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## Scarpelli honored for over 20 years of support of Antioch's 'Shop with a Cop' annual event

Antioch PD and Raymond Chevrolet-Kia team up to provide gifts for 50 local children and their families this year

Roughly 50 children had a brighter holiday season this year thanks to the efforts of the Village of Antioch Police Department and Raymond Chevrolet and Raymon Kia. The annual "Shop with a Cop" event held in mid December helped provide gifts for participating children and dinner for their families. The Antioch Police Department's "Shop with a Cop" program started over 20 years ago with the support of Raymond Chevrolet and Raymond Kia.

Each year, the Antioch Police Department works with local Antioch schools to identify needful families with children between the ages of five and twelve years old. In December, 50 children from about 30 different families were invited to participate. The children enjoyed a pizza party with pizza courtesy of Johnny's Snack Shop, a visit from "Skates", the team mascot of the Chicago Wolves, and a very special visit with Santa Claus in the showroom of the Raymond Chevy/Kia dealership. Also, as in years

past, Raymond Chevrolet and Raymond Kia employees drew a participating child's name and bought a gift for that child, which Santa gave them. After the party at the dealership, the families were escorted to Walmart to "Shop with a Cop".

During the festivities at the dealership this year, Antioch Mayor Scott Gartner and Antioch Police Chief Geoffrey Guttschow presented Raymond Chevrolet/Kia owner Mark Scarpelli with a plaque commemorating over 20 years of support and involvement with the event.

"Mark Scarpelli has been there since the beginning to make sure this special event can happen," said Guttschow. "Mr. Scarpelli and his staff at Raymond Chevrolet and Raymond Kia embrace the giving spirit of the holidays through how they generously donate their time and significant financial contributions to making the event happen year after year. Without the support of Raymond, "Shop with a Cop" would not happen."



Clockwise from top: From left, Antioch Police Chief Geoffrey Guttschow, Mark Scarpelli of Raymond Chevrolet/Kia, and Antioch Mayor Scott Gartner; an Antioch Police officer shops with participants and their family at Antioch Walmart; Santa presents a gift that was purchased by a Raymond Chevrolet/Kia employee.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS Hi-Liter/MCN

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# Prohibition on book bans, right to sue for 'deepfake porn' among new laws in 2024

*More than 300 statutes become law in the new year*

By Peter Hancock, Andrew Adams and Jerry Nowicki  
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

More than 300 new laws took effect Monday, ranging from a ban on book bans to the regulation of “deepfake porn” and prohibitions on videoconferencing while driving. Thanks to a law signed in 2019, workers at the lowest end of the pay scale will see a pay raise with the new year as the state minimum wage increases by one dollar, to \$14 per hour.

Gov. JB Pritzker championed and signed that law after it was approved by lawmakers within his first two months of office. The law gradually phases in a \$15 per-hour minimum wage starting in 2025.

The minimum wage applies to most workers 18 years of age and older. Teens who work less than 650 hours in a calendar year will go up to \$13 an hour while the minimum wage for tipped workers will increase to \$9 an hour.

Also going into effect on Monday, Illinoisans who own guns, ammunition and accessories prohibited under the state’s “assault weapons” ban will be in violation of the law if they don’t register them with the state. A federal judge recently chose not to temporarily halt the law’s enforce-

ment while a broader legal challenge plays out. The U.S. Supreme Court also recently declined to stay the law.

While permanent administrative rules regulating which guns and ammunition must be registered with the Illinois State Police remain in flux, temporary rules governing registration remain in effect.

Other laws hitting the books include a measure granting paid leave to all workers, indoor vaping restrictions and a ban on youth solitary confinement in state correctional facilities, among others.

## Paid leave for all

Starting Jan. 1, anyone who works in Illinois will be entitled to earn up to 40 hours of paid leave during a 12-month period, time they can take off work for any reason, regardless of whether they are full-time, part-time, or seasonal employees.

The Paid Leave for All Workers Act passed during the lame duck session in January, 2023—a session that was called primarily to pass the assault weapons ban. Pritzker signed it into law March 13.

“That is a game changer for many employers, particularly those who have not previously offered any type

of paid leave to their employees,” Scott Cruz, a labor attorney, said during an interview with Capitol News Illinois in November.

In particular, he said, the law will be a major change for waiters, waitresses and other workers in the hospitality industry who have never received paid leave benefits in the past.

The Illinois Department of Labor has published a list of frequently asked questions to help guide employers and employees through the new law.

## Banning book bans

Libraries in Illinois will lose access to grants administered by the secretary of state’s office after Jan. 1 if they ban books or other material “because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.”

The so-called ban on book bans, House Bill 2789, was an initiative of Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias. The secretary of state in Illinois also serves as the state librarian, which awards millions of dollars a year in grants to public and school libraries around the state.

