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Accidents in two counties claim lives of two men

Staff Report

According to a press release issued from Illinois State Police (ISP) District 22, at approximately 5:29 a.m. Friday July 27, a 2012 Kia Sedan, driven by Michael D. LaBelle, 45, of Grantsburg, was traveling on New Columbia Road, west bound, .29 miles west of Walnut Ridge Road.

The vehicle left the roadway on the left and struck a wooden fence with the front of the vehicle.

LaBelle was struck by a piece of the fence and pronounced dead at the scene. Authorities say LaBelle was the sole occupant of the vehicle.

On Friday night, one man was injured and one killed following a single utility vehicle (UTV) crash near Glendale.

According to ISP, at approximately 9:40 p.m. emergency personnel responded to a UTV crash on Glendale Road, one mile east of Bull Pen Road in Pope County.

A 2016 Polaris Ranger side-by-side was driven by Weston D. Adams, 28, of Golconda, who was traveling with passenger Austin Walquist, 22, also of Golconda.

The UTV was traveling

westbound on Glendale Road, when the vehicle ran off the left shoulder of the roadway. The vehicle traveled through a shallow ditch, striking a tree before coming to rest.

ISP says passersby spotted the crashed UTV and went to a nearby residence to call authorities.

An air ambulance flew Adams to Deaconess Hospital in Evansville, where he remains in very critical condition. According to his family, he remains sedated on medications and on a ventilator.

An account has been set up at City National Bank in Metropolis to assist the family with medical expenses while Adams is in the hospital. The family says he is expected to spend several weeks there.

Walquist was pronounced deceased on the scene. A friend of the Walquist family has established a GoFundMe account to help with expenses: <http://www.gofundme.com/2ry38-funeral-expenses>.

According to ISP, the investigation into the crash continues. Neither Adams nor Walquist were wearing seatbelts.

Obituaries for LaBelle and Walquist can be found on Page 2A.



Above: The template construction workers used in 1993 to begin constructing the cells of the cofferdam.

— Photo by Richard Berry

Olmsted Locks & Dam

A look at the history of the largest Army Corps of Engineers project in the United States

Editor's Note: This is the first article in a series of four, focusing on the Olmsted Locks and Dam project and the various aspects involved with it.

Michele Longworth
Planet Reporter
reporter@metropolisplanet.com

Olmsted Locks and Dam has been described by some as, “an engineering marvel,” while others, including Kentucky Senator Rand Paul in 2013 have called it a “boondoggle.”

Call it what you want, but after 30 years and six presidential administrations, the Olmsted Dam is closer than ever to being completed — and that cannot come soon enough for the river industry.

The project dates back to 1988, during the late President Ronald Reagan’s administration, when \$775 million was designated through the Water Resources and Development Act of 1988 to create a new lock and dam on the Ohio River between Illinois and Kentucky. Initially, when the project was funded, the completion date was set for 1998.

When the locks and dam is complete and operational, the project could go down in history as the United States Army Corps of Engineers’ (USACE) largest and costliest civil works project in the history of the Corps of Engineers. What started with funding of \$775 million, will end with a price tag of over \$3 billion, but according to the most recent cost estimates, it will still be under budget.

The Olmsted Dam project consists of two 110’ by 1200’ lock chambers adjacent to the Illinois bank of the river and a dam made up of five Tainter gates, 1400’ of boat-operated wickets and a fixed weir. The new Olmsted Locks and Dam



Above: A pile driver or vibro hammer is lowered by crane and placed on top of the steel in order to drive it into the riverbed, a job Richard Berry, of Metropolis knows all about as he was a pile driver foreman when he first began in 1993. He worked on the Olmsted project for a total of eight years.

— Photo by Richard Berry

will eliminate Ohio River Locks and Dam 52 and 53.

