



A Jefferson School student receives new shoes, pictured with Ashton Stephens of Edward Jones.

Thousands to gather at Arrowhead June 27 for annual fireworks blowout

Once again, Johnston City will likely be the first community in Southern Illinois to celebrate the nation's birthday, with what some consider the best fireworks show in the area. The event kicks off at 5:00 pm, Friday, June 27, at Arrowhead Lake. The evening offers multiple family-friendly activities, live music, and a variety of vendors. The celebration concludes with a fireworks show at dark.

The Bubble Bus, an annual feature of the JC Library's Summer Reading Program, will delight children with showers of suds. Food truck vendors will sell

meals and snacks throughout the evening. Marion-based tribute band, 90s Kidz, will headline the musical entertainment. The band is self-described on social media as the "Ultimate 90's Rock and Pop Tribute Band! Seasoned musicians from Southern Illinois reliving our childhood and time-traveling back to the best decade ever." Local DJ Terry Brooks will also spin musical hits throughout the evening.

This is the seventh year the city government has sponsored a Fireworks Spectacular at Arrowhead Lake. The annual blowout is

funded primarily through donations. From T-shirts to flower baskets, 5-K runs to pork steak dinners, JC businesses and citizens have responded to the challenge of covering the costs, currently about \$24,000, for fireworks alone. The event annually draws thousands of locals and individuals from nearby communities, as well as additional spectators at Arrowhead Campground. Campsites sold out soon after online reservations for the weekend became available. The City welcomes donations at any time at the City Hall (618-983-6651).

'Kicks for Kids' comes to Kindergarten, 1st Grade

BY BROOKE SCHLYER, JOHNSTON CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Kicks for Kids returned to Jefferson Elementary, May 12. This time, Kindergarten and first grade students went home with a brand-new pair of tennis shoes and socks. Students could be seen throwing their hands up in the air, hugging their new kicks, and running to fellow classmates when matched with their new shoes.

Mrs. Adams believes a new pair of shoes goes beyond providing support during a long day at school, but gives students a boost of confidence.

"Receiving new shoes can make a child feel valued and seen, especially if they've previously worn hand-me-downs or shoes in poor condition," Mrs. Adams contends. "I know my own child can wear down their shoes very quickly. A

Kindergarten teacher

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Jefferson renovations to be completed this summer



Jefferson Elementary continues its renovation and expansion project to modernize the school's facilities and improve accessibility for all students. (See story on page 3)

Clark named 'Superintendent of Distinction'

BY BROOKE SCHLYER, JOHNSTON CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Johnston City Superintendent Kathy Clark has been named the 2025 Superintendent of Distinction by her colleagues in the Shawnee Region of the Illinois Association of School Administrators (IASA).

Clark, who plans to retire June 30, was honored at a recent awards luncheon in Springfield. State Superintendent Dr. Tony Sanders was the featured speaker, where 21 IASA regional Superintendents of Distinction were recognized.

"Being recognized by my peers is a great honor, but it truly reflects the passion, resilience, and commitment of the entire Johnston City CUSD 1 team," said Clark, who has been an educator for 33 years and superintendent of Johnston City CUSD #1 for 10. "I'm proud of what we've accomplished together to support student success and strengthen our schools. It's a privilege to

lead in a community that values collaboration, innovation, and doing what's best for kids."

Those nominating Clark noted a number of successes during her tenure including:

- Secured a \$5 million grant to establish Full-Service Community Schools, enhancing educational support for students.
- Hired social workers at every school across the district to provide comprehensive support to students and families.
- Introduced new CTE programs in agriculture, education, social work, business, and medical careers.
- Expanded fine arts programming.
- Implemented Parent Mentors at elementary schools.
- Expanded community partnerships with local churches and businesses, fostering col-

laborative initiatives to benefit students and the community.

Introduced Student Support Advocates to work directly with students and their families, improve student attendance, behavior, and academic performance.

The Shawnee Region is comprised of Jackson, Williamson, Saline, Gallatin, Union, Johnson, Pope, Hardin, Alexander, Pulaski and Massac counties. Superintendents of Distinction were selected by peers in their region based on their commitment, dedication, and leadership.

"Effective school leadership requires both vision and the ability to execute," said IASA Executive Director Dr. Brent Clark. "Kathy has demonstrated both qualities consistently throughout her career in Johnston City. Her focus on building community partnerships while enhancing



Superintendent Kathy Clark receives 2025 Superintendent of Distinction from the Shawnee Region of the Illinois Association of School Administrators (IASA).

educational opportunities has created lasting positive change for students."

The 11th annual luncheon was sponsored by Stifel, the country's leading underwriter of K-12 school bonds.

