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~ including McHenry County News

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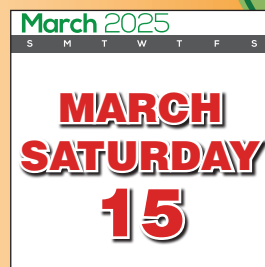
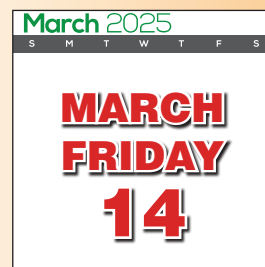
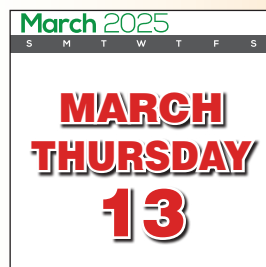
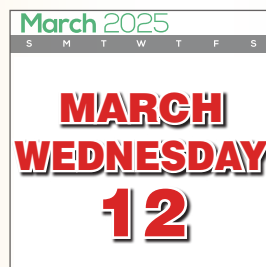
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Pritzker wants Illinois to be latest state to ban cellphones in classroom

Limits already are in place in some Illinois school districts

By Ben Szalinski
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

Are cellphones a useful tool or a distraction in the classroom? According to Gov. JB Pritzker, they're a distraction, and he has proposed banning them during classroom instruction.

Pritzker proposed legislation during his State of the State speech in February that would call for banning cellphones during classroom learning time. However, his proposal would not ban cellphones in school entirely, meaning students may still be allowed to use their devices between classes. Private schools would not be included in the ban.

educators from around the state, there is one thing most commonly cited as an impediment to classroom learning: cellphones," Pritzker said at a news conference last week in Champaign.

Some of Illinois' largest school districts already have adopted their own limits on cellphones in their classrooms, including Springfield, Peoria and Champaign.

"We want our students' phones turned off so their minds can be fully engaged in learning," Champaign Unit 4 School District Superintendent Sheila Boozer said.

The Champaign district implemented cellphone limits beginning last fall and said the response from parents and

teachers has been positive.

"Since every student is provided with a Chromebook for schoolwork, a cellphone is not really necessary for their learning," Boozer said.

Schools would be required to come up with their own guidelines for securely storing the phones during instructional time. Pritzker's plan would also prohibit students from being fined or punished by a law enforcement officer for violating a no-cellphone policy.

"Study after study has demonstrated the benefits of a ban in classroom use of cellphones, not just on student performance but on overall health and well-being," Pritzker said. "Bullying goes down

while grade point averages and Advanced Placement test scores goes up."

Pritzker's proposal would include several exemptions to such a ban, including in the event of an emergency, when a teacher allows students to use wireless devices for educational purposes or when a doctor requires a student to have or use their phone for medical reasons.

At some recent school shootings, such as in Uvalde, Texas, students made critical 911 calls. Rep. Patrick Sheehan, R-Lockport, who is a Plainfield police officer, told Capitol News Illinois its important students can access a cellphone in emergencies.

"The kids having these

devices to be able to call 911 dispatch so that they can get to the police officers, it cuts down on the response time and completely saves lives," Sheehan said.

Sheehan said it's important students have a distraction-free environment, but he cautioned against schools enacting a policy that could lock phones away from students.

"Taking away the cellphones and putting them in some sort of lock or away from the student, as a parent I don't like it," Sheehan said. "And as a police officer, I definitely don't like it."

Eight states enacted some type of limit on cellphones in schools last year, Stateline reported last month. This year,

Illinois is one of 13 states where legislation has been proposed to limit cellphones in schools.

A 2023 Pew Research poll of public school teachers found 72 percent of high school educators believe cellphone distractions are a "major problem" in their classroom. But 60 percent of high schools teachers said it is also difficult to enforce cellphone policies.

Bans on cellphones during class time are generally popular among U.S. adults. While 53 percent do not support banning phones in schools for the entire day, 68 percent support banning them during class, according to a 2024 Pew poll.

Trump administration ends reimbursements for Illinois food programs

USDA funds are part of nearly \$2 billion being withheld from Illinois, Pritzker says

By Ben Szalinski
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

The Trump administration has stopped reimbursing Illinois for a program designed to help farmers and supply fresh food to Illinois food banks.

The Illinois Department of Agriculture announced last week that changes to federal funding mean Illinois is missing reimbursements for costs for the Local Food Purchase Assistance Program, or LFPA, and can

no longer run the Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program, or RFSI.

The state agency said the federal U.S. Department of Agriculture has told states it will not reimburse them for any costs for the programs dating back to when Trump took office on Jan. 20.

