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~ including McHenry County News

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Celebrating tradition along the Fox River

Spraying green colorant into Boone Creek and the Fox River is an annual St. Patrick's Day tradition in McHenry. Gathering along the shore, visitors watch as the green dye spreads throughout the water, a sure sign St. Patrick's Day has arrived. In the early days many people from Ireland settled in McHenry and a parade is held for St. Patrick's Day to honor the heritage of those early settlers. Below: Everyone wears green for St. Patrick's Day, even the pets.

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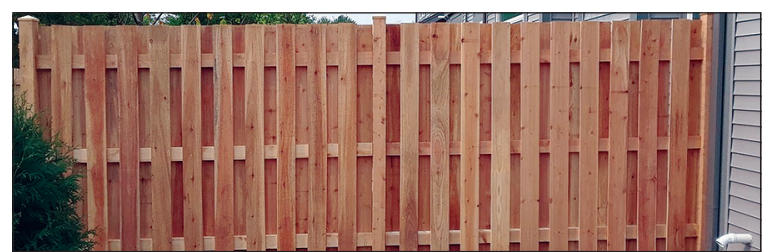
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Lawmakers mull betting on internet gambling while existing industry warns it'll fold

Proposal to legalize 'iGaming' comes as Illinois' still-growing sports betting market turns 5

By Hannah Meisel
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

In the years since the COVID-19 pandemic temporarily shut down Illinois casinos, video gambling terminals, horse racing and professional sports—just days after legal sports betting went live—the state's gambling industry has seen an explosion in growth.

Even the state lottery, which was launched 50 years ago, has experienced an expansion in recent years after a decade of stagnation. Total state tax revenues from all sources of wagering in Illinois, including the lottery, surpassed \$2 billion in the last fiscal year.

Against this backdrop, some lawmakers are pushing for Illinois to join eight other states that have legalized internet gambling, also known as iGaming. It's a tempting possibility in a year when the state is facing a possible budget deficit and uncertainty about normally solid sources of federal funding as President Donald Trump and congressional Republicans are looking for cuts.

While Illinois already allows sports betting on mobile apps, iGaming includes online casinos and other forms of online gambling that are currently outlawed.

State Rep. Edgar Gonzalez, D-Chicago, asked a panel of his fellow House members this week to imagine Illinois facing another financial downturn like the pandemic-recession of 2020 when Trump was finishing out his first term. That year, Illinois faced a major budget shortfall, though federal stimulus money ended up helping the state recover.

"If we had something like iGaming, we would have still had a financial fallback in spite of gross negligence by the first Trump administration," he said Wednesday at a Capitol hearing on his proposal to legalize internet gambling. "Illinois is gambling with its financial future by delaying the adoption of iGaming."

Proponents of Gonzalez's House Bill 3080 point out that plenty of Illinoisans are already gambling on the in-

ternet illegally, often facilitated by overseas-based websites.

"Whether or not you choose to pass legislation legalizing iGaming, it is already here," James Hartmann, a lobbyist for sports betting giant FanDuel, told the panel. "Right now, you can take out your phone and in five minutes, be gambling real money slot machines from the app store, unregulated and untaxed."

Hartmann, who was heavily involved in drafting and negotiating Illinois' legalized sports betting framework as a House Democratic staff attorney in 2019, said iGaming sites are "flooding the Illinois market"—and operating unscrupulously.

Meanwhile, FanDuel, Draft Kings and other sports betting platforms must adhere to the law's strict requirements for age checks, problem gambling prevention notifications and other consumer protections to maintain their expensive licenses.

"And so while these bad actors profit, none of it is being captured in tax revenue for the state of Illinois," Hartmann said.

He and others pushing the iGaming bill claim Illinois could collect an additional \$1 billion annually in taxes on internet gambling. The estimate is extrapolated from a 2024 report commissioned by the Sports Betting Alliance, an industry group that represents the four biggest sportsbooks in the U.S.

Those mobile sports betting platforms, which operate in 31 states, Puerto Rico and Washington, D.C., are eager to expand their nascent iGaming business into more states. The Sports Betting Alliance has been running geotargeted social media ads urging iGaming legalization in recent weeks, not just in Illinois but also Maryland.

The analysis from the gambling industry consultancy firm Eilers & Krejcik estimated \$775 million in state tax revenues after five years of legalized iGaming at a nearly 25 percent tax rate. The \$1 billion figure would reflect a higher tax rate more in line with what larger casinos and

sports books pay, especially after a hike in the state's sports betting tax last year. Pritzker last month also floated a tax hike on casino table games to help fill the state's budget gap.

But opponents of legalizing iGaming—including some casinos, video gambling terminal operators and the hospitality groups that represent the bars and restaurants in which those VGTs have proliferated in the 13 years since video gambling's launch in Illinois—warn the introduction of iGaming would prove a zero-sum game.

Indeed, the General Assembly's fiscal forecasting arm has for years reported on the cannibalization effects that new gambling opportunities have on existing gambling outlets. In its annual study from October, the legislature's Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability continued to chronicle the downfall of Illinois' once-thriving horse racing industry, in addition to noting flagging revenues from the state's legacy riverboat casinos, the oldest of which have been in business for a little more than three decades.

While overall casino revenue in Illinois is up, that success is mainly attributable to the opening of six new casinos provided for under Illinois' massive 2019 gambling expansion law. Additionally, Rivers Casino in Des Plaines, Illinois' first land-based casino that opened in 2011, has also seen continued growth.

But the state's nine legacy riverboat casinos have seen their revenues decline "for nine consecutive years," according to the report. Visits to casinos in East St. Louis, East Peoria and Joliet's Harrah's Casino have seen significant drop-off. Many of those casinos would be even worse off if it weren't for sportsbook partnerships entered into during the thick of the pandemic, when the type of in-person betting that was provided for under the law was not allowed.

