



ILLINOIS SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION

Protecting Our Communities,
HONOR • SAFETY • SERVICE



NOV 2025

The inside stories for you! **SHERIFFS, LAW ENFORCEMENT & MEMBERS NEWS & UPDATES**

As we reflect on Veterans Day this year, the Illinois Sheriffs' Association extends our heartfelt gratitude to all our members, Sheriffs, and Sheriff's Office staff who have served in the United States Armed Forces. Your dedication to protecting our country and your continued service to our communities embody the highest ideals of duty and sacrifice. Though Veterans Day has passed, our appreciation remains constant.

Thank you for your courage, commitment, and example of leadership both in uniform and beyond.



VETERANS DAY

HONORING ALL WHO SERVED



*Illinois Sheriffs who Still Serve,
their Communities Every Day!*



ADAMS COUNTY
Sheriff Anthony Grootens
US Airforce | 1973-1976



CRAWFORD COUNTY
Sheriff William Rutan
US Army - Construction Engineer | 1986-1990
National Guard | 1990-1993



HAMILTON COUNTY
Sheriff Tracy L. Lakin
US Airforce | 21.5 Years



KNOX COUNTY
Sheriff Jack C. Harlan, Jr.
US ARMY | 22 Years



LAKE COUNTY
Sheriff John Idleburg
USMC | 1974-1976



LOGAN COUNTY
Sheriff Mark Landers
US ARMY (active) | 1988-1994
IL National Guard | 2007-2013



MACON COUNTY
Sheriff James Root
USMC | 1986-1990



MARSHALL COUNTY
Sheriff Wayne Strawn II
Airforce | 6 Years



MASON COUNTY
Sheriff Paul Gann
US Army Special Forces | 20 Years



MCDONOUGH COUNTY
Sheriff Nicholas Pettigout
USMC | 1999-2004



MONTGOMERY COUNTY
Sheriff Tyson Holshouser
US Airforce | 1999-2005



PEORIA COUNTY
Sheriff Christopher Watkins
Airforce | 10 Yrs, 4 Yrs Active



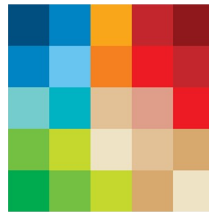
PERRY COUNTY
Sheriff Chad Howard
Marines- Infantry Rifleman-SGT
2011-2016
Knox National Guard - Infantry Rifleman - SGT



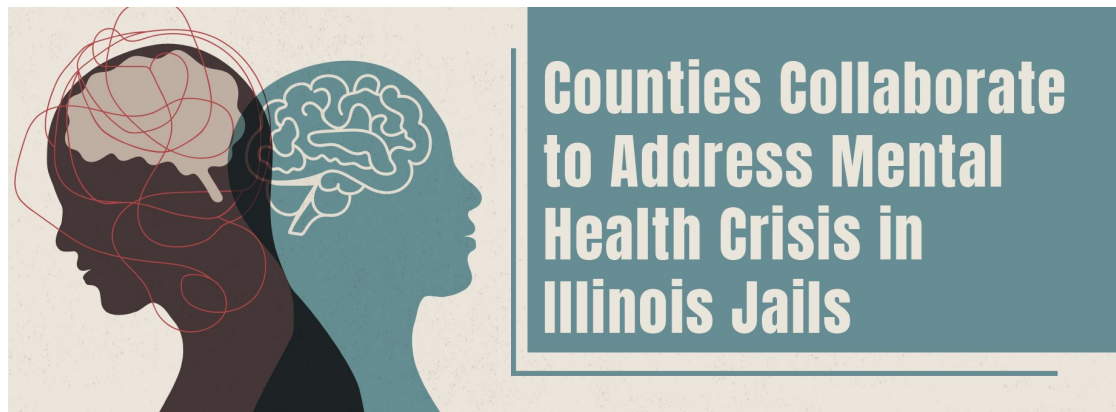
SCHUYLER COUNTY
Sheriff Bill Redshaw
Army - Vietnam (1968) 1965-1969



