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Congressman Bill Foster (D-IL) Issued the Following Statement:

“Unsurprisingly, much of what we heard in the Joint Address last night were lies from the most disgraceful president our country has ever seen. The disinformation and inflammatory rhetoric are an attempt to distract Americans from the fact that Trump’s policies are driving up the cost of living while slashing federal programs that people rely on. Despite his attempts to spin the narrative, Trump inherited one of the strongest economies in the world. Now, American consumers and businesses will bear the brunt of his tariffs and disastrous economic policies.

“In just over six weeks in office, Trump’s actions have left a stain on our nation’s honor that will take generations to remove.”

Foster Statement on Meeting Between President Zelenskyy, Trump in Oval Office

Press Release

Congressman Bill Foster (D-IL) issued the following statement:

“Every member of the Greatest Generation who gave their lives fighting for democracy and the freedom of mankind must be rolling in their graves over the behavior of the most disgraceful President and Vice President our country has ever seen.

“This is a President with no concept of right or wrong, only negotiating leverage. When we were supporting our allies in Europe against Hitler’s attacks, we weren’t focused on our negotiating leverage—we were focused on our duty to democracy.

“Although we have no treaty-level obligation to defend Ukraine, we have a special moral duty to assist Ukraine because of its decision to give up its nuclear weapons at the end of the Cold War, in return for international assurances of its territorial integrity. America must continue to stand on the side of democracy, and we must stand with Ukraine.”

March Is National Celery Month

*Americans Crunch Six Pounds of It
Annually*

By Tom Emery

Even long green vegetables need some love.

March is National Celery Month, a time to celebrate a crunchy vegetable that has a divided reputation among food critics. Some love the versatility of celery, while others deride it as bland and stringy.

Indeed, Americans seem to have a love-hate relationship with stalks of celery. The vegetable is native to the Mediterranean, and some sources

Continued on page 2

The Chicken In History and Politics

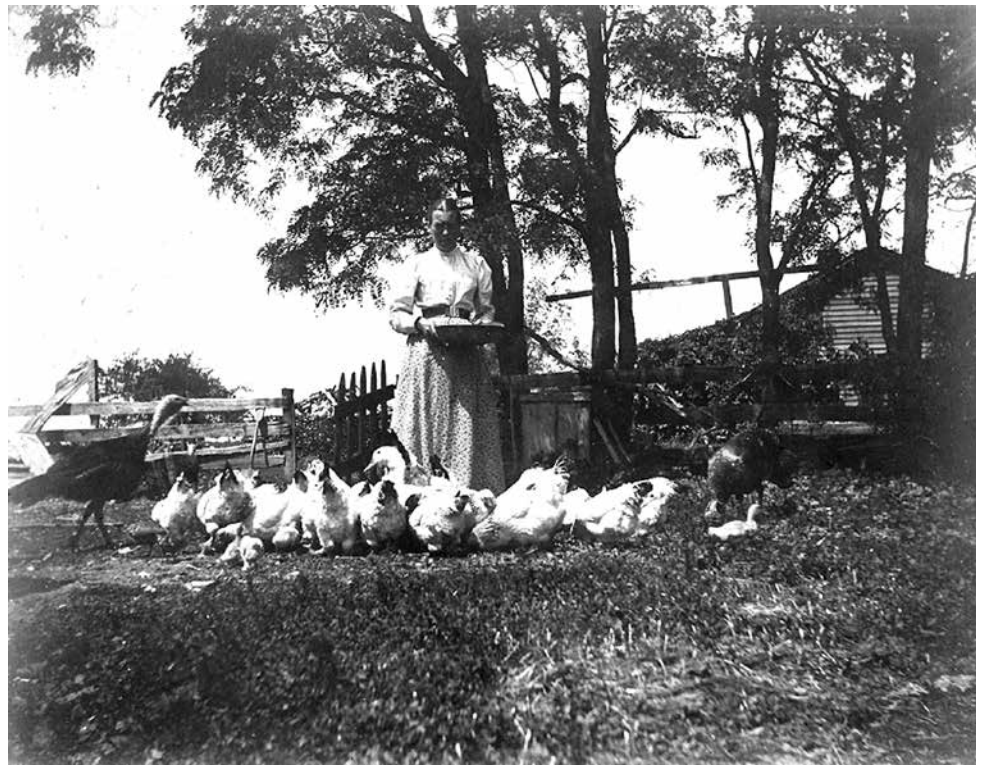
By David Larson

With the price of eggs exceeding \$5 a dozen, the American public is in shock. Avian flu is and has been around for quite some time.

A century or more ago, every farm in Boone County had a few cattle, a milk cow or two, a couple of hogs, a few sheep, and a number of chickens. Farming in those days was more an endeavor to attain self-sufficiency first and the production of surplus food second. Today farming is a purely economic function and single crop economies are the norm worldwide.

Tending to the chickens on a farm was usually delegated to the woman of the household. The men tended to pursue activities that were more designed for their size and their strength, such as feeding cattle or castrating bulls and

Continued on page 4



Trump Tariffs on Illinois’ Largest Trading Partners As State Faces Uncertainty Over Economic Projections

April taxes could provide revenue boost

By Ben Szalinski Capitol News Illinois

As the Governor’s Office of Management and Budget Director Alexis Sturm warned a House committee that uncertainty about President Donald Trump’s economic and administrative policies could affect Illinois revenue, the president announced new tariffs will take effect Tuesday on imports from some of Illinois’ top trading partners.

After initially pausing implementing 25% tariffs on products from Canada and Mexico, Trump announced in a social media post Thursday morning that tariffs will begin on March 4. In addition, he said the U.S. will add another 10% tariff on Chinese

Continued on page 4

Lawmakers Grill Mass Transit Leaders As Clock Ticks Toward Funding ‘Cliff’

*Various proposals floating in Springfield
to address funding, governing structure*

By Ben Szalinski Capitol News Illinois

Public transportation reform in the Chicago area is at the top of state lawmakers’ to-do list this spring, but exactly what that reform will look like remains unclear.

Metra, the Chicago Transit Authority and Pace, along with the Regional Transportation Authority, which oversees some aspects of the Chicago area’s transit systems, collectively face a \$771 million funding shortfall in 2026 as federal pandemic dollars run out. That includes inflation, according to the RTA, which previously said the shortfall would be \$730 million.

