THE GAZETTE-DEMOCRAT

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Thursday, November 5, 2026 | **Anna, Illinois** | **$1.00** | **Volume 179, Number 45**

Anna, Jonesboro host Trail of Treats



Trick-or-treating along South Main Street in Downtown Anna

The sixth annual Halloween season Trail of Treats was held from 4 to 6 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 24, in Anna and Jonesboro. Treats were handed out to the many visitors who came to the Main Street and Davie Street areas in Anna and to the area on and around the square in Jonesboro. The weather was warm and sunny for the big day.



Trick-or-treating on the Jonesboro Square.

SIU and Mizzou collaborate on $300k project to monitor soybean drought stress with drones, AI

BY BROOKE KELTNER
SIU UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS

Illinois is the number one producer of soybeans in the United States, but farmers across the state face a big issue when it comes to maintaining their crops — drought. Periods with little to no rain can hamper growth or, worse yet, kill the plant.

Researchers at Southern Illinois University Carbondale are partnering with the University of Missouri (Mizzou) on a $300,000 grant from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture. Together, the universities are exploring how artificial intelligence (AI) and drone-based imaging technologies can help monitor drought stress in soybean crops. The collaboration uses a multidisciplinary approach with expertise in AI, engineering and agriculture for a common goal — supporting farmers.

"Our long-term goal is to make AI-based agricultural technologies more accessible and practical for farmers," said Chao Lu, the professor leading the research for SIU. "Managing water resources is an important part of soybean production."

Drying up profits

Across Illinois, 43,000 soybean farmers rely on making a profit from their crops to feed and support their families, according to the Illinois Soybean Association. The impact is much larger when considering soybean farmers throughout the Midwest, who also depend on a successful harvest as part of their income. However, drought can lead to water stress, causing the plant to show visible signs of damage such as leaf wilting, discoloration or changes in leaf shape. Plant loss affects yield and the farmer's profit.

Typically, farmers identify signs of water stress by physically seeing changes in plants while spending time in their fields. Often, with hundreds or thousands of acres to maintain, this approach can be time consuming, and farmers can discover damaged plants when they're past the point of saving.

"While direct field observation provides valuable information, it can be difficult to apply consistently across large areas," said Lu, a professor of electrical, computer and biomedical engineering. "The condition of soybean plants may also vary within the same field, making regular monitoring more challenging."

A new approach

Now, researchers are investigating whether drone imaging and AI analysis can complement traditional field observations. SIU researchers use drone-based imagery of soybean fields to collect crop information. And they are developing AI models to assess different levels of soybean wilting stress.

But it's easier said than done. There are many challenges when it comes to creating reliable AI models, especially when agricultural conditions are less predictable than a laboratory.

"Soybean fields can vary considerably in soil conditions, weather, lighting, and plant growth," Lu said. "Even within the same field, plants may experience different conditions, which can affect their appearance and growth patterns. These variations create challenges for AI-based analysis."

Another challenge includes collecting high-quality data as AI model development depends on reliable information for training and evaluation. Collecting agricultural data often requires considerable fieldwork, and preparing reference data can involve substantial time and effort from agricultural experts, Lu said.

Educational and outreach opportunities

Currently, two SIU graduate students are hoping to overcome some of those technology challenges by contributing to AI model development and agriculture data analysis. Lu believes this academic experience is two-fold. One, the students can apply their knowledge of computing to real-word agriculture problems, and two, they're able to take an interdisciplinary approach, especially collaborating with Mizzou researchers who are providing expertise on the practical challenges of soybean farming.

"Engineering and agricultural research often approach problems from different perspectives," Lu said. "By working with agricultural researchers, engineering students can gain a better understanding of the challenges faced in agricultural environments and how technical approaches may contribute to possible solutions."

The grant also supports Lu and his graduate students attending outreach events to share their research and introduce AI technologies to the public, including agricultural communities.

Continuous improvement

Going forward, there's still much work to be done by SIU and Mizzou together as the grant continues through June 30, 2027. The universities plan to continue developing and evaluating AI models under a broader range of agricultural conditions..

"One important direction is to examine how the models perform when field conditions differ from those represented in the existing research data," Lu said. "This will help us better understand their strengths and limitations and identify areas where further improvements may be needed."

The team's also interested in exploring how information form drone imagery, soil measurements and weather data can complement one another as well as ways to make these tools affordable for the masses if the technology can be developed.

JONESBORO FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

On November 1, guest speaker, Bro. Carl Dillow, brought the message during morning worship. His message continued his five-part series of statements from an 1860 message from Charles Spurgeon, "What is a Healthy Church?" Last time Bro. Dillow was with us, he addressed the first point, Purity of Life in the Members of the Church. Today, he spoke on the early church and the need for Sound Doctrine. God's Word must be quoted, and the basis for uncorrupted and true biblical teaching. All of God's word must be preached because God's word changes things. The truth must be spoken, no matter who it offends, and there must be a call to bring people to Jesus. His text was found in the second chapter of the book of Acts, also in the first chapter of 2nd Timothy, both in the New Testament.

Music Director, Dee Rose, led the worship accompanied by Debbie York on the piano, and the Praise Team: Rodger Goines, Larry Keller, Sharon Morgan, Debbie York. Connor Benbrook sang a special song, "In Christ Alone."

Our service was sent via transmitter station 87.9 FM for those who want to listen via the radio. The service was also live streamed on Facebook, so if you missed it, you still have an opportunity to view it. Please check our Facebook page, Jonesboro FBC, for the latest videos and info on church events.

This week's activities include our Men and Ladies Bible Studies on Monday, November 2, at 6 p.m. Men meet at the church, ladies will meet at the home of Sheila Aldridge. Senior Adult group, Living Longer and Loving It, "LLL," will meet Tuesday, November 3, at 11 a.m. Our children's program, "Dig In," will meet Wednesday, November 4, from 6-8 p.m. for children ages 3 through 6th grade. There will be a baby shower to bless Nick and Jacqueline Rose on Saturday, November 7.

Happy birthday to Tom Smith, born November 3; Erica Goines, November 7 and Judy Hancock, November 8.

Currently, our regular schedule for worship at Jonesboro First Baptist includes Sunday School classes on Sundays at 9 a.m.; Sunday morning worship at 10 a.m.; Sunday evening worship at 6 p.m. Youth for 6th-12th grades meet also on Sundays at 6 p.m. and Wednesdays from 6-8 p.m. Both our Dig-In Children's program and our Adult Prayer Meeting and Bible Study meets on Wednesdays at 6:00 p.m. All are invited to attend.

ANNA CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

Loving as Jesus Loved…..Giving as Jesus Gave…..Ephesians 5:25

NOVEMBER 1, 2026

The morning worship service was held at 10:35 a.m. on November 1, 2026. Announcements were given by Jessica Elkins. The worship service was led by Pastor Wright and the worship team.

The message "The Book of Ruth - Make Room for What God Is Growing" was brought by Pastor Wright from Ruth 1–4 sharing that God can use everyday faithfulness, generous hearts, and courageous steps to bring new possibilities. Ruth's story points us to Jesus, our Redeemer.

Celebrating a birthday this week is: 2nd Lea Wright

SUNDAY – NOVEMBER 8, 2026

Breakfast - 9:00 a.m.

Sunday School - 9:30 a.m.

Morning Worship Service 10:35 a.m.

No Evening Service

WEDNESDAY – NOVEMBER 11, 2026

Wednesday Night Service will be held at 6:30 p.m. in the sanctuary

Youth Group in the Fellowship Hall at 6:30 p.m.

SUNDAY – NOVEMBER 15, 2026

Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes are due.

Memorial Roll Certificate Service for Michael Smith at 10:35 a.m.

You may contact the church by calling the church office at 618-833-6702 and leaving a message if necessary or by calling Pastor Wright at 618-534-7103

CAMP GROUND CHURCH

The sermon November 1 was "A Blessed Reunion, part 2"; Bro. Easton's chosen scripture selection was Acts 2:1-13. This scripture is a summary of the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the followers of Christ and the responses of those around them.

Just before Jesus returned to Heaven, He told His disciples to remain in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit came upon them. In the days that followed, the believers stayed together in one place, patiently waiting, and in continuing prayer.

On the day of Pentecost, as they were praying, tongues of fire" rested on them and they were filled with the Holy Spirit. The fire of the Holy Spirt is like a controlled burn that clears out that which hinders growth. The Holy Spirit frees us from the forces of earth and clears that which hinders our growth as Christians.

The Holy Spirit caused the disciples and those gathered with them to speak in the languages of all the Jews from around the known world who were gathered in Jerusalem for Pentecost. This speaking in tongues had a specific purpose: to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The crowd was amazed, perplexed, and asked what this meant. It was a chance for them to hear the Gospel, so that they might believe. Many accepted Christ as their saving Messiah. This was the beginning of the Christian Church.

Unfortunately, some made fun and rejected all that the Gospel offered.

Aldi and Vodra Gerard took up the tithes and offerings. Our lead elder for November is Rachael Bonner.

Having birthdays the past week have been Gage Roach the 27th, Justin Bonner the 31st, Bradley Easton November 2, and Teresa Rogers the 3rd.

Congratulations to Rodney and LaDonna Jean Miller whose wedding anniversary was Sunday, the 1st.

The congregation enjoyed a chili/soup, and finger foods fall fellowship October 30 which was a celebration of Bro. Bradley and Amber Easton's 4th year with us, and Pastor Appreciation. The Eastons were given a card and monetary gift as well as a special cake for the evening's dessert. The younger ones, and some not so young, also enjoyed the bonfire and s'mores.

Congratulations to Connor and Caliope Pind, Jonesboro School, and Reed Crane, Anna Junior High for achieving Honor Roll for first quarter this school year.

Congratulations to Vodra and Aldi Gerard who received multiple awards/patches during the recent Scout Court of Honor.

We invite you to join us each and every Sunday as we gather to study and Worship. At 9:15, we enjoy coffee and fellowship preceding Bible Study at 9:30 followed by Worship at 10:30. We are located at the intersection of Camp Ground Road and Tunnel Lane east of Anna, north of Route 146.

UNION COUNTY WEATHER REVIEW

Temperatures for the period of Oct. 19-25 in the Union County area ranged from a high of 78 degrees to a low of 37. No precipitation was recorded.

Following are highlights for the period as recorded by local weather observer Dana Cross near Jonesboro:

Monday, Oct. 19: high 72, low 37.

Tuesday, Oct. 20: high 74, low 40.

Wednesday, Oct. 21: high 76, low 40.

Thursday, Oct. 22: high 77, low 42.

Friday, Oct. 23: high 75, low 42.

Saturday, Oct. 24: high 78, low 41.

Sunday, Oct. 25: high 78, low 43.

Drought conditions worsen

Drought conditions worsened in the Southern Illinois area at the end of October.

An Oct. 29 update from the U.S. Drought Monitor showed that western Union and Williamson counties and all of Jackson County were experiencing severe drought conditions.

Moderate drought conditions were reported in eastern Union and Williamson counties, all of Johnson County, most of Alexander and Pulaski counties and a small part of northern Massac County.

Abnormally dry conditions were reported in extreme southern Alexander and Pulaski counties and most of Massac County.

The forecast from the National Weather Service office in Paducah was calling for a chance of light rain late last Saturday evening through Sunday. Additional showers were expected this week.

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Hebrews 12

The Chastening of the Lord

121 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

4 In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. 5 And have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses his son? It says, "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, 6 because the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son."[1] 7 Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? 8 If you are not disciplined-and everyone undergoes discipline-then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all. 9 Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live! 10 They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness. 11 No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

Warning against Rejecting God's Grace

12 Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. 13 "Make level paths for your feet,"[2] so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed. 14 Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. 15 See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many. 16 See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son. 17 Afterward, as you know, when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected. Even though he sought the blessing with tears, he could not change what he had done.

18 You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm; 19 to a trumpet blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them, 20 because they could not bear what was commanded: "If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned to death."[3] 21 The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, "I am trembling with fear."[4] 22 But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, 23 to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the Judge of all, to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, 24 to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. 25 See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven? 26 At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens."[5] 27 The words "once more" indicate the removing of what can be shaken-that is, created things-so that what cannot be shaken may remain. 28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, 29 for our "God is a consuming fire."[6]

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NEWS FROM VIENNA, ILLINOIS



ISBE Announces Exemplary Status for Vienna High

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has announced that Vienna High School has achieved the highest rank on the Illinois School Report Card, which is Exemplary. This achievement is in addition to Vienna also being ranked in the highest tier on the 5 Essential Survey, Well-Organized, with designations of strong in all five areas. The Illinois School Report Card and the 5 Essentials are the two tools that are utilized in Illinois to measure school success and federal accountability.

"Earning this designation is something our entire school community can take pride in. It represents the commitment our teachers and staff bring to their calling and the effort our students put into their education in cooperation with parents and a community that makes education a priority. We're excited to celebrate this accomplishment together and recognize the people who helped make it possible," said Principal John Giffin.

"Our team is continuously working on school improvement and has made systemic and intentional gains. These efforts have been continuously proven by the data. We are yet again celebrating this year's designation on the Report Card, and at the same time we are forging ahead to continue overall school improvement," noted Dr. Joshua W. Stafford, superintendent.

Stafford went on to explain, "While it is notable that Vienna has the highest rank on both tools the state uses to measure schools, there are so many other successes that our students and families celebrate through each school year. From over 90% of students earning college credit prior to high school graduation to 100% of students having a meaningful plan for post high school success to our Cross Country Team recently winning the IHSA 1A Regional Championship, Eagles are winners! And above all of those accomplishments Eagles are models of care, character, and compassion as demonstrated by days in which the students body has recently donned pink and yellow attire to support fellow students battling cancer along with numerous other actions."

Vienna High School also has two of its five feeder schools earning Exemplary, which includes Cypress and New Simpson Hill School, along with Dongola reaching Approaching Exemplary.

Only 4 other high schools out of the southernmost 52, covering 21 counties in Illinois, achieved Exemplary. In Regional Office of Education #21 Vienna and Carterville were the only two high school to earn Exemplary.

You can review the Illinois School Report Card at https://www.illinoisreportcard.com/. You can learn more about Vienna High School at www.viennahs.com/didyouknow.

Vienna High will host a school-wide celebration on Monday, November 2, starting with a special lunch at 11:45 a.m. and assembly to follow.

New Simpson Hill Blood Drive

New Simpson Hill District 32 will be hosting a Blood Drive for the American Red Cross on Friday, November 13, 2026 from 12:30-5:30pm in the school gymnasium. The theme this year is Be a Lifesaver, Save Lives. To schedule an appointment, call 618-658-8536 to speak with Heather Dailey. Walk-ins are welcome.

Vienna Receives USDA Farm to School Grant to Support Child Nutrition

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced that Vienna High School has been selected to receive the Patrick Leahy Farm to School Grantee. This $469,770 grant will support the Southernmost Illinois Farm to School Network: Growing Connections from Farm to Fork. The grant proposal was authored by Phillip Hosfeldt, Vienna's Dean of System Programs/Chief Strategy Officer and Dr. Evan Coulson, Vienna's Interim Community Schooling Director. The project will establish sustainable farm-to-cafeteria pipelines while developing the next generation of agricultural producers through an expanded outdoor learning

Contined on page 8

NEWS FROM HERE AND THERE By Dixie Terry

Welcome November!

This month was named for the Latin word, "novem," which means seven, since this was the seventh month on the ancient Roman calendar.

Daylight Savings Time has ended for this year. . Did you fall back?

Two important holidays wil be observed this month, Veterans Day on Nov.11 and Thanksiving on Nov. 26.

The Eagle House Ministries will once again provide a free Thanksgiving feast at noon on Thanksgiving day. Volunteers from different denominations will prepare and serve the meal. Call 618-658-0099 to have meals delivered or eat in-house at the location on State Route 37, north of Buncombe.

The "Rekindling the Spirit Youth Rally" will be held on Wednesday, Nov. 18, with food served at 6:30, followed by the worship service. All area youth and their grownups are welcome!

On Friday, Nov. 5 a Caregiver Retreat will be held at 10am-2pm at the Cornerstone Church in Marion. Call 618-993-9138, ext, 67920, to register. This is a recognition of caregivers who care for a patient without pay. This is free and will include a luncheon, door prizes and a speaker.

The "Merry and Bright Holiday Market" will be held on Nov. 7, at 10am, in The Pavilion of Marion.

Johnson County deer season harvest numbered 54, compared to 42 last year. The state youth harvest was 4,852. And, there ae still plenty more out there!

The Daniel Chapman Chapter National Society Daughters of the American Revolution will hold a wreath laying service on Nov. 3 at 11:30 am at the Vienna Fraternal Cemetery, to recognize their 117th anniversary. A luncheon will follow for members at a local eatery.

Seen on Facebook was our great-granddaughter, Belle, all dressed up for homecoming, as a freshman at her high school in Maine.

You are needed to donate at the American Red Cross Blood Drive on Monday, Nov. 16, at noon-6pm at the Fellowship Baptist Church in Vienna. The Pleasant Ridge Center will provide desserts and the Vienna Diner will donate the door prize. Walk-ins are welcomed!

Looking Back! From the Nov. 13, 1991, Goreville Gazette comes: "Just when we were beginning to enjoy the fall weather, after a long, hot summer, the rains came, followed by frigid weather and then snow. What happened to Indian summer?" Let's hope that history doesnt repeat this!

Vienna High School will provide an after-school art program each Tuesday, Nov. 3-Dec. 8, 3-4pm, in the art room. Call the school for more information.

November offers some special days for these folks! Happy Birthday to: Nov. 2--Jessica Berry, Allison Bean, Aaron Pritchettt, Scott Moake! Nov. 3--Emily Johnson! Nov. 4--Paula Evetts, Micah Moss! Nov. 5--Sue Hancock, Chris Bennett, Sue Webb! Nov. 6--Dawn Ragain, Chance Miles, Jeff Fox, Dustin Fox! May you all have many more!

A belated birthday wish goes to Jack Dunker of Cache River Basin Winery, who turned 95 on Oct. 23 and celebrated with his sister, Mary Jane Edmonds.

Congratulations to these couples who are celebrating their wedding anniversary! Kelly and Sheila Harper on Nov. 3! Alan and Linda Kirby on Nov. 3! Justin and Jennifer Mount on Nov. 6!

The Johnson County Women's Club will meet on Friday, Nov. 6 at 1:30pm at Tio's Taqueria Mexican Restaurant. The club welcomes new members to join them. The program will be on "Gardeing for Pollinators."

Give a gift of family history, a membership to the Johnson County Genealogical and Historical Society, a perfect birthday or Christmas gift for a history buff. Receive a monthly newsletter featuring local history stories. Send a check for $20 to JCGHS, PO Box 1207, Vienna, 62995.

Volunteers at the Goreville Ministerial Alliance Thrift Shop on Nov. 3-5-7 will be members of the Lake of Egypt Christian Church. Shopping hours are 9an-4pm on Tuesday and Thursday and 9am-noon on Saturday.

Hungry? PAST of Union County will be hosting a soup and chili supper on Friday, Nov. 6, at 5-7pm at St. Anne's Church. There will be a dessert auction as well. Admission is $8 for adults and $2 for kiddies.

Wish I could be there!

True Vine of the Vienna United Methodist Church will be providing free meals on Saturday, Nov. 14, at 4:30-5:30pm. Drive through the back entrance parking lot or enjoy a home delivery by calling 618-926-1468 and leaving a message. The menu will include turkey, mashed potatoes, stuffing, gravy, corn, green beans, rolls, and dessert. This is free!

Mark your calendar for The Live Nativity to be presented on Dec. 6 at 5:30-8pm at the Vienna City Park. There will be free food and live music also. Celebrate the birth of Christ under thr stars. This is sposored by Eagle House Ministries and local churches.

The Faith Alive Thrift Shop, located on the Vienna Square, welcomes one and all to stop in for a shopping spree. Their hours are Thursday and Friday at 9am-3pm and Saturday, 9am-noon.

Members of the Lake of Egypt Association of Property Owners (LEAPO) continue their project off "Adopt-A-Highway" in the lake community. We continue to wonder who are these slobs who throw their trash out their car windows!

The River-to-River Trail Society is offering another trail adventure, this one at the Crest Trsil of Saline County. Meet at 10am at the Tecumseh Statue near Glen Jones Lake on Saturday, Nov. 7. Call 618-926-3250 for more information. This is free!

Your news is welcomed for this column. Call 618-422-2086 or email to dixieterry85@yahoo.com.

Enjoy the remainder of the week and all that November has to offer!

Rural Health Inc. hosts Night of the Living Health Fair



Rural Health Inc. hosted its fifth annual Night of the Living Health Fair on Friday evening, Oct. 23. The Halloween season event took place at Rural Health Inc.'s health center in Anna. The theme for Night of the Living Health Fair was "Movie Monsters and TV Terrors." Organizers expected as many as 250 children to attend the event, which featured trick-or-treating with local healthcare providers, playing games and learning about the many healthcare services and programs available in Southern Illinois. A Health Resources and Services Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, financial award provided 100% of the costs for the event.

Bat Night presented in Jonesboro



Bat Night was presented Friday evening, Oct. 23, at the Lincoln Memorial Picnic Grounds in Jonesboro. The U.S. Forest Service/Shawnee National Forest, Friends of the Shawnee National Forest and other community partners hosted the event. Bat Night sponsors, recognized for their contributions, included Boy Scout Troop 7044, the City of Jonesboro, the Friends of the Shawnee National Forest, the Southern Illinois University Carbondale Wildlife Department, Stinson Memorial Public Library in Anna and University of Illinois Extension. Visitors had an opportunity to learn about the bats of Illinois. Kids could earn junior wildlife biologist certificates at a bat cave and see tools which are used to monitor bats. The bat cave was set up in a gazebo at the picnic grounds. Bat Night also offered crafts, a bat story walk and refreshments.

Food donations still needed

Anna School District 37 is welcoming donations of nonperishable food items. The donations will help the district's families with weekend meals for students. Items which are beingcollected include: Canned vegetables, fruits, pasta, meat or soup. Macaroni and cheese cups/boxes and ramen. Non-perishable breakfast items. Peanut butter, saltine crackers, graham crackers. Fruitsnacks, microwave popcorn, granola bars, pretzels. Easy to prepare boxed meals.

Items can be dropped off at Davie Jr. High, 301 S. Green Street.

NEWS NOTES

Items of interest from throughout Union County, from social media and beyond

BY GEOF SKINNER

Veterans Day will be observed on Wednesday, Nov. 11. Locally, a Veterans Day parade is planned on Nov. 11 in Anna.

***

Thank you to all of the veterans in Union County who have served the nation. Gratitude also goes out to the families of our veterans.

***

Shawnee School District 84 in Wolf Lake is planning to host an assembly in honor of Veterans Day at 1 p.m. on Nov. 10. The assembly will be in the junior-senior high school gymnasium.

***

Cobden American Legion Post 259 and its Auxiliary plan to serve a community breakfast on Saturday, Nov. 7. Serving is planned from 8 to 10 a.m. in the parish hall at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Cobden.

***

A U.S. Marine Corps birthday celebration is planned Tuesday, Nov. 10, at the Veterans of Foreign Wars Carroll P. Foster Post No. 3455 of Anna. The celebration begins at 5 p.m. at the post, which is located at 70 VFW Ln., just off old U.S. Route 51 between Anna and Cobden. A cake cutting and karaoke are planned; finger foods will be available.

***

National First Responders Day was observed Wednesday, Oct. 28. The day honored those who protect and answer the call to serve the nation's communities, including police and EMS, fire department and dispatch personnel.

***

The Union County Sheriff's Office is planning to have a food drive from 9 a.m. to noon Nov. 7 at the Kroger store in Anna.

***

Due to the production schedule for the paper, local results from Tuesday's general election were not yet available. The plan is to have the results in an upcoming paper.

***

The Village of Cobden has received major funding support from USDA Rural Development for a water well project. More on this to come.

***

Community members continue to voice their opposition to the use of Flock surveillance cameras. Two persons shared their concerns at an Oct. 23 meeting of the Union County Board of Commissioners. The meeting was at the county courthouse in Jonesboro. Both persons urged county officials to remove the cameras.

***

The City of Anna is hoping to start work soon on a new website.

***

Tom Smith has been appointed to fill a vacancy on the City of Anna's zoning board of appeals.

***

The Anna-Jonesboro Community High School National Society, the Student Services Department and The Comfort Closet are conducting a food drive which started Nov. 2 and continues through Nov. 6. Donations of breakfast items, snacks, pop-top canned goods, ramen noodles, soups and shelf-stables meals are welcomed. The donations will help to stock the Comfort Closet for students in need at the school. Community members can drop off donations at the principal's office at the school.

***

Congratulations to the 2026 A-JCHS girls and boys cross country teams. The girls won their fifth straight IHSA regional championship. The boys finished fourth at the regional. Both teams advanced to sectional competition.

***

A-JCHS senior Reese Lofton has won back-to-back juvenile 13-17 years old specialty action world grand championships at the 2025 and 2026 Racking Horse World Celebration held in Shelbyville, Tenn. Reese's horse, I Am Hooked, is a 7-year-old gelding owned by Reese and trained by Campbell Stables in Cullman, Ala.

***

The A-JCHS Beta Club is planning to host a Trivia Night on Nov. 6. Doors open at 6 p.m. in the school cafeteria. Trivia starts at 6:30 p.m.

***

The Cobden School District is hosting a food drive through the morning of Nov. 18. Thanksgiving items, boxed cereal and canned protein (such as Spam, chicken and tuna) are particularly welcomed. Donations will be divided between the Cobden Elementary School food pantry and Jesus Es El Señor.

***

The Cobden Elementary School food pantry is planning to serve a community Thanksgiving meal on Thanksgiving Day, Thursday, Nov. 26. Serving will be from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the school's cafeteria.

***

State officials have announced the 2026 Back-to-School Sales Tax Holiday provided an estimated $11.4 million in savings for Illinois families, exceeding the $10 million savings estimate. The tax holiday, held Aug. 7-16, reduced the state sales tax rate on clothing, footwear and school supplies. Approximately 2,284 retailers sold an estimated $229.3 million in qualifying items during that period. The reduced rate applied to purchases made both in stores and online.

Lick Creek School fall fest planned

Lick Creek School is planning to host a Fall Festival on Saturday, Nov. 7. The annual PTO fundraiser will be from 3 to 8 p.m. Funds which are raised at the festival will be used for classroom needs, field trips, family events and many other activities.

