



LINK

Local Information, News and Know-How

Upcoming Dates:



March 30:
IL Ag Legislative Day

April 4:
Consolidated Election

April 11:
Annual Town Meeting

May 1:
Deadline for Rural Nurse
Practitioner Scholarship
Applications

May 29:
Memorial Day



Did You Know...?

According to the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), as of February 2017, Illinois had 72,200 farms.

Illinois farmland covers nearly 27 million acres -- about 75 percent of the state's total land area.



March/April 2017

Volume 8 Issue 2

Highway commissioner pay

How compensation is set and what form it must take

by Kirby Wagner & Kevin Rund

In April there will be an election for township offices. As highway commissioner candidates gear up for the election, their governing boards have been in the process of determining compensation for those positions. This process is governed by Illinois statute.

Highway commissioners are paid for their duties, but the compensation process depends on what type of government the highway commissioner operates in. Likewise, the form of that payment can vary as well.

Illinois statute provides that the form of payment shall be either a salary or a per diem. The decisions on form

and rate of payment must be made by the overseeing authority prior to the election of the highway commissioner. Statute states:

"Unless an annual salary is fixed, the highway commissioner shall receive for each day he or she is necessarily employed in the discharge of official duties a per diem to be fixed by the county board in road districts in counties not under township organization, by the highway board of trustees in consolidated township road districts, and by the board of town trustees in districts composed of a single township." (605 ILCS 5/6-207)

(See **Commissioners** on page 2)

Drainage district operation

A primer on how districts are formed, managed, funded, modified and dissolved

The following material is based—on a large part—on a State of Illinois publication, the *"Legislator's Guide to Local Governments in Illinois."* That document was prepared by the Illinois Commission on Intergovernmental Cooperation. Though it was done over a decade ago, it's relevant today and it does a good job of laying out the basics of drainage district creation, dissolution, finance and

operation.

In the revenue section and those sections that follow, you'll note the use of the term "No Provision". That indicates that state statute does not establish either a requirement or an authorization for that concept that would apply to drainage districts.

(See **Districts** on page 2)

Commissioners

(Continued from page 1)

If paid by per diem, before any per diem is paid, the highway commissioner must file a sworn statement in the office of the district clerk showing the number of days the commissioner was employed, the kind of employment, and the dates of employment. The governing boards may, instead of a per diem, fix an annual salary for the highway commissioner at not less than \$3,000. The salary is to be paid in equal monthly installments.

The decision on the level and type of compensation for highway commissioners must be made on or before the last Tuesday in March.

Whatever the method and amounts selected, that decision must be made on or before the last Tuesday in March before the date of election of the commissioner." (605 ILCS 5/6-207) In 2017, that deadline falls on March 28th.

Statute provides that *"The compensation of the highway commissioner is paid from the general township fund in districts comprised of a single township. Compensation is paid from the regular road fund in all other districts having highway commissioners. However, in districts comprised of a single township, a portion of the highway commissioner's salary may be paid from the*

(Continued on page 7)

Districts

(Continued from page 1)

OVERVIEW

Drainage districts construct, maintain and repair drains and levees, and engage in other drainage or levee work for agricultural, sanitary, or mining purposes. Districts are governed by a board of commissioners. They do not levy property taxes, however, they may collect assessments and they have bonding authority.

ESTABLISHMENT

A drainage district may be proposed in a petition filed by 20% of the adult landowners owning more than one-fourth of the land, or more than 25% of the adult landowners owning a majority of the land.

Procedure: A hearing is held in circuit court.

Authorization: The court makes the final determination.

Annexation: Annexation is possible under certain circumstances. A petition to annex may be brought by 20% of landowners owning one-fourth of the land in the proposed addition, or by the board. A hearing is held in circuit court. The court makes the final determination.

DISSOLUTION

A request for dissolution may be filed in a petition signed by at least 75% of the adult landowners owning not less than three-fourths of the district's land. Alternatively, the board may petition the court for dissolution.

Procedure: A hearing is held in circuit court.

Authorization: The court makes the final determination.

Disconnection: Disconnection is

possible under certain circumstances. The proportion of owners required to request the disconnection varies with the circumstances. A hearing is held in circuit court. The court makes the final determination.

GOVERNANCE

Each drainage district is governed by a Board of Commissioners. The method of selecting those commissioners varies based on how the district was originally formed.

Members: Three members serve staggered three-year terms, although landowners in the district may petition for a reduction to one member if no construction is underway. Commissioners are paid a sum not to exceed \$30 per day for each day while conducting district business and may be reimbursed for their expenses.

