

Ex-sheriff loses pension after theft conviction

EUREKA (AP) — Former Woodford County Sheriff Bill Myers has lost his \$2,500 a month state pension after being convicted of stealing more than \$233,000 from the county.

The Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund has ruled the felony theft case was related to Myers' official duties as sheriff, which automatically cancels pension benefits under Illinois law.

Myers, who began serving a three-year prison sentence last week, had been collecting pension benefits since November 2001, when he resigned as sheriff after the missing money was discovered.

Pension checks were halted in late October, days after Myers was sentenced for federal mail fraud and money laundering charges, said Mike Weinstein, associate general counsel for the IMRF.

Myers, who was sheriff for 12 years, has until late January to appeal the IMRF ruling. His attorney, Thomas Penn Jr. of Peoria, could not be reached for comment on a possible appeal.

The former sheriff pleaded guilty to using county-issued credit cards to steal about \$200,000, which prosecutors said he used for personal expenses such as motorcycle equipment, cameras, guns and hotel rooms.

He also pleaded guilty to misuse of nearly \$30,000 from a federal grant from the Juvenile Justice reform fund.

McCoy sets Kane's goals for next year

Jail overcrowding high on list

~~12/13/02~~

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — A public safety referendum, a criminal justice committee and a plan for 2030 are all issues with which the Kane County Board will wrestle next year.

On Thursday, Chairman Mike McCoy distributed a list of "2003 goals and objectives" to the chairmen of each standing committee, a group that comprises the Executive Committee.



McCoy

Crowding at the jail is one of the biggest issues, and though the board has authorized spending \$12 million to build a 200-bed addition, coming up with the money to staff it is another story.

Enter the referendum. State law allows counties seek approval from the voters to levy a sales tax in quarter-cent increments. The income is restricted to public safety purposes.

A quarter-cent sales tax hike would raise \$8.2 million annually.

McCoy favors the National Institute of Corrections recommendation that the county form a criminal justice coordinating committee to oversee

the courts and the jail.

Last month, Sheriff Ken Ramsey invited the NIC representatives to give their assessment of the county's criminal justice system. Their top suggestion was to form a committee that examines the criminal justice system as a way to keep jail populations as low as possible.

"It's something that we should do so that we're all on the same page," McCoy said.

The 2030 plan is to follow in the steps of the county's award-winning 2020 Land Resource Management Plan. Both Development and Executive committees will be focused on developing the plan, he said.

In addition to the 2030 plan, McCoy wants the Development Committee to tackle the issue of growth and school financing.

"Every school district in our county has some type of financial problem," McCoy said.

The Executive Committee, which McCoy chairs, will head the jail addition project and the veterans' memorial.

He also wants to set up strategic objectives. The board wrote up some objectives six years ago, he said, and have followed them closely.

The Transportation Committee will focus on the Anderson Road extension near Elburn, and Randall Road.

"There's always Randall Road," McCoy said.

Other issues the board will tackle next year include the animal control facility, renovating the coroner's office, privatizing services at the jail, the circuit clerk's office build-out and a new telephone system.

County vice-chairman vote will wait a month

Committee agrees to forgo special meeting to make decision

12/13/02

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — The Kane County Board will wait until its February meeting to elect a vice-chairman.

The election will occur a month late because the vote it conducted Tuesday was declared invalid.

Board chairman Mike McCoy on Thursday told members of the Executive Committee he improperly declared Caryl VanOvermeiren, R-St. Charles, the winner.

Committee members agreed to forgo a special meeting and simply wait a month to conduct a new election.

"Caryl remains vice-chair until we vote again," McCoy said.

The board's vice-chairman is elected by the members of the county board. On Tuesday, three candidates were nominated — VanOvermeiren, Lee Barrett, R-Elgin, and Douglas Weigand, R-Batavia.

VanOvermeiren collected the most



VanOvermeiren

votes, but it was not enough.

The county code calls for the vice-chairman to be elected by a majority of the board.

One board member, Catherine Hurlbut, R-Elgin, was absent, leaving 25 members present and voting. VanOvermeiren received 12 votes, Barrett received eight and Weigand received five.

McCoy, exercising a chairman's power to cast a vote if it affects the outcome, cast a vote for VanOvermeiren, giving her 13.

However, he did not fully account

for his own vote, which increased the number of electors by one. Since 13 is not a majority of 26, the vote was declared invalid.

McCoy said neither the county code nor Roberts Rules of Order have a provision for a runoff between the top two vote-getters.

That means board members will choose from the same three candidates when they reconvene Feb. 11.

VanOvermeiren has been vice-chairman for six years. The position comes up for a vote every two years after a general election.

Woodruff first woman lieutenant in jail's history

KANE COUNTY CHRONICLE

GENEVA — Lynne Woodruff has been promoted from sergeant to lieutenant at the Kane County Jail, the sheriff announced Wednesday.

Woodruff, who has been a sergeant since 1995, has been with the sheriff's office for 13 years, Sheriff Ken Ramsey said. She was the first woman sergeant in the corrections department and, now, is the first woman lieutenant, he said.

Woodruff is pursuing certification as a jail manager through the American Jail Association, Ramsey said. She earned a bachelor's degree in business management and leadership from Judson College.

12/13/02

DuPage to study ability to bring water to Geneva, North Aurora

Existing pipes might be too crusty

12/13/02
By BRENDA SCHORY
Kane County Chronicle

ELMHURST — The DuPage Water Commission must study the condition of its pipes before it can offer excess water to Geneva and North Aurora.

Commissioners at Thursday's meeting said they must determine the condition of the inside of the transmission pipes, such as mineral deposits, to know if the pipes could adequately serve Kane County communities with Lake Michigan water.

"What complicates things is an issue of c-factors, engineering stuff, hydraulic issues we need to resolve," DuPage Manager of Water Operations Robert Martin said.

"It has to do with the smoothness inside the pipes. There's deposit built up on the inside of pipes, aluminum hydroxide and polyphosphate from the treatment that interrupts its transportability and changes the type of flow," he said.

The commission supplies an average of 80 million gallons a day to

DuPage communities. In October, officials suggested they could sell excess lake water to Geneva, Batavia and North Aurora.

Geneva and North Aurora officials are interested, but Batavia aldermen voted to build a water treatment facility to remove excess radium from its water. Radium is an element that occurs in water naturally, but is known to cause cancer. New radium standards call for reducing the amount in drinking water.

If DuPage can sell Geneva 4 million gallons a day of treated water, Geneva would not have to build a \$21 million treatment facility.

North Aurora officials still are waiting to learn what it would cost before they would commit to buying it. North Aurora would need 2.6 million gallons a day if the village chooses to participate.

Martin said the commission would send letters to all three municipalities to determine interest.

A report distributed at the meeting states the commission could supply less water if the municipalities mixed

deep well water with treated Lake Michigan water to comply with radium standards.

If they choose to take half water from Lake Michigan to reduce radium levels, "It will be necessary for them to construct improvements to their water systems to bring the water from the deep wells to a central mixing facility," the report states.

Engineering estimates state full water service mains could cost \$20 million, half water service mains could cost \$15.3 million to supply water outside DuPage County. Participating municipalities would pay for the mains.

Size could be reduced by installing a pumping station in the general area of Geneva and Prince Crossing roads, just east of Route 59 in unincorporated West Chicago, the report states.

The commission is expected to revisit the issue at its next meeting Jan. 9.

Geneva Water Superintendent John Donahue supported the idea when first proposed.

"Lake water is definitely a more viable source than aquifers are right now. It would certainly guarantee us maximum water — as much as we could hope for — in the foreseeable future," he said.

Lake water in Kane?

Geneva, Batavia, N. Aurora ponder

12/13/02

by Garrett Ordower
STAFF WRITER

Beacon

ELMHURST — Lake Michigan water could stream into some Kane County communities as they look to increase water quality and prevent future shortages.

Batavia, Geneva and North Aurora — the three communities eyed by the DuPage Water Commission for service — have shown varying levels of interest in the discussions.

At this point, Geneva appears to be most interested, according to DuPage's Water Operations Manager Robert Martin, and the city has put its plans for \$20 million of water system upgrades on hold pending talks with DuPage County.

"We're looking at doing a full replacement of our water supply to improve water quality and reliability of the future supply," said John Donahue, superintendent of water and sewer for Geneva.

Combining lake water with well water also could help the three towns reach federally ac-

ceptable radium levels.

Additionally, a study by the Northern Illinois Planning Commission has indicated the urbanized areas of Kane County could see well water shortages in the near future.

At the commission's Thursday morning meeting, Chairman Mike Vondra pointed to the three communities as a source of increased revenues for the county.

"My goal is to sell water and make money," Vondra said.

Vondra said a five-year capital improvement plan being looked at by the commission has no new sources of revenue and that bringing water west could reduce operating costs and increase profit margins.

Many questions concerning the viability of extending water service remain, however, including DuPage bumping up against its water allocation and, during the summer, its maximum pumping pressure.

Those concerns could mean a new pumping

station or other capital improvements would be needed before water could reach the cities, and that could make the costs for everyone involved prohibitive.

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WATER

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"If the costs are so high, they might not be interested in going any further," Commissioner Rick Wilcox said. "To really know what it would take is going to take a further study."

In addition to engineering costs, the legal costs, both in time and money, of DuPage providing water outside of the county also could run high. State laws may prohibit such action, and the move would need to be approved by communities already part of the DuPage water system.

"The bottom line is that, if we have to take in all those costs, it might not be profitable for us either," Commissioner William Mueller said.

Batavia will move ahead with \$18 million of improvements to its water system regardless of the DuPage decision after approaching the county several years ago and being told they were not interested in supplying lake water to Kane County.

However, the city will keep its options open for the future, as its current round of improvements are ex-

pected to take care of water needs for 20 to 30 years.

"Batavia would be interested in finding out what they have to offer us," said John Dillon, superintendent of water and sewer.

North Aurora contacted the commission as a way of "checking out alternatives" to a \$1.6 million water treatment plant the village will need in order to meet radium guidelines, Village Manager Rob Nelis said. North Aurora residents saw a 12 percent water rate increase this year, but Nelis doesn't expect the construction will cause another hike.

Both Batavia and Geneva said the cost of bringing lake water to town, even if it is high, still might be competitive with existing plans. As it stands now, Geneva expects water prices to go up 60 percent in the near future, and Batavia's rates soon will double from where they were six months ago.

DuPage intends to move ahead with a further study of the idea, provided at least one of the communities will make funds and personnel available to work with the county.

"Everyone is waiting to see the numbers," Martin said.

McCoy cracks door to discuss tax vote for jail

Kane County Board chief still has problems with higher taxes

BY DAVID R. KAZAK
Daily Herald Staff Writer

12/13/92
Kane County Board Chairman Mike McCoy, who has never been shy about his opposition to tax increases or his intolerance of the topic, said Thursday his views should not stifle talk about whether a tax increase is needed to build a new county jail.

That is a softened position for McCoy, who has never been shy about his opposition to tax increases or his intolerance of the topic.

McCoy made his comments at a



Mike McCoy

Ken Ramsey

meeting of top Kane County board members Thursday, noting that the dangerous situation overcrowding

creates for guards and inmates has spurred public questioning of his prohibitive tax policy.

"I'm still against a referendum," he said. "But I think, given what I've heard, that the idea needs to be discussed."

Sheriff Ken Ramsey, who himself isn't shy with his belief that that county leadership has too limited a view for jail solutions, said he's pleased with McCoy's new position.

"We need to talk about it," he said. "We cannot rule anything out and

I'm willing to look at all the options," Sill, McCoy, Ramsey and Karen Steve-McConaughay, the newly installed chairwoman of the county board's corrections committee, all said a deep and wide gulf lies between talking about a referendum and taking steps to ask taxpayers for more money.

"I think there's still a lot of work to do before you can get to the point of talking about a referendum," she said. "We have the responsibility to make sure every opportunity is

explored. I'll be hard pressed to be convinced we've shaken the bushes enough," she said.

Both Ramsey and McCoy agreed. But Ramsey added: "The jail has been studied to death."

For now, the county is about to embark on a two-year expansion project that will add 200 beds to the 400-bed jail in Geneva.

Sill, the project, which is estimated to cost \$12 million to \$14 million, was criticized by two federal inspectors who studied the jail in November. They said a new jail would be a better option.

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Jail: A half-percent sales tax increase is one option

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mat to cost from \$12 million to \$14 million, was criticized by two federal inspectors who studied the jail in November. They said a new jail would be a better option.

In a 1995 referendum, Kane County officials asked voters for \$51 million to add a 576-bed addition to the existing jail, but only 36 percent of the voters thought that that was a good idea.

Ramsey said "something" has to be done soon to alleviate the problems

at the jail, but he too said that he wouldn't support a referendum effort. One avenue he and others said they should consider, but haven't, is a one-half percent sales tax increase.

"That's much less painful and would raise a significant amount of revenue," Ramsey said.

Animal-control shelter draws closer to vote

■ Cost an issue:

Kane County Board will decide facility's location

By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

12/13/02
Beacon

GENEVA — The location of a proposed \$1.2 million Kane County Animal Control shelter will be decided by a vote of the County Board.

That is, of course, if the board votes to support the facility.

Almost everything about the project, about two years in the making, still is on the table as it careens toward a County Board vote.

"Ultimately, this body will decide," Board Chairman Mike McCoy, R-Aurora, told the Executive Committee Thursday. "We're following a certain schedule. We've been considering this, and now it's here. Maybe the board will decide to reject it, but it's time to make a decision."

The timing in recent months has been prompted by developments at the private Anderson Animal Shelter in South Elgin. The shelter has told Kane County it is crowded, and getting close to a time when it no longer will be able to take animals picked up by Kane Animal Control.

Traditionally, stray or dangerous animals collected north of Interstate 88 in the county have been taken to Anderson. South of I-88, the animals go to the Aurora Animal Control facility.

Recently, Anderson raised the fees it charges the county, which resulted in the county raising its fees to the public. The basic fee to retain an animal picked up increased from \$50 to \$150.

Board member Paul Grevskes, D-Aurora, said a Kane animal shelter is needed for the county to fulfill its statutory obligation to pick up "biting" or dangerous animals in both the unincorporated areas and the municipalities in the county.

"If we don't build the facility, we don't avoid the obligation," he said. "We really need the facility now — for when Anderson is not an option."

Municipal participation

Board member Karen Steve-McConaughay, R-St. Charles, said that, while she supports building the facility, she has had a tough time reconciling to constituents who ask her how the county can afford a \$1.2 million facility when it has a budget crunch.

"We have more obligations than money, so it becomes a question of priority," she said. "Do you feel this a top priority?"

Board member Jim Mitchell, R-North Aurora, said the county has had the money for the facility set aside, collected from pct license fees. He said board members should make it clear the animal control facility "pays for itself" with user fees. Moreover, when the facility is built, the county no longer will have to charge residents the fees it now pays Anderson.

Several board members agreed the county should consider charging the municipalities something to put toward the shelter. While the county has an obligation to pick up dangerous animals, it does not have to pick all strays within municipal boundaries. It has expanded its obligation somewhat to do that.

"I think it's reasonable to ask the municipalities to participate," McCoy said. "They won't agree to pay us; we'll have to threaten them."

The board would vote, too, on the location of the shelter. Grevskes said he is recommending the county pick a site it already owns at Peck and Keslinger roads in western Geneva. He said roads and existing land contours favor that site over one in Elgin.

Engineering tests at both facilities showed the Peck and Keslinger site would be about \$50,000 cheaper. Although the county does not own the proposed Elgin site, the Elgin City Council has agreed to buy the land for the county if it picks that site.

County official balks at spending \$1 million on animal control facility

BY DAVID R. KAZAK

Daily Herald Staff Writer

12/3/02

With budget cuts and slim prospects for new money the talk of the day, a Kane County Board member Thursday questioned why plans for a \$1.2 million animal control facility were moving forward.

"Is this really a priority?" said Karen Steve-McConnaughay, a St. Charles Republican and member of the county executive committee.

For more than a year, animal control officials, headed by board member Paul Greviskes, an Aurora Democrat and former leader of the board's public safety committee,

have been developing plans for such a facility.

It's needed, Greviskes said, because the Anderson Animal Shelter, a private facility in South Elgin, is too crowded to take Kane's animals. Anderson is the only facility that takes the strays picked up by Kane County.

The last hurdle to building a county-owned facility is answering the question of where to put it: in the Geneva area or in Elgin.

Greviskes, a staunch supporter of the proposed facility, said he's bothered by Steve-McConnaughay's question.

"We have an obligation, a legal

obligation, to provide (animal control) services," Greviskes said.

But Steve-McConnaughay said she wonders whether the county is providing services above and beyond its obligation when it comes to picking up strays.

If so, then maybe the towns that benefit from that service should be helping pay for the shelter, she said.

"I just don't see how we can justify this right now," she said.

The matter will be addressed at the public safety committee's next meeting in January. The committee's new chairman is Lee Barrett, a Republican county board member from East Dundee.

McCoy lays out priorities for Kane

Chairman wants list to bring focus

By William Presecky
Tribune staff reporter

12/13/02

Grabbing the chance to urge the Kane County Board to quickly set priorities, Chairman Mike McCoy on Thursday outlined about 30 projects, including expansion of the County Jail and construction of a veterans' memorial, coroner's building and animal-control facility.

His list of 2003 goals and objectives for the newly seated Executive Committee, of which he is chairman, didn't contain any surprises, but it was a rare attempt by the Aurora Republican to lay out the challenges facing the board.

It marked only the second time he has offered such guidance, he said, McCoy the first being



when he was elected board chairman in 1996.

McCoy said his list does not rank the projects and goals by importance. It is the legislative prerogative of the board, he said, to set those priorities.

"These are just things that I think the committees need to work on," McCoy said. "These are options."

McCoy said he plans to ask for a retreat-type session soon at which the County Board, including five members sworn

MCCOY: Cash-strapped Kane to look at priorities

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into office Tuesday, can sort through the issues and establish priorities.

He said the highly charged political atmosphere that dominated the past year, when the boundaries of all 26 districts were redrawn and board membership was up for grabs, was distracting.

"We need to refocus on some things that are hanging out there," he said. "We've shaken up the committees some, and it's a good time to refocus. As a board, we work best when the committees are doing committee work. Sometimes I feel like I'm doing more of the work."

Taxpayers will watch closely as the board establishes spending priorities at a time when fast-growing Kane is cash-strapped, said longtime board member Karen Steve-McConaughay (R-St. Charles). McCoy assigned her the task of solving the county's recurring problem of jail overcrowding.

"How does the County Board rationalize building an animal-control facility when you can't solve jail problems?" she said. "I can't possibly be the only board member who is asked that. We have more obligations than we have money. We've got a lot of top priorities and not enough money to pay for them."

The list of projects and pro-

grams that McCoy suggested include:

- Upgrading some of the county's communications and business systems, including telephone and purchasing, and building out half of the former St. Charles department store space now being leased to house the Circuit Court clerk.

- Shepherding the planned 200-bed expansion of the County Jail, examining opportunities for jail privatization and pursuing whether a jail-bond referendum proposal is feasible.

- Updating the county's comprehensive plan using projected 2030 population and employment figures and continuing to assess the county's future water supply.

- Constructing a veterans memorial and animal-control facility and addressing the need for a coroner's office.

- Paying greater attention to state and federal legislation affecting the county, establishing a legislative agenda and presenting it to the county's new state delegation.

Although McCoy's goal-setting effort comes as he begins the final two years of his second four-year term as board chairman, he said the list is not tied to his political future.

McCoy said he has not made up his mind whether to seek a third term as chairman, but said he has ruled out seeking any other elected post.

"I have no interest in any other office but I haven't decided for sure whether I will run for another term as chairman. Truthfully, I'm trying to kind of avoid [that decision] for at least a couple of months. I'm probably intending to [run] but I haven't made a final decision," McCoy said.

Mediator to hear court labor dispute

12/4/02

By William Presecky
Tribune staff reporter

Kane County officials and Teamsters negotiators are scheduled to meet with a federal mediator Wednesday to try to avert a strike by the 16th Judicial District's probation officers and youth home counselors.

The meeting came after a request Monday by newly sworn Chief Judge Philip DiMarzio to the regional office of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Services in Hinsdale. DiMarzio asked the office to enter the labor talks between the county and Teamsters Local 330 in Elgin.

DiMarzio took office Monday as the chief judge of the 16th Circuit, which includes Kane, Kendall and DeKalb Counties. He succeeded Judge Grant Wegner, who declined last week to ask for federal mediation.

A one-year labor agreement with the union expired Nov. 30.

Court Services Administration Director James Mueller

and labor attorney Carl Tomlinberg of Chicago are scheduled to represent the court system in the mediation proceedings, according to Court Administrator Doug Naughton. Dominic Romanazzi, secretary-treasurer of Local 330, will be the lead negotiator for the union.

Romanazzi said he welcomed the decision by DiMarzio to seek mediation but would not rule out a strike.

"It is our intent to bargain in good faith. We have agreed to mediation. However, I did not relinquish my right to take strike action," Romanazzi said. "There could be strike action during mediation."

A majority of the 114 members of the bargaining unit voted Nov. 22 to authorize a strike rather than accept a one-year labor pact that, among other things, included a 2 percent salary increase. The strike vote was 66-24. An emergency meeting at which strike instructions and directions were to be issued to union members was set for

Tuesday night in Elgin, according to Romanazzi.

The circuit's last offer, which union members voted to reject, would have added \$550 a year to the current \$27,500 starting salary of a probation officer. The union is seeking an across-the-board salary increase of 13 percent.

Romanazzi has argued that the circuit's probation officers need a double-digit percentage increase if they hope to approach parity with their higher-paid counterparts in some of the collar counties.

"This [parity issue] is a long-standing problem," Romanazzi said.

The operating budget for the county's fiscal year, which began Sunday, includes a nearly 6 percent cut in personnel expenses. About half the cuts were restored from contingency funds that were unexpectedly enhanced by about \$1.5 million after a lower-than-expected increase in medical insurance costs.

Kane alderman, Dem chairman on Blagojevich advisory panels

Policy committees: Marquez focuses on education, Guethle on housing

12/4/02

By Garrett Ordower
STAFF WRITER

Beacon

AURORA — Governor-elect Rod Blagojevich has tapped two local political leaders to help craft the state's education and housing policies as he prepares to take office.

Aurora Alderman David Marquez, a social studies teacher at East Aurora High School, will help the governor with his education policies.

Mark Guethle of North Aurora, chairman of the Kane County Democratic Party and the political director for district council No. 30 of the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades, will help Blagojevich with housing issues.

"I'm serving at the pleasure of the governor-elect in order to help him to find solutions to a lot of different problems we're facing in education," Marquez said. "It's a great honor."

Marquez and Guethle were both asked by members of Blagojevich's staff to serve on the committee within the last two weeks and readily accepted the appointments.

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ALDERMAN

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"I'm happy to help the state any way I can do it," Guethle said.

Both men cited relevant career experiences and involvement with the Democratic Party as reasons for the committee appointments. Guethle said he has been involved in organized labor for more than 25 years and with the painters union for about eight years.

Marquez has served as a teacher here for five years and been involved with youth programs for 10 years. He was the Aurora area coordinator for Blagojevich's primary campaign and helped get out the vote in November.

Beginning work

Guethle has already had one meeting with his committee in Chicago Monday, and has meetings scheduled Thursday and Friday. His committee is chaired by Rep. Bobby Rush, D-Chicago.

Marquez does not have a scheduled meeting yet, but will serve on a subcommittee dealing with translating education into careers, one of about 12 education subcommittees. Marquez also intends to advise subcommittees dealing with youth violence, teacher retention and school funding.

The topics are something Marquez has only started grappling with and he doesn't yet have any concrete ideas on what he will bring to the committee.

"We're just in the beginning process," Marquez said. "As we go along and collect the information we'll be passing it on to the education committee and then to the governor."

Guethle already has some issues

that he intends to bring up before the housing committee.

"One of the most important issues for folks that live in our district would be to create some resources for people that are homeless so they have a place to live," Guethle said.

"I want to help our area as much as possible. Kane County is a pretty large county and we need help, but hopefully I can benefit it."

Guethle also said he wants to ensure construction contracts go to in-state contractors. As it stands now, each county has its own rules for construction contracts, but he would like more of the 12 or 13 agencies throughout the state that deal with housing to mimic Chicago's housing program, which only uses in-state labor.

"I've seen contractors come in from out of state and never pay prevailing wage and never pay a dime in taxes," Guethle said.

Outlining challenges

Guethle said the time commitment for his committee should only be a couple of hours a week and won't affect his other responsibilities.

Both Guethle and Marquez said their commitments to Blagojevich's transition efforts are temporary and that they aren't looking for permanent positions with his administration.

The education and housing committees are two of the 16 transition committees whose membership Blagojevich announced Tuesday.

The committees are tasked with submitting reports to Blagojevich by the end of December that outline immediate challenges in each policy area and practical advice on translating campaign promises into realities.

Cook County school district broke; 20 more could follow

12/4/62 Beacon

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SPRINGFIELD — As Illinois lawmakers tried to find money to bail out a bankrupt Cook County school district Tuesday, educators warned that it's just one of 20 districts that could go broke by spring.

State Superintendent Robert Schiller told a House education committee that declining state support, eroding property tax bases and districts borrowing money have led to a crisis.

More than eight in 10 school districts could face deficits by the end of the school year, he said.

Preliminary figures suggest about 20 districts could be so deep in the red that they could not pay bills, Schiller said.

The pending crisis could fuel debate over a plan to shift the school funding burden to state income taxes, increasing them by \$3 billion, while rebating \$3.5 billion in property taxes.

"We must fund education from the state of Illinois and not from these little property taxes that can decline through no fault of the children," said Rep. Monique Davis, D-Chicago.

Schiller was promoting efforts to aid the Hazel Crest School District, a Cook County district that doesn't have enough money to meet its \$320,000 Dec. 20 payroll.

Its financial demise was so sudden that the district would be closed if the state followed its usual procedure of analyses in February.

Board eyes transfer station

Officials: Competition will keep waste disposal costs down

12/4/02
By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — The firm that wants to build a waste transfer station said a negative vote next week by the Kane County Board could skyrocket disposal costs.

However, some officials believe good old-fashioned business competi-

tion will influence prices more than next Tuesday's vote.

The board will vote on Waste Management's application to site a transfer station on the site of the defunct Woodland Landfill on Route 25 near South Elgin. The Executive Committee will consider the transfer station at today's meeting.

Waste Management spokesman Lee Adelman said if the application is rejected, sticker prices could increase when municipalities negotiate their garbage contracts.

"When Settler's Hill closes they'd be hard-pressed to keep costs down," Adelman said. "Without a transfer sta-

tion, the impact will begin to show when municipal contracts come to an end."

Some officials said the cost of garbage disposal is dictated by the market. If Waste Management's application is denied, another company will step forward to apply for another site.

"Economics will dictate if someone wants to site a transfer station," said Dan Walter, R-South Elgin.

Walter said the county board's solid waste plans call for a series of transfer stations in place of landfills. Woodland Landfill closed last month. Settler's Hill is scheduled to close Dec. 31, 2006.

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Station

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"I support our solid waste plan. We recognize the need to address the cost of disposal," Walter said.

As a member of the body that will approve or deny Waste Management's application, Walter is restricted in what he can and cannot say, even though many of his constituents in South Elgin would prefer the Woodland site stop accepting garbage.

Instead of traveling directly to a landfill, the trucks that pick up curb-side waste from residences first would go to the transfer station, where the loads of several trucks are put into semi-trucks and hauled to downstate landfills.

Walter said a transfer station or stations could be located anywhere.

"Any of them would have to meet the criteria," Walter said.

Settler's Hill is the second-

largest landfill in Illinois, based on the more than 1 million tons of waste it accepted last year.

By comparison, the largest in Illinois — and the second-largest in the nation — near Pontiac in Livingston County, owned by Allied Waste Systems, took in 2.9 million tons. And, while Settler's will close in four years, the Pontiac landfill has capacity for an additional 60 million tons, or another 20 years.

Groot Industries owns and operates the DuKane Transfer Facility on Powis Road just inside the DuPage County line. And Batavia may site its own transfer station in an industrial park on the city's east side.

County board Chairman Mike McCoy said the Batavia facility, if approved by the city, would benefit Tri-Cities residents once Settler's Hill is closed.

But the neighborhood garbage trucks cannot travel more than 12 to 15 miles to a

landfill or transfer station and remain economical, McCoy said.

If the Woodland site is denied, it could work to increase costs for northern county residents, he said.

"That's really the trade-off of not having one, higher costs," McCoy said. "In the long term, say 20 years, we're going to see significantly higher disposal costs."

Adelman said there is another economic benefit to the county that will be lost if board members deny the contract.

The county receives "tipping" fees, which go into two special funds, one restricted to environmental programs, called the Surcharge Fund, and one that can be used for anything, called the Enterprise Fund.

The county withdrew \$16 million from its Enterprise Fund to build the proposed 200-bed addition to the jail.

A logical step in addition to drug court

12/4/82 Herald

Kane County's drug court caught the eye of the man who leads the charge in this country for enforcing drug laws. And that's because at the heart of drug court is the message that by getting at the root of your problem you can stop your illegal behavior.

So it makes sense that Kane County would want to continue in that vein — by steering people who appear before judges for non-drug crimes to counseling or treatment to correct their behavior.

Judge Philip DiMarzio, who became chief of the 16th Judicial Circuit this week, has decided that come March — when a judicial vacancy will be filled — the judges who head DUI court, domestic violence court and drug rehabilitation court will work together to get people the help they need.

Judge James Doyle, who pioneered the much-lauded drug court in Kane County — and will continue to administer that program — will head a special resources division of the court system. Under his umbrella falls drug court, DUI and domestic violence.

For instance, by discussing cases as a team the judges can determine whether someone up on charges of domestic battery requires substance abuse treatment.

Our View

If you eliminate the drug problem or help someone curb his anger, you might help prevent him from getting into trouble in the future.

DiMarzio noted that drugs often are an underlying reason for domestic violence.

This is not to suggest that people aren't getting help now. It is routine to require that batterers undergo anger management training. And that those arrested for driving drunk go through counseling.

But the root cause of behavior isn't always that cut and dried.

It is important to note that while the idea behind this may be an homage to drug court, it is not the same thing. Wife beaters and drunken drivers will not get a pass — a fresh start — if they complete their respective programs as graduates of Kane's drug court do.

First, it would be impossible to ensure treatment is successful. How do you empirically test whether anger management is working? It is easy to beat a scheduled blood alcohol test because alcohol leaves your system quickly.

The reason frequent drug testing is an effective tool for keeping people clean is because drugs remain in your body for a long time.

Second, in the case of domestic violence, state law would not permit it.

This more holistic approach to routing people through the court system is both more humane and, hopefully, may be one long-term answer to Kane County's perennial problem of jail overcrowding.

If you eliminate the drug problem or help someone curb his anger, you might help prevent him from getting into trouble in the future.

And for Kane County, which spends \$2 million a year to ship a quarter of its inmates to jails in several counties throughout the state, any reduction in recidivism helps.

It may be pie in the sky to think this will put much of a dent in the jail population, but it certainly is a step in the right direction.

Belvidere priest faces charges

Geneva parish girl is alleged victim

12/5/02

By Ted Gregory
Tribune staff reporter

A Catholic priest from Belvidere has been charged with sexually assaulting a 14-year-old girl who was a student at the Geneva parish where the priest lived in 1999.

Kane County authorities said Wednesday that Rev. Mark A. Campobello, 37, who

was administrator of St. James Catholic Church in Belvidere, has been charged with aggravated criminal sexual assault and aggravated criminal sexual abuse. He was relieved of all duties by the Catholic Diocese of Rockford after his arrest.

Geneva Police Lt. Joe Frega said Wednesday that Campobello assaulted the girl, who was an 8th grader at St. Peter Church's school in Geneva, "on a quasi- or fairly regular basis" from January to May 1999. Prosecutors allege Campobello assaulted the girl at

least five times.

At the time of the alleged abuse, Campobello was assistant principal and spiritual director at Aurora Central Catholic High School in Aurora but was living in St. Peter's rectory. From June 1994 through September 1995 he served as asso-



Campobello

ciate pastor at St. Peter.

Frega said the assaults "occurred at various places during this several-month period," but not in the church or school.

Police began their investigation Oct. 22 after an attorney for the girl, now 18, notified police of the alleged misconduct, Frega said. Police arrested Campobello on Tuesday in his office at St. James Parish in Belvidere. He was released after posting \$7,500 cash bond.

"This young lady is tremendously brave and she's strong,

and we hope that she'll get through this," Frega said. "We can't say enough about how strong she is for coming forward at this time."

The Rockford diocese "has relieved Father Campobello of all duties at St. James Parish in Belvidere and removed his faculties to function as a priest," said Owen Phelps, the diocese's director of communications.

The diocese first learned of possible misconduct by Campobello

PLEASE SEE PRIEST, PAGE 2

PRIEST: 7 parishes served since '91 ordination

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

pobello on Tuesday when it was notified by authorities of the criminal allegations, Phelps said.

"We are saddened by the allegations in this case," Phelps said in a prepared statement. "Most especially we express our sorrow to the alleged victim and her family. Sexual abuse of minors is both a tragedy and a travesty, and we will not tolerate it in our diocese."

Theresa Malkowski, a parishioner at St. Peter's, said she "was shocked" to hear that Campobello had been accused of sexual misconduct.

"Of course, you don't think it's going to happen in your own

parish," she said Wednesday in the parish parking lot.

Malkowski added that she had hoped her children wouldn't find out about the alleged indiscretions, but they had and she would try to explain the situation to them.

Patricia Kowalkowski, an office worker at St. Peter, had similar sentiments.

"Everybody is pretty much saying the same thing. We're all saddened by these allegations, and we're all praying," she said.

After being ordained in 1991, Campobello served at seven diocesan parishes in Rockford, Geneva, Aurora, Crystal Lake and Belvidere, mostly as an associate pastor.

The diocese covers 11 counties from the Mississippi River to the Fox River and includes 105 parishes where a total of 371,322 Catholics worship, according to the diocese Web site.

Penny Wiegert, a spokeswoman for the diocese, said "there was really no reason other than the needs of the diocese" that Campobello moved seven times in the decade after his ordination.

She said Campobello is "with family." Efforts to contact him Wednesday were unsuccessful.

If convicted of the most serious charges, aggravated criminal sexual assault, he would be sentenced to a minimum of 4 years in prison. The maximum sentence is 15 years in prison.

Conviction for the less serious felony of aggravated criminal sexual abuse carries a minimum penalty of probation. The maximum sentence is 7 years in prison.

Campobello's next scheduled court date is Jan. 9.

Chicago firm to oversee Kane jail project

Business linked to top city official

12/5/02

By William Presecky

Tribune staff reporter

A Chicago-based management firm with family ties to a top city official was recommended Wednesday to oversee next year's planned construction of a 200-bed addition to the overwrought Kane County Jail.

The County Board's Executive Committee voted to recom-

mend that d'Escoto, Inc. be hired for \$534,648 to take charge of the estimated two-year, \$14 million construction project. The decision to recommend the firm, which is owned and operated by the family of Chicago Transportation Commissioner Miguel d'Escoto, was made based on a detailed review of the proposals from the company and three others by a special committee headed by board member Lee Barrett (R-East Dundee).

The full County Board is scheduled to vote next Tuesday. Board Chairman Mike McCoy (R-Aurora), who had suggested

the county hire the firm based on his own analysis of its proposal, ordered a second review by Barrett after some board members questioned whether they were all compared evenly.

A minority-run firm, d'Escoto originated in Aurora. In recent years it has worked on construction projects at Cook County Jail, O'Hare Airport and McCormick Place.

"Basically, the committee felt that after they really broke it down and compared apples to apples, [d'Escoto] was still quite a bit lower than anybody else," McCoy said. "The committee liked their approach to

the job—the way they want to break it down into five or six main contracts. I wasn't involved but those were the exact reasons that I liked it."

"Hopefully, we'll get contractor bids in early 2003," he said, adding that it was unlikely the proposed addition would be derailed, despite a recent suggestion by federal consultants that the jail be demolished and anew one built. The jail, on Fabryan Parkway in Geneva, was designed to house about 400 inmates. The county's daily inmate population is now about 600 with about 150 housed in other counties.

Court workers cancel strike after 3-year deal negotiated

The president of the labor union representing more than 100 probation officers and youth home counselors in the 16th Judicial District said he has called off a strike planned for Thursday based on the outline of a three-year salary agreement.

Details of the pact, which is expected to include a 13 percent across-the-board pay increase over the course of the contract, were being worked out late Wednesday after a day of federal mediation, said Joseph Degand, president of Teamsters Local 330 in Elgin.

Degand said the union hopes to hold a ratification vote Friday. He said approval "looks

very promising."

Union members were prepared to go on strike Thursday morning, he said.

"I'm calling people telling them the strike's off for [Thursday]," Degand said.

"This was planned even if they gave us an offer. There was a meeting [Tuesday] night and the people told us what they were willing for us to bring back and if they didn't reach that mark we would have been out [Thursday] morning," he said.

The union's one-year pact with the circuit court district, which includes Kane, Kendall and DeKalb Counties, expired Saturday.

12/5/02

Tribune

Kane urged to set conditions on waste station

State could OK transfer site if board doesn't act

By William Presecky
Tribune staff reporter

Kane County officials either can approve conditions for the opening in 2006 of a controversial waste transfer station near South Elgin or risk the state approving it without conditions, a hearing officer for the county said Wednesday.

The County Board's Executive Committee recommended

Wednesday that the full board vote Tuesday on whether to allow the transfer station, proposed for a site at Dunham Road and Illinois Highway 25.

Absent a decision next Tuesday, under state law Waste Management of Illinois Inc. would be granted siting approval by default, according to Patrick Kinnally, an Aurora attorney who oversaw the public hearings conducted this fall on the firm's application.

"And without conditions," added Kinnally.

If the County Board votes against the proposal, the company can appeal to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources,

which is likely to deem the site suitable, according to Kinnally. It was at the hearings that the waste firm, a Lombard-based unit of a Houston company, made its case for the transfer station and defended itself against organized opposition.

Opponents said the site is suitable, largely because of the high volume of truck traffic the facility would generate.

As part of his findings, which he presented for the first time Wednesday, Kinnally suggested the board consider including as many as 38 conditions in any siting agreement.

Chief among them is a condition that the facility not be open

for waste transfer until July 1, 2006, or until the date on which the estimated \$20 million realignment of major roads that intersect to the southeast is completed, whichever comes first.

The so-called Stearns-Dunham corridor improvement, adjacent to the proposed transfer station site, is scheduled for completion between mid-2003 and mid-2006, according to county highway planners.

In general, Waste Management's proposal and the site conditions appear to square solidly with the criteria set by state law for determining whether a site is suitable for a transfer station, said Kinnally.

"The biggest concern is traffic," said Kinnally, adding that waiting for completion of the corridor improvement appeared to be the only remedy.

Lee Addleman, a Waste Management vice president, said the July 2006 opening date was something the firm's officials had discussed previously and could accept.

As for other possible conditions—such as limiting the permit's duration to 30 years or constraining operating hours, garbage volumes and traffic—Addleman said the firm is open to "anything reasonable."

"We anticipated conditions would be offered, and we cer-

tainly would abide by the wishes of the board. We can live with reasonable conditions," said Addleman.

A July 2006 opening coincides favorably with the agreement Waste Management has with Kane to cease accepting waste at the county's Settler's Hill Landfill, near Geneva, on Dec. 31, 2006.

Proposed for a site within a half-mile of where Kane, DuPage and Cook Counties converge, the transfer station would take up about nine of the 213 acres in the Woodland Landfill. The landfill, bounded by South Elgin, Bartlett and Wayne, was closed last month.

City looks to new census

Conservative estimates cite 12,000 more Aurorans

12/5/02

By Dave Parro
STAFF WRITER

Beacon

AURORA — A new count of the city's population could make Aurora the second-biggest city in the state — and could bring in almost \$5 million in additional municipal revenue in the next four years.

A special census, which Aurora already has applied for, could bring in more than \$1 million in additional money annually for three years starting in 2004, based on an estimated population increase of 12,000 people. The count could

bring in more than \$300,000 during the fourth quarter next year.

The extra funds, which include state income tax and motor fuel tax funds, are already budgeted for next year and will help soften the blow of a weak economy. The city adjusted next year's budget because it expects to see a decrease of \$1 million in expected income tax revenue for 2003.

That number would have been worse without the added revenue from the special census. Brian Caputo, the city's finance director, said he expects the trend of

lower income tax revenue to the city to continue beyond next year.

"Certainly economic numbers could improve and make things better, but we're not expecting it to be too much better in 2004," he said.

Mayor David Stover said the special census will help offset some of the city's projected decreases in revenue because of the downturn in the economy.

"Last time we did it (in 1998), we spent \$250,000, and that resulted in an increase in our revenue by some

\$2 million," Stover said.

During the next four years, the new population count will result in an additional \$3.6 million in income tax and local-use funds, and more than \$1.1 million in additional motor fuel tax funds.

The new count would bring in an extra \$265,000 in income taxes and local-use funds next year alone. Once certified by the state, the results will pay for the \$185,000 special census within four months.

♦ Turn to CENSUS, A2

CENSUS

From Page A1

The special census could occur early next year, and the results should be certified in time to bring in additional revenue for the last three months of 2003, Caputo said.

An additional 12,000 people, a conservative estimate, would bring Aurora's population to about 155,000, which could potentially make the city the largest in the state

behind Chicago. Rockford's 2000 population is 150,115, compared to Aurora's count of 142,990.

"We have not strived to become the second largest city in the state of Illinois," Stover said, "but that's how it's happened."

That is, unless Rockford or another city sees enough growth to stop Aurora from continuing its leapfrogging up the list of the state's biggest cities.

Contact Dave Parro at (630) 801-5495 or dparro@scn1.com.

Valley reflects on priest case

12/15/02

By Marie-Anne Hogarth
STAFF WRITER

Beacon

AURORA — Word spread quickly through the community Wednesday of the arrest on sexual charges of a Belvidere priest, formerly an assistant principal and spiritual director at Aurora Central Catholic High School and an associate pastor at Holy Angels in Aurora and St. Peter's Catholic Church in Geneva.

While officials at Aurora Central and St. Peter's deferred comment to the Rockford Diocese, parishioners and former students expressed disappointment upon hearing the accusations against Mark A. Campobello, 37.

"I was a little shocked, but yet, with everything that goes on, I don't know," said Auroran Deborah Bonifas, whose older son had Campobello as a teacher before graduating from Aurora Central in 1999. "It is kind of like, there it



STEVE ROSENBERG/
STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Dr. Owen Phelps, director of communications for the Rockford Catholic Diocese, listens to Kane County State's Attorney Meg Gorecki as she announces sex-abuse charges against Father Mark Campobello Wednesday morning.

Phelps goes again, but I want to reserve judgment until later."

Turn to PRIEST, A2

PRIEST

From Page A1

Bonifas added that, while the jury is still out in the allegations of the victim girl, who has come forward several years after the fact and did not attend Aurora Central, the troubles surrounding the lives of priests in the United States have saddened her.

"It is kind of a slap in the face to have something like that happen with someone you trust," she said. "Unfortunately, we've just lost trust and faith in the priesthood."

Meanwhile Wednesday, Kane County State's Attorney Meg Gorecki held a press conference asking that any more victims contact authorities by calling the Geneva Police Department at (630) 232-4736 or the Kane County state's attorney's office at (630) 232-3500.

If convicted, Campobello faces a maximum of 22 years in prison, said Gorecki.

The priest stands charged with five counts of criminal sexual assault, an offense that might earn him 4 to 15 years in prison, should Campobello be found guilty. Also, the priest faces five counts of criminal sexual abuse, an offense for which he could be sentenced to probation or 3 to 7 years in prison.

Campobello had posted \$7,500 cash and bailed himself out as of Wednesday, but he could not be reached for comment.

In the meantime, Owen Phelps, communications director for the Catholic Diocese of Rockford, announced that Campobello had been relieved of all his duties at his parish, St. James in Belvidere, and was removed of his faculties to perform as a priest, as outlined in the Code of Canon Law.

At issue are the allegations of an 18-year-old Geneva woman, police said. She claims she was sexually abused by Campobello between January and May 1999.

At the time, the girl, who would have been 14 and an eighth-grader at the St. Peter's School, knew Campobello because her family attended church there, police said.

It took some time for her to come forward because of the soul-searching involved, police said.

Authorities wouldn't disclose where the abuse took place, but police said it did happen within Geneva city limits and not at St. Peter's Church or the associated school.

At the time, Campobello lived at St. Peter's Church, said Mass and had some duties there, but was assigned to Aurora Central Catholic High School, where he served as assistant principal and spiritual director.

A former student, Mark Chilelli, now 21, recalled in a telephone call that Campobello was well-liked among students.

"I had him for religion; he was a

good teacher, pretty outgoing," Chilelli said. "He brought us doughnuts to eat sometimes when we had him in the morning. Anybody could bring up anything."

Another former student, Julie Breyne, said she and her group of friends were close with Campobello, who would "talk to you as if you were an adult."

"We always went and talked to him whenever we had any troubles," the Eureka College senior said. "He was always down to earth and helped us out."

Genevan Mary Lu O'Halloran, who has attended Mass at St. Peter's for 20 years, is Irish-Italian and said she had been in touch with others in the community today, talking about the gregarious priest she remembered as "a true Italian, a happy Italian man."

"Our hearts are broken," she said. "We're a family here. In a family, when something happens to someone, we're all devastated. Our hearts go out to Father Mark, and our hearts go out to the victim and her family."

O'Halloran said she prays the truth will come out and all would learn from it.

In Aurora, Bob Scanlan and his wife Jean, parishioners at Holy Angels, where Campobello served in 1999, both expressed shock and dismay when they read about the charges against him.

Scanlan, who was a Rockford Diocese priest until he married his wife in 1973, remembers Campobello as a "nice young man" and respected in the parish.

Scanlan, who sits on the advisory board of a 10-year-old national group called "Celibacy is the Issue," believes the celibate lifestyle priests are forced to lead is one of the reasons these kinds of situations arise.

Others in the priesthood simply expressed dismay.

"If anything happened, I am sorry," said the Rev. Jerry Leake of Aurora, who formerly worked with Campobello. "I would want to minister to the (victim's) family."

Campobello was ordained May 18, 1991, at the Cathedral of St. Peter, Rockford. He became associate pastor at Holy Family Parish in Rockford. On June 16, 1994, he became associate pastor at St. Peter's in Geneva. On Sept. 26, 1995, he became associate pastor at Cathedral of St. Peter, Rockford.

On June 18, 1996, he became associate pastor of Holy Angels in Aurora. On June 10, 1997, he became assistant principal and spiritual director of Aurora Central Catholic High School.

On Oct. 6, 2000, he became associate pastor of St. Thomas the Apostle in Crystal Lake. On June 4, 2001, he became parochial administrator of St. James in Belvidere.

Staff writer Garrett Ordower contributed to this report.

County set to hire jail construction manager

■ **Closer look:** Some board members say d'Escoto, of Chicago, still is the best bid

12/5/02
By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER *Beacon*

GENEVA — Upon further review, the result was the same.

Or, in National Football League parlance, there is no compelling visual evidence for the Kane County Board to overturn a recommendation to hire d'Escoto Inc. of Chicago to manage and oversee a \$12 million, 200-bed jail addition.

After a month of detailed review of the top three bids for managing the addition project — which included interviewing the three bidding companies — a subcommittee headed by board member Lee Barrett, R-Carpentersville, recommended hiring d'Escoto.

"D'Escoto was the cheapest bidder,"

said board member Rudy Neuberger, D-Aurora, who served on the subcommittee with Barrett. "They want to see Kane County contractors and subcontractors and said they will hire as many Kane County workers as they possibly can."

Some board members were concerned about d'Escoto being a Chicago firm. Neuberger said the firm started in Aurora about 30 years ago but moved its base to Chicago to get more work. Now, they have moved back to this area and have opened a new office on Farnsworth Avenue in Aurora, Neuberger said.

After examining the bids, Barrett said all three of the bidders guaranteed adequate services the county needed. He said comparing exactly how much manpower each would use was hard to do, so his subcommittee looked at whether they all would give the county what it needed.

D'Escoto still was the lowest bidder at \$534,648. Next was Lamp Inc., \$845,875. The subcommittee also talked to Turner

Construction Company, which bid \$1.3 million.

"I originally recommended d'Escoto because it was the lowest price, and I think their approach to the job was the best," said board Chairman Mike McCoy, R-Aurora.

It seems apparent the board will go ahead and approve the contract and begin the jail addition as soon as possible, even though federal consultants who recently studied Kane County's situation recommended the county might want to scrap addition plans and look at a new jail.

While some board members, including Neuberger, said they were interested in that proposal, most have said the addition is so desperately needed, the board should go ahead with it. Board members might then look at a new jail.

The jail population has been running more than 650 prisoners daily, with about 125 sent to other counties. That still leaves about 550 in a jail designed for 450.

Court officials, Teamsters continue talks

12/5/02
By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

Beacon

GENEVA — It was a day of long meetings and caucuses Wednesday between union probation officers and youth workers and Kane County court representatives.

They met all day with a federal mediator to try to hammer out a last-minute agreement that would avoid a strike by about 115 probation officers, youth home workers and other support workers represented by Local 330 of the Teamsters union, headquartered in Elgin.

By late Wednesday night, though, there was no word on the talks' progress.

Workers voted to strike last week after turning down by a more than 2-1 margin what 16th Circuit Court representatives said was their final offer. It would have included a 2 percent raise for the next year and a small bonus. The current one-year contract expired Nov. 30.

Union officials had asked for an across-the-board, \$3,500-a-year, salary increase for every member of the bargaining unit. Workers said they are trying to increase the entire salary range.

Workers have complained for the past several years — and in some cases with agreement from County Board and court officials — that probation workers

and youth home workers are low paid in comparison with comparable court circuits in the Chicago area.

While union officials asked for federal mediation last week, court officials turned it down. This week, court officials turned around and asked for the mediation session that took place Wednesday.

Court officials said they turned down mediation last week because of the holiday and because the 16th Circuit was transitioning between former Chief Judge Grant Wegner and the new chief judge, Philip DiMarzio, who took office Monday.

Their letter to the union, however, did not mention any of those things, saying only that they did not think mediation would be beneficial.

The negotiations have been difficult during the past several weeks, with union officials filing unfair-labor-practices charges against the circuit. They said managers at the youth home were trying to convince union members to leave the union.

McCoy shakes up committee chairs

Former Transportation head assigned to Corrections and Rehabilitation

12-15-02

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Kane County Board Chairman Mike McCoy on Wednesday made good on his promise to shake up his committees.

Perhaps the biggest change is assigning Karen Steve-McConaughay,

R-St. Charles, who has led the Transportation Committee for six years, as chairman of the Corrections and Rehabilitation Committee.

Douglas Weigand, R-Batavia, who was Corrections Committee chairman for four years and often sparred with Sheriff Ken Ramsey over jail opera-

tions, was moved to the head of the

Finance Committee.

McCoy announced the assignments at Wednesday's Executive Committee meeting.

In a surprise move, McCoy did not re-appoint John Hoscheit, R-St.

Charles, as head of the Finance Committee, although he previously had said he would.

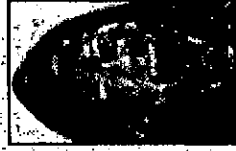
Hoscheit told McCoy he intends to



Weigand

Hoscheit and Cook were not available for comment.

Steve-McConaughay said she be-



McCoy

when he was elected county board chairman.

Wyatt will be taking over the committee at a time when the department is in flux. Director Jeff Dailey left at the end of October, Paul Rogowski was named interim director and Carl Schoedel was named county engineer.

Chairs

Continued from page 1

McCoy said that while he opposes the outer beltway, he does not feel their philosophies are that much different.

"Everyone wants to be chairman of the Transportation Committee," McCoy said. "She's been chairman for six years. I thought it was enough time."

Steve-McConaughay said she helped bring in federal and state money to the department, including \$20 million from the state this year, saw the regional bridge environmental impact statement to completion and worked to improve relations between municipalities and the county.

"I accomplished a lot in the six years I was chairman," she said. "I will use the same skills as I used in Transportation. My goal will be to create a work environment that's nonthreatening for everyone," she said. Ramsey said he was pleased about the switch.

"I think it's a tremendous move," Ramsey said. "She's very professional and we've always worked well together. I think the (county board) chairman has done a good job on committee assignments."

Taking Steve-McConaughay's place on Transportation will be William Wyatt, R-Aurora, whom McCoy appointed to fill the seat he vacated



McCoy

when he was elected county board chairman.

Wyatt will be taking over the committee at a time when the department is in flux. Director Jeff Dailey left at the end of October, Paul Rogowski was named interim director and Carl Schoedel was named county engineer.

"I'm a big believer in communications, explaining everything as well as possible. I think that's the way you make good decisions," Wyatt said.

McCoy praised Wyatt, who as chairman of the insurance committee, saved the county more than \$1 million in health insurance costs. "He's been a very successful board member," McCoy said.

Taking the reins of the Development Committee will be Catherine Hurlbut, R-Elgin, who most recently was Administration chair. Hurlbut also served as Finance chair.

Other new chairmen include Barbara Wojnicki, R-St. Charles, Human Services, and Lee Barrett, R-Elgin, Public Safety.

Paul Greviskes, D-Aurora, was moved from Public Safety to Administration; James Mitchell, R-North Aurora, was shifted from Human Services to Judiciary; and Robert McConaughay, formerly Judiciary Committee chairman, will head up Public Service.

Penelope Cameron, R-Aurora, once head of Public Service Committee, will be legislative liaison.

Gerald Jones, D-Aurora, chairman of Public Health Committee, is the only one to hold his former position.

All committee chairmen and the legislative liaison are members of the Executive Committee.

See CHAIRS, page 2

Outer-belt lawsuit moving through motions

■ **Dismissal sought:**
Kendall County judge
to rule in next week

12/2/02

By Dave Parro
STAFF WRITER

YORKVILLE—A Kendall County judge is expected to rule as early as next week on the state's motion to dismiss a landowners' lawsuit that alleges the Illinois Department of Transportation unconstitutionally took land to record a corridor for the proposed Prairie Parkway.

Sixteenth Circuit Court Judge Leonard Wojtecki heard arguments on the motion last week and said he

would rule in 14 days. IDOT filed the motion to dismiss Nov. 19, two months after landowners filed the six-count complaint challenging plans for the roadway through Kane, Kendall and Grundy counties.

Even if the judge denies the motion to dismiss, it likely outlines IDOT's defense for when the case would go to trial next year.

IDOT attorneys argued the lawsuit has no legal grounds because property has not been taken, meaning none of the 56 plaintiffs listed in the complaint suffered injury when the state recorded a 36-mile protection corridor for the proposed highway July 31.

The corridor protects land from

future development, but the property still belongs to the landowners, the state said.

"The defendants neither confiscated plaintiffs' property nor deprived plaintiffs of any economically viable use of their property," the state argued in its motion.

IDOT spokesman Mike Monseur refused comment until Wojtecki rules on the motion.

The lawsuit alleges IDOT violated the law by taking property without showing a public need for the highway, giving notice to a significant portion of landowners or making "bona fide" offers to property owners for their land.

Opponents of the proposed

highway, which would link Interstates 88 and 80, also said the state has to go through an eminent-domain process of declaring a need for the land, appraising the property and making an offer before taking land.

IDOT, however, argues it followed proper procedure in recording a corridor under a 1967 state law. Compensation must only be made when "the interference deprives owner of substantial use of property," IDOT attorneys argued.

Corridor protection under the state law requires property owners to notify IDOT if they plan to make changes on their land. IDOT then either allows the change or buys the property through eminent domain.

Because IDOT provides a way for landowners to still develop their land or be compensated through eminent domain, landowners' rights have not been violated, and the lawsuit should be dismissed, the state argued.

IDOT also argued there is no assurance the highway will be built and that landowners actually could benefit from higher property values as a result of the corridor being recorded.

The plaintiffs, represented by St. Charles attorney Tim Dwyer, did not respond to the motion in court. Dwyer could not be reached for comment.

Contact Dave Parro at (630) 801-5495 or dparro@scn1.com.

McCoy names new committees

■ Many changes:

Board members must approve set-up at a full meeting

12/15/02

By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

Beacon

GENEVA — Kane County Sheriff Ken Ramsey got his wish — sort of.

Ramsey had asked County Board Chairman Mike McCoy, R-Aurora, to appoint a new Corrections and Rehabilitation Committee chairman after the Nov. 5 election.

Ramsey has been at loggerheads for months with Corrections Chairman Doug Weigand, R-Batavia, a situation that escalated into Weigand openly opposing Ramsey in his re-election bid.

When the committee assignments came out Wednesday, McCoy named Karen Steve-McConnaughay, R-St. Charles, as the new Corrections chairman. Weigand will not even be on that committee.

That does not mean Ramsey and Weigand necessarily will escape having to work with each other, however. McCoy appointed Weigand as chairman of the Finance Committee, another committee that often runs up against the sheriff's office on budgetary matters.

Still, after seeing the appointments, Weigand said, "I think this will be a lot calmer."

McCoy had promised big changes in the committee assignments, and every committee chairmanship changed except one. The only holdover is Gerry Jones, D-Aurora, who will continue as chairman of the Public Health Committee.

The appointments include some first-time chairmen, including: Barb Wojnicki, R-St. Charles, who will head the Human Services Committee; Lee Barrett, R-Carpentersville, who will head the Public Safety Committee, and Bill Wyatt, R-Aurora, the new Transportation Committee head.

Other new committee chairmen and their committees are: Paul Greviskes, D-Aurora, Administration; Cathy Hurlbut, R-Elgin, Development; Jim Mitchell, R-North Aurora, Judiciary, and Rob McConnaughay, R-Geneva, Public Service.

One notable senior board member left out of the chairmanships was John Hoscheit, R-St. Charles, who had been the Finance Committee chairman. That fueled further speculation that Hoscheit will be

elected Forest Preserve District president at the next regular meeting Dec. 10. All the committees must be approved by the full board at the full board meeting that day.

Coin flip

Board members also found out through the flip of a coin which of the 26 board members must run for office again in two years and which will serve four-year terms.

All 26 board members stood for election on Nov. 5, the first election after redistricting, which is done every 10 years.

So, using the coin flip Wednesday, it was decided that board members in odd-numbered districts will serve two four-year terms, followed by a two-year term; and even-numbered districts will serve a two-year term, followed by two four-year terms.

Charges against priest prompt prayers

12/5/02
By BRENDA SCHORY
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — News that a former St. Peter priest has been accused of sexual abuse is spurring local Catholics to pray for the victim — and the priest.

It also has led some to defend the faith and the church, and issue a reminder that the charges are allegations.

Mark A. Campobello, 37, of Belvidere, was charged Tuesday with five counts each of criminal sexual assault and aggravated criminal sexual abuse. The victim was 14 and an eighth-grader at St. Peter Catholic School when the alleged abuse occurred between January and May 1999.



Campobello

Campobello was an assistant pastor at St. Peter on Kaneville Road in 1994. He was living at the parish and serving as assistant principal and spiritual director at Aurora Central Catholic High School at the time of the alleged abuse. He was arrested Tuesday at St. James Catholic Church in Belvidere, where he had been serving until his arrest.

"He was very outgoing. We enjoyed him as a priest," said Sue Arnold of Geneva. Arnold has eight children, four who graduated from St. Peter and four who still attend. Campobello also taught her son at Aurora Central.

"But priests are not the church. It has nothing to do with St. Peter Parish or the school. It's a human problem and not something where you can say all priests are perpetrators," Arnold said.

"The parish is coming together at the 8:30 a.m. Mass (today) to pray for this. We will be praying for the victim and her family and for Father Mark and his family and what they are going through," she said.

See PRIEST, page 2



Bob Gerrard — Chronicle photo staff

Kane County State's Attorney Meg Gorecki listens as spokesman for the Rockford diocese, Dr. Owen Phelps, answers questions at a press conference Wednesday at the Kane County State's Attorney Office. Phelps discussed the arrest of a former St. Peter Catholic Church priest for the alleged sexual assault of a minor.

Priest

Continued from page 1

Mary Lu O'Halloran of Geneva, a parishioner at St. John Neumann Catholic Church in St. Charles, attends Mass every morning at St. Peter and knew Campobello when he celebrated Mass.

"It's devastating to all of us," O'Halloran said. "It is devastating to our priests. Some of these men we trusted violated their vows, the sacrament of ordination. This makes us very sad."

"He was always laughing. He was a happy Italian man," she said.

O'Halloran said that continuing news of priests accused of sexual misconduct creates an unfair aura of suspicion on all priests.

"Most priests are true servants of the Lord and when these allegations happen, it hurts all of us — our priests and all the Catholics around the world," she said.

"My heart also goes out to this young lady. Our compassion in the church lies with the young lady and her family who have been victimized, and to Father Mark and his family," she said.

School officials from St. Peter and Aurora Central referred all questions to the Rockford Diocese. Campobello was relieved of his duties at St. James after his arrest.

Kane County State's Attorney Meg Gorecki said one criminal count of each charge was filed for each month the abuse is alleged to have occurred. Gorecki would not discuss the frequency or location of the alleged contact.

The charge of criminal sexual assault specifies that

penetration occurred, while the charge of aggravated criminal sexual abuse indicates the accused was in a position of authority over the victim.