Under the new law, libraries must either adopt the American Library Association’s Library Bill of Rights or develop a written statement

prohibiting the practice of banning specific books or resources.

Giannoulias said he proposed the legislation after extremist groups targeted Illinois libraries with efforts to ban certain materials from circulation.

“The concept of banning books contradicts the very essence of what our country stands for,” he said in a statement. “It also defies what education is all about: teaching our children to think for themselves. This landmark law is a triumph for our democracy, a win for First Amendment Rights, and a great victory for future generations.”

## Digital forgeries

Lawmakers this spring approved a new protection for victims of “deepfake porn.” Starting in 2024, people who are falsely depicted in sexually explicit images or videos will be able to sue the creator of that material.

The law is an amendment to the state’s existing protections for victims of “revenge porn,” which went into effect in 2015.

In recent years, deepfakes—images and videos that falsely depict someone—have become more sophisticated with the advent of more readily available artificial in-

telligence tools. Women are disproportionately the subject of deepfake porn.

Some sponsors of the legislation, notably chief sponsor Rep. Jennifer Gong-Gershowitz, D-Glenview, have indicated interest in further regulating the use of artificial intelligence.

## Zooming while driving

It is now illegal for Illinois drivers to participate in videoconferencing or check their social media pages while behind the wheel.

The law adds the use of any mobile videoconferencing software, explicitly referencing Zoom, Microsoft Teams and Webex, to banned actions under existed distracted driving laws.

The law also specifically names social media sites Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram and “Twitter,” which was rebranded to X a few months after the law’s passage.

Illinois law currently bans cell phone use generally while driving, although it does allow drivers to use phones through hands-free or voice-activated means.

In 2022, more than 24,000 drivers were cited for distracted driving in Illinois, according to the secretary of state’s office.

Illinois drivers continue to be able to use cell phones in handheld mode if they are reporting an emergency, are parked on a road’s shoulder or if they are stopped due to a traffic obstruction and the vehicle is in neutral or park.

## Vaping indoors

People who use electronic cigarettes or vaping devices will now face the same restrictions as cigarette smokers.

It’s an update to the state’s Smoke-Free Illinois Act, which banned smoking in most indoor public spaces and within 15 feet of building entrances in 2008. “Public places” include restaurants, theaters, offices, stores, libraries, schools, polling places, all government-owned buildings and banks among others.

Tobacco stores and vape shops are exempt from the law, as well as some other facilities, such as smoking rooms at nursing homes, some hotel rooms and tobacco conventions.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported this summer that in 2021, nearly 5 percent of adults were e-cigarette users, although that figure was 11 percent among people 18 to 24.

## Other new laws

• **Youth solitary confinement:** House Bill 3140 prohibits solitary confinement in youth detention facilities for any purpose other than temporarily preventing serious and immediate risk of physical harm.

• **Grocery initiative:** Senate Bill 850 created a Grocery Initiative program which will receive \$20 million to fund grants and financial aid to grocery stores opening or operating in “food deserts.” It also requires the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to study food deserts.

• **Underground Railroad task force:** Senate Bill 1623 creates the Underground Railroad Task Force to develop a statewide plan for creating a “cohesive statewide history” of the Underground Railroad and developing new educational and tourism opportunities.

• **Utility shutoffs:** House Bill 1541 prohibits utilities from shutting off gas or electric services due to nonpayment of bills when the temperature exceeds 90 degrees or there is a heat advisory in effect.

• **Rearview mirrors:** It’s long been illegal in Illinois to hang an object that obstructs a driver’s view from a rearview mirror. House Bill 2389 maintains that driving with such an obstruction is prohibited, but it also prevents law enforcement from stopping and searching a vehicle solely because the driver is violating that law.

• **Civil rights violation:** Under Senate Bill 1817, anyone who considers immigration status during a real estate transaction, including purchase and rental transactions, could be guilty of a civil rights violation.

• **Dangers of fentanyl:** House Bill 3924 requires high schools to teach students about the dangers of fentanyl in state-required health courses. The coursework would include differentiating legal

**See NEW LAWS, Page 4**



SUBMITTED PHOTO Hi-Liter/MCN

## McHenry County allocates \$1 million to eliminate Longmeadow Bridge toll

The McHenry County Board has approved \$1 million in Advance McHenry County funds towards the toll elimination efforts on the soon-to-be open Longmeadow Parkway Bridge over the Fox River.

The bridge is part of the 5.6-mile-long Longmeadow Parkway Corridor and is expected to relieve congestion on Illinois Route 62, which runs through the heart of downtown Algonquin in McHenry County. The bridge will also facilitate an increase in business opportunities in the region after its anticipated opening in the fall of 2024.