The Illinois Gaming Board opposes the bill due to the agency's own struggles to

keep up with its existing regulatory responsibilities and the General Assembly's lack of motion on banning so-called "sweepstakes machines," which are similar to video gambling terminals but operate in a legal gray area.

Jay Keller, a contract lobbyist for Penn Entertainment Inc., noted the company has spent \$600 million in recent years enhancing and expanding its casinos in Aurora, Joliet and Alton—an investment "made with the understanding that Illinois' gaming landscape would remain stable," he told lawmakers.

"The economic impact of iGaming is uncertain, but the potential negative consequences are clear: The proliferation of online gaming could reduce in-person casino traffic, threatening jobs, lowering the economic benefits to local communities and ultimately discouraging future investments in the state," he said.

Penn also operates video gambling terminals throughout Illinois and sportsbooks at all three of its casinos, including mobile sports betting via the casino in Aurora. Keller noted that roughly half of Illinois casinos are on Penn's side opposing iGaming, while the other half are in favor of legalizing it.

Though one major labor union, the Chicago-based International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 134, supports legalizing iGaming, another influential union is opposed.

Marc Poulos, the executive director of the labor-management group for the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 150, warned against any move that might jeopardize funding for state infrastructure projects, which provide jobs for Local 150 members.

"Every study that we have looked at shows that iGaming would cannibalize existing gaming positions, mainly video gaming terminals," he told the panel.

A study published recently, commissioned by the National Association Against iGaming, warned that if Illinois legalizes internet gambling, the state could lose \$252.5

million in direct casino tax revenues and 4,733 jobs, taking into account the gambling industry's adjacent hospitality industry.

Though the study concluded that land-based casinos underperformed expected growth in states where iGaming has been legalized, internet gambling proponents disagree.

"iGaming brings new customers to casinos," Sports Betting Alliance President Jeremy Kudon told lawmakers, saying the threat of cannibalization has become a mythical "Loch Ness Monster."

Another report the Sports Betting Alliance commissioned last year found that of Illinois survey respondents who participated in either illegal iGaming or placed online bets while traveling to a state where it's legal, 23 percent said they visited casinos more after they began iGaming. However, 54 percent said the frequency of their casino visits stayed the same, while 19 percent said they didn't go as much.

Additionally, Michael Pollock of the New Jersey-based consultancy firm Spectrum Gaming Group said "two immutable laws of human nature" will still attract people to casinos.

"One is that people like games of chance, and two is that people enjoy being in social settings," he said.

Trevor Hayes, an executive with Caesars Sportsbook, which operates in partnership with Elgin's Grand Victoria Casino, agreed, saying his company has found iGaming is "actually a marketing tool" for brick-and-mortar casinos to "find new customers— younger customers."

But that's exactly what some opponents worry will happen, creating a new class of problem gamblers.

A Tulchin Research survey published this week of 800 Illinois voters last month found 71 percent believed online gambling is more addictive than betting at casinos or other brick-and-mortar establishments. Seventy-seven percent of survey respondents agreed with the sentiment that "lawmakers should look for bet-

ter ways to balance the state budget than expanding mobile gambling in Illinois."

The October report from the legislature's economic forecasting commission estimated that in the last five fiscal years, the per-capita amount spent on gambling and lottery tickets in Illinois has increased from \$325 to \$560 annually, driven primarily by the explosion of video gambling terminals in Illinois and sports betting.

Illinois' sports betting market is now second in the nation behind New York in terms of overall sportsbook revenue, according to a report published last month by the American Gaming Association.

And Illinois' video gambling terminal industry is far and away the largest of any state with legal VGTs; a whopping 48,176 machines were in operation at bars, restaurants, dedicated gaming cafes, truck stops and the state fairgrounds in Springfield as of the end of last fiscal year in June.

Ivan Fernandez, director of the Illinois Gaming Machine Operators Association, which represents the VGT industry, warned that, unlike video gambling and casinos, iGaming presents a more dangerous risk of addiction. He urged lawmakers to follow other states that have rejected bids for iGaming legalization in recent years.

"They declined to authorize putting online casino gambling at people's fingertips on millions of cellphones, tablets and computers available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, when people are most vulnerable," he said. "When they're alone or in isolation and within the close reach of minors, without regard for local authority or any reasonable time or spending limits."

Last week's hearing yielded no vote, as it was purely informational, but the House Gaming Committee's chair, state Rep. Dan Didech, D-Buffalo Grove, indicated there would be a long road ahead for any iGaming legalization bid, calling opponents' concerns "well-founded."

Illinois community colleges see nearly 9 percent spike in spring enrollment

Spring enrollment tops 285,000, marking third straight year of growth

By Peter Hancock
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

Enrollment at Illinois community colleges grew to more than 285,000 in the spring semester this year, an 8.9 percent increase over a year ago and the largest spring-to-spring enrollment increase since the Illinois Community College Board began collecting systemwide data in the late 1990s.

In a report released last week, the ICCB said 40 of the state's 45 community colleges reported enrollment growth this spring.

There was significant growth in several enrollment categories, including a nearly 20 percent increase in students enrolled in dual credit programs, which allow high school students to

earn college credits. But there was an even greater increase, 23.4 percent, in students seeking general associate's degree programs.

"With the largest spring-to-spring enrollment increase and the third straight year of growth, our community colleges have not only bounced back from the pandemic—they are now stronger than ever thanks to our historic investments in education," Gov. JB Pritzker said in a statement.

Since Fiscal Year 2019, the year Pritzker came into office, state funding for the Monetary Award Program, also known as MAP grants, the state's need-based financial aid program, has increased 77 percent, to just over \$710 million.

