

Kane County puts heritage on display

Preservation focus of 2004 calendar

By William Presecky
Tribune staff reporter

Unlikely as it is to spawn a titillating movie-plot, as in the current movie "Calendar Girls," Kane County's 2004 pictorial calendar nevertheless offers an exposé of sorts.

The calendar features a dozen of the most prominent preservation projects the county has underwritten in the last several years, in part by utilizing millions of dollars in riverboat casino revenue.

Since 1997 Kane County has invested more than \$14 million in a campaign to preserve its heritage that may be the most ambitious in the state in scope and size, according to Julia Evans, the county's preservation planner.

"As far as counties go, there probably isn't any in Illinois that has given more than Kane County," Evans said.

The county is using a calendar to illustrate its point, as it did two years ago in touting its rural Rustic Roads volunteer program. This calendar depicts some of the "bricks and mortar" preservation funded since 1997. About 15,000 copies are available at the county government center in Geneva and other locations.

The Kane County Board, along with several organizations, has accomplished much preservation with the aid of profit-sharing funds from the Grand Victoria casino in Elgin.

The five-year period ending in 2002 was the most productive in county history, Evans said.

Kane County has invested at least \$14 million to benefit historic buildings, programs and heritage tourism, board Chairman Mike McCoy said, about \$11 million of it from riverboat funds.

Since receiving its first allotment from the Elgin casino in 1997, Kane County has accepted and doled out about \$74 million in riverboat grants, primarily for capital projects that benefit the environment, economic development or education.

In making its funding decisions, the County Board early on defined historic preservation as having an educational benefit, McCoy said.

"And we consider farmland protection as historic preservation," he said.

Like the 2002 calendar, McCoy said, the 2004 offering is intended spread public awareness.

"We don't do a county newsletter or anything like that. We thought this would be a good way to showcase the preservation projects we've done. Sometimes it isn't until you actually list them out or put them together that you realize how impressive it is."

Among the landmarks featured in the new calendar are the Plato Center and Wasco train depots; the Mongerson and Fidler farms; the Beith, Benton, Bliss, Peaslee and Farley houses; the Batavia Depot Museum; Eakin and Centerville Schools; the Fox River Trolley Museum; Big Rock Granary; and Teeple Barn.

Hampshire looks forward to growing in 2004

1-2-04 Chronicle

By ARACELY HERNANDEZ
Shaw News Service

HAMPSHIRE — Village President Bill Schmidt said he is proud that the village finally included Starks in its facilities planning area in 2003.

"That's something I've been wanting to do for years," he said. The Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission will make the ultimate decision where the village will expand and if it will include the Starks area at

Routes 20, 47 and 72.

Earlier in the year, officials scrambled to create a boundary agreement with surrounding communities to submit applications to the Northeastern Planning Commission after Elgin officials voted in October to be the leader in growth and provide sewer and water to all areas west to Route 47

between McDonald Road and Interstate 90.

Neighboring villages, including Gilberts, Hampshire, Huntley and Pingree Grove also have their sight set on severing property there. Hampshire worked out boundary agreements with Gilberts and Elgin officials in November.

In the Gilberts agreement, Hampshire gave up one of the eight corners that make up the intersection. Gilberts gets a triangle-shaped area between Reinking Road, Route 47 and Route 72.

The boundary line with Elgin is set to lie on Big Timber Road and Route 72. Elgin will go around south of the coveted area of Starks at the intersections of Routes 20, 47 and 72.

Trustees said they approved the agreement because Hampshire still had jurisdiction over that most of that prime commercial area.

Schmidt said giving up one of the corners at Starks worked out well with the village because it keeps the three largest industrial businesses, Buck

Brothers, Minuteman International and Edward Hines Lumber within the village's jurisdiction.

Gilberts officials last week decided to hold off on signing a boundary agreement with Elgin.

Village President Everett Clark said officials need to make sure the agreement includes all of the correct information. Dawn Thompson, an assistant administrator at the commission, said a date for a hearing has not been set but is expected sometime next month.



Kane courts remained busy through '03

1-2-04 Chronicle

Gorecki's law license suspension tops year's court-related news

By ADAM KOVAC
Kane County Chronicle

ST. CHARLES — The suspension of Kane County State's Attorney Meg Gorecki's law license made headlines around the state and overshadowed several other high-profile cases. The four-month sanction issued

by the Illinois Supreme Court on Nov. 20 made Gorecki the first sitting state's attorney disciplined for misconduct, but has not ended speculation about the future of the county's top prosecutor.

Gorecki, 36, has asked the state's high court to postpone her suspension for violating the Illinois Rules of Professional

Conduct by implicating Kane County Board Chairman Mike McCoy in a phony jobs-for-bribes scheme.

But Gorecki's was not the only case that grabbed attention in the far west Chicago suburbs and made 2003 a notable year in Kane County's legal arena.

Ruben Martinez, 21, died Jan. 8 after he was stabbed in the stomach



Gorecki

with a butcher knife and then beaten by a group of men armed with a baseball bat and nunchucks at the Fox Run Apartments in St. Charles.

Gustavo Martinez, 21, has pleaded innocent to murder charges and is awaiting trial in connection with the killing, the first in the city since 1999. The two men are not related.

Already facing sex abuse charges in Geneva, former priest Mark A. Campobello, 38, of Belvidere, was accused of additional offenses Oct. 31 for sex acts when he worked at Aurora Central Catholic High School.

Luther Casteel, 45, the gunman in a 2001 shooting rampage at JB's Pub in Elgin that killed two people and injured 16 others, had his death sentence commuted to life in prison in January by former Gov. George Ryan.

Bank robbers targeted the Fox Valley in October and November, pulling heists at about a half-dozen banks in Batavia, St. Charles, Aurora and Algonquin before escaping in rush-hour traffic. Those investigations are ongoing.

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Courts

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Joseph Hauschild, 19, was sentenced on May 28 to 65 years in prison for a 2001 home invasion and shooting of an executive at DeNor-Community Hospital in Geneva.



Hauschild

Hauschild and Ethan Warden, 18, had planned to steal \$10,000 that they thought was in the home and move to New York City to become rock musicians. Warden pleaded guilty and testified against Hauschild in exchange for a 12-year sentence.

On Sept. 24, former St. Charles Police Chief Don Shaw sued the city, Mayor Sue Klinkhamer, and City Administrator Larry Maholland, claiming that he was fired because he refused to cover up illegal activities by friends of the mayor. The case is pending in U.S. District Court in Chicago and Shaw remains on the police force as a sergeant.



Marcinkowski

Steven W. Marcinkowski, 41, of Hampshire, was sentenced to 25 years in prison on Nov. 23 for triggering a shoot-out with a Kane County sheriff's deputy, but is eligible for early release in 12 years because of a loophole in state law.

Kane County Sheriff Ken Ramsey called the sentence a "travesty" and state Rep. Tim Schmitz, R-Batavia, said he would propose legislation that would enhance all Illinois penalties for crimes against police.

Edward W. Edwardsen Jr.,

21, was convicted in October after a 10-day trial of attempted murder, animal torture and other offenses for a rampage in 2000 that terrorized Elgin and Carpentersville.

Edwardsen, who joked that he was the "hatchet man" committing the ax and knife attacks on people and cats, could be sentenced to up to 30 years in prison when he is sentenced this month.



Edwardsen

Ramsey won a settlement in a national class-action lawsuit against Poland Spring Water Co., which he sued Aug. 20. The agreement awards the sheriff \$12,000 and his attorneys \$1.39 million.

A drunken brawl erupted during a Mexican Rodeo at the Kane County Fairgrounds on Sept. 16, when a man rode a horse onto a packed dance floor and was attacked by the crowd. Four people were arrested and seven others injured.



Undesser

Lisle L. Undesser, 35, of West Chicago, was charged Dec. 2 with theft and forgery for falsely claiming that her 7-year-old son was dying of cancer.

Undesser received money and gifts in a campaign launched on the boy's behalf before the scheme was uncovered in late October, when people wondered why Undesser's son did not die.

And a Kane County coroner's jury determined that Craig M. Petropoulos, 36, of Elgin, became lodged in an open window and suffocated on Oct. 28 when a drug- and alcohol-fueled burglary attempt turned into a death trap.



Looking back... and forward

I was looking back on the columns I wrote in 2003, and I was surprised at how many of those stories are left unresolved as we start a new year. Today I'd like to take another look at the unfinished business that will have a real effect on 2004. In the process, maybe we can make a prediction or two as well.

2004 is an election year, so brace yourselves. With the two highest offices in the county open, the campaign season that started last summer will hit high gear over the next few weeks. Unfortunately, this means the mudslinging also is about to start.

The first race I predict as getting down and dirty is the primary battle to become the Republican candidate for chairman of the Kane County Board. Already one political operative is trying to label Karen McConnaughay a "liberal" and is describing the contest as being for "the heart and soul of the Republican Party." It's a toss-up which claim is more laughable, but when this is just the opening salvo, look for future pronouncements to be even more off the wall.

I expect opponents of the only other candidate in the race, Dave Rickert, to stop giving him a pass and start attacking. Rickert's campaign, under-funded and understaffed, is due for a rude awakening into the real world of rough-and-tumble politics.

Despite several other names on the ballot, the Republican primary race for state's attorney is really between John Barsanti and Tim O'Neil. So far, this has been a relatively civil contest, but cracks are emerging.

Supporters of both men are now starting to drop little bomblets of "information" about the other candidate. Most of the time these are ignored, but as this race tightens up I expect to receive a few more breathless phone calls telling me how O'Neil doesn't part his hair right, or that Barsanti eats with the wrong fork. Oh, joy.

I don't know why there's a Republican primary race for coroner, but there is one. Incumbent Chuck West is being challenged by crematory owner Stan Hickrod, and Hickrod has made it clear he's out to win. He's filed numerous requests for information from West's office and has made at least one charge,

later debunked, of mismanagement against West. West had better find his footing soon and go on the offense. You can't fight effectively if the other guy has you off-balance, but that's exactly where Hickrod has put him.

Moving from politics, there are other major issues left unresolved from last year. One of the biggest is ComEd's giant power towers; even though the towers are no longer planned for Randall Road, the project is very much alive. The question now is where will it pop up.

The last anyone heard, ComEd had shifted the towers from Randall to Kirk Road, but I've yet to see a drawing or map that shows exactly where these things are supposed to go. In any setting they're still ugly as sin, so expect a fight when the details become clear.

The Batavia dam issue has to be resolved this year, but I'll be darned if I know whom to trust on this one. I know I'm not the only person to feel this way; it's common when you have dueling experts supporting totally opposing views. However, I lean toward fixing the old dam for the simple reason that we know what the river and surrounding shoreline is like with a dam. We don't know for certain, and neither do the experts, what it will be like without one.

The push for a municipally owned and operated broadband system by a vocal, dedicated minority didn't show any signs of lessening last year, and it's doubtful they'll abandon the cause this year. Expect renewed calls for a city-owned system every time the cable goes out for more than 20 minutes, or when "Matlock" re-runs are cancelled.

Space won't let us delve into some other carry-over issues: teardowns in Geneva, the "no books" experiment in District 303, the screaming need for a new jail, or a hundred other stories. However, our promise to you all is we'll keep an eye on them — as well as all the new issues that are sure to come up in the next 12 months.

Stay tuned. It's going to be a very interesting year.

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Elburn ¹⁻²⁻⁰⁴ Chronicle
irons out
Metra deal,
construction

By DAN CHANZIT
Kane County Chronicle

Construction began on houses in the Blackberry Creek subdivision, Metra cemented a deal to bring a station to town and village coffers filled with impact fees.

It was a busy year for Elburn.

A look back at the year's most memorable stories:

• **Metra plans approved:** After years of discussion, Metra officials in October signed an agreement with the village to bring a train station to the village.

The Elburn Metra station will replace Geneva as the last stop on the Union Pacific West Line. It will be on 50 acres west of Blackberry Creek and north of Keslinger Road.

The property will include a 300-space parking lot, coachyard and warming house.

Construction and grading began in July.

The annexation agreement bars Metra from using the coachyard to store freight trains. The coachyard will be used to store commuter trains instead, and train operators will turn off the engines at night.

Still under discussion is the future extension of Anderson Road and a bridge over the train tracks.

Building the extension will require an intergovernmental agreement between the village and Kane County. It is unclear who will maintain and own the bridge. The proposed four-lane road would connect Route 38 and Keslinger Road.

Metra agreed to work with the Illinois Commerce Commission to install video cameras downtown so that trains will not need to blow their whistles when passing through.

Metra officials said they will work toward placing the cameras at First Street and Route 47 as part of its annexation agreement.

State and federal law requires train operators to sound their horns at crossings to warn motorists and pedestrians. Video cameras would allow conductors to see that crossings are clear, Metra officials said.

Installing cameras in Elburn is subject to ICC approval, but doing so would turn the village into a "quiet zone" on the Union Pacific West Line extension.

• **Transit-oriented housing:** Village officials in July reviewed plans by Pulte Homes, which proposes to build a high-density residential neighborhood to border the Metra station.

Pulte's last revision called for about 1,300 units on about 250 acres.

In November, village planner Kon Savoy presented to plan commissioners the village's proposed compromise: shorter blocks, varied lot sizes and lots of green space.

Village officials want high-density residential uses to mingle with space for specialty retail and recreation. That could mean three-story townhouses with shops to occupy the first floor.

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REVIEW

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Pulte is expected to return with an updated proposal later this spring, village officials said.

- **Power shift:** There was a lot of shuffling among village officials after the April election.

Former zoning board of appeals member Gordon Dierschow and former plan commission chairman Bill Graberek took their seats on the village board, as did Jeff Metcalf who was re-elected.

Three familiar faces left. Dennis Ricke did not seek another term because he was retiring from teaching at Wredling Middle School. Walt Tupy lost his seat. Jeff Humm was appointed to fill the seat vacated by John Peterson. Peterson resigned in March after being charged twice with drunken driving.

The board confirmed two plan commission appointments.

Plan commission member Pat Schuberg was named chairperson. Elburn business owner Sue Filek was tapped to fill an open seat.

In January, Mike Greenen was appointed to the planning commission. He replaced former commissioner Bob Miller, who resigned in November 2002 for health reasons.

- **Impact fees released:** Local governments began to feel the relief only impact fees can bring.

In April, the village released more than \$1 million in fees collected from developers for new construction in the Blackberry Creek subdivision.

Elburn imposed the fees on developer B&B Enterprises for the 625-acre, 1,250-unit development approved in 2001. Construction began this year.

The fees help new growth pay for its impact on infrastructure, schools, libraries and village services.

Kaneland schools received \$531,000, and the Town and Country Library District received \$8,600.

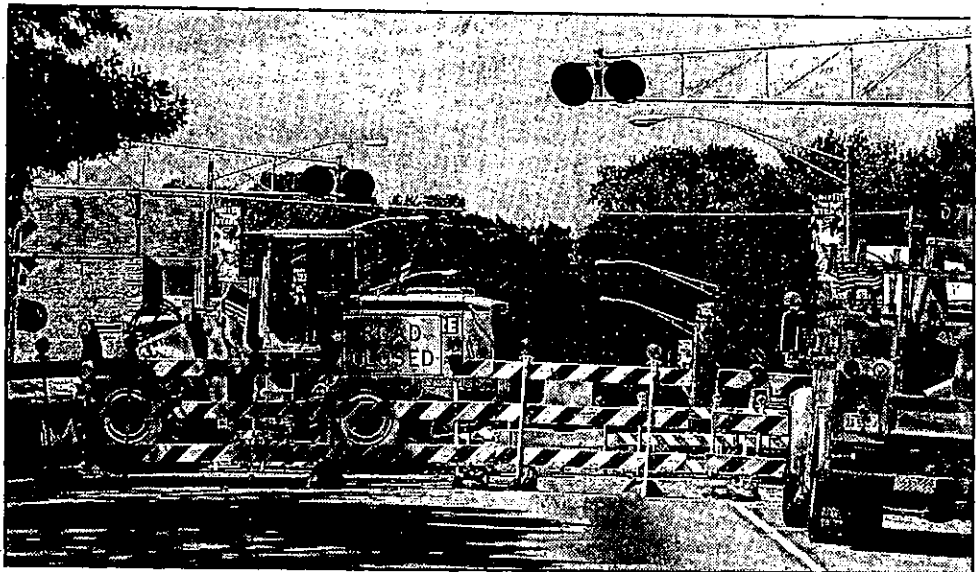
The wastewater treatment fund received \$285,000 and the Anderson road fund received \$183,000. The fire district received \$24,000.

The first round of fees was collected on 200 houses in the subdivision's first three phases. The development has 12 phases, and village officials said millions more in impact fees will be collected in the next few years.

- **Radium removal:** In September, village officials reviewed two proposals for removing radium from Elburn's water supply.

Federal and state officials have asked municipalities to lower concentrations of the naturally occurring element.

The village might select either ion exchange or Colorado-based Water Remediation Technology's zeolite filtering method.



Chronicle file photo

Route 47's railroad crossing was closed this year in July, while railroad officials upgraded the Union Pacific tracks. More closures are slated for this year.

Ion exchange would require the village to build about \$4.5 million in improvements to its water system. That is in addition to the estimated \$500,000 yearly materials cost.

WRT's method involves sending water through pipes and filters made of the mineral zeolite. Radium is trapped by the filters because it clings to the zeolite.

The village had faced a Dec. 8 deadline to bring its water into compliance. In August, the IEPA announced that it was relaxing its demand.

Residents pay \$2 per 100 cubic feet of water. Costs to implement WRT's zeolite filtering method would tack on another \$1.11 per 100 cubic feet, officials said.

But, village officials said the method would save residents \$9.7 million over 20 years, which is how much more it would cost to implement ion exchange.

- **Route 47 railroad closure:** Traffic was crippled in July when Metra and the Illinois Department of Transportation closed the railroad crossing at Route 47.

The \$155,000 project upgraded the Union Pacific tracks. Two additional closures this year will complete the project, which will prepare the village for the Metra station.

- **Village buys house:** In October, trustees discussed what to do with a house that they bought that borders the village's municipal campus.

The house at 9 S. First St. could be razed, or it could be fixed up and rented. Trustees have yet to decide.

In July, trustees agreed to buy the property for \$155,000 because it borders the village's municipal campus. The campus includes the village hall, public works, police department, fire station, library and Veteran's Memorial.

Grabbing nearby land as it goes up for

sale would benefit future leaders by giving them more property to work with, village officials said.

Village officials heard a proposal by FGM Architects of Oak Brook. The firm suggested moving the police department or village offices into the old ambulance building. This year, the fire and ambulance companies combined into one building across the street from it.

The vacant ambulance building is not for sale, and discussions are ongoing.

- **Garbage vaults:** In March, village officials revealed a dirty little secret about some residents' front porches.

Some village houses in the Cambridge subdivision have construction garbage buried underneath their concrete front stoops.

Rather than put the waste into a dumpster, village officials said at least one builder dumped his waste into the foundation. The practice is not common, and village officials said only a handful of houses are affected.

Construction garbage includes wood, roofing shingles, tiles, metal scraps and conduit. The waste is placed into a concrete vault that can be as deep as the foundation and as large as the front steps. Once the rubbish is placed in the hole, it is covered with gravel and sealed with cement.

That has prompted the village to draft a new ordinance specifically prohibiting the dumping.

Village attorney Bob Britz said the village did not have a law to enforce ethical building. He said a new ordinance would protect home buyers and stop the dumping.

The penalty for sealing waste in a basement vault is \$25 per day. The fine can go up to \$750 per day until the garbage is removed.

Ex-clown, ex-con running for Congress

■ March primary:

Hastert one of few in

Illinois delegation not

facing challenge

By Dennis Conrad

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — A retired clown, a congressman-turned-convict and a lawyer who defended a gang leader are among 30 challengers running to become the

newest members of Illinois' House delegation.

All but two of the state's 19 House members — Republican Speaker Dennis Hastert of Yorkville and Democrat Jan Schakowsky of Evanston — have one or more opponents lined up for the March primary or the November general election or both.

Party strategists say that because of the power of incumbency and districts designed to help incumbents keep their seats, the races are unlikely to affect the

partisan makeup of the delegation of 10 Republicans and nine Democrats, and they say virtually all expected to be re-elected.

The challengers generally were not recruited by national or state party political operatives and have raised little or no money.

Nine are in races where they were roundly defeated at least once and sometimes twice before. Some are making their first bid for any public office.

For former Rep. Mel Reynolds, who is trying to unseat fellow

Democrat Jesse Jackson Jr. of Chicago, it is his first campaign since he resigned from office in 1995 after being convicted and going to prison for having sexual relations with an underage campaign worker.

One race where the incumbent readily acknowledges difficulty ahead involves Rep. Danny Davis. The Chicago Democrat says he'll devote less time to pushing issues and more time raising money because one of his primary foes is

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CONGRESS

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attorney Anita Rivkin-Carothers, the aunt of Alderman Isaac Carothers, a longtime political rival.

Rivkin-Carothers, who unsuccessfully defended Chicago Gangster Disciples leader Larry Hoover on federal drug conspiracy charges in 1997, said she was not recruited by her nephew to make her first race. But Rivkin-Carothers said Carothers is supportive and that she is well-suited for the job based on her legal skills.

With strong opposition to the war in Iraq, attorney Nicholas Chrisos of Arlington Heights and mediator Lee Goodman of Northbrook are new Democratic congressional candidates seeking their party's nomination to face Rep. Mark Kirk, R-Highland Park, a supporter of President Bush's U.S.-led invasion.

"This administration couldn't get away with what they're doing without people rolling over, particularly Republicans," said Chrisos.

Several candidates say that, despite previous defeats, they are back to ensure voters have a choice.

"I'm keeping democracy alive," said Harvard Democrat John Kutsch, who owns a consulting firm and is running again against Rep. Don Manzullo, after losing to the

Egan Republican by more than a 2-1 margin.

Ray Wardingley, the former Spanky the Clown, and beer commercial actor making his third Republican run against Rep. Bobby Rush, D-Chicago, said he in no way is after attention. "I've been on TV," Wardingley said.

In the 8th Congressional District, in Chicago's northwest suburbs, represented by Phil Crane of Wauconda, a 34-year veteran of the House and its longest serving Republican member, there is both a contested Democratic and Republican primary.

"My prediction is, if I don't beat Mr. Crane, the Democratic challenger will," said Crane's GOP opponent, Crystal Lake attorney David W. Phelps.

One of the Democrats, Barrington businesswoman Melissa Bean, was encouraged by the 2002 election when, after raising more than \$300,000, she received 43 percent of the vote against Crane. She expects to raise more money this time around.

Democrat Tom Berry, a 63-year-old railroad conductor making his third run against Rep. Henry Hyde, R-Wood Dale, is campaigning on, among other things, the age issue. "He's going to be 80 next year," Berry said of Hyde.

Berry's campaign promises include a pledge to move back to the district from Chicago if elected.

Unpredictable year ahead for Kane County Board

By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — Predicting the movements of the Kane County Board in 2004 is a little like forecasting the weather — it's inexact science, at its best.

That's because the board faces the confluence of the unpredictability of lame duck leadership and an election, a rare combination the board has not faced in eight years.

County Board Chairman Mike McCoy's decision not to seek a third term has led to an unpredictable election featuring a potentially

hard-fought Republican primary between board member Karen McConaughay, R-St. Charles, and Treasurer David Rickert of Elgin.

Waiting in the wings will be a Democratic Party challenger, Thomas Meadath of St. Charles.

If McCoy were running again, the forecast would be easier. Politics would dictate the chairman stick to an agenda to facilitate re-election.

But with McCoy a lame duck, he is more likely to move an agenda consistent with his

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BOARD

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legacy — regardless of how it jibes with others' political motives. At the very least, he will try to move forward the things he sees as most important on his final to-do list — farmland preservation, dealing with the overcrowded jail and other issues.

There also is the matter of whether or not the county will have to deal with finding an acting state's attorney to fill in for Meg Gorecki, if a suspension of her law license forces her to vacate her office. It could be that the county will see three state's attorneys during 2004.

One thing is sure. There will be new leadership on the board by the end of the coming year, and speculation for 2005 can begin anew.

Aurora mayoral campaign not lacking in storylines

By Dave Parro
STAFF WRITER

FORECAST 2004

Stories to watch in the coming year

The political storylines will make for an interesting campaign year as the race to replace Aurora's outgoing mayor heats up in 2004.

So far, the field of candidates includes a well-known local Democrat who has worked at City Hall for 18 years, a conservative Republican seeking to become Aurora's first black mayor, a two-term Kane County Board member, and a long-shot candidate who has been trounced twice before.

And the election is still more than a year away.

Tom Weisner, Aurora's director of community services, was the first to announce his candidacy in May, about six months after Mayor David Stover announced he won't seek a third term. Weisner quickly picked up endorsements from other city officials who were rumored to be considering a run, including Al-

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Angel Hernandez



Richard Irvin



Tom Weisner



Bill Wyatt

RACE

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derman Chuck Nelson and Parks Director Jim Pilmer.

Two months later, Richard Irvin jumped into the race, painting himself as a City Hall outsider who could better bring together a diverse community. He is campaigning on the idea of change and wants voters to see Weisner as more of the same.

The former community prosecutor with the Kane County state's attorney's office, who was removed from the position amid controversy and later resigned, also offers a stark contrast to Weisner as a black conservative Republican. Weisner has been involved for years with the local Democratic party.

A county Republican became the third candidate in September, but it wasn't the person some people thought it might be. Kane County Board member Bill Wyatt joined the race as his mentor, County Board Chairman Mike McCoy, decided to

step down from public life and said he doesn't plan on running for the mayoral job his father, Al McCoy, once held.

Finally, Angel Hernandez joined the race in October, seeking to become Aurora's first Hispanic mayor. Like Irvin, Hernandez thinks residents here want change and will try to portray both Weisner and Wyatt as political insiders.

Hernandez has lost mayoral races twice before in Aurora, in 1989 and 1993.

Only Wyatt has experience holding elected office, but Weisner is expected to get backing from City Hall. Irvin was a popular community prosecutor credited with helping attack Aurora's crime problem. Hernandez is taking a page from the book of state Rep. Linda Chapa LaVia, D-Aurora, and campaigning heavily door to door in hope of overcoming his underdog status.

Not many shots have been fired yet in this race, but things will change quickly this year once the spring 2005 election is less than a year away.

New Year's crime a snoozer

Kane County Sheriff's Officer Randy Hughes, right, processes a prisoner Friday in the booking room at the Kane County Jail in Geneva. Police throughout Kane County reported few incidents of drunken driving or other crimes during the New Year celebration.

Warne Ratzlaff — Chronicle photo staff



Police make few arrests during holiday

By ADAM KOVAC
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA.— New Year's Eve resembled any other Wednesday night for police throughout Kane County, devoid of heavy drinking and mayhem common on previous holidays.

Only a handful of people were arrested for drunken driving, and about two dozen others were nabbed for various other crimes, Kane County Court records showed Friday, creating an uneventful start to 2004.

"It appeared to be relatively quiet," Geneva

police Detective Sgt. Joe Heinrich said. "There was nothing to indicate it was a holiday."

At least five people were arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol between Dec. 31, 2003, and Jan. 1, 2004, Kane County sheriff's deputies and Carpentersville and Elgin police reported.

Notable arrests by other police agencies included seven for domestic battery, two for disorderly conduct and five for drug offenses. Aurora police made at least one arrest for reckless discharge of a firearm, court records show.

Although five people died in vehicle crashes

around the Chicago area, no traffic-related deaths occurred in Kane County during the holiday, according to the Kane County Coroner's Office.

Sheriff's Capt. Rick McKinness said more accurate holiday arrest data from booking logs at the Kane County jail would be compiled by next week.

There were several reports of sporadic gunfire and fireworks that spiked about midnight Thursday and continued until about 12:30 a.m., McKinness said.

"We were very quiet on New Year's Eve," McKinness said.

Calendar highlights Kane's efforts to preserve its past

Help from casino: Riverboat money allows for more 'bricks and mortar'

By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — Pastoral rural scenes, quaint stone houses, renovated schools and museums.

People who like those kinds of pictures, and the historical detail that goes with them, will like the 2004 Historic Preservation calendar recently issued by the Kane County Development Department and Preservation Partners of the Fox Valley.

The calendar, paid for by a \$20,000 grant from the Kane County Board's riverboat funds, features some of the largest and most significant preservation projects of the past 10 years in the county.

Many of those preservation projects were paid for — in full or in part — by county riverboat funds, which come from a 7.5 percent tax on profits of the Grand Victoria Riverboat Casino in Elgin.

When the casino license was issued to the Elgin boat, and the county's portion of the tax was established, the County Board set historic preservation as one of its priorities in awarding grants from the riverboat fund. Since 1997, the board has awarded more than \$3 million in grant requests that benefit historic buildings, programs and heritage tourism.

In the past five years, Kane County has achieved more of what it calls "bricks and mortar" preservation than in any five-year period in the county's history, even though the county has had its Historic Preservation Ordinance in place since 1988, and had identified 3,966 historic sites in the county as

Historic Preservation calendars are free

Free 2004 Historic Preservation calendars are available in additional locations, in addition to all Kane County Credit Unions in Aurora, Geneva and Elgin.

■ Aurora: Aurora Art and History Center, 20 E. Downer Place, (630) 906-0650.
■ Batavia: Batavia Park District, 327 W. Wilson St., (630) 879-5235.

■ Geneva: Kane County Development Department, 719 Batavia Ave., (630) 232-3480.
■ St. Charles: Kane County Farm Bureau, 2N710 Randall Road, (630) 584-8660; Campton Township Community Center, 5N082 LaFox Road, (630) 377-5705; Preservation Partners of the Fox Valley, Beth House, 8 Indiana St., (630) 377-6424; St. Charles Heritage Center, 215 E. Main St.

■ South Elgin: Village of South Elgin, 10 N. Water St., (847) 742-5780.
■ Sugar Grove: Sugar Grove Assessor's Office, 263 Main St., (630) 466-5255.

far back as 1987.

In early 2003, county Development Department officials suggested the calendar as a good way of highlighting some of these preservation projects funded by the riverboat money. The idea came on the heels of two successful calendar issues from the past several years, including "That Dam Barn," which promoted a barn-preservation program, and the "Rustic Roads" calendar, which promoted the county's Rustic Roads program.

Within two weeks of distribution, only about 300 of the 2,000 barn calendars were still available, and more than 12,000 copies of the

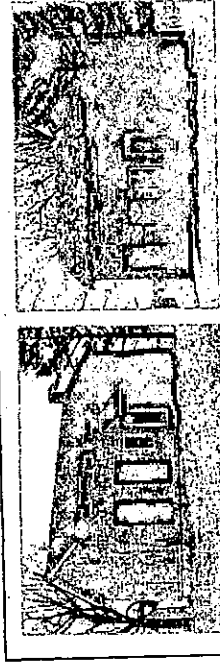
Rustic Roads calendars were dispersed, officials said.

Some of the highlights in the 2004 calendar include:

- The Mongerson Farm, about 99 acres purchased by the nearby Garfield Farm Museum to add to their holdings. The riverboat fund donated \$500,000 of the \$2.5 million Garfield Farm needed to raise for the purchase. The Mongerson Farm was part of the original 440-acre, 1841 Garfield Farm property.
- The Batavia Depot Museum, an 1854 building which originally was a Burlington Railroad depot. It was moved to its current site along the west side of the Fox River in downtown Batavia in 1973, and has undergone several renovations as a museum, now operated by the Batavia Park District. It received three different riverboat grants totaling \$181,500 between 1998 and 2001.
- The Fox River Trolley Museum in South Elgin, which received a \$270,000 riverboat grant in 2000 to help finish its 2,500-foot track extension into the county's Blackhawk Forest Preserve.

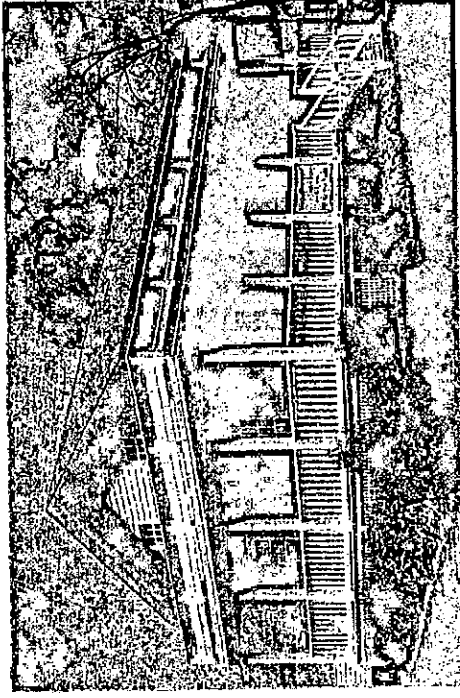
Other grant recipients featured with their own month on the calendar are: Plato Center Depot, Beth House in St. Charles, Benton and Farley houses in Kaneville Township, Bliss House in Sugar Grove, Feaslee House in South Elgin, Eakin School in Rutland Township, Wasco Depot in Campton Township, Centerville School in Dundee Township and Teeple Barn in Elgin.

The Bliss House in Sugar Grove (top photo) is the June feature for the 2004 Historic Preservation calendar. The Batavia Depot Museum (bottom photo) is the May feature.



Bliss House, Sugar Grove

The Bliss House was built in 1858 by P.V. Bliss, one of Sugar Grove's first settlers. The Greek Revival style house served as his residence. In true to the time period, it also served as a meetinghouse for area Methodists as well as the first mercantile establishment in the area. Its trails area extended from Skidabona in Dundee to Yorkville.

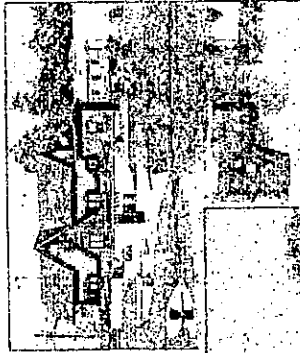


Kane County Riverboat Grant: \$90,000 in 1999
The move, restoration, and historically sensitive addition represent a unique cooperation of government, a historical society, private businesses, and volunteer citizens. The grant was used for completion of exterior trim and porch details, interior drywall, and new electrical, heating and air conditioning. The Bliss House is currently used by the Sugar Grove Historical Society for educational purposes. Other preservation grants that are open to the public.

Batavia Depot Museum

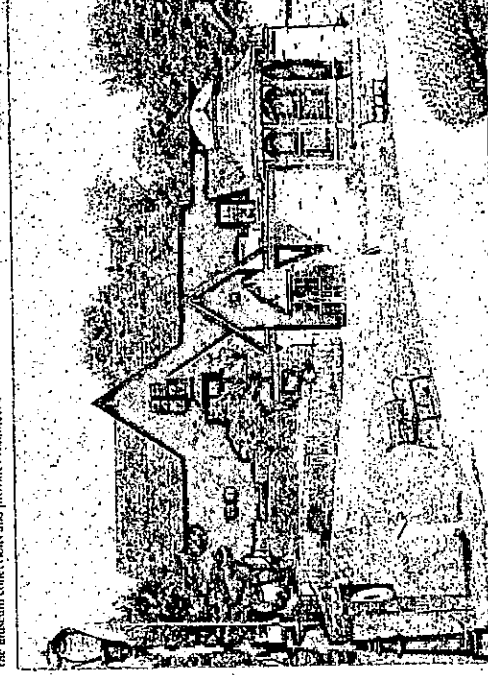
Batavia Historical Society

This c. 1854 building originally served as the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy railroad depot. As the transportation industry developed, the depot became obsolete and an ardent fire-bomb years. In the early 1970's, right Batavia businessmen bought the building to save it. They formed the Blue Ribbon Depot Committee, which decided to convert the old depot into a history museum. In 1973 the depot was moved to its current location on the west side of the Fox River. The museum was opened in May 1975. The Batavia Park District provides the operating budget, staff and building maintenance and the Historical Society owns and maintains the museum collections and provides volunteer.



Kane County Riverboat Grants:
\$16,500 in 1998
\$50,000 in 1999
\$125,000 in 2001

In 2001 the Historical Society received a Riverboat Grant that is being used to develop a Batavia Industrial History Museum in a new building adjacent to the museum. In 1999, a Riverboat Grant was used to help construct a 1200 square foot addition to the east side of the building to be used for a resource center and archival storage. The Historical Society received another Riverboat Grant in 1998 for historical plaques along the new Batavia Riverwalk.



The way we were: Prairie restoration in Fox Valley

By Louise Brass
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — The prairie was the color of spangled gold, softly shimmering and gently waving under a wintry sky as dozens of people descended into the forest of tall grasses to conserve some of Illinois' natural jewels.

They pushed their way through grasses taller than a man, reaching up to pull off the golden nodules that sprouted on the slender grass stems, then reaching down to grasp the little charcoal-colored pods where seeds nestled on flower tops.

This was seed collection day at Peck Farm.

The seeds were carefully transferred into plastic lunch bags, where they would stay safe and dry through winter until the spring planting time. Those seeds that fell to the ground might eventually grow where they landed, but chances are a foreign invader would rob them of their rightful place on the earth.

The volunteers' intense effort to save the prairie in Geneva is unfolding on about 60 acres of tall grassland, near the dividing line between what was once woodlands and grand stretches of flat Illinois prairie.

Forty-three more acres are being prepared for restoration here.

Time is of the essence in this endeavor, environmentalists say. Only one-tenth of 1 percent of Illinois' prairie land is left.

Developments have bulldozed away great pieces of the natural prairie, which only 150 years ago could be enjoyed as far as the eye could see in much of the Prairie State.

The community seed-collecting effort not only helps regenerate the slow-growing prairie plants where more prairie grasses

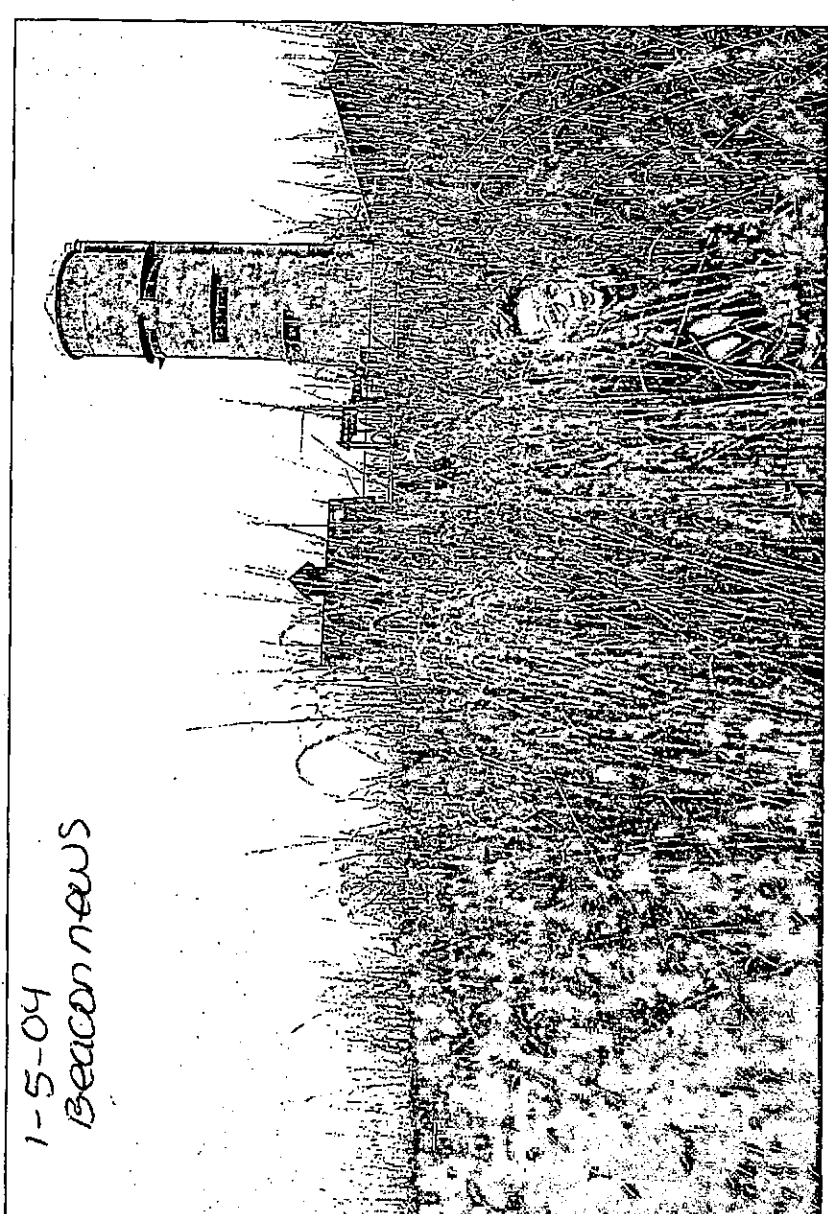


PHOTO BY KRISTY RALSTON / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Daniel Simon, 7, gathers seeds from the tall grasses on the prairie preserve at Peck Farm. Like many who participated in collection day, he will be invited to return in the spring to scatter the seeds.

and flowers are needed, but also saves the community money.

Some prairie seeds, such as Yellow Cone Flower, cost \$80 a pound at horticulture stores. The more abundant ones, such as Switch Grass, cost \$8 to \$12 per pound.

But on seed collection day, they are a free gift.

Among the seeds collected every year are large amounts of Indian Grass, Big Blue Stem, and Yellow Cone Flowers that blanket the landscape with brilliant yellow petals in early summer.

Big Blue Stem is Illinois' state grass and also is called Turkey Foot Grass, because the top of its stem resembles the foot of a turkey.

Thousands of seeds from various species of grasses and prairie flowers are gathered here every autumn. The valuable seeds are kept separate from one another, then planted in the spring in recently prepared areas

to keep the prairie growing on the 210-acre farm, which is part of the Geneva Park District.

Often the same prairie lovers who come to spend an hour or so collecting seeds in the fall come back to scatter the seeds in springtime. Scattering takes just a few minutes, but the work gives the seeds a chance to find a good place in the open, sun-exposed landscape. Sun is a requirement for prairie growth.

Returning to roots

The roots go deep, sometimes 15 feet into the earth. But it can take five years for the grasses and prairie flowers to grow up and come to their full, mature height.

