

THE GAZETTE-DEMOCRAT

The Talk And Cobden Review • Serving Union County Since 1849

Thursday, July 17, 2025

Anna, Illinois

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Volume 178, Number 32

News Notes

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

A Downtown Anna Summer Block Party is planned from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. Friday, July 18. The block party will feature music, shopping, food trucks, treats, drinks and more. Local businesses will be staying open late with special sales and sidewalk deals.

A 2025 schedule of events has been posted on the Union County Fair's website. Activities kick off Friday, Aug. 15, at the fairgrounds in Anna (the Anna City Park) with open show registration (exhibits are not to be brought) and this year's Union County Fair queen pageant 7:30 p.m. County fair activities, including two demolition derbies; a horse show; a community worship service; a truck, semi and farm stock tractor pull; a tractor pull; a ranch rodeo; and championship rodeo, run through Sunday afternoon, Aug. 24, when exhibits are to be claimed and exhibitor checks will be available.

A Cobden Peach Festival 5K run, 5K walk and 1-mile fun run are set for Saturday morning, Aug. 9. The events are one of the many highlights of the Peach Festival, which once again is sponsored by the Cobden Lions Club.

Southern Illinois high school CEO programs are featured in the latest edition of the Southern Illinois (SI) Now magazine. The Union County CEO program is among those featured.

Cobden School District No. 17 announced that online student registration for the 2025-2026 academic year is scheduled to open July 21 for all families. The district announced on social media that a link would shared once it was live. In-person registration is scheduled from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Aug. 4-8.

An evening event to support Anna Junior High School's cross country team is scheduled from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. July 28 at Pizza Villa in Anna.

Stinson Memorial Public Library District plans to have a pool party Thursday evening, July 31, to celebrate the end of the library's summer reading program. Festivities begin at 6 p.m. at the Anna City Pool.

Students in Anna School District 37's summer school have been learning a lot. Activities have included an experiment to make elephant toothpaste and making crystals, to name a few.

Weather permitting, the north parking lot and back drive on the Shawnee School District 84 grounds in Wolf Lake are scheduled to be closing for repair from Friday, July 18, through Monday, July 21. The south parking lot and circle drive will be open.

(continued on page 2)

Water rescue reported Sunday night in Anna

The Anna Police Department is thanking and acknowledging fellow first responders for their quick actions on Sunday night in responding to an incident which occurred during flash flooding in the Union County area caused by thunderstorms.

Torrential rain fell Sunday night in the county. At about 11:40 p.m. Sunday, the National Weather Service office in Paducah issued a flash flood warning for northern Union County. At the time, the Weather Service office reported that between 3 and 4 inches of rain had fallen. Additional rainfall amounts of 1 to 2 inches were possible. Locations expected to experience flash flooding included Anna, Jonesboro, Cobden and Alto Pass.

A vehicle was caught by flash flood waters along North Lime Kiln Road in Anna at about 11:17 p.m. The driver was trapped inside the vehicle. The area where the incident happened is near a creek.

The Weather Service had advised that flash flooding was possible on small creeks and streams and in low-lying areas.

The Anna Police Department shared on social media that due to the information Union County dispatchers provided, the Anna Police Department, Union County Sheriff's Office deputies, Union County Rescue and Union County Emergency Medical Services were able to respond quickly to safely rescue the driver from the vehicle.

The Anna Police Department said it was "grateful for this collaboration from our fellow agencies and members. As always, stay safe out there."

The police department also shared a message for the community: "during this unusually wet weather pattern, please be cautious in low-lying areas without adequate lighting. Just remember, flash floods happen quickly and without warning. Please be safe in your travels.

Campaign underway to reduce speeding

The Union County Sheriff's Office is partnering with the Illinois Department of Transportation, the Illinois State Police and more than 200 local law enforcement agencies in a "Speeding Catches Up with You" campaign during July.

The goal of the campaign is to step up traffic safety efforts across the state to reduce speeding. Throughout the month of July, motorists can expect to see increased patrols looking for speeding, as well as other traffic violations.

"Over the past few years, we have seen an increase in careless and risky driving. No matter how safe of a driver you think you may be, speeding is dangerous," Union County Sheriff David Wilkins said in a news release. "Speed limits aren't a suggestion – they are the law."

The sheriff said speeding

Shawnee plans to host Small Business Expo

A Small Business Expo is planned Wednesday, July 23, at Shawnee Community College near Ullin. The free event is begin presented by the Illinois Small Business Development Center at the college and will offer an opportunity to help small business owners to succeed.

Registration for the event starts at 8 a.m. The expo begins at 9 a.m. and continues until 3 p.m. Topics are scheduled to include start-ups, financing, marketing, human resources, legal matters, the web and more.

Entrepreneurs and small business owners are invited to attend expo. Four panels led by experts are planned and will cover business basics, business lending, business marketing and employees and human resources. Each session is scheduled to include a question-and-answer session with industry professionals.

Space is limited. Sign-up information is available at <https://ilsbdc.eccenterdirect.com/events/40627>.

creates unnecessary risks for all motorists, reducing the driver's ability to steer safely around other vehicles, hazardous objects or unexpected curves.

During the speed limit enforcement campaign, officers will intensify enforcement of posted speed limits. Offenders will be stopped and ticketed, especially in areas where many speed-related crashes occur. The goal is to save lives.

Drivers can expect a ticket from Union County Sheriff's Office deputies if they are spotted speeding. Stepped up patrols were scheduled to begin July 6 and continue through July 31.

The speed enforcement effort is part of the "Speeding Catches Up With You" campaign and is made possible by federal highway safety funds administered by IDOT. The campaign also supports IDOT's broader "It's Not a Game" media campaign.

Pedestrian killed by train in Anna

A tragic incident unfolded early Sunday morning in Anna after a pedestrian was struck and killed by a train.

The incident occurred near the Market St. crossing in Anna.

The pedestrian has been identified as 27-year-old Alan Lee Casey.

Union County Coroner Jon Shaffer confirmed he was called to the scene shortly before 5 a.m. on Sunday, July 13. Shaffer said no autopsy is planned, but a toxicology screening has been scheduled.

Following the collision, vehicle access at the Brady Mill Road crossing was closed throughout Sunday morning.

The Anna Police Department has launched an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the incident.

Crain Funeral home in Anna is in charge of arrangements and has announced that there are no services planned at this time.

Flash flood warning last Sunday night

Hot, humid conditions in forecast



Summer Saturday stormy sky

Storm clouds appeared in the sky over the Cobden area Saturday afternoon, July 12. At about the time the photograph was taken shortly before 3 p.m., the National Weather Service office in Paducah had issued a severe thunderstorm warning for central Cape Girardeau County in Southeast Missouri. The Union County Sheriff's Office also posted a weather alert on social media which advised local residents to monitor weather conditions. Not much more than a few sprinkles accompanied the stormy sky in Cobden.

Isolated thunderstorms, as well as hot and humid conditions, are in the forecast for this week in the Southern Illinois, Southeast Missouri and Western Kentucky region.

Early this week, the National Weather Service office in Paducah advised that isolated to scattered thunderstorms are expected each afternoon through Monday, July 21. Isolated strong to severe storms are possible. All storms will be capable of producing brief torrential rainfall. Localized flash flooding is possible anywhere a storm sets up for more than 30 to 45 minutes. The best chances each day will be mainly in the afternoon and evening hours.

