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Pritzker Unveils Virus Mitigation Playbook on Case of Surge

State now divided into 11 regions for containing COVID-19, up from 4

by Jerry Nowicki Capitol News Illinois

As Illinois' rolling COVID-19 test positivity rate saw a modest tick upward Wednesday, Gov. JB Pritzker laid out a new virus mitigation framework dividing the state into 11 regions for purposes of slowing the coronavirus' spread.

That's an increase from the four broad regions in the Restore Illinois reopening plan in place before Wednesday's announcements.

The new regions largely follow the state's emergency medical regions, including five split between Chicago and its suburbs, one in the St. Louis Metro East area, one Southern Illinois region, a Northern Illinois non-Chicago or suburban region, and each an East-Central, West-Central and North-Central region.

Pritzker, at a COVID-19-specific news conference in Chicago, also laid out the metrics that, if hit by any of the regions, would cause the state to implement new restrictions to mitigate spread. No regions were currently hitting any of the metrics as of Wednesday.

Those metrics include a combination of: an increase in the seven-day rolling average for test positivity rate for seven out of 10 days; a sustained seven-day increase in hospital admissions for a COVID-19-like illness; or a reduction in hospital capacity of intensive care unit beds to under 20 percent available.

Continued on Page 7

State Unemployment Agency Implements New "Callback" Model

Effective July 9, 2020, the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) has implemented a "callback only" model as a temporary solution to effectively honor the order in which callers attempt to reach the call center for assistance. This new model will be in effect for the following call centers: Claimant Services Center (800.244.5631), IllinoisJobLink.com (877.342.7533), Benefit Payment Control (800.814.0513) and Employer Hotline (800.247.4984). What this means to you is that rather than wait on hold or call multiple times, you will receive a call when you are next in line without losing your place.

"This new process should help to alleviate some of the frustration local residents have been experiencing when attempting to reach IDES," said State Representative Jeff Keicher, R-Sycamore. "My office has been helping local residents for months, working to follow-up on the status of individual claims directly. While we're happy to help however we can, families and businesses should be able to connect with an actual person at the unemployment office to get their questions answered and discuss their claim without having to rely on their local legislator to act as a go-between. This is a difficult time for many families and local small business owners.

Continued on Page 4



1951

by David Larson

It was the summer of 1951, the war had been over for six years and people were asking where Korea was on the map and which side are we for? The north or the south?

Belvidere's annual summer merchant sidewalk sale had everyone out on the 400 and 500 block of South State Street as buyers, maybe, but more than anything else to just be social and the experience of it all.

Last week we were able to see a photo of Hodel's Pharmacy in the 600 block of South State Street taken at about the same time as this photo. In this picture, three more pharmacies can be seen: Laws Rexall Drugs, Howard Drugs, and Kennedy Drugs at the very far end of the 400 block.

At the very end was a hardware store owned and operated by Walter Ray called Ray's Hardware. It was right on the corner of South State and Pleasant Street at the tracks. Ray sold common hardware as had John Plane, one of the original settlers in Belvidere, at 600 South State. Ray sold wood burning stoves and the general hardware for them early on.

The Florsheim Shoe Store sign seen in the picture was one of many Florsheim Shoe Stores in the U.S.A. Florsheim & Co. was founded in 1892 by Milton S. Florsheim. He and his father, Sigmund Florsheim made the first shoes in Chicago. By 1930, Florsheim was also making women's shoes and had five factories in Chicago employing 2500 employees, with 71 stores partly or entirely company-owned and 9000

stores around the US selling Florsheim. The shoe business was a spectacular success for the Florsheim family. The business was eventually purchased by a holding company, and by the mid-1990s, almost every mall in the US had a Florsheim store. But by the early 2000s, most Florsheim stores closed for good as did other brands of shoe stores in shopping malls.

When shopping malls began to develop in the Rockford region, many of the merchants, who were enterprising locals in business for themselves, could not survive. They had to close and the next generation had little interest in the risk of retail, given the massive retail consolidations of the 70s and 80s. By 1985, half of the storefronts in Belvidere were vacant. Out of that despair, the public and private economic development agency, Growth Dimensions was created.

It is hard to fathom that 4 drug stores could survive in a two-block stretch in a day when far fewer drugs existed and were prescribed. These were not the only drug stores in town in 1951. 9,400 people lived in Belvidere in 1951 and 17,000 in Boone County. Today there are 25,000 and 54,000, respectively. Today, two out of the three drug stores are chains. One of which is Walmart, and supplies most of the goods once sold on State Street. All three feel the Internet juggernaut of Amazon cutting into their market.

Most in the picture were not planning on buying anything anyway. They all just wanted the social experience. Perhaps that is the future of cities, the creation of enjoyable living spaces for the whole community that goes beyond curb and gutter streets. Maybe a place where the kids are smarter and you can leave your doors unlocked.

OP ED

It Starts At The Top

These past several weeks have been historic with Americans of every race and background coming out to protest the racial inequality of George Floyd's murder by a Minneapolis police officer. Our country has taken to the streets to protest and demand change. Change in the amount of force used by police on their own citizens. But now is the time to effect change in the way we see, act, and treat each other. People of color have been and continue to be abused by the system and they, along with other minorities, need to find equity of treatment, not only in police actions but in all our societal actions. Real change requires an honest look from the top to the bottom when addressing systemic racial inequity.

Currently, police can be brought to justice for their acts by a formal legal action by the grand jury or a civil suit. The first is often political in nature with sitting politicians reluctant to indict police officers. Going after police officers can be detrimental to a politician's career. With the advent of cell phones, that dynamic changed. Before cell phones, states attorneys and politicians would rely on the officer's version of events and seldom did a citizen overcome that. But with video recordings,

that changed, as a picture is worth a thousand words. Now we can see what actually transpired and officers cannot change the facts on the ground. What we have seen is disturbing. What many Americans believed to be true is no longer a truism rather corrupt human nature on full display. It has been difficult to swallow.

The current laws provide built in protection for an officer who uses excessive force. Based on personal observation for the last 30 years, officers use the standard- "he was resisting" defense, then it is "he would not put his hands behind his back," or "the suspect was fighting". Each if true are a proper basis to use force to effectuate an arrest, but in some instances the words are a cover for the excessive force used on an undeserving citizen. In the past thirty years I have seen numerous instances where arrestees are beaten up and battered for minor crimes. The Illinois legal system of the state's attorney's office and the courts are built to use the police officer's narrative. That usually means a large bond for a citizen and a lengthy sentence once convicted. The State's attorney does not want to be seen as soft on crime and is usually aggressive on such cases. The Courts also do not want to be perceived as weak either and will find for the officer in the majority of the cases and once they do so, they feel obligated to sentence the citizen to a lengthy prison sentence to send a message.

