THE GAZETTE-DEMOCRAT

The Talk And Cobden Review • Serving Union County Since 1849

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News Notes

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

Friday, June 20, is the first day of summer.

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Juneteenth is Thursday, today. The June 19 observance commemorates the end of slavery in the United States.

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The Union County farmers market continues on Tuesday mornings at the municipal parking lot along East Davie Street in Anna.

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Congratulations to Union County school teachers Dee Rose and Crystal Knueven for the special recognition they have received from the Association of Illinois Rural and Small Schools.

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Thank you to all of those who worked so hard to make this year's Annabelle Festival in Anna a big success.

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Thanks to grant funding, the City of Anna is offering free swim lessons to young swimmers this summer. The City of Anna received a $1,000 grant from the DuPage County Health Department to offer the lessons. Ten young people will receive the free lessons. Stinson Memorial Public Library was involved in the process leading to the grant funding.

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Veterans of Foreign Wars Carroll P. Foster Post No. 3455 celebrated the U.S. Army's 250th birthday last Saturday.

***

Shawnee Development Council Inc. planned to host a "Needs of the Community Meeting" Wednesday morning, June 18. The event was to have been held at Shawnee Development Council's office at 1000 N. Main St. in Anna. The purpose of the meeting was to understand the direct needs of clients in the area and how the agency can best assist them.

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This is "Lego Week" for the Summer Reading Program at Stinson Memorial Public Library in Anna.

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Local weather observer Dana Cross reports that as of early this week, the Union County area had received 6.57 inches of rain during the month of June.

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Flamm Orchards near Cobden shared that fresh, tree-ripened peaches are available at their farm store.

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Rendleman Orchards near Alto Pass announced that the first blooms in their zinnia field are expected after the 4th of July. Peak bloom is typically during the last two weeks of July.

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A new "Cobden Connect" Facebook page has been launched on Facebook. Cobden events, happenings and other news will be shared on the page.

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The City of Anna's next big trash cleanup is for July 8-10.

(continued on page 2)

Mid-June regional weather

Flood watches, storms possible, dangerous heat



Storm clouds over Anna

Storm clouds made another appearance in the sky over Anna late Friday afternoon, June 13. Not long after the photograph was taken, heavy rain fell in the Anna area.

The weather in mid-June in the region has included flood watches, the possibility of severe storms a forecast calling for extreme summer heat and humidity highlight…and even the sighting of funnel clouds.

Flood Watches

The National Weather Service office in Paducah on Monday, June 16, issued flood watches for parts of Southern Illinois, Southeast Missouri and Western Kentucky.

The flood watch was in effect from 10 a.m. until midnight Monday for all areas of Southern Illinois along and south of Highway 13 and for all of Western Kentucky. All of Southeast Missouri was under a flood watch through 7 p.m. Monday.

Scattered to numerous slow-moving thunderstorms were expected to develop across Southern Illinois and Western Kentucky from late Monday morning through late Monday night. The storms were expected to produce torrential downpours and the risk of flash flooding. Thunderstorms that developed also were expected to produce very high levels of lightning. Areas that saw thunderstorms could have received 1.5 to 3.0 inches of rain in just one or two hours. Locally higher amounts of up to 4 inches were possible.

The Weather Service advised that excessive runoff may have resulted in flooding of rivers, creeks, streams and other low-lying, flood-prone locations. Creeks and streams may have risen out of their banks. Flooding may have occurred in poor drainage and urban areas.

Those living in the areas under the flood watches were advised to monitor forecasts and to be prepared to take action should flash flood warnings have been issued.

Severe Storms Possible Wednesday

The Weather Service forecast early this week was calling for the possibility of severe thunderstorms on Wednesday, June 18, mainly during the late afternoon and evening hours. Damaging winds, a few tornadoes and large hail were expected to be the main severe risks. Heavy rain and isolated flooding issues also were possible.

"The risk of scattered to numerous severe thunderstorms continues to increase for late Wednesday afternoon into Wednesday night. Damaging winds, tornadoes and large hail are all possible," the Weather Service said Tuesday morning, June 17.

As of early this week, parts of Southern Illinois, Southeast Missouri and Western Kentucky faced a enhanced risk for severe weather on Wednesday. Union County was included in the area facing an enhanced risk for severe weather.

Hottest Temperatures of Season

The Weather Service advised that the hottest temperatures of the season are expected by this weekend and continuing into early next week. The forecast is calling for dangerous heat and humidity levels.

High temperatures on Saturday, Sunday and Monday are forecast to be the 90s in the region. Heat index values topping 100 degrees are in the forecast for Saturday, Sunday and Monday. Heat index values in Cape Girardeau could reach 106 degrees on Saturday, 108 degrees on Sunday and 106 degrees on Monday.

The Weather Service advised that the high heat index values "could cause heat-related health impacts if proper precautions are not taken."

Funnel Clouds Last Saturday

The Weather Service advised that funnel clouds were seen in the region Saturday afternoon, June 14. The Weather Service issued a special weather statement about the funnel clouds.

"There have been reports of funnel clouds today," the Weather Service reported early Saturday afternoon. "These funnels are developing underneath a few showers that are moving across the area. Underneath these showers…spinning columns of air that look like tornadoes may continue to develop. These funnels usually are very brief and rarely touch the ground. If these funnels do touch down…they most likely will not cause damage to life or property.

"These funnels are due to cooler air aloft…warm moist air near the ground…and are usually in association with a strong area of low pressure in the upper levels of the atmosphere. Due to little or no wind shear…they are usually weak and very brief."

Annabelle Festival celebrated

The 2025 Annabelle Festival was celebrated Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, June 12-15, in Anna. A wide range of special activities were offered during the festival, which was a celebration of the Annabelle hydrangea. The Annabelle was discovered near Anna.



The reason for the celebration: Annabelle hydrangeas were seen in bloom in Anna. The blossoms were on display at a residence which was part of the Annabelle Trail, which was one of the festival's attractions.



Many vendors and other attractions were set up along East Davie Street.



Lots of people stopped by for an up-close visit with Burks Family Alpaca Farm alpacas.



An Annabelle Festival book sale was offered Friday, Saturday and Sunday at Stinson Memorial Public Library. The sale was sponsored by the Friends of Stinson Library.

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Anna awarded $2,136,750 for multi-use project

The City of Anna on Tuesday, June 17, announced it has received $2,136,750 in funding through the Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program, ITEP, for a project to construct a multi-use path along East Vienna Street (State Route 146) . The work will enhance local transportation and boost quality of life for all community residents, the city shared in a news release.

"We're pleased to receive this money from ITEP and excited to put these dollars to work in our community," Anna city administrator Dori Bigler said. "The multi-use path to Walmart will improve accessibility while increasing safety for residents and visitors alike."

The project will construct a multi-use path from the intersection of Springfield Avenue and East Vienna Street going east along East Vienna (Route 146) and will end at Walmart.

The City of Anna's project is one of 66 projects receiving funding statewide, with a total of $139.2 million awarded through the Illinois Department of Transportation.

Made possible by federal and state funds administered by IDOT, ITEP awards are focused on improving bike and pedestrian travel, as well as making other surface transportation improvements that promote alternative options for getting around in a community.

"Under the leadership of Governor Pritzker, IDOT is committed to working with communities to improve local mobility options while strengthening the state's overall transportation network," said acting Illinois Department of Transportation Secretary Gia Biagi. "We're proud to support these efforts by our local partners that create new opportunities to connect people with the important places in their lives."

Weather

High 86, low 57; 1.98 inches of rain

The Union County area received 1.98 of inches or rain during the period of June 10-16.

Temperatures ranged from a high of 86 degrees to a low of 57.

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

Tuesday, June 10: high 81, low 57.

Wednesday, June 11: high 85, low 57.

Thursday, June 12: high 83, low 62. 0.35 of an inch of rain.

Friday, June 13: high 81, low 68. 0.86 of an inch of rain.

Saturday, June 14: high 84, low 70. 0.04 of an inch of rain.

Sunday, June 15: high 86, low 67.

Monday, June 16: high 86, low 69. 0.73 of an inch of rain.

News Notes

(continued from page 1)

An event for veterans is planned from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. June 28 at The Old Feed Store in downtown Cobden. Free coffee and donuts will be served.

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The Arrowleaf human services organization's mobile career center was in downtown Cobden June 11 for a Coffee and Careers visit. The center was scheduled to be at Shawnee Community College near Ullin on June 18.

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The Anna Blue Dolphins swim team will be holding a home meet against Marion on Tuesday, June 24 at 6 p.m. at the Anna City Park.

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The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention will be holding their second annual Southern Illinois suicide prevention walk on Saturday, Sept. 6 at 10 a.m. at Cobden park and soccer field.

The 2025 Southern Illinois Made Expo is scheduled from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday, July 19, at The Pavilion in Marion.

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The Anna First Baptist Church will be hosting the New Beginnings Quartet from Anna on Saturday, June 21 at 6:30 p.m.

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The National Weather Service office in Paducah is joining in this year's observance of National Lightning Safety Awareness Week, which is June 22-28. National Lightning Safety Awareness Week started in 2001 in order to call attention to lightning being an underrated killer. Since then, U.S. lightning fatalities has dropped from about 55 per year to less than 30. This reduction is lightning fatalities is largely due to the greater awareness of lightning danger and people seeking safety when thunderstorms threaten. The Weather Service encourages everyone to learn more about lightning and lightning safety.

State association presents award

Shawnee School District 84's Dee Rose honored as 2025 teacher of the year

Shawnee Community Unit School District No. 84's longtime choir and band teacher Dee Rose has been named as 2025 Illinois Rural School Teacher of the Year by the Association of Illinois Rural and Small Schools, AIRSS.

As the 2025 Illinois Rural School Teacher of the Year, Mrs. Rose is nominated as the Illinois semifinalist for the National Rural Teacher of the Year Award from the National Rural Education Association.

AIRSS shared that the selection committee for the honor was impressed with Mrs. Rose's decades of advocacy for the arts at her rural school and the lifelong impact she's had on her students, who often return to the school as volunteers. She has also been an impactful leader in her local community. The committee said that in all ways, Mrs. Rose embodies the values of AIRSS: Voice, Advocacy, Leadership.

The state association recently launched its first Illinois Rural Teacher of the Year Award program. AIRSS said that all of those who were nominated for the honor were recognized as Teachers of Distinction "for their amazing dedication to the rural education profession." Fourteen Teachers of Distinction from throughout the state were recognized.

AIRSS is the only statewide association focused on rural and small schools. The association was chartered in 1987 with the purpose of presenting a unified effort to promote educational excellence in rural and small schools in Illinois. The association's emphasis is to give identity, voice and recognition to rural and small schools and their local communities.

Rose Nominated by Superintendent

Dee Rose was nominated for the honor by Shawnee District 84 superintendent Shelly Clover-Hill. AIRSS shared the nomination submitted by the superintendent on its website:

It is my distinct honor to endorse Mrs. Dee Rose as a nominee for the AIRSS Rural Teacher of the Year Award. Mrs. Rose is an extraordinary teacher, respected leader among her colleagues, and a kind and generous human being dedicated to student success. I am fortunate to work with Mrs. Rose at Shawnee Community Unit School District #84 where she serves as our district-wide choir teacher and junior-senior high band teacher.