LFPA, which funds the Illinois-EATS program, uses federal funding to buy fresh products from farmers at a fair market value, then distributes the food to com-

munities via food pantries and other similar programs designed to help people in need for no additional cost. All the food produced as part of Illinois' program comes from socially disadvantaged farmers, including those the federal government defines as "new farmers."

More than 170 farmers have supplied food to 883 locations in Illinois through Illinois-EATS.

Brenda Stewart, a farm owner in Pembroke Town-

ship in Kankakee County, received grant funding through the state. She told Capitol News Illinois she is most worried about the people who depend on her farm and the grant program to eat healthy.

"We're still going to grow our food, we're still going to provide what we can to our community, but not on the scale if they were able to receive," Stewart said.

Pembroke Township has no grocery store and many

residents are on food stamps, Stewart said. She said IL-EATS and her farm provide many of the residents one of their only avenues for fresh and healthy food.

The USDA approved \$43 million for Illinois to carry out the program for several years, but the state is still missing \$17.8 million, according to the Illinois Department of Agriculture. The state and USDA announced a partnership for the program in 2022.

The state has also not received \$6.5 million for the RFSI grant program. The program is designed to improve capacity for food processors and distributors and improve access to better distribution markets. The state has established a grant program based on funding from the federal government and was in the process of selecting winners.

There was no explanation for why reimbursements submitted after Jan. 19 were stopped, according to the state, and reimbursement claims have been returned.

USDA did not return a request for comment.

"That program made the difference, and I would say to Elon Musk and President Trump, this is saving lives. This is teaching our babies how to eat fresh vegetables and how it helps their medical conditions," Stewart said.

News that the two programs are on an indefinite hold comes a week after Gov. JB Pritzker and Illinois' Democratic members of Congress sent a letter to

the White House Office of Management and Budget asking why the Trump administration was withholding \$1.9 billion from Illinois state agencies, nonprofits and businesses.

"These are federal funds that were passed by Congress, signed into law, and promised to Illinois," the letter stated. "State agencies, small businesses, nonprofit organizations, and everyday citizens across Illinois—including in rural communities—are still having trouble accessing allocated federal funding."

A federal judge issued another ruling last week prohibiting the Trump administration from blocking distribution of federal funding.

The end of funding for the programs comes as Illinois farmers face new tariffs imposed on three of the state's largest trading partners and retaliatory tariffs against American goods. Illinois farmers exported nearly \$14 billion of agricultural products in 2023, according to the Illinois Farm Bureau.

"Illinois farmers' products—from grains and feed, corn, soybeans, ethanol, beef, pork, and more—rely on access to foreign markets and will undoubtedly be impacted by these new tariffs either through increased prices or decreased market access," Illinois Farm Bureau President Brian Duncan said in a statement. "This uncertainty coupled with an already struggling farm economy has farmers worried as we head into planting season."



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St. Patrick Celebration in Richmond this Sunday

The Village of Richmond will host a St. Patrick Celebration on Sunday, March 16 from 2-7 p.m., at the The District at Memorial Hall, 10308 N. Main St., Richmond.

This free admission event will host: a local vendor market, live Irish music & dance performances, kids crafts, scavenger hunt, children's story time, open air photo booth, gift basket drawing, roaming leprechaun, and food and drinks for purchase.

For a full schedule and event details visit www.richmond-il.com or facebook.com/richmondil.





SUBMITTED PHOTO HI-Liter/MCN

Donate a non-perishable food item or toiletry and enjoy free admission to the Dunn Museum during spring break. From March 24–28, your visit can help support the Libertyville Township Food Pantry while exploring Lake County’s history. The museum is located at 1899 W. Winchester Road, Libertyville.

Free admission for a good cause during spring break at the Dunn Museum

For the third year, the Bess Bower Dunn Museum in Libertyville is holding a food drive during spring break. Visitors will receive free admission with the donation of at least one non-perishable food item or toiletry per person.

The food drive takes place during special spring break hours from 10 a.m.–4:30 p.m. Monday, March 24 through Friday, March 28 except for Thursday, March 27, when it closes at 8 p.m. The collected items will benefit the Libertyville Township Food Pantry.

“At the museum during spring break, every visit is an opportunity to lend a hand. Donate an item and enjoy free admission while helping local families,” said Director of Education Alyssa Firkus.

The Dunn Museum’s spring break food drive set a high mark last year. “We welcomed more than 1,280 visitors and gathered more than 1,400 pounds of food and toiletries, averaging about one pound per person,” said Museum Operations Manager Alicia Fullerton, who teamed with the food pantry.

