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Investigation



BENEATH KANKAKEE:
Tunnels beneath the
Shapiro Developmental
Center **Pg 3**

Community Highlights

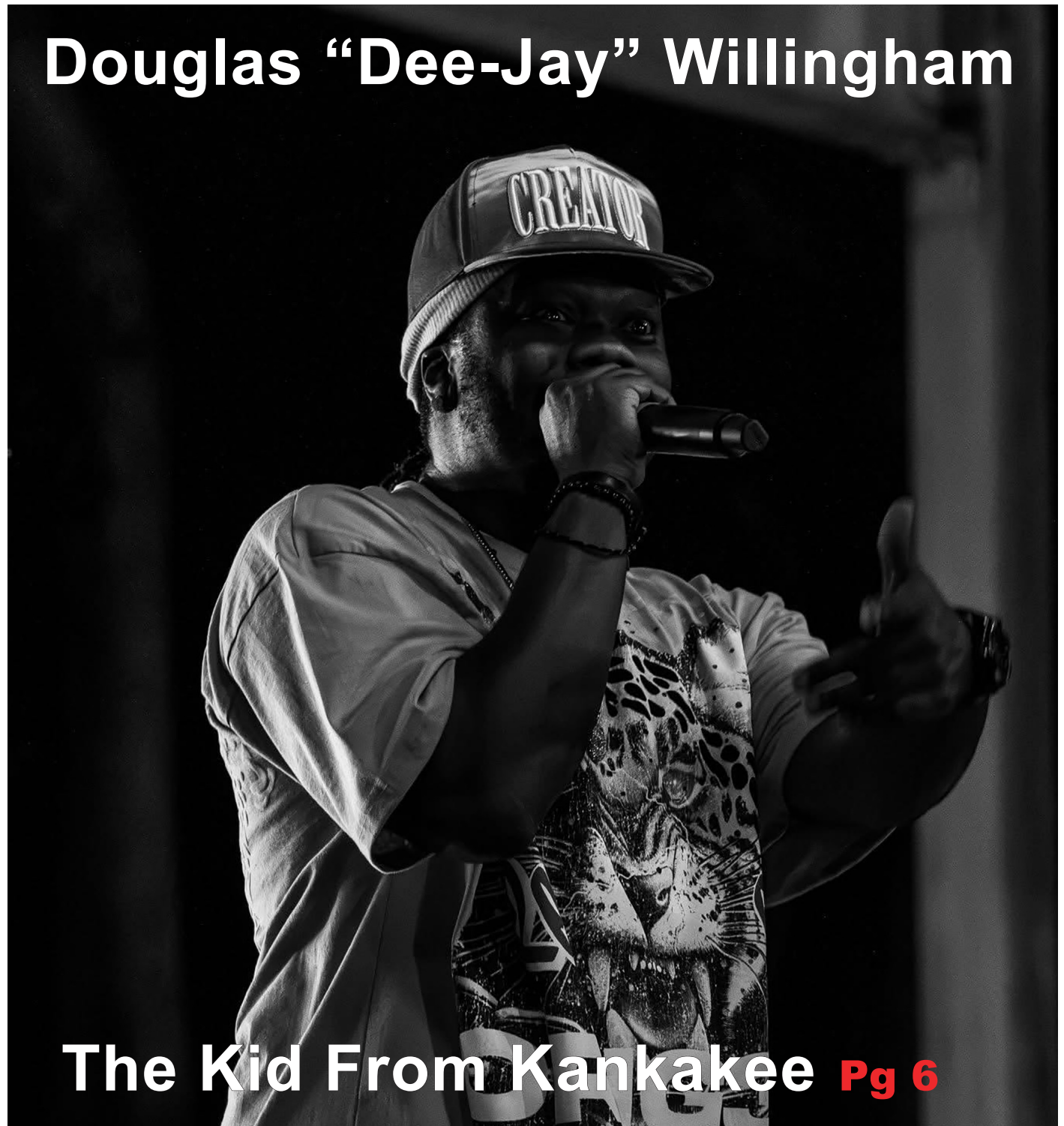


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Douglas “Dee-Jay” Willingham



