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

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\$8,999 WAS \$13,995

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- \$4,500 DODGE CASH

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\$34,085 MSRP
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- \$5,500 JEEP CASH

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Includes 65" 4K Smart TV

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†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 T.V. 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 New Year!

Budget pressures could impact K-12 funding

State Board of Education gets briefing on fiscal landscape ahead

By Peter Hancock
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

Public schools in Illinois have enjoyed several consecutive years of substantial increases in state funding, thanks largely to steady growth in state revenues and a new funding formula that lawmakers approved in 2018.

But whether that can continue into the upcoming fiscal year is an open question that state lawmakers will have to face when they return to the Statehouse in January.

With budget forecasters predicting flat revenue growth over the next year and continued demands for increased spending in other areas of the budget such as pension costs and health care, members of the Illinois State Board of Education were told recently that they are now in a different fiscal environment.

"I do not envy anybody involved in that process because it won't be a fun time," Eric Noggle, revenue manager of

the legislature's Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability, or COGFA, told the board.

COGFA is a nonpartisan agency that provides economic and budgetary analysis to the General Assembly. It operates independently of the Governor's Office of Management and Budget, or GOMB, although the two agencies are often in agreement in their general findings and analysis.

In November, GOMB issued a report projecting a \$3.2 billion deficit in the fiscal year that begins July 1, 2025. That was based on projections of essentially flat revenue growth of about \$53.4 billion, and a 6 percent increase in spending due to statutorily required increases in things like pension contributions, Medicaid and state employee health care costs, and PreK-12 education.

In the current fiscal year, state spending on public schools totals just under \$11 billion, or about 20 percent of

the state's \$53 billion General Revenue Fund Budget.

Two factors are primarily responsible for the demand for increased state spending on schools. One is the 2018 funding formula, known as the Evidence-Based Funding model, that calls for annual increases of at least \$350 million.

That law sets out a formula for determining what would be an "adequate" level of funding for each district based on factors such as total student enrollment, poverty rates, and the number of English language learners in the district. The adequacy target includes both state aid and money the district is able to raise on its own through local property taxes.

The law then directs that the new money each year be sent to districts that are furthest away from their adequacy target. The annual funding increases are supposed to continue until all districts reach at least 90 percent of their ade-

quacy target.

But some advocates argue the state needs to increase its evidence-based funding by more than the minimum \$350 million each year.

"One thing that we know is that three out of four children in Illinois are still in underfunded districts. That's more than 1 million students," Jelani Saadiq, director of government relations for the advocacy group Advance Illinois, told the board during the public comment portion of its meeting. "The latest school report card shows continued challenges with chronic absenteeism and lagging recovery in math. We need to set our schools up for success in addressing these challenges in the absence of federal stimulus funds by doubling down on our EBF investment moving forward."

The other factor driving increases in public school spending is known as "mandatory categorical" spending, or

MCAT, which includes such things as transportation costs, the state's free breakfast and lunch program and the cost of educating children in foster care.

Andy Krupin, ISBE's director of funding and disbursements, explained that the state often does not fully fund MCAT expenses and thus "prorates" the amount it reimburses districts for those expenses. The level of proration varies depending on how much the General Assembly appropriates in each category. Based on the agency's estimate of next year's costs, Krupin said, the General Assembly would need to add another \$142.2 million to its PreK-12 budget just to maintain the same level of proration as in 2024.

Combined with the \$350 million increase called for under the EBF formula, that would be a total increase in PreK-12 spending of \$492.2 million in 2025.

But ISBE has received requests for even more funding increases than that. During a series of public hearings on the budget in October, officials said, the agency heard numerous proposals adding up to about \$2.2 billion in funding increase requests. Those included proposals for a \$550 million increase in EBF funding and a \$10 million increase in career and technical education funding, among other requests.

GOMB's projection of a \$3.2 billion deficit assumed a \$444 million increase in school spending, as well as a \$1.1 billion increase in health care expenses and a \$437 million increase in pension contributions, among other increases.

State Superintendent of Education Tony Sanders is scheduled to submit his final budget proposal to the board for approval at the board's Jan. 15 meeting. Pritzker is scheduled to deliver his budget address to the General Assembly Feb. 19.

Metra Board Director resigns; qualified candidates sought for replacement

Melinda Bush, Lake County's appointed member on the Metra Board of Directors, has announced her resignation, effective January 3, 2025.

