

Things Change and Everything Stays the Same

By David Larson

This week, the *Chicago Tribune* published a story by Ashley Capoot about the city of Quincy, Illinois and remote working in the post COVID-19 economy. For many, working from home, tied to the office by an internet connection, and an occasional commute is now a permanent reality. The corporate world, forced to innovate, is moving quickly toward the remote worker format, because it often proved to be better.

Belvidere's future could also be tied to remote workers, in addition to the traditional manufacturing enterprises and warehouses that many local governmental officials seem so keen to attract. The kind of activity we see of the 500 block of South State Street in this photo, achieved by the first generation in Belvidere, should stimulate that type of economic growth in Boone County.

Belvidere had reached an architectural peak for a city of its size in the 1890s. Belvidere's status had changed from frontier to civilization in 50 years. This photograph shows the state of Belvidere's retail district and the flow of the hub of community when Belvidere was about to enter the 20th Century. Today, much of what remains is hidden behind years of "innovation," covering the original over with quick fix, faddish facades.

Continued on page 4

Inside the Federal Indictment of the Mike Madigan

Madigan says government is 'attempting to criminalize' job recommendations

By Beth Hundsdorfer & Jerry Nowicki
Capitol News Illinois

In a 106-page, 22-count indictment, federal prosecutors painted a picture of former House Speaker Michael Madigan as the leader, along with a longtime confidante, of a sweeping criminal enterprise that influenced legislation for personal power and financial gain.

"The Madigan Enterprise," as prosecutors called it in the document filed Wednesday, benefitted from Madigan's position as a Democratic ward committeeman, speaker of the Illinois House of Representatives, chairman of the Democratic Party of Illinois and law partner at Madigan & Getzendanner.

In those capacities, Madigan, either personally or through confidante Michael McClain, is accused of guiding the enterprise's illegal activities to punish opponents and reward loyalists, all while generating money for him and other members of the criminal enterprise, according to the indictment and comments from U.S. Attorney John Lausch Jr. of the Northern District of Illinois.

The feds accused Madigan of using intermediaries, falsifying documents, meeting in-person and using

Continued on Page 4

Former Sen. Tom Cullerton Pleads Guilty to Embezzlement

Plea deal calls for nearly \$250k restitution, possible prison time

By Peter Hancock *Capitol News Illinois*

Former state Sen. Tom Cullerton pleaded guilty Tuesday to one count of embezzlement and could face more than a year in federal prison.

During a plea hearing in federal court in Chicago, Cullerton admitted that he received pay and benefits from the Teamsters Joint Council 25 during 2015 while doing little or no work for the union. In addition to his salary, prosecutors alleged, Cullerton also received bonuses and health care benefits.

Cullerton, a Villa Park Democrat, was indicted in 2019 on 40 counts of embezzlement – one for each biweekly paycheck he received from January 2015 through January 2016, a period of time when he also served in the Illinois Senate.

The indictment was one element of a sprawling federal investigation into public corruption led by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Illinois. Other lawmakers indicted in the sweep included former Sen. Martin Sandoval, who is now deceased, former Rep. Luis Arroyo and, most recently, former House Speaker Michael

Continued on Page 6

OP-ED

Draining Lake Michigan with a Spoon

By Jim Nowlan

Illinois is known across the land for political corruption. I always get a hearty, knowing chuckle when I tell Rotary Club luncheons that I have worked for three unindicted Illinois governors. (True: Ogilvie, Thompson, Edgar. The other four across that era were all measured for striped suits: Kerner, Walker, Ryan, Blagojevich.)

Recently, the attorney for a Chicago alderman found guilty of political corruption (one of 37 since 1972, and counting) cynically argued against jail time for his client. He scoffed that any possible deterrent effect would be “no more effective than draining Lake Michigan with a spoon.” Ouch.

This unfortunate—for Illinois—phrase will enter the lexicon of Illinois politics alongside the famous harrumph by a Chicago ward boss to a young innocent jobseeker, who came into his office alone and unsponsored: “We don’t want nobody nobody sent.”

Political corruption in Illinois has a hallowed tradition, you might say, and it is bipartisan. In 1913, after a long trial in the United States Senate, the solons expelled their Illinois Republican colleague William Lorimer. The Blonde Boss of Chicago and his co-conspirators had bribed 40 Democratic state legislators with \$2,500 each (when the new Model T cost \$750) to join with Republicans to elect him to the Senate in 1909. The scandal spurred the direct election of senators.

In the 1920s, GOP Gov. Len Small of Kankakee was tried twice for embezzling millions from the state. He was acquitted at his first, criminal trial; two months later, eight of the jurors had received really good state jobs! In a later civil trial, Small was forced to pay the state \$650,000 to repay funds embezzled when he was state treasurer. Small leaned on state patronage workers to cover the payment.

But since then, most of the corruption has emanated from Cook County and Chicago, dominated by the Democratic Party.

Four confidants of defrocked Illinois House Speaker Mike Madigan (D-Chicago) are set to go on trial in Chicago in September, which will tee up corruption as a major issue in the November election.

One of the candidates for governor has already declared that if elected he would eliminate corruption in our state. Fat chance. Corruption is baked into our culture.

That doesn’t mean we are all corrupt, but that too many of us would indeed take advantage of government if presented with the opportunity.

For example, when I was teaching American politics at the University of Illinois in Urbana in the early 2000s, I asked each class of juniors and seniors, many headed for law school, about the following: Your brother has been charged with a serious DUI, but your brother’s lawyer said he could get him off—if brother slipped the attorney \$1,000 in cash, beyond his fee. Would you recommend to your brother that he “go for it,” or reject the idea?

In every one of five or six different courses, two-thirds of all the students, in their anonymous responses, said: “Go for it.” In one class I was astounded that 14 of the 17 students agreed. When I asked why they would recommend going for it, one student offered a typical response, with others nodding: Brother is in a tough spot—and that’s the way it’s done in Illinois. My brother would be the fool for not taking advantage of the offer.

After a while, I gave up looking for an honest class.

It’s a slippery slope, as they say, from a DUI to successfully bribing a judge to set free a mob assassin so he could kill again, and again. This actually happened in the 1970s, when much of the

Cook County Court system was controlled, or at least heavily influenced, by The Outfit.

Corruption hurts Illinois. In 2011, I surveyed local economic development officials across Illinois. One of my questions was about ethics. Does the state’s reputation for corruption have any impact on your recruiting of business from outside the state? Three quarters of the 70 respondents said perceptions of Illinois as corrupt had either a negative or a highly negative impact on their efforts to recruit business to come to Illinois. One said: Illinois is known for “pay to play.” Another observed: In Illinois, political clout is believed to help.

No governor can transform a political culture of corruption in his or her term. But the chief executive can use his bully pulpit to declare a very public war on corruption; set a high bar for conduct by his administration. The governor can also seek elimination of ludicrous, self-serving statutes such as the one that requires the “independent” legislative inspector general to first get approval of lawmakers before he can investigate a complaint against one of their fellow legislators.

Finally, we can all stop taking advantage of government, simply because “that’s the way it’s done in Illinois,” and exhort our children to follow our lead. That’s how cultures change.

Nowlan is the lead author of Illinois Politics (University of Illinois Press, 2010) and Fixing Illinois (U. of I. Press, 2014). He is a former chair of the Illinois Executive Ethics Commission.

Pronouns

By Scott Reeder

Pronouns are the workhorses of the English language and I never found them to be particularly controversial – until recently.

