The Gazette-Democrat

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Thursday, October 1, 2026 | Anna, Illinois | $1.00 | Volume 179, Number 40

News Notes

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

The second installment for Union County property tax bills is due Oct. 6.

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Congratulations to the Anna-Jonesboro Community High School girls' golf team. The team scored a 351 on its way to winning the SIRR Mississippi Conference championship. A-J's Elly Mays finished first and earned conference champion honors. Alli Leek was second and Finley Diemer placed third; both received all-conference recognition. The championship was played at the Apple Creek Golf Course in Makanda.

***

A Sept. 24 U.S. Drought Monitor update showed that all of Union, Jackson, Williamson and Johnson counties were experiencing abnormally dry conditions. Similar conditions were reported in parts of Alexander, Pulaski and Massac counties.

***

The National Weather Service office in Paducah notes that the 2026 fall severe weather safety and preparedness campaign started Sept. 28 and continues through Oct. 2. The purpose of the week is to increase awareness and promote preparedness about severe weather hazards during the fall season as well as increasing the level of response to watches and warnings.

***

The City of Anna hosted a meeting of the Southern Illinois Mayors Association. The meeting was Thursday evening, Sept. 24, at The Villa-Pizza Villa in Anna.

***

'Tis the season…the City of Anna is welcoming sign-ups for this year's Lights Parade, which is set for Saturday evening, Nov. 28, which is also the date for the annual Christmas in Downtown Anna festivities.

***

Proceeds from a recent spaghetti luncheon in Alto Pass will help to support the Wreaths Across America 2026 program. Donations will make the placing of honor wreaths on the graves of veterans at the Alto Pass, Hagler, Dutch Ridge and Tripp cemeteries.

***

Donuts with Grownups events are planned Tuesday, Oct. 6, at Lincoln School in Anna and Thursday, Oct. 8, at Davie School in Anna. The events are presented by the Anna District 37 PTO.

***

Kindergarten students in Anna School District 37 have been learning about apples with Union County Farm Bureau Ag in the Classroom program coordinator Haley Bode. Flamm Orchards near Cobden donated apples.

***

Dozens of Cobden School District 17 students, staff and community members were among those who joined in the See You at the Pole student-led day of prayer on Wednesday morning, Sept. 23.

***

Lincoln-Douglas debates, Constitution Week celebration held in Jonesboro

Two landmark events were celebrated Saturday evening, Sept. 19 in Union County. The events included the 168th anniversary of the historic Lincoln-Douglas debates and this year's commemoration of Constitution Week.

The celebration took place at the Lincoln Memorial Picnic Grounds in Jonesboro. The picnic grounds are located along North Main Street in Jonesboro at what was the site of a U.S. Senate campaign debate between candidates Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas which took place on Sept. 15, 1858.

From August to October in 1858, Lincoln, a Republican, and Douglas, a Democrat and the incumbent, engaged in a series of debates throughout Illinois. A program shared at the Sept. 19 celebration recalled that during the debates: "Thousands of spectators and newspaper reporters from around the country watched as the two men battled over the primary issue facing the nation at the time: slavery and the battle over its extension into new territories." The debates brought national attention to Lincoln, who was elected as president of the United States in 1860.

The program also shared that "Constitution Week commemorates America's most important document. In 1955, the Daughters of the American Revolution petitioned Congress to set aside Congress to set aside September 17-23 annually to be dedicated for the observance of Constitution Week. The resolution was later adopted by the U.S. Congress and signed into public law on August 2, 1956, by President Dwight D. Eisenhower."

Sponsors of the local celebration included the Shawnee Hills Arts Council, the Daniel Chapman Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Long Knives Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution, Veterans of Foreign Wars Carroll P. Foster Post 3455 of Anna and the U.S. Forest Service/Shawnee National Forest.

Some of the highlights of the celebration included presentation of the colors by Boy Scout/Scouting America Troop 44 and the Long Knives Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution, an invocation and reading of The American's Creed, singing of the National Anthem and "God Bless America" led by Lily Dallas, recalling the story of Molly Pitcher and other brave women who fought in the young nation's service, a flag folding ceremony presented by members of Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 3455 of Anna and its Auxiliary, the dedication of a Liberty Tree to celebrate the nation's 250th birthday in 2026 by the Scouts and Long Knives, a Constitution bell ringing and benediction.

A roll call was held to recognize the names of 26 patriots who fought during the Revolutionary War and then came to Union County.

A cannon was fired six times to close the evening. The cannon was fired by members of Rock Ridge Artillery The Molly Pitchers and the Long Knives.

Those attending the celebration were given a "homework" assignment by Shawnee Hills Arts Council executive director Lee Hackney: to talk with others about the U.S. Constitution and why the founding document is so important to America.



Presentation of colors

The colors were presented at the celebration by members of Boy Scout/Scouting America Troop 44 and the Long Knives Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution.



Flag folding ceremony

An American flag folding ceremony was conducted by Sherry Haddick, Mark Haddick and Bob Shoemaker, who are members of Veterans of Foreign Wars Carroll P. Foster Post 3455 and its Auxiliary.



Cannon fired

A cannon was fired at the conclusion of a celebration held in honor of Constitution Week and the anniversary of the historic Lincoln-Douglas debates. The event was held Saturday evening, Sept. 19, at the Lincoln Memorial Picnic Grounds in Jonesboro. The cannon was fired by members of Rock Ridge Artillery The Molly Pitchers and the Long Knives Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution.

Just as the celebration was coming to an end, the musical sounds which accompanied an American Ice Cream truck could be. The truck carried some sweet, and cold, treats, which some of those on hand purchased.

Entries for this year's Pumpkin Town welcomed

Organizers are continuing to invite the community to be a part of this year's Pumpkin Town, a Union County tradition which is returning in 2026.

This year's Pumpkin Town will feature a special theme and new ways for businesses, organizations, families and individuals to participate. Organizers have announced that traditional Pumpkin Town displays are planned at the Anna City Park and be stars of the show.

The theme for Pumpkin Town 2026 will be Dolly Parton. The community is invited to come up with displays inspired by Dolly.

A front porch decorating contest is planned this year. Community members can decorate their porch or yard and help to spread Pumpkin Town throughout Anna.

A storefront decorating contest also is planned. Businesses are invited to dress up their storefront for fall.

Prizes will be awarded this year. Winners will be selected in the different contest categories, with a prize for each category winner. Those who want to be eligible for prizes can email a photo of their finished display to Union County Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development at info@unioncounty.biz

All Pumpkin Town displays are to be set up and ready to see by Friday, Oct. 9, just in time for ColorFest. Pumpkin Town at the Anna City Park is scheduled to remain on display through Saturday, Oct. 24.

Sign ups for Pumpkin Town can be done online at https://forms.gle/PyxNn9Sd18P4JKx29.

District 37 welcomes food donations

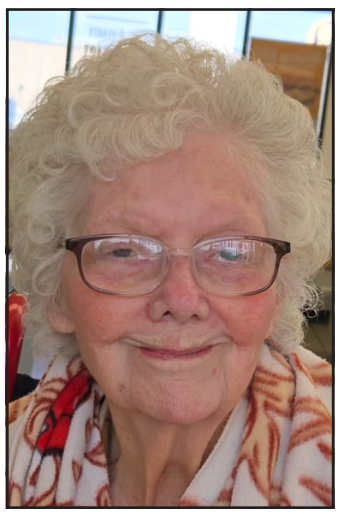
Anna School District 37 is welcoming donations of nonperishable food items. The donations will help the district's families with weekend meals for students.

Items which are being collected 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. Fruit snacks, microwave popcorn, granola bars, pretzels. Easy to prepare boxed meals.

Organizers ask that all food items are sealed and within their expiration date.

Items can be dropped off at Davie Elementary/Anna Junior High School, which is located at 301 S. Green St. in Anna. More information is available by contacting school nurse Candice Sauerbrunn at 618-833-8022, extension 224.

OBITUARIES



Mary Kathryn (Mitchell) Houchin

Mary Kathryn (Mitchell) Houchin, 90, of Garden Ridge, Texas, went to be with the Lord on Friday, Sept. 18, 2026.

Mary was born on Aug. 6, 1936, in Tamms to Walter F. and Helen (Wilson) Mitchell. She graduated from Tamms High School in 1954 and went on to attend cosmetology school.

On May 25, 1956, Mary married the love of her life, Lloyd Kenneth Houchin. Together, they shared a remarkable journey that took them around the world during Lloyd's more than 29-year career in the United States Air Force. Leaving her small hometown of Tamms, Mary embraced each new adventure and made a home wherever their travels led them. She lived in Arizona, Texas, and Georgia before spending three years in Japan. Upon returning to the United States with their daughter, Ramona Lynne, the family moved to Louisiana for four years. Their next overseas adventure took Mary, Lloyd, Ramona, and their son, Mitchell Lloyd, to England for three years. After returning stateside, they lived in Alabama, Nevada, Illinois, and Nebraska before retiring in Lebanon, Illinois. In 2023, Mary moved to Texas to be closer to her daughter.

Throughout her life, Mary was known for her willingness to try new things, her caring spirit, and her dedication to family and community. In her early years, she held various jobs while also embracing the responsibilities and friendships that came with being an Air Force wife. She was active in her husband's squadron spouses' activities and the Officer Spouses' Club, volunteered with the Red Cross, and enjoyed bowling and golf. Later in life, she worked at a Hallmark store and at a pig farm, where her compassionate nature shone through as she took home smaller piglets and bottle-fed them until they reached a healthy size.

Mary was also an active member of the Belleville, Illinois chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, where she served a term as chapter regent.

Mary is survived by her daughter, Ramona (Houchin) Dolson; her son, Mitchell Lloyd Houchin and his wife, Debbie (Snyder) Houchin; her grandsons, Alexander Lloyd and Destiny (Wood) Houchin, and Steven Mitchell and Alexis (Gutzmer) Houchin; her great-grandchildren, Granger and Sutton Houchin; as well as numerous nieces, nephews, cousins, and her beloved cat, Sammy.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Helen (Wilson) Mitchell and Walter F. Mitchell; her sister, Ruth Genevieve (Mitchell) Davis; and her brother, Eugene Pratt Mitchell.

At Mary's request, there will be no visitation or services held.

Announcement courtesy of Crain Funeral Home in Tamms.



Lynn Roach

Lynn Roach, 64, of Anna passed away on Aug. 25, 2026.

She was born on April 20, 1962, in Anna to Harold "Bob" and Arnetta Roach (née Pedigo).

She attended Jonesboro Grade School and Anna-Jonesboro Community High School, class of 1980.

Lynn enjoyed spending time with her friends, family, gardening, rescuing cats and volunteering. For several years, she organized a local coat drive through Union County Counseling and was awarded the "Volunteer of the Year" award. She gave away thousands of coats during her years volunteering.

She is preceded in death by her parents, Harold "Bob" and Arnetta Roach (née Pedigo); her sisters, Judy, Glenda, Shelby, and Tina; and her brother, Danny Roach.

Lynn is survived by one brother, Harold Roach; two sisters, Sarah Pind and Mona Shipley.

She is also survived by her five children, Destiny Trexler (née Bennett), Dustin Hubbs, Eian Mull, Skylar Ramos (Reynolds), and Zachariah Ramos; six grandchildren, Manning, Jasmine, Jeremiah, Josabella, Destilynn, and Kathlynn; and one great-granddaughter, Paisely.

Per her request, Lynn was cremated with no service at the funeral home.

On Sept. 4, her friends at Bob's Tavern hosted a beautiful memorial for her in her honor.

A celebration of life will be scheduled at a later date.

The cremation of Lynn Roach will be personally handled by the staff at Crain Funeral Home.

Crain Funeral Home in Anna, Illinois is in charge of arrangements.



Carolyn Follis

Carolyn Follis, age 90 of Ware, went home to her Lord and Savior Thursday, Sept. 24, 2026.