"After the glaciers melted, this was prairie for 8,000 years. It was farmed for 150 years. Now we are putting it back into the original tallgrass prairie," said Michael Kirschman, Peck Farm's manager.

"Most people in Illinois have never really walked in a prairie, nor could they identify a prairie. Our efforts here are not just about restoring the prairie. It is also about educating the public on their native habitat."

Jack Pizzo, a conservationist and president of Pizzo and Associates, which is preparing another area of Peck Farm for restoration, believes prairie restoration can preserve plants that might contain cures for human ills, used by ancient peoples. Some of the biostructures found here might eventually be used for technological development.

It's not just a thing of rare beauty, he said.

"That's why we say, when we do a restoration like at Peck Farm, we want people out here. We want you in there. We want you seeing it, feeling it, tasting it, touching it, because this prairie isn't a prairie without humans," Pizzo said.

1-5-04 Beacon News

Backyard prairies are blooming around the Valley

as long as there are not a whole lot of trees around. A prairie needs lots of sun," Schmidt said, and offered the following advice:

- Prairie flowers and grasses need full sunlight but can survive with little water.
- Seeds should be planted only one-eighth of an inch into the earth in the spring.
- Do not till the ground.
- Good plants for this area include big bluestem, Indian grass, Canada wild rye, yellow coneflowers, purple coneflowers and the side-flowering aster.
- Do not plant Queen Anne's lace, canary grass or turf on a natural prairie area.

I am not sure what the city would say," he said. "But if the city said anything, I would be more than ready to come to their aid."

In Albuquerque, N.M., all yards must have 50 percent natural growth to conserve water — called xeriscaping, Kirschman said.

"... I think with a lot of education, homeowners would realize the savings both in money and time. A native garden would save a couple of hundred dollars a year, and it is more aesthetically pleasing."

An open area is needed for do-it-yourself prairies, said Jennifer Schmidt, a naturalist with the Geneva Park District.

"You can create your own prairie

course near here," she said. "I think the natural stuff had all been dug up."

Potts believes gardening shouldn't be a battle against nature. "It's easier if you stick with the stuff that wants to grow naturally in this area," she said.

While it might be easy to achieve, city government leaders might have something to say about an abundance of prairies in back yards.

If many residents began making prairies as part of ornamental areas or had the plots blocked off from other areas, it probably would be OK, Kirschman said.

"But if they did their whole yard,

her own little piece of the prairie at her home in the Eagle Brook subdivision.

"It's not a big yard," she said. But backyard prairies are a big trend in the suburbs.

"I think it's very common; I just do it with the natural plants. I have the yellow cone flowers. It spreads like crazy. I grow things that don't require a lot of water," she said.

Before the Eagle Brook development was built, the land she lives on was a prairie bog, Potts said. That is why prairie flowers and grasses do much better in her patch of earth than do lawns or imported flowers, she said.

"They built it up and made a golf

By Louise Brass
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — Fox Valley residents can create their very own prairie in their own back yards. And it might be easier than they think.

Growing a prairie certainly will save on mowing, leaf-raking, fertilizing and lawn-watering costs, said Michael Kirschman, manager of the Geneva Park District's Peck Farm.

And Belinda Potts found that to be true.

Although she enjoys helping with prairie restoration projects at Peck Farm a couple of times a year, she also takes great joy in having

Schielke to ask Batavia aldermen to set date for discussion of dam

1-5-04 Chronicle
Park board voted 4-1 last month in favor of half dam

By MARK FOSTER
Kane County Chronicle

meets today, Schielke will ask aldermen to set a date to discuss the issue and formulate a response to IDNR's latest offer.

With the park board taking a vote, it now appears that there will be no joint meeting of the park board and the city council.



Schielke

BATAVIA — Mayor Jeff Schielke on Friday reiterated his support for replacement of the north dam with the "half-dam" option.

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources wants to remove the 10-foot-high dam, but in response to a query from the city has said that it would build a replacement about 900 feet up the river from the existing site.

Schielke favors replacement of the dam with a five-foot-high structure.

"I still think the half dam is the way to go," Schielke said. "I don't necessarily want to lose the pond above the dam because I think it is a nice community amenity, and I want to protect the integrity of Depot Pond."

The mayor's comments come after the Batavia Park Board last month voted 4-1 in favor of the half dam, taking the same position it had more than a year ago.

Last April, residents voted against dam removal in an advisory referendum by an overwhelming margin.

The previous year, aldermen had voted to remove the dam.

The referendum caused IDNR to put its plans on hold.

When the city council

IDNR's latest offer.

With the park board taking a vote, it now appears that there will be no joint meeting of the park board and the city council.

IDNR's \$8.5 million proposal to remove the dam would involve the impoundment of Depot Pond and the creation of riffles and shoreline treatments north to the causeway in Fabyan Forest Preserve.

The width of the river would be cut in half and would be even narrower during low flow periods.

The agency has about \$8.3 million available for dam projects, but is committed to improvements of the Fox River dam in Yorkville.

Schielke believes that with the state's current financial condition, it is unlikely that IDNR will be able to fund any of the options proposed for Batavia.

"I'm kind of numb about the whole deal," Schielke said. "All you do with all this stuff is continue the debate for three more years. I don't see closure."

1-4-04
Chronicle



Greg
Rivara

The things I think

Although the holidays are drawing down, visions of sugar plums still fog the brain. A few things I think I think as winter actually arrives ...

ComEd really is sticking it to central Kane County, especially the Tri-Cities.

Years ago, Batavia, Geneva and St. Charles made an agreement with the electricity giant to build 138kv power lines through the area. A corridor near Randall Road was chosen and the agreement included wording that, shall we say, encouraged Tri-Cities leaders to support the plan.

The agreement was made years before Randall Road became a retail corridor and a signature street for the Tri-Cities.

Now, ComEd wants Batavia, Geneva and St. Charles to fund a \$50,000 study of an alternative route for the power lines. Forcing the cities to pay is allowable, according to ComEd, because the cities are considered wholesale consumers.

Just one question.

Although state laws mandate ComEd to pursue the most cost-effective route when building new utility lines, the laws also require utilities to show why the route is the most cost effective. That certainly would suggest that ComEd already has studied alternative routes. Obtaining such details, however, is a bit difficult.

And yes, ComEd, I will call again...

William Scardamaglia is the first victim of the Election 2004. Scardamaglia, a candidate for Kane County Board chairman, decided not to fight challenges to his petitions and withdrew from the race.

That leaves county board member Karen McConnaughay of St. Charles against Kane County Treasurer David Rickert of Elgin for the GOP nomination.

Why should you care? Two reasons:
The chairman sets the agenda.

Although the chairman has only one vote, the position holds the bully pulpit to establish priorities and direction for the next four years. If someone wants a problem addressed, they must have the blessing of the chairman.

Politically, Kane County still is split three ways — those to the north in the Elgin area, those to the south in the Aurora area, and those in the ever-growing middle. In the past, north didn't like south, south didn't like north, and the middle didn't pay attention to either north or south. The McConnaughay-Rickert race, as well as the state's attorney race, could test that time-honored axiom.

The talking heads on television were tripping over themselves this past week in the wake of Dick Jauron's mercy killing.

In five years, Jauron compiled a 35-45 regular season record for the Chicago Bears, including the improbable 13-win season in 2001.

Like him or hate him, Jauron clearly is a leader. Although he could rally his team and his staff, for some inexplicable reason he refused to replace John Shoop when it has been clear for years that the offensive coordinator was not ready for the job.

Television's talking heads analyzed the firing from every conceivable angle, screaming over and over again that the NFL is a business, and if you don't succeed, you simply must leave.

And I'm thinking, what business accepts failure?

■ *Greg Rivara lives in St. Charles and is the Kane County Chronicle managing editor. He can be contacted directly at (630) 845-5355, or by e-mail at grivara@kcchronicle.com*

Our Viewpoint

Determine Gorecki's fate now

... The longer Lisa Madigan's office waits, the greater the disservice that is shown to the residents of Kane County.

1-4-04
Chronicle

Kane County residents continue to wait for the Illinois Supreme Court to decide when the suspension of Meg Gorecki's law license should begin.

Such delays are expected in the judicial process and, as such, must be endured.

What is confusing, however, is the waiting game being played by the Illinois Attorney General's office.

And the longer Lisa Madigan's office waits, the greater the disservice that is shown to the residents of Kane County.

Gorecki, the Kane County state's attorney, will have her law license suspended for four months because she broke the ethical rules of conduct for attorneys when she implied that a county transportation job could be bought. Gorecki did so in 1998, before being elected state's attorney.

Gorecki fought mightily against the suspension, and when it was handed down and set to begin in December, she asked the Illinois Supreme Court to delay the imposition until Nov. 30, 2004, the day before she is set to leave office. Gorecki, elected in 2000, has decided not to seek re-election.

The state's high court has delayed Gorecki's punishment while it considers her request. The answer is

expected in January.

There is no doubt that a person must be licensed to practice law in Illinois in order to be the state's attorney. However, just as Gorecki broke new ground when she became the first female state's attorney elected in Kane County, she also is breaking new ground for being the first sitting state's attorney in Illinois to have her license suspended.

The question before the attorney general's office is a simple one: Can Gorecki serve her four-month suspension and then return to office, or must she be forced to resign?

Clearly, we do not expect a simple answer. However, it is appropriate to expect a timely one. It is a fundamental part of the attorney general's role in the state of Illinois to offer such legal opinions.

Madigan's office still has not said whether it believes Gorecki can return after serving her suspension. The delay is unnecessary and puts an unacceptable burden on Kane County residents, as well as county government officials, who would have to choose Gorecki's replacement should she be forced to resign.

The attorney general's office needs to make its opinion public. To everyone. Now.

Hampshire board's decision on subdivisions could affect other planned developments

By ARACELY HERNANDEZ
Shaw News Service

HAMPSHIRE — If village board members vote to deny Crown Community Development's two subdivisions, the decision will have a domino effect on other planned developments.

Crown, KB Home and Van Vlissingen have formed a consortium to build water, sewer and roads for their projects. The approach would cut costs because developers would pay engineers only once to review the entire infrastructure project, Trustee Tom Brown said.

The strategy allowed for more land to be donated for schools.

KB pledged 100 acres, about half of its property, to School District 300 in its most recent plan.

But if Crown's plans are denied, KB and Van Vlissingen have to come up with a new strategy.

"If Crown doesn't come in, [KB Home] has to find a different way to get infrastructure," Trustee Orris Ruth said, who also is chairman of the village's planning and zoning committee.

As planned with the Crown subdivisions, KB Home would build 177 houses on 104 acres at Tamms Farm on Big Timber and Ketchum roads.

KB's property already is in the village and does not need to be annexed, unlike the property for Crown and Van Vlissingen projects.

District 300 officials also would have to wait to find out how much impact the subdivision would have on the district without a school site, Ruth said.

KB's development would not require a 100-acre donation to the school district, Ruth said.

Lincolnshire-based Van Vlissingen Co., has not brought its concept plan to build Brier Hill Crossing to the village board. That development would include a 7 million-square-foot office and warehouse complex and 560 homes on 728 acres between Sandwald and Hennig roads.

Brown said he thinks an annexation agreement for the Van Vlissingen property should come before the village board during the next few weeks. A concept plan could be expected to go before the board in February, he said.

"It's going to have an enormous magnitude of commerce, industry and jobs," he said.

Last year, the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission allowed Hampshire to extend utilities to the property.

Crown's subdivisions include

Prairie Ridge with more than 1,800 homes on 1,277 acres on Harmony Road between Allen and Melms roads, and Oakstead, which would have more than 800 homes on 513 acres between Route 20 and 47.

Concept plans for Crown's proposals and KB's proposal received negative recommendations from the village's Zoning Board of Appeals and the planning commission because lot sizes were too small.

They also were met with resistance from residents and Citizens After Responsible Expansion who want the village to keep its rural atmosphere. They also cited environmental factors such as possible contamination of an aquifer and endangering the existence of a pair of nesting Swainson's hawks as reasons not to build.

The Brier Hill Crossing plan already has met resistance from Huntley and School District 158. Both filed resolutions against the development this summer.

Huntley officials are upset because Van Vlissingen approached the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority about building ramps near Brier Hill Road. The region would be better served if the Route 47 interchange had east-bound access, officials have said.

1-5-04 BEALON NEWS

Challenges are democracy in action



We love democracy, right down to all the arcane ways of its processes. Take the recent filings for the March primary election for example. Objections were filed to the petitions turned in by two candidates. One stays on the ballot; one withdrew from the race because he said he didn't have the resources to fight the claims. We say democracy works, even if the petition-challenging feels like sniveling gamesmanship. If a candidate didn't have the resources to fight a petition challenge, how would he have the resources to run an effective campaign? **THUMBS UP** to democracy, and the people who practice it.

Kwanzaa shines for us all

WANTED

NAME: MO BEDZ
 HOME: KANE COUNTY CORRECTIONS
 DIMENSIONS: 9x9
 AGE: 32

Holly Green
 1-800-368-3683

1-4-04 Chronicle

FORECAST 2004

Stories to watch in the coming year



DONNELL COLLINS / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The Home Depot is likely just the first of major stores along Orchard Road.

2004 may be bellwether year along Orchard

By Ed Fanselow
STAFF WRITER

1-5-04
Beacon
News

The sounds you hear coming from Orchard Road are the sounds of progress — and they could be getting much louder in 2004.

This could be a bellwether year for Orchard Road, the 10-mile stretch of highway that many have said will someday resemble existing retail centers along Route 59 and Randall Road.

As the housing boom continues on Aurora's West Side and in North Aurora, Sugar Grove, Montgomery, Oswego and Yorkville, those predictions are seeming all the more likely.

The past several months have brought the announcements of several ambitious projects, including a 60-acre

ORCHARD

From Page A1

shopping center at Orchard and Route 34 in Oswego and a 175-acre mixed-use development at Oak Street in North Aurora.

In Aurora, meanwhile, stores, banks and restaurants continue to sprout up in several similar developments between Sullivan and Indian Trail roads.

Over the next few months, Fox Valley shoppers will likely find out which stores they can expect here and exactly when they can expect them. Kohl's, Best Buy, Target and Woodman's Food Market are just a few of the companies said to be eye-

ing Orchard Road sites.

Industrial development in at least two existing business parks near Interstate 88 is also expected to continue.

On a related note, work should begin sometime in 2004 on a project that will eventually widen Orchard Road from two to four lanes between Indian Trail and Route 30, where the average vehicle count is already at more than 60,000 a day.

Also, the long-awaited Metra/Pace Park-and-Ride station at Orchard and Mill roads in Oswego is expected to open in the spring.

Buses will shuttle commuters to and from the Park-and-Ride lot and the Aurora Transportation Center on North Broadway.

❖ Turn to ORCHARD, A2

1-6-04 Chicago Tribune Editorials
Gorecki lingers, public loses

In November, the Illinois Supreme Court ruled that Kane County State's Atty. Meg Gorecki's law license will be suspended for four months for professional misconduct.

Gorecki has admitted that before she was elected, she falsely told someone she knew that campaign contributions to the county board chairman could land a government job. Gorecki initially denied she had made such a claim, but she ultimately had to confess—she had left three messages on an answering machine talking about the scheme. The Supreme Court found that she had “endorsed, and even encouraged, the bribing of a public official.”

For most lawyers, a license suspension is good reason to hide under a rock for awhile and ponder a new profession.

Not so with Gorecki, who now is embarrassing herself and Kane County in this singularly odd case. She had the temerity to ask, in a motion filed last month, that the state high court put off her punishment for a year so she can serve out her term as the county's top prosecutor. She has also asked the Illinois attorney general's office for an opinion as to whether she could stay in office while her license is suspended. Gorecki's four-year term expires Nov. 30, and she is not seeking re-election.

Since Gorecki is prolonging the agony here, a few points laid out by Justice Mary Ann McMorrow in the court's 16-page opinion are worth discussing.

Gorecki's admission to wrongdoing came only after she made vigorous public denials. She ultimately admitted she was not forthright when the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission made an initial inquiry about the charg-

es in April 2000. She finally came around when it evidently dawned on her the charges were serious and there was strong evidence of wrongdoing, centering on the three recorded messages.

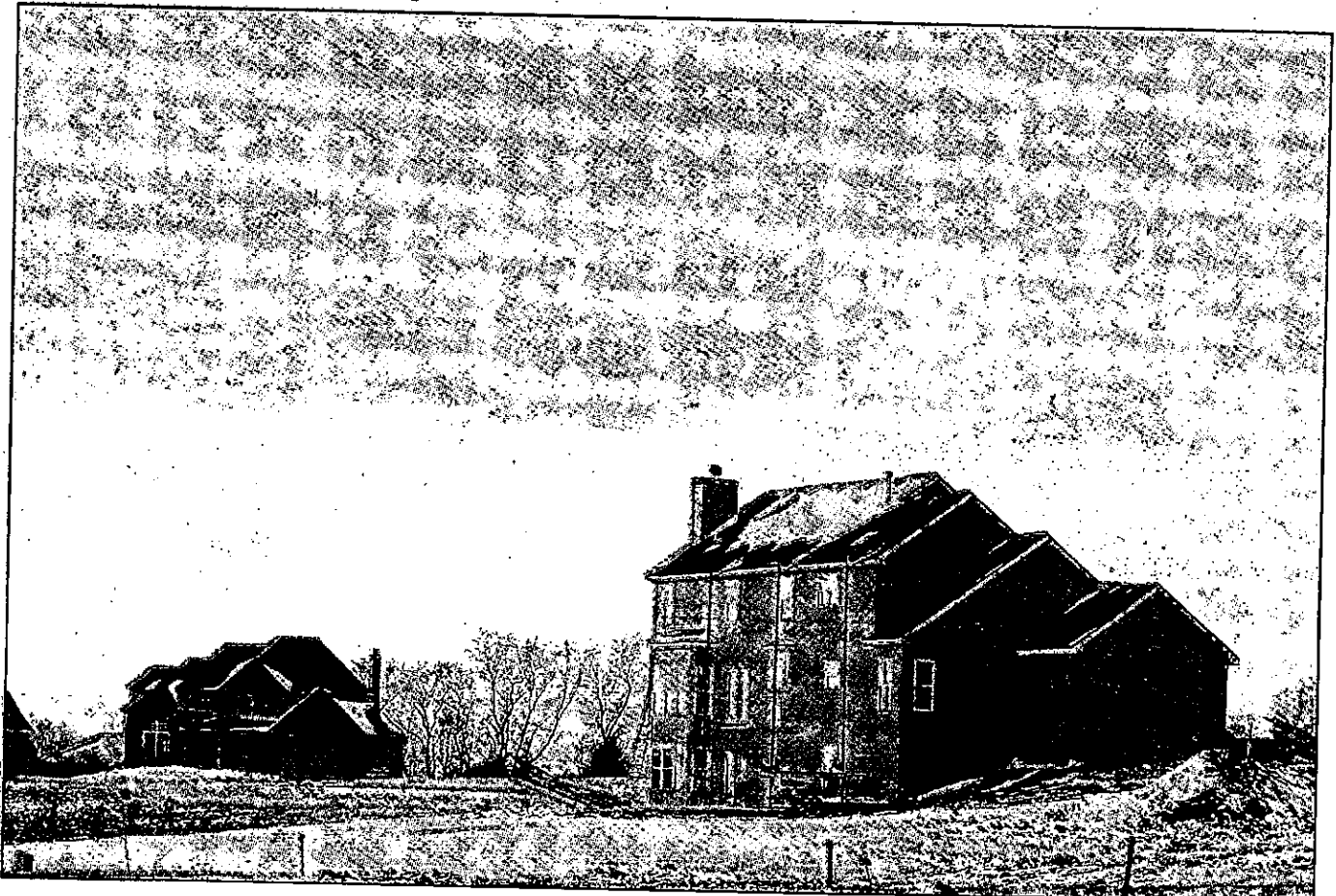
Investigators found no evidence Kane County Board Chairman Mike McCoy took a bribe or that Gorecki had even talked to McCoy about such a payoff. A false accusation that a public official is open to bribery is “serious misconduct ... because it places the reputation of that innocent official at risk,” McMorrow wrote in the opinion. McCoy had to endure an investigation by a special prosecutor.

Gorecki has remained less than candid, raising more questions about her suitability to serve in a position of public trust. She has stated repeatedly she has no explanation for the messages and could not “even imagine” saying such things. As a hearing board noted, Gorecki has chosen to stand by the troubling claim that “she has a complete and total lack of recall regarding the timing and intent of the taped messages.”

When the Supreme Court suspends a law license, the sanction normally takes effect immediately unless there's a compelling reason to wait, such as a client who would be harmed by switching lawyers midway through a complex trial.

There's no compelling reason to prolong the disgraced Gorecki's time in office. There is no reason she should receive different treatment than any other lawyer would receive.

Gorecki should have the grace to withdraw her motion, accept her suspension and step down from office. And if she won't, the Illinois Supreme Court should reject her request to delay her suspension and send her packing.



Robert Barcroft — Chronicle photo staff

Houses being built in Mill Creek, west of Batavia and Geneva, illustrate the pressure on one-time farmland that's exerted as development moves westward from the Fox Valley. Such influences also help bid up the price of farmland in other parts of Illinois, as farmers engage in federally sanctioned tax transfers by buying land elsewhere.

Kane sales felt statewide

Development pushing land prices everywhere, study finds

By ROALD HAASE
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Development pressures in Kane and other urbanizing counties are not just bidding up the price of area farmland.

The demands for farmland here — for housing uses and retail-commercial sites — also are pushing up the cost of farmland in other parts of

Illinois, a new study concluded.

The analysis, by Normal-based First Farm Credit Services, found that the aggregate value of 18 benchmark farms in a 42-county area increased 4.81 percent from July 1, 2002, to July 1, 2003.

Much of the growth in farmland values, moreover, was attributed to federal tax policy that's having a heavy impact in Chicago's so-called collar coun-

ties, including Kane County.

"I think for the foreseeable future there is going to be farming in Kane County," said farmland financing expert Randal Panzer

First Farm Credit Services, a farmland lending agency, said the federal tax policy was "the single largest driving factor in land value increases" in the 42-county area. It enables farmers to avoid immediate capital gains tax payments, if they apply money from land sales here to farmland purchases elsewhere.

Panzer, a vice president in First Farm Credit Services' Sycamore office, said the policy

is called a 1031 Exchange, for Internal Revenue Service Rule 1031. The farmers do not evade paying capital gains taxes, Panzer said, because if they later sell the farm they bought elsewhere, they have to pay the capital gains taxes on that sale.

But for now, farmers do defer such tax liabilities, observers said.

Panzer said a lot of farmers in Kane and DuPage counties are using that policy to sell their land here, then buy land farther away from metropolitan Chicago and rent it out to farmers there.

See FARMLAND, page 13

Farmland

Continued from page 13

"The majority of it is going for cash rent," Panzer said.

According to Mark Akers, also of First Farm Credit, the 1031 tax deferred exchanges are being prompted "by the housing and commercial building boom in the Chicago collar counties. The low interest rates for home mortgages, coupled with continued optimism in the strength of the economy, multiplied development pressure."

The strongest impact of the competition for land shows in counties adjacent to Chicago's collar counties, the study said. In neighboring DeKalb County, for instance, the rise in value of a benchmark farm there was 15.63 percent during four years.

Such land exchanges, Panzer added, increase the value of farmland in DeKalb and in other downstate counties. In turn, it makes it harder for farmers in those counties to buy land there because of the cost increases, he said. For farmers farther away from Chicago, the government tax policies represent "a double-edged sword," Panzer said.

While the farmland price increases help them if they want to sell their land, they make it relatively harder for these farmers to expand their holdings near their home farms, Panzer said.

A specialist on Kane County farmland preservation, Janice Hill, said the 1031 Exchange rule also applies to farmers who take part in the county's Purchase of Development Rights program.

In that program, farmers who agree to covenants that will forever preserve their land in farm uses, get money in return. This income also qualifies for 1031 Exchanges, enabling participating farmers to defer capital gains taxes on this form of income.

Hill, the county's program coordinator for farmland protection, said a "lot of them (farmland protection participants) are choosing to do the (tax) exchanges. Apparently, they can use the exchange with the easement program."

Today, 1,426 acres in Kane are part of the county's Purchase of Development Rights program.

In all, 11 farms have been accepted as part of the program, and the farm program has closed with the land owner, Hill said. The county board also has approved another five farms for participation, but the agreements haven't been closed.

Meanwhile, 23 farms have applied for participation but have not been granted the county board's OK. If all these farms are accepted, it would mean a total of 39 participation farms in the county, Hill said.

Hill said the purpose of the county's protection plan is "soil protection."

"We won't be able to buy all the development rights to all the agricultural land ... but we will be able to create clusters of agricultural land in certain areas (that) can be assured of land being protected in perpetuity," Hill said.

The clusters, to date, have been in the western townships of Kaneville and Big Rock, Hill said. Another potential cluster is in Virgil Township, Hill added.

While the amounts the county pays for farms can vary, generally speaking, the county pays \$5,000 an acre to acquire a farmer's development rights, Hill said.

"The definition of farming can vary, broadly," Hill said. "You could have a farmer whose home base is here in Kane County, or he could farm one or two townships west of here, or in counties in western Illinois," Hill said.

"We want his business to stay viable."



STC, county near deal on fiber optic connections

1-6-04 Chronicle

Plan will link
circuit clerk's office,
justice center

By HEATH HIXSON
Kane County Chronicle

ST. CHARLES — Fiber optic lines are likely to soon link the Kane County Justice Center and Circuit Court Clerk's office under a plan approved Monday by a city committee.

Members of the city's Government Operations Committee voted 7-0 to approve a proposed intergovernmental agreement to extend the city's Fiber Optic Telecommunications System to link the county offices. The plan now goes before the full city council as soon as Jan. 19 for final approval.

If council members approve the plan, the two county offices would be linked directly by four lines through the city fiber optic pipeline that runs down Route 38 and Prairie Street. The project is expected to cost more than \$19,000, which the city would bill the county.

Paul Anthoney, city information systems network engineer, said the agreement calls for city workers to build an extension of fiber optic lines from the clerk's office, 540 S. Randall Road, to the city's pipeline on Prairie Street.

In addition, he said city workers would construct a link from fiber optic lines on Route 38 near Peck Road to the justice center property, 37W777 Route 38.

The county is expected to use the fiber optic system to move toward a paperless docket system.

The 10-year deal dedicates four of the city's 48 lines on the corridor to be exclusively used by the county. The city uses only eight of those lines, Anthoney said.

Fiber optics

Continued from page 1

Under the agreement, the county also would pay an annual fiber maintenance charge. The city retains the ability to use the lines if needed, but is responsible for repair of the lines.

The intergovernmental agreement is similar to an arrangement between the St. Charles school district and the city that was signed in 2001.

The district paid to construct lines from at least 19 facilities to tie in with the city's fiber system. The district's schools, transportation and maintenance centers and the administration building are linked. The district also pays an annual maintenance fee to the city.

Ann Fleming, school district director of technology, said linking into the fiber optic network "makes all the difference in the world" in terms of data capacity, and the links provide the district with faster and cheaper service than could be provided by a private company.

Fleming said she hopes to use the fiber lines for video streaming and delivering graphics to classrooms.

The city fiber optic system was built in 1996 and connects "core" city facilities, such as offices and electrical substations. The fiber lines are expected to last at least 25 years, Anthoney said.

"For us, it gives us kind of unlimited capacity for applications," he said. "The data capacity is long term, unlimited. It is limited by the equipment that we buy. There are not recurring costs, except for maintenance."

See FIBER OPTICS, page 2

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Batavia OKs ComEd study on power system

1-6-04
By MARK FOSTER
Kane County Chronicle

BATAVIA — The city council on Monday authorized ComEd to conduct a study to determine whether the Tri-Cities can connect with the utility's 138kv system to the east.

The cities need additional power to satisfy growing customer demand in the growing communities.

ComEd initially proposed the installation of the high-voltage lines along Randall Road from South Elgin to North

Aurora, but a storm of citizen-protest and the intervention of Lt. Gov. Pat Quinn prompted the utility to postpone action on its application for a permit with the Illinois Commerce Commission.

Many residents contend that the power towers would be unsightly, reduce property values and present an unnecessary health risk. In Batavia, residents objected to a proposed electrical substation just west of Randall Road on Main Street, across from Grace McWayne School.

Last summer, the cities and ComEd began exploring other options.

The action by Batavia aldermen on Monday was to approve an intergovernmental agreement under which ComEd would study the possibility of connecting the cities to a power line system that extends from Joliet to Crystal Lake.

ComEd estimates that the study will cost \$50,000. The three cities will divide the cost evenly. The cost of the study has been capped at \$100,000.

Each of the cities owns and operates its own electrical utility, buying power wholesale and then reselling it to residential, commercial and industrial customers.

no. of seaports airports
in 18 Raymond residents

ILLINOIS CHRONICLE

Batavia backs 1-6-04 power Daily study Herald

BY GALA M. PIERCE
Daily Herald Staff Writer

If a long, hot spell causes Tri-Cities residents to keep their air conditioners on next summer, transmission lines might overload.

Since public opposition caused ComEd to back off the plan of installing 138,000-volt power lines along a 14-mile stretch of Randall Road, Tri-Cities leaders are moving forward with an east-side feasibility study.

"The clock is ticking," Batavia Public Works Director Gary Larsen said. "We got by last summer without it ... If we were to have a really hot summer, we'd be in a tough situation."

Batavia City Council unanimously approved an intergovernmental agreement Monday to authorize the Tri-City Interconnection Study, which would determine whether the installation of new transmission lines east of Fox River is feasible.

St. Charles approved the concept of a study last month and Geneva expects to endorse the agreement at its city council meeting on Jan. 20. "We're trying to evaluate all options," St. Charles City Administrator Larry Maholland said.

The exact routing of the lines remains undisclosed but could be east of Kirk Road, Larsen said. The study looks at the existing loads and the practicality of the proposed loads migrated into the current lines.

The study is estimated to cost \$50,000, which would be split three ways and has been capped at \$100,000 — a cost some officials are accepting with much chagrin. "ComEd paid for the study on Randall Road and they looked at other alternatives such as Peck Road," Geneva City Administrator Phil Page said. "We feel this eastern option is an alternative to the Randall Road corridor. Why wouldn't they also absorb the cost to explore this alternative?"

Larsen said the cost of the study, which requires a \$25,000 deposit, is minute compared to the cost of installing new power lines.

A year ago, Batavia and Geneva officials approved the Twin-City Study to look at an east-side connection between the two municipalities. It cost \$32,000 and is almost complete, but the new study will take precedence, Larsen said.

1-6-04 Daily Herald St. Charles asked to help make section of Randall Road safer

BY LISA SMITH
Daily Herald Staff Writer

Steve Cole is sick of the terrible accidents on Randall Road's S-shaped curve just north of Red Haw Lane a few miles east of his home.

Two months after 17-year-old Samantha Joos died in a head-on collision there and eight years after Cole — who coached

Joos on the St. Charles North High School junior varsity tennis team — himself got into a crash there, the former St. Charles school board president is asking St. Charles leaders to join him in his fight to make the county road safer.

Cole presented the city council Monday night with a resolution to support efforts by Kane County transportation officials,

who agreed to examine whether changes should be made on that stretch of road north of St. Charles.

Council members voted to put a resolution of support on the agenda for their next meeting, Jan. 19, for consideration.

A combination of high speed limits, steep slopes and limited visibility creates hazardous conditions between Red Haw Lane

and Silver Glen Road, Cole said. He asked the county board last month to consider lowering the speed limit, erecting stoplights and building a raised median.

The board's transportation committee is scheduled to discuss the issue with members of the county's transportation department staff on Jan. 22, Cole said. He plans to seek a

similar show of support from the St. Charles school board next week. "Parents are literally afraid of having their children driving on that road," Cole said. "I'm one of them."

On a snowy day eight years ago, a woman struck Cole's vehicle head on. He was not injured but the woman had a miscarriage, Cole said. "It's only going to get worse," Cole said.

"We always have to be vigilant and be prepared if there is a resurgence. We're cautiously optimistic it might be another year of minimal activity."

Fred Carlson, Kane County environmental health director

1-6-04
Daily Herald



DAILY HERALD
PHOTO ILLUSTRATION

West Nile 2004:

In check or rebound?

*Scientists already
working to keep
cases falling in 2004*

BY SUSAN STEVENS
Daily Herald Staff Writer

With 4 inches of snow outside your window, you may not be thinking about mosquitoes right now.

But local health officials are.

In particular, they're thinking about the ones that brought a deadly outbreak of West Nile disease two years ago — then all but vanished last summer.

Entomologists suggest a variety of reasons for Illinois' dip in West Nile virus cases in 2003: cooler weather, fewer birds, more vigilant homeowners.

Or it could be luck.

"We don't know, and nobody else does," said Tom Schafer, spokesman for the Illinois Department of Public Health. "It could be simply that the virus moved west."

Whatever the reason, public health officials are thankful 2003 did not bring the high death toll of 2002 — when 66 Illinois residents died of the West Nile virus and 884 became ill.

In 2003, amid frequent warnings of a possible outbreak, Illinois saw only 52 cases of humans infected with West Nile and just one death.

But West Nile experts aren't rejoic-

ing. While Illinois suffered fewer illnesses, nationwide the number of cases more than doubled as the mosquito-borne virus continued its westward expansion since its emergence on the East Coast in 1999.

Colorado was the heaviest hit with 2,477 human cases last year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The unpredictability of West Nile has Illinois officials planning full-scale preparations for spring 2004.

"If we have hot, dry conditions like we did in 2002, we could see a rebound," said Thad Koeune, director of environmental health services for DuPage County. "Nobody can tell you for sure."

DuPage County will increase its tracking of the virus this spring, beginning in May with dozens of new mosquito monitoring traps throughout the county.

In Kane County, officials have compiled the past two years of mosquito data to determine the likely hot spots in 2004.

"We always have to be vigilant and be prepared if there is a resurgence," said Fred Carlson, environmental health director for Kane County. "We're cautiously optimistic it might be another year of minimal activity."

In addition to their public education programs about eliminating stagnant water and wearing insect repellent, health officials will watch the weather closely this spring.

A hot, dry summer like that in 2002

West Nile human cases

	2002	2003
Cook	634	20
DuPage	49	3
Kane	9	0
Lake	8	1
Will	18	3

What you can do:

The best way to avoid West Nile is to reduce the number of mosquitoes around your home and take precautions to avoid mosquito bites.

- Wear insect repellent.
- Wear light-colored long pants, long-sleeved shirts outdoors.
- Repair holes in door and window screens.
- Clean gutters regularly.
- Get rid of old tires, buckets, drums, bottles and containers with standing water.
- Empty plastic wading pools, birdbaths, etc... every 4 to 5 days.
- Keep grass cut short, shrubs trimmed.

Source: Illinois Department of Public Health

See NILE on PAGE 5

Old fine for campaign donation won't keep Cross, others off ballot

1-6-04 BEACON NEWS

By Matt Hanley
STAFF WRITER

An election ethics bill that would keep candidates with unpaid State Board of Elections fines off the ballot has been delayed until after the March primary elections.

One section of House Bill 3412 — which passed on Dec. 3, 2003 — states that any person with unpaid civil penalties “shall not appear on any ballot for any office while the penalty is unpaid.”

This section could have affected two local legislators if the board

had not decided Monday to delay enforcement. House Republican leader Tom Cross of Oswego, a co-sponsor on the bill, and state Rep. Randy Hultgren of Wheaton both have unpaid campaign fines.

Cross's fine came from a campaign donation to a candidate running for mayor in Peoria, according to his office. The fine was the result of confusion over when the donation was supposed to be reported and it is being reviewed by the board.

❖ Turn to **CROSS A2**

CROSS

From page A1

“My fine has been stayed,” Cross said. “It’s kind of an interesting question whether there’s even a fine out there.”

Hultgren’s “Friends for Hultgren” committee has incurred three fines totaling \$2,000, with \$1,400 of that amount stayed. Hultgren said those fines came from problems with software provided by the board for reporting donations. The \$1,400 fine was stayed — meaning it was waived without an admission of guilt or innocence — and the \$600 in fines have been under appeal for several years, Hultgren said.

“It’s pretty frustrating now,” he said. “I’ve done everything I can and now it’s in their court.”

Hultgren finds himself, theoretically, in jeopardy of losing a place on the ballot for a situation he

has not been able to appeal. He said he hopes these sorts of conflicts will help streamline appeals.

Cross and Hultgren are two of more than 50 Illinois legislators that have been fined by the board of elections — but their penalties are on the smaller side. For instance, the campaign committee for Southern Illinois state Sen. Gary Forby has incurred \$40,600 in fines.

Rupert Borgsmiller, director of campaign contributions for the State Board of Elections, said the board chose not to force anyone off the ballot before the primaries because there was some question whether candidates had been given sufficient notice.

As far as whether the board would eject a candidate such as Cross with just one unpaid fine, Borgsmiller thought it was unlikely they would ban anyone with such a small infraction.

“I definitely feel that is the position the board would take,” he said.

Church, Batavia wait on stalled state grant to straighten Route 25 jog

BY GALA M. PIERCE
Daily Herald Staff Writer

Last September, state Rep. Tim Schmitz wrote a letter to the governor, asking him to release grant money that would help the city of Batavia purchase properties for the Route 25 realignment project. Just last month, the Batavia Republican received correspondence from the governor's office, but still didn't get an answer whether the state would keep its promise of the Illinois

FIRST grant of \$250,000. The money would go toward the purchase of First Baptist Church on the northwest corner of Washington Avenue or Route 25 and Wilson Street. "These projects have been, essentially, frozen while the

governor's staff reviews them," Schmitz said. "We have many communities that were promised the funds for different projects and still haven't received them." The realignment project involves taking out the jog in

traffic congestion in the city," said Schmitz, who served as an alderman from 1995 to 1999. "They've been working on this a long time with IDOT, trying to acquire property over the years

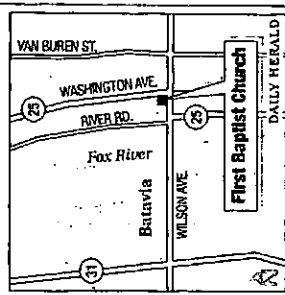
See ROUTE on PAGE 11

Route: Work could be done by 2006

Continued from Page 1

to straighten that road out." Straightening out the jog would eliminate traffic signals for one of the east-west inter-sections and another intersection north-south. The city would need the First Baptist Church parking lot for the route's realignment.

When developer Shoodeen Inc. donated about 8 acres on West Main Street and Mill Creek Drive to the church a couple of years ago, the church announced plans of moving. The church of 11,000 square feet on 1.6 acres has no where to grow at the current site, said James Hooper, chairman of the church building committee. With the announcement, the city moved forward with plans to straighten the jog. "They probably wouldn't have moved forward with the improvements, if we had not had an opportunity to move,"



Hooper said. The church would sell in the \$700,000s, Hooper said. "I understand the grant was for the city to begin the process of securing properties for this project," he said. "It would by no means cover everything." To receive the Shoodeen land, the church needs to have plans for the new church and financing — estimated at \$2.5 million — in place by early 2005. The city hopes to straighten out the jog by 2005 or 2006.

engage in odd spat

BY PATRICK WALDRON
Daily Herald Staff Writer

Stan Hickrod, an East Dundee crematorium owner and candidate for Kane County coroner, may not be legally required to answer people's questions. But it doesn't hurt to ask.

At least that's how Coroner Charles West sees it.

And that's why after being sent three Freedom of Information Act requests in as many months from Hickrod, West mailed out one of his own.

The seven-question letter, dated Dec. 30, written on county stationary and postmarked from the coroner's office, asks Hickrod to provide West a copy of his funeral director's license, list all the cremations his company has done for the past three years and detail death investigations he has been involved in.

"That's information we would like," West said. "If he chooses

not to respond to it, that's fine." Hickrod, who received the letter at his house Saturday, said no way.

"I won't provide any information until he starts providing me with what I have requested," said Hickrod, a former police officer.

The state Freedom of Information Act applies only to "public bodies" and not private businesses or individuals, said Scott Sievers, an attorney with the Illinois Press Association.

"He could just ignore it," Sievers said.

Clashes between Hickrod and West have quickly become typical of the three-man GOP primary set for March. Bob Tiballi of Elgin isn't involved in the fray but also is seeking the nomination for coroner.

Robert Moore of Aurora is running for the job as a Democrat. Hickrod started the Freedom

See SPAT on PAGE 10

Spat: Candidate criticizes use of county material

Continued from Page 1

of Information Act exchange in October shortly before announcing his intention to seek the office.

The 13-question request centered on employee qualifications, use of office credit cards, and travel and mileage reimbursements.

West says his office has responded to those requests, and two similar letters, providing answers according to available information. Some of the requests were denied when the coroner's office cited exemptions in the law.

West said all the disputed questions were reviewed by the Kane County state's attorney's office, and he insisted his office passed along to Hickrod all it could.

Hickrod disputes the explanation calling the answers "incomplete."

He defends his actions as seeking information about what he considers West's improper use of county-owned vehicles and an investigation into the qualifications of West's staff, particularly the deputy coroners.

He also criticized West's use of county supplies and the county mailing system for a political matter.

West made no apologies.

Under state election law, public money may not be used for political or campaign purposes.

Dan White, a spokesman for the Illinois State Board of Elections, could not categorically say if West's correspondence to Hickrod violated any campaign laws.

**IN THE UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT FOR
THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS
EASTERN DIVISION**

IN RE:)
) Chapter 11
EMERALD CASINO, INC.,) Case No. 02 B 22977
) Chief Judge Eugene R. Wedoff
Debtor.)

NOTICE OF SALE OF EMERALD CASINO, INC.

Emerald Casino, Inc. ("Emerald" or the "Company"), is a debtor under chapter 11 of the United States Bankruptcy Code. Headquartered in Chicago, IL, Emerald holds one of ten riverboat gaming licenses currently authorized in Illinois. Emerald's license permits the Company to operate a riverboat casino in Illinois pursuant to the Illinois Riverboat Gambling Act.

Emerald has decided to sell its business through a chapter 11 plan. The sale process developed by Emerald has been approved by the Bankruptcy Court and includes, but is not limited to, the following procedures:

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- Public opening of Binding Proposals, disclosing prospective purchasers' names, venture partners(s) if any, and locations of proposed development sites
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1-7-04 Daily Herald

Coroner to get free computer system

■ **Pilot project:** New system will save time and money, officials say
1-7-04

By Steve Lord *Beacon news*
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — The Kane County coroner's office will be the guinea pig for a new database program that could become a pilot for coroners offices across the country.

