

For Immediate Release:

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Altamont, 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 outstanding community members for their volunteer efforts of improvement to our community.

Peoples Bank & Trust has selected Sharon Harper as our Volunteer of the Quarter for the 4th quarter of 2024 for her efforts in creating Pickleball courts in Altamont.

Sharon is a resident of Altamont and became interested in pickleball several years ago. Since her retirement, she enjoys playing as much as she can. After driving to Effingham for several years to play Sharon wanted to see what kind of interest there was in Altamont. She contacted Dan Milleville, the mayor of Altamont at the time and asked if there was anyway the city would consider painting lines on the current tennis court in Norie's Yard for pickleball play. She was put on the city council agenda back in June of 2023. Several other interested Altamont residents attending the meeting and the city-approved volunteers, Dan Milleville, Patsy Mahaffy, Kyle and Sharon Harper, measured out two courts, painted them and the city donated two portable nets. Once they started playing, there was interest on improving the counts to add professional paint and striping for tennis, basketball and pickleball. Sharon went back to the city council meeting in May of 2024 presenting a quote from a business that specializes in court painting. She presented the quote and asked if the group could raise 1/2 of the costs, would the city be willing to pay the rest. With individuals and business donations, along with a food stand at the Wright House Wine tasting event, they have raised the funds to have the project started in the Spring when the weather permits. Sharon said, "It's a start and there are hopes and dreams of permanent courts to be a future project for one of the city parks in Altamont, if funding becomes available through possible grants."

Sharon grew up in Altamont and moved away to college, married her husband, Kyle in 1980 and moved back to Altamont in 1988. She is active in their church, St. Paul Lutheran Church ELCA, serving as church council treasurer, trustee of the cemetery association and treasurer, food pantry board and volunteers in other areas in the church as well. Sharon also is a board member and secretary of Arts Connection of Central Illinois/Effingham Performance Center (EPC).

Sharon enjoys playing pickleball 3-4 times a week, traveling with her husband and attending grandchildren's sport events. She also enjoys working with flowers, landscaping and lawn work and playing golf on occasion.

Peoples Bank & Trust will be honoring Sharon with a monetary donation to the GRACE Food Pantry and Sharon's name will also be placed on a plaque to be displayed at the bank.

Peoples Bank & Trust is an independent Community Bank with thirteen offices located in Pana, Taylorville, Altamont, Arcola, Arthur, Tower Hill, Charleston, Springfield, Morrisonville,

Palmyra, Tuscola, Waverly and White Hall. 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.