~ including McHenry County News

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Lake County Sheriff's Office, community mourn the loss of K9 Dax two days after his retirement ceremony

the Lake County Sheriff's Office, and the community, are mourning the loss of Sheriff's K9 Dax.

While K9 Dax's legacy will forever live on, K9 Dax passed away the morning of Friday, April 12.

On March 3, 2024, K9 Dax was injured while apprehending a person who had committed several felonies and was fleeing. K9 Dax injured his neck and spine, which resulted in temporary paralysis to his hindquarters. K9 Dax was subsequently diagnosed with cervical and thoracolumbar Intervertebral Disc Disease (IVDD) and lumbosacral IVDD exasperated during his apprehension on March 3rd. K9 Dax went through intensive physical therapy following the injury.

K9 Dax's team of veterinarians determined that, for his physical wellbeing, he would not be able to return to active duty. He was retired from service in March and on April 10, 2024, the community gathered to celebrate K9 Dax's loyal and dedicated service to the people of Lake County.

K9 Dax's partner, Deputy John Forlenza previously said, "There is no way to quantify or properly express what Dax's service has meant to the Lake County

The men and women of Sheriff's Office, the Lake County community, his supporters across the nation, and especially me. But I cannot refrain from stating that his service has been exemplary, and most importantly, he has saved countless lives, including my own. I am proud to have been his handler and best friend for the last nine years. Dax is a true hero and well deserving of the rest and love that waits for him in his retirement. I'd like to especially thank Dax's supporters, team of veterinarians, trainers, the Lake County Sheriff's Office, and my family and friends for all their support throughout his career.'

Sheriff John D. Idleburg said, "K9 Dax will always hold a special place in our hearts, and we are incredibly saddened by his passing. K9 Dax will be remembered for the lives he saved, violent offenders he apprehended, and drugs he kept from being distributed in our community. Please keep the Forlenza family in your thoughts and prayers."

Editors note: While I was preparing the story of Dax's retirement for this week's edition, I was saddened to receive the press release about the passing of Dax. See the original story related to K9 Dax's retirement inside on pages 4 and 5.





Above: K9 Dax looks on while his partner of 9 years, Deputy John Forlenza, speaks at the retirement ceremony held on April 10. Left: There was no shortage of appreciation and love shown for Dax by the sheriff's office staff and community members in attendance.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS



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Farm provides summer work opportunities for Lake County youth

College of Lake County CLC) and the Lake County Forest Preserves have joined in a partnership to revitalize the Green Youth Farm, renamed Greenbelt Farm.

The strategic partnership aims to foster sustainable farming, environmental education and community engagement. Together, the agencies aspire to create a thriving space that not only contributes to the local ecosystem but also serves as a dynamic educational hub for area teenagers.

This 1.25-acre sustainable farm is nestled within Greenbelt Forest Preserve in North Chicago. It's the second farm in CLC's local food portfolio, joining the Grayslake Campus Farm. These two farms lay the groundwork for the future Urban Farm Center at CLC's Lakeshore Campus in Waukegan, planned to break ground in early 2025.

"This farm has been here for 20 years, starting as a partnership with the Chicago Botanic Garden and the Lake County Forest Preserves," said Eliza Fournier, CLC urban farm director. "This site is so close to the Grayslake and Lakeshore campuses, so it makes good sense for a Lake County institution to connect with this project.

"The program has been a tremendous success over the years, addressing an array of life lessons and life skills," said Rebekah Snyder, director of community engagement and partnerships for the Forest Preserves. 'Working on the sustainable farm provides an experience that uplifts the lives of students and, in turn, their communities."

Last summer on a small scale, CLC and the Forest Preserves hosted a handful of student farmers for meaningful paid jobs in partnership with the Lake County Summer Youth Employment Program. The Lake County Board is generously funding the students' wages. This year, the program plans to expand so 15 students can participate in a 6-week paid work experience.

"The work can get hard at times, but it's mostly relaxing," said Waukegan resident Gadiel Martinez, 15, who worked on the

farm last summer. "You kind of forget about it, and you just get zoned in on what you're doing.

For most of the youth farmers, this is their first work opportunity. They not only acquire farming-specific skills such as planting, growing and harvesting, but also develop soft skills including punctuality, a positive attitude, conflict resolution and effective communication.

In addition to providing job opportunities to area youth, Greenbelt Farm is a resource for Lake County residents interested in gaining insights into local food and agriculture. The farm offers spring and fall internships to young adults exploring potential career paths within local food systems, including growing and marketing, health careers and culinary pathways.

The farm will welcome community organizations and schools for field trips and tours. Produce from the farm will be available at local grocers, pantries and via a farm stand at CLC's Lakeshore Campus in Waukegan. (Stay tuned for more information on exact times and dates).

"Working on the farm is a unique chance to do something that many community members haven't had the chance to do before," Fournier said. "You are growing food to give back to the community while getting paid work experience."

