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WAS \$14,995.....**MARKET BASED PRICE \$9,994***
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WAS \$31,995.....**MARKET BASED PRICE \$26,483***
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WAS \$33,995.....**MARKET BASED PRICE \$27,235***
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WAS \$36,995.....**MARKET BASED PRICE \$29,727***
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WAS \$49,995.....**MARKET BASED PRICE \$39,993***

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- 2013 RAM 1500 LARAMIE 4WD**, V8 Hemi, auto, A/C, leather, power moonroof, parking sensors, heated seats. #33152A
WAS \$21,995.....**MARKET BASED PRICE \$16,928***
- 2017 RAM 1500 REBEL 4WD**, V8, auto, A/C, parking camera & sensors, new brakes, heated fold-away mirrors, Chrysler Certified. #32188B
WAS \$31,995.....**MARKET BASED PRICE \$25,993***
- 2018 GMC 1500 DENALI 4WD**, V8, auto, A/C, leather, NAV, parking camera & sensors, new tires. #43412A
WAS \$36,995.....**MARKET BASED PRICE \$29,709***
- 2020 RAM 1500 BIG HORN/LONE STAR 4WD**, 8cyl, auto, A/C, power all, parking camera, perimeter approach lights, Chrysler Certified, only 9,000 miles. #33237A
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WAS \$48,995.....**MARKET BASED PRICE \$37,995***
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WAS \$58,175.....**MARKET BASED PRICE \$41,561***
- 2022 RAM 1500 BIG HORN 4X4 crew cab**, V8 Hemi, auto, A/C, NAV, mopar loaded, parking camera, loaded. #P2891
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WAS \$20,995.....**MARKET BASED PRICE \$10,995***
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Amid record overdoses and drug counselor shortage, workforce expansion program aims to fill gap

Joint program offers funds, tuition assistance and stipends for future alcohol and drug counselors

By Dilpreet Raju
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

Amid five straight years of record overdose deaths in Illinois, a new state program aims to alleviate a shortage of professionals who work to prevent substance use disorders.

Illinois' behavioral health counselor workforce "is aging while new entrants are declining," according to a 2019 report to the General Assembly; 56 percent of certified substance use disorder workers in the state were over the age of 50 at the time.

According to the Behavioral Health Workforce Center's latest data from 2023, 81 of Illinois' 102 counties have fewer than 13 licensed professional counselors per 60,000 residents, straining those counselors tasked with servicing a large portion of the state.

To alleviate the workforce shortage, the state's Department of Human Services has partnered with the Illinois Certification Board to offer stipends to lessen the financial burden for those working toward certification in substance use prevention and treatment.

The 2019 task force report also found the state's "already below-national-average" number of behavioral health professionals dropped 23 percent between 2016 to 2018, coinciding with a two-year period in which social services funding was slashed

as lawmakers and the governor failed to approve a state budget.

While the state's human service funding has increased in recent years, an analysis from the Chicago-based Center for Tax and Budget Accountability, a nonprofit think tank, found that the current fiscal year marks the first since FY 2000 in which the increase outpaced inflation.

Workforce expansion

The Illinois Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor Workforce Expansion program launched in May and is currently set to run through June 2024. It offers aid in the form of scholarships, tuition payments, internship stipends, application fees and \$1,000 upon hire with a state-licensed provider, following graduation from an ICB accredited training program.

Adriana Trino-Pujals, executive director of the Elgin-based Latino Treatment Center, said the challenge to find, hire and retain workers in behavioral health has remained difficult, mainly due to economic constraints that can push students to consider other career paths. According to Bureau of Labor Statistics data analyzing 2022 payrolls, the median salary for a behavioral health counselor in Illinois is about \$48,000.

Some students who start classes to obtain a certifica-

tion can't afford to finish, Trino-Pujals said.

"And then you're going to take that same person and I'm going to tell them that we're going to pay them 30-grand a year. Well, at that point, I'd rather go work at Walmart," she said.

The new workforce expansion program is a partnership between the ICB — an independent organization that credentials several human services positions in the state—and the IDHS Office of Substance Use Prevention and Recovery.

Chris Boyster, executive director of the ICB, said the workforce expansion program aims "to ensure that there's absolutely no barriers for completion."

"Let's say you want to become a CADC, but that class is taught on Monday nights and Monday nights you don't have anybody to watch your child. It will cover day care," Boyster said.

The CADC Workforce Expansion program will also provide internship stipends up to \$7,500, providing some reimbursement for work that might otherwise have been unpaid. It can also be used to pay for application and initial certification fees, along with transportation and course costs. Fees associated with enrolling and studying to become a CADC run at least \$500, according to the ICB Schedule of Fees.

To qualify for the pro-

gram's \$1,000 hiring stipend, a student must be in the process of getting credentialed as a CADC and agree to a two-year employment period with a state-licensed facility.

Information on how to apply to participate in the program can be found at il-cadcworkforce.org.

The workforce expansion program received a \$3 million appropriation in the current-year budget. IDHS spokesperson Daisy Contreras said in an email the program's continuation in future fiscal years is "pending the availability of funds and program performance indicators."

Contreras said that while it's too early in the program's implementation to track significant trends, IDHS saw an "initial increase of approximately 30% in new applications" for the first half fiscal year 2024, which began in July. That followed a dip in the number of CADC applicants coinciding with the COVID-19 pandemic, she said.

