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Pictures of the Harvest to Old to Remember

By David Larson

Thanksgiving is a celebration of the harvest. It has deep roots in American culture. So much of the business of farming, even today with computers mounted on tractors and other high-tech implements, is cyclical and dependent upon the whimsical nature of the weather. Such was the case a hundred years or more ago when methods were different, but the weather then was also the main factor that determined the bounty of the harvest.

The planting of corn and hard winter wheat is dependent upon weather patterns. In October and November, between the harvest of soybeans and corn, farmers often dedicate some of the land to be planted with wheat for harvest the following summer as we see in the top picture.

Even though farmers keep their eyes attuned to the sky during planting season, they gaze skyward with a similar sense of anticipation when harvest arrives. For wheat and oats, harvest arrives in mid-summer. A walk through a wheat or oat field discloses when harvest is near - if heads are bowing to the ground.

At that point, the grain is mature. The grain would also have dried to a point that it could be stored without fear that the seed held too much moisture that could cause the crop to mold if stored for an extended period.

The machine in the top photograph is a binder. These implements have long since ceased to be used and today are only relics of history. The grain binder was used to offset the uneven drying of grain while the crop still stood in the field.

The grain binder cut and shocked the grain into bundles. After the crop was cut and the bundles lay in the field, additional drying occurred that would have taken longer had the grain remained standing.

Days later after the bundling process was finished, workers with horse-drawn wagons followed where the bundles lay in the field and workers using forks pitched the bundles into a wagon to be transported to the threshing machine where the reaping of the grain occurred as is seen in the middle picture.

The business of farming so long ago required many more people than today and also the methods of farming required many more transits through a field than is the case today. Today the production of a crop of wheat requires two tours through the field, three if the straw is to be baled for livestock bedding. But today the demand for straw for livestock bedding has almost disappeared.

The men pictured in the middle photograph probably did not see the era they lived through in 1901 as being a "pivotal" time. The men were more likely interested in knowing if the rain would hold off until the threshing was done. They also might have been more interested in what would be served that night for supper, would they eat

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City Parking Lot and River Frontage Being Improved

By: Jocelyn Torres

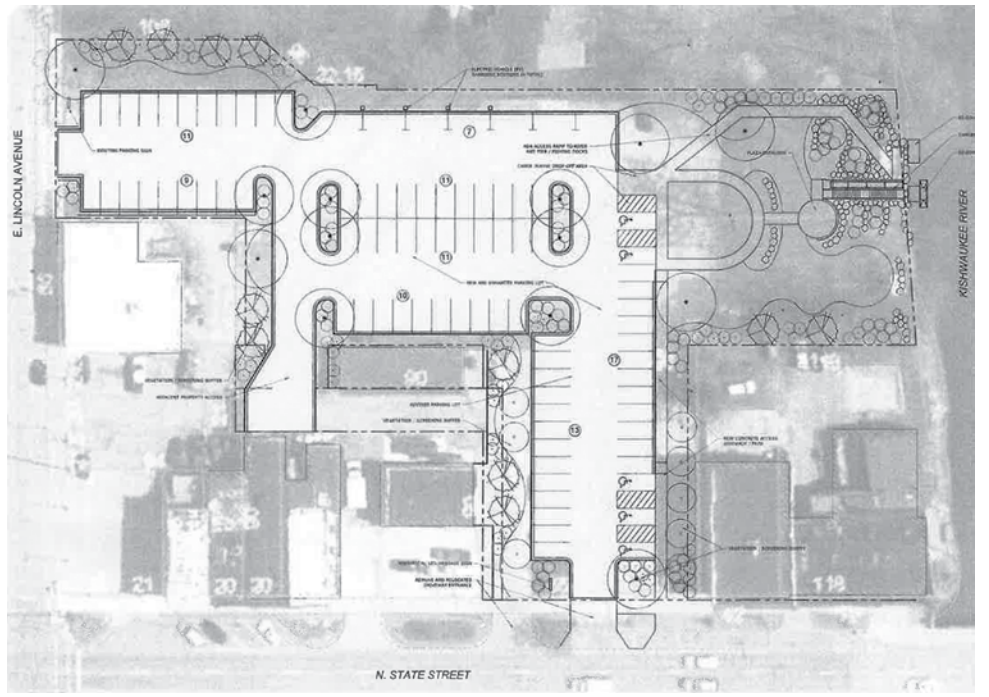
On October 16th the Belvidere City Council approved a proposal from ARC Design Resources not to exceed \$119,700 to begin redesigning city parking lot #7 and the development of the attached river frontage lot owned by the city. Parking lot #7 is located on the east side of North State Street near the Apollo and directly across from the once Lung-Fung restaurant. Grants were obtained for the project through R1, the regional planning agency, will pay for most of the cost. Two grants, a Federal TAP Grant (\$216,781) and a State DECO Grant (\$601,882.35) will provide \$818,663 of the projected cost. The city will pay the remainder of \$82,000.

The schedule thus far is a survey (fall of 2023), the design completion and permitting (winter of 2024), and bidding (Spring of 2024).

The parking lot #7 plan is to make the parking lot more functional, but also to improve the river bank adjacent to it, which will include a canoe launch, installation of an electronic sign with the intention to keep the city informed, and, as required by the grants, installing EV charging stations.

Alderperson Brereton questioned why the park district is not handling this instead, and received an answer from the mayor that the land belongs to Belvidere, as a result the park district would be out of its domain. The plan was approved with the only dissenting vote being Alderperson Brereton.

The mayor expressed hope that improving this parking lot and developing the river bank will encourage downtown property owners to continue to invest in their buildings.



Riverfront park, canoe launch, and parking lot by ARC Design Resources

OP-ED

Antisemitism Rears Its Ugly Head Again

By Scott Reeder

“It’s the Jews’ fault.”

I remember those words like they were yesterday, even though they were uttered by a co-worker more than 30 years ago.

The newspaper we worked for had just undergone a major layoff and later that week I found myself eating a plate of spaghetti in a dive restaurant listening to what portended to be a bizarre conspiracy theory.

I didn’t argue with him. I just looked him in the eye and said, “I’m not going to listen to this. And if I hear you say anything like that again, I’m not having lunch with you again.”

Those words of mine probably sounded shrill and sanctimonious to my dining companion. But to be honest, I wasn’t sure then – and I’m not sure now – what the appropriate retort to a bigoted utterance is.

The fellow I was eating with fit the stereotype of a rightwing zealot: rural, white, gun enthusiast. He wasn’t particularly religious – but he hated a whole group of people because their religion.

