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A Snapshot of the Growth of the National

By David Larson

When we think of the National Sewing Machine Company, we remember the grand building complex possibly from personal memory or a photograph. That was not the original building (see photo on this page). That first building in Belvidere was a small, two story structure, which was slowly expanded until it covered over 20 acres. Today, only two unconnected buildings remain, partly because of neglect by the City of Belvidere.

The mammoth factory in the center of Belvidere was built in 1900. Construction of the original building began in 1886 when Messer's June and Eldredge located the factory in Belvidere. The company, originally a Chicago transplant, but became co-owned by many individuals and investors in Boone County. By 1900, the original buildings were just too small to meet the demand for orders for the National Sewing Machine, which reached over 1,000 per day.

The company had to expand. Both domestic and foreign export orders were growing. The goal was to create a workspace for 2,500 employees. This is not too much different than the capacity of the auto manufacturing plant on the edge of town. To do that, the company had to spend \$100,000, or \$3,756,000 in 2025 dollars. At the time, the National was the largest sewing machine manufacturing business and building in the world.

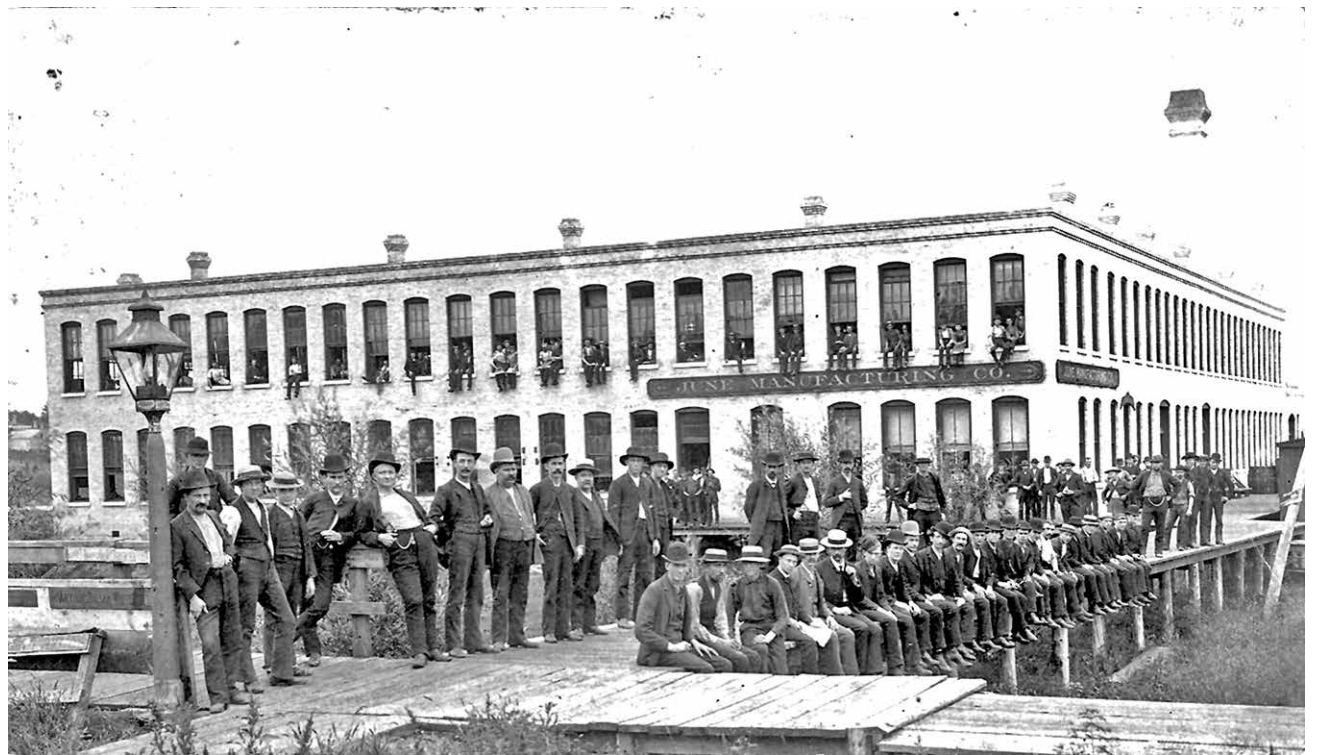
There were no subcontractors in the construction project except for a Rockford based brick layer. A superintendent, Fred H. Dixon was hired to lead the construction project using only day laborers.

The new additions included the creation of a foundry on the river, which was attached to a new tumbling and cleaning building. Attached to that building was a new japanning or painting building. One of the original buildings was

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The completed 1900 project



The original National Sewing Machine building which became a portion of the above photograph.

While Deficit Looms In Next Year's Budget, Current-Year Revenues Remain on Track

\$3.2 billion gap projected for upcoming budget discussions

By Ben Szalinski Capitol News Illinois

Revenue returns remain on track halfway through Illinois' budget year, though it's next year that is causing concern in the Capitol.

The Governor's Office of Management and Budget projects a \$3.2 billion deficit for the fiscal year that begins July 1, and the number one task facing Gov. JB Pritzker and the new General Assembly that was seated last week will be to eliminate it.

Pritzker is slated to give his budget address on Feb. 19, facing the largest projected deficit

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Illinois Bill Could Raise Age for Mandatory License Renewal Driving Test For Seniors

No other state requires an age-based driving test for license renewal

By Ashley Soriano For Capitol News Illinois and Medill Illinois News Bureau

Older drivers in Illinois could face fewer barriers to renew their driver's licenses next year as part of a bill that would raise the age for the state-mandated annual driver's test from 79 to 87.

Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias announced support for House Bill 1226 this week, joined by lawmakers from both parties. The measure, dubbed the Road Safety and Fairness Act, would impact roughly 350,000 Illinoisans, according to

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State Board of Education Seeks \$11.4 Billion for Prek-12 Spending

Requested 4.6% increase comes in face of projected revenue shortfall

By Peter Hancock Capitol News Illinois

The Illinois State Board of Education voted Wednesday to approve a budget request for the upcoming fiscal year of nearly \$11.4 billion, a 4.6% increase over this year's budget, despite projections that the state will face a substantial revenue shortfall next year.

