



Dramatic ending sends Dunlap to first state finals since 1992

SPORTS, 1B

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Now for sale, Peoria Speedway faces uncertain future

Dave Eminian
Peoria Journal Star
USA TODAY NETWORK

don Dean. ...” fans heard over a public address announcement Saturday that was posted on social media later. “The track goes on sale Monday. We have one person from down South who has been interested, but nothing has been finalized ... or (any) meetings (held) ... so to-

Peoria Speedway officials told spectators Saturday that weekly racing at the venerable quarter-mile dirt track was coming to an end under owner Brandon Dean.

Saturday’s race card was the last under Dean, who put the facility up for sale on Monday, June 1. Dean says if he can’t find a buyer, he’ll use the 50-acre property for non-racing events.

The Central Illinois Flea Market is a

tenant at the Speedway and will continue to operate there.

A long-planned feature event on June 11 – the DIRTcar Summer Nationals Late Models and Summit Racing Equipment Modified Nationals – will run as scheduled at Peoria Speedway. But weekly car divisions racing is halted until the track is sold.

“Tonight’s the last night of weekly racing at Peoria Speedway under Bran-

night will be last night of weekly racing until someone buys the racetrack.”

Peoria Speedway opened in 1948 in what is now Pioneer Park in north Peoria.

In 1965, the track settled down on Farmington Road in West Peoria, where it has been a mainstay on the local racing scene for 61 years.

See **SPEEDWAY**, Page 2A



Developers of the vacant building at 500 Main Street are targeting a November opening date for new businesses.

MATT DAYHOFF/JOURNAL STAR

New restaurants on Main Street look to fall openings

JJ Bullock
Peoria Journal Star
USA TODAY NETWORK

PEORIA — New bar and restaurant developments along Main Street in downtown are targeting November opening dates as construction and renovations are proving to be a lengthy task.

Developer Jeff Giebelhausen, who purchased the properties adjacent to the Madison Theater on Main Street along with fellow developer Gerald Ritterbusch, went before the Peoria Liquor

Commission on Monday to request a six-month extension on the properties’ site approval for liquor sales while a gutting and renovation of the building takes place.

Giebelhausen told the commission they are still targeting a pre-Thanksgiving opening for the bars and restaurants they plan on putting in the spaces at 500 and 512 Main Street. Likewise, he said a planned expansion of Hoops Pub and Pizza, which Ritterbusch purchased last year, should be open in late July.

The developers are “learning something new” about the building every day,

Giebelhausen told the commission, adding that Ritterbusch’s purchase of Hoops last year led to an entire redesign of the project.

Speaking with the Journal Star after the meeting, Giebelhausen said the building is “great” but the reality is it’s been hard work. The developers are stripping things down to “bare bones” he said.

Still, Giebelhausen said the goal remains to turn the space into something great for the community and the challenge now is just maximizing the square footage of the building.

Pritzker says revamped Bears bill ‘came in late’

Tom Ackerman
Springfield State Journal-Register
USA TODAY NETWORK

SPRINGFIELD — Following Illinois’ passage of a \$55.9 billion fiscal year 2027 budget, Gov. JB Pritzker touted affordability measures within it while criticizing President Donald Trump and his administration.

Pritzker also expressed a continued desire to work with the Chicago Bears and create legislation to incentivize the team to remain in the Prairie State.

“We’re working to survive a president of the United States that is attacking the people of Illinois and the people of the United States, particularly working families,” Pritzker said at a news conference on June 1, following the legislature’s night that wrapped up the spring session around 4:00 a.m.

“Literally billions of dollars have been taken away from people in our state. We’ve seen these massive tariffs that are affecting people at the grocery store, when they’re going to buy a car — everything else in their lives. Costs are going up, and then we’ve got this war that’s raised the cost of gasoline for everybody,” Pritzker added.

The need for affordability has been a talking point on both sides of the aisle for the entirety of the spring session. Pritzker said June 1 that the legislature and his administration are trying to defend the working families of Illinois, and the most vulnerable.

“That is what we’re spending literally 98% of our time focused on and what we’ve been doing over the last six months — and I realize that everybody wants to talk about things that are ancillary to that. To us, I really, want businesses to stay here and grow. I really want businesses to be attracted to the state of Illinois, and I’ve been working at that every single day,”

See **BEARS**, Page 2A



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