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Apollo Theater a Cultural Icon

by David Larson

Belvidere's Apollo Theatre opened on January 11, 1922 as a state-of-the-art theater. It was built by Frank Rhinehart. The Rhineharts were a prominent family who built and lived in a large Tudor-style mansion on North State Street, which is now a museum. The family had the financial muscle accumulated by Frank Rhinehart's grandfather, Allen Fuller, and was one of the original builders of the city on the banks of the Kishwaukee River.

The cost to build the Apollo was \$100,000 in 1921. In today's dollars \$1,681,000. A bargain even in today's construction costs.

The theater was designed to accommodate moving pictures, vaudeville, and road shows. The entrance of wide French doors were overhung by a broad marquee, rimmed with lights and surrounded by an electrical sign. Inside was a foyer, that was divided from the auditorium by ornamental wood panels, glass, and velvet curtains. Broad staircases at both ends of the foyer led to the balcony. Roomy mahogany-finished seats upholstered in padded

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Senate Votes to Lift Ban on Nuclear Construction

*Environmental, Anti-Nuclear Groups
Oppose The Legislation*

By Andrew Adams Capitol News Illinois

The Illinois Senate approved a measure on Thursday that would lift a 1980s-era moratorium on nuclear power plant construction.

Senate Bill 76, sponsored by Sen. Sue Rezin, R-Morris, was approved on a 39-13 vote. The bill now goes to the House of Representatives for consideration.

"The bill is going to come to the House with a lot of momentum," Rezin said in an interview after the bill passed. "The unions are out and working their members to explain the importance of the bill and to just explain the technology."

Rezin said on the Senate floor that the bill would specifically allow for the construction of small modular nuclear reactors, or SMRs. These reactors operate at a much smaller scale than traditional nuclear reactors and are built in factories and assembled on site. SMR proponents say they can be deployed in places like factories, replacing the need for things like coal-fired cogeneration plants.

"This is a large change in energy policy for the state of Illinois," Rezin said. "It's important to have a robust discussion and make sure the bill's been vetted."

Senate proponents of the bill, including Sens. Bill Cunningham, D-Chicago, and Patrick Joyce, D-Essex, said that lifting the ban would help the

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(above) The Apollo

(below) the Elephant event at the Apollo



Madigan Kept Pressure on Comed for Key Board Appointment

*Jury hears more wiretapped calls, from
Ochoa himself as feds wind down their
arguments*

By Hannah Meisel Capitol News Illinois

When Juan Ochoa was appointed to the board of Commonwealth Edison in April 2019, it was after a year and a half of delays and behind-the-scenes wrangling on his behalf by some of the most powerful people in Illinois politics and Chicago's business community.

But four years later, the emails and calls on

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Senate Approves Crack Down on 'Crisis Pregnancy Centers'

*Bill requiring insurance coverage of
abortion pills also passes*

By Andrew Adams & Nika Schoonover
Capitol News Illinois

A rush of legislation passed before a Friday deadline in the Senate included proposals aimed at protecting those seeking reproductive health care in Illinois.

The first of these proposals, Senate Bill 1909, would give the state's attorney general explicit authority to crack down on "limited services pregnancy centers," which are also known as crisis pregnancy centers, or CPCs.

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Bruce Appell

Beloved father, grandfather, and brother, passed away on April 4, 2023, at OSF Medical Hospital in Peoria, IL, after a hard-fought battle following a heart attack. Born on January 26, 1957, in Shullsburg, WI, the son of Virgil and Ellen (Dorneden) Appell. Bruce had a love for nature and an unwavering dedication to his family and friends.

Bruce was a 1976 graduate of Shullsburg High School and went on to proudly work at Chrysler Corporation in Belvidere as a forklift driver for many years until his retirement. He was a diligent worker and valued member of the Chrysler team, earning the respect and admiration of his colleagues.

On May 24, 1986, Bruce was united in marriage to the love of his life, Vianne Larvey, at St. Matthew's Catholic Church in Shullsburg, WI. Together, they shared a beautiful life and created a loving family that was the center of Bruce's world. Although Vianne preceded him in death in 2018, their love story remains a testament to the power of true partnership and devotion.

Bruce is survived by his daughters, Kaylla (Michael) Klimek and Chantel Appell, both of Belvidere, IL; a grandson, Milez Appell; and a sister, Marilyn (Bob) Sagmoen. He was preceded in death by his parents, his wife Vianne, and his brothers: Robert Appell and Mark Appell.

Known for his quirky sense of humor, Bruce was always ready with a joke or a funny story to make those around him smile. He was a selfless, thoughtful man who always put the needs of others before his own. His laughter and kindness will be greatly missed by all who had the privilege of knowing him.

In his free time, Bruce enjoyed 4-wheeling, hunting, gambling at the casino, and engaging in lively conversations with his friends. These moments brought him great joy and provided a source of relaxation and camaraderie that he cherished. Above all else, though, Bruce's greatest love was his family. His grandson, Milez, was his best friend, and he treasured every moment spent with his children and grandchildren. The memories they created together will live on in their hearts forever.

As we mourn the loss of Bruce Appell, we also celebrate the life he led and the love he shared with those around him. His laughter, generosity, and unwavering dedication to his family will never be forgotten, and his spirit will live on in the hearts of those who loved him.

A visitation will be held Friday, April 14, 2023, from 12:00 P.M. until 4:00 P.M. at Erickson Funeral Home (235 N. Judgement St., Shullsburg). Burial will be in St. Matthew's Cemetery in Shullsburg. Online condolences may be expressed to the family at www.ericksonfuneralhome.com.

In lieu of flowers, a memorial fund has been established in Bruce's name.

ANALYSIS: Three-Year Forecast Projects Revenue Could Begin Outpacing Revenues Once Again

decline followed by slow growth

By Jerry Nowicki Capitol News Illinois

While Illinois has recently experienced a prolonged stretch of good financial news, a new state fiscal forecast notes that if spending continues to grow at its recent pace it could lead to future budget deficits.

It would mark the reversal of a recent trend during which the state logged considerable surpluses this fiscal year and the two years prior.

In the highest-spending scenario outlined in the three-year forecast from the Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability, the state could once again face a bill backlog as high as \$18 billion. That estimate assumes spending growth at its five-year average of 7.1 percent.

"This example shows that spending patterns seen in the past few years cannot continue without a comparable increase in revenues which is not seen in the commission's current estimates," the report from the legislature's nonpartisan forecasting commission noted.

If the state keeps spending growth at 1.8 percent – the most austere scenario outlined by the commission – it could maintain an accounts payable balance of \$1.4 billion, the same as it was at the end of Fiscal Year 2022.

Even in that scenario, state spending would outpace revenues in the upcoming Fiscal Year 2024 that begins July 1 – although Gov. JB Pritzker has proposed decreasing state spending in FY 24.

His \$49.6 billion proposed spending plan for FY 24 represents a 0.7 percent decrease from the baseline number assumed in the COGFA forecast. Lawmakers, however, are still working on crafting a final budget before their May 19 adjournment.

"We have to pass a balanced budget... Illinois has had a past where, you know, for a few years anyway, that didn't happen," Pritzker said at a news conference last week. "... And I think the General Assembly has taken that very seriously."

While the new report illustrated that lawmakers may have to tighten their belts in the coming years, it remained consistent with previous projections by the commission and other forecasters that have suggested an economic slowdown is on the horizon.

The COGFA report noted that over the past five years, state revenues have grown at a rate of 12 percent on average, compared to the 7.1 percent

Continued on Page 3

Attention

Belvidere Township Property Owners

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Quidnunc



January auto sales 7% EV. Tesla is cutting prices, manufacturers of EVs are basically soldout to the end of the year. Ford F150EV is sold 3 years out.

What do you think?

