

THE GAZETTE-DEMOCRAT

The Talk And Cobden Review • Serving Union County Since 1849

Thursday, January 15, 2026

Anna, Illinois

\$1.00

Volume 179, Number 6

News Notes

Items of interest from throughout the Union County area.

Frigid cold temperatures are in the forecast for this weekend in the Union County area. The low Sunday morning could dip to around 13 degrees, with a wind chill around 3. The high on Sunday is expected to be near 27.

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

In celebration of the nation's 250th birthday in 2026, Union County Women in Business is planning to host a "Stars, Stripes & Smarts All-American Trivia Night" Saturday evening, Jan. 31, at the Anna VFW post. Doors are slated to open at 5 p.m., trivia starts at 6 p.m. Proceeds will support the Union County Women in Business scholarship fund.

Anna-Jonesboro Community High School is noting a change in the Illinois High School Association calendar beginning in 2026. No practices, workouts, open gyms or conditioning are allowed from June 29 through July 5. August workouts are now allowed leading up to fall sports.

Cobden High School student Alyssa Fabian earned second place honors in the Voice of Democracy audio essay contest for the VFW's 15th District in Southern Illinois.

A Cobden Junior High School Snowflake Dance is planned on the evening of Jan. 30. All junior high students are invited to the dance, which will be held in the school's small gymnasium.

Dongola School is congratulating 2026 homecoming queen Jesse Quinn and homecoming king Braedon Smalley.

Lick Creek School's FFA chapter has received a donation from the VFW's Carroll P. Foster Post No. 3455 of Anna.

Cobden American Legion Post 259 and its auxiliary are planning to serve an all-you-can-eat pancake breakfast on Saturday, Feb. 7. Serving is planned from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. in the parish hall at St. Joseph Catholic Church.

The spring semester started this week at Shawnee Community College.

Shawnee Community College's Small Business Development Center coordinator Mackenzie Scherer recently was elected to the Union County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors.

Rehearsals were scheduled to start this week for Shawnee Community College's upcoming production of "The Addams Family."

Cobden Spay Neuter Coalition is hosting their third annual chili cook-off and silent auction is set for Jan. 24 at Fuzzy's in Cobden from 4 to 7 pm. The event is sponsored by Fuzzy's and is open to all.

A-JCHS girls' wrestling team makes history

The Anna-Jonesboro Community High School girls' wrestling team made history at the recent Rang-erette Rumble competition in Benton. The A-J girls earned the first team trophy in school history.

Individual finishes recorded by the A-J girls and posted by the school on social media included:

Haydyn Williamson, first. Bianca Timmons first. Joz-ilyn Kerr, second. Izzy Gi-ron, second. June Markham, second. Kinley Leek, fourth.

The school voiced pride in the team's accomplishment and recognized the girls for their hard work.

Grand Tower Post Office burglary investigated

The U.S. Postal Inspection Service, USPIS, reports that it is investigating a recent burglary at another Southern Illinois post office.

USPIS is offering a reward of up to \$100,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of a suspect or suspects responsible for the burglary of the Grand Tower Post Office. The post office is located at 522 Front St. in Grand Tower. The incident occurred on Dec. 18.

In early December, a bur-glary was reported at the Anna Post Office. The post office is located at 201 N. Main St. USPIS is offering a reward of up to \$100,000 for information about that bur-glary. The service reported that the burglary happened at the Anna Post Office be-tween the hours of 8 p.m. on December 1 and 6:30 a.m. on Dec. 2.

USPIS is encouraging anyone with information about the burglaries to call 1-877-876-2455, say "law enforcement" and reference case number 4641750 for the Grand Tower Post Office incident and case number 4630246 for the Anna Post Office incident.

All information will be kept strictly confidential. Members of the public are advised by the USPIS to take no action to apprehend a suspect themselves.

Henry Barkhausen Cache River Wetlands Center celebrates grand reopening Saturday

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources, IDNR, invited the public to celebrate the grand reopening of the Henry N. Barkhausen Cache River Wetlands Center at Cache River State Natural Area in Southern Il-linois from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 10.

The many visitors who came to be a part of the grand reopening could experience family-friendly environ-mental crafts; explore nearly 20 interactive community education and conserva-tion booths; meet with local naturalists and environmen-tal organizations; explore self-guided winter hiking, biking and birding opportu-nities; and have food served by The Kitchen on Lafayette in Anna.

Natural resources coordi-nator Sydney Waters joined IDNR in November and is assigned to Cache River State Natural Area. She and other staff members were on hand Saturday to greet visi-tors and welcome them back to the Barkhausen center. During remarks to those in attendance, Waters thanked all of those who their support to the center.

IDNR chief of parks Cal-vin Beckmann said the re-opening of the wetlands center reflected IDNR's mission statement, which is to man-age, conserve and protect Illinois' natural, recreational and cultural resources, to further the public's under-standing and appreciation of those resources and to pro-mote the education, science and public safety of Illinois' natural resources for present and future generations.

The center is named in honor of Henry N. Barkhausen, who served as director the Illinois Department of Conservation from 1970 to 1973. He also served as secretary of the Citi-zens Committee to Save the Cache River. He worked to encourage government agen-cies, organizations and resi-dents to protect and restore the natural character of the Cache Wetlands in Southern Illinois.

Nearly organizations, agencies and individuals participated in the grand re-opening celebration. Stinson Memorial Public Library



Welcoming visitors

Henry N. Barkhausen Cache River Wetlands Center natural resources coordinator Sydney Waters, lower left, greeted visitors who attended the center's grand reopening celebration Saturday, Jan. 10.

District was represented at the grand opening. Stinson offered opportunities to sign up for a library card, to explore a selection of library resources, to pick up free stickers and bookmarks and to create a wood-slice wet-land critter craft.

The center is located at 8885 Illinois Route 37 South in Cypress. The Cache River State Natural Area, with more than 18,000 acres in Johnson, Massac and Pulas-ki counties, features hiking trails, canoeing among the bald cypress trees, bicycling, wildlife watching, fishing, hunting and cultural and nat-ural history exhibits inside the wetlands center. Hours posted for the wetlands center are from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Thursday through Monday.



University of Illinois Extension booth

University of Illinois Extension was one of the organizations which had a booth at the grand reopening celebration Saturday, Jan. 10, at the Henry N. Barkhausen Cache River Wetlands Center at Cache River State Natural Area. Program coordinator Anne Townsend, left, and natural resources, environment and energy educator Erin Garrett represented the Extension unit serving Alexander, Johnson, Massac, Pulaski and Union counties.

Anna planning for nation's 250th birthday celebration

The City of Anna is mak-ing plans for a big Indepen-dence Day celebration on July 4 in commemoration of the nation's 250th birthday. The city's celebration is part of activities which are being planned throughout Union County.

The city shared on so-cial media that planning is underway for a full lineup of community events. The city has launched a survey which will give residents, organizations and busi-nesses an opportunity to share their ideas about the celebration.

The survey welcomes the submission of events to be

included in the celebration and an opportunity to sign up to volunteer for upcom-ing activities.

Some of the activities being planned for Anna's Independence Day celebra-tion include egg and spoon races, sack races, three-legged races, a cornhole tournament, a horseshoe tournament, a badminton tournament, a tug-of-war, wiener dog races and a hot dog eating contest.

Those who would like to share their thoughts about the celebration can visit the city's Facebook page or they can contact Anna City Hall.



Visitor restrictions announced

Deaconess Illinois Union County Hospital in Anna has posted a message on social media announcing that due to rising flu and RSV cases in the region, Deaconess Health System is implementing visitor restrictions to protect vulnerable patients. Deaconess Illinois restrictions include no visitors under the age of 16 and no visitors with symptoms of illness, including sudden onset of fever, cough, headache, muscle or joint pain, sore throat or runny nose. Masks will be available and encouraged for guests. The health system is reminding visitors to practice good hand hygiene and to cover coughs and sneezes. Anyone who is feeling ill is asked to stay home.



THE GAZETTE-DEMOCRAT

THE TALK AND COBDEN REVIEW

Serving Union County Since 1849

(USPS 215-280)

ISSN 2834-6165 (Print)

2834-6173 (Online)

Published weekly on Thursdays

by Southern Illinois LOCAL Media Group, LLC

112 Lafayette St.

Anna, Illinois 62906-0529

618-833-2158

news@annanews.com

Periodical postage paid at Anna, Illinois 62906-0529







Benjamin Marxer.....Editor

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

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Per Year • July, 2022

In Union County.....\$54.00

Elsewhere in 629 Zip Code.....\$56.00

Out of Area.....\$64.00

Per Copy.....\$1.00

E-edition.....\$54.00



POSTMASTER: Send address changes to

The Gazette-Democrat

112 Layfayette St.

Anna, Illinois 62906-0529

Advertising rates given on application.

The Gazette-Democrat | Monday’s Pub.

www.annanews.com

facebook.com/gazettedemocrat

Illinois extends enrollment deadline for health insurance

By Jenna Schweikert
Capitol News Illinois

Customers still shopping for health insurance coverage through Illinois’ state-run marketplace now have more time to choose a plan.

Officials at Get Covered Illinois announced Monday, Jan. 12, they would extend the open enrollment deadline by 16 days. For coverage beginning Feb. 1, 2026, consumers must enroll by Jan. 31.

Independent from the federal marketplace at Healthcare.gov, Get Covered Illinois allows Illinois residents to shop for plans under the Affordable Care Act.

“We are seeing record numbers of customers finding more affordable coverage by taking the time to shop for and compare plans,” Morgan Winters, director of Get Covered Illinois, said in a statement. “As a state-based marketplace, not only do we now have the authority to offer this special enrollment extension, but we also have more resources to support our customers in finding affordable health coverage options.”

Federal subsidies enacted during the COVID-19 pandemic expired on Dec. 31, 2025. That has resulted in significantly higher premiums in 2026 for millions of consumers nationwide.

Data released by the federal government suggests that premium payments may more than double without the subsidies, according to analysis conducted by healthcare policy nonprofit KFF.

The U.S. House passed a bill with bipartisan support in January that would provide a three-year subsidy extension despite objections from GOP leaders, but it still must pass the Senate and receive a signature from the president to become law.

To apply for a plan, Illinois residents can visit GetCoveredIllinois.gov or call the Customer Assistance Center at 1-866-311-1119 (TTY: 711).

Navigators and brokers across the state, available through Get Covered Illinois, provide free plan recommendations and guidance through the enrollment and application process. They are funded by grants from the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services and the Department of Insurance.

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.

Jenna Schweikert is a student in the Public Affairs Reporting master’s degree program at University of Illinois Springfield.

Anna Police Department issues alert about scams

The Anna Police Department is encouraging the public to be aware of scams which appear on online. The department shared a message on social media which reported that several city and county residents recently were targeted by what appeared to be a local Facebook profile. The profile was used by scammers based in the Ivory Coast of Africa.

