

THE GAZETTE-DEMOCRAT

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Thursday, January 29, 2026

Anna, Illinois

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News Notes

Items of interest from throughout the Union County area.

Closings, cancellations and postponements of local events and activities started appearing early ahead of the past week's snow and bitter cold.

After being out of session Monday, Union County schools were closed again Tuesday due to continued snowy and icy road conditions and extremely cold temperatures.

Illinois Route 146 West was closed at Kratzinger Hollow Road for some time early Wednesday morning, Jan. 21, due to an accident involving a semi tractor-trailer.

The PAST organization of Union County canceled a tea party event which had been scheduled for Saturday afternoon, Jan. 24, at Historic St. Anne's Church in Anna.

Bald Knob Cross of Peace members are invited to an annual membership meeting which is scheduled from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 10. The meeting will be at the welcome center at the Cross of Peace, which is located atop Bald Knob Mountain near Alto Pass.

Looking ahead...to spring...the annual Easter sunrise service is set for 6:30 a.m. April 5 at the Cross of Peace.

Just days before the big winter storm...Dongola and Lick Creek schools delayed their start times on Wednesday, Jan. 21, due to slick road conditions caused by wintry weather.

The Cobden School District is congratulating student Alyssa Fabian for being selected as a 2026 semifinalist for the Cooke College Scholarship Program. The program's sponsors received more than 6,500 applications this year, and Alyssa was one of 568 talented high school seniors from across the country selected to advance to the semifinalist round. If selected as a Cooke College Scholar, she can be awarded up to \$55,000 to earn a bachelor's degree at an accredited undergraduate institution. The school district joins in wishing Alyssa all the best in the next round of the semifinals.

The Cobden High School boys' basketball team won the Zeigler-Royalton Midwinter Classic tournament. Cobden's Matthew Howell earned tournament most valuable player honors and the tournament's sportsmanship award. Cobden's Kyler White and Kingston Kuhn were named to the all-tournament team.

Cobden High School basketball player Matthew Howell is being congratulated for scoring 1,000 points during his playing career.

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Anna Police share message about scam

The Anna Police Department has shared a reminder to the public to be on the lookout for a potential scam.

"It is the start of tax season, which is also the start of tax scam season," the department shared in a message on social media. The message continued:

"The IRS will never call you for any reason. The IRS only communicates via U.S. mail or, if you are signed up for electronic mail through your taxpayer program, you may receive emails.

"Do not provide your personal information (name, address, phone number, date of birth, Social Security number, bank account number, credit/debit card number, taxpayer ID number, etc) to anyone who contacts you via phone unless you know them and have verified their number.

"Anyone who calls you requesting personal information should already have it. Do not confirm any information they provide to you. Ask for their name, their department, and their company name. Then look up the company and use a main number to reach back out to them. If they are a legitimate caller, your call can be routed to them.

"Please remember to always protect your personal information. Also pass this along to your friends and family.

"We would also ask for citizens to remind their elderly family members and neighbors about these scams as this is the most commonly targeted age group.

"Parents, please educate your children in reference to these scams so they are also prepared.

"As always, stay safe and notify your local law enforcement of any scams you encounter. We will pass them along to everyone so we are all protected this tax season."

Winter storm brings snow, dangerous cold



Heavy snow was falling at around midday Saturday, Jan. 24, in the Union County area. Traffic was moving slowly along Front Street/old U.S. Route 51 in Cobden at the time the photograph was taken. The Southern Illinois, Southeast Missouri and Western Kentucky region was under a winter storm warning which had been issued by the National Weather Service office in Paducah, Ky., for Saturday and Sunday.

A major winter storm that cut a swath through much of the eastern United States brought heavy snow and bitter cold temperatures which plunged the Southeast Missouri, Western Kentucky and Southern Illinois region, including Union County, into a deep freeze over the weekend.

The extreme cold was expected to continue throughout this week. An extended period of dangerously cold below-freezing temperatures was in the forecast for all of this week. The most dangerous wind chills were expected Monday morning and Tuesday morning. High temperatures are not forecast to climb above

freezing this week.

Snow began to fall Saturday morning and continued through much of Sunday in the Union County area. Highways, roads and streets throughout the county and the region were covered with a heavy layer of snow. Light to moderate snow was expected to continue in most of the region through midday Sunday. By mid-afternoon Sunday, the sun was starting to make an appearance in the Union County area, even as light snow continued to fall and strong winds were blowing.

By early Sunday morning, the Weather Service reported that very heavy snow had oc-

curred in an area roughly from Cape Girardeau to Evansville, Ind., and points north. More than a foot of snow was reported to have fallen in those areas.

A band of very heavy sleet also occurred overnight from Saturday into Sunday from about Poplar Bluff in Southeast Missouri to Paducah and Madisonville in Western Kentucky. Sleet occurred late Saturday night in the Union County area.

As of 10 a.m. Sunday, the Weather Service reported that widespread snow and sleet accumulations had made travel very difficult in the region. The Illinois Department of

Transportation, IDOT, reported on its gettingaroundillinois.com website that major highways in the Union County area were mostly covered with ice and snow.

"Travel is very difficult and impossible in many locations. Life-threatening cold exacerbates the danger," the Weather Service advised early Sunday morning. "Persons should delay all travel if possible. If travel is absolutely necessary, drive with extreme caution and be prepared for sudden changes in visibility. Leave plenty of room between you and the motorist ahead of you, and allow extra time to (continued on page 2)

Illinois Department of Revenue announces start of 2026 tax season

The Illinois Department of Revenue, IDOR, planned to begin accepting 2026 individual income tax returns on Monday, Jan. 26, the same day the Internal Revenue Service, IRS, was scheduled to open the federal filing season. The deadline to file Illinois returns is Wednesday, April 15, 2026.

IDOR encourages taxpayers to file their returns electronically and choose direct deposit to receive refunds as quickly and securely as possible.

"We want the tax filing process to be as smooth and stress-free as possible" IDOR director David Harris said in a news release. "Before filing, you should make sure you have all income documents, such as W-2s and 1099s. Filing online, reviewing information carefully, and submitting your returns early can help avoid delays and get you any refunds you may be entitled to sooner."

During the 2025 filing season, IDOR received over 6.3 million individual income tax returns. About 5.75 million, or 91.3 percent, were filed electronically. Taxpayers who file accurate returns electronically and select direct deposit can typically receive their refunds in about four weeks.

Free Filing with MyTax Illinois
MyTax Illinois is IDOR's

free online filing option that allows taxpayers to file with or without an account. The system guides users through a simple question-and-answer process, performs calculations automatically, and reduces errors by using prepopulated information when available. In addition to filing, MyTax Illinois allows users to:

Make payments. Respond to department inquiries. Check the status of refunds via Where's My Refund? Look up IL-PINs, estimated tax payments and Form 1099-G information.

Taxpayers may also file using tax software, a tax professional, or paper Form IL-1040.

Take Advantage of Tax Credits

IDOR reminds taxpayers to review their eligibility for tax credits that can reduce the amount of tax owed or increase a refund. Commonly claimed credits include the Illinois Earned Income Tax Credit, the Property Tax Credit and the K-12 Education Expense Credit, among others.

"Tax credits can put more money back in your pocket," Harris said. "Taking time to review the credits you qualify for can make a real difference."

Postmark Rule Changes

IDOR noted that the United States Postal Service, USPS,

has announced changes to postmarks that could impact tax filings in 2026. The USPS postmark now shows the date of the first automated processing operation instead of when a piece of mail was dropped off. This modification could impact time-sensitive documents such as tax returns and payments.

USPS will continue to add manual postmarks upon request at their offices. IDOR encourages taxpayers who mail their returns and tax payments to mail those items earlier than they typically would to ensure timely delivery.

"If you plan to mail your return or payment, don't wait until the last day," Harris stressed. "Sending it early or requesting a manual postmark at the post office can help protect you from late penalties."

Assistance Available

IDOR provides assistance by phone for tax-related questions, with automated options for checking refund status, identifying IL-PINs or accessing estimated payments.

Taxpayers can call 1-800-732-8866 or 217-782-3336. Free language assistance is available for Limited English Proficiency, LEP, individuals.

For the most up-to-date information, forms, schedules and instructions for the 2026 tax season, visit tax.illinois.gov.

Shawnee Hills Arts Council events slated

A photography group meeting, an artist reception and rescheduled performances of a play are planned at the Shawnee Hills Council in Anna. The arts council is located in the 100 block of West Davie Street in Anna. A new speaker series also was scheduled to begin this week at the arts center.

Photography Group

The new Shawnee Hills Photo Collective plans to meet at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 29, at the arts council. The group is being facilitated by portrait photographer Caleb Hale.

Photographers of all skill and experience levels are invited to meet, discuss, learn and improve through the new forum. Meetings are planned at 6:30 p.m. on the fourth Thursday of each month. Admission is free.

Artist Reception

An open house artist reception spotlighting Mahadji Gillespie is planned from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 1, at the arts council. Gillespie will talk about her unique craft of artificial bonsai trees. Light refreshments will be served. Admission is free.

An exhibit featuring the artist's works is scheduled to be on display from Jan. 29 through March 1. Hours are scheduled from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Thursdays and Fridays and from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. on

Saturdays and Sundays.

Play Rescheduled

Due to the winter storm in the forecast, the arts council announced that three performances of the play "The Odd Couple" were rescheduled Jan. 30, 31 and Feb. 1.

Performances are set for 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday and 2 p.m. Sunday. Tickets that have already been purchased will still be honored.

Conservation Corner Speaker Series

Anna-Jo Garden Club is sponsoring a Conservation Corner speaker series. This is a free monthly speaker series which will focus on local conservation information for landowners, gardeners and outdoor enthusiasts. Talks are set to start at 6 p.m. and are open to the public.

The series was scheduled to start with a presentation about water quality on Jan. 26 by Zack Rowatt with USDA-NRCS.

Other talks and topics on the schedule include: Feb. 23, Chris Evans with University of Illinois Extension on Southern Illinois invasive species; March 30, Tony Gerard with Shawnee Community College on reptiles; and April 27, John Wingate with Cache River Habitat Management LLC on habitat management.



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Snow covered the region’s highways, including Front Street/old U.S. Route 51 in Cobden, on Sunday, Jan. 25. Very little traffic was seen on the road when the photograph was taken Sunday afternoon.

Winter Storm

(continued from page 1)
reach your destination. Avoid sudden braking or acceleration, and be especially cautious on hills or when making turns. Make sure your car is winterized and in good working order.”

At around noon Sunday, the National Weather Service office in Paducah reported that the air temperature was 11 degrees in the Union County area. With wind gusts of 26 mph out of the northwest, the wind chill was 6 below zero.

Potentially Historic Snowstorm

Ahead of the winter storm’s arrival, the Union County Sheriff’s Office posted a message on social media advising that a “potentially historic snowstorm is forecast for our area. Totals are still uncertain, but models show significant snowfall. Please prepare and stay off the roads when possible so road crews and emergency services can work safely. Stay safe, everyone!”

Emergency Travel Only
With roads expected to be hazardous, the Union County Sheriff’s Office on Saturday advised residents to “only travel if absolutely necessary.”

Union County Sheriff David Wilkins posted a message Sunday on social media reporting the “roads throughout Union County are being cleaned for travel as fast as our resources can do so. The freezing temperatures and precipitation are not helping the cleaning process. Emergency services are working to get services out for assistance. I don’t expect the roads to be better by tomorrow morning for travel to work or etc. Business will still be closed along with schools and the Union County Courthouse. I’m asking the citizens for emergency travels only.”

Early Sunday morning, Alexander County Sheriff Tim Brown issued an emergency travel only order. The order was in effect for all of Alexander County, which is just south of Union County. All of the roads in the county were reported to be too dangerous for travel. The sheriff warned those who did choose to travel and became stranded might not receive assistance from first responders for several hours.

Winter Storm Warning, Cold Weather Advisory, Extreme Cold Warning

The Southern Illinois, Southeast Missouri and Western Kentucky region was under a winter storm warning from midnight Friday through 6 p.m. Sunday. The region also was under a cold weather advisory and an extreme cold warning. The advisory was in effect through midnight Sunday. The warning was in effect from 12 a.m. Monday through 10 a.m. Tuesday.

Heavy snow was in the forecast, with a band of 8- to 13-inch accumulations possible

in an area which included near Poplar Bluff in Southeast Missouri to Paducah and Marion. Other locations in Southern Illinois were expected to receive 6 to 10 inches of snow.

Heavy snow was expected during the day on Saturday. The heaviest amounts of snow were anticipated overnight Saturday and continuing into Sunday morning.

“Use caution while traveling outside,” the Weather Service said ahead of the storm. “Wear appropriate clothing, a hat and gloves.”

As of early Saturday morning, the Weather Service shared on social media that the major winter storm reminded on track to severely impact the region over the weekend. “Extreme cold will exacerbate the situation and sub-freezing temperatures continuing through the entirety of next week will make it that much worse,” the Weather Service cautioned. “Please stay home if at all possible, as this storm will be life threatening if stranded out in it.”