During that time, Illinois has

been able to increase both the number of grants it awards each year to more than 151,000 this year, as well as the maximum grant amount, which now stands at \$8,604.

For Fiscal Year 2026, which begins July 1, Pritzker has proposed another \$10 million increase in MAP grants, bringing the total to \$721.6 million.

Martin Torres, Pritzker's deputy governor for education policy, said in an interview that increased funding for financial aid has made higher education in Illinois more accessible to moderate-income students, especially those who choose to attend a community college.

"If you're at a community college, combined with the (federal) Pell grant and the MAP, the vast majority, nearly every

single student who's at or below median income level can go for free in terms of tuition and fees," he said in an interview.

Illinois community colleges also saw year-over-year enrollment increases in the fall semester. ICCB reported in October the total headcount enrollment had grown to 265,227, up 7.4 percent from the previous fall. That was also a higher growth rate than the state's public universities, which saw only a 2 percent increase in undergraduate enrollment over that same period, according to the Illinois Board of Higher Education.

In his budget address to the General Assembly in February, Pritzker also proposed giving community colleges a larger role in the state's

higher education system by allowing them to offer four-year bachelor's degrees in high-demand career fields in their local areas. He said that is intended to make four-year programs more accessible to people who don't live in or near cities with major universities.

Torres said he expects that legislation to come up soon in the General Assembly.

"The community colleges who pursue this, if the General Assembly creates this authority, will have to go through the same accreditation process as four-year institutions," Torres said. "And so, from a quality standpoint, students will be able to expect the same level of quality, and the instructors will be required to be trained in the same way."

Vietnam War Veterans Day ceremony being held Saturday

McHenry County will come together with area veterans' groups to honor and share the stories of those who served during the Vietnam War.

The event, open and free to the public, will take place from 9 to 11 a.m. Saturday, March 29, at the Vietnam War memorial outside the front entrance of the County Government Administration Building, 667 Ware Road, Woodstock. The McHenry County Veterans Assistance Commission is hosting the event in partnership American Legion Post 412 in Woodstock, and Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 5040 in McHenry.

The ceremony will include remarks from local veterans and officials, a tribute to the men and women who served, and a moment

of reflection for the sacrifices they made. Also, a plaque will be dedicated to the late Joe Kersten, a Vietnam veteran and longtime VAC chairman who died in 2023.

Congress designated March 29 as Vietnam War Veterans Day to honor the more than 2.7 million American men and women who served in Vietnam; the date was chosen on account of being the anniversary of the 1973 withdrawal of the last American combat soldier. More than 58,000 soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines died during the war, with another 1,200 still counted as missing.

For more information regarding the event, contact the VAC at 815-334-4229, and visit its Facebook page for updates.



Lake County Board Members, top row clockwise, Angelo Kyle (District 14), John Wasik (District 6), Marah Altenberg (District 19), Gina Roberts (District 4), Vice-Chair Mary Ross-Cunningham (District 9) and Jennifer Clark (District 15) recently attended the annual National Association of Counties Legislative Conference.

Lake County Board advocates for local priorities at National Legislative Conference

Lake County Board Members and County staff attended the National Association of Counties (NACo) Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C., bringing together county leaders with members of Congress and federal agency officials to focus on federal policy issues that impact their counties and residents.

The conference provided an opportunity to learn at an array of sessions focused on topics such as public safety, emergency management, environmental sustainability and more. Valuable insights into best practices and possible funding options were collected and will be shared with the teams within Lake County government for thorough evaluation and consideration.

"The annual conference gives counties a platform to advocate for their communities and ensure that local needs and priorities are heard at the highest levels of government," said Sandy Hart, Lake County Board Chair. "It's especially important for Lake County Board members to connect with leaders from across the country who face similar challenges. Sharing ideas and discussing solutions helps us find new and innovative ways to better serve our residents."

Throughout the conference, board members participated in policy steering committee meetings and educational sessions directly related to county business. Vice-Chair Mary Ross-Cunningham, Lake County's appointed NACo Board Representative, attends the NACo conference to not only further NACo's priorities but also to advance the County's federal legislative agenda.

"It is great to have the

opportunity to gather in Washington, DC with other board members and county officials from across the country," said Lake County Board Vice-Chair and District 9 Board Member Mary Ross-Cunningham. "Having the chance to promote the County's legislative priorities at the national level is crucial to having our voices heard."

Jennifer Clark, Lake County Board Member for District 15, discussed the issue of ensuring digital access and training for all residents during a panel discussion at the Telecommunications & Technology Policy Steering Committee meeting. The panel spotlighted practical strategies to help bridge the digital divide which includes "digital skilling" or teaching residents digital skills.

Clark, who is Chair of the Technology Committee, highlighted that one step the County has taken is recruiting digital navigators. Six digital navigators, who travel across the county, help residents learn basic digital skills and understand topics such as hardware, email, online security, telehealth and software.

"Residents have access to basic technology at locations throughout the county such as

libraries, health centers and the Job Center of Lake County, meeting residents where they are to improve digital skills and confidence," Clark said.

She also shared how Lake County is partnering with community organizations to distribute digital devices to eligible residents at community events. The County has

distributed 87 new and refurbished laptops through device distributions and learn-to-earn courses.

The Lake County Digital Growth Initiative was launched in 2023 to better understand the current state of high-speed internet service and digital equity in the county in order to implement solutions for improvement.



Jennifer Clark, Lake County Board Member District 15 and Chair of the Technology Committee, presented the County's strategies to bridge the digital divide during a panel discussion as part of the 2025 NACo Legislative Conference.