In civil cases a citizen can seek justice through a lawsuit. The typical method is by bringing a section 1983 case alleging a constitutional violation by the officer. In excessive force cases, that means a Fourth Amendment claim- illegal search and seizure expanded to include excessive force. The deck is stacked against Plaintiffs. First of all, officers are protected by qualified immunity, a legal doctrine that requires the officer know his acts are unlawful or unconstitutional and that said act(s) were unlawful at the time the action occurred. In many instances, the federal courts do not allow a claim to get to a jury and throw the case out.

Even if you get your case in front of a jury, the jury instructions are written to favor a defendant police officer. The Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals has published the following definition for excessive use of force cases:

"7.09 FOURTH AMENDMENT/ FOURTEENTH AMENDMENT: EXCESSIVE FORCE - DEFINITION OF UNREASONABLE FORCE

You must decide whether Defendants use of force was unreasonable from the perspective of a reasonable officer facing the same circumstances that Defendant faced. You must make this decision based on what the officer knew at the time of the arrest, not based on what you know now. In deciding whether Defendant's use of force was unreasonable, you must not consider whether Defendant's intentions were good or bad.

In performing his job, an officer can use force that is reasonably necessary under the circumstances.

[An officer may use deadly force when a reasonable officer, under the same circumstances, would believe that the suspect's actions placed him or others in the immediate vicinity in imminent danger of death or serious bodily harm. [It is not necessary that this danger actually existed.] [An officer is not required to use all practical alternatives to avoid a situation where deadly force is justified.]] (Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals, Jury Instructions, 7.09)

It is clear the officer has the upper hand in this instruction. His/her acts are to be judged as to what he knew at the time of the arrest. His intentions even if they are evil are not supposed to be considered only the fact that the officer "believed" the suspect's actions put him or others in immediate danger of death or serious bodily harm. An unarmed citizen reaching for his wallet can be enough to justify his death as we saw with Philando Castile in 2016. A suspect pointing his finger at an officer would seemingly be enough to warrant a death sentence. A citizen reaching for his cell phone to record his arrest would qualify for death as well. The solution is legislative change that limits the application of qualified immunity and to sets forth jury instructions that no longer favor the police but create an even playing field.

This would begin to address the current disparities of inequitable treatment for Black citizens and the use of unnecessary force by police authorities, but the analysis needs to start at the top. An analysis with a serious look at the leadership in government both elected and non-elected officials who create and enforce policy. Recently, we saw the ire of our community to the inequity of treatment of our citizens. I would suggest it stems not only from the

Quidnunc



How much will it cost Illinois and the country because some States choose to believe in magic rather than science?

Obituaries

Erickson, Raymond, 80, Cherry Valley, July 12
Lofquist, Gerald "Jerry", 83, Cherry Valley, July 1



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improper use of force but also minority exclusion in society as a whole. Our society should be reflected in its government, but in the federal government, the vast majority of senior leadership positions are held by white males. As of June 2018, women held only 34 percent of the government's more than 7,100 Senior Executive Service positions, according to the Office of Personnel Management. On the next rungs of the career ladder—supervisor and manager positions—woman filled only 33 percent of the more than 241,000 government jobs at those levels.

Minorities comprised nearly 40 percent of the U.S. population, yet accounted for just 22 percent of senior leadership jobs, according OPM's 2018 numbers. And they made up only 30 percent of supervisor or manager positions, even though minorities—defined by OPM as nonwhite employees—comprise 38 percent of the federal workforce. Our government is doing itself a disservice in this regard. Study after study has demonstrated the benefits leadership diversity brings to business' bottom lines. The low numbers of women in the federal government are not the only issue. There is also an imbalance in the numbers of federal employees who are minorities.

Other research determined that more diverse teams make better business decisions up to 87 percent of the time—and they do it twice as fast with half the meetings.

Research the Partnership for Public Service and Booz Allen Hamilton released in 2018 also found evidence that a diverse workforce is a key element contributing to an innovative federal workplace.

Notwithstanding the research, the problem is the continued sameness. Unfortunately, the leadership at the top is reluctant to hire someone who does not look, act, or feel like he does. Often, it is someone the senior manager can golf or go out with. So what happens is the same type of manager replaces the old one. Minorities and women are left out. In order for real change to happen, this systemic practice must end. The persistent line of hiring the best qualified is just a mantra for exclusion. Now, with so many minorities receiving a college-level education, there are numerous qualified individuals capable of doing any job in government. The only way to create change is to address this hiring flaw or inequity.

Possible solutions include a review of the hiring data. Who are you bringing in? Is there a diagnosis for the issue? Or a hiring problem? Government and private business alike should be pro-active in its outreach. Diversity does not mean hiring your buddy, but it is looking at hiring from the aspect of what does the individual's cultural contribution add. Is this the best person for my team and not just the best person? Can you set targets? Or set realistic goals that can create diversity and inclusion. The bottom line any progress is better than nothing.

Another aspect of the lack of minority representation is in the 17th Judicial Court for Illinois for Winnebago and Boone County. Currently, there are 26 judges, only one Black judge and no Hispanic representation. It took legislation to get the only Black judge elected with a newly created judicial district. Considering the population demographics this lack of representation is demonstrative of the work to be done. It is difficult for minorities to feel they are being included when the court system does not reflect them. On the upside, women have made some progress with 7 female judges. Currently,

the court leadership is only hiring Caucasian attorneys. In the 17th Judicial Circuit, justice is hard to conceive of when those in power will not allow all members of their society to participate.

The State's Attorney's Office for Boone County has no minority assistant State's Attorneys. Winnebago County has a Black State's Attorney, and a Black assistant SA, and no Hispanic SA's. If you look at local population in Boone County, you will observe that minorities make up 23.07% (21%-Hispanic and 2.07%-Black) and in Winnebago County, minorities make up 25.8% (13.1% Hispanic and 12.7% Black) of the population respectively and yet according to Winnebago County's own records they have 1242 employees, Black people only represent only 7.82% of that group and Hispanic's only represent 5.88% for Winnebago County. The City of Rockford has a total of 1000 employees with 101 or 10.001% Black employees and 89 Hispanic or 8.9% employees. Neither population group has any significant membership in management positions with the majority in administrative, maintenance, and server positions.

According to the US Census Bureau Hispanic's, make up 21% of the Boone County population but out of the 261 employees only 11 identify as Hispanic and only 2 Black employees. In the City of Belvidere Black people represent 1.8% of the population and Hispanics represent 32.9%. The City of Belvidere has a total of 128 employees and only 4 or 3.2% Hispanics and no black employees that could be discerned from their FOIA response. The hiring practices are demonstrative of exclusion of a substantial population group. If their leadership can demonstrate a commitment to diversity those numbers can change. But hiring one's friends and relatives is hard for many to pass up. Equity begins with inclusion.

