

THE GAZETTE-DEMOCRAT

The Talk And Cobden Review • Serving Union County Since 1849

Thursday, April 30, 2026

Anna, Illinois

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News Notes

Items of interest from throughout the Union County area.

Anna-Jonesboro Community High School thanks everyone who supported last week's American Red Cross blood drive. The school reported that 72 units of blood were collected. That brought the school's yearly donor total to more than 300 units. "That's an incredible impact and a powerful example of what our community can accomplish together," the school shared on social media. "We're grateful for each and every donor who stepped up to help save lives."

An American Red Cross blood drive is scheduled from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Wednesday, May 6, at Cobden High School.

A Memorial Day service is planned at 9:30 a.m. on Monday, May 25, at the Cobden Cemetery. The service is a longstanding tradition in the community.

The Anna Police Department shared on social media on the night of April 25 that "This evening one of our amazing residents and his son located a bike they believed was previously stolen and abandoned. They turned this in to the police station. If you are missing a Mongoose brand bike kitted for street travel, please come to the police station with proof of ownership so it can be released to you. To our resident who found this bike and drove it to our police station, we thank you for showing the care and neighborly spirit of our city."

Cobden High School's theatrical performances of "She Kills Monsters: Young Adventurers Edition" are set for 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday, May 1-2, at the Varsity Theater in Carbondale.

The Union County Farm Bureau has announced plans to be a part of the City of Anna's July 4th Independence Day celebration. The Farm Bureau is going to host an American Heritage Tractor and Car Show at the Anna City Park. Money that is raised will benefit the Union County Farm Bureau Foundation's scholarship and Ag in the Classroom programs.

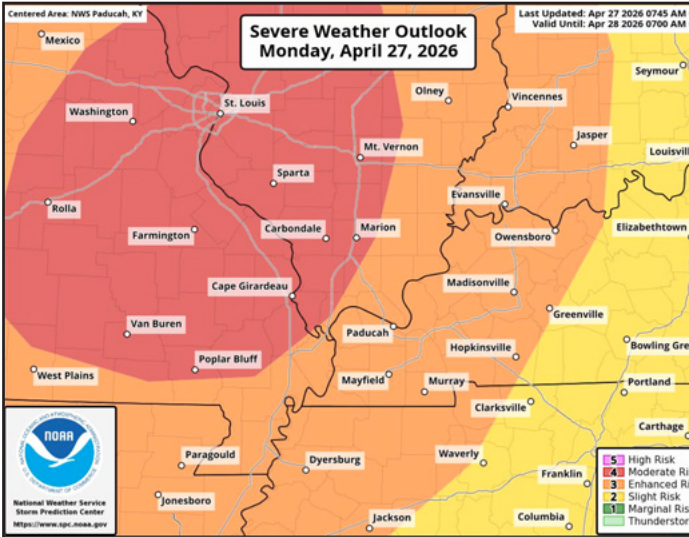
The Apostolic Faith Tabernacle of Jonesboro will be hosting a second yard sale on Saturday, May 2 from 7 a.m. to 12 p.m. New items will be for sale. The church is located at 955 IL-127 in Jonesboro.

A baccalaureate service for the Anna-Jonesboro Community High School class of 2026 is set for 2 p.m. Sunday, May 10. The baccalaureate will be in the high school auditorium.

Anna-Jonesboro Community High School is looking for a school nurse for the 2026-2027 school year.

(continued on page 2)

Severe weather occurs Monday in region



Severe weather outlook Monday

The accompanying map posted Monday morning, April 27, on the website for the National Weather Service office in Paducah showed that a large part of Southern Illinois, including Union County, and Southeast Missouri faced a moderate risk for severe weather. The moderate risk area was shaded in red. Other parts of Southern Illinois, Southeast Missouri and Western Kentucky faced an enhanced risk for severe weather, as shown in orange.

The Southern Illinois region, Southeast Missouri and Western Kentucky experienced more severe spring weather on Monday.

The National Weather Service office in Paducah advised at 9 a.m. Monday that a significant severe weather event was expected during the course of the day, with multiple rounds possible: one round in the morning, followed by the redevelopment of severe weather in the afternoon and then another round later in the evening. Strong tornadoes, large hail and destructive straight line winds were possible. The Weather Service encouraged everyone to review their safety plans and to keep tabs on the weather throughout the day.

Parts of Southeast Missouri and Southern Illinois, including Union County and neighboring counties, faced a moderate risk for severe weather on Monday. On a scale of 1 to 5, a moderate risk is number 4. Number 5, a high risk, tops the list.

The Weather Service advised that strong tornadoes, giant hail (2 inches or greater in diameter) and destructive straight line winds of 70 miles per hour were possible in areas facing a moderate risk for severe weather.

The National Weather Service's Storm Prediction Center posted online that more than 3.9 million people in parts of Illinois and Missouri faced a moderate risk for severe weather Monday.

Shortly before 3 p.m. Monday, the National Weather Service's Storm Prediction Center in Norman, Okla., issued a tornado watch which covered the Southern Illinois, Southeast Missouri and Western Kentucky regions. Union, Jackson, Williamson, Johnson, Alexander, Pulaski and Massac counties were included in the watch, which was in effect until 11 p.m. Monday.

The alert became a Particularly Dangerous Situation, PDS, tornado watch at around 4:30 p.m. Monday. The National Weather Service explained that PDS wording is used in rare situations when long-lived, strong and violent tornadoes are possible. This enhanced wording may also accompany severe thunderstorm watches for intense convective wind storms. Several strong (EF-2-plus) tornadoes were possible. Large hail (2-

plus inches) and scattered wind gusts up to 70 mph also were possible.

By around 8 p.m., severe weather was occurring in parts of south-central Missouri. Weather radar showed the storms were moving east. Multiple tornado warnings were issued for locations in Southeast Missouri by around 8:30 p.m. Severe thunderstorms were occurring by just after 10 p.m. in parts of Southern Illinois and Southeast Missouri.

Storms Monday Morning

Storms began early on Monday in the region. Parts of Southern Illinois, including Union, Pulaski, Perry, Jackson and Alexander counties, as well as parts of Southeast Missouri, were under a severe thunderstorm watch which was in effect until 10 a.m. Monday.

Shortly before 7 a.m. Monday, the Weather Service office issued a severe thunderstorm for Union County, northeastern Pulaski County, Johnson County, southwestern Williamson County, southeastern Jackson County and northern Alexander County, all in Southern Illinois. The warning was in effect until 7:45 a.m. At the time the warning was issued, radar indicated severe thunderstorms were located along a line from near Ware to near Mounds. The storms were moving northeast at 45 miles per hour.

At around 8:20 a.m. Monday, another severe thunderstorm warning was issued for parts of Southern Illinois and Southeast Missouri. The warning area included northwestern Union County, northwestern Williamson County, Jackson County, southwestern Franklin County, all in Southern Illinois; and southeastern Perry County in Southeast Missouri. At the time the second warning was issued, radar indicated severe thunderstorms were located along a line from near Grand Tower to near the Trail of Tears State Park in Southeast Missouri. The storms were moving northeast at 45 mph.

After the morning storms, strong winds continued in the region. Wind gusts topping 30 mph were reported early Monday afternoon in the Union County area.

More Severe Weather was Possible Tuesday

More severe weather possible Tuesday afternoon and Tuesday evening. Damaging winds, large hail and a few tornadoes were possible.

Anna City Council meets

New police chief takes oath of office



City of Anna welcomes new police chief

J.D. Barter has taken the oath of office as the new chief of the Anna Police Department. From left are Anna City Council members Michael Bigler and Torie Carter, J.D. Barter, and council members Kathy Bryan and Martha Ann Webb. Mayor Steve Hartline could not be present for the photo.

The City of Anna is welcoming a new police chief. J.D. Barter took the oath of office as police chief prior to the start of last week's regular meeting of the Anna City Council. The meeting was held Tuesday evening, April 21, at Anna City Hall.

The oath of office was administered by city council member Torie Carter. Carter serves as police and fire commissioner on the council. At its regular meeting on April 7, the city had acted on a resolution authorizing and approving an agreement to employ Barter as the new chief of the Anna Police Department. Barter comes to Anna from Johnston City, where he has been serving as police chief. Barter is slated to start his job in Anna on May 11. He will oversee a department with eight officers and a school resource officer. At last week's meeting, Barter thanked the city for the opportunity to serve and said he was looking forward to the job.

The city posted a message on social media welcoming the news police chief, adding "We are proud to announce the official swearing-in of Chief Barter, who brings with him a strong background in law enforcement and a commitment to serving our community with integrity, professionalism, and dedication. We look forward to his leadership and the contin-



Anna City Park project

Work continues on a major project at the Anna City Park. The project is scheduled to be completed in mid-May.

ued growth and safety of our community under his direction. Congratulations, Chief Barter, and welcome to your new role!"

Other Business

In other business at the April 21 meeting, it was announced that a major project which is underway at the Anna City Park is scheduled to be completed by mid-May. The city shared the following update about the project on social media following the meeting:

"At Tuesday's City Council meeting, a change order was approved to extend the PARC Project contract through May 18th. This extension will help ensure the project is completed the right way and to the highest standard for our community.

"The City has also met with SIBSA to discuss plans for the 2026 season. To protect field conditions and support long-term quality, Fields #2 and #3 – home of Anna Indians Baseball

and Lady Indians Softball – will remain closed throughout the summer. This will allow the fields to recover and be in top shape for fall play.

"Fields #1, #4 & #5 will be ready to go for SIBSA Union County Summer Ball first scheduled home games on the 26th of May.

"SIBSA has already communicated these updates with coaches, and schedules have been adjusted accordingly.

"We appreciate everyone's patience and understanding as we continue working through this project. We know there have been inconveniences this season, but we are confident the end result will be well worth the wait for our players, families, and community. Thank you for your continued support!"

The consent agenda for last week's meeting also included approval of a balanced budget for Fiscal Year 2026-2027.



Arbor Day

A rainy Arbor Day was commemorated at Lincoln Elementary in Anna last Friday with the planting of a Red Buckeye tree, provided by the Anna-Jo Garden Club. The tree was planted by conservation committee member Conner Jerolds.

Anna School District #37 was provided with \$250 worth of gardening tools from the National Garden Clubs' AMES Tool Grant, along with additional hand garden tools donated by The Anna-Jo Garden Club.

On hand for the event were, from left, Anna-Jo Garden Club President Debbie Franklin, Anna Junior High teacher Carolyn Gaddis, and students Cassidy Leslie and Paisley Lipe.