Afternoon heat index readings were expected to climb into the 100- to 107-degree range throughout the region starting Wednesday, July 16,

and continuing through Saturday. Humidity was expected to increase throughout the week.

The forecast for the Anna area includes high temperatures in the upper 80s to the lower 90s through Sunday, along with a chance for showers and thunderstorms each day.

Flash Flood Warning

The Union County area experienced heavy rain, lightning and thunder on Sunday, July 13. Union County initially was under a flood advisory which was issued at about 9:40 p.m. Sunday by the Weather Service office. The advisory also included Cape Girardeau and Perry counties in Southeast Missouri. The flood advisory was in effect until 12:45 a.m. Monday. At the time the advisory was issued, between 1 and 3 inches of rain had fallen. Minor

flooding was reported.

At about 11:40 p.m. Sunday, the Weather Service office issued a flash flood warning for northern Union County. The warning was in effect until 4:45 a.m. Monday. A flash flood warning also had been issued for northeastern Cape Girardeau County and southeastern Perry County in Southeast Missouri. Thunderstorms were producing heavy rain across the warned area. Between 3 and 4 inches of rain had fallen, with additional rainfall amounts of 1 to 2 inches possible. An unofficial measurement of nearly 5 1/2 inches of rain was recorded in Cobden.

Flash flooding was occurring at the time the warning was issued. Some locations that were expected to experience flash flooding included Anna, Jonesboro, Cobden and Alto Pass.

Anna City Park project work continues

Work continues on a major improvement project which is underway at the Anna City Park. The photos of some of the work were taken last week. The city has received state grant funding through the Illinois Park and Recreational Facility Construction, PARC, Act program. The focus of the project includes enhancing the resources the city has available at the park and other improvements.



A new parking lot is under construction on the site of a former playground at the city park.



Work has started on playing fields at the city park following the end of the 2025 SIBSA ball season. Many teams play ball at the park during the season each year.



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Southern 7 announces WIC income guidelines change

Southern 7 Health Department announces that income guidelines to qualify for the Women’s Infants & Children, WIC, Supplemental Nutrition Program have increased, which allows more families to qualify.

Now a family of four can earn up to \$59,478 and still qualify for WIC, the health department reported. Families that qualify for WIC receive a WIC EBT card with food benefits loaded each month to spend at participating grocers in the Southern Illinois.

The WIC Program safeguards the health of eligible women, infants and children up to age 5 who are at nutritional risk. The program provides nutritious food to supplement diets, nutrition education, including breastfeeding promotion and support and referrals to health and other social services.

Anyone with child dependents aged 0 to 5, including parents, grandparents, foster parents and step-parents, as well as women who are pregnant, postpartum or suffering the loss of a recent pregnancy, can apply for WIC benefits. Those who apply must meet the required income guidelines or be receiving Medicaid, SNAP or TANF benefits. S7HD WIC staff can assist in determining eligibility based on USDA WIC guidelines.

WIC is a federally funded program through the U.S. Department of Agriculture that provides federal grants to states to safeguard the health of low-income women, infants and children up to age 5 who are at nutrition risk by providing nutritious foods to supplement diets, information on healthy eating and referrals to health care. WIC is available at each Southern 7 Public Health Clinic.

To find out if you qualify for WIC through Southern 7 Health Department call 618-634-2297 or visit them online at www.southern7.org, on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/S7WIC>, and through the Southern 7 App.

News Notes

(continued from page 1)

Flamm Orchards near Cobden has started a summer “Peach Tour” which is scheduled to include stops during July and August in Illinois, Indiana and Iowa.

Rendleman Orchards in Alto Pass plans to host a “Pollinator Pop-Up Event” from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, July 19. A beekeeping demonstration, honey tasting education, vendors and other special activities are scheduled.

The Illinois Small Business Development Center, SBDC, at Southern Illinois University Carbondale is celebrating 40 years of helping new and growing businesses. An anniversary celebration was planned July 16 at the Dunn-Richmond Economic Development Center in Carbondale. The event was slated to include the recognition of four businesses, one for each decade, that represent the hundreds who have received assistance from SIU’s SBDC. Two of the businesses were from the Union County area: Alto Vineyards in Alto Pass and Rolling Oak Alpaca Ranch near Makanda.

A grain bin rescue awareness event is planned starting at 8 a.m. Aug. 16 at the Pulas-ki-Alexander Farm Bureau in Mounds. The Farm Bureau is joining with the Illinois Fire Service Institute to present the program.

New student ambassadors are being recognized by Shawnee Community College. The ambassadors are graduates of high schools in the college district. They will events at the college and in area communities.

Shawnee Community College is celebrating its most recent certified nursing assistant graduates.

TRiO Educational Talent Search-Shawnee Community College is planning to host a Pathways to Success event Thursday, July 31, on the college’s main campus near Ullin. The event is designed for parents of guardians with children in grades 6 through 12.

Summer construction work continues at Shawnee Community College, including replacement of windows, an HVAC project in cosmetology department and resurfacing and painting of parking lots.

A sun-up hike is planned from 6:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. July 25 at Giant City State Park near Makanda.

The National Weather Service office in Paducah reported that the heat index was 102 degrees at 2:52 p.m. Friday, July 11, at the Southern Illinois Airport near Carbondale. The air temperature at the time was 91 degrees and the humidity was 59 percent.



Up close with a fire truck

Participants in this year’s Stinson Memorial Public Library summer reading program in Cobden had an opportunity to get an up-close look at a fire truck Monday morning, July 7. A Cobden Fire Department truck was brought to the park in downtown Cobden for the reading program. Cobden Fire Department Assistant Fire Chief L.J. Hackethal talked with the children about the vehicle, about the equipment worn and used by firefighters, about fire safety and other topics. He reminded the children that firefighters “are there to help you.” He also made note of the pride which volunteer firefighters have in serving their communities.

Changes in SNAP could impact thousands in Illinois

By Ben Szalinski
Capitol News Illinois

Hundreds of thousands of Illinoisans could lose benefits from a federal food assistance program while the state will be required to cover more costs under changes passed in the latest domestic policy plan.

President Donald Trump signed the “One Big, Beautiful Bill Act” into law on July 4, making sweeping changes to social services programs, including Medicaid. Among the programs being revamped is the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, better known as SNAP. The bill institutes new work requirements for many people to remain eligible for benefits and shifts some costs for the program to the states.

Food stamps were first established in the 1930s during the Great Depression. Renamed to SNAP in 2008, the program provides monthly stipends for low-income Americans to purchase select foods at grocery stores. While states implement the program and pay a portion of administrative

expenses, the federal government has historically covered the cost of the benefits.

Under the law, work requirements to qualify for SNAP benefits have been expanded to include people up to age 64, along with homeless people, veterans and young adults leaving foster care. Previously, only people age 18-54 had to meet work requirements.

Those populations didn’t previously have to prove they were doing a certain amount of work, but when the changes kick in, they will have to do 80 hours of paid, unpaid or volunteer work each month to qualify for benefits, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The law continues to provide exemptions for people who are physically unable to work, such as for pregnancy.

The changes could leave 360,000 people in Illinois at risk of losing eligibility, according to the state.

“Trump and Republicans would rather children go hungry so their friends can receive tax cuts,” Gov. JB Pritzker

said in a statement. “Here in Illinois, we have been working to combat food insecurity for years, and while no state can backfill these costs, the State of Illinois will continue to fight against these harmful impacts and stand up for working families.”