In case you’ve forgotten your fourth-grade grammar lessons, some examples of pronouns are: he, she, we, they, it.

Recently, a Catholic priest in Arizona found out that sometimes the grammar police wear clerical robes and pointed hats.

For decades, the Rev. Andres Arango said “We baptize you in the name of the ...” instead of “I baptize you in the name of ...”

After diocesan officials found that out, they said last month that people who Arango baptized aren’t technically Catholic. That means they weren’t eligible, from a Catholic point of view, for other sacraments.

The theological argument is that the priest is acting as a representative of God, so it should be “I” rather than “we.” The parishioners sitting out in the pews are just observers – not participants in the sacrament.

Since baptism is a precursor for other Catholic rites, the thousands of people he baptized over the last several decades are left wondering if their marriages, confessions, and promises of salvation — have ceased to exist.

All that angst and worry comes from either:
A.) A priest who made a grammar mistake.
B.) Overly legalistic individuals in the religious hierarchy.

My thoughts? Salvation isn’t like a computer password dependent on every letter being in place when a priest recites the rite while pouring water over an infant’s head.

But pronouns can be confusing. I learned that decades ago when I was taking management training at the Quad-City Times. Some management guru said in our class when giving instructions to a subordinate don’t say to them, “I want you to do this.” Instead, one should say, “We will be doing this.”

The idea is that by saying “we” the subordinate feels like a member of the team rather than a lackey being ordered about.

So, I left the class and wrote up an assignment

Continued on Page 3

The Illinois State Treasurer has established a secure way to donate to help Ukraine

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Susan Kay Staniec

Susan Kay Staniec, 73, of Belvidere, IL, passed away Thursday, February 24, 2022, at Javon Bea Hospital in Rockford, IL. She was born June 24, 1948, in Chicago, IL.

The daughter of the late Ralph and Irene (Foltz) Rosenberg. She married the love of her life, Theodore Staniec, on May 27, 1967, at St. Alphonsus Catholic Church in Chicago, IL. She was a member of the Independent Order of Foresters, loved camping, doing crafts, and going to garage sales.

Susan is loved, and will be missed by her son, Brian (Rhonda) Staniec; daughters, Belinda (David) Schirmer, Beth Staniec, Bridget (Ryan) Oakley; grandchildren, Tom Schirmer, Nathan Staniec, Gracie Spears; brother, Michael Rosenberg. She is preceded in death by her parents; beloved husband, Ted; brother Steven Rosenberg.

The family would like to say a special thank you to Amberwood Care Center and Javon Bea Hospital for their compassionate care. There will be a memorial service at a later date. Memorials can be made to the Special Olympics Region E of Illinois.



Ahlberg, William, 87, Belvidere, March 1
Embry, Michelle, 42, Poplar Grove, February 23
Keegan, Margery, 93, Belvidere, March 2
Lee, Thelma, 83, Belvidere, February 21
Lyga, William, 83, Belvidere, February 28
Nelson, Wanda “Faye” 84, Belvidere, March 2
Poole, Archie, 85, Belvidere, March 1
Tyler, Thomas, 44, Belvidere, February, 27



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Richelle Kingsbury Aug. 1955 - June 2013

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

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

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

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

Pronouns

from page 2

for a photographer saying, “We will be shooting a photo of...”

The photo never got shot. Why? The photographer said he couldn’t find me when it was time to leave, and since I said “we” on the assignment form he assumed both of us needed to go.

My boss, who had been sitting through the same stupid management class with me, chewed me out for filling out the photo assignment form “wrong.”

So, you see, pronoun usage can be consequential.

Jeanne Ives, a conservative former state representative, expressed outrage during a recent interview that a former GOP office holder has placed on the bottom of her emails her “preferred pronouns.”

“She’s no conservative, if she’s doing that,” she said.

So, apparently pronoun usage is not just a matter of grammar but political identity. I take a libertarian “live and let live” approach. Folks should be able to identify in the manner they choose.

Still, I don’t like the practice of referring to individuals who don’t identify as male or female with a plural pronoun.

For example, back in 2019, my alma mater’s student newspaper wrote a feature on a biologically male campus police officer who identifies as “non-binary.”

Here is a sentence from the story:

“Other than snide comments, Hale said they receive interesting looks on campus when they’re wearing heels, a dress or have their nails done, but they have never been so uncomfortable that they felt something needed to be done about the remarks and looks.”

I’m left wondering is the sentence about one person or a group?

Language needs to be precise. This grammatical accommodation, which the Associated Press has endorsed, is anything but. Perhaps instead of using a plural pronoun, a new pronoun needs to be created to accommodate those not identifying as male or female.

For example, in the 1970s “Ms.” was created as a courtesy title for women who didn’t want to be identified as married or single. (Although the grammarian in me still wonders why there is a period after the “Ms” when it’s not an abbreviation. But that’s a language quandary for another day.)

Grammar is consequential. It should be precise but not unkind. Words matter.

Scott Reeder, a staff writer for Illinois Times, can be reached at: sreeder@illinoistimes.com.

District 100 Faces Challenges in Pandemic Recovery

By Mars Rinaldi

After a long and uneasy two years, we’ve almost made it through an entire “normal” school year. The buildings are open, the busses are running, and the masks are off (optionally, of course). Thanks to the diligence and hard work of school staff and administration, a quick glance into any classroom would give you the impression that everything is back to the way it was pre-Covid. Behind the scenes, as the kids would say, the struggle is real.

In a return to something that feels normal in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, the educational system has not been spared its share of challenges. Belvidere District 100 hosted a town hall meeting on February 28th to offer the community a chance to hear how the schools are doing. Despite a fairly regular torrent of concerns

voiced by parents on various social media sites, the town hall meeting only drew about 15 people; including Superintendent Dr. Woestman and several members of the Board of Education. The agenda included an update on district learning outcomes, current concerns and priorities, and the search for a new Superintendent to replace the out-going Dr. Woestman.

By the numbers, District 100 is largely on-par with the state on 4- and 5-year graduation rates; hovering steadily around 87% since 2015. But college enrollment is 15-20 percent below the state average.

The percentage of students participating in early college coursework is also lower, but trending upward. Teacher retention rates are steady, and the board reports that District 100 is in a healthy place financially. For those who were concerned that e-learning would have a negative effect on student progress, D100 reports that 61% of middle and high school students are progressing on all standards, while 83% of elementary school students are progressing on all standards. These numbers certainly aren’t dismal, but there are a few cracks that stand out

One of the main struggles facing the district right now is substitute fill rates. Dr. Woestman stressed the urgent need to find and place substitute teachers. The deficit is directly linked to the pandemic, as many regular substitute teachers found other work when schools were closed. Often, substitute teachers who are retired, elderly, or may have weaker immune systems feel that it is not in their best health interest to return to classrooms. Currently, the district is

struggling to reach a 50% substitute fill rate. There is an incentive, however. Recently, the board approved a raise in the daily pay rate for substitute teachers to \$115 a day. The rate for substitute paraprofessionals was raised as well. Subbing offers flexible scheduling, weekly pay, and bonuses tied to service time. The district is partnered with staffing agency Kelly Education to help fill the gaps, and anyone interested in applying should contact Brittany Andrews at (815) 538-1033.

The district has a strategic plan, however, and it is supported by funds from a federal Covid relief grant called ESSER III. The funds give school districts the ability to target key areas for students, both in the classroom and at home. Additionally, the district is in the process of reevaluating and re-structuring the grading and promotions process, and anticipates having a new proposal ready for presentation to the board this month.