Bush was appointed to the Metra Board in February 2023 by the Lake County Board Chair. A lifelong Lake County resident, she previously has served as a Grayslake village board trustee, a Lake County Board member and state senator for District 31.

On the Metra Board, Melinda was instrumental in

creating and serving on the Finance Committee and calling for the creation of a policy workgroup. She also is proud of the successful Bikes on Train policy.

During her tenure, Metra moved to a simplified four-zone structure, which brought most fares lower than pre-pandemic levels. The Metra Board also has made numerous capital improvements, including installing shelters at stations to protect passengers from the weather in addition

to renovating platforms and deteriorated tactile surfaces to assist in accessibility.

"I thank Melinda for her dedication to representing Lake County in this important role and all she has done to serve our residents and those who commute by Metra to work in our county," said Sandy Hart, Lake County Board Chair. "Her knowledge and commitment will be missed, and we wish her the very best in all of her future endeavors." Qualified candidates are

sought to fill the vacant Metra Board of Directors seat. The Metra Board of Directors is made up of 11 members representing the six-county Chicago metropolitan area. They meet once a month to discuss various matters.

According to 70 ILCS 3615/3B.04(4), one Director shall be appointed by the Chair of the Lake County Board with the advice and consent of the Lake County Board and shall reside in Lake County. Illinois law also

states:

• No director, while serving as such, shall be an officer, a member of the board of directors or trustee or an employee of any transportation agency, or be an employee of the State of Illinois or any department or agency thereof, or of any county, municipality, or any other unit of local government or receive any compensation from any elected or appointed office under the Constitution and laws of Illinois.

Lake County residents who

are interested in serving on the Metra Board of Directors and meet the criteria are encouraged to submit their resume, a letter of interest and any other supporting material they wish to include such as letters of recommendation via email to countyboardoffice@lake-countyil.gov or via U.S. mail to: Lake County Board Chair, Lake County Board Office, 10th Floor, 18 N. County St., Waukegan, IL 60085

The deadline to apply is January 17, 2025.

Permanent PADS shelter coming to Lake County

On December 17, local officials celebrated the acquisition of a commercial building that will be transformed into a permanent shelter to support individuals and families experiencing homelessness or a housing crisis in Lake County.

PADS Lake County plans to modify the nearly 33,000 square-foot former Travelodge hotel located on Lewis Avenue in Waukegan to create a safe space to help those who find themselves unhoused in Lake County by providing them with a place to sleep, eat and receive assistance. The proposed new facility will offer over 60 rooms with 200 beds and communal areas for socializing.

The Lake County Board allocated \$7.06 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to support this project, aimed at improving long-term housing security in the community. An additional \$2 million in funding was provided by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO).

"The lack of affordable housing is the leading cause of homelessness in our county, especially for families," said Lake County Board Chair Sandy Hart. "This has contributed to a dramatic rise in the number of families unable to find a place to live. This new shelter is going to be an essential and much-needed resource in our fight to combat family homelessness in our community."

The need for a permanent shelter in Lake County has increased since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Non-dedicated buildings, such as community centers and places of worship,

were used to offer temporary shelters for the unhoused, but because of health and safety concerns, these buildings were removed as shelter options during the pandemic. The new site will allow PADS

Lake County to offer 24-hour operations with specialty trained staff.

"PADS is proud to partner with Lake County in de-

See SHELTER, Page 7

HI-LITER

~ including McHenry County News

1102 Ann Street, Delavan, WI 53115

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

<p>DEADLINES:</p> <p>News..... Friday noon</p> <p>Display Advertising..... Friday 3 p.m.</p> <p>Legal Notices..... Friday 4:30 p.m.</p> <p>Classifieds..... Monday 10 a.m.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Published by Southern Lakes Newspapers & Rock Valley Publishing</i></p>	<p>NEWS..... (815) 877-4044</p> <p>DISPLAY ADS..... (815) 877-4044</p> <p>DELIVERY..... (815) 877-4044</p> <p>CLASSIFIED ADS... (815) 877-4044</p> <p>LEGALS..... (815) 877-4044</p> <p style="text-align: center;">— PUBLISHED WEEKLY —</p> <p>General Manager..... David Habrat</p> <p>Advertising Director... Vicki Vanderwerff</p> <p>Distribution Director..... Lindy Sweet</p> <p>Editor..... Heidi Schulz <i>news@hi-liter.com</i></p> <p>Advertising..... Becky Loizzo</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Becky@SouthernLakesNewspapers.com</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">463477</p>
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SUBMITTED PHOTO Hi-Liter/MCN

Pet of the week

Steele, a Shepherd mix, is about 7-1/2 years old, neutered, up-to-date on routine shots (incl. rabies), tested negative for heartworm and on preventative and microchipped.

