

Chicago Tribune



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WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, 2024

BREAKING NEWS AT CHICAGOTRIBUNE.COM



Reid Thompson, a farmer in central Illinois, checks the progress of corn seed in Gibson City on May 8. **E. JASON WAMBSGANS/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

As EV popularity grows, corn farmers look to sky

Many in country's heartland pinning hopes on turning ethanol into aviation fuel

By Karina Atkins
Chicago Tribune

Reid Thompson, a fourth-generation farmer in central Illinois, is in the middle of planting season. Weather permitting, he tends to the fields in the morning, walks home for lunch with his wife and newborn, and then returns to his tractor until sundown. He'll harvest his corn in early fall, sell it to a nearby ethanol plant, and eventually it will make its way to a car's gas tank. That's the routine, at least

for now.

Nearly all U.S. gasoline contains ethanol to reduce emissions, and nearly all of that ethanol is made from corn starch. But, electric and hybrid vehicles offer even further emissions reductions. This poses a threat to corn demand that could be devastating for a state such as Illinois, the second-largest corn producer in the country.

The resulting decline in the value of Midwestern farmland and corn prices will hurt farmers and have ripple effects across

INSIDE: U.S. energy panel approves rule to ease long waitlists for wind and solar power projects. **Chicagoland, Page 5**

rural communities, predict University of Nebraska at Lincoln agricultural economists Jeffrey Stokes and Jim Jansen. Rural businesses that cater to the agriculture sector could go under, property taxes that fund local schools will likely plummet and farmers could be forced to default on debts to community lenders,

the economists forecast. This would come after farmers have been hit by a series of misfortunes over the last five years: the pandemic, trade wars, inflation and excess supply.

Corn could be the key to solving another clean energy dilemma, though. Unlike cars and trucks, planes are difficult to electrify, and some fuel companies believe the answer to cleaning up aviation lies in America's heartland.

Turn to Ethanol, Page 4

Ex-cop on trial in death of girlfriend

Jury will determine if then-CPD officer shot her in self-defense

By Madeline Buckley
Chicago Tribune

Days before she was killed, Andris Wofford found a gun nestled among clothes in her laundry basket, prosecutors said, and then made a prophetic comment to a friend.

"If anything happens to me," prosecutors said she told her friend shortly before her death in December 2021, "Pierre will have done it."

She was referring to Pierre Tyler, the father of her 9-month-old daughter and then a Chicago police officer, according to prosecutors, who said her prediction would soon come to pass.

After an argument over another woman, Tyler fired a shot that killed the 29-year-old mother in her apartment in the 2100 block of North Nashville Avenue in the Northwest Side's Galewood neighborhood, according to police and prosecutors.

But Tyler, 32, standing trial on murder charges, is arguing that the shooting was in self-defense. He plans to take the stand later this week, his attorney said, a relatively rare choice because of the risk of going up against prosecutors for questions under oath.

His attorney, Tim Grace, argued that Wofford was shot after she pointed a weapon at the off-duty cop in a jealous rage. Prosecutors painted a different picture, telling jurors that Tyler fatally attacked Wofford — as she pressed him about his relationship with another woman — before he launched a calculated cover-up.

The jurors, who were sworn in Tuesday, will decide which version

Turn to Trial, Page 6

INSIDE



Caitlin Clark. **ELSA/GETTY**

'Transformational moment' for WNBA

With a high-profile rookie class entering the league, the WNBA begins its 28th regular season riding a wave of attention and growth.

■ This season represents a fresh start for the Sky, who welcomed in a new coach, new general manager and new rookies this offseason. **Stories in Chicago Sports**

We're entomophages (bug eaters)

Illinois could host upward of a trillion cicadas. You cannot escape them, but if it's any consolation, you can eat them. **Food & Health**

Museum gets new name after donation

The Museum of Science and Industry officially is becoming the Kenneth C. Griffin Museum of Science and Industry. **Arts & Living**

Cohen says blind loyalty led to misdeeds

Defense aims to cast testimony as driven by hatred of Trump

By Michael R. Sisak, Eric Tucker and Michelle L. Price
Associated Press

NEW YORK — It wasn't until after a decade in the fold, after his family pleaded with him, after the FBI raided his office, apartment and hotel room, Michael Cohen testified Tuesday, that he finally decided to turn on Donald Trump.

That decision led to a 2018 guilty plea to federal charges involving a payment to the porn actor Stormy Daniels to bury her story of an alleged sexual encounter with Trump and to other, unrelated crimes. And it's that insider knowledge of shady deals that pushed Manhattan prosecutors to make Cohen the star witness in their case against Trump about that same payment, which they say was an illegal effort to influence the 2016 presidential election. Under questioning this week, Cohen has described the nuts and bolts of how the scheme worked.

"To keep the loyalty and to do the things that he had asked me to do, I violated my moral compass, and I suffered the penalty, as has my family," Cohen said Tuesday.

A shocking moment did come,

Turn to Testimony, Page 10



Lunchtime customers place and wait for their orders at Brown Bag Seafood restaurant on East Randolph Street in Chicago on May 8. **TERRENCE ANTONIO JAMES/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

Loop restaurants clawing their way back to health

With more workers commuting again, eateries seeing rise

By Brian J. Rogal
Chicago Tribune

Donna Lee, founder of Brown Bag Seafood Co., is starting to feel optimistic about the Loop.

The number of office workers coming downtown seems to be inching up every month. Lunch rushes are back, and Lee hopes the summer will bring hordes of hungry tour-

ists to her fast casual restaurant group.

Brown Bag closed two of its downtown locations in 2020, when the pandemic gutted the dining scene. But Lee is starting to think about opening another location.

"This is probably the first year that things are stable," said Zach Flanzman, Brown Bag's chief operating officer. "We feel fully back to 2019 levels."

More than 300 downtown restaurants, bars and bistros shuttered during the first three years of the pandemic,

including iconic spots such as Ronny's Steakhouse and chain locations such as Starbucks and Panera Bread, according to Datassential, an analytics firm for the food and beverage industries.

But surviving Loop restaurant owners now say they can see light at the end of the tunnel. Even though many downtown office workers are still absent Mondays and Fridays, restaurateurs have found ways to compensate.

The rise of online

Turn to Restaurants, Page 6

