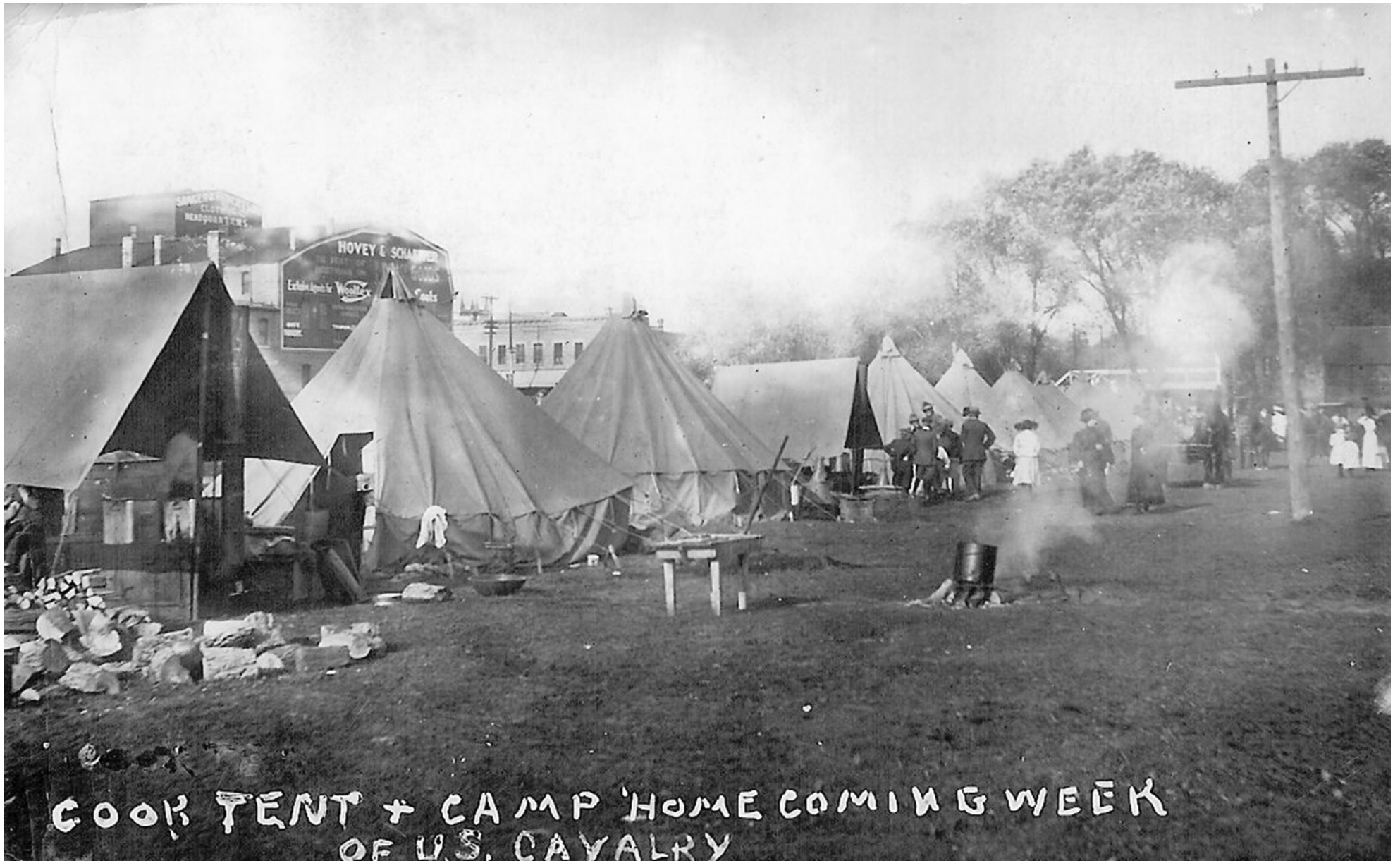


BOONE
COUNTY
LOCAL NEWS, OPINION & HISTORY
JOURNAL
Real Journalism for a Real Democracy

Friday • May 10, 2019
Vol. 23, Issue 2 • No. 1198



95th Civil War Veterans Yearly Reunited in Belvidere

By David Larson

Early September 1903 when the 95th regiment of Illinois held their 38th annual Civil War reunion in Belvidere the camp probably looked like this. A Civil War enactment in Doty Park today would not look much different. The regiment reunited several times, usually in Belvidere, over the years, but sometimes in DeKalb or Rockford. These local boys were coming of age when the war broke out. In September 2, 1862 the 95th formed at Camp Fuller in Rockford and was one of four regiments to muster there. Thus, the reunion date was always early September. The War had begun and Belvidere paid the price in blood. The veterans, mostly men, now entering their 60's had put the horror Vicksburg behind them and found solace in the yearly company of one another since Appomattox. By 1917 all of the veterans had become to old to travel or passed-a-way and the last reunion was held in Belvidere with those who attended using the Julian Hotel rather than camping along the Kishwaukee River.

The Derthick Opera House, is seen in the background. Mr. Derthick, the owner, was also a veteran and hosted the reunion meetings and meal. A business meeting called to order at 11AM. New officers we elected with representatives from each company included in the corporate body. This was how the reunion was conducted, every year. The Derthick Opera House burned to the ground and was replaced by the Apollo Theater in 1926.

The Derthick was the second Opera House at that location preceded by another which burnt to the ground also.

At noon the Woman's Relief Corps served dinner.