"The superintendents honored today exemplify the depth of leadership and personal commitment that exceptional superintendents bring to their districts

to serve students and staff to be the best they can be," said Anne Noble, managing director of Stifel. "Stifel's longtime commitment to IASA culminates in honoring these amazing superintendents and thanking them for all they do for the students of Illinois."



Legence Bank honors local tax preparer



Legence Bank chose Glenn Sanders to honor this tax season for all the work the CPAs and tax preparers do for us. Assistant Branch Manager Debbie Paris presents Glenn with a gift certificate to T-Moe's. Laura Small is the Johnston City branch manager.



Opinion

An 'Indian' by any other name

BY JIMMY DEAN

In my years in politics, I have watched a lot of arguments almost come to blows, people lose friends over a disagreement, and silly laws put into effect.

A couple of months ago, I started hearing about one that I really thought would never see the light of day, but now is close to passing.

As of this writing, it has passed the Illinois House and is in the Senate. By all indications it appears to be one step closer to becoming law.

It can either be approved by the Senate and passed on to be signed by the Governor, or die in the Senate.

The bill I am talking about is the one that will make all schools with any reference to Indians, tribes, or arrowheads change their mascots: House Bill 1237.

This will affect Johnston City (Indians), DuQuoin (Indians), Shawnee (Redskins), Cahokia (Comanches), Collinsville (Kahoks) and Freeburg (Midgets) just to name a few.

Freeburg's mascot got the ball rolling when a group from Nevada thought the name was poking fun at small people and the ball of string got larger and larger.

While the United States, State of Illinois, and our cities face major problems such as homelessness, health issues, and a crumbling infrastructure—just to name a few—our elected officials decide to make schools change the names of long-standing emblems and mascots that bring pride to schools and towns.

I'm surprised no one has jumped on the bandwagon to ban Red Devils, Blue Devils, Demons, Flaming Hearts, and Orphans.

These mascots don't bother me, but they are way different than Indians.

Around Johnston City you can see Indians on the athletic fields, schools, gym floors, football field, and more.

Toss in the clothing parents bought to support the school on Friday and Saturday nights, stationery, city vehicles, email addresses,

etc., and you are talking about a small fortune to replace these emblems before the bill's 2030 deadline.

Once this becomes law, schools refusing to comply will lose state funding.

The bill was sponsored by a congresswoman from the Quad Cities areas. I called her several times at her district office and got a voicemail recording instead of a real person. I found this strange, considering people in legislature all talk about constituent service.

I finally left a voice mail. I don't expect a return call, as I expressed my thoughts about the bill. But I encourage you to contact your legislators and voice your opinions.

I wonder what they would do if we changed the mascot emblem to a small train engine and spelled Engines across the front. It's not the Indians, but it sounds like it.

Who knows what our team name and mascot will be?

Candy maker offers rock candy "meals"

BY TIM HASTINGS

Candy maker Randy Hedler sold unusual flavors of rock candy during the Sweet Southern Market sponsored by Down Home Comforts last month.

"I make rock candy in flavors such as fried chicken, mashed potatoes, and sweet corn," Hedler said.

"We give lots of these away as 'meals' at Thanksgiving and Christmas."

Hedler was one of approximately 40 vendors who set up tents at the one-day Sweet Southern Market. Down Home Comforts, a gift shop located at 411 E. Broadway in Johnston City, sponsored the event, which

closed two blocks of Broadway to motorists.

Hedler, who is from Salem, also sold fudge, canned goods, rubs, and more conventional flavors of rock candy at the booth called "Uncle Randy's Sweets & More."

Kicks for Kids (FROM P. 1)

new pair of shoes can send the message: "You matter."

The Kicks for Kids program is a joint effort between the Edward Jones team in Johnston City (Ashton and Sidney Stephens, Tonia Johnson, and Laura Wilkerson) and Hibbett Sports. In January, all Pre-K students received shoes.

Teachers and staff, including first grade teacher Ms. Smith, appreciate the impact this is having on students and the extra help it provides to parents.

"We are incredibly grateful to everyone involved

in making this donation possible," Ms. Smith adds. "Your generosity not only provides children with a basic necessity but also inspires hope and joy in their lives. This program demonstrates the power of community and kindness, and we appreciate your commitment to helping our kids thrive."

The program's next goal is to give current second grade students a brand-new pair of shoes in August when they start the next school year at Lincoln Elementary.



Kicks for Kids organizers (L-R): Sidney Stephens, Ashton Stephens, Tonia Johnson, and Laura Wilkerson from Edward Jones; Harmony Maronay and Chrissy Stewart from Hibbett Sports.

Jimmy Dean is a freelance writer and former mayor of Johnston City. He can be reached at jrdean@mchsi.com.



Coulson's

HEATING & COOLING

Since 1961

983-8133




To become a sponsor of Arrow News, call 618-952-1272 or email jcitycenter@gmail.com. JCity Center for Hope and Renewal is a 501c3 nonprofit. All donations are tax-deductible.