“These scammers solicited embarrassing statements, opinions and other personal information. The scammers attempted to use these items for extortion purposes demanding monetary compensation to keep these items private,” the police department reported.

“Just remember that anything you put on the internet can be used against you by scam artists. If you intend something to remain private, be certain anyone you share

your information, opinions, photos, videos, etc. with are trustworthy individuals who will remain trustworthy in the future.

“Also, always be aware people can use information you post to target your residence when you are away on vacation, or falsely claim to be a family/friend in need of money while traveling. Be certain you have a way to verify people’s identities when they call asking for money (i.e. a password that can be used and is never publicly posted) and never put your travel plans on the internet.

“Lastly, if you are ever the target of a scam, please report it to your local police department or county sheriff’s office so we can continue to serve you to the best of our abilities. Reporting these crimes is the best way to keep our community safer.”

Shawnee College completes purchase of Anna extension center building

Extension center
Shawnee Community College’s extension center in Anna is located along East Vienna Street in a building which formerly housed a Walmart store. File photo.

Shawnee Community College reports that it has officially completed the purchase of the entire building formerly known to the community as the “old Walmart” in Anna, now home to the college’s Union County Extension Center, UCEC.

The college announced on social media that the facility, which is located at 1150 E. Vienna St., and is owned in full by the college as of Jan. 8, 2026.

The building houses Shawnee Community College’s Union County Extension Center, which serves as a key educational hub and houses the college’s occupational therapy assistant program, certified nursing assistant program, adult education offerings, general education courses and a community fitness center.

The facility also includes retail tenants Dollar Tree and Rent One, both of which will remain in the building. Each has signed long-term lease agreements as part of the transition in ownership, the college announced.

In 2025, the college entered into a lease agreement for the Union County Extension Center that included a negotiated purchase option at the direction of the Shawnee Community College Board of Trustees. Rather than committing to a long-term lease with escalating rental costs and significant deferred maintenance obligations, the board determined that purchasing the entire facility was the most fiscally responsible and sustainable course of action.

“This purchase marks an important milestone for Shawnee Community College and for Union County,”

Union County board meeting held in Jonesboro

Support for the county’s animal control program was noted at last week’s regular meeting of the Union County Board of Commissioners. The meeting was Friday morning, Jan. 9, at the Union County Courthouse in Jonesboro.

Board vice chairman Kent Pitts reported that the program recently had received several nice monetary donations. Such donations are welcomed. Donations of dog food also continue to be welcomed. Pitts thanked the public for its support of the program. He also praised the work which the animal control program’s staff continues to do.

In other business, Union County Sheriff David Wilkins shared an update on the installation of a Flock automated license plate recognition system in the county. Cameras for the system are being installed at key points along main roads in the county. Nine cameras have been installed, including some in the municipalities of Anna, Jonesboro and Donola. With the installation of the cameras, the county will be part of a nationwide system which assists law enforcement agencies in the investigation of criminal activities.

The commissioners approved building permits for two new single-family homes in the county.

Author book signings set at Stinson

The works of local authors will be featured at upcoming book signings which are scheduled at Stinson Memorial Public Library in Anna. The library is located at 409 S. Main St.

Jeremiah Bass, the author of “The Silver Screen,” is scheduled to be at the library at 11 a.m. Jan. 17. The library shared that the book is about Wyatt, “a man who travels through old movie theater screens. As reality blurs, he and Emma fight to keep his memories intact in a story about love and the magic of cinema.”

Southern Illinois history will be featured when author Todd Carr visits the library from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Feb. 10. Carr is the author of “Cave-In-Rock Pirates & Outlaws.” The book is about Cave-In-Rock, which was “a notorious outlaw stronghold” in the years following the American Revolution. “For decades, criminals and river pilots hid there, ambushing travelers.” Carr traces “the folklore of the thieves, pirates and highwaymen who haunted this legendary bluff” along the Ohio River.

Martin McMorro, the author of “Phoenix to LA,” is scheduled to be at the library from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. March 10. The book is “a coming of age tale of Vietnam and one man’s journey out of the 1960s.”

said Shawnee Community College president Dr. Tim Taylor. “By owning the entire building, we ensure long-term stability for our programs, maintain positive relationships with existing tenants and keep financial resources invested locally.”

SCC Board chairperson Steve Heisner, added, "By their approval of this purchase, the board of trustees affirms the college's commitment to the citizens of Union County and the entire college district as it continues to look for opportunities to establish permanent facilities to serve its constituency throughout the district.”

The purchase was funded through the successful sale of general obligation debt certificates, with proceeds received prior to closing.

Music festival plans to celebrate ‘America at 250’

The nationally recognized Southern Illinois Music Festival, SIFest, is planning to celebrate the history of the nation’s music in 2026. “America at 250” is the theme for this year’s festival. Concert venues for the 2026 SIFest include locations in the Union County area.

The festival, which is scheduled from June 18 to July 4, will present American classical music from the 18th through the 21st centuries, featuring composers such as Amy Beach, George Whitefield Chadwick, Samuel Barber, Irving Berlin, Leonard Bernstein, Chick Corea, Aaron Copland and many more.

Offerings are set to include five major orchestral programs, five “patriotic pops” concerts, three outdoor pre-fireworks concerts and numerous chamber music programs at locations throughout the region.

Edward Benyas, SIFest artistic director, founder and conductor, said this year’s repertoire includes a “great cross section of eras and composers.” Benyas is an emeritus professor of oboe and conducting at SIU Carbondale and executive director of the Cascade Symphony in Edmonds, Washington.

“I love American classical music and can’t tell you how excited I am to help introduce audiences to the tremendous range of music by American composers,” Benyas said. “For example, we will perform two great symphonies – William Grant Still’s ‘Afro-American’ Symphony and George Chadwick’s Second Symphony. Chadwick is kind of like an American Brahms – he trained in Germany and was part of the Second New England School from the late 19th century.”

The festival also is scheduled to feature three piano concertos that span a century and music “from great American musicals like ‘Oklahoma!’, ‘South Pacific,’ ‘West Side Story’ and ‘A Chorus Line,’” Benyas said, adding there also will be excerpts from John Williams’ film scores at every concert.

Concert locations include Carterville High School; the Harold Jones Fine Arts Center in Cairo; Artspace Southern Illinois 304 Cultural Arts Center, the African American Museum and First United Methodist Church, all in Carbondale; and Alto Vineyards and the Anna Arts Center in Union County.

The three free pre-fireworks concerts are scheduled July 2 at Mtn Dew Park in Marion, July 3 at Riverside Park in Murphysboro and July 4 outside of SIU Carbondale’s Banterra Center.

Tickets for all SIFest 2026 events, except those that are free, will be \$25 general admission and \$10 for students of any age, and available at concert venues 30 minutes before each performance. An all-festival pass is \$150 and includes admission to all events along with a 60-page program booklet, valued together at \$200.

Advance festival passes and individual tickets will be available on the SIFest 2026 brochure ticket order form, which will be posted in March on the festival website at sifest.com.

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	



Black belt promotion

Maddex Raganyi has been announced as the newest 1st Dan Black Belt in ChunJiDo. Maddex went through a rigorous Black Belt testing on Saturday, Jan. 3 at Coffman’s Martial Arts Academy in Anna. Upon passing his test, a candlelight ceremony was held on Saturday, Jan. 10. O’Sensei Robert Cutrell led a ceremony rooted in ancient samurai rituals. The ceremony was witnessed by Grandmaster Cutrell, Grandmaster Heather Coffman, Sensei Jerry Richey, Cooper Johnson, Jeffrey Stout, ChunJiDo students, family and friends. Maddex is the son of Jacob and Sarah Raganyi of Alto Pass.

Shawnee names honor roll students

The Shawnee School District in Wolf Lake has announced the names of the honor roll and high honor roll students for the second quarter of the 2025-2026 school year.

Honor Roll

Charlie Chapman, Eva Barcenas, Gracelynn Bigham, Thia Boucher, Avery Sissom, Eliza Ford, Connor Wilson, Desi Boucher, Keaton Carmack, Shelby Pender, Claire Boyd, Katie Crowden, Alana Davis, Raylyn Phelps.

High Honor Roll

Aubree McMahan, Ava Thomas, Adalyn Follis, Ella Faulkner, Tinley Qualls, Murphy Wilson, Ahanna Moore, Hunter Ross Saphyre Beasley, Eva Ford, Lillie Griffin, Emma Neilson, DJ Rushing.

Chandler Boyd, Adys-on Choate, Addilyn Clark, Peyton Clymore, Nick Dallas, Sereniti Mefford, Zoe Myers, Aniston Nicholson, Madalyn Schuster, Haleigh Charles, Cindy Price, Daisy Taylor, Emma Young.

Lick Creek students earn honor roll status

The Lick Creek School District has announced the students whose academic achievements in the second quarter of the school year have earned them honor roll and high honor roll honors.

High Honor Roll Third Grade

Otto Wayne Banks, William Scott Bowen, Blakeley Ann-Marie Bryan, Abigail Rosalie Fern Mari Evers, Wiliam Ellis Glays, Malory Elizabeth Hall, Miles Parker “Milo” Houseman, Hank Sawyer Newman, Rodney James "RJ" Wright.

Fourth Grade

Madelyn Jo Coomer, Friedrich Wichmann "Fritz" Moberley, Michael Christopher Schmidt.

Fifth Grade

Bella Lynn Cook, Kooper DuWayne Glasco, Isabella Marie Mendez Fabery, Paisley Jae New, Hayes Matthew Pinnon, Daniel Austin Plott.

Sixth Grade

Elias Carter “Eli”Houseman.

Seventh Grade

Owen Cache Corbit, Jet Allen Newman, Maggie Dawn

Honor roll students named at Jonesboro

Jonesboro Elementary School has named the honor roll and high honor roll students for the second quarter of the 2025-2026 school year.

High Honors

Arianna Black, Reagan Cheek, Eli Fehrenbacher, Gavin McFadden, Charlie Barlow, Jayden Benefield, Eli Cohen, Lawson Ury.

Landon Hill, Emma Lambdin, Kamiya Velasquez, Ella Bailey, Margaret Bailey, Cooper Dallas, Lily Dallas, Owen Jiter.

Honor Roll

Colton Barnhart, Jaycee Clutts, Addison Ebberts, Hank Goss. Blake Edwards, Knox Harris, Jonah Miller, Nolan Newberry, Conner Pind, Kadence Poe, Collin Staples, Madilyn Wilkins, Kaitlyn Zimmerman.

Zella Baggott, Mahayla Dukes, Jayda Mayes, Lillian Newberry, Adelle Sherrill, RJ Turner, Dylan Walker, Sam Warden.

