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## Presidential Candidate Visits Belvidere

*The artist Kasey Wells passed through Belvidere in his quest for the White House.*

by David Larson

On Thursday, August 6, The *Journal* had a visit from a downstate politician, or performance artist: You will have to decide. A man from a small town in America's heartland is offering voters an alternative in the 2020 Presidential election.

Kasey Wells, 41, of Lexington, Illinois, is running as an Independent, write-in candidate for U.S. President on Nov. 3.

Wells said it's time for voters to take back their country from the mainline, party-affiliated career politicians, who he believes owe their success to the to the "money people," those who put them there solely to advance their own special interests and increase their wealth.

"The number one public policy I am advocating for is Direct Democracy, the basic premise our country was founded on. I want to help build a government based web-service that will allow all U.S. citizens to log-on, view upcoming government agendas, give them the opportunity to give their input on those agendas, have that input voted up or down... I think the best input would rise to the top... then that is what we should be building public policy around," he said.

"The ideas that are central to my campaign are balance, fairness, and equality. I want to help restore balance to our ecological systems, to our political systems, and to our economic systems. Otherwise stated, I want to 'save the planet,' end corruption in government, and narrow the gap between the rich and the poor."

After becoming disillusioned more than a decade ago with how government operates on all levels, Wells began digging deeper.

"After spending the last 10 years doing extensive research, I reached the conclusion that the rampant corruption in our government can be traced to the involvement and influence of the Rockefeller family," he said.

Last summer and fall he took his message on the road, traveling more than 6,000 miles from his hometown as far as Washington D.C., New York City, and several other major cities and small communities.

As a conversation starter, Wells drove his pick-up truck and pulled a trailer carrying "American Standard," an 11-foot tall elephant sculpture that he and a friend created from scrapped metal, built around an old Standard Oil farm tank.

The artwork, Wells said, symbolizes the "elephant in the room" that no professional politician will talk about — what he believes is the Rockefeller Connection.

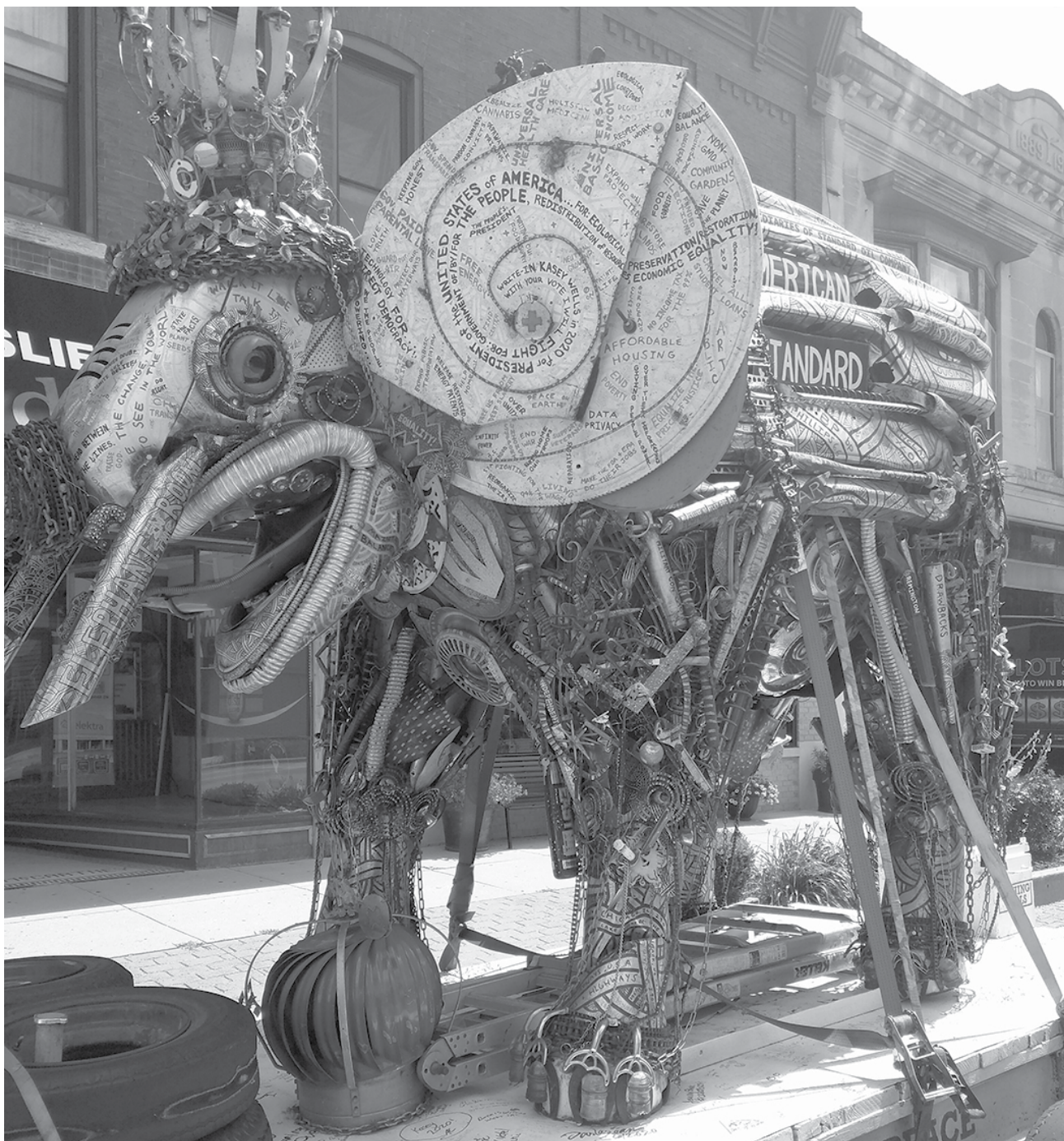
Along the way, he talked with everyone he encountered — factory workers, the homeless, small business owners and their employees, and school kids. He took the time to find out about their concerns, hopes, and dreams for America.