Speeches were given and musical performances given during the afternoon festivities. The Mayor of Belvidere, W.L.Pierce, gave the welcoming address that afternoon of 1903. Others remembering those who had fallen in battle or past with time delivered speeches in their honor. A fellow by the name of Ellis who had traveled from Louisiana addressed the podium asking if the local congressman could assist in getting burial records of northern soldiers from southern cemeteries, which had been uncooperative up to this point in sharing that information. Congressman Charles Fuller of Belvidere said he could do it because he was aware that older southerners had softened their hearts, which was promising for the success of the task. But, Fuller went on to say that, "the younger southerners feel a need to fight the war over again."

Congressman Fuller, younger than the veterans, was considered an adopted member of the 95th - of course. Congressman Fuller addressed the 112 attending veterans by telling about his recent travel out of the country and that the bounty of food they shared today is not possible where he had been. A Capt. Andrews addressed the congressman about the immigration problem, which the Congressman responded too. "It is a most important question... requiring immediate attention...many of them are undesirable." At that time many Swedish,

Continued on Page 2

Illinois Sees \$1.5 Billion Revenue Boost in April

Officials expect trend to continue into 2020.

by Peter Hancock
Capitol News Illinois

SPRINGFIELD – The state of Illinois received some unexpected good news Tuesday when officials reported that revenues received in April came in \$1.5 billion higher than expected.

That news was delivered in a letter to legislative leaders and top-ranking members of the House and Senate appropriations committees from Department of Revenue Director David Harris and Alexis Sturm, Director of the Governor's Office of Management and Budget.

"As an immediate result of the strong April performance, coupled with revenue collections year-to-date, the State of Illinois will be able to address most of the \$1.6 billion shortfall in the enacted (Fiscal Year 2019) budget because of the April revenues alone," Harris and Sturm stated.

The main reasons for the boost in April were higher-than-expected receipts in both personal and corporate income taxes.

Much of that, however, may be a one-time occurrence that resulted from strong stock market performance and recent changes in federal tax law. Because individuals can no longer deduct taxes they pay to state and local government on their federal returns, many filers did not adjust their state tax withholdings and ended up owing

Continued on Page 2

Reunion

from page 1

Italian and German migrants were streaming in to the Midwest. Every train from the east brought more. Cheap labor was in demand. The industrial revolution was in full bloom in the United States and government had very few regulations. It was the era of the Robber Baron, child labor and the 7-day workweek. Considering the economic growth in manufacturing at the time in Belvidere and Rockford perhaps the congressman was not as concerned as he presented himself.


In concluding the first days festivities President Wood of the Boone County Fair Association invited all veterans to the fair and promised they would not be charged an entrance fee. The veterans would continue to spend a few leisurely days in Belvidere before returning home, again. Small groups were seen engaging in informal conversation with old friends on the street, in restaurants, and taverns. They were who had survived and no one outside of that circle could begin to understand their sense of fraternity. That is why they sought each other's company for 52 years. What they said, what they thought is lost in the moment and only the imagination can hear.

In Chicago, 35 years after the war, 1900, a reunion of the Union Army was held. The Army of the Potomac, the Army of Tennessee, The Army of the Mississippi and Gulf and the Army of the Frontier each assembled together with campfire camps. The Commander-in-Chief Shaw representing the Union veterans extended an invitation to Major General John B. Gordon of the United Confederate veterans. President McKinley attended as well as former president Harrison both having been Generals during the war and now the last of the Civil War Generals to become President. McKinley was assassinated shortly after and "Teddy" Roosevelt became president.

The Republican Party had changed from the party of equality for all to the party of big business since the war and with the Roosevelts the national political current changed again.

Obituaries

- Bicksler, Darlene, 84, Belvidere, May 7
- Dolak, Williams, 87, Belvidere, May 2
- Larson, Phyllis, 95, Belvidere, April 30
- Pryor, Delores, 79, Belvidere, May 4
- Vance, Patricia, 55, Belvidere, May 4



real journalism for a real democracy

Publisher/Editor	David C. Larson
Senior Writer/Editorial Reporter	Charles Herbst
Advertising Manager	Sofi Zeman
Photography	Dena Roethler
Office Clerk	Susan Moran
	Amanda Nelson

David Grimm April 1938 - Dec. 2000
Richelle Kingsbury Aug. 1955 - June 2013

THE BOONE COUNTY JOURNAL
 419 S. State St • Belvidere, IL 61008
 Phone: (815) 544-4430 Fax: 544-4330
www.boonecountyjournal.com
news@boonecountyjournal.com

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

Revenue

from page 1

money in April. Harris and Sturm said many other states also saw higher tax collections in April.

But they also said there were other factors at work, including strong job growth, that will continue into the next fiscal year, which begins July 1.

As a result, the Department of Revenue raised its official estimate of next year's tax collections by \$800 million, bringing the new estimate to \$22 billion.

Harris and Sturm said Gov. J.B. Pritzker is recommending that money be earmarked for making the state's required payments into state pension systems. In his budget proposal in February, Pritzker originally suggested reducing those payments and stretching out the time for paying off the unfunded pension liabilities by another seven years.

"With the additional revenues due to the forecast revision, the state will be able to meet the current funding commitment to the retirement systems without extending the ramp this year," Harris and Sturm stated. "The governor remains committed to finding ways to fund our pension commitments in a sustainable manner."

State Comptroller Susana Mendoza, however, noted in a separate statement that the state still faces a backlog of unpaid bills totaling more than \$6 billion, and she has urged lawmakers to be cautious about expectations for continued revenue growth.