Without money to fill that gap, transit users could face up to a 40% reduction in services, RTA Executive Director Leanne Redden said.

Continued on page 5

Celery

from page 1
report that celery seeds were used by humans in present-day Switzerland in 4,000 B.C. The first recorded use of celery as a food source was in France in 1623.

By the early 1700s, celery had made its way to British gardens and in 1796, celery was included in a recipe for roasted turkey in *American Cookery*, the first cookbook by an American author for American users.

Though researchers debate where, and by whom, celery was first grown in the United States, evidence shows that the vegetable was grown in Michigan in the late 1800s. The state's heavy population of Dutch immigrants grew the vegetable to meet increasing demand in the post-Victorian era, particularly at holiday time.

In 1891, the first celery was grown in California, which is now the nation's leader in celery production at 80 percent. The Golden State devotes some 28,000 acres to the production of celery. Other states

that are big producers include Arizona, Michigan, and Florida.

Newspaper advertisements in the late 1800s and early 1900s frequently hawked celery as a popular dish at Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's. To Americans of the time, celery went well with main dishes of holiday game, such as turkey, goose, and duck.

A recent source writes that celery was one of the "constant fixtures of the holiday meal, starting in the late 1800s" and past the turn of the century. Other favorites of the time were olives and oysters.

Celery was also a top selection at fancy restaurants and hotel dining rooms. Today, it's hard to find celery in many eateries, but food buffs come up with plenty of ways to use celery at home.

And it still sells well. The site freshproduce.com reports that celery was the eighth-best selling vegetable in the United States in 2022, trailing potatoes, onions, tomatoes, lettuce, carrots, peppers, and cucumbers.

Today, celery often goes in Thanksgiving dressing, as well as soups and some stir-frys. It's common on veggie trays, where it can be stuffed with cream cheese or peanut butter, or used with dips and salad dressings.

Celery also comes with substantial health benefits. It's not only rich in fiber and nutrients, but low in calories. Celery is also loaded with potassium, vitamins, and antioxidants.

According to National Public Radio, the average American eats six pounds of celery a year. So there are still a lot of people out there who find a reason to crunch it.

But the number of family-run farms is declining because the profit margins are slim and the industry is unpredictable, according to the Illinois Farm Bureau.

Farmers are biting their nails as they await a new Farm Bill – a piece of federal legislation that Congress passes every five years to set comprehensive agricultural programs and policies.

The bill expired in September 2023 and was extended through last year. Congress extended the 2018 version for a second time in December. That legislation, the American Relief Act, 2025, extended the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 for one year through Sept. 30, 2025.

First enacted under President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal in 1933 to support struggling farmers and address Depression-era hunger, the Farm Bill allocates funding for crop insurance, disaster assistance and conservation programs for farmers. It also funds nutrition programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), also known as food stamps, and school lunch programs.

The Farm Bill didn't exist when Nelson's great-grandfather started their family farm in 1910, but it's become an essential part of farmers' financial planning process.

"When we do any kind of planning, we have to be looking out one, two, three, even five years ahead in terms of purchases or cash flow needs," Nelson said.

Another immediate concern is the impact already of the Trump administration's halting of USAID purchase of crops for foreign aid, which could hit Illinois farmers hard.

China could impose retaliatory tariffs like it did in 2018, which led to a significant decrease in soybean exports at the time.

This go-around could increase the cost of producing farm machinery and equipment.

"Farmers are working in the 2024 economy with a piece of legislation that was passed in 2018," Ryan Whitehouse, the Illinois Farm Bureau's director of national legislation, said in December. "And with everything that's happened to inflation ... It just needs modernized bills."

"Congress, you know, they kicked the can down the road two times," Whitehouse said.

Lawmakers in Springfield have also expressed frustration at Congress' lack of an update to the Farm Bill.

"I think it's really unfortunate that the federal government is not doing their part right now," state Rep. Sonya Harper, D-Chicago, said. "That lends itself to hurting our farmer families, which we know the majority of them are in rural communities."

Harper, who chairs the House Agriculture and Conservation Committee, said the delays are "disrespectful to farm families."

The delay has caused budgeting pressure for Nelson, who is considering upgrading an aging tractor to a newer, \$334,000 model.

"If I were trying to project ahead, am I going to try and replace that in 2025? Am I going to try and replace that 2026? I don't know where the safety net will be from the Farm Bill," Nelson said. "It's a politically driven decision in D.C., and there's lots of parts to it."

A new year looming: "There are repercussions" Across more than 26 million acres covering 75% of the state's land, farmers produced \$10.8 billion in corn and \$8.2 billion in soybeans in 2023, according to the USDA.

Each year, the state's 274 million bushels of corn produce more ethanol than any other state, according to the Illinois Department of Agriculture.

Continued on page 4

**John Albertini
For Mayor**

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Looking to Make Belvidere
Better For EVERYONE!

OBITUARIES

- Alexander "Al" Brown, 75, Marengo, Feb. 25
- Cheryl Calvert, 79, Cherry Valley, Feb. 23
- Michael Freeman, 67, Belvidere, Feb. 23
- James Kieser, 89, Belvidere, March 1
- Sol Klein, 89, Harvard, Feb. 23
- Donna Luckow, 90, Formerly of Belvidere, Feb. 23
- Lois Swenson, 84, Belvidere, Feb. 25
- Shirley Trueblood, 92, Belvidere, Feb. 26
- Edward Verhagen, 69, Garden Prairie, Feb. 27
- Patricia Walton, 55, Formerly of Belvidere, Feb. 23

Financial Impacts of Federal Action Stir Anxiety for Illinois Farmers

Farmers face uncertainty as Congress delays long-term spending legislation

By Ashley N. Soriano and Medill Illinois News Bureau

The effects of President Donald Trump's planned tariffs on allies and rivals are yet to be seen, but farmers in Illinois are bracing for their impact – even as they wait years for Congress to pass long-term federal spending legislation.

Fourth-generation Illinois farmer Rick Nelson feels that uncertainty keenly. He learned how to drive a tractor at 6 years old. By age 8, he was preparing the ground for planting.

"I became a 'tractor jack' at an early age," said Nelson, 72, who still operates his 2,500-acre family farm in Paxton, Illinois.

Now in his final farming years before passing the farm to his son, the Nelson family is anxious about the road ahead this year.

