BEES (part 1)

Bees are considered the most important group of pollinators for a simple reason. Female bees collect nectar and pollen from flowers as food for their offspring and, in doing this, accidentally transfer large quantities of pollen from flower to flower. With the exception of a few species of wasps, only bees deliberately gather pollen to bring back to their nests for their young. On a single foraging trip, a female bee may visit hundreds of flowers, transferring pollen the entire way. In contrast, butterflies, moths, flies, wasps and beetles visit flowers to feed on nectar (or the flower itself, in the case of some beetles) and not to collect pollen.

Lost & Found

Any lost and found items you may find should be brought to the attention of your supervisor immediately. Items should be sealed in an envelope. On the outside of the envelope, write a brief description of what is inside, when and where the item was found, the date, who found it and any other important information. Once the information is complete the envelope should be placed in the lost and found bin in the office to be picked up by Lee or Stephanie.

Driving Zero Fatalities to a Reality

At the Illinois Department of Transportation, safety is our number one priority and we stand committed to reducing the number of fatalities to zero on Illinois roadways. Please help us by driving defensively, buckling up, putting down your cell phone, slowing down in work zones, wearing the proper gear while motorcycling, and designating a sober driver if you have been drinking. Driving Zero Fatalities to a Reality is our message. Every life counts. With your help, we will ensure we are doing everything we can to save lives.

2014 Illinois Roadway Fatalities to Date

526

We Honored

Firefighter Nick Whitfield, Jr.
Normal Fire Department
Normal, Illinois

New Display at Farmland

The Farmer City Chamber of Commerce will be installing a new display inside the center island at the east bound Farmland rest area this month. The display will be permanent and the content will be changed out seasonally or as the City has an event or festival to promote such as Clinton Lake recreational area or their Heritage Days festival. Look for the new display the next time you pass through!

Inside this issue

Fall Cleanup ............................ 2
Funks Grove ............................. 3
Construction Update ................... 3
Poison Ivy ............................... 3
We Honored ................................ 4
Driving Zero Fatalities to a Reality ..... 4
Bees (part 1) ............................. 4
New Display at Farmland .............. 4

The Three P’s

Pollen, Pollination and Pollinators

The word ‘pollen’ means “fine flour” in Latin. Pollen are small, light, dry grains of protein that come from the male part of the flower, trees, grasses or weeds when they reproduce. During the spring, summer and fall, it’s either released into the air and carried away by the wind or carried by insects to other plants to fertilize them.

Pollination is the process by which plant pollen is transferred from the male reproductive plant organ to the female plant organ to form seeds. In flowering plants, pollen is transferred by the wind, insects and birds.

A pollinator is the “agent” that moves pollen to accomplish fertilization. There are four major groups of pollinating insects: bees and wasps, flies, butterflies and moths and beetles. Pollinators don’t gather pollen with the intent of promoting plant reproduction. They are looking for food. The sweet nectar and fatty, protein-rich pollen are excellent nourishment for themselves and their young. They may also be looking for mates, sometimes meeting at flowers where they gather food, or in other cases collecting floral oils to use as perfumes to attract a mate. As pollinators feed, court or gather oils, pollen grains stick to their bodies and rub off accidentally when they visit other blossoms.

Bees are considered the most important group of pollinators. Look for more about bees in the next RAZR.
**Fall Cleanup**

As fall approaches and lawn mowing duties start to decline, now is a good time to do a thorough cleanup outside of buildings, all picnic shelters and tables and garages. Outside windows and sills, soffits and lights all need cleaned of cobwebs, bird nests and droppings. Now is a good time to hit sidewalks removing chewing gum, spilled drinks and any other spill or stains.

When the leaves begin to turn and fall, extra attention will be needed to keep picnic shelters, walkways and buildings free of leaves. A regular cleanup schedule will make it easier to keep up and prevent a buildup of wet leaves which will leave stains and may become a slip and fall hazard for visitors. Care should also be taken to keep the parking lot gutters and inlet drains free of leaves.

A final edging of all concrete prior to retiring the equipment for the season will make snow removal easier this winter. If you have areas around the lawns that need to be re-seeded, please make out a work order. We will be working at all rest areas to workup and seed big areas and will leave some extra grass seed with supervisors for use on small areas we may miss.

We will also be around soon to pick up the hanging baskets for the winter. If you have baskets that are already looking sad, go ahead and move those to the garage as time allows. Please check with Lee or Stephanie prior to removal of any planted seasonal plantings, cutting of any ornamental grass, flowers or daylilies.

With fall and cooler temperatures we will all soon be paid visits by the Asian lady beetle. Fall is when they migrate and they normally seek shelter in cliffs and cracks in caves and other natural places. If a handy cliff or crevice isn’t available our rest area buildings and garages suit them just fine. Insecticide sprays don’t work very well on hard shelled bugs. The best bet is to vacuum or sweep them up and move them back outside. Just try to remind yourself, they are good beneficial bugs when they are outside!

**Poison Ivy**

We make every attempt to keep our rest areas free of the very unwanted, very invasive plant, poison ivy; however, it still seems to manage to creep into our landscapes and wooded areas. All supervisors should make sure both inside workers and lawn crews are familiar with what the plant looks like and all employees should complete a work order indicating where you found the plant growing on the rest area property. If you find poison ivy near any walkway, playground or picnic area where travelers may come in contact with it, please let Lee or Stephanie know.

Poison ivy produces oil called urushiol (pronounced oo-roo-shee-ohl) oil. Exposure to the oil causes a skin rash, blisters and itching. You can become sensitive to urushiol at any time, even if you think you were exposed to poison ivy in the past, you can still develop a rash the next time. Urushiol oil is very strong and it only takes a small amount to cause a reaction.

The rash that develops on our skin after contact is not contagious. It is possible to spread the oil even though contact with contaminated clothing, gloves or shoe laces. If you contact the plant wash any exposed skin immediately with soap and water, and make sure to handle your clothing and shoes carefully, making sure to wash your hands and any exposed skin thoroughly, again.

**Construction Update**

Construction work on the septic system at the Funks Grove rest area is nearing completion. Training on operation of the new system will be held during the first week of September and trial runs and testing of the system will begin shortly after.

Work at the water plant is also progressing. The new pneumatic tank air compressor has been installed. The retention tank has been repaired and is in the process of being re-installed on-site. With the long shutdown we expect to have some issues with the water plant and will be troubleshooting those over the next few weeks while we bring it back into full service.

Once we get both the water plant and the septic systems functioning properly we will begin bringing the main building back online. This process will likely require some minor repairs to toilets, urinals and sinks, cleaning of filters and valves that have been closed and thorough cleaning, decontamination and testing of the water prior to opening.

If everything remains on schedule and we don’t have any major issues restoring the systems to functioning, we hope to be open to the public in late September.