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Train Wreck

By David Larson

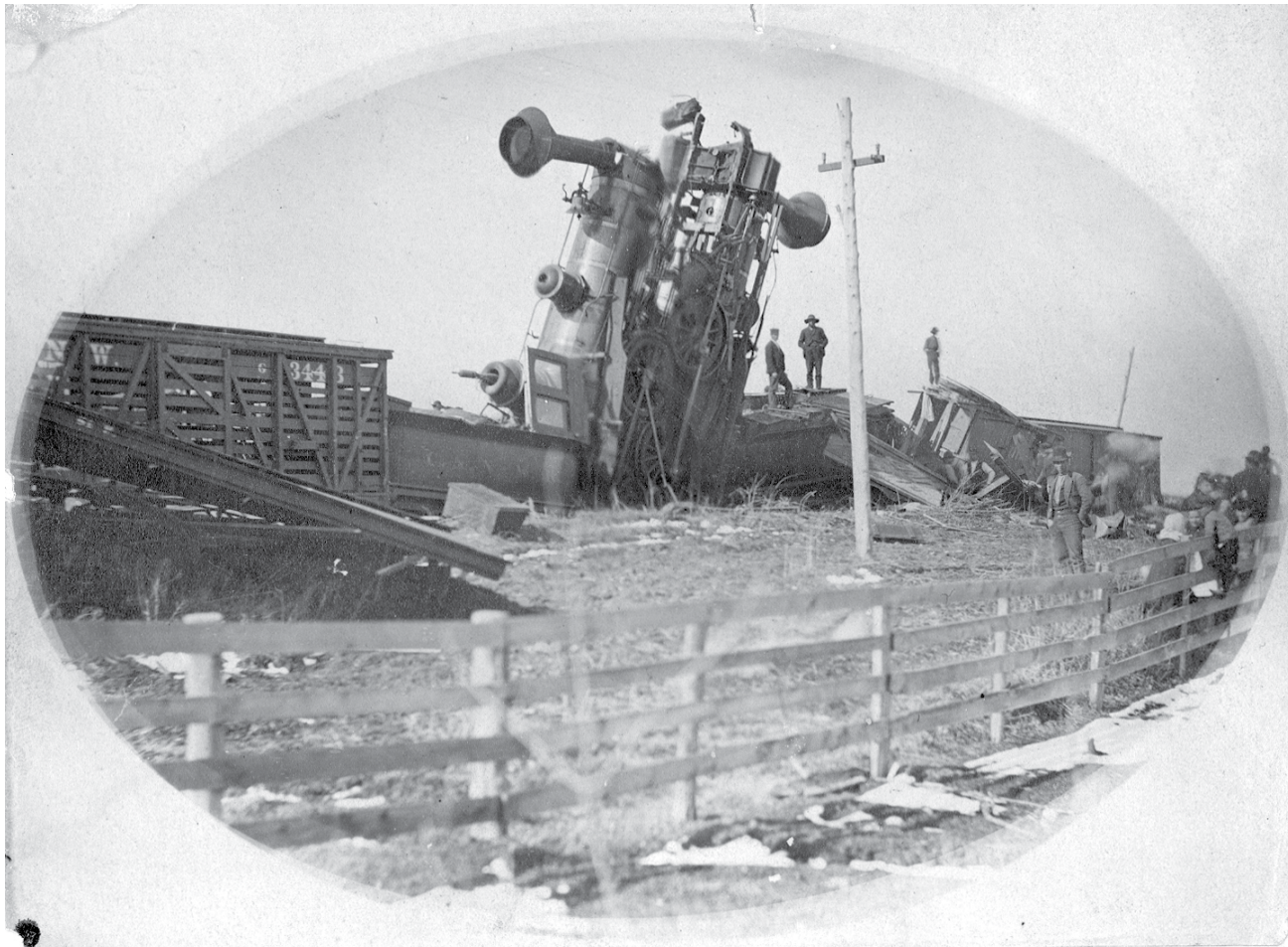
The Chicago and Galena Railroad had been built out to Belvidere by early December 1851. The tracks were laid high enough above the south riverbed of the Kishwaukee River to create a solid foundation to carry the weight of a fully-loaded train. In 1851, the south side of the Kishwaukee at Belvidere was still prairie. The log bridges built at State Street washed out almost yearly. The village originated on the north bank and North State Street and Lincoln Avenue was the center of activity.

The Chicago and Galena Railroad Company was chartered in 1836. Construction began in Chicago in 1848. By 1850, the older flat-style tracks had reached Elgin and were serviced by a locomotive called "The Pioneer." The new, T-type track was used as construction moved west of Elgin. It took 3 hours in 1850 to travel by rail from Chicago to Elgin. Today, depending on intermediate stops, Metra makes the trip in 61 to 81 minutes. At the same time as the railroad was coming to Belvidere, the Illinois and Michigan Canal was being completed. That canal linked the Atlantic Ocean to the Gulf of Mexico at the mouth of the Mississippi River. Together, with the merger of these two transportation routes, Chicago grew into the international city it is today, with O'Hare Airport now offering nonstop flights to 6 continents. Grain and livestock were shipped into Chicago and then routed to various east coast cities by rail or barge through the Great Lakes. Boone County could export its agricultural products and soon industrial products. In 1869, the Union Pacific and Central Pacific linked the Atlantic and Pacific Coasts by rail. The railroad attracted industrial development during the Industrial Revolution to Belvidere, in particular, the National Sewing Machine Company.

The railroad was built along the Galena-Chicago stagecoach route that operated from the 1835 to 1954. It went through Belvidere. The stagecoach also contributed to Belvidere's growth. Galena is a much older city than Chicago. At statehood in 1818, Galena had lead mines and had navigable access to the Mississippi. The coming of railroads and the Illinois and Michigan canal came later, which ultimately enabled Chicago's ascent.

In the beginning, the stagecoach route was a collection of independent stagecoach companies operating along the trail. In 1840, the Frink & Walker Company consolidated the lines into a single enterprise. Rockford was known as the midway point. The Rockford (Midway) stop was at East State and Kishwaukee Streets. In Belvidere, the stagecoach stop was at the Belvidere Company Hotel, which possibly is referred to as The American House.

The hotel was the center of business in the village. A legal notice published in 1852 states that a transfer of rural real estate will occur at



(above) Train wreck near Belvidere (below) The joining of the Union Pacific Railroad and the Central Pacific Railroad



the hotel at a particular time on a particular date. J. C. Oaks had established a tavern in the hotel and advertised in the newspaper that the tavern would be open "...at all hours 'up and dress' ready to cater to the tastes of such of 'THE DEAR PEOPLE'..."

In Marengo, the railroad arrived in October 1851, and by the time it arrived in Belvidere, 30 buildings had sprung up in Marengo. In October 1851, the Chicago & Galena purchased three new locomotives to keep up with the demand for freight as the line expanded. In November 1852, the *Chicago Democratic Press*

reported that one firm had received 10,000 pigs in the past week, having been brought in by rail and canal.

When the railroad was scheduled to open, a celebration was planned in Belvidere for December 3, 1851. Passenger service would begin on that date as well. A committee was formed to plan the event. Arrangements were made for a band to greet the corporate officers of the railroad who had been sent invitations as guests of honor. Following their arrival, speeches would be made, and a fine

Continued on Page 2

Train *Continued page 1*

dinner served at the Belvidere Hotel. The local newspaper, *The Belvidere Standard*, published by Ralph Roberts, rallied the community around the event to take place on the north side of the new depot.