Festival highlights include a haunted bus barn from 3 to 6 p.m.; a chance to kiss a mystery animal to help support Teacher Appreciation Week; games; a car smash; a fall photo booth; a "Lick Creek Jail" presented by the Lick Creek FFA; and face painting. Silent and live auctions are planned, as are a bake off, inflatables and a basket raffle.

Food will be served. The menu includes barbeque or fish dinners for $12. All dinners come with two sides, dessert and a drink. Barbeque sandwiches will be available for $4.

Christmas Shop set to open in Cobden Nov. 7

Union County Historical and Genealogy Society board member Darryl Parks stands among a collection of nutcrackers that will be sold at the society's upcoming Christmas Shop. The Shop is scheduled to open at 9 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 7. The Christmas Shop is located in the Union County Museum building in the downtown Cobden area. The shop, which will offer a variety of holiday decorations, is a major fundraiser for the society.





PHOTO PROVIDED

Union County Historical & Genealogy Society board member, Darryl Parks, posing with a collection of nutcrackers that will be sold at the Society's Christmas Shop.



Alto Pass Veterans Day Ceremony

The Alto Pass Area Veterans Memorial Organization is holding a Veterans Day ceremony on Saturday, November 7th at 11:00 am in downtown Alto Pass at the Veterans Memorial. The ceremony is to honor the memory of area Veterans including those whose names have recently been engraved on the Memorial Wall. This dedication will include Dale L. Toler, Terrell T. J. Johnson, Donald R. Gee and Floyd John Trexler. The ceremony will include a three-volley salute.

The Alto Pass Area Veterans Memorial group is responsible for creating and maintaining the Alto Pass Veterans Memorial that honors U.S. military veterans who have passed away and are from the Alto Pass area. Veterans from the Alto Pass area are encouraged to become members. Donations are always appreciated.

Salute to Veterans at Vienna High

Vienna High School Student Council is hosting the annual Veteran's Day flag raising program which will be on the front lawn (main gym if inclement weather) on Tuesday, November 10th, from 1pm-2pm.

This year's featured speaker will be United States Army Illinois National Guard Veteran and current Vienna High History and Driver's Education Instructor, Brandon McKinney. Mr. McKinney served for 9 years in the Army Guard and completed service in 2010 at the rank of Sergeant E5.

All community members are invited to attend the program and especially Veterans are encouraged to attend. If you are a Veteran who will be unable to attend, the students wish to honor you by reading your name and branch of service. Veterans and or others wishing to recognize a Veteran that they know can complete the below form at the link provided.



Veterans Day parade set in Anna

A Veterans Day parade is planned Wednesday, Nov. 11, in Anna. The parade is sponsored by Veterans of Foreign Wars Carroll P. Foster Post 3455 of Anna. The parade steps off at 11 a.m. on a route through the downtown Anna area.

The theme for this year's parade is "Honoring All Who Served." Businesses, organizations, school bands and clubs, local clubs and groups have been invited to take part in the parade.

The Anna VFW post is very proud of its Veterans Day parade. The Anna event is the only parade in Southern Illinois which continues to be held on Veterans Day, which is observed each year on Nov. 11.

There will be complimentary chili and hot dogs served in the VFW hall to parade participants immediately following the parade. Certificates will be distributed to winning entries at that time as well.

Arts council to salute veterans, service members

Shawnee Hills Arts Council is planning to host an annual salute to veterans and active duty service members.

Veterans and active duty service members will be honored with a dinner and show which are planned Monday evening, Nov. 9, at the arts council, 117 W. Davie St. in Anna. The evening begins at 6 p.m.

Dinner will be catered by The Kitchen on Lafayette. The evening will feature Chris Egelston's magic show.

Those who want to attend are asked to RSVP by Nov. 6 by calling or texting Zack at 309-826-6888 or by sending an email to zj.rowatt@gmail.com. Everyone needs a ticket. Veterans and active duty service members are free. All others are asked to make a $15 donation.

P.A.S.T. NEWS: FALL 2026

Board members of P.A.S.T. of Union County met Tuesday, Oct. 27, 2026 for a regular business meeting. Present were thirteen board members, one "Friend of PAST" and one guest. Two board members are currently ill, one is in the hospital, and two had prior obligations. Board members approved the Sept. 28, 2026 minutes and Sep. 30, 2026 treasurer's report.

Various committee reports were heard in regards to weddings at St. Anne's Church this fall, Color-Fest activities in Jonesboro, various fundraising endeavors, work on grant applications, and the outcome of a series of recent talks. Also discussed was the conversion of an outbuilding as a research area to house recent acquisitions from the Gathering Place. A "Thank You" card was received from the family of the late Martha Ann Webb in acknowledgment of our sympathies. Information was shared on the contents of the Jonesboro Quarterly received via mail, a flyer was presented on a program by Bob Swenson on the Rivers Confluences at the Stinson Library on Nov. 13 and a reminder of Darrel Dexter's event at John A. Logan Museum on Halloween discussing Entertaining Obituaries. Board members, again, wish to thank Darrel Dexter, Mike and Marilyn Meisenheimer who graciously filled in for Brian Bailey, and Bryan Crain for the creative and informative "Spooky Talks" in October. At the conclusion of the meeting, Patricia Moehring joined P.A.S.T. as a new "friend" and we are blessed to have her support.

In upcoming events, details were discussed in regards to the Nov. 6 Soup and Chili Supper with Dessert Auction, held 5 p.m. at St. Anne's Historic Church. The cost is $8 per adult, $2 per child.

Also discussed were the Holiday Luncheons whose theme this year is Icicles. Inspire. Imagination. Dates are Dec. 3, 4, 5, 10, 11 and 12. The meal will consist of Beef Brisket Au Jus, vegetable medley casserole, Heritage House salad, dinner roll, and dessert of ice cream and cookies. Cost is $25 per person and reservations are required. Contact Linda Hileman at 618-697-1870 by Dec. 1 to reserve your table/seat. Doors will open at 11:30 a.m. and the meal will begin at noon. "Friends of P.A.S.T." are asked to help if you can.

P.A.S.T. wishes to thank Susan Sitter Whitemountain and Norma Lee Hackney for graciously extending an unparalleled opportunity for the organization to acquire many of their various resource materials and equipment from The Gathering Place. Heritage House Museum is currently working to secure funding to convert a building on-site into a community resource facility. This building will help better utilize those additional resources in conjunction with the museum's current collection. P.A.S.T. members will be able to offer help in guiding those who are interested in accessing family genealogy, learning preservation methods for their own historical artifacts, or help for those seeking information on the immense history of our county and its communities in its transformation from a territory into the Union County of today.

All of these opportunities are reliant on community support through donations, various fundraising efforts, upcoming workshops, grants, and the physical dedication of P.A.S.T.'s members and "Friends." P.A.S.T. of Union County is a non-profit organization. Membership in P.A.S.T. includes a one-time $30 donation, which is tax deductible. Additionally, the organization hosts several events throughout the year and seeks help from "friends" during those times when they are able. If you would like more information or wish to extend a donation, please contact Suzan Harvel, President of P.A.S.T. at suzpark58@gmail.com or

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Shawnee Community College sees double-digit growth in online and dual credit enrollment

Shawnee Community College is experiencing significant growth in online education and dual credit enrollment, according to the Illinois Community College Board's (ICCB) Fall 2026 Opening Enrollment Report released this month.

The report highlights two areas where SCC is outperforming statewide enrollment trends, reflecting the College's efforts to provide flexible educational opportunities and expand access to higher education throughout Southern Illinois.

Online enrollment at SCC increased 11.9% compared to Fall 2025, with 706 students taking at least one online course. That contrasts with a statewide 2.2% decline in online enrollment.

More than 61% of Shawnee Community College students are taking at least one online course this fall, significantly higher than the statewide average of 36.5%.

This growth reflects an ongoing trend at SCC.

Since Fall 2022, enrollment in at least one online course has increased by 39.3%.

The College also saw substantial growth in dual credit enrollment, which lets high school students earn college credits while completing their high school education.

SCC's dual credit enrollment increased 13.8%, growing from 340 students in Fall 2025 to 387 this fall. Statewide, dual credit enrollment increased 2%. Since Fall 2022, Shawnee's dual credit enrollment has grown 20.9%.

"Today's students need educational opportunities that fit their lives. Whether that means taking classes online while balancing work and family responsibilities or earning college credits while still in high school, Shawnee Community College is committed to meeting students where they are," said SCC Interim President Dr. Melanie Pecord. "These enrollment trends reinforce the importance of providing flexible, accessible pathways to higher education."

While the College saw growth in online and dual credit enrollment, overall opening enrollment declined from 1,219 students in Fall 2025 to 1,153 in Fall 2026, a 5.4% decrease.

Statewide, Illinois community colleges saw a slight 0.7% enrollment decline, with 271,845 students enrolled this fall.

The ICCB report also highlights continued interest in workforce-focused education throughout Illinois. Statewide enrollment in Career and Technical Education programs rose 5.9%, while enrollment in vocational skills training rose 9.6%.

At Shawnee Community College, 380 students are enrolled in Career and Technical Education programs this fall, representing approximately one-third of the College's student population.

The College continues to offer a variety of academic transfer, career and technical education, workforce training, and dual credit opportunities to serve students throughout its five-county district.

The ICCB report reflects preliminary enrollment figures collected near the beginning of the fall semester. Final enrollment figures may change as additional data becomes available.

Registration is currently underway for Shawnee Community College's Winter Intersession and Spring 2027 semester.

For more information about educational opportunities at

Illinois sets new record for highest-ever graduation rate

Illinois students continue to build on years of progress, reaching new milestones in academic achievement, graduation rates, attendance, and college and career readiness, according to the 2026 Illinois Report Card released today by the Illinois State Board of Education. The data show encouraging statewide momentum across nearly every major indicator of student success.

"All across the state, Illinois schools are reaching new heights and the 2026 Report Card is just the latest demonstration of educational excellence and improvements," said Governor JB Pritzker. "Thanks to the hard work of our kids, the commitment of our teachers, and the historic investments from state government, Illinois is reaching record highs in graduation rates, improving proficiency across subjects, and unleashing the potential of every Illinois student."

This year's Report Card highlights progress across a range of academic and student success indicators while introducing Profiles of Performance, Illinois' redesigned accountability framework.

Graduation Rates Reach Record High

Illinois' four-year graduation rate reached 89.8% in 2026, marking a record high and continuing a long-term trend of improvement. Since 2012, the state's graduation rate has increased by more than nine percentage points and has now surpassed Illinois' Every Student Succeeds Act target of 88.9%, a milestone reached four years ahead of schedule.

Progress was observed across multiple student groups. English learners posted some of the largest gains, increasing their graduation rate by 6.2 percentage points since 2022. Strong improvements were also observed among Black students, Hispanic students, and students identifying with two or more races.

While a few student groups experienced modest year-to-year fluctuations, the longer-term trend remains positive. More Illinois students across a wide range of backgrounds are earning a diploma and preparing for success after high school.

Illinois Students Make Strong Academic Gains

Statewide proficiency increased across all three tested subjects in 2026, rising from 52.4% to 55.4% in English language arts (ELA), from 38.4% to 39.2% in math, and from 44.6% to 48.7% in science. Gains were observed across student groups and grade levels statewide.

ELA continued to show particularly strong results. Black students posted one of the largest improvements, increasing from 31.1% to 34.1%, while low-income students and students with disabilities also demonstrated meaningful gains. Students in Grades 6-8 led literacy improvement statewide, with eighth graders increasing proficiency from 56.3% to 62.5%, the largest year-over-year gain among tested grades. Student growth in ELA also remains above pre-pandemic levels across every student group measured, building on the work of Illinois' Comprehensive Literacy Plan.

Math proficiency also increased statewide, with gains observed across many student groups and six of the nine tested grades. Ninth-grade students posted the largest increase, rising from 37.7% to 41.7%. While math growth remains below pre-pandemic levels for most student groups, Illinois recently released its first statewide Numeracy Plan to strengthen mathematics instruction and accelerate achievement and growth in mathematics, building on lessons learned through implementation of the Comprehensive Literacy Plan.

Science demonstrated some of the strongest gains among the three tested subjects. Science proficiency increased across every student group measured, with Black students improving from 20.4% to 25.4%, low-income students improving from 27.7% to 32.1%, and English learners improving from 12.2% to 16.8%. Fifth- and eighth-grade students each improved proficiency by more than six percentage points. In 2025, Illinois adopted new proficiency benchmarks. This increase represents an apples-to-apples comparison of improvements among student groups.

Chronic Absenteeism Improves Across Student Groups

Chronic absenteeism declined for the fourth consecutive year, continuing Illinois' progress in reconnecting students to the classroom following pandemic-era disruptions. The statewide rate fell from 29.8% in 2022 to 23.5% in 2026, a 21.1% improvement.

ISBE emphasizes consistent attendance as the positive outcome schools are working toward: ensuring students are present, engaged, and connected to learning. Regular attendance remains one of the strongest predictors of academic success and high school graduation.

Teacher Workforce Grows, Diversifies

Illinois schools now employ nearly 140,000 teachers, continuing a steady upward trend in filled teaching positions. Since 2019, the state has added more than 12,000 teachers statewide while also reducing the number of unfilled teaching positions. This growth has coincided with a decline in average class size, helping schools provide more individualized support for students, even as statewide student enrollment continues a long-term decline linked to broader population and birth rate trends.

The educator workforce also continues to become more reflective of Illinois' student population, with the number of Asian educators increasing 11%, Hispanic educators increasing 6%, and Black educators increasing 5.2% in 2026. Sustained state investments in recruitment, preparation, and retention continue to strengthen the educator pipeline across Illinois.

Student enrollment continued its long-term decline in 2026, decreasing 1.6% from the previous year. This trend generally aligns with declining birth rates both in Illinois and nationally, resulting in fewer school-age children entering the education system.

Students Are Career and College Ready

Participation in advanced coursework and career pathway programs remains strong across Illinois. More than 326,000 students participated in enriched or honors coursework in 2026, while nearly 160,000 students enrolled in Advanced Placement courses and more than 117,000 students participated in dual credit programs. These opportunities help students challenge themselves academically, earn college credit while still in high school, and reduce future college costs for families.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) also continued to gain momentum statewide. More than 290,000 students participated in CTE programs, while over 163,000 students completed focused career pathways as concentrators. The number of CTE concentrators has increased by more than 17% since 2024, reflecting growing student interest in career-focused learning experiences that prepare them for both college and the workforce.

A Redesigned Accountability System for Illinois Schools

Beginning with the 2026 Illinois Report Card, ISBE is implementing a redesigned accountability system built around Profiles of Performance. Developed through extensive stakeholder engagement, the new system is designed to provide clearer expectations, support continuous improvement, and give families and educators a more meaningful picture of school performance.

The new framework expands opportunities for schools to earn Exemplary recognition by meeting clearly defined statewide criteria rather than being limited to a top percentage of schools. Under the previous accountability system, approximately 10% of schools were designated Exemplary. Under Profiles of Performance, 28.3% of schools met Exemplary criteria. The redesign also provides greater differentiation among schools by replacing the former broad Commendable category, which included 73.4% of schools, with multiple performance levels that provide a clearer picture of school strengths and opportunities for growth.

The Profiles of Performance model evaluates schools using a broad range of indicators, including proficiency, student growth, graduation rates, consistent attendance, climate survey participation, and English learner progress. Schools will now be evaluated against clearly defined performance criteria rather than solely in relation to one another, making results easier to understand and use for improvement.

The 2026 Illinois Report Card provides a snapshot of school performance data from the 2025-26 school year. Visit IllinoisReportCard.com for interactive data visualizations and school, district, and statewide Report Card information. Additional resources, including statewide trend data, student growth data, and downloadable Report Card datasets, are available through ISBE's Report Card webpage.

J.W. REYNOLDS MEMORIALS
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103 S. Fifth St.
(618) 658-2911

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517 E. Vienna St., Suite A
(618) 833-6014

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1408 S. Main St.
(618) 435-4199

Marion
1809 N. Court St.
(618) 993-5511

Herrin
1116 N. Park Ave.
(618) 942-2342

Mt. Vernon
2223 Broadway
(618) 242-1305

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200 E. Poplar St.
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‘Save Choate’ legislation recently proposed

State Rep. Scott Doody, R-Anna, is chief co-sponsor of legislation, along with State Rep. Charlie Meier, R-Okawville, to Save Choate Mental Health Center in Anna and address delays in treating defendants found unfit to stand trial in Illinois.

A package of bills is aimed at holding the Illinois Department of Human Services, IDHS, accountable and support both sheriffs and communities throughout Illinois.

House Bill 5822 would require prompt placement of defendants within 30 days and provide review of psychiatric status and treatment at a designated facility such as the Choate Mental Health and Developmental Center.

House Bill 5823 would require IDHS to pay sheriffs who provide housing and mental health services for defendants if the agency does not place them after 20 days.

House Bill 5824 would require former residents of Choate relocated to CILA’s the right to return if they so choose or to another state facility where space is available.

“These proposals focus on holding state agencies accountable and utilizing existing resources like the Choate Mental Health Center as temporary solutions,” Doody said in a press release.

Public health officials encourage immunizations for respiratory illnesses

BY GEOF SKINNER

The Illinois Department of Public Health, IDPH, is reminding Illinoisans that it is time to get immunizations against seasonal respiratory illnesses, such as flu, COVID-19 and RSV. The reminder comes after IDPH director Dr. Sameer Vohra received his annual flu and COVID-19 shots during a visit to the Winnebago County Health Department at the end of October.

“The message today is simple and clear: the time to get your seasonal immunizations is now,” Vohra said in a news release. “Respiratory illnesses like flu, COVID-19 and RSV will only get more prevalent in the weeks ahead. Getting protected now gives you the best chance of avoiding illness at the holidays and through the long winter months ahead. And it not only protects you, it also protects your family, your co-workers, and your community.”

Rural Health Inc. offers seasonal vaccinations for flu, COVID and RSV at each of its health centers in the area. Appointments can be made, and more information is available, by calling 618-833-4471.

According to IDPH’s Seasonal Respiratory Illness Dashboard, Illinois was seeing low levels of respiratory illness as of Oct. 28. But there were signs that flu was on the rise. Historically, acute respiratory illnesses increase significantly during the winter months, when people spend more time indoors, making it easier for such illnesses to spread.

IDPH shared that immunization remains the best form of protection against contracting seasonal respiratory illness and can lessen the severity of illness if someone does contract it.

Other preventive steps which can be taken include:

Wash your hands frequently with soap and water: it is one of the most effective ways to reduce the spread of illness. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are also effective if soap and water are not available.

Minimize close contact with sick people. Stay home when you are ill. When you are ill, allow a few feet of distance from others. Cover coughs and sneezes with your elbow or tissue but not your hand. When you are ill, you may also wear a surgical-type mask when around others.

Vohra noted that individuals can get their shots for flu, COVID-19 and RSV (where recommended) at the same time, making it easier to get full protection against the most common seasonal illnesses. He also pointed out that it can take some time for immunizations to become fully effective, making it important to get the shots as soon as possible before seasonal illnesses become more prevalent and ahead of large gatherings during the holidays.

IDPH highlights awareness about lead poisoning hazards

The Illinois Department of Public Health, IDPH, joined in the observance of National Lead Poisoning Week, which was Oct. 25-31. This year’s observance followed the state’s move to implement universal lead testing, which took effect July 1, 2026.

IDPH shared in a news release that each month in Illinois, hundreds of children around the state are found to have elevated levels of lead in their blood, which can lead to developmental and learning difficulties and other health issues.

“Universal lead testing is an essential tool for identifying and helping children who have been exposed to lead,” IDPH director Dr. Sameer Vohra said. “It’s equally important to identify and remove sources of lead exposure before a child is in harm’s way. This week is all about reminding Illinoisans to take the steps to prevent lead poisoning and keep our children safe.”

The most common source of exposure is from deteriorated lead-based paint, which was used in many homes built before 1978. Children can be exposed by swallowing or breathing in lead dust created by old paint that has peeled, cracked or chipped, or eating paint chips or chewing on surfaces coated with lead-based paint, such as windowsills.

For those who live in a house built before 1978, IDPH advised that a certified inspector or risk assessor can check the home for lead-based paint or lead-based paint hazards. It’s estimated that there are still well over one million homes in Illinois that contain lead-based paint.

Lead can also be found in drinking water. The most common sources of lead in drinking water are lead pipes, faucets and fixtures.

Lead exposure can be significantly reduced by taking simple precautions around the house, IDPH said. The precautions include cleaning up paint chips and peeling paint; washing floors, counter tops and windowsills weekly with soap and water; and using proper safety measures when renovating or remodeling your house, like spraying down painted surfaces with water before scraping or sanding, and using plastic sheeting to capture any debris which is generated.

Vienna Receives USDA Farm to School Grant to Support Child Nutrition, continued

laboratory.

The USDA provides leadership on food, agriculture, natural resources, rural development, nutrition, and related issues. USDA awards competitive Farm to School grants that support planning, developing, and implementing farm to school programs. USDA's Farm to School grants help state, regional, and local organizations as they initiate, expand, and institutionalize farm to school efforts.

Mr. Hosfeldt shared, “Current farm-to-school efforts remain sporadic and transactional rather than relationship-driven. Without permanent coordinating infrastructure and specialized consulting support, these challenges will persist. However, the Southernmost Illinois Farm to School Network project transforms transactional relationships into permanent market infrastructure supporting both food security and agricultural viability through targeted producer capacity-building investments, enabling meaningful infrastructure development.”

“This year’s grants are a win-win for schools and children, for farmers and real food,” said Deputy Under Secretary for USDA’s Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services Patrick A. Penn. “Our Nation’s farmers, ranchers and producers grow the safest, most abundant and affordable food in the world, and now more children will get to experience the benefits of that bounty. USDA is fully committed to supporting healthy choices, healthy families, and healthy outcomes through farm to school, and I can’t wait to see the life-changing impact these new projects will have on communities across

SIU’s Simon Institute hosts alum, Illinois state Rep. Will Davis for open house Friday



PHOTO PROVIDED

Illinois state Rep. Will Davis, D-Homewood, a 1989 SIU Carbondale graduate, will speak at an open house at SIU’s Paul Simon Public Policy Institute on Friday, Nov. 6. With Davis are Linda Baker, interim institute director (left) and Matt Collinsworth, institute associate director.

Southern Illinois University Carbondale’s Paul Simon Public Policy Institute will host an open house on Friday, Nov. 6, featuring a special appearance by alumnus and Illinois state Rep. William “Will” Davis. The event will bring together institute staff, friends and supporters for an opportunity to connect and discuss issues shaping Illinois public policy.

The open house is from noon to 1:30 p.m. at the Forestry Building, 1231 Lincoln Drive, on SIU’s campus. Davis, D-Homewood graduated from SIU with a degree in political science in 1989. During the event, he will reflect on the Nov. 3 election results, discuss priorities for the upcoming legislative veto session and take questions from the audience. Discussion topics will also include school funding reform, state budget accountability and other issues affecting Illinois communities.

Refreshments will be served. The event is free and open to the public. Registration is encouraged but not required.

“Rep. Davis has dedicated his career to public service and addressing issues that affect communities across Illinois,” Linda R. Baker, interim institute director, said. “We’re pleased to welcome him back to campus as a fellow Saluki and provide an opportunity for our community to hear his perspective on the recent election, the state’s upcoming legislative session and important questions surrounding education funding and responsible budgeting. Bringing public officials and community members together for thoughtful conversation is an important part of fostering informed and engaged citizenship.”

Davis represents the state’s 30th district in the Illinois House of Representatives, which includes parts of the city of Chicago, along with several southern and south-suburban municipalities and townships in Cook County. Voters first elected Davis to the state house in 2003.

He has been a longtime advocate for education funding and public accountability. He served as the chief House sponsor of Senate Bill 1947, which established Illinois’ Evidence-Based Funding model for public schools. He is also a founding member of the Better Funding for Better Schools Coalition and serves as chairman of the House Appropriations–Elementary and Secondary Education Committee. Davis is a member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity.

The open house will provide attendees with an opportunity to hear directly from a state lawmaker, exchange perspectives on the issues facing Illinois and connect with others interested in public policy and civic engagement, Baker said. It also offers an opportunity to learn more about the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute and its work to promote ethical conduct in government, responsible citizenship and greater public understanding of policy issues.

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SIU Waterski Club competes at national tournament for second time in team's history



(PHOTO PROVIDED/NEWS.SIU.EDU.)

The SIU Waterski Club traveled to Rio Linda, Calif., Oct. 15-17 to compete in the 2026 National Collegiate Water Ski Association tournament. The trip marked the second time the club has qualified for nationals.

BY BROOKE KELTNER
SIU UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS

A student from Union County is a member of the Southern Illinois University Carbondale Water Ski Club which competed at nationals for the second time in the club's history, with the team finishing 11th overall.

Club members traveled for the 2026 National Collegiate Water Ski Association, NCWSA, tournament on the waters of Bell Acqua Lakes in Rio Linda, Calif., Oct. 15-17. They earned a spot at the tournament where they competed against a dozen teams after taking fifth at regionals in Cambridge, Iowa.

Julia Lasley of Anna is one of the members of the club. Lasley is a medical student at SIU. Overall unofficial scores showed that Lasley took first place in women's jump, setting two personal records at 67 and 69 feet.

Nicholas Pinedo, the club's president, competed with the team at the 2024 nationals in San Marcos, Texas, when the team placed fifth overall. He described this second nationals adventure as "surreal."

"You're surrounded by a bunch of people whose favorite pastime is simply having a good time," Pinedo said. "For a weekend, you get to forget about everything else going on in life and just enjoy being with your team, skiing and being surrounded by great people and great vibes."

Journey to Nationals

The club meets three times a week to practice on the lake at the Du Quoin State Fairgrounds under the guidance of David Adams, whom Pinedo described as "an incredible coach who's always willing to help." Other than regionals, the water ski team competed in four other tournaments leading up to nationals this year, including the Saluki Showdown in Du Quoin, the Spartan Ripfest in South Haven, Mich., the Sunflower Showdown in Lawrence, Kan., and the Illinois Collegiate Cup in Du Quoin.

"One of my favorite things about these tournaments is being surrounded by teams from bigger schools all across the country," Pinedo said. "A lot of them have no idea where SIU is, what it stands for, or even what a Saluki is. We get the opportunity to show them."

