

HI-LITER

~ including McHenry County News

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FINAL SALE OF THE YEAR!



65" 4K LED SMART T.V.*

Also With Purchase of Any In Stock Vehicle You Will Receive A...

11 DAY EVENT
SALE ENDS DEC. 31 at 6 PM

Wednesday	Dec. 18	8am-7pm
Thursday	Dec. 19	8am-7pm
Friday	Dec. 20	8am-6pm
Saturday	Dec. 21	8am-4pm
Monday	Dec. 23	8am-7pm
Tuesday	Dec. 24	8am-12noon
Thursday	Dec. 26	8am-7pm
Friday	Dec. 27	8am-6pm
Saturday	Dec. 28	8am-4pm
Monday	Dec. 30	8am-7pm
Tuesday	Dec. 31	8am-6pm

HUGE TRADE-IN VALUES!!!

\$149 MTH** WAS \$9,995

2013 Ford Fusion SE
Leather, heated seats, Bluetooth, alloy wheels, luxury package. #44419A
Year End Price: \$5,995

OVER 35 Certified PreOwned Vehicles In Stock

LIFETIME POWERTRAIN WARRANTY
On Select Vehicles With Vehicle Purchase
See Salesperson for Details

\$199 MTH** WAS \$12,995

2009 Nissan Murano LE
AWD, Bluetooth, Heated Seats, Keyless Entry, Power Tailgate, Moonroof, & Navigation System. #P3093A
Year End Price: \$8,375

\$189 MTH** WAS \$12,995

2010 Chevrolet Equinox LT
Auto, Bluetooth, Heated Seats, Keyless Entry, Moonroof, Navigation System, & Rear Liftgate. #34141A
Year End Price: \$7,595

5.99%+ Financing As Low As **\$149 mth****
On Select Vehicles

\$199 MTH** WAS \$12,995

2014 Ford Fusion SE
Auto, Bluetooth, Satellite Radio, Keyless Entry, Entertainment System, & Cruise Control. #34036A
Year End Price: \$8,907

\$8,999 WAS \$13,995

2019 Ford Escape SE
4WD/AWD, heated seats, rear view camera, remote start, Apple Car Play. #44481A
Year End Price: \$8,999

LIFETIME CAR WASHES WITH EVERY VEHICLE PURCHASE

\$8,995 WAS \$12,995

2014 Ford F-150
AWD, Keyless Entry, Tow Package, Satellite Radio, Rear View Camera, & Entertainment System. #4432A
Year End Price: \$8,995

*Some restrictions apply. Cannot be combined with any other offers. Must take delivery to receive 65" 4K LED Smart TV. One giveaway per purchase. Prior sales excluded. Ends 12-31-24. **72 month 9% financing with 10% cash or trade down. Tax, title, license & service fees extra, on select vehicles. To approved credit. Vehicles available at time of printing. Ends 12-31-24. *On select Certified Vehicles. To Approved credit. Ends 12-31-24.