The Corps said at its peak — about three seasons ago — there were 675 craftsmen, 100 staff with contractors, 50 Army Corps staff members involved in the project. By the time it is operational, there will have been about 45 million man hours put in during the construction of the new dam.

According to the Corps,

there have been over 15,000 dives performed without incident. In fact, during the entire project there has been only one fatality in 2012 when a Vienna man, Robert R. Billingsley, 54, died at the scene while securing barges.

Dam 52 is located at Brookport and 53 is at Grand Chain, just upstream from the new

See **DAM**, page 2A

Ice Cream time



Above: Cherylann Easley, left, places a dollup of homemade chocolate sauce on Retha Rustin’s, right, bowl of homemade ice cream on July 26 during the annual St. John Lutheran Ice Cream Social. **Below:** Mauri Fiorentini is all smiles as he mans the grill cooking burgers. The proceeds from his year’s event will help two local families.

— Michele Longworth | *Metropolis Planet*



County’s unpaid bills mounting, property tax money coming in

By Michele Longworth
Planet Reporter
reporter@metropolisplanet.com

With three payrolls in the month of July, Massac County Commissioners Jerel Childers and Jayson Farmer learned during Tuesday morning’s commissioner meeting from Treasurer Dana Angelly that the general fund balance is \$4731.

Commissioner Jeff Weber was not in attendance at this week’s meeting.

Last week Angelly had brought up the topic of borrowing money from the county’s worker’s compensation or liability

funds.

“I think we should live within our means,” said Commission Chair Jerel Childers, who seemed reluctant for the commissioners to make an inter-fund loan to pay the county’s mounting unpaid bills.

The sheriff’s department unpaid bills is currently around \$102,000, according to Angelly.

She told the commissioners the finance charges that are applied to some of the unpaid bills might be costing the county even more money.

Angelly said this week her office should get the sheriff’s fees that are usually turned in at

the first of the month.

Farmer suggested since the three payrolls were covered, the commissioners should wait for a week or two to see if some money comes in that could be applied to the unpaid bill balance. Childers was in agreement to do that.

Angelly said mobile home tax bills were mailed out Monday, and the due date for those bills is Friday, November 2.

She said real estate property tax money is coming in and things are running smoothly so far. The first installment date is Friday, Sept. 7 and the second installment date for real estate

tax bills is also Friday, Nov. 2.

Although phase one of the courthouse renovation process is still ongoing and phase two has not even been put out to bid, Childers asked Farmer if the county would have to make it’s first payment on the money borrowed to fund the renovation.

Farmer indicated the first payment will be this fall and the county would hopefully be able to make the payment with money the county will have received from Massac Memorial Hospital and the City of Metropolis when phase one is completed.

Childers and Farmer discussed the renovation project and

determined some of the frames for the new windows have been put in, but the actual new windows have not. Farmer placed a call to the person overseeing the Massac County courthouse project and was informed he and the general contractor have both been talking to the person in charge of taking out and installing the windows and have been putting the pressure on him to finish the job.

This week Childers asked Farmer what his thoughts were on the unoccupied blue house at Eighth and Ferry streets. When

See **COUNTY**, page 3A

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news@metropolisplanet.com



Deaths

Austin Walquist



Austin Walquist, 22, of Temple Hill, died Friday, July 27, 2018 in Pope County.

Funeral service will be held at 1 p.m. Saturday at Aly Funeral Home in Ed-dyville with Bro. Kevin Richerson officiating.

Burial will follow at Temple Hill Cemetery in Temple Hill.

Visitation will be from 6-9 p.m. Friday at the fu-neral home.

Born March 22, 1996 to Matthew Walquist and Shannon Parr Markus in Paducah, Mr. Walquist was a member of Temple Hill

Church and also a member of UBC Millwrights Local 716 in St. Louis, Missouri.