“This is an example of regional collaboration at its finest,” said McHenry County Board Chairman Mike Buehler, R-Crystal Lake. “Not only are we partnering with our Kane County neighbors, but we’re also making a thoughtful and impactful investment in our region’s

infrastructure and business community without having to charge a toll saving our residents millions of dollars. It’s a win, win, win.”

A total of \$35 million is needed to make the Longmeadow Parkway Bridge toll-free. Thanks to the bipartisan efforts of State Rep. Suzanne Ness, D-Crystal Lake, State Rep. Anna Moeller, D-Elgin, State Sen. Don DeWitte, R-St. Charles, and State Sen. Linda Holmes, D-Aurora, \$30 million was contributed by the General Assembly leaving \$5 million to be covered by Kane, Cook and McHenry counties.

“Kane County’s objective is to eliminate the toll as a funding mechanism, and the support from McHenry County has brought us closer to achieving that goal,” said Kane County Board Chairman Corinne Pierog. “We are steadfast in taking on the financial responsibility

locally to ensure the benefits of the Longmeadow Parkway Bridge remain positive for drivers and the community.”

Removing the toll for passenger and typical business vehicles has the potential to save the average user \$200 to \$300 a year.

The McHenry County Board has approved over \$26.5 million in awards through the Advance McHenry County program to date. The program is funded through American Rescue Plan Act dollars, which have been invested directly into infrastructure capital projects, workforce development and jobs programs, nonprofit agencies, special districts, and local governments.

You can learn more about the Advance McHenry County initiative, and review approved awards and expenditures, by visiting [www.mchenrycountyil.gov/advance](http://www.mchenrycountyil.gov/advance).



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— PUBLISHED WEEKLY —





The spring concert season at the James Lumber Center for the Performing Arts at the College of Lake County has been announced and tickets are now available.



SUBMITTED PHOTOS HI-Liter/MCN

Above left: Experience the sounds of Forever Young on Feb. 25. Above right: Malevo, the all-male dance troupe, will present their high energy show on March 24.

# Spring concert season features diverse lineup

The James Lumber Center for the Performing Arts at College of Lake County announces its spring 2024 season which features a wide variety of performances.

“Our diverse spring offerings include pop, rock, Celtic and Indian music events, plus comedy and dance,” said JLC Executive Director Alisa Baum. “Our goal is to present unique, innovative artistry and affordable entertainment for audiences throughout Lake County.”

**The spring season includes:**

- Second Hand News, 8 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 20. Recreating the experience of seeing the legendary Fleetwood Mac in their heyday, the band features spot-on vocal harmonies and musicianship. Through the talents of seasoned performers, the spirit of Mick Fleetwood, John and Christine McVie, Stevie Nicks and Lindsey Buckingham

come to life on stage. Tickets are \$20 regular, \$18 for seniors and military and \$10 for students. Artist website: <https://www.2ndhandnews.com/>

- Pat Tomasulo, 8 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 27. A Chicago-based stand-up comedian and one of the hosts of the WGN Morning News, self-described “Man of the People” Tomasulo is a funny man on a serious mission — bringing the average person’s perspective to the stage, as he shares hilarious observations, stories and commentary on life’s everyday annoyances. Tickets are \$35 regular, \$32 for seniors and military and \$15 for students. Artist website: <https://pattomasulo.com/>
- Forever Young, 4 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 25. Follow the musical journey of an unforgettable group of friends as they discover the greatest hits of all time. Set in a music-

filled suburban basement, this heartfelt true story features songs by Billy Joel, The Beatles, Styx, Queen and more, along with powerhouse vocals and dynamite choreography. Tickets are \$32 regular, \$28 for seniors and military and \$15 for students. Artist website: <https://bbtheatricals.com/forever-young/>

- Natalie MacMaster and Donnell Leahy, 8 p.m. Friday, March 15. Canada’s reigning couple of Celtic music merge their virtuosic talents in an evening of contemporary Irish and traditional folk music. Natalie MacMaster, a marquee superstar, fiddler and step-dancer, has built a sterling, multi-decade career with her electrifying playing and must-see live performances. She performs and collaborates with her husband and fellow peerless instrumentalist, Donnell Leahy. Tickets are \$52 regular, \$47 for seniors and military and \$25 for

students. Artist website: <https://natalieanddonnell.com/>

- Malevo, 7 p.m. Sunday, March 24. America’s Got Talent: All-Stars (2023) and AGT Golden Buzzer artists, “South American Sensation” Malevo are the Cultural Ambassadors of Argentina. This thrilling all-male dance troupe performs Malambo — a traditional dance of strength and explosive bravado, with passionate drumming and fiery theatrics – à la STOMP! and Riverdance. Tickets are \$38 regular, \$35 for seniors and military and \$15 for students. Artist website: <https://malevogroup.com.ar/>
- TISRA: Zakir Hussain with Debopriya Chatterjee and Sabir Khan, 7 p.m. Sunday, April 7. Considered the “presiding genius and global ambassador for North Indian classical music,” Grammy™ award-winning tabla drummer Hussain first entered the