We are celebrating Mrs. Rose this year as it marks her 30th year of service to Shawnee CUSD #84. Mrs. Rose started here in 1995-1996 school year as the junior-senior choir teacher and remained in that role through the 1996-1997 school year. In 1997, she became the junior-senior high chorus and band teacher. After 2014, her role switched again as we consolidated elementary schools in our district and she became the district-wide chorus teacher and junior-senior high band instructor. Through every transition, Mrs. Rose has been instrumental in leading the charge to ensure chorus and band students were able to successfully navigate the switch.

Mrs. Rose is one of those teachers that everyone flocks to – students and staff. Her personality is infectious and the sound of her laughter is easily identifiable through our halls. She possesses this amazing "we can do this" attitude no matter the challenge before her which then makes the students believe they can do anything as well. She is famous for making hilarious dismissal announcements on days before holiday breaks which everyone looks forward to hearing. For 30 years now, Mrs. Rose has made our school district a better place because she, simply put, loves people and life.

Mrs. Rose builds relationships with students that last far longer than high school. After graduating, many of her students have been awarded music scholarships at local colleges and universities. They invite her to come watch their performances and she excitedly attends. Former students also come back to play in the Homecoming alumni band every year. Some even come back to help play Pomp & Circumstance for our high school graduation ceremony. Most recently, I saw a former student here at school and we were chatting. I asked him what he was up to and he said Mrs. Rose was going to let him borrow the tuba for one of his college competitions. I smiled to myself because that situation describes exactly who Mrs. Rose is – a teacher to all no matter the age.

Mrs. Rose continuously exhibits leadership qualities by volunteering her time before and after school to tutor her chorus and band students. She has been doing this every school day for years now. In fact, the staff are accustomed to being serenaded into work each morning to the sounds of students singing or instruments playing. Regardless if it sounds like a symphony or someone off-key, Mrs. Rose can be found vigorously instructing and encouraging students to excel. She is the reason the Shawnee #84 Music Department is so successful.



Shawnee Community Unit School District No. 84 choir and band teacher Dee Rose. Photo provided.

As if chorus and band isn't enough of a job, Mrs. Rose also serves as our New Teacher Mentor. Her welcoming demeanor allows her to form bonds with new teachers. She creates an atmosphere of calmness and the new teachers feel free to express their challenges academically and personally. Mrs. Rose's long tenure makes her an excellent mentor and confidante to the new teachers, as well as, the veterans.

When not at school, Mrs. Rose can be found at her church as the choir director. She oversees the weekly song service at church every Wednesday and Sunday. She is responsible for summer Vacation Bible School. She also develops and leads the church's Christmas program and Easter Cantata.

When not at school or church, one of Mrs. Rose's hobbies is baking sweet treats for family, friends, community members or school personnel. Her baking skills and artistic abilities allow her to create amazing desserts for birthdays, graduations, weddings, showers, retirements, etc….

In our school and communities, Mrs. Rose is considered the "go to" person. Need a hug? See Mrs. Rose. Need a treat? Call Mrs. Rose. Need some advice? Find Mrs. Rose. Need to laugh? Definitely look up Mrs. Rose. She is such a pillar and a blessing to us.

I am honored to endorse Mrs. Rose for the inaugural 2025 AIRSS Rural Teacher of the Year Award but I am also honored to have her as a member of our faculty. Mrs. Rose represents the finest of music teachers anywhere in the country. She is truly making a difference in the lives of our students, staff and our communities. Her relentless contributions make her an excellent candidate for this award.

College offers disc golf course

Play has started on a new 18-hole disc golf course on the campus of Shawnee Community College near Ullin. Volunteers from the Cache River Disc Golf Club shared information about the game with participants in the college's summer kids' camp program during a recent visit.

Designed by the Cache River Disc Golf Club, the new disc golf course offers a challenging layout for players of all skill levels. The 18-hole course features a mix of par three and par four holes, with three tee options per hole, Red (short) and Blue (long), ranging from 180 to 775 feet, as well as Yellow (beginner/youth). The par 57 course is available for recreational play and competitive tournaments.

SIU law school offers legal clinics for seniors

The Southern Illinois University Simmons Law School is planning to offer a series of mobile legal clinics in the region to provide free, onsite assistance for senior citizens who want to prepare health care power of attorney.

The legal clinic's Senior Summer Sessions were scheduled to begin Tuesday, June 10, at the Murphysboro Senior Center and will run through July 31, with site visits to each of the 13 southernmost counties the clinic serves. Participants must be age 60 or older and live within those 13 counties.

Dale Aschemann, a clinical assistant professor of law who oversees the clinic, noted that the law school has a long history of serving elderly individuals in the region. The idea for the senior summer sessions developed through discussions with Angela Upchurch, law school acting dean and professor of law, on opportunities for the clinic to "affirmatively engage with senior centers and remind the various regions of Southern Illinois that our school is not only part of their community but active in trying to make a positive difference in their community," he said.

Upchurch and Aschemann each noted the experience will also benefit the four law school students enrolled in the program for the semester. Law school faculty will also be present to assist, if needed.

"This is an incredible educational opportunity for our students," Upchurch said. "Because the work is more discrete than in the traditional clinic, we can provide students with the critical legal skill development early on in their legal education. It is a wonderful experience for them and for the community members that they will be helping."

To participate, those interested need to sign up at their local senior center and fill out an information sheet before the scheduled visit to ensure that all necessary details are available. Each participating senior citizen will be assigned a student to assist them and will leave with a completed power of attorney for health care, which is a document authorizing a person to act on behalf of another in matters of health care.

During each individual session, people will learn the importance of obtaining powers of attorney and the consequences of not having one when a person doesn't have the ability to speak for themselves, Aschemann said.

While health care powers of attorney will be the focus of each visit, the legal clinic will add people to its wait list for other estate planning services such as wills, property powers of attorney, transfer on death instruments, and consultations or assistance with guardianships for adults with disabilities and minor guardianships, Aschemann said.

"Beyond a positive community experience, students will have an opportunity to work on interviewing skills and become familiar with basic estate planning concepts through the doctrinal portion of the class," Aschemann said. "Very importantly, students will be introduced to the idea of meeting clients where they are, both geographically and where they are in their lives."

The Simmons Law School Senior Summer Sessions schedule for area counties includes:

Union County: Tuesday, July 1, 9 a.m. to noon. Sunshine Inn, located at Faith Community Church, 101 Richview, Anna, 618-833-6734.

Alexander County: Tuesday, July 15, 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Happy Days Senior Center (located in the Mighty Rivers Worship Center), 225 Poplar St., Cairo, 618-734-1050.

Massac County: Thursday, July 17, 9:40 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Happy Hearts, 701 Pearl St., Metropolis, 618-524-9755.

Johnson County: Thursday, July 24, 9:15 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. Whistlers & Whittlers, 60 State Route 37 North, Vienna, 618-658-9669.

Williamson County (Herrin): Tuesday, July 29, 9 a.m. to noon. Williamson County Programs on Aging, 1201 Weaver Road, Herrin, 618-988-1585.

Lick Creek's Crystal Knueven named Teacher of Distinction

Lick Creek School District No. 16 teacher Crystal Knueven has been recognized as a 2025 Teacher of Distinction by the Association of Illinois Rural and Small Schools, AIRSS.

The state association recently launched its first Illinois Rural Teacher of the Year Award program. AIRSS said that all of those who were nominated for the honor were recognized as Teachers of Distinction "for their amazing dedication to the rural education profession." Fourteen Teachers of Distinction from throughout the state were recognized.

AIRSS is the only statewide association focused on rural and small schools. The association was chartered in 1987 with the purpose of presenting a unified effort to promote educational excellence in rural and small schools in Illinois. The association's emphasis is to give identity, voice and recognition to rural and small schools and their local communities.

Knueven Nominated by Coworker

Crystal Knueven was nominated for the honor by coworker Jordan Suits. AIRSS shared the nomination that was submitted on its website:

Crystal Knueven goes above and beyond to support students and families in our rural community. She works diligently to provide an education to students that not only meets academic goals, but builds a sense of community within her classroom.

In the classroom, she is always looking for strategies to support each child in the classroom. She even supports our new teachers in the district by being a Teacher Mentor. Our small, rural school district depends on the help of teachers and parents to support extracurricular programs. Crystal is always quick to step in and help plan or supervise events outside of school hours.

Her ongoing dedication and willingness to be present and active for our school



Crystal Knueven

events is greatly appreciated by our community of Lick Creek. She is very active with our PTO, Booster Club, and any other areas where we may need an extra hand.

Former Jonesboro student earns full-ride scholarship to top 50 university

Recent high school graduate and former Jonesboro resident Dylan Wilson has been awarded a prestigious full-ride Morrill Scholarship to The Ohio State University.

The Morrill Scholarship is a highly competitive merit-based scholarship which recognizes students who demonstrate exceptional leadership and a commitment to diversity, inclusion, and social justice. This scholarship not only covers the full cost of attendance but also provides opportunities for leadership development, community service and academic enrichment.

Dylan will be attending The Ohio State University in the fall, a school ranked 41st among national universities by U.S. News & World Report. Dylan plans to major in biomedical engineering with a minor in materials science.

In 2019, Dylan moved to Lakewood, Ohio with his parents, Tracey Vaughn-Cundiff and Christopher Cundiff, and brother Mathew Wilson. Dylan graduated Lakewood High School on June 1 with a 4.428 GPA.

Beyond academics, Dylan has been actively involved in various extracurricular activities, including the Film Club, H2O-Help to Others, the Philanthropy Club and the National Honor Society.

He also served as the alto saxophone section leader in the marching band during his junior and senior years, participated in jazz band, pep band, wind ensemble and performed with the Cleveland Youth Wind Symphony. Additionally, Dylan was a dedicated thrower on the boys' track and field team, competing in both indoor and outdoor seasons.



Dylan Wilson

Dylan has several family members from Union County, including his father, Michael Wilson; grandparents Richard Vaughn and the late Judy Vaughn; grandparents Sam and Linda Bradley; and the late Ray Wilson; as well as many aunts, uncles and cousins.

Open house planned at animal control facility



New animal control facility

An open house is planned Saturday, June 21, at Union County's new animal control facility. The facility is located along Kaolin Road, just off old U.S. Route 51 between Anna and Cobden.

A bridge project and an open house for a new animal control facility were among topics discussed at last week's regular meeting of the Union County Board of Commissioners.

The meeting was Friday morning, June 13, at the Union County Courthouse in Jonesboro.

Open House

A reminder was shared about plans for an open house which is scheduled at Union County's new animal control facility. The open house is planned from noon to 3 p.m. Saturday, June 21. The public is invited to come to the open house to see the new facility, which is located along Kaolin Road, just off old U.S. Route 51 between Anna and Cobden.

Reminders also were shared about spaying and neutering of pets and the welcoming of donations of pet food for the shelter.

Bridge Project

In other business at Friday's meeting, the county board approved a bid for a bridge project on Union Springs Road north of Cobden.

Three bids were received for the project. A low bid of $258,201 submitted by Dees Inc. in West Frankfort was accepted.

Work is scheduled to begin in July or August. A wood bridge will be replaced with a single span concrete deck beam structure.

"The Preaching Pen"

What Must I Do to be Saved? Acts 16:30

Of all the questions that one may face in life, "What must I do to be saved?" is the most important. The answer to this question has implications on one's life as well as one's afterlife. Let us examine the question.

"What" – This simple word suggests that there is a requirement placed on man by which he can be saved.

"Must" – Must indicates that it is not optional but an absolute necessity.

"This" -The pronoun reveals that salvation requires individual responsibility.