Selection: Commissioners of districts organized under the Farm Drainage Act are elected by the adult landowners. In other districts, commissioners are appointed by the chair of the county board or the chief executive officer in home rule counties. Landowners may petition for the appointment of commissioners.

Key Officials: The county clerk serves as chairman of the district and the county treasurer as district treasurer. Commissioners may petition the court for authorization to appoint a separate treasurer.

POWERS

In addition to the usual powers of special districts (see page v), these districts may acquire prop-

(See **Districts** on page 7)

An Economic Development Opportunity to Eclipse Most Others

Southern Illinois draws national attention and a bright, one-time opportunity

By Brenda Matherly

If you want to be a part of one of the largest events and economic development opportunities to hit Southern Illinois, mark your calendars for August 21. It's on that day that the first total solar eclipse over the mainland United States since 1979 will sweep across the country following a 70-mile-wide path of totality running from Oregon to South Carolina and through 15 Illinois counties. The solar eclipse, being, dubbed "The Great American Eclipse", will reach its point of greatest duration on Aug. 21, 2017, just a few miles south of Carbondale.

It's being reported that spectators who visit Carbondale, nearby Goreville and other cities and towns close by will be rewarded with a full totality view of the solar eclipse for the longest duration of 2 minutes and 40 seconds. In addition, a few designated areas will have professional astronomers from the Department of Astronomy onsite explaining the stages of the eclipse and pointing out interesting facts related to the eclipse. They will also be available to answer questions.

Many Southern Illinois towns along the eclipse path will be celebrating this event in style. Spectators can expect a fair-like atmosphere with food vendors, activities, and southern-style hospitality.



In Goreville, IL the start of the eclipse will be 11:53 a.m., the start of the total eclipse will be at 1:20.46 p.m., the end of the total eclipse will be at 1:23.26 p.m. Visit [Community Eclipse Plans](#) to find other viewing locations in Illinois.

The number of visitors from around the nation and around the world are expected to make their way into Southern IL several days before the solar eclipse. Southern Illinois University is estimated an additional 30,000 to 50,000 tourists on campus that day. Tourism officials in southern Illinois say they are ex-

pecting this event to draw thousands of visitors and are preparing local businesses to handle this boom in tourism activities. Many of the hotels and campsites in the area have been booked for a year in advance.

This expected and highly anticipated burst in tourism activities and economic boost to several southern Illinois counties is a direct result of the path of totality of the solar eclipse. Unfortunately, not all of Illinois will experience the same benefits. A large portion of the state will only see a partial eclipse - 93%. This might seem like a lot, but our eyes are not well equipped to notice even when the sun is blocked by 93%. In other words, there is a HUGE difference between viewing a partial solar eclipse and viewing the total eclipse (which, by the way, should only be done when wearing eye protection.)

(Specialized eclipse) sunglasses might be just what the doctor orders for Southern Illinois - The future economic forecast looks bright.

"Do not attempt to observe the partial or annular phases of any eclipse with the naked eye. Failure to use appropriate filtration may result in permanent eye damage or blindness!"

— NASA

Identifying County Economic Drivers

Farming still playing a big part

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service

The USDA Economic Research Service (ERS) creates "county typology codes". These codes are a classification system for re-

searchers and policy analysis that provide a tool to analyze and characterize the economic base of US counties. They have been widely used as a means of identifying the very diverse economic and social structure needs in rural areas. It is this type of identification and understanding that greatly aids rural policy making.

