

To be notified of new issues online, register at [www.boonecountyjournal.com](http://www.boonecountyjournal.com)

## Stellantis Absent From 2024 Chicago Auto Show

By Charles Herbst

The Chicago Auto Show is in full swing this week at McCormick Place. This year, many test drives are being offered both inside and outside the exhibit hall, including two EV test tracks. Many new vehicles are being introduced by manufacturers from all over the world.

Volkswagen is celebrating their 75th year in America and Honda is showing off their 40-pound Motocompacto Scooter. So the party is going strong, despite a few no-shows.

What is missing this year is Stellantis. Earlier this year, Stellantis made the decision not to attend auto shows in 2024 as an economy measure. Stellantis and its predecessor, Chrysler have been longtime stalwarts at the Chicago Auto Show, known most recently for Camp Jeep, an exhibit where professional drivers give visitors a ride through an obstacle course, designed to show the maneuverability of Trail-Rated Jeep vehicles.

Over the years, we've seen other manufacturers such as Mercedes and BMW decide the auto show is not for them, but never a company the size of Stellantis. We see that BMW is back and participating in the Chicago Drives Electric Test Track. Also participating this year for the first time ever is Tesla.

We have been told that local Wisconsin dealers have scrambled and intend to establish a Stellantis presence at the Greater Milwaukee Auto Show, which runs from February 23 through March 2 at the Baird Center.

We certainly hope so. Part of the reason to go to an auto show is to survey the various cars on offer and quickly determine which ones might meet your needs for a new vehicle. When fewer players take part, the smorgasbord is smaller and makes the task of finding the right car more difficult.

Belvidere has a large stake in Stellantis' future as a seller of cars and trucks. This past Autumn, as a condition of settling the strike with the United Auto Workers, Stellantis agreed to establish a Belvidere parts depot, battery manufacturing facility, and a new assembly plant. If Stellantis' vehicles fade from the consciousness of the American vehicle buyer, it will not bode well for this community's future.

Stellantis' current position is a far cry from Chrysler's traditionally large presence at automotive exhibitions. To illustrate, we are bringing you a photograph and a press release describing Chrysler's substantial presence at the Century of Progress, the 1933 World's Fair held in Chicago. Chrysler's pavilion at the fair was less than a mile away from where the auto show is being held.

The Chicago Auto Show continues through Monday, February 19.

We would like to acknowledge the Special Collections Research Center of the University of Chicago Library for providing the 1933 Chrysler



Chrysler Motors Exhibit at the Worlds Fair in Chicago 1933

## Chrysler Motors Largest Private Exhibitor at 1933 Chicago Fair

*Mammoth Structure Housing World's  
Most Complete Automotive Show  
Nears Completion*

*Quarter-Mile Track in Exhibit*

*Chrysler Corporation 1933 Press Release*

Chrysler Motors' exhibit—the largest private exhibit, in area, at A Century of Progress International Exhibition—is the most complete exhibit of automotive engineering ever assembled.

Both floors of the Chrysler Motors' exhibit, being constructed with glass side walls and, due to the nature of its interior displays, the Chrysler Motors Building has become known as "The World's Largest Showcase."

The entire Chrysler Motors' exhibit covers approximately seven acres of ground and is in four main parts.

Described by the sequence by which it is viewed by millions of visitors to the World's Fair, the main parts of the exhibit consist of a "Revolving Cyclorama"—depicting an airplane trip from coast to coast—a 360-foot long promenade leading to the main building; the building itself housing an exhibit of more than 25,000 different and distinct automotive articles; a quarter-mile hard surface oval track and a beautiful sunken garden with a reflecting pool 325 feet in length.

The Chrysler Motors' exhibit plot is located at the junction of 31st Street and Leif Erickson Drive—just inside the 31st Street Entrance to the exhibition—and is easily accessible from the three main arteries of the fair.

Designed by Holabird and Root, internationally known architects, the exhibit is in the center

*Continued on Page 4*

## New State Task Force Aims to Promote State's Underground Railroad History

*First meeting took place Tuesday*

*By Alex Abbeduto Capitol News Illinois*

The Illinois Underground Railroad Task Force met for the first time Tuesday to begin devising a strategy for sharing, growing and celebrating the history of the Underground Railroad in Illinois.

The task force was created last year under a bill sponsored by Sen. David Koehler, D-Peoria, and Rep. Debbie Meyers-Martin, D-Olympia Fields, who also serve as its co-chairs. It currently consists of 5 legislators – three Democrats and two Republicans – and 5 Illinois history experts, all of whom are unpaid for their participation.

During the meeting, the task force exchanged several ideas about how to best recognize Illinois' connection to the Underground Railroad, including stories told by voices not commonly included.

Task force member Sen. Doris Turner, D-Springfield, said during a news conference that members want "to tell the entire story of the Underground Railroad."

"So, we will be looking at not only the conductors, but also the freedom fighters that were coming along the Railroad," Turner said.

Jennifer Edginton, interim director of the Illinois State Museum, said people looking for more information or to get involved can find the Underground Railroad Task Force webpage on the Illinois Department of Natural Resources website under the Boards and Commissions tab. On the website, people will be able to share relevant historical stories and read meeting minutes.

People will also be able to express interest in

*Continued on Page 4*

# Respected Restaurateur Passes

*A politically-connected force instrumental in the revival of Rockford's Near East State Street passes*

## Family Obituary

Michael Leifheit, co-owner of the Irish Rose Saloon Rockford, passed away after an extended illness, on Thursday, February 8, 2024 in Rockford, Illinois. He was 78.

Mike was born October 27, 1945 in Exeter, UK, where his mother, a young, Irish girl named Alice Waters, worked as a hotel barmaid during the Second World War. Just following the end of the war and Mike's birth, a distinguished gentleman from the Rockford area sponsored Alice and her son to come to America. Although his mother was later briefly married to Robert Leifheit (from whom they received the challenging surname), her larger-than-life sponsor, who owned many businesses and was the one-time mayor of a town in the region, was a father figure to Mike.