The request includes a \$350 million increase in "Evidence-Based Funding," the minimum annual increase called for under the 2017 law that focuses new education spending on the neediest districts.

It also includes a \$142 million increase in what's called "mandatory categorical" aid for expenses such as transportation and special education, and

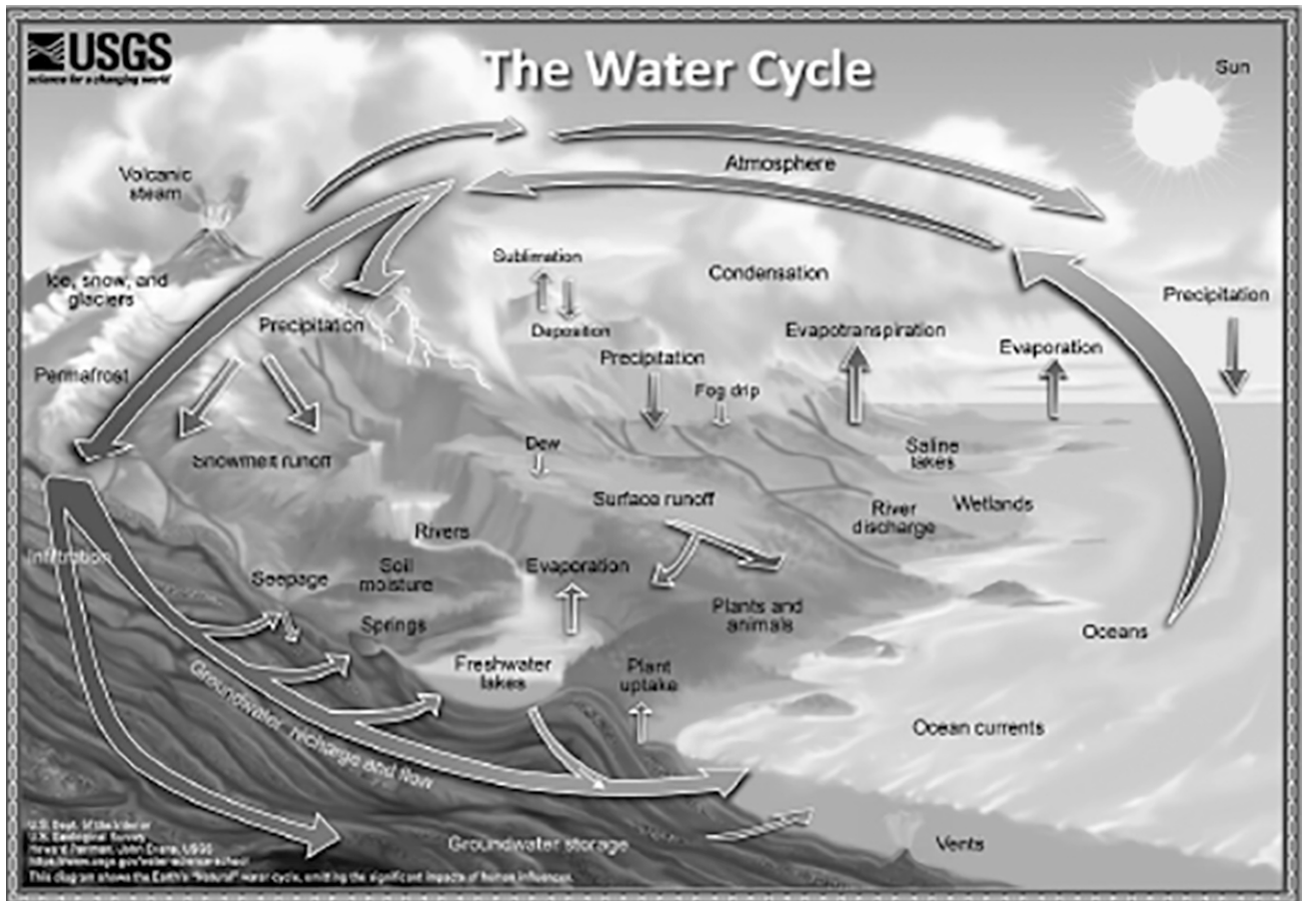
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Helicopter-Based Time-Domain Electromagnetics or HTEM Survey to Start on March 8th, 2025

Dan Kane, PG

Water Resource Specialist, Boone County

Boone County residents might soon see a helicopter flying overhead with a large, circular object suspended below it. The pilot will be collecting some very important data for a team of Illinois State Geological Survey (ISGS) scientists. The information collected will transform our understanding of the local geology in a very detailed way. Our water supply is part of this local geology as water is stored and pulled from aquifers hidden from our view. We all rely on groundwater for our water supply, we have no alternative sources.



USGS Water Cycle Diagram - <https://www.usgs.gov/media/images/water-cycle-png>

If you happen to catch a glimpse of the helicopter as it flies passes back and forth across the county collecting data for the 3-Dimensional Geologic Mapping Project, you will be seeing science in action! This is a new geologic mapping technique called Helicopter-based Time-domain Electromagnetics or HTEM. SkyTEM is the aerial geophysics firm that will be conducting the aerial survey.

Even though the aerial survey will take about a week of flight time, the ISGS will have a team of scientists dedicated to converting the geophysical data into a very detailed, three dimensional, interactive, geologic maps and other digital products over the next two years. The data will be calibrated by using known points of geologic information such as cores and well logs recorded from existing drilled wells. The results will provide an exceptional view of geologic features like shallow sand & gravel deposits that form aquifers, the precise depth of the bedrock surface, bedrock stratigraphy (layers of different sedimentary rocks) to a depth of about 1,000 feet below the ground surface. Once this detailed geology is revealed we can gain a greater understanding about our water supply and how it functions.

Our geology may seem to be fairly stable or even static. Closer observation will show that the land and water are dynamic systems. Water is constantly in motion as part of our globe's water cycle, with many factors affecting the state of water at any given location and at any point in time. Even though our water supply is found below our feet in aquifers hidden from view, groundwater is always moving and never static. The new 3-D geologic maps will show us some really important aspects to help us ensure we have a dependable supply of water.