After the presentation, Dr. Woestman opened the floor for input

or questions from those in attendance. Aside from a point of clarification on the grading and promotion changes and another on the application process for substitute teaching, there were no other questions.

Seemingly no-one has been able to avoid a shake-up from the pandemic, and education is no exception. Tensions are high as changes keep coming, and uncertainty leaves many feeling on-edge. Recent surveys distributed by the district show a decrease in employee engagement and parent satisfaction from pre-pandemic levels. These results likely do not come as a surprise to many, and the test that lies ahead for staff, administration, and parents is learning to move forward in this environment while giving each other a bit of grace to navigate a number of challenges.

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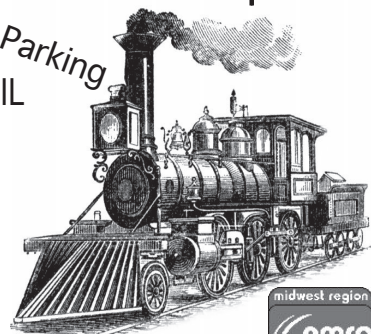
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Things Change *from page 1*

Many accomplishments have been made by a few individuals, who have invested their own money in the past 40 years to reveal and preserve the original architecture between the Apollo Theater and the Short-line section of Buchanan Street. Yet, much of it is at risk, if not forever lost.

Quincy, an historical town on the Mississippi River with about 40,000 people, has preserved much of its early architecture, making it an attractive place to settle for remote workers. Yet, it is quite a distance from a home office in Chicago. About 310 miles each way. It's about 140 miles each way to St. Louis and it takes 2-1/2 hours to get to the Arch. About the same amount of time a train leveling Belvidere would take.

Amtrak has two trains to Chicago, leaving Quincy at 5:30 and 6:12am, scheduled to arrive in Chicago at 9:51 and 10:33am. The return trip leaves Chicago at 7:40pm and should arrive back in Quincy at 10:17pm. If you book in advance, you can get a round trip for \$66. There are 3 scheduled daily flights from Quincy to O'Hare and St. Louis on propeller aircraft.

The *Journal*, for many reasons that were explained in this publication in a three-part series by Charles Herbst in April and May 2021, advocates bus service to Chicago. Despite the fatuously romantic notions that a train evokes, we believe that bus rapid transit from the Clock Tower and Belvidere Oasis would allow more convenient, frequent service for a fraction of the cost, and that it would allow riders to make better and faster connections, particularly to O'Hare. O'Hare's nonstops make it possible to easily visit a company's office not just in Downtown Chicago, but anywhere on the planet.

In creating an inviting place for higher-paid remote workers, and companies offering higher-paying jobs, better transportation, improved education and historic preservation are essential. As noted in another story in today's paper, Belvidere is sending 15-20 percent fewer students on to college than even the state average. With a statistic like that, no company interested in more than hiring general labor is going to invest in Belvidere or Boone County.

Attracting remote workers and companies with higher-paid employees is a sustainable, *diversified* growth model, as opposed to one that is dependent on the whims and fortunes of Stellantis.

The *Tribune* article featured a family from San Francisco that moved to Quincy for reasons other than architecture. For them, it was the family home of the husband and the sense of community and slower pace found in a somewhat rural place. In a small town, meaningful face-to-face social

connections, the sense of community, safety and education can present an attractive place for a higher-income, remote worker to live and raise a family.

The *Tribune* also cited another community in their story. "In Greensburg, Indiana, the relocation package includes \$5,000, gift cards to the seasonal farmers market, and, among other things, a "Grandparents on Demand" service, where longtime resident Tami Wenning and her husband offer free babysitting for those who move to the area." Greensburg is about 50 miles southeast of Indianapolis.

Tulsa, Oklahoma is another example. Tulsa will pay qualifying remote workers \$10,000 to move to Tulsa for a minimum one-year stay.

Belvidere offers a location that should not require bribing remote workers with a cash payment. Yet, Belvidere is stagnant and seeing no growth. But with transit, historical ambiance, and high-quality education, it might become more than a declining, Midwestern has-been.

The spirit and aspirations of the generation that built the city of Belvidere is frozen in time in the architecture. The architecture we see in this photo and what remains provides for an over-looked but more interesting repurposing of the 19th century city center and unique tollway Oasis with an aim to attract higher income professional and a creative class seeking a better educational experience for their children and us as well.

Madigan *from page 1*

third-party phones to avoid detection by federal agents, as well as speaking in coded language to protect the conspiracy.

But the former speaker still vehemently denied wrongdoing in a statement distributed by his lawyers, Sheldon Zenner and Gil Soffer of the Katten law firm.

"I was never involved in any criminal activity," Madigan said in a statement distributed by the law firm. "The government is attempting to criminalize a routine constituent service: job recommendations. That is not illegal, and these other charges are equally unfounded."

The statement directly contradicted claims made publicly in the indictment and by Lausch at a news conference announcing the charges Wednesday night.

Madigan and the enterprise are accused of receiving bribes and "unlawful personal financial advantage(s)" from parties that had business with the state and city of Chicago. Madigan's power to pass or kill legislation in the General Assembly, along with his control over resources through his various positions of power, were used to entice financial rewards from third parties, according to the allegations.

In that effort, the enterprise used "threats, intimidation, and extortion to solicit benefits from private parties," and used facilities of interstate commerce to further the goals of the enterprise, another federal crime, according to the indictment.

Madigan, 79, and McClain, 74, both face charges of racketeering, conspiracy, bribery and wire fraud. Madigan faces additional charges for attempted extortion.

While the sprawling indictment outlines wire taps and email conversations and even directly quotes the former speaker, Madigan's lawyers said in a statement, "neither the law nor the facts support these baseless charges, and the evidence will prove it."

"Throughout my 50 years as a public servant, I worked to address the needs of my constituents, always keeping in mind the high standards required and the trust the public placed in me," Madigan said, according to the statement. "I adamantly deny these accusations and look back proudly on my time as an elected official, serving the people of Illinois."

The indictment detailed several schemes attributed to the Madigan Enterprise.

The first involved Chicago-based electric company Commonwealth Edison, or ComEd. Many of those details had already been made public in a deferred prosecution agreement the company entered into in July 2020.

The indictment alleges that Madigan shepherded the passage of legislation that helped ComEd, specifically the Energy Infrastructure and Modernization Act in 2011 and the Future Energy Jobs Act in 2016. In 2018, legislation adverse to ComEd was killed, per the indictment.

In exchange for his support of legislation favorable to ComEd, the indictment stated that Madigan placed political pals into ComEd's intern program, even though they may not have been qualified.

He also allegedly named his choice for an appointment to ComEd's board, received "vendor" jobs for his friends on ComEd's payroll that required little or no work, and received contracts from ComEd for his political allies.

The indictment includes forfeiture actions against McClain and Madigan for \$2.8 million for proceeds they allegedly obtained, directly or indirectly, from racketeering activity.

A central player in another scheme is identified as Alderman A, who "cooperated in an undercover capacity" with the FBI. Alderman A has been identified as Danny Solis, who served as the city's zoning committee chair on the timeline identified in the indictment.

According to the indictment, in 2018 Madigan solicited Solis to usher work toward his law firm in exchange for getting Solis a state board appointment at about \$100,000 a year. Madigan said he would arrange for the appointment of Solis to the Illinois Commerce Commission or the Illinois Labor Relations Board and tried to get a state job for Solis' relative, according to the indictment.