Jefferson Elementary construction continues with goal of completion by end of summer break

BY BROOKE SCHLYER,
JOHNSTON CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Jefferson Elementary continues its renovation and expansion project to modernize the school's facilities and improve accessibility for all students.

Phase one began in May 2024 during the summer break, preparing the site for construction, with parking expansion and demolition work.

Architechnique Limited is the architecture firm overseeing the project, and Evrard Company Incorporated is carrying out the construction. Principal Architect Steve Sims notes that crews finished phase one in August 2024, allowing for minimal disruption to the school year.

Currently, phase two is underway, which involves several renovations to the school including four new classrooms, a pair of restrooms, kitchen expansion featuring a new cooler and freezer, dedicated class-

rooms for Student Support Services, and a renovated library.

Additionally, the principal's office will be relocated to the back of the building, near the current parking lot. This change will allow for a new, ADA-compliant main entrance. Overall, renovations will address multiple accessibility challenges within the existing building by installing interior and exterior ramps.

"The building, which was originally designed in the 1950s, is being updated to better serve today's educational needs," Sims said. "We're ensuring that the new layout not only meets modern codes but also improves safety and accessibility for all students and staff."

Jefferson Elementary received critical funding through a school maintenance grant to assist with the cost of ensuring full ADA compliance.

Phase three will occur

during the summer break and will focus on interior renovations for the new layout.

"This is a rewarding project, as it directly benefits the children and their education," Sims emphasized. "We're ensuring that the updated space will foster a more comfortable, safe, and accessible environment for all of Jefferson's students."

While major construction efforts are set to be completed in time for the start of the 2025-2026 school year, smaller finishing touches could continue after that time.



COMMUNITY CALENDAR



June Events

JUNE 1
Movie Night, "Courageous"
JCity Church, 5 pm

JUNE 2
Lunch Bunch begins, 11:30 am

JUNE 3
Business Leaders Meet-N-Greet, Andresen's, 9 am

Lions Club, JCity Church, 5:30pm

JUNE 4
Rotary, Andresen's, Noon

JUNE 10
Library Reading Program Kickoff, Fire Station, 2 pm

City Council, Scout Cabin, 5 pm

JUNE 15 - FATHER'S DAY

JUNE 16
JC Planning Commission Meeting, Scout Cabin, 5 pm

JUNE 17
Lions Club, Andresen's, 9 am

JUNE 18
Rotary, Indigo Realty, 4 pm

JUNE 19 - JUNETEENTH
Commodity Dist./Food Pantry, First United Methodist, 9:30 am-12:30 pm

JUNE 24
City Council, Scout Cabin, 5 pm

JUNE 26
School Board Meeting

JUNE 20
CCM Golf Scramble, Hickory Ridge, 9 am

JUNE 27
Fireworks Spectacular, Arrowhead, 5:00 pm

July Events

JULY 11
Rotary Chicken & Raffles, Andresen's

JULY 12
Manna Mission 29th Anniversary Celebration, 9:30 am-1:30 pm

Daily Events

Lunch Bunch (summer meals for kids), 4 locations: (1) 1308 Parkway, M-F, 11:30; (2) 901 W. Broadway, M-F, noon; (3) WMS summer school, M-F; (4) JCHS enrichment, M-Th.

Weekly Events

THURSDAYS
Food pantry/clothes closet First Christian, 3:30-5:30 pm

FRIDAYS
Farmers Market, 7-11 am

Why do bad things happen to good people?

BY BARRY ROBERTSON

What a round of devastating weather southern Illinois has endured lately—storms and wind and hail and tornadoes. We, our friends, and neighbors have suffered severe losses. Some might say, "Welcome to southern Illinois springtime." But doesn't it seem like things have been getting progressively worse?

An age-old question comes to mind: "Why do bad things happen to good people?" Jesus told us, "In the world you will have trouble..." and also said of His Father in Heaven, "He makes the sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matthew 5:45). He shows no partiality in this world. We've strayed from the perfection of the Garden of Eden to a sinful, fallen world where terrible things happen, and no one is immune to its effects.



Barry Robertson has been pastor of Washington Avenue Baptist Church since 2010.

The *Believer's Bible Commentary* says, "One of the great dangers in the Christian life is that the acquisition of food and clothing becomes the first and foremost aim of our existence. We become so occupied with earning money for these things that the work of the Lord is relegated to a secondary place. The emphasis of the New Testament is that the cause of Christ should have first place in our lives. Goods and clothing should be subordinate. We should work hard for the supply of our current necessities, then trust God for the future as we plunge ourselves into His service. This is the life of faith."

We shouldn't get so

caught up in things of the world, that we lose sight of the Giver of these things.