Youth farmer Anthony Martinez, 15, from Waukegan said, "I would recommend it because you get to be outside, meet new people and have a work opportunity. Plus, you get paid for it."

This project is made possible with generous financial support by local Lake County family foundations and by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois.

For more information about working at the Greenbelt Farm this summer, connect with Jon'nah Williams at jwilliams40@ clcillinois.edu or apply online at https:// www.lakecountyworkforce.org/2024summer-youth-employment-programapplication-period-open.



The College of Lake County and the Lake County Forest Preserves have collaborated to rejuvenate the Green Youth Farm, renamed Greenbelt Farm.



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SUBMITTED PHOTO Hi-Liter/MCN

Regional spelling bee winner Immanuel Lutheran School seventh-grader Evan Cochrane, left, recently won

the McHenry County Regional Spelling Bee. Competing against students from 22 other McHenry County elementary and middle schools, Evan came out on top by correctly spelling 'cornea' after 21 rounds. He will have the opportunity to represent the county at the Scripps National Spelling Bee in Maryland in May. Regional Superintendent of Schools Diana Hartmann is looking for sponsors to help defray the costs of the trip. Interested parties can contact her by calling 815-334-4055 or emailing DKHartmann@mchenrycountyil.gov.



The crowd enjoys a warm summer evening as the sun sets during Bands, Brews & BBQ 2023. Sponsors are sought to help make the 2024 event — Aug. 16-18 — a rousing success.

Bands, Brews & BBQ set for Aug. 16-18

McHenry Area Rotary leaders say sponsorships key to grant-giving outcomes

Cynthia Wolf CONTRIBUTOR

This year's Bands, Brews & BBO fest will feature eight stellar bands plus mouth-watering food, an array of craft beers and other libations over three days from Friday, Aug. 16, through Sunday, Aug. 18, along the McCullom Lake shoreline at Petersen Park.

The band lineup includes on Friday night, RealTime Noise, Recaptured – A Tribute to Journey and 8 Miles South on Saturday, and John Ballantyne's Crazy Heart, Tennessee Whiskey and Wildwood Country on Sunday. For complete lineup details, visit mrbbb.com/bands.

Discounted tickets are Leadership available now for \$7.50 each; the price at the gate will be \$15 daily. Other ticket options and more information are available at Eventbrite.com.

Bands, Brews & BBQ is McHenry Area Rotary's chief fund-raising event, and is one that has raised about \$300,000 for numerous charitable causdetermined, top of mind now that make all the difference • \$975 for McHenry Knights to charitable outcomes, event of Columbus Council 1288

"Just in the last eight months, since our last Bands, provided \$26,063 to nine incredible causes," said Don Tonyan, club president and event co-chairman. "We have also committed \$20,000 to-McHenry High School Dis-John Todd and Jimmy Nick trict 156, something we are very excited about. We could not do any of this without our sponsors.

A list of grants delivered since Bands, Brews & BBQ 2023 follows:

- \$6,000 for disaster relief in Lahaina, Hawaii
 • \$6,000 to Rotary Youth Awards
- •\$5,000 to Rotary Secret Santa • \$2,500 to Youth and Family Center of McHenry County
- \$2,500 for Sunbeams Christian School, Uganda • \$1,100 for food sup-
- plies in war-torn Ukraine • \$1,000 to Kids in Need children's winter
- es over the last 12 years. With \$988 for construction supthe 2024 dates and lineup plies toward building a boys' dorm at a school in Cruce is landing the sponsorships La Esperanza, Guatemala

Already stepping up this year are presenting sponsors the McHenry Outdoor The-Brews & BBQ, our club has ater - Golden Age Cinemas and the McHenry Auto Dealers Association, comprised of Buss Ford, Castle Chevrolet Buick GMC McHenry and Sunnyside Chrysler Dodge ward our new Dual Credit Jeep Ram. Other top sponprogram partnership with sors so far include the Northwest Herald, Star 105.5, Jay Adams and Lolly Meyer, Steffan's Jewelers. Elgin Recycling and the Volo Museum.

> The latter four are band sponsors, generously supplying funds needed to pull in great talent. Four band sponsorship opportunities remain, as do numerous other sponsorship options.

"Sponsoring Bands, Brews & BBQ is a highly visible way to say your business cares about youth development as well as neighbors in need," said Denis Buch, event co-chairman. "We look forward to buildof McHenry County for ing on our past success, and would love to add new businesses to our much-appreciated list."

Anyone interested is encouraged to visit mrbbb.com/ sponsor, or call Tonyan at 815-482-0746.

County breaks ground on Taylor Place Apartments

50 workforce housing units planned as part of the development

McHenry County celebrated the first day of Community Development Week recently by officially breaking ground in the City of McHenry on the Taylor Place Apartments.