OBITUARIES

- Ruth Below, 96, Marengo, April 4
- Gene Blazer, 82, Marengo, April 4
- Dick Burton, 85, Harvard, March 31
- Sandra Ferreri, 82, Marengo, April 7
- Frances "Sue" Lafferty, 96, Belvidere, April 6
- Teresa Oblinger, 85, Belvidere, April 8
- Robert Olson, 89, Belvidere, April 6
- Susan Shaw, 81, Belvidere, April 5



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

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

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

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

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

Boone County Committee Openings

Boone County is looking to fill a number of vacant committee appointment positions. The committee appointments application can be found at: https://cms8.revize.com/revize/booneil/government/county_board/appointments.php

Fire Protection District # 5

Fire Protection District #1

Board of Review

Boone County Historical Museum District

Community Building Complex

Garden Prairie Street Light District

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Interested parties are asked to send a letter and/or resume expressing your interest, qualifications along with your contact information and completed application to Boone County Administration Office, Administration Campus, 1212 Logan Ave., Suite 102, Belvidere, IL 61008 or e-mail info@boonecountyil.org.

Analysis

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average expenditure growth.

Pandemic-era federal stimulus funds have mostly dried up, however, and their effect on the nation's economy is beginning to wane. Many economic forecasts anticipate a mild recession is on its way.

The slowdown was evidenced in COGFA's March revenue update that was published this week, showing that revenues declined \$563 million from the same month last year. It marked the first year-over-year decline for any month this year, but COGFA noted the drop was expected after a record March 2022.

In other words, revenue growth rates of 18 percent and 12 percent that were seen in fiscal years 2021 and 2022 are not likely to be repeated anytime soon.

COGFA anticipates revenues will shrink by 1.4 percent to \$50.4 billion in the upcoming FY 24 and remain under current-year levels until FY 2026, when they jump 2.5 percent to \$52.2 billion.

As for spending, one important caveat is that the growth of the past two years been at least partially driven by measures that COGFA described as "fiscal discipline." That includes debt retirement, increased pension payments and long-term savings.

It has also included temporary tax relief and other one-time expenditures that won't carry over from one fiscal year to the next.

But spending across human services, education and other agencies has also grown.

"Current forecasts would allow for more of this kind of spending in the short-term," COGFA wrote in the report. "However, longer-term, economic and tax revenue forecasts remain murky as the potential for a recession remains."

The three-year report also analyzed threats to the state's fiscal position, including the potential recession, a COVID-19 resurgence, population loss and pension debt among others.

Many of the threats, the report noted, "can be directly linked" to "a long-term trend of having expenditures being higher than revenues." It also noted that "work still remains" for the state to achieve a "budgetary system that is more stable in the long-term."

"An opportunity exists to improve the state's financial situation by better aligning the revenues and expenditures of the state. This can be done by raising revenues, cutting spending, or some combination of both," the report noted.

Illinois could also achieve stability by broadening its sales tax to include more services.

"The Illinois sales tax was originally developed in the 1930s when the economy was much more reliant on goods production," the report noted. "By taxing services, the tax system would modernize to more accurately reflect the economy of 2023."

The revenues resulting from a service tax could be used to offset a portion of the sales tax on goods and "allow for the overall tax rate to be lowered," according to the report.

The state could also save money by reducing statutory interest payments on overdue bills and using current-year surpluses for "paying down debt, investing for future growth, reducing taxes, and/or returning money to taxpayers."

But on the whole, the report noted, "After the budget stalemate that occurred from 2015-2017, the state's financial position has been getting better each year."

That two-year impasse between

Republican Gov. Bruce Rauner and Democrats in the General Assembly drove the state's bill backlog to nearly \$17 billion and caused crippling cuts across state agencies.

The report's final piece of advice: "The State needs to continue to show fiscal discipline and demonstrate that the results of the past few years are not an anomaly."

Jerry Nowicki is the bureau Chief of Capitol News Illinois, a nonprofit, nonpartisan news service covering state government that is distributed to hundreds of news outlets statewide. It is funded primarily by the Illinois Press Foundation and the Robert R. McCormick Foundation.



Editor:

As Mayor, on behalf of the City of Belvidere I want to express my sincere condolences to the family of Belvidere resident Mr. Freddie Livingston Jr. who lost his life and to all those injured in the tragic tornado that damaged our downtown.

I do want to recognize our Fire and Police first responders who arrived on scene within minutes to this emergency. I personally want to thank our Belvidere Fire Department who immediately began to rescue, triage, treat and transport those injured at the Apollo event. Without our first responders and the additional 20 other area EMS responders this situation would have had a much more tragic outcome. Our entire Belvidere Fire Department under the direction of Chief Shawn Schadle are to be commended for their professional, rapid and heroic response that we as a community rely upon in a tragic event such as this.

Additionally, I want to recognize the many citizens who came out on their own to help in whatever way possible. As well, the event attendees that helped those most in need and each other in the initial aftermath of the Apollo roof collapse. And to our Public Works Dept. employees who began as quickly as possible and worked tirelessly to clean up and restore our city after this storm, thank you.

As a citizen of Belvidere and as Mayor, I want to express my sincere gratitude to all of those who helped during this tragic event. God bless each and every one of those who turned out to help. I have always been proud of Belvidere and the unselfish help displayed during this tragic event has only reinforced that pride.

Sincerely,
Clinton Morris
 Mayor, City of Belvidere



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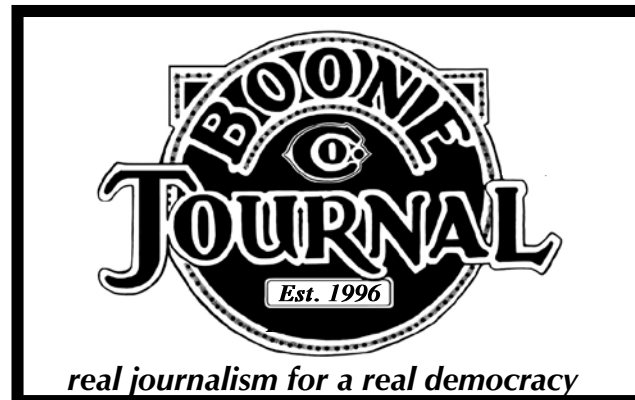
City Reflects on Repair Efforts

By David Larson

During the April 10th City of Belvidere Committee of the Whole, Kip Countryman, Director of Buildings stated, "no buildings have been condemned" as a result of the tornado. His staff has been working with property owners in the north-side and downtown areas to make repairs to damaged buildings. Many business with fencing in front have adapted by creating back entrances to their businesses.

Gina Del Rose, Community Development Planner, reported that five of the damaged buildings have National Registry status and can benefit from tax credits due to expenses incurred from the tornado damage. She has organized a meeting with property owners to meet with a representative from the state, in this regard, who will manage claims, answer questions, and establish a working relationship.

Alderman Tom Porter, (R) First Ward, asked if the city's Facade Improvement Fund, available to downtown property owners, to help maintain the historical, commercial parts of the City of Belvidere from blight, could be used on tornado-affected properties. Del Rose reported they could be, but the fund is small. It would be competing with other projects, such as the Ace Hardware Building soon to become the Twin Towers Building, and some other parapet work in need of renovation.



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Apollo

from page 1

green leather provided a capacity of 950 seats, 400 of which were in the balcony. The general color scheme blended blue, green, ivory, gray, and gold. The ceiling featured a watercolor mural, and the side walls had oil murals that framed a rich, blue-velvet curtain trimmed in gold. The stage and sounding board were framed with ornamental plaster, and featured a hand-painted, large "A" in a bed of roses. The stage was 72 by 30 feet. The gridiron (scenery loft) extended 60 feet above the stage. The foot lighting was a double row of white, red, and blue lights which could fade from one color to the next using a dimmer. To manage the stage, Rhinehart sought out Elmer Barker, who had previously been employed at the Garrick Theater in Chicago.

The orchestra pit could accommodate 15 musicians. A console was built at stage left for a large pipe organ. Rhinehart ordered the Hope-Jones Wurlitzer pipe organ, which could project a cathedral-like, symphonic sound. The organ was made of over one-thousand parts, and powered by an electric motor.