She was born Sept. 11, 1936 in Harrisburg, the daughter of Ronald Dale and Bertha (Weiss) Wilson. She married Fawn P. Follis on June 20, 1959, in Harrisburg. He preceded her in death on Nov. 15, 2022.

Carolyn is survived by her two daughters, Cara Follis of Jonesboro and Amy (Stuart) Rendleman of Anna; three grandchildren, Matthew (Ashley) Follis, Grace (Logan) Rich, and Keri (Jayden) Moore; three great-grandchildren, Mallory and Adalyn Follis and Lane Rich; other extended family and friends. She was preceded in death by her parents; husband, Fawn P. Follis; twin grandchildren, Baylee and Sibyl Rendleman; brother, Ronald Dale "Bud" Wilson Jr.; and sister, Eleanor Keller.

Carolyn was a member of the Ware Family Church for many years. After receiving her master's degree, Carolyn went on to teach at various schools in the area. Many days after teaching she went home to help Fawn work on the farm. She loved her family dearly, spending time with her grandchildren and great-grandchildren brought her joy and she will be missed beyond measure.

Graveside funeral services were at 3 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 27, 2026, at the Anna Cemetery with Pastor Sandy Estes officiating. Interment followed. Those attending were asked to go directly to the cemetery. Memorial contributions are preferred to the Ware Family Church. Envelopes will be available at the Rendleman & Hileman Funeral Home.



Barbara Sue (Harris) Russell

Barbara Sue (Harris) Russell, age 84, of Lick Creek, passed away on Friday, Sept. 25, 2026 at Reflections Memory Care in Carterville.

She was born on Dec. 15, 1941, to Troy Harris and Ruby Zellah (Zimmerman) Harris in Johnson County. On May 29, 1960, she married Leon Russell.

Barbara was a retired nurse having served in Marion, Cairo, many years at Union County Hospital in the Emergency Room, and as a Flight nurse. Then she was a nurse for Dr. Loomis and then at Union County Nursing Home. She was a member of the Mt. Hebron Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

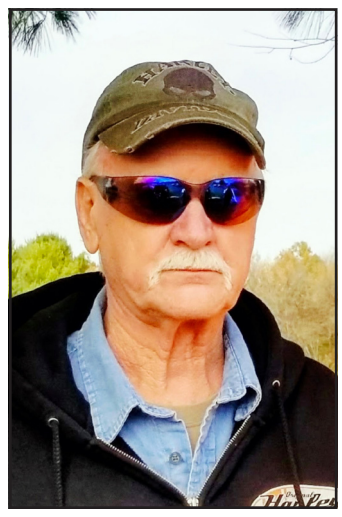
Survivors include her husband of 66 years, Leon; children, Dale (Monica) Russell and Kimberely Darlene (Peter) Hofelich; three grandchildren, Stefani (Thomas) Hall, Trevor (Jasmine) Russell, and Erika Hofelich; three great-grandchildren, Tommy Hall, Rayana Hall, and Izabella Hall; siblings, Melba Perry, Viola Reis, Linda Lou Dietrich, Everett Ray Harris, and Dallas Leon Harris; along with nieces, nephews, and other relatives.

Along with her parents, she is preceded in death by her three sisters, Doris Ann Haskell, Rose Ella Francis, and Verna Mae Martin; four brothers, Valgene Harris and Ace Lee Harris; infant Francis Harris and infant Marion Harris.

A Private Burial was held at Mt. Hebron Cemetery.

The family requests with gratitude that memorial contributions may be made to Mt. Hebron Cemetery.

Crain Funeral Home in Anna, Illinois is in charge of arrangements.



Jerry A. Potts

Jerry A. Potts, age 79, of Urbandale, passed away on Thursday, Sept. 24, 2026, at the Saint Francis Medical Center in Cape Girardeau, Mo.

He was born on May 1, 1947, to Losier McCoy Potts and Mary Curtis (Reeves) Potts in Cairo, Ill. He was married the love of his life, Jill Kay Mohundro, until her passing in 2003.

Jerry was a veteran of the U.S. Army. He was a retired ironworker. Jerry was a member of the Ironworkers Local 782, and a member of the former Urbandale Community Chapel. He loved to ride his Harley motorocycle.

Survivors include his sons, Jeremy and Chris (Lisa); grandchildren, Logan and Hayden; brothers, Losier Edwin and Kenny; nieces, nephews, and other relatives; and sister-in-law, Dwanda; and brother-in-law, Willie.

Along with his parents and wife, he is preceded in death by his brother, Dean; and sisters-in-law, Jan and Charlene.

Funeral Services were held on Monday, Sept. 28, 2026, at 1 p.m. with Willie Garner officiating at Crain Funeral Home in Cairo. Visitation was held prior to the service from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m. at the funeral home.

Interment followed at Green Lawn Memorial Gardens in Villa Ridge, Ill.

Crain Funeral Home in Cairo is in charge of arrangements.

Raymond Barry Walker

Raymond Barry Walker, age 81 of Anna, died Thursday, Sept. 24, 2026, at the Marion VA Medical Center. He was born on Oct. 27, 1944, in Risco, Mo., the son of Ray and LaVerne (Parker) Walker. He married Janice Evans in 1969. She preceded him in death on July 26, 2018.

Barry is survived by his daughter, Vonnie Pitts; grandchildren, Aubrey (Dustin) Dillow, Trevor Walker and Sydnie Ross; great-grandchildren, Harlan, Hayden and Haizley Walker; other relatives and friends. He was preceded in death by his parents, wife, Janice Walker, son, Marc Walker and two sisters.

Barry's request was to be cremated. No formal services will be held. Rendleman and Hileman Funeral Home in Anna is in charge of arrangements.

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THE TALK AND COBDEN REVIEW
Serving Union County Since 1849
(USPS 215-280)
ISSN 2834-6165 (Print)
2834-6173 (Online)
Published weekly on Thursdays
by Southern Illinois LOCAL Media Group, LLC

618-833-2158
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Circulation@localsouthernnews.com.....Circulation

Miguel Paredes as Trustee of the
Paddock Publications, Inc.
Employee Stock Ownership Trust
SUBSCRIPTION RATES

In Union County $54.00
Elsewhere in 629 Zip Code $56.00
Out of Area $64.00
Per Copy $1.00

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to
P.O. Box 34, Assumption, IL 62510

Periodical postage paid at Anna, Illinois 62906-0529

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as contemplated by 715 ILCS 5/5e.

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1 Corinthians 15

The Resurrection of the Dead

15.1 Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. 2 By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. 3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance[1] : that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas,[2] and then to the Twelve. 6 After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, 8 and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born. 9 For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them-yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. 11 Whether, then, it is I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.

12 But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. 14 And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. 15 More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. 16 For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. 17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. 18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. 19 If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

20 But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 21 For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. 22 For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. 23 But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. 24 Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. 25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death. 27 For he "has put everything under his feet."[3] Now when it says that "everything" has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. 28 When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all. 29 Now if there is no resurrection, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized for them? 30 And as for us, why do we endanger ourselves every hour? 31 I face death every day-yes, just as surely as I boast about you in Christ Jesus our Lord. 32 If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus with no more than human hopes, what have I gained? If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."[4] 33 Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character."[5] 34 Come back to your senses as you ought, and stop sinning; for there are some who are ignorant of God-I say this to your shame.

35 But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?" 36 How foolish! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. 37 When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else. 38 But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body. 39 Not all flesh is the same: People have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another. 40 There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another. 41 The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor. 42 So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; 43 it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; 44 it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. 45 So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being"[6] ; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. 46 The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. 47 The first man was of the dust of the earth; the second man is of heaven. 48 As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the heavenly man, so also are those who are of heaven. 49 And just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, so shall we[7] bear the image of the heavenly man. 50 I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

51 Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed- 52 in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. 53 For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. 54 When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory."[8] 55 "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"[9] 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

58 Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

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Ex-sheriffs stand at the Old Johnson County Courthouse

Pictured from left to right are L. Gray, Jim Carter, Wm. C. Allen, Mark Whiteaker, Lewis Frizzell, Bob Ridenhour, Mart Hankins amd John Veach.

This was a rare photo opportunity when eight ex-sheriffs of Johnson County were standing shoulder to shoulder in front of the north door to the Old Johnson County Courthouse. The date of the photo is unknown and the years that each served has not been completely discovered yet.

This photo was taken not many years after the 1871 Courthouse was built, where the office of the sheriff was located. Some of these men most likely served during the period of time when the previous building stood in the same location. Several of them served in the Civil War and came home to Johnson County to again do service as sheriff.

Pay attention to the paper notices posted on the doors. This was a time when the public display of notices and documents was required by law. Some of them may have been posted by the sheriff. This north door was not the main entrance, those being the west and east entrances. The north and south entrances were smaller and easily recognized because they were not recessed into the wall as much as the east and west doors. The ground sloping to the left of these gentlemen makes it clear that this is the north entrance.

The duties of the sheriff have always been as an officer of the court, to make it simple. He served warrants and carried out the execution of the law as dictated by the Judge of the court. He also served as a tax collector in the earlier days. Their chief duties were, and still are, acting as the chief law enforcement officer of the county and serving as an officer of the circuit court.

• This is a weekly feature written by Ed Annable.

Plans announced for new ice cream shop in Vienna

The Arrowleaf human services organization which serves the Southern Illinois area has announced plans for The Scoop Station at the Forman Depot in the Vienna City Park.

The organization shared on social media that what started as an idea brought to Arrowleaf to consider has grown into a new partnership between Arrowleaf and the City of Vienna. The partnership brings together jobs, tourism and community opportunity.

The Scoop Station will be a train-themed, hand-dipped ice cream shop located inside the Forman Depot Visitor Center & Train Museum in Vienna.

"Even better," Arrowleaf declared, it will serve as a social enterprise creating paid employment and job-training opportunities for students and individuals with disabilities." Arrowleaf expects to created approximately six to eight youth employment opportunities as the operation grows.

The ice cream will offer one more attraction for those who visit Vienna. "With the Forman Depot, Big Bike, railroad attractions, Vienna City Park and connection to the Tunnel Hill State Trail, The Scoop Station will give families, cyclists, visitors and our own community another reason to stop, stay and enjoy Vienna," Arrowleaf," the organization shared.

Arrowleaf continued: "Thanks to our partnership with the City of Vienna, we're working toward opening within approximately 60 days and plan to operate year-round, with expanded hours during the summer tourism season. There's a lot of work to do between now and opening day – but we can't wait to welcome you aboard."

Details are the shop's opening, employment opportunities, menu and more are to be announced.

In a message shared with the announcement about the ice cream shop, Vienna Mayor Steve Penrod said: "The Forman Depot and City Park are important community and tourism assets. The Scoop Station gives us another way to build on what is already here, create local jobs and give visitors another reason to stop and spend time in Vienna."

Vienna blood drive a success

The Vienna blood drive on Sept. 21 was a success with 51 donors.

The donors enjoyed lunch and dessert provided by County Line Baptist Church of Simpson, and the door prize was provided by Longhorn Cafe, Vienna.

Volunteers for the drive were Rita Hull, Bev Richardson, Barb Jeffress, Bonnie and David Hogue, Kim Collins, Mary Jo King, Imogene Bradshaw, Barb Smith, Geri Tesina, Bonnie Nutty, Joyce Taylor, Joseph Nelson, and Blood Program Leader Pat McCann.

NEWS FROM HERE AND THERE *By Dixie Terry*

Welcome to Fall, which arrived on Sept. 22, and not a minute too soon, bringing along the best weather we've had in weeks.

October comes from the Latin word "octo," meaning eight, since it was the eighth month on the ancient Roman calendar.

The birthstone of this month is the opal and the official flower is the marigold. Why not mums, I wonder.

