

COLIN BAENZIGER  ASSOCIATES

EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

Section 5

Brenda K. Evans

*Flagler Beach City Manager
Candidate Report*

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Cover Letter and Resume

June 6, 2023

RE: City Manager

To Whom It May Concern:

It is my understanding that the City of Flagler Beach is still accepting resumes for their next city manager. Please accept the enclosed resume for this position. I believe my experience in municipal government is exactly what you are looking for.

I am currently employed by the City of Neoga, where I have been employed for the past 29 years. During those years, I have been working with the City Council, businesses, school district, residents, as well as local organizations to improve our community and the surrounding area.

Working for the City of Neoga has given me the opportunity to broaden my knowledge of all levels of government and management. After reviewing your community profile, I feel that I am the candidate that you need. I have been doing the same daily activities that you are requesting but on a smaller level. I have visited Flagler Beach yearly for the past few years, and I am ready for a challenge like the one you are proposing.

I would like to thank you for your consideration and would like to interview with you as soon as possible. Please feel free to contact me at 217/273-2808.

Sincerely,

Brenda Evans

Enclosures

Brenda Evans
P O Box 173
Neoga, Illinois 62447
Phone: 217/ 273-2808
bevans3486@gmail.com

Objective / Summary

To obtain a full-time challenging position in a growing community. After 29 years in municipal government, I have management experience in every department, including, but not limited to, economic development, human resources, utilities, retirement programs, risk management, finance, team leadership with other department heads and working directly with the City Council.

Experience

City of Neoga

Nov. 94 - Present

City Administrator

2003-Present

- Chief Administrative Officer
- Budget Officer
- Economic Development
- Direct, supervise, and coordinate department heads
- Code Enforcer for city ordinances
- Employ, discipline, suspend, and terminate employees
- Prepare and submit annual budget/appropriations
- Prepare and submit tax levy
- Work side by side with engineers
- Personnel policies and procedures
- HR - Personnel records
- Grant writing and administrating

City Clerk

2003-Present

- Keeper of the City Seal
- Freedom Of Information Act Officer
- Record Retention
- Council Agendas & Minutes
- Ordinances & Resolutions
- Risk Management Coordinator
- Office Manager

Experience (cont.)

Human Resource

2002-Present

- Payroll
- Insurance
- Retirement
- Deferred Comp
- Personnel Records
- Work Comp Reports - Injury Reporting

Deputy City Clerk

1994-2002

Education, Certifications, and Training

International Institute of Municipal Clerks	2007
• Certified Municipal Clerk Certificate	
Illinois Municipal Clerks Association	2007
• Registered Municipal Clerk Certificate	
Bioterrorism/Emergency Response Team	2006
FEMA Certificate	2006
Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund	2003
• Authorized Agent Certificate	
Freedom of Information Act Training (Yearly)	2020
Economic Development Grant Seminar	2003
Parliamentary Procedure Seminar	2005
Overtime Requirement Seminar	2004
HIPAA Training	2003
Microsoft Word Certificate	2003
Increase Writing Seminar	2003
LOCIS Annual Training	2003
Lake Land College	1984
Neoga Jr-Sr High School	1983

Leadership / Experience

Cumberland County Development Corp. President	1 year
Cumberland County Development Corp. Vice-Pres.	2 years
Municipal Clerks of Illinois Vice-President	1 year
Municipal Clerks of Illinois District Director	6 years
Southeastern Illinois Clerk Treasurer Assoc. Secretary	2 years
Southeastern Illinois Clerk Treasurer Assoc. Vice-President	3 years
Southeastern Illinois Clerk Treasurer Assoc. President	4 years
Chairman of Neoga Days Celebration	6 years
Chairman of "Soeeyfest" Fall Festival	3 years
President of Post Prom/Graduation	2 years
Secretary of Post Prom/Graduation	2 years
Member of Grace United Methodist Church	29 years
Board member of Grace United Methodist Church	9 years
Volunteer at Heartland Christian Village	10 years
Student of the Month Committee	8 years
Chairman of Neoga Sesquicentennial	1 year

Candidate Introduction

Brenda Evans

EDUCATION

Although my advanced education is limited with a few credit hours of college, I have multiple hours of City Clerk and City Administrator hours. I received my Registered Municipal Clerk and my Certified Municipal Clerk Certifications in 2007 from the International Institute of Municipal Clerks. I also received my Economic Development Grant certificate in 2003.

EXPERIENCE

Cumberland County Development Corp. President	1 year
Cumberland County Development Corp. Vice-Pres.	2 years
Municipal Clerks of Illinois Vice-President	1 year
Municipal Clerks of Illinois District Director	6 years
Southeastern Illinois Clerk Treasurer Assoc. Secretary	2 years
Southeastern Illinois Clerk Treasurer Assoc. Vice-President	3 years
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Chairman of Neoga Days Celebration	6 years
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President of Post Prom/Graduation	2 years
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Board member of Grace United Methodist Church	9 years
Volunteer at Heartland Christian Village	10 years
Student of the Month Committee	8 years
Chairman of Neoga Sesquicentennial	1 year

BACKGROUND

The City of Neoga is a farming community located between two (2) larger cities along Interstate 57. Most of the residents work outside the community but like the small town, neighborly life with good schools and low crime. Because of the location, Neoga residents can be at their jobs within thirty (30) minutes to the north or south, and within one hour of Champaign, Illinois or Terre Haute, Indiana.

Over my 29 years employed with the City, I did nine (9) years in an apprenticeship with the previous Clerk and Administrator. In 2003, I was hired as the new City Administrator / Clerk. At this time, the Council reduced the budget and cut staff by almost 50%. With that being said, the employees took on additional duties to make it work. We were able to cross-train and became a better team. I will admit it was tough, but with the right people in place, our team knocked it out of the park. Currently, Neoga has eight (8) full time and three (3) part time employees. Today I

Brenda Evans

supervise the Treasurer department, Police department, Public Works department (which is water, wastewater, and streets), Animal Control, and Building Inspector.

Neoga has a general fund budget of just under \$2 million and a total budget of \$7 million.

Neoga has some issues facing our community, but the three (3) most significant issues are housing, retail/commercial, and streets. Housing is a problem in Neoga because we are somewhat landlocked. Due to the farming community that we have around us, no one is in favor of selling long-term family-owned property. This limits us from starting new residential areas. Retail and commercial are limited because most residents work outside the area and do their shopping after work, or during lunch hours, which allows them to come home and spend time with their families. We have been experiencing an increase in interest in new businesses locating in the area over the past few months. Our last hurdle that Neoga is dealing with is our streets. Currently, we have mostly oiled and chipped roads, which are nice, but we are researching other paving ideas that have a longer life span.

GENERAL MANAGEMENT STYLE AND EXPERIENCE

Although Flagler Beach has a population of just over 5,000 residents, it has several similarities to Neoga. Flagler Beach seems to be limited in growth potential because of it being surrounded by not one but two rivers, Bulow State Park, and the ocean, just like Neoga is limited. Like Neoga, Flagler Beach has several of their population below the poverty line which can be a challenge. However, with 29 years experience working with lower income families, landlocked, and larger communities within a few miles, I believe I can bring to the community the experience and knowledge to handle difficult projects in a positive way.

Having an “open communication” approach to management works best for me. I would like to keep an open-door policy for not only council members and employees, but for the residents as well. I usually like to have weekly meetings with each department head to see how I can help them achieve their goals and complete their projects. Keeping every department working in the same direction is a team effort.

Most all my past and present employees will tell you that I give my heart to my job. I have told them many times that I don't have a job, I have a hobby that I get paid to do. This would be the same with the elected officials. I know my job; I understand what they want done, and I do everything I can to accomplish those goals. Both elected officials and the employees will tell you that I am firm on state statutes and codes.

I have many strengths, but the one I am most proud of is that I am knowledgeable about my jobs. If I don't know an answer to something, I have no problem reaching out to find someone who can assist me in those answers. My other strong strength is I can handle almost any stressful situation that comes before me. I may break after the situation, but I can handle it at the time.

Brenda Evans

On the other hand, I have many weaknesses, but the biggest one I have is saying NO! I always feel like I can squeeze one more project in, one more phone call, or one more meeting.

When I evaluate a project, I try to stay with the system that is tried and true.... the five (5) point metrics system. This system is simple for everyone to understand and is versatile as well from personnel to projects.

I have a few achievements in my life but the one I am most proud of has been my two (2) children. My daughter is a registered nurse in an emergency room, and my son is a Parole Officer with the State of Illinois. Both have families of their own and contribute to the world in a positive way. On the other hand, I have had many failures in my career too. The biggest one was not landing a large fuel stop at the interchange. This would have been a fuel stop for travelers as well as a hotel and chain restaurant. However, due to the financial situation with the company, it didn't proceed any further.

Fortunately, I did not have to fire more than one person. Usually when we have employee issues, there has been a three strikes policy; verbal, written, suspension and most of the time they resign. However, there was a time that I had to strongly recommend our Public Works Superintendent retire. Having an employee resign on their own saves grace on them and is usually better for the city when it comes time for unemployment costs.

Some of the challenges that I see for your new City Manager will be learning about the past failures in Flagler Beach and correcting them immediately. This will include the drainage issues, rebuilding the pier, as well as protecting the sea turtles, all the while keeping tourism on a positive level with the residents. This is where I will be spending the first six (6) months learning the employees' jobs, what the Council expects, and the community. I know what it is like to be a visitor to Flagler Beach and now I am ready to learn the other side of this community.

The media is always looking for something to sell their story. I have not had a huge amount of media experience, but what I have had has all been positive. I do not have anything negative in my personal or professional life that would bring a bad light to the community, my family, or myself.

Keeping the open-door policy with the community is something I have always worked towards. In the world today, social media can be a great notification tool to notify the community of an emergency, projects, and updates. But it is not a sounding board, that is where your "town hall" meetings fall in.

My family has always been hard working upstanding people in our community. My father retired from General Electric and my mother from the Cumberland County Treasurers office. My sister was a school secretary when she retired a few years ago. So, any dirt on me or my family will not be found.

Brenda Evans

My fiancé and I enjoy being outside. We love sports, riding our motorcycle, traveling, listening to live music, and different restaurants.

SIX ADJECTIVES TO DESCRIBE MYSELF

1. Resourceful
2. Understanding
3. Confident
4. Integrity
5. Multi-tasker
6. Collaborative

REASON FOR LEAVING MY CURRENT POSITION

After 29 years in the same atmosphere which I have loved, I would like to have new challenges in my career, with new employees and projects.

CURRENT SALARY

Currently I have a salary of \$91,745 plus benefits.

Section 5

CB&A Background Checks

**Background Check Summary for
BRENDA KAY EVANS**

Criminal Records Checks:

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Records Found
County Cumberland County, IL	No Records Found
State Illinois	No Records Found

Civil Records Checks:

County Cumberland County, IL	No Records Found
Federal Illinois	No Records Found

Motor Vehicle

Illinois	No Records Found
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Credit

Recently Very Good

Personal Bankruptcy

June 2008 – Bankruptcy, Chapter 13
August 2013, Terminated

**See Personal Disclosure for
Candidate Explanation for Records
Found.*

Sex Offender Registry

Not Listed

Education

Not Applicable

Employment

Confirmed

Social Media

Nothing of Concern Found

**Background Check Summary for
BRENDA KAY EVANS**

Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, 15 U.S.C. 1681-1681Y, credit and bankruptcy information are very sensitive and should not be used in the consideration of hiring. The information is included for each candidate because we do not want you to be surprised if third parties raise what they consider to be a concern. Also, some states have limited the reporting to seven years, so any records older than that will not be available in those states. In addition, motor vehicle reports are limited to three to seven years, depending on the state.

**Background Check Summary for
BRENDA KAY EVANS
Personal Disclosure**

Personal Disclosure Questionnaire

Name of Applicant: Brenda Evans

The following questions are designed so that we will be able to make full disclosure to our client concerning your background. Please answer them honestly. Cutting corners or misrepresenting your past will result in you being eliminated from all further searches conducted by this firm. We understand that frivolous charges are sometimes made and that charges do not mean you were guilty. We also understand that you may have been wronged and needed to seek compensation. The bottom line is that we want to be certain that our client is fully informed. If you have any questions, please contact us for clarification.

Please explain any yes answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Have you ever been charged or convicted of a felony?
Yes No
2. Have you ever been accused of or have been involved in a domestic violence or abuse incident?
Yes No
3. Have you ever declared bankruptcy or been an owner in a business that did so?
Yes ²⁰⁰⁷
_(Divorce) No
4. Have you ever been the subject of a civil rights violation complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes No
5. Have you ever been the subject of a sexual harassment complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes No
6. Have you ever been charged with driving while intoxicated?
Yes No
7. Have you ever sued a current or former employer?
Yes No
8. Please list links to all your social media accounts (Facebook / Instagram / LinkedIn / Twitter, etc.) and your personal web page if you have one.
9. Is there anything else in your background that, if made public, would cause you, our client or our firm embarrassment if it came to light through the press or any other mechanism?
Yes No
10. Please provide a list of any lawsuits in which you are or have been a party either as plaintiff or defendant.

Attested to: *Brenda Evans*
Signature of Applicant

Please email this form via PDF DOCUMENT to Monique@cb-asso.com or via fax to (561) 621-5965 no later than 5:00 PM MST 06/14/2023.
(Note: Please be sure to sign the form with your actual signature if you are sending Fax or PDF Document)

CB&A Reference Notes

Reference Notes
Brenda Evans

Shawn Durbin – Public Works Superintendent, City of Neoga, IL 217-962-1890

Mr. Durbin has known Ms. Evans since 2014, when he was hired in Neoga. She is one of the hardest working individuals that Mr. Durbin knows. She stays after the office closes to finish her work. Her vacation time always rolls over because she does not use it. She is a solid manager.

In the hiring process Ms. Evans is very thorough, both in background checks and in the interview process. She asks good questions and excels at hiring. She has a tough job generally and is always respectful in her responses to the staff and residents. She remains respectful even when they are rude, and she has a calming influence.

Ms. Evans is very innovative, and she comes up with great ideas. She follows guidelines and best practices, and often finds a better and more efficient way to work. Mr. Durbin and Ms. Evans have a meeting every workday where they discuss what they are working on. She tries to keep the time clean by staying on topic. She knows everything happening in the town, including projects and grants. For compliance issues, she gives residents and businesses the opportunity to resolve the issue before handing out citations. She is always hard at work.

When events are held at the parks, Ms. Evans always attends. She volunteers to cook or help however they need her. She shows up at community functions like the Christmas party. She visits various businesses around town and provides assistance to community organizations. She works very well with the public as she grew up in Neoga and knows everyone. She tries to make everyone's day better that she encounters. She is genuinely a nice person.

Pipes burst at the high school during winter break and water was running through the parking lot. The person who discovered the damage called Ms. Evans at home. She coordinated with the public works department and school personnel. Public Works employees turned off the water and then they all worked together to squeegee the water out of the building. She works with the appropriate stakeholders to address every issue that occurs in the community.

Neoga always operates in the black. Ms. Evans ensures that employees do not exceed their budget. She works closely with the finance staff and manages the resources well. The City's financial status is very good.