The Nelsons' farm is one of nearly 71,000 registered farm operations in Illinois, the third-ranked state in the nation for agricultural exports, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

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District 100 Board Readies Kindergarten Classrooms For Renovation, Solidifies 13 Support Roles

By Sofi Zeman
Contributing writer

Belvidere School District 100 trustees during a February 18 meeting firmed up student resource and mental health services and approved plans to renovate kindergarten classrooms. The board also held a public hearing over whether the district should sell \$21 million in school fire prevention and safety bonds, although no community members participated. The board will consider the item during its March regular meeting.

Trustees unanimously approved making 13 district positions permanent. These were scheduled to end at the close of the 2024-25 year. District 100 employs 10 interventionists, but has space for 11, and two proficiency counselors whose salaries were previously financed by federal emergency relief funds. With the end of ESSER, or the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief that the government gave schools in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the district evaluated whether the positions were needed, and concluded that they were.

The district spent roughly \$1.3 million on staffing those positions during the 2024-25 year and expects to spend about \$1.4 million in the coming school year.

The board also approved administrative requests to renew two contracts that offer on-campus clinicians for students needing mental health support at the high school and middle school levels. They approved a \$120,000 contract with Four Corners Wellness, which would offer two clinicians between the two high schools for two to three days per week. The administration plans to finance the contract through grant funding, but will have to request use of local funds if it is unable to obtain that funding for the 2025-26 year.

A separate contract with Effective School Solutions, which will cost \$150,000 in the 2025-26 year, was expanded to offer services at both district middle schools starting next year. The group offered its services to Belvidere Central Middle School during the 2024-25 year. BCUSD 100 will finance the contract using IDEA grant funding.

Kindergarten classrooms across Belvidere will look different next year, according to the district. The board approved a three-year plan that would renovate Kindergarten rooms to include furniture conducive to hands-on learning. The rollout, which will begin in the 2025-26 year and is scheduled for 2027-28 completion, will cost \$350,000.

Please Join Us on Saturday, March 8th!

Press Release

By now it is my hope that the reader has learned about the Three-Dimensional Geologic Mapping Project (3-D GMP) about to begin in Boone County. This is the fourth article in a series dedicated to raising awareness in the community about this project. The key reason for doing this project is to gain a much-improved understanding of the local geology and the underground water supply that we all depend on.

If you are reading this article and have not seen the previous articles, you can go to the Boone County Website where they are posted:

https://www.boonecountyil.gov/government/departments/planning_department/water_resources.php

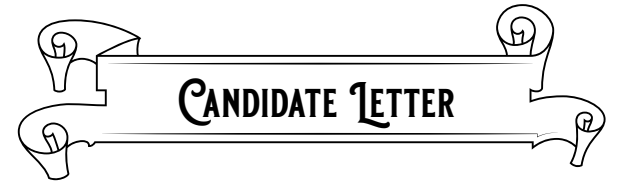
Mark your calendar for Saturday, March 8th as we are hosting a public information and media event at the Wings & Wheels Museum to provide an opportunity for anyone interested in learning more about this project. You will need to RSVP by logging into the reservation link found at the end of this article. We need to know how many people plan to come, so using this link is very important.

Boone County has long been a leader in using science to better understand and plan for local growth. The processes in place have changed over time with new information and technology aiding local leaders in their assessment of comprehensive planning and the review and approval of new development. The 3-D GMP is the first new, comprehensive study of Boone County geology, since the mid 1980's. Keep in mind that the local geology holds our water supply in the subsurface deposits that are called aquifers. The new study will map nearly the entire county and provide details about the size and extent of these aquifers. How they might be connected, and how they interact with surface waters like the Kishwaukee River.

We have a relatively new map, created from information already in hand. This map is titled "Boone County Sensitive Aquifer Recharge Areas (SARA) Map" (Figure 1). This map shows surface areas where the soil and near surface geologic materials have a high potential for water to soak into the ground (groundwater recharge). It is an important reference, and reflects two important aspects about our water supply. It is this combination of factors that needs greater understanding.

The SARA map shows where precipitation (rainfall or snowmelt) has an increased chance of getting into the ground based on a characteristic called saturated hydraulic conductivity. That is a mouthful to say, but it relates to how easily water can flow through the soil materials, something similar to permeability or how fast water can move through the material. Rate of flow is often expressed by the number of inches or

Continued on page 8



John Albertini for Mayor

For those who know me and those who don't, I am your Ward One Alderman for the city of Belvidere and have been for the last 2 years. I have seen and heard your concerns about the city. My vision is to get the city cleaned up. Repair the streets and sidewalks. Make them more usable to all. Instill in people to take better care of their properties so we can get more people and business to want to come here. Get school zone signs posted and enforced. Looking forward to working with library, Park and School Districts. See if a bus service to Chicago, Ohare, Milwaukee, Madison, etc. is feasible. Would an outdoor Sports Park bring in people and revenue to Belvidere? I would like to see more affordable housing. The city needs to grow, get taxes lowered and bring a sense of pride to Belvidere.

Please vote for me on April 1st for Mayor of Belvidere.

Respectfully,
John Albertini.

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Eggs

from page 1

boars. Women tended not to take an active role in any of those jobs. However, there remain some ranches in West Texas, Montana, and Wyoming where women can lay a loop over a running calf with a hand as soft as fresh cotton. They also can wield a knife that would make some men blush.

Tending to the chickens had a certain pace that was better suited to many farm women. For example, if a fryer was on the Sunday menu for the family to enjoy after church, the man would be the last person in the family to ask to select the plumpest pullet to be the subject of the meal.

Besides, the women most often gathered the eggs every morning and they kept better track of which hen was laying and which hen was taking a rest. Women also had a better hand for shaking out the feed for the birds. They would blend corn, oats, and rye seed together in a copper kettle that they most often kept either in the hen house or in the mud-room on the side of the house.

The women would call the birds from the hen house and lure them outside with the feed. Knowing who was feeding them was one of the few elements of human contact that chickens could remember. A chicken's body is significantly larger than its head and the skull is where its brains is located. A living creature with a body that size and a brain of that size, is not designed to provide significant intellectual performance. They are lucky to have enough sense to take care of the instincts they were born with, without expecting them to do more.