Such an appointment would have to come from the state's governor, a position that, at the time, was slated to be filled by Gov. JB Pritzker within months of the alleged misconduct.

The indictment does not allege any misconduct by Pritzker, and Solis did not receive an appointment to a state board.

Pritzker, however, did meet with federal investigators as a witness in the Madigan investigation, and he was "pleased to cooperate," according to his office. He spoke with federal investigators in a virtual meeting for more than an hour in late February, according to Pritzker's spokesperson Jordan Abudayyeh.

Pritzker condemned Madigan in harsh terms and answered questions on the indictment Thursday morning at an unrelated news conference. He said it was not immediately clear to him at the time of the

Continued on Page 5

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Madigan

from page 4

questioning that an indictment would be forthcoming, and he did not suspect any misconduct from Madigan in their interactions pertaining to state government.

“Remember, I was governor. He was speaker of the House. There was a Senate president, there were leaders across the General Assembly,” he said. “I needed to work with all of them and so none of the interactions that I had were anything other than about, you know, things to do with doing the right thing in government for the people.”

In another scheme detailed in the indictment, Madigan sought an introduction from Solis to a multi-unit apartment developer that was seeking a favorable zoning decision from Solis’ committee. Madigan was allegedly seeking business for his private law firm from the developer identified only as Company C.

The feds alleged that on June 23, 2017, Solis told Madigan, “I think they understand how this works, you know, the quid pro quo, the quid pro quo,” in reference to the apartment developer. Madigan allegedly responded, “Okay...Very good.”

On July 18, 2017, Madigan allegedly told Solis privately not to use the term “quid pro quo.”

“You’re just recommending ... because if they don’t get a good result on their real estate taxes, the whole project will be in trouble... Which is not good for your ward. So you want high quality representation,” Madigan is quoted as saying in the indictment.

Then there was the parking lot in Chicago’s Chinatown neighborhood.

In 2017, a group of real estate developers, identified only as Group A in the indictment, was involved in the development of a large commercial development that would include a hotel in Chicago’s Chinatown neighborhood. But the development group needed a parking lot that was owned by the state.

Madigan agreed to use his position as speaker of the House to assist with the transfer of the Chinatown parcel, according to the indictment. In exchange, legal work would be steered to his private law firm, Madigan & Getzendanner, which would generate legal fees that personally benefitted Madigan.

When two legislators opposed the transfer of the Chinatown parcel, Madigan suggested sending a delegation from Chinatown to visit two state senators to persuade them to remove their opposition, according to the indictment.

In November, Secretary of State Jesse White’s Office received letters from business owners in Chinatown, opposing the transfer.

Madigan advised that the bill to transfer the land would not go forward during the veto session, but he would attempt to try to get it through the legislature in May 2019.

Madigan’s arraignment is scheduled for March 9.

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Illinois, told a House committee Wednesday. “And modernizing the system sets the stage for the state of Illinois to become a leader at utilizing renewable natural gas, synthetic natural gas, and even hydrogen, which can attract new businesses and retain industry.”

At issue is a 2013 amendment to the Public Utilities Act that allows large natural gas utilities – those serving more than 700,000 customers – to add a surcharge onto customer bills to recover costs associated with investments in “qualifying infrastructure plant,” or QIP.

Those include a return on investment and depreciation allowances related to things like replacing old, leaky gas lines and meters. Those surcharges are subject to review by the Illinois Commerce Commission, but only to determine whether they qualify under the statute.

The commission also has authority to review a company’s actual expenses to determine whether customers were overcharged and are owed a refund.

That law is scheduled to sunset at the end of 2023, but House Bill 3941 would move that date up one year, to Dec. 31, 2022.

“Over the past decade, through formula rates and QIP, Illinois has stripped away regulatory protections, supercharging the utility incentive to spend money to make money and raise rates as fast as they can,” said Abe Scarr, director of the consumer advocacy group Illinois PIRG. “The utilities have responded to these incentives with billions of dollars of wasteful spending. This is not surprising. It’s exactly what we should expect. The question now is how will the General Assembly respond?”

As an example, Scarr pointed to the Naperville-based Nicor Gas, the state’s largest natural gas distribution company, which he said has raised its rates 77 percent in the last four years. That came after Nicor’s rates had risen only 28 percent over the previous 37 years.

“Rate increases and utility profits are largely driven by capital spending,” he said. “Nicor’s capital spending sharply increased since it began using QIP in 2015. Since then, QIP has accounted for half of Nicor’s capital spending, making it a major contributor to the company’s massive rate hikes.”

Consumer advocacy groups like Illinois PIRG have pushed for its repeal for years, to no avail. But this year, with rising natural gas prices across the board, and amid a global push to move away from fossil fuels to combat climate change, advocates think they have a better chance.

“Unless the General Assembly ends this unnecessary surcharge now, ratepayers will be stuck paying for stranded assets of a gas delivery system that will eventually become obsolete and not a part of the clean energy future that this legislature envisioned when it passed the Clean Energy Jobs Act and asked ratepayers and utility companies to move away from carbon- and methane-producing energy,” said Karen Lussion, staff attorney at the National Consumer Law Center.

Utility executives, however, argued that rising global prices for natural gas, not the surcharges, are the primary source of rising customer bills.

“Ninety percent of the current high prices are being driven by global demand and prices, not this act,” Kozak told the committee.

Patrick Evans, president of the Illinois Energy Association, recalled that the surcharges came about partially in response to a natural gas pipe explosion in San Bruno, California, in 2010 that killed eight people, left 58 injured and destroyed 38 homes.

“At the time, Illinois’ own (former Congressman) Ray LaHood was Secretary of Transportation,” Evans said. “And in response to this tragic incident, he actually issued a formal call to action, requesting that all natural gas utilities in the country begin to accelerate their pipeline replacement program to ensure that these incidents are minimized in the future.”

He said that led to negotiations between the industry and lawmakers which resulted in an agreement to end what he called the “regulatory lag” between the time a company invests money for system improvements and the time when it recovers those investments.

“That term simply means that we get to recover our investments quicker than the traditional method, which requires us to go to the (Illinois Commerce) Commission first,” he said. “It does not eliminate commission oversight. We will always have to prove up our investments at the commission. The standards have not been changed.”

Patrick Whiteside, senior vice president of operations for Nicor Gas, said the surcharge has enabled the company to improve the safety and reliability of its entire system.

“Nicor Gas’ system was able to support our customers and communities through the polar vortex of 2019, the single largest delivery of energy ever recorded on our system, without interruption to service or pressure situations for our customers,” he said. “By replacing poorly performing materials, we are driving the rate trends down and reducing greenhouse gas emissions across the overall system.”

But J.C. Kibbey, a clean energy advocate with the Natural Resources Defense Council, noted that his own personal gas bill from Peoples Gas in January had a \$15 surcharge, more than the company had previously said it would cost in a year, and that it had more than \$95 in total infrastructure charges.

“These big charges are worrying and so is what they pay for,” he said. “They’re building out a gas system to burn methane gas, fossil fuel, much of it in our homes. To be clear, this gas is no more natural than coal. Burning gas harms are health by releasing carbon monoxide and other pollutants in the air and our homes. This pollution disproportionately hurts underserved communities and people of color.”

The committee did not take action on the bill, which was on the agenda for discussion only.