Deadlines are met by Ms. Evans because she is willing to stay late to complete her work, when needed. Even with the high stress of the job, she never becomes worked up. She handles the stress well and keeps smiling through the process.

Ms. Evans has not been involved in anything controversial, either personally or professionally. She is very honest in all she does. Some in the community are very hard to please, but she is pleasant in her interactions with them, and she does what she can. Mr. Durbin does not know anyone who has a negative opinion of her.

Reference Notes
Brenda Evans

Mr. Durbin would hire Ms. Evans. In a time when it is hard to find employees who work 40 hours a week, she works overtime. She manages the organization well in Neoga and will bring her incredible work ethic to any organization that hires her. She will be greatly missed if she leaves, she is very dedicated.

Words or phrases used to describe Brenda Evans:

- Very determined,
- Dedicated to her job,
- Friendly,
- Good communicator, and
- Morale builder with employees.

Strengths: Communication.

Weaknesses: She should use some of her vacation time because everyone needs a break. Also, she is very customer service oriented and will let residents and employees sit in her office to talk, which puts her behind in her work. She could shut the door now and again, so she does not have to stay late so often.

Ronnie Groves – Commissioner of Finance, City of Neoga, IL 217-254-3515

Mr. Groves has known Ms. Evans since 2008. They worked together for fourteen years. On a grading scale, she rates an A or an A-, she did extremely well. She is a doer and a go-getter.

Ms. Evans makes good decisions when hiring personnel. She holds herself to a high standard which leads to a good decision-making process. She once wrote herself up because of a mistake that she made and then gave the write up to the Council. The staff told her it was unnecessary, but she did it anyway. She maintains the organization at a high level. She communicates well through phone calls, texts, and emails.

Neoga has many projects in process ranging from road repairs to a new water and sewer treatment plant. Ms. Evans oversees it all. She works with the engineers and leads staff to resolve issues on a weekly basis.

Ms. Evans is always out in the community, and she has a great relationship with the public. They can talk to her at any time, and she does what she can to help them. However, she is not always able to accommodate every request, and those who wanted something that was not possible may not view her as positively as Mr. Groves does.

Ms. Evans has good financial skills. She is very efficient in completing her work and meeting deadlines. At times she takes on too much but still tries to do it all. Once she realizes that she

**Reference Notes
Brenda Evans**

cannot complete the task in the timeframe given, she asks for help. She manages stress as best she can, and stays calm, cool, and collected.

Many controversial issues have occurred in the community, but Ms. Evans has not created or personally been involved in any of them. She has had to address these issues because of the nature of her role. Nothing in her conduct or background would concern a reasonable person.

Mr. Groves would hire Ms. Evans in a heartbeat. She is a good manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Brenda Evans:

- Confident,
- Caring,
- Compassionate,
- Diligent,
- Efficient, and
- Effective.

Strengths: Accomplishing the tasks given, compassion for people, empathy, listening, organized, detailed.

Weaknesses: She sometimes takes on more than she can handle. Also, she manages the staff and wants to be involved, and it can come across as micromanaging. This is not a weakness but could be an area of improvement for her. Additionally, it is sometimes necessary to be involved at that level.

Travis Haskett – Former Public Works Employee, City of Neoga, IL 217-246-6724

Mr. Haskett has known Ms. Evans his entire life. Her daughter was in his class. He worked for the City of Neoga for four and a half years as a public works employee, and they interacted in this capacity. Mr. Haskett was working as a videographer part time while working for Neoga, and she was one of his inspirations. She encouraged his talent and told him that while she wanted him to stay, he could be doing more. She is a great motivator who keeps the staff happy.

Ms. Evans has so much on her plate, she spends a great deal of time working with the public while managing the organization. She rates a 10 out of 10 on her job performance, she can focus on so many different things at once. She makes everyone happy and produces great results.

When hiring Ms. Evans reads people well. She asks good questions to determine if they will be a good fit. Her decisions in general are very good. She is best at maintaining the organization at a high level. However, she started a meeting every week where they meet as a team and pass ideas around for innovation, which she then tries to make happen.

Reference Notes
Brenda Evans

Ms. Evans attended every community meeting unless she was out of town. She worked very well with the public. She was very good about keeping employees informed. If she felt that the Director was not relaying information to his staff, then she personally relayed the information that pertained to their specific role.

They were creating a plan to replace old, obsolete pipes. Ms. Evans started the meetings by asking what employees were good at, and then developed a plan around their strengths. Mr. Haskett is good with technology, so she asked him to create and maintain a spreadsheet and Google documents with their daily plan for the project. As the process involved ripping up streets and blocking roads, it was important to have a clear and concise plan to communicate with the staff and the public. Her process was very effective while also ensuring that the work was spread out rather than one person being overloaded.

The Council was involved in the budget process, and Ms. Evans seemed to handle it all well. She has a great deal on her plate and some items take longer than others. However, she is very good at prioritizing, and tackles the most important items first. In stressful situations she does not become angry, she is very relaxed and does not raise her voice.

Ms. Evans' background is clear of anything that would embarrass an employer. While every government employee has detractors, the general consensus is that she is the best employee in the City of Neoga.

Mr. Haskett would hire Ms. Evans, 100%. She knows the ins and outs of government, and she is an incredible manager. She is a great motivator who keeps the employees on track and happy.

Words or phrases used to describe Brenda Evans:

- Bubbly personality,
- Very intelligent,
- Sense of humor,
- Very determined,
- Punctual, and
- Prioritization.

Strengths: Communication is one of her greatest strengths, she can talk to anyone and people come into her office all day long. Bubbly personality, hard worker, very caring.

Weaknesses: She tries to please everyone and commits to things, then must find a way to make it happen. Most of the time, she finds a way to make it work but it creates stress that she would not have otherwise.

Reference Notes
Brenda Evans

Rick Goeckner – Former Clerk, City of Effingham, IL 217-821-5819

Mr. Goeckner has known Ms. Evans since the late 1990s or early 2000s. As clerks, they were peers. Their offices were only 15 minutes apart. They were members of the same associations and served on Boards together.

If Mr. Goeckner wanted to build a dream team to work for him, Ms. Evans is one of the first people he would call. He would not hesitate to hire her for any role that interfaces with elected positions in local government.

Ms. Evans is an expert in her field and can mentor the staff because she knows government so well. She works well with others. She can address difficult situations, when needed, but has a very soft and personable way of interacting with others. She is approachable and residents are comfortable meeting with her to resolve their issues.

Ms. Evans is an outstanding individual who really knows her job. She works with zoning, clerks, elected officials, and oversees every department. If you need something done, she is the one to ask because she will see it through to completion.

Ms. Evans does what the Board feels is in the best interest of the Village as a whole, rather than individual members. When she became the Administrator, some who did not get what they wanted from the Board took their frustration out on her personally, but it never become controversial and has since died down.

When Mr. Goeckner resigned from Effingham, he recommended that they hire Ms. Evans. He would absolutely hire her. She is very highly respected by her peers. She is not afraid to tackle difficult issues and is always available to assist. He was in Neoga recently and needed some help. She called a public works employee on his day off, and he came right over to assist. She is one of the few managers who has all the qualities that an elected body wants, she will be a great asset wherever she goes.

Words or phrases used to describe Brenda Evans:

- Knows government,
- Mentor,
- Personable,
- Outstanding,
- Does not shy from difficult tasks, and
- Great manager.

Strengths: Knows her job, great manager, works well with the public, outstanding individual.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Reference Notes
Brenda Evans

Kelsey Lock – City Clerk, City of Effingham, IL 618-676-7419

When Ms. Lock began working as a City Clerk in the mid 2000s, Ms. Evans was one of the most respected clerks in the area, and she became Ms. Lock’s mentor. She provided knowledge, training, and expertise. They are both members of various clerk associations and have served together in leadership positions in these associations and on other boards. They have worked together on various projects and committees.

Ms. Evans was originally the City Clerk for Neoga and then took on more administrative duties, eventually becoming the City Administrator / City Clerk. She wears many hats and manages the budget and other departments. She handles everything that comes along without having to hire consultants to assist.

Because Ms. Evans is so thorough, her decisions and recommendations are fully vetted and you can rely on them. She is always looking to perform for her community. She is very responsive to others. Her job performance is superior.

Ms. Evans has faced stress in her role, and she handles it well. Nothing in her background or conduct would concern a reasonable person. Ms. Lock is not aware of anyone who has a negative opinion of Ms. Evans.

Ms. Lock would hire Ms. Evans and has recommended her to other organizations. She would be a good manager for any community.

Words or phrases used to describe Brenda Evans:

- Charismatic,
- Collaborative,
- Mentor,
- Very thorough,
- Strategic, and
- Dedicated.

Strengths: Very thorough, really researches to find the best alternatives before moving forward, strategic.

Weaknesses: She takes on so much and spreads herself too thin.

Prepared by: Lynelle Klein
Colin Baenziger & Associates

CB&A Internet Research

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Brenda Evans***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

The Daily Chronicle (IL)

August 11, 2021

In tornadoes' wake, residents sift through ruins

Author: Katrina Milton

After emerging from the basement of her house Monday evening, **Brenda Evans** described the devastation she saw in front of her as "the biggest 10-second mess you've ever seen." Tornado sirens had been sounding off and on throughout the afternoon at **Evans'** house, located on the 2200 block of Fenstermaker Road in unincorporated Sycamore. Around 6 p.m., **Brenda Evans** was in the garage and her husband Ken was in his shop with their dog when the wind picked up and debris started flying. "My husband yelled to me, 'Basement, now,' he picked up the dog and we ran into the basement as fast as we could," she said. "We made it into the basement just in time. Ten seconds later, we looked out the basement window and [the storm] was all over. My husband exited the basement first and told me to come out slowly. Looking out at what we saw, it was just awful. We grabbed each other and sobbed. It's all we could do."

Several tornado touchdowns have now been confirmed in DeKalb County, and one 11 miles northeast in Kane County, following Monday night's severe storms, said a meteorologist with the National Weather Service Tuesday. An EF-0 tornado was confirmed near Esmond in the far northwest of DeKalb County. There was an EF-U tornado south of Kirkland, an EF-0 tornado somewhere between Creston and Esmond which tracked into DeKalb County just north of Malta, an EF-1 just northeast in Burlington in nearby Kane County. The fifth tornado, an EF-1 touched down in Sycamore, where on Monday night the National Weather Service said the heaviest damage was reported. There were also tornadoes in McHenry and Lee counties. No injuries to people were reported in Monday's storms, confirmed Andy Sullivan, chief deputy with the DeKalb County Sheriff's Office, though significant property damage was reported across the county.

Ken's shop was missing its roof, two buildings were gone, debris and tree limbs were littered everywhere, a trailer was turned around and moved at least 50 feet and a metal windmill was destroyed. Their house and attached garage moved off of its foundation and some windows had been blown out, but were otherwise left untouched by the tornado.

Brenda said that some objects have disappeared and have not yet been found. The frame of their 1953 Studebaker remains, but the body parts are gone. A photo of Ken that was hanging on a wall was found 2 miles away in someone else's yard. "There's not much we can do, 23 years of work are completely gone," **Brenda** said. "I just ask everyone to please give us our privacy. Stay away and don't try to loot. It's already difficult enough."

Megan Gerwig and her husband Scott Wetzel's house on the 2200 block of Airport Road in unincorporated Sycamore overlooks the **Evans'** property to the east. Gerwig said when she noticed the wind pick up, she saw pieces of the **Evans'** metal buildings lift into the air. "We saw building pieces lift off the ground and swirl in the air, and a big piece of roof came off and hit

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Brenda Evans***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

our house," Gerwig said. "It was like 'The Wizard of Oz.' I could feel the pressure change and all our ears popped. We ran into the basement with our three dogs, and we heard debris hitting our house." When Gerwig and her family exited their basement, she said the damage they saw "was nothing like we could have expected." Gerwig's family, dogs and farm animals survived the tornado, although one of their horses was injured in the head by debris. "Our house was OK, but there were trees uprooted everywhere," Gerwig said. "Some trees are no longer there, there's just a hole in the ground. There was a grove of evergreen trees that are now at an angle. We had a seating area in the backyard, and the carpet is wrapped around fallen trees and the lights are gone. Everything is either missing or flattened."

Across the street from Gerwig, Melody Linneman was sitting on her front porch and talking to her husband on her cell phone when a warning alert went off on her phone. "As I was running into my house, the windows were blowing out around me," she said. "I was in shock, and it was scary. Some people say they hear a noise like a freight train. I didn't hear anything. I just saw stuff flying around and knew it was dangerous."

Linneman, her husband and his mother were building a new house behind their current house. Construction of the new house would have been completed in October. The tornado demolished Linneman's shed, milk house, a grove of trees and damaged her house and her new house under construction. "Now we have to rebuild our new home from scratch," she said. "There's a canoe hanging through the window of my new house." Linneman's family, two dogs and farm animals were not hurt by the storm, and she said she now has to find a place to live while her new house is torn down and reconstructed. "I think everything happens for a reason," she said. "If it's meant to be, it's meant to be. There's been so much support and help from everyone so far. This is just the kind of thing you never thought would happen to you, and it happened to me, here in Sycamore."

Will Wittwer was on his way home from work when a tornado demolished the old red barn on his Kirkland property. Wittwer describes the remnants of what used to be his barn, located on the 5000 block of Baseline Road in Kirkland, as "flat like a pancake." "There's hardly anything standing," he said. "It looks like a house of cards that folded completely in. ... I didn't see the tornado, but others did. It had enough power to pick the barn up 20 feet from its foundation and slam it back down to the ground."

The tornado's path can be seen through the nearby cornfield. "We were working on restoring the barn, and it was one of the reasons we bought the property about two years ago," Wittwer said. "Hopefully, with insurance money we'll be able to rebuild or place a new building, but you can't replace old barns like that. The barn is what makes the farm historic, and it's now it's history." Wittwer said that the renters that live on his property were not home at the time of the storm and that nobody was hurt. "I'm just glad that nobody was injured," he said. "Everyone is ok, and that's what is most important."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Brenda Evans***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Effingham Daily News (IL)
January 9, 2020

Project underway to flow EJ Water to Neoga

Author: Crystal Reed

EJ Water has begun construction on a \$4.566 million project that includes a water tower, service lines and meter construction for Neoga residents. EJ Water's new tower will hold 350,000 gallons just outside of Neoga. The project is expected to be finished this spring, weather permitting. "The City of Neoga has reviewed the cost to 'make' drinking water by taking all the expenses, including purchasing raw water from the City of Mattoon (Lake Mattoon), treat the raw water to finished water and distributing it to the citizens," said **Brenda Evans**, Neoga's clerk and city manager. "With these expenses and the ever-changing EPA requirements for a water treatment facility, it would be less expensive to purchase water from EJ Water than the city 'making' the water and updating the water treatment plant."

Neoga officials had been looking at different options for the city's water due to changing EPA regulations. "Adding on to our existing planned project and us providing finished water proved to be the most cost effective for the city," said EJ's marketing specialist, Astrid Hutchison. The scope of that work is now 27 miles of water main and more upgraded booster stations to properly size the pumps for the added capacity.

