

# HI-LITER

~ including McHenry County News

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SAVINGS \$4,000

Was \$14,995

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**SPRING OPENER SPECIAL**  
**\$10,995 or \$229 Mth\*\***

SAVINGS \$4,240

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**SPRING OPENER SPECIAL**  
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SAVINGS \$3,811

Was \$18,995

Includes Tailgate Grill & 2 Brewers Tickets

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SAVINGS \$4,618

Was \$18,995

Includes Tailgate Grill & 2 Brewers Tickets

**2015 Dodge Durango Citadel**  
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#P2929

**SPRING OPENER SPECIAL**  
**\$14,377 or \$289 Mth\*\***

SAVINGS \$4,152

Was \$18,995

Includes Tailgate Grill & 2 Brewers Tickets

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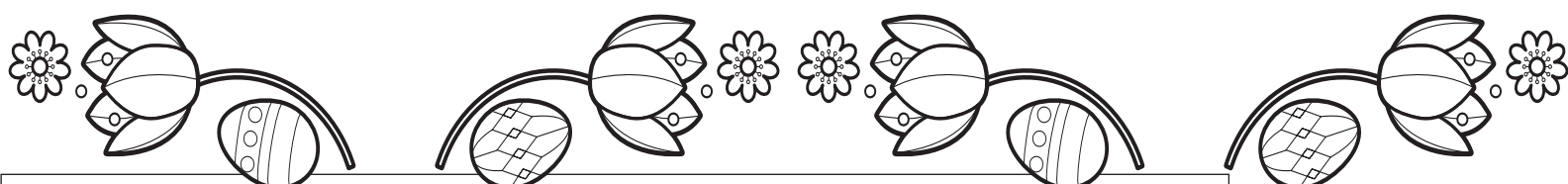
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# Lawmakers push bills addressing water quality, free school meals

State's largest teachers union releases annual education report

**CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS**

Lake Michigan is Illinois' largest drinking water supply, serving almost 6.6 million people in the state.

Legislators including Sen. Laura Ellman, D-Naperville, are working to increase research and monitoring of Illinois' water resources, including the lake.

"Just note with climate change, more and more states will grapple with greater and greater challenges," Ellman

said in a news conference last week. "And Illinois is very well positioned for safe water as long as we remain good stewards."

Ellman was part of a group of legislators highlighting four water-focused initiatives at a Capitol news conference last week. Two of the bills focus on increased research and reporting of water quality in the state.

Ellman sponsored Sen-

ate Bill 2743, which would require the State Water Plan Task Force to meet every three months and publish a new State Water Plan including critical issues and recommendations every 10 years. Senate Bill 3716, filed by Sen. Adriane Johnson, D-Buffalo Grove, would require the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency to regularly monitor the water quality of Lake Michigan and to publish an

executive summary every two years. Both measures await a vote from the full Senate.

Sen. Mike Simmons, D-Chicago, and Laura Fine, D-Glenview, focus on contaminants in drinking water. Simmons' Senate Bill 3450 would establish maximum levels of certain contaminants in drinking water, creating a state standard like the levels set by the U.S. EPA.

Senate Bill 2705, filed by

Fine, would ban the sale and distribution of certain products that contain intentionally added PFAS, otherwise known as "forever chemicals," starting in 2025. All other products containing PFAS would be banned by 2032 unless the product cannot be made without the chemicals. Senate Bills 3450 and 2705 both await a committee assignment.

meals under this program for free. The measure would also need further funding approval from lawmakers.

**Education poll**

The Illinois Education Association, the state's largest teachers union, released the results of its annual "State of Education" report last week.

A statewide poll included in the report surveyed 1,000 Illinoisans from Jan. 22-25, finding that 65 percent of respondents think funding for public schools should increase, up nine points from the year prior. Of the current public-school parents polled, 73 percent said public school funding should increase.

