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## Belvidere Welcomes Public Comment by E-mail During Stay-at-Home

By David Larson

An often-used and important part of Belvidere City Council meetings is the public comment part of the agenda. Its influence has been quite significant over the years and gives the council real insight into an issue under consideration or needing consideration. Recently, after WREX-TV brought to light a commonly-known problem with no simple answer, public comment during a city council meeting provided the public with an opportunity to offer information and opinions relating to the issue of local police brutality.

As a result of COVID-19 Stay-at-Home Order by Governor J. B. Pritzker and a temporary grant for local government to meet remotely over the Internet, Belvidere City Council has been meeting with some alderpersons remotely, while some come to the council chamber, which is closed to the public because of the virus threat.

This condition has made it impossible for the public to participate in city council meetings. An avenue has been opened for the public to submit in writing, via email any statement that they would like to make to the Mayor and City Council. The email to send comment to is: <https://www.ci.belvidere.il.us/contact-us>. The *Journal* recommends that you compose in some other medium and cut and paste the statement into the comment box at the above url.

## COVID-19 Boone County Update

According to The New York Times and the Chicago Tribune on Wednesday Boone County had 35 cases of COVID-19 infection with 5 deaths. The rate of infection is a doubling every 5.5 day.

Winnebago County 207 cases that double every 8 days with 5 deaths.

McHenry County 368 cases that double every 14 days with 20 deaths.

Dekalb County 56 cases that doubles every 11 days with 1 death.

Rock County has 83 cases that double every 14 days

## World-Famous Artist Glenna Goodacre Dies

-- artist created a statue in Belvidere

by David Larson

Glenna Goodacre, a master of expressive, monumental bronze sculpture, died April 13, 2020, at her home in Santa Fe, New Mexico at age 80. Goodacre's art appears in public, private, municipal and museum collections throughout the United States. Her work includes the Vietnam Women's Memorial on the National Mall in Washington, D. C., the design for the Sacagawea dollar coin, an 8-foot standing portrait of Ronald Reagan at the Reagan Library, and the Irish Memorial at Penn's Landing in Philadelphia. Goodacre was a native of Lubbock, Texas and had a studio in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Dedicated in 1993, Goodacre's best-known work was the Vietnam Woman's Memorial. The sculpture, of three women nurses and a wounded serviceman, was done in bronze. 265,000 women served during the Vietnam era, and about 10,000 of them stationed in Vietnam as nurses and intelligence analysts. The bronze is a depiction of despair, hope and dedication, reminiscent of Michelangelo's *Pieta*, which is housed at St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City.

During the Clinton Administration, Goodacre was commissioned to design a gold coin to replace the Susan B. Anthony Dollar. The design showed Sacagawea, the female Shoshone interpreter who accompanied Lewis and Clark, along with her infant son. Because of the public's preference for paper dollars rather than dollar coins, minting of the coin was discontinued shortly after production began.

Goodacre also designed the statue located at the intersection of Wolf Road and Big Thunder Boulevard in Belvidere. The statue, entitled *He Is, They Are* was donated to Belvidere by Jack Wolf. *He Is, They Are* communicates several layers of meaning all at the same time. The sculpture reflects the physical beauty, strength, and character of the American Indian culture, yet with restrained hands symbolizes the disadvantage that the indigenous culture faced confronting Western European Culture during the Westward Expansion of the United States in the 19th Century.

Symbolizing the strength and the struggle the American Indian has endured, the sculpture equals the Frank Lloyd Wright Pettit Memorial Chapel in importance. Belvidere native son, and renowned artist in his own right, John Berry, said of the statue that, "Rockford has nothing even



*"He Is, They Are" created by Glenna Goodacre, (below) detail of tied hands*



*Continued on Page 3*



# Pritzker Predicts Smaller Mid-May Covid-19 Peak

*Says president is 'fomenting some violence' with 'liberate' tweets*

by Jerry Nowicki Capitol News Illinois

Gov. JB Pritzker said Tuesday the state's COVID-19 peak could come in mid-May and he is examining the current stay-at-home order for potential changes.

The governor made the comments during a Washington Post Live interview with reporter Robert Costa.

Pritzker said people "have really been abiding by" the state's second-in-the-nation stay-at-home order, which he said led to fewer deaths and hospitalizations than anticipated at this point.

"And so the result of that has been the pushing out of what had been anticipated to be a peaking in the middle or near the end of April, so it's

been pushed out now according to the models to maybe mid-May but at a lower level," he said.

Pritzker was asked about differences in the Chicagoland area and downstate Illinois when it comes to fighting the virus, and he said there are different infection rates depending on region. That could inform changes to the stay-at-home order, the governor said, although he did not directly respond to a follow-up as to whether some counties might reopen before others.

"And now I think we can make some adjustments based upon hospitalization rates, based upon ICU bed availability, based upon infection rates, as we look to, how can we begin to adjust things and work toward — after the peak — really reopening the economy," Pritzker said.

He was also asked about recent tweets from President Donald Trump calling to "liberate" certain states with Democratic governors.

"When he tweets out liberate Michigan or liberate Minnesota, or liberate Virginia, he's fomenting protest and I hate to say that is fomenting some violence and I'm very concerned about what that might mean for the country if he keeps doing things like that," Pritzker said.

The governor said the president "should be pulling people together right now," and he noted recent protests of stay-at-home orders nationwide will likely lead to a wider spread of the virus, including more deaths among those who attended the events.

"They're frankly going to be giving each other coronavirus and people unfortunately will get sick, and some people may die as a result of the president's rhetoric that has brought them out to protest," he said.

While Pritzker praised the federal government's efforts to help set up an alternate care facility at the McCormick Place convention center in downtown Chicago, he said they fell short in other areas. He once again said Trump could have used the Defense Production Act to force greater manufacturing of testing supplies and personal protective equipment. He said

Illinois received "maybe 10 percent" of what the state needed from the federal government in terms of PPE.

"None of that has been done at the federal government level," he said. "That's the mistake that has been made all along here, we could have organized this and led this on a federal level."

## Harmon Letter

The state's five Republican congressmen responded Monday to a letter sent last week by Illinois Senate President Don Harmon requesting \$40 billion in aid to the state, including \$10 billion for the state's pension system, which has an unfunded liability of \$138 billion.

The GOP members hold five of Illinois' 18 Congressional seats, and they said Harmon, D-Oak Park, should consider pushing structural reforms before requesting "aid that is beyond this immediate crisis."

"We will fight for more aid to support the state and local governments in Illinois, but your letter assumes the federal government will approve aid that is beyond this immediate crisis," the congressmen wrote. "For example, you suggest the state's revenue loss will be approximately \$14.1 billion, but your letter requests aid that is many multiples of the state's loss projections. We fully support federal assistance to help defray some of the state's losses, but we oppose using the crisis as an opportunity for a full-scale federal bailout."

They said the pandemic did not cause the pension crisis in Illinois, but only "further illuminated the one that already existed."

While the GOP members said they will "work with" the state to provide more resources, they said Illinois must reform its pension system, reduce spending and local government mandates, and "withdraw the graduated income tax increase to protect Illinois jobs that are already at risk from the pandemic and to stem the exodus of people and opportunity from our great state."