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

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'Expand Your Experience' is the new official map and guide to Lake County's forest preserves. The interactive trail map can be found online at maps.lakecountyil.gov/trailmap/ or print copies can be picked up at locations throughout the county.

Explore hidden gems with new map and guide

Discover more ways to connect with nature using Expand Your Experience, the new official map and guide to Lake County's forest preserves. Covering all 31,200 acres, this comprehensive guide helps residents and visitors plan their next outdoor adventure—whether it's a walk, run, bike ride, fishing trip or special event.

"From serene trails to fishing spots with scenic views, this guide is your passport to adventure," said Angelo Kyle, president of the Lake County Forest Preserves. "Whether you're exploring the preserves for the first time or revisiting your favorite spots, this information is your key to making the most of your time outdoors."

The guide is offered in print and online at <https://www.lcfdp.org/>

places-to-go/preserves-trails/, in both English and Spanish to better serve the community. According to the 2020 U.S. Census, nearly 20% of Lake County residents speak primarily Spanish at home.

The print copies are located at Brae Loch Golf Club in Grayslake, Countryside Golf Club in Mundelein, the Dunn Museum in Libertyville, Fox River Marina in Port Barrington, the General Offices in Libertyville, Greenbelt Cultural Center in North Chicago, Independence Grove Visitors Center in Libertyville, Operations and Public Safety Facility in Lake Villa, Ryerson Welcome Center in Riverwoods and ThunderHawk Golf Club in Beach Park. They can also be found at

Deerfield Cyclery, the Lake Forest Oasis and Visit Lake County's offices in Gurnee.

In addition to a large, detailed map, the Expand Your Experience guide offers a wealth of information and pictures to enhance your visit to a preserve. You'll find tips on trail etiquette, details on special event venues and ways to get involved through volunteering or donating to the Preservation Foundation, the charitable partner of the Forest Preserves. The guide also highlights on the Dunn Museum, winter recreation opportunities, the popular Hike Lake County annual walking program and more.

Plan your next outdoor adventure today at [LCFPD.org](https://www.lcfdp.org).

Turn your holiday tree into trails this year

8 Lake County Forest Preserves offering recycling

From holiday cheer to helping nature: recycle your tree this season.

Give your Christmas tree a second life in your forest preserves. By recycling your real, undecorated tree, you help create wood chips for trails and landscaping that enhance the preserves.

Drop off your tree at one of eight marked sites across Lake County, open daily from 6:30 a.m. to sunset through February 1, 2025. No yard waste or commercial drop-offs are accepted.

Sites available for drop off

- Grant Woods Forest Preserve, 25405 W. Monaville Road, Ingleside.
- Greenbelt Forest Preserve, 1110 Green Bay Road, North Chicago.
- Half Day Forest Preserve, 24255 Milwaukee Ave., Vernon Hills.
- Heron Creek, 22890 N. Old McHenry Road, Lake Zurich.
- Lakewood Forest Preserve,

new location south of Ivanhoe Road near Heron Pond.

- Old School Forest Preserve, 28285 St. Mary's Road, Mettawa.
- Ryerson Conservation Area 21950 N. Riverwoods Road, Riverwoods.
- Van Patten Woods, 15838 W. Route 173, Wadsworth.

Facts

- The Lake County Forest Preserves has been accepting trees for recycling for at least 20 years.
- Most years more than 1,000 trees are donated.
- The majority of the trees are mulched for use on trails.
- Some are used to create "fish cribs." Staff ties several trees together and sinks them with a cinderblock in larger lakes, particularly those that were formerly gravel quarries and lack substantial underwater vegetation. These lakes benefit from the fish cribs, as they serve as crucial habitats for fish.



SUBMITTED PHOTO HI-LITER/MCN

Eight Lake County Forest Preserves offer holiday tree recycling. The trees are recycled into wood chips that are used for trails and landscaping in the forest preserves.

MCCD upcoming events

Skulls and Skins

Monday, Dec. 30, 10-11 a.m., Lost Valley Visitor Center, Glacial Park, Ringwood.

Join for an indoor presentation about the fascinating adaptations of local wildlife. Skulls, furs and an interactive activity will be used to examine animal traits. Ages 6+.