What he found out is that all of them love this country, but no one was satisfied with much of anything that comes down from Washington.

When asked about his Vice-Presidential pick, he said his wife. Raising a skeptical eyebrow, Wells said they discussed it, and once elected, she would prefer to be First Lady and would resign, hoping that Kasey could appoint Bennie Sanders as Vice President, if Sanders would accept. Wells said he felt that Sanders is a man of the people and felt bad about the politics played against him. Sanders fought as good of a fight as any man but the deck was stacked, he said.

The [kaseywellsforpresident.com](http://kaseywellsforpresident.com) website exhibits photos of his travels around the country to register as a write-in candidate in each State. It also has better photos of his artwork, "American Standard." His truck and art driving by the White House is one such photo.

Belvidere has not been visited by a Presidential candidate since Herbert Hoover came to town to speak from the back of his custom train car.



(above) Kasey Wells, "American Standard"

(below) Kasey Wells parked in downtown Belvidere

# Nicor Assistance Programs

## Press Release

Income-qualified households, or those facing financial hardship due to COVID-19, may be eligible for energy assistance programs, extended payment options and energy-savings measures from Nicor Gas.

Enrollment for the Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is underway and will continue through June 30, 2021 or until funds are exhausted. The federal- and state-funded energy assistance program provides qualifying households with monetary relief for energy bills. Program registration is open to all households with income up to 200% of the federal poverty guideline, or about \$52,400 for a family of four. In Illinois, LIHEAP is administered by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. For more information, or to locate a local agency, call 877-411-9276 or visit [liheapillinois.com](http://liheapillinois.com).

LIHEAP eligible households also may qualify for the Percentage of Income Payment Plan. PIPP households pay a percentage of their income toward their utility bill and receive a reduction in outstanding utility bills for every on-time payment made.

Additional energy assistance programs available to Nicor Gas customers are:

- The Nicor Gas Sharing Program provides one-time grants to qualified residential customers. The program is administered by the Salvation Army and funded through direct contributions from Nicor Gas employees and customers who can make donations via their monthly gas bill payment.

- The Nicor Gas Budget Plan provides a convenient way for customers to plan for and pay their monthly natural gas bill. Customers pay a more consistent amount by estimating natural gas usage and natural gas prices for the next year. They would then adjust quarterly to allow a credit balance to build up and help offset bills that may be higher during the winter heating season.

- Nicor Gas' Energy Efficiency Program helps customers manage their costs by lowering out-of-pocket expenses for energy efficiency improvements through rebates for energy efficient equipment, energy assessments and free energy-saving products. For more energy-saving tips, visit [nicorgas.com/residential/ways-to-save.html](http://nicorgas.com/residential/ways-to-save.html).

These additional programs are to assist Nicor Gas customers who may be affected by the ongoing pandemic:

- Nicor Gas' COVID-19 Bill Payment Assistance Program is intended to provide eligible residential customers with relief from high arrearages incurred as a result of

*Continued on Page 4*

# OP ED

It is said of the emperor Nero that he fiddled while Rome burned. Something similar, perhaps worse, could be said about officials in Washington today. "Enhanced" unemployment compensation benefits have expired. The Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) is about to expire also. These income support programs have helped us avert an even worse economic disaster than the one we have experienced. Yet our representatives in Washington seem determined to focus on squabbling and finger-pointing. Compromise for the benefit of all seems to be a lost art, even though it is needed now more than ever.

The enhanced unemployment compensation program added \$600 per week to existing benefits. This amount generated income greater than the individual wages of millions of unemployed fellow citizens. Critics have argued that the enhancement actually discourages people from accepting available jobs, thus propping up the unemployment rate and delaying recovery. Thus Congress has deadlocked over extending unemployment compensation benefits.

The evidence strongly suggests that the enhancement does not in fact discourage renewed employment. A recent study concluded that currently there are approximately 4.8 applicants for every opening, while the number of vacancies is the lowest in seven years. If the number of applicants per vacancy were declining it might make sense to reconsider the enhancement. Such is not the case currently. Remember also that the law requires job search activities for recipients, and simply refusing to accept a job is not an acceptable option for recipients. The ratio of applicants to vacancies ought to be an important decision criteria according to a number of commentaries. This ratio provides crucial information on the issue of work incentives.

We must remember also that for millions of fellow citizens a job entails more than wages. Many jobs provide health care and retirement benefits. No enhanced unemployment compensation can justify foregoing these invaluable benefits. A recent article in The Economist reviews the relevant evidence, and cites a University of Chicago study that concludes that "employment growth is currently constrained more by firms' lack of interest in hiring than people's willingness to work at prevailing wages."

The Paycheck Protection Program also provided valuable income support, and it is also about to expire. Economists speak of a negative "multiplier" effect. When people lose their jobs they don't spend money. The people with whom they don't spend money do not spend money in turn, and so on. A downward spiral ensues. Think of a balloon from which the air is escaping. The expiration of both of these two programs could exert a potentially disastrous macroeconomic effect.

President Trump is poised as of this writing to extend but revise downward the enhancement of benefits, and to defer payroll tax payments for Americans earning less than \$100,000 per year. There are at least two problems with these measures. First, they consist of executive orders, sweeping, perhaps questionable, ones. Little comfort is provided by the abject abdication by Congress of its core function--to legislate. Second, unemployed citizens get no relief from a tax that they are not paying in the first place.

So what do we have? We have a bitter partisan debate over enhanced unemployment compensation, when there is in fact little or no evidence of its negative effect. We have also a Congress immobilized by hyperpartisanship that has to be "rescued" by legally questionable and politically motivated executive orders. Oh yes, we also still have a pandemic.

**Robert Evans**  
Rockford University

## Quidnunc



Waiting for the vaccine is like waiting for Christmas and not being able to open presents until the 4th of July

## State Offering Rental, Mortgage Assistance to Illinois Residents Impacted by COVID-19

*Press Release Representative Jeff Keicher*

The Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) is offering rental and mortgage assistance to eligible residents impacted by COVID-19, State Representative Jeff Keicher (R-Sycamore) announced today.

The Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) program will provide renters impacted by COVID-19 \$5,000 for back rent and prepay through 2020, or until funds are exhausted. If approved, payment will be wired directly to the landlord within 10 business days; or 15-20 days if by paper check. IHDA will accept applications for rental assistance August 10 through August 21.

The Emergency Mortgage Assistance (EMA) program will provide homeowners impacted by COVID-19 up to \$15,000 to reinstate their mortgage and prepay through 2020 or until funds are exhausted. If approved, payment will be sent directly to the mortgage servicer approximately 7-10 days after the homeowner signs the Promissory Note. A second payment will occur up to one month after the first payment. IHDA will accept applications for mortgage assistance August 24 through September 4.

If interested in applying for rental or mortgage assistance, please visit <https://era.ihda.org/> for additional information on eligibility criteria.

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## Obituaries

- Bahling, Bernard, 90, Belvidere, July 18
- Bartlett Sr., Richard, 90, Belvidere, August 4
- Geissler, Judith, 76, Belvidere, July 31
- Murphy, Margaret, 71, Cherry Valley, August 5



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<p><b>Publisher/Editor</b> David C. Larson <b>Senior Writer/Editorial</b> Charles Herbst <b>Advertising</b> Bethany Staniec <b>Photography</b> Susan Moran <b>Office</b> Amanda Nelson</p>	<p><i>David Grimm April 1938 - Dec. 2000</i> <i>Richelle Kingsbury Aug. 1955 - June 2013</i></p>
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[news@boonecountyjournal.com](mailto:news@boonecountyjournal.com)

Each week, the Journal seeks to present a variety of voices.  
**Letters.** Every attempt will be made to print all letters received with the exception of those that are libelous or obscene. Letters should be signed and include an ID or phone number, so that we can contact the author prior to publication to verify authenticity.  
**Guest columns.** Community leaders are encouraged to submit guest columns consistent with our editorial guidelines for possible inclusion in the Journal.  
**Opinions.** The opinions expressed in the Journal are those of their authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of The Boone County Journal management or ownership.

## Candidate Letter

Editor,

It's high time American voters have someone other than the usual "least of the evils" running for the highest office in our nation. My name is Kasey Wells and I am that someone. I'm running as an Independent write-in candidate for President of the United States. Let me tell you why you should consider writing me in when you go to the polls on Nov. 3. First of all, as an Independent candidate I have no ties — or obligations — to either the Republican or Democratic Party or those that fund them. I think it's imperative to our country's future generations that "we the people" take our country back from the politicians who owe their success, power, and office to the "money people," those who put them there solely to advance their own special interests and make their already-bulging pocketbooks even fatter. I believe the people who pay the taxes and, therefore, foot the bill — that's you and I — should directly make the policies that govern this great nation, not the bankers, oil companies, and super rich. The number one public policy I am advocating for is Direct Democracy, the basic premise our country was founded on. I want to help build a government based web-service that will allow all U.S. citizens to log-on, view upcoming government agendas, give them the opportunity to give their input on those agendas, have that input voted up or down... I think the best input would rise to the top... then that is what we should be building public policy around. The ideas that are central to my campaign are balance, fairness, and equality. I want to help restore balance to our ecological systems, to our political systems, and to our economic systems. Otherwise stated, I want to "save the planet," end corruption in government, and narrow the gap between the rich and the poor. After spending the last 10 years doing extensive research, I reached the conclusion that the rampant corruption in our government can be traced to the involvement and influence of the Rockefeller family and their philanthropies. Last summer and fall I took my message on the road, traveling more than 6,000 miles from my home in Lexington, Illinois as far as Washington D.C., New York City, and several other major cities and small communities. As a conversation starter, I pulled a trailer carrying "American Standard," an 11-foot tall elephant sculpture created by my friend Kyle Riley and I from scrapped metal, built around an old Standard Oil farm fuel tank. The artwork symbolizes the "elephant in the room" that no professional politician will talk about — the Rockefeller Connection. Along the way I talked with factory workers, the homeless, small business owners and their employees, and school kids. I took the time to find out about their concerns, hopes, and dreams for America. All of them love this country, but no one was satisfied with much of anything that comes down from Washington. If you're ready for real change to begin, write in Kasey Wells when you step into the voting booth on Nov. 3. I would appreciate your support. For more information about me and what I stand for, go to [kaseywellsforpresident.com](http://kaseywellsforpresident.com).

**Kasey Wells**  
Lexington IL

# Community News

**Alcoholics Anonymous 12-step groups have moved their meetings to Zoom** - Although there are in-person meetings that continue in the area and they are following the guidelines provided by the Winnebago County Department of Public Health, many of the members of A.A. are choosing to practice safe social distancing by attending meetings online.

A list of Zoom meetings can be found on our websites and members of the community who are struggling with a substance abuse or drinking problem can find help 24/7 by visiting: [www.rockfordaa.org](http://www.rockfordaa.org) and [www.district70aa.org](http://www.district70aa.org) or by calling 815-968-0333. Sober members of AA are available to take calls and provide guidance around the clock.

**State's Blood Supply "Critically Low"; Blood Centers In Dire Need For Organizations To Host Blood Drives**- Following the national trend, Illinois Blood Centers are currently running on 2 day or less supply of blood, putting them at a "critically low" level. To donate blood, please go to [www.americasblood.org](http://www.americasblood.org) to find a donor center near you to schedule a donation time. Donor requirements include being at least 17 years old (16 with parental permission), in good health and weigh at least 110 lbs. The donation process takes about an hour, consisting of a health screening, donating time and snack. Individuals can donate whole blood once every 56 days.

