

**PROGRAMS PROVIDING THE MOST SIGNIFICANT TREATMENT OF
COMMUNITY ISSUES**

October 1, 2013-December 31, 2013

Political

WCIX News at 7 p.m.

- a.) 10/04/13; .25; Furlough Workers: Thousands of Federal workers thought they'd be back on the job by now. But with Congress still in gridlock it has some worried the Government shutdown will go on longer than expected. Furloughed workers and community members gathered in Springfield today to talk about it. One we talked to says he's been through this before...when the Government shut down in the 90's. But says this time it feels a lot different. Workers say they're relying on savings to get by in the meantime. If you're on furlough you can also apply for unemployment benefits.
- b.) 10/10/13; .25; Debt Ceiling Impact: Raising the National Debt Ceiling is the next big hurdle for Lawmakers. The county has never hit the debt ceiling before. It basically means the country won't have enough money to pay back the debt it owes. Other countries who own U.S. Debt could also lose their confidence in our ability to pay. That could mean a credit downgrade which would hit all of our wallets. The U.S. Treasury says if the debt ceiling isn't raised by next Thursday it will have 30 billion dollars cash on hand. That's less than half of what the Government pays out on any given day.
- c.) 10/16/13; .20; Debt-Ceiling Vote: The partial Government shutdown may be nearing an end. House Speaker John Boehner says he will encourage his party to support a Senate plan to re-open the Government and raise the debt ceiling. The Senate plan would fund the Government through mid-January and raise the debt limit until early February. A White House spokesperson says even though there's a deal –the damage has been done. Boehner also told reporters quote “we fought the good fight, we just didn't win.” Congress must pass the deal by midnight to avoid a possible U.S. default. And the President must sign it.
- d.) 10/24/13; .21; Oberweis vs. Durbin: From Your Local Election Headquarters....Republican State Senator Jim Oberweis is positioning himself for a run at the U.S. Senate. Oberweis says if he gets enough signatures to get on the ballot he'll challenge U.S. Senator Dick Durbin for his seat. Durbin has been in Washington for 30 years and is the second highest ranking Democrat in the Senate. Oberweis took office earlier this year.
- e.) 10/30/13; .20; Judy Barr/Quinn: The Stat Comptroller says Lawmakers will have to approve the Governor's request for extra money. Earlier this week-Governor Quinn said the state needs an extra 221-million dollars. About half is for pay raises for union workers. A judge ruled the state needs to follow through with the contract. Judy Barr Topinka says it'll take a Supplemental Appropriation Bill.
- f.) 11/08/13; .18; Quinn Running Mate: From Your local Election Headquarters....Governor Quinn is turning to a former school administrator. Today he

picked Paul Vallas as his Lieutenant Governor. Quinn is running for re-election next year. Vallas is a former Superintendent from Chicago Public Schools. Quinn says-Vallas is big into education reform