Rising toll

During 2021, the latest year for which comparable data is available, more than 3,000 people died of an opioid-involved overdose in Illinois, while 1,995 in the state were killed by firearms, according to the Illinois Department of Public Health Opioid Data Dashboard and the Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention. That same year, 1,611 people in Illinois died of alcohol-induced deaths—more than the number of people killed in traffic accidents, according to KFF, formerly known as The Kaiser Family Foundation.

CADCs offer support and try to assess the needs of individuals who seek treatment.

Jen Anandel, who works as overdose prevention manager at Chicago Recovery Alliance, said that in addition to working hundreds of hours in unpaid internships to qualify for her CADC, she had to work multiple jobs to make ends meet. She became certified in 2018 and said her coursework focused heavily on abstinence and relapse prevention.

"Abstinence is the goal," Anandel said. "There was not really any sort of harm reduction education, or what do we do with a client who is continuing to use. How do we help that person identify their own goal, which may not even be abstinence?"

Anandel said she left her job in traditional substance use treatment because she saw an opportunity to help more people, and in a more direct way.

Trino-Pujals, who also serves as the ICB's treasurer, said the program is a step toward keeping more students engaged in the field of substance use treatment and harm reduction.

"We have a horrible

shortage," she said. The lack of CADCs "has hindered us to be able to continue to progress in our field."

'Too little, too late'

Trino-Pujals said she was inspired to become an alcohol and drug counselor partly because both of her parents worked in substance use treatment, and she saw her father recover from alcoholism.

"Once I took the test, it not only propelled me professionally, but it also helped me to understand a lot more of the fields, theories and different processes regarding (substance use treatment)," she said.

The ICB expanded its reach in November by naming eight universities, public and private, as accredited training programs, including Loyola University, Southern Illinois University Carbondale and the Chicago School of Professional Psychology. The move will make CADC courses more readily available to college-age students interested in recovery and treatment work.

The program is one of three IDHS initiatives aimed at addressing the shortage of behavioral health workers in the state, with the others being a loan repayment program and another workforce incentive program focusing on certifying people who have lived experience as

See PROGRAM, Page 6

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Lake County Jail earns reaccreditation from National Commission on Correctional Health Care

The Lake County Jail has again earned accreditation from the National Commission on Correctional Health Care by demonstrating compliance with NCHC's nationally recognized standards of care for correctional health services in jails.

Reaccreditation recognizes the Lake County Jail's ongoing commitment to providing quality health services for the incarcerated population. The

Lake County Jail was first accredited in 1998 and has maintained its commitment to meeting the requirements described in NCHC's standards for 25 years.

To maintain NCHC accreditation, the Lake County Jail underwent a rigorous professional assessment in July, 2023. During the assessment, a team of experienced physicians and experts in correctional health care surveyed

the facility for compliance with jail-specific standards in several areas such as patient care and treatment, health promotion, safety and disease prevention, governance and administration, personnel and training, special needs and services, and medical-legal issues.

"We have a constitutional obligation to provide health care to those incarcerated in our jail, and we are committed

to doing so with innovation, excellence, and efficiency," said Sheriff John D. Idleburg. "Great work to our health care staff, correctional staff, and leadership for their hard work and dedication."

For 45 years, NCHC's highly respected standards have provided guidance to help correctional health professionals and administrators improve the health of their incarcerated populations and

the communities to which they return, increase efficiency of health services delivery, strengthen organizational effectiveness, and reduce the risk of adverse legal judgments. The consensus-based standards are developed in consultation with national experts in correctional health care, mental health, law, and corrections.

"In continuing to achieve NCHC accreditation, the

Lake County Jail has demonstrated its commitment to quality, standards-based correctional health care," said Deborah Ross, CCHP, NCHC chief executive officer. "Accreditation is a voluntary process, and we commend the Lake County Jail for successfully maintaining this distinction. The health of incarcerated people is a vitally important component of public health."

Unions look to state for solutions after year of higher ed labor action

Report finds public university employees paid 21% less than state agency workers in similar jobs

By Andrew Adams
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

At public universities across the state, staff and faculty unions have faced a contentious year of negotiations and, in some cases, strikes.

Pay has been a major issue on several campuses and the unions are now looking to Springfield for potential reforms to the state's higher education funding.

At Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, negotiations are ongoing between campus leadership and the union that represents clerical workers.

Amy Bodenstab, who works as an office manager in the Department of Teaching and Learning, also picks up weekend shifts at a local domestic violence shelter and contract work in data analytics to make ends meet.

She is on the bargaining team of AFSCME Local 2887, which has been without a contract since June 2022. She said the low pay and perceived lack of respect has resulted in high turnover rates, hampering university staff's ability to do their jobs. She said it's especially troubling because of the complexity of the positions her union represents,

which can involve financial management, purchasing, scheduling and more.

"If you're staff, you're treated as 'less than,'" Bodenstab told Capitol News Illinois.

Nicole Franklin, a spokesperson for the university, declined to comment specifically on the ongoing negotiations but said the university "continues to bargain in good faith" with the union.

But Bodenstab's experience is echoed on other campuses around Illinois.

In mid-November, dozens of building services, clerical and culinary staff at Eastern Illinois University held an "informational picket" as negotiations continued between the local union and administrators at the Charleston campus.