Evans said Neoga has three full-time employees in the public works department. Those employees are on a rotating schedule from water plant, waste water plants and streets and alleys. "Once the city is connected to EJ Water, they will not be treating water but there will still be tests that need to be done daily for distribution of finished water," she said. "With that being said, at this time all three public works employees will be retained and have additional duties added to their jobs." **Evans** said the existing water treatment building will continue to be used, but equipment that's no longer needed will be sold.

The city will continue to use its current water tower to serve its residents. EJ will fill that tower, which will then supply the city. Hutchinson said EJ's water tower will better serve its members. "However, the excess capacity and its location will help the city in case of a fire, as well as providing finished water to the City of Neoga's tower," Hutchison said. "The addition to our project will save both the City of Neoga and Windsor millions of dollars they would've had to spend on their own," Hutchinson said. Neoga residents interviewed seem pleased. Amy Gentry supports the EJ Water project. "As long as we get good water and the rates stop going up, I support it," she said. Charlotte Roman says she uses bottled water because of the quality of the current water supply and supports the project as well. "If the water is better than what we have currently, I support the project," she said. "Currently, the water either smells like bleach or a fishy pond."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Brenda Evans
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daily Union (Shelbyville, IL)
July 25, 2019

Blue-green algae means no fishing in Neoga pond

Author/Byline: Crystal Reed

A pond in Neoga located at the south end of Industrial Avenue has signs posted banning all fishing due to blue-green algae. According to **Brenda Evans**, City Clerk for the Village of Neoga, the algae was discovered by city employees that were mowing and checking water lines in the area last week.

According to Kim Biggs, Public Information officer for the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, the algae has not been confirmed by lab tests but through a phone conversation with the village the description of the algae sounded like that of blue-green algae (cyanobacteria).

According to the IEPA website, cyanobacteria are microscopic organisms that naturally occur in Illinois lakes and streams. Blue-green algae can reproduce very quickly in warm, shallow, undisturbed-surface water that receives a lot of sunlight.

According to the IEPA website, blue-green algal blooms can look like blue or green paint spilled in the water, thick puffy blue or green foam on the surface of the water or swirling colors beneath the surface of the water. Odors of the blooms have been described as grassy, fishy or having a septic odor.

When there is a rapid growth of algae it can produce a bloom. According to Biggs, when a bloom is created it can create toxic chemicals. When a person or animal is exposed to algal toxins it can result in vomiting, diarrhea, rash or hives or if inhaled can cause coughing or wheezing. She said that the most vulnerable to developing symptoms are children, the elderly and those with compromised immune systems.

Biggs said one of the reasons that fishing has been banned in the pond is if someone were to fish while pulling the fish out of the water they could expose themselves to algal bloom and toxins in the water. She said that if a person comes into contact with the algae they should wash the affected area and if showing symptoms contact poison control or a local health professional. If your pet has come into contact with the algae you should contact your veterinarian.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Brenda Evans
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Effingham Daily News (IL)
December 17, 2018

‘Do not knock’ in Neoga

Author: Crystal Reed

Neoga recently passed an ordinance that will establish a "Do Not Knock" list for residents who do not want to be disturbed by door-to-door salesmen. Neoga City Clerk **Brenda Evans** said the city has had door to door sales companies that would not register or would go to the home of older and disabled people. "It gives us an opportunity for our residents to say that they don't want solicitors at their door," she said. The ordinance does not apply to school groups, church groups or politicians.

Neoga Police Chief Andrew Schabbing said that in the fall and the spring the department gets calls about solicitors and if they are without a permit they have them apply for one. "We've never had them cause any trouble other than being a general nuisance," he said. Schabbing expects there to be a lot of participation in the list once the word gets out.

Neoga resident Steve Hoelscher was surprised to hear that an ordinance had been introduced to establish a "Do Not Knock" list. "I didn't realize it was a problem," he said. Christie Elson, another resident, said that when it comes to purchasing something, people usually will seek an item out not wait for a solicitor to come to their door. "The way I feel is if you want it you will go out and get it," she said.

According to the ordinance, the city requires that solicitors apply for a permit, which costs \$250 for the application fee and an additional \$50 for each person that applicants seek to authorize to solicit under the license. Within 10 days of receiving the application the City Clerk will grant or deny the license and give written notice to the applicant.

When a person signs up for the list the City Clerk will maintain and publish a "Do Not Knock" registry on the city's website listing residents prohibiting solicitors at their residence. If a solicitor knocks on the door of a person who has signed up for the list and has a sign displayed they could have their license taken away and potentially face fines of \$250 to \$750 for each offense.

Other towns that have adopted similar ordinances in Illinois include Charleston, Homer, Monticello, O' Fallon and Montgomery. To get on the "Do Not Knock" list residents can contact the city office and they will be given a sign to post in their window. The Neoga City Council passed the ordinance 5-0 at its Nov. 26 meeting.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Brenda Evans
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

JG-TC (IL)
June 25, 2018

District plans for Neoga Elementary School building's future
Author: Rob Stroud

The school district has been making plans for the future use of the former Neoga Elementary School building. Superintendent Ben Johnson said the district is preparing to request that this property, 641 W. Sixth St., be rezoned for business use as part of the district's ongoing practice of leasing out sections of the former elementary school building. He said the district also is preparing to transfer ownership of the property to the City of Neoga, possibly by late summer or early fall.

While the former elementary school building is still district property, Johnson said they want to ensure that the district's use of this site is in compliance with city zoning ordinances. Consequently, Johnson said the Neoga school board is scheduled to hold a special meeting at 7 p.m. Wednesday in the unit office to vote on filing a rezoning petition for this property.

If the school board votes to file the petition, City Clerk/City Manager **Brenda Evans** said the Neoga zoning board will likely hold a hearing on this rezoning petition at its July 9 meeting. **Evans** said the zoning board's recommendation will then go before the Neoga City Council for final approval at a later date.

The district closed the elementary school building in May 2015 as part of budget cuts and subsequently moved the students from there to the middle school building across town. Superintendent Johnson said the district has leased the former school property to Quality Network Solutions, Inc. President Mel Workman since then. Workman is senior minister of First Christian Church in Neoga.

First Christian Church temporarily held services in the former school until construction work was completed this spring at its church building. Johnson said the building also has continued to house Eastern Illinois Area Special Education's Project HELP preschool program, the Strong Beginnings preschool, the Community Clothesline clothing ministry, and the Neoga Community Food Pantry.

Johnson said district leaders have been pleased to see the community use the former school building in so many different ways. He said the district hopes that the building can continue to serve the community once it transfers ownership to the city later this year. In particular, Johnson said the district hopes to keep the Project HELP preschool in this building. "Right now, space wise in our district, that fits our needs really well," Johnson said of the Project HELP location.

City Clerk/City Manager **Evans** said the city is interested in assuming ownership of the former elementary school property, but it's still finalizing plans for this transfer and its use of the property. **Evans** said the city could serve as a caretaker for this building while keeping it open

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Brenda Evans

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

for various community uses. **Evans** said the district is hopeful that enrollment in the Neoga school district will eventually grow to the point that the district will have to put the former elementary school back into service. "We are still hoping the school will need it back," **Evans** said. She added that if the property is not needed as a school in years to come, the city could sell this site for economic development purposes. The former elementary school property is adjacent to Jennings Park, the Neoga wastewater treatment plant, and the Kern Manufacturing building.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Brenda Evans

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

JG-TC (IL)
May 7, 2018

Neoga, Shelbyville path projects get engineering grants

Author: Rob Stroud

The Illinois Department of Transportation has awarded federal grants to help with the engineering costs for the planned construction of shared pedestrian and bike paths in Neoga and Shelbyville. IDOT announced Monday that it has awarded \$26,400 to the City of Neoga and \$42,480 to the City of Shelbyville through the Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program. The grants were made possible by federal funds administered by IDOT. "By investing in our local communities, we are strengthening our state's transportation system as a whole," Illinois Transportation Secretary Randy Blankenhorn said in a press release. "Each of these investments embody our core mission at IDOT and bring us a step closer to our goal of a multimodal transportation system that benefits all residents of Illinois."

Neoga City Clerk/City Manager **Brenda Evans** said the \$26,400 grant will help with the city's plans to construct a shared use pathway from the Neoga school district campus on the east side of town to Jennings Park on the west side, along streets that include Sixth and Seventh. She said this pathway will be wider than current sidewalks in this area so that it can accommodate use by pedestrians and bicyclists. **Evans** said Neoga will match the grant for the project's preliminary engineering funds with \$6,600 in city funds. She said the preliminary engineering work will take about four months to complete and then Neoga will apply to IDOT for a grant to help construct the shared use pathway. She said the city also has applied for grant funding from the Safe Routes to School National Partnership for additional pathway improvements.

Shelbyville City Engineer Alan Spesard said the \$42,480 grant will help with the city's plans to construct a shared use pathway from the Shelbyville school district's north campus to the business district on the west side of town. He said this pathway will follow West North Sixth Street, Hickory Street and Illinois Route 16. Spesard said the city will provide a 20 percent match for the preliminary engineering funding and will later apply for construction funding through this IDOT grant program. He said this project is the 10th phase of a bike path system in Shelbyville. He said this system includes Safe Routes to School-funded paths east of the school campus and connects to the General Dacey Trail at Lake Shelbyville. Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program grants are focused on improving bike and pedestrian travel, as well as other surface transportation improvements that promote alternative options for getting around communities.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Brenda Evans

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

JG-TC (Mattoon, Charleston, IL)

April 12, 2018

Neoga circus raising money for new Lake Mattoon pavilion

Author/Byline: Rob Stroud

Ticket sale proceeds for Tuesday's circus shows in Neoga will help fund the planned construction of a new pavilion at the Lake Mattoon beach. The Friends of Lake Mattoon community group helped arrange for the Culpepper & Merriweather Circus to present shows at 5 and 7:30 p.m. Tuesday on the grounds of the former elementary school building, 641 W. Sixth St., across from Jennings Park. Community members are also invited to watch the raising of the big top tent at 9 a.m. Tuesday. "It's been a long time since Neoga has seen a circus here," said Katie O'Dell, secretary and treasurer for the Friends of Lake Mattoon. "We hope a lot of people will come out and enjoy the circus. It's for a good cause."

The Friends of Lake Mattoon group is working in conjunction with the Mattoon Rotary Club and the Mattoon Parks & Recreation Department to raise funding to construct a new pavilion at the Lake Mattoon beach. The city demolished the previous pavilion because this structure had deteriorated and been deemed a safety hazard. Plans call for the new pavilion to provide space for public events and private gatherings, such a company picnics. O'Dell said the Friends of Lake Mattoon group hopes that the pavilion site can eventually offer permanent restrooms, a concession stand, and other amenities for the community. "In the long run, the new pavilion is going to be nicer than it was before," O'Dell said. "We are really going to try to make it nice out there." Advance tickets for the circus can be purchased from Neoga IGA, the First Neighbor Bank branch and the city building in Neoga; from Keep it Kleen in Mattoon; by calling O'Dell at 217-460-0335; or by visiting www.cmcircus.com. Advance tickets are \$7 for children ages 2-12 and \$10 for adults. O'Dell said the ticket prices will increase to \$8 for children and \$13 for adults at the circus gate Tuesday night.

O'Dell said Culpepper & Merriweather's calling service helped sell advance tickets directly to area businesses, and several of these businesses donated the tickets back to the Friends of Lake Mattoon. She said this community group then gave the donated tickets to elementary schools in Mattoon, Neoga, Sigel and Windsor for use by children from families in financial need. In addition, O'Dell said "Skeeter" the circus clown from Culpepper & Merriweather visited with day care and preschool children in Neoga and Sigel on Tuesday. She said "Skeeter" talked about her work as a circus clown and she passed out free tickets to children.

O'Dell said the tour stop by Culpepper & Merriweather was arranged with the help of Neoga City Clerk/City Manager **Brenda Evans**, who is part of Friends of Lake Mattoon and Neoga Partnership for Progress. O'Dell said volunteers from Friends of Lake Mattoon will work at the ticket gate Tuesday evening and greet visitors to the circus.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Brenda Evans***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

JG-TC (IL)

August 23, 2017

Neoga looking at ways to solve its water woes

Author: Rob Stroud

The City of Neoga is at a crossroads. Its aging water treatment plant needs an estimated \$1.57 million in upgrades over the next 15 years, according to city officials. "I can guarantee this is not all-inclusive," City Engineer Lee Beckman told officials and residents at a meeting this week. That's because the estimate only covers the cost of required upgrades — not others that probably should be done but are not mandated. Another option is purchasing water from a provider, such as EJ Water Cooperative. On Wednesday, the city council and local officials, along with EJ Water's business development coordinator Eric Emmerich, held a question-and-answer session that about 20 residents attended. It's estimated that the city could save \$1.59 million over 40 years by entering into an agreement with EJ Water. That savings comes mostly from not having to spend money on the treatment plant, officials said.

Neoga currently bills residents who use less than 2,000 gallons a month at \$22.51. By 2020, the earliest date EJ could provide water, the rate would be \$26.06, said city clerk and administrator **Brenda Evans**. **Evans** said it's unclear how much the rate would be if the city keeps the plant in operation, but added it would be higher.

A 40-year contract with EJ would include a 2 percent annual raise in rates, said Emmerich. Residents have seen annual increases of 5 percent with city water for the past several years. Only one-third of city is using new pipe made of plastic, said Mayor Tony Kepp. Some of the mains elsewhere in the city are more than 100 years old. The money from the annual rate increase, along with grant money, is being used to replace and upgrade those lines, Kepp said. Neoga residents and some city officials expressed concern about relying on the cooperative for water. At the end of the contract, the negotiations could leave the city without its own plant to fall back on, residents said. Beckman agreed. "If I was the City of Neoga, I'd want a 100-year contract," the city engineer said. The change in water would not necessarily be obvious. "All we're doing is buying finished water," said commissioner Marty Hartke.

The city would remain responsible for distribution and local infrastructure. That means residents could see rate increases in addition to the 2 percent annually that EJ would raise rates, officials said. There is one expense that is coming, regardless. The city has to construct a linkage with a secondary provider in case of emergency, the Illinois EPA has mandated. EJ Water is installing an upgrade for its system that passes near Neoga, and has offered a price break to the city to link into its system. The single largest expense at the plant will be in 2022, when a second "claricone" is scheduled to be built. That's a key part of the filtration process. The current one has been in continual use for years and needs "some tender loving care," according to Beckman. The cost is estimated at \$683,184.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Brenda Evans

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Effingham Daily News (IL)
April 25, 2017

Neoga considers water options

Author: Graham Milldrum

Neoga's water supply comes from Lake Mattoon, and is purified at the city's 70-year-old treatment plant. The Illinois EPA told the city it needs an emergency linkage to another system in case of a problem with the lake water, according to city officials. **Brenda Evans**, the city administrator and clerk, said the state's directive led the city council to approach EJ Water Cooperative. The company advanced a plan to upgrade a water line linked to a pump station built at the Centerline road intersection. It would cost \$350,000, but the city would only pay \$100,000 and EJ Water would pay the remaining \$250,000. The pump station would also serve the power plant, which EJ Water said would also need to agree to the plan.