- g.) 11/12/13; .20; Quinn & Vallas: The Man running as Governor Quinn's running mate says he's ready. The Governor officially introduced Paul Vallas as the Democrat running for Lieutenant Governor. Vallas has a background in education administration. He's never held an elected position before. But says that's what makes him perfect for the job. Critics worry Vallas doesn't qualify to be on the ticket. Until now he's been running a school district in Connecticut. But Vallas says he never gave up his Illinois Residency.
- h.) 11/20/13; .30; Quinn Signs Law: Same-Sex Couples are celebrating a major step forward for Gay Rights. Governor Quinn signed the Marriage Equality Bill into law today. Making Illinois the 16th State to do so. The whole crowd including top State officials was buzzing with excitement. That's because from now on same sex couples will get the same rights and benefits as any other married couple in Illinois. A Freedom supports have been fighting for, for years. But even with all of the excitement supporters know there is still a long way to go before there is true equality. Even though Governor Quinn signed the Law today couples won't be able to get married until June 1st.
- i.) 11/25/13; .25; Filing Date: Filing Date: Though we've been talking about it for a while now... political season is now officially underway. We are your Local Election Headquarters. Candidates started filing petitions for State Elections today. Governor Quinn and Republicans Bruce Rauner, Dan Rutherford, Kirk Dillard and Bill Brady all filed for the Governor's Race. Two Republican Candidates filed today to challenge Senator Dick Durbin next year...Suburban State Senator Jim Oberweis and businessman Doug Truax.
- j.) 12/05/13; .15; Pension/Signed Quinn-74K: Governor Quinn has signed the Pension Reform Bill into law. He did it during a private ceremony in Chicago this afternoon. The Governor is happy about it for more reasons than one. Now he'll get about 74-thousand in back pay. He refused to take his pay until a pension deal was approved.
- k.) 12/11/13; .15; Jobless Benefits: If Congress doesn't take action this week, more than one million people will lose Federal Unemployment Benefits at the end of the year. The White House is urging Congress to extend the benefits to help the economy. Republicans say the program has already cost the country 252 billion dollars. However, House Speaker John Boehner has suggested he is open to an extension if the White House comes up with a plan. Federal unemployment benefits kick in after state benefits run out.
- l.) 12/18/13; .26; Fed Decision: Federal Reserve officials decided today to start reducing their massive economic stimulus program. Beginning in January, the fed will buy 75-billion dollars in bonds each month that's down from the 85 billion it has been buying since September 2012. The bond-buying program has become so large, it's expected to push the fed's assets to 4-trillion dollars this week. The new cut represents the beginning of a gradual wind-down process which Wall Street has nicknamed "Tapering."
- m.) 12/27/13; .26; Quinn Foreclosure Help: Governor Pat Quinn has signed a new law. It could keep homeowners from losing their home to a lender...if they've already applied for mortgage assistance. This is an extension of the Federal Home Affordable Modification Program. "Hamp" allow homeowners to change their mortgage payments, to make them more affordable. The Governor's office says nearly 50-thousand families have been helped though the program so far. It'll be continued through December 2015.

- n.) 12/31/13; .20; Interstate Speed Zones: One thing Lawmakers did decide to pass this year was higher speed limits on interstates. But it doesn't apply to all roads. Some downstate highways including apportion of interstate 55 near Springfield won't go up. Stretches near Effingham, Mount Vernon and Peoria also included. IDOT set them lower because studies suggest 70 miles per hour is too fast in those areas.

Education

WCIX News at 7 p.m.

- a.) 10/03/13; .25; Head Start: The Government shutdown is hurting Head Start across the country. But luckily Champaign County's program won't be affected. That's because of its grant schedule. Champaign County's funding was given in the previous federal budget – it runs from March to February. The program was already hurting from the Sequester and had to be downsized. There are more than 500 preschoolers enrolled in the income eligible program in Champaign County.
- b.) 10/07/13; .26; Teacher Mediation: Champaign teachers are just 11 days away from a possible strike. And at this hour the two sides are back at the bargaining table. But when they showed up at the meeting many brought their families for a “camp out”. They say they wanted to make their presence felt and show school board members they have a lot of support. Teachers are asking for a one-year contract with a raise of more than 3-percent. But tonight there is “no” federal mediator because of the Government shutdown. Teachers remain optimistic. Teachers say negotiations could continue as late as 11 tonight. The school board is offering a 3 year contract with a pay raise of just over 1 percent every year. If a deal isn't reach soon teachers could walk out October 18th.
- c.) 10/17/13; .18; Parkland Kindergarteners: Kindergarteners from Champaign Schools were able to enjoy this fall day outside. About 900 of them learned where their food comes from. Parkland College invited them to see animals and plants in person. They stopped at different stations. At one they got to look at chickens and find out more about what they eat. Students say they had fun learning more about their favorite things. Kids learned about those cows and pigs as well...they also saw presentations about vegetables like pumpkins and corn.
- d.) 10/25/13; .19; Alma-Update: U of I Leaders is answering questions about the beloved statue that's been missing from campus. People went to a forum today to talk about the Alma Mater and her renovation. It was taken to Chicago to be restored last summer. When workers say what was inside they realized less than 20 percent of its bolts were hold it together. Now they're taking it apart and cleaning it with a laser. Workers are using special silicon and bronze bolts to put Alma Back together. The project will cost 360 thousand dollars. Private donations will pay for it. She should be back in time for graduation in April.
- e.) 10/29/13; .25; U of I Training: Students at the University of Illinois are signing up for some unique training. Campus police have taught three classes on active shooters in the last week. Today was one of the open classes. That means anyone who is connected with the U of I can sign up. University Police posted this class and within three days it was full. More than 50 people want to learn what to do if an active shooter came into their classroom. Instructors hope the more people who know how to handle it the better.

