The Gazette-Democrat

The Talk And Cobden Review • Serving Union County Since 1849

Thursday, March 12, 2026 | **Anna, Illinois** | **$1.00** | **Volume 179, Number 14**

News Notes

Items of interest from throughout the Union County area.

If you have not already done so…be sure to vote in the Tuesday, March 17, primary election.

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The Union County area had more than half a foot of rain from March 3 through March 7.

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Anna-Jonesboro Community High School is planning to the musical "Seussical." Three performances are planned: at 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday, March 13-14, and 2 p.m. Sunday, March 15. Tickets are available in the superintendent's office at the school.

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The Anna Police Department's February activity report showed 331 calls for service, 11 arrests (including one DUI arrest) and 48 traffic stops.

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CASA of Southern Illinois welcomed seven new volunteer child advocates during a ceremony held Friday morning, March 6, at the Union County Courthouse in Jonesboro. More on this to come…

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New life may be coming for the former location of Lou's Room/Boswell's near the four-way stop in Anna. More on this to come as well…

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The City of Anna is accepting applications for summer lifeguards at the Anna City Pool. Details and applications can be found on the city's website at www.cityofanna.org.

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Happy St. Patrick's Day to all of our readers. St. Patrick's Day is Tuesday, March 17.

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Multiple media outlets have reported that the Snake Road in Union County once again has been temporarily closed for annual migration of several species of snakes and amphibians.

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At its meeting on Friday morning, Feb. 27, the Union County Board of Commissioners approved the purchase of a surplus property wood chipper from the City of Anna.

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The Cobden Village Board of Trustees recently approved a bid from Skuta Construction Inc. in the amount of $601,250 for a sanitary sewer relocation and lift station project.

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Concerns are being addressed about unregistered solicitors in the Village of Cobden. The village's options for enforcement are being reviewed.

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The Union County animal control program is planning to sponsor a fun run event on April 4 in Cobden.

(continued on page 2)

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Region experiences several rounds of storms, heavy rainfall



Temporary wetland

A pair of Canada geese were seen in a temporary wetland along Peach Ridge Road in east Anna Thursday afternoon, March 5. The road runs parallel to new U.S. Route 51. Heavy rain had fallen in parts of the region earlier in the day.



Debris on road

Debris, such as leaves and gravel, could be seen on local roads following last week's heavy rain. The photo was taken along Mountain Glen Road in Cobden Thursday morning, March 5.

The Southern Illinois, Southeast Missouri and Western Kentucky region experienced several rounds of stormy weather and heavy rainfall during the past week. More severe weather was possible Tuesday night and Wednesday.

The National Weather Service office in Paducah was calling for the possibility of a few strong to severe thunderstorms in the region late Tuesday night. A few strong to severe thunderstorms again were possible Wednesday.

Temperatures were expected to be above normal early in the week, with highs in the 70s. The forecast was calling for a cold front to move through the region on Wednesday, bring with it a cool down for Thursday, when the high is forecast to be near 54. High temperatures are expected to be around 54 again on Friday. Highs on Saturday and Sunday are forecast to be in the 60s. Showers and thunderstorms are likely on Sunday.

Old Man Winter then might make another appearance heading into Sunday night and Monday. The forecast posted early this week showed a chance for rain and snow showers Sunday night, with a low around 27. The high on Monday might only be near 40.

Wet Start to Month of March

Heavy rain which accompanied the storms brought some relief to an ongoing drought which the region has been experiencing. A change in the weather pattern brought significant rainfall to the region. Precipitation in the week prior to March 8 exceeded what many locations had seen over the previous 90 days.

The Paducah, Carbondale, Cape Girardeau and Poplar Bluff, Mo., areas had experienced their driest winter on record. The winter season included the period from Dec. 1 to Feb. 28. As of March 8, those locations had experienced one of their top 10 wettest starts to March on record.

The Weather Service posted the following precipitation numbers for locations in the region:

Paducah: Total winter precipitation (for Dec. 1 through Feb. 28), 3.27 inches. Total precipitation for March 1-7, 3.28 inches.

Cape Girardeau: Total winter precipitation, 2.13 inches. Total precipitation for March 1-7, 4.68 inches.

Poplar Bluff, Mo.: Total winter precipitation, 2.44 inches. Total precipitation for March 1-7, 3.03 inches.

Carbondale: Total winter precipitation, 2.52 inches. Total precipitation for March 1-7, 3.29 inches.

"We certainly needed the rain after how dry the past several months have been, but hopefully it doesn't flip too abruptly the other direction," the Weather Service office posted on its website. "We tend to go from one extreme to the other just like that around here."

The recent heavy rainfall has led to some river flooding in the region. Additional rises on rivers were possible this week.

Stormy Saturday

The Weather Service office issued multiple warnings and advisories for parts of the region early Saturday morning, including a flash flood warning, a flood warning and a flood advisory and a severe thunderstorm warning.

A line of thunderstorms made its way east across the region. The Weather Service advised that many of the storms could have produced wind gusts of 40 to 50 miles per hour, isolated large hail and torrential rainfall of 1 to 2 inches per hour, which could have led to localized flash flooding.

Heavy Rain Late Last Week

Stormy March weather brought heavy rain, thunder and lightning to the region on Thursday, March 5. In the early morning hours of March 5, parts of the region were under a flash flood warning, a flood warning, a flood advisory and a flood watch, all of which had been issued by the National Weather Service office in Paducah.

The Weather Service issued a flash flood warning for parts of the Southern Illinois and Southeast Missouri area early last Thursday morning. The warning area included northwestern Alexander County, southern Johnson County, northwestern Pulaski County and southern Union County, all in Southern Illinois; and east central Cape Girardeau County in Southeast Missouri.

The Weather Service reported that at 3:15 a.m. last Thursday, Doppler radar and automated rain gauges indicated thunderstorms were producing heavy rain across the warned area. Between 2.5 and 4.5 inches had already fallen. The expected rainfall rate was 1 to 1.5 inches in one hour. Additional rainfall amounts of 1 to 2 inches were possible. The warning was in effect until 8 a.m.

Flash flooding was ongoing in small creeks and streams, urban areas, highways, streets and underpasses, as well as in other poor drainage and low-lying areas.

As rain continued, a flood warning was issued by the Weather Service for parts of

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Rendleman Orchards to unveil historical marker



Dedication ceremony planned

Rendleman Orchards is planning to unveil its official historical marker, which recognizes the orchard's 150-plus year legacy and its new place on the National Register of Historic Places. A brief dedication ceremony is planned at noon Friday, April 3, which will honor Union County's fruit-growing heritage. The event also marks the beginning of a multi-year vision to cultivate Rendleman Orchards as a premier regional heritage destination.

Rendleman Orchards will host a dedication ceremony in April to unveil a new historical marker recognizing the Rendleman Orchards Historic District, which was recently listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The brief ceremony will be held Friday, April 3, at noon at the orchard in Alto Pass.

The program will recognize Union County's long history of fruit growing and highlight the orchard's role in Southern Illinois agriculture. Established more than 150 years ago, Rendleman Orchards has remained a multi-generational family operation while continuing to adapt and innovate.

According to organizers, the historic designation also represents the start of a broader vision to develop the property as a regional heritage destination where history, agriculture, education and tourism intersect.

"This designation is not simply about honoring where we have been," said Michelle Sirles of Rendleman Orchards. "It is about intentionally building what comes next. We believe historic farms can serve as living classrooms, economic drivers and gathering places for their communities."

Local leaders, partners, family members and community residents are invited to attend the dedication.

A-J student elected Illinois Beta Club president

Anna-Jonesboro Community High School is highlighting honors received by its students at last weekend's Illinois Beta Club state convention. The achievements included the election of an A-JCHS student as state president.

"We are incredibly proud to announce that Grayson Garner has been elected Illinois State Beta Club President," the school shared on social media. "This is an outstanding accomplishment and a tremendous honor – not only for Grayson, but for our entire school. Having a State Beta Officer right here in our building is something truly special, and we cannot wait to see the leadership and impact Grayson will bring to Beta across the state of Illinois."

A-JCHS students also brought home numerous awards from competitions at the state convention. Those honors included:

First place: Math, TJ Taylor. Creative writing, Mariel McGrath. Accessorized design, Lucas Tehandon. Robotics, Zach Taylor, Drake Bible, Edwin Thompson, Sam Smith, Kale Waller, Mason Yates, Layne Murray. Quiz Bowl, TJ Taylor, Drake Bible, Dawson Brunner, Mason Yates. Math, Seth Cochran.

Second place: Drawing, Taylor Crews. Campaign skit, Mac Barnhart, Nati Corbit, Lucas Tehandon, Adam Clark, Tilman Dallas, Mason Yates, Kale Waller, Lauren Jackson.

Third place: Science, Grant Lingle. Scrapbook, Brooke Sheffer. Living Literature, Lauren Jackson.

"Congratulations to all of these students on their outstanding accomplishments! We are incredibly proud of their hard work, dedication, and excellence in representing our school and our community so well," the school shared.

Anna students receive honors

Anna School District 37 is congratulating students who attended and received honors at the recent Beta Club state convention in Springfield.

Matthew Lang who was awarded first place in computer science. Zeppie Middleton was awarded first place in creative writing. Zeppie also received a Golden Ticket to perform at the Beta Club national convention in Nashville, Tenn., this coming June.

THE GAZETTE-DEMOCRAT
THE TALK AND COBDEN REVIEW
Serving Union County Since 1849
(USPS 215-280)
ISSN 2834-6165 (Print)
2834-6173 (Online)
Published weekly on Thursdays
by Southern Illinois LOCAL Media Group, LLC
112 Lafayette St.
Anna, Illinois 62906-0529

618-833-2158
news@annanews.com

Periodical postage paid at Anna, Illinois 62906-0529

Benjamin Marxer.....Editor

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

SUBSCRIPTION RATES
Per Year • July, 2022

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

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to
The Gazette-Democrat
112 Layfayette St.
Anna, Illinois 62906-0529

Advertising rates given on application.
The Gazette-Democrat | Monday's Pub.
www.annanews.com
facebook.com/gazettedemocrat

News Notes

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A spring community yard sale is scheduled May 9 in Cobden.

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Anna-Jonesboro Community High School shared on social media that its newly reactivated FFA Alumni hosted a livestock judging contest on Saturday, Feb. 28, and welcomed 40 participants from five different schools for a day of competition and learning. A-J took first place as a team. In individual competition, A-J's Ella Helton earned first place and Addison Bonner won fifth place.

***

A March Madness Book Battle is underway in Anna School District 37.

***

Shawnee School District 84 had a recently assembly to recognize 39 students who did well in state testing last year for grades 5 through 8. Junior high state testing for this year started last week.

***

Cobden Junior High School 7th grade basketball player Dillinger Thompson has been selected to play in the Premier All Star Game at Rend Lake College in Ina.

***

Spring break is underway this week at Shawnee Community College. Classes are scheduled to resume March 16. The college's campuses remain open.

***

Shawnee Community College has recognized alumna Madison Hill who was part of recent behind the scenes Super Bowl activities in California. Hill went on to earn a bachelor's degree at Southern Illinois University and is pursuing a master's degree in entertainment industry management at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pa.

***

The Little House of Tacos in Cobden once again is open for business.

***

WSIL News 3 reported that its broadcast signal was knocked off the air Wednesday morning, March 4, by a lightning strike which accompanied severe weather which swept through the region.

