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Foster and Vella Host Town Hall Meeting

Charles Herbst

Last Wednesday, August 20, US Congressman Bill Foster and Illinois State Representative Dave Vella hosted a town hall meeting at the Community Center in Belvidere.

Although they both have hosted town hall meetings in the past, this was the first time that Foster and Vella have hosted a joint session, and it seemed to go rather well. Foster and Vella, both Democrats, appeared to agree on most issues. Interestingly, Vella's district, which includes parts of Rockford and Loves Park, runs across three different Congressional districts. Besides Foster, Vella's District includes a portion of the 16th District, represented by Congressman Darin LaHood, a Republican, and the 17th District, represented by Democratic Congressman Eric Sorensen.

The Meeting was led by Congressman Foster's Chief of Staff, Hilary Denk. Constituents were asked to write their questions on an index card. The questions were summarized by Denk and generally alternated between Foster taking a question at the national level followed by Vella tackling Illinois questions.

During the one-hour-plus meeting, quite a few topics were covered. The audience remained silent, barely laughing when jokes were made.

Both Foster and Vella were critical of the Trump Administration's "One Big Beautiful Bill," with Foster stating that this will cause 17 million Americans to lose health care coverage. He noted that, with more uninsured people showing up at emergency rooms, that this would cause insurance rates for others to go up to cover the cost. He also stated that 3 million people will lose benefits. Vella noted that federal cuts will make it tough for Illinois and the General Assembly.

On the subject of election security, Foster suggested that the best solution was to "become an election judge." Having election judges from both parties helps ensure a fair election. He accused the Administration of "making it hard for people on Social Security to vote." He stated vote fraud was rare and that there was no evidence that vote-by-mail was a source of fraud. Vella said that getting to know your state and local election officials and their work will make you feel better. Foster said that he did agree with Donald Trump that we



Congressman Bill Foster (left) and State Representative Dave Vella (right)

should be rid of voting machines that leave no paper trail. Illinois phased out such machines a while ago.

Foster thinks it is fine to require identification when registering to vote, but he is not ok with requiring it each time someone votes.

Discussing a possible Stellantis reopening in Belvidere, Vella noted that, in six years, three pieces of legislation were passed in Illinois to assist Stellantis, despite the loss of federal funds to assist the effort. Foster noted that he made an "all-hands effort" working with Congressman Sorensen to lobby the Biden White House for assistance. He said that he respected the efforts of the UAW, but he has grown skeptical of promises from Stellantis.

To protect Social Security, Foster favors making all income, not just the first \$170,000 of wages subject to Social Security taxes. He stated this would be enough to close the gap in needed revenues to make future Social Security payments. Foster also said that the cost-of-living adjustment for Social Security should use a different index that is more representative of expenses that senior citizens typically incur.

Noting that Republicans tried to get rid of

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United Methodist Church Buys Billboard Space That Hosted Proud Boys Sign

'Hate Divides, love Unites' will be message on southern Illinois sign

Molly Parker *Capitol News Illinois*

In response to the uproar over a Proud Boys message displayed on a billboard near Central Community High School in Breese, Illinois, 35 miles east of St. Louis, the United Methodist Church has a simple message: "Hate Divides, Love Unites."

The church purchased billboard space in the same location as the Proud Boys sign, which was removed this week. It paid \$2,100 for the next four months.

"It's part of our ministry," said Paul Black, director of communication ministries for the Springfield-based Illinois Great Rivers Conference, which represents 650 United Methodist congregations and about 100,000 members across central and southern Illinois. "One of the focuses for the denomination is eradicating racism, and when you read about this group, there's no doubt there's cause for concern."

The Proud Boys sign, which went up late last week and came down Tuesday, stood along Old U.S. Route 50 and St. Rose Road, about 1,000 feet from the school's entrance. It appeared to be a recruiting tool for the group, listing a local phone number that went to a full voicemail and featuring its logo alongside the slogan: "Faith, Family, Freedom, Brotherhood."

The Proud Boys have been designated a hate or extremist group by organizations including the Southern Poverty Law Center and were tied to the Jan. 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol.

Lamar Advertising, which manages the billboard's ad space, declined to say who purchased the Proud Boys message. The company removed it after a Clinton County Board meeting Monday night where dozens of residents spoke against the sign, and the board unanimously passed a non-binding resolution denouncing hate.