We will learn where rainfall is most likely to soak in and become groundwater – a process called groundwater recharge. Local geology and soils affect whether or not precipitation can effectively enter an aquifer. Other factors can affect the natural process with people having significant influence on the landscape. Land use and land management can completely alter or enhance natural processes, including groundwater recharge.

Jessica Roberts, Boone County Planner adds her perspective on land use. "What does land use mean? Land use is just that, what is found on the land or how a property is used. For example: green fields, brown fields, agriculture, residential, commercial, industrial, preservation, conservation, are all terms used when describing land characteristics. Considering past, present and

future uses can all affect the way water moves. Land use is guided and regulated a variety of ways as we put mechanisms in place to manage our impacts. The mechanisms used are determined by levels of government through rules and regulations. The unique aspect to the regulation of land use, what is or is not allowed, is they are made primarily at a local level.

That means we can decide. We determine through the community's guidance, public input, professional expertise, data and trends, what areas to develop, what areas to keep residential, and what areas to preserve. Not only do we decide that, we also get to choose how these areas develop. What constraints, what features, such as architecture, landscaping, impervious surface areas, and in some cases details such as materials used for development. The data and information collected by the project will be a great benefit to assist in these decisions, helping to understand what exists below the surface. Painting a more complete picture of the natural constraints, needed to make the most informed decisions."

When this study is completed Jessica, other Boone County Staff, and the public will use this new information to guide future planning and important decision-making processes. Everyone will benefit from this cutting-edge science! The helicopter-based survey will begin on Saturday, March 8th following an information and media event at the Wings and Wheels Museum located at the Poplar Grove Airport. The program for this event will soon be available via a press announcement.

This is the third article in a series. You can read the previous two articles at:

<https://www.naturalland.org/geologic-study-boosts-groundwater-understanding/>

<https://www.naturalland.org/understanding-our-shared-water-supply/>

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- Adriel Alcalá, 40, Belvidere, Jan. 17
- Debra Clark, 64, Formerly of Belvidere, Jan. 13
- Phyllis Cullison, 84, Formerly of Belvidere, Jan. 19
- Anthony DeMay, 64, Harvard, Jan. 6
- Richard Haase, 81, Caledonia, Jan. 12
- Gabriel Martinez Perez, 48, Marengo, Jan 19
- Stephen Redding, 82, Harvard, Jan. 17

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Jury Hears Last Evidence In Madigan Trial as Defense Rests Case

Closing arguments scheduled for next week, 3 months after trial officially began

By Hannah Meisel Capitol News Illinois

Attorneys for former Illinois House Speaker Michael Madigan rested their case Thursday, marking the beginning of the end of the longtime Democratic powerbroker's corruption trial.

After prosecutors then recalled an FBI agent to the stand for a short bit of testimony and introduced one final bank record into evidence, U.S. District Judge John Blakey told the jury that the end is near.

"Ladies and gentlemen, the government has rested its rebuttal," he said. "That is the conclusion of facts in the case."

Three days of closing arguments are scheduled for Wednesday, and the jury would then begin deliberating the week of Jan. 27. But before any of that can happen, the lawyers must finish debating key jury instructions on Tuesday, which happens to mark three months since opening statements kicked off the trial in October.

How closely a jury follows the lengthy and often technical instructions for a complex trial like Madigan's is entirely up to the 12 men and women in the deliberation room. But after a U.S. Supreme Court decision this summer narrowed the federal bribery statute, attorneys on both sides have for months been preparing to argue the minutiae of bribery-related instructions.

Madigan faces 23 counts of bribery, racketeering, extortion and other corruption charges. His co-defendant, longtime Springfield lobbyist Mike McClain, is also charged in several of those counts, with prosecutors alleging he acted as Madigan's emissary.

On the witness stand this week and last, Madigan attempted to distance himself from the portrait the feds had painted of him and McClain always acting in tandem. After that testimony, McClain's attorneys renewed their already-rejected motion to sever their case from Madigan's, but after brief post-court arguments Thursday, U.S. District Judge John Blakey once again denied the request.

Prosecutors allege Madigan and McClain ran a "criminal enterprise," which enhanced the speaker's power and enriched him and those close to him. That included political allies who got jobs and contracts with electric utility Commonwealth Edison and telecom giant AT&T Illinois from 2011 to when the FBI's investigation was made public in 2019.

The feds characterize those jobs and contracts as bribes to Madigan and say that, in exchange, those companies had an easier time getting their preferred legislation passed in Springfield.

Government lawyers also accuse Madigan of engaging in bribery over a 1 1/2 year period in 2017 and 2018 when Chicago Ald. Danny Solis,

then the chair of the city council's powerful zoning committee, introduced Madigan to several real estate developers so the speaker's law firm could pitch them on property tax appeals services.

Prosecutors say Madigan's promise to recommend Solis for a lucrative appointment to a state board was made in exchange for Solis steering business to Madigan, though the former speaker never made the recommendation.

Jury instructions

In a June opinion deciding a case spawned from Portage, Indiana, the Supreme Court's conservative majority ruled the federal bribery statute – referred to as "Section 666" – does not criminalize "gratuities" given to a state or local public official after he or she has already performed an official act.

The justices clarified that a bribe requires a quid pro quo agreement before an elected official does an "official act," like a vote or any other action done in an official capacity. In Madigan's case, the feds allege the former speaker's "official act" was allowing certain bills backed by ComEd and AT&T to come to a vote in the Illinois House after staff attorneys in the speaker's office negotiated the bills. Madigan voted for some of the bills at issue, but not all.

Madigan's defense lawyers – and many witnesses called by both the government and defense – maintain there was nothing unusual about the speaker's office heavily negotiating bills and pointed out that the same thing happened with staff attorneys in the Illinois Senate and the governor's office.

Furthermore, they testified that the speaker's office-led negotiations stripped many of ComEd's and AT&T's desires out of the final version of the bills that ultimately became law, and inserted provisions the companies didn't want.

But prosecutors argue the utilities ultimately agreed to the watered-down legislation and that the various laws were still worth hundreds of millions of dollars for the companies over time.

