

Coles County Regional Planning & Development Commission

# CCRP&DC

Serving Coles, Clark, Cumberland, Douglas, Edgar, Moultrie, & Shelby Counties

## Staff Members @ CCRP&DC

*Kelly Lockhart* - Executive Director

*Kevin McReynolds* - Grants Compliance Manager

*Jackie Galletano* - Community Planner

*Susan Summers* - GIS Analyst

*Noah Spence* - GIS/I.T. Manager

*Sarah Mummel* - Solid Waste Coordinator

*Cliff Shaw* - Housing Inspector

*Allison Hudson* - GIS Technician

*Rachel Pappas* - Administrative Assistant

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*Coles County Regional Planning & Development Commission*

**Coles County Courthouse  
Windows**

Coles County has applied for funds to help replace many windows in the Coles County Courthouse through the "ARPA" grant. ARPA stands for the American Rescue Plan Act from the United States Treasury. The Coles County Courthouse will be in much better condition with the addition of new functioning windows, while also respecting the historical design of the courthouse. Replacement of the windows will reduce unwanted airflow and water infiltration. The windows currently allow water infiltration during windy and rainy conditions. The water has caused moisture and mold in some locations, which has created an unhealthy work environment for county employees. This renovation to the courthouse is an enormous improvement for the working conditions of county employees as well as making our courthouse a presentable building for the citizens of the county.

**Rebuild Downtowns and  
Main Streets**

Coles County Regional Planning & Development Commission has been busy working on drafting multiple grant applications for the Rebuild Downtowns & Main Streets Program. The program will provide up to \$3 million to support improvements and encourage investment in commercial corridors and downtowns that have experienced disinvestment, particularly in communities hardest-hit by the COVID-19 public health and economic crisis. CCRP&DC drafted grant applications for the City of Marshall Library, City of Oakland, Edgar County Courthouse, CTF Building, Village of Ashmore's storm water system and the Will Roger's Theatre which is a historic location in

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Rebuild Downtowns and  
Main Streets (cont.)

Dates to Remember

downtown Charleston. Assisting with these projects by providing the appropriate services and funding is crucial for the upkeep and development of such ventures. The Rebuilding Downtowns & Main Streets Program has a primary goal to drive investment in infrastructure and public amenities that will invite more people back into Main Street districts, and local city centers. Facilitating important projects within our communities with service from the appropriate businesses and citizens is important for the upkeep and development of such grant programs that aid in restoring, preserving, and expanding our communities.

*Sunday April 10th:* Palm Sunday

*Monday April 11th:* National Pet Day

*Wed April 13th:* Thomas Jefferson's Birthday

*Friday April 15th:* Good Friday

*Sunday April 17th:* Easter Sunday

*Friday April 22:* Earth Day

*Tuesday April 26th:* Pretzel Day

*Thurs April 28th:* Take your Child to Work Day

*Friday April 29th:* Arbor Day



## BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE NEWS

### **GOV. PRITZKER ANNOUNCES INAUGURAL COHORT OF ACCELERATE ILLINOIS BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM**

SPRINGFIELD - Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) Office of Broadband announced today the six communities selected to participate in the inaugural cohort of the Accelerate Illinois Broadband Infrastructure Planning Program. Hosted in collaboration with Heartland Forward and the Benton Institute for Broadband & Society, the six communities are the City of Springfield, Jackson County, Knox County, Mercer County, Whiteside County, and the Village of Elsau.

The 14-week intensive training program will help leaders from participating communities develop broadband plans responsive to their unique local needs and position them to effectively leverage newly available state and federal broadband infrastructure funding. This week, participants are launching community surveys to gather input and data from local residents and stakeholders to help shape their plans.

"Broadband infrastructure is only as useful as it is accessible to the people who need it - so my administration is partnering with local jurisdictions to develop broadband plans responsive to their unique local needs," said Governor JB Pritzker. "Thanks to our Connect Illinois initiative and federal funding on the way from President Biden's infrastructure plan, there's never been more potential to reach our goal of closing the digital divide here in Illinois. I'm grateful to Heartland Forward, the Benton Institute and all our partners on the Accelerate Illinois program working to ensure communities across our state are prepared to utilize this funding effectively."

## BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE NEWS

"All residents should have the same opportunity to tap into the critical resources that access to high-speed internet service providers," said Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton. "As we continue our efforts to expand digital equity, initiatives like Accelerate Illinois are crucial. I look forward to seeing the progress these communities make through this program."