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Shawnee Hills Pottery Trail to welcome visitors

The Shawnee Hills Pottery Trail in Southern Illinois will welcome visitors May 2 and 3. Hours each day are scheduled from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. This is the 11th year for the trail.

The Shawnee Hills Pottery Trail is described by organizers as a shared pottery experience which is held during the first weekend of May. Each of the participating potters will be available to show their works and answer questions.

Participating potters and their locations are featured on the trail’s website. They include:

Dan Johnson, 1140 Milligan Hill Rd., Alto Pass. Steve Grimmer with Keren Ya’Ari, Rob Lorenz, 595 Main St., Alto Pass.

Harris Deller with Sara Ballek, 158 Madison Rd., Carbondale. Darby Ortolano, 239 S. 14th St., Murphysboro.

Trail signs
Signs will be posted at each of the participating locations on the Shawnee Hills Pottery Trail.

Cameron Smith with Karen Fiorino, 900 Douglas St., Murphysboro.

Stephanie Dukat with Kari Woolsey, 161 S. Sato Rd., Ava. Kit Davis and Michael Polkinghome, 6831 Day Rd., Carbondale.

Information about the trail can be found online at potterstrail.wixsite.com/pottery-trail.

Flood warning issued

The National Weather Service office in Paducah on Monday afternoon issued a flood warning for the Mississippi River in Southern Illinois and Southeast Missouri. The warning includes Union, Alexander, Scott, Perry, Jackson and Cape Girardeau counties. The warning goes into effect Thursday evening (today) and continues until Tuesday, May 5.

“Recent heavy rainfall upstream along the Mississippi River combined with additional heavy rain over the next 24 to 36 hours will result in river levels rising,” the Weather Service reported. “Cape Girardeau is forecast to rise above flood stage on Thursday evening, cresting around 35 feet this weekend.

At 2:30 p.m. Monday, the river’s stage at Cape Girardeau was 29.0 feet. Flood stage is 32.0 feet. The river is expected to rise above flood stage late Thursday evening to a crest of 35.0 feet Sunday morning. The river is expected to then fall below flood stage Tuesday, May 5. Minor flooding is forecast.

A flood warning also is in effect until further notice for the Mississippi River at Chester. The warning went into effect Wednesday morning.

News Notes

(continued from page 1)

MaxPreps has picked the Cobden Appleknockers as the nation’s fourth best high school mascot.

The Anna Junior High School Student Council is planning to sponsor a dodgeball tournament April 30.

A general meeting to discuss the America 250 celebration is set for 6 p.m. Tuesday, May 5, at Cobden Village Hall.

Shawnee School District 84 is celebrating Teacher & Staff Appreciation Week this week. Gratitude was expressed to the Shawnee School District Board of Education, the district’s Educators Rising Club, the Shawnee PTO and Kiki’s Coffeehouse in Anna for their generous donations in support of the celebration.

Family Reading Night for pre-kindergarten through 2nd grade is planned from 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. Thursday, to-

day, at Lincoln Elementary School in Anna. The evening will feature a special guest reader, crafts, refreshments, giveaways, a petting zoo and more. Admission is free.

The kindergarten class at Lincoln Elementary School in Anna will be celebrated with a ceremony which is set for 9 a.m. Wednesday, May 20, at the amphitheater at the Anna City Park.

The annual Blessing of the Bikes is planned Sunday, May 17, at the Cross of Peace on Bald Knob Mountain near Alto Pass.

Bless Fest, with live music, food and beverages, is set for May 17 in Alto Pass.

Looks like after stormy weather early this week, cooler weather is on the way. Highs in the 60s and lows in the 40s are in the forecast for Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

Farm Bureau Announces Scholarship Winners

The Union County Farm Bureau Foundation has announced their scholarship recipients for the 2025-2026 school year. A total of \$5,500 in funds was awarded this year, including two named scholarships.

The winners are five students from two local high schools and three colleges pursuing studies related to agriculture.

Layne Murray, a senior at Anna-Jonesboro Community High School, will receive a \$1,000 scholarship for the fall 2026 semester. He is the son of Kelsie and Jordan Jansen and plans to attend Southeast Missouri State University to study agribusiness, with the goal of becoming a livestock production specialist.

Murray also received the \$1,000 Halford Dillow Memorial Scholarship and the \$500 Bill Flamm Memorial Scholarship.

Cash Hodges, a graduate of Anna-Jonesboro Community High School, also received a \$1,000 scholarship. He is the son of Chris and Kristen Hodges and is currently attending Missouri University of Science and Technology, where he is studying mechanical engineering and plans to work in the agriculture industry.

Kenzie Stover, a sophomore at Southeast Missouri State University, also received a \$1,000 scholarship. The

daughter of Aaron and Paula Stover, she is pursuing a degree in elementary education.

Two additional students were awarded \$500 scholarships.

Addison Bonner, a graduating senior at Anna-Jonesboro Community High School and daughter of Rachael Bonner, plans to attend Shawnee

Community College and pursue a career in agriculture or education.

Kaylee Stover, also the daughter of Aaron and Paula Stover, is currently attending Southeast Missouri State University and is working toward a degree in diagnostic medical sonography.

Farm Bureau officials said

Scholarships
The winners of the 2026 Union County Farm Bureau Foundation scholarships are, clockwise from upper left, Kaylee Stover of Southeast Missouri State University, A-JCHS senior Layne Murray, Cash Hodges of Missouri University of Science and Technology, Kenzie Stover of Southeast Missouri State University, and A-JCHS senior Addison Bonner

the recipients demonstrated academic achievement, leadership and involvement in programs such as 4-H and FFA.

The scholarship program is funded through member contributions, fundraisers and annual meeting activities. Information about the 2027 scholarship program will be available this winter.

Area schools awarded field trip grant funds

Nearly 7,000 students will have an opportunity visit Illinois state parks, natural areas, museums and other natural resources sites thanks to grants from the Illinois Biodiversity Field Trip Grant program administered by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, IDNR, and the Illinois Conservation Foundation, ICF.

The competitive grant program allows Illinois teachers to apply for funds to take students on a field trip to study Illinois’ natural resources. Learning activities must directly relate to the school’s curriculum, and funding covers such expenses as transportation and substitute teachers.

IDNR awarded more than \$101,000 for 108 field trip grants. This year’s grant recipients represent 34 Illinois counties.

Schools in the Union County area are among those receiving grants. Grant recipients, by county, and the locations they will visit include, as provided by IDNR:

Union County
Lick Creek CCSD 16, Buncombe, \$250: grade 2, Ferne Clyffe State Park, Goreville.

Johnson County
New Simpson Hill School, Tunnel Hill, \$500: grade 8, Cache River State Natural Area, Ullin.

Jackson County
Carruthers Elementary School, Murphysboro, \$658.75: grade 4, Lake Murphysboro State Park.

Carruthers Elementary School, Murphysboro, \$658.74: grade 4, Lake Murphysboro State Park.

DeSoto Grade School, De Soto, \$2,065: grades 6-8, Camp Manitowa, Benton.

Murphysboro Middle School, Murphysboro, \$806.96: grades 6-8, Touch of Nature Outdoor Education Center, Makanda.

Williamson County
Carterville Intermediate School, Carterville, \$4,080: grade 5, Cache River State Natural Area, Ullin.

Carterville Junior High School, Carterville, \$2,500 (two grants): grade 8, outdoor education sites, Makanda.

“These field trip grants offer students the opportunity to get outdoors and experience what they’ve been learning about in the classroom,” IDNR director Natalie Phelps Finnie said in a news release. “The next gener-

Warmest April on record for region

The National Weather Service office in Paducah reported that locations in Southern Illinois, Western Kentucky and Southeast Missouri were experiencing their warmest month of April on record.

As of April 24, temperatures for the month frequently had been above 80 degrees, including 12 times in Paducah. An average April observes around four to six days temperatures reaching 80.

Paducah and Cape Girardeau were on track to break their warmest April on record by at least 2 degrees. Carbondale was expected to be a close call.

The Weather Service office shared the following data about warm April temperatures in the region:

Paducah: projected average temperature, 66.3 degrees. Current warmest April, 64.1 degrees in 1981.

Cape Girardeau: projected average temperature, 65.9 degrees. Current warmest April, 63.9 degrees in 1981.

Carbondale: projected average temperature, 64.0 degrees. Current warmest April, 63.9 degrees in 1925.

Weather High 82, low 46; quarter-sized hail

Temperatures for the period of April 21-27 in the Union County area ranged from a high of 82 degrees to a low of 46. Precipitation totaled 1.06 inches. Quarter-sized hail was recorded.

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

Tuesday, April 21: high 78, low 46.

Wednesday, April 22: high 78, low 51.

Thursday, April 23: high 82, low 50.

Friday, April 24: high 73, low 57. 0.17 of an inch of rain.

Saturday, April 25: high 79, low 52.

Sunday, April 26: high 81, low 49.

Monday, April 27: high 80, low 63. 0.89 of an inch of rain. Quarter-sized hail accompanied stormy weather early in the morning.

Annual Stockholders Meeting

Stockholders of Anna State Bank gathered last week for the annual meeting. Directors were elected and financial reports presented. The elected board members are, top row, from left, Billy Abernathy, Chris Boyd and Matthew Chamness. Front, Richard P. Vicenzi, Jr, Jonathon D. Vicenzi and Donald W. Denny. Not available for the photo Dr. Charles Haire.

4-H leaders attend leadership retreat



Teen leaders
Students from Cobden, Vienna, Egyptian and Hardin County high schools attend a three-day 4-H leadership retreat.

Southern Illinois 4-H teen leaders recently gathered for a three-day leadership retreat at 4-H Memorial Camp in Allerton Park, taking part in activities designed to build teamwork, confidence and leadership skills.

Students from Cobden, Vienna, Egyptian and Hardin County high schools attended the annual retreat, which featured hands-on experiences ranging from outdoor recreation to group challenges. Activities included fishing, kayaking, rock climbing, archery and a creative “food challenge,” along with team-building exercises

and trivia games.

Participants also explored Allerton Park, visiting the Robert Allerton Mansion and the park’s visitor center to learn about local history. A hayrack ride to the park’s Sun Singer statue was among the highlights.

The retreat offered opportunities for new experiences, such as cooking over a campfire and connecting with peers from across the region. Organizers said the event helps strengthen friendships while encouraging personal growth.

“This is three days the teens look forward to all year,” said Kristi Stout. “It

continues to be one of the most impactful positive youth development experiences we offer.”

The retreat also included leadership sessions, such as a “Shark Tank”-style activity led by Youth Leadership Team President Alex Paul, along with educational programs led by area instructors and volunteers.