western world’s consciousness in the 70’s with his collaborations with George Harrison, Van Morrison and Earth, Wind & Fire. In this musical exploration into the richness, depth and joy of Indian music, Hussain performs with Sabir Kahn, a tenth-generation sarangi player and Debopriya Chatterjee, an award-winning flautist and bansuri player. Tickets are \$45 regular, \$42 for seniors and military and \$22 for students. Artist website: <https://zakirhussain.com/>

Tickets are currently on sale online at [www.jlcenter.clcillinois.edu](http://www.jlcenter.clcillinois.edu) or by phone at (847) 543-2300. Tickets may also be purchased in person at the JLC Box Office, 19351 West Washington Street in Grayslake. Check the JLC website for the latest Box Office hours. The JLC offers free parking and has a snack bar with soft drinks, beer, wine, chips and candy.

# McHenry County MCRide Dial-A-Ride fares increased Jan. 1

McHenry County and Pace Suburban Bus announced that the MCRide fare prices increased effective Jan. 1.

The base fare adjustment, effective Jan. 1, 2024, saw an increase from \$1.50 to \$2.00 per trip for seniors and individuals with a disability, and from \$3.00 to \$4.00 for all other riders. A 25-cent-a-mile charge is also issued after the first 5 miles. The last fare adjustment for MCRide took place Jan. 1, 2019.

MCRide remains an affordable public transportation option and has provided over 1 million trips since its 2012 inception. MCRide will continue to be operational from 5 a.m. to 11 p.m., every day of the week. The service is available to anyone, regardless of age, ability, trip purpose or residency.

The fare adjustment is a response to the increasing operational costs faced by MCRide in providing reliable and accessible trans-

portation options for the community. The decision was made after careful consideration and evaluation of the program’s financial sustainability.

All MCRide buses are fully wheelchair accessible. MCRide is funded by Section 5310 federal transit grants administered by the Regional Transportation Authority.

To schedule a ride, users can call the Pace Call Center at 1-800-451-4599. The general public can reserve a ride

up to two days in advance. Seniors (60+) and individuals with disabilities can reserve a ride up to seven days in advance. A minimum of two hours is required to reserve a ride.

For more information about MCRide, including service offerings, reservation details and fare structure, check out our MCRide webpage at [https://www.mchenrycountyil.gov/departments/transportation/transit-services/mcride-dial-](https://www.mchenrycountyil.gov/departments/transportation/transit-services/mcride-dial-a-ride)

a-ride. Stay informed about all transportation-related updates by following the Di-

vision of Transportation on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/McHenryCountyDOT/](https://www.facebook.com/McHenryCountyDOT/).

## Application period open to request vote-by-mail ballot

Registered voters who want to receive a vote-by-mail ballot for the March 19 presidential primary can now apply for one.

You can request an application for a vote-by-mail ballot by visiting <https://bit.ly/3RRV5Cg>, or by visiting the County Clerk’s Office at the County Administration Building, Room 107, 667 Ware Road, Woodstock. You don’t have to re-apply if you have previously enrolled in McHenry County’s permanent vote-by-mail program – your mail-in ballot will be automatically sent to you.

“Voting by mail allows you to vote at your leisure, on your schedule. It’s just as reliable as in-person voting

– every ballot is received, securely stored, and counted on election day. Like early voting, your vote is in the bank – no worries about getting to your polling place before it closes or braving bad weather,” County Clerk and Recorder Joe Tirio said.

The County Clerk must receive your vote-by-mail application by March 14; if you submit it by mail, please allow seven days for delivery.

If you would like to enroll in permanent vote-by-mail, you can find the form at <https://bit.ly/48hFXU9>. Once you enroll in the program, you will automatically receive a ballot for each election until you choose not to.

## •New laws (Continued from page 3)

and illegal uses of the drug, details about “the process of lacing fentanyl in other drugs and why drugs get laced with fentanyl,” as well as information on how to detect fentanyl in drugs and how to save someone from an overdose.

- **Fentanyl test strips:** House Bill 3203 allows pharmacists and retailers to sell fentanyl test strips over the counter.

- **Bears and primates:** Senate Bill 1883 prohibits keepers of bears and nonhuman primates from allowing members of the general public to come into contact with them. Violators of the law would be subject to a Class B misdemeanor. “General public” does not include employees at the facility where the animal is kept, veterinarians or professional film crews.