Sign up to be a Operation Dropbox location

Counties join forces to offer more drop locations

The McHenry County Department of Health is looking for a few good local organizations to help support the annual Operation Dropbox donation drive for veterans.

Now in its sixth year, Operation Dropbox places collection boxes at participating businesses, churches, governments and other organizations where people can donate goods to assist local veterans and their families.

This year, the McHenry Health Department is joining forces with the Lake County Health Department to make Operation Dropbox bigger and better than ever! All

goods collected during the May drive will be delivered to Veterans Path to Hope, in McHenry County, and to the Lake County Veterans and Family Services Foundation, in Lake County.

The deadline to sign up is Friday, April 4. Sign up can be accessed through the site for each county. McHenry County: redcap.dph.illinois.gov/surveys/?s=F9JXH9X4TK-DEJRR

Lake County: https://lchd.iad1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0BPdmUnASP2Y28u

Last year, McHenry County collected more than 8,000 pounds of donations through a record 80 drop sites, supporting more than 3,000 county veterans. The hope is to top the records again this year!

Conservation District hosting Earth Day Celebration April 19

McHenry County Conservation District to host its annual Earth Day Celebration on Saturday, April 19 from noon - 4:00 p.m. at Prairieview Education Center, 2112 Behan Road, Crystal Lake. Visitors can participate in earth-friendly activities and crafts, enjoy live music, help restoration efforts by planting native plugs, take a guided hike, view a puppet show and more. For those looking

to relax, bring a blanket and a lunch from two food truck options for a picnic with views of the prairie. The Environmental Defenders of McHenry County will be on-site to accept household recycling and composting.

This is a free event for all ages with no registration required. Co-sponsored by the Environmental Defenders of McHenry County. Learn more at MCCD.me/EarthDay.



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

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JOHN GUSKE PHOTOS Hi-Liter/MCN

Scale World Order will now have a permanent live reptile exhibit at Jurassic Gardens and will be offering a live reptile show throughout the Spring Break Staycation event from March 22 - 30. The show is free for kids 12 and under and free with paid admission for adults. For more information visit volofun.com.

From live princesses to pythons, Volo Museum's week-long spring break staycation event is even more interactive

Many people are looking for options during spring break that won't "spring break" the bank. From Saturday, March 22 thru Sunday, March 30, Volo Museum is allowing kids ages 12 and younger free admission to the museum and their animatronic dinosaur park, including a major costumed event and a full week of live, interactive, reptile shows.

The event kicked off on March 22 with one of Volo Museum's most popular events, Princess and Superhero Day. They partner with Costumers With a Cause, a non profit organization providing sometimes up to 50 elaborately-costumed volunteers ranging from Disney Princesses and Marvel Superheroes to Ghostbusters and Super Mario Bros characters. They all spend the day scattered throughout the museum, interacting and having fun with kids of all ages.

"This is one of our favorite events of the year," said board member Jen Greeley. She continued, "In exchange for our volunteering efforts, the museum will donate a portion of their proceeds towards our cause. This year

the funds will benefit The American Federation for Suicide Prevention."

Jurassic Gardens partnered with Scale World Order to also announce the grand opening of a new permanent live reptile exhibit, included with regular admission. For the duration of the spring break event, team members from SWO will be hosting live, interactive reptile shows.

"As a dad of young kids I know that entertaining your kids gets pricey quickly, and we wanted to offer an affordable option that would provide several days of fun over spring break," said Jim Wojdyła, marketing director for the museum located at 27582 Volo Village Road, in Volo. He added "We realize that some kids have off different weeks off for spring break, which is why we wanted to add two full weekends to the promotion."

Volo Museum is almost finished with a five-year, multi-million dollar, museum makeover and this adding many new exhibits and attractions. Many improvements and enhancements have been made to just about every building and area on

their 75 acre property, making spring break a great time to see all that has changed.

Platinum passes — \$49.90 for adults — permits entry to all attractions, including the indoor Jurassic Gardens animatronic dinosaur park, for two consecutive days, plus single-day entry to the Titanic exhibit and the Crime & Punishment sideshow. Gold passes — \$34.95 for adults — include all-day access to the museum and Jurassic Gardens for two consecutive days.

The Volo Museum is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily; closed on Easter Sunday. Regular museum admission is \$22.95 per adult, \$20.95 per senior or military, \$12.95 for children ages 5 to 12 and free for children 4 and younger. Separate, single-day admission to the Jurassic Gardens dinosaur park is \$16.95 each; free for children 4 and younger. Members are admitted free.

For other details, visit volofun.com find Volo Museum on social media, or call 815-385-3644.

MCCD events

Wetlands and Waterfowl Walk

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

Introduction to Volunteering

Saturday, April 12, 10-11:30 a.m., Lost Valley Visitor Center, Glacial Park, Ringwood.

Learn everything you need to know to get started volunteering with the District during this introductory meeting. Meet District volunteer liaisons and learn about the many ways you can volunteer, including habitat restoration, education, public safety, local history and more! Ages 18+.

Wonders of Wildflowers

Saturday, April 12, 10-11:30 a.m., Coral Woods Conservation Area, Marengo.

Looking for the perfect location for a short hike in the woods to see spring wildflowers? Look no further than Coral Woods. Explore trails and play games to re-enforce lessons on flower life cycles and pollination. Children outside the age range are welcome, but please note that the content will be geared for preschool and kindergarten only. Ages 2-6.

Full Moon Hike and Campfire

Saturday, April 12, 7:30-9 p.m., Prairieview Education Center, Crystal Lake.

Join us for a full moon hike through the prairie as you discover full moon stories from cultures around the world. Leave your flashlights at home and let the moon light the way. End the

night with a cozy campfire and comradery.

