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SPORTS, 1B

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The Highcrest Road Beef-a-Roo at 1680 N. Alpine Road in Rockford on June 26 was closed “for the foreseeable future” after managers said employees have not been paid for weeks. JEFF KOLKEY/ROCKFORD REGISTER STAR

Beef-a-Roo employees say they’re being stiffed, laid off

Jeff Kolkey
Rockford Register Star
USA TODAY NETWORK

ROCKFORD — Beef-a-Roo employees who haven’t been paid for weeks are saying they were notified the company is implementing a companywide layoff of all workers and closing its restaurants.

Phones at Rockford area Beef-a-Roos went unanswered July 8 and were not accepting voicemail messages. The Beef-a-Roo website does not appear to be working.

Most area stores had closed previously when employees had not been paid. However, the Freeport Beef-a-Roo continues to operate as an independently owned and operated franchise.

Shawna Smith who worked at the Beef-a-Roo in Macomb since December, said her general manager forwarded her a message from company human resources informing employees they were being laid off “due to severe financial constraints that made it impossible for the company to continue operations.”

The layoffs included company lead-

ership. It’s unclear if the layoffs will affect only corporate operated stores or franchise stores as well. Some employees are also saying Beef-a-Roo Inc., which was acquired by the Dallas-based private equity firm Elysian Capital in 2019, plans to file for bankruptcy.

“It’s wrong what they are doing. Everyone from all the stores have been affected tremendously from this,” Smith said during a phone interview. “If the bankruptcy thing is real, they are going to file for bankruptcy, and we are going to be out what we are owed. That doesn’t seem right to me. Someone needs to stand up and do something because corporate greed is a real thing.”

Elysian Capital CEO Jeff Love did not respond to an email seeking comment. Previously, company officials had said they were planning to sell the company that had been founded in Rockford by the DeBruler family in 1967.

Smith said she has not been paid since June 15. That was pay through June 6. She is owed for pay through July 2. Although the company has said it is trying to meet payroll obligations, Smith said she has no faith that the

company will pay employees what they are owed.

Smith said some of her fellow employees are losing their apartments and places to live because of an inability to pay their rent. She has created a GoFundMe in hopes of raising \$2,000 to assist her fellow employees.

Saying she was on her way to an Illinois unemployment office, Smith said she has filed a complaint with the Illinois Department of Labor and contacted the Illinois Attorney General’s Office about not being paid for her work.

Beef-a-Roo Vice President Jeremy Wise confirmed via a Facebook message that he is no longer with the company but declined to comment further.

According to the Freeport Beef-a-Roo Facebook page, the restaurant and its employees are not affected by the financial hardships facing the company. The store at 1804 S. West Ave. in Freeport opened in 2024 and continues to be open daily.

Jeff Kolkey writes about government, economic development and other issues for the Rockford Register Star. He can be reached via email at jkolkey@rrstar.com and on X @jeffkolkey.

Which vaccines do IL students need?

A breakdown by child’s grade

Hannah Hudnall
Peoria Journal Star
USA TODAY NETWORK

Though the school year is still weeks away for most students in Illinois, it’s a good time to start preparing supplies, clothes and vaccinations.

Here’s a breakdown of which vaccinations are required for the 2026-2027 school year in Illinois.

Illinois immunization requirements for preschool, early childhood programs

The following vaccines are required for children entering any child care facility, preschool, early childhood or pre-kindergarten programs in Illinois, according to the Illinois Department of Public Health.

Additional details about specific intervals between vaccine doses can be found on the IDPH website.

• **DTP/DTaP:** Three doses of diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis vaccine by 1 year of age, with an additional dose before the second birthday.

• **Polio:** Two doses by 1 year of age, with an additional dose before the second birthday (three doses by 3 years).

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A child receives one of two vaccinations for flu and COVID-19 at the Cumberland County Department of Public Health in Fayetteville, North Carolina.

MYRON B. PITTS/USA TODAY NETWORK



Speaker of the House Mike Johnson speaks at a news conference at the Capitol on June 30.

KEVIN DIETSCH, GETTY IMAGES

Birthright citizenship limits face slim odds

Zachary Schermele
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON — House Speaker Mike Johnson is insisting that congressional Republicans are “looking at all angles” to slap limits on birthright citizenship after the Supreme Court shielded it from President Donald Trump’s order to redefine who is an American.

In a July 5 interview on “Fox News Sunday,” the Louisiana Republican said GOP lawmakers in the House of Repre-

sentatives would move quickly to respond.

“If there’s some legislative fix, we’ll advance that immediately,” Johnson said. “If it’s a constitutional amendment, as you know, it takes a little more time. But we’ve got to address this.”

While that promise certainly isn’t hollow, the chances of Congress intervening in the near future to curb birthright citizenship are very low.

Whatever the options Johnson has, they’re long shots — especially in a mid-

term election year, when GOP leaders are dramatically struggling to capitalize on the little time they have left before November.

With ultra-slim Republican margins in the House and Senate, lawmakers are having a tough time completing the basics of legislating. There’s no realistic way for a constitutional amendment that controversial — which requires two-thirds approval from both chambers

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