After the birds were lured from the hen house, the business of gathering the eggs was easier. Lifting hens to the side to remove eggs can be a dangerous occupation even for the strongest woman to manage. Although chickens are not particularly brilliant, they do know when they are warming eggs, and the maternal instinct of these birds often leads the chickens to be rather disgruntled when someone nudges them to the side and deprives them of their hoped-for families.

Hens have been known to peck the hands of the egg gather and to leap from the nest and chase them out of the house. In addition to angry hens that have lost their eggs, one also has to be aware of the rooster.

Chickens today are not found hunting and pecking in the ground at the hem of the wife of the farming family. Although the meat of free-range chickens then was far more tasty. Today's chickens are confined to large coops with hundreds of chickens living in tight quarters that optimize production quantities to meet market demand. They are watered and fed pellets instead of corn, oats, and rye and live only a prescribed number of days before they are shipped to a slaughter house where thousands of birds are prepared everyday for your nearest supermarket. This is where the problem is despite the political rhetoric of the last year, if you even listened to it. Chickens are produced in a factory on a scale that boggles the mind. The current strain of avian disease spreads like wildfire, and once it touches a member of the flock of tens of thousands of birds, they all are destroyed to prevent further outbreaks. This is the challenge of the new President in order to fulfill his campaign promise "to lower the cost of eggs from day one." In the lower picture is Fair Boat Landing, a business that thrived on the banks of the Kishwaukee River in the late 1800s. For townspeople who didn't have chicken coops in their back yard, it was a favorite spot for local wives to frequent when they had a taste for a whole fryer chicken for Sunday dinner. Those were the days before the supermarkets that appeared across the nation in the 1940s and 1950s and the advent

of the chicken factories.

When it was time to stock the larder at home, one would walk to visit the bakery and then hitch the team to go to the farmers' market to buy fresh vegetables for the dinner table. One could also walk to the dairy or creamery for butter, cheese, and milk or visit a local butcher for salt pork, a roast, or some of that spiced sausage and hickory-smoked bacon that was so good any time of the year.

If poultry was on the menu, one could not go wrong by going down to the river and to visit the Fair Boat Landing. In addition to chickens and eggs, they also sold fat and tasty pigeons. If people today will eat pheasant and quail, they could learn to enjoy fresh-roasted pigeon, the bird some call a "flying rat." Some consider pigeon a favored, unique delicacy.

Fat-breasted pigeons that were corn-fed and cared for in surroundings similar to what was found in the photograph were certain to be moist and flavorful, as much as a small roaster chicken. But chicken, eggs, and pigeons were not the only enterprises that thrived at this emporium along the river, the Fair Boat Landing.

The mercantile wizards of the Kishwaukee River also provided ferry crossings and boats for idle lovers who wanted to slowly paddle along the river on those long summer evenings. One should not laugh; there were some that lived in those distant earlier days that did not believe it wise to cross the river walking or riding over a bridge. We wish President Trump success in driving down the cost of eggs.

Farm Bill

from page 2

Jim Niewold, a corn and soybean farmer in Loda, said he's frustrated with the Farm Bill's delay.

"Several years, or if not decades, most of it ends up getting delayed and put into these omnibus bills, and I wish they'd do it right," Niewold, 69, said. "They call it the Farm Bill, but it's really much bigger than that 'cause it's really like for food security for the country."

Without solidified legislation, funding is in limbo. Farmers rely on crop insurance funding from the farm bill, which protects farmers from losses in crop yields and revenue due to disasters like drought and severe weather events.

"They want their dollars from the market, not from a government handout, but they want that crop insurance there in case there is a crisis or if there's a disaster or national disaster," the Farm Bureau's Whitehouse said.

Although Nelson, also a corn and soybean farmer, said he isn't a fan of disaster payments, he would like the government to invest more consistent dollars into existing programs.

"Some folks get caught on the wrong side of the decisions that were made out of D.C., or in our case, Springfield, and consistency is to me a really important thing to have," Nelson said.

Delays to a new Farm Bill also impact consumers, particularly those who rely on benefit programs like SNAP or have students who eat a

school lunch. These food system impacts could also increase the cost of many grocery items.

But a one-year extension doesn't help much, according to farmers.

"I think we're always concerned because even with a five-year Farm Bill, people look at and say, well, that's a long-term farm bill, but it's really not when you're trying to set up things on the farm," said Ron Bork, a corn and soybean farmer in Piper City, Illinois.

The 73-year-old grew up on his family farm and has had a hand in operations since he was 8 years old. He's preparing to sell his farm and enter retirement, but he is still navigating the uncertainty that comes with farming.

"It's just like trying to steer a big ship in an ocean. You can't turn that ship around in a very short time. It takes a long period of time to get that turned around," Bork said. "It's the same way with farming."

Nelson and Niewold also plan to retire in the next couple of years, passing the reigns to their sons.

This could be the last Farm Bill any of them see as active farmers.

"Nothing these folks in D.C. do can change the rules. They can change the size and the speed of the waves up and down I think, but they can't completely change them, so (my son), like all of us, will have to go through some tougher times and then hopefully enjoy good times," Niewold said.

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

Tariffs

from page 1

goods.

The president alleged drugs were still coming into the United States at "unacceptable levels."

Meanwhile in the Illinois Statehouse, Sturm told the House Revenue and Finance Committee that revenue projections in Gov. JB Pritzker's introduced budget account for the possibility of tariffs affecting the economy.

"There's a lot of uncertainty in our outlook based on what's going on at the national level regarding tariffs, tax policy, what the Federal Reserve is going to do," Sturm said.

The governor's \$55.2 billion budget is based on the December S&P Global forecast that projected stable economic growth and considered some of Trump's top economic policies, including tariffs and tax cut extensions, would be implemented, Sturm said.

After the governor's budget office in November projected flat revenue growth for fiscal year 2026 based on the September S&P forecast, the December forecast caused state officials to revise their forecast upward by \$1.8 billion in the upcoming fiscal year.

There's also a risk that Trump's administration pulls back federal funding states are expecting. The

Continued on Page 5

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Tariffs

from page 4

current fiscal year budget for the state expects to receive upwards of \$20 billion in federal funding, but earlier this week, Pritzker wrote a letter to the federal Office of Management and Budget saying the federal government is withholding \$1.9 billion that has already been promised to Illinois.