This led to a consultation about future water and sewer needs in Neoga. The IEPA has alerted the city it may need to do upgrades to the water treatment plant, totaling between \$1 million and \$3 million within five to 10 years. A new plant in Moweaqua was bid at \$3 million, which EJ Water engineer Tony Beckman expects would be a similar cost for Neoga. The city determined it costs the municipality \$2.50 per 1,000 gallons to supply the water, which is done without paying any debts. EJ Water suggested the city pay it \$2.90 per 1,000 gallons to supply the water. At this point, the council is formally considering the emergency linkage, **Evans** said.

The state EPA also alerted the city the outgoing water from the wastewater treatment plant has too much ammonia in it. Ammonia can lead to health problems for fish and swimmers. The city has been grappling with how to reduce that amount, and is looking at spending \$1 million to install a cone clarifier, which allows the filtration of solids out of water. The city also went through a partial survey of the sewer system. Engineer Narendra Patel explained he surveyed several potential problems. That includes sewage coming in from the region of the truckstop, which could lead to an overflow situation at the next pump near the trailer park, if that pump is also operating at full capacity, Patel said.

Commissioner Carmen Stokes asked if limiting future expansion in the area would help alleviate the problem. Patel said it would prevent it from becoming worse, but the current situation creates the possibility of a problem. Another area of concern for Patel was the sewers that pass under the railway at Fifth and Ninth Streets. A blockage stopped a live camera scope during a survey of the sewers. Patel said removal of the blockage or limitation could reduce the strain at the trailer park station. He suggested a full survey of the system, which would cost \$4,500. The council did not vote on that suggestion. The council approved Howard's Trash Service as the provider for the citywide cleanup, at a cost of \$395 per 30-yard container. The previous year the city used three 40-yard containers. The city is still attempting to schedule a date, intending to set it in early June. The location will again be at the parking lot on Chestnut Street between Seventh and Sixth streets. Commissioner Marty Hartke was absent.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Brenda Evans

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

JG-TC (Mattoon, Charleston, IL)

November 12, 2016

Neoga Veterans Memorial Park to be dedicated

Author: Unknown

A dedication ceremony will be held at 1 p.m. Sunday for the Neoga Veterans Memorial Park, located at the southwest corner of Jennings Park.

City Clerk/City Manager **Brenda Evans** said the Veterans Memorial Park features four upright granite tablets inscribed with the names of nearly 1,400 Neoga community veterans, with room to place additional names. This site also includes a walking path, a dedication monument, and a sitting area.

Evans said community members spent two years raising the approximately \$80,000 needed to create the Veterans Memorial Park. She said this site is the first all-veterans memorial in Cumberland County.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Brenda Evans

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

JG-TC (Mattoon, Charleston, IL)
October 15, 2016

Briefs

NEOGA -- A week-long, city-wide boil order was lifted Friday morning in Neoga.

City Clerk/City Manager **Brenda Evans** said this boil order had been put into effect on Oct. 7 due to a mechanical malfunction at the water treatment plant. She said the malfunction has since been repaired.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Brenda Evans

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

JG-TC (IL)

September 29, 2016

Neoga to hold Soeefest on Saturday

Author: Rob Stroud

Free ham and beans, hog calling and pigtail contests, a pork smoke-off and other pig-related activities will be featured at the annual Soeefest on Saturday in Neoga. The festival also will offer live music, children's games, art and craft vendors, and food vendors, including a variety of barbecued pork. Soeefest is scheduled from noon to 7 p.m. Saturday downtown, where a festival beer tent also will be open.

City Clerk/City Manager **Brenda Evans** said pigs were chosen as the theme of Soeefest because pork producers are a big part of the agriculture industry in the Neoga area. She said the festival has been held in past years and is now in its second consecutive year. Neoga Partnership for Progress is sponsoring this festival. **Evans** said festival volunteers will serve free meals of ham and beans with cornbread from noon to 3 p.m., with drinks available for purchase. She said food vendors will be on hand to sell barbecue sandwiches, barbecue-covered french fries, barbecue egg rolls, and more.

Smoke-off competitors are slated to arrive before the festival starts and cook all day in preparation for judging starting at 4 p.m., **Evans** said. The competition categories consist of chicken, ribs and pork butt. Carnival-style games and other activities for children will be held through the festival, including face painting and hair braiding from 1 to 3 p.m. by Studio 165 Beauty & Boutique. **Evans** said the hair braiding will help prepare children who want to take part in the Soeefest pigtail contest at 3:30 p.m.

In addition, Cumberland County 4-H youths are set to hold a farm animal petting zoo for children from 1 to 4 p.m. Festival-goers who want to show how they would call hogs down on the farm can take part in a calling contest at 4:30 p.m. The festival's lineup of live music features Eagle's Wings, noon-1 p.m.; Rock U students, 1:15-1:55 p.m.; Kelsey Beard, 2-2:30 p.m.; Alyssa Cravens, 2:30-3 p.m.; Brooke Rupel, 3-3:30 p.m.; Crossborn, 3:45-4:30 p.m.; and Allie Keck, 5-7 p.m. Soeefest also will offer a 5K starting at 11 a.m. at Jennings Park, with registration at 10 a.m. The on-site entry fee will be \$25. The proceeds will go to the Neoga school track and field program.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Brenda Evans
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Herald & Review (Decatur, IL)
March 17, 2016

Prosecutor assigned to Neoga officer case

Author/Byline: Rob Stroud

A special prosecutor will determine if any criminal charges will be filed against a Neoga police officer who recently was fired for alleged criminal misconduct.

Cumberland County State's Attorney Jonathan Braden said during an interview Wednesday that he has a previous working relationship with the fired officer, John Dilger, from prosecuting cases in which Dilger was the arresting officer. Consequently, Braden said a special prosecutor, Jasper County State's Attorney Chad Miller, has been appointed to handle the misconduct case involving Dilger. He said Miller will review the investigation report from the Illinois State Police, determine if any criminal charges will be filed and serve as the prosecutor if charges are filed.

Braden referred questions about the alleged criminal misconduct to Miller, who could not be reached for comment Wednesday. No charges against Dilger were on file in Cumberland County as of late Wednesday afternoon, according to records kept by www.judici.com.

The Neoga City Council held a special meeting March 2 and went into closed session to discuss personnel matters, according to the minutes. After the 20-minute closed session, the council voted to discharge Dilger immediately for "allegations of criminal misconduct and/or other actions which a normally prudent employee would recognize as improper."

Mayor Tony Kepp and commissioners Marty Hartke, Larry Lindley and Carmen Stokes all voted to fire Dilger. Commissioner Ron Edwards was not present for this meeting.

Neoga City Administrator/City Clerk **Brenda Evans** said Wednesday that the city has not made a decision yet on hiring a new officer to replace Dilger, who was hired Feb. 1, 2014. **Evans** said the Neoga Police Department now has two full-time police officers, including Chief Andy Schabbing, and two part-time officers.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Brenda Evans

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Effingham Daily News, The (IL)
March 8, 2016

Trivia Night earns funds for Neoga students

Author/Byline: Staff Writer

Neoga Booster Club's 7th Annual Trivia Night had 29 teams sign up and raised \$2,500 for Neoga students. First place went to the "Whiz Kids" from Effingham. Second place went to "Here for the Food" from Sigel. Third place finishers were the "The Squids" from Altamont and included members Scott Beal, Kurt Becker, Brian Gilbert, Mark Gilbert, Rob Harder, Robert Harder III, Jon Oliver and Rick Seagle.

Each team donated their cash prize back to the Booster Club. Eric Tarter won the half time Head and Tails game. Door Prizes went to Melissa Kamm, Mike Roy, Trenton Moore, Abbi Kepp, Ethan Walk, Molly Masulis, Rebecca Nevius, Toby Hutchings, Tom Stolz, Leah Keck, Rose Gesell and Ellen Hall.

The club also honored **Brenda Evans** and Diana Foor for their assistance with merchandise sales.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Brenda Evans

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Effingham Daily News, The (IL)
February 22, 2016

Neoga mulling options to meet IEPA regulations

Author/Byline: Stan Polanski

Neoga officials are nearing a decision on what they say will likely be the city's most costly project throughout the next several years.

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency has ordered the city to submit a plan for removing ammonia from its wastewater by March 31. At a meeting Monday night, officials discussed two possible options. One involves constructing a lagoon, which would cost more than \$1 million. The other involves a chemical treatment that is estimated to cost about \$1.15 million.

City Clerk **Brenda Evans** said that a vote on the two options will likely come at the next regular meeting on March 14. She also said that a special meeting will likely be held before then for more discussion.

Stricter IEPA regulations require municipalities to remove ammonia that can naturally occur in wastewater. The agency has been regulating ammonia runoff from municipalities because its presence in water can harm fish and swimmers.

Neoga has been mulling how it should comply with the IEPA for awhile now. At a December 2014 meeting, officials reviewed six choices that would reduce ammonia. Since then, they've narrowed their options to two.

On Monday night, officials worried that constructing a lagoon might only satisfy the IEPA for a limited number of years. Superintendent Tom Helm said that a lagoon couldn't remove phosphorus, for example, if the IEPA decided to regulate the chemical in the future. "I want to do what's best for the next 15 years," commissioner Marty Hartke said.

The council has to make a decision soon, Narendra Patel, an engineer with Farnsworth Group told the officials. "I just want to stress that time is of the essence here," he said before the meeting adjourned.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Brenda Evans***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Daily Union (Shelbyville, IL)
December 15, 2015

Neoga High School student dedicates her time and talent for school and community

Author/Byline: Dawn Schabbing

When financial woes shuttered the art program Sarah Thomas loves, she found a way to continue honing her artistic ability while giving back to the school and community. The 15-year-old is a sophomore at Neoga High School, where budget cuts took away art classes this school year. But she advocated for herself and asked if there were any projects that could be done to allow her to continue to be immersed in one of her favorite pastimes.

Neoga High School Principal Ben Johnson found her artistic work to be refreshing and gave her a task: Create two new mascot boards for schools joining the National Trail Conference. The boards will be hung around the gym's perimeters for visitors of all teams to see. She recently completed the two 3-by-3-foot boards after sketching and painting the images of the South Central Cougars and the North Clay Cardinals. "The work is as good of quality as what we've had on the gym walls for a long time," Johnson said. "She not only did a nice job, but turned it around in two weeks. I didn't expect it for at least two months."

Her "art studio" involved using the kitchen table and chairs. As her work load grew, she moved her projects to the garage where two large banquet tables functioned as her work station, and her seat was a foam archery block.

Thomas been drawing for nearly as long as she can remember. "I remember in the first grade, we were having Dr. Seuss Week," said Sarah Thomas. "We had a contest to draw the best Dr. Seuss character. I drew 'Cat in the Hat' and got first place out of all the first-graders." "We spent more time erasing the walls (when the children were young)," said mother Suzanne Thomas of Sarah and her siblings, Jacob and Luke. "I wonder now if I ever gave them paper?" Her mom added that she has notebooks filled with comic strips that she's drawn over the years.

A timid girl of few words — but usually with a smile — Sarah Thomas said her favorite art medium is pencil drawing. Mostly she prefers to create from her imagination. She would like to be a children's book illustrator someday.

For now, Sarah Thomas said she's looking forward to the high school spring musical, where she will spend lots of time creating and painting the set for "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" scheduled for March 17-19. "I was so happy to hear we will be having a play in the spring," said Sarah Thomas. "I want to be on the crew again this year."

After completing South Central mascot board, which has been mounted, and North Clay, which will be added next school year, Johnson heard of another opportunity. The City of Neoga was looking for a creative student to help with a Community Christmas project. Nine businesses donated to help decorate a community Christmas Tree and the city wanted to give each business

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Brenda Evans

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

credit with their personalized sign to be placed around the large tree along U.S. Route 45. “It was a lot of work,” said Sarah Thomas. “But, it was fun. I’m glad to help.” While the family was reimbursed for materials, all of the work was volunteer. Countless hours went into the city project.

City Administrator **Brenda Evans** said the businesses’ signs were hand-crafted and the quality was “over and above” what they anticipated. “These will be around for years to come,” said **Evans**. “She is and will be a true asset to our community.”

Each one of the designs on the 10 local businesses signs were hand-drawn by the teenager and hand-painted. Some mimicked the same look on the respective business cards, while on others she was given freedom to put her holiday creative flair to the sign. She created more wooden cut-outs of Santa’s gift bag and similar ornamental boards to go downtown at the Christmas tree. She created another nine ornamental paintings that will go along the city’s large flower pots for the holiday season.

“This is my first year without an art teacher,” said Sarah Thomas. “My only art teacher since the fourth grade was Mrs. (Heather Curia) Siegel. I contacted her and she gave me some tips on what kind of paint to buy for this project since they will be outside.” Curia-Siegel said she was glad to see, despite of the current lack of funding for an art program in the school district, some opportunities are available. “I saw a lot of very talented and creative students at Neoga, but Sarah is one of a handful who had a rare combination of talent, creativity, self-motivation and persistence,” said Curia-Siegel. “And while she does have a natural ability, she works really hard at it, too.”

Curia-Siegel said as her teacher she enjoyed Sarah Thomas’ sketchbooks because of her “eye for detail and some sort of visual humor and whimsy” in her drawings. “I think she would make a fantastic children’s book illustrator, or something of that nature, because of her personal style of drawing reminds me of a richly illustrated children’s book,” she said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Brenda Evans

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Effingham Daily News, The (IL)
December 4, 2015

Neoga to light community Christmas Tree Saturday

Author/Byline: Dawn Schabbing

A new event has been added to the holiday season in Neoga this weekend, with the lighting of a Community Christmas Tree scheduled for 5:30 p.m. Saturday. The 14-foot-tall Colorado Blue Spruce has been placed and decorated at the Sitting Park, located along U.S. Route 45. The evergreen tree was donated by the Wanda Helm Family.

It's the first time in recent history that Neoga has had a Community Christmas Tree and the idea was spun out of the grassroots group called Neoga Partnership for Progress' holiday ideas, said City Administrator **Brenda Evans**.

Besides the tree lighting ceremony, hot chocolate and cookies will be served at the site. A visit from Santa Claus and Christmas caroling will be on the list of activities for the evening. "This new activity has definitely been a group effort," said Diana Foor, city treasurer and NPP member. "We are hoping for a big turn out. We'd like to build on this event in the upcoming years and we would enjoy having more volunteers join NPP."

Neoga Partnership for Progress was formed in May out of the MAPPING program, which is a blended group of citizens working with the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs at Western Illinois University, said Foor. Making this event possible are businesses who helped pay for decorations and lights on the large Christmas tree. Also, several NPP volunteers helped string the lights and decorate it. Businesses making donations were: Brighton Cabinetry, First Mid-Illinois Bank and Trust; First Neighbor Bank; Neoga IGA; Neoga News; Country Financial; Neoga Builders; Varner & Rawlings Heating and AC; and Studio 165 Boutique, all in Neoga.