Survivors include his mother, Shannon Mar-cus and husband Keith of Temple Hill; his father, Matthew Walquist of Kar-nak; one sister, Gracie Marcus of Temple Hill; one brother, Logan Mar-cus of Temple Hill; his grandparents, Jerry Parr and wife Carol of Temple Hill, Howard Walquist and wife Carolyn of Karnak and Chris Marcus and wife Susie of Metropolis; two aunts, Tammy Stevens and husband Mark of Kentucky and Melissa Stier and hus-band David of Springfield; one uncle, Phillip Walquist of Belknap; and several great-aunts, great-uncles and cousins.

He was preceded in death by his sister, Krysten Walquist; and one uncle, Kevin Parr.

Memorials may be made to: FFA, c/o Wade Swinford, 125 State High-way 146W., Golconda, IL 62938.

Michael LaBelle



Michael D. LaBelle, 45, of Grantsburg, died Friday, July 27, 2018 as a result of an automobile accident.

Mr. LaBelle was a boil-ermaker with Local 363, of Belleville.

Survivors include his wife, Dawn LaBelle of Grantsburg; his parents,

Ray and Leslie LaBelle of Grantsburg; three daugh-ters, Chassity LaBelle of Vienna, Haley LaBelle of Grantsburg and Brittnie LaBelle of Metropolis; one son, Michael LaBelle of Metropolis; two grand-sons, Breagan McCoy of Vienna and Chance Lee LaBelle of Metropolis; one sister, Lisa Burnham of Grantsburg; one brother, Jimmy LaBelle of Grants-burg; and several nieces and nephews.

Services will be held at a later date.

Visitation was held Tuesday at Aikins-Farmer-Loftus-McManus Funeral Home in Metropolis.

Memorials may be made to a charity of the donor's choice.

Vivian McPeak

Vivian McPeak, 46, of Metropolis, died Monday, July 30, 2018.

A memorial service will be held at 1 p.m. on Saturday, at Community of Christ Church, located at 1309 Commercial Park Rd. in Metropolis, with Ivan Woods officiating.

Born June 22, 1972 in Paducah, Mrs. McPeak at-tended the Community of Christ Church in Metropo-lis.

Survivors include her husband, Tony McPeak; one son, Sam Godman and wife Maegan; two stepchil-dren, Joseph and Samantha McPeak; her parents, Don

and Darlene Melcher; one sister, Monica Whalen and husband Ricky; one brother, Michael Melcher and companion Jen Judycki Schmidt; three grandchil-dren, Jack Sullivan, Scarlet Sullivan and Claire God-man; and several nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her grandparents, Vera and Francis “Dude” Smith and M.W. and Hazel Melcher; and one sister-in-law, Laura Cross Melcher.

Aikins-Farmer-Loftus-McManus Funeral Home in Metropolis is in charge of arrangements.

Naomi Wittig

Naomi A. Wittig, 90, of Metropolis, died Tuesday, July 31, 2018 at Southgate Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in Metropolis.

Funeral service will be held at 3 p.m. on Satur-day at St. John Lutheran Church in Metropolis with Pastor Kent Hollis offici-ating.

Burial will follow in the church cemetery.

Visitation will be held

DAM

Continued from front

dam. Both dams were built in 1929, 89 years ago. At the time they were con-structed their life expect-ancy was for 15 years.

In 1969, a 1200’ long lock chamber was added to Dam 52 and in 1979, one was added to Dam 53. Ac-cording to the Corps, the antiquated design of Dams 52 and 53 make it hard to meet current rive traffic de-mands without significant delays.

One of the most signifi-cant delays came late in the summer of 2017 with an eight day closure of Dam 52 because wickets were down.

The new Olmsted Dam will have fewer wickets than Dams 52 and 53, but the time to raise the wickets is estimated to take about 24 hours, whereas with the problematic wickets at the older dams, the process of raising and lowering the dam could take 36 or eve 72 hours.

The two lock chambers at the new Olmsted Locks and Dam will be able to keep barges moving up and down the river by allowing tow boats to lock through simultaneously.