When completed, Taylor Place Apartments will begin to address the growing need for workforce housing in McHenry County. Located at 4105 W. Crystal Lake Ave., Taylor Place will create 50 housing units, complete with energy-efficient appliances and wireless internet. Forty-six of the units will be built in a three-story, elevatored apartment building, while the other four will be built in a walk-up townhome model. The historic Old Feed Mill at the site will be repurposed into a community center for residents, a leasing office, a fitness center and business center.

Taylor Place will be open to individuals and families whose incomes fall within 30% and 80% of the county median. It is being funded in part by an \$800,000 grant through the Advance McHenry County initiative, which the McHenry County Board created to invest tens of millions of dollars of American Rescue Plan Act funding directly into thoughtful

and impactful projects.

The apartments will create a community that will enrich the City of McHenry and the entire county, County Board Chairman Mike Buehler said at the groundbreaking.

"I've ended more than one of my annual State of the County Addresses with my firmly held belief that McHenry County is the best place to live, work and raise a family. But in order to maintain that goal, McHenry County has to be a place where the workers who staff our businesses, manufacture our goods, teach our children and police our streets can live and make rent," Buehler said.

Officials joining Buehler included US Rep. Bill Foster, whose office was instrumental in securing federal funding, representatives from the Housing Opportunity Development Corp. and Northpointe Development Corp., which will build and administer Taylor Place. Also in attendance were representatives from the City of McHenry, the County Board. and the county's Community Development Division.

Monday's groundbreaking is the end of a three-year journey involving local, state and federal cooperation. Buehler independently.

expressed hope that more projects like Taylor Place are built to meet the increasing need, and that the approval process becomes more streamlined and efficient.

Foster is having a statement honoring McHenry County and the Taylor Place groundbreaking read into the Congressional Record, which is the official record of the proceedings and debates of Congress.

"The availability of workforce housing is a challenge facing communities large and small throughout our country. As McHenry County continues to grow, it's imperative that there are housing options to meet the needs of everyone who calls our community home," Representative Foster said. "The Taylor Place Apartments is a prime example of that effort, and I'm proud to be in attendance at its official groundbreaking today.

Also at the ceremony, McHenry County presented Senior Care Volunteer Network with its Community Development Partner of the Year Award. The SCVN, through its network of more than 250 volunteers, helps senior citizens who require assistance to live



Shown at the groundbreaking, from left: Dr. Richard Koenig, Executive Director of the Housing Opportunity Development Corporation, City of McHenry Alderman Andrew "Andy" Glab, Congressman Bill Foster, County Board Chairman Mike Buehler, City of McHenry Alderman Victor Santi, and Jake Victor, Vice President of Development at Northpointe Development Corporation.

State allocates additional million for grocery startups almost 315,000 votes for the is due in large part to the

CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

Grocery startups can now apply for funding allocated in last year's \$20 million Illinois Grocery Initiative aimed at preventing and eliminating food deserts in Illinois.

The Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, which is administering the grants, is currently accepting applications in the second round of funding, which will provide a combined \$14 million to grocery stores looking to open in Illinois food deserts.

The agency is also reviewing applications for the first round of programming rolled out earlier this year that could partially fund a total of \$3.5 million of equipment upgrades at select stores across the state.

Using data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Illinois Department of Public Health estimates that more than 3 million Illinoisans are unable to access good food because they might not have enough money, time or reliable transportation to go shopping. Research published by the National Academy of Sciences found that living in food deserts can lead to poor health outcomes.

At the launch, which cancer screening if the Gensoon-to-be community coop grocery store in Chicago's Uptown neighborhood, local Ald. Angela Clay (46) said that as a mom, she understands how important it is to have "healthy food on the dinner table, and at breakfast time or at snack time."

"And there are a lot of families where their reality is they are eating out of a liquor store, they are eating out of a gas station," said Clay. "And we understand that the longterm effects that that has on a family or as a child can be detrimental."

Gov. JB Pritzker proposed an additional \$10 million in funding for the initiative in next year's budget. A bill sponsored by Sen. Doris Turner, D-Springfield, could expand the initiative to include farmer-owned grocery stores as well.

information For more about the grants and application process, interested parties can visit the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity website.

Cancer screening

Illinoisans could have

was hosted in the aisles of a eral Assembly approves a measure that would require insurance coverage for the

> Currently, state law requires insurance to cover genetic testing for breast and ovarian cancers, along with annual screenings for prostate, pancreatic, colon, and skin cancers for those who have a family history of cancer or have a recommendation from their doctor.

> Under Senate Bill 2697, insurance would cover prevention and susceptibility screening—including genetic testing-for all types of cancer for those with a family history, the bill's sponsor, Sen. Julie Morrison, D-Deerfield, said at a news conference. She said Illinoisans with private insurance would pay \$50 or less for genetic screening, and it would be free for those on Medicaid.

One of the things that I tell my patients is that we already know the cure for cancer, and that cure is to not get cancer in the first place,' Vivan Pan, senior genetic counselor at the University of Illinois Cancer Center said. "And cost should not be increased access to genetic the reason why people can't

access the lifesaving care that they need."