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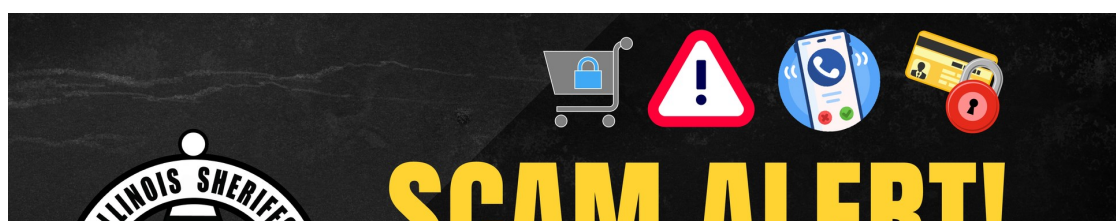


A pilot program launched in Kankakee County is changing the way Illinois handles inmates with serious mental health needs and inspiring other sheriffs to follow suit.

As jails across the state struggle to manage individuals found unfit to stand trial, the Illinois Sheriffs' Association (ISA), county sheriffs, and the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) are working together to provide a new model of care that combines safety, treatment, and collaboration.

To learn more about how the Kankakee program began, we spoke with Sheriff Mike Downey, who shared the story behind the pilot's creation, its early successes, and advice for other sheriffs considering similar programs.

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE HERE](#)





SCAM ALERT!

helpful tips for how
to protect yourself

ONLINE SHOPPING SCAMS: What to Look Out For This Holiday Season

Google has issued a warning ahead of Black Friday 2025, alerting shoppers to a surge in fake websites and scams posing as legitimate retailers. These fraudulent sites often use look-alike URLs and too-good-to-be-true deals to steal payment information and personal data. Shoppers are urged to be cautious, verify website legitimacy, and use secure payment methods to stay safe this holiday season.

Tips for Safe Online Shopping:

- Go directly to trusted retailer websites instead of clicking links in emails, texts, or social media ads.
- Watch out for deals that seem unrealistic - deep discounts on popular items can be a scam.
- Double-check website URLs for typos, unusual domain endings, or small spelling differences.
- Use secure payment methods, like credit cards, and confirm the site uses HTTPS.
- Enable two-factor authentication on your accounts and use strong, unique passwords.

Source: Forbes.com

2025 ISA Get to Know Your Sheriff Series November | Rock Island County



1.

What first made you get involved with law enforcement?

I grew up in a small community with one full-time police officer, the Chief. As a young teenager he occasionally allowed me to ride along while he was on patrol. I was immediately fascinated with the career and knew this was what I wanted to do with my life. After three decades of service, I have never regretted that decision.

2.

Describe your role as Sheriff in your Office and throughout your County:

Help provide the vision and mission for our office while hiring talented and qualified individuals that in turn will be our next generation of great leaders to continue serving and protecting Rock Island County.



*Elected as
Sheriff 2022*
33 Years in
Law Enforcement

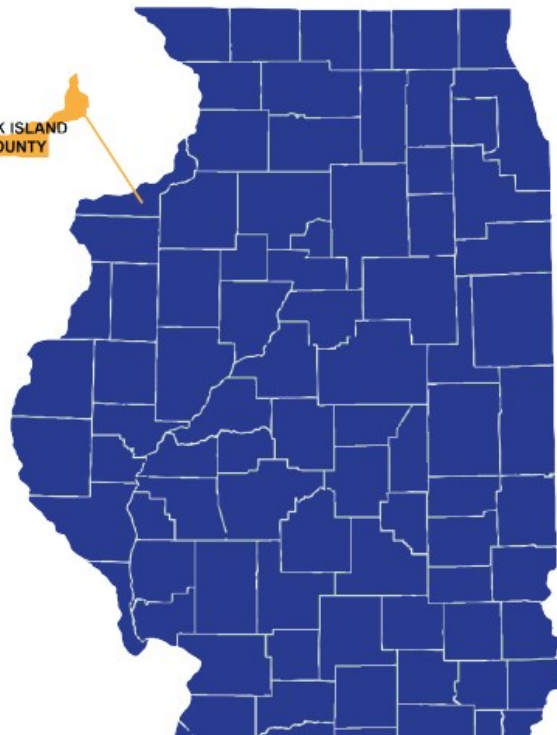


Population
Rock Island County
143,523



Average

ROCK ISLAND
COUNTY





3.