About 1.9 million people were using SNAP in Illinois as of March 2025, according to the USDA.

New Costs for State

Illinois and most other states will have to cover a greater portion of costs for SNAP under the law, including benefits based on the state’s error rate of over- and under-payments on benefits.

Beginning in federal fiscal year 2028, which begins in October 2027, the law requires states with an error rate greater than 10 percent as of at least FY25 to cover 15 percent of the cost of benefits. States with lower error rates would cover a smaller portion of the benefits. Illinois recorded an 11 percent error rate in FY24, according to the USDA.

More than 1.8 million Illinoisans received \$4.7 billion of SNAP benefits in FY25, according to the state. If Illinois must pay 15 percent of the cost of benefits, it could leave the state on the hook for \$705 million, or about 1.3 percent of the current-year budget.

Also beginning in federal fiscal year 2027, which be-

gins in October 2026, states will have to cover 75 percent of administrative costs for SNAP, rather than 50 percent. This year’s state budget appropriates \$60 million for administrative costs for SNAP, which is up \$20 million from last year.

The changes are part of initiatives by congressional Republicans and the Trump administration to shift more responsibility for assistance programs to states. The non-partisan Congressional Budget Office estimates changes to SNAP will reduce federal spending by \$279 billion over 10 years but increase state spending on SNAP by \$121 billion over the same time. The CBO predicts some states could abandon the program or choose to provide a lower level of benefits and not make up for reductions Congress made to the program.

Pritzker and 22 other governors sent a letter to Congress last month saying it’s possible states will have to leave or reduce the SNAP program because of the new cost requirements.

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.

National Health Center Week celebration planned

Rural Health Inc. is planning to join in the upcoming celebration of National Health Center Week 2025, which is taking place Aug. 3-9. The annual event highlights the essential role Community Health Centers, CHCs, play in improving public health and providing Americans with an equal opportunity for health. CHCs represent the nation’s largest primary care network, serving 32.5 million patients nationwide.

This year’s NHCW celebration, launched by the National Association of Community Health Centers, NACHC, focuses on the theme: “America’s Health Centers Celebrating 60 Years of Improving our Nation’s Health.”

CHCs across the country join the celebration through a host of scheduled events that include resource fairs, back-to-school drives, health screenings and visits to CHCs by local, state and national leaders.

Rural Health Inc. is planning to host free snow cone days Aug. 4-6 at its locations in Southern Illinois. The events will feature giveaways, access to health resources and more at all five of its clinics.

The schedule for the celebration at Rural Health Inc. clinics includes:

Monday, Aug. 4: Goreville, 10 a.m. to noon. Vienna, 12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Tuesday, Aug. 5: Anna, 10 a.m. to noon. Dongola, 12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Aug. 6: Metropolis, noon to 2 p.m.

With a mission to make high-quality, affordable care available to everyone, regardless of their ability to pay or insurance status, CHCs work to save lives and healthcare costs on the front lines of the nation’s most pressing public health challenges. They are powered by a workforce of over 310,000 dedicated professionals who reach beyond the walls of the exam room with effective services that not only prevent illness but also address the factors that may cause it.

“CHCs are vital in the offering of patient-centered care,” Rural Health Inc. chief executive officer Cynthia Flamm said in a news release. “CHCs play a pivotal role in the expansion of essential healthcare services by delivering care to those in need. Recognition of CHCs’ commitment to addressing social determinants of health and the strong community ties between patients and their providers remains a solid foundation to healthcare and the communities we serve.”

Those served by more than 1,500 CHCs across the nation include one in five uninsured persons, one in three persons living in poverty, one in five rural residents, 9.4 million children and 419,000 veterans.

CHCs serve 10 percent of the U.S. population but represent roughly 1 percent of total annual healthcare spending in the United States. This health center is a Health Center Program grantee under 42 U.S.C. 254b.

Union County Alliance of Churches

Recommendations

1

“Feeding Kids in the Park,” (FREE) TUE & THR, 1-3 pm, shelter near playground – Anna.

2

“The Closet” clothing for everyone at your price, next door to Dollar General – Anna.

3

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

Alliance of Churches (618)-614-2974

Thank You!

Deaconess Illinois Union County extends their deepest gratitude to Dr. J. Michael Cerny, MD for dedicating 40 years to Family Medicine in Union County and our surrounding communities.

Obituaries

Joseph Lyerla

Joseph Hank Lyerla, age 54 of Anna, died Wednesday, July 9, 2025 at Memorial Hospital of Carbondale.

He was born on Feb. 20, 1971 in Carbondale, the son of Joe and Velma (Brim) Lyerla.

Hank is survived by his children, Dylan Lyerla, Austin Lyerla, Kassidy (Kenneth) Swink and Wyatt Lyerla (Kelcie Kobel); grandchildren, Wrenleigh Lyerla, Aubrie and Hunter Swink and Liam and Colby Lyerla; sister, Carla and his dog, Willow.

He was preceded in death by his parents and the mother of his children, Tina Tate.

Hank enjoyed the peace and purpose found by spending time outdoors, whether camping, fishing or just sitting and taking in the serenity of nature. He was spontaneous and fun-loving.

His greatest love was his family. His legacy will live on through his strength, values and the love of his children and the lifetime of memories they created.

A celebration of the life of Hank Lyerla will be at 4 p.m. Thursday, July 17, 2025 at the Rendleman and Hileman Funeral Home in Anna.

Visitation will be after 2 p.m. and until the service at 4 p.m. at the funeral home.

Memorial contributions can be made to Rendleman and Hileman Funeral Home to assist the family with final expenses. Envelopes are available at the funeral home.



Celia Barker

Celia Barker, age 90, of Crisman, formerly of Jonesboro, passed away peacefully on Sunday, July 6, 2025.

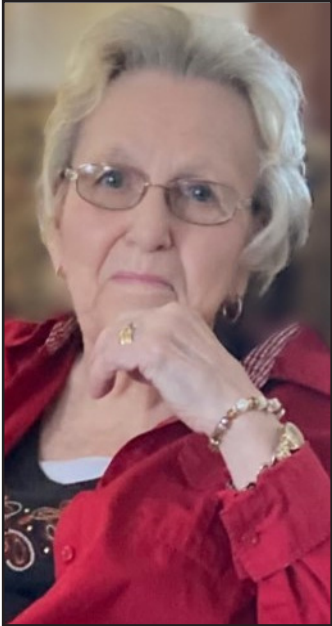
She was born on May 12, 1935 in Rock Island, the daughter of Charles and Minnie Janet (Slicker) Parcell.

She married Fredrick Dwane Barker, he preceded her in death on Dec. 12, 2003.

Celia is survived by her loving son, David Barker of Paxton; three grandchildren, Matthew Barker, Steve Barker and Tacara Jackson; three great-grandchildren, Sarai and Devon Jackson, Bradley Baker; brother, Charles (Sarah) Parcell of Chicago; nieces and nephews; other extended family and friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband, Dwane Barker; infant son, Duane E. Barker; and brother, Samuel B. Parcell.

Celia enjoyed spending time with her family and will be



Alan Lee Casey

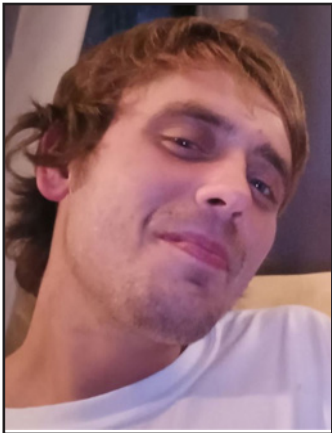
Alan Lee Casey, age 27, of Dongola, passed away suddenly on Sunday, July 13, 2025 in Anna, Ill.