For the extreme cold warning, dangerously cold wind chills as low as 20 degrees below zero were expected. Such extreme cold could have resulted in frostbite and hypothermia if precautions were not taken. The winter storm exacerbated the dangers. Early Monday morning, the Weather Service was reporting a temperature of 1 degree below zero in the area near Union County. The wind chill at the time was 12 degrees below zero.

Snowfall Totals

Some of the preliminary snowfall reports from the winter storm reported Sunday afternoon in the region by the Weather Service included 5.5 inches near Cobden, 12 inches near Murphysboro, 9 inches in Carbondale, 5.3 inches in Goreville, 4.1 inches in Metropolis, 14 inches in Du Quoin, 12 inches in Johnston City, 11 inches near Herrin, 7.4 inches in Paducah and 5.5 inches in Cape Girardeau.

Cancellations, Closings

The Union County Sheriff’s Office announced Sunday afternoon on social media that the Union County Courthouse in Jonesboro would be closed Monday, Jan. 26, due to hazardous road conditions. The Anna and Jonesboro city halls were closed Monday.

The storm led to the cancellation of services and other activities at many Union County area churches. Some businesses closed early on Saturday. The Dongola and Jonesboro public libraries were closed Saturday. Stinson Memorial Public Library District closed its main building in Anna and its branch facility in Cobden on Saturday. Stinson’s Anna and Cobden facilities remained closed Monday.

On Sunday afternoon, Union County schools began posting notices about being closed on

Monday due to the weather and road conditions. Schools also were posting e-learning guidelines. Some businesses announced adjustments to their schedules on social media.

Shawnee Mass Transit District was closed Monday. Rural Health Inc. in Anna was closed Monday. Southern 7 Health Department and Head Start sites in the region were closed Monday.

Deaconess Illinois Union County Hospital in Anna shared a message on social media that due to the weather conditions, some Deaconess facilities and clinic locations in Illinois, Indiana and Kentucky would have modified hours or operations on Monday. All Deaconess Illinois hospitals and emergency departments remained open 24/7 and were available to care for anyone with serious or life-threatening medical needs.

Shawnee Community College campuses were closed Monday, Jan. 26, for a snow day. Southern Illinois University Carbondale announced on social media that it would be closed Monday due to the winter storm. The university was scheduled to reopen Tuesday morning, Jan. 26. Southeast Missouri State University campuses were closed and classes canceled on Monday.

Warming Shelter

With winter weather, including snow and extreme cold in the forecast, Deaconess Illinois Union County Hospital on North Main Street in Anna announced that it would open its lobby as a warming shelter. The lobby was scheduled to be open 24 hours each day on Saturday, Jan. 24, through Sunday, Jan. 25. Community members in need of a warm, safe place were welcome to come to the hospital lobby throughout those days.

Illinois Department of Transportation Messages

The Illinois Department of Transportation shared messages on social media ahead of and during the storm. Before the storm arrived, IDOT reported that “A Winter Storm Warning is in effect this weekend for the southern half of the state, with heavy snow expected. An Extreme Cold Warning is also in place statewide today through the weekend.

“With these bitter temperatures, the effectiveness of salt will be limited, making road conditions hazardous. Please avoid travel this weekend, especially in the southern regions. Overnight travel will be particularly treacherous.

“Our crews will be out on the roads today and into the work week. While the storm will exit by Sunday, it may take additional time to clear the roads due to the extreme cold. We need your continued patience over the next few days as we work to ensure safe travel conditions. Stay safe, stay warm, and keep an eye on updates and road conditions at

gettingaroundillinois.com!”

Early Sunday morning, IDOT reported that “Winter Storm Fern has made hazardous impacts on our roadways across Illinois. Do not be out on the road if you don’t need to be. Please stay home!

“Our dedicated crews will be out on the roads today and into the work week. It’s going to take additional time to clear the roads due to the extreme conditions. We need your continued patience over the next few days as we work to ensure safe travel. Check gettingaroundillinois.com for real-time road conditions!”

IDOT followed up with a message early Sunday afternoon: “Our snowplow and Emergency Traffic Patrol crews are working nonstop to keep the roads as safe as possible!

“Currently, we’re focused on plowing and managing snow drifting from high winds. Roads may be passable but still snow-covered, and the extreme cold is limiting the effectiveness of salt and other materials.

“Unfortunately, we’ve had 8 collisions involving our snowplows during this storm. That’s 8 fewer plows clearing roads. If you can, please stay home. If you must drive, slow down, don’t crowd the plow, and give our crews plenty of space to work safely.”

Long-Duration Winter Storm

The National Weather Service Weather Prediction Center in College Park, Md., warned Friday afternoon, Jan. 23, that a significant, long-duration winter storm would bring widespread heavy snow, sleet and freezing rain from the Southern Rockies to New England through Monday. Widespread travel disruptions, prolonged power outages and vast tree damage were likely.

Frigid temperatures, gusty winds and dangerous wind chills were forecast to expand from the north-central United States to the Southern Plains, the Mississippi Valley and the Midwest. Dangerously cold temperatures were expected through much of the eastern two-thirds of the United States through early this week.

The winter storm was expected to produce large swaths of heavy snow, sleet and freezing rain, bringing hazardous driving conditions, power outages and tree damage.

After the passing of the winter storm, a strong arctic air mass originated from Canada would continue to bring frigid temperatures into the eastern two-thirds of the United States into early this week. Subzero low temperatures were accompanied by gusty winds, bringing dangerously low wind chills.

Cold temperatures are then expected to continue across much of the eastern two-thirds of the United States into early February.

More arctic cold weather in forecast

Another outbreak of arctic cold is expected as the week comes to an end in the Southern Illinois, Southeast Missouri and Western Kentucky.

The National Weather Service office in Paducah reported that after last weekend’s frigid cold, temperatures were expected to moderate slightly on Wednesday.

The next arctic outbreak is forecast for Friday through the weekend. Wind chill values are forecast to once again approach dangerous values. Subzero wind chills are possible Friday morning.

News Notes

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The Cobden/Shawnee co-op girls basketball posted a 3-0 record on its way to winning the Shawnee Mid Winter Tournament. Cobden’s Natalie Franklin and Emma Young were named to the all-tournament team.

Reminder: An American Red Cross blood drive is planned from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Feb. 10, at Anna-Jonesboro Community High School.

In a message shared last week on social media, A-JCHS announced plans for a new logo and for hallway upgrades.

A-JCHS boys’ basketball team players Kaleb Gore and Foster Needling were named to the all-tournament team at the Arrowhead Classic in Johnston City.

A-JCHS bowlers Logan Quick, Seth Cochran and Bryan Wright advanced from regional competition to the sectional tournament.

Blue Sky Vineyard near Makanda announced that it recently brought awards from the prestigious San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition, standing alongside and winning against wines from across the United States. Blue Sky Vineyard’s Norton and rosé earned double gold medals, while Seyval and Vintners Select took home gold medals. “We’re incredibly proud to showcase our estate-grown Southern Illinois wines on a national stage,” the vineyard shared in a message on social media.

Dongola School District 66 is congratulating eighth

Wind chills could be colder than 10 degrees below zero Saturday morning.

The forecast for the Union County area was calling for a high near 24 on Thursday, today, followed by a low around 5 Thursday night; a high near 16 on Friday, with a low around 0; a high near 16 on Saturday, with a low around 2; and a high near 24 on Sunday, with a low around 10. By next Monday, the high could be near 32 degrees.

As of Tuesday morning, no wintry precipitation was in the forecast.

grade boys’ basketball player Brantley Hoffman for scoring his 500th career point.

Illinois Farm to School Meat initiatives, including the USDA Farm to School Grant, provided Lick Creek School with fresh meat from local suppliers. Students have enjoyed sausage and pulled pork from Flock Farms of Lick Creek. In addition, Lick Creek School has been able to provide fresh strawberries, blueberries, and apples from Halls Farm and Flamm Orchards.

Lick Creek School’s eighth-grade class plans to present a Valentine’s dance on the evening of Feb. 7. The dance, to be held in the school gymnasium, is open to all 4th through eighth-grade students at the school.

A Union County Women in Business Stars, Stripes & Smarts Trivia Night is planned Saturday, Jan. 31, at the Anna VFW post. Doors open at 5 p.m., trivia starts at 6. Proceeds will support the Union County Women in Business scholarship fund.

Due to the winter weather, a chili cook-off planned at Fuzzy’s in Cobden to benefit the Cobden Spay/Neuter Coalition was rescheduled to Saturday, Jan. 31, from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

The Friends of Stinson Library are planning a winter book sale event on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, Feb. 6-8.

The first day of spring is March 20. At the time this item was being typed, there were 52 days, 19 hours, 19 minutes and 30 seconds until spring...but who is counting?



Streets, highways pretreated ahead of winter storm
Streets and highways in the Union County area were pretreated late last week ahead of the arrival of a major winter storm. On Friday morning, Jan. 23, East Davie Street in Anna showed signs of having been pretreated.

Winter storm created hazardous travel conditions throughout Illinois

Ahead of last weekend’s major winter storm, the Illinois Department of Transportation, IDOT, and the Illinois State Police, ISP, warned the public that the storm’s heavy snow, as well as bitterly cold temperatures and dangerous wind chills, would have major impacts on the state’s roads and potentially into the new week. Travel was not advised in the areas most affected.

“Our snow and ice teams will be prepared and out in force. But with the extreme weather forecasted, any kind of travel will put you and others at risk, especially during the overnight hours,” IDOT Secretary Gia Biagi said Friday, Jan. 23, in a news release. “Staying home during any severe weather event always is your safest option. If you must be on the roads, please take precautions because conditions could be life-threatening.”

The National Weather Service issued a winter storm warning for the southern half of the state and an extreme cold warning for most of Illinois. Areas south of Effingham and into Southern Illinois and the Metro East could see 8 to 12 inches of snow starting Saturday morning and into Sunday evening. Totals across Central Illinois could reach 8 inches, with as much as 4 inches in Kankakee, Peoria and Macomb. Between 1 and 4 inches were anticipated in the Chicago area, with totals decreasing toward Rockford and the Quad Cities.

Winds reaching 25 mph created blowing and drift-

ing, reducing visibility and challenging efforts to combat snow and ice. Temperatures were forecast to stay below zero across most of Illinois, with wind chill factors between minus 5 and minus 40.

In preparation for last weekend’s weather, IDOT was pretreating roads and bridges, loading plows with salt and other materials. Crews were to out throughout the weekend and into this week. However, due to subzero temperatures, the effectiveness of salt and materials to treat roads would be substantially diminished, creating slick and slippery conditions at all times. Additionally, blowing and drifting snow will quickly deteriorate conditions on roads that have just been plowed and treated.

“The bitter cold and large snow amounts forecasted this weekend for parts of the state can lead to dangerous driving conditions that could put not only your life at risk, but the lives of troopers and other law enforcement officers, emergency services, tow truck drivers and anyone else on the roads,” ISP director Brendan F. Kelly said Friday. “It’s simple: If you don’t have to drive, don’t. If you must go out, give yourself extra time, go slow and have an emergency kit in your vehicle.”

Statewide, IDOT had nearly 1,900 trucks and equipment available to spread salt, plow snow and respond to weather emergencies as needed across more than 45,000 lanes miles. IDOT shared the following message with the public: Do

not crowd the plows. Give them plenty of room to do their jobs and do not attempt to pass too closely. Conditions in front of the plow are going to be worse than behind it.

State officials advised those who had to travel to drive according to conditions at all times, reducing speed, increasing braking distances and allowing more space between themselves and other vehicles. Motorists were encouraged to take it especially slow when approaching intersections, ramps, bridges, shaded areas and other locations prone to icing.

Other tips for those who travel in conditions created by the winter storm included: Check the forecast before leaving and make sure someone is aware of your travel route and schedule. Anticipate much longer travel times. Make sure your windshield is clear of snow and ice.

Fill up your tank or fully charge your vehicle and pack winter weather essentials, such as a cellphone charger, traction materials, warm clothes, blankets, food, water, first-aid kit, washer fluid and ice scraper.

Give them distance. Obey the Move Over law by slowing down and changing lanes when approaching any stopped vehicle. Always wear a seat belt. It’s the law and your best protection in the event of a crash. Drop it and drive. Put down the mobile devices. This, too, is the law.

If you are involved in a crash, remain inside your vehicle. Exiting it during inclement weather with reduced visibility can have fatal consequences.

County clerk shares updates for elections

The 2026 primary and general elections are coming up soon in Union County. The primary election is in mid-March and the general election is in early November.

Union County Clerk Stephanie Cox is sharing the following significant dates voters need to know for the 2026 elections:

Primary Election
Feb. 5, 2026: Primary election early voting and vote by mail start.
March 12, 2026: Last day for vote by mail ballots to be sent out.
March 16, 2026: Last day for early voting for the primary election.
March 17, 2026: Primary election day.