***

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources, IDNR, reports that Illinois fishing licenses, among the most affordable in the nation, are on sale for the 2026 season. Illinois fishing licenses and stamps for 2026 are available for purchase online and at department-authorized vendors. A standard, non-discounted resident fishing license costs $15. Licenses for the 2025 season remain valid through March 31. Anglers 16 and older must have a valid fishing license in Illinois. Exemptions apply to active-duty military personnel and people with disabilities.

***

The first lottery for the 2026 Illinois deer firearm and muzzleloader season started March 3 and continues through April 30. IDNR reported the lottery is for Illinois residents only, and there is a limit of one application per hunter. Landowner deer firearm permit recipients are not eligible to apply for a firearm permit but may apply for a muzzleloader permit.

***

Leftover county permits for the 2026 spring turkey season in Illinois were scheduled to be available over the counter at license vendor locations beginning March 10 through May 14 on a first-come, first-served basis until quotas have been met for particular counties, IDNR reported. A list of permits available after the third lottery will be posted online.

***

The first youth spring turkey hunting season is scheduled March 28-29 in select counties statewide. IDNR reported that the spring youth turkey hunt is open to hunters who have not reached the age of 18 prior to the opening date of the youth season. Hunters must have an apprentice or youth hunting license, or they must have completed a state-approved hunter education course and have a hunting license, unless exempt.

Weather

High 75, low 40; 6.3 inches of rain

Temperatures for the period of March 3-9 in the Union County area ranged from a high of 75 degrees to a low of 40. Precipitation totaled 6.3 inches of rain.

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

Tuesday, March 3: high 73, low 40. 0.01 of an inch of rain.

Wednesday, March 4: high 75, low 58. 1.21 inches of rain.

Thursday, March 5: high 70, low 58. 4.24 inches of rain.

Friday, March 6: high 75, low 54. 0.01 of an inch of rain.

Saturday, March 7: high 70, low 45. 0.83 of an inch of rain.

Sunday, March 8: high 63, low 41.

Monday, March 9: high 71, low 42.

Shawnee Hills Arts Council announces upcoming events

The Shawnee Hills Arts Council in Anna has announced a variety of upcoming programs in March and April, offering opportunities for literature discussion, art activities, music and fitness.

The schedule begins Monday, March 16, with a Short Story and Pizza Night at 6 p.m. The discussion will be led by Tom Caldwell and will focus on the short story "What We Talk About When We Talk About Anne Frank" by Nathan Englander. Participants are asked to read the story in advance and come prepared for discussion.

Attendees should bring their favorite drink and $3 to help cover the cost of pizza. Those planning to attend are asked to RSVP to Caldwell by March 15 so enough food is available.

On Thursday, March 19, from 6 to 7:30 p.m., the arts council will host an Art Social. The free event invites artists of all skill levels to gather, work on their own projects or collaborate with others.

Participants will have the option to paint a 12-by-12 muslin square celebrating United States Semiquincentennial, marking the nation's upcoming 250th anniversary. The squares will be sent to the Here and Now shop to become part of a quilt banner titled "Celebrating America." Attendees may also choose to create a rabbit-shaped candy holder for Easter. All supplies will be provided free of charge.

In April, the arts council will partner with Freedom Sings USA, a nonprofit based in Chattanooga, Tennessee that pairs professional songwriters with veterans, military personnel and their families to help them tell their stories through music.

Five veterans have been selected to participate in the local program: Donnie Spurlock, Mark Haddick, Jean Few, Don Fotheringham, a 98-year-old veteran of Battle of Iwo Jima, and Jack Edwards, 99.

The three-day program will begin Thursday, April 16, at 6 p.m. with a dinner where veterans will meet their songwriters at the Veterans of Foreign Wars post in Anna. The evening will also include a writers' round concert and is open to the public. Admission is $15, and reservations are requested by April 10.

A free writers' round concert will follow Friday, April 17, at 7 p.m. in the gymnasium at Davie's School Inn in Anna.

The program will conclude Saturday, April 18, at 6 p.m. with a free concert at East Davie Park in Anna. The event will include recognition of the participating veterans and the premiere of songs written during the program.

In addition to special events, the arts council continues to host weekly wellness and fitness classes.

Tai Chi Gung with Maribeth is held Mondays from 11 a.m. to noon. The gentle exercise program focuses on slow movements designed to increase vitality, reduce stress and promote relaxation and better sleep. The first class is free, with unlimited classes available for $50 per month or $15 for walk-in participants.

Zumba classes led by Amy Sturgeon take place Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5 to 6 p.m. The dance-based fitness class is open to all experience levels, and participants are encouraged to bring water and a positive attitude.

SEC announces honors for girls', boys' basketball

The South Egyptian Conference has announced first team and second team all-conference honors for the 2025-2026 girls' and boy's high school basketball seasons. Players from Union County schools were among those honored.

The conference also recognized other accomplishments for the season, including coaches of the year.

Girls' Basketball

Elverado was the conference champion in girls' basketball. The player of the year was Essence Haynes from Elverado/Zeigler-Royalton.

A tie was reported for coach of the year honors, with recognition going to Nathan Pitts from Cobden/Shawnee and Rhiannon Skoog from Elverado/ZR.

Players from Union County schools named to the all-conference first team included seniors Emma Young and Natalie Franklin from Cobden/Shawnee.

Second team all-conference honors went to sophomore Eva Ford from Cobden/Shawnee.

Boys' Basketball

Three teams tied for the the conference championship in boys' basketball: Cobden, Century and Meridian.

Kyler White from Cobden was named as player of the year.

Karl Sweitzer from Cobden was honored as the coach of the year.

Players from Union County schools named to the all-conference first team included junior Kyler White and senior Matthew Howell from Cobden, junior Caleb Gaddis from Dongola and junior Kyler Jewell from Shawnee.

Senior Kingston Kuhn from Cobden earned second-team all-conference honors.

Storms

(continued from page 1)

Southern Illinois and Western Kentucky. The warning was in effect until 11 a.m. last Thursday. Southern Illinois counties included in the warning were Alexander, Hardin, Johnson, Massac, Pope, Pulaski and Union.

A flash flood warning also was in effect at the time for northwestern Bollinger County, northwestern Cape Girardeau County and Perry County, all in Southeast Missouri.

Parts of the region also were under a severe thunderstorm watch Wednesday night, March 4. Severe weather was possible again late Friday night in the Southern Illinois and Southeast Missouri region.

Drought Update

A Thursday, March 5, update from the U.S. Drought Monitor showed that all of Union, Johnson, Massac, Pulaski and Alexander counties were experiencing moderate drought conditions.

Southern Jackson County and most of Williamson County also were experiencing moderate drought conditions. Northern Jackson County and a small part of northwest Williamson County were experiencing severe drought conditions.

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

Cobden American Legion post hosts community breakfasts

Cobden American Legion Post No. 259 and its auxiliary have begun to serve breakfasts on Saturday mornings...and the entire community is invited. Breakfasts are planned on the first Saturday morning of each month in the parish hall at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Cobden. The March breakfast was served last Saturday from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. The breakfasts offer an opportunity for community fellowship while also helping to support veterans and the activities of the Cobden American Post and its auxiliary. The breakfast menu will vary each month.



American Legion member and U.S. Army veteran Seth Smith helped with getting food cooked and ready to serve.



American Legion Auxiliary member Diana Steele was busy cooking scrambled eggs last Saturday morning.



The menu last Saturday morning included a variety of breakfast favorites, including scrambled eggs and more.

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Cobden readers reach reading goals for February

Cobden Elementary School has announced the names of the students who have reached their goals for the month of February in the school's Accelerated Reading program. Students were required to read books and take comprehension tests on a computer to achieve their points. Photos provided.



25 Point Club

Back Row, from left, Wyatt Hackett, Jesse Schuck, Jai Morber, Aaron Wooters, Sophia Garcia, Finley Lofton, Elise Belmont and Lexi Jackson. Middle Row, Lainey Joyner, Kyrie Cashion, Ruth Sheridan, Lillian Sweitzer, Loretta Reh, Kason Brumleve, Eavie Tolson and Zayda Moseley. Front Row, Emberlynn Cash, Faith Rumfelt and Julia Tetmeyer.



50 Point Club

Back Row, from left Grayson Johnson, Marshall Jackson, Troy Williams, Arthur Kaszubski, Allie Petermichel, Merritt LeFevre and Reagan Moore. Front Row, Lacy Plott, Reece Lence and Penelope Stroehlein.



100 Point Club

From left, Keegan Wilson, Walker Schilling, Flynt Brumleve, Claire Flamm and Macy Adamitis.

Illinois WIC program expands food options

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, WIC, in Illinois has expanded its food package offerings, allowing families to choose from a broader range of culturally-responsive foods aligned with the latest nutrition science. The changes took effect Feb. 25 and provide greater flexibility at the grocery store, state officials said.

Expanded options include: Additional package size options. New foods, including corn masa flour, whole wheat English muffins and sardines. Adjustments to certain food quantities (reducing some items and increasing others) to align with current nutrition science and key dietary needs. Participants have greater flexibility to substitute certain items based on their families' preferences. For example, they may now select beans or peanut butter instead of eggs.

WIC supports the health of low-income women, infants and children up to age 5 who are at nutritional risk by providing nutritious foods to supplement diets, nutrition education, and referrals to health care and other services. WIC is one of the nation's most successful and cost-effective public health nutrition programs.

On average, more than 175,000 Illinois residents receive WIC benefits each month. Illinois WIC is open to those who are pregnant, postpartum, breastfeeding or a parent, guardian, or caretaker who has a child under age 5, who meet health and income criteria.

Participants receive a monthly food package that includes nutrient-dense foods such as milk, whole grains and plant-based proteins, as well as a cash value benefit for fresh, frozen or canned fruits and vegetables.

To learn more about the WIC program or check eligibility, visit the Illinois Department of Human Services website at dhs.illinois.gov.

River to River Trail Society hike planned

The River-to-River Trail Society has announced its third public hike of the 2026 spring hiking season for Saturday, March 21 at Ferne Clyffe.

The hike is free and open to the public. This will be a moderately difficult hike.

The leader of the hike can be reached at 618-791-3086 for more information.

Hikers are asked to meet at 10 a.m. at the Boy Scout Trailhead.

The trail society stated that the hike is intended for people in very good health who have done some hiking.

Hiking sticks and boots or sturdy shoes are recommended. Hikers should bring their own water and snacks. Hikers are asked to not bring dogs.

More information, including driving instructions to the meeting area, can be found online at the River to River Trail Society's website at www.rivertorivertrail.net

Maple Syrup Festival planned at nature center in Carbondale

The 2026 Maple Syrup Festival, a popular springtime tradition for the whole family, is scheduled March 21-22 at Southern Illinois University Carbondale's Touch of Nature Outdoor Education Center.

The festival features a breakfast with pancakes topped with real maple syrup. The festival offers a chance to see firsthand the extensive process involved in turning sap tapped from maple trees into syrup. The festival also features lumberjack shows, live demonstrations of handcrafts such as pottery and rope making, children's activities, nature walks and live music.

Visitors can test their prowess on a big climbing wall or take a turn on a giant swing. And, they'll want to check out the wide variety of items offered by artisans and vendors in vendor alley.

The festival runs from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day at the Touch of Nature Outdoor Education facility, which is located about 8 miles south of Carbondale off Giant City Road. The pancake breakfast and all the trimmings is served from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. daily – but organizers say that those who plan to eat should arrive by 1:45 p.m.

Demonstrations of maple syrup processing will be ongoing during the festival. A wide array of other activities are slated for the weekend, with most offered free of charge, and it's a rain-or-shine event.