However, there's extra pressure during tournaments as athletes only get one attempt at each event, including regionals where the Salukis narrowly qualified for nationals this year.

"We struggled to perform as well as we knew we were capable of," he admitted. "It was stressful knowing how close we came to missing out, especially after seeing how much work everyone had put in throughout the season."

After qualifying for nationals, the team had another obstacle to overcome: paying for a trip to California, including lodging, transportation and meals. The club created an online fundraiser, which received more than a dozen contributions from donors near and far. One contributor wrote, "Good work and good luck from a random person in San Francisco."

The club received support from the university, alumni and other donors who made the trip to nationals possible, Pinedo said.

Competing at Nationals

This season, SIU Water Ski started a new tradition by dancing on the dock around the teammate who's getting ready to compete to the tune of "Walk Like an Egyptian" by the Bangles. The nod to Southern Illinois being known as Little Egypt followed them to nationals. Pinedo credits having some fun during the competition as a way to calm nerves before getting out on the water.

Nationals consisted of six competition categories: women's slalom, men's slalom, women's trick, men's trick, women's jump and men's jump. All SIU club members competed in the tournament.

Along with Lasley, students from Southern Illinois who are members of the club are Abbey Dorsey of Carterville, a sophomore in exercise science; Thomas Imboden of Carbondale, a sophomore in forestry; and Jessi Rudloff of Du Quoin, a sophomore in mechanical engineering.

The other club members are Oliver Bernard of Batavia, junior in finance; Allison Bradford of Decatur, law school candidate; John Freese of Decatur, senior in forestry; Toby Fry of O'Fallon, sophomore in aviation technologies; Clarissa Johnson of Oak Creek, Wis., junior in journalism with a concentration in advertising; Nicholas Pinedo of Lake Zurich, senior in aviation flight and management; Brendan Schultz of Dow, senior in electrical engineering; Bryn Southerland of Decatur, sophomore in nursing; Samantha Varness of Peoria, senior in business analytics.

The overall unofficial scores also showed that team member Brendan Schultz took first place in the men's trick and men's jump.

Pinedo said the tournament goes beyond scores, medals or trophies. Instead, teammates get to keep something much more valuable: memories with teammates.

"There's so much more to these tournaments than just skiing and competing," he said. "It's about the people, the friendships, and the atmosphere that brings everyone together."

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SIU sculpture fundraiser offers 30 scratch blocks for cast iron artwork

By Maxbiya English

Southern Illinois University's sculpture program and the student organization Critical Forum are selling 30 scratch blocks that supporters can use to create their own cast-iron artwork. Sales will continue through the program's Nov. 7 iron pour at the Art Foundry, which runs from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Blocks cost $20 to $30, and buyers are asked to bring the exact amount. When they sell out, no more will be offered. A scratch block is a tile made of resin-bonded sand, used to scratch a shallow-relief design to create a custom mold for molten iron.

The fundraiser is at the center of what Alex Lopez, associate professor and head of sculpture in the School of Art and Design, calls this year's "home-alone event." Besides raising money to keep "the ever-rising cost of materials down for students," the program will use the pour to reignite its smaller cupola and test new ideas.

Blocks can be purchased at the foundry, 1520 W. Pleasant Hill Road in Carbondale, on Mondays from noon to 4 p.m., Wednesdays from 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Fridays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Sundays from noon to 3 p.m. Sales end at 10 a.m. the day of the pour.

Finished pieces can be picked up during the same hours beginning Nov. 13.

The program's big annual iron pour returns as a public event next year.

For questions or more information, email Lopez at alxlpz@siu.edu or call 618-453-7548. Updates are posted on Instagram at @siucsculpture.



PHOTO PROVIDED

Molten iron is poured into scratch blocks at the Art Foundry.

Data previously included in the Annual Statement of Affairs can be found at: Payments to certified personnel posted on district website per 05 ILCS 5/10-20.47. Student Counts included in district's report card. Financial Data included in district's Annual Financial Report posted on ISBE's Cerberus Server.

SALARY SCHEDULE OF GROSS PAYMENTS FOR CERTIFICATED PERSONNEL AND NON-CERTIFICATED PERSONNEL

GROSS PAYMENT FOR NON-CERTIFIED PERSONNEL

Salary Range: Less Than $39.999

Allen, Kenyoko; Barksdale, Robin; Barnfield, Mia; Blake, Janiece L; Brown, Collin; Burke, Brooklyn; Casey, Sally; Casper, Collin; Childress, Benay; Childress, Shakia; Cornelious-Weldon, Leslie; Criddle, Kerra; Crisler, Selena; Daley, Kamilah; Davis, Arthaniel; Davis, Deloyd JR; Davis, Rebecca; Dehoet, Charlene; Dover, Madyson; Gatewood, Heather; Glass, Emily; Green, Jami; Greenwood, DeMari; Haskins, J Mitch; Henderson, Misty; Henderson, Randall Ray; Hileman, Jacy; Houston, Larry; Houston, Wilma; Howard, Dorian; Hughes, Chauncey J; Jeter, RaKeya; Jeter, Rakyah; Johnson, Anae; Johnson, Ariel S; Killius, Nancy A; Long, Whittney; Malley, Stephen M; Mcelmurry, Barbara; Meadows, Verlene M; Medlock, Hannah A; Menkhaus, Abby; Mitchell, Brittney T; Mize, Debra L; Moore, Jammerio; Nance, Maria P; Newell, Robert E; Patterson, LeAjah; Pearcy, Hudson; Powell, Jannifer; Pryor, Venus; Ruddick, Heidi; Sawyer, Lakiesha; Schoffner Jr, Michael; Sichling, Mickayla; Smith, Roia; Steele, Todd N; Steele, Vicki; Sutton, Harley; Terry, Faye; Terry, Marilyn; Thaduri, Naga Snehal; Thomas, Elizabeth; Trover, Marleis; Weathers, Jalil; Weathers, Yaleana; Whitaker, Kamauri; Wilson, Sierra

Salary Range: $40,000 - $54,999

Andrews, Robert; Bartlett, Lavern P; Calvin, Sherri M; Hannan, Amy R; Leek, Danny L; Perkins, Rochelle A; Richard, Vanessa; Thurston, Alexandria

Salary Range: $55,000 - $74,999

Buckles-Tucker, Kimberly; Crow, Lori L; Gardner, Randall R

Salary Range: $75,000 and Over

Brown, Regina; Shemwell-Scott, Catherine

PAYMENTS TO PERSON, FIRM, OR CORPORATION OVER $2,500 EXCLUDING WAGES AND SALARIES

AFLAC INSURANCE	$10,701.76
AJD CONSULTING SERVICES	$16,091.00
AJD CONSULTING SERVICES	$6,000.00
AMEREN ILLINOIS	$70,088.73
AMERICAN FIDELITY	$30,201.42
AMPLIFY	$5,865.46
ANDREWS, ROBERT	$3,476.53
APPLE INC	$3,290.00
APPTEGY	$13,661.79
BEAVER JANITOR SUPPLY	$31,902.37
BEUSSINK HEY ROE&STRODER	$24,500.00
BOKF, NA	$233,327.00
BRAD`S COLLISION WORKS LLC	$9,711.00
BRIDGE THERAPY FOR YOU LLC	$70,730.00
BROKEN HERO ENTERPRISES LLC	$2,915.25
CAIRO PUBLIC UTILITY CO	$12,854.96
CENTRAL BANK	$106,525.00
CITY AUTO MITSUBISHI	$14,859.92
CLEARWAVE COMMUNICATIONS	$3,063.46
COMMON GOAL SYSTEMS	$16,158.82
COUCH JANICE	$5,024.23
CRISIS PREVENTION INSTITUTE, INC	$3,229.00
CRS ONESOURCE	$125,697.65
CUSUMANO & SONS, INC	$24,332.74
DARE, AVA JILL	$57,000.00
DELTA DENTAL OF ILLINOIS- RISK	$29,411.37
EMBRACE EDUCATION	$4,060.36
EMS LINQ INC	$7,002.17
EPIC TRUST FUND	$567,988.66
ESGI LLC	$2,983.00
EVERWAY LLC	$3,001.18
EXIT 8 STORAGE	$2,880.00
GAGGLE	$3,120.00
GALLAGHER BASSETT SERVICES INC	$10,000.00
GLOBAL LIFE LIBERTY NATIONAL	$8,810.71
GREAT MINDS PBC	$3,743.14
GUIN MUNDORF LLC	$83,846.25
HADDOCK EDUCATION TECHNOLOGIES	$9,297.00
HARDIN`S-SYSCO FOOD SERV.	$50,051.68
HASKINS, MITCH	$4,597.74
HSG MECHANICAL CONTRACTOR	$30,671.67
HUCKLEBERRY`S	$5,173.22
IDEAL EDUCATION CONSULTING LLC	$6,500.00
IL DEPT OF EMPLOYMENT SEC	$5,772.50
IL DEPT OF REVENUE	$185,615.50
IL MUNICIPAL RETIREMENT	$160,730.58
IL TEACHER RET-BD PD BEN	$15,527.48
IL TEACHERS RETIREMENT	$241,032.78
IL TEACHERS RET 23.10 FED	$22,758.06
IL. ED. ASSOCIATION	$19,725.18
ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BOARDS	$14,617.00
ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION	$17,467.00
ROWE PEST CONTROL	$4,452.00
SCHOOL HEALTH CO.	$4,142.47
SHAWNEE COMMUNITY COLLEGE	$16,708.50
SHAWNEE COMMUNITY COLLEGE	$24,205.00
SHERIFF PULASKI COUNTY	$6,974.00
SIGMA ATHLETICS LLC	$2,760.00
SKEETER KELL SPORTING	$12,606.70
SMITH ALICE	$3,431.52
SOUTHERN ILLINOIS LOCAL MEDIA GROUP LLC	$3,566.50
STAPLES	$11,256.68
STOUT, KRISTI J	$3,600.00
STUKENT, INC	$3,390.00
TAYLOR PUBLISHING CO	$3,750.00
TC3 MUSIC SUPPLY	$6,024.00
TEACHER SYNERGY LLC	$4,708.91
TEACHERS` CURRICULUM INSTITUTE (TCI)	$2,546.25
TEXAS LIFE INSURANCE	$6,077.95
THE PRINTING COMPANY	$3,525.18
THOMAS, LISA	$9,006.77
TIPTON LINEN SERVICE	$3,282.75
TOP YOUTH SPEAKERS	$4,980.00
TREVIPAY-WALMART	$3,914.85
TRS HEALTH INSURANCE	$42,030.41
TRS-VOYA	$5,366.12
VERIZON WIRELESS	$12,416.11
VIENNA HIGH SCHOOL	$31,542.17
WALMART COMMUNITY BRC	$6,617.26
WASTE CONNECTIONS OF MO	$25,105.53
WILLIAMSON COUNTY SP ED	$43,750.00

PAYMENTS TO PERSON, FIRM, OR CORPORATION OF $1,000 TO $2,500 EXCLUDING WAGES AND SALARIES

A&A ABATEMENT LLC	$2,400.00
ADOBE INC.	$2,460.00
BANK OF AMERICA LOCKBOX SERVICES	$2,450.00
BARTLETT LAVERN	$1,147.08
BIG TEAMS C/O ARBITER	$2,250.00
BOWEN, LEXIA	$1,519.07
BRANDTNER, BRIAN	$1,056.30
BUDDYS CLEANERS	$1,129.00
CAPE WINAIR COMPANY	$1,873.18
CHEER OUTFITTERS	$2,040.05
COAST TO COAST SIGNS	$1,800.00
CONSCIOUS DISCIPLINE (CD)	$1,815.75
COUNTRY COMPANIES	$1,159.80
DAVA POYNER	$1,000.00
DILLARD MARYANNE	$1,731.24
ELKOWITZ STEPHANIE	$1,120.00
FIRM SYSTEMS	$1,815.00
FLOORSITE INC	$2,300.00
HAWKINS MELISSA	$2,379.07
HEARTLAND PAYMENT SYSTM	$1,657.41
IASA	$1,349.23
ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BUSINESS OFFICIALS	$1,259.00
ILLINOIS PRINCIPALS ASSOCIATION	$1,982.31
IMAGI EDUCATION INC	$1,440.75
J.S. HELD LLC-US	$1,400.00
JOSTENS	$1,236.49
KAMI NOTABLE INC	$2,340.09
LAKESHORE LEARNING MAT	$1,508.00
LAKESHORE MATERIALS CO	$1,246.77
LARRY MALCOM	$1,564.20
LEGALSHIELD	$2,225.55
M E A DUES	$1,000.11
MAGNATAG INC	$2,046.85
MERIDIAN HIGH ACTIVITY	$1,000.00
MIKERENTALS INC	$1,189.17
NAGA SNEHAL THADURI	$2,100.02
ORIENTAL TRADING CO, INC	$2,287.38
PFAFF, AMY	$1,394.20
PULASKI BAR & GRILL- UPTOWN PLAZA	$1,545.37
QUADIENT LEASING USA INC	$1,425.76
READY MIX SOLUTIONS LLC	$1,817.00
REALLY GOOD STUFF	$2,249.13
REGINA BROWN	$1,066.18
RUIZ ERIN	$1,881.02
SCHOOL HEALTH CORPORATION	$1,927.72
SCHOOL SPECIALTY	$1,631.12
SCOTT, CATHERINE	$1,394.20
SCREEN ARTS INCORPORATED	$1,302.00
SECURITAS TECHNOLOGY CORPORATION	$2,397.24
SECURITY LOCKSMITH & DOOR SERVICE	$1,845.00
STOP & SHOP	$1,889.04
TEACHING STRATEGIES	$1,080.00
TERRI K`S HEARTLAND FLORIST	$1,400.00
THRILLHOUSE	$1,327.50
ULINE	$1,611.50
UNITED RENTALS	$1,385.94
UNUM LIFE INSURANCE	$1,222.00
USI, INC.	$1,625.74
YOUNG ALICHA	$1,200.00

ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
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ANNUAL STATEMENT OF AFFAIRS
FISCAL YEAR ENDING
June 30, 2026

SCHOOL DISTRICT/JOINT AGREEMENT NAME:	MERIDIAN CUSD 101
RCDT NUMBER:	30-077-1010-26
ADDRESS:	1401 MOUNDS ROAD
COUNTY:	PULASKI
NAME OF NEWSPAPER WHERE PUBLISHED:	MONDAY'S PUB

DISTRICT TYPE

Elementary	
High School	
Unit	X
Joint Agreement	

ASSURANCE

The Annual Statement of Affairs has been posted on the district's website and published in accordance with Section 10-17 of the School Code no later than December 1. (Put "X" in blue box if yes.) Yes X

SIZE OF DISTRICT IN SQUARE MILES	97
NUMBER OF ATTENDANCE CENTERS	1
NUMBER OF CERTIFICATED EMPLOYEES	
FULL-TIME	31
PART-TIME	6
NUMBER OF NON-CERTIFICATED EMPLOYEES	
FULL-TIME	40
PART-TIME	1

TAX RATE BY FUND (IN %)	
EDUCATIONAL	1.775450
OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE	0.443870
BOND & INTEREST	0.601260
TRANSPORTATION	0.177550
MUNICIPAL RETIREMENT	0.139870
SOCIAL SECURITY	0.139870
WORKING CASH	0.044390
FIRE PREVENTION & SAFETY	0.050000
TORT IMMUNITY	0.245100
CAPITAL PROJECTS	0.000000
SPECIAL EDUCATION	0.015480
LEASING	0.044390
OTHER	0.000000
OTHER	0.000000

REPORT ON CONTRACTS EXCEEDING $25,000 AWARDED DURING FY2025

1. Total number of all contracts awarded by the school district: 3
2. Total value of all contracts awarded: $1,048,075.99
3. Total number of contracts awarded to minority owned businesses, female owned businesses, businesses owned by persons with disabilities, and locally owned businesses: 0
   *If there are no contracts of this nature, please enter "0" in box to the right.
4. Total value of contracts awarded to minority owned businesses, female owned businesses, businesses owned by person with disabilities, and locally owned businesses: $0.00
   *If there are no contracts of this nature, please enter "0" in box to the right.

The Gazette-Democrat Classified Section

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HOUSING APPLICATION NOTICE

The Housing Authority of Johnson County is accepting applications for apartments in Johnson County.
The Housing Authority manages apartments in Vienna, Goreville, Buncombe, and New Burnside, IL. Monthly rent is based on income.
Apartments in Vienna and Goreville - Bedrooms range from efficiency to 4 bedrooms. Flat rents are available.
Apartments in Vienna, Goreville, and New Burnside range from 1 to 2 bedrooms and are for persons 62 years of age or older; or disabled regardless of age. Buncombe has 1 bedroom units. Rental Assistance may be available.
Interested persons may contact the Authority by telephone at 618-658-5811, by mail at Housing Authority of Johnson County P.O. Box 188, Vienna, IL 62995, by e-mail at hajciled@frontier.com or at the administrative office located at 501 North 4th Street, Vienna, IL 62995, to obtain an application for housing.
The Housing Authority of Johnson County is an Equal Opportunity Provider, and Employer.

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Anna First Baptist Church is looking for a Part-time Custodian – 20 hours per week, Monday through Thursday. If interested, applications can be picked up at the church office located at 409 Morgan Street in Anna.

FOR SALE

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LEGAL NOTICES

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
ALEXANDER COUNTY, ILLINOIS
BILLY E. SMITH JR. and TIFFINY A. SMITH,
Plaintiffs,
v.
UNKNOWN OWNERS AND NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS,
Defendants.
CASE NO.: 2026CH8
PUBLICATION NOTICE
The requisite affidavit for publication having been filed, notice is hereby given to you, Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, Defendants in the above-entitled the said suit has been commenced in the Circuit Court of Alexander County, Illinois, by the said Plaintiff against you for a quiet title on the following described premises, to-wit:
Lots Numbered Two (2), Three (3) and Four (4) in Block Numbered Seven (7) in Clutt's Subdivision of the North ¾ of the West ½ of the West ½ of Section 32 in Township 15 South, Range 2 West of the Third Principal Meridian, as platted and recorded in the Office of County Recorder at Cairo, Alexander County, Illinois, in Plat Book Numbered "F", Page 57.
and for other relief, and that said suit is still pending.
Now, therefore, unless you, the said Defendants, Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, file your answer to the Complaint in the suit, or otherwise make your appearance therein, in the Circuit Court of Alexander County, Illinois, in the County Courthouse in the City of Cairo, Illinois, on or before the 3rd Day of December, 2026, default may be entered against you and each of you at any time after that day and a Judgment entered in accordance with the prayer of said Complaint.
Carey L. Simmons
Clerk of the Circuit Court
Prepared by:
JOHN R. SCHNEIDER
JOHNSON, SCHNEIDER & FERRELL, L.L.C.
212 North Main Street
Cape Girardeau, MO 63701
Tel: (573) 335-3300
Fax: (573)335-1978
8221-970739

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 1ST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
ALEXANDER COUNTY - CAIRO, ILLINOIS
U.S. BANK TRUST COMPANY, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION, AS INDENTURE TRUSTEE ON BEHALF OF AND WITH RESPECT TO BARCLAYS MORTGAGE TRUST 2022-RPL1,
MORTGAGE-BACKED SECURITIES, SERIES 2022-RPL1,
PLAINTIFF
VS.
APRIL D LACEY A/K/A APRIL LACEY, FREDDIE G LACEY JR A/K/A FREDDIE G LACEY A/K/A FREDDIE
LACEY, ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE, UNKNOWN OWNERS GENERALLY, AND NON-RECORD
CLAIMANTS.
DEFENDANTS
NOTICE OF SALE
Case No.: 2026FC2
Property Address:
22759 Olive St
Olive Branch, IL 62969
PUBLIC NOTICE is given that pursuant to the Judgment of Foreclosure entered in the above entitled cause on
July 15, 2026, the Alexander County Sheriff will on December 9, 2026, at 10:00 am, at the Alexander County
Courthouse, 2000 Washington Ave., Hallway, Cairo IL 62914, sell to the highest bidder for cash, the following
described mortgaged real estate:
LOTS SIX (6), SEVEN (7), EIGHT (8), NINE (9) AND TEN (1O) IN BLOCK FIVE (5) IN THE ORIGINAL
TOWN OF OLIVE BRANCH, ALEXANDER COUNTY, ILLINOIS.
P.I.N.
06-32-251-001; 06-32-251-002
COMMON ADDRESS: 22759 Olive St, Olive Branch, IL 62969
Terms of all sales are ten percent (10%) of the opening bid.
Failure to pay the remaining balance within the twenty-four (24) hours shall result in the forfeiture of the ten
percent (10%) down payment.
No Refunds.
The property offered for sale is subject to real estate taxes, special assessments or special taxes levied against said
real estate and is offered for sale without any representation as to quality or quantity of title and without recourse
to plaintiff and in "as is" condition. The sale is further subject to confirmation by the court.
The improvement on the property consists of: Single Family Home
The entered judgment amount was $31,293.57.
The property will NOT be open for inspection.
For information call Plaintiff's Attorney, Kluever Law Group, LLC, 200 N. LaSalle St., Suite 1880, Chicago, IL
60601. 312-236-0077. KLG: RML000026-26FC1
8221-970835

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
UNION COUNTY, ILLINOIS
ROCKET MORTGAGE, LLC,
PLAINTIFF,
VS.
MICHELE ASTIN; SECRETARY OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT; UNKNOWN OWNERS AND NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS,
DEFENDANTS.
NO. 2026FC8
201 WEST SPRING STREET
ANNA, IL 62906
JUDGE PRESIDING JUDGE
NOTICE OF SALE
PURSUANT TO JUDGMENT OF FORECLOSURE
UNDER ILLINOIS MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE ACT
PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale entered by the Court in the above entitled cause on July 17, 2026, will on December 16, 2026, in UNION COUNTY COURTHOUSE, 309 W. MARKET, JONESBORO, IL 62952, at 9:00 AM, sell at public auction and sale to the highest bidder for cash, all and singular, the following described real estate mentioned in said Judgment, situated in the County of Union, State of Illinois, or so much thereof as shall be sufficient to satisfy said Judgment:
TRACT I: Lot One (1) in Diana B. Kroh's First Addition to the City of Anna, situated in the County of Union and State of Illinois. TRACT II: Beginning at a point between Lots Number One and Two on Spring Street (Diana B. Kroh's Addition to the City of Anna, Illinois); thence South 84 Degrees 30'West 165 feet for a place of beginning; thence in the same direction sixty (60) feet; thence South 5 Degrees 30' East 111 feet 2 1/2 inches to the north line of P.H. Kroh's property; thence North 84 Degrees 30' East along said line sixty (60) feet; thence North 5 Degrees 30' West 111 feet 2 1/2 inches to the place of beginning, situated in the City of Anna, County of Union and State of Illinois.
TAX NO. 05-19-03-409 and 14-00-08-625
COMMONLY KNOWN AS: 201 West Spring Street
Anna, IL 62906
Description of Improvements: Tan vinyl siding, 1.5 story single family home
The Judgment amount was $168,700.70.
Sale Terms: This is an "AS IS" sale for "CASH". The successful bidder must deposit 10% down by certified funds; balance, by certified funds, within 24 hours.
NO REFUNDS.
The subject property is subject to general real estate taxes, special assessments or special taxes levied against said real estate, water bills, etc., and is offered for sale without any representation as to quality or quantity of title and without recourse to plaintiff. The sale is further subject to confirmation by the court.
Upon payment in full of the bid amount, the purchaser shall receive a Certificate of Sale, which will entitle the purchaser to a Deed to the real estate after confirmation of the sale.
The property will NOT be open for inspection. Prospective bidders are admonished to check the court file to verify all information.
The successful purchaser has the sole responsibility/expense of evicting any tenants or other individuals presently in possession of the subject premises.
If this property is a condominium unit, the purchaser of the unit at the foreclosure sale, other than a mortgagee shall pay the assessments and the legal fees required by The Condominium Property Act, 765 ILCS 605/9(g)(1) and (g)(4).
IF YOU ARE THE MORTGAGOR (HOMEOWNER), YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN IN POSSESSION FOR 30 DAYS AFTER ENTRY OF AN ORDER OF POSSESSION, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 15-1701(C) OF THE ILLINOIS MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE LAW.
For Information: Visit our website at http://ilforeclosuresales.mrpllc.com.
Between 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. only - McCalla Raymer Leibert Pierce, LLP, Plaintiff's Attorneys, 333 W Wacker Drive, Suite 1820, Chicago, IL 60606-1220. Tel. No. (312) 346-9088. Please refer to file# 24-19980IL
PURSUANT TO THE FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT, THE PLAINTIFF'S ATTORNEY IS DEEMED TO BE A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE.
Plaintiff's attorney is not required to provide additional information other than that set forth in this notice of sale.
I3292344
8221-970711

WHEREAS, the Board of Education (the "Board") of Jonesboro Community Consolidated School
District No. 43, Union County, Illinois (the "District"), has the duty and authority to oversee
District funds to carry out its educational programs; and
WHEREAS, the District administration has proposed that the Board consider the following interfund transfer under Section 17-2A of the School Code (105 ILCS 5/17-2A):
From the Operations and Maintenance Fund to the Educational Fund, for the purpose to
transfer $78,065 designated for Building Leases, which is no longer needed, to the Education Fund to use for lease payments for technology; and
WHEREAS, Section 17-2A requires a public hearing with proper notice before the Board may
approve the proposed transfer. Hearing is set for November 19, 2026 at the Jonesboro School Science room starting at 6:30 pm.
8221-970625

Wolf Lake-Ware Fire Protection District's annual meeting will be on Wednesday, Nov. 11, 2026 at 5:30 a.m. in the Wolf Lake Community Center, 4720 N. State Rt. 3, Wolf Lake, IL.
8221-969483

