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## SkyTEM Completes Aerial Geologic Survey of Boone County

By Dan Kane, PG

Water Resource Specialist, Boone County

The Wings and Wheels Museum was the perfect setting on Saturday, March 8th to learn about Boone County's exciting geologic mapping project! Kicking off the start of this cutting-edge scientific study with local and state experts sharing how using this new technology sends electromagnetic signals deep into the ground and comparing the results to taking an MRI of the earth.

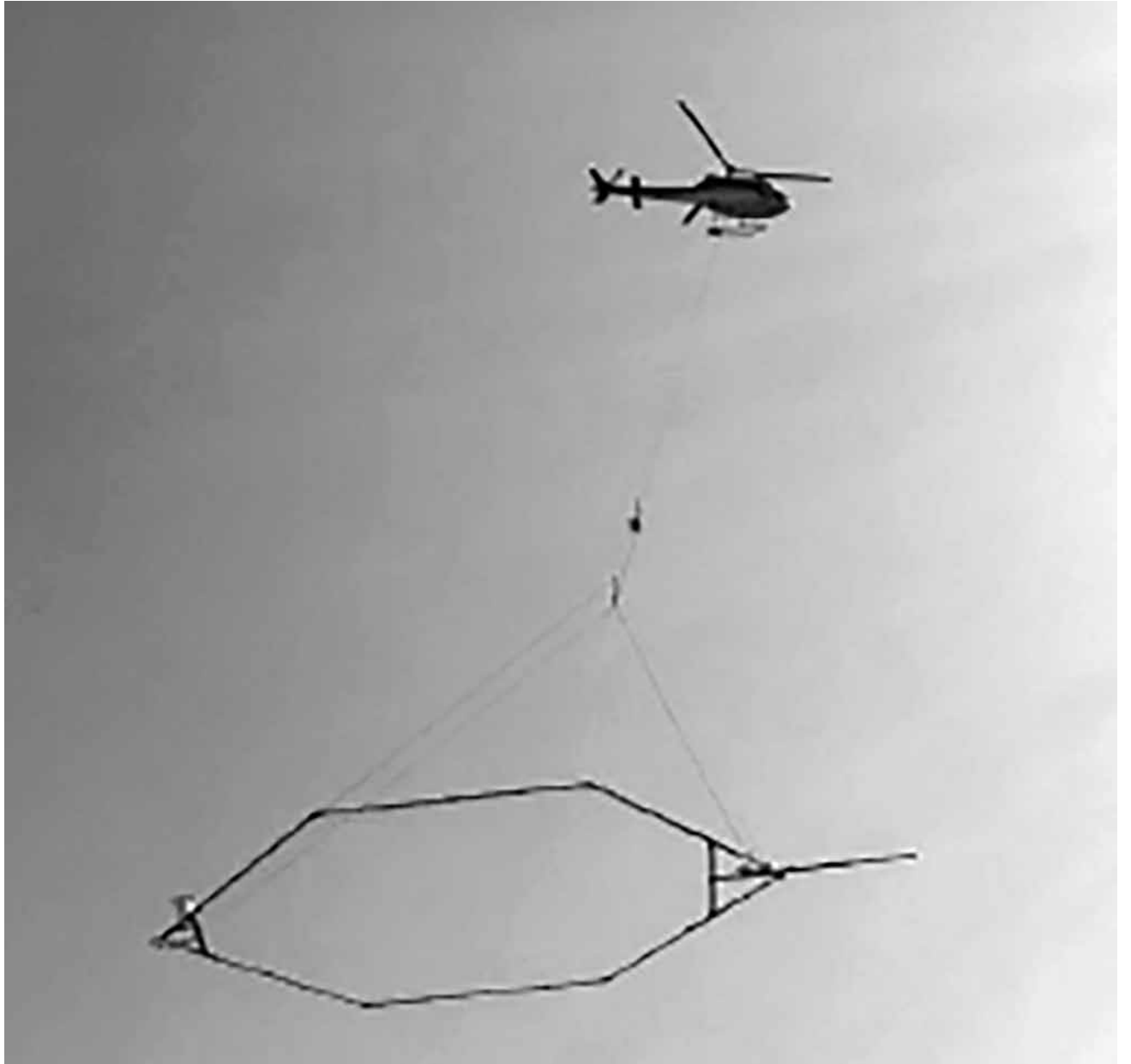
The event drew a good crowd! The weather cooperated and those that came out to learn more about the 3-D geologic mapping project were treated to an impressive helicopter demonstration (Figure 1 & 1A.) and the geophysical instruments it carries to emit and collect electromagnetic signals. Participants were able to meet with the Illinois Prairie Research Institute scientists working on the Boone County project, ask questions and get first hand information.

The Northern Regional Groundwater Protection Planning Committee (NRGPPC), an outreach effort of the Illinois Groundwater Protection Act, assisted with organizing, funding and staffing this event. This Committee consists of individuals representing a number of local agencies and organizations with water resource expertise. Members of this committee volunteered to staff tables around the museum with groundwater models and other demonstrations (see Figure 2.) to help further the public understanding about local water resources and our water supply.

This event was supported by the Wings & Wheels Museum, the Poplar Grove Airport, the Boone County Conservation District, the Boone County Soil and Water Conservation District, Severson Dells Foundation, Mr. Goodwater, S&S Catering and the Boone County Board. We had 175 pre-registered attendees, but additional participants stopped-in, raising participation to around 200 people. Boone County Board Chairman Karl Johnson (Figure 3.) spoke to the crowd acknowledging former County Board Member Sherry Branson's efforts to move this project forward. He stressed the importance of utilizing this new study in the community's efforts to sustain and preserve our water resources.

An impressive list of speakers including Senator Dave Severson (Figure. 4), Illinois State Geological Survey Director Dr. Dick Berg, Illinois Prairie Research Director Praveen Kumar, and project team scientists ISGS Geologist Jason Thomason and ISGS Geophysicist Kisa Mwakanyamale all contributed to the morning program.

The event concluded outside the museum with a presentation from the helicopter crew and an aerial demonstration (Figure 3.) of how the equipment is flown across the landscape to collect important scientific data that will be translated into the three-dimensional geologic map of Boone County. This map will reveal a comprehensive



(Top) SkyTEM's Aerial Demonstration of survey equipment at the March 8th, 2025 public information event for the Boone County 3-D Geologic Mapping Project. (Bottom) Ann Wasser with Severson Dells demonstrates how rainfall can cause erosion and carry sediments and other contaminants to streams and waterways. Photo credit: Diane Kane

picture of geologic materials like sand and gravel deposits, glacial tills, bedrock stratigraphy and hidden features like the buried Troy Bedrock Valley and its tributaries. The results of this study will provide high resolution, 3 - dimensional geologic maps and interactive online tools that will be available to the public. Even though it only took SkyTEM about a week to complete the aerial survey, it will take scientists about 2 ½ years to analyze the information and complete this study.