As a teen, Michael worked at both Lakeview Supper Club and at the grill at Gill's Diner, where the seeds of his passion for cooking, food and drink were sown.

He attended Harlem High School, where he met Robin (nee Finch), whom he eventually married. They had a son, Drew, while Mike was attending Beloit College. After Drew was born,



- Virginia Blomberg, 87, Belvidere, January 31
- Marjory Day, 88, Poplar Grove, January 31
- Barbara Forbish, 70, Harvard, January 29
- Jill Hubbard, 71, Belvidere, January 31
- Brandon Jensen, 37, Belvidere, February 4
- Doris Kessman, 92, Belvidere, January 27
- Amy Schuppner, 54, Belvidere, January 31
- Eugene West, 90, Belvidere, January 30
- Guenther Wohlfarth, 88, Belvidere, February 3

Mike worked at National Can to support the family and returned with his family to Beloit College to finish his studies. Starting out in Physics, he ended up graduating in Dramatic Arts, under the tutelage of Kirk Denmark and Carl Balson.

Back in Rockford, Mike became a route driver for Rockford Nehi. Taken under the wing of his bosses, Fred Adamany and Bud Longanecker, Mike thrived and became a supervisor. He was especially proud of the huge displays of product he'd sold and that, at that time in the Rockford market, RC Cola outsold both Coke and Pepsi.

In 1979, the owner of an RC plant in Sacramento, California hired him to run that operation. However, Fred Adamany, who had become president of RC Cola's parent company, quickly hired Mike away, offering him a position as the soft drink company's representative for the entire state of California. This gave Mike a chance to wine and dine the RC franchise owners up and down the state, in order to report on their activities for RC Cola headquarters. During that time, Michael's passion for international cuisine and wine blossomed, as what was available out in California was a world beyond cuisine he'd experienced in the Midwest.

After returning to the Chicago area to work for RC in Schaumburg for a spell, Mike decided to leave behind his corporate successes.

Whenever he'd be winding down with friends and family over a good meal and a glass of wine, he'd wax poetically about his "idea number 99," sharing his dream of being a restaurant owner: what kind of restaurant he'd have, the food he'd serve, etc.

In 1982, Mike discovered that there was an empty restaurant space (with all sorts of neon signs and paraphernalia attached to the ceiling) in downtown Rockford's legendary State and Madison building. He took the plunge and realized his dream of owning a restaurant, opening the Old Rock River Cafe and Deli. Despite the two having separated, Robin also began working there; meanwhile, Mike also hired his mom, Alice, to make bread and deserts.

As the bank which owned the building witnessed Mike's forthright and resourceful nature, they let him take over more and more of the building, which meant that eventually the "bar mall" at State and Madison not only included several bars with live music (including the back bar, the original Irish Rose), but also had a pool hall with 100-year-old tables, a bowling alley, exotic dancers, a delicatessen, even an underage music club for 1980s new-wavers.

By 1990, however, the party at State and Madison was over. Mike and Robin found out that too many things going on and not enough management in an old, decrepit building with huge insurance premiums was not a recipe for success. That's when they moved the Irish Rose to 519 E. State Street and he transformed an old cafe and musty bar into a gastropub serving honest, wholesome food.

With Robin behind the bar spinning the tunes and doling out the hugs, and Mike sitting on his perch at one end, many times after having fixed a cooler or dealt with any number of restaurant owner conundrums, the Rose was a speak-easy where the booze and conversation flowed simultaneously. The unique atmosphere helped forge countless friendships - even marriages. It became a fixture in the downtown Rockford scene, a classy place where you could feel good in jeans.

On the food side of things, Michael took special pride in making weekly trips into Chicago to procure the very best and freshest meat, produce and seafood. The wonderful purveyors and restaurant owners he met at the market also provided him further inspiration/food for thought for his business.

Robin, Mike and the Irish Rose hosted numer-

ous charitable benefits for various causes, and served up free Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners for those who were alone at the holidays.

Mike was also an avid motorcycle rider, taking legendary trips out to California and Mexico with his buddies in the 1970s, first on a Honda and later on his BMW 750.

For years, he wrote a column for the Rock River Times called "Hanging Out in Rockford," which recounted his food and drink adventures. He also loved his visits to see his son, Drew, in Budapest, Hungary.

While Mike could be lost in his own thoughts, or inexplicably gruff with people he didn't know, he was a loyal friend to those he knew well, and an advocate for other business owners in the downtown Rockford business community. He liked to fight for what he thought was right, like when he challenged the city's rule that prohibited al fresco dining in the 1980s. The city eventually relented.

His family is especially grateful to Mike's downtown friends, his wonderful staff, and all of our regulars for having helped Dad through a very difficult time last year. Also special thanks to the wonderful people at Anam Care. Bless you all!

In his dying days, Michael told his son that he was sorry for having pushed so many people away. He is now at peace.

Details of a celebration of Mike's life are forthcoming.

# League of Women Voters

## Press Release

"Did you know the League of Women Voters of Greater Rockford is working to provide non-partisan voter information for the March 19 primary? We're providing two ways for the public to get to know the candidates:

1. All local candidates were sent a questionnaire on January 22. Their answers will be published verbatim by February 16, in the [www.IllinoisVoterGuide.org](http://www.IllinoisVoterGuide.org).
2. LWVGR, along with AAUW, Alpha Kappa Alpha, Women's March Rockford, and the Rockford Public Library, is hosting five candidate meet and greets. All candidates were sent invitations on February 4. Each candidate will have 3 minutes to speak, then the audience will have time to meet 1:1 with the candidates.

All participants are required to conduct themselves in a civil and businesslike fashion.

All start at 6 pm:

- February 20 Rockford Public Library Nordlof
- February 26 Northwest Community Center
- February 28 Roscoe Community Center
- March 5 Pilgrim Baptist Church
- March 6 Belvidere North High School

Even though some local elections are uncontested, it's important to know where all the candidates stand on issues of importance to you, which is why the League is offering voters the chance to hear from all candidates, talk to the candidates and read about them."