The daily activities schedule of free activities also includes:

Children's activities, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Lumberjack game shows, 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. daily. Blacksmithing demonstrations by the Southern Illinois Metalsmith Society, noon and 2 p.m. each day.

The Carbondale Park District's mobile target sports unit will be on site throughout the festival, giving participants the opportunity to safely practice using slingshots and tomahawks.

Live music is scheduled from 11 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. each day.

For a small fee, participants can enjoy: A climbing wall, from 10 a.m. to noon and from 12:30 p.m. to 3 p.m. A giant swing, from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

A bar and grill is scheduled to be open from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Limited quantities of fresh, homemade maple syrup will be available for purchase each day at the center's Maple Syrup Store. Come early to be sure to get some, festival organizers said.

Tickets for the pancake breakfast highlighted by real maple syrup are available at the door at Freeberg Hall. Ticket prices include: Ages 11 and older: $15. Ages 4-10: $8. Ages 3 and younger: free. SIU students: $8 with valid student ID.

Festival organizers said that volunteers from Scout troops, church groups and service clubs, the university and the community at large are needed to assist with serving breakfast, cleaning tables, assisting with children's activities and other tasks. Volunteers can enjoy a complimentary pancake breakfast at the beginning of their shift. Sign up to assist is available online at signupgenius.com.

For more information about the Maple Syrup Festival, visit the Touch of Nature website at ton.siu.edu or email ton@siu.edu or call 618-453-1122.

Local government leaders seeking increased funding

By Ben Szalinski
Capitol News Illinois

SPRINGFIELD – Local government leaders in Illinois are once again calling on state lawmakers to increase funding for their communities after Gov. JB Pritzker called for reducing the share of income taxes disbursed to municipalities.

Pritzker's budget, introduced in February, calls for reducing the share of income tax revenues that is divided among counties and other municipalities via the Local Government Distributive Fund, from 6.47 percent of the revenue the state takes in to 6.23 percent.

The reduction would keep total funding for LGDF flat in fiscal year 2027 at $2.3 billion. That's $60 million less than the state would spend otherwise, according to budget documents from Pritzker's office.

Pritzker introduced a $56 billion spending plan that represents roughly 0.5 of a percent growth in most areas compared to the current fiscal year.

"The proposal suggests that overall LGDF formula distribution would remain flat, but flat funding is not neutral," said Illinois Municipal League President Sheila Chalmers-Currin, who is also village president of Matteson, in southern Cook County, at a news conference in Springfield Wednesday, March 4. "Flat funding during a time of rising costs is a cut."

Local governments would receive $2.3 billion from LGDF under Pritzker's proposal, but the IML is seeking $3.7 billion.

The IML leaders say the change prolongs a funding battle that began 15 years ago.

"It is the continuation of a long-term erosion of state revenue sharing," Chalmers-Currin said.

She said more LGDF funding would allow local governments to provide more services and tax relief.

"When the state reduces shared revenue, costs do not disappear," Chalmers-Currin said. "Costs shift. They shift to property taxes, local sales taxes, and service reduction."

She said it flies in the face of lawmakers' affordability message.

"You cannot talk about affordability while also cutting the revenue that funds essential local services," she said. "If we want meaningful property tax relief, the state must stop reducing the dollars that are shared with municipalities."

Years of Lower Rates

When the state income tax was first enacted in 1969, LGDF was earmarked to receive 10 percent of the revenue it brought in – although the initial personal income tax rate at the time was 2.5 percent compared to today's rate of 4.95 percent.

That amount was set aside for local governments, which do not collect their own income taxes.

The state raised the income tax rate to 5 percent from 3 percent in fiscal year 2011. At the same time, they reduced the LGDF cut to 6 percent. The change in percentages meant that while the LGDF shrunk as a percentage, actual dollar amounts remained relatively stable.

Since then, IML data shows local governments received $13 billion less than they would have under the 10 percent rate.

The distribution rate has changed over the years, but it has never risen back to 10 percent and has hovered between 6 percent and 7 percent since fiscal year 2021.

While the IML has lobbied state lawmakers to increase it to a more substantial amount, their pleas went answered even amid surpluses in the early 2020s.

"In the last couple of decades, the state's budget has gone from $30 billion to $56 billion," IML CEO Brad Cole said. "And during that time, we have lost a billion dollars a year in funding. So this is a matter of priorities."

Pritzker's office disputed that narrative.

"Since 2019, the governor has increased revenue sharing with local governments by nearly $1 billion – a 71 percent increase – and enacted more than $2.5 billion annually in additional ongoing resources through transportation funding, cannabis legalization, video gaming, casino expansion and other measures," a spokesperson for Pritzker said in an email. "He has also given local municipalities greater authority to adopt local sales taxes without requiring voter referendums and eliminating certain state administrative fees on collections – giving communities greater flexibility and control over their fiscal future."

The state has provided other funding to local governments as budgets have increased. That includes funds from changes to the tax code, more motor fuel tax and bond revenue for infrastructure, and tax revenue from cannabis sales and video gaming. Some local governments with public transportation will also get more funding in Fiscal Year 2027 under a new funding formula for public transit.

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.

Musical set at A-J

Anna-Jonesboro Community High School is planning to the musical "Seussical." Three performances are planned.

The musical will be presented at 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday, March 13-14, and 2 p.m. Sunday, March 15. Tickets are available in the superintendent's office at the Union County school.

Shawnee student musicians honored

Shawnee School District 84 is recognizing students who earned first place ratings at the recent junior high solo and ensemble music contest. Seven students participated.

Those earning first place ratings included:

Ava Thomas, solo and duet. Reed Sissom, solo and duet. Chase Clymer, solo. Hunter Clark, solo and duet. Bentley Parker, duet. Aubree McMahan, solo. Erica McCally, solo.

Obituaries

Tamara Lynne (Sauber) Chastain



Tamara Lynne (Sauber) Chastain, 64 of Pennsville, N.J., went home to her Lord and Savior on March 3, 2026.

Tamara was born on Sept. 16, 1961, to Madeline "Midge" (Ritter) Sauber and John Sauber in Jackson, Mich. where she grew up.

A devoted follower of Jesus Christ, Tamara trusted the Lord through every season and strived to live a good life full of love.

Tamara and her husband Marc were married April 19, 1986, and moved to Pennsville, N.J. in 1989 with their three children Andrew, Rachael, and Emily.

Her second home was the cabin that she and Marc built together, nestled in the peaceful Shenandoah mountains.

Tamara was a beloved wife, mother, and friend, but the title that made her most proud at the end of her life was grandma, or "beanie" as she was affectionately called by her three grandchildren, Sarah, Audrey, and Henry.

Tamara is survived by her husband Marc, three children Andrew (Katie), Rachael (Eddie), and Emily (Eric), three grandchildren (Sarah, Audrey, Henry), brothers Charles Sauber, John Sauber, sister Michelle Armstrong, four half-siblings, and countless cousins and friends along with "furbabies and granddogs" who will miss her dearly.

Graveside funeral services will be at 1 p.m. Saturday, March 14 at the Alto Pass Cemetery. Interment will follow. Those attending are asked to meet at the cemetery.

RENDLEMAN & HILEMAN FUNERAL HOMES

Kent E. Keller, Jr.

Kent was born in Southern Illinois in Anna, Ill. He was a 1973 graduate of Anna Jonesboro Community High School.

He moved to Florida to work on EPCOT, married and moved back home briefly. His only daughter was born, and they moved back to Florida.

Kent worked as a carpenter into 2000s.

Kent remarried and is survived by his wife of 30 years, Anne Keller. Kent and Anne started a ranch/farm and have a modest cattle heard in Taveres, Fla.

Kent was happiest when riding on a tractor. The day before his massive stroke, Kent was moving cattle. He passed in Leesburg, Fla.

Along with his wife he is survived by his brother, Mark Keller of Dongola and his three children, niece Shae and Derek, their two children Jaxon and Ryan; nephew Travis and nephew Timothy and Meagan and their two children, Harlyn and Garner; sister, Martha and Chuck Harvel of Tamms; nephews, Scott and Heidi Harvel and Sam and Bethany Harvel and their eight children, Hadassah, Zipporah, Havilah, Naphtali Berechiah, Zemirah, Jedidah, and Talitha; younger sister, Kelly Miller and her two children, Meagan and Jason also from Anna. Kent's daughter, Ashley an her two daughters, Lacey and Colbie; stepdaughter, Sara Robertson Mueller and her husband William and Sarah's three children Abigail, Ethan and Persephone.

Also surviving are cousins, Susan Keller of California and David Schlenker of Illinois.

Kent's parents came from large families, his mother had five siblings, but his father had fourteen siblings. So, there are a plethora of cousins.

Kent was preceded in death by his parents, Kent E. Keller, Sr. and Shirley Jean (Schlenker) Keller, brother Randal Keller.

A memorial Service for Kent E Keller, Jr. was held at 5 p.m. Feb. 21, 2026 at the Fruitland Park Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses at 502 Urick Street Fruitland Park, Fla.

Interment will follow at the American Legion Cemetery in Dongola, Ill.

RENDLEMAN & HILEMAN FUNERAL HOMES

Debra Ann "Debbie" Sutliff

Debra Ann "Debbie" Sutliff, age 54 of Cobden, died Thursday, March 5, 2026 at Deaconess Union County Hospital in Anna.

She was born on Dec. 22, 1971 in Carbondale to Donald and Margie (Dillow) Myers. She married Keith Sutliff on Jan. 9, 1993.

Debbie is survived by her husband Keith Sutliff of Jonesboro; daughters, Jessica (Deeken) Beegle and Ashley Sutliff; son, Dustin Sutliff; brothers, Donald Myers, Jr. and Kevin Myers; uncle, Bobby (Glenda) Myers; nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Donald and Margie Myers and grandparents, Walter and Louise Dillow.

Debbie graduated from Cobden High School and received an associates degree from Shawnee Community College. She worked for many years for the US Postal Service.

She loved spending time with family and friends and enjoyed traveling.

Graveside services for Debbie Sutliff will be held at a later date. Rendleman and Hileman Funeral Home in Anna is in charge of arrangements. The family asks that memorial contributions can be made to Rendleman and Hileman to assist with final expenses. Envelopes are available at Rendleman and Hileman Funeral Home

RENDLEMAN & HILEMAN FUNERAL HOMES

Debra Jean "Debbie" Jones

Debra Jean Jones, age 70 of Anna, died Monday, March 2, 2026 at Memorial Hospital of Carbondale.

She was born on April 23, 1955 in Anna to George Thomas Harris and Eulah Augusta (Breedlove) Harris.

Debra is survived by her sons, Jeri Harris of Anna and Steven (Michelle) Jones of Lansing, Mich.; nine grandchildren, 3 great-grandchildren; sisters, Saundra Owens and Glynna Gray; brother, Gary Harris; other relatives and friends.

For many years, Debra owned and operated Hair on the Square in Jonesboro. She enjoyed knitting and crocheting.

A celebration of the life of Debra Jean Jones will be held on April 23, 2026. The time and location will be announced soon.

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

RENDLEMAN & HILEMAN FUNERAL HOMES

Colleen Louise (Fisher) Collins



Colleen Louise (Fisher) Collins, was born in Dongola, Illinois on Aug. 30, 1926 to Harvey Fisher and Jessie Emily (Williams) Fisher.

On May 16, 1946, Colleen married the love of her life, Jack Collins. They spent their married life at Miller City and Olive Branch, Ill.