Organizers said the event reflects the mission of University of Illinois Extension 4-H programs, which focus on preparing youth for future success through leadership, service and hands-on learning experiences.

The Cat's Meow

by the Cobden Spay and Neuter Coalition

Huge thanks to the Cobden Village Board and to the Cobden Civic and Industrial foundation! They each donated \$750 for our Spayapalooza campaign. Those, along with some very generous individual donations, very nearly have made our goal of raising \$10,000 in two months to fix 100 cats. We’ll have our final count and calculations by next week. Watch our Facebook page for up-to-the-minute news.

The impact of this campaign to lessen the cat overpopulation in Union County, along with the success of raising awareness of these issues, has been tremendous. We are so thankful to all those who have shared, donated, volunteered and talked about these issues in our wonderful community!

There is much more to do. With you all in our court, we will continue to experience the positive benefits of TNR and

subsidized spay and neuter.

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.

If more convenient, you may also drop off donations for us at Kiki’s in downtown Anna. 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!

Ag Bash set in Jonesboro

Union County Farm Bureau is planning to host an Ag Bash on May 1 at the Lincoln Memorial Picnic Grounds in Jonesboro. The event scheduled from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. The picnic grounds

are located at 521 N. Main St. Ag Bash is planned as a celebration with all sorts of agricultural activities, a petting zoo and presentations from businesses and organizations throughout Union County.

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

REQUEST FOR BIDS FOR NEW ASPHALT PARKING LOT FOR UNION COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Request for Proposal (RFP) packets are available in the Union County Clerk’s office and on our website at www.unioncountylil.gov under Records-Requests. Questions regarding specifications may be directed to the County Administrator Angie Johnson via email at ajohnson@unioncountylil.gov.

Sealed bids should be submitted to the Union County Clerk by 4 PM on Wednesday, May 6, 2026 at the Union County Courthouse.

The County reserves the right to reject any and all bids received and to waive or not waive any informalities or irregularities in bids or bid procedures, and to accept or further negotiate costs, terms, or conditions of any bid determined by the County to be in the best interest of the County.

Union County Clerk
309 West Market Street, Room 116
Jonesboro, Illinois 62952

Ongoing drought conditions focus of concern in Illinois

By Nikoel Hytrek and UIS Public Affairs Reporting

Drought and hot temperatures have burdened Illinois since last summer, and despite rain improving conditions this spring, the long-term lack of precipitation and high temperatures have impacted water supplies across the state.

Sullivan, a small city southwest of Decatur, declared a water emergency in February that’s expected to last until June. Bloomington recently ended its severe drought proclamation and eased restrictions on water use, but residents are encouraged to continue being judicious. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources has delayed opening Heidecke Lake near Morris to boating because of low water levels.

As local governments confront water challenges, regional droughts have called attention to lax or nonexistent water management policies in Illinois. State lawmakers have caught on, too, especially as they consider how to regulate data centers, a new type of high-end water user that’s been spreading across the state.

Trent Ford, the Illinois state climatologist, said water monitoring and management can be tricky.

“It is definitely a really, really complex thing with water systems in Illinois,” Ford said. “You know, there’s always this overarching kind of perception of water abundance, in some cases overabundance. But that’s definitely not the case. That’s only a perception. It’s a mirage of abundance.”

He said rain in 2026 has improved topsoil moisture, but months of drought mean the dryness has impacted deeper layers of soil and water. Critical rivers like the Sangamon, the Mackinaw, the Kankakee, the Iroquois and the Mason, “are still way below where they normally are this time of the year,” he said, though he expects those levels to improve.

Lawmakers in Springfield, meanwhile, are only in the early phases of considering statewide water use plans, mostly discussing the problem in nonvoting subject matter hearings. The onset of data center development, however, has at least brought the conversations to the forefront.

“There’s several agencies that touch on this, and then you’ve got local control that does things,” Sen. Rachel Ventura, D-Joliet, said. “You’ve got the multi-state and multi-country water compact of the Great Lakes. So this is not just something that you can easily introduce and then be done.

“The goal of course is to make sure that our state is safeguarding water so people can have quality of life.”

Water Monitoring

Illinoisans rely on lakes, rivers, shallow groundwater and deep groundwater, but measuring water supply can be difficult because it depends on the region of the state and the structure of the ground beneath the surface.

“Underneath our feet gets really complicated really fast,” said Daniel Abrams, a principal research scientist at the Illinois Water Survey. “Being able to understand that is critical. And we’re looking at all kinds of ways to image and improve that.”

The Water Survey is not a government agency, but it works with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to conduct research and monitor water supply by using wells that measure groundwater levels and data mapping tools that visualize Illinois’ hydrology. The Water Survey also advises municipalities and counties about managing water.

The Water Survey does important research, but the lack of state regulatory authority over water makes its task difficult.

Abrams said water supply

modeling is a crucial tool for water management, but it’s not perfect, and he and his team are always looking for more data – particularly about water use.

“One of the data sources that right now we have is annual demand,” he said. “But the more we start thinking about drought, the more we start thinking about those peak demand conditions.”

Shallow aquifers and surface water sources are more susceptible to drought in the short term, but they rebound quickly after rain, Abrams explained. The opposite is true of deep aquifers like the Mahomet Aquifer in Central Illinois or the deep sandstone aquifer system in Northern Illinois. That means drought and overuse have different effects depending on the location.

More frequent reporting from municipalities, irrigators and industries would give the Water Survey a better idea of how seasonal demand works and the condition of aquifer levels, he said.

“Getting information on a quarterly basis or a monthly basis would make our models more accurate and could help us better understand things like impacts of drought to our water supply,” said Jenna Shelton, director of the Illinois Water Survey.

The Illinois Water Inventory Program collects reports about withdrawals, but it doesn’t have a full picture of that demand because of missing data.

Since 2010, the Water Use Act of 1983 requires annual water usage reports for “all high-capacity wells or intakes pumping 70 gallons per minute or more (100,000 gallons/day).” Systems of wells and intakes that have a combined pumping rate of 70 gallons per minute or greater also fall under the requirement.

Those high-capacity entities include public water suppliers like municipalities, industrial-commercial facilities, wildlife and recreation operations and agriculture irrigators.

Multiple sources told Capitol News Illinois that enforcement of reporting requirements across the state is lax.

“We are not a government agency, you know, we cannot really enforce the industries, farmers to report water use every year to us,” said Zhenxing “Jason” Zhang, a principal research scientist at the Water Survey who leads state and regional water supply planning. “We don’t get 100 percent compliance.”

Water use reporting is key to understanding what the state will need in the future and how to plan for it, he said. Without that information, resource planning is more difficult.

Management and Planning

Nora Beck, an employee at the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, or CMAP, said the state needs to update its rules about who’s in charge of water resources so the state can better manage them.

“Everything legislative has been sort of piecemeal over time,” she said.

CMAP does water supply planning for northeast Illinois, where many supply issues exist because people outside of Chicago and its immediate suburbs rely on hard-to-replenish aquifers where water levels have dropped dramatically.

A 2018 report from the Water Survey, for example, projected Joliet would be unable to meet water demands by 2030 if it continued using the aquifer, so the city is in the process of moving to Lake Michigan as a source.

Illinois has a limit for how much water it’s allowed to draw from the lake because of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact, an agreement between eight states and two Canadian provinces concerning water quality and withdrawals from the Great Lakes. That limit doesn’t exist for groundwater, Beck said.

Beck said approximately 80 percent of the people CMAP serves rely on Lake Michigan for water, but the rest rely on groundwater sources.

“We have a water budget, basically, for the Lake Michigan properties,” she said. “The remaining 20 percent are mostly on groundwater sources where there’s not a clear budget. Any user can pump as much as they want.”

Ventura, the senator from Joliet, has been involved in water policy since she worked as a naturalist for Georgia State Parks and Historic Sites.

She said looking at each water region in Illinois separately and streamlining oversight authority would be smart approaches to management. Ventura also suggested the state should mimic the Great Lakes Water Compact to create water use agreements across Illinois.

“Having that regional study is still really important,” Ventura said. “And then looking at things like refilling aquifers or having a long-term plan for access to water, I think is important for everyone in our state.”

There’s no single agency that manages water use in Illinois, either, she said. The IDNR, IEPA and the Illinois Department of Agriculture all manage water to different degrees, and with different focuses.

Of the three agencies, the IDNR shoulders the most responsibility for water supply and works with groups like CMAP, the State Water Plan Task Force and the Water Survey to do regional planning and monitoring. But at a February hearing on groundwater, a representative from the IDNR said the agency faces serious staffing shortages that limit its ability to monitor usage and enforce reporting.

Since 2024, CMAP has worked with IDNR, Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant and the Northwest Water Planning Alliance to develop a water sustainability plan for five counties in northeastern Illinois. Beck said a statewide version of that could be helpful.

Beck has also discussed governance strategies with Freshwater Society, a Minnesota initiative to better manage drinking water. Minnesota is currently developing updated rules for groundwater governance.

“I don’t think we need to copy directly from another state,” Beck said. “But I think it’s important to note that these other states are recognizing that they need to upgrade their groundwater governance, and they’re improving it in ways.”

Other Solutions

Ventura has introduced or cosponsored legislation to give the Illinois Department of Agriculture more authority over some withdrawals, and a bill to put more restrictions on private companies buying water from municipalities. But those measures have stalled.

She also has a data center regulation bill that would require the facilities to file water use reports and monitor discharged water for pollutants, a provision that could become part of a broader data center regulatory bill.

The POWER Act, a widely debated data center regulatory bill, has several water-related provisions, including requirements for usage, efficiency and water quality monitoring.

“We are looking at, you know, hundreds, thousands, millions of people who need access to water and what that looks like for the future as we move into things like data centers and other climate concerns,” Ventura said.

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.

