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Police investigate death of construction worker hit by vehicle

BY TERI MADDOX
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Local and state police are investigating the death of a St. Clair County road construction worker who was hit by a vehicle driven by an unidentified minor

on Friday morning east of Shiloh.

The victim was Murphy Rogers, 55, of Swansea, according to a press release posted Monday morning by Shiloh Police Department, although county Coroner Calvin Dye Sr. told the BND on Saturday that he lived

in East St. Louis.

"It was very tragic," Shiloh Detective Sgt. Kyle Bade said by phone on Monday afternoon.

The accident occurred at a road construction site between Shiloh and Scott Air Force Base along southbound Illinois 158, also known as Air Mobility

Drive, near its intersection with Maple Street.

Paul Wappel, spokesman for the Illinois Department of Transportation, said it was a St. Clair County road project, not a state project.

County Engineer Norm Etling, who heads the highway department, declined a phone interview on Monday. He stated in an email that he hadn't seen the accident report and referred questions to Shiloh police.

According to the release:

- Police responded to a call at 10:48 a.m. Friday in reference to a vehicle hitting a construction worker near Air Mobility Drive and Maple Street.
- On arrival, officers began

life-saving efforts on Rogers until emergency medical personnel took over.

- Rogers was transported to St. Elizabeth's Medical Center in O'Fallon, where he was pronounced dead.
- Officers made contact with the vehicle's driver, identified only as a "minor female," who had non-life-threatening injuries.
- The driver was transported to the police station for questioning.
- Shiloh police called in the Illinois State Police Traffic Crash Reconstruction Unit to help investigate.

"The results of the investiga-

SEE WORKER, 2A



JOSHUA CARTER Belleville News-Democrat

This drone photograph shows progress on the Belle-Clair Speedway racetrack as of June 22, 2026.

St. Clair County picks promoter for Belle-Clair Speedway

BY LEXI CORTES
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BELLEVILLE

St. Clair County has decided who will run future races at the rebuilt Belle-Clair Speedway racetrack in Belleville.

At a special meeting Monday night, the St. Clair County Board signed an agreement

leasing the quarter-mile dirt track to promoter WM Marketing, Inc.

St. Clair County Board Chairman Mark Kern said the person behind that company is Curtis Francois, who owns World Wide Technology Raceway in Madison.

"This is going to be an exceptionally great thing," Kern said of the agreement. "They've

helped us all along. They helped us design the facility and gave us a lot of advice, so it's natural to have these great people promote this track and be the ones who will run it."

Francois' company will now schedule and manage races in St. Clair County, starting with the first one on the new track on Aug. 1 during the revived County Fair. General admission

race tickets are \$23.50 and are available for purchase on the county website fairstclair.com.

The county has not hosted an annual fair since 2014. Races at the Belle-Clair Speedway stopped in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. The annual fair returns to the Belle-Clair Fairgrounds and Speed-

SEE SPEEDWAY, 2A

Family of deceased student pitches memorial policy

BY MADISON LAMMERT AND KATIE GRAWITCH
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Family and friends of a deceased Belleville East student proposed a policy for remembering deceased students at graduation ceremonies during public comment at the District 201 School Board meeting Monday.

More than a dozen supporters gathered at the meeting, mourning six months after the death of Keagan Rex. He died of complications from epilepsy just months before he was set to graduate.

Rex's mother Amy Morris, clad in a shirt bearing her son's likeness, said that she felt hurt when administration officials told her Rex's name would not be called at the ceremony, nor would there be a tribute, such as an open chair with his picture.

Rex's name was in the program, though Morris said it was misspelled, and the ceremony included a moment of silence for students who died. Superintendent Marshaun Warren told the Belleville News-Democrat it was her understanding that both schools had honored deceased students this way in the past.

But at a Belleville West graduation ceremony this year, school officials read the name of de-

SEE STUDENT, 5A

See inside St. Clair County's new animal control building

BY LEXI CORTES
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BELLEVILLE

As St. Clair County's animal control building off of Illinois 15 in Belleville nears completion, county officials recently toured the facility and its new features.

Officials estimated the new facility at 1123 Comwest Parkway could open by mid-July. Construction crews are still waiting for some equipment to arrive, including new, larger dog kennels.

Estimates for the price of the building got as high as \$16 million because of rising construction costs. But County Buildings Director Jim Brede said the total ultimately was about \$10.5 million.

Of that total, \$6.9 million will be covered by the county's share of federal COVID-related relief funds from the American Rescue Plan.

St. Clair County wanted to construct a new building because the existing facility at 1250 S. 11th St. floods during heavy rain. Staff have had to

evacuate cats and dogs multiple times.

Municipalities have until the end of 2026 to spend their COVID allocations.

The June 18 tour led by St. Clair County Animal Services Director Ashley Jett included members of the Public Building Commission, the board that manages county-owned properties, including the animal control facility.

Here's what board members saw and learned during the tour:

The new facility has capacity for about 75 dogs and 100 cats,



JOSHUA CARTER Belleville News-Democrat

This drone photo shows the new St. Clair County animal control building at 1123 Comwest Parkway in Belleville.

according to Jett. Public Building Commission member Edmond Brown asked whether that was enough to meet the coun-

ty's needs.

"Do we anticipate that this

SEE ANIMAL, 2A



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