Each of the businesses are being recognized with wooden signs noting their participation, which have been hand-painted and cut in the shape of a present under the tree. Sarah Thomas, 15, the daughter of John and Suzanne Thomas, of Neoga, hand-painted each business' sign and other decorative wooden cut outs. Shawn Durbin of Neoga cut the images into the shapes. The tree lighting follows the annual Business Christmas Walk from 8 a.m. to noon, where a variety of stores will have specials and open houses; and also the Vendor Fair will be held from 8 a.m.- 1 p.m., at the Grace United Methodist Church will involve at least 15 different booths.

Evans, the city administrator, called the event "a perfect way to end the day's festivities." All three events are being hosted by the NPP committees.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Brenda Evans

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Effingham Daily News (IL)
August 19, 2015

Neoga tweaks zoning to allow sexually oriented businesses in commercial districts

Author: Stan Polanski

Neoga officials have opened the door to sexually oriented businesses, but say there are no proposals for one to move into the city or the area surrounding it covered by its zoning. Officials said in interviews that the ordinance was needed to follow state and federal laws. "It was strictly to comply with regulations," said **Brenda Evans** said, Neoga's city clerk and administrator.

The ordinance classifies adult bookstores, adult video stores, adult cabarets, adult theaters, massage parlors, and sexual device shops as sexually oriented businesses. Prior to the updated legislation, those businesses needed to apply for a special-use permit to locate in the city or its extraterritorial limits. With the city's new ordinance, sexually oriented businesses are allowed in commercial zones.

Commissioner Marty Hartke said that other cities like Effingham and Mattoon have similar ordinances and that this new legislation doesn't mean Neoga wants a sexually oriented business. Two years ago, the owners of the Schoolhouse Gentlemen's Club, located four miles outside of Neoga, tried to relocate in the city's industrial park but were turned down.

Evans said no potential business owners have been in contact with the city about locating a sexually oriented business in the city's jurisdiction. However, officials said that the city would consider each permit because not doing so would be considered discrimination and an infringement of first amendment rights. "You still have to give them a right to have a business," **Evans** said.

Multiple residents have said they hope the new ordinance doesn't bring any sexually-based businesses into Neoga. "I'm opposed to any adult entertainment coming into the city and the extraterritorial area," said one area resident, Paul Walk.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Brenda Evans

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Effingham Daily News (IL)
August 11, 2015

Neoga plans to cite property owners over nuisances

Author: Stan Polanski

Neoga land owners with nuisances on their property might be getting a notice soon by the city to clean up or possibly face charges. "The first notices will probably go out within the next week," said **Brenda Evans**, the city's clerk and administrator. City officials reviewed the procedure for alerting property owners of nuisances at a meeting Monday night. City Attorney Tracy Willenborg assured them that if legal action is needed, the city would be able to file citations against non-complying owners.

A city ordinance describes a nuisance as something that is unsightly, odorous, or unhealthy for neighbors. Complaints from residents and visitors about possible nuisances have increasing recently, **Evans** said. City officials said they want to remove nuisances from Neoga to maximize property values and make the city more attractive for businesses and residents. "Neoga wants to stay up to par with the surrounding towns, and we'd like to see people come into the community," Commissioner Debbie Modglin said. "It's still a good place to live." Modglin said she would like the junk cars and trash removed from some Neoga properties.

It's not the city's intention to take anyone to court, officials said. But if residents are not cooperating with them, that will happen. Only property owners with the most complaints or are in the most visible areas of the city will receive notices at first. If a property owner gets a notice, they have 10 days to either remove the problem or at least communicate to the city that they need more time. "I think it's more than fair," Modglin said. "I think it's a good plan." City officials hope that when residents see that the city is dedicated to cleaning up the city, others will follow suit. "It's contagious," **Evans** said. "If people see a piece of property that is being cleaned up, they'll start cleaning up their property."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Brenda Evans

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Effingham Daily News (IL)

July 31, 2015

AmeriCorps worker built volunteerism in Neoga

Author: Dawn Schabbing

John Juliano has served as an AmeriCorps worker for the City of Neoga for the past 11 months, helping plan such events as the Business Christmas Walk, the Christmas Lighting Contest, Business After Hours, and Movie in the Park. His required 1,700 hours of work with the program complete, Juliano, 30, ended his time with the city this week. He had previously served with the Peace Corps in Kenya for two years, and in Europe for five months. During his time in Neoga, he also worked toward his Master's degree in Recreation Park and Tourism Administration at Western Illinois University. As part of his city duties, he followed up with Neoga's MAPPING program, which stands for Management and Planning Programs Involving Non-Metropolitan Groups. Citizens of the community had set goals in 2013 and formed groups to achieve these goals, but were struggling and needed guidance.

AmeriCorps engages more than 75,000 Americans in intensive service each year at nonprofits, schools, public agencies, and community and faith-based groups across the country, according to its web site. Juliano, who is used to helping others, came to Neoga, as a stranger and began networking almost immediately with people he'd never met. In all, he completed 28 projects by recruiting volunteers and maximizing the time those volunteers could spend on whatever interested each one. "It's neat being able to walk around this town and have people know you -- and you know them," said Juliano. "I think that's what I'll miss the most. To do this job well, I had to get to know people and network with them."

While in the U.S. Peace Corps in Kenya, he served as a small business advisor to a group of fish farmers from 2008 until 2010; and then in Georgia, Europe, in 2014 for five months, he served as an eco-tourism development and management adviser. He has a job lined up in his home town of Crystal Lake, in the northwest suburbs of Chicago, as a caregiver. He made that arrangement when he volunteered helping senior citizens there. He hopes to find work as an event coordinator for a park district or something similar.

City Administrator **Brenda Evans** said Juliano has been a huge asset to Neoga and its 1,700 residents. "Many of the things he's done will be everlasting in our community," said **Evans**. "He was able to get volunteerism built up and his efforts have made a huge difference in Neoga." Karen Lindley, a Neoga resident and member of the Neoga Partnership for Progress, described Juliano as always positive. "He's been a breath of fresh air," Lindley said. "He's full of ideas and willing to try new things to help make Neoga a better place." "I'm glad I've acquired his friendship," said Neoga resident Mattern. "He's been a lot of help to the city and he's been a good friend."

When he started his internship he was told he'd be doing pretty much whatever the city needed done. "At the first City Council meeting I was asked if I minded getting my hands dirty," said

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Brenda Evans

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Juliano. “Little did they know that just that very day, I helped plant trees at Horn Field Campus in Macomb at Western Illinois University.” Bitsy Trummer said that he worked with her to pull weeds around the newly renovated day care center. City Treasurer Diana Foor said Juliano helped in many ways from pulling weeds, planting flowers, working with businesses and volunteers, making fliers and lots more. He spent hours helping with fundraising for a new Veteran’s Memorial to be placed in Jennings Park. “He always knew just what to do, with little instructions,” said Foor.

Juliano said one of the highlights he most enjoyed was helping to establish the Movie in the Park for Neoga. After much research, networking and pulling in volunteers, the first ever was held July 11. “He’s definitely made an imprint in Neoga’s history,” said **Evans**. “Wherever he goes, he’ll be successful.”

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Brenda Evans

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Effingham Daily News (IL)
December 25, 2014

Neoga discusses ammonia reduction

Author: Stan Polanski

Neoga may have to spend more than \$1 million to lower the amount of ammonia in the city's wastewater, an engineer recently told officials. "Unfortunately waste water removal is expensive," Larry Johnson, an engineer for Farnsworth Group, told the city council this week.

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency told the city seven years ago that it would have to lower the amount of ammonia in its wastewater. Now, the state said, the city must start making the investment. Johnson, a consultant for Neoga, said rates will likely rise if the city has to borrow the money to pay for the improvements. The environmental agency is concerned about ammonia affecting an unnamed tributary of Copperas Creek, which runs through the west side of the city.

City Clerk **Brenda Evans** said that the city plans to hire an engineering service at the start of 2015. The city has six different options for reducing the amount of ammonia in ways that would satisfy the state agency, she noted. Some options are cheaper, but may only keep the agency satisfied for five to ten years. A more expensive plan might allow the city to go twenty or more years without needing an upgrade, officials said. Johnson said that's because technology has been improving, and the agency's standards have been rising too.

Having too much ammonia in a body of water depletes oxygen from it and can be harmful to fish and swimmers. Ammonia applied in fertilizer can appear in water sources from runoff. The ammonia in water comes from urine and animal decomposition. Therefore, ammonia regulation is an issue that many communities must deal with. Champaign, for example, is prepared to spend tens of millions of dollars removing waste from its water, Johnson said. **Evans** said she is not yet sure which of the six options suits the city best.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Brenda Evans

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Effingham Daily News (IL)
December 17, 2014

Neoga Zoning Board rejects proposal

Author: Staff Writer

Neoga’s Zoning Board has voted unanimously against the proposal to rezone residential land outside city limits to commercial. The vote is only a recommendation to the city council, which could decide to follow through with rezoning anyway. The next Neoga city council meeting will be Monday. The agenda has yet to be finalized but City Clerk **Brenda Evans** said on Wednesday that the rezoning proposal is not on the agenda for Monday’s meeting. “I don’t know when or if the city council will vote on it,” **Evans** said. **Evans** has said the city is looking to land just outside its borders to make space available for business growth. because all of the commercial space within city limits is in use.

At a public hearing Monday, disgruntled farmers got their message across to the zoning board but the property owners who would be affected by the rezoning haven’t eased up. “My first reaction was that I was very pleased that the zoning board accepted the opinion of the public,” property owner Paul Walk said. “My second reaction was that it was just a recommendation.” Walk said that though the property owners’ chance to voice their dissent has passed, he will be trying to get as many property owners to attend the council meeting should the rezoning proposal appear on the agenda.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Brenda Evans

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

JG-TC (IL)

December 16, 2014

Property owners raise concerns about rezoning proposal

Author: Rob Stroud

Several property owners raised concerns Monday night about a rezoning proposal that is part of city efforts to plan for development and address the possibility of an adult-use business locating in town. These landowners spoke during the Neoga Board of Zoning Appeals and Planning public hearing on the city's request to give additional properties highway business district zoning. The board was scheduled to vote on this request Monday evening, after press time. The newspaper will have a follow-up story on this meeting. The map with the request shows that the proposed rezoning areas are located west of north U.S. 45 on the north edge of town, between south U.S. 45 and Interstate 57 on the south edge of town, along both sides of County Road 1000N east of I-57, and along both sides of 1000N on the southwest edge of town.

Neoga City Attorney Tracy Willenborg said at the start of hearing in the Neoga Municipal Building meeting room, which was filled to overflowing, that the city asked her to review its current ordinances in response to the growing number of adult-use businesses in the region, such as in Dix and Edgewood. Willenborg said she found that Neoga's ordinances on using conditional use permits to regulate adult-use businesses violate the state and U.S. constitutional rights of these businesses to free speech. She said these ordinances could be struck down in court, leaving a wider area of Neoga open to adult-use businesses.

City Clerk/City Manager **Brenda Evans** and Willenborg said city officials are looking at options for dealing with adult-use businesses as part of a broader effort to update Neoga's zoning ordinances, which have not been updated since 1999. **Evans** said these efforts include identifying areas that have potential for future commercial growth in the years and decades to come and amending the zoning map to designate these areas as highway business zoning districts. She said Neoga has a shortage of land that could house large commercial development.

Property owner Paul Walk said the city's proposed zoning map amendment has angered many of the farming families who live along the outer edge of Neoga, where rezoning is proposed. "Does this look like community unity to you?" Walk asked, gesturing to several other property owners who had asked questions and spoken out against the proposal during the hearing.

Attorney Pam Apke, who planned to present a protest letter to the board, suggested that the city could help ease property owners' concerns by first revising the text of current zoning ordinances to protect existing farmland use within the city's zoning jurisdiction. "Most of us have a plan for our land that does not involve the city's interference," said property owner Richard Peters. Recommendations of the board must go before the Neoga City Council for final approval.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Brenda Evans

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Effingham Daily News, The (IL)
December 15, 2014

Rural landowners pack meeting, question Neoga's zoning plan

Author/Byline: Staff Writer

About 50 Neoga area farmers and other landowners packed Neoga City Hall on Monday, many of them questioning a proposal to change the zoning of their land to commercial. Some said the idea made no sense.

City Clerk **Brenda Evans** told the group that the zoning board will make a recommendation to the city council within 45 days on whether to rezone the land. The city has spent \$24,000 so far developing the rezoning proposal. "We're spending money for two reasons," **Evans** said. "We are trying to be compliant with the Constitution, and for commercial growth."

Evans has said that all of the commercial space within the city limits is in use. So Neoga is looking outside its borders, in areas that fall within its zoning jurisdiction, to make space available for business growth. "I ask that you review the map and notice that it's very a little area for commercial growth," **Evans** said.

"What makes you think we wanted this?" landowner Brett Williamson said. The residents outside the city limits of Neoga can't vote for the city commissioners who will be voting on the rezoning. State law allows the city to rezone within a 1.5 mile circle around the city. The zoning board is made up of seven members. Only one of them represents those outside the city limits.

"Don't you think we should have more representation than just that one guy?" landowner Ed Walk said. **Evans** said the board was created in 1999, before she was employed by the city.

If the land is rezoned, the landowners would have to ask the city for special permission to build a residence on their land — and pay a \$50 fee to the city. The change would also mean a landowner could sell to an unpopular business, which would then have the right to build without going through public hearings.

"What kind of growth are you expecting?" Paul Walk said. **Evans** said that Ameren inquired about getting 1,000 acres. She also pointed out that the highways through the areas under consideration for rezoning — in chunks to the north, south, east and west of the city — are prime locations for other businesses.

The mood among most in the audience seemed skeptical. Many appeared unwilling to accept the plan. "Yes I want to see Neoga grow, but at what cost?" said resident Julie Sloan.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Brenda Evans

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

JG-TC (Mattoon, Charleston, IL)
September 25, 2013

Area residents pay respects to fallen Neoga soldier

Author/Byline: Dawn Schabbing

Colors of the American flag lined U.S. Route 45 in Neoga as friends, family members and even complete strangers welcomed home fallen soldier SSG Randall R. "Randy" Lane on Tuesday. An estimated 300 small flags lined the highway as part of the tribute for the serviceman, who died earlier this month in Afghanistan. Mattoon firefighters provided their squad's ladder truck and large flag, which was displayed against the clear blue sky across Route 45 as the motorcade arrived from Indianapolis.

Hundreds of people of all ages were lined up along the highway from Neoga's Interstate 57 exit and on south down Route 45 to the four-way stop in the center of town. Many spectators came with their own flags, as well. Some sang songs as they waited for the procession. Others sat quietly. Uniformed military members stood still. Firefighters, ambulance and police personnel from Neoga and across the area were among those in uniform out of respect for Lane.

Children from the senior high and junior high and the elementary schools filed from their buildings to pay respects to the local serviceman. School officials say such a tribute ties into the students' lessons on respect, freedom, servicemen and women, and Veterans Day.