He was born on August 14, 1997 to Patrick Joseph and Jennifer Ann (Tellor) Casey in Carbondale, Ill.

Along with his parents, survivors include his children, Aiden Casey and Raylen Casey; siblings, Wyatt Casey, Jenna Casey, Johnathon Sims, Justin (Kayla) Sims; aunts and uncles, John Casey, Sandra (Brian) Meadows, Debbie (Shane) Hillard, Eric Tellor, Bradley (Karen) Toler, Susan McRaven; and grandmother, Mary Duty.

He is preceded in death by his grandmother, Barbara Casey, and grandfather, Curtis Casey.

No services will



Janet Sue Potts

Janet Sue Potts, age 80, of Cairo, passed away on Wednesday, July 9, 2025 at Saint Francis Medical Center in Cape Girardeau.

She was born on April 11, 1945 to David E. and Alma (Kell) Jackson in Cairo, Ill.

On January 6, 1966, she married Losier E. Potts and have been together for over 59 years and he survives.

Janet was a dog groomer for many years. She always loved spending time with her family and was a member of Mighty Rivers Regional Worship Center in Cairo.

Survivors include her husband; son, Joseph E. (Michelle) Potts; daughter, Tangie (Joe) Woomer; grandchildren, Justin, Joe, Jerry, Ryan, Chris, Eddie, Delaney, Cody, Jacob, Isabelle, Izac, and James; many great-grandchildren; sisters, Judy Draper and Loretta Newton; along with nieces, nephews, and other relatives.

Along with her parents, she is preceded in death by her Son, Jerry Potts; one grandson,



Tim; and her sister, May Jean.

Funeral services were held on Monday, July 14, at 2 p.m. with Rev. Larry Potts officiating at Mighty Rivers Regional Worship Center in Cairo.

Interment will followed the service at Green Lawn Memorial Gardens in Villa Ridge, Ill.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests with gratitude that memorial contributions be made to Mighty River Regional Worship Center

Crain Funeral Home in Cairo is in charge of arrangements.

Janet Sue Turner

Janet Sue Turner, age 67 of Anna, passed away Friday, July 11, 2025 at Memorial Hospital in Carbondale.

She was born May 9, 1958 in Dover, Del., the daughter of Franklin Henry and Pauline (Daggett) Powles. She married Alexander Turner Jr. on Sept. 21, 1980.

Janet is survived by her son, Alex and wife Amber Turner of Jonesboro; daughter, Kalanani Turner-Cutrell and husband Allan; three grandchildren, Joseph and Matthew Turner both of Jonesboro, Christopher Allan Cutrell of Anna; two brothers, Peter and wife Donna Powles of New York, Dana and wife Jackie Powles of South Carolina; other extended family and many friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents and husband, Alexander Turner Jr.

Janet was a wonderful person, a true humanitarian. Her true calling in life was helping others. She cared for her husband and family all while working multiple jobs without hesitation to provide for her family, that's just who she was.

After receiving her Bachelor degrees from Southern Illinois University she went to work for Tri-County Education in Anna as a teacher. Janet made a difference in numerous lives of the



students she taught throughout the years.

Beyond her professional life, Janet found joy in simple pleasures. She was an avid reader and was one with mother earth, spending many hours connecting with nature through her love of gardening and plants.

Her love for her family was unmeasurable, her grandchildren held a special place in her heart. Her warmth, wisdom and unwavering compassion will be deeply missed not only by her family and friends but also the countless hearts she touched in our community.

There will be no services at this time.

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

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

Extension plans to offer invasive species course

From the backyard to the local forest, invasive species have big environmental and economic impacts.

University of Illinois Extension educators are planning to offer Introduction to Invasive Species Management, a two-day hybrid program led by University of Illinois Extension educators that starts with a day of online learning on Aug. 5, followed by a regional hands-on field day available from Aug. 6-9.

At the online learning day, participants will explore the basics of invasive species ecology, invasive plant identification, and management principles. The field days are an opportunity to get an understanding of invasive species in the region, identify plants, review commonly used management tools and see demonstrations of management techniques.

Six statewide field day options are scheduled, including one Aug. 9 at the Jackson County Illinois Extension office in Murphysboro.

The program is open to early-career natural resource professionals, landowners, volunteers, students and anyone interested in gaining

News from

Anna Nazarene Church

Sunday, July 13

Congratulations to Pastor Randy Wright on receiving his Certificate Of Ordination at the Illinois District Assembly on Friday, July 11.

The event was held at the Decatur First Church Of The Nazarene in Decatur, Ill. with General Superintendent Carla Sunberg and Illinois District Superintendent Terry Armstrong presiding over the District Assembly.

Those attending as delegates to the Illinois District Assembly were Stanley Elkins-NDI President, Jessica Elkins-NMI President, Trey Morrison-NYI President, Carla Ramage, Yvonne Ramage, Jim and Tonya Hammer, Bradley West and Jaida Smith. Others attending were Lea Wright, Madison West, Sarah Morrison and Liz Hammer.

The morning worship service was held at 10:35 a.m. on July 13. Announcements were given by Jessica Elkins. The worship service was led by Pastor Wright

News from

First Baptist Church, Jonesboro

Bro. Perry's message during morning worship this past Sunday, July 13, discussed the question, "What does it profit a man to gain the world, but lose his soul.?"

We are reminded that loving the world shows the love of the Father is not in us. Our objective should be to fix our hope on Christ. The text was found in the 16th chapter of Matthew, and the 8th chapter of Mark, also 1 John 2, all located in the New Testament.

Dee Rose, Music Director, led in worship accompanied by The Praise Team: Connor Benbrook, Isabel, Megan and Lucas Tehandon. Our pianist was Debbie York.

Debbie York sang a solo: "Come, Jesus, Come." John Turner sang the song, "Worthy is the Lamb."

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

Our Vacation Bible School

and the worship team. The message "Whose Mat Are You Carrying?" from Mark 2:1-12 was brought by Pastor Wright.

The evening worship service was held at 6 p.m. on July 13. The message was "The Sacredness Of The Ark" from 1Chronicles 13 was brought by Pastor Wright

Sunday, July 20

Breakfast is at 9:00 a.m. and Sunday school is scheduled for 9:30 a.m.

Morning Worship Service will start at 10:35 a.m. and include of communion and guest speaker 10:35 a.m.

Missionary Service and International Night is at 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday, July 23

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

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

Busiest roadside mowing period underway statewide

With peak roadside mowing season underway, the Illinois Department of Transportation is reminding the public to slow down, proceed with caution and pay extra attention when encountering equipment and personnel.

In keeping with the recent practice of timing operations to preserve and promote pollinator habitat, the heaviest mowing period will continue until Aug. 15.

"By strategically scheduling when and where mowing takes place, IDOT is doing its part to help the environment and Illinois businesses," said Illinois Transportation Secretary Gia Biagi. "We need your assistance as well. Please be alert for mowing crews who work hard up and down the state, slowing down and giving them plenty of extra distance."

During the summer, IDOT conducts two primary types of mowing. Safety mowing occurs directly adjacent to the road as needed. Maintenance mowing, which lasts for approximately six weeks and starts around July 1, includes areas next to culverts, ditches, traffic control

devices and other structures, while following the Illinois Monarch Project Mowing Guidelines for Pollinators, protecting as much habitat and nectar resources as possible.