Get instant cash for your GOLD



WE PAY HIGHEST PRICES


Belvidere Collectible Coins

880 Belvidere Rd.  
Belvidere, IL  
815-547-7111

*Additional 10% off jewelry with this ad*

Mon-Fri 10am - 5pm  
Sat 10am - 2pm

Visit us Online at [www.goldsilverjewelrycoin.com](http://www.goldsilverjewelrycoin.com)



REAL JOURNALISM FOR A REAL DEMOCRACY

Publisher/Editor	David C. Larson
Senior Writer/Editorial	Charles Herbst
Photography	Susan Moran

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

---

THE BOONE COUNTY JOURNAL

419 S. STATE ST • BELVIDERE, IL 61008  
PHONE: (815) 544-4430 FAX: 544-4330  
[WWW.BOONECOUNTYJOURNAL.COM](http://WWW.BOONECOUNTYJOURNAL.COM)  
[NEWS@BOONECOUNTYJOURNAL.COM](mailto:NEWS@BOONECOUNTYJOURNAL.COM)

Each week, the Journal seeks to present a variety of voices.

**Letters.** Every attempt will be made to print all letters received with the exception of those that are libelous or obscene. Letters should be signed and include an ID or phone number, so that we can contact the author prior to publication to verify authenticity.

**Guest columns.** Community leaders are encouraged to submit guest columns consistent with our editorial guidelines for possible inclusion in the Journal.

**Opinions.** The opinions expressed in the Journal are those of their authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of The Boone County Journal management or ownership.

# Carlinville Funeral Director's Misdeeds Spur Legislation

At least 80 families have received wrong remains, according to coroner

By Beth Hundsdorfer Capitol News Illinois

The wrong cremains were buried in a national cemetery. Bodies cremated under the wrong name. The wrong ashes returned to families from coast to coast.

An investigation into the mishandling of human remains has affected at least 80 families so far and continues to ripple out from the epicenter, Heinz Funeral Home in Carlinville.

At Camp Butler National Cemetery, where 32,000 military veterans are laid to rest, authorities exhumed five graves to remove cremated remains buried under the wrong name.

While Sangamon County Coroner Jim Allmon – who brought to light the misdeeds of August “Gus” Heinz, the funeral home’s operator – does not have a complete count of families affected, he said he knows of more than 80 cases where loved ones received the wrong cremains. To date, Allmon said, there have been at least nine exhumations, including the five at Camp Butler. Some of the cases go back to 2019.

“We have received hundreds of calls from families since this investigation started. A lot of those people want to know if they have the right ashes or not but, unfortunately, they have already spread the ashes or buried them. We aren’t pulling ashes out of the ground unless we know for sure the wrong ashes were buried.” Allmon said.

While the state had known for months about allegations against Heinz, it wasn’t until October 2023, after Allmon went public with concerns about the funeral director, that Heinz and the state agreed to a disciplinary plan. An Oct. 5 notice of disciplinary action stated Heinz agreed to a permanent revocation of his license due to “vital records non-compliance, professional incompetence or untrustworthiness in funeral practice, taking undue advantage of clients amounting to perpetration of fraud, performing any act or practice that violates funeral regulations, unprofessional conduct and charging for professional services not rendered.”

On Thursday, Sen. Doris Turner, D-Springfield, introduced legislation mandates that a funeral director must place a unique identifier on the deceased’s body, body bag, and any body part, organ, or tissue separated from the deceased to be used in nontransplant organ donation. A director must also maintain chain of custody documentation for all dead bodies and human remains.

Turner’s bill codifies what for most funeral directors is already industry best practice.

Typically, when a body is picked up and transferred for cremation, a titanium medallion containing the name of the facility and a unique identifying number is placed with the body.

The crematorium keeps a record of the person and number. The medallion stays with the remains through the transfer and the crema-

tion and is typically affixed to the bag with the remains when it is returned to the family.

Heinz did not have a crematorium at his funeral home, but did contract with at least two local crematoriums to do cremations.

Allmon said he has tracked the remains to the identities by comparing the numbers on those titanium tags to records kept at those crematoriums, but acknowledged that there may have been instances when the tags were switched.

Cremains cannot be identified by using DNA because they are degraded during the incineration process.

As the investigation progressed, Allmon said he received ashes from a family in Oregon. Others have come in from Missouri, Iowa, Kansas and Massachusetts.

“This has been nationwide and statewide and it’s ongoing. I’m not real sure where it ends,” Allmon said at a Thursday news conference. “Yeah. I’ve said that a lot. But it seems to me once we have somebody’s cremains that we know should have been buried somewhere. We go to that grave. We do the disinterment, and we find another set of remains that were inside of that grave, then we notify that family. When we call that family, that family already has cremains.”

Dillion and Elizabeth Bricker appeared at the news conference on Thursday as well. The Brickers said Heinz gave them the cremated remains said to belong to their mother, Gina Bricker, that were displayed at a memorial service.

“Some came from states away to say goodbye to my mother, only to find out it wasn’t her. She was still in the hospital morgue where she laid on a table alone for almost close to a month,” Dillion Bricker said.

Springfield attorneys Jay Sheehan, Don Craven and Joe Craven filed a class action lawsuit against Heinz, his father and former business partner, Jon Clayton Heinz and Heinz Funeral Home, on behalf of those who received the wrong cremains. The Cravens also serve as legal counsel for Capitol News Illinois.

The case involved the cremains of George L. Woods Jr., George’s widow LeeAnn Woods, and daughters, Meghan and Ashleen Woods, who live in Portland, Oregon. The Woods selected Heinz for burial and cremation of George Woods, but they became anxious and suspicious after Heinz failed to send the ashes for weeks or file

the death certificate. After many calls, the Woods family finally received the cremains they thought belonged to George Woods, the suit stated, but later learned that they received the wrong cremains.

The Woods family “now have no idea what happened to the remains of their loved ones,” the suit stated.

In addition, at least three other lawsuits have been filed in Sangamon County.