"The number one issue is pay," Kim Pope, an office manager and the head of the local union, said.

Negotiations between the building services workers at Northern Illinois University are also ongoing. The head of the union there, Patrick Sheridan, also said pay is the focus of negotiations.

Research published this fall by the Illinois Economic Policy Institute, a think tank with strong ties to organized labor, found that pay for

staff at state universities is 21 percent less than the rate paid to employees at state agencies who are performing the same or similar work.

When controlling for hours worked, occupation and several demographic factors, the research found the average staff pay at state universities is 14 percent less than at state agencies.

Robert Bruno, a University of Illinois professor in the School of Labor and Employment Relations and lead author of that report, said these trends made him consider the impact on staff morale.

"You worry about turnover, about positions not being filled, about if people don't feel regarded or respected," Bruno said.

He also noted these trends could be explained by an ongoing trend in higher education.

"It starts to look like a more for-profit model," he said. "Part of that is a lack of support at the state level."

That research and recent university staff negotiations have led union organizations to begin planning a bigger request to the state in next year's budget talks — an ask that could prove challenging as early estimates from Gov.

JB Pritzker's budgeting office project a revenue shortfall for the upcoming fiscal year.

"We'll be pushing for an appropriation that can be earmarked for wages," Anders Lindall, a spokesperson for the statewide AFSCME organization, said.

He specifically pointed to Bruno's research as part of the reasoning for this push. "We're going to be talking to legislators about these systemic pay gaps," he said.

AFSCME is one of the most powerful lobbying organizations in Illinois. In the 2022 election cycle, AFSCME, through its state council and national organization, spent \$2.6 million on campaign contributions and expenditures around the state.

That includes over \$300,000 each in contributions to House Speaker Emanuel "Chris" Welch, D-Hillside, and Senate President Don Harmon, D-Oak Park.

In addition to staff negotiations, the past 12 months have seen a wave of strikes led by faculty unions. In January, faculty at the University of Illinois Chicago struck for five days.

In April, faculty at Chicago State University, Governors State University and Eastern Illinois University all went on overlapping strikes, lasting between five and 13 days. Northeastern Illinois University authorized a strike, although the faculty union there never formally struck.

In private higher ed, Columbia College Chicago faculty also went on an unusually long strike which lasted all of November and ended in mid-December.

Dan Montgomery, head of the Illinois Federation of Teachers, said after the Columbia strike ended that he

had "never seen anything like it in any other year."

"We're a strong labor state. I think those trends you're seeing play out in Illinois are playing out around the country," Montgomery told Capitol News Illinois. "We're just better organized."

Montgomery said he is "cautiously optimistic" that a new funding model being developed by the Commission on Equitable Public University Funding could help alleviate some of the problems that led to the strikes.

The commission, which was created by the General Assembly in 2021, is tasked with developing a new model for funding higher education. The legislature charged the commission with "remediating inequities" in the higher education system that have led to disparities in access for underrepresented students such as Black and Hispanic students and those who come from low-income families.

The commission's work is ongoing but was delayed by this summer's U.S. Supreme Court decision about affirmative action and race in higher education. While the commission's work is likely not going to impact next year's budget, it could create a drastic shift in the long term.

The model being developed will be similar to the funding formula used for K-12 schools in Illinois, which was rolled out in 2017. The K-12 model calls for an added \$350 million in funding each year and sets a funding adequacy target for each district. It then directs greater portions of the new funding to the schools furthest from their adequacy

target.

While the commission has not finalized a formula, some draft meeting materials presented at the board's November meeting suggest it would require as much as an overall \$14,000 per-student increase in state appropriations to fully fund higher education. With 130,000 undergraduates and 56,000 graduate students enrolled at state universities this year, these numbers suggest the needed funding increase could reach into the billions.

Lawmakers allocated about \$4.5 billion from the state's general revenue fund to higher education in the current fiscal year.

Any recommendations from the commission, however, would need to be approved by the General Assembly, leaving room for doubt when it comes to fully implementing — and funding — the commission's recommendations.

"The problem is always the problem: finding the funds to do it," Montgomery said.

The state revenue landscape could further compound the challenge. The Governor's Office of Management and Budget is projecting an \$891 million deficit for the upcoming fiscal year 2025, although that number drops to \$721 million when accounting for the statutory contribution to the state's "rainy day" savings fund.

"I think it's a signal that everybody, we need to be careful in Illinois, we have to balance our budget..." Pritzker told Capitol News Illinois when asked about the projection earlier this month. "And so, if that requires us to reduce the increases that may occur in certain programs, maybe that will be necessary."

Five-year transportation program approved by McHenry County Board

The McHenry County Board approved the 2024-2028 transportation Program for the McHenry County Division of Transportation.

The five-year program aims to implement the goals set in the 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan, including mitigating congestion, improving safety, promoting mobility for all, providing transportation choices preserving the environment and linking transportation and land use.

The five-year program is a financial planning tool to inform the development of the annual budget consistent with the County's Strategic Plan.

