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Sheriff's Office presented with POW/MIA Honor Chair

Rolling Thunder Illinois Chapter 2, a local POW/MIA advocacy group, presented the McHenry County Sheriff's Office with a "Chair of Honor" during a ceremony held on Thursday, April 24, in front of the McHenry County Courthouse.

The ceremony featured Sheriff Tadelman, Rolling Thunder Illinois Chapter 2 President Ted Makarewicz, and Chairman Wayne Kirkpatrick, as well as other members of the organization. During the ceremony, speakers reflected on the significance of the chair, which symbolizes the loss of life and the unfinished stories of those who never returned home. The McHenry County Sheriff's Office was selected as a site for the Chair of Honor

Rolling Thunder Illinois Chapin recognition of its ongoing commitment to those who have served in the Armed Forces.

Following the ceremony, the Chair of Honor was permanently placed inside the Courthouse near the West Entrance staircase. The chair is accompanied by an American flag and a POW/MIA flag, along with a plaque detailing its significance. The chair was created through a partnership between National Rolling Thunder and the Hussey Seating Company.

The Chair of Honor is to remain perpetually empty to help people remember that even though our soldiers are not here, there is still a space for them. Rolling Thunder Inc. advocates for the more than

80,000 U.S. service members still listed as Prisoners of War or Missing in Action (POW/MIA) since World War I.

Sheriff Tadelman said, "We are deeply honored to receive the POW/MIA Chair of Honor from Rolling Thunder Illinois Chapter 2. This powerful symbol serves as a lasting reminder of the brave men and women who have yet to return home. We are grateful for Rolling Thunder's dedication to ensuring that their sacrifice is never forgotten."

Across the country, POW/MIA Chairs of Honor can be found in public spaces serving as powerful symbols of Rolling Thunder's mission and our nation's promise: "We will never forget."



Above: Sheriff Tadelman and Rolling Thunder Illinois Chapter 2 members pose with the Chair of Honor. At left: Members of Rolling Thunder Illinois Chapter 2 stand at attention during the Chair of Honor ceremony.

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Summer electric price spike fuels policy tensions in Springfield

Price hike due to lack of energy supply comes alongside rocky transition to renewable power

CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

Customers around Illinois will see significantly higher prices on their electric bills in

average residential customer of northern Illinois' Commonwealth Edison will pay about \$10.60 per month more this summer, according to a company statement. Downstate Ameren Illinois says customers can expect an 18 percent to 22 percent increase in their monthly bill, or about \$45 per month depending on usage. Prices will likely decrease in October once winter electric rates go into effect.

Increasing energy prices are causing alarm among some consumer advocates and state policymakers, who worry that the long-term problems underlying the rising costs could lead to even higher prices or rolling blackouts.

Clara Summers, who advocates for consumer-friendly energy policy on behalf of the nonprofit Citizens Utility Board, said the ComEd price increases were for two reasons: increasing demand from data centers and large manufacturing as well as procedural issues slowing down new renewable

CUB officials said the issues underlying Ameren's increase were similar, while noting that both were due in part to the way grid regulators structure

The price hikes are a major undercurrent of escalating tensions over a package of energy reforms making its way through Springfield as lawmakers race toward their scheduled May 31 adjournment.

"We're trying to keep prices low while combating climate change," Jen Walling, head of the Illinois Environmental Council, told Capitol News Illinois. The IEC has been heavily involved in advocating for parts

In December, federal officials at the North American Electric Reliability Corporation—the nonprofit oversight agency for grid operators designated the grid for central and southern Illinois as "high risk" for not having enough electricity to meet demand on hot days in the summer and cold days in the winter over the next five years. The grid that stretches from central Canada to the Mississippi river delta is the only power grid in the nation to have that designation, with much of its risk stemming from power plants closing.

Illinois' northern grid, which includes parts of 13 states and Washington, D.C. from Illinois

is in

THE NEWSPA

ed" risk. That means extreme weather events are "likely" to cause shortfalls in energy re-

The increased demand stems from data centers, increasing adoption of electric heat pumps and the rise of electric vehicles, according to NERC.

David Braun, an executive at the energy technology company Intelligent Generation, said demand on the electric grid is the highest it's been in the 30 years he's worked in the energy

"We haven't seen this in a long time," Braun told Capitol News Illinois. "So, it's catching planners by surprise, and it takes a long time to build power

Shrinking supply

That demand, according to NERC's December report, is coming at the same time supply is going down, increasing pressure on the grid.

Around the country, fossil fuel plants are closing as states move to limit their greenhouse gas emissions. While Illinois exports energy overall, plant closures elsewhere in the country can affect the price of energy, raising prices for Illinoisans. Grid operators nationwide, meanwhile, face yearslong red tape-induced backlogs on new

Downstate Illinois' grid might run out of energy reserves as soon as 2034, per NERC. Northern Illinois' grid has more reserves but will face decreased levels throughout the next decade. If nothing is done to either reduce demand or increase supply, this means prices could continue to increase or blackouts could become necessary to stabilize the grid.

To address these issues, lawmakers in Springfield are weighing sweeping energy legislation. The bill's proponents say its provisions to incentivize new developments are the only way to prevent serious problems without walking back the state's climate goals.

Republican critics contend that the main reason for the legislation is to fix problems with the 2021 Climate and Equitable Jobs Act. Gov. JB Pritzker's marquee climate policy, they say, is a major cause of the supply shortfalls because it requires fossil fuel-burning power plants to shut down by 2045.

Others say provisions aimed at reducing data centers' energy demands on the grid will hurt businesses in the state.

Lawmakers and advocacy groups are currently reviewing draft language for the bill, which has not been made pub-

to the east coast, faces "elevat- lic. Even with complex procedural maneuvering to avoid long-passed deadlines, lawmakers face a tight turnaround to reach an agreement before the legislative session ends.

The process could have become more complicated, some suggest, after the U.S. House passed a wide-ranging bill early May 22 that could drastically alter federal energy incentives if it becomes law.

Higher prices

Bills for customers of private electric utilities, most notably ComEd and Ameren, will go up in June.