While Jesus said we'd have troubles, He continued in John 16:33: "...but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." He tells us we're not made for this world. "For our citizenship is in heaven." He has "put eternity in our hearts," so we should live as if there is more to come—a perfect, sinless place with "no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying."

Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me shall never die" (John 11:25). Here's a great question for you from Jesus: "Do you believe this?" (v. 26). Recognize your sins, confess and forsake them, and put your faith and trust in Jesus who died for your sins, but rose from the grave, and you will.

JC Manna Mission
THRIFT STORE
306 E. Broadway Blvd., Johnston City, IL 62951
618-983-6262
Mon. & Wed.: 9:30-4:00 • Tues.: 9:30-5:30
& First Sat. Monthly: 9:30-12:30

Washington Avenue Baptist Church

9th and Washington
Johnston City, IL 62951
Barry Robertson, pastor
618-694-2995

Down Home Comforts
All Things Home with a Southern Flair
Florist, Home Decor, & Gifts
411 E. Broadway Blvd. Johnston City, IL 62951
(618) 923-1124
 Join us on social media!

Southern Illinois Bank
Johnston City
West Frankfort
Zeigler
Thompsonville
Herrin

Churches of Johnston City
***First United Methodist Church**
400 W. Broadway
Johnston City, IL 62951
618-983-5150
Sherry Cisneros, pastor

***Heritage Fellowship**
(Church of God of Prophecy)
308 W. 12th St.
Johnston City, IL 62951
Pastors Gaylon & Dawn Stewart

***JCity Church**
(Free Will Baptist)
609 Monroe
Johnston City, IL 62951
618-983-5254
Dr. Randy Carney, pastor

Johnston City United Pentecostal Church
1101 W. 10th
Johnston City, IL 62951
618-983-5938
Brandon Abernathy, pastor

***St. Paul's Catholic Church**
1103 Washington Ave.
Johnston City, IL 62951
618-983-5073
Father Brian Barker

***Stiritz United Methodist Church**
Sherry Cisneros, pastor

***Washington Ave. Baptist Church**
9th and Washington
Johnston City, IL 62951
Barry Robertson, pastor
618-694-2995

Other Ministries

***JC Kids' Lunch Bunch**
c/o JCity Church (see above)

***JCity Center for Hope and Renewal**
504 E. Broadway Blvd.
Johnston City, IL 62951
618-952-1272

***Manna Mission**
306 E Broadway Blvd.
Johnston City, IL 62951
618-983-6262

**active members of Johnston City Ministerial Alliance*

JCity Arrow News. Published monthly by JCity Center for Hope and Renewal, Inc.
504 E. Broadway Blvd., Johnston City, IL 62951, 618-952-1272, jcitycenter@gmail.com, www.jcity.center

CREATIVE DIRECTOR	Keith Fletcher	BOARD MEMBERS	Keith Fletcher, chairman
MANAGING EDITOR	Sarah Fletcher		Mike Tyson, secretary
REPORTERS	Tim Hastings, Doug Hancock, Margie Sanders		Brenda McChesney, treasurer
PODCAST CO-HOST	Doug Hancock		Cris Corzine-McCloskey
SPONSOR RELATIONS	Margie Sanders		Randy McIntosh
DISTRIBUTION TEAM	Phil Crosby, Doug Hancock		Marta Phillips
	Don & Brenda McChesney		
STUDENT REPORTER/VIDEO EDITOR	Ben Johnson		

To submit news items, story ideas, events, employment/volunteer opportunities, donations, please call 618-952-1272 or email jcitycenter@gmail.com. All items for publication must pertain to events, individuals, or jobs located within Johnston City, Illinois.

Unless otherwise noted, all content in JCity Arrow News (podcast & print edition) is Copyright © 2025 of JCity Center for Hope and Renewal, Inc. All rights reserved.

ARROW NEWS
Never miss an issue, subscribe to the online edition of the Arrow here.

jcity.center/subscribe

WMS Vice Principal seeks to impact students' lives

BY MARGIE SANDERS

Being a vice principal presents a great opportunity for getting acquainted with all the students. For Blake Dobraski, that's an enjoyable part of his job. Every student who enters the building receives a smile, along with a hello from Mr. D.

Mr. Dobraski serves as assistant principal at Washington Middle School. He's a hometown boy, graduating from JCHS in 1995 and from SIUC in 1999 and again in 2001. Blake, along with his wife Tiffany, have chalked up several years of teaching in this district.

Mr. D. contemplated law school, but once he had a taste of the school scene, he could not see himself doing anything else with his life. He wants to make a difference. He loves being around kids and talking history. Blake's favorite part of teaching is seeing a student experience a lightbulb moment—making a connection with the subject being taught.