No criminal charges have been filed against Heinz to date. The Illinois State Police investigation is ongoing, a spokesman said. It’s been difficult to determine how to charge Heinz, one prosecutor said, under current laws.

Republican Sen. Steve McClure, of Springfield, proposed his own legislation to criminalize the mishandling of human remains, including providing inaccurate documentation of the identity of human remains, illegally storing human remains and providing remains that are intentionally misidentified. Under Senate Bill 3263, a violation of these standards would be a Class 4 felony, punishable by up to five years in prison.

Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation investigators knew for six months about problems at Heinz Funeral Home. Morgan County Coroner Marci Patterson filed a complaint with IDFPR when one of her depu-

Continued on Page 7

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



**BOONE COUNTY JOURNAL**  
1996  
real journalism for a real democracy



**ROCKFORD BUSINESS SYSTEMS**

- Digital Color & Black & White
- Multi Functional
- \* Copy \* Print \* Fax \* Scan
- \* Service \* Supplies \* Toner

Sharp ~ Canon ~ Toshiba ~ Lexmark ~ HP ~ Xerox ~ Ricoh

Sales: 815-608-1173      Service: 815-282-4002



## Looking for a tax preparer? My clients file with confidence.

I have over 35 years of experience as a tax attorney with an advanced law degree in taxation. My clients know that their taxes are prepared professionally, getting all the deductions and credits that they deserve, and they don’t have to fear a letter from the IRS. I can e-file any prior-year or current-year tax return. My overhead is low, my rates are reasonable, and handle things privately.

**Historically, lawyers have prepared tax returns.** Using a tax attorney gives you a unique advantage: At least once a year, you can talk to an attorney and discuss what is important to you. We can discuss your will or trust, assist with an upcoming real estate transaction, or even put your business into an LLC to protect your assets. Or maybe just answer a question that’s been bugging you for years.

**When was the last time you had a legal question?** Or had some large organization try to intimidate you, and you really weren’t sure of your rights. Did you know someone you could ask? Or did you just “wing it” and hope for the best? My clients know they can call me anytime for some quick advice.

**Owe the IRS money?** Haven’t filed? Afraid to file? Gotten a letter from them? I can help. With 35 years of experience as a tax attorney, I’ve helped many other people in your situation.

If your return consists of more than just a W-2, or you have a tax problem, please give me a call. Hours are by appointment.



**CHARLES HERBST, J.D., LL.M.**  
LAW, PLANNING AND TAX  
Belvidere and Rockford • 815 484 9482 • taxviking.com

## Chrysler

from page 1

of the Transportation Group, immediately north of the Travel and Transport Building. The Chrysler Motors' exhibit building itself belongs to the modern idyllic school of architecture. Constructed on pilings—184 in number—sunk more than 40 feet into the earth, the motif of the main building is one of progress and action in motive engineering, in keeping with the spirit of the entire Century of Progress Exhibition.

The Chrysler Motors' exhibit building is considered the most unique ever constructed in that, although the exhibit spaces inside are fully housed, the entire building is open to receive the refreshing breezes from nearby Lake Michigan.

The four 125-foot high pylons form a Greek Cross. The east and west pylons have diagonal continuous flutes, the entire width of the pylon, and at night are illuminated by more than 1,000,000 candlepower of high intensity lights. The white circular portion of the pylons have built-up flutes with similar illumination at night. The flutes add to the already impressive height and magnitude of the building.

The complete exhibition, most modern and startling in the field of automotive design, engineering, production, and performance, is housed in eight spacious niches throughout 68,000 square feet of space in the building, four on each floor. The evolution of the most important phases of automotive progress is cleverly shown by these exhibits.

Great interest centers around the quarter-mile track on which visitors ride free with Barney Oldfield and his staff of skilled drivers.

The track is oval in shape, 18 feet wide at its narrowest point and 40 feet wide at the turns which are banked for high speed driving. On the west straightaway there is a bypass leading to a 100-foot long, 25-foot high ramp with an average grade of 25 percent permitting hill-climbing tests.

The eastern side of the Chrysler Motors' exhibit has been made into a beautiful sunken garden. Benches, metal rocking chairs and a wealth of room in which to gather and rest has been provided in this garden, the center of which is the Chrysler reflecting pool. Standing in front of the pool the visitor may see the Chrysler exhibit building reflected in the pool of clear, sky-blue water. Artistic lighting effects and modernistic aluminum "trees" are placed at regular intervals throughout this garden.

## Underground

from page 1

joining a subcommittee of the task force. There are currently four subcommittees focused on aspects such as economic and cultural impact for communities, and education and history.

Although the subcommittees themselves will be temporary, Koehler said incorporation of their ideas will be ongoing.

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.

## Congressman LaHood

### Press Releases

#### Tax Relief for Working Families Passes the House

Last week, the House passed the Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act, bipartisan legislation that will strengthen financial security for families, support small businesses, and increase U.S. competitiveness. I was proud to secure important provisions that I helped author to bolster the affordable housing supply throughout the country. I urge the Senate to pass this bill swiftly, so we can deliver much needed relief to workers, families, and small businesses in Illinois.

• The Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act includes numerous pro-growth and pro-family provisions, including:

- Supporting working families with a strengthened Child Tax Credit.
- Expanding innovation and competitiveness with pro-growth economic policies like R&D expensing and 100% bonus depreciation.

• Building up Main Street by cutting red tape and assisting communities struck by natural disasters with tax relief.

• Enhancing the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit.

• Eliminating fraud, waste, and abuse by ending the Employee Retention Tax Credit program.

#### Addressing the Border Crisis

Open border policies pushed by the Biden Administration have turned every state into a border state. Violent crime and the influx of illicit drugs are on the rise, and they are harming our communities. House Republicans passed H.R. 2, critical border security legislation, and the Biden Administration must act to end the security and humanitarian crisis at the border.

Last week, I joined Speaker Mike Johnson, Majority Whip Tom Emmer, and House GOP Chairwoman Elise Stefanik for an important roundtable on the impact of the border crisis throughout the country.