The increase was determined at two recent capacity auctions, which are how grid operators set energy prices for years into the future. High prices at these auctions can indicate low supply relative to demand.

PJM Interconnection, the grid operator for northern Illinois, saw a roughly eight-fold jump in its most recent capacity auction compared to the year prior. Downstate's energy grid, Midcontinent Independent System Operator, or MISO, saw more than a 20-fold year-overyear price jump at its capacity auction in April.

Representatives state's two largest electric utilities stressed that these increases occurred beyond their purview.

'ComEd does not profit from this increase, was not part of the auction, does not supply capacity, and does not retain any proceeds of the capacity charge payments," ComEd spokesperson John Schoen said in a statement.

An Ameren echoed the sentiment, noting that the state requires utilities to pass this type of cost to customers "dollar-for-dollar, without markup."

The price is lower for ComEd customers than it could have been due to a provision in CEJA, which credits customers when energy generated by nuclear power plants is above a certain level. Consumer watchdogs at CUB estimate that the policy cut the increase for ComEd customers by about 17 percent. Customers in the Ameren area, which has much less nuclear power, are not eligible for the credit.

Other energy providers

While millions of Illinoisans get their power from ComEd and Ameren, some get their electricity through other means, including alternate retail suppliers, municipal utilities and electric cooperatives. Many of these energy suppliers are not affected directly by the capacity auctions.

Municipal customers in towns like Naperville, St. Charles and Rantoul are largely insulated from the spike, according to Staci Wilson, the head of government affairs for the Illinois Municipal Electric Agency. The IMEA is a private entity that provides electricity to 32 of the 42 municipal electric systems in the state.

IMEA sometimes participates in capacity auctions. But Wilson said the agency tends to secure energy through other means, such as having ownership stakes directly in power

"IMEA member municipalities have rates that are currently lower than private utilities and our ownership model continues to gain value as we transition to a carbon-free future in an affordable and reliable manner,' Wilson said.

But other municipal utility officials, including those at Springfield's City Water, Light and Power, are less optimistic about future prices.

"Regulations are forcing plant retirement a little too soon," CWLP spokesperson Amber Sabin said. "And the grid operators that are here. they have resources that they can't connect to the grid. They're waiting, or they don't get financing or ever developed. They have supply chain issues, workforce issues, right? There's a cost to all of that.'

CWLP didn't participate in the recent MISO auction, although it could have. The utility shut down several coal-fired generators over the past five years but continues to operate one coal-fired power plant on the southeast side of Springfield. That plant will need to shut down permanently at some point in the next two decades under state law.

"In the future, all the costs are going to go up," Sabin said. 'We do expect that capacity auction prices will affect our

That echoes what some state officials expect as well. Sen. Bill Cunningham, D-Chicago, has worked on energy legislation for years and said that there is "nothing we can do" to reduce prices for this summer as capacity auctions have concluded, but he said lawmakers should do what they can to address the root causes of the spike. "We think this is going to be the new normal," Cunningham said.

Legislative moves

Negotiations over energy reforms in Springfield have included lawmakers, the governor's office, and interest groups including environmentalists, organized labor and business associations. The process is sparking heated debate.

Over the past week, a draft of legislation began circulating a bill that would eliminate the sideration in Springfield.

among lawmakers and advocates, many of whom discussed portions of the bill with Capitol News Illinois.

"I don't think, by any stretch, you'll see a bill the size and scope that CEJA was, that we passed four years ago certainly won't see that," Cunningham, who was involved in the negotiations, said.

Potential provisions deal with incentives for renewable power, energy efficiency regulations, nuclear power, data centers and more.

Environmental clashed with business and labor this week over a provision meant to lower the energy burden brought by data centers. That proposal would require large energy consumers to build their own energy generation through renewable sources like wind or solar power or pay the state to do so.

The pitch sparked fierce pushback from business and labor groups, which sent a collective letter to Pritzker. urging him to oppose the specific provision. The letter was co-signed by groups including the AFL-CIO, Climate Jobs Illinois, Illinois Manufacturers Association and Constellation Energy—the last of which operates all the state's commercial nuclear power plants.

The proposal is being pushed by environmentalists, who say they want more accountability from data centers and other large consumers.

"We cannot allow these power-hungry facilities to drive up costs for consumers who are already struggling to pay their bills," Gina Ramirez, director of Midwest environmental health at the National Resources Defense Council, said at a May 21 rally.

Other issues are less controversial, largely because they've been negotiated for months.

Cunningham, a prominent player in the passage of CEJA, has his own proposal in the current draft: incentives for the energy storage industry. The current draft of that provision closely parallels recommendations made by the Illinois Commerce Commission. That agency was directed by a bill passed earlier this year to study how to handle energy storage projects. While legislative Republicans have largely been shut out of negotiations over the bill, some of their ideas are being consid-

Sen. Sue Rezin, R-Morris, put out a pitch to ease the pressure on electric demand earlier this year by expanding nuclear energy. She was the architect of a bill two years ago that eased the state's moratorium on new nuclear power plants, lifting it for next-generation, small generators.

remaining state restrictions on new nuclear power plants. Language similar to Rezin's was included in draft legislation circulated this week

Rezin, who leads several energy-related groups of lawmakers as part of her involvement at the National Conference of State Legislatures, said all states are facing similar issues around electricity.

"All energy buildout will take years because of the regulatory process," Rezin said. That's why it's important now. The state of Illinois needs to send positive messages to companies that are looking to invest in technology — whether it's nuclear or any other kind of energy producing plant — that we are open for business."

The feds' 'big, beautiful bill3

Republicans in the U.S. House of Representatives on May 22 passed a bill containing many domestic policy priorities of President Donald Trump that many fear could upend state energy policy.