## Quidnunc



Congratulation for every effort and financial sacrifice made to contain COVID-19. What fool would claim mission complete before science says it is. What fool would allow this to repeat.

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## Obituaries

Carlton, Roger, 82, Belvidere, April 20  
Mc Graw, Judy, 68, Belvidere, April 16  
Salamone, Charles "Chris", 68, ChVal, April 15  
Schneider, Michael, 78, Belvidere, April 19  
Stark, LaRene, 62, Garden Prairie, April 18  
Woest, Doris, 89, Cherry Valley, April 15



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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.

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in Capron

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The pantry is in need of donations. The demand for food will be more than we have ever experienced, and more than we are presently able to provide. The Stay-at-Home Order in Illinois and the loss of income for so many families make your donation so important.

None of us knows how long this will last but with your help we can minimize the pain for our community. For every dollar donated the pantry is able to purchase \$8 worth of food. Normally 2/3 of our neighbors are fixed income/social security incomes and a 1/3 are people that are in a temporary tight spot. We expect the later group to expand.

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# OP ED

## Choose Your Research Partners, and Do-Si-Do

by Jim Nowlan

I ran into University of Illinois President Tim Killeen recently at a reception. (This was before we all began staying at home, of course.) Tim chided me for not writing about all the great things going on at his university. I am sure he had in mind, among other initiatives, the \$1 billion Discovery Partners Institute (DPI) to be “led by the U. of I.” in Chicago’s South Loop.

DPI is a major high-tech applied research project critical to Chicago and the University of Illinois. Killeen’s big challenge is to persuade the University of Chicago and Northwestern University into becoming major, and probably somewhat equal partners. The courtship is, however, fraught with issues of institutional status, ambition and ego.

A former university colleague of mine once quipped that interinstitutional cooperation among universities was an unnatural act among unwilling partners. That is not true, of course. These three universities and their scientists collaborate at Argonne National Lab (managed by University of Chicago), Fermilab and elsewhere, yet there are delicate pecking order sensitivities. A little background.

The Center for World University Rankings for 2019 evaluated 20,000 institutions on the basis of research output, outcomes of graduates and more, and ranked the University of Chicago, Northwestern and UI-Urbana Champaign as 10th, 15th and 20th in the world, in that order. That ranks UIUC ahead of Kyoto, Japan’s top university, and a raft of big-name universities such as Duke and several Ivy League schools.

The three Illinois institutions are true, big-deal multi-billion-dollar operations in a world that is being transformed at warp speed by digital, quantum and DNA bits. Their rankings near the top are absolutely essential to the future of Chicago and Illinois.

University rankings are all flawed, not least because they compare apples and oranges; for example, University of Chicago has no engineering school, while University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign until recently had no medical school. Yet, higher rankings equal prestige, more research grants and capacity to recruit the absolute best scholars. These research schools are measured not by their teaching quality but by their research output and discoveries.

University competition for talent is brutal. Campuses steal budding star scholars and their labs in the dark of night, all the time. I am amazed that UIUC continues to hang on so well among the big boys, after two recent years without any state funding, caused by political stalemate in Springfield. It is a testament to Killeen and his academic leaders in the sciences and engineering.

The University of Chicago and Northwestern are, however, not about to let downstate UIUC upstage them on their own turf with projects like DPI. Yet, UIUC needs DPI to get a stronger foothold in Chicago, in a world that is gravitating to the action and resources in global cities, while Chicago needs DPI in its struggle to remain a global city.


These top Illinois schools as well as Chicago have been late to the commercialization party, lagging by decades the old Stanford Research Institute (SRI International), the Research Triangle in North Carolina and Route 128 near MIT and Harvard.

In 1992, for example, UIUC student Marc Andreessen and others developed Mosaic, a groundbreaking web browser. Marc wanted to develop its potential in Urbana, but university officials stifled his efforts at such unseemly commercialization. So, Marc went to Silicon

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Valley, where he is now a billionaire investor in tech start-ups and a worldwide web legend. Microsoft developed the Mosaic basics into Internet Explorer.

Illinois writ large can’t let even more Andreessens do-si-do off to our coasts and China. That is what DPI is all about. It cannot be allowed to founder over egos and turf issues.

*Nowlan in an Illinois-based columnist. Nearly half a century ago, he wrote his PhD paper on the politics of higher education (University of Illinois Press, 1976). He has worked for three unindicted Illinois governors.*

## COVID-19 Delivering Latest Twist in Fight Over Controversial Shipping Hub

*Project recently approved by Joliet raising issues not only of economics but also of open democracy for governments making decisions as they adhere to social distancing and stay-at-home orders amid pandemic.*

By **JOHN LIPPERT**

*Better Government Association*

Stephanie Irvine’s war with an e-commerce shipping warehouse park proposed near Joliet began three years ago, just months after she bought her family farm down the road near Elwood.

The sprawling complex — which would cover roughly seven times the area of Chicago’s Grant Park — would be another testament to the \$600 billion online U.S. retail industry. Warehouses like it are springing up all over the nation to meet the demand for faster deliveries to doorsteps far and wide.

Irvine likes next-day delivery as much as anyone but said the pollution and thousands of trucks that the

mega hub will bring to her small town’s already clogged roads cannot compensate for the few good-paying jobs that come with it.

So far, she’s been successful. But in the past month a new and tough adversary has emerged: the coronavirus.

With much of the nation sheltering in place and ramping up the need for home deliveries, supporters of the warehouse project have used the pandemic as a reason for government officials to quickly approve the development.

And opponents such

as Irvine have felt hamstrung to fight back because COVID-19 is forcing government meetings to be held virtually, preventing citizens from storming City Hall.

The situation is an early case study of the controversies that can arise for governments as they make decisions during the pandemic when social spacing and stay-at-home orders prevent residents from gaining access to meetings of town councils and other public bodies.

Last week, opponents of the warehouse park suffered a setback when the city council in Joliet gave preliminary approval to annex the land for the warehouse park that would butt up against the five-acre farm Irvine shares with her husband, Jason.

“They’re using coronavirus to slap this through with the least possible resistance,” said Irvine, 36, who also teaches English at a local community college. “They don’t even have to look anybody in the eye to do it.”

The project, which is being advanced by Kansas City area-based NorthPoint Development, promises to bring \$1 billion in investments, 1,600 construction jobs and 4,500 permanent warehouse jobs.

The development is the latest effort in the *Continued on Page 4*

**Goodacher** *Continued from page 1*

comparable to it.” Wolf has contributed a total of seven statues to Belvidere’s cultural experience. His most recent contribution is a statue on South State Street honoring the role that first responders play in society. *Twist of an Old Tale* in Belvidere Park, is inspired by one of Aesop’s Fables, “The Tortoise and the Hare.” Belvidere Park. *Old Man and Dog* is in front of the Boone County Council of Aging. *Field of Blue* of a small boy holding a burial flag is in the Boone County Military Memorial Garden. *Baby Sitter*, at Fairgrounds Road and Business 20, is a statue depicting the care-free, rural life of a child and a horse. Just outside Belvidere, *Aviator* is a statue done by George Lundeen in 2013.