The nationally accredited Dunn Museum—a distinction held by only 3% of American museums—cares for a treasure trove of history about our region. Lake County’s natural and cultural history is brought to life through a balance of interactive exhibitions, authentic artifacts, reproductions and audiovisual displays.

For more information, call 847-968-3400 or visit lcfpd.org/museum/.

Village of Antioch welcomes Kotloski as new Parks and Recreation Director

The Village of Antioch is excited to welcome Katie Kotloski as its new Director of Parks and Recreation! Katie is a proud Antioch resident whose children participate in our programs. She brings more than 20 years of experience in the field and will be responsible for overseeing Antioch’s recreation programs, as well as park improvement projects such as the revitalization of Centennial Park.



Katie Kotloski

“Katie’s expertise will be instrumental in enhancing our recreation programs here in Antioch,” Mayor Scott Gartner said. “I look forward to working with Katie to pro-

vide more engaging and enriching opportunities for our community, and I encourage everyone to give her a warm welcome as she settles into her new role.”

Kotloski’s past positions include managing and overseeing recreation programs for Lindenhurst and Northbrook park districts, and managing cooperative programs for the Northern Suburban Special Recreation Association (NSSRA) based in Highland Park. Her experience includes programming a wide range of recreation events and activities, from camps and sports leagues to special events. Gartner says Kotloski’s proven leadership in facility management, strategic planning, and policy development will also contribute greatly to the department’s upward trajectory.

“I am thrilled to serve my community in this capacity,” Kotloski said. “As a mom whose children are growing up in Antioch’s recreational activities, I am eager to do my part to ensure quality parks and recreation programs for my fellow residents. I can think of no better way to give back to the community.”

Those who have not yet had a chance to meet Kotloski can stop by the former senior center building (817 Holbeck Dr.) on Thursday, March 13 from 5:30-6:30pm for a meet-and-greet to learn about Kotloski and the Department’s vision for the future. She and her team will also be at the Shamrock Jam & (Almost) 5k at Sequoit Creek Park from 10am-noon on Saturday, March 22 handing out information about their upcoming programs and events.

Health Department offering reduced well water testing rates until March 21

In observance of National Groundwater Awareness Week, the Lake County Health Department is offering a reduced well water testing fee for homeowners who use well water as their primary source of drinking water. Between March 10 and March 21, 2025, the normal \$25.00 fee for testing for bacteria and nitrates will be reduced to \$20.00.

“Water plays such an important role in our lives, from drinking, to cooking, to cleaning, and more,” said Lawrence Mackey, Director of Environmental Health at the Lake County Health Department. “Annual testing helps ensure

your home’s system is producing water that is healthy and safe.”

Sterile test bottles and sampling instructions are available at the Lake County Central Permit Facility at 500 W. Winchester Road, Libertyville, the Health Department’s headquarters at 3010 Grand Avenue, Waukegan, and 19 township or municipal offices located throughout Lake County. To find a location nearest you, call (847) 377-8020 or visit lake-countyil.gov/726/water-wells. Water sampling kits can also be mailed out for \$20.00 plus a postage fee.

All collected water samples

must be brought to the Lake County Central Permit Facility between 8:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday. Results of water samples are ready for homeowners in approximately three business days. Residents also have the option to pay \$69.00 to have a Health Department staff member visit their home to collect the sample, inspect the well, and provide the lab analysis for bacteria and nitrates.

For more information on water testing, contact the Health Department’s Water Wells program at (847) 377-8020 or healthEHS@lake-countyil.gov.

Annual Fox River Summit March 13

Every March residents of Illinois and Wisconsin gather at the Fox River Summit to update one another on what is happening along and throughout the Fox River watershed. The objectives of this gathering include:

- Develop a framework to support ongoing watershed protection actions
- Continue dialogue on shared challenges concerning recreation, economics, sustainable flows, surface water/groundwater interactions, sediment and ecosystem services
- Develop relationships/build trust among Illinois and Wisconsin stakeholders
- Identify commonalities, project successes

and future challenges facing communities within the watershed

Registration is open for the 13th annual Fox River Summit which will be held from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm on Thursday, March 13 at Veterans Terrace in Burlington, Wisconsin. A remote viewing livestream option is also available for those who cannot attend in person. Registration is open at www.southeastfoxriver.org and the cost is \$75. The registration price for in-person or virtual attendance is the same. The registration fee covers a breakfast bar and lunch for in-person attendees. Reduced student rates are available by contacting Tom Slawski at tslawski@sewrpc.org.

McHenry Community High School hosted educators for AVID curriculum showcase



SUBMITTED PHOTO HI-Liter/MCN

McHenry Community High School hosted educators from other districts on March 6 to showcase their newly implemented AVID curriculum.