Mammals of Illinois

Friday, Jan. 3, 11 a.m. to noon, Prairieview Education

Center, Crystal Lake.

Learn about mammals of Illinois like raccoons, coyotes, beavers and skunks through fun activities and discussions. Ages 2-6.

Sights Seldom See: Larsen Prairie

Friday, Jan. 3, 1-3 p.m., Prairieview Education Center, Crystal Lake.

Join District Ecologist staff to learn about the man-

agement, ecology and history of Larson Prairie during an indoor presentation before driving to Lake in the Hills to experience the winter prairie firsthand. Ages 14+

Stories and Explore: New Year Wonders

Saturday, Jan. 4, 11 a.m. to noon, Prairieview Education Center, Crystal Lake.

Enjoy stories about winter life and what the new year may

bring while relaxing indoors. Bring a blanket or a pillow! Ages 2-6.

History Hike: Glacial Park

Sunday, Jan. 5, 9:30-11:30 a.m., Glacial Park Conservation Area, Ringwood.

Learn about the former inhabitants of the diverse areas of Glacial Park. Participants will visit the Wiedrich Barn, the kettle marsh, the Thomas cemetery and more. Meet

at the Wiedrich Barn Parking Lot. Ages 14+.

Bison Ranch Stories – VIRTUAL

Wednesday, Jan. 8, noon -1:30 p.m. Virtual meeting details will be sent to registrants.

Join District Agricultural Ecologist Brenna and a special guest to discuss regenerative grazing by bison and its impacts on ecosystems at Pleasant Valley Conservation Area.

Ages 14+.

Candlelight Ski & Hikes

Skiers and hikers of every experience level and age are welcome to join us on select weekends this winter to ski or hike three sites by candlelight!

Registration is not required for this free drop-in activity. Bring your own equipment if using. No pets, please.

- Friday, Jan. 10 & Saturday, Jan. 11, Rush Creek Conservation Area, Harvard.
- Friday, Feb. 7 & Saturday, Feb. 8, Coral Woods Conservation Area.

Join District Police for the 2025 Ice Fishing Clinic

Saturday, Feb. 1, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Crystal Lake Main Beach, 300 Lakeshore Drive, Crystal Lake. Free and for all ages.

Ever thought about learning how to ice fish? This is what you've been looking for! Participants will receive instruction and safety tips, view demonstrations and try your own luck at ice fishing on Crystal Lake with representatives from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Crystal Lake Park District Police and McHenry County Conservation District Police.

For more information or to sign up for programs please visit the McHenry County Conservation District website at [MCCDistrict.org](https://mccd.org).

You ought to be in pictures!

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- ▼ Just shoot and e-mail!
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Court & crime news

Deputies arrest man for knife attack at motel

Lake County Sheriff's Deputies arrested a man after he attacked an acquaintance with a knife.



Javier Moran

On December 6, at approximately 10:05 p.m., deputies responded to a motel in the 31200 block of North Route 45, Unincorporated Libertyville, following a report of a fight and a stabbing. Upon arrival, deputies located a 31-year-old man, a resident of the motel, who sustained minor cut injuries.

Preliminary investigation revealed that Javier Moran, 54, also a resident of the motel, had been drinking alcohol in a motel room with two acquaintances. During their gathering, Moran became argumentative and threatened one of the men. He was asked to leave the room and initially complied.

Shortly afterward, Moran returned armed with a knife. He attempted to stab the 31-year-old victim, who deflected the knife but sustained minor hand injuries in the process. Moran then engaged in a physical altercation but was subdued by the victim and another person present in the room.

The victim declined medical treatment, while Moran requested an evaluation at a hospital, due to injuries sustained while being subdued. He was transported to a local hospital, where he was treated and released into custody.

Following a review of the incident, the Lake County State's Attorney's Office approved a charge of aggravated battery with a deadly weapon against Moran.

During his court appearance, Moran was ordered to remain in custody pending his detention hearing.

Ibrahim sentenced to 13 years for armed robbery

The McHenry County State's Attorney's office announces that on December 5, Azmi S. Ibrahim, 21, of Waukegan, was sentenced to 13 years in the Illinois Department of Corrections for the offense of Armed Robbery. Ibrahim's sentence was part of a negotiated plea of guilty entered before the Honorable Judge Mark R. Gerhardt.