Officers added more classes because of high demand. Students also learn about mental health issues and how they can spot potentially dangerous behaviors.

- f.) 11/04/13; .25; Schools of Choice: Champaign School Leaders want to make it easier for parents to pick their children's schools. So they're adding more options to the "schools of choice." The biggest change involves how close you live to a school. Right now...if you're more than a mile and a half away the District doesn't put as much weight into which one is closest? Now the District would put greater emphasis on getting families into the school that's closest...if they want. Also parents would get to rank all 11 schools instead of just five. And registration would be open for 3 months from January to March. The Assistant Superintendent says many of these ideas have come from parents and families in the District. The School Board plans to look at these recommendations later this month. If members approve them they would start right away.
- g.) 11/14/13; .25; U of I Faculty Vote: A longtime U of I Professor is no longer with the University. The Board of Trustees voted to fire Louis Wozniak. He was a tenured Professor in the College of Engineering. He's been on paid leave since 2010. He was accused of having sexual overtones with students and taking pictures of them without their permission. After initial review the University let him stay as long as he stuck to school policy. But the Board says Wozniak has not been cooperative. So in a unanimously vote today he was removed. Wozniak has been a part of the U of I Faculty since the 60's. He was the first tenured professor to be let go.
- h.) 11/22/13; .25; State Superintendent Map: The State's Regional Superintendents have been slimed down. The State Board of Education approved a new plan today. It slims down regional offices of education from 44 to 35. In or area...Sangamon County has merged with Menard County. Christian, Montgomery, Bond, Effingham and Fayette counties all merged. Logan County merged with Dewitt, McLean and Livingston. We'll have more on what the consolidations mean tonight at 10.
- i.) 11/25/13; .25; Gifford Back to School: It's been more than week since the Tornado hit Gifford. Today, students are back in class. The grade school reopened this morning after many spent the week cleaning-up storm damage. The school offered free lunch for students...along with extra help watching kids before and after school. Some students got together to pray before class. The school will offer free lunch and help with daycare again tomorrow. Also tomorrow. A Multi-Agency Resource Center will open for any storm victim who needs help or a question answered. It'll be open in Gordyville from 10 until 6. All you need to take is proof of address.
- j.) 12/03/13; .25; Young Teacher Retirement: Teachers across our State have also been watching closely during the pension debates. Nick Ponder is a 5th grade teacher at Bottenfield Elementary in Champaign. He says when he started teaching figuring out when he could retire wasn't high on his priority list. But there could be drawbacks to extending teachers time in the classroom. Ponder says the biggest misconception is people thinking teachers get free pensions. He says he doesn't think today's vote will be the final word on Pension Reform.
- k.) 12/12/13; .19; Lincoln's Challenge Award: Some troubled teens are being honored for their help during the Gifford tornado. The county awarded 100 Lincoln's Challenge Cadets with a special commendation today. They volunteered delivering water and picking up debris after the November 17th storm. Cadets say they're used to

volunteering...but this was a completely different experience. The cadets helped out during a 5 day period following the storms.

- l.) 12/18/13; .29; Taylorville Reunion: Sixth Graders at St. Mary School in Taylorville had a special visitor yesterday. Bradley Endris surprised his sister and her classmates. The soldier told his family he wouldn't be able to come home from Kuwait for the holidays. But it was all part of a scheme. Before he surprised his youngest sister, he also stopped in to see another sister at the High School.
- m.) 12/24/13; .21; Second Spacewalk: The President was one of millions today who as closely watching a U of I Graduate. Astronaut Michael Hopkins did a second spacewalk making repairs to the international space station. He is half of a two-member crew assigned to the important task. It is the second Christmas Eve spacewalk in history. The duo was able to complete repairs today so a third walk won't be necessary.
- n.) 12/31/13; .19; New Laws-Sex Ed: When the clock strikes midnight, more than 200 laws will go into effect in Illinois. The Laws will impact everything from your pets...to your kids learn in school. Public School Districts will teach sex education and it's now required for those courses to include information about contraception's for students in grades 6 through 12.