She began her work life in Cairo, Ill. straight out of High School as a bookkeeper for Ben Fishel Auto Co., Limerick Finance, and later ending her work career at First National Bank after more than 30 years of work service.

Colleen was preceded in death by her parents, Harvey and Jessie Fisher; brother, Ernest Fisher; husband, Jack Collins; and grandson, Scott Alan Collins.

She is survived by her son, Larry (Nigel) Collins; granddaughter, Jackalyn (Kerry) Houser; great-grandson, Collin T. Houser; and step great-granddaughter, Savannah Houser; along with other family and friends.

Colleen will be remembered as a faithful servant of the Lord throughout her life. She requested that any memorials be made to The Chime Fund of the United Methodist Church at Olive Branch, Ill.

The family acknowledges with deepest gratitude, Shirley, Jessie, Jan, and Sharon.

A Graveside Service were held on Monday, March 9 with Rev. Sam Ramdial officiating at Rose Hill Cemetery in Thebes, Ill.

Crain Funeral Home in Tamms is in charge of arrangements.

CRAIN FUNERAL HOME

Joyce Bigham



Joyce Bigham, age 79, of Olive Branch, passed away on Thursday, March 5, 2026 at Southgate Nursing and Rehab in Metropolis, Ill.

She was born on Feb. 14, 1947 to Chester B. and Elsie Mae (Rollins) DeWeese in Cairo, Ill.

She had worked at Florsheim Shoe Factory in Anna, Ill. Joyce earned her certificate as a Nurse's Aide from Shawnee Community College. She could make anything grow and she loved her hobby of gardening flowers.

Survivors include her children, Brian (Stephanie) Bigham, Dennis (Vickie) Bigham, and Kevin (Hope) Bigham; along with 11 grandchildren, 24 great-grandchildren, and four great great-grandchildren.

Along with her parents, Elsie and Chester DeWeese, she is preceded in death by her step-father, Roy Houston; children, Jeff Bigham, and Wendell Bigham; siblings, Dorothy Vaughn, Marion "Spud" DeWeese, Lester, DeWeese, Charles DeWeese, Mary "Judy" Coleson, Samuel "Sam" DeWeese, JoAnn Ritter, and Shirley Sams.

Funeral Services were held on Tuesday, March 10 with Rev. Sam Ramdial officiating at Crain Funeral Home in Tamms.

Interment will follow the service at Olive Branch Cemetery in Olive Branch, Ill.

Crain Funeral Home in Tamms is in charge of arrangements.

CRAIN FUNERAL HOME

Rev. Jimmie Lee Monahan



Rev. Jimmie Lee Monahan, age 89, of Thebes, Ill., passed away on Tuesday, March 3, 2026 at Mercy Southeast Hospital in Cape Girardeau.

He was born on Jan. 6, 1937 to Lee and Ruth (Cook) Monahan in Caddo Gap, Ark. On April 27, 1955, he married Marvalee Bryant.

Rev. Monahan served proudly for over 20 years in the United States Air Force and after retirement, he worked as a bridge painter. He then became a minister of the gospel of Christ, where he served as Pastor of the Apostolic Lighthouse Church in Thebes from 1989 until 2022.

He was an avid hunter of elk, bear, deer, and squirrels, and loved the outdoors. He knew the meaning of service to country and devotion to God.

Survivors include his wife of 70 years, Marvalee; daughter, Tamra (Ollie) Schilling; son, Jon (Jeanie) Monahan; seven grandchildren, Chad (Angie) Monahan, Laura (Rocky) Strand, Adam Monahan, Cody Monahan, Dustin (Kristen) Easton, Keri Jo Easton, and Brandon (Abby) Monahan; and many great-grandchildren and great great-grandchildren.

Along with his parents, he is preceded in death by his sons, Kenny Monahan and Jimmy Monahan; two grandchildren, Starla and Marlee Girl; and siblings, Otis Monahan, Joel Monahan, Ernestine Webber, and Debbie Monahan.



Funeral Services were held on Monday, March 9 with Rev. Dustin Easton and Rev. Robert Smithey officiating at Crain Funeral Home in Tamms.

Interment with Full Military Honors followed the service at Rose Hill Cemetery in Thebes, Ill.

Crain Funeral Home in Tamms is in charge of arrangements.

CRAIN FUNERAL HOME

View Obituaries Online at annanews.com

News from

Anna Nazarene Church

Sunday, March 8

The morning worship service was held at 10:35 a.m. on March 8. Announcements were given by Jessica Elkins. The worship service was led by Pastor Wright and the Worship Team. The message "The King Is Coming" was brought by Pastor Wright from Isaiah 6:1-8, Hebrews 12:28, Philippians 2:19, Acts 4:12, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Ephesians 1:3-6, Romans 10:14. The annual ballot approval for 2026-2027 Church Officers was held following the morning worship service for active church members at least 15 years old and older.

Celebrating a birthday this week is 17th, Jayda Benefield.

Our prayers are extended to Brian and Michelle Trambley in the loss of Michelle's dad, Rick Pierson.

Funeral services were held at the Murphysboro United Methodist Church on Saturday, March 7 at noon.

Our prayers and sympathy are extended to Phil and Rin Ray and family in the loss of Phil's sister, Rebecca Ellen Grimes of Taylorville. The family will be hosting a memorial gathering Saturday, March 14, from 4 to 5 p.m. and then a celebration of life at 5 p.m. at Calvary Baptist Church in Taylorville.

Sunday, March 14

Breakfast - 9:00 a.m.

Sunday School - 9:30 a.m.

Morning Worship Service - $5

Sunday No Evening Service

Wednesday, March 18

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.

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

News from

First Baptist Church, Jonesboro

This past Sunday, March 8, Pastor Perry Williams spoke in both our services. In the morning service, his message was about faith. He described the bridge that spans the gulf of this life of ours through eternity which is Jesus Christ.

He paved the way to God by sacrificing His body and blood. There is nothing you can do to earn your way to God. You must choose to accept the sacrifice Christ made for you. But then what? He explained a living faith does three things, worship, walk with God, and work for God. His text was found in chapter 11 of the book of Hebrews, located in the New Testament in the Bible.

Music Director, Dee Rose, led in worship accompanied by the Praise Team: David Pedigo, Chris Rose, and Kim Benefield. Debbie York accompanied them on the piano. Kim Benefield sang the song, "Thank You, Jesus, for the Blood," as a special.

During the morning service, the Johnson family joined our fellowship. Jordan Johnson joined our church by letter; and Amanda and Madison joined by following the Lord through water baptism. Welcome to the church family!

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

This week's activities include the Men's Bible Study at 6 p.m., Monday, March 9, at the church; and the Ladies' Bible Study at the home of Sheila Aldridge, also on March 9, 6 p.m. Next Wednesday, the Dig-In will finish the year on Wednesday, March 18, from 6 to 8 p.m. with a skating party.

Recent birthdays: Debbie York, March 13; and Richard Tucker, March 15. Happy birthday to all!

Currently, our regular schedule for worship at Jonesboro First Baptist includes Sunday School classes on Sundays at 9 a.m.; Sunday morning worship at 10 a.m.; both Youth for 6th-12th grades and Sunday evening worship at 6 p.m. Our Children's Dig-In Program meets on Wednesdays, from 6-8 p.m. Youth 7th-12th grades meet 6-8 p.m. Wednesdays. Our Adult Prayer Meeting and Bible Study also meets on Wednesdays at 6 p.m. All are invited to attend.

The Cat's Meow

by Cobden Spay and Neuter Coalition

What else is there to talk about but Spring 2026 Spayapalooza? We have launched our campaign to spay/neuter 100 cats during March and April. And we have launched our campaign to earn/raise the $10,000 to do it!

We have met with the gracious and welcoming Dongola Village Board to explain this campaign. We are already working with several caretakers in that area. They generously donated $500 to fix 5 cats and are promoting Spayapalooza in the village and sharing on their Facebook page. We are so grateful to them.

We are meeting with the Cobden Lion's Club this week, Union County Board tomorrow morning, and Jonesboro Board Monday, March 16. We hope to meet with other city and village officials, as well as some of our many community and civic groups over the next several weeks.

Oh, but we DO have something else to talk about. We are officially accepting ONLINE DONATIONS for our work through givebutter.com via our Facebook page. We are so excited to have Givebutter online!

CSNC also already have two special events scheduled in conjunction with Spayapalooza. Alto Vineyards is hosting our "Meow Mixer" Saturday, March 21, from 2 to 5 p.m. There will be live music by Uncle John, a sweet raffle basket and fun cat-themed snacks. Then, we will have a flash tattoo fundraiser Friday, April 10, at Ascendant Moon in Anna. And there is more to come!

Don't forget our shop at Cobden Village Shops. There are pet, and other, items for sale 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, send your gift online through givebutter.com, 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!

Cobden students earn recognition at Junior Beta Convention

Cobden Junior High School students received honors at the recent Junior Beta convention in Springfield.

The school posted information on social media about honors received by the following students:

Jimmy Bergseth, 8th grade computer science, second place. Patrick Venturelli, 8th grade science, third place.

Joseph Venturelli, 8th grade social studies, first place. Lydia Uribe, 6th grade Spanish, first place.

Nathan Webb, 6th grade social studies, first place. Jaylyn Stroehlein and Sophie White, performing arts instrumental duo, third place.

Check out the Gazette-Democrat online at annanews.com

News from

Camp Ground Church, Community

Bro. Easton's message Sunday was "Hope for the Overcomer: Thyatira," from the last 12 verses of Revelation 2.

The letters to the seven churches in Revelation are sort of like God's "report card" to them. God is telling them "I see you!" Nothing escaped His attention with them and nothing escapes His attention with us.

We have not been left alone to figure out life. God has given us the Bible to teach us and the Holy Spirit to walk with us.

As with the church at Thyatira, God sees our deeds, love, faith, service, and perseverance. He also sees our rebellious times and ungodly actions.

God is long-suffering, giving mankind time to repent. But judgement will come. For those who do not repent, of misspent opportunities and time, will not spend eternity with God and Christ.

For those following Christ and serving Him because of who He is, Satan will try to hold on to them with all his might.

But just as Jesus received authority from God, if we persevere, we will be given authority with Jesus and will spend eternity in His presence.

Kayton Crane rang the bell to commence worship; Kayton and grandfather Rodney Miller took up the tithes and offerings.

Rachael Boner is our lead elder for March.

Kayton Crane celebrated her 9th birthday Saturday, the 7th, and Zoey Kaylor had a birthday yesterday, the 11th. We are proud of both of these young ladies and wish them a great year!

During this time of Lent, we especially invite you to Worship with us each Sunday at 10:30 a.m.

If you are looking for a church home, we also invite you to join us for coffee and fellowship at 9:15 a.m., and Bible Study at 9:30 a.m. prior to Morning Worship.

We are located at the intersection of Camp Ground Road and Tunnel Lane east of Anna, north of Route 146.

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

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Wednesday Bible Study 7pm
409 S. Green St, Anna, IL 62906 (Corner of West Spring and S. Green St)

THE UNSEEN HAND



A sailboat can't sail by itself; it needs the wind in its sails to keep it moving. A gust of wind is like an unseen hand; invisible, it's the power that moves the sailboat through the waves. It's the power the sailboat relies on. Like the wind, God is invisible. He is a mighty force. He can be your power if you let him. He can move you in the right direction; He can give you the strength to do what you cannot do alone. Look for God in your house of worship this week and learn how He can guide your life.