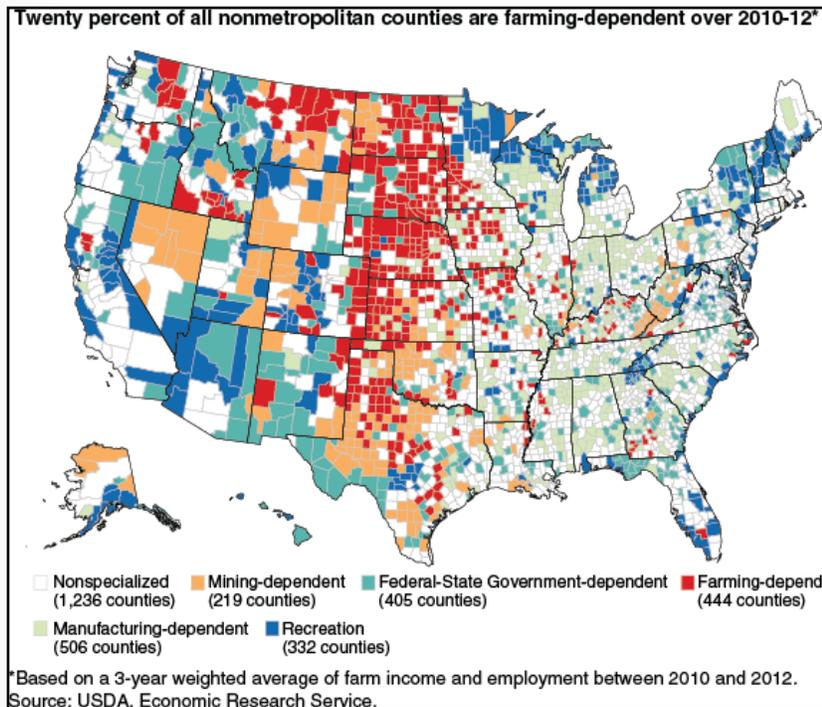
The ERS uses these codes to classify all US counties according to six mutually exclusive categories of economic dependence and six overlapping categories of policy-relevant themes. The economic dependence types include farming, mining, manufacturing, Federal/State government, recreation and nonspecialized counties. The policy-relevant types include low education, low employment, persistent poverty, persistent child poverty, population loss and retirement destination.

ERS first released the county economic typology codes in 1986. The codes are updated roughly every 10 years. The last update was in 2014 using data collected from 2001-2012.

ers, legislators, economic development practitioners and the general public to identify the differences in economic and social characteristics.

Updated codes show the number of farming-dependent counties fell moderately while manufacturing-dependent counties had a sharp decline between 2001-2012. However, this same data still shows farming as a principal source of income and employment in many US counties. The primary concentration of these farm dependent counties can be found in the Midwest. Farming-dependent counties (556 in total) are determined by having 25 percent or more of average annual labor and farmers' earnings derived from farming or, 16 percent or more of the jobs in the county come from farming.

Another significant factor driving economic development is population trends. The county topology codes account for these trends by capturing both migration and natural increase (the number of births minus deaths). Short-term changes in population growth largely reflect changing migration patterns, while long-term trends



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An area's economic and social characteristics have significant effects on its development and need for various types of public programs. To provide policy-relevant information about diverse county conditions to policymakers, public officials, and researchers. Using these codes makes it possible for policymak-

(See **Typology** on page 5)

Typology

(Continued from page 4)

are also influenced by age structure and trends in fertility and mortality.

Those counties identified as recreation-dependent counties have seen the most robust population growth since 2000. Many of these counties attract retirees and others looking for amenities like open spaces and water views. However, growth in these counties slowed sharply during and after the Great Recession, reflecting declines in discretionary income and mobility associated with the downturn.

Population growth in government-dependent counties was also relatively strong in the 2000s before slowing in more recent years. Meanwhile, rural manufacturing counties, hard hit by

the recession and its aftermath, went from modest population growth in the early 2000s to slight population decline in more recent years.

Demand for the types of goods and services produced by the local economy is not the only factor affecting population. For example, farming-dependent counties have seen population drop four percentage points since 2000, despite generally robust demand for U.S. agricultural products. This decline continues a long-term trend reflecting rising labor productivity in the farm sector, as well as the lack of other economic opportunities and amenities in many of these often remote counties. These conditions lead to substantial net out-migration of young adults, which in turn results in a population age structure consistent with

fewer births and more deaths.

The difficult part (if not impossible) is to completely pigeonhole all US counties into nice neat categories. The characteristics highlighted by these data sets still show a wide range of conditions and trends. However, by grouping together rural counties, the analysis is able to show similar needs and conditions when it comes to rural economic policy development.

For more information, and to view state maps by county economic type visit USDA's Department of Economic Research Service's website at <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/county-typology-codes/descriptions-and-maps/>

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Rural fire departments could win life-saving equipment & training:

Your nomination could make a difference

By: Brenda Matherly

Several months ago, in our September 2016 edition of LINK, we included an article about life-saving grain-bin rescue training, technology and new equipment being offered to fire fighters in Illinois. As a follow-up to that article, we'd like to include information on a contest providing fire departments a chance to win grain bin rescue tubes and hands-on rescue training.

Rural fire fighters are often the first and only line of defense when someone becomes helplessly trapped in grain. With more

than 900 grain-bin entrapments nationwide in the past 50 years, the role these responders play could save lives.

Unfortunately, many fire departments lack the specialized rescue techniques and equipment necessary for a successful grain bin rescue. Without training, during many of those entrapments, rescuers arrive and hastily get to work trying to save the victim. In their haste, some become victims themselves. Out of all grain-bin related fatalities, untrained rescuers account for about 60 percent of the deaths.