Gorecki said she did not know if the victim or her parents contacted the church or the diocese before going to police.

Gorecki praised the Rockford diocese's quick action in removing Campobello from his duties.

The diocese has a complicated policy regarding sexual abuse allegations, said Owen Phelps, diocese spokesman.

When an abuse complaint arises, the diocese advises the victim to call police and begins a simultaneous internal investigation, he said.

In this case, though, the church did not learn of the accusations until Monday, when prosecutors contacted the diocese, Phelps said. He said he was not aware of any investigation being conducted by the church.

Phelps would not explain why the diocese removed Campobello from his ministry so quickly.

Jody Gleason, one of the assistant state's attorneys who will prosecute the case, said she will seek a grand jury indictment, but she did not know when she will present the case to the grand jury.

At the same time police say the abuse was occurring in Geneva, Campobello was a celebrant at weekly Mass at St. Patrick's Church in McHenry.

In addition to St. Patrick's, Campobello also ministered at St. Thomas the Apostle Church and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Crystal Lake.

■ Staff writers Victoria A.F. Camron and Eric Olson contributed to this report.

Coin decides board terms

12/5/02

By TOM SCHLUETER

Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — With a toss of a coin, Kane County Board members learned whether their first term of the new millennium would be two or four years.

Chairman Mike McCoy secured a coin from auditor William Keck. He flipped it and it landed on heads.

Heads meant the 13 board members representing odd-number districts would serve one two-year term and two four-year terms.

The 13 representatives from even-numbered districts would serve two four-year terms and one two-year term.

The coin flip is conducted every 10 years after the census and redistricting. Every 10 years, all 26 board members face re-election the same year.

Case law supports the coin flip as fulfilling the statutory requirement that the decision be random, assistant state's attorney Robert Sandner said.

Before flipping the coin, McCoy had Democrat Paul Greviskes inspect it to ensure its suitability.

12/5/02

Nobel recognition *Chronicle*



Saying it was time to recognize the only Nobel Laureate in Kane County, Kane County Board Chairman Mike McCoy, right, reads from a proclamation honoring former Fermilab director Leon Lederman on Wednesday at the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy.

Randy Pomaro — Chronicle photo staff

Zoning proposal would affect existing homes

*Teardown/infill hearing
continues tonight*

12/5/02

By BRENDA SCHORY
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Potentially lost in the teardown/infill debate is that the proposed changes might affect modest remodeling efforts to houses built before 1989, critics said.

For example, critics said zoning proposals could prohibit the addition of a baby's room for an expecting couple or a larger garage for a growing family.

"That is a concern," said Dan Tkach, 46, who built a bi-level house on Sunset Road in 1986.

"We built it under one set of zoning regulations, and now that we want to put on an addition, we would be severely restricted (under the proposal)," Tkach said.

He said he would like to add an addition to his garage for a third car for when his son begins driving, but under the proposed regulations, he could only cover up to 12 percent more of his lot.

Tkach said this is an unnecessary restriction because the lot is big enough for the addition not to impact the neighbors.

"We are nowhere near the setbacks, we are not going to block any neighbors' view. We just are very limited in what we can do because we're near the limit on square footage" under the proposed regulations, Tkach said.

Inside

A look at proposed and existing teardown/infill regulations.

Page 6A

See ZONING, page 6

Zoning

Continued from page 1

City Planner Dick Untch said it was possible some existing houses would not qualify for a room addition if the lot coverage is already large. But based on staff research, most properties could qualify for an addition under the proposed zoning changes.

The changes are dubbed "teardown/infill" to more closely regulate those who buy a house in an established neighborhood, raise the structure and build a new house that does not fit with the neighborhood. The architecture could be out of place or the house could be so large it blocks the sun from entering a neighbor's windows.

Supporters say new regulations are needed to preserve a neighborhood's atmosphere as housing stock turns over. Critics, such as Genevans Against Rezoning, contend the proposal goes too far and not only limits personal property rights but could prohibit modest home additions.

Testimony continues at 7:30 tonight at city hall, 109 James St. This will be the third continued hearing.

The proposed regulations would affect houses built before 1989 that were not part of a planned subdivision.

The changes involve a two-part shift in philosophy, city officials said. The first is a change in theory from maximum living space to maximum building coverage. The second theory change is from maximum lot coverage for buildings to minimum open space on the lot.

Proposed Teardown/Infill Regulations

Proposed Zoning Amendment for Residential Area 1

Percent allowable		Allowable Building Coverage				Allowable Height Based on Lot Width					
Lot size	Building Coverage (RE, R1, R2, R3, and R4)	Bonuses (RE, R1, R2, R3, and R4)	Attached Garage	Detached Garage	Porch	Minimum Open Space Requirement RE, R1, R2, R3, R4	50 Feet or less	More than 50 Feet up to 80 feet	More than 80 Feet up to 120 feet	More than 120 feet	
6,500 square ft. or less	21 21 (1,365 square ft.)	31 31 (2,015 square ft.)									
More than 6,500 square ft. up to 8,400 square ft.	plus 7.7 square ft./100 square ft. of lot area above 6,500 square ft.	plus 17.7 square ft./100 square ft. of lot area above 6,500 square ft.	250 square ft.	400 square ft.	200 square ft.	55 percent	R4 30 feet	R4 32 feet	R4 32 feet	R4 32 feet	
More than 8,400 square ft. up to 10,000 square ft.	18 (1,512 square ft.) plus 11.8 square ft./100 square ft. of lot area above 8,400 square ft.	28 (2,352 square ft.) plus 17.7 square ft./100 square ft. of lot area above 8,400 square ft.	250 square ft.	400 square ft.	200 square ft.	55 percent	R3 30 feet	R3 32 feet	R3 33 feet with bonus	R3 34 feet with bonus	
More than 10,000 square ft. up to 13,000 square ft.	17 (1,700 square ft.) plus 8.3 square ft./100 square ft. of lot area above 10,000 square ft.	26 (2,600 square ft.) plus 13.0 square ft./100 square ft. of lot area above 10,000 square ft.	300 square ft.	500 square ft.	200 square ft.	55 percent	R2 30 feet	R2 32 feet	R2 33 feet with bonus	R2 34 feet with bonus	
More than 13,000 square ft. up to 20,000 square ft.	15 (1,950 square ft.) plus 6.4 square ft./100 square ft. of lot area above 13,000 square ft.	22 (2,860 square ft.) plus 13.4 square ft./100 square ft. of lot area above 13,000 square ft.	300 square ft.	500 square ft.	200 square ft.	55 percent	R1 30 feet	R1 32 feet	R1 33 feet with bonus	R1 34 feet with bonus	
More than 20,000 square ft.	12 (2,400 square ft.) plus 2.5 square ft./100 square ft. of lot area above 20,000 square ft.	19 (3,800 square ft.) plus 2.5 square ft./100 square ft. of lot area above 20,000 square ft.	300 square ft.	500 square ft.	200 square ft.	65 percent	RE 30 feet	RE 32 feet	RE 33 feet with bonus	RE 34 feet with bonus	

- At least 10 feet of interior living space must be located in front of an attached, side-load garage to be eligible for the building coverage bonus
- No more than one garage bonus can be applied to a zoning lot
- On corner lots, the attached garage bonus only applies to garages with garage doors facing the interior side lot line.

- At least 10 feet of interior living space must be located in front of an attached, side-lead garage to be eligible for the building coverage bonus
- No more than one garage bonus can be applied to a zoning lot
- On corner lots, the attached garage bonus only applies to garages with garage doors facing the interior side lot line.

Any construction would have to be filtered through both changes to be approved, the proposal states.

The proposal offers a mathematical formula based on lot size and how far the house is built from the street and the neighbors to decide how much open space must be included on the lot.

There are size "bonuses" if the owner builds a front porch or a detached garage in the back yard. Houses also could be taller if the side yards are bigger than the minimum, the proposal states.

Although the maximum building height now is 35 feet, the proposed changes would base height on lot width. Lot

width of 50 feet or less could have a house 30 feet high. A lot width of 50 feet to 80 feet could have a house up to 32 feet high.

Lot width of 80 feet to 120 feet could have a house 33 feet high, but could go up to 35 feet with a side yard setback bonus if the property owner increases the side yard setback by two feet on both sides. This bonus also applies to lots of more than 120 feet in width, as they could be 34 feet high or 36 feet high with the bonus.

The proposal's full text is available at the Geneva Public Library, 127 James St., and on the city's Web site, www.geneva.il.us.

Existing Teardown/Infill Regulations

Bulk Regulation	Existing Zoning Regulations				
	RE Residential District	R1 Residential District	R2 Residential District	R3 Residential District	R4 Residential District
Minimum Lot Area	20,000 square ft.	13,000 square ft.	10,000 square ft.	8,400 square ft.	6,500 square ft.
Minimum Lot Frontage	110 feet	100 feet	75 feet	60 feet	50 feet
Minimum Setbacks					
Street	40 feet	25 feet	20 feet	20 feet	20 feet
Side	20 feet	12 feet	8 feet	6 feet	6 feet
Rear	60 feet	25 feet	25 feet	25 feet	25 feet
Maximum Lot Coverage	30 percent 6,000 square ft.	40 percent 5,200 square ft.	40 percent 4,000 square ft.	40 percent 3,360 square ft.	40 percent 2,600 square ft.
Maximum Floor Area Ratio	0.2 4,000 square ft.	0.4 5,200 square ft.	0.4 4,000 square ft.	0.4 3,360 square ft.	0.4 3,360 square ft.
Maximum Building Height	35 feet	35 feet	35 feet	35 feet	35 feet

Committee lists conditions on transfer station

*Kane County
Board to vote on
conclusions Tuesday
12/5/02*

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — If the Kane County Board approves Waste Management's application for a waste transfer station Tuesday, it will place 35 conditions on its operations.

However, its approval is not a foregone conclusion.

The Executive Committee on Wednesday put two resolutions on Tuesday's meeting agenda, one approving the application with conditions, and one denying it.

The county board must vote the application up or down Tuesday. If it does not, the application is automatically approved as Waste Management submitted, meaning without any of the conditions.

"No applicant does so without anticipating conditions placed on them to

meet the concerns of the governing body," Waste Management spokesman Lee Adelman said. "We anticipated conditions would be placed and we will abide by the will of the board."

Attorney Patrick Kinnally served as hearing officer for the siting process. On Wednesday, Kinnally outlined some of the conditions he placed on the application.

"The biggest issue is traffic," Kinnally said.

Although the county board's conditions include restrictions on which routes the inbound and outbound trucks can use, some board members said that no current routes are suitable for the traffic.

The county is proposing the trucks cannot travel south on Route 25 to Route 64 in St. Charles.

Further, Waste Management officials testified during the public hearings that having their trucks traveling north of the facility to West Bartlett Road was not their first choice.

"It probably would be less desirable than going south on Route 25 (to Route 64)," Adelman said.

One of the conditions calls for Waste Management not to accept garbage at the transfer station until improvements

are made at the Route 25, Stearns and Dunham roads intersection.

Dan Walter, R-South Elgin, said Waste Management should withdraw its application and wait to re-apply for the transfer station

until those improvements are made.

"I think it's incumbent upon the applicant to come back when there's a suitable route," Walter said.

If approved, the transfer station would occupy nine

acres on the site of the former Woodland Landfill on Route 25 near the Prairie Path in an unincorporated area next to South Elgin.

A transfer station serves as a collection site for garbage. Neighborhood collection trucks go to the facility and dump their garbage on the floor. The garbage then is loaded onto semi-trucks and moved to landfills.

Many of the conditions apply to the building, its maintenance and how the garbage is moved from the collection trucks to the transfer trucks.

For example, no loaded trucks can be stored overnight outside the building, and garbage cannot remain on the floor after 10 p.m.

An average of 402 trucks would enter the station each day. When employee vehicles are added to the mix, the facility would generate 854 trips each day.

One of the more significant conditions would limit the amount of waste it accepts to 2,000 tons a day.

At the height of its operation, Woodland Landfill accepted 4,000 tons a day, Adelman said.

"When we were taking in 4,000 tons a day, we weren't impeding traffic," he said.

Wednesday was the first chance board members saw Kinnally's findings and suggested conditions. It is likely many could change or be added before the vote.

For example, the condition using Stearns Road becomes void after July 1, 2006. Kinnally said it was written that way because construction is scheduled to take place in 2005.

Some board members speculated the construction may not be completed in 2005. It is possible the either/or condition may be changed before the vote, or an amendment may be offered from the board floor.



Walter

With issue resolved, jail project can resume

12/5/02

BY DAVID R. KAZAK

Daily Herald Staff Writer

Kane County jail expansion can move forward again now that a panel has determined the construction management firm selected to oversee the project will do the same amount of work as other companies, but for

less money.

Last month, a divided county board voted 13-12 to delay the project and examine board Chairman Mike McCoy's decision to hire the construction firm d'Escoto Inc. to manage the \$12 million, 200-bed addition for about \$500,000.

One of the Chicago-based com-

pany's managing partners is Miguel d'Escoto, who is Mayor Richard Daley's transportation commissioner.

Other companies that wanted the job pitched their services at much higher costs, some topping \$1 million. Some board members questioned whether d'Escoto would provide the same level of service.

On Wednesday, county board member Lee Barrett, an East Dundee Republican, said his board subcommittee, which re-interviewed all the potential managers, determined that d'Escoto's was the best deal.

The full board will vote whether to approve the contract at its regular monthly board meeting Dec. 10.

County Board chairman shakes up leadership roles

12/5/02

BY DAVID R. KAZAK

Daily Herald Staff Writer

To most, county government is county government. A machine. Parts interchangeable.

County Board Chairman Mike McCoy proposed swapping some of those parts Wednesday with his selection of new leaders for the board's many committees.

For the uninitiated, committees handle specific issues. Their names are usually self-explanatory. Transportation committee. Public health committee. Corrections and rehabilitation committee.

You get the idea.

Leadership on these committees has remained unchanged for years, and in the past month, McCoy has promised a shakeup.

Politically, however, a shakeup can be a zero-sum game. That's because some committees are more powerful, and thereby, more desired. Aurora Republican Bill Wyatt, for example, is McCoy's pick to head the mighty powerful transportation committee, which oversees all road matters in Kane.

The loser? Longtime transportation committee chairwoman Karen

Steve-McConnaughay, a St. Charles Republican. McCoy moved her to head the corrections committee, where she now will take on all things county jail.

The previous chairman of the corrections committee, Batavia Republican Doug Weigand, got into a bitter and very public feud this year with Sheriff Ken Ramsey, who took the unusual step of asking McCoy to remove Weigand from the post.

He was removed, and now leads the board's finance committee, which sets the county's budget.

Missing from the list of chairman assignments is St. Charles Republican John Hoscheit.

McCoy said Wednesday that's because Hoscheit asked to be kept out of a chairman position because he wants to challenge Jack Cook, an Elgin Republican, for the presidency of the Kane County Forest Preserve board.

"He's taking a risk," McCoy said, noting that if Hoscheit is unsuccessful in ousting Cook (the commissioners themselves vote for their president) he'll be less influential without a county board committee of his own.

Hoscheit didn't return calls seeking comment Wednesday.

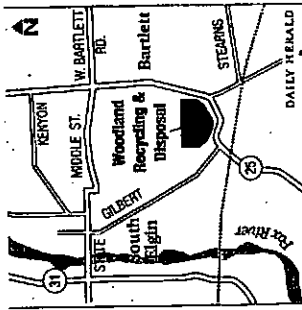
Only six days remain until garbage station vote

12/15/02
BY DAVID R. KAZAK
Daily Herald Staff Writer

Less than a week remains before Kane County Board members decide whether Waste Management can convert the now-closed Woodland landfill near South Elgin into a waste transfer station.

For some top elected leaders — who got their first look Wednesday at a report borne of a half-dozen public hearings and voluminous letters — having just six days to study the report, well, stinks.

Members of the board's Executive Committee had several questions about the report, which was drafted by attorney Patrick Kinnally, the



board's hearing officer.

In the report, Kinnally finds that Waste Management has met most of

the legal requirements needed to operate a waste transfer station in Kane County — subject to certain conditions, that is.

One is that the transfer station, which temporarily stores trash until it can be shipped to a landfill farther away, becomes operational no sooner than July 1, 2006.

The only exception is if Stearns Road is greatly improved before that time. Other conditions include limiting operating hours to between 6 a.m. and 4 p.m. on weekdays and 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturdays.

Also, no trash truck traffic will be allowed to use Middle Street or Gilbert Street in South Elgin. Waste Management should keep drivers

half is farmland.

The law governing the siting process doesn't allow for consideration of future land use, Steve-McConnaughay said, and that's a problem because it's likely the land will be filled with homes in the future.

Jim Mitchell, a North Aurora Republican, questioned why the transfer station could become operational on July 1, 2006, even if Stearns Road is not improved.

"It's not a question of need, it's a question of transportation," Mitchell said. "To allow it to open before the transportation system is improved... it just doesn't make any sense."

Regardless, by Dec. 10, the board

must vote on the matter — either to approve with the conditions or deny Waste Management's application. Otherwise, on Dec. 12, the application automatically is approved under state law.

Lee Addleman, the trash company's vice president of business development, who also saw Kinnally's conditions for the first time Wednesday, said any "reasonable" conditions would be acceptable.

"We anticipated conditions would be offered," Addleman said. "We'll abide by the will of the board. Reasonable conditions we can live with." He did not say if any of the conditions as presented were unreasonable.

"We'll abide by the will of the board. Reasonable conditions we can live with."

Lee Addleman, Waste Management's vice president of business development

caught violating this condition from using the facility for at least a week, Kinnally suggested.

Karen Steve-McConnaughay, a St. Charles Republican, questioned at least one finding that declared a transfer station compatible with surrounding land. The reason? Nearly

Strike averted in probation officer talks

12/5/02

BY DAVID R. KAZAK

Daily Herald Staff Writer

Sixteenth Judicial Circuit Court leaders and the union for Kane County's probation officers and youth home counselors reached a tentative agreement Wednesday on a three-year contract that calls for an immediate, \$2,400 bump in pay, according to a source familiar with the negotiations.

The agreement, which affects the 115 court services employees represented by Teamsters Local 330, also calls for a 2-percent pay hike in the contract's second and third years.

It remains unclear how the union's members — most of whom work in Kane County — will react to the proposed deal, which provides for less than the \$3,500 across-the-board pay hike the members wanted.

A membership vote on the contract is scheduled for Friday.

"Progress has been made," said 26-year-old youth home counselor Adam Christiansen, a member of the negotiating team. Asked if that progress is good or disappointing, he replied:

"Any movement is looked at as positively," he said.

Talks between court officials and the union had been at a standstill for weeks. Last week, then-Chief Judge Grant Wegner declined the union's offer to enter mediated talks, saying to do so would have done no good.

At the time, the gulf between the union's pay wants (a 13 percent pay hike) and what the court was willing to give (2 percent) was wide, and neither side was willing to budge.

Union spokesman Dominic Romanazzi said at the time that Wegner's move all but guaranteed a

strike, which was authorized by the membership Nov. 22.

Then, Wegner's successor, Judge Phil DiMarzio, who took over as chief judge Monday, decided he'd dip a toe into the mediation waters. Each side went into Wednesday's marathon negotiations with little optimism.

Yet it appears that didn't stop a deal from being struck.

Neither DiMarzio nor Romanazzi immediately returned calls seeking comment on the deal.

Just hearing that a deal was on the table was good news for many of the union workers. Alice Klimpke, a 34-year-old probation officers from Aurora, was one.

"I'm relieved," she said when told about the tentative deal. She declined to comment on whether she thought it was fair, saying only that the movement was "encouraging."

Investigation into priest continues

Prosecutors, police hope girl's allegation against former pastor at St. Peter's Church is only one

12/5/92

BY ALICIA FABBRE
Daily Herald Staff Writer

Kane County State's Attorney Meg Gorecki Wednesday urged anyone who either witnessed sexual abuse by a former Geneva priest — or may have been a victim of abuse — to

come forward.
Mark A. Campobello, 37, was arrested Tuesday after allegations that he inappropriately touched a 14-year-old girl while he was a resident priest at St. Peter's Catholic Church in Geneva.
He is charged with five counts of



Mark A. Campobello

Geneva Police Lt. Joe Frega said Campobello was released after

criminal sexual assault and five counts of aggravated criminal sexual abuse that the girl, now 18, says occurred between January and May 1999, when she was a student at St. Peter Elementary, Geneva.

Though investigators are uncertain if there are any other victims, Gorecki urged victims or anyone with information about the incidents to contact prosecutors or Geneva

Sec ABUSE on PAGE 13



JEFF KNOX/DAILY HERALD

Owen Phelps, director of communications for the Rockford Diocese, expressed sorrow to the girl who has accused former St. Peter's Catholic Church priest Mark A. Campobello of sexually assaulting her in 1999.

Abuse: Numbers provided for tips

Continued from Page 1

Parish in Belvidere.

"We pledge to cooperate with authorities in the investigation of this case so as to assure that justice is done," said Owen Phelps, director of communication for the diocese.

Gorecki and Frega could not provide details about what prompted the girl, who lives in Geneva, to contact authorities.

Campobello, who was ordained in 1991, served as a parochial vicar at St. Peter's in 1994.

He was a resident priest and often said Mass at the church. Campobello also served as assistant principal and spiritual director at Aurora Central Catholic High School during that time.

Officials from St. Peter's Catholic Church could not be reached for comment. Campobello's father, Richard, who lives in Crystal Lake, declined comment.

Anyone with information should call the Kane County State's Attorney's office at (630) 232-3500 or Geneva police at (630) 232-4736.

police.

"Please come forward to assist us in the prosecution of this matter," Gorecki said.

Frega said police have not interviewed any other victims or witnesses to any of the alleged incidents. Police began investigating the complaint in late October after the girl contacted police through an attorney.

"We hope there are none," Frega said of other possible victims. "Certainly we are cognizant to the possibility that some may come forward, but we certainly hope this is an isolated case in Geneva."

He said no one has contacted police since news of Campobello's arrest was made public Wednesday.

At a news conference, Gorecki praised officials from the Rockford Diocese for cooperating with the investigation and quickly removing Campobello from his duties as a parochial administrator at St. James

Kane Board set to vote on transfer station

12/5/02

By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

Beacon

GENEVA — Kane County Board members are getting ready to vote on the Waste Management Inc. application for a waste transfer station on the site of the current Woodland Landfill.

The vote will take place at the board's regular meeting Dec. 10 in the board room at the Government Center here.

Patrick Kinnally, an Aurora attorney who was hearing officer for the transfer station siting process, recommended Wednesday the board either turn down the application outright, or approve it with 35 conditions he attached to the application. He released his recommendations at the board's Executive Committee meeting.

One of the key conditions Kinnally recommended is that the transfer station not open until Jan. 1, 2006, at the earliest, or July 1, 2006, at the latest.

The deadline was to ensure that the intersection at Stearns Road, Route 25 and Dunham Road is improved and changed, as planned,

and that work is done along the Stearns Road corridor that eventually will include a bridge over the Fox River.

That is the favored route, and thus the main route trucks should be taking to and from the station, Kinnally said. If that road is not finished, there really is not a good route, he added.

In particular, Kinnally said, testimony at hearings on the transfer station siting indicated a route from the south, along Route 25 through St. Charles, is unacceptable.

"The problem is at Route 64 and 25," he said. "Trucks would not make that corner. That makes that

route a problem."

Kinnally said he believes the Stearns Road corridor will be finished at least by July 2006, although some board members said Wednesday they are unsure about that. Board member Jim Mitchell, R-North Aurora, said the opening should be tied to when the road is finished.

Board member Dan Walter, R-South Elgin, whose district includes the transfer station, suggested the board consider turning down the application completely until Stearns Road is finished.

"We're left at a point where there is no route unless Stearns-Dunham-

Route 25 is reconfigured," Walter said. "I think it's incumbent upon the applicant to come back and apply when there is a route, if we're saying there is no suitable route now."

Kinnally said he felt Waste Management satisfied the need to prove substantial compliance with the county's siting ordinance. Board Chairman Mike McCoy, R-Aurora, said the application is "consistent" with the county's solid waste plan.

Waste Management officials, who are not allowed to speak to the board members before next week's vote, said they will accept any reasonable restrictions put on the transfer station.

Tentative pact between Kane, probation staff

■ Strike avoided?

Teamsters Local 330
members will vote
on proposal Friday

12/16/02

By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

Beacon

GENEVA — Probation officers and youth home workers in the 16th Circuit will vote Friday on a new three-year contract.

If approved, the last-minute agreement would avoid a strike by about 115 probation officers, youth home workers and other support workers represented by Local 330 of the Teamsters union, headquartered in Elgin. The people work in Kane, DeKalb and Kendall counties, which comprise the 16th Circuit.

The new agreement reportedly will have about a 13 percent increase in it for the workers during the three-year life of the contract. That is not too far from the across-the-board, \$3,500-a-year, salary increase for every member of the bargaining unit officials asked for.

Workers have said they are trying to increase the entire salary range. They have complained for

the past several years — and in some cases with agreement from County Board and court officials — that probation workers and youth home workers are low paid in comparison with comparable court circuits in the Chicago area.

The tentative agreement came after an eight-hour federal mediation session Wednesday between Local 330 members and representatives, and representatives of the 16th Circuit. Kane County Board member Jan Carlson, R-Elburn, also sat it on the session.

Carlson said Friday he did not participate in discussions unless there was a specific question about how much money Kane County had to cover salary raises.

"This is an unusual and difficult process because the chief judge negotiates and signs the contract, but the County Board funds it," Carlson said.

If the union membership approves the contract Friday, Chief Judge Philip DiMarzio also must sign it.

The last contract between the two entities expired Nov. 30, and union members threatened a job action, perhaps as early as Thursday or today, if the mediation session did not work.

Probation officers to vote on contract

Union: 'Fair' agreement reached in mediation

—12/6/82

By VICTORIA A.E. CAMRON
Kane County Chronicle

ST. CHARLES — An impending strike of probation officers and youth-home counselors will be averted if a proposed three-year contract is approved today.

The 115 members of Teamsters Local 330 will vote at the county's youth home this

morning and at noon. Results should be available shortly after 1 p.m., union officials said.

The agreement was reached late Wednesday after court management and union negotiators met with a federal mediator. The tentative three-year contract includes an immediate, across-the-board pay raise of \$2,400, with a total raise of about 16 percent over the life of the contract, said Dominic Romanazzi, the union's secretary-treasurer.

Chief Judge Philip DiMarzio did not return phone calls seeking comment, and the court's attorney would not comment on the proposal.

Although the contract does not fulfill all of the union's goals, it provides a larger raise than the court's last offer that was rejected in November. The union had sought a 13 percent raise.

"This contract is not exactly what the union is looking for," said Adam Christiansen, a youth home counselor and a member of the negotiating team. Both sides made concessions, he said.

"I don't believe every aspect of the contract is perfect. I think it is a fair contract," Christiansen said.

See STRIKE, page 2

Strike

Continued from page 1

"We've come a long way," Romanazzi said, referring to the offer of 2 percent raises and one-time bonuses. "It's much better than their original proposals."

Christiansen and another union member said they were pleased with the agreement, but would not speculate on the election results.

"I believe it is a substantial improvement over the last best and final offer," Christiansen said. "I won't know until tomorrow how it's going to go."

Christiansen said some employees he talked to were thrilled with the proposal, while others were not, he said.

"I'm happy they decided to go to mediation and offer us more money," said Christi Johnson, a juvenile probation officer in DeKalb. "I think we will do the right thing on Friday."

Salaries for the court services employees start at \$27,500 and top out at \$40,000. In DuPage County, the same workers' pay ranges from \$31,000 to \$43,000; in Lake County, from \$34,000 to \$50,000; in McHenry County, from \$30,000 to \$54,000. Romanazzi said last year.

Under the proposal, salaries will range from \$29,900 to \$42,400 to begin with. At the end of the three years, that range will be from \$31,900 to \$46,400.

Suspected gang leader arrested



Bob Gerrard — Chronicle photo staff

A Kane County Sheriff's deputy and his police dog check the area in front of a house at 1N367 Pouley Road in rural Elburn on Thursday morning. A suspected Aurora gang leader was charged by the FBI with possession of a firearm.

FBI arrests Kane County man

Police search home, find handgun

12-16-102

By BILL TYNAN
Kane County Chronicle

BLACKBERRY TOWN

SHIP — A 31-year-old suspected Aurora gang leader living in rural Elburn was charged Thursday by the FBI with possession of a firearm as a felon.

FBI officials transported John M. Orosco, 1N367 Pouley Road, in the Still Meadows subdivision, to Chicago after they entered his home Thursday morning with combat gear and automatic weapons. He was charged in a criminal complaint in U.S. District Court late Thursday.

FBI and ATF officials asked the Kane County Sheriff and Aurora Police to help execute a federal search warrant at the home. During the search, the FBI said it found a Barretta combination barrel 9 millimeter semi-automatic pistol that was traced to Orosco.

The FBI said the search warrant was issued as part of an ongoing federal investigation into the distribution of drugs in the Aurora area.

"I think it's safe to assume they didn't go there to find a weapon and arrest him," FBI Special Agent Ross Rice said.

In an affidavit, FBI Special Agent Paul Bock said a search warrant was obtained Tuesday. Orosco, also known as "Big Turtle," was home with his wife and child at the time of the search.

See ARREST, page 2

Arrest

Continued from page 1

"The basis for this search warrant was John Orosco's alleged leadership role in a street gang organization in Aurora," Bock said in the affidavit. "It was also issued upon alleged narcotics distribution activity of John Orosco."

Elburn Village President Jim Willey said Thursday night he was still trying to gather information about what had happened.

As far as the incident happening so close to Elburn, Willey said he was "not aware

of any complaints from the neighborhood. But they would not necessarily have complained to Elburn police."

Two weeks ago, 29 alleged members of the same gang were indicted on federal drug charges in Chicago.

Bock said Orosco previously had been convicted of at least two felonies, including one drug conviction and one weapons conviction.

Neighbors said they have not had extensive contact with the family. However, neighbors said they have not had problems with Orosco.

"They haven't been bad neighbors," said Rick Schieve,

who lives across Pouley Road from Orosco. "They've put huge amounts of time and effort into making massive improvements to the property."

"They seem like really nice people," said a woman who lives to the north of Orosco. "I have met them. I see (the wife) mowing the lawn. They've been real nice."

Records show the title to the house is in the name of Corina Torres. Her relationship with Orosco is not known. The complaint did not indicate the name of Orosco's wife.

If convicted, Orosco could face 10 years in prison. No bond was given in the complaint.

Officials continue teardown/infill hearings

Plan commissioners say they need time to review proposal

12/10/82

By BRENDA SCHORY
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Plan commissioners continued the teardown/infill public hearing Thursday to 7:30 p.m. Jan. 16. After more than two more hours of testimony, Plan Commission Chairman David Rogers wanted to

give Zoning Board of Appeals members a chance to review the proposal and supporting documents before presenting their opinions.

Some would like room additions to existing houses regulated separately.

The zoning change proposal offers a mathematical formula based on lot

size and how far the house is built from the street and the neighbors to decide how much open space must be included on the lot. It includes lot coverage bonuses for building certain features, such as rear yard detached garages and front porches.

Its purpose is to control ultra-large houses from towering adjacent ones and impacting older neighborhoods.

The proposed regulations would affect houses built before 1989 that were not part of a planned subdivision.

Critics say the city's existing zoning every tree on the lot," Sommer said.

"What they are building there is the maximum allowable square footage ... on that lot. The homes they put up in Hinsdale — and soon to be here — are not built in three or four months. They're put up in a year and a half."

Commissioner Doug Cuscaden said he could not support the proposal as presented. He and others agreed teardown/infill needs to be regulated, but they wanted restrictions on existing house additions to be considered separately.

"I spoke with some city officials in Hinsdale. Approximately 25 percent of Hinsdale's original housing stock is gone. And I think the rumblings of that type of activity are in the not-too-distant future here in our town if we don't act proactively," Cuscaden said.

Hearings

Continued from page 1

Plan commissioners Thursday said they would need some time to digest the material and the nine hours of testimony given so far before they could make a decision.

Commissioner Stephen Sommer said he could support the proposal as presented based on the teardown/infill construction in Hinsdale while he worked there in the 1980s and 1990s.

"You just can't imagine going to work day after day and seeing house after house bought by a developer and the first thing they do is cut

walking to the house makes for more opportunities for neighbors to interact, he said.

Katherine Vondulien testified against the proposal, saying it was so restrictive, it would reduce the value of property and not preserve their investment.

"You have not addressed the value of property rights and the value of investment," she said. "A house is the largest investment people make in their lifetime."

See HEARINGS, page 2

Forest preserve slates entertainment

Music from decades of '40s to '70s featured

12/6/02
By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — The Kane County Forest Preserve Commission's Enterprise Committee on Thursday approved a series of concerts and shows for next summer.

Five concerts will feature music from the 1940s, 50s, 60s, 70s, plus country. Two shows will feature variety acts, such as magic, puppets and juggling.

All shows will be free. Dates for the shows have not been set.

"It's something we can give back to the community," committee Chairman Robert McConnaughay said.

The forest preserve will pay \$25,000 up front for performer fees, stage, lighting, posters and fliers.

In return the district will receive 70 percent of the sponsorships. Onesti entertainment, the promoter, will receive 30 percent.

Once the district earns its money back, Onesti and the forest preserve will evenly share the sponsorship income.

The music of the 1940s will feature The Rhythm Rockets, a swing band that plays songs from World War II.

The Stingrays play music from the 1950s, such as "Rock Around the Clock," and "Rock and Roll is Here to Stay."

Motown music of the '60s will be a tribute to Barry White, Gladys Knight and Aretha Franklin.

Infinity, which plays music of the 1970s, has been the crowd favorite at Ribfest.

The country music will be brought in by radio station US99.

The "Kids Spectacular" will feature marionettes, an interactive music show, jugglers and balloon art.

"An Evening of Magic and Illusion" will feature juggling, fire eating and acrobatics.

Panel recommends d'Escoto to oversee jail construction

12/10/02

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — It appears Kane County will use the construction manager recommended by county board Chairman Mike McCoy to handle the 200-bed jail addition.

In November, McCoy suggested using d'Escoto Inc. of Chicago, which worked on the Cook County Jail addition, but board members delayed a decision.

McCoy then appointed a subcommittee that was to compare three firms' proposals to ensure they were comparable.

As a construction manager, firms would charge on a per-hour basis. A general contractor would charge a flat fee. D'Escoto estimated its cost at

\$534,648, while Lamp Inc. of Elgin estimated it would cost \$845,875, and Turner Construction Co., \$1.3 million.

Lee Barrett, R-Elgin, led the subcommittee.

"We tried to flesh it down to where the proposals were similar to the others," Barrett said.

On Wednesday, Barrett's panel recommended d'Escoto to the Executive Committee. The committee then voted to put the recommendation on Tuesday's county board agenda.

Barrett said it would take another three or four months to draw up construction documents, meaning building the addition could begin in the spring.

Schmitz elected to House Republican Leadership team

12/6/02
KANE COUNTY CHRONICLE

GENEVA — Members of the House Republican Caucus Wednesday elected State Rep. Tim Schmitz, R-Batavia, to serve on the House Republican Leadership team.

Schmitz will serve on the team during the upcoming 93rd General Assembly.

Schmitz said he will

work hard to maintain the trust and confidence his colleagues have placed in him.

"I sincerely appreciate my colleagues' vote of confidence in my leadership abilities," Schmitz said. "It is an honor to have been elected an assistant leader, and I will do my best to provide strong leadership to ensure that the necessary public service pro-

grams are funded, while looking at ways to stimulate our economy."

Schmitz was one of four House Republicans elected to the leadership team under incoming House Republican leader Tom Cross (R-Oswego). Schmitz will begin serving as an assistant leader when Rep. Cross officially assumes the post of House Republican leader on Jan. 8.

Committee calls for all Kane cities to join disaster plan

*FEMA funds available
to planners
to mitigate damages*

12-16-02

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — If cities want federal money after a natural disaster, they should sign up with Kane County as it writes its disaster mitigation plan.

With a change coming in how the Federal Emergency Management Agency distributes money earmarked to prevent damage in natural disasters, county officials are asking villages and cities to join with them.

FEMA is requiring local governments to write a Hazard Mitigation Plan by November 2004 to be eligible for mitigation funds.

"After that date, if you get a disaster declaration, you will not be allowed to get any of the money without a plan," said French Wetmore, president of French & Associates, a consulting firm hired by the county to help write the plan.

Wetmore said FEMA money is divided into several pots. Disaster aid will be available after an event, but money to prevent further damage will not be available without the plan.

Thursday was the first meeting of the Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee. Representatives of 16 of the county's 28 municipalities attended.

An example of mitigation would be removing a building from a flood plain or reinforcing existing buildings to prevent storm damage.

The committee will meet for the next nine months and follow the procedures Wetmore said will satisfy FEMA's requirements. Wetmore has worked with other counties and cities to develop similar plans.

With 17 inches of rain inundating the county in 24 hours in 1996, flooding is first on everyone's minds when thinking of natural disasters.

But northeastern Illinois can be home to all sorts of nasty natural disasters, such as tornadoes, strong thunderstorms, earthquakes and winter ice storms.

During an ice storm, the damage is not caused by ice on utility wires, but from the weight of the ice breaking tree limbs that fall across the wires.

"How many communities employ arborists?" Wetmore asked.

FEMA distributes huge amounts of disaster aid and mitigation funds.

Wetmore said Illinois used millions of FEMA dollars to buy 6,000 buildings after the 1993 Mississippi River floods.

"There's often a lot of money available after a flood," he said.

Having a disaster plan also can reduce National Flood Insurance rates, he said.

North Aurora village president to run for third term in 2005

12/6/02

By ERIC SCHELKOPF
Kane County Chronicle

NORTH AURORA — The election is more than two years away.

But Village President Mark Ruby said he probably will run for a third term in April 2005. Ruby was elected to his second term in April 2001.

"As things are right now, I would run again," Ruby said this week.

Ruby said he is making the early announcement because people have been asking him if he will run again. So far, he has no challengers.

Ruby said he would welcome other candidates into the race. He faced no opposition when he was re-elected president last year.

"Obviously it is up to the voters. But somebody running for office would have to have some experience. It is not something you can just step into," Ruby said.



Ruby

Ruby was on the village board for four years before being elected village president in 1997 in a two-person race.

One of the goals Ruby said he would like to accomplish is repairing the village's streets.

"We still have roads in the village that are way behind in needing improvement," Ruby said.

Another goal is to bring more commercial development into North Aurora "to produce more revenues for the village," Ruby said.

He said officials must find a solution to the space woes of the village hall and the police station.

"We have to come to some sort of resolution with a plan for an improved police facility and village hall. The police department is woefully overcrowded," Ruby said.

Ruby said he has been fortunate to have a good staff and village board to work with during his tenure.

"That has made the job enjoyable. We have a very productive board. I am fortunate to have good board members who are conscientious and serious about trying to work together," he said.

Kane board close to adopting plan for bike, pedestrian paths

Proposal stresses need for routes in new development

By William Presecky
12/6/02
Tribune staff reporter

The proposed plan, which heralds bicycles and walking as integral to getting around the county, was endorsed last month by the County Board's Transportation Committee. The board's Executive Committee voted this week to recommend adoption by the full board on Tuesday.

The plan maps out existing pathways and suggests possible links and additions. It does not list projects by priority or cost, but it does raise the issue of considering where bike and pedestrian paths fit in when develop-

ment is proposed. "It provides a planning map for all the municipalities and park districts in the county to follow that don't have their own maps," said county transportation planner Heather Tabbert. "[It] helps guide them in ways to fit into a larger, regional network."

"By having [conceptual trails] on a map, it will give them more credibility and help obtain funding" to build them, she added.

Tabbert said adoption of the plan will place Kane, along with

neighboring DuPage County at the vanguard of bicycle and pedestrian path planning in the Chicago region.

In addition to identifying existing and proposed trails, the plan identifies conceptual trail links that can be considered as development is proposed.

About 20,000 copies of the proposed trail map are expected to be available by mid-2003.

Adoption of the plan will cap more than two years of collaboration by the county, Forest Preserve District and Kane County Council of Mayors, with partici-

The new plan advocates creation of a countywide network of bikes and trails and, for the first time, combines in a single plan all the existing local or park plans. Although only seven of 30 Kane communities have a bicycle plan, nearly three times that number have bicycle paths in their park districts.

The plan also outlines policies and programs that promote bicycle and pedestrian travel and safety and encourages local governments to enact them in their development or building codes as a matter of routine.

The study that led to the plan's formulation was initiated in August 2000 and based largely on the assumption that it is easier and more cost-effective to consider integrating bicycle and pedestrian facilities before proposed development rather than after.

Although the county's 2020 transportation plan included a bicycle and pedestrian component, it didn't include specific recommendations for increasing the accompanying infrastructure.

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Although the county's 2020 transportation plan included a bicycle and pedestrian component, it didn't include specific recommendations for increasing the accompanying infrastructure.

Kane board assignments tell lot about forest district race

12/6/02
By William Presecky
and H. Gregory Meyer
Tribune staff reporters

Depending on the voting next Tuesday for president of the Kane County Forest Preserve Commission, incumbent President Jack Cook (R-Elgin) could remain one of the county's busiest officials even if he loses.

His competition is Commissioner John Hoscheit (R-St. Charles). Hoscheit, who is chairman of the Kane County Board's Finance Committee, is mum about his active behind-the-scenes campaign to win the forest commission presidency. But Cook is keenly aware of the challenge and said he is preparing to meet it.

The list of new County Board committee assignments announced this week by Chairman Mike McCoy (R-Aurora) speaks volumes about the seriousness of Hoscheit's intentions regarding the Forest Preserve District. It also says a lot about the seriousness with which McCoy views Hoscheit's chances.

McCoy said last month he didn't intend to replace Hoscheit as head of the finance panel, so the omission of Hoscheit's name from the list of committee

chairmen announced Wednesday was glaring.

No less conspicuous was the addition of Cook's name to four board committees and the county's Liquor Control Commission. Except for holding ex-officio membership on the County Board's Executive Committee by virtue of being Forest Preserve Commission president, Cook isn't a member of any of the board's standing or ad hoc committees.

McCoy said Hoscheit's pursuit of the forest commission presidency, which is a demanding, time-consuming post, precluded his availability as Finance Committee chairman.

"That [chairmanship] needs a full-time commitment," said McCoy, adding that he consulted with Hoscheit about the move.

As Finance Committee chairman, Hoscheit automatically would have continued as a member of the board's influential, agenda-setting Executive Committee.

"If he's successful in [being elected forest commission president], he'll be back on the Executive Committee," said McCoy.

Building a future: After thanking his departing colleagues and welcoming new ones at DuPage

County's swearing-in ceremony Monday evening, County Board Chairman Robert Schillerstrom in a keynote address laid out a vision that includes a lot of concrete and asphalt.

Starting with the county's continuing jail expansion and courthouse addition, Schillerstrom went on to plug for a wider Eisenhower Expressway east of the notorious Hillside Strangler, the extension of Interstate Highway 355 southbound into Will County and a highway spur connecting the western suburbs with O'Hare International Airport.

"It's time that we quit holding this program hostage in the battle over O'Hare," Schillerstrom said of the project.

Young Republicans: A politically connected brood grew one bigger with the birth a week ago of Daniel William Wagner, the 21-inch-long son of Schillerstrom's chief deputy, Dan Wagner, and House Speaker Dennis Hastert's chief of finance, Lisa Wagner.

The boy is the couple's fourth child. They also are raising 1-year-old triplets.

"We have four young Republicans we're going to add to the vote," Dan Wagner said.

Geneva hashes out rules for teardowns

12/6/02

BY TONA KUNZ

Daily Herald Staff Writer

Geneva plan commissioners discussed a proposed zoning change that would shrink the size of new homes allowed in town.

In the third public hearing on the proposal Thursday, most commissioners declined to take a definitive stance saying they needed time to digest the more than nine hours of public comment. But the commission did see a need for proactive regulations to prevent an influx of teardown and infill development that could bring with it the type of giant homes made infamous in Hinsdale.

Since 1996, Geneva has had 22 houses, called infill development, built on vacant lots in the older portions of town. Another 10 homes were torn down and replaced by larger ones.

"While at this point we are seeing a trickle of it, I think the flood might be around the corner," said Commissioner Doug Cuscaden.

However, Cuscaden and a few of his fellow commissioners said the proposed zoning changes go too far in some areas. They reduce the amount of livable space allowed to be built by up to 40 percent in some areas.

The Mayor's Task Force on Teardown/Infill Development agreed the changes are too strict for lots larger than 20,000 square feet and plan to work on a compromise.

Other concerns from commissioners were imposing building penalties or granting bonuses, depending how you look at it, for constructing a detached garage and not differentiating between new development and additions.

Creating separate rules for new homes instead of zoning districts could put the city at risk for a discrimination lawsuit, City Attorney Charles Radovich has said.

Plan commissioners decided to continue the public hearing again to 7:30 p.m. Jan. 16 in city hall.

Gang leader arrested

12/16/02

By Mike Cetera
STAFF WRITER

Beacon

BLACKBERRY TOWNSHIP — A

reputed leader of the Latin Kings street gang faces a federal weapons charge after authorities raided his home Thursday as part of an ongoing probe of illegal drug sales in the Aurora area.

John Orozco, 31, of the 1N300

Weapons charge might be linked to drug sales

block of Pouley Road, west of Elburn, appeared before a federal magistrate and was held without bond, FBI spokesman Ross Rice said.

Orozco is charged with one count of weapons possession by a felon after agents seized a 9mm Barretta

semi-automatic pistol. He faces up to 10 years in prison if convicted.

Orozco, also known as "Big Turtle," was named but not charged in court documents earlier this year alleging a massive drug trafficking conspiracy in Aurora. Twenty-nine

members or associates of the Latin Kings have been indicted on federal drug charges to date.

Authorities declined to comment on whether Orozco's arrest is connected to the larger investigation. However, FBI agent Paul Bock ac-

knowledge in court papers the basis for a search warrant of Orozco's home was his alleged leadership role in the gang and his " narcotics distribution activity."

Bock's affidavit also suggests he has more evidence related to the in-

vestigation. Rice would not say if more charges are pending.
"It should be noted that the Latin King street gang has been linked to multiple homicides and violence in the Aurora, Illinois area," according to the affidavit filed Thursday. "Much of this violence stems from drug activity conducted by the gang."

◆ Turn to GANG, A2

GANG

From Page A1

Officers from the FBI; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms; Aurora Police Department and Kane County Sheriff's Department all participated in serving the warrant Thursday.

Authorities discovered the handgun in the house. Orozco told law enforcement agents the gun belongs to his wife, the court papers

note.

Orozco has been convicted at least once on both felony drug and felony weapons charges, according

to the affidavit.

He is named in federal court papers as a cocaine and marijuana supplier to David Bustamante, one of seven men arrested in late October during simultaneous raids of several Aurora area homes.

Those men and more than a dozen others were indicted last month.

Authorities said they will seek to seize at least \$7 million in cash from the gang as well as other assets that include weapons and jewelry.

Contact Mike Cetera at
(630) 844-5853 or
mcetera@scn1.com.

Hazard mitigation committee has first meeting

■ FEMA funds eligibility:

County, towns need a plan
in place by November 2004

12/10/02

By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

Beacon

GENEVA — No one can stop a tornado or a flood, but people can cut down on the damage from them simply by planning ahead.

That was the word Thursday from French Wetmore, a consultant Kane County has hired to help develop a countywide Hazard Mitigation plan.

"The idea behind mitigation is that these things can happen at anytime," Wetmore told those attending the first Hazard Mitigation Plan committee meeting. "There is a tendency to think, we had a flood and we dealt with it, now we can go back to normal. But that could be counterproductive. Back to normal could mean back to being exposed again."

Mitigation is cutting down on the risk by preparing ahead of time for the hazard, he said. It can be everything from using different kinds of building codes to educating the public on personal awareness.

While one of the goals of a hazard mitigation plan is to have a better community, Wetmore said, there is an even more tangible reason for Kane County to have one: federal money.

The federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 mandates that a county or municipality must have a mitigation plan in place by November 2004 to be eligible for Federal Emergency Management Administration, or FEMA, money.

The same applies to anyone wanting an Army Corps of Engineers project, or for any county or municipality that wants to take advantage of Community Rating System flood insurance.

"Most communities who have these have had a problem, and they've had enough," Wetmore said. "They wanted to what they could do about it. We've seen it work; we believe in it."

As an example of how to mitigate life-safety problems, Wetmore pointed to lightning. The number of deaths by lightning strikes has been cut drastically down through the years because of public education of how to stay safer from it, he said.

"It was education and awareness — that's mitigation," Wetmore said. "We're not so much looking into policies, such as should the county preserve farmland. We're

interested more in specifics, things like changing or strengthening building codes, things that agencies, counties, cities, even private organizations, can implement."

One of the key factors in the county plan is participation by the municipalities. If a municipality fails to adopt a plan, or participate actively in development of the county plan, it would not be eligible for federal money in case of an emergency, Wetmore said.

Participation is entirely voluntary at this point.

"A municipality can take it or leave it," he said. "They can do their own plan, but we think this is a good way to take advantage of the county's money and work."

Municipalities need to pass a resolution of participation, which county officials would like to see done by the end of January, Wetmore said.

About half the county's municipalities were represented at the meeting Thursday. Conspicuously absent were any representatives from Aurora and the Tri-Cities communities of St. Charles, Geneva and Batavia.

Officials hope the Hazard Committee will meet at least once a month through September 2003, and have a plan ready for adoption by then.

New Kane panel to examine ways to lessen disaster losses

12/6/02

By William Presecky
Tribune Staff Reporter

Kane County planners began laying the groundwork Thursday for a plan to mitigate losses from natural hazards and disasters.

The county-funded effort, announced last week by County Board Chairman Mike McCoy (R-Aurora), will develop a comprehensive plan that identifies risks and outlines measures to reduce the hazards and property damage from floods, tornadoes, earthquakes, thunderstorms and severe winter weather.

The plan also will define steps to qualify the county and any participating municipalities for federal disaster-relief funds, said planning consultant French Wetmore, of Park Forest.

"That's the No. 1 driving force," Wetmore told about 50

officials gathered for the Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee's inaugural meeting.

The committee is expected to take about nine months to put together a plan.

He said federal regulations require that by November 2004, any county or municipality in which a disaster is declared must have a formal hazard-mitigation plan in place to qualify for federal emergency assistance or other grants.

French & Associates Ltd. has been hired to guide the committee, which is being assisted by staff from the county's Department of Environmental Management and Office of Emergency Management.

Participation by Kane County municipalities is voluntary. Any towns that do not join the effort by February may elect to do nothing or adopt their own plans, said Wetmore.

"There is no mandate that

you join in on this process," he told municipal officials. "That's the community's call."

Wetmore said he expects that most of the nearly 30 Kane County municipalities invited to participate will join.

Part of the planning process will involve assessing each participating community's risks for hazards and damage, as well as prescribe "action items [that] will specifically benefit a community," Wetmore said.

Wetmore said the committee is expected to review an assortment of hazard-mitigation options, ranging from flood-control projects and emergency services to property protection and public information.

In announcing the planning effort, McCoy recounted recent natural disasters in Kane County, such as tornadoes in 1990, 1991 and 1993, the 1996 flood and blizzards in 1999 and 2000.

Police: Arrest by FBI no surprise

Officials aware of gang members, drugs in small towns

12/7/02

By BILL TYNAN
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Central Kane County residents may have been surprised by the arrest of an alleged Aurora gang member in rural Elburn.

Local police officials were not, however.

"Gang members are extremely mobile," St. Charles Police Chief Don Shaw said. "They take it upon themselves to not only be in larger cities to blend in, but also smaller towns or unincorporated areas to try to become lost. This is something that law enforcement and the community has to be vigilant about."

The FBI on Thursday charged John M. Orosco, 1N367 Pouley Road, Blackberry Township, with possession of a firearm as a felon. FBI officials executed a search warrant, and entered Orosco's home Thursday morning with combat gear and automatic weapons.

The FBI said the search warrant was issued as part of an ongoing federal investigation into the distribution of drugs in the Aurora area.

Local police said they are aware of gang members who live in the Tri-Cities and the surrounding area. They said

gang members usually do not live in the areas that they work because they want to remain as anonymous as possible.

Geneva Police Lt. Joe Frega said the department is aware of gang members who live in Geneva, but work elsewhere.

"That's what you have (with the Elburn case)," Frega said. "Just because he chose to reside in Elburn, I doubt he was doing a lot of drug business in Elburn. There is no gang activity from the less than one dozen people who live (in Geneva) that are affiliated with gangs. They go elsewhere."

The arrest took place about one mile outside of Elburn's border. Elburn Police Chief James Linane said even though Elburn remains a small, quiet area, the village is not immune to big-city problems.

"We don't have a fence around Elburn to protect everybody," Linane said. "These things do go on and they are in our midst. Sometimes some of the residents don't want to believe it's possible because we're in a small area, but I don't think this is unusual."

Orosco's neighbors said he put an extensive effort into fixing up the house.

"These are usually quiet people because they don't want to draw attention to themselves," Linane said. "He wanted to be away from it and left alone. People were probably surprised that they know this guy, but that's the way it works."

See ARREST, page 2

Arrest

Continued from page 1

Shaw said despite gang members' intentions they do not necessarily live in anonymity.

"We have been aware and communicate with departments from Rockford to Chicago regarding gang members," Shaw said. "When they come into town, we try to become aware of it and attack any activity as soon as possible. But we still need the help of citizens to make the effort effective."

Police said gang presence in the Tri-Cities and nearby communities is not new.

"There have always been drugs in the area and it has become more prevalent over the years," Frega said. "Law enforcement is aware of it whether the community at large is aware or not. It's not as

prevalent in towns like Geneva or Elburn, but they certainly are not immune from it."

Police agree that residents must be aware of their surroundings. They said the community is needed to help with investigations because police cannot be everywhere.

"You may not see people exhibiting gang activity and that's why they go to smaller areas sometimes; to operate in anonymity," Shaw said. "But if someone sees an inordinate number of cars and individuals out of the norm in and out of a residence, it's of great assistance to us if we know."

"I think everybody should be on a heightened sense of awareness looking for anything going on," Batavia Police Cmdr. Greg Thrun said. "Don't take things lightly. Burying your head in the sand is not the answer."



Shaw

Area hospitals' staff to receive smallpox vaccine

Vaccinations part of Homeland Security plan

12/7/02
By BRENDA SCHORY
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Selected employees at Kane County hospitals will receive smallpox vaccine in January as part of a Homeland Security measure to protect health-care workers.

Kane County Health Department Executive Director Mary Lou England and Emergency Coordinator Michael Isaacson said the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta told state health departments to prepare to give the vaccine.

Hospitals are to create a plan for 50 to 100 health workers from each one to volunteer to receive the vaccine. They would be vaccinated at the health department.

Small pox is a highly contagious, often fatal virus characterized by prolonged fever, vomiting and pustular eruptions that often leave pitted scars.

The vaccinations are part of the nation's response to Sept. 11, to prepare for the possibility of germ warfare using smallpox virus.

About 10,000 health-care workers throughout Illinois will receive the shots in the first phase of preparing for the possibility of bioterrorism.

"No vaccine has been released to Illinois yet," said England. "All local health departments are to put a plan together by next week and assemble a team of nurses and health-care workers to be trained and immunized."

"Since no one been immunized since 1972, many of our nurses and physicians have never given one," said Isaacson. "The Illinois Department of Public Health will have to give training for that to occur."

Health-care workers who choose to be immunized will have their health histo-

ries reviewed to reduce risk from the vaccine itself. England said people with immune response problems, or who have had organ transplants, eczema or other skin problems, HIV or are pregnant are not good candidates to receive it.

The vaccine usually causes fever, a sense of malaise and sometimes itchy bumps, England said.

Health-care workers who have the most exposure to patients would be expected to be vaccinated. That way, Isaacson said, if someone comes to the hospital with smallpox, there would be workers there with immunity who could take care of them.

"Then we can have the person admitted and you have people in the hospital care for them without worrying about catching it," England said.

Brian Griffin, spokesman for Delnor-Community Hospital in Geneva said the hospital is considering which groups of its employees are most critical and have the most contact with patients.

Still, administering the vaccines is not required.

"No employee has to be vaccinated. Scott Janco, spokesman for Sherman Hospital in Elgin. "It's a voluntary program."

In McHenry County, Centegra Health System officials announced employees to be considered for vaccinations include those who work in the emergency, intensive care, pediatric intensive care and infection control departments.

Respiratory therapists, radiation technicians, security and housekeeping workers also could receive the shots.

"It's kind of like creating a firewall," said Aaron Shepley, Centegra Health System vice president. "We don't have a problem and we're doing what we need to do to make sure we never will."

Forest preserve wants to purchase 263 acres

12/7/02
By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — The Kane County Forest Preserve's Executive Committee on Friday authorized the district's negotiators to buy land that would help connect two large preserves.

Land Acquisition Committee Chairman James Mitchell said the 263 acres would be "a start" to connect Nelson Lake and Aurora West forest preserves.

Mitchell said the district would like to buy four properties, three of them 80 acres and

the fourth 23 acres.

The land straddles a stream that flows from Nelson Lake to Aurora West called Lake Run in Blackberry and Sugar Grove townships, near Tanner Road.

"This will help connect Nelson Lake (to Aurora West)," Mitchell said. "One of our goals

(with the open space referendum money) was to connect forest preserves."

Owning the property also will help with stormwater problems, Mitchell said.

The resolutions approved at Friday's meeting authorizes the district to buy the properties.

Court employees accept new contract

12/7/02
By VICTORIA A.E. CAMRON
Kane County Chronicle

ST. CHARLES — Probation officers and youth home counselors on Friday overwhelmingly approved a three-year contract, union officials said.

The new contract, approved by a 68 to 9 vote, includes immediate pay raises of \$2,400 and total raises of about 16 percent, said Dominic Romanazzi, secretary-treasurer of Teamster Local 330, which represents 115 local court services employees.

Chief Judge Philip DiMarzio said he be-

lieves the new contract will bring stability to the office.

"There are some hidden savings in this agreement because I believe it will reduce the turnover," DiMarzio said. The county has trained some employees, only to have them leave for higher pay in nearby counties.

"I want to make sure we can keep the good people we have and attract good people to the job. These individuals have been considerably underpaid in the past," he said.

Seretha Hollingsworth, a union stew-

ard and youth home counselor, said she was pleased with the offer.

"We came a long way from the offer that was initially made," Hollingsworth said.

Christi Johnson, a juvenile probation officer in DeKalb, agreed.

"I think this will lead the way for probation officers in future contracts," Johnson said. The 16th Judicial Circuit includes Kane, DeKalb and Kendall counties.

Youth home counselor Adam Christiansen credited new Chief Judge Philip DiMarzio for the agreement.

Sgt. Pat Perez files with ILRB

Deputy alleges unfair labor practice by Sheriff Ken Ramsey

By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

12/11/02
Beacon

GENEVA — Kane County Sheriff's Deputy Pat Perez says his reassignment to front-desk duty on election day constituted an unfair labor practice.

The sergeant, who ran against his boss, Kane County Sheriff Ken Ramsey, on Nov. 5, has filed an unfair labor practice complaint with the Illinois

Labor Relations Board.

He said the reassignment was unfair because it was retribution against him for running against Ramsey.

That violates a section of the contract between deputies and the county that says deputies cannot be discriminated against on the basis of race, religion or political affiliation, Perez said.

"It's because of my political beliefs," he said.

The filing is in addition to the grievance Perez filed through his union, also because of the reassignment. The grievance also claims political discrimination, but also says Perez's seniority rights as spelled out in the contract were violated.

Perez said Friday he filed the unfair labor practice on the advice of the union and his attorney. He called the situation an "administrative" procedure

which will determine if there was an unfair labor practice. He said the labor board will try to resolve the situation through mediation.

Failing that, the board could go to court, Perez said.

The filing names Ramsey and Kane County Board Chairman Mike McCoy, R-Aurora.

Ramsey declined much comment on the case, calling it a "legal action" that could result

in litigation.

"I'm confident there won't be anything to this, just like there's nothing to any of this," he said.

McCoy said he is unsure of what stand he should take, or even why he was named a party to the action. Perez said it is because Kane County is considered a co-employer, and McCoy, as County Board chairman, signed the contract



Perez



Ramsey

Probation, youth workers ratify contract

12/7/02
By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER *Beacon*

GENEVA — Probation officers and youth home workers are on the job with a new contract.

Members of Local 330 representing those workers in the 16th Judicial Circuit Friday overwhelmingly approved a new contract that will provide a 16 percent raise during the next three years. The vote was 68-9 to approve the new agreement, which was hammered out during a day-long federal mediation session Wednesday.

"This was a giant leap, not a step," Dominic Romanazzi, Local 330 secretary-treasurer, said. "We've narrowed the gap."

Approval of the contract staved off a possible strike by the probation and youth home workers who conceivably could have walked off the job two days ago.

But the mediation session, which included court management, the workers and a representative from the Kane County Board, produced the agreement ratified by the union Friday.

Union officials and members had sought to bump up the entire salary structure because, they maintain, probation officers and youth home workers in the 16th Circuit are grossly underpaid when compared to neighboring counties. They had asked for a \$3,500-a-year adjustment for all members of the unit, which would have changed the salary structure.