Azmi S. Ibrahim

On July 23, 2023, the victim went to the Village Market in Wonder Lake to meet with Ibrahim, having previously met and communicated through Snapchat. The victim intended to purchase cannabis from Ibrahim. When Ibrahim arrived at the Village Market, the victim entered Ibrahim's vehicle, and upon entering the vehicle, the victim observed Ibrahim sitting in the driver's seat, pointing a black semi-automatic pistol at him. Another male sitting next to the victim pointed a blue revolver at him, while a third, younger male sat in the passenger seat in front of the victim. While at gunpoint, Ibrahim and the others demanded money from the victim and under threat of

force, he reluctantly handed over \$500 in cash. Once in possession of his money, the victim was told to leave the car, and he immediately called the police. Responding officers from the McHenry City Police Department located Ibrahim's vehicle and executed a traffic stop. Ibrahim was taken into custody and positively identified in a show-up by the victim. All the victim's money was recovered from either within Ibrahim's vehicle or on the person of the two other occupants.

McHenry County State's Attorney Randi Freese thanks the McHenry City Police Department and the McHenry County Sheriff's Office for their collaborative efforts and thorough investigation in this case. A special thanks to Assistant State's Attorney Maria Marek for her work in the prosecution of this case.

Antioch burglary suspect arrested

The Antioch Police Department is pleased to announce the successful arrest of 23-year-old Jose Tobias of Waukegan, after an extensive collaborative investigation. The investigation, conducted with the invaluable assistance of the Waukegan Police Department, underscores the commitment and professionalism of law enforcement agencies working together to protect our communities.



Jose Tobias

The Antioch Police were notified that an individual had entered vehicles and garages in the Red Wing Subdivision on the afternoon of December 8. The victim's credit cards were later used in the Lake County area, where our Investigators captured video surveillance that matched surveillance from the Red Wing subdivision.

This led to arrest warrants being issued for Tobias for the following charges: Count 1 – Residential Burglary (Class 1 Felony), Count 2 – Identity Theft (Class 3 Felony), Count 3 – Identity Theft (Class 3 Felony), Count 4 – Unlawful Use of Credit Card (Class 4 Felony) and Count 5 – Unlawful Use of Credit Card (Class 4 Felony).

On December 17, Tobias was arrested by Waukegan Police Officers.

Antioch Police Chief Guttschow reminds residents of the importance of proactive measures to safeguard their property, especially during the holiday season. "Antioch is a safe community, but we must remain vigilant, as no community is immune to criminal activity such as these incidents. We continue to urge residents to take precautions such as locking doors, securing valuables, and reporting suspicious activity. These simple steps can greatly reduce the risk of becoming a crime victim. While our officers are actively patrolling and working to deter crime, we rely on the partnership of our community to help keep Antioch safe."

The collaboration between the Antioch and Waukegan Police Department's played a crucial role in bringing this case to a successful resolution.

Chief Guttschow extends his appreciation to the Waukegan Police Officers involved, saying "This outcome is a testament to the dedication and shared commitment of our departments to protecting the community. We deeply appreciate the support and partnership of the Waukegan Police Department and thank them for their assistance in this investigation."

As the holiday season approaches, the Antioch Police encourages all residents to take extra precautions and remain mindful of their personal safety. Together, we can continue to make our community a safe place.

Homicide under investigation by Major Crime Task Force

Lake County Major Crime Task Force Investigators and Mundelein Police Detectives are investigating the homicide of a 21-year-old Wheeling man.



Joaquin Romero

On December 9, at approximately 7:10 p.m., Mundelein Police Officers responded to a report of shots fired in a parking lot located in the 700 block of South Lake Street. Upon arrival, officers learned that a man had been shot and transported to an area hospital in a privately owned vehicle. Shortly afterward, officers were notified that the victim had been brought to Advocate Condell Medical Center in Libertyville. Despite efforts to save him, the man succumbed to his injuries and was pronounced deceased.

The individual(s) who transported the man to the hospital left prior to the arrival of Mundelein Police Officers.

The Lake County Coroner's Office is scheduling an autopsy for the man. Major Crime Task Force Investigators and Mundelein Police Detectives continue to actively investigate the homicide.

Anyone with information is encouraged to call Mundelein Police at: 847-968-4600.

Update: Person charged in homicide case

A Mundelein man was charged with aggravated unlawful possession of a firearm and obstructing justice for his role in the homicide of Luis Moreno. During the investigation, Task Force Investigators and Mundelein Police Detectives located the vehicle used by the offender in the homicide and determined Joaquin Romero, 20, of the 900 block of Lake Street, Mundelein, was present in the vehicle when Moreno was shot. Following the shooting, investigators determined Romero possessed the firearm used in the homicide and hid it. He was located December 11 and arrested without incident in Round Lake.