News from

Anna Nazarene Church

Sunday, April 26
The morning worship service was held at 10:35 a.m. on April 26. Announcements were given by Jessica Elkins.
The worship service was led by Pastor Wright and the Worship Team. The message “What Is It That You Desire Most In Life?” from Psalm 27:4, Psalm 84:1-2, 2 Corinthians 3:18, John 1:14, was brought by Pastor Wright.
There was no evening service.
Saturday, May 2
NDI Convention from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Salem Grace Church Of the Nazarene. Plenary Speaker – Candice Brooks.
Sunday, May 3
Breakfast at 9:00 a.m. Sunday School at 9:30 a.m. Morning Worship Service at 10:35 a.m. with Guest Speaker, Michael Benson.
No Evening Service
Wednesday, May 6
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

Camp Ground Church, Community

Bro. Easton’s sermon Sunday was “Enter into the Throne Room” based upon Revelation 4:1-3.
The first three chapters of Revelation were messages to “the seven churches”; the remainder of the book focuses on things that will take place.
In the selected scripture, Jesus invited John to come “into the throne room,” into the presence of God to see and hear what is to come.
The imagery used in Revelation was John’s attempt to explain that which he couldn’t fully comprehend or describe.
John’s descriptions of what he saw were similar to those of Isaiah and Ezekiel, recorded in the Old Testament, and the Apostle Paul, recorded in 2 Corinthians.
In spite of all the imagery, the throne of God is a throne of grace, a never-ending stream of mercy for His creation.
We can come before “the throne of God” with confidence that He will give us strength and mercy in our time of need.
Those who have accepted Christ as their savior will see this awesomeness firsthand one day and we won’t need imagery; we will see God and Christ in all their glory.
Tony and Berna Gerard took up the tithes and offerings.
Rodney Miller is our lead elder for May.
Prior to Morning Worship, a congregation meeting was held to elect two elders for a three-year term. Nominated and elected were Tony Gerard and Bradley Easton. Arrangements are still being made for their ordination and installation date.
Those celebrating birthdays the latter part of April were Mary Robinson the 25th, and Mary Jones the 29th.
Congratulations to Billy and Donna Williams whose wedding anniversary was Tuesday, the 28th.
We invite you to join us each and every Sunday as we gather to study and Worship. At 9:15 a.m., we enjoy coffee and fellowship preceding Bible Study at 9:30 a.m. followed by Worship at 10:30 a.m. 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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Daily Devotional Reading						
Romans 1:1-17	Romans 2:1-16	Romans 3:19-31	Romans 4:1-12	Romans 4:13-25	Romans 5:1-21	Romans 6:1-23
Scriptures Selected by the American Bible Society						
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The Gazette-Democrat

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NOTICE

Notice is hereby given of the sale of the following described personal property which is stored at Busby Storage (Anna Location) 215 B East Vienna St. Anna, IL 62906. Name of Occupant: Jessica Rarrick Storage Unit: 1 Property to be sold: Personal/Miscellaneous Time/Place/Manner of Sale: May 2nd 2026 at 9 a.m. by Public Auction at Busby Storage 215 B East Vienna St. Anna, IL 62906 Phone: 618-833-3983 or 618-833-0238

ESTATE SALE

Estate Tag Sale Fri. May 8 and Sat. May 9 9am-5pm Sunday May 10 12pm -5pm at 310 Cross Creek Lane Cobden, IL extensive wood & tool shop equipment, milled & rough cut oak boards, household items, furniture, vintage China, books & much more. Cash or Check only.

LOST/FOUND

Lost Dog last seen at the Road Ranger. Brown and black beagle mix. Her name is Mattie. Very sweet older dog. She ran off during the storms and is very missed. 618-751-9049

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT UNION COUNTY, ILLINOIS ESTATE OF JAMES BRUCE JONES, SR. DECEASED. NO. 2026-PR-8 IN PROBATE NOTICE OF DEATH INDEPENDENT ADMINISTRATION, AND CLAIM DATE

NOTICE IS GIVEN to creditors of the death of James Bruce Jones, Sr., of Dongola, Illinois.

Letters of Office were issued on April 20, 2026, to Angela K. Sharp, 2215 Oak Creek Drive, Sherman, TX 75092 as Independent Executor, whose attorney is Elvis C. Cameron, 205B N. Main St., Anna, Illinois.

Within 42 days after the effective date of the original Order of admission, you may file a petition with the Court to require proof of the Will by testimony of the witnesses in open Court or other evidence, as provided by Section 5/6-21 of the Probate Act (755 ILCS 5/6-21.)

You also have the right, under Section 5/8-1 of the Probate Act (755 ILCS 5/8-1), to contest the validity of the Will by filing a petition with the Court within six (6) months after admission of the Will to probate.

The estate will be administered without Court supervision unless, under Section 5/28-4 of the Probate Act (Ill. Compiled Stat. 1992, Ch. 755, Par. 5/28-4), any interested person terminates Independent Administration at any time by mailing or delivering a petition to terminate to the Clerk of this Court.

Claims against the estate may be filed in the Office of the Clerk of this court at the Union County Courthouse, 309 W. Market St., Jonesboro, Illinois, or with the Independent Executor, or both, on or before October 30, 2026, or if mailing or delivery of a notice from the Executor is required by Section 5/18-3 of the Probate Act of the State of Illinois, the date stated in that notice. Any claim not filed on or before that date is barred. Copies of a claim filed with the Clerk must be mailed or delivered by the claimant to the Executor and to the attorneys within ten (10) days after it has been filed.

Dated: April 21, 2026.
ANGELA K. SHARP
CAMERON LAW FIRM, LLC
ELVIS C. CAMERON
ATTORNEY FOR INDEPENDENT EXECUTOR
205B N. MAIN ST.
ANNA, ILLINOIS 62906
PHONE: 618-833-2220
ARDC# 6244394
8221-964267

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT UNION COUNTY, ILLINOIS ESTATE OF CHERYL TRAYLOR, DECEASED. NO. 2026-PR-9 IN PROBATE NOTICE OF DEATH INDEPENDENT ADMINISTRATION, AND CLAIM DATE

NOTICE IS GIVEN to creditors of the death of CHERYL TRAYLOR, of Jonesboro, Illinois. Letters of Office were issued on April 22, 2026, to RITA HUMPHREY, 1115 Tollgate Road, Anna, IL 62906, as Independent Administrator, whose attorney is

PART OF THE SOUTH HALF OF THE SOUTHWEST QUARTER OF SECTION 20, TOWNSHIP 12 SOUTH, RANGE 1 EAST OF THE THIRD PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, SAID PARCEL BEING MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED BY METES AND BOUNDS AS FOLLOWS:

BEGINNING AT A RAILROAD SPIKE AT THE SOUTHEAST CORNER AT THE SOUTHWEST QUARTER OF THE SOUTHWEST QUARTER OF SAID SECTION 20; THENCE S. 89 DEGREES 31'48"W., ALONG THE SOUTH LINE THEREOF, A DISTANCE OF 165.00 FEET TO A 1/2" IRON ROD; THENCE DEPARTING FROM SAID SOUTH LINE, N.00 DEGREES 05'00"E., A DISTANCE OF 344.12 FEET TO A 1/2" IRON ROD; THENCE S.86 DEGREES 00'12"E., A DISTANCE OF 117.19 FEET TO A 1/2" IRON ROD; THENCE N.89 DEGREES 21'47"E., A DISTANCE OF 59.19 FEET TO A 1/2" IRON ROD; THENCE S.84 DEGREES 37'56"E., A DISTANCE OF 128.52 FEET TO A POINT IN THE CENTERLINE OF JIMTOWN LOOP; THENCE S.33 DEGREES 05'26"W., A DISTANCE OF 69.89 FEET TO A POINT; THENCE S.20 DEGREES 34'14"W., A DISTANCE OF 282.65 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING, CONTAINING 1.761 ACRES, MORE OR LESS, IN UNION COUNTY, ILLINOIS, AS PER SURVEY BY SCOTT A. RICHARDS, PROFESSIONAL LAND SURVEYOR #2996, DATED APRIL OF 2015, SUBJECT TO EXISTING EASEMENTS OF RECORD IF ANY AND THAT PART THEREOF FALLING IN JIMTOWN LOOP. TAX NO. 02-20-00-972-1

COMMONLY KNOWN AS: 835 Jim Town Loop Anna, IL 62906

Description of Improvements: Gray vinyl siding, 2 story single family home, detached 2 car garage

The Judgment amount was \$198,576.23.

Sale Terms: This is an "AS IS" sale for "CASH". The successful bidder must deposit 10% down by certified funds; balance, by certified funds, within 24 hours. NO REFUNDS.

The subject property is subject to general real estate taxes, special assessments or special taxes levied against said real estate, water bills, etc., and is offered for sale without any representation as to quality or quantity of title and without recourse to plaintiff.

The sale is further subject to confirmation by the court.

Upon payment in full of the bid amount, the purchaser shall receive a Certificate of Sale, which will entitle the purchaser to a Deed to the real estate after confirmation of the sale.

The property will NOT be open for inspection. Prospective bidders are admonished to check the court file to verify all information.

The successful purchaser has the sole responsibility/expense of evicting any tenants or other individuals presently in possession of the subject premises.

If this property is a condominium unit, the purchaser of the unit at the foreclosure sale, other than a mortgagee shall pay the assessments and the legal fees required by The Condominium Property Act, 765 ILCS 605/9(g) (1) and (g)(4).

IF YOU ARE THE MORTGAGOR (HOMEOWNER), YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN IN POSSESSION FOR 30 DAYS AFTER ENTRY OF AN ORDER OF POSSESSION, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 15-1701(C) OF THE ILLINOIS MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE LAW.

For Information: Visit our website at <http://ilforeclosuresales.mrpilc.com>.

Between 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. only - McCalla Raymer Leibert Pierce, LLP, Plaintiff's Attorneys, 333 Wacker Drive, Suite 1820, Chicago, IL 60606-1220. Tel. No. (312) 346-9088. Please refer to file# 25-224791L

PURSUANT TO THE FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT, THE PLAINTIFF'S ATTORNEY IS DEEMED TO BE A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE.

Plaintiff's attorney is not required to provide additional information other than that set forth in this notice of sale.

13285361
8221-963982

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT UNION COUNTY, ILLINOIS IN THE MATTER OF: SIERRA EDDLEMAN AND MARK TYLER EDDLEMAN, MARRIED PEOPLE, TO ADOPT ESTELLA MAE FULLER, A minor. No.: 2026-AD-2

NOTICE BY PUBLICATION TO NOAH F. FULLER AND ALL UNKNOWN FATHERS OF THE CHILD, ESTELLA MAE FULLER, BORN ON THE 1ST DAY OF MAY, 2015 IN CARBONDALE, JACKSON COUNTY, ILLINOIS.

You are notified that there is now on file in the office of the clerk of court for Union County, Illinois a Petition for Adoption in case number 2026-AD-2, which prays for a termination of your parent-child relationship to said child. For further details contact the Union County Circuit Clerk's Office at the Union County Courthouse, Jonesboro, IL 62952. The petitioners' attorney and address are: D. Brian Trambley, P.O. Box 899, Vienna, IL 62995.

You are hereby notified that there will be a hearing on the Petition for Adoption before the Honorable Timothy Denny, Circuit Court Judge, at the Union County Courthouse in Jonesboro, Illinois, on June 22, 2026 at 9:00 a.m. If you wish to be heard in

this matter you must appear at the above time and date.