When asked to give a letter grade to the nation's public schools, respondents were more likely to give a lower grade this year than in past years. Just 3 percent said they gave the nation an "A" grade this year compared to 6 percent last year.

When asked about their local schools, however, Illinoisans gave an overall higher grade, with 14 percent giving an "A."

"What all this should tell us is that public education is a very important issue to the people of this great state, and they don't want the status quo, they want better for our students, teachers, faculty and staff," IEA President ALlorens said in a news release.

The survey also asked Illinoisans whether they favor or oppose certain policies, such as banning books in school libraries. A majority, 76 percent, of respondents oppose the practice.

While majorities of respondents said they support Illinois high schools teaching about the history of slavery and racism in the United States, they were split on whether they would support a state law that "bans the teaching of critical race theory" in schools. Of the respondents, 38 percent were supportive, 37 percent were opposed and another 14 percent responded they did not know.

**Free school meals**

New legislation unveiled last week aims to provide state-funded breakfast and lunch to all public and private K-12 students in Illinois, fulfilling a law that was passed in 2023 but never financed.

Ellman introduced Senate Bill 1931, which would allow the Illinois State Board of Education to reimburse school districts the full cost of the free meals at an anticipated price of \$209 million. Ellman sponsored separate legislation allocating the funding, but what amount of money, if any, is allocated will be decided during the state's budgeting process.

Ellman said meals provided under the program are required to meet national nutrition requirements, which "contain nutritious foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean protein."

"Research shows that students who eat school meals eat more healthy foods than those who do not eat school meals," Ellman said at a news conference.

Senate Bill 2209, introduced by Sen. Christopher Belt, D-Swansea, would create a grant program offering up to \$7,500 in grants to select schools that provide free breakfast to students once the school day has begun.

"And it allows students to be able to grab something in the classroom, some form of breakfast in the classroom, to help take away a growling belly or to give them energy that they so deserve," Belt said.

Students who qualify for reduced-price breakfast or lunch options would receive



SUBMITTED PHOTO Hi-Liter/MCN

## Take me out to the McConnell ball

The W.A. McConnell Foundation will be holding their ball on Saturday, April 13 from 7-10 p.m. at The District in Richmond. Shown at a previous ball are (above, left) Katie Anderson-Tedder and (above, right) John Drummond and Rommy Lopat. Tickets are \$50 and include hors d'oeuvres, 2 drinks, live music, exclusive Eldredge Mystery presentation and access to the silent auction. Purchase tickets in person at Anderson's Candy, the Richmond Café or Village Hall, or by sending a check to: P.O. Box 272, Richmond, IL 60071. Proceeds from the ball go to the W.A. McConnell Foundation's mission. The W.A. McConnell foundation is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to preserving the treasured history of the greater Richmond area in Illinois, protecting the legacy of its founders, and promoting its historic downtown for the benefit of generations to come.

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## Volo Bog offering annual native shrub and tree sale

What to know about the cicada emergence before ordering

In light of the anticipated 17-year cicada emergence, you are encouraged, before purchasing, to learn whether they may affect your area. Momma cicadas cut slits in young twigs, which doesn't do lasting damage to established healthy trees, but young transplants can be vulnerable. That said, cicadas are very localized. Although we expect them in large numbers in some locations in our area, there may be few to none in other spots. It all depends on whether, in 2007, they were present within 1/4 mile. The females who have been feeding on tree roots for seventeen years, will emerge from the soil but not travel very far.

If seventeen years ago there were few or no trees (like in a relatively new subdivision built where there was previously

farmland and not too close to nearby woods), you probably won't have many cicadas, if any at all. If you are new to your neighborhood and don't know the history, ask around; long-time neighbors will probably know and enjoy telling you their stories! Even if you do expect cicadas, there are precautions you can take like covering the plants with fine mesh.

To learn more about the cicada's and protecting your plants, visit <https://www.friendsofvobog.org/fovb-native-tree-shrub-sale> or <https://www.lcfdp.org/education/cicadas/>.