This past month, I’ve been thinking about that long-ago interaction in an Iowa restaurant as I watch antisemitism rear its head on elite college campuses.

It first came to mind when I saw a comment from Paul Miller, a Jewish acquaintance in a Chicago suburb who has a child the same age as my oldest daughter. He posted on Facebook that his No. 1 criteria for selecting a college for his son is that it be a safe place for Jewish people.

That brought me up short. I’ve visited a lot of college campuses with my daughter the last few months. While all parents are concerned about their children’s safety, I’ve never worried that my child would be singled out for who she is.

But Paul was concerned for his son – and rightly so. Frightening things are happening on elite college campuses since Oct. 7 when Hamas launched its attack on Israel, killing more than 1,200 people.

The New York Times reported at a pro-Palestinian rally at Northwestern University in Evanston; students shouted, “Hey, Schill, what do you say, how many kids did you kill today?” an appropriation of a chant from the anti-Vietnam

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OBITUARIES

- Gary Appelhans, 72, Poplar Grove, November 15
- Gary “Silver” Brace, 81, Poplar Grove, November 9
- Eugene “Gene” Cavin, 89, Harvard, November 14
- Lloyd Fruin Jr., 84, Marengo, November 13
- Virgie Lehr, 87, Harvard, November 17
- Howard McMahon, 87, Capron, November 15
- Robert “Bob” Nie, 64, Caledonia, November 18
- Timothy O’Day, 72, Belvidere, November 14
- Marialee “Kay” Parris, 81, Poplar Grove, Nov. 13
- Ann Turner, 87, Belvidere, November 14



Virgie A Lehr

Virgie A Lehr, 87 of Harvard passed away on Friday, November 17 at Javon Bea Hospital in Rockford IL. Virgie was born November 17, 1936 to James and Lelia Ancelet in Basco, IL.

On December 23, 1954, she married the love of her life Glen Lehr in Basco, IL.

Virgie was a wonderful wife and mother who enjoyed spending time with her husband and family. She assisted her husband Glen with his Veterinary business until their retirement.


Virgie is survived by their two children, son Randy (Eileen) Lehr of Harvard, daughter Cindy (Glenn) Goszinski of Milton, WI, grandchildren Justen (Ashley) Lehr, Emalee (Curtis) Stahl, Jenny (Mike) Salvo and Joshua (Darcy) Stopple, and great-grandchildren Easton, Everett, and Elijah. One brother Leo Ancelet, Kahoka MO She was preceded in death by her parents, James and Lelia, husband Glen and brother Raymond Ancelet

The visitation will be 4-8 PM Monday, November 27th at Saunders & McFarlin Funeral Home, 107 W Sumner St., Harvard, IL. 60033.

On Saturday, December 2 at 10 AM, there will be a graveside service in Oakland Cemetery in Warsaw, IL.

Friends and Family may sign the online guestbook at <http://www.saundersmcfarlin.net>

Call Saunders & McFarlin Funeral Home for more info at 815-943-5400.



REAL JOURNALISM FOR A REAL DEMOCRACY

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

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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.

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.

OP-ED*from page 2*

War movement, now directed at Northwestern's president, Michael H. Schill, who is Jewish.

Some other incidents of antisemitism cataloged in the last month by the Washington Post and NYT include:

- At Tulane University two students were assaulted in a melee that began when someone tried to burn an Israeli flag.

- At the Cooper Union, a college in New York City, frightened Jewish students hunkered down behind locked doors at a library while demonstrators shouted, "Free Palestine" and banged on the doors and windows.

- Next to a Jewish fraternity at the University of Pennsylvania, someone scrawled "The Jews R Nazis."

- And at Cornell University, a computer science major was arrested for allegedly making online threats to shoot up a kosher dining hall and rape and murder Jewish students.

These are some of the most selective, competitive universities in the world. But their students are acting like idiots. Unlike my co-worker from so long ago, these aren't gun-toting rednecks. Disproportionate numbers of children from elite backgrounds attend these schools.

Some college administrators have taken a stand against such acts, but others have been silent. These administrators need to grow spines and condemn these acts of hatred. No student should ever be in fear of violence.

But as a practical matter, how do we as individuals combat antisemitism? Well, working together to do positive things is a good start.

I grew up in Galesburg, a town with many churches and one small synagogue. When a major earthquake hit Guatemala in 1976 my father and two other men worked day and night to refurbish an Army surplus truck into an ambulance, load it with food and medical supplies and drive nonstop from Illinois to Guatemala City. My dad was Methodist, another was Mormon and the third was Jewish. But they were able to see past theological differences and work together to help others.

Another example from my family comes from my brother Danny. He was a hog farmer, a profession that didn't provide for many interactions with Jewish people. He suffered from a rare liver condition and had a transplant at the Mayo Clinic in 2003. His surgeon was Jewish. Because of this my brother, who I never knew to read for pleasure, became intensely curious about Judaism and read the book Postville about a Hasidic community in Iowa. He showed an interest in a faith other than his own.

There is a lot of false information about various religions on the internet and elsewhere. I've learned that if you really want to understand another religion it's best to ask someone who belongs to that faith.

Years ago, I visited the pediatric cancer ward of Cedars Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles and noticed a box on the doorframe of each room. I asked a Catholic friend who was showing me around what the purpose of the box was. I got a shrug and was told it had something to do with it being a Jewish hospital.

Later I asked a Jewish person, about the symbol and was told it is called a Mezuzah and it holds a scripture that says: "You shall love your God, believe only in Him, keep His commandments, and pass all of this on to your children."

Those are good words for all of us to live by during these troubled times.

Scott Reeder, a staff writer for Illinois Times can be reached at sreeder@illinoistimes.com.

Advocates Hail Regulatory 'Earthquake' As State Slashes Requested Gas Rate Increases

Company profits cut, low-income customers set to receive new discounts

By Andrew Adams Capitol News Illinois

Regulators at the Illinois Commerce Commission on Thursday unanimously approved rate hikes for four major natural gas utilities, but the little-known regulatory body's decision was perhaps more notable for what it rejected.

The five-member board flexed its regulatory muscle, slashing the utilities' requested rate increases by as much as 50 percent.

"This was an earthquake in Illinois utility regulation," Abe Scarr, director of consumer advocacy group Illinois PIRG told Capitol News Illinois after the Thursday meeting.