Witness, 4/10/2026
Keri Clark
Circuit Clerk
8221-964026

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT UNION COUNTY, ILLINOIS ESTATE OF GERALD G. BROWN, DECEASED. NO. 2026-PR-7 IN PROBATE NOTICE OF DEATH INDEPENDENT ADMINISTRATION, AND CLAIM DATE

NOTICE IS GIVEN to creditors of the death of Gerald G. Brown, of Anna, Illinois. Letters of Office were issued on April 9, 2026, to Andrea Witthoft, 4985 Lick Creek Road, Anna, IL 62906 as Independent Executor, whose attorney is Elvis C. Cameron, 205B N. Main St., Anna, Illinois.

Within 42 days after the effective date of the original Order of admission, you may file a petition with the Court to require proof of the Will by testimony of the witnesses in open Court or other evidence, as provided by Section 5/6-21 of the Probate Act (755 ILCS 5/6-21.)

You also have the right, under Section 5/8-1 of the Probate Act (755 ILCS 5/8-1), to contest the validity of the Will by filing a petition with the Court within six (6) months after admission of the Will to probate.

The estate will be administered without Court supervision unless, under Section 5/28-4 of the Probate Act (Ill. Compiled Stat. 1992, Ch. 755, Par. 5/28-4), any interested person terminates Independent Administration at any time by mailing or delivering a petition to terminate to the Clerk of this Court.

Claims against the estate may be filed in the Office of the Clerk of this court at the Union County Courthouse, 309 W. Market St., Jonesboro, Illinois, or with the Independent Executor, or both, on or before October 16, 2026, or if mailing or delivery of a notice from the Executor is required by Section 5/18-3 of the Probate Act of the State of Illinois, the date stated in that notice. Any claim not filed on or before that date is barred. Copies of a claim filed with the Clerk must be mailed or delivered by the claimant to the Executor and to the attorneys within ten (10) days after it has been filed.

Dated: April 9, 2026.
ANDREA WITTHOFT
CAMERON LAW FIRM, LLC
ELVIS C. CAMERON
ATTORNEY FOR INDEPENDENT EXECUTOR
205B N. MAIN ST.
ANNA, ILLINOIS 62906
PHONE: 618-833-2220
ARDC# 6244394
8221-963911

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT UNION COUNTY, ILLINOIS FIRST SOUTHERN BANK, an Illinois Banking Institution, Plaintiff, v. CATHERINE CECIL, UNKNOWN OWNERS AND NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS, Defendants. Case No.: 2026FC4

NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE BY PUBLICATION

The requisite Affidavit for Publication having been filed, notice is hereby given to you, CATHERINE CECIL, ALL NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS and ALL UNKNOWN OWNERS, defendants in the above-entitled cause, that the above-entitled mortgage foreclosure action was filed on February 23, 2026, and is now pending.

1. The names of all Plaintiffs and the Case Number are identified above.

2. The Court in which said action was brought is identified above.

3. The name of the titleholder of record is Catherine Cecil.

4. A legal description of the real estate sufficient to identify it with reasonable certainty is as follows:

TRACT 1:
A parcel of land being a part of the Northeast Quarter of the Northeast Quarter of Section 16, Township 11 South, Range 2 West of the Third Principal Meridian. Said parcel is intended to be the same property described and recorded in Book 107, Page 398 in the Union County Courthouse in the name of Robert D. Coats and Vicki A. Coats, Dated September 16, 1993. Said Parcel being more particularly described as follows:

Commencing at the Northwest corner of said Quarter-Quarter Section, being marked by an iron rod set; thence N89°58'00"E 208.00 feet along the North line of said Quarter-Quarter Section to an iron rod set and the Point of Beginning; thence N89°58'00"E 208.00 feet continuing along said North line to an iron rod set; thence S02°28'56"E 208.00 feet parallel to the West line of said Quarter-Quarter Section to an iron rod set; thence S89°58'00"W 208.00 feet parallel to the said North line to an iron rod set; thence N0°28'56"W 208.00 feet parallel to the said West line to the Point of Beginning.

Said parcel to contain 0.993 acres, more or less, per survey of Mitchell R. Garrett, Illinois Professional Land Surveyor No. 3085, Dated 10/15/1999.

Said parcel being subject to an existing Easement for roadway purposes as shown in Book 55, Page 674 and in miscellaneous record 18, Page 701. Said parcel being subject to the existing Right-of-Way of Bald Knob Road at its Northeast corner and any other Rights-of-Way and Easements, Recorded or otherwise. All situated in the County of Union, State of Illinois.

TRACT II:

A parcel of land being a part of the Southeast Quarter of the Southeast Quarter of Section

9, Township 11 South, Range 2 West of the Third Principal Meridian. Said Parcel being more particularly described as follows:

Commencing at the Southwest corner of said Quarter-Quarter Section, being marked by an iron rod set; thence N89°58'00"E 208.00 feet along the South line of said Quarter-Quarter Section to an iron rod set at the Northwest corner of property described and recorded in Book 107, Page 398 in the Union County Courthouse in the name of Robert D. Coats and Vickie A. Coats, Dated September 16, 1993, this being the Point of Beginning; thence N0°28'56"W 20.63 feet along the Northerly extension of the West line of said Coats property to a point in the South Right-of-Way line of the Bald Knob Road; thence along said South Right-of-Way line the following Two (2) calls: Thence N86°38'21"E 53.43 feet to a point; thence along a curve to the right with chord bearing S77°38'14"E 110.53 feet, a radius of 203.92 feet, and an arc of 110.69 feet to a point in the North line of said Coats property; same being the South line of said Quarter-Quarter Section; thence S89°58'00"W 161.13 feet to the Point of Beginning.

Said parcel to contain 0.069 acres, more or less, per survey of Mitchell R. Garrett, Illinois Professional Land Surveyor No. 3085, Dated 10/15/1999.

Said parcel being subject to all Rights-of-Way and Easements, Recorded or otherwise. All situated in the County of Union, State of Illinois.

SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING DESCRIBED EASEMENT THAT FALLS WITHIN A PORTION OF TRACT 1:

An 18 feet Easement, being 9 feet on either side of the Centerline, for the right of ingress, egress, and utility access being a part of the Northeast Quarter of the Northeast Quarter of Section 16, Township 11 South, Range 2 West of the Third Principal Meridian. Centerline of said Easement being more particularly described as follows:

Commencing at an iron rod set per prior Shawnee Professional Services (SPS) survey at the Northwest corner of said Quarter-Quarter Section; thence S87°13'24"E 416.03 feet along the North line of said Quarter-Quarter Section, passing an iron rod set per prior SPS survey at 208.00 feet, to a point at the Northeast corner of the Herold Family Trust Property (DOC #2014R0961); thence S01°58'03"W 35.69 feet along the East line of said Herold property to an iron rod set per prior SPS survey in the South Right-of-Way line of the following Two (2) calls: Thence S52°15'57"E 10.19 feet to an iron rod set at the intersection of the West line of said 18 foot Easement with said South Right-of-Way line; thence S54°15'26"E 9.39 feet to a point, said point being the Northern Terminus of said Easement.

Thence along the centerline of said 18 feet Easement the following Nine (9) calls: thence S16°34'33"W 151.70 feet to a point; thence S33°33'55"W 104.43 feet to a point; thence along a curve to the right with chord bearing S75°41'08"W 19.98 feet, a radius of 21.25 feet, and an arc length of 20.80 feet to a point; thence N73°03'25"W 93.16 feet to a point; thence S82°56'26"W 205.62 feet to a point; thence along a curve to the left with chord bearing S14°49'30"W 49.94 feet, a radius of 34.26 feet, and an arc length of 55.96 feet to a point; thence S42°16'48"E 155.98 feet to a point; thence along a curve to the right with chord bearing S15°54'46"E 96.14 feet, a radius of 163.54 feet, and an arc length of 97.59 feet to a point; thence S04°46'21"W 90.98 feet to a point on the North line of the Burton property (No Deed located at time of survey), said point being S87°56'02"E 167.83 feet from an iron rod set at the Northwest corner of said Burton property and being the Southern Terminus of said 18 feet Easement.

Centerline of said 18 feet Easement follows an existing old roadway cut and represents the Easement as set forth in the document dated August 19, 1976, and recorded February 1, 1982 in Misc. Book 44, Page 221-223, by and between Gareth M.E. Goodger-Hill and J. Carol Goodger-Hill, as Grantors, and James S. Burton, as Grantee.

Said Easement to contain 0.403 acres, more or less.

Said Easement being subject to all Rights-of-Way and Easements, recorded or otherwise all situated in the County of Union, State of Illinois.

TRACT III:

PARCEL 1: A parcel of land lying in the Northwest corner of the Northeast Quarter of the Northeast Quarter of Section 16, Township 11 South, Range 2 West of the Third Principal Meridian and more particularly described as follows: Beginning at a point in said Northwest corner where the South right-of-way line of the Black Top Road intersects said Quarter-Quarter line; thence Easterly following the South right-of-way line of said road 208 feet to a point; thence South parallel with the West line a distance of 208 feet to a point; thence West parallel with the North line of said Quarter-Quarter 208 feet to the West line of said Quarter-Quarter; thence North on said West line 208 feet to the Point of Beginning, situated in the County of Union and the State of Illinois.

PARCEL 2: Easement created by instrument dated June 6, 1967, and recorded June 14, 1967, in Miscellaneous Record 18, Page 701, from Merel Conway and Karal Conway, husband and wife, for roadway described as follows: A parcel of land lying in the Northwest part of the Northeast Quarter of the Northeast Quarter of Section 16, Township 11 South, Range 2 West of the Third Principal Meridian and more particularly described as follows: Beginning at a point on the North line of said Quarter-Quarter 208 feet East of the Northwest corner thereof; thence

continuing East along the North line some 208 feet to a point; thence South parallel with the West line of said Quarter-Quarter Section a distance of 14 feet to a point; thence West parallel with the North line of said Quarter-Quarter Section a distance of 208 feet to a point; thence North parallel with the East line to the Stearns tract a distance of 14 feet to the Point of Beginning.

EXCEPT any interest in the coal, oil, gas and other minerals underlying the land which have been heretofore conveyed or reserved in prior instrument(s) of record, and all rights and easements in favor of the estate of said coal, oil, gas and other minerals, if any, situated in Union County, Illinois.;

Permanent Index Numbers: 07-16-05-415 and 07-16-05-417-C. 5. A common address or description of the location of the real estate is as follows: 745 Chestnut Street, Alto Pass, IL 62905.