General Election
Sept. 24, 2026: General election early voting and vote by mail start.
Oct. 29, 2026: Last day for vote by mail ballots to be sent out.
Nov. 2, 2026: Last day for early voting for the general election.
Nov. 3, 2026: General election day.

Offices on Ballot
Union County offices and positions which will be on the ballot in 2026 include:
Union County commissioner Seat B (six-year term).
Union County sheriff (four-year term).
Union County treasurer (four-year term).
Union County clerk/recorder (four-year term).
Precinct committee persons (two-year terms).

Also on the ballot for Union County voters are the following federal, state and regional offices:

United States senator. Governor/lieutenant governor. Attorney general. Secretary of state. Comptroller. Treasurer. United States Representative in Congress. State senator. State representatives. Regional superintendent of schools.

Two Referendums
Two referendums also will be on the ballot. The referendums follow:

RESOLUTION TO SUBMIT AN ADVISORY REFERENDUM TO THE VOTERS OF UNION COUNTY REGARDING THE FEDERAL SCHOLARSHIP TAX CREDIT

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the county board of UNION COUNTY that the County Clerk is hereby authorized and directed to place said stated question/referendum - Should Illinois opt into a federal program that would provide Public K-12, private school, and homeschool students with private-

ly-donated funds for academic needs, such as tutoring and test preparation, educational therapies for students with disabilities, tuition, books, exam fees or for other specified academic needs?

Yes ____ No ____

AN ORDINANCE TO LEVY AND ASSESS A TAX FOR STINSON PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT OF THE COUNTY OF UNION, STATE OF ILLINOIS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2025 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2026.

BE IT ORDAINED, that the Stinson Public Library District of the County of Union, State of Illinois shall levy a tax of 0.02% of the value of all taxable property within said District, for building and maintenance purposes, subject to the right of the electors in said District to petition and require an election concerning the imposition of such tax, pursuant to 75 ILCS 16/35-5.

As soon as the ballot is certified, the county clerk’s office will publish the ballot in the paper, on its website and in the Union County Courthouse in Jonesboro.

“The 2024 primary and general elections were very successful and smoothly ran elections here in Union County,” Cox said in a news release. “My office is preparing to run this election with the same mentality, it being a fair and correct election, for all Union County voters.

“We are always looking for election judges to help work the day of the elections, if interested, please contact our office to find out how to become an election judge to help serve and keep our elections running successfully. As always, if you have any questions, please contact me or my staff for assistance.” The clerk’s office is located in Room 116 at the county courthouse. The clerk’s office can be contacted by phone at 618-833-5711.

Weather
9 inches of snow; high 45, low 2

A major winter storm brought 9 inches of snow to the Union County area over the weekend. Temperatures for the period of Jan. 20-26 in the area ranged from a high of 45 degrees to a low of 2. Wind chills below zero were recorded on several days.

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

Tuesday, Jan. 20: high 36, low 6.
Wednesday, Jan. 21: high 45, low 24.
Thursday, Jan. 22: high 43, low 21.
Friday, Jan. 23: high 27, low 8.
Saturday, Jan. 24: high 12, low 7.4 inches of snow (0.38 of an inch of melted precipitation).
Sunday, Jan. 25: high 14, low 10.5 inches of snow (0.87 of an inch of melted precipitation).
Monday, Jan. 26: high 17, low 2. Wind chill of 7.6 degrees below zero at 6 a.m. (when the air temperature was 2.4 degrees) and 7 a.m. (when the air temperature was 3.5 degrees).

County prepares for storm

Preparations for a major winter storm were discussed at last week’s regular meeting of the Union County Board of Commissioners. The meeting was Friday morning, Jan. 23, at the Union County Courthouse in Jonesboro.

Union County Highway Department Engineer Amy Ferris said the department was prepared for the storm. Roads had been pretreated in the county. Ferris said that 75 tons of salt had just been delivered to the county.

Ferris said highway department crews would work split shifts in response to the winter storm.

The county maintains about 500 miles of roads. About 250 of those miles are gravel roads.

City of Anna shares messages about trash service, snow routes

The City of Anna shared messages about trash service and emergency snow routes in postings on social media late last week ahead of a major winter storm that was in the forecast.

Trash Service
The following update was shared from Republic Services regarding trash service:

“Due to expected inclement weather, residents should anticipate possible delays for scheduled trash collection. These precautions are necessary to help ensure the safety of our collection crew and the community. Please leave your trash containers at the curb. Our crew will collect all trash as soon as conditions allow, and it is safe to do so. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause and appreciate your patience and cooperation as we prioritize everyone’s safety.

Emergency Snow Routes
Ahead of the storm, the city also shared the following reminder about emergency snow routes:

“With an upcoming snow event in the forecast, the City of Anna would like to remind residents about Emergency Snow Routes.

“No parking is allowed on designated emergency snow routes when snow and/or ice accumulation exceeds 2 inches.

“Vehicles parked on snow routes during a snow emergency will be towed at the owner’s expense.

“Emergency Snow Route signs are clearly posted and include: Main Street. Davie Street. Lafayette Street. West Vienna Street.

“These routes must remain clear so crews can safely and efficiently plow streets and ensure emergency vehicles can get through.

“Thank you for your cooperation and for helping keep Anna safe during winter weather!”

Union County Alliance of Churches
Recommendations

1

The AOC needs teachers who can show us how to help kids learn to read. We want to help, call us.

2

John 3:16 Ministries, “The Cure”, for drugs/alcohol addiction, john316thecure.com/admission/ FREE

3

“The Old Depot” 6 pm. Free dinner, live praise, fellowship, everyone welcome, come as you are.

Questions call Alliance of Churches (618)-614-2974

SEALED BID NOTICE

Larry Taylor, will be accepting sealed bids for the following properties:
90± tillable acres in section 21, T14S R1W Alexander County, Illinois.
That will be accepted up until 5:00 pm on 03/02/2026. Sealed bids can be mailed to the attention of Larry Taylor at 14748 Elco Road, Ullin, IL 62992.
If the bid holder's bid is accepted by Larry Taylor, the bid holder will be notified and will be responsible for closing on the real estate transaction within thirty (30) days of the close of the sealed bid. The property(ies) being bid on is as is and where is with no warranties whatsoever. Any due diligence, title work, or legal advice shall need to be obtained separately for the Notice. No promises, other than a conveyance by Deed, is being made as a part of this bid process.

Any petitions regarding the bid process can be made with Larry Taylor at 14748 Elco Road, Ullin, IL 62992 or by phone or email at 618-202-0459
Larrygta2312@hotmail.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

To: Customers of Illinois-American Water Company - Notice of Proposed Change in Rates

Illinois-American Water hereby gives notice to the public that it has filed with the Illinois Commerce Commission a proposed change in water and wastewater rates for all operating areas served by the Company, effective approximately January 1, 2027, with a second rate step effective January 1, 2028.

The proposed rates would increase the overall water or wastewater service revenue for the Company's districts below as follows:

	Effective January 1, 2027	Effective January 1, 2028	Total Increase
Central Water	23.0%	2.4%	25.4%
Peoria Water	40.4%	5.0%	45.4%
Central Wastewater	45.3%	5.3%	50.6%
Chicago Metro Wastewater	3.5%	1.0%	4.5%

The proposed changes, which include changes in design of the rates, affect charges for customers in all service classifications (including metered water service, wastewater service, private fire service and public fire service) in the districts listed above. The estimated bill impact of the proposed changes may vary based on multiple factors, including, but not limited to, meter size, usage volume, service classification, fire protection district, and other factors.

Illinois Commerce Commission procedures for intervention are contained in its Rules of Practice, 83 IL Admin. Code Part 200. In addition, customers may request a public forum regarding this proposed increase by making a written request to the Illinois Commerce Commission in accordance with procedures specified in Section 8-308(n) of the Public Utilities Act (220 ILCS 548-308 (n)).

A copy of the proposed rate schedules may be inspected by any interested party at any of the Illinois-American Water offices. Additionally, customers may contact Illinois-American Water at (800) 422-2782 for an explanation regarding how the proposed changes might impact their monthly bill.

Customers should be advised that the Illinois Commerce Commission may alter or amend the rates or conditions of service after hearings held pursuant to 83 IL Admin Code Part 200 and may increase or decrease individual rates in amounts other than those requested by Illinois-American Water.

You may obtain additional information either directly from Illinois-American Water, 300 N. Water Works Drive, Belleville, Illinois 62223, tel: (800) 422-2782, or by addressing the Chief Clerk of the Illinois Commerce Commission, 527 East Capitol Avenue, Springfield, Illinois 62701, or via the Illinois Commerce Commission's website at www.icc.illinois.gov. Information is also available at Illinois-American Water's web site, www.illinoisamwater.com.

Obituaries

Paul Wayne Gibson

Paul Wayne Gibson, age 77 of Dongola, formerly of Alto Pass, died Wednesday, Jan. 14, 2026 at home with his family by his side.

He was born May 14, 1948 in Anna, the son of Rev. Johnnie Beauford and Lucille (Sides) Gibson.

He married his childhood sweetheart, Shirley Clover. Paul was just 12 when he saw Shirley for the first time in church. He told his mom and dad on their way home, he was going to marry her, and he did on Aug. 21, 1971. Together they have shared fifty-four wonderful years of marriage.

Paul loved his church first and foremost. He was a member of the Trinity Pentecostal Tabernacle in Jonesboro for many years.

He was an auto body man by trade and loved working under the hood to keep them running and looking good.

Paul is survived by his loving wife, Shirley Gibson of Dongola; three children, Kenny Gibson and friend, Angelina of Missouri, Greg and wife Belinda Gibson and Dorena Gibson all of Dongola; twelve grandchildren, thirteen great-grandchildren and two more on the way; one sister, Linda and husband Bill Wright of Anna; other extended family and friends.

Funeral services were on Saturday, Jan. 17 at the Trinity Pentecostal Church in Jonesboro with Rev. Bryan Tinnin officiating.

Interment followed on the family homestead in Dongola. Memorial contributions are preferred to the Trinity Pentecostal Church. Envelopes will be available at the Rendleman & Hileman Funeral Home and the church.

To view the obituary and leave online condolences for the family, visit www.rendlemanhilemanfh.com.

Rendleman and Hileman Funeral Home in Jonesboro in charge of arrangements.



RENDLEMAN & HILEMAN
FUNERAL HOMES

Esther Mae Barker

Esther Mae Barker, age 81 of Anna, died Thursday, Jan. 22, 2026 at home with her family.

She was born Aug. 9, 1944 in Alto Pass, the daughter of Melvin Levi and Estella Alma (Fox) Teller.

She married Carroll “Sonny” Barker on Jan. 21, 1972. He preceded her in death on Jan. 24, 2007.

Esther is survived by her son, Anthony (Hannah) Barker of Anna; four grandchildren, Dylan (Meranda) Barker, Justin (Emmelie) Barker, Garrett (Hannah) Barker, and Seth Barker; three great grandchildren, Alistair, Cooper and Arthur Barker; other extended family and friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband, Sonny Barker; son, Robert Barker; and numerous brothers and sisters.

Esther worked at Florsheim Shoe Factory in Anna for twenty-eight years and later worked at Union County Hospital for twenty-four years until her retirement.

Her greatest joy was spending time with her grandchildren and especially her great-grandchildren.

Graveside funeral services will be at 2 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 30, at the Alto Pass Cemetery. Interment will immediately follow. Those attending are asked to go directly to the cemetery.

To view the obituary and leave online condolences for the family, visit www.rendlemanhilemanfh.com.

Rendleman and Hileman Funeral Home in Anna in charge of arrangements.



Don Eugene Hileman

Don Eugene Hileman, son of the late Ray Hileman and Blanche (Dillon) Hileman was born on Dec. 8, 1939 in Jonesboro, Ill. and went to be with the Lord on Wednesday, Jan. 21, 2026 at the age of 86 years.

He was a Veteran of the United States Army, Heavy Equipment Operator for Union #318 for 25 years and then drove over the road for ABF Trucking for 11 years.

Don was a member of the McClure Baptist Church and a resident of East Cape Girardeau, Ill.

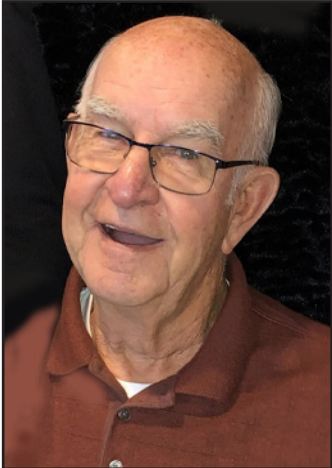
On Feb. 22, 1958 he was united in marriage to Shely Jean Benefield in Anna, Ill. Mrs. Hileman survives.

Along with his wife, Shely Hileman; survivors include one son, Steve Hileman of McClure, Ill.; three grandchildren, Chad Hileman, Heather (Steven Jarvis) Hileman, and Morgan (Jeff) Gates; one brother, Dick Hileman of Gardner, Ill.; one sister, Mary “Murk” Cripps of Jonesboro, Ill.; also, by other relatives and friends.