The next step is to look at legislative changes to address racial inequities. Can the federal government enact laws that will dismantle the current system of qualified immunity for police officers? The answer is yes, but do they have the stomach to retreat from long standing policies of protecting the police. With removal of qualified immunity and setting forth a new definition of unreasonable force the use of force issue will go to a jury of our peers to decide if the officer's conduct was lawful or not.

Another avenue is to modify the current use of collective bargaining agreements to protect officers. Currently, officers are protected if they are sued in court for constitutional violations through collective bargaining agreements. That means the local governmental entity pays for the defense and any judgment awarded to a plaintiff. The problem with this mechanism is that the officer does not have skin in the game so to speak. If he or she has a level of responsibility towards paying for his defense and a judgment, then the attitudes of offending officers will change. Knowing that one can lose their house and bank account to an injured citizen will radically change the wonton use of unnecessary force on a citizen.

The amount to be paid by an officer is fungible but at least a third or 33.33% of any judgment awarded should be considered. Additionally, the municipality should retain the ability to dismiss officers who violate established conduct rules. Recently, New York Police Union Officers held a press conference to protest their treatment by the protesters. Stating "we deserve respect" and "we are not thugs." The problem is they have forgotten what they are. They are the servants of the people. They are there to serve and protect, not each other but the people. Moreover, the issue of respect is the same everywhere, that is to get respect you have to give it. To hear the Union officer yelling about his respect is analogous to underworld figures demanding respect without earning it.

Police are not supposed to be the enemy. They are there to serve and protect us the citizens. They deserve respect if they can give it and appropriate benefits of healthy pay and retirement. It is a difficult job and if done correctly can be great one with a lifetime of respect and friendships. Inherent to that is the commitment by local governments to hire not only qualified people but also individuals screened to weed out the power-hungry individuals who believe the badge and gun is a source of power to inflict harm on others. There will be times when officers must use deadly force but in so doing, we as citizens must have confidence its use is right and justified. Training must include use of force alternatives, that when deadly force is used all good judgment and training have kicked in. Ensuring its use is appropriate and acceptable. This must be reinforced in every training cycle without fail.

Additionally, it is difficult to respect police officers who fail to report misconduct within their own ranks. The "blue wall of silence" is deafening. How can citizens have trust in an organization who fails in its sworn duty to serve and protect not each other but the citizens who hire them? This is an issue that must be addressed in police reform. Training must include a constant component of obeying the law from within and to report those who do not that is their duty to us as citizens and their employer. Police must be taught that they are not separate from us nor are they better than the rest of us. They are one of us representing all of us.

Taking steps to equalize treatment is not tantamount to giving something away to minorities. I often hear "I worked my ass off to get where I am." I have no doubt, but the difference is the opportunity to do so was already there. Equal opportunity is not available to minorities. When it is, we can stop talking about this issue. It starts at the top.

Rene Hernandez



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OP ED

In Reopening Schools, State Next Must Address Educational Recovery Plans

by Arthur R. Culver, Sharon Desmoulin-Kherat, John Price and Tony Sanders
Illinois School District Superintendents

For months, we have witnessed in awe the resilience displayed by our students, families, and school staff as they navigate the COVID-19 crisis that has shuttered our campuses. Although many school buildings remain closed through the summer, educators and parents around the state are working diligently to ensure that learning continues.

However, we know this past semester did and will have an impact on our students. Many children were without access to the tools they needed to learn effectively during remote learning. This was particularly acute where parents in “essential” jobs continued to leave the home, even as child care disappeared. For others, being absent from the classroom and their caring teachers, peers, support staff, and administrators compounds the trauma they experienced more generally due to the coronavirus. And, while some schools are hosting limited in-person summer school, we know that’s not sufficient.

We look forward to the fall when we can begin to reopen our schools, resume in-person learning, and restore the achievement gains that are being lost to the pandemic. With that said, like everyone else, we know this virus has a life of its own, and we continue to prepare for every eventuality and recognize this school year may not go as planned, yet again.

Although our districts have different demographics and needs, two things are certain. First, this crisis is affecting every student in the state. Second, making sure all students get what they need in Illinois will require “all hands on deck” and a multi-year statewide learning recovery plan that provides flexibility for schools and districts and that is comprehensive, well-resourced, and rooted in equity.

Absent serious effort, this period of emotional and academic turmoil will follow Illinois’ children into adulthood. Research into other crises reveals that periods of intense learning loss resulted in lifelong negative outcomes in education, employment, and earnings. To avoid such permanent impact, we will need: social-emotional and mental health supports for students and educators; educator planning time, support, and training; infrastructure and training to close the digital divide; targeted supports for students most impacted by COVID-19; and additional in-person school time for students to address learning and social-emotional needs.

Some of these supports, such as high-quality professional development, will be relatively straightforward to provide and afford, particularly with federal recovery dollars. Specifically, teachers will need training in trauma-informed practices to best serve students dealing with the stress of the current public health crisis. Others, like closing the digital divide, will require a multi-agency, multi-year effort. Still, other

critical supports, including making sure students have additional in-person instructional time, will require adults to set aside business as usual and develop a strategy that meets the unprecedented need facing our two million students – especially those most negatively impacted by this crisis.

We appreciate the State Board of Education prioritizing in-person learning and the work they have done to date under extraordinary circumstances. We now urge Governor JB Pritzker, the General Assembly, and educational leaders to unite on behalf of our children to tackle remaining issues. If we are not careful, an uneven or haphazard recovery plan will compound the inequitable impact of the crisis itself. We implore state leaders to ensure critical education recovery needs — high quality social-emotional and instructional resources and training, devices and connectivity, and the time necessary to plan and learn — are available to all districts.

We must think creatively, act boldly, and remember that the future of two million children depend on our willingness to meet and respond to this once-in-a-century challenge. It is up to us. For our part, we stand ready to support and work with you.

Arthur R. Culver is superintendent of East St. Louis School District 189. Sharon Desmoulin-Kherat is superintendent of Peoria Public Schools. John Price is superintendent of North Chicago School District 187. Tony Sanders is superintendent of School District U-46 (Elgin).

Letter to The Editor

Editor:

This letter is directed to the U.S. Congressman for the 16th District of Illinois, Adam Kinzinger.

The story broke recently in the New York Times that Russian intelligence was paying bounties to Taliban-linked militants to kill American soldiers. Since then, the story has been confirmed by several different media outlets. Also reported is that the Trump Administration knew about this bounty scheme as early as 2019.

Three U.S. Marines, who were killed last year in Afghanistan in an IED attack, may have been casualties of this bounty program. Since U.S. Intelligence became aware of this program and reported it to the Trump White House, Donald Trump has spoken at least five or six times by phone to Vladimir Putin, but not about the killings of our soldiers. In fact, Donald Trump has been pushing to have Russia invited back into the G7. Russia was expelled, by the other members of the G7, after invading Crimea.