Crime/Law Enforcement

WCIX News at 7 p.m.

- a.) 10/03/13; .20; Bank Robbery: Urbana Police are searching for a teen who robbed a bank. She walked into the heartland Bank and Trust on Philo Road just after 3 this afternoon. Police say she handed the teller a note and took off with cash. Here's a surveillance photo of the suspect. She was wearing a black hoodie with blue stripes and jeans. She was last seen running southeast toward Colorado Avenue. If you know who she is call Crimestoppers.
- b.) 10/09/13; .22; Decatur Pill Thefts: Suspects in a Decatur burglary led police right to their door. In Crime Watch tonight: Police were called to Victory Health Mart on William Street. Someone broke in, stole pills and the store's safe. A trail of pills led investigators to a home right across the street. That's where they found Terry Jones and Nichole Haines. They also found the safe and the pills. The two were arrested on several charges.
- c.) 10/18/13; .20; Jones in Court: A former Macon County Police investigator pleads "not" guilty. Steve Jones is accused of stealing nearly 200-thousand dollars from the Department's narcotics fund. He worked at the department for 30 years. Police say the theft happened the last 8 years he worked there. He's out on bond. If convicted of the felony charges he could face 30 years in prison.
- d.) 10/25/13; .18; Pregnant-Beating: A Decatur man is charged after punching a pregnant woman in her stomach. Police say 20-year old Martell Fizer repeatedly punched, choked and threatened to kill a 19-yr old woman. Fizer was already on probation for a mob attack. He faces felony charges of aggravated battery, domestic battery and unlawful restraint.
- e.) 10/29/13; .14; Paxton Murder Charges: A Paxton man is charged with second-degree murder. Police say 33-year-old Sean Kelley stabbed Jeffrey Potts during a fight. It happened in front of Shooky's Bar two weeks ago. Kelley remains in the Ford County Jail. If convicted he could get 15 years in prison.

- f.) 11/06/13; .20; Burglaries: Two men were arrested accused of breaking into homes in Coles County. Sean Watson and Raphael Lavalay face charges. Police believe they are responsible for 11 burglaries over the past 30 months. Police say the men entered homes while people were asleep. Different items were taken no one was hurt.
- g.) 11/13/13; .20; Blago Appeal: Prosecutors say Rod Blagojevich should stay behind bars. They filed a response today to his request for an appeal. His lawyer argues the judge made mistakes and Blagojevich's behavior was nothing more than politics. But prosecutor's argue-it's still a crime. They want the Judge to leave him in prison.
- h.) 11/21/13; .21; Officer Shooting-Vermilion: A Vermilion County Deputy shot a man. Now the State Police are investigating. The deputy was called to a home on Georgetown Road in Danville. He was responding to a domestic disturbance. For some reason the Deputy shot 20 year old Caleb Emory. Emory was taken to the hospital but will be okay. Police aren't releasing any other information about what happened.
- i.) 11/26/13; .20; Denight Sentencing: A Mahomet man was sentenced to 15-years in prison. 59-year old Michael Denight pleaded guilty to having child pornography and sexual exploitation of a minor. Denight admitted to secretly taking pictures of nude and partially dressed girls and women. Last year, a camera was found in the women's bathroom of Espresso Royale. Evidence led police to Denight's home.
- j.) 12/04/13; .16; Danville Arrests: Danville police arrested four people in connection to an armed robbery. Robert Parker, Davon Parker and April Osborne were arrested along with a 16 year old boy. All four suspects are charged with armed robbery. Robert Parker is also charged with aggravated battery and unlawful use of a weapon.
- k.) 12/11/13; .26; Embezzle Charges: An accountant is sentenced after stealing almost a million dollars from his employer. Neal Freeman was sentenced to more than three years in prison. He was convicted of stealing over 860,000 dollars from Champaign Builders Supply Company. It's now closed. The company couldn't recover from the loss. The judge ordered him to pay back that money. Freeman stole it between August 2003 and January 2011. He also failed to pay taxes on it. He pleaded guilty back in May.
- l.) 12/19/13; .31; Urbana Attempt Murder: Urbana Police need your help solving an armed robbery and shooting. It happened at the Lincoln Lodge on Friday the 13th. This is security video from the motel. The Manager says two men came in, pointed guns at him, and demanded the safe. One went upstairs to find his family. They took the safe and then shot the Manager as they left. He is ok. Police are looking for these two suspects. Both men were wearing grey hooded sweatshirts, dark pants and white sneakers. If you have any information about them call Crimestoppers at the number on your screen.
- m.) 12/26/13; .30; Dyna Chem Shooting: A Georgetown man is dead after shooting his boss then turning the gun on himself. It happened today at Dyna Chem. A chemical plant in Westville...just off route one. Investigators say the president of Dyna Chem called an employee in for an annual performance review. That's when the employee pulled a handgun out of his briefcase and shot the President twice...once in the head once in the hip. The Sheriff tells us the employee then fatally turned the gun on himself. No names are being released at this time.
- n.) 12/31/13; .30; Vermilion Suspect Dead: The man police believe killed a Danville woman is found dead. 40 year old Jamie Sternberger was shot to death on Sunday. It happened in her home on Greenwood Cemetery Road. The Vermilion County Sheriff's Department says 43-year-old Michael Penrose had lived with Sternberger about six