As it is, the contract will be front-loaded to include a \$2,400 adjustment for all employees in the first year, then about 2 percent raises the following two years, union and court officials said.

"People are going to make more money sooner under this," Romanazzi said.

That was important to union members, who have complained that it took too long under the old salary structure to get to the \$40,000 annual salary maximum.

"I asked all the people at the meetings to raise their hands if they had maxed out, and not one raised their hand," Romanazzi said.

Contingency funds

One reason few workers had reached the top is that employees were not staying long enough to get very high on the pay scale. Yearly turnover has been running about 50 percent, with many in the 16th Circuit — which covers Kane, Kendall and DeKalb counties — leaving for higher-paying positions in DuPage, Lake and McHenry counties.

"You can't do good business that way," Kane County Board Chairman Mike McCoy, R-Aurora, said. "I think most of the board felt they needed to have the salary issue addressed."

McCoy and board member Jan Carlson, R-Elburn, got involved in the situation this week. Carlson spent the entire day Wednesday representing the board at the mediation hearing.

"It was because of their efforts that we avoided a strike," Romanazzi said.

"We got involved at the end," McCoy said.

"These workers work for the chief judge, but, if there's a strike, I think it comes back to the County Board, because we supply the money."

McCoy said he has estimated the first year of the new contract will cost the county \$500,000 to \$600,000, although he called those "ballpark" estimates. That undoubtedly will have to come from more than \$2 million in contingency funds the county has in the 2003 budget.

The new contract covers 115 employees.

Both union and county officials are glad to see a three-year contract accepted. The workers have been working under a series of one-year contracts, which meant there often was only a matter of months before officials were back at the negotiating table.

Kane Forest Preserve to buy land

12/7/02

By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

Seacon

GENEVA — The Kane County Forest Preserve District is looking at purchasing more than 250 acres between Aurora, North Aurora and Sugar Grove.

The preserve's Executive Committee Friday agreed to begin negotiations for the properties, divided between several landowners, which would connect the Nelson Lake Forest Preserve west of Batavia with the Aurora West Forest Preserve currently under devel-

opment.

The land would follow the Lake Run, a channel which stretches from Nelson Lake south into the Blackberry Creek.

"We're trying to connect two forest preserves," said Jim Mitchell, Land Acquisition Committee chairman. "That's one of our goals."

Another goal is to insure stormwater control in the area. Owning the land along Lake Run would allow the county to develop measures that would control how water flows from Nelson Lake into Blackberry Creek.

The county, the city of Aurora and the Fox Valley Park District have been pursuing flood-control projects throughout the Blackberry Creek watershed since the flood of 1996.

Part of that effort has been the large number of properties the Forest Preserve has collected into what is being pieced together as the Aurora West Preserve. Because it is a conglomeration of properties, the Forest Preserve District has hired a landscape planner to put together an overall plan for the area.

Some of the properties and their acreages being pursued because of Friday's action include: Clamer property, 23 acres; Konen property, 80 acres; Alexander property, 80 acres; and Kreig property, 85 acres.

Mitchell classified the landowners as willing sellers. He also said there could be some other land donations in the area that would complete the connection between the forest preserves.

County officials declined to say how much they are willing to pay for the properties because negotiations are just beginning.

Probation workers avert strike with deal

12/7/02
BY ALICIA FABBRE

Daily Herald Staff Writer

Probation officers and youth home workers in the 16th Judicial Circuit Court Friday approved a contract that keeps them on the job for the next three years.

The agreement includes a \$2,400 salary increase this year and a 2-percent salary increase plus bonuses in the second and third years of the contract. The contract, which affects 115 workers in Kane, Kendall and DeKalb counties, was approved by a 68 to 9 vote by the union's membership.

"I'm certainly happy that our membership will be able to enjoy the holiday season rather than being

forced to take strike action during the month of December," union spokesman Dominic Romanazzi said.

Union members last week authorized a strike after then-Chief Judge Grant Wegner declined to enter mediation talks. Judge Philip DiMarzio, who took over as chief judge Monday, requested mediation talks, which took place during a seven-hour session Wednesday.

DiMarzio said he hopes the increase in pay will curb the turnover rate among probation and youth home workers. Last year, it was 40 percent, DiMarzio said.

"It was clear that these individuals were considerably underpaid," DiMarzio said.

Union members credited DiMarzio and Kane County officials for settling the labor talks. County board Chairman Mike McCoy and board member Jan Carlson sat in on the talks Wednesday.

"Without their assistance I don't think a contract would have been accepted and I think we would have been out on strike," said Adam Christiansen, a youth home worker and member of the negotiating team.

McCoy said county board members in January likely will approve a budget transfer to cover the costs of the salary increases.

Romanazzi added that union complaints against the judicial circuit for unfair labor practices will be dropped Monday.

Events Center will be site of added shows next summer

■ Four additional dates:

Promoter will assume
bulk of risk, insurance

12/8/02

By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

Beacon

GENEVA — The Kane County Events Center is organizing a new lineup of activities for summer 2003.

Although some Forest Preserve District board members have questioned in the past whether the Events Center shows are beneficial to the county, board members said they are fine with plans to increase the number of shows from three to seven.

Promoter Ron Onesti has said he will take almost all the risk for the shows. The county will put up the first \$25,000, but Onesti will front all the other costs, including insuring the shows against bad weather.

"It will cost us the same amount as last year, but for seven shows (instead of three)," said Ann Marie Fauske, Events Center coordinator.

There will be four shows dedicated to certain musical eras of the '40s, '50s, '60s and '70s. There will be a country music show and a kids show, and a show featuring almost circus-like acts, such as acrobats.

Fauske said officials already have appointments set up to look for sponsors.

She also said Onesti is considering running RibFest again, despite some problems — mainly bad weather — in the past years. Fauske said Onesti and other officials still are convinced RibFest "can be a good event."

The Events Center again will be home for the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life fund-raiser, which has been hugely successful. Relays for Life are run across the state, and the Kane County relay at the Events Center last year was the third largest in Illinois in terms of money raised, Fauske said.

Already for the coming summer there are 80 relay teams lined up, and some of them already have raised thousands of dollars, she said.

The center also is planning an event with the Open Door Clinic in Elgin to raise money and awareness to combat HIV and sexually transmitted diseases.

Fauske said Illinois has the third highest incidence of sexually transmitted diseases in the country, one reason for the event's importance.

Don't vote just out of habit

12/8/02 Beacon
Many of us heard the story about the woman who every year cut off a big piece of the Christmas ham before she put it in the roasting pan. When asked by her daughter, "Why are you cutting off all that meat?" the woman replied, "That is how your Grandma taught me to cook ham." The daughter, being a bright, curious young woman, called her grandmother and asked the same question. The grandmother replied, "because my pan was too small for the ham." All that wasted meat because we do things the way we observed our folks when we grew up without ever asking why.

A friend remarked casually the other day that she voted Republican because her family had always been Republicans. It sounded like she had never thought about it before. It sounded a lot like the old story about the ham.

Here in Kane County, the newspaper columnists are reporting that the recent Republican victory at the local level was a clear message the "people like the status quo." This may or may not be true if voters are voting the party line. With every contested election, Democrats are gaining ground. Those numbers tell us that folks in Kane County are beginning to ask questions. "The known devil is better than the unknown" is no longer true on our country.

I would like to thank those who supported me in my bid for County Board and remind you that elections come again in two short years. I hope you all will ask questions of our elected officials and familiarize yourselves with the issues. An informed voter is the best ally our nation has.

Like the bright young woman in the story about the ham, I encourage everyone to think about why you vote the way you do. Are you voting out of habit or for the issues that are important to you?

Ron Gilkerson

Batavia

Kane Co. sergeant files labor complaint

12/8/02
BY GALA M. PIERCE

Daily Herald Staff Writer

Kane County Sgt. Pat Perez says he accepted defeat in November when he unsuccessfully ran against Sheriff Kenneth Ramsey.

But he says he won't accept the front-desk duties to which he has been assigned since Election Day.

Perez, an 11-year-veteran with the sheriff's department, has filed a complaint with the Illinois Labor Relations Board.

He said he was demoted from working with the midnight shift patrol division, where he supervised 13 deputies, to a position considered part of Community Oriented Policing.

"Now I sit at the front desk, answer telephones and supervise no one," said Perez, who has been a sergeant since 1996.

The Sugar Grove resident said the transfer, ordered when he was on vacation, violates his contract with the department. A provision in that contract says an employee cannot be



Pat Perez



Ken Ramsey

transferred or discriminated against based on race, religion or political affiliation.

He said he thinks he is being discriminated against because he campaigned against Ramsey.

Perez said the front-desk position he works is handled by a civilian before his shift begins at 2 p.m. He said no one has been employed full-time with these duties since the 1980s.

In addition, he said his bid to work the midnight shift patrol division—a job he worked last year—was approved Oct. 1.

"I have earned a right to bid on the

midnight shift," Perez said.

Furthermore, he said his squad car has been taken away from him. He said he is the only one of 18 sergeants who must use his own car.

Perez also filed a grievance through his union.

The complaint with the labor relations board names Ramsey, Kane County Board Chairman Mike McCoy and the union president because each of them signs the union contracts, Perez said. He believes Ramsey, however, to be the sole decision-maker on his transfer.

Ramsey declined comment.

Perez said he is asking for restoration of his former duties and his squad car. If Ramsey does not comply, an arbitration procedure may follow. The case could end up in court.

Perez emphasized the change in his job is more of an inconvenience to his family, since his wife works second shift at an Aurora hospital. The hours Perez used to work allowed him to watch his two sons after school.

Tri-Cities leaders OK with their share

BY DAVID R. KAZAK

Daily Herald Staff Writer

Illinois FIRST money could have helped build a bridge over the Fox River in St. Charles.

Or it could have helped pay for an addition at the continually crowded Kane County jail. Better yet, it could have bought a brand new building.

Short of these off-hand ruminations, central Kane County's elected leaders are satisfied — for the most part — with the amount of Illinois FIRST cash that has flowed their way since the \$12 billion program's inception in 1999.

This despite a Daily Herald review of spending that revealed Chicago and the collar counties have received little more than half of all the Illinois FIRST spending so far, even though they have two-thirds of the state's population.

Between the program's inception and November, Kane County alone has received a little less than \$214 million, and while that seems like a lot, it breaks down to

Where \$12 billion comes from:

- Illinois FIRST is a \$12 billion program, but the state taxes that were increased will not raise that much money.
- The state's share is \$6.3 billion, with \$2 billion coming from available cash from state taxes and the remaining \$4.3 billion borrowed. Higher taxes on alcohol and increased vehicle registration fees help pay off the debt.
- Federal taxpayers are coming up with \$3 billion. The Regional Transportation Authority borrowed \$1.6 billion. School taxes are providing \$1.1 billion for school construction projects.

See **SHARE** on **PAGE 16**

Billed as a program to improve roads, schools and infrastructure, Illinois FIRST also went to other areas, like restoring the Graue Mill in Oak Brook.

Share: Kane fared better than other collar counties

Continued from Page 1

passed, the city of Batavia received a \$10 million, low-interest state loan that Ryan attributed to Illinois FIRST so the city could revamp its deteriorating wastewater treatment plant.

And, said Mayor Jeff Schielke, the state is looking at spending Illinois FIRST money to reconfigure the zigzag configuration of the Route 25/Main Street intersection.

"That's in the hopper," he said. "I don't have the money yet, but we're working on it."

Overall, Schielke said he thinks Illinois FIRST money has been put to good use in Kane County.

Kane County Board Chairman Mike McCoy agreed.

"At first, I thought we were going to get shortchanged," he said. "Ultimately, in the final thing that was passed, we did pretty well."

That was the view throughout Kane County, from Elgin's Mayor to state legislators like Republican State Rep. Doug Hoeft, who was one of the program's most vocal critics when it first was proposed.

As for how the money has been spent in Kane County, again, few officials complained.

"You take whatever you can get," Schielke said. "Obviously, you're never satisfied, but when you do get funding for a project, it's one less thing you have to go to your local taxpayers for."

Burns pointed out that the Third Street enhancement project — an economic development program — is funded in large part by Illinois FIRST.

Soon after Illinois FIRST was

Information on spending inaccurate, difficult to find

BY JOHN PATTERSON

Daily Herald Staff Government Editor

SPRINGFIELD — Getting accurate information about Illinois FIRST is no easy task.

When asked how much had been spent so far, Gov. George Ryan said he had no idea.

A state-run Web site, detailed more than \$6 billion in spending credited to the program, yet when the Daily Herald asked the governor's budget staff for information on all projects, the total amounted to \$1.3 billion. At the same time, the governor's office published a report trumpeting Ryan's record in office. Again, those totals differed from totals in other state data. State officials were never able to reconcile the differences.

Department of Transportation officials continue to sing the praises of Illinois FIRST but were

unable to provide a list of projects. That's because they stopped tracking Illinois FIRST road projects after the first year of funding began in 1997.

In the records reviewed by the Daily Herald, mistakes abound, particularly in lawmakers' projects added to the Illinois FIRST program. Democratic lawmakers are listed as Republicans, towns are in the wrong county and some projects are listed for the wrong area.

For example, state records show state Rep. Monique Davis obtained a \$3,000 Illinois FIRST grant for a Little League association. Those records show the grant went to Chatham, a small community just outside Springfield. But Davis represents a section of Chicago's South Side. The money is actually for the West Chatham Improvement Association, which is in Davis' district. Such errors were blamed on data entry.

Klinkhamer said it would have been nice to get some help locally on any part of a project to build a new Fox River bridge in her town.

Still, there is little else she takes exception to.

"We've done OK," she said.

Aurora homeland security depends on local networks

■ Community safety:

Terrorism training first step in communication

12/8/02

By Dave Parro

STAFF WRITER

AURORA — The answers to the questions about potential terrorist attacks locally are almost as scary as

the scenarios themselves

What would Aurora do if there were an outbreak of smallpox or another disease?

How would officials decide whether to quarantine the city?

How would hospitals cope with a large number of casualties?

What happens if an attack destroys the city's communication or utility infrastructure?

It's impossible to be ready for

everything. No city in the world can develop a foolproof plan for every threat.

However, there's one key to answering ahead of time all the questions most people don't even want to ask in the first place: communication and established networks.

"You don't want to talk to someone for the first time during a disaster," said Larry Langston, the city's new

director of community safety. "You don't want to be sitting across the table from someone you've never met before."

A three-day terrorism training course last week in Aurora brought together for the first time about 50 people who, if the region ever faced an attack, would represent the crucial local players, including city, police,

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SECURITY

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fire, hospital, education, utility and infrastructure officials. The topics ranged from general terrorist threats to vulnerability studies on specific targets in Aurora.

While Aurora still has a long way to go, the consensus seems to be that the local resources and plans go beyond what most cities have in place. Especially with the creation of Langston's position and the Community Safety Department in early September, Aurora is putting the pieces in place to create an effective prevention and response network.

"Trying to put it all together is most important," said course instructor Luke Stevens, a Texas A&M University employee who teaches the terrorism training across the country. "Aurora has been very impressive, of all the cities I've visited."

Mike Fagel, a local emergency expert who works with the Department of Justice and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, sat in on all three days of training and taught a couple sessions himself.

The North Aurora man, who spent three months in New York City after the Sept. 11 attacks and who teaches around the country, said the interest and cooperation he has seen locally to prepare for terrorism rival what he's seen in Olympic cities preparing for millions of visitors.

"The interest of the people is that good. Remember, we don't have the infrastructure yet," Fagel said. "Never before have we had all those disciplines on such a level of communication back and forth."

Local responsibility

There's an important lesson Aurora can learn from other cities, such as Oklahoma City, that have dealt with terrorist attacks of lesser magnitude than those in New York City and Washington, D.C., last year.

If there's an attack, the locals are going to be the ones who deal with it, at least for the first 12 to 48 hours.

"If you have an incident, it's going to belong to you," Stevens told the training participants at the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy. "You may get some help, but that incident is going to be your responsibility."

Aurora can't just rely on a planning document stuck on a shelf somewhere in a city office.

That has to exist, of course, and Langston is working with department heads and terrorism experts to update the city's emergency plan to include new appendixes that deal with threats beyond natural disasters. More importantly, however, there has to be a network in place, so the right people can be reached and checklists completed quickly.

So, while some Aurora residents scoffed at the idea of Homeland Security for a city of 143,000 people, there's much to consider in planning for the worst.

City department heads have to develop specific plans for how to respond when the federal government changes its color-coded security level. There has to be a system in place to notify hospitals and rescue personnel of a critical situation. Citizens need to know what they should do to protect families and businesses.

Public works employees and

emergency personnel have to know when to retreat from a dangerous situation, how to treat a disaster site as a crime scene with evidence, and how to get obtain the right equipment from various places. City officials need to know how to keep detailed inventory of recovery costs in order to be compensated by the federal government.

Langston has to keep up with how federal legislation affects state funding, which eventually trickles down to municipalities, and keep in touch with local FBI agents and other terrorism task forces in the region.

Those are just a few examples of why it's important to develop a local network of people who have thought about and discussed all the possibilities and how to react.

"If you don't take it seriously, that is definitely something the adversary relies upon," Langston said. "When you really stop to think about it, there's a lot to do."

On the right track

With three full-time employees and a 2003 budget of half a million dollars, the Community Safety Department, which includes the city's long-time Emergency Management Agency, doesn't have abundant resources. Langston knows complete emergency preparedness takes a lot more, but he's set some realistic goals for the next year beyond just updating the city's emergency plan.

He wants to establish a citizens corps that would bring together and train Neighborhood Watch leaders to aid in emergencies, work with the Aurora Chamber of Commerce to develop a survival plan for businesses that suffer from an attack, and develop an ordinance that will give the mayor the power he needs to call on local resources immediately.

Many of the same players who attended the training this week will be in Maryland late next year for FEMA training that will focus specifically on targets and scenarios in Aurora, simulating responses to various situations.

The city will conduct a \$100,000 study of the Aurora water treatment plant, a requirement of the Environmental Protection Agency being paid for through a grant.

"I feel good about what we've got started," Langston said Friday. "We've got a long way to go, but we're on the right track. No doubt about it."

Fagel said the local emergency network is improving every day, thanks in part to having an experienced administrator in Langston who has run a police department and has contacts across the region and state. During training in other cities across the United States, Fagel has urged leaders to find someone like Langston whose job focuses on getting people to prepare for the "what-ifs."

Stevens admits that even the best-laid plans fly out the window during a disaster, but "if you haven't pre-thought through a plan, you're dead in the water." That's where the network comes in, and Langston now works full time to pull the pieces together.

"I don't know if you'll ever be whole again (after a terrorist attack)," Stevens said, "but you can come close to being whole, depending on how you respond to terrorism."

Contact Dave Parro at (630) 801-5495 or dparro@tribune.com



Langston

Suburbs lose out on funds

*Illinois FIRST money
flowing disproportionately
to downstate areas*

BY JOHN PATTERSON
Daily Herald State Government Editor

12/8/02

SPRINGFIELD — In the more than three years that Gov. George Ryan has been doling out Illinois FIRST dollars, suburban residents and their Chicago neighbors have, in effect, been footing the bill for firetrucks, water towers, and other projects in sparsely populated downstate counties.

Inside

- Chicago and suburbs gave far more than they received.
- Record-keeping on Illinois FIRST very lax.
- How much your legislators doled out.
- How your legislators feel about the program's success.

A Daily Herald review of Illinois FIRST spending suggests the suburbs and even clout-heavy Chicago have so far not received their proportionate share of the money.

While two-thirds of the state's population lives and pays taxes in Cook and the collar counties, only about half of the Illinois FIRST spending has gone to these counties, a trend even the governor does-

n't expect to change.

And while the five-year building program was sold to the public in 1999 as a much-needed solution to crumbling roads, bridges, schools and other infrastructure, millions of Illinois FIRST dollars have been spent on lawmakers' pet projects ranging from support for religious and private organizations to more than \$1.1 million for skateboard parks throughout the state.

For suburban taxpayers, the review of the first three years of spending raises questions of whether they're getting enough bang for their buck. It also brings into question whether Illinois FIRST — which stands for Fund for Infrastructure, Roads,

Who got the most money?

Rank	County	Amount received
1)	Cook	\$1.95 billion
2)	DuPage	\$324 million
3)	St. Clair	\$256 million
4)	Will	\$243 million
5)	Lake	\$233 million
6)	Kane	\$213 million
7)	Sangamon	\$131 million
8)	Peoria	\$128 million
9)	McLean	\$125 million
10)	Madison	\$121 million
11)	McHenry	\$91 million

Who got the most per resident?

Rank	County	Amount per resident
1)	Alexander	\$3,778
2)	Grundy	\$2,181
3)	Lee	\$1,778
4)	Calhoun	\$1,747
5)	Scott	\$1,674
68)	Kane	\$529
70)	Will	\$484
84)	Cook	\$363
87)	Lake	\$361
88)	DuPage	\$359
89)	McHenry	\$351

Source: Daily Herald reporting

See FIRST on PAGE 17

FIRST: Ryan agrees need far outpaces project funds

Continued from Page 1

Tomorrow

- Millions of tax dollars want to private and religious institutions
- Sold as a roads, schools and infrastructure project, millions want to other areas

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Detailed lists of Illinois FIRST projects

"You guys can figure any way you want to figure it. There's been a lot of great, wonderful projects that have done a lot of good things for a lot of smaller communities that would have never been able to afford what they were doing. It was never meant to be on a per-capita basis or projected in any fashion. To make that kind of comparison is just kind of nonsense frankly," Ryan said.

The governor said if projects were awarded by which region paid the most in taxes, many downstate communities wouldn't get anything. "So that's not the theory of government," Ryan said. "If they were going to do that then we'd just collect the taxes in an area and spend it in that area, and that's not the way it works."

This is by no means a new precedent in state government. In general the suburbs usually don't get funding proportional to the taxes the region pays, whether it is the state's

multibillion-dollar education budget or agriculture spending. However, there are many state grant programs that award funding based solely on population. State lawmakers often complain Illinois doesn't get enough federal funding given the state's sizable population. And clearly no one touted Illinois FIRST three years ago as a way to help downstate communities pay for projects they otherwise couldn't afford.

The average taxpayer pays roughly \$38 a year to fund the Illinois FIRST program. Of the total, \$30 comes from higher vehicle registrations, with the remaining \$8 from higher alcohol taxes. However, commercial truck drivers pay substantially more for their registrations, up to \$2,790 yearly depending on the truck's weight. And anyone buying a car now pays \$65 for the title transfer rather than the previous \$13.

Almost 60 percent of the state's 8.29 million cars and trucks are registered in Cook and the suburban counties. And almost 57 percent of vehicle title transfers since the higher fees went into place occurred in the metro area, again showing the region is paying far more than it is getting back from Illinois FIRST. Similar breakdowns are not available for alcohol.

"As a suburban taxpayer I would like to see that gap narrowed, but for quality public investment not just for the sake of throwing more money toward the suburbs," said state Rep. Jeffrey Schoenberg, an

Evanston Democrat and chairman of one of the House Appropriations committees. "Like everyone else, I want to see a solid, long-term return on investment."

Despite the seeming inequities, many local government leaders and lawmakers aren't about to scorn millions of state dollars pouring into their communities, and numerous examples of improvements exist.

The Hillside Strangler's grasp on commuters loosened, the Stevenson Expressway is being rebuilt, and a dark, narrow section of North Avenue in Carol Stream and West Chicago once known as the "killing field" for its propensity for accidents was widened and brightened.

"My only comment is this is an improvement that was needed for our community," said Michael Gutman, city administrator in West Chicago.

More than \$6 billion in state funds has been spent so far on thousands of roads, schools, parks and other projects. That total grows almost weekly if not daily as Ryan's administration releases more state dollars for projects.

"I drive a lot; everywhere I go there are things being built. It seems to me the vast majority of the money is being spent for the purpose for which it was designated," said David Vite, president and chief executive of the Illinois Retail Merchants Association, a key business lobbying group.

The disparity in Illinois FIRST

spending per person wasn't a surprise, Vite said almost any road construction project in a rural area would skew the numbers.

"In the main, the dollars of Illinois FIRST have gone to important projects for the people of Illinois," Vite said.

The massive funding surge for suburban projects needed to bring spending in line with population is unlikely, especially since Ryan sees no need for such a balance. Also, almost all the state money devoted to the five-year program has been spent already, only three years in.

The \$12 billion total tagged onto the program included local and federal tax dollars. The state's share is \$6.3 billion, with \$2 billion coming from state taxes and the remaining \$4.3 billion borrowed. A state Web site tracking spending shows \$6.1 billion has been spent.

Federal taxpayers are coming up with \$3 billion. The Regional Transportation Authority borrowed \$1.6 billion. And local school taxes throughout the state are providing \$1.1 billion for local school construction projects. The combined state, local and federal total is \$12 billion.

However, suburban motorists and beer drinkers, like their motor-ing and drinking brethren throughout the state, likely will be paying the higher taxes for the foreseeable future. The tax increases were never designed to yield \$12 billion upfront. Rather, they cover the annual debt payments for the

next 20 years. So while all the Illinois FIRST spending will be done after five years, taxpayers foot the bill for at least 20 years. Roads built today with Illinois FIRST dollars will likely need to be resurfaced and repaired before the initial financing is paid off.

Yet gridlock continues on suburban highways and a transportation experts say billions of dollars in added investments are needed. Traffic congestion in the Chicago area is expected to increase 40 percent by 2020 despite Illinois FIRST investments.

Schools also continue to line up for state construction help. With all the Illinois FIRST school construction money exhausted, this past spring lawmakers raised taxes to help build more schools.

Even Gov. Ryan agrees construction needs far exceed the program he is responsible for and urged the next governor to come up with his own Illinois FIRST program.

"If I were running for governor, you know what I'd be doing? I'd be looking for a way to keep this program going because there is still a lot of infrastructure needs that need to be done," Ryan said this summer when the governor candidates were criticizing Illinois FIRST.

But he wouldn't comment on what taxes he'd raise to keep it going. "Look, I found my way, they can find theirs," the governor said. "There's ways to do it if they've got the political courage to do it, they can step up to the plate and find a way to do it."

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2002

Wagering on bets to help Kane County's coffers

BY PATRICK GARMOE

Daily Herald Staff Writer

It seemed fitting Saturday that the ribbon-cutting for the new off-track betting facility in South Elgin was in front of the cash registers where people place bets.

When Village President Jim Hansen cut the ribbon at Longshots Bar & Grill, trustees, other local officials and representatives from Arlington International Racecourse all applauded.

They clapped partially because the facility provides more entertainment for residents, but also because a lot of groups are likely to take home a lot of money from the partnership.

"The happiest man in here is probably Art Skibley, our finance director," Hansen joked to the crowd of more than 100.

After cutting the ribbon at what was formerly Sammy K's, Hansen placed a bet on Warning Sign, running at a Miami track.

His horse didn't win, but he didn't seem too concerned. Besides, his loss will, in a small way, contribute to the \$75,000 South Elgin should receive each year from off-track betting. Kane County also is expecting to receive \$75,000.

That assumes that the \$7.5 million gaming officials estimate will flow through the facility actually materializes.

And who's going to fork over the cash? People like Byron Parker, of Elgin, who expects he'll be here three to five nights a week.

"I bet on as many (races) as I can, until my money runs out," he said.

This is going to be far more convenient than driving to Arlington, he said.

"When I go home, it's not as far to cry," he said with a smile.

Parker was feeling good a few minutes into the racing Saturday, because he had won on the very first race ever shown in this facility. His horse, Miss Marina, won him \$30.

Public money; private uses

How state justifies giving money to private schools first

12/9/02

BY JOHN PATTERSON

Daily Herald State Government Editor

SPRINGFIELD — Last year, as the Chicago Bears finished plans to move their training camp to Bourbonnais, officials at Olivet Nazarene University were trying to figure out how to pay to bring the small Christian school's athletic fields up to NFL standards.

The answer came in the form of \$1 million in taxpayer money, given to the university by Gov. George Ryan through his Illinois FIRST program. Ryan, a native of nearby Kankakee, put the project on a list of those he wanted funded while negotiating the state budget with lawmakers last year. The money was released in December 2001.

University officials said that without taxpayers' help, the Christian school couldn't afford the Bears.

Olivet Nazarene is by no means the only private or religious-based university benefiting from the publicly funded Illinois FIRST program. At a time when public colleges and universities hiked tuition as much as 20 percent to cope with state budget cuts, taxpayers provided at least \$36 million for private universities and

Special Report

ILLINOIS FIRST:
WHERE THE MONEY
WENT

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Detailed lists of Illinois FIRST projects

colleges, a Daily Herald review of state spending shows. That figure does not include \$22 million in state funds going to Northwestern University for medical research.

Public help for private institutions of higher learning is not new. But the growing amount given to church-affiliated schools and to churches concerns some government watchdogs and religious freedoms groups.

"Taxpayers can't be asked to put money in the collection plates of churches involuntarily. That's why we have separation of church and state," said Steve Benen, spokesman for the

The series

Sunday

- Chicago and the suburbs gave far more than they received
- Record-keeping lax on Illinois FIRST
- How much your legislators doled out
- How your local legislators feel about the success of the program

Today

- Millions of tax dollars went to private and religious institutions
- Sold as a project to improve roads, schools and infrastructure, Illinois FIRST funneled millions to other areas

Washington-based Americans United for Separation of Church and State. "It can be troubling. It depends on how it's being done."

The state has routinely helped private schools with construction

See **MONEY** on **PAGE 4**

Money: Religious freedoms groups look out for questionable funding

Continued from Page 1

needs. Illinois FIRST provided a new pool of money. Higher taxes on alcohol and higher fees for license plates and vehicle title transfers fund the \$12 billion public works program Ryan pushed through the General Assembly in 1999.

In the past three years Ryan alone requested \$18.25 million for private schools in Illinois through the Illinois FIRST program. Besides re-sodding practice fields, and adding NFL goal posts and a new locker room to Olivet Nazarene's sports facilities, Ryan's list includes \$6 million for construction at Elmhurst College and \$2.6 million for an indoor sports complex and other construction at Decatur's Millikin University.

Elmhurst College is affiliated with the United Church of Christ. Millikin is connected with the Presbyterian Church.

Elmhurst state Rep. Lee Daniels, the House Republican leader, secured \$9.2 million for private colleges and universities, the most of any legislator. The list includes:

- \$5.5 million for Benedictine University in Lisle.
- \$1 million for Peoria's Bradley University, which has no church affiliation.
- \$2 million for Elmhurst College.

In May, the Daily Herald reported that Daniels asked for \$2 million for Millikin University. Daniels denied that the request had anything to do with his daughter's enrollment at the school.

Daniels spokesman Gregg Durham said there's nothing wrong with helping private schools with construction, and he said the aid pales in comparison to state spending on public universities, which includes \$2.64 billion for higher education operations and \$283.7 million for construction projects.

"If you look overall at what state-supported units of higher education get, we've done a great job of increasing the funding to those schools. However, we can't ignore the impact these smaller schools have on their communities and the students in their communities. And often times you'll find these small private schools being a real force in

their region," Durham said.

Ryan's spokesman also defended the \$1 million for Olivet Nazarene University as effectively promoting tourism.

"We brought the Bears' training camp back to Illinois from Wisconsin, where thousands of visitors spent their money in Platteville to see the Bears. Having the Bears come back to Illinois was a huge boon for tourism," said Dennis Culloton, the governor's spokesman.

He estimated the camp's economic impact at \$2 million. "It paid for itself."

But the public funding for private institutions goes well beyond church-affiliated colleges and universities.

The Daily Herald found more than \$5.5 million in Illinois FIRST grants for faith-based groups.

The bulk is for such religious organizations as Catholic Charities, Lutheran Social Services and the Jewish Federation. The state relies on these organizations to provide human services to the elderly and needy.

To avoid legal or constitutional problems, these groups set up separate charitable entities to handle the state dollars, track finances and undergo audits as any public agency would. In addition, they cannot discriminate in hiring and cannot proselytize or try to convert people.

Such organizations go to great lengths to separate their religious activities from their service efforts. Apart from constitutional issues, to do otherwise might nullify their tax-exempt status.

However, there are still thousands of dollars in public grants going directly to churches, funding that raises red flags for religious freedoms groups.

For example, Chicago's Joshua Missionary Baptist Church received \$25,000 for a "Teenage Christian Program" from state Sen. Rickey Hendon, a Chicago Democrat.

"To have taxpayers give money to a church for a Christian teen program ... to say that raises a red flag is an understatement. Whether the program does good work or not is not relevant," Benen said. "Religious pork is unconstitutional. That's not

supposed to happen in our system."

Hendon could not be reached for comment.

The state agency overseeing the grant said it cleared an early review.

Brian Reardon, spokesman for the state's department of commerce and community affairs, said the money is for a program designed to help 30 disadvantaged children with health, education and life skills.

Before being approved, the governor's office had to sign off that the project served a public purpose, he said.

Reardon said the agency's staff will be checking the church's program and said grants for social service work face greater scrutiny than construction grants. There have been instances, he said, of lawmakers being told to make changes to grants because the initial use was not proper. After grants are awarded, auditors do follow-up visits.

However, there are only 17 staff members assigned to the Illinois FIRST grant unit, each assigned hundreds of projects for review. "We're not going to be able to go out and visit every single grantee," Reardon said.

The governor's spokesman said Ryan usually follows lawmakers' leads when it comes to funding requests, arguing they best know the needs of their local communities.

One lawmaker said the state's review of Illinois FIRST grants is limited to rooting out fraudulent uses and guaranteeing dollars are going for the purpose outlined.

"Right now, there is no mechanism in place to ensure that these grant dollars are not being used for religious programs," said state Rep. Jeffrey Schoenberg, an Evanston Democrat who got Illinois FIRST dollars for the Jewish Federation. "I guess at the moment, the state is taking it on faith that they're not."

Ryan defends Illinois FIRST spending choices

12/19/02

BY JOHN PATTERSON

Daily Herald State Government Editor

SPRINGFIELD — First billed as a way to fix crumbling roads and schools, Illinois FIRST has done far more.

The five-year, \$12 billion program funded by higher alcohol taxes and vehicle fees has paid to send a suburban high school performance group to Washington, D.C., and covered the rent and other working costs for organizations ranging from the Vietnamese Association of Illinois to the National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders in Highland Park. More than \$6 billion in state funds has been spent so far on thousands of roads, schools, parks and other projects.

And while many worthwhile projects have been undertaken, Illinois FIRST has faced growing criticism largely because of the inclusion of more than \$1 billion in lawmakers' pet projects that have grown increasingly suspect given the state's dwindling economic condition.

Cynthia Canary, director of the Illinois Campaign for Political Reform, said her organization was concerned from the beginning with the spending and the lack of disclosure before checks were written, particularly when the state's financial status turned south.

"A lot of good stuff seems to have gotten done, certainly," Canary said. "But it also seemed like the state was awash in projects and money until it wasn't."

"It's really not a question that our state didn't need to do some major infrastructure projects, because we certainly did. And it's not a question that different projects have different meaning to different communities," Canary said of Illinois FIRST, launched by Gov. George Ryan and lawmakers in 1999.

"But you could never get a handle on the whole picture," Canary said. "Every now and then you'd hear, 'It's a Little League field, it's a stained glass window,' and you'd wonder, 'What's that about?'"

To help win support for the program and to keep tax hikes lower than first proposed, lawmakers and the governor agreed to set aside money for local projects in 1999 when the state's bank accounts were flush with cash as Illinois' economy soared. Lawmakers' projects included \$25,000 for a Jack Benny statue in Waukegan, \$10,000 for Naperville's carillon bells, \$100,000 for golf clubs and lessons for at-risk children in Kane County, \$2,500 for a McHenry County storytelling festival, and \$15,000 in equipment for a Cook County Ukrainian dance ensemble.

Some lawmakers object to these

projects being classified as Illinois FIRST spending, saying it has turned a public works program into a catchall for state spending.

"Illinois FIRST is a convenient explanation for whatever people want to take credit for," said state Sen. Steven Rauschenberger, an Elgin Republican.

Ryan argues lawmakers have done a good job selecting projects for Illinois FIRST dollars.

"Ninety-nine percent of it has been used wisely. Have there been some mistakes made? I suppose. Can I point them out? No, not really," Ryan said, saying it's "nonsense" to focus on the negative side of Illinois FIRST.

"Of the thousands of projects and millions of dollars that have been spent, I'm sure that even the dimmest of minds could probably find a dozen or half a dozen projects that they could say weren't worthwhile," Ryan told a Daily Herald reporter. "This has been an excellent program for a lot of communities, including communities like yours. And you ought to point that out."

Grasping exactly how decisions are made on spending, however, often borders on impossible.

Three years ago, key business groups recommended creating a panel to oversee Illinois FIRST spending. The members would oversee public disclosure of project

information and help set priorities to preserve public confidence in the massive spending program. Requests would have been subjected to a "taxpayer value test" to reduce waste and ensure priorities and need, rather than politics, drove funding.

The oversight panel never came about, and little to no public information is available about what projects are being considered, until the money is actually approved. There is no Illinois FIRST checkbook to consult. Much of the borrowing was tacked on to existing state credit lines. After the first year, the Illinois Department of Transportation simply stopped tracking which projects were Illinois FIRST projects.

In each of its annual progress reports on Illinois FIRST, the Chicago-based Metropolitan Planning Council cites the need for more information about projects and priorities so employers, elected officials, the media and the public can assess the program.

So how are projects chosen?

"By application, by need, things that have been on the books for a long time. Legislators, of course, brought projects in that they needed for their districts," Ryan said.

He rejected the idea of the oversight panel, saying if he'd gone along with that plan, the media would have accused him of selling out to the business interests that pushed it.

Perez files complaint with state labor board

12/9/02

By VICTORIA A.E. CAMRON
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — The sergeant who challenged Kane County Sheriff Ken Ramsey for his job isn't happy with his post-election assignment.

Sgt. Pat Perez, who ran as a Democrat against Ramsey, a Republican, was re-assigned to the front desk at the sheriff's office from 2 to 10 p.m., Monday through Friday. Ramsey made the assignment, effective Nov. 17, a day after the election.

Perez has said the re-assignment is political retribution, which violates his contract.

Although Perez already had filed a grievance with the union representing sworn officers in the sheriff's office, he filed an unfair labor practice complaint with the Illinois Labor Relations Board about two weeks ago, he said.

"I wasn't trying to make a big deal out of it," Perez said.

The grievance is scheduled to go to arbitration, but the two sides have to agree on an arbitrator first, Perez

said.

Ramsey did not return a phone call seeking comment.

Perez wants to be returned to the midnight shift and have the use of a squad

car again.

He is the only sergeant without a squad car, he said.

"On the midnight shift, I actually supervised people,"



Perez

Perez said. "On this shift, I supervise no one."

When Perez is not on the desk, a civilian employee sits there.

If an officer is needed at the front desk, Perez suggested a deputy could do the job instead of a sergeant.

Perez has worked for the sheriff's office since 1992, most recently as a sergeant in the patrol division. He also worked on the special operations unit, and on task forces with Aurora police, the Drug Enforcement Agency and the FBI.

Time to pay attention

12/5/02

Republican

An important step in the confusing and convoluted structure that is the Illinois property tax system is upon us. And property owners would do well to pay attention to what taxing bodies are doing right now.

This is the tax levy season — when officials decide how much in property taxes to request from land owners.

Budgets for these taxing bodies have already been discussed. Now, elected officials must determine how to pay for all of the programs, salaries, building upgrades and even normal, routine maintenance. They need to decide how much revenue to seek from property owners. That figure, the tax levy, will in turn help determine how much in property taxes homeowners will pay next year.

Getting a handle on property taxes in Illinois is a tricky proposition, mainly because there are so many taxing bodies. Kane County alone has almost 360 of them, ranging from special service districts to unit school districts.

But each takes a slice of the property tax pie and now is the time for residents to voice concerns and/or ask questions about their taxes.

This newspaper will be running stories about the proposed tax levies and giving the times, dates and locations of upcoming levy hearings.

In place for more than 10 years, the state's tax cap has done much to put a clamp on the unbridled property tax increases seen in the 1980s when property values were soaring and elected officials were grabbing as many tax dollars as they could get their hands on.

But home-rule communities do not have to follow the tax cap and taxing bodies can capture taxes outside the cap limit through growth.

Residents must take the time to become informed and make their views known now.

It will be too late next year when the time comes to pay up.

12/5/02 Republican
**County clerk ready
to work for all**

I write this open letter to the residents of Kane County to express my sincere thanks for your vote of confidence in the Nov. 5 election for the office of Kane County Clerk.

I will work hard over the next four years to make my supporters proud and earn the trust of those who selected another candidate.

Since Election Day, I have taken the opportunity to meet with election officials in Kane County and other jurisdictions to determine what steps we can take to make Kane County the premier clerk's office in Illinois. One aspect of my 10-point plan for the office is to increase on-line resources.

I have met with officials in Lee County, Fla., who have an excellent interactive Web site. I encourage you to visit www.lee-elections.com. We can add some elements of that site to our current Web presence.

We should all be thankful for the 22 years of dedicated service to the Kane County Clerk's office that Bernardine Murphy provid-

ed the people of Kane County. I wish her the best in retirement.

Also, as I take office as clerk, I would like to acknowledge the years of service of Lorraine Sava as Kane County clerk from 1986-2000. Her contributions will never be forgotten.

We are fortunate that the experienced and dedicated Joan Rennie will continue her tenure in the clerk's office. She is a valuable public servant.

Finally, allow me to thank Christine Adelman for her willingness to offer the voters a choice in the election. She is a fine person, and I wish her well.

John A. "Jack" Cunningham
Kane County Clerk-elect
Aurora

Kane to elect forest preserve chief

County board vote scheduled for Tuesday 12/9/02

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Kane County Board members on Tuesday not only will take a historic vote on a waste transfer station, they will select a forest preserve president.

The transfer station vote cannot be delayed or Waste Management's application is approved by default.

The second Tuesday in December

after a general election not only means the seating of the new board members, but the election of the forest preserve commission president and vice-chairman of the county board.

Jack Cook, R-Elgin, has been preserve president for eight years. Two years ago, Douglas Weigand, R-Batavia, tried to challenge Cook but withdrew when he realized he did not have the votes.

John Hoscheit, R-St. Charles, this year



Hoscheit



Cook

will challenge Cook.

"I've been active on the forest preserve commission since I was elected six years ago," Hoscheit said.

He is chairman of the commission's Finance Committee and a member of the Land Acquisition and Executive committees.

Hoscheit also is credited with successfully negotiating the long-term contract with the Kane County Cougars.

See PRESERVE, page 2

Preserve

Continued from page 1

Hoscheit said the role of presidency is changing. The \$70 million open space referendum has added thousands of acres to the districts holdings and shifted more of a responsibility from elected officials to staff members, he said.

"With our new properties we need to allow the full-time staff to manage things," he said.

In anticipation of the growing responsibilities, the commission, earlier this year, authorized a reorganization of the staff, which established the position of an executive director.

Jon Duerr, formerly field services director, was named to the new post.

Unlike Cook, a retired pharmacist, Hoscheit is a practicing attorney.

"I understand what the role

of the president will be," Hoscheit said. "If you have good people you can delegate duties."

Cook took over at a time when relations between the forest preserve and Cougars were strained. He also presided over the successful open space referendum in 1999 that allowed the district to nearly double its holdings.

Hoscheit served as chairman of the board's Finance Committee, but was not reappointed to the position by Chairman Mike McCoy.

Hoscheit said the reduction of his county board responsibilities would give him enough time to devote to the forest preserve, if he wins Tuesday.

The president is elected by forest preserve commission members. At the board meeting following, board members will elect the vice-chairman. Caryl VanOvermeiren, R-St. Charles, has said she wants to be re-elected to the post.

Elburn keeps a handle on growth

12/9/02

By DAN CHANZIT
Kane County Chronicle

TODAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY

Managing growth
Boosting local business
Maintaining services
Envisioning the future



ELBURN — Before 1998, it was easy for travelers to miss Elburn as they drove through. That year, a McDonald's restaurant opened to serve the village's 2,400 residents.

Five years later, there are 600 more residents. Once a lonely outpost, the McDonald's now has commercial neighbors. Within two years, a Jewel-Osco complex is expected open across the street.

New rooftops and proposed developments could

double the village's size in the next decade. As farmland falls to suburban sprawl west of Randall Road, Elburn soon could become a major player in regional development.

The next few years are critical, but village officials say they have everything under control. Growth is weighed against a simple philosophy: Better, not bigger.

Nevertheless, the challenge presents itself in interesting ways.

Take clothes, for example. Sometimes trustees attend meetings wearing a T-shirt and shorts. And sometimes, they are debating development requests from attorneys wearing \$5,000 Armani suits.

"They look at the board like we're a bunch of nitwits," Mayor James Willey said. "Don't underestimate us."

Village officials say they have been meticulous in their efforts to control the pace. They must be, because more rooftops are coming.

See GROWTH, page 2

Growth

Continued from page 1

In 2000, village officials approved a 625-acre, 1,250-unit development called Blackberry Creek.

But they required no more than 120 houses could be built each year. At that rate, Blackberry Creek will take at least a decade.

What is more is the village board decided that Blackberry Creek's building timetable should be the village's new standard.

"We tied our own hands behind our back," Willey said. "We meant to do that. When a developer comes in, we've already contractually committed ourselves. I thought that was pretty bold."

Village administrator David Morrison said the village will maintain that growth rate for new neighborhoods. Future village leaders could change the requirement, but doing so is unlikely, he said.

"When the handcuffs are on a 625-pound gorilla, you don't take them off," Morrison said, chuckling.

Better, not bigger, is the looking glass used to examine everything in the village.

Willey said residents deserve better houses, better services and a better quality of life. Sacrificing the village's small-town atmosphere is not part of the process.

"We're trying to learn from what's happened in the east," Willey said. "We're trying to mimic the things that work well, and we're trying to avoid the strip mall and big box development."

The result is a village with strong growth in property value every year. In 1992 the village's property was valued at \$24 million. This year it is \$81.9 million.

The Jewel 'power corner'

The village in June approved a Jewel-Osco complex for the southwest corner of Routes 38 and 47.

Morrison and Willey said the village's "power corner" will serve the community's growth and capture tax revenue to improve village services.

Today the village takes in \$350,000 in sales tax revenue each year. Conservative village estimates call for the Jewel complex to pull in an additional \$200,000.

While some might see a chain grocery store as a sign of what is to come, Willey and Morrison said the village will not welcome development that cannot pay its own way



Building permits issued 1999

single family detached . . .	51
single family attached . . .	38
commercial . . .	9
industrial . . .	5
fences . . .	22

2000	
single family detached . . .	50
single family attached . . .	41
commercial . . .	4
industrial . . .	0
fences . . .	32

2001	
single family detached . . .	52
single family attached . . .	12
commercial . . .	14
industrial . . .	4
fences . . .	30

Source: Village of Elburn

or do something to make the village a better place.

"It's get in, get out, make a buck," Willey said. "We can see right through that."

"They want to slide in here for a chance to sell an idea," Morrison said. "Most are focused on profit, not on the survivability of the community."

When a developer approaches to ask how long it will take to get through the village's approval process, Willey has a stock answer.

"I say, 'How long do you want to argue about it?'" he said, smiling. "The burden is all on them. We are going to tell (them) what's best for our community."

If a development meets the village's requirements, approval can take a few months. Blackberry Creek took about a decade.

Willey and Morrison said there are no housing developments on the radar, but there are stretches of land to the south and north that are inviting to developers.

Earlier this summer, Pulte Homes purchased 250 acres between the Union Pacific railroad tracks and Keslinger Road. Willey said the property likely will become townhouses and condominiums so residents who work in Chicago can live near the train station.

But for now, the village appears to be maintaining growth at a slow pace.

"We're in a nice lull," Willey said. "There are very few lots available in Elburn. We're catching our breath."

Need bus service? Get lift to RTA talks

12/19/02

By John Zaremba
STAFF WRITER

Beacon

AURORA — The city has arranged bus service for residents who want to tell regional transportation officials not to cut seven bus routes that run through Aurora.

After seeing about 200 people show up at a city meeting last month to say how much they rely on the routes, officials decided these same people needed a way to tell that to the Regional Transportation Authority, which meets Tuesday in St. Charles.

The meeting will be a public hearing on the RTA's budget, which in turn determines how much money Pace, the suburban bus transit board, will have for operations in the coming year.

"We had a huge turnout at the Pace public hearing," said Tom Weisner, the director of Aurora's Community Services department. "It was very clear that most of the same people would like to show up at the RTA hearing."

The RTA will meet from 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. at the St. Charles Municipal Center, 2 East Main Street. The hearing is one of several that the RTA holds in Chicago-area counties to discuss its budget. Weisner said the RTA most likely chose to have its Kane County meeting in St. Charles because the city is centrally located.

Those who need a ride to the meeting should contact the city at (630) 844-3675.

The lines proposed for cuts include:

- Saturday service on Route 521 High Street.

- Weekday service on Route 524 Downer Place.

- Saturday service on Route 528 Fifth Street.

- Weekday and Saturday service on Route 532 Sullivan Road

- Saturday service on Route 533 Molitor Road.

- Weekday service on Route 534 through the Fox Valley Villages to the Route 59 Metra train station.

- Saturday service on Route 802, which runs between Aurora and St. Charles, with connections to Elgin.

Pace is reviewing the routes because of low ridership, officials have said.

Contact John Zaremba at
(630) 801-5414 or
jzaremba@scn1.com

VanOvermeiren retains seat as county board vice-chairman

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — A battle for the Kane County Board's vice-chairman position erupted Tuesday with three candidates vying for the post.

In what usually is a perfunctory matter for the board every two years, Caryl VanOvermeiren, R-St. Charles, garnered the necessary 13 votes to retain her seat as vice-chairman.

Lee Barrett, R-Elgin, took eight votes and Douglas Weigand, R-Batavia, earned five.

VanOvermeiren took 12 votes from the floor and county board Chairman Mike McCoy cast the 13th vote, giving VanOvermeiren the needed majority.

Because of the crowded field, Jan Carlson, R-Elburn, asked that the meeting be recessed for 15 minutes while the political parties had meetings to try to whittle down the number of candidates.

McCoy, though, said if there was to be a recess, it would have to be for two

hours because he was scheduled to be at his leadership luncheon in 15 minutes.

Some board members wanted to caucus, others did not.

"This is the business part of the meeting, let's get it on," said Paul Greviskes, D-Aurora.

An informal vote was taken, and 14 members voted against a caucus, while 10 were for it.

Board members voting for VanOvermeiren were McCoy, Carlson, Penelope Cameron, R-Aurora, John Hoscheit, R-St. Charles, Robert McConnaughay, R-Geneva, James Mitchell, R-North Aurora, Mary Richards, R-Aurora, Karen Steve-McConnaughay, R-St. Charles, Dan Walter, R-South Elgin, Barbara Wojnicki, R-St. Charles, Donald Wolf, R-Elgin, William Wyatt, R-Aurora, and VanOvermeiren.

Members voting for Barrett were Deborah Allan, R-Elgin, Jack Cook, R-Elgin, Ken Griffin, D-Aurora, Bob Kudlicki, R-Hampshire, John Noverini, R-Carpentersville, Margaret Scalfaro, R-Carpentersville, Jackie Tredup, R-Elgin and Barrett.

Members voting for Weigand were Paul Greviskes, D-Aurora, Gerald Jones, D-Aurora, Rudy Neuberger, D-Aurora, Dorothy Sanchez, D-Aurora and Weigand.



VanOvermeiren

Hoscheit takes reins of preserve

Veteran chief leaves after eight years

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — After leading the Kane County Forest Preserve for eight years, Jack Cook on Tuesday withdrew his name, clearing the way for John Hoscheit's election.

Hoscheit, R-St. Charles, was elected 25-0 by the forest preserve commission.

"I pledge I'll give my best to carrying out the duties of president of the forest preserve," Hoscheit said. "Our challenge is to focus internally and get them (the forest preserves) in use by the public."

With Hoscheit calling for the district to focus internally, it means a shift from buying land to developing the properties it has acquired with the \$70 million from the 1999 open

space referendum.

He said he does not expect to push another open space referendum, for a while.

"In order to get support for a future referendum we have to make sure the public uses the ones we have," Hoscheit said.

Cook presided over the commission as it added more land in less time than at point in its history, nearly doubling the district's holdings.

See HOSCHEIT, page 2

Hoscheit

Continued from page 1

James Mitchell, chairman of the commission's Land Acquisition Committee under Cook, said the district has added about 3,700 acres.

Mitchell said Cook pushed for the referendum despite skepticism from many board members. The referendum was approved with 70 percent of the vote.

"Jack was the one who came forward and pushed it," Mitchell said. "It was Jack's leadership that brought this forward and got this done."

Cook said he would not fade away.

"It's not unreal to think that I can't help the forest preserve," Cook said. "What I really want to do is fulfill an obligation."

Cook is a retired pharmacist. Hoscheit is a practicing attorney.

Hoscheit agreed that Cook can help in the transition and through the contacts he made during his tenure.

"He has graciously offered



Robert Barcroft — Chronicle photo staff

Outgoing Kane County Forest Preserve president Jack Cook is thanked for his years of service.

to help in transition," Hoscheit said.

Earlier this year, the commission approved a reorganization of the commission. One of the first changes was to appoint field services manager Jon Duerr as executive director of the district.

Three new management positions, director of operations and maintenance, director of planning and director of community of affairs, have not been filled.

Kane votes down transfer station

Board cites road safety concerns

12/11/02

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — The Kane County Board on Tuesday denied Waste Management's application to build a transfer station on the grounds of the Woodland Landfill near South Elgin.

A spokesman for the solid waste company said the vote could mean an increase to residents' garbage pickup costs and a loss of income for the county.

"We are disappointed. We think our track record is exemplary. The end result (of the vote) will mean higher prices to the municipalities and a loss of revenue to the county," said Lee Adelman, public affairs spokesman for Waste Management of Illinois.

The vote came as good news to South Elgin residents, who have lived next to a landfill for 30 years.

"We are grateful that the board chose not to be intimidated by Waste Management's focus on money and, instead, rightly focused on the deficiencies in the application," South Elgin Village President Jim Hansen said.

The county earns a fee for every ton of solid waste that comes to a landfill or transfer station.

The transfer station was rejected by a 23-2 vote. Most opponents cited traffic safety concerns.

Gerald Jones, D-Aurora, said the entrance to the site off Route 25 is dangerous. He also said the routes that truck drivers would take would force them to drive east to Route 59 for access to Interstate 88, which would take the garbage to landfills in the western part of the state.

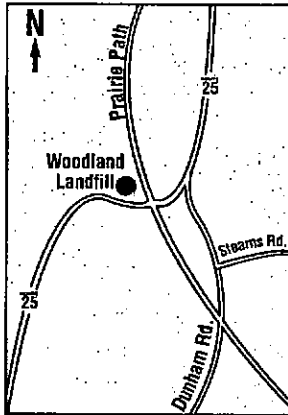
"Anyone who's traveled down Route 25 knows it's a nightmare," Jones said. "They'll need to go east to get to the west. That ought to tell you something right there."

"Just because it's (Route 25) considered a designated truck route doesn't mean it functions well as a truck route," Karen Steve-McConaughay, R-St. Charles, said.

Waste Management owns Woodland, which closed last month. Dan Walter, R-South Elgin, said that if the board approved the application it needed to consider the increase in truck traffic.

"The traffic gain is every single truck (going in and out)," Walter said.

Donald Wolfe, R-Elgin, and



Chronicle graphic by Stacey Cordero

Paul Greviskes, D-Aurora, were the two lone votes in favor of the transfer station.

"We create bags and bags of waste daily, weekly, monthly. Where do think the garbage is going to go?" Greviskes said. "This is the perfect site. It sits adjacent to a Superfund site, near a gentleman's club and down the road from a gravel pit."

Greviskes also said the county stands to lose \$1 million in income from the site. He said the county is using \$12 million it received from Waste Management from the Settler's Hill Landfill to pay for the jail addition.

"This is not an insignificant amount," Greviskes said.

Wolfe chided some members who said the transfer station would be near two schools and were worried about truck traffic mixing with school buses.

"We're not going to be mowing down children," Wolfe said. "Let's stay away from hyperbole. I think it's a reasonable place. It's as good a place as any."

Adelman said the company will take some time and figure out a strategy. Waste Management can appeal the vote to the Illinois Pollution Control Board within 35 days, but Adelman gave no indication that would happen.

Although the county owns Settler's Hill, Waste Management operates it. The company also operates a small transfer station on Keslinger Road.

The company must wait two years before it can apply for the Woodland site again.

The process from initial application to Tuesday's vote took nearly a year. The company first filed an application with the county in February. However, because the company failed to notify a state legislator as required by statute, it was forced to withdraw its application.

The company refiled last summer. A series of hearings were conducted this fall.

Forest president clear on priorities

New Kane leader targets land use

By William Presecky
Tribune staff reporter

12/11/02

Finding more and better ways to make publicly owned land available to more people will be the primary goal of the Kane County Forest Preserve District over the next two years, its new district president said Tuesday.

"We've acquired a number of parcels, and I think the best marketing tool for another [land acquisition] referendum is not only the acquisition of those parcels but the development of the parcels so constituents can use them and realize the real value of what we've acquired," John Hoscheit said after becoming the commission's unanimous choice to lead the district.

"The focus in the short term is going to be getting the public to recognize what we've accomplished with the hope that that will motivate them to support a new referendum," he said.

Hoscheit, a 43-year-old Republican from St. Charles, succeeds forest preserve commissioner Jack Cook (R-Elgin), who had held the post of commission president for the last eight years. The 78-year-old Cook, a retired pharmacist, dropped his plan to seek reelection to a fifth two-year term as president when it became apparent last week that Hoscheit had garnered substantial support. In an apparent agreement struck with commissioners and with Hoscheit's blessing, Cook said he will continue to act as the forest preserve district's conduit to the various state and regional open space and conservation organizations. "They want me to do what I've been doing," said Cook, who shepherded the district through the greatest growth spurt in its history.

Armed with \$70 million in open space bonds that were sold with voter approval in April 1999, the district has expanded by more than 4,000 acres to a total of more than 10,000 acres. With roughly \$100 million in property assets currently, the focus of the forest preserve district over the next two years must be "to get properties developed and used," Hoscheit said.

An attorney and accountant, Hoscheit is a former St. Charles Park District commissioner and city alderman. He was elected to the County Board in 1996. The forest preserve president's salary is \$25,000 a year.

Kane elects new leadership

By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

12/11/02 Beacon

GENEVA — St. Charles Republican John Hoscheit on Tuesday was elected Kane County Forest Preserve District president.

Hoscheit received unanimous support from his fellow forest preserve commissioners to replace Jack Cook, R-Elgin, who had served eight years as president.

Calling himself a "consensus-builder," Hoscheit said he plans to focus on development of the large amount of land the commission has purchased during the past six years.

"Over the last six years, we have made a significant amount of land acquisition," he said. "In the next year, we will button up that process and begin to focus on the land we have."

The key to developing that land will be the budgetary constraints the district will have, Hoscheit said. He pledged to look at the budget and "get the land ready for the public."

Hoscheit praised Cook for bringing a total of \$100 million in land and other assets to the district during his tenure. He said Cook will continue representing the district in outside agencies, such as the Illinois Prairie Path organization and with state organizations.

In nominating Hoscheit, Commissioner Don Wolfe, R-Elgin, called him "well-reasoned."

"He's one who will help us move forward in the Forest Preserve District," Wolfe said.

In voting for Hoscheit, board members declined to support Cook for a third term as president. Cook said he is just as happy to continue in his role of representing the district in outside organizations.

"The seat doesn't make any difference to me," he said.

Cook said his legacy will be that he brought the Forest Preserve District "out of the dark past," and made it more "user friendly." He cited the \$100 million in assets the district gained during his time as president.

"No other president has ever done that," he said.

Split vice-chairman vote

Hoscheit was elected during the first meeting of the Forest Preserve District and the County Board with newly seated representatives from the Nov. 5 election. It was the first board meeting for new members Deborah Allen, R-Elgin, Ken Griffin, D-Aurora, Bob Kudlicki, R-Hampshire, John Noverini, R-Carpentersville, and Margaret Scaffaro, R-Carpentersville.

While Hoscheit received a unanimous vote, that was not the case with the vote for the position of vice-chairman of the County Board.

Vice Chairman Caryl Van Overmeiren, R-St. Charles, was re-elected, but with only 12 votes on the board.

Van Overmeiren was challenged for the position by Lee Barrett, R-East Dundee, and Doug Weigand, R-Batavia, who garnered eight and five votes, respectively.

In nominating Van Overmeiren for re-election, board member Jan Carlson, R-Elburn, said she has done "a credible job," and said she "has served her community in a variety of ways."

"She has a knack of bringing people together to get results," Carlson said. "She is a generalist rather than a specialist."

Noverini nominated Barrett, and Paul Greviskes, D-Aurora, nominated Weigand. Although Weigand is a Republican, four of the five Democrats voted for him. Griffin voted for Barrett.



Hoscheit



Van Overmeiren

Kane County rejects garbage transfer site

By William Presecky

Tribune staff reporter

12/11/02

The Kane County Board voted overwhelmingly Tuesday to deny a permit to Waste Management of Illinois Inc. to build a major garbage transfer station near South Elgin.

Officials of the firm based in Lombard declined to speculate on what action they may take in response to the County Board's 23-2 vote to deny approval for the proposed facility at Illinois Highway 25 and Dunham Road.