McHenry Community High School’s newly implemented AVID elective curriculum was on display March 6 for other teachers and administrators to see a successful early program that’s meant to motivate students to reach their highest potential.

About 30 educators from districts in Peoria, Niles, Harvard, southern Wisconsin, and more, visited both Freshman Campus and Upper Campus classrooms to see McHenry’s program in action. AVID, which stands for Advancement Via Individual Determination, is an elective college and career readiness program designed to motivate students to build on their skills and knowledge by taking on new challenges.

English Instructor Heidie Dunn, who is the AVID site coordinator for McHenry High School District 156, said McHenry was selected by AVID to host the free AVID Showcase for other educators.

The daylong free showcase included tours, a panel discussion with students, and classroom visits. McHenry started the program last year with 9th-graders and the program is growing.

Dunn, said she wants her legacy as a teacher to be bringing AVID to McHenry Community High School. Dunn is the regional Teacher of the Year for the Far North suburban region and her nomination focused on her work with the AVID program.



SUBMITTED PHOTO HI-Liter/MCN

Pet of the week

Iris, is about 6 months old, spayed, up-to-date on routine shots (incl. rabies), tested negative for feline leukemia, FIV, and heartworm and micro-chipped.

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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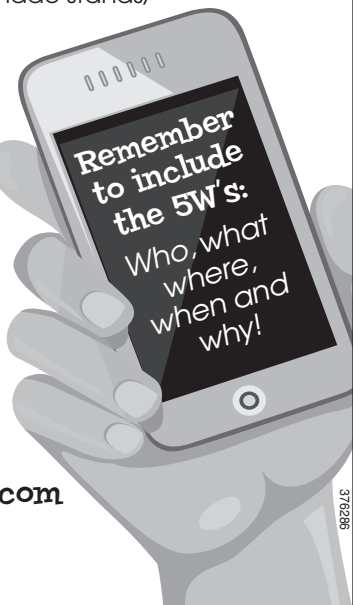
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- ▼ **Please do NOT crop your photos.**
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southernlakesnewspapers.com

Forest Preserves launches Every Acre Strong Campaign

During the pandemic, Brian and Gretchen Boyer walked the entire Des Plaines River Trail, experiencing its beauty firsthand. They were especially struck by the stunning landscapes and, most of all, the high level of care Lake County dedicates to its forest preserves.

“We are extremely grateful that we live so close because these are sacred spaces to escape the hustle and bustle of everyday life,” they said. “We all benefit from the forest preserves, whether we visit them or not, and we must continue supporting them.”

That belief in shared responsibility inspired them to act. Recognizing the need to protect and care for the forest preserves for future generations, the Boyers joined hundreds of others in giving to the Forest Preserves Every Acre Strong campaign.

The goal of the campaign is to establish a \$20 million endowment. An endowment is made up of donations that are invested so the interest helps fund an organization’s long-term needs. The original donation is not spent but protected, invested and grows. Only the income from an endowment is spent.

Managed by the Preservation Foundation of the Lake County Forest Preserves, the endowment will generate approximately \$800,000 annually to fund ongoing care of the Forest Preserves’ restored lands.

Preserving and protecting Lake County’s natural lands requires a close partnership between public support and private philanthropy, Forest Preserves leaders say. On average, the cost of every acre is:

- \$40,000 to preserve it.
- \$15,000 to restore it.

• \$75 every year to keep it healthy.

The Forest Preserves leverages public tax dollars to fund the preservation of land, restoration of native habitats and construction of parking lots, trails and overlooks for public access and enjoyment.

The Preservation Foundation helps people, companies and foundations invest in the mission and work of the Forest Preserves, supporting everything from major restoration projects to public programs.

“We lead by example, bringing together public and

private partners to restore and protect the natural assets of Lake County,” said Ty Kovach, executive director of the Lake County Forest Preserves. “We’re inviting everyone who is passionate about nature to help ensure the forest preserves remain resilient in an uncertain future.”

The endowment will permanently fund innovative climate-informed land management of the forest preserves, enabling activities such as:

- Re-treating invasive species, including buckthorn, honey-suckle and teasel.

- Re-planting native seeds, trees and shrubs that can adapt to a changing climate.
- Conducting prescribed burns to keep land healthy.
- Monitoring plants, animals and insects to ensure our actions are effective.

“We all have a role in stewarding the land, and our gifts today will live on for future generations,” said Preservation Foundation President Betsy Hough.

The Forest Preserves invites support. Donate online at LCFPD.org/endowment or call 847-968-3110.



BOB CALLEBERT PHOTO HI-LITER/MCN

The Lake County Forest Preserves has launched its Every Acre Strong campaign to help fund the organization’s long-term needs. For more information visit lcfpd.org/preservation-foundation/endowment-fund/.