6. An identification of the first Mortgage to be foreclosed is as follows:

a. Name of Mortgagor: Catherine Cecil.

b. Name of Mortgagee: First Southern Bank

c. Date of Mortgage: December 17, 2021.

d. Date of Recording: December 17, 2021.

e. County Where Recorded: Union County, Illinois.

f. Recording Document Identification: 2021R2729.

7. An identification of the second Mortgage to be foreclosed is as follows:

a. Name of Mortgagor: Catherine Cecil.

b. Name of Mortgagee: First Southern Bank

c. Date of Mortgage: July 14, 2022.

d. Date of Recording: July 21, 2022.

e. County Where Recorded: Union County, Illinois.

f. Recording Document Identification: 2022R1333.

NOW, THEREFORE, unless you, CATHERINE CECIL, ALL NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS and ALL UNKNOWN OWNERS, defendants, file your answer to the complaint for foreclosure in this cause or otherwise make your appearance therein, in the Circuit Court of the First Judicial Circuit, Union County, Illinois, held in the Union County Courthouse, in the City of Jonesboro, Illinois, on or before May 19, 2026, default may be entered against you and each of you at any time after that date and a judgment for foreclosure entered in accordance with the prayer of the complaint for foreclosure.

/s/ Keri Clark
Circuit Clerk

PURSUANT TO THE FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT IT IS REQUIRED THAT WE STATE THE FOLLOWING TO YOU: THIS NOTICE IS AN ATTEMPT TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE.

LAWLER BROWN LAW FIRM

Adam B. Lawler #6283341

David W. Lawler #6303793

Nick Brown #6302494

Zachary S. Walston #6331559

Jarrold Wiggs #6350317

1600 W. Main

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Marion, Illinois 62959

Telephone: (618) 993-2222

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Service Email: service@lbf.com

8221-963901

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT UNION COUNTY, ILLINOIS SOUTHERN BANK, f/k/a CAPAHA BANK, Plaintiff, vs. CURT'S CLASSIC, LLC, ROY CURTIS WALKER, ANDREA M. WALKER, COMMUNITY FINANCIAL SERVICES BANK, NATIONAL LOAN INVESTORS, L.P., SAMSON MCA, LLC, UNKNOWN OWNERS AND NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS, Defendants. CASE NO. 2026FC6

PUBLICATION NOTICE

The requisite affidavit for publication having been filed, notice is hereby given to you, Curt's Classics, LLC, Roy Curtis Walker, Community Financial Services Bank, National Loan Investors, L.P., Samson MCA, LLC, Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, Defendants in the above-entitled suit, that the said suit has been commenced in the Circuit Court of Union County, Illinois, by the said Plaintiff against you and other defendants to foreclose a certain Mortgage covering the following described premises, to-wit:

A parcel of land being a part of the Southeast Quarter of the Southeast Quarter of Section 24, Township 13 South, Range 1 West of the Third Principal Meridian. Said parcel is part of property described and recorded in Book 91, Page 153 in the Union County Court House in the name of Village of Dongola. Said parcel being more particularly described as follows: Commencing at an iron rod found at the Southeast corner of said Quarter-Quarter section; thence N 00°17'15" W, 719.02 feet along the East line of said Quarter-Quarter section to a corner of the Earnhart property (Book 183, Page 428); thence N 42°45'00" W, 241.75 feet along said Earnhart property to a point of a centerline in a creek, this being the point of beginning. Thence along the centerline of said creek the following three (3) calls; thence S 52°28'57" W 47.81 feet to a point; thence S 43°13'38" W 54.32 feet to a point; thence S 34°26'13" W 15.43 feet to a point; thence N 41°22'26" W 348.63 feet along a new line, passing an iron rod set at 25.13 feet, to an iron rod set in the southeasterly right-of-way line of Cypress Road; thence along said southeasterly right of way along a curve to the left with a chord bearing N 43°17'25" E 108.76 feet, a radius of 5769.65

feet, and an arc length of 108.78 feet to an iron rod found at a corner of said Earnhart property; thence S 42°45'00" E 353.16 feet to the point of beginning.

Said parcel being subject to all rights-of-way and easements, recorded or otherwise. All situated in the County of Union, State of Illinois. EXCEPT all coal, oil, gas and other minerals.

and for other relief, that summons was duly issued out of the said Court against you as provided by law, and that said suit is still pending.

Now, therefore, unless you, the said Defendants, Curt's Classics, LLC, Roy Curtis Walker, Community Financial Services Bank, National Loan Investors, L.P., Samson MCA, LLC, Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, file your answer to the Complaint in the suit, or otherwise make your appearance therein, in the Circuit Court of Union County, Illinois, in the County Courthouse in the city of Jonesboro, Illinois, on or before the 25th day of May, 2026, default may be entered against you and each of you at any time after that day and a decree entered in accordance with the prayer of said Complaint.

Keri Clark
Clerk of the Circuit Court

Prepared by:
JOHN R. SCHNEIDER
JOHNSON, SCHNEIDER & FERRELL, L.L.C.
212 North Main Street
Cape Girardeau, MO 63701
Tel: (573) 335-3300
Fax: (573)335-1978
8221-963794

REAL ESTATE

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT UNION COUNTY, ILLINOIS LAKEVIEW LOAN SERVICING, LLC, PLAINTIFF, VS.

JOHN CASEY A/K/A JOHN L CASEY; STEPHANIE CASEY A/K/A STEPHANIE R CASEY F/K/A STEPHANIE R POOLE; UNKNOWN OWNERS AND NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS, DEFENDANTS. NO. 2025FC12

835 JIM TOWN LOOP ANNA, IL 62906

NOTICE OF SALE PURSUANT TO JUDGMENT OF FORECLOSURE UNDER ILLINOIS MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE ACT

PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale entered by the Court in the above entitled cause on April 6, 2026, will on May 27, 2026, in UNION COUNTY COURTHOUSE, 309 W. MARKET, JONESBORO, IL 62952, at 9:00 AM, sell at public auction and sale to the highest bidder for cash, all and singular, the following described real estate mentioned in said Judgment, situated in the County of Union, State of Illinois, or so much thereof as shall be sufficient to satisfy said Judgment:

TAX NO. 02-20-00-972-1

COMMONLY KNOWN AS: 835 Jim Town Loop

Anna, IL 62906

Description of Improvements: Gray vinyl siding, 2 story single family home, detached 2 car garage

The Judgment amount was \$198,576.23.

Sale Terms: This is an "AS IS" sale for "CASH". The successful bidder must deposit 10% down by certified funds; balance, by certified funds, within 24 hours. NO REFUNDS.

The subject property is subject to general real estate taxes, special assessments or special taxes levied against said real estate, water bills, etc., and is offered for sale without any representation as to quality or quantity of title and without recourse to plaintiff. The sale is further subject to confirmation by the court.

Upon payment in full of the bid amount, the purchaser shall receive a Certificate of Sale, which will entitle the purchaser to a Deed to the real estate after confirmation of the sale

Garden club speaker program rescheduled

The Anna-Jo Garden Club has rescheduled the final session of its Conservation Corner speaker series due to severe weather concerns.

Originally planned for April 27, the program was postponed out of an abundance of caution during a tornado watch. The event will now be held Monday, May 11, at 6 p.m. at the Shawnee Hills Arts Council.

The rescheduled program will feature John Wingate of Cache River Habitat Management LLC, who will speak

on habitat and property management in Southern Illinois. Wingate’s company works with landowners on projects including food plots, pollinator plantings, trail maintenance and overall habitat development.

The Conservation Corner series has offered monthly programs focused on practical environmental topics for landowners, gardeners and conservation enthusiasts. The event is free and open to the public.

‘Coolest Thing Made in Illinois’ supported lunar mission’s success

By Nikoel Hytrek and UIS Public Affairs Reporting

SPRINGFIELD – Astronauts just returned from their first voyage around the moon since 1972 and a device built by an Illinois company helped fuel the mission’s success.

Created and manufactured in Downers Grove, the NASA Standard Initiator, or NSI, is a small electrically activated pyrotechnic device that initiates propulsion by sparking a chain reaction of heat and pressure in space flight.

“Anytime you have a space launch, anytime you have a separation activity, particularly in space, you need something to push that away and get something to light that initiating event. And that’s what that device does,” said Steven Hill, president of Chemring Energetic Devices Inc.

Chemring and the NSI won the 2026 “Makers Madness” contest on Wednesday, April 15, being named “The Coolest Thing Made in Illinois” for 2026. The competition is held annually by the Illinois Manufacturers’ Association.

“The NASA Standard Initiator helped make Artemis II’s historic mission possible and literally took Illinois innovation to the moon,” said Gov. JB Pritzker, who presented the award at the Illinois Governor’s Mansion in Springfield. “Illinois’ remarkable investors are shaping the world’s future every day, and our state’s thriving manufacturing sector continues to power that progress.”

Artemis II wasn’t Chemring’s first trip to space. The device is also on the Mars lander and Atlas satellite launchers. Hill said the company’s involvement in space goes back to the Apollo missions.

“The founders of the company, many years ago, were in the ordnance business,” Hill said. “And when you think about space, you need something that’s highly reliable, that’s going to work every time. And that’s about the chemistry, that’s about the energetic material. And then using the electrical signal to go off and start that device. That’s what the company wanted to go off and do, and that’s how they got the first contract with NASA.”

The devices are fully engi-

neered and manufactured in Illinois. Hill said 80 NSIs are used for space launches and Chemring is the only manufacturer of the product that’s qualified by NASA.

“As the only provider of NSI initiators to NASA, Chemring Energetic Devices is proud to contribute to humanity’s most ambitious achievements,” said Karen Kern, the principal contracts manager for Chemring.

In addition to its contract with NASA, Chemring works with Elon Musk’s SpaceX, Jeff Bezos’ Blue Origin and United Launch Alliance.

Chemring also manufactures similar devices for aircraft ejection seats, called Cartridge Actuated Devices and Propellant Actuated Devices, or CAD/PADs and flight suit testers.

“When you think about pilots going out to the flight deck, you see them in their flight suits. They have to test the pressure in those suits,” Hill said. “We built a tester system that goes off and evaluates whether or not that can be effectively used.”

Chemring’s NSI bested a field of more than 100 other Illinois-manufactured products. Over eight weeks, 167,000 votes were cast to narrow the field down to four finalists.

“This year’s winner is truly out of this world and represents the very best of Illinois manufacturing, embodying the creativity and innovation that is the hallmark of our incredible industry,” Mark Denzler, president and CEO of the Illinois Manufacturers’ Association, said.