The mowing schedule helps to minimize the impact on the traveling public and encourage pollinator activity, which assists in the reproduction of flowers, fruits and vegetables that are essential to the state's ecosystem and agricultural economy.

Reducing the amount of land maintained and growing pollinator habitat also protects the endangered rusty patched bumble bee and the monarch butterfly, the official state insect of Illinois.

A short video about IDOT's mowing schedules and its work with pollinators can be found at IDOT's YouTube channel.

In 2020, IDOT joined in the launch of the Illinois Monarch Action Plan as part of the Illinois Monarch Project, a collaborative effort with local and state partners to help ensure the survival and successful migration of monarchs by increasing and protecting habitat.

View Obituaries
Online at
annanews.com

News from

Anna First Baptist Church

Anna First Baptist Church met for worship Sunday, July 13, with our welcome and opening prayer.

Our Call to Worship was on Grace and Assurance. “Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.”

These verses were taken from the book of Hebrews.

Our Worship Team led in three songs, “Power in the Blood,” “Blessed Assurance” and “Victory in Jesus.”

Pastor Perry gave our sermon which was titled “Power, Assurance and Victory.” Highlights of his sermon gave many examples of how, through Jesus, we have complete power in our lives to live in the assurance that Jesus is going to take care of all aspect of our complete life. We will have victory through Jesus.”

Pastor Perry showed examples and spoke how Jesus works in our life for the good and for what will help us in everything

we are going through.

We appreciated everyone filling in for those who were in Mexico. Our Mexico Mission Trip started Monday, July 7th, but God provided the blessing of people in our church who were willing to give their talents and fill-in for those who are away. We are truly blessed and we give God all Glory and Praise.

Our Mission Trip to Mexico is going great as our Missionary’s are sharing Jesus with the folks there in Durango, Mexico. Please keep them in your prayers.

Sunday School starts at 9 a.m. on Sunday morning and is for all ages. Worship service and Children’s Church starts at 10:15 a.m. Our Prayer Time is on Wednesday evening at 6 p.m., our Youth Program is also on Wednesday at 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Our bus runs for all of these services and programs. Please call our church offices for information about being picked up.

Our church is located at 409 Morgan Street in Anna. Our phone number is 618-833-5416.

Visit us on Facebook.com/AnnaFirstBaptistChurch. Our email is fbcanna409@gmail.com.

You are invited to come by if we can pray with you or share Jesus with you. We pray Jesus is part of everything you do and that you are living for Him.

God Bless You is our prayer for you and your family.

Public invited to participate in Peach Festival Parade

The Village of Cobden has issued an invitation for participation in the Cobden Peach Festival Parade.

“We would like to invite the public to participate in this annual tradition in downtown Cobden – The Home of the Appleknockers,” said a press release from village officials.

All types of entries are welcome, including color guards, bands, floats, scout units, church groups, kiddy units, performing units, neighborhood groups, families, class reunions, antique/custom autos, tractors, horse units and any other entry which is appropriate for viewing by children and all citizens.

The parade will begin at 4:30 p.m. on Saturday, August 9.

The Peach Festival, which is sponsored by the Cobden Lions Club, is scheduled for the evenings of Friday, August 8 and Saturday, August 9.

The Cobden Peach Festival Parade is sponsored by the Village of Cobden.

For additional information, call (618) 893-2425, or email cobdenvillage@gmail.com.

Entry forms are available at the Cobden Village Hall or at www.cobdenil.com.

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



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A Plan and A Purpose

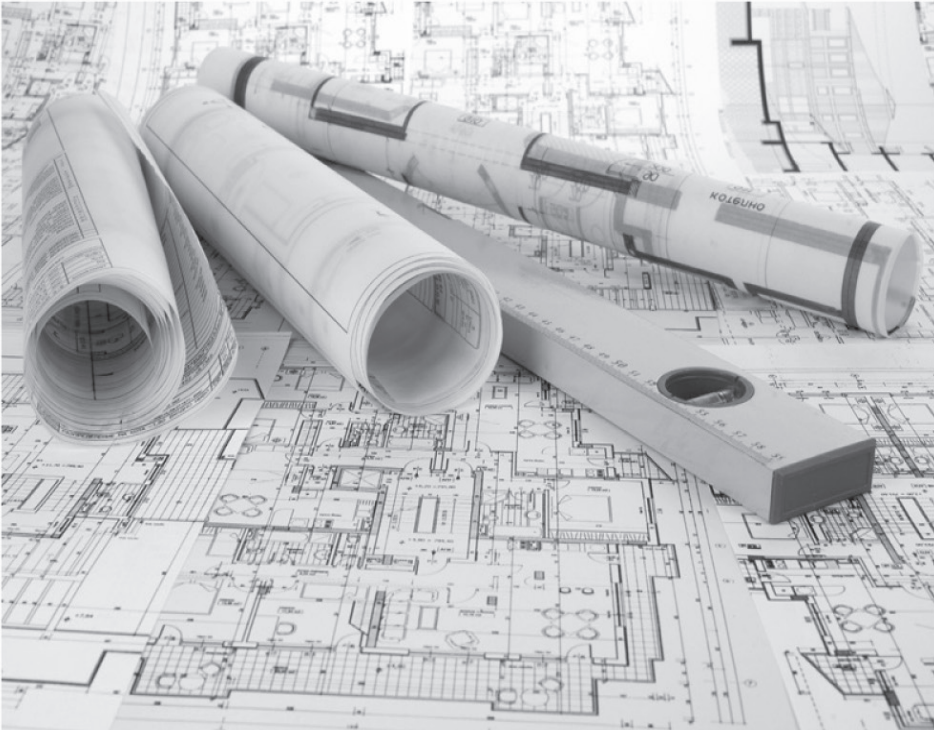


Photo Credit Istockphoto.com/Photodsotiroff

There is a purpose for every mark on the architect’s blueprint; if the plans aren’t followed, an unstable structure might result. A wise construction engineer will consult with the designer if in doubt. Consider that God is our Master architect, for He created us. He has given us His plan in the Bible; when we follow His design for our lives we will be filled with peace and joy. If we don’t understand His plan, we can talk to Him through prayer. Visit Him this week at your house of worship and learn about His special plan for you.

Weekly Scripture Reading					
Judges	Judges	Deut.	Deut.	Deut.	Deut.
2.1-23	3.1-30	4.1-14	4.15-40	11.1-32	15.1-18
19.1-13					
Scriptures Selected by the American Bible Society					
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LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE OF INTENT TO FILE APPLICATION
The Anna Jonesboro Water Commission (AJWC), Union County, IL is submitting an application for financial assistance to USDA Rural Development to Water System Improvements including new wells,, storage tank rehabilitation, and watermain replacements & addition.
Additional information may be obtained by contacting Casey Johnson at the Anna Jonesboro Water Commission Office at 618-833-5313
8221-956040

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING
Anna Jonesboro Water Commission
Tuesday, July 29, 2025 at 4:00PM at Jonesboro City Hall for the purpose of providing general information to the public regarding the proposed Water System Improvements including new wells, storage tank rehabilitation, and watermain replacements & additions project.
The public is invited to attend and comment on such issues as economic and environmental impacts, service area, alternatives to the project or any other pertinent issues.