Daily Bible Reading
Psalm Psalm Psalm Psalm Psalm Psalm Psalm

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The Gazette-Democrat Classified Section

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HELP WANTED

BID NOTICE

The Village of Millcreek will be accepting bids for mowing and weed eating our park & around post office for this year 2026. Bidder has to have proof of insurance.

Season runs from April 1 - Sept 2026. Park & around post office needs to be mowed as needed & weed eat around the apparatus, rocks & building. Please send bids to Village of Millcreek, PO Box 23, Millcreek, IL 62961. If any questions, call 618-697-3884 & leave a VM.

Request for Mowing Bids

Proposals are requested for the mowing and trimming of Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative's (SIEC) twelve (12) substation properties, Massac County facilities and Massac Office property for seven (7) months April 2026 – October 31, 2026. Work includes mowing and trimming outside of fenced areas at substation properties, mowing and trimming at our two (2) Massac County facilities. Descriptions and addresses can be found in the bid packet. Bid packages can be picked up at SIEC, 7420 U.S. Highway 51 South, Dongola, IL, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. The Cooperative requires the successful bidder to provide and maintain public liability insurance, including but not limited to insurance on vehicles utilized in this job and property damage coverage. The Cooperative also requires the successful bidder to provide and maintain workmen's compensation insurance coverage on any individual who performs the mowing and trimming---including an individual who may be the sole owner/operator of the business.

Bids must be received by noon on Monday, March 23, 2026.

City of Anna, Police Chief The City of Anna, IL is accepting applications for the position of a Full-Time Police Chief

The City of Anna seeks a skilled Police Chief with exceptional interpersonal skills and proven leadership and management experience in law enforcement. The Chief must be strongly committed to public service, dedicated to community policing and understanding of the importance of managing crime. The Chief directs the planning, organizing, controlling and budgeting of all Police functions and activities with the City. Eligible applicants must reside within 30 minutes of Anna City limits, have PTI certification. Prefer at least ten years of law enforcement experience, three of those years in a supervisory position. Prefer candidates who also hold an Associate's degree or Bachelor's degree, be proficient with MS Office and have experience in a "Bargaining Unit" environment. Salary negotiable depending on experience, as well as a full benefit package is offered by the City of Anna. Applications will be available for interested candidates at Anna City Hall or can be downloaded below. 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

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT UNION COUNTY, ILLINOIS IN THE INTEREST OF: CHERISH J HANCOCK, A Minor. NO. 2024-JA-7 NOTICE BY PUBLICATION PURSUANT TO 705 ILCS 405/2-16

ANY AND ALL KNOWN AND UNKNOWN FATHERS, and to ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

TAKE NOTICE that on 3/25/2024 a petition was filed under the Juvenile Court Act of 1987 by TYLER E. TRIPP, Union County State's Attorney, by his Assistant State's Attorney Thomas E. Bucher, in the Circuit Court of Union County entitled "In the interest of CHERISH J HANCOCK, a minor", and that in Judge Tyler R. Edmonds courtroom at Union County Courthouse, 309 West Market Street, Jonesboro, Illinois on Thursday, the 26th day of March, 2026, at the hour of 10:00 AM, or as soon thereafter as this cause may be heard, an Termination hearing will be held upon the petition to have the child declared to be a ward of the court under that Act. THE COURT HAS AUTHORITY IN THIS PROCEEDING TO TAKE FROM YOU THE CUSTODY AND GUARDIANSHIP OF THE MINOR, TO TERMINATE YOUR PARENTAL RIGHTS, AND TO APPOINT A GUARDIAN WITH POWER TO CONSENT TO ADOPTION. YOU MAY LOSE ALL PARENTAL RIGHTS TO YOUR CHILD. IF THE PETITION REQUESTS THE TERMINATION OF YOUR PARENTAL RIGHTS AND THE APPOINTMENT OF A GUARDIAN WITH POWER TO CONSENT TO ADOPTION, YOU MAY LOSE ALL PARENTAL RIGHTS TO THE CHILD. Unless you appear you will not be entitled to further written notices or publication notices of the proceedings in this case, including the filing of an amended petition or a motion to terminate parental rights.

Now, unless you appear at the hearing and show cause against the petition, the allegations of the petition may stand admitted as against you and each of you, and an order or judgment entered.

Keri Clark
Clerk of the Circuit Court
Dated: March 12, 2026
8221-962741

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COUNTY OF UNION, ILLINOIS-IN PROBATE IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF: ROBERT L. CRAFT, Deceased. Case No: 2026PR3 PUBLICATION NOTICE – INDEPENDENT ADMINISTRATION

FOR UNKNOWN CREDITORS, CLAIMANTS, HEIRS, AND LEGATEES

1. NOTICE is given of the death of ROBERT L. CRAFT. Letters of Office were issued on February 13, 2026, to Administrator, ANGEL CRAFT, of Granite City, IL, whose attorneys are Scott Walker and SK Walker Law, LLC, 208 N Market St, Ste 2, Marion, IL 62959.

2. Claims against the Estate may be filed in the Office of the Circuit Court at the Union County Courthouse, 309 W Market St, Jonesboro, IL 62952, or with the Administrator's attorney, or both, on or before September 12, 2026, which date shall be not more than six (6) months from the date of the first publication or three (3) months before the date of mailing or delivery of this notice, whichever is later. Any claims not filed on or before that date are barred. Copies of a claim filed with the Clerk must be mailed or delivered to the Executor's attorney within 10 days after it has been filed pursuant to 755 ILCS 5/18.

3. ROBERT L. CRAFT passed intestate, without a will, thus petitions contesting a will under 755 ILCS 5/6-21 are inapplicable.

4. The Estate will be administered without Court supervision unless an interested party terminates independent supervision administration by filing a Petition to Terminate under the Probate Act, 755 ILCS 5/28-4.

DATED: March 4, 2026
SK WALKER LAW, LLC
By: /s/ Scott Walker, Attorney for Petitioner
SK WALKER LAW, LLC
Scott Walker, #6325929
208 N Market St, Ste 2
Marion, IL 62959
Office: (618) 703-5400
Fax: (618) 422-9117
Email: Scott.walker@skwalkerlaw.com
8221-962763

CITY OF JONESBORO CEMETERY CLEAN-UP

The City of Jonesboro will begin cleaning up in the cemetery on March 23, 2026. All arrangements, grave blankets and miscellaneous items left on the ground, will be picked up and disposed of by the cemetery department.

8221-962560

NOTICE UNDER ASSUMED BUSINESS NAME ACT
State of Illinois
SS
County of Union

Notice is hereby given pursuant to "An Act in relation to the use of an Assumed Name in the conduct of Transaction of Business in the State," as Amended that a certification was filed by the undersigned with the County Clerk of Union County,

Filed this 24th day of February, 2026, under the Assumed Name of Smoke Til Ya Broke with the place of business located at 215 Bainbridge St., Cobden, IL 62920, and that the True Name(s) and Residence Address of the Sole Owner(s) and Proprietors of said Business is:

Owner(s): Steven Krause
Address: 215 Bainbridge St.,
Cobden, IL 62920
Stephanie L. Cox
Union County Clerk
8221-962555

Illinois, Cook County wipe out $2 billion in medical debt

By Kaitlin Bender-Thomas and Medill Illinois News Bureau

SPRINGFIELD – When Kayleigh White opened a plain white envelope stamped "UNDUE" in big, bold blue letters late last year, she threw it away.

The 27-year-old Rochelle resident assumed it was junk mail, or maybe a scam. The letter claimed that her medical debt from 2018, totaling over $1,000, had been erased.

"I didn't believe it," she said. "I was like, 'Who just does that?'"

White was among more than 1 million Illinoisans who have received one of these letters thanks to appropriations from the state and Cook County. For the state, that meant turning a $10 million appropriation into $1.1 billion in debt relief through a nonprofit partnership that buys the debt for pennies on the dollar. Cook County's $7 million investment erased $820 million in debt.

In 2018, White underwent an MRI after experiencing persistent shoulder pain, which she now believes was linked to the rheumatoid arthritis she was later diagnosed with. At the time, she was a 19-year-old mother who had just aged out of her father's military insurance coverage and had not yet secured coverage of her own, leaving her with a bill she could not afford.

White carried the debt for years, nearly forgetting about it. Because the state law banning most medical debt from credit reports didn't take effect until January 2025, the unpaid bill also dragged down her credit score.

So when a notice arrived claiming that her balance had been erased, it felt too good to be true.

White then remembered the QR code on the letter and pulled the envelope from the trash to scan it, half expecting a scam designed to access her personal information.

Instead, the link directed her to information about the Illinois Medical Debt Relief Program, created in 2024 in partnership with the nonprofit Undue Medical Debt. The organization partners with local governments and health care providers to purchase and eliminate qualifying medical debt owed by low-income residents.

Gov. JB Pritzker said during a news conference on Tuesday, March 3, that the Illinois Medical Debt Relief Program has erased $1.1 billion in medical debt, with patients receiving an average of about $1,200 in relief. Cook County's Medical Debt Relief Initiative has eliminated an additional $720 million in medical debt since it launched its program in 2022.

"Countless people across the state are living proof that this program is more than clearing numbers on a ledger," Pritzker said. "It is about giving people the freedom and the opportunity to build and live their lives. Lifting the burden of medical debt restores hope. It provides a sense of security."

Pennies on the Dollar

The state's program, established in 2024 and funded with an initial $10 million appropriation, allows the state to purchase qualifying medical debt for pennies on the dollar and then abolish it.

Courtney Story, vice president of government initiatives at Undue Medical Debt, says hospitals typically bundle old, unpaid medical bills into "bad debt" portfolios once it becomes clear that patients are unlikely to pay. These portfolios are then sold in bulk, often to collection agencies or debt buyers on the secondary market.

Undue Medical Debt purchases those same portfolios from commercial debt buyers on the secondary market or directly from hospitals and health systems. Instead of attempting to collect on the debt, the organization erases the balances altogether.

Because pursuing patients who don't have the means to pay is often costly with no guarantee of recovery, Story says many medical providers see selling the debt for pennies on the dollar as a way to recover at least some portion of what would otherwise be a total loss.

"Working with us allows them to convert those debt assets into cash," she said. "Even pennies on a dollar is better than nothing, and for hospitals carrying millions in uncompensated care, selling their qualifying debt to us can actually result in a meaningful amount of money."

She noted that if hospitals forgave debt directly, patients could face income tax liability. As a third party, however, the organization can relieve debt without imposing a tax burden on the patient.

Under the program, Illinois residents qualify if their medical debt equals at least 5% of their household income or if they earn less than 400 percent of the federal poverty level. Eligible residents do not have to apply; they will instead automatically receive a letter notifying them that their debt has been eliminated.

White, now married with two children, has been babysitting for the past four years so she can stay home with her youngest. She said she earns only about $5,000 a year from it, so paying the $1,000 bill on her own would have been difficult.

"If you take $1,000 out, I'm only making $4,000 a year. My little penny dollars a week go to groceries," she said. "Just so I can help out. I don't know what I would have done. …I don't even want to know."

Tolono resident Kelli Daugherty, another beneficiary of the program, said her family fell into medical debt because of a billing mistake.

In 2017, her 18-year-old son was involved in a car accident in Mississippi and was transported to the hospital by ambulance. Although she and her husband had health insurance, the ambulance company billed the wrong provider. After months of back-and-forth attempts to correct the error, the $1,400 bill was eventually sent to collections.

In 2024, during the early stages of the state's medical debt relief program, Daugherty received a letter informing her that the debt had been erased. Like White, she was initially skeptical. But after researching the organization and the program, she realized it was legitimate and quickly called her son to share the news.