#### Combating CCP Cyber Threats

The House Select Committee on the CCP held a hearing on the CCP Cyber Threat to the American Homeland and National Security. During this important hearing, I discuss the impact of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) on thwarting CCP cyber hackers and helping the US stop fentanyl from flowing into our communities.

#### Celebrating National Catholic Schools Week

Last week, we celebrated the 50th National Catholic Schools Week. As a proud graduate of Catholic grade school, high school, and college, I look forward to highlighting the achievements of Catholic schools in Illinois

and across America each year during National Catholic Schools Week. I applaud the 31 Catholic schools in the 16th District of Illinois and across the country, who invest in their student's academic and spiritual formation. My experience in Catholic schools helped me prepare for life experiences as a husband, father, and Member of Congress, and I am proud to lead this effort to recognize their contributions to society.

#### Back the Blue

In Northern Illinois, we are lucky to have Police Chiefs like Durand's Michael Reiman serving the community. I am grateful to the men and women in blue who continue to protect us in Illinois.

## Congressman Foster

### Press Release

#### Foster Earns "A" Rating for Fighting to Get Big Money Out of Politics, Protect the Right to Vote

Congressman Bill Foster (D-IL) released the following statement after earning an "A" on the 2024 End Citizens United // Let America Vote Action Fund legislative scorecard, which grades Members of Congress on their support for voting rights and anti-corruption measures Congress has considered in the past year and a half:

"I am proud to receive an 'A' on the End Citizens United // Let America Vote Action Fund legislative scorecard," said Congressman Foster. "We have a responsibility to safeguard American democracy for future generations and that means protecting the right to vote, cracking down on corruption, bolstering ethics rules, and finally ending the era of special interest money in our politics."

"Congressman Bill Foster has been a leader in the fight to safeguard our democracy, expand voting rights, and get Big Money out of our politics to ensure that the voices of the American people are heard in Congress," said End Citizens United // Let America Vote Action Fund President Tiffany Muller. "Congressman Foster's strong record on these critical issues has earned him an 'A' on our 2024 legislative scorecard and we look forward to continuing to work with him to pass these reforms into law."



# Boone County License & Title Stickers - Titles - Plates We Are OPEN

M-F 9-5  
Sat 9-1

419 S. State St. Bel  
815-544-2075

Bring:  
Postcard Bill from the Secretary of State  
Or  
Old Registration Card  
Or  
Vin# + Plate # + Expiration Date



# Vella Recognizes Local Boy Scout

## Press Release

State Representative Dave Vella (IL-68) is proud to recognize Martin Hernandez of Troop 141–Belvidere in honor of National Boy Scouts Week and the organization’s 114th year anniversary.

Martin was nominated to receive this honor by his peers in Troop 141 for his dedication as Assistant Senior Patrol Leader. He is described by friends, and fellow scouts as someone who “exemplifies Scout Spirit with his words, his actions, and his deeds.”

He has proven to be a natural leader in his work and personal life. Some of his endeavors include over 30 volunteer hours at Nygren Wetland Preserve, and helping other local organizations such as Kiwanis, the Belvidere Cemetery, Tornados Cross Country Club, and more. In an effort to lead others, Martin displays the ideals and principles of scouting by regularly picking up trash in his neighborhood, local roads, and encouraging others to join.

“I am so proud to see our local youth helping others and building lifelong skills through the Boy Scouts of America Scout Oath and Law. It makes me happy to see the work that Martin has achieved so far and I am certain this is a glimpse into the future of leaders coming out of this region. We celebrate National Boy Scout Week to honor those who are trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean and reverent, and Martin Hernandez embodies just that.” -State Representative Dave Vella

Friends, family and executive members of Boy Scouts of America will join State Representative Vella for a recognition ceremony on Friday, February 9, 2024 at 5PM to celebrate the achievements of Martin Hernandez of Troop 141.

# Tax Credits for Children, And Manufacturers Among New Legislative Proposals

*Insurance coverage for fertility treatments, child internet regulations also introduced*

By Andrew Adams Cole Longcor & Alex Abbeduto  
Capitol News Illinois

After failing to pass a child tax credit last year, advocates returned to Springfield Wednesday to propose a scaled back version of the policy which they say would still reduce child poverty and spur economic growth.

The proposal, contained in House Bill 4917 and Senate Bill 3329, would create a \$300 per-child refundable tax credit for families who earn less than the state’s median income – about \$75,000 per year for couples and \$50,000 for single parents.

The policy would cost the state about \$300 million, according to Erion Malasi, Illinois policy director for the Economic Security Project, an advocacy group backing the proposal.

A January report from the Illinois Economic Policy Institute, a union-backed think tank, found that a \$300 tax credit would cost the state about \$471 million, although that estimate

doesn’t account for cost reductions in other state programs, like the earned income tax credit or the supplemental nutrition program for women, infants and children, known as WIC – and it assumes that 100 percent of eligible families will claim the credit.

Frank Manzo, an economist with ILEPI and co-author of that report, said a \$300 per-child credit would be lower than in the other 15 states that have similar policies. Utah, Minnesota and Oregon – which enacted a similar credit last year – all offer \$1,000 or more in credits.

“But it does comport with some budgetary realities in the state of Illinois,” he told Capitol News Illinois on Wednesday.

In December, Gov. JB Pritzker urged a “careful” approach to next year’s budget after his budget office projected a \$891 million deficit.

Omar Aquino, the chief Senate sponsor of the proposal, said Wednesday he hopes the program, if passed, can be scaled up in the future.

The bills, which were introduced Wednesday, await substantive committee assignments, a necessary step before they can be voted on by the full legislature.

### Manufacturers’ agenda

Tax credits were also included in a wide-ranging legislative agenda put forth by the Illinois Manufacturers’ Association.

House Bill 4670 creates a pilot program to allow manufacturers to create onsite child care programs and provide tax credits to those who do.

“We know that the lack of available child care is a hindrance to getting and keeping people, especially women, in the workforce,” sponsor Rep. Amy Elik, R-Godfrey, said.