"While we cannot confirm or deny the Department of Revenue's projection of \$800 million more than expected for Fiscal Year 2020 at this time, we are hopeful and will continue to research this possibility thoroughly," Mendoza said. "My office has prioritized pension payments and debt service since I took office and that will be our policy going forward."

Moody's Says Graduated Income Tax Would Pose Opportunities and Risks

New report says change in credit rating would depend on how the new money is used.

by Peter Hancock
 Capitol News Illinois

SPRINGFIELD – One of the nation's leading credit rating agencies said Monday adopting a graduated income tax system in Illinois probably would provide some much-needed revenue, but whether state's credit rating would be improved depends on how the state uses the new money.

The report, by Moody's Investors Service, came in response to a proposed constitutional amendment that proposes to replace the state's current "flat" income tax rate of 4.95 percent with a graduated system where higher rates would apply to people with higher incomes.

The Illinois Senate voted last week to approve the amendment. It is now pending in the House and, if approved there, would be placed on the November 2020 general election ballot for voter approval.

"If the constitutional amendment ultimately passes, its impact would depend on the degree to which the state derives new resources and uses them to address core credit challenges, most prominently pension obligations," the report stated.

"To be sure, a neutral outcome is possible if a new tax system yields only minimal revenue gains and has little effect on the state's economy or budget," according to the report. "A positive outcome for the state's credit standing would require that the new system yield substantial net new revenue, without material damage to the economy, and that the new revenue be largely

allocated to addressing the state's retirement benefit liabilities on a recurring basis."

"A negative outcome — characterized by growing economic challenges and scant progress addressing pension funding needs — is also possible," the report stated.

Moody's rates Illinois bonds as Baa3, the lowest investment-grade rating available. Any further downgrade would put the state into what many refer to as "junk bond" status.

In addition to the proposed constitutional amendment, the Senate last week also passed a bill establishing new income tax rates that would take effect in 2021, provided voters approve the amendment. Those new rates would generate an estimated \$3.3 billion in new general fund revenues, plus additional money earmarked for expanded child care tax credits and property tax relief.

The bill does not specifically earmark any new revenues for pension obligations or paying down the state's backlog of past-due bills.

The Moody's report also noted adopting such a system could expose the state to additional risks of revenue volatility. That's because such a system would increase the state's reliance on income taxes overall to fund its budget, and in particular on the incomes of upper-income individuals whose incomes can fluctuate widely from year to year, depending on market conditions.

"Some states that depend heavily on income-tax revenues also have a heightened reliance on their highest-earning taxpayers," the report said. "These states tend to face greater revenue volatility."

Madigan: Legal Pot Passage 'Not Guaranteed Today'

Speaker says expungement, diversity details could prove tough to sell.

by Jerry Nowicki
 Capitol News Illinois

SPRINGFIELD – A 532-page proposal to legalize adult-use cannabis in Illinois by Jan. 1, 2020 was filed in the state Senate Monday, but the state's powerful House speaker said its passage is "not guaranteed today."

Amendment 1 to Senate Bill 7, carried by Chicago Democratic state Sen. Heather Steans, allows Illinois residents to possess 30 grams of cannabis, five grams of cannabis concentrate and 500 milligrams of THC contained in cannabis-infused products. Visitors from other states could possess half of those amounts.

Up to five home-grown plants would also be allowed, provided certain safety conditions are met.

Adult-use legalization coupled with criminal justice reforms were campaign promises of Democratic Gov. J.B. Pritzker, whose office said in a press release Saturday that the proposal "will be a starting point" for debate.

But House Speaker Mike Madigan, a Chicago Democrat, told a group of graduate student reporters from the University of Illinois Springfield's Public Affairs Reporting program Monday that it could be difficult to get 60 House lawmakers – the threshold needed for the bill to pass that chamber – to agree on some of the language in the proposal.

The bill allows for the expungement of misdemeanor and Class 4 felony marijuana convictions and makes a special designation in the licensing process for "social equity applicants," or businesses having a majority of owners or employees from communities that were "disproportionately impacted" by the war on drugs.

The bill gives those applicants access to funding from a newly-created \$20 million low-

interest state loan program, according to Pritzker's release, and allows for reduced licensing fees in certain circumstances.

"There are some very controversial aspects to the proposal. No. 1 would be the proposal for the expungement of criminal records," Madigan said. "The key on that issue is how far do you go in terms of expungement? If we're talking about some teenager who was doing drugs and found guilty of possession, that's one thing. If you're talking about people who were actually in the business, dealers, and you want to expunge those records, that's a different case."

Convictions for possessing, growing, manufacturing and delivering cannabis were all included as eligible for expungement in a document released by Pritzker's office, which said the expungement provision would only apply to standalone offenses not accompanied with other convictions.

Madigan said he wasn't speaking to the bill's specific expungement language, but to the idea in general.

"I'm not sure how they treat that in the proposed language, but that will be very important in terms of finding 60 people in the House to vote for the bill," he said.

Per the bill, the Illinois State Police would be required to start the expungement process within two years of the effective date of the law by identifying individuals eligible for expungement and notifying prosecutors' offices, local law enforcement agencies and the attorney general's office of their cases.

Madigan said the decision process for which businesses will receive new licenses would affect the vote as well.

"Among the minorities in the Legislature, they would argue that there oughta be some leg up for minorities in terms of licenses to cultivate or be a dispenser. Here again, language will be important in terms of finding 60 people to vote for the bill," Madigan said.