Norman and George Powers

Sunday, April 13, noon - 4 p.m., Powers-Walker House, Glacial Park, Ringwood.

Come explore this Greek Revival 1854 restored house and learn more about the resident families that called this area home. April's program centers around the Powers family and honoring their two sons' military service in the Civil War.

This is an all ages, free special event and registration is not required. Children ages 13 and under must be accompanied by an adult.

Basecamp Basics: Outdoor Cooking

Thursday, April 17, 6:30-8 p.m., Prairieview Education Center, Crystal Lake.

Want to learn some basic camping skills like how to cook outdoors? This program is part of a series that focuses on teaching adults camping skills, with activities and hands-on practice designed to get you comfortable with the camping basics. Ages 14+.

Conservation Egg Hunt

Saturday, April 19, 10-11 a.m., Prairieview Education Center, Crystal Lake.

Embark on a short hike that leads you to various bird habitats where you search for the "eggs" of local birds and win a prize! Bring the whole family and stay to celebrate Earth Day. Ages 13 and under.

Earth Day Celebration

Saturday, April 19, noon-4 p.m., Prairieview Education Center, Crystal Lake.

Join us to celebrate mother earth at this free event! Visit various environmental-themed booths hosted by partner organizations, participate in earth-friendly activities and crafts, grab lunch at one of our visiting food trucks and enjoy live music and puppet shows! All ages, free/drop-in event.

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

You ought to be in pictures!

THIS IS AN OPEN CALL FOR SUBMITTED PHOTOS TO BE USED IN YOUR COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER.

▼ Community events, car washes, festivals, lemonade stands, school projects - people at work and at play.

We are interested!

▼ Show the community what your group has been doing!

▼ **NO EXPERIENCE NEEDED!**

▼ Just shoot and e-mail!

▼ We need you to ID everyone in the photo *first* and *last* names required

▼ 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!

E-mail your photos at the highest possible resolution to: news@hi-liter.com
BY NOON ON FRIDAY

PHOTOS MAY ALSO APPEAR ON OUR WEB SITE.

southernlakesnewspapers.com



SUBMITTED PHOTO Hi-Liter/MCN

Pet of the week

Vortimer, is about 9 years old, neutered, up-to-date on routine shots, tested negative for FIV, feline leukemia and heartworm and microchipped.

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

Native shrub and tree sale orders due by April 5

The Friends of Volo Bog are taking orders for their Native Shrub and Tree Sale now through Saturday, April 5.

Order forms can be found online at www.FriendsofVoloBog.org. Order early as supplies are limited.

Pickup will be on April 12 from 9 a.m. to noon at the Volo Bog State Natural Area parking lot behind the visitor center. Plants will be tagged for you.

Volo Bog SNA is located at 28478 W. Brandenburg Road, Ingleside.





THESE DEALS ARE A SLAM DUNK!



P16654
2022 MITSUBISHI MIRAGE

\$12,990



P16474A
2014 JEEP GRAND CHEROKEE LTD.