October is the National Month for Emotional Wellness, Breast Cancer Awareness, Vegetarian Awareness, Gazpacho, Womens' Healthcare and Arthritis Awareness.

The Arrowhead Endurance Run will be on Oct. 10-11 at Arrowhead Lake Campground near Jonesboro.

The Fat Tire Festival comes up on Oct. 16-18 near Ozark in Johnson County.

The Vienna Fall Festival will kick off early on Saturday, Oct. 3 at the Vienna City Park. A chili cook-off can be entered by calling 658-5161. Lots of music, entertainment, good food and more will be enjoyed.

A "Patriotic Tribute" to honor our country will be held at noon at the amphitheatre in the city park. The Vienna High School Chorus will perform under the direction of Connor Windings. Bring a chair and enjoy the concert!

The Goreville Community Yard Sales will be underway on Oct. 2-3. Call 995-2157 to get your sale on the map, which will be available at the village hall.

Photos for the Johnson County Historical Society must be received by Oct. 31, along with an entry fee of $5, with photo and description included in envelope marked "2026 Historical Society Photo Contest." Take it to the Vienna Town Square Mall, along with name, date of birth, age, address, e-mail and phone.

The Johnson County HCE members and guests loaded into a coach and headed way up north to Shipshewana, Ind., on Sept. 28-Oct. 1, at the Amish community, with many interesting events on their agenda.

The Johnson County Women's Club will hold their first meeting of the club year on Friday, Oct. 2 at 1:30 p.m. at the U. of I. Extension Building in Vienna. All county ladies are welcomed to join this social/philanthropic organization. Club officers are Faye Mize, President; Marleis Trover, Vice-President; Jeanne McKenzie, Secretary; Sue Hirsch, Treasurer; and Rosemary Rouse, Program Co-ordinator.

Nature is fascinating, with the eye-popping color changes of the leaves in Autumn. It is not caused by the chilly weather, but by the lack of sunshine. Day and night hours are roughly equal in length, according to the Farmer's Almanac.

Bye-bye and great traveling is wished for the humingbirds who have disappeared from southern Illinois to make their annual trek to Mexico for the winter months.

Serving as volunteers at the Goreville Ministerial Alliance Thrift Shop on Sept. 29 and Oct. 1-2, will be members of the Lick Creek Pentecostal Church. Fall merchandise and decor is ready and waiting to be purchased at lower-than-low prices, on Tuesday and Thursday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and on Saturday, 9 a.m. to noon.

The Vienna High School is offering an after-school art program, beginning on Sept. 29 through Oct. 27, each Tuesday from 3 to 4 p.m. A second session will be from Nov. 3 to Dec. 8. To register, go online at viennahs.com/art.

"Community Preparedness" will be presented for the public and community leaders on Saturday, Oct. 10 from 10 a.m. to noon at the Vienna High School.

The 100th birthday of Owen Lee Webb of rural Vienna will be celebrated on Oct. 17 in the Vienna High School Commons. Cards can be mailed to him at c/o Debra Goddard, 2190 Mt. Zion Road, Vienna, 62995.

The Southern Seven Health Department will be providing a drive/thru flu shot service on Oct. 1 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Goreville Village Park. Bring insurance cards.

Enjoy "Sweet Harvest Day" at the Goreville Village Park on Saturday, Oct. 3 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. with a horse-drawn sorghum press, apple cider, honey, Autumn produce, pony rides and much more.

We will appreciate receiving newsy items from Johnson County schools, churches and organizations. Call 618-422-2086 or email to dixieterry85@yahoo.com.

Have a great remainder of the week and enjoy all that October has to offer.

Community emergency preparedness event set for Oct. 10 at Vienna High

Johnson County residents are invited to attend a community emergency preparedness event sponsored by the American Red Cross and Johnson County ESDA/Emergency Management on Saturday, Oct. 10 at Vienna High School.

The event will be held in the Vienna High School Media Center and will provide community members with an opportunity to learn more about local emergency management efforts, how emergency response is carried out and ways residents can become involved.

Organizers hope the event will help keep community members informed about what local emergency response agencies do before, during and after unusual or emergency events, as well as the importance of community involvement in preparing for and responding to those situations.

Community members are encouraged to attend and learn more about how they can help their families and communities prepare for emergencies.

Pre-registration is encouraged.

For additional information or questions about the event, contact Johnson County ESDA/Emergency Management Coordinator Rich Marose at esda@johnsonco.illinois.gov.

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Cobden hosts car show, bounce houses and more

Cobden hosted a car show, bounce houses, vendors, a flea market and community yard sales on Saturday, Sept. 19. The car show, vendors and bounce houses were set up at and near the Cobden Community Park. Food was available to those braved a late summer heat wave to come to the park.

County Line News by Suzan Harvel

The Village Board of Mill Creek met on Tuesday, Sept. 15 in regular business meeting. A new board trustee, Matt Phalin, was voted in. The village president, Amy Kram, reported the Union County Sheriff's Office has been apprised of derelict and condemned properties in the village proper, hosting squatters, vandals and hazardous waste issues. The next meeting will be held on Oct. 20 at 7 p.m.

The Honor Flight for Veterans latest run to Washington D.C. returned home a day off schedule due to a pilot shortage. The veterans and their guardians returned safely Tuesday afternoon to Veteran's Airport in Marion. The long-awaited trip to our nations capital was reported to be excellent and we are glad these veterans returned home safely. We also appreciate all the efforts made by so many to give our veterans this wonderful opportunity.

Johnson and Pope Counties kicked off their Constitution Week Celebrations with bell ringing, proclamations and many other events. Union County will host their own events this weekend at the Lincoln Memorial Park in Jonesboro on Saturday and at the Heritage House Museum on Sunday. Constitution Week runs from Sept. 17 to 23 of each year.

P.A.S.T. of Union County will have their regular business meeting on Tuesday, Sept. 29 at 6 p.m. at the Heritage House Museum in Jonesboro.

Shawnee Hills Arts Council unveiled their wonderful new signage on Sept. 8, 2026, on the outside of the Anna Arts Center on Davie Street in Anna. The mural was rendered by artist Christine De Shazo and was created by Spectrum Graphics and endorsed by the city of Anna.

Camp Ground Church News

Bro. Easton's sermon Sept. 20 was "The Importance of Partnership" based on 2 Corinthians 6:14-18.

This selection in the Bible is often referred to as "Be not Unequally Yoked." Many use this passage in reference to marriages between a believer and non-believer.

However, being yoked can apply to many other alliances or relationships that have a different "moral compass" than that of a faithful Christian.

If you are in the race of life, when you accepted Christ as your Savior was your "starting gun." It is easier to "train for" and "run the race of life" with other believers rather than non-believers.

The devil is out to get us — to wreck marriages, families, jobs, etc., and will use those around us to accomplish his work.

As Christians, we have to be steadfast in our actions. We need to be the "trendsetters," and lead non-believers to Jesus.

We are the temple of the living God. "Let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates the body and spirit" so that the Holy Spirit can live within us.

Carolyna Pind and Olivia Painter assisted by Cali Pind rang the bell beginning Worship.

Raelynn Bonner and Cali Pind took up the tithes and offerings.

Our lead elder for September is Bro. Easton.

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.

Anna First Baptist News

Anna First Baptist Church met for worship on Sept. 27 with Matthew Lopez leading our Opening Prayer.

Our Call to Worship was on Baptism. "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

"And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

"And Jesus, when he was baptized, went straightway out of the water; and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon him.

"And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism unto death:

That like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

This was taken from Matthew and Romans.

Our Worship Teams songs for this week were, "Open the Eyes of My Heart," "What a Beautiful Name" and "Unashamed."

Pastor Lupe's sermon was "Jeremiah, the Weeping Prophet"

Highlights included, Jeremiah was a prophet called by God while still a young man to speak His truth to the nation of Judah. He faithfully warned the people to turn from their sin and return to God before judgment came upon Jerusalem. Known as the "weeping prophet," Jeremiah carried a broken heart for people who repeatedly rejected both God's Word and His warnings. Despite opposition, imprisonment, loneliness, and persecution, Jeremiah continued proclaiming the message God had given him. His life reminds us that faithfulness is not measured by how many people listen, but by whether we remain obedient to God when they do not.

After our Worship Service we had a Baptismal Service, sharing with someone as they have accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior of their life. This is the most important decision we will ever make in our own life. If you have not yet done this in your own life, please let us help you with this. We would love to tell you about our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Our Sunday School meets at 9 a.m. and is for all ages. Our Worship Service and Children's Worship begins at 10:15 a.m. Our bus runs for both of these services. Just give us a call, we will be happy to pick you up.

Our church is located at 409 Morgan St. in Anna. Our phone number is 618-833-5416.

Our prayer is God will bless you and your family and that you will know Him in the fullness of His Grace.

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Anna Church of the Nazarene News

Anna Church of the Nazarene News

The morning worship service was held at 10:35 a.m. on Sept. 20. The worship service was led by guest worship leader Brandon Ratermann.

The message "3 Life Lessons From A Donut" was brought by guest speaker Nate Ammon from Psalm 119:68: "You are good and you do what is good, teach me your decrees."

Philippians 1:6 " And I am certain that God. Who began the good work within you, will continue His work UNTIL it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns."

Romans 8:28 "And we know that God causes everything to work together for the GOOD of those who love God and are called according to His purpose for them."

John 15:5 "Yes, I am the vine: you are the branches. Those who remain in me and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing."

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.

EMR class scheduled in Union County

Shawnee Community College is planning to offer an emergency medical responder, EMR, class in Union County.

The eight-week class is scheduled to begin Monday, October. 19, at the college's Union County Extension Center in Anna. Hours are from 6 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. The class is open to anyone over 16.

The college noted that the class is open to those interested in a future career in emergency medical services, health care or public safety. The also is open to those who simply want to be better prepared to help in an emergency. More information can be found online at shawnee.edu.

Musical, art exhibit, reception, haunted house set at arts council

An art exhibit and artist's reception, a musical and a haunted house are on the calendar for October at the Shawnee Hills Arts Council in Anna. The arts council is located at 125 W. Davie St. in Anna.

Art Exhibit

The arts council is hosting an exhibit featuring "nature paintings rooted in calm and clarity" by local artist Mary Ellen Ecker.

An opening reception for the exhibit is planned from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 3. Refreshments will be provided. The reception is free and open to the public.

The exhibit is scheduled to be on display from Oct. 2 to Nov. 1. Viewing hours are scheduled on Thursdays and Fridays from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and Saturdays and Sundays from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Admission is free and open to the public.

Musical

The arts council plans to present three performances of the musical "9 to 5 Jr." The performances are set for 7 p.m. Friday, Oct. 2 and 2 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 3-4.

"9 to 5 Jr." features musics and lyrics by the late Dolly Parton. The musical is based on the film "9 to 5." Ticket prices are $15 for adults and $ for kids.

Haunted House

The arts council announced on social media that a Halloween season haunted house is scheduled on Fridays and Saturdays in October. Hours are scheduled from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. On Halloween, which is Oct. 31, the haunted house is set to be open from 6 p.m. to 11 p.m. Admission prices are $7 per person. A group of five can enter for $30.

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Notice of Intention of Community Consolidated School District Number 37, Union County, Illinois to Issue $1,250,000 Working Cash Fund Bonds

Public Notice is hereby given that on the 15th day of September, 2026, the Board of Education (the "Board") of Community Consolidated School District Number 37, Union County, Illinois (the "District"), adopted a resolution declaring its intention and determination to issue bonds in the aggregate amount of $1,250,000 for the purpose of increasing the Working Cash Fund of the District, and it is the intention of the Board to avail of the provisions of Article 20 of the School Code of the State of Illinois, and all laws amendatory thereof and supplementary thereto, and to issue said bonds for the purpose of increasing said Working Cash Fund. Said Working Cash Fund is to be maintained in accordance with the provisions of said Article and shall be used for the purpose of enabling the District to have in its treasury at all time sufficient money to meet demands thereon for expenditures for corporate purposes.