As of this date, Wednesday, July 15, 2020, there has been no action by the Trump administration to address this horrifying story or to hold Russia accountable for its actions. Instead we’re being told by the White House and Mr. Trump’s enablers, Congressional Republicans, that he didn’t know. That, of course, is a lie.

Here are my questions to Mr. Kinzinger. Why haven’t you made any public statements regarding this disturbing revelation? Do you now think that the Trump Administration’s decision to ignore dead American soldiers rises to the level of impeaching Donald Trump or demanding his

resignation? I ask because you didn’t think that Mr. Trump’s pressuring Ukraine to investigate his likely opponent in the November election was egregious enough. Or are you waiting for Mr. Trump to “shoot someone on Fifth Avenue” before you’ll act?

Unfortunately, I don’t expect a response from Mr. Kinzinger. The congressman has shown time and time again he will not hold Donald Trump accountable for his unfitness for office, his immorality or his mental instability. Mr. Kinzinger is too busy trying to get reelected.

I implore my fellow citizens of the 16th Congressional District to think long and hard about whether or not Adam Kinzinger should be sent back to Washington for another term. I say no and I won’t be voting for him come November 3rd.

Mr. Kinzinger continues to be a coward when it comes to standing up to Donald Trump. Why should I expect anything more than the same old, same old over a few dead Marines?

Shame on you, Mr. Kinzinger, and all of your Republican colleagues in Congress.

Susan Lovell

Unemployment *Continued from page 1*

Please feel welcome to reach out to me if we can help provide further direction on any questions you may have regarding unemployment.”

When you call IDES, it is important that you select the appropriate numeric option that best describes the reason for your call. This ensures that you will be served in the order that we receive your call. You will be called back Monday through Friday. Call back hours are as follows:

Claimant Services Center: 7:30 AM -7:00 PM
IllinoisJobLink.com, Benefit Payment Control and Employer Hotline: 8:30 AM-5:00 PM

You can only have a single pending callback scheduled in the system at a time. The call you receive from IDES should display on Caller ID as 800-244-5631 under normal circumstances. In certain cases, this number could be blocked by your phone carrier.

It is important that you answer the phone when the callback is made. If you miss your callback, IDES staff will attempt to leave you a voice mail. They will call you again shortly after the first attempt. If you cannot be reached after the second attempt, you will be required to contact the call center to schedule another callback.

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 and www.district70aa.org or by

Coronavirus	Flu	Allergies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fever • Dry cough • Shortness of breath • Fatigue • Chills • Muscle pain • Headache • Sore throat • New loss of taste or smell 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fever • Cough • Muscle aches • Fatigue • Headache • Runny nose • Sore throat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sneezing • Itchy eyes • Runny nose • Watery, red or swollen eyes

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calling 815-968-0333. Sober members of AA are available to take calls and provide guidance around the clock.

Burpee Museum offers FREE Virtual Reality Field Trips - Thanks to generous community support and donations from foundations and individuals, we are pleased to offer a limited number of virtual field trips at NO COST to school groups this spring! Using the teacher's choice of a simple web browser, students will enter the "museum" through their home devices. Clicking on the floor, students can "walk" the 360-degree virtual reality environment and click on "hot spots" for additional activities, videos, and more. Burpee will have a live stream with the class to complete a 30-45-minute field trip. Please contact nicole.hayes@burpee.org for more to reserve your spot while supplies last. For more information see Burpee.org or email Burpee@burpee.org

State's Blood Supply "Critically Low"; Blood Centers In Dire Need For Organizations To Host Blood Drives-Officials from the Illinois Coalition of Community Blood Centers (ICCBC) gathered today to make the public aware of Illinois' dwindling blood supply and the dire need for organizations to step up and continue to host blood drives in their communities, especially as Illinois advances to Phase 4 of Restore Illinois. 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 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.

Curbside Grilled Pork Chop Dinner Fundraiser:-Flora Grange's Curbside Pickup Grilled Pork Chop Dinner is Sunday, July 19th, 11:30am to 1:00pm at Flora Grange Hall, 2105 Stone Quarry Rd, 3 miles south of Chrysler (Appleton Rd). Two pork chops for \$12. One chop for \$10. Ages 8 and under \$6. Dinners include your choice between two types of potato and vegetable along with applesauce and a dinner roll. Must preorder by 5:00pm, Friday, July 17th. To order call 815-543-2721 or go to our Facebook Page 'Flora Grange #1762'. Click on the easy to use link there to place your order online. Cash or check only when you pick up. The dinners will be brought to you in your car. Enjoy a taste of the Boone County Fair and help Flora Grange fund their various community service projects.

Zoom Programs to Enhance Health:-Womanspace will be hosting two programs on Zoom in July facilitated by Dr. Elisha Robinson that will help people to improve their health and well-being. Many are struggling with the "quarantine 15" and looking to bounce back and get in better shape. Both programs offer some practical solutions.

On Monday, July 20th, from 7:00-8:00 PM, she will lead a program on "The Vegan Ketogenic Diet". This diet can help those suffering from a lack of energy, excessive tummy fat, insomnia, high blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol, fibromyalgia, PCOS, arthritis, fibroids, and weight issues. The keto vegan diet is anti-inflammatory, helps regulate hormones, improves cardiovascular health, promotes insulin sensitivity, and improves central nervous system and brain health. During this session, participants will learn what the keto vegan diet is and how to follow it effectively. Register here: <https://womanspace-rockford.org/event-3878789>

On Monday, July 27th, from 7:00 - 8:00 PM, she will lead a program on "The Benefits of Fasting". The program will discuss different types of fasting, from intermittent to prolonged, as well as how to implement fasting and make it work for your life and schedule. Register here: <https://womanspace-rockford.org/event-3876517>

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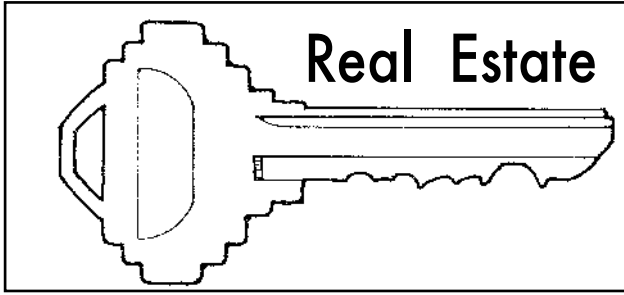
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IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE SEVENTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT BOONE COUNTY, ILLINOIS
 U.S. BANK NATIONAL ASSOCIATION AS TRUSTEE FOR NRZ INVENTORY TRUST Plaintiff,
 -v- 2018 CH 68
 ANGELA A. TAILLET et al Defendant

NOTICE OF SALE
 PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale entered in the above cause on December 11, 2018, an agent for The Judicial Sales Corporation, will at 1:00 PM on August 5, 2020, at the NLT Title L.L.C., 530 S. State, Suite 201 (Logan Avenue entrance), Belvidere, IL, 61008, sell at a public sale to the highest bidder, as set forth below, the following described real estate:

Commonly known as 130 HEATH CLIFF DRIVE SE, POPLAR GROVE, IL 61065

Property Index No. 03-26-151-016
 The real estate is improved with a residence.