\$13,748



P16543
2021 NISSAN VERSA SV

\$13,990



P250294A
2017 CHEVY IMPALA LT

\$14,690



P16617
2022 CHEVY MALIBU LT

\$14,990



250278B
2019 BUICK ENCORE PREFERRED

\$15,490



P16500A
2019 CHEVY EQUINOX LT

\$15,490



F240628B
2020 BUICK ENCORE PREFERRED

\$15,990



P16616
2022 CHEVY MALIBU LT

\$16,690



P16683
2021 CHEVY TRAILBLAZER LT

\$21,490



P16659
2022 CHRYSLER VOYAGER LX

\$21,490



P16604
2019 CHEVY EQUINOX PREMIER

\$21,890



PB16572
2023 CHEVY EQUINOX LT

\$21,890



K250289A
2023 CHEVY TRAILBLAZER LT

\$23,890



250357A
2020 CHEVY SILVERADO LT

\$24,790



P16735
2024 CHEVY TRAX 2RS

\$25,488



P16597
2021 VW ATLAS SE

\$26,290



P16687
2024 BUICK ENVISTA SPORT TOURING

\$26,390



240889A
2017 CHEVY SILVERADO LT

\$26,990



P16593
2024 CHEVY EQUINOX RS

\$28,890



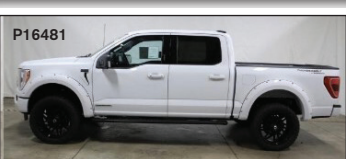
P16614
2022 CHEVY EXPRESS 250 WORK VAN

\$29,290



250395A
2018 CHEVY SILVERADO LT

\$29,790



P16481
2023 FORD F-150 XLT

\$36,890



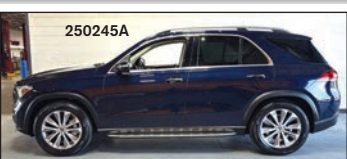
P16565
2021 GMC SIERRA ELEVATION

\$42,590



P16603
2021 CHEVY SILVERADO LT

\$42,890



250245A
2022 MERCEDES-BENZ GLE350

\$43,790



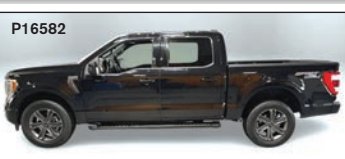
250428A
2024 CHEVY SILVERADO 1500 LT

\$45,690



P16602
2023 CHEVY SILVERADO RST

\$48,490



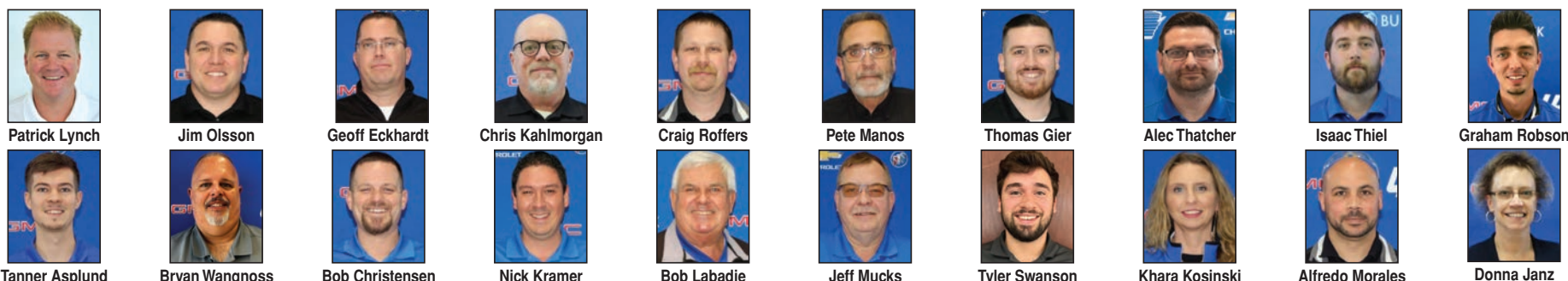
P16582
2023 FORD F-150 LARIAT

\$50,788



P16722
2023 GMC YUKON XL DIESEL

\$68,691



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Court & crime news

Sheriff's 911 emergency telecommunicators work to rescue woman being battered, restrained

Lake County Sheriff's Office Emergency 911 Telecommunicators worked diligently to rescue the victim of a domestic battery, who was being held against her will.

On March 18, at approximately 12:30 a.m., the Lake County Sheriff's Office 911 Telecommunications Center received a wireless 911 call from a frantic woman who was inside a car with a violent man, Hector O. Cortes Del Rio, 26, of the 38500 block of North Sheridan Road, Beach Park.



Hector Cortes Del Rio

It was very clear to sheriff's telecommunicators that the woman was scared, and a loud argument was ensuing. Sheriff's telecommunicators utilized state-of-the-art equipment to track the location of the 911 caller, and learned she was calling from the area of Route 45 and Center Street in Grayslake. Sheriff's telecommunicators could tell the cellular phone

appeared to be moving southbound in a vehicle. While the 911 call-taker was on the phone with the victim obtaining as much information as possible, other 911 telecommunicators were dispatching deputies and notifying local police departments of the situation.

The phone the victim was using disconnected and the 911 call-taker called back multiple times, until he was able to reestablish contact with the victim. The 911 call-taker heard Cortes Del Rio screaming at the woman, the woman was frantic, pleading with the man to stop driving so recklessly, and the call again disconnected.

Another sheriff's telecommunicator researched who the cellular phone belonged to and located the victim's information. Sheriff's telecommunicators called the local police department where the victim lives and asked them to go to the victim's home. This allowed additional information to be gathered including the type of car the victim was in. Additionally, a relative told the local police department that the victim

was being held against her will.

Sheriff's telecommunicators were able to reestablish communications with the victim and could hear her crying and shouting for the man to stop the car. Sheriff's telecommunicators were able to determine the victim was now in Buffalo Grove, and they alerted Buffalo Grove Police and Cook County agencies of the situation, while updating responding sheriff's deputies.

A Buffalo Grove Police Officer located the vehicle and conducted a traffic stop, where the victim was able to free herself from the vehicle and run to the police officers.

Sheriff's deputies arrived and saw the woman had injuries to her face and body. The woman told sheriff's deputies that Cortes Del Rio battered her while they were driving, and he held her against her will. The woman declined medical treatment and was given a ride home. It was determined the victim and Cortes Del Rio are acquaintances and initially agreed to spend time together that night, until Cortes Del Rio

became violent.

Sheriff's deputies reviewed the incident with the Lake County State's Attorney's Office who approved the following charges against Cortes Del Rio: Unlawful Restraint (class 4 felony), Two Counts of Domestic Battery (class A misdemeanors), and Interfering with the Reporting of Domestic Violence (class A misdemeanor).

Sheriff John D. Idleburg said, "We are so fortunate to have incredibly professional and dedicated sheriff's 911 emergency telecommunicators serving Lake County. With their vast knowledge of the entire county, utilization of best practices, and the care they have for our community, our telecommunicators are consistently the calm behind the phone for people in some of their worst moments. In this case, they did an incredible job working to stay with the caller and figure out her location, ensuring she was safely rescued."

Cortes Del Rio was held in the Lake County Jail pending a first court appearance.

Two vehicle traffic crash under investigation

An 89-year-old Woodbury, Minnesota woman was pronounced deceased following a two-vehicle crash in the 17100 block of Illinois Route 176 near Union.

On Sunday, March 16 at about 9:25 a.m. members of the McHenry County Sheriff's Office, Marengo Police Department, and rescue departments from Harvard, Crystal Lake, Woodstock, Huntley, Union, and Marengo responded to a two-vehicle head-on crash on Illinois Route 176 to the east of North Union Road.

Preliminary investigation indicates that a 2007 Kia Sportage, driven by a 40-year-old Marengo man, was traveling eastbound on Illinois Route 176 and a 2016 Mazda CX-5, driven by a 64-year-old Crystal Lake man, was traveling westbound on Illinois Route 176. The vehicles were involved in a head-on crash with both vehicles remaining on the highway.

Four people were injured,

and one person was pronounced dead as a result of the crash. The driver of the Mazda was transported to Northwestern Hospital Huntley in critical condition. A 64-year-old Crystal Lake woman, a passenger in the Mazda, was transported to Northwestern Hospital McHenry in stable condition. An 89-year-old woman, a passenger in the Mazda, was taken to Northwestern Hospital Huntley and later pronounced dead. The driver of the Kia refused treatment on scene. A 17-year-old Marengo juvenile passenger in the Kia was transported to Mercyhealth Hospital Crystal Lake in good condition. A 37-year-old Marengo man was transported to Northwestern Hospital Huntley in good condition.

