



# BELLEVILLE NEWS-DEMOCRAT

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## OLD SCHOOL BASEBALL



DERIK HOLTSMANN/News-Democrat

Trenton Mains players, from left, Brady "Hambone" Kesner, Paul "Curly" West, Kevin "Ace" Weber, Rich "Boomer" Ritzheimer, and Miles "Moonlight" Bateman have fun re-creating a moment from the movie "Field of Dreams" during a recent practice.

### Team celebrates game's early days

By JENNIFER A. BOWEN  
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TRENTON — The 1890s newspaper ad was pretty clear: The Trenton Mains baseball team needed new players, and the manager was so disgusted with his current players he wouldn't consider letting them take the field again.

Bob "Squatter" Rieger stumbled across the ad while researching baseball in Trenton in the mid-1800s and thought, well, why not form a whole new team, 100 years later?

Rieger took his idea to the city's sesquicentennial committee and pitched it: A vintage baseball team that played by the rules of the 1860s. The team could represent the city and be part of the city's 150th anniversary celebration.

His idea was a winner with

the committee, and plans to drum up funds for vintage uniforms, balls and bats were put into motion.

"It has really taken off and we are much farther ahead of the curve than I thought we would be," said Rieger, 47, of Trenton. "As the word spread, the circle got bigger and bigger as people got involved."

The team had to scrounge together 10 players for its first game in May. The Mains now have 15 players, known as "ballists," with even more people interested in wrapping their hands around a historically replicated wooden bat and giving the ball a whack. Rieger is the team manager.

There are two vintage baseball teams in St. Louis, and the Mains have traveled to Decatur and across Illinois to play other vintage teams.

The Vintage Base Ball Association has registered more than 200 clubs throughout the U.S. and Canada, with more teams forming every year.

#### 'It's in my blood'

Rich "Boomer" Ritzheimer is the Mains' oldest player. At 73 years old, he is local icon.

A hometown boy, Ritzheimer grew up playing sports, especially baseball. After he graduated from college, he played professional baseball for the Brooklyn Dodgers organization for two years before returning to the metro-east. He eventually came home and continued his love of the sport by coaching baseball and softball teams in Trenton and coached teams at Wesclin High School.

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DERIK HOLTSMANN/News-Democrat

Kevin "Ace" Weber makes a catch with his bare hands. Players did not wear gloves in the early days of the game.

## Belleville weighs law to assist doctors

Would shield physicians' assets

By SCOTT WUERZ  
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BELLEVILLE — The City Council on Monday will consider an ordinance designed to protect the assets of doctors who work in Belleville.

The ordinance would protect physicians with at least \$1 million in liability coverage. If a verdict is awarded that is higher than the physician's insurance coverage, the physician could petition the court for asset protection in an amount equal to twice the maximum amount payable per occurrence under the insurance.

Ward 5 Alderman Mark Eckert said the purpose of the ordinance is to show that it is a top priority of city leaders to make Belleville a good place for doctors to work.

"The hospitals are certainly one of the biggest employers in Belleville and in (St. Clair) County," Eckert said. "They're the backbone of our community, and we'll obviously do anything we can to keep our doctors and bring new ones to town."

The Belleville News-Democrat reported last

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## Federal plans move forward for new bridge

State hopes to get \$500 million

By PATRICK J. POWERS  
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BELLEVILLE — Federal transportation funding expected to be released later this year should include at least \$500 million for the new Mississippi River bridge, U.S. Rep. Jerry Costello announced Friday.

"It's our No. 1 priority from the standpoint of transportation," said Costello, who serves as a member of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. "It's a big, big project. We've committed our funds in the House. Now all we have to do is convince our colleagues in the Senate."

The Belleville Democrat was in town Friday to

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### Coming Sunday

**ECHO COMPANY:** Eleven members of Echo Company, 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines lost their lives in fighting in Ramadi, Iraq. Philadelphia Inquirer photographer David Swanson was imbedded with the unit when Iraqi insurgents ambushed the Marines.



**GREEN SPACES:** The Confluence Greenway Project was formed to create a network of historic, conservation and recreational sites to draw tourists and preserve history and nature in the corridor where the Illinois, Missouri and Mississippi rivers come together. Work on \$100 million worth of public and private projects continues.

## Contract awarded to begin Interstate 64 construction

### Missouri company submits lowest bid

By PATRICK J. POWERS  
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State transportation officials on Friday gave the green light for work to begin on a \$55.9 million project to widen Interstate 64 from Caseyville to O'Fallon.

"It is my understanding that the paperwork is going out today to award the contract," said Mary Lamie, district engineer for the Illinois Department of Transportation in Collinsville. "The paperwork is in the mail to Fred Weber Inc."

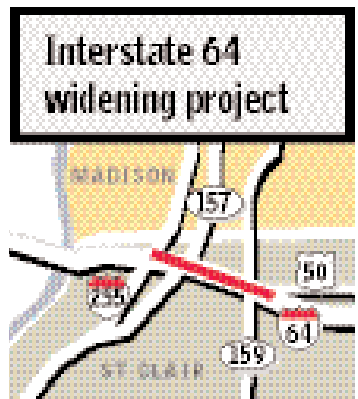
The Illinois Department of Transportation earlier this summer delayed its decision after the initial bids came in at least \$15 million higher than the department expected. Fred Weber Inc., of Creve Coeur, Mo., submitted the lowest bid at \$55.8 million.

"We're very happy," said Tom Barta, executive vice president of Fred Weber. "We'll probably have a meeting with IDOT soon to see what the procedures are and when we can get started."

The Illinois Department of Transportation budgeted \$45.9 million to widen I-64 from Illinois 157 to U.S. Highway 50. Fred Weber's bid came

in \$10 million higher and the only other bid, from Keely & Sons Inc. and Keller Construction of East St. Louis, came in at \$65.9 million.

The higher-than-expected bids forced IDOT to re-evaluate its plans and delay the timetable for awarding a contract, a common practice when bids exceed the budgeted amount. IDOT was expected to award the contract sometime before July 25.



fore July 25.

Construction plans call for Fred Weber to widen I-64 from four to six lanes. The new lanes will be adjacent to the inside lanes of the interstate, with a concrete wall to separate traffic. Two lanes of traffic will still exist during construction.

IDOT projected between 50,000 and 65,000 vehicles a day travel that stretch of I-64.

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#### LOTTERY FOR ILLINOIS

Pick 3-Midday: **0-1-9** Pick 4-Evening: **5-6-4-2**  
Pick 3-Evening: **8-3-7** Little Lotto: **04-13-14-27-32**  
Pick 4-Midday: **1-1-6-5** Jackpot: **\$10.5 million**

#### FOR MISSOURI

Pick 3-Midday: **7-4-0**; Evening: **1-3-5**  
Pick 4-Midday: **7-3-8-5**; Evening: **7-1-5-3**  
Show Me 5-Midday: **19-24-36-39-43**  
Show Me 5-Evening: **6-7-20-39-41**

**MEGA MILLIONS** Game **14-31-41-45-48** Mega Ball: **20** Jackpot: **\$35 million**