To read the previous articles in the series about the 3-D geologic mapping project and access more information about this project visit the Boone County Website.



# Raoul says 'I do not want to go to Washington,' rules out bid for U.S. Senate

Illinois attorney general says he can do more by staying in his current job

By Peter Hancock Capitol News Illinois

While many Illinois Democrats wait anxiously to hear whether U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin will run for reelection in 2026 or step down after five terms in the Senate, at least one incumbent officeholder appears to be ruling himself out as a potential successor.

Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul said Tuesday he is not interested in running for that job, or any other elected position in the foreseeable future.

"I do not want to go to Washington. I want to stay here," Raoul told a luncheon audience at the City Club of Chicago. "And this is no knock on Sen. Durbin or Sen. (Tammy) Duckworth. I truly believe what I do on a day-to-day basis (as attorney general) has more impact than what I could do as U.S. senator."

Durbin, who turned 80 in November, currently serves as the Democratic whip in the Senate, the second-highest ranking position in the caucus, behind Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer,

of New York. But he is widely expected to announce in the coming weeks whether he will run for another term, and there has been rampant speculation in political circles about who might succeed him.

Raoul, 60, has become the target of much of that speculation in recent months by joining numerous multistate lawsuits that seek to block many of President Donald Trump's executive orders and other policy initiatives.

Those include Trump's efforts to halt the recognition of birthright citizenship that is recognized under the 14th amendment; to freeze the distribution of federal funds previously appropriated by Congress; to dismantle the U.S. Department of Education, and to terminate the employment of tens of thousands of federal employees.

But Raoul, who served 15 years in the Illinois Senate before being elected attorney general in 2018, said emphatically Tuesday he does not want to be considered for Durbin's seat, insisting he can do more to counteract the Trump administration from the attorney general's office than from anywhere else.

"I know that the attorney general's office, and it's in every state, produces more than a single U.S. senator can for its constituency," he said. "So why would I leave doing something more important to doing something — I'm not saying unimportant — but less impactful?"

Durbin himself has come under criticism from fellow Democrats, including Gov. JB Pritzker, for voting last month in favor of a Republican-backed spending plan that averted a partial government shutdown but also provides for implementing massive spending cuts over the next 10 years.

Pritzker called that vote "a huge mistake," but Durbin defended it by telling reporters at a March 18 event in Taylorville, "I have never voted for a shutdown and I didn't last week."

In his comments Tuesday, Raoul said the budget vote caused a rift within Democratic circles nationally, but he said he would not second-guess Durbin or any of the other Democrats who voted to let the spending package go through.

"I don't know how I would have voted on the continuing resolution," he said. "But I'm not going to drag anybody over the coals without a very healthy, well-informed debate about everything that they were facing in that moment."

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\$771 million funding gap the Chicago area's public transportation agencies face in 2026. But downstate public transit agencies are also facing a similar plight as costs rise beyond the state's longstanding funding commitment.

Read more: Lawmakers grill mass transit leaders as clock ticks toward funding 'cliff'

"We want (legislators) to be aware that it's a statewide problem even though the nature of the problem is a little different," Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District CEO Karl Gnad said in an interview. "There is a financial problem statewide."

The Illinois Public Transportation Association, which represents public transit agencies throughout the state, including in Chicago, is asking lawmakers to consider reforming the formula that doles out money to downstate public transit agencies.

The association also projects that the Downstate Transit Improvement Fund, which pays for infrastructure projects at downstate transit agencies, could become insolvent by 2029 without changes to how it is funded.

### Costs exceeding state support

Chicago area transit agencies face financial challenges as federal COVID-19 funds run out and rider patterns change thanks to work-from-home policies adopted during the pandemic. Rider fares are also no longer enough to cover half of the agencies' revenue as required by state law. That requirement was suspended during the pandemic but is set to go back into effect this summer.

Downstate agencies are facing a different problem at the same time.


While the state covers about 17% of public transportation funding in the Chicago area, the state covers up to 65% of expenses for downstate transit agencies. But because of rising costs and lackluster economic growth in downstate communities that hinders sales tax revenue, funding shortfalls are growing.

Read more: A university, a rural town and their fight to survive Trump's war on education

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- Barbara Burns, 87, Marengo, April 3
- Curt Crawford, 75, Belvidere, April 1
- Donna Dean, 67, Belvidere, April 1
- Marilyn Gustafson, 92, Belvidere, April 4
- Dalton Kalas, 28, Belvidere, April 4
- Victoria (Pratt) Langeloh, 70, Belvidere, March 26
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## It's Not Just Chicago. Downstate Public Transit Agencies Face Funding Challenges

Funding hole expected to grow as costs rise, revenue lags

By Ben Szalinski Capitol News Illinois

Outside the busy systems of buses and trains moving about a million commuters around Chicago and its suburbs every day, 54 public transit agencies provide services throughout the rest of Illinois in communities surrounded by farmland and or home to state colleges and universities.

State lawmakers are spending this spring's legislative session debating how to solve a

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# THE BOONE COUNTY JOURNAL

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--In Our Opinion--

## Pritzker Trade Mission to Mexico Sparks New Investment Despite Tariffs

*Mexico City was latest destination of governor's economic development trips*

By Ben Szalinski Capitol News Illinois

Gov. JB Pritzker wrapped up a four-day trip to Mexico City on Wednesday, hopeful a trade mission to Mexico will yield new economic development in Illinois, even as tariffs threaten the stability of the United States' global trade.

Speaking to reporters on a call Wednesday, Pritzker outlined a series of meetings he had with Mexican business leaders exploring setting up new operations in Illinois.

But Pritzker's trip concluded just as Trump was set to announce new tariffs on goods and countries around the world.

"Here in Mexico, there is deep concern," Pritzker said. "Let's start with just the concern that the tariffs seem so broad-based and not well negotiated or thought out that they will potentially destroy some businesses in Mexico that U.S. companies rely upon."

Pritzker said Mexican officials told him and others in Illinois' 70-person delegation that businesses need stability and certainty about America's trade policy.

"Over the past few days, I've heard a consistent message from Mexican public officials and business leaders and the business owners that the U.S. federal government must reestablish stability and consistency in the U.S.-Mexico relationship," Pritzker said.

Pritzker acknowledged tariffs could hurt Illinois' business recruitment efforts as well.

"The uncertainty that we've heard over and over again in the discussions with our Mexican counterparts is going to lead to them pulling back," Pritzker predicted about the tariffs.