MCCD upcoming events

Festival of the Sugar Maples

Friday, March 15 and Saturday, March 16, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Coral Woods Conservation Area, Marengo.

Learn how maple syrup was first made hundreds of years ago and how we collect sap from the trees today! Try your hand at using tools to tap trees and watch as it is boiled in our evaporator house. You’ll even get a chance to taste pure maple syrup! This event is free and for all ages, but registration is recommended.

Basecamp Basics: Firebuilding and Safety

Thursday, March 20, 6:30-8 p.m., Prairieview Education Center, Crystal Lake.

Learn basic camping skills like how to safely build a fire. This program focuses on teaching adults camping skills, with activities and

hands-on practice. Ages 14+.

Animal Tracks Detective School

Friday, March 21, 10-11 a.m., Pleasant Valley Conservation Area, Woodstock.

Use magnifying glasses and your detective skills to find and study the tracks of local creatures like deer, raccoons and coyotes! Ages 2-6.

Grounding Yoga & Meditation

Saturday, March 22, 9:30-10:30 a.m., Prairieview Education Center, Crystal Lake.

Join us for a gentle flow yoga practice inside the Prairieview Education Center with a view of the prairie. Please bring your own mat. Ages 14+.

Spring Break Camp

Tuesday, March 25 – Thursday, March 27, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., Lost Valley Visitor

Center, Glacial Park, Ringwood.

Looking for something fun to do over spring break? Join us for three days of team-based outdoor activities, nature exploration, campfires, and much more! Ages 8-11.

Paddling McHenry County

Tuesday, March 25, 7-8 p.m., Lost Valley Visitor Center, Glacial Park, Ringwood.

Learn everything you need to know about paddling in McHenry County in this informational presentation including how to dress, how to plan your shuttle, how to read the USGS water level website and more! Ages 14+.

Wetlands and Waterfowl Walk

Saturday, April 5, 8-10:30 a.m., Lost Valley Visitor Cen-

ter, Glacial Park, Ringwood.

Enjoy a spring walk with volunteer bird enthusiast Dave Miller and explore various locations within Glacial Park in search of migrating waterfowl and other birds! Ages 14+.

Wandering Writers: Spring into National Poetry Month

Saturday, April 5, 1-3 p.m., Prairieview Education Center, Crystal Lake.

Kick off National Poetry Month by taking an inspirational hike where we identify various species of flora and fauna and learn a few natural history tidbits that might be useful as we wordsmith our creative works. Ages 14+

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

Lake County State’s Attorney Rinehart makes a statement following Crimo changing plea to guilty

On Monday, March 3, Robert E. Crimo III, 24, withdrew his earlier not-guilty plea in the Highland Park Independence Day 2022 parade shootings.

Prosecutors had charged him with 21 counts of first-degree murder, three counts for each person killed, and 48 counts of attempted murder.

Before jurors ever entered the courtroom, Judge Victoria Rossetti read the charges to Crimo and asked questions to be sure he understood before accepting the plea. To the surprise of those in the courtroom, Crimo changed his plea to guilty, putting a sudden end to the trial that had been expected to last a month.

Rinehart’s statement on the guilty plea

Lake County State’s Attorney Eric Rinehart made the following statement after the guilty plea:

“Today is about the victims and survivors of the Highland Park July 4 Parade Shooting.

Our community may never heal from the Defendant’s calculated and heinous actions that destroyed so many lives. But today is an important step about justice. Today is about:

- Katie Goldstein
- Irina McCarthy
- Kevin McCarthy
- Stephen Strauss
- Jackie Sundeim
- Nicolas Toledo-Zaragoza
- Eduardo Uvaldo

And 48 others who were physically hurt – who bled, who cried, who may never heal.

Today is also about the hundreds who still remember and feel the trauma from that awful day – a day that should have been about celebration and recovering from the pandemic. Instead, it turned into a day of death and anguish for so many.

This morning, the shooter in the Highland Park Trial, pled guilty to 21 counts of first-degree murder and 48 counts of Attempted first degree murder.

This was not a negotiation. This was not a deal. He made a free decision to plead guilty to every count that was about to be presented to a jury. He received nothing in exchange.

We were 1000% ready for trial and to prove him guilty.

We have been working for years to prepare our evidence that includes DNA testing, fingerprint identification, firearm records, video evidence, identification evidence that put him in the alley walking up to the roof, on the roof, and descending from the roof at the time of the shooting. We also were prepared to present his voluntary confession that he made that day to law enforcement.

His admissions would have confirmed every piece of physical evidence, trajectory analysis, ballistics reports, DNA conclusions, and eyewitness testimony.