The IMA reaffirmed support for three bills filed last spring, including two tax credits – one sponsored by Democrats, the other by Republicans. The IMA did not provide cost estimates for the tax credits.

Sen. Meg Loughran Cappel, D-Shorewood, filed Senate Bill 1313 to create a tax credit for businesses that assist their employees in repaying student loans.

“Student debt is a huge issue. This proposal would allow an employer to help offset about five thousand dollars per year,” IMA President and CEO Mark Denzler said. “It’s a great opportunity to help those individuals struggling with college debt while also making sure we have a great workforce.”

Sen. Donald DeWitte, R-St. Charles, filed Senate Bill 163 would make a temporary research and development tax credit permanent, rather than expiring every five years. The current credit will expire in 2027.

House Bill 3307 would amend graduation requirements for students entering high school in 2028, allowing them to fill the requirement of two foreign language courses with career-focused courses.

### Fertility treatments

Members of the state Senate Democratic Caucus introduced three bills Wednesday aimed at increasing access to infertility treatments and fertility preservation.

If passed, the bills would require insurance companies to cover the diagnosis and treatment of infertility, certain prescription medications, and preservation of reproductive cells by amending the Illinois Insurance Code.

Senate Bill 2572 would require insurance coverage of procedures used to diagnose and treat infertility, as well as injectable medications used to treat prediabetes, gestational diabetes and obesity – all of which can make it harder to conceive and carry a baby to term.

Senate Bill 2623 would require insurers to

cover the freezing of an individual’s reproductive cells without restriction or exclusion.

Another measure, Senate Bill 2639, would prevent insurance companies from denying infertility treatment coverage when recommended by a physician.

### Safe screens initiative

Another pair of bills introduced this week aim to create a safer online environment for children.

Sen. Sue Rezin’s, R-Morris, proposals mostly affect children’s data and privacy and how content is moderated.

The amended Age-Appropriate Design Code Act is a privacy law based on a similar one in California that Rezin said will help parents set stronger privacy settings and change how companies use children’s data, which she said can facilitate the development of addicting content.

Senate Bill 3355 would require social media companies to have a customer service line where concerned users can report inappropriate content that would need to be removed within 3 days.

Rezin said a third bill, which is still in development, would “require social media platforms to create an identity verification process.”

The senator compared social media to the tobacco and opiate industries, saying people cannot trust them to regulate themselves. She also said Illinoisans cannot wait for the federal government to take action.

“Parents are mad,” Rezin said. “They want us to act and pass legislation to protect their children. They don’t care if it’s a federal issue or a state issue.”

*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.*

**The Journal**  
has old newspapers free  
for picking up from time to time.  
Call to see if any are available



**Milos Dental Care**  
Dr. Jamie Lynn Milos

129 S. Phelps Ave. Suite 307, Rockford, IL 61108  
**(815) 315-4200**  
Call now for an appointment!!  
[www.milosdentalcare.com](http://www.milosdentalcare.com)



**Ackerson Door Sales**

*“We give your garage closure”*

- Sales • Doors • Openers • Replacement Sections
- Service • Cables • Installations • Springs



Visit Our  
Showroom





**2255 Rt. 173**  
**Caledonia, IL 61011**

**815-623-2616**  
**815-765-1551**  
Fax: **815-765-0333**



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

NATIONSTAR MORTGAGE LLC Plaintiff,

-v- 23 FC 54

UNKNOWN HEIRS AND/OR LEGATEES OF FLOYD SINGLETON A/K/A FLOYD D. SINGLETON, DECEASED, ALYSSA SINGLETON, CANDLEWICK LAKE ASSOCIATION, INC., JOHN VINCENT LA BONTE, JR., TIM MILLER, AS SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF FLOYD SINGLETON A/K/A FLOYD D. SINGLETON, DECEASED, UNKNOWN OWNERS AND NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS, UNKNOWN OCCUPANTS Defendant

NOTICE OF SALE

PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale entered in the above cause on January 23, 2024, an agent for The Judicial Sales Corporation, will at 1:00 PM on March 7, 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 219 THORNHILL DRIVE SW, POPLAR GROVE, IL 61065

Property Index No. 03-27-155-018

The real estate is improved with a condominium.

The judgment amount was \$265,528.19.

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.

Potential Bidders: For sale information, please visit [www.realtyBid.com](http://www.realtyBid.com) or call 877-518-5700.

For information, contact The sales clerk, LOGS Legal Group LLP Plaintiff's Attorneys, 2121 WAUKEGAN RD., SUITE 301, Bannockburn, IL, 60015 (847) 291-1717 For information call between the hours of 1pm - 3pm. Please refer to file number 23-099096.

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](http://www.tjsc.com) for a 7 day status report of pending sales.

LOGS Legal Group LLP  
2121 WAUKEGAN RD., SUITE 301  
Bannockburn IL, 60015

847-291-1717  
E-Mail: [ILNotices@logs.com](mailto:ILNotices@logs.com)

Attorney File No. 23-099096

Case Number: 23 FC 54

TJSC#: 44-217

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 54 6088-939540

Published in *The Boone County Journal* Feb 8, 15, 22, 2024 CW

influence of alcohol while transporting a baby's body across state lines and disposing of a body while there was an ongoing coroner's investigation into the death.

In another similar case in 2010, Illinois funeral director Marcee Dane was accused of giving a family the wrong remains. Dane pleaded guilty to desecration of human remains, a violation of the Cemetery Protection Act. Dane was sentenced to 30 days in county jail and fined \$10,000.

Dane surrendered her license, but requested reinstatement which was granted in 2019. IDFPR imposed fines and fees and one year of probation. Her license is currently active.

She declined to comment for this story.

*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.*

## Mapes Sentenced to 30 Months for Obstruction of Justice, Perjury

*Judge tells Mapes his 'loyalty was greatly misguided' in lying to grand jury investigating former speaker*

*By Hannah Meisel Capitol News Illinois*

For most of his adult working life, Tim Mapes only had one boss: former Illinois House Speaker Michael Madigan.