months. Her car was found across the state line in Parke County, Indiana. At that location they also found Penrose's body. Police say he shot and killed himself.

Heath/Healthcare

WCIX News at 7 p.m.

- a.) 10/02/13; .26; Flu Shot Clinic: As flu season begins to set in people are lining up to beat it. And people who showed up didn't even have to get out of their car to get their shots. It's a part of Carle's Community Flu Clinic. Here at vineyard Church in Urbana, people can just drive thru to get the vaccine. It's open until Saturday. If you can't make it before then there are plenty of other dates and locations that you can check out. Head to illinoishomepage.net.
- b.) 10/07/13; .17; Go Pink: You might have noticed the firefighters were all wearing pink t-shirts. It's a fundraiser to help the Mills Breast Cancer Center at Carle Hospital. They'll wear the shirts all month long. T-shirts can be bought at Brownfield Sports inside Lincoln Square Mall. Last year they raised more than six hundred dollars.
- c.) 10/14/13; .30; Healthcare Changes: State retirees are on edge about changes coming to their insurance. The state is planning to switch Medicaid eligible retirees to a Medicaid Advantage Plan. The announcement was made last week. Since then, a lot of retirees have called their Lawmakers worried about what this means. State Representative Raymond Poe represents state workers in Springfield. He'll be part of a special hearing next week on the issue. That hearing is a week from Wednesday in Springfield. Poe is encouraging any retirees who have questions to come and testify at the committee hearing.
- d.) 10/22/13; .25; Cancer Cuts: A business did something today to make a difference. Rod Sickler Salon and Spa hosted a Cut-A-Thon. People paid 35 dollars for a hair cut with a portion going to "Look Good Feel Better." The group helps women undergoing chemotherapy. The salon says it's a cause everyone should support. Look Good Feel Better helps more than 50-thousand women each year.
- e.) 10/28/13; .30; Kid Flu Shots: It seems kids should be vaccinated for the flu...even if they're healthy. A new report found nearly half of those kids who died from flu complications had no underlying medical conditions or risk factors for complications. Between 2004 and 2012...830-children have died from flu-related complications. The CDC says starting at six months old...children should be vaccinated for the flu every year.
- f.) 11/04/13; 25; No Shave: The Macon County Sheriff's Department is looking different. They're growing their beards out for "No Shave November." It's something that goes against Department policy but helps in the fight against Cancer. About 60 men signed up and had to donate at least 30 dollars for the fundraiser. The Department lost two officers to Cancer last year. The Department raised more than a thousand dollars beating its goal. They're already up to 2 thousand dollars.
- g.) 11/13/13; .15; Health Board Dissolves: A partnership between two counties is ending. It's a follow-up from your News Leader. The Iroquois County Board voted to withdraw from the Iroquois-Ford County Health Department. The Board's vote was unanimous. The two will dissolve by next summer.
- h.) 11/21/13; .25; Smaller Seats: It's only one week away...and if you are gearing up for Thanksgiving travel prepare for a tight squeeze. New data suggests airplane seats are

getting smaller while more Americans are struggling with obesity. It is not your imagination, airlines seats are getting smaller. Even worse we are getting larger making for an uncomfortable equation. Travel website "Seat Guru" ran the numbers and in a seat-by-seat comparison over time its study confirms, the airlines are packing us in. But is not just the size that's making us feel squeezed. As seats shrunk we grew. The World Health Organization says worldwide obesity has doubled since the 1980's. Ultimately it is up to each individual airline not the manufacturer of the plane to determine seat size. And as of now experts predict that airlines will still value the optimal use of space over a few extra inches for us.