What is your favorite part about being Rock Island County Sheriff?

My favorite part of being Sheriff is the opportunities I have to get out and meet with citizens to explain how the Sheriff's Office can help make a positive impact in their lives. I often find people are not familiar with all that a Sheriff's Office does and the services we provide.

4.

Describe what drives you to get involved within the community:

That as the elected Sheriff, I have the ability to be a problem solver and to help make a difference, no matter how small it might be, throughout Rock Island County which has been my home for over 50 years.

5.

What's the best thing to happen to you because of your community or career in peace keeping service?

I was fortunate enough to attend the FBI National Academy in 2018, Class #271. That experience, along with my three plus decade career in the Quad Cities has help me build lasting friendships that would have never been possible if it weren't for my career in law enforcement.

6.

Tell us about someone or something that has influenced you:

My grandfather. He taught me what strong values were. That if you work hard, show loyalty and provide for your family, you'll be successful. I've tried to mirror his passion for life in how I have conducted myself as a deputy sheriff, a husband and as a father.

7.

What do you consider the biggest challenge in your community?

Individuals experiencing mental health crisis. This is a national problem and not one unique to Rock Island County. Unfortunately, law enforcement has limited resources to address this crisis adequately in most communities across Illinois.



How do you think someone meeting you for the first time would describe you?

My hope is that they would see me as someone who listens and is fair.



What advice would you give young people?

It's important to be honest and to be kind to others. It's also important to be confident and to be brave.

Understand the importance of an education or learn a skilled trade. I attended college late in life and graduated at the age of 50 with a bachelor's degree, the same year our daughter graduated college.

SHERIFF HART FUN FACTS:



**IF YOU WEREN'T DOING
WHAT YOU DO NOW,
WHAT WOULD BE
YOUR DREAM JOB?**

Professional Golfer



**WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN
YOU AREN'T WORKING OR
VOLUNTEERING?**

My wife & I enjoy biking & going for walks. We have a beautiful bike path in our community that runs along the Mississippi River. I also grew up around the game of golf & still enjoy playing with friends & family today



**WHAT MIGHT SOMEONE
BE SURPRISED TO KNOW
ABOUT YOU?**

I ran half marathon
a few years ago



FOLLOW THEM:
Rock Island County Sheriff's Office

Illinois Sheriffs' HOLIDAY STORE NOW OPEN!



DON'T MISS OUT - THE STORE CLOSING NOVEMBER 29!

STORE IS PRE-ORDER & ITEMS WILL SHIP 1-2 WEEKS AFTER STORE CLOSING





MORE ITEMS AND COLOR CHOICES AVAILABLE!

Proceeds from every purchase help the ISA continue its mission – supporting Sheriffs and building safer communities across Illinois.

SHOP NOW!

2026 ISA Conference & Training Schedule



ISA PRESENTS - Law Enforcement Continued Education Opportunities

Together, the Illinois Sheriffs' Association is making progress in the right direction by providing our Peace Officers with the resources they need.

Sheriffs Winter Training Conference

February 7-10, 2026

President Abraham Lincoln Hotel,
Springfield

Chief Deputy & Jail Administrators Conference

April 22-24, 2026

Embassy Suites, East Peoria

Civil Process

June 2026, TBD, East Peoria

Sheriffs Summer Training Conference

September 12-15, 2026

Embassy Suites, East Peoria

[Visit Our Website](#)

We would not be able to put our training and conferences on without our Preferred Vendors! The Illinois Sheriffs' Association would like to thank your vendors listed below!