“There’s no real way to prepare for that,” Sturm said. “Obviously we are watching closely what’s going on at the national level, but I think the governor has tried to make clear that this state at this level of operations can’t cover any decisions that the federal administration or Congress makes to reduce its payments to Illinois.”

Asked whether there are any spending cut plans for downturns in revenue projections, Sturm the governor’s office doesn’t have a backup plan.

“At this point, no,” Sturm said. “I think the important thing to watch is what happens in April.”

Sturm hinted there could be some good news for state finances when income tax revenue is reported at the end of April. She said state officials are expecting a “pretty significant April tax payment,” which could cause state officials to reevaluate their revenue projections for the current fiscal year.

Personal income tax receipts for the state are up 8% for the fiscal year through January, according to the non-partisan Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability.

But new tariffs on imported goods could add more uncertainty to the state’s economy.

IMPORT PARTNERS

Illinois received \$127.8 billion of imports from China, Canada and Mexico in 2023, according to the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. Canada is Illinois’ largest partner for both imports and exports, with the state receiving \$65.6 billion of goods from the country in 2023.

Illinois is highly dependent on oil and gas from Canada, meaning consumers could be in line for higher energy and gas prices due to Trump’s tariffs. About 72% of Illinois’ imports, or \$47.4 billion, from Canada in 2023 was oil and gas, according to DCEO.

China had the second-highest volume of imports to Illinois in 2023, with \$43.9 billion worth of goods, including \$27.2 billion of computers and electronics.

CANADIAN ENERGY

Illinoisans might end up paying more for alcohol and cars if tariffs are implemented on Mexican goods. Illinois received \$18.3 billion of imports from Mexico in 2023, including \$5.9 billion of beverages and tobacco and \$2 billion of transportation equipment.

China, Canada and Mexico received \$37.9 billion of exports from Illinois in 2023, nearly half of the state’s exports for the year. This included a combined \$3 billion in agricultural goods to China and Mexico and nearly \$4 billion of machinery to Canada.

Canada’s proposed targeted tariffs include penalties on American exports of food and metal products, according to the Canadian Broadcasting Company. Illinois sent \$3.2 billion of food and

primary metal manufacturing products to Canada in 2023.

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Transit

from page 1

The transit agencies were peppered with questions from lawmakers during a House hearing this week about their shortfalls in planning, organization and execution of services. Lawmakers have said for months the agencies will not receive new state funding without major reforms to their operations happening first.

In a particularly tense exchange, Rep. Rita Mayfield, D-Waukegan, ripped into RTA Chair Kirk Dillard.

“I think that we need to blow up the RTA, totally blow it up, get rid of everyone, because again, systemic incompetence for the last 50 years,” Mayfield said. “I don’t want to keep anyone other than the janitors and the basic clerical staff. Anybody in a leadership position needs to be removed.”

What has been proposed

Various reform plans have been proposed, including some from transit activists and labor organizations. Dillard is pushing a plan that focuses on empowering the RTA to coordinate more operations between the transit agencies.

Current state law limits the power of the RTA to regional planning, setting standards for the service, developing performance measures, allocating funding, financial oversight, and capital planning. The three agencies that actually provide public transportation are left to determine levels of service, schedules and fares.

“What the RTA’s role is at best is the bully pulpit and trying to coordinate, convene and have conversations if there is no compelling mechanism — financial, statutorily or out of penalties — whereby the RTA can control that outcome,” Redden said.

About 17% of the transit systems’ funding comes from the state, according to the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning. State law mandates half of the funding must come from rider fares, though that requirement has generally been suspended since the pandemic.

Dillard’s plan aims to address some of those areas where transit agencies are left to make their own decisions. Under his proposal, the RTA would gain more power

to set fares, including on a unified app. The RTA would also have more control over service coordination and receive quarterly reports from the three systems that would allow the RTA to require improvements in exchange for more funding.

Dillard also said the RTA has identified \$100 million in “efficiencies” to provide savings to the agencies.

“We’re not asking just for money,” Dillard said. “We have presented significant reforms that will be there.”

But Mayfield, who chairs the House appropriations committee that oversees transportation, questioned why the RTA is needed.

“I for one will never vote to give you more anything, definitely not more power or more money, because I’ve not seen anything good come out of the RTA,” Mayfield said.

Other lawmakers said regional oversight remains necessary, but significant reforms are needed.

“I believe that we need this regional oversight,” Rep. Mary Beth Canty, D-Arlington Heights, a former RTA board member, said. “My frustration has always come from a place of us not being able to get that in a meaningful way.”

Labor unions have proposed their own plan. The AFL-CIO-led plan calls for more coordination between agencies including universal fare tools, coordinated safety on public transportation and reducing the percentage of the agency’s budget that must come from fares.

Sen. Ram Villivalam, D-Chicago, has introduced a bill that would merge all the transit agencies into one entity known as the Metropolitan Mobility Authority.

Challenges toward reform

Achieving reform faces numerous challenges and differing opinions among transit leaders and lawmakers. It also faces the financial reality that the state has limited resources to dole out.

Similar-sized transit agencies in other states receive far more state funding than Chicago’s systems. Pennsylvania funds half of Philadelphia’s public transit costs while other systems receive at least a quarter of their funding from the state.

It’s this “chronic underfunding” by Illinois that has made this shortfall worse, Redden said.

Even among the Chicago-area systems, there’s disagreement about how funding should be

Continued on page 7




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This notice is also to advise you that a petition has been filed for a tax deed which will transfer title and the right to possession of this property if redemption is not made on or before 8/12/2025.

This matter is set for hearing in the Circuit Court of Boone County, 601 N. Main Street, Courtroom 3, Belvidere, Illinois, 61008 at 9:30 A.M. on 9/16/2025.

You may be present at this hearing but your right to redeem will already have expired at that time.

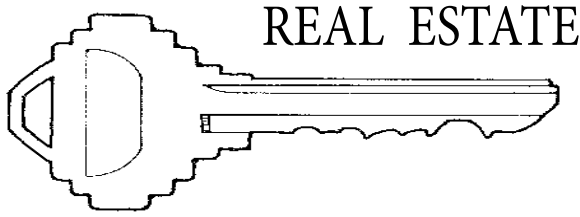
YOU ARE URGED TO REDEEM IMMEDIATELY TO PREVENT LOSS OF PROPERTY.