And for the more than 25 years he served as Madigan's chief of staff, Mapes was known for his extreme loyalty to the powerful speaker. His office décor in the state Capitol in Springfield featured a sign inspired by the 1939 classic film "The Wizard of Oz" that read: "Nobody gets in to see the wizard. Not nobody, not no how."

But federal prosecutors say that instinct toward loyalty in his longtime role as gatekeeper to the speaker led Mapes to lie to a grand jury in 2021, a few months after Madigan left office amid a growing criminal probe into his inner circle.

And on Monday, U.S. District Judge John Kness agreed, telling Mapes he didn't understand the longtime political operative's actions before sentencing him to 30 months in prison for his August conviction on one count each of perjury and attempted obstruction of justice.

"Perhaps this was out of some sense of loyalty, but if that was the case, your loyalty was greatly misguided," Kness said.

Mapes, who didn't testify in his own defense during trial, chose to make a statement before the judge handed down his sentence, saying he was proud of the decades he put into public service in Illinois government.

But Mapes was also self-aware, having seen two governors and many other politicians indicted, convicted and sentenced to prison during his time in Springfield.

"I also recognize that many people in the state of Illinois have lost faith in their government," Mapes said. "And that breaks my heart."

### 'Protect the boss'

Flanked by his attorneys, Mapes stood stoically receiving the news of his sentence, which was preceded by more than 30 minutes of near-monologue from the judge.

Kness wondered aloud if Mapes was operating under the old mafia logic of "omertà," an Italian term for the mob honor code wherein members of organized crime outfits were pressured to solve disputes among themselves and to never cooperate with law enforcement. During trial, a retired FBI special agent testified that Madigan ran his political organization almost like "the head of a mafia family."

"I have to say the law of omertà had no place in that grand jury room," Kness said. "And now you will pay a price for it."

Prosecutors have frequently claimed that Mapes could have been a star witness in the government's probe but chose to tank his own grand jury interview instead.

"(Mapes) was evasive, he was non-responsive and he flat-out lied," Assistant U.S. Attorney Julia Schwartz said in closing arguments last year. "He did it to protect the boss and stay in the foxhole."

Both "protect the boss" and "stay in the foxhole" were nods to phrases heard throughout trial. Many witnesses who worked alongside Madigan testified "protect the boss" was a common refrain for those who worked under the speaker, and it was also heard on wiretapped calls played for the jury.

Kness said he took Mapes' age – 69 – into account in sentencing him but said the other factors in the case played a larger role, including the message a multi-year sentence would send to elected officials and the general public.

"The people of this state cry out for accountability," Kness said. "A wise person I once knew said, 'accountability is liberating.' That may not mean much to you right now, but I think it might down the road."

Mapes began working for the Illinois House in 1977, a couple years after his graduation from Western Illinois University. Madigan wouldn't become speaker until 1983, but Mapes continued to climb the ranks within House staff until Madigan tapped him as chief of staff in 1992.

Mapes built upon his position as chief of staff, taking over as director of the Democratic Party of Illinois under Madigan's chairmanship later that decade, and serving as clerk of the Illinois House for the last seven years of his career.

But all three roles ended abruptly in 2018 when, at the height of the #MeToo movement, a House staffer accused Mapes of sexual harassment and bullying. It was the third accusation made against a member of Madigan's top deputies that year, and the speaker responded by demanding Mapes' resignation.

In the summer of 2020, the prosecutors announced electric utility Commonwealth Edison had entered into a \$200 million deferred prosecution agreement and agreed to cooperate with the feds' investigation into an alleged bribery scheme aimed at currying favor with Madigan.

Several months later, Madigan's close confidant and ComEd's longtime top contract lobbyist Mike McClain was indicted for orchestrating the alleged bribes, along with the utility's former CEO and two other ex-lobbyists. Emails and wiretapped

## Funeral Home

from page 3

ties went to Carlinville and found a decomposing corpse in a prep room.

IDFPR did not take immediate action against Heinz's funeral director license because if they suspended the license, the agency would have only 30 days to complete an investigation and go to trial, a spokesperson said.

Without any restriction on his license, Heinz continued to operate, continuing to accept bodies for burial and cremation. IDFPR complaints are confidential until action is taken, so those using Heinz Funeral Home for funeral services would have no idea the business had complaints.

In cases where IDFPR does take enforcement action against a licensee, the spokesman said the enforcement actions are published once a month. The public can also look on the IDFPR website to determine whether a funeral director has been disciplined in the past. But the specific conduct leading to the discipline can only be obtained by filing a Freedom of Information Act request.

Capitol News Illinois obtained three years' worth of disciplinary action taken against about 30 funeral home directors. Four licenses were revoked and two were indefinitely suspended

Other cases included relatively minor infractions, mostly for failure to pay state taxes or child support or failure to complete continuing education requirements. More serious infractions included losing a body in transit, driving under the



**Mapes**

from page 7

phone calls shown at trial also established Mapes' close relationship with McClain, though attorneys for Mapes attempted to minimize their friendship to the jury.

Against this backdrop, Mapes sat for the grand jury in March 2021 after having been put under an immunity order, meaning he wouldn't be charged with any wrongdoing related to the criminal probe into Madigan's inner circle. However, Mapes was warned multiple times that if he lied under oath, he'd be charged.

Two months later, he was.

On Monday, Kness said Mapes' case was "very sad," and especially "aggravating" because Mapes was placed under immunity.

"Whatever compulsion you felt to protect Michael McClain and the former speaker of the House, Mr. Madigan, as far as I can tell was not reciprocated...and was not necessary," the judge said. "You were immunized. You had no personal risk in going to the grand jury other than you didn't tell the truth. And that's what you did."

McClain was convicted along with his three co-defendants in the ComEd bribery case in May, and also awaits trial alongside Madigan in October on related racketeering and bribery charges.

Mapes will report to prison on June 11, though a facility assignment was not immediate. Before Kness gaveled out Monday's hearing, Mapes' attorney asked that he be sent to a federal prison in Pensacola, Florida, as his family would be able to visit him on trips nearby.