Scarr and PIRG were among the consumer advocates asking for greater regulatory oversight of the natural gas industry ahead of the requested rate increase from the four utilities that collectively serve 98 percent of Illinois' gas customers – Nicor Gas, Ameren Illinois, Peoples Gas and North Shore Gas.

Rates will still rise next year, but not nearly as much as they would have if the commission had approved the utilities' initial requests.

The commissioners instead sided with consumer advocates – rejecting several recommendations from the ICC's own staff – in several key areas, including profit rates, low-income discounts and spending oversight.

Commissioners lowered Ameren's initial ask by about 50.8 percent and cut Nicor's request by 30.3 percent. For Peoples Gas, it was a 25 percent reduction, and for its sister company North Shore, regulators cut the request by 34 percent.

While advocates hailed the ICC's decisions as a victory, utilities were wary.

"My initial reaction is that I'm concerned," Matthew Tomc, who oversees regulatory affairs for Ameren Illinois, told Capitol News Illinois.

Tomc said that once Ameren staff fully reviews the ICC decision, they will consider requesting a rehearing to challenge the ICC's conclusions.

Other companies involved in the cases indicated they were reviewing the decisions.

"Natural gas remains the most affordable energy source for winter-residential heating and is the main fuel source used by manufacturers in Illinois," Nicor spokesperson Jennifer Golz said in a statement. "Nicor Gas provides an affordable energy source, which is more important now than ever with families facing rising costs for everything. resources as an energy."

Nicor and Peoples Gas have not released cost estimates under the new rates approved Thursday. But downstate Ameren Illinois says costs will remain similar to last winter, echoing claims made by Peoples Gas earlier this year.

Spending oversight, consumer impacts

In general, the ICC's five commissioners reduced the companies' requests for infrastructure spending, citing a lack of evidence

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Pritzker Designates Additional \$160M for Migrant Response as Winter Approaches

New spending focused on building Chicago's shelter capacity, getting migrants to permanent housing

By Hannah Meisel & Jerry Nowicki Capitol News Illinois

As winter quickly approaches, Gov. JB Pritzker on Thursday announced plans for the state to spend an additional \$160 million to aid and house a sustained influx of migrants sent to Chicago from the nation's southern border.

The administration sold the plan as a three-phase approach: "welcome, shelter, independence" – aimed at meeting the needs of migrants based on how long they've been in Chicago and whether they're planning to stay.

The state will spend \$65 million to create a winterized "soft shelter site" to address severe shortages in the city's shelter system, and another \$65 million to assist with legal and housing assistance to resettle the migrants. Another \$30 million would go to launch in intake center.

"With Congress likely unwilling to act and with lives of innocent people at stake, the hurdles we face seem far beyond the scope of any one state and yet everything we can do, we must do," Pritzker said at a news conference announcing the plans.

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Illinois Lawmakers Approve Plan to Allow Small-Scale Nuclear Development

Governor, who vetoed previous bill, supports new effort

By Andrew Adams Capitol News Illinois

Lawmakers on Thursday approved a proposal that would allow companies to develop new nuclear power generation in Illinois for the first time since 1987.

House Bill 2473 does not entirely lift the 36-year-old moratorium on nuclear construction. Instead, it creates a regulatory structure for the construction of small modular nuclear reactors, or SMRs.

The bill limits the nameplate capacity of such reactors to 300 megawatts, about one-third the size of the smallest of the six existing nuclear power plants in Illinois. It also requires the state to perform a study that will inform rules for regulating SMRs, which will be adopted by regulators at the Illinois Emergency Management Agency by January 2026.

Proponents of the measure say it is a step to make the ongoing transition away from fossil fuels more reliable for customers throughout the

state, while opponents warn the unproven technology comes with safety risks and the potential for cost overruns.

The bill passed with bipartisan support in the Senate, 44-7, and the House, 98-8. The

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Harvest

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the leftover beef roast from the grand lunch served at the noon break, prepared by the farmers wife, or would the his wife prepare a surprise.

One sidelong glance at the men in the photograph disclosed they were hard men. They knew how to work, they knew why they worked.

They hired on and came to the farms in a caravan of horse-drawn wagons and motorized trucks. They began at dawn on one farm and foraged across the ground like so many dozens of hungry cicadas cutting, shocking and threshing everything in sight. They moved to another farm as the shockers cut grain and wagons got fat with shocks and delivered them to the thresher. Monster steam-powered tractors ran the threshers with a wide woven belt that rolled continuously. Straw and chaff shook out one end of the machine while clean grain collected at another end. Wagons gathered the grain as the straw and chaff fluttered into conical piles like those seen behind the man with the boy and girl on the left.

The crew worked long hours starting after the farmers had finished the morning milking before sun-up and did not end until someone said it was time to stop.

After a week at one farm the hands broke down the equipment, loaded it on flatbeds and the steam-powered tractors hauled the equipment further west or south or north, wherever there was another farm that had grain to reap. The path was relentless and the number of men and women and children willing to pay the price to gain their meager pay were always welcome. But if they left after getting paid no one cared much. The hands came and the hands went but the work still had to be done.

Some spoke what sounded like Swedish or maybe Polish or Greek or some other language no one understood. Those speaking smiled when they saw blank expressions and followed fingers that pointed and sharp voices and words that must have been directed to them. The hands did not understand what the foremen said and the foreman did not care what the hands said. No one could understand but no one was paid to understand, they were only paid for their work. The hands were paid for their work and the foremen were paid for their results and the farmers were paid for their reaped grain, the arrangement was all very simple to understand.

The bottom photograph was actually a steam-powered engine that was used to run a variety of farm machines. The marvel of the invention was that with that steam-powered engine running that wide cotton and rubber v-belt, the farmer could run just about anything he wanted to run. He ran grinders, threshing machines and even corn-shelling machines. Atop the steam engine was a little valve that would sort of sputter when the steam was running real good.

Ears of corn picked from fields and dumped into the sides of the corncribs where they were allowed to dry even more than what had occurred in the field before picking.

Later, the corn-shelling machine removed the kernels of corn from the cobs. The shelled corn would then be elevated into the bins in the top

of the crib where the grain would sit until it was ready to feed to the chickens, cattle and hogs. In those days farmer were not single crop operations. Grain was first grown for the farmers livestock and the remainder sold as a commodity into the market.

Technology moves us at an ever acceleration pace. While AI and Quantum computing are the pivotal tools today promising to solve the weather problem. No doubt, the back breaking work of farming in those days long ago with those tools represent real progress over prior hand-working a sickle and extracting the grain by hand. The Boone County Journal wishes everyone a very happy Thanksgiving.