**RVC Reopening Student Services for In-person Appointments:**

Rock Valley College is happy to announce that most student services will be open to visitors again beginning Monday, July 20. While the College still encourages phone and virtual appointments as a first choice, in-person assistance will be available by appointment only starting July 20. All social distancing guidelines and procedures

must be followed for the protection of all visitors and staff members. All visitors must schedule an appointment. No walk-ins will be accepted. Visitors are also required to wear a facemask and will be asked to park in lots 1, 2A or 2B and enter the Student Center on the west entrance closest to the Physical Education Center (PEC). Appointments can be scheduled by calling the specific department needed. For a complete list of department numbers and for additional information on the reopening plan for student services, please visit [rockvalleycollege.edu/contact](http://rockvalleycollege.edu/contact).

*Continued on Page 4*

## Voting by Mail Encouraged to Protect against Virus

*(press release-Boone County Clerk)*

With coronavirus a continuing concern as the 2020 General Election approaches, County Clerk Julie A. Stapler encourages voters to consider voting by mail as a safe, secure and convenient option to in-person voting.

The Illinois General Assembly this year passed an election bill that provides many safeguards against the spread of coronavirus in the voting process for the Nov. 3 General Election. Chief among them are provisions to increase voting by mail throughout the state.

Among the special vote-by-mail provisions for the 2020 General Election are:

- All voters who voted in either the March 2020 General Primary, April 2019 Consolidated Election or November 2018 General Election will receive by mail an application for a vote-by-mail ballot. This will be mailed by August 1, 2020.

- Those who registered to vote or updated their registration between March 18 and July 31 will be mailed an application for vote-by-mail ballot. This will be mailed by August 1, 2020.

- The state's online voter registration site now allows users to request a mail ballot when they register.

- Request a vote-by-mail ballot electronically at <https://il-boone.ballotrequest.net/>.

You will need to complete the application and return it to the Boone County Clerk's office before a vote-by-mail ballot may be mailed. Ballots will be mailed beginning September 24, 2020. If you prefer to early vote or vote at your polling location on Election Day, please disregard the application for a vote-by-mail ballot.

Clerk Stapler urges voters to make sure your voter registration is up-to-date. You may register online at <https://ova.elections.il.gov>. You may also contact the Boone County Clerk's office at (815) 544-3103 or <https://www.boonecountyil.org/department/clerk>.

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**Gas** *Continued from page 2*

financial hardship caused by the ongoing pandemic. Eligible customers can receive a grant of up to \$300 towards their account balance automatically after receiving a LIHEAP or Sharing Program grant. This program will continue until funds are exhausted.

•Eligible residential customers can receive an Energy Aide Grant up to \$250 toward past due balances; this grant does not need to be repaid by the customer. The Nicor Gas Energy Aide program is administered by select local agencies.

• Voluntary suspension of residential service disconnections for nonpayment through Aug. 30 to ensure that those who may have difficulty paying their bills or whose jobs are affected by COVID-19 do not face the added hardship of interruption of services.

• Nicor Gas will waive reconnection fees and restore service for residential customers who were disconnected due to nonpayment up to one year prior to June 18, 2020 upon request by the customer.

• Nicor Gas is offering residential customers the opportunity to pay off past due account balances in 24 monthly installments, without a down payment requirement. Residential customers who currently have an active payment arrangement may renegotiate their terms to 24 monthly installments; terms may be renegotiated if a customer's financial situation changes or if they default after enrollment.

•Nicor Gas also is offering commercial and industrial sales service customers an opportunity to enroll in more flexible payment arrangements for a limited period.

For more information about each of these programs or help managing natural gas costs due to economic hardships related to the ongoing pandemic, please call 888.Nicor4U (642.6748) or visit nicorgas.com/energyassistance.

**News** *Continued from page 3*

**Rock Valley College Ready to Help Students Succeed Online This Fall:** Rock Valley College has worked diligently over the last few months to ensure that students will have a successful hybrid and online learning experience this fall.

RVC faculty have completed in-depth training and will have resources available to them to create quality learning experiences for students. Best practice research and a newly expanded online learning department have ensured that Rock Valley College's fall courses are designed to achieve student success. Because many of RVC's fall courses are now online, a strong emphasis on faculty communication with their students has been implemented so that students will not feel isolated or lost. Furthermore, Zoom sessions and synchronous communication is encouraged from faculty in an attempt to answer questions or student concerns in a faster time frame.

**Cars for CASA 2020-**The 4th Annual Cars for Casa Car Show will Be on August 23rd from 12pm to 4pm. We will be jining the Buchanan Street Stroll.Due to the COVID-19 pandemic public gatherings may be limited at that time. The backup plan is to hold a Cruis for Casa with a set course through Bevidere and Boone County.

**OP ED**

**The 'Comed Way' Fuels Culture Of Corruption**

*By Jim Nowlan*

The recent admission by behemoth electric utility Commonwealth Edison that it repeatedly bribed minions of Illinois House speaker Mike Madigan for years (of course, Madigan knew nothing about all this; sure, right) was breathtaking for its brazenness.

The bribery is a classic example of otherwise upright citizens fueling the culture of corruption that has tainted our state since at least the late 19th Century.

This is known as "the Illinois Way" of doing political business, that is, paying off the political gatekeepers to get your way with legislation and other needed favors. In this case, ComEd agreed to pay \$200 million of company money to the federal government, presumably to keep the prosecutors from going after the individual company executives who perpetrated the bribery. Ironically, this is yet another payoff, to my mind.

A quick look at my archives (jimnowlan.com) shows that I have written about our culture of corruption a dozen times since 2010. What do I mean by that? Not that all of us are corrupt, but that too many of us would take advantage of government if given the opportunity, say, to get a DUI fixed or grease the skids to win a state contract. And we might expect our big campaign contribution would take us to the front of the line when we need something from government.

When teaching American politics to pre-law students at the University of Illinois in the early 2000s, I queried each class as to whether they would pay a bribe under the table to get a sibling out of a really tough DUI charge. Consistently, two-thirds of the students in each class said, Yes, they would do so (responding anonymously).

Why, I asked? Because "anybody else would do so if in their situation," and because "that's the way it's done in Illinois." I call this a pattern of learned behavior, or a cultural value, passed along from father to son and daughter, and around the neighborhood.