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
JOHNSON COUNTY, ILLINOIS
ESTATE OF
JERRY L. BILLINGSLEY, DECEASED.
NO. 2026-PR-17
IN PROBATE
NOTICE OF DEATH
INDEPENDENT ADMINISTRATION,
AND CLAIM DATE
NOTICE IS GIVEN to creditors of the death of Jerry L. Billingsley, of Buncombe, Illinois. Letters of Office were issued on October 15, 2026, to Janet S. Billingsley, 155 Elvira St., Buncombe, Illinois 62912 as Independent Executor, whose attorney is Elvis C. Cameron, 205B N. Main St., Anna, Illinois. Within 42 days after the effective date of the original Order of admission, you may file a petition with the Court to require proof of the Will by testimony of the witnesses in open Court or other evidence, as provided by Section 5/6-21 of the Probate Act (755 ILCS 5/6-21.)
You also have the right, under Section 5/8-1 of the Probate Act (755 ILCS 5/8-1), to contest the validity of the Will by filing a petition with the Court within six (6) months after admission of the Will to probate.
The estate will be administered without Court supervision unless, under Section 5/28-4 of the Probate Act (Ill. Compiled Stat. 1992, Ch. 755, Par. 5/28-4), any interested person terminates Independent Administration at any time by mailing or delivering a petition to terminate to the Clerk of this Court.
Claims against the estate may be filed in the Office of the Clerk of this court at the Johnson County Courthouse, 400 Court St., Vienna, IL 62995, or with the Independent Executor, or both, on or before April 29, 2027, or if mailing or delivery of a notice from the Executor is required by Section 5/18-3 of the Probate Act of the State of Illinois, the date stated in that notice. Any claim not filed on or before that date is barred. Copies of a claim filed with the Clerk must be mailed or delivered by the claimant to the Executor and to the attorneys within ten (10) days after it has been filed.
Dated: October 16, 2026.
JANET S. BILLINGSLEY
CAMERON LAW FIRM, LLC
ELVIS C. CAMERON
ATTORNEY FOR INDEPENDENT EXECUTOR
205B N. MAIN ST.
ANNA, ILLINOIS 62906
PHONE: 618-833-2220
ARDC# 6244394
8221-970501

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
JOHNSON COUNTY, ILLINOIS
SOUTHERNTRUST BANK, an Illinois Banking Institution,
Plaintiff,
vs.
PAULA C. MEADE a/k/a PAULA CHRISTINE MEADE, UNKNOWN OCCUPANTS, UNKNOWN OWNERS and NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS,
Defendants
Case No. 2026FC12
NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE BY PUBLICATION
The requisite Affidavit for Publication having been filed, notice is hereby given you, ALL UNKNOWN OCCUPANTS, ALL NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS and ALL UNKNOWN OWNERS, defendants in the above-entitled cause, that the above-entitled mortgage foreclosure action was filed on October 6, 2026, and is now pending.
1. The names of all Plaintiffs and the Case Number are identified above.
2. The Court in which said action was brought is identified above.
3. The name of the titleholder of record is Paula C. Meade a/k/a Paula Christine Meade.
4. A legal description of the real estate sufficient to identify it with reasonable certainty is as follows:
A PARCEL OF LAND BEING A PART OF THE WEST HALF OF THE SOUTHEAST QUARTER OF THE SOUTHEAST QUARTER OF SECTION 27, TOWNSHIP 11, RANGE 2 EAST OF THE THIRD PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, SAID PARCEL IS PART OF PROPERTY DESCRIBED AND RECORDED IN BOOK 174, PAGE 77 IN THE JOHNSON COUNTY COURT HOUSE IN THE NAME OF HAROLD SERRETT, SR. AND MARY SERRETT, DATED JANUARY 19, 1990 (SEE ALSO BOOK 174, PAGE 106). SAID PARCEL BEING MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:
COMMENCING AT THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF SAID WEST HALF, SAID CORNER BEING MARKED BY AN IRON ROD SET; THENCE N 87°06'39" E, 238.34 FEET ALONG THE SOUTH LINE OF SAID WEST HALF TO AN IRON ROD SET, THIS BEING THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF SAID PARCEL AND THE POINT OF BEGINNING; THENCE ALONG NEW LINES THE FOLLOWING TWO (2) CALLS; THENCE N 00°21'52"W, 313.37 FEET, PASSING AN IRON ROD SET AT 40.00 FEET, TO AN IRON ROD SET; THENCE N 87°06'39"E, 417.42 FEET TO AN IRON ROD SET IN THE EAST LINE OF SAID WEST HALF; THENCE S 00°21'52" E, 104.66 FEET, PASSING A STONE FOUND AT 25.37 FEET, TO AN IRON ROD SET AT THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF THE JOYCE MASSEY PROPERTY (SEE BOOK 243, PAGE 105); THENCE WITH SAID MASSEY PROPERTY THE FOLLOWING TWO (2) CALLS; THENCE S 87°06'39" W, 208.71 FEET TO AN IRON ROD SET; THENCE S 00°21'52" E, 208.71 FEET TO AN IRON ROD SET IN THE SOUTH LINE OF SAID WEST HALF; THENCE S 87°06'39" W, 208.71 FEET ALONG THE SOUTH LINE OF SAID WEST HALF TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING.
SAID PARCEL TO CONTAIN 2.001 ACRES, MORE OR LESS, PER SURVEY BY MITCHELL R. GARRETT, IL PROFESSIONAL LAND SURVEYOR NO. 3085, DATED 6/22/2001.
EXCEPTING THEREFROM A STRIP OF LAND THIRTY FEET (30') IN WIDTH OFF THE ENTIRE WEST SIDE THEREOF.
SAID PARCEL BEING SUBJECT TO THE RIGHT-OF-WAY OF REBMAD LAND ACROSS THE SOUTH SIDE AS WELL AS ANY ADDITIONAL RIGHTS-OF-WAY AND EASEMENTS, RECORDED OR OTHERWISE. ALL SITUATED IN THE COUNTY OF JOHNSON, STATE OF ILLINOIS.
Permanent Index Number: 01-27-407-000.
5. A common address or description of the location of the real estate is as follows: 170 Rebman Lane, Goreville, IL 62939.
6. An identification of the Mortgage to be foreclosed is as follows:
a. Names of Mortgagors: Frank D. Meade, Sr. and Paula Christine Meade.
b. Name of Mortgagee: SouthernTrust Bank.
c. Date of Mortgage: July 29, 2010, as modified May 2, 2013, as modified May 20, 2018, as modified June 20, 2023.
d. Date of Recording: August 3, 2010, as modified May 8, 2013, as modified June 14, 2018, as modified August 7, 2023.
e. County Where Recorded: Johnson County, Illinois.
f. Recording Document Identification: Book 706 at Page 69 as Document No. 101376, as modified in Book 790 at Page 106 as Document No. 130803, as modified in Book 920 at Page 119 as Document No. 180896, as modified in Book 1060 at Page 119 as Document No. 8004487.
NOW, THEREFORE, unless you, ALL UNKNOWN OCCUPANTS, ALL NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS and ALL UNKNOWN OWNERS, defendants, file your answer to the complaint for foreclosure in this cause or otherwise make your appearance therein, in the Circuit Court of the First Judicial Circuit, Johnson County, Illinois, held in the Johnson County Courthouse, in the City of Vienna, Illinois, on or before November 28, 2026, default may be entered against you and each of you at any time after that day and a judgment for foreclosure entered in accordance with the prayer of the complaint for foreclosure.
/s/ Ryan M. O'Neal
Circuit Clerk
PURSUANT TO THE FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT IT IS REQUIRED THAT WE STATE THE FOLLOWING TO YOU: THIS NOTICE IS AN ATTEMPT TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE.
LAWLER BROWN LAW FIRM
Adam B. Lawler #6283341
David W. Lawler #6303793
Nick Brown #6302494
Zachary S. Walston #6331559
Evan W. Taylor #6305093
Jarrod Wiggs #6350317
1600 W. Main St/P.O. Box 1148
Marion, Illinois 62959
Telephone: (618) 993-2222
Facsimile: (618) 731-4141
Service Email: service@lblf.com
8221-970570

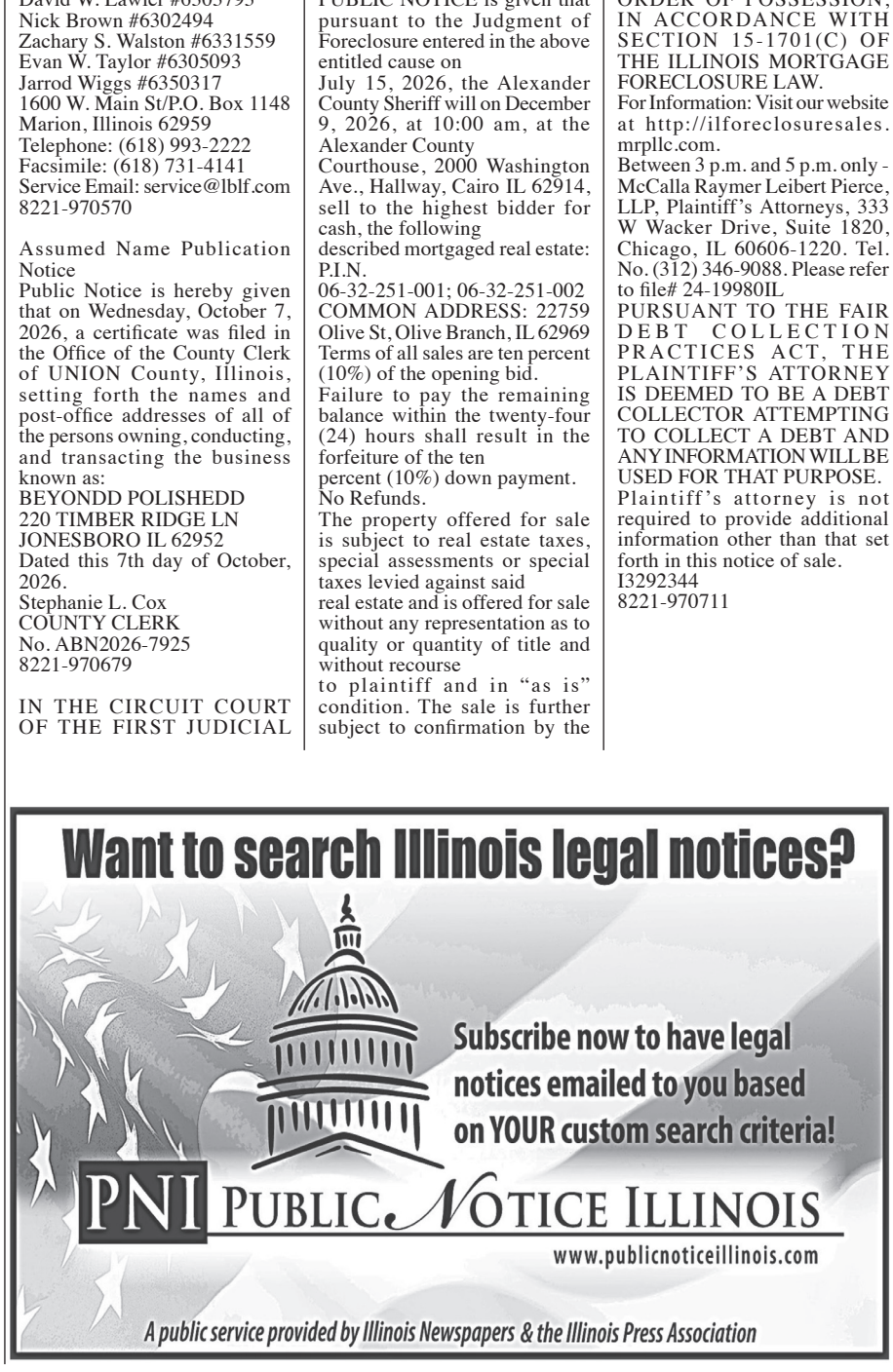
Assumed Name Publication Notice
Public Notice is hereby given that on Wednesday, October 7, 2026, a certificate was filed in the Office of the County Clerk of UNION County, Illinois, setting forth the names and post-office addresses of all of the persons owning, conducting, and transacting the business known as:
BEYONDD POLISHEDD
220 TIMBER RIDGE LN
JONESBORO IL 62952
Dated this 7th day of October, 2026.
Stephanie L. Cox
COUNTY CLERK
No. ABN2026-7925
8221-970679

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
JOHNSON COUNTY, ILLINOIS
IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF:
BOBBIE G. HARPER, DECEASED.
CASE NO. 2026PR16
NOTICE OF PUBLICATION
Notice is given of the death of Bobbie G. Harper, of Tunnel Hill, Johnson, Illinois, on September 1, 2026. Letters of Administration were issued on October 07, 2026 to Kathy Stevens and Bob Kelly Harper as Co-Administrators, whose attorney is Evan W. Taylor of Lawler Brown Law Firm, 1600 W. Main Street, Marion, Illinois 62959.
Claims against the estate may be filed in the office of the Clerk of the Court at the Johnson County Courthouse, Vienna, Illinois, or with the representative, or both, on or before April 22, 2027, or three months from the date of mailing or delivering notice pursuant to 755 ILCS 5/18-3(a), whichever is later, and any claim not filed within that period is barred. Copies of a claim filed with the clerk must be mailed or delivered to the representative and to the attorney within 10 days after it has been filed.
Notice is given to all persons, including all heirs whose names and/or post office addresses are unknown and are not stated in the Petition for the Issuance of Letters of Administration filed on October 5, 2026, that on October 7, 2026, the Circuit Court of Johnson County, Illinois entered an Order Appointing Independent Co-Administrators naming Kathy Stevens and Bob Kelly Harper as Independent Co-Administrators.
KATHY STEVENS AND BOB KELLY HARPER,
INDEPENDENT CO-ADMINISTRATORS
BY: /S/ EVAN W. TAYLOR
LAWLER BROWN LAW FIRM
ADAM B. LAWLER #6283341
DAVID W. LAWLER #6303793
NICK BROWN #6302494
ZACHARY S. WALSTON #6331559
EVAN W. TAYLOR #6305093
JARROD WIGGS #6350317
1600 W. MAIN ST
P.O. BOX 1148
MARION, ILLINOIS 62959
TELEPHONE: (618) 993-2222
FACSIMILE: (618) 731-4141
SERVICE EMAIL: SERVICE@LBLF.COM
8221-970381

REAL ESTATE

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 1ST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
ALEXANDER COUNTY - CAIRO, ILLINOIS
U.S. BANK TRUST COMPANY, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION, AS INDENTURE TRUSTEE ON BEHALF OF AND WITH RESPECT TO BARCLAYS MORTGAGE TRUST 2022-RPL1,
MORTGAGE-BACKED SECURITIES, SERIES 2022-RPL1,
PLAINTIFF
VS.
APRIL D LACEY A/K/A APRIL LACEY, FREDDIE G LACEY JR A/K/A FREDDIE G LACEY A/K/A FREDDIE
LACEY, ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE, UNKNOWN OWNERS GENERALLY, AND NON-RECORD
CLAIMANTS.
DEFENDANTS
NOTICE OF SALE
Case No.: 2026FC2
Property Address:
22759 Olive St
Olive Branch, IL 62969
PUBLIC NOTICE is given that pursuant to the Judgment of Foreclosure entered in the above entitled cause on
July 15, 2026, the Alexander County Sheriff will on December 9, 2026, at 10:00 am, at the Alexander County
Courthouse, 2000 Washington Ave., Hallway, Cairo IL 62914, sell to the highest bidder for cash, the following
described mortgaged real estate:
P.I.N.
06-32-251-001; 06-32-251-002
COMMON ADDRESS: 22759 Olive St, Olive Branch, IL 62969
Terms of all sales are ten percent (10%) of the opening bid.
Failure to pay the remaining balance within the twenty-four (24) hours shall result in the forfeiture of the ten
percent (10%) down payment.
No Refunds.
The property offered for sale is subject to real estate taxes, special assessments or special taxes levied against said
real estate and is offered for sale without any representation as to quality or quantity of title and without recourse
to plaintiff and in "as is" condition. The sale is further subject to confirmation by the court.
The improvement on the property consists of: Single Family Home
The entered judgment amount was $31,293.57.
The property will NOT be open for inspection.
For information call Plaintiff's Attorney, Kluever Law Group, LLP, 200 N. LaSalle St., Suite 1880, Chicago, IL
60601. 312-236-0077. KLG: RML000026-26FC1
8221-970835

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
UNION COUNTY, ILLINOIS
ROCKET MORTGAGE, LLC,
PLAINTIFF,
VS.
MICHELE ASTIN; SECRETARY OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT; UNKNOWN OWNERS AND NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS,
DEFENDANTS.
NO. 2026FC8
201 WEST SPRING STREET
ANNA, IL 62906
JUDGE PRESIDING JUDGE
NOTICE OF SALE
PURSUANT TO JUDGMENT OF FORECLOSURE
UNDER ILLINOIS MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE ACT
PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale entered by the Court in the above entitled cause on July 17, 2026, will on December 16, 2026, in UNION COUNTY COURTHOUSE, 309 W. MARKET, JONESBORO, IL 62952, at 9:00 AM, sell at public auction and sale to the highest bidder for cash, all and singular, the following described real estate mentioned in said Judgment, situated in the County of Union, State of Illinois, or so much thereof as shall be sufficient to satisfy said Judgment:
TAX NO. 05-19-03-409 and 14-00-08-625
COMMONLY KNOWN AS: 201 West Spring Street
Anna, IL 62906
Description of Improvements: Tan vinyl siding, 1.5 story single family home
The Judgment amount was $168,700.70.
Sale Terms: This is an "AS IS" sale for "CASH". The successful bidder must deposit 10% down by certified funds; balance, by certified funds, within 24 hours.
NO REFUNDS.
The subject property is subject to general real estate taxes, special assessments or special taxes levied against said real estate, water bills, etc., and is offered for sale without any representation as to quality or quantity of title and without recourse to plaintiff. The sale is further subject to confirmation by the court.
Upon payment in full of the bid amount, the purchaser shall receive a Certificate of Sale, which will entitle the purchaser to a Deed to the real estate after confirmation of the sale.
The property will NOT be open for inspection. Prospective bidders are admonished to check the court file to verify all information.
The successful purchaser has the sole responsibility/expense of evicting any tenants or other individuals presently in possession of the subject premises.
If this property is a condominium unit, the purchaser of the unit at the foreclosure sale, other than a mortgagee shall pay the assessments and the legal fees required by The Condominium Property Act, 765 ILCS 605/9(g)(1) and (g)(4).
IF YOU ARE THE MORTGAGOR (HOMEOWNER), YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN IN POSSESSION FOR 30 DAYS AFTER ENTRY OF AN ORDER OF POSSESSION, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 15-1701(C) OF THE ILLINOIS MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE LAW.
For Information: Visit our website at http://ilforeclosuresales.mrpllc.com.
Between 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. only - McCalla Raymer Leibert Pierce, LLP, Plaintiff's Attorneys, 333 W Wacker Drive, Suite 1820, Chicago, IL 60606-1220. Tel. No. (312) 346-9088. Please refer to file# 24-19980IL
PURSUANT TO THE FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT, THE PLAINTIFF'S ATTORNEY IS DEEMED TO BE A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE.
Plaintiff's attorney is not required to provide additional information other than that set forth in this notice of sale.
I3292344
8221-970711



Please read this...

By Geof Skinner

Bats, a barred owl, Mother Goose, groundhogs…

BY GEOF SKINNER

Thank goodness Halloween has come and gone. Now we can get serious about some Christmas commercials on television…

Speaking of things… seemed kind of strange last week to still be going outdoors in the afternoon late in October without a jacket. Guess you can do that when the temperature is 81 degrees, which it was at 1:52 p.m. last Thursday. The heat index at the time was 80. Go figure…

Meanwhile…

Bats. A barred owl. Mother Goose. A turtle…sort of. And, of course, groundhogs. Those were just a few of the critters which were seen recently during the Journey Through Life.

Let's start with the "turtle." The critter was seen laying upside down in the street during a recent daily walkabout in our hometown. My first thought was just to get, whatever I had found, out of the street before it was smashed to pieces. I picked up the object and turned it over. The critter turned out to be something called a "Touch & Teach Turtle," which I suppose made it some sort of learning toy. I have no idea how it ended up in the middle of the street.

Some words, and accompanying illustrations, could be seen on the turtle. The words were "Ant," "Bee," "Cat" and "Dog." "Touch & Teach Turtle" informed me that "The ANT is walking near the BEE" and "The CAT is playing ball with the DOG." In the "real world," I can't see such things actually happening, especially the idea that a cat would be playing ball with a dog. Then again, stranger things can happen. Based on some of the online videos The Other Half shows me, cats and dogs can, and do, have fun together.

"Touch & Teach Turtle" appeared to have buttons and little flaps showing the letters of the alphabet. I supposed I should have taken some time to figure out how the critter worked. Instead, I set "Touch & Teach Turtle" next to a pole holding a Stop sign. The critter stayed where it was for a day or two and then disappeared. I hope it found a good home.

Bats, a barred owl and Mother Goose are kind of connected. For one thing, they all fly. Well, I think Mother Goose could fly. She is a goose, after all. I can't be sure if what was found was actually Mother Goose, but that's what I decided to call her.

Bats, a barred owl and Mother Goose all were seen during recent visits to the Lincoln Memorial Picnic Grounds in Jonesboro. The picnic grounds were the setting for a recent Bat Night event presented by the Shawnee National Forest. Bat Night took place on a very nice and unusually warm October evening. As the name suggested, Bat Night was about bats. Visitors could learn all about bats, including those that call Southern Illinois home.



A "Touch and Teach Turtle" was one of the Critters spotted recently in our little corner of the world.

After I arrived at the picnic grounds, a search began for a photo opportunity or two. As I walked along a path, I caught a glimpse of a rather large bird flying across the pond at the picnic grounds. It's not unusual to see a hawk, which is a rather large bird, at the picnic grounds. However, what I saw just did not look like a hawk. One of the folks at Bat Night shared that the bird I had seen actually was a barred owl. Too bad the critter didn't find a nice place for a photograph.

Mother Goose also showed up at the picnic grounds. Just not on Bat Night. I saw Mother Goose laying in some fallen leaves during a "routine" visit to the picnic grounds. As was the case with "Touch & Teach Turtle," Mother Goose was a toy. And, as also was the case with "Touch & Teach Turtle," I picked up Mother Goose and set her on a fence. Mother Goose ended up disappearing, too.

Finally, there were the groundhogs. We went for a couple of days without seeing any of the groundhogs which call our backyard home. The Other Half figured they were just waiting for some more acorns to fall out of an oak tree in a neighbor's yard. I thought maybe the groundhogs had flown south for the winter. Yes, I know. Groundhogs can't fly. But I bet they can purchase plane tickets.



Mother Goose was moved to a "safer" location on a fence after she was found laying in fallen leaves at the Lincoln Memorial Picnic Grounds.

Most of the time, when we look out in the backyard, we'll just see one of the very well fed critters. One day last week, I happened to look out the window and saw two of 'em. The two critters seemed to be enjoying themselves and the moment they were experiencing. Maybe they were sharing a message.

We'll finish up this week with critters we still have not seen any time recently, including raccoons on our front porch, a mountain lion, a bear and a gnu. That last one's a good sign. After all, no gnus is good news…

Clawed, webbed or lobed?

Bird families have different feet for different purposes

BY HENRY DETWILER

Human feet are all the same, with a heel, an arch, and five toes. Bird feet, however, vary considerably depending on the family.

Some have webbed feet for swimming and diving, some have long toes for distributing their weight on lily pads, some have sharp flexible claws for climbing up and down tree trunks, and others have tremendous claws for ripping apart carrion. Many birds use their claws to clamp tightly to high branches, providing safety as they sleep.

We'll look at three families of birds and see how their feet are adapted to their lives and feeding habits.

Most birds have three toes pointing forward and one toe pointing backward, called anisodactyl. Woodpeckers, however, have 2 toes pointing forward and 2 backward, called zygodactyl. This arrangement allows woodpeckers to better grip the bark as they travel up and down trunks, and hang on while drilling into the trees (for food or nest cavities) and drumming for mates. Cuckoos have zygodactyl claws to help them navigate thick tangles, and in the case of roadrunners, to run quickly on the ground. Owls and Ospreys have a reversible outer toe that lets them shift this toe to the rear position, enabling them to better grip struggling rodents and wet fish.

Most waterfowl have palmate feet; their three front toes are connected by webbing and the back toe is free.



ISTOCK.COM/WRZESIENTOMEK

Bird feet vary considerably depending on the family. Waterfowl, like mallards, have webbed feet that help with diving and paddling through the water.

These palmate feet allow for efficient paddling and diving. Diving ducks also have lobes attached to their back toe, aiding in control. American Coots and grebes do not have webbed feet, but rather large lobed feet. These feet spread the bird's weight over a large surface area, allowing them to walk on floating vegetation and lily pads.

Raptors slice, dice, and knock prey out of the air with their talons. Most raptors have three toes facing forward. Their hind toe (the hallux) acts like a powerful thumb and can pierce deep into prey to deliver a lethal jab. Our Bald Eagles' claws can be 8.5 inches in size, with deadly, large 2.5-inch talons. The crushing grip strength from these eagles can reach 400 pounds per square inch (PSI) — some eight times stronger than a human hand. Both Bald Eagles and Osprey eat a lot of fish, so the pads on their feet have many tiny, sharp spikes (spicules) to help them grip slippery, thrashing fish. Peregrine Falcons use their feet differently — they dive on their prey (reaching 200 mph) and then strike the flying bird with balled up claws, knocking it out of the air. On the ground, the Peregrine will finish the kill with a bite to the neck, severing the spinal column.

Current regional sightings

By the end of November most wintering waterfowl, raptors, sparrows, and finches will be back for another season. Winter Wren, Golden-crowned Kinglet, and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker have already returned. In October some of the good birds located were a Black-billed Cuckoo and LeConte's Sparrow in Elkville. Another Black-billed Cuckoo was close to Johnston City. Bay-breasted and Blackburnian Warblers were at Fountain Bluff in Jackson County, close to Marion, and at Rend Lake. Blue-headed Vireos were seen at Pyramid SP and in Union County. A Cape May Warbler in Saline County and a Mourning Warbler in Union County were good, and a Black-throated Blue Warbler at Union County Refuge was outstanding. A Merlin was at LaRue-Pine Hills.

If you're looking for ideas about where to go birding in Southern Illinois, consider my book, "Finding Birds in Southern Illinois," available in print or as a PDF at www.southwestbirders.com.



PHOTOS PROVIDED BY HENRY DETWILER

Raptors, like the bald eagle have sharp talons that aid in capturing prey.



ISTOCK.COM/CRAIG CORDIER

Grebes' feet are lobed, which spread the bird's weight over a larger surface area, allowing them to walk on floating vegetation and lily pads.

