

VIEW FROM THE CAB

Radio provides entertainment during work day

Even though my focus has shifted more toward agriculture in recent years, I continue to have a strong passion for local radio.

When I am doing a farm chore as simple as mowing, picking up sticks or moving a truck somewhere I always have the radio on. I especially find the radio companionship beneficial during the hectic planting and harvest seasons. I could not imagine driving that tractor or combine up and down the rows without listening to something in the background.

If I am having a bad day, radio improves my mood. When my favorite song comes on, I want to drive the tractor just a tad faster and crank it up. Nothing beats your favorite song just getting done on one station only to discover it is still playing on another.

I credit my parents with instilling in me a love for radio. At a very young age, I was broadcasting local news and weather to Mom in the house and Dad out in the machine shed.

During summer vacation, I had Mom read the news and I had to go in the house to wake her up to make sure she was ready for the 6 a.m. report. I won't forget those hot breakfasts she would bring me during my "morning show" each day.

When I was a little older, I would enjoy a cup of coffee with cream and sugar. Now I am a true radio broadcaster who sticks to black coffee.

When riding in the tractor with Dad as a child, I recall good old rock 'n roll playing on the radio. It was probably one of those good-time oldies stations like WIHN 96.7 out of Bloomington (remember the pink flamingo logo?) or WIRL from Peoria.

Mom would often have the radio playing in the house all day much like my grandma did. She listened to Problems and Solutions and the Don Munson Morning Show on WJBC for years.

My Friday afternoons on the farm will soon become a little more enjoyable thanks to the return of local radio icon Lane Lindstrom's Friday Afternoon Oldies Get-Together program, which will be heard on WGCY 106.3 FM each week from 1-5 p.m.

Lane's debut is this week so don't miss it. There is no better way to start your Memorial Day weekend than by listening to the tunes of the 1950s, '60s and '70s. I have offered to be Lane's fill-in man when he isn't available. This should be fun.

Welcome back to the local airwaves, Lane!
The latest farm news, podcasts, planting updates and more can be found at www.centralillinois-farmnetwork.com. Become a fan of "Central Illinois Farm Network" on Facebook.



Kent Casson
Ag Columnist

BUDGET

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"My advice to the governor today is that he and his agents are not being persuasive in the working groups," Madigan said.

The groups have been discussing possible changes to collective bargaining policies and how injured workers are compensated by employers, among other things. Rauner has said those changes are needed to improve Illinois' economy and that he would support a tax increase to close a \$5 billion deficit if he gets some of his demands.

The stalemate has highlighted the bitter rivalry between Rauner, a wealthy former venture capitalist elected on the promise to weaken unions, and Madigan, who has served as speaker for more than 30 years and controls much of the machinations of the Legislature.

Democrats have repeatedly said that Rauner's proposals on unions and workers' compensation would

be devastating to the middle class and have shown little interest in debating those issues at the state Capitol.

Illinois has operated without a budget since July after Rauner vetoed the out-of-balance plan Democrats sent him. But they also sent him education funding in a separate bill last year that Rauner signed, ensuring that schools would open. About 90 percent of Illinois' spending has been on autopilot due to court orders requiring payment in critical areas, such as Medicaid insurance for the poor and salaries for state workers.

The Democrats' budget proposal would fund everything except what's already covered under court orders. The state would be spending \$13.5 billion from its general fund, which is comprised of taxes. With federal funds and other money included, the total budget would be \$47.5 billion.

A huge chunk of the funding would go to public schools, which would receive a total of \$11.2 billion.

Rauner has repeatedly said school funding should be a top priority to ensure schools open in the fall, and what Democrats are proposing one-ups his suggested funding increase of \$55 million.

Democrats want to add \$700 million, targeting most of the money for poorer districts.

The governor's office blasted the Democrats' overall budget idea, saying an analysis shows their plan is \$7 billion out of balance. A full veto would throw schools into chaos this summer.

Republican leaders who met with Madigan and Rauner Wednesday were visibly irritated. Democrats have supermajorities in the House and Senate.

"My sense is (Democrats) have absolutely no interest in trying to save the state from going off the deep end," said Senate Republican Leader Christine Radogno.

After lawmakers adjourn on May 31, three-fifths support in each chamber will be needed for passage of anything.