The General Assembly has just 21 days of legislative debate on the calendar to pass the critical piece of Pritzker's first-term agenda before they adjourn.

The governor budgeted for \$170 million in new revenues next fiscal year from licensing fees associated with legalization.

The first of those fees would come from the state's existing 17 cultivation and 55 dispensary facilities.

Currently-licensed cultivators would be eligible to purchase a recreational license for \$100,000 and up to \$500,000 paid to the Cannabis Business Development Fund, which would help

fund the low-interest loans and other equity-promoting measures.

Retailers, on the other hand, would be allowed to purchase up to two licenses, each costing \$30,000, with up to \$100,000 paid to the CBD fund for the first license and up to \$200,000 for the second.

Beginning May 2020, licenses would be granted to 75 new entrants to the retail market. Then, in July 2020, processors, craft growers and transporting businesses would be eligible for 40 newly-created licenses in each respective category.

Craft growers and processors would pay \$40,000 for their licenses, while new dispensaries would pay \$30,000 and transporters would pay \$10,000. Any applicant would also be charged a nonrefundable \$5,000 application fee.

Debate is expected to begin soon in the Senate, which is made up of 40 Democrats and 19 Republicans. The bill will need 30 votes to move to the House for further consideration.

Capitol News Illinois' Grant Morgan contributed to this story.

Chips Back on the Table for Gambling Advocates

Committee hears renewed talk of statewide casino expansion.

*by Grant Morgan
Capitol News Illinois*

SPRINGFIELD – Stakeholders that have been advocating for a gambling expansion for almost a decade are back at the table with renewed optimism this legislative session.

On Thursday, some of those stakeholders – including local governments who want a casino in their community, private firms that will build or operate the casinos, and race tracks who want to convert into racinos – testified at a House executive committee on gambling expansion.

Much of the focus centered on a gambling bill which failed to clear committee in the previous General Assembly. That bill, which would have added six more casino licenses to the state's current 10, could prove to be a basis for this year's bill, which has not been filed yet.

The communities of Rockford, Danville, downtown Chicago, southern Cook County, Lake County and Williamson County would

have received licenses under that plan.

Tom McNamara, mayor of Rockford, alluded to a potential rival casino being considered in Beloit, Wisconsin, about 15 minutes away. If they build it before Illinois can pass the right legislation, McNamara said, "it would virtually eliminate the opportunity for Rockford to pursue our own casino."

"Illinois residents would bypass our community and our state and take their dollars to Wisconsin," he said.

Sam Cunningham, mayor of Waukegan, said the city is "ready to transform with the addition of a casino to Lake County."

Derek Blaida, a lobbyist representing Chicago, continued years-long calls for a city-owned casino downtown, which would be overseen by the Chicago Casino Development Authority but managed by a private casino operator.

Blaida also indicated that Chicago would only support sports betting, another proposal to expand gambling in the state, if Chicago got its casino license.

The southern portion of the state could also benefit from expanded gambling, said Ron Ellis, Williamson County chairman.

According to Ellis, eight of the state's 10 most impoverished counties are in the "deep south."

A casino being considered at Walker's bluff, a vineyard in Carterville, could pull visitors from the more than 4 million people who live within 250 miles of the county. Building such a casino would create more than 1,200 construction jobs and more than 700 permanent jobs once up and running.

"That's a huge economic boom," Ellis said.

Yet another casino is being considered in Danville, a Vermilion County city near the middle of Illinois' border with Indiana.

"We've been talking about adding a casino here for 28 years," said Larry Baughn, chair of the Vermilion County board. "At the end of the day, it's all about job and revenue creation. We desperately need the jobs."

Between July 2017 and July 2018, Danville's roughly 1.25 percent population decline was the fourth-worst for any metro area in the nation, according to recent U.S. Census Bureau data.

Plans for a sixth casino, which would be coupled with a standardbred harness horse racing track, are already underway in southern Cook County.

Within the last four years, both of the state's two standardbred harness tracks, Balmoral and Maywood, shut down.

"The harness racing industry has been pretty

Continued on page 4

Clothing Drive

Saturday, May 11
9:00 am - 2:00 pm



To be Reused or Recycled • Reduces 85% of unwanted clothing from going to landfills!

Locations:

Blain's Farm and Fleet
7300 East Riverside Blvd.
Loves Park 61111

Blain's Farm and Fleet
4725 W. State Street
Rockford 61102

Blain's Farm and Fleet
4567 E. Rockton Road
Roscoe 61073

Our Saviors Lutheran Church
3300 Rural Street
Rockford 61107

Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd
1829 N. Rockton Ave.
Rockford, 61103

Pilgrim Baptist Church
1703 S. Central
Rockford 61102



This program is made possible with support from
FCA USA Belvidere Assembly Plant, Goodwill Industries
Northern Illinois, Two Men And A Truck, SERVPRO, and
Mid-City Office Supplies

For more information, or to volunteer, go to www.knib.org or call 815-637-1343

Received a notice from the IRS? Haven't filed for several years? Can't afford to pay your taxes?



You have a serious legal problem.
You must take action. The IRS is not going to go away.

There are deadlines. Miss those deadlines and you'll lose your rights to appeal, have your case heard, and pay more interest and penalties.

I can help. As a tax attorney, I am trained to analyze the law, minimize your tax bill, and protect your legal rights. Wouldn't you rather speak with someone locally that you can trust?

You can overcome your tax problems. I use a variety of approaches, often more than one, to solve a tax problem. Each client's situation is different.

Let's work through your IRS matter and get you back to enjoying The Good Life.