Another significant part of last year's SCOTUS opinion drew a distinction between "bribes" and "gratuities" by clarifying that a bribe requires a specific quid pro quo agreement beforehand. Defense



Former Illinois House Speaker Michael Madigan and his attorneys leaving the Dirksen Federal Courthouse in Chicago (Capitol News Illinois photo by Andrew Adams)

attorneys are not arguing that what the feds characterize as "bribes" should really be seen as "gratuities." But they are trying to prove Madigan did not agree to the alleged "bribes," which means they can't possibly constitute a quid pro quo.

Prosecutors, however, argued they'd have no trouble proving an implicit quid pro quo existed under a legal theory known as "stream of benefits," wherein a pattern of corrupt exchanges over a long period of time is proof enough of a quid pro quo, even if there's no smoking gun evidence of a handshake deal.

The Supreme Court majority also pointed to the federal bribery statute's use of the word "corruptly" in criminalizing "state or local officials to 'corruptly' solicit, accept, or agree to accept 'anything of value' 'intending to be influenced or rewarded in connection with' any official business or transaction worth \$5,000 or more," Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh wrote in the opinion.

But the Supreme Court did not wade into defining the word "corruptly." In a dissenting opinion, Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson warned that the majority's opinion would make it difficult for prosecutors to go after corruption at the state and local levels given a 2005 SCOTUS decision that related the word "corruptly" with "consciousness of wrongdoing."

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National**from page 1**

ultimately removed to build a four-story shipping and receiving building along the railroad tracks on Meadow Street. The power plant located where the Steam Plant Restaurant is located today was another addition. It was estimated to be capable of 1,700 horsepower.

In 1928, a new steam-driven generator was installed. It had the latest automatic stoking device and consumed over 40 tons of coal each day to light and power the factory.

In the 1900 project, the iconic 150-foot smoke stack was erected. At that time it was the second tallest in Illinois. It rested on pilings driven 21 feet into the ground to a rock formation. A second stack was built for the power plant on the other side of Meadow Street.

Times have changed. No public funds were used on the project.

Macy's in New York, Wannamaker's in Philadelphia, and Marshall Field and Company in Chicago -- all were National customers. Macy's bought its first National machines in 1897, and Montgomery Ward was a customer back in 1889.

The National Sewing Machine Company manufactured more than sewing machines. In the bicycle-boom years of the 1890s, an Eldredge two-wheeler won a prestigious six-hour race at Madison Square Garden in New York City. And when the automobile came upon the scene in the first decade of the 20th century, there was an Eldredge competing for a place in the emerging technology.

Beyond sewing machines, bicycles and autos, washing machines, vices, food grinders, and many other products all flowed from the Belvidere factory.

The National will be forever a part of Belvidere History, but in a unique way. Today's auto manufacturing plant, storage, and cold storage facilities somehow don't seem to carry the same resonance for the future of Belvidere that the National did. The National was Belvidere as much as Belvidere was the National.

Budget**from page 1**

entering a spring session since 2021, when the pandemic hurt state income – though federal stimulus funds and a strong economic recovery helped erase the gap that year.

Since then, the state has enjoyed more robust revenue with little need for new revenue-generating policies – until the current-year budget that passed in May with about \$1 billion in new revenues through a tax hike on sportsbooks and businesses among other changes.

But with one-time federal funding in the rearview mirror and the economy slowing, lawmakers face flat revenue projections for the coming year with spending on the rise.

As for the current year, revenues are keeping pace with what lawmakers projected when they approved the \$53.1 billion spending plan last May.

According to the December monthly report from the Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability, the state brought in \$52.6 billion last year, and through December, this year's revenue is \$35 million, or 0.1%, ahead of the six-month mark of fiscal year 2024.

December was a strong month for the state, with revenue up \$327 million compared to December in FY24, driven by income tax receipts. Income tax receipts are up 9.2% so far this year, even as corporate income taxes have declined by 11%. Sales tax receipts rose in December for the third

consecutive month thanks to holiday shopping and are now up 1.2% for the year.

Though revenue remains on track, it's also showing little sign of growth — something GOMB warned in the fall would be a challenge for lawmakers as they craft a new state budget this spring.

As a new General Assembly begins, it remains unclear how lawmakers and the governor plan to plug the projected deficit. Republicans' main concern is Democrats will resort to tax increases to boost revenue and avoid spending cuts.

"I know they're going to be talking about needing additional revenue, but there's no reason to do that. We're spending almost \$20 billion more than we were eight years ago," Rep. CD Davidsmeyer, R-Murrayville, who is a co-chair of COGFA, told Capitol News Illinois.

Pritzker told reporters on Wednesday that tax increases aren't his preferred method, but he didn't elaborate on how he will propose closing the deficit.

"That's certainly not the first thing on my list is thinking about tax increases," Pritzker said. "I'm looking at how we can balance the budget within our means."

Dissatisfaction with the budget has also grown among Democrats. Several voted against the FY25 budget last May. The revenue plan passed in the Illinois House with the bare minimum 60 votes despite Democrats holding 78 seats in the chamber. Rep. Fred Crespo, D-Hoffman Estates, who voted for the state spending plan but against the revenue bill last year, told Capitol News Illinois Democrats need to revamp their budgeting approach.

"There has to be discipline," Crespo said. "I've recommended in the past when we work on our budget that we establish our revenue number. So we know based on GOMB, based on COGFA, they can project how much we're going to bring in next fiscal year. We should use that as a standard and say, 'hey, there's a revenue number we have to hit; we can't exceed that.' We don't do that."

Crespo said he feared the FY25 revenue enhancements that were enacted to close a roughly \$900 million deficit would limit lawmakers' options to increase revenue this year. He's also been harping on his Democratic colleagues for passing bills "subject to appropriation," which means the bill creates a new program that will only be funded if the state agency it is housed in asks the General Assembly to fund the program. Without funding, the program can't move forward.

"Anytime we pass a bill that is subject to appropriations, what it means is the bill as it passes, you create a line item on the budget, you're putting pressure on the budget," Crespo said.

Donald Trump entering the presidency this month is also a factor that could affect the state's bottom line. Exactly how his administration's decisions will impact the state remains to be seen, but Pritzker expressed concern on Wednesday about declining federal funds or changes to federal health care programs.