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## Pet of the week

Oriane, a cattle dog mix, is about 4 months old, spayed, up-to-date on routine shots (incl. rabies), tested negative for heartworm and on preventative 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](http://www.saveapetil.org/adopt).



# Subcontractors invited to meet Lake county's newest 'JOC' Contractors

Lake County is inviting subcontractors to attend an upcoming event on Thursday, Jan. 18, from 8:30-10 a.m., to meet the County's newest Job Order Contracting (JOC) General Contractors.

Attending this event provides a great opportunity to hear directly from Lake County's Purchasing and Facilities teams

about upcoming projects and procurement opportunities. You will also learn about how your business can work with Lake County, and various initiatives and programs, such as the Lake County JOC program.

The Lake County Board recently awarded McDonagh Demolition, AGAE

Contractors and Leopardo Companies to serve as JOC General Contractors. Lake County utilizes JOC as a method to procure certain construction and renovation projects involving demolition, electrical, HVAC, carpentry, concrete, painting, plumbing and other trade work.

JOC is an Indefinite Delivery/Indefinite


Quantity construction contract that expedites the ordering of construction services while controlling cost plus increasing quality and transparency.

The meeting will be held at the Lake County Central Permit Facility, 500 W. Winchester Road in Libertyville. The event is free to attend.




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Patrick Lynch




Jim Olsson




Geoff Eckhardt




Nick Kramer




Jeff Mucks




Bob LaBadie




Isaac Thiel




Dan Dace




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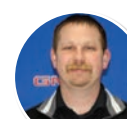
Josh Luchini




Chris Kahlmorgan




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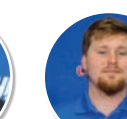
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Donna Janz




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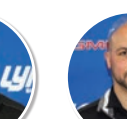
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# Mark your calendars for Volo Bog’s Winterfest event January 14

Looking for a cure for Cabin Fever? Plan to attend Volo Bog State Natural Area’s Annual WinterFest on Sunday, Jan. 14. It is the perfect blend of indoor and outdoor activities to remedy those mid-winter doldrums! With a mixture of indoor and outdoor activities there is sure to be something for everyone to enjoy.

## Indoor Activities:

Live Music: Harper’s Back Porch Revue, an eclectic ensemble of performers, will fill Volo Bog State Natural Area’s Visitor Center with the energy of nearly 20 musicians! Friends of Volo Bog and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources are delighted to welcome this dynamic musical group back for an encore performance. The ensemble explores Americana music from the late 19th to the mid-20th centuries: blues and country, old time, folk, gospel, and more. They perform on string instruments of all sorts: guitars, banjos, fiddles, ukuleles, bass, etc., as well as hand drumming and singing. The ever-evolving group, led by Scott Cashman and Bekr Ali, brings a variety of backgrounds and experiences together for a one-of-a-kind experience with each performance.

## Photo Contest Awards

Between music sets photo contest awards will be presented to first, second and third place in ten categories in Volo Bog’s 37th Annual Nature Photo Contest. Winter Crafts upstairs in the Visitor Center provides materials for creating fun take-home treasures.

## Refreshments

Friends of Volo Bog will have hot cocoa, coffee, sodas, and cookies for sale.

## Outdoor Activities:

Bog Tours: Volo Bog is beautiful any time of year and all the more magical under a blanket of snow. Join our 45-minute tours to learn about bogs and their winter secrets. Eight start times between 11 am – 3 pm. Snow Sculpting Contest: Children and adults alike are invited to enter our snow sculpting contest. There are prizes in four categories – Youth, Teen, Family/Group, & Adult. Ask for rules & entry form by emailing [dnr.volobog@illinois.gov](mailto:dnr.volobog@illinois.gov). Snowshoeing & Skiing: Cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and hiking can be enjoyed on five miles of trails over rolling hills through woodland, wetland, and prairie. BYO skis or snowshoes. Friends of Volo Bog, a 501(c)(3) membership organization, happily accept donations to support this and other programs at Volo Bog State Natural Area. Suggested cover - \$10/adult; children free. Donations are greatly appreciated. Volo Bog State Natural Area is an Illinois Department of Natural Resources site located at 28478 W. Brandenburg Road, Ingleside, IL 60041. Contact the site at [dnr.volobog@illinois.gov](mailto:dnr.volobog@illinois.gov) or 815-344-1294.

# Pancake breakfast set for Jan. 21

The Richmond Burton Community High School Music Department will be holding a pancake breakfast to help raise funds for their trip to New Orleans. On January 21, from 8-11 a.m. they will be serving all-you-can-eat pancakes. There will also be performances from the band and choir, raffles and a bake sale. Tickets will cost \$7 for adults and \$5 for students.