Besides his parents, he was preceded in death by one son, Kerry Lynn Hileman; brother, Dan Hileman and by one sister, Tut Moore.

Celebration of life will be conducted at a later date. Amick-Burnett Funeral Chapel is assisting with arrangements.

Online condolences may be shared at www.amick-burnettfuneralchapels.com.



SIU Alumni Association launches Saluki Market for alumni entrepreneurs

By Caleb Hale
CARBONDALE, Ill. – What began as an idea to help Salukis support one another has quickly become a success story. Since launching in late 2025, Saluki Market, the SIU Alumni Association’s newest venture, has generated more than \$6,000 in first-month sales, connecting alumni, students and friends of Southern Illinois University Carbondale with businesses owned by alumni and friends of the university.

Built on Shopify, one of the world’s leading e-commerce platforms, Saluki Market has quickly established itself as more than a shopping destination: it’s a digital hub where alumni, students and SIU supporters can discover, connect with and support fellow Salukis. In addition to offering curated products, the platform highlights the personal stories behind each business, celebrating the university’s long-standing culture of entrepreneurship.

Champion Sponsorship To help launch and grow the platform, the SIU Alumni Association secured a multi-year Champion Sponsorship from Black Diamond Harley-Davidson, the flagship dealership of the Black Diamond Family of Businesses, a growing portfolio of retail, entertainment and sports ventures based in Marion. This partnership has played

a key role in supporting the market’s early success and will continue to help expand opportunities for alumni entrepreneurs.

“Many members of our Black Diamond team are proud SIU alumni and active members of the SIU Alumni Association,” Black Diamond co-founder Shad Zimbardo said. “Supporting Saluki Market was a natural fit for us. We believe in entrepreneurship because that’s exactly how we started. This partnership is more than a sponsorship: it’s an investment in the next generation of Saluki business owners. And from a business standpoint, aligning with a platform that reaches nearly 280,000 alumni worldwide just makes sense.”

Platform Built by Salukis, for Salukis

“At SIU, we’re known for forging our own paths to success,” said Molly Hudgins, a 1997 SIU graduate and executive director of the SIU Alumni Association. “Our alumni consistently launch successful businesses, and Saluki Market reflects our mission to showcase SIU excellence while creating meaningful, tangible opportunities for our graduates. Seeing the market exceed \$6,000 in sales in its first month confirmed what we already believed: Salukis want to support Salukis!”

Democrats focus on Trump as Illinois House returns for spring session

By Georgia Epiphaniou, Erika Tulfo and others
SPRINGFIELD – Illinois House Democrats kicked off their spring session last week in a mostly symbolic fashion, denouncing President Donald Trump’s policies in a series of resolutions criticizing immigration raids and cuts to health care and child care programs.

“The session was an opportunity for us to emphasize how these policies in the federal government impact Illinois,” House Rep. Lillian Jiménez, D-Chicago, said.

The Democrat-led symbolic resolutions targeted Trump’s tariffs, excessive use of force by federal immigration agents, the freezing of affordable child care funds and the expiry of Affordable Care Act subsidies. They even denounced the administration’s push to acquire territory overseas while Illinoisans face affordability challenges at home.

They all passed overwhelmingly over Republican objections.

“We basically did nothing but allow Democrats in the General Assembly to grandstand on things that are happening in D.C. that we have zero impact on,” House Rep. Jeff Keicher, R-Sycamore, told Capitol News Illinois.

House Rep. Jaime M. Andrade Jr., D-Chicago, kicked off the Wednesday, Jan. 21, session by calling out aggressive actions by Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents, citing the killing of Silverio Villegas González in Franklin Park in September last year and Renee Good in Minnesota earlier in January.

Andrade filed House Resolution 622 which condemned the use of “excessive and deadly force” by ICE agents, and called for an independent investigation into the Department of Homeland Security for killings and deaths of detainees in custody. Democrats also called for the resignation of DHS Secretary Kristi Noem over her handling of immigration enforcement.

Democrats then focused on the impact of federal funding cuts.

Jiménez filed House Res-

The idea for Saluki Market took shape in 2024 after the alumni association recognized a growing desire among graduates to intentionally support alumni-owned businesses. The platform simplifies that process, encouraging shoppers to “Shop SIU First” while directly engaging with Saluki entrepreneurs.

Entrepreneurial Excellence

Saluki Market was developed with the expertise of SIU alumni such as Sadie Horan (Class of 2007), an independent consultant with prior experience at Shopify. Inspired by the project, Horan also became one of the marketplace’s first vendors, launching All Things Maroon, a boutique offering SIU-inspired apparel in maroon and white.

In addition, other alums, like Tom Harness (Class of 2001), owner of Harness Digital Marketing, provided early consulting and support; while Jeremy Packer (Class of 2015), owner of his own tech consulting firm, Packer Labs, assisted with back-end logistics before the market’s launch.

The association also worked closely with a selection of alumni-owned vendors, who volunteered time and effort to establish storefronts on the Saluki Market.

Early Saluki Market vendors include T.J. Cowan, founder of Cold-Blooded Coffee and Roastery, who collaborated on a Saluki Market-exclusive coffee blend.

The marketplace also features products from Rendleman Orchards, an Illinois-based farm owned by SIU alumni Wayne and Michelle Sirles.

“As an alumna and long-time partner of the SIU Alumni Association, it’s been incredibly rewarding to see Saluki Market take off so quickly,” said Michelle Sirles. “This platform is a powerful way to celebrate our SIU community while

showcasing the outstanding products our alumni and region have to offer.”

For Michael Smith and Krista Daniel, owners of Fired-Up Jellies and Jams, joining the Saluki Market as a vendor meant expanding their online presence. “Prior to this shift, we would only have one or two orders every couple of months on our website,” Smith said. “Now since we launched our Shopify website, we have had over 30 orders in two months, some of which came from the Saluki Market. Though it is only on its infancy, we know this partnership will be a game-changer for us, as it already has been.”

Additional vendors featured on Saluki Market include 17th Street BBQ, 40 Below Joe, Cristaudo’s, Eccentrics Boutique, Handmade by Chloe, Howdy Hyde, Kinley Jewelry LLC, Nicholas Brewing Co, Sunflower Girl Skincare, Tattered-N-Torn Designs.

Additional sponsors and partners supporting Saluki Market include Blue Sky Vineyard, First Southern Bank, Silkworm, The Printing Plant, the Small Business Development Center at SIU, SI Now, Banterra Bank and First Mid Bank.

Explore Marketplace

With strong early sales, positive feedback from vendors and growing interest from alumni shoppers, Saluki Market continues to expand its offerings while strengthening connections across the SIU community.

To explore the marketplace and support Saluki-owned businesses, visit salukimarket.com. Alumni, students and those who have a close working relationship with SIU and are a small-business owner also are welcome to apply as a vendor online. More information about getting started can be found on the website.

Caleb Hale is director of communications for the SIU Alumni Association.

County Line News

(Mill Creek and Upper Elco)

By Suzan Harvel

Well, it finally happened; real winter weather. Freezing rain, sleet, snow, below freezing temperatures, and for the unfortunate...power outages.

With the predictions and dire travel warnings came grocery store madness, extreme lines at the gas pumps, gathering of blankets and heavy clothing, rooting out of flashlights, filling extra water jugs, battery replacements, sharpening or replacement of chain saw blades and shovels, frantic calls to the propane companies for those who thought they had time yet, extra preparation for livestock and household animals, and massive cancellations of everything from school, church, social functions, businesses and jobs.

Then, in the midst of it, came the sore muscles from chopping extra wood, the seemingly endless work with snow shovels/tractor and blade/snow plows and blowers, and most of the former was prefaced by the spreading of chemicals, cinders, or rock salt.

Next, we have to deal with clean-up of snow being tracked and piled everywhere, disposal of downed branches/trees, sprained/broken bones and cuts/bruises or worse... heart attacks/strokes from misadventures, the ever present dealing with colds/flu/covid/whatever bug is going around, and eventually the cleaning of vehicles, equipment, and/or repairs. Frankly, I’d much rather deal with spring cleaning. It’s easier and more satisfying. I’m already tired of the cold. Bring on spring!

New additions to the prayer list are the family of Dorcas Cravens and Esther Barker; a friend of mine, Debbie Pumphery for cancer; Levi Morrow for seizures; Sue Starr for illness; safety for DOT workers and first responders; protection for the homeless and those in dire need/without resources. Stay safe everyone and don’t go out if you don’t absolutely have to.

Union County Fixin’s

Sweet Potato Boats

4 medium sized sweet potatoes
1/4 cup butter, melted
2 cups mini marshmallows
1/2 cup honey or maple syrup
1/2 cup chopped pecans
Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Pierce potatoes all over with a fork and arrange on a parchment lined baking sheet. Bake until tender 40-45 minutes. Allow to cool on pan. (If time is an issue, microwave potatoes on high for 11-13 minutes instead of baking.)
Preheat broiler. Slice each potato in half lengthwise and place back on baking sheet, skin side down. Brush with melted butter and top with marshmallows.
Broil until marshmallows start to toast, about 1 minute. Top with remaining ingredients. If you don’t like marshmallows (I don’t), just toast the potatoes and add toppings of your choice.

Kentucky man sentenced for drug, gun crimes in area

BENTON, Ill. – A Southern Illinois district judge has sentenced a Kentucky man to 15 years in federal prison for possessing more than 150 grams of meth and a firearm as a felon.

James W. Towery, 45, of Salem, Ky., pleaded guilty to one count of possession with intent to distribute meth and one count of felon in possession of a firearm.

“Armed drug dealers belong in federal prison,” U.S. Attorney Steven D. Weinhoeft said in a news release. “Southern Illinois communities are safer with this defendant locked up.”

According to court documents, law enforcement conducted a traffic stop of Towery’s vehicle on March 11, 2024, in Massac County. He was found in possession of 150.4 grams of actual meth and a .38 caliber handgun.

Towery had multiple prior felony convictions and therefore unable to legally possess a firearm.

The Illinois State Police, Kentucky State Police, DEA, HSI, ATF and local law enforcement contributed to the investigation. Assistant U.S. Attorney David Sanders prosecuted the case.

News from Anna Nazarene Church

Sunday, Jan. 25

There was no in-person services held on Jan. 25 due to the inclement weather. The message “Being A Gentle Disciple” was brought by Pastor Wright on Zoom from Ephesians 4:2, Philippians 2:5, Matthew 11:28-29, Psalm 103:8.

Celebrating a birthday this week is: 25th Larry Fuller.

Celebrating an anniversary this week is 27th Dorris & Joyce Johnson.

The children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren of Dorris and Joyce Johnson of Anna invite family and friends to join them in a celebration of the couple’s 65 years of marriage. The Johnsons were married on Jan. 27, 1961 at the old Church of the Nazarene on Chestnut Street in Anna. They have lived in Union County for most of those 65 years.

The 65th anniversary celebration will be at the present Church of the Nazarene in the fellowship hall on Saturday, Jan. 31, from 2 to 4

p.m. The church is located at 100 Kirk St. in Anna. The Johnsons request no gifts: however, cards will be welcomed.

Sunday, Feb. 1
Breakfast - 9:00 a.m.
Sunday School - 9:30 a.m.
Morning Worship Service-10:35 a.m
No Evening Service – 6:00 p.m

Wednesday, Feb. 4
Wednesday Night Service will be held at 6:30 p.m. in the sanctuary.
Youth Group in the Fellowship Hall at 6:30 p.m.

Sunday, Feb. 8
Breakfast - 9:00 a.m.
Sunday School - 9:30 a.m.
Morning Worship Service-10:35 a.m
Guest speaker, Nate Ammon & guest worship leader, Evan Cureton
No Evening Service – 6:00 p.m.

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

The sponsors on this page urge you to attend the church of your choice.



618-893-2861 • 618-534-2391

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Remember When



We can remember times when we were young that we were sad and could crawl into Mom's lap and everything would be all right. For Mother's Day we would bring home handmade cards from school and Mom would tell us they were beautiful. Now, if we are grown, we can still remember the countless little things that made Mom so dear to us all those years ago and be grateful for her today and every day. Mom can make things seem a little better. Visit your house of worship this Mother's Day and give thanks to God for wonderful moms.

Weekly Scripture Reading

Hebrews	Romans	Romans	Romans	Romans	Romans	Romans
12.1-29	1.1-17	2.1-16	3.21-31	4.1-12	4.13-25	5.1-21

Scriptures Selected by the American Bible Society

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HELP WANTED

LEGAL NOTICE

Job Opening: Director of Library Services Jonesboro Public Library Jonesboro Public Library is seeking a motivated, organized, and community-oriented individual to serve as Director of Library Services. This is a part-time, temporary position offering an opportunity to support library operations and community engagement.