Bucky Miller, of Aviston, who helped organize community turnout for the board meeting, said he was relieved to hear about the Methodist sign. He and his wife, Laura Thoman, are raising two children, ages 6 and 4, and they were particularly

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DOJ Demands Sensitive Illinois Voter Registration Data After State Responds

Elections board offered partially redacted data; federal officials insist on complete database

Peter Hancock

Capitol News Illinois

The U.S. Department of Justice is insisting Illinois election officials hand over the state's entire computerized voter registration database, including sensitive information such as driver's license and partial Social Security numbers.

In a letter dated Thursday, Aug. 14, an attorney in the department's Civil Rights Division rejected the Illinois State Board of Elections' offer of a partially redacted database – the same data that state law allows political committees and other governmental agencies to access – insisting that federal authorities are entitled to the complete, unredacted data.



Robert Bruce, 69, Belvidere, August 11

Nancy Bruni, 78, Capron, August 9

Richard "Dick" Durley, 85, Belvidere, August 14

Clarence "Tom" Hancock, 83, Belvidere, August 18

Gerald Huff, 86, Belvidere, August 11

Ellie Wilson, 94, Belvidere, August 10

"We have received Illinois's statewide voter registration list ("VRL")," Assistant Attorney General Harmeet K. Dhillon wrote. "However, as the Attorney General requested, the electronic copy of the statewide VRL must contain all fields, including the registrant's full name, date of birth, residential address, his or her state driver's license number or the last four digits of the registrant's social security number as required under the Help America Vote Act ('HAVA') to register individuals for federal elections."

The letter indicated DOJ was making the request under a provision of the National Voter Registration Act, also known as the "Motor Voter Act," a 1993 law that was intended to make it easier for people to register whenever they conducted other government business such as obtaining a driver's license or renewing their vehicle registration.

"Our request is pursuant to the Attorney General's authority under Section 11 of the NVRA to bring enforcement actions," the letter stated.

The letter also cited the 2002 Help America Vote Act. Passed in the wake of the controversial 2000 election between Republican George W. Bush and Democrat Al Gore, that law made sweeping changes to the nation's voting processes, including new requirements about how states must maintain accurate and up-to-date voter registration databases.

'Not entitled to demand'

DOJ first requested a copy of the Illinois database in a July 28 letter. That was a few weeks after the agency filed what's known as a "statement of interest" in a civil lawsuit that the conservative legal activist group Judicial Watch, along with other plaintiffs, had filed against the state board, alleging it was not meeting its duties under HAVA to maintain the voter database.

In that initial letter, DOJ also requested the names of all election officials in the state who are responsible for maintaining the registration list. It also asked the state to identify the number of people removed from the registration list during the 2022 election cycle because they were noncitizens, adjudicated incompetent or due to felony convictions.

David Becker, a former attorney in the DOJ's voting section who now runs the nonpartisan Center for Election Innovation and Research, told Capitol News Illinois last month that the letter is similar to requests filed in multiple other states and that it goes far beyond the Justice Department's legal authority.

"The Department of Justice asked for the complete voter file for the state of Illinois, including all fields in that file, which is an absolutely huge file that contains so much sensitive data about Illinois citizens, including driver's license numbers, Social Security numbers and dates of birth that the Department of Justice is not entitled to receive and not entitled to demand," he said in an interview. "They know this. Other states have told them this, and yet they continue to seek to receive this information, citing sections of federal law that don't apply and don't require that."

Illinois' initial response

The State Board of Elections responded to that request Aug. 11 with answers to DOJ's questions as well as an electronic copy of what it described

as the statewide voter registration list.

However, the board also cited a state statute that limits what the agency can disclose from the centralized registration list.

A spokesperson for the board said in an email that the law allows the release of two types of data files. One, available only to political committees or "a governmental entity for a governmental purpose," includes the voters' names and addresses, their age at the time the registration was completed, the voting jurisdictions in which they reside, and their voting history. That includes elections in which they voted and, in the case of primary elections, which party's ballot they selected.

That is the list the state board provided to DOJ. The board also waived the normal \$500 fee it charges for providing the list.

Another version of the file, available to the general public, contains much of the same information, but only the name of the street on which they live, not their exact street address.

But neither file, the spokesman said, contains voters' personal identification information used to verify voter registrations such as driver's license numbers or Social Security numbers.

DOJ, Pritzker respond

In its letter Thursday, however, DOJ said the list that the elections board provided was insufficient.

"In charging the Attorney General with enforcement of the voter registration list requirements in HAVA and the NVRA, Congress plainly intended that DOJ be able to conduct an independent review of each state's list," Dhillon wrote. "Any statewide prohibitions are preempted by federal law."

The letter directed the board to provide the information by Aug. 21.