According to USACE, construction work began as early as 1993, when the contract was awarded to build a cofferdam.

For one former worker at the dam, he knows ex-actly when construction began because the dam project was why Richard Berry moved his family to Metropolis in 1993. At the time he first heard about the Olmsted Dam project he and his family were liv-ing in Ohio.

Berry said his father worked for Balfour-Beatty, the company hired to work on the first portion of the dam project. The Olmsted Dam project was expected to be a 10 year job, when it was first announced.

That first phase of con-struction, Berry said was to drive the piling for 49 peanuts and 50 cells that would make up the coffer-dam for the locks.

The cells are the round structures that make up the cofferdam and the “pea-nuts,” are the half-round structures used to connect the cells.

They get their nickname because when looking down on them, they look like peanuts.

When Berry first be-gan at Olmsted, there was nothing but water. Typic-ally when construction work is done in water a coffer-dam is built. A cofferdam is an enclosure built within or across a body of water to allow the water to be pumped out.

That was the case with Olmsted. The process of building the cofferdam took about three to three and a half years, accord-ing to Berry, who worked at different times during all of the various phases of construction. His position while there was mainly as pile driving foreman.

A template for a peanut would be placed in the river and from there workers would drive the piles one by one.

Berry said the 190-foot-long pieces of steel were the biggest pieces Bethle-hem Steel has ever rolled.

Berry described how he would be in the bucket of a lift anywhere from 75 to 85 feet in the air with a 190-foot piece of steel coming toward him.

The steel beam would be lowered into the wa-ter and then with the as-sistance of a crane, which would hold the vibro ham-mer, or sheet pile driver, overhead, would lower it over the piling and Berry would guide it over the pil-ing and the hammer would vibrate and in the process drive the steel into the riv-erbed.

While the cofferdam was being built and after it was constructed, towboat traffic was routed to the other side of the river.

After the cofferdam was up, then the Corps was able to have the water pumped out so the engineers could survey and workers could pour concrete footers, foundation pile and con-crete.

Berry said phase two was taken over by Atkin-son, Dillingham, Lane (ADL).

Also during this por-tion of the construction the floating guide walls that were constructed at James Marine in Paducah and floated down river to the dam, were put into place.

Throughout the entire project, there were numer-ous obstacles along the way. Some of the problems the Olmsted project has faced include:

- Delays in funding and lack of availability of ap-propriations
- Low initial budget proposal for the project by engineers
- Cost increases of ma-terial over time
- In the wet construc-tion
- Cost-reimbursable contracts
- Unforeseen engineer-ing problems
- Stretching of the USACE budget that took money to other projects
- Inflation
- Changes to the design of the project
- Unpredictable river conditions

Berry has a personal collection of memorabilia from his eight years of employment at the dam, including a news photo showing the cofferdam constructed, but flooded. Berry recalls the river had risen so high it was spilling over the top of the coffer-dam and got to the point where the Corps made the decision to intentionally flood the cofferdam, which set the construction back.

Another significant im-pact was the inefficient funding. According to a chart from USACE, for nearly 20 years the project did not receive enough funding. It was not un-til the mid 2000s that the Olmsted project began re-ceiving the proper amount of funding it needed.

The Corps timeline of events shows in 2004 the contract for the dam was awarded and from 2004

to 2009, the dam pre-cast yard was constructed and the site was mobilized for dam work to begin. At that point, the cost projections totaled about \$1.9 billion.

After the cofferdam came down, an innova-tive design of constructing portions of the dam “in the wet,” was devised.

This process used a concrete casting yard that transported the pieces of the dam into the river for placement on the bottom of the river, without dis-ruption to the river traffic.

In 2009, shells for the dam began being fabri-cated and 2010 marked the first season of in the wet dam construction and set-ting of shells.

Also in 2010 cost es-timates were re-done and construction continued.