"I'm very grateful we were selected because I don't really like having anything in collections," she said.

Had the debt not been canceled, Daugherty said her family would have needed to set up a monthly payment plan and adjust their household budget.

"However much we would have to pay monthly, would have had to come out of the budget for something else. We would have had to decide what we are going to have to sacrifice so we can pay this bill," she said.

Lawmakers Weigh In

The state program has received both support and pushback from lawmakers across party lines.

Sen. Mike Simmons, D-Chicago, was the chief Senate sponsor of the legislation and called the program one of the most concrete accomplishments he has led.

For Simmons, the issue of medical debt is personal. After losing his mother in 2020, he said his family was unexpectedly burdened with medical bills.

"I don't want any more families to have to experience that. They shouldn't have to," he said.

Last month, during his annual State of the State and budget address, Pritzker proposed a $56 billion budget for fiscal year 2027. If approved, it would be the largest in the state's history, representing a $878 million, or 1.6 percent, increase over the current year.

Simmons praised Gov. Pritzker's proposal to allocate $15 million for the continuation of the medical-debt program.

"Everyone understands medical bills, and everybody understands what it means to have them go away. So, I think we'll see this continue for several years, and as long as I'm a member of the Senate, I'll keep championing it," Simmons said.

However, not all lawmakers are in support.

Rep. Chris Miller, R-Hindsboro, one of the most conservative members of the Illinois House, argued Illinois has become a "welfare state" under Pritzker.

Sen. Seth Lewis, R-Bartlett, who, like Miller, voted against the bill creating the program in 2024, said his stance has since evolved.

"If the governor has $15 million lying around and feels the state has it, I'm not as opposed as I once was, seeing some of the emotional, positive benefits," Lewis said.

He added that a fellow Republican colleague in Southern Illinois reviewed the program's impact in their district and was "pleasantly surprised" to see it helping residents across the state, regardless of political affiliation.

However, Lewis noted that nothing is guaranteed as the state faces budget constraints and competing priorities.

Budget negotiations are underway, with the legislature slated to adjourn on May 31.

"As much as we may agree that $15 million for this is a worthwhile program, the billion dollars going somewhere else that we don't agree with will override our ability to say yes to the budget," Lewis said.

Kaitlin Bender-Thomas is a graduate student in journalism with Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism, Media and Integrated Marketing Communications, and is a fellow in its Medill Illinois News Bureau working in partnership with Capitol News Illinois.

Capitol News Illinois is a nonprofit, nonpartisan news service that distributes state government coverage to hundreds of news outlets statewide. It is funded primarily by the Illinois Press Foundation and the Robert R. McCormick Foundation.

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The local community newspaper, whether it be a 2,000 circulation weekly or a 50,000 circulation daily, serves to keep people connected to their community, by telling them what's happening with their neighbors, as well as the institution serving the community.

The publication of obituaries, birth announcements, weddings and other significant events in our lives remind us of poet John Donne's words, "no man is an island."

Community newspapers alert members of the community to problems needing attention.

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There are so many things of value community newspapers provide: the recording of local history and helping to maintain a healthy local economy through effective advertising for local businesses are just a few areas of value.

The community newspaper's value to its community is unquestioned.

– from Publishers Auxiliary, a publication of the National Newspaper Association

Stinson Library to host 150th anniversary celebration

The Stinson Memorial Public Library will host a special celebration Saturday, April 11, marking the 150th anniversary of noted architect Walter Burley Griffin.

The Stinson Memorial Public Library in Anna is one of 150 historic sites around the world participating in commemorative events honoring Griffin's legacy. As part of the celebration, two trees will be planted and dedicated in his honor.

Griffin, an influential architect and landscape architect, is known for designing the library building in Anna. During the event, visitors will also have the opportunity to view the original architectural rendering of the library created by Marion Mahony Griffin.

Activities will begin at 11 a.m. with a self-led tour of the library, along with light refreshments and a stained-glass craft.

At noon, a tree dedication ceremony will be held on the library grounds.

The event will conclude with a presentation at 12:30 p.m. titled "Understanding the Stinson Library, One of America's Great Treasures." The talk will be presented by Paul Kruty of the University of Illinois, who is also a founding member of the Walter Burley Griffin Society of America.

The event is open to the public and will take place at the Stinson Memorial Public Library, located at 409 S. Main St. in Anna, Illinois. For more information, contact the library at 618-833-2521.

Clean out the closet, yard sale season is just around the corner! To place your ad call 618-833-2158

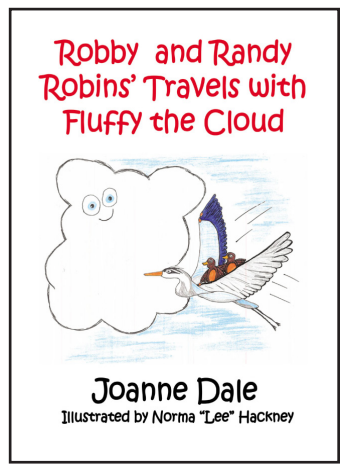
Anna author releases new children's book

Local author Joanne Dale has released a new children's book that follows two adventurous robins as they journey across North America with the help of a friendly cloud.

Dale's latest book, 'Robby and Randy Robins' Travels with Fluffy the Cloud,' was recently published by Fulton Books. The story centers on Robby and Randy Robin, who set out on an adventure to visit their robin cousins throughout North America.

In the story, the robins are sent on their journey by Grandpa Reginald and are accompanied by Buzz Blue Heron, one of the elder robin's closest friends. To help them travel quickly across the continent, the birds rely on a magical cloud named Fluffy.

According to the publisher, the book is the third story in Dale's Robby Robin series and is designed to both entertain and educate young readers. Like Dale's previous books, the story introduces children to music concepts while following the characters' adventure.



The book includes illustrations by Norma "Lee" Hackney, director of the Anna Shawnee Hills Center. Throughout the book, readers encounter birds playing a variety of musical instruments, including classical and folk string instruments, woodwinds and keyboards.

Dale, an Anna resident, spent 35 years working as a public school music teacher and is also a wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother.

Robby and Randy Robins' Travels with Fluffy the Cloud is available through bookstores and online retailers, including Amazon, Apple, Google and Barnes & Noble.

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT, FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, **UNION COUNTY, ILLINOIS CAUSE NO. 2026TX2** TO THE FOLLOWING NAMED PERSONS (AND IF DECEASED, TO THEIR UNKNOWN HEIRS AND DEVISEES), AND TO THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, AND TO ALL INTERESTED DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES THEREOF, INCLUDING AMONG OTHERS ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE, ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES- COLLECTIONS, ILLINOIS DEPT OF EMPLOYMENT SECURITY, ILLINOIS ATTORNEY GENERAL, STATE OF ILLINOIS DEPT OF HEALTHCARE & FAMILY SERVICES (PUBLIC AID) GENERAL COUNSEL AND UNION COUNTY CLERK, UNION COUNTY TREASURER, UNION COUNTY STATE'S ATTORNEY, CITY OF JONESBORO CITY CLERK AND CITY OF ANNA CITY CLERK, AND TO OCCUPANTS, UNKNOWN OWNERS AND PARTIES INTERESTED IN THE PARCELS HEREINAFTER NAMED:

Parcel Number	Owners/Parties Interested	Cert Number	Street Or Common Address
05-19-03-349-Z	ANNA STATE BANK	2022-00023	REAR 118 CASEY ST.
05-19-03-349-Z	MOLTER, ZEBULON K.	2022-00023	REAR 118 CASEY ST.
14-00-07-357-	TWEEDY, RICKY	2022-00096	202 PECAN ST.
14-00-07-357-	SHORT, TIFFANY A.	2022-00096	202 PECAN ST.
14-00-07-357-	FIRST NATIONAL BANK	2022-00096	202 PECAN ST.
14-00-07-357-	ILLINOIS HEALTHCARE AND FAMILY SERVICES CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT COLLECTION AND ASSETT RECOVERY UNIT	2022-00096	202 PECAN ST.
14-00-07-357-	UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ATTORNEY GENERAL	2022-00096	202 PECAN ST.
14-00-07-357-	UNITED STATES OF AMERICA US ATTORNEY	2022-00096	202 PECAN ST.
14-00-07-357-	UNITED STATES OF AMERICA INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE	2022-00096	202 PECAN ST.
14-00-07-627-	TWEEDY, RICKY	2022-00100	204 PECAN ST.
14-00-07-627-	SHORT, TIFFANY A.	2022-00100	204 PECAN ST.
14-00-07-627-	FIRST NATIONAL BANK	2022-00100	204 PECAN ST.
14-00-07-627-	UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ATTORNEY GENERAL	2022-00100	204 PECAN ST.
14-00-07-627-	UNITED STATES OF AMERICA US ATTORNEY	2022-00100	204 PECAN ST.
14-00-07-627-	UNITED STATES OF AMERICA INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE	2022-00100	204 PECAN ST.
14-00-07-627-	ILLINOIS HEALTHCARE AND FAMILY SERVICES CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT COLLECTION AND ASSETT RECOVERY UNIT	2022-00100	204 PECAN ST.
14-00-07-687-	RAY, TERRY G	2022-00103	503 UNION ST.
14-00-08-098-	ARMSTRONG, FLORENCE RAQUEL	2022-00113	119 W. VIENNA ST.
14-00-08-543-	COMMUNITY INTEGRATED LIVING INC PRES: BEN WEINSCHNEIDER	2022-00130	205 E. CHESTNUT ST.
14-00-08-632-	GREEN, NANCY HEIRS AND DEVISEES	2022-00134	207 VIENNA ST.
14-00-08-632-	GREEN, CYNTHIA ANN HEIR	2022-00134	207 VIENNA ST.
14-00-09-323-	ELKINS, FRANK WAYNE	2022-00151	221 LIMEKILN RD.
14-00-11-492-2	GRAVES, DAVID	2022-00169	165 ELM DR.

