

## PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:

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Pana, Illinois: As a community bank, Peoples Bank & Trust recognizes the value of volunteerism in our communities. To recognize, commend and promote the volunteerism, Peoples Bank & Trust has established a program to recognize an outstanding community member for their volunteer efforts of improvement to our community.

Tom Latonis has been chosen as the Peoples Bank & Trust Volunteers of the Quarter for his many years of community service and volunteerism in the Pana community. His most recent endeavor is overseeing the project to bring a Union Pacific caboose to Pana.

Tom, a native of Petersburg, originally came to Pana in 1978, when he began working at WKXX radio station. He managed the satellite studio in Nokomis. In 1984, he began working in the advertising department of Pana News Palladium. He later became sports editor and managing editor in 1989. He worked at Pana News for 34 years, leaving in 2018. He currently is editor of the Breeze Courier in Taylorville.

Tom is the current Christian County Deputy Coroner and Pana Township Supervisor. He served as an Alderman on the Pana City Council for 12 years. Tom was past-president of the Pana Jaycees and has served on the Nokomis Homecoming Association, Pana Tri-County Fair Association, Pana Chamber of Commerce and Pana Quarterback Club. Tom is a 38-year member of the Pana Elks Lodge 1261 and was past exalted ruler. He is a member of the St. Patrick Catholic Church and Pana Knights of Columbus Council 896.

Tom was married to the late Cindy Phillips-Latonis for 27 years until her death in 2018. They have one son, Jacob Latonis, who is a cyber-security expert. He will receive his Master's in Computer Science from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, MD in May.

The current project of "Move the Caboose" to Pana is near and dear to Tom's heart. In 1984, Tom's father-in-law, Thomas Phillips, purchased the Pana Interlocker Tower at First and Main Streets in Pana. It was their dream to one-day move a train car to the property to memorialize the history of trains in Pana. Tom noted that at one time, across four rail lines, close to 30 trains went through Pana daily, carrying passengers and freight. They recently learned that a friend of Mr. Phillips and former Panaite, William "Butch" Morez, owed a Union Pacific Caboose. Mr. Morez passed away a few years ago and his wife is selling their property. In an effort to keep his caboose and his memory alive, Mrs. Morez has donated the Caboose to the people of Pana. Latonis is spearheading the effort to raise the funds necessary to move the caboose nearly 300 miles to Pana. This venture, of course, involves large hauling equipment, cranes, highway permits and new track and ties to be installed at the site in Pana. Anyone interested in supporting the project may

make a tax-deductible donation to the Pana Historical Society through their website at [panahistoricalsociety.org](http://panahistoricalsociety.org) or mailed to 38 Oak Street, Pana, IL 62557

In honor of Tom's volunteer services, Peoples Bank has made a monetary donation to the Pana Historical Society to benefit the caboose project and a plaque with his name will be placed on display at the bank.

Peoples Bank & Trust is an independent Community Bank with ten offices located in Pana, Taylorville, Altamont, Tower Hill, Charleston, Waverly, Morrisonville, Palmyra, White Hall and Springfield. Peoples is a full service bank offering outstanding customer service to consumers, small business, and farmers in Central Illinois. People First Bancshares, Inc., with corporate offices in Pana, Illinois, is the holding company for Peoples Bank & Trust.