Even existing Illinois businesses such as auto manufacturers Ford, Stellantis and Rivian will be harmed by tariffs on auto parts, the governor argued. President Donald Trump is hoping the tariffs will encourage businesses to set up more operations in the United States to avoid the tariffs.

Pritzker said tariffs can be effective when they're "targeted" to balance out trade deficits, but the wide scope of Trump's plan will just end up costing Americans more and injecting more uncertainty into businesses.

"When you talk about raising tariffs, to say you're going to put a tariff on everything from a country doesn't take into account that you're trying to have some specific outcomes," Pritzker said. "Not to raise costs and inflation on American families, but rather to perhaps equalize trade deficits. And you can do that with, again, a targeted focus on a product or a set of products."

Pritzker signed a cooperation agreement with Mexico state Gov. Delfina Gómez Álvarez on Monday that emphasizes the strong ties between Illinois and Mexico and encourages cooperation on key industries for both governments in areas such as manufacturing, agriculture and finance.

Illinois has had a long relationship with Mexico in the years since Gov. Jim Thompson signed the first bilateral agreement between the state of Illinois and state of Mexico in 1990, which was reaffirmed by Gov. Pat Quinn in 2013.

Mexico was Illinois' second-largest export market in 2024 with \$32 billion worth of goods being sent to the country. Another \$19 billion worth of Mexican goods came to Illinois that year,

## A Meaningful Step In the Right Direction

The Boone County Journal cannot give high enough praise to former county board member Sherry Branson and her determined drive to get the attention of the Boone County Board. The County Board's support and funding of the MRI groundwater project equally has also earned our respect. Now, it's time for the City of Belvidere to follow through.

The Journal sees political decisions often being made on the basis of something "sounding good." Good in the moment or not wanting to make waves with fellow power holders. But here the County Board reflected and made a decision based upon an exchange of all board members in the light of day and not behind closed doors. They deserve our praise.

The information from this study, an expensive study, paid for by the Biden Administration's ARPA funds, will provide a foundation for future comprehensive land use planning. Water is fundamental to life. In Illinois, we see areas where available water is running dangerously low. Today's faucet is not guaranteed to have water tomorrow. Good clean water is like having money in the bank.

Local comprehensive planning has often been one-dimensional, based on private land development, mostly behind closed doors in the carving room. This introduces a second dimension: creating a healthy future for the community.

David Larson

## Pritzker Vows To Be 'Stable' Trading Partner With United Kingdom

*Governor, UK sign memorandum focusing on manufacturing, energy and technology*

By Peter Hancock Capitol News Illinois

Gov. JB Pritzker vowed Tuesday that Illinois will remain a "stable" trading partner with nations around the world, despite President Donald Trump's imposition of tariffs that have disrupted global markets.

"Look, there are a lot of uncertainties at the moment, a lot of instability. There's no doubt," Pritzker said. "But this is a stable state. This is a state that thrives on certainty and allows our businesses to do well. And so we look forward to maintaining that status."

Pritzker was responding to questions from reporters in his Statehouse office after signing a "memorandum of understanding," or MOU, regarding trade between Illinois and the United Kingdom. MOUs are nonbinding agreements

that outline how the parties intend to work together.

The signing ceremony in the governor's office was largely ceremonial because terms of the MOU were originally agreed to during Pritzker's trade mission to the U.K. in 2023.

"This action will inspire greater dialogue, cooperation and innovation on issues of critical importance to both of our nations, from climate change to infectious disease controls to sustainable agriculture," Pritzker

said. "It will strengthen our existing lines of trade and investment while expanding into new ventures in each of our emerging high growth sectors, advanced manufacturing, life sciences, finance, clean energy and beyond."

Joining in the ceremony was U.K. Consul General Richard Hyde, who said he sees particular opportunities for Illinois to work with the U.K. on the development of smaller-scale nuclear power generation, where the British firm Rolls-Royce has been a leader.

"Excuse me for lobbying governor, and I promised you I wouldn't, but you know, Illinois has adopted a standard and definition of small and small-modular reactors, which we think is a

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## Transit

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Like nearly every other sector of the economy, public transportation agencies are facing rising costs for maintenance in addition to recruiting and retaining employees.

A 17-year-old formula in state law requires about 7.5% of sales taxes collected in areas served by transit agencies to be deposited into the state's Downstate Public Transportation Fund. The fund provides downstate agencies with funding for up to 65% of their operating expenses while local funding sources such as property taxes, rider fares, bus advertisement sales and cost-sharing contracts cover the other 35%.

More than \$460 million dollars was allocated to public transportation agencies outside Chicago through that fund in the current fiscal year. Appropriations range from \$99.6 million to the St. Clair County Transit District that provides a portion of the rail and bus service in the St. Louis metro area to a \$209,200 for a "dial-a-ride" program for seniors in Douglas County in East Central Illinois.

But the gap between the costs that local and state funding sources cover is growing. In fiscal year 2024, the state deposited \$150 million less than lawmakers had budgeted, according to the association, and transit leaders expect this gap to keep growing.

Combined with slower economic and property tax growth outside the Chicago area, local governments are struggling to cover 35% of public transportation costs as expenses increase.

"There's no mechanism to get money from elsewhere," Laura Calderon, head of the Illinois Public Transportation Association, said. Downstate agencies could collectively face a \$42 million shortfall next year. Though smaller than Chicago's budget gap, just a few million dollars less in funding could have major impacts for downstate agencies, Gnadat said.

Without funding changes, Gnadat said the Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District would have to implement "dramatic" service cuts.

### Boosting state funding

Downstate public transportation agencies are asking lawmakers to allow more money from sales taxes to go toward public transportation. Under a change proposed by the IPTA, about 9.4% of sales tax revenue generated in communities with public transportation would go toward downstate public transit, rather than the current 7.5%.

According to the association, this change would increase funding by \$79.3 million annually beginning in fiscal year 2026. By fiscal year 2034, the association wants lawmakers to boost funding to 12%, which would increase yearly funding by \$265 million.

That's "not much of a difference in the overall tax collection for the state, but it's a meaningful difference for downstate transit," Gnadat said.

Downstate agencies deliver a lot of services for free or reduced fares and the typical distance traveled on trips is farther than in major cities, meaning fare hikes are not an ideal way to raise revenue, Calderon said.

The association is also seeking to increase the state's portion of funding for downstate transit agencies. Rather than having the state cover up to 65% of operational expenses across the board, the association wants the state to cover 75% of expenses for urban agencies and 80% for rural agencies serving populations less than 50,000 people.