Business Systems Engineering of Chicago will develop the program with equipment from three other companies. Kane County Coroner Chuck West on Tuesday told the County Board Public Safety Committee the company will provide the time-saving database system for no charge.

"This will be provided at no cost to the county — for them to market it elsewhere," West said. "This does not exist anywhere in the U.S. now."

The idea for the pilot program came from recent discussions of coroner's office needs.

West said the need for a better data system were relayed through the county's Information Technology office, which brought the need to Business Systems.

The company will make a formal presentation to the Public Safety Committee next month. West said the new program should be in place by March.

The program will allow the coroner's office to enter data into the system just once. It then will be available to fill out any of the 22 different forms used by the coroner's office, including death certificates and burial permits.

"Instead of having to type 20-some forms, we can enter things once," West said.

In addition to the clerical savings, the system will make statistics more readily available, West said.

"The system we are running is 12 years obsolete," he said. "We have been losing part of our database."

In addition to setting up the system, the companies will provide equipment and training for office personnel, West said.

Although he would not have a precise cost amount for all this until a formal contract is signed, he said, the six computer notebooks the office will get would normally cost \$1,300 each.

Public Safety Committee member Ken Griffin, D-Aurora, who was involved in hearing the presentation from Business Systems, said it will have "long-term benefits" for the county.

"It's very promising," Griffin told fellow committee members. "It's just time-saving, for lack of a better word."

Tax to help senior services gaining support

1-7-04 Daily Herald
Question asking Kane County residents for 2.5-cent tax likely on November ballot

BY PATRICK WALDRON
Daily Herald Staff Writer

the county need.
In part of that survey respondents were asked to offer their own comments. Dozens listed high taxes as a major concern, a source of anxiety for some county officials considering a tax referendum.

For example, Margaret Scalfaro, a Carpentersville Republican, encouraged the county to make sure it is doing its best with the money it has before "raising more taxes."

County Board since August. The tax increase, as proposed, would raise \$2.5 million a year and cost the owner of a \$250,000 house about \$20 annually, according to Senior Services estimates.

The senior survey was done at the county board's request, as research to quantify the level of additional help seniors around

keep up, that's why we are here," said Beth Schoenholtz, executive director of Senior Services Associates, a group that oversees programs for seniors in McHenry, Kendall and Kane counties.

Senior Services has helped establish similar taxes in McHenry and Kendall counties and has been lobbying the Kane

other priorities. Supporters of the senior tax point to survey numbers showing that nearly 9 percent of seniors had no access to dental care and that 5 percent of respondents attempted suicide in the past year as proof more needs to be done to help seniors.

"We are too busy and we can't

with specifics for a senior tax, notably how much it would be, how the money would be collected and dispersed and what programs it would pay for.

Those instructions came after officials presented results of a health department survey asking 1,500 county residents over the age of 60 for comments on medical care availability and

A request to create a new 2.5-cent tax supporting services for senior citizens won't make the March primary ballot, but the issue is likely to make an appearance in November for the general election.

The Kane County Board's public health committee Tuesday ordered the health department to move forward

1-7-04 Chicago Tribune

Kane pushing back plan for senior-tax referendum

By William Presecky
Tribune staff reporter

Kane County voters are not likely to be asked in the March primary whether they favor increasing property taxes to help underwrite an array of senior services, from transportation to congregate meals.

Pending an unexpected reversal Wednesday by the County Board's Executive Committee, the proposed tax referendum question that Senior Services Associates Inc. and the Salvation Army have been imploring the County Board to schedule will be deferred until at least November.

Members of the board's Public Health Committee said they need more analysis and more time to better inform voters on the many, complex needs of the county's aging population and the impact and aim of an added tax to help seniors. The committee voted Tuesday to recommend the issue not be put to a binding referendum March 16.

Monday will be the final day for local governing boards to adopt a resolution or ordinance to allow referendum questions on the primary ballot. The full County Board is not scheduled to meet again in regular session until Tuesday. A vote by the Executive Committee, therefore, to go forward with a senior tax referendum proposal in March

would require a special board meeting.

Elgin-based Senior Services Associates Inc. and other cash-strapped agencies began prodding county officials in August to ask voters for approval to levy a tax of up to 2.5 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation to supplement public and private funding for senior services. Voters in 11 other Illinois counties, including neighboring Kendall, DeKalb and McHenry, have authorized a tax for senior services.

Former St. Charles Mayor Fred Norris, president of the non-profit consortium, said that without the county funding, the level of social services available to Kane seniors will continue to diminish at a time when their numbers continue to grow.

As proposed, the tax impact from a countywide senior services levy could range from \$7.46 a year for a home valued at \$100,000 to \$24.12 on a \$300,000 home, according to Norris.

"The [funding] crisis is now, and it's just going to get worse," said Norris. "We're at the point where we have no choice but to cut back."

Public Health Committee Chairman Gerald Jones (D-Aurora) said the roughly two months remaining before the primary election was not sufficient to adequately educate voters on the issue.

Batavia can't have home rule, census finds

BY GALA M. PIERCE
Daily Herald Staff Writer

Despite preliminary numbers surpassing the 25,000 population, Batavia officials learned last week the special summer census concluded the city is 22 people short of achieving home-rule status.

Representatives of the U.S. Census Bureau discovered a mistake made in the 2000 census when 375 inmates of the Kane County jail were incorrectly tallied in Batavia's population.

"Despite this, the city will still get about \$108,000 in new revenue from the state (annually)," Assistant City Administrator Randy Recklaus told the city council's Government Services Committee Tuesday.

The city's cost of \$210,000 for the special census was not wasted, Mayor Jeff Schielke said.

"We will easily overcome the cost in 2 years," he said. "It was a wise investment on the part of the city council. I don't think there's anything to regret at all."

Staff already has asked the bureau for an estimation of a

partial census. Officials are confident that the numbers at the Heritage Woods assisted-living facility and new housing at the Cambridge and Kirkland Chase developments would push the 24,978 population past the 25,000 threshold, which would grant Batavia home-rule status.

Home-ruled cities are not subject to the tax cap with property tax increases, have less restrictions in appointing high-ranking positions in the fire and police departments, can use the hotel/motel tax revenue in the general fund and can impose a quarter- to half-cent increase in sales tax revenues.

Geneva will conduct a partial special census of 1,600 households, which will cost \$5,800, Recklaus said.

"Geneva doesn't anticipate home rule and are still doing it because it's additional state revenue," he said.

From the census, officials learned Batavia's vacancy rate on rental housing was higher than in the past, which is attributed to low-interest rates that spur people to buy rather than rent, Recklaus said.

County office to get system:

The Kane County coroner's office will act as a proving ground for a new computer system that allows quicker completion of vital records when someone dies. Coroner Chuck West said Tuesday the system is being developed through a partnership between the county information technology department and several private companies, including Chicago-based Business Systems Engineering. West said when a person dies, more than 20 forms and records have to be completed. The new system allows information to be entered once and automatically applied to separate documents. The program will

be installed at no cost to the county and could be running as early as March.

Parenting class offered again:

The spring session of Bill Oliver's video class series, "Parent to Parent 2000," begins in February on the third floor of the Geneva school district administrative offices, 227 N. Fourth St., Geneva. The series covers topics parents need to address with their children. Class I meets from 9 to 11:30 a.m. Wednesdays, Feb. 4 to 25; class II meets from 7 to 9:30 p.m. Thursdays, March 4 to 25; class III is from 9 to 11:30 a.m. Thursdays, April 8 to 29; and class IV meets from 7 to 9:30 p.m., Tuesdays, April 27 to May

18. To register, call (630) 463-3073 or (630) 463-3083 and leave a name, phone number and the desired class number. Cost is \$10 for the workbook.

Family self-help program:

"Together" is a five-week program designed to help children and their families cope with the challenges and stresses that often arise as they face the serious illness of a loved one. The group will meet from 3:30 to 5 p.m. Sundays beginning Jan. 25 at Fox Valley Hospice, 200 Whitfield Drive, Geneva. Registration is requested; for more information, call (630) 232-2233 and talk with Priscilla Brinkman at ext. 230 or Judy Hanson at ext. 225.

1-7-04 Beacon News

Village rejects high-end townhouse project

By David Garber
STAFF WRITER

NORTH AURORA — Village trustees unanimously rejected a developer's proposal to build a neighborhood of upscale townhouses south of Oak Street between Randall and Orchard roads.

Although many trustees said they liked the idea of townhouses with average prices of \$278,000 and square footages in excess of 2,600 feet, they were unwilling to allow the project in its proposed location.

This site is immediately east of a neighborhood of single-family houses whose owners expected the next-door property to be developed with similar houses. The

village's long-term land-use plan calls for the property to be zoned single-family.

Representatives of the developer, Naperville-based Gladstone, said the quality of the townhouses and landscaping would make the project at least as aesthetically pleasant as the single-family houses and would raise the area's property values.

"We think it is a very appropriate land use at this location," Gladstone representative Ray Ulrich said.

He said the plans had been modified to reduce density of the 30-acre neighborhood, from 28 townhouse buildings with a total of 121 units, to 26 buildings with 104 units.

Trustees agreed the project was appealing, especially after several toured a similar Gladstone development in Plainfield.

"I was somewhat between impressed and overwhelmed," Trustee Mike Herlihy said. "I think this would be a very positive addition to North Aurora, and it's something we don't have anywhere else."

Nevertheless, the trustees agreed they had received too many complaints from existing homeowners east of the proposed site to support the townhouse project.

Several trustees encouraged the developer to consider building the townhouse neighborhood elsewhere in the village, suggest-

ing the project would serve well as a "buffer" area between single-family houses and commercial areas.

Gladstone president Dave Bolger said he disagreed, because the townhouses were actually more expensive than single-family houses and targeted at "move-up" buyers.

"This is not a buffer property," Bolger said, adding that his company would respect the village's opinion and no longer pursue the townhouse project on the Oak Street site.

"I'm not certain what our plans are going to be," he said, adding that he would be looking at other sites in the village for a similar development.

1-7-04 Beacon News

Study seeks alternatives to Randall power lines

By Jan Ramming

SPECIAL TO THE BEACON NEWS

BATAVIA — The City Council unanimously approved an intergovernmental agreement with St. Charles and Geneva to encourage a new power study by ComEd.

The study might help determine a non-residential, east-side route for 138KV high power lines as an alternative to the lines which had been suggested along Randall Road.

ComEd originally proposed running 16 miles of high-power lines along Randall from South Elgin to North Aurora. The plan was strongly opposed by area residents who were concerned with the safety and aesthetics of the lines.

The People United for Responsible Energy (PURE) group was formed, and members have been involved in talks with ComEd and representatives from the cities of North Aurora, Batavia, Geneva, St. Charles and South Elgin. Illinois Lt. Gov. Pat Quinn has been involved, too.

St. Charles, Geneva and Batavia will each pay ComEd one-third of the cost of the study, estimated to be \$50,000 to \$100,000.

St. Charles has approved the study, according to city administrator Larry Maholland. Geneva is expected to formally approve it at its next City Council meeting Jan. 20, City Administrator Phil Page said, adding that the study might be completed by February.

1-7-04 Beacon News

Batavia calls special meeting on North Dam

By Jan Ramming

SPECIAL TO THE BEACON NEWS

BATAVIA — The City Council has called a special meeting Feb. 12 to further discuss the future of the North Dam.

The meeting will be at 7 p.m. in council chambers at City Hall.

City Administrator Bill McGrath said representatives from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources will be asked to attend.

On Christmas Eve, the Batavia Park Board reaffirmed its original vote in favor of a new half-height dam to replace the 87-year-old North Dam. McGrath said he is certain the IDNR is hoping for the council's consensus on one of the many options from the state for removal or replacement of the dam.

Many City Council members said they hoped to take a final vote on the matter.

"We really need to have a discussion amongst the council," Alderman Jim Volk, 4th Ward, said. "We've heard an interminable number of public discussions about the pros and cons on this already. It's time for us to sit down and have a discussion on these points."

1-7-04 Daily Herald Referendum in Geneva looks likely

*Progress on access road discussions
paves the way for school district*

BY GARRETT ORDOWER
Daily Herald Staff Writer

Geneva school board members may have lost their only reason to postpone a \$49 million March referendum.

As the deadline for a ballot question looms just days away, discussions on road access for a second middle school have made solid progress, said Geneva school board President Dean Kilburg.

Though the specifics of land acquisition related to the site on Viking Drive off Fabyan Parkway likely will remain secret, if board members feel there has been progress, it would eliminate their sole sticking point.

Board members balked last month at asking voters to approve a referendum proposal if they couldn't guarantee traffic an alternative route to ease congestion and improve safety.

While access to the site from a

road other than Fabyan seemed uncertain at the Dec. 16 meeting, Kilburg said the issue that threatened to stop a \$49 million referendum now looks like it could be resolved.

"We're optimistic that by the time the building would open that we would probably have that resolved," Kilburg said.

If the board delays the referendum past March, the school would open its doors in fall 2007 at the earliest, instead of fall 2006.

Kilburg and Superintendent Michael Jacoby have been meeting with several parties to work toward a solution, Kilburg said, though he declined to discuss specifics.

The park district has continued to deny a school board request for access from Kaneville Road through its Peck Farm land. That leaves more

See **SCHOOL** on **PAGE 10**

School: Opening is years away

Continued from Page 1

expensive, privately held land as one option.

Without additional access, Viking Drive would become a four-lane road cutting the school site off from surrounding open space. It would also increase the traffic at the Fabyan and Randall Road intersection, already one of the most dangerous in this city.

The district already plans to spend \$760,000 to temporarily house middle-school students until the new school can open. Any further delay would increase that amount.

The district might decide to roll the cost of land acquisition

for access into the cost of the referendum, which has about \$25 million allocated for the second 1,000-student school and \$24 million for other projects at sites throughout the district.

"We don't have all the answers, but as we decide to move forward with the referendum some of these questions might be resolved," Kilburg said.

He said more specifics would probably come to light at the next school board meeting. The meeting is 7 p.m. Monday at the district headquarters, 227 N. Fourth St., Geneva.

Jacoby could not be reached for comment.

"Our aim:
To fear God,
tell the truth
and make money."

H.C. Paddock
1852-1935

Opinion

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1-7-04 Daily Herald

Web site puts apt pressure on deadbeats

Public humiliation of an individual rarely makes for prudent or effective public policy, but there is an exception to be recognized when it comes to deadbeat parents.

An Illinois Department of Public Aid Web site, up and running for one month now, features a dozen noncustodial parents whose failure to pay court-ordered child support has been particularly egregious. Among the dozen parents featured as of Tuesday, back payments owed ranged from \$8,313 to \$98,500. Most have not made a payment for several years.

Public aid officials and Gov. Rod Blagojevich, who championed the Web site, offer no pretense that the Web site is anything other than an effort to shame parents into paying up. And while it is generally a positive development that public shaming long ago went the way of stockades in the town square, this Web site is nonetheless a good idea.

It amounts to a prudent effort because the need for more effective enforcement tools could hardly be more clear. Among more than 720,000 active child-support cases in Illinois, more than 42,000

Our View

Among more than 720,000 active child-support cases in Illinois, more than 42,000 people owe at least \$5,000 and have not made a payment in at least three months.

people owe at least \$5,000 and have not made a payment in at least three months — two conditions that must be met before the Department of Public Aid will place a deadbeat on the Web site.

Translate those numbers into people's lives, and it undoubtedly means that some custodial parents are struggling to pay school fees or even to put the right kind of food on the table or to buy the clothes or shoes their children need.

It is not as if Illinois and other states have not tried many other means of enforcing support payments. To the contrary, Illinois' list of mechanisms includes intercepting tax refunds,

suspending professional licenses, placing liens on property and paying collection agencies to go after the deadbeats. Still, thousands of parents manage to avoid payment — some by finding work for cash only, some by moving frequently, often from state to state.

As to the Web site's long-term effectiveness, only time will tell. But in its recently completed first month of operation, the site was credited for compelling two parents to cough up a total of \$37,000. One of those who paid up was featured on the site; the other reportedly paid up to avoid being featured.

The reasons some parents have no interest in providing even the most basic support for their children is a mystery that may never be understood by the vast majority of people who do their best to offer their children as much financial and emotional support as they can.

But the state's obligation is not to understand, but to enforce. This Web site is one more useful weapon to be used in the ongoing battle to collect for children the money they need and to which they are entitled.

Slayings decline in suburbs

DuPage, Kane see less violence

By Art Barnum
Tribune staff reporter

DuPage County reported four murders in 2003, the county's second-lowest yearly total in recent history.

Neighboring Kane County had 19 homicides, which was a decrease from 23 the previous year. All but five of those deaths were in Aurora, whose police chief credited a crackdown on gangs with a seemingly dramatic reduction in gang-related deaths.

Domestic violence was involved in three of the DuPage killings. An Oak Park man was stabbed outside his former girlfriend's Addison apartment, and the current boyfriend was charged; a Glen Ellyn woman was killed in her

apartment, and her former boyfriend was charged, and a Downers Grove woman was strangled by her husband, who then committed suicide.

The other murder was in May at a West Chicago party in which two brothers are accused of participating in the shooting of a rival gang member.

DuPage County State's Atty. Joseph Brkett has praised local police efforts in reducing serious crime. He said that if the murder rate in DuPage County, with almost a million residents, mirrored the nation's, the county would have about 60 homicides a year.

The only recent year with fewer homicides was 2000, when only a single murder was recorded in DuPage. In 2002, there were 9 murders, 10 in 2001 and 11 in 1999. Compared with DuPage, PLEASE SEE MURDERS, PAGE 6

MURDERS: Police cite crackdown on gangs

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

numbers continue to be much higher in Kane County, although the drop in Aurora homicides to 14 in 2003 from 25 in 2002 indicates overall violence was on the wane.

Gang violence led to four homicides in 2003, compared with as many as 15 the year before, police said. And shooting incidents, which totaled 199 as of Sept. 30, 2002, dropped nearly 30 percent to 140 in the first nine months of 2003, according to the most recent police statistics.

Aurora's Deputy Police Chief Byron Saum said he is reluctant to draw conclusions from a single year's data, but added that he believes ongoing federal and local crackdowns on gangs that started in November 2001, as well as crime prevention initiatives, have made a difference.

To date, 54 people, most of whom are alleged gang members, have been arrested in the crackdowns, which targeted two street gangs involved in the illegal drug trade.

"When you take those people

off the streets who are committing the violence, that's the most effective way of preventing further violence," Saum said.

In the aftermath of the first crackdowns in late 2001 and early 2002, shootings and murders in Aurora surged. Police speculated then that ensuing turmoil among gangs over leadership and drug turf might have led to the high homicide tally of 2002.

Saum said he believes programs designed to prevent violence, like the Aurora Cares program established in 1997—along with stepped up community-oriented policing programs, school anti-violence programs, social services and additional youth activities—are "bound to have an impact over time."

And he also noted that citizens have stepped forward in several cases to help police solve homicides in 2003, when police arrested 15 people in nine homicides.

In addition to the four likely gang-related cases, five people were killed because of personal disputes and three slayings were attributed to domestic disputes. A cabdriver died in a robbery attempt, and police have been unable to determine a motive in one homicide.

Linda Holmes, an Aurora activist, said that while she is encouraged by the decline in gang homicides, she is taking a wait-and-see view of the overall decline in violence.

"I think it's too early to tell,"

she said. "I'm wondering whether it was things they did or whether it was part of the cycle. It needs a longer trial period."

Saum basically agreed, saying there could be another increase in violence, and that is why long-term approaches involving social services and schools are important.

Elsewhere in Kane County, Elgin had three homicides, the same number as the previous year. Carpentersville had two, and St. Charles, West Dundee, Montgomery and unincorporated Aurora Township each counted one.

The murder in Montgomery, the July 9 shooting of Juan Carlos Rodriguez, 22, of Oswego, was the first in that village in five years, authorities said.

Kane's 19 homicides do not include four Aurora cases in which the victims died after being taken to out-of-county hospitals and one Elgin case that occurred in the Cook County portion of that city.

DuPage numbers do not include the December death of a 2-year-old Glen Ellyn boy, Noah Chorski, which is under police investigation.

Also not listed is the Nov. 17 death of Patrick Switzer, 44, of South Elgin, who was fatally shot by West Chicago police after he charged officers with a knife.

Freelance writer Hal Dardick contributed to this report.

THE SIX PERSON. THE MURDER.

Vote on senior tax likely for fall ballot

■ **Survey results:** Need for aid is there, but how should it be funded?

1-7-04

By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

Beacon
news

GENEVA — As Kane County officials consider a tax referendum to pay for senior citizen services, they are faced with a dichotomy.

A county survey shows a great need for assistance programs for seniors, but the same survey shows that seniors themselves identify high taxes as one of the major problems in the county.

Still, officials who got their first glimpse Tuesday at results of the Kane County Senior Survey said they will study putting a .025 percent tax to pay for senior services on the county ballot.

Officials said, however, that it probably is too late for the March primary ballot. They targeted the November ballot as probable.

"We need to think how it would be worded, and what kind of money we are talking about exactly," Public Health Chairman Gerry Jones, D-Aurora, said. "In that paragraph, it has to clearly state what the question is."

Members of the Senior Services Associates thought the referendum question would be clear and simple enough to place on the March ballot. Fred Norris, president of the Senior

❖ Turn to SENIOR, A2

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SENIOR

From Page A1

Services board, said the 2.5 cents for each \$100 of assessed value tax is authorized by state law — if voters approve.

Already, the tax has been approved by wide margins in Kendall and McHenry counties.

Norris said Senior Services faces losing as much as 60 percent of its \$2.5 million yearly budget because of state and federal funding cutbacks.

"November is OK, it will be better than nothing," Norris said of the referendum Tuesday. "March would have been better."

It would be almost impossible for the County Board to approve a referendum for the March ballot. January 15 is the deadline for referendum questions approved by governmental bodies to be presented to the county clerk's office, but Jan. 12 — next Monday — is the deadline for governmental boards to approve such questions. The full County Board does not meet until Tuesday.

Listing senior concerns

Despite differences over ballot dates, almost everyone from committee members to senior service providers agreed the survey provided a window into what seniors in the county are thinking. Surveys were sent by the county to 3,000 randomly selected senior residents among the estimated

46,000 people in the county who are 60 years or older.

An additional 2,000 were distributed by Senior Services and the Salvation Army's Meals on Wheels program. More than 34 percent were returned from the mail surveys, and 493 were returned from the senior programs, according to Uche Onwuta of the county Health Department.

The survey showed that the top five senior problems are: cost of prescription drugs; cost of health care services; affordable housing and taxes on housing; transportation; and cost and availability of home health care.

While none of these really surprised senior service providers, Bette Schoenholtz, Senior Services director, said there were some surprises. For instance, about 26 percent of seniors who returned mail surveys said home repair cost was a problem. Among all the surveys returned, about 18 percent said that the toughest daily living activity seniors need help with is taking care of their toenails.

Officials said the most compelling part of the survey was the individual comments from seniors themselves. They varied, from the person who called senior services "boondoggles" and said "for every dollar you spend on seniors, you're taking from my children or someone else's children," to the widow who said she had to sell her home in Florida and move back in with her children to afford \$1,000 a month in prescriptions.

Census error may cost Batavia

2000 report counted inmates at county jail, city is 22 residents short of seeking home rule

By MARK FOSTER
Kane County Chronicle

BATAVIA — An error by the U.S. Census Bureau in 2000 has come back to haunt Batavia.

The result is that the city's official population as counted in last year's special census is 24,978, 22 residents short of the 25,000 benchmark necessary to achieve home rule status under state statute.

In 2000, the Census Bureau incorrectly credited Batavia's population with 375 Kane County Jail inmates. City officials used the official 23,866 figure from 2000 as the base for projecting a population of about 25,500 in 2003. The release of the preliminary census count of 25,153 last fall was the first indication that something might be wrong. "We thought the number was low," said Batavia Assistant City Administrator Randy Recklaus, who worked

with the Census Bureau. "They thought it was from vacancies in rental units." The city insisted on further investigation by the Census Bureau.

"What struck us was that we had a population increase of 1,000 when we had an increase of 1,000 housing units," Recklaus said, noting that the bulk of new housing in Batavia is composed of large single-family homes. "We pushed them because it didn't make sense."

Last week, the Census Bureau reported to Recklaus the error of including the jail inmates in the 2000 count.

Tim Olson, supervisory program analyst at the Census Bureau headquarters in Washington, D.C., confirmed the mistake. "There was a group quarters population that was allocated to Batavia that was actually in the county," Olson said. However, Kane County Sheriff Ken Ramsey said that the jail actually is within Geneva city limits. Ramsey noted that until 1995, after he became sheriff, the mailing address for the jail was a Batavia post office box number. "The address at 777 E. Fabyan Parkway in Geneva was not recognized by the post office until I asked the postmaster to change it in 1995," Ramsey said. Ramsey said that the jail's population is generally closer to 500 inmates, but added that the rated capacity of the overcrowded facility is 398. Populations of jails are to be credited to the jurisdictions in which they are located. Olson could not confirm whether the jail inmates were counted twice or assigned only to Batavia. The city performed the special census last year to gain official recognition of its increasing population. Municipalities receive state motor fuel tax, income tax, photo processing tax revenues and other tax money based on population. In the 1980s and 1990s, the city performed several special counts to increase revenues from the state.

Batavia

Continued from page 1

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The city performed the special census last year to gain official recognition of its increasing population. Municipalities receive state motor fuel tax, income tax, photo processing tax revenues and other tax money based on population.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the city performed several special counts to increase revenues from the state.

The 2003 special census, performed by the Census Bureau, cost the city \$210,000.

Olson said the 24,978 figure has been certified and forwarded to the state, meaning that Batavia will receive an additional \$108,000 in revenues a year.

"The special census is going to pay for itself in two years," Recklaus said. In the next five years, the city will collect an additional \$500,000 it otherwise would not have received.

However, the city also performed the special census in 2003 to qualify for home rule status, which grants municipalities additional rights and powers under state statute.

One of those powers is the ability to levy an additional 0.5 percent municipal sales tax. City officials estimate that if enacted, the city could add about \$1 million a year to its revenue stream. However, Recklaus noted that the city did not budget for such revenues this year.

City officials believe that with the continued growth of the community, performing a partial special census in designated census tracts covering about 500 homes will produce enough additional population to boost the population count over the 25,000 standard.

"We are very certain we have already passed 25,000," Recklaus said.

Recklaus said the city will seek cost estimates for a partial special census.

If a population of more than 25,000 is certified, it would be up to a vote of the city council to determine whether the city assumes home rule powers.

See BATAVIA, page 2

Senior citizens referendum to wait

1-7-04 Chronicle

Gives more time for forming questions

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA—A tax increase referendum to provide senior services will not appear on the spring ballot. Members of the Kane County's

Public Health Committee said Tuesday that they did not have enough time to meet Monday's deadline to file referendum questions for the March 16 primary with the county clerk.

The delay would allow county officials time to frame the question.

"Ideally, we're always ready to go (for the referendum in March)," said Bette Schoenholtz, executive director of Senior Services Associates. "But there are advantages to waiting."

An advantage would be time to sell the referendum to voters.

The question would ask voters to approve a 2.5-cent tax increase. If approved, the increase would cost the owner of a \$250,000 house an additional \$20 a year.

If approved, the tax would raise \$2.4 million a year that would go for services for senior citizens.

To determine what services are needed, the health department conducted a survey of Kane County residents 60 and older.

A total of 3,000 surveys were mailed, and 1,032 were returned. An additional 2,000 were distributed to senior centers and 493 of those were returned.

Census figures show an estimated 46,000 people 60 and older live in Kane County.

The top five concerns listed were affordable prescription drugs (71.9 percent), affordable health care (50.8 percent), affordable housing (37.8 percent), transportation (28.8 percent) and home health care (23.4 percent).

See REFERENDUM, page 2

Referendum

Continued from page 1

The survey revealed 7.1 percent of those responding have contemplated suicide and 5 percent have attempted suicide.

Schoenholtz said she read the survey and, applying the percentages in the survey to the county's senior population, 28,590 seniors have unmet needs.

One issue repeatedly mentioned as a concern was rising taxes.

Schoenholtz said many of the programs available to seniors go unused because of a lack of knowledge.

Some of the services are available on a donation basis, and some provide up to \$150 for home repair.

"That's seven years of tax payments," she said. "The senior who can't afford this is the very senior who needs this."

SSA's budget is \$2.5 million, of which 60 percent comes from state and federal sources. The

rest comes from donations and fund-raisers.

Committee members said they wanted time to frame the wording of the question that would appear on the ballot, such as statements of how much money would go to what service.

Schoenholtz cautioned board members that if specific dollar amounts for specific programs were listed, it might turn off voters who do not see the service they need.

"We have to be careful not make it too narrow," she said.

Ken Griffin, D-Aurora, said the survey shows the need for services, but he wondered if the referendum should request less than the 2.5 cents maximum allowed by statute.

Voters in McHenry, Boone, Carroll, Coles, DeKalb, DeWitt, Franklin, Jackson, Kendall and Williams counties have approved similar referendums.

To make it to the Nov. 2 ballot, the Public Health Committee, Executive Committee and full county board must approve it.

Batavia, died Friday, Jan. 2, 2004, friends in 1948. After nine

1-7-04 Chronicle
**County wants opinions
on transportation plan**

Meetings set

GENEVA — Members of the public and government officials are invited to provide opinions on Kane County's 2030 Transportation Plan.

The county will conduct an open house and a series of forums in January and February to introduce the draft plan and solicit opinions.

An evening public meeting/open house will be from 4 to 7 p.m. Jan. 28 in the auditorium of Building A in the Kane County Government Center, 719 S. Batavia Ave., Geneva.

Public forums will be in each of the planning partnership areas:

• 10 a.m. Jan. 30, Upper Fox Area, Randall Oaks Golf Club, Dundee.

• 10 a.m. Feb. 3, Aurora Area,

North Aurora Public Library, North Aurora.

• 10 a.m. Feb. 9, Tri-Cities Area, Batavia Public Library, Batavia.

• 10 a.m. Feb. 11, Elgin Area, Elgin Community College, BCC, Room 123.

• 10 a.m. Feb. 18, Campton Area, Campton Township Community Center.

• 10 a.m. Feb. 19, West Central Area, Elburn Public Library, Elburn.

• 10 a.m. Feb. 23, Northwest Area, Huntley Village Hall, Huntley.

• 1 p.m. Feb. 25, Southwest Area, Waubensee Community College, Bodie Hall, Room 150.

Information on the planning process can be found at the Kane County Division of Transportation Web site at www.co.kane.il.us/dot.

For information, call Heidi Files at (630) 406-7308.

— Kane County Chronicle

proving careers

Coroner's office to get new computer program

1-7-04
Chronicle

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — The Kane County Coroner's office will be a demonstration site for a new computer program that will be designed especially for the office.

Coroner Chuck West said Business Systems Engineering of Chicago will design for free a database that would be used by the company to market their product.

"This would be tailor-made for our purposes," West said. "The company would market all over the country."

Speaking on Tuesday to members of the Public Safety Committee, West said a contract could be signed with the company within two weeks.

The new database would replace the office's 12-year-old computer program.

When someone dies, 23 documents must be filled out by the coroner.

That means the name of the deceased and other personal information must be typed in 23 times.

The new program will change that.

"Once you type in the information it will automatically migrate to all the forms," West said.

It also will provide statistical information the office currently cannot provide.

The company tentatively has agreed to provide six notebook computers and 16 hours of training for employees.

The new computer program is an outgrowth of a subcommittee of the Public Safety Committee that has been studying the needs of the coroner's office.

Establishing an up-to-date database was one of the panel's goals.

Finding more storage space for bodies is another priority.

1-7-04 Chronicle Transportation staff to consider changes along Randall Road

Residents fear driving on the road north of STC

By HEATH HIXSON
Kane County Chronicle

ST. CHARLES — Kane County transportation staff are set to meet Thursday to consider changes to hazardous conditions on a stretch of Randall Road north of the city.

As part of a normal staff meeting, transportation staff are expected to consider various options to clear up dangerous conditions on the road between Red Haw Lane and Silver Glen Road.

Residents along the stretch say speeding motorists and the lack of lane separation and stoplights on the road cause them to fear traveling on the road.

Paul Rogowski, county transportation director, said his staff plans to craft various solutions to help make the road safer.

He said those options would be presented Jan. 23 to the Kane County Board's Transportation Committee.

"We believe there is a unique situation because of that hill and that curve," he said. "We need to do a lot of work and try to understand what types of (problems) are happening. We are going to try to look at any and all options to try and help find a solution."

The move by county officials comes in large part after a campaign by former

St. Charles school board President Stephen Cole to call attention to the road's unsafe conditions.

Cole presented his case to the county board in early December, telling board members that residents near the stretch "fear Randall Road" and cited the November death of 17-year-old Samantha Joos along the road as a reason for changes.

"Today the fear is Randall Road is the ignominious successor to Kirk (Road)," he told the board.

Kirk Road was the scene of numerous fatal vehicle accidents more than 10 years ago before road improvements were added and the speed limit was decreased.

Cole wants the county board, which controls the road, to place signage, reduce the speed limit, build a steel road divider between opposing lanes, place signals at Crane and Bulcom roads and enforce the speed limit.

Cole on Monday asked the city council to approve a resolution supporting his efforts and calling on the county to take action.

The council is expected to consider the resolution Jan. 19.

Cole plans to ask the St. Charles school board Monday to do the same.

1-8-04 BEACON NEWS

Referendum on seniors programs faces bumpy road

■ **Board questions:**
Some Kane officials lukewarm about raising seniors' taxes

By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — While the Kane County Health Department will continue studying a property tax referendum to fund programs for senior citizens, there were indications Wednesday such a referendum would get a rough reception from the County Board.

Some members of the board, speaking at the Executive Committee meeting, said a tax increase to fund programs for seniors might be just the opposite of what seniors need. The board is looking at a question on the November ballot asking voters to approve a tax increase of 2.5 cents for each \$100 of assessed value, an increase of less than \$20 a year on a \$250,000 house.

"The seniors in my community are looking for tax relief," board member John Noverini, R-Carpentersville, said. "It seems there are plenty of programs for senior citizens. We have programs on top of programs. It doesn't make sense."

Board member Deborah Allan, R-Elgin, said a referendum might be "buying more bureaucracy." Board member Don Wolfe, R-Elgin, said the tax might be intended to go to senior programs, but would end up feeding a list of other non-profit agencies.

Other board members suggested that program funding, and even a referendum for funding, would be better handled by individual townships.

"I think seniors would rather just have the money, and spend it themselves," Board member Lee Barrett, R-Dundee, said.

That is the choice people would have at the ballot box, if the referendum question were approved, said board member Gerry Jones, D-Aurora, chairman of the Public Health Committee.

"If they vote 'no' on the referendum, then that's what they're saying," he said. "It's not a sure thing, just because it's on the ballot."

"We're virtually saying, are you willing to support more taxes for these programs?" board member Barb Wojnicki, R-St. Charles, said.

The drive for the senior citizen referendum was started by providers of programs in the county who face cuts in federal and state funding. The 2.5 cents for each \$100 of assessed value for seniors programs is specifically authorized by state law for counties.

The county would collect the money and could dole it out to senior citizen services providers.

More need

Senior Services Associates Inc., an organization covering McHenry, Kane and Kendall counties with a budget of about \$2.5 million a year, has been pushing for the referendum because of threatened budget cuts, Bette Schoenholtz, Senior Services Associates director, said.

After the meeting, Schoenholtz pointed out there are plans to cut many of the services Noverini referred to. As much as 60 percent of Senior Services' budget comes from federal and state sources that could be cut as early as this year, and many of those services not only need a local agency to coordinate it, but to match the funding.

"Most require at least a 15 percent match," Schoenholtz said. "Out of our budget, we could lose 60 percent. That leaves a lot of money to be raised, which is where the referendum comes in."

Schoenholtz said the recent Kane County Senior Survey, presented Tuesday to the Public Health Committee and distributed to other County Board members Wednesday, showed many of the gaps in senior care in the county. She pointed out that, by looking at the survey answers, she was able to come up with more than 28,000 individual examples of an unmet need.

"Services are there, but the needs assessment shows more needs to be done," she said. "Even if we are able to maintain what we have, we need to seek funding to meet the unmet need."

The Health Department and the state's attorney's office will continue to study possible wording for a referendum on the November ballot.

Battle expected on impact fees

1-804 Chronicle

County board to consider fees Tuesday

BY TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Kane County Board members from the Tri-Cities area are prepared for a floor fight Tuesday when the board considers transportation impact fees.

At the center of the argument is what representatives from the middle of the county see as a program that will discourage commercial development and send precious sales tax revenue to other communities.

The proposed fee structure is significantly higher in central Kane County than elsewhere.

"It will put the Tri-Cities at a disadvantage," said Robert McConaughay, R-Geneva.

The county would levy the fees to offset the impact that development has on county highways.

Members of the Executive Committee on Wednesday voted to place the impact fee program on Tuesday's county board agenda. McConaughay and James Mitchell,

Fees

Continued from page 1

To calculate the fee, the Kane County Division of Transportation divided the county into eight regions they call Planning Partnership Areas and applied a formula that takes into account the number of lane miles of county highways and the amount of traffic a given development is expected to generate.

With Fabyan Parkway and Kirk and Randall roads, the Tri-Cities has more county roads than any other region.

But a line must be drawn somewhere, board members say.

Weigand points to theoretical development on Kirk Road.

A strip mall built at Kirk and Wind Energy Pass in Batavia could generate a fee that tops \$500,000. For the same strip mall a few hundred feet south in the corporate limits of Aurora, the fee would be \$120,000, Weigand said.

Developments in the Tri-Cities should pay more because they put more traffic on county highways, said William Wyatt, R-Aurora, chairman of the Transportation Committee.

"The bottom line is we need the money," Wyatt said. "If we don't do this we have to look at the gas tax or the property tax. Those are people taxes. We're going to be spending a lot of money in the Tri-Cities."

If approved, the fee is expected to bring in \$2.6 million a year. The money must be spent in the PPA in which it was collected.

See FEES, page 2



1-8-04 Daily Herald

Mayors: Road fee formula unfair

By PATRICK WALDRON
Daily Herald Staff Writer

Trying to protect their cities' economic interests and protest unfairness, the mayors of Batavia, Geneva and St. Charles hope to persuade county leaders to scrap a proposed formula

that will determine future development road fees. "I don't think any of us oppose the concept," said Batavia Mayor Jeff Schielke, "but our issue revolves around the impact fee formula. We certainly think it puts us at a great disadvantage."

For months, county transportation officials have worked on creating a new transportation impact fee system charging residential and commercial developers a set amount per house or store that would pay to build, expand and maintain roads. It's set to go before the

county board for approval on Tuesday. Many around the county expect a flood of questions and vocal critics. If approved, it would bring in an estimated \$27 million over the next 10 years and is based on a complicated formula that calculates road usage, distance

traveled and development cost. The formula also takes into account where the developments are and how close they are to existing county roads. But that formula churns out fees that are highest in the Tri-

See FEE on PAGE 9

Fee: Mayors willing to go to court

Continued from Page 1

Cities area, one of eight planning areas created in the county to separately raise and spend the money.

For example, the builder of a 1,000-square-foot fast-food restaurant in the Aurora area would pay \$1,064 in road fees. The same project in the Tri-Cities area would be assessed \$6,119.

County leaders defend the program, saying the Tri-Cities have several highly traveled county roads that need maintenance and expansion that all cost money. Plus, the higher fees collected in the area would stay in the Tri-Cities. In areas such as Aurora or Elgin, many of the heavily traveled roads are not under county jurisdiction.

County Board transportation committee Chairman Bill Wyatt, an Aurora Republican, said the system works, but he understands the concern.

"I see their point," he said. "But differences in fees from area to area, that's to be expected."

The alternative to this, he said, is collecting more taxes from residents instead of builders.

The mayors say fair is fair and they will fight, possibly in court, to make it that way. St. Charles Mayor Sue Klinkhamer said the mayors have to protect their cities' interests.

"This will hurt us," she said.

The mayors are trying to lobby county board members to revamp the formula and thus vote against the fee next week.

If it's approved, the mayors believe there is room to challenge the system.

"We haven't reached that point yet," Schielke said. "I'm hoping for diplomacy to win out."

Kane says no to higher tax on the rich

1-8-04 Daily
BY PATRICK WALDRON
Daily Herald Staff Writer *Herald*

The last time Lt. Gov. Pat Quinn's proposal for revisions to the state income tax system came up, in conversation around the Kane County Board table, the issue was ridiculed.

On Wednesday, when the proposal — which Quinn says would help education funding around the state — surfaced again for final consideration, Kane leaders gave it the silent treatment.

In short, the notion of supporting Quinn's call for a special advisory referendum on the subject wasn't even considered.

County Board Chairman Mike McCoy said he told Quinn's representatives to expect that kind of reaction.

"I didn't see it going anywhere," McCoy said.

In county boardrooms across the state, Quinn is seeking support for an advisory referendum asking voters to approve a plan to double the state income tax for people making more than \$250,000 and then splitting that money evenly between schools and homeowners.

The lieutenant governor's office is sending staff members to all 102 Illinois counties asking local county boards to vote to place the question on the ballot.

If approved during the March primary, Quinn's plan calls for a vote in November to amend the state constitution and make the plan law.

Quinn estimates the plan would net the state an additional \$1.2 billion annually.

The tax increase would involve 81,343 residents, roughly 2 percent of Illinois taxpayers. Of those affected, 66,637 — or 82 percent — live in Cook or the collar counties.

An aide to Quinn told McCoy that 16 counties have approved putting the question on the ballot.

Quinn was not available for comment on the referendum drive Wednesday.

1-8-04 Chronicle

County board cool toward senior tax

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Supporters of a referendum to expand services for senior citizens might find a hard sell on the Kane County Board.

A recent survey of the county's senior residents demonstrated a need for more senior services, officials said. A possible tax increase would help fund those services.

A proposed senior citizens referendum would ask voters to approve a 2.5-cent tax levy, which would generate \$2.4 million and cost the owner of a \$250,000 home about \$20 a year.