On December 3, the community gathered. The band set up on the East side of the platform and waited for the signal from the committee chairman to start playing. The train arrived but the corporate officers of the Chicago and Galena Railroad did not show.

The *Chicago Journal* published news of the planned celebration in its pages in a condescending tone. Belvidere was a place on the prairie that produced chickens and pigs. It mistakenly referred to the Kishwaukee River as the Episcatonica, which powered grain mills. Perhaps the author imagined himself to be the inventor of the steam engine.

Six months later, a lengthy editorial appeared in *The Belvidere Standard* discussing new economic development along and around the railroad tracks at the depot. Five warehouses built from locally-quarried stone for grain storage had popped up since the opening of the depot. A lumberyard and several groceries, hardware stores, and general stores

were opened around the depot area. Homes were being built on the prairie land south of the river. By 1900, Belvidere had substantially moved to the South Side of the Kishwaukee River.

The photo is believe to be the train wreck 2 miles west of Cherry Valley in 1852: "The freight train on the Galena and Chicago railroad encountered a cow on the track about two miles west of Cherry Valley, which threw the locomotive and ten or a dozen freight cars off the track, pell mell, into a hard bank of earth, the accident occurring in a deep cut. The locomotive was nearly demolished. It was a new one - the DeKalb - and one of the best, if not the best on the road. A resident of Cherry Valley, who was at the spot, informs us that it was a most terrible "smash-up," knocking the cars and engine, (to use his own phrase) into "broom stuff." The cars were going east, and were loaded with grain, on which the damage must be very heavy. No one was hurt. It is said that \$20,000 will not make the damage good. Some eight or ten hour's delay occurred in consequence of the time occupied in clearing away the wreck. The loss of the engine and cars at the present time will be severely felt by freighters, as there is now a shameful deficiency for their accommodation."

To get a fuller idea of the times in Belvidere in 1852 the following was taken from *The Belvidere Standard*. It reported that a man from Virginia traveled through New York for a few days with 8 slaves was on his way to Texas and had the slaves taken from him by New York authorities. A New York judge freed the slave once New York authorities discovered the slaves and the Virginia man lost his property. Another story told of the Whig Convention held in Rockford, which nominated the political nemesis of the Belvidere Whig, politician Stephen Hurlbut. The nominee, Washburn, was a Galena resident and it was he whom the convention nominated for Congress. Ralph Roberts, the publisher of *The Belvidere Standard*, a Democratic-leaning publisher who brought the Republican Party to Belvidere, opposed the nomination calling it, "as yet another step toward domination and monopoly by the Whigs." The Whig base of support was centered among entrepreneurs, professionals, planters, social reformers, devout Protestants, and the emerging urban middle class. The Republican Party, the party of Lincoln, was the anti-slavery and equality party, more inline with today's Democratic Party than the Republican, which has been up until now viewed as the pro-business and individualism party.

OP ED

Remap Too Important to Leave to Madigan

by Jim Nowlan

The dance of democracy continues in 2021 with the once-a-decade ritual of drawing new state legislative and congressional district lines in Illinois and across the nation. In two-thirds of the states, including Illinois, the legislators themselves draw the lines. This means the party in power draws maps that favor incumbents and enhances its partisan control.

This is done rather simply by "cracking" (breaking apart) pockets of opposition party strength or, conversely, by "packing" (concentrating) a party's voters so as to limit the numbers of districts the opposition can win.

A couple of election cycles ago, a friend of mine tallied the total number of votes across Illinois for Democratic and Republican House candidates, respectively. He found that Democrats received 50 percent of the total vote, yet won 60 percent of the legislative seats. (That is what is called "gerrymandering," in honor of Massachusetts Governor Elbridge Gerry, who in the early Republic drew a district, favorable to his allies, that looked like a mythical, contorted salamander.)

But this year can be different, as I explain below.

In 2001 and 2011, Democratic House Speaker Mike Madigan controlled the process and drew maps that were laughingly unconstitutional. The Illinois Constitution clearly states that districts shall be compact and equal in population. However, the 2011 map for the Illinois Legislature includes districts that are stringy, arthritic fingers that reach from central city Chicago out into nearby suburbs, to pick up enough population to provide districts for incumbent Democratic members. See the map attached; are those districts compact?

As soon as the new census figures are tallied and reported to the states, redistricting will begin in earnest. In normal times, Mike Madigan would draw the maps; they would be contested in the courts by opposition Republicans who would scream foul, and the courts would say, tsk, tsk,

This past election, a group of us campaigned successfully to oust Democratic Illinois Supreme Court Justice Tom Kilbride, whom we believed had paid his union dues faithfully to his benefactor Mike Madigan, via highly partisan court opinions.

Immediately upon Kilbride's ouster, the other justices appointed a temporary appointment until 2022. They elevated the man Kilbride had been personally appointing to the state appellate court for 16 years. So, the court remains 4-3 in the hands of the Dems, and ready once again to support a gerrymandered map.

As I say, however, this year is different. First, Madigan and his fellow Dems are under an electron microscope, because the speaker is implicated in a brazen corruption scheme. Even if he loses his speakership contest in the coming weeks, the Dems who follow in his footsteps will be judged on whether they are just like Mike, or can be better.

Second, Gov. JB Pritzker has proclaimed repeatedly that he will support only a "transparent" map-drawing process that is thought to be fair.

So, what to do? Borrowing from an old adage about candidates, you can't beat a bad map with no map. Thus, I propose that good government groups like Change Illinois, the Better Government Association and the League of Women Voters get together to draw alternative maps that are based on the criteria used in neighboring Iowa, which is considered to have

Continued on Page 3


Obituaries

Fitch, Dorothy, 94, Belvidere, December 27
Streit, Donald, 88, Poplar Grove, January 1

Quidnunc



Trump's "Warp Speed" plan using the military to vaccinate the country must have been canceled or never existed.



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

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the gold standard in mapping. The legislature in Iowa turns the process over to its legislative research agency, which is prohibited from using factors of incumbency or political party in drawing new district lines.

Illinois is more diverse than Iowa, and courts and Congress have decreed that minorities must have a fair shot at electing their own. Further, in 2011 the Illinois Legislature added "communities of interest" to the criteria here, to protect Chinatown in Chicago from being fractured in such a way that the community could not elect one of its own.

Fortunately, there is widely available, off-the-shelf technology that allows citizen groups to draw the maps. They could direct a computer to maximize, as much as possible, population equality, compactness, minority opportunities, communities of interest—and to avoid like the plague incumbency and partisan considerations.

The computer whirs for a while and then spits out one or more maps based on those criteria. I am sure independent-minded lawmakers can be found to introduce these maps into the legislature for consideration, along with the in-house gerrymandered version.

But, appreciate that few inside either party will like these nonpolitical maps drawn by outsiders, (probably using the same software as the gerrymanderers). And these maps won't alone transform the legislature from Dem to GOP majority control. The state is too Blue for that.

Independent, nonpartisan maps will, however, be drawn to the benefit of the voters, rather than the elected officials. And such maps would probably result in more competition, that is, more choices for the voters.

All of the above won't happen without relentless public pressure on lawmakers and courts to support nonpartisan maps. I never said democracy was easy.