Pan said in her experience, roughly 10-15 percent of blood and saliva samples find mutations, which "may indicate an increased risk for disease like cancer." With those results, Pan said, patients can work with their medical provider to develop personalized plans for screening, prevention, and management.

The proposal unanimously passed committee in last month but Morrison has filed a technical amendment before the bill gets a final vote in the Senate.

Komatsu mining truck named 2024 'coolest thing made in Illinois'

A mining truck manufactured by Komatsu was crowned the winner of the 2024 "Makers Madness" contest, earning the title of "the coolest thing made in Illinois" at the Governor's Mansion last week.

The truck was one of more than 200 entries in the fifth annual contest hosted by the Illinois Manufacturers' Association and sponsored by Comcast Business. The bracket-style contest lasted eight weeks and collected

them down to the top 16, then to the final four, which were recognized Wednesday.

The truck, made by Komatsu in Peoria, has a hauling capacity of up to 400 tons and has "new innovations in suspension transmission, electric drive technology and autonomous operation," according to Komatsu. The 980E-5 truck weighs more than 1.3 million pounds.

Dan Funcannon, a vice president at Komatsu, said the trucks are the "coolest machines on the planet."

"These machines manufactured in Peoria and shipped around the world to support mining the minerals and materials that are required to do this manufacturing around the globe," he said at the ceremony. "We feel it's a big honor and also responsibility to sell these products throughout the world.'

Gov. J.B. Pritzker congratulated the finalists and said manufacturing is key to the state's economy.

"This room is full of talented and driven people who continue to propel our state toward a brighter future," he said. "Our economic growth 2020.

products entered, narrowing thriving manufacturing sector that you all help to build every day.

Three other finalists were also recognized at the ceremony, covering a wide range of products. Mullen's Imitation French Dressing, made by J.D. Mullen Company in Palestine, was founded by World War I veteran and Illinois restaurateur John Mullen. The MQ-25 Stingray Drone Refueler, built by Boeing in Mascoutah, is the first unmanned aircraft to refuel another aircraft midflight. Enviro Buildings' Mod Box, made by Craig Industries in Quincy, is a modular insulated outdoor building used for construction and security offices.

According to the Illinois Manufacturers' Association, the industry is responsible for almost a third of the state's jobs and contributes more than \$580 billion to the economy annually.

The Rosenberg habitat, made by Ingersoll Machine Tools in Rockford. was the 2023 winner. Another mining vehicle, the 797F mining truck by Caterpillar, was named the winner in

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Community briefs

Native shrub and tree Penny's Purpose sale order deadline May 3

The Friends of Volo Bog are taking orders for their Native Shrub and Tree spring sale-fundraiser until May 3.

Planting native shrubs and trees in your yard will help support neighborhood pollinators and other wildlife.

Pick-up will be May 11 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Volo Bog SNA parking lot behind the visitor center. Plants will be tagged for your convenience to pick up.

Volo Bog State Natural Area is located at 28478 W. Brandenburg Road, Ingleside.

Order forms can be found online at www.FriendsofVolo-Bog.org

fundraiser Saturday

The Penny's Purpose Fourth Annual Fundraiser and Silent Auction will be held at The Lodge of Antioch and Rivalry Alehouse on April 20.

Dine in or pick up your

meal at either venue (no third-party pickups) and mention The Penny's Purpose (TPP) or show their flyer to ensure 20% of all food and drink sales are generously donated back to TPP.

For more information visit the website at thepennyspurpose.org.

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Sheriff's Department celebrates retirement of K9 Dax

Dax had a long list of accomplishments, awards over his 9 years with the department

County Sheriff's Office in the spring of 2015. Dax was 13 months old when he joined the team. As the Lake County community has followed over the years, Dax has thrived in his role as a police canine. K9 Dax and his partner, Deputy John Forlenza, have located over 400 missing endangered people or fleeing felons. He has hundreds of kilos of illegal drugs, millions of dollars seized, dozens of firearms discarded by offenders, dozens of seized vehicles, and has participated in hundreds of community and school demonstrations.

K9 Dax has received awards for:

- 2016 Illinois House of Representatives - General Assembly Award
- 2017 ASIS International (Illinois North Shore Chapter) Law Enforcement Officer of the Year
- 2017 Chicago Crime Commission – Paws of Distinction Award
- 2018 K9s of Valor Foundation – K9 of the Year
- 2019 Lake County Board Special Recognition
- 2019 The 100 Club of Chicago – Valor Award
- •May 14, 2019 State of Illinois House of Representatives 101st General Assembly - House Resolution No. 872 offered by Representative Sam Yingling
- 2019 American Humane Hero Dog – Law Enforcement Winner
- 2019 Italian American Police Association - Officer of the Year

- K9 Dax joined the Lake 2022 State Senator Craig Wilcox Certificate Recognition
 - 2022 Lake County Sheriff's Commendation Office Award
 - 2022 Illinois Sheriff's Association – Award of Merit 2023 Lake County Sheriff's Office - The Sheriff's Award of Valor
 - 2023 Illinois Enforcement - Medal of Hon-
 - 2023 The German Shepherd Dog Club of America – Hero Dog Award

During Dax's career with the United States Police Canine Association (USPCA) he competed in several regional and national trials across the country. Dax has earned numerous top finishes in the areas of tracking, article searches, narcotics, suspect searches, and protection. Dax won six USPCA Regional Championships and earned two Tracking Exceptional Certifications.