The bill contains provisions rolling back several clean energy tax incentives. Several key solar company stock prices fell sharply May 22 in response, including NextEra Energy, FirstSolar and Enphase Energy among others. The solar industry has been

a key part of Illinois' renewable

energy plans and efforts to re-

duce carbon emissions. Lesley McCain, the head of the Illinois Solar Energy & Storage Association, said that the bill could 'cause solar energy companies of all sizes to cancel projects, and many will be forced to shut their doors." Environmentalists were quick to criticize the federal bill, which still requires negotiation and an eventual vote in the U.S. Senate before it can become

"It strips funding for climate programs, guts clean energy manufacturing, kills good union jobs, drives energy prices up, and abandons farmers and small business owners," Walling said in a statement.

Illinois Republicans, meanwhile, expressed optimism that some of the bill's provisions could help the fossil fuel sector

"If the federal government is going to help us to, you know, power up coal, power up gaswe want all energy," Illinois House Minority Leader Tony McCombie, R-Savanna, said at a news conference. "We want solar, we want wind, we want nuke, we want coal. We want all of it."

Rep. Ryan Spain, R-Peoria, noted that the federal bill should not "be used as an excuse to rush forward" on the This year, Rezin introduced energy legislation under con-

of each month this summer.

Our June concert features

drumming one-man band.

Jaik has performed 300 shows

in a year and has appeared at

festivals such as Bonnaroo,

Summer Camp Music Fest,

Dunegrass, and the Chicago

Bluegrass and Blues Fests.

All ages event.

MCCD upcoming events

Glacial Park Team Challenge

Saturday, May 31, 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., North Branch, Richmond.

Grab a friend or two for this non-competitive biking, paddling, and off-trail hiking adventure. This recreational triathlon starts at the North Branch Conservation Area. Teams pedal 14 miles, hike/ run five miles, and paddle seven miles. Ages 14+.

Ice Cream Social of 1858

Sunday, June 1, Noon to 4 p.m., Powers-Walker House, Glacial Park, Ringwood.

Take a break from your and nature on the first Friday hectic modern life and enjoy the simple pleasures of an old-fashioned ice cream Jaik Willis, a strumming and social. Enjoy delicious ice cream, play old-time games, and chat with your neighbors while visiting the historic Powers-Walker house in the summertime. All ages drop-in special event with no registration required.

First Friday Concert: Jaik Willis

Friday, June 6, 7-8:30 p.m., Lost Valley Visitor Center, Glacial Park, Ringwood.

Enjoy an evening of music

Explore: Birds Saturday, June 7, 10-1:30 p.m., Winding Creek, Hebron.

Join this fun filled hike at See EVENTS, Page 3

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North Chicago hosts second annual North Shore Veteran's Benefit Fair May 29 In recognition of Military tions—including the U.S. De- to those who have served, but on housing, healthcare, ed-

Appreciation Month, the City of North Chicago is proud to host the Second Annual North Shore Veteran's Benefit Fair on Thursday, May 29, 2025, from 3:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the Greenbelt Cultural Center, 1215 Green Bay Road, North

This impactful event brings together a network of federal, state, and local organizapartment of Veterans Affairs (VA), HUD-VASH, the Lake County Veterans Assistance Commission, Senator Adriane Johnson, and the College of raise their hand to serve our Lake County—to connect servicemembers, veterans, military spouses, and dependents in return.' with the benefits they have

number of benefits available

navigating them can be overwhelming," said North Chicago Mayor Leon Rockingham, Jr. "The brave individuals that country give us their best. It is our duty to give our best back

Participants will have the opportunity to meet one-on-"There are a tremendous one with experts to receive information and assistance

ucation, employment, free chair massages and more. The fair is open to all active duty, retired, and former service members as well as their fam-

For more information, please contact City of North Chicago Communications and Outreach Coordinator Hombre Darby at 847-596-8640 or hdarby@northchicago.org.



SUBMITTED PHOTO Hi-Liter/MCN

Donation drive deemed a success

From April 15-30, 'A Safe Place' partnered with the Lake County Clerk's Office for a donation drive. Donation boxes were stationed at multiple locations and the response from the community was overwhelming. A Safe Place provides shelter, support and safety to survivors of domestic violence and human trafficking in Lake County. For more information about the organization or where you can donate, visit asafeplaceforhelp.org.

MCCD Conservation Director named to statewide conservation effort

Governor J.B. Pritzker has appointed Elizabeth S. Kessler, Executive Director of the McHenry County Conservation District, to the Illinois Legacy Tree Program Task Force. The Task Force, created under Public Act 103-0863, is charged with developing recommendations for a statewide legacy tree recognition program to promote the identification, awareness, commemoration, and preservation of significant trees throughout Illinois.

Kessler is a recognized leader at local, state and national levels, and brings extensive experience in conservation, parks and public engagement. She serves as Chair of the Chicago Wilderness Alliance, Chair of Naturally McHenry County, past President of the National Recreation and Park Association, past Chair of the Illinois Park and Recreation Association and is President-Elect of the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration. In 2023, she was awarded the prestigious Pugsley Medal—one of the highest honors in the field of parks and conservation presented by the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration in association with the National Park Foundation and with supporting sponsorship of The Davey Tree Expert Company. Kessler was selected to serve on the Task Force representing the Illinois Association of Park Districts—a statewide organization encompassing park districts, forest preserves, conservation and special recreation districts as well as municipal agencies.

The legacy of Illinois' trees, especially our native oaks, is vital to the health and heritage of our communities," said Kessler. "Special districts including park districts and forest preserve and conservation districts are essential partners in safeguarding these ecological treasures, ensuring clean air, diverse wildlife habitat and climate resilience for future generations.'

McHenry County has lost a significant portion of its mature oak ecosystems, with less than 13% of large blocks of mature oaks remaining. The McHenry County Conservation District has conducted an extensive Oak Ecosystem Recovery Study which was replicated across the Chicago Wilderness Alliance region, underscoring the urgent need to protect remaining stands. Trees not only provide critical wildlife habitat, they also play a vital role in mitigating climate change through carbon storage, air purification, and water filtration.

The 19-member Legacy Tree Program Task Force will meet quarterly and is tasked with submitting a comprehensive report to the Illinois General Assembly by June 30, 2028. The effort reflects the state's commitment to preserving Illinois' natural heritage and empowering local communities to recognize and protect significant trees as living landmarks of ecological and cultural importance.