The board spokesman said the latest DOJ letter is "under review."

On Monday, Pritzker declined to say whether the board's decision to provide the partially redacted database was the correct one. But he also accused the Trump administration of ulterior motives.

"Well, it's clear why they're hunting around for voter data, right? They're trying to say that in the next election, that there will be fraud because they know they're going to lose," he said at an unrelated bill signing. "They are looking, essentially, to say that, well, we found somebody who died who's still on the rolls, and therefore there's fraud, and therefore these elections are fraudulent and should be overturned."

He also defended Illinois' decentralized election system.

"We have, actually, one of the safest, best systems in the entire country, because it's run by individual county clerks so it's unhackable," he said.



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David Grimm April 1938 - Dec. 2000
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Editor

I realize this is late in response, it was a hectic prelude to and hot week at the fair! I would like to thank you for the wonderful editorial you published a few weeks ago. It was just what a lot of people in our area believe and others needed to see it in print. I give kudos to you for having the gumption to write and print such a well thought out and perceptive opinion.

The people of our community should be grateful to have a press that is not bullied or persuaded by the "people in power". Thank you again, and hope that you can continue with your honesty and bravery.

Peace!

Tracy Rangel

New Laws in Illinois

Governor completes signing of more than 430 bills from spring session

*Peter Hancock, Andrew Adams
& Ben Szalinski*

Capitol News Illinois

Gov. JB Pritzker signed the final two bills from the spring session Friday, giving his approval to more than 430 bills approved by lawmakers this year.

The final bills signed Friday are designed to improve access to abortion medication even if the federal government revokes permission for a certain drug. The governor signed a bill earlier in the week prohibiting students from receiving municipal tickets for disciplinary infractions.

The General Assembly sent 436 bills to the governor's desk this year, with Pritzker signing all but three of them. Pritzker issued a pair of vetoes to Senate Bill 246, which would have allowed non-profits to participate in the state's investment pool, and House Bill 2682, a crisis assistance measure that had duplicative language in a bill Pritzker previously signed.

Pritzker also issued one amendatory veto to House Bill 2568 because a portion of the bill was written into the wrong section of state law. Lawmakers can decide whether or not to accept the change when they reconvene in October.

Abortion medication access

Illinois will allow health care professionals to prescribe certain medications over the next decade even if the federal government revokes approval for a drug under House Bill 3637.

The bill stipulates that any medication that had U.S. Food and Drug Administration approval prior to 2025 and remains approved by the World Health Organization will remain legally accessible in Illinois even if the FDA revokes approval of the drug. The law would remain in effect through 2034. It was primarily aimed at protecting providers of abortion mediation.

The bill expands "shield law" protections to all Illinois health care workers to protect them from

prosecution in other states or disciplinary action in Illinois for providing health care that is legal in Illinois but may not be legal in other places.

"As an anti-woman, anti-science, authoritarian administration invades our privacy, Illinois is holding the line and we are fighting back," Pritzker said at a news conference in Champaign.

The Trump administration has planned to review the FDA's authorization of mifepristone, a leading abortion pill.

General Assembly Republican opposed the bill, arguing the state should not ignore the FDA's guidance about medications.

Pritzker also signed House Bill 3709, an initiative of a group of University of Illinois students that requires Illinois colleges and universities to provide students access to contraception and abortion medications at campus pharmacies and health care centers beginning this school year.

"These services will now become more easily available from a source that young women can trust," Pritzker said.

Municipalities in Illinois may no longer issue fines, fees, tickets or citations to students as a form of school-based discipline under a new law signed Wednesday.

Senate Bill 1519, sponsored by Sen. Karina Villa, D-West Chicago, took effect immediately and is intended to close a loophole in a 2015 law, which prohibited schools from issuing fines for disciplinary infractions.

A 2022 investigation by ProPublica and the Chicago Tribune found that schools were getting around that law by referring students to local law enforcement for offenses such as truancy, vaping, fights or other infractions. The investigation also found Black and Latino students were fined at disproportionate rates.

The law does not apply to delinquent or criminal behavior. It also does not apply to traffic, boating, or fish and game laws.

"Our schools should be places of learning and growth — not entry points into the justice system," Villa said in a statement. "When we treat student behavior with fines and tickets, we fail to address the real issues and risk derauling a young person's future."

The new law also requires school districts that employ school resource officers to have a memorandum of understanding with their local law enforcement agency to ensure SROs are properly trained and do not use fines or tickets for disciplinary infractions.