Sale terms: 25% down of the highest bid by certified funds at the close of the sale payable to The Judicial Sales Corporation. No third party checks will be accepted. The balance, including the Judicial Sale fee for the Abandoned Residential Property Municipality Relief Fund, which is calculated on residential real estate at the rate of \$1 for each \$1,000 or fraction thereof of the amount paid by the purchaser not to exceed \$300, in certified funds/wire transfer, is due within twenty-four (24) hours. No fee shall be paid by the mortgagee acquiring the residential real estate pursuant to its credit bid at the sale or by any mortgagee, judgment creditor, or other lienor acquiring the residential real estate whose rights in and to the residential real estate arose prior to the sale. The subject property is subject to general real estate taxes, special assessments, or special taxes levied against said real estate and is offered for sale without any representation as to quality or quantity of title and without recourse to Plaintiff and in "AS IS" condition. The sale is further subject to confirmation by the court.

Upon payment in full of the amount bid, the purchaser will receive a Certificate of Sale that will entitle the purchaser to a deed to the real estate after confirmation of the sale.

The property will NOT be open for inspection and plaintiff makes no representation as to the condition of the property. Prospective bidders are admonished to check the court file to verify all information.

If this property is a condominium unit, the purchaser of the unit at the foreclosure sale, other than a mortgagee, shall pay the assessments and the legal fees required by The Condominium Property Act, 765 ILCS 605/9(g)(1) and (g)(4). If this property is a condominium unit which is part of a common interest community, the purchaser of the unit at the foreclosure sale other than a mortgagee shall pay the assessments required by The Condominium Property Act, 765 ILCS 605/18.5(g-1).

IF YOU ARE THE MORTGAGOR (HOMEOWNER), YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN IN POSSESSION FOR 30 DAYS AFTER ENTRY OF AN ORDER OF POSSESSION, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 15-1701(C) OF THE ILLINOIS MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE LAW.

You will need a photo identification issued by a government agency (driver's license, passport, etc.) in order to gain entry into our building and the foreclosure sale room in Cook County and the same identification for sales held at other county venues where The Judicial Sales Corporation conducts foreclosure sales.

For information, examine the court file, CODILIS & ASSOCIATES, P.C. Plaintiff's Attorneys, 15W030 NORTH FRONTAGE ROAD, SUITE 100, BURR RIDGE, IL, 60527 (630) 794-9876

THE JUDICIAL SALES CORPORATION
 One South Wacker Drive, 24th Floor, Chicago, IL 60606-4650 (312) 236-SALE

You can also visit The Judicial Sales Corporation at www.tjsc.com for a 7 day status report of pending sales.

CODILIS & ASSOCIATES, P.C.
 15W030 NORTH FRONTAGE ROAD, SUITE 100
 BURR RIDGE IL, 60527
 630-794-5300

E-Mail: pleadings@il.cslegal.com
 Attorney File No. 14-18-07717
 Attorney ARDC No. 00468002
 Case Number: 2018 CH 68
 TJSC#: 40-1814

NOTE: Pursuant to the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, you are advised that Plaintiff's attorney is deemed to be a debt collector attempting to collect a debt and any information obtained will be used for that purpose.

13152454
 Published in *The Boone County Journal* July 10, 17, 24, 2020

LEGAL NOTICES Foreclosures

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE SEVENTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT BOONE COUNTY, ILLINOIS
 U.S. BANK NATIONAL ASSOCIATION AS TRUSTEE FOR NRZ INVENTORY TRUST Plaintiff,
 -v- 2018 CH 68
 ANGELA A. TAILLET et al Defendant

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LOT THIRTY-FOUR (34) IN CANDLWICK LAKE UNIT NO. 10 ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF RECORDED AS DOCUMENT NO. 72-3475 IN THE RECORDER'S OFFICE OF BOONE COUNTY, ILLINOIS; SITUATED IN THE COUNTY OF BOONE AND THE STATE OF ILLINOIS.

Commonly known as 130 HEATH CLIFF DRIVE SE, POPLAR GROVE, IL 61065

Property Index No. 03-26-151-016
 The real estate is improved with a residence.

Sale terms: 25% down of the highest bid by certified funds at the close of the sale payable to The Judicial Sales Corporation. No third party checks will be accepted. The balance, including the Judicial Sale fee for the Abandoned Residential Property Municipality Relief Fund, which is calculated on residential real estate at the rate of \$1 for each \$1,000 or fraction thereof of the amount paid by the purchaser not to exceed \$300, in certified funds/wire transfer, is due within twenty-four (24) hours. No fee shall be paid by the mortgagee acquiring the residential real estate pursuant to its credit bid at the sale or by any mortgagee, judgment creditor, or other lienor acquiring the residential real estate whose rights in and to the residential real estate arose prior to the sale. The subject property is subject to general real estate taxes, special assessments, or special taxes levied against said real estate and is offered for sale without any representation as to quality or quantity of title and without recourse

to Plaintiff and in "AS IS" condition. The sale is further subject to confirmation by the court.

Upon payment in full of the amount bid, the purchaser will receive a Certificate of Sale that will entitle the purchaser to a deed to the real estate after confirmation of the sale.

The property will NOT be open for inspection and plaintiff makes no representation as to the condition of the property. Prospective bidders are admonished to check the court file to verify all information.

If this property is a condominium unit, the purchaser of the unit at the foreclosure sale, other than a mortgagee, shall pay the assessments and the legal fees required by The Condominium Property Act, 765 ILCS 605/9(g)(1) and (g)(4). If this property is a condominium unit which is part of a common interest community, the purchaser of the unit at the foreclosure sale other than a mortgagee shall pay the assessments required by The Condominium Property Act, 765 ILCS 605/18.5(g-1).

IF YOU ARE THE MORTGAGOR (HOMEOWNER), YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN IN POSSESSION FOR 30 DAYS AFTER ENTRY OF AN ORDER OF POSSESSION, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 15-1701(C) OF THE ILLINOIS MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE LAW.

You will need a photo identification issued by a government agency (driver's license, passport, etc.) in order to gain entry into our building and the foreclosure sale room in Cook County and the same identification for sales held at other county venues where The Judicial Sales Corporation conducts foreclosure sales.

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 TJSC#: 40-1814

NOTE: Pursuant to the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, you are advised that Plaintiff's attorney is deemed to be a debt collector attempting to collect a debt and any information obtained will be used for that purpose.