THE BOONE COUNTY JOURNAL

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--In Our Opinion--

Now.

This is War.

Over 21 million cases of Covid-19 have been recorded in the United States. Over 360,000 Americans have lost their lives to this plague in less than a year. These numbers are escalating daily. To compare, 291,000 Americans in battle made the supreme sacrifice in World War II over four years.

Nothing is more important in Boone County, the United States, or the world than controlling this virus. Now. We don't have a single day to waste.

Because of the hard work of our scientists, and yes, good-old American ingenuity, we now have several vaccines to fight back and exterminate this virus. Our researchers worked hard, efficiently, and put their best efforts into the cause.

That, dear readers, is the American Way.

But all the vaccine that we manufacture isn't going to a bit of good if it's left to rot in freezers. All throughout America, we hear persistent reports of dawdling in getting people inoculated. In Boone County, we hear that the first week's shipment was only 500 doses.

At that rate, with two doses for each of roughly 50,000 people, it will take four years to immunize Boone County from Covid-19.

In the Second World War, Americans made sacrifices. They did without rationed items, arranged blackout curtains, bought war bonds, and worked

booster shots three weeks later!

The bureaucratic-laden plan to ask people to wait their turns and make appointments with a local drug store shows that there is no plan at all--locally or nationally. Is that how the Army inoculated GIs? For our current "leadership," the objective is figuring out how to turn the immunization process into a profitable boondoggle, while bodies stack up at the morgue.

Despite the need to control an increasingly contagious virus and the resulting pleas of medical personnel and scientists, our local public officials haven't the guts to enforce the order to cease inside service at local, germ-laden greasy spoons and taverns. It's all about politics and, to them, far better that anonymous Boone Countians needlessly suffer and die than responding to a public health emergency. We must not offend "the right kind of people," you know. Spit on vulnerable, elderly Vietnam veterans one more time, why don't you?

We could say plenty about the self-proclaimed "stable genius" Donald J. Trump, his mask-eschewing example, and total lack of interest in protecting Americans. No matter: He will be gone in a fortnight. And we are sure our local Republican officials will have plenty of complaints about President Biden and Governor Pritzker. We can see the press releases now and can already hear the nattering nabobs of negativism.

Yes, we know Biden, Pritzker, and their appointees will make mistakes. But we'll support them when they roll up their sleeves, do their best work, and make honest efforts to protect ordinary Americans. Rest assured, that we'll condemn them if they dawdle. As well as any other slackers.

Right now, we have a war to fight, and we don't give a damn about your politics. With war raging in both Europe and the Pacific, anyone with the temerity to say Franklin Roosevelt is "not my President," that Adolph Hitler was a "hoax," or that Wendell Willkie was the real winner of the election of 1940 would have been shunned and dismissed as mentally ill.

This is the United States of America. Let's start acting like it!

long hours. Incredible amounts of war material were produced "on the double."

Joe Biden's plan to produce 100 million doses in 100 days strikes us as lazy. There are over 300 million Americans, and we don't have a year to get the job done. Remember, people are dying every day that we wait.

There are dozens, and probably hundreds of qualified people in Boone County alone who would be honored to volunteer to administer a mass inoculation campaign. If our leaders, national and local, would treat this as a war--instead of planning an ice cream social--we would be done in a weekend, with

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Community News & Events

Boone County CASA's Giving Tree: Now until January 9, 2021, The Boone County CASA is accepting donations at Planet Fitness in Belvidere, IL for "The Baby Bank, a local non-profit that provides baby hygiene products to families in need. Items needed include diapers, baby wipes, formula, soap, detergent, and blankets. Stop by Planet Fitness and select a tag off the giving tree. Buy the item on the tag, then drop the item in the box.

Time to Prune the Fruit Trees: Let University of Illinois Extension Help you this Winter with Upcoming Webinars. To help residents this winter, University of Illinois Extension will be offering its popular "Intro to Fruit Tree Pruning" class in a zoom-webinar format on two different dates: January 20 (12:00-1:30PM), and January 26 (6:00-7:30PM). In this online format, participants will learn the basics of pruning, tools to use, and strategies to consider for their trees

Cost for the class is \$5. For more information and to register, please visit go.illinois.edu/IntroFruitTreePruning or call 815-235-4125.

Illinois Tollway Extends Popular Toll Violation Relief Program through June 30, 2021: The Illinois Tollway is reminding drivers that they have through June 30, 2021 to take advantage of TOLLING 2020 by paying a reduced, \$3.00 fee per toll for passenger vehicles, a savings of 85 percent over the \$20.00 fines previously assessed. Visit www.Illinoistollway.com for more information.

Medicare.gov: As the country begins to distribute COVID-19 vaccines, there's no doubt scammers are already scheming.

Medicare covers the COVID-19 vaccine, so there will be no cost to you. If anyone asks you to share your Medicare Number or pay for access to the vaccine, you can bet it's a scam.

Here's what to know:

- You can't pay to put your name on a list to get the vaccine.
- You can't pay to get early access to a vaccine.
- Don't share your personal or financial information if someone calls, texts, or emails you promising access to the vaccine for a fee.

More Info:

If you come across a COVID-19 vaccine scam, report it to the Federal Trade Commission or call us at 1-800-MEDICARE. And check out CDC.gov for trustworthy information on the COVID-19 vaccine.

Sincerely, The Medicare Team

Winter Parking Regulations for The Village of Cherry Valley: Winter parking regulations will be in effect for the Village of Cherry Valley, Starting December 29, 2020 at 3 P.M.

Boone County CASA's Giving Tree: Now until January 9, 2021, The Boone County CASA is accepting donations at Planet Fitness in Belvidere, IL for "The Baby Bank, a local non-profit that provides baby hygiene products to families in need. Items needed include diapers, baby wipes, formula, soap, detergent, and blankets. Stop by Planet Fitness and select a tag off the giving tree. Buy the

item on the tag, then drop the item in the box.

Vacancies of the Boone County Volunteer Boards:

	Term Expires	Length of Term
Commissioners of the Housing Authority	January 1, 2025	(5) Year Term
	January 1, 2023	(5) Year Term
Fire Protection District #3	May 2021	Remainder of Term
Regional Planning Commission	December 31, 2020	Remainder of Term
	December 31, 2021	Remainder of Term
Boone County Ethics Commission	June 30, 2021	(1) Year Term
Boone County Zoning Board of Appeals	June 1, 2021	Remainder of Term
Building Board of Appeals	June 1, 2024	(5) Year Term
	June 1, 202	(5) Year Term
Capron Cemetery Association	February 2027	(6) Year Term

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

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Pandemic Response, Budget, Black Caucus Agenda on Table For 'Lame Duck' Session

House will reconvene Friday ahead of next week's inauguration of new members

by Peter Hancock Capitol News Illinois

Illinois lawmakers will return to the capital city on Friday for a "lame duck" session that is expected to focus on the state's COVID-19 response, a nearly \$4 billion budget deficit and a host of social issues being advanced by the Legislative Black Caucus.