Lake County Jail construction underway

in coordination with Lake tion steps are being imple-County Facilities, is upgrading an area of the jail designated for individuals at risk of self-harm, commonly referred to as "safety cells." These specialized rooms are equipped with soft, rubberized walls designed to prevent inmates from injuring themselves.

Over time, the material in the original safety cells has deteriorated, limiting their effectiveness and use. Construction began at the end of May to rebuild these rooms using high-quality, durable materials. The project is expected to be completed by late June or early July.

During construction, there may be occasional odors noticeable to correctional staff ize the facility.

The Lake County Jail, and inmates. Several mitigamented to reduce the impact, including

- A full height, plywood wall has been erected around the entire work area
- An additional layer of plastic sheeting has been affixed to the interior of the plywood
- A negative air machine will be used to extract air from the work areas and will be routed directly to isolated exhaust ducts discharging directly to outside air
- · No chemical discharge will emanate beyond the isolated work areas

This project aligns with the Lake County Sheriff's Office's ongoing efforts to enhance jail safety and modern-

Arrest made in May 22 armed robbery

The State's Attor-

Lake County Sheriff's detectives investigated several leads in connection with a recent armed robbery and identified the suspect as Shane L. Lones, 41, of the 1800 block of Jethro Avenue, Zion. Lones was arrested May 23.

Following the robbery, sheriff's detectives reviewed area surveillance footage, which showed Lones entering a vehicle. Utilizing Flock cameras in the area, detectives obtained additional information about the vehicle, including its license plate.

On Friday afternoon, Zion Police Officers located Lones in a vehicle near his residence and took him into custody.

Sheriff's detectives obtained and executed search warrants for Lones' vehicle and apartment. During the searches, they recovered the clothing Lones wore during the armed robbery in Beach Park.

After reviewing the facts and circumstances of the case, the Lake County State's Attorney's Office approved one count of Armed Robbery (Class X Fel-



detention hearingwas scheduled for May 27. **Shane Lones** The Lake County Sheriff's Office thanks the Zion Police Department for their assistance, as well as members of the community who provided tips.

Original: Sheriff's Department investigating armed robbery

Lake County Sheriff's Detectives are investigating an armed robbery that occurred in Beach Park.

On May 22, at approximately 7:35 p.m., Lake County Sheriff's Deputies responded to a fast-food restaurant in the 38900 block of North Lewis Road,

Beach Park, for an armed robbery. Sheriff's deputies arrived and spoke to the two victim employees of the restaurant, who were both uninjured.

A preliminary investigation shows a light-skinned man, possibly in his late 20s to mid-30s entered the store wearing a black hooded sweatshirt, black pants, black shoes, and a surgical mask to cover his face. While in the store, he produced a knife and demanded money. After stealing money from the cash register, he fled on foot.

A sheriff's canine responded and conducted a track, which ended nearby, in a parking lot to the east of the restaurant, indicating the man likely entered a vehicle.

Sheriff's detectives continue to investigate. Anyone with any information is encouraged to make a tip to sheriff's detectives at www.lakecountyil.gov/sheriff or Lake County CrimeStoppers at http://www.lakecountycrimestoppers.

Events (Continued from page 2)

tion Area. Search for birds and other wildlife as we hike through woodland, prairie and wetlands along the trail. Binoculars are provided for a closer look at the birds we encounter along the way, but you are welcome to bring your own if you wish. Ages

Hooked on Fishing

Saturday, June 4, 9 a.m. to noon at The Hollows, Cary. Sunday, June 15, 9 a.m. to noon, Rush Creek, Harvard.

Bring the whole family for a day of fishing fun, prizes and more at this event featuring the grand reopening of Lake Atwood at The Hollows! Bring your gear or borrow ours. A fishing license is not

Winding Creek Conserva- required for this event. June 13-16 are free fishing days in the state of Illinois. All ages.

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

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Sale Dates:

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Ray Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram donated '25 Jeep Gladiator for Jeeps on the Run raffle

Though December is a distant flip of the calendar away, the folks who put together the Jeeps on the Run Toys for Tots Run already are excited about the 2025

A major key to the early buzz is having in hand months sooner than usual the event's big Jeep raffle prize. Awarded to the lucky ticketholder at the Dec. 7 event this year will be a brand new, 2025 Jeep Gladiator Sport valued at \$46,375, said Mike Missak, president and founder of Jeeps on the Run, or JOTR.

The nonprofit has donated more than \$2 million to Toys for Tots and other local charitable organizations including animal shelters, food pantries and more since its 2012 inception, he

The \$20 Jeep raffle tickets, only 3,000 of which will be sold, will be available soon at jeepsontherun.com. Those interested should keep an eye on the Jeeps on the Run Facebook page for the latest news and updates.

Available right now is the chance to come and view the Army green, Nighthawk edition Jeep located at Ray Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram, 23 Route 12, Fox Lake. It is the sixth new Jeep that dealership owner Ray Scarpelli Jr. has donated to Jeeps on the Run. This enables the nonprofit to put 100 percent of the ticket sales toward the holiday season U.S. Marines Toys for Tots campaigns of Lake and McHenry counties.

"Ray Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram has donated close to \$300,000 to Jeeps on the Run in the form of Jeeps and other generous support," Missak said. "They are committed to our group 365 days a year — and to the community in general.'

Missak quickly noted that the JOTR Toys for Tots Run's success relies not only on the generous partnership the nonprofit has forged with Ray CDJR, but also with all of JOTR's sponsors as well, of course, as the Toys for Tots Run and after-party participants. These folks have in recent years supplied so

tractor-trailers to contain

"Thousands of families from McHenry and Lake counties benefit," he said. "We could not do this without the folks who show up each year with their creatively decorated Jeeps — some with a few toys, some with a trailer load of them, and all very deeply appreciated."