Kate Cohen, Karcen East-erly, Mariah Miller, Caliope Pind, Kenley Rains, Koralynn Treece, Kimber Webb, Reata Wenger, Cain Williams, Warner Wingate.

Anna-Jonesboro names fall semester honor roll students

Anna-Jonesboro Commu-nity High School would like to congratulate the following students for their outstanding academic achievements in the fall semester of the 2025-2026 school year.

Honor Roll awards are given to students based on their weighted GPA during the semester. High Honor Roll comprises students who achieved a semester GPA of 4.0 or above, while Honor Roll recognizes students with a semester GPA of 3.6 to 3.99.

High Honor Roll Freshmen

Trystan Borders, Hayden Craft, Abbey Del Rosario, Lindyn Eudy, Frank Gad-dis, Levi Hill, Zakira Kerr, Cooper Knueven, Adalyn Landis – Plott, Allison Leek, Ava McDowell, Clara Mix, Gabriella Newberry.

Andrea Olivera, Lola Pier-son, Makenna Reynolds, Xavier Richardson, Shaylee Sadler, Jersey Shepard, Kaleb Stover, Joseph Thompson, Leah Turner, Sailor Waters, Zoe Weir, and Smith Wilson.

Sophomores

Shooter Belcher, Kaysee Benefield, Joshua Binversie, Julian Brust, Elina Chen, Seth Cochran, Camron Easterly, Lera Hoehner, Jase Holshous-er, Melissa Isaacson, Hayden Keller, Alexis Kinder, Gabri-el Morey, Xailex Morgan.

Madalyn Moss, Zach-ary Orange, Aryanna Oz-ment, Elliott Poulos, Molly Roach, Reaslyn Shepard, Jaida Smith, Adalyn Suggs, Emma Thurston, Brooklynn Tripp, Sophia Vaughn, So-phia Wells, Kenleigh Whea-ton, and Allie Yana.

Juniors

Blake Abernathy, Mack-enzie Barnhart, Lyra Casper, Caden Cerney, Nicholas Cook, Natilyn Corbit, Elliot Cox, Taylor Crews, Tilman Dallas, Faelyn Foss, Grayson Garner, Halle Haas, Hannah Hale, Tyler Haywood, Eliza-beth Hill, Milla Hunter, Evan Inman, Norah Kelley, Bodhi Laws, Kinley Leek, Rocelin Lily, Reese Lofton.

Benjamin Marggraf, Dillon Moreland, Kylee Myers, Zan-der Navarro-Ballard, Leon Patterson, Maxwel Rud-dick, Sophia Seader, Brooke Sheffer, Jaron Taliseo, Brian Thompson, Beckett Thorpe, Matthew Turner, Haydyn Williamson, John Wright Jr, Lucas Wright and Lizbeth Zamora.

Seniors

Jaylen Althoff, Brooke-lynn Barnhart, Drake Bible, Presley Bierstedt, Addison Bonner, Aleah Box, Dawson Brunner, Zoe Chen, Adam Clark, Kansas Craig, Gray-don Edmonds, Emily Ed-wards, Jordan Gentry, Mag-gie Gooden, Lula Griffin, Brody Gulledge, Christopher Hernandez, Traven Hodges, Alexis Houseman.

Lauren Jackson, Raegan Jones, Reese Jones, Amelia Lingle, Grant Lingle, Aidan McFadden, Mariel McGrath, Jason Messamore, Heidi Miller, Kenzie Miller, Madi-son Moore, Danica Morgan, Layne Murray, Foster Nee-ddling, Jayci Needling, Daw-son Nicholas, Kurt Petrich, Lane Piller.

Ethan Plott, Tanner Pow-ell, Aaliyah Prater, Raelynn Sadler, Jayda Shepard, Ally Simmons, Timothy Taylor, Zachary Taylor, Lucas Te-

handon, Drue Teske, Edwin Thompson, Kayleigh Whea-ton, and Mason Yates

Honor Roll Freshmen

Jesica Ambrocio, Kaden Ames, Alison Carrillo, Lib-erty Cook, Sophia Cooley, Easton Corbit, Kylie Dillow, Vivienne Gooden, Caden Gurley, Nolan Holderfield.

Hayden Lewis, Trent Mill-er, Robert Murray, Scarlet Myers, Kynlee Needling, Lexsis Robertson, Ian Sulli-van, Sophia Willey, and June Williams.

Sophomores

Brayden Barnhart, Ava Boreup, Melaina Bundren, Briley Clay, Mya Clutts, Landen Curry, Allison Dan-iels, Damon Easter, Ava Fra-zier, Isabella Grey, Cobie Hodges. Camryn Kelley, Gus Kirk, Elly Mays, Jalynn Moss, Macayla Nance, Logan Pearl, Hayden Staples, Ella Whitaker, and Bryce Wright.

Juniors

Madelyn Ahlberg, Hunt-er Alsip, Heaven Brimm, Tristan Brown, Jackson Carter, Landen Carter, Lark Fleming, Jimena Flores, Ella Helton, Camiah Lowe, Char-lie Pierson, Ava Rosenthal, Abigail Shipley, Jackson Spurlock, Jaylin Vicory, and Holly Yana

Seniors

Kinsey Brown, Aiden Col-son, Sadie Cross, Blake Dil-low, Mariah Downs, Gabriel Eddings, Caleb Harvell Alexa Hinkle, Henry Hoehner, Elias Knight, Jake Menees, Dexter Morse, Calie Pinnon, Owen Quick, Jack Smith, Samuel Smith, Kale Waller, and Ne-vaeh Walsh.

Illinois Human Rights Authority to meet in Anna

The Egyptian Regional Human Rights Authority of the Illinois Guardianship and Advocacy Commission will meet in Anna on Thursday, Jan. 15. The meeting will take place at Los Dos Gallos at 101 Leigh Ave. at 5 p.m.

On the agenda for the meeting is a review and discussion of complaints concerning allegations that the rights of persons with disabilities are being vio-lated at private and public facilities that provide mental health or developmental dis-abilities services.

The Human Rights Au-thority is a panel of nine citizen volunteers appoint-ed by the Commission and empowered by statute to in-vestigate alleged violations of the rights of persons with disabilities.

The Human Rights Au-thority serves all counties throughout Illinois. Case investigations ensure the rights of eligible children and adults who have a dis-ability.

Cases tentatively set for this month's agenda include complaints involving alleged

violations of the laws, regu-lations and other mandates that protect the rights of persons with disabilities.

If you believe the rights of a person with disabilities are being violated, you may report this at the meeting or contact the Disability Rights Manager, Kim Conway, at (618) 833-2013.

All complainants' names are kept confidential. Cur-rently the board has two vacancies for citizen member volunteers. Contact Kim Conway if you are interested in serving on the HRA board.

Anna Council approves bid for project

The Anna City Council last week approved a bid for a valve replacement project at the city’s wastewater treatment plant lagoon. The project was on the agenda for a regular council meeting which was held Tuesday evening, Jan. 6, at Anna City Hall.

One bid was submitted for the project. The bid, from Plott Construction in Anna in the amount of \$39,886.44, was approved by the coun-cil. Two valves are to be replaced.

In other business, the coun-cil reviewed a proposed or-dinance to amend the city’s revised code of ordinances to regulate the placement of feather flags with respect to setbacks from sidewalks and public rights-of-way in the community. The matter has been discussed at several re-cent council meetings.

A vote, which ended in a tie, was taken on the proposed or-dinance. One council member could not be in attendance at the meeting. Action is antici-pated at the council’s next regular meeting, when all of the council members are expected to be in attendance.

Work has started on the budget for the city’s new fiscal year which begins on May 1.

Book sale set at Stinson

The Friends of Stinson will hold their annual winter book sale on Feb. 6 to 8. The library is located at 409 S. Main Street in Anna.

The three-day event begins with a Friends Appreciation Sale on Friday, Feb. 6, from 4 to 6 p.m.

A public sale will follow on Saturday, Feb. 7, running from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The final day, Sunday, Feb. 8, features a bag sale from 1 to 3 p.m.

65th wedding anniversary planned



The children, grandchil-dren, and great-grandchildren of Joyce and Dorris Johnson of Anna invite family and friends to join them in a ce-lebration of the couple’s 65 years of marriage.

The Johnson were married on Jan. 27, 1961 at the old Church of the Nazarene on Chestnut Street in Anna.

They have lived in Union county for most of those 65 years.

The 65th anniversary cele-bration will be at the present Church of the Nazarene in the fellowship hall on Saturday, Jan. 24, from 2 to 4 pm.

The church is located at 100 Kirk St. in Anna.

The Johnsons request no gifts: however, cards will be welcomed.

Roller derby recruitment night set

Cape Girardeau Roller Derby (CGRD) will host its first re-cruitment of the 2026 season on Monday, Jan. 26 at 6:30 p.m. at the AC Brase Arena Building in Cape Girardeau.

Adults 18 and older are welcome to attend, meet the team and learn what it takes to become a roller derby skater or referee.

The league encourages all interested adults to attend. No skating or athletic experience is necessary. CGRD utilizes a dedicated training committee to teach new members all the skills they will require.

The only requirement for the recruitment event is a boil-and-bite mouthguard. A lim-ited amount of loaner skates

and protective gear will be available on a first-come, first-serve basis. Roller derby is an inclusive sport and CGRD welcomes fall to attend.

More information on the league and on the recruit-ment event can be found on their Facebook page (CGRD: Cape Girardeau Roller Der-by).



Recruitment

The Cape Girardeau Roller Derby league is holding a recruitment night in Cape on Monday, Jan. 26. Photo credit: Photography by Matt Ruddick

Obituaries

Roy Eugene (Gene) Miller

Roy Eugene (Gene) Miller, age 90 of Tamms, Ill., passed away at 7:06 p.m. on Monday, Jan. 5, 2026 at the Lutheran Home in Cape Girardeau, Mo.

He was born Nov. 9, 1935 to Roy and Effie (Holshouser) Miller in Tamms, Ill.

On Aug. 13, 1954, Gene married Wilma Faye Jordan of Thebes, Ill. in Corinth, Miss.

Gene taught sixth grade at Thebes, Ill. grade school for 3 years. After leaving teaching, he was employed by the Illinois Department of Transportation District 9 in Carbondale, Ill. for the remainder of his work life.

The District Engineer awarded him a plaque for 32 years, 7 months of dedicated service to the Improvement of Transportation in Illinois on December 31, 1989.

Gene was a member of Sandy Creek Baptist Church in Tamms, Ill. where he served as a Deacon.

He is survived by his son, Kent J. Miller (Ginger) of Sikeston, Mo.; daughter, Marcy Miller-Borel (Rhine) of New Iberia, La.; and one grandson, Byron K. Miller (Sierra) of Benton, Mo., and one sister, Frances Reid of Cape Girardeau, Mo., nieces, nephews, and other relatives.