Redemption can be made at any time on or before 8/12/2025 by applying to the County Clerk of Boone County, Illinois, at the Office of the County Clerk in Belvidere, Illinois.

For further information contact the County Clerk.

ADDRESS: 1
212 Logan Ave, Suite 103
Belvidere, IL 61008
TELEPHONE: (815) 544-3103
Auction Z-2, Inc.
Purchaser or Assignee
Dated: 2/18/2025

Published in The Boone County Journal March 6, 13, 20, and 27th, SW



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

WELLS FARGO BANK, N.A., Plaintiff,
-v- 24 FC 27
NICHOLAS HAILEY, MICHELE HAILEY, Defendant
NOTICE OF SALE

PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale entered in the above cause on September 11, 2024, an agent for The Judicial Sales Corporation, will at 1:00 PM on March 24, 2025, at the Advocus National Title Insurance, 530 S. State, Suite 201 (Logan Avenue entrance), Belvidere, IL, 61008, sell at a public in-person sale to the highest bidder, as set forth below, the following described real estate:

Commonly known as 10915 WHISPERING PINES WAY, ROCKFORD, IL 61114

Property Index No. 05-07-201-003

The real estate is improved with a single family residence.

The judgment amount was \$375,947.80.

Sale terms: 25% down of the highest bid by certified funds at the close of the sale payable to The Judicial Sales Corporation. No third party checks will be accepted. The balance, in certified funds/or wire transfer, is due within twenty-four (24) hours. The subject property is subject to general real estate taxes, special assessments, or special taxes levied against said real estate and is offered for sale without any representation as to quality or quantity of title and without recourse to Plaintiff and in "AS IS" condition. The sale is further subject to confirmation by the court.

Upon payment in full of the amount bid, the purchaser will receive a Certificate of Sale that will entitle the purchaser to a deed to the real estate after confirmation of the sale.

The property will NOT be open for inspection and plaintiff makes no representation as to the condition of the property. Prospective bidders are admonished to check the court file to verify all information.

If this property is a condominium unit, the purchaser of the unit at the foreclosure sale, other than a mortgagee, shall pay the assessments and the legal fees required by The Condominium Property Act, 765 ILCS 605/9(g)(1) and (g)(4). If this property is a condominium unit which is part of a common interest community, the purchaser of the unit at the foreclosure sale other than a mortgagee shall pay the assessments required by The Condominium Property Act, 765 ILCS 605/18.5(g-1).

IF YOU ARE THE MORTGAGOR (HOMEOWNER), YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN IN POSSESSION FOR 30 DAYS AFTER ENTRY OF AN ORDER OF POSSESSION, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 15-1701(C) OF THE ILLINOIS MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE LAW.

You will need a photo identification issued by a government agency (driver's license, passport, etc.) in order to gain entry into our building and the foreclosure sale room in Cook County and the same identification for sales held at other county venues where The Judicial Sales Corporation conducts foreclosure sales.

For information, contact The sales clerk, LOGS Legal Group LLP Plaintiff's Attorneys, 2801 LAKESIDE DRIVE, SUITE 207, Bannockburn, IL, 60015 (847) 291-1717 For information call between the hours of 1pm - 3pm. Please refer to file number 24-100912.

THE JUDICIAL SALES CORPORATION
One South Wacker Drive, 24th Floor, Chicago, IL 60606-4650 (312) 236-SALE

You can also visit The Judicial Sales Corporation at www.tjsc.com for a 7 day status report of pending sales.

LOGS Legal Group LLP
2801 LAKESIDE DRIVE, SUITE 207
Bannockburn IL, 60015
847-291-1717
E-Mail: ILNotices@logs.com
Attorney File No. 24-100912
Case Number: 24 FC 27
TJSC#: 45-418

NOTE: Pursuant to the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, you are advised that Plaintiff's attorney is deemed to be a debt collector attempting to collect a debt and any information obtained will be used for that purpose.

Case # 24 FC 27 6088-950427

Published in The Boone County Journal Feb 20, 27, March 6, 2025

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

NEWREZ LLC, D/B/A SHELLPOINT MORTGAGE SERVICING
Plaintiff,

-v- 23 FC 81

BRANDON WALKER, CANDLEWICK LAKE ASSOCIATION, INC.
Defendant

NOTICE OF SALE

PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale entered in the above cause on February 4, 2025, an agent for The Judicial Sales Corporation, will at 1:00 PM on April 15, 2025, at the Advocus National Title Insurance, 530 S. State, Suite 201 (Logan Avenue entrance), Belvidere, IL, 61008, sell at a public in-person sale to the highest bidder, as set forth below, the following described real estate:

Commonly known as 405 PEMBROKE ROAD SOUTH WEST, POPLAR GROVE, IL 61065

Property Index No. 03-27-305-018

The real estate is improved with a single family residence.

The judgment amount was \$71,680.77.

Sale terms: 25% down of the highest bid by certified funds at the close of the sale payable to The Judicial Sales Corporation. No third party checks will be accepted. The balance, in certified funds/or wire transfer, is due within twenty-four (24) hours. The subject property is subject to general real estate taxes, special assessments, or special taxes levied against said real estate and is offered for sale without any representation as to quality or quantity of title and without recourse to Plaintiff and in "AS IS" condition. The sale is further subject to confirmation by the court.

Upon payment in full of the amount bid, the purchaser will receive a Certificate of Sale that will entitle the purchaser to a deed to the real estate after confirmation of the sale.

The property will NOT be open for inspection and plaintiff makes no representation as to the condition of the property. Prospective bidders are admonished to check the court file to verify all information.

If this property is a condominium unit, the purchaser of the unit at the

foreclosure sale, other than a mortgagee, shall pay the assessments and the legal fees required by The Condominium Property Act, 765 ILCS 605/9(g)(1) and (g)(4). If this property is a condominium unit which is part of a common interest community, the purchaser of the unit at the foreclosure sale other than a mortgagee shall pay the assessments required by The Condominium Property Act, 765 ILCS 605/18.5(g-1).

IF YOU ARE THE MORTGAGOR (HOMEOWNER), YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN IN POSSESSION FOR 30 DAYS AFTER ENTRY OF AN ORDER OF POSSESSION, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 15-1701(C) OF THE ILLINOIS MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE LAW.