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Chicago region to attract online retailers like Amazon by building giant clusters of often-controversial warehouses and other industrial infrastructure. On any given day, half of all containers moving in the U.S. pass in or around Chicago by train, plane or truck, according to the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

On its website, NorthPoint cites the coronavirus as an e-commerce turbocharger. “The retail world was already transforming and will evolve even faster in a post-pandemic world,” the company says.

For Joliet Mayor Bob O’Dekirk, a finalized NorthPoint annexation agreement will provide an immediate \$5 million cash infusion for the city and a potential source of long-term growth.

O’Dekirk said the city has lost three-quarters of its revenue since the pandemic shut down casinos and other businesses in town. With the coronavirus threatening public meetings for the rest of the year, O’Dekirk said the city moved forward with its unorthodox hearing on NorthPoint but stretched those hearings to 12 ½ hours over four days to accommodate varying points of view.

“The people who are criticizing us just don’t want to go forward, and they’re using COVID-19 to say, ‘shame on you,’” he said.

In 2018, Irvine was one of the leaders when Elwood balked at annexing the land for NorthPoint. A turning point came when she asked people in a packed gymnasium to stand if they opposed it.

“Everybody stood up, and they were yelling and waving signs and clapping for me. It was democracy in action,” she said.

Last week, when Irvine phoned in for her four-minute allotment of remote commentary during the Joliet public hearing, the vibe was far different. “It felt like you were talking into a black hole,” she said.

Those without internet access couldn’t register to speak at the meeting; that’s about one in 10 Joliet residents, warehouse critics say.

Others may not have known about the hearing because of late notice, and could only view public comments emailed to the council by filing a Freedom of Information request. Callers had to register as many as four days in advance and wait for a call-back — sometimes during work hours. If they failed to respond within four rings, they got bumped to the end of the line.

Irvine tried and failed to convince a Will County court to block the vote, arguing the restrictions violated the state’s Open Meetings Act. Judge John Anderson disagreed, ruling that under challenging circumstances the city’s effort to stage a public hearing was at least reasonable. But he still had misgivings.

“Having this meeting in the way the City has decided is shady and does a disservice to the public,” Anderson said in his ruling.

Irvine promises more litigation after last week’s vote. On Tuesday, she and other opponents said they may ask Anderson to declare the vote null and void but that the judge hasn’t scheduled the case for a public hearing until July.

Irvine’s father-in-law, Dick Ooykaas, 63, also opposes the development. He started buying 540 acres for his own nearby tree farm 40 years ago and now has 45 employees. He said he sometimes waits

five minutes to pull across a country road as trucks from existing warehouses roar by at 70 miles per hour. That’s tough, he noted, when pulling a trailer full of freshly dug trees. The only reason NorthPoint wants farmland near his rural home, he said, is that it costs half as much as it would five miles away near the existing warehouse parks.

Ooykaas said the company is also bragging about the 8,000 trees it intends to plant on farmland it wants to cover with warehouses. “They think they can do whatever they want,” he said, “just because they’ve got money.”

The warehouse debate is driven largely by geography and by the remarkable growth of e-commerce and the logistics infrastructure it needs.

Elwood has become a Midwest shipping hub because it is at the eastern end of a high-speed rail line connecting Chicago to Los Angeles, and in turn, to shipping containers coming to and from China.

Amazon alone has five major distribution centers near Joliet, and the company uses them to break open containers and distribute their contents via truck and rail not just to Chicago, but to 88 million people throughout the upper Midwest.

Wal-Mart, Ikea, Target, Samsung, and Dollar Tree operate additional warehouses nearby and are scrambling to keep up.

Jose Holguin-Veras, an engineering professor at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, said the intermodal network that’s developed “is a juggernaut that is very, very difficult to stop.” Prior to the pandemic, he foresaw average daily package deliveries to Chicago-area homes and businesses rising to 3.3 million by 2021, up 26 percent from 2018.

These sorts of projects are prompting similar debates around the country.

In a 2014 study of a Chicago suburb, the Environmental Protection Agency found “residential areas in close proximity to the Cicero rail yard generally experience higher overall air pollution.” The smog, soot and dust from diesel fumes lead to elevated levels of disease and death, and now to increased vulnerability to COVID-19, a Harvard University study found.

Last year, the American Lung Association gave a failing air quality grade to San Bernardino, California, where Amazon is the largest employer with 14 distribution centers.

In Joliet, the four days of hearings provided plenty of emotion.

Burneva McCullum of the South Suburban Region Black Chamber of Commerce called to say opponents should stop dismissing the \$16.08 hourly pay NorthPoint expects for warehouse workers.

“It’s not up to others to dictate what those without jobs should want,” she said.

Raechel Steffes dialed in to say she’d move if Joliet approved NorthPoint. “I refuse to raise my child and future children in an area full of nothing but pollution, noise, traffic, and with representatives that do not uphold the democratic process,” she said.

In all, about 250 people spoke, with NorthPoint opponents outnumbering supporters by five to one. Traffic was their top concern.

They told stories of semi-trucks snarling traffic, flipping over, roaring through red lights, crashing into

police cruisers, running people off the road, speeding through residential neighborhoods, and crushing headstones as they turn around inside a cemetery for U.S. war veterans. They warned of crumbling bridges and pot-holed highways Illinois may never repair now that COVID-19 has saddled the state with a \$2.7 billion budget deficit.

When NorthPoint’s turn came at the meeting, its executives listed the companies that are already tenants — Amazon, GM, Ford, Wayfair and Home Depot — and came close to daring the city to make its way into the future without them.

“We’ve been waiting and working for nearly four years. We can’t wait any longer,” said Nathaniel Hagedorn, NorthPoint’s chief executive.

With projects in 23 states, the privately owned NorthPoint also has perfected the art of political lobbying.

During the Joliet hearings, the company’s primary backing came from unionized construction workers who earn four times more than people would make in the warehouses. NorthPoint and the construction unions are players in Joliet-area political campaigns. Together, they donated to all nine of the Joliet City Council members during recent elections, according to the Illinois State Board of Elections.

The company’s website features a picture of Hagedorn with former Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel at the dedication of a new Chicago warehouse. For the Joliet vote, NorthPoint lined up bipartisan endorsements. The Democrats included U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin and Rep. Bobby Rush, who represents Elwood. U.S. Rep. Adam Kinzinger, a Republican, also endorsed the annexation.

Now that Joliet has said yes to NorthPoint, it still must wait years to see how its decision pays off.

For one thing, NorthPoint still faces a gauntlet of lawsuits, and not just about open meetings. The company needs a bridge over a local highway to fulfill its promise of limiting the number of trucks on neighborhood streets. But the bridge would be built in Elwood, which is fighting the plan in court. NorthPoint isn’t requesting tax breaks for now, but it’s applying for a state enterprise zone through which it could seek them later on.

And uncertainty remains even as Amazon scrambles to hire 75,000 workers for its U.S. operations, on top of 100,000 added as demand surged in the immediate aftermath of the COVID-19 outbreak, and as the Union Pacific Railroad consolidates some of its Chicago-area operations in Elwood.