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RELAX IT'S COVERED

2025 RAM 1500 BIG HORN 4x4

Includes 65" 4K Smart TV

\$55,270 MSRP
- \$2,739 MILLER DISCOUNT
- \$2,000 FORD CONQUEST CASH
- \$6,500 RAM CASH

\$44,031 CLOSING THE BOOKS PRICE

OR LEASE FOR **\$429 MTH****

2024 DODGE HORNET GT AWD

Includes 65" 4K Smart TV

\$33,490 MSRP
- \$495 MILLER DISCOUNT
- \$4,500 DODGE CASH

\$28,495 CLOSING THE BOOKS PRICE

OR LEASE FOR **\$359 MTH****

2024 JEEP COMPASS LATITUDE PLUS 4x4

Includes 65" 4K Smart TV

\$34,085 MSRP
- \$254 MILLER DISCOUNT
- \$5,500 JEEP CASH

\$28,331 CLOSING THE BOOKS PRICE

OR LEASE FOR **\$315 MTH****

2024 FORD EDGE SE AWD

Includes 65" 4K Smart TV

\$40,225 MSRP
- \$805 MILLER DISCOUNT
- \$5,000 FORD CASH

\$34,420 CLOSING THE BOOKS PRICE

OR LEASE FOR **\$489 MTH****

0% Financing Savings Over **\$13,800!!!**
up to **72 mths!**

2024 FORD F-150 STX 4x4

Includes 65" 4K Smart TV

\$52,210 MSRP
- \$2,033 MILLER DISCOUNT
- \$2,000 FORD FLEX CASH
- \$2,000 RAM CONQUEST CASH

\$46,177 CLOSING THE BOOKS PRICE

+1.9% for 66 mths**

OR LEASE FOR **\$349 MTH****

*On Select Models. To Approved Credit. Ends 12-31-24. Vehicles Available at time of printing may not be exactly as shown. All offers end 12-31-24. *Some restrictions apply. Cannot be combined with any other offers. Must take delivery to receive 65" 4K LED Smart TV. One giveaway per purchase. Prior sales excluded. Ends 12-31-24. **36 month lease. 10,500 miles a year. Plus tax. \$3990 down plus 1st month payment due at delivery. To approved credit. Ends 12-31-24. ***36 month lease. 10,500 miles year. Plus tax. \$4990 down plus 1st month payment due at delivery. Includes \$2,000 Ram Conquest cash. Must own or lease a Ram to qualify. Ends 12-31-24. *Includes Ford conquest bonus cash. Must own or lease a Ford to qualify. Ends 12-31-24. **Must own or lease Ram vehicle to qualify. Ends 12-31-24. ***Must finance with Ford Credit flex buy option. To approved credit. Ends 12-31-24.

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HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

County wins GFOA Financial Reporting Award

McHenry County has again earned national recognition for its excellence in financial reporting. The Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada has bestowed a Certificate of Achievement on McHenry County for its annual comprehensive financial report for the 2023 fiscal year. The annual report lists a government's audited year-end fiscal activities in detail, and the award is the highest recognition the GFOA offers in the area of government accounting and financial reporting.

This is the 26th consecutive year that McHenry County has received the award. "McHenry County takes transparency and accountability, especially regarding its financial reporting, very seriously, and we are dedicated to ensuring that we are responsible stewards of taxpayer money – this award is recognition of our commitment," County Board Chairman Mike Buehler, R-Crystal Lake, said.

The GFOA is a nonprofit professional organization that advances excellence in government finance by providing best practices, professional development, resources, and practical research for more than 21,000 members, and the communities they serve. "This award from the GFOA once again recognizes McHenry County as among the best of the best when it comes to financial reporting," Chief Financial Officer Kerri Wisz said. "I am grateful to the dedicated staff members who have helped make this award-winning report possible over the years."

You can view the FY 2023 annual comprehensive financial report at <https://www.mchenrycountyil.gov/departments/finance/annual-comprehensive-financial-reports>.



SUBMITTED PHOTO HI-LITER/MCN

Construction advances at Regional Operations and Communications Facility

The new, 37,000-square-foot Regional Operations and Communications (ROC) Facility in Libertyville is on track to open in 2025. Construction is progressing, with crews scheduled to work through winter to prepare the building for operations.

This state-of-the-art facility will house three key agencies: LakeComm, the Lake County Emergency Management Agency (LCEMA) and the Joint Emergency Telephone System Board (JETSB).

LakeComm will serve as a consolidated Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) for partnering agencies, municipalities and unincorporated areas of Lake County, covering more than 425,000 residents. As a PSAP, it will handle 9-1-1 calls for law enforcement, fire and emergency medical services.

"With the opening of the ROC in 2025, LakeComm will be one step closer to completing our 9-1-1 consolidation efforts and providing state-of-the-art service to our member agen-

cies," said Kevin Timony, Chair of the LakeComm Member Board of Directors and Village Manager, Village of Vernon Hills. "This will allow us to achieve our overall mission of getting the right public safety resources to the right location, with the right information, in the shortest amount of time."

LCEMA coordinates people, plans and resources to protect Lake County communities from disasters like tornadoes and floods. It includes Lake County staff and community volunteers. The ROC will also house the Emergency Operations Center, providing a modernized space for disaster preparation and critical, real-time coordination across multiple agencies.

"The ROC will offer essential protection from hazards like tornadoes, ensuring we can continue supporting our community during disasters," said Daniel Eder, Manager of LCEMA. "We'll also be able to conduct advanced disaster-response training, improving readiness across our agencies. Co-locating with LakeComm will enhance coordination among emergency communications, public safety and emergency management."

JETSB will support LakeComm with the latest technology and training resources. Earlier this year, local law enforcement and fire agencies adopted cutting-edge public safety software, which LakeComm will use at the ROC.