Position Details: Title: Director of Library Services Pay: \$15.00 per hour Schedule: Part-time, 20 hours per week Term: Temporary position for one (1) year

Key Responsibilities Include (but are not limited to): Oversee daily library operations and services , Assist patrons with circulation, reference, and basic technology needs ,Coordinate programs, events, and community outreach ,Support grant writing and fundraising efforts , Manage library collections and basic records , Supervise volunteers and ensure a welcoming library environment ,Maintain compliance with library policies and procedures

Qualifications: High school diploma or equivalent required , Library, nonprofit, education, or customer service experience preferred ,Strong communication and organizational skills , Ability to work independently and with the public ,Basic computer and technology skills, Passion for libraries and community service

How to Apply: Please email a resume and cover letter to: jonesboropubliclibrary@gmail.com Application Deadline: Open until filled Join us in supporting literacy, learning, and community connection at Jonesboro Public Library!

City of Anna, Part Time SRO - Police Officer The City of Anna, IL is accepting applications for the position for a Part-Time School Resource Officer. Under the direction of the Chief of Police and in coordination with School Administration, the School Resource Officer will work to improve school safety and security. This is a part time position with an hourly rate of pay of \$25.00. The hours of this position coincide with the school calendar, not to exceed 1,560 hours per calendar year. Minimum qualifications for an interested candidate are as follows; must be a U.S. citizen, have a valid driver's license, possess a valid Illinois FOID card, have certification from the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board, must pass a medical and criminal background check, and reside within 30 minutes of the corporate limits of Anna. Applications will be available for interested candidates at Anna City Hall or online at cityofanna.org. Please return resume and employment application to the Human Resources Department at Anna City Hall, 103 Market Street Anna, IL 62906 or by email to mmcreynolds@cityofanna.org. Position will remain open until filled. EOE

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

MISC.

Notice is hereby given of the sale of the following described personal property which is stored at Busby Storage (Anna Location) 215 B East Vienna St. Anna, IL 62906. Name of Occupant: Christine Bridges Storage Unit: 75 Property to be sold

Personal/Miscellaneous Time/Place/Manner of Sale: February 21, 2025 at 9 a.m. by Public Auction at Busby Storage 215 B East Vienna St. Anna, IL 62906 Phone: 618-833-3983 or 618-833-0238

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Department on Aging seeks nominations for Seniors Hall of Fame

The Illinois Department on Aging, IDoA, is seeking nominations for the 2026 induction class of the Senior Illinoisans Hall of Fame, which honors the accomplishments of Illinois residents aged 65 and older.

“Senior Illinoisans across the state carry unique histories, perspectives and accomplishments that deserve to be celebrated,” Gov. JB Pritzker said in a news release. “I highly encourage Illinoisans who know an older adult that made a lasting impact in their community to

nominate them for this state honor.”

Each year, four older adults are inducted into the Hall of Fame for their work in the arts, sports and entertainment; community service; education; or the labor force. Anyone may nominate an older adult for consideration.

To be eligible for nomination to the Hall of Fame, nominees must be at least 65 years old at the time of nomination and a current Illinois resident or a previous resident of Illinois for most of their life.

Posthumous nominations are also accepted, provided the nominee was 65 or older and living in Illinois at the time of death.

To guarantee consideration for the 2026 induction class, nominations must be submitted on or before June 2, 2026. Nominators of new Hall of Fame inductees are expected to participate in an award ceremony honoring their nominee and highlighting their accomplishments.

“The Senior Illinoisans Hall of Fame recognizes remarkable older adults

who continue to inspire growth, connection, and purpose at every stage of life,” IDoA acting director Mary Killough said in a news release. “Please consider nominating someone you know for this meaningful award.”

Completed nomination forms may be submitted electronically or returned via U.S. mail, fax or email. For more information or to submit a nomination, please visit this page. Information about past Hall of Fame inductees is available here.

IDoA serves and advo-

cates for older Illinoisans and their caregivers by administering quality and culturally appropriate programs that promote partnerships and encourage independence, dignity, and quality of life.

For information about the department’s programs and services for older adults and persons with disabilities, visit <https://ilaging.illinois.gov/> or contact the Senior HelpLine toll-free at 1-800-252-8966 Monday through Friday between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m.

Ameren triggers more \$20.7 billion in economic output

Ameren Corporation reports that its operations in Illinois and Missouri triggered more than \$20.7 billion in annual economic output, according to a study by a market research and development firm.

Conducted by HR&A Advisors and commissioned by Ameren, the study analyzed direct spending by the company on functions such as payroll, capital equipment, supplier services and the additional economic benefits that are generated when those investments prompt other businesses and consumers to spend money on housing, capital goods and retail.

In short, every dollar and job related to Ameren’s operations in the bi-state area are generating additional leading-wage jobs, disposable income and increased tax revenue for communities and public institutions in the bi-state region.

The study produced the following highlights:

Jobs: 55,200 supported by Ameren’s annual economic activity.

Vendor/Suppliers: \$2.2

billion purchased from in-state suppliers in Illinois and Missouri.

Taxes: \$920 million contributed to state and local governments.

Philanthropy: \$10.6 million in support to meet critical community needs.

“Every day, our employees, suppliers and contractors are working to strengthen and expand our energy grid, bolstering reliability and resiliency for customers, while facilitating economic expansion,” said Martin J. Lyons Jr., chairman, president and chief executive officer of Ameren Corporation, in a news release. “The results of this economic impact study validate that our ongoing energy infrastructure investments and operations are delivering unprecedented benefits in the communities where we live and work.”

The study also cites Ameren’s annual efforts to manage costs and streamline operational efficiency to help mitigate the impact of rising energy costs. Efforts to keep rates as low as possible

No fatal interstate highway shootings in Illinois in 2025

By Rebecca Pieder

SPRINGFIELD – For the first time in at least a decade, there were no fatal interstate highway shootings in Illinois last year, Illinois State Police, ISP, announced. The number of these shootings dropped significantly for the fourth year in a row in 2025, the state police said.

This development marks a dramatic reversal from 2021, when the number of expressway shootings spiked at 310. Since then, incidents have dropped 80 percent to 61 shootings last year.

Of the 89 shootings in 2024, 12 were fatal. In 2025, the number of shootings decreased by 31 percent, with no fatalities, police said.

Expanded use of technology, including the deployment of automated license plate readers, ALPR, on highways, has been central to the decline. The license plate readers monitor state highways and collect millions of data points, including images, time, date and location of passing vehicles. Police cross-reference that data against databases of stolen vehicles and those connected to crimes.

Despite success in lowering the number of shootings and finding criminals on the state highways, the technology has also drawn critics and a lawsuit accusing the ISP of creating “a system of dragnet surveillance.”

Expansion of Camera Program

Last year, lawmakers allocated \$7 million in new funding for the tech-

nology, as well as \$2.5 million reappropriated from a previous year.

The state has installed at least 588 ALPRs across Illinois, with higher concentrations in areas where ISP has identified elevated rates of violent crime and threats to public safety.

A shift in mindset from traffic to trafficking has been key to reducing highway violence, ISP director Brendan Kelly said in an interview.

The agency has focused more on combatting drug trafficking, gun trafficking and human trafficking, while placing greater emphasis on deterring violent crime and vehicular hijackings, he said.

“Allocating our personnel in a focused way was the foundation but also augmenting the hard work of our people with technology like license plate readers,” Kelly said.

In 2023, the agency used evidence gathered from license plate readers in every expressway homicide case for which the agency filed criminal charges in Cook County, Kelly said.

The license plate reader system alerts troopers in real time when cameras spot a vehicle reported stolen or connected to a violent crime. State police can then decide whether to pull the vehicle over immediately or use aerial surveillance to follow it until conditions are safer for an arrest.

Kelly said the coordination between license plate readers and ISP’s air operations allows police to apprehend sus-

pects without posing undue risk to the public or officers. The technology also helps identify potential witnesses and other circumstantial evidence based on time and location data.

State Sen. Christopher Belt, D-Swansea, chair of the Senate Public Safety & Infrastructure Committee, called the decline in shootings “the perfect intersection of exemplary police work and technology.”

Concerns About Surveillance

But the expansion of surveillance technology has also resulted in some pushback. A lawsuit filed by the libertarian legal group Liberty Justice Center in May 2024 challenged the ALPR program and asserted that the constant surveillance of the ALPRs infringed on the rights of two Cook County residents.

While the case was dismissed in 2025, plaintiffs are appealing to the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals. A ruling is expected later this year, which could lead to the possibility of a further appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.

The ACLU of Illinois, though not involved in the lawsuit, has also expressed concern about the license plate readers.

“These are very powerful surveillance tools,” said Ed Yohnka, director of communications and public policy at ACLU of Illinois. “The ability to place these around a community and essentially track someone is a very powerful thing.”

Yohnka said the group has reservations about

leading global supplier of semi-finished copper and copper alloy products, is expanding in East Alton, investing \$500 million and creating 700 new full-time jobs.

In 2025, businesses across Ameren Missouri’s service territory created 2,273 new jobs and invested \$1.56 billion. Some of those businesses include:

Amazon recently completed a new 61,000-square-foot last-mile delivery station in the SEMO Industrial Park in Scott City, Mo. Amazon also invested \$15 million in capital and created 70 new jobs for the area.

WEG Transformers USA, a leading producer of transformers, is expanding in Washington, Mo., investing \$77 million and creating 50 new jobs.

IKO, a global leader in the manufacturing and supply of residential shingles, commercial roofing and waterproofing products, is investing more than \$120 million in a new 220,000-square-foot facility and creating

more than 50 new jobs for its subsidiary, Bismarck Granules, in Bismarck, Mo.

Ameren was also recently selected as one of Business Facilities magazine’s 2026 Top Utilities for Economic Development.

St. Louis-based Ameren Corporation serves 2.5 million electric customers and more than 900,000 natural gas customers in a 64,000-square-mile area through its Ameren Missouri and Ameren Illinois rate-regulated utility subsidiaries.

Ameren Illinois provides electric transmission and distribution service and natural gas distribution service. Ameren Missouri provides electric generation, transmission and distribution services, as well as natural gas distribution service. Ameren Transmission Company of Illinois develops, owns and operates rate-regulated regional electric transmission projects in the Midcontinent Independent System Operator Inc.

the expanding surveillance network and the lack of clear restrictions on data storage duration, storage methods and who has access to the information.

Last year, Illinois Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias’ office said it unearthed two instances of license plate reader data being shared in violation of Illinois law. State law requires that police departments and other license plate camera operators obtain a written declaration from all out-of-state law enforcement agencies saying they will not use license plate reader data to enforce abortion restrictions or immigration enforcement.

Giannoulias alleged that police tech company Flock Safety illegally shared data with federal border enforcement and that the Forest Park Police Department improperly shared information with border enforcement via Motorola Solutions technology.

“License plate reading cameras serve as powerful surveillance technology, and as Secretary of State, I’m committed to ensuring that everyone involved in data sharing is following the law and protecting Illinoisans’ right to privacy,” Giannoulias said in a statement at the time.

Kelly also noted ISP’s license plate reader data cannot be used for immigration enforcement under the Illinois Trust Act.

The Motorola system has strict restrictions on data usage and any law

enforcement agencies that receive shared data are contractually required to abide by state requirements, he said.

History of Program

The ALPR program was initially launched in 2020 in response to expressway shootings, and expanded in 2022 to combat a range of serious offenses. These include vehicular hijacking, aggravated vehicular hijacking, terrorism, motor vehicle theft and any forcible felony. ALPRs are not meant to be used for speeding or routine traffic enforcement.

House Bill 3339, sponsored by Rep. Thaddeus Jones, D-Calumet City, which was signed into law last year, broadens the definition of forcible felony to include human trafficking and involuntary servitude.

“Currently, there is a plan to maintain and identify potential locations for additional license plate readers,” Kelly said. “(We’re) updating our air fleet and continuing to hire Illinois State Police officers.”

Rebecca Pieder is a student in the Medill Illinois News Bureau, a program at the Medill School of Journalism that provides local news outlets with state legislature and government coverage.

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.