In a separate email, Illinois PIRG’s Abe Scarr conceded that getting the bill through the General Assembly was a “long shot.” But he said he hopes the concerns that his group and other advocates are raising will deter lawmakers from extending the surcharge past its current 2023 expiration date.

Gas Companies Push Back Against Effort to Repeal Surcharge

Consumer advocates say fee is no longer needed

By Peter Hancock Capitol News Illinois

Natural gas utilities in Illinois warned of job losses and possible risks to public safety if state lawmakers repeal a law allowing them to add a surcharge on customer bills that consumer advocates say is being used to gouge customers.

“This provides around 500 good jobs annually and creates opportunity for diverse contractors,” Eric Kozak, vice president of gas operations for Ameren

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LEGAL NOTICES

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 17TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
BOONE COUNTY - BELVIDERE, ILLINOIS
DEUTSCHE BANK NATIONAL TRUST COMPANY, AS TRUSTEE
FOR J.P. MORGAN MORTGAGE ACQUISITION TRUST 2007-CH1,
ASSET BACKED PASS-THROUGH CERTIFICATES, SERIES 2007-
CH1,
PLAINTIFF
VS.
Case No: 2022FC6
LEONARD R SPATES A/K/A LEONARD SPATES, TIFFANY SPATES,
CANDLEWICK LAKE ASSOCIATION, INC. ; UNKNOWN OWNERS
GENERALLY, AND NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS.
DEFENDANTS
Property Address:
243 Briar Cliff St SW
Poplar Grove, IL 61065
NOTICE OF PUBLICATION

The requisite affidavit for publication having been filed, notice is hereby given to: Leonard R Spates, Tiffany Spates and Unknown Owners, and Non Record Claimants, Defendants in the above-entitled action, that a Complaint for Foreclosure and Other Relief has been commenced in the Circuit Court of Boone County, by said Plaintiff against you and other defendants, praying for the foreclosure of certain mortgages conveying the premises legally described as follows:

LOT TWENTY-NINE (29) IN CANDLEWICK LAKE UNIT NO. 8 ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF RECORDED AS DOCUMENT NO. 72-3073 IN THE RECORDER'S OFFICE OF BOONE COUNTY, ILLINOIS; SITUATED IN THE COUNTY OF BOONE AND STATE OF ILLINOIS.

P.I.N.: 03-27-153-035
COMMON ADDRESS: 243 Briar Cliff St SW, Poplar Grove, IL 61065
And which mortgages were made by Leonard R Spates a/k/a Leonard Spates, as Mortgagor(s); and given to Chase Bank USA, N.A. as Mortgagee; to wit: that certain "Mortgage" dated (a) 04/26/2005, and recorded as Document No.05R04684, that Summons was duly issued out of said court against you as provided by law, and that the said Complaint is now pending for foreclosure of said mortgages and for other relief.

Now, therefore, unless you Leonard R Spates a/k/a Leonard, Spates Tiffany Spates and Unknown Owners, and Non Record Claimants, file your Appearance and Answer to the Complaint in said action in the office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Boone County, Chancery Division, on or before March 28, 2022, default may be entered against you at any time after that day and a judgment entered in accordance with the prayer for relief in said Complaint.

CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT
Kluever Law Group, LLC
225 West Washington Street Suite 1550
Chicago, IL 60606
(312) 236-0077
courtsresults@klueverlawgroup.com
Atty. No. 6275308
6088-921202

Published in The Boone County Journal Feb 24, Mar 3, 10-SW

NOTICE

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS that on the 16th day of March, 2022, at 6:30 p.m., the PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION for the Village of Cherry Valley, Illinois, shall convene at the Village Hall, 806 East State Street, Cherry Valley, Illinois, to address the following request:

1.A request upon annexation for zoning of IL – Light Industrial District under Section 82-281 to allow for a warehousing and distribution center for the property commonly known as PINs: 07-06-151-004 and 07-06-151-001 (Mango Creek). The exact location can be viewed on a Site Plan on file at the Village of Cherry Valley, 806 E. State Street, Cherry Valley, Illinois.

2.A request upon annexation for zoning of IL – Light Industrial District under Section 82-281 to allow for a warehousing and distribution center for the property commonly known as PINs: 07-06-176-001; 07-06-176-002; and 07-06-151-005 (Zepelak). The exact location can be viewed on a Site Plan on file at the Village of Cherry Valley, 806 E. State Street, Cherry Valley, Illinois.

Any interested party may attend said meeting and be heard.
Published in the Boone County Journal Feb 24, 2022

STATE OF ILLINOIS
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 17TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
COUNTY OF BOONE
IN RE THE MATTER OF: A.P. (DOB 9/9/2017), Minor.
CASE NO. 2021-P-70

NOTICE BY PUBLICATION

Notice is hereby given to Respondent father, MATTHEW CROOP, that Petitioner, SUSAN CROOP, has caused to be filed a Petition for Guardianship of a Minor Child and other relief in the above-captioned cause of action. You are further notified that if you fail to file an answer or an appearance by March 31, 2022 at the Boone County Courthouse located at 601 N. Main Street, Belvidere, Illinois 61008 a judgment by default may be entered against you at any time thereafter for the relief requested in the Petition for Guardianship of a Minor Child.

By: /s/Susan Croop

Prepared by:
Thomas C. Laye – ARDC #6320977
HAMPILOS & ASSOCIATES, LTD.
308 West State Street, 210
Rockford, IL 61101
Telephone: 815/962-0044
Fax: 815-962-6250
thomas@hampiloslaw.com
Published in The Boone County Journal March 3, 10, 17

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

In The Interest of: JULIUS SANCHEZ, minor
No. 22-JA-2

DIEGO SACHEZ/ To whom it may concern
ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Take notice that on JANUARY 7, 2022, a petition was filed under the JUVENILE COURT ACT by Atty, Tricia Smith, State's Attorney, 601 North Main Street, Belvidere, Illinois 61008, in the Circuit Court of Boone County entitled "In the Interest of Julius Sanchez, minor; and that in the County Courthouse in Belvidere, Illinois, at 3:00 P.M. central daylight time on 3/24/2022; or as soon thereafter as this cause may be heard, a termination of parental rights will be held upon the petition to have the child declared to be a ward of the Court under that Act. THE COURT HAS AUTHORITY IN THE PROCEEDING TO TAKE FROM YOU THE CUSTODY AND GUARDIANSHIP OF THE MINOR, TO TERMINATE YOUR PARENTAL RIGHTS, AND TO APPOINT A GUARDIAN WITH POWER TO CONSENT TO ADOPTION, YOU MAY LOSE ALL PARENTAL RIGHTS TO YOUR CHILD. IF THE PETITION REQUESTS THE TERMINATION OF YOUR PARENTAL RIGHTS AND THE APPOINTMENT OF A GUARDIAN WITH THE POWER TO CONSENT TO ADOPTION YOU MAY LOSE ALL PARENTAL RIGHT TO THE CHILD. Unless you appear you will not be entitled to further written notices or publication notices of the proceedings in this case, including the filing of an amend petition or a

motion to terminate parental rights.