One of the bills Pritzker signed Friday

invited almost immediate pushback from Republicans and business groups.

The law, outlined in Senate Bill 328, allows lawsuits to continue against companies that operate in Illinois even if the company and plaintiffs are from other states. The law only applies to cases dealing with "toxic" substances under state law.

The law is seen as good for trial lawyers, who might see expanded business opportunities under the new law. The head of the Illinois Trial Lawyers Associations applauded the governor's approval last week and said that the "sole intent" of the new law is provide justice for people exposed to toxic substances.

But critics, like the Illinois Manufacturers Association, say the measure will be bad for business.

A group of Republican lawmakers filed a lawsuit challenging the bill earlier this summer, criticizing it as legalizing "litigation tourism."

That lawsuit — focused on the legislative process more than the bill's contents — could also end the practice of passing "gut-and-replace" bills. That's a procedural maneuver where lawmakers modify a bill already passed in one chamber of the General Assembly with an amendment that removes the entire bill and replaces it.

This move is unpopular among some lawmakers who see it as unconstitutional because it limits or precludes substantial debate on a bill's actual contents. The lawsuit is still pending in Sangamon County.

Another measure — this one backed by state

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Social Security in the 1950s, Foster believes that any current alarm is merely a back-door to privatizing the system. “There is enough money in this country to finance a dignified retirement,” he said.

Foster stated that Illinois loses \$20-40 billion in federal taxes. Noting that New Mexico receives \$2.40 for every dollar sent to Washington, Illinois only gets 75 cents. Since the 1970s, this has amounted to over \$1.5 trillion dollars. Foster says the “guilty party” is the US Senate.

Turning to foreign affairs, Foster said that “Gaza is a crime against humanity.” As a protest, he voted against an appropriations bill for Israel. He called the attempt to relocate Gazans in South Sudan, “ethnic cleansing in its purist form.”

Speaking of Ukraine, Foster noted that the Ukrainians gave up the world’s third-largest stockpile of nuclear weapons in exchange for security guarantees. He believes that abandoning Ukraine “will be a source of eternal shame for the United States.”

Foster said that he supported comprehensive immigration reform in 2013, and he has worked behind the scenes to secure Republican votes for a path to citizenship for law-abiding, undocumented persons. He believes that, privately, the deal is still available. Foster agreed that those immigrants who have committed serious crimes should be deported. The “problem” is that the White House is running out of criminals and has started going after others.

Foster suggested that getting involved in local politics can make a big difference, citing school boards and zoning commissions. He also noted that some of the best Congressmen are first generation immigrants. Vella called on people to check on their neighbors and become more involved in things.

Foster and Vella both suggested that people need to “disconnect” from the Internet to stop online misinformation. Saying that people need to talk to each other, and not screens, Foster added that Google has been polluted by money and predicted that we will have that problem “in spades” with artificial intelligence.

After the presentation, the *Journal* had a chance to discuss the abuse of drug patents and how the situation can be rectified. Patents are often “evergreened” to artificially lengthen their exclusivity and prevent the development of lower-cost generics. Foster stated that the “secret sauce” is the manufacturing process. A company may have ten crucial steps to make a drug. A “patent thicket” can be created by applying for patents for each step on a staggered schedule that will lengthen the amount of time the drug is under patent. He believes that courts have become more sophisticated and less willing to allow this device.

Citing the new weight loss drugs, Foster believes that competition may ultimately solve this problem, although there is really no good solution in the case of drugs for rare conditions.

Bills

treasurer Michael Frerichs — would have allowed Frerichs’ office to create an investment pool for Illinois nonprofits. The treasurer’s office would then invest those funds and provide the returns on those investments back to the nonprofits.

But Pritzker vetoed Senate Bill 246, saying that the measure had harmful unintended consequences.

“It would unfortunately allow Illinois’ financial investments to be used to benefit fringe and extremist groups,” Pritzker wrote. “I cannot sign a bill that unintentionally allows extremist groups to advance their hateful missions by exploiting state services and resources.”

Pritzker pointed to an Indiana nonprofit linked to the Oath Keepers, an anti-government militia that watchdog groups label as an “extremist” organization. Leaders of the group were found guilty of seditious conspiracy for their role in the U.S. Capitol riots on Jan. 6, 2021.

Pritzker said that organization would be eligible for the investment fund program. But the treasurer issued a statement countering that claim.

“I strongly disagree with the governor’s misguided belief that hate groups would use a state investment pool,” Frerichs said in a statement. “The bill specifically requires that to be eligible, a nonprofit must provide a copy of their audited financial statements. No hate group would ever agree to that. Sunshine remains the best disinfectant for fighting hate.”