Lane, 43, of Indianapolis, formerly of Neoga, died Sept. 13, 2013, while serving in the Indiana Army National Guard. He had served more than 20 years and previously served as a U.S. Marine. The soldier's body was brought to Neoga's First Christian Church for the Tuesday visitation from Flanner and Buchanan Funeral Center in Indianapolis. Flags will line the route to the Swedish Lutheran Cemetery, rural Neoga, today for the funeral service, which begins at 10 a.m.

"We thought it was important to see and experience this (procession). We want the students to show respect to someone who has served our country," said Amy Westjohn, a second-grade teacher. "It gives us an opportunity to teach about freedom and to appreciate the freedom we have."

Art Hewing of Neoga said he didn't know Lane personally but thought it was important to come out for his return home. "Anytime you have a soldier locally, who dies and comes home, you should do this to show respect," said Hewing.

Mayor Wayne Modglin, who works for the Illinois Department of Transportation, was on the route the procession passed by. "I actually saw the procession going through I-70 between Martinsville and Marshall," said Modglin. He said he later was able to watch video clips on Facebook that were shot by Neoga citizens. "I really appreciate how the community came together. I'm a Vietnam veteran and I lost my best friend in Vietnam. I wasn't able to go to the

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Brenda Evans

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

(friend's) service, but I know his hometown at that time came together. I really value that in a community," he said. Modglin said he credits the school system, the Patriot Guard Riders, and recently formed Neoga MAPPING for making Lane's welcome home special. Those involved are in the process of putting up signs for Neoga's military members and updating the city's veterans' memorial.

During the Tuesday procession, citizens commented on the "quietness" of the spectators as the vehicles moved through. "The silence was deafening. The school children never made a sound. The respect shown was unbelievable," said **Brenda Evans**, Neoga city clerk.

A former classmate and neighbor of Lane, Amy Baker said of the lines of people: "This is Neoga. This is what we do. I'm impressed that everyone here is taking time out to pay respects." Theresa Lake of Mattoon said she didn't personally know Lane, but has friends who do. "I'm here today to support the military and the family."

Lane's funeral service will be held at the First Christian Church today, the same church he attended while growing up.

"Randy was a year older. He was a great guy. Everyone loved him. He's done a lot of serving in other countries, too," said Lora Lund of Mattoon. "I remember when we attended Christ in Youth conference when Randy gave his life to the Lord. So, there's no question where he's at today. He's with the Lord," she said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Brenda Evans

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Journal Gazette (Mattoon, IL)

June 10, 2011

Boil order issued as Neoga inspects tower

Author: Unknown

NEOGA

Boil order issued as Neoga inspects tower

The City of Neoga has issued a boil order effective until Monday, according to City Clerk **Brenda Evans**.

Scheduled work at the city water tower prompted the boil order, **Evans** said. The tower must be drained for an inspection, so all residents are asked to conserve water. If water is rusty, residents are advised to refrain from doing laundry.

Residents may call city officials at 895-3237 or log on to www.neoga.org for more information.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Brenda Evans

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Journal Gazette (Mattoon, IL)

April 19, 2011

Neoga leaders ready to go back to township on cemetery issue

Author/Byline: Herb Meeker

City Council members Monday agreed to go back to the bargaining table with Neoga Township officials over cemetery funding. The city wants the township to share the cost of maintaining Neoga Memorial Cemetery, located south of town. For 14 years, township officials have declined repeated requests for such funding due to city ownership of the graveyard, but recently the township offered to share costs through an intergovernmental agreement with a township share of \$7,500 per year. The city wants up to \$12,500 in support. "We could get on the agenda for the next township board meeting and see where we're at," Neoga Mayor Wayne Modglin said Monday night. Different council members agreed it was worth a try after a resolution failed to transfer ownership of the cemetery to the township. That vote came during last Thursday's annual meeting for Neoga Township.

On Monday, Modglin said the offer of \$7,500 of support from the township through a verbal proposal is now still on the table, which was the opposite of what he learned after the annual meeting. "If their offer is still on the table, we can go to the meeting," said Commissioner Tony Kepp. But the council was asked whether the sides need a third party or mediator to help produce an end to this apparent deadlock. Modglin explained city officials had gone to several township meetings to try to work out a compromise that never materialized.

Commissioner Dave Varner said he is reluctant to pay a mediator when the city is facing a funding crunch. But Neoga City Clerk **Brenda Evans** voiced support for the idea of considering help from a mediator. "Even if it costs us money then we should work with the idea," she said.

Modglin said the township should start supporting the city in its efforts to maintain the cemetery. He said city residents are also part of the township and paying property taxes to that taxing body. He said it is not unreasonable to expect the township cemetery levy to support all public cemeteries within the township borders. The township now provides tax money to smaller cemeteries through a cemetery tax levy. "People are mistaking this for the city against the township. But people in the city are part of the township, too," he said. Richard Peters was a member of the township board when the decision was made to discontinue support to Neoga Memorial Cemetery in 1997. He said it was done because of legal questions on supporting a cemetery that was owned by another taxing body. In addition, the township was facing monetary problems at the time. Peters said it would make more sense to place the cemetery under a separate board. Modglin said that has been suggested through a call for a referendum to create a cemetery taxing district. He said that would end up being bad news for Neoga taxpayers. "If that referendum was passed then it means a new tax for everyone. Why should we create a new taxing district when we already have one in place?" he said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Brenda Evans

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Journal Gazette (Mattoon, IL)

February 3, 2011

Storm keeps power line crews scrambling

Author/Byline: Herb Meeker & Rob Stroud

Utility crews made their way through icy roads and blowing snow on Wednesday to repair downed power lines throughout the area, while various shelters offered to take in those affected by power outages.

Coles-Moultrie Electric Cooperative President Chris Christman said the winter storm knocked out substations in Casey and Bethany, and caused outages south of Illinois Route 16 in Coles County, north of Ashmore, northwest of Charleston, and north of Neoga. He said accumulating ice and heavy wind were damaging power lines. Christman said efforts to make repairs were made more challenging by icy roads, blowing snow, and frigid temperatures. He said the electric cooperative called in 20 extra crews to restore power to approximately 4,000 customers, including the University Estates mobile home park on the northwest side of Charleston.

Valerie Karr, manager of the American Red Cross branch in Charleston and Mattoon, said a couple of residents from University Estates spoke with her about staying at the storm shelter in the Red Cross office at 825 18th St. in Charleston, but no guests had arrived at the shelter as of late Wednesday afternoon. The Red Cross encouraged those who needed overnight shelter Wednesday to arrive at the site by 10 p.m. Karr said various community groups had also set up shelters in the Martinsville fire hall and the Casey First Baptist Church, as well as warming stations at the Ashmore Baptist Church and at Oaks Manor in Oakland.

Cumberland County opened an emergency shelter in Cumberland Grade School late Wednesday afternoon for people left without power from Tuesday's winter storm. Outages with three different utilities hit dozens of houses stretching from Jewett to Greenup, said Cumberland County Emergency Management Agency Director Webb Timm. He expected the number to rise as winds increased and temperatures dropped to sub-zero levels overnight. "These wires are really flapping around right now. The way things are going with the wind we're going to have more people without power," Timm said. "They just need to bring their clothing and some blankets (to the shelter). The county health department will supply the water and food."

In addition to the grade school, arrangements were also made for emergency shelter at the Neoga Municipal Building. That community was without power for four hours Tuesday, starting at 8:20 p.m., due to power line damage from the storm. "We were on standby with the shelter," Neoga City Clerk **Brenda Evans** said Tuesday night. "Everyone was fairly calm and prepared for this."

Mattoon officials did not activate the emergency shelter at Williams Elementary School on Tuesday or Wednesday, said City Administrator Sue McLaughlin. Power outages at Lake Paradise on Tuesday night raised the possibility of opening the shelter. Ameren Illinois spokesman Leigh Morris said 143 Ameren electrical customers were without power at mid-

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Brenda Evans

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

afternoon Wednesday. There were 2,707 Ameren power interruptions in Coles, Douglas, Moultrie, Clark, Edgar, Shelby and Cumberland counties as of 2:30 p.m. Wednesday. This does not account for electric cooperative outages in those counties. For the Ameren system, Clark County with 1,041 outages was the worst off on Wednesday, while Edgar County with 755 and Moultrie with 312 made up much of the total outages for the area on Wednesday afternoon.

The number of outages was changing by the hour, Morris said, mainly due to the intensity of the wind gusts. "Right now, we're at 17,000 statewide, but a few hours ago we were at 26,000," Morris said. Early Tuesday night, the total was as high as 35,800 for Ameren Illinois.

Shelby Electric Cooperative reported an estimated 3,500 member-owners were without power Wednesday morning. "We are currently assessing the damage to our electrical distribution system and also have line crews dispatched and working on the damage we've found," says Shelby Electric Chief Operating Officer Josh Shallenberger. Crews from Kentucky are assisting in the process, but the speed of the restoration effort will be largely dependent on weather conditions, he said. "We are anticipating restoration could take several days for some of our members," Shallenberger added.

Shelby co-op members can report an outage or a downed line by calling 1-800-677-2612. Frequent updates will be posted to the co-op's Facebook page www.facebook.com/YourCoop.

The culprit for many of the outages has been "galloping conductors" or electrical wires weighted down with ice bouncing in the wind, Ameren's Morris said. This effect causes lines to damage insulators, break off power poles or causes the lines to break and fall. "Until the wind dies down you're going to face problems with the galloping conductors. And there is nothing we can do to prevent it," Morris said. He advised Ameren customers to call 1-800-755-5000 if they experience any outages, even momentarily.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Brenda Evans
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Journal Gazette (IL)
January 6, 2010

Neoga looking to curb government – costs, commissions water rate study

Author: Herb Meeker

This town is still dipping into a water rate study and ways to cut governmental costs. On Monday night, Neoga City Council members learned a water rate study should be available for consideration during the Jan. 18 council meeting, Neoga City Clerk **Brenda Evans** said.

The council employed Foth Infrastructure & Environmental, LLC of Champaign during the fall to study possible changes to water rates, which have not been altered since 2001. The cost in Neoga is \$7.35 cents per 1,000 gallons, but a minimum of \$10.50 is assessed on the first 2,000 gallons. The city has 720 water meters, serving customers ranging from single residential to high-volume agriculture users.

The city is facing an update of its water distribution system in the near future with aging water mains and other concerns. Adding to the city's fiscal concerns is a drop in overall revenue from local and state sources. "We're getting less money from sales taxes and Motor Fuel Tax funds so our money is down and our expenses are increasing," **Evans** said in summary of the council's review of cost-cutting measures for all departments.

The city currently employs nine full-time and two part-time workers. The city maintains the police, street and water and wastewater treatment departments. The city's monetary situation has its limits with some departments. The water system generates \$25,000 per month in revenue with production costs of about \$23,000, which includes \$3,000 in debt, officials said.

Neoga currently purchases raw water for local processing from Lake Mattoon. The city is considering other options with either EJ Water Cooperative, Inc. of Dieterich or Clear Water Service Corp. of rural Mattoon, both area rural water systems. For now, the options on water rates and departmental cost cuts are wide open with council action down the line, **Evans** said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Brenda Evans

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Herald & Review (IL)

December 2, 2009

Neoga continues examination of water issues

Author: Herb Meeker

Water rates and water suppliers are being studied for this community, but city leaders are not necessarily diving in to one option for now. “We want to have our ducks in a row before we do anything. We’re not rushing into it. This will be a well-informed decision,” Neoga City Council member Ronnie Groves said Tuesday.

On Monday night, the council members reviewed the first draft of a water rate study conducted this fall by Foth Infrastructure & Environmental LLC of Champaign. The special meeting determined the need to correct some figures in the draft report, and that work is expected to be completed by the regular council meeting next week. Final action is not anticipated on the water rates during that meeting. Neoga has not changed its water rates since 2001. The cost is \$7.35 per 1,000 gallons, but a minimum of \$10.50 is assessed on the first 2,000 gallons.

During the past several years, the town has faced increases in costs for water treatment plant operations, including the cost of treatment chemicals, required testing, labor and repairs, Neoga City Clerk **Brenda Evans** said. The municipal water system produces about 150,000 gallons of treated water daily from Lake Mattoon, controlled by the city of Mattoon. Neoga has 720 water meters, serving customers ranging from single residential residents to high-volume agriculture users.

The bottom line is getting narrower each year for the Neoga water system, according to city financial records. The system generates \$25,000 per month in revenue with production costs of about \$23,000, including \$3,000 in debt. **Evans** said that leaves little financial leeway if the water system requires major repairs or faces updates that might be mandated by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency.

Another cost concern is the infrastructure of the system, including the water mains and equipment, Groves said. In coming years, the city will face maintenance and replacement costs, he said. Another way of attaining that goal might be contracting with rural water systems such as EJ Water Corp., based in Dieterich, or Clear Water Service Corp. of rural Mattoon. The city could use these companies as secondary bulk water suppliers or as primary water systems for the community, officials said. The city is seeking proposals from water suppliers.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Brenda Evans

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Times-Courier (Charleston, IL)
December 2, 2009

Neoga leaders looking at changes in water rates, sources

Author/Byline: Herb Meeker

Water rates and different water suppliers are being studied for this community, but city leaders are not necessarily diving in to one option for now. "We want to have our ducks in a row before we do anything. We're not rushing into it. This will be a well-informed decision," said Neoga City Council member Ronnie Groves during a phone interview Tuesday. On Monday night, the council members reviewed the first draft of a water rate study conducted this fall by Foth Infrastructure & Environmental, LLC of Champaign. The special meeting determined the need to correct some figures in the draft report, and that work is expected to be completed by the regular council meeting next week. Final action is not anticipated on the water rates during that meeting, however. Neoga has not changed its water rates since 2001. The cost is \$7.35 per 1,000 gallons, but a minimum of \$10.50 is assessed on the first 2,000 gallons.

During the past several years, the town has faced increases in costs for water treatment plant operations, including the cost of treatment chemicals, required testing, labor and repairs, said Neoga City Clerk **Brenda Evans**.

The municipal water system produces about 150,000 gallons of treated water daily from Lake Mattoon, controlled by the City of Mattoon. Neoga has 720 water meters, serving customers ranging from single residential residents to high-volume agriculture users. The bottom line is getting narrower each year for the Neoga water system, according to city financial records. The system generates \$25,000 per month in revenues with production costs of about \$23,000, including \$3,000 in debt.

Evans said that leaves little financial leeway if the water system requires major repairs or faces mandated updates that might be implemented by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency.

Another cost concern is the infrastructure of the system, including the water mains and equipment, Groves said. In coming years, the city will face maintenance and replacement costs, he said. "We're looking at the long-term longevity of the infrastructure. And we want to make sure we have the revenue to do that," Groves said.

Another way of attaining that goal might be contracting with rural water systems like EJ Water Corporation, based in Dieterich, or Clear Water Service Corporation of rural Mattoon. The city could use these companies as secondary bulk water suppliers or as primary water systems for the community, officials said. The city is seeking proposals from water suppliers. "We're involved in a fact-finding mission with this study for the future of Neoga for years to come," Groves said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Brenda Evans

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Journal Gazette (Mattoon, IL)

June 19, 2009

Early Thursday storm hit hardest in Neoga

Author: Herb Meeker

NEOGA - The local town festival is not gone with the wind.