About The Author

Carbondale is my home town, where I started birding 56 years ago. I spent an exciting 16 years as a bird guide, and have penned bird-finding books for Southwest Arizona, Southern California, and Southern Illinois. I currently reside in Arizona; you can reach me at henry_detwiler@

THE GAZETTE-DEMOCRAT

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Thursday, November 5, 2026 | **Anna, Illinois** | **$1.00** | **Volume 179, Number 45**

Anna, Jonesboro host Trail of Treats



Trick-or-treating along South Main Street in Downtown Anna

The sixth annual Halloween season Trail of Treats was held from 4 to 6 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 24, in Anna and Jonesboro. Treats were handed out to the many visitors who came to the Main Street and Davie Street areas in Anna and to the area on and around the square in Jonesboro. The weather was warm and sunny for the big day.



Trick-or-treating on the Jonesboro Square.

SIU and Mizzou collaborate on $300k project to monitor soybean drought stress with drones, AI

BY BROOKE KELTNER
SIU UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS

Illinois is the number one producer of soybeans in the United States, but farmers across the state face a big issue when it comes to maintaining their crops — drought. Periods with little to no rain can hamper growth or, worse yet, kill the plant.

Researchers at Southern Illinois University Carbondale are partnering with the University of Missouri (Mizzou) on a $300,000 grant from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture. Together, the universities are exploring how artificial intelligence (AI) and drone-based imaging technologies can help monitor drought stress in soybean crops. The collaboration uses a multidisciplinary approach with expertise in AI, engineering and agriculture for a common goal — supporting farmers.

"Our long-term goal is to make AI-based agricultural technologies more accessible and practical for farmers," said Chao Lu, the professor leading the research for SIU. "Managing water resources is an important part of soybean production."

Drying up profits

Across Illinois, 43,000 soybean farmers rely on making a profit from their crops to feed and support their families, according to the Illinois Soybean Association. The impact is much larger when considering soybean farmers throughout the Midwest, who also depend on a successful harvest as part of their income. However, drought can lead to water stress, causing the plant to show visible signs of damage such as leaf wilting, discoloration or changes in leaf shape. Plant loss affects yield and the farmer's profit.

Typically, farmers identify signs of water stress by physically seeing changes in plants while spending time in their fields. Often, with hundreds or thousands of acres to maintain, this approach can be time consuming, and farmers can discover damaged plants when they're past the point of saving.

"While direct field observation provides valuable information, it can be difficult to apply consistently across large areas," said Lu, a professor of electrical, computer and biomedical engineering. "The condition of soybean plants may also vary within the same field, making regular monitoring more challenging."

A new approach

Now, researchers are investigating whether drone imaging and AI analysis can complement traditional field observations. SIU researchers use drone-based imagery of soybean fields to collect crop information. And they are developing AI models to assess different levels of soybean wilting stress.

But it's easier said than done. There are many challenges when it comes to creating reliable AI models, especially when agricultural conditions are less predictable than a laboratory.

"Soybean fields can vary considerably in soil conditions, weather, lighting, and plant growth," Lu said. "Even within the same field, plants may experience different conditions, which can affect their appearance and growth patterns. These variations create challenges for AI-based analysis."

Another challenge includes collecting high-quality data as AI model development depends on reliable information for training and evaluation. Collecting agricultural data often requires considerable fieldwork, and preparing reference data can involve substantial time and effort from agricultural experts, Lu said.

Educational and outreach opportunities

Currently, two SIU graduate students are hoping to overcome some of those technology challenges by contributing to AI model development and agriculture data analysis. Lu believes this academic experience is two-fold. One, the students can apply their knowledge of computing to real-word agriculture problems, and two, they're able to take an interdisciplinary approach, especially collaborating with Mizzou researchers who are providing expertise on the practical challenges of soybean farming.

"Engineering and agricultural research often approach problems from different perspectives," Lu said. "By working with agricultural researchers, engineering students can gain a better understanding of the challenges faced in agricultural environments and how technical approaches may contribute to possible solutions."

The grant also supports Lu and his graduate students attending outreach events to share their research and introduce AI technologies to the public, including agricultural communities.

Continuous improvement

Going forward, there's still much work to be done by SIU and Mizzou together as the grant continues through June 30, 2027. The universities plan to continue developing and evaluating AI models under a broader range of agricultural conditions..

"One important direction is to examine how the models perform when field conditions differ from those represented in the existing research data," Lu said. "This will help us better understand their strengths and limitations and identify areas where further improvements may be needed."

The team's also interested in exploring how information form drone imagery, soil measurements and weather data can complement one another as well as ways to make these tools affordable for the masses if the technology can be developed.

JONESBORO FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

On November 1, guest speaker, Bro. Carl Dillow, brought the message during morning worship. His message continued his five-part series of statements from an 1860 message from Charles Spurgeon, "What is a Healthy Church?" Last time Bro. Dillow was with us, he addressed the first point, Purity of Life in the Members of the Church. Today, he spoke on the early church and the need for Sound Doctrine. God's Word must be quoted, and the basis for uncorrupted and true biblical teaching. All of God's word must be preached because God's word changes things. The truth must be spoken, no matter who it offends, and there must be a call to bring people to Jesus. His text was found in the second chapter of the book of Acts, also in the first chapter of 2nd Timothy, both in the New Testament.

Music Director, Dee Rose, led the worship accompanied by Debbie York on the piano, and the Praise Team: Rodger Goines, Larry Keller, Sharon Morgan, Debbie York. Connor Benbrook sang a special song, "In Christ Alone."

Our service was sent via transmitter station 87.9 FM for those who want to listen via the radio. The service was also live streamed on Facebook, so if you missed it, you still have an opportunity to view it. Please check our Facebook page, Jonesboro FBC, for the latest videos and info on church events.

This week's activities include our Men and Ladies Bible Studies on Monday, November 2, at 6 p.m. Men meet at the church, ladies will meet at the home of Sheila Aldridge. Senior Adult group, Living Longer and Loving It, "LLL," will meet Tuesday, November 3, at 11 a.m. Our children's program, "Dig In," will meet Wednesday, November 4, from 6-8 p.m. for children ages 3 through 6th grade. There will be a baby shower to bless Nick and Jacqueline Rose on Saturday, November 7.

Happy birthday to Tom Smith, born November 3; Erica Goines, November 7 and Judy Hancock, November 8.

Currently, our regular schedule for worship at Jonesboro First Baptist includes Sunday School classes on Sundays at 9 a.m.; Sunday morning worship at 10 a.m.; Sunday evening worship at 6 p.m. Youth for 6th-12th grades meet also on Sundays at 6 p.m. and Wednesdays from 6-8 p.m. Both our Dig-In Children's program and our Adult Prayer Meeting and Bible Study meets on Wednesdays at 6:00 p.m. All are invited to attend.

ANNA CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

Loving as Jesus Loved…..Giving as Jesus Gave…..Ephesians 5:25

NOVEMBER 1, 2026

The morning worship service was held at 10:35 a.m. on November 1, 2026. Announcements were given by Jessica Elkins. The worship service was led by Pastor Wright and the worship team.

The message "The Book of Ruth - Make Room for What God Is Growing" was brought by Pastor Wright from Ruth 1–4 sharing that God can use everyday faithfulness, generous hearts, and courageous steps to bring new possibilities. Ruth's story points us to Jesus, our Redeemer.

Celebrating a birthday this week is: 2nd Lea Wright

SUNDAY – NOVEMBER 8, 2026

Breakfast - 9:00 a.m.

Sunday School - 9:30 a.m.

Morning Worship Service 10:35 a.m.

No Evening Service

WEDNESDAY – NOVEMBER 11, 2026

Wednesday Night Service will be held at 6:30 p.m. in the sanctuary

Youth Group in the Fellowship Hall at 6:30 p.m.

SUNDAY – NOVEMBER 15, 2026

Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes are due.

Memorial Roll Certificate Service for Michael Smith at 10:35 a.m.

You may contact the church by calling the church office at 618-833-6702 and leaving a message if necessary or by calling Pastor Wright at 618-534-7103

CAMP GROUND CHURCH

The sermon November 1 was "A Blessed Reunion, part 2"; Bro. Easton's chosen scripture selection was Acts 2:1-13. This scripture is a summary of the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the followers of Christ and the responses of those around them.

Just before Jesus returned to Heaven, He told His disciples to remain in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit came upon them. In the days that followed, the believers stayed together in one place, patiently waiting, and in continuing prayer.

On the day of Pentecost, as they were praying, tongues of fire" rested on them and they were filled with the Holy Spirit. The fire of the Holy Spirt is like a controlled burn that clears out that which hinders growth. The Holy Spirit frees us from the forces of earth and clears that which hinders our growth as Christians.

The Holy Spirit caused the disciples and those gathered with them to speak in the languages of all the Jews from around the known world who were gathered in Jerusalem for Pentecost. This speaking in tongues had a specific purpose: to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The crowd was amazed, perplexed, and asked what this meant. It was a chance for them to hear the Gospel, so that they might believe. Many accepted Christ as their saving Messiah. This was the beginning of the Christian Church.

Unfortunately, some made fun and rejected all that the Gospel offered.

Aldi and Vodra Gerard took up the tithes and offerings. Our lead elder for November is Rachael Bonner.

Having birthdays the past week have been Gage Roach the 27th, Justin Bonner the 31st, Bradley Easton November 2, and Teresa Rogers the 3rd.

Congratulations to Rodney and LaDonna Jean Miller whose wedding anniversary was Sunday, the 1st.

The congregation enjoyed a chili/soup, and finger foods fall fellowship October 30 which was a celebration of Bro. Bradley and Amber Easton's 4th year with us, and Pastor Appreciation. The Eastons were given a card and monetary gift as well as a special cake for the evening's dessert. The younger ones, and some not so young, also enjoyed the bonfire and s'mores.

Congratulations to Connor and Caliope Pind, Jonesboro School, and Reed Crane, Anna Junior High for achieving Honor Roll for first quarter this school year.

Congratulations to Vodra and Aldi Gerard who received multiple awards/patches during the recent Scout Court of Honor.

We invite you to join us each and every Sunday as we gather to study and Worship. At 9:15, we enjoy coffee and fellowship preceding Bible Study at 9:30 followed by Worship at 10:30. We are located at the intersection of Camp Ground Road and Tunnel Lane east of Anna, north of Route 146.

UNION COUNTY WEATHER REVIEW

Temperatures for the period of Oct. 19-25 in the Union County area ranged from a high of 78 degrees to a low of 37. No precipitation was recorded.

Following are highlights for the period as recorded by local weather observer Dana Cross near Jonesboro:

Monday, Oct. 19: high 72, low 37.

Tuesday, Oct. 20: high 74, low 40.

Wednesday, Oct. 21: high 76, low 40.

Thursday, Oct. 22: high 77, low 42.

Friday, Oct. 23: high 75, low 42.

Saturday, Oct. 24: high 78, low 41.

Sunday, Oct. 25: high 78, low 43.

Drought conditions worsen

Drought conditions worsened in the Southern Illinois area at the end of October.

An Oct. 29 update from the U.S. Drought Monitor showed that western Union and Williamson counties and all of Jackson County were experiencing severe drought conditions.

Moderate drought conditions were reported in eastern Union and Williamson counties, all of Johnson County, most of Alexander and Pulaski counties and a small part of northern Massac County.

Abnormally dry conditions were reported in extreme southern Alexander and Pulaski counties and most of Massac County.

The forecast from the National Weather Service office in Paducah was calling for a chance of light rain late last Saturday evening through Sunday. Additional showers were expected this week.

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Hebrews 12

The Chastening of the Lord

121 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

4 In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. 5 And have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses his son? It says, "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, 6 because the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son."[1] 7 Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? 8 If you are not disciplined-and everyone undergoes discipline-then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all. 9 Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live! 10 They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness. 11 No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

Warning against Rejecting God's Grace

12 Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. 13 "Make level paths for your feet,"[2] so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed. 14 Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. 15 See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many. 16 See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son. 17 Afterward, as you know, when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected. Even though he sought the blessing with tears, he could not change what he had done.

18 You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm; 19 to a trumpet blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them, 20 because they could not bear what was commanded: "If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned to death."[3] 21 The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, "I am trembling with fear."[4] 22 But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, 23 to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the Judge of all, to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, 24 to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. 25 See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven? 26 At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens."[5] 27 The words "once more" indicate the removing of what can be shaken-that is, created things-so that what cannot be shaken may remain. 28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, 29 for our "God is a consuming fire."[6]

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NEWS FROM VIENNA, ILLINOIS



ISBE Announces Exemplary Status for Vienna High

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has announced that Vienna High School has achieved the highest rank on the Illinois School Report Card, which is Exemplary. This achievement is in addition to Vienna also being ranked in the highest tier on the 5 Essential Survey, Well-Organized, with designations of strong in all five areas. The Illinois School Report Card and the 5 Essentials are the two tools that are utilized in Illinois to measure school success and federal accountability.

"Earning this designation is something our entire school community can take pride in. It represents the commitment our teachers and staff bring to their calling and the effort our students put into their education in cooperation with parents and a community that makes education a priority. We're excited to celebrate this accomplishment together and recognize the people who helped make it possible," said Principal John Giffin.

"Our team is continuously working on school improvement and has made systemic and intentional gains. These efforts have been continuously proven by the data. We are yet again celebrating this year's designation on the Report Card, and at the same time we are forging ahead to continue overall school improvement," noted Dr. Joshua W. Stafford, superintendent.

Stafford went on to explain, "While it is notable that Vienna has the highest rank on both tools the state uses to measure schools, there are so many other successes that our students and families celebrate through each school year. From over 90% of students earning college credit prior to high school graduation to 100% of students having a meaningful plan for post high school success to our Cross Country Team recently winning the IHSA 1A Regional Championship, Eagles are winners! And above all of those accomplishments Eagles are models of care, character, and compassion as demonstrated by days in which the students body has recently donned pink and yellow attire to support fellow students battling cancer along with numerous other actions."

Vienna High School also has two of its five feeder schools earning Exemplary, which includes Cypress and New Simpson Hill School, along with Dongola reaching Approaching Exemplary.

Only 4 other high schools out of the southernmost 52, covering 21 counties in Illinois, achieved Exemplary. In Regional Office of Education #21 Vienna and Carterville were the only two high school to earn Exemplary.

You can review the Illinois School Report Card at https://www.illinoisreportcard.com/. You can learn more about Vienna High School at www.viennahs.com/didyouknow.

Vienna High will host a school-wide celebration on Monday, November 2, starting with a special lunch at 11:45 a.m. and assembly to follow.

New Simpson Hill Blood Drive

New Simpson Hill District 32 will be hosting a Blood Drive for the American Red Cross on Friday, November 13, 2026 from 12:30-5:30pm in the school gymnasium. The theme this year is Be a Lifesaver, Save Lives. To schedule an appointment, call 618-658-8536 to speak with Heather Dailey. Walk-ins are welcome.

Vienna Receives USDA Farm to School Grant to Support Child Nutrition

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced that Vienna High School has been selected to receive the Patrick Leahy Farm to School Grantee. This $469,770 grant will support the Southernmost Illinois Farm to School Network: Growing Connections from Farm to Fork. The grant proposal was authored by Phillip Hosfeldt, Vienna's Dean of System Programs/Chief Strategy Officer and Dr. Evan Coulson, Vienna's Interim Community Schooling Director. The project will establish sustainable farm-to-cafeteria pipelines while developing the next generation of agricultural producers through an expanded outdoor learning

Contined on page 8

NEWS FROM HERE AND THERE By Dixie Terry

Welcome November!

This month was named for the Latin word, "novem," which means seven, since this was the seventh month on the ancient Roman calendar.

Daylight Savings Time has ended for this year. . Did you fall back?

Two important holidays wil be observed this month, Veterans Day on Nov.11 and Thanksiving on Nov. 26.

The Eagle House Ministries will once again provide a free Thanksgiving feast at noon on Thanksgiving day. Volunteers from different denominations will prepare and serve the meal. Call 618-658-0099 to have meals delivered or eat in-house at the location on State Route 37, north of Buncombe.

The "Rekindling the Spirit Youth Rally" will be held on Wednesday, Nov. 18, with food served at 6:30, followed by the worship service. All area youth and their grownups are welcome!

On Friday, Nov. 5 a Caregiver Retreat will be held at 10am-2pm at the Cornerstone Church in Marion. Call 618-993-9138, ext, 67920, to register. This is a recognition of caregivers who care for a patient without pay. This is free and will include a luncheon, door prizes and a speaker.

The "Merry and Bright Holiday Market" will be held on Nov. 7, at 10am, in The Pavilion of Marion.

Johnson County deer season harvest numbered 54, compared to 42 last year. The state youth harvest was 4,852. And, there ae still plenty more out there!

The Daniel Chapman Chapter National Society Daughters of the American Revolution will hold a wreath laying service on Nov. 3 at 11:30 am at the Vienna Fraternal Cemetery, to recognize their 117th anniversary. A luncheon will follow for members at a local eatery.

Seen on Facebook was our great-granddaughter, Belle, all dressed up for homecoming, as a freshman at her high school in Maine.

You are needed to donate at the American Red Cross Blood Drive on Monday, Nov. 16, at noon-6pm at the Fellowship Baptist Church in Vienna. The Pleasant Ridge Center will provide desserts and the Vienna Diner will donate the door prize. Walk-ins are welcomed!

Looking Back! From the Nov. 13, 1991, Goreville Gazette comes: "Just when we were beginning to enjoy the fall weather, after a long, hot summer, the rains came, followed by frigid weather and then snow. What happened to Indian summer?" Let's hope that history doesnt repeat this!

Vienna High School will provide an after-school art program each Tuesday, Nov. 3-Dec. 8, 3-4pm, in the art room. Call the school for more information.

November offers some special days for these folks! Happy Birthday to: Nov. 2--Jessica Berry, Allison Bean, Aaron Pritchettt, Scott Moake! Nov. 3--Emily Johnson! Nov. 4--Paula Evetts, Micah Moss! Nov. 5--Sue Hancock, Chris Bennett, Sue Webb! Nov. 6--Dawn Ragain, Chance Miles, Jeff Fox, Dustin Fox! May you all have many more!

A belated birthday wish goes to Jack Dunker of Cache River Basin Winery, who turned 95 on Oct. 23 and celebrated with his sister, Mary Jane Edmonds.

Congratulations to these couples who are celebrating their wedding anniversary! Kelly and Sheila Harper on Nov. 3! Alan and Linda Kirby on Nov. 3! Justin and Jennifer Mount on Nov. 6!

The Johnson County Women's Club will meet on Friday, Nov. 6 at 1:30pm at Tio's Taqueria Mexican Restaurant. The club welcomes new members to join them. The program will be on "Gardeing for Pollinators."

Give a gift of family history, a membership to the Johnson County Genealogical and Historical Society, a perfect birthday or Christmas gift for a history buff. Receive a monthly newsletter featuring local history stories. Send a check for $20 to JCGHS, PO Box 1207, Vienna, 62995.

Volunteers at the Goreville Ministerial Alliance Thrift Shop on Nov. 3-5-7 will be members of the Lake of Egypt Christian Church. Shopping hours are 9an-4pm on Tuesday and Thursday and 9am-noon on Saturday.

Hungry? PAST of Union County will be hosting a soup and chili supper on Friday, Nov. 6, at 5-7pm at St. Anne's Church. There will be a dessert auction as well. Admission is $8 for adults and $2 for kiddies.

Wish I could be there!

True Vine of the Vienna United Methodist Church will be providing free meals on Saturday, Nov. 14, at 4:30-5:30pm. Drive through the back entrance parking lot or enjoy a home delivery by calling 618-926-1468 and leaving a message. The menu will include turkey, mashed potatoes, stuffing, gravy, corn, green beans, rolls, and dessert. This is free!

Mark your calendar for The Live Nativity to be presented on Dec. 6 at 5:30-8pm at the Vienna City Park. There will be free food and live music also. Celebrate the birth of Christ under thr stars. This is sposored by Eagle House Ministries and local churches.

The Faith Alive Thrift Shop, located on the Vienna Square, welcomes one and all to stop in for a shopping spree. Their hours are Thursday and Friday at 9am-3pm and Saturday, 9am-noon.

Members of the Lake of Egypt Association of Property Owners (LEAPO) continue their project off "Adopt-A-Highway" in the lake community. We continue to wonder who are these slobs who throw their trash out their car windows!

The River-to-River Trail Society is offering another trail adventure, this one at the Crest Trsil of Saline County. Meet at 10am at the Tecumseh Statue near Glen Jones Lake on Saturday, Nov. 7. Call 618-926-3250 for more information. This is free!

Your news is welcomed for this column. Call 618-422-2086 or email to dixieterry85@yahoo.com.

Enjoy the remainder of the week and all that November has to offer!

Rural Health Inc. hosts Night of the Living Health Fair



Rural Health Inc. hosted its fifth annual Night of the Living Health Fair on Friday evening, Oct. 23. The Halloween season event took place at Rural Health Inc.'s health center in Anna. The theme for Night of the Living Health Fair was "Movie Monsters and TV Terrors." Organizers expected as many as 250 children to attend the event, which featured trick-or-treating with local healthcare providers, playing games and learning about the many healthcare services and programs available in Southern Illinois. A Health Resources and Services Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, financial award provided 100% of the costs for the event.

Bat Night presented in Jonesboro



Bat Night was presented Friday evening, Oct. 23, at the Lincoln Memorial Picnic Grounds in Jonesboro. The U.S. Forest Service/Shawnee National Forest, Friends of the Shawnee National Forest and other community partners hosted the event. Bat Night sponsors, recognized for their contributions, included Boy Scout Troop 7044, the City of Jonesboro, the Friends of the Shawnee National Forest, the Southern Illinois University Carbondale Wildlife Department, Stinson Memorial Public Library in Anna and University of Illinois Extension. Visitors had an opportunity to learn about the bats of Illinois. Kids could earn junior wildlife biologist certificates at a bat cave and see tools which are used to monitor bats. The bat cave was set up in a gazebo at the picnic grounds. Bat Night also offered crafts, a bat story walk and refreshments.

Food donations still needed

Anna School District 37 is welcoming donations of nonperishable food items. The donations will help the district's families with weekend meals for students. Items which are beingcollected include: Canned vegetables, fruits, pasta, meat or soup. Macaroni and cheese cups/boxes and ramen. Non-perishable breakfast items. Peanut butter, saltine crackers, graham crackers. Fruitsnacks, microwave popcorn, granola bars, pretzels. Easy to prepare boxed meals.

Items can be dropped off at Davie Jr. High, 301 S. Green Street.

NEWS NOTES

Items of interest from throughout Union County, from social media and beyond

BY GEOF SKINNER

Veterans Day will be observed on Wednesday, Nov. 11. Locally, a Veterans Day parade is planned on Nov. 11 in Anna.

***

Thank you to all of the veterans in Union County who have served the nation. Gratitude also goes out to the families of our veterans.

***

Shawnee School District 84 in Wolf Lake is planning to host an assembly in honor of Veterans Day at 1 p.m. on Nov. 10. The assembly will be in the junior-senior high school gymnasium.

***

Cobden American Legion Post 259 and its Auxiliary plan to serve a community breakfast on Saturday, Nov. 7. Serving is planned from 8 to 10 a.m. in the parish hall at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Cobden.

***

A U.S. Marine Corps birthday celebration is planned Tuesday, Nov. 10, at the Veterans of Foreign Wars Carroll P. Foster Post No. 3455 of Anna. The celebration begins at 5 p.m. at the post, which is located at 70 VFW Ln., just off old U.S. Route 51 between Anna and Cobden. A cake cutting and karaoke are planned; finger foods will be available.

***

National First Responders Day was observed Wednesday, Oct. 28. The day honored those who protect and answer the call to serve the nation's communities, including police and EMS, fire department and dispatch personnel.

***

The Union County Sheriff's Office is planning to have a food drive from 9 a.m. to noon Nov. 7 at the Kroger store in Anna.

***

Due to the production schedule for the paper, local results from Tuesday's general election were not yet available. The plan is to have the results in an upcoming paper.

***

The Village of Cobden has received major funding support from USDA Rural Development for a water well project. More on this to come.

***

Community members continue to voice their opposition to the use of Flock surveillance cameras. Two persons shared their concerns at an Oct. 23 meeting of the Union County Board of Commissioners. The meeting was at the county courthouse in Jonesboro. Both persons urged county officials to remove the cameras.

***

The City of Anna is hoping to start work soon on a new website.

***

Tom Smith has been appointed to fill a vacancy on the City of Anna's zoning board of appeals.

***

The Anna-Jonesboro Community High School National Society, the Student Services Department and The Comfort Closet are conducting a food drive which started Nov. 2 and continues through Nov. 6. Donations of breakfast items, snacks, pop-top canned goods, ramen noodles, soups and shelf-stables meals are welcomed. The donations will help to stock the Comfort Closet for students in need at the school. Community members can drop off donations at the principal's office at the school.

***

Congratulations to the 2026 A-JCHS girls and boys cross country teams. The girls won their fifth straight IHSA regional championship. The boys finished fourth at the regional. Both teams advanced to sectional competition.

***

A-JCHS senior Reese Lofton has won back-to-back juvenile 13-17 years old specialty action world grand championships at the 2025 and 2026 Racking Horse World Celebration held in Shelbyville, Tenn. Reese's horse, I Am Hooked, is a 7-year-old gelding owned by Reese and trained by Campbell Stables in Cullman, Ala.

***

The A-JCHS Beta Club is planning to host a Trivia Night on Nov. 6. Doors open at 6 p.m. in the school cafeteria. Trivia starts at 6:30 p.m.

***

The Cobden School District is hosting a food drive through the morning of Nov. 18. Thanksgiving items, boxed cereal and canned protein (such as Spam, chicken and tuna) are particularly welcomed. Donations will be divided between the Cobden Elementary School food pantry and Jesus Es El Señor.

***

The Cobden Elementary School food pantry is planning to serve a community Thanksgiving meal on Thanksgiving Day, Thursday, Nov. 26. Serving will be from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the school's cafeteria.

***

State officials have announced the 2026 Back-to-School Sales Tax Holiday provided an estimated $11.4 million in savings for Illinois families, exceeding the $10 million savings estimate. The tax holiday, held Aug. 7-16, reduced the state sales tax rate on clothing, footwear and school supplies. Approximately 2,284 retailers sold an estimated $229.3 million in qualifying items during that period. The reduced rate applied to purchases made both in stores and online.

Lick Creek School fall fest planned

Lick Creek School is planning to host a Fall Festival on Saturday, Nov. 7. The annual PTO fundraiser will be from 3 to 8 p.m. Funds which are raised at the festival will be used for classroom needs, field trips, family events and many other activities.