Blake loves Disney World and Disneyland. Along those lines, Blake and Tiffany will celebrate 20 years of marriage this summer with plans to enjoy a Disney Cruise. His hobbies include being a first-generation video gamer and spending



Assistant Principal Blake Dobraski,

time with his family. The Dobraski's have two sons: Bennett and Myles.

When asked if he will be ready to retire in eight years, Mr. Dobraski expressed mixed feelings. "I will enjoy all the free time, but I need to have a retirement plan."

Blake offers these words of advice for new teachers.

1. Don't be afraid to fail; failing teaches.
2. Don't be afraid to try something.
3. Try to be the one for someone.
4. Be prepared to be flexible and spontaneous.
5. Get ready to do more paperwork than you ever imagined.

For now, Mr. Dobraski just wants all his middle school students to have fun this summer and be kids while they can.

Thank you, Mr. Dobraski.



WMS STUDENTS WRITE...

Summer in JC

BY JAYDON CLARIDA

When summer comes around and school is ending, things get really fun in JC. I am looking to go outside, play sports, and have fun with my wonderful family in the beautiful weather. When it is the summer, you can go swimming and be able to sit outside with a cool drink and get a tan. One of my favorites is going to my grandma's house because I can go fishing or swimming, play basketball, and see my grandma and grandpa—all the things I love to do. There are also many things to do in my town, Johnston City.

In JC, there are many things to do. You can go get ice cream from Dairy

Queen or go to McDonald's to cool down. You could go to the Arrowhead ball fields to watch some baseball or softball and get concessions. You could also go to Andreson's or El Jalisco to enjoy a nice meal. There are many things to do but my favorite is going around town with my friends from JC. We always make good memories and have so much fun with each other. Even though we can have that much fun at JC, going on vacation with my family is great.

My family and I will go on one vacation in the summer to enjoy the sun elsewhere. We are planning to go to a water park this year, which will be so much fun with my cousins and my siblings. Hopefully it is the perfect day like I imagine it to be. The perfect day would be around 90 degrees and the sun is shining with a little wind, so I can cool off a little. Also, I am able to have fun without getting sunburnt. All in all, wherever you go, whether it is in your town or away from your town, summer is great.

My Middle School Experience

BY SILAS GWALTNEY

My middle school experience has been basically everything from happy to sad, from bad to even boring. But as I get higher up in the grades, I look back on my past and realize how everything from the beginning of fifth grade to the end of eighth grade has been preparing me for my future of school and just life in general. I probably wouldn't have made it this far without the love and support of all my family members, friends, and even teachers. At the beginning, I felt like middle school was going to be the hardest and most irresistible years of my life, but I was way wrong. Being in middle school was probably one of the best experiences I've had. I've made way more friends since fifth grade and some of them are in grades lower than mine. Everyone should do this to help them prepare for higher grades.

Some special memories from middle school are probably painting a banana in art class and making a special bond with the art teacher. Even just saying "banana" every time we see each other in the halls, class, etc., makes us laugh. Sometimes I will go to her class just to check up on her and see how she is doing. Another special memory is all the freshmen that were eighth graders last year and how they treated me, and how we were good friends even though I'm not ready for high school. I'm ready to see all of them again.

Some advice I would give to upcoming fifth graders and the people that are going into higher grades would probably be, just be yourself. Don't let anyone tell you how to sit, talk, walk, run. Just be yourself. Not everyone is perfect, but you can be yourself, which in some eyes is better than being perfect. And to the sixth and seventh graders, you guys got this. I have faith in every single one of you, especially the future student leaders. I have made multiple friends that I'm proud of, and I don't want to leave just yet, but I will see them again in high school. Making friends in middle school is key to having a fun time and not being alone all the time. I got reconnected with one of my old friends from baseball that I used to play games with, and now we are basically inseparable outside of school. I'm really grateful for all of my teachers I've met and friends I've made in middle school.

Arrow News would like to thank WMS teacher Mrs. Hannah Colson for providing student compositions during the school year.

Words for incoming freshmen

Take Full Advantage of Opportunities in High School

BY KATE CARNINE

My name is Kate Carnine. I just completed my freshman year at Johnston City High School. The 2024-2025 school year has been the best year in all aspects: academically, athletically, socially, and mentally. To begin with, I joined the math team and placed third in state individually. Our team also placed first overall. If you want an opportunity to succeed, I highly recommend joining the math team. Even if you don't enjoy math, it creates ample opportunities to see your friends and become a better problem solver. It also helps you better manage your time.

Another thing I am involved in is scholar bowl. It is another option that provides many chances to succeed. Both of those teams have created a higher sense of self-respect and confidence in me. They have shown me that I am smart everywhere, not just in a

small-town high school.

Coming into high school, I was concerned about the school work. Now I know there was no need to worry. I would say that the work that comes with freshman year isn't any harder comparatively to work in previous years, although there is a lot more of it. You have many more assignments and quite a few presentations, but if you use your time wisely, you can get it all done. Make sure not to get behind in your work, because that is when you will start to struggle. If you stay ahead of it, everything will go smoothly and you will be less stressed than if you wait to do the work later.