Casey Johnson,
Superintendent
8221-956036

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

ESTATE OF BONNIE VINES, DECEASED. NO. 2025-PR-10 IN PROBATE

NOTICE OF DEATH INDEPENDENT ADMINISTRATION, AND CLAIM DATE

NOTICE IS GIVEN to creditors of the death of BONNIE VINES, of Anna, Illinois. Letters

of Office were issued on July 1, 2025, to JENNINE ELLEN BAGGOTT, of 5470 State Road 191, Dodgeville, WI 53533, whose attorney is ELVIS C. CAMERON, 205B N. Main St., Anna, Illinois.

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

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

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

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

Dated: June 27, 2025.
JENNINE ELLEN BAGGOTT
CAMERON LAW FIRM, LLC
ELVIS C. CAMERON
ON ATTORNEY FOR INDEPENDENT EXECUTOR
205B N. MAIN ST.
ANNA, ILLINOIS 62906
PHONE: 618-833-2220
ARDC# 6244394
8221-955742

ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS ANNA-JONESBORO WATER COMMISSION JONESBORO, ILLINOIS SHAWNEE VALLEY METER REPLACEMENT General Notice
Anna-Jonesboro Water Commission (Owner) is requesting Bids for the construction of the following Project:
Shawnee Valley Meter Replacement 22-7015
Bids for the construction of the Project will be received at the Water Treatment Plant located at 495 Water Plant Rd, Jonesboro, IL. 62952, until Friday, August 8, 2025 at 2pm local time. At that time the Bids received will be publicly opened and read.
The Project includes the following Work:
Work included in the

Project will consist of installation of approximately 40 LF of watermain, one tapping sleeve connection to existing watermain, one direct connection to existing watermain, valves, meter vault, and appurtenant items.

Bids are requested for the following Contract: Shawnee Valley Meter Replacement

Obtaining the Bidding Documents

Information and Bidding Documents for the Project can be found at the following designated website:

www.klingnerplan-room.com

Bidding Documents may be downloaded from the designated website. Prospective Bidders are urged to register with the designated website as a plan holder, even if Bidding Documents are obtained from a plan room or source other than the designated website in either electronic or paper format. The designated website will be updated periodically with addenda, lists of registered plan holders, reports, and other information relevant to submitting a Bid for the Project. All official notifications, addenda, and other Bidding Documents will be offered only through the designated website. Neither Owner nor Engineer will be responsible for Bidding Documents, including addenda, if any, obtained from sources other than the designated website.

Instructions to Bidders.
For all further requirements regarding bid submittal, qualifications, procedures, and contract award, refer to the Instructions to Bidders that are included in the Bidding Documents.
American Iron and Steel
Section 746 of Title VII of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2017 (Division A - Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2017) and subsequent statutes mandating domestic preference applies an American Iron and Steel requirement to this project. All iron and steel products used in this project must be produced in the United States. The term “iron and steel products” means the following products made primarily of iron or steel: lined or unlined pipes and fittings, manhole covers and other municipal castings, hydrants, tanks, flanges, pipe clamps and restraints, valves, structural steel, reinforced precast concrete, and Construction Materials.

This Advertisement is issued by:

Owner: Anna-Jonesboro Water Commission
By: Casey Johnson
Title: Superintendent
Date: 06-30-25
8221-955649

ADVERTISEMENT
Clear Creek Levee and Drainage District, located in Union County, Illinois, is accepting sealed bids for mowing the levee’s and is offering a one (1) year written Contract to be extended up to three (3) additional terms. For more specific bid specifications, leave a message with an email and/or mailing address at 618-833-3740. Sealed bids may be received by July 31, 2025, at the following location: 4720 N. State Rt. 3, Wolf Lake, Illinois 62998. Sealed bids will be opened at 4720 N. State Rt. 3, Wolf Lake, Illinois 62998 on July 31, 2025. Payment will be made by a half payment two (2) weeks after the start of mowing and the other half when the job is complete for each Spring and Fall season.

8221-955650

Illinois to roll out direct admissions program for most state universities

**By Andrew Adams
Capitol News Illinois**

CHICAGO – Illinois students won’t need to fill out applications for most state universities to be admitted...if they have high enough grades.

With his signature, Gov. JB Pritzker on Monday, June 30, approved a bill creating the direct admissions program. Along with it, he approved bills that implement new state standards for programs offering college credits to high school students, and new requirements for financial aid application assistance.

“These bills streamline the application process for college-bound seniors in Illinois, enhance support for applicants, and open up new horizons for prospective students,” Pritzker said in a statement. “Enacting these laws is what all government work should be about – making life easier for our people.”

Pritzker had said college admissions and higher education accessibility would be a priority of his during this year’s legislative season, which ended May 31. But one of his signature initiatives, allowing community colleges to offer four-year degrees, failed earlier this year.

Direct College Admissions

Illinois will implement a direct admissions program so that students hoping to go to a state school will be automatically admitted – if they have a high enough grade point average.

“For eligible seniors and community college transfer students, you will receive offers from the schools that you are admitted to without raising a finger. That’s huge,” Sen. Christopher Belt, D-Swansea, said. “It takes away the anxiety, it takes away the angst of that whole process.”

The bill outlining the direct admissions program, House Bill 3522, passed unanimously in the Senate and with broad bipartisan support in the House in late May.

The program is set to begin in the 2027-28

school year, with nine of the state’s 11 public universities participating: University of Illinois Springfield, Southern Illinois University, Chicago State University, Eastern Illinois University, Governors State University, Illinois State University, Northeastern Illinois University, Northern Illinois University, Western Illinois University.

High school students and community college students hoping to transfer to a state school must opt-in to the program to receive offers. Community colleges already admit all students interested in attending but will still participate in the direct admissions program.

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and University of Illinois Chicago will not participate in the direct admission program. The state will, however, provide information about traditional applications to qualifying students through an “access and outreach campaign.”

The criteria for the direct admissions program and outreach campaign will be set by individual schools.

“This new, statewide direct admissions program will make a college degree more accessible for students and will motivate them to continue in their life-changing college journey by ensuring them a spot at their community college or at one of the state’s public universities,” Illinois Board of Higher Education Executive Director Ginger Ostro said in a statement.

Financial Aid Application Assistance

Two more bills signed by Pritzker on June 30, House Bills 3096 and 3097, aim to make it easier for students to navigate the financial aid process.

HB 3096 requires high schools in Illinois to designate at least one staff member as a point-of-contact for information about the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, or FAFSA. HB 3097 requires high schools to offer students time during the school day to

fill out FAFSA forms and to receive assistance in doing so.

The new requirements go into effect in the 2025-26 school year.

Information collected through FAFSA is used to determine eligibility for federal loans. Many schools use FAFSA for their own aid programs, and the state offers need-based grants based on information submitted through FAFSA.

“As a father of college students, I just currently went through this fun exercise with my daughter filling out a FAFSA form,” Sen. Javier Cervantes, D-Chicago, said. “I’m being a little sarcastic calling it fun because we had deadlines, we had to make sure we had our documentation together and it wasn’t easy.”

From the 2010 to 2020 school years, an average of 86 percent of first-time students at four-year schools and 78 percent of first-time students at two-year schools received federal financial aid, according to data from the U.S. Department of Education.

Dual Credit Program

House Bill 2967, another bill approved by Pritzker on Monday, outlines new requirements for high schools and community colleges offering “dual credit” programs, through which students earn high school and college credit for completing a single course.