The Lake County State's Attorney's Office reviewed the facts and circumstances of the incident and approved the two charges against Romero.

Mundelein Police Detectives continue to investigate the homicide.

Driver critically injured in one-vehicle crash

A 26-year-old Hanover Park male was injured following a single vehicle crash in the 11400 block of Price Road, in unincorporated Hebron.

On December 13, at approximately 7:15 a.m., members of the McHenry County Sheriff's Office, Alden Hebron Fire Protection District responded to a crash involving a 2023 Isuzu Box Truck and a tree.

Preliminary investigation indicates that the 2023 Isuzu Box Truck was traveling eastbound on Price Road, exited the left side of the roadway and struck a tree. The driver had to be extricated from the truck. The driver was flown by LifeNet from the scene to Condell Medical Center in Libertyville and is listed in critical condition. The driver was wearing his seatbelt.

The investigation is ongoing and is being investigated by the McHenry County Sheriff's Office Major Traffic Crash Investigation Unit.

Woman charged after sending lewd photos to teen

Lake County Sheriff's Detectives arrested a Buffalo Grove woman for sending lewd photos to a juvenile.



Bayleigh Hoyt

Lake County Sheriff's Detectives became aware Bayleigh Hoyt, 28, of the 100 block of South Buffalo Grove Road, engaged a 17-year-old boy in inappropriate text message conversations and sent the boy lewd photos.

Hoyt met the 17-year-old while he was in custody at the Depke Juvenile Detention Facility in Lake County, and she was employed at the facility as a juvenile counselor. After the juvenile was discharged from the facility, the two began communicating with each other. During the communication, Hoyt began having lewd conversations with the boy, and sent the boy nude photos of herself.

Hoyt encouraged the boy to delete messages and photos, as she did not want to get caught before resigning. Shortly after, Hoyt resigned from the juvenile facility, before law-enforcement became aware of the situation.

Sheriff's detectives conducted an investigation and after reviewing the facts and circumstances of the incident, the Lake County State's Attorney's Office approved the charges of official misconduct and distributing harmful material. An arrest warrant was drafted on December 10, 2024, and approved by a Lake County Judge.

Sheriff's detectives arrested Hoyt at her place of employment in Highland Park, without incident.

Repeat weapon offender sentenced to 40 years in prison for two separate incidents

On Friday, December 13, a Lake County Judge sentenced Carnell Wesson, 31, to 40 years in the Illinois Department of Corrections following his convictions for two different incidents related to weapon offenses.

Lake County State's At-

orney Eric Rinehart stated, "Our very experienced prosecutors continue to hold repeat gun offenders accountable through successful trials and sentencing hearings. This offender, in particular, demonstrated his danger to the community while committing offenses after posting cash bail in 2022. Our police partners throughout Lake County are continuing to do an excellent job of solving shootings and making arrests for illegal weapon possession."

Originally, Wesson was arrested in March 2022, for the Class X offense of being an Armed Habitual Criminal, after Zion police located two firearms in a vehicle that Wesson was passenger in. Wesson was held in the Lake County Jail until September 2022, when he posted 10% of his \$150,000 bond and was released. This was prior to the effective date of bail reform which now prevents individuals charged with firearm offenses from posting bond if a judge so decides at the beginning of the case.

While out on the \$15,000 bond, Wesson was arrested for committing the Class 1 offense of Aggravated Discharge of Weapon and, again, the Class X offense of being an Armed Habitual Criminal for a shooting that occurred in December 2022.

After a jury trial concluded in September 2023, Wesson was convicted of the offense of Armed Habitual Criminal for the March 2022 incident. In October 2024, a second jury convicted the Defendant for the offense of Armed Habitual Criminal in connection with the December 2022 incident.

At the sentencing, Judge Lombardo considered evidence in aggravation from two State witnesses, one of whom described a violent altercation involving Wesson and another inmate while in custody. The second witness testified to Wesson's affiliation with a street gang.

Chief Deputy Jeff Facklam and ASA Don Tyer argued to Judge Lombardo that Wesson was the epitome of a danger to Lake County and that Wesson's sentences for the two separate incidents needed to be consecutive to protect our community. Prosecutors further noted that his dangerous behavior is evident through his lengthy criminal history and through his gang affiliation. They asked Wesson to be sentenced to somewhere between 30 and 40 years combined for both offenses.