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

Dated: February 16, 2022
Pamela Coduto, CIRCUIT CLERK
Published in The Boone County Journal; Feb. 24, March 3,10 - C

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

NOTICE OF PUBLICATION
In The Interest of: GRACELYNN WILLER, DAVID WILLER,
LANDON WHITE, minors

No. 20-JA-9, 10, 11
SYDNEY STAVER/ To whom it may concern
ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Take notice that on February 27, 2020, a petition was filed under the JUVENILE COURT ACT by Atty, Tricia Smith, State's Attorney, 601 North Main Street, Belvidere, Illinois 61008, in the Circuit Court of Boone County entitled "In the Interest of Gracelynn Willer, David Willer, Landon White, minors; and that in the County Courthouse in Belvidere, Illinois, at 1:30 P.M. central daylight time on 3/17/2022 & 4/7/22; or as soon thereafter as this cause may be heard, a termination of parental rights will be held upon the petition to have the child declared to be a ward of the Court under that Act. THE COURT HAS AUTHORITY IN THE PROCEEDING TO TAKE FROM YOU THE CUSTODY AND GUARDIANSHIP OF THE MINOR, TO TERMINATE YOUR PARENTAL RIGHTS, AND TO APPOINT A GUARDIAN WITH POWER TO CONSENT TO ADOPTION, YOU MAY LOSE ALL PARENTAL RIGHTS TO YOUR CHILD. IF THE PETITION REQUESTS THE TERMINATION OF YOUR PARENTAL RIGHTS AND THE APPOINTMENT OF A GUARDIAN WITH THE POWER TO CONSENT TO ADOPTION YOU MAY LOSE ALL PARENTAL RIGHT TO THE CHILD. Unless you appear you will not be entitled to further written notices or publication notices of the proceedings in this case, including the filing of an amend petition or a motion to terminate parental rights.

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

Dated: February 15, 2022
Pamela Coduto, CIRCUIT CLERK
Published in The Boone County Journal; February 24, March 3, 10 - C

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

NOTICE OF PUBLICATION

In The Interest of: Celenia Garcia, minor

No. 22-JA-1
To whom it may concern
ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Take notice that on January 7, 2022, a petition was filed under the JUVENILE COURT ACT by Atty, Tricia Smith, State's Attorney, 601 North Main Street, Belvidere, Illinois 61008, in the Circuit Court of Boone County entitled "In the Interest of Celenia Garcia, minor; and that in the County Courthouse in Belvidere, Illinois, at 3:00 P.M. central daylight time on 3/24/2022; or as soon thereafter as this cause may be heard, a pre-trial hearing will be held upon the petition to have the child declared to be a ward of the Court under that Act. THE COURT HAS AUTHORITY IN THE PROCEEDING TO TAKE FROM YOU THE CUSTODY AND GUARDIANSHIP OF THE MINOR, TO TERMINATE YOUR PARENTAL RIGHTS, AND TO APPOINT A GUARDIAN WITH POWER TO CONSENT TO ADOPTION, YOU MAY LOSE ALL PARENTAL RIGHTS TO YOUR CHILD. IF THE PETITION REQUESTS THE TERMINATION OF YOUR PARENTAL RIGHTS AND THE APPOINTMENT OF A GUARDIAN WITH THE POWER TO CONSENT TO ADOPTION YOU MAY LOSE ALL PARENTAL RIGHT TO THE CHILD. Unless you appear you will not be entitled to further written notices or publication notices of the proceedings in this case, including the filing of an amend petition or a motion to terminate parental rights.

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

Dated: February 16, 2022
Pamela Coduto, CIRCUIT CLERK
Published in The Boone County Journal; February 24, March 3, 10 - C

CALEDONIA TOWNSHIP

Notice is hereby given to the legal voters, residents of Caledonia Township in the County of Boone and State of Illinois that the Annual Town Meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 12, 2002 at 6:00 p.m. at the Caledonia Township Building located at 2430 Man Street, Caledonia for the transaction of the following: Nominate and elect Moderator, Approve minutes of the April 13, 2021 meeting, Reading of Annual Financial Statements, Old Business and New Business – Resolution 2022-01 Transfer of Surplus Town Funds to Road and Bridge Fund.

Dated March 6, 2022
Theresa Balk, Town Clerk
This was published in The Boone County Journal, March 10, 2022

ASSUMED NAMES

ASSUMED NAME CERTIFICATE OF INTENTION
STATE OF ILLINOIS COUNTY OF BOONE

This is to certify that the undersigned intend to conduct and transact a home inspections business in said County and State under the name of AP HOME INSPECTIONS at the following post office address: 532 Prairie Point Drive, 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: Aaron Powers, 532 Prairie Point Drive, Poplar Grove, IL 61065; phone # (815) 558-7300.

Subscribed and sworn (or affirmed) to before me, this 1st day of March, A.D. 2022
Julie A. Bliss, County Clerk
Published in Boone County Journal 3/3, 3/10, 3/17/22

ASSUMED NAME CERTIFICATE OF INTENTION

State of Illinois County of Boone) ss This is to certify that the undersigned intend... to conduct and transact a Cleaning Service business in said County and State under the name of State Line Cleaning Service at the following post office addresses: 1126 W. 9th St., Belvidere, IL, 61008 and that the true and real full names of all persons owning, conducting or transacting such business, with the respective residence address of each, are as follows:

NAME AND ADDRESS OF RESIDENCE: Miguel A. Moctezuma, 1126 W. 9TH ST., Belvidere, IL, 61008. Signed: Miguel A. Moctezuma, 03/01/22

Subscribed and sworn (or affirmed) to before me this 1st. day of March, 2022,
Julie A. Bliss, County Clerk,
Published in the Boone County Journal 03/03,10,17

ASSUMED NAME CERTIFICATE OF INTENTION
STATE OF ILLINOIS COUNTY OF BOONE

This is to certify that the undersigned intend to conduct and transact a beauty salon business in said County and State under the name of THE INDIGO ROOM at the following post office address: 110 Lovesee Road, Roscoe, IL 61073 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: Michele Hansel, 110 Lovesee Road, Roscoe, IL 61073; phone # (815) 543-6050.

Subscribed and sworn (or affirmed) to before me, this 23rd day of February, A.D. 2022
Julie A. Bliss, County Clerk
Published in Boone County Journal 2/24/22, 3/3/22, 3/10, 20/22

CHANGE IN CERTIFICATE OF OWNERSHIP

Public Notice is hereby given that on March 1, A.D. 2022, a certificate was filed in the Office of the County Clerk of Boone County, Illinois, concerning the business known as POWERS HOME INSPECTION, located at 532 PRAIRIE POINT DRIVE, POPLAR GROVE, IL 61065, which certificate sets forth the following changes in the operation thereof: DISSOLUTION OF BUSINESS

Dated this 1st day of March, A.D. 2022
Julie A. Bliss
Boone County Clerk
Published in the Boone County Journal 3/3, 3/10, 3/17/22

ASSUMED NAME CERTIFICATE OF INTENTION

STATE OF ILLINOIS COUNTY OF BOONE

This is to certify that the undersigned intend to conduct and transact a welding construction business in said County and State under the name of F & J MILLWRIGHT at the following post office address: 402 Van Buren 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: Fabian Lorenzo, 402 Van Buren Street, Belvidere, IL 61008; phone # (815) 713-6964.

Subscribed and sworn (or affirmed) to before me, this 3rd day of March, A.D. 2022
Julie A. Bliss, County Clerk
Published in Boone County Journal 3/10, 3/17, 3/24/22

ASSUMED NAME CERTIFICATE OF INTENTION

STATE OF ILLINOIS COUNTY OF BOONE

This is to certify that the undersigned intend to conduct and transact a bridal and formal wear alterations business in said County and State under the name of RYNN BRIDAL at the following post office address: 320 Church 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: Christine Seaver, 320 Church Street, Belvidere, IL 61008; phone # (414) 828-8531.