Members of the Executive Committee on Wednesday considered the survey commissioned by the Health Department of residents age 60 and older to learn their needs, and the proposed referendum.

To many county board members, the biggest need for seniors is lower taxes.

"Some (seniors) have told me 'why don't you just cut my taxes?'" said Lee Barrett, R-East Dundee.

James Mitchell, R-North Aurora, said townships provide services for senior citizens and a county tax would have the effect of taxing residents twice for the same service.

"Perhaps that should be a township function. I can't support a referendum like that," Mitchell said.

Bette Schoenholtz, executive director of Senior Services Associates, said the health department's survey demonstrates the need for services, especially after state and federal spending cuts for social programs.

"It was kind of discouraging to listen what was being

said," Schoenholtz said.

The cuts in state and federal spending have forced the closure of some of the very programs to which the board members were referring, she said.

Adult day-care programs and home meal delivery have



Mitchell

closed, and Senior Services had to lay off an employee this year, leaving the agency with three full-time workers.

"There are programs out there, but some of them don't have the capacity," she said. Worse, those that do exist may face the same fate as the ones that have closed, she added.

The top five concerns listed in the survey were affordable prescription drugs, affordable health care, affordable housing, transportation and home health care.

Board member Donald Wolfe, R-Elgin, said the tax is meant to help the nonprofit agencies as much as the seniors themselves.

"Let's be very careful," Wolfe said.

John Noverini, R-Carpentersville, said the best thing to do for senior citizens is cut their taxes.

"We have federal programs, we have state programs, we have township programs. We have programs on top of programs. If we want to do something we could exempt seniors earning less than \$30,000 from paying taxes," Noverini said.

The earliest a question could appear on the ballot is the Nov. 2 election.

It would not appear on the March 16 ballot.

Cole urges Randall safety measures

■ **S-curve dangers:**
Former SC School Board president gets City Council support

By Mike Sullivan

SPECIAL TO THE BEACON NEWS

ST. CHARLES — Expressing grave concern about the dangers to motorists along the so-called "S-curve" on Randall Road, former St. Charles School Board President Stephen Cole urged the city this week to support safety measures for the road.

Cole, a resident of Redgate Ridge subdivision in St. Charles Township, has been championing Randall Road safety for some time. In remarks to the City Council this week, Cole warned aldermen about the dangers of driving on Randall Road, especially on the S-curve —

the area north of Red Haw Lane to Silver Glen Road.

He asked that the council pass a resolution supporting discussions aimed at improving driver safety on Randall, which is under the jurisdiction of Kane County.

The City Council, with no debate, agreed to put Cole's request on the agenda, and immediately voted unanimously in favor. The resolution supports discussions that will "meaningfully lead to reducing the safety risk on Randall Road."

Cole has drawn up a list of five recommendations and actions he previously presented to a Kane County Board committee to reduce the risks on the heavily traveled roadway.

In addition to lowering the speed limit to 45 mph along that stretch of Randall Road, Cole suggested putting up signs on snowy and rainy days, advising drivers of the

dangers as they enter the S-curve. He also favors dropping the speed limit on the S-curve to 35 mph during inclement weather.

Cole dismissed current safety measures for that stretch of road — measures he says Sheriff Ken Ramsey has failed to enforce.

"Another 45 mph blinking light at Crane Road ... that no one follows ... will not get the job done," Cole said.

In his previous meeting with Kane County Board members, Cole claimed to have support from "many homeowners and parents who have come to fear Randall Road," in particular the area north of Red Haw Lane.

Cole cited the case of St. Charles North High School student Samantha Joos, who was killed last fall when her car, during a rainstorm, went out of control on the S-curve north of Red Haw.

Cole said a St. Charles school

boundary committee last spring was discussing a plan to shift certain high school students from Arbor Creek and Fox Mill subdivisions to St. Charles East High School in order to keep them from driving north on Randall.

Cole's other recommendations include:

- Building a steel road divider the length of the S-curve.
- Erecting a traffic light at Crane and Bolcum roads.
- Enforcing the speed limits on Randall Road.

Cole said he expects his recommendations to be reviewed by members of the Kane County Transportation Department and the County Board Transportation Committee at a Jan. 22 meeting. According to Cole, the full County Board in February will review "the problems associated with speed, access from side roads and poor design of the S-curve."

1-8-04 Beacon News

Error puts Batavia home-rule status in doubt

By Jan Ramming
SPECIAL TO THE BEACON NEWS
BATAVIA — The final census count came up just below the necessary number for Batavia to gain home-rule status, city officials have learned.

Plans for a partial census are under way, and the city hopes to gain home-rule status in 2005. Any municipality in Illinois with a population in excess of 25,000 is eligible to be a home-rule municipality. The final figure from the U.S. Census Bureau for Batavia was 24,978 — just 22 people short.

In November, the preliminary population count for Batavia from

the Census Bureau was 25,153. That number was lowered to reflect a Census Bureau error in 2000 that counted inmates of the Kane County Jail in Geneva as being residents of Batavia.

Although the city will not gain home-rule status as soon as officials had hoped, the city will benefit from the new census figure. The special census cost the city \$210,000 but will bring in \$108,000 per year in additional state funding for at least the next seven years, Mayor Jeff Schielke said.

"We'll get about \$756,000 back just because we went through the exercise of the census," Schielke said. "I think it was certainly worth-

while to do it."

Home-rule status would allow the city to increase the property tax cap and to lower the interest costs of government borrowing. Home-rule municipalities may negotiate better interest rates, since they are not limited in their borrowing to the kinds of debt authorized by statute. They may issue general obligation bonds without securing voter approval through a referendum.

Batavia could gain \$1 million per year in additional sales tax revenue by raising the tax rate by .5 percent under home rule.

Schielke said that city officials did not anticipate that amount in this year's budget because they

were not sure whether they would reach the necessary population number.

"We didn't want to be premature in projecting anything, so we didn't make any adjustments in the budget to reflect any sales tax increases," Schielke said.

The city has asked the Census Bureau for the estimated cost of a partial census, knowing that new housing numbers would bring the count over 25,000. Schielke expects the cost to be less than \$5,000.

"Then we have to go through their calculations and certification process," Schielke said. "I'm not anticipating that we'll have any final word on it until 2005."

CALIFORNIA

1-8-04 Chronicle

Coroner candidate vows to drop business if elected

By ADAM KOVAC
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — A candidate for Kane County coroner said he will forfeit operation of his crematory business if he is elected to avoid the appearance of impropriety.

Stan Hickrod's comments on Wednesday blunted an attack by incumbent Coroner Charles West that Hickrod would use his Twin Pines crematorium in East Dundee to line his pockets while in office.

The coroner issues cremation permits to the two crematoriums in Kane County, which includes Twin Pines, and gives advice on obtaining funeral services when someone dies.

"It would be very easy to channel things to his facility," West said. "In 26 years of coroners, no one has ever been in a position to profit."

But Hickrod first must defeat West and Bob Tiballi of Elgin in the March 16 Republican primary, a race that appears focused on West's

administration and Hickrod's potential to profit from holding the post.

Hickrod denied using an election victory to benefit his business, noting that the demands of the post would require his full-time attention. He said West is trying to deflect criticism from himself.

"There's no way for me to profit by this whatsoever," Hickrod said. "Most likely, it would be sold because I can't work both jobs."

Questions about Hickrod's crematorium are the latest in a series of campaign barrages fired in three months as West and the former Streamwood police officer target each other in the three-way primary.

On Dec. 30, West used county stationery to mail Hickrod a freedom of information request asking for a copy of his funeral director's license, a list of cremations his business performed in the last three years and other information.

West's inquiry was in response to three similar re-

quests from Hickrod for records about the coroner's budget, use of county-owned vehicles and the qualifications of West's deputies.

Illinois law does not require Hickrod to respond to the coroner's request because he is a private citizen. Hickrod also accused West of violating state election laws by using county funds and resources for political purposes.

"He can't do that," he said.

However, West said he only asked for information his office needs to have on file, but acknowledged that his request was based in part on Hickrod's campaign probing.

"He feels his questions are vital to his campaign, so I gave him an opportunity to respond to the same kind of questions," West said. "It's all about the campaign."

Tiballi has managed to avoid the contention. The GOP winner is expected to face Democrat Robert Moore of Aurora in the November general election.

Business briefs

Job club series for the new year

The Kane County Department of Employment and Education (KCDEE) holds a weekly job club series providing assistance with finding a job in the current economy. Classes are held at various Illinois Employment and Training Centers (IETC).

What ties people in a job club together is the need for mutual support and encouragement. Guest speakers provide information and spark conversation among attendees about issues pertinent to those who are "between careers." People who have been involved with a job club report that their job-seeking efforts are strengthened by belonging to a group and that their job searches are shorter.

Upcoming job club sessions are held from 1 to 2:30 p.m. Fridays at the Elgin IETC, 30 DuPage Ct., Elgin:

- Jan. 9: Reasons people don't get jobs - how not to get hired
- Jan. 16: Guest speaker from Kane County Health Department
- Jan. 23: Positive thinking and success - greet the New Year with a new attitude
- Jan. 30- Challenges facing the experienced worker

For more information, call Jean Duchaj at the Elgin IETC, (847)-888-7900, Ext. 247. Reservations are not required, but come early because seats fill up quickly. There is no charge for the sessions.

The Kane County Department of Employment and Education is a proud member of the America's Workforce Network.

Sam's Club fueling station in Batavia 'just for gas'

By MARK FOSTER
Kane County Chronicle

BATAVIA — Most gasoline stations today function as convenience stores, with everything from newspapers to snacks to hot coffee brewing inside.

But when motorists drive in to the Sam's Club fueling station on Fabyan Parkway, they should expect one commodity.

"It's just for gas," said Kofi Addo, a project designer with an engineering firm working for Sam's Club.

The Sam's Club station will be part of the 30-acre commercial development at the southwest corner of Randall Road and Fabyan Parkway to be anchored by a 150,000-square-foot Wal-Mart store.

Sam's Club is a branch of the Wal-Mart empire, with a Sam's Club store on Randall Road already doing a brisk business just south of the planned development.

The Randall-Fabyan development also will include two banks, two restaurants and numerous retail shops. The property already has been annexed into the city and the project approved.

The plan commission on Wednesday was reviewing design plans for the fueling station.

"You need to try to make it more attractive," plan commission member Nancy Bertoglio told Addo. Bertoglio and other planners said the station needs more architectural detail and landscaping than was presented Wednesday.

They also said the canopy over the six fueling islands, each with two pumps, needs to be better integrated with the station building.

The building, described by Addo as a kiosk, is just 224 square feet, and would have space only for a single attendant and restrooms.

Addo said at most Sam's Club fueling stations there is no attendant at all, but this one is far enough across the parking lot from the Wal-Mart that an attendant will be provided.

While the attendant will be able to take payment for gasoline purchases, Addo said Sam's Club is designing the facility to encourage use of credit cards at the pumps.

The station will be at 855 W. Fabyan Parkway, east of the signalized intersection on Fabyan that will be the primary access to the commercial development. The Wal-Mart will be at the west end of the property.

Addo and city staff planner Kai Tarum said they will work together to refine the design before bringing it back to the commission for further review.

Tarum said planning the development has been a challenge because of the steep slope to the property, and the grading that must be performed.

1-8-04 Republican

1-8-04 Daily Herald

Deal expected to end battle over subdivision

By PATRICK WALDRON
Daily Herald Staff Writer

County leaders say an environmental permit expected any day now is the only remaining hurdle to clear before finalizing a deal to develop the long-disputed Prairie Lakes subdivision in Campton Township.

"I think it's a done deal," said county board Chairman Mike McCoy, an Aurora Republican.

The permit from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency authorizing use of sanitary spray fields as part of the Campton Township development was due this week but hadn't come down as of Wednesday. Still, county leaders expect the permit to be issued in time for the project to be put before

the full county board on Tuesday when the plan is expected to win full board support.

That vote stands to end years of legal battles between the county and the project's developer.

"Tuesday's meeting is a major key to the settlement and we are optimistic that this will be approved," said Rick Fox, a spokesman for Oak Brook-based Inland Real Estate Development Corp.

The Prairie Lakes compromise outlines plans for 150 single-family homes on the 225-acre site near Burlington and Bolcum roads. Acre-plus lots would buffer the property from surrounding areas and half-acre lots would make up the interior. The homes with larger lots

might sell for more than \$800,000.

It's a departure from versions presented by Inland in the early 1990s that called for 280 homes on the same site.

County board members rejected those plans and several revisions prompting a series of lawsuits, including one that remains in court unresolved.

County officials reached what they refer to as a settlement with Inland in December that will clear the way for home construction and put an end to the remaining lawsuit that stands ready for trial.

Inland officials say once the board approves the plan and puts it on the path toward construction, that lawsuit will be dropped.

1-8-04 Chronicle Gilberts OKs boundary agreement with Elgin

By ARACELY HERNANDEZ
Shaw News Service

GILBERTS — Village officials have approved a boundary agreement with Elgin, which will keep the city from going into areas the village plans to develop.

Village Trustee Tom Wajda said the board on Tuesday approved the agreement, which was held over from last month. Village officials said they wanted to make sure all of the information was correct.

"This boundary agreement says, 'This is the line to where we want to serve. We aren't going to encroach in your area if you don't encroach in ours,'" he said.

Elgin's Principal Planner Tom Armstrong said the boundary between the village and the city respects Gilberts' comprehensive plan.

The line also reflects Gilberts' boundaries with Pingree Grove to the south. The Gilberts boundary line for both Pingree Grove and Elgin is at Route 72 and Big Timber Road. Elgin's de-

velopment plan ignores Pingree Grove's boundaries.

"The line we agreed to was one on (Gilberts') comprehensive plan," Armstrong said. "I don't know why it would be controversial."

Gilberts created boundary agreements with its neighbors after Elgin officials began talking about expanding the city's borders to undeveloped land on either side of Route 47 from Interstate 90 to McDonald Road.

Neighboring villages including Burlington, Gilberts, Hampshire and Pingree Grove all have been eyeing the area for future expansion. By creating the agreements and resubmitting their comprehensive land plan maps to the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission, officials hope to soon hear which municipalities will get the right to serve the area.

The commission is expected to hold a hearing later this month to sort out where the different municipalities can expand. A date has not been set for the hearing.

Gas station details still need to be worked out

1-8-04 Daily Herald
By GALA M. PIERCE
Daily Herald Staff Writer

Although the Wal-Mart development was given final approval in April, construction is stalled until the ground settles on the Hawks property.

In the meantime, the Batavia plan commission on Wednesday reviewed the design for a Sam's Club gas station also planned for the property. The six-pump station will be built on less than an acre on the north end of the site, at the southwest corner of Fabyan Parkway and Randall Road.

"The (gas station) project is not scheduled to break ground until the spring," said Rick Smeaton, Batavia city planner and zoning officer.

Because many details have to be worked out and a new manager was assigned to the gas station project, the plan commission continued the design review. It is anticipated the petitioners, CEI Engineering Associates of Bentonville, Ark.,

will be ready in the next month and the station will be reviewed at the Feb. 4 or 18 plan commission meeting.

"There's a lot of work that needs to be done," Commissioner Nancy Bertoglio said. "To continue this would be appropriate."

City staff and the commission agreed there should be access to the station from the west as well as to the south, and that the sugar maples planned for the

property need to be replaced by a different species of tree.

Bertoglio suggested a more attractive building for the station and for the colors to coincide with some of the buildings already approved for the site. Operating hours for the gas station have been set at 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Sunday.

The station's address would be 855 W. Fabyan Pkwy.

Daily Herald

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Thanks for Holiday Hope

I would like to thank all those who helped with the Holiday Hopes food drive.

I was amazed at the volume of food generated by our community in such a short time. The drop-off center was filled with boxes for needy families and with volunteers making it all possible.

This year, Holiday Hopes met their goal of 1,500 food boxes and assisting 1,800 families and 5,000 children. Jill Orr and her staff did an outstanding job organizing and distributing all of the items collected.

I especially wish to thank the following people and restaurants that participated in the food drive by placing collection barrels in their lobbies: Keith Miller at Murphy's, Mike and Denise Siddon at Mike & Denise's, and Henry and Shirley Ho at Shan-Li's Place.

The Bill Wyatt for Mayor Committee is proud to have participated this year and is already planning more drop sites for the next Holiday Hopes food drive.

We do have a very compassionate and giving community here in Aurora.

Bill Wyatt
Aurora

1-8-04 BEACON NEWS

or fax to:

1-8-04 Chronicle

County board cool toward senior tax

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Supporters of a referendum to expand services for senior citizens might find a hard sell on the Kane County Board.

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said," Schoenholtz said.

The cuts in state and federal spending have forced the closure of some of the very programs to which the board members were referring, she said.

Adult day-care programs and home meal delivery have closed, and Senior Services had to lay off an employee this year, leaving the agency with three full-time workers.



Mitchell

"There are programs out there, but some of them don't have the capacity," she said. Worse, those that do exist may face the same fate as the ones that have closed, she added.

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"Let's be very careful," Wolfe said.

John Noverini, R-Carpentersville, said the best thing to do for senior citizens is cut their taxes.

"We have federal programs, we have state programs, we have township programs. We have programs on top of programs. If we want to do something we could exempt seniors earning less than \$30,000 from paying taxes," Noverini said.

The earliest a question could appear on the ballot is the Nov. 2 election.

It would not appear on the March 16 ballot.

Leaf issue will get resolved

I am replying to some of the recent comments about the leaf vacuum for Aurora Township, especially the political rhetoric comment if Commissioner Burgess would do something about it. I am well aware of the program that Kane County is offering some funds to offset the price of a leaf vacuum. At this point in time there is a special committee that was organized in the fall of taxpayer township people and township board members discussing the possible solutions to this leaf and brush issue. To just go out and buy a leaf vacuum will not solve all the issues associated with the leaf disposal, whether it be an expensive leaf vacuum or free leaf bags. I have been active in trying to get this situation resolved since all

this began. Aurora Township and the surrounding townships interrupted their brush pickup service when the state notified them to stop. I made the decision to begin brush pickup this fall after the state allowed for townships to decide about brush pickup.

Fred Burgess, Highway Commissioner, Aurora Township

1-9-04 METRO CHICAGO TRIBUNE SECTION 2

Kane sheriff to head FBI-police group

By William Presacky
Tribune staff reporter

For the third time in 16 years, the FBI National Academy Associates in Virginia is being headed by an Illinois lawman. Kane County Sheriff Kenneth Ramsey assumed leadership of the association of senior law-enforcement professionals last week. He will serve as president of the 17,000-member training, education and lobbying group through Dec. 31.



Ramsey

The group's membership is composed of alumni of the FBI National Academy which is on the Marine Corps base at Quantico. The group was founded by the first graduating class of the academy, which was created in 1935 by the late FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover to increase the professionalism of police officers.

Ramsey, 55, joins retired Chicago Deputy Chief Julien Gallet

and retired Illinois State Police Deputy Supt. William O'Sullivan as the other Illinois law-enforcement officials to head the global organization.

Gallet was president in 1988 and O'Sullivan in 1996, said Executive Director Tom Colobell, who called the organization's Illinois chapter "probably the most active in the country."

"Illinois is unique," said Ramsey, a 1989 graduate of the academy. "We have a northern Illinois chapter, a southern Illinois chapter and a state chapter over both. But the northern Illinois chapter is one of the largest in the world with more than 700 members."

Colobell said the organization has members in every state and 134 countries. Since its founding, the academy has had more than 36,000 graduates, he said.

Ramsey, a Batavia resident and former city alderman, is a Vietnam veteran whose Army career spanned 33 years. He has led the Kane County Police Chiefs Association and the Illinois Sheriffs Association.

Since becoming sheriff, the outspoken Ramsey has clashed

with some Kane County Board members and others over his management practices.

Ramsey expects that his travels outside the county will be scrutinized by the board.

"There will be some demands on my time this year and some travel outside the county," he said, "but my staff is more than capable of handling things when I'm not around."

Ramsey said his absences will be offset by benefits gained from being "in the absolute inner circles of decisions that are being made that will affect law enforcement worldwide."

"I'll be right in the forefront of that," he said, "so Kane County will benefit."

1-9-04 Daily Herald

Batavia to hold discussion about transfer station

BY GALA M. PIERCE
Daily Herald Staff Writer

Half of the Batavia City Council will hear arguments during upcoming public hearings on why the community's waste hauler should be allowed to open a waste transfer station.

Batavia Mayor Jeff Schielke recommended members of the city services committee to serve on the pollution control facility committee at Monday's city council meeting.

"City services has been the one to oversee this since its conception," Schielke said.

Members of that committee include Jodie Wollnik, Charles Beckman, Cathy Barnard, Jim Volk, Eldon Frydendall, Mary McCarter and Nancy Vance, who serve the 1st through 7th wards, respectively.

The panel should convene later this month to set dates for a series of public hearings, probably in April, on the application's merits.

The seven aldermen will make findings and recommendations, but the full city council will have to give final approval.

This week, the city council's government services committee also approved the hearing officer. Attorney Glenn Sechen of the law firm of Schain, Burney, Ross & Citron, of Chicago, will serve with his rate capped at \$225 an hour.

Onyx Waste Services Midwest Inc., based in Milwaukee, paid \$200,000 up front to cover the fees, officials said.

Sechen should be officially approved at an upcoming city council meeting.

The company filed an application to approve a siting permit for a station at 766 Hunter Drive, the southeast corner of

"There is a lot of opportunity for the community to see this document."

Bill McGrath, city administrator, on Onyx Waste Services Midwest Inc.'s permit application for a waste transfer station

Hunter Drive and Hubbard Avenue, Dec. 19.

The public is invited to review Onyx's hefty application, available at city hall, 100 N. Island Ave.

"There is a lot of opportunity for the community to see this document," Batavia City Administrator Bill McGrath said.

An agreement between Batavia and Onyx limits waste to an average 1,000 tons a day on the 5 acres in the city's industrial park.

City officials considered building the city's own transfer station after Kane County revised its solid waste plan in 1997 and banned more landfills in the area. Settler's Hill is set to close by 2006.

Transfer stations temporarily store and consolidate the garbage before it is transported to landfills farther away.

Members of the panel can discuss the process with residents, but not the merits of the application. All discussion of the transfer station's merits should wait until the public hearings.

"When they did this in West Chicago, there was a lot of people who were upset because they couldn't talk to members of the city council," Alderman Alan Wolff said.

Waste transfer site application on file in Batavia

1-9-04 Beacon News
Public Library

By Jan Ranning
SPECIAL TO THE BEACON NEWS
BATAVIA — Onyx Waste Services has filed an application to build a waste transfer station in Batavia. The application is available for public inspection at City Hall and at the reference desk of the Batavia

The company proposes siting the waste station, where garbage would be temporarily stored before being shipped to a landfill, at 766 Hunter Drive on the city's east side. Mayor Jeff Schielke appointed a Pollution Control Facility Committee to conduct public hearings and make findings and recommenda-

tions regarding the application. The council approved the mayor's following recommendations: Jodie Wollnik, 1st ward; Charles Beckman, 2nd ward; Cathy Barnard, 3rd ward; Jim Volk, 4th ward; Eldon Frydendall, 5th ward; Mary McCarter 6th ward; and Nancy Vance, 7th ward. City Administrator Bill McGrath

said he expects public hearings to take place in April. The Pollution Control Facility Committee will then rule as to whether Onyx is in line with the city's siting ordinance. Further information is available on the city's Web site: www.cityof-batavia.net, under Ongoing City Projects/Solid Waste Transfer Station.

1-9-04 Daily Herald

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Battle set on transportation impact fees in Kane County

Tri-Cities officials say proposed charges unfair

By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — A battle is brewing over a transportation impact fee Kane County officials have been working to enact for more than two years.

While the fee is on the Jan. 13 County Board agenda, members of the board from the Tri-Cities, as well as the mayors of St. Charles, Geneva and Batavia, say it is unfair to their cities.

Batavia Mayor Jeff Schielke said this week he and Mayors Kevin Burns of Geneva and Sue Klinkhamer of St. Charles will

speak before the board next week to oppose passage of the impact fee ordinance.

Board members representing the Tri-Cities also have said they will oppose the ordinance, although other board members have said privately there still are enough votes to pass it.

The Executive Committee this week voted to put the matter on the agenda, with only two members, Rob McConnaughay, R-Geneva, and Jim Mitchell, R-North Aurora, voting against it.

Schielke said the mayors are against the disparity in the amount developers would be charged in the Tri-Cities, as opposed to other towns. The fee schedule was developed using eight areas: Aurora, Egin, Camp-ton Hills, Northwest, Southwest, the Tri-Cities, West Central and

the Upper Fox.

The fees in the Tri-Cities are higher across the board in every category than in any other area. Tri-Cities officials are particularly upset over the fees for commercial development, which they said will discourage developers from locating in the Tri-Cities.

For instance, in the commercial retail category, a development of 50,001 to 300,000 square feet would cost \$2,668 in impact fees for every 1,000 square feet in the Tri-Cities. In Aurora, that fee would be \$412 per 1,000 square feet.

That would translate to a fee of between \$133,402 and \$800,400 in the Tri-Cities, and \$20,600 to \$123,600 in Aurora.

"This puts the Tri-Cities at a disadvantage economically with the rest of the county," Schielke said.

Toward the future

He pointed to the area around Kirk and Butterfield roads, where Aurora and Batavia meet. A developer looking to build between Wind Energy Pass and Butterfield Road on the Batavia side would pay the higher fee. That developer could move a matter of feet from that site to the Aurora side and pay less.

"The fees are as high as three and four times as much, literally, from property across the street," Schielke said.

Kane County Board member Bill Wyatt, R-Aurora, Transportation Committee chairman, said the reason the Tri-Cities have higher fees is because the Tri-Cities have more key county roads than any other area, including Kirk Road, Randall Road and Fabyan Parkway. The Aurora area has hardly any county roads, Wyatt

said. But Schielke said, in the Kirk-Butterfield example, it is reasonable to assume that Aurora development contributes as much to traffic on Kirk as Batavia.

Kane County officials have been working to develop the impact fee ordinance since July 2001. The fees must be defended, which is why the county hired CH2M Hill of Chicago to develop the formula that created the fee structure.

Officials have estimated the fee structure would bring in an estimated \$27 million over the next nine years, although that is based on an estimate of current planned road projects.

A county survey of proposed road projects showed about 57 projects worth about \$424 million would be eligible for impact fee funds.

The projects cover a period from 2004 to 2013. If all 57 were done, the

county would pay an estimated \$178 million of the \$424 million cost, with the rest coming from state and federal sources.

In most cases, that local amount is necessary to match the state and federal money. Without it, the county would have no funding for any given project.

The comprehensive plan identifies \$127.24 million of projects during the next nine years in the Tri-Cities region, the most among any of the regions.

While Wyatt acknowledged the disparity in the fees, he said the fees are "proven," and the formula is fair. He called the fees a way of making developers pay for the impact they create instead of putting it all on the taxpayers.

"It's either the developers or the taxpayers," he said. "This is a first step toward looking for the future."

Cities' case against ComEd appears headed for settlement

Process could take several months to wind through court

By Colt Foutz
STAFF WRITER

NAPERVILLE — ComEd could be ready to settle with five cities seeking relief from proposed electrical rate hikes.

In December, lawyers from the cities of Naperville, St. Charles, Batavia, Geneva and Rochelle and the Illinois Municipal Electric Agency met with ComEd officials at the Washington, D.C., headquarters of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

At the meeting, ComEd avoided litigation by settling several other rate cases, and announced its intention to cooperate with the cities, according to Allan Poole, director of public utilities for Naperville.

ComEd filed for a two-stage increase to its electrical transmission rates last year. If the rate hikes are approved, the cities and IMEA members could pay 192 percent more each year to ComEd for electricity transmission.

The cities don't dispute ComEd's right to file for an increase. The energy company has improved or rebuilt many of its power lines and

towers, Poole said, and is entitled to a return on its investment.

The cities, however, seek an explanation of how the increase was calculated and why it is warranted.

In Naperville, for example, the city's annual electricity costs are about \$60 million, Poole said. Although the city's contract bundles all individual power costs, about \$2 million of the bill is for transmission, he said. That figure could balloon to \$3.8 million annually with ComEd's rate hikes, he said.

St. Charles and Batavia pay about \$480,000 per year in transmission fees, according to Glynn Amburgey, superintendent of electric for St. Charles.

Amburgey is not sure whether the rate hike would mean an increase of 200 percent or 35 percent to that charge. There are seven parts to the St. Charles transmission bill. Amburgey said he thinks the rate hike affects two of those line items, but he's not sure. ComEd's explanation of the proposed increase is ambiguous, he said.

"In the ComEd filing, it's very difficult for us to actually judge the total impact on our costs," Amburgey said. "We need to see the numbers. We need to understand why the increase is required, what is needed and if, in fact, it's justifiable."

Not all the cities would be affected by a rate hike in the same way, or at the same time.

Naperville's fixed-rate contract with ComEd expires in 2007. It would not be hit by the increases until then.

Geneva's contract with Wisconsin Electric Power ends in 2005, Amburgey said. Batavia and St. Charles would begin paying the extra fees this year, he said, as soon as the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission is through with the case.

"Our concerns are all the same," he said. "The only difference is that St. Charles and Batavia have immediate concerns."

In the fall, the cities and the agency agreed to share the legal cost to protest the rate hikes. Naperville has pledged a maximum of \$31,067 to the fight, or one-third of the cost for a hearing with witnesses and expert testimony.

The IMEA is covering another third. Batavia, St. Charles, Geneva and Rochelle will pay the rest. Each group has sent its own lawyer, Poole said.

The next step is for the cities and the agency to submit their views about the issue and a list of questions for ComEd. The federal commission is compiling that information, which will be presented to ComEd by Saturday, Poole

"Our concerns are all the same. The only difference is that St. Charles and

Batavia have immediate concerns."

Allan Poole

Director of public utilities
for Naperville

said.

The next meeting is scheduled for the second week of February, when the parties could decide to pursue negotiations.

Poole and Amburgey said the process could take several more months, with a settlement late this year.

If a settlement is not reached, the commission could hand the matter to an administrative judge. The judge could decide the hikes are justified or ask ComEd to lessen the impact on the cities.

"At that point, I think, we would accept what the FERC's decision was," Poole said. "If it goes to expert-witness testimony, we would take a final order and we'd all have to live by the final order."

Elburn seeks boundary agreement

Village has no formal agreement with neighbors

By DAN CHANZIT
Kane County Chronicle

ELBURN — Village officials hope to work on formal boundary agreements with their neighbors this year to aid land-use planning.

The concept might seem premature, especially because most rural towns west of Randall Road essentially are surrounded by farmland.

In fact, most of rural western Kane County is listed as agricultural by county land-use maps. But with farmland falling to suburban sprawl, Elburn wants to make sure everyone is on the same page.

"Make no mistake, the area between us is completely and wholly in the county's agriculture preservation zone," Village President James Willey said. "But we think it is time."

Elburn has no formal agreements with its neighbors, some of which might see explosive growth, according to 2030 population projections by the Northern Illinois Planning Commission.

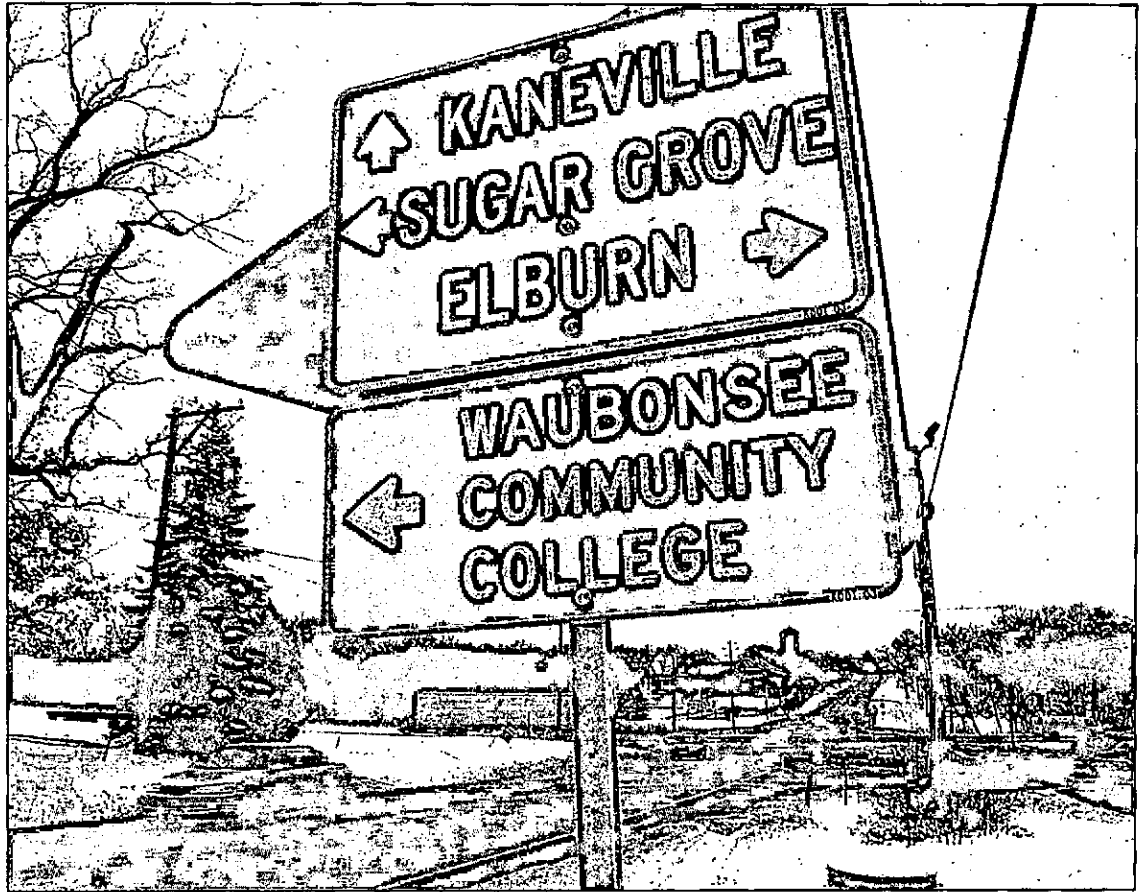
NIPC estimates that Sugar Grove will grow to 63,889 by 2030 from 3,909 residents in 2000. Elburn is expected to jump to 21,126 residents by 2030 from 2,756 residents in 2000.

The reason for the disparity between the projected populations is a difference in growth philosophies.

Sugar Grove wants to expand. Elburn wants to build "inside the box," which refers to the stretches of creeks and wetlands that surround the village.

Welch Creek forms the southern and western part of that box. Blackberry Creek is to the east and south. The Virgil Drainage Ditch is to the north.

Elburn officials hope that



Robert Barcroft — Chronicle photo staff

Motorists pass through the intersection of Route 47 and Main Street near Elburn and Sugar Grove in rural Kane County. Elburn wants to establish boundary agreements with surrounding communities.

other municipalities will adopt similar growth philosophies and tend their own yards before getting too close to their neighbors.

Sam Santell, the county's development director, applauded Elburn's interest in boundary agreements.

"Agreements allow them to know where their future growth is going to be," Santell said. "If you have an idea of how far you'll grow, you'll be able to plan for the future."

Two dozen agreements exist around the county be-

tween various municipalities. A pact between St. Charles and Geneva has been around for 20 years, he said.

Aurora has an agreement with Sugar Grove and Montgomery, which Santell said helps Aurora concentrate on improving established neighborhoods and revitalizing its downtown.

A Gilberts-Carpentersville pact also includes land-use plans.

"It's not only a boundary agreement, but they are locked into land uses, too,"

Santell said. "It makes it so a developer can't play the cities off of each other."

Far away neighbors

Elburn's situation is somewhat different. Most of its neighbors are more than five miles away.

The nearest potential neighbor is La Fox, an unincorporated settlement to the east. A group of residents has developed a land-use map and seeks to incorporate. Harley Road is the proposed western border, which is about a mile

east of Elburn.

"I've seen a La Fox concept plan, so there is one out there," Willey said.

Lily Lake is about five miles north on Route 47. Virgil is a few miles west of Lily Lake on Route 64. Elburn does not have agreements with either.

In the last year, Sugar Grove officials have asked to work on a boundary agreement. The growing village is about 10 miles south of Elburn on Route 47.

See ELBURN, page 6

Population projections

	2000	2030
Elmhurst	452	14,449
Elburn	2,756	21,126
Montgomery	2,900	20,393
Sugar Grove	3,909	63,889

Source: Northern Illinois Planning Commission

Elburn

Continued from page 1

Interstate 88 is about halfway between the villages, and Willey has suggested that boundary be somewhere near the highway.

"Somewhere north of I-88 realistic," said Brent Eichelberger, Sugar Grove's village administrator.

"We've had some informal discussions. The intersection of I-88 and Route 47 is a prime opportunity for some mixed use development, so we want to get up to the interchange."

Sugar Grove has boundary agreements with Aurora, North Aurora, Yorkville and Montgomery. The village is seeking agreements with Elburn, Big Rock, Plano and Batavia, Eichelberger said.

"When the pressure of de-

velopment isn't there, it's difficult to make boundary agreements a priority," he said.

"We think it's a good idea to start now."

Maple Park is about five miles west of Elburn, and the village governments have agreed to stay on



Willey

their sides of Meredith Road.

"There is no formal position," Willey said. "But, Meredith is on the eastern boundary of their comprehensive plan."

Still, Willey suggests that the village seek a formal boundary agreement.

"Sometimes it's good to say something like, 'You stay west of Meredith and we'll stay to the east,'" he said.

2004 Red Cross Hometown Heroes nominees

David Anderson, Elburn
For his generosity, humanitarianism and volunteer efforts on behalf of Delnor-Community Hospital, Kaneland Schools, Elburn Lions Club and the community-at-large

John Arthur Anderson, St. Charles
For securing expanded physical facilities and programming opportunities to meet the needs of local residents served by the Tri-Cities Corps of the Salvation Army

Jodie Averaino, Batavia Fire Department

Kurt Baum, Batavia Fire Department
For going above and beyond the call of duty in all aspects of their work as firefighters for Batavia

Bruno Bartozek, Aurora
For his volunteer work in adult literacy, as a translator, and for his community service with the Boy Scouts of America and numerous other social service organizations

Warren Beeh, physician, Geneva
For sacrificing a week of summer vacation to conduct a special medical mission to Bolivia

Judy Birkner, Geneva
For her tireless volunteer, lobbying and educational efforts on behalf of improving the quality of life for developmentally disabled and handicapped individuals

Evan Carr, Batavia, second-grader
For sacrificing his birthday gifts to raise money to purchase a sun oven for a needy family in rural Haiti

John Carr, Batavia
For his hard work, leadership and dedication helping fellow veterans and spearheading construction of the Veterans Memorial in his role as superintendent of Veterans Assistance Commission of Kane County Inc.