"Do" – If one wants to be saved, there is an action that one must undertake. God has done His part; one must do theirs.

"To be saved?" – This is phrase is the object to the question. One is saved by Jesus Christ, not alone by oneself.

Fortunately for mankind, scriptures hold the answer to the question. In Acts 2:38, Peter answers, "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Have you been? Your soul depends upon it.

Ryan Thornsberry,
Anna Church of Christ

Governor signs $55.1 billion budget reliant on $700 million in new taxes

By Ben Szalinski
Capitol News Illinois

Gov. JB Pritzker signed Illinois' fiscal year 2026 budget into law Monday, June 16, taking shots at President Donald Trump's budget management to defend hard choices state lawmakers were forced to make this year.

The $55.1 billion spending plan set to take effect July 1 is the largest in state history and is supported by $55.3 billion in anticipated revenue, including more than $700 million in new taxes and more than $500 million in one-time revenues.

Democrats approved the budget shortly before midnight on May 31 with only a handful of Democrats opposing it and all Republicans unanimously voting against it.

The budget's passage came after months of discussion about closing an initially projected $3 billion deficit and growing concerns about Trump's treatment of state funding in Washington. Pritzker, a possible 2028 presidential candidate, used Monday's budget signing ceremony in Chicago as an opportunity to draw a contrast between his and Trump's budgets.

"While the Trump administration goes on Fox News lying about being fiscally responsible, Illinois is showing a better way: Balancing the budget while maintaining the programs that most people rely on," Pritzker said.

"Congress is about to pass a federal budget that has one of the largest budget deficits ever in a year without a war or a pandemic. By contrast, Illinois is balancing its budget and prudently improving its fiscal condition," he said.

Pritzker and other Democratic leaders acknowledged that crafting the FY26 budget was challenging but continues to make investments Democrats believe are priorities. Discretionary spending will increase by less than 1 percent in FY26, Pritzker said. Despite the minimal increase, the FY26 budget still spends about $2 billion more than FY25.

Democrats "ace the challenges and uncertainty head on, and the result is a budget that is truly balanced with no gimmicks," House Speaker Chris Welch, D-Hillside, said.

But that's not how Republicans view the budget's fund sweeps and delayed transfers that free up hundreds of millions of dollars that can be used in FY26.

"This approach sets Illinois up for failure by FY27 and continues a pattern of short-term thinking," House Minority Leader Tony McCombie, R-Savanna, said in a statement.

Senate Minority Leader John Curran, R-Downers Grove, condemned lawmakers for failing to deliver significant tax cuts since Pritzker took office in 2019 when Illinois' budget totaled about $40 billion.

"You know it's a bad budget when it's based on nearly $1 billion in tax increases and enhancements," he said in a statement.

The governor also used his broad authority to reduce a pair of technical errors in the budget. The changes lower spending by $161.2 million from what lawmakers passed.

Tax Increases on Tobacco, Vape Products, Businesses

The tax plan will raise $709 million in new revenue through what House Majority Leader Robyn Gabel, D-Evanston, characterized as "smart new sources of revenue." They include new taxes on businesses, sports betting and tobacco and vape products, according to a list provided by the Senate Democratic caucus.

The budget will not raise personal income, corporate income or sales taxes after Pritzker told reporters that he will veto any budget containing "broad-based" tax increases just days before the bill passed.

The largest sum of new taxes, $336 million, are on businesses outside of Illinois that lawmakers call "leveling the playing field" and will require businesses to pay more income tax to the state on their profits.

Consumers will face new taxes on specific items, including taxes on tobacco, vaping and other nicotine products, which are increasing to 45 percent to raise $50 million. An existing telecommunications tax will also rise from 7 percent to 8.65 percent and raise $49 million to fund the statewide 988 hotline.

A new tax on sports bets will charge betting sites 25 cents for the first 20 million wagers and 50 cents for each bet following that. It's projected to raise $36 million. Sports betting sites FanDuel and DraftKings have both announced they will implement 50-cent transaction fees on Illinois customers in response to the tax.

Short-term rentals will have to begin paying the state's hotel operator's tax. The charge is already applied to hotels in the state, and Airbnb already pays it voluntarily, but more companies like Vrbo will now be required to pay the tax expected to raise an additional $10 million.

A pair of tax amnesty programs are expected to raise $228 million. Those programs are meant to incentivize taxpayers to pay overdue taxes.

Fund Sweeps, Delayed Transfers Free Up More for Spending

The budget deploys a series of tactics designed to free up more money for spending in the general fund in FY26 without repeating as a revenue source for the following year's budget.

It suspends the monthly transfer to the "rainy day" fund for one year, freeing up $45 million for general fund use. Pritzker has taken pride in the fund's increase in recent years as it's grown to a balance of $2.3 billion, up from less than $60,000 when he took office. The fund is still estimated to grow by $161 million from interest and contributions from other funds in FY26.

The state will also pause the final transfer of motor fuel sales tax revenue to the road fund in order to free up $171 million. That scheduled transfer was set in motion by the state's 2019 infrastructure plan, with the sales tax supporting bond debt taken out to complete road and bridge projects. This year was to be the final year of incremental transfers that took place over the past five years.

The budget package also establishes a new $100 million BRIDGE fund that the governor can tap into "in the event of unanticipated delays in or failures of revenues." The measure, an apparent nod to the uncertainty of federal funding amid ongoing congressional budget negotiations, will come from money swept from 57 different funds.

When combined with the tax amnesty program, the fund sweeps and delayed transfers add up to at least $544 million of one-time revenue in this year's state budget that will not be available in FY27.

Health and Human Services

The most notable change to health care funding is the elimination of the Health Benefits for Immigrant Adults, or HBIA, program that provided certain low-income noncitizens between ages 42 and 64 with state health care benefits akin to Medicaid. Eliminating the program saves the state $330 million, but the $110 million Health Benefits for Immigrant Seniors, or HBIS, remains in place.

"This was part of the challenge that we had to address," Pritzker said. "It was a program that had been growing significantly in cost. I do believe that everybody should have health care. I also know that we have to live within our means in the state of Illinois."

HBIA's elimination comes after a recent audit found the two programs have cost the state at least $1.6 billion since their inception, far exceeding original estimates for the program. Last year, the state put new guardrails in place to limit enrollment into the programs and reduce costs through co-pays and other measures.

HBIA's elimination also comes as Congress debates a domestic policy plan that could reduce reimbursements to states that provide health care benefits to noncitizens.

In anticipation of broader reductions to health care and Medicaid reimbursements to the state, Illinois lawmakers also increased spending on other health care and social service programs:

•$40 million for Federally Qualified Health Centers. These centers could provide care for people who lose coverage under HBIA turn.

•$18 million from the General Revenue Fund for five safety-net hospitals in the state's Medicaid managed care program. Another $100 million from Fund for Illinois' Future will go to support the Medicaid managed care program at 12 other safety net hospitals.

•$60 million for administrative expenses for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. That's a $20 million increase from FY25 as Congress has proposed requiring states to cover half of administrative costs.

•$263.7 million for HOME Illinois, a program created to reduce homelessness in Illinois. Housing advocates calculated that between Home Illinois and other housing line items, the budget includes $354 million in funding. That's about a $14.6 million decrease from a year ago, which marks about double of what Pritzker proposed cutting in homelessness funding in February.

•An 80-cent hourly wage increase for direct service professionals who service individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in community care settings. However, overall flat funding for the program means 305 positions in the program will be eliminated, according to the They Deserve More coalition. Community Care Program workers at the

(continued on page 7)

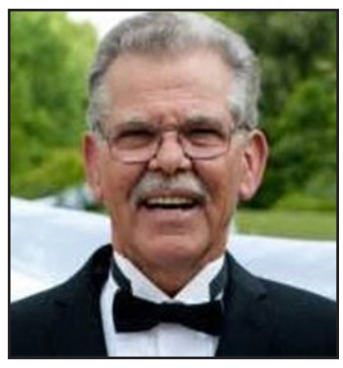
Worship at Kornthal

Worship at Kornthal will be held
2 p.m. Sunday, June 22nd.
The service features special music.

Kornthal is located 2 ½ miles south
of Jonesboro off Illinois 127.
Hope to see you there.

Obituaries

Richard W. Bittle



Richard W. Bittle, 76, passed comfortably away, June 9, 2025, in his home with his family by his side.

Richard was born Aug. 10, 1948 to Bob and Virginia (Hickam) Bittle in Alto Pass.

On May 10, 1968, Richard married Marcia L. (Stearns) at Boskydell Baptist Church. During their marriage they had two children, Richard David (Kathy) Bittle and Brandi Leigh. They both survive.

Richard is also survived by his parents, his mother-in-law, Lora (Forby) Stearns, his sister, Jean Ann (Gerald) Lindsey, sisters-in-law, Christine Bittle and Veronica (Stearns) Kinley, and brother-in-law, Michael D. (Barb) Stearns. Three granddaughters, Katie (Jon) Davis, Leah (Brandon) Lewis, and Brooke Inman. Five great-grandchildren, Paisleigh, Kaislyn, Aiden, Ellie, and Ariyah. His sixth great-grandchild is expected next month.

Richard served in the USAF from 1969-1972. He held many jobs and worked hard his entire life. From working for the railroad, construction, Stearns Locker Plant, and finally SIU where he retired from in 2015.

However, his greatest honor and position he held was Pastor of Unity Baptist Church from 1996 until time of his death.

He was also preceded in death by his father-in-law, David L. Stearns in February 1996, his brother, Everett L. Bittle in Feb. 2025, and his beloved wife, Marcia L. Bittle in March 2025.

Services were held on Saturday, June 14 at Unity Baptist Church located at 57 Haven of Love Drive in Makanda, where he pastored for almost 30 years. His friend and pastor, while he lived in Madisonville, Ky, Brother Roy G. Ellis, officiated his final service.

Richard received full military honors by the Alto Pass Area Veterans when his earthly body was laid to rest at Alto Pass Cemetery.

Meredith Funeral Home in Carbondale assisted the family with arrangements. To leave a story or memory of Richard visit www.meredithfh.com.

Donald Kevin Newman



Donald Kevin Newman, aged 67, of Anna, Ill. and Martensdale, Iowa, was a beacon of laughter and light to all who knew him.

His journey with us came to a close on Tuesday, May 27, 2025.

Donald's life was one of adventure, devotion, and love.

He is survived by his wife, Judy Newman; children, Sara Haynes, Clifford (Veronica) Moellering, Amy (Tom) Hall, Brittany (Allen) Newman-Murphy, Dallas (Casey) Nix; grandchildren, Quinton Shriver, Olivia Shriver, Annysia Moellering, Dominic Moellering, Allen W Murphy, Dixie Murphy, Bonnie Murphy, Emery Nix, Blake Nix; great-grandchildren, Aponi Murphy, Melanna Murphy, Zaiden Shriver, Kasin Shriver; and several nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his mother, Doris Jean Ottinger, and his father, Donald Lee Newman.

Donald was a devoted husband and father who was always ready for a party. He enjoyed riding his motorcycle, mechanic work, and his model hobbies.

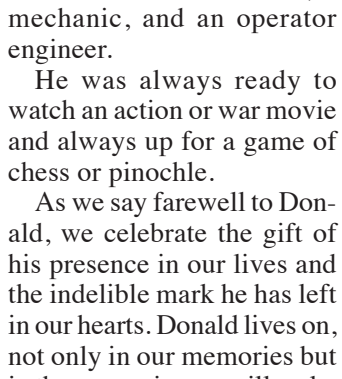
Throughout his life he was an over the road trucker, a mechanic, and an operator engineer.