Festival highlights include a haunted bus barn from 3 to 6 p.m.; a chance to kiss a mystery animal to help support Teacher Appreciation Week; games; a car smash; a fall photo booth; a "Lick Creek Jail" presented by the Lick Creek FFA; and face painting. Silent and live auctions are planned, as are a bake off, inflatables and a basket raffle.

Food will be served. The menu includes barbeque or fish dinners for $12. All dinners come with two sides, dessert and a drink. Barbeque sandwiches will be available for $4.

Christmas Shop set to open in Cobden Nov. 7

Union County Historical and Genealogy Society board member Darryl Parks stands among a collection of nutcrackers that will be sold at the society's upcoming Christmas Shop. The Shop is scheduled to open at 9 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 7. The Christmas Shop is located in the Union County Museum building in the downtown Cobden area. The shop, which will offer a variety of holiday decorations, is a major fundraiser for the society.





PHOTO PROVIDED

Union County Historical & Genealogy Society board member, Darryl Parks, posing with a collection of nutcrackers that will be sold at the Society's Christmas Shop.



Alto Pass Veterans Day Ceremony

The Alto Pass Area Veterans Memorial Organization is holding a Veterans Day ceremony on Saturday, November 7th at 11:00 am in downtown Alto Pass at the Veterans Memorial. The ceremony is to honor the memory of area Veterans including those whose names have recently been engraved on the Memorial Wall. This dedication will include Dale L. Toler, Terrell T. J. Johnson, Donald R. Gee and Floyd John Trexler. The ceremony will include a three-volley salute.

The Alto Pass Area Veterans Memorial group is responsible for creating and maintaining the Alto Pass Veterans Memorial that honors U.S. military veterans who have passed away and are from the Alto Pass area. Veterans from the Alto Pass area are encouraged to become members. Donations are always appreciated.

Salute to Veterans at Vienna High

Vienna High School Student Council is hosting the annual Veteran's Day flag raising program which will be on the front lawn (main gym if inclement weather) on Tuesday, November 10th, from 1pm-2pm.

This year's featured speaker will be United States Army Illinois National Guard Veteran and current Vienna High History and Driver's Education Instructor, Brandon McKinney. Mr. McKinney served for 9 years in the Army Guard and completed service in 2010 at the rank of Sergeant E5.

All community members are invited to attend the program and especially Veterans are encouraged to attend. If you are a Veteran who will be unable to attend, the students wish to honor you by reading your name and branch of service. Veterans and or others wishing to recognize a Veteran that they know can complete the below form at the link provided.



Veterans Day parade set in Anna

A Veterans Day parade is planned Wednesday, Nov. 11, in Anna. The parade is sponsored by Veterans of Foreign Wars Carroll P. Foster Post 3455 of Anna. The parade steps off at 11 a.m. on a route through the downtown Anna area.

The theme for this year's parade is "Honoring All Who Served." Businesses, organizations, school bands and clubs, local clubs and groups have been invited to take part in the parade.

The Anna VFW post is very proud of its Veterans Day parade. The Anna event is the only parade in Southern Illinois which continues to be held on Veterans Day, which is observed each year on Nov. 11.

There will be complimentary chili and hot dogs served in the VFW hall to parade participants immediately following the parade. Certificates will be distributed to winning entries at that time as well.

Arts council to salute veterans, service members

Shawnee Hills Arts Council is planning to host an annual salute to veterans and active duty service members.

Veterans and active duty service members will be honored with a dinner and show which are planned Monday evening, Nov. 9, at the arts council, 117 W. Davie St. in Anna. The evening begins at 6 p.m.

Dinner will be catered by The Kitchen on Lafayette. The evening will feature Chris Egelston's magic show.

Those who want to attend are asked to RSVP by Nov. 6 by calling or texting Zack at 309-826-6888 or by sending an email to zj.rowatt@gmail.com. Everyone needs a ticket. Veterans and active duty service members are free. All others are asked to make a $15 donation.

P.A.S.T. NEWS: FALL 2026

Board members of P.A.S.T. of Union County met Tuesday, Oct. 27, 2026 for a regular business meeting. Present were thirteen board members, one "Friend of PAST" and one guest. Two board members are currently ill, one is in the hospital, and two had prior obligations. Board members approved the Sept. 28, 2026 minutes and Sep. 30, 2026 treasurer's report.

Various committee reports were heard in regards to weddings at St. Anne's Church this fall, Color-Fest activities in Jonesboro, various fundraising endeavors, work on grant applications, and the outcome of a series of recent talks. Also discussed was the conversion of an outbuilding as a research area to house recent acquisitions from the Gathering Place. A "Thank You" card was received from the family of the late Martha Ann Webb in acknowledgment of our sympathies. Information was shared on the contents of the Jonesboro Quarterly received via mail, a flyer was presented on a program by Bob Swenson on the Rivers Confluences at the Stinson Library on Nov. 13 and a reminder of Darrel Dexter's event at John A. Logan Museum on Halloween discussing Entertaining Obituaries. Board members, again, wish to thank Darrel Dexter, Mike and Marilyn Meisenheimer who graciously filled in for Brian Bailey, and Bryan Crain for the creative and informative "Spooky Talks" in October. At the conclusion of the meeting, Patricia Moehring joined P.A.S.T. as a new "friend" and we are blessed to have her support.

In upcoming events, details were discussed in regards to the Nov. 6 Soup and Chili Supper with Dessert Auction, held 5 p.m. at St. Anne's Historic Church. The cost is $8 per adult, $2 per child.

Also discussed were the Holiday Luncheons whose theme this year is Icicles. Inspire. Imagination. Dates are Dec. 3, 4, 5, 10, 11 and 12. The meal will consist of Beef Brisket Au Jus, vegetable medley casserole, Heritage House salad, dinner roll, and dessert of ice cream and cookies. Cost is $25 per person and reservations are required. Contact Linda Hileman at 618-697-1870 by Dec. 1 to reserve your table/seat. Doors will open at 11:30 a.m. and the meal will begin at noon. "Friends of P.A.S.T." are asked to help if you can.

P.A.S.T. wishes to thank Susan Sitter Whitemountain and Norma Lee Hackney for graciously extending an unparalleled opportunity for the organization to acquire many of their various resource materials and equipment from The Gathering Place. Heritage House Museum is currently working to secure funding to convert a building on-site into a community resource facility. This building will help better utilize those additional resources in conjunction with the museum's current collection. P.A.S.T. members will be able to offer help in guiding those who are interested in accessing family genealogy, learning preservation methods for their own historical artifacts, or help for those seeking information on the immense history of our county and its communities in its transformation from a territory into the Union County of today.

All of these opportunities are reliant on community support through donations, various fundraising efforts, upcoming workshops, grants, and the physical dedication of P.A.S.T.'s members and "Friends." P.A.S.T. of Union County is a non-profit organization. Membership in P.A.S.T. includes a one-time $30 donation, which is tax deductible. Additionally, the organization hosts several events throughout the year and seeks help from "friends" during those times when they are able. If you would like more information or wish to extend a donation, please contact Suzan Harvel, President of P.A.S.T. at suzpark58@gmail.com or

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Shawnee Community College sees double-digit growth in online and dual credit enrollment

Shawnee Community College is experiencing significant growth in online education and dual credit enrollment, according to the Illinois Community College Board's (ICCB) Fall 2026 Opening Enrollment Report released this month.

The report highlights two areas where SCC is outperforming statewide enrollment trends, reflecting the College's efforts to provide flexible educational opportunities and expand access to higher education throughout Southern Illinois.

Online enrollment at SCC increased 11.9% compared to Fall 2025, with 706 students taking at least one online course. That contrasts with a statewide 2.2% decline in online enrollment.

More than 61% of Shawnee Community College students are taking at least one online course this fall, significantly higher than the statewide average of 36.5%.

This growth reflects an ongoing trend at SCC.

Since Fall 2022, enrollment in at least one online course has increased by 39.3%.

The College also saw substantial growth in dual credit enrollment, which lets high school students earn college credits while completing their high school education.

SCC's dual credit enrollment increased 13.8%, growing from 340 students in Fall 2025 to 387 this fall. Statewide, dual credit enrollment increased 2%. Since Fall 2022, Shawnee's dual credit enrollment has grown 20.9%.

"Today's students need educational opportunities that fit their lives. Whether that means taking classes online while balancing work and family responsibilities or earning college credits while still in high school, Shawnee Community College is committed to meeting students where they are," said SCC Interim President Dr. Melanie Pecord. "These enrollment trends reinforce the importance of providing flexible, accessible pathways to higher education."

While the College saw growth in online and dual credit enrollment, overall opening enrollment declined from 1,219 students in Fall 2025 to 1,153 in Fall 2026, a 5.4% decrease.

Statewide, Illinois community colleges saw a slight 0.7% enrollment decline, with 271,845 students enrolled this fall.

The ICCB report also highlights continued interest in workforce-focused education throughout Illinois. Statewide enrollment in Career and Technical Education programs rose 5.9%, while enrollment in vocational skills training rose 9.6%.

At Shawnee Community College, 380 students are enrolled in Career and Technical Education programs this fall, representing approximately one-third of the College's student population.

The College continues to offer a variety of academic transfer, career and technical education, workforce training, and dual credit opportunities to serve students throughout its five-county district.

The ICCB report reflects preliminary enrollment figures collected near the beginning of the fall semester. Final enrollment figures may change as additional data becomes available.

Registration is currently underway for Shawnee Community College's Winter Intersession and Spring 2027 semester.

For more information about educational opportunities at

Illinois sets new record for highest-ever graduation rate

Illinois students continue to build on years of progress, reaching new milestones in academic achievement, graduation rates, attendance, and college and career readiness, according to the 2026 Illinois Report Card released today by the Illinois State Board of Education. The data show encouraging statewide momentum across nearly every major indicator of student success.

"All across the state, Illinois schools are reaching new heights and the 2026 Report Card is just the latest demonstration of educational excellence and improvements," said Governor JB Pritzker. "Thanks to the hard work of our kids, the commitment of our teachers, and the historic investments from state government, Illinois is reaching record highs in graduation rates, improving proficiency across subjects, and unleashing the potential of every Illinois student."

This year's Report Card highlights progress across a range of academic and student success indicators while introducing Profiles of Performance, Illinois' redesigned accountability framework.

Graduation Rates Reach Record High

Illinois' four-year graduation rate reached 89.8% in 2026, marking a record high and continuing a long-term trend of improvement. Since 2012, the state's graduation rate has increased by more than nine percentage points and has now surpassed Illinois' Every Student Succeeds Act target of 88.9%, a milestone reached four years ahead of schedule.

Progress was observed across multiple student groups. English learners posted some of the largest gains, increasing their graduation rate by 6.2 percentage points since 2022. Strong improvements were also observed among Black students, Hispanic students, and students identifying with two or more races.

While a few student groups experienced modest year-to-year fluctuations, the longer-term trend remains positive. More Illinois students across a wide range of backgrounds are earning a diploma and preparing for success after high school.

Illinois Students Make Strong Academic Gains

Statewide proficiency increased across all three tested subjects in 2026, rising from 52.4% to 55.4% in English language arts (ELA), from 38.4% to 39.2% in math, and from 44.6% to 48.7% in science. Gains were observed across student groups and grade levels statewide.

ELA continued to show particularly strong results. Black students posted one of the largest improvements, increasing from 31.1% to 34.1%, while low-income students and students with disabilities also demonstrated meaningful gains. Students in Grades 6-8 led literacy improvement statewide, with eighth graders increasing proficiency from 56.3% to 62.5%, the largest year-over-year gain among tested grades. Student growth in ELA also remains above pre-pandemic levels across every student group measured, building on the work of Illinois' Comprehensive Literacy Plan.

Math proficiency also increased statewide, with gains observed across many student groups and six of the nine tested grades. Ninth-grade students posted the largest increase, rising from 37.7% to 41.7%. While math growth remains below pre-pandemic levels for most student groups, Illinois recently released its first statewide Numeracy Plan to strengthen mathematics instruction and accelerate achievement and growth in mathematics, building on lessons learned through implementation of the Comprehensive Literacy Plan.

Science demonstrated some of the strongest gains among the three tested subjects. Science proficiency increased across every student group measured, with Black students improving from 20.4% to 25.4%, low-income students improving from 27.7% to 32.1%, and English learners improving from 12.2% to 16.8%. Fifth- and eighth-grade students each improved proficiency by more than six percentage points. In 2025, Illinois adopted new proficiency benchmarks. This increase represents an apples-to-apples comparison of improvements among student groups.

Chronic Absenteeism Improves Across Student Groups

Chronic absenteeism declined for the fourth consecutive year, continuing Illinois' progress in reconnecting students to the classroom following pandemic-era disruptions. The statewide rate fell from 29.8% in 2022 to 23.5% in 2026, a 21.1% improvement.

ISBE emphasizes consistent attendance as the positive outcome schools are working toward: ensuring students are present, engaged, and connected to learning. Regular attendance remains one of the strongest predictors of academic success and high school graduation.

Teacher Workforce Grows, Diversifies

Illinois schools now employ nearly 140,000 teachers, continuing a steady upward trend in filled teaching positions. Since 2019, the state has added more than 12,000 teachers statewide while also reducing the number of unfilled teaching positions. This growth has coincided with a decline in average class size, helping schools provide more individualized support for students, even as statewide student enrollment continues a long-term decline linked to broader population and birth rate trends.

The educator workforce also continues to become more reflective of Illinois' student population, with the number of Asian educators increasing 11%, Hispanic educators increasing 6%, and Black educators increasing 5.2% in 2026. Sustained state investments in recruitment, preparation, and retention continue to strengthen the educator pipeline across Illinois.

Student enrollment continued its long-term decline in 2026, decreasing 1.6% from the previous year. This trend generally aligns with declining birth rates both in Illinois and nationally, resulting in fewer school-age children entering the education system.

Students Are Career and College Ready

Participation in advanced coursework and career pathway programs remains strong across Illinois. More than 326,000 students participated in enriched or honors coursework in 2026, while nearly 160,000 students enrolled in Advanced Placement courses and more than 117,000 students participated in dual credit programs. These opportunities help students challenge themselves academically, earn college credit while still in high school, and reduce future college costs for families.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) also continued to gain momentum statewide. More than 290,000 students participated in CTE programs, while over 163,000 students completed focused career pathways as concentrators. The number of CTE concentrators has increased by more than 17% since 2024, reflecting growing student interest in career-focused learning experiences that prepare them for both college and the workforce.

A Redesigned Accountability System for Illinois Schools

Beginning with the 2026 Illinois Report Card, ISBE is implementing a redesigned accountability system built around Profiles of Performance. Developed through extensive stakeholder engagement, the new system is designed to provide clearer expectations, support continuous improvement, and give families and educators a more meaningful picture of school performance.

The new framework expands opportunities for schools to earn Exemplary recognition by meeting clearly defined statewide criteria rather than being limited to a top percentage of schools. Under the previous accountability system, approximately 10% of schools were designated Exemplary. Under Profiles of Performance, 28.3% of schools met Exemplary criteria. The redesign also provides greater differentiation among schools by replacing the former broad Commendable category, which included 73.4% of schools, with multiple performance levels that provide a clearer picture of school strengths and opportunities for growth.

The Profiles of Performance model evaluates schools using a broad range of indicators, including proficiency, student growth, graduation rates, consistent attendance, climate survey participation, and English learner progress. Schools will now be evaluated against clearly defined performance criteria rather than solely in relation to one another, making results easier to understand and use for improvement.

The 2026 Illinois Report Card provides a snapshot of school performance data from the 2025-26 school year. Visit IllinoisReportCard.com for interactive data visualizations and school, district, and statewide Report Card information. Additional resources, including statewide trend data, student growth data, and downloadable Report Card datasets, are available through ISBE's Report Card webpage.

J.W. REYNOLDS MEMORIALS
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103 S. Fifth St.
(618) 658-2911

Anna
517 E. Vienna St., Suite A
(618) 833-6014

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1408 S. Main St.
(618) 435-4199

Marion
1809 N. Court St.
(618) 993-5511

Herrin
1116 N. Park Ave.
(618) 942-2342

Mt. Vernon
2223 Broadway
(618) 242-1305

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200 E. Poplar St.
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‘Save Choate’ legislation recently proposed

State Rep. Scott Doody, R-Anna, is chief co-sponsor of legislation, along with State Rep. Charlie Meier, R-Okawville, to Save Choate Mental Health Center in Anna and address delays in treating defendants found unfit to stand trial in Illinois.

A package of bills is aimed at holding the Illinois Department of Human Services, IDHS, accountable and support both sheriffs and communities throughout Illinois.

House Bill 5822 would require prompt placement of defendants within 30 days and provide review of psychiatric status and treatment at a designated facility such as the Choate Mental Health and Developmental Center.

House Bill 5823 would require IDHS to pay sheriffs who provide housing and mental health services for defendants if the agency does not place them after 20 days.

House Bill 5824 would require former residents of Choate relocated to CILA’s the right to return if they so choose or to another state facility where space is available.

“These proposals focus on holding state agencies accountable and utilizing existing resources like the Choate Mental Health Center as temporary solutions,” Doody said in a press release.

Public health officials encourage immunizations for respiratory illnesses

BY GEOF SKINNER

The Illinois Department of Public Health, IDPH, is reminding Illinoisans that it is time to get immunizations against seasonal respiratory illnesses, such as flu, COVID-19 and RSV. The reminder comes after IDPH director Dr. Sameer Vohra received his annual flu and COVID-19 shots during a visit to the Winnebago County Health Department at the end of October.

“The message today is simple and clear: the time to get your seasonal immunizations is now,” Vohra said in a news release. “Respiratory illnesses like flu, COVID-19 and RSV will only get more prevalent in the weeks ahead. Getting protected now gives you the best chance of avoiding illness at the holidays and through the long winter months ahead. And it not only protects you, it also protects your family, your co-workers, and your community.”

Rural Health Inc. offers seasonal vaccinations for flu, COVID and RSV at each of its health centers in the area. Appointments can be made, and more information is available, by calling 618-833-4471.

According to IDPH’s Seasonal Respiratory Illness Dashboard, Illinois was seeing low levels of respiratory illness as of Oct. 28. But there were signs that flu was on the rise. Historically, acute respiratory illnesses increase significantly during the winter months, when people spend more time indoors, making it easier for such illnesses to spread.

IDPH shared that immunization remains the best form of protection against contracting seasonal respiratory illness and can lessen the severity of illness if someone does contract it.

Other preventive steps which can be taken include:

Wash your hands frequently with soap and water: it is one of the most effective ways to reduce the spread of illness. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are also effective if soap and water are not available.

Minimize close contact with sick people. Stay home when you are ill. When you are ill, allow a few feet of distance from others. Cover coughs and sneezes with your elbow or tissue but not your hand. When you are ill, you may also wear a surgical-type mask when around others.

Vohra noted that individuals can get their shots for flu, COVID-19 and RSV (where recommended) at the same time, making it easier to get full protection against the most common seasonal illnesses. He also pointed out that it can take some time for immunizations to become fully effective, making it important to get the shots as soon as possible before seasonal illnesses become more prevalent and ahead of large gatherings during the holidays.

IDPH highlights awareness about lead poisoning hazards

The Illinois Department of Public Health, IDPH, joined in the observance of National Lead Poisoning Week, which was Oct. 25-31. This year’s observance followed the state’s move to implement universal lead testing, which took effect July 1, 2026.

IDPH shared in a news release that each month in Illinois, hundreds of children around the state are found to have elevated levels of lead in their blood, which can lead to developmental and learning difficulties and other health issues.

“Universal lead testing is an essential tool for identifying and helping children who have been exposed to lead,” IDPH director Dr. Sameer Vohra said. “It’s equally important to identify and remove sources of lead exposure before a child is in harm’s way. This week is all about reminding Illinoisans to take the steps to prevent lead poisoning and keep our children safe.”

The most common source of exposure is from deteriorated lead-based paint, which was used in many homes built before 1978. Children can be exposed by swallowing or breathing in lead dust created by old paint that has peeled, cracked or chipped, or eating paint chips or chewing on surfaces coated with lead-based paint, such as windowsills.

For those who live in a house built before 1978, IDPH advised that a certified inspector or risk assessor can check the home for lead-based paint or lead-based paint hazards. It’s estimated that there are still well over one million homes in Illinois that contain lead-based paint.

Lead can also be found in drinking water. The most common sources of lead in drinking water are lead pipes, faucets and fixtures.

Lead exposure can be significantly reduced by taking simple precautions around the house, IDPH said. The precautions include cleaning up paint chips and peeling paint; washing floors, counter tops and windowsills weekly with soap and water; and using proper safety measures when renovating or remodeling your house, like spraying down painted surfaces with water before scraping or sanding, and using plastic sheeting to capture any debris which is generated.

Vienna Receives USDA Farm to School Grant to Support Child Nutrition, continued

laboratory.

The USDA provides leadership on food, agriculture, natural resources, rural development, nutrition, and related issues. USDA awards competitive Farm to School grants that support planning, developing, and implementing farm to school programs. USDA's Farm to School grants help state, regional, and local organizations as they initiate, expand, and institutionalize farm to school efforts.

Mr. Hosfeldt shared, “Current farm-to-school efforts remain sporadic and transactional rather than relationship-driven. Without permanent coordinating infrastructure and specialized consulting support, these challenges will persist. However, the Southernmost Illinois Farm to School Network project transforms transactional relationships into permanent market infrastructure supporting both food security and agricultural viability through targeted producer capacity-building investments, enabling meaningful infrastructure development.”

“This year’s grants are a win-win for schools and children, for farmers and real food,” said Deputy Under Secretary for USDA’s Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services Patrick A. Penn. “Our Nation’s farmers, ranchers and producers grow the safest, most abundant and affordable food in the world, and now more children will get to experience the benefits of that bounty. USDA is fully committed to supporting healthy choices, healthy families, and healthy outcomes through farm to school, and I can’t wait to see the life-changing impact these new projects will have on communities across

SIU’s Simon Institute hosts alum, Illinois state Rep. Will Davis for open house Friday



PHOTO PROVIDED

Illinois state Rep. Will Davis, D-Homewood, a 1989 SIU Carbondale graduate, will speak at an open house at SIU’s Paul Simon Public Policy Institute on Friday, Nov. 6. With Davis are Linda Baker, interim institute director (left) and Matt Collinsworth, institute associate director.

Southern Illinois University Carbondale’s Paul Simon Public Policy Institute will host an open house on Friday, Nov. 6, featuring a special appearance by alumnus and Illinois state Rep. William “Will” Davis. The event will bring together institute staff, friends and supporters for an opportunity to connect and discuss issues shaping Illinois public policy.

The open house is from noon to 1:30 p.m. at the Forestry Building, 1231 Lincoln Drive, on SIU’s campus. Davis, D-Homewood graduated from SIU with a degree in political science in 1989. During the event, he will reflect on the Nov. 3 election results, discuss priorities for the upcoming legislative veto session and take questions from the audience. Discussion topics will also include school funding reform, state budget accountability and other issues affecting Illinois communities.

Refreshments will be served. The event is free and open to the public. Registration is encouraged but not required.

“Rep. Davis has dedicated his career to public service and addressing issues that affect communities across Illinois,” Linda R. Baker, interim institute director, said. “We’re pleased to welcome him back to campus as a fellow Saluki and provide an opportunity for our community to hear his perspective on the recent election, the state’s upcoming legislative session and important questions surrounding education funding and responsible budgeting. Bringing public officials and community members together for thoughtful conversation is an important part of fostering informed and engaged citizenship.”

Davis represents the state’s 30th district in the Illinois House of Representatives, which includes parts of the city of Chicago, along with several southern and south-suburban municipalities and townships in Cook County. Voters first elected Davis to the state house in 2003.

He has been a longtime advocate for education funding and public accountability. He served as the chief House sponsor of Senate Bill 1947, which established Illinois’ Evidence-Based Funding model for public schools. He is also a founding member of the Better Funding for Better Schools Coalition and serves as chairman of the House Appropriations–Elementary and Secondary Education Committee. Davis is a member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity.

The open house will provide attendees with an opportunity to hear directly from a state lawmaker, exchange perspectives on the issues facing Illinois and connect with others interested in public policy and civic engagement, Baker said. It also offers an opportunity to learn more about the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute and its work to promote ethical conduct in government, responsible citizenship and greater public understanding of policy issues.

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SIU Waterski Club competes at national tournament for second time in team's history



(PHOTO PROVIDED/NEWS.SIU.EDU.)

The SIU Waterski Club traveled to Rio Linda, Calif., Oct. 15-17 to compete in the 2026 National Collegiate Water Ski Association tournament. The trip marked the second time the club has qualified for nationals.

BY BROOKE KELTNER
SIU UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS

A student from Union County is a member of the Southern Illinois University Carbondale Water Ski Club which competed at nationals for the second time in the club's history, with the team finishing 11th overall.

Club members traveled for the 2026 National Collegiate Water Ski Association, NCWSA, tournament on the waters of Bell Acqua Lakes in Rio Linda, Calif., Oct. 15-17. They earned a spot at the tournament where they competed against a dozen teams after taking fifth at regionals in Cambridge, Iowa.

Julia Lasley of Anna is one of the members of the club. Lasley is a medical student at SIU. Overall unofficial scores showed that Lasley took first place in women's jump, setting two personal records at 67 and 69 feet.

Nicholas Pinedo, the club's president, competed with the team at the 2024 nationals in San Marcos, Texas, when the team placed fifth overall. He described this second nationals adventure as "surreal."

"You're surrounded by a bunch of people whose favorite pastime is simply having a good time," Pinedo said. "For a weekend, you get to forget about everything else going on in life and just enjoy being with your team, skiing and being surrounded by great people and great vibes."

Journey to Nationals

The club meets three times a week to practice on the lake at the Du Quoin State Fairgrounds under the guidance of David Adams, whom Pinedo described as "an incredible coach who's always willing to help." Other than regionals, the water ski team competed in four other tournaments leading up to nationals this year, including the Saluki Showdown in Du Quoin, the Spartan Ripfest in South Haven, Mich., the Sunflower Showdown in Lawrence, Kan., and the Illinois Collegiate Cup in Du Quoin.

"One of my favorite things about these tournaments is being surrounded by teams from bigger schools all across the country," Pinedo said. "A lot of them have no idea where SIU is, what it stands for, or even what a Saluki is. We get the opportunity to show them."