"The speed and efficiency of processing emergency calls will improve significantly," said J. Kevin Hunter, Chair of the JETSB and Lake County Board Member for District 5. "By reducing the need to transfer many calls, we'll be able to save valuable time and potentially, lives."

The ROC is being built to withstand extended power outages and severe weather. Security features, including vehicle barriers, reinforced construction, high-impact-resistant window treatments and secure parking

will provide enhanced protection.

Interior work is underway throughout the ROC. The solar array powering the facility is operational. Framing for the stretched fabric ceilings is being installed in the designated dispatch and Emergency Operations Center areas and drywall installation has begun.

The building will offer a bright, daylight-filled workspace and areas for training, staff education and fitness. Outside, walking trails and a patio will support employee wellness.

Recently, members of the Lake County Board and County officials gave U.S. Congressman Brad Schneider a guided tour of the ROC. During the tour, they discussed the facility's progress and unique features, emphasizing its alignment with Lake County's sustainability goals.

Congressman Schneider's support through the Community Projects Funding initiative enabled Lake County to secure \$1 million from the 2022 Consolidated Appropriations Act for construction. Additional funding sources include a \$2 million grant from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation, a \$5 million commitment from the Lake County Emergency Telephone System Board, a \$30 million Lake County General Obligation Bond approved by the Lake County Board and contributions from Lake County's Capital Program and the American Rescue Plan Act.

"We are deeply grateful for Congressman Schneider's invaluable support, the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation's grant award and the dedication of everyone involved in making the ROC a reality," said Lake County Board Chair Sandy Hart. "This facility will bring together the latest cutting-edge technology and resources needed for emergency responders to protect our residents, creating a safer Lake County."

Christmas Worship

A Guide to Celebrating the Reason for the Season

Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP
5:00 pm and 10:30 pm

THE GIFT OF GOD

4300 Grass Lake Rd., Antioch, IL 60002 | faithantioch.org

Trinity Church

Sundays: 9:00a & 10:45a

CANDLELIGHT SERVICES
DECEMBER 24
4:00p & 6:00p

Home for Christmas

W775 Geranium Road, Genoa City, WI
262-279-3052 • trinity.family

St. Ignatius of Antioch Episcopal Church

500 Depot Street, Antioch, IL 60002
(corner of Deep Lake Rd. and Depot St.)

CHRISTMAS WORSHIP

Tuesday, December 24
4:30 pm Christmas Carols
5:00 pm Christmas Eve Mass

Wednesday, December 25
10:00 am Christmas Day Mass

Zoom link available on the website!

All are welcome!

For more information:
(847) 395-0652
saintignatiusofantiochil@gmail.com
www.ignatiusantioch.com

Prince of Peace Catholic Church

135 S. Milwaukee Ave (Rte 83)
Lake Villa, IL 60046
847-356-7915
princeofpeaceilv.org

Christmas Eve Mass Schedule
3:00 p.m., 3:15 p.m. (Parish Hall),
5:00 p.m. & Midnight
(carols begin at 11:30 p.m.)

Christmas Mass Schedule
7:30 a.m., 9:30 a.m. & 11:30 a.m.

"What gift can I bring the newborn King?"

Recycle your holiday lights

SWALCO offers recycling for old and unwanted strings of lights at no cost. Wire string holiday lights and extension cords are accepted. Items that are not accepted include live trees, artificial trees, wreaths, garland, ornaments, and inflatables.

Drop-off locations:

- Grant Township: Road District Facility, 26535 Mollitor Road, Ingleside, IL 60041. Monday - Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- Grayslake: Village Public Works Facility, 585 Ber-

ry Avenue, Grayslake, IL 60030. Monday - Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., and Saturday, 8:00 a.m. to noon.

- Highland Park: City Recycling Center, 1180 Half Day Road, Highland Park, IL 60035. Every Tuesday, 7:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., and the first Saturday of the month, 7:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
- LRS Wauconda, 1350 N Old Rand Road, Wauconda, IL 60084. Monday - Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

For more information visit SWALCO's website at swalco.org.

BBQ'd Productions celebrating 10 years of red envelope campaign with stellar prizes

Cynthia Wolf
CONTRIBUTOR

Dining in this month at any of Kris Schoenberger's restaurants will prove to be a golden experience for some lucky participants in his red envelope campaign.

This is the 10th year for the campaign, and the restaurateur has gone all out for prizes worthy of the benchmark anniversary. Tucked within 300 of the 5,300 red envelopes available will be golden tickets, whose holders will be invited to a top-prize distribution party at the Lehmann Mansion in Lake Villa on Thursday, March 20, 2025.