Each end of the stage had 14 different dressing rooms with hot and cold running water for the stars. Beneath the stage were 12 more rooms for other members of the acting company.

Attached to the building on the river side was a building that was available for rent. It had a deck for tables and chairs that reached out over the river, creating a perfect place for a restaurant and cocktail lounge.

Construction continued almost up until opening night. Because the box office was not complete, ticket sales were by mail order until just days before opening night. Rhinehart brought in a musician from the Wurlitzer Company by the name of Mr. Ball to play the organ for the comedy "Take It From Me."

Robert "Nick" Nichols, the manager of the Apollo Theatre in 1952, executed the most masterful promotion of the Apollo Theatre since Frank Rhinehart's 1922 grand opening.

Days before this picture was taken, a circus at the Boone County Fair had opened, featuring "Babe" the elephant. Babe was often seen lumbering through the carnival area. The attendees marveled at the 10-foot giant. Besides looking beautiful, the only work Babe did was to help with some of the heavy work in putting up tents before the fair started.

The story goes (as told by Dave Grimm) Nick made a deal for with Babe's trainer, Jim O'Dell, who we see behind the Nichols family in the photograph. The deal was that if O'Dell walked Babe up Lincoln Avenue from the Fairgrounds, now Spencer Park, to the Apollo, Nick would pay him \$5.

Nick put an advertisement in the local newspaper announcing the event on Friday, the day before. When the journey began, children along West Lincoln Avenue in their excitement--and not wishing to miss a moment--began to fall in behind Babe as it made the curve on West Lincoln, heading toward the Apollo Theatre. Every block pulled more and more children. The Apollo was central to Belvidere's identity in the 1950s and 1960s. Children experienced the Apollo Theatre as an institution that had always been and always would be. The pleasure of going to the movies and meeting friends or finding them there was part of growing up in Belvidere.

Every movie was preceded by a cartoon or two. In the early 1960s, 50 cents would get you in the door, plus popcorn and a soft drink. Candy was extra. Gordon Clark, Nick's assistant manager, would collect the ticket that Charlotte Nichols, Nick's wife, sold you at the ticket window when you handed over your quarters.

Nick, who always seemed to be smoking an unlit cigar, would be on patrol throughout the afternoon with his flashlight to signal a realignment of behavior if he deemed it necessary.

That meant for the older kids in junior high, who sat in the back with their girlfriends, a command by Nick to "come up for air" if he caught them necking. It was cause for everyone's amusement.

The Apollo must have shown every Tarzan movie ever made. In those days, every movie theater got the latest releases from Hollywood. Talking pictures were just being released when Rhinehart built the Apollo.

In 1952, and for many years at Christmas, a food drive by the Salvation Army was held at the Apollo on a Saturday in December. The ticket price to see multiple cartoons and a movie was to donate canned food for the food pantry. It was the social event of the season for Belvidere kids.

The Apollo also had a radio station. It was run from the projection booth, under the call letters WOAG. Broadcasts were made on Friday nights from the stage of the Apollo. The license later passed to Larry Kleber under the call letters WLRB.

The Apollo had been closed for decades before its present owner, Maria Martinez, purchased the building and brought it back to life. It was not until recently, when Martinez remodeled the building, that the restaurant space next to the Kishwaukee River reopened as the Rio.

Today, the future of the Apollo is unknown. In an interview, Maria Martinez stated she was searching for the answer.

Recently the Times Theater in Rockford received a portion of a \$22-million-dollar grant to renovate and preserve its heritage

It is the *Journal's* opinion that we should value our unique heritage. We all must participate in preservation because it is a part of everyone. We need real long range planning and real financial stimulus to preserve what these pioneers achieved. The original buildings in Belvidere everyday tell us a story and the Apollo is at its heart.

Ban

from page 1

state attract investment in new technology.

Cunningham said the moratorium is preventing the state from "sending signals out to the market" for investment in new energy technology, including SMRs and using nuclear power for hydrogen generation.

"I'm here to make Illinois stay relevant, to make Illinois stay at the table," Joyce said. "With the moratorium in place, we're not even part of the conversation."

Rezin noted during floor debate that the federal government has signaled support for nuclear reactors and made funding available for small modular projects. The Department

of Energy has several grant programs for the development and demonstration of SMRs.

"By lifting this ban, it allows Illinois, should they choose, to go after federal dollars that are provided by this administration, the Biden administration, who is embracing, supporting and investing in advanced nuclear reactors," Rezin said.

Sen. Ram Villivalam, D-Chicago, said the bill was "still not fully baked," adding that the question of what is done with nuclear waste still doesn't have a solution.

"Whether it's one pound or a thousand pounds, it's still nuclear waste," he said. "We can't wait for a national strategy, in my opinion."

The state's ban went into effect in 1987 and was intended to remain in effect until the federal government identifies a national nuclear waste disposal strategy. In 1987, Congress identified a site in Nevada as the nation's repository for nuclear waste, although later opposition from the state and the White House quashed that plan. No national disposal site has been designated.

Some of the state's largest environmental groups, including the Illinois Environmental Council, oppose the measure. Jack Darin, the head of the Illinois chapter of the Sierra Club, told Capitol News Illinois earlier this month that his organization doesn't believe nuclear energy is "clean energy," citing concerns over the environmental impact of nuclear waste.

David Kraft, the head of the Nuclear Energy Information Service, an anti-nuclear advocacy group based in Chicago, has said the bill will weaken the state's landmark energy policy, the 2021 Climate and Equitable Jobs Act.

"Small modulars are not climate solutions, they're not job generators until the 2030s and they'll generate more nuclear waste," Kraft said in a Thursday interview.

Kraft added he's worried that lawmakers are not fully considering the safety implications of SMR technology.

The federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission has approved one SMR design, although no power plants using an SMR design are online in the United States. China and Russia both have SMRs of other designs online.

A similar bill was introduced in the House by Rep. Mark Walker, D-Arlington Heights. That measure, House Bill 1079, was approved in committee with a bipartisan majority, 18-3, although it hasn't been heard by the full House.

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Madigan

from page 1

his behalf would land Ochoa on the witness stand in a federal bribery trial. His board appointment is one of four main pillars of the feds' case that three ex-lobbyists and the former CEO of ComEd bribed powerful Illinois House Speaker Michael Madigan.

Ochoa spent approximately 90 minutes on the witness stand Thursday afternoon, marking the end of the trial's fourth week. Prosecutors are expected to rest their case next week, and defense could take up the rest of the month.

Jurors on Thursday heard from Ochoa about the 17-month delay between his resume being submitted through Madigan's office and his ultimate appointment to the board. It was a period marked by a few emails, phone calls and a dinner with two high-ranking ComEd officials – but mostly, Ochoa heard silence between November 2017 and April 2019.

A year prior to his appointment, Ochoa said he received a call from Madigan, who said he'd likely be appointed at the August 2018 board meeting.

"Did you ask yourself why it was that Mr. Madigan was the one communicating with you and giving you information about board seat?" Assistant U.S. Attorney Diane MacArthur asked Ochoa on Thursday.

Ochoa said that he "didn't give it much thought," adding that it's common for elected officials to "take credit" for appointments and job recommendations.

At any rate, Madigan's call to Ochoa that spring turned out to be a false start, as both a corporate restructuring at ComEd and internal pushback against Ochoa delayed his appointment.

While Ochoa was experiencing more silence after Madigan's call, his appointment was the subject of several wiretapped calls through the spring and summer of 2018.

In early May of that year, Madigan called Mike McClain, one of his closest friends and a longtime lobbyist for ComEd – and one of the four defendants in the trial. In the call, McClain told Madigan that Ochoa was not a universally popular choice for the board seat.

"I guess Juan's had some financial problems in the past and stuff like that," McClain explained, adding that there were some within ComEd who would have rather seen former board member Jesse Ruiz re-appointed to his old seat. Ruiz had stepped down from the board to mount an unsuccessful campaign for attorney general in 2018, creating the vacancy in the first place.