"We'll have to take [the board's decision] under advisement and see what our next steps will be," Waste Management Vice President Lee Addleman said.

"We don't intend to abandon Kane County."

The company can appeal the

decision to the Illinois Pollution Control Board.

Company officials had indicated they were willing to meet conditions the county might impose. But some board members argued that even if Waste Management agreed to a number of conditions, it would not offset the lack of safe truck routes in the area near Kane County's eastern border with Cook and DuPage Counties.

The transfer station was also to serve parts of DuPage, Cook, Lake and McHenry Counties.

The municipalities nearest the 9-acre site, on the firm's 213-acre Woodland landfill property, opposed the facility largely because of truck traffic. They also had looked for-

PLEASE SEE KANE, PAGE 2

KANE: Waste firm can appeal site rejection

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ward to the idea that decades of garbage handling in the area would finally cease with the landfill's closing last month.

South Elgin has sued Waste Management, alleging that the firm's site application constitutes a breach of a 1988 agreement not to expand the solid waste facility.

On a separate action, the County Board voted 21-4 against granting a permit to Waste Management contingent on 37 conditions, among them waiting until July 2006 to open and paying \$500,000 toward a planned mul-

timillion-dollar intersection improvement near the entrance to the site.

The company has 35 days to appeal the board's decision.

"Whether we exercise that option is another question," Addleman said. "We've not made any decision in regards to that."

Waste Management operates 15 transfer stations in the Chicago region and more than half a dozen landfills in northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin. The firm has applications pending for a transfer station permit in DuPage and a landfill expansion permit in Kankakee County, Addleman said.

Kane board members John Hoscheit (R-St. Charles) and Dan Walter (R-South Elgin) led the opposition to the site permit.

"I'm satisfied we made the right decision," Hoscheit said. "The difficulty is we do have the need for transfer stations, but this site was just not suitable for the type of facility they were proposing."

"I have industrial parks in my district and there are other industrial parks not too far away that would be suitable, that may meet the criteria and not have the flaws. I'm not opposed to transfer stations."

Walter agreed it was not a proper site for the proposed facility.

"There's not enough conditions that could remedy the problems," he said.

"I hope they will look in a different direction for a different site, because we need transfer stations in the county."

HOW TO CONTACT US

Comments, questions and suggestions about articles in this section are welcome.

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METRO

Kane board trashes waste transfer station

12/11/91

By Daniel Duggan and Ed Pilolla
STAFF WRITERS

Beacon

GENEVA — Opponents scored a victory over Waste Management Tuesday when the Kane County Board roundly rejected a plan for a controversial garbage transfer station.

The near-unanimous vote by the board brought loud cheers by the activists who have opposed the proposed station between South Elgin and Wayne for nearly two years. The vote sends Waste Management back to square one in finding a place to build a transfer station.

"I'm thrilled and stunned at the outcome," said Carol Hecht, a longtime South Elgin resident who led a group of 30 residents against the transfer station. Hecht's group has been credited with discovering many of the discrepancies between the waste company's application

and the county's solid waste plan. "This has to be considered a victory for the whole town," she said.

The transfer station — which is essentially a depot for transferring garbage from smaller to larger trucks — would have been just west of Dunham Road and Route 25, on the south end of the recently closed Woodland Landfill. Area residents have said that Waste Management in 1988 promised not to expand the landfill after it closed. South Elgin Village President Jim Hansen walked out of the County Board chambers smiling.

"A lot of hard work paid off. County sense is still alive," he said. While the County Board voted 21-4 against the measure, board members were at times emotional in their differences of opinion.

"Sometimes juries set aside the legal constraints and just use their

common sense; we have to use our common sense here," said board member Don Wolfe, R-Elgin, who voted for the transfer station.

Lee Barrett, R-East Dundee, Margaret Scalfaro, R-Carpentersville and Paul Greviskes, D-Aurora, also supported the station.

Wolfe pointed out that traffic problems already exist in Kane County and that the added trucks would make little impact. He said the county is going to need more than just this transfer station to take care of the garbage it generates.

"This is as good of a site as any," he said.

Other board members strongly disagreed with Wolfe, including Dan Walters, R-South Elgin and John Hoschett, R-St. Charles.

The pair gave several speeches in an effort to convince board members to vote "no." After the meet-

ing, both considered the denial a triumph.

"This was a victory," Walters said. "I never believed it was an appropriate site."

Lee Addleman, Waste Management's vice president of business development, sat impassively in the front row as the board voted down the proposal.

"We are disappointed," Addleman said after the meeting. "We think that our track record in this county speaks for itself."

"The entire process is becoming more difficult because of public opposition to the sites," he said. "It's probably short-sighted; but with the closure of all the landfills which used to serve the very needs the transfer stations are meant to do, we're finding ourselves having to go further and further to dispose of the waste."

RTA, Kane board members clash over bus service

12-11-02

By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

Beacon

GENEVA — One said area buses need more riders. Another said the needs of area riders are not being met by the buses.

That was the rift between Fred Norris, former mayor of St. Charles who now sits on the Regional Transportation Authority board, and Kane County Board member Gerry Jones, D-Aurora.

Norris appeared before the County Board Tuesday to tell board members the RTA budget is balanced for 2003, despite a loss in revenue for the agency and a bad economy.

Jones, however, derided the agency for not doing more to force Pace, the suburban bus board that the RTA oversees, to better meet the needs of area bus riders.

"When the RTA vote came to us, it was not something we supported," Jones said, referring to Kane County residents. "It was our belief that we would not get the service of the city of Chicago, and that the service we already had would be degraded. That turned out to be true. We are not getting the money back we put into it."

He criticized a Pace proposal to cut seven bus lines in Aurora. He said that would deny transportation "to the people who really need it."

Norris said he and Batavia Mayor Jeff Schielke, who sits on the Pace board, recently rode the Pace buses throughout the Fox Valley.

"It was a lonely trip," he said. "I think everyone has seen the buses



Jones



Norris

riding up and down highways with one person in it."

Norris said the RTA has to look at new solutions, such as more van pooling and smaller buses. He pointed out that state law requires the RTA to balance itself 50 percent with money from fares. The RTA already gives Pace "a break," Norris said, by allowing only 40 percent farebox recovery. That means the Metra suburban rail system and the Chicago Transit Authority have to make up that extra 10 percent given to Pace.

"They discontinued Saturday routes because nobody was using it," Norris said.

Jones maintained people would ride the buses if the service were more flexible, and ran smaller buses but more often.

"You're always doing a study," Jones said. "You're studying if we need service to Milwaukee, and that's fine; you're studying if we need service between Midway and O'Hare airports, and that's fine. But what about a study of ridership you might have on Randall Road, or on the Farnsworth-Kirk Road corridor?"

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

12/11/02

Beacon

Status quo goes both ways

In his recent letter, Ron Gilkerson wonders if Kane County voters aren't voting Republican simply because they always have. To make his point, he brings up the story of the woman who always "cut off a big piece of the Christmas ham before she put it in the roasting pan." As it turned out, this was simply a learned habit. She did it because her mother always did it.

I can think of another story that might explain the Kane County Republican votes. This one is actually a joke, but with an easily understandable point. It goes like this: the pope, the president and Mayor Daley were on a sinking cruise ship and were arguing over the last life preserver.

The pope said he should have it, since he was the leader of such a large number of followers. The president said he should have it, since he was the leader of the most powerful nation on Earth.

Daley said he should have it

because he was mayor of one of the largest cities on Earth, but then suggested, "Why don't we vote on it?"

The other two agreed, they voted, and Daley won, seven to two.

Also, if I said, "Vote early, and vote often!" would any particular city come to mind? Chicago, perhaps? Maybe this is why Kane County voters are sticking with Republicans, professor. There's this thing called the Chicago Machine that many don't want out here in the suburbs.

You said that newspapers reported that "the people like the status quo" here in Kane. Did you ever think about Chicago? When was the last time a Republican was mayor there? Better yet, out of the last 30 or 40 years, how many of them saw a Chicago mayor whose name wasn't Daley? Watcha think? A little status quo in action there, too, hmmm?

John Babush
Big Rock

COMMENTARY: ALAN SWANSON

^{Beacon} Perez was transferred: So what?

12/11/02

I have sat back and read your articles since the election. It would appear that these articles are very one-sided. Therefore, I feel compelled to offer my opinion.

Yes, Pat Perez was transferred. So what? This is news? What about all of the transfers that occur at the sheriff's office? Why don't we read about them? Also, if Pat had won and become "king," as you phrased it, he wouldn't have transferred anyone? I don't think so. He said he would move all of the command staff. What about them and their families?

Also, Pat may be a qualified officer, but he is not the only one. So he has arrested a murderer and some drug dealers. So have numerous others at the sheriff's office. From reading your articles, it would seem that Pat is the only qualified officer. Maybe the rest should just stop doing their JOBS and let Pat handle it. Let's get real!

And then we hear about Pat's children being home alone. Surely

he can afford child care. What about all of the other officers at the sheriff's office who can't be home with their children? That time also cannot be replaced. Do we hear them complaining and filing grievances? NO. Every employee of the sheriff's office knew when they were hired that they could be assigned to any shift or assignment at any time. It's part of the job!

As for the front desk assignment being a civilian position, that is only partly true. During normal business hours, it is staffed by civilians.

If a police matter arises during that time, an officer is called in, usually from the street. Also, this is not a new position, it has merely not been staffed for a while.

Under previous administrations (i.e.: Undersheriff Perez), there were four sergeants assigned to work the front desk after normal business hours. Where was the story about that? Those officers just accepted it as part of their job.

We all knew when we were hired that we would have to make sacri-

fices when it came to family time. It would appear that Pat has led a sheltered career with an early promotion and choice assignments.

Pat didn't complain then. No grievances were filed. No stories were printed.

So, the bottom line is this. Everyone at the sheriff's office has been assigned to a position they did not like or want at some time or another. It's part of the job. We all miss out on family time at some point or another. It's part of the job.

I for one am proud to be a member of the sheriff's office. I consider these negative articles an insult to the fine men and women of the office who are doing their jobs without complaint. They take the good with the bad and move on.

The citizens have spoken, the election is over, so let's get on with our lives. Surely, The Beacon could find more newsworthy items to fill their pages.

Alan Swanson is a resident of Aurora.

Pastor calls for Perez probe

■ **Kane sheriff flap:** Rev. Roy Brown asks board to review job action

By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

12/11/02
Beacon

GENEVA — The Rev. Roy Brown on Tuesday asked for the Kane County Board to intervene in what he described as "an embarrassing situation" at the Kane County sheriff's office.



Perez



Brown

The pastor at Progressive Baptist Church in Aurora asked for "oversight help" from the board to address the situation between Sheriff Ken Ramsey and Sgt. Pat Perez. Brown spoke at the regular County Board meeting.

Perez was the Democratic Party candidate for sheriff in the Nov. 5 election. He lost to Ramsey, a Republican, who was re-elected to his third term. On that day,

Ramsey issued new orders reassigning Perez to front desk duty on an evening shift that begins at 2 p.m.

Perez has filed a grievance through his union saying the reassignment violated a contract seniority provision between the county and deputies. He filed an unfair labor practice claim with the Illinois Labor Relations Board, saying the reassignment was retribution for his political leanings.

Brown reiterated those complaints Tuesday, asking the board to "review and address what appears to be ... retribution toward Pat Perez."

PEREZ

From Page A1

"People are dying in the street, and we have a sergeant of good standing sitting at a desk," Brown said. "Is this an exercise of good management?"

The pastor asked the board whether Perez' reassignment might have been racially motivated.

"We have a ranking minority member of the sheriff's office being made a public spectacle," he said.

"The sheriff's office appears not to appreciate diversity."

The board listened to Brown's statement, but had no discussion afterward. Later, board Chairman Mike McCoy, R-Aurora, said board members were unsure how to react.

"I don't think we meddle in assignments of personnel," he said. "I have been getting a lot of calls, and a

lot of e-mails, asking, why don't I do something. It has created a stir."

The County Board and the Sheriff's Department have had their share of budgetary disputes, but board members often grudgingly admit they have little say over anything but the overall amount of money the sheriff's office is allocated.

Nothing to do with race

The County Board's Public Safety and Corrections and Rehabilitation committees oversee the sheriff's office, but Ramsey, as well as other elected officials, long have maintained that state statute sets up an independence between their offices and the County Board. In short, the board has budgetary oversight, but nothing more.

"I hate to just pass the buck," McCoy said. "It kind of puts us in a bad spot."

"I don't think Ken Ramsey is a racist," he added.

Waste station plan voted out

12/10/02

BY DAVID R. KAZAK

Daily Herald Staff Writer

Waste Management Inc. always gets what it wants.

Until Tuesday, that was South Elgin resident Sue Schudel's idea of a truism.

Schudel is part of a group that includes many of her neighbors, and South Elgin's elected leaders — all staunch foes of Waste Management's desire to put a garbage transfer station at the now-closed Woodland landfill at Route 25 and Dunham

Road.

Transfer stations temporarily hold trash until it can be shipped to a landfill farther away.

For Schudel, fighting Waste Management has been a 40-year task. She fought Woodland's creation. She fought Woodland expansions. Each time, she said, Waste Management won.

So she fully expected the Kane County Board to approve Waste Management's latest plan at its meeting Tuesday.

The board's vote, however, turned

out to be a 23 to 2 hammer that both crushed the trash company's plans and stunned Schudel.

"I just cannot believe it," she said after the vote. "I've been fighting this 40 years. I just cannot believe it."

Neighbor Carol Hecht, a fellow transfer station foe, felt the same way.

"I thought Waste Management was unbeatable," Hecht said. "What I saw in there today was a county board that took their job seriously."

Dan Walter, a Republican county board member from South Elgin, said the vote shouldn't have been too sur-

prising, because Waste Management's plan — when held up to county laws that govern transfer station applications — was inherently flawed.

The company could not show to his satisfaction how roads around the site would handle safely the inevitable increase in trash-hauling trucks.

Gerry Jones, a board member and Aurora Democrat, said he felt it was wrong that trucks leaving the proposed station for points west first would have to travel east, either on

See WASTE on PAGE 1

Waste: Leaders, residents stunned at 'no' vote on transfer station

Continued from Page 1

West Bartlett Road or Stearns Road, to get to Route 59 in order to get to I-88 or I-90.

DuPage County officials even lobbied Kane leaders, asking why they were considering sending trash trucks through Bartlett when the region most served by the station was west of the Fox River.

Roads and their adequacy was one of several legal hurdles Walter said Waste Management failed to overcome. Others included whether the health and welfare of the nearby residents would be protected and whether the facility was compatible with surrounding land use.

Weeks of hearings and testimony on the matter led a county hearing officer to determine the application failed to meet county standards. He recommended that if it were approved, the station's opening be delayed until 2006 when road improvements in the area might be done. But there'd be no assurance that such improvements would be made in time.

Dale Hoekstra, a vice president in Waste Management's Illinois Landfill Division, has worked with Kane County for more than 20 years, overseeing operations at Settler's Hill landfill in Geneva. He disagreed with board members who said the application failed to meet county law and said legal action against the county is "probably likely."

"With the effort we put forth in the application, with all the evidence showing our compliance (with county law), and with our

"It's a free market. If the need exists, somebody will find an acceptable place to put a transfer station and bid for the work."

Dan Walter, county board member

commitment to agree to their conditions — in light of those things, this is very disappointing," he said.

He said Tuesday's rejection likely will fuel higher garbage costs for Kane County residents, especially when Settler's Hill closes in a few years.

"There aren't a whole lot of options," Hoekstra said.

Walter scoffed at the notion of higher garbage fees.

"It's a free market," he said. "If the need exists, somebody will find an acceptable place to put a transfer station and bid for the work."

South Elgin Village President Jim Hansen, who in a pending lawsuit contends Waste Management broke its promise never to seek a Woodland expansion again, said the county's decision will stand up to any legal challenge Waste Management can muster. "I'm just excited. Happy. Glad it's over," he said.

That's how Schudel felt, too. And now she has another task.

"We spent two months putting up all those signs opposing this," she said. "Now, we got to go and take them down."

Forest district gets new leader

*Outgoing chief
oversaw purchase
of more property
12-1-162*

BY DAVID R. KAZAK
Daily Herald Staff Writer

For eight years, Jack Cook, a retired pharmacist from Elgin, led Kane County's Forest Preserve District board during a time of great achievements.

One was convincing some two-thirds of the county's

"I brought the forest preserve and approve higher taxes out of the Dark Ages and into the 21st century."

Jack Cook, retiring Kane County Forest Preserve District president

watch, a long-term deal with the Kane County Cougars — one of the most successful minor league baseball franchises in the country — was inked, keeping the team at Elfstrom Stadium in Geneva.

"I brought the forest preserve out of the Dark Ages and into the 21st century," Cook said.

It's these notes, and more, that played during Cook's swan song Tuesday morning, when a successor — St. Charles attorney John Hoscheit — took over the leadership of the district.



Ex-Kane County forest board chief Jack Cook shares a laugh with Day Waterman of South Elgin Tuesday after John Hoscheit was voted in as president of the forest preserve district to replace Cook.

Hoscheit, a Republican like Cook, was elected by a unanimous vote to a 4-year term as president Tuesday morning.

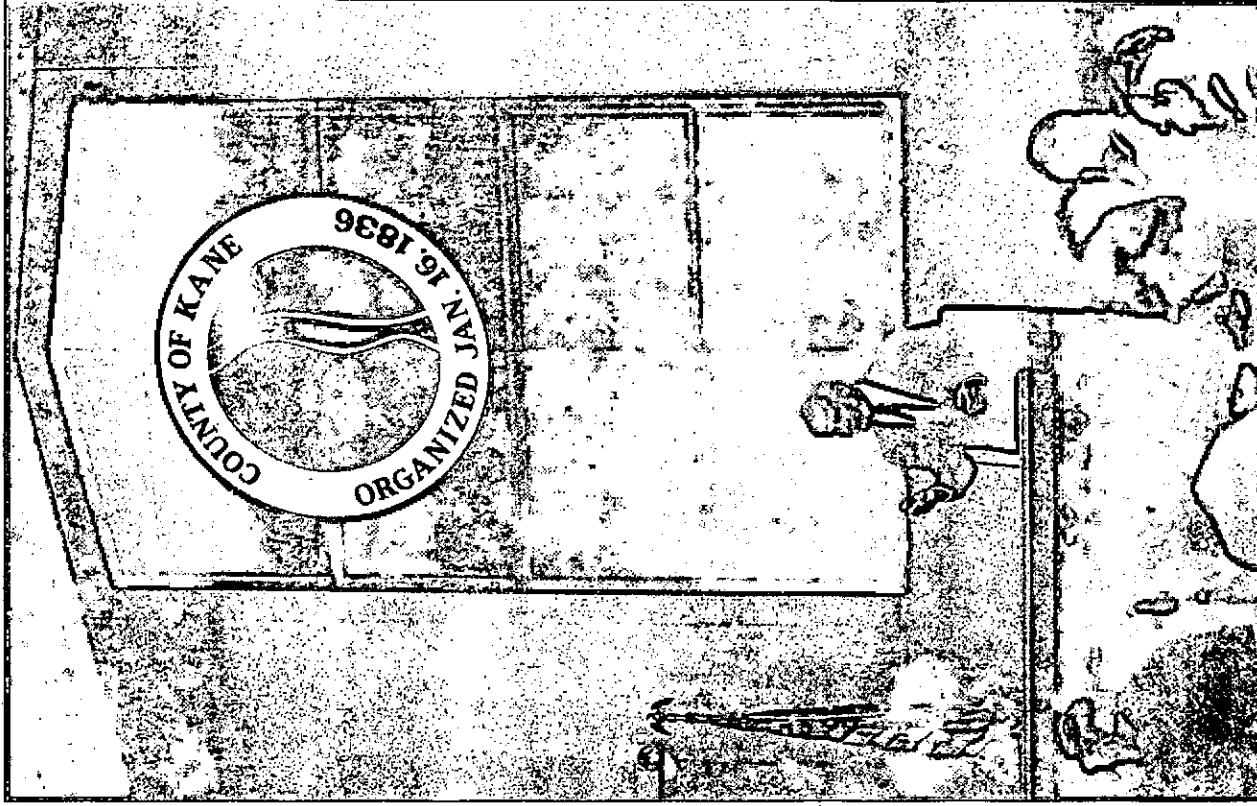
In a speech, Hoscheit promised to complement Cook's legacy of land acquisition by shifting focus to the development of the property acquired, so the public can enjoy the land more. He also promised to lead not as a commander but as a consensus builder.

The shift in leadership was bitter-sweet for Cook, who in the months leading up to Tuesday's vote made clear he'd hoped to retain the job as forest preserve chief.

"I think they did me a favor," he said in a joking manner about the commission's support of Hoscheit.

"Part of me is sad. Part of me isn't," he said. "The sad part is I have to change my own focus somewhat."

"The other part?" he said, "I'm not going to go away."



New Kane County forest preserve President John Hoscheit of St. Charles takes the podium Tuesday.
PHOTOS BY LAURA STOECKER/DAILY HERALD

County to rid preserve of gravel

*Some remnants will be used
by transportation division*

Removal to cost \$182,000

12/10/02
By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Three feet of gravel cover parts of the Big Rock Forest Preserve, the remnants of the old mining operation.

Now that the forest preserve owns the land, the district wants to remove the gravel so plants can grow.

"It's obviously in the way for plant growth," forest preserve Executive Director Jon Duerr said.

On Monday, the district's Utilization Committee agreed

to pay Campton Excavating \$182,000 to remove the gravel.

Some of the gravel will be refined and used by the Kane County Division of Transportation in road projects.

Duerr said the forest preserve will use some of the gravel to rebuild bike paths and internal roads.

Part of the cost will go to trucking loads to other forest preserves.

"We'll save a couple thousand yards that our people can use instead of buying it," he said.

One of the main attractions of the preserve on Jericho Road is its large lake, which once was the gravel pit.

Big Rock features woods, wetlands, prairie restoration project, the 31-acre lake and Deer Run golf course.

Landscape architect Doug Gotham of Kabbes Engineering has been working on a site plan for the 450-acre preserve.

One possibility for the site is a nature center along the lines of Shoemaker Nature Center in Tekakwitha Woods Forest Preserve north of St. Charles, Gotham said.

"You have a lot of natural history and a lot of natural aspects to learn about," Gotham said.

Development of Big Rock Forest Preserve could take 10 years.

Wayne: Supreme Court should decide bridge

12/10/02
By VICTORIA A.E. CAMRON
Kane County Chronicle

ST. CHARLES — The Illinois Supreme Court has been asked to decide whether St. Charles can have the land it wants to build the Red Gate Road bridge.

Judges in the 16th Judicial Circuit and the 2nd Appellate District have ruled that a Wayne resident improperly donated land to the village to block the building of a bridge across the Fox River at Red Gate Road. St. Charles tried to buy the property in May 1999, then filed a lawsuit to condemn the property.

The circuit court ruled in November 2000 that St. Charles could take over the property. The appellate court in October agreed with the circuit court.

Wayne recently asked the Illinois Supreme Court for permission to appeal that ruling, but the court is not expected to decide for at least three months, said Andrew Acker, attorney for the village.

The appellate court did not

follow previous court decisions on the issue, denied Wayne its right to due process and did not compensate Wayne for the loss of the property, the village argued in court papers asking for the appeal.

"There's a series of arguments based on our assertion the 2nd District (Appellate Court) didn't follow the precedent of the Supreme Court," Acker said.

St. Charles City Attorney Tim O'Neil was not happy with the village's request for another appeal.

"Why are we wasting taxpayers' money on this?" O'Neil asked. Besides the expense of his time, O'Neil said construction costs are higher now than they would have been in 1999.

"Every bit of delay costs the taxpayers more money," he said.

O'Neil will ask the court to sanction Wayne, which will allow St. Charles to recoup some of its expenses.

The Illinois Supreme Court allows about 5 percent of the requests it receives to file an appeal, Acker said.

Geneva tree protections yield to ownership rights

Revised plan seeks to protect trees in new developments

12/10/02

By JANNA SMALLWOOD
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — A revised version of a tree preservation ordinance focuses more on protecting certain types of trees and less on stopping property owners from cutting trees.

Revisions include regulating tree preservation for individual lots when a building permit is requested and a zoning amendment that sets forth tree preservation regulations for new subdivisions and new commercial development sites, Community Development Director Dick Untch said Monday in a presentation to aldermen meeting as committee of the whole.

For existing properties, the proposal would require trees 10 inches in diameter or larger near proposed construction to be located on a development sketch, with the property owner deciding which trees would be removed, kept or moved.

Former Mayor Tom Coughlin created the Tree Conservation Subcommittee two years ago after residents banded together to save 200-year-old burr oak trees on the southwest corner of Second and South streets. Now the group is working to protect "high quality trees," which include certain species of trees such as burr oak, white oak, sugar maple, male ginkgo and about 25 others.

The committee used input from community groups to create the revisions.

"The bottom line of the responses, the majority expressed the view that the regulations should not prohibit landscaping activities on pri-

vate property," Untch said. The revised proposal focuses on tree identification, evaluation and protection.

Many supported tree preservation regulations on new developments, but said tree preservation requirements would intrude on private property rights. Revisions put the city in a position to instruct property owners on protecting remaining trees and require that the trees are protected during construction.

For new developments, the subcommittee recommended that the planning process avoid the destruction of high quality trees.

Developers would be required to submit a tree survey and tree preservation plan, and tree protection measures would be required before building permits were issued.

If the city hires a forester consultant, it would save money by not hiring a full-time staff member, and consulting fees could be paid in full by the permit applicant, or subsidized in full or part by the city, Untch said.

But delays could occur in the permit process with that method.

The city might hire a consulting forester or a full-time arborist if aldermen accept the code amendments next year. An in-house arborist would mean prompt turnover of permits, but would cost about \$40,000 a year, and the city does not have space for another staff member, Untch said.

The revised proposal is available at City Hall or can be accessed online at the city's Web site, www.geneva.il.us.

Schmitz to fill one of top GOP slots in House

12/10/62

By DAVID R. KAZAK

Daily Herald Staff Writer

Four years ago, a Batavia firefighter named Tim Schmitz won a Republican seat in the Illinois House of Representatives. Today, he's on a powerful perch few third-term representatives have ever reached.

Republican House members have elected Schmitz to one of 10 party leadership posts.

He'll join state House Minority Leader Tom Cross, an Oswego Republican, and other leaders on the GOP caucus leadership team as they work to stamp the GOP's imprint on all legislation moving through the General

Assembly.

It's no small duty.

"I'm excited," Schmitz said. "I wasn't appointed, I was elected. The (Republican) caucus has put a lot of faith, and a lot of trust, in me."

Faith and trust bestowed on Schmitz also means more political clout for the Fox Valley and most of central and

northern Kane County, most of which is inside Schmitz's new 49th District.

"I only have one vote," he said. "But I do have a much larger role to play."

That role includes working on the Republican agenda, helping to shape issues, rather than just voting on them as they come before him.

Of course, Schmitz also is happy to be



Tim Schmitz

a part of Cross' team, one viewed by younger Republicans as a force of change that will herald a "new era" for his party.

"That means we're trying to open up the process," he said. "Just having the party leaders elected, instead of appointed, that alone is a huge change."

Geneva weighing the cost of full-time arborist, consultant

12/10/02

BY VERONICA GONZALEZ

Daily Herald Staff Writer

To preserve trees in Geneva, city officials may want to consider hiring a full-time arborist or a consultant on a project-by-project basis, according to the recommendations from a subcommittee on protecting mature trees.

Mature trees give a quaint, historic look to Geneva and residents highly favor trying to keep them. Many of those trees are on private property and Geneva has no way to go about protecting them without trampling over individual property rights.

Geneva city council members discussed the two-year-old issue on Monday, but a public hearing on what a city ordinance would say still is months away.

Still unanswered is how involved the city should be in preservation.

To date, the subcommittee is recommending that property owners be allowed to decide what trees they want removed from their property if they are building an addition. If they want to preserve them, the subcommittee is recommending the property owners inform the city.

The city would then instruct

property owners on how to protect high-quality trees and how to take care of them.

Tree inspection would not be free and under the proposal, property owners would have to pay a fee.

For developers, the subcommittee is proposing the city establish stronger and clearer guidelines on preserving trees.

Those would include requiring a developer to survey the trees on a property to be developed and indicate which ones would be removed, replaced or transplanted. Measures to protect trees would have to be in place before a building permit would be issued.

Planning Director Dick Untch told city council members that hiring a full-time arborist would be an advantage because the city would be directly involved in preservation and prompt turnaround for permit applications.

The downside, however, would be the cost of paying that professional and finding office space. City hall has no room for a new staff member, he said.

A consultant would be great because the city wouldn't have to hire staff, but permit processing would take longer.

Auditor clears Kane sheriff in expense probe

'No indication' of double billing

By William Presecky
Tribune staff reporter

12/12/02

Absent evidence that Kane County Sheriff Ken Ramsey was reimbursed by the county for business expenses also paid by professional organizations he belongs to, the county auditor's office has concluded there is no appearance of wrongdoing by the sheriff.

"We have no indication whatsoever" that Ramsey has engaged in any double billing for travel-related expenses, Deputy Auditor John Harahan said in a report Wednesday to members of the County Board's new Finance Committee.

"There is absolutely no indication that I did anything wrong because I haven't done anything wrong," said Ram-

sey, adding that he welcomed the auditor's findings into the handling of the department's 34 credit cards and said he hopes they put the issue to rest.

But committee members expressed disappointment in the report after Harahan said he never got documentation he had requested from the Illinois Sheriff's Association and the FBI National Academy Association. Harahan wanted to compare the records to the county's to make sure Ramsey did not get reimbursed twice. Both groups refused to give the information because it might set a precedent.

Douglas Weigand (R-Batavia), the new chairman of the committee, who has clashed publicly with Ramsey over management of the Sheriff's Department, said the report begs for a more final resolution.

PLEASE SEE SHERIFF, PAGE 2

SHERIFF: Many charges not claimed, auditor says

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Though he said he would rather "it just go away," Weigand said the County Board is "responsible to clear up any doubts" the report may leave.

Harahan said he had no reservations in concluding that Ramsey hadn't engaged in wrongdoing because in many cases he did not request reimbursement from the county.

"At this point there is just no indication of double compensation. I don't have any concern about [it]," said Harahan, who

took three months to review the Sheriff's Department records.

Based on other information regarding Ramsey's travel and expense activities, Harahan said, "There are many instances when expenses have not been claimed" by the sheriff, which Ramsey said were paid by the private organizations. "There are so many unclaimed expenses that I don't have any evidence that there are double claims."

"These public inquiries [about county credit cards] put all of us on the hot seat," said committee member Dorothy Sanchez (D-Aurora). "Questions were raised [by the public in September], and we have a responsibility to answer the questions to the best of our ability."

Though Harahan said only investigators with subpoena power could get more information than he did, board members made no suggestion they would seek such an inquiry.

Beloved leader dies after battle with cancer

BY PATRICK GARMOE
AND AMY E. WILLIAMS

Daily Herald Staff Writers

12/12/02

Village President Ted Spella, a man many call a guiding force behind Algonquin, died late Tuesday at Provena St. Joseph Hospital in Elgin. Spella, 72, had been fighting cancer for several years, and those close to him said he died from ailments related to it.

Those who knew him said this man, who entered Algonquin politics as a favor, turned out to be an irreplaceable leader to the community.

"He was just integrity from top to bottom and he is going to be sorely missed," said Trustee John Schmitt.

Funeral services will be held 10 a.m. Saturday at St. Margaret Mary Church, 115 S. Hubbard Road in Algonquin. Visitation is from 10:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Friday and 9 to 10 a.m. Saturday. A public burial at Algon-



Ted Spella

quin Cemetery, at the corner of main Street and Cary-Algonquin Road, will follow the funeral service.

When Spella moved to Algonquin in 1958 from Carpentersville, the thought of leading the village never crossed his mind, he said.

But in 1988, former Village President Vern Harnish asked Spella, who had a background in information technology, to serve on Algonquin's Economic Development Commission. He thought his political career would go no further, but he was wrong.

One night as he was eating dinner, two village trustees called him to ask if he would consider a position on the village board.

"I told them they were catching me

Services

Funeral services will be held at 10 a.m. Saturday at St. Margaret Mary Church, 115 S. Hubbard Road in Algonquin. Visitation is from 10:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Friday and 9 to 10 a.m. Saturday. A public burial at Algonquin Cemetery, at the corner of Main Street and Cary-Algonquin Road, will follow the funeral service.

at a bad time. I hadn't even given it a thought. But I thought about it and called them the next day and said I'd give it a shot," Spella said in a 2001 interview.

From 1989 through 1993 he served as a village trustee, stepping up to the presidency in 1993, where he has served since.

During his tenure, he managed to put his print on projects all over

town, helping to make the community a wonderful place to live, friends and trustees said.

"It's a quality community with good businesses, well-planned fiscally, quality residents, quality homes, and quality businesses, and all of that is Ted Spella's legacy," Schmitt said.

Algonquin Village Manager Bill Ganek, who came aboard while Spella was still a trustee, said the mayor was good at prioritizing such things as putting good roads and sewer systems ahead of amenities such as recreation.

And it's really paid off, Ganek said. Now Algonquin has a new village hall, the ribbon cutting for the new business park was recently held, downtown is in the midst of a large revitalization, a new public works building is under construction and the village is starting to provide more recreational options for residents.

Bank sues former hotel owner's mother

BY ALICIA FABBRE

Daily Herald Staff Writer

12/12/02
When Craig Frank and Neil Johnson decided to buy and rehab Hotel Baker, Frank's mother signed on to guarantee the loan.

Now, she could end up having to pay \$675,000 still owed on the loan for the hotel, which closed in January because of financial problems.

LaSalle National Bank, which now owns the hotel, recently filed a lawsuit in Cook County Circuit Court against Ruby Frank for the balance due on the loan. Frank owns Frank's Employment, an employment agency in downtown St. Charles.

Although the bank bought the

hotel in October at a court-ordered foreclosure sale, it bid only \$3 million for the hotel — leaving \$400,000 due on the loan. With interest and fees, the amount has grown to \$675,000.

Craig Frank and former owner Neil Johnson filed for bankruptcy after the hotel closed, leaving only Ruby Frank liable for the remaining debt.

Ruby Frank could not be reached for comment Wednesday.

At a hearing in Kane County last week to confirm the sale of the hotel, Frank's attorney said she could still file for bankruptcy. However, no decision has been made, attorney Elizabeth Bates said.

Bates last week argued that the

bank should not be allowed to sue Ruby Frank for the balance if it sells the hotel at a profit.

Judge Michael Colwell rejected Bates' arguments, saying the bank can legally sue even if it makes a profit on the sale of the hotel.

"While it's legal, it doesn't seem fair," said Craig Frank, Ruby's son and the former owner of Hotel Baker.

Bates also argued that another foreclosure sale should be held because potential bidders were scared off when they learned that the bank was holding two sales — one for the furniture and another for the building. Colwell also rejected that request, saying the bank properly published notices for the sale.

Report clears sheriff, but some aren't buying it

BY DAVID R. KAZAK
Daily Herald Staff Writer

12/2/02 County board finance chief dismisses report against nemesis because he says it's inconclusive

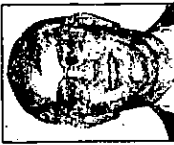
Forget that the Kane County auditor's office released a report Tuesday clearing Sheriff Ken Ramsey of charges he sought double payment from the county and private groups to attend conferences.

To Doug Weigand, a Republican county board member from Batavia and Ramsey's political nemesis for the past year, the report just didn't matter.

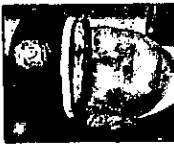
Weigand, in his first action as chairman of the board's finance committee, flatly dismissed the report's findings, saying they do not — and cannot — show Ramsey didn't double dip.

"If an auditor's report isn't good enough for Mr. Weigand, then issue a criminal subpoena and talk to my lawyer," Ramsey said.

Weigand holds his position mainly because two private groups that held conferences Ramsey attended — the Springfield-based Illinois Sheriff's Association and Virginia-based FBI National Academy Associates Inc. —



Doug Weigand



Ken Ramsey

refuse to reveal whether they paid Ramsey for expenses already paid by the county.

Political opponents raised the damaging insinuation during Ramsey's heated re-election bid this year.

"We don't release information about our finances unless we receive a subpoena," said Les Davis, the National Academy associates executive director. Ramsey is that organization's second vice president.

Davis called Ramsey "one of the most honest men I know."

"Personally, I'd have a problem

with anybody breaking the law, because I'm a former FBI agent," Davis said. "And I don't have to worry about that as far as anyone on (the association's) board is concerned."

Greg Sullivan, executive director for the Illinois Sheriff's Association, said the group's board — on which Ramsey sits — rejected opening its books because it is a private group.

"It smelled political," Sullivan said, noting all 22 members (except Ramsey) voted to keep financial records closed.

"We weren't going to get involved," he said.

Ramsey has called the double-dipping charge political and false, and he has rejected any request to produce documentation proving the charge false. That's not his obligation, he said. Weigand on Tuesday called that position "stonewalling."

"There's no good reason to stonewall, and 100 bad ones," he said.

Still, the charge-clearing conclusion contained within the auditor's report — while noting the lack of information from the two organizations — was based on a detailed study of Ramsey's travel expenses over years. The study was conducted by Kane County Deputy Auditor John Harahan.

Harahan said his look at what Ramsey has revealed, and was eligible to get, revealed that on most occasions, Ramsey never sought reimbursement from the county for professional conference travel expenses, even when he was justified in doing so.

Asked if it was possible Ramsey double-dipped, Harahan said, "Yes, anything is possible." Asked if it was probable, based on Ramsey's expense reimbursement patterns, Harahan replied, "Absolutely not."

Weigand, however, wasn't hearing any of it, not without the information from the two groups, he said.

"This thing is going to hang on for-

said. "And rightfully so. "We should be able to give an answer to the public," she said.

At least one, however, was clearly irritated by Weigand's stance — fellow committee member Jan Carlson, a Republican board member from Elburn.

"This conversation never seems to end, and the election, well, it's over," he said. "Anything short of accepting the conclusion in the auditor's report is suggesting the auditor did something improper, and I'm not going to do that."

During the committee's regular monthly meeting Tuesday, at which the report was presented, Carlson upbraided Weigand and other doubting members, reminding them they have no authority whatsoever to demand financial information from private groups or individuals.

"There are agencies, government bodies, that can resolve this," he said. "That's a grand jury. And their involvement is up to the state's attorney."

"So beyond that, I really don't know why we're talking about this," he said.

ever unless we can find out what those reimbursements were," he said. "It seems simple to me."

"You just cannot draw a final conclusion on this without that information," he said. "You cannot be 100 percent certain."

That position angers Harahan's boss, Kane County Auditor Bill Keck. "I'm kind of agnostic at his confidence in his report. I'm bothered by this. They should accept the report."

"(Weigand) may not agree with its findings, but there's nothing that exists that can refute those findings," Keck said.

At least one county leader, board Member Dorothy Sanchez, an Aurora Democrat and finance committee member, agrees with Weigand's belief that the report is inconclusive.

"When it became public knowledge that we didn't have the answer to these questions, we all ended up looking like a bunch of buffoons," she

Kane County Board has to vote again for vice chairman

12/12/02
By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

Beacon

GENEVA — It turns out the close vote for Kane County Board vice chairman this week was no vote at all. When board members left the board room shortly after noon Tuesday, they were under the impression they had re-elected Caryl Van Overmeiren, R-St. Charles, as vice chairman.

But it turns out the 13 votes that elected Van Overmeiren were one short of the number she needed.

Board rules say the vice chairman must get a majority vote of the board members present. Because one board member was missing, only 25 members voted, with the vote being 12 for Van Overmeiren, eight for Lee Barrett, R-East Dundee, and five for Doug Weigand, R-Batavia.

Thinking Van Overmeiren needed the 13th vote to put her over the top, board Chairman Mike McCoy, R-Aurora — who was the 26th board member present — voted. The chairman votes only when that vote affects the outcome, such as when needing a super-majority or breaking a tie.

But the winner for vice chairman needed 14 votes, which would be the majority of the 26 present. That means she could not win with only 13 votes. And she actually got only 12 votes, because McCoy should not have voted in that situation because his vote did not affect the outcome.

"It was my mistake," McCoy said Wednesday. "I was thinking 13 votes were necessary."

McCoy will bring the situation to the attention of board members at today's Executive Committee meeting. He will ask their advice on how to proceed with another vote for vice chairman.

One thing McCoy said he knows for sure: there will be another vote.

"We have to decide whether we will have a special meeting, or we can

just go to the next month," he said.

McCoy said he and Assistant State's Attorney Bob Sandner, the board's attorney, agree that Van Overmeiren will continue to serve as vice chairman until a new one is elected. At least one of the other candidates, Barrett, disagrees. In a memo to McCoy, Barrett said he thinks McCoy should declare the position vacant.

"That's the only thing I disagree with him on," McCoy said.

Otherwise, McCoy said, he agrees with Barrett that the vote for vice chairman should pick up where it left off, with another vote. McCoy said he should have said the vote did not pass, and called for another vote during the meeting.

No matter when the meeting picks up, there will be time for more political maneuvering, although McCoy said Wednesday he does not think the additional time favors any one candidate.

On Tuesday, board member Jan Carlson, R-Elburn, had wanted to recess and call for party caucuses, so the Republicans could emerge with a compromise, slated candidate.

But the board voted against recessing, and the vote was taken. Carlson nominated Van Overmeiren, and new board member John Noverini, R-Carpentersville, nominated Barrett. It became a three-way race when board member Paul Greviskes, D-Aurora, nominated Weigand. That set up the strange situation where four of the five board Democrats, and Weigand himself, cast the votes for Weigand.

McCoy said he only cast his vote to put Van Overmeiren over the top, because he thought that was what the majority of the board wanted.

"If Barrett had needed one to win, I probably would have voted for him," McCoy said.

Contact Steve Lord at (630)
844-5926 or slord@scn1.com.

Kane auditor says Ramsey reimbursements were clean

■ **No problems:** But some Kane board members say the matter is not closed

12/2/02
By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

Beacon

GENEVA — The Kane County auditor's office says it has no evidence Sheriff Ken Ramsey took a double reimbursement for trips he made for private organizations.

John Harahan, deputy auditor, told the County Board Finance Committee Wednesday that, after looking at documentation from the sheriff's office and comparing it to financial information his office has, he is satisfied the sheriff did not take money from the county for trips for

which he was compensated elsewhere.

"From the data I have, I don't have any concern," Harahan said. "At this point, there's no indication of double reimbursement."

This did not satisfy some members of the Finance Committee, though, who said they still are lacking key information to make sure the sheriff did not take county compensation for trips he made as a member of the FBI National Academy Association and the Illinois Sheriffs Association.

"We've hit a stone wall," Finance Chairman Doug Weigand, R-Batavia, said. "It bothers me when things are stonewalled, because I can't think of one good reason why something should be stonewalled. I can think of 100 bad reasons why something would be stonewalled. It's frustrating because it would be

so easy to resolve."

What would make it easy would be if the FBI Association and the Sheriffs Association would turn over their records showing what they reimbursed Ramsey, Weigand said.

So far, the organizations have refused to do so, citing their status as private, non-profit groups and not subject to the Freedom of Information law.

Until the groups release their records, "this thing's going to hang on forever," Weigand said.

"I don't think you're ever going to see those records," Harahan said.

No power, no evidence

Questions about Ramsey's trips for the private organizations to which he belongs came up from Karyn Danielson of Hampshire, who earlier this year also questioned Ramsey's credit card spending.

Finance Committee member Dorothy Sanchez, D-Aurora, said she is upset the committee cannot resolve the situation, because a private citizen brought it up.

"As taxpayers, they have the right to know, and it concerns me that we don't know and can't tell them," Sanchez said. "These public inquiries put us on the spot."

Ramsey has said his expenses are proper, and that it would be fine with him if the organizations wanted to release their records.

Board member Jan Carlson, R-Elburn, said there was no point to the committee discussing the situation, because the county does not have the power to force the organizations to give up their records.

He said the only way that could happen would be if the state's attorney's office wanted to impanel a

grand jury, and use subpoena power. "We could carry this on, sitting here with our long, gray beards, and never resolve it," he said.

Someone would have to ask the state's attorney's office to open a grand jury investigation, and, to do that, there would have to be some evidence, Carlson said.

Harahan said there is no evidence. He said he has a list of dates Ramsey traveled for both the FBI National Academy Association and the Illinois Sheriffs Association, and on none of them is there a record of Ramsey asking the county for reimbursement.

"I have many trips where we did not pay the reimbursement," Harahan said. "I don't have any evidence of double claims."

Contact Steve Lord at (630) 844-5926 or slord@scn1.com.

Sullivan bridge plan has IDOT's blessing

■ North Aurora relieved:

After 10-year wait, work could begin in the spring

12/12/02

By Garrett Ordower
STAFF WRITER

Beacon

NORTH AURORA — After about 10 years, the village has cleaned its hands of its often confusing and costly obligations to the Sullivan Road bridge project.

An announcement at Monday's Village Board meeting that a letter had been received from the Illinois Department of Transportation to that effect met with applause, smiles and sighs of relief.

"The bridge is going to be a tremendous benefit to the area," village attorney Kevin Drendel said. "Traffic has increased exponentially, and it will take pressure off of other bridges in the area. The bridge is badly needed."

The bureaucratic combination of the Illinois Department of Transportation, the federal government, Aurora and North Aurora weighed down the \$10 million project.

A mix-up over appraisal procedures earlier this year delayed the project, but now that things are back on track construction could start next spring.

"Anytime there's a project that involves multiple governmental bodies — local, state and federal — it's going to have its own natural complexities," Drendel said.

What made the project so difficult, according to Trustee Bruce Mitchell, wasn't acquiring the necessary land, but documenting its purchase.

As a non-home-rule village, North Aurora cannot do quick-takes of land, which would allow it to take property and go into condemnation proceedings at a later date, Mitchell said. Fortunately, the village was able to reach agreements with four landowners rather quickly.

"We wanted to make sure we did our part to make sure the project ran as smoothly as possible," Mitchell said.

Mitchell said he and Drendel, who worked out most of the land deals, were inundated with federal and state regulations that were often not fully explained by IDOT.

SULLIVAN

From Page A1

Additionally, Drendel said, North Aurora's "tangential" role in the Aurora-led project made it difficult to know exactly what was required of the village.

Construction and engineering of the bridge will be paid for using about \$7 million in federal funds and about \$3 million from Aurora, which has earmarked \$1.9 million in its 2003 budget and \$1.3 million in 2004 for the two-year project.

For its part, North Aurora spent about \$400,000 to purchase four parcels of land needed to secure right-of-way for the bridge.

Drendel and Mitchell agree they won't feel completely free of the project until they see vehicles make their way over the Fox River on the bridge. Aurora's obligations to the project are not yet complete, with village staff still working on one easement and documenting the purchase of one of five parcels purchased by the city, Aurora Public Works Director Bob Rieser said.

Mistake forces new county board vote

*VanOvermeiren did not receive
enough votes for vice-chairman*

12/12/02

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — A parliamentary faux pas in Tuesday's vote for vice-chairman of the Kane County board will require a re-vote.

County board Chairman Mike McCoy took responsibility for the mistake.

"It was my fault," he said. "The election is not valid and we'll have to re-do it."

Three candidates were nominated for the position, which is chosen by the members of the board.

Lee Barrett, R-Elgin, and Douglas Weigand, R-Batavia, challenged incumbent vice-chairman Caryl VanOvermeiren, R-St. Charles.

VanOvermeiren received the largest number of votes, but not enough to give her the seat.

The totals were VanOvermeiren, 12; Barrett, eight and Weigand, five, with the votes generally split along party and geographic lines.

Most of the board members from northern districts voted for Barrett, while four of the board's five Democrats voted for Weigand.

VanOvermeiren received votes from Aurora Republicans and board members from districts in the central

part of the county.

Catherine Hurlbut, R-Elgin, did not attend Tuesday's meeting, making a total of 25 voters. The county code calls for the vice-chairman to garner a majority of those voting.

McCoy said he cast a vote for VanOvermeiren to give her 13 — a majority of the 25 — without taking into account his vote increased the number to 26.

McCoy said the Executive Committee will decide today how and when the next election will be held.

After the vote Barrett told McCoy of the mistake.

"The thing that needs to be done is the election needs to be cleaned up," Barrett said.

Board members choose the vice-chairman every two years after a general election.

Barrett said he wants to be vice-chairman because the county is about to embark on at least three building projects: the jail addition, animal control facility and child advocacy center.

An opinion from the state's attorney's office states VanOvermeiren remains in the position until a new election is held.

Barrett said he was OK with it. Tuesday's vice-chairman selection was unusual in that it was the first time in six years VanOvermeiren has been seriously challenged.

In the past, Democrats nominated a candidate from their party as a formality, but because of the overwhelming Republican majority, the opposition was considered token.



VanOvermeiren

Auditors clear Ramsey on credit card usage

12/12/02
By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Additional checks of travel expenses incurred by sheriff's office employees show no improprieties, auditors said Wednesday.

Deputy auditor John Harahan told members of the Finance Committee that he cross-checked dates of travel with receipts submitted by Sheriff Ken Ramsey and found no evidence of Ramsey receiving money from two sources.

"At this point there is no indication of double reimbursements," Harahan said.

The investigation has focused on Ramsey's travels to meetings with the FBI

National Alumni Association and the Illinois Chiefs of Police Association, both of which are private organizations and provide travel money to its members to attend conferences.

Because they are private groups, their books are not subject to public scrutiny.

"Their boards (of directors) have met and declined to provide information," Harahan said.

While Harahan said he is unable to obtain copies of the associations' records, he checked dates of travel to the conferences and found nothing that suggests the county paid Ramsey's expenses.

"I don't have any evidence of double claims," Harahan said.

Elgin official to fill Hoeft's position

BY SARA BURNETT
Daily Herald Staff Writer

12/31/02

Hispanic community, Munson's appointment signals a reaching out by local Republicans, both to women and Hispanics.

It also raised a few eyebrows among Kane County Republicans, because Munson lives in Cook County.

Malek, who had the final say in selecting a replacement, said geography did not play a role in his decision.

"My overriding concern was finding someone who was qualified, who had the experience and was committed to a full-time job," Malek said. "There is no question in my mind Ruth will reach out to Kane County Republicans, and that she will represent the entire district."

East Dundee Police Chief Ignacio "Joe" Pena also was a finalist for the job, meeting last week with state Sen. Steven Rauschenberger and Malek, and gaining the support of several Kane County Republican precinct committeemen.

But Pena said Monday he withdrew his name because his job as police chief wouldn't allow him to

A one-term Elgin City Council member and local business owner with close personal ties to the late state Rep. Douglas Hoeft will fill the former lawmaker's seat in the General Assembly.

Ruth Munson, 44, was named Monday by Kane County Republican leader Ed Malek to replace Hoeft, who died unexpectedly Dec. 17.

Munson was the choice of Hoeft's widow, Libby, and had talked with Hoeft in recent years about replacing him when he retired.

She called Monday's announcement at the Hemmens Cultural Center in Elgin "bittersweet" but said she was honored to be replacing a man she referred to as her "dear friend."

"(Hoeft) believed his service was about democracy, about good government, about representing his district, about helping people," Munson said. "I look forward to carrying on his legacy."

A close ally of the 43rd District's

Ruth Munson, 44, Elgin

- Owner, EveryWare Inc., an Elgin software development firm
- Elgin City Council member, 1999-present
- Member, Elgin Economic Development Council and Technology Action Team
- Co-founder, Downtown Neighborhood Association
- Board member, Elgin Area Chamber of Commerce and Elgin Community College Foundation
- Member, Hispanic Network, Hispanic Heritage Coalition, Kiwanis Club and First Congregational Church of Elgin
- Degree in political science/public administration, Northern Illinois University
- Waukegan native has lived in Elgin 12 years
- Married, two children, ages 15 and 12



Source: Daily Herald reports

jump as quickly as necessary into the job of state representative.

"While I appreciate all the support and recognition that has come out of this opportunity, I'm going to stay home," Pena said.

A Waukegan native, Munson and

her husband, Steven, moved to Elgin 12 years ago. They have two children, Ryan, 15, and Olivia, 12.

The couple owns and operates EveryWare Inc., a software development company located downtown Elgin.

In this artist's rendering, the site of the vacant Shell station on Fifth and State streets in Geneva could soon be home to shops and a restaurant topped by offices.



BAB ENTERPRISES AND MINISCALCO ARCHITECTS, LTD.

City sticks to old-style downtown

Geneva bets lack of parking won't hurt businesses in planned west-side development

By TONA KUNZ
Daily Herald Staff Writer

Geneva is betting the adage that businesses thrive or die by how much front door parking they have is nothing but a myth.

Putting that idea to the test are two new developments made possible by

the city loosening its parking requirements for new businesses.

The fate of the two-story developments, which mix shops and offices, could decide the future of the west edge of the downtown shopping corridor, roughly from Fourth Street to Anderson Boulevard.

If city planners know their stuff,

you could see new life infused into an area of homes retrofitted to hold businesses and small auto shops that hark back to a slower-paced life. If city planners are putting more faith in wishes than fact, you could see attractive new buildings attracting new tenants.

"We could have a lot of empty space because of a parking shortage," said Jay Moffat.

Still, he and other plan commissioners this month were willing to give two test cases a shot, partially because the developments bring the sturdy brick look of Geneva's oldest

See BETS on PAGE 7

Bets: Relaxed rules opened options

Continued from Page 1

shops to an underdeveloped part of town.

"We're looking to extend downtown Geneva a little bit further," said Joe Stanton, owner of Fagan Inc., which is overseeing one of the developments.

"It is just an absolutely stunning improvement on the property," Moffat said.

"It really screams Geneva," agreed Commissioner Vicki Deane.

Commissioners approved plans for retail and office complexes at the north corner of State and Fifth streets where the long vacant Shell gas station sat and kitty-corner across State Street on the south side where the Fagan Inc. office sat in a historic Wilson brothers' house until it was moved in June.

Both projects became possible

after a city council decision in July 2001 to loosen parking requirements in areas that have pockets of underutilized parking, but not near the shops that need it.

"It's based on the premise that people will walk," said Dick Untch, city development director.

Traditionally, the three-block area at the edge of downtown, with its closely spaced buildings and nearby homes, has left few options for developers to meet parking requirements other than turning a neighbor's building into a parking lot.

Jerry Boose, who turned the former Geneva Theatre into a retail mecca, hopes to have similar success with the former Shell station. Developers like Boose shied away from the cramped corner before the parking changes. His building with offices on the top floor and retail and possibly a restaurant with outdoor seating on

the bottom would have required 68 parking spots, nearly an impossibility on the site. Instead, Boose will offer up 24, still more than the station's former 14 spaces.

Stanton sees potential at 514 W. State St. following the same formula of a mix of upper level offices and retail, including a jewelry store, at street level.

He's betting that other business owners will jump on the redevelopment bandwagon and agree to have employees park behind his building in the parking lots not visible from State Street.

That would free up at least some front door spots for customers. City officials hope he's right and business owners in those three blocks will see the success of these two developments and start expanding and renovating the rest of the area by sharing parking.

Elgin official to fill Hoeft post

■ **New state rep: Elgin City Council member promises to 'carry on Doug's leadership'**

By Daniel Duggan
STAFF WRITER

12/31/02
Beacon

ELGIN — Area political officials Monday appointed Elgin City Council member Ruth Munson to fill the 43rd District state representative post left vacant by the death two weeks ago of Doug Hoeft.

Munson, 44, owner of EveryWare Inc. in Elgin, noted the "bittersweet" nature of taking the new job — and having lost a good representative. Her speech at a press conference Monday was dedicated more to thanking community members and honoring Hoeft and his widow, Libby, than to laying out a legislative agenda.

"I promise to carry on Doug's leadership and make decisions that would make him proud," Munson said.

Political circles have been buzzing with speculation since the popular Elgin Republican's unexpected death Dec. 17. Hoeft, 60, died from complications from a surgical procedure to clear his carotid artery on Nov. 26.

Munson had been mentioned as a front-runner for the position since late last week, as officials debated appointing her or East Dundee Police

Chief Joe Pena. Sources close to the decision said that Libby Hoeft was influential and expressed a strong desire that Munson be appointed.

The final decision on the appointment was made by Kane County Republican Party Chairman Ed Malek, although state Sen. Steve Rauschenberger, R-Elgin, was mandated to be part of the decision in his capacity as chairman of the Hanover Township Republicans.

Malek said the decision was based on several criteria, including selecting someone who would be sensitive to Hoeft's political philosophy, committed to working for the district full-time and have strong ties to the community.

"Ruth meets the various criteria we have been reaching out to in the selection process," he said.

Munson has served on the Elgin City Council since 1999 and recently filed for re-election. In her first campaign, she vowed to be a "consensus builder" and has largely voted in concert with other council members.

In 1987, she founded EveryWare Inc., a software development firm that began in her home. She later moved the business to downtown Elgin.

Munson is a member of the Elgin Area Chamber of Commerce, serving on its board of directors. She was active with Elgin Day in Springfield, held on Feb. 21, when community members were brought to the state's capital to educate legislators about the city.



Elgin Alderman Ruth Munson is tapped for late lawmaker's seat

Munson

Continued from page 1

"Doug dedicated his life to education. He realized that decisions in Springfield were bigger than him or politics," Munson said.

Addressing herself directly to Hoeft's widow, Munson said: "Libby, I promise to carry on."

Doug's initiatives and make decisions that would have made him proud," Malek had been under heavy pressure from many Kane County Republican precinct committeemen to appoint someone from Kane County. The new 43rd District includes portions of Elgin, South Elgin and the Dundee area, and also extends east into Cook County, where Munson lives.

However, Malek said Munson has broad support, and that it will be up to her to prove to Kane County residents that she will represent their interests.

Libby Hoeft exerted considerable influence on the decision.

"It was Doug's choice," Libby Hoeft said. "It was the last thing that I could do for him. He loved what he saw in Ruth and decided she would be the person to succeed him."

Munson will set up her



Hoeft

district office in the same space that Hoeft and Rauschenberger shared on South Street in Elgin.

Rauschenberger said Munson will have to work hard to build support.

"Doug assembled a unique coalition of supporters," Rauschenberger said. "Anytime you appoint a replacement there are fences to be mended and relationships to be established. It's at least a full-time job."

Malek said he was pleased with the process he and Rauschenberger used to consider the candidates.

The party chairman cited Munson's business and government experience, community involvement and close connection with Elgin's Hispanic community.

"She has proven leadership and legislative ability and has established and worked toward building consensus in the community in which she serves," Malek said. "She is in tune with the platform and political philosophy that Doug espoused and is committed to the goals and initiatives he began."

Malek made sure that Munson will be able to serve out the last few days of Hoeft's fifth term, in order to gain seniority on the incoming freshman class of representatives.

Seniority is considered important in the legislature because it is used in determining lawmaker committee assignments and chairmanships, and even deciding who gets the most desirable offices.

Libby Hoeft, left, embraces Ruth Munson, who was named Monday to replace Hoeft's late husband, Doug Hoeft, as state representative from Elgin.

Munson named Hoeft's successor

Elgin alderman appointed to state House

12/31/02

By MARK POSTER
Kane County Chronicle

ELGIN — Doug Hoeft had been grooming Elgin City Council member Ruth Munson to be his successor in the state legislature for when he retired.

Hoeft's untimely death Dec. 17 at the age of 60 has propelled Munson into the Illinois

General Assembly sooner than she expected.

"The new representative will be someone who Doug loved and respected and trusted to carry out his mission," Libby Hoeft, the lawmaker's widow, said Monday in announcing Munson's appointment to her husband's seat in the House.

Kane County Republican Party Chairman Ed Malek appointed Munson after he and state Sen. Steve Rauschenberger, R-Elgin, considered 10 candidates.

Malek said the other leading contender for the post, East Dundee Police Chief Joe Pena, had contacted him earlier that day, asking that his name be withdrawn from consideration.

Pena cited a commitment to a project involving his police department and other law enforcement agencies, Malek said.

Munson will be sworn in as 66th District state representative today, in Elgin. Then, on Jan. 8, she will take the oath in Springfield as representative for the newly drawn 43rd District, with the rest of the House members.

Munson, 44, of Elgin, was introduced during a ceremony at the Hemmens Auditorium.

"This is a bitter-sweet day as I accept this appointment," Munson said.

See MUNSON, page 2

Bob Geirard — Chronicle photo staff

Drunk driving a costly venture

Lawyer: Total cost of DUI arrest could be \$5,000

By VICTORIA A.F. CAMRON
Kane County Chronicle

Inside

Police prepare for
New Year's celebrations.

Page 7A

If driving home after a few celebratory drinks is a natural for you, a reminder that you are putting your life — and the lives of others — at risk might not be a powerful motivator.

So how about the pocket book?

A ticket for driving under the influence of alcohol — along with lawyer costs, fines, higher insurance rates, and missed work — will far surpass what a cab or even a limousine would have cost.

Geneva defense lawyer D.J. Tegeler estimated the total cost of one's first DUI arrest to be \$5,000. St. Charles defense attorney Gerard Kepple put the fee at \$4,000.

"It's basically 50 limousine rides," Tegeler said.

More than 1,900 drunken driving tickets have been issued in Kane County this year, according to court records. That number probably will increase tonight as some New Year celebrations make the mistake of getting behind the wheel after drinking.