Missak also noted that Jeep ownership is not required for after-party participation. This year's run once again will start at Ray CDJR and end up at the Lincolnshire Marriott Resort, where Santa, live music, food, family activities and more will await — not to mention the drawing to determine the winner of the Jeep Gladiator. "It's a special color called

41, which refers to 1941, the year Jeeps started being mass produced for military use," Missak said. "It comes with upgraded tires and wheels, rock rails and other enhanced off-roading capabilities." Scarpelli said it his pleasure to support Jeeps on the Run.



Mike Missak of Jeeps on the Run shows off this year's Toys for Tots Run Jeep raffle selection — a new Jeep Gladiator.The Jeep is donated by Ray Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram, so all ticket sales benefit Toys for Tots. Tickets will be available soon at jeepson therun.com.

"Seeing the Toys for Tots Run take off in terms of awareness, participation and the sheer number of tovs and dollars it generates for such a great cause has been really rewarding," he said. "Jeeps on the Run is a great group, and

I'm happy to do what I can to eye on jeepsontherun.com help them continue to shine in and the group's Facebook their charitable endeavors."

ipating in the 2025 Toys for Tots Run (\$30 per Jeep) and/ or after-party (\$5 per indi- typically in late August or vidual) should also keep an early September.

page. Both will provide no-Those interested in partic- tification on when registration opens and tickets will be available on the website,

HELP WANTED

VETERAN'S TRUCK LINE INC. in Burlington, Wis. is now accepting applications for:

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

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- Paid life/disability
- Must have Class A CDL and pass medical/drug screen

The Lake County Sheriff's cal law enforcement partners. Office Special Investigations Group (SIG), a High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HID-TA) funded task force, achieved a record-breaking year in 2024.

SIG opened 156 criminal investigations, leading to the arrest of 80 drug traffickers, gun traffickers, and human traffickers. The team and their federal partners seized more than \$24 million street value worth of trafficked drugs, over 130 illegally possessed firearms, and 58 machine gun conversion devices—many of which were in the possession of convicted

"The work done by SIG in 2024 is nothing short of extraordinary," said Sheriff John D. Idleburg. "These results represent safer communities, disrupted criminal enterprises, and lives saved. I am so proud of the partnerships we have with both our federal and lo-

These relationships truly make our community safer, and I could not be any prouder of the work done by those assigned to

SIG is the only HID-TA-funded initiative in Lake County, and it is led by the Lake County Sheriff's Office. "Because of the strong partnership we have with Chicago HIDTA, these types of investigations and seizures are possible," added Sheriff Idleburg.

The task force is made up of local and federal law enforcement investigators who collaborate to dismantle drug trafficking organizations, money laundering operations, and criminal enterprises.

2024 Drug Seizure **Highlights**

- 173+ pounds of methamphetamine

Lake County Sheriff's SIG seizes

record amount of drugs in 2024

- 950+ grams of heroin • 300+ grams of crack cocaine
- 480+ grams of psilocybin mushrooms
- 100+ pounds of illegally trafficked cannabis

Most of these drug seizures took place in Lake County, while some occurred in surrounding collar counties in anticipation that the drugs would be distributed in Lake County.

For nearly a decade SIG has played a vital role in combating human trafficking. Working alongside local and federal partners, SIG is committed to identifying traffickers, rescuing victims, and supporting survivors on their path to recovery.

In 2024 alone, SIG rescued 11 human trafficking victims and connected them with vital support services through partnerships with local social service providers. As a founding member of the Lake Coun-

Trafficking, SIG continues to lead efforts that combine enforcement with compassionate

Beyond investigations, SIG is equally committed to prevention and education. In 2024, SIG delivered numerous presentations across Lake County to raise awareness about the warning signs of human trafficking. Members also provided training for school staff, students, community groups, and neighborhood organizations on both human trafficking and current drug trends.

These efforts have led to significant success, with traffickers prosecuted and convicted at both the state and federal levels.

Participating SIG Agencies

- · Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)
- · Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
- · Homeland Security Investigations (HSI)
- Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF)
- Naval Criminal Investigative
- Service (NCIS)
- · Highland Park Police Depart-
- Lake County Sheriff's Office
- Park City Police Department · Round Lake Police Depart-
- Round Lake Beach Police De-
- partment Round Lake Park Police De-
- partment
- Wauconda Police Department
- · Waukegan Police Department
- · Winthrop Harbor Police Department

• Zion Police Department

The Chicago HIDTA program is an Office of National Drug Control Policy (OND-CP) sponsored counterdrug grant program that coordinates and provides funding resources to multiagency drug enforcement task forces to disrupt or dismantle local, multi-state, and international drug trafficking organiza-



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SUBMITTED PHOTO Hi-Liter/MCN

Pet of the week

Daisy Paws, a lab/heeler/shepherd mix is about 3 years old. She is spayed, up-to-date on shots (incl. rabies vaccination), tested negative for heartworm and on preventative and microchipped. While walk-ins are welcome, adoptions are by appointments only to ensure we have the staff available to help adopters. For information and/or to complete an online application, please visit www.saveapetil.org/adopt.



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Alfredo Morales



2300 Browns Lake Drive Burlington, WI









Court & crime news

Teacher arrested for sending child porn

Detectives arrested a Gurnee area teacher for disseminating child pornography.

Lake County Sheriff's Detectives received a tip from

a social media company that one of users have may shared child pornography to another user of their platform. Sheriff's



detectives began an investigation and based on their determined investigation, the likely source was coming from a residence in the 300 block of Buckingham Drive, Grayslake.

Sheriff's detectives obtained a search warrant for the residence and conducted that search warrant today with the Illinois Attorney General's Office. During their search, detectives recovered the device likely used to share child pornography by the offender. Todd R. Fowler, 47, of the above Grayslake residence.

Further investigation revealed Fowler is a teacher at Woodland Elementary School in Gurnee. Based on the investigation sheriff's detectives believe, in addition to possessing and disseminating child pornography, that Fowler took photos posted to social media by area students and their parents and shared them with pedophiles from across the country.

Sheriff John D. Idleburg said, "This is a despicable crime—especially committed by someone entrusted to be a positive influence on our youth. The actions of one individual do not reflect the thousands of hardworking, dedicated teachers and educators in our community. With that, this is a reminder that it is critically important for parents to monitor who their children are communicating with and to regularly remind them about the dangers of social media and the internet."