In light of that pushback, McClain told Madigan that ComEd CEO Anne Pramaggiore – one of the other four defendants – had a question for Madigan.

"Is it important to you for Juan to be on the board?" McClain asked. "If it is, she'll keep pushing. If it's not... She'll try to find something that would compensate him equally."

Madigan asked McClain how much a board member is paid annually: \$78,000.

"Maybe I'll take the appointment," Madigan joked, before giving his directive. "Mike, I would suggest we continue to support Juan Ochoa, but keep me advised as to how much pushback there is."

Two weeks later, Ochoa's appointment was the subject of another call between the two men.

"Mike, my recommendation is go forward with Ochoa," Madigan told McClain. "So if the only complaint about Ochoa is that he suffers from bankruptcy twice, so did Harry Truman."

That same day, McClain called Pramaggiore with a message from the speaker: "He would appreciate if you would keep pressing," McClain said.

"Okay," Pramaggiore replied. "I will keep pressing."

Ochoa was not a natural beneficiary of Madigan's help; the two had a falling out years earlier over Ochoa's firing of a former Madigan staffer when he was the CEO of Chicago's Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority. Earlier this week, the defense successfully requested that the court bar prosecutors

from asking Ochoa about that fight while he was on the witness stand.

But Ochoa was close with former U.S. Rep. Luis Gutierrez and his successor, U.S. Rep. Chuy Garcia. The two had endorsed Madigan in 2016 when the speaker was facing a rare primary challenge from a candidate named Jason Gonzales. In an increasingly Latino area of Chicago's southwest side, Madigan and his allies sought help from Latino leaders like Gutierrez and Garcia in order to survive the challenge.

From there, Madigan retained his political alliance with Gutierrez and especially Garcia as he ascended to Congress, solidifying his position as the most powerful Latino elected official in Illinois.

Prosecutors framed Ochoa's appointment to the ComEd board as Madigan's reward to Gutierrez and Garcia, with whom Ochoa had co-founded the Latino Leadership Council in 2018.

Pramaggiore's attorney, Daniel Craig, sought to downplay Madigan's role in Ochoa's appointment. He emphasized that Ochoa was the one who asked Gutierrez and Garcia to set up meetings with not only the speaker, but also then-Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, asking for their recommendations.

"Do you feel like you did the best you could to represent the Latino community on the ComEd board?" Craig asked Ochoa on Thursday.

"Given the circumstances, yes," Ochoa replied.

Crackdown

from page 1

The bill, which was pushed by the attorney general's office, bars CPCs from engaging in "unfair methods of competition" or "deceptive acts or practices."

The proposal passed on a partisan 36-19 vote after heated debate.

Crisis pregnancy centers are a type of facility that offer services to expectant parents which may include counseling, aid such as free diapers or limited medical services such as ultrasounds. They are often non-profits associated with national or local groups that oppose abortion.

CPCs are the subject of ongoing national debate because they sometimes divert women seeking abortions from receiving them.

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists has recommended that state funds in general should not be used to support these organizations. It also recommended states should strengthen consumer protection laws against false or misleading advertising to hold the industry's more nefarious actors accountable.

"Patients report being misled into going to crisis pregnancy centers – sometimes even receiving exams and ultrasounds – thinking they were visiting another clinic that offers the full range of reproductive care. This is an extreme violation of trust and patient privacy that should not occur in our state," Attorney General Kwame Raoul said in a news release earlier this week.

The Crisis Pregnancy Center Map, a project of professors Andrea Swartzendruber and Danielle Lambert of the University of Georgia's Department of Public Health, identifies 97 CPCs in Illinois. The Guttmacher Institute, an abortion-rights focused research group, found that in 2017 there were 40 abortion providers in Illinois.

The bill's sponsor, Sen. Celina Villanueva, D-Chicago, said it clarifies existing powers of the office of the attorney general, which already has authority to prosecute consumer fraud. Opponents criticized the bill on that front, saying it gave the attorney general too much authority.

"We're going to have the same entity making the rules, deciding what the fines are, and then collecting those into their own coffers," said Sen. Terri Bryant, R-Murphysboro. "I don't know any other circumstances that we do that in."

Sen. Jil Tracy, R-Quincy, suggested the measure could be used to prevent volunteers at CPCs from

sharing their religious beliefs on abortion.

"And this overreach just goes to the point that if you don't believe the way the majority party believes in this state you're wrong and we're going to go after you," she said.

Villanueva said the bill is not intended to punish providers of obstetrical or gynecological care "simply because they do not perform abortions."

"Health care providers will not be subject to enforcement under this bill, as long as they do not employ fraud, deception and misleading practices to interfere with or prevent another from accessing comprehensive reproductive health care," she said.

The bill has drawn criticism from outside the legislature as well.

At an anti-abortion rally in front of the Capitol last week, Bishop Thomas John Paprocki of the Springfield Diocese encouraged protestors to continue to fight against abortion measures in the state.

"Every year, over 10,000 out-of-state residents now come to Illinois for abortion, often at taxpayer expense. And that number has been increasing dramatically since June of 2022, when Dobbs was decided," said Paprocki said. "In states such as ours, we cannot relax our pro-life efforts now that Roe v. Wade has been overturned."

Others have already promised to fight the bill in court.

"This bill is flagrantly unconstitutional, and if it becomes law, we will immediately file suit to protect pro-life organizations' right to free speech," Peter Breen, the head of litigation for the Thomas More Society, said in a statement Friday morning.

Illinois has passed several laws protecting abortions in recent years, including making it a right under state statute. They've all faced similar Republican opposition as the measures that passed with only Democratic support this week.

Another of those measures was Senate Bill 1344, which would ensure that insurance providers cover medication abortion, hormonal therapy and HIV medication. It passed the chamber Friday on partisan lines.

The bill would also exempt reports from the Abortion Care Clinical Training program from being subject to the Freedom of Information Act. The program, established last year, gives grants to fund abortion training programs at community-based provider sites.

Villanueva sponsored that bill as well, noting the exemption clarifies existing law and keeps program participants safe.

"We already know that reproductive rights providers have been under attack, have been harassed have been abused, and in some cases murdered," Villanueva said. "So when we strive to clarify laws in the state of Illinois in order to make sure that people are not put under duress in a situation or harassed... We're trying to protect people which was the original intent of the original bill."

Senate Minority Leader John Curran, R-Downers Grove, said the governor's office already has administrative rulemaking authority to "exempt any sort of information that could pose... a threat of any sort to someone."

"The reality is, we already have the authority on that point," Curran said. "It's up to the governor to act. The governor, for three months, has not acted on this point."

The Senate also passed Senate Bill 1907, which would require state colleges and universities to provide "wellness kiosks." These would be vending machines to provide wellness products with the explicit requirement that emergency contraception be among the items offered. This is also sometimes known as the morning after pill or Plan B.

The bill, also sponsored by Villanueva, passed 38-19 on Thursday. Republicans criticized it, with Tracy calling it "frivolous."

All three measures head to the House for further consideration.