Judge Lombardo concurred, ruling that consecutive sentences were necessary to keep our community safe and sentenced Wesson to 15 years for the March 2022 incident, and 25 years for the December 2022 incident, resulting in a total of 40 years. Wesson received 855 days credit for time served. This forty-year sentence will be served at 85%.

Sentencing laws allowed Judge Lombardo to sentence Wesson to a range of 6 to 30 years for each offense, a com-



Carnell Wesson

bined sentencing range of 12 to 60 years.

Convicted murderer sentenced for unlawful use of weapon by felon, reckless discharge of firearm

On December 10, Rudy Villarreal, Jr., 51, of DeKalb, was sentenced to 12 years in the Illinois Department of Corrections for Unlawful Use of Weapons by Felon and Reckless Discharge of a Firearm. The sentence was handed down by the Honorable Judge Mark R. Gerhardt following a finding of guilt to both counts at the end of a two-day bench trial.

On May 27, 2023, Villarreal, a convicted murderer, went to the restaurant formerly known as La Placita – Café Botenera in downtown Marengo. Villarreal was armed with a 9 mm semi-automatic handgun. While there, he encountered his wife who had an active Order of Protection against him. An altercation ensued between Villarreal, his wife, and a woman that Villarreal was with outside the restaurant. During the altercation, Villarreal brandished his firearm and shot it three times over his head and then immediately fled the area. Several eyewitnesses, interviewed by the police on scene, positively identified Villarreal as the shooter during the bench trial. Physical evidence presented included three 9 mm fired cartridge cases recovered from the walkway just outside of the restaurant.

McHenry County State's Attorney Randi L. Freese recognizes the hard work done by the Marengo Police Department in their thorough investigation into this case. This case was successfully prosecuted at trial by Assistant State's Attorney Maria Marek and William Bruce.

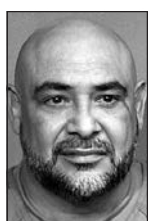
Five establishments in violation after alcohol compliance checks

The Lake County Sheriff's Office conducts alcohol compliance checks at Lake County liquor selling establishments. The compliance checks are designed to ensure businesses vending alcohol are not selling to anyone under the age of 21.

Of the 55 establishments tested, five sold alcohol to someone under the age of 21. The establishments in violation are:

- Mobil, 37740 N Sheridan Rd, Beach Park.
- Citgo, 41490 Route 41, Wadsworth.
- Sheridan Liquor, 39172 N Sheridan Rd, Beach Park.
- Stop & Save, 38478 N Sheridan Rd, Beach Park.
- Shell, 28787 N Waukegan Rd, Unincorporated Lake Bluff.

The clerks in violation were ticketed for selling liquor to a minor. They are required to appear in Waukegan court. Notice of the violations were sent to their respective liquor commission jurisdictions (Beach Park, Wadsworth, and Lake County Liquor Commissions).



Rudy Villarreal

Lake County Sheriff's arrest bulletin

Nov. 11
 Eliese Ham, 41, Waukegan, was cited for unlawful possession of a stolen motor vehicle, and criminal trespass to vehicle;
 Sinthia A. Odoms, 45, no permanent address, was cited for criminal trespass to property, and unlawful possession of drug paraphernalia;
 Patience J. Cedzidlo, 40, Lake Villa, was cited for a warrant arrest: unlawful possession of a controlled substance;
Nov. 12
 Carlos E. Silva, 45, no permanent address, was cited for criminal damage to government property;
 Yaid Rodriguez-Parra, 28, Berwyn, was cited for battery;
 Kevin Aguilar, 28, Waukegan, was cited for battery;
 Donovan McLeod, 29, Rolling Meadows, was cited for battery, and obstructing a correctional officer;
 Donald M. Shifflett, III, 20, Wonder Lake, was cited for battery and obstructing a correctional officer;
 Anthony Miller, 36, Mt. Prospect, was cited for a warrant obtained: aggravated home repair fraud;
 Yakson G. Lacayo-Gomez, 32, Zion, was cited for no