Being pulled over

During a traffic stop, a police officer will ask a suspected drunken driver to perform field sobriety tests if the officer notices some classic signs of intoxication such as blood-shot eyes or slurred speech.

All Illinois police officers receive the same training for field sobriety tests, said Geneva Police Lt. Joe Frega. The tests include walking a

line, standing on one leg and reciting part of the alphabet.

The officer also will ask the driver to follow, with only his eyes, the officer's pen or finger. This test is the horizontal gaze nystagmus exam, in which the officer watches the driver's eyes to see how smoothly they move.

When a person is impaired, the eyes appear to bounce. Because this is an involuntary reaction, it is not something a driver can control or even is aware of, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

"It's a quite successful way of determining intoxication," Frega said.

After the officer decides the driver is drunk, he will place the driver under arrest and handcuff him, Frega said.

Once the driver and the officer arrive at the police station, the officer will explain the driver's rights and ask if the driver wants to submit to a breath analysis, or a Breathalyzer test.

One condition of having an Illinois driver's license is that a driver agrees to submit to breath, blood or urine tests to determine alcohol or drug use, according to the Secretary of State's Office.

See DUI, page 2

DUI

Continued from page 1

If the driver refuses such tests on the first DUI charge, the driver's license is suspended for six months.

If the test shows the driver has a blood-alcohol content of more than .08 percent, the driver's license will be suspended for at least three months, beginning 46 days after the arrest, according to the Secretary of State's Office.

A driver younger than 21 can face an even longer suspension.

"It's entirely possible you wouldn't get to drive again until you're 21," said St. Charles Police Sgt. Brad Griffin.

To get out of jail after the arrest, the driver must post either his driver's license and \$100, or \$300, Frega said. A driver who cannot post bond must see a judge the next morning.

Going to court

Although most drivers do not need a lawyer for a traffic ticket, one is needed for a drunken driving charge.

"It's not just an ordinary traffic ticket, it's a Class A misdemeanor," said Batavia defense lawyer Kathleen Colton.

The misdemeanor becomes a felony, however, if the driver has two previous drunken driving convictions, or if the driver caused an accident that seriously injured or killed someone.

A first offender almost always gets court supervision, community service and a fine, Colton said.

Kane County Assistant State's Attorney Debbi Conforti said there is no standard plea agreement for drunken drivers in Kane County.

"Each case is examined individually," Conforti said. Court supervision is not an option for second-time offenders, she said.

Supervision is not the end of the sentence. The court often orders the driver to undergo treatment for alcoholism and sometimes im-



Randy Pomaro, Chronicle photo staff

St. Charles police officers Jim Burden, left, and Robert Bobinsky demonstrate the use of a Breathalyzer machine.

poses a period of community service.

Fines normally range from \$700 to \$1,000 and could reach \$2,500. It also is possible to be sentenced to one year in the county jail.

In Kane County, offenders must attend a victim-impact panel at the judicial center. Drunken driving victims, or their survivors, speak about how their lives were forever altered.

Offenders also must pay \$140 for an alcohol evaluation, and at least \$80 for each session of counseling, said Aurora defense lawyer Anna Wilhelmi.

First-time offenders are also eligible for a judicial driving permit, which will reduce the license suspension from three months to one, Tegeler said. The permit limits when and where the driver can drive, most often to and from work.

"How many people don't require a driver's license for their work?" Tegeler said. "Losing your driver's license can affect your livelihood."

It will cost \$60 to have the driver's license reinstated after the suspension.

Outside the courtroom

A drunken driving conviction has other effects in addition to what happens in court.

Many employers require a valid driver's license. Losing a job can affect the entire family.

"I've seen families break up as a result of a DUI," Batavia defense lawyer Kevin Busch said.

Many drivers will lose their insurance coverage, as well, or at least pay more for it.

Allstate can terminate any policy whenever a driver's license is suspended, said company spokesman Mike Siemienas. When the license is reinstated, the driver becomes a high risk and the premiums can double, he said. The high-risk status and higher costs apply to everyone in the household.

The company will drop the family upon a second suspension, he said.

"We do not allow more than one major violation in the household in the last five years," Siemienas said.

State Farm does not give convicted drunken drivers a second chance.

"Typically, it will result in cancellation of the policy," said spokesman Joe Johnson.

A Progressive Insurance Co. customer will suffer less, but pay more, said spokesman David Hale.

"They could see increases of 45 percent to 60 percent," Hale said.

St. Charles leaders want to know how you'd alter zoning

12/31/02

BY PATRICK WALDRON

Daily Herald Staff Writer

Tired of bright neon signs broadcasting the name of that store or restaurant in full color? Don't like box stores with big concrete walls and no windows?

St. Charles leaders want to know.

Anticipating a new wave of redevelopment and looking for more consistent building regulations, St. Charles officials are working on an overhaul of the city's zoning ordinance. But before the planning professionals put the new rules in place, they want help identifying the areas that may need some changes.

"How do we want to develop St. Charles?" asked Assistant City Planner Michele Ribant.

Three focus groups are being formed to examine various subjects within the zoning code: one for residential developments, including tear downs; a second for commercial development around Main Street and Randall Road; and a third for aesthetic elements such as landscaping, building architecture and signs.

Residents are invited to join one of the focus groups for a set of meetings Jan. 28 hosted by Camiros Ltd., a Chicago-based consulting firm hired to assist in updating the zoning code.

A zoning ordinance spells out what people can build and where. The intent is to make sure land is developed in a logical fashion while protecting the integrity, character and aesthetic appeal of a city.

The ordinance regulates a range of public and private property characteristics, such as the height of a building, the size of a sign outside a business, how far a house can be from a property line and even dimensions of pools or decks.

Zoning changes are not uncommon, especially in growing communities with changing housing styles. St. Charles has seen periodic updates to its zoning code, but this is the first revamp since 1960.

The city of Geneva finished an

Zoning meetings

City leaders are forming three focus groups to discuss development of the new St. Charles zoning ordinance.

The meetings are set for Jan. 28 at city hall, 2 E. Main St. To join one of the focus groups call (630) 762-6925 before Jan. 10.

- Focus Group No. 1 from noon to 1:30 p.m.

Discussion of residential developments including tear downs, in-fill construction and alternative housing types.

- Focus Group No. 2 from 3 to 4:30 p.m.

Discussion on development of new and redevelopment of old commercial areas, notably the Main Street and Randall Road areas.

- Focus Group No. 3 from 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Discussion on appearance-related elements of new construction, including landscaping, architecture and signs.

Source: City of St. Charles

across-the-board review and revision of its zoning ordinance in 1995. City leaders now are working on more specific changes regulating tear-downs and other so-called in-fill development, or new construction in already built-up areas.

Batavia officials expect to complete a revision of the city's comprehensive plan next year with a zoning ordinance revision in 2004. The comprehensive plan is an advisory paper that outlines how a community will grow and build. The zoning ordinance creates the rules used to meet those goals. Batavia hasn't revised its ordinance since 1971.

To join the St. Charles focus groups or for information on the meetings, call Michele Ribant at (630) 762-6925.

12/19/02 Republican

Lawsuit on electric generation contract dismissed

The 16th Judicial Circuit Court Dec. 16 dismissed the City of Geneva, Geneva Superintendent of Electric Services James Greever and HWS Energy Partners from the lawsuit filed by LaSalle Associates in Kane County Dec. 2.

The lawsuit contested the award of the electric generation facility contract to HWS for the construction of an electric generating plant in the Geneva Business Park on Averill Road. Under the terms of the court's order, the case has been dismissed with prejudice and the lawsuit cannot be reinstated.

The lawsuit contested the award of the electric generation facility contract to HWS for the construction of an electric generating plant in the Geneva Business Park on Averill Road. Under the terms of the court's order, the case has been dismissed with prejudice and the lawsuit cannot be reinstated.

Geneva City Attorney Chuck Radovich did not comment on

termination of the lawsuit and the end of [LaSalle's] attempt to obstruct the project from moving forward. We can now advance the electric generation facility under the city's business plan to achieve our goal of obtaining a significant degree of electric energy independence," said Mayor Kevin Burns in a press release Dec. 16.

LaSalle Associates representatives could not be reached for comment as of press time.

Sheriff's employees make holidays special for kids

By Kristen LaBoon
Staff writer
12/19/02
Republi

Imagine celebrating Christmas without receiving presents from friends and loved ones. For thousands of children in Kane County, a Christmas without presents is not the exception, it is the rule.

Kane County Sheriff's Office Sgt. Al Swanson has seen what the holidays are like for some of the county's most underprivileged children.

Swanson, former president of the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 14, initiated the Shop With A Cop program 13 years ago and since its inception, "it has done nothing but grow," Swanson said.

"You would have kids come Sheriff's Office Sgt. John Stoffa, FOP Lodge 14 president. Stoffa said names are sent by

up and express their gratitude because if it hadn't been for this program there would not have been a Christmas at their household," Swanson said.

Supported by private citizens and businesses in the county, Shop With A Cop generated more than \$90,000 this year. By using the funding, gifts were

purchased and the increase between Dec. 16 and 18 for more than 1,400 underprivileged children up to the age of 16.

But the program is not open to the public. FOP Lodge 14 takes submissions from all the townships in the county, said Kane

County



At a glance

For more information about the Shop With A Cop program, call the Kane County Sheriff's Office at 232-6840 or the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 14 at 466-0671.

local groups, including schools, churches and social agencies. Typically, Stoffa said the lodge does not have to turn away many applications. However, the number of submissions increased 100 percent this year.

Stoffa attributed the increase to the events of Sept. 11, 2001 and the downward economy, which has caused sweeping layoffs by some large corporations. The children who participat-

ed in the program were given a warm welcome by more than a dozen law enforcement officials from the county at the Elgin Wal-Mart on Randall Road and the Aurora Wal-Mart on West Galena this week.

"It has always been a good time. We have a ball because you're getting to play Santa Claus," Stoffa said. In addition to having fun, Swanson said the program shows kids that interacting with

police is not always a bad thing. "If little kids get a positive impression of the police from this program, then that's a good thing," Swanson said.

Police also are able to interact with a larger grouping of the community than those whom they deal with on a disciplinary level. "All the guys who work here live in the community and care about what goes on here," Swanson said.

Prison issue: Towns place trust in Kane

■ **Batavia, Geneva:**
Mayors, police note
need for jail space

By Linda Girardi 12/30/02
SPECIAL TO THE BEACON NEWS

At first glance, the mayors of Geneva and Batavia are placing their trust in Kane County to determine whether talk of a federal prison warrants further investigation.

Kane Sheriff Ken Ramsey disclosed earlier this month he

had been approached by a private company interested in building a 700-bed federal facility on property adjacent to the county jail on Fabyan Parkway on the Geneva side of the Geneva-Batavia boundary.

While it would be built primarily to hold federal inmates, the county would be able to put up to 200 prisoners in the facility from its own severely overcrowded jail. Additionally, ownership of the larger jail would

❖ Turn to **PRISON, A2**

PRISON

From page A1

transfer to the county in 15 years.

Geneva Mayor Kevin Burns said he has faith in county leadership that what is under investigation would be in the best interest of Geneva.

"Obviously, the property abuts Geneva, and we would have a keen interest in what is built there," Burns said.

"I trust our county elected officials will engage Geneva in the discussion. What is done or not will have an impact on the city. I am looking forward to learning more about it and any impact it would have on our community."

Lieutenant Joe Frega of the Geneva Police Department said he, too, is confident that the County Board and Ramsey would investigate the idea more closely to determine whether it is mutually beneficial for federal, county and city governments.

Frega said construction of a federal prison would be a plus if it did anything to relieve the overcrowded conditions at the county jail.

"Something needs to be done as rapidly as possible," Frega said. "I am sure the county would have the insight to fully investigate a facility of that nature being built in the city of Geneva."

"I am fully aware of the jail conditions and very much in favor of rectifying those problems — it impacts the entire county. It impacts which offenders are being released and held and which are formally charged. On the whole, the entire system is overloaded.

"If one part of the system fails, the entire system fails."

Batavia Mayor Jeff Schielke, too, referred to the county's corrections crisis.

"It is incumbent on them to explore all viable options," Schielke said.

"I have faith and trust in our leadership on the County Board and Sheriff Ramsey to look into it."

Schielke said it sounds as though a proposed federal facility would be built in the same security-conscious manner as the existing county jail on Fabyan Parkway.

"It could mean more jobs. We have to hear the whole thing out," the mayor said.

Ramsey said he has had preliminary discussion with officials of Emerald Correctional Management in Shreveport, La., and there was "potential to gain some revenue" through a possible arrangement with the company.

The sheriff indicated Emerald was interested in building "low- to medium-security, dormitory-style cells" on property next to the county jail.

No decision set for Hoeft replacement

*Malek mulls
10 candidates*

12/30/02

By DAN CHANZIT
Kane County Chronicle

ELGIN — Kane County Republican Party Chairman Ed Malek said he is considering 10 people to fill Doug Hoeft's Illinois House of Representatives seat.

"I'm looking at all the potential individuals," Malek said. "Where they live is a factor, but is not a determining factor. The selection is based on their qualifications."

"I'm getting closer," he said. "If not Monday then Tuesday."

Hoeft, 60, died Dec. 17 of complications from surgery he had Nov. 26 to clear a blocked artery. The Elgin Republican served in the legislature for 10 years.

Hoeft's replacement could come from

his old or new district. His old district included parts of Cook County. His new district includes portions of Carpentersville, Dundee, Elgin, and South Elgin. Because Hoeft received the most votes from Kane County in the November election, Malek has the final say on the appointment.

He will consult with State Sen. Steve Rauschenberger, R-Elgin, in making that decision. Hoeft's Representative district is part of Rauschenberger's Senate district.

"We had a couple of meetings with some Republican leaders," Rauschenberger said.

Local Republicans said Elgin City Council member Ruth Munson and East Dundee Police Chief Joe Pena appear to be the leading contenders. Pena appears to have more support from precinct com-



Malek

mitteemen because he lives in Kane County. Munson lives in the district's Cook County portion.

Munson said she spoke with Malek over the weekend. She said he did not indicate whether she would be named as Hoeft's replacement. "I'm just waiting," she said Sunday. Pena could not be reached for comment Sunday.

Also being considered are Kane County Treasurer David Rickert and Kane County Board member Jackie Tredup, R-Elgin. Malek met with GOP precinct committeemen and other party officials last week to hear recommendations. He would not confirm names on his list.

Rauschenberger and Malek said they met over the weekend with Elgin Township Republican Chairman Mike Kenyon and former Kane County Board Member Don Rage, R-Sleepy Hollow.

Kenyon is a possible nominee. Neither Kenyon nor Rage could be reached for comment Sunday.

Kane eyes neighborhood for jail committee ideas

DeKalb County forms panel to help deal with jail crowding problem

12/30/82

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — As Kane County looks to form a Criminal Justice Committee, officials could look to the west to see what their neighbor is up to.

DeKalb County has instituted a

form of the committee as it looks to deal with a jail crowding problem of its own.

"Our jail is reaching the maximum capacity," DeKalb County Administrator Ray Bockman said. "We're very early in that process."

While DeKalb and Kane counties public defenders, county board members, about 80, compared to Kane's 400.

DeKalb County's population is 88,969 compared to Kane's 404,000.

While DeKalb's committee will disband, it is likely that Kane's would be a permanent fixture, at least as long as it appears to be working.

Bockman said it would make sense for larger counties to operate the committee on a full-time basis.

"In a larger county I think it would be a good idea," Bockman said.

See COMMITTEE, page 2

Committee

Continued from page 1

Kane County Board Chairman Mike McCoy said establishing the Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee is one of the board's goals for the coming year.

McCoy said it is essential for the committee to gather information so the system can respond to problems.

Some of the problems are the same in small and large counties. DeKalb and Kane have similar percentages of pre-trial inmates, between 60 percent and 85 percent.

While the number of inmates is the primary concern, an equally vexing problem is the length of their stays, Bockman said.

"The closer (the system) is working to maximum efficiency, the shorter the length of stay," he said.

DeKalb recently added prosecutors and public defenders to beef up efficiency, he said.

Just last week, Kane County's new Chief Judge Philip DiMarzio requested two new public defenders to speed up the system.

"We would prefer people obey the law," Bockman said. "That's the least expensive."

Things I'd like to see in 2003

12/28/02



Tom Schlueter

Chronicle

I'd like to see Iraq and the United States come to some kind of mutually agreeable solution to whatever the problems may be.

Our beef is with Saddam, not the Iraqi people.

I'd like to see corporate executives guilty of pilfering from their employees' retirement funds or cooking their books to enrich their own bank accounts sent to the slammer.

And I mean a real slammer, not a country club. These folks have ruined peoples' lives as sure as some poor schmuck who knocks off a 7-11. Even more.

I'd like to see the Cubs in the World Series. Hey, it could happen.

If nothing else I'd like to see the Cubs win more games than they lose. Frankly, I'd be happy if they won more games than they did last season.

What's the deal with North Korea? I'd like to see some resolution, there, too. It seems to me they're much more dangerous than Iraq, but we aren't bombing them, yet.

Maybe I just answered my own question.

I'd like to see a concert next year, but I doubt I will. Ticket prices are just too high. Unless John Lennon and George Harrison come back from the dead and have a Beatles reunion, I'll stick with the cheesy free concerts you can see during the summer municipal festival season (as long as they're not too cheesy).

I'd like to see less traffic. I realize there's a greater chance of Saddam vol-

untarily giving up the reins of power than the number of cars declining on Randall Road, but a man can hope, can't he?

I'd like to see more hair on my head. I'd like to see private clubs admit everybody. If Augusta National changed its policy about admitting women, Tiger Woods wouldn't have to answer any more questions about his commitment to equal rights.

Besides, I don't know why anyone would want to be somewhere where women weren't invited.

I'd like to see my niece married. The wedding isn't until June and I'm already getting excited.

I'd like to see sales of my book "Mouse River" (available, in case you're interested, at www.Xlibris.com or by calling (888) 795-4272) skyrocket so I can spread the wealth, contribute to charity and stop having to attend county board meetings.

And, lastly, I'd like to see everybody have a wonderful year full of peace and prosperity.

■ *Tom Schlueter is the county reporter for the Kane County Chronicle. He can be reached at (630) 845-5380 or by e-mail at tschlueter@kcchronicle.com.*

I'd like to see private clubs admit everybody. If Augusta National changed its policy about admitting women, Tiger Woods wouldn't have to answer any more questions about his commitment to equal rights.

North Aurora wants flexibility for Route 31 revitalization

By ERIC SCHELKOPF 12/28/02
Kane County Chronicle

NORTH AURORA — Village officials said more flexibility for developers will help revitalize Route 31.

Village Administrator Rob Nelis Sr. wants the village to create an overlay district as part of the tax-increment-financing district along Route 31.

Village trustees recently created the TIF district along Route 31 and adopted a TIF redevelopment plan to beautify and give an economic boost to the corridor.

The tax district runs roughly from Oak Street to just north of Sullivan Road. The block around the North Aurora Activity Center was removed from the district after residents petitioned they did not want to be part of it.

The TIF redevelopment plan makes several suggestions on what should be built along the corridor.

One recommendation calls for offices, stores and a shopping center on vacant land next to the off-track betting facility.

Another recommendation calls for converting the former post office off Route 31 into offices or a day-care center.

The TIF redevelopment plan suggests that for any given parcel of land, several different land uses would accomplish the corridor's revitalization goal," Nelis said.

"An overlay district is one that, in effect, adds a second layer of regulation to the one currently assigned to land parcels — it overlays the existing zoning. When a property owner determines which regulations they must use, they look through the overlay at the existing zoning. The owner then determines which set of regulations, or both, provide the direction for land use development," he said.

Plan commissioners said they liked the idea.

"It is well conceived, fair and properly motivated," plan commissioner Ed Sweeney said.

This is the village's first TIF district, which allows the amount of tax revenue a taxing district receives from the area to be frozen at current levels. A TIF district can be in place for up to 23 years.

Any increases in taxes resulting from an increase in the district's assessed property value goes toward funding improvements. The TIF district is expected to generate about \$19,000 its first year.

Geneva park district seeks 18 percent levy increase

Rise would only apply to reassessed homes

12/28/02
By BRENDA SCHORY
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Geneva Park District officials recently requested a \$4.6 million levy, an 18 percent increase over the previous year's \$4 million extension.

"This does not mean a tax increase except where the homes are reassessed," said Board President Michael Abts. "The levy increase is based on new growth. We are receiving more revenue because of that — which we do need because of the increased use of the different facilities."

Susan Leninger, superintendent of finance and personnel said the \$700,000 in-

crease simply reflects continuing growth and demand for recreation.

"The most influential issue for the additional levy is growth in the equalized assessed valuation," she said.

Taxing bodies file their tax extension requests with the county clerk in December and receive their money in the spring. Levies are usually more than they expect to receive as a fail-safe to make sure they receive all the taxes they are entitled to.

"We never receive what we levy but if we don't levy enough to include the new growth, we won't receive those funds," Leninger said.

Most of the increase,

\$403,000 is in corporate fund, which covers all salaries. The district levied \$2.4 million last year and \$2.7 million this year. The increase reflects hiring a full-time naturalist, an additional full-time parks and maintenance worker and as well as adding more soccer and baseball fields.

The recreation fund increased by \$100,000, from \$600,000 to \$700,000, because of increased programs to meet the public's demand.

Social Security and the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund increase — \$19,000 and \$14,000 increases respectively — also reflects the growth from additional staff and more programs, Leninger said.

Bond and interest costs increased \$132,000, a nearly 24 percent hike from \$555,000 to nearly \$700,000, to pay off voter-approved open space bonds.

Hoeft replacement down to two

Munson, Pena top list of favorites 12/29/02

By MARK FOSTER
Kane County Chronicle

Two favorites have emerged as local Republican Party leaders consider a replacement for former state Rep. Doug Hoeft.

Elgin City Council member Ruth Munson and East Dundee Police Chief Joe Pena appear to be the leading contenders. However, Pena appears to have more support from precinct committeemen because he lives in Kane County.

Kane County Republican Party Chairman Ed Malek, who will select a replacement, met with GOP precinct committeemen and other party officials Thursday to hear recommendations.

Hoeft, 60, died Dec. 17 of complications from surgery he had Nov. 26. The Elgin Republican served in the legislature for 10 years. Previously, he was Kane County Regional School's superintendent.

Malek said he plans to name a replacement next week, and wants the new lawmaker sworn in before the start of the next legislative term, giving the representative seniority on the rest of the freshman class.

Malek has control of the appointment because most of the new 43rd District is in Kane County, covering portions of Elgin,

South Elgin and the Dundee area.

Munson and Pena appear to have garnered the most support, local Republicans said.

"Clearly those two candidates had the most discussion and interest among the committeemen," said state Sen. Steve Rauschenberger, R-Elgin.

The party chairman said he has not shortened his list of candidates, and continues to meet with some of the hopefuls.

Malek also is considering Kane County Treasurer David Rickert, Kane County board members Jackie Tredup and Lee Barrett and Elgin Township Republican Chairman Mike Kenyon to fill the seat.

See REPLACEMENT, page 2

Replacement

Continued from page 1

"I want to keep this close to my vest," Malek said. "The rumors out there are unbelievable."

The residency of Hoeft's successor is an issue for some precinct committeemen, Rauschenberger said.

Munson lives in Cook County, while Pena lives in Kane County.

"A number of committeemen feel it's a Kane County seat and the new representative should be from Kane County," Rauschenberger said.

Munson said she is downplaying the concern.

"I think it's an issue that can be overcome," Munson said. "I have served a multi-jurisdictional community as council member, and I would represent the entire district."

Hoeft recently had moved into the Cook County end of Elgin.

Pena could not be reached for comment Friday.

Malek said Munson's Cook County residency would not be a barrier.

"As chairman of the Kane County Republican Party, I am very much concerned with the geography and demographics of the district, but I am not going to make my decision based on where they live," he said.

It's going to be based on

their quality, experience, background and ability to serve. Not because of some imaginary line."

Rauschenberger said Hoeft's wife, Libby, supports Munson.

"Doug was mentoring Ruth," Rauschenberger said. "It's very important that the Republican Party and Ed and me be sensitive to Doug's family and key supporters."

Rauschenberger said either Munson or Pena would be a suitable replacement for Hoeft.

"They are consistent with where Doug was on issues," Rauschenberger said.

"They are well-situated from a philosophical standpoint."

Hoeft had earned a record as being moderate on social issues and fiscally conservative, Rauschenberger said.

Rauschenberger said Hoeft had made an obligation to support state Rep. Tom Cross, R-Oswego, for House minority leader, and the new lawmaker will be expected to meet that commitment.

"The new person will have to fulfill some of Doug's commitments, for at least the first six months," Rauschenberger said.

"You're not picking a free agent. You can fill Doug's seat but can't replace him. It's fair to ask them to meet those obligations."

■ Reporter Tom Schlueter contributed to this story.

Outlaws ^{IN} THE country

*Tiny towns attractive,
out-of-way hideouts
for big-city criminals*

12/29/02

By Mike Cetera
STAFF WRITER

Beacon

When gangster Al Capone wanted to get out of Chicago, legend has it, he sometimes stopped at an apartment above a gas station in rural Kane County.

The rustic setting, along with its sparse population, offered a quiet retreat but also provided the opportunity and anonymity needed to run a bootlegging operation.

Decades later, the connection with outlaws, even if tenuous, appears alive with the arrest earlier this month of a man law-enforcement officials say is a major player in Aurora's street gangs.

While residents living along the Blackberry Township road where John Orozco lives expressed surprise when they learned of his arrest Dec. 5, police and longtime residents from nearby Elburn say the myth of small-town innocence long has been gone.

"I guess we've always been kind of aware that there's gang-type transportation that goes through Elburn," Mayor Jim Willey said. "(Yet,) the general perception in our community is that nothing bad happens."

Indeed, some longtime residents are quick to point out that Orozco, a purported leader of the Latin Kings street gang, was arrested outside village limits at his Pouley Road home.

Orozco, 31, faces a federal weapons charge as part of an ongoing investigation into illegal drug sales in and around Aurora.

He was released from custody earlier this month after posting a \$100,000 bond, Assistant U.S. Attorney Lawrence Beaumont said. He was required to post that full amount, secured by property ownership rather than cash, a spokesman for the office said. A condition of his release includes home electronic monitoring.

Orozco's attorney, with the federal public defender's office, did not return phone calls.



John Orozco, identified by police as a street gang leader, has a home on the outskirts of peaceful Elburn.



DONNELL COLLINS/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

An unpaved country road through a rural Kane County setting apparently provides a sense of security for today's criminals, just as it once did for such gangsters as Al Capone.

❖ Turn to OUTLAWS, A2

OUTLAWS

From page A1

The Capone connection

About a mile south of Orozco's house, along a road that alternates between paved and unpaved, sits a farmhouse that may have played a role in the days of Prohibition.

Landmarked in 1994, the property designated as the Blackberry Creek Farm is believed to have been operated as a still by Capone's gang.

The gangsters hired someone to farm the land while they made illegal liquor in a cellar underneath the barn, according to a Kane County Development Department study of the property. The liquor was later brought to an old gas station at Routes 47 and 38, where it was distributed to Chicago and elsewhere.

"They stored barrels in the basement walls of the house on shelves they had made," noted the study, conducted prior to landmark designation.

"It is said by people living around that time that fancy men in expensive cars came down Pouley Road hauling lots of sugar."

When the still was later discovered by federal authorities, they filled it with gravel and cement. Many of the barrels are believed to remain buried there.

"Apparently this was a stopping point, a hideout for Al Capone to use," Elburn Police Chief James Linane said.

"There's some similarities here. They go for places out in the country."

Residents said Orozco, who recently moved into the ranch-style home with his family, kept to himself. There have been no allegations he conducted illegal activities out of his home.

One resident, who asked to not be identified, said Orozco was rarely seen in the neighborhood since his family moved in more than a year ago. Residents know little of the family, except that Orozco built several coops and began raising roosters.

"I can't say I'm sleeping as well knowing a gang member" lives nearby, the resident said.

Orozco, who patronized the grocery store in the middle of town, wasn't seen as insidious by people.

"This individual didn't bring his work home, so to speak," said Dave Anderson of Anderson's Grocery Store on Main Street.

"When someone comes in my front door of the business here, they are a customer. No more, no less," Anderson said.

Indeed, police had little to share with the FBI when its agents began asking questions. Orozco had no run-ins with local cops, Linane said.

"What I've heard is there were basically no complaints about this individual in the subdivision," Willey said. "It's almost as if he had a double

life."

Aurora Police Chief William Lawler said it's becoming more common during investigations that gang members arrested are found living in neighboring communities.

While Elburn has no gang history to speak of — it's consistently the safest community in Kane County per capita, according to Linane — it does have ties to street gang activity. These ties were bound for precisely the same reasons why Capone's gang would have picked the area for a place to set up shop — it's small and rural but close enough to a large city that travel is convenient.

Willey said Elburn has long been a route taken by gang members traveling between Aurora and Elgin who want to stay below the radar. Route 47 is more frequently used when Fox River communities increase patrols along Routes 25 and 31.

The use of Elburn as a transportation point hasn't increased crime in and around the community, police said, but residents know the days of leaving the back door unlocked are over.

"The small town is gone, and progress is coming, if that's what you want to call it," said Ken Gustafson, whose family has long operated Gliddon's Drug Store in downtown Elburn.

'Big Turtle's' past

Orozco has so far avoided the major drug charges leveled at more than two dozen Latin Kings or gang associates. He is charged with just one count of weapons possession by a felon after agents seized a 9mm Beretta semi-automatic pistol. He faces up to 10 years if convicted.

Also referred to in court documents as "Big Turtle," Orozco was named but not charged in a federal affidavit earlier this year, alleging a conspiracy to sell millions of dollars in cocaine in Aurora. A search warrant for Orozco's home was obtained by FBI agents because of Orozco's alleged leadership role in the gang and his "narcotics distribution activity."

Federal documents prepared prior to Orozco's initial court appearance make no mention of drug seizure.

Orozco, however, is named in federal court papers as a cocaine and marijuana supplier to David Bustamante, one of seven men arrested in late October during simultaneous raids of several Aurora area homes.

The former Aurora resident has a long history of police contacts dating to the early 1990s, including a conviction for delivery of a controlled substance.

Then, in 1995, Orozco was sentenced to two years in prison for his role in a drive-by shooting that police said was in retaliation for the slaying of a high-ranking gang leader the day before.

Two other men were convicted in the case as well: Miguel A. Montez was sentenced to eight years in prison; Rafael Juarides was sentenced to three years in prison.

Both men are among the 29 indicted in the federal drug probe in Aurora.

Election long over; Ramsey, Perez still battling

■ **Holiday delay:** 2003 will start with unresolved questions at sheriff's office

12/28/02

By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — Pat Perez began 2002 hoping he would occupy the Kane County sheriff's private office.

He finishes the year sitting in a chair about 50 feet away, behind the front desk at the Sheriff's Department on Fabyan Parkway here, answering telephones, welcoming the public and doing occasional paperwork.

The tale of high expectations tempered by reality is one of the more compelling ones of 2002, a story of personalities and politics. It actually began in the waning days of summer 2001. In early August of that year,

A series of personal looks at people who made news in the Fox Valley

Perez, a sergeant with the Sheriff's Department, announced he would run for the Democratic nomination for sheriff.

As the only Democrat to file for the position, he would face his boss, Republican Sheriff Ken Ramsey, about a year later in the general election.

From the beginning, Perez seemed to know what he was getting himself into. "I'm running as a Democrat and running against Sheriff Ken Ramsey, who is my boss,"

boss," he said in March. "Those two things should tell you something about me having a lack of fear."

The race heated up during the summer and came to a fever pitch during the early fall. Board members supporting Perez — or at least opposing Ramsey — were pressuring the incumbent sheriff hard on budgetary matters.

Perez was criticizing some department programs and saying he would change the command structure of the department. Ramsey pointed to programs started during his term as sheriff which he considered in line with modern, urban, law-enforcement techniques. Some of them, such as the community-policing substations he opened throughout the county and individually assigned squad cars, were the very programs Perez said he opposed.

◆ **Turn to FACES, A2**



Sheriff Ken Ramsey gets an election night hug from his 3-year-old grandson, Connor Gentry, at a celebration at the Riverside Reception Inn in Geneva.

BEACON NEWS FILE PHOTOS

practice complaint with the Illinois Labor Relations Board.

Both still are pending. "I feel this is a very vindictive move," Perez said. "I'm trained in investigation. This is a severe waste of my talents and training."

"He's the best one for that position," the sheriff said in response. "He needs to look at it as an opportunity to grow. He'll be inside, out of the weather... I'm actually doing him a favor."

In December, the Rev. Roy Brown, of the Progressive Baptist Church in Aurora, called on the Kane County Board to intervene in what he described as "an embarrassing situation" at the Kane County sheriff's office. He said the board needed to exercise an "oversight" position in the matter between Ramsey and Perez.

Brown said he was speaking on behalf of people who asked him to approach the board.

While the holidays have put the legal situation on hold briefly, the story has remained hot in the public eye.

Newspapers have been inundated with calls, running about even on those who favored Ramsey and those who favored Perez.

FACES

From Page A1

Calls and letters

During a meeting with Beacon News editorial board members, Ramsey made a statement succinctly spelling out his philosophy.

"They have had me under a microscope all summer long, and everything checked out," Ramsey said. "And you know why? Because I'm not stupid, and I'm not crooked."

Ramsey easily won re-election to his third term as Kane County sheriff, with about 62 percent of the vote to Perez's 38 percent.

But if anyone thought election day was the end of the matter, they were wrong. It was only the beginning.

On that very day, Ramsey signed papers reassigning Perez from being an on-the-street deputy to being behind a desk on a different shift.

Within a week, Perez had filed a grievance with his union, and, shortly after that, an unfair labor



Sheriff's Sgt. Pat Perez, Sheriff Ramsey's Democratic challenger in the November election, concedes defeat in an election night telephone call from Walter Payton's Roundhouse.

Prosecutors plan to bring lots of help with them to shooter's clemency hearing

12/28/02

By SARA BURNETT
Daily Herald Staff Writer

One, possibly two busloads of victims will travel to Springfield Jan. 6 to testify before a panel considering clemency for Luther Casteel, the man who opened fire last April inside JB's Pub in Elgin.

Prosecutors also plan to play for the first time in public the chilling 911 tapes from the shooting that killed two men. On the tapes, Casteel can be heard yelling maniacally and

firing several shots, Kane County First Assistant State's Attorney Robert Berlin said.

Both Berlin and State's Attorney Meg Gorecki will argue before the state's Prisoner Review Board, asking them to recommend Gov. George Ryan not commute Casteel's sentence from

death to life in prison.

Berlin said Friday he believes the state has a strong case but that anything can happen given the political climate.

"Certain things we have no control over," he said.

Casteel, 44, formerly of Elgin, was convicted in November 2001 of two counts of first-degree murder and 15 counts of attempted murder for the April 13, 2001, shootings that killed bar manager Jeffrey Weides and patron Richard Bartlett.

He was sentenced to die for the murders and to 15 life sentences for the attempted murders.

Prosecutors said Casteel armed himself with four guns and more than 200 rounds of ammunition, then went to the bar and began shooting because he was angry about being thrown out earlier in the night.

Casteel's defense attorneys said he was drunk and taking prescription drugs at the time and that the shootings were part of a suicide mission.

Taking the stand in his own defense, Casteel said he didn't remember the shootings and refused to show remorse, saying he would share his feelings "with God."

This fall, after Ryan hinted he may commute all death sentences to life in prison before leaving office Jan. 13, several days of clemency hearings were held in Springfield and Chicago. Casteel was not among them, however, and his attorney said at the time he wouldn't be filing a petition for him.

But last month, appellate public defender Duane Schuster did file a petition signed by Casteel. He declined to comment on why Casteel had changed his mind about applying for clemency.

In the petition, Schuster argued Casteel should not be executed because he suffers "from severe mental illness." Casteel's attorneys attempted to pursue an insanity defense at trial, the petition states, but Casteel "declined to pursue that strategy."



Luther Casteel

Public hearings set on outer-belt highway proposal

12/28/02

BY VERONICA GONZALEZ

Daily Herald Staff Writer

Two January public hearings will help state transportation officials study traffic congestion in six Illinois counties, including Kane County.

The hearings will be held from 5 to 8 p.m. Jan. 22 in Kaneland South Elementary, 85 S. Main St., Sugar Grove, and from 4 to 7 p.m. Jan. 23 in the Fountains of Minooka, 502 Twin Rail Drive, in Minooka.

The Illinois Department of Transportation is inviting people to attend two open meetings so they can watch a presentation, review exhibits and talk with state representatives.

The study comes as state transportation officials look into building the controversial outer-belt expressway to connect interstates 80 and 88.

"We just want to find out what the problems are to begin with," said Rick Powell, project engineer for the outer-belt expressway.

"We might be able to upgrade existing systems and the new beltway is only one of many possible solutions to any problem that we may find."

The other counties involved in the five-year, \$18 million study are DeKalb, Kendall, Grundy, Will and LaSalle.

The state has restricted development in the 36-mile corridor where the outer-belt expressway could be built. The corridor, 400 feet wide,

Public hearings

What: Public hearings on the Illinois Department of Transportation's traffic study.

Where and when: 5 to 8 p.m. Jan. 22 in Kaneland South Elementary, 85 S. Main St., Sugar Grove, and 4 to 7 p.m. Jan. 23 in the Fountains of Minooka, 502 Twin Rail Drive, Minooka.

stretches for 36 miles from Interstate 80 near Minooka in Grundy County to Interstate 88 near Kaneville in western Kane County.

But in a lawsuit in Kane County circuit court, property owners said that restriction was unconstitutional.

The corridor has been hotly contested because opponents want to protect the miles of farmland from being developed but also don't want the state transportation agency to dictate what gets developed there.

They have argued the state didn't prove why the corridor needed to be protected from development other than a highway.

Landowners are suing to have the state law banned because it prevents major developments from being built in that corridor without notifying the state transportation department.

The department, in turn, can decide to buy the land to protect it.

At least two nominated to fill Hoeff's job

*City council member,
police chief on list*

BY SARA BURNETT
Daily Herald Staff Writer

Two or three people have "bubbled up" as potential replacements for former state Rep. Douglas Hoeff, the chairman of the Kane County Republican Central Committee said Thursday.

Among those being considered are Elgin City Council member Ruth Munson and East Dundee Police Chief Ignacio "Joe" Pena. Hoeff's widow, Libby, recently

asked Munson to consider taking her late husband's seat. Munson accepted the invitation. She met Thursday afternoon with Kane Republican leader Ed Malek and state Sen. Steven Rauschenberger, the two men who will select Hoeff's replacement.

An Elgin business owner, Munson said she had conversations with Hoeff over the past few years about succeeding him when he retired — an event that was supposed to occur "at a much later date."

Hoeff, who was re-elected in November to his sixth term in office, died last week after suffering a stroke during a routine medical procedure. His 43rd District included much of Elgin, Carpentersville, East and West Dundee, and South Elgin.

"Doug planted the seed long ago," Munson said. "It was humbling to be asked and it would be an honor to continue what Doug started."

Munson, who already has the endorsement of the Dundee Township Republican party, is nearing the end of her first 4-year term on the Elgin City Council and has filed for reelection in April. If she is selected for Hoeff's seat, she likely would withdraw her name from the council ballot.

Pena, meanwhile, has the support of Mike Kenyon, chairman of the Elgin Township Republicans, the largest township in the 43rd District. While Pena did not return phone calls seeking comment Thursday, Kenyon said he discussed Pena's application for the job with him

Thursday morning. Pena indicated he would be interested, Kenyon said.

Pena has been a member of the East Dundee police department since 1974, serving as a patrol officer before being named chief. He also has been active in fund-raising for the Special Olympics and is well-liked by law enforcement, Kenyon said. "He would be the best choice for the party, and I think he's done a fine job," Kenyon said.

Kenyon also said he thinks Pena is respected in the Hispanic community and would be "re-electable." He is concerned about Munson's ability to be re-elected in two years because she lives in Cook County, which makes up the smallest part of the 43rd District.

Christmas brings need for recycling

12/25
By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — That pile of brightly colored presents under the tree Christmas morning has turned into a pile of brightly colored trash by Christmas night.

And, no, you are not imagining it. You are producing more garbage this time of year.

Kane County recycling coordinator Gary Mielke said Americans discard an extra 2 billion pounds of garbage during the last two weeks of December.

"That translates into an extra 3 million pounds in Kane County," Mielke said.

With all that extra waste, this time of year is a good time to think about what can and cannot be recycled, he said.

Greeting cards and wrapping paper can be recycled, as long as they do not contain foil.

Gift boxes and cardboard shipping boxes can be recycled, as can the newspaper and heavy paper used for packing.

Discarded wrapping and packing paper can be stuffed into paper grocery bags for easy pick-up. Recycling truck drivers will not take anything in a plastic bag.

Wrapping paper and greeting cards that contain foil cannot be recycled. Polystyrene, or Styrofoam, in rigid form or "peanuts" cannot be recycled either, he said.

Most municipalities will provide a pick-up service after the holidays for natural Christmas trees. Many shipping businesses will take the foam peanuts and re-use them.

Should voters get explicit say in teardown zoning change?

12/10/02 Herald

Ask the voters if they want a city ordinance reining in the size of new homes and additions in town, say critics of the current zoning rules under review.

"Put on the ballot zoning changes proposed by the Mayor's Task Force on Teardown/Infill Development that would affect 60 percent of town," is the latest cry by critics of the proposal.

They want the study and debate that has been going on for almost three years to appear on the April ballot as a referendum. The idea being that by casting your vote, you tell city officials what you think.

Kind of a roundabout and expensive way of doing it, say some city officials.

The city would have to print up fliers with taxpayer money, and maybe hold forums to tell voters what the issues are. Even though the city has held more than nine hours of public hearings on the changes, it would need to continue the education process to counter the notoriously unclear phrasing the state requires on the ballot. If you remember the fire station or school referendum questions that read like a chapter out of a dusty law book, you know what I'm talking about.

True, the message would get out to more people through direct mailings in the city newsletter, but then again, will that make a difference for the majority of people? Will those who weren't interested enough to follow the issue the last two years in the newspapers or at the city hall read the flier? While attendance at the recent public hearings has been good for a public hearing, at about 100 during the first two meetings, it dropped off for the Dec. 5 meeting to 50 people.

Putting the question on a referendum ballot literally would be the most democratic way to solve the debate — give everyone a say.

But, as politically incorrect a statement as this is, do you really want everyone having a say? If someone isn't following the issue, and it is really more complicated than reading a one-paragraph summary, do you want them voting on a whim? That was the argument advanced by some council members against putting the construction of a power plant on the east side on a ballot. Those same aldermen likely would vote down any request to put the zoning changes on the ballot.

An informal poll of several city officials leads me to believe that any attempt to ask aldermen to put the teardown/infill ordinance on the ballot would fail to get enough votes to in the council chamber.

Regardless, the referendum



Tona Kunz
Geneva

Kunz: Zoning issue referendum pushed

Continued from Page 1

wouldn't legally be binding, meaning aldermen could create an ordinance even if voters didn't want one, or vice versa. That was another argument against a power plant referendum. A resident group could collect petitions and force a referendum against the aldermen's wills, but they couldn't make the aldermen act on the vote outcome.

Typically, the only binding referendums are those that will raise the tax rate and make it exceed the tax cap of an annual increase of 5 percent or the consumer price index, which this year is 1.6 percent.

There also are a few exceptions laid out by state law, such as requir-

ing non-home rule towns to place on the ballot the creation of a publicly owned cable television company. Hint: you'll be seeing this coming.

Although some city officials see no harm in a referendum to get a better grasp of how residents feel, others say they can get a good idea just by answering their phones and listening to resident's comments.

Others say in essence, voters already did get a say when they cast a ballot for their alderman and mayor, giving them with the job of micromanaging town so the voters don't have to. For those officials, turning everything into referendum questions negates the need for

elected officials.

If that's true, maybe critics of the zoning changes, should turn their ballot focus toward effecting the individual ward elections rather than seeking a referendum.

Sharpen your blades: Alumni of Geneva High School hockey are invited to play in the annual alumni hockey game.

The game will take place between Christmas and New Year's Day at the Fox Valley Ice Arena in Geneva.

To register, or for more information, call Geneva High School Hockey Club president David Faunderoy at (630) 232-0347 or vice president Ann Sullivan at 845-1489.

Outer-belt opponent, 75, accepts media spotlight

■ Unofficial spokesman:

Big Rock resident has become group's voice

By Dave Parro
STAFF WRITER

12/25/02
Beacon

AURORA — Marvel Davis is 75

It's exactly that type of newspaper reporting that has become a running joke among Prairie Parkway opponents when it comes to the woman who has unintentionally become the group's spokesman.

As their campaign against the 36-mile proposed highway has heated up, Davis has been thrust into the spotlight, becoming the

poster child for the opposition. It wasn't by choice, but she represents everything journalists just eat up — an elderly woman not afraid to fight the politicians for the land she loves.

She's been quoted often, in newspapers and on TV, and every time, reporter include the same information. Earlier this year, it was, "Marvel Davis, 74, in every story. Now, she's a year older."

It's not something Davis necessarily wants people to know, but it's something she can live with telling as long as she can get her message out, too.

It's the pictures that really get to her. "I look so much older and so much fatter."

◆ Turn to FACES, A2



With her farm reflected in her window, Marvel Davis of Big Rock holds her dog Marty. In addition to voicing opposition to the Prairie Parkway, Davis has been trying to turn her property into a conservation easement to guard against development.

STEVE ROSENBERG / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

FACES

From page A1

the Big Rock resident said. "That's downright painful."

Part of the reason Davis has been so visible is because she has been willing to speak openly about her fight against the highway that would cut her town and 200-acre farm in half. She's feisty, and she's always good for a quote.

Most importantly, she's passionate about the land she grew up on, and she represents the opinions of many landowners up and down the 400-foot-wide corridor protection strip recorded by the Illinois Department of Transportation in July. The road would connect Interstates 88 and 80 through 193 parcels of land in Kane, Kendall and Grundy counties.

"If there were no Marvel Davis, we'd like to invent one," said Jan Strasma, official spokesman for Citizens Against the Sprawlway, the group Davis has come to unofficially represent. "She does lend a very personal aspect to the issue."

Norma Leifheit, a 60-year-old Big Rock resident who has known Davis all her life, said Davis has become the backbone of the highway opposition. Though she has always been active in the community, fighting other

development threats and turning her barns into community centers, the outer-belt issue has really thrown her into the public eye.

"She's kind of been the focal point for everyone in town," Leifheit said. "We kind of look to her for what we're doing."

When Citizens Against the Sprawlway decided to file a lawsuit against the state in September, challenging the corridor protection process, it was obvious to organizers that Davis should be the lead plaintiff of 56 landowners.

Like the media attention, Davis didn't ask for the role, but she accepts it with humility.

"It's a little scary to see 'Marvel Davis, et al' against the state of Illinois," Davis said. "It's a little intimidating, but it has to be done."

Davis may have reluctantly accepted her new spokesman title, but neighbor Tracy Dettman said no one has been surprised that the outspoken Davis has shone in the spotlight. Dettman said there's no better person to represent the opposition that the town's 75-year-old cat lover, who houses dozens of felines on her farm.

"When those bulldozers come, if they do, they'll have to go by her body," Dettman said. "Because she won't just let them do it."

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Schools major subject for Kane County

12/26/02
By MARK FOSTER
Kane County Chronicle

Kane County school districts faced financial difficulties in 2002, even as they made plans to accommodate growing enrollments.

Voters in some school districts were presented with tax referendums in 2002, or can expect to face ballot questions seeking school tax increases in 2003.

Schools were the big story of 2002 in central Kane County, from the mold crisis that hindered the St. Charles School District to the financial woes that crept into not only the St. Charles district, but also the Geneva, Batavia and Kaneland districts.

Another story from 2002 was the recommendation to suspend the law license of Kane County State's Attorney Meg Gorecki.

There also was the opening of the Geneva Commons, the sale of the Hotel Baker, the closings of the Pillsbury plant in Geneva and the General Mills plant in St. Charles and massive job cuts at Arthur Andersen.

And the growth, which continued to drive up school enrollments.

In St. Charles, the school year started with uncertainty, as the community waited to see if East High School would open for the start of the 2002-03 school year.



Taxpayers approved a \$4.3 million building referendum in March, but rejected a tax increase on the same ballot. In November, taxpayers again rejected an operational tax increase, which has forced the school board to make difficult decisions as it deals with a \$2.3 million deficit in the 2002-03 budget.

Now the board is in the midst of choosing new school boundaries, which will take effect in the fall.

Two new elementary schools are being built in South Elgin and West Chicago to accommodate for overcrowding.

In Geneva, former Assistant Superintendent for Finance Michael Jacoby moved down the hall into the Superintendent's office July 1 when John Murphy retired.

The district approved a \$43 million budget that includes a \$2 million deficit in the education fund — caused by the state cutting state aid and paying Geneva so late it lost interest income.

See SCHOOLS, page 2

Schools

Continued from page 1

But Geneva's financial woes were common across Illinois — 61 percent of the state's districts had deficit budgets because the state cut aid and paid late.

Such cuts were a key factor in the Batavia School District's deteriorating financial position in 2002, setting the stage for an operations tax referendum in April.

By the end of the school year in spring 2003, the district is expected to have \$400,000 in reserve. Without an increase in revenues or a cut in programs, the district would go into a \$4 million hole by the end of the 2003-04 school year, officials said.

This led the Batavia School Board to form a facilities and operations study commission, composed of citizen volunteers. The 66 members of the panel met throughout the fall, studying district finances and programs. However, taking into consideration the weak economy, the panel recommended a 60-cent increase.

The school board and advisory panel have agreed on a separate, 5-cent tax referendum also expected to be on the April 1 ballot. That referendum would finance the purchase of land to make possible the expansion of Batavia High School facilities.

The high school's enrollment of 1,641 is expected to reach 2,000 in the coming years, and the facility is already considered overcrowded. The land the district is looking to buy is owned by Mooseheart, which is considering the sale because of its own school financial problems.

Mooseheart International operates Mooseheart Child City & School on Route 31 between Batavia and North Aurora.

Moose officials talked about the possibility of closing the 90-year-old, kindergarten through 12th-grade school if the bleak financial situation does not improve.

To improve its financial situation, the organization hopes to generate at least \$1 million annually by leasing or selling 300 acres it owns outside its main campus. However, the campus would stay open.

In the Kaneland School District, a high school addition is on schedule as district administrators face challenges posed by growing enrollment and a tightening budget.

Phase II of construction is under way, with the foundation poured for the east end of the school and the bricks and mortar being set for the rest of the expansion.

The addition, which includes a library expansion, cafeteria, locker rooms and a music wing, will accommodate a growing student body — enrollment is expected to increase by 7 percent this year. Growth is expected to continue as new subdivisions take root farther west in the county.

While preparing for growth and managing a tight budget,



Burlington Central School administrators also are working to improve test scores and find a new superintendent.

At the end of the fiscal year, the district faced an operations and maintenance deficit of more than \$800,000.

The West Aurora School District experienced another year of growth in 2002.

School officials plan to build schools and add to existing schools to keep up with growth. The district has about 11,000 students, but enrollment is expected to increase 19 percent by 2006.

The West Aurora School Board voted to buy 38 acres for a fourth middle school that will help address growing enrollment at Jewel Middle School.

The school district will buy 38 acres from a farm off Deerpath Road in Aurora owned by the Patterman and Leick families. The school district is buying the land for \$43,000 per acre.

The sagging economy was also tough on local municipalities, and St. Charles felt the effects as more than 1,000 people lost their jobs.

First it was Hotel Baker, then Arthur Andersen, then General Mills — a one-two-three punch that left some city officials wondering what would happen next.

But even as the job losses piled up, new jobs came as the east gateway welcomed Target, Portillos and T.G.I. Fridays, which together produced 600 jobs.

Perhaps the biggest eye-sore in the city for the last several years was the old St. Charles Mall property on Route 38, east of Randall Road. Strict rules on the defunct mall prevented anyone from buying the building, so it sat vacant for six years.

The city finally was able to clear the restrictive covenants on the property with owner Bill O'Kane, and in late April, construction crews forced the bulk of the building to tumble down.

City officials wanted an auto mall to replace the once great mall property, but that has not come to fruition, and with Chicago auto dealer Al Piemonte choosing East Main Street for a Cadillac dealership instead of the proposed auto mall, some remain skeptical.

Batavia, Geneva and St. Charles spent most of the year investigating the possibility of

creating a Tri-Cities telecommunications utility offering telephone, cable television and high-speed Internet service.

Batavia approved plans for a water treatment system designed to remove radium from the water supply.

In Geneva, the city took on many changes this year that will overlap into the new year.

After a successful \$6 million public safety referendum, the city broke ground for the new \$4.5 million east side fire station, which is scheduled to be finished next fall.

When the fire department completely moves from the Public Safety Building to its new facility, a \$1.5 million revamp of the police department



Campobello

will follow. It is scheduled to be completed by July 2004.

The city's promotion of itself as a retail Mecca changed the face of Randall Road when the Geneva Commons Shopping Center opened this summer.

The mall giant's opening combined with road widening, turn lanes and stop lights turned Randall Road into gridlock for weeks this summer.

Another retail plus was the razing of Frank's Finer Foods on East Side Drive and a new CVS Pharmacy opened in its place.

Both Pillsbury and Kmart closed this year. Pillsbury hurt the city's bottom line in electric utility sales while Kmart's loss cut into its sales tax revenue. While the city continues to market the former Pillsbury site in its east side industrial park, an outdoor retailing giant, Gander Mountain, plans to open next year in the former Kmart site.

The nationwide scandal surrounding Catholic priests abusing children affected Geneva in December. Mark A. Campobello, 35, was charged with criminal sexual assault and criminal sexual abuse after being accused of molesting a 14-year-old girl while she was a student at St. Peter Catholic Church in Geneva. The incidents reportedly occurred between January and May 1999, while Campobello lived at the parish.

The Rockford Diocese of the church stripped Campobello of the ability to function as a priest.

State's Attorney Meg Gorecki's saga involving taped messages left on a friend's answering machine continued this year, and it is not over.

After a hearing in November 2001, an Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission hearing board recommended in April that Gorecki's law license be suspended for six months.

If her license is suspended for that time period or longer, she will have to resign her elected position and leave the state's attorney's office.



Gorecki

Kane GOP leaders seek Hoeft replacement

12/26/02

By Daniel Duggan
STAFF WRITER

Beacon

Local political hopefuls will make their pitches today for appointment to the Illinois House of Representative seat left open from the death of Rep. Doug Hoeft of Elgin.

Little official action has been taken since Hoeft's Dec. 17 death besides filing the paperwork for a vacancy of the position in the 43rd Legislative District. The district covers much of Elgin and South Elgin.

Hoeft, who served in the position for the last 10 years, died unexpectedly after complications arose during a surgical procedure from Nov.

The decision on who will fill the position will be made by Kane County Republican Party Chairman Ed Malek of Campton Township and state Sen. Steve Rauschenberger of Elgin. However, the process uses a "weighted vote" that gives Malek the final say.

Since Sunday, there have been a number of meetings among area politicians, Malek said, in an attempt to find a replacement who area politicians can agree on.

"We've been talking to a lot of elected officials in the area to get their input," he said.

Rauschenberger said the decision will be tough, with a lot of qualified candidates in the area and big shoes to fill.

"One thing we need to do is make sure the progress Doug made over the last 10 years is continued," he said.

Neither Rauschenberger nor Malek have identified about whom they are thinking just yet.

"We don't have a short list; we have a list," Malek said.

Today, interviews will be conducted with prospective candidates, and a meeting of elected Republican committeemen will be held to gauge their opinions, Malek said.

Following tradition, Libby Hoeft, the representative's widow, has been offered the position, sources said, but has not expressed an interest in the job. She has, however, chosen to take part in the decision-making process.

ing process.

Sources close to the process say that there is strong interest to find someone who can work well with the current state House leadership as well as other political leaders, such as U.S. House Speaker Dennis Hastert, R-Yorkville. Incoming Illinois House Republican minority leader Tom Cross, R-Oswego, also has had staff members involved in many of the discussions.

A number of names have been circulated in recent days. Sources close to the deliberations have said that a handful of people are being considered strongly.

Elgin City Council member Ruth Munson and East Dundee Police

Chief Joe Pena are two people several sources have mentioned as potential candidates for the position.

Kane County Board member Lee Barrett, of Dundee Township, also has been mentioned, as has Rauschenberger's brother, Keith Rauschenberger. Kane County Treasurer Dave Rickert, of Elgin, and Elgin Township Republican Chairman Mike Kenyon names also have come up.

Some have said that there is an effort to reach out to the area's large Hispanic population and that several of Elgin's Hispanic politicians, such as City Council member Juan Figueroa, have been considered.

A decision is expected to be made before the end of the year.

Geneva Township approves levy requests

Split reflects continuing clash over history center move

12/27/02

By BRENDA SCHORY
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Geneva Township officials recently approved the township and road district levies by two 3-2 split votes.

Trustees Dick Sharp and Bill Johnson cast the "No" votes.

The township levy request of \$471,000 is a 7 percent or \$30,000 increase over last year's extension of \$441,000; the road district request is \$201,000, a 5 percent increase over last year's \$191,000. Taxing bodies file levy requests with the Kane County Clerk in December and receive their money in the spring.

"There will not be a dollar increase in anyone's tax bill," Supervisor Patrick Jaeger said. "For the last three years, there has been a rate reduction and one passed with a zero levy. The fact of the matter is, no one's taxes are going up. In fact, they will go down slightly because of all the new construction ... \$36 million in new construction."

The levy increase is needed to pay for the Clarke Mosquito Control to spray for mosquitoes as the township attempts to keep the West Nile virus out, and to bolster the township's general assistance fund.



Jaeger

"West Nile is going to be a continuing problem and we want to make sure there aren't any fatalities," Jaeger said.

The township has paid about \$35,000 in general assistance aid for people who were income-eligible last year. This includes the \$20,000 levied and what was left over as an unused cushion

from previous years. "General assistance funds are being depleted at a record rate. If it continues at the same rate, it's possible by April 31 (the end of the township's fiscal year) the fund will have a zero balance," Jaeger said. The new levy includes about \$23,000 for general assistance.

"The remedy? If worse comes to worse, we can borrow from the town fund. We'll cross that bridge when we come to it," he said.

See LEVY, page 3

Levy

Continued from page 1

Sharp said he voted against the increase because he thought money has been wasted at Wheeler Park.

"I'm against any tax increase when we waste so much money at the township," Sharp said.

The levy vote mirrored their 3-2 split some 18 months ago when the board majority first voted to condemn the history center for new offices and a senior center.

Also part of the plan is to sell the property at 2202 Gary Lane, which is zoned for industrial use.

In August, township and history center officials approved \$315,000 for the building, and to allow the history center to stay in its Wheeler Park location rent-free until Nov. 15, 2003. If it stays beyond that point, rent would be paid until the center must move out Jan. 31, 2004. Unused rent would be reimbursed.

"This is such a waste of tax dollars," Sharp said. "We are quite capable of doing everything everybody would want to do right here. We have a place where people can come to the door, and not walk 450 feet to the front door" to the history center at Wheeler Park.

Sharp voted against the road district levy because it will

pay for replacing a rusted truck. "If the body falls apart, who cares? All you need is something to hook the salt machine on in back," Sharp said. Part of the plan to revamp township services and save money is to sell off unneeded road equipment and contract out for plowing and brush pickup.

Jaeger said the truck was 13 years old, and parts were replaced for this winter season. But the most important aspect of the road district budget is repaving its 8.2 miles of roads. In particular, Wenmoth Road is receiving more traffic with the expansion of the Mill Creek subdivision.

Trustee Sharon Brazill said both levies were appropriate.

"I felt very comfortable with the new levies," Brazill said. "I didn't feel that we were overbudgeted in any area."

Brazill said she believed Road Commissioner John Carlson was justified in wanting to replace a rusted, old truck.

"I might not always agree with someone, and someone might not always agree with me," she said. "But you have to come to a point finally when it's over, it's done with and you do what is in the best interests of the people in order to move forward, instead of constantly voting 'No,'" she said.

The area also retains an impressive piece of open space.

Through a lease arrangement with its onetime sister firm — what once was known as Andersen Consulting but later became Accenture — Andersen administers the beautiful conference center that is set along the banks of the Fox River, north of downtown St. Charles.

It seems an irony that a company long at the pinnacle of the accounting world would leave that field, even as it stays in the training and education arena. Or, maybe not.

There seems little doubt that the Worldwide Center was the heart and soul of Arthur Andersen, the boot camp that turned raw college graduates into leaders of American business.

A Web site maintained by former Andersen employees — www.andersenalumni.com — tells of the high regard they hold for the St. Charles piece of the company. One of them says it poignantly. It was written by one Joseph Zanco and posted on Nov. 7:

"Like many Andersen alums, my fondest memories are of the times I spent with colleagues in St. Charles. The firm's leadership made an incredible commitment to the facility. I applaud them for the \$\$\$ they invested enriching the careers and lives of their staff.

"To my knowledge, no company has created a similar atmosphere for career development."

What the future portends for the Worldwide Center is unclear. What is clear is that the center made a big impact on a lot of people who still play a big role in U.S. business.