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VOLUME 3

LOCAL NEWS: Devastating Hail and Storms Leave Lasting Impact on Kankakee County Residents

By Aaron Robinson

On March 10, a dangerous supercell thunderstorm moved through the Kankakee River Valley, producing multiple tornadoes and unusually large hail. The most destructive of these was an EF-3 tornado that tore through southern portions of Kankakee and nearby communities such as Aroma Park.

In total, nearly 500 buildings were damaged, with at least 30 homes completely destroyed in Kankakee County alone. The tornado uprooted trees, tore roofs from houses, and displaced vehicles, leaving entire neighborhoods facing extensive recovery efforts.

Alongside the tornadoes, the storm produced massive hailstones measuring between 3 to 6 inches in diameter, with some potentially setting a new Illinois state record.

Residents reported shattered car windows, destroyed siding, and significant roof damage. In some cases, hailstones as large as grapefruits punched through structures and rendered vehicles unusable.

The storms disrupted nearly every aspect of daily life in Kankakee County:

Power outages left thousands



Hailstorm damage on a silver Sedan

without electricity as downed lines and damaged infrastructure overwhelmed utility crews.

Beyond the physical damage, the storms left many families facing uncertainty. Displaced residents were forced to seek temporary shelter, while others began the long process of rebuilding homes and replacing essential belongings.

Insurance claims surged across the county, and many households found themselves navigating financial strain due to repair costs and lost property.

In the aftermath, local organiza-

tions, volunteers, and relief groups have stepped in to support affected families. Efforts have included distributing food, clothing, and essential supplies, as well as assisting with cleanup and recovery.

Meteorologists warn that conditions remain favorable for additional severe weather across Illinois, including the potential for further hail and strong storms.

Residents are encouraged to stay alert, monitor weather updates, and have emergency plans in place as the region continues through an active storm season.

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COVER PHOTO: Douglas "Dee-Jay" Willingham

INSIGHT NEWS READER

InSight News Reader is more than a newspaper publication, it is a trusted voice for the community, created to inform, uplift, and amplify stories that deserve to be heard while addressing the concerns and needs of the community at large. It also engages with its audience and serves as a dynamic platform for businesses to expand their visibility and connect meaningfully with the communities they serve.

Operating under the umbrella of Robinson Publishing LLC, InSight News Reader is connected to the nationwide magazine, Consciousness Magazine, a respected publication with over 20 years of impact, along with a portfolio of published works that have achieved Amazon bestseller recognition. Together, these platforms reflect a lasting commitment to truth, empowerment, culture, and community advancement.

EXPRESS YOURSELF

What's Your Point?



3

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your Voice - your concern & thoughts

INVESTIGATION - Beneath Kankakee: Exploring the Mystery of the City's Underground Tunnels

By Staff

For generations, stories of hidden tunnels beneath Kankakee have intrigued residents, historians, and urban explorers alike. While some tunnels are well-documented, such as the utility tunnels beneath the former Shapiro Developmental Center, other accounts have fueled speculation about underground passageways beneath downtown buildings, historic businesses, and former industrial sites.

Are these stories rooted in fact, local folklore, or a combination of both?

This investigation seeks to uncover the truth behind Kankakee's underground history by examining historical records, speaking with local historians, city officials, longtime residents, and property owners, and exploring the role that the city's quarrying, industrial development, and institutional campuses may have played in creating underground structures.

Questions to be explored include:

What documented tunnels exist in Kankakee today?

Were tunnels used to transport utilities, goods, or people between buildings?

Are there records of underground passageways connected to former hospitals, businesses, or government buildings?

How did Kankakee's limestone quarry industry influence underground construction?