Asked for comment as he emerged from the conference room he'd retreated to after the sentencing hearing, Mapes shook his head and gave a thumbs-down signal to reporters as he walked across the hall to a men's bathroom. He later left the building with his wife, exiting quickly past cameras waiting in the courthouse lobby.

*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.*

## Current Innovation NFP Receives Grant for Regional Water Sustainability

*Innovation hub hopes to produce 500 jobs within 2 years*

By Dilpreet Raju *Capitol News Illinois*

A Chicago organization focused on drinking water sustainability will receive a \$15 million federal grant over the next two years for a project aimed at jumpstarting a regional clean water industry.

The U.S. National Science Foundation awarded the grant to Current Innovation NFP, a nonprofit "innovation hub" whose mission is to "solve pressing water challenges caused by climate change and pollution." It will receive one of 10 inaugural NSF Engine awards aimed at using science and technology to drive regional economies.

Current's Great Lakes Water Innovation Engine, also called Great Lakes ReNEW, includes more than 50 regional partner organizations from Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin.

Between the partner organizations – which range from nonprofits to educational institutions and for-profit companies – the project aims to train 500 people for jobs related to water technology within the first two years.

While the initial grant covers two years, it could grow to an eventual \$160 million investment over a 10-year period so long as the project progresses towards its goals.

At an announcement Tuesday, Gov. JB Pritzker called the federal funding a "win for our economy and for our environment" as climate pressures continue to mount.

"Fresh water is drying up. Nations across the globe are grappling with unprecedented water shortages, and over time, it will become the world's most precious resource," he said.

Great Lakes ReNEW will develop methods for selectively separating wastewater molecules to retrieve different minerals used in the production of electric parts.

"Our advantage in the Great Lakes region is that we are home to one-fifth of the planet's freshwater," Pritzker said.

Current, which will lead the regional project, aims to launch and invest in dozens of water tech companies while using a testbed for those companies to develop technologies that aim to attract water-intensive manufacturers.

The end goal is a circular economy centered on refining wastewater, removing chemicals such as PFAS — sometimes called 'forever chemicals' — while retaining minerals like cobalt, lithium and nickel. These minerals are necessary when producing rechargeable batteries, most of which are currently produced overseas, making them valuable to domestic tech companies.

Toni Preckwinkle, Cook County Board president, said the investment will benefit communities affected by environmental racism.

"We simply will not survive if we don't invest in clean water," she said.

The Great Lakes hold about 90 percent of all fresh water in the United States and the National Science Foundation estimates 40 million people rely on the lakes for clean drinking water.

Alaina Harkness, executive director of Current and principal investigator of the project, said water scarcity is something to tackle as early as possible.

"Today, we waste too much of our water and the valuable materials it carries – materials that we need to power the electrification of our society," she said.

Harkness said the environment and economy have always been inextricably linked.

"No economy or society is sustainable beyond the ecosystems and natural resources we all rely on," she said. "We don't have time to waste, we do have two years and \$15 million to show meaningful, measurable progress on new science to extract valuable minerals from our wastewater."

Harkness said the project will "help address both our environmental and economic challenges, generating solutions to planetary concerns while creating good jobs and opportunities for people to build wealth and stability."

Within the two-year period, it also plans to engage 1,000 youth across the region in STEM-related programs.

Crafting sensor networks that can detect real-time information on chemical levels in water will be another short-term aim, said Junhong Chen, co-principal investigator and lead water strategist at Argonne National Laboratory based in Lemont.

"The breakthroughs will play a pivotal role in securing our domestic supply chain, supporting electrification and advancing our clean energy future," Chen said. "While it might sound like science fiction, I assure you it is not."

## Bombs, Narcotics, and Firearms Bust

*Press Release*

In December 2023, the Boone County Sheriff's Office received information of subjects making homemade explosive devices, and in possession of narcotics and firearms. On December 21, 2023, the Boone County Sheriff's Office, along with the ATF, Illinois State Police, Winnebago County Sheriff's Office Explosive Ordnance Disposal Team, and the Belvidere/Boone County SWAT Team executed a search warrant in the 200 block of Thornhill Dr., Poplar Grove. During the investigation, Detectives recovered several homemade explosive devices, firearms, ammunition, cannabis, narcotics, and electronics.

Anthony Pizzuto, 31 years old of Poplar Grove, and Anthony Krieger, 32 years old of Poplar Grove, were charged. The investigation continues and additional charges are possible.

The Boone County Sheriff's Office encourages anyone having information on a crime, suspicious activity or narcotic trafficking to call the Boone County Sheriff's Office at 815-544-2144 or Crime Stoppers at 815-547-7867.

Members of the public are reminded that these are only charges and are not proof of the defendant's guilt. Every defendant is presumed innocent and is entitled to a fair trial in which it is the State's burden to prove his or her guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

## Durbin at Ground-breaking Ceremony for Starved Rock Breakwater Project

*Press Release*

U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) today attended the groundbreaking ceremony for the Starved Rock Breakwater Project, a habitat restoration effort led by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers designed to restore submerged aquatic vegetation in the Starved Rock Pool of the Illinois River.

This is the third project within the Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP), which Durbin helped secure \$829 million for in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). NESP is a long-term, dual-purpose program that will modernize Illinois locks and dams and restore the ecosystem in the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers.

"The Starved Rock Breakwater Project, achieved through collaboration among various stakeholders, will significantly enhance the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers' ecosystem, benefiting both wildlife and local communities," said Durbin. "With over 200 ecosystem restoration projects planned through NESP, we're ensuring a sustainable future for our waterways while bolstering our economy."

The Starved Rock Breakwater Project will increase the amount and quality of resting and feeding habitat for migratory waterfowl and improve spawning and nursery habitat for native fish. The project will also create a riprap breakwater adjacent to the navigation channel between River Mile 233 and 234 to provide protection for aquatic vegetation, reduce wind and wave energy, and benefit native fish species and waterfowl. The anticipated completion date is October 2024.