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CCRP&DC FALL 2025

NEWSLETTER



(Picture by: Rob Stroud, JG-TC)

Coles Wind

The Coles Wind farm, proposed by Apex Clean Energy, was approved by a narrow margin earlier this year. The 51-turbine wind farm north of Charleston was approved by the Coles County Board after an extensive round of 13 public hearings. Apex plans to place their turbines in Seven Hickory and Morgan townships, across approximately 30 miles of farmland along Illinois 130. If their building permit is approved, construction is planned to start in 2026.

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217-348-0521

Economic Development District

Coles County Regional Planning is exploring the development of a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) as a first step toward establishing a federally recognized Economic Development District (EDD). An EDD unites counties, municipalities, businesses, and organizations in long-term, collaborative, economic planning. Through the CEDS process, Coles County will analyze strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, while creating actionable strategies for sustainable growth. Once in place, a CEDS not only guides local priorities but also opens the door to significant federal resources. Meeting the Economic Development Administration's criteria for distress is required for designation, and appropriate staffing must be available, but the payoff is substantial: access to funding for infrastructure, business development, workforce training, and disaster recovery. While the effort is extensive, the creation of a CEDS and eventual EDD would position the region to attract investment, strengthen resilience, and build long-term economic vitality.

Housing Rehabilitation Grants

Coles County Regional Planning has several active housing rehabilitation grants currently. Two more grants through the Federal Home Loan Bank of Chicago were awarded, one covering Montgomery County and the other covering our full 7 county region. Another round of funding was also awarded by the Illinois Housing Development Authority this year. Progress is picking up thanks to two additional contractors that have been working with us. If anyone you know needs their home brought up to code, please call our office at 217-348-0521 and get on one of our waiting lists today.

CCRP Planning Update

2025 has been a busy year for us here at Coles County Regional Planning so far. In December, we wrapped up our Coles And Douglas County Transportation Plans, followed by Hazard Mitigation Plans for Coles, Clark, and Shelby counties. We've also been hard at work on an update to Coles County's Comprehensive Plan, which should be finished up by the end of 2025. Having recently completed the Mattoon Safety Action Plan, we're now diving into their Comprehensive Plan to help guide Mattoon through the next 20 years.

We would love to help other communities with their planning efforts, so don't hesitate to reach out to us and let us know what you need!

2025 Landmarks Award

The 2025 Landmarks Illinois Richard H. Driehaus Foundation Preservation Award for Environmental Sustainability was awarded to Coles County this year for the replacement of nearly 400 windows in the Coles County Courthouse. This was recognized as an exceptional preservation effort by Landmarks Illinois. The two-year effort to replace 384 deteriorating windows in the 125-year-old courthouse helped with significant energy efficiency improvements for the county and enhanced the overall appearance of the prominent landmark (JG-TC.com).



DCEO Grant Snapshot

Community Solar Energy Sovereignty Program

(\$8.5 million total award funding)

- 40 anticipated awards
- Award range: \$50,000-\$1,000,000
- Eligible Applicants: Community-based organizations, public entities, and technical service providers in partnership with community-based organizations.

Application Deadline: December 31, 2025.

Program objective: Provides pre-development funding to support the development of programs and entities to assist in the long-term governance, management, and maintenance of community solar projects, such as community solar cooperatives.

Equitable Energy Future Grant Program

\$25.5 million total award funding

- Anticipated Awards: 40 awards
- Award Range: \$250,000 - \$1,000,000
- Eligible Applicants: Equity Eligible Contractor; Business, Non-profit, Cooperative Organization that meets equity building criteria.

Application Deadline: December 31, 2025.

Program focus: Provides pre-development funding to support the development of renewable energy and energy efficiency projects benefitting businesses, community organizations, and the workforce in Illinois, with a specific focus on historically disadvantaged communities.

Illinois Grocery Initiative Equipment Upgrade Round 2

The Illinois Grocery Initiative Equipment Upgrades Program will provide grants for new energy-efficient equipment upgrades for existing independently owned for-profit grocery stores, cooperative grocery stores, or not-for-profit grocery stores. Intended to reduce or eliminate the existence of "food deserts" in Illinois, this grant will prioritize stores located in food deserts, however, it is not limited to these stores. These grants are intended to facilitate energy-efficient equipment investment and sustainability for stores located in food deserts, areas that could become food deserts, and other areas that are underserved to a lesser degree. The following expenditures will be eligible for reimbursement under this program, insofar as the equipment will result in energy efficiency improvements:

- HVAC equipment
- Refrigeration units and freezers
- Lighting systems.
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Cost sharing or Matching is required.