Last year’s winner was the Aerial Firefighting Helicopter Refill Pump, which provides water for aerial firefighting teams.

Other finalists for the 2026 competition included:

The John Deere Combine, manufactured in East Moline.

Duck Skimmer, a floating weir skimmer used to take the surface layer off the water to remove duck weed, water meal and other pollutants. It’s manufactured by Elastec in Carmi.

Aerapy PPR HVAC UV System, a system that disinfects the air with ultraviolet light, reducing airborne pathogens. This technology is manufactured in Aerapy in St. Charles.

VFW hosing derby party and fundraiser

Veterans of Foreign Wars Carroll P. Foster Post No. 3455 will host several upcoming events, including its monthly all-you-can-eat fish fry and a Kentucky Derby celebration.

The fish fry is scheduled from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. Friday, May 1, and will include fish, fries, baked beans and sides, along with dessert, for a \$15 donation. A drawing for a local fundraiser nomination will be held at 6:30 p.m., and

Mystify Music will provide entertainment from 6 to 10 p.m.

A Kentucky Derby party is planned for 4 p.m. Saturday, May 2, with food available and live music by Mystify Music from 7 to 11 p.m.

The VFW Auxiliary is also taking final orders for smoked pork butts, which will be prepared May 9 in time for Mother’s Day. To place an order, call Linda at 618-833-7737 or Phillip at 618-967-1374.

For young people looking to take over Illinois farms, costs can be steep

By Rebecca Pieder and Medill Illinois News Bureau

Brock Seymour was 5 the first time he drove a combine. It was pouring rain, and his grandfather had jumped out to fetch the grain cart, leaving him to drive across the field. “I’ll never forget that,” Seymour said. “When he got down out of the combine, he said, ‘Just drive straight, buddy.’”

From that point on, Seymour knew he wanted to be a farmer. Growing up on the family farm in Shipman, Illinois, Seymour took on responsibility early, helping with operations at 13 and by his early 20s, learning the business side of running a farm.

Now 26, he represents the fifth generation on his family’s land. With his grandparents entering their late 70s, those responsibilities are shifting into conversations about succession.

His path is a familiar one for young farmers in Illinois, many of them fifth- or sixth-generation stewards of Midwestern farms. Yet, fewer than 9 percent of Illinois farmers are below the age of 35, and the average age of a farmer in Illinois is over 58, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s 2022 agriculture census.

If you ask farmers why that is, the reasons for the stats are varied. For any young farmer, not least those without access to inherited land, there are the high costs of getting started. This includes land, equipment and fertilizer, none of which are cheap

For those looking to continue their family legacy, there is a hefty estate tax associated with taking over the business and the land. But there’s also a sense of some in the older generation not wanting to pass the torch, and because of improved equipment quality, they don’t have to just yet.

While the U.S. Department of Agriculture has programs in place to support young farmers, including low-interest loans, the threshold to entry remains high, said Garrett Williams, 26, chair of the Illinois Farm Bureau’s young leader committee.

“I do think that the rising costs of inputs and the buy-in on assets and ground is probably a relatively high barrier,” Williams said. “For young farmers, especially those with families, it can be a challenge.”

Farming is capital-intensive; there are equipment costs, fertilizer costs, and the price of land and labor. A combine alone can cost

College plans two events

Shawnee Community College is planning to host two events on Saturday, May 2, at its main campus near Ullin.

Car Show

The Saints Foundation of Shawnee Community College, along with the college’s Automotive Technology Club and student engagement team, are planning to present a car show from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The rain date for the event is Saturday, May 9.

Check-in for the show will be at 9 a.m. Gates open at 10 a.m. Judging will be at noon. Awards will be presented at 2 p.m.

Welding Lab Open

Also on Saturday, the college’s welding lab is scheduled to be open from 9 a.m. to noon. Visitors will have an opportunity to explore the welding program, meet instructors and see the hands-on opportunities which are available at the college.

more than \$1 million. Tariffs and geopolitical disruptions have already increased costs for Illinois farmers in recent years, according to the Illinois Soybean Association. Now, conflict in the Middle East is adding new pressures, with fertilizer prices at risk of climbing toward levels not seen since Russia’s 2022 invasion of Ukraine, which also upended global supply chains.

“People just don’t realize how much money it takes to start from scratch,” said Lance Muirhead, a seventh-generation corn and soybean farmer in Cerro Gordo, Illinois. “If you don’t have some kind of financial backing, it’s extremely expensive to be a farmer.”

Even if you are fortunate enough as a young farmer to inherit farmland from your parents or grandparents, the financial burdens remain through taxation, Muirhead, 29, said.

“Land Rich and Cash Poor”

Illinois is one of a dozen states that imposes a so-called “death tax” – a state-level estate tax on inherited assets, separate from federal taxes. While Congress raised the federal estate-tax exemption to \$15 million through the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, farmers in Illinois still face state-level taxes if they reach the \$4 million threshold. That means that once an estate exceeds \$4 million, the entire value is subject to taxation.

With land and equipment becoming more valuable, it’s easy to reach that \$4 million limit, Williams said.

The Family Farm Preservation Act, which would have raised the estate tax threshold to \$6 million, included key priorities for the Illinois Farm Bureau. The measure would allow for the 96 percent of farms that are family owned to stay intact when passed down between generations, without having to sell off land or assets, according to the farm bureau.

“Farmers, we have a tendency to be land rich and cash poor,” Williams said. “I think that’s the general sentiment. Any taxes incurred on inherited assets can be very difficult. It can be cumbersome on the young farmer to come up with that cash to keep those acres and keep that equipment for the operation.”

The prices of both land and equipment have risen for farmers over the past decade, increasing the value of estates.

“You know, the price of land has skyrocketed,” Muirhead said. “I see a lot of family farms that could be passed down to the next generation. But once they’re inherited, they have to go pay all this tax and sell two-thirds of the farm to be able to keep one-third in the family. And that’s just not right.”

The Family Farm Preservation Act (contained in Senate Bill 2921 and House Bill 4600) did not pass the previous legislative session due to fiscal concerns over reducing

A-J prom scheduled

Anna-Jonesboro Community High School’s 2026 prom is set for May 2 at the Southern Illinois Airport near Murphysboro. “Around the World” is the theme.

Prom queen candidates are Mariel McGrath, Aaliyah Prater, Brookelynn Barnhart, Jayda Shepard, Kansas Craig and Aleah Box.

Prom king candidates are Adam Clark, Cole Whitaker, Dawson Nicholas, Lucas Teahandon, Foster Needling and Elias Harner.

Finley Diemer and Tilman Dallas are the prom princess and prince.

state revenue while trying to resolve a budget deficit. Now, a new bill, Senate Bill 1688, was awaiting assignment to a Senate committee. Sponsored by Sen. Doris Turner, D-Springfield, who chairs the Senate Agriculture Committee, the bill seeks to raise the tax exemption to \$6 million.

Turner echoed fiscal concerns about lost revenue for the state, saying “It’s the money. That’s the big piece.”

However, she hopes this time there is enough momentum for the bill to pass. It’s been awaiting a committee assignment since February 2025.

“We’re working really hard with all of the stakeholders,” Turner said. “Hopefully we get it over the finish line.”

Sen. Terri Bryant, R-Murphysboro, is among 29 cosponsors on the bill, which has bipartisan support in both the House and Senate.

“You can get to \$4 million really fast when a combine costs \$1 million,” Bryant said. “So we need to get rid of that and bring it in line with the federal government. We’re pushing for it really hard.”

“I don’t know anyone who is against it,” added Sen. Sally Turner, R-Beason.

Estate tax revenues have “increased significantly in recent years,” according to a January Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability report. Between fiscal year 2012 and fiscal year 2020, receipts averaged more than \$300 million annually. And in recent years, they’ve gone north of \$600 million. Some growth can be attributed to a sharp rise in asset valuations.

Gov. JB Pritzker said in March that changes to the estate tax have not been a priority, though he added: “I do think it’s something that I could support as long as it includes the kind of tax break that I think is appropriate to preserving small farms and small businesses.”

“I think there are people who look at me and think (an) estate tax cut is not something that Pritzker should be the advocate for,” Pritzker said, acknowledging his billionaire status. “But I understand, very much so, how impactful it is in a negative way on farmers and on small businesspeople.”

The combined impact of high costs and estate taxes can lead young farmers to delay formally buying into the family farm until they have gained enough capital. As a result, these transitions often happen later in life, according to the University of Illinois’ farmdoc daily, a website that offers research-based analysis for farmers, market analysts, policymakers and more.

Reluctance to Step Aside

Financial barriers are only part of the challenge facing new farmers. While agriculture has long required significant capital, some experts say older farmers are holding onto their operations longer, leaving fewer opportunities for the next generation.

Kevin Brooks, a farm management commercial agriculture educator with University of Illinois Extension, said transitions within family farms can be difficult to navigate, leading some to delay succession planning altogether.

“A lot of fathers that are running on farms don’t want to give up that control,” Brooks said. “People don’t like to talk about their impending demise. They don’t want to talk about slowing down and retiring. There’s that work ethic of wanting to stay at it.”

This puts younger farmers in a bind, having to play the waiting game until the older generation is ready to pass

the torch, said Seymour, the Shipman farmer.

“Maybe when I get that age, I’ll be the same way. I don’t know,” Seymour said. “I can’t speak for the older generation, but they’ve put blood, sweat and tears into the ground. And I think they just have a hard time being able to hang them up and, you know, smoothly pass it on.”

In recent decades, farming equipment has gotten considerably more advanced, making it more comfortable to farm and less demanding physically. This has allowed people to stick with it longer, Brooks said.

“To an extent, the boomer generation hung on for a long time. And I don’t blame them. They get a bad rap,” said Muirhead, the Cerro Gordo farmer. “They went out in open-air cab tractors and farmed with four-row planters. Then they got better equipment, air conditioning, air ride suspension and auto steer. They put in the work, and they get to reap the benefits of that. I don’t blame them.”

Last year, the Farmland Transition Commission Act, Senate Bill 2372, was signed into law, creating a new body within the Illinois Department of Agriculture tasked with reviewing the barriers to acquiring farmland for people aged 25 to 40. It was championed by Sen. Sally Turner. As part of the act, she is working with the state agriculture department to create a webpage where younger people can get useful information on entering farming.

“Young farmers see all the roadblocks,” Turner said. “From problems with tariffs, the low prices of corn and beans, and everything on top of it. But there’s different avenues that can help you as a farmer, like low-interest loans if you wanted to try and buy a piece of ground. All those things are out there.”