K9 Dax has appeared in/ on: Numerous local and national news stations, People Magazine, Hero Dogs (Fox Nation), American Humane's Hero Dog (Hallmark Channel - Los Angeles, California), Home and Family (Hallmark Channel - Los Angeles, California), Access Daily (NBC - Los Angeles, California), Today with Hoda & Jenna (NBC - New York, New York), America's Top Dog (A&E Network - Santa Clarita, California) and Dynamic K9 Duos (ESPN Valdosta, Georgia)

See RETIREMENT, Page 5





Above: The love and respect for K9 Dax was shown on April 10 by the large crowd gathered at the ceremony for his retirement from the Lake County Sheriff's Department.

Left: Deputy Forlenza presents his partner of 9 years a plaque signifying his retirement. Dax was injured on March 3 while apprehending a suspect, and unfortunately passed away two days after his retirement ceremony.

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Retirement a person who had committed several felonies, and was fleeing. K9 Dax injured his neck and spine, which resulted in temporary paralysis to his hindquarters. K9 Dax was subsequently diagnosed with cervical and thoracolumbar Intervertebral Disc Disease (IVDD) and lumbosacral IVDD exasperated during his apprehension on March 3. K9 Dax went through intensive physical therapy fol-

lowing the injury, allowing him

(Continued from page 4)

to regain the ability to walk and enjoy relaxing with Deputy For- half of the men and women of use his hind legs.

K9 Dax's team of veterinarians determined that, for his physical wellbeing, he would not be able to return to active

Sheriff John D. Idleburg has accepted K9 Dax's official retirement request from Deputy Forlenza and ordered him to be turned over to Deputy John Forlenza, to enjoy his retirement. K9 Dax will undoubtedly miss going to work every day but will

lenza and his family.

Sheriff John D. Idleburg said, "Deputy John Forlenza and K9 Dax exemplify what a true partnership looks like. They are among the top canine teams in the nation. There was virtually nothing K9 Dax couldn't handle. He saved many lives throughout his career, apprehended some of the most violent offenders, and located major quantities of illegally trafficked drugs. On be-

the Lake County Sheriff's Office and the Lake County community, thank you, K9 Dax, for your dedication, your commitment, and your service to our community."

Right: File photo of Deputy John Forlenza and his partner K9 Dax of the Lake County Sheriff's Department.

> SUBMITTED PHOTO Hi-Liter/MCN































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Regulators weigh future of gas industry in Illinois, while clamping down on Chicago utility

CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

Natural gas is fueling a fight between consumer advocates, a powerful utility company and the state. Amid competing advertising campaigns, accusations of mismanagement and state decarbonization efforts, the Illinois Commerce Commission is starting a process that will shape how the state regulates the increasingly controversial industry.

While Chicago considers passing an ordinance to ban natural gas in some new building construction—following the lead of places like New York City and Seattle state officials are moving more slowly in an attempt to ensure Illinois meets its goal of having 100 percent renewable energy by 2050.

The ICC launched a process dubbed the "Future of Gas" last week that will inform the governor, legislature and other policymakers on potential policy changes. The process was initiated by the ICC after they tamped down requests for rate increases from all of the state's major

"We need to get this right," ICC Chair Doug Scott said at a virtual workshop with over 350 advocates and industry

officials held recently. "We a major part in reaching the Gas. The company's controget one really good shot at state's climate goals.

He added the process "is not designed to meet a pre-ordained conclusion."

Rob Kelter, senior attorney at the Environmental Law and Policy Center, praised the new approach to regulation and Scott's personal attention to the proceeding while welcoming the fact that these discussions are happening outside of a traditional rate case, where utilities have more say in setting the agenda.

Everybody pays gas and electric bills and also everyone is affected by the current gas and electric systems, Kelter said.

Both electric and gas companies are involved with the "Future of Gas" proceeding, which is expected to last until summer 2025, although the precise timeline and the scope of what will be discussed are still tentative.

"What I hope will result from this is a lot of good, productive discussion that objectively analyzes the state's options for reducing carbon emissions," Kelter said.

A spokesperson for Peoples Gas, Chicago's natural gas utility, echoed that sentiment and added the state's gas

"Natural gas, along with emerging technologies such as Renewable Natural Gas and Hydrogen, will be critical to meeting Chicagoans' need for reliable, affordable, decarbonized energy," Peoples Gas' David Schwartz told Capitol News Illinois in a statement.

