

# A look at egg prices, eateries

By DEE-ANN DURBIN  
The Associated Press

It's a chicken-and-egg problem: Restaurants are struggling with record-high U.S. egg prices, but their omelets, scrambles and huevos rancheros may be part of the problem.

Breakfast is booming at U.S. eateries. First Watch, a restaurant chain that serves breakfast, brunch and lunch, nearly quadrupled its locations over the past decade to 570. Eggs Up Grill has 90 restaurants in nine southern states, up from 26 in 2018. Florida-based Another Broken Egg Café celebrated its 100th restaurant last year.

Fast-food chains are also adding more breakfast items. Starbucks, which launched egg bites in 2017, now has a breakfast menu with 12 separate items containing eggs. Wendy's reintroduced breakfast in 2020 and offers 10 items with eggs.

Reviews website Yelp said 6,421 breakfast and brunch businesses opened in the United States last year, 23% more than in 2019.

In normal times, producers could meet the demand for all those eggs. But an ongoing bird flu outbreak, which so far has forced farms to slaughter more than 145 million chickens, turkeys and other birds, is making supplies scarcer and pushing up prices. In January, the average price of eggs in the U.S. hit a record \$4.95 per dozen.

The percentage of eggs that go to U.S. restaurants versus other places, like grocery stores or food manufactur-

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River Hess, right, and Connie Brown rehearse a scene from "Catch Me If You Can," which runs Friday through Sunday at the Iola Community Theatre Warehouse Theatre, 203 S. Jefferson Ave. Below is Paige Schauf-Olson in another scene. REGISTER/RICHARD LUKEN

## 'Catch' frolicking ICT romp

By RICHARD LUKEN  
The Iola Register

The best "whodunit" mysteries keep you on your toes to the end, stories that zig when you expect them to zag, leading viewers to believe they've solved a riddle, only to have the rug pulled unexpectedly.

That happens more than a few times in this mysterious, comical and highly entertaining Iola Community Theatre production of "Catch Me If You Can," which runs Friday through Sunday at the ICT Warehouse Theatre, 203 S. Jefferson Ave.

Tickets sell at the door for \$10 for adults and \$5 for students

Not to be confused with the 2002 movie starring Tom Hanks and Leonardo DiCaprio, "Catch Me If You Can" follows the story of Daniel, a newlywed whose



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## Kennedy confirmed for HHS

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate on Thursday confirmed Robert F. Kennedy Jr. as President Donald Trump's health secretary, putting the prominent vaccine skeptic in control of \$1.7 trillion in federal spending, vaccine recommendations and food safety as well as health insurance programs for roughly half the country.

Nearly all Republicans fell in line behind Trump despite hesitancy over Kennedy views on vaccines, voting 52-48 to elevate the scion of one of America's most storied political — and Democratic — families to secretary of the Health and Human Services Department.



Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

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### Open for business

Though they're still moving in inventory, store manager Dale Lalman says the new PrairieLand facility is open for business. The 25-acre site at the northwest corner of U.S. 169 and Oregon Road is home to the estimated \$14 million John Deere farm implement dealership. The new facility is a massive 64,000 square feet. Ground was broken for the project in December 2023 and by June 2024, significant progress had been made on the construction (pictured at left). Fast forward to Thursday, the empty space now looks more like a store. Many items are in stock and employees are on-hand to assist. Lalman notes that the grand opening hasn't been scheduled yet, but will likely be in March. REGISTER/SARAH HANEY



Vol. 127, No. 82  
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# RFK: Vaccine skeptic earns Senate confirmation for HHS

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ment. Democrats unanimously opposed Kennedy.

Kentucky Sen. Mitch McConnell, who had polio as a child, was the only “no” vote among

Republicans, mirroring his stands against Trump’s picks for the Pentagon chief and director of national intelligence.

“I’m a survivor of childhood polio. In my lifetime, I’ve watched

vaccines save millions of lives from devastating diseases across America and around the world,” McConnell said in a statement afterwards. “I will not condone the re-litigation of proven cures,

and neither will millions of Americans who credit their survival and quality of life to scientific miracles.”

The rest of the GOP, however, has embraced Kennedy’s vision with a directive for the public

health agencies to focus on chronic diseases such as obesity.

“We’ve got to get into the business of making America healthy again,” said Sen. Mike Crapo, R-Idaho, adding that Kennedy will bring a “fresh perspective” to the office.

Kennedy, 71, whose name and family tragedies have put him in the national spotlight since he was a child, has earned a formidable following with his populist and sometimes extreme views on food, chemicals and vaccines.

His audience only grew during the COVID-19 pandemic, when Kennedy devoted much of his time to a nonprofit that sued vaccine makers and harnessed social media campaigns to erode trust in vaccines as well as the government agencies that promote them.

With Trump’s backing, Kennedy insisted he was “uniquely positioned” to revive trust in those public health agencies, which include the Food and Drug Administration, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the National Institutes for Health.