CHARLES HERBST, J.D., LL.M.
LAW, PLANNING AND TAX

Belvidere and Rockford • 815 484 9482 • taxviking.com

Gaming

from page 3

much decimated,” said Rick Heidner of Heidner Properties, the firm that would build the new casino, racetrack and hotel complex.

But while such a project could bring back harness racing, thoroughbred racetracks in other parts of the state say they will not fare well if gambling expansion does not apply to them too.

“Racing will only succeed in those areas where income through gaming coincides with commissions on horse racing,” said Mike Campbell, president of the Illinois Thoroughbred Horsemen’s Association, which represents the labor side of horse racing.

Such revenues could come from a measure proposed in last year’s gambling bill that would have allowed video gambling and table games at racetracks, turning them into racinos.

Only one of the state’s three racetracks did not indicate support for that measure.

Tony Petrillo, president of Arlington Park, said he’d like to see lawmakers focus on passing sports betting legislation first, because trying to incorporate too many interests in a comprehensive gambling bill might leave racetracks with the same outcome as last year – nothing.

“While [sports betting] is not the answer to our overall problems, we feel it can reach and expand our customer base until those big gaming issues are worked out,” Petrillo said.

On the other side, the Illinois Casino Gaming Association, which represents nine of Illinois’ 10 casinos, is a major opponent of adding more casinos or allowing racetracks to turn into racinos.

ICGA Executive Director Tom Swoik testified that allowing too many casinos in the state would dilute the market, decreasing revenues for all.

Gov. J.B. Pritzker and many lawmakers on both sides of the aisle have voiced support for gambling expansion, and Pritzker’s budget proposal depends on added gambling revenue from sports betting.

State Capital Briefs

Senate president vows to increase cigarette tax by \$1, nearly triple Pritzker’s ask.

By Capitol News Illinois staff

SPRINGFIELD – Illinois Senate President John Cullerton said he wants to raise the state’s usage tax on tobacco products.

In a proposal supported by anti-smoking advocacy groups, the Chicago Democrat said Tuesday, May 7, he will introduce legislation to raise the tax on a pack of cigarettes by \$1, to \$2.98. That is about triple the 32 cents Gov. J.B. Pritzker initially proposed in his February budget outline.

Cullerton also would include a bump in taxes on all other tobacco products — cigars, chewing tobacco and snuff, to name a few — by 64 percent of the wholesale price.

“Many of the bills that we vote on in Springfield deal with money and in fact, I would say most of them do. Since I’ve been here, the bills that I’ve been most interested in working on are bills that you can vote on where you actually save lives,” the Senate president said. “This is another example of that. ...That is about the most rewarding thing anybody can do in the Legislature.”

Hiking Illinois’ usage tax on tobacco products would generate about \$180 million in revenue, said Kathy Drea, vice president of advocacy for the American Lung Association — more than \$159 million from the increase on cigarettes and \$20 million to \$25 million from the increase on other tobacco products.

But the plan would also save the state money in long-term health costs, as well as provide an incentive for current smokers to quit and potential smokers not to start.

The American Cancer Society’s Cancer Action Network commissioned a survey to poll voters about the favorability of the tax increase. It found 58 percent of Illinoisans support the \$1 proposal. But when given information about the state’s budget deficit, and that the revenues generated from the tax increase might help pay that down, the support grew to 66 percent.

The poll also found voters prefer the \$1 increase over the governor’s 32 cent proposal by a 2-to-1 margin.

Pritzker is counting on the General Assembly to pass a slew of new or heightened taxes to make his budget work, including those on plastic bags. His budget also needs revenue from the legalization of recreational marijuana, and expansion of the state’s sports betting industry.

“It’s going to be tough to pass some of these bills that raise revenue, but there’s one revenue-raiser — the cigarette tax, and for that matter, e-cigarette taxes — where the public actually supports a tax increase. There’s not very many of those,” Cullerton said. “This is probably the only one that comes to mind, so when all those things converge, it makes it really obvious that this is what we should be doing.”

MADIGAN INTERVIEW: House Speaker Michael Madigan doesn’t make a lot of media appearances, but Monday, May 6, he talked with student journalists who are covering the Statehouse in a graduate school program.

In his visit with the Public Affairs Reporting program class at the University of Illinois Springfield, Madigan (D-Chicago) said legislative committees in control of budget appropriations have taken Gov. J.B. Pritzker’s proposed levels of spending in next year’s budget and “ratcheted them down” in case measures supporting that spending do not pass.

Those measures include legalizing recreational

marijuana and sports betting, which Madigan said are “not guaranteed today.”

And while he supports Pritzker’s attempts to change the state’s income tax structure from a flat to a graduated rate, Madigan said the Senate moved too quickly when it debated for only 7 minutes Wednesday, May 1, before passing a bill and resolution that would put an amendment question on the 2020 ballot. He said the Senate should have “given it more time.”

Madigan’s comments indicate a slower-than-expected pace of passing new legislation with Democrats in control of the Legislature and governor’s office.

“Have you ever worked with Democrats?” he joked.

Of Republican lawmakers who say they are not being included in the legislative process, he said they have a “pretty clear record of non-participation,” especially regarding the budget, in recent years, but that he is “willing to work with them.”

Responding to a question about running for reelection in 2020, Madigan said, “Why not?”

DCFS AUDIT: The Illinois Auditor General’s office said Tuesday, May 7, that understaffing at the state’s child welfare agency led to a massive backlog of cases of suspected child abuse or neglect during the administration of former Republican Gov. Bruce Rauner. It also said the agency often failed to follow its own protocols for investigating cases and filing timely reports.