To obtain an envelope, one must dine in at BBQ'd Productions in Third Lake, Lake Zurich or Kenosha, Wisconsin, or at Station 51 in Antioch, between now and the end of the year, or as long as supplies last. To redeem the no-peek envelope, dine in again at any of

the restaurants between Jan. 1, 2025, and Feb. 28, 2025. Only then can it be opened and the prize revealed.

At the March 20 celebration, all top prizes will be awarded, with the grand prize winner choosing from a Polaris Ranger utility vehicle, a Ski-Doo MXZ snowmobile or a Yamaha VX Cruiser wave runner. All are 2024 models from Nielsen Enterprises in Lake Villa, and each is valued at between \$14,000 and \$15,000, Schoenberger said.

"It's an amazing party," he added, noting that last year was the first year he included the soiree in his campaign. "Golden ticket holders enjoy a gourmet meal and live entertainment in one of the oldest and most beautiful mansions in existence. The architecture of the building is incredible. It's gigantic, about 40,000 square feet, and in a gorgeous, gated, wooded setting."

All red envelopes contain prizes, ranging from a free dessert to the golden tickets, which, aside from the grand prize, could bring the holder anything from a new Kitchen-aid mixer to a grill, a television and more.

Schoenberger said he is excited to continue the red envelope campaign, which as of 2025 will surpass \$1 million in prizes awarded over the years.

"I think it's important as a small business to give back to the people who support me and allow me to live my dream of being an entrepreneur," said Schoenberger, who also operates Elyte Productions at the Lehmann Mansion, a wedding and events venue. "This creates excitement among our employees and excitement within the community. People talk about it all year."

There is no limit to the number of red envelopes a customer can receive. Dine

in a few times a week, and receive an envelope each time, while supplies last. BBQ'd Productions restaurants are located at 34121 Route 45 in Third Lake, 405 N. Rand Road in Lake Zurich and 4235 Green Bay Road in Kenosha, Wisconsin. Envelopes also are available at Station 51, 883 N. Main St., Antioch.

BBQ'd Productions features mouthwatering, award-winning smoked and grilled pork, beef and fish dishes, barbecued nachos, burnt ends, hearty pub-style burgers, smoked wings and home-style sides as well as salads, craft cocktails and more. Station 51 Truck Co. Bar and Grill features fire station-themed décor. Popular menu items there include foot-long mozzarella sticks and lobster rolls straight from the East Coast, served on signature New England rolls.

For other information, visit wegrillitall.com or



SUBMITTED PHOTO Hi-Liter/MCN

Kelly Scheuring, marketing manager, and Amber Jones, marketing director, show off one of the red envelopes available this holiday season at BBQ'd Productions restaurants in Lake Zurich, Third Lake, and Kenosha, Wisconsin, as well as Station 51 in Antioch.

call 847-550-1234 for Lake Zurich, 847-543-1234 for Third Lake or 262-764-5005 for Kenosha. BBQ'd Productions regularly updates its menus with the latest fare, and also offers a free mobile app, private events and catering. The Station 51 website is at station51truck-company.com. The phone number is 224-493-6111.



SUBMITTED PHOTO Hi-Liter/MCN

Flood insurance premium discounts may be available for some unincorporated Lake County residents.

Unincorporated Lake County residents may be eligible for flood insurance premium discounts

Property owners residing in unincorporated Lake County may be eligible to save an average of \$241 a year on their flood insurance policies. Currently, there are more than 508 flood insurance policies in unincorporated Lake County.

Through the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Community Rating System (CRS) program, residents within unincorporated Lake County – who meet certain requirements – are eligible for up to 20 percent savings on flood insurance premiums. This results in a potential annual total savings of \$121,526 overall for residents across the county. Property owners should contact their flood insurance agent to obtain individual savings information.

Since 2008, Lake County has participated in the CRS program and received favorable ratings saving property owners thousands of dollars on their policies. Lake County is required to create an Annual Evaluation Report to maintain the favorable rating.

Highlights from the report include:

- During the project year, Lake County issued a number of flood protection-related permits, including elevating structures and utilities as well as the addition of flow-through foundations. These improvements,

required per the Lake County Unified Development Ordinance, are designed to protect these structures from future flooding.

- The Lake County Stormwater Management Commission's (SMC) Watershed Management Board cost-share grant program helps fund local stormwater projects. The highest funding priority is flood damage and prevention/mitigation, but other project benefits are also included in funding decisions.