NOTICE OF 2025 ASSESSMENT CHANGES		
The following is a list of all real estate assessment changes for townships 11-1E, 11-1W, 11-2W, 11-3W, 11-4W, 12-1E, 12-2W, 12-3W, 12-4W, 13-1E, 13-1W 13-2W and 13-3W . Real estate assessment changes for the remaining Township of 12-1W are located in the Quadrennial Reassessment Publication. All assessed values are subject to revision by the Union County Board of Review and by local and state equalization. All properties are subject to equalization in accordance with Section 9-210 of the Property Tax Code other than those assessed as farm under Sections 10-110 through 10-140 and 10-170 through 10-200 of the Property Tax Code.		
This publication is made in accordance with section 12-10 of the Property Tax Code and serves as public notice to property owners that the median level of assessment in Union county for the 2025 tax year payable in 2026 is 31.28% based on three years of sales transactions from 2022-2024. The statutory median level is 33.33% of fair market value for all property other than farmland.		
In accordance with section 9-210 and section 10-115 of the property tax code, an equalization factor of 1.0655 has been applied to bring assessments to the statutorily required three -year median level of 33.33% for the townships of 11-1E, 11-1W, 11-2W, 11-3W, 11-4W, 12-1E, 12-1W, 12-2W, 12-3W, 12-4W, 13-1E, 13-1W, 13-2W and 13-3W as follows:		
Farm Land	1.0000	
Farm Improvements	1.0000	
Non-Farm Land	1.0655	
Non-Farm Improvements	1.0655	
You may check the accuracy of your non-farm assessment by dividing your non-farm assessment by the median level of assessment. The resulting value should equal the estimated fair market value of the property. If the resulting value is greater than the estimated fair market value of your property, you may be over-assessed. If the resulting value is less than the estimated fair market value of your property, you may be under-assessed.		
Property owners who consider their property to be incorrectly assessed may submit a written complaint with the Union County Board of Review in accordance with section 16-55 of the Property Tax Code. All complaints must be filed with the Supervisor of Assessments within 30 days following the date of this publication at: 309 W. Market Street, Room 128 Jonesboro, Illinois 62952 . All publications can be viewed at unioncountylil.gov . Please call our office if you have any questions. You may reach us at 618-833-8051 from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.		
The equalized assessed value of your property minus exemptions is multiplied by the tax rate to arrive at the taxes you will pay. The tax rate is determined by the amount the taxing bodies levy in your tax districts.		
Tammy Robinson, CIAO Supervisor of Assessments Union County		
11-1E		
WILLIAMS, ELDRIDGE R & GLORIA	01-07-00-033-A	64,050
WILEY, DENISE L	01-07-00-039-A4	131,780
FLUCHEL, DAVID J	01-10-00-060-	10,450
KAUFMAN, SCOTT & STEPHANIE	01-14-00-108-A1	160
SCOTT, KENDALL & CARRIE A	01-14-00-108-A2	5,670
KAUFMAN, SCOTT & STEPHANIE	01-14-00-122-1	32,250
SCOTT, KENDALL & CARRIE A	01-14-00-122-2	2,960
MORRIS, WILLOW & MELISSA	01-17-00-179-	67,830
MORRIS, WILLOW & MELISSA	01-17-00-182-	4,320
MORRIS, WILLOW & MELISSA	01-20-00-221-	11,510
PAPAZIAN, JAQUES	01-22-00-261-	8,090
TITSWORTH, TOSHA LYNN	01-24-00-279-1	117,210
PEARMAN, STEVE & TAMMY	01-26-00-310-1	37,910
HOFELICH, PETE & KIMBERELY	01-26-00-310-2	460
PAPAZIAN, JAQUES	01-27-00-343-	660
PITTS, JAMES W & JOSEPH R	01-28-00-369-	33,140
GOULD FAMILY LIMITED PARTNERS	01-29-00-391-	4,500
CYPHERS, LARRY J	01-29-00-391-C	21,980
HARRIS, JOHN K & ASHLI D	01-33-00-479-C	26,860
SUTTLE, DAVID A & SUSAN M	14-00-12-036-A1	72,570
12-1E		
BARRINGER, GARRETT & JACQUELIN	02-01-00-596-	11,970
SCHULTZ, TRAVIS & MELINDA	02-02-00-608-1	11,190
SCHLENKER, FREDERICK & WANDA	02-03-00-628-1	85,270
SCHLENKER, TROY D	02-06-00-692-	58,460
LOVELESS, LASHONNA L & KEVIN L	02-07-00-703-1	31,590
BASLER, JAKE R	02-07-00-703-2	8,050
SAWBROOKE HOLDINGS INC	02-07-00-703-3	8,170
WITTHOFT, DONALD & ANDREA	02-07-00-703-4	2,620
CRANE, COLLIN & LARA	02-07-00-703-5	160
BAITY, MICHAEL J	02-07-00-718-	16,430
DENNY, LOUIS	02-08-00-722-D	22,200
MILLER, JOHN D & CLARINDA F	02-08-00-724-1	6,480
NAVE, DAVID LEE & CONDA G	02-08-00-724-2	7,050
MCCARVER, DAVID L	02-09-00-752-1	42,800
MARTIN, NATHAN & NANCY	02-09-00-752-2	910
COBB, PRESTON & TRISHA	02-10-00-770-1	3,260
COBB, ANTHONY & CASSIE	02-10-00-770-2	12,980
COBB, JERRY & DEBBIE	02-10-00-770-A1	43,190
LAMSZUS, WM R	02-10-00-778-A	42,590
CARMAN, JAMES D & MELISSA L	02-18-00-922-2	26,910
BREWER, CHARAY	02-18-00-922-3	128,290
CARMAN, JAMES & MELISSA	02-18-00-922-4	2,650
HAND, DAWN	02-19-00-933-	25,150
CRAIG, TIMBRE BRIANN	02-20-00-967-	80,870
CHAMNESS, ROBERT MATTHEW & TRA		
	02-20-00-979-1	4,610
CHAMNESS ANGUS FARMS LLC	02-20-00-979-2	10,020
JANSEN, JORDAN & KELSIE	02-26-01-087-4	107,350
CLAY, JOSHUA D & ANGELA D	02-26-01-088-	107,890
COLLIER, GARY W JR & KAREN	02-27-01-098-	78,340
COLLIER, COLTEN	02-27-01-098-B	16,250
PIXLEY, MAXINE	02-27-01-101-A	9,820
CHAMNESS, LOUIS MATTHEW	02-29-01-129-2	27,910
O'DANIEL, KAITLYN	02-29-01-133-	4,120
O'DANIEL, KAITLYN	02-29-01-136-	56,860
PRIBBLE, MITCHELL G & SHIRLEY	02-30-01-149-B	15,010
MARTIN, ROSENE	02-30-01-157-B2	86,160
TOLER, JARED A	02-32-01-201-2	64,760
DILLER, DALLAS	02-32-01-210-2	61,740
COHAM, LARRY T & MARY C	02-35-01-253-1	33,950
WEAVER, RICHARD & RUTH IRENE	02-36-01-280-1	98,020
WEAVER, CLAIR & RHODA	02-36-01-280-2	15,870
DILLARD, MICHAEL LYNCH & MELAN	14-00-12-235-	8,640
13-1E		
MOLL, WESTLEY	03-03-01-336-4	8,800
TERBRAK, FRED J JR	03-03-01-349-	31,200

RUMFELT, EDWARD & KAREN	03-06-01-412-3	79,950
RALLS, ROBERT L & AMY G	03-06-01-412-4	2,810
RALLS, ROBERT L & AMY G	03-06-01-412-5	2,930
DAVIS, BRYAN K & RENE	03-07-01-421-B	4,930
JOHNSON, RYAN J & ASHLYN B	03-07-01-436-2	46,000
BELCHER, SEAN K & AMBER N	03-07-01-439-A1	17,230
PORTERFIELD, STEPHEN R & CHARL	03-08-01-461-	71,320
WASULESKI, JARED A & STEPHANIE	03-14-01-571-B	9,080
O'NEAL, ZACHARY E & SHAYLEE	03-16-01-615-1	16,910
LIGHT, ROBERT CARLYN	03-16-01-615-2	10,160
LIGHT, ROBERT CARLYN	03-17-01-625-1	21,660
O'NEAL, ZACHARY E & SHAYLEE	03-17-01-625-2	160
TERBRAK, JOHN	03-18-01-642-	15,090
SCHULTZ, CHARLES C	03-18-01-654-1	10,700
MCCOMMONS, HUNTER B	03-18-01-654-2	2,250
ADEN, SHAUN & KELLY	03-19-01-682-2	5,680
LINGLE, ROGER G & ROSALIND L	03-22-01-757-1	66,080
KODAFISH LLC	03-25-01-824-	73,960
HINKLE, JAMES R & JACKIE L	03-29-01-887-A5	34,650
HILL, MICHAEL & TRACI	03-29-01-887-A6	280
GWALTNEY, SHAWNA	03-29-01-898-A	25,100
YATES, REBECCA M & JAMES F	03-30-01-913-C2	4,500
ALLEN, WINSTON & KELLEE	03-30-01-929-A	58,170
LINGLE FARMS LLC	03-31-01-947-	24,200
NEWMAN, KENNETH R	03-31-01-954-1	75,720
NEWMAN, KENNETH R	03-31-01-954-2	150
11-1W		
LOWE, PHILLIP DAVID	04-04-02-058-	112,530
MARTINEZ, LUIS	04-04-02-058-B1	310
STEWART, CHARLES H	04-04-02-058-B2	1,300
RAILA, DAVID	04-06-02-082-1	22,650
JAROS, MILES	04-06-02-082-2	580
DUGGAN, JAMES B	04-06-02-084-B1	19,220
BEAM HOME RENTALS LLC	04-08-02-129-A4	141,810
FEATHER ENTERPRISES LLC	04-08-02-129-A5	146,440
FEATHER ENTERPRISES LLC,	04-08-02-129-A6	150
HELLMAN, RANDY L & LISA M	04-08-02-133-	25,150
FEATHER ENTERPRISES LLC	04-08-02-143-B1	160
BARNES, LISA	04-09-02-153-1	63,830
DAVEY, BROOKS	04-09-02-153-2	770
SNELL, JUSTIN L & JENNIFER L	04-17-02-284-B	58,270
BRUMLEVE, RYAN K & RACHEL E	04-17-02-297-2	22,670
HOWARD, CARL W	04-18-02-300-A	13,960
BRUMLEVE, RYAN K & RACHEL E	04-19-02-323-2	90,770
SWEITZER, GARY & CASSANDRA	04-20-02-373-2	2,610
MYERS, ROXANNA D	04-21-02-409-A	49,785
GEARHART, RILEY J	04-21-02-413-1	6,240
GEARHART, ROBERT W & CHIARA	04-21-02-413-2	1,340
TREECE, DAVID L & DEBORAH S	04-21-02-421-A	26,300
COX, KEVIN & WENDY	04-21-02-432-A	58,290
FOX, PAUL R TRUSTEE	04-22-02-444-	8,650
MORRISON, REGINA & BRETT	04-25-02-501-2	127,650
BENNETT, RICHARD A & MARY JANE	04-25-02-504-2	1,590
RESCH, GARY J	04-27-02-541-	15,390
STROEHLEIN, MICHAEL R	04-27-02-559-A1	41,730
STROEHLEIN, TRACY	04-27-02-559-A2	4,500
STEVENS, MICHAEL B & ROBYN S	04-28-02-567-	69,070
FARR, JEREMY & SARAH	04-28-02-567-A	23,770
STUART, RYAN & NICOLE	04-30-02-715-	45,640
CLARE, KIRBY C & COMILLA D	04-30-02-755-	27,170
INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES HO	04-31-02-783-	59,000
BRITT, WILLIAM WALTER ROY	04-31-02-804-	45,260
GILL, GARY	04-32-02-819-A	47,070
WRIGHT, ADAM & ELIZABETH	04-32-02-834-2	16,280
SWEITZER, KAROL M	04-33-02-847-2	57,500
SWEITZER, KAROL M	04-33-02-847-3	490
HUBBLE, CODY NOLAND & BROOKE M	04-34-02-860-	70,120
WAYNE LAZENBY & JEAN LAZENBY R	04-35-02-901-	6,230
PITTS, MARIA G	14-00-09-853-	22,980
GESKE, ANNA LYNN	14-00-09-882-	2,470
PMF PROPERTIES LLC	14-00-09-968-	12,310
CHILDERS, DAVID BRIAN	14-00-10-131-	18,420
SHARP, CATHY J	14-00-10-132-	24,330
WALL, RALPH & MARIA	14-00-10-239-1	29,110
ZAMORA, PASTOR HORTIA	14-00-10-251-	17,830
ZAMORA, SANDRA & PASTOR	14-00-10-279-1	20,750
GRIFFITH, CHAD	14-00-10-286-	14,950
MORRISON, BRYAN M & GINGER	14-00-10-298-	23,350
BUCHHEIT, JAMES & SANDRA	14-00-10-307-A2	3,190
13-1W		
JONES, JAMES B	06-02-04-260-A	28,270
EAKER, MARK D	06-04-04-324-	44,140
RALLS, ERIC M	06-05-04-365-	59,980
WASELEWSKI, RANDALL J & LANA K	06-10-04-431-	8,320
ALLEN, BRENDA R	06-10-04-435-1	10,700
BERCHTOLD, WALTER W & ANGELA	06-10-04-435-A	48,690
WASELEWSKI, RANDALL J & LANA K	06-11-04-460-A	1,670
LAW, TIMOTHY JOE	06-11-04-462-B	4,930
PENROD, RICKEY JOE	06-13-04-495-A	52,710
LINGLE FARMS LLC	06-16-04-560-	12,180
MORELAND, RAY DEAN & GUIOLA	06-17-04-578-	115,010
HORTON, JEFF & TINA	06-17-04-578-1	160
HORTON, JEFF & TINA	06-18-04-588-	19,360
EDDLEMAN, MARK TYLER	06-19-04-607-1	20,200
HINKLE, LORI TRUSTEE	06-23-04-663-B	162,600
WYANT, BILLIE SUE	06-24-04-701-	2,990
GOLIGHTLY & LONG LLC	06-24-04-709-A2	64,700
GOLIGHTLY & LONG LLC	06-24-04-709-A3	5,620
JA-MAR LAND COMPANY LLC	06-24-04-709-B1	39,930
TOLER, DAVID R	06-24-04-712-	34,680
GOLIGHTLY & LONG LLC	06-24-04-718-A	200
CLARK, BARRY E & JULIA D	06-25-04-791-	1,540
OSMAN, IVA LORENE	06-25-04-818-	5,440
OSMAN, ROBERT L & LORENE	06-25-04-819-	1,990
FLICK, JOSEPH	06-25-04-829-	3,730
THOMPSON, ROBERT T & BILLIE JO	06-26-04-881-C1	60,530
GUPTA, VINOD C	06-26-04-887-	60,020
GEORGE, RICKY & MELANIE	06-26-04-899-C4	21,200
JOHNSON, DAKOTA & CODY	06-26-04-899-C5	58,460
ROONEY, JOHN J & CHARLOTTE L	06-27-04-916-A	19,990
FLORES, TERRY W	06-28-04-931-B	7,050
EDDLEMAN, MARK TYLER	06-29-04-945-A	23,490
HILEMAN, JEREMY & ANGELA	06-30-04-960-1	27,320
WEST, BRIAN & CAROL	06-30-04-960-2	13,140
SHAFFER, DREW A	06-33-05-039-2	69,270
BARRINGER, MICHAEL D & CAROLYN	06-34-05-056-	16,600
MORELAND, DALE LEE & MARILYN	06-36-05-094-	30,730
HARRIS, CLAY B & KAITLYN A	06-36-05-099-5	47,070
HARRIS, DELORIS JO LIFE ESTATE	06-36-05-099-6	53,470
MORELAND, DALE LEE	06-36-05-107-	90,280
ROE, LARRY E	14-00-10-425-	1,660
EADS, LARRY JORDAN	14-00-10-431-	42,770
KENNEDY, CARL ANDREW	14-00-10-436-	1,850
BRIGHT, DAVID	14-00-10-461-	35,260
OSMAN, LELAND MARK	14-00-10-558-	980
SIMMERMAN, LARRY E & SHIRLEY	14-00-10-626-	4,010
MICHEAL, RICHARD	14-00-10-671-T	5,310
STRANGE, KENNETH J	14-00-10-678-	1,850
STRANGE, KENNETH J	14-00-10-679-C	1,190
MILLER, TRACEY	14-00-10-687-	290
MILLER, TRACEY	14-00-10-690-	290
MILLER, TRACEY	14-00-10-691-	290
MILLER, TRACEY	14-00-10-693-	480
MILLER, TRAVIS	14-00-10-723-	970
11-2W		
HEIST, EDWARD J	07-03-05-148-B	16,340
BROWN BROTHERS TRANSPORTATION	07-03-05-155-	6,860
REIMBOLD, DONALD J & SANDRA A	07-03-05-156-4	26,170
SMITH, SANDRA	07-03-05-156-5	340
LEWEY, SHANNON P & REBECCA C	07-05-05-191-B	111,270
MERCER, VICKIE	07-09-05-220-C	10,720
BROWN BROTHERS TRANSPORTATION	07-10-05-237-	20,260
BROWN BROTHERS TRANSPORTATION	07-10-05-239-A	