The audit report paints a picture of the Department of Children and Family Services as an agency overwhelmed by a growing volume of cases with investigators under pressure to close cases quickly, “even when they had not performed basic tasks such as contacting police and doctors.”

“There is every indication here that there are problems,” Rep. Sara Feigenholtz, a Chicago Democrat who chairs the House Adoption and Child Welfare Committee, said during a news conference shortly after the report was released.

The Illinois House ordered the audit in June 2017 when it passed a resolution that cited a number of concerns about how the agency was being managed.

The audit examined activity at DCFS between July 2014 and June 2017. That included the two-year period when the state government operated without a budget amid a stalemate between the Rauner administration and the Democratic-controlled General Assembly.

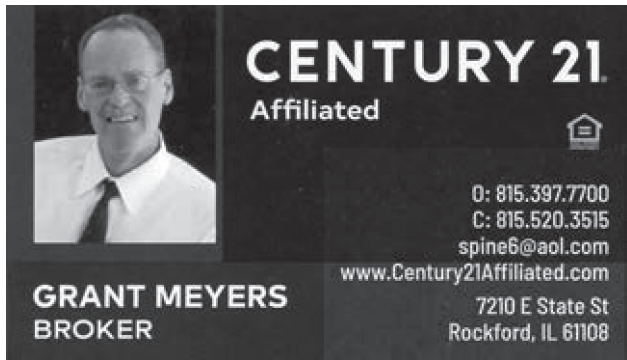
According to the auditor’s report, DCFS saw a 10.8-percent spike in the number of cases it was called on to investigate during that time.

During that time, however, there was also a sharp decrease in the percentage of cases where investigators said they found credible evidence of abuse or neglect. And in nearly two-thirds of the cases where credible evidence was found, auditors could find no documentation about whether those families had received or even been informed about available services to help them.

Meanwhile, the report indicated, the agency was unable to handle the volume of calls coming into its hotline, and in some cases it took the agency a week or more to return messages that were left on an answering machine. Investigators were also routinely assigned more new cases in a month than is allowed under a federal consent decree.

The report spells out 13 specific recommendations for DCFS to improve its handling of abuse and neglect cases, ranging from improving data collection and reporting requirements to ensuring that critical investigations are completed within the required 60 days, and that extensions on that time limit are granted only for good cause.

FOR RENT IN BELVIDERE - 3 bedroom Duplex, 2 story with large yard. Off Street Parking Washer and Dryer hookups. NO PETS! \$950 Call 608-604-0791



CENTURY 21
Affiliated


GRANT MEYERS
BROKER

0: 815.397.7700
C: 815.520.3515
spine6@aol.com
www.Century21Affiliated.com
7210 E State St
Rockford, IL 61108

Roman’s Blacktop Sealing
Driveways & Parking Lots



Art Roman **815-885-3238**
Owner *Insured*



Tarot Card

READING BY MICHELLE
PAST • PRESENT • FUTURE
SPECIALIZING IN CHAKRA BALANCING

815-999-6954
120 N State St. Bel.

ROOM FOR RENT: Belvidere: Nice furnished room w/ fridge, near downtown, bus stop, Aldi, Drug & Dollar Stores. No Sec. Deposit. \$102/wk. or \$430/mo. **Call (815) 544-4466**

For SALE: General Steel Pole Building, new, three sided, 22’ W x 70’ L x 20’8” H, Side single slope w/2:12 pitch. One 14’W x 14’H framed opening and one 10’ W x 10’H framed opening with heavy duty doors. Asking \$29,000. Call 815-569-1571 for more information.

DCFS CAUCUS: Sara Feigenholtz said there's a need to "modernize and improve" the state's Department of Children and Family Services.

The Democratic state representative from Chicago spoke Tuesday, May 7, about a new DCFS Child Welfare Reform Caucus that intends to promote legislation during the last month of the 2019 session. She said she hopes that is done through a "bicameral effort."

During a news conference at the Capitol, Feigenholtz referenced Senate Bill 193, which came out of the Senate last month with language that children served by DCFS would receive services until age 21 instead of 19.

Feigenholtz is now proposing to add new language that would address "vertical accountability" in the agency.

"I want to make sure there are other sets of eyes in these cases that are so difficult," Feigenholtz said.

The bill would require an internal review of a randomly selected 5 percent of cases and involving children 5 and younger.

Cases involving young children have been under scrutiny with the recent death of A.J. Freund, 5, of Crystal Lake, whose body was found in a shallow grave and whose parents allegedly were drug users. DCFS had contact with AJ's family dating back to 2012.

Also, in February, police arrested Twanka Davis in connection to the death of her daughter Ta'Naja Barnes, 2, who froze to death in Decatur. Barnes had been placed in foster care in 2018 while her mother was investigated for child abuse.

"It's clear that the state failed AJ, and it's clear that we must make changes to fix our child protective care system," state Rep. Anna Moeller (D-Elgin) said Tuesday.

"We're seeing a pattern that these are the children that are falling victim to this," Feigenholtz said.

SECOND ATTEMPT: At a Tuesday, May 7, press event billed to "discuss new legislation" in response to a graduated tax constitutional amendment, Illinois House Republicans introduced an identical bill to one that failed to advance in the Senate.

The Republicans' measure would require a two-thirds vote in each legislative chamber to raise any tax rates in the future.