The order deadline is Friday, May 3, and pick-up will be on May 11 at the Volo Bog State Natural Area parking lot behind the visitor center. Order forms can be found at [www.FriendsofVoloBog.org](http://www.FriendsofVoloBog.org).

# LYNCH BURLINGTON

# SPRING INTO SAVINGS\*

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2017 CHEVY CRUZE LT

**\$10,290**

P15786



2013 DODGE GRAND CARAVAN SE

**\$10,461**

P15763



2021 CHEVY SPARK LT

**\$11,921**

EP3356A




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2012 FORD ESCAPE LIMITED

**\$12,519**

P15581



2021 NISSAN VERA SV

**\$15,981**

P15884



2019 TOYOTA C-HR LE

**\$19,961**

P15844



2020 BUICK ENCORE SPORT TOURING

**\$19,986**

P15768



2021 CHRYSLER VOYAGER LXI

**\$19,986**

P15814



2022 CHEVY MALIBU LT

**\$20,214**

P15789A



2019 VOLKSWAGEN TIGUAN SE

**\$20,992**

P15918



2021 TOYOTA CAMRY SE

**\$21,965**

P15842



2021 CHEVY EQUINOX LT

**\$22,341**

PB15815A



2019 SUBARU WRX ST1

**\$23,211**

P15830



2017 JEEP CHEROKEE TRAILHAWK

**\$23,221**

P15693A



2017 GMC SIERRA 1500 SLT

**\$26,917**

JP869A



2021 JEEP GRAND CHEROKEE L LIMITED

**\$28,916**

P15646B



2019 KIA STINGER GT1

**\$30,917**

M230384A



2017 GMC YUKON XL DENALI

**\$31,117**

P15849



2021 GMC ACADIA SLE

**\$32,314**

P15439



2021 DODGE DURANGO RT

**\$32,434**

FP2931



2021 BUICK ENVISION AVENIR

**\$32,917**

P15863



2021 CHEVY CAMARO 2LT

**\$33,881**

PB15792



2021 GMC CANYON DENALI

**\$34,861**

PB15795



2021 CADILLAC XT6 PREMIUM LUXURY

**\$35,711**

P15855



2021 CHEVY TRAVERSE PREMIER

**\$36,917**

P15747



2022 BUICK ENCLAVE ESSENCE

**\$38,117**

240319A



2021 CHEVY SILVERADO RST

**\$40,372**

P15874



2021 CHEVY SILVERADO RST

**\$40,969**

K240269A



2022 GMC SIERRA SLT

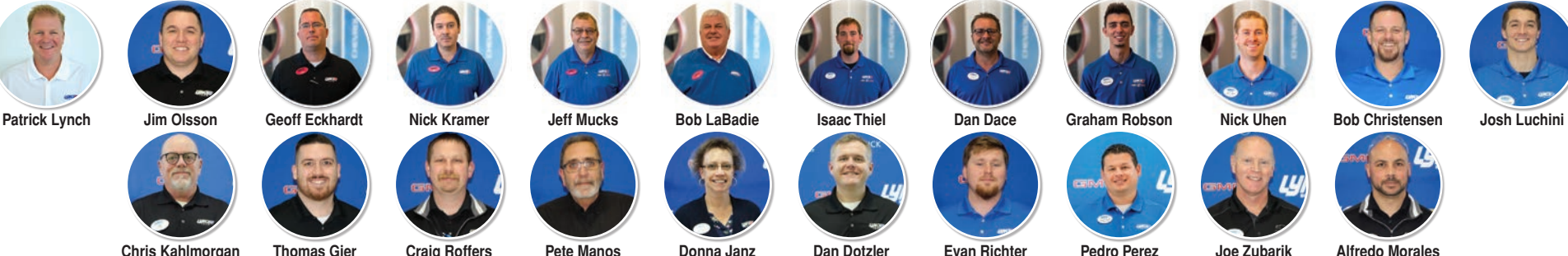
**\$44,214**

230456A



2022 CHEVY SILVERADO HIGH COUNTRY

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# Jury convicts man of 'cold blooded and calculated' murder from 2020

On March 13, a jury convicted Darius Kirby, 34, of First-Degree Murder in connection to a 2020 shooting in Waukegan.