Know a veteran who needs help? Here's how to set up a wellness check through Operation Connect a Vet

By Steve Stein Shaw Local News Network

Illinois Joining Forces is launching an effort to connect veterans with services they may need.

The effort is called Operation Connect a Vet.

People are asked to contact IJF through the end of the year to request a wellness check – either a single check-in or on an ongoing basis – for a veteran, service member or member of their family.

The wellness checks will be made by veterans who help fellow veterans for a living. One is Michael Pedroza, a U.S. Navy veteran who served from 1989 to 1993. He's a veteran care coordinator specialist for IJF.

"Veterans we'll be calling doesn't necessarily have to be experiencing a crisis," Pedroza said. "At the very least, we want to let them know there's someone to talk to, another veteran, and they're not alone."

Most calls Pedroza takes from veterans do uncover a crisis. And that crisis is usually financial, he said.

A recent report by the United States Department of Agriculture noted that 11% of working-age veterans live in a food-insecure household.

There are a multitude of financial problems veterans face, Pedroza said.

"Rent. Mortgage. Life issues, like deciding between fixing a broken-down vehicle or getting meds," he said. "We're not going to give veterans a hand out, but a hand up. We want to meet their needs using a holistic approach."

Veterans' financial issues often are caused by the difficulties of resuming civilian life after serving in the military, Pedroza said.

There could be a job loss because of a breakdown, episodes, survivor's guilt or invisible injuries, he said.

Veterans are often reticent about asking for help, Pedroza said.

"That's because of the military culture," he said. "You learn to be self-sufficient, to improvise, to adapt to overcome whatever problem you're facing. Veterans are just too humble to reach out.

"I tell them I want to work with them to get them and their family, if they have one, in a better place," he said. "Once that self-sufficient roadblock comes down, they usually can't thank me enough."

In addition to providing help with finances, Pedroza can guide veterans and their families to find help with housing, food, employment, health care and other needs.

Illinois Joining Forces is a nonprofit organization launched in 2012 through an agreement between the Illinois Departments of Veterans' Affairs and Military Affairs.

It's a statewide public/private network of military and veterans-serving organizations that work together to improve services for veterans, service members, and their families.

According to its website, IJF helps veterans, service members and their families navigate the "sea of goodwill" to find the support they need when they need it.

"No one organization can do it all, but veterans shouldn't have to wander from office to office – or website to website – to determine who does what and (who) can best meet their needs," the IJF website statement reads.

To Connect a Vet

Requests can be made calling the IJF Care Coordination Center at 833-463-6453, sending an email to callcenter@illinoisjoiningforces.org, or filling out Connect a Vet form on the IJF website, illinoisjoiningforces.org.

Foster Statement on Reported FDIC Misconduct

Press Release

Congressman Bill Foster (D-IL), Ranking Member of the House Financial Services Subcommittee on Financial Institutions and Monetary Policy, issued the following statement in light of reported widespread and entrenched misconduct by FDIC employees:

"I am disturbed by reports of widespread sexual harassment and gender discrimination at the FDIC. These are serious allegations that must be investigated and those responsible should be held accountable. I echo Chairman McHenry's call for a briefing by the FDIC's Office of the Inspector General and look forward to getting detailed information about their investigation."

Nuclear

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opposition came exclusively from Democrats.

Gov. JB Pritzker said in a statement Thursday that he would sign the bill. He worked with lawmakers on the new language of the new bill after vetoing a broader measure this summer.

Leadership of the Illinois AFL-CIO umbrella labor organization released a statement Thursday calling the policy an "important for our state's economy and our clean energy future."

It echoed a release from the Illinois Manufacturers Association, an industry advocacy group that testified in support of the proposal several times, saying that it would allow the state to "continue leading in energy and manufacturing innovation."

The legislation's sponsors, Sen. Sue Rezin, R-Morris, and Rep. Lance Yednock, D-Ottawa, said the bill has the potential to bolster Illinois' electric reliability as intermittent sources like wind and solar begin to make up a larger portion of the state's energy output.

"In order to reach our clean energy goals, we may have to invest in more nuclear generated carbon-free energy," Yednock said. "The policy does not subtract from the growth of wind and

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Nuclear

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solar energy; it could be an enhancement, as a potential use of small modular reactors could be to energize large manufacturers, therefore keeping more traditional new sources of energy for residential, small commercial customers and our future [electric vehicle] needs.”

Rezin noted that she is particularly interested in the potential for SMRs to be developed at the sites of former coal plants in Illinois, avoiding the need to build new transmission lines, although that process could take many years.

Because permitting nuclear energy takes many years at the federal level, the earliest a nuclear project could be brought online in Illinois would be in the 2030s.

Environmental, safety issues

Critics of the bill and of nuclear power remain worried about its implications.

David Kraft, an outspoken critic of nuclear energy and head of the Chicago-based advocacy group Nuclear Energy Information Service, urged lawmakers at a Thursday committee meeting to reject the bill.

Kraft said he was concerned about the lack of existing SMR installations and the unproven nature of the technology. While some nuclear reactors of this scale do exist in other countries, no commercial SMRs have ever been built in the United States.

“This isn’t an energy policy, it’s a Las Vegas craps shoot,” he said during the committee hearing.

In a follow-up interview, Kraft said that SMRs bring with them security concerns, as the smaller installations have different staffing requirements than traditional reactors and use a more highly enriched type of uranium. This relative abundance of this uranium, according to Kraft, could incentivize the further proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Some environmentalists also lined up against the bill, worrying that investment in nuclear could take away from investments into renewable energy technology. Sierra Club Illinois chapter director Jack Darin called nuclear energy “at best, a distraction.” Sierra Club was one of the main advocacy organizations that sought Pritzker’s veto of the previous bill.

While the Sierra Club remained opposed to the updated version of the bill, the Illinois Environmental Council – which co-signed a letter requesting the August veto with the Sierra Club – adopted a neutral position on the new bill before it was approved on Thursday.

Rep. Lilian Jimenez, D-Chicago, was one of the eight House Democrats who voted against the bill on Thursday. She said that there had not been enough study of the potential drawbacks of SMR development in the state.

“Illinois has plenty of time to assess the risks and costs before opening the door to these projects,” Jimenez said during floor debate. “I believe we should be focusing on that piece before taking this huge leap and this huge step.”

Industry issues

Since 2016, five other state legislatures have either repealed or weakened their bans on nuclear construction. Counting Illinois, bans on nuclear construction remain on the books in 11 states.