A forensic examination of electronics is underway. The Lake County State's Attorney's Office approved the charges of: Disseminating Child Pornography and Possession of Child Pornogra-

Additional charges are possible, pending the final results of the electronic forensic examination.

The Lake County State's Attorney's Office intends to file a petition to detain Fowler while he awaits trial.

The Woodland School District has been cooperative and collaborative during the entirety of this investigation. The sheriff's office asks that you speak to your children to see if they have communicated with Fowler or believe they may be a victim of Fowler. If so, please contact sheriff's detectives at 847-377-4000.

The Lake County Sheriff's Office thanks Kenosha Police Department for the assistance of their Electronic Detection K9 Iris, at the scene.

Update: Prosecutors successfully argue to detain man charged with possessing and disseminating child pornography

On May 16, a Lake County Judge granted the State's peti-

After the detention hear- one count of ing, Lake County State's Aggravated Attorney Eric Rinehart stated, "Thank you to the Lake ual Abuse, a County Sheriff's Office and the Lake County State's Attorney's Cyber Division for into a plea their fantastic investigation that led to the capture of this offender, who was charged with multiple counts of child pornography, and was detained without the ability to post cash bail. This is what bail reform looks like - a community that does not allow dangerous offenders access to children because they have cash. The community deserves real conversations about our justice system that is not polluted with constant misinformation. Bail reform is protecting children.'

Williams sentenced to thirteen years for armed

The McHenry Coun-

State's Attorney's Office announced that on May 1. Christo-Williams, 22, of Round Lake Beach, was sentenced



Christopher

to thirteen years in the Illinois Department of Corrections after entering a plea of guilty to one count of Armed Robbery. The sentence was handed down by the Honorable Judge Mark Gerhardt after Williams entered a negotiated plea of guilty to the

On July 23, 2023, deputies from the McHenry County Sheriff's Office were dispatched to 3410 Thompson Rd in Wonder Lake, for a report of an armed robbery. Upon arrival, officers learned that a minor victim had been robbed at gunpoint while in the back of a silver Porsche Cayenne. The vehicle was eventually located, and a traffic stop was effectuated. Williams was identified to be one of the passengers inside. A show-up where the victim was asked to identify his assailant - was conducted and Williams was determined to be the individual who struck the victim in the face with a blue gun and demanded his money.

McHenry County State's Attorney Randi Freese commends the victim for his courage in reporting the offense and for his assistance in identifying Williams as the perpetrator. Freese also Can-Am Outlander G2, was thanks the deputies involved from the McHenry County Sheriff's Office for their 11-year-old boy and a 7-yearimmediate and collaborative actions which resulted in the swift apprehension of Wil-

This case was successfully prosecuted by Assistant State's Attorney Andrew

Man sentenced for predatory criminal sexual assault and aggravated criminal sexual abuse of a child

The McHenry County State's Attorney's Office announces that on May 9, Jason Kupsik, 27, of Woodstock, was sentenced to nine years in the Illinois Department of Corrections on one count of Predatory Criminal Sexual Assault, a class X felony, and seven years in the Illinois Department of

Criminal Sexclass 2 felony, after entering agreement before the Honorable Judge Tiffany Davis.



In November of 2023, the Woodstock Police Department began investigating a report of sexual assault of a child. Between January 1, 2023, and November 5, 2023, Kupsik committed acts of sexual penetration and sexual conduct against a female minor child during a time in which the child was under 13 years of age and at a time when Kupsik resided with the minor child.

Truth-in-Sentencing will require that Kupsik serve a minimum of 85 percent of his sentence on the Predatory Criminal Sexual Assault charge prior to being released from the custody of IDOC. The defendant will be required to serve the sentences on both charges consecutively. Upon release, Kupsik will be placed on Mandatory Supervised Release for a period of between three years to life for the Predatory Criminal Sexual Assault charge and will be required to register as a sexual predator for the rest of his natu-

State's Attorney Randi Freese commends the young child for having the courage to come forward to report this abuse and for the swift response by Detectives David Sharp and Matthew Prentice of the Woodstock Police Department to investigate. Freese recognizes the Child Advocacy Center of McHenry County as well as the medical staff at Northwestern Medicine Hospital for their work on this case and their continued dedication to child victims. This case was successfully prosecuted by Deputy Criminal Chief Margaret O'Brien.

Serious ATV crash involving three people under investigation

Lake County Sheriff's Deputies are investigating a serious crash that occurred when an ATV carrying three people including two children

On May 19, at approximately 5:35 p.m., Lake County Sheriff's Deputies responded to the 27000 block of Chris Larkin Road, Ingleside, for a crash with injuries, involving

A preliminary investigation shows the ATV, a 2021 driven by a 25-year-old woman from Lubbock, Texas. An old boy were also riding on the ATV. While driving in circles in the yard, the operator lost control and crashed into a tree, causing the ATV to roll on top of the two children. Several bystanders quickly responded and freed the children from beneath the vehicle. The operator was knocked unconscious and sustained serious head trauma in the crash.

The children sustained minor injuries and were transported to an area hospital for evaluation. The operator of the ATV sustained critical injuries and was transported to an area hospital, due to her injuries.

The crash remains under investigation by the Lake County Sheriff's Office.

aggravated criminal sexual abuse

The McHenry County State's Attorney's Office announces that on May 7, Austin M.

Chiluk, 36, of Wonder Lake, sentenced to four years in the Illinois Department of Correcentering a



plea of guilty to one count of Aggravated Criminal Sexual Abuse, a Class 2 felony. Upon release, Chiluk must also register as a sex offender for the remainder of life. The sentence was handed down by the Honorable Judge Justin Hansen after Chiluk entered a negotiated plea of guilty to the charge.