By last month, COVID-19 had already cut the number of high-speed container trains moving from Los Angeles to Elwood in half, to 25 trains per week, according to the Financial Times. About a third of the land stands vacant inside a sprawling intermodal yard that Centerpoint Properties built in Elwood 20 years ago.

O’Dekirk can’t say with certainty when COVID-19 will relax its grip enough for the NorthPoint warehouses to flourish. “All I know is, I’ve got a potential billion-dollar investment saying this is a good idea,” he said.

But Holguin-Veras said making a decision “during a pandemic is bound to upset local communities.”

“When cities make decisions under duress, they’re less inclined to require things like buffer areas for noise and traffic, or the use of electric vehicles,” Holguin-Veras said.

By moving ahead during the pandemic, O’Dekirk did more than squander leverage to press NorthPoint to mitigate problems that might develop from the project, Irvine argued. He also revealed the fundamental unfairness in the city’s approach, she said.

“There was nothing essential about this other than that NorthPoint wanted it done now,” she said.

This story was produced by the Better Government Association, a nonprofit news organization based in Chicago.

Editor’s Note: Opponents of the NorthPoint development hired Chicago attorney Matt Topic for its Open Meetings Act lawsuit. Topic is the outside general counsel for the BGA, and frequently represents other clients on open-government matters. The BGA is not involved in any aspect of the NorthPoint lawsuit and Topic was not involved in the reporting or editing of this story.



# Meat Supply Chain Begins To Feel Effects of COVID-19

*Packing, labor issues affect abundance and availability of products*

By **BEN ORNER** Capitol News Illinois and **JEFF BROWN** Illinois Farm Bureau

The meat supply chain, which was running at full capacity at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, is now taking a hit as the disease infects plant workers and threatens the livestock industry's ability to keep up with high demand.

The spread of coronavirus through employees at some of the nation's largest meat plants could slow the flow of food, depending on how long plant closures last. At the same time, other plants that normally supply the food service industry with larger quantities of food are not equipped to distribute smaller packages suitable for grocery stores.

"When one section of the supply chain has a slowdown or complete shutdown, it bottlenecks the rest of the system," Illinois Farm Bureau President Richard Guebert, Jr. said. "With highly perishable products like milk or vegetables, the bottleneck is slowing down the process longer than the items have in shelf life."

One of the nation's largest pork processing plants, a Smithfield Foods facility in Sioux Falls, S.D., shut down earlier this month because of a COVID-19 outbreak, taking 130 million weekly servings of food out of the supply chain. The closure also idled plants in Missouri and Wisconsin that rely on the Sioux Falls plant's raw materials.

On Monday, food processing company JBS shut down a Minnesota processing plant that produces about 5 percent of the nation's pork. Tyson Foods has also shut down an Iowa facility that produces 2 percent of U.S. pork.

Those four closures represent 10 to 15 percent of U.S. pork processing, said Illinois Pork Producers Association Executive Director Jennifer Tirey.

"That just creates a bottleneck for all the other packers, because they try to move those hogs to their other facilities," she said.

Of the three major pork facilities in Illinois, one is operated by JBS in Beardstown and another, in Monmouth, is operated by Smithfield Foods. The third major facility in the state is the Agar-operated Rantoul Foods in Rantoul.

While Tirey said the plants are experiencing disruptions, they remain in operation. There were, however, three employees at the Monmouth plant who tested positive for COVID-19 last week.

Tirey said the bottlenecked supply chain dropped the number of pigs processed in the U.S. on Monday to 370,000, down from 415,000 only a couple days before.

"Just losing those couple processing plants in neighboring states brings the overall total down," she said.

Tirey added, though, that she does not expect the amount of pork in supermarkets will decrease, for now. Instead, she said, shortages at supermarkets should be attributed to consumers' heightened demand for meat.

Tirey also said that Illinois pork plants, including the one in Monmouth, have stepped up their safety protocols, including social distancing, daily temperature checks for employees and requiring workers to wear personal protective equipment (PPE).

Meanwhile, farms in some parts of the country have an oversupply of their products. The inability to bridge the gap between farmers growing produce, milk and meat with the growing number of needy consumers has not been from a lack of trying, Guebert said.

Illinois Farm Bureau and the Illinois Farm Bureau Young Leader Committee recently wrapped up a 16-day fundraising campaign that raised a total of \$26,000 for eight food banks that serve Illinoisans.

County Farm Bureaus in six northern Illinois counties donated \$5,000 worth of milk – nearly 2,000 gallons – to 30 food pantries in those counties.

And the American Farm Bureau Federation is working with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to purchase products from farmers who have lost other markets during the pandemic and redirect them to food banks.

"It isn't that the food isn't there," the Illinois

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Farm Bureau's associate director of food systems development, Raghela Scavuzzo, said. "What we are facing is a readjusting of the distribution system. That takes time. More time than any of us would like."

Guebert said farmers would prefer to donate their products to those who need them rather than dispose of them on the farm. But food pantries' capacity to store products with short shelf lives is limited.

"It's heartbreaking for farmers whenever they're forced to dispose of products," he said. "Many farmers do not know where their income is going to come from during this time, but believe me, they would rather find a home for these products."

Many food banks are based on repackaging bulk loads of products into smaller amounts to be distributed individually. But the volunteer base that performs that work has largely dried up because of social distancing guidelines.

Other barriers stand in the way of getting meat and dairy products from farm to fork.

The facilities that package eggs, milk and cheese, for example, are set up to distribute more than half of those products to food service sectors. Eggs are typically delivered in either liquid form or in 15-dozen quantities.

Cheese might be delivered to a pizzeria in 10-pound bags, not the 8-ounce bags a shopper would buy at the grocery store.

And large amounts of milk would ordinarily be packaged in half-pint cartons for students eating lunch at school, not the gallon jugs that have been subject to rationing at many supermarkets.

"Approximately 60 percent to 65 percent of product from farms typically goes into the food service industry – restaurants, hotels, schools and cafeterias," Scavuzzo said. "The way in which these businesses purchase food is very different than what goes into a retail space or what the food banks are needing due to their labor barriers."

Some relief is coming to farmers struggling from low demand, supply chain crises and low prices after the federal government on Friday announced a COVID-19 agricultural aid package. The USDA will provide \$16 billion in direct payments to farmers and ranchers, including \$9.6 billion for the livestock industry.

Producers will be

compensated for 85 percent of price losses from Jan. 1 through April 15. Compensation will then decrease to 30 percent of price losses through the next two quarters.

The USDA says another \$873 million will go toward purchasing agricultural products to be sent to food banks. This is on top of \$600 million of previous COVID-19 relief money set to food banks to purchase food.

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## ISA Seeks Qualified Candidates for District Director Board Seats

The Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) seeks qualified candidates to fill a board seat representing District 1 (Boone, Carroll, DeKalb, Jo Daviess, Lee, Ogle, Stephenson & Winnebago Counties). Paul Rasmussen, current director, will term off the board in July 2020. The Illinois Department of Agriculture directs the election process.

The Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) represents the interests of more than 43,000 soybean farmers in Illinois through the state soybean checkoff and membership efforts. ISB, which is one of the entities of the ISA organization, manages and invests Illinois soybean checkoff funds.

Board members serve a term of three years and are eligible for up to two terms. The ISA board is comprised of 18 district directors and six at-large directors.

Eligibility to serve requires candidates be Illinois residents of legal voting age that contribute to the soybean checkoff. Candidates must also be residents within the district and maintain eligibility during their term(s). Directors may need to devote about 24 days per year, depending on level of leadership and representation needs.

Petitions are available through the Illinois Department of Agriculture in Springfield, or by contacting ISA representative Dustin Scott at 309-808-3603 or scott@ilsoy.org. Contact Scott with questions or for additional information.

To have your name placed on the ballot, petitions must be completed and filed with the Illinois Department of Agriculture director in Springfield no later than 5 p.m., May 15, 2020. A candidate's petition must carry the signatures of at least 250 of the qualified producers from the district where the candidate seeks office, or five percent, whichever is less. Any person running as a write-in candidate must also meet the eligibility requirements and submit a Declaration of Intent to the IDOA Acting Director Jerry Costello no later than 5 p.m., June 30, 2020.

Elections will be held July 7, 2020.

Rachel Peabody, Communications Manager

Illinois Soybean Association checkoff program

Illinois Soybean Growers

Office: 309.808.3617

Mobile: 217.825.7654

Email: peabodyr@ilsoy.org

www.ilsoy.org

www.ilsoygrowers.org

Our Mission: "To ensure Illinois soy is the highest quality, most dependable, sustainable and competitive in the marketplace."

# LEGAL NOTICES

## Public Notices

IN THE STATE OF ILLINOIS  
 IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 17TH JUDICIAL  
 CIRCUIT COURT IN BOONE COUNTY, ILLINOIS  
 IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF DAVID R. RASMUSSEN,  
 2509 E. Sixth St., Belvidere, Illinois 61008. Date and place of death:  
 January 3, 2020 Rockford, Illinois. Case No. 2020P23 PUBLICATION  
 NOTICE - INDEPENDENT ADMINISTRATION TO: CREDITORS,  
 CLAIMANTS, UNKNOWN HEIRS AND LEGATEES Notice is hereby  
 given of the death of David R. Rasmussen who died on January 3,  
 2020, a resident of Belvidere, Illinois. The Representative for the estate  
 is Douglas J. Schefflow, 63 Douglas Avenue, Suite 200, Elgin, Illinois  
 60120. The Attorney for the estate is Douglas J. Schefflow, 63 Douglas  
 Avenue, Suite 200, Elgin, Illinois 60120. Claims against the estate may  
 be filed on or before October 19, 2020. Claims against the estate may  
 be filed with the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court, 601 N. Main  
 Street, Belvidere, Illinois 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 10 days after it has been filed. On March 20, 2020 an  
 Order Admitting the Will to Probate and Appointing the Representative  
 was entered. Within forty-two (42) days after the effective date of the  
 original Order Admitting the Will to Probate, you may file a petition  
 with the Court to require proof of the validity of the Will by testimony  
 or witnesses to the Will in open Court, or other evidence, as provided  
 in Article VI 5/6-21 (755 ILCS 5/6/21). Within six (6) months after the  
 effective date of the original Order Admitting the Will to Probate, you  
 may file a petition with the Court to contest the validity of the Will as  
 provided under Article VIII 5/8-1 of the Probate Act (755 ILCS 5/8-1).  
 The estate will be administrated without Court supervision unless an  
 interested party terminates independent supervision administration by  
 filing a petition to terminate under Article XXVIII 5/28-4 of the Probate  
 Act (755 ILCS 5/28-4).  
 Signature of Executor /S/Douglas J. Schefflow  
 Published in The Boone County Journal April 17, 24, May 1

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**  
**BELVIDERE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION**  
 Notice is hereby given that the City of Belvidere Planning and  
 Zoning Commission will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, May 12,  
 2020 at 6:00 pm in the City Council Chamber, Belvidere City Hall, 401  
 Whitney Boulevard, Belvidere, Illinois 61008 upon the following:  
 Application of Dean Kelly (Abbott Land and Investment  
 Corporation), 2250 Southwind Boulevard, Bartlett, IL 60103 on behalf  
 of the property owners, Dal Pra Trust 1994 and Southtown Ventures,  
 LLC, 1901 Union Avenue, Belvidere, IL 61008 for a special use for  
 a daycare center (3+ children) at 435 Southtowne Drive, Belvidere,  
 IL 61008 within the GB, General Business District (Belvidere Zoning  
 Ordinance Sections 150.105(C)(5)(B)(2) Daycare Center (3+ Children)  
 and 150.904 Special Use Review and Approval Procedures. The subject  
 property is legally described as:  
 A part of the South 25 acres of the east half of the Southeast  
 Quarter of Section 35 Township 44 North, Range 3 East of the  
 Third Principal Meridian described as beginning 631.49 feet north  
 of the southeast corner, west 164.7 feet, north 187.2 feet, west  
 794 feet, south 357.33 feet, west 366 feet, south 211.05 feet, east  
 733.42 feet, northeast 226.99 feet, northeast 62.38 feet, northwest  
 100.57 feet, northeast 173.87 feet, east 200 feet, north 164.55 feet  
 to the point of beginning (except commencing at the southeast  
 corner north 631.49 feet, west 164.7 feet, north 187.2 feet, west  
 794 feet, south 357.33 feet, south 21 feet); located in Boone  
 County, Illinois; PIN: 05-35-482-017.  
 All persons interested in the petitions may attend and be heard at  
 the stated time and place.  
 Alissa Maher, Vice-Chairman,  
 Belvidere Planning and Zoning Commission  
 Published in *The Boone County Journal* Apr 24

**ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS**  
 DATE: April 24, 2020  
 PROJECT: Food Service Management Contract Belvidere  
 CUSD #100 Belvidere, Illinois  
 LOCATION: All District Schools and Satellite Operations  
 per Spec  
 SCHOOL FOOD: Belvidere Unit School District #100  
 AUTHORITY: 1201 Fifth Avenue Belvidere, Illinois 61008  
 Phone (815) 544-0301  
 Fax (815) 544-4260  
 SCOPE: Contracted Food Services for the District's  
 National School Lunch Program, Breakfast  
 Program and Summer Programs.  
 DATE DUE: Sealed bids will be received until 10:00 a.m.  
 on Friday, May 29, 2020, at the office of the  
 CFO, Belvidere Community Unit School District  
 No. 100, 1201 Fifth Avenue, Belvidere, Illinois,  
 and will be publicly opened and read aloud at that  
 time.  
 PRE-BID MEETING: All prospective contractors are required to attend  
 a pre-bid meeting (potentially virtually) and  
 site visit that will begin at 1:00 p.m. on Monday,  
 May 4, 2020, at the Administration Center, 1201  
 5th Avenue, Belvidere, Illinois.  
 ACCESS TO BIDDING Bidding Documents are on file for reference at  
 the Administration  
 DOCUMENTS: Center, 1201 5th Avenue, Belvidere, IL 61008  
 and will be sent to prospective bidders upon  
 request.  
 BID FORM: The Bid Form is included in the Bidding  
 Documents.  
 RIGHTS RESERVED The FSA reserves the right to waive any  
 BY FSA: irregularities and/or reject any or all bids when,  
 in the opinion of the FSA, such action will serve  
 the best interests of the FSA.  
 WITHDRAWAL No bid may be withdrawn for a period of 90 days  
 BIDS: after the opening of bids without written consent  
 of the Owner.  
 By: Holly Houk, Secretary of the Board of Education  
 Published in *The Boone County Journal* Apr 24