Several of the states that have lifted their bans in recent years have done so to pave the way for SMR technology. But the biggest player in that industry has seen several upsets in recent weeks.

As lawmakers debated the bill on Wednesday, NuScale Power – the only company with a federally approved SMR design – announced that it was canceling its highly watched “Carbon

Free Power Project” in Utah, which would have been the first commercial project with a NuScale reactor.

The project’s cancellation comes after months of falling stock prices and criticism from trading firms. Still, its leaders say the company will continue with its other projects, which are at various steps of regulation and planning.

“NuScale will continue with our other domestic and international customers to bring our American SMR technology to market and grow the U.S. nuclear manufacturing base,” NuScale CEO John Hopkins said in a Wednesday news release.

Rezin noted that “there’s a lot to learn” from NuScale’s canceled project, but hopes Illinois’ and other states’ moves to reverse their construction bans will encourage nuclear energy development in the U.S.

“If we do not build out this technology with companies that are in the United States, there’s other companies and countries such as Russia that are looking to sell that technology,” she said. “We don’t want that.”

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Gas Rates

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that increased rates were necessary to maintain system safety.

But the commission was particularly critical of one company’s spending choices. Peoples Gas, which operates in the city of Chicago, has been highly criticized for its ongoing system modernization program, which critics have said is plagued by regular budget overruns and is often behind schedule.

Thursday’s ICC decision not only reduced Peoples Gas’ overall infrastructure spending request, but it also took a strong oversight step for the company’s pipeline replacement program. The ICC paused all spending on the program for the next year and ordered a new ICC investigation into the program.

“We look forward to actively participating in future proceedings and demonstrating how our energy delivery system is critical to Chicago’s clean energy future,” Peoples Gas spokesperson David Schwartz said in a Thursday statement. “We are pleased the Commission shares our concern about safety.”

Scarr, a longtime critic of the program, praised the decision.

“This program was clearly problematic, literally since it got started. It stumbled out of the gates and there’s been so many investigations,” Scarr said. “For years, decision-makers have looked the other way, but they didn’t today and that’s a huge deal.”

Consumer impacts have been one of the most hotly debated elements of the four concurrent rate cases. Last year, the ICC directed utilities to propose a new system to offer lower energy rates for low-income customers.

These low-income rate designs were one of the areas of focus of Karen Lusson, a lawyer with the National Consumer Law Center who advocated for the plan that the ICC eventually adopted, overruling administrative judges’ recommendations.

“In previous rate case orders, the commission

never specifically assessed how affordable or unaffordable rates are for customers,” Lusson said.

The plan will offer discounts to those with incomes below three times the federal poverty limit, with greater discounts for those making less money. Discounts would apply to an entire customer bill and would be as high as 83 percent for Peoples Gas customers and 75 percent customers of other companies, according to Lusson. These discounts are slated to go into effect in October 2024.

Ameren’s Tomc said he was worried about the program’s potential impacts on customers who are not low-income.

Profits slashed

The commission lowered the expected rate hikes by leveraging one of its most powerful tools: deciding companies’ profits through their “return on equity” or ROE.

Ameren and Nicor both requested ROE rates above 10 percent, while Peoples Gas requested a 9.9 percent figure. But consumer advocates pushed back on those asks. For example, the Citizens Utility Board, one of several groups that argued for lower rates, requested a range centered on 9.5 percent for Ameren and Peoples Gas and 9.4 percent for Nicor.

But in a surprising move, the Commission set rates in the cases at or below that recommendation. Nicor Gas will operate with a 9.51 percent ROE, and Ameren will operate with a 9.44 percent ROE. Peoples Gas and North Shore Gas will operate with a 9.38 percent ROE.

Sarah Moskowitz, CUB’s executive director, said the move has both consumer and climate implications.

“They (the ICC) sent a strong message today that they are looking out for the interests of utility customers and understand that we’re going to have to plan for a clean energy transition and that utilities can no longer dodge that issue,” Moskowitz said.

Thursday’s decisions also began a process for the state deciding what role natural gas should play in Illinois’ clean energy transition. Each gas company involved in the cases is set to participate in a series of “future of gas” hearings next year that could help shape the industry’s fate in Illinois.

“As the State embarks on a journey toward a 100 percent clean energy economy, the gas system’s operations will not continue to exist in its current form,” ICC Chairman Doug Scott said in a statement. “Identifying how our gas and electric systems can adapt to meet these goals, and what specific actions should be taken to achieve them, will be an important task for the Commission moving forward.”

That statement came a few hours after Scott told utility representatives and advocates that the companies had failed to take that transition into account during the rate cases.

In the Peoples Gas case, for instance, Scott noted that the company “signaled that they are not currently working toward the electrification goals of the state.” He made similar comments about Nicor and Ameren Illinois and cited it as reasoning for cutting some of the companies’ spending.

Climate advocacy groups such as the Illinois Clean Jobs Coalition celebrated the decision, issuing a statement that the ICC’s decision indicates “there’s a new sheriff in town.”

Capitol News Illinois is a nonprofit, nonpartisan news service covering state government. It is distributed to hundreds of print and broadcast outlets statewide. It is funded primarily by the Illinois Press Foundation and the Robert R. McCormick Foundation, along with major contributions from the Illinois Broadcasters Foundation and Southern Illinois Editorial Association.

NOTICE TO BIDDERS

The Boone County Board will receive bids marked BCG-2023-06 for the purpose of completing renovations to the exterior of the Sheriff's Storage Building at 1455 McKinley Avenue, Belvidere IL 61008. Work includes removal of existing material and installing new insulation, plywood, and new panels.

Bid documents will be available on or after November 16, 2023. Those interested may visit the Boone County Website at https://www.boonecountyil.gov/businesses/bids_rfp_s.php for further details. Copies of the Bid Documents will be available for viewing in the Boone County Clerk's Office located at 1212 Logan Avenue, Suite 103, Belvidere, IL 61008. Bids will be accepted at the Boone County Clerk's Office until Monday, December 11, 2023 at 12:00 P.M. Bids will be opened immediately after the deadline in the Boone County Board Room located at 1212 Logan Avenue, Belvidere, Illinois 61008.

