



# SUNDAY Herald & Review

## Next chapter

Oakley Brick Church gathers in new home **SUNDAY BEST, C1**

## Football Notebook

Hayes shines in Week 1 as W-L starting quarterback **SPORTS, D1**



## Muted response

Pope meets with victims in Ireland **NATION & WORLD, B5**



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### SPECIAL REPORT: SAFETY ON THE SMALL FARM



JIM BOWLING PHOTOS, HERALD & REVIEW

Randy Toohill, of Randy Toohill Farms, is shown in his Wapella business. His brush with a dangerous grain bin situation is a reminder about safety issues for those in the farming industry, which remains one of the most dangerous occupations in America.

# SMALL FARMS, BIG RISKS

Despite advances, ag business one of most dangerous jobs in U.S.

**ALLISON PETTY**  
allison.petty@lee.net

As a longtime farmer in the Wapella area, Randy Toohill knows all about how to be safe as he goes about his day. He also is aware how fast a normal chore can turn into a threat.

In some cases, it's 29 seconds — how long it takes for someone to become engulfed in a grain bin and at risk of suffocating, according to experts.

Toohill once sank to his waist in his own grain bin and felt what people mean when they say your body weight doubles as you fight against current. Fortunately, he didn't enter without knowing that his father was at the door with his hand on a switch, ready to turn off the auger that was moving the grain.

"I was immobilized," said Toohill, 52, who encountered the situation about 15 years ago. "I eventually dug myself out, but you had to stop the flow."

Many farmers have stories of close calls, minor injuries or situations that could have ended tragically if not for one variable or precaution. If they haven't been in a serious accident themselves, their friends or neighbors usually have.

Despite advancements in technology, farming remains one of the most hazardous industries in America. Out of every 100,000 farmers, 21 will die each year from a work-related injury, according to the Centers for Dis-



Farmer Adam Brown is pictured with a mechanically driven sweep auger that removes grain from the floor of a bin without a person operating it inside. This kind of auger limits the dangers that come with other augers that require manual operation by a person inside the bin.

ease Control and Prevention. Tens of thousands are hurt in accidents that primarily involve tractors and other machinery.

Small family farms, in particular, are an iconic part of American heritage. They make up 88 percent of the 2.1 million operations across the United States, and are the backbone of the economy in many rural areas. Some families have worked their acres for more than a century, passing down through generations farming lessons along with the land.

Many farm families involve children in the operations from a young age. They learn valuable skills and responsibility, but also must be as cognizant of risk as the adults.

"I grew up on our family farm in Moweaqua," said Amy Rademaker,

farm safety specialist at Carle Foundation Hospital in Urbana. "I come to this as a farm kid, and tend to take for granted that dad and granddad and mom taught us this way of life. In no other occupation do you live and eat and sleep and play in the same environment. We take those things for granted. We have people come visit (farms) for agriculture literacy and we have to make sure the farm is safe and people understand the hazards."

Small farms carry the most risk, said Bob Aherin, a professor who runs the Agricultural Health and Safety Program at the University of Illinois and researches farm injury causes.

"The small family farm is one that tends to be one of our focal points because they have a much higher risk of injury than larger farms tend to have,"

### Safety on the small farm

This story is part of a series of the hazards on small agricultural operations in Illinois.

**SUNDAY:** While virtually every place of employment is getting safe, agriculture remains the deadliest industry in the country.

**MONDAY:** How do families balance helping young people learn the trade with staying safe?

**TUESDAY:** Safety improvements are often costly, putting operators in a juggling act.

**WEDNESDAY:** What farmers and groups are doing to keep the industry safe moving forward.

Visit [herald-review.com](http://herald-review.com) to see photos and videos of the farmers featured in our series. Join the conversation on the Dialogue page by sending comments to [letters@herald-review.com](mailto:letters@herald-review.com).

he said.

No one knows exactly how many people are hurt in accidents on small farms. Operations with fewer than 11 employees have long been exempt from inspection and enforcement by the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration. More than 58,000 adults had an injury performing

Please see **SAFETY**, Page A6

■ **INSIDE:** How slow-moving vehicles present a danger on area roadways. **LOCAL, A6**

■ **Also inside:** As the harvest approaches, here's a step everyone can take to ensure farmers are safe. **IALOGUE, B1**

### JOHN MCCAIN: 1936-2018

# McCain recalled as hero

Battle with brain cancer ends for veteran, maverick lawmaker

**NANCY BENAC**  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Sen. John McCain, who faced down his captors in a Vietnam prisoner of war camp with jut-jawed defiance and later turned his rebellious streak into a 35-year political career that took him to Congress and the Republican presidential nomination, died



McCain

Please see **MCCAIN**, Page A4

■ **MORE ONLINE:** Visit [herald-review.com](http://herald-review.com) to look at articles and photos of U.S. Sen. John McCain from the Herald & Review archives.

■ **Also online:** What are your memories of the senator? Join the conversation and share your thoughts at [herald-review.com/letters](http://herald-review.com/letters)

### MACON COUNTY BRIDGES

# 48 bridges in county rated as deficient

Plans in place to repair, replace many in coming years

**JAYLYN COOK**  
jaylyn.cook@lee.net

DECATUR — Macon County and Decatur engineers say they have funds and plans in place to repair some of the area's most structurally deficient bridges, but are being hampered by limited financial resources.

"We would like to be able to do more," said Macon County Engineer Bruce Bird. "If there was more road funding available, I'd feel a lot better about being able to catch up and get some of these bridges taken care of."



Bird

Please see **BRIDGES**, Page A7

■ **MORE ONLINE:** Visit [herald-review.com](http://herald-review.com) to see a map of Macon County bridges set for repair in 2019 and ones identified as deficient.

■ **Also online:** What ones should be added to the list? Share your thoughts at [herald-review.com/letters](http://herald-review.com/letters).

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**Dr. Nathan Pyle**  
Gastroenterologist

**DR. PYLE IS WELCOMING PATIENTS AT**  
**DMH GASTROENTEROLOGY**  
PHYSICIANS PLAZA WEST  
2 Memorial Drive | Suite 101 | Decatur  
**FOR MORE INFORMATION**  
**CALL 217-876-2756**



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