**Belvidere Community Unit School District #100 is requesting bids  
 for Copy Paper**  
 All bids are due by 1:00 pm Tuesday, May 12, 2020 at the Business  
 Office, Administration Building 1201 Fifth Avenue, Belvidere, Illinois  
 61008. Bids are to be F.O.B. 1034 7th Avenue, Belvidere, IL 61008.  
 Bids are to be submitted on the form provided and signed by an  
 authorized representative of the company.  
 Specifications may be obtained at the Administration Building 1201  
 Fifth Avenue Belvidere, IL 61008 or by phoning 815-544-0301  
 The Board of Education reserves the right to reject any and all bids.  
 Holly Houk, Secretary  
 Board of Education  
 Published in *The Boone County Journal* April 24, 2020

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.

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# LEGAL NOTICES

## Foreclosures

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE SEVENTEENTH JUDICIAL  
 CIRCUIT COUNTY OF BOONE, STATE OF ILLINOIS  
 BAYVIEW LOAN SERVICING, LLC, A DELAWARE LIMITED  
 LIABILITY COMPANY, Plaintiff(s),  
 vs. 20 CH 47  
 BERTHA CONEJO, UNKNOWN OWNERS AND NON-RECORD  
 CLAIMANTS, Defendant(s).  
 PUBLICATION NOTICE  
 The requisite Affidavit for Publication having been filed, notice is  
 hereby given to you: BERTHA CONEJO, NONRECORD CLAIMANTS  
 and UNKNOWN OWNERS, Defendants in the above entitled suit, that  
 said suit has been commenced in the Circuit Court of Boone County,  
 Chancery Division, by the said Plaintiff, against you and other Defendants,  
 praying for foreclosure of a certain Real Estate Mortgage conveying the  
 premises described as follows, to wit:  
 LOT EIGHT (8) IN BLOCK NINETEEN (19) AS DESIGNATED  
 UPON THE PLAT OF SHEFFIELD GREEN, PLAT NO. 6 BEING A  
 SUBDIVISION OF PART OF THE SOUTH HALF (1/2) OF SECTION  
 35, TOWNSHIP 44 NORTH, RANGE 3 EAST OF THE THIRD  
 PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN IN BOONE COUNTY, ILLINOIS, AS  
 PLATED AND RECORDED IN THE RECORDER'S OFFICE OF  
 BOONE COUNTY, ILLINOIS, IN PLAT IN INDEX FILE ENVELOPE  
 NO. 32, AS DOCUMENT NO. 78-1544 ON MAY 22, 1978 AS  
 SITUATED IN BOONE COUNTY AND THE STATE OF ILLINOIS.  
 Tax Number: 05-35-330-008-0000

commonly known as 1422 14TH AVE BELVIDERE IL 61008; and  
 which said Real Estate Mortgage was made by BERTHA CONEJO,  
 and recorded in the Office of the Boone County Recorder as Document  
 Number 2007R10021; that Summons was duly issued out of the said Court  
 against you as provided by law, and that the said suit is now pending.  
 Now, therefore, unless you, the said named Defendant, file your answer  
 to the Complaint in the said suit or otherwise make your appearance  
 therein, in the office of the Circuit Court of Boone County, located at 601  
 N MAIN ST, BELVIDERE, IL 61008, on or before May 25, 2020, default  
 may be entered against you at any time after that day and a judgment  
 entered in accordance with the prayer of said Complaint.  
 LAW OFFICES OF IRA T. NEVEL, LLC  
 Attorney for Plaintiff  
 Ira T. Nevel - ARDC #6185808  
 Timothy R. Yueill - ARDC #6192172  
 Greg Elsnic - ARDC #6242847  
 Aaron Nevel - ARDC #6322724  
 Joseph Baldwin - ARDC #6323598  
 Danielle Alvarez - ARDC #6325510  
 175 North Franklin St. Suite 201  
 Chicago, Illinois 60606  
 (312) 357-1125  
 Pleadings@nevellaw.com  
 KP  
 # 20-00389  
 13150191  
 Published in *The Boone County Journal* Apr 24; May 1, 8, 2020.

# Illinois to Loosen Election Rules for Independents, Third-Party Candidates

*Judge allowing more time, fewer signatures while Illinoisans staying at home*  
 by Rebecca Anzel Capitol News Illinois

Illinois ballot eligibility requirements will be loosened for third-party candidates affected this election cycle by state efforts to combat the novel coronavirus pandemic.

In a lawsuit filed April 2, the state's Libertarian and Green parties said social distancing and stay-at-home orders instituted by Gov. JB Pritzker made gathering enough petition signatures to qualify for the ballot "practically impossible."

Both are considered "new" political parties under state election rules, meaning their candidates must obtain a greater number of in-person signatures than those with "established" parties — typically, Democrats and Republicans.

Under statute, Libertarians, Greens and Independents have from March 24 until June 22 to gather enough signatures — in person with a canvasser watching — to qualify for inclusion on the Nov. 3 general election ballot. Illinoisans have been subject to Pritzker's stay-at-home order since March 20.

In a remote hearing Tuesday, Federal Judge Rebecca Pallmeyer outlined general terms to ease those requirements this election cycle for all "new" party and independent candidates and asked both sides' representatives to formulate the details.

She described pushing the deadline for candidates to submit petition signatures to the State Board of Elections to a date in the first week of August and reduced the number of mandated signatures by 85 to 90 percent, according to attorneys present for the hearing.

Independents or those in a "new" party needed at least 25,000 signatures to run for president or a seat in the U.S. Senate. Under Pallmeyer's terms, the minimum required signatures could range from 2,500 to 3,750. The judge also dictated candidates may collect signatures remotely. Voters would be able to print out a petition from the candidate's website, sign it and either send a hard copy to the candidate through the mail or electronically in an emailed attachment or as a photograph.

Alternatively, voters would be able to electronically sign petition forms from their smartphone or laptop's trackpad.

Both Oliver Hall, founder of the Center for Competitive Democracy and an attorney for the parties, and a spokesperson for the Board of Elections declined to comment.

Sam Cahnman, an attorney representing an independent candidate for president, said the terms Pallmeyer outlined are "good."

"It is not everything we wanted, but I think overall it's a big victory for independents — for



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democracy, really," he said. "In a lot of these legislative races, there's only one candidate on the ballot. We're supposed to let people make their decisions about who they want to vote for, but if they only have one candidate on the ballot, they have no choice."

Those conditions to be finalized differ from what the Libertarian and Green parties initially sought and what attorneys for Pritzker and the State Board of Elections offered.