Changes to Medicaid reimbursement rates, for example, could drastically alter the type of care Illinois can provide for those enrolled in the program or increase the state's costs.

Trump is "so unpredictable that we need to consider that as we're putting a budget together and debating it," Pritzker said.

Davidsmeyer said he believes Illinois could see financial impacts soon, particularly because Trump's "border czar's" stated goal to go after sanctuary states by blocking grant funding in hopes of spurring compliance with federal immigration authorities.

License**from page 1**

Giannoulas.

Illinois is the only state that requires a driving test for seniors based on age. Currently, people 79 and above are required to take a road test to renew their license. The proposed bill comes after years of efforts by some lawmakers and advocates to raise the "behind-the-wheel" driving test age and to establish procedures to report unsafe drivers.

"Age alone does not necessarily determine if someone should or should not have a driver's license," said Giannoulas, whose office oversees driver's license issuance and vehicle registration, at a news conference Tuesday. "A birthday is not an accurate gauge of one's ability to get behind the wheel safely."

Older drivers tend to have lower crash rates, according to state data. In 2023, the crash rate for drivers aged 75 and above was 24.61 per 1,000 drivers, which was lower than any other age group, according to the Illinois Department of Transportation. The low crash rate has been consistent since at least 2018, according to the Secretary of State's Office's 2023 Study on Age-Related Driving Abilities.

The crash rate is more than double for many of the other age groups.

"I think about my mom. I don't think my mom would admit she's a senior, but she is someone that is very much a safe driver," said state Sen. Ram Villivalam, D-Chicago. "I can't think of someone that I know that's a safer driver. ... This legislation is removing this archaic requirement and doing so in a very balanced way."

Villivalam, chair of the Illinois Senate Transportation Committee, said the road test is the No. 1 issue seniors reach out to his office about in his district, which includes Chicago.

"They do not appreciate being discriminated against in this way. They do want this barrier removed," he said.

Before the pandemic, the road test for senior drivers applied to people over the age of 75 but a temporary measure raised the age to 79. This became permanent last year after a study from the secretary of state's office found the number of crashes did not increase significantly in each age range.

Co-sponsor State Rep. Jeff Keicher, R-Sycamore, referred to the legislation as "the art of the possible," despite some pushback from some other legislators.

The Road Safety and Fairness Act would also allow relatives to report unsafe drivers.

Illinois is one of only five states that do not allow immediate family members to report concerns about a relative's driving ability, but

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License

from page 4

the new legislation, in partnership with AARP Illinois, would change that.

“Illinois AARP members have asked our team for years, ‘Why is Illinois the only state in the nation to use age as a factor to require people to retake their driving test?’” Philippe Largent, AARP Illinois state director, said. “It’s time for Illinois to join the 49 other states and take a step forward in increasing the age in which older drivers in the state are required to take a driving test.”

The proposed legislation would eliminate the driving test for some, but it would still require renewals at a DMV location every one to four years, depending on age.

Every four years, 79- and 80-year-olds will still need to renew their licenses in person, while drivers between 81 and 86 years of age will need to renew every two years in person. Those 87 and above will renew annually in person, and a vision test is required for all age groups.

The bill moves Illinois closer to being consistent with other states’ driving requirements, although it remains one of the strictest states when it comes to license renewal for older drivers.

Wisconsin requires drivers of all ages to renew their licenses every eight years without a driving test. Indiana once mandated a road test for seniors but repealed it in 2005. New Hampshire was the last state besides Illinois to do away with their age-based road test in 2011.

“I would look at this as where we’re able to get the ball right now,” Keicher said. “It doesn’t mean the battle ends, but it does mean this is where we’re able to get from the feedback that we had during the spring session (last year).”

The Road Safety and Fairness Act will be considered in the upcoming spring General Assembly session. If passed and signed by the governor, the changes would take effect July 1, 2026.

Ashley Soriano 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.

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Education

from page 1

\$75 million in new funding for early childhood education.

“This year’s budget recommendation recognizes the tight fiscal projections faced by the state of Illinois, while continuing to invest in things that we know that are critical for school districts and that have a direct impact on student learning,” State Superintendent of Education

Tony Sanders told the board.

Funding for PreK-12 education is one of the largest categories of spending in the entire state budget, accounting for about one-fifth of all General Revenue Fund spending. That money is used to help fund the budgets of more than 850 school districts, which serve an estimated 1.9 million students.

State funding, however, makes up only part of the total amount spent on public education. In 2021, the most recent year for which complete numbers are available, state funding made up only about 26% of total school spending while about 65% came from local sources such as property taxes and the rest came from federal sources.

Over the years, the state’s heavy reliance on local property taxes to fund public schools produced vast inequities among districts. The Evidence-Based Funding formula was intended to address that over time by establishing a “hold-harmless” mechanism by which no district would ever see its funding reduced, then directing new funding to the districts most in need.

The law created a formula for estimating the cost of providing an adequate education in each district based on certain factors such as total student enrollment, the number of students from low-income families and the number of students from non-English speaking backgrounds. The goal of the law is to bring all districts up to at least 90% of their adequacy target.

Since the law went into effect, according to ISBE, nearly \$2.2 billion has been distributed to districts through the Evidence-Based Funding system and overall funding for the neediest districts – known as Tier 1 districts – has grown from 59.2% of their adequacy target to 73.4%.

Still, however, seven out of 10 students in Illinois attend a school in a district that is funded at less than 90% of its adequacy target. According to ISBE, bringing all districts up to 90% of adequacy would cost an additional \$2.6 billion.

In November, the Governor’s Office of Management and Budget reported that the annual increases in education funding called for under the Evidence-Based Funding law, combined with other rising costs and overall flat growth in revenue, would lead to a projected \$3.2 billion budget shortfall in the fiscal year ahead.

Gov. JB Pritzker will outline his plan for plugging that hole when he delivers his budget address to the General Assembly Feb. 19.

Sanders, however, said he remains confident Pritzker and lawmakers will find a way to balance the budget and still fund the agency’s budget request.

“While most of state government’s going to be looking at potential freezes, we are really pleased to see a governor and legislature that is committed to public education funding, even in tight fiscal times,” he said.



