



Nation, 8A
 Hundreds gather in Baton Rouge for a service to honor three police officers killed earlier this month

Sports, 1B
 Danville's American Legion baseball team takes on the Mt. Prospect squad in the state tournament in Jerseyville



FRIDAY, JULY 29, 2016

COMMERCIAL-NEWS

DANVILLE, ILL

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\$1.00

Surprise of her life



Photo Provided

KATE COX, lower left, and her daughters, Allie, top left, and Erin, top right, pose recently for a photo with Dora Lee. Cox participates in a program where runners represent others who are unable to run. Lee is one of the people Cox represents.

Cox visited by four 'buddies'

BY CAROL ROEHM
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DANVILLE – Something happened last Saturday that could quite possibly be the biggest surprise of Kate Cox's life.

"I had no clue whatsoever," Cox, a speech language pathologist at Northeast Elementary Magnet School, said. "It was a complete surprise."

"Kate was totally unsuspecting," her mother, Darlene Halloran, said. "She just wept. She was so excited."

The big surprise was a visit from Cox's other "family" who traveled to Danville from Hamilton, Ontario: 3-year-old CJ, 12-year-old Dora Lee, 17-year-old Tina and 20-year-old Damien. Each one has a disability.

CJ and Tina live with hydrocephalus, a neurological disorder; Dora Lee lives with cerebral palsy; and Damien was born with a rare genetic disorder that has left him non-communicative.

Cox became acquainted with the four-some two years ago through her involvement with IRUN4, a Facebook-based international organization started in 2013 that pairs physically active people and runners with a buddy who has special needs. Buddies could have a physical, mental or learning disability, or a life-threatening or terminal illness.

The organization boasts 41,560 members, which includes athletes, runners, buddies and both athletes and buddies still waiting to be paired.

The runners and athletes post updates for their buddies at least three times a week to the private IRUN4 Facebook page. The runners and athletes dedicate their races and workouts to their buddies who, in turn, help cheer them on through photos and videos they post on the private Facebook page.

After being placed on a waiting list for seven months, Cox was paired in June 2014 with the four children and their two moms, Tara Fowler and Amanda Kyle, from Canada.

"Families can get a different runner for each child in their family, but my family thought if one person was willing, they

See **COX** | 4A



Jennifer Bailey | Commercial-News

VERMILION GARDENS, located on Bowman Avenue near its intersection with Winter Avenue. Has a new owner. The company plans renovations worth \$8 million in the coming months.

Vermilion Gardens to see renovations

BY JENNIFER BAILEY
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DANVILLE – An estimated \$8 million investment should wrap up by April at the latest to transform Vermilion Gardens apartments off Bowman Avenue.

The 223 units consist of 82 one-bedroom, 95 two-bedroom and 46 three-bedroom units at the site, 1213 Garden Dr. The apartments house more than 700 residents.

Vitus Group based in Seattle, Wash. is a national developer and affordable housing owner that bought the property in May from Hispanic Housing Development Corp.

Vitus Group's Development Director Scott Langan said they've had a long relationship with Hispanic Housing Development Corp., a Chicago-based not-for-profit, that was looking to get out of Danville because it was an outlying area for the non-profit.

This is Vitus Group's first venture in Danville, but third redevelopment in Illinois in the last 18 months. The other two have been in the Chicago area. Vitus owns more than 10,000 affordable housing units in 21 states.

Illinois-based Evergreen Property Management will provide on-site management of the property.

"It's a big development," Langan said of the project, adding there will be new parking lots, siding, windows and other improvements.

He said Vermilion Gardens was "sort of underserved," with "not the amount of love Vitus is going to give it."

He said tenancy will be improved, in addition to the property renovations.

See **RENO** | 4A

Tilton's Redneck Games ready to begin

BY CAROL ROEHM
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TILTON – A few changes are on tap for this year's ninth annual Tilton Redneck Games, which kicks off at 6 p.m. today.

The most significant change is the festival's location this year. It will take place at Carl Gruber Sports Complex, formerly Central Foundry Ball Park.

"This is our ninth year, and it's fast becoming one of the biggest festivals in the county," said Tilton Ambulance Chief Butch Fields, who co-founded the festival in 2007 with Scott Boswell.

Fields said the festival raises money for the

Tilton Ambulance Service – otherwise known as Tilton Fire and Rescue – to upgrade its equipment. The ambulance service responds to calls not only in the village but along a section of Interstate 74 as well.

The Redneck Games is much like a traditional festival, with pageants, live music and a beer tent. What makes the Redneck Games different are the mud events, such as ATV and truck mud bogs and mud volleyball.

The new location for the Redneck Games is a little bit smaller than previous sites, Fields said.

"The ATV and truck mud bogs won't be out

See **GAMES** | 4A



MUD VOLLEYBALL, such as this match from 2015, is one of the popular events at Tilton's Redneck Games. The annual event runs through Sunday at the baseball complex just north of Interstate 74.

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Today: 40 percent chance of rain all day. Full report, **Page 2A**

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