It requires teachers teaching dual credit classes to have a master’s degree in the subject they’re teaching or a master’s degree and some graduate coursework in the subject. It also requires high schools and community colleges to designate individuals responsible for negotiating what individual dual credit agreements look like.

“HB 2967 reinforces the vital role that strong, robust partnerships between community colleges and high schools play in delivering high quality dual credit programs,” Illinois Community College Board Executive Director Brian

Durham said in a statement. “These programs help students get a head start on their college education and a path towards career success.”

The bill also requires schools to consider in-state colleges and universities when setting up dual credit programs over out-of-state institutions.

The bill also creates a committee made up of education officials, representatives from two different statewide teachers unions and others to work on improving dual credit programs’ accessibility and quality, as updating a template used by school districts to develop dual credit agreements with community colleges.

Four-year Degrees at Community Colleges

One key proposal didn’t make the cut this spring: a measure allowing community colleges to offer bachelor’s degrees. Despite being backed by Pritzker in his State of the State address earlier this year, it faced pushback in the General Assembly, which did not pass a bill implementing the policy.

That proposal drew concerns from some lawmakers who worried it could undercut programs to attract local students to state universities. In particular, some lawmakers worried that it could hurt schools like Northeastern Illinois University and Chicago State University, which serve largely minority student populations.

But Pritzker on June 30 said he would continue working on a proposal to allow more schools to offer bachelor’s degrees in “very specific, niche areas” like nursing and advanced manufacturing.

“You sometimes have to work two, four, six years, maybe longer to get something done,” Pritzker said.

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

Governor signs executive order responding to impact of tariffs

**By Ben Szalinski
Capitol News Illinois**

SPRINGFIELD – Gov. JB Pritzker signed an executive order Monday, July 14, requiring Illinois agencies to draft recommendations to respond to tariffs being implemented by President Donald Trump.

The order requires seven state agencies to “consider the specific impacts that the U.S. tariffs have had on Illinois and provide draft recommendations of measures to mitigate the impact of these tariffs” within the next 100 days, which would be Oct. 22.

Pritzker said in a statement that tariffs amount to a tax increase on consumers and contribute to economic uncertainty.

“This Executive Order ensures we have a clear-eyed view of the impact the Trump Slump will cause from higher prices at the grocery store to uncertainty in our farms and factories,” Pritzker said. “We’re working with other states to stand

up for working people and protect our economies when we can.”

The order cites large tariffs Trump has unilaterally implemented on most countries, including some of Illinois’ largest trading partners, saying the tariffs have raised prices for consumers and businesses and led to supply chain disruptions. The order says tariffs as well as retaliatory tariffs countries have imposed on the United States are hurting “vital sectors of the Illinois economy.”

After previously pushing off implementation of some tariffs until Aug. 1 to allow time for negotiations, Trump announced last week many countries will see tariffs take effect. His latest policy includes 35% tariffs on Canada, 30 percent on Mexico and the European Union, and between 25 percent and 40 percent on many Asian countries. The president previously imposed 145 percent tariffs

on goods from China in the spring, but many of his latest rates are lower than they would have been earlier this year.

Illinois imports more goods from Canada than any other country.

Order’s Requirements

Under Pritzker’s executive order, state agencies must examine the impact of tariffs on certain sectors of the economy or the agency’s operations.

The departments of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and Employment Security will evaluate challenges reported by businesses, employment trends since tariffs have been implemented and industries most affected by tariffs.

The Department of Human Services will evaluate trends in food donations and supply chain challenges for food assistance programs, as well as the purchasing power of food banks and their ability to meet demand.

The Department of Transportation and the Capitol Development Board will assess the impact of tariffs on construction costs and the ability to purchase construction materials and complete projects within their timelines.

The Illinois Emergency Management Agency and the Department of Homeland Security will evaluate any impacts to stockpiles and the ability to obtain supplies, including staying prepared for emergencies within budget constraints.

Pritzker’s executive order was part of actions taken by seven Democratic governors to understand the impact of tariffs on their states.

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

Opinion and Commentary

Parents encouraged to talk with kids about outdoor electric safety

Summer is in full swing, and children are spending more time enjoying the outdoors. Ameren says now is a good time for parents to sit down with children to share some important electric safety tips.

"More than ever, young people are operating devices and technologies, like drones, that can come into contact with overhead electrical equipment," said Brian Brackney, director of safety for Ameren. "We are encouraging parents to talk to kids about the dangers of overhead power lines and surrounding electrical equipment and remind them to stay away."

Discussion tips for parents

Ameren offers the following discussion tips for parents regarding outdoor electric safety:

Drones, remote-controlled (RC) planes and kites should be flown only during good weather conditions in large open areas, such as an open park or a wide field. Keep these items away from overhead power lines or other electrical equipment. If a kite gets stuck in a tree near power lines, do not climb up to get it. Electricity can travel down kite strings or wires. Do not attempt to free something stuck in a power line. If your drone or RC plane lands in a substation, call Ameren Illinois at 1-800-755-5000.

Never climb a utility pole or tower. The electricity carried through this equipment is high voltage and could kill you.

Do not play on or around pad-mounted electrical equipment. These are often green metal "boxes" on cement pads and contain transformers.

Never climb trees near power lines. Even if the power lines are not touching the tree, they could touch when more weight is added to the branch.

Never go into an electric substation. Electric substations contain high-voltage equipment; even raising your hand inside one can cause an arc that may cause an electric shock. Never attempt to retrieve a pet, ball or any toy from these areas.

Immediately seek shelter if lightning or thunder is present while playing outdoors.

Downed power lines discussion tips

Make sure your family members know to stay away from downed power lines and wires, and tell children to report any fallen or dangling wires to an adult.

Downed power lines are dangerous; always assume any power line is energized and stay far away. Call Ameren Illinois immediately at 1-800-755-5000 if you or your child encounters a downed power line.

Protection outdoors and around water

Protect all family members from serious shock and injuries by installing ground fault circuit interrupters, GFCIs, on outdoor outlets and in interior rooms where water is present. A GFCI shuts off power instantly if it detects a problem. Use portable GFCIs for outdoor outlets that don't have them. GFCIs are affordably priced and found at hardware stores.

Be careful using electrical appliances outdoors, even if plugged into GFCI-equipped outlets. Never use appliances with frayed or damaged extension cords and always be sure the ground prong is intact.

Teach kids to never touch an electric appliance while in a pool or hot tub, to keep all electrical appliances at least 10 feet away from pools, ponds, and wet surfaces, and that it is never safe to swim in a pool or lake when a storm is brewing.

Teach older children to exercise caution before plugging in a radio, CD player, or any electrical gadget outdoors and never leave any electrical appliance outside. If it rains, the device could get wet and cause an electrical shock when used later.

Tips for parents when building a swing set or outdoor playing area

Do not install playground equipment or swimming pools underneath or near power lines.

Installation of either will require digging. Call 811 to have buried lines marked so you can avoid serious injury and damage.

St. Louis-based Ameren Corporation serves 2.4 million electric customers and more than 900,000 natural gas customers in a 64,000-square-mile area through its Ameren Missouri and Ameren Illinois rate-regulated utility subsidiaries. Ameren Illinois provides electric transmission and distribution service and natural gas distribution service. Ameren Missouri provides electric generation, transmission and distribution service, as well as natural gas distribution service. Ameren Transmission Company of Illinois develops, owns and operates rate-regulated regional electric transmission projects in the Midcontinent Independent System Operator Inc.