- Lake County works continuously with residents and coordinates with other agencies such as the Township Highway Commissioners and Lake County SMC to respond to drainage complaints affecting private properties.

- View details of the Annual Evaluation Report at <https://lakecounty.legistar.com/>.

Contact your insurance agent for coverage information, pricing and CRS flood insurance discount information. FEMA Flood Smart website can be found at floodsmart.gov.

This notice applies to residents in the unincorporated areas of Lake County. If you live within a village or city, contact your municipality to see if they participate in the CRS program.

Lake County Board members sworn in at December meeting

Seven Lake County Board members, re-elected in the November 5 General Election, were officially sworn into office on Monday, Dec. 2. The members sworn in were: Adam Schlick (District 2), J. Kevin Hunter (District 5), Diane Hewitt (District 8), Mary Ross-Cunningham (District 9), Paras Parekh (District 12), Sandy Hart (District 13) and Sara Knizhnik (District 18).

Also at the meeting, the County Board re-elected Sandy Hart as its chair and Mary Ross-Cunningham as its vice-chair.

Hart has been on the board since 2012 and has served as the chair since 2018. Her district (District 13) includes Lake Bluff and portions of Burnee, North Chicago and Waukegan. She has been a steadfast champion of government transparency, efficiency and ethics and has worked diligently to enhance and support behavioral health resources. Under her leadership, she has emphasized investing in infrastructure, including stormwater management, roads and non-motorized paths.

"I am honored to contin-



Sandy Hart



Mary Ross-Cunningham

ue to work side-by-side with this dedicated board," Chair Hart said. "We've accomplished really great things in partnership with other government entities, non-profits and volunteers through the guidance and support of Lake County's outstanding employees. Utilizing our strategic plan, I look forward to collaborating with my colleagues to use this road map in continuing to make Lake County a great place to live, work and do business."

Vice-Chair Mary Ross-Cunningham, a board member since 2002 and vice-chair since 2018, represents District 9, which includes parts of Waukegan and North Chicago. She has served as the chair of the County Board's Law and Judicial Committee and the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Committee.

In addition to her local work, Ross-Cunningham has represented Lake County nationally as the Board's representative for the National Association of Counties (NACo). Her key priorities include creating job opportunities and expanding access to affordable housing.

"The County Board will continue to work together as a team so that we can accomplish even more, now and in the future, that will benefit all of our residents," Vice-Chair Cunningham said. "Every person on this Board is ready to do the hard work to make our communities safer, more prosperous and healthier."

The Lake County Board has 19 elected members, each representing a specific geographic district. The Board approves the budget and all financial matters as well as ordinances, affecting all county government departments. Bios and contact information for all 19 Lake County Board Members can be found on Lake County's website at <https://www.lakecountyil.gov/2336/Board-Members>.

-EST. 1966-

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HOLIDAY HOURS:
Monday, Dec. 23: 9:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.
Tuesday, Dec. 24: 9:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Wednesday, Dec. 25: 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

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Cash & Carry Coupon
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1.75 LITER (ON 2)
Cash & Carry Coupon
Expires 12/24/24 (No debit or credit cards)

MEUKOW COGNAC VS
\$21.99
750 ML
Cash & Carry Coupon
Expires 12/24/24 (No debit or credit cards)

GREY GOOSE VODKA
\$39.99 ★ (\$44.99 LESS \$10 INSTANT REBATE)
1.75 LITER (ON 2)
Cash & Carry Coupon
Expires 12/24/24 (No debit or credit cards)

JIM BEAM BOURBON
\$19.99 ★ (\$22.99 LESS \$3 INSTANT REBATE)
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Cash & Carry Coupon
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Hi-LITER

~ including McHenry County News

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As of Feb. 9, 2022 Hi-Liter is the successor publication to McHenry County News

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McHenry County approves balanced FY2025 budget

The McHenry County Board has approved a balanced 2025 budget and responsible levy.

The \$270 million budget and the \$64.99 million levy were both approved at the Nov. 19 County Board meeting after a 30-day public review period. The 2025 fiscal year for McHenry County begins Dec. 1.

The owner of a \$350,000 home who takes the homestead exemption will pay at least \$60 less for the County's share of their tax bill; the new levy is \$8.8 million smaller than the current 2024 levy of \$73.8 million because of the successful voter referendum earlier this year to remove the Mental Health Board levy and replace it with a retail sales tax.