House Speaker Michael Madigan's office notified that chamber's members of the plans in an email sent Wednesday, Dec. 30. Senate President

Continued on Page 5

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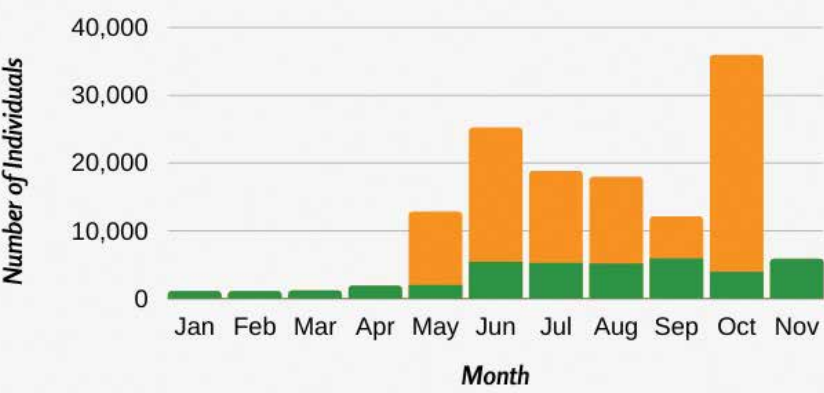
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COVID-19 RESPONSE

BAR GRAPH KEY:


- = Additional Saturday drive-thrus in Belvidere
- = Ongoing Tuesday hours at food pantry

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Don Harmon has not officially announced his plans, but his spokesman said in an email over the weekend that senators have been advised to hold the dates open in the event lawmakers are called back into session.

Lawmakers haven't met since late May when they held an abbreviated special session to pass a budget and a few other items that were considered essential. The regular fall veto session, which had been scheduled for late November and early December, was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The budget that lawmakers passed during that special session with only Democratic votes was about \$5 billion out of balance. But it was passed on the assumption that Congress would soon pass a stimulus package that would include aid to struggling state and local governments and that voters in November would approve a constitutional amendment to allow the state to levy a graduated income tax. Neither of those two things happened.

In November, Democratic Gov. JB Pritzker announced plans to borrow \$2 billion from the Federal Reserve's Municipal Liquidity Facility to cover revenue losses the state has suffered since the start of the pandemic. That was in addition to the \$1.2 billion the state borrowed to make up for revenue losses at the end of the last fiscal year.

In addition, in December he ordered more than \$700 million in spending cuts from executive branch agencies. But that still leaves the state more than \$1 billion short of what it needs to balance the current year's budget.

Republicans, who have been clamoring for months for lawmakers to return to session, said during a virtual news conference Monday that they believe Democrats want to use the lame duck session to push through a tax increase to fill the budget hole.

"They refused to listen to our warnings over and over again," said House Minority Leader Jim Durkin, of Western Springs. "And now, after voters just sent the Democrats a message, Madigan and his cohorts will be trying to sneak a tax increase – yes, sneak a tax increase – into the lame duck session."

Pritzker has said in the past that he would consider closing certain business tax "loopholes" in order to raise additional revenue, but more recently he has said that he wants to focus on spending cuts.

Madigan, meanwhile, said in December that he was prepared to push for an increase in the state's flat income tax rate, should Pritzker propose one. But Pritzker has given no indication that he plans to make such a proposal.

Rep. Greg Harris, of Chicago, the House Majority Leader, did not immediately respond Monday to a request for comment about his plans for the special session.

In addition to dealing with the budget crisis, lawmakers may also consider measures regarding the state's overall pandemic response, which so far has been managed almost exclusively out of the governor's office.

Many lawmakers, particularly Republicans, have expressed frustration during the pandemic that they have had no role in making decisions that involve closing schools, restaurants and bars or imposing limits on gathering sizes.

"We can stop allowing Gov. Pritzker to run this state unilaterally by executive order," Durkin said Monday. "We can fix the state's broken unemployment insurance system that still is barely functioning nearly a year later, resulting in thousands of families struggling to put food on the table each day."

Also likely to be on the agenda is a long list of policy initiatives being pushed by members of the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus focusing on racial and social justice issues that were thrust into the forefront following the killing of George Floyd by Minneapolis police officers in May.

The session is scheduled to begin Friday, Jan. 8, and could run until Jan. 13, when the 102nd General Assembly will convene to inaugurate new members.

Pritzker Issues Marijuana Pardons, State Police Clear Eligible Arrest Records

ISP expunges over 490,000 state arrest records, local counties still working on clearing logs

by Raymon Troncoso Capitol News Illinois

Gov. JB Pritzker issued 9,219 pardons for low-level marijuana convictions on Thursday, New Year's Eve, while announcing the Illinois State Police had expunged all eligible records at the state level for marijuana related arrests.

Since the passage of the Cannabis Regulation and Tax Act in 2019, Pritzker has issued pardons in 20,236 marijuana cases. Pritzker previously issued 11,017 pardons for low-level marijuana convictions on New Year's Eve 2019.

In a release distributed New Year's Eve, Pritzker also announced that ISP had expunged 492,129 non-felony marijuana-related arrest records in the state database. These expungements will also be mirrored in local law enforcement agencies.

Of the 102 counties in Illinois, only 10 – including DuPage, Kane and Peoria counties – have expunged their records for eligible arrests. The other counties were required to expunge records of arrests created between 2013 and 2019 by Jan. 1 and have until Jan. 1, 2025 to expunge all eligible arrest records.

"As we near the end of the first year of Illinois' new legal cannabis industry, I am heartened by the progress we have made towards undoing the harms dealt by the failed war on drugs," Toi Hutchinson, Pritzker's senior marijuana advisor, said in a statement. "Eleven states in the nation have legalized cannabis for recreational use, but no other state has done the important work we're doing here in Illinois, where equity intentionality takes center stage."

The legalization act created three groups of marijuana-related records eligible for some type of expungement. The first two groups are eligible for automatic expungement, meaning no action is required on behalf of the affected party, while the third group requires a court petition to start the expungement process.

ISP's completed arrest record expungement, and the corresponding record purge ongoing at the local level, is part of the first group. Eligible records for expungement in this category are arrests for possession under 30 grams or less that occurred before June 25, 2019. The arrest must not have resulted in charges, or if it did, those charges were dropped, dismissed, resulted in acquittal, or resulted in qualified probation that has been completed.

This automatic expungement only occurs in law enforcement databases. To remove all mentions of the arrest from court records, a motion must be filed by the defendant in the court where the charges were brought.

Arrests for minor marijuana offenses that were tied to a violent or sexual crime are also not eligible for expungement. Neither are arrests for delivery on school grounds, trafficking or

possession of marijuana plants.

Records available for automatic expungement in the second group go through a six-step process that includes a pardon from the governor, such as the ones issued Thursday. These are convictions for low-level misdemeanors that occurred before June 25, 2019, such as possession of 30 grams or less, or the sale of marijuana up to 10 grams.

Eligible convictions are first compiled by ISP and delivered to the Prisoner Review Board. If a conviction was for a class 4 felony, the state's attorney for the jurisdiction in which that conviction took place can object to the case being eligible for expungement, which is then resolved in a hearing.

The PRB will then recommend eligible convictions to the governor for a pardon. The governor then decides whether to accept or deny the recommendation. Pardons issued by the governor are given to the Illinois attorney general, in this case Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul, who then files a request with the circuit clerk where the conviction occurred to expunge the record. The circuit clerk then expunges the record and sends an order to law enforcement to expunge records related to the conviction as well.

According to PRB Chair Craig Findley, the board expects to review "thousands of additional felony and misdemeanor" marijuana offenses in 2021.