MILLER, WENDALL WADE	07-10-05-286-	5,850
MILLER, WENDALL WADE	07-10-05-287-	970
VAUGHN, BILLY GENE JR & DEANA	07-12-05-324-	24,740
ANDERSON, ROBERT J	07-12-05-326-B	6,810
KEITH, LEROY G & MOLLIE	07-14-05-365-1	48,990
WOLFE, JIMMIE LEE	07-15-05-392-1	102,780
WILKINS, SARAH & MARK	07-15-05-395-	9,940
CRANE, GRANTLAND	07-15-05-396-B	3,450
MCHUGHS, JORDAN	07-15-05-397-	79,270
BOANOWSKI, ROBERT D	07-15-05-404-1	6,610
MC GEE, ROBERT	07-15-05-409-A	1,850
KEITH, LEROY G & MOLLIE	07-15-05-414-A	54,400
HIATT, AARON & HAYLEY	07-16-05-417-	790
GRAY, WILLIAM MICHAEL & PATTI	07-16-05-431-5	62,540
MOORE, TERRY L & GYLIAN E	07-16-05-431-6	7,970
KALINA, TODD G & DEANNA M	07-22-05-476-1	12,380
HACKETT, GARRETT E & LAUREN M	07-22-05-476-2	4,260
CASALI, SANDRA	07-26-05-580-	300
REH, ALEX C	07-26-05-581-A	6,710
HACKETT, GARRETT E & LAUREN M	07-27-05-588-1	72,110
KALINA, TODD G & DEANNA M	07-27-05-588-2	187,730
BLACK, EMMETT W JR & JUDY N	07-27-05-594-B3	4,370
CLOVER, DOUGLAS E & CHARLOTTE	07-27-05-594-B4	69,530
RENDLEMAN, GEORGE F III & DAWN	07-29-05-606-	2,940
CRAIN, JIMMIE LEE & BARBARA AN	07-29-05-607-	20,220
CRAIN, JIMMIE LEE & BARBARA AN	07-30-05-613-	71,280
CRAIN, JIMMIE LEE & BARBARA AN	07-30-05-617-B	3,030
CRAIN, JIMMIE LEE & BARBARA AN	07-31-05-618-B	1,610
FIRST NATIONAL BANK & TRUST CO	07-31-05-619-	8,320
CRAIN, JIMMIE LEE & BARBARA AN	07-32-05-636-	32,370
ADAMS, JESSE THOMAS	07-34-05-642-A	40,210
ADAMS, JESSE T	07-34-05-642-D	6,490
SMITHEY, ROBERT S III	07-35-05-647-1	3,240
SMITHEY, BRANDON D TRUSTEE	07-35-05-647-2	3,730
INMAN, STEVEN P & DIANNA S	07-36-05-675-	3,020
BNJ PROPERTIES LLC	14-00-10-988-1	11,630
ANDERSON, JESSICA	14-00-10-990-1	28,830
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF ALTO P	14-00-11-027-1	1,490
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF ALTO P	14-00-11-031-1	2,390
ZAMORA, J GUADALUPE & GRACIELA	14-00-11-047-	17,840
MURRAY, MARIAN R	14-00-11-082-	24,070
MURRAY, MARIAN R	14-00-11-083-	9,270
BOLANOWSKI, ROBERT D	14-00-11-091-1	550
BOLANOWSKI, ROBERT D	14-00-11-129-	5,220
WALLIN, JEFFREY & VALERIE BROO	14-00-11-166-	1,850
		3,670
12-2W		
SKAGGS, STEPHEN P	08-01-05-677-A3	34,810
SKAGGS, STEPHEN P & CHERYL A	08-01-05-677-A4	72,730
GAWRYCH, BRETT A	08-01-05-679-A	69,780
HOCHHEIMER, JOHN & ANNRAE	08-02-05-694-	57,920
PITTS, WESLEY DALE	08-07-05-737-C	31,210
MCMAHAN, AIDEN & RACHEL	08-07-05-737-D	67,000
LASTER, KENNETH M	08-10-05-752-5	6,220
LASTER, KENNETH M	08-10-05-756-	53,660
LASTER, KENNETH M	08-10-05-762-6	12,860
ANDERSON, STEPHANIE TRUSTEE	08-12-05-800-A	54,100
KELL, TREVOR J	08-13-05-817-D2	3,480
KAMPE, CRAIG	08-13-05-817-D3	10,990
KAMPE, CRAIG VERNON	08-13-05-820-2	78,270
KAMPE, CRAIG VERNON	08-13-05-820-3	520
KAMPE, CRAIG VERNON	08-13-05-831-A2	510
KAMPE, CRAIG VERNON	08-13-05-831-A3	2,570
LAND ALIGN LLC 1405 KRATZINGER	08-13-05-832-	65,930
REYNOLDS, KEVIN & JANET	08-13-05-834-B	24,580
REYNOLDS, JEFFREY & KATHY R	08-13-05-834-C	51,870
PLEMON JOSH N & REBECCA L	08-14-05-843-A1	56,270
KELL, TREVOR & RACHEL	08-14-05-843-A2	7,630
MEYER, KRISTOPHER	08-14-05-847-2	9,640
JIMMIE W SCHAEFFER SR REVOCABL	08-14-05-850-	62,530
RALLS, ROBERT L & AMY G	08-17-05-889-E	24,690
BITTLE, TERRY W & RHONDA LIFE	08-20-05-922-	22,010
MCHUGHES, POLLY A	08-20-05-922-A	13,310
RUMFELT, JOE & DORIS M	08-22-05-947-1	16,750
HARVEL, SCOTT & CARLA	08-22-05-947-A1	76,680
WARDEN, HAROLD D & CHRISTINA D	08-24-06-046-A1	
WILLYERD, JAMIE L	08-24-06-056-	18,960
SHEPARD, WILLIAM C & BETTY	08-24-06-056-A	1,190
BROOKWOOD PROPERTIES LLC	08-25-06-109-	860
BUSBY, ASA A & TIFFANY M	08-25-06-110-A	18,940
GODWIN, JACKIE LEE & LISA M	08-25-06-128-	10,840
MATTHEIS, MARK E & MELANIE ANN	08-25-06-147-	36,970
HUNTER, BRANDON & STEPHANIE	08-25-06-168-B7	24,760
JOHNSON, GORDON TYLER & ELAINA	08-25-06-171-1	63,450
JOHNSON, JEREMIAH E & ALEXIS M	08-25-06-171-2	56,780
ROBINSON, TULLEY & LINDA	08-26-06-183-B	290
MARKS, JUSTIN C & JAMIA N	08-26-06-187-B1	2,490
STOWERS, MARK	08-28-06-216-B1B	47,290
LIVESAY, JOE & LILLIAN	08-50-06-300-	11,510
JHS REAL ESTATE HOLDINGS LLC	14-00-07-693-	4,780
SIMS, BARBARA	14-00-07-752-	14,840
MIXEN, CARL & MARY	14-00-07-824-	26,850
ALSIP, MILES E	14-00-07-915-	44,310
		37,920
13-2W		
PENNINGER, MATTHEW	09-01-06-328-B	52,730
WB FARMS LLC	09-03-06-335-	71,650
R & B INVESTMENTS LLC	09-11-06-348-	69,880
HILEMAN, KURTIS N & MELANIE A	09-11-06-350-	50,910
JOHNSON, DAVID A & JUDITH A	09-11-06-357-B1	50,910
CALDWELL, THOMAS S	09-11-06-357-B2	28,950
KUCZAJ, KENNETH W	09-11-06-357-D	160
DILLOW, DUANE TRUSTEE	09-11-06-364-	13,500
ELLIS, EVERETT F & JANET N ETA	09-13-06-383-	59,300
ELLIS, PAUL E	09-13-06-383-A	20,790
SI LAND HOLDINGS LLC	09-28-06-533-	59,990
CLOVER, LARRY D & DARLENE	09-28-06-534-A	6,420
DOUBLE DE FARM LLC	09-28-06-546-1	7,560
CLARDY, STEPHEN R & CARRIE L	09-28-06-550-	25,190
DMS FARMS LLC	09-35-06-604-	35,680
		52,760
11-3W		
HICKAM, CHRISTOPHER EXECUTOR	10-01-06-639-	40,980
LUNDBERG, JAMES W & ANGELA	10-02-06-642-A1A	30,980
TEPPER, GEORGE & DIANA	10-20-06-708-B	21,330
LAMBDIN, MATTHEW & LENI	10-31-06-777-	52,440
CRAIN, JIMMIE LEE & BARBARA AN	10-32-06-779-	9,070
MCMAHAN, LUKE D ETAL	10-32-06-783-	152,980
CAMP DAVID LLC	10-33-06-798-	6,220
12-3W		
SCHAEFER, GERHARDT & JUDITH	11-03-06-830-	7,660
SCHAEFER ENTERPRISES OF WOLF L	11-04-06-846-Z	
SHAW, DONALD H JR & KAYLEEN MA	11-07-06-877-A	4,490
NEILSON, JUSTIN LEE & AMANDA K	11-16-06-977-A	12,660
HILEMAN, JOSEPH ETAL	11-23-07-010-	125,530
MOSBY, BRUCE R & CYNTHIA J	11-23-07-019-	7,020
MCLANE REAL ESTATE HOLDINGS	11-25-07-048-B	38,750
LAMBDIN, MATTHEW & LENI	11-25-07-055-A	37,110
DUNN, DONALD WAYNE & PAULA SUE	11-25-07-061-	35,710
LIVESAY, JOSEPH D JR	11-34-07-084-2	1,330
LIVESAY, DIANE	11-34-07-084-3	106,040
GARCIA, HARLEY	14-00-11-303-	16,880
BETH MCMAHAN REV LIVING TRUST	14-00-11-371-	7,930
MCMAHAN, ADAM	14-00-11-419-F1	970
HUFFORD, GREG	14-00-11-419-G1	7,150
MAYES, CHAD STEVEN	14-00-11-514-	44,310
JOHNSON, JOSHUA A & KELLY R	14-00-11-547-	13,500
		5,100
13-3W		
JENNINGS, JACALYN	12-24-07-152-1	11,100
JENNINGS, JESSE T & JACALYN D	12-24-07-154-1	22,670
D & D FARMS	12-25-07-162-A	5,060

Opinion and Commentary

Illinoisans invited to unite in service by volunteering

In celebration of the founding of the United States 250 years ago, Illinoisans are being invited to unite in service by volunteering with organizations of their choice to foster community connection and to build a legacy of giving back throughout 2026.