What's more, if St. Charles and the surrounding area can find a way to nurture what is left of Arthur Andersen, it is altogether possible something quite important can rise from the ashes.

For the late company founder, Kendall County native Arthur Edward Andersen, the center remains the best part of his legacy.

■ **Roald Haase** is the Kane County Chronicle's business editor. To contact him, call (630) 845-5348, or e-mail him at: rhaase@kcchronicle.com.

Business Scene



**Roald
Haase**

Accounting firm's legacy lives on by Fox River

Arthur Andersen is down. But it's not out.

Not entirely.

The accounting giant, once one of the pillars of U.S. business, is essentially gone from the accounting industry.

Its downfall this year — a result of its indictment and conviction for obstruction of justice in the investigation of the Enron financial collapse — was sudden and pretty near total.

Except, that is, for a piece of Andersen called the **Worldwide Center for Professional Education**.

The center, in St. Charles, continues to provide facilities and staffing for conferences, meetings, business training sessions and other activities for which it long has been known.

Company spokesman **Patrick Dorton** told me this week that "the center will operate for a long time to come."

And the Andersen company remains a business entity, meanwhile, despite leaving the public accounting, audit and tax fields. Exactly what Andersen does is hard to say, although it employs less than 1,000 people.

So what is left of Andersen? The largest chunk, apparently, is the Worldwide Center and the estimated 150 Andersen workers employed there. Despite the loss of hundreds of other Andersen employees this year in St. Charles, the Fox Valley retains the Worldwide Center and its conference business, although in a much downsized form.

Chronicle 12/27/02

Economy defines 2002 for St. Charles

*Loss of jobs hurt,
but city did not falter*

By BILL TYNAN
Kane County Chronicle

12/27/02



ST. CHARLES — The sagging economy hit St. Charles hard in 2002 with more than 1,000 jobs lost.

First it was the Hotel Baker, then Arthur Andersen, then General Mills — a 1-2-3 punch that left some city officials wondering what would happen next.

But even as the job losses piled up, new jobs were created. The east gateway welcomed SuperTarget, Portillo's and T.G.I. Fridays, which together produced 600 jobs. The SuperTarget on Route 64, which combines a Target discount store with a grocery store, is the first in Illinois.

"(The loss of jobs) was a big issue, but it wasn't all doom and gloom," Mayor Sue Klinkhamer said. "To me it was more sad than anything else. We had two really vibrant companies at the beginning of the year (Arthur Andersen and General Mills). It would've been hard to believe both would close."

The year began with Hotel Baker closing in January as LaSalle Bank began foreclosure proceedings.

It soon became clear the historic hotel's closure would not be brief. Nearly one year has passed and a lock remains on the front door.

"It's very tragic," Klinkhamer said. "I'm sure somebody will buy it and it will re-open and things will be good, but (the closing) wasn't a good thing. As far as the city goes, you have to roll with it. It wasn't up to (the city) to keep them in business."

Court records showed the hotel's previous owners, Neil Johnson and Craig Frank, owed approximately \$3 million to the bank, \$900,000 to the Small

Business Administration and \$2 million to the city.

City Administrator Larry Maholland said he expects the problems that still exist at the hotel will take several months to be cleared, but believes a new owner may be found by late spring or early summer 2003.

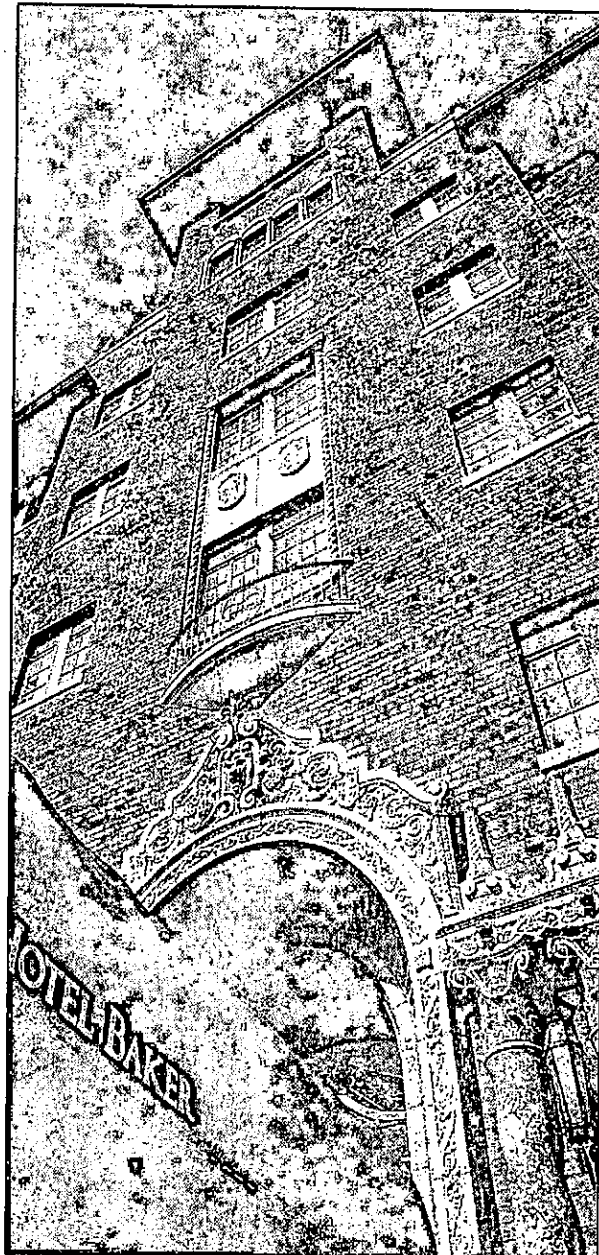
"I think things will get worked out, and hopefully somebody will come in and buy it," Maholland said. "I think in the long run we'll be better off, and hopefully the next (owner), if they fail, can bow out gracefully and sell."

"Hopefully the next (owner) will know what they need to do," Klinkhamer said. "It's pretty clear now what it takes to run a hotel and turn a profit. It's very sad to see it closed, but fortunately it hasn't stopped the success of the downtown."

Main Street storefronts now are completely filled, and that may be one of the few bright spots of 2002 for St. Charles. Main Street filled up in October with the addition of Moonlight Chocolates at 214 W. Main St., the first store of its kind downtown.

Arthur Andersen laid off 300 people in April during the fallout from the Enron debacle. Then in July, close to 300 General Mills employees at the company's west side dry-mix plant were told they would all lose their jobs by the end of the year.

The General Mills an-



Chronicle file photo

The Hotel Baker in St. Charles closed in January as LaSalle Bank began foreclosure proceedings. Job losses at Arthur Andersen and General Mills also hurt the city's economy.

nouncement came six months after the company announced the closure of its Geneva Pillsbury plant.

"(The layoffs) didn't just affect us," Maholland said. "We were impacted significantly, maybe more so than towns around us, but not compared to what happened nationally. Maybe there was a

community that had one business it depended on and it didn't have the location we have to recover. We are very fortunate to be in the area we are and the community we are because we still attract new business."

Perhaps the biggest eyecore in the city the last several years was the old St. Charles Mall

property on Route 38, east of Randall Road. Strict rules on the defunct mall prevented anyone from buying the building, so it sat vacant for six years.

The city finally was able to clear up the restrictive covenants on the property with owner Bill O'Kane, and in late April, construction crews demolished the bulk of the building.

City officials wanted an auto mall to replace the old mall, but that has not come to fruition. With Chicago auto dealer Al Piemonte recently choosing East Main Street for a Cadillac dealership instead of the proposed auto mall, some remain skeptical.

"I know people want more and want it faster, but it's hard to control the economy," Klinkhamer said. "Everything right now is in a state of flux. The fact that (the mall) sat there for so many years as an abandoned building, we set out what we planned to do, and that was to get the building down."

"It certainly isn't something to give up on. People have to be patient."

The new year will bring new projects for city officials, who are looking forward to the First Street redevelopment project. Officials said they expect the project to transform First Street into a retail attraction. Officials also are excited about the River Corridor redevelopment project, which they said could make the Fox River a destination point in St. Charles.

"It's amazing how a bad thing will happen and a good thing will go in its place," Klinkhamer said. "We're fortunate we're in a place where that happens. I still think we're in a better place than 90 percent of the communities out there, so we'll keep plugging along. This is still a great place and people want to live here."

Agencies receive state funds to protect local open spaces

Open Lands Trust program to preserve 162 acres in Kane

12/24/02

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Local forest preserve and park districts received Christmas gifts from Gov. George Ryan this week.

Ryan released \$36 million in his Open Lands Trust program, which will protect 2,600 acres statewide, including 162 in Kane County and another 818 in McHenry County.

The Kane County Forest Preserve will receive \$1.4 million to add 50 acres to the Campton Forest Preserve west of Wasco and 87 acres to the Burnidge/Paul Wolff Forest Preserve west of Elgin.

Forest preserve executive director Jon Duerr said the district is adding to preserves in areas where subdivisions are encroaching.

"Most of these properties are under development pressure," Duerr said.

Executive director of the McHenry County Conservation District Craig Hubert echoed those sentiments.

The conservation district will receive \$2 million to buy 570 acres adjacent to the Pleasant Valley Conservation Area and \$750,000 to add 248 acres to the district's headquarters at Brookdale.

With the new acquisition, Pleasant Valley will total nearly 1,500 acres.

"This is right in the center of the county," Hubert said. "It's a very nice area with a lot of natural features."

The 1,000-acre office complex at Brookdale will feature native plant communities and multi-use trails.

"We're slowly opening it up to the public," Hubert said.

Duerr said some of the district's older properties already are hemmed in by development.

"This is what's happening to our older preserves," Duerr said.

Campton Township will receive \$771,500 to purchase 53 acres north of Route 64 adjacent to the Great Western Trail. The township plans a picnic area, trail system and restoration of a wetland and prairie area.

Dundee Township will receive \$2 million to buy 92 acres in two locations, a 22-acre parcel on Boncosky Road east of Sleepy Hollow and 70 acres near Huntley Road and Elm Avenue, adjacent to Raceway Woods in West Dundee.

The Geneva Park District will see \$741,150 to buy 17 acres on Keslinger Road between the Mill Creek Forest Preserve and Peck Farm Park. The park district plans habitat and prairie restoration at the site.

The Open Lands Trust program is designed to protect habitats, restore native plants species and guard corridors along rivers and streams.

So far the program has provided \$63.5 million to local agencies to buy 8,700 acres. The four-year goal is to provide \$87.6 million to save a total of 41,200 acres.

Malek to name Hoeft successor within days

County Republican chairman meeting with seat hopefuls

12/27/62

By MARK FOSTER
Kane County Chronicle

Kane County Republican Party Chairman Ed Malek plans within a few days to name a replacement for former state Rep. Doug Hoeft. "I would love to do it before the end of year," Malek said. "My goal is

Monday or Tuesday." Malek and state Sen. Rauschenberger, R-Elgin, have begun interviewing candidates for the open seat, and Thursday night conducted a meeting with Republican precinct committeemen and other party leaders to hear recommendations.

Hoeft, 60, died Dec. 17 of com-

plications from surgery he had Nov. 26.

The Elgin Republican served in the legislature for 10 years. Previously, he was Kane County Regional School Superintendent.

Malek said he wants his appointee to serve out the last few days of Hoeft's unexpired term to earn seniority over the rest of the freshman class of state representatives who will take the oath of office Jan. 8.

"I think the seniority is important for the district and all of Kane County," Malek said.



Hoeft was the 43rd District representative under the new district map. The new district includes portions of Elgin and South Elgin.

Under Malek's plan, the new lawmaker would serve for a few days as 66th District representative before the new legislative apportionment map takes effect.

The appointee would be sworn in again as the 43rd District representative under the new district map.

While the district extends into Cook County, most of the population is in Kane County, which is why Malek has control of the appointment.

"It's my decision as to who the next state representative is going to be in that district," Malek said.

Malek would not volunteer the applicants' names, but confirmed that certain individuals have expressed interest.

See HOEFT, page 2

Hoeft

Continued from page 1

Among them are Kane County Board members Jackie Tredup, R-Elgin, and Lee Barrett, R-East Dundee, Kane County Treasurer David Rickert, East Dundee Police Chief Joe Pena, Elgin City Council member and business owner Ruth Munson and Elgin Township Republican Chairman Mike Kenyon.

"All those and others have been mentioned," Malek said.

Malek said he has felt pressure from party members on whom he should select.

"Certainly people have been giving opinions," Malek said. "But that's encouraging. I can't do this in a vacuum."

Malek said that finding a replacement whose political philosophy is similar to

Hoeft's will be critical. Hoeft was widely considered an expert on education issues. "I think it is important

that constituents have a representative whose views are consistent with the person who chose," Malek said.



Malek

Malek said Hoeft's wife, Libby, will be consulted as part of his decision.

"It's important that Libby feels comfortable with the candidate," Malek said.

Malek said Rauschenberger also will be key to the decision-making process.

Rauschenberger did not return phone calls seeking comment.

Judge calls for two additional public defenders

Hiring two lawyers would cost \$100,082

12/24/02

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Chief Judge Philip DiMarzio wants funding for two additional assistant public defenders as a way to speed up criminal cases.

Judges cannot set trial dates when public defenders are not available, DiMarzio said.

"It is my duty to ensure the system operates as efficiently as possible with the resources available," DiMarzio said.

Two entry-level lawyers would cost \$100,082, which includes a starting salary of \$35,000 each plus benefits.

Public Defender David Kliment said his office has 23 full-time and two part-time lawyers, which is down from 28 full-time and two part-time lawyers three years ago.

Since January, the office has had 3,605 felony cases assigned to it, which is down from 3,684 for the same period a year ago.

Despite the drop, Kliment said felony cases have increased at an average of 200 a year since he took office in 1994.

DiMarzio said he hopes to begin a new scheduling system designed to move Class III and Class IV felony cases to trial quicker.

"It would allow judges to schedule trials more frequently," DiMarzio said.

A trial has one of three results: The defendant is found not guilty, or sentenced to prison or probation.

"One thing is for certain, they will be out of our jail," DiMarzio said.

DiMarzio said he wants to focus on the mid-level cases.



DiMarzio

The most serious require DNA tests and rely on the state crime lab for results, which can take months.

"We're not getting these Class IIIs and Class IVs to trial as fast as I think we could," he said.

Kliment said he will begin a new, more detailed way of tracking cases that will provide a way to measure if the additional attorneys are paying for themselves.

Kane's jail population averages between 80 percent and 85 percent pretrial inmates. Moving more defendants to trial would help reduce the jail's population.

The judge's request will be sent to the January Finance Committee meeting.

Kane County Board Chairman Mike McCoy said he supports the addition of the public defenders.

IDOT to begin outer beltway study

Program to seek information about planning efforts

BY TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

12/24/83

GENEVA — The Illinois Department of Transportation will begin its needs assessment study of the outer beltway next month.

The department will begin by conducting two open houses in January at which officials will try to get a glimpse of Kane, Kendall and Grundy counties in 30 years.

"We'll be taking a look at the area and what the expected growth will be," said Gregg Mounts, IDOT program engineer.

IDOT will seek information from

local officials about their planning efforts for the area to see what "the landscape will look like in 2030," Mounts said.

The assessment is the first step of an exhaustive Phase I study that examines traffic patterns, environmental concerns and social impacts of a highway.

"We will look at the existing network (of roads) and see if it can handle (the growth). If it can, we're set," Mounts said.

"I encourage people to come out and see what we're doing and get an opportunity to get involved," he said.

U.S. House Speaker Dennis Hastert secured \$15 million for the study, which Mounts said could take three to five years.

Opponents of the proposed highway welcome the meetings.

"You can't fight the beltway without knowing about it," said Jan Strasma,

IDOT open houses

- Jan. 22 — 5 to 8 p.m., Kaneland South Elementary School, 85 S. Main St., Sugar Grove
- Jan. 23 — 4 to 7 p.m., at The Fountains of Minooka, 502 Twin Rail Drive, Minooka

chairman of Citizens Against the Sprawlway. "It's an important meeting."

One of the group's biggest criticisms is that IDOT recorded a 400-foot-wide corridor for the road without conducting a needs study.

"As it looks now, they decided what the answer is: The beltway," Strasma said.

Kane County Board Chairman Mike McCoy said the timing of the meetings is fortuitous because the county has just begun an update of its 2030 master plan.

"It's a good first step," McCoy said. "Nothing affects land use like an interstate highway."

Earlier this year, the state exercised its authority to protect the corridor against possible development.

The highway, if it gets built, would connect Interstate 88 near Kaneville to Interstate 80 in Grundy County near Minooka.

The IDOT open houses will be from 5 to 8 p.m. Jan. 22 at Kaneland South Elementary School, 85 S. Main St., Sugar Grove, and from 4 to 7 p.m. Jan. 23 at The Fountains of Minooka, 502 Twin Rail Drive, Minooka.

The open houses will be the first of what Mounts said would be many public meetings, both small and large, during the Phase I study.

"There will be multiple opportunities for people to give their input," Mounts said.

\$7 million for park, forest land

12/24/02

3EACON NEWS STAFF

Kane, Will share in final state acquisition grants

About \$7 million has been awarded to local agencies in Kane and Will counties for land acquisition as part of the state's Open Land Trust Program, Gov. George Ryan announced Monday.

The Kane County Forest Preserve District received two grants

from the program: \$753,000 for the acquisition of 50 acres on Route 64 adjacent to the Campton Forest Preserve west of Wasco, and \$676,750 for the acquisition of 87 acres adjacent to Burnidge/Paul Wolff Forest Preserve in the northern part of the

county. For the land adjacent to the Campton preserve, the county intends to provide additional trails and open space. The Burnidge/Paul Wolff preserve plans call for habitat restoration and hiking and equestrian trails.

The Geneva Park District received \$741,150 to acquire a 17-acre parcel off Kaneville Road between the Mill Creek Forest Preserve and the Peck Farm Park. Prairie and habitat restoration are planned for the site.

Campton Township received

\$771,500 to acquire 53 acres north of Route 64 west of Wasco. The site is adjacent to the Great Western Trail and part of the Mill Creek Watershed Study area. Development there includes a picnic area, trail system and the restoration of prairie and wetlands.

◆ Turn to LAND, A2

LAND

From Page A1

In northern Kane County, Dundee Township received two grants, for a total of \$2,028,500 for the purchase of two parcels totaling 92 acres. One of those parcels is 70 acres adjacent to the county's existing Raceway Woods Preserve. The Kane County Forest Preserve District bought an additional 67 acres and the two agencies split the \$6.8 million cost last week.

The Will County Forest Preserve

District received two grants. One, for \$251,250, will be used to acquire 150 acres near the Kankakee River State Park. The second grant, for \$1,300,000, will be used to acquire more than 200 acres along the Des Plaines River, site of a rookery for great blue herons and double-crested cormorants.

Administered by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the Open Land Trust is a four-year, \$200 million property acquisition initiative for conservation, natural resource protection and recreation. The \$36 million in grant awards announced Monday are the final grants awarded through the program.

Kane panel willing to hear alternatives to jail addition

By William Presacky
Tribune staff reporter

12/20/72
The new head of the Kane County Board's Corrections Committee said Thursday she is willing to temporarily defer construction of a 200-bed addition to the County Jail that has been called a waste of money if other cost-effective proposals are forthcoming.

Karen Steve-McConaughay (R-St. Charles) said she wouldn't support a lengthy de-

lay, even though questions have been raised about whether to proceed with the jail expansion. The addition to the 1970s-era jail on Fabian Parkway near Geneva has been proposed as a way to ease chronic overcrowding of inmates. It would cost about \$12 million to \$14 million and take two years to complete. The jail is expected to reach capacity even as the expansion is finished.

Consultants with the federal National Institute of Corrections recently told Kane officials that it might be preferable to demolish the jail in favor of a new facility. They said adding to an old jail that they believe was poorly designed and is ineffi-

cient and unsafe may be a waste of money.

Although the jail's capacity is about 400 inmates, it housed 460 Thursday, according to Sheriff Ken Ramsey. Another 150 inmates are being housed in other county jails, mostly in McHenry County, for a daily fee.

Steve-McConaughay's comments followed a report by Ramsey, who said he recently received overtures from a Louisiana-based firm about some type of jail deal with the county Ram-

sey said he has invited officials of Emerald Correctional Management of Shreveport to meet with the committee in January.

The firm owns and operates a dormitory-style prison in Epps, La., and manages another state facility. It also is building a regional correctional facility in Texas designed primarily for federal inmates.

Ramsey said the company wants to discuss building a similar 500-bed, dorm-style facility in Kane that also would house

federal inmates.

The partnership concept has "a lot of potential for addressing overcrowding," the sheriff said. The notion "came out of the blue," he said, but a joint venture with a company "sounds very good at first blush."

"We can't afford to not take a look at it," Steve-McConaughay said. "But we need to decide in a very short time if we are on the right course. I want the best long-term solution at the cheapest price for the taxpayers."

Ramsey plays 'get jail free' card

■ **Current jail site: Board hears plan for privately built federal prison facility**

By Daniel Duggan
STAFF WRITER

12/20/82
Beacon

GENEVA — County officials perked up their ears Thursday at the thought of a new jail coming to Kane County — at no cost to the public.

Sheriff Ken Ramsey said he has been approached by a private company with a plan to build a 700-bed facility to hold mostly federal prisoners on property adjacent to the Kane County jail on Fabyan Parkway in Geneva.

"This has the potential to bring some new dollars to the county," Ramsey told the County Board Corrections Committee.

The preliminary proposal was made to Ramsey by Emerald Correctional Management, based in Shreveport, La. The company's chief executive officer, Clay Lee, confirmed having the meeting with Ramsey but would not comment further.

"I can say it was a very preliminary, initial meeting," Lee said.

Ramsey said there is a "potential to gain some revenue" from the situation by working out an agreement with the company.

Ramsey said the agreement would mean Emerald could build a new facility next to the jail on the county's property with "low to medium security dormitory style cells."

In return, the county would be able to put up to 200 prisoners in the facility from its own severely overcrowded jail, he said.

In addition, the facility would be turned over to Kane County in 15 years.

"It sounds good at first blush," he said. "It could be a good revenue stream for the county."

PRISON

From Page A1

Prisoner space is a touchy issue among County Board members, who are still unsure about a proposed \$12 million addition to the current jail.

Ramsey told Corrections Committee members that Emerald approached him "out of the blue" and that there would be more discussions in the coming month. Company representatives are expected to attend next month's committee meeting, he said.

Committee member Caryl Van Overmeiren, R-St. Charles, said the idea is "a viable thing to look at."

Karen Steve-McConnaughay, R-St. Charles, who recently took over as chairman of the committee, said working with the federal government could be a way to get more money.

"We would be remiss if we didn't shake that bush," she said. "We can't afford not to look at it."

With Thursday's meeting the first for some new board members,

Steve-McConnaughay and Ramsey took the group on a tour of the county jail.

Though some members seemed to bristle when Ramsey explained what to do in the event of hostages being taken, Steve-McConnaughay said it was a positive experience for members.

"This is the largest problem that the board will be facing," she said. "At a minimum, they need to know what this place is like."

For recently elected board member Deb Allan, R-Elgin, the jail was what she expected for the most part.

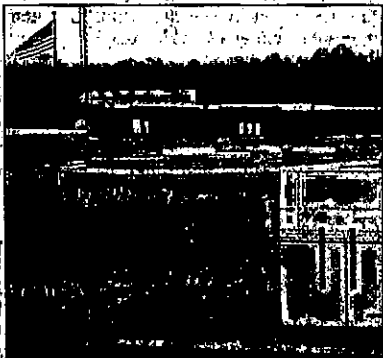
"It's very sparse," she said, "and I'd say it's better cared for than I would have expected."

Steve-McConnaughay told the new committee members that she is expecting them to put in "a lot of overtime" to get up to speed on the proposed 200-bed expansion of the county jail.

"We need to determine in a short period of time if this is the best solution we can come up with," she said about the addition.

"If we're spending that kind of money, we better make darn sure it's the right decision."

◆ Turn to PRISON, A2



STEVE ROSENBERG/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Talk has begun about a private company building a federal prison here on the grounds of the Kane County jail in Geneva.

The cost of a crowded jail

Kane County pays other counties millions to house its inmates

BY DAVID R. KAZAK 12/23/02
Daily Herald Staff Writer

Kane County's leaders have had a tough time over the years paying employees what those employees say they should be paid.

The money, leaders say, just isn't there. In fact, officials had to reduce budgets by some 3 percent across the board in county government because, they said, tough economic times are taking a toll.

Nonetheless, Kane tax money paid for McHenry County's jail guards' recent pay increase of 14 percent over three years.

In Kane County, employees have been told they'll get no pay increase, or maybe a 2 percent bump, due to budget cuts. In many instances, jobs emptied through attrition or other means will remain open for the foreseeable future.

Yet in Grundy County, Kane taxpayers helped pay for two new jail guards at that county's jail.

Ogle County is using Kane tax money to help it make a better offer to workers' unions.

The reason these other counties use Kane taxpayer money for their own benefit is that they supply the space that Kane County cannot for an average of 140 inmates a day.

At \$50 a day for each inmate, Kane's payments translate into thousands of local tax dollars being funneled into the budgets of several counties, some sharing a border with Kane, others as far away as deep southern Illinois.

In some cases, the amount paid reached hundreds of thousands of dollars. And in the case of McHenry County, cells rented to Kane County netted more than \$1 million this year alone.

Overall, Kane County doled out \$2.1 million for rent in 2002. And that amount does not include the cost of shuttling inmates across the state and other ancillary expenses. The farthest away is Jackson County in southern Illinois, a six-hour drive on Interstate 57.

Just east of Jackson is Williamson County. Kane jail officials didn't send any inmates there this year, but they have in the past. According to the sheriff's office there, Kane money paid for a new van Sheriff Tom Cun-



GEORGE LECLAIRE/DAILY HERALD

McHenry County corrections officers like David Durkin received raises because of the influx of money from Kane County, whose jail doesn't have enough room for all its inmates.

Where Kane spends rent money on jail cells

In 2002, Kane County rented space for an average of 140 inmates each day in other counties at a total cost of \$2.1 million. That cost will go up once Marion County starts accepting 30 inmates a day.

1. Stephenson County

- 80 inmates daily
- About \$1.39 million a year
- Money helped pay for 14-percent raises (over three years) for 175 jail guards

2. McHenry County

- About \$66,000 a year

3. Ogle County

- About \$66,000 a year

4. Henry County

- About \$66,000 a year

5. Grundy County

- About \$66,000 a year

6. Schuyler County

- About \$66,000 a year

7. Marion County

- About \$66,000 a year

8. Jackson County

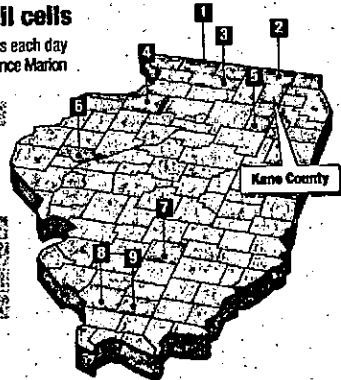
- About \$66,000 a year

9. Williamson County

- About \$66,000 a year

Source: Individual counties

DAILY HERALD



diff's jail guards use to transport inmates.

In McHenry County, Tom Svoboda, chief of corrections in the sheriff's office, said Kane sends about 80 inmates a day to his jail, which brings in millions to the county.

The county, in turn, has been generous when it comes to the jail.

Besides the hefty increase in pay the guards received, the jail was able to hire a

full-time property room officer.

"We've never had that in the past," Svoboda said. He added that the hiring of an additional five corrections employees also was possible thanks to the inmate rent money.

Ogle County rents out some of its cells to Kane as well as others, including the federal

See JAIL on PAGE 4

Jail: New addition also will be crowded, sheriff says

Continued from Page 1

government, bringing it a total \$900,000.

"That's made it much easier to negotiate with the unions," said Ogle County jail director Greg Beitel. "I think it's safe to say they're looking at a 3- to 4-percent raise."

Grundy County Sheriff Jim Olson said Kane has provided his county coffers with some \$400,000, and "if it's helping our general fund, it's helping our county."

Late in November, he was housing about 30 Kane inmates in his jail. Past efforts to help Kane out allowed Olson to ask for, and receive, two

new corrections officers for his staff.

"I wouldn't have been in a position to ask for (the officers) if I didn't have Kane inmates," Olson said.

Kane County officials earlier this year approved a \$12 million, 200-bed jail expansion that will increase the current 400-bed capacity. The project is slated to be finished in late 2004 or early 2005.

Still, many officials, and Sheriff Ken Ramsey himself, have said the addition will be crowded, too, by the time it opens.

Meanwhile, many county board members, including Chairman Mike McCoy, have held fast to their position that the government

cannot build its way out of the crowding problem.

McCoy also said money isn't being lost because of renting, it's being saved.

"If it wasn't going to (rent), then it would be staying here in Kane, paying for increased costs to house our prisoners," McCoy said. "It's not like it's found money or anything."

Ramsey said that's true. But it's true only in the short term. In the long run: "We're losing valuable dollars that could be spent in Kane County," he said. "Because McHenry built their way out of their overcrowding problem, now they're making money, taking prisoners

from other counties and elsewhere."

No matter what's said in the debate, Kane jail Cmdr. Todd Exline said the \$2.1 million that flows out of Kane easily could double if more free cells open up elsewhere.

Marion County, for example, is set to open up 30 cells for Kane's use, he said, and with Kane's average inmate count at between 600 and 700, those extra 30 cells will be filled immediately.

That translates into nearly \$500,000 if Kane can keep those 30 cells filled all year long.

"If I could find the space in other county jails, they'd all be out," Exline said.

Board races take shape for April election

Most Geneva incumbents plan to seek re-election

Candidate filing continues until 5 p.m. Jan. 21

12/23/02

By BREND A SCHORY
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Most incumbents in Geneva said they are seeking re-election April 1, with actual contests

possible in two aldermanic races.

Incumbent 1st Ward Alderman Chuck Brown, and treasurer and Geneva Library Board member Timothy Moran may face off.

Also, 3rd Ward Alderman Ray

Pawlak may face a challenger in Diane Chapman as they both seek the same seat.

Chapman is a middle school teacher and former member of the plan commission.

Second Ward Alderman Jim Radecki said he may seek another term, but still is deciding. Fourth Ward Dorothy Flanagan said she definitely is running again.

Fifth Ward Alderman Scott Fintzen said he will not run again. Craig Maladra, president of the Geneva Library Board said he will run

for Fintzen's spot.

Nominating packets for the spring election still are available. The first filing date is 8 a.m. Jan. 13 at each respective public body's office. Candidate filing continues until 5 p.m. Jan. 21.

Incumbent School Board President Dean Kilburg and members Margaret Selakovich and David Scatterday all said they would stand for re-election.

Park board president Michael Abts and board member Charles Emma said they would both stand for elec-

tion to continue serving on the board.

There are five four-year terms open on the library.

Two members, Moran and Maladra already declared themselves for aldermanic posts. Donald Cummings Jr. and Mim Evans said they would run again, and Susan Tegeler could not be reached for comment.

Library Director Jeanne Hintz said she hoped there would be no shortage of people willing to serve on the board, as 15 people picked up nominating packets.

How group wants Valley View for drug treatment

12/22/02
BY ALICIA FABRE
Daily Herald Staff Writer

Kane County Judge James Doyle knows there are people out there who want help getting off drugs. He sees them every day. They ask him to help.

But getting them the assistance

they need is another story. Though there are residential drug treatment centers within a half-hour's drive of the courthouse, bed space is limited. It's not unusual for a person in Doyle's drug rehabilitation court program to wait several weeks in jail for a spot to open up at a treatment center. At times, the wait can be

more than a month. Some say that problem only will get worse as enrollment in Kane County's drug rehabilitation court grows and other counties start similar programs.

That's why Doyle and a group of parents want to reopen the Illinois Youth Home at Valley View. They say

the shuttered youth prison between St. Charles and South Elgin would be the perfect spot to treat drug court participants.

"In my opinion, this is something that is so needed in this community," said Lea Minale, founder of Hearts of Hope, a parents advocacy group for the drug court. "There are kids

dying and something needs to be done. We just can't sit by and cry. We've done that already. Now we want some action."

Doyle and members of Hearts of Hope first publicly floated the idea of reopening the Valley View facility at a meeting last month.

Since then, parents have met to

begin drafting a proposal to take to state, federal and local lawmakers. The group plans to start taking its plans to lawmakers early next year.

"We want to get this in front of everyone so we can get this thing rolling," said Bob Sherry, one of the

See REOPEN on PAGE 6

Reopen: Group to plans to ask to federal government for funds

Continued from Page 1

parents involved in the proposal. Sherry also has a son in the drug court program.

Though the Valley View facility has 10 buildings, Sherry said parents are proposing to open only four at first. All four buildings, which each could hold 48 people, would be used for treatment.

Applicants to drug court still would be held in the county jail until their application is approved. But parents say that with a treatment center at Valley View, applicants wouldn't have the weeks-long wait for a bed at a treatment center.

"We'd be able to move more people into the program and into treatment," Doyle said. Parents still are working out a budget outlining the costs of transforming the youth home into a rehabilitation center. Sherry said possible repairs, including some to a water tower they believe has frozen, would add to the costs.

Despite the costs — likely to run in

the millions — of running a treatment center and the budget problems facing the state and county, Doyle and other parents are optimistic lawmakers will come through. "What's the alternative?" Doyle said. "We have more drug courts opening up and no treatment. What's the alternative?"

He said the group's focus will have to be on the federal government. With the county and state facing budget problems, the federal government has the deepest pockets to help get a treatment center off the ground.

A treatment center also would help fight the government's war on drugs by reducing the demand, Doyle said. Representatives for U.S. Speaker Dennis Hastert, a Yorkville Republican, this week told Doyle they want to bring back \$250,000 in federal money next year for the existing drug court program. The Hearts of Hope group will discuss the proposal at 6:30 p.m. Jan. 6 at the Kane County Judicial Center, 37W777 Route 38 in St. Charles.

Good morning

Death of rare man who put kids, truth first leaves a gaping civic hole

12/22/02 Herald

"We adjourn tonight because there aren't any more rich white guys to service."

Doug Hoeff was so unflinchingly polite that such a moment of publicly expressed despair and disgust was all the more powerful for its rarity. That quote, published in May 1999, sealed his position as a truth-teller in the hearts of a great many in the Fox Valley who valued such honesty. But embarrassed as he was by having to speak such words, he believed the spring 1999 General Assembly should have been dressed in red.

George Ryan had coerced it into lifting more cash from every car owner and gutting the state's original gambling legislation in order to shower the least needy — Donald Stephens and Rosemont, Richard Duchossois and Arlington International Racecourse, Bill Wirtz and other less famous liquor distributors, and Ryan's favorite contractor buddies — with his largesse.

Ryan's methods eventually would lead to his downfall, but back then, Hoeff was pretty much a voice in the wilderness, futilely begging his colleagues to remember their constituents.

That legislative session cast a dark shadow across Doug Hoeff's soul, for

it corrupted the essence of public service, he held so dear.

Hoeff believed constituents' colleges and the media, all were essential parts of representative government, just as he felt it his duty to introduce that wondrous system to its future — the kids to whom he devoted most of his life as a teacher, school administrator, and legislative leader on education.

The spring session of 1999, he knew, would be indefensible to kids who inherently understand right and wrong, fair and unfair — kids like my son, who had served as a Hoeff page in the Illinois House just the year before. Hoeff had invited him to participate with a seriousness that reflected his deep belief in the process — wear a tie, be polite, do what you're asked to do.

It was a thrilling experience for my son — and, I confess, to a rather cynical pair of journalist parents, to feel again that special democratic pulse, that thump, thump, thump of a free

It is an energy that can be felt only in person, in the U.S. Capitol or state capitols across the land. It is the heartbeat of democracy, and Hoeff represented the very best of it.

people deciding their own fate. It is an energy that cannot be felt over the phone or through a book, but only in person in the U.S. Capitol or state capitols across the land. It is the heartbeat of democracy, and Hoeff represented the very best of it.

The page job itself was no cake-walk and in my son's case, it was done during spring break, when other kids were playing video games or baseball. Basically, the kids run piles of paper back and forth between the Capitol and legislators' offices, or they deliver food, or drink to working legislators. It was long periods of standing around bored, followed by a rush to the cafeteria and back.

At age 11, my son was then too young to understand many of the issues unfolding in front of him. But he was old enough to know he was for a day — part of something bigger than he was, bigger than Doug, bigger than his family or his hometown. He felt part of an idea, a

A small notion, not a big one. A personal philosophy, not a political one. And one that undoubtedly would leave Hoeff's nemesis, George Ryan, snickering.

But it was, in the most simple terms, the central theme of Doug Hoeff's life.



In March 1998, Doug Hoeff posed with then-fifth-grader J.J. Bailey, son of Daily Herald columnist Chris Bailey, when he served as an Illinois House page under Hoeff's sponsorship.

Hundreds remember Hoeft as compassionate

12/22/02

By Lisa Smith
STAFF WRITER



ERIC MAXEN/SPECIAL TO THE BEACON NEWS
Former Elgin Assistant City Manager Bob Malm (far right) holds open the rear door for visitors at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Elgin Saturday morning, as hundreds gathered to attend the funeral of state Rep. Doug Hoeft. The Elgin Republican died unexpectedly Tuesday.

speech pathologist.

The 60-year-old Elgin legislator died unexpectedly Tuesday at a Chicago rehabilitation center where he was undergoing physical therapy after suffering a stroke. He was re-elected to his sixth legislative term in November.

Brian recalled his father as a man of faith who had taught Sunday school to high school students. At church every Sunday, Doug Hoeft introduced himself to someone he did not know or someone attending a service alone.

Doug Hoeft's daughter, Amy Saylor, said she and her father shared an interest in sports, and he encouraged her love of music.

"Nothing was more important to my dad than family," Saylor said. "My father left a small part of him-

self with each one of us."

Others who spoke at the service paid tribute to Hoeft's commitment to schools.

"After family ... I know that Doug's love and passion was education," said Clem Mejia, Kane County regional school superintendent, a position Hoeft held until selecting Mejia to take his place.

Mejia described Hoeft as a "lifelong learner, teacher and leader."

"Doug Hoeft always knew where he was going but never ever forgot where he came from," Mejia said. "Doug never stopped teaching and learning."

Hoeft taught social studies at Elgin High School from 1965 to 1975.

"He may have become a legislator, but he was a teacher at heart,"

Mejia said.

State Sen. Steve Rauschenberger, R-Elgin, praised Hoeft for his dedication to reforming education, improving the Elgin riverfront and commitment to finding a permanent home for Public Action to Deliver Shelter (PADS) for the homeless. Hoeft's compassion for others was obvious, Rauschenberger said.

"His greatest gift ... was his ministry of caring for his colleagues," Rauschenberger said. "Something tells me that, when Doug gets to the great pearly gates, he's going to open with a joke, and then he's gonna ask, 'How are you?'"

In addition to his two children, Hoeft is survived by his wife of 37 years, Libby.

Committee hopes to save Batavia dam

By Denise Linke

SPECIAL TO THE BEACON NEWS

12/22/02
BATAVIA — Ruth Johnsen and Carol Leppert want nothing more for Christmas than to save the north Batavia dam from destruction.

They're hoping enough local Santas will join a petition drive they hope will make that happen.

Leppert and Johnsen chair the Dam Committee, a group of residents working to put an advisory referendum question on April's ballot. The referendum would give voters a chance to tell the Illinois Department of Natural Resources whether they think the century-old dam near Island Park should be removed to let the river run more swiftly.

IDNR officials already are planning the demolition project, said Batavia Assistant City Administrator Randy Recklaus.

"I don't know if we can actually stop the project," Leppert said. "We just want the state to know that we haven't had a voice and that we want to be part of this decision, even though the officials say it's a done deal. In politics, nothing is ever a done deal."

Committee members object to tearing down the dam because they say it will destroy the natural beauty of the Fox River near the Riverwalk volunteers worked so hard to build.

"What's the Riverwalk and the wildflower sanctuary going to look like without the dam?" Johnsen said. "The Depot Pond will disappear. The cascades will be gone. Wild birds, animals and fish will lose the habitat they've had for over 100 years. The river will narrow and expose the riverbed, which will be unsightly and will hold pools of water where mosquitoes will breed in the summer."

Recklaus said state officials plan to landscape the exposed riverbed so that Riverwalk users still have a scenic view to enjoy.

A proposed earthwork berm connecting Island Park to Duck Island and the west riverbank would keep the pond's water level the same, he added; and the natural limestone formations on Duck Island would replace the cascades as a focal point.

"The idea is to add to the Riverwalk's appeal," he said. "This is the first dam in an urbanized area that the IDNR is tearing down (as part of a statewide dam removal plan). We're going to be the poster child for this whole project, and the state people are going out of their way to mitigate any effects this will have on the city."

Dam proponents also worry that sediment caught at the base of the dam contains decades worth of pollutants that will contaminate drinking water downstream if the dam isn't there to hold it in place.

"My concern is that Aurora residents drink this water," Johnsen said. "The sediment reports now aren't that good, so what will they be like if the dam isn't there? I can't understand why the Aurora City Council isn't getting involved in this issue."

Recklaus said the IDNR will dredge the sediment and dispose of it before demolishing the dam.

The Dam Committee must submit at least 1,500 signatures of registered voters by Jan. 13 to place the referendum question on the ballot. So far, it has logged about 500, with dozens of petition forms still circulating, Johnsen said.

"It's hard now because we're right at Christmas time and everyone is busy," Leppert said. "We just hope that people will start thinking about it again once the holidays are over so we can get this done."

The committee's office at 8 N. River Lane is open from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and 4-6 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays, except for Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. For more information, call 879-2282.

Batavia and Geneva will take another look at tapping into Lake Michigan water

12/21/02

BY VERONICA GONZALEZ
Daily Herald Staff Writer

Geneva and Batavia officials are rethinking tapping into a Lake Michigan pipeline because the water is better and tastier than what's available underground and there's more of it.

It's an idea that had been proposed by the DuPage Water Commission

about three years ago as Batavia and Geneva considered building water treatment plants to improve the quality of their well water, officials said.

Since then, Batavia decided to build its own treatment plant — under the gun by the Environmental Protection Agency — while Geneva put its plans on hold.

Batavia and Geneva officials began

rethinking the issue after the water commission recently approached them and North Aurora with the possibility, said Richard Skiba, financial administrator for the commission, which sells lake water to 25 municipalities.

"We're in the courting stage," said John Donahue, Geneva's superintendent of sewer and water.

At this point, it's too early to tell how

much it would cost to extend pipes beyond West Chicago or how much it would cost customers here to get Lake Michigan water, Skiba said.

Tapping into the pipeline is an attractive option for both cities that are concerned about the health of aquifers in Kane County that are taxed more each day with residential growth.

A Northeastern Illinois Planning

Commission study showed that Kane County faces water shortages in the next 20 years.

"There's going to be more growth and more demand on the wells," said John Dillon, Batavia's water superintendent.

Batavia officials at one point had considered the option as they wrestled with different choices for how to comply with a federal mandate to

lower the water's radium levels. City officials recently decided to build an \$18 million treatment plant they want running next year. And they raised water rates by 20 percent to foot the costs.

But the city still is open to considering lake water.

"The possibility of getting Lake

See WATER on PAGE 8

Water: Pipes would be extended

Continued from Page 1

Michigan water may not come again for a long time," Dillon said.

Geneva had considered getting lake water, too, knowing that at some point radium levels would exceed allowable levels. As a result, the city had considered building a costly lime-softening treatment plant.

"As long as this is an option for us, we'd be foolish not to evaluate what those costs are," Donahue said. "Our customers have indicated to us they would like to see an improved water quality."

For the DuPage Water Commission, it's a chance to make money, Skiba said.

Before the cities even consider tapping into lake water, the Department of Natural Resources would have to review whether they should receive lake water. Then the department would determine an allocation for the cities, said Jim Casey, a civil engineer with the department.

Plus, pipes would have to be extended from West Chicago to serve Batavia and Geneva.

In the meantime, officials in both cities will consider the costs and logistics as well as continue discussions with the commission, officials said.

"We're not going to do it just to do it," said Randy Reckhaus, Batavia's assistant city administrator. "We have to see if it makes sense."

Evaluation ordered for suspect in Halloween shooting

12-21 p2

BY ALICIA FARRRE
Daily Herald Staff Writer

Kane County prosecutors want to know if St. Charles man accused of shooting at trick-or-treaters and police is fit to stand trial.

Assistant State's Attorney Scott Herbert requested the evaluation. Herbert said comments made by Edward Beach, the man accused of the Oct. 31 shooting, prompted the

request.

Shortly after his arrest, Beach told Kane County Judge Timothy Sheldon he did not know why he was in court and that he did not believe he did anything wrong.

A fitness evaluation will determine if Beach understands the court proceedings and if he can help his attorney, Fred Morelli, present a defense.

Morelli also requested the fitness

his client.

Beach, 44, recently was indicted on 11 counts of attempted murder, one count of aggravated battery with a firearm and 12 counts of aggravated discharge of a firearm.

The charges carry prison terms ranging from four years to life.

Beach, owner of Beach Lawn Maintenance, was arrested early Nov. 1. Police say he shot at 22-year-old Alejandra Garcia, who was

holding her 1-year-old daughter at the time of the shooting.

Garcia and five other family members were trick-or-treating in the Fox Run Apartments the day of the shooting. When they knocked at Beach's apartment door, gunshots rang out, police said.

Beach then held police at bay for eight hours, authorities said, and he surrendered after police used tear gas to force Beach out of his apart-

ment.

A bullet fragment grazed Garcia's arm. No one else was injured.

Sheldon also denied a request to decrease Beach's bond. Morelli argued the \$1 million bond was too high and should be lowered to \$100,000.

In denying the request, Sheldon made note of the allegations, the ages of the victims and that Beach is a truck driver with licenses in other states.

Outer-belt study to start

Info sessions should be the first of many for Prairie Parkway

By Dave Parro
STAFF WRITER

12/21/02
Beacon

OTTAWA — The study that will ultimately decide whether the Prairie Parkway gets built will begin immediately, the Illinois Department of Transportation announced Friday.

A team of technical experts is set to begin

evaluating the need for future transportation improvements in a general study that includes parts of Kane, Kendall, DeKalb, Will and LaSalle counties, IDOT officials said.

Engineers will look at a different transportation options for the area, including construction of the 36-mile Prairie Parkway, a highway connecting Interstates 88 and 80 through Kane, Kendall and Grundy counties.

Prairie Parkway open houses:

Jan. 22 — 5 to 8 p.m. at Kaneland South Elementary School, 85 S. Main St., Sugar Grove

Jan. 23 — 4 to 7 p.m. at The Fountains of Minooka, 502 Twin Rail Drive, Minooka

◆ Turn to BELT, A2

Minooka in Minooka

"We want people in the region to have a first-hand look at what the Phase 1 study will entail," said Ottawa District Engineer Jim Jereb. "The study will take a new look at local and regional transportation needs and will not be influenced, or bound by, any prior studies and reports."

Mounts said the Phase 1 study will be broken down into steps, with the first determining how the land will look in 30 years. During the next 12 months, IDOT will also conduct public opinion surveys and focus groups, as well as set up an interactive Web site on the study.

A decision at the end of next year could determine what transportation option IDOT will pursue, Mounts said.

"It really has to be broken down into steps," he said. "We'll have decisions at the end of the first step."

Jan Strasma, spokesman for Citizens Against the Sprawlway, the group that organized a lawsuit against the proposed highway, said that even though the meetings aren't public hearings to solicit opinions on the proposed highway, the opposition will show up.

"If people are in favor (of the highway), it's a good meeting to go to, too," Strasma said, "but we're going to have a good number of people there who are opposed to it."

BELT

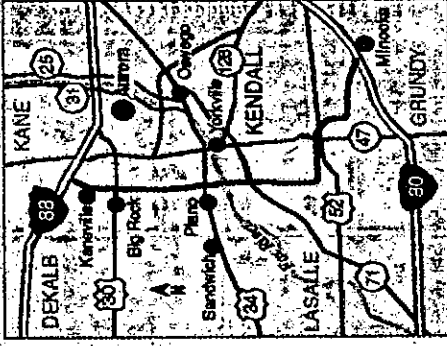
From page A1

The Phase 1 engineering study "will take an in-depth look at the current and future transportation needs in an area that is experiencing increased development and traffic congestion," according to an IDOT press release. The three- to five-year study is being paid for with \$15 million in federal funds and another \$3.75 million in matching state funds.

Mounts said the next year will be devoted to studying the area and collecting public input to determine future land uses and traffic patterns in the area near the proposed outer-belt highway. IDOT recorded a 400-foot wide corridor in July through Kane, Kendall and Grundy counties that protects land that could be used for the road against future development.

One of the first steps will be to get information to the public about how the study will proceed, Mounts said. Two open houses will be held in January, when IDOT will present a slide presentation and exhibits and answer questions about the study.

The sessions will be held at 5 p.m. Jan. 22 at Kaneland South Elementary School in Sugar Grove and 4 p.m. Jan. 23 at The Fountains of



While Burgess-Norton intends to close two out-of-town plants, the longtime Geneva employer has no plans to shut either of its two local facilities, Company President John Carroll said Friday. Shown here is one of the Geneva facilities.

Two out-of-town plants set to close

*Neither Geneva location
scheduled to shut doors*

12/21/02

By ROALD HAASE
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Geneva's Burgess-Norton Manufacturing Co. will close two plants elsewhere by early spring, company officials said Friday. The plants, in DeKalb and Muskegon, Mich., are apparent victims of a decision by a major customer to shift automotive parts production to India.

Burgess-Norton President John Carroll said, however, that Burgess-Norton continues to plan for growth. It has no plans to shutter its two Geneva production facilities, Carroll said.

"It's an unfortunate situa-

tion, but not something that's going to keep us from growing this company and moving to satisfy our customers on a global basis," Carroll said from the company's Geneva headquarters.

The customer, Columbus, Ind.-based Cummins Engine Co., chose to use a supplier in India to produce rocker arms for pickup truck engines that Cummins makes, Carroll said. It was work that until now had been performed by Burgess-Norton.

The DeKalb plant is an assembly facility that employs 20 people, while the Muskegon plant is a foundry that employs an estimated 60 workers in making rocker arm castings for

Cummins and in machining castings for other customers.

In both instances, Cummins was the primary source of work for the plants, Carroll said.

In the case of the DeKalb workers, the company is talking to them about working at either of the Geneva plants, company officials said.

"The hope is that they would be willing to move over to either of those plants," Carroll said.

While it is possible several of the Muskegon workers also may move to jobs in Geneva, Carroll said the company is not making similar overtures to workers there because they are "pretty much wedded to the Muskegon area."

Despite the layoffs, the company still will have an estimated work force of about 1,000 in 2003, Carroll said.

That includes employees at the Geneva plants, as well as workers at plants in Beaver Dam, Wis.; Claremore, Okla.; Saltillo, Mexico; and Vieux Charmont, France.

The French plant, in which Burgess-Norton already maintains a stake, will become totally owned by the Geneva firm in 2003. The plant in eastern France largely supplies piston pins to automotive manufacturers in Europe, although the cars in which they are used are not necessarily assembled in Europe, Carroll said.

DeKalb Mayor Greg Sparrow said the city's economic development staff has talked to company officials and learned about the potential that at least some of the workers can be used in Geneva.

See BURGESS, page 2.

Burgess

Continued from page 1.

Sparrow said its his understanding the building's owner, who he did not identify, has found a tenant.

Burgess-Norton's decision was not a surprise, Sparrow said.

"It had been coming off and on for the last year," Sparrow said. "They had been talking about this possibility."

A similar remark was issued from Cathy Brubaker-Clarke, community and economic development director for Muskegon.

"We've actually been for a year and a half, two years, talking to them, in terms of what we can do, and consolidating in the Muskegon area," Brubaker-Clarke said.

The Muskegon workers are members of the United Auto Workers, and Carroll said the labor contract spells out that Burgess-Norton must negotiate the terms of the layoffs with workers there. The Muskegon facility is expected to close in February, Carroll said, while DeKalb is projected for shutdown in April.

Burgess-Norton is part of employee-owned Amsted Industries Inc. of Chicago. More than 18 months ago, then Amsted Chairman Arthur Goetschel had announced a corporate belt-tightening, which potentially was to include Burgess-Norton's rocker arm business.

Shortly after, Goetschel announced his retirement just before he was to stand for reelection to the board of directors. In his place, board member W. Robert Reum of Wayne was selected to be chairman, president and chief executive.

At the time, in early 2001, Amsted was said to be laboring under debt taken on when it bought rival Varlen Corp. of Naperville.

Carroll said Friday that the work done in Muskegon and DeKalb on the rocker arms is for engines that Cummins sells to DaimlerChrysler, mainly for the Dodge Ram line of heavy-duty pickup trucks.

"We've been discussing trying to establish a long-term agreement with Cummins for quite a period of time," Carroll said. "The people at both Geneva plants, as well as DeKalb and Muskegon, were aware of the possibility of Cummins making a decision to possibly move this business elsewhere."

Several years ago, there had been hints Burgess-Norton might want to relocate from Geneva. But Burgess-Norton made a commitment at that time to Geneva. City Economic Development Director Chris Aiston said Friday that "to the best of my knowledge there has been no discussion of contraction of any of their facilities in Geneva."

Burgess-Norton is heavily involved in automotive work, and counts as major customers was such firms as Ford, General Motors and Honda. Other customers include John Deere, Copeland (air conditioners) and Eaton, Carroll said.

In 2003, Burgess-Norton will celebrate its 100th anniversary.

"We are continuing to bring in more business to both Geneva operations and expanding in Oklahoma and expanding our customer base," Carroll said. "Our customers are very pleased with the performance of our plants here and the value and quality we provide."

Hundreds wait to pay final respects to Hoeft

BY KARA SPARK
Daily Herald Staff Writer

12/21/02

When the funeral home doors opened at 3 p.m. Friday, the line to pay respects to the family of state Rep. Douglas Hoeft was already an hour long.

Politicians from U.S. Sen. Peter Fitzgerald to state Sen. Steve Rauschenberger to Elgin Mayor Ed Schock were present as was an Elgin police honor guard, but Laird Funeral Home in Elgin was packed with people who remembered Hoeft more for his personal presence than his public one.

When Hoeft died Tuesday morning, people seemed to say over and over at the funeral home we lost a good friend with an arsenal of bad jokes, a teacher, a church usher, a card player, a fighter.

Hoeft was 60 years old when he died unexpectedly Tuesday at the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago. He was transferred to the hospital Monday to begin rehab for a stroke he suffered after complications from a routine surgical procedure.

For resident Dewey Cain, losing Hoeft meant losing one of the core competitors of a racquetball group that started at Channing YMCA but now plays at The Centre of Elgin.

Hoeft was known, Cain said, as much for his occasionally mismatched workout outfits as his consistent willingness to partner up

Memorial service

• Services for former state Rep. Doug Hoeft will be at 11 a.m. today at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 360 Grand Ave. in Elgin.

• The family requests memorials be sent to the Bethlehem Lutheran Church endowment fund, Elgin Symphony Orchestra or Elgin Public Action to Deliver Shelter in Hoeft's name.

with less skilled players.

"He was very competitive and wouldn't give in," Cain said.

For LaWanda Clark, losing Hoeft meant losing a mentor for her daughter, Lashaunda, who was named 2001 Youth of the Year by the Boys and Girls Club of Elgin.

"She went down to Springfield and he let her sit on the House floor and press the buttons to vote," Clark said. "He was just always so friendly."

For Marcia and Budd Wilkening, it meant losing a member of the monthly pinochle group, formed through Bethlehem Lutheran Church, where Hoeft was active in a variety of programs.

"We'd play with Doug and Libby once a month," Marcia Wilkening said. "We'd go over to each other's homes. He was always so fun."



PATRICK KUNZER/DAILY HERALD

Mourners lined up outside of Laird Funeral Home in Elgin to pay final their respects to state Rep. Douglas Hoeft.

For Julie Jindra and Patty Burnett, who worshipped with Hoeft at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, it meant the loss of one of the most earnest members of the church's Adult Forum Sunday class, a person, they said, who was always interested in learning.

"It was very important to Doug to separate his political life from his personal life," Jindra said. "He really found Adult Forum a place to be himself, to be honest."

And seemingly for all who knew him, Hoeft's death meant the end of one of Elgin's most reliable sources of humor.

"What was so important to him was putting everybody at ease," Jindra said.

St. Charles council OKs tax levy, views river plan

By Mike Sullivan

SPECIAL TO THE BEACON NEWS

2/22/02

ST. CHARLES — Although few may grasp the intricacies of computing the 2002 tax levy, most homeowners may appreciate the net effect of the city's new levy request.

Officials said the levy, for the city's portion of property-tax bills payable in 2003, will mean \$12 more on a home valued at \$150,000, \$15 on a \$200,000 home and \$20 on a \$250,000 home.

With few comments from City Council members and none from the audience, Mayor Sue Klinkhamer and the city clerk executed the annual tax levy ordinance after the council's vote last week to approve the measure.

It boosts the tax levy about 18.5 percent. The new rate of 75 cents per \$100 of equalized assessed valuation, up from just over 72.6 cents, will generate about \$8.5 million in local property tax revenue, according to statistics provided by the city.

The City Council also glimpsed the river corridor master plan, a sweeping revitalization project developed by the Downtown St. Charles Partnership, the city and the Park District.

Prepared by Hitchcock Design Group, the plan is designed to create what company president Rick Hitchcock described as "a downtown riverfront environment that becomes the centerpiece of the community within the next 20 years."

The river corridor master plan is the product of extensive public discussion with input from numerous residents, civic, business and government participants. It would ensure the riverfront is publicly accessible, hand-

somely improved and carefully integrated into all new development, Hitchcock said.

The plan, as envisioned by Hitchcock, would showcase the river as a "compelling downtown attraction."

The goal, according to Hitchcock, is to improve access to the river and to connect the public with regional trails, retail stores and public parks and to provide parking for citizens and visitors "of all capabilities."

The project would stabilize the shoreline of the Fox River and enhance the riverwalk as well as recreational opportunities along the river corridor and in nearby parks.

Before the project can be launched, however, the city and Park District must adopt the plan as public policy. In addition, the Downtown St. Charles Partnership, as co-sponsor, would have to formally endorse the plan.

Presuming these bodies agree to jointly endorse the project, it then would be turned over to the river corridor subcommittee, comprised of members of the City Council, Park District and other involved agencies.

The subcommittee's task would be to promote the master plan through targeted mailings, presentations, press releases and a Web site.

No specific project cost has been developed for what would be a multi-million-dollar venture. However, Hitchcock, recommends the project be built in stages.

He said funding might be secured through a combination of local, county, state and private-sector sources.

City Council members received the river corridor master plan without comment.

Time to build animal control facility

If I were a dog or cat owner in Kane County I'd be a little angry.

Two years ago the county board increased rabies tag fees to pay for a new animal control facility. In those two years the county has collected approximately \$500,000, about half what the expected cost would be.

And in those two years, virtually nothing has been done, except, of course, to collect money from the public.

There are many people who own dogs and cats; if I lived somewhere with a nice yard, I'd love to myself. But if you need visual evidence of how many dogs and cats are out there, take a stroll down the pet food aisle at any grocery store.

The point is, pet ownership is a huge constituency for the elected county board members. By stalling and delaying action on building the new headquarters, the board members are, at best, ignoring part of their sworn responsibility or, at worst, taking money from the public for no good reason.

The main purpose for the existence of the Animal Control Department is preventing rabies, a particularly nasty disease that always results in a slow, painful and tortuous death.

Rabies had been absent from the county for years, but a dead bat was found last year in North Aurora, which tests showed was infected.

Rabies prevention is the department's No. 1 function, but it also collects and isolates vicious animals.

Kane County Animal control investigates an average of about 100 animal bites a month, or three a day. Experts believe there are many more bites that never get reported.

By law, these dogs (they're mostly dogs, but a handful of other pets fit into the category) must be quarantined to make sure they are not rabid.

The department also picks up a similar number of stray dogs and cats, about 1,000 a year.

The strays go to shelters, which the



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Tom Schlueter

Chronicle

county doesn't own. Because there are so many strays, the shelters in Aurora and South Elgin are as crowded as the Kane County Jail. They are refusing to take vicious dogs and soon will refuse to take the county's strays.

The problem is the result of humans' inability to care for Man's Best Friend. Obviously, if every dog and cat were well-treated, there'd be no strays and very few vicious ones. Reality is another story.

And the reality is dogs and cats can't lobby for themselves. Since they don't write letters to the editor or phone their county board representative to complain, it is left up to their masters to do their lobbying for them.

Experience has taught me that animal lovers are not afraid to stick up for the furry beasts, the beasts who can't stand up for themselves.

Remember the story a couple of years ago about the dozen or so golden retrievers that were confiscated? The county had no place to take them and it was only by the good graces of several county veterinarians the dogs finally had a safe place to spend the night.

The county is hurting for money. Fortunately, the county board had the foresight to see the need and raised tag fees and paid \$30,000 for engineering drawings.

Two years of wasting time is a little excessive. Maybe it's time for the county board to use the money it has been taking from the public and build the facility it so desperately needs.

■ *Tom Schlueter is the county reporter for the Kane County Chronicle. He may be reached at (630) 845-5380 or at tschlueter@kcchronicle.com.*

Two years of wasting time is a little excessive. Maybe it's time for the county board to use the money it has been taking from the public and build the facility it so desperately needs.

