

WEATHERSBY

Continued from Page 1

In addition to noting that his business did vacuum cleaner repairs, Weathersby also touted many of his supplies as having a private label, which meant they were more specialized than one would find in a general retail store.

“A lot of our product has a private label, so a lot of that you’re not going to find in another store with clean-

ing supplies,” he said.

PROUD interim director Jessica Finkenbinder said that she looked forward to working closely with Weathersby’s cleaning supply store in the future.

“It’s a great service to have for our



Oscar Weathersby

community, and we’re very lucky that they chose Pontiac for their continued place of business,” she said. “Since his business is location just off the Pontiac Square, it would be both Chamber of Commerce and PROUD.

“The business is a great addition to that vicinity, and both Mindi (Terrell, Chamber of Commerce executive director) and I are really lucky, and we’ll be excited to start working with them.”

SENATE

Continued from Page 1

quest for their state.

The politicking and power plays enormously complicated what should have been a routine measure to avoid an election-eve government shutdown.

The temporary government-wide spending bill stalled in the Senate Tuesday over Democrats’ demands that the measure include \$220 million in Senate-passed funding to help Flint and other cities deal with lead-tainted water. Democrats said they were not willing to accept a promise that Flint funding would come after the election, but they won stronger assurances from top GOP leaders like House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., and agreed to address the city’s crisis in the separate water development bill.

The Flint issue arose as

the final stumbling block after McConnell added the flood aid for Louisiana to the spending bill.

Democrats argued it’s unfair that the water crisis in Flint has gone on for more than a year with no assistance, while Louisiana and other states are getting \$500 million for floods that occurred just last month. Democrats played a strong hand in the negotiations and had leverage because Republicans controlling the House and Senate were eager to avoid a politically harmful shutdown before the election.

Behind-the-scenes maneuvering and campaign-season gamesmanship between Republicans and Democrats had slowed efforts to pass the temporary spending measure, once among the most routine of Capitol Hill’s annual measures. A longstanding stalemate over Zika funding spilled on to the measure, which many GOP

conservatives disliked because it guarantees a lame duck session that’s likely to feature post-election compromises that they’ll oppose.

McConnell has made numerous concessions in weeks of negotiations, agreeing, for instance, to drop contentious provisions tied to Zika funding that led Democrats to block prior Zika measures. A provision to make Planned Parenthood ineligible for new anti-Zika funding for Puerto Rico was dropped, as was a provision to ease pesticide regulations under the Clean Water Act. Democrats relented on a \$400 million package of spending cuts.

The spending bill also includes full-year funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Many House Republicans have resisted helping Flint, arguing that the city’s problems are a local issue and that many cities

have problems with aging water systems.

Flint’s drinking water became tainted when the city, then under state control, began drawing from the Flint River in 2014 to save money. Regulators failed to ensure the water was treated properly and lead from aging pipes leached into the water supply. As many as 12,000 children have been exposed to lead in water, officials say

Democratic Rep. Dan Kildee, Flint’s congressman, had accused Republicans of ignoring the plight of the predominantly black city after Republicans initially would not permit a vote.

Wednesday morning Kildee issued a statement that called the upcoming vote on the non-binding, \$170 million promise for Flint represented “a step forward to ensuring that Flint families get the resources they need to recover from this crisis.”

SHOOTING

Continued from Page 1

Townville Elementary were safe. The students were bused to a nearby church and reunited with their parents. They hugged and kissed.

The school has about 300 students in its pre-kindergarten to sixth-grade classrooms. It is in a very rural part of the state and surrounded by working farms.

“This is the country,”

Brandi Pierce, the mother of a sixth-grader, told The Associated Press as she began to cry. “You don’t have this in the country. It just don’t exist out here.”

Jamie Meredith, a student’s mother, said some of the children went into a bathroom during the shooting.

“I don’t know how they knew to go in the bathroom, but I know her teacher was shaken up. I know all the kids were scared. There was a bunch of kids crying. She didn’t

talk for about 5 minutes when I got her,” she told WYFF.

Television images showed officers swarming the school after the report of an active shooter. Some were on top of the roof while others were walking around the building. Students were driven away on buses accompanied by police officers.

Gov. Nikki Haley released a statement shortly after the shooting.

“As we work together with law enforcement to

make sure they have the support they need to investigate what happened in Townville, Michael and I ask that everyone across South Carolina join us in praying for the entire Townville Elementary School family and those touched by today’s tragedy.”

The rural town is located along Interstate 85 near the Georgia-South Carolina state line.

HEALTH

Continued from Page 1

cian before you resume physical activities such as contact sports that might result in another hit to the head,” LaBella said.

LaBella also said recent changes to state law governing the removal of students with suspected head injuries from games are working.

“They’re getting people off the field and getting them looked at in a greater fashion than we were seeing in the first few years of the rule,” said Kurt Gibson, associate executive director for the Illinois High School Association.

Illinois Department of Public Health data also show an increase in the number of concussions. Over 8,000 Illinois youth ages 10 to 19 were diagnosed with concussions in hospitals in 2015, up from over 6,500 diagnoses in 2010.

According to those figures, 8,198 Illinois children ages 10 to 19 were diagnosed with concussions in hospitals in 2015, up from 6,538 diagnoses in 2010.

But LaBella cautioned that not all concussions are from football or even sports. She said about 40 to 45 percent of the children she sees in her clinic got concussions from activities other than sports.

VIEW FROM THE CAB

Harvest season moving along rather quickly

They say time flies when you are having fun. I must be having a lot of fun this harvest season because the days sure do go by quickly.

It seems as though I have been a man on the move since we began harvesting this year’s corn crop as I am running the tractor and auger wagon. For you non-farm readers, this means I am responsible for “catching” the combine going up and down the rows so the machine can unload on the go.

This saves quite a bit of time so the combine can keep going while I stop to unload the trucks waiting patiently at the other end of the field. We made some good progress last week and had a great weather window. You couldn’t beat those clear blue skies and bright sunshine. It may have been a tad on the warm side, but we can’t complain for late September. I especially can’t complain since I work out of a climate controlled cab much of the day.

The tractors run on diesel and I run on black coffee each fall. That thermos is always nearby in case I need a warm refill. I speak from experience when I say don’t try to pour a cup while traveling over bumps in the field at near road speed.

Planting and harvest seasons seem to be the only times of the year when I drink coffee all day long. My normal cutoff is about 6 a.m. since I host an extremely early radio show each weekday.

Sounds like all of the area grain elevators were hopping with activity last week. The corn moisture is really dropping in some locations, depending on which variety growers planted. A week of warm weather and low humidity will do that to a corn plant.

A few growers have even ventured out into the soybean fields for the first time. Early yields are impressive — much like most of the area corn has been so far.

Farm Safety and Health Week may be over, but let’s not forget to continue being on the lookout for large farm equipment on the roadways. Remember, being a few minutes late to your destination is better than not reaching that destination at all due to a major accident. Farmers should also take the time to slow down, take a break now and then, get plenty of sleep and eat balanced meals.

For the latest farm news, local harvest updates and podcasts, visit www.centralillinoisfarmnetwork.com and like “Central Illinois Farm Network” on Facebook.



Kent Casson
Ag Columnist

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