Another law signed Friday, contained in House Bill 3363, will create the “Office of State Public Defender” to provide public defender offices throughout the state with more resources. It also reforms the public defender appointment process in an effort to give public defenders more independence from local judges.

An analysis of public defender data from a Northwestern University research team, which supported the bill, found that Illinois had a shortage of public defenders in fiscal year 2023, with only about 56% of the needed number currently allocated statewide.

A 2021 report commissioned by the Illinois Supreme Court found similar results in nine counties. None of those counties had sufficient resources to provide defendants with proper legal representation.

The need for public defenders has also increased in years since the state’s abolition of cash bail in 2023. Cases now require more work in the pretrial phase.

Lawmakers appropriated \$10 million for county public defense services in this year’s budget, the same they’ve appropriated since 2023.

Drivers tests for seniors: Drivers tests for seniors: Under House Bill 1226, only drivers 87 and older will have to take an annual driver’s test. The previous age for a mandatory yearly driver test was 79. Illinois drivers between 79 and 86 won’t be required to take a driver’s test to renew their license; instead, they’ll only have to take a vision test, and if they have a driving violation, a written test. The law takes effect July 1, 2026.

Artificial intelligence professors: House Bill 1859 bans the use of AI as primary instructors in

community colleges.

PFAS ban for fire fighters: House Bill 2409 requires that companies selling fire-fighting equipment disclose the presence of perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances, sometimes called “forever chemicals.” It bans the use of them in clothing used by fire fighters by 2027 and in other equipment by 2030.

PFAS ban in other industries: House Bill 2516 bans, by 2032, PFAS chemicals in children’s products, cosmetics, intimate apparel like sleepwear or underwear, menstrual products and dental floss.

Warehouse tornado safety: House Bill 2987 requires that warehouses provide a tornado safety plan and build new warehouses with stricter safety standards. The measure follows a lethal warehouse collapse in 2021.

‘Chicken bill’: Farmers who process fewer than 7,500 chickens annually will be exempt from state and federal inspections of their poultry operations or from having to send birds to USDA-approved processing facilities — an increase from the previous 5,000-bird threshold. It requires products to be labeled as not-inspected, if processed under this exemption.

Noncitizen representation: House Bill 2436 grants the Cook County Public Defender the ability to represent noncitizens during immigration proceedings.

Defibrillators in nursing homes: House Bill 1287 requires skilled care facilities to have automatic external defibrillators by 2030.

Home births: House Bill 2688 allows certified nurse midwives to enter a written agreement with a physician to provide or assist with home births. In designated maternity care deserts, they can enter into such an agreement even if the local physicians don’t provide home births.

Baby food safety: Senate Bill 73 requires baby food makers to test their products for arsenic, cadmium, lead and mercury at least once per month.

Price transparency at the gym: Senate Bill 314 requires fitness centers to disclose any changes to customer fees at least 60 days before the automatic renewal of a contract.

AI in schools: Senate Bill 1920 requires the state board of education to develop guidance on the use of artificial intelligence in schools.

Scott’s Law update: Senate Bill 1922 expands the law requiring drivers to move over for police vehicles to apply to any authorized emergency vehicle whether or not it is stationary.

Transfer credit requirements: Senate Bill 1958 requires community colleges to facilitate transfer credits between community colleges and encourages them to work with state universities to make transferring credits easier.

Ben Szalinski and Jerry Nowicki contributed research.

Editor’s note: The story has been corrected to reflect that the new age for an annual driver’s test will be 87, effective July 1, 2026.

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LEGAL NOTICES

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE SEVENTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT BOONE COUNTY IN RE ESTATE OF

Donald L. Robson, Deceased.
Case Number 2025 PR 30
INDEPENDENT ADMINISTRATION PUBLICATION NOTICE TO:
[x] Creditors and Claimants
[x] Unknown Heirs and Legatees

1. Notice is given of the death of Donald L. Robson, who died on October 17, 2024, a resident of 4000 Trillium Trail, Unit B, Poplar Grove IL 61065, Illinois.

2. The Representative for the estate and her address is: Marcia K. Robson, 4000 Trillium Trail, Unit B, Poplar Grove IL 61065.

3. The Attorney for the estate is: Dawn M. Weekly, LEGACY LAW FIRM, LLC, 410 E. Church St., Unit D, Sandwich, IL 60548.

4. Claims against the estate may be filed on or before February 12, 2026. Claims against the estate may be filed with the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court, Boone County, or with the Representative, or both. Any claim not filed within that period is barred. Copies of a claim filed with the Clerk must be mailed or delivered to the Representative and to the attorney within 10 days after it has been filed.