These goals prioritize projects that are included in the five-year program. The McHenry County 2024-2028 Five Year Transportation Program includes \$372 million in total project expenditures including:

- \$71 million for bridge work — 24 bridges and culverts are included in the program.
- \$37 million for the Public Safety and Health Program — identifying and improving

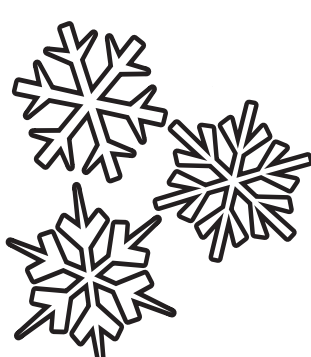
safety at critical intersection and corridors.

• \$22.1 million for MCRide dial-a-ride service — funded by a combination of Pace, Count and Federal dollars, the MCRide program provides flexible transit service throughout McHenry County.

• \$133.5 million for the Woodstock Railyard project — this project is a top priority of METRA allowing for improved train service along the Union Pacific Northwest Line.

McHenry County is expected to receive \$163.9 million in revenue over the five-year period, which will leverage an additional \$204 million in federal, state and local funding for projects. Revenue sources are derived from a mix of user fees such as state motor fuel tax allotments and the local county-option motor fuel tax, and non-user fees such as the transportation sales tax and two property tax levies.

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SUBMITTED PHOTO Hi-Liter/MCN

Shown above is the grand prize winner of the 'I Voted' sticker contest held by the Lake County Clerk's Office. The sticker was designed by Annika in the 6-8th grade category. There were over 220 submissions in the three age categories.

Lake County Clerk's Office announces the winners of this year's 'I Voted' sticker design contest

The Lake County Clerk's Office is delighted to announce the exceptional talents showcased in the recently concluded "I Voted" sticker design contest. After receiving over 220 submissions from creative young minds across Lake County, three outstanding individuals have been selected as winners in their respective categories.

The winners of the contest are as follows:

Annika - Winner of the 6th through 8th grade category and the grand prize winner from all grade levels.

Annika's exceptional artistry secured the grand prize, earning the honor of having their design transformed into the official Lake County "I Voted" sticker in 2024! Annika is a 7th-grade student at Woodlawn Middle School. After learning of her victory, Annika had the following to say, "I'm so happy! I've entered many drawing contests before but I've never won. I'm super excited and can't wait to see my drawing in a sticker!"

Caleb - Winner of the Kindergarten through 5th grade category.

Caleb, a 4th-grade student at Beach Elementary School, impressed the judges with an imaginative and vibrant design in the Kindergarten through 5th grade category.

Puja - Winner of the 9th through 12th grade category.

Puja, a senior at Barrington High School, stood out in the 9th through 12th grade category with a design that captured the essence of civic engagement and creativity.

"We were astounded by the talent and creativity displayed by all the participants in the 'I Voted' sticker design contest," stated Anthony Vega, Lake County Clerk. "The dedication and enthusiasm shown by Annika, Caleb, and Puja is exemplary, and their designs truly embody the spirit of our community."

The winning designs will be showcased and celebrated across various platforms to honor the talent and contribution of these remarkable individuals.

The clerk's office extends their heartfelt congratulations to Annika, Caleb, and Puja for their outstanding achievement and thank all the participants for their remarkable submissions!



SUBMITTED PHOTO Hi-Liter/MCN

Experience the magic of Frozen Jr.

From January 11 to 14, PM&L Theatre will present Frozen Jr. each evening at 7 p.m. and special 2:30 p.m. matinees on Saturday and Sunday. Audiences of all ages will be mesmerized by the story of Anna, Elsa, and the vibrant world of Arendelle, brought to life with stunning visuals, captivating music and a tale that warms the heart. Tickets can be purchased online at pmltheatre.com or by calling 847-395-3055.

County creates FAQ page for mental health board sales tax referendum

Voters who have questions regarding the upcoming McHenry County Mental Health Board sales tax referendum can find answers on the county website.

McHenry County Government has created a frequently asked questions page regarding the referendum; it can be found at <https://www.mchenrycountyil.gov/MHBSalesTaxFAQ>.

The page is strictly informational and does not take a position for or against the referendum.

The County Board at its Dec. 19 meeting passed a resolution to place the referendum on the March 19 primary ballot. If approved, it would impose a quarter-percent sales tax to fund mental health initiatives, which would mean that a consumer would pay an additional 25 cents in sales tax for every \$100 of retail purchases. The revenue would eliminate the need for the county to continue levying property tax to fund the

Mental Health Board; the levy now stands at \$10,975,000. The McHenry County Mental Health Board was created by voter referendum in 1967 to fund local agencies that treat and educate county residents affected by mental illness, developmental disability and substance abuse, and to help other populations in need of behavioral health care. You can learn more about the board and its mission by visiting www.mc708.org; mental health boards are often called "708 Boards" on account of the Illinois House of Representatives bill number that allowed their creation.

Early voting for the March 19 primary begins Thursday, Feb. 8, and the application period is open for voters to apply for a vote-by-mail ballot; they can do so by visiting www.mchenrycountyclerk.gov, or by visiting the County Clerk's Office at the County Administration Building, Room 107, 667 Ware Road, Woodstock.

Community briefs

'In Search of Eagles!' set for Jan. 20

When rivers freeze, and around open water downstream of dams, eagles begin to congregate. On Saturday, Jan. 20 from 8-10 a.m., join "In Search of Eagles!". No reservations are needed for this program that will take place in four locations: Williams Bay Boat launch (Williams Bay, WI), McHenry Dam, Algonquin Dam, and Carpenter Dam.