Madigan

from page 3

“The majority worries that it may be unclear to an official whether accepting a gift is, in fact, ‘wrongful,’” she wrote. “But if ‘corruptly’ is read to require knowledge of wrongfulness, any lack of clarity benefits the official. In such circumstances, a prosecutor is almost certain to be unable to meet her burden of proof.”

Defense lawyers are leaning on that “consciousness of wrongdoing” standard, with Madigan attorney Dan Collins peppering his questions of his client on the witness stand with opportunities to deny knowledge of any wrongdoing – which he took.

Madigan, for example, repeatedly denied knowing that several of his political allies had not been doing any work in exchange for monthly checks from ComEd and AT&T over various periods dating back to 2011. He acknowledged having asked McClain to help find work for the five men, but said he never asked for him to arrange no-work contracts, and in fact was “very angry” to find out they weren’t working when the feds’ investigation was made public.

Prosecutors tried to refute those claims while Madigan was on the witness stand, playing a wiretapped phone conversation in which he and McClain laughed about different ComEd contractors having “made out like bandits” for what McClain described as “very little work.” The feds later agreed to a stipulation that ComEd’s hiring of one contractor named in the call was not initiated by Madigan.

| In contentious cross-examination, prosecutor accuses Madigan of not telling ‘the whole truth’

On the witness stand, Madigan also denied having a conversation with one of those ComEd contractors. Political worker Ed Moody testified earlier in trial that he’d asked the then-speaker in 2018 if he should be worried that the utility lobbyist whose contract he was under wasn’t giving him any work, but Madigan said not to worry.

Before court recessed for the holiday weekend, Madigan attorney Tom Breen asked Blakey, a Notre Dame alum just like his client, if he was going to Monday’s college football championship game where the Fighting Irish will face the Ohio State Buckeyes.

When Blakey joked that he “doesn’t donate enough money for tickets,” Breen cheekily asked, “would you like some 50-yard line tickets, judge?”

“I’m not sure if that’s a bribe or a gratuity that’s being offered but I’m neither soliciting it or accepting it!” he replied to laughter in the courtroom.

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course, 17.5 feet; thence Northeasterly, parallel with the center line of said main tract, 662.82 feet to the point of beginning, situated in the County of Boone, in the State of Illinois. PIN: 05-25-353-012

All persons interested in the petitions may attend and be heard at the stated time and place.

Paul Engelman, Chairman,
Belvidere Planning and Zoning Commission
Published in The Boone County Journal Jan 23, 2025

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

No. DBA4218 - The undersigned person(s) do hereby certify that a WINDOW CLEANING SERVICE business is or is to be conducted or transacted under the name of LD WINDOW CLEANING SOLUTIONS that its location is or will be 22371 COUNTY LINE RD, in SOUTH BELOIT, 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: 630-699-4258

Louie Anthony Dazzo 22371 County Line Rd South Beloit, IL 61080

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: January 21, 2025.

Julie A Bliss, County Clerk and Recorder
Published in Boone County Journal 01/23,30 02/07 - P

CHANGE IN CERTIFICATE OF OWNERSHIP OF
BUSINESS PUBLICATION NOTICE

Public Notice is hereby given that on JANUARY 21ST A.D. 2025, a certificate was filed in the Office of the County Clerk of Boone County, Illinois, concerning the business known as GREEN BLADE LAWN CARE, located at 2512 E 6TH ST., BELVIDERE, IL 61008, which certificate sets forth the following changes in the operation thereof: CHERYL LEIGH PACELLO IS BEING WITHDRAWN AS AN OWNER.

Dated this 21ST day of January, A.D. 2025

Julie A. Bliss
Boone County Clerk

Published in the Boone County Journal 01/23,30 02/07 (P)

Hemp Regulation Bill Stalls Amid Democratic Infighting

Pritzker 'tremendously disappointed' bill wasn't called for vote; blames Speaker Welch

By Peter Hancock Capitol News Illinois

A bill that would have imposed regulations on new types of intoxicating substances derived from hemp stalled in the Illinois House Tuesday, dealing a political setback to Gov. JB Pritzker after he strongly supported the legislation.

"I was tremendously disappointed," Pritzker said at an unrelated news conference Tuesday, after it became clear the bill would not be called for a vote in the House. "This is a demonstration, from my perspective, of the power of special interests and the money that they spread around to thwart health and safety of the public."

But the bill also created rifts within the House Democratic caucus. According to several sources, the hemp regulation bill was the focus of a three-hour closed-door caucus meeting Monday that some House members described afterwards as "spirited" but others described as "raucous."

Pritzker also called Democratic House Speaker Emanuel "Chris" Welch's decision not to call the bill "irresponsible," saying he believed it would have passed with a bipartisan majority had he done so. And he criticized House Democrats for the treatment of members of his staff who appeared at Monday's caucus meeting.

But Welch's spokesperson noted that he is a cosponsor of the bill and would continue working to pass it in the new legislative session that begins Wednesday.

"A lengthy caucus discussion found that the bill in its current form did not have enough support within the House Democratic Caucus," the spokesperson said. "He is committed to continuing discussions so that when the bill ultimately passes, it is the best possible piece of legislation for the state of Illinois."

'Intoxicating' hemp

The bill targeted a new category of products that have so far been able to bypass the regulatory framework Illinois set up when it legalized industrial hemp in 2018 and recreational marijuana the following year.

The two crops are closely related biologically. Both are classified as a form of cannabis but the major distinction between them is the amount of the intoxicating chemical THC they contain.

Hemp is defined as having a THC content not more

than 0.3% by weight. It is primarily used to make a variety of consumer products, such as CBD oils, that are thought to have health benefits. The plant can also be used to make a variety of industrial products such as textile fabrics and building materials.

Both the hemp and marijuana industries are heavily regulated by the state, from the planting and growing of the crops to the transportation and processing of plants into various products. In addition, marijuana and related cannabis products can only be sold through licensed dispensaries.

In recent years, however, a new category of intoxicating products has emerged in what some people call a "gray market" that lies just outside the existing regulatory framework. Those products are made using THC that is extracted or synthesized from hemp plants and are often sold in gas stations and convenience stores, sometimes in packaging that closely resembles candy, snacks or other products commonly sold to children.