There are plenty of ways to be involved in the school community, including clubs, sports teams, academic teams, etc. One club that is very popular is Educators Rising. I am not involved in Educators Rising; however, it is a very active

part of our school. It takes quite a bit of time, but everyone I have spoken to about it enjoys it. They run multiple school events and the club is very much student led. If being a leader is something you are interested in, you should try Educators Rising.

If you enjoy writing, there is a newspaper club. The newspaper gets published with students' articles monthly.

I greatly recommend participating in at least one extracurricular, whether it's a sport or something else. It allows you to see your friends, and gives you something to do in your spare time. Participating in something will also make you happier.

Overall, my freshman year has been amazing, with multiple successes, nearly perfect grades, good friends, and great teachers. My biggest advice to incoming freshmen is to just enjoy the year with your friends and have fun.

available.

Services are free and open to anyone living within the school district. To conveniently reach all corners of the community, the mobile pantry will schedule distributions at different locations. Individuals are asked to bring a student or government-issued I.D.

to verify either attendance at Johnston City schools or residency within the school district. Find a schedule of locations on the Washington Middle School Facebook page.

Currently, the school is seeking businesses/individuals willing to donate food/hygiene items.

WMS launches mobile food pantry

BY BROOKE SCHLYER,

JOHNSTON CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT Washington Middle School will kick off a Mobile Food Pantry, with its first distribution event Monday, June 2, from 4-6 pm. at the City Hall Pavilion (118 E. Broadway). The pantry, available through the Full-Service Community grant, will provide produce, dairy, bread, canned goods, and deli meats to families and community members. Hygiene products like shampoo/conditioner, body wash, wipes, baby powder, and other toiletries will also be

MW MURMAN & WILSON
FUNERAL HOME
KYLE SAVANT • RAYMOND SAVANT • ERIK SAVANT
618.983.6542
211 W. BROADWAY JOHNSTON CITY • MURMANANDWILSON.COM

State Farm
Paul E Lawrence, Agent
305 E Broadway PO Box 118
Johnston City, IL 62951
Bus: 618-983-6953
paul.lawrence.by9j@statefarm.com

futiva
Providing High Speed Internet Service
futiva.biz 618-736-2901



JCHS Class of 2025

Johnston City High School celebrated its graduates with an outdoor sunset ceremony on Saturday, May 17, in optimal weather conditions. The event, originally slated May 16, was postponed due to threatening storms that produced an F4 tornado less than 15 miles away. Hundreds of attendees sat in lawn chairs as both students and administration shared memories and offered accolades. The 2025 class presented retiring Superintendent Kathy Clark with 17 roses for her 17 years of service within the district. Principal Kristi Schell recognized various student groups, scholarship recipients, and students enlisting in military service. Valedictorian Chase McReynolds and co-salutatorians Cassidy Hermetz and Katelynn Turner each spoke words of encouragement and reflection to the crowd. All three plan to attend Southern Illinois University Carbondale in the fall.

McReynolds is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering with plans for a career in medical engineering. Tied for salutatorian. Hermetz is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education with aspirations of being a future educator. Turner is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engi-

neering. SIUC awarded her the prestigious Chancellor's scholarship.



Chase McReynolds, Valedictorian



Cassidy Hermetz, Co-Salutatorian



Katelynn Turner, Co-Salutatorian

JCHS names new head coaches for basketball, football

BY BROOKE SCHLYER,
JOHNSTON CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Johnston City School District recently announced two key additions to the high school's athletic leadership. Quinton Smothers has been named the new Boys' basketball head coach, bringing his passion and expertise to the program. Additionally, JCHS teacher and current Assistant Football Coach Marshall Mummert will step into the role of Head Football Coach.

The Board of Education expressed confidence in these two individuals as exceptionally well-qualified to lead and foster the continued success of student athletes, provide a seamless transition for its programs, and uphold the high standards and expectations of parents and community.

Mummert is a familiar name to most Johnston City students, fans, and residents. The JCHS teacher is a 2005 alumnus who played high school football and has been on staff for 16 of his 19 coaching years.

In 2005, Mummert began as an assistant coach for the Freshman/Sophomore team. In 2008, he was promoted to position coach on the defensive and offensive lines at the varsity level and became the head Freshman/Sophomore coach. His dedication to JC's student athletes supports his stance on the game.

"My coaching philosophy is built on the idea that success doesn't happen by accident—it's earned through consistent, hard, and often monotonous work. We strive for perfection, knowing we'll never reach it, but that pursuit sharpens us and builds habits that lead to winning."