Applicants are required to provide 25% of the total project costs, representing a 1:3 match. These matching funds can come from any nonstate sources such as local municipal funds, federal funds, or private investment. Application deadline is December 15, 2025.



Dial-A-Ride Program Overview

Dial-A-Ride, a service offered by the Coles County Council on Aging, is supported by state, federal, and local funding from the county, municipalities, and the 508 board. This program provides door-to-door, reservation-based transportation services, along with two zipline routes, available Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., excluding observed holidays. All services are ADA-compliant with hydraulic lifts, railing, spaces for mobility devices, and stop announcements. Use the QR code to view more about services and route maps.

Coles County Fare Structure

For Individuals Over 60:

Travel within city limits: Donation basis (suggested \$1.00 each way)

For Individuals Under 60:

Travel within city limits or rural towns: \$2.00 for each one-way trip

For All Ages:

Travel outside city limits or rural towns within the same county: \$4.00 for each one-way trip

Travel outside Coles County to Douglas County, Champaign, or Effingham: \$7.00 for each one-way trip

For Children:

Ages 5 and under: Free for each one-way trip

Ages 6 to 10: \$1.00 for each one-way trip

Monthly passes can be purchased from any Dial-A-Ride driver and are valid for both Zipline and Demand Response services within the county only. Each pass costs \$40.00. A discounted Veteran's Pass is available for \$20.00 with proper military identification. Tokens are also available for purchase from any Dial-A-Ride driver at \$4.00 each. Tokens do not expire and can be used instead of a \$4.00 fare.

The Advantage 50 Program, sponsored by Sarah Bush Lincoln Hospital, allows passengers to travel to any Sarah Bush Lincoln Facility for a fare of \$1.00, exclusively for Advantage 50 members. To register, call (217) 258-348-2422 or email advantage50@sblhs.org. Passengers should inform the dispatcher of their membership when making a reservation.

Dial-A-Ride also accepts Illinois Medicaid and Managed Care Insurance for non-emergency medical transportation. Approval from your insurance is required before calling and scheduling your ride with Dial-A-Ride.

Dial-A-Ride Program Cont'd

Dial-A-Ride offers shopping days in Charleston & Mattoon as well.

The schedule is as follows:

Charleston:

Monday: 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Wal-Mart

Wednesday: 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Ruler Foods

Thursday: 12:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. County Market

Mattoon:

Tuesday: 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. County Market/My Store

Wednesday & Thursday: 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Wal-Mart

Friday: 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. Cross County Mall

Dial-A-Ride also offers transportation to Douglas County, Champaign/Urbana, and Effingham. The fare is \$7 for each one-way trip. Please schedule your appointments no earlier than 10:00 a.m. All passengers must be prepared to return no later than 2:00 p.m. Pickup times will depend on the number of passengers traveling that day and the requested destinations.

Schedule:

Monday — Champaign-Urbana

Wednesday — Effingham

Tuesday & Thursday — Douglas County

Business Advertising on Buses

Did you know that Dial-A-Ride offers advertising on our bus windows? Businesses can get thousands of miles of exposure every year! If interested, be sure to take a look at the advertising flyer. For more information or questions, please call 217-639-5160.

DIAL-A-RIDE ADVERTISING





1-800-505-5505 DIAL-A-RIDE

P-1
21.75w X 34h
\$800.00

P-2
32.5w X 24h
\$800.00

P-3
21.75w X 24h
\$600.00

12 Month Contracts

D-1
33.75w X 24.5h
\$900.00

D-2
33.75w X 24.5h
\$900.00

D-3
33.5w X 24h
\$900.00

D-4
33.75w X 34h
\$1,300.00



DIAL-A-RIDE 1-800-505-5505

Dial-A-Ride is sponsored by the Coles County Council on Aging, Inc., a not for profit 501(C)3 Corporation. Is your business ready for thousands of miles of exposure? Call 217-639-5160.