The third and final group of records eligible for expungement are not subject to an automatic process, but require a court petition filed by the convicted party. These are for marijuana offenses that do not qualify for the previous two groups.

As part of the legalization law, a portion of tax revenue from the legal sale of marijuana must be put towards the expungement process. For convictions in the third group that require a court petition, these funds go toward legal assistance through the New Leaf Illinois initiative that connects eligible Illinoisans seeking to remove convictions from their record with 20 nonprofit organizations that provide free legal representation and information on expungements.

"Statewide, Illinoisans hold hundreds of thousands low-level cannabis-related records, a burden disproportionately shouldered by communities of color," Pritzker said in a release Thursday. "We will never be able to fully remedy the depth of that damage. But we can govern with the courage to admit the mistakes of our past—and the decency to set a better path forward."

Illinoisans with an arrest or conviction for marijuana seeking legal aid can visit NewLeafIllinois.org or call the New Leaf Illinois hotline at 855-963-9532.

Charles Herbst

Attorney At Law

Practice Areas:

- Wills and Trusts
- Tax Strategy
- IRS Representation
- Real Estate
- Wealth Planning
- LLCs and Corporate



Education:

- LL.M. (Masters in Tax Law) New York University
- B.S. Business, J.D. Law (cum laude) Indiana University

Experience:

- International Tax Associates, Director of Federal Tax Research
- Ernst and Young LLP, Manager; Writer, Washington National Tax Writing Center
- Private Practice in the local area for over 13 years
- Former chairman of the written publications committee of the Indiana State Bar Association.

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Licensed to practice before the Internal Revenue Service nationally and in state courts in Illinois.

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815 484 9482

Public Notices

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

IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION FOR ADOPTION OF:
ATLAS HARTEL, a child. Boone COUNTY CASE NO. 2020AD7
NOTICE TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

TAKE NOTICE that a Petition for Adoption was filed in the Circuit Court of the 17th Judicial Circuit, Boone County, Illinois, for the adoption of a child named, ATLAS HARTEL;

NOW, THEREFORE, unless you, ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN, file your answer to the Petition in the action or otherwise file your appearance therein, in the said Circuit Court of Boone County, in the City of Belvidere, Illinois, on or before the 12 day of January, 2021, a default may be entered against you at any time following that day, and a judgment order entered in accordance with the prayer of said Petition.

DATED: 12/15, 2020

Linda J. Andersen, Clerk of the Circuit Clerk
Attorney Alicia Oliver Leonard
318 N. 1st St.
Rockford, IL 61107
815-315-7873

Published in The Boone County Journal Dec 25, Jan 1, 8

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

IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION FOR ADOPTION OF: ZAYIAN HARTEL, a child. BOONE COUNTY CASE NO. 2020AD5
NOTICE TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

TAKE NOTICE that a Petition for Adoption was filed in the Circuit Court of the 17th Judicial Circuit, BOONE County, Illinois, for the adoption of a child named, ZAYIAN HARTEL;

NOW, THEREFORE, unless you, ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN, file your answer to the Petition in the action or otherwise file your appearance therein, in the said Circuit Court of BOONE County, in the City of Belvidere, Illinois, on or before the 12 day of January, 2021, a default may be entered against you at any time following that day, and a judgment order entered in accordance with the prayer of said Petition.

DATED: 12/15, 2020

Linda J. Andersen, Clerk of the Circuit Clerk
Attorney Alicia Oliver Leonard
318 N. 1st St.
Rockford, IL 61107
815-315-7873

Published in The Boone County Journal Dec 25, Jan 1, 8

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

IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION FOR ADOPTION OF:
JORDYNN HARTEL, a child.
BOONE COUNTY CASE NO. 2020AD6
NOTICE TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

TAKE NOTICE that a Petition for Adoption was filed in the Circuit Court of the 17th Judicial Circuit, BOONE County, Illinois, for the adoption of a child named, JORDYNN HARTEL;

NOW, THEREFORE, unless you, ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN, file your answer to the Petition in the action or otherwise file your appearance therein, in the said Circuit Court of BOONE County, in the City of Belvidere, Illinois, on or before the 12 day of January, 2021, a default may be entered against you at any time following that day, and a judgment order entered in accordance with the prayer of said Petition

DATED: 12/15, 2020

Linda J. Andersen, Clerk of the Circuit Clerk
Attorney Alicia Oliver Leonard
318 N. 1st St.
Rockford, IL 61107
815-315-7873

Published in The Boone County Journal Dec 25, Jan 1, 8

Public Notice:

Early Voting for the February 23, 2021 Consolidated Primary Election will begin on Thursday, January 14, 2021 and end February 22, 2021. This Primary Election is City of Belvidere Mayor, City of Belvidere Clerk, Alderperson in Wards 2 and 3 and Belvidere Township Trustees. There are no Democratic candidates running for this office, so this will be a Republican Primary only. Early Voting for Boone County residents will be conducted at the Boone County Clerk's Office, 1212 Logan Ave, Suite 103, Belvidere, IL 61008. The office is open Monday through Friday, 8:30AM to 5:00PM. The office will be closed in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day on January 18, 2021 and again on February 15, 2021 in observance of President's Day. The office will also be open on Saturday, February 20, 2021 from 9:00AM to 12:00PM

For more information about Early Voting please contact the Boone County Clerk's Office at 815-544-3103.

Julie A. Bliss
Boone County Clerk & Recorder

Published in the Boone County Journal Jan 1 thru Feb 19, 2021

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, January 26, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. in the County Board Room, 1212 Logan Ave, Belvidere, IL 61008 upon the following petitions:

The applicant, Sherry Voss, 2705 Blake Rd Garden Prairie, IL 61038, is requesting a Special Use Permit under Section 2.7 (Special Use) and Section 3.16.1 (Table of Permitted Uses) of the Boone County Zoning Ordinance to allow the use of antique sales in the A-1, Agricultural Preservation District, at 2705 Blake Rd. Garden Prairie, IL, unincorporated Spring Township, Boone County Illinois. (PIN: 08-23-100-005, Legal: 23-43-4 SE1/4 NW1/4).

The applicant, Patrick Morris, 3404 Manchester Rd. Poplar Grove, IL 61065, is requesting a Special Use Permit under Section 2.7 (Special Use) and Section 3.16.1 (Table of Permitted Uses) of the Boone County Zoning Ordinance to allow the use of temporary seasonal housing in the A-1, Agricultural Preservation District, at 4840 Manchester Rd. Poplar Grove, IL in unincorporated Manchester Township. (PIN: 01-11-400-005, Legal: 11-46-3 S 749.12' E 1/2 SE ¼)

Tony Savino, Chair, Boone County Zoning Board of Appeals
Published in the Boone County Journal on January 8, 2021.

PUBLIC NOTICE is hereby given that at 6:00 P.M., February 17, 2021, Public Hearing will be held at Boone County Fire Protection District No. 2, 1777 Henry Luckow Lane, Belvidere, Illinois, for the purpose of considering the proposed amended budget and appropriation ordinance of the District. Any party interested in viewing a copy of the proposed amended budget and ordinance may do so during business hours (8:00 A.M. to 5 P.M.) at the station at 1777 Henry Luckow Lane, Belvidere, Illinois.