Soon Ja Choi, physician, Warrenville
For being the driving force behind Messengers of Mercy and bringing hope, healing and faith to people in Egypt, Nicaragua, Guatemala, North Korea, Brazil, India and West Samoa

Thomas G. Collinet, physician, Elburn
For providing medical care to 1,000 Nicaraguan natives during a four-day mission in February 2003 with other professionals and members of the Assembly of God Church

Annie Collins, Batavia
For her drive and enthusiasm in re-invigorating the Batavia Jaycees and spearheading variety of community projects including Jaycees Haunted House and Batavia's Fourth of July Fireworks

A. Collins

Haunted House and Batavia's Fourth of July Fireworks

Steve Collins, Deputy, Kane County Sheriff's Office
For quick thinking and heroic actions to extinguish car fire resulting from a rollover accident that trapped two passengers who subsequently survived

Kevin Conrad, St. Charles
For mentoring local youth by giving up his vacations to run summer basketball camps and serving on the board of directors for St. Charles Basketball Organizations



Conrad

Fred Dornback, Elburn
For being a "service-oriented" individual who volunteers for the Red Cross and Delnor-Community Hospital, assists disaster victims across the country and is known for always "being there" to help neighbors in need back home

Shayne Dwyer, St. Charles, fourth-grader
For his "gift of love" to sick children through participation in the Locks of Love program to provide human hair wigs for children who lose their hair due to illness

Annie Fink, St. Charles
For her selfless volunteer work on behalf of Lazarus House and St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Staff Sgt. Jacob L. Frazier and his parents, St. Charles
For establishing a memorial to benefit Glenwood School students in memory of Jacob, who was killed in action in Afghanistan



J. Frazier

Joe Frega, Lieutenant, Geneva Police Department
For 25 years of service as a local law enforcement professional, FBI trainer and scouting/service club/community volunteer

Becky Hoffrage, St. Charles and Susan Sherwood, Wayne
For their heroic four-day, four-night search to return a 5-month-old "runaway" puppy to its owners

Dr. Stephen Holtsford, St. Charles
For his tireless work as medical director of Southern Fox Valley Emergency Medical Services as well as on behalf of Tri-City Health Partnership, Sierra Club, Amnesty International and Campton Township Open Space Committee

Hal Honeyman, St. Charles
For founding Creative Mobility and Project Mobility to provide adapted cycling equipment and opportunities for disabled individuals

John L. Hoschelt, St. Charles
For his visionary leadership in forwarding the mission of the Forest Preserve District of Kane County, including acquiring, preserving and developing open lands



Hoschelt

Jerome Johnson and the Johnson Family, La Fox
For dedicating their lives and personal resources (financial and otherwise) to preserving open space, as well as the history of farming in Kane County

Gloria Klimek, St. Charles
For her service on the St. Charles Park Board and leadership role in securing new natural areas, expanding district programming and restoring native plants at park district properties

Scott Larson, Kane County State's Attorney's Office
For his dedication and professionalism in protecting the victims of elder and disabled abuse in the Fox Valley

Pang-Hsung Lu, physician, St. Charles
For providing excellent service to those in need of pain management, often without charging them when the need arises

Karen L. Maloney, physician, St. Charles
For humanitarian work in the Ukraine, as well as her involvement in "A Light to the Nation," a host program for Ukraine orphans in the United States, and "Docs on the Block," a mobile medical unit for the homeless

Kevin McKiness, St. Charles
For rescuing a dying kitten and nursing it back to health using his own money, time and effort

Bob Miller, St. Charles



Miller

For a lifetime of volunteerism and philanthropy to benefit countless local causes/charities including Glenwood School, Northwestern Hospital, Chicago Baseball Cancer Charities, Special Olympics, Norris Cultural Arts Center, Ronald McDonald House and others

Cynthia Morales-Vasquez, St. Charles, high school freshman
For maturity, strength and leadership in providing morning announcements in Spanish to assist English as a Second Language students

Jon Olson, Elgin
For establishing St. Charles Learning Community, an alumni and professional association devoted to social and professional needs of former employees of Arthur Andersen

Bruce Parks, St. Charles
For risking personal injury to provide aid to the victims of a rollover accident involving a minivan accident at Route 31 and Illinois Street in St. Charles

Harry Patterson, North Aurora
For his leadership role and countless hours of service, counsel and physical labor as chairman of The North Aurora Beautification Committee



Patterson

Sgt. Pat Perez, Kane County Sheriff's Office
For his distinguished service as a law enforcement professional and mentor to local youth through Aurora Super Stars Football League, which he founded and still runs and by serving as a volunteer coach for the Kaneland School District



Perez

St. Charles Drill Team, St. Charles East and North High Schools
For a decade of raising funds (\$33,500 this year) to benefit the American Cancer Society's annual Relay for Life

Jeremy Schlepsiek, St. Charles
For identifying and helping police pursue a suspicious vehicle, apprehend criminals and recover

thousands of dollars in stolen goods

Tim Schmitz, Batavia
For his dedication and professionalism as a firefighter, firefighter trainer and Illinois state representative



Schmitz

Chief Alan Schullo, St. Charles Fire Department
For helping the city enter a new arena of fire service dedicated to exceeding customer expectations, improving operations and providing cutting-edge equipment, programming and services



Schullo

Susan Sherwood, Wayne and Becky Hoffrage, St. Charles
For their heroic four-day, four-night search to return a five-month-old "runaway" puppy to its owners

Wayne R. Stevens, Batavia
For providing exemplary Emergency Medical Services to his community for more than 30 years and thereby saving numerous lives either directly or indirectly

Kate Sunleaf, St. Charles, high school junior
For her dedication, fund-raising efforts and service on the board of directors to benefit Lazarus House

Spc. Stephen D. Tawell, St. Charles
For his commitment to protecting American interests and recently serving eight months in Iraq as a member of the U.S. Army

Trish Utlich, registered nurse, Geneva
For her expert, professional and compassionate care of Alzheimer patients and their families

Charles "Chic" Williams
For his dedication and volunteer efforts on behalf of Geneva's Community Intervention Program and Kane County Drug Rehabilitation Court, as well as many other youth-oriented programs and organizations

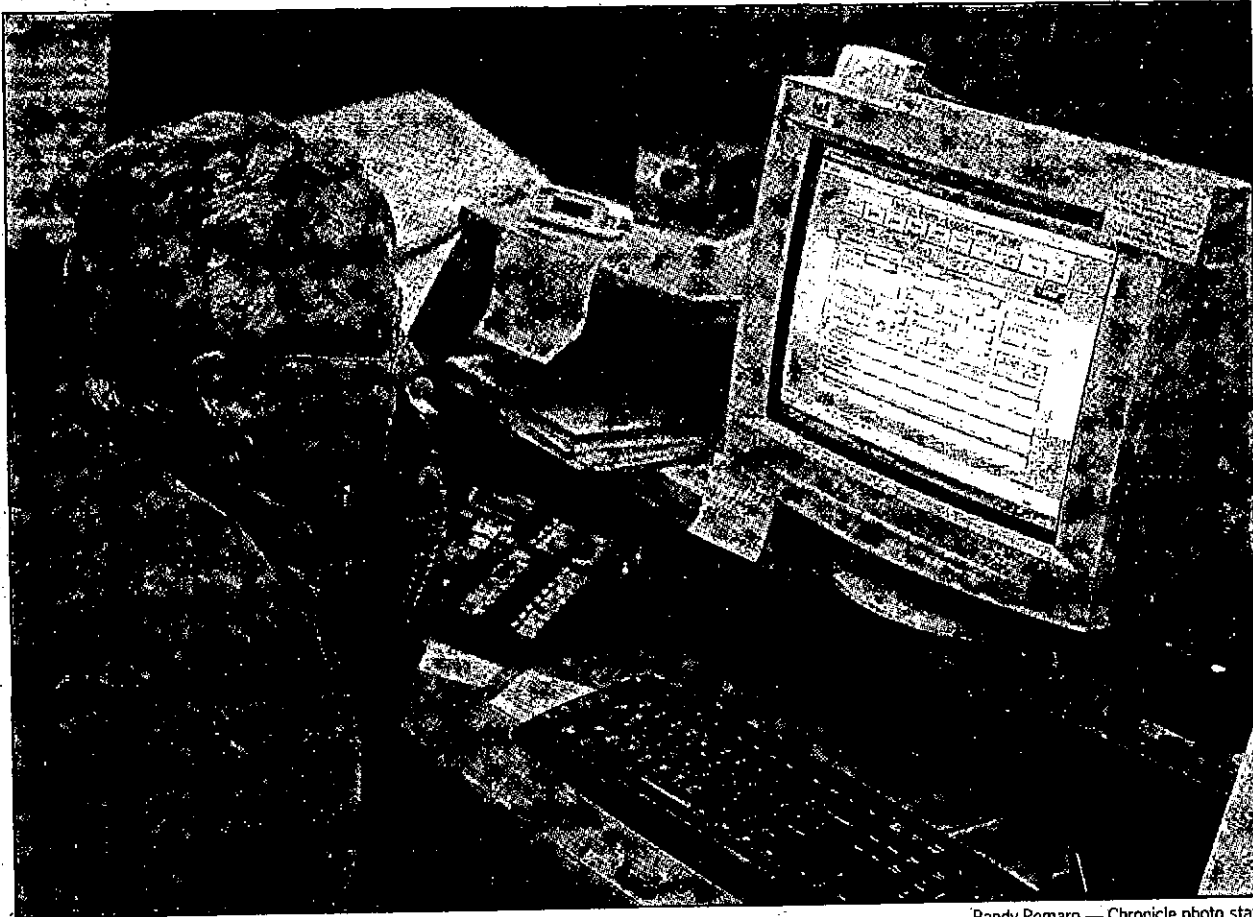
Phil Zavitz, St. Charles
For his lifelong dedication and accomplishments rescuing animals both here and abroad



Zavitz

1-9-04 Chronicle

A call for help



Randy Pomaro — Chronicle photo staff

Suicide Prevention Services volunteers work with callers who are depressed and suicidal. Senior citizens often call and have problems because they are lonely.

Seniors in need of more services

Who to call

- **TriCity Family Services,** Geneva (630) 232-1070
- **Fox Valley Hospice,** Geneva (630) 232-2233
- **Ecker Center for Mental Health,** Elgin (847) 695-0484
- **Association for Individual Development Crisis Line of Fox Valley,** Aurora (630) 482-9393
- **Senior Services Associates** (847) 741-0404
- **Suicide Prevention Services Depression Hot Line** 24-hours, 365 days a year (630) 482-9696

Survey: 5 percent of county's elderly have attempted suicide

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — More mental health services are needed to help senior citizens cope with feelings of isolation and loss that come with growing older, experts say.

A survey of senior citizens commissioned by the Kane County Health Department revealed that 8 percent of those questioned had contemplated

suicide and 5 percent actually attempted suicide, numbers that indicate a gap in services.

"Dwindling funding for mental health has affected that area," said Uche Onwuto, chief epidemiologist with the health department. "They have a lot of need in that area."

Senior citizens can face a number of concerns, such as the loss of friends and loved ones, a feeling of isolation and dwindling physical health. Worse, our society does not value the elderly as other cultures do, said Stephanie Weber, executive director of Suicide Prevention Services.

"It's a segment of society that we ignore," Weber said.

See SENIORS, page 2

Seniors: Suicide prevention is priority

Continued from page 1

Each individual is different, meaning that their motivations for contemplating suicide are different, she said.

Generally, it is the feeling of great losses over time that can become overwhelming, she said.

Statistics for suicide attempts are practically nonexistent, according to the National Institute for Mental Health.

Numbers show that white men over age 85 have the highest suicide rate of all age groups at 54 per 100,000, compared to 7.9 per 100,000 for teenagers age 15 to 19, and 12 per 100,000 for those 20 to 24.

While statistics for attempts are lacking, experts agree that there is anywhere between eight and 25 attempts for each suicide death.

The elderly typically avoid seeking help in the area of mental health because of a perceived stigma, said Bette Schoenholtz, executive director of Senior Services Associates.

"Traditionally, seniors are reluctant to use mental health services," Schoenholtz said. "That's part of the aging problem."

Complicating matters is

A growing problem

Numbers show that white men over age 85 have the highest suicide rate of all age groups at 54 per 100,000, compared to 7.9 per 100,000 for teenagers age 15 to 19, and 12 per 100,000 for those 20 to 24.

For information on volunteering for Suicide Prevention Services, call (630) 482-9699.

the lack of mobility that might require home visits by a psychologist instead of traveling to an office, she said.

"There is a very limited number of trained geriatric psychologists," she said.

Jaye Nichols, clinical social worker with TriCity Family Services, said the warning signs include a disruption of sleep or eating habits, a loss of interest in life and giving personal items away.

The presence of a weapon in the home, particularly for a man, can be a warning sign, she said.

Nichols suggested professional help if any of these signs are noticed.

The health department

planned to conduct the survey for its own purposes. But the study is being dovetailed into a proposal to put a referendum on the fall ballot that would raise money for more senior services.

The question would ask voters to approve a 2.5-cent tax increase, which, if approved would cost the owner of a \$250,000 house about \$20 a year. The tax would raise \$2.4 million a year.

Onwuto, a member of the Kane County Suicide Task Force, said senior suicide will be one of the group's top priorities in 2004.

Because of a general reluctance on the part of seniors to seek help, the task force will be training members of the clergy to recognize and deal with potential suicides, she said.

The county's survey indicated that many seniors are not aware of the few services that exist, Schoenholtz said.

"They definitely need to know where to get help," Schoenholtz said.

Weber said Suicide Prevention Services always is seeking volunteers to man the hot lines.

For information to volunteer, call (630) 482-9699.

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ERIC MAXEN / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Vice President Doug Fulton (from left), of Aurora; President Kurt Kojzarek, of Elgin, and technology administrator Brandon Yaniz, of Elgin, leaders of the Kane County Young Republicans organization, chat in Yaniz's downtown Elgin business office. The group has about 50 members and hopes to expand to 200 in the coming year.

They're young, they're involved — and they know their politics

By Daniel Duggan
STAFF WRITER

A handful of young Kane County political buffs are trying to make the political world safe for the under-40 crowd.

With the war in Iraq evoking strong emotions on both sides, an upcoming presidential election and some important local races, both Republicans and Democrats in the area are looking at programs geared toward young people.

Two months ago, the Kane County chapter of the Young Republicans announced it is now functioning again after two years of inactivity. In addition, an Aurora man has been considering starting a chapter of the Young Democrats.

Chapter president of the Young Republicans, Kurt Kojzarek, 24, of Elgin, said it's time to have a local program for young people.

"The party is getting older; the members are getting older; it's time we have something for younger people," he said.

According to Kojzarek, too many young people feel disenfranchised by the political system. But, he said, the Republican Party can reach out to them and give them a voice if they participate.

Following his graduation from college and a return to Elgin, where he lives and works as a

policy analyst for the Illinois House GOP, Kojzarek wanted to be involved with a local chapter of the Young Republicans. After learning the previous organization had been dormant for two years, Kojzarek — along with Doug Fulton, of Aurora; Jeff Meyer, of Elgin, and Anthony Cvek, of Batavia — decided to take out a charter for a new group in November.

Since then, they have organized a toy drive and volunteered with the Northern Illinois Food Bank to prepare holiday meals, along with holding regular meetings.

"Young" for the purposes of politics ranges from 18 to 40 years old, and Kojzarek said about 50 area residents have become members — including State Rep. Tim Schmitz, R-Batavia.

Reaching out

It may take more than rhetoric to reach out to people, however.

Kojzarek said one goal is to help people get more involved. The Young Republicans have been holding meetings and forums to give people a chance to debate politics, and meet political figures and others.

To make things more relaxed, he said, some of the meetings are socially oriented gatherings at local bars.

'Having young people involved will invigorate the party and invigorate the older Democrats.'

Brian Pollock of Aurora, who hopes to start a Kane County Young Democrats group

'The party is getting older; the members are getting older; it's time we have something for younger people.'

Kurt Kojzarek of Elgin, president of the Kane County Young Republicans

POLITICS

From page A1

There are also plans for a high-end Web site, said Brandon Yaniz, 24, who runs the organization's current Web site and owns his own technology business.

Yaniz said the group's Web site will play a large role, giving information for members but also having regularly-updated content, such as book reviews written by members.

When local campaigns start to heat up, the group will also work as a campaign arm for candidates who need support. Kojzarek said they will "do whatever we need to" when it comes to helping out, including handing out literature, staffing phone banks and holding forums for candidates.

Democrat group possible

The prospect of a Kane County Young Democrats group has some interest but is still under discussion said Brian Pollock, a 26-year-old Aurora resident.

Pollock said he hopes to pull the group together by the summer or, at least, before the 2004 general election in November. But in working on local, state and federal cam-

paings, he said time may be an issue.

"We're all trying to do 60 things at once right now," he said.

Having a group of some kind is important, said Pollock, based on the interest in the area.

"This is going to be an important election year," he said. "Having young people involved will invigorate the party and invigorate the older Democrats."


Despite efforts to bring more young people into a political party, recent polls indicate the 18-to-29-year-old crowd is most likely to be "independent" and not part of either party.

A November Gallup Poll showed nearly half — 45 percent — of young adults say they are politically independent. Of those who identify with a party, 30 percent say they are Republican while 34 percent say they are Democratic.


While Pollock and Kojzarek will never agree on who should be president or whether tax cuts are a good idea, they both agree that taking steps to reach out to young people is important — and could also mean more votes for their parties.

"When you're old enough to vote, you have a voice," Pollock said. "We can all sit back and whine about things, but it's time to do something."


1-12-04 Beacon News
Coroner's office gets free upgrade

 The Kane County coroner's office will be the testing center for a new database that might become the standard for coroners across the country, and taxpayers will get this benefit at no cost so the company can market it elsewhere. The originating company will pay for equipment, setup and training. With the system, the coroner's personnel will have to enter data only once to create any of the 22 forms issued by the office. This arrangement rates a **THUMBS UP** from county staff, residents and taxpayers alike.

Conservation work moves ahead

 When the state committed \$1.9 million in grants through the Conservation 2000 Ecosystems program, two local organizations submitted successful applications. **THUMBS UP** to the Kane County Forest Preserve District, which will receive \$50,000 for the restoration and education programs at Nelson Lake Marsh, and the Conservation Foundation, which will receive \$26,250 for restoration of the Lake Renwick East Habitat near Plainfield, home to the endangered black-crowned night heron as well as several other magnificent bird species.

Picture heritage in free calendar

 A good chunk of the funds Kane County receives from a tax on profits of the Grand Victoria Riverboat Casino in Elgin goes to historic preservation. Now Kane County residents can see where some of those funds have gone in the 2004 Historic Preservation Calendar, available free at nine locations. Your photo tour will include the Batavia Depot Museum, Fox River Trolley Museum in South Elgin, Bliss House in Sugar Grove and the Mongerson Farm, adjacent to Garfield Farm. The views are great, the price is right. **THUMBS UP** to all concerned.

1-10-04 Daily Herald
Comment sought
on county roads plan

Kane County is developing the county's 2030 transportation plan.

A series of public forums were held in each of the eight planning partnership areas to review the planning process, the socioeconomic forecasts and discuss existing transportation system deficiencies and concerns. Now, a public meeting and a second series of forums will be held in January and February to introduce the initial 2030 modeling results and discuss future system deficiencies and the first set of alternatives to address them.

The public meeting will be from 4 to 7 p.m. Jan. 28 at the Kane County Government Center, 719 Batavia Ave., Geneva. Planning partnership area forums meet at 10 a.m.:

- Jan. 30 at the Randall Oaks Golf Club, 37W361 Binnie Road, West Dundee
 - Feb. 3 at the North Aurora Public Library, 113 Oak St.
 - Feb. 9 at the Batavia Public Library, 10 S. Batavia Ave.
 - Feb. 11 at Elgin Community College's Business Conference Center, Room 123, 1700 Spartan Drive, Elgin.
 - Feb. 18 at the Campton Community Center, 5N082 Old LaFox Road, St. Charles.
 - Feb. 19 at the Town and Country Public Library, 320 E. North St., Elburn.
 - Feb. 23 at the Hundley village hall, 11704 Coral St.
- The final forum is at 1 p.m. Feb. 25 at Waubensee Community College, Bodie Hall, Room 150, Waubensee Drive at Route 47, Sugar Grove.
- The purpose of the 2030 transportation plan is to determine major transportation projects, guide transportation decisions and identify resources to implement transportation projects.
- The county is seeking public comment throughout the development process, and offers information at www.co.kane.il.us/dot. The county expects to complete a draft of the plan in March and bring the plan to the board for adoption in the summer. For information, call (630) 406-7308.

When mom or dad are in court, kids now have fun place that they can go

Playing the waiting game at Kane County court has become downright fun—for kids, anyway.

Now, instead of sitting quietly in a courtroom or wandering aimlessly down a hallway, children who are potty trained and younger than 12 can safely wait in a secure room filled with toys, games and books.

As many as 20 children at a time will be allowed in the facility, which opened Monday on the lower level of the Kane County Judicial Center at Illinois Highway 38 and Peck Road in St. Charles. Parents themselves will not enter the waiting room, but they probably won't be missed once the children are inside.

One wall is decorated with a hand-painted mural depicting "Candy Land meets Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood," as artist Ian Quisenberry called it.

Parents will not have to pay for the service.

"It will be much more pleasant for everyone," said Lisa Nyuli, chair of the Kane County Bar Foundation committee that oversaw the project and who practices family law in Elgin.

Kane buys tract from Andersen

Forest preserve acquires 53 acres

By William Presecky
Tribune staff reporter

The Kane County Forest Preserve District has struck a \$7.5 million deal with Arthur Andersen LLP to acquire more than 53 wooded acres of the sprawling training center it owns in St. Charles.

District President John Hoscheit (R-St. Charles) said Friday the deal to buy nearly 40 percent of the firm's 144-acre residential training center on the Fox River became final this week.

In addition to a large block

of undeveloped woodland at the north end of the Andersen property, on the east side of the Fox River along Illinois Highway 25, the district also acquired an approximately 2,100-foot strip of riverfront land that runs north and south the entire length of the campus property.

A long-term, no-cost license agreement the district had with Arthur Andersen, which it could have canceled with a year's notice, allowed the riverfront strip to be used as public right of way for the Fox River Trail. The recreational trail runs the length of Kane County for about 30 miles and extends into adjacent McHenry and Kendall Counties.

The portions of the trail parcel is set for Tuesday.

that run through the Andersen campus and an adjacent residential parcel, which the district is moving to condemn, were the only ones for its entire length that were not publicly owned, Hoscheit said.

The nearly 1-acre residential parcel is virtually surrounded by the training center property. Lengthy, sometimes contentious, negotiations with the family that owns the riverfront home—stead, known as Foxpatch, appear to have reached an impasse, according to Hoscheit. A vote by the Forest Preserve Commission on the Executive Committee's recommendation to condemn the entire parcel is set for Tuesday.

County's impact fee draws fire

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

The county's proposed impact fee has drawn fire from the Tri-Cities mayors and the Tri-Cities representatives on the county board.

Critics say the fee is unfair because the cost of development in some areas is greater than others.

The highest fees would be charged to developments in the Tri-Cities, the county's thinking goes, because that's where there are the most county roads.

Kirk and Randall roads and Fabyan Parkway are the three main county highways and consume the greatest amount of the county's transportation money.

The county argues that the money collected from the fees must be spent in the area where it was collected. In other words, developers would pay the most in the Tri-Cities, but the Tri-Cities then would receive the most benefit from the fee.

The mayors point out that commercial development will flock to those areas where the impact fee will be lower. On Kirk Road, that means a strip mall could locate a few hundred feet south of Wind Energy Pass, and pay hundreds of thousands of dollars less because it would be in Aurora, not Batavia.

The county board is scheduled to vote on the measure Tuesday, although don't hold your breath.

This is an election year, and the county board is notoriously shy about taking on controversial projects. A betting man (or woman) might suggest that one of the board members will conveniently find something confusing and will move to send it back to committee.

A news story about indigent persons who die and did not have the family or the resources for burial spurred a man to come forward and personally donate \$200 in cash to a county burial fund.

He told the workers at the coroner's office that his family had endured a similar dilemma and he wanted to help out.

The Office of Emergency Management has been busy, and in fact, 2003 was its busiest ever.

Last year the office responded to 138 incidents, up from 86 the year before, an increase of 63 percent.

OEM volunteers donated 7,045 man-hours last year. Director Donald Bryant has 35 volunteers who are on-call 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Also, Kane is the first county in Illinois to adopt a hazard mitigation plan, which will enable the county to be eligible for federal funding to prevent damages commonly associated with natural disasters.

Kane County Notebook

Former deputies plead guilty

Two will avoid jail time for misconduct charge

BY PATRICK WALDRON

Daily Herald Staff Writer

Two former Kane County sheriff's deputies pleaded guilty to attempted misconduct Friday in a deal that will allow them to avoid jail time and more serious felony misconduct charges.

Michael Eurkaitis, 32, of Plainfield, and Brandon Dahlke, 27, of Montgomery, were charged in connection with an Oct. 5, 2002, incident where investigators say the men stole a rifle and a police scanner from an Aurora Township home while serving an arrest warrant.

Kane County sheriff's officials said the former deputies violated procedures by not inventorying the items. The rifle was later found at Dahlke's home. The scanner was found inside Eurkaitis' home.

The incident resulted in the men being fired from their jobs in May 2003 and later indicted on four counts of misconduct and one count of possession of a stolen gun.

The plea bargain was reached before a scheduled court hearing Friday when both men agreed to the deal. Attempted official misconduct is a class A misdemeanor.

Assistant Attorney General Robert Huiner, who prosecuted the former deputies, said

See **GUILTY** on PAGE 7

Guilty: Both maintain their innocence, lawyers say

Continued from Page 1

despite the lesser charges, the end result did represent justice.

"We feel this is an (outcome) that is fair to them and the county," Huiner said.

Having already lost their jobs and now each receiving a \$500

fine plus one year on probation, Huiner said the men got a far greater punishment than a similar theft charge would have brought to a civilian defendant.

Defense attorneys for Dahlke and Eurkaitis said both men maintained their innocence, but wanted to bring the case to

an end.

"In light of all the circumstances, he thought this was the best course of action for him," said Kathleen Colton, who represented Dahlke.

"You never know what a jury is going to do," Van Richards, the attorney

representing Eurkaitis, said his client was not happy with the guilty plea but acknowledged that Dahlke's decision to accept it was a factor in Eurkaitis' decision.

The prospect of Dahlke testifying against Eurkaitis in a future trial was part of that.

Patrick Waldron 4/20/04 40-01-1

Plan Commission rejects zoning at Orchard-Galena

■ Unanimous denial: Aurora Community Church hits setback

By Dave Parro
STAFF WRITER

AURORA — Continuing five years of frustration for Aurora Community Church, the Plan Commission this week denied a rezoning request that would allow the church to sell its disputed land on the West Side to a commercial developer.

Also this week, the Planning Commission denied a petition to turn the vacant Kmart building on North Lake Street into a flea market.

Both votes were unanimous, and the requests will now move on to the City Council for final consideration.

Commissioners rejected the rezoning request from Aurora Community Church for 9.8 acres at the southwest corner of Orchard Road and Galena Boulevard. The commission said the current residential zoning is more appropriate given the surrounding land uses.

Aurora's planning staff is opposed to commercial zoning, favoring instead low-density residential or open space at the corner, said Community Development Director Bill Wiet.

The vote continues a series of setbacks for the church that date back to 1999, when residents from the surrounding subdivisions opposed special-use zoning that would have allowed the construction of a new church and private school. The City Council approved the proposal despite those protests, but the church later abandoned its plans because of further obstacles.

Aurora Community Church once owned about 30 acres but sold two-

thirds of it to the city for storm-water management. The church hoped to get more land in a swap with the city in 2000, but that fell through when residents on Hanks Road objected to the church and school. Kane County also denied access off Orchard Road.

"I think if all the energy that has gone into opposing us over the years had gone into making our original proposal acceptable, we'd have a church and school on that corner today," said the Rev. Dan Haas.

The church had commercial development plans for the land in 2001 for a pharmacy and other businesses, but Kane County filed a condemnation lawsuit, seeking the land for storm-water management. The lawsuit was settled in December when the county obtained 0.7 acres for a right-turn lane from Galena on to Orchard, allowing the rezoning request to again move forward.

Haas said he disagrees that residential is a more appropriate use for the land and is hopeful the City Council will be more receptive to commercial development.

"We have never had any residential development express an interest in this property," Haas said. "I think it has something to do with it sitting on the intersection of two four-lane highways."

The Planning Commission also denied special-use zoning for a flea market in the 1200 block of North Lake Street after nearby businesses objected. Plans called for a market with 116 tenants who would sell new goods in the Aurora Commons plaza.

Wiet said tenants in the strip mall opposed the flea market because it would give people who rent a booth an unfair economic advantage over businesses that have high rent and overhead costs. Access off Lake Street was also a concern because of the projected traffic the market would draw.

1-11-04 Beacon news

Kane Forest Preserve buys river trail land north of St. Charles

By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — The Kane County Forest Preserve District has purchased more of the Fox River Trail north of St. Charles. Officials announced Friday

they closed on the 50-acre Arthur Andersen property, which includes about 1,200 feet of the bike trail along the river.

The preserve has had a license on the property for years from Arthur Andersen.

The arrangement between the

Forest Preserve District and Arthur Andersen has always been friendly — Andersen basically let the preserve use the bike trail property for free.

But Forest Preserve President John Hoscheit, R-St. Charles, said the district is trying to pre-

serve the integrity of the trail by owning all of it.

"This gives us thousands of feet of trail in an area that's heavily wooded," Hoscheit said.

To facilitate the sale, the Executive Committee approved transferring \$350,000 from the Fox

River Fund to the Land Acquisition Fund.

While the district still has about \$1.3 million in the Land Acquisition Fund, it is saving the money for whatever must be done with the South Batavia Dam project.

STC officials hope to access Geographic Information System

1-12-04 Chronicle

Plan to extend fiber optic lines to receive final consideration

By HEATH HIXSON
Kane County Chronicle

ST. CHARLES — City officials hope the extension of city fiber optic lines to Kane County offices results in gaining access to the county's Geographic Information System.

A plan to extend city fiber optic lines along Route 38 and Prairie Street to the Kane County Justice Center and circuit clerk's office, which would provide a direct link between the two buildings, is expected to receive final consideration by the city council Jan. 19.

A city committee accepted the proposal last week.

If approved, the county would pay for the extension construction and an annual maintenance fee to use the city lines.

But city officials hope the fiber optic relationship also produces a link into the county GIS data bank and computer applications.

Use of the GIS system would help increase the efficiency of city projects that use GIS data, according to Paul Anthony, city information systems network engineer.

"The city is just on the verge of going heavily down that road," he said. "It is just a more convenient and more up-to-date way to use the county's data."

Governmental entities nationwide have been moving toward the use of GIS operations over the last decade because of the amount of data that can be analyzed by

the computer systems.

GIS applications allow for data sets to be layered on top of each other for a more precise analysis and a better understanding of an area.

The St. Charles city government has been in the process of setting up a full-fledged GIS operation and has budgeted for a GIS system coordinator this year as well as a GIS network engineer next year, Anthony said.

Tom Nicoski, county GIS technologies director, said GIS technology is very graphical and "enables you to see the picture" of an area with precise data.

He said the system has helped agencies such as the county health department track the West Nile virus.

"GIS is a tool that allows you to have more efficiency and productivity to do your job," he said.

The county has had a GIS operation in service since 1995, with a full-fledged county department beginning in 1998.

The county uses the system to analyze plots of land and provide GIS information to cities and other governmental entities.

But that information is provided on compact discs and not directly through an Internet link.

With the fiber optic connection, Anthony said he hopes current negotiations with the county will result in the city being able to tap into the GIS system and share data.

Forest preserve committee votes to condemn Gill property

1-10-04 Chronicle

Move clears way for court proceedings

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Another obstacle has been hurdled in a bid to acquire property along the Fox River Trail.

The Kane County Forest Preserve's Executive Committee on Friday voted to condemn the Gill property, a move that cleared

the way for court proceedings to begin after Tuesday's full commission meeting.

The one-acre Gill property has 200 feet of frontage on the Fox River, a bike path along the river and is surrounded by land that the district recently purchased from Arthur Andersen.

Negotiations between the forest preserve and the Gill Family Trust for use of the bike path right of way and purchase of the property have been drawn out and at times rancorous.

"They would rather pad the pockets of lawyers than give the money to the Gill family," Douglas Gill said.

Forest preserve President

John Hoscheit said negotiations between the parties have not been successful.

"We've had discussions, but we haven't come to a resolution," Hoscheit said.

Gill accused the forest preserve of failing to negotiate in good faith. He said the family repeatedly has dropped its asking price, but the district has refused to budge from its offer of \$350,000.

Gill said the family has agreed to sell the property, but as executor of the estate, he cannot approach a real estate agent because of the forest preserve's threat of condemnation.

"Kane County has done

nothing in a manner to resolve this in a peaceful solution," Gill said.

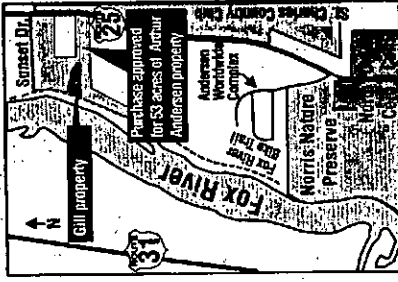
"This is not an issue of forcing them to do something they don't want to do," Hoscheit said, noting that the family has decided to sell the property.

An issue is a 200-foot stretch of the bike path on the Fox River's east side.

The forest preserve had been leasing the Gills' land for \$10 a year since 1987, but the agreement expired in August 2002.

At one point, the family was seeking \$1,500 per month for the use of the bike path.

On Nov. 1, "No trespassing" signs were erected along the bike



Chronicle graphic

path at either side of the property.

Forest preserve officials contend that the Gills shut down the path, while Gill maintained that the signs were intended to keep trespassers off property that was not included in the bike path right of way.

Gill said Friday that he intends to allow bike riders to continue to use the path, even though the lease has expired.

"If Dr. Gill said it's open, then I guess it's open," Hoscheit said.

The forest preserve commission will vote on the resolution to condemn the property Tuesday.

"I expect a suit to be filed soon thereafter," Hoscheit said.

"Our aim:
To fear God,
tell the truth
and make money."

H.C. Paddock
1852-1935

OPINION

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1-11-04 Daily Herald

Focus on real issues of coroner's office

F3

The race for Kane County coroner is becoming mired in paperwork.

The computer printers began working overtime in October just before challenger Stanley Hickrod announced his intention to seek the GOP nomination in the March primary. Hickrod, an East Dundee crematory owner and former Streamwood police officer, filed Freedom of Information Act requests with the coroner's office seeking information on employee qualifications and copies of expense reports. Hickrod contends county-owned vehicles are used improperly and that staff qualifications in the coroner's office are lacking.

Enter incumbent Chuck West, a fellow Republican from Elgin seeking his second term. West has responded to some of Hickrod's requests for information but has denied others, saying the information he seeks is exempt from the law.

The state's Freedom of Information Act establishes the public's right to obtain information from public bodies such as the coroner's office. There are 36 exceptions that allow the public agency to withhold records, such as when a person's right to privacy would clearly be violated.

Our View

Perhaps angered by Hickrod's claims of poor leadership and repeated requests, West shot back with a Freedom of Information Act request of his own recently. West sent a seven-question letter to Hickrod on Dec. 30 demanding that he turn over documents relating to his funeral director's license and operation of his crematorium. The letter was typed on county stationery and sent through the county mail system.

But even West acknowledged last week the law applies only to public bodies, not private businesses or citizens like Hickrod.

There is nothing wrong with asking questions of a candidate, and certainly Hickrod will be asked plenty about his business and credentials by voters and editorial boards prior to the primary. And there also is nothing in the law that says West can't file a Freedom of Information Act request.

But West's use of county stationery, equipment and a postmark on such an obvious political play seems a violation of state election laws. While one

election official called it a gray area, the laws state that no public funds may be used to influence voters for or against any candidate or proposition or for political or campaign purposes. Certainly, a veteran politician like West should have known better.

The coroner candidates — including Republican Bob Tiballi of Elgin and Democrat Robert Moore of Aurora — have plenty of pressing issues to debate without manufacturing new ones. The coroner's office has had to deal with budget constraints and manpower shortages, and demands for service continue to rise beyond the level of surrounding counties. Then there is the matter of public education on issues like drinking and driving, drug use and suicide.

No matter how infuriating his opponent's tactics may be, West cannot use his position or his office for campaign purposes. We suggest he take a refresher course on election laws and the Freedom of Information Act before firing up his office printer next time.

We also urge both candidates to spend less time on these requests and more time discussing ideas to tackle the real issues facing the office.

1-12-03 BEACON NEWS

Township gets chance to vote on Quinn tax proposal

By Brian Shields

SPECIAL TO THE BEACON NEWS

AURORA — Aurora Township residents can expect to see a measure on the March primary ballot asking if they would support a tax on high wage earners to provide more money for schools and property tax relief for the less well-off.

The Township Board unanimously decided to support putting the non-binding referendum question on the ballot, as advocated by Illinois Lt. Gov. Pat Quinn.

Township Supervisor Jim Murphy and Trustee John Aguilar, both Democrats, and Republican Trustees Michelle Whetstone Tom Rosebush and John Shoemaker gave their approval to the referendum question last week after meeting with Quinn political director Jerry Galoway.

The advisory referendum is designed to give state legislators an idea of how much support there would be if the measure were placed on the ballot in the fall general election.

The General Assembly will have until May 2 to decide if it should be a ballot item. To be on the November ballot, 60 percent of both the Senate and House would have to vote in favor.

Quinn, a Democrat, envisions a 3 percent surtax to be charged each year to individuals

Tax forum set tonight

■ State Rep. Joe Dunn, whose district includes the DuPage County portion of Aurora, plans session at Neuqua Valley High School.

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❖ Turn to **QUINN, A2**

Fedlott, Chris Paul, 91, Aurora
Knies, Pete, formerly Aurora
Smith, Edgar, 81, Aurora



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QUINN

From Page A1

whose income exceeds \$250,000 per year, which would generate an estimated \$1.15 billion in additional state tax revenue.

Half of this amount — an estimated \$575 million — would be equally distributed each July 1 to state homeowners who have filed for the Homestead exemption, no matter what their income is. The share would come out to about \$208.

The other half would then go to bolster public school funding with every school getting the same amount of money per student, or about \$277 apiece. Murphy said the East Aurora and West Aurora school districts would each get about \$2.9 million per year if the measure were to pass.

Sixty percent of voters statewide would have to approve the initiative in November for it to take effect.

If everything goes the way Quinn and other supporters of the so-called "school trust fund" want it to, the surtax would go into affect for the 2004 tax season and homeowners and schools will get their first checks in mid-2005.

"The majority of taxpayers will see no increase in taxes," Whetstone said. "I didn't know what to think at first because I thought it was another tax increase, and I

didn't want to support that."

The proposal is not without its critics.

The Kane County Board refused to put the issue on the county-wide ballot. County Board Chairman Mike McCoy asked the board last week for a motion to put the referendum on the ballot, and was answered with silence.

In a letter to the editor in The Beacon News, House Republican Leader Tom Cross, R-Oswego, said the proposal will not relieve high property tax bills, will damage the business climate in Illinois and lead to layoffs.

The 1.4 percent of taxpayers affected by the surtax would see their state income tax bills go up an average of \$14,000, and there is no evidence that spending more money on public schools will improve them, Cross added.

At least 19 counties and a number of townships and municipalities throughout the state have agreed to put the question on the ballot in March, Galloway said.

"I think both the property tax relief and education funding that it provides were positives," Murphy said.

"We thought it should go on the ballot as far as Aurora Township voters are concerned ... I think it's a good way to jumpstart the Legislature to continue discussions in a more concrete way than has taken place in recent years."

GIVING

To be a donor

Kane GOP candidate reports threats

■ **Politically motivated:** McConnaughay says calls upset children

By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

ST. CHARLES — Karen McConnaughay, a candidate for Kane County Board chairman in the March Republican primary, said Friday she and her family have re-

ceived threats related to her campaign.

McConnaughay, R-St. Charles, confirmed St. Charles police are investigating threats she received earlier this week by telephone at her home. She declined to discuss specifics of the situation because of the investigation but said they were politically motivated and clearly designed to intimidate her.

"I can't imagine what else they would be related to," she said. "When

you bring in the candidate's children, and they are upset, that has crossed the line. Where are we going with Kane County politics here?"

The investigation into the phone threats came to light because of another investigation launched Thursday night — this one by Aurora police into the theft of McConnaughay's purse at a political meeting.

McConnaughay was present Thursday night at a gathering of the Aurora Township Republican Com-

mittee in a private meeting room at Luigi's Restaurant, 732 Prairie St., when she noticed her purse had been taken from a chair she left it on. "I literally got up and just turned around, and it was gone," she said. "I can narrow it down to a five-minute period."

McConnaughay said she has no idea who took the purse or why. She also did not say it was necessarily related to the threats from earlier in

❖ *Turn to THREATS, A2.*

THREATS

From Page A1

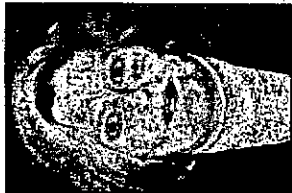
the week. But, in investigating the theft, Aurora police officers asked if anything else was going on with her.

"I told them," she said, "I have no idea if this was a random theft or not."

Police said McConnaughay also

lost cash, a cell phone and identification that was in the purse. Value of the loss was put at \$631.

McConnaughay, a long-time County Board member, is running for board chairman in the March 16 primary against Kane County Treasurer David Rickert of Elgin. The winner of that race will face St. Charles businessman Thomas Meadath, the only candidate to file for the Democratic Party primary.



Karen McConnaughay is seeking the GOP nomination for Kane County Board chairman in the March primary.

Ex-deputies cut a deal

■ **Aurora Township theft:**
Pair pleads down five felony
counts to one misdemeanor

By **Daniel Duggan**
STAFF WRITER

1-10-04
Beacon news

ST. CHARLES TOWNSHIP — Two former Kane County sheriff's deputies, originally charged with five felony counts each, walked away from the county courthouse Friday with 12 months of probation after pleading guilty to one misdemeanor count each.

Brandon J. Dahlke, 27, of Montgomery, and Michael Eurlkaitis, 32, of Plainfield, agreed to the terms of the plea agreement laid out by Illinois Assistant Attorney General Robert Huimer, pleading guilty to one count each of attempted official misconduct.

The two were sentenced to 12 months probation, a \$500 fine and \$25 per month probation fees, the attorney general's office said.

Even if the pair had gone to trial as scheduled later this month and been found guilty of the felony charges, there still would have been a chance they would get nothing more than probation, Huimer said, given the fact that they both have clean records.

"It's a fair and just sentence," Huimer said. "They have both lost their jobs and were found guilty of a criminal offense that will be on their records forever."

The pair were accused of stealing a police scanner radio and a .22-caliber rifle from an Aurora Township residence in October 2002 while executing a search warrant. Police had been investigating the matter internally and

❖ *Turn to DEAL, A2*

DEAL

From Page A1

issued a search warrant of the deputies' houses on March 19 after getting a tip from another officer. During the search, the scanner and the rifle were found, previous reports have stated.

They were charged with four counts each of official misconduct and one count of possession of a stolen firearm, both felony charges. Dahlke and Eurlkaitis were both found guilty by the Kane County Sheriff's Office Merit Commission after their March arrests, which resulted in their dismissal from the sheriff's office.

Dahlke's attorney, Kathleen Colton, said her client still maintains his innocence but agreed to the plea agreement in the face of risking a prison term.

"In light of the circumstances, facing five felony counts, he thought this was the best cause of action," she said. "You never know

what a jury is going to do. You can walk in with the best case and the best facts and still walk out with a guilty verdict."

Colton also said the matter shouldn't have been brought to the criminal court level.

"This should have been handled in-house," she said. "These things happen in police departments and sheriff's departments all the time and rarely are there charges filed."

Kane County Sheriff Ken Ramsey, who did not want to comment on the plea agreement, said he is not aware of any past cases of police theft being handled internally.

"If she has any knowledge of people stealing things, she should report it," Ramsey said of Colton.

Ramsey also said that, in cases pertaining to police, charges should be filed because officers are in a position of public trust that needs to be taken seriously.

"It's the ultimate violation of the public's trust," Ramsey said. "When police are stealing, they should be held to a higher standard."

1-12-04 Chronicle

Referendum questions due today

Deadline for paperwork is Thursday

By MARK FOSTER
Kane County Chronicle

Local governments will place a variety of referendum questions to Kane County residents in the March 16 primary election.

The deadline is today for government boards to adapt resolutions to place referendums on the ballot. The deadline to file the paperwork with the county clerk's office is Thursday.

Several central Kane County governments have decided on ballot measures or will decide tonight.

Geneva school officials have the most ambitious hopes. They will decide tonight whether to seek money to build

a second middle school. School officials are expected to vote to ask residents to consider a \$49 million building referendum and a 35-cent tax rate increase. A closed session to consider the purchase or lease of land is scheduled before the vote.

Money from the referendum would pay for a new middle school to be built next to the existing middle school on Viking Drive. The referendum also would fund additional parking at

Mill Creek Elementary School. Property taxes would not increase if voters approve the building referendum. Rather, the district's debt payment schedule would be extended for the new construction.

The 35-cent increase would mean an additional \$279 in school taxes for the owner of a \$250,000 home. Last year, the same owner paid \$3,650 in school taxes.