Senate Democrats already advanced a graduated income tax rate structure last week which would become law if an amendment is approved by the House, then by Illinois voters. That rate structure would lower the income tax rate for earners with \$250,000 or less in taxable income, while the tax rate would increase on earnings above that threshold.

The higher taxes on those earning more than \$250,000 would provide more than \$3.5 billion in estimated revenue, and Democrats say it is the only legislative plan that can balance a long-term structural deficit of about \$3.2 billion.

Democrats have said the other options for balancing the budget are an increase to the flat tax rate from 4.95 percent to 6.95 percent or 15 percent cuts to all state departments, including education.

The nine House Republicans at Tuesday's event did not reveal a counterplan to close the structural deficit, but they did say greater taxpayer protections are needed as the state awaits "structural spending reforms."

House Joint Resolution Constitutional Amendment 34 does not address those structural reforms, but Republican Rep. Thomas Morrison, of Palatine, said it does give taxpayers "protection."

"Going forward, it just takes a simple majority to raise taxes, and we believe that that is not a great enough protection to taxpayers," Morrison, the amendment's sponsor, said.

The Democrats' graduated tax amendment does not lessen the amount of votes – 30 in the Senate and 60 in the House – needed to raise taxes, but Republicans claim it will make it politically easier to sell a tax increase to the public by allowing the General Assembly to raise the rates on only a

certain portion of the public.

The Republican amendment to require a two-thirds vote to raise taxes, however, remains in the House Rules Committee.

The graduated tax amendment passed the Senate by a 40-19 vote and will need support from 71 lawmakers in the House to be put on the 2020 ballot.

There are now 73 Democrats in that chamber after the seat of conservative Democratic Rep. Jerry Costello II, of Smithton, was vacated Tuesday when he accepted a post at the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

Costello, who was a co-sponsor on a resolution opposing the graduated tax, will be replaced within 30 days after a vote by the Democratic Party chairmen in Monroe, Randolph, St. Clair and Perry counties.

ESTATE TAX: Members of a liberal House caucus on Friday, May 3, announced their opposition to the Senate's move to strike Illinois' estate tax from statute, a measure unexpectedly included in a package of bills to change the state's income tax structure.

Chicago Democratic Rep. Will Guzzardi, co-chair of the Progressive Caucus, said the state is at a "critical moment." The General Assembly is negotiating the terms under which to implement a graduated income tax system, and repealing a tax on the transfer of property, he said, "is a move in precisely the opposite direction."

The measure, contained in Senate President John Cullerton's (D-Chicago) Senate Bill 689, passed the Senate with 33 votes after unexpectedly being added to a package of bills which can only become law if the voters approve a graduated tax constitutional amendment in November 2020.

Six Democrats joined all but one Senate Republican in voting against the measure. State Sen. Dan McConchie, a Hawthorn Woods Republican, said the estate tax repeal is generally supported by Republicans, but his opposition was based on the fact that the repeal could be reversed at any time.

The estate tax currently only applies to estates worth more than \$4 million, and it produces \$305 million in revenue according to a 2020 estimate from the Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability.

Guzzardi said that revenue would have to be made up elsewhere or the budget would have to be cut to account for the \$305 million – even with the estimated \$3.5 billion in revenue that would be gained from a proposed graduated tax structure.

Guzzardi said the Progressive Caucus supports the graduated income tax proposal because Illinois does not have the financial resources to fund services its members see as ones a government should provide—quality public schools, affordable health care and access to social programs.

He said he is "optimistic" the constitutional amendment necessary to enact the new tax structure will receive enough votes to be presented to voters in 2020. The bill needs 71 votes in the House, which has 74 Democratic members.

But either way, removing current law that taxes the transfer of property is not something Guzzardi said he thinks will be successful in his chamber.

ENERGY REFORMS: Advocates from various energy sectors agree that the Illinois Legislature will likely define a radical new energy future with the legislation it does or does not pass this month, but what that future looks like is up for debate.

On Thursday, May 2, the Senate's energy committee debated two bills: One would benefit the state's coal industry, the other its nuclear industry.

Amendment 1 to Senate Bill 660 is backed by nuclear energy provider Exelon. That bill would reform the state's capacity market — one of two markets affecting energy availability and costs. When capacity is purchased, the product is not the energy itself, but the guarantee that the grid can output necessary energy wattage to satisfy

consumer needs three years into the future.

Northern Illinois is currently part of the federally-regulated PJM grid which purchases capacity from generators in 13 states and Washington, D.C. at an auction every year. The Exelon-backed bill would remove Illinois from this compact while giving the Illinois Power Agency the authority to purchase capacity.

Kathleen Barron, senior vice president of Government and Regulatory Affairs for Exelon, said capacity reform is necessary to continue to incentivize carbon-free emissions because pending Federal Energy Regulatory Commission changes could remove those incentives from the PJM market.

Dave Kolata, executive director of the Citizens Utility Board, testified in favor of the capacity market portion of the Exelon-backed bill, noting a rate cap included in the bill would help keep costs to the consumer low.

But opponents, including the Illinois Chamber of Commerce, said Exelon's large market share of Illinois energy production would give the company an unfair advantage and potentially drive up energy costs.

Judith Lagano, senior vice president of asset management at NRG Energy which operates coal plants in Illinois, said the bill minimizes competition under the guise of clean energy production.

Lagano advocated for a different bill, Amendment 3 to Senate Bill 135, which she said would drive costs and carbon emissions down through greater competition — the opposite, she said, of what the Exelon bill would do.