The Lake County State’s Attorney’s Office continues to express its condolences to all who lost a loved one and to all who were hurt physically and psychologically. Our Victim Services Division remains dedicated to uplifting victims, connecting them to resources, and helping them navigate the judicial process. Our team is available, ready, and willing to accompany victims through each step as we prepare for sentencing. Our team STILL stands with you.

I want to acknowledge the heroes that day who ran toward the gunfire. First responders, police, EMTs, fire department professionals, and civilians all helped their friends and neighbors without hesitating, without thinking of themselves.

Every member of law enforcement, the City of Highland Park, the FBI, the Illinois State Police, Lake County, and this office has risen to every moment challenge since 10:14 a.m., July 4, 2022.

Justice in the legal system does not descend upon a case, it is earned. It comes from the bravery of every victim and surviving family member who was going to come forward today and will come forward during sentencing.

Justice comes from the hours of victim support that Highland Park and our federal partners provided.

Justice comes from the victim support professionals and administrative support that hundreds of dedicated employees have provided to those in need.

Justice comes from the tireless law enforcement professionals who never stopped to make sure that the investigation was complete.

And justice comes from the amazing men and women in this office that were ready every step of the way.

I want to again thank everyone who played a part in this journey. The journey will not end for many. We will move to sentencing and continue support for those in need.”

Sentencing is scheduled for April 23. Each count of first-degree murder carries a maximum natural life prison sentence, assuring that Crimo will spend the rest of his life behind bars.

St. Patrick’s Day traffic safety campaign underway this weekend

To remind motorists of the dangers of impaired driving and to help keep our streets safe, the Lake County Sheriff’s Office is partnering with the Illinois State Police and Illinois Department of Transportation for a traffic safety campaign.

In addition to looking for alcohol- and cannabis-impaired drivers, the Sheriff’s Office will be increasing

seat belt enforcement, particularly at night when seat belt usage rates are lowest. Speeding, distracted driving, and all traffic laws will be strictly enforced.

Whether you’re attending a party, hosting friends, or going out to a tavern, keep safety at the forefront of your day and night. When it’s time to leave, make sure your designated driver is so-

ber. Remember that walking impaired can also be dangerous, so designate a sober friend to walk home with you. Designated drivers: Be alert for impaired walkers who may not obey street signs.

Other important tips:
• Drunk or high, it doesn’t matter. It is never okay to drive impaired. Designate a sober driver or plan to

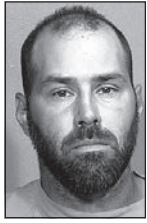
use public transportation or a ride service to get home safely.

- If you see an impaired driver on the road, call 911.
- Always buckle up!

The St. Patrick’s Day traffic safety campaign is funded by federal traffic safety funds from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and administered by IDOT.

Court & crime news

Enders receives eight year sentence for kidnapping ex-girlfriend



Douglas Enders

The McHenry County State's Attorney's Office announces that Douglas Enders, 44, of McHenry, Illinois was sentenced to eight years in the Illinois Department of Corrections. The sentence was handed down on February 27, by the Honorable Mark R. Gerhardt after Enders entered a negotiated plea of guilty to one count of Kidnapping, a Class 2 Felony.

On March 16, 2024, the McHenry Police Department responded to the Mobile Gas Station in McHenry for a report of a domestic battery. Upon arrival, police learned that Enders had battered his ex-girlfriend and had confined her in a garage against her will, locking the door and preventing her from leaving. The defendant and the victim later walked to a gas station, where the victim was able to obtain help from a cashier who called 911. Enders then fled the gas station and was subsequently apprehended by the McHenry County Sheriff's Office.

The charge of Kidnapping has a penalty of two to seven years in the Illinois Department of Corrections, but due to the defendant's criminal history and his extended term eligibility, the McHenry County State's Attorney's Office was able to successfully negotiate a term of eight years in the Illinois Department of Corrections on the charge.

McHenry County State's Attorney Randi Freese commends Officer Roske with the McHenry Police Department and the McHenry County Sheriff's Office on their diligent and effective investigative efforts in combating domestic violence in this county. This case was successfully prosecuted by Assistant State's Attorney Shelby Page.

Single vehicle crash ends in fatality

An unidentified individual is dead after a single-vehicle crash near Woodstock.

On Monday, March 3, at 4:49 p.m., McHenry County Sheriff's Office and Woodstock Fire & Rescue responded to a single vehicle crash in the 8200 block of Mason

Hill Road in unincorporated Woodstock.

First responders arrived to find a vehicle fully engulfed in flames. It was also discovered that a person was still within the vehicle and pronounced dead.