Leslie W. Grubbe

Leslie W. Grubbe, age 84, of Jonesboro, passed away on Sunday, Jan. 4, 2026 at his home.

He was born on Oct. 1, 1941 to Leslie W., Sr. and Dorothy (Standburg) Grubbe in Chicago, Ill.

Leslie worked at Southern Illinois University for 27 years until his retirement.

He enjoyed showing Indian artifacts and horseback riding across the country and loved model trains.

Leslie was a member of the Union and Johnson County Saddle Club, Little Egypt Orchid Society.

Survivors include his wife, Michael Grubbe; children, Bill Grubbe and Beth Frick; three grandchildren, Cody Grubbe, Dawson Frick, and Allison Frick; brother-in-law, Warren Strouts; along with many other relatives and friends.



Janet Rae Ragan

Janet Rae Ragan, age 80 of Jonesboro, passed away peacefully with her family by her side, Saturday, Jan. 3, 2026.

She was born May 13, 1945 in Anna, the daughter of Herman and Margaret (Shephard) Pretzsch. She married Robert Logan Ragan on Oct. 11, 1962 in Anna.

Janet is survived by her husband, Bob Ragan; children, Marla (Todd) Williams, Tyler Ragan, Chris Ragan, and Margaret (Pat) Hite; grandchildren, Maddy (Clint) Walker, Chloe (Preston) Fore, JR Hileman, Justice Hite; great-grandchildren, John Brooks Walker, Addisyn Rae Fore, and her little brother on the way; son-in-law, Joe Hileman; sister, Nancy (Knute) Shultz; cousin, Judy (John) Kowaldzyk; nieces and nephews; many other relatives and friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents; daughter, Carla Hileman; sister, Sharon Leslie, and brother, Jerry Landrum.

Janet worked at Union County Hospital for 30 years in housekeeping until her retirement in 2003.

She loved spending time with her children and grandchildren; they were her pride and joy.



Along with his parents, he is preceded in death by his loving wife, Wilma Jordan Miller on March 18, 2017; his granddaughter, Jordan E. Miller of Sikeston, Mo.; two brothers, Clifford Miller and Curtis Miller; and four sisters, Elsie Suddeth, Lorene McAlister, Grace Duff, and Lois Farris.

A Graveside Service followed by interment was held on Friday, Jan. 9, with Rev. Clint Nale officiating at Rose Hill Cemetery in Thebes, Ill.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests with gratitude that memorial contributions be made to Baptist Children's Home, 949 County Rd 1300 N, Carmi, IL 62821.

Crain Funeral Home in Tamms is in charge of arrangements.



friends.

Along with his parents, he is preceded in death by his sister, Laura Buckley (Dorian).

Per Leslie's wishes, there will be no formal service.

The cremation of Leslie W. Grubbe will be personally handled by the staff of Crain Funeral Home.

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



and joy. She enjoyed watching sports of all kinds on T.V., especially Chicago Cubs baseball and Chicago Bulls basketball.

Janet's love of her family and friends kept her busy with daily phone calls and check-ins, keeping up to date with everything going on. Janet especially looked forward to hair day with Cathy and visiting with everyone in the shop.

Funeral services for Janet Rae Ragan were on Saturday, Jan. 10, 2026 at the Rendleman & Hileman Funeral Home in Jonesboro with Mark Kirk and Todd Williams officiating. Interment followed in the Casper Cemetery.

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

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

Lloyd "Dean" Newman

Lloyd "Dean" Newman, 77, of Anna passed away Sunday, Jan. 4, 2026, at Memorial Hospital of Carbondale surrounded by family.

He was born in Anna on Nov. 14, 1948 to Archie Lloyd Newman and Ruth Lucille (Alger) Newman. He married Linda Faye Womack on Dec. 14, 1968.

Dean is survived by his wife of 57 years, Linda Newman; two sons, Heath (Holly) Newman of Anna and Dusty Newman of Anna; two granddaughters, Dustee Brooke Newman and Lila Ann Newman; two sisters, Ruth Ann (Donnie) Russell of Mission, Texas and Linda Lee Hine of Murphysboro, Ill.; sister-in-law, Royce Womack of Bloomington, Ill.; 7 nieces, 1 nephew and many friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents, his brother, John "Sunny" Newman, and his beloved dog, Maverick. Dean was a man of many trades, just like his father, but was first a husband, father and pawpaw to those he loved.

He was a truck driver, business owner, cattle farmer and retired from Local 318 as a heavy equipment operator for the State of Illinois.

In his earlier years, he enjoyed riding horses, riding motorcycles on small vacations with his wife and sons, and was, reportedly, an amazing dancer and roller skater.

In his later years, he and Linda traveled through the southern states in their fifth-wheel camper. They eventually bought a place in Mission, Texas and became Winter Texans.

Dean loved spending time with his family, solving all the world's problems with the

RENDLEMAN & HILEMAN early morning FS crew, getting his FUNERAL HOMES

Kathern E. "Kathy" Dillow

Kathern E. "Kathy" Dillow, age 82 of Jonesboro, passed away Friday, Jan. 9, 2026 at Memorial Hospital of Carbondale.

She was born on Oct. 9, 1943 in Anna, the daughter of Sam and Alice (Newton) Ellis. She married Gene Dillow on Feb. 20, 1965.

Kathy is survived by her husband, Gene Dillow; children, Lynda Dillow (Michael Jordan), Patrick Lane Dillow and Gary Eugene Dillow; granddaughter, Cali Dillow; great-grandchildren, Avery Golliher and Stevie Kay Basler; brothers, Ronald Ellis, Everett "Mike" (Janet) Ellis and Jim (Linda) Ellis; sister-in-law, Patricia Ann (Larry) McIntosh; nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents, brother, Charles Ellis and sister-in-law, Maxine Ellis.

Kathy retired from Short Enterprises in Anna after 26 years. For many years, she was a member of the University of Illinois Home Extension in Anna.

RENDLEMAN & HILEMAN She enjoyed painting, FUNERAL HOMES

Shawn Gunn

Shawn Gunn, age 53, of Carbondale, formerly of Cobden, passed away on Friday, January 2, 2026 at Barnes-Jewish Hospital in St. Louis, Mo.

He was born on April 3, 1972 to Terry and Judy (Basler) Gunn in Carbondale, Ill.

Shawn worked at Neuro Restorative in Carbondale since 2011.

In his spare time, Shawn loved to watch football, play his gaming console, and loved going out to eat and spending time with his grandchildren.

Survivors include his children, Austin Gunn, Cameron Gunn, and Cheyenne Trexler; grandchildren, Micah Vandergraph, Oakley Vandergraph, Caden Vandergraph, and Mav-



erick Gunn; and one sister, Melissa Gunn.

Shawn is preceded in death by his parents.

No formal services will be held.

The cremation of Shawn Gunn will be personally handled by the staff of Crain Funeral Home.

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



bowling, shopping and traveling. Most of all, she loved her family and spending time with them. She will be missed.

Graveside funeral services for Kathy Dillow were held on Tuesday, Jan. 13, 2026 at the Jonesboro Cemetery with Bill Littrell officiating. Interment will follow. Rendleman and Hileman Funeral Home in Jonesboro is in charge of arrangements.

To visit Kathy's memorial page and leave online condolences for her family, please visit the Rendleman and Hileman Funeral Home website at rendlemanhilemanfh.com



erick Gunn; and one sister, Melissa Gunn.

Shawn is preceded in death by his parents.

No formal services will be held.

The cremation of Shawn Gunn will be personally handled by the staff of Crain Funeral Home.

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

Jane E. Baggott

Jane E. Baggott, age 80, of Anna, formerly of Cobden, passed away on Friday, Jan. 9, 2026 at Deaconess Illinois Union County Hospital.

She was born on Nov. 12, 1945 in Union County, Ill.

On Dec. 8, 1961, she married Donald Baggott and together they spent over 57 years.

Jane's passion was for antique collecting and collectibles and was a dealer and collector of many items.

Among many things, her family and friends will remember her for being a great cook, having big dinners, and her love to bake Christmas cookies to share with others.

Survivors include her four children, Julie (Michael) Kelley, Jake (Jenni) Baggott, Dan (Donna) Baggott, and Sara (John) Nimmo; along with numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

She is preceded in death by her parents and husband.

News from

First Baptist Church, Jonesboro

This past Sunday, Jan. 11, Pastor Perry presented a message discussing wisdom, prudence and decision-making. His text was found in the sixth chapter of the book of Joshua found in the Old Testament.

Music Director, Dee Rose, led in worship accompanied by the Praise Team: Lucas, Megan and Isabel Tehandón, and Connor Benbrook. Debbie York accompanied them on the piano. John Turner sang a special: "Worthy of Worship."

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

This week's activities in-

Anna VFW post hosting bingo, meetings

Veterans of Foreign Wars Carroll P. Foster Post No. 3455 of Anna will be hosting Glo Bingo on Saturday, Jan. 17. The kitchen will open at 5:30 p.m. and play will start at 7 p.m.

Tickets are \$25 and includes six bingo cards for 10 games, a Glo hat and dauber.

This event is made possible through the support of current public servants

U.S. Rep Bost secures funding for local infrastructure projects

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Representative Mike Bost (IL-12) today applauded House passage of a commerce, energy and interior funding bill for the remaining fiscal year that includes nearly \$9 million for seven local infrastructure projects he championed in Congress.

The community projects, spanning Clinton, Crawford, Edwards, Monroe, Randolph, St. Clair, and Union counties, will improve water safety, sanitation, public safety and emergency communications.

"This spending package provides the certainty needed to unleash America's energy potential, invest in our military, and modernize our aging infrastructure," said Bost. "I'm proud to say, it's an impact that will be felt across Southern Illinois. I worked with local leaders on key priorities to strengthen the safety of our water systems and the effectiveness of emergency response services. All told, we've delivered nearly \$9 million



A Private Inurnment will be held at a later date at the Mound City National Cemetery in Mound City, Ill.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests with gratitude that memorial contributions be made to the Anna VFW Funeral Ritual Team.

The cremation of Jane E. Baggott will be personally handled by the staff of Crain Funeral Home.

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

clude the Men's Bible Study at 6 p.m., Monday, Jan. 12; and the men will participate in the CCBA Wild Game Supper at Ullin First Baptist Church on Friday, Jan. 16, at 6 p.m.

Recent birthdays: Evanne Osman, Dec. 26; Denna Williams, Jan. 11; Robert McCain, Jan. 12; and Randy Gorst, Jan. 14, and Kim Anderson, Jan. 20. Happy birthday to all!