A petition may be filed with the Secretary of the Board (the "Secretary") within thirty (30) days after the date of publication of this notice, signed by not less than 473 voters of the District, said number of voters being equal to ten percent (10%) of the registered voters of the District, requesting that the proposition to issue said bonds as authorized by the provisions of said Article 20 be submitted to the voters of the District. If such petition is filed with the Secretary within thirty (30) days after the date of publication of this notice, an election on the proposition to issue said bonds shall be held on the 23rd day of February, 2027, unless none of the voters of the District are scheduled to cast votes for any candidates for nomination for, election to or retention in public office at said election, in which case an election on the proposition to issue said bonds shall be held on the 6th day of April, 2027. The Circuit Court may declare that an emergency referendum should be held prior to either of said election dates pursuant to the provisions of Section 2A-1.4 of the Election Code of the State of Illinois, as amended. If no such petition is filed within said thirty (30) day period, then the District shall thereafter be authorized to issue said bonds for the purpose hereinabove provided.

By order of the Board of Education of Community Consolidated School District Number 37, Union County, Illinois.

Dated this 15th day of September, 2026.

Cheryl Ligon
Secretary, Board of Education,
Community Consolidated School District
Number 37,
Union County, Illinois

Joshua Gooden
President, Board of Education,
Community Consolidated School District
Number 37, Union County, Illinois

For scuba diving enthusiasts, Mermet Springs 'best place in the Midwest'

By Peyton Cook and Saluki Local Reporting Lab

Sometimes a person doesn't just discover a place. It discovers them, too.

For Glen Faith, that place was an abandoned rock quarry in rural Massac County in far southern Illinois. He would eventually transform it into Mermet Springs Inc., a scuba diving destination that draws hundreds of divers every year for recreation and training.

But Faith's life underwater began years earlier.

A certified diver for over 40 years, he got his start in 1987 after joining the Illinois Secretary of State Police as an investigator, and volunteering for its dive team. Working out of the agency's Marion office at the time, Faith helped conduct underwater search-and-rescue missions across southern Illinois, recovering bodies, guns, drugs and other evidence.

The work introduced Faith to scuba diving. It became a lifelong passion.

Originally of Joliet, Faith first came to Southern Illinois as a student, earning a bachelor's degree in administration of justice from Southern Illinois University Carbondale in 1985.

A few years after starting his job in law enforcement, he learned from a neighbor about an old quarry just up the road from his home in Vienna, a piece of private property that divers would sometimes sneak onto to explore.

"He told me about it and I drove straight down here in my police car and drove in the gate and found what is now Mermet Springs," Faith said.

The quarry, which operated from about 1956 to 1972, had been long abandoned by the time Faith arrived at that gate of untapped opportunity, still early in his police career. He was immediately drawn to the place.

"The water was blue and crystal clear and it was just amazing because diving on a rescue team, you dive in muddy ponds and creeks and rivers," Faith said. "This was almost like the ocean compared to what I'd been diving in."

But there was one problem. The owner, Adley Schmidt, wasn't too keen on divers sneaking onto his property. Faith had heard all the stories about how he was known to run them off. So he tried a different approach. He knocked on Schmidt's door and asked for his permission to dive in the quarry.

"We ended up becoming good friends," Faith said. "I ended up getting permission from him to come in here and to scuba dive."

Starting a Business

A few years later, Faith decided he wanted to start his own business and open up the quarry to others. Schmidt wasn't ready to sell, so they worked out a long-term leasing arrangement – and that is how Mermet Springs Inc. got its start in 1996.

"That was more than 30 years ago now," he said of the business he now co-operates with his wife, PJ Faith.

Today, the Faiths can be found there nearly every day. They advertise Mermet Springs as a full-service dive center and open-water destination, offering scuba instruction for everyone from the beginning open-water diver to aspiring instructors. The property includes a dive shop that offers rental equipment and repairs, and the business organizes group trips to some of the world's best scuba destinations. Certified open-water divers can also enjoy the quarry outside of classes, while those who are not certified must dive with a buddy.

"I love that it's a diving location that gives people the opportunity to not only dive, but to see and explore the world," Faith said. He also loves that it brings families together and draws people to southern Illinois from across the region and country.

It's also a great boost to regional tourism efforts.

"Mermet Springs is a wonderful asset to the region, and complements the other soft adventure offerings across the area," said Carol Hoffman, executive director of the Southernmost Illinois Tourism Bureau. "It is a much-needed part of our outdoor infrastructure, which is good for visitors and community members alike."

After leasing the quarry, it took about one year to have it ready to host divers starting only on the weekends.

When it first opened it would average about 10 to 12 people a day. The numbers have grown much higher since then.

"This past weekend," Glen Faith said during an interview at the property in August, "it was a little slower, but we still had over 100 people a day."

Crystal Clear Water

The old limestone quarry offers a unique diving experience. Limestone is a rock composed primarily of calcium carbonate, which can help neutralize and remove impurities from the water, making conditions suitable for dive training.

The water's clarity also makes it the perfect place for divers to find and explore the many attractions the Faiths have submerged at Mermet Springs.

Most famous among them: the wingless Boeing 727 that Faith paid $1 to purchase and that was featured in a scene shot underwater for the film "U.S. Marshals." Faith laughs talking about how expensive that $1 plane really was – the real cost was in transporting it to rural Southern Illinois.

The quarry also includes two submerged Cessna airplanes, a school bus, pickup truck, motorcycle and train car.

Mermet Springs is one of only two dive spots in Illinois and offers a variety of diving options and training from night diving to open water, advanced and instructor certification.

Unlike many quarries, it is also open year-round, allowing for certification such as a dry suit, which is required for diving in much cooler temperatures.

"We use local pools, and right now we have more than 25 instructors," Faith said. "We've got training classes that are going almost every day."

Prices vary by the service, but divers pay $25 a day and non-divers $8 to enter, according to the website.

Open water certification is the most basic scuba training one can do. It starts with practicing skills in the pool and a written test. Once completed it is moved to the quarry where they review the skills and pass a test to be officially certified.

Divers can be certified starting at age 10 – and it is common for families to have generations of divers.

"It is a safe, fun and controlled environment," Heather Kiswani said, owner of Great American Divers, located in St. Charles, Missouri, who frequently visits Mermet Springs. "They run a very, very good organization down there. Glen is amazing, his wife PJ is amazing."



Divers from Great American Divers in St. Charles, Mo., practiced at Mermet Springs near Belknap on July 17. Photo by Peyton Cook for the Saluki Local Reporting Lab.



Mermet Springs co-owner Glen Faith posed for a portrait in April. He was on a training boat at Mermet Springs. Photo by Peyton Cook for the Saluki Local Reporting Lab.

Safety a Priority

Faith said they take safety very seriously at Mermet Springs.

"We have an underwater recall system," Faith said, describing a radio system that can be heard throughout the entire quarry. "I can do recalls if we were to have a lightning storm or a lost diver, things like that."

All of their instructors "practice and speed-dress until they can be dressed and ready to help with the rescue in 2.5 minutes or less," Faith said.

The quarry can provide all the gear one may need with additional upgrades if desired. On Thursdays, they offer a discount: Anyone who helps clean the submerged items has their entrance and air fee waived.

They also offer multiple trips a year for a set price where everything is included. They then travel with the group and scuba dive together. Jessa Shoemaker, who is a part of the office staff, traveled with owner PJ Faith to Little Cayman in the Cayman Islands in April for a women-only trip.

"We had women from ages 18 all the way up to 80, and everybody interacted with everybody," Shoemaker said. "Above water was just as much fun as below the water," PJ Faith said.

The Great American Divers shop has been going since 1996. Kiswani said they travel there about two to three times a month.

"Glen has it set up so well for training. There's underwater attractions there so divers don't get bored," she said.

For Glen Faith, his ownership of Mermet Springs Inc. also represents a full-circle moment. As he once worked on a law enforcement dive team, today he helps train firefighters and others so they can be certified to conduct underwater search-and-rescue missions.

"It's not just a training platform and then diving into the murky green water," Kiswani said. "He's just got it set up so well for training that it really is the best place in the Midwest to go to train."

• *The Saluki Local Reporting Lab is a special project of the SIU School of Journalism and Advertising and is designed to give students from diverse backgrounds practical reporting experience while providing news coverage to underserved communities. Capitol News Illinois is a nonprofit, nonpartisan news service that distributes state government coverage to hundreds of news outlets statewide. It is funded primarily by the Illinois Press Foundation and the Robert R. McCormick Foundation.*

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Marching Wildcats in homecoming parade

Anna-Jonesboro Community High School celebrated its 2026 homecoming last week. Homecoming featured a full schedule of special activities. A homecoming parade was held Friday afternoon, Sept. 25, in Anna. The A-JCHS Marching Wildcats band was one of the many participants in the parade. A big crowd was on hand in the downtown Anna area to watch the parade.

IDPH urges public to get vaccinated ahead of respiratory virus season

The Illinois Department of Public Health, IDPH, has released fall respiratory virus immunization guidance for children, adults and pregnant women.

The fall immunization guidance was adopted by IDPH based on recommendations made on Sept. 9 by the Illinois Immunization Advisory Committee, IL-IAC. IDPH shared in a news release that the committee is a group of 20 highly qualified experts spanning infectious diseases, pediatrics, family medicine, internal medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, nursing, pharmacy and public health.

The guidance was issued in response to ongoing immunization actions taken by the federal government which are not rooted in scientific evidence, the department said. IDPH is committed to providing Illinois residents with reliable, science-based guidance they can use to make informed decisions for the health of themselves and their loved ones.

Additionally, IDPH also endorsed the routine, non-seasonal adult and maternal immunization schedules, previously approved by the nation's leading medical associations. These routine schedules do not differ from what IDPH endorsed in 2025, and are based on years of science, research, data and best practices.

IDPH advised that pediatric providers should follow the child and adolescent immunization schedule provided by the American Academy of Pediatrics, AAP. IDPH adopted that schedule in February 2026.

"Illinois residents and health care providers deserve credible, transparent, and science-based immunization guidance," IDPH director Dr. Sameer Vohra said. "IDPH's recommendations, developed in consultation with the Illinois Immunization Advisory Committee, ensure our residents have the best available information this respiratory season to protect themselves and their families. I encourage Illinois residents to stay up to date on recommended immunizations to reduce their risk of serious illness."

In addition to releasing immunization guidance, Vohra issued a standing order to reduce barriers to accessing the COVID-19 vaccine. The standing order allows the COVID-19 vaccine to be offered at additional locations.

As the fall respiratory virus season begins, IDPH's Seasonal Respiratory Illness Dashboard provides important information about COVID-19, flu, and RSV activity in Illinois. Residents may also track the flu and COVID-19 vaccine coverage rates in their counties throughout the season.

The department said that uninsured or underinsured Illinois residents are encouraged to contact their local health department or to use IDPH's Vaccine Locator Dashboard for information on where to find no-cost vaccines.

IDPH recommends the following immunization guidance for the 2026-2027 respiratory virus season:

Flu vaccination is recommended for all people ages 6 months and older.

RSV immunization is recommended for:

All pregnant people during weeks 32 through 36 of pregnancy if not previously vaccinated. The maternal vaccination season has been extended and should go from September through March 1.

All infants under the age of 8 months without maternal RSV vaccine protection entering their first RSV season. Children ages 8 months through 19 months who are at increased risk for severe RSV disease and entering their second RSV season.

Adults ages 50 years through 74 years at increased risk of severe RSV disease if not previously vaccinated. All adults ages 75 years and older if not previously vaccinated.

COVID-19 vaccination is recommended for:

All children ages 6 months through 23 months. Children ages 2 years through 18 years in certain risk groups, or if desired.