Published in *The Boone County Journal* Jan 8, 2021

Belvidere Township Park District Board of Commissioners 2021 Meeting Schedule 920 West Lincoln Avenue Baltic Mill Annex

Tuesday	January 12	5:00 p.m.	Baltic Mill Annex
Tuesday	January 26	5:00 p.m.	Baltic Mill Annex
Tuesday	February 9	5:00 p.m.	Baltic Mill Annex
Tuesday	February 23	5:00 p.m.	Baltic Mill Annex
Tuesday	March 9	5:00 p.m.	Baltic Mill Annex
Tuesday	March 23	5:00 p.m.	Baltic Mill Annex
Tuesday	April 13	5:00 p.m.	Baltic Mill Annex
Tuesday	April 27	5:00 p.m.	Baltic Mill Annex
Tuesday	May 11	5:00 p.m.	Baltic Mill Annex
Tuesday	May 25	5:00 p.m.	Baltic Mill Annex
Tuesday	June 8	5:00 p.m.	Baltic Mill Annex
Tuesday	June 22	5:00 p.m.	Baltic Mill Annex
Tuesday	July 13	5:00 p.m.	Baltic Mill Annex
Tuesday	July 27	5:00 p.m.	Baltic Mill Annex
Tuesday	August 10	5:00 p.m.	Baltic Mill Annex
Tuesday	August 24	5:00 p.m.	Baltic Mill Annex
Tuesday	September 14	5:00 p.m.	Baltic Mill Annex
Tuesday	September 28	5:00 p.m.	Baltic Mill Annex
Tuesday	October 12	5:00 p.m.	Baltic Mill Annex
Tuesday	October 26	5:00 p.m.	Baltic Mill Annex
Tuesday	November 9	5:00 p.m.	Baltic Mill Annex
Tuesday	November 23	5:00 p.m.	Baltic Mill Annex
Tuesday	December 14	5:00 p.m.	Baltic Mill Annex

Published in *Boone County Journal* January 8, 2021

Assumed Names

ASSUMED NAME CERTIFICATE OF INTENTION

This is to certify that the undersigned intend to conduct and transact a landscaping business in said County and State under the name of Mujica Landscaping at the following post office address: 609 Union Avenue, Belvidere, IL 61008 that the true and real full names of all persons owning, conducting or transacting such business, with respective residence address of each, are as follows: Clemente Mujica, 213 King Henry Road SE, Poplar Grove, IL 61065; phone #224-423-7801.

Subscribed and sworn (or affirmed) to before me, this 19th day of November, A.D. 2020

Julie Stapler, County Clerk

Published in Boone County Journal December 4, 11, 18

ASSUMED NAME CERTIFICATE OF INTENTION

This is to certify that the undersigned intend to conduct and transact a construction business in said County and State under the name of Keating Exteriors at the following post office address: 322 W. 10th Street, Belvidere, IL 61008 that the true and real full names of all persons owning, conducting or transacting such business, with respective residence address of each, are as follows: Keith Keating, 322 W. 10th Street, Belvidere, IL 61008; phone #815-566-5022.

Subscribed and sworn (or affirmed) to before me, this 24th day of November, A.D. 2020

Julie Stapler, County Clerk

Published in Boone County Journal, December 4, 11, 18

ASSUMED NAME CERTIFICATE OF INTENTION

STATE OF ILLINOIS
COUNTY OF BOONE
This is to certify that the undersigned intend to conduct and transact a graphic custom design business in said County and State under the name of Starfire Grafix at the following post office address: 854 Pear Street Road, Belvidere, IL 61008 that the true and real full names of all persons owning, conducting or transacting such business, with respective residence address of each, are as follows: Norma Allen, 854 Pearl Street Road, Belvidere, IL 61008; phone #815-218-6969.

Subscribed and sworn (or affirmed) to before me, this 2nd day of December, A.D. 2020

Julie Stapler, County Clerk

Published in Boone County Journal December 4, 11, 18

ASSUMED NAME CERTIFICATE OF INTENTION

STATE OF ILLINOIS
COUNTY OF BOONE
This is to certify that the undersigned intend to conduct and transact a landscaping and snow removal, grass cutting, spring and fall cleanup, installing mulch business, in said County and State under the name of 3 Brothers Landscaping and Snow Removal at the following post office address: 105 Candlewick Drive SE, Poplar Grove, IL 61065 that the true and real full names of all persons owning, conducting or transacting such business, with respective residence address of each, are as follows: Genaro Montano Fonseca, 105 Candlewick Drive SE, Poplar Grove, IL 61065; phone #815-566-5143.

Subscribed and sworn (or affirmed) to before me, this 17th day of December, A.D. 2020

Julie Stapler, County Clerk

Published in Boone County Journal December 25, January 1, 8

ASSUMED NAME CERTIFICATE OF INTENTION

STATE OF ILLINOIS
COUNTY OF BOONE
This is to certify that the undersigned intend to conduct and transact office cleaning business, in said County and State under the name of Sunrise Office Cleaning at the following post office address: 114 Pembroke Road SW, Poplar Grove, IL 61065 that the true and real full names of all persons owning, conducting or transacting such business, with respective residence address of each, are as follows: Armando Solano, 114 Pembroke road SW, Poplar Grove, IL 61065; phone #815-668-5662.

Subscribed and sworn (or affirmed) to before me, this 17th day of December, A.D. 2020

Julie Stapler, County Clerk

Published in Boone County Journal December 25, January 1, 8

ASSUMED NAME CERTIFICATE OF INTENTION

STATE OF ILLINOIS
COUNTY OF BOONE
This is to certify that the undersigned intend to conduct and transact a marketing and business relation consulting company business in said County and State under the name of Cree Distributions at the following post office address: 640 Candlewick Drive NE, Ste. #1, Poplar Grove, IL 61065 that the true and real full names of all persons owning, conducting or transacting such business, with respective residence address of each, are as follows: Lateesha Collins, 640 Candlewick Drive NE, Ste. #1 Poplar Grove, IL 61065; phone #231-224-6315.

Subscribed and sworn (or affirmed) to before me, this 2nd day of December, A.D. 2020

Julie Stapler, County Clerk

Published in Boone County Journal December 25, January 1, 8

ASSUMED NAME CERTIFICATE OF INTENTION STATE OF ILLINOIS COUNTY OF BOONE

This is to certify that the undersigned intend to conduct and transact a auto and truck repair business in said County and State under the name of Snap's Auto and Truck Repair at the following post office address: 6276 Logan Avenue, Belvidere, IL 61008 that the true and real full names of all persons owning, conducting or transacting such business, with respective residence address of each, are as follows: Keith W. Beers, 815 Prospect Street, Belvidere, IL 61008; phone #779-200-2894.

Subscribed and sworn (or affirmed) to before me, this 31st day of December, A.D. 2020

Julie Stapler, County Clerk

Published in *Boone County Journal* January 8, 15, 22

State Sen. Manar Resigns to Become Senior Advisor to Pritzker

Senate Republican Leader Brady resigned Dec. 31 as well

by Jerry Nowicki Capitol News Illinois

Democratic state Sen. Andy Manar of downstate Bunker Hill announced Monday he will resign from the General Assembly effective Jan. 17 to join the governor's office as an advisor two days later.

The announcement marked the second high-profile resignation from the state Senate in one week's time, as Minority Leader Bill Brady, R-Bloomington, announced his immediate resignation on Dec. 31.