Stop by anytime and see what we're seeing including eagles, ducks and other water birds. Look through the volunteers' scopes and binoculars, or

bring your own. Whether there is ice or not, there should be birds.

This program is sponsored by Friends of Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge, McHenry County Audubon, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, McHenry County Conservation District, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services and Friends of Moraine Hills State Park.

Free diabetes, pre-diabetes workshop offered

If you or someone you care about has diabetes or pre-diabetes, the 'Take Charge of Your Diabetes' is a good fit for you.

A six-week virtual program allows participants to build skills and learn helpful tools from the comfort of home. Virtual sessions are on Thursdays, from January 18 to February 22, from 5:30-8 p.m.

Topics covered are: monitoring, healthy eating, menu planning, medication management and more. Participants will achieve greater awareness and improved self-management of diabetes.

The program requires use of a computer, tablet or smartphone with a camera and internet access. Tech support will be available at each class. Seats are limited for this program. To register for the no

cost program call Carol Wagoner, RN at 815-334-4580.

Holiday tree recycling available through Feb. 1

Bring your real, undecorated tree to marked drop-off sites at forest preserves around Lake County, open 6:30 am-sunset daily, through February 1.

Locations for tree drops off are as follow:

- Grant Woods Forest Preserve, 25405 W. Monaville Road, Ingleside.
- Half Day, 24255 Milwaukee Ave., Vernon Hills.
- Heron Creek, 22890 N. Old McHenry Road, Lake Zurich.
- Lakewood Forest Preserve, 27277 Forest Preserve Road, Wauconda.

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(262) 539-4460 Ask for Don
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SUBMITTED PHOTO Hi-Liter/MCN

Pet of the week

Gatsby, is about a year and a half old, neutered, up-to-date on shots, tested negative for FIV and heartworm and microchipped.

While walk-ins are welcome, adoptions are by appointments only to ensure we have the staff available to help adopters. For information and/or to complete an online application, please visit www.saveapetil.org/adopt.

Statement regarding McHenry County's response to potential asylum seeker arrivals

Given the arrival of asylum seekers at suburban locations across the Chicagoland region, McHenry County Government is stating its position and how it will respond should additional asylum seekers arrive within its boundaries.

McHenry County does not have the authority to direct a municipality to assume any role in housing asylum seekers, but it may facilitate the efficient transportation of asylum seekers to the consolidated resources of the State of Illinois in the City of

Chicago.

While there is no advance notice as to when and where asylum seekers may arrive, McHenry County representatives and Emergency Management have been in regular communication with municipal mayors, managers, and law enforcement to discuss the coordination of responses.

McHenry County prioritizes the safety and well-being of all who visit and reside here, and it will continue to closely monitor this evolving situation.



New Years Sales Event*

P15507A



2016 KIA SOUL
\$6,990

240124A



2015 KIA RIO LX
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P15723



2020 CHEVY TRAX LS
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2021 TOYOTA COROLLA LE
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230535B



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2019 GMC ACADIA SLE
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P15749



2021 CHEVY MALIBU LS
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P15732



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PB15700



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240306A



2020 FORD F-150 XLT
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2017 TOYOTA HIGHLANDER LIMITED
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P15532AA



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\$29,990

P15685A



2018 CHEVY SILVERADO LTZ
\$30,390

230250A



2020 GMC ACADIA SLE
\$30,490

240140A



2019 CHEVY TRAILBOSS
\$30,790

P15722



2021 RAM WARLOCK
\$31,290

230520A



2022 HONDA ODYSSEY EX-L
\$31,490

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2021 CHEVY COLORADO Z71
\$32,990

P15659



2021 RAM BIG HORN
\$33,290

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2019 KIA STINGER GT
\$33,790

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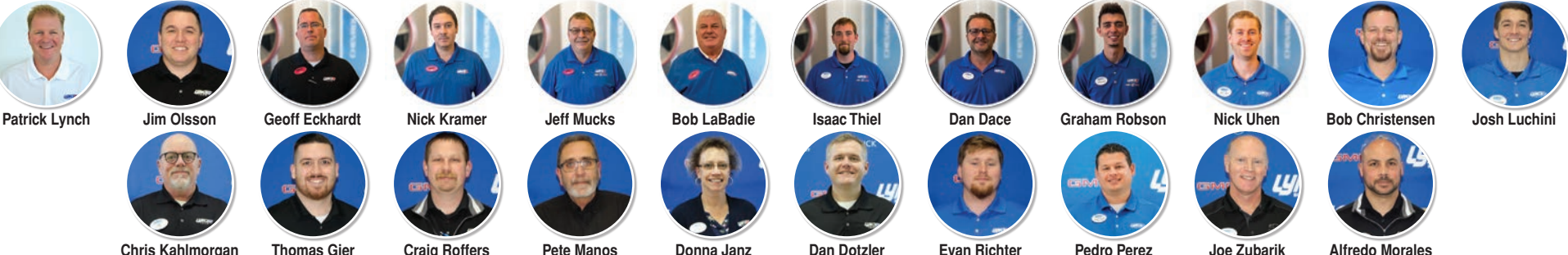


2021 DODGE DURANGO R/T
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P15696



2022 GMC CANYON ELEVATION
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Madigan trial delayed until October for SCOTUS review of bribery statute

At court hearing, former Democratic powerhouse makes first appearance in court

By Hannah Meisel
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

Former Illinois House Speaker Michael Madigan won't be spending his 82nd birthday in a federal courtroom this spring after a judge on Jan. 3 granted his request to delay his bribery and racketeering trial originally set to begin April 1.