Straight-line winds played havoc in this Cumberland County town Thursday morning on the opening of the annual Neoga Days Festival, but volunteers from near and far helped with cleanup and repairs throughout the day. Trees and limbs fell on houses, smashed vehicles and sliced power lines; however, no injuries were reported by midday. "We had four homes with big oaks or maples down on them," said Bob Thomas, Neoga Emergency Services and Disaster Agency director, during a noontime break from the cleanup effort. "But some areas were hardly affected. But from Fifth to Ninth streets we had considerable damage."

Some trees measuring 30 inches in diameter were split open by the high winds that struck about 7 a.m. Thursday. Thomas said a wall cloud was sighted three miles north of Neoga near the Lake Mattoon road, but there was no evidence of a tornado touchdown from damage in the town or the countryside.

Power was restored to all but 31 homes by noontime Thursday, Thomas said. The cleanup and repairs were completed with help from personnel with the city of Neoga, Neoga Fire Protection District, Neoga Township, Cumberland County Highway Department, AmerenCIPS and the Southern Baptist Disaster Relief group.

Even with these setbacks, the annual festival will go on as scheduled today. Neoga City Clerk **Brenda Evans** said it is becoming an unfortunate tradition that foul weather seems to hit during Neoga Days. "We had tons of volunteers come in to help out today. They were helping clear debris and blocking off roads. It really helped out," **Evans** said.

Help is available in Neoga for those who have storm debris. Those interested should contact **Evans** at city hall, 895-3654.

Hail and high winds Thursday morning pelted Coles County, too, but the damage reported to Coles County Emergency Management Services consisted only of downed tree limbs.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Brenda Evans

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Journal Gazette (Mattoon, IL)

June 19, 2009

Neoga takes step to allow golf cart-style vehicles on streets

Author/Byline: Chris Sessig

Another East Central Illinois town may soon be added to the list of area communities that allow low-speed golf cart-style vehicles on their streets. The Neoga City Council approved an ordinance on June 1 that would make certain low-speed vehicles street legal, and the move must receive state approval to go into effect.

While the measure was considered a golf cart ordinance on the council's agenda, the term "golf cart" was replaced with "neighborhood vehicle," said **Brenda Evans**, Neoga city clerk. The Illinois Vehicle Code makes a distinction between golf carts and neighborhood vehicles, although they are similar.

Julie and Jim Phillips of Neoga circulated a petition in favor of the ordinance that received more than 200 signatures. The couple purchased their neighborhood vehicle, a 1977 Western House Marketeer, at an auction in August. They hoped to use it on camping trips but found some sites don't allow carts. After hearing from friends that other towns in the area were passing golf cart ordinances, they started collecting signatures.

The ordinance will be sent to the IDOT District 7 office in Effingham because U.S.Route 45 cuts through Neoga, **Evans** said. Under the Illinois Vehicle Code, IDOT must approve city ordinances that include streets under their jurisdiction, such as state highways and national routes. If IDOT gives approval, low-speed vehicles may be allowed to cross certain roads under its jurisdiction, said Jerry Cearlock, operations engineer for IDOT District 5. "Safety is the number one issue," he said.

The Phillipses also had to obtain approval from the railroad and county highway department because of the railroad tracks and county roads that run through town. The biggest advantage of the vehicles is energy efficiency, since many run on batteries, Jim Phillips said. "Everybody needs to help consume less energy," he said.

The Neoga ordinance requires vehicles to have brakes, a steering apparatus, a rearview mirror, headlights, brake lights and turn signals, among other equipment. The police department will inspect every vehicle. Neoga's ordinance would allow residents to apply for a \$75 license for their vehicle, providing they are at least 18 years of age and have a valid driver's license. Riding will only be allowed from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. during daylight savings time and 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. during standard time. Any person who violates the ordinance will be subject to fine of at least \$100 and no more than \$1,000.

Evans doesn't foresee problems with the low-speed vehicles because the streets in Neoga have a speed limit of 30 mph as it is. Neighborhood vehicles may not travel on roads with posted speeds

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Brenda Evans

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

of more than 35 mph. Plus, drivers of regular vehicles already have to be aware of bikers and scooters on the road, she added. "Drivers need to be defensive," **Evans** said.

Under the Illinois Vehicle Code, golf carts specifically refer to vehicles used for playing golf. They may either be electronically or gasoline powered. If they are the latter, they must have an "engine displacement under 1,200 cubic centimeters." Neighborhood vehicles are defined as "self-propelled ... four-wheeled motor vehicles" that travel between 20 and 25 mph.

Municipalities may pass ordinances that approve either or both on their streets. The number of cities inquiring about such an ordinance has increased since last summer, at least at the IDOT District 7 office, said Dewayne Seachrist, traffic operations engineer for the district. That office has received about seven inquiries from cities in the area since the first of the year. The inquiries are predominately from small towns, he said.

Several area towns already passed an ordinance similar to Neoga's, including Arthur, Greenup, Shelbyville, Stewardson, Sullivan and Windsor. With 54, Greenup has the most registered licenses of the six communities. The town initiated its ordinance about five years ago, said Chief of Police Bill Cline. It includes golf carts and slow-moving utility vehicles. The ordinance has not caused any major problems, he said. The number of people registering for licenses spiked when gas prices were \$4 a gallon last year but have leveled off since then, Cline noted.

Stewardson's golf cart ordinance has been around for about four years. About six people have signed up, Officer Randy Allen said. Both golf carts and neighborhood vehicles or utility type vehicles (UTVs) are legal on the roads there, Allen said.

Windsor has had an ordinance on the books since 2005. About six to 10 people have applied for a license, said Linda Voris, Windsor city clerk. No accidents or injuries have been reported due to the carts on the road, she said. Sullivan has had an ordinance in place since August. Five people have signed up for licenses, city officials reported.

Arthur has had an ordinance in place since September that allows golf carts and UTVs on the streets. In all, 20 people have registered, and so far the response has been positive, said Arthur Police Chief Michael Goodman. "A good number" of the drivers are elderly, Goodman said. No accidents have been reported and some of the drivers comment that it is easier to make small trips in town, he said.

In May, Shelbyville passed a similar ordinance that allows neighborhood electric vehicles on its streets. Carrie Jones, Shelbyville city clerk, said she has not received any inquiries for licenses so far. Casey town leaders are also looking into an ordinance that would allow these vehicles on the streets.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Brenda Evans

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Journal Gazette (Mattoon, IL)

April 30, 2009

News

Author: Unknown

Main break leads to boil order for some homes

Brenda Evans, Neoga city clerk, said Wednesday evening that a water main break at the corner of Hickory and 12th streets has led to a boil order.

The boil order is only for residents on four blocks. Homes on Willow, Dogwood, Hickory and Ash streets are affected, **Evans** said. The boil order will be in effect until further notice, she added.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Brenda Evans
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Journal Gazette (Mattoon, IL)
April 25, 2009

Neoga employee injured after partial trench cave-in

Author/Byline: Nathaniel West

An unnamed Neoga city employee is "recovering very nicely" after the trench he was working in collapsed last week while a city crew was repairing a faulty sewer main, said City Clerk **Brenda Evans**. The partial cave-in also caused a nearby water main to rupture, causing a city-wide reduction in water pressure and prompting a boil order that was lifted Wednesday, **Evans** reported.

At about 5:45 p.m. April 16, the city employee was working in a trench dug to access a sewer main at the corner of Fifth Street and Maple Avenue. "While they were repairing (the sewer main), it partially caved in and one of our employees had to seek medical attention," **Evans** said.

The employee, whose name was not released, is expected to return to work, **Evans** also said. "He's recovering very nicely," she said, noting that she could not elaborate on the employee's injuries. Both the damaged sewer and water mains were fixed by the night of April 17, reported **Evans**. "When (the trench) collapsed, there was a water main close by, and the dirt - the support for that water main - was gone, and that caused the water main to rupture as well, and that's why we were under that boil order," she said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Brenda Evans
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Journal Gazette (Mattoon, IL)
June 27, 2008

Neoga to close sixth street for two months

Author/Byline: Nathanie West

A major thoroughfare here is slated to be closed for about two months while crews build an entirely new roadway, curbs and sidewalks as part of a joint city-county venture to make Sixth Street suitable for full tractor-trailer use. "It will be a little bit of an inconvenience, but it will be reconstructed from curb to curb," said Stan Hagerstrom, Neoga superintendent of public works.

The Neoga City Council on Monday will be asked to approve the likely low bid of \$554,024 from Ne-Co Asphalt in Charleston for the reconstruction of Sixth Street - from the railroad tracks west to Elm Street.

Cumberland County will contribute up to \$420,000 for the project, since the county technically owns the interior section of the road. The city, meanwhile, is responsible for the shoulders, curbs and sidewalks, and has agreed to pony up no more than \$100,000 for their replacement, said City Clerk **Brenda Evans**. "Instead of just resurfacing the middle of the road, the city is putting in its portion to resurface from curb to curb," **Evans** said.

The city-county partnership also has received \$60,000 from the state's Truck Access Route Program, because the street will become suitable for semitrailer loads up to 80,000 pounds.

Recently, Shelby County has renovated its stretch of the roadway - which becomes Trowbridge Road - all the way to Route 32, said Hagerstrom.

The project is slated to begin in approximately four to eight weeks, at which time Sixth Street will be shut down completely for about two months. This also will entail the closing the Sixth Street railroad crossing, said Hagerstrom. "It's going to be a bottleneck," he said.

According to the county highway department, the project involves more than resurfacing, as all of the old road will be removed and replaced. The city will be issuing maps of detour routes.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Brenda Evans

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Journal Gazette (Mattoon, IL)

June 26, 2007

School Honors

Author: Unknown

Student of Year named at Neoga High School

In recent commencement exercises, Chelsie Evans was named Student of the Year at Neoga High School.

Evans is the daughter of David and **Brenda Evans** of Neoga. She received a monetary award provided from funds raised by Neoga Teachers Association and the Neoga High School Alumni.

The Student of the Year program was originated several years ago when Jim Short, a local businessman, cooperated with the student council to establish a process for recognizing a senior "Student of the Month." The process provided for faculty nomination of seniors whose achievement had been commendable in the areas of academic effort, attitude, leadership, responsibility and service. Then a committee of students, faculty and community members selected the "Student of the Month."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Brenda Evans***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Journal Gazette (Mattoon, IL)
October 18, 2006

News

Author/Byline: Nathaniel West

Kim Ewing's son, Andrew, was counting on an appearance at the upcoming state cross country meet to make an impression on college coaches, and hopefully secure a scholarship. But with the Neoga school district's teachers expected to go on strike this week, the hopes of at least one Neoga High School senior are now in jeopardy, said Kim Ewing. "This is just really upsetting," she said.

The teachers on Monday rejected the latest offer from the school board and voted to walk out Thursday, leaving parents and students with concerns about everything from child care to participation in sports. And regardless of which side they think is in the right, parents and guardians of students said they want the teachers and the school board to meet and resolve their differences quickly. "They are all at fault," said Ewing, who also has a second grader in the district. "They are adults - they should be able to work this out."

Bill and Roxanna Osborn are raising their granddaughter, a sixth grader at Neoga Middle School, and they are frustrated by the breakdown in talks between the school board and teachers. "You can't really find out exactly what has been offered by the school board, and what the teachers want," said Bill Osborn. "We the public don't have the slightest idea why they're going on strike."

The teachers union on Tuesday announced for the first time that salary rates and scheduling are the only issues still contested, and that the school board's latest offer includes pay raises. Osborn said he is not opposed to hikes if Neoga teachers' salaries are below average. "But I can't see where if the school board has made a justified offer, why (the teachers) won't accept it and not go on strike and put the entire community in jeopardy," he said. "It's going to cause chaos in the entire community."

Neoga resident Amy Baker said she has already made day care arrangements for her two children in first and sixth grades at Neoga's elementary and middle schools, respectively. "But I'm one of the lucky ones who have people available (to provide day care)," she said. "I know some people will struggle with that."

She noted that she supports the teachers and their strike, at least over the short term. "We live here because we love the school district, and we'll back the teachers," Baker said. "I'm frustrated with the Board of Education, (that) they didn't negotiate a further deal, that they just gave them a final take-it-or-leave-it deal."

Baker said she remembers the last time the Neoga teachers went on strike, in 1980. She was in elementary school at the time. "It's a Catch 22," she said. "We want our kids to be in school, but

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Brenda Evans

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

we want the teachers to fight for what they deserve." Baker added that her children are worried about the possibilities of missing athletic games, and having to go to school over the summer. "It changes their little schedule around," she said.

Neoga resident Angie Worthey likewise has children in the Neoga School District: a second grader and a high school senior. "I think they need to settle as soon as possible, for our kids' sake," Worthey said. She indicated she will take her children to work with her should the strike materialize. Worthey also said she believes the teachers deserve what they are demanding. "It's the best school district in the area (because) our teachers care about the kids," she said.

Meanwhile, parent **Brenda Evans** said one of her two daughters at Neoga High School is a member of the volleyball team now preparing to miss regionals next week. "But I'm more concerned about them getting back to their classes," **Evans** said. "I want both the teachers union and the school board back at the table Thursday morning ... so they can get it settled ASAP."

Ewing said she has not chosen a side because of a lack of information from both the school board and the teachers union. There are not enough facts that are facts," she said. "There are too many rumors."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Brenda Evans

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Brenda Evans** is listed below.]

Marion Republican, The (IL)

August 10, 2006

Auditor: County 'keeping its head above water'

Author/Byline: Cherri Flinn

In other business the board accepted a Certification of Amendment for Saluki Hills II Subdivision. It also accepted the replatting of Magnolia Estates.

The county board accepted the resignation of **Brenda Evans** from the Crosswalk board.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Brenda Evans

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Herald & Review (Decatur, IL)

August 31, 2005

Ambulance service sold to Neoga fire department - Medical calls will be taken over Oct. 1

Author/Byline: Nathaniel West

If you're willing to take on the workload of running an ambulance service, you may get quite a deal on the vehicles themselves. At least in Neoga, the going rate for ambulances is about 50 cents each.

During a joint meeting Monday between the Neoga City Council and the Neoga Fire Protection District, the city voted to sell two ambulances and all its medical equipment to the fire district for \$1. This formalized the prearranged transfer of the ambulance operation from the city to the fire district, which local voters approved in April. Had they not, Neoga would now lack a local ambulance service.

Monday's meeting "was making sure everything was set to go," said Rodney Williamson, fire district board president. The fire department will take over the medical calls on Oct. 1, according to City Clerk **Brenda Evans**. She added that the city will also give the fire district about \$9,000 from the city's ambulance fund.

In the months leading up to the April election, city and fire officials campaigned for transferring the service. They said the city could no longer afford to operate the two ambulances and pay two full-time paramedics. By more than a two-to-one margin, voters from the portions of Cumberland and Shelby counties within the fire district approved the establishment of a 0.3 percent property tax levy to finance the ambulance corps.

It had been funded through the general portion of the city's budget, because municipalities like Neoga are prohibited by law from taxing specifically for ambulance services. Prior to the election, fire department officials indicated they planned to retain the two full-time ambulance employees.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Brenda Evans

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Brenda Evans** is listed below.]