Darius Kirby

After the verdict, Lake County State's Attorney Eric Rinehart stated, "Mr. Kirby committed a cold-blooded and calculated murder that he contemplated as he made the long drive from Joliet, Illinois, to Waukegan. Mr. Kirby then laid in wait for his victim. This type of planned murder warrants a very lengthy prison sentence. Our experienced trial team from the Violent Crimes Unit did an outstanding job. Our office's outstanding victim specialists will continue to support the family as we work together to seek justice."

The jury trial began on March 5, lasting 5 days. The jury heard from more than a dozen witnesses, including law enforcement officers and other expert witnesses.

Kirby was charged in March 2021, after an exten-

sive investigation was conducted by Waukegan Police Department. On August 26, 2020, Waukegan Police and Park City Police responded to a report of shots fired outside a motel in Waukegan. When officers arrived, they located the victim outside the motel after he had been shot six times. The victim was transported to a nearby hospital where he was pronounced deceased.

At the trial, surveillance videos were played that followed Kirby as he arrived at the hotel in a black Dodge Challenger that was registered to Kirby's name. Through video, officers were able to see Kirby and two other individuals as they searched and waited for the victim to exit the motel. Videos also showed Kirby and two individuals chase the victim to the side of the motel, where he was later discovered by police officers.

Officers testified to finding a Dodge Challenger key fob near where the victim was found. That same key fob, jurors heard, unlocked the Dodge Challenger registered to Kirby.

Other expert witnesses were able to put Kirby at the crime scene through cell-phone records and tollway records.

During the trial, the State was represented Assistant State's Attorney Scott Hoftert and Assistant State's Attorney Lauren Kalcheim Rothenberg. Lake County State's Attorney Victim Specialist Melissa Burke, Investigator Jack Metcalf and Tony Theis, Director of the Cyber Lab JB Brooks, and Cyber Crime Analyst Lexi Brown all assisted in trial preparation.

Kirby is facing between 20 to 60 years in the Illinois Department of Corrections. Kirby's next court hearing is scheduled for May 1, 2024.

Prior to the trial, Kirby was being held in the Lake County Jail on a \$2 million bond, (this cash bond was set by a judge in 2022, before the effective date of bail reform which now prevents individuals charged with murder from posting bond if a judge so decides at the beginning of the case). After the guilty verdict, Judge Strickland revoked his ability to post cash bail.



SUBMITTED PHOTO Hi-Liter/MCN

Guns and ammunition that were recovered from the suspects and while conducting a search warrant on the home of one of the suspects.

## Gun trafficker, lookouts arrested after committing armed robbery on undercover detective

Three people were apprehended Friday after attempting to commit an armed robbery on an undercover detective during an undercover operation.



Patrick Neal

On March 15, the Lake County Sheriff's Office Special Investigations Group (SIG), a High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) funded task force, in conjunction with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) Chicago Field Division were conducting a purchase of firearms from a 17-year-old boy of Beach Park who was trafficking firearms.

Around 1:00 p.m., an undercover detective met with the 17-year-old to purchase a firearm. The detective met with the juvenile in a parking lot in the 38400 block of North Sheridan Road, Beach Park. When the two started talking, the juvenile pulled a semi-automatic pistol from his waistband, charged the firearm by racking the slide, pointed the firearm at the detective's face, and demanded the detective give him the money he came with to buy the firearm. The juvenile told the undercover detective that he would "blow his brains out" if he did not comply. The undercover detective complied and gave the money to the juvenile, the juvenile then fled on foot.