Mummert served as full-time varsity assistant coach for the 2010 season, overseeing the offensive and defensive lines and becoming heavily involved in the offensive game planning. He then spent three years at West Frankfort before returning for the JCHS 2014 playoff run. He has been a strong presence in JC football since his return in 2014.

In 2022, Mummert took on a new JCHS football coaching position as the offensive coordinator while continuing to coach the offensive and defensive lines. During this time, the high school football team held a record of 32 to 5 and reached the state semifinals in two of the past three years.

"I believe in keeping things simple so our players can play fast and confidently. Discipline is key; we want to execute at a high level and play smart, pen-



JCHS' new head coaches: Marshall Mummert (football) and Quinton Smothers (basketball)

alty-free football. Mental and physical toughness are a core part of who we are. It's not about talking tough—it's about showing up, responding to adversity, and doing things the right way every day."

Mummert knows Johnston City has a special football culture and tradition, and he's ready to put in the work as head football coach to see this continue during his tenure. Still admitting, though, he owes a lot to the coaches and players who came before him.

"I'm proud to continue building on the strong foundation we have at Johnston City, and I'm committed to helping our players grow—not just on the field, but as people."

The JCHS basketball program owns this same commitment to its players and their growth. Quinton Smothers joins Johnston City as the new head boys' basketball coach following 13 years with the Herrin School District. His coaching career started in September 2012, splitting his time as the Herrin girls junior high basketball coach and the boys junior varsity basketball coach. Smothers transitioned exclusively to boys' high school coaching in 2015.

Smothers brings an impressive track record, leading teams to JV conference championships in 2021-22 and 2022-23 (undefeated). His JV team was co-conference champion in 2023-24 and finished in second place in 2024-25. In his 10-year span at Herrin High School (2015-2025), Smothers accumulated a remarkable record of 132-55.

"I believe that to build a winning environment, creating a strong team culture is key. It starts with leading by example; everyone is held accountable, and no excuses."

Now, Smothers is ready to take the JCHS basketball program and create that culture. His goal for the first year is to build a strong foundation for success, establishing a clear vi-

sion and setting achievable goals.

Smothers will be supported by the high school's new assistant boys basketball coach, Hayden Holloway, who was also hired by the school board during its special meeting. Holloway is a dedicated and knowledgeable coach. He brings a strong educational back-



New assistant basketball coach at JCHS Hayden Holloway

ground, having graduated from John A. Logan College and Southern Illinois University before earning his Master of Accountancy from Missouri State University.

Over the past four years, he served as an assistant coach at Herrin High School, where he played a key role in developing game plans, leading practices, and promoting physical fitness among the athletes.

Hayden is no stranger to Johnston City. His grandparents lived in Johnston City, and his mother graduated from Johnston City High School in 1986. Hayden is enthusiastic about joining the Johnston City program and looks forward to helping student athletes grow both on and off the court, emphasizing skill development and the value of teamwork.

JC Sports Hall of Fame inductees announced

This year's Johnston City Sports Hall of Fame inductees include athletes Kyle Baker and Tony Kendrick, and Roy Rogers as a "Friend of JC Sports."

The Hall of Fame inductees will be recognized at the Homecoming Football Game, October 10. An induction ceremony and banquet will be held on October 11, 11:30 am.

School sports typically take a break for summer vacation but practices resume mid-summer; games begin in August. See jcindians.org for info.

Schools offer free summer enrichment camps

Kids, Want to break the Summer boredom cycle? Join the JCHS Educators Rising Club for its expanded Summer Enrichment Camps. Educators Rising students will provide lesson plans filled with team challenges, STEM activities, creative experiments, art projects, games, music and more.

FREE. This expansion is made possible through the Full-Service Community School grant, which allows participation at no cost to families. Enrollment is open to students entering 1st-6th grades (2025-2026 school year).

FUN. Kids will have so much fun, they may forget they are learning. Each week, there's a new

hands-on theme to explore:

- June 2-5: Survivor Challenge
- June 9-12: Oceans to Outer Space
- June 16-18: World of Wonder
- July 7-10: The Great Mess-terpiece
- July 14-17: Mad Science Mayhem
- July 21-24: Career Curiosity

FLEXIBLE. Kids may attend all six weeks or any week that fits their schedule. Camp will take place Monday through Thursday from 8 a.m. to noon. Bus transportation will be provided along with breakfast and lunch. Sign-up at <https://bit.ly/3F8qXiM>

City Church
FREE WILL BAPTIST

Christ & Community First

Broadway & Monroe (609 Monroe)
618-983-5254 | jcitychurch.com
Randy Carney, pastor



Sunday School 9:30 | Morning Worship 10:30 | Wed. Night 7:00

Darren & Shelley Pyle

PYLE
Funeral Homes

1008 W. Broadway Blvd.
Johnston City, IL 62951 (618) 983-7777
pylefuneralhome.com

ARK
INSURANCE GROUP, INC.
Home Auto Life Health

Office: (618) 983-8000 Fax: (618) 983-8001

1109 Grand Ave.
Johnston City, IL 62951
arkinsurance@ark4me.com



Jr. Baseball/Softball Opening Day

2nd baseman shares joy of running

BY TIM HASTINGS
One Johnston City boy chose to play youth baseball because he likes to run. "I like running a lot," said Cohen Nagreski, age six and a second baseman for team Nagreski Law.