Schwartz pointed to technological developments in capturing natural gas from waste products like food, using new gas-powered appliances for heating buildings and the ongoing replacement of pipes as steps that would reduce or even eliminate the gas system's carbon footprint. But Kelter said he is skeptical of the claims made by boosters of the new technology—a position shared by other environmental and consumer advocates.

'The state has climate goals that require us to change how we heat and cool our homes," he said. "We've got to move toward a system that's reliant on renewable energy.'

Peoples Gas faces

While the ICC weighs the future of the gas system generally, it's also investigating distribution system will play the current state of Peoples

versial "safety modernization program," designed to replace Chicago's aging pipe infrastructure, was put on notice in November, when the ICC paused any spending related to the program and began an investigation into it.

That investigation began in earnest last week, with Peoples Gas filing its first testimony in the case. The company was also granted a rehearing on the decision to pause spending after it claimed some work was still necessary.

The investigation is expected to last until January 2025, while the rehearing will last until late May or early June 2024.

Consumer advocates have praised the decision to shorten the leash on Peoples Gas' pipe replacement program, while also recognizing the need to replace Chicago's natural gas pipes-some of which are more than 100 years old.

But Abe Scarr, the head of the consumer advocacy group Illinois PIRG, said the program's costs have grown, in part, due to Peoples Gas conducting other work under the guise of replacing old pipes or 'emergency" repairs.

"I think it's pretty clear

Peoples Gas hasn't really kept to the scope of that work,' Scarr said.

Schwartz, of Peoples Gas, said the company provided options to the ICC for reducing the scope of the work or more narrowly targeting the program when the company can begin work again.

"We will continue to seek authorization to move forward with the needed work," Schwartz said. "Modernization of Chicago's underground energy delivery system is crucial for the safety. reliability, affordability and environmental sustainability of Chicago's heating system."

Fallout from ICC decisions

Since the ICC's bombshell rulings in November limiting several utilities' rate requests and investigating Peoples Gas, one labor union launched a pressure campaign on the commission and the governor urging them to walk back some of the decisions.

The International Union of Operating Engineers Local 150, which represents about 23,000 members in Illinois and neighboring states, launched a series of advertisements claiming that the decisions were a "natural gas ban" and urged prioritizing pipea cleaner energy system.

"I don't think any of us have seen enough facts in front of us to say that the natural gas system will be obsolete," Local 150 spokesperson Kristine Kavanagh told Capitol News Illinois.

Because of the decision to pause Peoples Gas' infrastructure spending, Kavanagh said about 200 members of her organization lost their jobs in addition to hundreds more in other unions.

While the union endorsed Pritzker in his most recent general election in 2022, his campaign organization launched a series of response ads pushing back on the union's claims.

"At a time when too many working families are struggling to pay their heating bills, the governor knows that putting their bottom line ahead of that of a record-profit-earning utility is the right thing to do," Pritzker campaign spokesperson Christina Amestoy said in a written statement.

The back-and-forth ads between the union and the Pritzker campaign illustrate a potentially growing fight between the governor and one of the Democratic Party's core bases of support.

Conservation district upcoming events

Get Out and Explore: Hike to Haiku

Thursday, April 18, 5-6:30 p.m., Hickory Grove Highlands Conservation Area.

Join for a hike to serve as an inspiration for writing nature-themed haikus. Learn about the very first haiku ever written, a short history of haikus, and how to write your own. Notebooks and pencils provided. Ages 8+.

Earth Day Celebration

Saturday, April 20, Noon to 4 p.m., Prairieview Education Center, Crystal Lake.

Spend the afternoon celebrating the earth. Explore earth-friendly activities and craft stations, plant seeds, take a guided hike, and view a puppet show and more.

Co-sponsored by the Environmental Defenders of McHenry County. All ages.

Weekend of Restoration

Saturday, April 20, 8 a.m. 7 p.m., and Sunday, April 21 8 a.m. to noon, Glacial Park Lost Valley Visitor Center, Ringwood

Explore your relationship with the natural world through storytelling and hands-on team-building activities that incorporate Native American perspectives, joined by staff from the Trickster Cultural Center. Participants will also plant hundreds of native trees and shrubs to restore an ancient oak savanna. Ages 16+.

Norma & George Powers

Sunday, April 21, Noon to 4 p.m., Powers-Walker House, Glacial Park.

Visit this 1854 Greek Revival restored house and learn more about the resident families who called this area home. April's program centers around the Powers family and honoring their military service. All ages welcome.

Rock, Ridges, Ice Oh My!

Wednesday, April 24, 6-7:30 p.m., Marengo Ridge Conservation Area, Maren-

McHenry county's landscape is seemingly mundane, but what rocks and more tell is more than meets the eye! Join a naturalist on a journey through time to learn how Marengo Ridge was formed by hiking 1.25 miles on hilly terrain. There will be occasional stops to experience artifacts and witness a demonstration. Ages 7+.

