

**Girls Prep Basketball
Postseason update:**

- Central defeated Columbia 48-26 Tuesday and will play in the championship game of the Class 3A Freeburg Regional at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 15.
- Mater Dei defeated Vienna 57-30 Tuesday and will play in the championship game of the Class 2A Hamilton County Sectional at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 15.

“When I do good
I feel good, when
I do bad I feel bad,
and that’s my
religion.”

ABRAHAM
LINCOLN



State Champion Bartelso Braves

INSIDE: Congratulations to the Bartelso Braves boys basketball team who won the Southern Illinois Junior High School Athletic Association Class S Boys Basketball State Tournament on Saturday at Rend Lake College defeating Carrier Mills 57-46. The team finished its stellar season with an undefeated 32-0 record. Read more ... 6B



BREESE Journal

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Breese City Council offers letter of support for proposed senior housing development



Ben Porush, director of operations for 3 Diamond Development, spoke to the Breese City Council about a proposed senior housing development that his company is considering in Breese. 3 Diamond, based in Lincolnwood, Illinois, currently has six similar apartment developments in northern Illinois and Iowa. Porush said the Breese facility would be modeled after Diamond Senior Apartments of Princeton, Illinois, which offers 40 units (one bedroom, two bedroom and accessible) located on 7.5 acres. The location of the proposed independent senior living facility in Breese was not disclosed.



Congratulations to Breese EMS paramedics Michael Gretzinger and Carlos Hill who were honored at Metro-East Paramedics Association's inaugural ball on Jan. 31 in Belleville. Gretzinger was named Paramedic of the Year while Hill received a Lifetime Achievement Award. The two men were recognized for these achievements at the Feb. 6 meeting of the Breese City Council. Pictured, from left, alderman Bill Fischer, chairman of the city council's Public Safety Committee; Mayor Charlie Hilmes; Michael Gretzinger; Breese EMS manager Shane Westfall; and Carlos Hill.

Award-winning Breese EMS personnel — Carlos Hill and Michael Gretzinger — recognized for recent achievements

By Vicky Albers
Breese Journal Editor

A northern Illinois company that specializes in affordable and specialized housing is considering Breese as a site for a new senior apartment complex. Breese Mayor Charlie Hilmes signed a letter of support for the proposed project following a presentation at the regular meeting of the Breese City Council on Tuesday, Feb. 6.

Ben Porush, director of operations for the Lincolnwood, Illinois-based 3 Diamond Development said his company currently has six similar developments — in Oswego (two properties), Chicago and Princeton in northern Illinois along with Iowa City and Dubuque, Iowa.

Porush said that the Breese development would likely be modeled after their Princeton property. According to the website for 3 Diamond Development, Diamond Senior Apartments of Princeton includes 40 units built on 7.5 acres for seniors 55 and older. The one-story apartment buildings offer one bedroom, two bedroom and accessible units.

The development also has a clubhouse with a community room, fitness center and library.

Porush said his company is experienced in senior housing, property development and tax credit financing. Funding for

the development is through the Illinois Housing Authority, which Porush said is a “very competitive program.”

The application for financing will be submitted in early March, he said.

“We’ll apply for tax credits that would allow us to build housing with affordable rent for seniors on a fixed income,” he said. “With all the qualities that Breese has to offer, we feel this could be a successful project.”

Hilmes stressed that the letter of support from the city is simply a preliminary step in the development process.

“The company will still have to go through the same process that any developer would go through,” Hilmes said.

The location for the proposed Breese development was not disclosed.

In other business, two employees of Breese EMS were recognized by the council for their recent awards received at the Metro-East Paramedics Association’s inaugural ball held Jan. 31 in Belleville. Carlos Hill received a Lifetime Achievement Award while Michael Gretzinger was named Paramedic of the Year.

Breese EMS manager Shane Westfall commented, “Breese EMS is very grateful to have such qualified personnel.” He noted that the four full-time employees have a combined 92 years of experience, and “one of those people is on duty all the time.”

The council took action amending its municipal code in regard to the powers of the deputy clerk and authorized city clerk Erin Wagoner to appoint Sandy Hemann and Wendy Heumann as deputy clerks.

Hemann is city collector and Heumann is utility billing clerk, which are both full-time positions at City Hall. Appointing them as deputy clerks enables documents to be signed, as needed, when the city clerk is not available at City Hall.

Bill Schmaltz, principal of Einstein Advanced Health Insurance Solutions, gave a brief presentation about the city’s new self-insured health care program which saved the city \$137,000 in its first year.

Schmaltz said the city appointed an Insurance Committee which reviewed data from 2016 and determined that a self-insured program was in the city’s best interest.

“We’re taking advantage of the discounts that traditional insurance offers but only paying for what we use,” he said. “It’s a proactive approach to keep health plans down.”

He outlined the following actions by the city that resulted in the cost savings:

- using discounts provided by the insurance system by joining the HealthLink Network.
- only paying for medical and pharmacy services utilized by members. That compares to the traditional method of pre-paying an inflated monthly premium each month for medical services and pharmacy that may not be needed.
- protecting the city’s budget by purchasing a stop loss insurance policy; thereby, protecting against any large claims.

Schmaltz said the city’s renewal for 2018 was at a 1.8 percent increase. Subsequently, the Insurance Committee deter-

mined they could reduce the necessary annual budget for health insurance by 18 percent (assuming a 5 percent increase for medical and pharmacy costs).

The Insurance Committee also implemented the following program improvements for 2018:

- enrolling employees in the Teledoc program to provide 24/7 access to a physician. The total costs for unlimited visits averages \$2.37 per person, per month.
- improving access to wellness exams now including 3-D imaging.
- in-house health care assessments are available to identify and address health concerns.

Schmaltz noted that the goal of early assessment is to address medical risk and conditions before they result in later, escalated expenses to the employee and city.

In final business, two meetings were announced by alderman Carl Ratermann, chairman of the Recreation Committee. The Bent Oak Golf Board will meet at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 15 at the golf course. The Park Board will meet at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 28 at City Hall.