Currently, our regular schedule for worship at Jonesboro First Baptist includes Sunday School classes on Sundays at 9 a.m.; Sunday morning worship at 10 a.m.; both Youth for 6th-12th grades and Sunday evening worship at 6 p.m. Our Children's Dig-In Program meets on Wednesdays, from 6-8 p.m. Youth 7th-12th grades meet 6-8 p.m. Wednesdays. Our Adult Prayer Meeting and Bible Study also meets on Wednesdays at 6:00 p.m. All are invited to attend.

and future leaders. Contact Linda at 618-833-7737 via text or call to reserve tickets or tables.

On Monday, Jan. 19, the Anna VFW and Auxiliary will host a joint meeting at 5 p.m. Afterwards, the auxiliary will hold their monthly business meeting at 6 p.m. The post will hold their monthly business meeting at 7 p.m.

dollars to make our communities safer and healthier, and that makes a big difference for small communities."

This funding package includes targeted investments secured by Rep. Bost for Illinois' 12th District, including:

\$2.1 million for Clinton County to upgrade a county-wide emergency radio and communication system

\$1.636 million for the Village of Maestown for wastewater treatment facility improvements

\$1.2 million for the Village of West Salem for water main replacement

\$1 million for the City of Anna for sewer infiltration and inflow improvements

\$1 million for the Robinson Palestine Water Commission for a new water treatment plant

\$1 million for the City of Casey for sanitary sewer relining

\$750,000 for the City of Sparta for a raw water transmission line project

News from

Camp Ground Church, Community

Bro. Easton’s sermon Sunday was “A Message from Our King,” a look at Revelation 1.

The book of Revelation is overlooked, or skipped by many. It is prophecy of what is in our future and thus should be as important to believers as the rest of the Bible. It is not to be feared, but was written to give us hope.

Jesus appeared to the Apostle John while he was imprisoned on the island of Patmos. In John’s vision, Jesus told John to record all that he was seeing and hearing.

John struggled with finding words to explain all that had been shown to him so it should not surprise us that we struggle to understand the book of Revelation.

Throughout Revelation, the number seven is used repeatedly; biblically, seven is considered perfection or completion.

The vision or revelation given to John was a warning to seven churches in Asia Minor that were facing persecution. But the message has been relevant to all generations of believers including

us in 2026.

Jesus is coming again and all will see Him! He will reign supreme; many will mourn, but believers will be in a state of awe and joy!

Addi and Raelynn Bonner took up the tithes and offerings.

Rodney Miller is our lead elder for January.

Sunday, we were fortunate to have more praises voiced than prayer requests – giving thanks for persons who are recovering or situations that are improving.

Those who have had birth-

days the past week are Nancy Pind the 8th, Collin Crane the 10th, and Jhan Miller the 12th.

Pastor Bradley and Amber Easton will be taking a short trip this weekend to celebrate their wedding anniversary. Pastor LaRue Parr will be filling our pulpit in Braley’s absence.

If you are looking for a church home, we invite you to join us each Sunday. We have coffee and fellowship at 9:15, Bible Study at 9:30 and Worship at 10:30. We are located at the intersection of Camp Ground Road and Tunnel Lane east of Anna, north of Route 146.

News from

Anna Nazarene Church

Sunday, Jan. 11

The morning worship service was held at 10:35 a.m. on Jan. 11. Announcements were given by Jessica Elkins. The worship service was led by Pastor Wright and the worship team. The message “The Power Of The Holy Spirit” was brought by Pastor Wright from Acts 1:4-8, John 16:8-11, 2 Thessalonians 2:13, Acts 1:8, Joel 2:28-29, Mark 16:17-18

There was no evening service.

Celebrating a birthday this week is: 12th Kaylee Smith

Sunday, Jan. 18

Breakfast - 9:00 a.m.

Sunday School - 9:30 a.m.

Morning Worship Service-10:35 a.m

Missionary Service – 6:00 p.m. – Meat will be provided for the meal. Everyone should bring a side dish or dessert.

Wednesday, Jan. 21

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.

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



618-893-2861 • 618-534-2391

Custom Processing of Beef-Pork-Goat-Sheep
Deer Processing Oct. 1st through Jan. 30th.



5565 St. Rt. 146E
Anna, IL 62906
618-833-5986

Jason Martin, Owner
Visit our website:
triplecmeats.com

Duty's Auto Glass
Windshields • Door Glasses
Back Glasses • Chip Repair

*Serving All of Southern Illinois
Over 30 Years Experience*

324 Willard Ferry Rd. • Jonesboro
833-2923 or Toll Free 866-759-2923



Anna-Jonesboro National Bank
Dedicated to our customers, committed to our community

201 South Main • Anna, IL • 618-833-8506
512 E. Vienna St. • Anna, IL • 618-833-2922
1002 Public Square • Jonesboro • 618-833-4547



SOUTHERN FS
JONESBORO LOCATION
400 SOUTH MAIN ST JONESBORO, IL 62952
618-833-2494

YOUR FULL SERVICE DEALER!

- BAG FEED/BULK FEED
- FERTILIZER/CHEMICAL
- SEED
- CUSTOM SPRAYING/SPREADING
- PROPANE
- PETROLEUM/LUBRICANTS
- GPS SOIL TESTING
- PRECISION FARMING



Josh's Heating & Cooling

P.O.BOX 775
Jonesboro, IL 62952
618-697-8490

joshuahathy@gmail.com



**Dine-In
Carryout
Delivery**

1835 E. Vienna St. • Anna, IL
(618) 833-2415
www.pizzahut.com



Cardinal Corner

409 Grand Tower Road
Grand Tower, IL
618-565-1064
Your Hometown Store

GROSS BUSTERS
Exterior Cleaning

Pressure Washing • Deck Staining • Gutter Cleaning
618.697.5968

Where is Your Faith?



Photo Credit istockphoto.com/xyno

There’s a tale of a fisherman who fell from his boat and implored God to save him. As he bobbed in the water he refused help from several bystanders because he was so sure God was going to save him. He shouted that he didn’t need their help as he disappeared beneath the water. Upon entering Heaven he asked, “God, why did you not save me?!” God replied, “But I sent several angels to help you and you refused their help. Where was your faith?” God asked the fisherman a good question. Where is your faith? Do you know where to find it? Visit your house of worship and learn of His promises. He wants to help you live a more peaceful and joyous life.

Weekly Scripture Reading						
Hebrews 8.1-13	Hebrews 9.1-22	Hebrews 9.23-10.18	Hebrews 10.19-39	Psalm 80	Hebrews 11.1-22	Hebrews 11.23-40

Scriptures Selected by the American Bible Society

©2025 Keister-Williams Newspaper Services, P.O. Box 8187, Charlottesville, VA 22906, www.kwnews.com

Community Integrated Living, Inc.
*Improving the lives of the
individuals we serve.*

201 E. Chestnut St. • Anna, IL
618-833-2500
www.communityintegratedliving.com



FARMERS STATE BANK

55 N. Elm St. • Alto Pass, IL
(618) 893-2464
www.myfsb.com





109 Transcraft Drive
Anna, IL 62906
833-8755



**You're Invited!
CrossPointe Church**

409 S. Green St, Anna, IL 62906 (Corner of West Spring and S. Green St)

**Sunday
Worship Service
10:30am**

**Wednesday
Bible Study
7pm**



**THE FIRST STATE BANK
OF DONGOLA**
Old and Reliable, Established 1906

108 SE Front Street • Dongola, IL 62926
618-827-3451





**MIDWESTERN
PROPANE GAS CO.**
Anna, IL • 833-6300
Mike Jones, Manager



Apostolic Lighthouse Church

Breakfast and Sunday School at 9:45 a.m.
Worship service at 10:45 a.m.
Midweek service Wednesday at 7 p.m.

423 S. Front St.
Cobden, IL 51-3GC



**Union County
Abstract Office, Inc.**

Chicago Title Insurance Company
Susan T. Holderfield, President
304 West Market Street • P.O. Box AC
Jonesboro, Illinois 62952
(618) 833-6521



GIVE US A CALL....WE CLEAN IT ALL
618.697.7030
618.697.9502



BEUSSINK, HICKAM & KOCHER P.C.
CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS

139 W Vienna St – Anna, IL 62906
(618) 833-2721

Serving the area for over 35 years
Gurley & Son Heating & Air Conditioning

INSTALL CONFIDENCE
1540 Old Hwy. 51N • Anna, IL
(618) 833-5211
"Hope to see you in church Sunday"



Schaefer Enterprises
Website: www.sewlparts.com

P.O. Box 136 • Wolf Lake, IL 62998
Email: parts@sewlparts.com
800-626-6046 • (618) 833-5498
Fax: 618-833-7765



WHITNEY ACCOUNTING
(618) 833-2145
105 Transcraft Drive - Anna, IL



WINTERS ROLL-OFF LLC
Michael Winters - Owner
618-614-0885
Unwanted Clutter Hauling Service
Dumpster Rentals

Serving the community since 1979!
DUTCH GUTTERING
CALL FOR SUMMER SPECIALS!
618-351-1881
Seamless Aluminum Guttering
Gutter Clean Outs • Leaf Guards
Roof Repairs • Home Improvement
Service and Repair • Siding & Overhang



Anna STATE BANK

100 E. Vienna Street • Anna, IL
833-2151
www.annastate.com



The Gazette-Democrat
Classified Section

Anna Office
618-833-2158
classifieds@annanews.com
AD DEADLINE IS 3 P.M. MONDAY

CLASSIFIED RATES
Classifieds35¢ per word
\$8.00 minimum for each paid ad per week

CLASSIFIED DISPLAY RATES
Per inch\$14.00

LEGAL
NOTICE

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT
FOR THE 1ST JUDICIAL
CIRCUIT
UNION COUNTY -
JONESBORO, ILLINOIS
Rocket Mortgage, LLC f/k/a
Quicken Loans, LLC f/k/a
Quicken Loans Inc.
PLAINTIFF
Vs.
Dylan Shane Barker; Esther
Barker; Merandia Gifford
a/k/a Merandia R. Gifford;
City of Anna; Unknown
Owners and Nonrecord
Claimants
DEFENDANTS
No. 2025FC15