However, there's extra pressure during tournaments as athletes only get one attempt at each event, including regionals where the Salukis narrowly qualified for nationals this year.

"We struggled to perform as well as we knew we were capable of," he admitted. "It was stressful knowing how close we came to missing out, especially after seeing how much work everyone had put in throughout the season."

After qualifying for nationals, the team had another obstacle to overcome: paying for a trip to California, including lodging, transportation and meals. The club created an online fundraiser, which received more than a dozen contributions from donors near and far. One contributor wrote, "Good work and good luck from a random person in San Francisco."

The club received support from the university, alumni and other donors who made the trip to nationals possible, Pinedo said.

Competing at Nationals

This season, SIU Water Ski started a new tradition by dancing on the dock around the teammate who's getting ready to compete to the tune of "Walk Like an Egyptian" by the Bangles. The nod to Southern Illinois being known as Little Egypt followed them to nationals. Pinedo credits having some fun during the competition as a way to calm nerves before getting out on the water.

Nationals consisted of six competition categories: women's slalom, men's slalom, women's trick, men's trick, women's jump and men's jump. All SIU club members competed in the tournament.

Along with Lasley, students from Southern Illinois who are members of the club are Abbey Dorsey of Carterville, a sophomore in exercise science; Thomas Imboden of Carbondale, a sophomore in forestry; and Jessi Rudloff of Du Quoin, a sophomore in mechanical engineering.

The other club members are Oliver Bernard of Batavia, junior in finance; Allison Bradford of Decatur, law school candidate; John Freese of Decatur, senior in forestry; Toby Fry of O'Fallon, sophomore in aviation technologies; Clarissa Johnson of Oak Creek, Wis., junior in journalism with a concentration in advertising; Nicholas Pinedo of Lake Zurich, senior in aviation flight and management; Brendan Schultz of Dow, senior in electrical engineering; Bryn Southerland of Decatur, sophomore in nursing; Samantha Varness of Peoria, senior in business analytics.

The overall unofficial scores also showed that team member Brendan Schultz took first place in the men's trick and men's jump.

Pinedo said the tournament goes beyond scores, medals or trophies. Instead, teammates get to keep something much more valuable: memories with teammates.

"There's so much more to these tournaments than just skiing and competing," he said. "It's about the people, the friendships, and the atmosphere that brings everyone together."

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SIU sculpture fundraiser offers 30 scratch blocks for cast iron artwork

By Maxbiya English

Southern Illinois University's sculpture program and the student organization Critical Forum are selling 30 scratch blocks that supporters can use to create their own cast-iron artwork. Sales will continue through the program's Nov. 7 iron pour at the Art Foundry, which runs from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Blocks cost $20 to $30, and buyers are asked to bring the exact amount. When they sell out, no more will be offered. A scratch block is a tile made of resin-bonded sand, used to scratch a shallow-relief design to create a custom mold for molten iron.

The fundraiser is at the center of what Alex Lopez, associate professor and head of sculpture in the School of Art and Design, calls this year's "home-alone event." Besides raising money to keep "the ever-rising cost of materials down for students," the program will use the pour to reignite its smaller cupola and test new ideas.

Blocks can be purchased at the foundry, 1520 W. Pleasant Hill Road in Carbondale, on Mondays from noon to 4 p.m., Wednesdays from 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Fridays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Sundays from noon to 3 p.m. Sales end at 10 a.m. the day of the pour.

Finished pieces can be picked up during the same hours beginning Nov. 13.

The program's big annual iron pour returns as a public event next year.

For questions or more information, email Lopez at alxlpz@siu.edu or call 618-453-7548. Updates are posted on Instagram at @siucsculpture.



PHOTO PROVIDED

Molten iron is poured into scratch blocks at the Art Foundry.

Data previously included in the Annual Statement of Affairs can be found at: Payments to certified personnel posted on district website per 05 ILCS 5/10-20.47. Student Counts included in district's report card. Financial Data included in district's Annual Financial Report posted on ISBE's Cerberus Server.

SALARY SCHEDULE OF GROSS PAYMENTS FOR CERTIFICATED PERSONNEL AND NON-CERTIFICATED PERSONNEL

GROSS PAYMENT FOR NON-CERTIFIED PERSONNEL

Salary Range: Less Than $39.999

Allen, Kenyoko; Barksdale, Robin; Barnfield, Mia; Blake, Janiece L; Brown, Collin; Burke, Brooklyn; Casey, Sally; Casper, Collin; Childress, Benay; Childress, Shakia; Cornelious-Weldon, Leslie; Criddle, Kerra; Crisler, Selena; Daley, Kamilah; Davis, Arthaniel; Davis, Deloyd JR; Davis, Rebecca; Dehoet, Charlene; Dover, Madyson; Gatewood, Heather; Glass, Emily; Green, Jami; Greenwood, DeMari; Haskins, J Mitch; Henderson, Misty; Henderson, Randall Ray; Hileman, Jacy; Houston, Larry; Houston, Wilma; Howard, Dorian; Hughes, Chauncey J; Jeter, RaKeya; Jeter, Rakyah; Johnson, Anae; Johnson, Ariel S; Killius, Nancy A; Long, Whittney; Malley, Stephen M; Mcelmurry, Barbara; Meadows, Verlene M; Medlock, Hannah A; Menkhaus, Abby; Mitchell, Brittney T; Mize, Debra L; Moore, Jammerio; Nance, Maria P; Newell, Robert E; Patterson, LeAjah; Pearcy, Hudson; Powell, Jannifer; Pryor, Venus; Ruddick, Heidi; Sawyer, Lakiesha; Schoffner Jr, Michael; Sichling, Mickayla; Smith, Roia; Steele, Todd N; Steele, Vicki; Sutton, Harley; Terry, Faye; Terry, Marilyn; Thaduri, Naga Snehal; Thomas, Elizabeth; Trover, Marleis; Weathers, Jalil; Weathers, Yaleana; Whitaker, Kamauri; Wilson, Sierra

Salary Range: $40,000 - $54,999

Andrews, Robert; Bartlett, Lavern P; Calvin, Sherri M; Hannan, Amy R; Leek, Danny L; Perkins, Rochelle A; Richard, Vanessa; Thurston, Alexandria

Salary Range: $55,000 - $74,999

Buckles-Tucker, Kimberly; Crow, Lori L; Gardner, Randall R

Salary Range: $75,000 and Over

Brown, Regina; Shemwell-Scott, Catherine

PAYMENTS TO PERSON, FIRM, OR CORPORATION OVER $2,500 EXCLUDING WAGES AND SALARIES

AFLAC INSURANCE	$10,701.76
AJD CONSULTING SERVICES	$16,091.00
AJD CONSULTING SERVICES	$6,000.00
AMEREN ILLINOIS	$70,088.73
AMERICAN FIDELITY	$30,201.42
AMPLIFY	$5,865.46
ANDREWS, ROBERT	$3,476.53
APPLE INC	$3,290.00
APPTEGY	$13,661.79
BEAVER JANITOR SUPPLY	$31,902.37
BEUSSINK HEY ROE&STRODER	$24,500.00
BOKF, NA	$233,327.00
BRAD`S COLLISION WORKS LLC	$9,711.00
BRIDGE THERAPY FOR YOU LLC	$70,730.00
BROKEN HERO ENTERPRISES LLC	$2,915.25
CAIRO PUBLIC UTILITY CO	$12,854.96
CENTRAL BANK	$106,525.00
CITY AUTO MITSUBISHI	$14,859.92
CLEARWAVE COMMUNICATIONS	$3,063.46
COMMON GOAL SYSTEMS	$16,158.82
COUCH JANICE	$5,024.23
CRISIS PREVENTION INSTITUTE, INC	$3,229.00
CRS ONESOURCE	$125,697.65
CUSUMANO & SONS, INC	$24,332.74
DARE, AVA JILL	$57,000.00
DELTA DENTAL OF ILLINOIS- RISK	$29,411.37
EMBRACE EDUCATION	$4,060.36
EMS LINQ INC	$7,002.17
EPIC TRUST FUND	$567,988.66
ESGI LLC	$2,983.00
EVERWAY LLC	$3,001.18
EXIT 8 STORAGE	$2,880.00
GAGGLE	$3,120.00
GALLAGHER BASSETT SERVICES INC	$10,000.00
GLOBAL LIFE LIBERTY NATIONAL	$8,810.71
GREAT MINDS PBC	$3,743.14
GUIN MUNDORF LLC	$83,846.25
HADDOCK EDUCATION TECHNOLOGIES	$9,297.00
HARDIN`S-SYSCO FOOD SERV.	$50,051.68
HASKINS, MITCH	$4,597.74
HSG MECHANICAL CONTRACTOR	$30,671.67
HUCKLEBERRY`S	$5,173.22
IDEAL EDUCATION CONSULTING LLC	$6,500.00
IL DEPT OF EMPLOYMENT SEC	$5,772.50
IL DEPT OF REVENUE	$185,615.50
IL MUNICIPAL RETIREMENT	$160,730.58
IL TEACHER RET-BD PD BEN	$15,527.48
IL TEACHERS RETIREMENT	$241,032.78
IL TEACHERS RET 23.10 FED	$22,758.06
IL. ED. ASSOCIATION	$19,725.18
ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BOARDS	$14,617.00
ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION	$17,467.00
ROWE PEST CONTROL	$4,452.00
SCHOOL HEALTH CO.	$4,142.47
SHAWNEE COMMUNITY COLLEGE	$16,708.50
SHAWNEE COMMUNITY COLLEGE	$24,205.00
SHERIFF PULASKI COUNTY	$6,974.00
SIGMA ATHLETICS LLC	$2,760.00
SKEETER KELL SPORTING	$12,606.70
SMITH ALICE	$3,431.52
SOUTHERN ILLINOIS LOCAL MEDIA GROUP LLC	$3,566.50
STAPLES	$11,256.68
STOUT, KRISTI J	$3,600.00
STUKENT, INC	$3,390.00
TAYLOR PUBLISHING CO	$3,750.00
TC3 MUSIC SUPPLY	$6,024.00
TEACHER SYNERGY LLC	$4,708.91
TEACHERS` CURRICULUM INSTITUTE (TCI)	$2,546.25
TEXAS LIFE INSURANCE	$6,077.95
THE PRINTING COMPANY	$3,525.18
THOMAS, LISA	$9,006.77
TIPTON LINEN SERVICE	$3,282.75
TOP YOUTH SPEAKERS	$4,980.00
TREVIPAY-WALMART	$3,914.85
TRS HEALTH INSURANCE	$42,030.41
TRS-VOYA	$5,366.12
VERIZON WIRELESS	$12,416.11
VIENNA HIGH SCHOOL	$31,542.17
WALMART COMMUNITY BRC	$6,617.26
WASTE CONNECTIONS OF MO	$25,105.53
WILLIAMSON COUNTY SP ED	$43,750.00

PAYMENTS TO PERSON, FIRM, OR CORPORATION OF $1,000 TO $2,500 EXCLUDING WAGES AND SALARIES

A&A ABATEMENT LLC	$2,400.00
ADOBE INC.	$2,460.00
BANK OF AMERICA LOCKBOX SERVICES	$2,450.00
BARTLETT LAVERN	$1,147.08
BIG TEAMS C/O ARBITER	$2,250.00
BOWEN, LEXIA	$1,519.07
BRANDTNER, BRIAN	$1,056.30
BUDDYS CLEANERS	$1,129.00
CAPE WINAIR COMPANY	$1,873.18
CHEER OUTFITTERS	$2,040.05
COAST TO COAST SIGNS	$1,800.00
CONSCIOUS DISCIPLINE (CD)	$1,815.75
COUNTRY COMPANIES	$1,159.80
DAVA POYNER	$1,000.00
DILLARD MARYANNE	$1,731.24
ELKOWITZ STEPHANIE	$1,120.00
FIRM SYSTEMS	$1,815.00
FLOORSITE INC	$2,300.00
HAWKINS MELISSA	$2,379.07
HEARTLAND PAYMENT SYSTM	$1,657.41
IASA	$1,349.23
ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BUSINESS OFFICIALS	$1,259.00
ILLINOIS PRINCIPALS ASSOCIATION	$1,982.31
IMAGI EDUCATION INC	$1,440.75
J.S. HELD LLC-US	$1,400.00
JOSTENS	$1,236.49
KAMI NOTABLE INC	$2,340.09
LAKESHORE LEARNING MAT	$1,508.00
LAKESHORE MATERIALS CO	$1,246.77
LARRY MALCOM	$1,564.20
LEGALSHIELD	$2,225.55
M E A DUES	$1,000.11
MAGNATAG INC	$2,046.85
MERIDIAN HIGH ACTIVITY	$1,000.00
MIKERENTALS INC	$1,189.17
NAGA SNEHAL THADURI	$2,100.02
ORIENTAL TRADING CO, INC	$2,287.38
PFAFF, AMY	$1,394.20
PULASKI BAR & GRILL- UPTOWN PLAZA	$1,545.37
QUADIENT LEASING USA INC	$1,425.76
READY MIX SOLUTIONS LLC	$1,817.00
REALLY GOOD STUFF	$2,249.13
REGINA BROWN	$1,066.18
RUIZ ERIN	$1,881.02
SCHOOL HEALTH CORPORATION	$1,927.72
SCHOOL SPECIALTY	$1,631.12
SCOTT, CATHERINE	$1,394.20
SCREEN ARTS INCORPORATED	$1,302.00
SECURITAS TECHNOLOGY CORPORATION	$2,397.24
SECURITY LOCKSMITH & DOOR SERVICE	$1,845.00
STOP & SHOP	$1,889.04
TEACHING STRATEGIES	$1,080.00
TERRI K`S HEARTLAND FLORIST	$1,400.00
THRILLHOUSE	$1,327.50
ULINE	$1,611.50
UNITED RENTALS	$1,385.94
UNUM LIFE INSURANCE	$1,222.00
USI, INC.	$1,625.74
YOUNG ALICHA	$1,200.00

ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
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ANNUAL STATEMENT OF AFFAIRS
FISCAL YEAR ENDING
June 30, 2026

SCHOOL DISTRICT/JOINT AGREEMENT NAME:	MERIDIAN CUSD 101
RCDT NUMBER:	30-077-1010-26
ADDRESS:	1401 MOUNDS ROAD
COUNTY:	PULASKI
NAME OF NEWSPAPER WHERE PUBLISHED:	MONDAY'S PUB

DISTRICT TYPE

Elementary	
High School	
Unit	X
Joint Agreement	

ASSURANCE

The Annual Statement of Affairs has been posted on the district's website and published in accordance with Section 10-17 of the School Code no later than December 1. (Put "X" in blue box if yes.) Yes X

SIZE OF DISTRICT IN SQUARE MILES	97
NUMBER OF ATTENDANCE CENTERS	1
NUMBER OF CERTIFICATED EMPLOYEES	
FULL-TIME	31
PART-TIME	6
NUMBER OF NON-CERTIFICATED EMPLOYEES	
FULL-TIME	40
PART-TIME	1

TAX RATE BY FUND (IN %)	
EDUCATIONAL	1.775450
OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE	0.443870
BOND & INTEREST	0.601260
TRANSPORTATION	0.177550
MUNICIPAL RETIREMENT	0.139870
SOCIAL SECURITY	0.139870
WORKING CASH	0.044390
FIRE PREVENTION & SAFETY	0.050000
TORT IMMUNITY	0.245100
CAPITAL PROJECTS	0.000000
SPECIAL EDUCATION	0.015480
LEASING	0.044390
OTHER	0.000000
OTHER	0.000000

REPORT ON CONTRACTS EXCEEDING $25,000 AWARDED DURING FY2025

1. Total number of all contracts awarded by the school district: 3
2. Total value of all contracts awarded: $1,048,075.99
3. Total number of contracts awarded to minority owned businesses, female owned businesses, businesses owned by persons with disabilities, and locally owned businesses: 0
   *If there are no contracts of this nature, please enter "0" in box to the right.
4. Total value of contracts awarded to minority owned businesses, female owned businesses, businesses owned by person with disabilities, and locally owned businesses: $0.00
   *If there are no contracts of this nature, please enter "0" in box to the right.

The Gazette-Democrat Classified Section

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HOUSING APPLICATION NOTICE

The Housing Authority of Johnson County is accepting applications for apartments in Johnson County.
The Housing Authority manages apartments in Vienna, Goreville, Buncombe, and New Burnside, IL. Monthly rent is based on income.
Apartments in Vienna and Goreville - Bedrooms range from efficiency to 4 bedrooms. Flat rents are available.
Apartments in Vienna, Goreville, and New Burnside range from 1 to 2 bedrooms and are for persons 62 years of age or older; or disabled regardless of age. Buncombe has 1 bedroom units. Rental Assistance may be available.
Interested persons may contact the Authority by telephone at 618-658-5811, by mail at Housing Authority of Johnson County P.O. Box 188, Vienna, IL 62995, by e-mail at hajciled@frontier.com or at the administrative office located at 501 North 4th Street, Vienna, IL 62995, to obtain an application for housing.
The Housing Authority of Johnson County is an Equal Opportunity Provider, and Employer.

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Anna First Baptist Church is looking for a Part-time Custodian – 20 hours per week, Monday through Thursday. If interested, applications can be picked up at the church office located at 409 Morgan Street in Anna.

FOR SALE

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LEGAL NOTICES

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
ALEXANDER COUNTY, ILLINOIS
BILLY E. SMITH JR. and TIFFINY A. SMITH,
Plaintiffs,
v.
UNKNOWN OWNERS AND NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS,
Defendants.
CASE NO.: 2026CH8
PUBLICATION NOTICE
The requisite affidavit for publication having been filed, notice is hereby given to you, Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, Defendants in the above-entitled the said suit has been commenced in the Circuit Court of Alexander County, Illinois, by the said Plaintiff against you for a quiet title on the following described premises, to-wit:
Lots Numbered Two (2), Three (3) and Four (4) in Block Numbered Seven (7) in Clutt's Subdivision of the North ¾ of the West ½ of the West ½ of Section 32 in Township 15 South, Range 2 West of the Third Principal Meridian, as platted and recorded in the Office of County Recorder at Cairo, Alexander County, Illinois, in Plat Book Numbered "F", Page 57.
and for other relief, and that said suit is still pending.
Now, therefore, unless you, the said Defendants, Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, file your answer to the Complaint in the suit, or otherwise make your appearance therein, in the Circuit Court of Alexander County, Illinois, in the County Courthouse in the City of Cairo, Illinois, on or before the 3rd Day of December, 2026, default may be entered against you and each of you at any time after that day and a Judgment entered in accordance with the prayer of said Complaint.
Carey L. Simmons
Clerk of the Circuit Court
Prepared by:
JOHN R. SCHNEIDER
JOHNSON, SCHNEIDER & FERRELL, L.L.C.
212 North Main Street
Cape Girardeau, MO 63701
Tel: (573) 335-3300
Fax: (573)335-1978
8221-970739

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 1ST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
ALEXANDER COUNTY - CAIRO, ILLINOIS
U.S. BANK TRUST COMPANY, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION, AS INDENTURE TRUSTEE ON BEHALF OF AND WITH RESPECT TO BARCLAYS MORTGAGE TRUST 2022-RPL1,
MORTGAGE-BACKED SECURITIES, SERIES 2022-RPL1,
PLAINTIFF
VS.
APRIL D LACEY A/K/A APRIL LACEY, FREDDIE G LACEY JR A/K/A FREDDIE G LACEY A/K/A FREDDIE
LACEY, ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE, UNKNOWN OWNERS GENERALLY, AND NON-RECORD
CLAIMANTS.
DEFENDANTS
NOTICE OF SALE
Case No.: 2026FC2
Property Address:
22759 Olive St
Olive Branch, IL 62969
PUBLIC NOTICE is given that pursuant to the Judgment of Foreclosure entered in the above entitled cause on
July 15, 2026, the Alexander County Sheriff will on December 9, 2026, at 10:00 am, at the Alexander County
Courthouse, 2000 Washington Ave., Hallway, Cairo IL 62914, sell to the highest bidder for cash, the following
described mortgaged real estate:
LOTS SIX (6), SEVEN (7), EIGHT (8), NINE (9) AND TEN (1O) IN BLOCK FIVE (5) IN THE ORIGINAL
TOWN OF OLIVE BRANCH, ALEXANDER COUNTY, ILLINOIS.
P.I.N.
06-32-251-001; 06-32-251-002
COMMON ADDRESS: 22759 Olive St, Olive Branch, IL 62969
Terms of all sales are ten percent (10%) of the opening bid.
Failure to pay the remaining balance within the twenty-four (24) hours shall result in the forfeiture of the ten
percent (10%) down payment.
No Refunds.
The property offered for sale is subject to real estate taxes, special assessments or special taxes levied against said
real estate and is offered for sale without any representation as to quality or quantity of title and without recourse
to plaintiff and in "as is" condition. The sale is further subject to confirmation by the court.
The improvement on the property consists of: Single Family Home
The entered judgment amount was $31,293.57.
The property will NOT be open for inspection.
For information call Plaintiff's Attorney, Kluever Law Group, LLC, 200 N. LaSalle St., Suite 1880, Chicago, IL
60601. 312-236-0077. KLG: RML000026-26FC1
8221-970835

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
UNION COUNTY, ILLINOIS
ROCKET MORTGAGE, LLC,
PLAINTIFF,
VS.
MICHELE ASTIN; SECRETARY OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT; UNKNOWN OWNERS AND NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS,
DEFENDANTS.
NO. 2026FC8
201 WEST SPRING STREET
ANNA, IL 62906
JUDGE PRESIDING JUDGE
NOTICE OF SALE
PURSUANT TO JUDGMENT OF FORECLOSURE
UNDER ILLINOIS MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE ACT
PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale entered by the Court in the above entitled cause on July 17, 2026, will on December 16, 2026, in UNION COUNTY COURTHOUSE, 309 W. MARKET, JONESBORO, IL 62952, at 9:00 AM, sell at public auction and sale to the highest bidder for cash, all and singular, the following described real estate mentioned in said Judgment, situated in the County of Union, State of Illinois, or so much thereof as shall be sufficient to satisfy said Judgment:
TRACT I: Lot One (1) in Diana B. Kroh's First Addition to the City of Anna, situated in the County of Union and State of Illinois. TRACT II: Beginning at a point between Lots Number One and Two on Spring Street (Diana B. Kroh's Addition to the City of Anna, Illinois); thence South 84 Degrees 30'West 165 feet for a place of beginning; thence in the same direction sixty (60) feet; thence South 5 Degrees 30' East 111 feet 2 1/2 inches to the north line of P.H. Kroh's property; thence North 84 Degrees 30' East along said line sixty (60) feet; thence North 5 Degrees 30' West 111 feet 2 1/2 inches to the place of beginning, situated in the City of Anna, County of Union and State of Illinois.
TAX NO. 05-19-03-409 and 14-00-08-625
COMMONLY KNOWN AS: 201 West Spring Street
Anna, IL 62906
Description of Improvements: Tan vinyl siding, 1.5 story single family home
The Judgment amount was $168,700.70.
Sale Terms: This is an "AS IS" sale for "CASH". The successful bidder must deposit 10% down by certified funds; balance, by certified funds, within 24 hours.
NO REFUNDS.
The subject property is subject to general real estate taxes, special assessments or special taxes levied against said real estate, water bills, etc., and is offered for sale without any representation as to quality or quantity of title and without recourse to plaintiff. The sale is further subject to confirmation by the court.
Upon payment in full of the bid amount, the purchaser shall receive a Certificate of Sale, which will entitle the purchaser to a Deed to the real estate after confirmation of the sale.
The property will NOT be open for inspection. Prospective bidders are admonished to check the court file to verify all information.
The successful purchaser has the sole responsibility/expense of evicting any tenants or other individuals presently in possession of the subject premises.
If this property is a condominium unit, the purchaser of the unit at the foreclosure sale, other than a mortgagee shall pay the assessments and the legal fees required by The Condominium Property Act, 765 ILCS 605/9(g)(1) and (g)(4).
IF YOU ARE THE MORTGAGOR (HOMEOWNER), YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN IN POSSESSION FOR 30 DAYS AFTER ENTRY OF AN ORDER OF POSSESSION, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 15-1701(C) OF THE ILLINOIS MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE LAW.
For Information: Visit our website at http://ilforeclosuresales.mrpllc.com.
Between 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. only - McCalla Raymer Leibert Pierce, LLP, Plaintiff's Attorneys, 333 W Wacker Drive, Suite 1820, Chicago, IL 60606-1220. Tel. No. (312) 346-9088. Please refer to file# 24-19980IL
PURSUANT TO THE FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT, THE PLAINTIFF'S ATTORNEY IS DEEMED TO BE A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE.
Plaintiff's attorney is not required to provide additional information other than that set forth in this notice of sale.
I3292344
8221-970711

WHEREAS, the Board of Education (the "Board") of Jonesboro Community Consolidated School
District No. 43, Union County, Illinois (the "District"), has the duty and authority to oversee
District funds to carry out its educational programs; and
WHEREAS, the District administration has proposed that the Board consider the following interfund transfer under Section 17-2A of the School Code (105 ILCS 5/17-2A):
From the Operations and Maintenance Fund to the Educational Fund, for the purpose to
transfer $78,065 designated for Building Leases, which is no longer needed, to the Education Fund to use for lease payments for technology; and
WHEREAS, Section 17-2A requires a public hearing with proper notice before the Board may
approve the proposed transfer. Hearing is set for November 19, 2026 at the Jonesboro School Science room starting at 6:30 pm.
8221-970625

Wolf Lake-Ware Fire Protection District's annual meeting will be on Wednesday, Nov. 11, 2026 at 5:30 a.m. in the Wolf Lake Community Center, 4720 N. State Rt. 3, Wolf Lake, IL.
8221-969483