See REFERENDUM, page 2

Referendum

Continued from page 1

In North Aurora, the village board already has filed for a referendum asking voters whether the village should keep its partisan election system.

Village trustees voted to put the referendum on the March 16 ballot.

Residents will answer "yes" or "no" to the question, "Shall the village conduct future elections for all village offices as nonpartisan elections?"

The village for years has handed out independent petitions, and candidates run as independents.

However, the village's basic election ordinance is partisan.

That means Democrats, Republicans and local parties can run in North Aurora's municipal election.

If voters approve the referendum, the village board then would have the needed direction to drop the partisan election ordinance from the village books.

In the Batavia and Countryside Fire Protection District, the residents of eight homes in the area of Deerpath and Tanner roads will be asked if they wish to disconnect from the Batavia district and connect with the North Aurora and Countryside Fire Protection District.

Don Hubbard, and attorney representing the Batavia fire district, said the move makes sense because North Aurora is planning a new fire station at Tanner and Deerpath in the future. He also said it is necessary to provide the North Aurora district with a

Referendum questions

The following referendum questions have been filed with the Kane County Clerk's office for the March 16 primary election. The deadline to file questions is Thursday.

- Batavia and Countryside Fire Protection District: Disconnect from the Batavia and Countryside Fire Protection District to the North Aurora and Countryside Fire Protection District?
- Hampshire Park District: Shall the Hampshire Park District be authorized to levy and collect a tax of 0.12 percent for purpose of recreational programs?
- Big Rock Township: Increase the property tax extension limitation from 5 percent up to 39.55 percent for the 2003-04 levy year?
- Blackberry Township Road District: Increase the property tax rate from 0.1650 percent up to 0.33 percent for road purposes?
- Virgil Township: 1. Increase equalized assessed valuation on taxable property from 0.165 percent to a maximum of 0.33 percent for road purposes? 2. Increase the property tax extension limitation for the Virgil road fund from 2.4 percent to 198.18 percent for the 2004 tax levy?
- Village of Barrington Hills: Adopt article 3 of the Illinois Pension Plan to create police pension fund?
- Village of Burlington: Increase the property tax extension limitation from 2.4 percent up to 125 percent for the 2004 levy year?
- Village of Carpentersville: Impose a surcharge up to \$1.65 per month per network connection for the purpose of improving a 911 emergency telephone system?
- Village of East Dundee: 1. Impose a surcharge up to \$1.65 per month per network connection for the purpose of improving a 911 emergency telephone system? 2. Shall the Village of East Dundee become a home rule unit of government?
- Village of North Aurora: Shall the Village of North Aurora conduct future elections for all village offices as nonpartisan elections?
- Village of Sleepy Hollow: Impose a surcharge \$1.65 per month per network connection, for the purpose of improving a 911 emergency telephone system?

contiguous link to a large new subdivision planned to the north.

While seven of the homeowners agree to the change, Hubbard said, one is opposed, forcing the referendum.

Also tonight, the Town and Country Library District will decide whether to seek a tax increase. The referendum has been rejected the

last six times it has been put to voters.

The district wants to increase the tax rate to 19 cents from 15 cents per \$100 of assessed value. Officials said the extra money is needed for new technology and additional staff to meet growing demand.

Contributing: Dan Chanzit and Eric Schelkopf

Ex-deputies agree to lesser charge, probation

1-10-04 Chronicle

Men said they did not think they were wrong to take scanner, rifle from suspect

By ADAM KOVAC
Kane County Chronicle

ST. CHARLES — When two Kane County sheriff's deputies took a criminal suspect's rifle and police scanner, they did not think that they were doing anything wrong.

But worried that a jury might think

otherwise, Brandon J. Dahlke and Michael Eurekaits on Friday pleaded guilty to attempted official misconduct. They were sentenced to one year of probation and fined \$500.

"He still maintains his innocence of any crime," said Dahlke's attorney, Kathleen Colton of Batavia.

Dahlke, 27, and Eurekaits, 32, had

pleaded innocent to theft and official misconduct charges after sheriff's detectives in March learned of the incident from a confidential informant and found the items in the deputies' homes.

They were fired in May after a sheriff's review board found them guilty of similar charges.

Eurekaits faced up to five years in



Eurekaits

Aurora when they went to the home of a man with warrants for his arrest and caught him trying to escape out a bed-



Dahlke

prison for official misconduct, but Dahlke faced up to seven years for possessing a stolen firearm because the rifle was stashed in his house.

In October 2000, Dahlke and Eurekaits were on patrol in an incorporated area when they went to the home of a man with warrants for his arrest and caught him trying to escape out a bed-

room window.

Dahlke and Eurekaits were well-acquainted with the man, who, with the help of his police radio scanner, eluded capture several times before, sheriff's detectives have said.

The deputies found the scanner and a .22-caliber rifle inside the house and took the items to prevent the man from using the scanner to evade capture and the weapon to harm the deputies if they returned.

See DEPUTIES PAGE 2

Deputies

Continued from page 1.

It was a good bust that went bad when Dahlke, of Montgomery and Eurekaits, of Plainfield, took the rifle and scanner home instead of logging the items into the sheriff's evidence vault, according to earlier testimony.

Dahlke agreed to the misdemeanor punishment to avoid a trial before a jury. A jury might have been more inclined to convict him of felony offenses because he was in uniform when he took the rifle, Colton said.

Eurekaits had refused to negotiate with Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan's office, which prosecuted the case on behalf of Kane County State's Attorney Meg Gorecki to avoid

the appearance of a conflict of interest.

But that changed Friday when Dahlke accepted the deal and could have been forced to testify against his former partner, said Eurekaits' attorney, Van Richards of Elgin.

"He's not happy about it," Richards said of his client.

The agreement makes them eligible to keep their state license to own firearms.

Assistant Illinois Attorney General Robert Huiner said Dahlke and Eurekaits, who have no significant prior criminal history, likely would have faced misdemeanor charges and probation if they were civilians.

"They've lost their jobs, they've pled guilty to a criminal offense," Huiner said. "It's going to stay on their records for the rest of their lives."

1-13-04 Daily Herald

Candidate's run mired in misfortunes

BY PATRICK WALDRON

Daily Herald Staff Writer

Just two weeks into the home-stretch of the 2004 primary election season, Karen McConnaughay's campaign for Kane County Board chairman has seen enough bad news to last an entire term.

It started Wednesday, when McConnaughay's husband received what is being described as "a threatening one-page typed letter at his Geneva office.



Karen McConnaughay, Republican committee chair and over the weekend, her 18-year-old son Garrett Steve was arrested at a St. Charles bowling

The following day, McConnaughay, a St. Charles Republican, had her purse stolen from an Aurora restaurant during a meeting of the Aurora Township Republican committee. And over the weekend, her 18-year-old son Garrett Steve was arrested at a St. Charles bowling

alley and accused of possession of alcohol and trespassing. It was the second time Steve had been arrested in the last seven months.

While her son's arrest is a family matter, McConnaughay, who has served on the county board since 1992, says she knows the letter is connected to her political ambitions and fears the purse theft could be related.

"There is no question the threats are connected to my run for county board chairman," she

said Monday. It would be "unfair," McConnaughay said, to characterize the purse theft Thursday night at Luigi's Restaurant, 732 Prairie Street, as politically motivated, but the Aurora police did include references to the letter in their report.

It wasn't the first letter the family received, McConnaughay said. The first came in the fall after she announced her campaign to run for chairman.

She would not go into

specifics, but said that letter was directed at her and her work as a county board member. The second letter dealt with her family.

There was no direct threat of violence but one could easily be interpreted, McConnaughay said. She called both "offensive."

McConnaughay didn't point the finger at anybody, but said the incident smacks of political low-balling.

Geneva police Lt. Joe Frega said the department took a

report on the information Monday, but there is no active investigation into the letters.

McConnaughay said she will not be intimidated by the recent developments and plans to keep her campaign going forward.

"I'm just going to carry on," she said.

McConnaughay will face county Treasurer David Rickett of Elgin in the March 16 GOP primary. The winner will face Democrat Thomas Meadath in November.

Chairman candidate reports threats aimed at 'intimidating' campaign

1-13-04
Chronicle *First letter received in September 2003*

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Candidate for Kane County Board chairman Karen McConnaughay said she has received two threatening letters "meant to intimidate" her campaign.

The letters were sent to her husband John McConnaughay's business and contained threats.

One letter was received in September.

Another arrived Wednesday.

McConnaughay said Geneva police are investigating and that she could not divulge the nature of the threats.

"It was meant to intimidate," she said. "It was definitely related to the campaign."

The latest threat came a day before McConnaughay had her purse stolen at a meeting of the Aurora Township Republican Committee.

McConnaughay said she does not know if the theft and the letters are related.

"I have no way of knowing," she said. "It would be inappropriate for me to surmise to say the two are connected."

Her purse contained two cell phones, a wallet with \$20 and personal items.

She said she set it down on a chair and was talking with someone no more

than 4 feet away as she was getting ready to leave.

When she turned around, the purse was gone, she said.

When asked if the letters had intimidated her

McConnaughay replied "absolutely not."

"I think anonymous threats are disconcerting but serve to motivate. I don't get deterred by threats and intimidation," she said.

She said she ignored the letter that came in September, but reported the second letter.

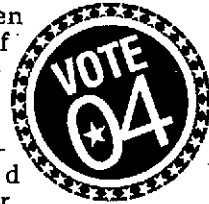
"The second one is when I decided to do something. I believe you are going over the line when you go after my family," she said.

McConnaughay, a county board member from St. Charles, seeks the Republican nomination for county board chairman.

Treasurer David Rickert of Elgin is her opponent in the March 16 primary.

Democrat Thomas Meadath will face the winner of the primary in the November election.

County Board Chairman Mike McCoy will not seek re-election.



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1-13-04
Chronicle



Bill
Page

Calls and e-mails and threats... oh, my!

Your column about coaches not giving kids any playing time really hit home. After months of hard work and practice his junior year, our son spent the football season on the bench. He, and judging from the final roster, most of his friends, didn't even bother to go out senior year. Their attitude was "Why should I kill myself if I'm not going to play?"

Besides the boy you wrote about, there were a lot of kids who had no or very little playing time, so my question is, why would any coach deny it?

Beats me. I could fill 10 columns with parent and player complaints I received about coaches, but all you'll hear from the schools is that I don't know what I'm talking about. Not much of an answer, but typical from people who are used to bullying teenagers.

Your kids better never go out for any team. It'll be a long time before they play. Thank you for that comment on fairness and balance in high school sports.

I'm a teacher at (St. Charles) East, so PLEASE don't use my name. The day your column ran about Hilary Bell (treasurer for St. Charles East High School) and her run-in with our new principal, Bob Miller, we had a faculty meeting. During the meeting, Miller claimed he never said the things you quote in your column and he also said you "refuse" to meet with him. What's the real story?

I'm at a loss to explain Miller's actions because the column quoted directly from his letter to Bell. As in the original, the one he signed. I'm willing to let him see it, but I think he has a copy. As to refusing to meet with him, all I have to say is you have to be asked before you can refuse and ol' Bob hasn't asked me yet. By the way, it's sad you have to be afraid of being identified.

As I sat on Route 25 last night, stuck in a long traffic jam, I wondered how the Red

Gate bridge was doing. Is it on track, or has Wayne figured out a way to hold this project up even longer?

Now that Dennis Hastert has let it be known that he's had it with all the delays on all the bridges promised for the area, I expect that things will start to move a little faster than the glacial speed we're used to. That doesn't mean you should start planning your trip across the Fox any time real soon. Wayne may have lost every challenge it has brought against the Red Gate bridge, but don't expect that to stop them from trying once again. This will happen when a town has the resources to finance frivolous lawsuits — you know, "more money than brains," and all that.

I don't know why you objected to the program called "Rat 'Em Out," where kids were being paid to tell police about underage drinking parties. Drinking is a big problem with kids and any way to stop it is fine with me.

The program encourages kids to turn in their friends, but not to save them from the evils of underage drinking. The pitch the program makes is for kids to "get even" for not being invited to a party by ratting out the hosts. Hardly the loftiest of motives. I agree that teen drinking is a real problem, but you don't solve it with a creepy program like this.

As an owner of a Hummer H2, I resent your recent column that painted me as being "selfish." Look, just because you and your tree-hugging friends can't afford a nice car don't try and take mine away. I hope I meet you on the road. I'll show you who's boss.

■ Bill Page lives in St. Charles and writes about local issues on Tuesday and Thursday. Calls and e-mails answered at (630) 584-0809 or wpage@mediawerks.org.

1-13-04 Daily Herald

Geneva school board backs ballot questions

BY GARRETT ORDOWER
Daily Herald Staff Writer

The Geneva school board voted 6-1 Monday night to ask voters two funding questions in March.

The board will ask for approval of a \$49 million building referendum and it also will ask for a tax-rate increase of 35 cents.

But in siding with urgency over certainty, board members admitted the outcome of its building referendum will depend on what answers it can offer voters before then.

A key question the board must address is traffic access for building a second 1,000-student middle school on Viking Drive off Fabyan Parkway. About \$33 million of the referendum would go toward building the school.

School officials said they need to push the issue in March because without voter approval, the new school would not be able open until at least fall 2007. By that time, enrollment is expected to be about 1,500 students at the current school, which has a capacity of 1,216.

"Despite my belief there is a

Two questions on the March 16 ballot:

1. Will voters approve a tax increase of 35 cents per \$100 equalized assessed value? The money will go into the education fund.

The increase will be phased in over four years, so eventually the owners of \$250,000 home will be paying \$291 more.

2. Will voters approve a \$49 million bond issue?

The district plans to spend this money on several projects, including:

- \$33 million for a second middle school on the site of the current one, on Viking Drive off of Fabyan Parkway.
- \$760,000 for temporary accommodations until the fall 2006 opening of the new school.
- \$7 million for an auditorium connecting the current and new schools.
- \$825,500 to expand parking and athletic fields at Mill Creek School.

See **BALLOT** on **PAGE 6**

Ballot: Board fails to reach other solutions

Continued from Page 1

better solution, I will support putting this on the ballot," board vice president Margaret Selakovich said of the building referendum. "Become informed and base your decision on what you know."

The referendum includes about \$800,000 for "development" of the site, which could include land acquisition, Superintendent Michael Jacoby said.

Without additional road access, traffic at the Fabyan and Randall roads intersection would become even more dan-

gerous and a four-lane road would cut through the school site.

While the school board had hoped it could negotiate with the park district for affordable access to the site through Peck Farm Park, the park district board said in a statement at the beginning of the meeting its opposition to that was "unwavering and unanimous."

After an hourlong closed session to discuss possible alternatives, board members continued to express doubts any solution could be reached.

"After 18 months (of discussion) we still don't have the hard

facts," board member Susan Shivers said. "I understand there's a plan, but it's not concrete."

Shivers cast the sole vote against the referendum.

The education fund increase of 35 cents per \$100 of equalized assessed valuation would translate into an extra \$291 a year for the owner of a \$250,000 home.

The education rate referendum seeks to make up for a loss of state funding and stave off planned cuts in the district. Bill Wilson was the only board member to oppose putting that question on the ballot.

1-13-04 Daily Herald
Comment
sought on
2030 county
road plan

Kane County is developing the county's 2030 transportation plan.

A series of public forums were held in each of the eight planning partnership areas to review the planning process, the socioeconomic forecasts and discuss existing transportation system deficiencies and concerns. Now, a public meeting and a second series of forums will be held in January and February to introduce the initial 2030 modeling results and discuss future system deficiencies and the first set of alternatives to address them.

The public meeting will be from 4 to 7 p.m. Jan. 28 at the Kane County Government Center, 719 Batavia Ave., Geneva. Planning partnership area forums meet at 10 a.m.:

- Jan. 30 at the Randall Oaks Golf Club, 37W361 Binnie Road, West Dundee
- Feb. 3 at the North Aurora Public Library, 113 Oak St.
- Feb. 9 at the Batavia Public Library, 10 S. Batavia Ave.
- Feb. 11 at Elgin Community College's Business Conference Center, Room 123, 1700 Spartan Drive, Elgin.
- Feb. 18 at the Campton Community Center, 5N082 Old LaFox Road, St. Charles.
- Feb. 19 at the Town and Country Public Library, 320 E. North St., Elburn.
- Feb. 23 at the Huntley village hall, 11704 Coral St.

The final forum is at 1 p.m. Feb. 25 at Waubensee Community College, Bodie Hall, Room 150, Waubensee Drive at Route 47, Sugar Grove.

The purpose of the 2030 transportation plan is to determine major transportation projects, guide transportation decisions and identify resources to implement transportation projects. The county offers information at www.co.kane.il.us/dot. The county expects to complete a draft of the plan in March and bring the plan to the board for adoption in the summer.

Call (630) 406-7308.

1-13-04 Daily Herald
Geneva picks townhouses
instead of retail buildings

BY AMANDA VINICKY
Daily Herald correspondent

Townhouses will likely be erected at the corner of Peck and Bricher roads instead of the office and commercial buildings originally intended for the area.

The Geneva Planning Commission, which unanimously approved the switch, recommended the change at last night's committee of the whole meeting.

John Cebczynski, president of John Henry Homes Inc., said that for more than a year his company has been planning on purchasing the land from the current owner in order to build 90 townhouses on the 22-acre property.

According to Dick Untch, Geneva's community development director, the commission approved the plans for the Prairie Ridge project because, although the area, which is part of Fisher Homes, was supposed to be for retail use, there are already new and vacant office spaces in the area that should be used before developing more commercial centers.

Untch also said that plans for government offices to move by the Kane County Judicial Center haven't advanced, and that the retail business on Randall Road is dominant, thereby lessening the need for two miles of two- to three-story office buildings at Peck and Bricher.

"I think that land plans change," Cebczynski said. "Years

ago, when they did their planning, you didn't have what you have now at Randall."

According to Untch, Geneva, St. Charles and both cities' park districts have purchased more than two square miles of land intended for permanent public use. A residential district would make for better "land use compatibility."

Aldermen Robert Pawlak and Ron Singer voted against the rezoning.

Pawlak, who was on the council when developers from Fisher Farms first made the argument to zone the space for commercial use in 1996, said that for the developers to change their agenda after having fought so stringently for it was wrong.

"I gave them my word, they gave me their word," Pawlak said.

In response to Untch and Cebczynski's statements that current residents in the Fisher Farms area would rather have townhouses than commercial property, Pawlak said "it was always like that and the people knew so when they moved in."

Pawlak said he was further against townhouses because schools are already strained.

"We've overcrowded our schools. We're faced with more referendums. There seems to be no end in sight," Pawlak said. "We have the ability to at least control somewhat of our own destiny, as little as it may be. Why more people? Where are we going?"

Prosecutor hopefuls state their case

By Daniel Duggan
STAFF WRITER

AURORA — In Monday's first public debate of the contentious race for Kane County state's attorney, Joseph Rago was quick to take aim at two of his opponents, saying they will be "bogged down" with potential conflicts of interest should they be elected.

Rago questioned whether there will be conflicts of interest if two candidates are elected — John Barsanti of the firm Canic, Johnson, Wilson and McCul-

loch, and Tim O'Neil of the firm Footle, Meyers, Meike and Flowers — because of the large firms they work for and the many cases with which they have been associated.

"We need someone who is not bogged down by conflicts of interest because of the large firms they work for," said Rago, a Geneva resident.

Barsanti, of St. Charles, said he has been involved in about 20 cases since leaving his position in the Kane County state's attorney's office in 2000. In those instances, he said, another prosecutor in

the office would deal with the case, or an outside prosecutor would come in.

O'Neil, of Geneva, said there would not be any conflicts, noting that he has not tried any criminal cases — except some speeding tickets — since leaving the state's attorney's office in the 1980s.

Rago, Barsanti, O'Neil and Michael Leuer of Geneva want to be the Republican nominee for the office held by Meg Gorecki. Gorecki will not be running for re-election in the March 16 primary.

Monday's event, sponsored by the Aurora League of Women Voters and the Republican National Hispanic Assembly, was among the first public events showcasing the four Republican candidates for state's attorney.

Leuer, who entered the race last month, said he looked at the current field of candidates and decided to run. He said the residents of Kane County "need more."

Turn to PROSECUTOR, A2

PROSECUTOR

From page A1

He stressed his experience as a former Cook County prosecutor and his varied educational background that includes a law degree, CPA and master's of business administration.

"I will develop a professionalized state's attorney's office," he said. "I will look at each person and determine their competency and whether or not they are a political appointee."
Leuer also promised to focus on

violent crimes, as opposed to "sex, Internet crimes and fraud." The comment was aimed at Rago, who has emphasized creating a task force to focus on identity theft and online crimes.

"If used to be that they came in through the window or the door," Rago said. "Now they come in through a wire."

Barsanti stressed his wealth of experience, spending 20 of the 26 years he has been an attorney working in the Kane County state's attorney's office.

"Do you want someone coming in, looking at that \$7.5 million budget for the first time?" he asked.

"Or do you want someone who's done it before?"

O'Neil focused on his range of experience that has included work as a prosecutor, but also a lot of time representing public officials in the county — most recently as city attorney for St. Charles.

"Right now we are lacking in the advice given to the Kane County Board," he said. "And I will bring my expertise in advising public officials."

Democratic candidate Renee Robinson was invited to the forum, but had a short statement on her behalf. Robinson is running unopposed in the Democratic primary.



STEVE ROSENBERG / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
State's attorney candidates (from left) T. Michael Leuer, Tim O'Neil, John Barsanti and Joseph Rago debate Monday night at Aurora Central Catholic High School.

1-13-04 Beacon News

Kane board chairman candidate's son faces alcohol-related charge

By Steve Lord

STAFF WRITER

ST. CHARLES — The son of a candidate for Kane County Board chairman was charged here Saturday night after an incident at a bowling alley.

Garrett J. Steve, 18, of the 100 block of Creekside Court, St. Charles, was charged with unlawful possession and consumption of alcohol by a minor and criminal trespass to land, according to St. Charles police. He is the son of County Board member Karen McConaughay, R-St. Charles, one of two candidates for the GOP nomination for County Board chairman in the March 16 primary election.

According to police reports, Garrett Steve and several other men were at a bowling alley in the 2500 block of West Main Street, when they were asked to leave. They did leave, but Steve and Eric J. Stammem, 18, of the 2000 block of Persimmon Street, St. Charles, came back later.

The manager asked the two to leave, but an argument ensued and the manager called police. Both men were charged in the in-

cident.

This is the second time Garrett Steve has been charged with unlawful consumption of alcohol by a minor. He received a similar charge from St. Charles police last June.

McConaughay released a statement Sunday through her campaign office acknowledging the arrest.

"Garrett has the love and support of myself and his entire family during this difficult time," the statement said. "We respect the process of the legal system and will fully cooperate while this matter is being resolved."

Last week, McConaughay was in the headlines when her purse was missing at a political function in Aurora. At the time, she mentioned to Aurora police that her family earlier in the week had received threats. They were in the form of unsigned letters sent to her house.

While she said at the time she had no idea who stole the purse, she said the threats in the letters clearly were politically motivated and intended to try to intimidate her.

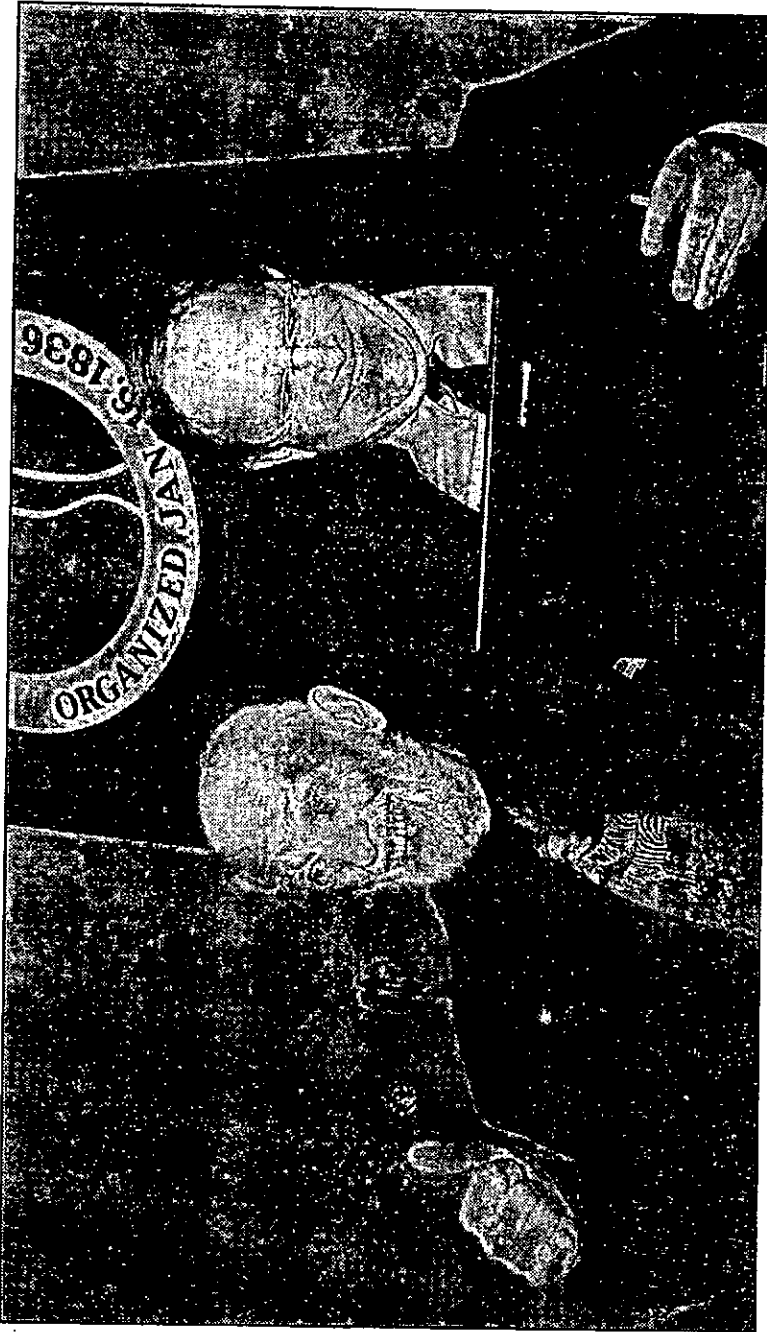
Casual comments, questions, smiles

1-13-04 Beacon News

Repeal burning ban

I live in Aurora Township on a large lot with lots of trees. Being retired and with a bad back and sciatica, it was excruciating pain for me to bag 45 bags of leaves because I cannot burn them now and just rake them into a pile and put a match to them. It cost me over \$200 to have them removed because we have to call a private garbage contractor in order to do this, and it is very expensive. I want a redress on the ban. Pick up the Constitution and read the First Amendment. Today, it is a burning ban. Next, it will be a lawn-mowing ban because asthmatics will complain about the grass clippings.

1-14-04 Chronicle Honored for service



Kane County Chairman Mike McCoy, right, reads a resolution Tuesday honoring retired animal control warden Phil Zavitz for 13 years of service.

Bob Gerrard — Chronicle photo staff

850 more homes may be headed to Elburn

1-14-04 Daily Herald

BY DENISE
PERRY DONAVIN

Daily Herald correspondent

Kirk Homes President John Carroll on Tuesday presented a concept plan to the Elburn planning commission for Herrington Place, which could bring 850 more homes to the village, including 560 single-family homes and 290 townhomes and duplexes.

The 358-acre site overlaps Route 38 heading south to the Elburn Forest Preserve and north to the Virgil Ditch with the Dessenbrook Stables Horse Farm marking the western border of the houses planned for north of Route 38.

Summing up the commission's major concerns, Chairman Pat Schuberg said the project needs a greater variety of house styles; open space for active recreation like baseball and soccer fields; tennis and basketball courts; and accessibility to the woodland areas.

"We do not want 22,000 single-family houses with five different elevations. We want real variety — ranches, row-houses, single-story townhomes, cluster houses — a real mix," said Commissioner Rich Stewart.

"How about one-acre lots next to the forest preserve," Commissioner Leroy Herra noted. "People in town are asking me why we are not building \$700,000 homes."

However, Commissioner Tate Haley countered by saying "For years we've talked about affordability."

"We are largely market-driven," Carroll said. "It is difficult to find a house under \$300,000 in this area and we

hope to provide it."

Village Administrator Dave Morrison suggested the plan should "put the ranches near the park areas and you can see the woods over the rooftops."

One major change from the first concept presented to the village last January is an elementary school site. South of Route 38, the designated 14.5 acres of combined park and school property separates a townhome/duplex neighborhood and single family houses along Prairie Valley. It is on the same street as the current Kaneland North Elementary School (east of Route 47).

The Kirk concept plan has also added residential access to the commercial space and a walking and bike paths throughout the development. However, Stewart said more access is needed to the school site or kids will simply walk through yards.

There are also two big commercial boxes in the Kirk Homes plan, 30 acres in total. The southern section of the concept has a proposed Jewel shopping center on the eastern boundary, off Route 47.

The commercial plan could also include a larger shop and several smaller ones, such as banks, day-care facilities or restaurants, Carroll suggested.

Joe McKeska, senior real estate manager for Jewel, said that if Kirk's plan is approved, it would be a positive factor in the timing of the store's opening.

Asked when Jewel would be ready to open the proposed store, McKeska said that is proprietary information. However, he had previously said the store would likely open by 2005 or 2006 at the latest.

Sign exists to warn cars that median is ending

1-14-04 Daily Herald

Q. I am wondering about a sign at the intersection of Kautz Road and Route 38 in West Chicago.

When I drive east on Route 38 and want to turn left onto northbound Kautz, why is the median sign on the right side of Kautz? Shouldn't it be in the median?

It is difficult to see the median on Kautz, especially at night. Is there a way to mark this more clearly?

—C.D., Bloomingdale

A. No, because the purpose of this sign is to alert northbound drivers that the Kautz median will be ending — not to tell them that the median exists.

Scott Marquardt, West Chicago city engineer, said signs like this are typically placed on the side of the roadway, where the sign you mention on Kautz already lies.

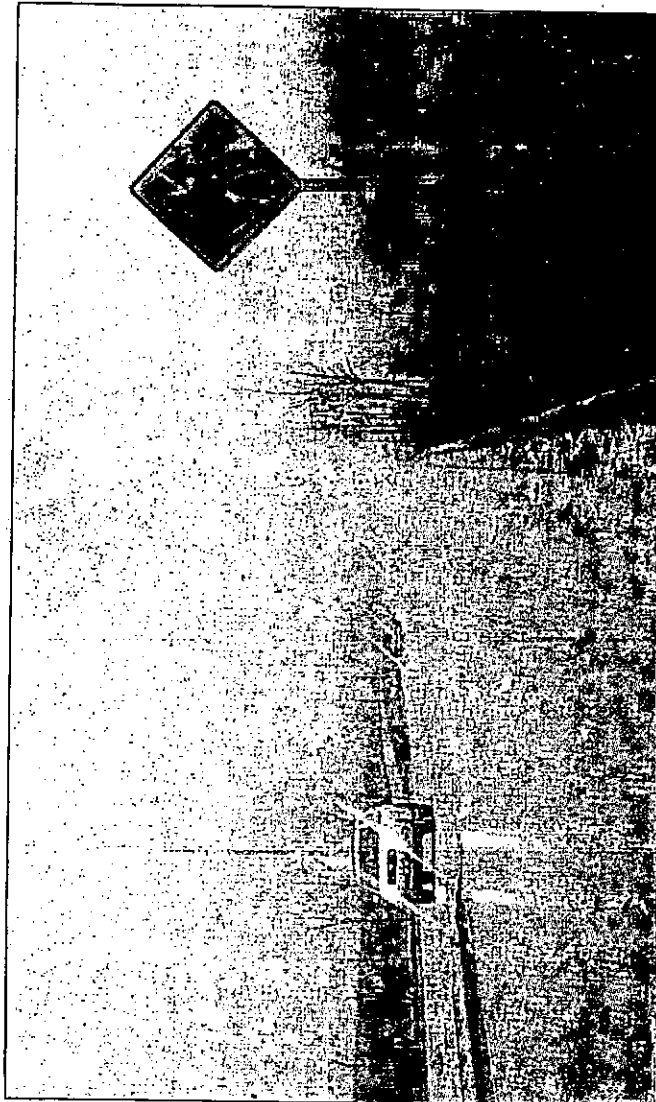
"(This) is generally where people will be looking for guide signs for that," Marquardt said. "So the sign appears to be in a standard location."

"It's been there for several years and, to my knowledge, this has been the first question that has been raised regarding this."

Traffic Q&A

The Daily Herald provides

answers to your questions about traffic safety and road construction. Send questions, comments and suggestions to traffic@dailyherald.com. Please include your name, hometown and phone number.



ED LEE/DAILY HERALD
This sign at Route 38 and Kautz Road in West Chicago alerts drivers to an existing median.

buildings are still under construction.

The announcement follows previous agreements with Starbucks, McDonald's, Krispy Kreme, Tropicana Smoothies and TravelMart.

The tollway authority's Oases Redevelopment Project includes a 25-year agreement,

with Wilton Partners and Exxon-Mobil, which provides for the private developers to invest \$94 million in capital improvements in the tollway authority's seven oases at no cost to the tollway authority or its customers.

The tollway authority will share in the food and gas sales revenues, with funds being set

aside for future repair needs. Five of the seven oases will be completely rebuilt, with the DeKalb Oasis on the East-West Tollway (I-88) and the Des Plaines Oasis on the Northwest Tollway (I-90) being remodeled.

For more details, visit the tollway's Web site at www.illinois-tollway.com.

Tri-Cities loses fight over new road fees

BY PATRICK WALDRON
Daily Herald Staff Writer

1-14-04
Daily
Herald

Over the protests of Tri-Cities leaders calling the system unfair, the Kane County Board Tuesday approved a new developer-paid fee that will generate millions for future road projects.

The amount paid by the developer of a new home, store or office will be determined through a complicated formula calculating road usage based on the number car trips, distance of those trips and even where they originate.

Fees will be collected in eight planning areas with the money from one area being spent only on projects built within its borders.

Tuesday's split vote ends more than two years of work on the system that is expected to generate \$27 million in the next 10 years.

But the road fee system could face a legal challenge from opponents — notably the mayors of Batavia, Geneva and St. Charles — before a single dollar is collected.

They say the system charges too much in their communities compared to other places in the county.

"It creates a number of large disparities and inequities in regard to the Tri-Cities," said Batavia Mayor Jeff Schielke.

Opponents of the system's formula on the county board, including Jan Carlson, an Elburn Republican, tried to lobby for an overhaul of the system but were unable to get the votes. Throughout the debate, the issue wasn't the fee, it was the way it was computed.

"The flaws in that are obvious," said John Hoscheit, a St. Charles Republican.

Supporters argued the formula is reasonable. Areas that have and use more county roads naturally should pay a bigger price, they said.

"It is inherently fair," said Don Wolfe, an Elgin Republican.

And, supporters also say, this is not a tax on existing residents, but on developers.

"This is for citizens and you forget that," said

PAGE 10 SECTION 1 DAILY HERALD

F3

Fee: Cities could sue the county

Continued from Page 1

board Chairman Mike McCoy, an Aurora Republican, responding to the mayors.

Road fees will start being paid in April. In the meantime, Schielke said he and other mayors will meet to discuss options.

A lawsuit against the county could be one of those options, he said. McCoy and other supporters say they expected such a reaction and worked hard to follow state guidelines when putting together the formula

Impact of the fee

Here's what developers in different areas of Kane County may have to pay under a new fee plan passed by the county board.

Fast food restaurant (per 1,000 square feet)

Aurora area	\$1,064
Campton Hills	\$3,157
Elgin area	\$1,799
Northwest	\$1,150
Southwest	\$4,846
Tri-Cities	\$6,119
Upper Fox	\$1,303
West Central	\$182

Source: Kane County

and fee system. They say part of that was following the pattern used in DuPage County where a similar fee has withstood legal challenges.

See FEE on PAGE 10

Tri-Cities cry foul as Kane enacts first impact fee

1-14-04 Beacon News

■ Unequal payments? Mayors complain charges are not fair

By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — The Kane County Board Tuesday passed an impact fee for transportation projects despite objections from Tri-Cities officials the fee structure is unfair to Batavia, Geneva and St. Charles.

It is the first impact fee in Kane County and would charge future developers of residential, industrial and commercial properties a fee for impacting county highways. In addition to maintenance projects, there are 57 projects worth about \$424 million planned for the next nine years that would be eligible for impact fee money.

"These fees will pay for about 8 percent of these projects," said County Board Chairman Mike McCoy, R-Aurora. "So that's all we're asking for from developers."

Representatives of Batavia, Geneva and St. Charles said that still could be too much, especially as the fees apply to the Tri-Cities. They all but said outright the situation will end up in a courtroom.

"We know we have the support of our city councils to take whatever action is necessary," said Batavia Mayor Jeff Schielke.

The fees apply differently in different parts of the county. A developer building in the Tri-Cities will pay a higher county impact fee than one building in Aurora or Elgin, for example.

Schielke said that becomes particularly critical in border areas, such as the 4,400-foot stretch along Kirk and Butterfield roads which has three parcels zoned commercial shared by both Batavia and Aurora. A commercial developer seeking to build in the 842 feet in Batavia could pay \$400,000 more in impact fees than if that developer moved across Butterfield Road into Aurora.

"I think every one of us supports an impact fee in some way," Schielke said, "but this formula as put forth has disparities and inequities."

How much credit?

Schielke, St. Charles Mayor Sue Klinkhamer and Geneva City

Administrator Phil Page pointed to a number of places throughout the Tri-Cities where they believe the towns did not get enough credit in figuring the fees.

They pointed out that, along Fabyan and Kirk, Kane County has the Settler's Hill Landfill, the Kane County Events Center and Elfstrom Stadium and the Public Safety Center. These are not tax generators, Schielke said, but they generate a lot of traffic being credited to Tri-Cities development.

Klinkhamer said along the South Elgin-St. Charles border area, a developer could pay \$400,000 less of an impact fee on one side of Randall Road as opposed to the other side.

Transportation Committee Chairman Bill Wyatt, R-Aurora, said the fee schedule was developed fairly, with several public hearings and in accordance with state statute. McCoy pointed out the impact fee is being enacted instead of a property-tax increase or a gas tax.

"This was not geared for the dealmakers," McCoy said. "You could make the argument citizens in the Tri-Cities are getting a greater break, that it would be less out of their pocket."

The impact fee schedule was passed 18-7, with the opposition coming mainly from board members from the Tri-Cities. Those voting against were John Hoscheit, Karen McConnaughay and Caryl Van Overmeiren, all of St. Charles; Rob McConnaughay, of Geneva; Jim Mitchell, of North Aurora; Jan Carlson, of Elburn, and Mary Richards, of Aurora.

Hoscheit pushed for impact fee development as a member of the Transportation Committee and said Tuesday he still supports the concept. "But allocation is the problem," he said. "No matter where you are on Randall Road, north end or south end, you should pay the same."

One Tri-Cities representative, Doug Weigand, R-Batavia, voted for the fee, saying he was tired of the heavy traffic along Randall Road.

"I was leaning toward voting no, then I spent 15 minutes going 5 mph on Randall Road in my own community," he said. "The developers who create the congestion should pay for it."

1-14-04 Chicago Tribune

Gorecki loses court appeal

Kane prosecutor inactive on Feb. 1

By William Presecky
Tribune staff reporter

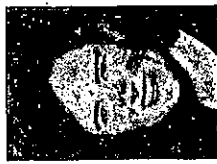
Without comment, the Illinois Supreme Court denied a request by Kane County State's Atty. Meg Gorecki to defer the suspension of her law license until her term expires this fall, and on Tuesday ordered her to stop practicing

law for four months beginning Feb. 1.

It is not clear whether the suspension will prevent her from continuing to administer the state's attorney's office. Illinois Atty. Gen. Lisa Madigan has been asked for an opinion on that question, although County Board Chairman Mike McCoy already has made up his mind.

The Aurora Republican said he will ask the County Board at its Feb. 10 meeting to declare the state's attorney posi-

tion vacant. If that is done, McCoy said state law allows him 60 days to fill the office with the board's advice and consent.



Gorecki

A spokesman for Gorecki said she would not comment.

A spokeswoman for Madigan said the office will respond "hopefully

in the near future" to whether suspension of Gorecki's law license prevents her from continuing as state's attorney. Gorecki, 36, announced in August she would not seek re-election.

"Now that the court's decision is final, we will finish our analysis and respond," said spokeswoman Melissa Merz.

McCoy said that although he would welcome the non-binding guidance of Madigan's office, he plans to move ahead with replacing Gorecki.

Special counsel has said the vacancy occurs when her license is suspended, he said.

"We're going to follow our interpretation of state law. If the attorney general interprets it in a different way, that's not binding, but we would sure look at it and see if it changes our viewpoint," McCoy said.

Gorecki, a Republican, is the first woman elected state's attorney in Kane. As a result

PLEASE SEE GORECKI, PAGE 8

GORECKI: Ethical gaffe leads to suspension

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

of an ethical gaffe that predated her election in 2000, she is the first sitting state's attorney in Illinois to be sanctioned by the court.

Gorecki suggested to an acquaintance in a 1998 taped phone message that a county highway job could be landed with well-placed political contributions. The scheme later proved to be fictitious, and Gorecki tried to explain it away as a lapse in judgment.

The state Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission pursued charges of misconduct against Gorecki and argued vigorously for a one-year suspension of her law license.

On Nov. 20, the state Supreme Court ordered her license suspended and originally set the

suspension to begin Dec. 18. It said it viewed the charges against Gorecki as "quite serious" and said the gaffe undermined "public confidence in the integrity of the government."

Gorecki then sought a deferral of the suspension, which the commission opposed.

Concerning the high court's latest action, ARDC chief counsel James Grogan said the "office never comments regarding the final orders of a court. As far as we're concerned, the matter is over," he said.

Six months of Gorecki's term will remain after the suspension is completed, but McCoy said he has no choice but to fill the vacancy for the remainder of Gorecki's entire term. McCoy said he would not consider putting her back in office after her license has been reactivated.

It was McCoy whom Gorecki implicated in the fabricated kickback scheme. Several investigations, including one by a special court-appointed prosecutor, showed McCoy to be innocent of any wrongdoing.