Friends remember Hoeft

"He had some corny ones, but you could always look forward to the joke of the day," Seyller said.

Li Gov. Corrine Wood served in the state legislature with Hoeft and worked with him on educational issues.

"He was Mr. Education," Wood said. He was a unique lawmaker, she said, in that he stayed true to his word after he started working in Springfield.

See HOEFT, page 2

lawyer who attended a visitation for Hoeft on Friday evening.

County Clerk Circuit Clerk Dieborah Seyller met Hoeft when he was the regional superintendent and she was working in the clerk's office. She'll miss his daily quip, she said.

Hoeft

Hoeft

Continued from page 1

"He was well-grounded," Wood said. "We need more good guys. We need more like Doug."

Wood and Hoeft developed a friendship as well, which continued after Wood was elected to her current post.

Whenever Wood visited Elgin, the town in which she was born, Hoeft would be there, she said.

"He really re-introduced me to my hometown," Wood said.

Hoeft will be missed in Springfield, Wood said.

Circuit Judge Gene Nottolini agreed.

"He was an ideal legislator because he represented the people," Nottolini said. "He cared about people. You could always get ahold of him and talk."

Besides being a good friend, Hoeft was a warm person who always was concerned about the people he represented, Malcolm said.

State's Attorney Meg Gorecki has known Hoeft for a decade, she said. She'll miss "his bad jokes and his warm hellos," she said.

When she was elected in 2000, Hoeft invited her to Springfield, where he showed her around for two days.

"Clearly, it was the teacher

in him," Gorecki said.

"Those were two of the most powerful days I've spent, not just as an elected official, but as a citizen," Gorecki said. "Watching him draft and pass laws for all the people he cared about in his community."

County Treasurer Dave Rickert recalled his first election day as a candidate. Before the results were known, Hoeft called to give him encouragement, win or lose. Hoeft told Rickert he was a bright young man with whom he looked forward to working, Rickert said.

"He didn't know me well. It was a very kind thing for him to say," Rickert said.

Rickert admired Hoeft's work for education, and liked his sense of humor.

"I can't think of anybody in state government who fought harder for education. He'll be missed," Rickert said.

Retired Circuit Judge Pamela Jensen knew Hoeft long before either of them became involved in politics, she said. They met when their now-adult children were classmates, and both were involved with the Well Child Conference Board when it was a small organization, she said.

Besides his jokes, Jensen will miss "his attitude toward life and his positive philosophy," she said.

humor was good or bad seems to depend on who was hearing the jokes, but many of his friends and colleagues said Friday they would miss that the most.

The 60-year-old Elgin resident died Tuesday of complications from surgery to remove blockage from an artery. A memorial service is at 11 a.m. today at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 360 Grand Ave., Elgin.

"I'll miss everything about him except his bad jokes," said Garrett, Malcolm, an Elgin

Memorial service is at

11 a.m. today

42-72-102

By VICTORIA A.F. CAMRON

Kane County Chronicle

ELGIN — State Rep. Doug Hoeft may have been admired for his work in education, but he also was well known for his sense of humor.

Whether that sense of

humor was good or bad seems to depend on who was hearing the jokes, but many of his friends and colleagues said Friday they would miss that the most.

The 60-year-old Elgin resident died Tuesday of complications from surgery to remove blockage from an artery. A memorial service is at 11 a.m. today at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 360 Grand Ave., Elgin.

"I'll miss everything about him except his bad jokes," said Garrett, Malcolm, an Elgin



Bob Gerrard — Chronicle photo staff

Friends and colleagues of state Rep. Doug Hoeft attended his visitation Friday at Hemmens Cultural Center in Elgin. A memorial service is at 11 a.m. today.

Officials consider zoning change for asphalt plant property

By JEFF KOLKEY
Shaw News Service

12/20/02
ALGONQUIN — Kane

County officials are considering a zoning change for property at the site of an asphalt plant.

It may have little impact on a Callaghan Paving Inc. plant constructed this year in an area that was zoned for industry in 1937. The area is surrounded by residential developments and is near several schools.

The county may change the zoning to light industrial, a designation that includes more stringent restrictions and which allows fewer uses.

Kane County Development Committee member Jan

Carlson said there are pockets of industrial zones throughout the county that will be examined.

Officials plan to study whether zoning in those areas is appropriate.

"Back in those days, the term was just industry, but it means that it is open to just about anything," Carlson said. "In 65 years a lot of things can happen around a piece of property."

Dave Reece is president of the Citizens Advocate Team which is suing Callaghan

Paving and county development officials to have the asphalt plant's permits revoked.

Reece said changing the zoning would be a positive step.

"What they are doing is updating the zoning, modernizing it," Reece said. "(Light industrial) is fine. That is totally acceptable. I don't think we should take away the zoning from the property owners, but I do think it should be updated."

Callaghan Vice president Carmen Laporte said he does not believe a zoning change would affect his plant, which will open this spring.

Mollie Millen, director of subdivisions and zoning, said the county is studying the zon-

ing of an estimated 51 acres at the site.

"We have to find out who the owner is, where we can get a legal description of the properties and do a lot of research," Millen said. "You have to have a public hearing and make sure the property owner is notified."

After research is complete, Millen said the county board must decide whether to revoke the area's zoning and proceed with public hearings.

The decision could be more than two months away.

"It's kind of like closing the door after the horses are already out, but that is better than not doing anything," Carlson said.



Carlson

Carpentersville water tastes best

Village dethrones Elgin at sixth annual water tasting contest

12/20/02

By ERIC SCHELKOPF
Kane County Chronicle

BATAVIA — Tri-Cities residents might think highly of their drinking water.

But Carpentersville has the best drinking water in Kane County.

Carpentersville was judged to have the best drinking water in terms of taste, odor and clarity during the Kane County Water Association's sixth annual water-tasting contest

Thursday at the Lincoln Inn.

Only the winner was announced. While Batavia and Geneva participated in the contest, St. Charles did not.

Carpentersville's drinking water was judged better than water from seven other communities — Batavia, Geneva, North Aurora, Aurora, East Dundee, Montgomery and Elgin.

A panel of three, including representatives from two newspapers and Mike Fik, a World War II veteran

from Geneva, judged the contest.

Fik landed on Utah Beach on D-Day and was involved in five major combat campaigns. He was awarded five bronze battle stars.

Trying to determine which sample had the best clarity or if the water had any kind of odor was difficult for Fik.

"Taste was the most difficult to judge. They all looked clear, and they all smelled the same," Fik said.

The samples from each community were submitted in unmarked beakers so judges did not know whose water they were drinking.

Carpentersville officials

were beaming with delight after taking home the top prize.

"It is nice to know that your water is good quality," said Chris Settiani, Carpentersville's underground utilities superintendent.

Carpentersville now will compete against communities from around Illinois in the state competition.

This is the first year Carpentersville has won the award. Elgin won the contest last year.

But Elgin water department director Larry Deibert is not too disappointed about being de-throned.

See WATER, page 3

Water

Continued from page 1

"We are still proud of our water," Deibert said.

And outgoing water association president Randy

Miller said all of the communities should be proud of their water.

"Everybody has got good, clean drinking water. All communities take pride in their water," Miller said.

Liquor check nails Batavia businesses

*Police cite Cafe Cancun, Tribella
for second time this year*

12/20/02

By MARK FOSTER
Kane County Chronicle

BATAVIA — Five Batavia liquor-license holders sold alcohol to minors in a police sting operation Wednesday.

The Batavia Police Department and the Illinois State Police conducted the operation, sending minors into the establishments to see if they could purchase alcoholic beverages, or if they would be checked properly for identification.

Of the 21 businesses tested, 16 passed. The five that failed include:

- Cafe Cancun, 90 N. Island Ave.
- Tribella Bar and Grill, 1900 Mill St.
- Schlotzsky's Deli, 2002 W. Wilson St.
- Amstadt's Finer Foods, 309 Webster St.
- Windmill City Liquors, 101 S. Batavia Ave.

For Cafe Cancun and Tribella, it was the second time this year that police have cited the businesses for selling alcohol to minors.

Early this year, Cafe Cancun was the focus of a police investigation that determined the business was allowing minors to obtain alcohol during dances.

The restaurant paid a fine and served a liquor-license suspension.

Then on May 10, police conducted a check like the one carried out Wednesday. Cafe Cancun passed.

However, Tribella was one of eight businesses that failed the May 10 check.

Tribella, Cafe Cancun and the other three businesses are being charged with unlawful sale of alcoholic beverages to minors, and will appear at the Kane County Judicial Center on Jan. 21.

After that, a hearing date will be set with Mayor Jeff Schielke, who serves as the city's liquor commissioner.

"It's going to mandate a series of actions," Schielke said.

After the last sting, the employees who sold the alcohol were assessed fines, and the business owners and employees were required to attend a training session with Batavia police and the Illinois Secretary of State's office.

Cafe Cancun and Tribella could receive more serious discipline because they have been cited more than once this year.

"We'll be evaluating it and taking action," Schielke said.

Schielke has the power to suspend licenses, levy fines and order business owners and employees to undergo the education programs designed to make sure they check identification when selling alcoholic beverages.

Schielke has cultivated a reputation of being tough on liquor-license holders for failing to check identification.

Police said the 16 businesses that passed the test will be recognized.

"The management of each business that properly screen the individuals working with police will receive a letter from the city recognizing the effort," Batavia police Commander Greg Thrun said.

New panel members take first look at jail

12/20/02

Corrections committee operating under tight time table

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — New members of the committee that oversees the Kane County jail met there Thursday, some seeing their first view of life behind bars.

One of their first orders of business was to discuss the 200-bed jail addition.

"We have to determine in a very

short period of time if this is the best solution," said Karen Steve-McConnaughay, R-St. Charles, the committee's new chairman.

Steve-McConnaughay replaced Douglas Weigand, R-Batavia, who was chairman of the Corrections and Rehabilitation Committee for four years, during which time he and Sheriff Ken Ramsey often sparred.

The new chairman wants the new committee members quickly

up to speed.

"I may ask you to have more than one meeting a month," she said.

Although the county is planning a new addition and is just a few days away from signing a construction management contract, Ramsey said a private jail company approached him Wednesday about building a federal penitentiary on county property.

"It sounds very good a first blush," Ramsey said. "We can't afford not to look at it."

Ramsey said he knew little about the plans of Emerald Correctional Management of Shreveport, La.

The company houses federal prisoners in custody by the Immigration

and Naturalization Service and U.S. Marshal Service.

Under the plan, the company would build and operate a 500- to 700-bed prison on county property, Ramsey said. In return, the county would receive revenue for each prisoner.

"There's a lot to be discussed," Ramsey said. "There's a potential for a lot of revenue coming into Kane County."

One scenario could have the county building its own 200-bed addition, bringing its jail capacity to 600, while Emerald builds its own prison.

Because there are often more than 600 inmates in Kane's custody, the

Emerald facility would take the overflow, Ramsey said.

After Wednesday's meeting, the new members of the committee, as well as new board members who are not committee members, Ken Griffin, D-Aurora, Margaret Scaffaro, R-Carpentersville and John Noverini, R-Carpentersville, toured the jail.

Before the tour Ramsey warned them not to be surprised if inmates displayed obscene gestures.

He also warned them his policy is not to negotiate with hostage takers.

"We don't negotiate if someone is taken hostage, including me. That really keeps us safe," he said.

Toll authority to patch 100 miles of I-88

12/20/02
By OWEN R. BRUGH
Shaw News Service

Enron
DOWNERS GROVE — The Illinois Toll Highway Authority plans to patch a 100-mile stretch of Interstate 88 during the 2003 construction season.

The project is part of the authority's \$396.7 million budget for 2003. The budget is 3.9 percent higher than this year and includes no toll increase.

Tollway board Chairman Art Philip said the budget will meet immediate needs.

"It's, as usual, a balanced budget, within our means," Philip said.

Resurfaced roads last five to seven years. A completely rebuilt road lasts about 15 years before it needs resurfacing.

Although it costs more to rebuild roads, it saves money in the long run, toll officials said.

"(The budget does not in-

clude) what we should be doing. We should be rebuilding, not repatching," Philip said.

"Repatching doesn't last as long, but nobody thinks we need to increase tolls."

Toll officials were able to hold costs down by eliminating 75 positions, mostly at toll plazas. I-PASS, the authority's automated toll collection system, has decreased the need for as many toll collectors, officials said.

The budget also includes \$10.2 million for an outside collection firm to crack down on drivers who speed through plazas without paying. The collection agency is expected to bring in about \$18 million.

The authority also expects to spend about \$1.8 million repairing various stretches of pavement on Interstate 88 between Interstate 290 and Sterling, near Dixon.

The work should run from

the beginning of July to the end of September.

Construction crews also will resurface a large stretch of Interstate 90 in 2003.

The resurfacing, from Route 31 to Newberg Road in southeast Rockford, will cost about \$57 million.

That stretch of Interstate 90 last was patched extensively in 1998. It was built in 1956, when tolls were 30 cents, and never has been rebuilt. Toll officials said they fear the road base is crumbling but do not have the money to rebuild it now.

The work is expected to run from May through November. Construction crews will try to keep lane closures to a minimum, tollway spokeswoman Joelle McGinnis said.

U.S. Route 20 can work as an alternate route.

The tollway expects to completely rebuild the road between Elgin and Hampshire in 2008.

Cocaine smugglers sentenced to prison

By VICTORIA A.F. CAMRON ^{12/20/82} was sentenced to 12 years in prison.
Kane County Chronicle

ST. CHARLES — Three men accused of hiding cocaine inside religious statues have pleaded guilty in Kane County and been sentenced to prison.

Antonio Mejia Rodriguez, 27, of Aurora, was sentenced Thursday to 17 years in prison after he pleaded guilty to manufacturing and delivering cocaine.

Louis Valle, 18, of California, and Hector Garcia Ledezma, 33, of Chicago, also have pleaded guilty to manufacturing and delivering cocaine. Valle was sentenced to nine years in prison. Ledezma

The men were arrested in March after Chicago police and the Kane County Sheriff's Office raided two houses on the southeast side of Aurora and found nearly 830 pounds of cocaine. Sheriff Ken Ramsey said at the time it was one of the largest drug busts in the county's history.

After the cocaine was smuggled into the United States inside the statues, the men would break open the statues and repackage the cocaine for distribution, police said.

All three men have been in custody at the Kane County Jail since their arrest.

Hampshire police chief recovering after surgery

12/20/02

By PAUL ROCK
Shaw News Service

Chronicle
HAMPSHIRE — Police Chief Tom Atchison is recovering after suffering a heart attack and undergoing quadruple bypass surgery on Nov. 25.

The 57-year-old chief is on limited administrative duty, but does not plan to return full-time until January.

Village officials did not release information about the chief's health until a resident mentioned the chief had surgery at a meeting Tuesday.

In the interim, Lt. Brian Thompson is in charge of the department.

"We have more than adequate help," Atchison said Thursday. "They can get by without me. Brian is very capable of managing the department."

Thompson served as acting chief for nine months in 1996.

"The biggest thing was the shock of learning he had such an invasive surgery," Thompson said.

Village President Bill Schmidt appointed Atchison after former Chief Bob Swalwell retired in February 1998. The chief is a former

Kane County sheriff's deputy. "Certainly he's kept the department together and moving forward," Schmidt said.

Atchison discovered his health problems during his annual physical exam Nov. 20. He took a stress test after his doctor administered an electrocardiogram.

While on the treadmill, Atchison had a heart attack and was taken to St. Anthony Medical Center in Rockford. Doctors performed an angiogram.

Betty Atchison said her husband showed few warning signs.

"I was concerned and he really wasn't because he felt so good," she said. "I guess that's why they call (heart disease) a silent killer, because people don't know when it's happening to them. It was pretty scary."

"They told me the blockage was so bad, I might not have lived another week without surgery," Atchison said.

The chief has no family history of heart disease, but said his health worsened after Sgt. Greg Sears was killed in 2000. Soon after Sears' death, Atchison found out he was a diabetic.

Aurora 5th Ward candidates know campaign ropes

■ **Prior experience:** All have run in elections, two have held office

12/19/02

By Dave Parro
STAFF WRITER

Beacon

AURORA — There's no lack of campaign experience in the race for alderman in the 5th Ward, where the lack of an incumbent drew in candidates who otherwise might not have run.

The field includes a former alderman of 15 years, a longtime Aurora Township clerk and a political hopeful who tested the waters during the Kane County Board election in November. Together, the three candidates, who will face each other in a Feb. 25

primary election, have run in more than a dozen elections.

They're all hoping to replace Alderman Judy Morrison, who is not seeking re-election after serving three terms in the far West Side ward.

Former 3rd Ward Alderman Ken Hinterlong, 68, who served on the council from 1977 to 1979 and from 1987 to 2000, when he moved out of the East Side ward, said he's always hoped to get back into politics. When Morrison decided to retire, the 40-year Aurora resident said he saw his chance to serve the city again.

"I intended to get back in at the next election where there was a seat available," said Hinterlong, a retired electronics manager who lives in the 100 block of South Hanks Road with his wife. The couple has five grown children.

♦ Turn to 5TH WARD, A2

5TH WARD

From Page A1

"I'm available virtually all of the time. I listen and try to get something accomplished. With my years of experience, I know the ropes of the city, so I should be effective from that standpoint."

John "Whitey" Peters, 57, who has been Aurora Township clerk for 26 years as a Republican, sees growth, zoning and infrastructure needs as the biggest challenges facing the developing 5th Ward.

Peters, a Fox Valley Park District athletic coordinator, said he decided to run for alderman because he and his neighbors want to make sure any proposed developments on Aurora's western edge get a long look before getting approved.

"Just in the short time I've been out here (campaigning), I've heard from a lot of people," said Peters, who is married with four children. "My phone has been ringing off the hook."

He said he is still organizing his campaign after deciding to run for sure only about a week before he had to file a nominating petition.

Peters, a resident of the 1900 block of Kenilworth Place, has lived in Aurora all his life.

Derrick Mitchell, 27, who lost a bid for Kane County Board in November against incumbent Republican Bill Wyatt, said he

decided to run for the 5th Ward seat when he found out Morrison was not running again.

The life-long Aurora resident wants to put his education to use. He has a degree in political science from Aurora University and is pursuing a master's degree in the same field from Northern Illinois University.

"Coming out of the Kane County Board race, I figured that my name would be fresh in people's minds," said Mitchell, who works for Nanco Sales, a janitorial supply company in Aurora.

Mitchell, who lives in the 1700 block of Roanoke Avenue, said he wants to keep in touch with the concerns of residents, who already have mentioned road maintenance and growth to him as major issues. Mitchell said he wants to make sure the city doesn't overdevelop its western edge.

Morrison said the next alderman has to guard the 5th Ward against inappropriate residential and commercial development. She has been consistently particular about the appearance of the western entrance to the city.

"I certainly hope and pray whoever wins this office will be really mindful of Orchard Road," said Morrison, who said she is stepping down because of her mother's health.

"We have to be very, very careful. I want this western gateway to be a real beautiful entrance to the city."

Contact Dave Parro at (630) 801-5495 or dparro@scn1.com.

Batavia worries about Wal-Mart traffic

BY VERONICA GONZALEZ

Daily Herald Staff Writer

12/19/02

Kane County's busiest intersection at Randall Road and Fabyan Parkway in Batavia needs improvements if a Wal-Mart is going to be built there, according to a study.

The study was presented to plan commissioners Wednesday as they review plans for a Wal-Mart and other stores on the southwest corner of the intersection.

Chicago-based Aetna Development Corp. and its president, George Hanus, are planning to build the 150,000-square-foot Wal-Mart by 2004.

It would sit on a 30-acre development that would provide needed revenue to the city, Batavia officials say.

The study, presented by Stephen

Corcoran, principal of Hanover Park-based Metro Transportation Group Inc., showed that during rush hour, 2,900 cars in four lanes travel on Randall Road across Fabyan.

It's worse on Saturdays, when 3,100 cars pass through there.

Fabyan Parkway also has its own traffic problems.

Four lanes on Fabyan accommodate about 1,000 cars that cross Randall during rush hour and Saturdays.

"The intersection currently is not working," Corcoran said.

And it would only get worse with the proposed development, he said.

Randall and Fabyan need at least two additional lanes in each direction to accommodate increased traffic, Corcoran said.

A frontage road is planned for the southern part of the site, but some

plan commissioners aren't convinced it would alleviate traffic.

"We just can't put a road in if it's not going to serve a purpose," said Nancy Bertoglio, a plan commissioner.

Plans also include a western truck access from Fabyan, and two other entrances, one of which would have a traffic signal. There also would be a right-in, right-out entrance from Randall Road.

The development would connect with a bridge to the Sam's Club shopping center to the south.

Besides the Wal-Mart, the plan calls for two banks — one at the north end and one at the south — with space for stores along Randall Road and a gas station along Fabyan Parkway. The proposal also includes two restaurant sites.

The Wal-Mart proposal will be presented again to plan commissioners.

Kane plans to fill space in former Wards store

By William Presecky
Tribune staff reporter

12/12/02

Kane County's \$1.3 million renovation of the former Montgomery Ward store in St. Charles is expected to be completed and available for occupancy by the circuit clerk's office by early March, county officials were told Wednesday.

Circuit Clerk Deborah Seyller and her staff of about 100 have occupied the north half of the former store since the county took over the 9.5-acre Wards site under a \$3.5 million long-term

lease approved in May 2001.

They will move to the southern half once it is completed.

The former store is on the east side of Randall Road just north of Illinois Highway 38. The move to the building was so quick and the establishment of the circuit clerk's operations so makeshift that some of the signs and fixtures used by Wards to direct customers and to display goods still remain.

Contracts totaling more than \$1.3 million for the work and furnishing necessary to transform the facility, which is nearly de-

void of interior walls, were authorized by the County Board on Dec. 10.

"We'll have it wrapped up in three months," said Larry Briggs, county central services director, whose department is overseeing the renovation.

With the anticipated move of the circuit clerk's office, members of the County Board's Administration Committee began to lay the groundwork Wednesday for possible office moves and space and storage allocations by other departments. The committee's aim is to reoccupy

the roughly 45,000-square-foot space.

The Wards store was built in 1972 and underwent about \$2 million in renovations in the late 1990s.

Among the proposals being considered is a move by the county Regional Office of Education.

The county is expected to begin negotiations soon with Geneva library officials over the building it owns at 210 S. 6th St., which houses the education office.

Party will pick replacement representative for Hoeft term

12/19/02
By Daniel Duggan
STAFF WRITER

Beacon
ELGIN — The unexpected death of state Rep. Doug Hoeft will leave a vacant seat in the Illinois House that will be filled based on a decision by local Republicans early next year.

Under state law, the position most likely will be filled by political officials after the next legislative session begins Jan. 8, said Al Zimmer, legal counsel for the Illinois Board of Elections.

"You could fill it now, but you'd

have to fill it again when the next session begins," Zimmer said.

Hoeft's 43rd District includes Elgin and Dundee townships in Kane County and Hanover Township in Cook County. The 60-year-old Elgin Republican, who died Tuesday, was re-elected Nov. 5 by voters in the newly redrawn district.

Zimmer said that, because the district has two townships in Kane County, the chairman of the Kane County Republicans will have one vote on the replacement, and the chairman of the Hanover Township Republicans will have another.

Under the rules, Kane County Republican Chairman Ed Malek will vote along with state Sen. Steve Rauschenberger, R-Elgin, who is chairman of the Hanover Township GOP. Zimmer said the vote will be "weighted" based on where more votes were cast in the March primary election.

There were 8,350 votes in the Kane County portion of the district and 1,970 in Cook County, according to election officials, which means Malek will have the final decision.

St. Charles proposes city-owned broadband system

By Warren Moulds

Special to the Tribune

12/19/02

Answering the call of residents and businesses for improved Internet performance, St. Charles officials expect to have a city-owned broadband system referendum proposal drafted for City Council consideration next month.

If approved, the referendum question would be put on April's election ballot, said city administrator Larry Maholland. It would follow similar referendum questions in Batavia and Geneva.

Because St. Charles is a home-rule municipality, a referendum for public works infrastructure is not required. Council alder-

men, however, felt residents and businesses should have the opportunity to judge the \$27 million project.

"I'm comforted by the fact the decision will be made by residents of the community," said Ald. Don DeWitte. "People will need to get out [and vote]."

A bond issue would finance the building of the project, and user fees would be used to pay off the bonds, Maholland said.

In a recent survey of the community, residents said better Internet access should be among the city's highest priorities. Almost 75 percent of the respondents said broadband interested them.

AT&T Broadband has not given the community a commit-

ment as to when it might bring a broadband system there, officials said. Internet is now provided through telephone lines.

Aldermen unanimously approved having the question drafted, but they expressed reservations about moving ahead too aggressively.

"Will we be able to maintain and update service?" asked Ald. Jo Kreiger. "We should make sure where we're going."

"We need to wait no longer," said Ald. Peter Grathoff. "It's a big thing, yes, but it's the future. People who will use it the most are not those who vote. It will be college students and young people."

He said that if Batavia and Geneva choose to join St. Charles,

it would be a good way to "recoup" some of the costs.

It would be especially attractive to the city's west side developments of subdivisions and industrial parks, said Mayor Susan Klinkhamer. A drawback to a referendum in April might be if residents have to choose between a new cable system and something the school district puts on the ballot, she said.

Maholland said a study showed the project to be economically feasible. He said the service would cater to an "underserved commercial sector," enhance economic development opportunities, improve services to residents and return an estimated \$7 to the community for each \$1 spent.

Gorecki trying to force quicker cleanup of former Karsch property in St. Charles

BY PATRICK WALDRON
Daily Herald Staff Writer 12/19/02

property that is "offensive" to public health, safety or the aesthetics of a neighborhood.

City officials had agreed to give Urhausen more time to clear the property, but Gorecki decided eight months since the home's demolition with no cleanup was long enough.

"I refused to look the other way," she said Wednesday.

St. Charles officials, through a court order, demolished Karsch's former home at 5N021 Route 31 in March, and a pile of construction

debris has sat on the property since. The demolition ended a 12-year legal battle involving the city, Karsch and Urhausen, who built the adjacent subdivision.

In a letter to city officials dated Nov. 15, Urhausen said the site would be cleared by Feb. 1 in the worst case scenario. In October, Urhausen said he was close to arranging a development deal to build three homes on the property. That deal still has not been signed but is nearing completion, Urhausen said this week.

After more than a decade of problems on the property, city leaders said they were willing to wait a few more weeks before forcing legal action.

"We are interested in getting the property cleaned up and developed," City Attorney Tim O'Neil said.

But just days after Urhausen's letter was sent, Gorecki asked for permission from the city to take over the case and ultimately force a cleanup. Gorecki, who has personally handled the legal battles with Karsch,

gave Urhausen a Dec. 15 deadline to clear the property. That was the same day Urhausen expected to close his development deal that would arrange for the cleanup's payment.

With that deadline passed, she is putting together a case that ultimately could end up costing Urhausen \$500 in fines for every day the site is not cleaned. Urhausen said a cleanup crew already has been contracted, and once the papers are signed with the new property buyer, work will begin.

The city and Urhausen's development company have fielded a regular flow of calls from neighbors of the site complaining about the debris.

"Nobody called in the 12 years I spent \$180,000 on it," Urhausen said, referring to the money he spent getting legal permission to clear the property. "Now that I own it, everybody's calling."

"I realize there is a pile of rubble," Urhausen said. "Sooner or later it will be gone. Preferably sooner, and this will all be a memory."

Kane County looks into changing zoning near area asphalt plant

BY DAVID R. KAZAK
Daily Herald Staff Writer

12/19/02

Kane County leaders want to know if they can force a change in the industrial zoning classification for property near Algonquin that, though surrounded by homes, is the site of a new asphalt plant.

If it can, such a drastic measure would have little, if any effect on the plant, which already is built and ready for springtime operations. It would, however, prevent any other industrial use on the property.

"This is very preliminary," said Phil Bus, Kane's development director, who oversees the county's building and zoning department. "It's a first step in determining whether it's even feasible to change the zoning."

Bus and the county board are embroiled in a legal battle with residents near the land, that also is home to an abandoned gravel pit and abandoned gun range.

Neighbors fought to keep Burr Ridge-based Callaghan Paving from building an asphalt plant on the site.

They met with sympathetic board members who nonetheless felt bound by zoning laws that allowed the plant.

The property, east of Sandbloom Road, north of Bolz Road and south of the Algonquin Lakes subdivision between Carpentersville and Algonquin, was zoned for industry in 1937.

In the six decades since, homes sprouted around the site. An elementary school sits nearby. Neighbors ended up suing the county, claiming Bus issued the plant's building permit illegally because it violates county laws designed to protect citizens' health and welfare.

The case is pending, but the imbroglio has spurred Kane leaders to take steps to ensure no similar situation ever arises.

The county board eliminated asphalt plants as a "normal" use for industrially zoned property, meaning a prospective builder must run a gauntlet of bureaucratic procedures and public hearings to build one in Kane County.

The study to revoke the zoning classification is another step, first suggested by Jan Carlson, a Republican board member from Elburn and member of the county board's development committee.

"It doesn't make any sense to have that heavy industrial zoning there," he said.

Callaghan Vice President Carmen LaPorte did not yet respond Wednesday afternoon to calls seeking comment.

Officials say more than a dozen other pieces of isolated, industrially zoned land are scattered throughout the county. Bus said each parcel would have to be reviewed individually.



Should Kane deem it appropriate to revoke the zoning classification at the asphalt plant site, it would remain unclear how that would affect the asphalt plant itself.

"We're just not sure," Carlson said.

Steve Barnes, one of the residents suing the county and Callaghan, said he likes the idea of the county keeping zoning consistent with neighboring properties.

He said if the county does that with the Callaghan site, and the residents are successful with the lawsuit, it would mean Callaghan could never apply to build on that site again, because the land would no longer be industrial.

"It would be beneficial," Barnes said.

Kane may sell Sixth Street School

County looks to consolidate offices

12/19/02

By TOM SCHLUEIER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — The Geneva Public Library may want Sixth Street School back, a move that would allow the county to consolidate some of its offices. The Health Department

current situation it is difficult to work in that space.

County board Chairman Mike McCoy confirmed they are looking at a new building for the health department in Aurora.

The existing Aurora health department building is too small, he said.

One scenario would see the Geneva and Aurora offices of the health department move

into a new building and move the school office to the Randall Road office of the circuit clerk.

That would allow the county to sell the existing Aurora health department office and Sixth Street School, reducing the number of county buildings by one, he said.

"We think the money will balance out," McCoy said. Geneva Library Director Jeanne Hintz said she could not

comment about what county officials said is library interest in buying the former Sixth Street School building.

"We owned it one time. In 1980, we bought it from the school district. And there was a proposal to build a library on that site, but that referendum failed, so the library sold it to the county," Hintz said.

See SCHOOL, page 2

School

Continued from page 1

"But we retained the right of first refusal. We have a legal requirement that they tell us when it's being sold and we have the right to match any offer."

The county's ace in the hole is the old Montgomery Ward building on Randall Road in St. Charles. The circuit clerk's office occupies half of the structure.

With 45,000 square feet of unused space, it could house the school office, provide storage and even have room left over.

The county has a long-term lease on the building, but McCoy said Wednesday he would like to buy it. Owning the building would allow the county to sell out lots in the parking lot, a move that would put at least some of the property back on the tax rolls.

"Ultimately, that's what we want to do," McCoy said.

"It's very adaptable."

Before the Judicial Center was built, Sixth Street School housed courtrooms and some court services offices.

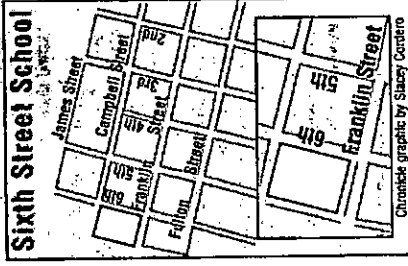
Library officials have conducted closed sessions at nearly every meeting the past 18 months for land acquisition.

Board President Craig Maladra said this spring the board was exploring options for the district's growth, which is west of Randall Road.

"We talk frequently about ways we're going to manage that growth, and when we hear of possibilities of land acquisition, we go into closed session," Maladra said.

Among the options library board members discussed were relocating the main library or a branch west of Randall Road, relocating the main library elsewhere downtown and having a branch west or relocating the main library west of Randall and using the downtown site as a branch, Maladra said.

■ Staff writer Brenda Schory contributed to this story.



Chronicle graphic by Stacy Cordaro

Redistricting broadens search for replacement

Several names suggested to fill
Rep. Hoeft's seat

FROM STAFF REPORTS 12/19/02 Inside
Kane County Chronicle

Rep. Doug Hoeft's replacement could come from anywhere inside his new district or from his old district, thus creating a larger than normal pool of candidates.

Hoeft, an Elgin Republican who served in the House for 10 years, died early Tuesday after complications from surgery to clear a blocked artery. He was 60.



Hoeft

The area that Hoeft's potential replacement will come from is so large because Illinois just completed legislative redistricting. Every 10 years, the legislative districts are redrawn to reflect population changes.

When redistricting occurs, lawmakers occasionally no longer live in the district they had represented. When that happens, the lawmaker is able to seek election either in part of the district he represented or in the new district.

If elected to the new district, state law allows the lawmaker time to move into that district.

Because election officials have interpreted the state's redistricting laws as loosely as possible, it is conceivable Hoeft's replacement could

Tim Schmitz, R-Batavia, remembers Doug Hoeft and Tim Osmond.

Page 3A

come from his old district or his current district, state election officials said.

Hoeft's old district included part of Elgin Township in Kane County and most of Hanover and Barrington townships in Cook County.

Hoeft's current district includes Elgin and parts of South Elgin, Dundee and Hanover Township in Cook County.

Ed Malek, the Kane County Republican Party Chairman, will have the most say in selecting Hoeft's replacement. According to state law, county party leaders choose a lawmaker's replacement based on a weighted vote system tied to the number of ballots cast in the last election. Most of Hoeft's district is in Kane County, where he received four times the number of votes as in Cook County.

Malek will consult with Elgin Sen. Steve Rauschenberger, who was Hoeft's roommate in Springfield. Rauschenberger will serve in the role normally reserved for the Cook County Republican party leader. Malek and Rauschenberger have 30 days to fill the vacancy.

See HOEFT, page 2

Hoeft

Continued from page 1

History dictates that Hoeft's widow, Libby, be consulted.

Several names have been suggested to fill Hoeft's seat, although candidates are expected to wait until after Saturday's funeral service before actively seeking the nomination.

Names most frequently mentioned:

- Mike Kenyon, the Elgin Township Republican party chairman and Kane County Farm Bureau president.

- Brian McGuire, Rauschenberger's chief of staff.

- Elgin City Council member Ruth Munson.

- Attorney Doug Scheflow, who lives in Elgin.

- Kane County Board member Jackie Tredup of Elgin.

Malek declined comment on potential replacements. Rauschenberger did not return telephone calls.

Incoming House Republican leader Tom Cross said he wants input into choosing Hoeft's replacement. However, he also said that discussion should wait.

"I'm not in a position to talk about names. I'm really not ready to have that discussion," the Oswego representative said. "Let's get through the next couple of days and help the Hoeft family."

Nevertheless, a line is forming.

"Everyone wants to be respectful to the family, but it is being thought about, partially because Doug (Hoeft) would have wanted it that way,"

Elgin Township Supervisor Doug Johnson said. "There is so much going on, you don't want to wait too long."

"You have to have some respect for the knowledge he had," Johnson said. "I have some sympathy for the poor guy who ends up having to compare himself to Doug."

Hoeft's successor should have the ability to win an election on their own, said Lee Barrett, the Dundee Township Republican party chairman and Kane County Board member.

"I'd like to see someone who is going to be viable in two years," Barrett said. "There's enough people here. They should be able to find someone who can fit in."

■ *Contributing Chronicle reporter Tom Schlueter and Shaw News reporter Owen R. Brugh.*

Developers detail plans for Randall Road Wal-Mart

By MARK FOSTER
Kane County Chronicle

12/19/02

BATAVIA — The final piece of the commercial development puzzle at the intersection of Randall Road and Fabyan Parkway may prove to be the most complex.

Developers on Wednesday presented their plans for a commercial center anchored by a Wal-Mart store at the southwest corner of Randall Road and Fabyan Parkway.

Batavia Plan Commission members heard a proposal for the 30-acre site known as the Hawks Farm.

When fully developed, the project would have more than 270,000 square feet of commercial space and parking for more than 1,400 vehicles.

In addition to the Wal-Mart, the site plan includes space for two banks, two restaurants and three retail buildings along Randall Road, and a gasoline station near the development's main entrance on Fabyan Parkway.

The Wal-Mart, sitting at the west end of the property facing Randall Road and the large parking area separating it from the other buildings, would initially cover 209,253 square feet.

Eventually, a 25,420-square-foot grocery addition would be built, making the store a Wal-Mart

Super Center.

Vehicle access to the property, located at the busiest intersection in Kane County, will be a major concern, planners said.

The development is expected to produce an additional 1,400 to 1,800 trips to the area each day.

The main entrance, with a traffic signal and turn lanes, would line up with the westernmost entrance to the shuttered K mart store on the other side of Fabyan in Geneva.

In addition, there would be a service entrance for trucks at the western edge of the property, leading to an access road running behind the Wal-Mart. Between the main entrance and the Fabyan

Randall intersection would be a right-in, right-out only drive.

The plans also call for a right-in, right-out drive on Randall at the south end of the property, providing access to a roadway running the length of the development's south side.

Also running east-west along the south side of the property would be retaining wall, 15 to 18 feet tall, one of many retaining walls on the development made necessary by the land's steep slope.

Developers said they will be undertaking a massive earth-grading project in order to make the property relatively level, and limit slopes in parking areas to no more than 3 percent.

N. Aurora intersection to close for turn-lane installation

By ERIC SCHELKOPF
Kane County Chronicle

12/19/02

NORTH AURORA — The intersection of Butterfield Road and Route 25 will have to be shut down for at least four months while turn lanes are being installed.

The Illinois Department of Transportation will begin the project in late spring or early summer. North Aurora Village Administrator Rob Nelis Sr. told village trustees Wednesday that IDOT needs

to shut down the intersection going across the railroad tracks for four months.

Nelis said the problem is IDOT has to totally rebuild the hill adjacent to the intersection and the railroad tracks, and that would be hard to do without shutting down the intersection.

"They looked at every alternative," Nelis said.

The state-funded project is estimated to cost about \$2 million.

There will be limited ac-

cess to Route 25, and Grant Street will be designated as the main detour for getting across the railroad tracks.

For example, residents living east of the intersection wanting to get to village hall, which is across the railroad tracks, would have to go south on Route 25 to Grant Street, and then to State Street.

And those people headed east on State Street would have to go to Grant Street and then travel north on Route 25 to get to Butterfield Road.

McCoy sets Kane Board agenda for '03

By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — Jail overcrowding, a legislative agenda and a county newsletter are among the diverse topics on Kane County Board Chairman Mike McCoy's mind these days.

Those were among the laundry list of things McCoy, R-Aurora, said last week need to be addressed in the coming year. It was the first meeting of the new, post-election Executive Committee, which is made up of the chairmen of the various standing board committees.

McCoy took the opportunity to run down some of the key issues before the board, including:

■ Jail addition construction, a look at

privatizing the jail, the possibility of sponsoring a public safety sales-tax referendum and future staffing at the jail. These are all things the

Corrections and Rehabilitation Committee will oversee, and they all tie in with the overcrowding and underfunding of the Kane County jail.

"These are things that are recurring," McCoy said. "They never get off our plate."

■ Continuing the revision of the 2020 land use plan to form the 2030 land-use plan and exploring ways the county can get development to pay more for schools in the county to help school districts with growing budget problems.



McCoy

■ Establishing the Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee, made up of the leaders of the criminal-justice system, including the

state's attorney, sheriff, chief judge and County Board. McCoy said new Chief Judge Philip DiMarzio told him they are doing something similar now, so establishing a new, more formal committee "shouldn't be too difficult."

"I've talked to the chief judge, and he has some pretty good ideas," McCoy said.

■ Developing a legislative agenda that the county's new legislative liaison, Penny Cameron, D-Aurora, can take to area state representatives and senators.

"We're probably the only county around here that doesn't have one," the chairman said.

■ Continuing maintenance and development of new traffic patterns along Randall Road, and developing the Anderson Road corridor in Elburn in cooperation with that village.

McCoy said Randall Road "has been an economic boon" to the municipalities along it but has created traffic nightmares for the county.

"Randall Road is 10 to 15 years ahead of its projections," he said. "There's been a lot of extra traffic because of their economic boom."

McCoy said the Anderson Road corridor, which includes a new overpass that ties in with the new Metra train station there, is reminiscent of Orchard Road in

Aurora 30 years ago.

Board member Jim Mitchell, R-North Aurora, brought up an issue that was not on McCoy's list publicly.

He said the County Board needs to let people know the successful programs and initiatives it has been involved with.

"When I was campaigning, I found there overall satisfaction with the County Board, but I also found people who were unaware of some of the good things we have done," Mitchell said.

McCoy said the county's Transportation Division has had success with its newsletters.

"Most units of government send out a newsletter," he said. "That's something we could handle pretty well without much cost."

N. Aurora planners back park proposal

Monroe Street residents oppose village idea

12/17/82

By ERIC SCHELKOPF
Kane County Chronicle

NORTH AURORA — Over the objections of Monroe Street residents, plan commissioners Monday recommended designating their neighborhood for a future park.

"I am concerned they don't want a park there, they just want our property," said Monroe Street resident Barbara Van Dyke following the vote.

Village trustees will review the plan commission's recommendation at their Jan. 6 committee-of-the-whole meeting.

Monroe Street residents earlier this year feared their homes would be condemned to make way for a new village hall and police station.

After residents petitioned against the proposal, village trustees removed their block, including the North Aurora Activity Center, from a list of potential sites for the complex.

Plan commissioners considered making changes to the village's comprehensive plan to coincide with the village's new tax-increment-financing redevelopment plan.

The comprehensive plan already designates the activity center and the fire station as a park area. A proposed amendment to the plan would expand that park designation to include the rest of the block and an area north of Oak Street.

Village Administrator Rob Nelis Sr. said having such a park would give the village a much-needed gathering place. And he said such a designation would warn potential developers.

"In case some future developer tried to buy up the property, it would show that the village doesn't want condos or townhouses there. And as parcels come on the market, the village may want to buy them," he said.

However, Nelis said the change would not impact residents because the land would stay zoned residential.

But Monroe Street resident Richard Smith said he would rather the land be left as it is. He said homes have been on the block since 1890, before the village was incorporated.

"I would rather see it left alone, the way it has been since 1890," Smith said.

Smith said he was also concerned the activity center will be torn down to make way for the park.

Plan Commission Chairman Mike Brackett said he likes the idea of developing a town park.

"There has never been a downtown. There is no place to gather as a community. I think it is a great idea," Brackett said.

But plan commissioner Michael Towle said he hopes the park "doesn't become a use for something else in the future, such as a government building."

"The concept of planning for the future and having access to the water is a good idea," Towle said.

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Bill
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Chronicle McCoy sets the stage

According to news reports, county board chairman Mike McCoy has set the stage for serious discussions on solving the problems of the county jail.

While not coming right out and saying he favors a tax increase as part of the solution, McCoy at least put the idea into play. Good. It's about time we got down to business and dealt with the issue — and while we're at it, let's re-think the whole idea of the planned 200-bed addition to the jail.

The truth of the matter is we should be looking to build a new jail, not add on to the monstrosity on Fabyan. The lock-up is falling apart and adding a new wing to a decrepit structure makes no sense at all. It is the equivalent, as a friend put it rather inelegantly, of "putting perfume on a pig."

A new jail needs to be built and it should be placed on land adjacent to the judicial center on Route 38. If it were attached to the courthouse complex the county would eliminate nearly all the costs they presently incur transporting prisoners from jail to their court hearings — an estimated \$800,000 per year.

The new jail should be big enough — say 700-800 beds — to take care of all the county's prisoners. Ending the practice of paying other counties to house our inmates would save around \$2 million a year. If we build a big enough facility we should end up with spare beds to rent out ourselves.

At the same time we're building a new jail we should be building space for the clerk of the court. Again, this office belongs on the same grounds as the courthouse, not a couple of miles away in an abandoned department store as it is now.

Currently, the county leases space in the defunct Wards store on Randall Road to house the clerk's office. This came about after its lease in the old Campana building wasn't renewed. It's a tacky, embarrassing arrangement and the clerk's office desperately needs a facility it can call its own. (By the way, when will city officials from St. Charles notice the clerk's "temporary sign" — a cloth banner, really

— has been up for well over a year?)

McCoy's willingness to, at least talk about raising taxes is a good sign, but let's make sure the talk ends up with positive results. A new jail is just a start.

...
It looks like this April's ballot will contain more referendum questions for voters to ponder than usual and the reason for the glut is the calendar. Because there is no general election in November 2003, this April 1 is the last general election until April 2004. School districts and municipalities are scrambling to get their request before the public this spring, rather than wait a full year. Unfortunately, the sheer number of requests may turn off the voters and send most of the referendums down to defeat.

Batavia, for instance, may be asking voters to raise their taxes to support their schools and at the same time asking them to approve a multi-million dollar bond issue for a municipal broadband network. That's a lot of hands out to the same wallets, and the easy answer in tight times like these is "No."

...
Hey... I need your help!

This week I was going to publish a list of addresses of the most colorfully decorated homes in the area, but the flu bug kept me from getting out and making my list. Please phone in your picks to me and give me the addresses of your favorites.

And need I tell you, these houses must meet my guidelines for Christmas décor? If there's any doubt in your mind, let me be clear: White is not a Christmas color. We're looking for homes with multiple Santas, flashing colored lights, and over-the-top yard displays. The basic rule is uniformity is not a virtue, and gaudiness is not a vice.

If you're unsure whether a house should be listed, ask yourself this question: "Would I want to live across the street from this guy?" If the answer is "Are you kidding?" then I'd say that's a keeper.

■ Calls and e-mails answered at (630) 584-0809 or e-mail wpage@media-works.org.

Batavia Park District sues two design firms

By VICTORIA A.F. CAMRON
Kane County Chronicle

12/17/02
BATAVIA — The Batavia Park District has sued two design firms for more than \$100,000 because of problems in the building of West Main Community Park.

The lawsuit, filed Friday in Kane County Circuit Court, alleges that Water Technology Inc. of Mount Prospect and Seton Engineering of Palatine provided opinions and services that delayed construction or damaged the park or some amenities. Water Technology Inc. was conducting business as Leisure Concepts & Design.

The park, near West Main Street and Fabyan Parkway, opened in summer 2002.

Although not all of the corrections have been made, the dedication was delayed by six months, said Derke Price, attorney for the park district.

Correcting the problems will cost at least \$100,000, the lawsuit states.

"We're still paying the price on that," Price said. The park district only can sue for the cost to fix the park so it can be usable, not for any delays the park

district has suffered, he said.

The lawsuit states that problems included improper siting of the fields and amenities, which forced the park district to move them, and too great a slope on an athletic field surface, causing the district to regrade the field.

For example, one of the baseball fields had a steep grade right off the foul line, Price said.

Also cited was a problem with concentrated runoff that crossed the limestone access trails and washed away the limestone screenings, and drainage problems that resulted in stagnant water, the lawsuit states.

The park includes a couple of baseball fields, a soccer field, a pond and some running trails, Price said.

The suit states that the design firms put the wrong plans in the bid packages, did not coordinate the design elements with the elevation, did not detail path excavation and did not detail the installation of the irrigation pump.

A spokeswoman for Water Technology Inc. did not return a phone call seeking comment. A Seton Engineering representative said the company had no comment.

Geneva energy suit dismissed

12/17/02

City proceeds with electric generator plans

By BRENDA SCHORY
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — A judge dismissed an energy company's suit against Geneva, a city official and a competitor Monday following an agreement by all parties.

The lawsuit cannot be reinstated, according to the order from Kane County Circuit Court Judge Michael Colwell.

LaSalle Associates sued the city, Electric Superintendent James Grever and HWS Energy Partners earlier this month, claiming the

city's award of an electric generation contract to the competitor was unfair. LaSalle claimed the city gave its trade secrets to HWS and allowed it to change its bid.

The suit also sought to stop HWS from proceeding with its \$13.5 million project to build electric generators.

"From the inception of this lawsuit, the city has consistently denied any and all of LaSalle's unfounded allegations with regard to selecting a contractor for the construction of the electric generation facility," according to a statement city officials

released after a closed session meeting at the city council.

"The city is pleased with the termination of the lawsuit and the end of the disgruntled bidders' attempt to obstruct the project from moving forward," Mayor Kevin Burns said.



Burns

Officials also said the city did not pay to settle the suit. LaSalle had sought \$650,000 in lost profits and more than \$650,000 in damages.

Public bodies would have to disclose terms of a settlement, private

companies do not.

"We agreed to dismiss it," said LaSalle attorney Mark Patricoski. "We dismissed all counts — against Grever, the city, HWS — the lawsuit has gone away. We didn't go to trial, and we're done. The case against all parties is dismissed by agreement."

"We're glad to hear about it and we look forward to a working relationship with the city," said Lyle Wachtel, president of HWS.

Neither Patricoski nor Wachtel would acknowledge if there was a private settlement agreement between LaSalle and HWS.

"My understanding is, when the parties agree to it, we go to the judge and it's dismissed," Wachtel said. "That's what we did and that works for me."

"If there was or was not (a private settlement), I can't comment on that," Patricoski said.

The gas-fired electric generating facility is to be built at 1717 Averill Road in the city's east side business park off Kautz Road. The engines are supposed to be ready when the contract with its current electric supplier, Wisconsin Electric, expires on Dec. 31, 2005.

The facility would create a third of the city's power needs, giving it a cost savings, particularly during summertime peak usage.

"We can now advance the electric generation facility under the city's business plan to achieve our goal of obtaining a significant degree of electric energy independence," Burns said.

Elburn tax rate to drop

Property values climbing

12-17-02

By DAN CHANZIT
Kane County Chronicle

ELBURN — More rooftops and rising property values mean residents will pay fewer taxes to the village.

The village tax rate will drop nearly 6 percent, to 59.94 cents per \$100 of equalized assessed value.

The new rate is about \$32 less in village taxes on a house valued at \$250,000. That home-

owner currently pays about \$530 in village taxes each year.

Mayor James Willey said more residents are paying fewer taxes to maintain the village budget.

"Growth is good for the homeowner," Willey said. "But, it's a bad thing for the government that has to provide services and keep up with

that rate of growth."

Village officials attribute the declining tax rate to the rising value of village property. The value has more than tripled in the last 10 years.

Village officials estimate village land to be worth \$81.9 million this year, up from \$24 million in 1992. Last year, the value was \$72.9 million.

"It is increasing annually," village administrator David Morrison said.

The village also collects taxes from special tax districts.

Prairie Valley and Blackberry Creek pay another 5 cents per \$100 of EAV. That money pays for drainage and landscaping for those developments.

Another district allows the village to collect taxes from the soon-to-be-built Jewel complex if the owner refuses to maintain its detention ponds.

That rate will remain at zero unless village officials need to collect it.



Willey

City council approves site for relocated liquor store

12/17/02

BY VERONICA GONZALEZ

Daily Herald Staff Writer

A Batavia liquor store will nearly triple in size after city council members Monday approved plans for it to relocate a block from its present location.

Council members approved plans to let Frank Hernandez, owner of R & S Liquors, build a 5,600-square-foot store near the railroad tracks at 415 E. Wilson St.

It will replace an old barn on the site.

"I think it will get rid of an eyesore

on Wilson," said Alderman Tom Schmitz.

A proposal to let traffic through Delia Street off Wilson was denied after residents complained too many cars would be driving through the neighborhood.

"There was a lot of opposition," Hernandez said.

"I don't need to alienate the whole neighborhood."

The site of the new store is at the intersection of Prairie and Wilson and is one of the busiest in the city, officials said.

That's why city planners had rec-

ommended Delia Street be opened to through traffic.

Instead, a chain or gate will block cars from getting through, officials said.

"That neighborhood is on the upswing and I don't want to see anything negative impact the neighborhood," said Mayor Jeff Schielke.

Hernandez first opened a store 22 years ago near city hall. In 1990, he moved to his present 2,000-square-foot location at 320 E. Wilson St. Hernandez said he plans to open the new store in May.

Lawsuit against Geneva tossed

12/18/02

BY ALICIA FABBRE

Daily Herald Staff Writer

Geneva city officials can go ahead with plans to build a power plant.

A Kane County judge has dismissed a lawsuit challenging the city's bid process for the plant. The agreement between LaSalle Associates Inc. — which was not awarded the bid — and the city does not require Geneva to pay any damages. It also does not change plans to have HWS Energy Partners build the power plant.

LaSalle filed the lawsuit seeking to

stop the project and collect \$650,000 in damages after Geneva officials gave the project to build and install generators for the 30-megawatt plant to another company.

In the lawsuit, LaSalle officials said the bid process was biased, noting that they submitted the lowest bid for the plant. LaSalle officials also said that Geneva employees shared information from LaSalle's bid with officials from HWS.

Geneva officials denied the claims and noted that the difference between LaSalle and HWS would be recaptured in two years because the

HWS system would operate more cheaply.

"The city is pleased with the termination of the lawsuit and the end of the disgruntled bidder's attempt to obstruct the project from moving forward," Geneva Mayor Kevin Burns said in a written statement.

An attorney representing LaSalle filed a request to dismiss the lawsuit after reaching an agreement with Geneva and HWS officials.

Attorneys for LaSalle and HWS declined to discuss the terms of any agreement between the two companies.

Kane County forest to be preserved

12/18/02

BY TOM O'KONOWITZ

Daily Herald Staff Writer

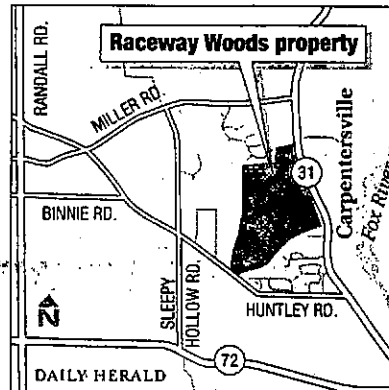
Just about all of Raceway Woods in Carpentersville will be spared from bulldozers and construction, under a deal signed Tuesday.

Dundee Township and Kane County Forest Preserve officials signed a contract to buy 134 acres of Raceway Woods for \$6.8 million from Meadowdale Properties of Carpentersville, sources said. The two government agencies, along with the Dundee Township Park District, already had acquired nearly 200 acres of the woods along Route 31 near Huntley Road.

The deal, signed Tuesday afternoon, marks the culmination of nearly two decades of work by residents and officials determined to preserve land as open space and prevent it from being developed.

"We did it. The checks have been exchanged, the titles have been exchanged and all the paperwork's done," said Dundee Township Supervisor Sue Harney, who started lobbying to save the land about 20 years ago. "It's very, very satisfying, and I'm just savoring it right now."

With the change in ownership, Raceway Woods officially will be designated as open space and will be protected from commercial, residential or industrial development. About 7 acres along Route 31 will be retained by Meadowdale Properties



for future commercial development.

Raceway Woods is a big part of Dundee Township's massive open-space initiative, which was launched in 1996 when voters approved spending \$18.6 million to buy land and preserve it as open space. So far, the township has obtained more than 800 acres of land at seven locations.

"A lot of us moved out here to be in the country and enjoy the woods, but we could see what would happen with the development," Harney said. "We realized we had to step up to the plate and do something to preserve some of the land or it would all be developed."

Raceway Woods, which could have been a prime location for new business or residential development, has a unique history in

Dundee Township.

In 1958 Leonard Besinger opened the Meadowdale International Raceway on the land. Major races were held on the 3-mile track there for a decade before it was shut down. Today, remnants of the track still can be seen on the Raceway Woods land.

Now, the property consists mostly of wetlands, woods, streams, valleys, hills and cleared areas with views of the Fox River.

Forest preserve officials say the woodlands, wetlands and other areas will be conserved and prairie land will be re-created.

"We see a tremendous potential in being able to restore some of the native habitat that was there," said Jon Duerr, executive director of the Kane County Forest Preserve. "This is a key piece because people today like to recreate near where they live, and this is centrally located in the township."

Under Dundee Township's open-space management plan, the 300-acre Raceway Woods could be improved to include hiking and equestrian trails, a nature education center, additional parking, an amphitheater, athletic fields and a children's playground.

"We see this as becoming a central park — a recreational hub for the community," Harney said. "It's just going to be wonderful when we get it all done."

Elburn police offer temporary home for stray dogs

12/18/02

BY DENISE PERRY DONAVIN
Daily Herald Correspondent

Elburn's police chief wants to create a kinder, gentler approach to handling stray dogs in town.

Chief Jim Linane told the village board this week he plans to erect a small pen or kennel near the police station so that lost dogs could be

housed temporarily while the owner is contacted.

The village already has a contract with Kane County Animal Control and renewed that agreement this week.

But Linane is interested in eliminating some of the hassle — and all of the cost — for Elburn residents. Through the county, if your dog gets

loose and is picked up, it will cost you \$150 plus boarding fees to retrieve him.

A local kennel would allow residents and the dogs some breathing time before the pets get hauled away by the county.

"If I had a place I could put them there temporarily, those dogs who have misplaced their owners or vice

versa," Linane said. "We hope by holding the dog for a few hours — not overnight — that we can match up owners with dogs more economically."

Linane said since the idea was broached, several people have volunteered to supply the dog runs or equipment, so the cost would be negligible.

If it is a chronic problem with certain pet owners, a local ticket with a \$25 fine could be issued. The county would be called for dangerous animals or those that remain unclaimed.

"All dogs in the county are required to have a rabies tag," Village President Jim Willey said. "But the village has no way to identify strays by the

number on their rabies tag." The village does not have access to reading electronic identification implants, either. A pet ID tag with a name, address, and phone number always is a good idea.

And for out-of-towners just visiting Elburn, it is a good idea to put a temporary ID on the dog that includes a local contact number.

Accused dean says officer was biased

12/18/02
By VICTORIA A.F. CAMRON
Kane County Chronicle

ST. CHARLES — A former high school dean charged with buying marijuana from a student wants to know if the police officer influenced the student during the investigation.

Michael Miller, 40, of DeKalb, claims that police reports from the investigation refer to contact between an investigating police officer and the student outside the scope of the investigation. Such a relationship could show bias against an impartial investigation.

Miller's attorney, Tom McCulloch, wants Kane County prosecutors to investigate the relationship.

"In this case, it goes to the fairness of the case," McCulloch said.

Prosecutors declined comment.

However, St. Charles Police officials are investigating the allegations.

"I've initiated an internal investigation," said St. Charles Police Chief Don Shaw. "The internal investigation is a personnel matter, which as a matter of policy, we don't discuss."

In March 2000, Miller was charged with soliciting the de-

livery of marijuana on school grounds and contributing to the delinquency of a minor. The incident occurred at St. Charles East High School in November 1999, but the student did not report the incident until the following month, according to police reports.

Both allegations are misdemeanors. Miller denies the charges. If convicted, he could face up to one year in the county jail.

Miller told police the student gave him a small bag of marijuana inside a crumpled piece of paper. Because Miller did not want to get the girl in trouble, he threw the bag into a pond on campus, according to police reports.

Miller contends the student made up the story that he tried to buy marijuana from her as revenge after Miller, suspecting there was domestic abuse inside the student's home, notified the Department of Children and Family Services. By law, Miller has to notify DCFS if he suspects abuse.

DCFS will neither confirm nor deny an investigation into the student's home.

Miller is on an unpaid leave of absence from the school.

N. Auroran earns Hero of Kane County award

Miller cited for volunteer work
12-11-82

By ERIC SCHELKOPF
Kane County Chronicle

The county board presented the 82-year-old Miller with its first Hero of Kane County award for volunteering and other accomplishments.

NORTH AURORA — Ray Miller recently attended a Kane County Board meeting because he thought the North Aurora Lions Club would receive an award. What he did not know was that the award was for him.

holding every office except secretary.

It also notes his many volunteer activities, including driving senior citizens around who need a lift.

The award left Miller speechless.

"I gave a salute," said Miller, a World War II veteran. "I couldn't talk. I was speechless."

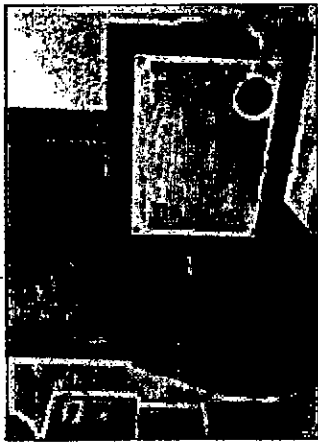
That response was indicative of Miller's humble nature.

"He is someone who has al-

ways been there when you need something," said Kane County Board member Jim Mitchell, a North Aurora resident who nominated Miller for the award. "He is someone I have always admired."

Even though Miller's health recently has been failing — he had triple bypass surgery last year, along with suffering from bleeding ulcers — he still volunteers his time.

See HERO, page 2



Bob Gerrard — Chronicle photo staff
North Aurora resident Ray Miller shows his Hero of Kane County award.

Hero

Continued from page 1

For example, he helps organize bingo the first Monday of every month at Ashbury Gardens and collects the eyeglasses and hearing aids that are dropped off at Lions Club collection boxes around the village.

