

Quarterly Issues Programs List for Station WJPF/WCIL-AM
Jan 1st through March 31st, 2024
Placed in the Public File 4/10/24

Section I. Issues.

The station has identified the following issues as significant issues facing our community in this quarter:

- A. Tourism**
- B. IL Gun Owners/Courts/Lawsuits**
- C. Spring Legislative Session**
- D. Aging Population**
- E. Crime/Drugs**
- F. Local Primary Election**
- G. Healthcare**

A. Tourism

1. On the Morning Newswatch, Jan 9th at 8:20am we spoke for 20 minutes with the Director of the IL Dept. of Natural Resources Natalie Phelps-Finnie. The subject was can tourism replace coal in the southern IL economy. With the absence of coal mining, incomes have fallen, and there's a push to grow the economy across the region. The director says that will be a huge challenge, but to be able to grow tourism, IL must 1st repair it's park system after years of underfunding. She also spoke on the efforts to grow RV camping and that required investments for water and electricity for RV campers.
2. On the Morning Newswatch, Jan 15th at 8:20am we spoke for 15 minutes with Harrisburg Mayor John McPeek who had received a visit to his town, the 1st in years, by Governor JB Pritzker. The Mayor had complained that the entire S/E portion of Illinois has been neglected and the Mayor hosted the Governor for a series of presentations on the natural resources for tourism, and some additional efforts his city has taken the pull down dilapidated building and improving infrastructure as the "Gateway to the Shawnee National Forest"
3. On the Morning Newswatch, Jan 31st at 7:20am we spoke for 10 minutes with Ashlee Spiller of "Visit SI" for their annual boat show the following

weekend, a 3 day regional events that draws from across the southern most counties. We also discussed the many other events that are publicized by the organization and the evolving attempts to grow the regionals tourism industries and the plans being put in place for the total eclipse in April.

4. On the Morning Newswatch, Feb 12th at 8:20am we spoke for 15 minutes with the new Director of the Sparta World Shooting Complex, Skip Klinger. This facility has an economic impact estimated at close to 30 million dollars and brings shooters from over 100 countries to Sparta during their biggest event of the year "The Grand". The state had been trying to sell off the property or create a partnership and neither was accomplished so the state brought in a new director to try and grow the location. Included using the facilities for non-sporting events like wedding and conferences.

B. IL Gun Owners/Courts/Lawsuits

1. On the Morning Newswatch, Jan 17th at 7:20am we spoke for 10 minutes with Richard Pearson the Executive Director of the IL State Rifle Association on the topic of the Protect IL Communitates Act. There are numerous lawsuits and multiple jurisdictions and the Director believes, even though all the cases have been lost to date, the US Supreme Courts will side with gun owners that the weapons on the list deemed as assault rifles will be over turned and that ultimately it will lead the FOID card required by Illinois will be found unconstitutional as well.

C. Spring Legislative Session

1. On the Morning Newswatch, Jan 19th at 7:20am we spoke for 10 minutes with State Rep Paul Jacobs on the spring session in Springfield. Most of the items are holdover issue like gun rights. But there's been increasing concern on how much immigration is costing the state when it comes to healthcare. The money allotted to date has been spent and the Governor has transferred funds from other dept. to cover that cost.
2. On the Morning Newswatch, Feb 5th at 8:20am we spoke for 15 minutes with IL Farm Bureau Brian Duncan. Estate taxes on farmland have been a hot topic in southern Illinois for years. The taxes placed on the estate after the passing of the head of household are so high that the family often doesn't have the money to pay them. Self-described as money poor and land rich. The Farm Bureau has ideas that will be presented in Springfield this session to seek a solution that will help save "The Family Farm".

3. On the Morning Newswatch, March 19th at 7:20am we spoke for 10 minutes with for Governor Pat Quinn about ethics reform in IL. Quinn, a democrat is working with a republican member of the House to change IL law to allow voters to put reform ideas on the ballot. For example term limits, so that they can take responsibility for cleaning up state politics.
4. On the Morning Newswatch, Feb 26th at 8:20am we spoke for 15 minutes with the Executive Director of the Illinois Municipal league about an element of the Governor's Budget Proposal, the "Grocery Store Tax". This tax goes through the state but returns to each municipality to the sum of 325 million dollars. The unanswered question is how do cities like Marion, Illinois, which would lose 1.68 million, Carbondale 1 million, and Herrin 350 thousand dollars replace those dollars. The Governor's office says the local entities can return the tax, but the IML director says the cities do not have the authority.

D. Aging Population

1. On the Morning Newswatch, Feb 23rd at 8:20am we spoke for 15 minutes with Marion Senior Citizen Community Center Director, Jill Lindsey-Graskewicz. This year more people in the U.S. will become 65 years old than ever before and there's a number of important issues in our area that people, like the director, are trying to help with. Inflation and food costs, the center supplies free lunch and now a new food pantry. Assistance with benefits, reduced prices for driver's license renewal. This is the only city supported senior center in the area.

E. Crime/Drugs

1. On the Morning Newswatch, Jan 23rd at 8:20am we spoke for 20 minutes with Jackson County States Attorney Joe Cervantes. A new 'drug court' has been implemented in the county which allows a person convicted of a drug crime to go into a diversion program. No Jail, more frequent drug testing and attend drug recovery programs. When the program is completed they return in front of the judge in charge of the "drug court" and 'graduate' and the charges are dropped based on the judge's final session with the defendant. This will be Jackson County's 1st "Graduating Class".
2. On the Morning Newswatch, March 26th at 8:20am we spoke for 20 minutes with the Director of the Illinois State Police Brendan Kelly about their recruitment effort for troopers. The starting salary of 90 thousand dollars has

just been announced along with a list of changes from training to what region you're eligible to work to the draw new applicants.

3. On the Morning Newswatch, March 28th at 7:20am we spoke for 10 minutes with Sen. Jason Plummer. The Senator addressed the announcement of two members of the Prisoner Review Board who stepped down early in the week. They resigned after someone was given parole with a questionable record and a day after his release he stabbed an 11 year old boy to death as he protected his mother from the accused, an ex-girlfriend who had asked for an order of protection. The Senator contends that the Governor is skirting to Senate approval process for position like the Prisoner Review board and wants that changed and for the Senates role to return.

F. Primary Election

1. On the Morning Newswatch, March 13th at 8:20am we spoke for 20 minutes with the incumbent for the 116th District Rep. David Severin. Two republicans faced off in the primary in a newly re-districted area. David defended his position on a gas tax vote, the issue of the Safe-T Act's passage.
2. On the Morning Newswatch, March 14th at 8:20am we spoke for 20 minutes with the challenger for the 116th, Franklin County Board member Angela Evans. She ran a very aggressive race for this seat and for a more conservative approach to the office. She spoke about the efforts she has gone to be prepared for this race including her run for the county board to gain the experience she felt she needed to become a good state representative.

G. Healthcare

1. On the Morning Newswatch, March 22nd at 8:20am we spoke for 20 minutes with the Regional President for Deaconess Hospital Will Davis. Mr. Davis is now overseeing 4 healthcare locations that the Deaconess Hospital system, from Indiana, has purchased in southern Illinois, the largest the Heartland Hospital in Marion. Their Indiana system saw many southern Illinois patients and the decision was made to try to "Clone" that system and its expertise and delivery more and better services here in Illinois so that the Indiana System is not overwhelmed and prospective patients do not have as long a drive to access healthcare in southeastern IL.