County government, on average, accounts for about 7.6% of residential property tax bills.

While the \$270 million budget is \$21 million more than the current 2024 budget, the largest portion of this increase is due to the impending start of construction to widen the northern segment of Randall Road. This improvement project is 80% funded by the federal government, and the County has been saving for years to pay its share. Another increase is due to the addition of three new McHenry County Sheriff's Office deputies; this is the first expansion of the deputy roster in 20 years.

These expenses are in addition to the ongoing impact of inflation, increasing supply costs, and a highly competitive labor market, as well as unfunded mandates imposed by the General Assembly.

McHenry County displays its budget through Questica OpenBook, an interactive tool that allows users to view all levels of the budget, from a high-level summary by category to revenue or expense account detail by fund and department. You can review the 2025 budget by visiting <https://mchenrycountyil.openbook.questica.com/>.



From left: Sergeant Matthew Harmon, Lieutenant Jacob Novak and Sheriff John D. Idleburg with the HIDTA 'Initiative of the Year' Trophy that was recently awarded to the Lake County Sheriff's Office Special Investigations Group (SIG) at a ceremony in Chicago.

Lake County Sheriff's Special Investigations Group receives significant HIDTA award

Sheriff John D. Idleburg is proud to announce the Lake County Sheriff's Office Special Investigations Group (SIG) was awarded Chicago High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area's (HIDTA) '2024 Initiative of the Year' award!

Sheriff John D. Idleburg, Lieutenant Jacob Novak (SIG's Commander), and Sergeant Matthew Harmon (SIG's Assistant Commander) received the recognition, on behalf of SIG, in Chicago. The award was presented at a ceremony by Chicago HIDTA's Executive Board.

SIG was selected from all of the Chicago HIDTA initiatives for their success of recently disrupting or dismantling nine drug trafficking organizations, making over 50 arrests, seizing nearly 200 illegally possessed firearms, and seizing significant quantities of fentanyl, heroin, cocaine, crack cocaine, methamphetamine, and other illegal drugs.

Sheriff John D. Idleburg said, "To say I am proud of not only my staff assigned to SIG, as well as our local and federal partners assigned, is an understatement. This team of proactive professionals works extremely hard to identify and arrest drug traffickers, gun traffickers, human traffickers, and some of the most violent offenders in society.

They are doing incredible work to keep Lake County safe and I am very grateful for the recognition from HIDTA's Executive Board."

Nicholas Roti, Executive Director of Chicago HIDTA added, "Congratulations to the Lake County Sheriff's Office led Lake County Special Investigations Group on being awarded the 2024 Chicago High intensity Drug Trafficking Area's Initiative of the Year! The Lake County Special Investigations Group has continuously displayed high level investigative proficiency resulting in numerous successful investigations all aimed at keeping the neighborhoods and residents of Lake County, Illinois safe. Great Job!"

"Working alongside our local, state and federal partners has proven to be a force multiplier when it comes to investigating firearm and drug trafficking," said ATF Special Agent in Charge Christopher Amon of the Chicago Field Division. "ATF is committed to the law enforcement partnerships with the Lake County Special Investigations Group, and I commend the Lake County Sheriff and his staff for their leadership."

Lake County was awarded HIDTA designation in 2020. At that time, SIG showed its ability to disrupt and

dismantle organized crime, conduct long-term investigations focused on drug trafficking leading to arrests and convictions, and partner with municipal as well as federal agencies to combat drug trafficking. Since obtaining the HIDTA designation, SIG has been able to accomplish far more with HIDTA's support.

HIDTA operates under the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy. This program provides federal support to law enforcement agencies in designated counties with coordination, equipment, technology, and additional resources to combat drug production and trafficking.

The current partner agencies involved in SIG are: Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) Chicago Field Division, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), U.S. Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), Highland Park Police Department, Park City Police Department, Round Lake Police Department, Round Lake Beach Police Department, Round Lake Park Police Department, Wauconda Police Department, Waukegan Police Department, Winthrop Harbor Police Department and Zion Police Department

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▼ Tell us what's happening in the photo

▼ **Please do NOT crop your photos.**

▼ Tell us who took the photo and we will give them a photo credit

This is your chance to promote your organization or special event!

Remember to include the 5W's:
Who, what, where, when and why!

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BY NOON ON FRIDAY

PHOTOS MAY ALSO APPEAR ON OUR WEB SITE.