Transit officials and lawmakers are considering other proposals to increase funding, including a new tax on electric utility companies. Senate

Transportation Committee chair Sen. Ram Villivalam, D-Chicago, said in an interview he's making the same request to downstate transit agencies that he is to Chicago agencies: they must make reforms to improve service and accountability for their riders before lawmakers pony up money.

"Whether it's the northeastern Illinois region of the state or downstate, we are requesting public transit agencies to come forward with reforms to ensure that the level of service that's being provided to our residents meets their needs," Villivalam said.

That includes improving planning coordination between agencies that may serve similar areas, Villivalam said.

While much of the legislature's attention is on Chicago's issues, Calderon said lawmakers are receptive to downstate public transit needs.

"The budget is tight this year and so seeking an increase in a portion of the state sales tax going to transit is going to be a challenge," Calderon said.

Villivalam observed that during nearly a dozen hearings his Senate committee has held over the last year, there have been few objections to increasing state funding for public transit but many calls for the state to increase its investment.

"That has really spoken to the fact that there's a consensus that we need to fund public transit," he said. "What level of service, what the governance looks like, what level of funding — those are questions that we're going to come together and work on."

Villivalam said he is "cautiously optimistic" that lawmakers will pass transit reforms for the entire state before the General Assembly is scheduled to adjourn on May 31.

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## Mexico

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making the country Illinois' third-largest import market.

Latinos have also been the state's fastest-growing population in recent decades — up 45% since 2000, according to research by the University of Illinois Chicago.

The Illinois delegation met with energy companies interested in establishing production facilities in Illinois and a retail business trying to grow their presence in Mexican American communities, among others, Pritzker said.

Pritzker's trip to Mexico City is the latest international economic development trip the governor has taken since he took office in 2019. Other trips have included Canada, Japan and the United Kingdom.

"I've made international trade missions a central part of my economic mission," Pritzker said. "It is part of my job as governor to be the chief marketing officer for Illinois and to pitch companies and investors on why Illinois is the best state in the U.S. to do business in."

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## UK

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little old fashioned," he said. "We'd love to open it up, like other states are doing around you, so that Rolls-Royce can come and bring their technology into Illinois and drive forward small-modular reactors and more decarbonization, a more safe nuclear power to your state."

In 2024, according to the governor's office, Illinois exported more than \$2.6 billion worth of goods to the U.K., making it the state's eighth-largest export partner. Exports from Illinois include chemicals, computer products and manufactured and fabricated metal products. British firms, meanwhile, employ about 96,000 people in Illinois.

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## Senate Democrats Champion Program To Streamline Illinois College Applications

*Program is a Pritzker initiative, aimed at making Illinois colleges more affordable*

By Jade Aubrey Capitol News Illinois

Illinois Senate Democrats voiced their support Thursday for a bill that would create a program to streamline high school students' college application processes, reducing fees and making higher education more affordable.

An initiative of Gov. JB Pritzker, the direct admission program is described as a "one-stop shop" for students that would bypass all college application fees.

Sen. Christopher Belt, D-Swansea, spoke at a news conference in the Statehouse, calling the bill "a critical step we're taking to make higher education more accessible to students across Illinois."

"The college admissions process can be a daunting experience, high school seniors and community college transfer students already have enough on their plates," he said. "The last thing that they need is a complicated application process filled with extra fees, paperwork and delays."

Senate Bill 2448 would allow all high school juniors and seniors and community college students to enroll in the program. The bill would allow the Illinois Board of Higher Education to send students a single notification containing all of their admission offers. And students would be able to accept an offer and enroll at the Illinois university they choose through the direct

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## Applications

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admission program.

The bill is still awaiting passage in the Senate.

Students would have to “opt-in” to take part in the program and provide their contact information and GPAs to the Illinois Student Assistance Commission. The commission would then apply admission criteria from each university to find out which universities the student qualifies for admission at.

Belt praised the program’s time- and cost-saving efficiencies, as students who use the direct admission program wouldn’t have to individually apply to every Illinois college, and they wouldn’t be subject to the standard college application fees at each.

“This means that they won’t have to go through the repeated application process and pay application fees,” he said. “Instead, they’ll be able to focus on what matters most, their education and their future.”

All public universities would take part in this program except the University of Illinois Chicago and the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Those universities would offer a “pre-screened outreach,” where they would directly invite students to apply.

“We have so many bright, talented young people right here in Illinois, and we want them to stay here,” Belt said. “We want them to pursue their education in our state, to get jobs here, raise their families here, and contribute to the growth and prosperity of our communities.”

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## Lawmakers Approve Bills Easing Driving Tests on Seniors, Limits on Student Fines

*Plan approved by House allows women’s pro sports to receive state funding*

By Ben Szalinski & Peter Hancock  
Capitol News Illinois

Road tests to renew driver’s licenses could be a thing of the past for many seniors in Illinois under a bill unanimously approved Wednesday by the Illinois House.

The House voted 114-0 to approve House Bill 1226, which would raise the age that seniors must take a driving exam to renew their licenses from 79 to 87. People age 79 and older would still have to go in person to a secretary of state facility to renew their license but wouldn’t have to take a driving test with a state employee until they turn

87.

The bill is an initiative of Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias.

“Study after study indicates that senior drivers are the most safe amongst us and there’s really no need for this onerous test to be administered when you are a senior,” said bill sponsor Rep. Jay Hoffman, D-Swansea.

The bill includes a number of safeguards, including that immediate family members can submit reports to the secretary of state if they are concerned a relative has a condition that makes it unsafe for them to drive.

The bill was conceived by a constituent of Rep. Jeff Keicher, R-Sycamore, last year.

“We have had a persistent issue with discriminating against older folks in this state,” Keicher said. “This bill goes part of the way towards resolving that.”

### Women’s sports stadiums

Legislation approved on a 111-0 vote by the House on Wednesday adds women’s professional sports to the types of sports facilities the Illinois Sports Facilities Authority can oversee. Current law only allows the ISFA to oversee sports facilities for baseball, football and auto racing.

“What I wanted to accomplish with this bill is to make sure that women’s professional sports were being treated equally to men’s professional sports,” bill sponsor Rep. Eva-Dina Delgado, D-Chicago, said in an interview.

The bill’s passage comes amid pushes by the Chicago Bears and Chicago White Sox for state funding to build new stadiums. But the Chicago Red Stars, a women’s professional soccer team that plays in suburban Bridgeview, are also interested in a new stadium with help from state funding. Team owner Laura Ricketts met with General Assembly leadership last year, Crain’s Chicago Business reported.

Delgado stressed the bill isn’t designed to move any specific stadium proposal forward and said the Red Stars have not approached her with any specific plan.