ISSUES

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Karls also brought up a costly study and upgrades to the city's water treatment plant, per federal mandate via the Environmental Protection Agency in order to reduce phosphorus run-off into the Mississippi River, which has created an ecological "dead zone" in the Gulf of Mexico.

The administrator cited

the cost of the study as being \$180,000, which will determine how much phosphorus is in Pontiac's run-off. He didn't give a precise figure on what the treatment plant improvements would cost pending the results of the studies, but was sure it would "be in the millions."

While acknowledging that the financial challenges facing Pontiac sounded grim, Karls had a lot of praise for different areas of the city's develop-

ment that he felt residents should be proud of, such as Caterpillar opting to keep its Pontiac operations open as other plants around the U.S. closed down.

"While other communities got word that their plants were closing, we got word that ours was staying — and actually expanding by 160 jobs," he said.

Pontiac's city administrator also praised the TIF funding districts within Pontiac, which has pro-

vided the city some much needed relief from its burdensome pension obligations.

Karls went on to praise several construction projects that were either completed or are in the works, such as construction of the band shell in Riverside Park, the makeover of the new Eagle Theater and the plans to add another splash pad and putting it where the Historic Jail is currently.

CLINTON

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The audit found no evidence of a legal staff review or approval. It said any such request would have been denied by senior information officers because of security risks.

The inspector general's inquiry was prompted by revelations of Clinton's email use, a subject that has dogged her presidential campaign.

The review encompassed the email and information practices of the past five secretaries of state, finding them "slow to recognize and to manage effectively the legal requirements and cybersecurity risks associated with electronic data communications, particularly as those risks pertain to its most senior leadership."

Clinton campaign spokesman Brian Fallon underscored that point Wednesday.

"The inspector general documents just how consistent her email practices were with those of other secretaries and senior officials at the State Department who also used

personal email," Fallon said.

The audit did note that former Secretary of State Colin Powell had also exclusively used a private email account, though it did not name any other prior secretaries who had done so. But the failings of Clinton were singled out in the audit as being more serious than her predecessor.

"By Secretary Clinton's tenure, the department's guidance was considerably more detailed and more sophisticated," the report concluded. "Secretary Clinton's cybersecurity practices accordingly must be evaluated in light of these more comprehensive directives."

Republicans said Wednesday the audit showed Clinton was in clear violation of the Federal Records Act and endangered national security.

The State Department has released more than 52,000 pages of Clinton's work-related emails, including some that have since been classified. Clinton has withheld thou-

sands of additional emails, saying they were personal.

Critics have questioned whether her server might have made a tempting target for hackers, especially those working with or for foreign intelligence services.

Separately from the State Department audit, the FBI has been investigating whether Clinton's use of the private email server imperiled government secrets. It has recently interviewed Clinton's top aides, including former chief of staff Cheryl Mills and deputy chief of staff Huma Abedin. Clinton is expected to be interviewed.

Clinton has acknowledged in the campaign that the homebrew email setup in her New York home was a mistake. She said she never sent or received anything marked classified at the time, and says hackers never

breached the server.

The audit said a Clinton aide had to shut down the server on Jan. 9, 2011, because he believed "someone was trying to hack us." Later that day, he said: "We were attacked again so I shut (the server) down for a few min."

The next day, a senior official told two of Clinton's top aides not to email their boss "anything sensitive," saying she could "explain more in person."

On CBS' "Face the Nation" this month, Clinton said, "I've made it clear that I'm more than ready to talk to anybody, anytime. And I've encouraged all of (my staff) to be very forthcoming."

The audit said four of her closest State Department aides — Mills, Abedin, policy chief Jake Sullivan and strategy aide Philippe Reines — all declined interview requests.

RAUNER

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political process, especially when it pertains to the state budget," Garrett said. "You can't help but think if they don't follow through on this recommendation that that may impact their relationship."

Golden addressed four pieces of Republican-sponsored legislation that she told the AP would appropriate \$2.1 billion in spending for the current year and more for the budget year that begins July 1, although she did not know the amount for the coming year. She said

"there is no impropriety here."

"As we talk to legislators and say, please give us our re-appropriation so we can start these projects back up, these are the folks that are impacted by the shutdown, so we're just asking for their assistance," Golden said. She said the recipients' responses "would have no bearing on any future projects or any future bids."

Former Gov. Rod Blagojevich, a Democrat who served from 2003 to 2009, was criticized more than once for using state resources to push a political agenda.

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