout the next fiscal year will be the continuation of the Pleasant Ridge Windfarm county zoning board of appeals hearings, which will continue through the month and possibly into January.

Fannin said the board would hopefully be ready to bring it to a vote in February.

"There are people on both sides. I'm not head counting, so I couldn't say what kind of split there is, but it's not all one way," Fannin said.

Another big project would be taking care of the aging Health and Education Building on Torrance Avenue. Fannin said the board is looking into finding a new home for the Public Health Department and Mental Health, which are both housed there.

"The boilers are so old we pray every winter we won't have major issues," Fannin said. "Last winter was really long and really tough. This one is supposed to be just as bad, so are hoping we make it

through another winter."

The county met a large milestone recently with the groundbreaking of Good Samaritan Home-Pontiac and the prospect of a ribbon cutting by this time next year.

## DIST. 90

Continued from Page A1

measure — District 90 added its approval.

The program is an incentive for municipalities and local governments to encourage the expansion, restoration, improvement and development of existing businesses.

"It would either need to be an example of an existing business adding and expanding not only in the facility, but also in the number of jobs, or a new business that comes into Livingston County that

also meets the criteria of square footage, number of jobs and so on," Kilgore said. "There are a number of different taxing bodies that are getting on board."

This program does not have any affect on current residents in terms of increased taxes, but the taxing bodies who sign the agreement agree to not require taxes from a new or existing company looking to expand during the time of the incentive period. So, if a company qualifies for the incentive, they can use money that would be given to the taxing bodies to enhance their business.

### NOTICE OF ADOPTED PROPERTY TAX INCREASE FOR THE FLANAGAN PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT

I. The corporate and special purpose property taxes extended or abated for 2013 were \$0.

The adopted corporate and special purpose property taxes to be levied for 2014 are \$100,000. The increase in the extension over the prior year cannot be calculated.

II. The property taxes extended for debt service and public building commission leases for 2013 were \$0.

The estimated property taxes to be levied for debt service and public building commission leases for 2014 are \$0. This represents a 0% increase over the previous year.

III. The total property taxes extended for 2013 were \$0.

The estimated total property taxes to be levied for 2014 are \$100,000. The increase in the extension over the prior year cannot be calculated.

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