That's what ComEd consciously decided to do, in a tough situation. ComEd is a regulated utility, so it needs the okay of the legislature to get its rates upped, and for many other of its objectives. Madigan, speaker of the House for almost four decades, literally owns the space in which ComEd has to operate. Madigan's arrogance of dominance was so galling that ComEd even acceded to his demand that the company put one of his political fiends on their board of directors!

This exchange could not have happened in Minnesota and Iowa, though it could in some other states that are also known for political corruption. I checked with knowledgeable reporter-editor friends of mine in MN and IA, asking: "How would utilities and other big businesses in your state respond if they were told they had to pay to play?"

I was told the companies would simply say: "We won't play your game, and if you persist in your demands, we're going to spill the beans to law enforcement."

"Yeah, but Illinois is different," ComEd execs might retort. "Our company and stockholders could suffer badly if we didn't play ball."

ComEd officials could have just said No, as in MN and IA. The company might suffer, initially,

from certain politicians who like the Illinois Way. Yet, can you imagine elected officials ultimately harming the flow of reliable electric power to their own constituents?

The guilty ComEd company execs who have escaped prosecution are, I'm sure, church-going paragons of virtue and success in their leafy suburbs. Yet they and others of us who would pay to play are as much a part of the culture of corruption as the elected officials who want to feather their political nests with ill-gotten bribes.

The Illinois culture of corruption won't fade away until we all Just Say No. That would then become a new learned behavior, passed along to future generations.

**Lawsuit Seeks \$450 Million Payment to Ratepayers from Comed, Madigan**

*Case alleges violation of RICO, which feds used to dismantle organized crime groups*

*By Rebecca Anzel Capitol News Illinois*

A group of Commonwealth Edison ratepayers asked a federal judge Monday to force the utility company, House Speaker Michael Madigan and others to pay "at least" \$450 million to be split among all those affected by an alleged extortion scandal.

The number of affected ratepayers could rise to more than 3.8 million, according to a lawsuit filed by attorneys representing six residents that all resided in the Chicagoland area at some point in the last decade.

In an agreement with the U.S. government to avoid prosecution, ComEd officials in July acknowledged they funneled money through contractors to colleagues and friends of Madigan.

Those "bribes" – which total more than \$1.3 million according to a federal lawsuit filed Monday – were made from 2011 through 2019 in an attempt to influence the longtime House gatekeeper to pass legislation favorable to the utility and kill other bills that would negatively impact the company.

That "racketeering scheme" generated more than \$150 million in profits for ComEd, according to the document — all of which is money paid by customers in service charge hikes and fees implemented by laws for which ComEd and its parent company, Exelon Corporation, lobbied in support.

ComEd distributes electricity to 70 percent of Illinoisans, according to the lawsuit, making the company the largest utility in the state.

Exelon, ComEd, Madigan and various other officials participated in an operation designed to enrich themselves while defrauding consumers, the lawsuit alleges. That would be a violation of the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organization Act, used by the federal government to prosecute and dismantle organized crime groups.

If a judge in the Eastern Division of Illinois' Northern District agrees, ComEd ratepayers could be compensated the \$150 million the utility earned in profit "threefold" as well as attorneys' fees.

The Illinoisans who filed the case also requested a judge bar Madigan from being involved in any way with legislation affecting electricity in the state. They also want a judge to force him to resign as chairman of the Democratic Party of Illinois "in order to prevent him from continuing to run the state party in a corrupt manner." He has held that position since 1998.

"ComEd understood that as Speaker of the House of Representatives, Madigan was able to exercise control over what measures were called for a vote in the House of Representatives and had substantial influence and control over fellow lawmakers concerning legislation, including



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legislation that affected ComEd,” according to the lawsuit.

A spokesperson for the speaker did not respond to a request for comment.

One of the laws named in the court document was the Energy Infrastructure and Modernization Act, passed in 2011. It changed how utility companies could raise rates.

Previously, ComEd would have to present proposed electricity delivery fees to the Illinois Commerce Commission, which would then conduct “hearings comparable to judicial proceedings in which ComEd had to prove both the reasonableness and justness of its proposed rates,” according to a court document. This system was used for almost a century.

Once the act became law, utility companies could “avoid” that process and use a formula dictated by statute “that spits out automatic rates annually,” according to the filing. This authority expires at the end of 2022 unless the General Assembly renews it before then.

Due to the change, electricity rates ComEd charges customers jumped by 35 percent over the past nine years, the group argued in their lawsuit.

Those costs increased another 4 percent with the implementation of zero emission credit fees. ComEd and Exelon lobbied for the passage of the Future Energy Jobs Act in 2016, which included the charge, because it provided “massive subsidies” to the two nuclear power plants it owns in the Quad Cities and Clinton.

The lawsuit alleges that in exchange for his help passing those legislative measures, Madigan wanted “ghost-payroll jobs” for his allies. At least 15 such associates were paid by ComEd through other contractors for jobs for which they did little to no work.

These payments “were also intended to influence and reward Madigan in connection with the advancement and passage of legislation favorable to ComEd in the Illinois General Assembly,” according to a court document, and were funneled through other companies “in part to assist ComEd in denying responsibility for employment oversight of Madigan’s associates.”

*Capitol News Illinois is a nonprofit, nonpartisan news service covering state government and distributed to more than 400 newspapers statewide. It is funded primarily by the Illinois Press Foundation and the Robert R. McCormick Foundation.*

## Aid for Struggling Small Businesses to Start Flowing

**\$636M in ‘Business Interruption Grants’ to help small firms hit by COVID-19**

by Peter Hancock *Capitol News Illinois*

Financial aid is about to start flowing for Illinois businesses that have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity published emergency rules this week to implement the Business Interruption Grant program, or BIG. Those rules took effect July 21 when they were submitted to the secretary of state’s office.

State lawmakers authorized the program in the budget they approved during their special session in May. It will make \$636 million in federal CARES Act money available to small businesses that have been forced to close or that have seen a substantial loss of customer activity due to COVID-19.