Woodland Wandering

Thursday, April 25, 6-8:30 p.m., Glacial Park, Kettle Lot, Ringwood.

Volunteer bird enthusiast Dave Miller leads this spring evening 2 mile hike through the woods. Catch a glimpse

Remember

to include

the 5W's:

Who, what

where,

when and

why!

0

of the birds that are passing through on their migration and search for those that stay as summer or year-round residents. Join the group for discussion at the Lost Valley Visitor Center following the hike. Bring binoculars and field guides if you have them. Ages 14+.

April World Migratory Bird Days

Saturday, April 27, noon to 4 p.m., Lost Valley Visitor Center, Glacial Park, Ringwood.

Sunday, April 28, noon to 4 p.m., Volo Bog State Natural Area, Ingleside.

your passport stamped at bird and insect activity stations as you participate in games and activities. All ages.

For more information or to sign up for programs please visit the McHenry County Conservation District website at MCCDistrict.org.

Lake County Sheriff's arrest bulletin

The Lake County Sheriff's erating a commercial vehicle Dept. reported the following arrests in Lake County. Suspects are considered innocent until proven guilty in a court March 5

Joseph A. Delapara, 38, Lake Villa, was cited for DUI - alcohol, and open transportation of alcohol;

James A. Paulick, 41, Lincolnshire, was cited for a warrant arrest: contempt of court (Wisconsin):

Jennifer F. Hass, 52, Elkhorn, WI, was cited for driving while license suspended, and driving with suspended

Roberto C. Fuentes-Claros, 25, Beach park, was cited for no driver's license, and driving with suspended registra-

Sean A. Banks, 49, Hammond, IN, was cited for op-

without a CDL:

Amy Fell, 39, Round Lake Heights, was cited for aggravated DUI;

March 7

Jose A. Pacheco Valladares, 22, Zion, was cited for no driver's license and no

Aralin A. Alvarez, 23, Gurnee, was cited for DUI drugs, reckless driving, unlawful possession of drug paraphernalia, and no insur-

March 8

David J. Myers, 50, Grayslake, was cited for violating an order of protection;

Navarro, Waukegan, was cited for attempted burglary to vehicle:

Fatima A. Serrano, 19 Waukegan, was cited for attempted burglary to vehicle:

Antonio Logwood, 46 Woodstock, was cited for DUI - alcohol, driving while license revoked and no insur-

March 9

Rashad T. Reed, 26, Milwaukee, WI, was cited for unlawful possession of a stolen

Nicholas J. Martinez Holderbaum, 24, Zion, was cited for aggravated DUI, driving while license suspended, open transportation of alcohol and no insurance;

March 10

Daniel A. Deen, 54, Pleasant Prairie, WI, was cited for DUI - alcohol, and no insurance.

March 11

Zion M. Fleming, 23, Beach Park, was cited for a warrant arrest;

Joanne E. Concidine, 61, Beach Park, was cited for DUI - alcohol, and no insur-

March 12

Martin W. Kerley, 57, Palatine, was cited for a warrant arrest: criminal trespass to residence and resist-

Marcella G. McIntosh, 61. Grayslake, was cited for endangering the life of a child.

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Justice, is about 9 years old, spayed, up-to-date on routine shots (incl. rabies), tested negative for FIV, feline leukemia 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.

Sheriff's reports

Sheriff's personnel successfully use de-escalation techniques

members of the Lake County Sheriff's Office deescalated two potentially deadly incidents.

On April 9, Lake County Sheriff's deputies responded to a residence in unincorporated Deerfield for a report of a man in mental crisis. While deputies were responding, Lake County Sheriff's Telecommunicators obtained important information that the man was armed with a firearm. The 911 caller was in fear that the man in distress was going to kill his child and the child's mother – who were both in the home.

Sheriff's deputies arrived and were able to evacuate the woman and child. The man in distress barricaded himself in a bathroom with the firearm. Sheriff's deputies spent nearly two hours calmly communicating with the man, deescalating the situation. The man agreed to come out of the bathroom without the firearm. The man was subsequently transported to an area hospital for a mental health evaluation and

Sheriff's deputies located the semi-automatic pistol in the bathroom, which they placed into evidence for safekeeping.

On April 11, Lake County Sheriff's deputies responded to a residence in Volo for a man in mental crisis, threatening suicide. Sheriff's deputies arrived, and the man retrieved a knife and moved to a different area of the home. Sheriff's deputies spoke to the man in a calm manner, and the man requested to speak to a military combat veteran. Sheriff's deputies were able to accommodate the request and put the man

in telephone contact with an

Announcements

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In the span of two days, off-duty member of the sheriff's office, who is a combat veteran.