What local legends and firsthand accounts have persisted through the years?

Are any of these tunnels still accessible, preserved, or in use today?

As Kankakee continues to preserve and celebrate its history, understanding what lies beneath the city may provide a fascinating glimpse into a hidden chapter of the community's past.

Residents with information, photographs, historical documents, or personal stories related to underground tunnels in Kankakee are encouraged to contact InSight News Reader.



Tunnels beneath the Shapiro Developmental Center

Be a voice in the community. Do you have any concerns about your community? Here is your chance to Express Yourself. We want to hear from you. Email contact@insightnewsreader.com or write to P.O. Box 2496, Kankakee, IL 60901

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The InSight News Reader team are proud members of the NAACP.

If you're having concerns or problems in your community contact your Regional or National Headquarters.



NAACP

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Springfield Office

Phone (217) 546-3523
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Email information@iardc.org

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE

Public Notice is hereby given that on May 26, 2026, a certificate was filed in the Office of the County Clerk of Kankakee County, Illinois, setting forth the names and post-office addresses of all persons owning, conducting and transacting the business known as Rollin' Out, LLC, located at 545 S Nelson Ave, Kankakee, IL 60901.

Dated this 26th day of May, A.D. 2026.

Dan Hendrickson
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5

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Hot Topics - What's Trending

LEARNING CORNER

Small Actions, Big Impact

Simple ways young people can help build a better tomorrow.

You don't have to be an adult to make a difference. Small, everyday actions can help our environment, our communities, and our future. What can **YOU** do today?



1. WORD SEARCH

Find the words hidden in the puzzle.

R	E	C	Y	C	L	E	A	R	T	H
E	C	O	F	R	E	N	D	L	Y	N
D	B	U	I	D	C	O	M	M	U	N
U	S	A	V	E	W	A	T	R	R	I
C	L	E	A	N	E	E	R	G	Y	T
E	K	I	N	D	K	S	S	T	O	Y
R	E	S	P	O	N	I	B	L	E	P

WORDS TO FIND:

RECYCLE	EARTH	KINDNESS
SAVE	WATER	RESPONSIBLE
CLEAN	ENERGY	COMMUNITY
BUILD	ECOFRIENDLY	

2. THINK & ANSWER

Answer the questions in the space below.

1. What is one way you can help the environment at home?

2. How can you show kindness in your community?

3. What is a small change you can make that could have a big impact?



Be the change. Inspire others.
Together, we can create a better world!

3. ACTION CHALLENGE

★ Choose one action from the list below and check the box when you complete it!

- Pick up litter in your neighborhood
- Save water while brushing your teeth
- Turn off lights when not in use
- Recycle something at home
- Write a thank-you note to someone
- Plant a flower or a tree



My own idea: _____

DID YOU KNOW?

Turning off the tap while brushing your teeth can save up to 8 gallons of water a day!



The Power of Community: Why Working Together Matters for Youth

Community is important because it brings people together to support, encourage, and help one another. For youth, being part of a positive community can build confidence, create friendships, and provide guidance for the future. Whether it is family, school, sports, church, or neighborhood groups, community teaches young people the value of teamwork, respect, and kindness.

A strong community also helps youth feel safe and connected. When young people know others care about them, they are more likely to make positive choices and work toward their goals. Communities can inspire youth to volunteer, lead, and give back to others in need.

In difficult times, community becomes even more important. People can lean on one another for encouragement and support. By working together, communities become stronger and create better opportunities for everyone.

Every young person has the power to make a difference. Even small acts of kindness, helping a neighbor, or supporting a friend can strengthen a community and inspire others to do the same.

Every action counts—no act is too small! ♥ Keep learning. Keep caring. Keep growing.

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6 Douglas “Dee-Jay” Willingham

The Kid From Kankakee



Douglas “Dee-Jay” Willingham

By Aaron Robinson

For Douglas “Dee-Jay” Willingham, music was never just a hobby. It was destiny.