In September of 2024, a teen disclosed to her mother that she had been sexually assaulted. They then reported the abuse to the McHenry County Sheriff's Police Department for investigation. A victim-sensitive interview was conducted at the Child Advocacy Center, where the victim further revealed specific details of the assault and identified Chiluk as the

McHenry County State's Attorney Randi Freese commends the teen for her courage to speak up and report the abuse. "All citizens must be protected from criminals, but we must remain especially diligent in protecting the most vulnerable members of our county - the children", Freese stated. Freese appreciates the thorough investigative efforts by those involved from the McHenry County Sheriff's Police Department, especially Detectives Cody Smith and Vidal Garcia, and Sgt. Kyle Mandernack, as well as the trained staff at the Child Advocacy Center.

This case was successfully prosecuted by Assistant State's Attorney Elizabeth M. Vonau.

Multiple people injured in three-vehicle crash

On Sunday, May 11, at 6:55 a.m., the McHenry County Sheriff's Office, Hebron-Alden-Greenwood Fire Protection District, Woodstock Fire/Rescue District, Wonder Lake Fire Protection District, Harvard Fire Protection District and Mercyhealth MD-1 responded to a three-vehicle crash on Illinois Route 47 and Thayer Road in unincorporated McHenry County, near He-

Preliminary investigation indicates that a 2024 Toyota Tundra was traveling westbound on Thayer Road and failed to yield prior to entering the intersection, hitting a 2021 Jeep Grand Cherokee that was traveling northbound on Illinois Route 47. The Jeep was then struck by a southbound 2024 International semi with trailer.

The 51-year-old male driver of the Jeep, from Woodstock, was airlifted from the scene to Advocate Condell Medical Center in Libertyville in serious condition. The 51-year-old female passenger of the Jeep, also from Woodstock, was transported to Northwestern Medicine McHenry Hospital with minor injuries. The 32-year-old

male driver of the Toyota, to 30 years in the Department from Chicago, was transported to Northwestern Medicine McHenry Hospital with minor injuries. The 34-year-old driv-Streamwood, was not injured.

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

Jury convicts man of second weapon offense from 2022, after he posted cash bail in 2019 for similar weapon offense

On May 8, 2025, a jury trial concluded in the Lake County

Courthouse guilty verdicts on all counts related to a 2022 Waukegan shooting. Demon-

shea Davidson, 32, was Davidson convicted of one of one count of Armed Habitual Criminal (Class X

The trial began on Monday, May 5, and lasted four days. The jury heard from State witnesses, including law enforcement officers and forensic ex- First Law enforcement officers

testified to responding to a report of shots fired at a family amusement center in Waukegan. They collected numerous pieces of evidence, including spent shell casings and a surveillance video that captured the entire incident. Through surveillance foot-

age, officers observed a man, later identified as Davidson, firing a gun in the parking lot, in the direction of the family amusement center. The video also depicted him inside the center shortly before the shooting occurred.

Davidson was out on bond at the time of this offense after being charged with multiple firearm offenses, including Armed Habitual Criminal, in December 2019 and posting \$25,000 cash. (Davidson was convicted of these charges in May 2023). This was prior to the effective date of bail reform which now prevents individuals charged with firearm offenses from using cash bail to secure release. Such firearm offenders are now detained in

the jail by order of court. Davidson was taken into custody by Waukegan Police in January 2023, due to the 2022 shooting incident. Because the offense occurred prior to bail reform, a judge set Davidson's bond at \$1.5 million dollars. After the conviction at the first trial for the Court revoked Davidson's ability to post bond.

After the verdict, Lake County State's Attorney Eric Rinehart stated, "Our experienced prosecutors continue to hold dangerous individuals accountable. This defendant continued to put our community at risk, even after posting \$25,000 for a separate incident in 2019. During this 2022 incident, he endangered the parents and the children who were present at the family center that day. Thanks to the great work of law enforcement, we were able to secure another conviction against a violent individual who now faces decades in the Illinois Department of Corrections."

Armed Habitual Criminal carries a sentencing range of 6

of Corrections. The sentence for the charges stemming from this incident can be served either concurrently, resulting in er of the International, from a total sentencing range of 6 to 30 years, or consecutively, to his conviction in the December 2019 incident, which could lead to a combined sentencing range of 12 to 60 years

> in prison. Prosecutors have indicated that they intend to argue that Davidson should serve his sentences consecutively. Davidson's next court date is scheduled for June 16, for a status hearing on post-trial

Man found guilty of attempted first degree murder, aggravated discharge of a firearm and unlawful possession of a weapon by a felon after bench trial

The McHenry

County State's Attorney's Office announces that Juan A. Colon, 29, of Waukegan, Illinois, was found guilty of Attempt Juan A. Degree Murder,

three counts of Aggravated Discharge of a Firearm, and Unlawful Possession of Weapon by Felon after a bench trial before the Honorable Judge Mark Gerhardt. Colon faces a minimum of 26 years in the Illinois Department of Corrections on the Attempt Murder Charge, which Truth-in-Sentencing will require to be served at

Evidence at trial showed

that on April 24, 2022, Colon was the passenger of a vehicle that initiated a roadway dispute with the victim by passing the victim's vehicle and throwing a Pellegrino water bottle at his car. After forcing the victim to a stop, Colon exited and approached the victim's driver-side window with a loaded .25 caliber semi-automatic firearm while the victim was seated in the driver's seat. For their own safety, the victim sprayed pepper spray at Colon, at which point, Colon fired his gun at the victim, hitting the edge of the b-pillar of the driver-side doorframe. The bullet was incredibly close to striking the victim directly in the head. Colon then fired two more times at the victim before running to his vehicle and fleeing the scene with another individual. The victim remained on scene to meet with deputies from the December 2019 incident, the McHenry County Sheriff's Office and provide them with his dashcam video, which captured Colon approaching the victim's vehicle with the loaded gun in his right hand. The gun was subsequently recovered buried behind a residence in Island Lake. Due to Colon's extensive criminal history out of Lake

County, Illinois, the McHenry County State's Attorney's Office petitioned for him to be detained pretrial pursuant to a discretionary no-bail petition - a mechanism through which defendants could be detained pretrial, without bail, before the Safe-T Act took effect. The petition was granted by the Honorable Judge Robert Wilbrandt on

See CRIME, Page 7

June 1, 2022. Colon con- May 4, 2024, in Harvard, this tense situation under dicated they did not see the tinues to remain in custody pending his sentencing scheduled for July 9, 2025.