You will need a photo identification issued by a government agency (driver's license, passport, etc.) in order to gain entry into our building and the foreclosure sale room in Cook County and the same identification for sales held at other county venues where The Judicial Sales Corporation conducts foreclosure sales.

For information, contact The sales clerk, LOGS Legal Group LLP Plaintiff's Attorneys, 2801 LAKESIDE DRIVE, SUITE 207, Bannockburn, IL, 60015 (847) 291-1717 For information call between the hours of 1pm - 3pm. Please refer to file number 23-099985.

THE JUDICIAL SALES CORPORATION
One South Wacker Drive, 24th Floor, Chicago, IL 60606-4650 (312) 236-SALE

You can also visit The Judicial Sales Corporation at www.tjsc.com for a 7 day status report of pending sales.

LOGS Legal Group LLP
2801 LAKESIDE DRIVE, SUITE 207
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E-Mail: ILNotices@logs.com
Attorney File No. 23-099985
Case Number: 23 FC 81
TJSC#: 45-434

NOTE: Pursuant to the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, you are advised that Plaintiff's attorney is deemed to be a debt collector attempting to collect a debt and any information obtained will be used for that purpose.

Case # 23 FC 81

6088-951115
Published in The Boone County Journal March 6, 13, 20, and 27th, 2025

Transit from page 5

prioritized between agencies. CTA Chief Financial Officer Tom McKone said the CTA wants a greater share of transit funds for carrying 86% of the region's daily riders and to provide more service. But lawmakers weren't sold.

"If we can't take care of what we have already, how the hell are we going to expand into anything?" Rep. John Cabello, R-Machesney Park, said. "It just doesn't make sense. It doesn't make sense at all. I mean if we can't pay for what we have today, how can we expand?"

There's also disagreement between the agencies about what the governing structure should look like as some push to consolidate transit governance.

"This issue, in our opinion, is not from a governance issue," CTA Acting President Nora Leerhsen said. "This discussion of consolidation is not something that we think would solve the issues that we know riders want to see solved, from CTA's perspective. Consolidation would bring additional administrative burdens that would in fact exacerbate some of the inequities that we've seen."

Consolidation could also cause problems at Metra, CEO Jim Derwinski said.

"I do believe because we represent six counties, because the RTA taxing region represents so many communities, an oversight board that can see a regional perspective is required," Derwinski said.

Metra is also bound by other agreements, contracts and federal railroad laws. Many operations that appear to the average rider to be run by Metra are actually run by freight companies that own Metra's rail lines. For example, employees who work on the BNSF Metra line to Aurora are BNSF employees and the passenger schedules on the Milwaukee District North and West lines to Fox Lake and Elgin are dictated by Canadian Pacific, according to Derwinski.

"It almost sounds like, I'm not going to say impossible, but close to impossible, for you to actually be a part of some big service board," Rep. Will Davis, D-Homewood, said.

Logistical questions about a governing structure are only part of the issue. The other question that must be addressed is how the budget shortfalls, which RTA officials said will grow beyond \$771 million in subsequent years, will be addressed, particularly as the state faces its own financial constraints.

Gov. JB Pritzker's proposed \$55.2 billion state budget for the next fiscal year raises spending by just 1% across most of state government but doesn't include any new spending for public transportation.

"Who's covering how much of that is a negotiation that will take place," Pritzker told reporters after his budget address. "So it's near impossible for us to put

a number into a budget, to make a determination of what the state should be putting forward when we don't yet know."

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning has recommended various funding mechanisms including raising the RTA sales tax in the six-country region, a sales tax on services, and higher tolls, vehicle registration fees or downtown Chicago parking taxes.

"As a former legislator and a former state senator in this body, I know how difficult it is to support new revenue," Dillard said.

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

Legislation Aims To Help First-Time Homebuyers

Bill would create tax deductible accounts to save for down payments

*By Peter Hancock & Jade Aubrey
Capitol News Illinois*

As the cost of housing continues to rise, Illinois realtors are pushing legislation to make it easier for first-time homebuyers to save for a down payment.

Senate Bill 148 would enable Illinois residents to open a special kind of savings account that could only be used to pay eligible costs for the purchase of a single-family residence. Deposits into those accounts would be deductible from state income taxes with some limitations.

The deductions would be limited to \$5,000 per year for individuals and \$10,000 per year for joint accounts, up to maximum aggregate amounts of \$25,000 per individual and \$50,000 for joint accounts over a 10-year period.

The accounts would be available to Illinois residents who have not owned or purchased, either individually or jointly, a single-family residence during the prior 10 years. That would include both first-time and "second-chance" buyers – people who may have purchased a home previously and now want to get into the ownership market again.

"When you look at the median sales price of a home in Illinois in 2024, it was almost \$300,000," Sen. Christine Castro, D-Elgin, said during a news conference Thursday. "That's 8% higher than in 2023 and almost 40% then higher than in 2019. So you see the rapid (rising) cost of homes."

Jim Clayton, senior director of state government affairs for the trade group Illinois Realtors, said the bill is one of several initiatives the industry has introduced this year to help alleviate the burden of rising home prices.

The bill has been assigned to the Senate Revenue Committee and is awaiting further action.

Senate Republicans push property tax relief measures

Senate Republicans are urging passage of a handful of bills they say are aimed at providing property tax relief to Illinois homeowners, something they say Democratic Gov. JB Pritzker did not address in his budget proposal last week.

"He talked about affordable housing," Sen. Jil Tracy, R-Quincy, said during a Statehouse news conference Thursday. "And yes, that's very necessary. First-time homeowners are facing difficulties in buying homes, because what you

continued on page 8

Aquifer

from page 7

centimeters the water can move per minute or per hour.