Preliminary investigation indicates a 2019 Chrysler 300 was traveling westbound on Mason Hill Road, to the west of Cherry Valley Road. The vehicle failed to negotiate a curve and exited the roadway to the right, striking a tree and catching fire.

The victim is believed to be a male subject and has not been positively identified. The subject was wearing a seatbelt at the time of the crash. Speed is believed to be a factor of the crash.

The crash remains under investigation by McHenry County Sheriff's Office Major Crash Investigation Unit and the McHenry County Coroner's Office.

Tynis sentenced to ten years for unlawful possession of a controlled substance

The McHenry County State's Attorney's Office announced that Joel Tynis, 38, of Holiday Hills, Illinois, was sentenced to ten years in the Illinois Department of Corrections. The sentence was handed down on March 3, by the Honorable Judge Tiffany Davis after Tynis entered a negotiated plea of guilty to one count of Unlawful Possession of a Controlled Substance (Heroin), a Class 1 felony.

On January 6, 2022, officers of the McHenry City Police Department arrested Tynis on an outstanding warrant stemming from an investigation of an overdose death of a McHenry city resident. After his arrest, during a pat-down, officers located on Tynis's person over seventy-five individual baggies containing a total of approximately thirty-nine grams of heroin. Lab tests affirmed that the substances located in each of the baggies tested positive for heroin.

McHenry County State's Attorney Randi Freese com-

mends the thorough investigative efforts of Det. Ryan Ehardt and the McHenry City Police Department, along with the forensic efforts from the Illinois State Police Rockford Forensic Science Laboratory. The Office remains committed to the zealous prosecution of those who possess, deliver, or distribute illegal narcotics in our county.

This case was successfully prosecuted by Assistant State's Attorneys Matthew Brodersen and Justin Neubauer.

Lake County Special Investigations Group arrests cocaine trafficker

The Lake County Sheriff's Office Special Investigations Group (SIG), a High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HID-TA) funded task force, with the assistance of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) - Chicago Field Division, concluded an investigation that resulted in the arrest of a Beach Park man for drug trafficking.

In January of 2025, SIG received a tip that Evan E. Crews, 34, of the 40100 block of North Glendale Avenue, Beach Park, was trafficking drugs. Members of SIG conducted an undercover operation that revealed Evans sold over 90 grams of cocaine to undercover detectives on several occasions. Evans set the location of at least one of the drug deals within 350 feet of an elementary school.

On March 5, following the investigation, Crews was arrested in the 200 block of Water Street, Waukegan. After reviewing the facts and circumstances of the investigation, the Lake County State's Attorney's Office approved the following charges:

- Three Counts of Unlawful Possession of a Controlled Substance with Intent to Deliver (Class X Felonies)
- Unlawful Possession of a Controlled Substance with Intent to Deliver within 500 feet of a school (Class X Felony)
- Three Counts Unlawful Possession of a Controlled Substance (Class 1 Felonies)
- Violating an Order of Pro-



Evan Crews

tection (Class 4 Felony)

Sheriff John D. Idleburg said, "It is absolutely unacceptable that anyone would endanger our communities by trafficking dangerous drugs, let alone so close to an elementary school. Our Special Investigations Group, in partnership with the ATF - Chicago Field Division, remains relentless in holding drug traffickers accountable and keeping these poisons off our streets. I commend our detectives and law enforcement partners for their outstanding work in this case."

Crews remained held in the Lake County Jail pending his initial court hearing.

Driver from fatal hit-and-run charged

Following an extensive investigation by the Lake County Sheriff's Office Technical Crash Investigations Team, the driver of the GMC SUV has been indicted by a Lake County Grand Jury.

Sheriff's crash investigators determined Alex Landa, 33, of the 700 block of Franklin, Winthrop Harbor, was responsible for striking and killing bicyclist Tiana Smith, 18, of Zion.

On Wednesday, March 5, 2025, a Lake County Grand Jury was presented with testimony on the evidence gathered during the investigation. The Lake County Grand Jury indicted Landa on one count of failure to report a crash involving death (class 1 felony) and one count of aggravated DUI causing death (class 2 felony).

Following the direct indictment, a Lake County Judge signed a warrant for the arrest of Landa.

Sheriff John D. Idleburg said, "No family should have to endure such a tragedy, and we hope these charges bring them the first measure of justice. I commend our crash investigations team for their tireless efforts in ensuring the driver was held accountable. Their dedication to uncovering the truth and seeking justice for victims is a testament to their professionalism and commitment to our community's safety."

All defendants are presumed innocent unless proven guilty in a court of law.

