

VETERANS DAY

STUDENTS'
SALUTE TO SERVICE



ROB STROUD, JG-TC

Riddle Elementary School third grader Holsten Tate carries a sign decorated with photos of veterans in his family during the parade in honor of those who have served Friday afternoon on his campus in Mattoon. Holsten is followed by his grandfather, Army veteran Robert Young, as well as his grandmother, Darla Young, and mother Tracee Tate.

Riddle Elementary honors veterans with annual parade

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MATTOON — Holsten Tate has prepared ahead of time for Veterans Day by creating a sign decorated with photos of those in his family who have served. The third grader proudly carried this sign as he walked in an annual parade that his school, Riddle Elementary, held Friday afternoon on campus in honor of veterans. One of the veterans depicted on that sign, Holsten's grandfather Robert Young of Trilla, followed closely behind him in the procession as they filed by long lines of cheering staff and students. They also were accompanied by the youth's grandmother, Darla Young, and mother, Tracee Tate. "It was touching, very touching," Darla Young said of the parade and the preceding assembly in salute of veterans. Tate said, "It's good to instill that in our younger generation." The portrait photo of Robert Young on his grandson's sign shows him wearing a dress uniform while serving in the U.S. Army from 1971-1972. Young said he was assigned to an honor guard at Arlington National Cemetery, a great opportunity that also required tremendous attention to detail. "Everything had to be perfect all the time," Robert Young recalled, adding that he was not allowed to keep the honor guard uniform when his service concluded. Dozens of veterans took part in the event on Friday, including Rich Orr of Mattoon. His service from 1988-1992 in the U.S. Army included Operation Des-

ert Storm, also known as the Gulf War. Orr said he always enjoys attending the veterans' event at Riddle Elementary, where his granddaughter Emma Bennett is in fourth grade. Emma's mother, Army veteran Ashley Bennett, also is a regular participant in the assembly and parade there. "Every year, they put on a good one," Orr said. The assembly included performances of patriotic music by Riddle Elementary band members, under the direction of teacher Melissa Griffith-Orndorff, and by the school's choir, under the direction of teacher Jenny Fagaly. With her voice quavering with emotion, Fagaly said she preferred to let her students' music do most of the speaking for her during this emotional performance. "As a family with lots of veterans, this one touches my heart," Fagaly said. Students on the Riddle Elementary Culture Team helped organize the event, present thank you cards to veterans during the assembly and serve cookies afterward. Fourth grader Aniston Baker said she was excited to see all their planning come to life on Friday, which included her carrying a U.S. flag at the end of the procession of veterans. "It was fun," Aniston said. "I love it." Riddle counselor Casey Harley said Riddle has held a veterans' event for several years now, but attendance had dipped in the years immediately after the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Vaccine
guidelines
among bills
approved

Illinois lawmakers
punt on gambling bill
in fall veto session

BRENDEN MOORE
Capitol News Illinois

SPRINGFIELD — Illinois lawmakers passed two dozen bills during their annual fall veto session that ended Friday, Oct. 31, including a measure that will empower the state's Department of Public Health to issue vaccine guidelines amid federal uncertainty. House Bill 767 would allow IDPH Director Sameer Vohra to issue state-specific guidelines while granting more authority to the Immunization Advisory Committee — a group of doctors, nurses and public health professionals who offer guidance to the director. "This bill makes important changes that both codify the role of trusted experts in our vaccine recommendation process and ensure science-based vaccine access through Illinois-regulated insurance plans," Vohra said in a news release. The bill builds on an executive order Gov. JB Pritzker issued in September directing IDPH to develop vaccine guidelines. That directive came amid federal vaccine guideline changes initiated by Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., a longtime skeptic of vaccine safety and efficacy. Among those were the Food and Drug Administration's decision in August to rescind emergency use authorizations for COVID-19 vaccines. That meant removing approval of the vaccine for children and adults ages 6 months to 64 years who have no underlying risk conditions. Kennedy also fired the agency's director, Susan Monarez, and dismissed the entire board of CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices. "With this new authority for the Department of Public Health, Illinois is choosing to stand with decades of sound science, not RFK's latest conspiracy theory," said state Rep. Bob Morgan, D-Deerfield, the bill's chief sponsor. The legislation still allows IDPH to take guidance from the federal government, but it also allows it to consider World Health Organization recommendations, the Immunization Advisory Committee, the IDPH medical director and "medical and scientific experts in the field of disease prevention." It passed on a party-line vote, with Republicans opposing it largely due to its political undertones. State Rep. Bill Hauter, R-Morton, a medical doctor, characterized it as "a Trump derangement syndrome bill." "We are pro-vaccination, but this bill makes sure that we can't vote for it because we have a bill that's signaling to their base how much they're battling the 'evil' Trump administration," Hauter said. The legislation would also require state-regulated insurance plans to continue to cover vaccines that are recommended by IDPH guidelines at no cost to patients regardless of federal guidance.

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ILLINOIS | INDOOR PESTS

Stink bugs invading homes as weather cools

Other insects, spiders,
rodents may also come inside

MEREDITH HOWARD
Belleville News-Democrat

BELLEVILLE — After the Metro East and greater St. Louis region saw an abnormally warm and dry September, some pests will likely stick around longer this year than usual. Average high temperatures this September were about 4 degrees above average, National Weather Service St. Louis lead meteorologist

Matt Beitscher said in a recent interview with the News-Democrat. Much of the region experienced moderate to severe drought conditions in early fall that curtailed the Metro East's typically colorful fall foliage. In addition to dulling autumn leaves, the delayed onset of cooler temperatures is likely to allow ants and spiders to remain active for longer than normal, Jim Fredericks, board certified entomologist and senior vice president of public affairs for the National Pest Management Association, wrote in an Oct. 23 email to the BND.

Belleville and surrounding areas are starting to move into a more normal fall weather pattern, Beitscher said in late October, and this week's forecast shows sun and warmer temperatures before a cooler dip this weekend. "So while September was relatively warm and dry, we've seen a little bit kind of a regression back to a normal fall pattern here in October with a little bit wetter conditions," Beitscher said.



MIKE JEFFORDS

Please see STINK BUGS, Page A3 A brown marmorated stink bug