Last week, Sen. Thom Tillis, R-N.C., said he hoped Kennedy “goes wild” in reining in health care costs and improving Americans’ health. But before agreeing to support Kennedy, potential holdout Sen. Bill Cassidy, R-La., a doctor who leads the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, required assurances that Kennedy would not make changes to existing vaccine recommendations.

During Senate hearings, Democrats tried to prod Kennedy to

deny a long-discredited theory that vaccines cause autism. Some lawmakers also raised alarms about Kennedy financially benefiting from changing vaccine guidelines or weakening federal lawsuit protections against vaccine makers.

Kennedy made more than \$850,000 last year from an arrangement referring clients to a law firm that has sued the makers of Gardasil, a human papillomavirus vaccine that protects against cervical cancer. If confirmed as health secretary, he promised to reroute fees collected from the arrangement to his son.

Kennedy will take over the agency in the midst of a massive federal government shakeup, led by billionaire Elon Musk, that has shut off — even if temporarily — billions of taxpayer dollars in public health funding and left thousands of federal workers unsure



Rhi Jordan, left, and Justin Chandlee rehearse a scene from the Iola Community Theatre production of “Catch Me If You Can,” which runs Friday through Saturday. Below, Jesse Hodge is also a part of this comedic mystery. REGISTER/RICHARD LUKEN

## ‘Catch’: ICT show this weekend

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wife, Elizabeth, has disappeared shortly before they’re supposed to camp out on a Labor Day weekend at a remote cottage in the Catskill Mountains.

Daniel is growing concerned, frantic even, to the point he’s notified the police, desperate for information on his wife’s disappearance.

To everyone’s relief, the crisis ends when Elizabeth saunters into the cabin, safe and sound.

But there’s a catch. Daniel claims fraud, insistent he’s never met this woman.

Is he right? Is “Elizabeth” an imposter? If so, why? Or is he simply going crazy?

What follows is a two-hour romp filled with enough twists and turns to make a plate of spaghetti blush, clues and obligatory red herrings brought to life with a talented cast headlined by the incomparable River Hess as Daniel.

Hess, who has entertained ICT audiences for years as often-quirky supporting characters, shines as the focal point this time around as he descends into varying shades of madness. Can he convince someone — anyone — that Elizabeth is not who she claims?

Paige Schauf-Olson, another veteran of the stage, returns to the spotlight after taking time off to direct a pair of recent Community Theatre works.

As Elizabeth, Schauf-Olson shows what audiences have been missing. Loaded with an effervescent charm, quick wit and a disarming smile, Elizabeth leads one to think she knows a wee bit more than she’s letting on. Is she truly Daniel’s wife?

Newcomer Jesse Hodge brings an air of mystery to his character, Father Kelleher, a priest who has helped

Elizabeth find her way back to the cabin and her newly wedded husband. Here’s hoping Hodge becomes a frequent performer at future ICT productions.

Justin Chandlee is certain to draw a chuckle or three as Inspector Levine, equal parts Sherlock Holmes and Inspector Cluseau, tasked with dealing with an increasingly frantic Daniel, fruitlessly trying to convince the others on stage of a vast conspiracy. Does he know more than he’s letting on?

The supporting characters bring everything together in their all-too-brief time on stage.

Connie Brown plays Sidney, a local sandwich shop owner who unwittingly plays a central part in one of the production’s big twists.

Likewise, Tiffany Hurlock and Rhi Jordan are a hoot as they take turns playing the lecherous Everett Parker, Daniels’ boss and owner of the cabin in which the play is situated, and his wife — we think. Jordan and Hurlock will alternate roles on each night of the play, one playing Everett one night, and Mrs. Parker the next.

DIRECTOR Nic Olson, in his show notes, explains the impetus to bringing “Catch Me If You Can” to the ICT stage, after watching a recent production in Kansas City.

“As soon as I saw it, I knew we needed to put it on in Iola,” he wrote. “A small cast, simple set with genuine laughs and drama; this show was built for us.”

Turns out he was right ... but about 50 years too late.

This same production delighted local audiences in 1974, with the legendary Mary Martin as Elizabeth and Richard Spencer as Inspector Levine.

As Olson so accurately notes, this year’s ren-



dition should find its niche in the hallowed ICT venue.

“We are now connected — the original cast and our cast — through time,” Olson wrote. “These same characters that once stood on stage under the ICT banner are back and, just like 50

years ago, they’re larger than life and ready to do what the Iola Community Theatre does best: Put on one heck of a show.”

“CATCH Me if You can” runs at 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday and 2 p.m. Sunday. Catch it. If you can.

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## Wrong date

Allen Community College’s groundbreaking ceremony for the Iola campus’s new Career and Technology Education facility will be at 4 p.m. March 5.

An article in Thursday’s Register had the incorrect date.

We regret the error.

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