Nagreski was one of several hundred players and fans who celebrated opening day of Johnston City Junior Baseball and Softball at Arrowhead Park on Saturday, May 10.

Nagreski said it felt good to tag two runners at second. He also got several hits off the pitcher.

Nagreski's grandfather, Dale Burzynski of Benton, said he wasn't sure about the final score in

his grandson's game. "I don't know if they picked a winner or not," Burzynski said. The grandfather also watched his granddaughter in the matchup between the Lake Creek Quarter Horses and the Lunch Bunch softball teams for 15-year-olds.

Ryan Ray, right fielder for the softball team Attorney Meagan Rich sponsors for 10-year-olds, said she walked every time at bat and committed no errors.

Johnston City also celebrated opening day with a pancake breakfast and parade. Games will be played throughout the season at Arrowhead Park where fans are invited to bring chairs and cheers.

Cohen Nagreski, age 6, plays second base in JC Junior Baseball



Johnston City will host tournament play with teams from Benton and West Frankfort in age group 8-U the last week of June. Johnston City may also host other teams in tournament play.

Premium team sponsors are Gibbens & Kiel CPA, Moonshine Run, Buccaneers Club, Nagreski Law, IUOE Local 318, Lineman's Lounge, Simple Solutions, Shooting Star Photogra-

phy, Southern Plating, McCluskie-Miller Funeral Services, MKE Builders, J. Odle Construction, R and R Rentals and Renovations, Dave Anderson - State Farm, Coulson's Heating and Cooling, Blondie's Bakery, Meagan Rich, Attorney at Law, Protek Fiber, Martin Electric, JC Kid's Lunch Bunch, and Lake Creek Quarter Horse.

Follow the teams on Facebook (<https://tinyurl.com/5h324sjf>) or email jc-jbleague@gmail.com.

Are you thinking about selling your house?

Want the best offers for you home? Follow this handy checklist!

Then..... call us and we'll do the rest!

900 W. Broadway Blvd
Johnston City, IL 62951
618-952-5200

Make It Inviting	Show It's Cared For	Boost Curb Appeal
<input type="checkbox"/> Open blinds or curtains to let the light in <input type="checkbox"/> Check lightbulbs and replace as needed <input type="checkbox"/> Take down personal photos or items <input type="checkbox"/> Declutter throughout <input type="checkbox"/> Give every room a clear purpose	<input type="checkbox"/> Clean your vents and baseboards <input type="checkbox"/> Vacuum, mop, or sweep floors <input type="checkbox"/> Fix anything that's broken <input type="checkbox"/> Organize countertops, cabinets, and closets <input type="checkbox"/> Touch up any scuffs on the walls	<input type="checkbox"/> Power wash outdoor surfaces <input type="checkbox"/> Clean the windows (inside and out) <input type="checkbox"/> Tidy up the landscaping <input type="checkbox"/> Freshen up your entry <input type="checkbox"/> Sweep patios, decks, and walkways

Edward Jones > edwardjones.com | Member SIPC

Investing in and supporting our communities

Thank you for helping us be part of this great community. We're glad to be here.

For more information, contact your Edward Jones Financial Advisor
Edward Jones cannot accept gift cards, cash or checks as donations.

Ashton Stephens
Financial Advisor
504 W Broadway Blvd
Johnston City, IL 62951
618-983-6317

Sidney Stephens
Financial Advisor
504 W Broadway Blvd
Johnston City, IL 62951
618-983-6317

CEA-9901E-A AECSPAD 3/4/2015

Legence Bank

Member FDIC

LEGENCEBANK.COM

JC KIDS' LUNCH BUNCH

June 2 - August 1
Monday - Friday

CALL 618-952-1272 FOR INFORMATION
VOLUNTEERS & DONATIONS ALWAYS WELCOME

1. IN THE PARK
BY THE SCOUT CABIN
(behind Washington School)

11:30 am - 12:30 pm

2. NEW LOCATION!
901 West Broadway
Across from Indigo Realty
(corner of Nelson & Broadway)

Kids Meal Pick-up Only - 12:00-12:30 pm

3. SUMMER SCHOOL
WASHINGTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

4. FSCS Enrichment Program at JCHS

Free Summer Meals/Comidas Gratis de Verano
All children 18 and under/Todos los niños de 18 años y menos