"And I talked to a mother of a daughter who took one of these packages, didn't understand how intoxicating the package was, and ended up passed out, ended up in the hospital, has been in and out of the hospital now for eight months as a result of just this product that looked, in all respects, as if it were candy," Pritzker said.

House Bill 4293, known as the Hemp Consumer Products Act, would have closed the existing loophole by defining any product meant for human or animal consumption with a THC content greater than that of consumer CBD products as "cannabis." It would have done so regardless of where the THC came from or how it was derived, and it would have subjected those products to all the regulations that apply to the cannabis industry.

That bill passed the Senate during the regular 2024 session in May by a vote of 54-1. But the House did not consider the bill during the final days of the spring session, nor did the bill come up for a vote during the fall veto session in November.

Industry concerns

In December, Pritzker held a news conference and issued a news release announcing his support for the bill while urging lawmakers to pass it during the upcoming lame duck session in January.

But the bill ran into stiff opposition from some hemp-related businesses argued the bill would cast too wide of a net over the industry, putting small, independent businesses and farms at risk while cutting off consumers' access to health products like CBD oil.

"This bill, as currently written, would wipe out thousands of jobs and criminalize CBD products to the benefit of billion-dollar cannabis corporations," the lobby group Illinois Healthy Alternatives Association said in a statement Jan. 5.

But other industry advocates disagreed, arguing the new regulations were needed to close a regulatory loophole in Illinois law that allows certain businesses to sell products that are essentially cannabis, without going through the state's cannabis regulatory process.

"What these guys are trying to do is that they're trying to cement themselves in a separate category that allows them to sell the exact same product at a whole different rate because they don't have to follow any of the regulations," Ted Parks, a licensed cannabis transporter and executive director of the Illinois Third Party Carriers Association, told Capitol News Illinois in an interview.

Democratic rift

Speaking to reporters Tuesday, Pritzker openly complained that officials from state agencies that would be involved in the regulatory process were verbally abused by Democratic lawmakers, and he specifically blamed Welch for not intervening.

"There was a raucous meeting of the Democratic House caucus, in which there was a lot of yelling at staff by people who were opposed to the bill that the

speaker did not intervene about," Pritzker said. "And you shouldn't let staff get berated like that. You just shouldn't."

A spokesperson for Welch issued a statement later Tuesday saying he expects House members to conduct themselves with "proper decorum and respect, especially on contentious topics amidst tight deadlines."

"Speaker Welch spoke individually with certain members immediately following the discussion yesterday, as well as to the entire Caucus today, reiterating these expectations," the spokesperson said. "It is his understanding that at least one member has reached out to offer an apology to the Governor's staff, and has also apologized to members of the Democratic Caucus."

The bill did not come up for a vote Tuesday, the final day of the lame duck session, due to an unwritten procedural rule in the House commonly known as the "rule of 60," which says no bill can advance to final action on the House floor unless at least 60 members of the majority caucus have signed on to support it.

Sixty is the minimum number of votes needed to pass legislation in the House. Democrats currently hold 78 of the House's 118 seats.

"It came up a few votes short," Rep. Bob Rita, D-Blue Island, said in an interview. "We're in the lame duck (session) and this is a time when there are a lot of things going on, but it's a measure that we need to address as we go into the 104th General Assembly. I believe this is going to be at the forefront of one of the agenda items."

Chicago concerns

Some House members speculated that Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson, who was known to oppose the bill, may have been a factor in some Democrats' refusal to support the bill, but Pritzker said he doubted that was the case.

"My impression is he didn't have much to do with this," he said. "There's a powerful lobby that has been working against this bill for quite some time. This was not an easy bill. If it had been, it would have passed last May."

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 Advance 'Karina's Bill' to Remove Guns From Domestic Violence Situations

Bill moves forward following 2024 U.S. Supreme Court ruling

By Ben Szalinski Capitol News Illinois

It's been 18 months since Karina Gonzalez and her 15-year-old daughter Daniela were shot and killed on Fourth of July weekend at their Chicago home, allegedly by her husband.

Gonzalez had filed for an order of protection from her husband just two weeks before her death. That order caused his Firearm Owner's Identification card to be revoked, but law enforcement never removed the gun he owned from his possession.

After more than a year of negotiations, the Illinois General Assembly passed "Karina's Bill" on Tuesday with bipartisan support. It clarifies that local law enforcement must temporarily remove guns from a person who has an order of protection against them when the alleged victim successfully seeks firearm removal as a remedy in court.

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Firearms*from page 7*

“We are talking about people who are abusing the people that they claim to love, that are threatening them with harm, that are shooting them and killing them,” bill sponsor Sen. Celina Villanueva, D-Chicago, told the Senate Monday night.

Gonzalez’s son, Manny Alvarez, who survived the 2023 shooting, joined Rep. Edgar Gonzalez Jr., D-Chicago, on the House floor for the bill’s final passage. It needs only a signature from Gov. JB Pritzker to become law.

Current law allows people asking a court for an order of protection to request a “firearm remedy” that would lead to law enforcement removing guns from the alleged abuser’s possession. Karina’s bill seeks to close the loophole that made it unclear who was responsible for removing the gun from the situation.

Under the bill, the person who seeks an order of protection can also ask the court to issue a search warrant that will allow local law enforcement to seize firearms from the alleged abuser. The petitioner or state’s attorney must demonstrate probable cause that the alleged abuser poses an immediate threat to the petitioner. Law enforcement would then be required to execute the warrant within 96 hours of it being issued.

Road blocks, delays

The bill ran into road blocks, including that lawmakers wanted to wait for the U.S. Supreme Court to weigh in on a similar federal case.

The nation’s high court upheld a federal law last June that prohibits people with domestic violence-related restraining orders from having guns. Though Karina’s bill had previously passed through the House, senators delayed action while waiting for the decision. The court’s ruling “gave us far more elbow room than I would have expected to tackle this issue,” Senate President Don Harmon, D-Oak Park, said in a Senate committee Monday.

Illinois law enforcement organizations also had concerns about their ability to carry out the law, including where police agencies would store the confiscated firearms and the logistics of carrying out search warrants against alleged abusers. Stakeholders came to agreement over those logistics, including giving police 48 hours to research the situation behind the order of protection so they can properly execute the search warrant.