He was always ready to watch an action or war movie and always up for a game of chess or pinochle.

As we say farewell to Donald, we celebrate the gift of his presence in our lives and the indelible mark he has left in our hearts. Donald lives on, not only in our memories but in the memories we will make inspired by his example.

Please join us for a celebration of life for a loving husband, father, and friend on the 28th of June 2025 from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the Northern Shelter on the Trail of tears. 320 State Forest Road, Jonesboro, IL 62952.

Gary P. Little



Gary P. Little, age 75, of Grand Chain, Ill. passed away at 5 a.m. Thursday, June 12, 2025 at his home.

Gary accepted Christ as his Savior at an early age and was a member of the Karnak Baptist Church.

Gary retired as a Lieutenant from the Shawnee Correctional Center, Vienna, Ill. with thirty years of service.

He is survived by his wife, Joann Yewell Little. They were united in marriage for 36 years, and she was his best friend and love of his life.

He is also survived by his daughter, Rachel Cobb, of Anna, Ill., sister, Cara Little (Kenny) of Murray, Ky., stepson, Kelvin (Susan) Kunath of Golconda, Ill. Grandchildren, Kelvin Ray Kunath (Patricia), Kyle Kunath (Paxton), Trevor Williams (Dusty) Amber Orr (Bryce), Amanda Davis (Justin) and six great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Edwin and Mary Stubblefield Little and stepdaughter Jo Ellen Kunath Jackson.

Graveside memorial services honoring the life of Mr. Gary P. Little will be held at the Anderson Cemetery in the Boaz Community of Massac County. The service date and time will be announced.

Donations may be made to Hospice of Southern Illinois, 305 South Illinois Street, Belleville, IL 62220 or Saint Jude's Children's Research Hospital, 501 Saint Jude Place, Memphis, TN 38105 - 9959.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Wilson Funeral Home in Karnak.

Annette Wallace Gardiner



Annette Wallace Gardiner, age 97, passed away peacefully on Sunday, Feb. 2, 2025, at St. Patrick's Hospital in Missoula, Mont.

She was born on June 11, 1927, in Anna, Ill., to Robert and Florence Marie (Hilton) Wallace. She was a 1945 graduate of Cobden High School, home of the "Appleknockers," and in 1942 Annette was selected as the Cobden Peach Festival Queen.

While attending Southern Illinois University, she met Robert Allyn Gardiner from Herrin, Ill. Annette and Robert married in 1951 and after a brief stint of living in Evansville, Ind., they settled in Herrin where they gave birth to their daughter, Susan.

Annette was a member of the Herrin Presbyterian Church and the Herrin Women's Club. She loved cooking, sewing, annual trips to Estes Park, Colo., and playing Canasta with her family and friends.

In 2004, Annette relocated to Billings, Mont. to be closer to her daughter (Susan), son-in-law (Mike), and grandson (Michael). During her time in Billings, she made many new friends at Mission Ridge Senior Living Community. She also enjoyed attending Michael's sports activities and school events.

Crain Funeral home

Annette moved to Polson, Mont., in 2019 where she enjoyed spending time on the shores of Flathead Lake.

Annette is survived by her daughter, Susan (Gardiner) Gulledge and son-in-law, Mike, of Polson, Mont.; grandson, Michael and his wife, Shelby (Towe), of Missoula, Mont.; and niece, Karen Siener Driver, of Decatur, Ill.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Robert; sister, Lorraine Wallace Siener; and nephew, Steven Siener.

Internment will take place on Friday, June 27, 2025 at 1:30 p.m. at Walker Hill Cemetery in Grand Tower, Ill.

Crain Pleasant Grove-Murdale Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

To view the obituary and/or to leave an online condolence for the family, please visit www.crainsonline.com.

Secretary of State addresses license plate technology issue

Following reports that Texas police illegally accessed Illinois automatic license plate reader, ALPR, data to track down a woman for an abortion care-related matter, Illinois Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias has announced new measures aimed at preventing further abuse.

The secretary of state said in a news release that in May, law enforcement authorities in Texas performed a nationwide search of more than 83,000 ALPR cameras to locate a woman they said had a self-administered abortion. Included in the search were cameras located in states where abortion is legal, including Illinois, specifically Mount Prospect in suburban Cook County.

In 2023, Giannoulias spearheaded first-in-the-nation legislation making it illegal for law enforcement in other states to use ALPR cameras to track or penalize individuals seeking abortion care or criminalize a person's immigration status.

"License plate readers can serve as an important tool for law enforcement, but these cameras must be regulated so they aren't abused for surveillance, tracking the data of innocent people or criminalizing lawful behavior," Giannoulias said. "No one seeking legal healthcare services in Illinois should face harassment or jail – period."

In response to the breach, the Secretary of State's office instructed Flock Safety, which operates the ALPR network in question, to immediately shut off access for the out-of-state authorities illegally using the system.

The office has also contacted the Illinois attorney general's office to investigate the matter and is establishing an audit system with additional safeguards to ensure any law enforcement entity using an ALPR in Illinois is adhering to the law.

Under the act, which took effect in 2024, law enforcement agencies must attest that ALPR data will not be used to prosecute or enforce another state's laws pertaining to abortion care or immigration status. If a law enforcement agency violates this agreement, they jeopardize their access to Illinois ALPR data and eligibility for federal and state grants.

In the recent case, Mount Prospect's ALPR settings provided a gateway into Illinois' system operated by Flock for an unauthorized use, despite the Texas police stating that the reason for the search was related to abortion care. Any law enforcement entity operating the ALPR must adhere to the declaration in the law and deny such requests, according to the act. Between Jan. 14 and April 30, there were 262 searches for immigration related matters in Mount Prospect, alone.

The law still allows police to use ALPR technology for investigating felonies, carjackings, vehicle thefts and missing person alerts, but it protects a person's right to abortion access and prevents attempts to criminalize a person's immigration status.

Operated by private companies, ALPRs are used in every state by most metropolitan police departments to scan license plates and provide the time and location of vehicles in real time. ALPR technology allows police to read thousands of license plates per minute from cameras placed on roadways,

View Obituaries Online at annanews.com

News from

Anna Nazarene Church

The morning worship service was held at 10:35 a.m. on June 15. Announcements were given by Pastor Keeley. The worship service was led by Pastor Wright and the worship team. The message "Experience The Love Of The Heavenly Father" from Romans 5:8 and Luke 15 was brought by Pastor Wright.

Celebrating birthdays this week are: 17th Joe Ames, 21st Curly Ralls.

Celebrating anniversaries this week are: 16th Jeremy and Jennifer Fuller, 21st Terry & Emily Wiseman.

The evening service was cancelled in honor of Father's Day.

Sunday, June 22

Breakfast - 9:00 a.m.

Sunday School - 9:30 a.m.

Morning Worship Service & Communion - 10:35 a.m.

Evening Worship Service – 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday, June 25

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.

Thursday, June 26

At noon, Prime Time Ministry-Senior Citizens. We will be having a good, old-time country-cookin meal. Come early and sit and visit a spell.

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.

County Line News

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

Mill Creek Baptist Church held Vacation Bible School this past week. It was a short one, two days and then family night, but we had a wonderful turn out. The theme was Yee Haw: Celebrating God's Special Gifts, and that's exactly what we did. Any other church that wants to do a short VBS, just let us know, we'd be glad to share the program and resources. Call 573-208-9692.

The weather cooperated each evening and didn't get blistering hot, so activity time outside was good and the brief rains we had earlier didn't make the ground nasty. There was a special visual treat on our second night when three deer came out grazing in the back yard while we were having meal time. The kids were excited to peer out the windows at the wildlife, and as there were two bucks, the men folk excited also.

Members of P.A.S.T. of Union County, Illinois set up a table with books for sale during the Annabelle Festival. We passed out flyers for the self-guided tour of historical business for our Timeless Treasures event, and had flyers for the Annabelle Trail also. We sold a few books and had a lot of interest in our organization and the historical aspects of what we do.

PAST will be holding it's monthly meeting on June 24 at 6 p.m.. We encourage those that might like to learn more, or even participate in what we do, to come to a meeting. The meetings are held at the PAST Heritage House in Jonesboro right off the square at 102 South Main St. in Jonesboro.

The Annabelle Festival was well attended from what I saw, despite the few little showers that came and went. I did some birthday shopping and picked out a goodie for myself too. A lot of Annabelle hydrangeas found new homes, as well. If you didn't get to attend, I encourage you to try to come next year. It's always held on the second Saturday of June. There are activities for the children, a lot of vendors with crafts and food, Main Street businesses have much to offer, there is music, a car show, and plants galore. Get it on your calendar now.

I hope all you fathers had a great Father's Day. My husband did pretty well with gifts and I fixed one of his favorite meals. We enjoyed having some of our children and grandchildren on hand as well.

Brother Bobby Richardson led the Mill Creek Baptist Church in a special message for fathers out of the books of Ephesians 6:1-4 and Colossians 3:21. It was a reminder of what a good father does and doesn't do.

Those added to the prayer list were: Jerry "Bud" Goodman who is on hospice care; Kendra and Doug Edwards as they navigate life with Kendra's health issues, Gary Rider's father for health; Robin Henson for severe health problems, JoJo Cobb for a small head injury from a fall, and Butch Poole who is undergoing radiation treatments. Please keep these folks in your prayers.

Union County Fixin's

Herb and Cheese Angel Biscuits

1 cup buttermilk

2 1/2 cups biscuit mix (like Bisquick)

1/2 cup shredded Cheddar cheese

1/2 teaspoon Italian herb seasoning

1/4 teaspoon garlic powder

1 package rapid-rise yeast

3 tablespoons butter

3 tablespoons all- purpose flour

Cooking spray

2 tablespoons butter, melted

1 tablespoon of fresh chopped parsley or you can use everything bagel topping

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

Place buttermilk in a glass measuring cup and microwave on high for 1 minute or until it reaches 130 degrees.

Combine baking mix, cheese, seasoning, garlic powder, and yeast. Cut in butter to resemble coarse meal. Add buttermilk, stirring just until dry ingredients are moistened.

Sprinkle flour over a work surface. Turn dough out onto surface and knead 4 times. Roll to ½ thickness and then cut into rounds with a 2-2 ½ inch biscuit cutter. It will make about 18 biscuits.

Place rounds on baking sheet coated with cooking spray.

Lightly brush tops of rolls with melted butter and sprinkle parsley or topping over that.

Cover and let rise in a warm place free from drafts for 10 minutes.

Bake at 400 degrees for 14 minutes.

Hess News

By Glenn Heisner

Our son Danny returned to Georgia last week from Guatemala where he and a church team built two homes. One was for a widow who washed clothes for a living.

Our grandson Aaron Harris was married last Sunday in Texas. We couldn't attend but watched it via phone. The bachelor party went shooting as several were policemen.

Our only granddaughter Rae Ann Heisner graduated in May and will be teaching 8th grade math as her first teaching job.

Danny and youngest grandson Sam came here for Father's Day.

We will celebrate our 64th anniversary on the 24th.

The nine-day trail ride is moving after being in the same location over 50 years. The farm sold recently.

News from

Anna First Baptist Church

Anna First Baptist Church met for worship on Sunday, June15, Father's Day, with Bro. Perry Wright opening our service with prayer.