“Illinoisans throughout history have always come together to help their neighbors, and it’s this deep sense of community that makes our state the best in the nation,” Gov. JB Pritzker said in a news release “As we celebrate America’s 250th anniversary, I encourage Illinoisans from across the state to unite in service and give back to the place we all call home.”

Illinois United in Service volunteers could begin to log their hours online with Serve Illinois, a program of the Illinois Department of Human Services, IDHS, starting on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, which was Monday, Jan. 19. Volunteers who log hours will receive a special commemorative certificate for the nation’s 250th anniversary.

“Serve Illinois is proud to celebrate America’s 250th birthday by bringing people together in service to one another,” Serve Illinois executive director Andres Fernandez said. “Volunteering and community service bring out the best of us, our communities, our state and our nation.”

In addition, organizations statewide can share volunteer events and with Serve Illinois, enabling prospective volunteers to match with opportunities near them.

Illinoisans can expect to learn about future volunteer events throughout 2026. Illinois United in Service is an initiative of the Illinois America 250 Commission and Serve Illinois.

Illinois United in Service is one of a series of signature initiatives organized by the commission to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. The commission was established to lead an inclusive, statewide celebration that uplifts local stories, highlights significant places and programs and showcases how Illinoisans bring the ideals of the Declaration of Independence to life.

Other signature programs forthcoming this spring include a limited-edition keepsake passport of historical, cultural and heritage sites around the state, as well as Illinois Voices 250, a project to record and preserve Illinoisans’ reflections on the 250th anniversary in the Library of Congress. More information about these initiatives will be announced in the coming weeks.

“As we approach our nation’s 250th anniversary, Illinois United in Service is an invitation to reflect on the founding ideals of our country and put them into action,” said Gabrielle Lyon, chair of the Illinois America 250 Commission and executive director of Illinois Humanities. “Through acts of service, we can show up for one another in 2026, while connecting across communities and generations. These efforts can help Illinoisans shape a more just, inclusive and hopeful future worthy of this historic milestone.”

“Volunteers are vital to carrying out the mission of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. We lean on our volunteer network to help us staff state parks, clear hiking trails of invasive species, teach hunter safety, welcome campers to our parks, serve as historical interpreters, and much more,” said Natalie Phelps Finnie, director of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, which provides support to the Illinois America 250 Commission. “IDNR looks forward to welcoming new volunteers to our ranks and further enhancing our sites and programs during this special national anniversary year.”

The official hub for Illinois America 250 can be found online at il250.org. There, Illinoisans can sign up to be a 250th partner; browse or submit events; access free educational and planning resources for schools, libraries, families and organizations; learn about or join local 250th communities and partners; and get updates on news and volunteer opportunities connected to Illinois America 250. Illinoisans who want to get involved in events near them can visit the community calendar at il250.org/events.

The Serve Illinois Commission is a 40-member bipartisan board appointed by the governor and administered by the IDHS. The enabling legislation of the Serve Illinois Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service (Serve Illinois) promotes, partners and supports community service in public and private programs, while stimulating new volunteerism and community service initiatives to meet the needs of Illinois citizens. Within the IDHS, Serve Illinois is a resource advocate for community service agencies, volunteers and programs that utilize state and private volunteers.



Art Show
Marie Samuel's (left) new show “Wild Horses” is open for viewing at Rend Lake College is January and February. Pictured with Marie is Melissa Engler (right).

Please read this...

Fly me to the moon...maybe it will be warmer there...

Oh my goodness...ahead of last week’s winter storm, the website for the National Weather Service office in Paducah posted the following Watches, Warnings & Advisories for our part of the world on Thursday morning, January 22: Cold Weather Advisory, Dense Fog Advisory, Freezing Fog Advisory, Winter Storm Watch, Extreme Cold Watch, Special Weather Statement, Hazardous Weather Outlook, The End of the World As We Know It. Well...maybe not that last one...

Meanwhile...
I looked out a window into our backyard last Thursday morning. Winter greens and browns were still to be seen. A squirrel was scampering through The Other Half’s garden. I almost felt sorry for the squirrel. Do squirrels and other Critters have any way of knowing that a foot of snow might be on the way? Do they know anything about the Polar Vortex?

Meanwhile...
Major winter storm notwithstanding, there is a glimmer of hope. The Other Half planted some onion seeds in containers filled with dirt a week or two ago. The seeds have sprouted and are now under a grow light. Soon (really soon, one hopes) the onions will be planted. Outdoors. When it will be warmer.

Meanwhile...
I have my boarding pass. And I have already earned 685,000 miles in mileage. I am ready to go...

One day last week, I stumbled across an article online about a project which involved a journey to the moon. With a little more digging around on the internet, I found the following article, which was in the form of a September 2025 NASA news release:

“NASA is inviting the public to join the agency’s Artemis II test flight as four astronauts venture around the Moon and back to test systems and hardware needed for deep space exploration. As part of the agency’s ‘Send Your Name with Artemis II’ effort, anyone can claim their spot by signing up before Jan. 21.

“Participants will launch their name aboard the Orion spacecraft and SLS (Space Launch System) rocket alongside NASA astronauts Reid Wiseman, Victor Glover, Christina Koch, and CSA (Canadian Space Agency) astronaut Jeremy Hansen.

“‘Artemis II is a key test flight in our effort to return humans to the Moon’s surface and build toward future missions to Mars, and it’s also an opportunity to inspire people across the globe and to give them an opportunity to follow along as we lead the way in human exploration deeper into space,’ said Lori Glaze, acting associate administrator, Exploration Systems Development Mission Directorate at NASA Headquarters in Washington.

“The collected names will be put on an SD card loaded aboard Orion before launch. In return, participants can download a boarding pass with their name on it as a collectable.”

The Artemis II test flight is expected to launch no later than April of this year and will last approximately 10 days. The journey will be first crewed flight under NASA’s Artemis campaign. It is another step toward new U.S.-crewed missions on the Moon’s surface that will help the agency prepare to send the first astronauts, Americans, to Mars.

For whatever it might be worth, I have been interested in space for many a year. I suppose such a fascination came with growing up during the Space Race back in the day. I can remember watching the launch of astronaut John Glenn’s space flight in a classroom in a school in Clarkston, Michigan. And, like anybody else who might have been paying at least a little bit of attention, I watched the first Americans walk on the moon. The moon walk was witnessed on a black and white television. Yes, kids, there was such a thing.

Sometime during my grade school days, I even sent a letter to one of the original astronauts. A letter came in return, signed by the astronaut. Well, I think it was signed by the astronaut. The letter vanished some time during the Journey Through Life.

In the mid-1980s, NASA launched a Journalist in Space program. The program would have given a journalist an opportunity to be a part of a Space Shuttle flight. Backed by some wonderful support from the publisher, several folks in the community at The Other Half, I applied for the program. Thanks to Wikipedia, which, as far as I know, did not exist at the time, I learned that 1,705 journalists, including 728 who represented newspapers, applied for the program. I don’t think

The Cat's Meow

by Cobden Spay and Neuter Coalition

Our Third Annual Chili Cook-off is THIS Saturday, the 31st! The weather this last week won. Fuzzy’s in Cobden is hosting the event from 4-7 p.m. We will have a silent auction during the cook-off, hosted by the Green Mug, right next door to Fuzzy’s. Included in the silent auction are wonderful pet items, a gorgeous ring, a Wilson Leather Co. large green tote, and we will also have a number of great gift baskets for the silent auction. There will be a raffle of a great cat tree See you there! All funds raised go toward the work of easing the cat overpopulation in Union Co.

Last week was a bit of a banner week despite the weather. We trapped 5 cats from a colony in Jonesboro. Sadly, one of them had a severe, chronic, painful infection, so decision was made to euthanize. The other 4 were neutered, rabies shots, ears tipped, and returned to their comfy and warm barn home. Then we got word of two more kittens being dumped behind the Kroger store. They were trapped that evening, neutered, then taken to a generous and willing caretaker.

Altogether, we placed a total of 14 cat shelters with straw, along with several other deliveries of just straw last week, including Friday and Saturday. John and Jillian were real troopers making deliveries of life-saving supplies to cat colony caretakers throughout the county.

Please visit our booth at Cobden Village Shops for pet items at a discount. All proceeds here, too, go toward our work. Remember, CSNC is 100% donation funded. We have no employees to pay, no facility to maintain, so all funds are directed to our primary mission.

Please visit our website, cobdenspayneutercoalition.org, or our facebook page to see what we’re up to. You may drop off, call in, or send donations to our account at Meller-James & Associates, or mail them to CSNC, P.O. Box 542, Cobden, IL 62920. CSNC is a 501c3 nonprofit organization, and donations are tax-deductible.

Spay/Neuter/Adopt companion animals. Meanwhile, if you see a companion animal in need, in trouble, or suffering, please, please call someone before it’s too late for them. Call your local animal control office, the police, or the Sheriff’s Dept. It IS your business if an innocent being who cannot speak for himself needs your help!

By Geof Skinner



Yours truly has secured a genuine boarding pass for a flight to the moon...along with more than 2 million new friends.



This image of the full moon on January 3 is probably about as close to the lunar landscape that the photographer will ever get.

the internet...or Facebook...or TikTok...were around either. I am not quite sure how, or why, civilization continued under such conditions.

To be honest, as a journalist at a small weekly newspaper in Flyover Country, I did not expect to be chosen for the program. Especially since one of the journalists who applied was some guy named Walter Cronkite. (I subsequently learned that Mr. Cronkite had some sort of connection to Anna, but that is another story.)

Then there was whole thing about flying. At that point in my life, I did not get excited about flying. A trip to Australia, and back home again, got me over that.

Sadly, the Journalist in Space program was immediately suspended after the Space Shuttle Challenger disaster on January 28, 1986. I did receive a nice certificate noting my participation in the program.

Anyway, when I saw the opportunity to be a part of a new adventure in space, I signed up. Just barely made it, too. I learned about Send Your Name with Artemis II on the day before the deadline to participate. By signing up, I joined 2,193,846 new friends who will board an SD card for the journey of a lifetime. I sure they don’t lose my luggage.

Enough for now...stay warm and safe...

Rural Health recognizes American Heart Month

While deaths from heart disease have continued to decline in recent decades, heart disease remains the leading cause of death in the United States. With the upcoming observance of American Heart Month in February, Rural Health Inc., RHI, encourages everyone to talk to a healthcare provider to schedule a heart-healthy check if needed and to join them in preventing heart-related diseases.

According to the Illinois Department of Public Health, IDPH, heart disease is the leading cause of death for women, men and people of most racial and ethnic groups in the United States. In 2024, approximately 683,000 people in the United States died from heart disease; that is roughly 1 in every 5 deaths.

While heart disease is a broad category, specific statistics show approximately 805,000 heart attacks occur yearly in the nation. Coronary artery disease, the most common type of heart disease, is caused by risk factors like high cholesterol, blood pressure, smoking, diabetes and lack of exercise, and develops gradually, often without symptoms until a major event happens. It is estimated that 5 percent, or 1 in 20 adults aged 20 and older, have coronary artery disease. Other causes of heart disease include obesity, unhealthy diet, physical inactivity and excessive alcohol use.

“Keeping your heart healthy is not a one-size-fits-all process, that’s why it’s important to talk with a

healthcare professional before starting any diet or exercise program,” RHI director of public relations Shawwna Rhine said in a news release. “What works for someone else may not work for you. You and your provider will assess your overall health needs and, together, establish a plan just for you that includes diet, exercise and managing stress.”

Rhine shared ways those in the community can join in the observance of American Heart Month:

- Join Rural Health, Inc. in Wearing Red on February 6th, to show support for women's heart health.

- Learn CPR: Take courses in Hands-Only CPR to save lives.

- Get Screened: Schedule regular check-ups for blood pressure, cholesterol and other risk factors.

- Spread Awareness: Share information and use hashtags like #HeartMonth, #GoRed and #MoveWithHeart.

To learn more about American Heart Month, visit heart.org/en/american-heart-month. To schedule a heart-healthy appointment through RHI, call 618-833-4471 or visit rural-healthinc.org for a local clinic.

RHI is a not-for-profit organization serving Union, Johnson and Massac counties. RHI is designated by the federal government as a Federally Qualified Health Center whose mission is to provide quality services to all patients in need of healthcare while being committed to the overall health and well-being of the underserved.