However, some Republicans expressed concerns that small sheriff’s departments in rural districts would continue to struggle to carry out the law with limited resources.

“We don’t have the people to do these things,” Sen. Chapin Rose, R-Mahomet, said.

But supporters of the bill said the state needed to strengthen its laws to support victims of domestic violence and prevent deaths like Gonzalez’s.

“Our current laws are confusing for victims and judges and the result is that victims aren’t getting what they need: their abuser’s guns taken away,” Villanueva said in committee Monday.

Domestic violence shooting deaths were up 63% from 2019 to 2023 and were responsible for three times as many gun deaths in 2023 as non-domestic violence incidents, Amanda Pyron from The Network, an anti-domestic violence organization, told the Senate committee.

“The emergency order of protection stage is the most dangerous moment and the time a survivor is most likely to be killed because it is when an abuser realizes they’re losing power over a survivor,” Pyron said.

But gun rights lobbyists expressed concerns the bill undermines due process afforded to people accused of crimes. They argued taking guns away from a person with an order of protection against them assumes guilt on criminal charges and violates their constitutional rights. Orders of protection are filed in civil court.

The bill received bipartisan support in the

legislature, but some Republicans echoed the concerns of the gun rights groups.

“There is not another amendment in our Bill of Rights that you have to petition a court to get your right back before you’re convicted of something,” Sen. Neil Anderson, R-Andalusia, said in the Senate Monday.

Kane County State’s Attorney Jamie Mosser told the Senate committee she believes the bill will withstand any court challenges. Mosser, who officially took a neutral position on the bill, said due process is honored because the guns are temporarily confiscated, and the person can file objections if the guns were taken away permanently.

The measure, House Bill 4144, passed 43-10 in the Senate and 80-33 in the House.

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Sangamon County Enters Agreement to End DOJ Investigation

Investigation was launched in the aftermath of the Sonya Massey shooting

By Beth Hundsdorfer Capitol News Illinois

Sangamon County, its sheriff’s office and its central dispatch system on Thursday announced an agreement with the U.S. Department of Justice to resolve an investigation spurred by the shooting of Sonya Massey.

Massey, an unarmed Black woman who was experiencing a mental health crisis, was shot in her kitchen by Sangamon County Deputy Sean Grayson who responded to Massey’s 911 call about a prowler outside her home near Springfield.

“The death of Sonya Massey was a terrible tragedy for a woman experiencing a mental health crisis, her family, and the entire Sangamon County community,” said Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke of the Justice Department’s Civil Rights Division. “This agreement reflects Sangamon County’s commitment to instituting reform and taking action that will help improve public safety and restore trust with the community in the road ahead.”

In recent weeks, the DOJ Civil Rights Division announced the conclusion of investigations not only in Sangamon County, but also of police departments in Trenton, New Jersey; Memphis, Tennessee; Worcester, Massachusetts; and Mount Vernon, New York, as well as the Louisiana State Police.

The agreement resolves the investigation into Sangamon County and its sheriff’s office and dispatch system that was officially launched by DOJ in November into alleged discriminatory practices on the basis of race and disability by police and dispatching services.

It specifically states the DOJ did not find evidence that the county, the sheriff’s department or central dispatch discriminated in providing services, and the county did not admit any liability by entering into the agreement.

The agreement states the sheriff’s office will continue to work with Memorial Behavioral Health Center in Springfield to provide mobile crisis team services, including sending teams to mental health calls either with police or on their own, depending on the call circumstances.

The sheriff’s department agreed to review the accuracy and reliability of the current process for collecting and analyzing demographic data and make any necessary improvements.

Under the agreement, dispatchers and deputies will receive training to identify people experiencing

a behavioral health crisis and how to relay that to the responder. The training will also include suicide intervention and de-escalation techniques.

The county also agreed to designate a person to review citizen complaints within 90 days. The Justice Department also requested it receive information on those citizen complaints as well as the status of the training within 90 days.

Sangamon County formed the “Massey Commission” made up of local residents after the shooting to address inequities in policing and other county services. The agreement states that the county, the dispatch system and sheriff’s department will review recommendations made by the commission.

“We are pleased that there has been swift action and we look forward to reviewing the details of the agreement,” Massey Commission Chair Jo Ann Johnson said in a news release following the announcement. “The agreement does acknowledge the work of the Massey Commission and asks the county to work collaboratively with us to incorporate our recommendations.”

Under Sangamon County’s agreement with the DOJ, the county has one year to implement the necessary changes.

Grayson was fired after he was charged with first-degree murder, aggravated battery with a firearm and official misconduct charges. He remains in Macon County Jail, awaiting word on whether the Illinois Supreme Court will decide, based on the state’s new SAFE-T Act, to release him until trial.

Syverson: Send Valentines to Long-Term Care Facility Residents

Press Release

State Sen. Dave Syverson (R-Cherry Valley) is asking residents to once more lift the spirits of people living in assisted living and long-term care facilities by sending them Valentine’s Day cards.

“For the fifth year in a row, we are asking the community for their help with our Valentines for Seniors Card Drive. Thanks to the public’s out-pouring of support, we are able to provide Valentine’s Day wishes to residents of assisted living and long-term care facilities,” Syverson said. “Receiving your cards has brought much joy and many smiles to these residents.”

Valentine’s Day cards will be accepted through Feb. 7. Participants will have the option to mail or drop their cards at 527 Colman Center Dr., Cherry Valley, IL 61108.

Syverson is encouraging community members, churches, schools, and other groups to participate by dropping off or mailing Valentine’s Day cards to his office in Cherry Valley. Once the cards have been collected, they will be delivered by the Senator and his district staffers on the communities’ behalf to residents of assisted living and long-term care facilities in communities across the region.

In 2024, members of the Senate Republican Caucus collected and delivered 58,615 Valentines through the program. In 2021, the Valentines for Seniors Card Drive was noted on social media by celebrity businesswoman Martha Stewart, which led to hundreds of Valentines being donated to the Card Drive from around the country. The program was also featured on Good Housekeeping magazine’s website.

Contact Cheryl Larson at info@senator-davesyverson.com or call 815-987-7555 for more information, or to indicate interest in participating.