The parties asked Illinois' signature collection mandates be waived or suspended this general election cycle so their candidates could appear on the November ballot. In a remote court hearing Friday, Pallmeyer said that "is beyond the power of the court."

"In other words, no test that I adopt is going to be, if you file a lawsuit, you get on the ballot. That's not appropriate," she said, according to a court transcription.

The state, in a court document filed April 16, submitted what its attorneys said was a proposal that "reasonably accommodates the candidates' interests in accessing the ballot and does not impose undue burden on them." It also maintains Illinois officials' "important interest in election integrity."

In part, voters under the state's proposal would have been able to print out ballot petitions, sign them with a pen and return them to candidates either physically or electronically. The deadline would have remained June 22 and the number of required signatures would have been halved.

Hall, in a remote court hearing Friday, said "the logistics (of the state's proposal) are just unworkable, particularly given the shortened timeframe, the lack of notice, and the lack of ... infrastructure in place in order to be able to make a procedure like that work," according to a transcript.

## Centuries-Old Law Cannot be Used to Reclaim Lost Wager, State Supreme Court

*Daily fantasy sports a game of skill, not chance, court says*

by *Rebecca Anzel Capitol News Illinois*

A statute dating back to the early 1800s cannot be applied to daily fantasy sports betting, Illinois' highest court ruled Thursday. Fantasy sports, the court ruled, are games dominated by skill, not by chance.

In April 2016, Colin Dew-Becker and Andrew Wu competed in a fantasy NBA contest through the website FanDuel. They each paid \$109 — a \$100 wager and \$9 fee to the company. Wu's team scored almost double the points Dew-Becker's team did, making him the winner.

Dew-Becker filed a lawsuit three days later to recover his bet. Under a centuries-old Illinois law called the Loss Recovery Act — passed in 1819, one year after Illinois became a state and 40 years before the Civil War — those on the losing end of an illegal wager have a legal avenue to get their money back.

In order for that to be a possibility, however, that money had to be lost while gambling. The state Supreme Court, after consulting recently-published peer-reviewed studies, ruled that while nothing in the act's language omits internet contests from its purview, daily fantasy sports bets do not fit the definition of gambling as dictated by law.

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"Because the outcomes of head-to-head DFS contests are predominately skill based, we conclude that (Dew-Becker) was not engaged in 'gambling' with (Wu) as required" under statute, Chief Justice Anne Burke wrote in the opinion. "... We determine here only that the DFS contest at issue in this case does not fall under the current legal definition of gambling."

Justice Lloyd Karmeier, whose retirement takes effect in December, was the lone justice among six to dissent. Justice Michael Burke, who is not related to the chief justice, did not participate in this case. He was appointed to replace retired Justice Robert Thomas on March 1, after arguments in the case were heard.

"Throughout the history of antigambling laws, courts have recognized the effort and ingenuity man has exerted to circumvent the law by disguising activities as legal or contests of skill although the intended appeal is to chance," Karmeier wrote in his dissent. "...The ingenuity exerted in head-to-head DFS contests duped the majority into believing it is a game of skill when truly it is a game of chance."

He took issue with the majority justices using outside research to base their decision instead of materials submitted by attorneys for Dew-Becker and Wu. This, he said, can set a dangerous precedent.

"The majority opinion risks legalizing traditional concepts of gambling anytime a study concludes that it involves skill more than chance," Karmeier wrote.

He cites poker as an example. There is "statistical evidence" the game is won by the most skillful player — one with the best strategy and knowledge of the card game. That interpretation would legally define poker not as gambling, as Illinois courts have long held, but as a contest of talent.

If the majority justices used what Karmeier wrote was the "proper standard," they would have determined daily fantasy sports are games of chance.

"Once a lineup is set and the athletic games commence, the DFS participant cannot influence the athlete's performance or how points are accumulated," he wrote. "At this point in the game, the outcome of the contest relies entirely on a contingent event that the participant lacks all control over, and there is no subsequent opportunity for the participant to overcome the chance involved."

The six justices who participated in deciding the case agreed in other matters.

The Loss Recovery Act requires bettors have a "direct" connection to each other — simply, one person must lose to another. That enables its purpose of "not simply to undo illegal gambling transactions but 'to deter illegal gambling by using its recovery provision as a powerful enforcement mechanism' is met, according to court documents.

That contradicts the argument Wu's legal representative, William Gantz, made in a court

filing. Gantz said this interpretation "seeks a green light for a cottage industry in Illinois — lodging hundreds of thousands of claims against unsuspecting citizens who have been engaged in online DFS contests in Illinois for at least over a decade."

Burke wrote the filing of lawsuits would be in keeping with the act's "explicit" goal. The five majority justices added that state lawmakers are able to alter current regulations to manage daily fantasy sports contests.

## Boone County Community Foundation Disaster Fund

The Boone County Community Foundation (BCCF), through the use of its Disaster Fund, has established the Boone County COVID-19 Response Grant (BCCRG). The intended purpose of the BCCRG is to respond to and support the needs of the people of Boone County during the COVID-19 pandemic by distributing grants to local non-profit organizations that are in and/or serving Boone County.

The BCCRG will be awarded to Boone County non-profit organizations that have experience and existing programs providing essential and direct services to the community. No grants will be awarded to individuals. This is a competitive grant application process with limited resources. Grantees will be selected and awards allocated by a grant committee. The first round of grant applications will be accepted no later than May 15, 2020. If funding allows, subsequent deadlines will be the 15th of each month with funding allocations released by the 30th of each month. Eligible applicants may apply during each new grant cycle.

Non-profit organizations interested in applying for the BCCRG may find the application on the BCCF website at [www.boonecountycf.org](http://www.boonecountycf.org) or by contacting them at 815-544-7231.

The Boone County Disaster Fund is managed by the BCCF. The Fund was established to accept monetary tax-deductible donations that are used to support mid- to long-term recovery of declared disasters here in Boone County. Donations made to this particular fund will be used for the COVID-19 Response Grant and future declared disasters. If you are interested in donating to this fund please visit BCCF'S donations page at <https://boonecountycommunityfoundation.org/donations/>. BCCF can also accept checks mailed to:

Boone County Community Foundation  
600 South State Street, Suite 302  
Belvidere, IL 61008

For more information please visit their website at [www.boonecountycf.org](http://www.boonecountycf.org) or call their office at 815-544-7231.

# Pritzker Faces Questioning on Prison Sentence Commutations

*Governor says all decisions go through Prisoner Review Board*

*By Jerry Nowicki Capitol News Illinois*

Illinois Senate Republicans are calling for greater communication from the governor's office when he commutes prison sentences, but Gov. JB Pritzker has not indicated he will make any voluntary changes to the process, which is spelled out in state law and also goes through the state Prisoner Review Board.

The Chicago Tribune reported Pritzker commuted 17 sentences between March 11 and April 9. Another two commutations were conducted on April 13, according to the Prisoner Review Board.