LEVEL DIAMOND ELITE



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Biometric Intelligence & Identification Technologies



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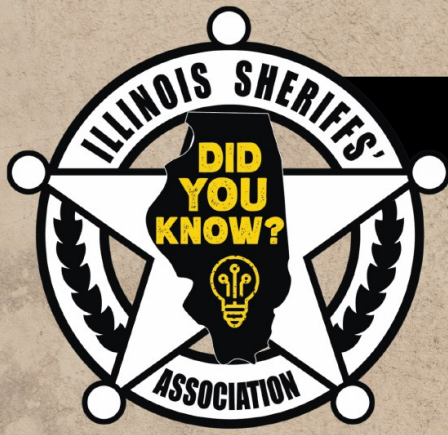
STELLAR
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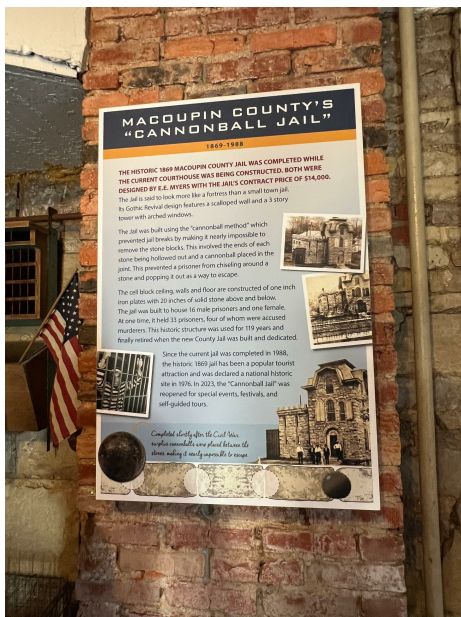




County Spotlight

Macoupin County: Cannonball Jail

By: Tamara “Tammie” Browning | Mother Road Moves



Route 66 in Carlinville, Illinois, was used for transport of illegal beverages in the 1920s, leading some people to incarceration at the Macoupin County “Cannonball Jail” right on that same Route 66. The jail was used for 119 years and is now open to the public for self-guided tours.

Built in 1869 a few years after the end of the Civil War, the Macoupin County Jail was constructed using the “cannonball method” which prevented jail breaks “by making it nearly impossible to remove the stone blocks,” a jail poster says. “This involved the ends of each stone being hollowed out and a cannonball placed in the joint. This prevented a prisoner from chiseling around a stone and popping it out as a way to escape.” The Cannonball Jail was built to house 16 men and one woman.

The official address is 205 E. 1st South St. in Carlinville, Illinois. The jail’s entrance was on the original alignment of U.S. Route 66. Route 66 went through Macoupin County during the end of the Prohibition Era. Taking place from 1920 to 1933, constitutional prohibition in the U.S. prohibited the manufacture, sale and transportation of intoxicating liquors for beverage purposes, according to the 18 Amendment (repealed by the 21st Amendment).





"The years which Route 66 traveled through Macoupin County coincided with the end of the Prohibition Era," a jail sign says. "There was a lot of bootlegging in the county which was recorded in the jail records. The arrests included possessing and operating a still along with selling and transporting intoxicating liquor."

Jail house stories

Ruthann, who refused to give her last name, was among those who were caught up in Prohibition busts. "I slept in that bed one night in 1927 and took a bath in that tub," a sign sharing Ruthann's story in the jail's female cell says. "The Jailer brung the water up. I got arrested here for cookin a meal for a gangster who was movin moonshine (homemade liquor) north. Sheriff Stubblefield arrested me sayin I assisted with illegal transportation of alcohol and it was prohibition times. Booze rolled pretty easy up Route 66 through Carlinville. There weren't many women who got arrested, but they got me. These are the facts, well, they might be." Information about jail life is placed throughout the jail, particularly in the form of "Jail House Stories."

The jail housed inmates but also was the residence of the sheriff, his wife and their children. "When a sheriff was elected in the 1800s, the citizens received two for the price of one," a jail sign at the door of the jailer's residence says. "The sheriff performed his duties of apprehending criminals while his wife did the cooking, laundry, and cleaning for the prisoners and her family." The second floor of the jail tower housed the family's living quarters, where the sheriff's and his wife's bed was located. The bedroom for the sheriff's children was in the tower's third-floor room.

"Until the 20th century, the sheriff's wife cooked and did the laundry in the basement of this building," the jailer's residence sign says. The "Hell Hole" was also in the basement. "This door within the floor leads to the 'Hell Hole,'" a sign at the basement's floor access door in the jail's foyer says. "Inmates were treated well but if they gave a Sheriff a difficult time, they'd be removed from the cell and sent to the 'Hell Hole.' This was a cell in the basement on a dirt floor that wasn't kept up well."