Multiple other detectives monitoring the transaction immediately moved in during the armed robbery. The juvenile was taken into custody after a brief foot chase. During the chase, the juvenile threw the firearm he used in the robbery; however, the firearm was located by Sheriff's K9 Duke.

When arrested, the money the juvenile stole from the undercover detective was recovered. Two people who were acting as the juvenile's lookout during the armed robbery were also apprehended by

detectives. One was a 16-year-old from Kenosha, who was armed with a semi-automatic pistol, converted to be fully automatic with an extended magazine. The other, Patrick Neal, 22, of the 10100 block of Ford Avenue, Beach Park, was also armed with a semi-automatic pistol, converted to be fully automatic with an extended magazine.

Sheriff's detectives then obtained and conducted a search warrant at the 17-year-old's home. Inside the home, they located an AR Pistol loaded with a rifle round, ammunition, extended magazines, and a drum magazine.

Sheriff John D. Idleburg said, "Our Special Investigations Group investigate and arrest some of the most violent criminals in society. They, along with police officers everywhere, put their lives on the line every day to protect our communities. I cannot stress enough how thankful I am that none of our staff was injured in this incident. We will work with the state's attorney's office to ensure this violent teen and his accomplices are held accountable for their actions."

The 17-year-old was transported to the Hulse Juvenile Detention Facility and petitioned on the charges of: Armed Robbery, Three Counts of Unlawful Use of a Weapon, and Obstructing a Peace Officer.

Neal had four outstanding warrants and was also charged with: Armed Robbery, Aggravated Unlawful Possession of a Machine Gun, Unauthorized Possession of a Firearm by a Street Gang Member, Aggravated Unlawful Use of a Weapon, and Two Counts of Unlawful Use of a Weapon.

Neal remains held in the Lake County Jail. He was ordered to be held in custody for a detention hearing on March 18.

The 16-year-old was transported to the Hulse Juvenile Detention Facility and petitioned on the charge of: Unlawful Use of a Weapon.

## 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.

### Feb. 9

Martin W. Kerley, 59, Arlington Heights, was cited for criminal trespass to property;

Kevin M. O'Keefe, 49, Waukegan, was cited for a warrant arrest: retail theft;

Timothy J. Deemie, 38, Effingham, was cited for criminal trespass to property;

### Feb. 10

Jose C. Castro, 51, North Chicago, was cited for DUI - alcohol, and driving while license revoked;

Domenico A. Polizzi, 33, Washington, was cited for retail theft;

Patricknella S. Webb, 60, Waukegan, was cited for violating an order of protection;

Arnold Zambrano, 19, Barrington, was cited for aggravated speeding (109 mph in 55 mph zone);

Zachery J. Zolen, 27, Fox Lake, was cited for a warrant arrest: battery and a new charge of DUI - alcohol;

Jeffrey Almond, 43, Waukegan, was cited for a warrant arrest: battery;

### Feb. 11

Adeniyi O. Akinmade, 60, Arlington Heights, was cited for a warrant arrest: driving while license suspended (DuPage County);

Alan Dzagoev, 54, Libertyville, was cited for aggravated speeding (64 mph in 35 mph zone);

Barry J. May, III, 38, Waukegan, was cited for a warrant arrest: retail theft, fleeing to elude, obstructing justice and reckless driving;

Jozafat Taboada, 47, Lake Zurich, was cited for DUI - alcohol.

### Feb. 12

Tyler J. Koehler-Davis, 26, Skokie, was cited for driving while license revoked;

### Feb. 13

Modena O. Stinnette, 54, Winthrop Harbor, was cited for unlawful possession of a controlled substance;

Janessa L. Colon, 26, Waukegan, was cited for driving while license suspended;

### Feb. 14

Steven M. Gunn, 34,

See ARRESTS, Page 7

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