TAKE NOTICE THAT THE ABOVESAID PARCELS WERE SOLD ON FEBRUARY 7, 2024, FOR GENERAL TAXES FOR THE YEARS 2022 AND PRIOR YEARS, AND THAT THE PERIOD OF REDEMPTION FROM SUCH SALE EXPIRES AUGUST 17, 2026. TAKE FURTHER NOTICE THAT A PETITION FOR ORDER DIRECTING ISSUANCE OF TAX DEEDS HAS BEEN FILED IN THIS CAUSE AS TO THESE PARCELS BY UNION COUNTY, AS TRUSTEE, AND THAT ON SEPTEMBER 16, 2026 AT 11:00 AM [COURTROOM 1], SAID PETITIONER WILL APPLY FOR AN ORDER THAT A TAX DEED ISSUE AS TO EACH ABOVESAID PARCEL NOT REDEEMED ON OR BEFORE AUGUST 17, 2026. /S/ UNION COUNTY AS TRUSTEE, PETITIONER.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT THE COUNTY CLERK
ADDRESS: 309 W MARKET ST ROOM 116, JONESBORO, IL 62952-1239
TELEPHONE: (618) 833-5711

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT, FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, **UNION COUNTY, ILLINOIS CAUSE 2026TX3**: TO THE FOLLOWING NAMED PERSONS (AND IF DECEASED, TO THEIR UNKNOWN HEIRS AND DEVISEES), AND TO THE ILLINOIS SECRETARY OF STATE, ILLINOIS ATTORNEY GENERAL, ILLINOIS SECRETARY OF STATE VEHICLE SERVICES AND UNION COUNTY CLERK, UNION COUNTY TREASURER, DITECH FINANCIAL LLC CORP AGENT: C T CORP SYSTEM, RITHM CAPITAL, UNION COUNTY STATES ATTORNEY, AND TO OCCUPANTS AND UNKNOWN OWNERS AND PARTIES INTERESTED IN THE PARCELS HEREINAFTER NAMED:

Parcel Number	Owners/Parties Interested	Cert Number	Street Or Common Address
04-003-	WISEMAN, ROGER HEIRS AND DEVISEES	2023-90002	433 CASS LN
04-003-	WISEMAN, CAROL HEIRS AND DEVISEES	2023-90002	433 CASS LN
04-003-	WISEMAN, ROGER ALVIN JR HEIRS AND DEVISEES	2023-90002	433 CASS LN
04-003-	BRUMLEVE, JEANNE HEIR	2023-90002	433 CASS LN
04-003-	MITCHELL, REBECCA ANN HEIR	2023-90002	433 CASS LN
04-003-	MCCANN, SHERI LYNN HEIR	2023-90002	433 CASS LN
04-003-	WILIKINS, ARTHUR DAVID HEIR	2023-90002	433 CASS LN
04-003-	WILIKINS, MARK STEVEN HEIR	2023-90002	433 CASS LN
04-182-	JOHNSON, ROY D	2023-90003	432 N OAK
04-182-	JOHNSON, LOLA E HEIRS AND DEVISEES	2023-90003	432 N OAK
04-182-	JOHNSON, KIMBERLY HEIR	2023-90003	432 N OAK
04-182-	JOHNSON, ROY HEIR	2023-90003	432 N OAK
04-182-	GOMEZ, JENNIFER HEIR	2023-90003	432 N OAK
06-043-	EDDLEMAN, CAROLE	2023-90006	485 ST JOHN RD
06-043-	EDDLEMAN, R EDWIN HEIRS AND DEVISEES	2023-90006	485 ST JOHN RD
06-043-	NANCE, SUSAN HEIR	2023-90006	485 ST JOHN RD
06-043-	EDDLEMAN, RODNEY HEIR	2023-90006	485 ST JOHN RD
06-114-	STOCKTON, PAT C HEIRS AND DEVISEES	2023-90007	190 BODY BARN RD
06-114-	STOCKTON, RILEY M HEIR	2023-90007	190 BODY BARN RD
06-114-	WHITAKER, PERRY HEIR	2023-90007	190 BODY BARN RD
06-114-	WHITAKER, KATRINA HEIR	2023-90007	190 BODY BARN RD
06-114-	CUNDIFF, SUSAN HEIR	2023-90007	190 BODY BARN RD
06-157-	HENSON, DONNA HEIRS AND DEVISEES	2023-90008	180 KEIL LANE
06-157-	HENSON, CARROLL HEIRS AND DEVISEES	2023-90008	180 KEIL LANE
06-157-	HENSON, DOUG HEIR	2023-90008	180 KEIL LANE
06-157-	HENSON, LYNETTE HEIR	2023-90008	180 KEIL LANE
06-185-	SIMMERMAN, CYNTHIA L	2023-90009	4970 LAKE RD
06-185-	SIMMERMAN, STEPHEN L HEIRS AND DEVISEES	2023-90009	4970 LAKE RD
06-185-	SIMMERMAN, TASHA HEIR	2023-90009	4970 LAKE RD
07-055-	WOLFE, JIMMIE	2023-90010	345 APPLE ST
07-134-	WOLFE, JIMMIE	2023-90011	335 APPLE ST
08-133-	HARTLINE, DARREL	2023-90013	165 HARTLINE LN
14-277-	MESSAMORE, DONALD E	2023-90014	165 CROWELL HEIGHTS LP

TAKE NOTICE THAT THE ABOVESAID MOBILE HOMES WERE SOLD ON FEBRUARY 7, 2024, FOR DELINQUENT MOBILE HOME LOCAL SERVICES TAXES FOR THE YEAR 2023 AND PRIOR YEARS, AND THAT THE PERIOD OF REDEMPTION FROM SUCH SALE EXPIRES AUGUST 17, 2026. TAKE FURTHER NOTICE THAT A PETITION FOR ORDER DIRECTING ISSUANCE OF TAX CERTIFICATES OF TITLE HAS BEEN FILED IN THE ABOVESAID CAUSE AS TO THE ABOVE-NAMED MOBILE HOMES BY UNION COUNTY, AS TRUSTEE, AND THAT ON SEPTEMBER 16, 2026 AT 11:00 AM [COURTROOM 1], SAID PETITIONER WILL APPLY FOR AN ORDER THAT A TAX CERTIFICATE OF TITLE ISSUE AS TO EACH ABOVESAID MOBILE HOME NOT REDEEMED ON OR BEFORE AUGUST 17, 2026. /S/ UNION COUNTY AS TRUSTEE, PETITIONER.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT THE COUNTY CLERK
ADDRESS: 309 W MARKET ST ROOM 116, JONESBORO, IL 62952-1239
TELEPHONE: (618) 833-5711

County Line News

(Mill Creek and Upper Elco) **By Suzan Harvel**

We had a doozie of a storm last week. We lost power for over a couple hours and therefore I had to stay awake to make sure everything was okay when the lights came back on…and to shut off all the lanterns I'd turned on.

The wind was quite impressive. We'll have to fish assorted items out of the pond too, since stuff got loose and blew that way. A hefty amount of rain fell also. The lower yard and garden area were under water for a spell and parts still are. I was getting a bit worried some of the farm equipment might be headed for underwater, but it subsided before it got that bad.

No matter what the calendar says, spring is here, at least the weather is. I hope everyone is prepping for more, as it's just getting started.

The rain and warmer temperatures have sure produced results in the flora section if you've noticed. "Easter" flowers are blooming, as are forsythia, crocus, hyacinth, redbuds, Bradford pear, dogwood, tulip magnolia, and a host of other trees and bushes. Those not blooming have buds ready to pop. My nephew in South Carolina sent photos of all the peach trees in bloom down there.

Of course, on the flip side of that, he's complaining about the "yellow snow" (i.e. pollen) coating his vehicles, porches, and decks. We don't have as heavy a coating of that around here, but my sinus still reacts to what there is, and not favorably.

We were blessed with company this past Friday. David and Suzanne Carter came for dinner and she brought a wonderful coconut cream pie and half a loaf of friendship bread with a starter. My husband fixed a huge pot of kraut dumplings and the fixings. I know it's an acquired taste, but we sure enjoy them. Thanks to both Richard and Suzanne for the yummy stuff and we had some great visiting time with her and David.

Sunday, after church, we headed to Cape Girardeau to celebrate a grandson's birthday. His great grandmother, and other grandparents, who came from Eminence, Mo., were in attendance as well. A lot of presents, lots of cake and ice cream, and a nice visit all around made for a happy day. Great grandma Shirley has her 91st birthday coming up next month, so we'll get to celebrate that and Easter.

Shirley Harvel was blessed with a brief visit from her sister, Sue Knowlton and her husband, Don, from Poplar Bluff, Mo. on Monday. They had appointments in Cape Girardeau and stopped to visit on their way back home. She was thrilled they came by. I was sorry to miss them, as I was at work and then had a meeting in Golconda afterwards…maybe next trip I'll be around.

The Daniel Chapman Chapter of Daughters of the American Revolution met for their monthly meeting at First Baptist Church in Golconda on Monday, March 9, 2026. Fifteen members and one prospective member were in attendance. After the business meeting, Alice Thodoropoulos and Debra Simmons gave a program on the history of the first church, which was started in the early to mid-1800's and on through to the present church and the newest additions.

Delicious refreshments were presented afterwards by Alice, Debra, and Jeanne Boglino who all live in Golconda and attend this beautiful church. The next chapter meeting will be held at First Christian Church in Anna on April 13, and the program will be the awards meeting.

A reminder that the Village of Mill Creek Board will have its monthly meeting next Tuesday, March 17, at 7 p.m. at the Village Hall.

Members of Mill Creek Baptist Church were led in a sermon on repetitious prayer. Matthew 6: 5-15 were the scriptures covered. Many of us, I'm sure, find our prayer life contains the same litany day after day. First in importance, you are praying, so, there's nothing wrong there. The need to repeat prayers isn't bad either, sometimes it's called for by special needs. As long as we enter into prayer with our minds and heart in the right place we are doing well.

In the scriptures, Jesus teaches we aren't to pray to impress others. Our prayers need to come from the heart. We need to give God the details, in other words be specific. Yes, he knows before we ask, but he still wants to hear from us. Jesus gave us the Model Prayer to teach us about prayer.

Breaking it down by key words in verse 9: "Our Father"…. We need to remember we are his children and thank him for that honor, "Hallowed "….Praise and honor belong to him for our every need. Verse 10: "Kingdom Come"… When we say these words we are welcoming the day of His return, "Your will"…we need to ask for His Will in our lives, "On Earth as it is in Heaven"…. We invite God to be the same here on Earth. Verse 11: "Daily Bread"…Asking Him to supply what we need each day. Verse 12: "Forgive"…We need to ask forgiveness AND forgive others. Verse 13: "Temptation"… Ask Him for guidance to resist all temptations, "Deliver us"… We need to ask God to save us from Satan and retore our peace and joy. "For Yours"…we need to acknowledge His glory.

Brother Bob gave us these 6 points to touch on in prayer for ourselves and others. When we pray we need to ask for all needs to be met…Spiritually (faith, trust, obedience..), Physically (health, comfort), Financially (to make good decisions with what comes our way and offer thanks for work when we have it), Morally (to follow God's, will not the world's), Mentally (to keep focus on the good and to set aside worries/fears that hinder), and Emotionally (depression, anger, hurt, jealousy, anxiety and to give us confidence and boldness).

Always end prayer in Jesus' name, for by doing so you invoke his righteousness. Doing this will extend your prayer time, but will surely enrich it also.

Those added to the prayer list are: Sofia Bridger, Thomas Bowman, Geb Sullivan, Justin Bonner, Rider Plott, Pauline Neighbors, and Becky Wilson. Remember those families who have lost loved ones also: Debbie Sutliff, Linda Murray, Pat Poiter, Joseph Walker, Joyce Bigham, Colleen Collins, Rev. Jimmie Monahan, and Sandy Kaufman.

Union County Fixin's

Chicken Fajitas

4 Tablespoons canola oil, divided
2 Tablespoons lemon juice
1 1/2 teaspoons seasoned salt
1 1/2 teaspoons dried oregano
1 1/2 teaspoons ground cumin
1 teaspoon garlic powder
1/2 teaspoon chili powder
1/2 teaspoon paprika
1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes (optional)
1 1/2 lbs. boneless, skinless chicken breast, cut into thin strips
1/2 medium red pepper, cut into thin strips
1/2 medium green pepper, cut into thin strips
4 green onions, thinly sliced
1/2 cup chopped onion
6 flour tortillas, warmed

Toppings: shredded cheese, taco sauce or salsa, guacamole, sour cream…whatever you like

In a large bowl, combine 2 tablespoons oil, lemon juice, and all seasonings. Add chicken. Turn to coat completely. Cover and refrigerate 1-4 hours.

In cast iron skillet, sauté peppers and onions in 1 Tablespoon of canola oil until crisp-tender over low heat. Remove to a small bowl and cover to keep warm.

Drain chicken and discard marinade. Add remaining 1 Tablespoon of canola oil to skillet with remaining oil and cook on medium-high heat about 6 minutes on both sides and no longer pink. Add onions and peppers back to skillet with chicken and heat through.