Jail break notwithstanding

Difficult inmates finally overcame jail personnel, making a jail break notwithstanding the cannonballs built within the jail's walls. Richard Walden was a jailer, dispatcher and relief janitor at the Cannonball Jail in his college years at Blackburn College during the 1970s. Walden shared in his "Jail House" story that he was around when three people, two of whom were brothers, were jailed for robbery. "They were notorious. This happened when I was working there," Walden says. The three men broke out of the jail one Sunday afternoon when another jailer was working. The two brothers overtook the jailer while he was retrieving metal lunch boxes and then sprang their companion out of jail. Later, one of the brothers was found in California and brought back to Macoupin County. "I happened to be at work when they were ready to arraign the prisoner and take him to the Courthouse to see a Judge," Walden says. "Someone said, 'Go get him and let's go.' As (Sheriff) Herb (Hoover) went past me, he gave me his firearm and said, 'If he comes out first, shoot him.'" At the courthouse, the prisoner lunged at the judge after his handcuffs were removed. The sheriff wrestled him back into handcuffs. "He was later convicted and sentenced," Walden says.

WHEN YOU GO

WHAT: Macoupin County "Cannonball Jail"

WHERE: The official address is 205 E. 1st South St. in Carlinville, Illinois.

The jail's entrance was on the original alignment of U.S. Route 66.

WHEN: The Macoupin County Cannonball Jail has free self-guided tours from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. April through October.

However, the jail will be open **Thanksgiving Day and Weekend:** Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, Nov. 27 through 30, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

INFORMATION: The historic 1869 Macoupin County Jail was completed while the current courthouse was being constructed. Both were designed by E.E. Myers with the jail contract price of \$14,000.

[MORE INFORMATION](#)



**From all of us at
the Illinois Sheriffs'
Association**

*We wish you a safe and
happy Thanksgiving!*

Winter Weather Prep: Tips to Get Your Home & Car Ready

As temperatures drop, now's the time to make sure you, and your home, are ready for winter weather. A few simple steps can go a long way toward keeping you safe, warm, and prepared for whatever the season brings.

HOME READINESS CHECKLIST

1. Schedule a heating checkup.

Have your furnace or boiler serviced to ensure it's running efficiently before the cold sets in. Don't forget to replace filters and test your thermostat.

2. Protect your pipes.

Insulate exposed pipes in basements, crawl spaces, and garages. On extremely cold nights, let faucets drip slightly to help prevent freezing.

3. Seal drafts.

Check windows, doors, and vents for leaks. Adding weatherstripping or caulk helps keep warm air in and energy bills down.

4. Clear gutters and downspouts.

Clean out leaves and debris so melting snow can drain properly—helping prevent roof and ice damage.

5. Test smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.

COLD WEATHER CAR CHECKLIST

1. Check your tires.

Make sure tread depth and air pressure are good. Cold air can lower tire pressure. Consider winter tires for added traction.

2. Test your battery.

Cold weather can weaken batteries. If it's over three years old, have it tested before the first freeze.

3. Top off fluids.

Use winter-grade washer fluid and make sure your coolant mix is right for freezing temperatures.

4. Replace worn wipers.

Good visibility is essential in snow and sleet. Keep an ice scraper and snow brush in your vehicle.

5. Pack an emergency kit.

Include a blanket, gloves, flashlight, jumper cables, snacks, and a small shovel, just in case.

Heating systems and fireplaces increase risk—replace batteries and confirm alarms are working properly.

6. Prepare for power outages.

Keep flashlights, extra batteries, blankets, and nonperishable food on hand. Make sure your phone stays charged and know where your emergency kit is.

7. Reverse ceiling fans.

Setting fans to spin clockwise on low helps push warm air back down into the room.

6. Keep your gas tank at least half full.

It helps prevent fuel lines from freezing and ensures you can stay warm if you're delayed in traffic or snow.

Sources: Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Ready.gov, National Weather Service (NWS), American Automobile Association (AAA), and U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)



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