- i.) 11/26/13; .27; E-Patient: There's a new way to get a check up and you don't even have to leave your house. Carle Hospital is now offering E-Visit. It lets you get diagnosed online. If you have a non-emergency medical issue...you can simply log on, answer some questions about your symptoms and your doctor will get back to you within the day. An E-Visit costs 35 dollars. But if the doctor thinks your symptoms are something serious he or she will recommend you come to the office for a check-up. If you would like to sign up head to illinoishomepage.net to learn more.
- j.) 12/06/13; .15; Eating Healthy Costs: A \$1.50 a day. That's how much more it costs to eat healthier foods. Researchers say the price difference is the less then they expected. Meat had the highest price difference. The healthier cuts cost 29 cents more per serving on average. On the other hand grains, snacks and dairy had the smallest price shift from healthier to unhealthy versions.
- k.) 12/09/13; .16; Prescription Drug Abuse: The Centers for Disease Control says abuse of prescription drugs may be the number one cause of accidental death in the U.S. Today, the American College of Physicians issued new guideline to better educate both physicians and patients on the dangers of drug addiction. The American College of Physicians also wants to connect all state drug monitoring programs so that patients cannot go across state lines to get multiple prescriptions.
- l.) 12/17/13; .23; Anti-Bacterial Soaps: The FDA says anti-bacterial soaps and body washes don't work any better than plain old soap and water. From now on manufacturers have to prove their products are better. Health officials say there are about 2-thousand kinds of antibacterial soaps on the market. But after studies were done...there's no evidence they're more effective. In fact, data suggests long-term exposure to them could lead to bacterial resistance.
- m.) 12/24/13; .16; Healthcare.gov Million: More than 2-million visitors logged into Healthcare.gov yesterday. People are racing to meet the administration's new midnight deadline to enroll in health insurance. Enrollment is falling far below expectations, especially on the troubled website that's handling insurance sales for 36 states.
- n.) 12/31/13; .27; Sexual Health: A new study find that doctors don't spend enough time talking about sexual health with their teen patients. Researchers at Duke found that less than two-thirds of doctors even bring up the subject. And when they do the conversation often lasts less than one minute. Girls were more than twice more likely to discuss sexual health than boys which means they could miss the benefits of a doctor visit. The study will help develop new recommendations for discussing teen sexual health.

Consumerism

WCIX News at 7 p.m.