NOTICE BY PUBLICATION
NOTICE IS GIVEN TO YOU:
Unknown Owners and Nonre-
cord Claimants
That this case has been com-
menced in this Court against you
and other defendants, praying
for the foreclosure of a certain
Mortgage conveying the prem-
ises described as follows, to-wit:
COMMONLY KNOWN AS:
807 N Main St
Anna, IL 62906
and which said Mortgage was
made by:
Dylan Shane Barker
Esther Barker
Merandia Gifford a/k/a Meran-
dia R. Gifford
the Mortgagor(s), to Mortgage
Electronic Registration Systems,
Inc., as mortgagee, as nomi-
nee for Quicken Loans Inc., as
Mortgagee, and recorded in the
Office of the Recorder of Deeds
of Union County, Illinois, as
Document No. 2016R1231; and
for other relief; that summons
was duly issued out of said
Court against you as provided by
law and that the said suit is now
pending.
NOW, THEREFORE, UN-
LESS YOU file your answer or
otherwise file your appearance
in this case in the Office of the
Clerk of this Court,
Keri Clark, Circuit Clerk
P.O. Box 450
Jonesboro, IL 62952
on or before February 9, 2026,
A DEFAULT MAY BE EN-
TERED AGAINST YOU AT
ANY TIME AFTER THAT DAY
AND A JUDGMENT MAY BE
ENTERED IN ACCORDANCE
WITH THE PRAYER OF SAID
COMPLAINT.
CODILIS & ASSOCIATES,
P.C.
Attorneys for Plaintiff
15W030 North Frontage Road,
Suite 100
Burr Ridge, IL 60527

(630) 794-5300
DuPage # 15170
Winnebago # 531
Our File No. 14-25-06508
NOTE: This law firm is a debt
collector.
I3279592
8221-961012

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT
OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL
CIRCUIT
UNION COUNTY, ILLINOIS
IN THE MATTER OF THE
ESTATE OF
JOE H. MCMAHAN
Deceased.
Case No. 2025PR24
NOTICE OF DEATH,
INDEPENDENT
ADMINISTRATION AND
CLAIM DATE
Notice is given of the death
of Joe H. McMahan, of Anna,
Union County, Illinois. Letters
of Office were issued on the
12th day of December 2025,
to Joseph McMahan, of 4890
State Route 146 E. Anna, Illinois
62906, and Randy McMahan, of
4980 State Route 146 E. Anna,
Illinois 62906 as Co-Executors,
whose attorney is listed below.
The Estate will be administered
without Court supervision, un-
less under Section 28-4 of the
Probate Act (755 ILCS 5/28-4),
any interested person terminates
Independent Administration at
any time by mailing or deliver-
ing a petition to terminate to the
Clerk of this Court.
Claims against the Estate may
be filed in the office of the Clerk
of the Court at the Union County
Courthouse, 309 W. Market St,
Jonesboro, IL 62952, or with the
Executors on or before the 1st
day of July, 2026, or if mailing
or delivery of a notice from the
Executors is required by Section
18-3 of the Probate Act, 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 Attorney
within ten (10) days after it has
been filed.
Dated: December 23, 2025
Independent Administrators:
Joseph McMahan
4890 State Route 146 E.
Anna, IL 62906
Randy McMahan
4980 State Route 146 E.
Anna, IL 62906
Prepared by:
Bigler Law Office, LLC
John Bigler
Bigler Law Office
407 E. Vienna St.
Anna, IL 62906
Office: (618) 833-4777
Fax: (618) 833-4770
Email: aj@biglerlawoffice.com
8221-960853

Bailey proposes ‘Illinois DOGE’ as GOP governor’s race focuses on spending

By Ben Szalinski
Capitol News Illinois
SPRINGFIELD

– President Donald Trump’s and Elon Musk’s Department of Government Efficiency disbanded less than a year into Trump’s second term and appeared to have caused more chaos than actual savings to the federal government.

But Illinois Republican candidate for governor Darren Bailey says a DOGE-like system can achieve savings and efficiencies in Illinois’ budget.

“It needs to be broken down,” Bailey told reporters at a news conference at the Statehouse Thursday, Jan. 8, in Springfield. “It needs to be audited. It needs to be opened up so that people know where the money’s coming from. I am very confident there are going to be a lot of waste discovery in that.”

Bailey also announced a plan to address cost-of-living issues and other areas that relies on DOGE-style governing to achieve results. The commission under a Bailey governorship would be led by his running mate, Aaron Del Mar.

Bailey and Del Mar did not specify any cuts they’ve already identified but stressed it would not be a tool to lay off large numbers of state employees or make cuts based on partisan politics – a difference from Trump’s and Musk’s approach.

“We’re not going in here with a chainsaw,” Del Mar said. “We’re go-

ing in here with an X-Acto knife. We are doing this as a purely public policy effort. This is not politically driven.”

Musk waived a chain-saw on stage at a conservative event last year, symbolizing his wide-ranging approach to government cuts. He later had a falling out with Trump and left government service.

Bailey and Del Mar suggested numerous state boards and commissions deserve more scrutiny, and any jobs or services that are duplicative could be consolidated.

A spokesperson for Gov. JB Pritzker said he doesn’t trust the Bailey campaign’s approach.

“He echoes Trump’s lies, copies Trump’s dangerous ideas, and wants to bring Trump’s chaos to Illinois,” Alex Gough said in an email. “Make no mistake: Bailey is running with Trump, embracing the same dysfunction and broken promises that have repeatedly failed working families.”

Bailey said he is not concerned about naming something “DOGE” after the scrutiny the program received in the Trump administration.

“People understand what it means,” Bailey said. “They’re going to have to get over the federal situation and we’re going to understand we have our own problems in Illinois. I am my own person, and I have proven that, regardless of who I like, who I support.”

Bailey received Trump’s endorsement

during his unsuccessful 2022 campaign and said on Thursday he is willing to accept it again.

Bailey’s Priorities Beyond the DOGE plan, the former state legislator from Clay County is proposing a series of initiatives he hopes will address affordability.

Topping that list is utility prices, which have increased substantially throughout the state. Bailey said he would repeal the 2021 Climate and Equitable Jobs Act that many Republicans blame for rising prices and dwindling supply. He also wants to require independent audits of major utility contracts.

Bailey said he would cap annual property tax rates to not exceed a person’s mortgage rate. In response, he said the state would do more to fund education but did not elaborate on how much he would increase spending for public schools to help them rely less on property taxes.

“Classrooms should focus on education, not political agendas,” Del Mar said. “The blueprint prioritizes strong instruction in reading, writing, math, science and civics. It supports parental involvement.”

Child Care Spending The Trump administration has already tried slashing some spending in Illinois. Most recently on Tuesday, Jan. 6, the federal government cut off what Pritzker’s office estimates is \$1 billion in federal aid for child care and other family assistance programs to Illinois.

The Trump administration claimed without evidence that the freeze was in response to “widespread fraud and misuse of taxpayer dollars” in Illinois and four other Democrat-led states.

“I think it’s fair for any administration to demand accountability,” Bailey said when asked whether he agrees with the administration’s decision.

One of Bailey’s opponents, conservative researcher Ted Dabrowski, is also trying to score political points on the Trump administration’s claims and a fraud scandal in Minnesota’s human services programs.

Dabrowski held a news conference in Chicago on Tuesday, Jan. 8, warning massive spending on child care programs in Illinois could be a sign of fraud like Minnesota. But he acknowledged he had no evidence there had been any wrongdoing in Illinois. He suggested there should be audits to see why child care spending has grown in Illinois in recent years.

Funding child care and preschool programs throughout Illinois has been one of Pritzker’s top priorities during his second term and he has included several spending increases for the programs in recent budgets. He took office in the wake of a historic two-year budget impasse between Republican Gov. Bruce Rauner and Democrats in the General Assembly that was accompanied by massive spending cuts to social services.

First Poll of Race The first poll of the

Republican primary for governor by Emerson College was released Thursday by WGN and showed Bailey has a strong lead in the primary.

Bailey received support from 34.4 percent of voters in the poll of 432 likely GOP primary voters conducted Jan. 3-5. No other candidate cracked 10 percent, with Dabrowski coming in second at 8.2 percent.

DuPage County Sheriff James Mendrick was at 5.4 percent and businessman Rick Heidner was at 1.1 percent. While Bailey holds a strong lead less than a month before early voting begins on Feb. 5 for the March 17 primary, 46.4 percent of voters were still undecided.

The GOP field was whittled down to four candidates on Thursday, Jan. 8, after the State Board of Elections ruled Gregg Moore and Joseph Severino did not submit enough valid signatures to remain on the ballot.

The economy was the top issue in the larger poll of 1,000 likely primary voters for 40.4 percent of respondents followed by health care and threats to democracy, each around 12 percent.

Pritzker’s approval rate is 50.6 percent, according to the poll.

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.

Illinois Department of Human Services reports years-long data breach

By Peter Hancock
Capitol News Illinois
SPRINGFIELD

– The Illinois Department of Human Services disclosed recently that it mistakenly uploaded private health-related information about hundreds of thousands of Illinoisans to a publicly accessible website and left it there for more than three years before it discovered the mistake.

But the agency would not explain last week why it took officials so long to discover the problem or why officials waited more than three months after it was discovered to notify the individuals affected and the news media, as required by federal rules.

In a news release dated Friday, Jan. 2, IDHS said the data breach involved two categories of individuals. One category included approximately 32,401 customers of its Division of Rehabilitation Services, which provides services to people with disabilities. The other involved more than 672,000 recipients in the Medicaid and Medicare Savings Program, which

helps low-income Medicare beneficiaries pay for premiums, deductibles and coinsurance.

In both cases, the agency said, information about individuals was uploaded to a mapping website used by the agency’s Bureau of Planning and Evaluation. The bureau used that site to create maps “to assist IDHS with resource allocation decisions, such as determining where to open new local offices,” according to the news release. It said the maps were intended for internal use only.

However, according to the news release, due to “incorrect privacy settings,” the maps and the information contained within them were publicly viewable.

The maps containing information about Rehabilitation Services customers were publicly accessible from April 2021 through September 2025 when the flaw was discovered, the agency said. That included customers’ names, addresses, case numbers, case status, referral source information, region and

office information and individuals’ status as DRS recipients.

The maps containing information about Medicare Savings Program recipients were publicly accessible from January 2022 until September 2025. The information included addresses, case numbers, demographic information and the names of individuals’ medical assistance plans such as Medicaid and Medicare. The information did not include recipients’ names.

In both cases, IDHS said, the vulnerabilities were discovered on Sept. 22, 2025, at which point officials changed the privacy settings to restrict access to only authorized IDHS employees. The agency said it also conducted a “comprehensive review” to determine the type of data contained in each map and assess its reporting obligations under state and federal law.

“IDHS has developed and implemented a Secure Map Policy that prohibits the uploading of any customer-level data to public mapping websites,” the agency

said in its Jan. 2 news release. “Under this policy, no identifiable customer information may be uploaded, entered, or stored on public mapping platforms. Access to any customer-related maps is now restricted to authorized personnel based on role-specific needs.”

Federal Regulations According to federal regulations under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, or HIPAA, whenever a health plan, health care clearinghouse or health care provider discovers an individual’s protected health information has been breached, that entity is required to notify the individual “without unreasonable delay and in no case later than 60 calendar days after discovery of a breach.”

When a breach involves more than 500 residents of a state or jurisdiction, the entities also are required to notify “prominent media outlets” serving that area within 60 calendar days after discovery.