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SUBMITTED PHOTO Hi-Liter/MCN

Pet of the week

Jeffy, is about 7 years old, neutered, up-to-date on shots, tested negative for 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.

Paulson Road Township bridge closed after recent inspection

The McHenry County DOT and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) have closed the Paulson Road Township Bridge over the north branch of the Kishwaukee River in Hartland Township following a recent bridge inspection.

A detour route is posted directing travelers to utilize U.S. Route 14, Deep Cut Road, and Streit Road. Motorists are encouraged to follow the posted detour. The duration of the closure is currently indefinite.

The County has been actively working with IDOT on a replacement of this bridge structure. Pending state and local approvals, the bridge replacement project is tentatively scheduled for construction in 2027.

Follow the Division of Transportation on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/McHenryCountyDOT> for transportation updates.

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Letters To Santa

Dear Santa Claus 


Hi Elves,
 My name is Lena. My grandmother is helping me write, as I am only 2 1/2. We are visiting in Antioch at her house. So could you let Santa know I have been very good and I helped Grandma pick up stuff on the floor and put it in the garbage can. I would really like peppa pig for Christmas.
 Could you also ask Santa to bring my cousin in Texas an Elsa. She loves Elsa.
 I hope you will send me & Kehlani a letter. I believe in Santa so much.

Love, Lena


Dear Santa Claus 

My Name is Wesley. I'm 3 years old. I've been nice this year.
 These are the gifts I'd love to receive this Christmas:
 A pizza delivery play-doh scooter, an orange, a choo choo train, and a car with keys.
 I will leave some cookies and milk for you.

Wesley


Dear Santa Claus 

I want a 5,000 vebus card and more Pocemon card and jim a cwimit and a 8 feet tv and a ps5 and a branow bed and i want scwish melow's and i want lego's and i want gojisow.
 frum Mosiah

Dear Santa Claus 

This is Liam and this year I am 5 years old. All year long I have been both naughty and nice.
 For Christmas this year I would like shoes, legos, monster truck, camera, Kalahari,
 When you are here tonight, please watch out for Mom & Dad.
 Merry Christmas Santa!


Love, Liam

Dear Santa Claus 

Lamonaidstand
 bog
 cat
 bab
 fison
 saloer
 Whiteboarb
 Mar
 kit shekers
 - Montego

Dear Santa Claus 

BABY
 LITTE TEDOJBEBR
 KENE COTHES
 NES KLASE
 NEW FISH

Dear Santa Claus 

This is Charlotte and this year I am 7 years old. All year long I have been both naughty and nice.
 For Christmas this year I would like 4 toy that is: A Axoloti with A Donut, new Winter boots that are Purple, Polly Pocket, Legos, Kalahari.
 When you are here tonight, please watch out for Mom & Dad and Dinos.
 Merry Christmas Santa!

Love, Charlotte

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Court & crime news

Man sentenced to 10 years for child pornography

The McHenry County State's Attorney's Office announces that on November 25, Alejandro Vilchis, 24, of Chicago Heights, was sentenced to 10 years in the Illinois Department of Corrections for the charge of Solicitation of Child Pornography. Vilchis' sentence was part of a negotiated plea of guilty entered before the Honorable Judge Mark R. Gerhardt.



Alejandro Vilchis

On January 3, 2023, the parent of a young victim discovered inappropriate messages in a chat on his underage daughter's Snapchat account. The phone was brought to the McHenry City Police Department, which uncovered messages between Vilchis and the victim dating back to June of 2022. The messages provided evidence that the sender attempted to exchange drugs, vape cartridges, marijuana, and alcohol in exchange for sexual photographs and favors with the minor. During one of the conversations, Vilchis ultimately persuaded the victim to provide him a pornographic image of herself. Snapchat records, obtained through search warrants during the investigation into the user's

Snapchat account, led officers to identify Vilchis as the sender and ultimately his arrest.

McHenry County State's Attorney Randi Freese thanks the Johnsburg Police Department and McHenry Police Department for their thorough investigation in this case. A special thanks to First Assistant State's Attorney Ashur Youash for his efforts in prosecuting this case. Online predators are a growing problem, and the McHenry County State's Attorney's Office is fully committed to prosecuting offenders.

Mains sentenced for aggravated discharge of a firearm

The McHenry County State's Attorney's Office announces that on November 19, Jacob A. Mains, 25, of Belvidere, was sentenced to 8 years in the Illinois Department of Corrections for Aggravated Discharge of a Firearm. Mains sentence was part of a negotiated plea of guilty entered before the Honorable Judge Tiffany E. Davis.