The case was successfully prosecuted by Chief of Staff Ashley Romito and Assistant Štate's Attorney Maria Marek. The State's Attorney's Office would like to thank Victim Witness Coordinator Polo Fabian for his assistance on this case. The State's Attorney's Office would also commend Deputy Keith Sosnowski and the McHenry County Sheriff's Office for their thorough investigation.

Jones sentenced to six years for possession of a weapon by a felon and possession of methamphetamine

The McHenry County

State's Attorney's Office announces that on Mav 12, Tyrone D. Jones, 37, of Elgin, Illinois, was sentenced to six years in

the Illinois



Department of Corrections by the Honorable Judge Tiffany Davis after entering a plea of guilty to one count of Possession of a Weapon by a Felon and one count of Possession of Methamphetamine, both class 3 felonies.

The charges stem from an incident that occurred on Officer Andrade - to bring

Illinois. On that date, officers with the Harvard Police Department responded to an address on Brown Street, where a 911 caller reported hearing gunshots. Upon arrival, officers met with a nois. Although the victim in victim who had sustained a non-life-threatening injury and learned that there was a man inside the residence who had fired a handgun. As responding officers worked to set up a perimeter around the residence, they observed a man flee from the back of the residence. After a foot pursuit, the officers were able to apprehend the man and place him in custody where he was subsequently identified to be Jones. A search of his person located a bag on him containing a powdery substance, which upon further testing by an Illinois forensic crime lab, tested positive for methamphetamine. Further investigations on scene, including the retracing of the path of the foot pursuit, resulted in the location of a revolver on top of a shed nearby. At the time of this offense, Jones

a firearm. McHenry County State's Attorney Randi Freese attempting to turn left onto would like to highlight the tremendous efforts by the responding officers from the Harvard Police Department - Det. Oczus, Sgt. See, and

was a convicted felon, re-

stricting his right to possess

control, resulting in the apprehension of Jones. Freese also appreciates the work done on this case by the Illinois State Police Forensic Crime Lab of Rockford, Illithis case has unfortunately passed away from causes unrelated to this incident, the State's Attorney's Office is pleased to have secured convictions for these offenses.

This case was successfully prosecuted by Assistant State's Attorney Justin Neu-

Two car fatal crash under investigation

Lake County Sheriff's Deputies are investigating a fatal Sunday morning crash that occurred in Deer Park.

On May 18, at approximately 10:20 a.m., Lake County Sheriff's Deputies responded to Lake Cook Road and Ferndale Road, Deer Park, for a traffic crash with injuries. Sheriff's deputies arrived to find two vehicles with major damage and two people critically injured.

A preliminary investigation shows a 2025 Jeep Wrangler, driven by 75-year-old man of Deer Park, was eastbound on Lake Cook Road and was northbound Ferndale Road. A 1986 Alfa Romero, driven by a 71-year-old man of Mount Prospect, was traveling westbound on Lake Cook Road.

The driver of the Jeep in-

Alfa Romero and began their left turn in front of the Alfa Romero. The Jeep and Alfa Romero collided.

The driver of the Alfa Romero was transported to a local hospital in critical condition but succumbed to his injuries shortly after arriving at the hospital. A passenger in the Alfa Romero, a 63-yearold woman of Mount Prospect, was also transported to an area hospital, where she remains in serious, but stable condition. The driver of the Jeep sustained minor injuries and is cooperating with the investigation.

The Lake County Coroner's Office will conduct an autopsy on the driver of the Alfa Romero.

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

Fatal motorcycle crash under investigation

A 19-year-old Marengo man died following a single motorcycle crash on County Line Road, north of Harmony Road, near Marengo in unincorporated McHenry County.

On Saturday, May 10, at approximately 3:24 p.m., members of the McHenry County Sheriff's Office, Boone County Sheriff's Office, and the Marengo Fire and Rescue District responded to a single motorcycle

north of Harmony Road.

Preliminary investigation indicates that a 2018 Indian Scout was traveling southbound on County Line Road when the driver (the sole occupant) lost control of the motorcycle for unknown reasons and failed to navigate the curve. The motorcycle exited the roadway and the driver was ejected. The driver was transported to Northwestern Medicine Huntley Hospital and later pronounced deceased.

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

Five-vehicle crash under investigation

Multiple people were injured following a crash in unincorporated Huntley earlier this month.

On Saturday, May 3, at 4:29 p.m., members of the McHenry County Sheriff's Office, Lakewood Police Department, Huntley Police Department, Huntley Fire Protection District, Algonquin Lake in the Hills Fire Protection District, and Woodstock Fire/Rescue District responded to a five-vehicle crash near the intersection of Route 47 and Foster Road involving injuries.

Preliminary investigation indicates that a non-involved vehicle was waiting to turn crash on County Line Road left into a private driveway

in the southbound lane of Route 47, north of Foster Road, A 2024 Honda CR-V and a 2016 Hyundai Veloster were slowing or had stopped behind the non-involved vehicle. A 2017 Toyota Tacoma, traveling southbound on Illinois Route 47, struck the rear end of the Honda, which caused the Honda to hit the Hyundai. Due to the impact, the Toyota entered the northbound lane of Route 47 striking a 2020 Kia Niro and hitting a 2015 Mitsubishi Outlander head-on. Both the Kia Niro and Mitsubishi Outlander were traveling in the northbound lane of Route 47.

A 27-year-old Pingree Grove woman, driving the Mitsubishi, was transported to Northwestern Medicine Huntley Hospital with serious injuries. A 55-year-old Pingree Grove woman, passenger of the Mitsubishi, was transported to Northwestern Medicine Huntley Hospital and later transported to Advocate Condell Medical Center with life-threatening injuries. A 35-year-old male and 2-year-old male, the driver and passenger in the Toyota, were transported to Advocate Sherman Hospital in Elgin and later released. Six other people were evaluated and released on scene.

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

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