Weather is believed to have been a factor for the crash. All but one of the victims were seat belted at the time of crash. The investigation is ongoing by the McHenry County Sheriff's Office Major Traffic Crash Investigation Unit and the McHenry County Coroner's Office.

'Right to Play' bill that would affect high school athletes advances in House

Bill would allow students to compete on school and nonschool teams simultaneously

By Peter Hancock
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

A House committee advanced a bill March 12 that would give high school student athletes the right to participate in both school-sponsored teams and nonschool teams in the same sport at the same time, despite concerns that such a policy could create friction between coaches and jeopardize students' safety. House Bill 3037 would create the "Right to Play Act" in Illinois and override existing rules of the Illinois High School Association, which sets eligibility rules for student athletes and strictly regulates their ability to participate in nonschool programs.

Those rules generally prohibit students who participate on a school team from also participating on a nonschool team in the same sport during the high school sport's season.

IHSA Executive Director Craig Anderson said in an interview that currently students may participate in as many as three outside contests or tournaments during the season, but only if those events are sanctioned by the sport's national governing body and the student receives permission from both their school and IHSA.

Rep. Janet Yang-Rohr, D-Naperville, the lead sponsor of the bill, told the committee that the rules have resulted in

students being disqualified from competition over seemingly minor infractions.

"We have cross country runners who are running a charity race during the cross country season. IHSA found out and disqualified that runner for the rest of the season," she told the House Education Policy Committee. "We have members of a high school pom squad in Will County. Members of that pom squad went to a dance competition, and IHSA found out and disqualified those dancers for the rest of the season."

Libby Magnone, a junior at Carmel Catholic High School in Mundelein told lawmakers that during her first two years of high school she was prohibited under IHSA rules from playing soccer at her school because she also played in the Girls Academy League, a program that sponsors tournaments that are eyed closely by college recruiters.

"The best soccer players across the state have to choose between having to forgo showcasing their talents to college coaches that recruit from these tournaments, or sitting out their high school season," she said. "Issues like these disproportionately affect girls and young women because unlike football or basketball, college coaches and scouts rarely go to high school events."

But Rep. Katie Stuart, D-Edwards-

ville, who serves on the committee, said the rules restricting participation on multiple programs exist for several reasons, including protecting the health and safety of student athletes.

"If there's a kid in a concussion protocol, if there was an event that happened, maybe in a soccer game with one team or the other, I don't know that that coach has to communicate with the other coach to make sure that the kid is rested," she said. "And so I just have issues with that overlap."

Stuart said the policy change could also create friction between coaches, and put the students and their families in awkward positions, if both teams have games or activities scheduled on the same day.

"They're in a spot," she said. "Their high school coach says, 'If you don't go to practice, you're not playing the next 10 games,' or whatever the typical thing is. And then you have a traveling coach who says, 'Well, if you don't show up for our practice, then you're not playing.' And then the kid has to choose. 'Which one do I not have an opportunity in?' I think you're going to have a lot of issues with that."

The bill passed out of the Education Policy Committee on a 12-0 vote, with Stuart voting "present." The measure will go next to the full House for consideration.

Deadline approaching for taking online survey to help secure county broadband funding

Taking a quick online survey can help ensure that McHenry County receives its fair share of more than \$1 billion in funds to improve broadband access for residents and businesses.

The survey, which can be found at <https://go.illinois.edu/ConnectMcHenryCounty>, only takes five to ten minutes to complete, and asks about your provider, the number of devices in your home or business that rely on internet access, and your upload and download speeds. The survey includes taking an internet speed test, so it should be taken from the home or business internet connection that you use; please connect to your internet router (i.e. Wi-Fi) to take the survey.

Completing the survey will help provide information that the state will use to determine each county's share of the \$1.04 billion in federal broadband internet

funding that has been allocated to Illinois.

"Reliable access to high-speed internet is vital to McHenry County. It affects everything - education, the economy, health care, you name it," County Board Chairman Mike Buehler, R-Crystal Lake, said. "We urge everyone to spare a few minutes to take this survey to help secure federal funding to make sure that our residents, schools, libraries, schools, job creators and more have dependable and fast internet."

Residents have until Friday, April 4 to complete the survey. For questions, please call 815-334-4818, or email broadband@mchenrycountyil.gov. A paper copy of the survey can be obtained at the county's Administration or Procurement offices, located at the County Administration Building, 667 Ware Road, Woodstock.

Ensuring that the entire county has high speed internet access, especially rural and underserved areas, is one of the many priorities set in the McHenry County Strategic Plan. You can review the plan, and the county's progress toward its goals, by visiting <https://www.mchenrycountyil.gov/county-government/strategic-plan>.

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Applications open to join Board of Trustees for McHenry County Conservation District

McHenry County residents who have a passion to protect and preserve the natural communities of McHenry County and a desire to serve the public are encouraged to submit an application to become a McHenry County Conservation District Trustee.

The McHenry County Conservation District's Board of Trustees is comprised of seven (7) members. Each year, McHenry County Conservation District Board of Trustees welcomes one to two new trustees who serve for five years under the Conservation District Act. Conservation District Trustees serve without compensation in a non-partisan role and work to develop long-range plans, establish policy and chart a strategic course and direction for the preservation of education and recreational use of the county's public natural and cultural resources. Trustees arrive with the desire to

serve the taxpayers and a passion to protect and preserve the flora and fauna entrusted to the Conservation District by the citizens of McHenry County.