“Most of my colleagues are hesitant to do public funding for any kind of stadium at this moment in time,” Delgado said.

The bill would also require ISFA to notify the governor and General Assembly when a team formally requests funding from the state, and for the General Assembly to hold hearings on the proposal.

Municipal fines, fees as school-based discipline Public school students would no longer be subject to municipal fines, fees, tickets or citations as a form of school-based discipline for many kinds of code violations if they occur on school grounds under a bill that cleared the state Senate on Wednesday.

Senate Bill 1519, sponsored by Sen. Karina Villa, D-West Chicago, would prohibit that practice. It would also require school districts that employ school resource officers — a sworn law enforcement officer assigned to a school — to sign a formal memorandum of understanding with the officer’s law enforcement agency to ensure the officers are properly trained and do not use fines or tickets as a form of discipline.

The bill would not apply to delinquent or criminal conduct or to violations of traffic, boating or fish and game laws.

“A student being

ticketed for behavior at school can result in them being thrown into the system, hindering their future opportunities,” Villa said in a statement. “School discipline that mirrors law enforcement practices is ineffective at addressing the root causes of student behavior.”

A law passed in 2015 prohibits schools from issuing monetary fines for school behavior, but Villa said many schools get around the law by referring students to law enforcement. A 2022 ProPublica investigation found Black and Latino students received a disproportionate number of tickets.

The bill passed the Senate, 37-17, and will next be considered in the House.

### AI in health insurance decisions

Health insurances companies could face new restrictions on how they use artificial intelligence under a measure approved on a 79-35 vote Wednesday.

House Bill 35 sponsored by Rep. Bob Morgan, D-Deerfield, would prohibit health insurance companies from only relying on AI to deny, reduce or terminate coverage for patients receiving care ranging from prescriptions to surgery. Instead, those AI-made decisions would have to be reviewed by a human employee who can override it.

Health insurance companies would also be required to disclose to the state when they are using AI.

“New disclosures to you, the consumer, you have the right to know if AI is being used to deny your health care,” Morgan said.

### Commission would commemorate Underground Railroad

The Illinois Senate passed a bill Wednesday to preserve and promote resources in the state linked to the Underground Railroad — the network of secret routes and hiding places that enslaved African Americans used to escape bondage before the Civil War.

Senate Bill 1607 by Sen. Dave Koehler, D-Peoria, would establish a Freedom Trails Commission to identify, preserve and promote historic sites in Illinois linked to the Underground Railroad. The commission would also work with the National Park Service’s Network to Freedom program to serve as a liaison between the Park Service and local entities involved in the history of the Underground Railroad.

“Preserving our history is essential to building a better future,” Koehler said in a statement. “Through this commission, we can ensure the stories of bravery, perseverance, and freedom are told and remembered.”

The bill passed unanimously out of the Senate and moves to the House for consideration.

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LEGAL NOTICES

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

IN RE THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF: Renato Garza Jr., Deceased.

CASE NO: 2025PR11 CLAIM NOTICE

NOTICE is given of the death of RENATO GARZA JR on September 23, 2024. Letters of Office were issued on March 19, 2025 to: Ena O Garza who is the legal representative of the estate.

Claims against the estate may be filed within six (6) months from the date of first publication. Any claim not filed within six (6) months from the date of first publication or claims not filed within three (3) months from the date of mailing or delivery of Notice to Creditors, if mailing is required by Section 18-3 of the Illinois Probate Act, 1975, as amended whichever date is later. Any claim not filed by the requisite date stated above shall be barred.

Claims may be filed in the office of the Boone County Circuit Clerk-Probate Div. at the Boone County Courthouse, 601 N. Main St., Belvidere, IL 61008, or with the representative or both.

Copies of claims filed with the Circuit Clerk’s Office-Probate Div., must be mailed or delivered to the estate legal representative and to the attorney within ten days (10) after it has been filed.

DATED: 03/26/2025 ENA O. GARZA, ADMINISTRATOR CHRISTIAN SOLARES #6325075

Attorney for Estate 4855 E State St Ste 24 Rockford, IL 61108 815/312-1703

Published in the Boone County Journal – 04/03,10,17

STATE OF ILLINOIS IN THE CIRCUIT COURT BOONE COUNTY DATE FOR REQUEST OF NAME CHANGE (ADULT): JHONTAYA CARLINA BAROSSO

Case No. 2025-MR-13 There will be a court date on my Request to change my name from: JHONTAYA CARLINA BAROSSO to the new name of JHONTAYA CARLINA BARROSSO. The court date will be held on 05/13/2025 at 9:00 a.m. at the Boone County Courthouse, 601 N. Main St., Belvidere, IL 61008 in Courtroom #3 Published in the Boone County Journal – 4/3, 4/10, 4/17/2025

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE SEVENTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT BOONE COUNTY, ILLINOIS Federal National Mortgage Association, Plaintiff, -v- 2024FC56 Luis Lopez Rodriguez; et. al., Defendants. 121 BULLARD ST, POPLAR GROVE, IL 61065

NOTICE OF SALE PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale entered in the above cause on 12/17/2024, an agent of Auction.com LLC will conduct the auction in person at 12:00 PM on May 15, 2025 located at 601 N Main Street, Courthouse Steps, Belvidere, IL 61008, and will sell at public sale to the highest bidder, as set forth below, the following described real estate. LOT FIVE (5) IN BULLARD’S ADDITION TO POPLAR GROVE, BEING A SUBDIVISION OF PART OF THE NORTHWEST QUARTER (1/4) OF SECTION 19, TOWNSHIP 45 NORTH, RANGE 4 EAST OF THE THIRD PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF RECORDED IN BOOK 10 OF PLATS ON PAGES 50 AND 51 AS DOCUMENT NO. 72-3406 IN THE RECORDER’S OFFICE OF BOONE COUNTY, ILLINOIS; SITUATED IN THE COUNTY OF BOONE AND THE STATE OF ILLINOIS. Commonly known as 121 BULLARD ST, POPLAR GROVE, IL 61065 Property Index No. 04-19-151-023 The real estate is improved with a Residential Property. The judgment amount was \$178,076.41 Sale Terms: 20% down of the highest bid by certified funds at the close of the sale payable to Auction.com LLC. No third party checks will be accepted. All registered bidders need to provide a photo ID in order to bid. The balance, in certified funds/or wire transfer, is due within twenty-four (24) hours. (relief fee not required) 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. For information, contact Plaintiff’s attorney: CODILIS & ASSOCIATES PC (630) 794-5300 please refer to file number 14-24-04980. Auction.com LLC 100 N LaSalle St., Suite 1400 Chicago, IL 60606 - 872-225-4985 You can also visit www.auction.com. Attorney File No. 14-24-04980 Case Number: 2024FC56

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. 13258582 Published in the Boone County Journal – 4/3, 4/10, 4/17/2025 PNN

STATE OF ILLINOIS IN THE CIRCUIT COURT BOONE COUNTY

DATE FOR REQUEST OF NAME CHANGE (ADULT): LAUREEN RAE MATTSON Case No. 25MR12 There will be a court date on my Request to change my name from: LAUREEN RAE MATTSON to the new name of LAURIE RAE MATTSON. The court date will be held on 06/10/2025 at 9:00 a.m. at the Boone County Courthouse, 601 N. Main St., Belvidere, IL 61008 in Courtroom #3 Published in the Boone County Journal – 04/03,10,17 P.