- a.) 10/01/13; .25; Postal Service Defaults: The U.S. Postal Service defaulted on a 5.6 billion dollar retiree benefits payment last month. The Postmaster General had warned a Senate Committee that it would happen. This isn't the first time the postal service has defaulted on the payment. Unlike other Federal agencies the postal service is not funded by taxpayers. It's intended to function more like a private business. An agency spokesperson says the default is not related to the Government shutdown.
- b.) 10/11/13; .22; Facebook Privacy Setting: Facebook is getting rid of a privacy setting that allowed people to hide their profiles from other users in the search field. The setting has already disappeared from the options for some users. Those who still have it enabled will get removal notices. Facebook says it was outdated. They say users can be found in other ways-like clicking on their name in a mutual friend's timeline or news feed.
- c.) 10/15/13; .20; Veteran Jobs: It will soon be easier for some Illinois Veterans to get jobs right away after being discharged. The state will accept military service in place of some training for certain job licenses. For example if you were a medic during your service you could get your nursing or EMT license quicker. Supporters say this will help cut down on veteran unemployment.
- d.) 10/24/13; .21; Employment Fraud: A new Federal Grant could help keep your tax dollars from ending up in the wrong hands. The State Agency in charge of unemployment benefits is getting more than two million dollars to help fight fraud. The money will let them find new ways to catch mistakes. The state recovered almost a quarter of a billion dollars in the last two years from people getting unemployment checks illegally.
- e.) 10/31/13; .19; MTD Taxes: Champaign-Urbana's Mass Transit District wants more money. The Board approved a tax levy increase of about 329 thousand dollars from property owners. The MTD says it's to cover the increased costs staffing and expanded services. They say ridership is up about eleven and a half percent. This proposal would increase their budget by about five percent.
- f.) 11/05/13; .20; Decatur Development: A new furniture store could be on the way to Decatur. The City Council approved a plan for 35-thousand square foot addition at the Mound Center. That's on Mound Road and US 51. A furniture store and other retail stores or restaurants will fill the space.
- g.) 11/11/13; .21; Holiday Outlook: The Holidays may not be so merry and bright this year...for retailers. Predications from Morgan Stanley suggest sales growth could be some of the weakest since 2008. Same store sales could grow just one and a half-percent. Last year sales were up more than 3 percent. Weak consumer confidence may be to blame. Retailers may need extra sales deals to get shoppers to spend more.
- h.) 11/21/13; .20; Abercrombie Plus: Beginning next year, Abercrombie and Fitch will offer plus sizes in its women's clothing line. Currently, the retailer does not carry women's sizes above a ten. The shift comes as sales and profit margins have taken a dip. The Company has been slammed by many consumers and youth advocacy groups since comments CEO Mike Jefferies made in a 2006 interview surfaced. He said his clothes were more for "Cool" and "Good Looking" people. Jeffries has since apologized. Abercrombie and Fitch would not provide details on the new sizes or when they will be available.

- i.) 11/26/13; .23; T-Day Training: Expect roads to be busy the next few days. Triple A is estimating 90-percent of Thanksgiving travelers will be driving to their destinations this year. Nearly 39 million people are expected to hit the roads between tomorrow and Sunday. Triple-A has this advice. Leave as early as you can tomorrow: traffic gets worse later in the day. And avoid coming home on Sunday it is the busiest travel day of the year.
- j.) 12/02/13; .20; Cyber Biz: Small Business Saturday has come and gone...but some stores say they're still cashing in. Charlotte's Daughter is a resale shop that opened in Danville earlier this year. The owners say they had special deals for black Friday. Small Business Saturday and now Cyber Monday. She says they see the whole weekend as an opportunity to reach out to shoppers. Everyone who came to the store got a discount today. But shoppers who liked Charlotte's Daughter Facebook saved even more money.
- k.) 12/10/13; .25; Ameren Rates: More than a million Ameren Illinois customers could see rate decreases on their electric bills come next year. The Illinois Commerce Commission approved new electric distribution rates for Ameren for 2014. The reduction comes with a cost for Ameren...about 45 million less in revenue, they had planned to lower their rate by 37-million dollars...but ICC says the figure was higher because Ameren over-collected on previous rates. Ameren has more than a million electric customers in Central and Southern Illinois. The utility says...they're still reviewing ICC's decision.
- l.) 12/17/13; .25; Restaurants Closed: After failing its health inspection. A restaurant in Savoy is back on its feet. Smokey Bones BBQ failed two health inspections. On September 9th and October 7th. Most of their violations came from not having food stored at the right temperature. For one day the restaurant closed its doors and cleaned up its act. The restaurant owner has new ways to keep his business up to code. The restaurant scored a 95 on the last inspection.
- m.) 12/23/13; .20; Amtrak Wi-Fi: Amtrak trains may be getting faster. But they're moving to keep up with the times. Amtrak will install Wi-Fi on trains operating out of Chicago, as early as February. That includes the Chicago to St. Louis corridor...it goes through Springfield. It's called Amtrak-Connect. It's already on around 75 percent of Amtrak trains around the U.S.
- n.) 12/31/13; .30; Minneci's Closing: A popular Italian restaurant in Champaign is closing its doors today. Minneci's Restaurant is closing its downtown location on Springfield. It's been a downtown staple for more than 3-decades. Earlier this year it opened a second restaurant in the "Village at the Crossings." That location will remain open. Customers at the Springfield franchise say it's a bittersweet day. The downtown building won't sit empty for long. A Mediterranean restaurant will open up in its place early next year.