# State lowers interest rate for Senior Citizen Tax Deferral to 3%

*Applications must be received by March 1*

The Senior Citizens Real Estate Tax Deferral Program provides tax relief for qualified senior citizens by essentially providing a loan up to \$7,500 to pay a senior’s property tax bill. These funds are granted through the State of Illinois. Applicants for 2024, who receive this deferral loan, will gain access to a simple interest rate of 3%, which has been significantly reduced from the previous rate of 6%. Interested McHenry County seniors can contact the County Treasurer to apply for the program. “The State of Illinois has made the Senior Citizens Real Estate Tax Deferral

Program far more appealing to seniors by reducing the interest rate for the deferral/loan to 3%. Seniors now have a cost-effective means to defer their property tax bill which frees up funds needed to address their other expenses,” Treasurer Donna Kurtz said. “In addition to the Senior Deferral program, McHenry County seniors have other programs available that can provide the means to further lower their property-tax bills. I urge seniors to assess these other tax reduction programs, as needed, if they have not yet done so.” To be eligible for this program, an applicant must be

at least 65 years old by June 1, and have a total household income less than \$65,000. Other program requirements include:

- Living on the property or other qualifying property for the last two years,
- Having equity in the property,
- Having no unpaid property taxes or foreclosures, and
- Having fire and casualty insurance for the property.

Upon qualification, a lien for the deferred amount will be filed on the qualifying property. Deferred amounts are repaid upon the sale or transfer of the property, or within one year of the property owner’s death.

Applications will be available at [treasurer.mchenry-countyil.gov](http://treasurer.mchenry-countyil.gov) starting Jan. 1, and must be received by March 1; there will be no extensions. For questions, please visit the Treasurer’s website or contact them at 815-334-4260 or [treasurer@mchenrycountyil.gov](mailto:treasurer@mchenrycountyil.gov). In addition, Kurtz encourages seniors to make sure they are taking advantage of the multiple exemption options that are available to ease their property-tax burden. To learn more about these exemptions, contact the McHenry County Assessments Office at 815-334-4290 or email [assessments@mchenrycountyil.gov](mailto:assessments@mchenrycountyil.gov).

# As dual credit participation grows in Illinois, study shows gaps widening

*Urban, low-income, high-minority districts lag behind rural counterparts*

By Peter Hancock  
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

As the cost of higher education continues to rise in Illinois and elsewhere, a growing number of students are working to earn as many college credits as possible while they are still in high school. But even as the popularity continues to grow for “dual credit” offerings—courses in which a student earns credit toward both a high school diploma and a college degree—a new study shows disparities between racial, economic and geographic groups are also widening. According to the study, dual credit programs are more prevalent in districts that serve rural communities and small towns in downstate Illinois than in suburban and urban districts. They are less prevalent in districts that serve minority and lower-income students. And even within individual districts, the study found that white students and those from more affluent backgrounds were more likely to enroll in and complete dual credit courses than minority students or students from lower-income households.

The study was conducted by the Illinois Workforce & Education Research Collaborative, or IWERC, a research arm of the University of Illinois System’s Discovery Partners Institute, which works to develop the state’s high-tech workforce and economy. Dual credit courses are offered through partnerships between high schools and post-secondary institutions. According to the study, a small number of dual credit courses are offered through public four-year universities, but the overwhelming majority, about 97 percent, are offered through local community colleges. As a result, the courses offered in any given high school are strongly influenced by the policies and programs of the community college district that overlaps with the high school district. Sarah Cashdollar, an IWERC researcher and author of the report, said in an interview that details of those partnership agreements may help explain some of the disparities between school districts and between different geographic areas. “It is costly to provide dual credit, especially for community colleges,” she said. “Depending on the partnership, it can also be costly for the school district. And so there might be variation in terms of how community college districts have managed those

costs.” Although students typically pay some tuition to enroll in a dual credit course, Cashdollar said the cost is typically only a fraction of what students would pay otherwise, which is one of the reasons why dual credit programs help lower the overall cost of higher education. In recent years, Illinois lawmakers have taken several steps to make dual credit programs more accessible and affordable. Among those actions is the Dual Credit Quality Act, first passed in 2010 and amended several times since then, which requires public colleges and universities to accept credit from those courses if a standard agreement is in place. It also requires community colleges to enter into dual credit agreements with any high school in their district that requests one. The Education Workforce Equity Act, passed in 2021, provides that starting this year, high school students who meet or exceed state standards on their annual assessments in English language arts, math, or science may automatically be enrolled the following year in the next most rigorous level of advanced coursework offered by the school. For seniors, that must include a dual credit, Advanced Placement, or International Baccalaureate course.