Boone County Government reserves the right to accept or reject all bids.
Published in the Boone County Journal – 11/23/2023

Complaint for An Order of Abandonment Pursuant to 65 ILCS 5/11-31-1, Against

515 Buchanan St, Belvidere, Illinois 61008

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 17TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, the City of Belvidere, an Illinois municipal corporation, v. Thomas D. Grimes aka Tom Grimes, et al., Case No. 2023MR37. PUBLICATION NOTICE: The requisite affidavit having been duly filed herein, NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN TO Thomas D. Grimes aka Tom Grimes, Blackhawk Bank s/i/i First Federal Savings and Loan Association of Belvidere, Retax Corp, and Unknown Owners and Nonrecord Claimants that said action has been commenced in said Court by the Plaintiff, naming you as Defendant(s) therein and requesting an order declaring abandoned the property commonly known as 515 Buchanan St, Belvidere, Illinois 61008 PIN: 05-25-378-009, and legally described as: Lot Three (3) in Block Two (2) of Gilman's Fourth Addition to Belvidere, being a Subdivision of part of the Southwest Quarter (1/4) of Section 25, Township 44 North, Range 3 East of the Third Principal Meridian, according to the Plat thereof recorded April 5, 1882 in Book 41 of Deeds, page 491; situated in the County of Boone and the State of Illinois. Now, therefore, unless you file your answer or otherwise make your appearance in said action in this Court by filing the same in the office of the 17th Judicial Circuit Court - Boone County of 601 North Main St., Belvidere, IL 61008, by December 18, 2023, AN ORDER OF DEFAULT MAY BE ENTERED AGAINST YOU AND JUDGMENT ENTERED FOR PLAINTIFF. Circuit Court of Boone County Clerk.
Published in the Boone County Journal, on 11/23, 11/30/ & 12/7/2023.

Suggested Disadvantaged Business (DBE) Advertisement for Construction Contractors

Notice to Disadvantaged Businesses

Great Lakes Water Resources Group, Inc. P.O. Box 460 Channahon, IL 40610, (815)-210-6311; (815)- 726-2720, is seeking disadvantaged business for the City of Belvidere. Project for subcontracting opportunities in the following areas: Boone County.

All disadvantaged business should contact, **IN WRITING**, (certified letter, return receipt requested), Kyle Brandenburg to discuss the subcontracting opportunities. All negotiations must be completed prior to bid opening 12/12/23.

Published in the Boone County Journal, 11/23/2023

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
BOONE COUNTY ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS**

Notice is hereby given that the Boone County Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, December 19, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. in the County Board Room, 1212 Logan Ave, Belvidere, IL 61008 upon the following petitions:

The applicant, German Ortiz (property owner), is seeking a variance to construct an accessory building in excess size of what is permitted in the R-1 District, pursuant to 2.8 (Variations) and Section 3.5.4 (Lot Development Standards) of Section 3.5 (R-1, Single-family Residential District) and 5.2 (Accessory Structures or Use) of the Boone County Zoning Ordinance, at 875 Ivy Oaks Drive, PIN 03-19-228-008, in unincorporated Caledonia Township, Boone County, Illinois.

The applicant and owner, Pam Berkenpas, 378 Wyman School Road, is requesting a map amendment pursuant to Section 2.10 Map Amendment and 3.3 Agriculture Residence District of the Boone County Zoning Ordinance to rezone parcel 03-06-300-011 from A-1, Agricultural Preservation District to A-2, Agricultural Residential. Located in unincorporated Caledonia Township, Boone County, IL.

The applicant, Prairie North Solar L.L.C., is seeking a special use permit in the A-1 Agricultural Preservation District for a solar energy facility pursuant to section 2.7 Special Use and Section 3.16.1 (Table of Permitted Uses) and Chapter 4 Design Criteria for Specific Uses 4.22 Solar Energy Systems Siting 4.2 of the Boone County Zoning Ordinance, in unincorporated Boone County, PIN 03-02-300-002, in unincorporated Poplar Grove Township.

All persons interested may appear at the hearing and be heard at the stated time and place.

Craig Hale, Vice-Chair, Boone County Zoning Board of Appeals
Published in the Boone County Journal on Thursday November 23, 2023.

ASSUMED NAMES

**STATE OF ILLINOIS COUNTY of BOONE COUNTY
ASSUMED NAME CERTIFICATE OF INTENTION**

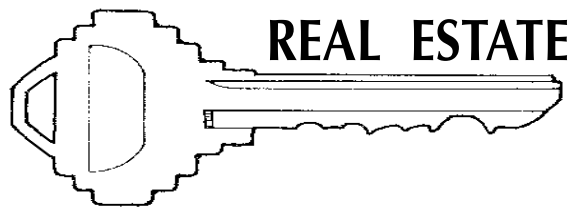
No. DBA4173 - The undersigned person(s) do hereby certify that a BUILDING ART AND MUSIC business is or is to be conducted or transacted under the name of SALLEY BUILDING COMPANY that its location is or will be 222 W. BOONE STREET, in Belvidere in the County of Boone County, State of Illinois, and that the true or real name(s) of the person(s) owning, conducting, or transacting the same with the post office address or address of said person(s) is shown below.
Phone Number: 815-979-4427
Rita Jan Salley, 222 W. Boone Street, Belvidere, Illinois 61008

I, Julie A. Bliss, County Clerk And Recorder of Boone County, in the State aforesaid, do the hereby certify that the within is a true and correct copy of an Assumed Name Certificate on file in my office. Dated: Monday, November 13, 2023
Julie A Bliss, County Clerk and Recorder
Published in Boone County Journal 11/16, 11/23, 11/30 - P

**STATE OF ILLINOIS COUNTY of BOONE COUNTY
ASSUMED NAME CERTIFICATE OF INTENTION**

No. DBA4176 - The undersigned person(s) do hereby certify that a Resume writing service is or is to be conducted or transacted under the name of PRO RESUMESELECT that its location is or will be 1625 CLOVERDALE WAY, BELVIDERE, IL 61008, in Belvidere in the County of Boone County, State of Illinois, and that the true or real name(s) of the person(s) owning, conducting, or transacting the same with the post office address or address of said person(s) is shown below.
Aarris M. Gore, 1625 Cloverdale Way, Belvidere, Illinois 61008
I, Julie A. Bliss, County Clerk And Recorder of Boone County, in

the State aforesaid, do the hereby certify that the within is a true and correct copy of an Assumed Name Certificate on file in my office. Dated: November 21, 2023 Julie A Bliss, County Clerk and Recorder
Published in Boone County Journal 11/23,30 12/07 P.