Spoon chicken and vegetable mixture down middle of warmed tortillas and add toppings. Fold in half

Opinion and Commentary

IDPH releases carbon monoxide surveillance report

The Illinois Department of Public Health, IDPH, has issued its first carbon monoxide surveillance report. The report details all known unintentional carbon monoxide (CO) exposures in the state from 2019-2023.

IDPH said in a news release that data from the report will help state and local officials work on targeted public information and education efforts and other interventions to help Illinoisans avoid emergency room visits, hospitalizations and deaths resulting from carbon monoxide exposure.

"Carbon monoxide poisoning can be a silent killer, but it is also completely preventable," IDPH director Dr. Sameer Vohra said. "Simple steps like installing and maintaining carbon monoxide alarms and checking appliances can save lives. This first-ever report gives us the tools and strategies to act now, protecting Illinois families and preventing these tragedies before they happen."

"In 2024, Illinois fire departments responded to 9,860 carbon monoxide-related calls across our state. These numbers serve as a powerful reminder that carbon monoxide remains a serious and potentially deadly threat in our homes. The good news is that prevention is simple working smoke and carbon monoxide alarms save lives," Illinois State Fire Marshal Michele Pankow said. "Regularly testing your alarms, checking expiration dates, and replacing units that are broken or outdated is your strongest line of defense against accidental carbon monoxide poisoning or worse."

Key Findings

Key findings in the report included:

Over the five years of the study, carbon monoxide exposures resulted in an average of 940 emergency department, ED, visits, 126 hospital admissions, and nearly 57 deaths annually in Illinois.

While unintentional CO exposures are most common during cold weather months from October to March, they can and do happen at any time of the year.

Among the most common sources of unintentional carbon monoxide exposures are fire and smoke; malfunctioning or improperly ventilated furnaces, gas stoves, water heaters, or other appliances; exhaust from vehicles running in garages or other enclosed spaces; generators operating indoors without proper ventilation or operating outdoors too close to open windows; and gas-powered tools like saws or power washers being operated indoors or in unventilated spaces.

Fire departments responded to more than 50,000 total carbon monoxide incidents statewide in the five- year period, with 95 percent of them occurring in residential settings. Commercial and business locations accounted for 2.4 percent of total reports, followed by public/government locations, healthcare and assisted living facilities and institutional/educational locations.

CO incidents were more likely to occur on Sunday than any other day of the week, and more likely to happen in the evening and night time hours, from 6 p.m. to midnight. Both findings reflect times when people were more likely to be home and using furnaces, appliances or other potential sources of carbon monoxide.

In 81 percent of all incidents, there was no data provided on whether a working carbon monoxide detector was in place at the site of the exposure. Of the remaining 19 percent of incident reports, 6 percent indicated that residents were alerted to the issue by a working CO detector; 1 percent indicated that no working detector was in place; and 12 percent said the CO detector status was "unknown." The report says this shows the need for more consistent and complete reporting practices.

Increasing Awareness

As stated in the report, "The data shows that carbon monoxide exposure is not a rare or isolated threat. It is happening every day, affecting residents of all ages, in homes across every part of Illinois.... This report is more than a set of statistics; it is a call to action." IDPH will use the report to support a number of initiatives aimed at improving awareness and prevention of carbon monoxide exposures, including:

Strengthening and supporting public information campaigns year-round, and especially during high-risk seasons.

Supporting local health departments and other community partners around the state with data that will help them tailor outreach and prevention efforts in the most impacted communities.

Encouraging awareness, use, and maintenance of carbon monoxide detectors, as well as encouraging regular inspection and maintenance of furnaces and other gas-powered appliances.

Strengthening interagency coordination, including first responders, to identify and address high-risk settings before exposures occur.

Promoting continued CO surveillance efforts and better reporting on the presence and use of CO detectors to highlight their importance.

Spring screening for Pre-K, kindergarten set at Shawnee

Shawnee Community Unit School District 84 will hold its spring screening for the 2026–27 school year on Friday, April 10, at Shawnee Elementary School.

Screening will take place from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the school.

The screening is open to children entering pre-K and kindergarten. Pre-K screenings will be conducted for children who are age 4, while kindergarten screening and registration will be held for children who will be 5 years old on or before Sept. 1, 2026.

Parents or guardians are asked to bring their child, the child's birth certificate, immunization records and two proofs of residency.

Appointments are required. To schedule a screening, call 618-833-4975.

Please read this...

By Geof Skinner

It was a dark and stormy night…again…

It was a dark and stormy night… Really. It was. And the nights were filled with some unexpected sights and sounds…

Before we get to some of the "good stuff," let's pause for a moment and ponder the first sentence in this week's gem…

Good writers, and those who pay attention to the "rules" of such things, are advised to avoid starting one of their creations with "It was a dark and stormy night." Even if it really was a dark and stormy night, writers are advised to come up with some other way to state the obvious.

A famous writer with four legs came to mind when yours truly sat down and started to work on this week's column. You may have heard of the writer. His name is Snoopy.

Snoopy is one of creations of a fellow named Charles M. Schulz who appear in the "Peanuts" comic strips. Back in the day, Snoopy was one of my "heroes." Truth be told, Snoopy, who happens to be a dog, still might be one of my heroes. Just because he is so genuine.

Of course, living in a cat household, I also need to have a feline hero. That would be Garfield the cat. I do not know if Snoopy and Garfield ever had an opportunity to meet.

Thanks to the website for the Charles M. Schulz Museum (which, until last week, I did not know was a thing), I learned that "Snoopy began his writing career in July 1965 with the infamous first line, originally penned by English novelist Edward Bulwer-Lytton: 'It was a dark and stormy night.' Charles M. Schulz brought his love of literature to his cartoon with his depiction of Snoopy as the World Famous Author sitting atop his doghouse using a typewriter. Schulz gave Charlie Brown, Lucy, Linus and the others opportunities to talk about the authors he most admired, including Leo Tolstoy, Eudora Welty, and F. Scott Fitzgerald. Schulz developed his style and came to understand the world through his love of books and reading."

Snoopy did his writing on top of a dog house. On the other paw, yours truly conjures up creations at a makeshift fancy office desk. Occasionally, I might end up in a dog house. Snoopy uses an old school typewriter. I learned how to type on a manual typewriter and then was pretty excited when electric typewriters came along. Now, a laptop computer is the writing tool of choice. Most of the time, that is a good thing.

Anyway…there really was a dark and stormy night last week. I think it was late last Wednesday night and the really early and dark hours of Thursday morning. Frequent flashes of lightning were accompanied by some big time rumbles of thunder…the kind that actually seemed to shake the house…and torrential downpours. We ended up with somewhere between 3 1/2 and 4 inches of water in the unofficial rain gauge in our backyard after several days of downpours. At least it wasn't snow…but it looks like we might see some of the white stuff Sunday night…

Meanwhile…

In addition to Mother Nature's theatrics in the sky, complete with a rather impressive sound track, night time hours during the past week or so featured a few familiar sounds…and one "surprise"…

The familiar sounds included frog choruses which have begun practicing for their spring concert season. Bob and I heard them while we were sitting out on the porch swing a couple nights this past week. It's nice to be able to do that again…without having to be concerned about potential frostbite. One night, we also heard an owl calling far off in the distance to the south. I wish I could tell you what Bob thinks of such sounds.

The "surprise" sound in the night time came in the form of music. I think it was last Friday night. The days kind of run together sometimes.

My feline friend and one of the people he tolerates were on the porch swing again when I thought I heard music… I had no idea where the music was coming from, somewhere off to the east maybe, but it included the sounds of an instrument (or maybe instruments) and a male singer. I listened for a little while, not sure what I was hearing. Pretty soon…I was pretty sure I was hearing "The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald." The song became an unexpected big hit on the radio back in 1976. Canadian Gordon Lightfoot wrote, composed and performed the song, which told the story of the sinking of the freighter SS Edmund Fitzgerald on Lake Superior in early November of 1975.

The timing of hearing that song while sitting outside on our porch swing in the dark of an early March night seemed rather interesting to me. I had just finished reading a book titled "The Gales of November: The Untold Story of the Edmund Fitzgerald" by John U. Bacon. The book tells a fascinating story about the Edmund Fitzgerald, its crew members, their families and the making of the song. As a native Michigander, there were a lot of mentions of places that were familiar…Detroit and the Great Lakes in particular. It's a good book…you can check it out at Stinson Memorial Public Library in Anna.

Meanwhile…

Critter Sightings during the past week or so included bluebirds visiting our bluebird house, water striders, a couple of goats, some chickens, what appeared to be a very domesticated turkey and a trilobite. Well, the fossil of a trilobite…



A squirrel…just because… And, as often seems to be the case, this Critter seemed to take time out of a busy squirrel day to pose for a photo or two.



Seems like it's been a while since we shared a picture of a turtle. These aquatic reptiles were seen enjoying a nice, warm March morning one day last week at the Lincoln Memorial Picnic Grounds in Jonesboro. Looked like they were smiling.



Stormy sky on a March morning

Dark clouds could be seen north of the Union County area at around midday on Wednesday, March 4. The photo was taken along old U.S. Route 51 between Cobden and Anna. At the time the photo was taken, very heavy rain was reported to be falling just north of Union County.

Colorectal cancer rates rising in people under 65

Colorectal cancer, CRC, is the third most common cancer in both men and women in the United States and the second leading cause of cancer-related death, according to the American Cancer Society, ACS. While the disease continues to decline in the United States among older adults, a 2026 report conducted by the ACS show that CRC rates are rising in people under age 65.

March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. Rural Health Inc. encourages residents age 45 and older to talk with their healthcare provider about their risk for developing CRC and screen as recommended. Rural Health Inc. is a not-for-profit organization which serves Union, Johnson and Massac counties.

In 2026, the ACS estimates that more than 158,800 new cases of CRC will be diagnosed, and 55,200 people will die from the disease, including 200 diagnoses each day in people younger than age 65. According to the ACS report, CRC is now the number one cause of cancer-related deaths for adults under age 50.

For those ages 20 to 49, the incidence rate is rising by 3 percent per year and by 0.4 of a percent in those ages 50 to 64. The only decline recorded was among those age 65 and older at 2.5 percent per year over the past 10 years.

While there is no definitive reason for the increase of CRC in people under age 65, early diagnosis through CRC screening is essential to survival, Rural Health Inc. notes. CRC screening can be done beginning at age 45 for those with an average risk of developing the disease. People who have a high risk, such as those who have a family history, may be advised to start screening at a younger age.

On-time colonoscopy screening can both prevent cancer by finding pre-cancers that are easily removed and by finding cancer early, before symptoms develop, when they are usually more treatable. Less invasive home-test screening, such as Cologuard or FIT (Fecal Immunochemical Test), helps determine a patient's risk for having CRC and serve as effective in-between colonoscopy screenings.

In addition to regular screening, risk factors can also play a key role in developing CRC. These include being overweight or obese, lack of physical activity, poor diet, tobacco and alcohol use, age, personal and family history of CRC and inherited syndromes.

Patients are advised that during a medical visit, a healthcare provider can discuss options which are available and recommend screening as needed.

Rural Healt, Inc. healthcare providers can help persons screen for CRC by offering Cologuard, FIT genetic cancer testing and determining risk factors. To learn more, or to schedule an appointment, call 618-833-4471 or visit www.ruralhealthinc.org. For more information about the American Cancer Society, visit www.cancer.org.