In conjunction with Grain Bin Safety Week (Feb. 19 - 25, 2017), the National Education Center for Agricultural Safety (NECAS) is teaming up with a number of farm and other interest groups to help better prepare first responders. Through their efforts, a contest is being held to award grain bin rescue tubes and hands-on rescue training to fire departments around the nation.

Winning entries will be awarded:

- One grain rescue tube, valued between \$3,000 to \$5,000

(See **Tube** on page 8)

IL Farm Bureau's local government policies

New language and concepts added for 2017

The completion of Illinois Farm Bureau's (IFB's) 2016 policy development program year brought with it new policy language impacting local government. We've gathered that new language in the following listing.

We've provided the policy number and name, along with the paragraphs containing the new language.

Please keep in mind that these statements are taken out-of-context, so might not provide the complete picture on the issue being addressed. Other, older paragraphs in that same policy could help to round out that understanding.

For a more complete reading of IFB's policies on local government, refer to our policy page on the IFB website at: <http://www.ilfb.org/policy-issues/policy-for-ifb-and-afbf.aspx>

County Farm Bureaus are encouraged to develop their own set of local policies on topics unique to that county.

Policy 8. Education

We support:

10. Innovative pilot efforts that include creative partnerships with business and industry, higher education and government; encourage exploration of new ideas and new approaches to make schools more effective and efficient. Ideas and approaches should include, but not limited to, Charter Schools, Distance learning, new approaches to Vocational Education and Special Education and transitioning to a

new educational model centered on classrooms that emphasize creativity, innovation, and teamwork while helping individual students to identify their passions earlier in their educational experience.

11. Increasing engagement of students in local, state, and federal activities in an effort to gain a better understanding and knowledge of the political process and the importance of civic engagement.

We oppose shifting responsibility for the state's contribution to the Teachers Retirement System (TRS) on the local school districts.

Policy 42. Governmental Property Acquisition and Ownership

We will oppose:

3. The creation or expansion of local, state, and federal refuges, recreational or conservation areas when the aggregate acreage of such proposed focus areas account for more than two percent of the county's farmland.

Policy 83. Government Regulation

We support legislation to amend existing laws to reduce and eliminate duplicative services, programs and burdensome government regulations.

Policy 90. 9-1-1 Telephone System

We support legislation:

3. That will require the State of Illinois to forward 911 fees they collect to the municipal systems in the month following the collection of the fee.

Policy 112 Local Government

We will support legislation:

7. Extending the time limit from 30 days to 60 days to get 10 percent of registered voters' signatures on petitions concerning backdoor referendums.

10. That provides for the absorption, consolidation, disconnection, and dissolution of units of local government by front door referendum.

11. Waiving the residency requirement for the office of Highway Commissioner in a township with no incorporated town within the borders of the township and a population of less than 500. All other requirements for the office shall remain.

Policy 126. Tax Reform

We will support legislation:

27. Maintaining and creating property assessment levels that encourage the creation and use of grassed-back terraces, grassed waterways, filter strips, two stage ditches, bioreactors, and other approaches to improve water quality through these practices.

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Districts

(Continued from page 2)

erty through eminent domain, construct, maintain and repair drains, levees, or other works, and sell its real estate and property. When authorized by the circuit court the board may construct additional drains, alter any drains or pumping plants, purchase necessary equipment, and abandon any drain or levee that is no longer of value to the district. Under some circumstances, the district may construct and operate sewerage treatment facilities.

REVENUE

Corporate Tax: No provision

Bonds and Interest Tax: No provision

Tax Anticipation Warrants: No provision

Other Revenue: Commissioners may levy three types of assessments on property in the district that will be benefited, taken, or damaged by proposed drainage work.

Original assessments are levied for the construction of the original work of the district.

Annual maintenance assessments are levied for the performance of the annual maintenance of the district, the operation of pumping plants, and to pay the current expenses of the district.

Additional assessments are levied for the performance of additional or repair work and the construction or repair of pumping plants.

DEBT

Revenue Bonds: No provision

MANAGEMENT

General Obligation: No provision

Other Debt: Districts may incur debt greater than uncollected assessments only for:

Operating expenses, completion of work already approved by the court, and expenses arising as a result of a flood or other emergency.

Districts may issue bonds or notes for up to 90% of uncollected assessments, or more than 90% of uncollected assessments with the approval of the court. The bonds or notes must be paid within one year of the date the assessments will fall due.