PUBLIC NOTICE

ON APRIL 8, 2025, THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE BOONE COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT #1 DID ADOPT TENTATIVE ANNUAL BUDGET AND APPROPRIATION ORDINANCES FOR CORPORATE PURPOSES FOR FISCAL YEAR COMMENCING ON MAY 1, 2025, TO APRIL 30, 2026.

EFFECTIVE APRIL 9, 2025, THE AFOREMENTIONED TENTATIVE BUDGET AND APPROPRIATION ORDINANCES ARE AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION ON THE BULLETIN BOARD ON THE EXTERIOR OF THE BUILDING AT THE BOONE COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT #1 STATION LOCATED AT 130 WEST OGDEN STREET, CAPRON, ILLINOIS. A PUBLIC HEARING WILL BE CONVENED ON MAY 13, 2025, AT 6:55 PM AT 130 WEST OGDEN STREET, CAPRON, ILLINOIS, AT WHICH TIME THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES WILL ENTERTAIN QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ON THE TENTATIVE BUDGET ORDINANCES FOR THE 2025/2026 FISCAL YEAR.

IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING ADJOURNMENT OF THE PUBLIC HEARING, THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE BOONE COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT #1 WILL CONVENE A SPECIAL MEETING TO TAKE ACTION ON THE ANNUAL BUDGET AND APPROPRIATION ORDINANCES FOR CORPORATE PURPOSES FOR FISCAL YEAR COMMENCING MAY 1, 2025, TO APRIL 30, 2026.

CAROL BERGLUND SECRETARY, BOARD OF TRUSTEES BOONE COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT #1 Published in The Boone County Journal April 10, 2025

ASSUMED NAMES

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

No. DBA4226 - The undersigned person(s) do hereby certify that a MEN’S RETAIL business is or is to be conducted or transacted under the name of THE ARMOURY CLUB that its location is or will be 10020 KARL CLOSE 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: 815-980-8622 AMY CHRISTINE SALVI 10020 KARL CLOSE 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: March 26, 2025 Julie A Bliss, County Clerk and Recorder Published in Boone County Journal 04/03,10,17 P.

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

No. DBA4227 - The undersigned person(s) do hereby certify that a MOBILE VENDING MACHINES business is or is to be conducted or transacted under the name of NEXTGEN VENDING that its location is or will be 345 CHANNING AVENUE 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: 779-548-0544 DOMINIC CESARONE 345 CHANNING AVENUE 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: April 1, 2025 Julie A Bliss, County Clerk and Recorder Published in Boone County Journal 04/10,17,24 P.

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

No. DBA4225 - The undersigned person(s) do hereby certify that a SEALCOATING business is or is to be conducted or transacted under the name of GOMEZ SEAL COATING that its location is or will be 219 RIDGESTONE TRAIL IN POPLAR GROVE, 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.

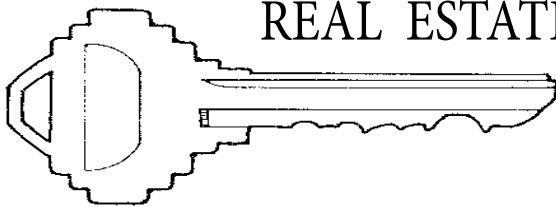
Phone Number: 815-491-0845 JUAN CARLOS GOMEZ SR 219 RIDGESTONE TRAIL POPLAR GROVE, ILLINOIS 61065 I, Julie A. Bliss, County Clerk And Recorder of Boone County, in the State aforesaid, do the hereby certify that the within is a true and correct copy of an Assumed Name Certificate on file in my office. Dated: March 20, 2025 Julie A Bliss, County Clerk and Recorder Published in Boone County Journal 3/27, 4/3, 4/10 - P

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

No. DBA4224 - The undersigned person(s) do hereby certify that a POWER WASHING business is or is to be conducted or transacted under the name of NICO’S LANDSCAPING LLC DBA NICO’S POWER WASHING that its location is or will be 2706 WINFIELD LANE 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: 815-505-6777 NICOLAS DAVID REZA 2706 WINFIELD LANE 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: March 20, 2025 Julie A Bliss, County Clerk and Recorder Published in Boone County Journal 3/27, 4/3, 4/10 - P

REAL ESTATE



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

Federal National Mortgage Association, Plaintiff, -v- 2024FC56 Luis Lopez Rodriguez; et. al., Defendants. 121 BULLARD ST, POPLAR GROVE, IL 61065

NOTICE OF SALE PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale entered in the above cause on 12/17/2024, an agent of Auction.com LLC will conduct the auction in person at 12:00 PM on May 15, 2025 located at 601 N Main Street, Courthouse Steps, Belvidere, IL 61008, and will sell at public sale to the highest bidder, as set forth below, the following described real estate. LOT FIVE (5) IN BULLARD’S ADDITION TO POPLAR GROVE, BEING A SUBDIVISION OF PART OF THE NORTHWEST QUARTER (1/4) OF SECTION 19, TOWNSHIP 45 NORTH, RANGE 4 EAST OF THE THIRD PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF RECORDED IN BOOK 10 OF PLATS ON PAGES 50 AND 51 AS DOCUMENT NO. 72-3406 IN THE

RECORDER’S OFFICE OF BOONE COUNTY, ILLINOIS; SITUATED IN THE COUNTY OF BOONE AND THE STATE OF ILLINOIS. Commonly known as 121 BULLARD ST, POPLAR GROVE, IL 61065 Property Index No. 04-19-151-023

The real estate is improved with a Residential Property. The judgment amount was \$178,076.41 Sale Terms: 20% down of the highest bid by certified funds at the close of the sale payable to Auction.com LLC. No third party checks will be accepted. All registered bidders need to provide a photo ID in order to bid. The balance, in certified funds/or wire transfer, is due within twenty-four (24) hours. (relief fee not required) 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.