> The sheriff's deputies at the scene, along with the off-duty member of the sheriff's office, deescalated the situation and convinced the man to go to the hospital. The man was transported to an area hospital for a mental health evaluation and treat-

Following these incidents, sheriff's deputies utilized the 'Clear & Present Danger' protocol through the Illinois State Police and 'Red Flag laws' through the local court system. This is to ensure both people in crisis do not have access to fire-

Sheriff John D. Idleburg said, "We place a major emphasis on de-escalation versus rushing to use force. If it were not for the calm disposition of our deputies, along with their desire to be community caretakers, combined with our enhanced training – these situations could have ended in tragedy. This is just another one of the many reasons I am proud to serve alongside the men and women of the Lake County Sheriff's Office."

Three injured during dog attacks

Three people, including one deputy, were injured after a series of dog attacks near McHenry on April 11. The public was advised to be on the lookout for one dog that had remained on the

On Thursday, at about 5:50 p.m., McHenry County Sheriff's police and McHenry Township Fire Protection District were dispatched to reports of an aggressive dog fight at W Huemann Drive and Stilling Blvd near

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McHenry. The owner reported that she was unable to separate her dogs who were engaged in a fight, and she had sustained bite wounds. A neighbor, who attempted to help the owner, also sustained bite wounds.

Upon arrival, deputies found three dogs loosely enclosed on a front porch, and two dogs corralled in a car. While speaking with the owners, the three dogs broke through the porch gate and aggressively ran towards responding deputies and fire personnel. Less-lethal attempts to control the dogs were made by use of tasers and a fire extinguisher. Subsequently, one dog was shot during the incident. One deputy also sustained a dog bite and was treated at a nearby hospital.

McHenry County Animal Control took possession of three dogs while one dog remains on the loose. Deputies continually looked for the remaining dog through the night and into the morning with no success.

The Sheriff's Office understands the bond between an owner and their pet and only resorts to using lethal force when it comes to protecting the safety and well-being of citizens and

The dog at large is described as a petite dark brown pit bull with a white stripe on its face. If spotted, please do not approach. All sightings should be reported to the Sheriff's Office or Animal Control at (815) 459-

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tree traffic crash under investigation

Lake County Sheriff's Traffic Crash Investigators are investigating an early morning single-vehicle crash that resulted in critical injuries.

On April 13, at approximately 4:40 a.m., Lake County Sheriff's Deputies were dispatched to a car-versus-tree traffic crash with injuries in the area of Fairfield Road and Chardon Road, unincorporated Wauconda. The vehicle, a 2016 GMC Sierra, was occupied only by the driver, a 28-year-old man from Palatine, who sustained critical injuries in the crash and required extrication from the vehicle by the fire department.

Preliminary investigation shows the driver was traveling southbound on Fairfield Road when, for an unknown reason, he crossed the center line and left the pavement on the east side of the roadway. The vehicle then crossed a driveway and struck a large tree head-on.

The driver was transported to Advocate Condell Medical Center in Libertyville with critical. life-threatening injuries.

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

Lake County Sheriff's Special Investigations Group logs success in 2023

The Lake County Sheriff's Special Investigations Group seized a record-breaking amount of fentanyl in 2023.

The Lake County Sheriff's Office Special Investigations Group (SIG), a High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) funded task force, recorded an incredibly successful year in 2023. The team opened 167 criminal investigations, which resulted in the arrests of 64 offenders and seizure of over \$2,500,000.00 worth of illegal drugs in Lake County. Additionally, they seized 112 illegally possessed firearms, many of which were possessed by convicted felons.

In 2023, SIG seizures include:

- Over 17,000 fentanyl laced pills
- Over 120 pounds of psilocybin mushrooms
- Nearly 10 pounds of powder cocaine
- Nearly 10 pounds of illegally trafficked cannabis
- Nearly 900 grams of methamphetamine

In 2023 SIG placed a focus on gun traffickers operating throughout Lake County. This resulted in the seizure of dozens of firearms being sold by gun traffickers, seizure of switch devices that turn pistols into fully automatic firearms and seizure of ghost guns, all while securing the arrests of the offenders.

During one of their investigations, SIG discovered a possible human trafficking operation being run in Saint Charles. SIG turned crucial information they uncovered over to authorities in Saint Charles and assisted local authorities in rescuing five victims from human

SIG also places significant emphasis on community outreach, speaking at schools, businesses, community groups, and other public safety organizations. Numerous community presentations were provided in 2023.

Sheriff John D. Idleburg said, "Our Special Investigations Group is making a major positive impact in our community. They successfully stopped over 17,000 deadly fentanyl pills from being sold throughout Lake County, which undoubtedly saved many lives. Over the last five years, SIG has removed nearly \$20 million dollars' worth of drugs being trafficked in Lake County. The partnerships and collaboration between SIG's member agencies are major reasons that SIG is so successful."

Participating members of the Lake County Sheriff's Special Investigations Group are: Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI), Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms (ATF), Highland Park PD, Lake County Sheriff's Office, Park City PD, Round Lake Beach PD, Round Lake Park PD, Round Lake PD, Wauconda PD, Waukegan PD, Winthrop Harbor PD and Zion PD.

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