driver's license, and no insurance;
 Antonio D. Riley, 51, Inglewood, was cited for DUI – alcohol, obstructing identification, driving while license suspended, suspended registration and no insurance;
 Daniel J. Young, 45, North Chicago, was cited for driving while license suspended and no insurance;
Nov. 14
 Sky M. Reiter, 18, Gurnee, was cited for aggravated speeding (116 mph in 55 mph zone);
Nov. 14
 Anthony Coleman, 49, North Chicago, was cited for a warrant arrest: criminal damage to government property;
 Thomas Brunner, 42, Fox Lake, was cited for a warrant obtained; aggravated assault;
 Daniel D. Tuholski, 51, Lake Bluff, was cited for domestic battery;
Nov. 15
 Nelly Gonzalez, 53, Waukegan, was cited for a warrant arrest: contempt of court;
 Marla M. Rice, 41, Hawthorn Woods, was cited for a warrant arrest: theft;
Nov. 16
 Zbigniew Swider, 40, Tinley Park, was cited for a

alcohol;
 Joseph Scott Belill, 26, Grayslake, was cited for DUI – alcohol;
 Pawel Baginski, 41, Lake Villa, was cited for home invasion, residential burglary, criminal damage to property, and criminal trespass to property;
 Tim Culotta, 45, Lake Villa, was cited for a warrant arrest: DUI (McHenry County);
 Christian Bailon, 27, Franklin Park, was cited for DUI – alcohol;
 Jhonjairo Sierra, 29, no permanent address, was cited for assault, and criminal trespass to property;
 Angelica L. Aleman, 28, Lindenhurst, was cited for theft, and criminal trespass to property;
 Kaitlin A. Juarez, 23, Zion, was cited for DUI - alcohol;
Nov. 17
 Sharon L. Humphrey, 71, Zion, was cited for driving while license suspended, suspended registration and no insurance;
 Fernando Arellanes-Ramirez, 41, North Chicago, was cited for DUI – alcohol, open transportation of alcohol and no insurance;
 Christine M. Slayton, 57, Beach Park, was cited for a

warrant arrest: DUI – alcohol.
Nov. 18
 Jorge L. Avila Castellanos, 38, Beach Park, was cited for driving while license suspended;
Nov. 19
 Hailey Gertz, 23, Inglewood, was cited for a warrant arrest: obstructing identification;
Nov. 20
 Jorge L. Martinez-Andrade, 26, Antioch, was cited for assault, and disorderly conduct;
 Luis Tenorio-Hernandez, 38, Zion, was cited for a warrant arrest: unlawful possession of meth;
 Arthur Mitchell, 34, Winthrop Harbor, was cited for criminal damage to property, obstructing a peace officer and resisting arrest;
 Djarvis C. Parker, 26, Inglewood, was cited for unlawful possession of a weapon;
 Perlo B. Gregorio, 43, Gurnee, was cited for violating an order of protection;
 David F. Cooper, 46, Algonquin, was cited for reckless driving;
Nov. 21
 Deonte Toliver, 39, Chicago, was cited for disorderly conduct.

• Shelter (Continued from page 3)

veloping resilient and durable social infrastructure to address the rising homelessness crisis across our community. This much-needed shelter will provide critical support in response to the staggering 75% increase in family homelessness we've seen over the past year," said Allen Swilley, Executive Director of PADS Lake County. "We extend our heartfelt gratitude to County Board Chair Sandy Hart, the Lake County Board members and Lake County Community Development for their unwavering commitment to our most vulnerable neighbors. Your leadership is making Lake County a place where everyone has the opportunity to thrive!"
 Creating a permanent shelter will increase available assistance to residents currently unhoused, with the aim of reducing the amount of time individuals and families experience homelessness. The new shelter will also help increase the quality of assistance and services to be provided, creating a better living situation for families and support moving into stable housing.
 "Lake County has put our federal ARPA funds into impactful and purposeful projects that directly help people,"

said Paul Frank, Chair of the Special Committee on ARPA and Board Member for District 11. "Funding this PADS shelter is another important project which will help those in need of temporary housing support."
 The facility will serve as a central resource center for PADS Lake County to provide housing, food and case management services for individuals and families in need. Having multiple services housed under one roof also has the potential to increase the resources accessed by those in need and deepen the impact to Lake County residents.
 "I'm grateful that residents will benefit from our partnership with PADS Lake County," said Mary Ross-Cunningham, Lake County Board Vice-chair and Board Member for District 9. "This project is an excellent example of how collaboration to address the housing issues facing our residents in Waukegan and across the county can make a real difference. Lake County is dedicated to working on ways to assist all those who find themselves unhoused."
 Learn more about Lake County ARPA funded projects at lakecountyil.gov/ARPA.

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