Manar announced his resignation shortly after noon Monday, and within 20 minutes Gov. JB Pritzker's office announced he would hire Manar as a senior advisor. Manar will be paid \$278,000, annually according to the governor's office, half of which will be paid out from a limited liability company created by Pritzker to compensate several of his top aides beyond their state payrolls. That company is East Jackson Street LLC.

The rate of pay is more than three-and-a-half times Manar's Senate salary, which was \$79,100 in 2019, according to a state database run through the Illinois Comptroller's office.

In a statement, Manar said his wife Trista and three children "have only known me as a husband and father who also carries the responsibility of serving as an elected official."

"They have never known a day otherwise," he said. "The time has come for someone new to take up the call in the Illinois Senate. Central Illinois is full of outstanding individuals ready to step forward to meet the challenge — be an agent of change in Downstate Illinois."

Manar would have been up for reelection in the 48th Senate District in 2022, likely facing a difficult challenge in an area that leaned heavily toward Republican President Donald Trump in the 2020 election. He did not respond to a phone message from Capitol News Illinois Monday.

Manar replaces Nikki Budzinski, who left the administration in February, as a senior advisor.

"Andy is a fiercely devoted public servant with an enviable track record in the legislature. His counsel and friendship have been invaluable over the last two years," Pritzker's Chief of Staff Anne Caprara said in a statement. "We are elated that he will be serving alongside this team as we face the challenges of the coming years."

The Bunker Hill Democrat has served in the Senate since 2012 and was most notably the lead negotiator of an evidence-based funding formula for K-12 education which directs money to the schools that are furthest from funding adequacy based on a number of factors. That reform passed in 2017.

Prior to the General Assembly he served as city councilman, then mayor in Bunker Hill, as well as Macoupin County Board Chairman.

Brady, who resigned ahead of the new year, served as Senate GOP leader since 2017, but members of his caucus elected Sen. Dan McConchie, of Hawthorn Woods, to lead them in the 102nd General Assembly which begins Jan. 13.

Brady served in the Illinois House from 1993 to 2000 and has served in the state Senate since 2002. He also made three separate bids for the

Continued on Page 7

governorship, winning a place on the ballot as the GOP's candidate facing Pat Quinn in 2010. He lost to Quinn by approximately 32,000 votes.

He did not give a reason for his resignation in a letter distributed to members of the Senate Republican caucus. He was paid \$96,500 in 2019, according to the comptroller's database. He would have stood for reelection in 2022 in the heavily Republican area.

"Over the years, our caucus was successful in securing additional funding for our public schools, helping create a tax-credit private school scholarship program for low and middle-income students, standing up against incomes tax hikes that hurt working families, and working tirelessly to improve our state's crumbling infrastructure," he said in the letter.

Both senators stepped down after a deadline that would have called for special elections to choose their successors, so local party leaders in the counties within their districts will choose each of the senators' replacements.

Sen. President Don Harmon, who was voted to that post in January 2019, lauded both outgoing senators in statements distributed by a spokesperson.

"I will miss working with Leader Brady. He has proven time and again to be a results-driven lawmaker and leader. While we have our political differences, he always came to the negotiating table looking for common ground and success, not conflict," Harmon, D-Oak Park, said as he wished Brady well.

Harmon called Manar a "guiding force for so many lawmakers on so many issues," noting that Manar served first as a chief of staff in the Senate before being elected to the chamber.

"He's compiled a lifetime of achievements in what is still a very young career. Atop that list would be the education funding overhaul he led that sets our state on a course for fundamental education fairness, equity and excellence," Harmon said. "Andy's been my friend and an invaluable sounding board since my first days in the Senate, and I'm grateful that our friendship is even stronger today. The governor is very lucky to have him. I wish Andy all the very best in his new role."

GOP Lawmakers Introduce 'Fair Maps' Legislation

Bill similar to failed 2016 unconstitutional amendment

By Peter Hancock Capitol News Illinois

Republicans in the Illinois House said Tuesday that they hope to use legislation, instead of a constitutional amendment, to change the way state legislative and congressional district lines are redrawn every 10 years.

The so-called "fair maps" proposal would authorize the General Assembly to set up an independent, nonpartisan commission to redraw the lines, taking that highly political process out of the hands of legislators who currently are able to use that process to protect themselves politically, a process known as "gerrymandering."

Redistricting is a process that all states go through following each decennial federal census and one that Illinois must complete in the upcoming session so that districts can be established in time for candidates to file for office in time for the 2022 elections.

Rep. Tim Butler, R-Springfield, said the measure is similar to the proposed constitutional amendment that supporters tried to put on the ballot in 2016 before being blocked by a sharply divided Illinois Supreme Court. The main difference is that it would put the process into statute instead of the constitution.

"This is a great way to do it through statute to make sure that we have an independent commission that draws our maps this year, gets it out of the hands of the leadership of the General Assembly and puts it in the hands of a commission of citizens to draw fair and equitable maps across the state of Illinois," Butler said during a virtual news conference.

In 2016, supporters of such a change circulated petitions to put a constitutional amendment on that year's general election ballot. That's one of three ways the current Illinois Constitution allows amendments to be considered. The others are by

a constitutional convention or by a resolution approved by a three-fifths majority in both the House and Senate.

However, the constitution also limits the scope of citizen-initiated amendments to "to structural and procedural subjects contained in Article IV," which pertains to the General Assembly.

In a 4-3 ruling, the Supreme Court blocked the proposal from going onto the ballot because the proposed amendment contained elements that also dealt with the attorney general and the auditor general.

The legal challenge to the amendment was brought by several individuals led by John Hooker, a former Commonwealth Edison lobbyist who is now under indictment for allegedly taking part in a bribery scheme aimed at buying the favor of House Speaker Michael Madigan.

Former Justice Thomas Kilbride, who lost his bid for retention in November, wrote the majority opinion in that case, and that was a factor in the GOP-led campaign to remove him from the court.

"And that decision really still burns me to this day," said Rep. Ryan Spain, R-Peoria, who was among the nearly 600,000 people who signed a petition to put that amendment on the ballot.

"So something has to change," Spain added. "And since the Supreme Court decision many years ago, I have repeatedly supported and been either the sponsor or the chief cosponsor of a number of different initiatives to change the way we approach redistricting in the state of Illinois."

Rep. Jackie Haas, R-Bourbonnais, said her district is an example of how gerrymandering can be unfair to certain communities. She said her 79th House District excludes three-quarters of the small town of Momence, whose 2010 population was 3,171, and includes only three streets in the village of Beecher, which has about 4,500 residents.

"These moves were not based on township, village, or meaningful divisions, but on pure partisan maneuvers to advantage (House Speaker Michael) Madigan, to keep his majority in his power," Haas said.

Butler filed the bill, House Bill 5873, Tuesday. That makes it eligible for consideration in the upcoming lame duck session, which begins Friday, Jan. 8.

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Pandemic, Social Unrest, Statehouse Scandals Top 2020 Stories

Budget, leadership changes, Black Caucus agenda on tap for 2021

by Jerry Nowicki, Peter Hancock, Sarah Mansur and Raymon Troncoso
Capitol News Illinois

It was a year like no other, and one most Americans would just as soon forget, but 2020 is sure to last in the history books as one of the most tumultuous in modern history.