13152454
 Published in *The Boone County Journal* July 10, 17, 24, 2020

LEGAL NOTICES Public Notices

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

In the Matter of the Estate of MIKEL J. OTXOA, SR., Deceased.
 No. 2020-P-42

NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION-WILL AND CLAIMS
 NOTICE is given of the death of Mikel J. Otxoa, Sr, who died November 14, 2011. Letters of Office were issued on June 3, 2020, to Mikel J. Otxoa, Jr. and Maurice Z. Otxoa, who are the legal representatives of the estate. The attorney for the estate is Attorney Charles G. Popp, P.C., 215 South State Street, Belvidere, Illinois.

Claims against the estate may be filed on or before December 31, 2020, 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 755 ILCS 5/18-3, 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 claims filed with the Circuit Clerk's Office--Probate Division, must be mailed or delivered to the estate legal representative and to his/her attorney within ten days after it has been filed.

Published in *The Boone County Journal* July 3, 10, 17

PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE is hereby given that at 6:00 P.M. July 27th 2020, Public Hearing will be held at Boone County Fire Protection District No 2., 1777 Henry Luckow Lane, Belvidere, Illinois, for the purpose of considering the proposed budget and appropriation ordinance of the District. Any party interested in viewing a copy of the proposed budget and ordinance may do so during business hours (8:00 A.M. to 5 P.M.) at the station at 1777 Henry Luckow Lane, Belvidere, Illinois.

Published in *The Boone County Journal* 7-3, 10, 17, 24

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

In the Matter of the Estate of JON J. KEISTER, Deceased.
 2020-P-44

PUBLICATION NOTICE
 TO CREDITORS and CLAIMANTS

Notice is given of the death of JON J. KEISTER, who died on February 24, 2020, a resident of Belvidere, Boone County, Illinois. Letters of Office were issued on June 24, 2020, and the Representative for the estate is AMANDA K. LOVELL, 3234 Grand Cape Court, Rockford, IL 61109. The attorney for the estate is Amanda J. Martinez, 5732 E. Riverside Blvd., #201, Loves Park, IL 61111.

Claims against the estate may be filed on or before December 4, 2020, that date being at least six (6) months from the date of the first publication. Claims against the estate may be filed with the Clerk of the Circuit Court, 601 N. Main Street, Belvidere, IL 61008, or with the Representative, or both. Any claim not filed within that period is barred. Copies of a claim filed with the Clerk must be mailed or delivered to the Representative and to the attorney within ten (10) days after it has been filed.

The estate will be administered without Court supervision unless an interested party terminates independent supervision administration by filing a petition to terminate under Section 28-4 of the Probate Act (755 ILCS 5/28-4).

Attorney Amanda J. Martinez ARDC#: 6287970
 The Law Office of Amanda Adams Martinez LLC
 5732 E. Riverside Blvd., #201, Loves Park, IL 61111
 815-491-8065
 amartinez@adamsmartinezlaw.com

Published in *The Boone County Journal* 7-3, 10, 17, 24

STATE OF ILLINOIS
 IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE SEVENTEENTH JUDICIAL COURT BOONE COUNTY
 ROBIN HIGGS, Plaintiff -VS- SHAMEKIN HIGGS, Defendant
 NOTICE OF PUBLICATION 2020-D-42

Notice is given to you, SHAMEKIN HIGGS, Defendant that this cause has been commenced against you in this Court asking for DISSOLUTION OF MARRIAGE and other relief.

Unless you file your response or otherwise file your appearance in this cause in the office of the Circuit Clerk of Boone County, Boone County Courthouse, 601 N. Main St., Belvidere Illinois, 61008 on or before the 12th day of August, 2020 at 3:00p.m., a Judgment or other relief as prayed for by the Plaintiff may be granted.

Dated: 7/2/2020
 Linda J. Anderson, Clerk of the Circuit Court
 17th Judicial Circuit Boone County, Illinois
 Published in *The Boone County Journal* July 10, 17, 24

Assumed Names

ASSUMED NAME CERTIFICATE OF INTENTION

State of Illinois County of Boone) ss This is to certify that the undersigned intend...to conduct and transact a residential/commercial building maintenance & inspection business in said County and State under the name of Fair Trades Home Maintenance & Inspection PLLC and that the true and real full names of all persons owning, conducting or transacting such business, with the respective residence address of each, are as follows: NAME AND ADDRESS OF RESIDENCE: Virginia L Chorney, Brad A. Chorney 316 White Oak Dr. Poplar Grove, IL 61065 Signed: Virginia L Chorney, Brad A. Chorney 7/1/2020 Subscribed and sworn (or affirmed) to before me, this 1st day of July 2020.

Julie A. Stapler, County Clerk,
 By Giselle R Lenover, Deputy
 Published in the Boone County Journal July 3, 10, 17

ASSUMED NAME CERTIFICATE OF INTENTION

STATE OF ILLINOIS COUNTY OF BOONE
 This is to certify that the undersigned intend to conduct and transact a clothing online store business in said County and State under the name of Janet's Boutique at the following post office address: 225 Highline Street #10, 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: Janet Rivera, 225 Highline St. 310, Belvidere, IL 61008; phone # 815-202-0260

Subscribed and sworn (or affirmed) to before me, this 10th of July, A.D. 2020
 Julie Stapler, County Clerk
 Published in *The Boone County Journal* July 17, 24, 31

A Public Notice is an important tool in assuring an informed citizenry; a conduit of information from the government to the public. Notices are mandated by legislatures to make sure there is a public window into the activities of governments, officers of the court and others holding a public trust. Among the most common types of public notices are: hearings, government budgets, notices of contract bids, foreclosures, probate notices, adoptions, and dissolution of marriages, name changes and assumed business names. There are four key elements to a public notice:

Independent: A public notice is published in a forum independent of the government, typically in a local newspaper.

Archivable: A public notice is archived in a secure and publicly available format.

Accessible: A public notice is capable of being accessed by all segments of society.

Verifiable: The public and the source of the notice can verify the notice was published, usually by an affidavit provided by the publisher.

Enabling an informed citizenry through newspaper public notices helped America to develop participatory democracy where it counts: where money is spent, policy is made and futures charted. Public notices by government and private parties are so tightly woven into the American fabric that many citizens may take them for granted. Located in easily found sections of the newspapers, public notices reach out to interested readers, leading them to opportunities. Voices are expressed on taxation, communities are formed around planned public improvements, and assets are saved from loss to unworthy creditors – all as a result of public notices.

Public Notice Network

Pritzker said there would be a “menu of options” to contain the virus, including many of those in place during previous phases of the reopening plan. Bars were of particular concern, he said, along with youth sports camps that have proven to be hotbeds for the virus.

“Local governments have the ability more immediately to do things than state government does, and so we encourage that,” the governor said. “But where state government needs to step in, we do and we will.”