5. On July 22, 2025, an Order Admitting the Will to Probate and/or Appointing the Representative was entered.

6. Within 42 days after the effective date of the original Order Admitting the Will to Probate, you may file a petition with the Court to require proof of the validity of the Will as provided under section 6-21 of the Probate Act (IL Rev. Stat. Ch. 110 ½, Par. 6-21).

7. Within 6 months after the effective date of the original Order Admitting the Will to Probate, you may file a petition with the Court to contest the validity of the Will as provided under Section 8-1 of the Probate Act (IL Rev. Stat. Ch. 100 ½, Par. 8-1).

8. The estate will be administered without Court supervision unless an interested party terminates independent administration by filing a petition to terminate under Section 28-4 of the Probate Act (IL Rev. Stat. Ch. 110 ½, Par. 28-4).

6088-956849
Published in Boone County Journal 8/12, 8/19/ & 26th, 2025 SW

STATE OF ILLINOIS
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 17th JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
COUNTY OF BOONE

IN RE THE ESTATE OF: LINCOLN J. WOLCOTT, Deceased.
CASE NO.: 2025 PR 41

CLAIM NOTICE

NOTICE is given of the death of LINCOLN J. WOLCOTT. Letters of Office were issued on July 21, 2025, to THOMAS H. WOLCOTT and KAITLIN M. WOLCOTT, who are the legal representatives of the estate. Claims against the estate may be filed on or before 2/26/26, that date being at least six (6) months from the date of first publication, or within three (3) months from the date of mailing or delivery of Notice to creditors, if mailing or delivery is required by 755 ILCS 5/18-3 of the Illinois Probate Act, 1975 as amended, whichever date is later. Any claim not filed by the requisite date as stated above shall be barred.

Claims against the estate may be filed in the office of the Boone County Circuit Clerks Office at the Boone County Courthouse in Belvidere, Illinois, or with the estate legal representatives, or both.

Copies of claims filed with the Circuit Clerk’s Office must be mailed or delivered to the estate legal representatives within ten days after it has been filed.

THOMAS H. WOLCOTT
KAITLIN M. WOLCOTT
Prepared by:
Kaitlin M. Wolcott
407 Gail Court
Belvidere, IL 61008
P: 815-670-9503
Published in The Boone County Journal August 26, Sept 2 & 9, 2025

STATE OF ILLINOIS
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE SEVENTEENTH JUDICAL CIRCUIT
BOONE COUNTY B IN PROBATE
In the Matter of the Estate of JEFFREY DESECKI., Deceased.
Case No. 2025PR45

CLAIM NOTICE

Notice is given of the death of: JEFFREY DESECKI of: BELVIDERE, IL
Letters of office were issued on: 08/01/2025 to:
Representative: ANGELA TRAPP
1226 WARREN AVENUE
BELVIDERE, IL 61008

Whose attorney is:FRANKS, GERKIN, PONITZ & GREELEY, P.C.
19333 E. GRANT HWY
PO BOX 5
MARENGO, IL 60152

Claims against the estate may be filed within six months from the date of first publication. Any claim not filed within six months from the date of first publication or claims not filed within three months from the date of mailing or delivery of Notice to Creditor, whichever is later, shall be barred.

Claims may be filed in the office of the Clerk of Circuit Court at the Boone County Government Center, 601 North Main Street, Belvidere, Illinois 61008, or with the representative, or both.

Copies of claims filed with the Clerk must be mailed or delivered to the representative and to his attorney within ten days after it has been filed.

Pamela Coduto
Clerk of the Circuit Court
Franks, Gerkin, Ponitz & Greeley, P.C.
File #21689.001
P.O. Box 5

Marengo, IL 60152
(815) 923-2107
pleadings@fgpglaw.com
Published in The Boone County Journal Aug 19, 26, Sept 2, 2025

NOTICE

To: Tina Coats, Douglas E. Coats, Unknown Occupants, and Unknown Owners Date of Notice: August 22, 2025

You are notified that Greenview Estates LLC has declared that a certain mobile home 1979 Victorian Vin#1V7014FFR24835 located at 306 Greenview Rd., Belvidere, IL 61008 is an abandoned mobile home within the meaning of the Abandoned Mobile Home Act. Unless delinquent monies owed \$9,969.09 are paid and electric and water utilities are restored to this mobile home within 30 days of the date of this notice, Greenview Estates LLC shall remove and dispose of the mobile home, and it shall be disposed of or sold at public auction free and clear of any existing liens.