And this year’s state budget includes just over \$3 million for community colleges to help them lower the cost of dual credit programs. Despite those efforts, however, the study found that while overall participation in dual credit programs has grown—from 10.2 percent of high school students in the 2018 school year to 14 percent in 2022—the racial and economic disparities in participation rates and completion rates has widened. That was due mainly to the fact that participation rates grew more slowly among students of color and students from lower-income backgrounds than they did among white and Asian students and students from more affluent backgrounds. Cashdollar noted those kinds of achievement gaps are similar to the gaps that researchers find in other aspects of education, including college enrollment rates and college completion rates. And because dual credit programs are, by definition, intended for students who aspire to continue their education beyond high school, she said the gaps point to differences in the types of students who are seen as being college-bound. She said prior research on the topic has found the biggest predictor for racial gaps in

*See DUAL CREDIT, Page 7*

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# Felon apprehended following shooting in parking lot of apartment complex

The Village of Antioch Police Department arrested a 34-year-old convicted felon on weapons related charges connected to an incident that occurred late Saturday evening. Travis R. Malott, of the 1200 block of Main Street, was taken into custody early Sunday morning following a brief standoff with the Antioch Police Department and the Northern Illinois Police Alarm System (NIPAS). Nobody was injured during the incident.

On Dec. 30, at approximately 10:30 p.m., the Village of Antioch Police Department responded to several reports of shots fired in the 1200 block of Main Street. When officers arrived at the Country Manor Apartments, they met with a delivery driver from a local restaurant who was making food deliveries in the area. The delivery driver told investigators that when he arrived at the apartment complex with a delivery, he was met by the suspect, who recognized him from a prior dispute. According to the delivery driver, Malott displayed a pistol and chased the driver to his vehicle. As the delivery driver attempted to flee,



Travis R. Malott

he claimed that Malott fired several rounds at him and his vehicle. Nobody was struck by the gunfire.

Malott had retreated into his apartment and was initially uncooperative with responding officers. Several other neighboring police agencies, including NIPAS, were called in to assist with taking Malott into custody. The immediate area was blocked off for several hours, including a portion of Main Street (Route 83). Malott eventually surrendered to officers at about 3 a.m. Sunday morning. Subsequently, Antioch Police obtained a search warrant for Malott's apartment, where investigators recovered two weapons. Seven spent shell casings were also recovered from the parking lot of the apartment complex.

Travis R. Malott, a convicted felon, has been charged with: (2) Counts – Aggravated Unlawful Use of a Weapon by a felon | Class 3 Felony and (1) Count – Aggravated Discharge of a Firearm | Class 1 Felony.

Antioch Police Chief Geoffrey Guttschow says he is grateful for the assistance of NIPAS and several other neighboring law enforcement agencies to bring a peaceful resolution to a dangerous situation.

“Having the resources and collaboration of our partner

agencies, including the NIPAS swat team, is critical in bringing peaceful resolutions to situations like this,” said Chief Guttschow. “Our department is grateful for the dedication of the officers who comprise the NIPAS organization, and the members of the neighboring police departments who responded quickly and worked diligently to keep our community safe.”

All persons arrested are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law. Anyone with any additional information related to this crime, including security camera video, or anyone who may have been the victim of an unreported crime, should call the Antioch Police dispatch center at 847-270-9111 or email [crime@antioch.il.gov](mailto:crime@antioch.il.gov).

## K9 Dax apprehends man involved in violent attack

Lake County Sheriff's Canine Dax apprehended a man who fled from a hospital, who was arrested by a local police department for aggravated domestic battery.

On December 31, 2023, at approximately 5:20 a.m., Lake County Sheriff's Deputies, including K9 Dax and Deputy Forlenza were dispatched to a hospital in the 400 block of Route 22, unincorporated Barrington, for

a report of a man under arrest for aggravated domestic battery that fled from the hospital during treatment.

Earlier in the morning, Jaime C. Romero, 51, of the 800 block of North Constitution Avenue, Island Lake, was arrested by a local police department, after strangling and battering his girlfriend. He also had an active arrest warrant from Kane County. Romero was transported to a hospital for treatment after being arrested. While being moved inside the hospital for treatment, he fled on foot. Upon Romero fleeing, hospital staff made notification to authorities, which prompted a response by the sheriff's office and K9 Dax.



Jaime C. Romero

K9 Dax and Deputy Forlenza arrived and immediately started tracking Romero. While tracking Romero westbound in the parking lot, Lake County Sheriff's Telecommunicators received a call for a burglar alarm at an orthopedic doctor's office in the 27400 block of Route 22. Sheriff's telecommunicators were able to immediately radio this information to sheriff's deputies at the scene.

K9 Dax and Deputy Forlenza tracked to the ortho-

pedic doctor's office and found an open door. K9 Dax began barking to alert Romero that he was there. Deputy Forlenza made several announcements to Romero to surrender, or K9 Dax would be released. Romero refused to surrender, and K9 Dax located him in the doctor's office, and bit his leg. Romero punched K9 Dax, but as is common with K9 Dax, he was not fazed by Romero's strikes.