Madigan claimed the small victory while appearing in court for the first time since he was indicted nearly two years ago, opting to show up in person to a hearing at the Dirksen Federal Courthouse Jan. 3 despite having been granted permission to appear via video-conference. Sporting a black suit and royal blue tie, the former speaker spoke only once during the hearing.

"Yes I do, your honor," Madigan said in reply to U.S. District Judge Robert Blakey's question as to whether he consented to the trial's rescheduling to Oct. 8.

The trial is now scheduled for several months after the U.S. Supreme Court is expected to weigh in on the

case of a northwest Indiana mayor convicted under the same federal bribery statutes at play in Madigan's case. Attorneys for the former speaker and his codefendant argued the high court's ruling could affect the outcome of Madigan's case.

Blakey agreed during the hourlong hearing, likening the risk of going to trial prior to the Supreme Court's expected June ruling to stepping on a Lego brick.

"I'd go, 'George! I thought I told you to pick up the Legos!'" Blakey said, recounting telling his then-young son to clean up his toys. "And he'd say, 'Eh, I picked up most of them.'"

Blakey acknowledged that while only a third of the 23 charges Madigan is facing could be affected by the high court's ruling and posited that no parties involved want to "walk into a dark room with no shoes on" and be thrown a Lego by the Supreme Court.

Most critically, Blakey said, delaying the trial until after the Supreme Court's

ruling would avoid the possibility of having to redo the entire trial, which he said would be a waste of everyone's resources. Government prosecutors opposed the delay, but in a filing Tuesday evening offered that they'd be willing to reevaluate jury instructions if the high court had not ruled by the time the case was nearing a close in late spring.

But Blakey rejected that solution, saying the "critical juncture" for clarity on what the federal bribery statute says does not occur during jury instructions. Rather, he said, it occurs even before opening statements begin, as attorneys on both sides prepare for trial.

"You're absolutely right: there's a bunch of the case that won't be affected," he said. "But there's enough of the case that's going to be affected that it might require retrial."

The case at issue on the Supreme Court's docket is a review of a 2021 conviction of a northwest Indiana mayor who accepted \$13,000 from

a company that had recently won contracts to sell garbage trucks to the city. The high court accepted the case last month and is expected to clarify whether "gratuities" are the same as bribes, even if there's no quid pro quo agreement in place.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Amarjeet Bhachu pointed out that prosecutors in the Northern District of Illinois are overseeing that case, which stems from Portage, Indiana, about 20 miles east of the Illinois border.

"When you corruptly solicit a payment ... an actual quid pro quo isn't required," Bhachu maintained during the Jan. 3 hearing.

But Federal appeals courts have split on the issue, and Madigan has already attempted to have the case dismissed on similar grounds, though Blakey has yet to rule on that motion from last year.

Madigan was forced out of his 36-year reign as House Speaker in early 2021 as pressure grew from his own

Democratic caucus after he was cited as "Public Official A" in federal charging documents against electric utility Commonwealth Edison and former top lobbyists and executives at the company.

Prosecutors alleged ComEd bribed Madigan with jobs and contracts for his political allies in exchange for favorable legislation in Springfield. ComEd agreed to pay a \$200 million fine as part of its resolution of the legal action against it, while the company's former CEO and three ex-lobbyists fought the charges in a seven-week trial last spring. All were ultimately convicted by a jury.

The four are still awaiting sentencing, which was originally scheduled for January before being delayed due to court scheduling conflicts. Also awaiting sentencing is the former ComEd executive who wore a wire against his colleagues and became the government's star witness in last year's trial.

Madigan wasn't indicted

until March 2022, more than a year after he'd stepped down from nearly every public office he'd held, including as head of the state's Democratic Party and the legislative seat he'd kept for 50 years representing Chicago's southwest side.

The indictment was largely a repackaging of allegations from the ComEd cases, claiming Madigan and his codefendant—ComEd's longtime top outside lobbyist Mike McClain—ran a "criminal enterprise" via the power Madigan had accumulated from his positions as both a political power broker and name partner in a Chicago-based property tax law firm.

In October 2022, the feds added an additional count alleging telecommunications giant AT&T Illinois had been part of a bribery scheme similar to ComEd's, wherein the company allegedly gave jobs and contracts to Madigan allies in exchange for favorable treatment in Springfield.

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Safety tips offered for National Radon Action Month

The McHenry County Department of Health (MCDH) is encouraging all residents to test their homes for radon as part of National Radon Action Month.

Radon is a naturally occurring colorless, odorless, tasteless, radioactive gas produced during the natural decay of uranium, an element that occurs in rock and soil of the earth's crust.

Radon can enter a building through the ground into lower levels such as basements, floor drains, sump pits, crawl spaces, foundation cracks and gaps around pipes and wires. It is harmless when dispersed in outdoor air, but it can be harmful to an occupant's health when it becomes concentrated inside closed spaces like homes and buildings and if it reaches elevated levels.

Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer deaths in the United States, according to the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention. The only way to know your level of radon exposure is to test for it in the livable areas of your home. Radon-related health risks are preventable with a simple home detection test. Homes with elevated levels of radon can often be fixed inexpensively, but the cost may depend on the type of home construction.

McHenry County has been classified as a Zone 2 or medium risk for radon, a predicted average indoor radon screening level between 2 and 4 picocuries per liter (pCi/L), but all homes should be tested regardless of geographic location.

To help McHenry County residents keep their homes safe, short-term radon test kits are available for \$8 at MCDH's Division of Environmental Health office, 667 Ware Road, Suite 110, Woodstock. Test kits can also be found at most hardware stores and online. People are encouraged to test their homes for radon every two years, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Testing for radon is simple, and directions are provided with each test kit.

"The only way to know if you and your family are at risk of radon exposure is by testing your home. Testing should be completed in the lowest level of the home that is frequently occupied, and testing in the winter is ideal since there is less opportunity for radon to escape since we tend to keep our windows and doors closed during the colder months," said Patricia Nomm, MCDH Director of Environmental Health.

If testing reveals radon levels that meet or exceed the action level of 4.0 pCi/L, residents are strongly encouraged to take corrective action to reduce exposure to radon gas.

For more information about radon, contact MCDH's Division of Environmental Health at (815) 334-4585 or visit <https://www.mchenrycountyil.gov/departments/health-department/environmental-health/public-health- nuisance/radon>. Additional radon resources and information can be viewed at <https://iemaohs.illinois.gov/nrs/radon.html>.

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•Program (Continued from page 2)

peer support specialists.

Still, many advocates say the recent state efforts are not nearly enough. Andel, for example, said she fears the hiring stipend is still too low to incentivize people to pursue a certification.

"Two years for \$1,000? I'm going to keep it real here, come on," Andel said.

John Werning, the executive director of Chicago Recovery Alliance—a harm reduction organization founded over three decades ago—said he is skeptical of state investment in an overdose program that isn't directly aimed at slowing the state's death toll.

"People who use drugs far outnumber the amount of people who are seeking or treatment or who qualify for a substance use disorder diagnosis," he said. "We've never seen a reduction in the demand for drug use in this country and we've only seen overdose rates climb."

Werning said there remains a need for investment in more social service programs such as overdose prevention sites because a diversity of options expands what people can utilize, hopefully saving more lives.

"It might also be too little, too late," he said, "we need broad, really tremendous investments in social services across the board, not just treatment modalities."

Sheriff's reports

Investigation into juvenile death leads to arrest

On January 3, at approximately 10:50 a.m., McHenry County Sheriff's Office responded to the 9600 block of Hill-andale Lane, unincorporated Richmond for an outside assist to Richmond Township Fire Protection District. The call was for a medical emergency involving an unresponsive juvenile male. He was later pronounced deceased at the hospital.



Cara Ullrich

As a result of the ongoing investigation, Cara Ullrich, 45, of Round Lake Beach, was arrested on outstanding warrants and the following charges. Warrants: failure to appear for 2020 charges of Violation of Order of Protection & Domestic Battery, and Failure to appear for 2021

charge of Aggravated Battery. New Charges: 2 counts of Possession of a Controlled Substance (Class 4) and 2 counts of Endangering the Life or Health of a Child (Class A).

The investigation remains ongoing, and more information will be released as it becomes available.

Update to August multiple death investigation in domestic dispute

McHenry County Major Investigations Assistance Team (MIAT) and McHenry County Sheriff's Office have concluded their investigation on an August 9, 2023 death investigation in unincorporated Crystal Lake.

The incident occurred on August 9, at approximately 3:56 a.m., when McHenry

County Sheriff's Deputies were dispatched to the 5800 block of Wild Plum Road in unincorporated Crystal Lake for reports of multiple gunshots fired.

Upon arrival on scene, deputies located three deceased adult females, an adult female seriously injured, and an adult male, identified as the shooter, seriously injured from gunshot wounds. They were also identified as family members.

Upon further investigation, it was concluded that the incident was a familial domestic situation that escalated from a verbal dispute to physical violence. The male shot at all four females, killing three, before shooting himself. He later died in the hospital. The fourth female survived the incident and since been released from the hospital.

McHenry County Sher-

iff's Office did not have any contact at this residence prior to this incident. The shooter possessed a valid FOID card and Illinois Concealed Carry License.

Throughout the investigation, it was discovered that the shooter was most likely suffering from a mental health crisis. McHenry County Sheriff's Office and its partnering law enforcement agencies work with the Police Social Work Program and countless other local social service providers who are specifically trained in aiding residents with many conditions and circumstances. We encourage community members to take advantage of these resources.

McHenry County Sheriff's Office would like to thank MIAT, Crystal Lake Police Department, and all rescue personnel for their assistance during this incident.

Lake County jail to temporarily house some inmates at McHenry County jail

Lake County Sheriff John D. Idleburg entered into an agreement with the McHenry County Sheriff Robb Tadelman to temporarily house up to 150 Lake County Jail inmates at the McHenry County Jail. This transfer is necessary to alleviate safety concerns amid a staffing crisis at the Lake County Jail. With current employee vacancies, staff on FMLA, and other absences, the Lake County Sheriff's Corrections Division is down nearly 40% of its normal staffing levels.