Our Call to Worship was Grace and Assurance and was given by Vickie Burrow. "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep and am known of mine. as the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep," John 10.

Our Worship Team led in three songs, "Yes, I Will," "See a Victory" and "Way-Maker."

Pastor Lupe's sermon title was The Book of Revelation – "Hour of Power." Highlights included, Revelation 17, the "hour of power" refers to a brief but intense period when ten kings receive authority alongside the beast to wage war against the Lamb, symbolizing a short-lived global alliance of evil.

These kings are unified in purpose, submitting their authority to the antichrist in a final rebellion against God. Mystery Baby, described as a seductive and corrupting harlot, represents a global system of false religion, immorality, and political manipulation that influences kings and nations. Through outwardly powerful and luxurious, Babylon is doomed to sudden and complete destruction by the very powers it once controlled. This chapter reveals God's sovereignty even in judgment, as He uses evil to destroy evil, preparing the way for Christ's ultimate triumph.

Today we honored our men in our church as it is Father's Day. Each man was presented with a gift.

Special thanks was given to Shirley Ray and Zach Tomkinson and the Youth Dept. for their participation in representing Anna First Baptist in the Annabelle Festival Saturday.

Saturday, from around 8.30 a.m. to noon, we will have our Mexico Mission Trip Yard Sale.

At around 11 a.m. the Morgans will be at Anna Heights Baptist Church speaking about their mission work in Uzbekistan.

At 6:30 p.m. on Saturday Anna First Baptist Church will be hosting Southern Gospel Concert featuring Roger Crews and New Beginnings Quartet. Concert is free but we will take a love offering.

Our Sunday School meets at 9 a.m. and is for all ages. Our Worship service and Children's Church begins at 10:15 a.m. Our Prayer Time is on Wednesday evening at 6 p.m., our Youth Program begins at 5:30 p.m. also on Wednesday. Our bus runs for all of these programs and services. Please call our church 618-833-5416 to be put on a list to ride our bus.

Our church is located at 409 Morgan Street in Anna, Illinois. Our facebook is Facebook.com/AnnaFirstBaptistChurch. Our email is fbcanna409@gmail.com.

If we can be of any help or pray with you, please call or stop by our church. It is our prayer that you know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and that you are walking with Him in your life always. God Loves You and so do we!

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

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When Everyone Speaks At Once

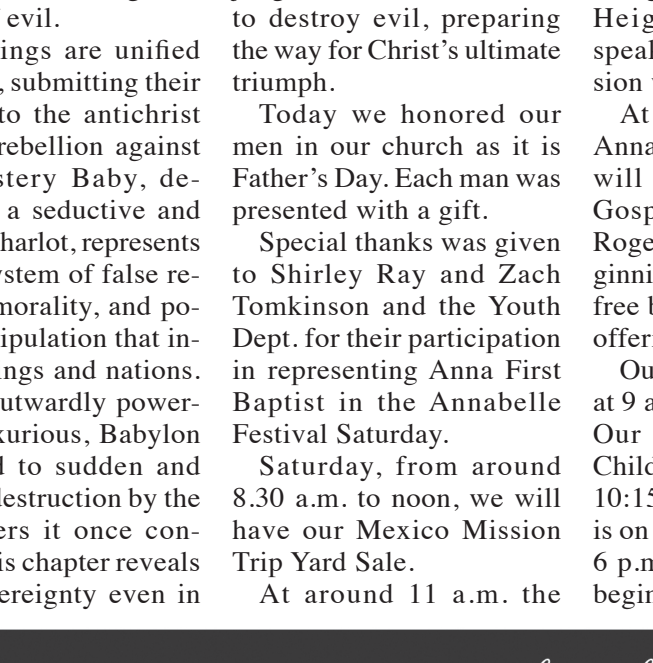


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There are days when everyone gets on your nerves. They all want help "now" and you feel pulled in five different directions. Who can possibly handle such a situation? God can. He can hear all of us…all of the time. When we think of this from a human standpoint it is just too incredible to fathom; we take it on faith. We can communicate with Him anytime we choose; whatever we need, whenever we need it, He hears us. Worship this week and discover how prayer and faith can give you peace that is uninterrupted by the world.

Weekly Scripture Reading

John	John	John	John	John	1 Cor.	1 Cor.
14.1-14	14.15-31	15.1-27	16.1-15	16.16-33	12.1-11	14.1-25

Scriptures Selected by the American Bible Society

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TAKING APPLICATIONS

Union County Housing Authority is taking applications for USDA Rural Development for one bedroom apartments and two bedroom apartments in Wolf Lake, IL. Rent is based on income. For information call 618-833-5129 or Email: Robbin@ucha.email or sara@ucha.email. Union County Housing Authority is an Equal Opportunity Provider.

TAKING APPLICATIONS

Union County Housing Authority is taking applications for USDA Rural Development Sites for one-bedroom apartments in Jonesboro, one-bedroom apartments in Dongola, and two bedroom apartments in Dongola. The applicant(s) must be at least 62 years of age or have a disability to qualify. Rent is based on income. For information call 618-833-5129 or Email: Robbin@ucha.email or Sara@ucha.email. Union County Housing Authority is an Equal Opportunity Provider.



YARD SALE

Yard sale: 209 Mountain Glan Rd. Cobden, Friday June 20th & Saturday June 21st 7-3pm Nice 2XL, 3XL & 4XL men's & women's Coats, dresses, jeans & shirts. Teen boys clothes, hoodies, new baseball pants, shorts & T-shirts. Toddler girls Matilda Jane & Teen Girls, shoes, 6 kitchen chairs, Antique Queen bed frame, 2 bikes, old jars, household items, dishes & toys. Lots of Miscellaneous. Rain or Shine

Yard Sale This Fri 8-5 & Sat 7-12 1/4 mile N on New 51. 215 Boyd Butchering Ln, Anna Furniture, household decor, kitchen items, clothes, Quilts, bedding, Antiques & Lots of Misc.

HELP WANTED

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

The Voyage Senior Living of Anna is hiring for a part-time cook position $16.00-$16.50/hr. and a full-time CNA for day, evening, and midnight shifts $17.50-$18.50/hr. Call Katie at 618-833-5495. EEO/AA Employer

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LEGAL NOTICE

STATE OF ILLINOIS IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 1ST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT UNION COUNTY

Madison Headrick, Plaintiff, and Dwight E Vaughn Defendant. No. 2025OP53

NOTICE OF PUBLICATION

Notice is given you Dwight E. Vaughn, Defendant, that this cause has been commenced against you in this Court asking for Order of Protection and other relief.

Unless you file your response or otherwise file your appearance in this cause in the office of the Circuit Clerk of Union County Courthouse, Illinois, on or before the 21st day of July, 2025, at 11:00 am and other relief may be granted as prayed for by the Plaintiff.

Keri Clark
CIRCUIT CLERK
8221-954939

Hospital District Board Meeting Planned

The Union County Hospital District Board of Directors will hold a meeting at 6:00 pm on Monday, June 30th, 2025, in the third-floor conference room of Union County Hospital.

The agenda includes updates on the Phase 1 Renovation Project, Master Facility Planning, and the Food Pantry. As well as the discussion of property tax exemption, the sale of property to Rural Health, Inc. and the sale of property & buildings to Deaconess Illinois Union County.

8221-954601

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

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

Filed this 6th day of June, 2025, under the Assumed Name of Narrow Way N with the place of business located at 3155 New Saratoga Rd., Anna, IL 62906, and that the True Name(s) and Residence Address of the Sole Owner(s) and Proprietors of said Business is:

Owners: Jeremy & Lisa Nice
Address: 3155 New Saratoga Rd., Anna, IL 62906
Stephanie L. Cox
Union County Clerk
8221-954938

LEGAL NOTICE NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING On Annual Budget and Appropriation Ordinance of Stinson Memorial Public Library District

Notice is hereby given to the Public that on July 28, 2025, at the hour of 5:00 P.M. at the Stinson Memorial Public Library District, 409 S. Main Street, Anna, Illinois, a public hearing will be held on the annual Budget and Appropriation Ordinance for the Stinson Memorial Public Library District for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025 and ending June 30, 2026. Any person interested in said budget and ordinance may be present at said time and place and may be heard in regard to the budget and ordinance. The tentative budget is now on file with the Secretary of the Board of Trustees, Stinson Memorial Public Library District, at the Library office and may be reviewed upon request prior to said hearing by the Public.

Date: June 19, 2025
Secretary, Board of Trustees
Stinson Memorial Public Library District
409 S. Main Street
Anna, IL 62906
(618) 833-2521
8221-954971

NOTICE TO TAXPAYERS

THE UNION COUNTY BOARD OF REVIEW OPENED JUNE 2nd, 2025 FOR THE 2025 ASSESSMENT YEAR. A WRITTEN COMPLAINT MAY BE FILED FROM THIS DATE UNTIL 30 DAYS AFTER THE PUBLICATION OF THE REAL ESTATE ASSESSMENT LISTS. These complaints affect the 2025 payable 2026 assessments. THE DEADLINE FOR FILING FOR THE 2024 ASSESSMENT YEAR was FEBRUARY 24TH, 2025. THIS IS IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 16-55 OF THE ILLINOIS PROPERTY TAX CODE.

BOARD OF REVIEW COMPLAINT FORMS AND RULES ARE AVAILABLE AT THE SUPERVISOR OF ASSESSMENTS OFFICE LOCATED AT 309 W. MARKET ST. ROOM 128 JONESBORO IL 62952 OR BY CALLING 618-833-8051.

8221-954942

PUBLIC HEARING

A public hearing on the 2025 Tentative Budget and Appropriation Ordinance of the Dodge Memorial Public Library District will be held at 4:00 p.m. on Thursday July 10, 2025 at the Dodge Memorial Library in Olive Branch, Illinois. Copies of the Tentative Budget and Appropriation Ordinance are available for public inspection on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays between the hours of 12:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. at the Dodge Memorial Public Library in Olive Branch, Illinois.

Elizabeth McCoy
President
8221-954905

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, UNION COUNTY, ILLINOIS

FARMERS STATE BANK OF ALTO PASS, a state chartered bank, Plaintiff v. HUDSON & HUDSON LLC, et al., Defendants, No. 2025-FC-7

NOTICE OF PENDENCY OF ACTION

NOTICE is hereby given to unknown owners and non-record claimants of the real estate described in the Complaint for Foreclosure filed in the above entitled case, defendants in the above entitled case, pursuant to the provisions of 735 Illinois Compiled Statutes 5/2-206, 5/15-1218, and 5/15-1502, that the above entitled mortgage foreclosure suit is now pending in said Court and the day on or after which a default may be entered against said Defendants is JULY 14, 2025, and that the following information applies to said foreclosure proceeding:

1. The name of the Plaintiff and the case number are identified above.

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

3. The name of the titleholder of record: Hudson & Hudson LLC.

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

TRACT 1:

A parcel of land being a part of the Northwest Quarter of the Northeast Quarter of Section 21, Township 12 South, Range 1 West of the Third Principal Meridian. Said parcel is also a part of property described and recorded in Book 118, Page 103 in the Union County Courthouse in the name of Juanita Denny, as Trustee under the provisions of a trust agreement dated March 15, 1973, identified as Trust No. 4056-73-1, and also known as Tri D Development Land Trust. Said Parcel being more particularly described as follows:

Commencing at an iron pipe found at the Southeast Corner of said Quarter-Quarter Section, said corner being established per survey of J.T. Blankenship, IPLS No. 699, for Dale Denny, dated June 6, 1966; thence N 0 degrees 33' 33" W 1007.81 feet along the East line of said Quarter-Quarter Section to the Southeast corner of an existing utility easement; thence N 88 degrees 41' 32" W 278.65 feet along the South line of said utility easement to an iron rod set, this being the point of beginning; thence along new lines the following two (2) calls: thence S 1 degree 55' 21" E 213.36 feet to an iron rod set; thence N 88 degrees 41' 15" W 190.60 feet to an iron rod set in the East line of a new 50' access and utility easement; thence along said new easement the following two (2) calls: thence N 1 degree 55' 21" W 18.31 feet to an iron rod set; thence along a curve to the left with chord bearing N 22 degrees 03' 40" W 144.07 feet, a radius of 209.22 feet, and an arc of 147.08 feet to an iron rod set in the South line of said existing utility easement; thence along said existing utility easement, the following two (2) calls: thence N 47 degrees 47' 54" E 90.74 feet to an iron rod set; thence S 88 degrees 41' 32" E 170.94 feet to the point of beginning.