If you have any questions regarding this notice, you should contact the following: Lainey Hills
Greenview Estates LLC
3901 Newburg Rd.
Belvidere, IL 61008
815.547.5343
Published in The Boone County Journal Aug 26, Sept 2, 9,2025

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN By the Board of Education of North Boone CUSD 200 in the County of Boone State of Illinois, that the budget for said school district for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025 will be on file and conveniently available to public inspection at 6248 North Boone School Road, Poplar Grove, IL 61065 in the school district from and after 8:00 A.M. on the 20th day of August 2025.

Notice is further hereby given that a public hearing on said budget will be held at 6:30 P.M. on the 23rd day of September 2025, at 6248 North Boone School Road, Poplar Grove, IL 61065, in the North Boone CUSD No. 200.

Dated this 20th day of August 2025, Board of Education of North Boone CUSD No. 200 in the County of Boone, State of Illinois.
Russell O'Donnell, Board of Education
Published in The Boone County Journal Aug 26,2025

ASSUMED NAMES

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

No. DBA4245 - The undersigned person(s) do hereby certify that a PILOT CAR business is or is to be conducted or transacted under the name of TOM GRAY PILOT CAR SERVICE that its location is or will be 117 Galleon Run 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: 815-218-7044
THOMAS C. GRAY 117 GALLEON RUN 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: August 18, 2025
Julie A Bliss, County Clerk and Recorder
Published in Boone County Journal 8/26, 09/02, 09/09 - P

Billboard from page 1

disturbed by the sign’s placement near a school.

The new message, he said, “embodies what our community and Clinton County as a whole is all about.”

Black said the design for the new billboard comes from a campaign first launched by the Missouri Conference of the United Methodist Church. The campaign began after a private citizen erected a similar sign near a Confederate flag flying along a busy road at the Lake of the Ozarks. The church eventually took over funding for that billboard and has since expanded the effort, putting up signs in several locations throughout the state.

Kim Jenne, director of connectional ministries for the Missouri Conference, said other Methodist conferences across the country, including in Ohio and North Carolina, have also adopted the “Hate Divides, Love Unites” message in places where local communities have reported extremist activity, though she was not aware of any other Proud Boys billboards.

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.

Illinois Beekeepers Battle Losses, Costs to Keep Hives Buzzing

Community support, careful management help address challenges

Tom O'Connor
Medill Illinois News Bureau

Luke Harvey established the Riverview Road Apiary in 2014, perched along the Illinois River in Chillicothe, just across from the home where he grew up north of Peoria. Surrounded by bird-song on the back porch of the house, Harvey recently reflected on his history with bees.

“The love of beekeeping is also about the love of being outside, being closer to nature and being close to the world that we just aren’t really involved in.”

It’s an idyllic scene, one that can make it easy to overlook how challenging beekeeping can be for Harvey and the more than 5,400 other registered beekeepers across Illinois. Nearly 89% of them are hobbyists managing 10 colonies or fewer, according to the fiscal year 2025 Apiary Inspection Annual Report from the Illinois Department of Agriculture released in July.

Losses

Bee loss is a persistent issue throughout the state. It’s not uncommon for beekeepers to lose over half of their colonies each year — primarily during winter — due to disease, competition, poor nutrition or limited resources. That’s a trend mirrored across much of the Midwest and the country.

One long-standing threat is the varroa mite, which feeds on a bee’s hemolymph — a fluid similar to blood — and fat body, a key part of the bee’s immune system. These mites can weaken bees and act as vectors of viruses that can spread rapidly through a hive and beyond.

Many beekeepers indicated that it is difficult to keep colonies healthy. The IDOA’s FY25 report suggests a rise in varroa mite levels in the state, though it cautions that this may partly be because of environmental variables or when and where inspections occurred.

Pollinator expert Brittany Buckles said many of the biological challenges in Illinois are recurring and somewhat predictable but not always completely avoidable or easy to manage.

Buckles has worked with bees for about a decade and holds a master’s degree in entomology, specializing in pollinators. Now based primarily in northern Illinois, she teaches classes through the Chicago Honey Co-Op in addition to her other pollinator-related work.

She reports an annual colony loss rate of around 40% in the hives she’s involved with — lower than many in the state — and partly attributes that to precise, timely treatment and close hive monitoring.

Buckles emphasized the importance of reliable information, recommending the University of Minnesota’s Beekeeping in Northern Climates guide.