It was a year when face masks and hand sanitizer became ubiquitous items of everyday life and when major sporting events that many Americans use to mark the passage of time were canceled or delayed.

It was also a year marked by racial and social unrest following the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and other Black Americans at the hands of police. And it was a year of economic catastrophe that brought about some of the highest unemployment rates the nation has seen.

For Illinois, the year seemed to begin on a hopeful note. The state was running a budget surplus for the first time in many years. By February, unemployment had fallen to an all-time low.

But things were about to change amid a backdrop of pandemic and government corruption scandals that rocked the foundation of power of the nation's longest-serving state legislative leader.

COVID-19 pandemic

On Jan. 24, a Chicago woman who had just returned home from Wuhan, China, where the COVID-19 pandemic originated, tested positive for the disease. A few days later, her husband tested positive as well, marking the first known instance of person-to-person spread in the U.S.

On March 9, Gov. JB Pritzker declared a statewide disaster and quickly began invoking his emergency powers with a series of executive orders including closure of K-12 schools to in-person learning and a statewide stay-at-home order that brought much of the state's economy to a grinding halt.

By year's end, COVID-19 had claimed the lives of more than 16,000 Illinoisans as the rapid distribution of a pair of vaccines marked new hope that the "beginning of the end" of the pandemic was near.

Madigan scandal

After more than three decades as one of the most powerful men in the state, Illinois House Speaker Michael Madigan faced an uncertain political future as 2020 neared its end.

His future as speaker and Democratic Party of Illinois chairman was first put in doubt on July 17 when officials at utility giant Commonwealth Edison admitted in court to a yearslong bribery scheme in which they sought to buy favor with Madigan – the latest in a series of bombshell investigatory revelations that have centered on Democratic state politicians since 2019.

The case sparked an internal House investigation in which Republicans sought to oust him from office, but that effort was thwarted when Democrats on the investigating committee – all Madigan loyalists – voted against recommending a disciplinary charge.

Madigan himself has not been charged criminally and has denied any wrongdoing.

But at least 19 members of the House Democratic caucus have said they will not vote to re-elect him as speaker, which would mean

he is well short of the 60 votes needed to win another term. No one else has yet emerged as a viable contender for the office, however, so it is unclear what will happen when lawmakers reconvene in Springfield in January to choose a speaker for the 102nd General Assembly.

Leadership changes

While there is some uncertainty about whether Madigan will serve as speaker next year, a leadership change would make House Republican Leader Jim Durkin the General Assembly's most tenured leader.

Durkin, who hails from Western Springs, has been House minority leader since 2013. That caucus indicated it will back him again in January after a brief challenge from Rep. Tony McCombie, from Savanna, who eventually backed Durkin.

While 2020 began with a leadership change on the Democratic side in the Senate, it ended with a change in Republican leadership in that chamber.

After former Senate President John Cullerton announced plans to retire in 2019 after 11 years, Sens. Kimberly Lightford, from Maywood, and Don Harmon, from Oak Park, emerged as top contenders to fill the remainder of Cullerton's two-year term. Ultimately, Harmon secured majority support from the Democratic caucus and was elected on Jan. 19 following several hours of behind-the-scenes negotiations. Harmon's fellow Democrats indicated earlier this month they would back him for another two-year term come January.

Senate Minority Leader Bill Brady, from Bloomington, announced in early November his plans to step down from Republican leadership in the Senate after three years, and members of the caucus chose Sen. Dan McConchie, from Hawthorn Woods, as his replacement. McConchie has served in the chamber since 2016.

The new year will also see challengers emerge for governor and other state constitutional officers, as candidates have already begun to announce their intentions for a statewide run.

Looking ahead

Despite the pandemic, Illinois voters went to the polls in record numbers in 2020, opting for Democrat Joseph Biden over incumbent Donald Trump by a 58-41 percent margin.

Nearly 6.1 million ballots were cast in the November election – the largest number recorded in Illinois – after state lawmakers passed a measure greatly expanding access to mail balloting for the 2020 general election in response to the pandemic.

Democrats lost one seat in the state House to hold a 73-45 supermajority but gained a seat in the state Senate to hold a 41-18 supermajority.

Republicans scored some big wins by defeating Gov. JB Pritzker's proposed constitutional amendment to allow a graduated income tax and by ousting Supreme Court Justice Thomas Kilbride, setting up a GOP effort to take a one-seat majority on the high court in 2022.

Legislatively in 2021, Pritzker and the General Assembly are facing a \$3.9 billion revenue shortfall, due largely to the financial impact of COVID-19 and the failure of the graduated income tax, and they are bracing for difficult choices to cut spending, raise revenue or some combination of both.

Pritzker has proposed \$700 million in spending cuts as a "first step" to address the budget holes. His administration also announced plans to borrow \$2 billion through a federal program to cover revenue losses and unforeseen COVID-19 expenses for the current fiscal year, but other difficult budget decisions loom in 2021.

The state's two main storylines of 2020 –

scandal and pandemic – have also contributed to the derailing of a potential massive overhaul of the state's energy landscape. The Clean Energy Jobs Act and other energy reforms could be near the top of the agenda when lawmakers return for a 2021 session as well.

Black Caucus agenda

Initiatives of the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus will also be at the top of the state government agenda in 2021 following a tumultuous 2020.

The agenda, aimed at ending systemic racism in Illinois, comes amid the backdrop of massive protests against police brutality and racial inequality, as well as the COVID-19 pandemic that disproportionately infected and killed Black and Latino Americans.

The agenda is split among four pillars of policy: criminal justice reform, violence and police accountability; education and workforce development; economic access, equity and opportunity; and health care and human services.

From September to October, the Black Caucus held more than 100 hours of hearings to inform potential legislation, some of which caucus leader Kimberly Lightford said will be brought forth for January's lame duck session before the swearing-in of new lawmakers.

The effort was partially in response to prolonged social unrest following the May 25 death of George Floyd, who died after a Minneapolis Police officer knelt on his neck for over 9 minutes. Protests began the next day in Minneapolis and quickly spread to cities across the country.

That unrest led Gov. Pritzker to deploy the Illinois National Guard to Chicago on May 31 after a weekend of large-scale protests devolved into violence in some areas.

Meanwhile, Cook County State's Attorney Kim Foxx drew national attention for dropping charges for minor and non-violent offenses for hundreds of protestors, and President Trump engaged in high-profile disputes of rhetoric with Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot and Gov. Pritzker over the deployment of federal authorities to Illinois to clamp down on protests. While widescale intervention was avoided, some federal officers were deployed to aid ongoing law enforcement efforts to combat gun and drug crimes.

Ultimately, the protests which lasted from May until early November became the largest in U.S. history with an estimated 15 to 26 million participants across the country, with more protests taking place worldwide.

Marijuana licensing

In 2019, the Cannabis Regulation and Tax Act legalized the sale and use of recreational marijuana in Illinois, and in legalization's first year, sales were expected to reach \$1 billion, yielding more than \$100 million in state and local tax revenue.

There's plenty of room for those numbers to grow, as at the start of 2020 the state had issued only 30 licenses for recreational dispensaries to firms that were already licensed as medical dispensaries.

Despite the promise that 75 new licenses would be awarded to social equity applicants in an effort to diversify the industry, the pandemic and a number of lawsuits delayed the process. While no additional licenses were awarded in 2020, the state won a lawsuit in November that could allow the program to move forward in 2021.

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