



SOUTHERN CHAMPAIGN COUNTY TODAY

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SERVING ALL OF SOUTHERN CHAMPAIGN COUNTY

South County SPOTLIGHT

St. Patrick Catholic Charities - Tolono IL Free Food Pantry Every Monday from 5-6:30 & Friday 9-10:30 Located at the Parish - providing Fresh produce, meat and pantry items. Serving all of Champaign County.

The Giving Place is open every Wednesday from 4pm-6pm in Tolono to help families in need of food items

3rd Thursday of every month Tolono Fun Day Committee Meeting 6:30 @Police Station

2/7 Catholic Charities of Champaign and Piatt Counties is hosting a Bingo Night at the Elks Lodge in Savoy, doors open at 5pm

2/28 Unity PTO Glow Bingo doors open at 5:30

If you have an upcoming event that you would like to see featured in Spotlight email: jamie@thecounty-chronicle.com

Children of Countryside United Methodist Church Donate Blessing Basket Collection to Local Family



Photo above: back row-Kelsie Cunningham, Tyler Cunningham, Pastor Jeff Stahl. Front row-Austin Cunningham, Myla Cunningham. Photo on right: Olivia Cler, Kaisley Kern, Karma Kern, Austin Cunningham, Myla Cunningham (from left to right). Photos by Janet White.

Every Sunday at Countryside United Methodist Church after the Children's Moment, the youth collect pocket change from the congregation and once a year chose a charity or family to donate their collections to.

In the fall of 2024, during

Sunday School Class for 7 Sundays, the youth were introduced to 7 local charitable organizations.

After a review of all the charities, the youth voted for their favorite one.

Based on the votes counted, the Blessing Basket money

collected that year was donated to Cunningham Children's Home, Crisis Nursery and Restoration Urban Ministries.

For the 2025 collection the children chose the Cunningham Family from Philo to receive a portion of the Blessing Basket money. The family has

been dealing with health and travel related expenses for their young daughter Myla Cunningham.

This donation will help the family pay for expenses while driving back and forth to Chicago for Myla's medical appointments.

The Cunningham Family came to Countryside Church to accept the donation, meet Pastor Jeff and some of the youth that collected the money through out the year.

Unity Music Boosters Meet to Discuss Fundraising



Unity Music Boosters met in the high school choir room on January 27th to discuss fundraising efforts. Band Director Matt Cowser updated the group on his pep band, concerts and the new idea for a showcase Thursday, March 12th with a POPS concert (instead of Jazz & Java). Legacy members "came back" to provide input during the meeting as All Out A'cappella celebrates 20 years Friday, March 6th with event creators Cary and Bonnie Woolards planning to attend. Photo provided by Diane Ducey.

Election '26: 4 Democrats Seeking to Replace Mendoza as Illinois Comptroller

Who wants to manage Illinois' checkbook as the state faces growing financial uncertainty? Three state legislators and the treasurer of one of the state's largest counties have raised their hand.

Incumbent Comptroller Susana Mendoza — who has first took office in 2016 in the middle of the state's infamous two-year budget stalemate — is not seeking reelection. Her departure created the first open primary for the Democratic party for a statewide constitutional office since 2018.

The comptroller's primary responsibility is ensuring the state's bills are paid — a task that wasn't always easy, but one that Mendoza has fine-tuned in recent years.

With Mendoza stepping aside, state Sen. Karina Villa of West Chicago, Rep. Margaret Croke of Chicago, Rep. Stephanie Kifowit of Oswego, and Lake County Treasurer Holly Kim are running in the Democratic primary. Each sat down with Capitol News Illinois reporters in recent days to

answer questions on our Capitol Cast podcast.

Bryan Drew, a Republican from southern Illinois, is running unopposed for his party's nomination.

Who are the candidates

Kifowit is the longest tenured legislator of the group, having joined the General Assembly in 2013. She is leaning on her Marine Corps service and past career as a financial advisor to argue she is the most qualified candidate.

"In this race, individuals need an independent, knowledgeable, experienced person for this position, one that has the backbone like I do from being a United States Marine Corps veteran, and one that has life experience along with professional experience," Kifowit said.

She is facing an uphill battle in fundraising, however, as her campaign raised the least money of the candidates in the final quarter of 2025. Croke is leading the financial race thus far as the only candidate to raise at least \$500,000 during that fundrais-



Democratic candidates for comptroller from left to are Lake County Treasurer Holly Kim, Rep. Stephanie Kifowit, D-Oswego, Sen. Karina Villa, D-West Chicago, and Rep. Margaret Croke, D-Chicago. (photo by Capitol News Illinois)

ing period. Croke has been in the legislature since 2021 and was previously a deputy director at the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. She

is a close ally of Gov. JB Pritzker and has received endorsements from several top Democrats, including the influential Cook County Democratic Party, but Pritzker has not been one of

them. "We all have seen bills pass, and we've seen bills blow up, and it's because of your relationships or if you understand how to get these things done," Croke told

Capitol News Illinois. "So, I feel really confident about my ability to kind of steer the ship in the right direction."

Croke narrowly won the support of the **Cont. pg. 6**