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Bees

Cost

Beyond biology, there are financial hurdles as well. Newcomers often face startup costs between \$600 and over \$1,000 for a hive and the required equipment.

"Life is already expensive enough," Harvey said, adding that beekeeping is complex and many first-timers face difficulties managing hives. "People get frustrated."

Harvey is what the beekeeping community calls a "sideliner," someone between a hobbyist and a full-time professional. A former engineer and project manager, he has been able to devote more time to the apiary since taking early retirement from Caterpillar Inc. last year.

Even for seasoned beekeepers, scaling up can be a challenge. Harvey has considered expanding beyond 100 hives but said doing so alone would be difficult. Hiring would be costly, especially given how hive numbers can fluctuate.

"I know it's possible," he said. "I just haven't been able to do it yet."

About 10 miles away, the Urban Acres Gardens project in Peoria also incorporates beekeeping into its broader mission. Founded in 2018, the initiative focuses on providing fresh and affordable produce sourced from local gardens in Peoria's North Valley.

Andres Diaz, owner of Urban Acres Gardens, has kept bees for six years and acknowledged the steep startup cost. However, he said he has recouped the initial investment through honey sales at the North Valley Farmers Market, where Urban Acres' produce is sold.

"(Beekeeping) has been both beneficial for our plants and our production," Diaz said. "It pays for itself after a couple of years if you're selling the honey."

He reinvests most of the proceeds into better beekeeping equipment and said the practice also supports a deeper purpose.

"We reap the benefits of being in a community (where) we can do things more naturally and be more connected with our food sources," he said.

Diaz has seen that first-hand. His teenage son helps bottle honey and wants to start working the hives, while his youngest daughter enjoys taste-testing.

Community

Diaz and others emphasized the value of mentorship in beekeeping. Buckles recommended that aspiring beekeepers shadow an experienced local mentor for a season before starting.

"Just like in any other trade, your mentor and the quality of your mentor can make or break

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you," she said.

Many beekeepers credited the longevity of their apiaries to local clubs. Twenty-five local groups are affiliated with the Illinois State Beekeepers Association, offering education and a sense of community.

Harvey is now the communications officer with the Heart of Illinois Beekeepers Association, which he said was key to sustaining his decadelong experience with bees.

"I can't emphasize enough how important a well-run local association is," he said. "That's how you get new beekeepers, how you educate new beekeepers and how you educate the public."

Other pollinators

While honeybees usually get the spotlight in discussions around pollination, promoting non-honeybee pollinators is crucial for biodiversity and for preserving endangered species like the rusty-patched bumble bee — one of 400 to 500 native bee species in Illinois. Those species are often overshadowed by the honey bee, known as *apis mellifera*, which was originally imported from Europe in the 17th century.

Since 2021, the Illinois Farm Bureau's pollinator conservation grant program has committed \$145,000 to 55 projects across 28 counties. Most of the support has gone toward pollinator plots — planted areas with species like milkweed, which monarch butterflies rely on for their reproductive cycles.

"It's kind of a passion project for people," said Bena Pegg, environmental program manager at the Farm Bureau. "There's a lot of diversity in the way that individual counties are doing that work."

Buckles suggested there is currently a lack of substantial data on competition between honey bees and native pollinators in the Midwest. Still, she encouraged maintaining native plants — such as milkweed, New England aster, monarda fistulosa (bee balm) and native goldenrod species — to help support vulnerable pollinators.

"As beekeepers, we all are connected to the environment. We're not trying to do harm," she said, adding that more research could spark valuable conversations around conservation in the context of beekeeping.

While keeping honeybees may not directly support native species, Buckles said she believes it can have benefits. The activity connects people to the natural world and deepens their understanding of food systems.

"There is a lot of beauty to beekeeping," she said. "However, just putting a beehive in your yard isn't going to help conservation necessarily."

Looking out at the Illinois River from the back porch of his family home late one afternoon, Har-

vey reflected on the personal significance of beekeeping.

"It's a calming experience," he said. "You get to go through the hives and get away from the screen or being indoors."

Harvey also values the community around it. In February 2024, he and his mentor Steve Schmidt launched the Beekeeping Buddies podcast, which surpassed 2,600 listens in its first year.

"Which for two guys out in the Midwest is not bad," he said with a smile.

Harvey acknowledged the concerns about competition between honeybees and native species but stressed the importance of conservation of all pollinators.

"We need to push to be understanding of what our pollinator loss is, and we need to be doing better by them," he said.

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

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

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