TRACT II:

A perpetual, non-exclusive easement for roadway and utility purposes, for the benefit of the foregoing "tract 1" (The dominant tenement) being a part of the Northwest Quarter of the Northeast Quarter of Section 21, Township 12 South, Range 1 West of the Third Principal Meridian, City of Anna, Union County, Illinois being more particularly described as follows:

Commencing at an iron pipe found at the Southeast corner of said Quarter-Quarter Section, said corner being established per survey of J.T. Blankenship, IPLS No. 699, for Dale Denny, dated June 6, 1966; thence N 0 degrees 33' 33"W 1345.81 feet to a concrete right-of-way marker found in the South right of way line of Dog Walk Road; thence N 88 degrees 41' 32" W 456.70 feet along the south right-of-way line of Dog Walk Road to a concrete right-of-way marker found in the South right-of-way line of Lick Creek Road; thence along the South right-of-way line of Lick Creek Road along a curve to the right with chord bearing S 46 degrees 54' 01" W 310.20 feet, a radius of 8634.42 feet, and an arc of 310.22 feet to an iron rod found, this being the point of beginning; thence along new easement lines the following seven (7) calls: thence S 42 degrees 12'00" E 252.63 feet to an iron rod set; thence along a curve to the right with chord bearing S 22 degrees 03' 40" E 144.07 feet, a radius of 209.22 feet and an arc of 147.08 feet to an iron rod set; thence S 1 degree 55' 21" E 18.31 feet to an iron rod set; thence N 88 degrees 41'15" W 50.08 feet to an iron rod set, thence N 1 degree 55' 21" W 15.49 feet to an iron rod set; thence along a curve to the left with chord bearing N 22 degrees 03' 40" W 109.64 feet, a radius of 159.22 feet, and an arc of 111.93 feet to an iron rod found; thence N 42 degrees 12' 00" W 252.88 feet to an iron rod found in the South right-of-way of Lick Creek Road; thence along a curve to the left with chord bearing N 48 degree 05' 44" E 50.00 feet, a radius of 8634.42 feet, and an arc of 50.00 feet to the point of beginning.

5. Common address or description or the location of the real estate is as follows: 108 Denny Industrial Drive, Anna, Illinois.

6. An identification of the mortgage sought to be foreclosed is as follows:

Name of mortgagor: Lindsey Fisher Hudson a/k/a Lindsey Fisher

Name of mortgagee: Farmers State Bank of Alto Pass

Date of mortgage: March 3, 2023

Date of recording: March 9, 2023

County where recorded: Union County

Recording document identification: Document No. 2023R0356

THIS IS AN ATTEMPT TO COLLECT A DEBT BY A DEBT COLLECTOR AND ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE.

Clerk of the Circuit Court
Union County, Illinois
BARRETT, TWOMEY, BROOM, HUGHES & HOKE, LLP
Attorneys at Law
100 North Illinois Avenue
P.O. Box 3747
Carbondale, IL 62902-3747
Tel: (618) 457-0437
Fax: (618) 457-0411
8221-954692

Southern Illinois included in'2025 Top Logistics Hubs'

Southern Illinois is included in a list of "2025 Top Logistics Hubs" announced by Business Facilities Magazine. The list appears in the magazine's May/June issue and has been posted online at business facilities.com.

Business Facilities is a full-service media brand specializing in the site selection marketplace. Through a bi-monthly magazine, e-mail newsletters, a news portal, and its LiveXchange event, Business Facilities has created a dynamic community for C-level executives and economic development organizations.

The "2025 Top Logistics Hubs" include Southern Illinois; Anchorage, Alaska; the City of Moreno Valley, Calif., Atlanta, Ga.; Houston, Texas; Louisville, Ky.; Marion, Ohio, Mobile, Ala.; Norfolk, Va.; Portland, Ore.; Tampa Bay, Fla.; Southwest Louisiana; Vineland, N.J.; and Wilmington, North Carolina.

The article by the magazine's editors shared that when " relying on logistics, choosing the right location for operations – such as distribution centers, manufacturing plants, and warehouses – is essential to maintaining efficiency, reducing costs and meeting customer expectations.

Several strategic factors guide location selection to optimize logistics performance and long-term success.

Proximity to key markets is one of the most important considerations. Being close to major customer bases or urban centers allows for faster delivery times, lower transportation costs, and greater responsiveness to demand fluctuations. Companies serving multiple regions often choose centralized or multi-site locations to balance speed and cost.

Access to transportation infrastructure is just as vital. The ideal location should offer convenient access to highways, railroads, ports and airports to ensure smooth inbound and outbound logistics. Multimodal options are especially valuable for companies with diverse shipping needs. Efficient transport routes reduce transit times and lower fuel consumption, improving both cost-effectiveness and sustainability.

Another factor is labor availability and cost. Companies must assess the local workforce's size, skill level, and wage expectations. In logistics-heavy operations, a reliable labor pool for drivers, warehouse staff, and logistics managers are vital.

Businesses also evaluate how well a location connects to suppliers, manufacturers, and end-users. Choosing a site near major suppliers or vendors can reduce freight costs and simplify procurement.

Risk factors such as natural disasters, political stability, and traffic congestion should be considered. A region with frequent weather-related disruptions or infrastructure bottlenecks are factors to look into when relocating.

Overall, companies relying on logistics evaluate transportation access, proximity to markets, a capable workforce, competitive real estate, and favorable regulatory conditions. These factors help create a basis for a reliable, cost-effective, and scalable logistics operations.

The "2025 Top Logistics Hubs" were described as "locations that offer assets to move products and people efficiently. This is not an exhaustive list of top logistics hubs, and serves to provide a look at the assets to consider."

Southern Illinois

The list shared the following look at Southern Illinois:

Southern Illinois is a premier logistics hub, offering unparalleled advantages for businesses seeking efficient and cost-effective solutions. The region boasts a robust infrastructure including three interstate highways (I-57, I-64 and I-24), five Class I railroads, and is bordered by both the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers. This strategic R4 Advantage (rivers, rail, roads and runways) combined with its central location ensures seamless connectivity for swift movement of goods, so companies get to customers faster at a fraction of the cost.

The region's workforce is a key asset. Its education and training network, including Southern Illinois University Carbondale – a Research 1 institution, four community colleges, and numerous training partners ensure a skilled workforce and strong talent pipeline. Employer-specific training and recruitment programs are the norm in Southern Illinois through initiatives like the Southern Illinois Manufacturing Academy, Agronomy Innovation Center, and SIU's Transportation Education Center housing its nationally ranked aviation and automotive programs.

Companies leveraging Southern Illinois' logistics advantages include:

Prysmian's $63.8 million cable manufacturing facility expansion to meet growing renewable energy market demands.

Aisin Illinois' new 463,000-square-foot logistics center to create distribution efficiencies for its three Southern Illinois manufacturing facilities and reduce lead times for its automotive customers.

Manner Polymers' $54 million polymer compounding facility.

Long-standing companies like Continental Tire that have called Southern Illinois home continue to reap the benefits of the region's centrally located logistics assets. Since 1974, the company grew its 32-acre, 47 employee facility to the largest Continental Tire facility in all North America sprawling 100 acres under roof and drawing 3,800 employees from more than 150 zip codes.

(Prysmian is in Du Quoin. Aisin Illinois is in Marion. Manner Polymers is in Mt. Vernon. Continental Tire is in Mt. Vernon.)

Ex-Speaker Madigan sentenced to 7 1/2 years for bribery, corruption

By Hannah Meisel
Capitol News Illinois

CHICAGO – The number of years former Illinois House Speaker Michael Madigan spent in Springfield has often been used as shorthand to explain his outsized impact on state government and politics. His political career spanned 50 years in the General Assembly, 23 years chairing the Democratic Party of Illinois, and 36 years as House speaker – the longest tenure of any state or federal legislative leader in U.S. history.

But on Friday, June 13, a new term was added to the former speaker's list of legacy-defining terms when U.S. District Judge John Blakey sentenced Madigan to 90 months, or 7 1/2 years, in federal prison.

The sentence, which also includes three years' probation after his prison term and a $2.5 million fine, follows a jury's split verdict in February. After a marathon two weeks of deliberation, jurors convicted him on 10 of 23 corruption charges, including bribery, but acquitted him on seven and deadlocked over another six.

As Friday afternoon's hearing passed the three-hour mark, Madigan accepted Blakey's invitation to make a statement to the court. After taking a drink of water, putting on his glasses and blowing his nose as he approached the bench, the former speaker addressed the judge for less than two minutes, reading from a prepared script.

"I'm truly sorry for putting the people of the state of Illinois through this," he began, noting that he "tried my best" to serve the people of Illinois. "I am not perfect."

Later, when explaining how he was weighing Madigan's continued insistence in his innocence, Blakey repeated Madigan's words.

"The defendant says he's sorry for putting the people of Illinois through this," the judge said. "I guess that's as close as we'll get to remorse."

Blakey spent a long time audibly weighing what he called "a tale of two different Mike Madigans," calling the former speaker "a dedicated public servant" and "a good and decent person."

"He had no reason to commit these crimes," the judge said. "But he chose to do so."

Blakey took particular umbrage with Madigan's performance on the witness stand in January after he made the stunning decision to testify in his own defense. In siding with the government's argument that the former speaker's sentence should take into account his perjury on the witness stand, Blakey cited several examples of times Madigan's statements conflicted with either evidence, the sworn testimony of others, or even his own testimony.

"The defendant's testimony was littered with obstruction of justice and it was hard to watch," Blakey said. "To put it bluntly, it was a nauseating display. … You lied, sir. You lied. You did not have to."

Madigan, who was described by many witnesses throughout his four-month trial as difficult to read – and who attempted to explain the familial origins of his reserved personality as a defense while on the witness stand – was characteristically stoic as Blakey handed down his sentence.

After conferring with his attorney, he hugged and kissed his adult children in the front row of the courtroom gallery. A few minutes later, he and his entourage of lawyers and family quickly made their way out of the Dirksen Federal Courthouse, trailed by cameras.

True to form, the former speaker also made no statement to reporters, though he smiled slightly before getting on the elevator down to the courthouse lobby. Across the street, a man yelled to Madigan and his group, "You going to jail, buddy?"

Madigan was ordered to report to a yet-to-be-named federal prison on Oct. 13.