“The Business Interruption Grant program, otherwise known as BIG, is a key component of Governor Pritzker’s comprehensive response to COVID-19 and the economic distress it’s caused for Illinois businesses and communities,” DCEO spokeswoman Lauren Huffman said in an email.

“This historic \$636 million program will provide immediate relief for small businesses which have experienced significant revenue losses as a result of the ongoing pandemic and focuses on businesses and communities hit hardest by the crisis.”

The bill also provides that at least 30 percent of the money must go to businesses located in “disproportionately impacted areas,” or DIAs, which are ZIP codes where there are high concentrations of low-income households and high rates of COVID-19.

Huffman also said that at least \$159 million in grants will go to entities located outside Chicago and the surrounding collar counties.

Although the application window for the first round of grants totaling \$60 million has already closed, the new rules enable the agency to begin processing those applications and awarding grants.

During the first round, priority is being given to small businesses located in DIAs. Specifically, \$20 million will be distributed to small businesses located in DIAs where there was property damage during recent civil unrest. Another \$20 million is set aside for bars and restaurants; \$10 million for barbershops and salons; and \$10 million for gyms and fitness centers.

Those businesses must have had certain amounts of income during 2019. They also must have been in business for at least three months prior to March 2020 and have incurred at least \$10,000 in qualifying expenditures since March 21.

The BIG program also sets aside \$270 million for licensed day care centers. An initial round of those grants are to be awarded by Sept. 30. Those grants are being administered by the Department of Human Services and will be awarded to facilities that receive at least 25 percent of their revenue through the Child Care Assistance Program and whose operating capacity has been reduced due to group size restrictions imposed by the Department of Children and Family Services to combat the spread of the novel coronavirus.

If funds allow, another round of grants will be awarded for the period Oct. 1 through Nov. 30, according to DCEO.

Grant awards may be used to cover operational costs such as staff wages and benefits, occupancy costs, materials, supplies and professional services that are eligible for federal Coronavirus Relief Fund reimbursements and are not otherwise covered by another grant or loan program such as the Payroll Protection Program or other disaster relief programs.

More information on how to apply for the grants is available on the DCEO website.

## Pandemic Aid to Start Flowing to Local Governments

**Municipal League disappointed money can’t be used to aid local businesses**

by Peter Hancock *Capitol News Illinois*

The state of Illinois will soon begin distributing \$250 million in federal funds to help cities, counties and other units of local government pay for pandemic-related expenses.

The General Assembly’s Joint Committee on Administrative Rules cleared the way Tuesday for the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to launch the Local Coronavirus Urgent Remediation Emergency, or Local CURE, program, which state lawmakers authorized in the budget they adopted in May.

Of that money, \$200 million will go directly to cities and counties. The rest will be divided between local public health departments and other local units of government such as townships and other special taxing districts.

The money can be used for expenses such as COVID-19 testing and emergency medical expenses; public health expenses, including costs of enforcing orders related to COVID-19; payroll expenses for public safety and other employees whose jobs are mainly focused on mitigating or responding to COVID-19; and other expenses that are “reasonably necessary” for responding to the public health emergency.

DCEO used a formula to determine how much money each city and county will receive. Department spokeswoman Lauren Huffman said the agency will start distributing the money later this month.

One thing local governments cannot use the money for, however, is direct aid to local businesses that have been impacted by the pandemic. That is something that disappointed some local government leaders.

“The federal government says that communities can use these dollars for local economic support, but DCEO says we can’t,” Brad Cole, executive director of the Illinois Municipal League, said during an interview after the JCAR meeting. “And while the department says that local governments cannot use the funds for that purpose, the state reserves the right to use it.”

DCEO set up a separate program to help businesses impacted by the pandemic called the Business Interruption Grant, or BIG, program that will distribute about \$636 million to businesses around the state.

Both the aid to local governments and the BIG program are funded with money the state received through the federal CARES Act. The city of Chicago as well as Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake and Will counties are not eligible for the grants because they have populations over 500,000 and therefore received their own direct allocation of CARES Act funding.

Gov. JB Pritzker announced during a COVID-19 briefing in Chicago Wednesday that DCEO just awarded the first round of those grants totaling \$46 million. He said the funding will go to more than 2,600 businesses located in 78 of the state’s 102 counties.

An additional round of grants will be awarded soon focusing on child care providers, and further grants will be awarded later in the fiscal year, according to DCEO.

Phil Keshen, DCEO’s chief financial officer, said during Tuesday’s JCAR hearing that there had been many discussions between the agency and IML, and DCEO intends to make up to \$30 million available to local communities working in conjunction with local businesses.

The main concern, Keshen said, is the potential liability to the state and the local governments if the funds are not used in strict accordance with federal rules or with the state’s Grant Accountability and Transparency Act, commonly known as GATA.

“The liability does remain on the state for the federal funds,” he said. “And so that’s part of the process of entering into grant agreement — to make sure that the audit requirements set forth by GATA are in place as well, and...making sure that both the local government knows what their role is in the grant-making process as well as what DCEOs role is.”

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# LEGAL NOTICES

## Public Notices

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
COUNTY OF BOONE  
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE  
SEVENTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
BOONE COUNTY, ILLINOIS

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF TIMOTHY WAYNE GUMPRECHT, DECEASED  
No. 2020P48  
NOTICE TO CREDITORS

NOTICE is given of the death of TIMOTHY WAYNE GUMPRECHT, of Belvidere, Boone County, Illinois.

Letters of office were issued on August 10, 2020 to JAMES W. GUMPRECHT, 28629 Bay Meadow Drive, Waterford, WI 53185, whose attorney is Hamer, Schuh & Cuda, 101 Van Buren Street, Woodstock, IL 60098.

Claims against the estate may be filed within six (6) months from the date of this notice. Any claim not filed within said time period, shall be barred.

Claims may be filed in the office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court at the Boone County Courthouse, Belvidere, Illinois 61008, or with the representative, or both.

Copies of claims filed with the Clerk must be mailed or delivered to the representative and to his attorney within ten days after it has been filed.