Subscribed and sworn (or affirmed) to before me, this 14th day of February, A.D. 2022
Julie A. Bliss, County Clerk
Published in Boone County Journal 2/17/22, 2/24/22, 3/3/22

ASSUMED NAME CERTIFICATE OF INTENTION

STATE OF ILLINOIS COUNTY OF BOONE

This is to certify that the undersigned intend to conduct and transact a roofing business in said County and State under the name of IDEAL PROPERTY SOLUTIONS at the following post office address: 820 North State 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: Taylor Tracey, 820 North State Street, Belvidere, IL 61008; phone # (815) 742-4743.

Subscribed and sworn (or affirmed) to before me, this 9th day of March, A.D. 2022
Julie A. Bliss, County Clerk
Published in Boone County Journal 3/10, 3/17, 3/24/22

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 construction business in said County and State under the name of FOUR FLORES LANDSCAPING CONSTRUCTION at the following post office address: 310 Cloud Mist Drive, Capron, IL 61012 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: Hugo E. Flores, 310 Cloud Mist Drive, Capron, IL 61012; phone # (815) 304-3898.

Subscribed and sworn (or affirmed) to before me, this 3rd day of March, A.D. 2022
Julie A. Bliss, County Clerk
Published in Boone County Journal 3/10, 3/17, 3/24/22

Cullerton

from page 1

Madigan. All three are Chicago Democrats.

According to court documents, Cullerton, a one-time chairman of the Senate Labor Committee, had been a member of the Teamsters Union Local 734 when he drove a truck for Hostess Brands until November 2012 when the company filed for bankruptcy. That was the same year he was elected to the state Senate.

In March 2013, according to the indictment, John Coli, president of the Teamsters Joint Council 25, the local union's parent organization, hired Cullerton as a union organizer. He received a salary, a car and telephone allowances and bonuses from the council, which also continued contributing to his health care and retirement benefits through the local union.

On July 30, 2019, two days before Cullerton was indicted, Coli pleaded guilty to other, unrelated federal charges and agreed to cooperate with other investigations.

The indictment also alleged that Cullerton "repeatedly failed to respond to efforts by his supervisors at Teamsters Joint Council 25 to contact him and routinely ignored their requests that he perform the job functions of an organizer, as was required of other organizers employed by Teamsters Joint Council 25."

After his indictment, Cullerton was removed as chairman of the Labor Committee, but he continued to serve in the Senate and repeatedly denied any wrongdoing. His case was delayed

Continued on page 7

Cullerton

from page 6

for more than two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic which interrupted many federal court proceedings.

In October 2021, Cullerton's attorneys filed a motion to dismiss the charges, but a judge denied that motion in December. Then last month, Cullerton resigned his Senate seat and his lawyer announced that he would change his plea.

The charge carries a maximum sentence of five years in prison. But according to a plea agreement, prosecutors said that based on his lack of any previous criminal history, sentencing guidelines would call for 12-18 months imprisonment, in addition to any supervised release, fine and restitution the court might impose.

As part of the plea agreement, Cullerton agreed to pay restitution of \$248,828. That includes \$247,179.37 to the Teamsters Local Union 734's Health and Welfare fund, plus \$1,648.63 for the paycheck he received on Jan. 15, 2015.

The agreement also calls on Cullerton to pay \$25,000 of that amount within the next 30 days, in exchange for which prosecutors agreed not to seek forfeiture of his Villa Park residence.

Formal sentencing has been set for June 21.

Capitol News Illinois is a nonprofit, nonpartisan news service covering state government and distributed to more than 400 newspapers statewide. It is funded primarily by the Illinois Press Foundation and the Robert R. McCormick Foundation.

IDOC Plans to Close Units at Vandalia, Pontiac Prisons

Maintenance costs, fewer inmates precipitate reductions

By Beth Hundsdorfer Capitol News Illinois

The Illinois Department of Corrections is making plans to downsize—plans that a major public employee union claims have not been shared with its members.

With inmate population dwindling to 28,000 and mounting maintenance bills on prison buildings at correctional centers across the state, DOC developed a plan which may include significant downsizing at the Vandalia and Pontiac correctional centers.

"These facilities are referenced due to current operational needs," IDOC chief of staff Camille Lindsay said in an email when asked about a draft plan obtained by Capitol News Illinois.

Under the proposed plan, Pontiac would close the medium security unit and go from 1,740 beds to

642 beds. Pontiac currently houses 1,144 inmates, including a unit that houses seriously mentally ill individuals.

Vandalia Correctional Center currently has a capacity of 1,001 and would be reduced to 401 inmates under the plan.

Both facilities face maintenance costs, including \$3.8 million at Pontiac. The reduction of beds at Vandalia will save the state \$12 million, according to plan estimates.

Gov. JB Pritzker's spokesperson Jordan Abudayyeh said the plan is still preliminary.

"The document is a draft plan that was put together for discussion within the agency and in order to start discussions with stakeholders. It was not presented to the governor's office for final approval because it is a draft that is expected to be updated after more discussions," Abudayyeh said. "The Department is always interested in considering new ideas to better serve their population and this draft plan is an attempt to spur discussion about ways to improve services."

The preliminary plan noted that hiring continues to be a challenge at IDOC and staff overtime hours for are "extremely high, especially at Pontiac."

IDOC plans to adjust staffing to account for closures.

"No one will be laid off or a transferred as a result," Lindsay said.

Lindsay said in an email the department has not started moving people in order to reduce the populations in these facilities.

That claim was disputed by a representative from AFSCME Council 31 – the union that represents IDOC officers.

"The department began moving offenders out of Pontiac last week with no advance notice to the union, the employees or the individuals who were moved," said Anders Lindall, public affairs director for AFSCME Council 31.

Lindall noted that the union subsequently received notice of IDOC's intent to reduce populations at Vandalia and Pontiac with a target date of March 16 for the first phase with additional unit closures to be completed by the summer.

Lindall said the union began to hear rumors early last week about possible changes at Pontiac and met with IDOC officials on Feb. 9, during which IDOC denied that possible changes may be forthcoming.

"On Wednesday, seven buses arrived at the facility and began to empty out the medium security units. Only on Friday did they inform us of their plan to close the MSU that they earlier denied," Lindall said.

In response to questions, Lindsay wrote in an email that "the department has not started moving people in order to reduce the populations in these facilities."

"This is an unacceptable breach of trust from IDOC management and not the basis of productive labor relations," Lindall said. "Especially given the history of closure threats at both Pontiac and Vandalia, these new changes introduce uncertainty and instability that hurt employee morale and the lack of truthfulness in presenting them make union members question whether they can rely on management's commitments."

In a letter to Pritzker and IDOC Director Rob Jeffreys, Reps. Thomas Bennett, R-Pontiac, Charlie Meier, R-Okawville, Paul Jacobs, R-Pomona, Patrick Windhorst, R-Metropolis, Blaine Wilhour, R-Beecher City, and Sens. Jason Plummer, R-Edwardsville, Jason Barickman, R-Bloomington, and Terri Bryant, R-Murphysboro, asked about the transfers from Pontiac and Vandalia.

"(T)here is significant concern in these communities about the future of those facilities," the letter stated. "As both of these correctional centers serve as some of the largest employers

in their respective regions, any changes to staffing or inmate population levels would have a major impact on the economic health of those areas."

Vandalia Mayor Ricky Gottman said Wednesday that he had been in contact with some of the legislators to let them know he was concerned about reductions in inmate populations or staff.