All pregnant women and those who are planning pregnancy, those who are postpartum (after pregnancy), or during lactation.

All adults 19 years and older.

NOTICE OF VACANCY

Meridian CUSD #101 is now accepting applications for the Maintenance Director (full-time) position. Applicants must have the following qualifications: High School Diploma; Aptitude of the fundamentals of electricity, carpentry, plumbing, air conditioning, heating, mechanics, and refrigeration in a school setting; and experience supervising employees. Certifications are a plus. Applications can be picked up in the Meridian CUSD #101 District Office, 1401 Mounds Road, Mounds, IL 62964. POSITION WILL REMAIN OPEN UNTIL FILLED.

MERIDIAN CUSD #101 IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

UNION COUNTY LOW INCOME MEETING

Shawnee Development Council, Inc. will hold a meeting of the Low-Income residents of Union County. The purpose of the meeting is to elect a representative and alternate to their governing board of directors. The meeting will take place on Wednesday, October 28, 2026 at 10:30 am at the Union County Office located at Shawnee Development Council, Inc, 1000 North Main St, Anna IL 62906. All persons voting will be required to sign an affidavit of income eligibility.

Early & Grace Period Voting Schedule for the 2026 General Election being held November 3, 2026

Early Voting Schedule

Thursday, September 24, 2026 through Monday, November 2, 2026 from 8:00a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Excluding weekends, except Saturday, October 31, 2026 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon.

Grace Period Voting Schedule

Wednesday October 7, 2026 through Tuesday, November 3, 2026. Excluding weekends, except Saturday, October 31, 2026 from 9:00a.m. to 12:00 noon.

GENERAL ELECTION DAY
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2026
FROM 6:00 A.M. TO 7:00 P.M.

Early and Grace voting will be held at the Union County Clerk's Office located at:

309 W. Market Street, Room 116
Jonesboro, IL 62952

Stephanie L. Cox
Union County Clerk

Notice of Public Hearing Concerning the Intent of the Board of Education of Community Consolidated School District Number 37, Union County, Illinois to Sell $1,250,000 Working Cash Fund Bonds

Public Notice is Hereby Given that Community Consolidated School District Number 37, Union County, Illinois (the "District"), will hold a public hearing on the 20th day of October, 2026, at 5:30 o'clock P.M. The hearing will be held in the Media Center at Anna Junior High School, 301 South Green Street, Anna, Illinois. The purpose of the hearing will be to receive public comments on the proposal to sell bonds in the amount of $1,250,000 for the purpose of increasing the working cash fund of the District.

By order of the President of the Board of Education of Community Consolidated School District Number 37, Union County Illinois.

Dated the 15th day of September, 2026.

Cheryl Ligon
Secretary, Board of Education,
Community Consolidated School District
Number 37,
Union County, Illinois

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Preview Ballot
09/21/2026 12:26:57
2026 General Election
November 3, 2026
Johnson County, IL
PUBLICATION

Robin Harper-Whitehead, Johnson County Clerk & Recorder

To vote, completely darken the box to the LEFT of your choice, like this ■. To cast a write-in vote, darken the box to LEFT of the blank space provided and write the candidate's name in that space. For specific information, refer to the card of instruction posted in the voting booth. If you tear, spoil, deface or erroneously mark this ballot, return it to the election judge and obtain another.

FEDERAL

FOR UNITED STATES SENATOR
(Vote for one)

- ☐ JULIANA STRATTON — DEMOCRATIC
- ☐ DON TRACY — REPUBLICAN
- ☐ WHITFIELD HARRINGTON JR — AMERICAN CENTER PARTY

STATE

FOR GOVERNOR AND LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
(Vote for one)

- ☐ (JB PRITZKER (CHRISTIAN MITCHELL — DEMOCRATIC
- ☐ (DARREN BAILEY (AARON B. DEL MAR — REPUBLICAN
- ☐ (COLLIN CORBETT (CAROLYN SCHOFIELD — INDEPENDENT
- ☐ _____ Write-in

FOR ATTORNEY GENERAL
(Vote for one)

- ☐ KWAME RAOUL — DEMOCRATIC
- ☐ ROBERT W. FIORETTI — REPUBLICAN

FOR SECRETARY OF STATE
(Vote for one)

- ☐ ALEXI GIANNOULIAS — DEMOCRATIC
- ☐ DIANE M. HARRIS — REPUBLICAN

FOR COMPTROLLER
(Vote for one)

- ☐ MARGARET CROKE — DEMOCRATIC
- ☐ BRYAN DREW — REPUBLICAN
- ☐ _____ Write-in

FOR TREASURER
(Vote for one)

- ☐ MICHAEL W. FRERICHS — DEMOCRATIC
- ☐ MAX SOLOMON — REPUBLICAN
- ☐ _____ Write-in

CONGRESSIONAL

FOR REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS TWELFTH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
(Vote for one)

- ☐ JULIE FORTIER — DEMOCRATIC
- ☐ MIKE BOST — REPUBLICAN

LEGISLATIVE

FOR STATE SENATOR FIFTY-NINTH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT
(Vote for one)

- ☐ TAMIKO "T.C." MUELLER — DEMOCRATIC
- ☐ PAUL JACOBS — REPUBLICAN

REPRESENTATIVE

FOR REPRESENTATIVE IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ONE HUNDRED-SEVENTEENTH REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT
(Vote for one)

- No Candidate — DEMOCRATIC
- ☐ PATRICK WINDHORST — REPUBLICAN

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE REGION

FOR REGIONAL SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS (ALEXANDER, JACKSON, PERRY, PULASKI AND UNION COUNTIES)
(Vote for one)

- No Candidate — DEMOCRATIC
- ☐ MATTHEW HICKAM — REPUBLICAN

FOR REGIONAL SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS (FRANKLIN, JOHNSON, MASSAC AND WILLIAMSON COUNTIES)
(Vote for one)

- No Candidate — DEMOCRATIC
- ☐ LORIE LEQUATTE — REPUBLICAN

COUNTY

FOR COUNTY CLERK
(Vote for one)

- No Candidate — DEMOCRATIC
- ☐ ROBIN HARPER-WHITEHEAD — REPUBLICAN

FOR COUNTY TREASURER
(Vote for one)

- No Candidate — DEMOCRATIC
- ☐ MITCH McCLELLAN — REPUBLICAN

FOR COUNTY SHERIFF
(Vote for one)

- No Candidate — DEMOCRATIC
- ☐ PETE SOPCZAK — REPUBLICAN

FOR COUNTY ASSESSOR
(Vote for one)

- No Candidate — DEMOCRATIC
- ☐ DANELL MOTT — REPUBLICAN

FOR COUNTY COMMISSIONER
(Vote for one)

- No Candidate — DEMOCRATIC
- ☐ MATTHEW HAYDEN — REPUBLICAN

Read Both Sides of the Ballot

Preview Ballot
09/21/2026 12:26:57
2026 General Election
November 3, 2026
Johnson County, IL
PUBLICATION

JUDICIAL

FOR JUDGE OF THE APPELLATE COURT FIFTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT (To fill the vacancy of the Hon. Thomas M. Welch)
(Vote for one)

- No Candidate — DEMOCRATIC
- ☐ AMY E. SHOLAR — REPUBLICAN

SHALL John B. Barberis, Jr. be retained in office as JUDGE OF THE APPELLATE COURT FIFTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT ?

- ☐ YES
- ☐ NO

SHALL William J. "Bill" Thurston be retained in office as JUDGE OF THE CIRCUIT COURT FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT?

- ☐ YES
- ☐ NO

SHALL Sarah K. Tripp be retained in office as JUDGE OF THE CIRCUIT COURT FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT?

- ☐ YES
- ☐ NO

PROPOSITION

ADVISORY QUESTION - COURTHOUSE GRANT FUNDING

"Should the County Board of Commissioners collaborate, support, and work with the Johnson County Revitalization Corporation to obtain additional grant funding, state and federal allocations, and private donations to preserve the Landmark Courthouse and repurpose it for community benefit WITHOUT using local taxpayer funds?"

- ☐ YES
- ☐ NO

ADVISORY QUESTION - HISTORIC JOHNSON COUNTY COURTHOUSE

"Should The County of Johnson preserve and restore the Historic Johnson County Courthouse at an estimated cost of approximately $7,000,000, with the understanding that local taxpayer funds may be used to conduct the repairs and restoration and to provide for the building's ongoing maintenance, future repairs, and operation?"

- ☐ YES
- ☐ NO

Read Both Sides of the Ballot

PRECINCT COMMITTEE-DEMOCRAT-24-26

GOREVILLE 1
LOOKING FOR INTERESTED PERSON

GOREVILLE 2
LOOKING FOR INTERESTED PERSON

TUNNEL HILL
LOOKING FOR INTERESTED PERSON

BURNSIDE
LOOKING FOR INTERESTED PERSON

OZARK
LOOKING FOR INTERESTED PERSON

ELVIRA
LOOKING FOR INTERESTED PERSON

BLOOMFIELD
LOOKING FOR INTERESTED PERSON

SIMPSON
LOOKING FOR INTERESTED PERSON

CACHE
LOOKING FOR INTERESTED PERSON

BELKNAP
LOOKING FOR INTERESTED PERSON

VIENNA I
LOOKING FOR INTERESTED PERSON

VIENNA II
LOOKING FOR INTERESTED PERSON

GRANTSBURG
LOOKING FOR INTERESTED PERSON

VIENNA III
LOOKING FOR INTERESTED PERSON

LAKE I
LOOKING FOR INTERESTED PERSON

LAKE II
LOOKING FOR INTERESTED PERSON

PRECINCT COMMITTEEMEN-Republican 26-28

GOREVILLE I
PETER SOPCZAK
103 COLBY WAY
GOREVILLE IL 62939
618-889-7070

GOREVILLE II
GREG RUSSELL
7655 TUNNEL HILL ROAD
GOREVILLE IL 62939
618-525-3276

TUNNEL HILL
ROBIN HARPER-WHITEHEAD
765 WEBB LANE
TUNNEL HILL IL 62972
618-967-9528

BURNSIDE
FREDERICK HEATON
430 OAK TREE LANE
NEW BURNSIDE IL 62967
618-777-2878

OZARK
CODY BAITY
4260 GUM SPRINGS ROAD
TUNNEL HILL IL 62972
618-771-2882

ELVIRA
TOMMY GRONER
108 SUITE AVE POB 43
BUNCOMBE IL 62912
618-771-6294

BLOOMFIELD
LARRY MCGILL
2750 DUTCHMAN LAKE RD
VIENNA IL 62995
618-771-2345

SIMPSON-APPT
RANDY MCLAUGHLIN
920 OLD RT 146 LOOP
VIENNA IL 62995
618-771-0900

CACHE
DAVID HOGUE
45 CHURCH OF GOD RD
VIENNA IL 62995
618-771-2355

BELKNAP-APPT
AUBREY EDWARDS
510 SNELL LANE
CYPRESS IL 62923
618-771-6437

VIENNA I
ANDREW ROCKWELL
904 N HESS ST
VIENNA IL 62995
618-771-6008

VIENNA II
PHILIP MCMAHAN
614 N 4TH STREET
VIENNA IL 62995
618-882-8222

GRANTSBURG
JIM HEMPHILL
425 REEVESVILLE ROAD
GRANTSBURG IL 62943
618-771-6192

VIENNA III
ZACHERY MOORE
800 HAWKINS ROAD
VIENNA IL 62995

LAKE I-CHAIRMAN 24-26
KEN WIGGS
1045 LAKESHORE DR N
GOREVILLE IL 62939
POB 155, VIENNA IL 62995
618-771-2775

LAKE II
SANDRA WOOLLEY
350 MARINA CIRCLE
CREAL SPRINGS IL 62922
618-604-0221

ELECTION DAY NOVEMBER 3RD, 2026
GENERAL ELECTION
IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER!!