Prosecutors had urged a 12 1/2-year sentence and a $1.5 million fine, while Madigan's lawyers asked for five years' probation, the first on home detention. After hearing arguments from attorneys earlier in the week, Blakey calculated the sentencing guidelines for Madigan's convictions and other factors would dictate a prison term of 105 years, but the judge was under no obligation to follow that directive.

'I'm Not a Target of Anything"

One of the last times the famously media-averse Madigan ever deigned to answer questions from journalists was in the fall of 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic afforded the speaker an even larger buffer than usual from those outside his closed circle of staff and advisors.

The previous several months had yielded near-weekly developments in the public's understanding of an unfolding federal corruption probe, including revelations about FBI searches executed on the homes of close Madigan allies. The intrigue only intensified after the indictment and midday FBI raids on two different Democratic state senators and the arrest of a member of Madigan's own House Democratic leadership team on a charge that he bribed another Democratic senator, who happened to be cooperating with the feds.

Despite his name showing up on subpoenas for some of those search warrants, Madigan made a bold declaration that he was not in the feds' crosshairs.

"No, I'm not a target of anything," he told a gaggle of reporters in a crowded and noisy hallway of the state Capitol in Springfield in late October 2019.

Within the year, however, Madigan would be proven wrong as prosecutors filed the first in a series of bombshell charges alleging the longtime speaker had been the beneficiary of a yearslong bribery scheme from electric utility Commonwealth Edison. Prosecutors alleged ComEd officials agreed to hire Madigan allies, including a handful on no-work contracts, to grease the wheels at key times when the company was pushing for big and ultimately lucrative legislation in Springfield.

In that July 2020 filing, Madigan's status as a target of the feds' widespread corruption investigation was marked by a new moniker: "Public Official A."

But it wasn't until March 2022 – more than a year after Madigan resigned from his biggest public roles after pressure from within the Democratic power structures he'd built over decades – that the former speaker was indicted.

Receiving top billing among the original 22 counts in the indictment, which was later bumped to 23, was racketeering. Prosecutors accused Madigan of using his positions as House speaker, chair of the state's Democratic Party and as partner in his real estate law firm as a "criminal enterprise" meant to maintain and increase his power while enriching his allies.

The indictment rehashed what had been already made public in July 2020 and again several months later when four former ComEd executives and lobbyists were charged with orchestrating the utility's bribery scheme aimed at Madigan.

But it also revealed that former Chicago Alderman Danny Solis had worn a wire on the speaker and alleged the speaker had agreed to get him appointed to a lucrative state board position in exchange for introductions to real estate developers to woo them as potential clients of Madigan's firm.

A final charge added later in 2022 alleged a tacit bribery agreement between Madigan and telecommunications giant AT&T Illinois like the ComEd scheme, albeit smaller – involving one no-work contractor hired in the months before AT&T-backed legislation passed in Springfield.

Jury delivers a split verdict

On the witness stand, Madigan repeatedly claimed that he was ignorant of the fact that the collective $1.3 million his allies earned from their ComEd contracts was for performing no work. Instead, the former speaker and his lawyers framed those contracts as the result of mere job recommendations, which they argued was a component of Madigan's job as speaker.

Madigan's attorneys, along with some of the government's own witnesses, argued the ComEd-backed legislation passed after years of strategic and expensive lobbying efforts, and not because the speaker's allies had gotten jobs and contracts with the utility.

But after a slew of witnesses, including a ComEd exec-turned-FBI cooperator and one of the former contractors, in addition to secretly recorded videos and wiretapped phone calls shown at trial, the jury was ultimately convinced on most ComEd-related charges. Madigan was convicted on seven of those charges, including four counts of bribery and conspiracy, though he was acquitted on two charges related to an effort to get his ally appointed to the utility's board.

The so-called "ComEd Four" were convicted in their own trial in 2023 and are scheduled to be sentenced this summer. They include Madigan's formerly close friend and longtime Springfield lobbyist Mike McClain, who was also the speaker's codefendant in the most recent trial. But after roughly 65 hours of deliberations over two weeks beginning in late January, the jury deadlocked on all six charges that named both the former speaker and McClain, including the feds' marquee racketeering allegation.

The jury also deadlocked on the single count alleging Madigan's participation in the alleged bribery scheme with AT&T, forcing Blakey to declare a mistrial on that count.

It was the second time in five months that charges alleging a bribe between AT&T and Madigan resulted in a hung jury; weeks before Madigan's trial began, former AT&T Illinois President Paul La Schiazza's bribery case ended in a mistrial on all five counts against him. He faces retrial in January 2026.

Charges involving Solis, the former Chicago alderman, ended in a mix of convictions, acquittals and deadlock from the jury. While jurors convicted the former speaker on wire fraud and Travel Act violation counts related to the alleged scheme to help get Solis appointed to a state board, they acquitted him of the bribery charge pertaining to the same alleged scheme. As laid out in trial, Madigan never ended up recommending Solis to newly elected Gov. JB Pritzker.

The former speaker was also acquitted of attempted extortion and three related counts related to a real estate developer to whom Madigan wanted an introduction from Solis, who served as chair of the Chicago City Council's powerful Zoning Board. Prosecutors alleged Madigan understood and tacitly approved of Solis' made-up story that he'd condition the approval of a zoning change sought by the developer on whether it agreed to hire the speaker's law firm.

At the FBI's direction, Solis told the speaker ahead of the July 2017 introduction meeting that the developer understood "how this works, you know, the quid pro quo" — insinuating the company was under the impression that it would not get the zoning approvals it needed unless it hired the speaker's law firm, though it wasn't true.

A few weeks later, Madigan admonished Solis before the developer meeting, telling the alderman, "You shouldn't be talking like that."

The feds argued Madigan was urging Solis to not speak so brazenly about their alleged bribery agreement. But on the witness stand, the former speaker said the alderman's use of the term "quid pro quo" caused him "a great deal of surprise and concern" to the point that he decided he needed to confront Solis about it face-to-face.

In Madigan's contentious cross-examination, the lead prosecutor attempted to poke holes in the former speaker's explanation of that key moment, but Madigan maintained Solis seemed to have recognized he'd "made a serious mistake" and that he considered the matter settled because "I was not going to connect a request for an introduction with anything else."

The jury also deadlocked on four other bribery, wire fraud and Travel Act charges concerning a plan to get state-owned land in Chicago's Chinatown neighborhood transferred to the city for eventual development into a mixed-use apartment building.

Prosecutors alleged Madigan intended to have his firm contract with the Chinatown developer in accordance with hints Solis had dropped on secret recordings. But Madigan's former law partner and testimony from two former top lawyers in the speaker's office indicated the law firm had strict conflict-of-interest rules that would have prohibited the developer from ever becoming a client.

Sentencing Factors

In the four months post-verdict, a period nearly as long as the grueling trial itself, Madigan turned 83 — a mitigating factor his defense attorneys noted in a pre-sentencing memo late last month, which asked for five years' probation, including one on home confinement.

In another filing last week, Madigan's lawyers painted a bleak picture of the sentence sought by prosecutors, accusing them of arguing in bad faith that ComEd's investor profits should be considered as part of sentencing.

"The government seeks to condemn an 83-year-old man to die behind bars for crimes that enriched him not one penny," defense attorneys wrote. "They demand that Mike Madigan spend his final years in a cell, though he spent decades as the consumers' shield against ComEd's predations."

But much more emphasized was his role as caretaker to his wife, Shirley, who suffers from "a severe lung disease," per a letter filed with the court last month from Madigan's daughter, former Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan.

Instead of writing a letter, Shirley Madigan recorded a video pleading for leniency in sentencing. Clad in purple latex gloves with a medical mask hanging from her neck, Shirley praised her husband's character as a father and grandfather but also detailed how Madigan has become her caretaker, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic hit.

"I really don't exist without him," she told the camera as B-roll of Madigan helping her up from a couch played over her testimonial. "I don't know what I would do without Michael. I would probably have to find some place to live, and I'd probably have to find care."

The former speaker and his lawyers echoed Shirley's pleas Friday, with attorney Dan Collins telling Blakey that for Madigan, "mercy is justice," and Madigan himself asking the judge that "you let me take care of Shirley and that you let me spend my final days with my family."

Blakey said Madigan's age was a factor, but said arguments that "any sentence" for an older defendant is tantamount to a life sentence are "not particularly helpful."

But the judge said he carefully considered the nearly 250 character reference letters filed on Madigan's behalf late last month, saying he "placed significant weight" on the support of the former speaker's family and friends.

He even got emotional when discussing Madigan's role as a husband, father and grandfather.

"Whatever his crimes – and he did do things wrong – but his relationship to his family? He got that right," Blakey said, echoing words the former speaker told Solis during a secretly recorded meeting between the two in 2018.

Aside from family, other notable letter-writers on Madigan's behalf included former U.S. Sen. Carol Moseley Braun; former Illinois Supreme Court Justice Tom Kilbride; Democratic mega-fundraisers Michael Sacks and Fred Eychaner, and Chicago Bulls and White Sox owner Jerry Reinsdorf. While many former Democratic allies of Madigan penned appeals to Judge Blakey, only a few currently hold office – among them state Reps. Marcus Evans, D-Chicago, and Curtis Tarver, D-Chicago, along with Auditor General Frank Mautino.

In determining sentencing guidelines, Blakey agreed with prosecutors' contention that the value of the ComEd bribes should be based on testimony from utility leader Scott Vogt during trial. Vogt cited projections that the continuation of the "formula rate" contained in the first piece of ComEd-backed legislation passed during the eight-year bribery scheme was worth $400 million in increased shareholder value for the company.

The judge also agreed with smaller sentencing enhancements, for defendants who orchestrate bribery schemes, and for lying under oath while testifying in their own defense.

Blakey gave several examples of times in which Madigan perjured himself during his four days on the witness stand, including the former speaker's attempt to "falsely minimize the close and regular relationship he had with McClain."

"Other witnesses testified to their unique and close relationship, which spanned decades," Blakey said. "In short, the evidence produced at trial showed McClain was one of Madigan's most-trusted operatives, not merely one of many, as he falsely testified."

Ultimately, though, the judge's ruling in favor of sentencing enhancements for perjury and other factors is mostly symbolic, as the parties already agreed to a sentence far below the complicated calculation that would advise a 105-year prison sentence.

Sentences handed down to other convicted politicians in Illinois' long history of elected officials caught up in corruption have varied widely.

Last year, a federal judge sentenced Madigan's pseudo-counterpart in the Chicago City Council, five-decade Ald. Ed Burke, to two years in prison after his bribery conviction that also involved Solis' FBI cooperation in bringing potential clients to Burke's real estate law firm. The judge noted the number of character letters she received on the former alderman's behalf were a strong mitigating factor in her sentencing decision.

On the other end of the spectrum, Gov. Rod Blagojevich was sentenced to 14 years in prison after his 2011 bribery convictions related to attempting to sell then-President-elect Barack Obama's soon-to-be-vacated U.S. Senate seat in 2008. President Donald Trump commuted his sentence in 2020, and in February pardoned him completely – just two days before Madigan's conviction.

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.

State Budget

(continued from page 3)

Illinois Department on Aging will receive a 75-cent hourly wage increase.

•A new $25 million Prescription Drug Affordability Fund to support certain pharmacies in Illinois in competition against larger pharmacy benefit managers.

•$15 million for the Medical Debt Relief Pilot Program that purchases medical debt from patients at a fraction of the total debt.