"This is an important employer in the area. And that makes it in an important part of our economy for Vandalia, for Fayette County and surrounding areas," Gottman said. "These are good and high-paying jobs and it would be devastating to lose them."

Capitol News Illinois is a nonprofit, nonpartisan news service covering state government and distributed to more than 400 newspapers statewide. It is funded primarily by the Illinois Press Foundation and the Robert R. McCormick Foundation.

Illinois State Police Director Details Response to Expressway Shootings

Suggests statutes be updated to reflect discharge of firearms on expressway

By Grace Kinnicutt Capitol News Illinois

Illinois State Police Director Brendan Kelly on Monday outlined the department's efforts and a proposed response to expressway shootings during a Public Safety and Violence Prevention Task Force hearing.

Kelly said expressway shootings are one of the biggest challenges officers face, and he noted that a good portion of expressway shootings are driven by fights that begin on social media.

"It's almost like a modern day form of dueling," Kelly said. "Whether it's motivated by gang issues, personal issues, or neighborhood issues, they'll say things to each other and then insult one another and say well let's take it out on the E-way."

He noted that people choose expressways since the speed allows suspects to escape more easily and increases the excitement, there are fewer cameras to capture what suspects are wearing and other identifying features, and it's difficult to track down witnesses.

According to the ISP expressway shooting dashboard, from 2019 until now, there have been 543 expressway shootings. In 2021, there were 273 shootings on Chicago expressways.

When police investigate an expressway shooting, Kelly said, they have to obtain evidence from phones, cell towers and social media accounts to verify and identify people involved with violent shootings. Kelly said a deadline needs to be given to tech companies for information to be provided in a timely manner.

Kelly suggested that when it comes to violent and forcible felonies, lawmakers should change the statutes to allow tech companies 36 hours from the moment investigators deliver a search warrant to turn over information.

Rep. Frances Hurley, D-Chicago, asked what more the legislature can be doing to help with expressway shootings.

Kelly said he would like to see aggravated discharge and reckless use of firearms further defined in the aggravated offenses section of the Illinois Criminal Code to reflect the inherent danger of the discharge of a firearm on the expressway.

"I just want to be clear that the things that we're recommending and we're discussing here are not broad," Kelly said. "Let's get to the actual language of the statute and update it to reflect the conduct that we see occurring that's putting people at risk of public safety."

Continued on page 8

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State Police

Continued from page 7

Even when no one is killed or injured, Kelly said that discharging a firearm on an expressway should be considered as an aggravated and reckless discharge of a firearm due to the inherent danger to bystanders.

Kelly said lawmakers should consider expanding an automated license plate reader program to help identify those involved in expressway shootings.

Under the proposed Expressway Camera Act, ISP, the Illinois Department of Transportation and Illinois State Toll Highway Authority would be required to work together to increase the number of cameras along expressways in Cook County.

In 2021, IDOT allocated \$12.5 million to ISP for the purchase and installation of automated license plate readers to aid in expressway shooting investigations in Cook County. ISP has installed 99 automated license plate cameras across the Dan Ryan Expressway.

Installation also includes a communication system that backs up video images to a central location where additional software is then used to search and match license plates to existing license plate and vehicle databases.

Kelly also said the passing of Gov. JB Pritzker's proposed budget for ISP would help in terms of staffing to address expressway shooting.

In the proposed fiscal year 2023 budget, Pritzker proposed \$18.6 million in general funds to support three ISP cadet classes to hire and train 300 officers with a portion of those officers patrolling expressways in the ISP Chicago district.

At a February news conference, Pritzker said ISP is working with the Chicago Police Department, U.S. Department of Homeland Security and local law enforcement agencies to apprehend individuals. Pritzker and Kelly said more than 20 arrests have been made in recent months related to expressway shootings.

Kelly said the agency increased officer presence by 150 percent at "peak criminal activity times" on Chicago expressways. Since October 2021, the increased presence has led to nearly 5,000 traffic stops, 132 DUI arrests, 69 firearm recoveries and 133 criminal arrests.

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Those commissions amount to 15 percent of the transaction on the first \$1 million of sales, and 30 percent of all transactions above that.

"I was there in the tech industry the last time the U.S. government pursued a major tech monopolist with the (2001 Department of Justice) case against Microsoft," David Heinemeier Hansson, CEO and cofounder of the Chicago-based software company Basecamp, told a Senate committee Tuesday.

"What Apple and Google are doing today makes what Microsoft did then look like child's play," he said. "At the height of its power and arrogance, Microsoft never even thought they could impose a tax on all software running on the Windows operating system. But that's where we are today, Apple and Google demanding a cut of 30 percent of revenue for an ever-increasing share of transactions on their platforms."

Two bills are now pending in the General Assembly that would give Illinois-based app developers more control over their app-based sales, Senate Bill 3417 and House Bill 4599, creating the "Freedom to Subscribe Directly Act."

It would prohibit large app distribution platforms like the App Store and Play Store from requiring Illinois-based app developers to use a particular in-app payment system as the exclusive mode of accepting payments.

It would also prohibit those stores from requiring Illinois customers to use those in-app payment systems to download or purchase an app, and it would prohibit them from retaliating against Illinois-based app developers or users for using a different in-app payment system.

The bill would not apply to certain "special purpose" app distribution platforms, including those designed for gaming consoles, music players and public safety agencies.

Mark Buse, head of government relations for Match Group, the makers of Tinder and other online dating apps, said his company paid Apple and Google \$550 million in fees last year, money that he said ultimately comes out of consumers' pockets.

"That is money that we could invest back into technology, hiring of employees, putting employees on the ground in Illinois, and giving consumers lower prices," he said.

Industry officials, however, argued that consumers actually do have choices in payment methods and app developers have options for distributing their software.

Carl Szabo, vice president and general counsel for NetChoice, a trade association that promotes free speech and free enterprise on the internet, noted

in a House committee hearing Wednesday that companies such as Netflix and Spotify require their users to go directly to their company websites to sign up for services and therefore pay Apple and Google no commission fees for distributing their apps.

"Simultaneously, Match Group for example, you could actually walk down the street to CVS right now, go buy a gift card for Match and Tinder and all the services that they provide," he said. "So the notion there's only one form of payment doesn't match reality."

Montana Williams, director of state and local public policy for the Chamber of Progress, a trade group that represents technology companies, also said the bill would violate the commerce clause of the U.S. Constitution, which gives Congress the sole power to regulate interstate commerce.

"Since Apple and Google's App Stores are not confined to state laws, the state of Illinois does not have the power to regulate these interstate transactions," she told the House committee.

Neither committee has taken action on the bills, and supporters said Wednesday that technical amendments are needed before they are ready to be sent to the full House and Senate.

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Bill Aims to Rein in Apple, Google App Stores

App developers complain of exorbitant fees

By Peter Hancock Capitol News Illinois

Two bills pending in the Illinois General Assembly would rein in the ability of tech giants like Apple and Google to dictate how transactions are conducted, and how much of a cut they receive from those transactions, when consumers make certain kinds of purchases using smartphone apps.

If enacted, the bill would make Illinois the first state to regulate that segment of the e-commerce industry, but a broader bill is also pending in Congress where it appears to have bipartisan support.

Currently, app developers pay Apple's App Store and Google's Play Store an annual fee to distribute their apps on those platforms. In addition, however, Apple and Google take a commission percentage on what are known as "digital-only" transactions like dating services, journalism or digital music – those that do not involve the purchase of physical goods or services.

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