IMPORTANT DATES!

Public Test of Equipment-OCTOBER 6TH, 2026 @ 2:30 PM

Vote by Mail- Apply for Application NOW

Vote By Mail Last Day to mail ballot-OCTOBER 29TH, 2026

Early Voting Starting SEPTEMBER 24TH IN ELECTION OFFICE
Early Voting Offsite-
(all Johnson County Residents can vote at any of the early voting sites)
OCTOBER 22ND-Autumn Ridge Senior Living-4-6 PM
OCTOBER 21ST-United Methodist Church of Goreville, 8 AM-6:00 PM

Grace Period Voting starts OCTOBER 7TH- (Election Office Only & Early Voting Sites)

Voting in our Office Hours-
MONDAY- FRIDAY-8AM-NOON, 1PM - 4PM
SATURDAY -OCTOBER 31ST- 8-Noon

Voting Late, NOVEMBER 2ND, --- office open until 6 PM

ELECTION DAY NOVEMBER 3RD All polling places open at 6 AM and close at 7 PM.

HOSPITAL VOTING-If you are or your family member is in the Hospital you may request a ballot be delivered to you by calling the Election Office-Dr. will need to sign form.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR AFTER-HOURS APPOINTMENTS

PLEASE CALL THE ELECTION OFFICE, ROBIN OR PAM.

JOHNSON COUNTY CLERK/RECORDER & ELECTION AUTHORITY
105 N 6th STREET, VIENNA IL 62995 618-658-3611

Johnson County Polling Places

GOREVILLE I	UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, 116 West Adams Street
GOREVILLE II	Goreville IL 62939
TUNNEL HILL	Tunnel Hill Community of Christ Church (Webb Church) 5140 Tunnel Hill Road
BURNSIDE	Community Center, 178 W 2nd St. New Burnside
OZARK	Ozark Baptist Church 790 Ozark Road, Ozark, IL 62972
ELVIRA	Dolly Hopkins Community Center 71 Main St., Buncombe
SIMPSON	Gilead Church 475 Gilead Church Road Simpson IL 62985
CACHE	Village Hall-7750 Main Street Cypress
BELKNAP	Senior Citizens Center East Main Belknap
GRANTSBURG	New Columbia Masonic Lodge 3025 Reevesville Road
BLOOMFIELD VIENNA I VIENNA II VIENNA III	Fellowship Baptist Church Family Center 890 Senior Drive Vienna
LAKE I	Eagle Point Bay Association Building 80 Spring Cove Rd., Goreville
LAKE II	Egyptian Hills Marina 75 Egyptian Parkway, Creal Springs

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL ROBIN HARPER-WHITEHEAD COUNTY CLERK RECORDER 618-658-3611

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Anna Office
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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.

EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

The Housing Authority of Johnson County is an Equal Opportunity Provider, and Employer.

CD

HOGUE'S ANIMAL CARE
• Open 7 Days A Week
• 8:00 A.M. - 6:00 P.M.
• Boarding
Call (618) 833-7134

HELP WANTED

Shawnee Community College is looking for full and part-time Custodian for their Ullin Campus and The Massac County Extension Center. For more information, please Call 618-634-3200 Ext. 3436

SERVICES

Land Clearing, Mulching and Excavation Work Brush Busters 618-658-3634

FOR RENT

APARTMENT FOR RENT: The Voyage Senior Living of Anna has an independent living apartment available for those 55 years of age and older. The apartment is a two bedrooms, one bathroom with parking space available for each apartment. Please call Amber at 618-833-5495.

FOR SALE

2006 Jeep, red 2-door, 6 cylinder engine, auto-transmission, like new, $16,000.00 Ph. 618-318-1152.

YARD SALE

MULTIPLY FAMILY YARD SALE

Friday, October 9th 8:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M. The Voyage Senior Living, 151 Denny Drive, Anna, IL 62906. Too much to mention. Please come support our residents.

LEGAL NOTICE

TAKE NOTICE
Certificate No. 2022-00009

TO: HENSON, CARROLL & DONNA, DISCOVER BANK, UNION COUNTY TRUSTEE and unknown owners, occupants or parties interested. A petition for Tax Deed on premises described below has been filed in the Circuit Court of Union County, IL

Parcel No. 03-18-01-655-

S18 T13 R1E S & W PT SW NW.

Said property was sold on 2/7/2024 for the general taxes for the year 2022. The period of redemption will expire on 1/15/2027. On January 20, 2027 at 11A.M, the petitioner will make application to such court in said County for an order for Tax Deed should the real estate not be redeemed.

Vivek V. Gupta, Personal Representative
Petitioner
8221-969782

TAKE NOTICE
Certificate No. 2022-00029

TO: BLACK ELBERT LEE, CITY OF ANNA and unknown owners, occupants or parties interested. A petition for Tax Deed on premises described below has been filed in the Circuit Court of Union County, IL

Parcel No. 05-20-03-633-

S20 T12 R1W S PT W SD LOT 10 (77X150)

Said property was sold on 2/7/2024 for the general taxes for the year 2022. The period of redemption will expire on 1/15/2027. On January 20, 2027 at 11A.M, the petitioner will make application to such court in said County for an order for Tax Deed should the real estate not be redeemed.

Vivek V. Gupta, Personal Representative
Petitioner
8221-969783

TAKE NOTICE
Certificate No. 2022-00058

TO: EDDLEMAN, R. EDWIN & CAROL, EDDLEMAN, SARAH H and unknown owners, occupants or parties interested. A petition for Tax Deed on premises described below has been filed in the Circuit Court of Union County, IL

Parcel No. 06-18-04-579-

S18 T13 R1W E 1/2 NE.

Said property was sold on 2/7/2024 for the general taxes for the year 2022. The period of redemption will expire on 1/15/2027. On January 20, 2027 at 11A.M, the petitioner will make application to such court in said County for an order for Tax Deed should the real estate not be redeemed.

Vivek V. Gupta, Personal Representative
Petitioner
8221-969784

TAKE NOTICE
Certificate No. 2022-00059 & 2022-00060

TO: EDDLEMAN, R. EDWIN & CAROLE, NANCE, SUSAN M and unknown owners, occupants or parties interested. A petition for Tax Deed on premises described below has been filed in the Circuit Court of Union County, IL

Parcel No. 06-18-04-580-

S18 T13 R1W W 1/2 NE.

& Parcel No. 06-18-04-582-

S18 T13 R1W S SD NW. MOBILE HOME PT 06-043

Said property was sold on 2/7/2024 for the general taxes for the year 2022. The period of redemption will expire on 1/15/2027. On January 20, 2027 at 11A.M, the petitioner will make application to such court in said County for an order for Tax Deed should the real estate not be redeemed.

Vivek V. Gupta, Personal Representative
Petitioner
8221-969786

TAKE NOTICE
Certificate No. 2022-00093

TO: MYERS DALTON JO, ANNA HOSPITAL CORPORATION and unknown owners, occupants or parties interested. A petition for Tax Deed on premises described below has been filed in the Circuit Court of Union County, IL

Parcel No. 09-28-06-542-

S28 T13 R2W PT SE NW. MH PT 09-047

Said property was sold on 2/7/2024 for the general taxes for the year 2022. The period of redemption will expire on 1/15/2027. On January 20, 2027 at 11A.M, the petitioner will make application to such court in said County for an order for Tax Deed should the real estate not be redeemed.

Vivek V. Gupta, Personal Representative
Petitioner
8221-969787

TAKE NOTICE
Certificate No. 2022-00122

TO: CAMPBELL WILLIAM CODY, CITY OF ANNA, ANNA-JONESBORO NATIONAL BANK and unknown owners, occupants or parties interested. A petition for Tax Deed on premises described below has been filed in the Circuit Court of Union County, IL

Parcel No. 14-00-08-438-

N PT LOT 27 A J MENEE'S ADD. SURVEY 2014R0264 02/18/14 50'X 150 & 50'X 146.5

Said property was sold on 2/7/2024 for the general taxes for the year 2022. The period of redemption will expire on 1/15/2027. On January 20, 2027 at 11A.M, the petitioner will make application to such court in said County for an order for Tax Deed should the real estate not be redeemed.

Vivek V. Gupta, Personal Representative
Petitioner
8221-969788

TAKE NOTICE
Certificate No. 2022-00140

TO: MILLER, JEFFREY & RACHAEL D, City of Anna and unknown owners, occupants or parties interested. A petition for Tax Deed on premises described below has been filed in the Circuit Court of Union County, IL

Parcel No. 14-00-08-791-

40' OFF E SD LOT 6 DANIEL W BROWN 4TH ADD.

Said property was sold on 2/7/2024 for the general taxes for the year 2022. The period of redemption will expire on 1/15/2027. On January 20, 2027 at 11A.M, the petitioner will make application to such court in said County for an order for Tax Deed should the real estate not be redeemed.

Vivek V. Gupta, Personal Representative
Petitioner
8221-969789

TAKE NOTICE
Certificate No. 2022-00158

TO: HITE, SHIRLEY LIFE EST, HITE, THOMAS E & RANDY M and unknown owners, occupants or parties interested. A petition for Tax Deed on premises described below has been filed in the Circuit Court of Union County, IL

Parcel No. 14-00-10-329-

LOTS 6 & 7 ORIGINAL PLAT OF DONGOLA.

Said property was sold on 2/7/2024 for the general taxes for the year 2022. The period of redemption will expire on 1/15/2027. On January 20, 2027 at 11A.M, the petitioner will make application to such court in said County for an order for Tax Deed should the real estate not be redeemed.

Vivek V. Gupta, Personal Representative
Petitioner
8221-969790

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF ILLINOIS PULASKI COUNTY, ILLINOIS
IN RE THE ESTATE OF: WILLIAM JESSE HAND, III, Deceased.
No. 2026-PR-7
CLAIM NOTICE

Notice is given of the death of William Jesse Hand, III, whose place of residence at the time of his death was 302 East Main Street, Karnak, Illinois. The Order Appointing Independent Co-Administrators And For Letters of Office to issue was entered were issued on July 9, 2026 to Jessica Horn, whose address is 108 Lincoln Street, Karnak, Illinois and Amy Stafford, whose address is 5187 Lower Salem Church Road, Grand Chain, Illinois as Independent Co-Administrators, whose attorney is Richard Kruger of Kruger & Abell Law Firm, 110 W. 5th Street, Metropolis, Illinois.

Claims against the estate may be filed in the Office of the Clerk of the Court at the Pulaski County Courthouse, Mound City, Illinois or with the representative, or both, within six months from the date of the first publication of this Notice on or before six months from the date of first publication 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 ten days after it has been filed.

E-filing is now mandatory for documents in civil cases with limited exceptions. To e-file, you must create an account with an e-filing service provider. Visit https://efile.illinoiscourts.gov/EFSPs-Page/ to learn more about and to select a service provider. If you need additional help or have trouble e-filing, visit https://efile.illinoiscourts.gov/faq-page/ or talk to your local circuit Clerk's office.