•A $4 million increase for the Department of Children and Family Services aimed at hiring 100 additional staff members.

•A child tax credit created in 2024 at 20 percent of the Earned Income Tax Credit will double to 40 percent.

Education

The state's evidence-based funding model for K-12 schools calls for $350 million in additional funding each year, with a portion of that going to a property tax relief fund and the rest directly to schools. The proposed budget fully funds the K-12 education increase at $307 million but does not add $43 million in property tax relief funds.

Funding for higher education operational expenses is only going up 1%. Pritzker had proposed 3%. Democrat budget leaders have said the spending plan includes ways to increase funding by an additional 2% if there are significant cuts in federal funding for higher education, however.

Read more: Despite victories, major higher education policy bills stall in General Assembly

The budget also includes:

•A $10 million increase to the Monetary Award Program grants for lower-income college students.

•$8 million for a minority teacher scholarship program.

•$2.9 million for the state's Common App initiative to make it easier for high school students to apply to Illinois colleges and universities at one time.

•$212 million for Pritzker's Smart Start early childhood education program.

•$21.7 million for the newly created Department of Early Childhood

Others Spending Areas

Part of the budget package created a new Tier 2 reserve fund that can be accessed if there are violations of what's known as the federal "safe harbor" law. Lawmakers appropriated $75 million for the fund this year, in line with Pritzker's proposal. Broader reform to Tier 2 was not considered this spring.

"With this fix going into effect, we're protecting our taxpayers and state workers from future shortfalls that could cost the state much more," Pritzker said.

Attorney General Kwame Raoul is receiving a $15.7 million general fund increase as his office engages in a growing number of lawsuits against the Trump administration. Raoul told lawmakers he needs more attorneys to handle the cases and a generally growing workload in his office. However, because of declining revenue in other funds, total funding for the office largely remains flat in FY26.

The budget sent to Pritzker included a 5 percent pay raise for state lawmakers, to $98,304. State law sets the pay for legislators to increase annually with inflation, and lawmakers took no action to stop it from occurring in FY26.

The budget also includes:

•$500 million for the Department of Central Management Services and Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity for the Surplus to Success program to prepare idle state properties for economic development.

•$17.9 million for the Department of Financial and Professional Regulation to implement a new licensing system.

•$40 million for immigrant welcoming centers.

•$6.2 billion for Department of Transportation construction projects, including $4.5 billion for roads and bridges.

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Opinion and Commentary

Important role of pollinators highlighted

As they flutter through plant and flower blossoms, spreading pollen with every landing, butterflies, bees and other pollinators quietly sustain healthy ecosystems, successful home vegetable gardens and agricultural production.

During Pollinator Week, which is June 16-22, University of Illinois Extension joins the national initiative to raise awareness about the vital role these insects play.

Pollinators move pollen from one flower to the next, fertilizing and producing fruits, nuts, and seeds. Some plants are self-pollinating or wind-pollinated, but many rely on insects such as butterflies, bees, beetles, moths, wasps, flies or animals like hummingbirds.

More than 150 crops in the United States benefit from pollinators, which contribute to about one-third of the food we consume every day. Among these, 500 native bee species are some of the environment's most valuable pollinators. Illinois Extension's Four Seasons Gardening webinar series invites viewers to learn more about native bees during Pollinator Week at go.illinois.edu/FourSeasonsGardening.

Many pollinator species populations are in decline from a loss of food sources and nesting habitats. Anyone can support pollinators by growing flowers that bloom from spring to fall, using integrated pest management practices that reduce or eliminate pesticide use and limiting fall garden cleanup of fallen leaves and dead plant stems.

To help community members take action, Extension's Illinois Pollinators tool, available at go.illinois.edu/Illinois-Pollinators, has expert recommendations about plants for pollinator gardens, plant design tips, community science opportunities and more.

"People are looking to know more about pollinators and how to support their populations," said Nicole Flowers-Kimmerle, an Extension horticulture educator. "By helping people help pollinators through growing native flowering plants everywhere from their backyard to roadsides, we hope to create more habitats across Illinois."

Extension Master Gardener and Master Naturalist volunteers support 172 gardens statewide that provide food and habitat for pollinators. These projects include the Open Gate Garden in Madison County with native plants and educational signage, the Danville Public Library pollinator pocket enhancing community green spaces, and the Idea Garden in Kane County, providing tools and tips for creating home pollinator gardens.

To further address this issue, Extension began tracking "pollinator pockets" in 2016. To date, nearly 600 of these small community-based gardens have been reported by Illinois residents and others nationwide through the Pollinator Pocket website, go.illinois.edu/PollinatorPocket. Anyone can create and register a pollinator pocket garden.

"The incredible response from the community shows how individual actions can add to the larger effort to support pollinators. Each of these registered gardens helps sustain a healthy environment for pollinators and people," said horticulture educator Ryan Pankau.

Pollinator Week focuses on the importance of pollinators and serves as a reminder to take meaningful action in the growing effort to support and protect nature's small but essential creatures. Whether attending a local event, creating pollinator pockets or learning more, every effort contributes to a healthier, more biodiverse environment.

A list of pollinator books for readers of all ages and more information about National Pollinator Week are available at publish.illinois.edu/PollinatorWeek. Find an Extension demonstration pollinator garden at gardens.extension.illinois.edu.

Please read this...

By Geof Skinner

White-tailed deer enjoys The Other Half's garden…



These Critters would be two of the 10 white-tailed deer we saw while on a drive through the countryside last Sunday evening. At least they were out in the "wild" and not in The Other Half's garden.

So many things to ponder…and so little space…and time…

Meanwhile…

Doe. A deer. A female deer…

There now. The tune is stuck in your head and will not go away at least until Thanksgiving. Then, after you've had a second, or maybe third, slice of pumpkin pie, covered in a layer of spray whipping cream, you'll sit down in your favorite chair… turn on the television…and, just in time, you'll be watching the scene in "The Sound of Music" where Julie Andrews is singing that song…

You can thank me later for not being able to get the song out of your head…

The song came to mind on a rare bright, sunny and rain-free afternoon one day last week. At the time, I was pretending to read a book while occasionally being interrupted by a nap…

"Come and look in the backyard," The Other Half suddenly called out.

Lo, and behold, right out there in the backyard, in the midst of all kinds of tasty things she is growing for us this summer, was a big ol' white-tailed deer. In broad daylight. Generally they sneak into the backyard, and probably into our kitchen, too, looking for munchies.

A moment or two after seeing the big ol' white-tailed deer, a future big ol' white-tailed deer made an appearance…a little fawn, still decked out in a coat with lots of white spots.

Normally, the two of us would have said something about how cute Mommie Deerest and her little one were. However, The Other Half was not in a "how cute they are" mode. She was ready to get the cayenne powder…

The deer, you see, like to munch on daylilies and other goodies The Other Half grows in her various gardening enterprises. Deer consider daylilies to be quite tasty treats. And, apparently, The Other Half is not the only gardener on the planet to experience deer on snack patrol.

I stumbled across a May 2018 University of Illinois Extension article written by horticulture educator Christopher Enroth which has been posted online. The article shared that "Many a gardener has faced the not-so-lovely experience of white-tailed deer using their backyard as their personal smorgasbord."

The article offered a few suggestions about possible deterrents to keep the deer away from daylilies. Even if those Critters are cute. The article explained there "are a few options, including deterrents, choosing less desirable plants, and physical barriers (this would be to prevent antler rubbing damage). Some say hanging bars of soap help to deter deer away from plants, but the effective radius is only about 1 foot out, so it would take multiple bars in a landscape. A Cornell University study conducted from 1989-1991 showed soaps made from tallow fatty acids were more effective than those made with coconut fatty acids, so make sure to check the label if this is the route you want to take.



Aren't they cute? A white-tailed deer (mom?) and a fawn paid a visit to The Other Half's garden…in broad daylight.

"Another research study was released in 2010 about chemical deer deterrent effectiveness in Connecticut and was conducted using yews over a two year period. They compared four different types of chemical deterrents – fear, condition-aversion, pain-inducing, and taste to see what worked best as well as having a control group that received no treatment. Over the two-year period, deterrents did help to reduce the amount of damage, but there were none that provided 100% control…

"Plant selection gives us another option for minimizing deer damage. There are some plants that deer highly favor over others, but if they are hungry will feed on most anything. Even if a plant is listed as 'deer resistant' it means that it's not their first choice, but if given no other options, that plant could still fair game."

The Other Half, however, has chosen an all natural, straight out of the kitchen option…cayenne powder. Our hope is that the deer do not like spicy food…

Meanwhile…

Critter Sightings Update, Part I…

Speaking of deers…

I saw two of 'em while motoring through the country last Saturday afternoon…one, just one, crossing Kaolin Road. I waited for deer number two…sometimes, after you see one deer, you can almost count on another one…or two… Not this time. Just the one, which scampered into some nearby woods.

A second deer was seen along Kaolin Road…

A couple of other Critters were spotted Saturday afternoon, too…

A hawk, which flew across Kaolin Road, landed on a tree branch for a moment, and then flew off into the woods.

A groundhog, which was scampering down a driveway in the general direction of the road. I hit the brakes, 'cause I really did not want to run over any Critters on a nice Saturday afternoon.

A skunk, existing in the past tense, along West Vienna Street in Anna. And, yes, the dead skunk on the edge of the road, once again, was stinking to high heaven.

Critter Sightings Update, Part II…

Sunday afternoon, while The Other Half was taking a nice nap, yours truly decided to engage in some walk through a creek bed therapy. Yup. I headed out to the Trail of Tears State Forest to take a walk in the woods. Except for some mowing that was being done, the state forest was a pretty quiet place on sunny, warm and rather humid June afternoon.

During my visit, I spotted one tiny amphibian (which I believe was a frog) and some future amphibians (tadpoles) in a pool of water at the state forest. I also spotted the remains of a few Critters that lived about 300 and some odd millions of years ago.

On the way to the state forest, and coming back home again, I spotted…

A chipmunk as it scampered across Mountain Glen Road. Brave little Critter.

An egret that was seen flying along a tree line not far from Mountain Glen Road. The contrast of the bird's bright white feathers and the lush spring green of the woodlands was quite stunning. The bird made a stop at a creek along the road.

Critter Sightings Update, Part III…

Last Sunday evening, after dinner (roasted chicken and potatoes), The Other Half and her traveling companion headed out into the country for a ride…just to see what we might see…

Turned out we saw some crows…lots of other birds flitting through the air…a whole bunch of cows…two dogs that chased our car…and 10 white-tailed deer. At least they weren't in her garden.

Oh, just in case you were wondering… Yes. I went to last weekend's book sale sponsored by the Friends of Stinson Library. Yes. I acquired some more books. Can't have too many.

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College program moving

Shawnee Community College has announced that its medical assistant program is moving to the college's main campus near Ullin. Starting in August, all classes and hands-on training are scheduled to occur on main campus.

The two-semester program is scheduled to start Monday, Aug. 11. Enrollment information is available by calling 618-634-3282.

Graduates Pass Exam

The college also reported that all three of thee program's spring 2025 medical assistant graduates have officially passed their National Certified Medical Assistant exam. The college announced on social media that the graduates are Leslie Dirden, Brittany Webster and Lacey Shepard.

The college offered praise for instructor Kayde Pender. The college said the 100 pass rate reflects Pender's "commitment to high standards, hands-on learning and mentoring future Medical Assistants with skill and heart."