Long before the lights, performances, tours, and upcoming film roles, there was a 7-year-old boy clutching his very first rap verse, racing to his father for approval. That moment would shape the course of his life forever.

“My dad also rapped, and he was who I looked up to,” Dee-Jay recalled. “When I read my first rap to him and he gave me that yes nod afterward, I knew right then I had something.”

That single nod became fuel for a

lifelong pursuit; one driven by passion, sacrifice, and an unshakable belief in himself.

Today, Dee-Jay is not only building a name in music, but also carving out space in acting and television production. Yet despite expanding into multiple forms of entertainment, the Kankakee native says authenticity remains the foundation of everything he does.

“What I do differently is simply be myself,” he said. “You can’t get more original than that. I never portray someone I’m not.”

In an era where many artists chase trends and viral moments, Dee-Jay’s

approach is rooted in honesty, discipline, and perseverance. Growing up in Kankakee, a city rarely recognized as a major music destination, only strengthened his determination to rise above expectations.

“The environment forced me to do the complete opposite of what the statistics said,” he explained. “I never wanted to be part of the ‘shoulda, coulda, woulda’ category.”

Instead, he committed himself fully to the grind, refusing to allow limitations or lack of recognition to define his future.

While Kankakee may not have historically been viewed as a music powerhouse, Dee-Jay believes the city has always possessed extraordinary talent. He points to influential local acts like Prime Supreme and the legendary Rapper D, his father, as proof that the city’s musical roots run deep.

“If social media existed back then like it does now, Kankakee would’ve definitely been on the map,” he said.

As his career expanded beyond his hometown, Dee-Jay faced new pressures while performing in cities across the country and touring. One of the greatest challenges, he admits, has been battling his own perfectionism.

“I’m huge on the 5 P’s; Proper Preparation Prevents Poor Performance,” he said. “I’m my own biggest critic. Sometimes I put so much pressure on myself mentally because I want every performance to be perfect.”

Still, those struggles have only sharpened his focus. Through years in the entertainment industry, Dee-Jay learned one hard truth: nobody is going to hand success to you.

“You have to go out and get it yourself,” he said. “Even when you think people should help you - family, friends, whoever. At the end of the day, it’s on you.”

That realization transformed the way he approaches both business and life. Now at 35 years old, he says urgency drives him more than ever before.

“The world and time aren’t going to wait on you,” he said. “Somebody else is getting better every day. It’s now or never.”

But beyond fame, accolades, or industry recognition, Dee-Jay says his greatest motivation is family. “I want my

three kids to know their daddy gave it his all,” he said. “I want to inspire them to chase whatever they love the same way.”

His ambitions continue to expand at a rapid pace. Dee-Jay was recently cast in the upcoming film sequel *Out of Darkness 2: Revenge*, set to release on Tubi later this year. In the film, he will portray the character “Twin” alongside a cast that includes Dre “Relentless” Holmes, Makeiva Albritton, Murder Mook, and Crystal The Doll.

At the same time, he is preparing to release a new album titled *KANKA-KING*, while also co-producing and co-starring in a television series called *Bars & Bloodlines* alongside business partner Mic Fort. The series features Dee-Jay in the role of “Reek,” further showcasing his versatility as both an artist and actor.

Despite the growing list of accomplishments, his hunger remains unchanged. “I never gave up,” Willingham said. “I took nothing and made it into something. I didn’t take no for an answer because eventually I was going to get a yes.”

And as he continues to elevate from the streets of Kankakee to larger stages and screens, Dee-Jay Willingham is making one thing crystal clear: the “Kid From Kankakee” is far from finished.

“Hip hop is alive as long as I’m breathing,” he declared.





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What's Poppin'

Entertainment

Arts & Culture - Music - Events and more...