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Commissioners

(Continued from page 2)

corporate road and bridge fund or the permanent road fund if approved by the township board and the highway commissioner.” (605 ILCS 5/6-207)

“The board of town trustees will order payment of the amount of per diem claimed in the highway commissioner’s sworn statement at the first regular meeting following the filing of the statement. In consolidated township road districts, the highway

board of trustees audits the compensation of the highway commissioner.” (605 ILCS 5/6-207)

Following the April election, highway commissioners will take office and begin their duties. For the next four years, they receive compensation for their work that was agreed upon and approved prior to the election.

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Millennials

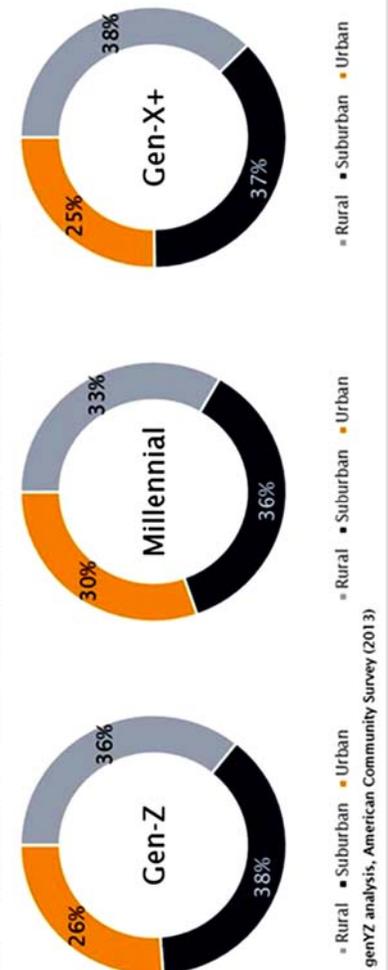
Born 1982-2002

Small-town millennials are heading to colleges in the city and leaving their small towns behind. So how will these small towns lure them back? Rural Development expert and Executive Director and Founder of Lanesboro Arts, John Davis has worked on national main street programs and rural development programs. He suggests there are three key elements to drawing these young people back:

arts, education, and coffee.

<http://lanesboroarts.org/>

Urban – suburban – rural distribution by generation (2013)



Tube

(Continued from page 5)

- One six-hour grain entrapment rescue training session, at winner's location, valued up to \$5,000

The contest began on January 1, 2017 and ends on May 31, 2017.

To enter, describe how your local fire department or emergency rescue team and community would benefit from grain entrapment training and a rescue tube, and how the tube and training could be shared with nearby departments.

Please include:

- Your name
- Occupation
- Phone number
- Mailing address
- Email address, and
- Name, address and phone number of the



fire department or rescue team nomination

Nominations are accepted from the general public as well as from fire fighters who wish to nominate their own fire department.

For more information on contest rules and to submit your entry please visit NECAS's website at <http://www.necas.org/>

Congratulations Mid Piatt Fire Protection District in White Heath, IL for being an award winner in 2016.

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2017 Rural Nurse Practitioner scholarship program—apply now!

Applications are now available for the 2017 rural nurse practitioner scholarships. This year Illinois Farm Bureau (IFB) will again offer five \$4000 scholarships to qualified applicants.

The scholarship program, now in its 25th year, helps encourage and develop a pool of rural health practitioners to help meet primary health care needs in rural Illinois. Students who receive scholarships agree to practice for two years in an approved rural community in Illinois.

To be eligible for the scholarship, students must be Illinois residents and be a Registered Nurse accepted or enrolled in an accredited Nurse Practitioner Program. Funding is provided by the Rural Illinois Medical Student Assistance Program (RIMSAP).

Applications and information can be received through your local county Farm Bureau® and have also been placed on the RIMSAP website at

www.RIMSAP.com.

We will again this year be encouraging County Farm Bureaus to promote this program locally. Applications are due in the Illinois Farm Bureau office by May 1, 2017.

For additional information, contact Donna Gallivan at 309-557-2350, or via e-mail at dgallivan@ilfb.org.

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Scholarship Time Table

May 1	Applications due
June	Illinois Farm Bureau Nurse Practitioner Scholarship Committee recommends recipients to the grant providers
July	Recipients are notified
Sept.	First installment paid to university
Jan.	Recipient submits a one-page progress report to Scholarship Committee
Jan.	Second installment paid to university
May	Second progress report is submitted to Committee

Upon graduation, recipient must submit a letter to the Scholarship Committee verifying employment in a rural community.

After completion of the two years of service, the recipient must verify he/she has been employed in a rural community.