Interested candidates should submit a completed online application by Tuesday, April 15, 2025. Interviews will be conducted by the County's Planning, Environment and Development Committee Meeting on May 6, 2025, beginning at 8:30 a.m. Trustees are appointed by the County Board Chairman, with the approval of the County Board. The selected trustee will serve a 5-year term beginning July 1, 2025, and expiring June 30, 2030.

As ambassadors to the public, board members must understand the laws and legal requirements of the District and resist political, personal and special interest pressures. By regularly attending

board and committee meetings and being prepared for these meetings, board members actively participate in discussions and act in a manner that best represents the citizens they serve. Conservation District Board members serve as guardians of public funds and are entrusted to be good stewards and make wise use of taxpayer resources.

Trustees are required to: be a resident of McHenry County, be a registered voter and have a demonstrated interest in the District. In addition, trustees cannot hold any other political office and/or be officers of a political party. Trustees' backgrounds have included environmental initiatives, development, law, education, finance and agriculture.

For more information visit the Conservation District's website at MCCD.me/BOT.

MCCD offers four sites stocked with trout this spring

The Illinois spring trout season opens Saturday, April 5 and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and McHenry County Conservation District have stocked trout at four different conservation areas including Beck's Woods (5940 North Pagles Rd, Chemung), Rush Creek (20501 McGuire Road, Harvard), Pleasant Valley (13315 Pleasant Valley Road, Woodstock) and Fel-Pro RRR (1900 Crystal Lake Road, Cary). Conservation areas are open sunrise to sunset.

Roughly 1,950 rainbow trout will be stocked between the four locations. Anglers over the age of 16 must possess a valid Illinois fishing license and inland trout stamp. To purchase licenses and review regulations, visit IDNR's website at IFishIllinois.org.

Unlike in past years, Lake Atwood at The Hollows Con-

servation Area will NOT be stocked with trout. Lake Atwood is currently under construction for exciting improvements including a newly paved accessible trail encircling the lake, a second accessible fishing pier, an ADA kayak launch and more. These improvements were made possible by an Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) grant and a Boat Access Area Development (BAAD) grant awarded by IDNR. Additional contributions to the project were made by McHenry County Conservation Foundation donors. The site will reopen in June and more information on these improvements can be found at MCCD.me/LakeAtwoodImprovements.

For more information and a map of the trout stocking locations, please visit our website at MCCD.me/Fish.

Lake County Sheriff's arrest bulletin

The Lake County Sheriff's Dept. reported the following arrests in Lake County. Suspects are considered innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

Feb. 9
Michael J. Fischer, 49, Fox Lake, was cited for a warrant

arrest: unlawful possession of a controlled substance;

Robert J. Gerstner, 49, Fox Lake, was cited for a warrant arrest: aggravated battery.

Feb. 10
Jacqari K. Taylor, 28, Zion, was cited for a warrant

arrest: driving while license suspended;

Kyle J. Emerick, 37, Vernon Hills, was cited for unlawful possession of drug paraphernalia;

Anthony Tripol, 34, Volo, was cited for domestic battery;

Albert Kurth, 25, Antioch, was cited for aggravated battery to a peace officer, disorderly conduct and resisting a peace officer;

Feb. 11
Jesus Ramirez, 30, Antioch, was cited for a warrant

arrest: driving while license suspended;

Cherrish S. Riggins, 33, Round Lake, was cited for a warrant arrest: aggravated DUI;

Angel N. Pineda, 52, Inglewood, was cited for a warrant

arrest: unlawful possession of a controlled substance;

Feb. 13
Katherine Y. Swopes, 55, Waukegan, was cited for a warrant arrest: failure to register as a violent offender against youth.

Hi-LITER Classifieds

TRANSPORTATION

Automobiles

2001 FORD MUSTANG CONVERTIBLE Blk on Brn, 90K miles, new tires, new brakes, mechanically sound throughout, minor scratches on body, leather seats, V-6 engine, premium sound system and ice-cold A/C and hot heat. \$6000. call 262-496-5739.

2010 CADILLAC DTS Mint condition inside & out. No issues, just turned 140,000 miles. Asking \$6,800. 262-742-4333.

2016 VW PASSAT SE Excellent cond, inside & out, no rust, remote start, tinted windows, newer Michelin tires. 2nd owner. Well maintained. Dave @ 262-325-2457.

Boats

2003 ALUMACRAFT 175 TROPHY W/ Trailer. 90 HP, 9.9HP & equip. 815-389-2480.

Campers and RVs

2016 FLEETWOOD TERRA 34B MOTOR HOME 35' 27,000 Miles 3 Slideouts 2 New WI-FI TV's 5.5k Generator. \$79,000 262-206-4164.

2021 JAYCO JAYFLIGHT SLX 264 Bunk house. In new condition. Loaded. NO SLIDE. Price to sell \$18,500. Call 815-494-8309

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RESIDENTIAL GARAGE DOOR Installation & Repair. 224-321-0012.

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Burial Needs

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cated at Roselawn Memory Gardens 3045 WI-67, Lake Geneva, WI 53147. **This is a private sale.** Contact Randy, the seller at randy@spublishers.com.

Collectibles

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REAL ESTATE

Other Real Estate

PUBLISHER'S NOTICE All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Fair Housing Act which makes it illegal to advertise any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, disability, familiar/ status or national origin, or an intention to make any such preference, limitation or discrimination. Familial status includes children under the age of 18 living with parents or legal custodians, pregnant women and people securing custody of children under 18. This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate which is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain of discrimination call HUD toll-free at 1-900-669-9777. The toll-free tele phone number for the hearing impaired is 1-800-927-9275. EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

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