The news release announcing the two breaches at IDHS was issued

102 days the agency said it discovered the breaches.

IDHS declined to answer directly when asked by Capitol News Illinois why it took the agency more than three years to realize it was exposing individuals’ protected health information on a public website and why, after discovering the vulnerability, it took the agency more than 100 days to provide the legally required public notification.

“The privacy and security of IDHS customers and residents is an utmost priority,” the agency said in an email. “Immediately upon learning of the issue, IDHS moved to secure the relevant information and began internal review and practices to prevent anything similar from happening in the future.”

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.

What Is The
Value Of A
Community
Newspaper?

What is the value of a community newspaper?
What does it bring to that community that no other institution can provide?
The local newspaper is a basic institution in any community, like the post office, the schools and the churches.
The local community newspaper, whether it be a 2,000 circulation weekly or a 50,000 circulation daily, serves to keep people connected to their community, by telling them what's happening with their neighbors, as well as the institution serving the community.
The publication of obituaries, birth announcements, weddings and other significant events in our lives remind us of poet John Donne's words, "no man is an island."
Community newspapers alert members of the community to problems needing attention.
The community newspaper facilitates the exchange of ideas and opinions through its editorial page and letters to the editor.
There are so many things of value community newspapers provide: the recording of local history and helping to maintain a healthy local economy through effective advertising for local businesses are just a few areas of value.
The community newspaper's value to its community is unquestioned.
– from Publishers Auxiliary, a publication of the National Newspaper Association

Send Classified Ads
and Legal Notices to
classifieds@annanews.com

Governor signs energy reform bill amid projected shortages

CHICAGO – Amid warnings of impending energy shortages, Gov. JB Pritzker on Thursday, Jan. 8, signed a wide-ranging energy reform package into law aimed at bolstering the state’s power grids after years of negotiations.

Senate Bill 25, also known as the Clean and Reliable Grid Affordability Act, or CRGA, will fund battery storage, grant greater authority to state utility regulators, create new options for “virtual power plants” and lift a longtime ban on new large-scale nuclear power plants.

“We’re making it easier to develop renewable energy,” bill sponsor Sen. Bill Cunningham, D-Chicago, said at the signing ceremony in Joliet. “We’re going to deploy battery storage; we’re lifting the nuclear moratorium. That’s all going to bring more supply onto the grid, and that will help hold the line on our electrical bills.”

The Illinois Power Agency, an independent body responsible for planning and procuring cost-effective energy for Illinoisans, found that the law will save utility customers in the state \$13.4 billion over the next two decades. But opponents question those projections, pointing to increased subsidies for battery storage that will eventually be reflected via a new charge on consumers’ bills beginning in 2030.

The bill signing took place less than a month after state regulators projected energy shortfalls would likely drive up costs in the next three to five years and force Illinois to import more power from out of state absent action from lawmakers and grid operators.

Shortfalls, Pritzker said, would be exacerbated by actions at the national level, including the Trump administration’s passage of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act,

which phased out renewable energy tax credits and froze federal funding for energy projects. He also criticized a Trump executive order that stripped funding for the Inflation Reduction Act, a major renewable energy law passed by Congress in 2022.

“All of that raises prices in the short term, while threatening our long-term ability to meet growing electricity demand,” Pritzker said.

CRGA, he said, will allow Illinois to forge its own path. What’s in the Law?

At the core of the law is a new structure to incentivize energy storage, or battery, projects. It will result in new charges to ratepayers, though supporters of the bill say that those costs would be offset by cost savings from greater energy efficiency, storage and planning.

The law grants new authority to the Illinois Commerce Commission, the state body responsible for regulating utilities. The ICC will now have the power to set long-term plans for managing energy supply and demand in the state through approval of an integrated resource plan.

It additionally adds new requirements for energy efficiency programs at electric and natural gas utilities and places new air regulations on backup generators used by data centers.

It also secures new labor protections by closing a loophole for community solar projects that has allowed some developers to avoid hiring union labor, a major priority for organized labor groups involved in negotiating the bill.

CRGA also lifts a long-standing ban on constructing new large-scale nuclear power plants, while at the same time increasing fees for nuclear plant operators. It outlines new programs for geothermal and thermal

energy network projects, using naturally occurring heat from underground and transferring it via water-filled pipes to offset the need for electric or fossil fuel heating.

The law also creates new “virtual power plant,” or VPP, programs. That’s not virtual as in occurring via the internet or virtual reality, but rather as a program that allows homes and businesses with solar panels or wind turbines to pool energy together, acting “virtually” like a power plant despite not physically existing as one.

The idea is that the energy stored in residential and business batteries can be contributed to the electrical grid when the state’s primary electric delivery companies, like ComEd and Ameren Illinois, face high supply prices during peak hours of use, especially during the summer.

Homes and businesses who contribute energy to the grid via VPPs will be paid for their energy. The law also mandates that electric utilities offer optional “time-of-use” pricing, allowing customers to save money by using less energy during periods of high demand.

ComEd already offers time-of-use pricing, as approved in an ICC ruling in January 2025, but CRGA enshrines the requirement for both Ameren and ComEd into law.

Path to Passage
The legislation passed during the legislature’s veto session in late October with support from environmental, labor and utility oversight advocates. Business groups and Republicans criticized the bill for its reliance on a new ratepayer charge to fund new battery storage and for yielding what they said was too much power to the ICC.

“Senate Bill 25 is a guaranteed rate increase that does nothing to increase energy

production,” Rep. C.D. Davidsmeyer, R-Murrayville, said in a statement released after the signing, calling battery storage an “unproven” strategy.

Rep. Norine Hammond, R-Macomb, also denounced energy sources like wind and solar as unreliable in a statement, saying that the state “should focus on preserving reliable energy sources like coal, natural gas, and nuclear power that actually work when the wind isn’t blowing and the sun isn’t shining.”

Supporters, though, say that ratepayer charges will be offset with savings from increased energy supply and grid reliability. They argue the investment in battery systems allows the state to store extra energy generated on bright sunny days or windy days and deploy it at night and when other energy supply is low.

Sarah Moskowitz, executive director of Citizens Utility Board and champion of the bill, said CRJA was the state’s response to market signals sent by regional grid operators.

“To me, CRGA is really about us here in Illinois, together as a state, deploying the tools we have here at our disposal to defend the promise of clean and affordable power for Illinois,” Moskowitz said.

Organized labor advocates also supported the bill, which is expected to generate up to 100,000 jobs according to statements from multiple House Democrats. AFL-CIO Secretary Treasurer Pat Devaney and LiveWire Construction CEO Shon Harris joined Pritzker on stage at the signing ceremony.

“By expanding access to pre-apprentice programs, lowering thresholds for project labor agreements, ensuring that wind, solar and thermal energy projects are built by skilled Illinois workers, this bill clearly says the future of clean energy in Illinois will be union built,” Devaney said.

The bill prioritizes grants to historically underserved contractors and projects in communities that would most benefit from investments to combat discrimination. Harris said that legislation keeps the doors open for businesses like his.

“CRGA ensures equity remains a part of Illinois’ clean energy future,” Harris said. “That means that companies like mine can keep building projects, training workers and creating good-paying jobs all across 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.



Venus Buck won the raffle for the Valentine basket at the District 25 American Legion Auxiliary meeting. Photographer, Martha Ann Webb.

County Line News

(Mill Creek and Upper Elco)

By Suzan Harvel

In the never-ending saga of yo-yo weather, we had a couple of pretty days this past week. For some reason those always seem to fall on the days I work. Then, on my days off it’s cold, rainy, or just too nasty outside to do much. At least we’ve had more sunshiny days than gloomy. I even managed to get my outside Christmas decorations down this week. Small progress, but hey...it's progress.

Randy Miller and girlfriend, Ivonne, stopped by to visit with me last week. It’s nice that he’s moved back into the area and brought a fresh face with him. My brother-in-law, Chuck Harvel stopped by while they were here and got to meet Ivonne, as well.

I ran into several folks I know, but rarely see, this past week. Unfortunately, it was at the funeral home. Brother Bobby Richardson mentioned that same thing Sunday morning, when he reminded the men about the Clear Creek Associational Wild Game Supper on Friday, Jan. 16 at First Baptist in Ullin.

You always seem to see folks you haven’t in a long time at either family reunions, weddings, funerals, or social events. People don’t visit like they did once upon a time, and that’s a shame.

Shirley Harvel can’t say that though, as she’s had a lot of family dropping in lately. She was visited this past week by her daughter and son-in-law from Poplar Bluff, Mo. Tina and Darron Moore arrived with lunch and spent the day visiting with her mother, brother Richard and his wife, Suzan, and brother Chuck and his wife, Martha. Then Shirley was taken by her son, Chuck, down to his house to visit with all his grandchildren on Saturday morning.

Saturday afternoon she had the last of her Christmas with granddaughter Nikki Bates, her husband Jordan, and their three children. Richard Harvel made homemade Chinese for dinner and the last of his birthday (Dec) ice cream cake was eaten. Afterwards, games were played by Shirley, Jordan, and great grandson Desmond who got out the dominos she received for a Christmas gift while up in Sparta. Desmond won. Shirley’s granddaughter, Allison, who is in Canada, called in to visit via speaker phone with everyone. They’ve gotten a lot of snow and temperatures have dipped into the negatives more than once...they can keep it up there! Brrrrr. Brother Bobby Richardson

led the congregation Sunday from Genesis 29-30. These passages introduce us to Jacob after he connived his way into taking his brother Esau’s birthright and blessing from his father, Isaac. Isaac sent him to his uncle in Padan Aram. There he ends up in 14 years of service to his uncle, acquires four wives, and sires 12 sons and a daughter.

Through these and future passages all manner of sin is brought into play: incest, lies, theft, cheating, conniving, jealousy, rape, persecution, kidnapping, slavery, murder, and much more. Blessings also abound from the creation of our world to many, many, miracles, our salvation, ultimate forgiveness and redemption, words and songs of praise and comfort, through to the annihilation evil.

The Bible is better than any best seller out there and has sold 5 billion copies, more than ANY other book. It’s more than a mere book though. It carries the instructions for a successful life, the beginning genealogy of our family, and gives us the hope of eternal salvation. Genesis starts it off. If you don’t have a copy, you certainly need to get one.

Those added for prayer are: the families of Wendell Davis, Janet Ragan, Dean Newman, Raymond Flamm, Gene Miller, and we learned that Anne Rosson lost her sister. Others in need of prayer are: Elizabeth Kerr, unspoken; Cassie Cobb, pregnancy issues; Junior Tripp, Jerry Cobb, Steven Zinn, & Tom Smith, all for health; Travis Sadler; unspoken; Shirley Harvel, who took a fall Wednesday evening; and Richard Harvel, for back issues.