Dated this 6th day of July, 2026.
Jessica Horn and Amy Stafford,
Independent Co-Administrators of the Estate of William Jesse Hand, III, Deceased,
By: /s/ Richard Kruger,
their attorney
RICHARD KRUGER
KRUGER & ABELL LAW FIRM
Attorneys at Law
110 W. 5th Street
P.O. Box 568
Metropolis, IL 62960
Telephone (618) 524-9302
Fax (618) 524-9305
E-mail: richard@richardkruger-law.com
8221-969733

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF ILLINOIS PULASKI COUNTY, ILLINOIS
IN RE THE ESTATE OF: WILLIAM JESSE HAND, III, deceased.
No. 2026-PR-7
NOTICE TO HEIRS OF WILLIAM JESSE HAND, III OF RIGHTS IN INDEPENDENT ADMINISTRATION
TO: THE HEIRS OF WILLIAM JESSE HAND, III, Deceased

Independent Administration means that the executor or administrator will not have to obtain court orders or file estate papers in court during the probate. The estate will be administered without court supervision unless an interested person asks the court to become involved. Under Section 28-4 of the Probate Act (755 (LCS 5/28-4 any interested person may terminate independent administration at any time by mailing or delivering a petition to terminate to the clerk of the court. In addition to the right to terminate independent administration, any interested person may petition the court to hold a hearing and resolve any particular question that may arise during independent administration, even though supervised administration has not been requested. The independent representative must mail a copy of the estate inventory and final account to each interested person and must send notice to or obtain the approval of each interested person before the estate can be closed (Probate Act Section 28-6 and 28-11). Any interested person has the right to question or object to any item included in or omitted from an inventory or account or to insist on a full court accounting of all receipts and disbursements with prior notice, as required in supervised administration.

"E-filing is now mandatory for documents in civil cases with limited exceptions. To e-file, you must create an account with an e-filing service provider. Visit http://efile.illinoiscourts.gov/service-providers.htm to learn more about and to select a service provider. If you need additional help or have trouble e-filing, visit http://www.illinoiscourts.gov/FAQgethelp.asp, or talk to your local circuit clerk's office.

Jessica Horn, and Amy Stafford, Independent
Co-Administrators of the Estate of Todd Thomas, deceased
By: /s/Richard Kruger,
his attorney
RICHARD KRUGER
KRUGER & ABELL LAW FIRM
Attorneys at Law
110 W. 5th Street
P.O. Box 568
Metropolis, IL 62960
Telephone (618) 524-9302
Fax (618) 524-9305
E-mail: richard@richardkruger-law.com
8221-969737

TAX DEED NO. 2026TX25
FILED September 22, 2026
TAKE NOTICE

TO: ROBIN HARPER-WHITEHEAD, JOHNSON COUNTY CLERK; BANK OF HERRIN; CHANVEASNA CHIN; UNKNOWN OWNERS OR PARTIES INTERESTED; AND NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS.

This is NOTICE of the filing of the Petition for Tax Deed on the following described property:

Lots Seven (7) and Twenty-seven (27) in Wagon Creek Subdivision, reference to plat recorded in Plat Book 3, Page 31, in the Office of the Recorder of Johnson County, Illinois. EXCEPT any interest in the coal, oil, gas and other minerals underlying the land which have been heretofore conveyed or reserved prior in prior instruments of record, and all rights and easements in favor of the estate of said coal, oil, gas and other minerals, if any, situated in Johnson County, Illinois.

Property Index Number 02-04-404-007

On February 9, 2027 at 10:00 a.m. the Petitioner intends to make application for an order on the petition that a Tax Deed be issued. The real estate was sold on November 14, 2025 for general taxes of the year 2024. The period of redemption will expire January 25, 2027.

Stuart E. Morgenstern, Attorney for Petitioner
(618) 357-5315
Cert. # 2024-00074
8221-969751

Assumed Name Publication Notice

Public Notice is hereby given that on Friday, September 25, 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:

A-MAZE-ING CREATIONS AND HOME IMPROVEMENTS
130 JACOB ST
WOLF LAKE IL 62998

Dated this 25th day of September, 2026.
Stephanie L. Cox
COUNTY CLERK
No. ABN2026-7923
8221-969852

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice of Public Hearing

In accordance with Section 17-20 of the Property Tax Code (35 ILCS 200/17-20), notice is hereby given that a public hearing will be held at 02:00 P.M., 20-Oct-2026, in the Offices of the Department of Revenue, 101 West Jefferson Street, Springfield, Illinois, for the purpose of taking evidence which may be pertinent to the Department's estimate of the percent to be applied to the aggregate assessment of locally assessed property in Alexander County for the assessment year 2025. This hearing is required by the Property Tax Code.

Based on the comparison of assessed valuations, the analysis of property transfers, and other available information, the estimated percentage to be applied to the aggregate assessment of locally assessed property other than property assessed under Sections 10-110 through 10-140 and 10-170 through 10-200 of the Property Tax Code (35 ILCS 200/10-110 through 10-140 and 10-170 through 10-200) is -2.83%. Accordingly, the tentative equalization factor is 0.9717.

This meeting will be accessible to persons with disabilities in compliance with Executive Order #5 and pertinent state and federal laws upon notification of anticipated attendance. Persons with disabilities planning to attend and needing special accommodations should contact the Property Tax Division, by telephone at 217-785-6619, email Rev.SR-EQUAL@illinois.gov or letter at Illinois Department of Revenue, Property Tax Division MC-3-450, P.O. Box 19033, Springfield, Illinois 62794-9033, by 13-Oct-2026, to inform their anticipated attendance..
8221-969585

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT ALEXANDER COUNTY, ILLINOIS
IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF
THOMAS EUGENE PORTER,
Deceased
2026-PR-4
CLAIM NOTICE

Notice is given of the death of Thomas Eugene Porter, Deceased, of Herrin, Williamson County, Illinois. Letters of Office were issued on the 9th day of September, 2026, to Beverly Jean

Bible, whose attorney is Kibler Law Office, Attorney at Law, 208 North Market, Marion, Illinois. 62959.

Within 42 days after the effective date of the original order of admission, any heir or legatee may file a petition with the Court to require proof of the Will by testimony of the witnesses to the Will in open Court or other evidence, as provided in Section 6-21 of the Probate Act (755 ILCS 5/6-21). You also have the right under Section 8-1 of the Probate Act (755 ILCS 5/8-1) to contest the admission of the Will by filing a petition with the Court within six months after admission of the Will to probate.

Claims against the estate may be filed in the Office of the Clerk of the Court at the Alexander County Courthouse, Cairo, Illinois, or with the representative, or both, on or before March 24, 2027, 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

ten days after it has been filed.

Carey L. Simmons
Circuit Clerk of Alexander County
Keith W. Kibler
Attorney at Law
PO Box 1224
Marion, IL 62959
ARDC#6180298
618/993-2196
office@kibler-law.com
8221-969447

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 1ST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT UNION COUNTY - JONESBORO, ILLINOIS
ROCKET MORTGAGE, LLC F/K/A QUICKEN LOANS, LLC,
PLAINTIFF
vs.
LARRY MALONE;
DEFENDANT
NO. 2026FC3
Address: 545 State Route 127 N. Jonesboro, Illinois 62952
NOTICE OF SHERIFF'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE

PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale entered in the above cause on July 13, 2026, I, Sheriff of Union County, Illinois, will on October 28, 2026 at the hour of 9:00 AM at the Union County Courthouse, 309 W. Market Street, Courthouse Lobby, Jonesboro, IL 62952, or in a place otherwise designated at the time of sale, County of Union, State of Illinois, sell at public auction to the highest bidder for cash, as set forth below, the following described real estate:

PART OF THE SOUTHEAST QUARTER OF THE NORTHEAST QUARTER OF SECTION 15, TOWNSHIP 12 SOUTH, RANGE 2 WEST OF THE THIRD PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, UNION COUNTY, ILLINOIS, DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS: BEGINNING AT THE INTERSECTION OF THE SOUTH LINE OF THE SAID QUARTER QUARTER WITH THE WESTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF ILLINOIS ROUTE 127; THENCE NORTH 23DEGREES-44'-47" WEST ALONG THE SAID RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE A DISTANCE OF 210.00 FEET; THENCE NORTH 89DEGREES-44'-03" WEST A DISTANCE OF 315.00 FEET; THENCE SOUTH 24DEGREES-01'-19" EAST A DISTANCE OF 210.45 FEET TO THE SOUTH LINE OF THE SAID QUARTER-QUARTER; THENCE SOUTH 89DEGREES-44'-03" EAST ALONG THE SAID SOUTH LINE A DISTANCE OF 313.89 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING; THE TRACT CONTAINING 1.385 ACRES, MORE OR LESS, PER PLAT OF SURVEY FILED ON MAY 17, 1988, IN RECORD BOOK 50 AT PAGE 165 IN THE RECORDER'S OFFICE OF UNION COUNTY, ILLINOIS.

FORMERLY MISDESCRIBED AS:

A PARCEL OF LAND LYING IN THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF THE SOUTHWEST QUARTER OF THE

NORTHEAST QUARTER OF SECTION 15, TOWNSHIP 12 SOUTH, RANGE 2 WEST OF THE THIRD PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS: BEGINNING AT THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF SAID QUARTER QUARTER SECTION AT THE INTERSECTION OF THE WEST RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF STATE ROUTE NO. 127; THENCE NORTHERLY WITH THE WEST RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE FOR A DISTANCE OF 210 FEET; THENCE WEST IN A STRAIGHT LINE 315 FEET TO A POINT; THENCE SOUTH IN A STRAIGHT LINE 210 FEET TO THE SOUTH LINE OF SAID QUARTER QUARTER SECTION; THENCE EAST ON THE SAID SOUTH LINE TO THE WEST RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF SAID ROUTE NO. 127, WHICH IS THE POINT OF BEGINNING.

SITUATED IN THE COUNTY OF UNION IN THE STATE OF ILLINOIS.

COMMON ADDRESS: 545 State Route 127 N., Jonesboro, Illinois 62952

P.I.N.: 08-15-05-866

The real estate is improved with a single family residence.

THE JUDGMENT AMOUNT WAS: $57,259.44

Sale terms: 25% down by certified funds; the balance, by certified funds, is due within twenty-four (24) hours. The subject property 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.

Upon payment in full of the amount bid, 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 and Plaintiff makes no representations as to the condition of the property. Prospective bidders are admonished to check the Court file to verify all information.

Pursuant to 735 ILCS 5/15-1512, the amounts of any surplus bid will be held by the sheriff until a party obtains a Court Order for its distribution, or for 60 days following the date of the entry of the order confirming sale, at which time, in the absence of an order directing payment of the surplus, it may be automatically forfeited to the State without further notice.

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: Examine the court file or contact Plaintiff's attorney: Johnson, Blumberg & Associates, LLC, 30 N. LaSalle St., Suite 3650, Chicago, IL 60602, telephone 312-541-9710. Please refer to file number IL 26 1922.