For young farmers in Illinois, the challenges are hard to ignore, including longer term concerns about South American competition impacting soybean farmers in the state. But knowing that previous generations have overcome similar obstacles instills confidence.

“To see anybody struggle, it’s not encouraging, but to see them get through it has the opposite effect,” Muirhead said. “If you work hard enough or smart enough, you’ll get through the bad times.”

Brock Seymour has been working full time at his family farm for the past few years. The estate tax concerns him, and lifting the threshold would give him and his family more breathing room, he said. As with any family business, navigating succession planning and generational divides can be challenging, but Seymour is optimistic about the future.

“Now there’s hard times. I’m not going to lie,” Seymour said. “As a farmer, you know, you’re gambling. But to see how Grandpa has built the foundation gives me confidence that I can do the same.”

Rebecca Pieder 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.

Opinion and Commentary

Alcohol Use Disorder awareness promoted

Alcohol is the most used drug in the United States, with roughly 29.8 million individuals suffering from Alcohol Use Disorder, AUD, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse. For many people, the resulting stigma of AUD can often be as detrimental as the disorder itself.

During April, Rural Health Inc. has joined healthcare providers nationwide in observance of Alcohol Awareness Month to raise awareness, reduce the stigma, offer support and provide education in an effort to improve health outcomes in Southern Illinois.

Much of the region, from St. Louis south to Southeast Missouri, Western Kentucky, Southern Illinois and Arkansas and Tennessee, is considered a "hotspot" or high risk area for AUD. According to Rural Health Inc., this is a growing concern for their providers.

“Alcohol abuse and addiction tend to be higher in rural or underserved areas for a few reasons such as it’s much more accepted culturally and does not tend to have the same stigma as other drugs of abuse,” said Rural Health Inc. licensed clinical social worker Dennis Gade. “It’s generally most often diagnosed in individuals who struggle economically, have a family history of use, begin drinking at an early age, experience trauma and live with stress.”

AUD, also known as alcoholism or alcohol addiction, is characterized by physical addiction, tolerance, and loss of control. It differs from alcohol abuse in that AUD is a chronic (long-term), often physical, addiction in which the person requires alcohol to function. While alcohol abusers may stop, those with AUD face severe withdrawal and inability to control consumption.

Continued chronic abuse can damage the brain, pancreas and immune system. For all users, alcohol increases their risk of cancer (including breast, liver and esophageal cancer), heart disease, stroke and liver cirrhosis.

Signs and symptoms of AUD include cravings, failed attempts to reduce drinking, neglecting obligations at work or home and continued consumption despite health, social or dangerous consequences. Behavioral changes often involve high-risk drinking, mood swings and losing interest in, or reducing, activities due to alcohol.

Treatment for Alcohol Use Disorder is available at Rural Health Inc. in Anna, Dongola, Goreville, Metropolis and Vienna. For more information on AUD, or to schedule an appointment with a behavioral health provider at Rural Health Inc. for treatment support, call 618-833-4471 in Anna or visit ruralhealthinc.org online for the medical clinic near you.

STI Awareness Month highlights hidden risks of common infections

Sexually Transmitted Diseases, STDs, are some of the most commonly reported diseases in the United States. Because most infections that cause these diseases have no signs or symptoms, someone could be positive and not know it.

April is Sexually Transmitted Infections, STI, Awareness Month. Rural Health Inc. encourages anyone at risk of having an STI to get tested and treated if necessary.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC, classifies an STI as a virus, bacteria, fungus, or parasite people can get through sexual contact and sometimes skin-to-skin contact meaning they are blood borne and fluid-borne, not airborne viruses. STIs require direct contact with mucous membranes or broken skin and cannot be contracted by breathing the same air as an infected person.

STIs are contagious immediately upon infection and remain so until treatment is completed and verified, even when symptoms are absent. Left untreated, these infections can develop into an STD when symptoms can occur. Often someone is most contagious when showing symptoms, such as sores and discharge, but can be without them.

Rural Health Inc. advises that the only way to know your disease status is to get tested. According to the Illinois Department of Public Health, it is estimated that there are roughly 20 million new STIs each year in the United States. Of these new infections, half are among young people age 15 to 24, but can occur at any age.

In addition to preventing disease spread, screening is important to prevent serious health problems from untreated STD infections. The most common include Human papillomavirus, HPV, which are responsible for cervical, anal and throat cancers; HIV, which increases risks for Kaposi sarcoma and lymphomas; and Hepatitis B and C, which cause liver cancer.

Vaccines are available for HPV and Hepatitis B to reduce your chance of contracted these diseases, Rural Health Inc. noted. For more information about STIs and STDs, or to schedule an appointment for testing, treatment or vaccination, call RHI at 618-833-4471 or go online at www.ruralhealthinc.org to learn about a clinic near you.



Daffodil Festival celebrates spring
The Cobden Lions Club hosted a Daffodil Festival on Saturday, April 25. The festival was held, for the first time, at the Lions Club’s grounds in Cobden to celebrate spring and daffodils. The Daffodil Festival featured live music (the Whiskey Chicks performed as the festival opened), a bags tournament, a chili cook-off, a daffodil decorating contest, food and more.

Please read this...

‘It’s The End Of The World As We Know It’...

By Geof Skinner

Early Monday afternoon, “Watches, Warnings & Advisories” for the region posted on the website for the National Weather Service in Paducah included a Tornado Warning (in the St. Louis area), a Severe Thunderstorm Warning, a Flash Flooding Warning, a Severe Weather Statement, a Flood Warning, a Tornado Watch, a Severe Thunderstorm Watch, a Flood Advisory, a Wind Advisory, a Flood Watch, a Special Weather Statement and a Hazardous Weather Outlook. There was even a sound track to all of the alerts...R.E.M.’s “It’s The End Of The World As We Know It (And I Feel Fine)”...

Meanwhile...

At this gem was being crafted, the temperature was 81 degrees, the humidity was 67 percent, the heat index was 84 degrees, rain had fallen for a short time, the wind was blowing (with gusts topping 30 miles per hour) and bright sunshine was warming up the atmosphere over our little corner of the world. With a little bit of imagination, you could almost see Mother Nature using a big ol’ ladle to stir up the soupy sky, getting ready to unleash some sort of chaos on those of us down below.

The National Weather Service office in Paducah had been warning us for several days about the possibility of a coming maelstrom. (That, by the way, could be first time yours truly has ever used the word maelstrom.) By Monday morning, we were being advised that “a major severe weather outbreak” was possible. More than “possible,” as it turned out. Two severe thunderstorm warnings were issued for Union County early Monday morning. And, in addition to whatever might have been on the way Monday afternoon, evening and night, more severe weather was possible Tuesday afternoon and evening.

The Weather Service even offered some helpful tips on getting ready for the storms. One of those tips included remaining vigilant. Yup. And so we did... Oh...we also found a travel guide to the Land of Oz...you know...just in case... I just don’t want to meet up with those flying monkeys.

Meanwhile...

On Monday, in the midst of uncertainty over what might be coming, The Other Half had an opportunity to chat with someone who is fairly new to Southern Illinois and had come from someplace where the weather had a much calmer demeanor. The newcomer, like the rest of us, seems to have quickly figured out that the weather in the Land Between the Rivers is a bit crazy sometimes and can change at a moment’s notice. Well...if we are lucky...we will get some sort of notice.

Meanwhile...

The Other Half and her companion on The Journey Through Life were watching an episode of “BBC Gardeners’ World” online last Sunday evening. The occasion was our Saturday date night...which had to be delayed by 24 hours.

About halfway through the episode came a bit of a surprise. One of the plants mentioned in a story about a garden in Scotland (well...I think it was in Scotland) was very familiar to us. We just didn’t expect to hear and see the plant mentioned on a BBC program. The plant was the Annabelle hydrangea, which, as you probably know, has a Union County connection.

“The story of the ‘Annabelle’ hydrangea begins in southern Illinois near the town of Anna,” University of Illinois Extension horticulture educator Ryan Pankau wrote in a July 2019 article which can be found online. “In 1910, Harriet Kirkpatrick, of the renowned Kirkpatrick Pottery Company (which has a story all of its own), went on a horseback ride along a wooded trail in Union County and noticed a beautiful native hydrangea with abnormally large, snowball-like blooms. Together with her sister-in-law, Amy Kirkpatrick, she went back to dig up the native shrub and transplant it into her yard in Anna. Neighbors and friend noticed the showy plant and the Kirkpatrick family shared specimens of the easily transplantable shrub, spreading its progeny throughout Anna and other towns in Illinois”... and, so it would seem, in some other places, too.

Meanwhile...

Recent Critter Sightings have included...

Two tiny green amphibians of the frog or toad variety which were seen in a mostly dry creek bed at the Trail of Tears State Forest in Union County. The two amphibians were seen last Sunday afternoon during a visit to one of my favorite places. To tell you truth, I was hoping to see a snake in the creek bed. That did not happen. I had not been to the state forest in over a month. The creek bed was really dry.

Two young killdeer that were exploring the world along the railroad tracks in our hometown. I am still not sure why killdeer seem to like railroad tracks.

A flock...or maybe a gaggle...or maybe a herd...of white-tailed deer in a field, close to a woodline, along Spanish Bluff Road north of Anna. They sure kept a watchful eye on the photographer. Eventually, the deer either got bored or were tired of having their pictures taken and wandered off into the woods.

Lots of fireflies that were putting on show last Saturday night



Two young killdeer were seen along railroad tracks in our hometown on a recent sunny afternoon. Mom... or maybe it was dad...was close by...trying to distract



Three white-tailed deer were on high alert when they were seen in a field along Spanish Bluff Road last Friday morning.



A small amphibian found a nice place on a rock to rest its weary head after a busy day of hopping around in an almost dry creek bed at the Trail of Tears Forest.

in a field not far from Cobden. Oh, there was also the possum that decided to cross the highway right in front of us. I hit the brakes. The possum abruptly turned around and headed back to the side of the road it had come from, presumably to do whatever a Southern Illinois marsupial does on a Saturday night.

Well...that’s about enough for this week. Need to get this sent to The Paragraph Factory before the next round of storms...

Anna police issue alert to public about scam

The Anna Police Department is alerting the public about a scam. The department shared the following message on social media:

“Recently residents have been receiving scam calls claiming to be from Publishers Clearing House. The scammers are requesting Amazon gift cards as part of their fraudulent activities. Please do not send gift cards, money, or personal information to people who call you unless you know them personally and are expecting their request.”

“If you have been a victim of a scam, please report this to your local police agency. Please pass this along to friends and family, especially those most likely to be targeted for fraud,” the social media post continued

