

TO THE DOGS

Rover showcases his best tricks in quest to be named the king K-9 at TAPS event.



Really the best?

Mike Nadel finds much to like about Cubs' performance this season ... at least compared to the competition.



WHAT TO EXPECT ...

Guide breaks down what you need for your new bundle of joy.

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State's hospital aid plan: Loans

Comptroller's office wants \$1.2 billion borrowed to keep alive program for hospitals with Medicaid patients

BY AARON CHAMBERS
OF GATEHOUSE NEWS SERVICE

SPRINGFIELD — A plan to send extra dollars to the hospitals with the poorest patients lingered on life support just a week ago.

Now state officials are trying to resurrect the program in a big way — and fast. They're poised to borrow

\$1.2 billion to restart payments, and that means the hospitals may soon get the \$470 million they've anticipated since early spring. The state would get \$130 million on top of that for other health-care expenses.

Come Aug. 31, the legal authority to spend the money expires. Officials hope to raise and spend it by then.

"Borrowing is really the only option," said Carol Knowles, spokeswoman for state Comptroller Dan Hynes.

The three-year plan is geared to help hospitals handling the most patients on Medicaid, the joint state/federal health-care plan for the poor. It works by shuffling money between the state and hospitals, thereby triggering federal reimbursement for the state's Medicaid spending.

Hospitals gain \$1.4 billion over three years, or \$470 million each

year. The state wins a three-year total of \$390 million and the feds pick up the \$1.8 billion tab.

The state completed the first year of the program. But it couldn't execute the second year by spring, as required under Illinois law, because lawmakers had not authorized the spending.

The state borrowed \$900 million to kick-start the second-year cycle anyway. But without the power to

INSIDE

► Chart shows how much area hospitals got from program during fiscal 2006. **Page A7**

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Woodford outlook turns east

Port vote is latest example of county turning eye away from Tri-County Area toward McLean County

BY JOHN SHARP
OF THE JOURNAL STAR

EUREKA — Woodford County leaders are saying adios to economic development groups in the Peoria area while seeking marketing opportunities with Bloomington-Normal officials.

The County Board's finance committee declined last week to appropriate about \$11,000 next fiscal budget year to the Heart of Illinois Regional Port District, or TransPORT. A vote by the full board on its future with TransPORT is expected Tuesday.

The move is a port district? **INSIDE**

► What exactly is a port district? **Page A8**

The County Board voted to no longer support its annual payment to the Economic Development Council of Central Illinois, which is based in Peoria, ending a more than 15-year relationship. Instead, county leaders are exploring whether to handle economic development opportunities themselves.

County Administrator Gregory Jackson said TransPORT's focuses seemed to be on the redevelopment of an abandoned

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MORE OF A SLIDE THAN A RIDE

Back in the day ... Let's just say the annual August weekend when the motorcycle universe seems to descend on Peoria wasn't one civic officialdom has always appreciated.

Bert Sanders smiled when I brought that up.

"We survived all that," said the race director for the AMA Grand National Peoria TT, an event whose name we'll explain as we go.

What the 59th edition couldn't survive Sunday was the weather. At 3:28 p.m., as riders lined up for the second qualifying heat, rain began to fall and forced them to take cover in the tents on pit row of the Peoria Motorcycle Club. Moments later, lightning flashed, thunder boomed, and a brief monsoon turned the five-eighths-mile dirt track into a river of mud and oil unfit for racing.

"Well," Bert said, "you're seeing history."

Not exactly what either of us had in mind, though.

Never since this event debuted in 1947 had the races been rained out. Once, in 1977, the whole day was canceled ahead of time because of flooding on previous days. Otherwise, hot and dry — but appropriately muggy — summer days have been as dependable as Chris Carr, the "Prince of Peoria," who won 13 of the 59 races.

The Peoria Motorcycle Club has been running races almost since it was chartered in 1931. In 1940, the club obtained a picturesque plot of property west of the city, near the intersection of Illinois Route 116 and Cameron Lane. A track was built in the lowland between two tree-lined hillsides, and in 1947 the club staged its first national American Motorcyclist Association race.

Six decades later, the race is the climax of a Grand Nationals Weekend, which includes a parade and fills the Peoria riverfront with food, music, thousands of celebrants and, of course, motorcycles.

The race itself for years has been the biggest sports spectator event in the Tri-County Area. Crowds of 15,000 to 16,000 are the norm — though the threat of rain Sunday held down attendance to an estimated 10,000.

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ADAM GERIK/JOURNAL STAR

A group of young men slide down a muddy incline after the AMA Flat Track Championship was cancelled because of rain Sunday afternoon at the Peoria Race Park.

Leah Ropp, 5, and Cristy Love dance to live Louisiana-style music provided by the band Creole Stomp at Kickapoo Creek Winery's Grape Stomp on Sunday afternoon.

DAVID ZENTZ
JOURNAL STAR
PURCHASE THIS PHOTO AT PJSTAR.COM



Red, white and stomped all over

Wine connoisseurs and kids alike put best foot forward at Kickapoo Creek Winery

BY GENEVIEVE DIESING
OF THE JOURNAL STAR

EDWARDS — To hear David E. Conner talk, the life of a grape is like the life of a person.

"It grows, it changes, year to year, month to month," said Conner, a former surgeon and the owner and co-wine-maker at Kickapoo Creek Winery. "Every year they're different,

so you have to treat them differently."

Despite his empathy for the fruit, Conner didn't cringe when patrons repeatedly squashed grapes under their feet at the winery's 2nd annual Grape Stomp on Sunday afternoon. The trampled clusters were table grapes, and they certainly weren't going to create a tempting beverage.

"They were cold, and they were really firm at first," said Bushnell resident Jeri Brown after she had stomped on her share of the fruit. Brown watched her two granddaughters wade in a kiddie-pool lined with

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What makes you happy?

Ignore their sarcasm, youths really enjoy their families, poll finds

BY JOCELYN NOVECK
AND TREVOR TOMPSON
OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — So you're between the ages of 13 and 24. What makes you happy? A worried, weary parent might imagine the answer to sound something like this: Sex, drugs, a little rock 'n' roll. Maybe some cash, or at least the car keys.

Turns out the real answer is quite different. Spending time with family was the top answer

to that open-ended question, according to an extensive survey — more than 100 questions asked of 1,280 people ages 13-24 — conducted by The Associated Press and MTV about happiness among America's young people.

Next was spending time with friends, followed by time with

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UNDER ARREST
Activist seized by immigration officials after leaving Chicago church. **PAGE B1**



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