The NRG-backed bill would allow companies to receive clean energy credits for closed fossil fuel plants. Coal-to-gas conversions would be eligible for these credits.

Opponents to the NRG bill, however, said it would provide state funding to coal plants that would be closing for financial reasons anyway, diverting this money from renewable energy projects.

No action was taken on the two bills, which remain part of a larger energy discussion at the Statehouse.

Capitol News Illinois is a nonprofit news service operated by the Illinois Press Foundation that provides coverage of state government to newspapers throughout Illinois. The mission of Capitol News Illinois is to provide credible and unbiased coverage of state government to the more than 400 daily and weekly newspapers that are members of the Illinois Press Association.



HOOKED ON FISHING!
SATURDAY,
JUNE 8th, 2018
 Caster's Shelter Near
 Administration Office
9am-1pm

PRIZES! PRIZES! PRIZES!
FREE & Open To Ages 5-15
Bring your own pole & tackle
Lunch Provided • Bait Provided
Pre-Registration Required
Call Boone Co. Conservation Dist.
(815) 547-7935

Limited Space!

Sponsored by The Coon Creek Casters.
 Lunch provided by Belvidere Lions Club

COMMUNITY NEWS & EVENTS

Boone County Volunteer Board Vacancy's- Boone County Sanitary District

Term Expires	Length of Term
May 1, 2021	(3) Year Term
May 1, 2019	Remainder of Term
Conservation Easement & Farmland Protection	
June 1, 2019	(3) Year Term
Boone County Board of Review	
June 1, 2019	(2) Year Term
Building Board of Appeals	
June 1, 2019	(5) Year Term
Fire Protection District #1	
1st Monday, May, 2019	(3) Year Term
Zoning Board of Appeals	
June 1, 2019	(5) Year Term
Zoning Board of Appeals	
June 1, 2021	Remainder of Term
Board of Health	
July 1, 2021	Remainder of Term
July 1, 2019	(3) Year Term
Boone County Conservation District	
June 30, 2019	(5) Year Term
Ethics Commission	
June 30, 2019	(1) Year Term
Historical Museum District	
June 30, 2019	(5) Year Term
Historical Museum District	
June 30, 2021	Remainder of Term
Community Building	
June 30, 2019	(3) Year Term
911 Board	
December 30, 2021	Remainder of Term
Capron Rescue Squad	
December, 2021	Remainder of Term
Regional Planning Commission	
December 31, 2020	Remainder of Term

Interested parties are asked to send a letter and/or resume expressing your interest and qualifications along with your contact information to Boone County Board Chairman Karl Jonson, Administration Campus, 1212 Logan Ave., Suite 102, Belvidere, IL 61008. Please respond by May 24, 2019 to assure being considered.

Immanuel Lutheran Church Annual Rummage Sale – 13535 Route 76, (Countryside Mall) Poplar Grove on Friday, May 17th from 9:00 a.m. till 5:00 p.m. and Saturday, May 18, from 9:00 a.m. till 1:00 p.m. Proceeds to benefit neighborhood outreach.

Found a Stray Dog? You Might Soon be on the Clock

Legislation would require reporting to local authorities within 48 hours.

by *Lindsay Salvatelli*
Capitol News Illinois

SPRINGFIELD – Dog owners who have their four-legged friends microchipped hope doing so will speed the dogs' return if they get lost.

Legislation being considered in the General Assembly might also help speed that process.

The Senate last month passed SB1572, which requires people who find a stray dog to bring it to their local animal control agency or police department within 48 hours so the dog can be scanned for a microchip. If not brought, those who find stray dogs face fines from \$50 to \$500.

The bill then moved to the House for consideration, but was sent back to a House committee on Wednesday where it awaits further action.

Rep. Diane Pappas (D-Itasca), who is sponsoring the bill in the House, said that while the law wouldn't likely be enforced often, it's only fair to people who've gone to the trouble of microchipping their pets to have a good-faith effort put into returning them.

"I think this bill strikes a good balance between protecting the rights of the owners of the dog who went through the expenses of having the dog microchipped ... and the rights of the person who finds the dog and wants to keep the dog," Pappas said.

Rep. Margo McDermed (R-Mokena) called the legislation "such a suburban bill" and questioned if there is a cost associated with having a pet's chip scanned.

Also, she said the law would be unfair to those in rural communities because of the extra effort it might take for someone to bring a recovered pet to animal control.

"This assumes they own a car," McDermed said. "This assumes it's a five-minute drive to the vet. What if it's out in the country and it's a 30-mile drive?"

Rep. Rita Mayfield (D-Waukegan) was just as critical, saying the threat of a fine would discourage people from coming forward with a wayward pet.

"To impose a fee or fine on somebody who's trying to do the right thing, I think this is just wrong," Mayfield said. "I think it's overstepping, and this would actually discourage individuals from being a good Samaritan."

BOONE COUNTY LICENSE & TITLE

What WE Can Do For YOU!

Illinois License Plates & Stickers for

- Cars • Trucks • Motorcycles •
- Trailers • Boat Trailers •
- Notary Public • Map Books •



Ask us for details about our over the counter Plates and Sticker service.

- License & Title Services
- Plates, Stickers & Renewals (Get sticker same day)
- Flat Fee for Services
- No Long Lines
- Friendly Helpful Staff
- Fast Convenient Service



Open 6 Days a Week
Monday thru Friday - 9 am to 5 pm
Saturday - 9 am to 1 pm

(815) 544-2075

Located on State Street at the

Journal

419 S. State Street
Belvidere, IL 61008