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

PNC BANK, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION Plaintiff,
-v.- 23 FC 24
SHARON K LAREINE, RAYMOND G LAREINE, LANDMARK
CROSSINGS HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION, UNKNOWN OWN-
ERS AND NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS Defendant
NOTICE OF SALE

PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale entered in the above cause on September 21, 2023, an agent for The Judicial Sales Corporation, will at 1:00 PM on January 3, 2024, at the NLT Title L.L.C, 530 S. State, Suite 201 (Logan Avenue entrance), Belvidere, IL, 61008, sell at a public sale to the highest bidder, as set forth below, the following described real estate:

Commonly known as 2025 LAFAYETTE DRIVE, BELVIDERE, IL 61008

Property Index No. 05-22-278-001
The real estate is improved with a single family residence.

Sale terms: 25% down of the highest bid by certified funds at the close of the sale payable to The Judicial Sales Corporation. No third party checks will be accepted. The balance, in certified funds/or wire transfer, is due within twenty-four (24) hours. The subject property is subject to general real estate taxes, special assessments, or special taxes levied against said real estate and is offered for sale without any representation as to quality or quantity of title and without recourse to Plaintiff and in "AS IS" condition. The sale is further subject to confirmation by the court.

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

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

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

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

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

MCCALLA RAYMER LEIBERT PIERCE, LLC Plaintiff's Attorneys,
One North Dearborn Street, Suite 1200, Chicago, IL, 60602. Tel No. (312) 346-9088.

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

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

MCCALLA RAYMER LEIBERT PIERCE, LLC
One North Dearborn Street, Suite 1200
Chicago IL, 60602
312-346-9088
E-Mail: pleadings@mccalla.com
Attorney File No. 23-14083IL_883538
Case Number: 23 FC 24
TJSC#: 43-3691

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

Case # 23 FC 24
I3232706
Published in *The Boone County Journal* Nov 23, 30; Dec 7, 2023 PNN

Prizker from page 3

Thursday's announcement was made easier by the fact that the state is running a budget surplus. In an updated five-year economic forecast published Wednesday, the governor's budgeting agency increased current-year revenue estimates by more than \$1.4 billion.

That created leeway for the state, which has already spent \$470 million on the response to asylum seekers since the wave of new arrivals to Chicago began 15 months ago, according to the administration's breakdown of state agency spending. The city is on track to spend more than \$500 million of its own money to address the influx by the end of next year.

But Pritzker emphasized the state isn't handing over the \$160 million directly to the city of Chicago, instead characterizing the plan as offering the types of "wraparound" services state agencies otherwise provide to Illinois residents. He chided the city for an intake and resettlement process that he said was moving too slowly and said Thursday's action plan was spurred by his administration's analysis of data regarding the influx of migrants.

"We're stepping in here to try to help and accelerate this process," the governor said. "It isn't moving fast enough. That's why you're seeing

people still on the street... We cannot have people freezing on the streets of Chicago as we head into very cold weather."

'Welcome' and 'shelter'

In the last 15 months, Chicago has seen more than 24,000 migrants arrive – the vast majority coming by bus at the direction of Texas Gov. Greg Abbott – according to city data.

In late September, the number of weekly arrivals to Chicago began surging, reaching nearly 3,000 the first week of October. But since then, the numbers have once again leveled off, averaging about 700 asylum seekers weekly for the last three weeks.

Read more: Pritzker urges Biden to intervene amid 'untenable' pace of migrant arrivals

With federal coordination of migrant relocation efforts lacking, the Pritzker administration said it was critical to create an intake center to coordinate the new arrivals. That includes identifying which migrants are hoping to go somewhere else in the U.S. from Chicago, and those who have sponsors in Illinois.

The state will pay \$30 million to launch the intake center, at a location in Chicago that is yet to be determined. The center will provide a centralized place for migrants to get assistance from community-based organizations already working with the asylum seekers. It would also likely serve as the new de facto location for buses to drop asylum seekers, an administration official said.

Pritzker on Thursday estimated having a centralized intake center would also help reduce the number of new arrivals going to city shelters by 10 percent. If that projection bears out, it would be a weight off Chicago's already overloaded system.

According to city data, nearly 12,300 migrants were staying in city shelters as of Thursday morning. But another 2,400 were awaiting placement in those shelters – the majority of whom have been sleeping in police stations, with hundreds more taking up temporary residence at O'Hare Airport.

As the pace of migrant arrivals picked up in September, Pritzker was critical of Mayor Brandon Johnson's proposal to build tent encampments for migrants, telling reporters he didn't think it was "the only option."

But on Thursday, Pritzker said the state would spend \$65 million on a similar endeavor – "dependent on the city turning over a property to us."

Asked why he'd softened to the idea, the governor pointed to the quickly approaching cold weather. In just a week, on Thanksgiving, the high temperature in Chicago is forecasted to be 24 degrees – more than 40 degrees below Thursday's mild temperatures.

"That is a reflection again of the fact that we are heading into winter very shortly," Pritzker said. "And that not enough shelter space has been created between the last couple of months when I said that and now."

Johnson on Wednesday announced a new policy limiting shelter stays to 60 days, although no one will be forced out if they're able to prove they've made progress securing permanent housing.

The winterized shelter site would house as many as 2,000 people at any given time, and the Pritzker administration estimates it would be up and running for as long as six months.

'Independence'

The final \$65 million chunk of Pritzker's migrant aid plan will be spent on programs for asylum seekers, including legal help, workforce training and rental assistance, all with the aim of getting new arrivals out of shelters and into more permanent housing.

Pritzker, along with other political and business leaders, spent months urging President Joe Biden's administration to speed up the application process for asylum – a prerequisite to applying for work
Continued on Page 8

Pritzker*from page 7*

permits.

Read more: Pritzker, state leaders call on Biden to allow Illinois to sponsor work permits for migrants

The governor on Thursday said those immigration application processing times have decreased in the last few months, and that some migrants have either already been authorized to work legally in the U.S. or are on their way to doing so.

Through a series of pro-bono legal aid workshops, the state aims to assist 11,000 shelter residents with submitting asylum or work permit applications by February. However, the Biden administration has not agreed to waive the fees associated with the paperwork.

Those already living in city shelters by Friday will be eligible for three months' worth of rental assistance – down from six months that had been offered previously.

Kirstin Chernawsky, Illinois Department of Human Services associate secretary for early childhood family and community, said cutting the rental assistance time in half allowed the state to reach all current shelter residents and would also send a message.

“This allows us to tell all new arrivals there is no more emergency rental assistance available, so that folks who are choosing to come to Chicago understand what it is that they are coming into,” Chernawsky said Thursday.

\$160 million

The money comes from the IDHS budget, equaling about 1 percent of the department's \$13.7 billion all-funds budget for the current fiscal year.