LEGAL NOTICES

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 17TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
BOONE COUNTY, ILLINOIS
MORTGAGE ASSETS MANAGEMENT, LLC, PLAINTIFF,
v.
CASE NO.: 2023FC16
LARRY SUHR; UNKNOWN HEIRS AND LEGATEES OF SHIRLEY
M. SUHR, DECEASED; UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ACTING BY
AND THROUGH ITS AGENCY THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING
AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT; UNKNOWN OWNERS AND NON-
RECORD CLAIMANTS; DEFENDANTS.
PROPERTY ADDRESS:
318 WEST JACKSON STREET
BELVIDERE, IL 61008

NOTICE BY PUBLICATION

The requisite affidavit for publication having been filed, notice is hereby given to you:
UNKNOWN HEIRS AND LEGATEES OF SHIRLEY M. SUHR,
DECEASED

UNKNOWN OWNERS AND NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS
that Plaintiff commenced this case in the Circuit Court of Boone County against you and other defendants, for foreclosure of a certain mortgage lien recorded against the real estate described as follows:

THE NORTHERLY ONE-HALF (1/2) OF THE FOLLOWING DESCRIBED PLACE OR PARCEL OF LAND:

COMMENCING AT A POINT ON THE NORTHERLY LINE OF MENOMINIE STREET TWELVE (12) RODS WESTERLY FROM THE SOUTHEASTERLY CORNER OF BLOCK SEVENTY-TWO (72) IN THE ORIGINAL TOWN OF BELVIDERE, RUNNING FROM THENCE NORTHERLY PARALLEL WITH BAKER, FORMERLY PEARL STREET, SIXTEEN (16) RODS, TO THE NORTHWESTERLY CORNER OF SAID BLOCK SEVENTY-TWO (72); THENCE NORTHEASTERLY ALONG THE SOUTHERLY LINE OF JACKSON STREET FOUR (4) RODS; THENCE SOUTHERLY PARALLEL WITH SAID BAKER STREET SIXTEEN (16) RODS TO THE NORTHERLY LINE OF MENOMINIE STREET; THENCE SOUTHWESTERLY ALONG THE NORTHERLY LINE OF MENOMINIE STREET FOUR (4) RODS TO THE PLACE OF BEGINNING; EXCEPTING THEREFROM THE NORTHERLY FOUR (4) RODS OF THE EASTERLY TWO FEET; HERETOFORE CONVEYED TO HENRY BLIETZ AND MARY BLIETZ, AS APPEARS OF RECORD IN THE RECORDER'S OFFICE OF BOONE COUNTY, ILLINOIS, IN BOOK 67, OF DEEDS AT PAGE 463, SITUATED IN THE CITY OF BELVIDERE, COUNTY OF BOONE IN THE STATE OF ILLINOIS.

Common Address: 318 WEST JACKSON STREET BELVIDERE, IL 61008

PIN: 05-26-254-002

Said mortgage was executed by EDWARD E. SUHR AND SHIRLEY M. SUHR, as mortgagor(s) and VERTICAL LEND INC., as mortgagee, on 8/29/2007 and recorded in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds of Boone County, Illinois as Document Number 2007R09951.

E-filing is now mandatory for documents in civil cases with limited exemptions. To e-file, you must first create an account with an e-filing service provider. Visit <http://efile.illinoiscourts.gov/service-providers.htm> to learn more and to select a service provider. If you need additional help or have trouble e-filing, visit <http://www.illinoiscourts.gov/faq/gethelp.asp> or talk with your local circuit clerk's office.

Unless you file your Appearance and Answer/Response in this case in the office of the clerk of this court by 05/08/2023 A JUDGMENT OF FORECLOSURE OR DECREE BY DEFAULT MAY BE ENTERED AGAINST YOU FOR THE RELIEF ASKED FOR IN THE PLAINTIFF'S COMPLAINT.

Thomas LaSalle 6340111
Robertson Anschutz Schneid Crane & Partners, PLLC
205 N. Michigan Suite 810
Chicago, IL 60601
Phone: (561) 241-6901 E-mail: ILmail@raslg.com
File: 22-087255
THIS COMMUNICATION IS FROM A DEBT COLLECTOR.
6088-931395

Published in The Boone County Journal April 6, 13, 20

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 17TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
BOONE COUNTY, ILLINOIS
Probate Division
Estate of Russell Graff, Deceased. Case No. 2023 PR 13
CLAIM NOTICE

Notice is given of the death of Russell Graff of Capron, Illinois. Letters of office were issued on March 23, 2023, to Representative Hollis Piquette Graff of 165 Cloud Mist Dr, Capron, Illinois whose attorney is Keith D. Sloan, 101 N. Virginia St, #108, Crystal Lake, IL 60014.

Claims against the estate may be filed in the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court or with representative, or both, on or before October 7, 2023 which date is not less than 6 months from the date of the first publication of this notice and any claim not filed within that period is barred. Copies of any claim filed with the Clerk must be mailed or delivered to the representative and to the attorney within 10 days after it is filed.

E-filing is now mandatory for documents in civil cases with limited exemptions. To e-file, you must first create an account with an e-filing service provider. Visit <https://efile.illinoiscourts.gov/service-providers.htm> to learn more and to select a service provider. If you need additional help or have trouble e-filing, visit <http://www.illinoiscourts.gov/FAQ/gethelp.asp>.

Prepared by:
Name: Keith D. Sloan
Address: 101 N. Virginia St, #108
City: Crystal Lake
Phone: 815-893-4360
State: IL
Zip Code: 60014
ARDC #: 6287423
E-mail address: info@kdslawfirms.com
Published in The Boone County Journal April 6, 13, 20

NOTE: PURSUANT TO THE FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT, YOU ARE ADVISED THAT THE LAW FIRM OF ALLEN GALLUZZO HEVRIN LEAK, LLC IS DEEMED TO BE A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE.

State of Illinois
In the Circuit Court of the 17th Judicial Circuit
County of BOONE
BYRON BANK, an Illinois State Bank, Plaintiff,
v.
Case No. 2023FC28
RYAN R. WESTERBERG, SHELLY L. WESTERBERG, UNKNOWN OWNERS, UNKNOWN TENANTS, UNKNOWN SPOUSES, UNKNOWN HEIRS, and NONRECORD CLAIMANTS. Defendants.

NOTICE TO UNKNOWN OWNERS; UNKNOWN TENANTS; UNKNOWN SPOUSES; UNKNOWN HEIRS AND NONRECORD CLAIMANTS FOR PUBLICATION

The requisite Affidavit having been duly filed in my office, NOTICE is hereby given you, UNKNOWN OWNERS; UNKNOWN TENANTS; UNKNOWN SPOUSES; UNKNOWN HEIRS AND NONRECORD CLAIMANTS, Defendants in the above-entitled suit, that the said suit has been commenced in the Circuit Court of Boone County, by the said Plaintiff, against you and other Defendants, praying for the foreclosure of a certain mortgage concerning the premises described as follows, to-wit:

Lot Eight (8) in Prairie Fields Estates, being a Subdivision of part of the Northeast Quarter (1/4) of Section 17, Township 44 North, Range 3 East of the Third Principal Meridian, according to the Plat thereof recorded January 6, 2004, in Plat Index Envelope 287-B, as Document No. 2004R00166, in the Recorder's Office of Boone County, Illinois; situated in the County of Boone and State of Illinois.

COMMON ADDRESS: 1654 Danielle Lane, Belvidere, Illinois 61108
PINs: 05-17-251-004
And for other relief; that Summons was duly issued out of the said Court against you as provided by law, and that the suit is now pending.
NOW, THEREFORE, unless you, the said above-named Defendants, file your Answer to the Complaint of said suit or otherwise make your appearance therein, in the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Boone County, Boone County Courthouse in the City of Belvidere, Illinois, on or before the 18th day of May 2023, default may be entered in accordance with the prayer of said Complaint.
PAMELA CODUTO, Clerk of the Circuit Court, 17th Judicial Circuit, Boone County, Illinois

PREPARED BY:
Cassandra M. Crandall (ARDC 6335736)
Allen Galluzzo Hevrin Leake, LLC
839 N. Perryville Road, Suite 200
Rockford, IL 61107
815-265-6464
ccrandall@aghlaw.com
Published in The Boone County Journal April 6, 13, 20

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE 17TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
BOONE COUNTY - BELVIDERE, ILLINOIS
Discover Bank, PLAINTIFF
Vs. No. 2023FC8
Kevin White; Unknown Owners and Nonrecord Claimants, DEFENDANTS

NOTICE BY PUBLICATION

NOTICE IS GIVEN TO YOU:

Kevin White
Unknown Owners and Nonrecord Claimants
That this case has been commenced in this Court against you and other defendants, praying for the foreclosure of a certain Mortgage conveying the premises described as follows, to-wit:
COMMONLY KNOWN AS:
919 Fremont St
Belvidere, IL 61008
and which said Mortgage was made by:
Kevin White
the Mortgagor(s), to Discover Bank, as Mortgagee, and recorded in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds of Boone County, Illinois, as Document No. 2018R00745; and for other relief; that summons was duly issued out of said Court against you as provided by law and that the said suit is now pending.