Fatal Wadsworth Hit-and-Run Traffic Crash (issued

9/7/24)

Lake County Sheriff's Traffic Crash Investigators are investigating an overnight fatal hit-and-run crash that occurred in Wadsworth.

On September 6, 2024, at approximately 11:45 p.m., Lake County Sheriff's Deputies were dispatched to a report of a 'person down' on Dilley's Road just south of Wadsworth Road. Sheriff's deputies arrived and located an adult woman deceased in the roadway. The woman sustained significant trauma, consistent with being struck by a vehicle.

Based on a preliminary investigation, sheriff's crash investigators believe the woman was riding a bicycle northbound on Dilley's Road, when she was struck from behind by a northbound GMC SUV. When she was struck, she was thrown from the bicycle, and the bicycle became lodged under the SUV, as the driver fled from the scene. The woman was then struck by a southbound Hyundai Elantra, driven by a 23-year-old man of Waukegan. That driver of the Hyundai is cooperative with the investigation.

Information was received from a witness who saw a GMC SUV dragging a bicycle eastbound on Wadsworth Road. The vehicle was identified and located parked at a residence in Winthrop Harbor. The vehicle had damage consistent with being involved in the hit-and-run crash. The vehicle was seized, and crash investigators have identified the suspected driver of that vehicle, a 32-year-old man of Winthrop Harbor.

The Lake County Coroner's Office responded to the scene and is in the process of identifying the woman and scheduling an autopsy.

The crash remains under investigation by the Lake County Sheriff's Office Technical Crash Investigations Team and criminal charges will be sought following the conclusion of their investigation.

Man arrested for possessing child pornography

Lake County Sheriff's Deputies arrested a Waukegan man for possessing hundreds of photos and videos depicting child pornography.

Lake County Sheriff's

Detectives

received a tip from an online cloud storage website indicating a device in Lake County uploaded child pornography to their platform. Sheriff's detective began an investigation, and based on that investigation, determined the likely source was coming from a residence in the 1100 block of Gladys Court, Waukegan.

Sheriff's detectives spoke with one of the residents of the home, Brandon C. Roberson, 21. Detectives took possession of a laptop Roberson used and the Lake County State's Attorney's Office Cybercrime Unit conducted a forensic analysis of the laptop. Their analysis revealed close to 200 images and videos containing child pornography, some of which depicted children as young as toddlers being sexually assaulted.

This week, an arrest warrant was drafted and approved by a Judge for Roberson, along with a search warrant for his residence. Sheriff's detectives, Illinois Attorney General's Office Cybercrime Investigators, and Lake County State's Attorney's Office Investigators arrested Roberson yesterday and seized several additional devices with electronic storage.

The additional electronics seized are being forensically analyzed and it is believed they will contain additional child pornography.

Sheriff John D. Idleburg said, "Protecting our children from those who seek to harm them is among our highest priorities. Our detectives work tirelessly to identify and apprehend child predators, and this arrest is a testament to their dedication. We are grateful for the invaluable collaboration with the Illinois Attorney General's Office and the Lake County State's Attorney's Office, as it takes a united effort to bring these offenders to justice. We will continue to use every available resource to protect the most vulnerable members of our community."

Roberson is currently charged with three counts of possessing child pornography. Additional charges are likely.

Roberson was being held in the Lake County Jail pending a detention.

Serious traffic crash under investigation

Lake County Sheriff's Traffic Crash Investigators are investigating a serious single-vehicle traffic crash.

On March 8, at approximately 2:05 a.m., Lake County Sheriff's Deputies responded to the area of Stearns School Road and Mill Creek Drive, unincorporated Gurnee, for a traffic crash, where someone was trapped in the vehicle. Sheriff's deputies arrived and found a Mercedes-Benz sedan with heavy damage.

Preliminary investigation shows the driver, a 26-year-old man from Gurnee, was traveling eastbound on



Brandon C. Roberson

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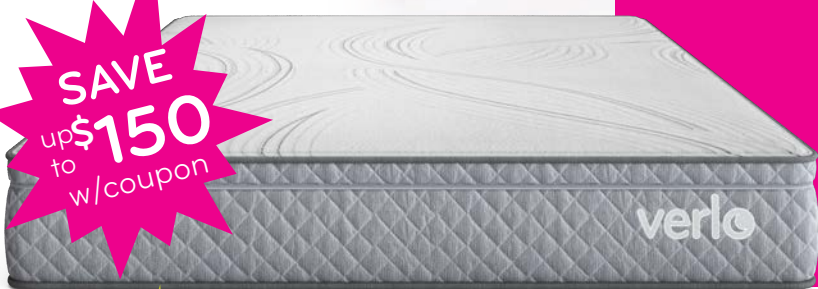
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