Union County Fixin’s

Candy Bar Pie

1 package of 6 full sized candy bars-with or without almonds

16 full-sized marshmallows

1/2 cup milk

1 cup whipping cream

1 pre-made graham cracker or chocolate wafer pie shell

Melt chocolate bars and marshmallows with milk in a double boiler. Cool thoroughly.

Beat whipping cream until stiff. Fold gently into chocolate mixture.

Pour into crust. Refrigerate at least 3 hours. (Can be frozen)

NAACP to host Martin Luther King Jr. Breakfast

The Alexander/Pulaski Counties NAACP will host its annual Martin Luther King Jr. Breakfast on Monday, Jan. 19 at 9 a.m. The event will be held at the Meridian High School gymnasium in Mounds.

This annual gathering features community members, leaders, and youth to honor the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and to reflect on the ongoing pursuit of justice and equality. This year’s theme, “The Urgency of Now,” underscores Dr. King’s call to confront injustice with courage, clarity, and collective action.

The NAACP is honored to welcome Rev. Joseph A. Brown, S.J., PhD, as the special guest speaker. Rev. Brown serves as the Director

of the School of Africana and Multicultural Studies \$20 per person, with youth ages 12 and under admitted for \$10. Children ages 5 and under may attend free. Tables seating six are available for \$200.

Community members are encouraged to secure tickets early, as the event traditionally draws strong attendance from across Southern Illinois. Tickets may be purchased by contacting any member of the Alexander/Pulaski Counties NAACP at 270-366-2014 or 618-734-9188 or by email to info@apcountynaacp.org.

Proceeds from the breakfast support local NAACP initiatives, youth programming, and ongoing civil rights advocacy throughout the region.



District meeting

Anna Post 0344 American Legion Auxiliary members attended the District 25 meeting at the Haven in Carbondale. Pictured are, from left, Martha Ann Webb, President of District 25 America Legion Auxiliary Diana Steele, Venus Buck, Natalie Clutts and Macky Cohen.



New officers

New American Legion Auxiliary District 25 officers were installed by District 25 President Diana Steele. The new members were Susan Dragovich as Secretary of Post 1961, Sherry Haddick as Historian of Post 0259, and Kathy Arendt as Sgt-At-Arms of Post 1961. With President of District Diana Steele. Photographer, Martha Ann Webb.

Opinion and Commentary

Red Cross highlights need for blood donors

The American Red Cross announced in early January that it was facing a growing risk of a blood shortage following the holiday season. As the new year started, the Red Cross was distributing blood products faster than they were coming in.

Faced with those conditions, doctors may be having to make difficult decisions about which patients receive blood transfusions and who will need to wait. Snow, ice and frigid temperatures in December created challenges that caused thousands of donations to go uncollected. Busy holiday schedules and seasonal illnesses further reduced donations, significantly straining the Red Cross national blood inventory.

January is National Blood Donor Month and the Red Cross is calling on donors to start the year with a life-saving act of generosity. To book a time to give, visit RedCrossBlood.org, download the Red Cross Blood Donor App or call 1-800-RED CROSS.

Over the last two decades, blood donation rates have declined, which means even small disruptions can have a big impact on the Red Cross ability to meet patient needs.

"The start of the new year is a challenging time to collect blood, but it's also an opportunity to build life-saving habits," said Paul Sullivan, senior vice president of donor services for the American Red Cross," in a news release.

Upcoming dates for blood drives in Union County were shared online by the American Red Cross and include:

- Feb. 10, from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., at Anna-Jonesboro Community High School.
- Feb. 12, from 12:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., at the Veterans of Foreign Wars Carroll P. Foster Post No. 3455 near Anna.

All blood types are needed to ensure a reliable supply for patients. A blood donor card or driver's license or two other forms of identification are required at check-in. Individuals who are 17 years of age in most states (16 with parental consent where allowed by state law), weigh at least 110 pounds and are in generally good health may be eligible to donate blood. High school students and other donors 18 years of age and younger also have to meet certain height and weight requirements.

Blood and platelet donors can save time at their next donation by using RapidPass to complete their pre-donation reading and health history questionnaire online, on the day of their donation, before arriving at the blood drive. To get started, follow the instructions at RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass or use the Blood Donor App.

Letter to the editor

Postmaster appreciates local support through holidays

To the Editor,

As we turn the page on the holidays, I want to thank our customers in Anna for the patience, kindness, and support you showed our local Postal Service team during the busiest mailing and shipping season of the year.

Our carriers, clerks, and plant teams worked hard to keep mail and packages moving for families, small businesses, and neighbors who rely on us including working later hours. Behind every delivery is a local employee who lives here, shops here, and cares about getting it right.

Now that the holiday rush is behind us, our focus is simple: steady, dependable service every day — along with continued improvements that help us handle today's mix of letters and packages more efficiently.

If you had a great experience with your local Post Office this season, I hope you'll share it with our team. And if we missed the mark, please let us know so we can keep improving at usps.com.

Sincerely,

George W. Gass VI
Postmaster, Anna, IL 62906

Please read this...

Computer updates, road trips and other stuff...

Monday brought another opportunity for an “update” on the fancy, high tech equipment used by yours truly to craft these little gems each week.

As near as I can tell, updates are offered fairly often as a way to improve how computers and other wonders of 21st century technology function. Couldn’t prove it by me. Mostly, they just seem to mess up systems which had been functioning very well until they were updated.

The latest update for my fairly new laptop, which I am still learning how to use, gave me some things I didn’t know I needed...and probably did not want. Such as information about the current weather in Cupertino, California. And New York City, too. There’s another calendar. The calendar shows the month and the current day, highlighted with a red circle. The calendar does not show the current year. I guess I am on my own for that. There’s also some sort of message about photographs appearing when they are finished processing. I do not need that. I know when my photographs are finished and where they are appearing.

I’m pretty sure the update probably involved something that had to do with Artificial Intelligence. AI, after all, is the way of the world. From what I have been seeing lately, AI is even helping human beings with their shopping. I plan to continue writing down my shopping list, with an old-school pencil or pen, on a piece of scrap paper or one of those notepads that keep arriving in the mail for free.

Meanwhile...

Critter Sightings, a recent road trip out to the bottomlands near the Mississippi River in western Union County, and another road trip, not quite as far as the bottomlands, along with the journey back home, are kind of tied together this week.

Yours truly decided to take a road trip to the bottomlands one day last week as kind of a photographic expedition of sorts. The weather at the time of my travels was very nice...not very winter-like. We’ve been having a lot of that lately. My hope was to come up with some exciting photographs that could be submitted to the local newspaper for their consideration and possible publication therein.

I headed out to the Union County State Fish and Wildlife Area in suburban Ware. The state fish and wildlife area is still, I think, known to many folks in our little corner of the world as the “refuge,” which doesn’t take nearly as much energy to say.

Over the years, we have made many trips to the refuge. In what we used to know as the winter months, we would go to the refuge to see waterfowl, especially Canada geese and their cousins, which had migrated to Southern Illinois. Back in the day, it was not unusual to see...and hear...thousands of birds.

That definitely was not the story last week. At least not at the time I paid a visit. I drove from one end of the Refuge Road and back again. I did see some interesting cloud formations in a bright blue sky. I did not see thousands of geese. At one point, I could see what might have been snow geese on the other side of a distant tree line. I could hear them, too. The Critters were just too far away for a photograph. Maybe next time.

As I drove slowly back to Illinois Route 146, I passed a pond at the refuge. Some ducks were seen, and heard, at the pond. I’m guessing there may have been a couple dozen of the quackers. I spotted two turtles on a log in the water. Yup. It was the first full week of January...and I saw turtles.

Perhaps, in the not too distant future, we’ll try another road trip to the refuge. Maybe we’ll even see some geese.

Meanwhile...

The next day, yours truly and The Other Half went on a road trip together. Not quite as far as the bottomlands, as noted. We had a delivery to make and it seemed like a good time to go for a ride together in the countryside.

On our way back home, we spotted a goat...chasing a chicken. Then, while motoring along Mountain Glen Road, we encountered a whole bunch of blackbirds...hundreds of them, I would guess. We may have disturbed the birds while they were feasting on delicacies found in a harvested corn field near the road. I stopped the car...and we just kind of waited for the birds to make their way across the road into a nearby tree line. An Alfred Hitchcock movie about feathered Critters came to mind.

A Critter Sighting unrelated to the road trip to the bottomlands involved a lone coyote out for a stroll on a sunny morning one day last week. The Critter loped across old U.S. Route 51, right in front of me, as I was motoring back home from a trip to metropolitan Anna. The coyote appeared to be quite eager to get to wherever it was going.

Another unrelated-to-the-road-trip sighting involved a half dozen or so mourning doves in our backyard early on Monday morning of this week. In recent weeks, we had seen more armadillos (one) than mourning doves in our yard. We were glad to welcome the feather Critters back.

Enough for now. Sounds like it’s going to get really cold again. Stay warm...



4 and 20...and 20...and 20...blackbirds...perched in a tree...near a harvested corn field along Mountain Glen Road...



Sun bathing...in January....this Critter was seen at the Union County State Fish and Wildlife Area.

The Cat's Meow

by Cobden Spay and Neuter Coalition

To paraphrase a recent post on facebook from another TNR (trap-neuter-return) group on their observations, it is often the case that when they first encounter an unsterilized cat colony, the cats often look thin and scruffy. That’s because they are under constant stress, expending lots of energy on mating behaviors, territorial fighting, pregnancy, nursing, and the hormonal drive to roam.

Injuries, parasites, illness, poor sleep all take a toll. And grooming, as healthy, content cats do, becomes a low priority when simply surviving is the focus.

After sterilization, everything shifts, gradually, but noticeably. Roaming and fighting decreases, and energy that once went into reproduction can finally be used for healing and grooming. They often begin to groom more, rest more, and seem to be more at peace. “It’s like their bodies finally get permission to thrive instead of just endure.” Especially those colonies with kind and consistent caretakers.

Thoughts more from the perspective of the cats’ well-being and what TNR volunteers see over time. Difficult work, requiring persistence and dedication, but it is the goal CSNC (Cobden Spay and Neuter Coalition) also pursues. We

must continue to have your support and concern and willingness to help.

Our Chili Cook-off is on Saturday, Jan. 24 at Fuzzy’s in Cobden from 4 to 7 p.m. We will have a silent auction during the cook-off, hosted by the Green Mug, right next door to Fuzzy’s. We are now accepting your donations of items, big or small, for this event. You may drop items off for the silent auction at the Cobden Village Hall or at KiKi’s Coffeehouse in Anna. We plan to put together a number of great gift baskets for the silent auction. See you there!

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

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



Dressing for cold weather

With frigid temperatures in the forecast, the National Weather Service office in Paducah reminds everyone to remember to wear multiple layers and to stay inside as much as possible during extreme cold weather.