For information, contact Plaintiff’s attorney: CODILIS & ASSOCIATES PC (630) 794-5300 please refer to file number 14-24-04980. Auction.com LLC 100 N LaSalle St., Suite 1400 Chicago, IL 60606 - 872-225-4985 You can also visit www.auction.com. Attorney File No. 14-24-04980 Case Number: 2024FC56 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. 13258582 Published in the Boone County Journal – 4/3, 4/10, 4/17/2025 PNN

Supreme Court Rules House Republicans Waited too Long to Challenge Maps

Republicans argued recent election cycles show maps illegally gerrymandered

By Ben Szalinski Capitol News Illinois

Illinois House Republicans waited too long to file a lawsuit challenging legislative maps drawn in 2021, the Illinois Supreme Court ruled Wednesday.

As a result, the Democrat-majority court will not hear the case.

House Republican Leader Tony McCombie, R-Savanna, along with a group of individual voters, asked the court to reject the current legislative map for its partisan bias and lack of compactness. House Republicans wanted the court to appoint a special master redraw the districts.

They alleged the voting district maps are not “compact,” a requirement of the state constitution, which has led to allegations of gerrymandering in favor of Democrats.

The plaintiffs argued court cases in other states and at the federal level required them to gather data from multiple election cycles with the maps in place to show a pattern that proves the maps aren’t compact and were drawn for partisan benefit. But the court said McCombie’s caucus waited too long to make their case.

Read more: House Republicans ask state Supreme Court to toss out legislative maps

“Plaintiffs could have brought this argument years ago,” the court wrote in a short two-page opinion. “Their claim that waiting multiple election cycles is necessary to reveal the effects of redistricting is unpersuasive.”

Republican Justice David Overstreet was the lone dissenting justice.

“They had the chance to make this right just to give the voters the chance to pick their representatives instead of representatives picking their voters and they declined,” Rep. Dan Ugaste, R-Geneva, told reporters.

The court’s ruling follows a similar case in 2012 that challenged the compactness of the

**Court**

from page 7

2011 maps. In that case, the court dismissed the challenge as untimely even though it was filed just eight months after the maps were enacted.

Attorneys for House Speaker Chris Welch, D-Hillside, and Senate President Don Harmon, D-Oak Park, were allowed to intervene as defendants in the case, which was originally filed against the State Board of Elections.

“To allow plaintiffs to proceed now, mid-decade, with their proposed redistricting challenge would invite political parties to wait until they have a wave election and use their best election results to justify a partisan challenge to the legislative map,” the Democrats’ lawyers said in their filing.

Read more: Democrats argue Republicans waited too long to file latest redistricting lawsuit

The court wrote that five years since the 2020 census, population data might also be “stale.”

“Plaintiffs’ approach would also be prejudicial and create uncertainty for voters and officeholders alike, now and in the future, as to whether any redistricting plan in Illinois is ever final,” the court wrote.

The court’s decision not to hear arguments on the case is the latest blow to various Republican legal efforts to throw out maps drawn by lawmakers and instead force an independent commission to draw new maps.

A lawsuit from multiple parties challenging the map was dismissed in 2021 by a federal three-judge panel, which rejected arguments that the map diluted the voting strength of racial minorities.

The court’s ruling on Wednesday noted Republicans did not appeal those rulings.

The Illinois Supreme Court blocked a 2016 citizen-driven referendum attempting to create an independent redistricting commission. The lead plaintiff in that case was John Hooker, a now-convicted conspirator in the “ComEd Four” corruption case. Federal courts also rejected Republican efforts to throw out the 2011 legislative maps.

In the case thrown out Wednesday, Republicans argued that more than half of the current House Districts were less compact than a district the state’s high court tossed out in 1981. They also said Rep. Lisa Hernandez, D-Cicero, who led the House redistricting process for House Democrats in 2021, admitted during debate that the maps were drawn for her party’s political gain.

The Princeton Gerrymandering Project, which assesses legislative maps around the country on several metrics, gave the current Illinois House map an “F” grade for its compactness metric.

Republican leaders said they will review possible additional legal options in this case, but their next steps toward enacting independent mapping will be outside of court. Rep. Ryan Spain, R-Peoria, said he wants to try another petition drive to force a ballot referendum on the issue.

“It’s up now to the voters to take this baton and run with it,” Spain told reporters. “We need to have voters initiate the redistricting reforms that were cut down.”

Republican lawmakers also want to pursue judicial ethics reform, arguing Democrat Justices Elizabeth Rochford and Mary K. O’Brien should have recused themselves from the case after receiving campaign contributions in 2022 from a political action committee run by Harmon, who intervened as a defendant in the case.

*Capitol News Illinois is a nonprofit, nonpartisan news service that distributes state government coverage to hundreds of news outlets statewide. It is funded primarily by the Illinois Press Foundation and the Robert R. McCormick Foundation.*

## Lawmakers Seek Ways to Prevent Data Centers From Straining Illinois’ Power Grids

*Rapid expansion of AI sparks worries over environmental goals, electricity rate spikes*

By Leonardo Pini

Medill Illinois News Bureau

Illinois has been at the forefront of the data center boom, but state lawmakers are working to gauge and mitigate the impact these centers have on climate and energy consumption.

In the last two decades, data centers have multiplied due to increased demand for cloud computing, information storage and data processing. However, data centers now also serve AI and cryptocurrency mining, which puts new digital coins into circulation and enters transactions on the blockchain.

Powering these data centers is costly, consuming large amounts of water and energy. The growth of this business has prompted concerns about the impact on the environment and the electricity grid, including rising costs for rate-paying consumers.

State Sen. Steve Stadelman, D-Rockford, chair of the Senate Committee on Energy and Public Utilities, has filed legislation that aims to gather data on the industry to determine the impact on energy and water usage and prevent them from putting too much strain on Illinois’ power grids.

“As data centers continue to multiply, they are putting an incredible strain on the grid,” he said. “And this legislation is trying to ensure that residents are not bearing the rise of this energy cost caused by the booming of this industry.”

Under Stadelman’s Senate Bill 2181, companies that operate data centers in Illinois would need to report their annual water and energy consumption to the Illinois Power Agency beginning next spring under threat of \$10,000 fines for non-compliance. The IPA would then synthesize the data into annual reports to answer the question of whether residential ratepayers in Illinois are, in effect, subsidizing data centers, along with the environmental impacts of the industry.

Across the U.S., utilities and grid operators are worried by the increased demand of electricity needed for data centers, and some have proposed delaying the closure of fossil fuel plants to support that demand, setting back environmental goals.