NOW, THEREFORE, UNLESS YOU file your answer or otherwise file your appearance in this case in the Office of the Clerk of this Court,

Pamela Coduto
Clerk of the Circuit Court
601 North Main Street
Belvidere, IL 61008
on or before May 8, 2023, A DEFAULT MAY BE ENTERED AGAINST YOU AT ANY TIME AFTER THAT DAY AND A JUDGMENT MAY BE ENTERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PRAYER OF SAID COMPLAINT.
CODILIS & ASSOCIATES, P.C.
Attorneys for Plaintiff
15W030 North Frontage Road, Suite 100
Burr Ridge, IL 60527
(630) 794-5300
DuPage # 15170
Winnebago # 531
Our File No. 14-23-00749
NOTE: This law firm is a debt collector.
13217285
Published in The Boone County Journal Apr 6, 13, 20, 2023

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

In The Interest of: AIDEN JONES, minor Patrick O'Brien, Unknown Fathers and All Whom It May Concern
No. 23-JA-07

ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Take notice that on MARCH 23, 2023, a petition was filed under the JUVENILE COURT ACT by Atty. Tricia Smith, State's Attorney, 601 North Main Street, Belvidere, Illinois 61008, in the Circuit Court of Boone County entitled "In the Interest of Aiden Jones, minor; and that in the County Courthouse in Belvidere, Illinois, at 2:00 P.M. central daylight time on 6/15/23; or as soon thereafter as this cause may be heard, a hearing will be held upon the petition to have the child declared to be a ward of the Court under that Act. THE COURT HAS AUTHORITY IN THIS PROCEEDING TO TAKE FROM YOU THE CUSTODY AND GUARDIANSHIP OF THE MINOR, TO TERMINATE YOUR PARENTAL RIGHTS, AND TO APPOINT A GUARDIAN WITH POWER TO CONSENT TO ADOPTION. YOU MAY LOSE ALL PARENTAL RIGHTS TO YOUR CHILD. IF THE PETITION REQUESTS THE TERMINATION OF YOUR PARENTAL RIGHTS AND THE APPOINTMENT OF A GUARDIAN WITH THE POWER TO CONSENT TO ADOPTION YOU MAY LOSE ALL PARENTAL RIGHTS TO THE CHILD. Unless you appear you will not be entitled to further written notices or publication notices of the proceedings in this case, including the filing of an amended petition or a motion to terminate parental rights.

Now, unless you appear at the hearing and show cause against the petition, the allegations of the petition may stand admitted as against you and each of you, and an order or judgment entered.

Dated: March 27, 2023
Pamela Coduto, CIRCUIT CLERK
Published in The Boone County Journal: 4/6, 4/13, 4/20 - C

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on March 21, 2023, the Board of Education of North Boone CUSD 200 approved the sale of North Boone 200 property via a silent auction. Property to be auctioned off includes a 48" Zero Turn Lawn Mower and a 72" Zero Turn Lawn Mower. The silent auction viewing and bidding will be conducted on Wednesday, April 19, 2023 from 12:00 PM to 2:30 PM with equipment being awarded to the highest bidder. The location of the silent auction is at North Boone CUSD 200, 6248 North Boone School Rd., Poplar Grove, IL 61065.

Michael Greenlee, Superintendent
North Boone CUSD 200
Published in The Boone County Journal Apr 6, 13

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING BOONE COUNTY ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Notice is hereby given that the Boone County Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, May 2, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. in the County Board Room, 1212 Logan Ave, Belvidere, IL 61008 upon the following petitions:

Amending Chapter 4 Design Criteria for Specific Uses of the Boone County Zoning Ordinance, revising 4.8 Wind Energy Conversion Systems Siting and creating section 4.22 Solar Energy Systems Siting.

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

Tony Savino, Chair, Boone County Zoning Board of Appeals
Published in The Boone County Journal on April 13, 2023.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Manchester Rural Fire Protection District #5 will meet at 8:00 P.M. April 20, 2023 to consider the proposed budget. The meeting will be held at the Manchester Township Hall at 20904 Grade School Road, Caledonia Illinois.

Published in the Boone County Journal: 04/13/2023

ASSUMED NAMES

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

No. DBA4140 - The undersigned person(s) do hereby certify that a HEALTH CLUB business is or is to be conducted or transacted under the name of CHELITO'S HEALTHY CLUB that its location is or will be at 2024 N STATE ST. UNIT #800 in Belvidere in the County of Boone County, State of Illinois, and that the true or real name(s) of the person(s) owning, conducting, or transacting the same with the post office address or address of said person(s) is shown below.

Phone Number: 815-520-9409
Consuelo Pasillas, 8872 Olson Road, Belvidere, IL 61008
I, Julie A. Bliss, County Clerk And Recorder of Boone County, in the State aforesaid, do the hereby certify that the within is a true and correct copy of an Assumed Name Certificate on file in my office. Dated: Friday, March 28, 2023, Julie A Bliss, County Clerk and Recorder
Published in Boone County Journal 4/6, 4/13, 4/20 - P

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

No. DBA4139 - The undersigned person(s) do hereby certify that a CLEANING business is or is to be conducted or transacted under the name of FLORES CLEANING SERVICES LLC that its location is or will be at 204 Warren Avenue in BELVIDERE in the County of Boone County, State of Illinois, and that the true or real name(s) of the person(s) owning, conducting, or transacting the same with the post office address or address of said person(s) is shown below.

Phone Number: 815-520-4515
Liliana Flores, 204 Warren Avenue, Belvidere, IL 61008
I, Julie A. Bliss, County Clerk And Recorder of Boone County, in the State aforesaid, do the hereby certify that the within is a true and correct copy of an Assumed Name Certificate on file in my office. Dated: Friday, March 24, 2023, Julie A Bliss, County Clerk and Recorder
Published in Boone County Journal 3/30, 4/6, 4/13 - P

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

No. DBA4142 - The undersigned person(s) do hereby certify that a POWER WASH business is or is to be conducted or transacted under the name of G5 PRESSURE WASH SERVICES that its location is or will be 207 CHANTICLEER LANE in POPLAR GROVE in the County of Boone County, State of Illinois, and that the true or real name(s) of the person(s) owning, conducting, or transacting the same with the post office address or address of said person(s) is shown below.

Phone Number: 815-218-5702
JOSHUA JOHN GALLAGHER, 207 CHANTICLEER LANE, POPLAR GROVE, IL 61065
I, Julie A. Bliss, County Clerk And Recorder of Boone County, in the State aforesaid, do the hereby certify that the within is a true and correct copy of an Assumed Name Certificate on file in my office. Dated: Monday, April 10, 2023, Julie A Bliss, County Clerk and Recorder
Published in Boone County Journal 4/13, 20, 27

Pritzker: 'Devil's in the Details' When Considering Lifting Ban on New Nuclear

Statewide building code, requirement that retailers accept cash also advancing through legislature

**By Jerry Nowicki & Nika Schoonover
Capitol News Illinois**

Lawmakers went on a two-week spring break last week with more than 700 bills already passed in at least one chamber of the General Assembly.

They will return to Springfield on April 18 for a final one-month stretch in which the measures can be amended, defeated or sent to the governor.

Among the bills to successfully move to the other chamber are a measure to lift the state's 1987 moratorium on nuclear power plant construction, a bill that would create statewide building codes and another requiring retail establishments to accept cash payments within certain hours.