On the evening of October 26, 2023, Marengo Police Department officers were dispatched to Kennedy Drive for a wellness check where a firearm was involved. The caller reported that Mains had entered the home at the leaseholder's request to order unwanted persons to leave the premises. Af-

ter a confrontation with a person inside the home, Mains left the home. Before returning to a waiting vehicle, he fired two shots through the home's attached garage door. Mains has a prior felony conviction for residential burglary, which makes even possessing a firearm a felony crime.

McHenry County State's Attorney Randi Freese thanks the Marengo Police Department, Belvidere Police Department, and McHenry County Sheriff's Office for their thorough investigative efforts. A special thanks goes out to Assistant State's Attorney Ashley Romito for her thorough prosecution of this case. Improper gun usage has serious consequences and those who misuse them will be prosecuted.

Man arrested after firing a gun following argument

A Beach Park man was arrested after firing a gun, following an argument.

On December 5, at approximately 10:30 p.m. Lake County Sheriff's Deputies responded to a residence in the 12200 block of West 29th Street, Beach Park. When sheriff's deputies arrived, they learned

Jesus Machuca-Barragan, 20, who resides at the same residence, had been in an argument with his acquaintance, who also lives at the residence.

Just before sheriff's deputies arrived, Machuca-Barragan left from the home. Before driving away in his vehicle, Machuca-Barragan fired a gun multiple times from his car. It is unclear why or where Machuca-Barragan was shooting, as no bullet holes were located.

Lake County Sheriff's Telecommunicators issued an area-wide radio broadcast to inform local police agencies of the situation, along with Machuca-Barragan's description and a description of the vehicle he was driving. A short time later, Machuca-Barragan was located by Waukegan Police Department at a gas station in the area of Route 120 and Jackson Street, Waukegan.

Machuca-Barragan was taken into custody by Waukegan Police officers, and he was found to be in possession of a pistol. Sheriff's deputies located a second pistol in Machuca-Barragan's vehicle, along with five spent shell casings.

Machuca-Barragan was ar-

rested and transported to the Lake County Jail. After reviewing the facts and circumstances of the case, the Lake County State's Attorney's Office approved the following charges against Machuca-Barragan: Three counts of Aggravated Unlawful Use of a Weapon and Reckless Discharge of a Firearm.

The Lake County State's Attorney's Office intends to file a petition to detain Machuca-Barragan in custody while awaiting trial.

As small children were inside the home during this incident, notification was made to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services.

Price convicted of multiple charges, to be sentenced in January

Randi L. Freese, McHenry County State's Attorney, announces that Kenneth Price, 32, of McHenry, was convicted of Armed Habitual Criminal, Possession of a Controlled Substance with Intent to Deliver, Possession of Cannabis with Intent to Deliver and Endangering the Health or Life of a Child on December 5, 2024, at the conclusion of a bench trial. Price will be sentenced by the Honorable Judge Mark Gerhardt on January 30, 2025.

On December 12, 2023, members of the McHenry County Sheriff's Narcotics

Task Force initiated an investigation into illicit drug sales out of a home in unincorporated McHenry. After obtaining a search warrant, Task force officers executed a search of the home that same day. Multiple pieces of evidence presented at trial proved that Price possessed a firearm, despite having been convicted of felonies for selling illegal drugs on two prior occasions. Evidence also showed that Price possessed cocaine and cannabis with the intent to deliver. Along with all the contraband, evidence collected by the officers determined minor children were living in the home from where all the drugs and weapon were recovered.

McHenry County State's Attorney Randi L. Freese expressed her gratitude to the McHenry County Sheriff's Narcotics Task Force for their swift and effective action. A special thanks goes out to Assistant State's Attorneys Stephan Gregorowicz and Brian Miller for their comprehensive preparation and effective presentation of the evidence at trial which led to Price's conviction on all counts.



Kenneth Price

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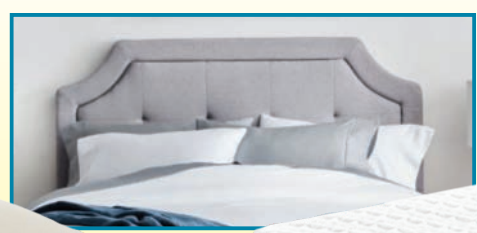
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