Currently, correctional officers are being forced to monitor a higher number of inmates, leading to considerable safety issues. Based on the current staff to inmate ratio, correctional officers cannot adequately perform their duties to ensure both they and the inmates remain safe.

Through this one-year agreement, extendable up to two-years, Lake County will pay \$100 per day, per inmate housed at the McHenry County Jail. McHenry County Corrections will transport all inmates to and from each jail, and ensure those being temporarily housed in McHenry County will be back in Lake County for their required court appearances.

It is expected with the reduction in overtime costs, reduction in cost for meals/medical care/other items for those housed in McHenry County, that there will be little to no additional financial costs incurred by the Lake County Sheriff's Office.

The Lake County inmates temporarily being housed in McHenry County will have the ability to meet with their attorneys virtually in a private setting via Zoom, in person at the McHenry County Jail, or by telephone. They will also have the ability to communicate with anyone they choose, as they do in Lake County, unless restricted by the Court.

Both Lake County Correctional Administration and McHenry County Correctional Administration will conduct regular operational reviews and assessments of this new program to determine its feasibility and operational efficiency. There are no mandates in the agreement for a specific number of inmates to be housed in McHenry County Jail, and the agreement can be terminated should it be necessary.

McHenry County Jail will begin receiving Lake County inmates the week of January 7.

Sheriff John D. Idleburg said, "I am very thankful for the assistance of McHenry County Sheriff Robb Tadelman and his team. I cannot praise my correctional employees enough for all they've done during this staffing shortage. We will continue working toward filling staffing vacancies and I will continue advocating to Lake County leaders that increased pay for corrections staff, retention and sign-on bonuses are essential to recruiting and retaining high-quality employees."

McHenry County Sheriff

Robb Tadelman said, "I'm happy and honored to assist Sheriff Idleburg and the Lake County Sheriff's Office of housing inmates in their time of need. The McHenry County Sheriff's Office is committed to working with our local law enforcement partners to assure the mission of safety is not lost."

While Illinois Sheriffs have statutory authority to house inmates in adjoining county jails, Sheriff Idleburg and staff at the Lake County Sheriff's Office worked extensively with Lake County Government leadership, to create and present an 'Intergovernmental Agreement' (IGA) with McHenry County, for the Lake County Board's consideration. The McHenry County Board approved the agreement in November of 2023, but unfortunately, the IGA proposal was never presented to the Lake County Board, due to Lake County Government leadership removing the IGA from the agenda multiple times. Due to the IGA being removed from several agendas, Sheriff Idleburg moved forward with an agreement between the Lake County

Sheriff's Office and McHenry County Sheriff's Office, as allowed by law.

Permanently and temporarily holding inmates in adjoining county jails is not an uncommon practice and is done in various counties throughout the State of Illinois. Lake County previously utilized Boone County Jail for the temporary holding of inmates when the Lake County Jail was under renovation. It is the goal of the Lake County Sheriff's Office to increase correctional officer staffing levels and return the temporarily housed inmates to Lake County as quickly as possible.

Waukegan Police Officer charged with official misconduct and battery to a civilian

The Lake County State's Attorney Office has charged Waukegan Police Officer Richard Tabisz with felony official misconduct and misdemeanor battery to a civilian after the officer threw down the civilian while he was handcuffed and cooperating on December 14, 2023.

Waukegan police command staff presented the evidence, including several body camera recordings, to the States Attorney's Office on December 15, 2023.

Lake County State's Attorney Rinehart stated after the charges were issued, "the Waukegan Police Department acted swiftly and appropriately with respect to presenting the evidence to our office. It is important to point out that there were up to seven officers on the scene and that the civilian was cooperative and had been in custody for several minutes before Tabisz arrived as a transport officer. The situation was completely under control. Tabisz was not the arresting officer and threw the handcuffed civilian to the ground in the presence of several officers. Besides Tabisz, other officers on the scene acted very professionally throughout the encounter. We will hold individuals accountable for breaking the law regardless of their profession. I want to thank Chief Navarro and Mayor Ann Taylor for their swift actions in this matter."

The charges against Tabisz are similar to charges against former officer Dante Salinas who was charged in 2022 with Official Misconduct and Aggravated Battery / Great Bodily Harm from a 2019 incident in which he broke a civilian's eye socket.

Rinehart also commented, "This incident was clearly captured on police body camera. While Waukegan has used body cameras since 2016, it is a great thing for our communities and police departments that agencies of any size in Illinois have been recently mandated to use body cameras by 2025, due to the SAFE-T Act."

The State's Attorney's Office has begun an immediate review of all pending cases involving Tabisz in light of these charges.

Tabisz will appear in court on January 17.

REAL ESTATE

Other Real Estate

PUBLISHER'S NOTICE All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Fair Housing Act which makes it illegal to advertise any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, disability, familiar/ status or national origin, or an intention to make any such preference, limitation or discrimination. Familial status includes children under the age of 18 living with parents or legal custodians, pregnant women and people securing custody of children under 18. This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate which is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain of discrimination call HUD toll-free at 1-900-669-9777. The toll-free telephone number for the hearing impaired is 1-800-927-9275. EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

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