Pembroke Rodeo Celebrates 50 Years of Tradition and Community

By Staff

Thousands of visitors gathered in Pembroke Township last weekend to celebrate a milestone event as the Pembroke Rodeo marked its 50th anniversary with two days of thrilling competition, family entertainment, and community pride. The annual event, held May 23–24, drew spectators from throughout Illinois and neighboring states, continuing a tradition that has become one of the region's most anticipated Memorial Day weekend attractions.

Hosted by Latting Rodeo Productions, the event featured classic rodeo competitions including bull riding, barrel racing, roping events, and bronc riding. Fans filled the stands each afternoon as cowboys and cowgirls showcased their skills in front of enthusiastic crowds. The action-packed performances kept spectators on the edge of their seats while highlighting the athleticism and dedication of rodeo competitors.

Beyond the arena, the rodeo grounds offered a festive atmosphere with food vendors, family activities, and opportunities for community members to reconnect. Children enjoyed the sights and sounds of the rodeo while families spent the holiday weekend celebrating a tradition that has become deeply woven into the fabric of Pembroke Township.

The Pembroke Rodeo has long served as more than just a sporting

event. For decades, it has brought visitors to the area, providing an economic boost for local businesses and showcasing the unique culture and history of Pembroke Township. The 50th anniversary celebration was particularly meaningful as residents reflected on the event's lasting impact and the generations of families who have attended over the years.

Community leaders and longtime attendees noted that the rodeo continues to unite people from diverse backgrounds through a shared appreciation for Western heritage, family entertainment, and community fellowship. Many visitors described the event as a tradition they look forward to every year, with some families attending for multiple generations.

As the final riders exited the arena and another successful rodeo came to a close, organizers expressed gratitude to volunteers, sponsors, competitors, and attendees who helped make the 50th anniversary celebration a memorable success. The strong turnout and community support demonstrated that the Pembroke Rodeo remains a treasured tradition and a proud symbol of Pembroke Township's rich heritage.

With 50 years now in the history books, residents and visitors alike are already looking forward to next year's rodeo and the continuation of a tradition that has become a hallmark event for Kankakee County and the surrounding region.



Bull Rider in Action at Pembroke Rodeo

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Community Highlights:



BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES THROUGH CONNECTION Rhonda Currie's Mission of Service and Youth Empowerment

By Tocarra Eldridge-Robinson

In communities across Illinois, meaningful change often begins with people who are willing to connect others, build partnerships, and invest in future generations. For Rhonda Currie, Fundraising Director for the Illinois Coalition for Community Services, that mission has become both a career and a calling.

A native of Kankakee, Currie's roots in the community run deep. Although she relocated briefly during her youth, she eventually returned permanently in 2013 after attending Eastern Illinois University. Today, her commitment to the area is driven not only by her personal connection to Kankakee, but also by her belief in the power of unity.

"I believe in the power of people coming together with a shared purpose," Currie said. "When we unify in positive ways, we can create meaningful opportunities for youth and future generations."

Currie's passion for youth outreach was solidified early in her professional journey while working with Girl Scouts of Central Illinois, formerly known as Girl Scouts-Green Meadows Council. Through the CU One-to-One Mentoring Program, she was paired with a third-grade student named Anika; an experience that would leave a lasting impact.

"While I had always enjoyed working with youth, that experience truly solidified my passion for outreach and access," Currie explained. "Bringing programs directly to youth at no cost became something I deeply believed in."



Photo of Rhonda Currie

Even after moving away from the Champaign-Urbana area, Currie maintained her connection with Anika throughout high school and into adulthood. Seeing her former mentee now thriving as a parent continues to inspire her dedication to community service and violence prevention efforts.

For the past 13 years, Currie has focused much of her work on violence prevention among youth and young adults in Kankakee County. She believes that providing young people with resources, mentorship, and opportunities can help them envision a brighter future and choose positive paths forward.