Continued on Page 7

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Pritzker

from page 5

Gov. JB Pritzker noted last week that he's generally supportive of the concept of lifting the nuclear construction ban, although he didn't commit to signing the proposal contained in Senate Bill 76, which passed on a 39-13 bipartisan roll call.

Pritzker said he is supportive of allowing for the construction of small modular nuclear reactors, which are small-scale generators that could be used to power individual factories or for other uses.

He said he didn't think doing so would be contradictory to the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act that he signed in 2021. Some environmentalists have opposed lifting the nuclear ban due to the dangers associated with nuclear waste.

"These are smaller, less prone to an accident, more likely for us to be able to maintain them for a long period of time, that's something that's worthy of consideration," Pritzker said. "Now the devil's in the details and we want to make sure that we're not just opening this up to nuclear everywhere or any type of nuclear."

SB 76, as written, would allow any type of nuclear construction, including the large-scale projects.

"I don't know where that bill will go this session, but I'm not opposed to it as if I'm, you know, just dead set against any nuclear," he said. "I just want, if we're going to consider it, it's got to be safe."

Statewide building codes

Beginning in 2025, Illinois could have statewide building codes for new or substantially renovated commercial and residential construction under a bill that passed the Senate before break.

Sponsored by Dave Koehler, D-Peoria, Senate Bill 2368 allows the state's Capital Development Board to prohibit occupation of such a facility until it is inspected. The building would have to be compliant with several state or federal building codes for electricity, energy efficiency, accessibility, and plumbing, as well as the Fire Investigation Act.

"Basically, what this does is establishes a statewide building code as a minimum standard," Koehler said during floor debate. "Now most communities are going to have well above the minimum standard. But the reason that this is important is because Illinois is one of only six states in the union that does not have a statewide building code."

Koehler said when Illinois has a natural disaster and applies for funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the state has to check a box noting it doesn't currently have such a code.

"And so it costs us money," he said.

The bill would require municipalities with existing building codes to adopt at least the newly created statewide minimum standard and submit their plans to the state. A homeowner renovating a residential property in a jurisdiction without a building code would have to adopt the code of any jurisdiction within 100 miles of the construction in the contract with their builder.

Otherwise, it would have to comply with the new statewide standards, which apply to new construction and any renovations that increase the property's value by 50 percent or more.

Republicans questioned whether a statewide code would be enforceable in smaller towns.

"It's up to a municipality as to how they want to enforce it," Koehler said. "The Capital Development Board is responsible for having organizations say that they're, you know, what codes they have and all that. In terms of who enforces that? I don't know."

Sen. Chapin Rose, R-Mahomet, used a small town in his district as an example to speak against the bill.

"In Metcalf, Illinois, they don't have anybody to mow the lawn, okay, let alone inspect a house," Rose said. "But more importantly, you're telling an awful lot of people who couldn't afford to repair and maintain their home in the first place that we just doubled or tripled the bill. And there may or may not be some guy from the (Capital Development Board) knocking on their door."

The measure passed 34-18 with one present vote and it awaits action in the House.

Cash requirements

Lawmakers advanced a bill that would mandate retail establishments to accept cash for purchases under \$750. Senate Bill 1979 passed 40-16 in the Senate with mainly Democratic support.

Sen. Omar Aquino, D-Chicago, is the bill's lead sponsor. He said SB 1979 is aimed at protecting "underbanked and unbanked" people who only carry cash.

"This bill is making sure that those folks...have an ability to still purchase needed things," Aquino said. "Getting fuel, getting their medicine at the pharmacy, getting food on the table that they're able to purchase from groceries and restaurants."

The bill also says retail establishments can't charge a higher price to customers paying with cash. SB 1979 also exempts restaurants, gas stations and grocery stores from the requirement between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m. in an effort to protect against robbery.

"It goes directly into trying to keep people safe," Aquino said of the time exemption. "Businesses are accepting cash, we're just trying to get ahead of the trend that looks like more locations are going for a non-cash payment."

Debate on the measure centered around the question of accessibility versus safety, with Republican opponents arguing that mandating businesses to accept cash was putting them at risk.

"What I'm concerned about is the small businessman who operates in an area that he's worried about theft, or he's worried about robbery, and he chooses how he runs his business to operate in a certain area," said Sen. Jil Tracy, R-Quincy.

Sen. Steve McClure, R-Springfield, added that not all robberies occur at night.

"These businesses, some have been ransacked, and the times in which they were ransacked in the last several years was not between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m.," McClure said. "They were in broad daylight, and we are seeing that more and more."

The bill also notes that retailers are not required to accept any denomination of currency larger than a \$20 bill.

A violation could result in a \$50 fine for the retail establishment, \$100 for a second offense in a 12-month period or \$500 for a third offense during that period. No establishment could be fined more than \$5,000 in one year.

Push For Offshore Wind on Lake Michigan

Lawmakers consider legislation to clear the way for development on Lake Michigan

By Andrew Adams Capitol News Illinois

A coalition of Democratic politicians, labor unions and environmental groups is advocating for a plan that would put an offshore wind farm off the coast of Lake Michigan on Chicago's South Side.

Lawmakers are currently considering legislation to create a regulatory framework for offshore wind while directing the state to seek federal funding and a developer for the Lake Michigan project, which would need to be online by the end of 2030.

Advocates say the proposal, known as "Rust Belt to Green Belt," is uniquely suited to bring jobs and economic development to Chicago's South Side while positioning the state as a leader in renewable energy deployment. Opponents criticize its potential \$680 million price tag for ratepayers and its potential impact on bird populations.

House Bill 2132, sponsored by Chicago Democrats Rep. Marcus Evans Jr. and Sen. Robert Peters, passed the Illinois House on March 24 by an 85-21 vote and now awaits consideration in the Senate.

It marks the latest step in Illinois' ongoing shift toward renewable energy. In 2021, Illinois passed the landmark Climate and Equitable Jobs Act, or CEJA, which aims to phase out most carbon-emitting energy generation by 2045. With about one-third of the state's energy generation currently coming from coal and natural gas plants, policymakers have been rushing to incentivize clean energy.

"CEJA came with two promises: fighting climate change and ensuring equity," Peters said. "This is a project that does both."

Environmental justice and jobs

Backers of the Rust Belt to Green Belt proposal say it will be an economic boon for Chicago's South Side, which has been historically neglected when it comes to economic development.

"It's time for us to have a renewable energy project that's rooted in equity," Peters said.

The project's organizers say on their website it will bring 2,700 jobs in predominantly Black and brown communities. They also say it will bring \$497 million of economic activity, the majority of which will come during the construction phase.

The bill would require the state to choose the future developer of the project based on the cost of the project, its viability, and an "equity & inclusion plan," which will show how the project will create opportunities for underrepresented populations and equity investments in communities.

The project's developer must also have at least one "community benefits agreement," a contract that outlines how the development will help the community in which it is located.

Advocates say the project is a prime example of environmental justice, a framework that stresses the fair treatment of poor and marginalized communities, which disproportionately bear the weight of environmental hazards like industrial pollution and the effects of climate change.

The Sierra Club of Illinois, one of the state's leading environmental organizations, has advocated for offshore wind on Lake Michigan for over a decade. Jack Darin, the organization's director, applauded the environmental justice aspects of CEJA and of the Rust Belt to Green Belt initiative.

Continued on Page 8



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“This does raise the bar even further by making the equity component and the community benefits agreement some of the core aspects of the project,” Darin said in an interview.

Chynna Hampton is the equity director for the Climate Jobs Illinois campaign, a coalition of labor groups with a “pro-worker, pro-climate agenda.”

“There’s a green economy now and it’s critical for labor to be part of it,” Hampton said.

Hampton said that the jobs and labor organizing that would come with offshore development compliments other state efforts to bring climate jobs to the state, such as the Climate Works Preapprenticeship Program outlined in CEJA.

She added that labor advocates have been in talks with businesses and a potential developer for the project: Diamond Offshore Wind, a Boston-based company that has also been featured at events with Peters, Evans and community groups.