Dated: August 11, 2020.

Steven J. Cuda  
Hamer, Schuh & Cuda  
Attorney for Administrator  
101 Van Buren Street  
Woodstock, IL 60098  
815-338-1334  
ARDC #3121643  
Published in *The Boone County Journal* Aug 14, 21, 28

### Project Based Vouchers Award Request for Proposals (RFP) Project Based Vouchers

The Boone County Housing Authority (BCHA) announces the availability of up to 15 Section 8 Project-Based Vouchers (PBV's) for rehabilitation and/or new constructed housing units within Boone County

Applications in response to this Request for Proposals must be consistent with the published Request for Proposals (RFP) and in compliance with governing rules and regulations. The RFP may be obtained either by (1) contacting the Boone County Housing Authority, attention Alan Zais and via email only at alan@wchauthority.com, or (2) via the website at <https://wchauthority.com>.

Applications will be accepted until 4:00 p.m. September 14, 2020.  
Published in the Boone County Journal July 31 and August 14, 2020

STATE OF ILLINOIS IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 17TH  
JUDICIAL CIRCUIT BOONE COUNTY

IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION OF  
Camila Lupita Casillas Barrientos  
Case No.2020-MR-84

NOTICE OF FILING PETITION FOR NAME CHANGE

Notice is hereby given, that on September 22, 2020, at 10:15am, I will present a Petition requesting that the Court change her present name of Camila Lupita Casillas Barrientos, to the name of Camila Lupita Barrientos. The hearing will take place at the Boone County Courthouse, 601 N. Main St., Belvidere, IL 61008 Courtroom #4  
Published in the Boone County Journal 07/31, 08/07, 14

STATE OF ILLINOIS

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 17TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
COUNTY OF BOONE  
PROBATE DIVISION

In the Matter of the Estate of ROBERTA A. DANIELS Deceased.  
NO. 2020-P-19

CLAIM NOTICE

Notice is given of the death of ROBERTA A. DANIELS, of Boone County, Illinois. Letters of Office were issued on March 10, 2020 to ANGELA J. DANIELS and LISA JO VANCE, 8094 Fairgrounds Road, Belvidere, Illinois, Co-Executors of the Estate. The attorney for the Estate is Donald L. Shriver, of the Law Offices of SHRIVER, O'NEILL & THOMPSON, 930 W. Locust Street, Belvidere, Illinois, 61008.

Claims against the Estate may be filed on or before February 7, 2021, that date being at least six (6) months from the date of first publication, or within three (3) months from the date of mailing or delivery of Notice to creditors, if mailing or delivery is required by Section 18-3 of the Illinois Probate Act, 1975 as amended, whichever date is later. Any claim not filed by the requisite date stated above shall be barred.

Claims against the Estate may be filed in the Office of the Boone County Circuit Clerk--Probate Division at the BOONE COUNTY COURTHOUSE, 601 NORTH MAIN STREET, BELVIDERE, ILLINOIS, 61008, or with the Estate legal representative, or both.

Copies of a claim filed with the Circuit Clerk's Office--Probate Division, must be mailed or delivered to the Estate legal representative and to the attorney for the Estate within ten (10) days after it has been filed.

Dated: July 31, 2020 Angela J. Daniels and Lisa Jo Vance,  
Co-Executors

DONALD L. SHRIVER (ARDC #2593815)  
Law Offices of  
SHRIVER, O'NEILL & THOMPSON  
Attorneys for Estate  
930 W. Locust Street  
Belvidere, Illinois 61008  
Tele: (815) 547-5402  
Service@sotlaw.net  
Published in *The Boone County Journal* Aug 7, 14, 21, 2020

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
CIRCUIT COURT  
BOONE COUNTY  
PUBLICATION NOTICE OF COURT DATE FOR REQUEST FOR  
NAME CHANGE (MINOR CHILDREN)

Case No.2020-MR-91  
REQUEST OF: ALONDY CHRISTINA O'HOWELL to change  
name of minor child: Current Name of Minor Child MATTHEW  
JASON GEIGER; Proposed New Name of Minor Child MATTHEW  
JASON O'HOWELL. Court Date information: on September 22, 2020,  
at 9:15am, Boone County Courthouse, 601 N. Main St., Belvidere, IL  
61008 Courtroom #4  
Published in the Boone County Journal 08/14, 21, 27 c

## Assumed Names

ASSUMED NAME CERTIFICATE OF INTENTION  
STATE OF ILLINOIS COUNTY OF BOONE

This is to certify that the undersigned intend to conduct and transact take out restaurant business in said County and State under the name of Dairy Barn BBQ at the following post office address: 115 East Main Street, Capron, IL 61012 that the true and real full names of all persons owning, conducting or transacting such business, with respective residence address of each, are as follows: Kelly Overstreet, 18172 LeRoy Center Road, Capron, IL 61012; Dale Overstreet, 18172 LeRoy Center Road, Capron, IL, 61012; phone #847-339-9969

Subscribed and sworn (or affirmed) to before me, this 4th of August, A.D. 2020  
Julie Stapler, County Clerk

Published in Boone County Journal August 7, 14, 21

ASSUMED NAME CERTIFICATE OF INTENTION  
STATE OF ILLINOIS COUNTY OF BOONE

This is to certify that the undersigned intend to conduct and transact a diamond art (craft) store in said County and State under the name of Julie's Diamond Art at the following post office address: 615 S. State Street, Belvidere, IL 61008 that the true and real full names of all persons owning, conducting or transacting such business, with respective residence address of each, are as follows: Julie Ohlsen, 1209 Garfield Avenue, Belvidere, IL 61008; phone #815-914-9082.