Illinois aids Texas after floods

An Urban Search and Rescue, USAR, team from Illinois is headed to Texas late last week to assist with operations after recent deadly flooding. The Illinois group of 39 rescuers from fire departments, deployed as part of the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System, MA-BAS-Illinois, as USAR Task Force 1, was scheduled to be on the ground in Texas for up to 14 days.

Illinois Emergency Management Agency-Office of Homeland Security, IE-MA-OHS acting director Theodore (Ted) Berger shared on social media that: "This nationwide mutual aid agreement allows states to share resources and personnel during emergencies, and tasks for this operation include wide-area search and rescue as well as debris pile clearance. Our hearts go out to everyone

affected by this devastating tragedy and hope we can be of service."

Illinois is one of close to two dozen states offering assistance to flood-ravaged Texas. "Just as many towns, cities and counties in Illinois have agreements to assist each other in times of disaster, states have agreements to do the same," Berger said.

Gov. JB Pritzker authorized the assistance by directing IEMA-OHS to activate the Emergency Management Assistance Compact, EMAC.

EMAC is a congressionally ratified mutual aid agreement among states to provide assistance across state lines during emergencies and disasters. Since its inception in 1996, EMAC has facilitated thousands of deployments in response to hurricanes, floods, wildfires, and other disasters.

Please read this...

‘We’ve got the beets’...Critters are singing a happy song...

Am I the only one who can't wait for the "How to Train Your Dragonfly" movie? Probably... Meanwhile...

A walk seemed like a good idea at the time. Last Sunday afternoon, a bit of a storm rumbled through our little corner of the world. Rain and a nice breeze had cooled the sauna which was simmering out in the world beyond our front door. Clouds were keeping the July sunshine at bay...

...for a while. As in until about the time I was about halfway through a daily walk. Sunshine made an abrupt reappearance. Combined with humidity and the temperature, the walk became a bit more challenging...and a bit more steamy.

A check of weather conditions following my arrival back home showed that the temperature was 77 degrees (not bad... not bad at all). The humidity was 90 percent. The dew point was 74. Those numbers, when totaled, generated a Go For A Walk On A Hot, Humid Day Heat Index reading of 322 degrees. No wonder one of the parking lots I saw was steaming in the sultry conditions. By the way, as you can probably tell, I just made up the whole Go For A Walk Index thing. Maybe it will catch on.

Oh...by the time I got back home, the sun had gone behind a cloud cover again. Mother Nature is such a joker...which she proved once again Sunday night by pouring about 5 1/2 inches of rain on our backyard. Goodness...it sure did rain hard... Meanwhile...

A top 10 hit song from way, way back in the day came to mind over the weekend...

A fellow traveler on The Journey Through Life mentioned that all of the beets in his garden had pretty much vanished. As in they were gone, gone, gone.

My first thought, especially in these uncertain times was: ALIENS. Visitors from outer space who like beet crops and don't have them available on the hostile planet which they call home. At the time the thought flashed through the dust bin between my ears, I had been standing outside in the bright sunshine, which was accompanied by some of our wonderful Southern Illinois heat and humidity. I'm guessing that the good ol' brain synapses simply short-circuited for a moment or two...

A more rational and less heat-induced guess about the fate of the beets came to mind...and involved...as it always seems to do in the midst of a garden's growing season...four-legged furry Critters of some sort. Might have been rabbits. Deers. Groundhogs. Mouses. Skunks. Moles. A bear (even though we still have not seen a bear out there). They all seem to like the goodies The Other Half is growing in her garden.

(Speaking of her garden...so far, her tomatoes have not been doing well. Seems like other folks might be experiencing such a situation this year.)

Back to that top 10 hit song from long ago...with apologies to The Go-Go's...

I'm thinking the beet bandits were probably very happy with their harvest escapade. And they probably had filched some other garden goodies, too. Be they rabbits or deer, they were probably singing a happy tune following dinner...

"We've got the beets..." or maybe "We've got the beans..."

Meanwhile...

We'll wrap up things up this week with a first-time Critter Sighting...baby killdeers...spotted Monday morning in a parking lot in Williamson County, where we had journeyed for an early in the week adventure or two. Those little Critters were incredibly cute.

Treasurer will return record number of checks to Illinoisans

This summer will bring \$45 million in cash to a record-breaking 600,000 people who will receive money they didn't even know they had from the state's missing money program, and the only thing they must do is cash the check, Illinois State Treasurer Michael Frerichs said July 9.

The checks are part of the latest round of the Enhanced Money Match program, which takes the "claim" out of unclaimed property. The state treasurer's office helps get the check in the mail by leveraging technology to return money to individuals, through I-CASH, the state's unclaimed property initiative.

Most of the matched claims in this Enhanced Money Match round equal \$50 or less, though some people can have multiple

claims and their checks will amount to much more.

"The first thing we tell people, is this: the money belongs to you, the check is real and this is not a scam," Frerichs said. "The second thing we tell them, is to cash the check! Who couldn't use a little extra pocket money this summer?"

The volume of "claim-less" checks is unprecedented. Frerichs' office founded the Enhanced Money Match program in 2018 and has since returned more than \$130 million to more than 870,000 people. This summer's total of nearly 600,000 checks makes it the largest Money Match ever performed in the nation.

Frerichs' office began mailing notification letters at the end of June. The checks soon follow and will hit mailboxes

all summer long.

The Enhanced Money Match Program leverages data already collected by partnering state agencies and crossmatches it with the State Treasurer's unclaimed property database. The treasurer's office matches names and mailing addresses, confirms those and then sends a letter to the unclaimed property owner that describes the amount and source of the money.

Enhanced Money Match focuses only on straightforward claims that involve cash owed to a single person. It doesn't cover other types of claims, such as those involving cash owned by multiple parties, shares of stocks and bonds, escrow accounts, and the contents of bank safe deposit boxes.

Enhanced Money Match is

part of the office's unclaimed property program, also known as I-CASH. It is one of the state's oldest consumer protection initiatives. In Illinois, the state treasurer is tasked with safeguarding unclaimed property, such as the contents of overlooked safe deposit boxes, unpaid life insurance benefits, forgotten bank accounts and unused rebate cards.

Illinois holds more than \$5 billion in unclaimed property. More than \$2.3 billion has been returned since Frerichs took office, the most in state history. The state treasurer is legally required to return missing money to its owners or heirs, no matter how long it takes.

Those who want to see if they have missing money can check the online database at www.illinoistreasurer.gov/ICASH.



A rabbit may have been waiting for an informal dinner table to be set when it was spotted on a recent sunny summer evening. Beets might have been on the menu.



Big-eyed book bug? A lone cicada was spotted on morning last week at Stinson Memorial Public Library in Anna.



Garden of the month

The Anna-Jo Garden Club selected Irene Reynolds' wonderland of color at 128 Wilford Rd in Jonesboro as Garden of the Month for July. She has multiple large raised beds with hundreds of blooming daylilies of every color imaginable. In addition, there are oriental lilies, tiger lilies, hostas, hummingbird vine, catmint, gladiolas and cleomes blooming. Other plants that bloom in spring and fall include peonies, geraniums, irises, cacti, chrysanthemums and phlox. Her flowers are deer-proofed by using fine mesh and fencing to keep the hungry critters at bay. The amazing thing is that all of these plants have been gifts from friends and have multiplied over many years. She says she's never had to buy a plant.