In addition to union support, the project has earned praise from at least one major business group in the region.

“This pilot program will not only result in hundreds of millions of dollars in economic growth, but it will also provide new, high-growth jobs with a focus on equity across every neighborhood in Chicagoland,” Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce head Jack Lavin said in a statement.

Illinois as a leader in the region

Proponents of the measure say that being an early leader in offshore wind is critical for Illinois. In a statement last week, Peters described the current situation on the Great Lakes as “a race between adjacent states to get the federal infrastructure investments and the jobs the offshore wind industry will bring.”

“Inevitably, this is going to happen,” Peters said in an interview. “Is Illinois going to be a leading force in doing it right?”

This project would have a minimum of 150 megawatts of “nameplate capacity,” the amount of energy the plant would generate under ideal conditions. This is smaller than most planned offshore wind developments, although the project’s advocates say it is meant as a pilot.

The U.S. currently only has two operational offshore wind farms, although more than a dozen are planned to be built off the east coast in the next 10 years and several leases have been signed for projects off the coast of California.

These projects are managed by the federal Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, which also regulates offshore oil and gas drilling. The federal government hasn’t implemented such a framework for development in the Great Lakes, meaning regulation of any offshore development would be handled at the state level.

Over the past 12 years, Illinois has taken steps to establish a regulatory framework for offshore wind, including establishing broad regulatory guidance for offshore developments. The legislation under consideration in the Senate goes further by establishing a process to select developers creating a state fund to manage state support of offshore development.

One other project is planned in the Great Lakes, the Icebreaker Wind project off the coast of Ohio in Lake Erie. That project is planned to have a capacity of 20.7 megawatts and is scheduled for completion in 2026.

Although the Icebreaker project is moving forward, it was not without controversy. The Ohio Supreme Court had to rule on the development after several opponents to the project filed suit, claiming the state didn’t have enough data on the project’s impact on bird and bat populations.

Concerns over funding, lake privatization

Opponents of the proposal have been sharply critical of the funding method laid out in the bill, which includes potential rate increases for energy customers in northern Illinois.

The Illinois Power Agency, or IPA, buys energy from renewable sources using “renewable energy credits,” a financial asset that is paid for with rate increases on Illinois customers. CEJA limits these

rate increases to 4.25 percent of what customers paid for energy in 2009.

The Rust Belt to Green Belt legislation would authorize the IPA to procure additional renewable energy credits to buy power from the potential offshore wind farm and bump the rate cap increase limit to 4.5 percent for eligible customers.

“It’s a relatively marginal rate increase,” Peters said.

Mark Denzler, the head of the Illinois Manufacturers Association, said he expects manufacturers to pay “the lion’s share” of the increase in energy costs.

Denzler added that manufacturers take an “all of the above” approach to energy generation and support offshore wind development. Their issue is with how lawmakers are proposing to fund the project.

The Environmental Law & Policy Center, a non-profit environmental advocacy group, calculated the project, as described in the bill, would cost at least \$34 million per year and \$680 million over its lifetime.

“Ratepayers will have to pay for a project that’s more expensive than other developments,” David McEllis, the organization’s Illinois legislative director, said.

McEllis outlined the organization’s opposition to the bill in committee testimony in March. Among those concerns: the project could lead to violations of the “public trust doctrine,” the long held legal principle that Lake Michigan is held in trust by the state for public use.

“This project is an expensive and unnecessary grant of public land in Lake Michigan to a private developer,” McEllis said.

The state has a complex history with the public trust doctrine as it relates to developments on Lake Michigan, with federal court cases as far back as 1892 and as recently as 1990 blocking state attempts to cede portions of the lakebed to private developers.

The state’s “Lake Michigan Offshore Wind Advisory Council” called this doctrine an “issue of primary concern” to any development on the lake in a 2012 report. This finding, among others from the advisory council, prompted the state to pass the Lake Michigan Wind Energy Act in 2013, clarifying its authority to facilitate offshore wind development on Lake Michigan “so long as all affected public trust lands and waters of Lake Michigan remain under public ownership and control.”

Ohio’s regulations around the public trust were part of the legal opposition to the Icebreaker Wind development. The Ohio court system ultimately sided with the developers. The specifics of Ohio’s law and precedent are different from Illinois, so how the Illinois courts would respond to a challenge on this basis is an open question.

What about birds?

Some bird conservationists have raised concern that wind development in Lake Michigan would interrupt bird migration. The lake is home to the largest migration corridor for nocturnal birds in North America.

The National Renewable Energy Laboratory, part of the federal Department of Energy, released a report in March which identified more than 30 key challenges facing offshore wind development in the Great Lakes. The uncertain impact of these developments on bird and bat populations was among the highest-priority challenges, meaning that it impacts all of the Great Lakes, has potential for high-costs associated with it and represents a major barrier to development.

“The impacts of wind turbines on some species of birds and bats may contribute, along with other stressors, to population-level declines,” according to the report.

Fully researching the issue across the Great Lakes region could cost up to \$8 million and take several years, according to the NREL report.

This echoes concerns cited by conservationists who oppose the legislation.

Bob Fisher is a spokesman for the Bird Conservation Network, a coalition of conservation organizations that studies bird behavior in the Chicagoland region. He was also a member of the state’s Lake Michigan Offshore Wind Energy Advisory committee before it disbanded. Fisher described the impact offshore wind would have on Lake Michigan’s bird population as a

“very, very complicated question.”

In an email statement, Fisher said that the General Assembly should “pause” the Rust Belt to Green Belt project and “pass legislation providing funding for a comprehensive environmental analysis, collecting the best available science on bird use (nocturnal neotropical migrants and wintering waterfowl especially) of Illinois waters of Lake Michigan.”

While the Bird Conservation Network, the Illinois Audubon Society and the American Bird Conservancy all opposed the bill as it went through committee, not all bird advocates were against it.

Audubon Great Lakes, or AGL, has been a key supporter of Rust Belt to Green Belt as well as a player in Ohio’s Icebreaker project, helping to choose the development’s location. They also successfully advocated for collision detection systems for the project and for mandatory data collection on bird migration over Lake Erie.

AGL supports the legislation and the project as a whole.

“The cost to birds if we do not invest in renewable energy is unthinkable, as climate change stands to take a far greater toll than any threat posed by well-sited and operated clean energy infrastructure itself,” AGL’s Policy Director Adam Forrer wrote in a letter of support for the project.

Sierra Club leadership shared the sentiment, saying that the potential sites for the turbines would be clear of the most concentrated migration paths along the coastline.

“We need clean energy and we need it as quickly as possible,” Darin said.

The legislature’s role

Evans, describing HB 2132 on the House floor, said the legislation was “step one.”

“We’re a long way away, but we’ve got to get the ball rolling,” Evans said.

The bill passed the House on March 24 by a vote of 85-21. A previous version of the bill was also heard in a subject matter hearing in the Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee in March.

Opposition in the legislature has come mostly from Republicans, although two Democrats voted against the bill: Reps. Rita Mayfield, D-Waukegan, and Curtis Tarver, D-Chicago.

Both of their districts border Lake Michigan, with Tarver representing most of the coastline on Chicago’s South Side, including a proposed site of the development.

“This is not something my district wants,” Tarver said during debate on the House floor. “... There are many, many issues and many, many community groups who do not want this.”

Evans responded that the legislation does not identify a location and that the site of the project would come later in the process.

Peters, whose district includes all of Tarver’s, said that there was some confusion over location, although he identified Chicago’s port district as the “preferred spot” for development.

Although he declined to comment directly on Tarver’s opposition, Peters defended the plan’s benefits to the local community, citing the bill’s required community benefits agreement.

When asked about how likely the bill would be to advance, Peters said he felt “optimistic.”

“We’re in a good place for a variety of reasons,” Peters said. “We have immensely broad support from business, labor and a variety of environmental justice organizations. I think most members of the Senate are supportive of this issue.”

The bill awaits consideration in the Senate.