Freelance reporter Victoria A.F. Camron contributed to this report.

Commission votes to condemn Gill property

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — The Kane County Forest Preserve Commission voted Tuesday to condemn the one-acre Gill parcel north of St. Charles.

A Gill Family Trust spokesman said the family is determined to receive fair treatment from the district.

"We will litigate to the full extent. My grandfather built that house and we're going to get fair market value," Matthias Gill said.

Matthias is the son of Douglas Gill, who is the executor of the estate.

The Gill family and the forest preserve district have been in-

volved in sometimes-rancorous negotiations over the property and have failed to reach a solution.

The Gill property fronts 200 feet on the east side of the Fox River, north of the Arthur Andersen property.

The Fox River Bike Trail crosses the Gill property.

The district recently closed on 53 acres of Andersen property, for which they spent \$7.5 million.

The 53-acre parcel surrounds the Gill property.

The relationship between the Gills and the district took a bizarre twist last year when both sides accused the other of closing the bike trail.

Matthias Gill attended Tuesday's meeting and requested to speak, but was denied because he did not register in advance.

"We've been negotiating with these people for two years and, if anything, we've been too passive," said Gerald Jones, D-Aurora.

Twenty years ago, the district and the Gill family negotiated a lease for an easement for the bike trail, for which the district paid the family \$10 a year.

When the lease expired in August 2002, the family wanted to renegotiate the lease. District officials felt that the asking price was too high, which at one point sought \$1,500 a month.

In the meantime, the lease has expired, which the family contends puts them in a position of liability for the bike riders.

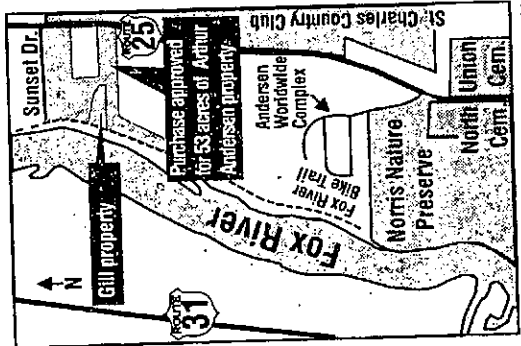
"As far as we're concerned, we're taking a liability," Matthias Gill said.

According to the lease, upon termination of the agreement, the district is required to return the land to its original state.

Now that the district owns land surrounding the Gill property, it could relocate the bike path around it.

"They have the ability to go around," he said.

Forest preserve President John Hoscheit said hills would make the ride around difficult.



Chronicle graphic

1-14-84 Chicago Tribune

Kane County OKs

road fees for builders

Some towns call formula unfair

By William Presecky
Tribune staff reporter

Kane County commissioners on Tuesday adopted the county's first formula for assessing developers a fee for helping to improve roads.

The ordinance establishing the fees on all new residential and commercial development in the county mirrors one adopted by DuPage County several years ago and that has successfully weathered several court tests since. The formula, which puts a dollar value on traffic volume and its impact on a given area, is set to take effect April 1.

The mayors of Batavia, St. Charles and Geneva said the fees are inequitable and unfair to developers in their towns and vowed to lead an effort to alter the ordinance. Ba-

tavia Mayor Jeff Schielke said the municipalities will use whatever legal options they have.

Based on the way the fees are to be calculated, Schielke said a large commercial development in some of Batavia's border areas would be assessed fees totaling hundreds of thousands of dollars greater than if the same development was planned a hundred feet away in an adjacent town.

Schielke, St. Charles Mayor Susan Klinkhamer and Geneva Mayor Kevin Burns said they support the concept of impact fees rather than increased property taxes, for example, but they take exception to what Schielke said was a fee formula that "creates a number of large disparities and, we feel, inequities . . . for the Tri-Cities."

Schielke said the county's formula fails to give the towns credit or take into account the

PLEASE SEE KANE, PAGE 9

KANE:

Formula, not fee itself, causes a stir

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

significant impacts county-owned facilities and other large government institutions already have on the county roads within their borders.

"We feel [the ordinance] is not in the interest of fairness and parity to the Tri-Cities," he said. Other municipal officials argued that the impact formula, as adopted, provided a disincentive to redevelop property and would encourage the type of sprawl Kane County's much-heralded comprehensive land-use plans aims to discourage.

The St. Charles City Council adopted a resolution Monday opposing the county impact fee ordinance.

"Nobody is opposed to impact fees," said Klinkhamer, repeating a refrain that fearfully every

County Board member who voted against the measure used to preface remarks in opposition to the plan.

"We feel the county needs a transportation impact fee. We feel, however, that the fee formula . . . is not going to be one that is going to be easily imposed. Because of the impacts on us, this is something we cannot easily dismiss."

Despite lengthy debate and several attempts to amend or delay their adoption, the Kane board voted 18-7 to adopt the fee ordinance and 19-7 to adopt a companion ordinance establishing a road improvement plan directing where the new fees are to be used.

Establishment of the impact fees has been brewing in Kane for more than two years.

Because of strict statutory guidelines for how impact fees are to be enacted, the Kane board virtually was bound to vote on the ordinances as presented Tuesday or, if amended, face having to restart an approval process that could take another year to complete.

County Board Chairman Mike McCoy (R-Aurora), who advocated heavily for imposing

The fee formula . . . is not going to be one that is going to be easily imposed.'

—St. Charles Mayor Susan Klinkhamer

impact fees in lieu of raising fuel or property taxes, said he expected they would not be embraced by developers or by politicians concerned about their standing in the development community.

"We geared this for the citizens," McCoy said. "As a citizen, I'd like to live in an area where the impact fees [on developers] are the highest. The way I saw it was the [citizens in the Tri-Cities are getting the most benefit from it]."

McCoy said the \$3 million in road improvement fees the ordinance is projected to generate in its first year accounts for about 8 percent of the annual costs of the improvements planned for county roads.

OF DEPOSIT

Amenities

1-14-04 Daily Herald

Gorecki to begin suspension Feb. 1

Law license will be suspended for four months and she may lose state's attorney job after that

BY PATRICK WALDRON
Daily Herald Staff Writer

Kane County State's Attorney Meg Gorecki will lose her law license for four months starting

Feb. 1. But losing her job is another matter.

The Illinois Supreme Court Tuesday rejected Gorecki's request to begin at month's end. The order closes the book on the

two-year-old discipline case against her for ethics violations but creates a new list of questions surrounding the future of the Kane County state's attorney's office. The punishment stems from

three messages Gorecki left on a friend's answering machine in 1998 suggesting a county job could be bought in exchange for campaign contributions. An answer had not come as of Tuesday on either the court order or her plans.



Meg Gorecki's future as state's attorney is up in the air.

See SUSPENSION on PAGE 11

Suspension: County board chair would name replacement

Continued from Page 1

contributions.

Gorecki, who is the first sitting state's attorney in state history to have her license suspended, did not comment Tuesday on either the court order or her plans.

Last year, Deputy Assistant State's Attorney Mike Coghlan, on behalf of Gorecki, asked state Attorney General Lisa Madigan's office for an opinion on whether she can remain state's attorney during the suspension.

An answer had not come as of Tuesday.

"Now that the court's decision is final, we will finish our analysis and respond to (Coghlan)," said attorney general's office spokeswoman Melissa Merz.

That analysis deals with who would run the office during Gorecki's suspension if she were removed only temporarily.

As Madigan's office considers the situation, County Board Chairman Mike McCoy has enlisted the help of a special assistant, Aurora attorney Patrick Kinnally, to research the situation.

Kinnally would not discuss his conclusions or the future of the state's attorney's office Tuesday.

However, McCoy said he is ready to proceed with appointing an interim state's attorney to take over the office until the next one is sworn in after the November election.

"At the point this suspension occurs, we feel there is a vacancy," McCoy said.

As chairman, county codes give McCoy the discretion to fill the state's attorney's post, a job he intends to do. Quoting state laws, McCoy says Gorecki's vacancy will be created when she loses her license and becomes "a person under legal disability."

He expects the county board to declare the office vacant at the Feb. 10 county board meeting. From there, he has 60 days to fill the job. That's only if Madigan doesn't weigh in.

"I think (Gorecki's) only hope would be some kind of opinion from the attorney general's office," McCoy said. "But we may disagree with that opinion."

McCoy also said if a temporary state's attorney is named, he would not expect Gorecki to return. To do that, McCoy said, the temporary appointee would have to resign at the end of the suspension and Gorecki would need to be re-appointed.

That is something McCoy said he is not interested in.

Assuming the vacancy does happen, McCoy says he wants to fill the spot with someone from inside the office.

But he will not tap an employee who lives outside the county, a move that eliminates three of Gorecki's top assistants — first assistant Bob Berlin, criminal chief Jody Gleason and Coghlan — from consideration.

History of Gorecki's troubles

The case against Kane County State's Attorney Meg Gorecki stem from allegations during the 2000 campaign

2000

March 2: Allegations surface that Meg Gorecki suggested that a family friend, Kane County Sheriff's Deputy Jane Morrison, make a campaign contribution to Kane County Board Chairman Mike McCoy to secure Morrison's then boyfriend a county job. Morrison turns over the tape from 1998, which included the taped messages from Gorecki, to sheriff's officials. Allegations become public three weeks before the Republican primary in which Gorecki was challenging then State's Attorney David Akemann. Gorecki said she offered help in getting Morrison's boyfriend a job, but denied suggesting a campaign contributions-for-job scheme.

March 3: Gorecki turns the focus of the allegations on how the information was leaked to reporters. She also denies allegations and suggests the voice on the answering machine tape may not even be hers.

March 21: Gorecki wins the Republican primary.

2001

Aug. 28: County Board Chairman Mike McCoy releases a transcript of the answering machine tapes.

Sept. 1: Gorecki holds a press conference and admits to making the statements. Kane County Judge Grant Wegner approves hiring a special prosecutor. Akemann requests special prosecutor after the Illinois Attorney General's Office and the FBI declined to investigate.

Sept. 8: Wegner appoints Dan Doyle, a former appellate court judge and former prosecutor in Winnebago County, as special prosecutor.

Oct. 24: Doyle ends investigation and issues a report clearing McCoy and Morrison of wrongdoing and stating that there is not enough evidence to pursue criminal charges against Gorecki. Doyle suggests she face a disciplinary review and forwards the report to the Illinois Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission.

Nov. 7: Gorecki wins the general election, defeating Democrat Bob Steffen with a vote of 67,527 to 65,212.

2002

Feb. 23: The Illinois Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission files a formal complaint accusing Gorecki of misconduct. An inquiry board reviews the complaint.

May 1: ARDC determines the complaint should proceed to a hearing board for a disciplinary hearing.

Nov. 30: ARDC hearing board hears the case. During the proceeding, attorneys for the ARDC recommend a one-year suspension of Gorecki's law license while Gorecki's attorneys recommend a censure.

April 29: The hearing board issues a report recommending the Illinois Supreme Court suspend Gorecki's law license for six months. The report also included a dissenting opinion from one of the hearing board members who recommended censuring Gorecki.

Sept. 13: Review board for the commission hears arguments in Gorecki's case. As before the hearing board, ARDC attorneys again argue for a one-year suspension of Gorecki's law license and Gorecki's attorneys suggest a censure.

2003

Jan. 14: The review board issues a report recommending the Illinois Supreme Court suspend Gorecki's law license for two months.

Feb. 18: ARDC attorneys ask the Illinois Supreme Court to review its argument for a one-year suspension of Gorecki's law license.

March 5: Gorecki's attorneys file documents with the Illinois Supreme Court suggesting a two-month suspension — rather than a censure — would be fair punishment.

May 22: Illinois Supreme Court justices order additional arguments in Gorecki's case.

Aug. 20: Gorecki's case scheduled to go before the Illinois Supreme Court for oral arguments on Sept. 17.

Aug. 27: Gorecki announces she will not seek election to a second term as state's attorney.

Sept. 17: Illinois Supreme Court justices hear oral arguments in Gorecki's case. Justices take the case under advisement but do not give a date when a decision will be rendered.

Nov. 20: Illinois Supreme Court rules that Gorecki will be suspended from the practice of law for four months. The effective date remains unclear.

Dec. 1: Gorecki petitions the court to delay her suspension until Nov. 30, 2004, her last day in office.

2004

Jan 13: Illinois Supreme Court rejects Gorecki's request for a delay and orders the suspension to begin Feb. 1.

Source: News reports, Daily Herald archives

Kathy Moran remain strong possibilities, though neither has been approached by McCoy yet. At the state's attorney's office Tuesday, Coghlan described

He warned against predicting too quickly who will hold the state's attorney title in the next two or three months.

High court yanking Gorecki law license

State's attorney's suspension starts on Feb. 1, but status of office remains unclear

By Daniel Duggan
STAFF WRITER

The order issued Tuesday by the Illinois Supreme Court was clear: Kane County State's Attorney Meg Gorecki will have her law license suspended for four months starting Feb. 1.

What that suspension will mean to the leadership of the office, however, is not as clear.

Gorecki's license was suspended over a bogus jobs-for-cash scheme she proposed to a friend in 1998. The issue followed her into office and has dogged her since being elected in 2000.

Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan's office still is working on an opinion expected to spell out what the situation will mean to Gorecki — whether she will be forced to step down for the rest of her term or someone would be appointed to serve only while she is suspended. Answers also are expected on the issue of who would appoint a successor.

Madigan spokeswoman Melissa Merz said Tuesday that the office will finish its analysis of the situation and issue an opinion to Deputy Chief Assistant State's Attorney Michael Coghlan.

Illinois law requires that a state's attorney hold a license to practice law. However, many have said the situation is in a legal gray area because the law that governs the suspensions of law licenses is vague when the suspension is less than six months.

Compounding the problem, legal experts say they cannot remember a sitting state's attorney in Illinois losing a law license before this, meaning there is no precedent.

County ready to fill post

Kane County Board Chairman Mike



BEACON NEWS FILE PHOTO

Kane County State's Attorney Meg Gorecki shares a word with Kane County Sheriff Ken Ramsey in this September 2002 photo from a news conference announcing an arrest in the murder of Irma Braun. Tuesday, the Illinois Supreme Court ruled Gorecki must surrender her law license for a four-month suspension on Feb. 1.

McCoy said the legal opinions he has been given seem clear that the law states the county board will appoint a person to serve out the term.

"If (the attorney general's office) comes out with something, we'll consider it," he said. "But our feeling is that, at the point when the law license becomes invalid, a vacancy exists.

"The county board will then declare that a vacancy exists and will have 60 days to fill it," he said.

McCoy also said the board will move forward on the vacancy on Feb. 1 if Madigan's office does not come out with a decision.

Kane County First Assistant State's Attorney Bob Berlin said the Supreme

Court's ruling will not affect the office's operations.

"We'll continue what we're doing and await an opinion by the attorney general's office," he said.

Appeals run out

Tuesday's decision effectively ends Gorecki's string of appeals in a 1998 ethics flap.

Last November, the Supreme Court found that Gorecki violated several sections of the rules governing Illinois attorneys when she left a message for a friend saying a county job could be ensured with a campaign contribution. After an investigation, however, it was found that no such scheme existed.

The court still found that proposing a bribery scheme was a violation, even if the bribe never took place.

The November ruling ended a legal fight that has dragged on since the matter became public in February 2000.

Gorecki unsuccessfully appealed every ruling by several Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission bodies, culminating in her giving oral arguments on the matter before the Illinois Supreme Court.

Most recently, she requested that the court postpone her suspension until November of this year so she could serve out the rest of her term. The court denied that request Tuesday with no explanation.

"If (the attorney general's office) comes out with something, we'll consider it. But our feeling is that, at the point when the law license becomes invalid, a vacancy exists. The County Board will then declare that a vacancy exists and will have 60 days to fill it."

Mike McCoy, Kane County Board chairman

Gorecki suspension starts Feb. 1

1-14-04 Chronicle

Attorney general still to announce whether Gorecki can return to post

By ADAM KOVAC
Kane County Chronicle

ST. CHARLES — Kane County State's Attorney Meg Gorecki must vacate her office in the Kane County Judicial Center on Feb. 1.

The Illinois Supreme Court on Tuesday denied a request that would have allowed Gorecki to finish her term uninterrupted and serve a four-month suspension of her

law license after she leaves office in December.

Gorecki, 36, was suspended Nov. 20, 2003, for statements she left on a friend's telephone answering machine in 1998 implicating Kane County Board Chairman Mike McCoy in a fictitious jobs-for-bribes scheme.

Last month, Gorecki asked the state's highest court to shelve the suspension she received for violating the

Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct. She maintained that her absence would disrupt the operation of her office.

While Tuesday's order sets a date for Gorecki to serve her punishment, it does not answer questions on whether the county must find a temporary substitute or permanent replacement for its top law enforcement official.

See GORECKI, page 2



Gorecki

Supreme Court justice sues Chronicle over 2 columns

By ADAM KOVAC
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Illinois Supreme Court Justice Robert R. Thomas has sued the company that owns the Kane County Chronicle, along with a top editor and columnist, claiming he was defamed in columns published in the newspaper.

Thomas names as defendants Shaw Suburban Media Group Inc., Chronicle Managing Editor Greg Rivara and columnist Bill Page, alleging that he was defamed and falsely portrayed in columns that ran on the newspaper's editorial page on May 20 and Nov. 25, 2003.

See LAWSUIT, page 2

Lawsuit

Continued from page 1

"The Kane County Chronicle categorically denies Mr. Thomas' assertions, and we will zealously defend both free speech and our newspaper," Publisher Mark M. Sweetwood said in a statement to the Chronicle staff.

Thomas seeks in excess of \$50,000 in damages, claiming that the columns "impute the integrity of Justice Thomas as an officer of the Court and impute the integrity of Justice Thomas in the performance of his ethical duties as an officer of the Court," according to documents filed Friday in Kane County Circuit Court.

Page linked Thomas to a so-called Republican conspiracy to oust Kane County State's Attorney Meg Gorecki, whose misconduct case was argued before the state Supreme Court. The court Nov. 20, 2003, imposed a four-month suspension of her law license.

Thomas' attorney, Joseph Power of Chicago, said the former Bears kicker filed the 20-page civil suit after repeated

attempts to have the columns retracted were denied and after Page sent an e-mail to the court's press offices threatening "a nightmare of bad publicity" if Thomas influenced the Gorecki decision.

"It's not open season on public officials and when you spread a pack of lies ... he's left with no alternative," Power said. "How far can the media go?"

The lawsuit was served Tuesday.

Thomas joined the Illinois Supreme Court in 2000 and represents the 2nd District, which includes Kane, DuPage and 11 other counties in northern Illinois.

Rivara, 34, has been managing editor since October 2001.

Page, 55, owns a consulting firm and has been a part-time employee at the Chronicle since September 2001.

"I stand by my columns," Page said.

Shaw Suburban Media Group is a division of Dixon-based Shaw Newspapers, which owns the Chronicle, the Northwest Herald of Crystal Lake and other newspapers in Illinois and Iowa.

Gorecki

Continued from page 1

"The big question is, 'What's the impact of a four-month suspension on a sitting state's attorney?'" said James Grogan, a spokesman for the Illinois Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission, which prosecuted Gorecki.

Gorecki is the first sitting state's attorney disciplined by the state Supreme Court, and the future of her administration could weigh on components of the state's election code or constitution.

Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan has been asked to determine whether Gorecki can return to her job after a leave of absence or will be forced to resign. The legal research was stopped when Gorecki asked for the one-year delay.

Madigan spokeswoman Melissa Merz said the decision is not ready for release but would be issued to Assistant Kane County State's Attorney Michael Coghlan, one of Gorecki's top lieutenants.

"I imagine it would be released sometime in the near future," Merz said.

Coghlan, Gorecki's deputy

chief of the criminal division, is among a short list of candidates whom McCoy has tapped to serve in Gorecki's absence.

McCoy would nominate to the Kane County Board Gorecki's potential successor. The board must approve McCoy's choice. McCoy did not return telephone calls for comment.

Just before the 2000 Republican primary, tapes surfaced of telephone calls in which Gorecki three times suggested that a county transportation job could be bought with a donation to McCoy's campaign fund. None of it was true.

The court's one-paragraph order allows Gorecki to complete unfinished business before she must leave her office and refrain from practicing law during the suspension.

On Tuesday, Gorecki was in her office at the Judicial Center in St. Charles and attended meetings most of the day.

Kay Catlin, Gorecki's longtime friend and former campaign manager, said Gorecki declined to comment on the order and instead left an answering machine message indicating that she would wait until Madigan's decision.



JEFF KNOX/DAILY HERALD

Kane County Forest Preserve District officials Tuesday authorized condemning the Foxpatch property in St. Charles Township, which contains 200 feet of the Fox River Trail, after negotiations to buy the land broke down. Also this week, the district acquired the land surrounding the site. 1-14-04 Daily Herald

Kane County forest board condemns Foxpatch land

BY PATRICK WALDRON
Daily Herald Staff Writer

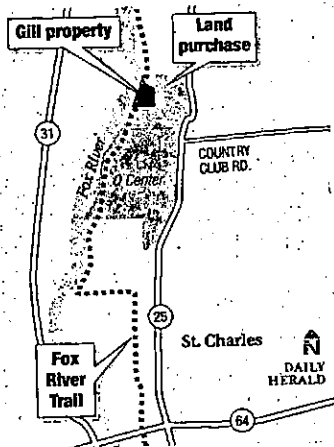
Negotiations are over. The riverfront property known as Foxpatch and its tiny stretch of the county bike path system have been surrounded.

And now the Kane County Forest Preserve is ready to move in for the kill, or in this case, the buy.

In a split vote, forest preserve commissioners Tuesday opted to condemn the 1-acre St. Charles Township parcel on the river's eastern bank, land officials say is needed to secure the future of the Fox River Trail.

The family that owns the land and the house that sits on it says the legal move is a result of the forest preserve's unwillingness to pay a fair price for the real estate and has nothing to do with a 200-foot strip of path.

"They don't need us; they have all the land around us," said Doug Gill, the trustee of the family estate that



controls Foxpatch. "They can move the bike path."

The Gills and forest preserve officials have been at odds since 2000 when a

15-year lease granting public access to that section of the bike trail expired. Under that lease, the forest preserve paid Lucille Gill \$10 a year for the path.

For the last four years, Lucille Gill's children have been trying to renegotiate for a shorter-term lease that would pay more money, as much as \$1,000 a year.

Forest preserve officials rejected those offers and quickly set their sights on buying the entire Gill property.

Those talks never amounted to a deal and broke off this fall.

At the same time, the forest preserve had been working to buy 53 acres of property on the northern edge of the former Arthur Andersen-owned Center For Professional Education, now called the Q Center.

That \$7.2 million deal closed this week and essentially surrounded the

See CONDEMN on PAGE 11

Condemn: Nearby land bought

Continued from Page 1

Gill property with new forest preserve land — which in itself strengthens the county's case to condemn the land under state guidelines.

Forest Preserve President John Hoscheit, a St. Charles Republican, says the Gill portion is still important. He says

moving the bike path would be difficult because of hills surrounding Foxpatch.

Doug Gill says it's just poor negotiations and a rip-off to taxpayers. He says the family has dropped its price down from more than \$1 million to \$445,000 while the forest preserve stays at \$350,000, the amount it was appraised at a

year ago.

Gill says the forest preserve's lack of compromise will end up costing more in the end.

"And it's all at the expense of Kane County taxpayers," he said.

If a last minute offer isn't accepted, legal action to condemn the property could come in less than two weeks.

Geneva alderman seeks smoke-free eateries, bars

1-14-04 Chronicle

Carlson says state's clean air act prevents further restrictions without pre-existing law

Pawlak will seek residents, business and alderman input

By PAUL ROCK
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — The Illinois Clean Indoor Act appears to stand in the way of an alderman who wants to ban smoking in the city's public places.

But the act will not stop Raymond Pawlak from pursuing ways to strengthen the city's laws regulating tobacco use.

Pawlak, the 3rd Ward alderman for the last nine years, proposes that the city ban smoking in all indoor public venues. "I think we're behind on this issue,

and usually we're ahead of the curve," Pawlak said. "As a form of public government, we have a duty to protect the health and safety of residents."

Pawlak's proposal is not close to being enacted, however.

He said he will research the ordinances that ban smoking in public places recently enacted by Skokie and Wilmette and one being considered by Arlington Heights. He also will gauge interest in the idea from residents, business owners and other aldermen before making a formal proposal.

But Fred Carlson, the Kane County

Health Department's tobacco coordinator, said the state's clean air act does not allow municipalities to further regulate smoking in public places unless a clean air ordinance was in place when the act went into effect in 1990. Elgin is the only Kane County community to have a pre-existing ordinance, he said.

The act prohibits smoking in public places but allows businesses to establish smoking sections.

"Illinois law prevents them from establishing anything more than the clean air act allows," Carlson said. "We would applaud them for looking into

it, but that's how the state law reads."

Carlson said the city can increase enforcement of smoking laws and encourage its restaurants and bars to become smoke-free, but cannot do much more than that. About 290 Kane County restaurants have followed the health department's advice.

"We're constantly reinforcing and encouraging them," he said. "As far as forcing them, without (a pre-existing) local ordinance, they have to abide by the state's clean indoor air act."

See SMOKING, page 2

Smoking

Continued from page 1

smoking is a freedom of choice issue. I don't like it when the government steps in and tells us what to do and not to do."

Arbizzani said that while customers sometimes complain about too much smoke coming from the bar area, he values the bar patrons, many of whom smoke.

"People used to be a lot more tolerant of smoking," he said. "Now, one little whiff of smoke and people get paranoid. People that tend to be bar people also tend to be smokers. That's been my observation."

Arbizzani said a backlash from smokers would be inevitable.

"You used to have speak-easies, and you might soon have smoke-easies," he said.

Inglenook Pantry owner Mark Weaver said his Geneva restaurant has been smoke-free since 1989 and has experienced no dropoff in business.

"I think it does help (business) and it certainly does make it a clean place," Weaver said. "I think most people would appreciate (a ban), and more nonsmokers would go out if they knew it would be smoke-free."

Carlson, citing a shift in attitudes about the health risks of smoking, predicts that within 10 years, Illinois legislators will establish a clean air act that prohibits smoking in public places.

Second Ward Alderman William Barclay said he would not support a smoking ban, particularly because of the perceived hit restaurants and bars would take from smokers.

"I would never support making Geneva smoke-free," Barclay said.

"I'm not a smoker, but there are businesses that would be affected if we were smoke-free.

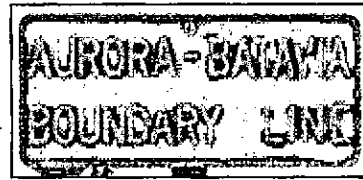
There are a lot of businesses that are no-smoking. I think people always have a choice, and we should leave it up to the individual businesses."

Geneva restaurant owners differ on the idea of a smoking ban.

"I think it stinks," said Bob Arbizzani, whose family has owned the Little Owl since 1920. "I guess the best way to put it is that smoking and not

Lines of discontent

Tri-Cities object to county impact fee



By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Tri-Cities mayors likely will sue Kane County over an impact fee that they say unfairly inhibits their ability to attract commercial development.

By an 18-7 vote Tuesday the county board approved a transportation impact fee that Batavia Mayor Jeff Schielke, St. Charles Mayor Sue Klinkhamer and Geneva City Administrator Phil Page said is unfair.

Schielke hinted that the decision could spark a lawsuit.

"We will have significant meetings among the Tri-Cities to discuss our options," Schielke said. "There's some possibility that we'll form some kind of coalition."

Governments impose impact fees to offset the effect of development.

The impact fee ordinance splits the county into eight regions called planning partnership areas.

The areas were used when the county developed its 2020 Land Resource Management Plan and in its stormwater management plan.

Developments, and especially commercial developments within the Tri-Cities PPA will be assessed much higher fees than neighboring regions, such as Aurora.

Schielke noted that the dividing line between the Tri-Cities and Aurora PPAs is the Aurora Township border, which he said is 842 feet south of Batavia's city limit.

See LINES, page 2



Bob Gerrard — Chronicle photo staff

Top: This sign marks the Aurora-Batavia boundary line on Kirk Road. Above: Batavia Mayor Jeff Schielke speaks Tuesday before the county board in opposition to the transportation impact fee ordinance. The county later approved the fee 18-7. Officials from Batavia, St. Charles and Geneva now are considering a lawsuit against the county, saying that the impact fees are unfair to the Tri-Cities.

Kane County Chronicle

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	3 mo.	6 mo.	Year
Kane County	\$35.10	\$58.50	\$104
Out of county	\$45.00	\$84.50	\$156

(Local rates include Wayne and West Chicago)

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To schedule a speaker from the Chronicle, organizations should call (630) 232-9255, Ext. 307. Available speakers include editors and managers.
 Tours of our plant at 1000 Randall Road in Geneva may be arranged by calling (630) 232-9255, Ext. 307. Groups must have fewer than 20 people and tour hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday.

LOTTERIES

ILLINOIS LOTTERY

TUES. PICK 3 MIDDAY: 3-6-7
 TUES. PICK 3 EVENING: 7-9-7
 TUES. PICK 4 MIDDAY: 1-3-7-0
 TUES. PICK 4 EVENING: 1-8-5-9
 TUES. LITTLE LOTTO: 02-04-20-21-29
 LOTTO JACKPOT: \$9.5 million

How board members voted on the county impact fee proposal

Yes

1. Dorothy Sanchez, Aurora
3. Ken Griffin, Aurora
4. Penelope Cameron, Aurora
5. William Wyatt, Aurora
6. Paul Greviskes, Aurora
7. Gerald Jones, Aurora
8. Rudy Neuberger, Aurora
10. Doug Weigand, Batavia
15. Barbara Wojnicki, St. Charles
17. Deborah Allen, Elgin
18. Donald Wolfe, Elgin

No

2. Mary Richards, Aurora

Absent

9. Jim Mitchell, North Aurora
11. Robert McConaughay, Geneva
12. John Hoscheit, St. Charles
13. Caryl VanOvermeiren, St. Charles
14. Karen McConaughay, St. Charles
26. Jan Carlson, Elburn

Lines: Money to be used for transportation

Continued from page 1

A development in Batavia would generate a fee \$350,000 to \$400,000 more than an identical development in Aurora, Schielke said.

Schielke also noted that the Tri-Cities is saddled with a large proportion of property that cannot be developed, such as the long stretch of Fabyan Parkway that fronts Settler's Hill Golf Course and the Kane County Jail and the east side of Kirk Road owned by Fermilab.

The impact fee ordinance "doesn't grant us much credit. The Tri-Cities is trying to seek some adjustment in the fee schedule," he said.

Page argued that the cities require developers to pay for upfront road improvements before they are granted building permits, such as the \$1.1 million that the developers of Geneva Commons paid for Randall Road improvements.

He said the fee structure will force developers to move west, which would create more congestion and sprawl.

"We feel the methodology is unfair," Page said.

Klinkhamer said the St. Charles City Council on Monday adopted a resolution opposing the ordinance.

"This puts us at a real disadvantage, especially with South Elgin," Klinkhamer said.

Those on the county board who support the fees argued that the county needs \$350 million in road improvements and will collect \$2.6 million a year from the fees.

County board Chairman Mike McCoy said the fees will cover about 8 percent of the needed projects.

"We're doing this for existing citizens. We aren't doing this for developers or dealmakers or city fathers," McCoy said. "As a citizen who uses the roads, I'd want to live in the area of the highest impact fee."

The fees must be spent in the PPA in which they were collected.

Donald Wolfe, R-Elgin, said the fee structure was established according to state statutes that establish the number of cars and the length of

County impact fees

Service area	Single-family house*	Convenience market**
Aurora	\$156	\$1,661
Campton Hills	\$1,780	\$5,226
Greater Elgin	\$297	\$3,326
Northwest	\$424	\$946
Southwest	\$965	\$6,790
Tri-Cities	\$1,249	\$11,145
Upper Fox	\$356	\$3,152
West Central	\$297	\$1,571

* per unit

** per 1,000 square feet

Source: Kane County

their trips on county highways.

"This formula is inherently fair," Wolfe said. "You may not like the boundaries, but there's going to be lines somewhere."

Douglas Weigand was the only board member from the Tri-Cities to support the ordinance.

"I was leaning toward voting 'no' until I sat in traffic on Randall Road coming here," Weigand said. "I am tired of sitting in traffic over and over in my community."

Other Tri-Cities representatives argued against the impact fee.

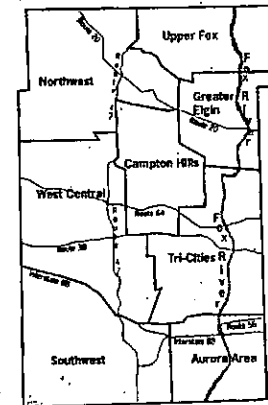
John Hoscheit, R-St. Charles, noted that the dividing line between the Tri-Cities and Campton Hills PPA is Randall Road. A commercial development on the east side of Randall would generate a fee twice as much as one on the west side.

"I don't care where you are on Randall Road, you should pay the same impact fee," Hoscheit said.

Former Transportation Committee Chairman Karen McConaughay, R-St. Charles, said she supports the concept of impact fees but said the ordinance's commercial component discourages economic development, which hurts taxpayers by placing more of a tax burden on residents.

She said she supports separating the commercial and residential components of the ordinance and re-evaluating the commercial side.

Kane County planning partnership areas



Joshua Mowbray -- Kane County Chronicle

"When you create an uneven playing field for economic development, you're hurting the taxpayers," she said.

Transportation Committee Chairman William Wyatt, R-Aurora, said the alternative for revenue is increasing the gas tax or property tax.

"If you want to be the driving force behind the tax, get behind it," Wyatt said.

Mary Richards, R-Aurora, Jim Mitchell, R-North Aurora, Robert McConaughay, R-Geneva, Hoscheit, Caryl VanOvermeiren, R-St. Charles, Karen McConaughay and Jan Carlson, R-Elburn, voted "no."

Dan Walter, R-South Elgin, was present for the discussion but absent for the vote.

1-14-04 Chronicle

County ends Prairie Lakes lawsuit

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Action taken Tuesday by the Kane County Board effectively ends a seven-year lawsuit over zoning and clears the way for the 150-house Prairie Lakes development.

The county board voted to settle the lawsuit and to rezone the property as part of the suit.

At an earlier meeting, the forest preserve commission approved three easements

beneath its Great Western Trail that will provide connections for the proposed subdivision to the Wasco Sanitary District.

All votes are subject to the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency approving the wastewater treatment irrigation area.

Inland Land Appreciation Fund sued the county in 1996 after failing to receive approval for its request to rezone the land on Old Burlington Road from farming to planned unit devel-

opment.

The county argued that the development, at a proposed 241 homes, was too dense, and the soil would not accommodate septic systems.

The agreement calls for the Prairie Lakes development to have 150 homes. As part of the settlement, the 50-acre Bergland property across Old Burlington Road will not be developed.

Instead, 12 acres of sensitive geological land will be dedicated to the forest preserve and the remaining 38

acres will be used by the sanitary district for wastewater treatment.

"This agreement was not brought forward (today) with the choice of 150 homes or open farmland," said Barbara Wojnicki, R-St. Charles, whose district encompasses the property. "Inland owns the property and will develop it."

Preliminary plans call for the Inland to sell its holdings to B&B Enterprises, which eventually will develop the subdivision.

1-15-04 Daily Herald

High court justice sues Chronicle columnist

By PATRICK WALDRON
Daily Herald Staff Writer

Illinois Supreme Court Justice Robert Thomas of West Chicago has filed a defamation lawsuit against a suburban newspaper columnist who wrote that Thomas was unfair in the handling of Kane County State's Attorney Meg Gorecki's discipline case.

The libel suit, filed Friday in Kane County Court, claims Bill Page, a columnist for the Kane County Chronicle, damaged Thomas' reputation by accusing the justice of securing a political endorsement for a Kane County judge candidate in exchange for a lighter punishment against Gorecki.

"This was never Justice Thomas' case and he had no vendetta against Gorecki," said Thomas' attorney, Joseph Power. "Everything in the articles was untrue."

The suit also names the paper's parent company, Shaw Suburban Media Group, a division of Dixon, Ill.-based Shaw Newspapers, and Chronicle Managing Editor Greg Rivara as defendants. Shaw also publishes the Northwest Herald. Rivara was named for his refusal to print retractions when the columns were objected to, Power said.

Thomas, a former Chicago Bears place-kicker, is seeking more than \$50,000 in damages. But that sports notoriety plus his status as a justice means he'll have a higher legal threshold to meet to prove libel, as the law affords more protection to private citizens than public figures.

Thomas' suit claims he was defamed in three editorial page columns published May 15, May 20 and Nov. 20 last year. The columns had to do with Thomas' role as a one of seven justices considering the punishment for Gorecki in her ethics violation case brought by the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission in 2002.

The Illinois Supreme Court acts as the final authority in lawyer discipline cases.

Gorecki's case ended this week with the court ordering the four-month suspension of Gorecki effective Feb. 1.

In the columns, Page painted Thomas as a biased judge and a political enemy of Gorecki during last year's deliberations about what punishment, if any, she would receive for suggesting a bribes-for-jobs scheme in 1998. Page wrote that Thomas tried to influence the court to disbar Gorecki or suspend her license for a year.

He compromised on the four-month suspension, Page wrote in his columns, when Thomas was promised support for Kane County Judge Robert Spence's judicial campaign. Thomas denies the allegations of bias or political trades.

"Justice Thomas never tried to influence his Supreme Court colleagues with respect to length or severity of the sanctions in the Meg Gorecki case," Power wrote in the suit.

In a one-sentence statement, the paper stood by its columnist.

"The Kane County Chronicle categorically denies Mr. Thomas' assertions and will zealously defend our newspaper," Chronicle Publisher Mark Sweetwood said.

Page did not return a phone call seeking comment.

1-15-04 Beacon News

Gorecki must pull out of Minniti murder trial

■ **State's attorney vacancy:** Officials still unsure what to do with interim position

By Mike Cetera
STAFF WRITER

ST. CHARLES TOWNSHIP — The trial was to have been all about the reckoning of a brutal rape and murder, an

act authorities said was committed by a 15-year-old boy.
But the case against Joshua Minniti has taken a twist.

On Feb. 2, Minniti is expected to stand trial. It is a day Meg Gorecki declared months ago the state was prepared to see.

Now it appears the Kane County state's attorney, who has led the prosecution of the case, will have to sit out its culmination. The four-month suspension

of Gorecki's law license is to begin a day earlier.

Gorecki and others within the state's attorney's office say her absence will not affect the Minniti case, and other cases Gorecki has handled directly likely will be handed off to her staff. An accounting of the cases Gorecki is personally prosecuting was unavailable Wednesday.

"We will continue working through the entire month, and I have not handed off the case to (other prosecutors), but they

will be trying the case," Gorecki said Wednesday on a voice mail left for a reporter. "We are ready to go to trial on the case."

Gorecki could not be reached for comment later in the day.

Minniti, now 18, is accused of beating 57-year-old Irma Braun with a crowbar during an October 2001 botched robbery of her Aurora Township home. He also is charged with the sexual assault of Braun,

❖ *Turn to GORECKI, A2*

fortherecord

The Beacon News tries to be accurate and fair in every story it publishes. When a mistake occurs, we want to fix it. To report errors, call the managing editor at 844-5881.

■ A story Wednesday incorrectly identified Becky Morganegg's position with the Kendall County court system. Morganegg is the Kendall County court administrator and not an employee of the circuit clerk. Morganegg is seeking the Republican nomination for circuit clerk in the March primary election.

recentdeaths

Obituaries / Page A8

Benjamin, Daniel James, 73, Montgomery
Bennett, Neil, 69, Aurora
Feldott, Chris Paul, 91, Aurora
Goldsberry, Raymond B., 92, Sandwich
Hurley, Elaine F., 66, Geneva
King, Kirk D., 41, formerly Aurora
Knickerbocker, Genevieve "Reddi", 95, Sarasota, Fla.
Markowski, Kristine, 35, Batavia
Mayer, Betty, 71, Oswego
Pollock, Roslyn, 89
Tomlin, Juanita S., 94, Aurora

The Beacon News

 A Hollinger

GOECKI

From page A1

who lived only houses away from the teenager.

Prosecutors are expected to base their case around Minniti's taped confession and DNA evidence collected from Braun's home.

"We're certainly completely up to speed on it," said Assistant State's Attorney Joseph Cullen, who is expected to lead the prosecution. "I know this case inside and out."

Three prosecutors, including Gorecki, have been assigned to the Minniti case throughout. Most cases are tried using two prosecutors, although Gorecki's office said the embattled state's attorney's legal woes had nothing to do with adding the extra hand — Assistant State's Attorney Divya Sarang, who has specialized in juvenile prosecutions.

Criminal Chief Jody Gleason said the complexity of some cases requires additional help.

Kane County Public Defender David Kliment, who is Minniti's attorney, said he plans to proceed to trial as scheduled. A decision on whether to seek a jury or bench trial has not been made, he said.

"I can't imagine that they went into this thing without that possibility (of a law-license suspension) in mind," Kliment said.

Meanwhile, a day after the Illinois Supreme Court announced the first-term Republican's suspension over a bogus jobs-for-cash scheme, county officials were still grappling with what to do next.

County Board Chairman Mike

McCoy said the interpretations of the law given to him make it clear the County Board will be able to declare a vacancy in Gorecki's office, then appoint someone to fill the unexpired term within 60 days.

But with the next meeting of the board scheduled for Feb. 10, a gap will exist between when Gorecki's suspension starts and when the board votes. When asked what will happen during the gap in time, McCoy said he is not sure.

"We're looking into that," he said. "There has to be some provision for that, because there could be a situation where the state's attorney has a heart attack and dies."

McCoy has been working with Aurora attorney Patrick Kinnally on a solution. Kinnally could not be reached for comment Wednesday.

Several options have been suggested.

A meeting of the County Board could be called closer to Gorecki's suspension date or another person could be appointed by 16th Circuit Chief Judge Philip DiMarzio to serve during the interim period, McCoy said.

The law appears to give the County Board power to appoint after the vacancy, but he said the authority to make an appointment before the vacancy is declared might go to DiMarzio, who declined comment Wednesday.

McCoy has said, however, he will take an opinion by the Illinois attorney general's office into account. It is not known when that opinion will be available.