In 2012 a Post Authori-zation Change Report was completed, which indi-cated the project cost esti-mate reaching \$3.1 billion, coming after \$1.4 billion had already been invested into the project.

The Corps says from 2016 through 2018, the dam construction surged with 93 percent of the dam completed.

“It was a good job,” said Berry, who said he never thought the dam would get to this point — to where it’s almost op-erational. He says on rib-bon cutting day, he and his wife, Tracie, will likely be there to see it in person.

As the ribbon cutting ceremony for the Olmsted Locks and Dam approach-es on Thursday, Aug. 30, many components of the dam have been completed. But, the Corps’ current schedule for the dam is for it to be operational in Oc-tober and to complete the project, which includes re-moval of Dams 52 and 53 by December 2020.

According to the Corps timeline, as of Jan. 31, 2018, all 18 Tainter gate shells had been set and all

five Tainter gates had been erected.

But, why hold a ribbon cutting two months before the dam is operational?

As Louisville District Commander Col. Antoi-nette Gant explained,

“We were looking for the best opportune time to be able to do it as close to when we felt we would be operational as possible. Selecting and August date ensured we’d have Con-gress that would be out of session

“Olmsted Locks and Dam will ensure the vi-ability of this commercial waterway so important to our nation’s economic security. The project’s operational achievement represents generations of innovation excellence, more than 45 million labor hours and stands as an ex-ample of the benefits pro-vided from work done by the Corps on our nation’s critical inland waterways,” said Gant.

The ceremony will be-gin at 10 a.m. at Olmsted Locks and Dam, located at 567 New Dam Road, Olm-sted.

The event is open to the public and will include a keynote address by the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, R.D. James and will fea-ture the dedication of the Wicket Lifter Keen and the first commercial tow lockage.

Shuttle service to trans-port attendees to the cer-emony site location will be provided from the des-ignated parking locations. The shuttle loop will run continuously from 8 to 9:55 a.m. on Aug. 29.

The detailed informa-tion regarding scheduled events, directions and park-ing locations are available on the Louisville District website at: <https://www.lrl.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/Navigation/Locks-and-Dams/Olmsted-Locks-and-Dam/>

Do you enjoy reading Yesterday's News?

Do you remember Massac County as it was years ago, or want to know what it was like? Then you'll enjoy reading *Family and Pictorial History of Massac County, Illinois*. Available at *The Metropolis Planet* office, 111 E. 5th St. \$45, plus \$4 for mailing.

THANK YOU

The family of Edward Cole would like to thank everyone that brought food, flowers, gifts, fellowship, and prayers to them as they mourned the loss of this amazing man. Many thanks to the friends and neighbors that came and mowed the lawn and offered their time and hard work in preperation for the wake and funeral. Randy Cole and Penny Emery, your heartfelt thoughts, prayers, and words gave comfort beyond measure as you ministered at the funeral. The emergency room staff at Massac Memorial Hospital, your hard work, your heartfelt words, and how you gave love to our family when we needed it the most, we are forever thankful.

Wanda, Connie, Ronda,
Lisa and Family



To place a classified ad, call Planet/Scene Classifieds at 618-524-2141 or e-mail classifieds@metropolisplanet.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the Village of Karnak has passed “An Ordinance of the Village of Karnak, Illinois Authorizing and Ascertaining the Prevailing Rate of Wages for Laborers, Workmen and Mechanics, and Other Workers Employed on Public Works” to be the same as those in Pulaski County as determined by the Illinois Department of Labor.

The original Ordinance, which lists the applicable prevailing rate of wages, is part of the official records of the Village of Karnak, and is on file and available for examination at the office of the Village of Karnak during Village office hours.

Dated this 17th day of July, 2018.
Village of Karnak

Ronald D. Meyers
Acting Mayor, Board of Trustees
Village of Karnak

103.3 The Bridge
WEST KENTUCKY'S ONLY ALTERNATIVE

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