"We have learned through the media that you have reduced the sentences of some violent criminals, including seven or more convicted murderers," eight Senate Republicans wrote in a letter to the governor on April 16. "We are concerned that you have done so without informing the victims, their families, witnesses who testified against them, local law enforcement leaders, the judges who decided their sentences, or members of the General Assembly. Are all of these commutations because of the COVID-19 crisis? We believe that the public deserves to know."

Pritzker did not directly respond Saturday to a question as to whether recent commutations were related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Illinois Constitution states, "The Governor may grant reprieves, commutations and pardons, after conviction, for all offenses on such terms as he thinks proper. The manner of applying therefore may be regulated by law."

Pritzker pointed out Saturday that all cases also go through the Prisoner Review Board process.

"So I just want to be clear that those go through the PRB," he said. "So they actually have a presentation of each case at the PRB, they vote on those cases before they ever get to my desk."

The review board is an independent body made up of members appointed by the governor. It imposes release conditions, revokes and restores good conduct credits, and conducts parole hearings. It also notifies victims and their families when an inmate is about to be released from custody and makes confidential recommendations to the governor regarding executive clemency petitions.

But the Senate Republicans said the information about releases from prison should be publicly viewable in an online database and Pritzker should personally reach out to victims' families, local law enforcement leaders, members of the General Assembly, presiding judges, witnesses, and state's attorneys' offices "before making any future commutation decisions."

"We don't even know everyone that they're releasing," Springfield Republican Sen. Steve McClure, who co-signed the letter to the governor, said in a phone call. "So we are not even getting the information. It is not just something that we need so that we know whether or not this is the right thing to do, but also for the safety of the public, particularly ... victims, people who testified against these people."

House Republican John Cabello, of Machesney Park, was also critical. He accused the governor of undermining the criminal justice system in "an unbelievable attempt to protect these prisoners from the coronavirus" as he released the names of 13 recently released prisoners last week.

Prison reform and civil rights groups, however, have praised the actions on medical furloughs and commutations and even called for greater release of at-risk prisoners in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Releasing prisoners from these settings improves safety for other detainees, people

who work in the corrections system as guards and administrators and also helps protect the communities where Illinois prisons are located," Colleen Connell, executive director of the ACLU of Illinois, said in a statement. "The people who are being released have served time – some of them years. The release of these names is not another opportunity to create faux outrage and perpetuate a criminal legal system that too often confuses being tough with being smart."

The Pritzker administration also faced a lawsuit from civil rights activists seeking the release of thousands more prisoners due to health concerns earlier this month, but a judge denied the request to intervene.

According to the IDOC website, as of Monday, 148 incarcerated individuals had tested positive for COVID-19 in Illinois prisons, 62 of whom have recovered, and 135 prison staff had tested positive for the virus, 35 of whom have recovered. Stateville Correctional Center near Joliet accounted for 70 of the staff and 121 of the prisoners that tested positive, with 77 combined recoveries.

In a Thursday news conference, Pritzker said there are "two methods that we're following for thinking about release."

"One is the director of the DOC, the Department of Corrections, has the ability on his own to determine that someone can be released and it's the criteria that he's using is non-violent convictions and people who have already served a substantial portion of their term or have a comorbidity or something that makes them especially vulnerable," he said, adding that it is essential that the person would not pose a risk to the community.

On April 6, Pritzker signed an executive order allowing the IDOC director greater authority to grant medical furloughs to prisoners during the COVID-19 disaster declaration.

Pritzker did not have an exact number of releases Monday at his daily briefing but said there were 1,300 fewer persons incarcerated than at the beginning of March for various reasons the last time he checked.

A spokesperson for IDOC said later Monday, "The department's efforts to return people to their communities has led to either the release or home confinement of more than 760 people, and this work is continuing. To reach this number, the department is exercising the legal procedures available while placing an emphasis on maintaining public safety."

Pritzker said the second method for release is appeals to the governor for clemency.

"And those often are the more difficult cases. These are often people who may have committed a violent crime but it may have occurred many, many years ago, they may have served, for example, decades of a term," Pritzker said, adding he makes decisions in consultation with Lt. Gov. Juliana Stratton and legal counsel.

Asked if the governor was considering adopting some of the procedures suggested by the GOP senators and whether more commutations are in the works, Pritzker's spokesperson said only, "The governor has clemency powers granted to him via the state Constitution. The administration has followed all appropriate procedures."

In their letter, the Senate Republicans specifically mentioned Alma Durr, a mother who was charged with killing her 21-month-old son in 1996 after allegedly using crack cocaine. She was serving a life sentence before it was commuted with nine others on April 7. They alleged that Durr was leaving a prison that had no prisoners confirmed to have COVID-19.

McClure said it and another case regarding the murder of a child that was in youth protective services stood out as hypocritical and dangerous when compared to the governor's previous public comments on reforms needed to the Department of Children and Family Services.

"It just doesn't make any sense, particularly when the governor seems to be so outraged over DCFS cases," McClure said.

The John Howard Association, an independent prison reform group, released a statement Friday with the Cook County Public Defender's Office

saying commutation decisions should be based on "research and data, not politics and emotion."

"Full consideration of all of the public health ramifications of this deadly disease inside prisons makes clear that each person released from prison represents an opportunity to save not one life but many lives," they said in the statement. "Categorically excluding people who have demonstrated their rehabilitation and do not present a threat to society from consideration for release solely due to the offense they were convicted of committing many years prior has long been recognized by experts as an ineffectual and ill-chosen approach to maintaining public safety."

The statement said Pritzker's commutations and executive orders to expedite early release of some prisoners "are steps in the right direction that must be encouraged and increased for everyone's safety and well-being."

The other Republicans who signed the letter are Jason Plummer, of Vandalia; Brian Stewart, of Freeport; Chapin Rose, of Mahomet; Jil Tracy, of Quincy; Paul Schimpf, of Waterloo; Craig Wilcox, of McHenry; and Dan McConchie, of Hawthorn Woods.

## 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.

**The Wall That Heals visit to the Belvidere area May 7-10 has been postponed-**

This event hosted by Flora Grange #1762 would have brought the preeminent replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial to the Boone County Fairgrounds May 7-10 for Vietnam veterans, family members, students and other members of the public. We are already looking at dates in 2021 to reschedule this important event. We want to thank all our sponsors whose continued support will make this event possible in 2021.

**WINNEBAGO COUNTY CASA** Program to host Virtual Heritage Run on Sunday, April 26th, 2020-

Rockford's oldest 10k is back for the 36th year, with a unique twist. In order to comply with current social distancing regulations, the 2020 Heritage Run will be virtual! Winnebago County Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Program will host the virtual run on Sunday, April 26, 2020. Each runner will run the distance on their own, and then report their time. Results will be posted on-line. Everyone who registers by April 18th will receive a commemorative race shirt.

**Webinar offers Best Practices for Disabilities in Workforce Development**-Sherry Sparks, workforce development unit manager from the Illinois Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS), will provide best practices for inclusion of persons with disabilities in workforce programming as part of University of Illinois Extension's Local Government Education webinar series. Disabilities in Workforce Development Programming will be offered free online at noon, April 23. Register prior to the webinar; <https://web.extension.illinois.edu/registration/?RegistrationID=22180>