A “failsafe” requiring immediate action, as Pritzker described it, would occur if a region has three consecutive days averaging greater than an 8 percent positivity rate on tests conducted.

The Illinois Department of Public Health announced three tiers of mitigation strategies that could be employed if a region reaches those metrics.

In “higher risk” settings, such as indoor bars and restaurants, some mitigations could be triggered “automatically.” These include reduced indoor dining capacity and suspended indoor bar service in tier one, followed by suspended indoor dining in tier two, then takeout only in tier three.

There are also mitigation factors for hospitals, including visitor limits and reduced elective surgeries, then suspended elective surgeries, or, in tier three, opening alternate care facilities.

Additional meeting size restrictions would also be considered, along with remote work guidance or requirements for offices, and a reversion to other reduced in-person retail and businesses and services that were in place in previous phases of the reopening plan.

On the reopening of schools, Pritzker said all districts and buildings are different, so “one size doesn’t fit all.” There’s room for adaptation of

In our 25th year publishing *The Boone County Journal* July 17, 2020 7 the Illinois State Board of Education guidelines, as long as face covering, social distancing and classroom size guidelines are met.

“In every decision relating to this viral threat, schools must focus on giving our children the best education possible, while offering the greatest consideration to their health and the health of their families, and all of those who work in our schools,” he said. “And as indicated by the ISBE instructions, hybrid schedules and remote learning are likely to be a part of that solution.”

Pritzker’s news conference came as the state’s overall positivity rate for tests conducted ticked up to 3.1 percent after four days at 3 percent that followed multiple weeks below that level. There were 1,187 new confirmed cases reported out of 38,161 tests completed over the previous 24 hours, resulting in a one-day positivity rate of 3.1 percent.

The eight COVID-19-related deaths reported Wednesday drove the statewide total to 7,226 among 156,693 confirmed cases since the pandemic reached Illinois.

The IDPH website still contained information based on only the original four regions of the reopening plan Wednesday afternoon, and the Southern region had the highest positivity rate at 5 percent, followed by the Northeast and North-Central region at 4 percent each, and the Central region at 2 percent.

Dr. Ngozi Ezike, director of IDPH, and Pritzker both said the best virus mitigation tactic is wearing a face covering in public, keeping distance from others and hand washing. Ezike added young people are now a major driver of the virus’ spread.

“Ages 10-to-19 and ages 20-to-29 — they are having higher case rates now than ever before in this pandemic,” she said. “We are following this very closely, but young people and parents of young people, please be aware. This virus is now being spread by youth, by younger people. So young people, we need you to make responsible decisions to help us continue to keep our successes and decrease and minimize spread.”

Ezike said those exposed to a person testing positive for the virus must “undergo a 14-day timeout” of self-quarantine. It’s best to wait six to seven days after exposure to get tested, she said, otherwise a false negative may occur. Even a negative test does not release a person from the 14-day quarantine requirement, she said.

“I know that’s hard to take — You’re feeling fine. You got an initial test, it says you’re negative. But that test is not enough to take you out of the 14-day timeout. We have many individuals that have not been positive on day six or seven,” she said, adding that positive test results have come as late as 14 days after exposure.

The state’s hospitalization metrics continued to hover around their pandemic lows at the end of Tuesday. There were 1,454 hospital beds in use by COVID-19 patients as of 11:59 p.m. Tuesday, up by 38 from the day before but within the range of the past two weeks. The 324 COVID-19 patients in intensive care unit beds and 130 on ventilators were also near pandemic lows.

Marijuana Sales Collected \$52 Million in First Six Months

Sales reach \$239 million total since legalization

by Jerry Nowicki Capitol News Illinois

Since January, Illinois residents and visitors have spent nearly \$240 million on legalized recreational marijuana, producing \$52 million in state revenue, according to a news release from the governor’s office.

Of that, \$34.7 million came from excise taxes, while \$18 million came from sales taxes.

Per the law, 8 percent of that revenue will be

shared with local governments, while the Illinois Department of Revenue estimates \$25.9 million from excise and sales taxes will be directed to the state’s General Revenue Fund.

Also under the law, 25 percent of revenues collected from recreational cannabis sales will be reinvested through the R3 program (Restore, Reinvest and Renew) in communities that have been disproportionately impacted by the justice system, and to address substance abuse and prevention and mental health concerns.

The R3 program on Tuesday announced \$31.5 million in grant opportunities to organizations working in historically underserved communities across Illinois.

“Illinois has done more to put justice and equity at the forefront of this industry than any other state in the nation, and we’re ensuring that communities that have been hurt by the war on drugs have the opportunity to participate,” Gov. JB Pritzker said Tuesday in a news release.

The announcement signals progress for one of the legalization bill’s three main social equity measures. Another, which is aimed at allowing groups from areas disproportionately impacted by the war on drugs to obtain an ownership stake in the industry, has stalled amid licensing delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

A lead marijuana advisor to Pritzker has said September is a goal date for when new dispensary and craft grow licenses will be released.

Another key equity measure is expungements for low-level marijuana offenses, and the governor’s office said Pritzker is working with Chicago State’s Attorney Kim Foxx, the Illinois Prisoner Review Board, and Illinois state’s attorneys to advance those goals.

Comptroller Criticized for Handling of Late Bill Payments

Participant says Mendoza’s prioritizing puts Vendor Payment Program at risk

by Peter Hancock Capitol News Illinois

A program that helps vendors get paid even when the state is late paying its bills might be in danger, the head of one financial company said, because of the way Illinois Comptroller Susana Mendoza is prioritizing the bills that she does pay.

The program is called the Vendor Payment Program and it allows third-party financial companies, known as “qualified purchasers,” to buy the debts owed to state vendors and then collect the late interest penalty owed whenever the state does pay the bill.

The problem, said Andrew Greta, president of Illinois Financial Partners, one of the program’s participating companies, is that Mendoza’s office has put a priority on paying off the principal owed on invoices so they stop accruing interest. But she only rarely, and sporadically, makes payments on the interest that is already due.

“They have been few and far between,” Greta said of the interest payments during an interview Friday.

“To date, we’ve got about close to \$50 million in interest payments that remain outstanding,” he said. “So, they have made some payments from time to time. ... But ... there is no predictability to it and as far as we can tell, she’s completely put interest payments on hold now.”

Abdon Pallasch, a spokesperson for Mendoza, disputed that statement. In an email Friday, he said the comptroller’s office paid out \$127 million in late payment interest penalties in 2019, and it paid out \$16.3 million this year before the COVID-19 pandemic hit, cutting deeply into state revenues.