“So there are lines in the IDHS budget that are, you know, exactly for the purposes of providing services – wraparound services as we're calling them – to people who are living in the state of Illinois, and those are the places that we're pulling dollars from to assist these asylum seekers,” Pritzker said.

The reallocation of funding is made easier, according to the administration, because of the anticipated surplus now projected by fiscal forecasters with one-third of the fiscal year in the books.

The Governor's Office of Management and Budget updated its general revenue estimate to just over \$52 billion on Wednesday, driven in large part by corporate and personal income taxes and a one-time increase in federal funds. The state had only budgeted for about \$50.6 billion in revenue.

But the estimate from GOMB also identified about \$1 billion in additional “budget pressures” for the current fiscal year, including asylum seeker response, caseloads at the Department on Aging, increased group health insurance costs and other factors.

The administration noted a supplemental spending plan could be on the table when lawmakers return for their regular session in January to ensure that other IDHS services are not crowded out by the reallocation of funds to serve asylum seekers.

Illinois Lawmakers Aimed at Modernizing Professional Licensing

Measure would provide for new online system to speed up paperwork

By Hannah Meisel Capitol News Illinois

As Illinois faces shortages of health care practitioners and mental health professionals, the state agency in charge of licensing for those and more than 100 other industries has struggled to keep up.

The Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation has failed to meet its goals to speed up both initial licensing and renewals in key industries as applications to the agency grew by 15 percent between 2019 and 2022. IDFPR's director called the situation a “crisis” earlier this fall when testifying before lawmakers at a committee hearing on the issues facing the agency.

Last week, the General Assembly approved a measure to help IDFPR move beyond its antiquated systems and – at least temporarily – assist those awaiting license renewal. The measure cleared the General Assembly unanimously and needs only a signature from the governor to become law.

State Rep. Bob Morgan, D-Deerfield, who sponsored the bill in the House, said with legislative approval, IDFPR would be able to batch-renew licenses for those who've been waiting “not days, not weeks, but months – up to six to eight months.”

House Bill 2394 also calls for IDFPR to contract with a technology vendor to build a new computer software system within three months of Gov. JB Pritzker's signature on the bill, and to have that system up and running three months after that.

In a September hearing, IDFPR Secretary Mario Treto Jr. told lawmakers his agency is hamstrung by 1990s-era technology that doesn't allow the agency to add new types of licenses to its online system, even as more types of professional licensure have come under the agency's purview.

As a result, IDFPR has seen “an onslaught of paper applications,” Treto said, contributing to “historic wait times.” A sizeable number of the 104,000 total applications the agency received last year were submitted on paper via snail mail.

Earlier this year, the agency had been in talks with an existing state vendor that's already under a “master contract,” which would have sped up the often-slow process of contracting with a new company. But in the September hearing, Treto revealed the agency had walked away from those talks once IDFPR leaders realized the vendor wouldn't have been able to meet the agency's specific needs.

“And candidly we were quite disappointed with the news,” Treto said.

In that same hearing, leaders of industry groups aired their frustrations with IDFPR's licensing delays.

Daniel Stasi, a consultant with the Illinois Mental Health Counselors Association, noted he's been the point person for licensing-related issues for 24 years.

“Very little has changed,” Stasi said in September. “The wait is actually longer.”

Illinois State Medical Society executive senior vice president David Porter told lawmakers that the most concerning aspect of IDFPR's current licensing system is the “lack of transparency” from the agency.

“Applicants tell us that there's no real way for them to obtain status updates on their applications or renewals, and there's virtually no chance to be able to connect with someone at the department by phone or email who can provide such updates,” Porter said. “Most frustrating to new applicants is that they are rarely notified when their applicants are deemed to be insufficient or incomplete, which adds days or weeks to when they can expect to obtain a license.”

Treto assured lawmakers he's been speaking with his counterparts in other states to get ideas about how to improve IDFPR's systems – and said Illinois isn't alone in facing licensure issues. But, he said, some states seem to have figured it out. Oklahoma, for example, has reduced its call volume by 95 percent.

Lawmakers Decline To Extend Private School Scholarship Tax Credit Program

Veto session adjourns without renewing Invest in Kids Act

By Peter Hancock Capitol News Illinois

Illinois lawmakers adjourned their fall veto session Thursday afternoon without renewing a controversial program that provided indirect state support for students attending private and religious schools.

The Invest in Kids program will sunset as scheduled on Dec. 31, meaning donors to six state-approved private school scholarship funds will no longer be able to claim a 75 percent tax credit for their donations. The program has been capped at \$75 million annually since its implementation in 2018.

Advocates for the program say without the tax incentives, the scholarship organizations won't be able to raise the money they have in recent years, and an estimated 9,600 students who currently receive those scholarships may have to find another way to pay for their education or transfer to their local public school.

Lawmakers passed the Invest in Kids Act in 2017 as part of a bipartisan package that also included an overhaul of the way Illinois funds public preK-12 education. The scholarship program was considered necessary in order to get then-Gov. Bruce Rauner, a Republican, to sign the public school funding overhaul.

Supporters of the program argued that it gave children from lower-income backgrounds the ability to attend schools that would otherwise be available only to wealthier families. But opponents, including teachers' unions and other advocates for public education, argued that the tax credits siphoned money out of state coffers that could have been used to support public schools.

Last month, state Rep. Angelica Guerrero-Cuellar, D-Chicago, introduced House Bill 4194, which would have renewed a scaled-back version of the program. But that bill was never called for a vote.

Read more: Scholarship tax credit program among issues still on the table with 3 legislative days remaining

One question that remained unanswered about the program is whether students who received private school scholarships performed any better academically than their peers who went to public schools.

The 2017 law required students receiving the scholarships to take the same standardized tests that public school students take each year, and it called on the Illinois State Board of Education to publish an analysis of that data.

But ISBE has not yet published that analysis. Officials at the agency said they were unable to collect reliable data during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021. An analysis using 2022 and 2023 test results is scheduled for release later this year or early in 2024.

Throughout the veto session, dozens of supporters of the program converged on the Statehouse wearing blue t-shirts and waving signs that read, “Protect our scholarships.”

House Republican leader Tony McCombie, of Savanna, told reporters Thursday that she believes the program still has bipartisan support, and she said its backers will continue working to have it reinstated.

“It certainly will continue to be a priority of the caucus, and it certainly will be a priority of several of the Democrats in the House as well as, I believe, in the Senate,” she said. “I don't think it's going to be something that they're going to want to just stop.”