As the first-ever Fundraising Director

for the Illinois Coalition for Community Services, Currie faced the challenge of building the role from the ground up. One of the biggest obstacles, she said, has been changing how people view fundraising.

"Not everyone feels comfortable with fundraising or sees it as part of their role," she said. "I've worked to reframe fundraising as relationship-building rather than simply asking for money."

Currie believes impactful fundraising starts with authentic conversations and community engagement. By encouraging others to see themselves as partners in the mission, she has helped foster a more collaborative and supportive approach to

advancing programs that serve youth and families throughout Illinois.

Her work has not gone unnoticed. In 2024, Currie was honored as the inaugural Woman of the Year by Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., Delta Alpha Omicron Zeta Chapter. While grateful for the recognition, she says the true reward lies in the relationships formed and the lives impacted through her efforts.

Looking ahead, Currie hopes to see continued investment in violence prevention initiatives throughout Kankakee County. She emphasizes the importance of supporting grassroots organizations, nonprofits, and frontline workers with sustainable funding, training, and development opportunities.

"Strengthening these areas will help build a more proactive, supportive, and resilient community," she said.

Currie also encourages residents to become involved in the mission of the Illinois Coalition for Community Services through volunteerism, partnerships, and financial support. Donations can be made through the organization's website at www.iccscare.org/donate or by mailing a check to:

Illinois Coalition for Community Services
Attn: Garry Klasing
400 Chatham Road, Suite 201
Springfield, IL 62704

For those interested in local involvement opportunities, community members can connect with Community Youth Services-Youth Resource Advocate Kephren Lee (Kephren@iccscare.org) to learn more about supporting youth and violence prevention efforts in the Kankakee community.

BLACK BOY, BLACK MAN - Stay Alive

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Aaron Robinson

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Current - Latest Happenings

Global Markets Rally on Hopes for Middle East Diplomatic Progress



Global Markets

By Staff

Global financial markets posted gains this week as investors responded positively to signs of potential diplomatic progress in the Middle East, easing concerns over regional instability and its impact on the global economy.

Major stock indexes across Europe, Asia, and North America advanced as reports suggested that international leaders are engaging in renewed diplomatic efforts aimed at reducing tensions in the region. Market analysts noted that investors have become increasingly optimistic that a peaceful resolution could help stabilize global trade and energy markets.

The positive sentiment was reflected in international equities,

with several major exchanges recording notable gains. Investors appeared encouraged by the prospect of reduced geopolitical risks, which have weighed heavily on markets in recent months.

One of the most significant developments has been the decline in oil prices. Crude oil markets have softened as traders anticipate fewer disruptions to energy supplies if diplomatic negotiations continue to progress. Lower oil prices are generally viewed as favorable for consumers and businesses, helping to reduce transportation and production costs while easing inflationary pressures.

Energy markets have remained particularly sensitive to developments in the Middle East due to the region's critical role in global oil production and shipping routes. Any

indication that supply chains may remain uninterrupted has the potential to influence prices worldwide.

Financial experts caution, however, that markets remain vulnerable to sudden shifts in geopolitical conditions. While investor confidence has improved, uncertainty persists, and market volatility could return if negotiations stall or regional tensions escalate.

Despite these concerns, the current market rally highlights the significant influence that geopolitical developments can have on global economic activity. For now, investors are closely monitoring diplomatic efforts, hoping that continued dialogue will support stability in both financial and energy markets.

As the situation evolves, economists and market observers will be watching for further signs of progress that could shape investment trends, commodity prices, and economic outlooks around the world.



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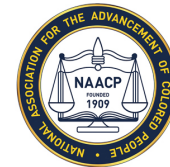
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Still I Rise has received the Kankakee County Chamber of Commerce "Nonprofit of the Year Award" and the "NAACP Presidents Award".



With your contribution and support SIR will continue to make a difference in our community!

To donate, call (815)414-9614 or visit www.Still-iRise.org