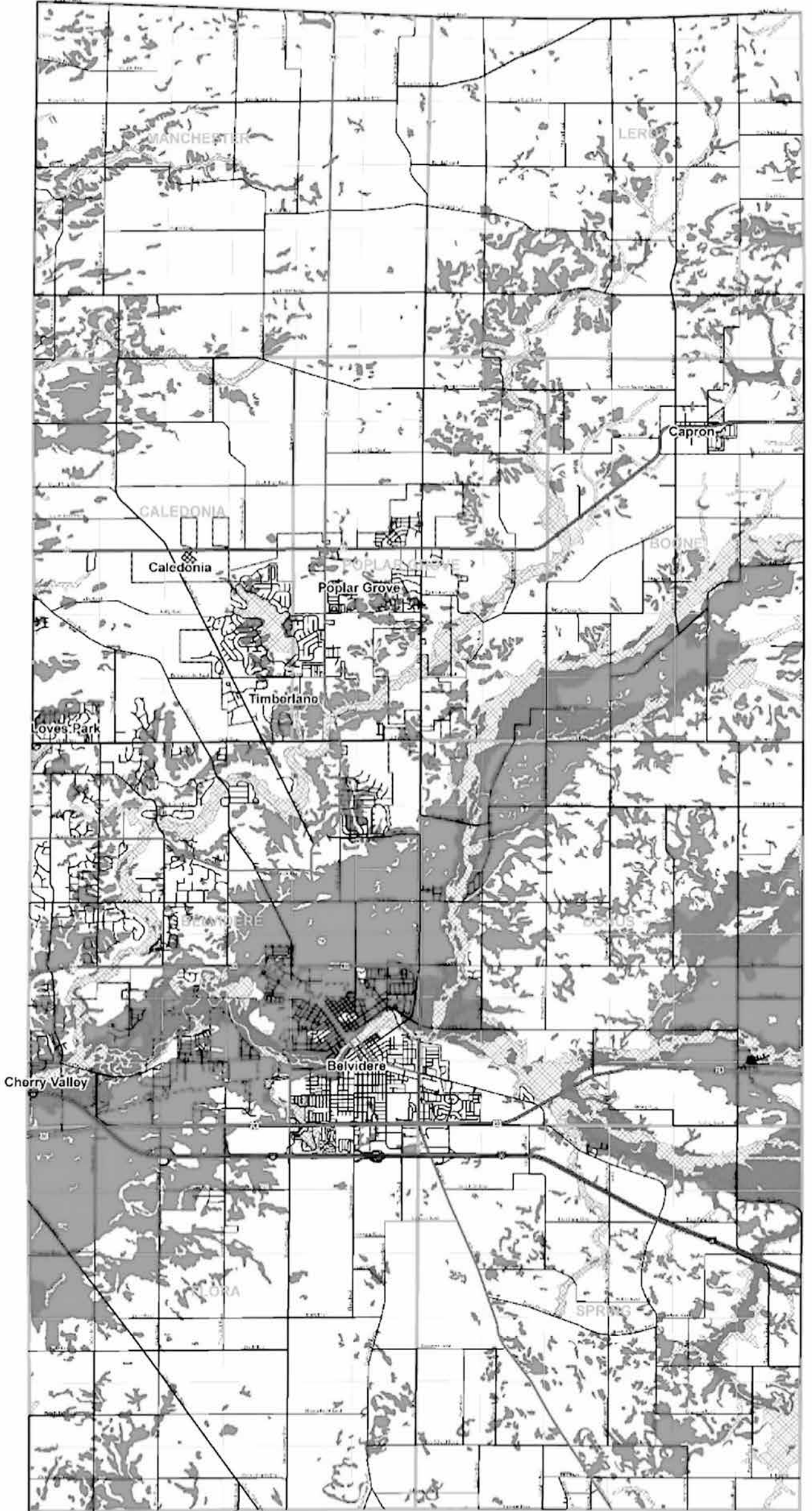
The usefulness of the current SARA map is limited to the detail of the data collected to create it. United States Department of Agriculture Soil Survey Maps typically represent a resolution of around one soil boring or “data point” per 20-acres of land surface. Areas highlighted in red on the SARA map also depict places considered to be “sensitive” in terms of where contaminants would also have an increased chance of soaking into the ground, perhaps with the precipitation, and thus potentially degrading water quality. The new study will significantly increase the detail(s) about what is found at, and below the soil surface. The new technology will be assessing geologic materials and structures continuously across the landscape. Exposing seamless 3-dimensional aspects of how the surface materials provide connections to the shallow sand and gravel aquifers, and ultimately the deeper bedrock aquifers - shedding important new insights on how the local water supply actually functions. Circling back, the local geology is complex and this study will tell us in great detail where the aquifers are, where the current water level is; where, how, or if the shallow aquifers connect with the soil surface and/or the bedrock buried below.

You can learn more about the 3-D GMP at the public information and media event scheduled for March 8th. The event will be held at the Wings

and Wheels Museum on Orth Road from 10 am till 2:00 pm. Weather permitting, a helicopter demonstration of the geophysical system will take place at noon.

An open house format between 10:00 and 11:30 a.m. will allow attendees to meet this project’s scientists, engage with local water

resource professionals (like me!), and visit with local planners who will use the new information to develop and implement safeguards to help ensure local water resources remain sustainable to meet current and future needs. If you want to attend, please use the RSVP link to register for the event! <https://forms.illinois.edu/sec/1102594718>.



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Homebuyer

from page 7

have to consider most of all is, can you make the property tax payment? You can’t address affordable housing unless you first address what’s going on with Illinois’s high property tax and high property tax amounts.”

Sen. Chapin Rose, R-Mahomet, is sponsoring Senate Bill 2246, which would put a cap increases in the assessed valuation of residential property to the rate of inflation over the previous 12 months. He said it would help bridge the rapidly increasing gap between what senior homeowners collect from Social Security and the increasing amounts they’re being charged for property taxes.

“This is real, this is hurting people, and it’s all scalable,” he said. “Whether you live in \$100,000 home or \$200,000 home or \$4,000 home, it’s becoming unaffordable.”

The bill has not yet been assigned to a committee.

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

Boone County Sensitive Aquifer Recharge Areas

Legend

- Interstate Principal Arterial
- Principal Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Major Collector
- Local
- Township Boundary
- Section Boundary
- Municipalities
- Floodplain
- High Recharge Area

Data Sources
Web Soil Survey - Ksat

Saturated hydraulic conductivity (Ksat) refers to the ease with which pores in a saturated soil transmit water. The estimates are expressed in terms of micrometers per second. They are based on soil characteristics observed in the field, particularly structure, porosity, and texture. Saturated hydraulic conductivity is considered in the design of soil drainage systems and septic tank absorption fields. For this map the Ksat is converted from micrometers per second to centimeters per second for simplification. All “High Recharge Areas” in the map represent a soil with a Ksat rating 5 centimeters per second or higher.

DRAFT 1

Created by the Boone County GIS Department May, 2016.