With the recent passage of the \$1 trillion federal infrastructure plan, Illinois communities stand poised to receive historic funding for the expansion of broadband infrastructure. This is in addition to Governor Pritzker's bipartisan Rebuild Illinois capital plan which dedicated \$420 million to broadband expansion as well as funds made available through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Accelerate Illinois aims to level the playing field and allow cities and counties of all sizes and staffing levels to apply for these funds and plan to most effectively implement them in their communities.

"The Accelerate Illinois program is crucial to ensuring communities have a plan and are equipped with the tools they need to effectively utilize historic funding for broadband infrastructure expansion and improvement," said Sylvia I. Garcia, Acting Director of DCEO. "Under Gov. Pritzker's leadership, our state is working to close the digital divide and get all Illinoisans connected to high-speed internet access, this program meets communities where they are and builds capacity that is critical to helping close the gap."

## BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE NEWS

The Accelerate Illinois program is offered through a collaborative effort between the Illinois Office of Broadband, the Illinois-based Benton Institute for Broadband & Society, and the University of Illinois Extension as well as funding by Heartland Forward. The training is designed to guide communities through the process of establishing and implementing a full-scale broadband connectivity vision. With more than 30 hours of no-cost expert counsel provided by the Benton Institute, the program provides structured education and engagement for communities to identify broadband goals, gather information and analyze opportunities, understand available funding options, and target capital dollars to support implementation.

"Through Heartland Forward's Connecting the Heartland initiative, we are working to ensure all Illinoisans have access to the high-speed internet service necessary to live, work and learn at home. Communities across the state are poised to receive historic federal funding to make that goal a reality. But many - especially rural and under-resourced communities - lack the expertise and capacity to seize this opportunity," said Angie Cooper, Chief Program Officer of Heartland Forward. "That's why the Accelerate Illinois program is so important, and we are thrilled to be able to support the communities that were selected to participate."

# Spring Recipe

## Buttery Italian Easter Cookies



## INGREDIENTS

### COOKIES

*2 large eggs*

*6 tablespoons unsalted butter*

*1/2 cup granulated sugar*

*2 teaspoons vanilla extract*

*2 teaspoons baking powder*

*1 teaspoon almond extract*

*2 tablespoons whole milk*

*2 cups all-purpose flour*

*1 teaspoon salt*

### ICING

*3 cups powdered sugar*

*1 teaspoon almond extract*

*2-4 tablespoons whole milk*

*2 tablespoons light corn syrup*

*gel food coloring rainbow*

*sprinkles*

## INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat oven to 350°F. In a mixing bowl, beat together butter and sugar until creamed. Add eggs one at a time, beating to combine between each. Beat in vanilla and almond extracts. Mixture will be pale yellow and slightly separated. In a separate bowl, sift together flour, baking powder, and salt.

Add half of the milk to the butter/sugar mixture, then half of the flour mixture, the remaining milk, and then the remaining flour. Mix just until combined, scraping the bowl as needed. Use a 1 ½ tablespoon cookie scoop to form scoops of dough.

Place each scoop of dough on a lightly floured surface and roll into a 6-7" log. Twist the log into a knot for half of the cookies. For the other half of the cookies, form donut shapes by joining the two ends of the log together - or simply roll the scoop of dough into a ball and then press your finger down into the center of it to make a hole, shaping the "donut" around your finger.

Place cookies on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Bake for about 9 minutes or until the bottoms of the cookies are just slightly golden brown. Transfer cookies to a cooling rack to cool. Meanwhile, whisk together all of the icing ingredients to form a smooth glaze. Divide the glaze between four bowls and add a tiny drop of gel food coloring to each bowl. Stir to distribute the coloring evenly throughout the glaze.

Dip a cooled cookie into the glaze; hold it above the bowl for a few seconds to allow the excess glaze to drip off. Place on a sheet of parchment paper and sprinkle with nonpareils. Leave untouched until glaze sets and is dry to the touch.

## RECIPE TIPS & TRICKS

Bring butter and eggs to room temperature. This is essential for creating a smooth dough, and it helps the other ingredients incorporate faster as well. It wouldn't hurt to measure out the milk to warm on the counter as well. Don't overwork the dough! It will be just a little bit sticky, but a light dusting of flour on your work surface is plenty to prevent sticking while rolling out the logs. And since it's already nice and thick, it won't need to be refrigerated first. Form the shapes gently. Be careful not to smash the dough when tying the knots — they will puff up in the oven, so it's fine if they aren't tightly secured. For the donut shape, wrap the log around your finger and pinch the ends together. Then, gently roll at the seam to round it out. Tip for baking: Italian butter cookies are best when the bottoms just start to turn golden brown. I found that 9 minutes was just the right amount, so they are cooked through but still soft and tender.