Journal Gazette (Mattoon, IL)

October 23, 2004

News

Author: Unknown

NEOGA

Boil order in effect for Neoga water customers

A boil order has been issued for water customers in Neoga until further notice, according to City Clerk **Brenda Evans**.

A leak in a water line is blamed for the order.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Brenda Evans

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Brenda Evans** is listed below.]

Times-Courier (Charleston, IL)

November 3, 2003

Neoga city clerk retires after 20 years of service

Author/Byline: Dawn Schabbing

Serving her community and teaching other city clerks the ropes has been Pat Ehrhart's joy for 20 years.

Brenda Evans replaced Ehrhart as City Clerk on Friday.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Brenda Evans

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Journal Gazette (Mattoon, IL)

August 9, 2002

Member: Cumberland Co. Board already has 'self-imposed tax cap'

Author: Dawn Schabbing

Cumberland County Board members operate under a "self-imposed tax cap" already, according to one county board member. The board is expected to discuss and vote on the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law referendum during its regular meeting at 7 p.m. Tuesday.

"Cumberland County has been living under a self-imposed tax cap for the last 12 years, except for one year when the board raised their levy above 5 percent, (which required a public hearing.) The rest of the time we've restrained ourselves in spending," said Ronnie McMechan.

While McMechan of rural Greenup wasn't sure how he would vote Tuesday on whether or not to put PTELL on November's ballot, he said 20 years as a township supervisor tells him "tax caps are not the answer." "For the first two or three years the taxes will probably go up. The reason behind that is the anticipation of tax caps; taxing bodies will levy the limit and so many of them don't do that now."

Others, including the executive director for the Township Officials of Illinois, said the matter is complex and if the county board agrees to let the people vote on PTELL, it should also make sure voters are well-informed. "I think if the tax cap question is put before the voters, a very serious amount of information should be put out informing the voters how it could affect all levels of government," said Bryan Smith of TOI.

Smith suggested public forums and guest speakers who are expert on the topic should be a part of a strong informational campaign. He said PTELL can severely limit the government in performing its functions. "It really does put a tight fist on them."

Two candidates seeking a seat on the county board in November think taxpayers should have a say. "I believe the people should have the opportunity to vote on it. I'm still in the process of investigating the impact of tax caps in Cumberland County," said Roy Gibson of rural Neoga, who seeks the new Central District seat.

Mark Ewald of Lake Mattoon, candidate for the Western District, said he researched "tax caps" and voters deserve the opportunity to vote on the matter. "The board is responsible for getting the pros and cons and accurate information out to the taxpayers so they can make an informed decision when they vote. I'm very concerned this board won't allow that to happen." Ewald said he supports tax caps, especially after reviewing the rising property taxes in the county and what he terms out-of-control spending by the county board.

Jill Layton of rural Toledo, Cottonwood Township clerk, said voters should be given the chance to say, but "only after the county board has adequately educated voters on ramifications of

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Brenda Evans

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

passing PTELL." Townships must worry about maintaining roads and bridges, plus snow removal, cemetery maintenance and general assistance, Layton said. "It is with these concerns I continue to investigate into the positives and negatives of a tax cap. "I want to absorb all I can about the proposed tax caps, as I am, No. 1, a taxpayer, but also an elected township official. I am aware of the financial woes of the rural townships."

But, another township official and strong supporter of PTELL said governing bodies must spend responsibly. Lloyd Lacy, Neoga Township supervisor, said if every taxing body would act responsibly on the tax increases, PTELL wouldn't be needed. "In 1999, Neoga school district raised the tax levy more than 29 percent, with around 13 percent going for the bond referendum for the new school. The rest was for the raise on the regular tax levy."

With tax caps, Lacy said taxpayers would see increases around 2 percent to 3 percent, the rate of the Consumer Price Index. "It forces governments to spend responsibly. "Anything over that has to be voted on by the people. If a taxing body could show just cause why they should raise taxes more than what the tax cap would limit it to, then they should show it and let the taxpayers have a say."

Neoga school Superintendent Bill Steichmann said the levy increase Lacy referred to occurred because several support staff retired that year. Because they retired under the early option plan, the district was forced to pay more into the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund. "Everyone thinks the tax cap is 5 percent, but it actually is much less, and as little as 1.97 percent for 2001-2002 school year. I know a school district in Lake County that has gone broke under it. Tax referendums have failed in that particular school district." According to Steichmann, now the Lake County district must be absorbed by another one. In Neoga, the school board has been fiscally responsible, he said.

Neoga resident **Brenda Evans** said if county voters approve tax caps, it would affect many taxing bodies, but as for schools, only Neoga would be affected. That is because a portion of Cumberland school district lies in Jasper County, which has not yet considered tax caps. "My feeling is that we won't be able to fund programs we have now under tax caps. In reality, there are tax caps in place because if a governing body wants to raise taxes more than 5 percent, they have to hold a public hearing. "If you ask members of governing bodies, they will tell you that nobody shows up at public hearings."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Brenda Evans

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Marion Republican (IL)
September 28, 2000

County to contribute to DHS program helping Seniors

Author: Bill Grimes

It's the second call that can be too much, says Carol Aronson. "If one of our clients makes a call for services, but gets referred somewhere else, they're often too sick to make that second call," said the program director for the Shawnee Alliance for Seniors. That's why Aronson and **Brenda Evans** of the Illinois Department of Human Services visited the Williamson County Board meeting Tuesday in an effort to secure start-up funding for a new initiative that would place a Shawnee case manager in the Marion DHS office for about 25 hours a week. The board agreed to give Shawnee \$1,800 to begin the program. Aronson said the program's annual cost has been estimated at about \$7,500 a year.

Aronson told the board that she would like to have a case manager in place by the end of next month. That person would be responsible for handling a variety of requests from more than 2,300 Williamson County seniors that have been identified as "frail." The idea, Aronson said, is to limit nursing home care to those seniors who need 24-hour supervision for medical reasons. "It's very expensive for people to be cared for in a nursing home," she said. "Then there's quality of life issues involved." Aronson said "frail" seniors include those who have trouble feeding, bathing or grooming themselves, as well as those who have continence or mobility problems. Less frail seniors can take advantage of senior citizen programs in virtually every community of any size, she said.

Shawnee case managers help clients with everyday living tasks in an effort to stave off the burden of long-term care. "Without the services we provide, many of our clients would be entering long-term care institutions," Aronson said. She told the board that the Shawnee Alliance served 2,313 seniors in Williamson County over the past year. She said that number was further subdivided into the number of people served from each ZIP code, including 919 in the Marion code and 490 in the Herrin postal service area.

Commissioner Rex Piper suggested that Aronson determine how many of these clients live within the corporate limits of municipalities. "Every city council might commit to some kind of assistance," he said. Chairman Robert "Bo" Emery said it would be hard for the board to commit to any more than the \$1,800 because of "unforeseen circumstances" that have hamstrung county officials for the rest of this fiscal year. **Evans** said she hoped the program could receive some sort of alternate funding after the start-up, perhaps from a grant program.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Brenda Evans
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Journal Gazette (Mattoon, IL)
January 7, 1999

Return to school brings mixed reviews

Author: Jeff Kelly

"Cabin fever" may be responsible for the strange reaction some local children had when they learned they had to return to school on Wednesday. "My kids were excited about it," said **Brenda Evans** of Neoga, who has two children, 10-year-old Chelsie and 8-year-old Brock, who attend Neoga Elementary School and Neoga Pioneer Elementary School, respectively. "They like school," **Evans** said. "They've got some really good teachers and have to do a lot more work around here when they're snowed in."

"I think it was time for them to go back," said Jodi Creed of Mattoon, who has an 8-year-old son, Marshall, who attends fourth grade. "He didn't want to go, but I think once he got to school, he was fine. I think it was time for them to go back." Many area children spent their four-day weekend playing Nintendo or riding around on snowmobiles. Most kids, however, found the below-zero windchills a bit too nippy to be outside building snowmen.

"I'm glad they're back in school," said **Evans**. "I also wish we could have all been snowed in so we could have spent more quality time together outside building snowmen and stuff instead of sitting inside."

"My kids didn't like it when they had to go back, but they were relieved to get out of the house," said Penny Dowling of Charleston, whose two children, Hannah, 7, and Kelly, 17, enjoyed the brief respite from school. "They went outside on Saturday, but I wouldn't let them go out after that," Dowling said. "It got too cold."

The most snow-related vacation days Mattoon school children have taken in one year is seven days, according to School Superintendent Richard Berg. Berg said this figure is not for consecutive snow days, just a total from an entire school year. When asked if he thought this winter would be full of snow days, Berg said, "The way the winter's starting off, it doesn't look very promising."

Berg said schoolchildren will have to make up the days they get off for bad weather, either in a school year that extends into summer vacation or with a shortened spring break. **Evans** said she thought students would be able to finish out this week but expects many more snow days to be called this winter. The extended weekend for kids didn't inconvenience **Evans**, as she works all day, but it probably inconvenienced the family members who took care of her children, she said. "The kids worked on spelling lists, read books, played with their cousins and drove their aunt nuts," said **Evans**.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Brenda Evans

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Brenda Evans** is listed below.]

Journal Gazette (Mattoon, IL)
September 9, 1998

Neoga Days Committee is year-round job

Editor, Journal Gazette:

The Neoga Days Committee would like to address some issues that have come up recently in Letters to the Editor.

First, concerning the conflict between the family reunions and the carnival -- this was apparently a scheduling conflict. The carnival was not told a specific time when they could come in and set up. Had we known there were reunions scheduled, the carnival could have been told not to arrive until later in the evening. We are sorry for any inconvenience to the families at the reunions and will take steps to ensure this does not happen again.

Second, in regard to the judging of the talent show -- each contestant was judged by three judges in four areas, 1) stage presence; 2) difficulty of act; 3) quality of performance; 4) overall performance. The judges rated each contestant individually and then the totals of the three were added to determine the winners. None of the judges knew who the winners were until the votes were tallied.

We feel that the letter about the talent show was offensive to the contestants. We did not think it was necessary for J.S. Harris to comment that one of them "screamed her way through" and one could not "carry a tune in a bucket." We respect the courage these people have to get up and perform on stage and we think they all showed a lot of talent.

As to the assertion that the winner's family "owns half the town" -- the winner was not from Neoga and none of the judges know her or her family. Maybe talent, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder. These three judges will gladly surrender their positions to anyone else willing to be fair and impartial.

Neoga Days is a three-day event, but the planning and preparation is a year-round job. The members of the committee volunteer their time and energy throughout the year to try to make this event run smoothly for the entire community. We welcome new people and new ideas at any time.

The Neoga Days Committee
BRENDA EVANS, chairwoman

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Brenda Evans

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Journal Gazette (Mattoon, IL)

January 27, 1998

Area Focus, Community to get advice

Author: Unknown

The Neoga Area Chamber of Commerce is inviting citizens and businesses to a unique meeting at 7 p.m. Thursday at the Municipal Building.

Brenda Evans, secretary, said Neoga Chamber of Commerce, recently participated in a Cooperative Extension Community Swap program in which another community critiqued Neoga on its businesses, churches, schools and friendliness of the community. These results will be made public at the meeting Thursday.

"The Community Swap program was established to help communities better their cities by having it looked at by outsiders," said **Evans**. The program allows a community to be critiqued from an outsider's point of view. "We go through here every day and some things go unnoticed or there are things we just get used to," she said.

Neoga was critiqued by members of another community in areas including: appearance of the community, layout and hospitality of the general public. The presentation will include handouts and slides and should be very informative, **Evans** said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Brenda Evans

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Journal Gazette (Mattoon, IL)

February 5, 1997

Domestic violence protocol OK'd. Law enforcement officials to

Author: Dawn Schabbing

NEOGA

In other business, the council appointed a policy review committee of six city employees in an effort to update job responsibilities and clarification of benefits.

Those on the policy review committee are Bob Althoff, **Brenda Evans**, Pat Ehrhart, Jim Short, Richard Kepp and Jim Ramert. Others will likely be named as to have at least one representative in each department and three council members on the committee, Pat Ehrhart said.

The committee will be reviewing duties of all city employees.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Brenda Evans

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Journal Gazette (Mattoon, IL)

October 23, 1996

Neoga residents made Railside Station possible

Brenda Evans

Editor, Journal Gazette:

This past week, citizens of Neoga, along with tourist just passing through town, have noticed activity next to the old Marathon station. Yes, they are putting in a sitting park for anyone who would like to enjoy a few nice flowers and trees. We drive these streets everyday and, for some people, it will be nice to see something other than tracks. This project was started more than two years ago when a few people got together because of their wishes to beautify the downtown area. These people have put many hours into planting poles and walls, Christmas lights, planting flowers, and fund-raising.

This past spring, about 200 people attended one of the fund-raisers that the Beatification Committee held. For a \$12.50 ticket attendees were treated to a sit down dinner. A group of fine volunteer students from our high school waited tables and supplied dinner entertainment. Bob Thomas and his staff served a meal that was outstanding. After dinner, those attending the event, were able to witness the Mt. Zion Swingsations sing and dance their hearts out. I don't think one person walked away that evening feeling they didn't get their money's worth.

The construction of the Railside Station has been FULLY sponsored by donations and fund-raisers. Total cost of this project is \$12,500. Several local businesses and organizations have donated their time and labor to install electricity, water, move dirt, etc. Anyone wishing to get involved with the community SPIRIT AND PRIDE of this group will be more than welcome.

Any Neoga area resident who has a concern, suggestion, or wish to help on the Beautification Committee or the Neoga Days Committee, please come to the next Chamber of Commerce meeting. It will be held on Thursday, at 7 p.m. in the Neoga Municipal Building's boardroom. A Neoga Days Committee meeting will be held one hour prior to the Chamber meeting.

I would like to thank those people who have been able to donate not only money, but time, to the many organizations that our small community has. I know after working all day and a family to raise the last thing anyone wants to do is attend a meeting or work on a project, but remember you ARE making a difference. We hope if you paint it, fix it, plant flowers, grow trees, others will do the same.

BRENDA EVANS

Neoga Area Chamber of Commerce Secretary

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Brenda Evans
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Brenda Evans** is listed below.]

Journal Gazette (Mattoon, IL)
May 4, 1994

East Coles County recognized by Covered Bridge Council

For the third year in a row, East Coles County received the President's Award for moving their unit towards the goals of the council.

The Covered Bridge Girl Scouts Council held its annual meeting April 13 at the Plumbers and Steamfitters Union No. 157 in Terre Haute. Council board members, staff, delegates and volunteers from all areas of the Council were invited to attend. An opening flag ceremony and song were done by the Girl Scout troops in Jasper County.

The meeting was called to order by Council president, Marilyn Custer-Mitchell. The meeting agenda included recognition of the 1994 top cookie sellers, guest speaker Patrece Dayton of WTHI-TV, adult recognitions and the election and installation of new board members.

Several awards were presented at the meeting.

The 1994 top cookie sellers were ; and **Brenda Evans**, Cumberland County.

Research Compiled by: Amanda Dillabough
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