Sheriff of Union County, Illinois
Johnson, Blumberg & Associates, LLC
30 N. LaSalle St., Suite 3650
Chicago, Illinois 60602
Email: ilpleadings@johnson-blumberg.com
Ph. 312-541-9710 / Fax 312-541-9711
JB&A # IL 26 1922
I3294233
8221-969411

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT UNION COUNTY, ILLINOIS
ESTATE OF BONNIE HILEMAN, DECEASED.
NO. 2026-PR-18
IN PROBATE
NOTICE OF DEATH
INDEPENDENT ADMINISTRATION, AND CLAIM DATE

NOTICE IS GIVEN to creditors of the death of Bonnie Hileman, of Anna, Illinois. Letters of Office were issued on September 8, 2026, to Russell Hileman, of 1250 Kimmel Cemetery Lane, Anna, IL 62906, whose attorney is Elle J. Mobley, 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 Union County Courthouse, 309 W. Market St., Jonesboro, Illinois, or with the Independent Executor, or both, on or before March 17, 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: September 8, 2026.
RUSSELL HILEMAN
CAMERON LAW FIRM, LLC
ELLE J. MOBLEY
ATTORNEY FOR INDEPENDENT EXECUTOR
205B N. MAIN ST.
ANNA, ILLINOIS 62906
PHONE: 618-833-2220
ARDC# 6345426
8221-969310

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT UNION COUNTY, ILLINOIS
ESTATE OF MARTHA ANN DAVIS WEBB, DECEASED.
NO. 2026-PR-19
IN PROBATE
NOTICE OF DEATH
INDEPENDENT ADMINISTRATION, AND CLAIM DATE

NOTICE IS GIVEN to creditors of the death of Martha Ann Davis Webb, of Anna, Illinois. Letters of Office were issued on September 10, 2026, to Bessie Mae Ellis, 1525 Old Hwy 51 N., Anna, IL 62906 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 Union County Courthouse, 309 W. Market St., Jonesboro, Illinois, or with the Independent Executor, or both, on or before March 17, 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: September 10, 2026.
BESSIE MAE ELLIS
CAMERON LAW FIRM, LLC
ELVIS C. CAMERON
ATTORNEY FOR INDEPENDENT EXECUTOR
205B N. MAIN ST.
ANNA, ILLINOIS 62906
PHONE: 618-833-2220
ARDC# 6244394
8221-969319

ASSUMED NAME PUBLICATION NOTICE

Public Notice is hereby given that on August 31, 2026, a certificate was filed in the Office of the County Clerk of Pulaski County, Illinois, setting forth the names and post-office addresses of all of the persons owning, conducting and transacting the. business known as Mythlode Assets

located at 11879 State Highway 37, Olmsted, IL 62970

which certificate sets for the Owners as follows:

Daniel Ray Rivera
11879 State Highway 37,
Olmsted, IL 62970
Dated August 31, 2026
Julie Hancock
County Clerk
8221-969208

REAL ESTATE

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 1ST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT UNION COUNTY - JONESBORO, ILLINOIS
ROCKET MORTGAGE, LLC F/K/A QUICKEN LOANS, LLC,
PLAINTIFF
vs.
LARRY MALONE;
DEFENDANT
NO. 2026FC3
Address: 545 State Route 127 N. Jonesboro, Illinois 62952
NOTICE OF SHERIFF'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE
PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale entered in the above cause on July 13, 2026, I, Sheriff of Union County, Illinois, will on October 28, 2026 at the hour of 9:00 AM at the Union County Courthouse, 309 W. Market Street, Courthouse Lobby, Jonesboro, IL 62952, or in a place otherwise designated at the time of sale, County of Union, State of Illinois, sell at public auction to the highest bidder for cash, as set forth below, the following described real estate:

COMMON ADDRESS: 545 State Route 127 N., Jonesboro, Illinois 62952

P.I.N.: 08-15-05-866

The real estate is improved with a single family residence.

THE JUDGMENT AMOUNT WAS: $57,259.44

Sale terms: 25% down by certified funds; the balance, by certified funds, is due within twenty-four (24) hours. The subject property 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.

Upon payment in full of the amount bid, 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 and Plaintiff makes no representations as to the condition of the property. Prospective bidders are admonished to check the Court file to verify all information.

Pursuant to 735 ILCS 5/15-1512, the amounts of any surplus bid will be held by the sheriff until a party obtains a Court Order for its distribution, or for 60 days following the date of the entry of the order confirming sale, at which time, in the absence of an order directing payment of the surplus, it may be automatically forfeited to the State without further notice.

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: Examine the court file or contact Plaintiff's attorney: Johnson, Blumberg & Associates, LLC, 30 N. LaSalle St., Suite 3650, Chicago, IL 60602, telephone 312-541-9710. Please refer to file number IL 26 1922.

Sheriff of Union County, Illinois
Johnson, Blumberg & Associates, LLC
30 N. LaSalle St., Suite 3650
Chicago, Illinois 60602
Email: ilpleadings@johnson-blumberg.com
Ph. 312-541-9710 / Fax 312-541-9711
JB&A # IL 26 1922
I3294233
8221-969411

Please read this...

By Geof Skinner

Cooler weather makes even a squirrel smile…

We'll start this week with a follow-up to a previous item: you may, or may not, recall my hope that robots would not win this year's season of "America's Got Talent." Well. Hooray. A real live person was the winner. In my simple little mind, that was a good thing.

Meanwhile…

Folks seem to very grateful for the nice change in the weather we have experienced in the Land Between the Rivers. Right on time, with a change in seasons on September 22, fall weather arrived.

Three months from now, a heat advisory might be welcomed. Especially if our good friend the Polar Vortex pays a visit. In the meantime, we'll just enjoy what Mother Nature has shared with us.

Meanwhile…

Even the Critters appear to be much happier with the cooler temperatures. Can't be sure if they have a way to keep track of the heat index, but I am pretty sure Critters know when it's really hot outside.

One Critter I saw recently appeared to have decided enough was enough when it came to a temperature in the range of 100 degrees or so. On Saturday evening, September 19, I journeyed to the Union County seat to attend an event at the Lincoln Memorial Picnic Grounds. A local weather observer who is kind enough to share information about Union County's climate subsequently told me he recorded a high temperature of 99 degrees on the 19th. Yes, indeed, it was hot.

(The day before the 19th, the high temperature was 98 degrees. And the day before the day before the 19th, the high temperature was 98 degrees. The heat index on the 18th topped out at 111.8 degrees. I did not ask if there was a wind chill that day.)



Peekaboo…a squirrel was seen during another visit to the Lincoln Memorial Picnic Grounds on a much cooler day. It may be hard to tell, but the Critter looked like it was smiling.



Oh, deer…it was hot…really hot…in the Land Between the Rivers in the final days of summer. This white-tailed deer appeared to have decided to just stop and take a rest when it was seen on the evening of September 19 at the Lincoln Memorial Picnic Grounds in Jonesboro.

As the event at the picnic grounds was coming to an end (an ending which included a timely and welcomed visit by an ice cream truck offering icy cold treats), I headed back to the car. Just as I walked past the ranger station at the picnic grounds, I caught a glimpse of something moving rather quickly off to my left. Turned out the "something" was a white-tailed deer. I have seen deer at the picnic grounds occasionally. I was not expecting to see one of the Critters on a steaming summer evening. Maybe it was wanting to get some ice cream.

The deer wandered off to a nearby grassy area…took a few steps…looked around… and then plopped down on the ground. Maybe the Critter was hot and needed to take a break. Whatever the reason might have been, I just had never seen a deer do such a thing. The deer stayed put as I got in my car…to head back home… where the air-conditioning was on.

The temperature remained way too hot in our little corner of the world for a few more days. Then, as mentioned already, summer came to a merciful end…and some nice, cooler, fall weather arrived and stuck around for a while.

Meanwhile…

A few more Critter Sightings…and sounds…

While at the picnic grounds in Jonesboro on the 19th, I heard an owl calling somewhere not too far away. Never did see it, through.

A few days later, I was back at the picnic grounds for a weekly visit and walk. Didn't see many Critters, at least not initially. As I was getting to the end of my walk, a couple of squirrels made an appearance. They seemed to be having a good time being squirrels. The zoomed up a tree…and vanished into a hole in the tree. Then, one of the Critters peeked out… and seemed to be smiling… I'm guessing the squirrel was happy with the cooler weather, too.

Mention was made a couple of weeks ago about a chipmunk sighting. Until then, I had not seen a chipmunk in a long time…in years, as a matter of fact. Well, since that sighting, I have seen the cute little Critters a couple of more times…including once right along a street heading into our hometown. I hope that Critter made it home safely.

A lone monarch butterfly was seen making its way through downtown Anna last Friday afternoon…just before the start of Anna-Jonesboro Community High School's homecoming parade. I did not watch to see if the butterfly joined the parade.

Then…once again, there were the groundhogs. One was seen last Thursday in a yard across the street from our humble abode. The Critter appeared to be munching on some sort of greenery. Later that day, I was walking by the shed in our backyard. Without making much of a sound, a groundhog scampered across the deck in front of the shed… and right in front of me. The Critter was close enough that I could have shaken its paw. The groundhog vanished, as groundhogs do, to what I guess was a nice, safe spot. I'm guessing that as soon as I left, he came back out and began munching on what's left of The Other Half's garden.

Oh…can't forget the mosquitoes. The cooler weather seemed to slow the little blood-suckers down… at least early in the morning. Once the temperature warmed up during the day, they came out in clouds again in our backyard.

Critters that were not seen…a mountain lion… and a bear… Well…that's about enough for this week. A deadline is nigh…

31st Annual Cache River Days Beauty Pageant and Baby Contest winners announced



(Above) From left to right are Ivy Thurston, Little Miss; Jayda Wright, Miss Cache; Audrey Shearer, Senior Miss; and Nora Thurston, Junior Miss



(Right) From left to right are Waylon DeWitt and Georgia Townley for the baby contest (baby boy and baby girl winner).

Fun Day, sales scheduled in Cobden

Two community events are coming up in Cobden. A Family Fun Day and a parking lot yard sale/vendor sale are planned Saturday, Sept. 26.

Family Fun Day

The Family Fun Day is scheduled from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Cobden Community Park. The event is being hosted by Cobden American Legion Post 259 and the post's Auxiliary. Admission is free; donations will be accepted.

The day will feature live music by Brian Pender from noon to 3 p.m., a bubble station for the kids, a bounce house, cornhole play (bags will be available), a three-legged race (with prizes), and a scavenger hunt. Those who complete the scavenger hunt will be entered into a raffle to win a $25 gift card. Food also will be provided.

Yard Sale/Vendor Sale

The yard sale/vendor sale event is planned from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the parking lot at the Cobden Unit School. The sales will benefit multiple school organizations.

Organizers noted that for those who do not sell everything, school Beta Club members will haul away remaining items for $25.

Energy assistance program applications slated to open

Illinois state officials are encouraging eligible families to apply for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, LIHEAP, to support income eligible households with utility costs for natural gas, propane and electricity.

Applications are set to open Oct. 1 and are scheduled to remain open through Aug. 13, 2027, or until funds are exhausted.

Beginning Oct. 1, eligible families can apply by visiting the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, DCEO, website or by visiting their local agency. For Union County, the local agency is the Shawnee Development Council. The council's office serving Union and Johnson counties is located at 1000 N. Main St. in Anna. The office can be contacted at 833-7431.

Shawnee Development Council posted on its website that appointments to seek assistance can be made through its website. The following documentation is needed at the time of an appointment: Proof of 30-day gross income for all household members. A copy of the applicant's current electric and gas bill. Photo ID. Social Security cards for all household members. For those who rent, a current rent receipt. A Food Stamp printout, if applicable.

Families can also call 1-833-711-0374 for assistance in 30 languages. The energy bill assistance program offered through Help Illinois Families will provide $240 million to eligible families to assist with natural gas, propane, electricity bills and furnace assistance.

The priority application system will ensure families most in need are able to apply first. The first group eligible to apply is expected to represent more than half of households that apply for the program.

The program will begin taking applications on Oct. 1 for older adults (those 60 years of age and older), individuals with a disability, families with children 5 years old or younger and households that are disconnected from their utilities, have a disconnection notice or have less than 25 percent of fuel in their propane tank. All other income eligible households can start applying on Nov. 1, 2026.

All families who meet the qualifications and provide proper documentation will receive support until funding is exhausted, DCEO noted. Families who earn up to two times the federal poverty level are eligible to receive support through LIHEAP. A chart with eligible income thresholds can be found on the webpage.

Additional Program Information

The State of Illinois offers various programs to support eligible low-income families with utility assistance. These programs are open to all income eligible Illinois families who meet the criteria, including qualified non-citizen families. Programs for eligible families include:

One-Time Direct Vendor Payment: All LIHEAP recipients receive a one-time payment.

Crisis/Reconnection Assistance: Funding is available for families in heating-related emergency situations.

Furnace Assistance: Based on funding availability, Furnace Assistance may be provided to homeowners who do not have an operating furnace for their residence.

Home Weatherization Program: The Illinois Home Weatherization Assistance Program helps low-income residents and households conserve fuel and reduce energy costs by making their homes and apartments more energy efficient.

LIHEAP provides one-time payments directly to energy service providers on behalf of recipients. While the amount of support varies based on the needs of individual families, last year's LIHEAP funding, which was available from October 2025 through August 2026, provided assistance to 360,500 households, with an average of $676 per household.