It simply is in Miller's nature to help others. "Life is really what you make it. I thank God I have had the opportunity to do these things," Miller said. "I was never much for woodworking. Helping other people has been pretty much my hobby."

The retired custodian worked for West Aurora School District, where he cleaned Schneider Elementary School and North Aurora School.

Miller also was the custodian at the village's activity center for several years.

His wife of 55 years, Mary, is proud of her husband, although she does not want him to know.

"I don't want him to get a big head," Mary said, laughing.

Miller also is a highly decorated World War II veteran. His medals include a silver combat star for being in five major campaigns.

He has been a member of the Lions Club for 43 years, and is the only active charter member.

He has received several awards from the club, including Lion of the Year three times and the Melvin Jones Fellow Award. The award is given in honor of Jones, founder of the Lions Clubs International Association.

Miller is extremely proud of being a Lion and the group's work.

"It is the best service club in the world. It is all over the free world," Miller said.

A North Aurora resident for 50 years, Miller has seen the village grow around him. Miller and his wife have lived in the same house on East State Street for 50 years.

"North Aurora has always been nice. There are friendly people here. I have had a good life. I have nothing to regret," Miller said.

Geneva OKs 2002 levy

Lone senior citizen protests increase

12/18/02

By BRENDA SCHORY
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Aldermen approved a 2002 tax levy request of \$4.8 million, a \$510,000 or 9.5 percent increase over the 2001 request of \$4.3 million.

Most of the increase, 7 percent, is the new public safety bond and interest debt for the new fire station and remodeled police department, approved by voters in April, City Administrator Phil Page said.

Because of a projected increase in assessed valuation, the city's tax rate will increase by 2 percent, or 1.6 cents to 75 cents per \$100 equalized assessed valuation. Page said when the city proposed the \$6 million public safety referendum, officials estimated it would increase the annual taxes by \$43 on a house valued at \$200,000.

"The public safety bonds created a \$40 increase on a house valued at \$200,000, so we certainly are in that ballpark," Page said.

The largest increase in the levy is for insurance, to \$129,000 from \$81,000, an increase of 60 percent. First Ward Alderman Chuck Brown said it seemed large, but Page said it was larger to cover higher liability costs as a result of Sept. 11 and for worker's compensation coverage.

Taxing bodies file levy requests with the Kane County Clerk and receive their money in the spring.

But a new retiree, Keith Garland, who will be 65 in January, testified at the public hearing that the increase is cash out of his pocket.

"I want this to go on the record that you passed a very large increase, but there has been no increase in the homestead exemption ... and the Social Security increase was 1.4 percent," said Garland, of 701 Maple Lane. "Anything over 1 percent or 2 percent is going to have an impact on my fixed income."

Garland asked for officials' help in reducing the cost of nonessential services so taxes could go down, and in increasing the state's homestead exemption — a cut in property taxes for senior citizens.

"I understand the direction you are coming from, sir. There are a number of us retired and living on fixed incomes," 4th Ward Alderman Ron Singer said, gesturing to himself, 1st Ward Alderman Sam Hill and 5th Ward Alderman Paul DesCoteaux. Singer said the state controls the homestead exemption, not local aldermen.

"I think we have been very prudent in trying to keep taxes as low as we have. I think we are second to none in the area of public services such as police and fire, water, sewer and streets," Singer said.

Levy

Continued from page 1

"Had it not been for the city's public safety referendum, our levy would have been a minuscule increase," 2nd Ward Alderman Jim Radecki said.

Radecki advised Garland to watch other taxing bodies' proposed referendums.

Treasurer Tim Moran said most tax referendum increases have been approved by voters. Moran suggested Garland lobby his state representative to see about increasing the homestead exemption.

He also suggested a tax freeze or property tax deferral

program, both of which reduce senior citizens' property taxes.

The freeze program is based on income, the deferral sets aside property taxes until the homeowner dies or the property is sold. In both cases, the state recovers its money as a lien on the property.

Garland said after the hearing that he has lived in Geneva 23 years, but if taxes keep going up, he may have to explore other options.

"I just love this town and I do not plan to move," he said. "I voted for all the referendums for the schools, I supported all of that for 23 years. At some point, they have to stop raising taxes."

Early agreement not binding, says Waste Management

Judge to decide on contract with South Elgin

Waste transfer station
replaces plans for park

12/18/02

By VICTORIA A.F. CAMRON
Kane County Chronicle

SOUTH ELGIN — Lawyers for Waste Management on Tuesday argued that South Elgin's lawsuit to prevent a waste transfer station south of town should be thrown out of court. The village should be presenting

its case to the state pollution control board, the company's lawyers said. The case could go to the appellate court after the administrative hearings, they said.

The village is asking the court to hold Waste Management to an agreement made in 1988, when the trash-hauling company sought to expand the Woodland Landfill at Route 25 and Dunham Road.

Waste Management sent a letter to South Elgin outlining how it would handle some of the village's concerns.

The Kane County Board approved the expansion without including the letter, Waste Management attorney Donald Moran said.

Circuit Judge Michael Colwell said he would rule on Waste Management's request in writing by Jan. 28.

"I'm troubled by the way the major corporation always tries to take the high ground and tries to leave the citizens holding the bag — in this case, a bag of garbage," Colwell said.

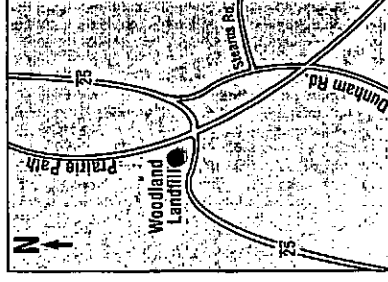
Derke Price, the lawyer representing South Elgin, said the letter was a contract because it included an agreement.

"That's the language they wrote," Price said.

Woodland Landfill was created in 1976 and is scheduled to close next year, at which time Waste Management was supposed to turn the area into a park, the lawsuit states.

However, Waste Management applied to the county in February for permission to build the waste transfer station, which would be able to handle 2,000 tons of garbage daily. This application violates the agreement outlined in the letter, the lawsuit states.

Two weeks ago, the county board rejected the application for the waste transfer station. The company has said the application rejection would result in residents' garbage pick-up costs increasing.



Chronicle graphic by Stacy Cordero

Shhhh! Elburn OKs noise ordinance

By DAN CHANZIT
Kane County Chronicle

12/18/02

Info available

ELBURN — A new ordinance will sound pretty good to a handful of angry residents.

This week, trustees unanimously approved restrictions on noise levels. The move gives police officers more power to keep the peace.

Police officers will use a decibel meter to measure noise levels. The meter only will be used when a resident makes a complaint.

Mayor James Willey said police will not patrol the streets looking for noise.

"Police are not going out monitoring sound levels just for the heck of it," Willey said. "This is a complaint-oriented ordinance."

The ordinance is modeled after similar restrictions in other communities. Elburn's restrictions are more lax, but village officials said they could revisit the issue later if there are problems.

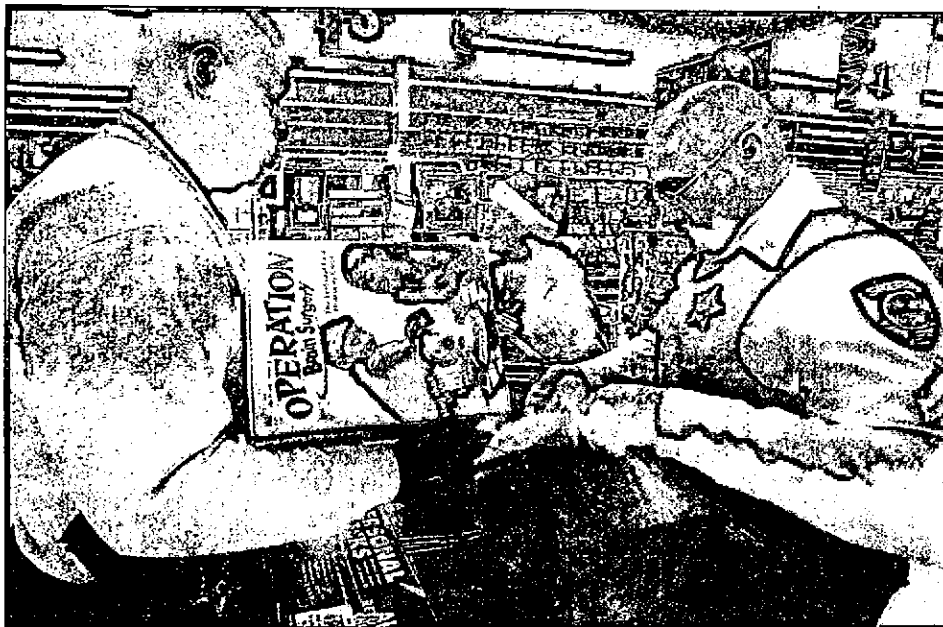
■ To request a copy of the noise ordinance to review a list of acceptable sound levels, call the village hall at (630) 365-5060.

"We do have to balance the rights of a person to make some noise with the right of a person not to listen to it," police chief James Linane said.

The village's previous regulation required residents to sign a formal complaint. That required police to arrest people and charge them with disorderly conduct.

Under the new ordinance, residents should call police when a neighbor is making too much noise. The officer will measure the noise level from the property line. If the level is too high, the offending resident will receive a warning.

After several warnings, officials said the offender will receive a fine.



Wayne Reistaff — Chronicle photo staff

Sheriff's Deputy Willie Mayes, left, and Sgt. Kevin Williams help out with the Kane County Fraternal Order of Police's Shop with a Cop on Tuesday at Wal-Mart in Aurora.

Cops shop to help needy

By VICTORIA A.E. CAMRON
Kane County Chronicle

AURORA — Kane County Sheriff's officers today will spend their third morning shopping for Christmas presents with more than 1,400 local children.

It is the 13th year the officers have contributed to Shop

with a Cop, a program that provides needy children with spending money and the chance to spend positive time with a law-enforcement officer.

"It's a great program. It helps people who otherwise wouldn't be able to get their kids so much," said Patty Kuntz of Aurora, whose 7-year-old son participated in the pro-

gram. "It gives him an extra present because I'm on a limited budget. He's not gonna get that much anyway."

Kuntz could not get her son the video game he wanted, "but he'll like what I got him," she said.

"My son is going to love you guys," she told the officers who helped bag her purchases.

The officers spent Monday and Tuesday at the Wal-Mart on Galetia Boulevard in Aurora. They will be at Wal-Mart on Randall Road in Elgin today.

Although they do not shop for themselves, the officers do not come away empty-handed.

See SHOP, page 3

Shop

Continued from page 1

"You get a warm feeling," said Lt. Ron Smith, who has volunteered for the program since it began in 1989. "You see people who may not have a Christmas other than that."

Smith also enjoys seeing the children, he said.

"How often do we get to mingle with the kids?" Smith asked.

Det. Willie Mayes has helped with Shop with a Cop since he joined the sheriff's office about 10 years ago.

"It's nice to see people who are less fortunate than others enjoy the holiday," Mayes said. "This gives us an opportunity to give back to the community."

Sgt. Pat Perez has been involved since the early 1990s, he said.

"This is what the spirit of Christmas is all about," Perez said. "It makes me more appreciative of all the good things I have in my life and all my family has."

The first-time volunteers enjoyed the experience as well.

"I like seeing the little kids with the smiles on their faces," Sgt. Kevin Williams said.

Previous job assignments prevented Williams from participating in Shop with a Cop. But he plans to be part of the program from now on.

"I wish I was here the other times," Williams said.

"I'll be here until my retirement. It's nice to be wanted, instead of not wanted for a change."

Deputy Brad Zentmyer is another new volunteer.

"It sounded like a good cause," Zentmyer said. The children were nervous to begin with, but quickly warmed up to the officers, he said.

"It's getting me in the Christmas spirit," Zentmyer said.

Wal-Mart invited the sheriff's office to shop there about three years ago, and the program has stayed.

"We think it's a really great program," said Janile Johnson, community involvement coordinator for the Aurora Wal-Mart.

The families come from all over Kane County, including Batavia, Hampshire, North Aurora, South Elgin, St. Charles, Sugar Grove, Aurora and Elgin, said Sgt. John Stoffa, president of the Kane County Sheriff's Office union, which sponsored the program.

However, there were too many needy children in the community for the sheriff's office to help them all. Instead of letting each child spend \$100, each received \$50.

"That way we can do more," Stoffa said. The officers had so many requests for help, they decided to only aid those who did not get to participate last year.

State Rep. Doug Hoefft dies

By OWEN R. BRUGH

Shaw News Service
12/18/02

ELGIN — The state Legislature lost one of its strongest voices on education Tuesday when state Rep. Doug Hoefft died from surgery complications.

Hoefft was 60. He is survived by his wife, Libby, and two children.

"He was a serious thinker, but he didn't take himself too seriously," said Leo Nelson, president of the Elgin Area Chamber of Commerce and Hoefft's friend for more than 20 years. "I don't know any people who were his enemy. Even if you disagreed with him, you liked him."

Hoefft, an Elgin Republican, underwent routine surgery Nov. 26 to remove a blockage from an artery, family spokeswoman Melissa Taube said. He suffered a stroke and remained in the hospital until Monday, when doctors believed he was stable enough to begin a rehabilitation program, said Dr. Mark Huang, Hoefft's physician with the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago.

Hoefft was moved to the institute Monday, where he died.

Hoefft had served in the House for 10 years. Hoefft worked as a high school history teacher in Chicago and Elgin before moving into school administration. He served as the Kane County regional superintendent of schools prior

to his election to the Legislature.

His replacement will be named within 30 days.

Hoefft served on a number of legislative committees, including those dealing with education, election reform and prisons. His colleagues called him one of the strongest and most vocal advocates for education in the General Assembly.



Hoefft

See HOEFT, page 2

Mejia: Hoefft 'carried the torch of education'

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

Doug Hoefft will be remembered as a torch-bearer for education.

Before Hoefft went to Springfield, where he served much of northern Kane County in the state Legislature as an Elgin Republican since 1992, he served 12 years as Kane County Assistant Regional School Superintendent and an additional six years as superintendent.

"He was a mentor for a lot of people," said Clem Mejia, who succeeded Hoefft as regional school superintendent. "He never forgot where he came from."

Hoefft died early Tuesday. He was 60.

Hoefft was a history and government teacher at Elgin High School when he was hired in 1975 as the assistant to former superintendent James Hanson.

See TORCH, page 2

Hoeft

Continued from page 1

"He was a champion of keeping local control of our schools and for sensible standardized testing," Illinois House Republican Leader Lee Daniels said in a statement.

U.S. House Speaker Dennis Hastert said he felt a special bond with Hoeft. Both worked as history teachers before moving into politics.

"He spoke from the heart and did what he thought was right, regardless of politics," Hastert said in a prepared statement.

Hoeft won election to the Legislature in 1992. State Treasurer and former legislator Judy Baar Topinka said he brought his sense of humor into political office.

Every day, Hoeft seemed to have a new joke, said Topinka, chairwoman of the Illinois Republican Party.

"He was a great addition to the Legislature, a man of integrity and honor who also had a devilish humor," she said. "He was a great legislator, a great Republican."

Hoeft's accomplishments

- Secured \$5 million in state funding for cleanup of a downtown Elgin salvage yard.
- Secured hundreds of thousands of dollars for area police and park projects.
- Helped repair a rift in the Kane County Republican Party.
- Helped create the state's school construction grant program, providing hundreds of millions of dollars for building projects.
- Secured a site for an Elgin Public Action to Deliver Shelter homeless facility.

Hoeft became one of the Legislature's foremost authorities on education, said state Rep. Patricia Reid Lindner, R-Sugar Grove.

"He was an expert on education," Lindner said. "Sometimes, when people get up to talk, there's chaos on the House floor. Well, when Doug got up to speak on education issues, it quieted down. People really listened to what he had to say."

Hoeft argued that members of the state board of education should be elected rather than appointed. He said state-mandated education tests were poorly structured.

He worked to approve the state's school construction grant program in 1995. He also opposed shifting education

funding from property taxes because it would hurt the suburbs.

And when debates in Springfield became heated, Hoeft used his sense of humor to calm the situation, Lindner said. He was philosophical about government and politics.

"I was always amazed," she said. "He always had a joke of the day. He could remember everything."

Voters in eastern Elgin, East Dundee, eastern Carpentersville, and parts of Barrington Hills and South Elgin elected Hoeft, a Republican, to a sixth term last month. He won about 59 percent of the vote.

According to the Illinois Constitution, Kane County Republican committeemen

from Hoeft's district have 30 days to pick someone to complete the two-year term.

Kane County Republican Chairman Ed Malek declined to discuss possible replacements.

"I think we all need to take some time to reflect on the loss," Malek said. "This is a real shock to the community."

Malek instead remembered how Hoeft helped repair a rift in the party about three years ago when the central committee chairwoman resigned.

"His wit and his sense of humor helped him develop his relationship with his constituents and his colleges," Malek said. "If we don't have a sense of humor, it can make life very difficult. Humor puts life into perspective."

Visitation for Hoeft will be from 3 to 9 p.m. Friday at Laird Funeral Home, 310 S. State St., Elgin. A memorial service will begin at 11 a.m. Saturday at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 360 Grand Ave., Elgin.

In lieu of flowers, the family has requested donations to either the Bethlehem Lutheran Church Endowment Fund, the Elgin Symphony Orchestra or PADS of Elgin.

Torch

Continued from page 1

When Hanson first took office, he sent notices to the county's school districts that the assistant's position was open.

"Of all the people who came in, he just impressed me," Hanson said.

Their differing personalities complemented each other. Hoeft was more outgoing while Hanson describes himself as being more reserved. Hanson went on to

serve until 1987.

"I think we made a good team," Hanson said. "He was dedicated to doing whatever he did."

When Hoeft took over the reins of the office in 1987, he hired Mejia out of the East Aurora School District.

"He always had a sense of humor," Mejia said. "You need that when you work with young people and young teachers."

One of Hoeft's proudest accomplishments was the formation of the drop-out and truancy prevention program, Mejia said.

The program received in-

ternational acclaim when it was written about in the education journal Phi Delta Kappa.

"It's been a model ever since. He was always looking out for the less fortunate, the kids of color," Mejia said.

The regional superintendent reports to the county board's Public Service Committee, and longtime committee Chairman Penelope Cameron, R-Aurora, recalled Hoeft's attendance at those meetings.

"He was just very down to earth and he wanted the best for the children," Cameron said.

Although Hoeft was re-

lected to a second term, he saw an opportunity to help education at the state level.

"He felt he could do more for kids as a representative," Hanson said.

In 1992, half-way through his superintendent's term, Hoeft won his race for state representative. He resigned and Mejia was appointed to replace him.

"He carried the torch of education. He always pushed the cause of education," Mejia said. "He gave me the opportunity to serve in this capacity and I'll never forget that. He will not soon be forgotten."

Successor will have to wait 12/18/02

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

State Rep. Doug Hoeft's successor will be chosen by Kane County Republican Chairman Ed Malek with input from Elgin Republican Senator Steve Rauschenberger.

Hoeft, an Elgin Republican who served in the House for 10 years, died early Tuesday. He was 60.

Malek and Rauschenberger have 30 days to name a replacement. Malek will have more influence in picking the successor than Rauschenberger, said Pat Freeman, director of election information for the Illinois State Board of Elections.

When a representative dies, party chairmen choose the successor based on a weighted vote tied to the number of ballots cast in the last election.

Most of Hoeft's district is in Kane County, where he received four times the number of votes as in Cook County.

Because Rauschenberger lives in Cook County, and because such a small portion of Hoeft's district is in Cook County, Rauschenberger will meet with Hoeft instead of the Cook County Republican Chairman.

Freeman said two days remain in the 92nd General Assembly. Malek and Rauschenberger could choose a successor to serve the last two days of the session, or wait for the 93rd General Assembly, which begins at noon Jan. 8.

Two losses further shake up House

12/18/02

BY ERIC KROL

Daily Herald Political Writer

House Republicans were shocked and saddened Tuesday when two of their suburban colleagues died on the same day.

State Rep. Doug Hoeft of Elgin died early in the morning from complications from surgery last month. State Rep. Tim Osmond of Antioch died from a heart attack in the evening.

"It's hard to comprehend. We can't even believe we're having this discussion about these two friends and colleagues," said state Rep. Tom Cross of Oswego, the incoming House Republican leader.

The sudden deaths of Hoeft and Osmond will bring more new faces to the regrouping House GOP and the House in general. Of the 31 new House members who will be sworn in Jan. 8, 14 now will be Republicans.

House Republicans already had picked a new leadership team headed by Cross and instituted rule changes to make their political processes more open. But given that the House Republicans are in the minority, the internal changes are not expected to have a big impact on state government.

The successors to Hoeft and Osmond will be chosen in a similar fashion by Republican leaders. Under state law, no special elections will be held, even though neither will be sworn in after winning election.

The Hoeft replacement largely will be chosen by new Kane County Republican chairman Ed Malek of Campton Township, who holds a wide majority of the weighted vote. State Sen. Steve Rauschenberger, an Elgin Republican who is the Hanover Township GOP committeeman, also

will have a say. Rauschenberger said they will take into consideration the feelings of Hoeft's widow, Libby, as well as Hoeft's colleagues in Springfield.

In Lake County, Osmond's replacement will be chosen by a three-member panel led by county Republican chairman Tom Adams, who said he plans to consult with Republican state Sen. Adeline Geokaris of Zion and incoming state Rep. Bob Churchill of Lake Villa.

In both cases, the new legislator must be picked within 30 days, but officials likely will want to find successors in time for the Jan. 8 swearing-in ceremony.

Malek declined to talk about naming a successor out of respect for Hoeft's family. "We're all deeply saddened by the loss of Rep. Hoeft," Malek said. "He served his constituents well."

That's the same reason potential successors were not floating their names publicly Tuesday. But that didn't stop names from being circulated in political circles. Among those were Elgin City Council member Ruth Munson; Elgin attorney Doug Scheflow; Keith Rauschenberger, the senator's brother; and Larry Wegman, a perennial candidate and husband of county recorder Sandra Wegman.

Several other potential candidates mentioned live outside the district, including former county farm bureau president Mike Kenyon of South Elgin, county board member Jackie Tredup of Elgin and former county board member Don Rage of Sleepy Hollow.

• *Daily Herald State Government Editor John Patterson contributed to this report.*

'A regular guy doing great things for Elgin'

12/18/02

BY KARA SPAK

Daily Herald Staff Writer

Amid deep shock and grief, Doug Hoeft, a longtime Fox Valley leader and educator, was remembered locally Tuesday for his frequent jokes and big heart, a heart committed to a life of public service.

His unexpected death shook friends, family and constituents throughout the Elgin area, like Elgin Mayor Ed Schock, who said he felt "like somebody hit me in the stomach" upon hearing the news.

"He saw himself as a servant," Schock said, echoing the comments of many others locally.

Elgin city council member Marie Yearman, who knew Hoeft since his days as Kane County Regional Superintendent of Schools, described Hoeft as a "friend to Elgin."

Hoeft represented the Elgin area in the General Assembly for the last decade, and was re-elected with broad support in November for two more years in Springfield.

His ties to the Fox Valley were much deeper, forged first as an Elgin High School social studies teacher and then as the Regional Superintendent of Schools, a position he was hired for in 1987. He and his wife Libby were longtime parishioners at Bethlehem Lutheran Church.

"He was committed to the process of education early on," said Bob Siljestrom, one of Hoeft's closest friends and advisers. Siljestrom represented Hoeft at political events if Hoeft was unable to attend. "One of his goals in life was to be a helpmate to other people. I'm an only child and Doug was the closest I've had to a brother."

On Tuesday, Elgin city council member Ruth Munson remembered how Hoeft helped rebuild the



DAVE TONGE/DAILY HERALD

Robert Siljestrom of Elgin photographed Doug Hoeft, a friend for 30 years, many times and served as one of Hoeft's most trusted advisers.

McKinley School playground and acted as a mentor when she first considered a run for city council.

"When I ran for council the first time I sat in his living room and he gave me advice," Munson said. "He impacted a lot of people's lives but didn't seek notoriety for it. He was just a regular guy doing great things for Elgin."

One group particularly grateful for Hoeft's work was Elgin's Public Action to Deliver Shelter, the homeless services agency that for years searched for a place to build a permanent shelter. Hoeft championed their cause and was key in the group obtaining land on Route 31 for the project.

• Daily Herald staff writer Sara Burnett contributed to this report.

Surgery Hoeft had considered low-risk

12/18/02

By KARA SPARK

Daily Herald Staff Writer

On Monday, optimism was high among Elgin state Rep. Doug Hoeft's family and friends for his recovery from a series of strokes he suffered after complications arose in a routine surgery.

He was moved Monday from Sherman Hospital in Elgin to the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago to begin rehab, but he unexpectedly died in his sleep there early Tuesday morning.

Hoeft's complications began on Nov. 26 after surgery to remove plaque from a carotid artery, which

carries oxygen to the brain. There are two carotid arteries on each side of the neck, and they are often used to quickly locate a pulse.

A carotid endarterectomy is a low-risk outpatient procedure where a surgeon removes plaque from the artery, restoring full blood flow to the brain, said Dr. Keith Horvath, a cardiothoracic surgeon at Northwestern Memorial Hospital and assistant professor at Northwestern University.

One to 2 percent of patients experience complications, which often result from the plaque flaking off into the artery and traveling toward the brain, Horvath said. Less than 1 percent die as a result of the surgery.

"It's not a very complicated procedure and it's done hundreds of thousands of times each year," Horvath said.

Without the surgery, patients with partially blocked carotid arteries are at a risk for stroke or death.

Robert Siljestrom, one of Hoeft's closest friends, said he and Hoeft discussed the procedure at length before Hoeft's surgery. Siljestrom had two of the procedures last year, he said.

"He told me he had to have this done but was going to wait until after the election," Siljestrom said.

If complications arise from plaque flaking off, as appears to be the case

in Hoeft's surgery, the condition is typically treated with aspirin to thin out the blood, Horvath said. If the plaque flake blocks blood flow to the brain, it can result in a series of strokes, which sources said happened in Hoeft's case.

Siljestrom said in the days after Hoeft's surgery, he was "looking really good." On Monday, doctors apparently agreed with that assessment and Hoeft was admitted to the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago.

By Tuesday evening, the cause of death was still unknown, said Melissa Taube, the Hoeft family's spokeswoman. Taube was not sure if an autopsy would be conducted.

Push is on to get state's open space funds restored

BY MATT ARADO
Daily Herald Staff Writer

12/15/02

A group of state legislators hopes Gov. George Ryan will restore millions of dollars in funding to two programs that help governments acquire and develop open land.

The General Assembly reduced funding for the Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development Fund and the Natural Areas Acquisition Fund earlier this year in an effort to balance the budget.

The reductions, which some legislators thought were a one-time-only deal, were made permanent. A proposed law awaiting Ryan's signature would restore the funding for both programs to pre-2002 levels.

The funds have been key sources of money for suburban park districts and other governments interested in acquiring land for recreational use. Legislators estimate that the open space fund alone has provided \$167 million in grants to local governments since its inception in the mid-1980s.

State Rep. Carolyn Krause, a Mount Prospect Republican and a supporter of the legislation, said it's important for local governments to be able to acquire land and save it from rampant development.

"If we don't provide the resources for this, the precious amount of open land that still exists in the Chicago area could soon be turned into a sea of concrete," Krause said.

If Ryan signs the legislation, the restored funding would come from the state's real estate transfer tax. Before this year, 35 percent of the total real estate transfer tax revenue went to the open space fund and 15 percent went to the natural areas fund. During this past year's difficult budget negotiations, those percentages were reduced to 20 percent and 5 percent, respectively, with the remainder used to help cover the state's operating deficit.

Restoring the cuts would pour a total of about \$14 million back into the open space and natural areas funds. The proposed law, if approved, would go into effect on July 1.

Krause said she's optimistic the governor will sign the legislation, even despite a projected spending deficit next year expected to top \$2 billion.

"This was not supposed to be a permanent reduction," she said. "All indications are that the governor will sign it."

A Ryan spokeswoman said the legislation arrived on the governor's desk Thursday; she couldn't predict when he might take action on it.

Several suburban park districts have used the open space fund to help pay for major projects.

In 1997, for example, the Mount Prospect Park District received a \$575,000 grant for the acquisition of a 2.1-acre site that became Hill Street Park. The park district also received open space grants for the development of Einstein and Busse parks, Chief Executive Officer Walter Cook said.

The Arlington Heights Park District has received a total of about \$2 million in grants through the program, Executive Director Roger Key said.

Most recently, the park district received a \$400,000 grant for the renovation of Frontier Pool this year and a \$200,000 grant for the renovation of Pioneer Pool in 1997.

Municipalities also can receive grants through the program. This year, Elgin and Lake in the Hills received grants to develop parks. The grants were partially funded by the open space program.

The other fund that would be affected by the proposed law, the Natural Areas Acquisition Fund, is used primarily by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, which has acquired more than 17,000 acres of land statewide through the program, Krause said.

Transfer station rejection right move for Kane

12/15/02

The mere idea that Waste Management, the local garbage hauler with a nearly omnipotent presence in Kane County, could lose a battle with local communities and county residents seemed far-fetched as county board members prepared to decide the fate of its trash transfer station proposal.

After all, Waste Management's singular influence on county garbage collection and county politics is well-documented over the past couple of decades. Its influence was such that its leaders believed, for example, that a written promise it made South Elgin in 1988 to close the Woodland landfill after this year could be summarily ignored.

But lose Waste Management did, by a substantial margin, in its efforts to transform the Woodland landfill just southwest of South Elgin into a garbage transfer station.

"I thought Waste Management was unbeatable," said Carol Hecht of South Elgin, one of the leaders of the opposition. "What I saw in there today was a county board that took their job seriously."

The vast majority of the board apparently agreed with county hearing officer Patrick Kinnally, who had recommended the county deny the request — or attach more

Our View

Herald

Hearing testimony clearly showed the traffic route was all but impossible for garbage trucks of the proposed size to negotiate.

than 30 conditions to any approval, including a ban on its opening until 2006, when road improvements in the area would be more likely to be completed. But there has never been any guarantee that those road improvements would be done even by that date four years in the future.

The board voted to reject the application based largely on a traffic plan that would have required nearly impossible turns for large trucks in St. Charles and doubts about the plan's compatibility with the county's solid waste plan.

Waste Management officials, probably a bit stunned by an experience in rejection quite foreign to them, predicted the county's waste collection fees would rise as a

result of the decision and suggested the company might pursue legal action against the county to reverse it.

Given the weaknesses in the truck route outlined in the plan, such legal action might be risky. Hearing testimony clearly showed the truck route, particularly the turn at Routes 25 and 64 in St. Charles, was all but impossible for trucks of the proposed size to negotiate. It also had drawn the opposition of DuPage County, which had questioned why the trucks would travel through Bartlett when most of the area served by the transfer station would be west of the Fox River.

Waste Management has 35 days to file an appeal with the Illinois Pollution Control Board, or it can reapply in two years. It also is scheduled to appear in court Tuesday in connection with South Elgin's legal attempt to hold it to the letter of that 1988 promise.

We have said before that Waste Management should honor its promise to South Elgin. Even if its 1988 letter isn't legally binding, morally it is the proper thing to do because its last approval for Woodland was predicated on that promise. Now the county board has agreed that the transfer station doesn't belong at Woodland albeit for different reasons. It's a decision as right as it was surprising.

\$30 million road-rail plan targets traffic near airport

BY JAKE GRIFFIN
Daily Herald Staff Writer

12/14/02

Two railroad underpasses and a rerouting of busy Roosevelt Road is the latest plan to fix traffic snarls at an awkward intersection south of DuPage Airport.

Engineers expect to have final design approval by next summer on the \$30 million project.

"We had a meeting with the last of

many players in the game and got a consensus on the alignment," said Morgan Cotten, DuPage County's deputy transportation department director.

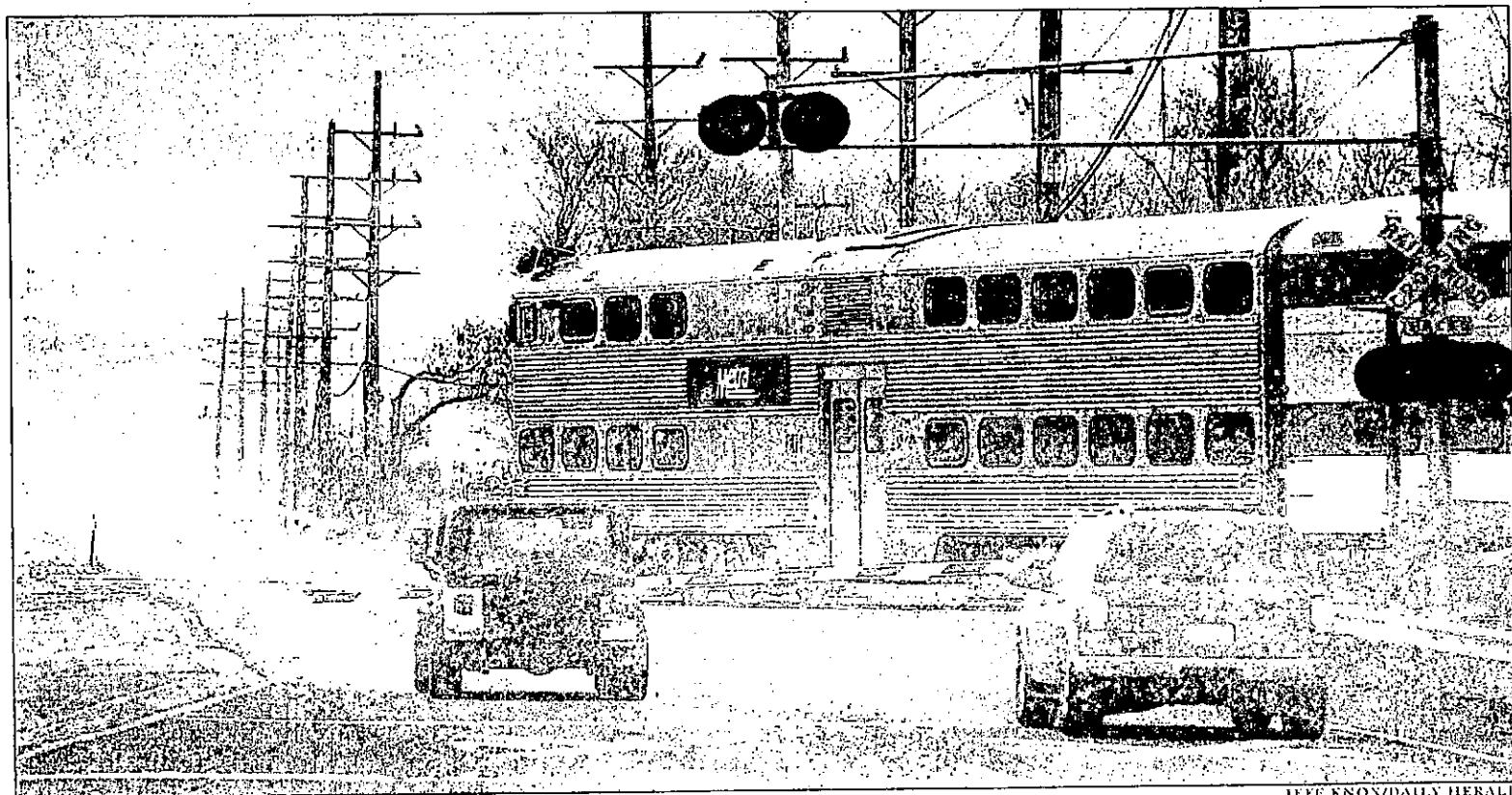
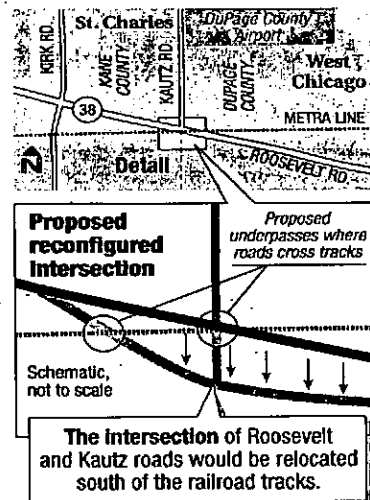
The north/south Kautz Road meets a diagonal Roosevelt Road, running northwest/southeast. To complicate matters, a Union Pacific rail line dissects the two roads at the intersection with trains using the tracks up to 75 times a day. The new

design calls for a portion of Roosevelt east of Kautz to be rerouted to the south, past the intersection and then under the Union Pacific tracks.

Kautz would be extended south to meet up with Roosevelt. A second underpass would be built to route Kautz traffic under the tracks.

The new design is the 18th version created since the project started in

See **TRAFFIC** on **PAGE 7**



Traffic backups at the Route 38/Kautz Road intersection will be eased when an underpass is built. Here, cars wait for a Metra train to pass Friday.

Traffic: Side benefits would help area

Continued from Page 1

2000. And despite the agreement of myriad agencies involved in the project, construction would not begin until 2005. It would take two years to complete.

Steve Ravanesi, project engineer for Chicago-based design firm McDonough Associates, said the finished system would look similar to the Winfield Road underpass at Interstate 88 in Warrenville.

Two underpasses are an advan-

tage, he said, because building bridges over the railway would pose a problem for air traffic from the nearby airport.

Gordon Cole, the airport's executive director, added the new configuration might encourage development.

Because Kautz is the border between DuPage and Kane counties as well as Geneva and West Chicago, discussions about the change have involved a larger-than-normal number of government agencies.

Throw in the airport, which owns much of the affected land; the board of the proposed tech park being built near the intersection; Union Pacific Railroad; the state's transportation department, and the Federal Highway Administration; and the bureaucracy involved alone could kill most projects.

"Everybody sees this as a great improvement in the region and everybody wants to see the project done," Cotten said. "But everybody had their own concerns."

In Kane County, officials are concerned about the cost.

"It's a design that can work," said Paul Rogowski, the county's transportation division director. "It's a very costly design and we would look at it from that standpoint when we make our final decision."

The cost of the initial design phase will be shared between the state and DuPage, Cotten said.

Construction and other costs will be borne by the state, counties, municipalities and Union Pacific.

State grants to enhance park, preserves, museum

12/14/02

Peck Farm Park in Geneva and Tekakwitha Woods Nature Center in St. Charles were awarded grants this week from the Illinois Public Museums Capital Grants Program.

Peck Farm Park received a \$100,000 grant for its natural classroom exhibits. The project includes construction of a butterfly house and an interpretive and sensory garden area.

Tekakwitha Woods Nature Center will use its \$125,000

grant for a buffalo prairie exhibit, which will include a prairie/savanna diorama.

A grant of \$38,500 was made to Red Oak Nature Center in Aurora for an interpretive deck over the Fox River as part of its Watchable Wildlife on the Fox program. Aurora's SciTech received a \$275,000 grant for the design and development of permanent science exhibitions in the Center of Excellence area.

— Kane County Chronicle

Firm pulls transfer station petition

By Dave Parro
STAFF WRITER

Beacon

AURORA — In a surprise move this week, Waste Management withdrew its application for a waste transfer station in unincorporated Aurora Township near Eola Road, postponing public discussion on the controversial proposal that was set to go to public hearing Tuesday.

The company said it plans to refile

Public hearing canceled; Waste Management to refile early next year

the application early next year, which effectively will set back the approval process for at least three months.

Company officials decided to "step back for a short period of time" to review and improve the ap-

plication, said Waste Management spokesman Bill Plunkett.

"We're just temporarily putting off the development efforts for the transfer station," Plunkett said. "We're still committed to the project."

Residents of nearby subdivisions and Aurora city leaders were ready to speak against the plans at the first of several public hearings Tuesday, but the company rescinded its application at the last minute.

The request for withdrawal was made late Thursday and approved Friday.

DuPage County, which allowed Waste Management to apply for construction of the station in August, subsequently canceled a public information meeting planned for Monday and the public hearing scheduled for Tuesday in Lisle.

❖ **Turn to PETITION, A6**

PETITION

From Page A1

The timing of the withdrawal was coincidental, Plunkett said. The company did not withdraw the application because of opposition and does not plan on considering alternative locations, he said.

"It's a good site," Plunkett said. "We think we've got an excellent plan for the transfer station."

Earlier this week, the Kane County Board rejected a Waste Management application to build a transfer station near South Elgin. Board members voted 21-4 against the proposal for many of the same reasons Aurora gives for opposing the DuPage County station.

Plunkett said Kane County's rejection of the South Elgin site Tuesday and withdrawal of the Aurora application Friday was simply another coincidence in timing.

When the company applied in DuPage County in September, it started a six-month approval process that would have ended with the County Board voting on the proposal by March. Dozens of residents already had sent letters of

opposition to board members, asking them to deny the application.

Bruce Sellers, a resident of the near-by Oakhurst North subdivision, said he had planned to argue against the transfer station Tuesday because it would have been inconsistent with the high-quality residential developments in the area. He said the delay will give him more time to lobby board members.

"I don't know if I'd call it a victory as much as a stay," Sellers said. "It just means I'm going to be more prepared."

Opposition to construction of the transfer station on the 24-acre site on Liberty Street, a third of a mile west of Eola Road at the Elgin, Joliet and Eastern Railway tracks, has been strong since the idea first was floated. Opponents said the garbage station conflicted with surrounding land uses and would have burdened local roads with truck traffic.

When Waste Management approached Aurora two years ago, asking to annex the site into the city, Mayor David Stover and aldermen told the company to look elsewhere despite the nearly \$1 million in fees the site would have generated.

Because Waste Management already had purchased the land, it

turned to DuPage County for approval instead, leaving Aurora with no official vote.

Bill Catching, an assistant chief of staff to Stover, said the Aurora City Council was ready to consider a resolution of opposition to the station Tuesday. City officials have acknowledged the need for another station to serve mostly Aurora and Naperville, but they want to find a more appropriate site.

There are several other options, Catching said, including one piece of land in particular in a zoned industrial area in Aurora away from residential areas. The city already has talked to the property owner, he said.

DuPage County plans call for the construction of five transfer stations, which have become a necessity because of closed landfills in the county. Haulers use the facilities to transport waste from smaller to larger trucks before taking it greater distances for dumping.

DuPage County Board spokesman Paul Darragh said the board has no comment on the application withdrawal because members have not yet seen the plans.

Contact Dave Parro at (630) 801-5495 or dparro@scn1.com.

Board will elect vice chairman in January

12/14/02

By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

Beacon

GENEVA — Kane County Board Chairman Mike McCoy will never forget what board member Lee Barrett told him when they discovered McCoy this week counted the vote wrong for vice chairman of the board.

"Lee said to me, 'I thought you were good with numbers,'" McCoy said.

They had a laugh about it Thursday at the Executive Committee. But it was no laughing matter earlier this week when Barrett, R-East Dundee, who lost the election to current Vice Chairman Caryl Van Overmeiren, R-St. Charles, called for a new vote.

Barrett garnered eight votes to Van Overmeiren's 12, with a third candidate, Doug Weigand, R-Batavia, getting five votes.

Board rules say Van Overmeiren needed a majority of board members present and voting. Because board member Cathy Hurlbut, R-Elgin, was absent, there were 25 board members on the floor.

When Van Overmeiren got the 12th vote, McCoy was figuring she was one vote short of the majority she needed. He then voted, casting what he thought was the 13th and winning vote.

But McCoy forgot that when he voted, that meant there were 26 board members voting, and 13 was not a majority. The vote officially stands at 12 because the chairman only votes when the vote makes a difference.

It turned out McCoy should have not have voted at all.

"It was entirely my fault," McCoy said Thursday. "We reviewed the play, and, after further review, the decision on the floor is reversed."

Executive Committee members agreed to hold the vote again at the January board meeting, picking up where they left off. That means board members will proceed as they would have after the failed vote — with renominations and another vote, or as many votes as it takes.

Committee members also agreed with McCoy and Assistant State's Attorney Bob Sandner, the board's lawyer, that state legal opinion allows Van Overmeiren to continue serving as vice chairman until a new one is elected.

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Kane mulls site for veterans memorial

■ Carr's list Officials might pick a spot on Government Center site

By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER
12/14 Beacon

GENEVA — The peaceful setting of pine trees and a stream soon might gain an added measure of solemnity.

The site is where some Kane County officials want to put a memorial to the county's war dead from the 20th century. The grouping of pines and the stream are at the

tree line of a forest at the Kane County Government Center, in front of the building at 719 S. Balzawa Ave.

Kane County Board Chairman Mike McCoy, R-Aurora, said this week he and John Carr, the county's Veterans Affairs director, favor that location for the veteran's memorial, now several years in the planning but slowly making its way through the government process.

"It's not set in stone," McCoy said of the location. "It's an idea I see the grouping of pine trees as a background, and it would be accessible."

Accessibility is key, said Carr, because officials see the memorial

"not only as a place of reverence but also a place of education."

People visiting the memorial will learn such things as there still are 67 county residents listed as missing in action, there were more than 100,000 American casualties in the U.S. military during the four months between September and December 1944, and Kane County lost seven people at the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor.

"Kane County was a small, rural county in 1941; to have seven killed on the first day of the war must have been quite a shock," Carr said.

Compiling the names

Carr has taken more than a year

— much longer than he expected — to develop a list of more than 700 dead from Kane County in 20th century wars. He has gleaned information from the military, newspapers, cemetery lists, historical societies and even survivors to put together the list.

This week, the Kane County Board Executive Committee accepted Carr's work and passed it for approval by the full board. But Carr admitted despite all the work, the list probably is not complete.

"It may be a list that's going to be near impossible to complete," he said.

Still, Carr wants the list to be

accepted so planning for the memorial can continue. In addition to picking the site, officials need to formulate a design for the memorial. It will not be easy, especially considering the lopsidedness of war casualties. For instance, some 547 are listed as Kane County casualties from World War II, while there was only one casualty from the county during the Persian Gulf war.

The county has money set aside for the memorial from riverboat funds.

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STC students become city officials

*There's no
learning
experience like
the real thing*

12/14/82

By GRANT MILLER

Shaw News Service

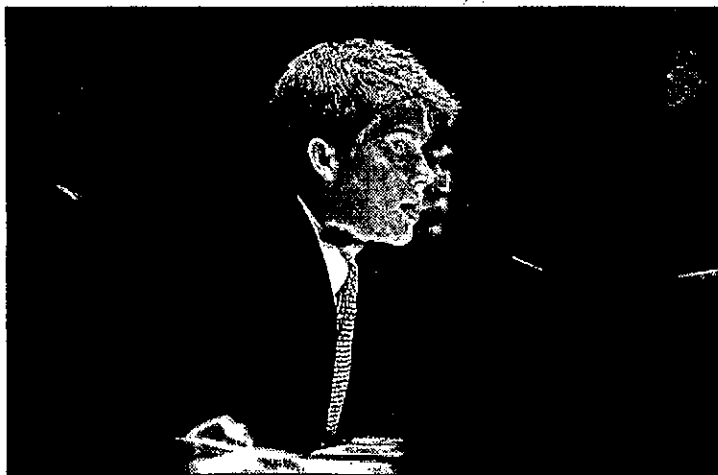
Chronicle

ST. CHARLES — Nearly 50 St. Charles East High School seniors Friday took their classroom to city hall to learn how local government works.

The project was for the school's Government For a Day program. The seniors sat in for city officials and debated issues facing the city.

Senior Matt Ploszek was appointed mayor for the day and was sworn in by Mayor Susan Klinkhamer. Ploszek said the program offered an unusual opportunity.

"It's an experience you can only get the effect from by sitting here," Ploszek said, sitting behind the mayor's desk. "We've been studying out of our books all semes-



Robert Barcroft — Chronicle photo staff

St. Charles East student Matt Ploszek oversees a mock city council meeting Friday during St. Charles East's Government Day at the St. Charles Municipal Center.

ter, but this is our best opportunity to use that knowledge."

The seniors debated potential Fox River development, the Red Gate Road annexation and other pressing issues. Friday's program marked the 10th year seniors have sat in for city officials. Social studies teacher Andrew Johnson said issues

change, but the experience for students remains the same.

"We try to mirror issues that are really being discussed in the city," Johnson said. "That way the kids can come up with their own revelations on current events."

One proposal discussed Friday involved a \$522,000 riverwalk along the Fox River

from Main Street south to Prairie Street. The plan includes two gazebos, a garden and benches lining the riverbanks. Instead of a tax increase, funding would come from donations and existing alcohol taxes.

Senior Grace Howell said the plan was based on riverwalks in San Antonio, Texas, and Naperville.

"Not only would it look beautiful, but it would attract business, too," she told the council.

Social studies teacher Jerry Powers said city officials take student input seriously. Powers said some designs for the Main Street bridge came from ideas presented in previous Government For a Day programs.

Johnson said Friday's program is proof future city councils are in good hands.

"I think we can get a sense of encouragement about the future, because these kids will be city council members wherever they live and we have some very informed kids coming through the system," Johnson said.

Good morning

Adding some necessary letters to volatile Kane County Jail debate

12/15/02
Herald

Wonder of wonders, Kane County Board Chairman Mike McCoy can actually speak the 'r' word. As in "taxes."

It's a word McCoy nearly gags on, especially when accompanied by the 'h' word. As in "hike."



McCoy

Can't say I blame him much, given the sturdy attitude of taxpayers these days. And I can't blame them much, either, come to think of it.

But McCoy, who may actually be recovering some of his leadership skills after an odd foray into some sort of personal political bunker, actually mentioned the two words last week in connection with the continuing problem of an overcrowded jail.

Not that he's advocating a referendum, mind you. He is merely

suggesting a little discussion on the subject might be in order. And he's right. Since an ill-advised and improperly sold jail referendum question failed dramatically in 1995, the county has been living dangerously. To date, it has managed to evade the action, if not the wrath, of the state and federal governments, and avoid serious injuries to guards or inmates. But building an addition it can't afford to operate, as it is planning now, isn't necessarily a wise solution.

either. Some influx of revenue — increased taxes, for those of you who don't understand government-speak — will be required. Do I think a referendum request would pass now? No. Not even if you paid voters for every "yes."

But its discussion is likely to lead to rational thought, which, in turn, could lead to a more sensible solution, like maybe the sales tax hike of a half-percent Sheriff Ken Ramsey has suggested.

Either way, 'r' and 'h,' whatever their form, will be necessary to any jail solution.

some enthusiasm for what the future might hold at the hands of those who see themselves as leaders. But with candidate filings for Elgin mayor and city council positions only a day away from closing, my reaction is as grim as the weather has been of late.

Incumbents Ruth Munson and Marie Yearman and the now-familiar Dennis Novotny and Tom Sendor have filed for three council seats so far. Yes, they tend to suffer a predilection for either, cheerleading, or near-constant pessimism.

But if I look past my obvious lack of enthusiasm for filing week due to its sheer repetition or its predictable "who's gonna run against Ed Schock" theories, I find it has less to do with the candidates and their views than

my feeling that the city council and the mayor are going to have very little to do with the city's immediate future.

That rests solely in the hands of Elgin School District U-46, which seems poised to slice away its outstanding "gifted" and academy programs (among many others) even as it returns the city's east side to the segregated 1950s.

Yes, I accept that cuts, serious cuts, are coming — and are necessary to solve the district's financial shortfall. But if the school district wants to ensure the worst possible outcome for the city over the long term, it is headed in the right direction. Its apparent intent to drive from the city's east side a middle class that values a demanding educational pro-

gram, all to serve a fetish for neighborhood schools, won't be overcome by city council enthusiasm for downtown townhouses and a fancy recreation center.

Schools suddenly filled with underachievers via boundary changes dictated by volunteer social engineers will become failing neighborhood schools overnight. And no one with any interest in their child's education will want their children to attend them.

I don't think Novotny, Yearman, Munson, Sendor or anyone else who eventually files can do anything about that — only the school board can. Thus, the city election simply isn't going to matter much in the face of U-46 actions.

Grim.

Powerless candidates

Petition filing for civic office is supposed to generate some excitement,

1 Their noses know

Kane sheriff reaping benefits from its canine division

By George Rawlinson
SPECIAL TO THE BEACON NEWS

Police detection dogs can sniff out any number of substances, including dynamite and other explosives, as well as marijuana, heroin, hashish, cocaine, crack and other dangerous drugs.

"We believe that our dogs are among the best anywhere," said Sgt. Alan Swanson, who helps head up the Kane County Sheriff's Department canine division.

The seven canines assigned to the department are making a big difference in protecting people and fighting crime, Swanson said.

"Our dogs have demonstrated an almost unbelievable talent for detection, though that's only one aspect of their training," Swanson said. "They're very versatile."

Smart, too.

Just ask Terry Siers, owner of a family-based business in Elgin. He's seen the dogs train on a regular basis.

Siers Feed and Pet Supply, the store he runs with his wife and son, is a sort of doggy *Temptation Island*, a canine training site that comes complete with an array of rawhide bones, toys and different types of food.

On a recent weeknight, Swanson supervised several police officers there, observing and offering suggestions as they ran their dogs through a series of detection tests, during which each canine was required to seek out and locate hidden substances.

Time was of the essence, and not succeeding could land both cop and canine in the dog house.

"This training is serious business, something with real-world applications," said Swanson, a 22-year police veteran. "We're here helping one another, but we want results, too."

A nose ahead of humans

Bob Baloun, a Kane County deputy and certified canine handler,

agreed, adding that dogs have an "amazing ability," surpassing human scenting, which is not nearly as developed.

Idar, a Kane County canine, can detect scents imperceptible to humans, says his handler, Eric Fisher, who has been a police officer for almost a decade.

During the recent run-through, Idar, a 3½-year-old German Shepherd weighing about 110 pounds, was able to detect several scents in less than 10 minutes.

Swanson said he went out of his way to make it an especially tough training session, hiding deactivated explosive material next to open catnip, for example. The sergeant also hid a drug-scented package among a pile of dog treats, directly underneath a ceiling fan, trying to confuse Idar even more.

Dog-officer relationship

What does Idar get out of all the training and hard work?

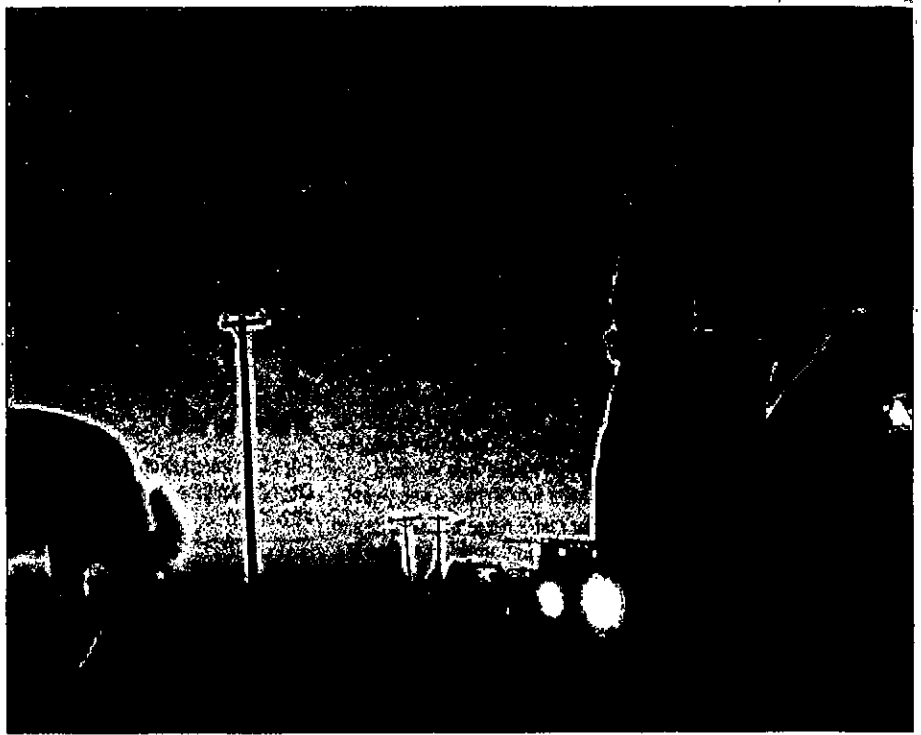
With every successful "find," he gets to play tug of war with his handler, a reward that's of paramount importance in training, Swanson said.

When detector dogs are sniffing and searching frantically for drugs and explosives, they think it's a game, trying to find their toy—the one they think their handler has hidden, accomplished by a pretend throw.

"A good handler learns to read his dog," Swanson said. "To the dog, an opportunity to 'play' is too good to be missed. That's why they're so focused during scent discrimination. . . . Essentially, the relationship between dog and handler is all about communication."

In Idar's case, a great deal of that communication comes in a language other than English. Like some other Kane County canines, the dog was born and received apprentice training in Czechoslovakia.

Fisher had to learn 20 Czech commands. He also learned Idar's individual characteristics, earning



ROB MATTSON / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Kane County sheriff's police dog Idar sniffs along the roadside as Deputy Eric Fisher watches during an evening call in DeKalb County.

the dog's trust, which he says is returned tenfold every day.

"A dog's love is unconditional," Fisher said. "We spend a lot of time together."

As is the case with other Kane County canine handlers, Fisher takes his dog home at night.

Handlers say the detection dogs make excellent pets when they're off duty, adding that they're particularly fond of romping around with children.

Dogs gain prominence

German shepherds make up the bulk of the sheriff's canine force, though there is one Labrador among them.

According to their handlers, not only do these dogs have a marvelous ability to detect scents, but they also are extremely good at distinguishing one odor from another and remembering it. Scent discrimination is especially important in detecting differences between bomb materials and drugs.

"The alerts are different for those scents," Swanson said. "With drugs, the dogs are taught an aggressive alert, scratching at the object. With a bomb, however, they're taught a passive alert. When they find something, they sit down. You don't want them scratching at a bomb, of course, taking a chance that the



Deputy Eric Fisher rewards his partner Idar after the dog successfully found a tube containing crack cocaine during a training exercise.

slightest movement might cause an explosion."

Swanson and members of his canine team train on a regular basis, sometimes several times a month, often in a warehouse adjacent to Siers' feed store. Dogs and dog handlers from other local police departments also participate.

Not all canines make good detector dogs. The secret to their success rests in the selection process. Only dogs that are fanatic retrievers will be interested in trying to find an object. In addition, only dogs that pre-

fer a vigorous game of tug of war over meek surrender of the toy are chosen for work in a detection division.

Detector dogs possess a single-mindedness. To each one, the introductory phase of training establishes that finding a narcotic, for example, is a highly rewarding experience.

"They're a lot of things," Swanson said of the deputy dogs. "A good one is intelligent, affectionate and brave."

"... Ours are very good ones."

Beltway divides politicians

12-29-01 Chronicle

Hastert and McCoy are taking sides.

BY TOM SCHUESTER
Kane County Chronicle



Wayne Ratzliff — Chronicle photo staff
Kane County Board Chairman Mike McCoy points to a map as he speaks during an outer-beltway hearing in Big Rock.

Board Chairman Mike McCoy, who sees the highway as destroying his policies of preserving agricultural land and open space.

Both enjoy strong support among their constituencies. Both believe in their causes. Both are prepared to fight to the end.

"It's going to be a long war," McCoy said.

One of the fundamental issues nagging both is the eternal question: What comes first, the traffic or the road?

The Illinois Department of Transportation, with Hastert's support, has taken the unusual step of

trying to protect a corridor for the Prairie Parkway without money to buy rights-of-way, nor statistics to back up the need for the road.

Hastert spokesman Brandon Groner said the Chicago area has few north-south routes that aren't choked with traffic.

Compounding the problem are lost opportunities in DuPage County to construct a major north-south highway to relieve congestion on existing roads.

Hastert supports identifying a corridor before the explosive growth slated for Kane puts the county in the same position as its neighbor to

the east, Groner said. "The Speaker believes the time to do that is now," he said.

McCoy said siting a centerline for a new highway will spur growth and create even worse traffic. He said history is on his side.

Look at the westward movement of the pioneers along rivers, wagon trails and railroads, he said.

"They ventured out into virgin territory and development followed," McCoy said.

"Transportation drives land use."

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Another way to view the aerial photographs of inter-state highways, McCoy said, is to look at historical documents growing year by year. Randall Road is another example, McCoy said. Randall was designated a strategic regional arterial highway, designed to move people from one end of the county to the other. Instead, commercial interests bought up land fronting the road and now Randall is cursed as the most congested road in Kane County. "Business will figure out a way to use the land," McCoy said.

The Prairie Parkway is not the first proposal for a major north-south route. Plans for the so-called Fox Valley Freeway surfaced from time to time, but no one could find a place for it. Corridors for the Fox Valley Freeway included Route 59, a path along the east side of Fermilab, another along the west side of Fermilab, and Route 47. Each of the routes would have taken homes and property. None had public support and the proposals died in the meantime, traffic on existing roads got worse. Not to protect a corridor now would doom any hope for a north-south route, Groner said.

Groner said Hastert supports the concept of the highway, but is favoring one corridor over another. "It is IDOT's job to find a route," Groner said. "The corridor identified by IDOT — and the one upon which the public can offer comments until Feb. 10 — runs 33 miles from I-88 just east of Kaneville south past Big Rock and on into Kendall County, meeting up with I-80 near Minooka.

A route for the beltway closer to the Fox Valley makes more sense, McCoy said. Kaneville and Big Rock towns from development, due in large part to the county's 2020 Land Resource Management Plan, which calls for the protection of agricultural land.

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