“We sympathize with Mr. Greta and the other qualified investors who have made healthy

Continued on Page 8

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Sewer Sludge Under Fire

By David Larson

The Boone County Board and Boone County Health Department have been made aware of a firm that is presently spreading sewer sludge from Chicago on over 3000 acres of farmland in the Capron, according to a board member. The sludge is used as fertilizer. But concerns have developed within the board about what constitutes the substance and will it have a negative or positive long-term effect on the environment.

The obvious nitrogen rich, organic substance is why the owner of the farmland is willing to accept the sludge being spread on the farmland. But many questions have developed within the County Board concerning what other compounds enter a sewer system and compose some part of the sludge. What effects do miscellaneous compounds have on microbes in the soil? Soil, being one of Boone County's and the world's natural resources, is not protected and generally viewed as an object of exploitation. But, the potential for harmful compounds to leach into the aquifers and waterways does get the attention of political powers that be on the grounds of health, safety, and welfare State mandate. The Health Department is looking into the issue. The EPS has not yet established a position.

Additionally, the City of Belvidere has been disposing of local sewer sludge for years in a similar fashion.

Upgrade to City Sewer Treatment Planned

By David Larson

The most recent Belvidere Committee-of-the-Whole meeting passed on to the regular City Council meeting scheduled for Monday, July 20 its approval to apply for an Illinois Environmental Protection Agency program loan of \$4.7 million at the rate of 1.39 percent.

Funds from the loan under the IEPA program Illinois Water Pollution Control Program will pay for improvements to the secondary digester and the buildings of the water sewer treatment plant on Newburg Road.

Criteria for the loan application require that the city have a dedicated source of revenue to repay the loan, which it has. The city will also increase the waste water rate to no more than 16 cents per 100 cubic feet to satisfy the loan. No discussion regarding a sunset of the increase once the loan was repaid occurred.

The increase will go into effect if approved by the City Council May 1, 2021 to meet the first payment date in 2022, which would be \$271,372 annually over 20 years.

To help defray the cost of improvements, the city will apply for a grant for \$750,000. If approved, it is expected that the rate increase would turn out to be around 12 cents per 100 cubic feet.

The project was approved unanimously for passage to the regular City Council meeting.

"I don't pay interest on interest. That's going to go to the back of the line," she said. "I need to make sure that I'm either paying front-line providers or I'm paying down bills that are accruing late payment penalties at 12 percent. That's the best use of taxpayer money."

But Greta said Mendoza's reluctance to make those interest payments is having a ripple effect that extends far beyond the financial lenders who take part in the Vendor Payment Program.

Under the program, he said, companies like his act much like commercial banks. They borrow money from their investors at a certain rate, something less than the 12 percent the state pays. They then pay the vendors 90 percent of what they're owed and wait for the state to eventually pay off the bill with interest.

When that payment comes, the companies then give the vendors the remaining 10 percent on their bill and pay the original investors the interest they are owed. The difference between the interest they pay to investors and what they collect from the state, known as the interest rate "spread," is where the qualified purchasers make their profit.

And the certainty that the state will eventually make those payments is what enables his company to get money into the pockets of vendors, many of whom cannot afford to wait for the state to catch up on its bills.

But because the state has been reluctant to make those interest payments, Greta said, many of the investors that he works with have stopped putting money into the program, and he has to turn down requests from vendors to purchase their debt.

"We've had an uptick in the number of inquiries that we've been getting, you know, sort of vendors asking for help, and we have to turn them away," he said.

In addition, he said, there are many more vendors whose debts have already been purchased who are still waiting for the remaining 10 percent balance still owed to them.

Greta and other companies that take part in the program have complained to lawmakers about the late interest payments for years, and during the recent special session in May, lawmakers put language into one of the budget bills that says the comptroller's office "must issue the interest payment within 60 days after acceptance of the interest voucher."

Greta argues that Mendoza's office is intentionally ignoring that language, but Mendoza's spokesperson Pallasch disagreed.

"The (Illinois Office of the Comptroller) maintains compliance with this section of law, which is specific to a narrow group of interest vouchers that are permitted under the State Finance Act for those principal vouchers paid after the close of a fiscal year," he wrote. "Without it, those vouchers would not be allowed to be submitted to the IOC for payment since the fiscal year has officially closed."

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Vote by Mail in Boone County

Julie A. Stapler

Boone County Clerk & Recorder

Boone County Clerk's Office Sending Applications for Vote By Mail ballots for November 3, General Election

Due to COVID-19, all 2020 General Election voters are encouraged to cast a ballot prior to Election Day, either by mail or during early voting. Voting by mail is an easy and secure option for voters and you can request a vote by mail ballot online, through the mail, or in person.

The Boone County Clerk's office will be mailing an application to receive a ballot in the mail to all registered voters who voted in the November 2018 General Election, April 2019 Consolidated Election or this year's General Primary Election. These will be mailed out no later than August 1, 2020. Any person who has registered between March 18 and July 31, 2020 will also receive the same application in the mail. You may also request a ballot by mail electronically at <https://il-boone.ballotrequest.net>

Clerk Stapler is encouraging any person who has not registered to vote do so as soon as possible. You can register in person at the Boone County Clerk's office or online at <https://ova.elections.il.gov>. If you have moved or changed your name, you must notify the Clerk's office to change your voter registration.

Election Day and Early Voting will still be available for the November General Election. Early Voting will begin September 24, 2020 in the Boone County Clerk's office. You can contact the Boone County Clerk's office at (815) 544-3103 or email at elections@boonecountyil.org.

Comptroller

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profits on this program and would like the final portions of their payments but we are not going to leapfrog them over nursing homes, hospice centers, battered women's shelters and other state vendors awaiting payment," Pallasch wrote. "They have received most of their payments and they will eventually be paid in full as fiscal conditions allow."

Greta, however, said the problem didn't begin with the COVID-19 pandemic. He said some of the invoices his company holds have had interest payments due for years.

For example, he noted in an email that his company purchased a \$57 million invoice that was payable for insurance premiums that were due as part of the State Employee Group Health plan. The state paid that base invoice in February 2018, making the \$4 million in late payment interest penalty due at that time. The invoice for that \$4 million was accepted by the comptroller's office in August 2018, but Greta said that, to date, it still has not been paid.

In another case, he said, Illinois Financial Partners purchased a \$50,000 invoice in March 2018 that the Department of Corrections owed to a food service vendor. The base invoice was paid in April, leaving an interest penalty balance of approximately \$6,000. The comptroller's office accepted that bill in October 2018, nearly six months after it had become payable. In the nearly two years since then, the company still has not been paid.

As of Friday, the state had a backlog of past-due bills totaling just over \$5 billion. Under state law, if those bills are not paid on time, the state is charged a late payment penalty of 1 percent per month, or 12 percent per year.

During an interview with WTTW-TV in Chicago in June, Mendoza was asked how she was keeping up with payments for COVID-19-related expenses while the state was suffering from a massive revenue shortfall. She explained her rationale for delaying late payment interest penalties.

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