Romero was taken into custody by sheriff's deputies, evaluated for the dog bite to his leg, and transported to the Lake County Jail.

After reviewing the facts and circumstances of the incident, the Lake County State's Attorney's Office approved the following charges: Two Counts of Aggravated Domestic Battery (Class 2 Felonies), Striking a Police Animal (Class A Misdemeanor), Resisting Arrest (Class A Misdemeanor) and Criminal Trespass to a Building (Class A Misdemeanor).

Per policy, K9 Dax was evaluated by his veterinarian, since he was struck, and cleared to return to service.

Sheriff John D. Idleburg said, “K9 Dax has done it again! Our ten canine teams are in the community serving the public each and every day. Through quick communication from our sheriff's dispatchers, providing crucial information to our deputies at the scene along with the work of those at the scene, we were able to take this violent, fleeing offender

into custody. I am proud of all of my staff involved in this incident.”

## Pedestrian killed in early morning crash

Lake County Sheriff's Office Crash Investigators are investigating an early morning fatal crash involving a pedestrian.

On December 28, at approximately 3:20 a.m., Lake County Sheriff's Deputies were dispatched to Route 137 and Clover Drive, unincorporated Libertyville, for a car versus pedestrian traffic crash. Sheriff's deputies arrived and found the pedestrian, a 51-year-old man of Park City, critically injured.

Preliminary investigation shows a 2016 Kia Rio, driven by a 54-year-old man of Woodstock, was traveling westbound on Route 137, in the outside lane of traffic. The driver of the Kia did not see the pedestrian, who was walking in the lane of traffic, for an unknown reason. The Kia struck the pedestrian.

The pedestrian was transported to Advocate Condell Medical Center in Libertyville, where he was subsequently pronounced deceased. The driver of the Kia was uninjured and is cooperating with the investigation.

The Lake County Coroner's Office is scheduling an autopsy on the pedestrian.

The crash remains under investigation by the Lake County Sheriff's Office Technical Crash Investigations Team.

# Lake County Sheriff's arrest bulletin

The Lake County Sheriff's Dept. reported the following arrests in Lake County. Suspects are considered innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

**Dec. 4**

Juan M. Oronia, 26, Glendale Heights, was cited for a warrant arrest: DUI;

Jessica L. Cox, 42, Fox Lake, was cited for a warrant arrest: unlawful possession of a controlled substance;

Jorge Y. Vargas-Esquivas, 19, Milwaukee, WI, was cited for unlawful possession of a

firearm;

Shelby L. Luna, 31, Gurnee, was cited for domestic battery;

**Dec. 5**

Miranda L. McNutt, 28, Round Lake, was cited for DUI – alcohol, no driver's license and no insurance;

Adilene Gallegos, 31, North Chicago, was cited for a warrant arrest: battery;

Joshua J. Barry, 30, Round Lake Park, was cited for a violation of an order of protection;

Justin J. Scott, 23, Beach Park, was cited for domestic

battery;

**Dec. 6**

Efren J. Lingat, 52, Waukegan, was cited for a warrant arrest: theft;

Kandi L. Smith, 37, Mundelein, was cited for criminal damage to property;

**Dec. 7**

Erin M. Deveau, 39, Waukegan, was cited for a warrant arrest: driving while license suspended (McHenry County);

Amber J. Parks-Eskew, 33, Beach Park, was cited for a warrant arrest: domestic bat-

tery;

Matthew W. Theesfield, 25, Antioch, was cited for DUI – alcohol;

Quintella S. Johnson, 46, Waukegan, was cited for driving while license suspended;

Sean Runions, 51, Antioch, was cited for obstructing a peace officer;

**Dec. 8**

Joseph P. Gromacki, 58, Fredonia, WI, was cited for DUI – alcohol;

Deangelo D. Wallace, 32, Zion, was cited for driving while license suspended.

## •Dual credit

students enrolled in dual credit was enrollment in accelerated coursework taken prior to high school.

“So who are those kids who are in the gifted classes? Who are taking algebra in eighth grade? Who are the kids in the honors program, maybe at the middle school?” She said. “And it's kind of like, that sets the wheel in motion in terms

(Continued from page 6)

of who is then either tracked into these higher-level courses, who is thinking about themselves as the type of kid who takes these courses.”

The report recommends the state continue investing in efforts to make dual credit programs more accessible and affordable but that it focus on increasing dual credit offerings in districts that currently

have the lowest participation rates, especially urban and suburban districts.

“Only by attending to these issues of representation can

the potential for (dual credit) coursework to reduce inequities in postsecondary educational attainment be fulfilled,” the report concludes.

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