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
JOHNSON COUNTY, ILLINOIS
ESTATE OF
JERRY L. BILLINGSLEY, DECEASED.
NO. 2026-PR-17
IN PROBATE
NOTICE OF DEATH
INDEPENDENT ADMINISTRATION,
AND CLAIM DATE
NOTICE IS GIVEN to creditors of the death of Jerry L. Billingsley, of Buncombe, Illinois. Letters of Office were issued on October 15, 2026, to Janet S. Billingsley, 155 Elvira St., Buncombe, Illinois 62912 as Independent Executor, whose attorney is Elvis C. Cameron, 205B N. Main St., Anna, Illinois. Within 42 days after the effective date of the original Order of admission, you may file a petition with the Court to require proof of the Will by testimony of the witnesses in open Court or other evidence, as provided by Section 5/6-21 of the Probate Act (755 ILCS 5/6-21.)
You also have the right, under Section 5/8-1 of the Probate Act (755 ILCS 5/8-1), to contest the validity of the Will by filing a petition with the Court within six (6) months after admission of the Will to probate.
The estate will be administered without Court supervision unless, under Section 5/28-4 of the Probate Act (Ill. Compiled Stat. 1992, Ch. 755, Par. 5/28-4), any interested person terminates Independent Administration at any time by mailing or delivering a petition to terminate to the Clerk of this Court.
Claims against the estate may be filed in the Office of the Clerk of this court at the Johnson County Courthouse, 400 Court St., Vienna, IL 62995, or with the Independent Executor, or both, on or before April 29, 2027, or if mailing or delivery of a notice from the Executor is required by Section 5/18-3 of the Probate Act of the State of Illinois, the date stated in that notice. Any claim not filed on or before that date is barred. Copies of a claim filed with the Clerk must be mailed or delivered by the claimant to the Executor and to the attorneys within ten (10) days after it has been filed.
Dated: October 16, 2026.
JANET S. BILLINGSLEY
CAMERON LAW FIRM, LLC
ELVIS C. CAMERON
ATTORNEY FOR INDEPENDENT EXECUTOR
205B N. MAIN ST.
ANNA, ILLINOIS 62906
PHONE: 618-833-2220
ARDC# 6244394
8221-970501

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
JOHNSON COUNTY, ILLINOIS
SOUTHERNTRUST BANK, an Illinois Banking Institution,
Plaintiff,
vs.
PAULA C. MEADE a/k/a PAULA CHRISTINE MEADE, UNKNOWN OCCUPANTS, UNKNOWN OWNERS and NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS,
Defendants
Case No. 2026FC12
NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE BY PUBLICATION
The requisite Affidavit for Publication having been filed, notice is hereby given you, ALL UNKNOWN OCCUPANTS, ALL NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS and ALL UNKNOWN OWNERS, defendants in the above-entitled cause, that the above-entitled mortgage foreclosure action was filed on October 6, 2026, and is now pending.
1. The names of all Plaintiffs and the Case Number are identified above.
2. The Court in which said action was brought is identified above.
3. The name of the titleholder of record is Paula C. Meade a/k/a Paula Christine Meade.
4. A legal description of the real estate sufficient to identify it with reasonable certainty is as follows:
A PARCEL OF LAND BEING A PART OF THE WEST HALF OF THE SOUTHEAST QUARTER OF THE SOUTHEAST QUARTER OF SECTION 27, TOWNSHIP 11, RANGE 2 EAST OF THE THIRD PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, SAID PARCEL IS PART OF PROPERTY DESCRIBED AND RECORDED IN BOOK 174, PAGE 77 IN THE JOHNSON COUNTY COURT HOUSE IN THE NAME OF HAROLD SERRETT, SR. AND MARY SERRETT, DATED JANUARY 19, 1990 (SEE ALSO BOOK 174, PAGE 106). SAID PARCEL BEING MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:
COMMENCING AT THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF SAID WEST HALF, SAID CORNER BEING MARKED BY AN IRON ROD SET; THENCE N 87°06'39" E, 238.34 FEET ALONG THE SOUTH LINE OF SAID WEST HALF TO AN IRON ROD SET, THIS BEING THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF SAID PARCEL AND THE POINT OF BEGINNING; THENCE ALONG NEW LINES THE FOLLOWING TWO (2) CALLS; THENCE N 00°21'52"W, 313.37 FEET, PASSING AN IRON ROD SET AT 40.00 FEET, TO AN IRON ROD SET; THENCE N 87°06'39"E, 417.42 FEET TO AN IRON ROD SET IN THE EAST LINE OF SAID WEST HALF; THENCE S 00°21'52" E, 104.66 FEET, PASSING A STONE FOUND AT 25.37 FEET, TO AN IRON ROD SET AT THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF THE JOYCE MASSEY PROPERTY (SEE BOOK 243, PAGE 105); THENCE WITH SAID MASSEY PROPERTY THE FOLLOWING TWO (2) CALLS; THENCE S 87°06'39" W, 208.71 FEET TO AN IRON ROD SET; THENCE S 00°21'52" E, 208.71 FEET TO AN IRON ROD SET IN THE SOUTH LINE OF SAID WEST HALF; THENCE S 87°06'39" W, 208.71 FEET ALONG THE SOUTH LINE OF SAID WEST HALF TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING.
SAID PARCEL TO CONTAIN 2.001 ACRES, MORE OR LESS, PER SURVEY BY MITCHELL R. GARRETT, IL PROFESSIONAL LAND SURVEYOR NO. 3085, DATED 6/22/2001.
EXCEPTING THEREFROM A STRIP OF LAND THIRTY FEET (30') IN WIDTH OFF THE ENTIRE WEST SIDE THEREOF.
SAID PARCEL BEING SUBJECT TO THE RIGHT-OF-WAY OF REBMAD LAND ACROSS THE SOUTH SIDE AS WELL AS ANY ADDITIONAL RIGHTS-OF-WAY AND EASEMENTS, RECORDED OR OTHERWISE. ALL SITUATED IN THE COUNTY OF JOHNSON, STATE OF ILLINOIS.
Permanent Index Number: 01-27-407-000.
5. A common address or description of the location of the real estate is as follows: 170 Rebman Lane, Goreville, IL 62939.
6. An identification of the Mortgage to be foreclosed is as follows:
a. Names of Mortgagors: Frank D. Meade, Sr. and Paula Christine Meade.
b. Name of Mortgagee: SouthernTrust Bank.
c. Date of Mortgage: July 29, 2010, as modified May 2, 2013, as modified May 20, 2018, as modified June 20, 2023.
d. Date of Recording: August 3, 2010, as modified May 8, 2013, as modified June 14, 2018, as modified August 7, 2023.
e. County Where Recorded: Johnson County, Illinois.
f. Recording Document Identification: Book 706 at Page 69 as Document No. 101376, as modified in Book 790 at Page 106 as Document No. 130803, as modified in Book 920 at Page 119 as Document No. 180896, as modified in Book 1060 at Page 119 as Document No. 8004487.
NOW, THEREFORE, unless you, ALL UNKNOWN OCCUPANTS, ALL NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS and ALL UNKNOWN OWNERS, defendants, file your answer to the complaint for foreclosure in this cause or otherwise make your appearance therein, in the Circuit Court of the First Judicial Circuit, Johnson County, Illinois, held in the Johnson County Courthouse, in the City of Vienna, Illinois, on or before November 28, 2026, default may be entered against you and each of you at any time after that day and a judgment for foreclosure entered in accordance with the prayer of the complaint for foreclosure.
/s/ Ryan M. O'Neal
Circuit Clerk
PURSUANT TO THE FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT IT IS REQUIRED THAT WE STATE THE FOLLOWING TO YOU: THIS NOTICE IS AN ATTEMPT TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE.
LAWLER BROWN LAW FIRM
Adam B. Lawler #6283341
David W. Lawler #6303793
Nick Brown #6302494
Zachary S. Walston #6331559
Evan W. Taylor #6305093
Jarrod Wiggs #6350317
1600 W. Main St/P.O. Box 1148
Marion, Illinois 62959
Telephone: (618) 993-2222
Facsimile: (618) 731-4141
Service Email: service@lblf.com
8221-970570

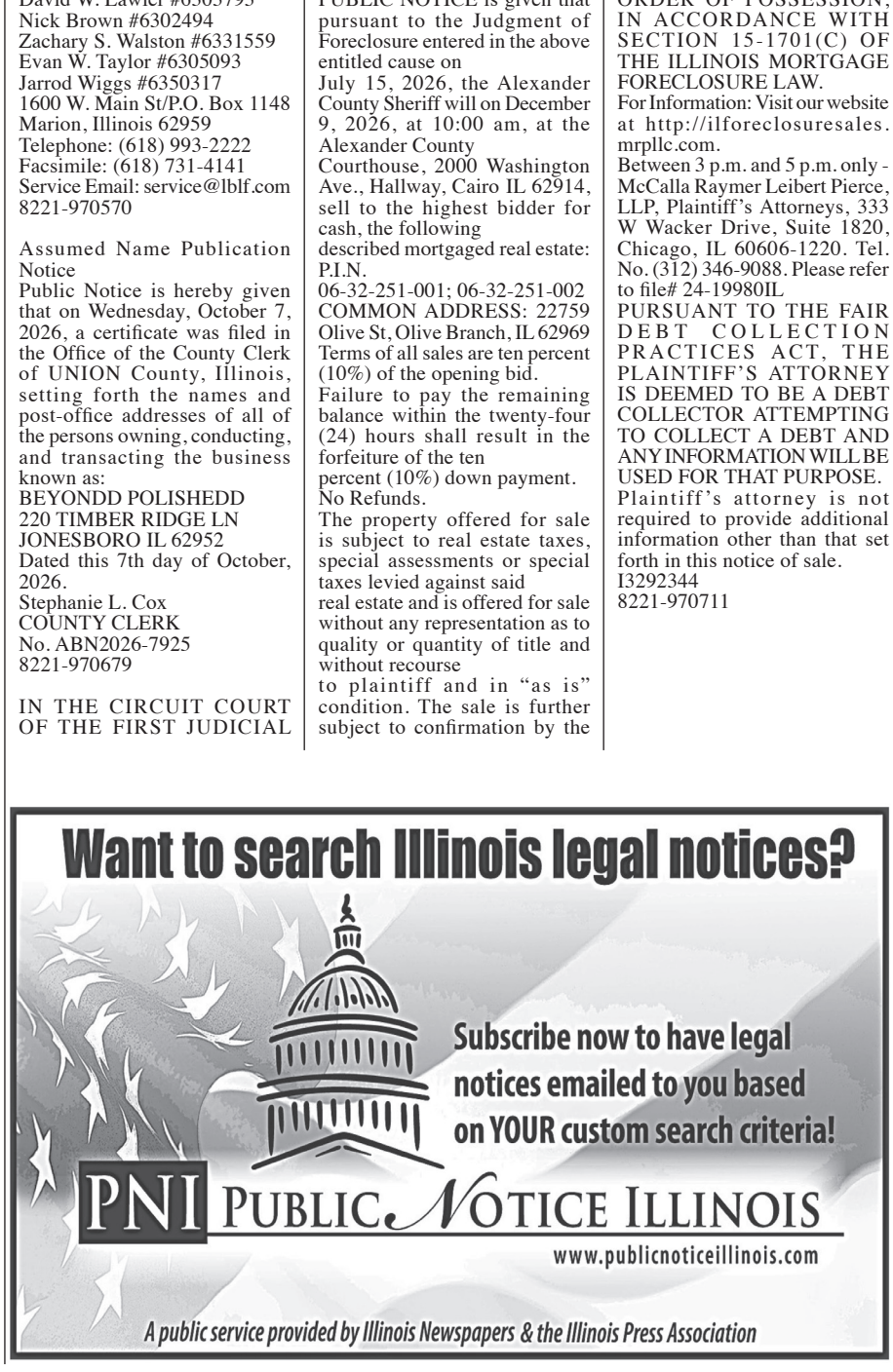
Assumed Name Publication Notice
Public Notice is hereby given that on Wednesday, October 7, 2026, a certificate was filed in the Office of the County Clerk of UNION County, Illinois, setting forth the names and post-office addresses of all of the persons owning, conducting, and transacting the business known as:
BEYONDD POLISHEDD
220 TIMBER RIDGE LN
JONESBORO IL 62952
Dated this 7th day of October, 2026.
Stephanie L. Cox
COUNTY CLERK
No. ABN2026-7925
8221-970679

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
JOHNSON COUNTY, ILLINOIS
IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF:
BOBBIE G. HARPER, DECEASED.
CASE NO. 2026PR16
NOTICE OF PUBLICATION
Notice is given of the death of Bobbie G. Harper, of Tunnel Hill, Johnson, Illinois, on September 1, 2026. Letters of Administration were issued on October 07, 2026 to Kathy Stevens and Bob Kelly Harper as Co-Administrators, whose attorney is Evan W. Taylor of Lawler Brown Law Firm, 1600 W. Main Street, Marion, Illinois 62959.
Claims against the estate may be filed in the office of the Clerk of the Court at the Johnson County Courthouse, Vienna, Illinois, or with the representative, or both, on or before April 22, 2027, or three months from the date of mailing or delivering notice pursuant to 755 ILCS 5/18-3(a), whichever is later, and any claim not filed within that period is barred. Copies of a claim filed with the clerk must be mailed or delivered to the representative and to the attorney within 10 days after it has been filed.
Notice is given to all persons, including all heirs whose names and/or post office addresses are unknown and are not stated in the Petition for the Issuance of Letters of Administration filed on October 5, 2026, that on October 7, 2026, the Circuit Court of Johnson County, Illinois entered an Order Appointing Independent Co-Administrators naming Kathy Stevens and Bob Kelly Harper as Independent Co-Administrators.
KATHY STEVENS AND BOB KELLY HARPER,
INDEPENDENT CO-ADMINISTRATORS
BY: /S/ EVAN W. TAYLOR
LAWLER BROWN LAW FIRM
ADAM B. LAWLER #6283341
DAVID W. LAWLER #6303793
NICK BROWN #6302494
ZACHARY S. WALSTON #6331559
EVAN W. TAYLOR #6305093
JARROD WIGGS #6350317
1600 W. MAIN ST
P.O. BOX 1148
MARION, ILLINOIS 62959
TELEPHONE: (618) 993-2222
FACSIMILE: (618) 731-4141
SERVICE EMAIL: SERVICE@LBLF.COM
8221-970381

REAL ESTATE

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 1ST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
ALEXANDER COUNTY - CAIRO, ILLINOIS
U.S. BANK TRUST COMPANY, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION, AS INDENTURE TRUSTEE ON BEHALF OF AND WITH RESPECT TO BARCLAYS MORTGAGE TRUST 2022-RPL1,
MORTGAGE-BACKED SECURITIES, SERIES 2022-RPL1,
PLAINTIFF
VS.
APRIL D LACEY A/K/A APRIL LACEY, FREDDIE G LACEY JR A/K/A FREDDIE G LACEY A/K/A FREDDIE
LACEY, ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE, UNKNOWN OWNERS GENERALLY, AND NON-RECORD
CLAIMANTS.
DEFENDANTS
NOTICE OF SALE
Case No.: 2026FC2
Property Address:
22759 Olive St
Olive Branch, IL 62969
PUBLIC NOTICE is given that pursuant to the Judgment of Foreclosure entered in the above entitled cause on
July 15, 2026, the Alexander County Sheriff will on December 9, 2026, at 10:00 am, at the Alexander County
Courthouse, 2000 Washington Ave., Hallway, Cairo IL 62914, sell to the highest bidder for cash, the following
described mortgaged real estate:
P.I.N.
06-32-251-001; 06-32-251-002
COMMON ADDRESS: 22759 Olive St, Olive Branch, IL 62969
Terms of all sales are ten percent (10%) of the opening bid.
Failure to pay the remaining balance within the twenty-four (24) hours shall result in the forfeiture of the ten
percent (10%) down payment.
No Refunds.
The property offered for sale is subject to real estate taxes, special assessments or special taxes levied against said
real estate and is offered for sale without any representation as to quality or quantity of title and without recourse
to plaintiff and in "as is" condition. The sale is further subject to confirmation by the court.
The improvement on the property consists of: Single Family Home
The entered judgment amount was $31,293.57.
The property will NOT be open for inspection.
For information call Plaintiff's Attorney, Kluever Law Group, LLP, 200 N. LaSalle St., Suite 1880, Chicago, IL
60601. 312-236-0077. KLG: RML000026-26FC1
8221-970835

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
UNION COUNTY, ILLINOIS
ROCKET MORTGAGE, LLC,
PLAINTIFF,
VS.
MICHELE ASTIN; SECRETARY OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT; UNKNOWN OWNERS AND NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS,
DEFENDANTS.
NO. 2026FC8
201 WEST SPRING STREET
ANNA, IL 62906
JUDGE PRESIDING JUDGE
NOTICE OF SALE
PURSUANT TO JUDGMENT OF FORECLOSURE
UNDER ILLINOIS MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE ACT
PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale entered by the Court in the above entitled cause on July 17, 2026, will on December 16, 2026, in UNION COUNTY COURTHOUSE, 309 W. MARKET, JONESBORO, IL 62952, at 9:00 AM, sell at public auction and sale to the highest bidder for cash, all and singular, the following described real estate mentioned in said Judgment, situated in the County of Union, State of Illinois, or so much thereof as shall be sufficient to satisfy said Judgment:
TAX NO. 05-19-03-409 and 14-00-08-625
COMMONLY KNOWN AS: 201 West Spring Street
Anna, IL 62906
Description of Improvements: Tan vinyl siding, 1.5 story single family home
The Judgment amount was $168,700.70.
Sale Terms: This is an "AS IS" sale for "CASH". The successful bidder must deposit 10% down by certified funds; balance, by certified funds, within 24 hours.
NO REFUNDS.
The subject property is subject to general real estate taxes, special assessments or special taxes levied against said real estate, water bills, etc., and is offered for sale without any representation as to quality or quantity of title and without recourse to plaintiff. The sale is further subject to confirmation by the court.
Upon payment in full of the bid amount, the purchaser shall receive a Certificate of Sale, which will entitle the purchaser to a Deed to the real estate after confirmation of the sale.
The property will NOT be open for inspection. Prospective bidders are admonished to check the court file to verify all information.
The successful purchaser has the sole responsibility/expense of evicting any tenants or other individuals presently in possession of the subject premises.
If this property is a condominium unit, the purchaser of the unit at the foreclosure sale, other than a mortgagee shall pay the assessments and the legal fees required by The Condominium Property Act, 765 ILCS 605/9(g)(1) and (g)(4).
IF YOU ARE THE MORTGAGOR (HOMEOWNER), YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN IN POSSESSION FOR 30 DAYS AFTER ENTRY OF AN ORDER OF POSSESSION, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 15-1701(C) OF THE ILLINOIS MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE LAW.
For Information: Visit our website at http://ilforeclosuresales.mrpllc.com.
Between 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. only - McCalla Raymer Leibert Pierce, LLP, Plaintiff's Attorneys, 333 W Wacker Drive, Suite 1820, Chicago, IL 60606-1220. Tel. No. (312) 346-9088. Please refer to file# 24-19980IL
PURSUANT TO THE FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT, THE PLAINTIFF'S ATTORNEY IS DEEMED TO BE A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE.
Plaintiff's attorney is not required to provide additional information other than that set forth in this notice of sale.
I3292344
8221-970711



Please read this...

By Geof Skinner

Bats, a barred owl, Mother Goose, groundhogs…

BY GEOF SKINNER

Thank goodness Halloween has come and gone. Now we can get serious about some Christmas commercials on television…

Speaking of things… seemed kind of strange last week to still be going outdoors in the afternoon late in October without a jacket. Guess you can do that when the temperature is 81 degrees, which it was at 1:52 p.m. last Thursday. The heat index at the time was 80. Go figure…

Meanwhile…

Bats. A barred owl. Mother Goose. A turtle…sort of. And, of course, groundhogs. Those were just a few of the critters which were seen recently during the Journey Through Life.

Let's start with the "turtle." The critter was seen laying upside down in the street during a recent daily walkabout in our hometown. My first thought was just to get, whatever I had found, out of the street before it was smashed to pieces. I picked up the object and turned it over. The critter turned out to be something called a "Touch & Teach Turtle," which I suppose made it some sort of learning toy. I have no idea how it ended up in the middle of the street.

Some words, and accompanying illustrations, could be seen on the turtle. The words were "Ant," "Bee," "Cat" and "Dog." "Touch & Teach Turtle" informed me that "The ANT is walking near the BEE" and "The CAT is playing ball with the DOG." In the "real world," I can't see such things actually happening, especially the idea that a cat would be playing ball with a dog. Then again, stranger things can happen. Based on some of the online videos The Other Half shows me, cats and dogs can, and do, have fun together.

"Touch & Teach Turtle" appeared to have buttons and little flaps showing the letters of the alphabet. I supposed I should have taken some time to figure out how the critter worked. Instead, I set "Touch & Teach Turtle" next to a pole holding a Stop sign. The critter stayed where it was for a day or two and then disappeared. I hope it found a good home.

Bats, a barred owl and Mother Goose are kind of connected. For one thing, they all fly. Well, I think Mother Goose could fly. She is a goose, after all. I can't be sure if what was found was actually Mother Goose, but that's what I decided to call her.

Bats, a barred owl and Mother Goose all were seen during recent visits to the Lincoln Memorial Picnic Grounds in Jonesboro. The picnic grounds were the setting for a recent Bat Night event presented by the Shawnee National Forest. Bat Night took place on a very nice and unusually warm October evening. As the name suggested, Bat Night was about bats. Visitors could learn all about bats, including those that call Southern Illinois home.



A "Touch and Teach Turtle" was one of the Critters spotted recently in our little corner of the world.

After I arrived at the picnic grounds, a search began for a photo opportunity or two. As I walked along a path, I caught a glimpse of a rather large bird flying across the pond at the picnic grounds. It's not unusual to see a hawk, which is a rather large bird, at the picnic grounds. However, what I saw just did not look like a hawk. One of the folks at Bat Night shared that the bird I had seen actually was a barred owl. Too bad the critter didn't find a nice place for a photograph.

Mother Goose also showed up at the picnic grounds. Just not on Bat Night. I saw Mother Goose laying in some fallen leaves during a "routine" visit to the picnic grounds. As was the case with "Touch & Teach Turtle," Mother Goose was a toy. And, as also was the case with "Touch & Teach Turtle," I picked up Mother Goose and set her on a fence. Mother Goose ended up disappearing, too.

Finally, there were the groundhogs. We went for a couple of days without seeing any of the groundhogs which call our backyard home. The Other Half figured they were just waiting for some more acorns to fall out of an oak tree in a neighbor's yard. I thought maybe the groundhogs had flown south for the winter. Yes, I know. Groundhogs can't fly. But I bet they can purchase plane tickets.



Mother Goose was moved to a "safer" location on a fence after she was found laying in fallen leaves at the Lincoln Memorial Picnic Grounds.

Most of the time, when we look out in the backyard, we'll just see one of the very well fed critters. One day last week, I happened to look out the window and saw two of 'em. The two critters seemed to be enjoying themselves and the moment they were experiencing. Maybe they were sharing a message.

We'll finish up this week with critters we still have not seen any time recently, including raccoons on our front porch, a mountain lion, a bear and a gnu. That last one's a good sign. After all, no gnus is good news…

Clawed, webbed or lobed?

Bird families have different feet for different purposes

BY HENRY DETWILER

Human feet are all the same, with a heel, an arch, and five toes. Bird feet, however, vary considerably depending on the family.

Some have webbed feet for swimming and diving, some have long toes for distributing their weight on lily pads, some have sharp flexible claws for climbing up and down tree trunks, and others have tremendous claws for ripping apart carrion. Many birds use their claws to clamp tightly to high branches, providing safety as they sleep.

We'll look at three families of birds and see how their feet are adapted to their lives and feeding habits.

Most birds have three toes pointing forward and one toe pointing backward, called anisodactyl. Woodpeckers, however, have 2 toes pointing forward and 2 backward, called zygodactyl. This arrangement allows woodpeckers to better grip the bark as they travel up and down trunks, and hang on while drilling into the trees (for food or nest cavities) and drumming for mates. Cuckoos have zygodactyl claws to help them navigate thick tangles, and in the case of roadrunners, to run quickly on the ground. Owls and Ospreys have a reversible outer toe that lets them shift this toe to the rear position, enabling them to better grip struggling rodents and wet fish.

Most waterfowl have palmate feet; their three front toes are connected by webbing and the back toe is free.



ISTOCK.COM/WRZESIENTOMEK

Bird feet vary considerably depending on the family. Waterfowl, like mallards, have webbed feet that help with diving and paddling through the water.

These palmate feet allow for efficient paddling and diving. Diving ducks also have lobes attached to their back toe, aiding in control. American Coots and grebes do not have webbed feet, but rather large lobed feet. These feet spread the bird's weight over a large surface area, allowing them to walk on floating vegetation and lily pads.

Raptors slice, dice, and knock prey out of the air with their talons. Most raptors have three toes facing forward. Their hind toe (the hallux) acts like a powerful thumb and can pierce deep into prey to deliver a lethal jab. Our Bald Eagles' claws can be 8.5 inches in size, with deadly, large 2.5-inch talons. The crushing grip strength from these eagles can reach 400 pounds per square inch (PSI) — some eight times stronger than a human hand. Both Bald Eagles and Osprey eat a lot of fish, so the pads on their feet have many tiny, sharp spikes (spicules) to help them grip slippery, thrashing fish. Peregrine Falcons use their feet differently — they dive on their prey (reaching 200 mph) and then strike the flying bird with balled up claws, knocking it out of the air. On the ground, the Peregrine will finish the kill with a bite to the neck, severing the spinal column.

Current regional sightings

By the end of November most wintering waterfowl, raptors, sparrows, and finches will be back for another season. Winter Wren, Golden-crowned Kinglet, and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker have already returned. In October some of the good birds located were a Black-billed Cuckoo and LeConte's Sparrow in Elkville. Another Black-billed Cuckoo was close to Johnston City. Bay-breasted and Blackburnian Warblers were at Fountain Bluff in Jackson County, close to Marion, and at Rend Lake. Blue-headed Vireos were seen at Pyramid SP and in Union County. A Cape May Warbler in Saline County and a Mourning Warbler in Union County were good, and a Black-throated Blue Warbler at Union County Refuge was outstanding. A Merlin was at LaRue-Pine Hills.

If you're looking for ideas about where to go birding in Southern Illinois, consider my book, "Finding Birds in Southern Illinois," available in print or as a PDF at www.southwestbirders.com.



PHOTOS PROVIDED BY HENRY DETWILER

Raptors, like the bald eagle have sharp talons that aid in capturing prey.



ISTOCK.COM/CRAIG CORDIER

Grebes' feet are lobed, which spread the bird's weight over a larger surface area, allowing them to walk on floating vegetation and lily pads.

About The Author

Carbondale is my home town, where I started birding 56 years ago. I spent an exciting 16 years as a bird guide, and have penned bird-finding books for Southwest Arizona, Southern California, and Southern Illinois. I currently reside in Arizona; you can reach me at henry_detwiler@