A January study by Frontier Group, a coalition of environmental and consumer groups, found at least 17 units at seven fossil fuel plants have seen their planned closures delayed — or are at risk of being delayed — due in part to increased demand from data centers. Most of it is happening in Virginia, where “Data Center Alley” is located, and nearby Maryland and West Virginia.

Stadelman cited similar environmental concerns about Illinois’ goals under the 2021 Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA), which requires the state to shift to 100% clean energy by 2050. He worries that indiscriminate expansion of data centers could hamper Illinois’ ability to meet that deadline.

“When we passed CEJA, no one anticipated the impact of data centers,” Stadelman said. “That is going to have an impact on our ability to meet our energy demands with these data centers.”

The proposal also calls for the agency to suggest legislative solutions “to mitigate any negative impacts of data centers on rate-paying customers.”

But SB 2181 has not yet received a hearing — or any co-sponsors — despite agreement from fellow state Sen. Laura Ellman, D-Naperville, that data centers’ resource usage could become a problem for Illinois.

“Illinois has a wealth of power and water, but we have to be good stewards of that wealth,” said Ellman, who chairs the Senate Environment and Conservation committee. “One fear I have is that this increased demand from data centers will delay the closure of fossil fuel plants, much like they did in Virginia and Maryland.”

Trying to regulate the business, though, could be “somewhat tricky,” according to Laurance Lewis, senior advisor at Metro Edge Development Partners, a Chicago commercial real estate firm focused on data center development.

All data centers are not the same, Lewis pointed out. There are both “hyperscalers” and “colocation” centers. Hyperscaler data centers are usually owned and operated by one company, such as tech giants like Google or Amazon. Colocation centers, on the other hand, rent out space to smaller companies, which could make it difficult to collect data on resource usage.

“If you are a data center landlord of a retail colocation facility, you have multiple tenants. Some of their energy and water consumption may not be metered precisely” Lewis said, noting that poorly crafted legislation could be “unduly burdensome.”

An October study published by the Center for Secure Water at the University of Illinois found that hyperscalers can use up to 550,000 gallons of water per day, while smaller data centers can consume up to 18,000 gallons per day.

However, Lewis argued that many critiques on water consumption are “overblown,” claiming the data center industry is “self-regulating” and trying to find solutions, “such as a closed-loop water system that does not require millions of gallons of water.”

Recently, the need for such large expenditures of resources by U.S. data centers has been called into question with the emergence of new Chinese AI large language model “Deepseek,” which reportedly consumes less water and power than Open AI and other competitors.

Cushman and Wakefield, a global real estate services firm with a Chicago office, assesses that Chicago’s metro area currently hosts 1.2 gigawatts of operational capacity, with 169 megawatts under construction and about 2.6 gigawatts already planned in upcoming years.

Nevertheless, a comprehensive study to estimate data centers’ impact on the electricity grid is difficult to find. The rapid boom of data centers in recent years means their impact is still up for interpretation.

In the meantime, data centers are multiplying. The Chicago Tribune reported last month that a new data center in Minooka, 40 miles southwest

*Continued on Page 8*

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**Grid** *from page 7*  
of Chicago, could be opened by California-based Equinix Inc. by 2034. The new structure, the Tribune reported, will need 3 million gallons of water per day and 700 megawatts of power.

Weighing the economic benefits

As in many other municipalities, local leaders and residents are weighing the economic benefits of the project — including new jobs and tax revenue — against possible environmental tradeoffs. But absent state action like the data collection called for in Stadelman’s bill, those environmental factors are currently difficult to quantify.

Andrew Chien, director and founder of the Center for Unstoppable Computing at the University of Chicago, believes that in the meantime, “planning is always important.”

“In Virginia, for example, they are building fossil fuel generators alongside renewables because they did not have an adequate plan to support the demand of power data centers required through renewable energy,” said Chien, a professor at the University.

But he pointed out that Illinois has a different mix of energy sources than Virginia, owing to the state’s 11 reactors at six nuclear plants — the most of any state — “and ample wind and solar resources.”

“I think the right way to deal with this is to build capacity with those clean energy resources to be prepared for the growth in data centers,” Chien said. “If we are prepared, we would not only attract jobs and investments. We would also do so in a way that does not increase carbon emissions.”

On this note, Lewis agrees with Chien: Illinois is different from other states, as Illinois’ energy market deregulated nearly 30 years ago, opening it up “to the entire country to procure energy,” he said.

“Going back to fossil fuels is less likely to happen in Illinois than in a regulated state,” Lewis said. “There are solar projects in DeKalb, for example, some wind projects and new technology coming in the market like hydrogen fuel cells and Dairy Renewable Natural Gas. There is a general sense that fossil fuel can only take us so far.”

While the coexistence of technological innovation amid the shift towards renewable energy has proved problematic in other parts of the country, Illinois legislators think it is still early enough to tackle this issue.

Rep. Carol Ammons, D-Urbana, chair of the House Energy and Environment committee, said it’s “critical” for state policy to “achieve this balance” allowing those two sectors cohabitate.

“I think it is a false choice to put our environment and innovation against each other, it should not have to conflict,” she said. “We need to protect our environment and ensure that up-and-coming technology develops sustainably. We need to regulate the industry to ensure technology does not pollute our communities while allowing new fields to emerge and provide opportunities.”

But environmental concerns are not the only possible pitfall for data centers. Another concern is their impact on energy customers, who could see the cost of their rates spike in upcoming years. Sarah Moskowitz, executive director of the Chicago-based consumer advocacy group Citizens Utility Board, said she worries that Illinois’ energy capacity may be monopolized by data centers in the near future.

“In Illinois, we have put together solutions to ensure adequate energy supply for citizens through ratepayer support for nuclear power plants,” Moskowitz said, referring to fees approved by the General Assembly in the last decade that support the continued operations of nuclear plants in the northern half of the state as a bridge to expanding

more renewable energy.

“Those supports do not expire for a couple of years, but now is the time to start working on strategies to ensure that the power generation that citizens need is not all gobbled up by these single, powerful customers.”

Moskowitz warned that the growth of data centers could cause higher prices for energy for consumers and cautioned that “the entities that control the information about data centers are the entities that benefit the most from inflating demand projections.”

“Suppose those data companies can outbid everyday ratepayers for electricity generation,” she said. “In that case, that is removed from the

overall markets and exacerbates real or perceived energy supply shortages that drive up market prices.”

Leonardo Pini is a graduate student in journalism with Northwestern University’s Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications, and a fellow in its Medill Illinois News Bureau working in partnership with Capitol News Illinois.

*Capitol News Illinois is a nonprofit, nonpartisan news service that distributes state government coverage to hundreds of news outlets statewide. It is funded primarily by the Illinois Press Foundation and the Robert R. McCormick Foundation.*

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