Subscribed and sworn (or affirmed) to before me, this 12th of August A.D. 2020

Julie Stapler, County Clerk  
Published in Boone County Journal August 14, 21, 28

ASSUMED NAME CERTIFICATE OF INTENTION  
STATE OF ILLINOIS COUNTY OF BOONE

This is to certify that the undersigned intend to conduct and transact a small engine sales and service business in said County and State under the name of Engine Solutions Lawn & Garden at the following post office address: 704 West Locust Street, Belvidere, IL 61008 that the true and real full names of all persons owning, conducting or transacting such business, with respective residence address of each, are as follows: Greg Tucker, 7334 Waterford Drive, Rockford, IL 61108; phone #815-979-2312

Subscribed and sworn (or affirmed) to before me, this 31st of July, A.D. 2020

Julie Stapler, County Clerk  
Published in Boone County Journal August 7, 14, 21

ASSUMED NAME CERTIFICATE OF INTENTION  
STATE OF ILLINOIS COUNTY OF BOONE

This is to certify that the undersigned intend to conduct and transact a tree service and stump removal business in said County and State under the name of Might's Tree Service at the following post office address: 710 East 2nd Street, Belvidere, IL 61008 that the true and real full names of all persons owning, conducting or transacting such business, with respective residence address of each, are as follows: Ken Meudt, 710 E 2nd Street, Belvidere, IL 61008; phone #815-721-6585

Subscribed and sworn (or affirmed) to before me, this 27th of July, A.D. 2020

Julie Stapler, County Clerk  
Published in Boone County Journal August 14, 21, 28

ASSUMED NAME CERTIFICATE OF INTENTION  
STATE OF ILLINOIS COUNTY OF BOONE

This is to certify that the undersigned intend to conduct and transact a landscaping business in said County and State under the name of Mujica Landscaping at the following post office address: 809 Union Avenue, Belvidere, IL 61008 that the true and real full names of all persons owning, conducting or transacting such business, with respective residence address of each, are as follows: Clemente Mujica, 609 Union Avenue, Belvidere IL 61008; phone #224-423-7801.

Subscribed and sworn (or affirmed) to before me, this 7th of July, A.D. 2020

Julie Stapler, County Clerk  
Published in Boone County Journal August 14, 21, 28

## Appeals Court Allows Lawsuit Challenging Bond Issues to Move Forward

*Moody's calls the decision 'credit negative' for Illinois*

by Peter Hancock Capitol News Illinois

A lawsuit seeking to force the state to default on billions of dollars in outstanding bonds should move forward, a state appellate court said last week.

A three-judge panel of the 4th District Illinois Court of Appeals ruled Thursday that a lower court acted prematurely in dismissing the suit by John Tillman, CEO of the conservative think tank Illinois Policy Institute.

"We repeat that we express no opinion on the merits of Tillman's claims," Justice Robert Steigmann wrote in an opinion also signed by Justices John Turner and Lisa Holder White. "We merely conclude for the purpose of this proceeding that Tillman should be permitted to file the complaint."

Tillman and Warlander Asset Management LP, a New York-based hedge fund that holds some of the outstanding bonds, filed the suit in July 2019 seeking to block the state from making further payments on the bonds.

The case was filed under a state law that allows "any citizen and taxpayer" to file an action to block the disbursement of public funds by a state officer. But before such a case can go forward, the plaintiff first must ask a court for

permission to file the suit and demonstrate there are sufficient grounds for the action.

In this case, Tillman argued that a \$10 billion bond issuance in 2003 used to shore up the state's struggling pension funds and another \$15.2 billion bond issuance in 2017 used to pay down a backlog of past-due bills violated the Illinois Constitution's requirement that bonds only be issued for "a specific purpose."

The 2017 bonds were part of a legislative deal that ended the state's historic two-year budget impasse.

At the time the suit was filed, roughly \$14.35 billion of those bond issuances remained outstanding.

In August, Sangamon County Circuit Judge Jack Davis II denied Tillman's petition, citing a 1927 case that said courts are not required to consider petitions based on allegations that are "vague, conclusory, or irrelevant."

"Tillman's proposed complaint is chock-full of conclusory and argumentative statements describing the financial condition of the state that are irrelevant and which the court must disregard," Davis wrote in his opinion. "Indeed, it resembles far more of a political stump speech than it does a legal pleading."

In its ruling Thursday, however, the appellate court relied on a different precedent that says suits can only be denied if they are "frivolous or malicious, or that a filing of the complaint is otherwise unjustified."

"Tillman's complaint sets forth a colorable reading of the Illinois Constitution that does not appear to be frivolous on its face," the appellate court said. "While we express no opinion on the ultimate merits of Tillman's claims, we conclude that the petition and complaint state reasonable grounds for filing suit."

The court sent the case back to Sangamon County for reconsideration, although the state has the option of appealing to the Illinois Supreme Court. Attorney General Kwame Raoul's office did not immediately say whether it plans to appeal.

In a statement Monday, Moody's Investor Service, one of three credit rating agencies that rate Illinois bonds, called the court's decision "credit negative" for the state.

"We still view an ultimate ruling in favor of the plaintiff as highly unlikely, in view of the state's constitutional power to borrow for statutorily defined needs," Moody's said in Monday's Credit Outlook. "Moreover, a court-ordered debt service disruption would harm bondholders and other parties, as well as the state's capital market access, while providing comparatively little benefit to the plaintiff or other parties."

Moody's currently rates Illinois' bonds as Bbb3 with a negative outlook, the lowest investment-grade rating available.

A Moody's spokesman noted in an email that a declaration of a "credit positive" or "credit negative" event is not the same as a rating or outlook change — it only indicates the impact that a distinct event or development could have as one of many credit factors affecting the issuer.

Gov. JB Pritzker's press secretary Jordan Abudayyeh said in an email Monday that the two bond issues in question went through extensive legal review and were approved both by bond counsel and then-Attorney General Lisa Madigan.

"This lawsuit continues to be a tired tactic of the extreme right who continue to push their ideology over sound fiscal policy," she said. "This administration will continue to focus on the important work of acting responsibly to keep the state on stable fiscal footing."

*Capitol News Illinois is a nonprofit, nonpartisan news service covering state government and distributed to more than 400 newspapers statewide. It is funded primarily by the Illinois Press Foundation and the Robert R. McCormick Foundation.*

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