Staff writer Dan Duggan contributed to this report.

Coroner, candidate accuse each other of being negligent

1-15-04 Chronicle

*Elgin physician: West did not
order sufficient tests for patient*

By PAUL ROCK
and ADAM KOVAC
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — A candidate for Kane County coroner has accused incumbent Charles West of botching a death investigation he claims might have led to criminal charges.

Bob Tiballi, an Elgin physician, said Wednesday that West did not order sufficient tests for one of Tiballi's patients who had cocaine in her system when she died while hospitalized after a stroke. Evidence showed that the incapacitated woman ingested the drug while she was in the hospital.

West refuted the allegations and maintained that Tiballi was negligent because he failed to notify authorities when the drug was detected hours before the woman died.

Tiballi and West are in a three-way race that includes Stan Hickrod, an East Dundee crematorium owner, for the Republican nomination in the March 16 GOP primary.

The allegations, leveled at a meeting between the three candidates at the *Kane County Chronicle*, are the latest in a series of campaign salvos that until Wednesday were limited

to Hickrod challenging West.

"This was sloppy coroner's work," Tiballi said of the death investigation after the woman died Feb. 20, 2001.

Elgin police were called to investigate the woman's death, which occurred 17 days after she was admitted to Sherman Hospital after she suffered a cocaine-related stroke in her home, according to coroner's documents.

A drug test when the woman, who is not being identified, was admitted detected cocaine in her urine. The drug was found again as her health began to rapidly deteriorate the day before she died.

At a coroner's inquest that May, West said the presence of cocaine while the woman was partially paralyzed and could not talk or feed herself triggered "concern about the circumstances surrounding her death," the documents show.

Elgin police Detective Bill Wolf testified at the inquest that investigators think the woman was given cocaine sometime in the three days before she died, possibly through a feeding or intravenous tube while in the hospital.

See CORONER, page 2

Coroner

Continued from page 1

"It's not something that normally happens when somebody's inside of a hospital," Wolf told a coroner's jury.

The jury ruled that the woman died from complications of a cocaine-related stroke, but could not determine if the death was natural or a homicide.

Criminal charges were never filed in the case, in part because the woman's family would not cooperate with investigators, according to a transcript of the inquest.

Tiballi claims that West should have conducted additional tests during the woman's autopsy that could have led to criminal charges against whomever allegedly gave cocaine to his patient.

But West maintains that his office conducted a thorough investigation and leveled his own allegations that Tiballi

should have contacted police sooner when he learned of the continuing drug use. He further stated that it is not within his power to file criminal charges and emphasized that authority lies only with the Kane County State's Attorney's Office.

"He documented a rise in her cocaine levels, and he did nothing," West said. "He has a legal and ethical responsibility to do something."

However, Tiballi said the final drug test results were not available until after the woman died.

Tiballi recently had avoided trading political blows in the heated primary that appears focused on West's administration and Hickrod's potential to profit from holding the post.

In the last three months, West and Hickrod have traded Freedom of Information Act requests seeking records from West's office and Hickrod's business, which Hickrod has said he will vacate if elected.

1-15-04
Chronicle



Bill
Page

So long, Klink

I don't often use this space for personal messages, but today I'm making an exception to give a salute to a friend. Friday, St. Charles Police Cmdr. Dan Klinkhamer will wrap up a 29-year career with the department, and it's been an interesting, if not occasionally bumpy, run.

Over the years, Dan has been involved in every facet of police work, from street patrol to investigations to administration. Although he always kept up with technology, Dan was decidedly "old school" when it came to his approach to the job. A strong work ethic, dogged pursuit of details and knowledge of the community were the tools Dan used to close literally thousands of investigations.

In addition, Dan was particularly skilled as a hostage negotiator and used that talent to end five situations where the subjects were barricaded. I don't know if there's a connection, but in addition to being able to talk people into giving up, for some reason Dan also was the guy criminals would search out when they wanted to turn themselves in.

It won't be easy for the St. Charles Police Department to replace Dan Klinkhamer; the job is different now and so are some of the younger men and women in uniform. Dan always has lived in town, his kids went to school here and obviously his wife seems to have a sense of civic involvement, too.

That isn't the case anymore. Officers live up to 25 miles away and few have any ties to the city beyond their job. When they punch out, they leave town, but that never was the case with Dan. St. Charles always has been more to him than a place to earn a paycheck, it's his home. His telephone number was listed, and he often took calls from neighbors, parents and other citizens who needed to talk to a cop who would listen.

I suppose I should be glad that Dan's retiring because it means we'll be able to get in a few more games of racquetball, but the man is left-handed and has a wicked backhand. More on-court humiliation I don't need. (Not that retirement means Dan will be slowing down much. He'll continue his gig as director of security for the Kane County

Cougars, and he is weighing a few other offers as well.)

It has been a good run for Dan, but it is time to move to the next challenge. Thanks, Klink, St. Charles is a better place because of you.

Well now... hasn't it been an interesting news week? A lot of stories broke that will have far-reaching impact on the county and we'll have our work cut out just trying to keep up.

The Illinois Supreme Court's imposed a four-month law license suspension on Meg Gorecki, effective Feb. 1. However, that doesn't answer all the questions that need answers in this affair. Does the suspension mean Gorecki must give up her job? Can she stay on as an administrator? If she has to leave, is she entitled to return to the office she rightfully won in an election after the suspension is through? And so on. Most of these questions have to be answered by Attorney General Lisa Madigan's office, but so far, none have, leaving the situation up in the air.

Not that any of those questions seem to bother county board Chairman Mike McCoy, who already is moving to replace Gorecki. It would be nice if McCoy would wait for guidance from Madigan; that way we'd know the right decision had been made.

Speaking of McCoy's decisions, what was behind his push to implement a county transportation impact fee schedule that brutalizes the Tri-Cities?

The new fees are 10 times higher in the Tri-Cities than Aurora, four times higher than Elgin, and three times more than the northwest sector of Kane County. That much disparity will have a chilling effect on business growth — and by extension, tax revenues to cities — in the affected zones. This was not a well-thought out action, but it is of a type that is becoming increasingly the norm as McCoy enters his last few months in office.

■ *Bill Page lives in St. Charles and writes about local issues on Tuesday and Thursday. Calls and e-mails answered at (630) 584-0809 or wpage@mediawerks.org.*

Our Viewpoint

The damage is done

Now, it again is time to turn to Kane County and what happens to its 400,000 residents now that the chief law enforcement officer is in limbo.

1-15-04
Chronicle

Meg Gorecki must vacate her position as Kane County state's attorney on Feb. 1.

That is the day the Illinois Supreme Court has determined in refusing to consider Gorecki's request to have her law license suspension delayed until November, when she would leave office after the electoral cycle.

Gorecki's law license was suspended for four months after she left messages on an answering machine suggesting a county highway department job could be had in exchange for a campaign donation. Nothing ever came of the suggestion, and Gorecki later said she made up the story.

Gorecki's troubles have been well-documented. Some would say overly so. Now, it again is time to turn to Kane County and what happens to its 400,000 residents now that the chief law enforcement officer is in limbo.

Unfortunately, there are no answers.

Attorney General Lisa Madigan's office still has not said whether Gorecki can return to office after serving the suspension. Another possibility, albeit remote, is that Gorecki could continue her administrative duties and not practice law. Her position largely is administrative.

We still are confused why Madigan's office has not had a reply in hand to the questions that have been asked for

nearly one year. Choosing to not be in front of the Supreme Court's decision might be polite in the political arena, but it does a disservice to Kane County.

Madigan's office has given Kane County Board Chairman Mike McCoy no recourse other than to be prepared for a vacancy. McCoy would submit possible replacements for the county board's approval to fill whatever vacancy exists given Gorecki's suspension.

Some might believe it unseemly that McCoy already has set Feb. 10 as the day he would declare Gorecki's office vacant. However, not having a plan in place would further harm Kane County.

And that is where our thoughts must be today.

The damage has been done regarding Gorecki. She made a poor decision to leave the taped messages. She compounded that poor decision by denying the allegations. She inexplicably did not respond to public inquiries nor refute the criticisms of her enemies.

She did nothing to stop the speeding train careening off the tracks.

Kane County residents continue to be the passengers in that train. It would be wise if everyone else involved would remember that simple fact and act accordingly.

Kane County deserves no less.

Child waiting room at Kane courthouse is up and running

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — The child waiting room is open at the Kane County Judicial Center, and the Finance Committee on Wednesday established its operating budget.

Court administrator Douglas Naughton said next year's cost will be \$70,200 and he expects \$72,200 in revenue.

The revenue figure might be low, Naughton said, considering the amount of money brought in 2003.

"That's a conservative guess considering we got \$77,000 last year," Naughton said.

The money to pay for the child waiting room comes from an added \$5 tacked on civil case filing fees.

The county board in August 2002 approved the \$5 fee increase, which the state legislature allows for establishing courthouse child waiting rooms.

The bulk of the expenses, \$68,200, will be paid to Jane Stover Easter Seals, the agency hired to operate the waiting room.

Because the waiting room opened last week, Naughton said there has not been time to evaluate its effectiveness. During last week and the first

part of this week attendance has averaged two to three, he said, with a high of seven.

The waiting room is on the Judicial Center's lower level at the back of the cafeteria.

The waiting room was the idea of the Kane County Bar Association Foundation, which proposed it two years ago.

Its purpose is to have a place for youngsters while their parents are in court, as well as a refuge for children away from the seamier side of the day-to-day activities at the courthouse.

Naughton said more children are in the courthouse on Thursdays and Fridays when judges hold sentencing hearings. Often entire families of both defendants and victims come to court to hear the sentences read, he said.

The waiting room is not a day-care center, which would operate under tougher legal restrictions.

Parents are able to drop a child or children off and receive a wrist band. Only by showing the wrist band is the child turned over.

The bar association foundation conducted a survey and found an average of 12 to 15 children ages 2 to 12 would use the facility each day.

1-15-04 Chronicle

Justice files suit against newspaper, columnist

By Daniel Duggan
STAFF WRITER

1-15-04 Beacon News

An Illinois Supreme Court justice is suing an area newspaper, claiming several recent opinion columns were defamatory.

Robert Thomas, the Supreme Court justice representing the district that includes the Fox Valley, filed the four-count civil suit in Kane

County's 16th Judicial Circuit Court last week against local columnist Bill Page and the Geneva-based Kane County Chronicle, which publishes his columns.

The suit also names Shaw Suburban Media Group, which owns the newspaper.

In the 20-page complaint, Thomas' attorney, Joseph Power of Chicago, claims Page falsely portrayed Thomas' involvement in the recent action to suspend Kane County State's Attorney Meg Gorecki's license to practice law. He also claims Page's columns tarnished his reputation as a justice of the state's high court.

The suit references three columns Page wrote about motivations for the punishment Gorecki received from the Supreme Court in November. The court found she violated the ethics rules for attorneys when she left messages on a friend's answering machine, laying out a plan to get a transportation job by making political donations.



Illinois Supreme Court justice Robert Thomas is suing the Kane County Chronicle.

In Page's columns, he claimed Thomas was part of a GOP conspiracy to punish Gorecki for taking on fellow Republican David Akemann in the 2000 primary election. Page also implied that Thomas influenced other justices in making the decision to suspend Gorecki's law license for four months, partly out of an attempt to help a judicial candidate.

Page also sent an e-mail to the Supreme Court's press office, saying the entire court would face a "nightmare of bad publicity" if Thomas were to influence the decision of the justices, according to the lawsuit.

Thomas' complaint states Page's columns were "false or authored with a reckless disregard for their truth or falsity," with "malice towards the reputation of Justice Thomas."

Thomas is seeking damages in excess of \$50,000 for each of the two counts of defamation and the two counts of "false light."

Retractions for the columns were requested, but nothing was run in the newspaper, Power said, and that action was followed by another story.

"This really leaves (Thomas) with no other avenue," Power said. "They spread a pack of lies about him. He's not looking to pick a fight, but what else can he do?"

"They're saying he's a vindictive, small-minded person who will trade his vote to help a friend. It's as bad as what Gorecki was charged with, and it's false," Power added.

Kane County Chronicle Publisher Mark M. Sweetwood issued a brief statement on the lawsuit by e-mail Wednesday.

"The Kane County Chronicle categorically denies Mr. Thomas' assertions and we will zealously defend our newspaper," he said.

1-15-04 Beacon News

County officials sending grant money back to state

By Steve Lord

STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — When is a state grant not a state grant?

When it is not spent, apparently.

Kane County officials are sending a \$13,672 Local Law Enforcement Block Grant back to the state of Illinois because no one can find any proof it ever was used.

"We tried to get information from the state with absolutely no luck," Cheryl Pattelli, Kane County finance director, told the County Board Finance and Budget Committee Wednesday. "There are no files on it. We have concluded it was not spent because there is no evidence it was spent."

So the county will send the money back. Pattelli said it will come from county contingency funds because it would be impossible to find out what fund the grant money went into.

The situation dates back to 1998, when the county got two Local Law Enforcement Block Grants at the same time. One was for \$13,604, and the other for \$13,672. Pattelli theorized the grants got confused because they were for almost the same amount.

"There was some sort of mix-up when they were received," she said.

Pattelli also told the Finance Committee Wednesday that, while final 2003 budget figures are not available, it appears the county is "going to be in a better situation" than was projected last September.

"It seems revenue was higher, and expenditures lower," she said. Committee members told Pattelli they want to see a list of the departments that overspent budgets for 2003. She said the list probably will be no surprise to committee members.

"Most departments that overspent have come to you at some time," she said.

1-15-04 Daily Herald

More layoffs a possibility in county offices

By Tona Kunz

Daily Herald Staff Writer

The employee exodus that began last year in DuPage County government may not be over.

County board Chairman

Robert Schillerstrom says his main priority for 2004 is continuing to streamline county government.

Last year, 304 of the county's 4,300 workers opted to leave under a buyout agreement.

Officials left another 37 posi-

tions vacant through attrition and laid off 18 people, mostly in information technology and a department that serves low-income families.

They said the cuts were needed to help slice \$23 million from the county budget.

1-15-04 Beacon News

Slew of area referendums set for spring ballot

BEACON NEWS STAFF

Raise the tax rate on people who make more than a quarter-million dollars a year.

OK bond issues for new school and library projects.

And add just a few cents toward the maintenance of roads and the improvement of fire services.

Those are among the many issues that will be on the primary election ballot in the Fox Valley in March.

Today is the deadline for local government bodies to get their referendum questions on the ballot. Many governments already have made the referendum applications to area county clerks.

LaSalle County and Aurora Township both will place on the ballot a special advisory referendum asking whether the state income tax should increase for people making more than \$250,000 a year in order to create an education fund.

The Geneva School District is seeking permission to issue bonds worth \$48,972,121 to build a new middle school and maintain existing buildings. The School District is also requesting an increase in the tax rate from \$3.08 to \$3.43.

Minooka High School District in southern Kendall County proposes issuing \$28.4 million in bonds to build and equip a new school. Also, the Minooka Consolidated School District is wants to increase its tax rate from \$1.62

to \$2.17 per \$100 assessed evaluation. The Oswego Library District is seeking permission to issue \$16 million in bonds to expand the library in downtown Oswego. And the Town & County Library District in Elburn wants to increase its tax rate from 15 cents to 19 cents.

The Sandwich Fire Department is seeking a 30-cent tax increase to provide ambulance service. In Hinckley,

◆ *Turn to* **BALLOT, A2**

Coming Friday

- A full list of Fox Valley government bodies that will pose referendums on the March primary ballot.

5 p.m. weekdays

Obituaries

Call (630) 844-5837 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. weekdays or 4-8 p.m. weekends and holidays

Newsroom

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News question or complaint? Call Jim King (630) 844-5881

To suggest a story or photo: Call City Editor John Russell (630) 844-5902

To submit a press release: Call community editor Jolene Kramer or Dixie Endicott at (630) 844-5880

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Photos: Donnell Collins (630) 844-5917; Steve Rosenberg (630) 801-5413

Montgomery.
Blackberry Farm, 100 S. Barnes said.

BALLOT

From page A1

The Fire Protection District wants a tax cap increase to build a new fire station. The increase would mean an additional 11 cents for every \$100 of assessed valuation.

DeKalb County is seeking to impose a half-cent sales tax at all retail businesses in the county to fund public safety programs and crime prevention.

In Kane County, the road districts in Blackberry Township and Virgil

Township both want tax rate increases from 16.5 cents up to 33 cents for road purposes.

In North Aurora, there will be two nonmonetary issues on the ballot.

The village of North Aurora is asking residents' permission to conduct future local elections on a strictly non-partisan basis.

The North Aurora Fire Protection District is asking for permission to annex an eight-house subdivision that currently is covered by the Batavia Fire Department. The subdivision, off Tanner Road, is closer to the North Aurora fire station.

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1-16-04 Beacon News

Variety of referendums on March ballot

Thursday was the last day for local governments to file with county clerks to get referendums on the March 16 primary election ballot.

Issues that will be on the ballot in Kane, Kendall, DuPage, Will, DeKalb and LaSalle counties:

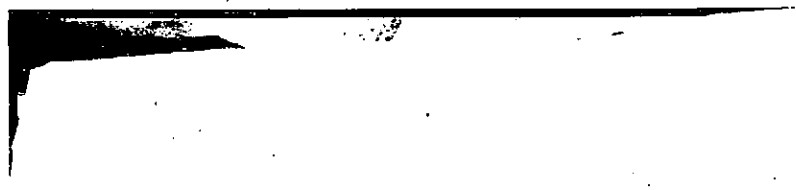
- Aurora Township: Advise the legislature to raise state income tax for those individuals who make more than a quarter-million dollars a year?
- Big Rock Township: Shall the township increase the property tax extension limitation from 5 percent up to 39.55 percent for the 2003-2004 levy year?
- Blackberry Township Road District: Shall the district increase the property tax rate from .1650 percent up to .3300 percent for road purposes?
- DeKalb County: Shall the county be authorized to impose a public safety tax at the rate of one-half of one percent upon all retail sales for crime prevention, detention, and other public safety purposes?
- Geneva School District: Shall the district issue bonds in the amount of \$48,972,121 for the purpose of building one new middle school and maintaining existing buildings?
- Geneva School District: Shall the district increase the tax rate from 3.08 percent to 3.43 percent?
- Hinckley Fire Protection District: Shall the extension limitation under the property tax extension limitation law be increased from 2.4 percent to 60.264 percent for the 2003 levy year?
- Minooka High School District: Shall the district build and equip a new high school building and issue

bonds to the amount of \$28.4 million?

- Minooka School District: Shall the maximum annual tax rate for educational purposes be increased and established at 2.17 percent, instead of 1.62 percent, the present maximum rate?
- Minooka School District: Shall the district build and equip an addition to Minooka Junior High School and build and equip an elementary school building, and issue bonds to the amount of \$15.5 million?
- North Aurora: Shall the village conduct future elections for all village offices as non-partisan elections?
- North Aurora Fire Protection District: Shall the Deer Oaks subdivision be disconnected from the Batavia & Countryside Fire Protection District and annexed into the North Aurora & Countryside Fire Protection District?

- Oswego Public Library District: Shall the bonds of the Library District in the amount of \$16.5 million be issued for the purpose of purchasing sites for erecting library buildings, building an addition to and repairing, remodeling and improving the existing library building, furnishing necessary equipment, acquiring library materials and electronic data storage and retrieval facilities and providing for the payment of a mortgage executed to pay costs of library improvements?
- Sandwich Fire Protection District: Shall the Fire Protection District levy a special tax at a rate not to exceed .30 percent for the purpose of providing ambulance services?
- Sugar Grove Public Library District: Shall the extension limitation under the property tax limitation law be increased from 1.9 percent to

- 76 percent for the 2004 levy year?
- Town & Country Library District (Elburn): Shall the annual public library tax rate be established at .19 percent instead of .15 percent?
- Virgil Township: Shall the equalized assessed valuation on taxable property be increased from .165 percent to a maximum of .330 percent for road purposes?
- Virgil Township: Shall the extension limitation under the property tax limitation law for the road fund be increased from 2.4 percent to 198.18 percent for the 2004 tax levy year?
- Warrenville: Shall the city of Warrenville be a home rule unit?
- West Chicago Mosquito Abatement District: Shall the extension limitation under the property tax limitation law for the district be increased from 1.9 percent to 70 percent for the 2004 levy year?



1-16-04 BEACON NEWS

Forest panel condemns Gill plot

■ Makes it official: Board members reinforce their desire to buy bike trail land

By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — Kane County Forest Preserve District members made it official this week, voting to condemn less than an acre of land that contains about 200 feet of the Fox River bike trail in St. Charles Township.

The full district board voted 19-5 to condemn the property, owned by the Lucille B. Gill trust and once called Foxpatch when the Gill family lived on it. It's on the east side of the Fox River north of St. Charles.

Forest Preserve board members first voted last November to authorize condemnation of the land, and reinforced that vote Tuesday. Officials said they have been trying to negotiate with the Gill family for more than two years.

"We have had a number of discussions and been unable to reach an amicable decision," said Forest Preserve President John Hoscheit, R-St. Charles.

The district offered about \$300,000 for the plot. The family has asked for as much as \$1.2 million.

Since 1987, the Forest Preserve had been leasing the 200-foot-long stretch from the Gill family for \$10 a year. That agreement ran out in 2000, and the Forest Preserve and the family began negotiations.

At one time, the family asked for as much as \$1,500 a month for a new lease. The Forest Preserve offered as much as \$500 a month.

Last Nov. 1, the trail was closed, and there was a debate about who closed it. The Gill family insisted they did not close the trail to the public, but Forest Preserve officials maintained they did.

It was at that point that Hoscheit said the district needed to purchase the property to maintain the integrity of the trail.

Voting against the condemnation

were board members Deborah Allan, R-Elgin; Lee Barrett, R-Dundee; John Noverini and Margaret Scalfaro, both R-Carpentersville; and Karen McConaughay, R-St. Charles.

Barrett characterized the condemnation as "hostile," and "an aggressive act on our part."

Board member Gerry Jones, D-Aurora, said the Forest Preserve District has not been aggressive enough.

"We've been negotiating for 2½ years," he said. "If anything, we've been too passive."

The Forest Preserve District did recently close on the Arthur Andersen property — 53 acres that surround the Gill property. With that purchase, officials could bypass the Gill property with the bike trail. But it would require bikers' and hikers to climb a steep hill.

Hoscheit praised the purchase of the Andersen property as preserving open space along the river.

"That would have been developed residentially," he said.

Batavia wants grant money for Route 25 project

1-16-04 Chronicle

\$250,000 grant would be used for purchase of church property

By MARK FOSTER
Kane County Chronicle

BATAVIA — City officials want Gov. Rod Blagojevich to release a \$250,000 grant for the Route 25 realignment project.

The money is to be used for the purchase of the First Baptist Church

property at the northwest corner of East Wilson Street and North Washington Avenue.

"This has been a long-term plan, and we're at the point now where this is one of the last pieces of the puzzle," said state Rep. Tim Schmitz, R-Batavia.

Months after writing a letter on

behalf of the city, Schmitz received a letter from the governor's office last month, with the response that release of the money still is under review.

"The good news is that they didn't say no," Schmitz said. "We'd like to get these funds released. They've been promised."

Route 25 takes a jog in downtown Batavia. The 100 block of East Wilson Street connects the two legs of the state route, meaning that motorists traveling the north-south highway must make a right-hand turn and a left-hand turn when driving through

the community. City officials say the jog creates traffic flow problems throughout the downtown and have worked with Illinois Department of Transportation officials to draw up a plan that would eliminate the jog by realigning the two legs of the highway and establishing a single Route 25-Wilson intersection.

The city already owns the vacant property at the southeast corner of Wilson and River streets, but needs the church property, as well. The project calls for routing the highway on a northeast-southwest alignment

from the corner of State Street and North Washington Avenue to the corner of Webster Street and South River Street.

The roadway would run through the church's parking area, but the church building would not be touched.

For years, the city's position was that it would never force the church to move from its 1889 building, but was interested in buying the building if the congregation ever decided it wanted to move.

See PROJECT, page 3

Project

Continued from page 1

Once the church started to develop plans for a new church on Main Street west of Randall Road, church and city leaders began to discuss the potential sale of the property.

"We've got the essence of a contract," Mayor Jeff Schielke said. "It's verbal."

That verbal agreement includes a \$715,000 price for the 1.6 acres, said Jim Hooper, the church building committee chairman.

"We're landlocked, and the building is not user-friendly anymore, with a lot of stairs," Hooper said. "It's old architecture with a lot of spaces cut up and no air-conditioning. There is not a whole lot you can do with that building. It would be as expensive to upgrade as too move."

The church has conception plans for a 12,000-square-foot, \$2.5 million church at the corner of Main Street and South Mill Creek Drive, on eight acres to be donated by developer Kent Shodeen, Hooper said.

However, the donation is conditional upon the church having financing and a plan by early 2005, Hooper said.

The church has about 90 to 100 members attending a single Sunday service. Financing the new building will require fund-raising and a loan in addition to the money the church realizes from the sale of its property, Hooper said.

Aside from the city, developers have expressed interest in the church property, Hooper said.

City officials say they need the \$250,000 grant, which is one of many Illinois FIRST grants secured by state Sen. Chris Lauzen, R-Aurora, that have yet to be released.

"Every time I see the governor, I remind him about the \$1.4 million in member initiatives in my district that are still out there," Lauzen said.

Schielke said that the future of the old church has yet to be determined.

"That would be a building without a parking lot," Schielke said.

Desired land has Batavia eager

Officials note progress in Mooseheart deal

By GALA M. PIERCE
Daily Herald Staff Writer

Batavia city, school and park leaders are anxious to carve up the Mooseheart land along Randall Road south of Main Street.

The city hopes to annex 50 acres for businesses along Randall and a possible water tower, the school district needs to expand the high school and the park district may build a recreational facility on the land.

For the past few years, there has been talk of a deal pending between the Batavia entities and Mooseheart, which sits on 1,000 acres along the west bank of the Fox River between Batavia and North Aurora.

Negotiations remain preliminary, but the deal is closer at hand as all parties convened just before the holidays.

Last month, park representatives hired a company to conceive a concept plan for all of the land's possible uses. Once school officials get the land appraised this week, the different city officials will have more information to bring to the table.

"We hope to start to get into serious negotiations fairly soon," Batavia school board President Tom Van Cleave said.

No new meeting has been set, and there is no deadline. However, school administrators need to prepare a list of recommendations in how to expand the high school by this spring.

Offering land

In April 2001, the financially strapped Mooseheart International first announced plans of leasing more than 300 acres.

The umbrella organization, which oversees the fraternity and Mooseheart Child City and School, cited a slow economy and dwindling membership as reasons for its financial woes. At

See LAND on PAGE 7

FRIDAY, JANUARY 16, 2004

Continued from Page 1

Land: Parcel sizes still in question

Continued from Page 1

that time, Mooseheart officials were hesitant to sell some of the farmland.

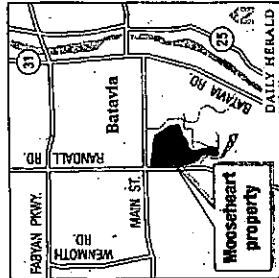
In July 2001, Batavia Mayor Jeff Schielke announced the intention of the city council, school board, park district and township to pursue a joint purchase of 150 acres of Mooseheart property. He declared a public use of the land since the property lacked the infrastructure and capacity to service homes.

More than a year ago, Mooseheart's troubles hit such a low its school was in danger of closing. The school serves 202 children on campus.

Three chunks of land were put on the market, one of which falls within Batavia's boundaries and two of which fall within North Aurora's. Last June, the Women of the Moose came to the school's rescue by raising membership fees for its 500,000 members across the nation.

Tight budgeting and the group's annual \$1.5 million fees should save Mooseheart from sending its children to Batavia schools.

Last spring, Batavia voters approved a referendum proposal that allows the school



district to borrow \$5 million to buy 50 acres of the land for an expansion of the high school. The land also would provide space for water retention that the current campus lacks.

In November, the park district wrapped up focus group sessions, and each group indicated Mooseheart land was ideal for a future recreational facility. A questionnaire that will be sent out randomly in the next couple of weeks may give the park district further direction.

Possible obstacles

While every party remains hopeful the deal is on, no one is certain.

Two possible stumbling blocks include the amount of usable land and the quantity of

"This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity — to have some land available smack dab in the middle of our jurisdiction that's right next to the high school."

Park district Executive Director Mike Clark

acreage each party wants. "There's about 187 acres north of Mooseheart Lake and south of Main Street that could be developed," said Donald Ross, director general and chief executive officer of Mooseheart International.

"If it were all to be developed, we would need about 26 acres for water retention and roads. Then the rest would be available to what we've been talking about for years — commercial, a retirement community, the school district and the park district."

The concept plan, conducted by Wehler Peterson & Associates of Batavia last month, identifies 165 acres for everyone's needs. The plan does not address the floodplain areas. "There are some floodplain

issues on the parcel in question that seem to be in conflict between Mooseheart land planning and what we've identified in our land planning," Park District Executive Director Mike Clark said. "That's one issue that needs to be resolved."

At the recent meeting, Batavia leaders also learned that Mooseheart's comprehensive land plan designates almost 25 acres for the school district and another 25 for the park district.

Each party wants 50 acres, however.

When asked whether there is room to negotiate the acreage amounts, Donald Ross, director general and chief executive officer of Mooseheart International, said yes.

"The numbers mean something, but there's certainly opportunities for them to change," Ross said.

The deal is an opportunity for everyone to cooperate to meet their needs, Clark said.

"This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity — to have some land available smack dab in the middle of our jurisdiction that's right next to the high school," he said. "What better location to meet all the needs of the community?"

Retiring animal warden honored

1-16-04 Beacon news

BEACON NEWS STAFF

GENEVA - As Phil Zavitz walked toward the front of the Kane County Board room this week, Board Chairman Mike McCoy quickly pointed out that two news photographers were following him.

"See?" McCoy said. "Wherever Phil shows up, there's always cameras."

That observation even made it into the official resolution the County Board passed this week to honor Zavitz, who is retiring after 13 years in the Animal Control office.

Before joining Kane's Animal Control office, he spent 14 years answering calls for animals in distress, or humans in distress because of animals, throughout the Tri-Cities, ever since he started helping St. Charles' animal-control officer.



Phil Zavitz was honored Thursday by the Kane County Board.

And, yes, it seems his photo has made it into the newspapers a few times, with every kind of animal, including deer, baby squirrels, a lynx, pythons, alligators, lizards, dogs, donkeys, chickens, servals, bobcats and coyotes.

"Phil has had more photographs in the county's newspapers than any other county employee, appearing with various animals he has saved, and some of them were almost as photogenic as his elfin self," read part of the County Board resolution.

The official document also noted Zavitz' "dedication to his duty is surpassed only by his willingness to serve the community in innumerable volunteer efforts."

After a standing ovation from the board and those attending the meeting, Zavitz called the resolution "quite an honor." But he added that it belongs as much to the "Animal Control team" as to him.

"Like I always said, when you care to send the very best, call Animal Control," he said.

1-16-04 Beacon news
Electionwatch

Aurora mayoral candidate **Bill Wyatt** is underwriting the admission fee for the Paramount Theatre offerings of "Tuesday Nights at the Movies" Tuesday to Feb. 24.

The Paramount selected three movies by Alfred Hitchcock and three romantic classics.

Psycho will be shown at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday at the theater, 23 E. Galena Blvd. in Aurora. The remaining movies are: *The Birds*, *North by Northwest*, *Casablanca*, *Doctor Zhivago* and *The Philadelphia Story*.

Voter registration will be held in the lobby of the theater, where Wyatt will greet moviegoers.

Call (630) 896-6666.

Local candidates are invited to submit items about endorsements, fund-raisers, debates, appearances or other campaign activities to Election Watch. Mail items to: Election Watch, The Beacon News, 101 S. River St., Aurora 60506. Fax (630) 844-1043. Or e-mail beaconourtowns@scn1.com

Norris challenges Seyller for county clerk

Computer errors at center
of political debate
1-17-04 Chronicle

By DAN CHANZIT
Kane County Chronicle

The Republican challenger seeking Kane County Clerk Deb Seyller's job believes the clerk could do a better job.

Sue Norris of Aurora seeks the Republican nomination in the March 16 primary. Norris wants to make the office more efficient. She also wants to provide attorneys and the public with better access to information.

Norris is branch supervisor for the Aurora and Elgin branch of the Kane County State's Attorney's Office. She has worked there for 36 years, she said.

Norris said the court's dockets are full of "orphan" cases that have been settled but never were officially closed.

Seyller said the clerk's office is working to correct errors automatically generated by a computer glitch since the office has upgraded its com-

puter systems.

The errors included cases from December 2001 to August 2003, when the office discovered the glitch. Now, court employees are responsible for clearing their dockets, she said.

"Every clerk is responsible," Seyller said.

"They have to check and make sure they didn't miss any. Are we behind? You're darn right we are."

The two candidates met this week with *Kane County Chronicle* editors.

Seyller defended the system and said Norris does not have accurate information to base her accusations.

Seyller touted her office's successes and said the clerk's office needs direction from someone with experience who knows how to get the job done.

The office has a \$5 million

budget and 108 employees. Seyller said she wants to continue to improve technology. Some of the holdup, she said, is permission from the local judges.

"We are ready, and we want to keep moving forward," she said. "We are working on electronic forms on the Web site to integrate into our database. We're trying to make things easier for the people we serve, not just attorneys."

Asked whether the clerk's office should be at the judicial center, Seyller said doing so would waste tax dollars.

Last year, the clerk's office moved into remodeled headquarters at the former Montgomery Ward building on Randall Road.

"That was a great learning experience," Seyller said. "My staff worked together. I'm real proud of them."

The office took several weeks to move millions of records and documents.

"We just put all this money into moving and remodeling," she said. "I don't think it would be right. I don't see that as being fiscally responsible to the people of Kane County."



For Gorecki, fall, like rise, came quickly

By William Presecky and John Biemer
Tribune staff reporters

In less than four years, Mary Elizabeth "Meg" Gorecki has made history—for better and for worse.

At 33, she became the first woman elected state's attorney in Kane County.

Then, at 36, she became the first state's attorney in Illinois to be disciplined by the state Supreme Court for professional misconduct while in office. Now, she appears to be on her way out of that office as her law license faces suspension.

Her offense? Less than a minute's worth of cryptic but incriminating messages left on a friend's answering machine in 1998, 18 months before she ran for office.

The messages became a political bombshell when they surfaced weeks before the March 2000 Republican primary and have loomed over

Focus on issues

I have to express my appreciation for the perspectives, opinions, and viewpoints that have been expressed in our newspapers over the past several weeks. It is clear that the people of Kane County want their candidates to speak to the issues of their prospective races.

From the date of my announcement, I have put forward my priorities for the Office of Coroner. To be an office that focuses on being proactive to the needs of the people of Kane County.

To be an office that has the foresight to craft a realistic budget and has the fiscal discipline to stick to it. To be an office that works in cooperation and can effectively communicate with the County Board, all branches of county government, law enforcement, the court systems, community organizations, and our schools.

I would ask my fellow candidates in this race to listen to what the people of Kane County are saying in a clear voice.

Come forward and address the real issues. Attack the problems, not each other. Form solutions, not media splashes.

Robert Moore
Aurora

1-19-04

Beacon news

Sheriff: Charges possible after fight at county jail

By ADAM KOVAC
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Ten inmates in the Kane County jail could face additional charges after a brawl erupted early Friday between members of rival street gangs, authorities said.

The fight occurred about 6 a.m. in a cellblock dayroom where inmates gathered after they left their cells for the day, Kane County Sheriff Ken Ramsey said.

No weapons were used in the ruckus, which investigators said began after taunts exchanged by two groups of gang members boiled over into a fist fight. Several inmates suffered minor scrapes and bruises.

"I fully anticipate we will ask for charges from the state's attorney's office when we get it all sorted out," Ramsey said.

The names of the inmates were not released, but one was identified as Miguel Gonzalez, 26, of South Elgin, who was scheduled for a court hearing Friday morning. Gonzalez suffered minor injuries.

Gonzalez has been jailed on \$1.5 million bond since June,

when he was arrested in connection with a home invasion and sex assault on an 8-year-old girl in South Elgin.

The fight halted the transport of all inmates from the jail to the Kane County Judicial Center in St. Charles. Some inmates were taken to their court appearances in the afternoon.

Investigators have not pinned down exactly what started the incident in the jail's 300 cellblock. Pepper spray was pumped into the dayroom to quell the fight.

Ramsey said corrections officers heard the inmates yelling at each other, but the dispute escalated before the groups could be separated.

There were 512 inmates housed Friday in the jail, which is built into the side of a hill off Fabyan Parkway.

In June, a sheriff's corrections officer was injured in an uprising by five accused killers who ambushed deputies with excrement, urine, bars of soap, pencils and newspapers they set on fire.

No jail officers were injured in Friday's disturbance.

1-17-04 Chronicle

1-18-04 Chicago Tribune

GOECKI:

Messages, denials led to inquiry

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

her administration ever since. In the messages, Gorecki indicated in blunt language that Board Chairman Mike McCoy could be bribed into providing a county job.

She compounded the problem by denying that she had made the statements contained on the tape. She later was forced to admit the words were hers when McCoy released a transcript. She ultimately said she made up the whole story about a kick-back scheme, but said she had no explanation why.

Suspension without delay

On Feb. 1, within 10 months of maintaining in her four-year term, Gorecki is likely to be forced from office based on a Supreme Court order last week. In it, the court denied without comment her petition to delay the four-month suspension of her law license until her term expires.

McCoy will ask the County Board to declare her job vacant, starting the process to find a successor. Likely ending her tenure as state's attorney and throwing into question a political future that had been filled with promises.

The court ordered the suspension for violating the kick-back scenario. Subsequent investigations by a special prosecutor and others showed there was no such scheme—no one ever got a job, and no money changed hands.

Supreme Court Justice Mary Ann G. McMorrogh acknowledged in the court's Nov. 20 opinion that Gorecki "did not commit any crime, she took no money and she took no action to further a bribery or kickback scheme." But, in the court's opinion, she did "undermine public confidence in the integrity of the government" by saying one existed.

Gorecki's breach of professional ethics was inconsistent with what otherwise "appears to be an exemplary life devoted to assisting others," McMorrogh noted in her ruling.

Others who know her and work with her say the same. Kane County Board member Doug Wegand, a Republican from Batavia, called Gorecki "probably the most dedicated, hard-working" elected county official he has seen.

"Everything that I've learned about Meg Gorecki, the person, the professional, the lawyer, doesn't match up with what happened as far as the tape and the consequences," said Wegand, a 12-year board member who has served on the Judiciary Committee for much of that time. "In no personal price she has paid, in all aspects of her life, has she exceeded what justice required."

In mid-February 2000, the telephone message tapes surfaced in the office of Kane County Sheriff Ken Ramsey when the friend Gorecki had talked with in 1998, a deputy sheriff, turned them over. Their contents were leaked to a local newspaper just weeks before the holy conflict between the two parties.

The messages appeared to convey that a campaign donation to McCoy would be a quick way to get a county job. "You know, offer him the money, you know," she says on the tape. "You make campaign contributions." That's what I meant to say... [laughs].

A promising start

Smart, hard-nosed, energetic, engaging and focused, Gorecki had what it took to challenge incumbent state attorney David Akemann, her former boss. She had been preparing for the job for most of her adult life.

A lifelong resident of Kane County, Gorecki showed an interest in politics from the time she graduated from Kossuth High School in Aurora and enrolled in Tufts University, a liberal arts college near Boston. During college, she majored in political science and worked for the late Congressman John Groberg, a Republican from St. Charles.

While at John Marshall Law School in Chicago, she had an internship at the Kane County state's attorney's office. In 1991, Gorecki, who boasted in campaign literature of her perfect GOP voting record, became an assistant precinct committee member for the Geneva Township Republican Organization.

In 1999, she also became an assistant state's attorney under Akemann of Elgin, serving until 1996, when she was a coordinator in his campaign. When she decided to challenge Akemann, the two said there had been no falling out. But Gorecki sharply criticized her former boss, questioning his handling of two death penalty cases and calling his administration aloof and financially bloated.

energy and enthusiasm claim. He didn't leave the tapes to the newspaper and later testified under oath that he had nothing to do with it.

Akemann said he didn't leave the tapes to the newspaper and later testified under oath that he had nothing to do with it.

Even though Akemann said he didn't leave the tapes to the newspaper and later testified under oath that he had nothing to do with it.

After the transcripts came out in August 2000, Akemann, still in office, asked a court to appoint a special investigator to examine the age-restricted comments. Gorecki responded contentedly, calling her comments "completely made-up and foolish."

"I have great faith in the voters of Kane County," she said. "When judging me, I hope they would take a look at their own lives and I would hope they judge me as fairly as possible, knowing that we've all done something stupid in our lives."

Two weeks before the general election, the special investigator concluded the probe had failed to develop sufficient admissible evidence to prove in a criminal trial the essential elements of the offense of bribery or any related offense. However, an Illinois Attorney Regulator and Disciplinary Commission investigation continued.

In November 2000, Gorecki defeated her Democratic opponent in the heavily Republican county by 2,400 votes. In February 2001, the commission filed a complaint against her.

That July, state campaign finance records indicated that her campaign committee, Citizens for Gorecki, had raised more than \$96,000 to attorneys defending her. That put the committee over the \$50,000 limit. Almost \$20,000 of that was owed to Gorecki's family, and almost \$80,000 was from her personal account.

With the exception of one tearful act of contrition in last

month before a commission hearing in November 2000, Gorecki has maintained a stoic public face about the matter.

While on the witness stand, Gorecki sobbed and attempted to explain what she called "unbelievably stupid statements."

"I ask myself this every day: Why in the world would I have said something like this? I go over and over it in my head," Gorecki said. "I wish I could give you an explanation but there is none."

"No apology would ever be sufficient." "There's not a single day of my life that I have not woken up from a restless night without thinking about it."

"All my friends have stood by me and I feel I don't deserve the Florida and family that I have."

Some of Gorecki's critics contend she became her own worst enemy when she denied the said what she did and later lied or attempted to rationalize why she did it, saying in the end that she simply had no explanation.

In arguing for a one-year suspension of Gorecki's law license, commission attorney Scott Penrose said, "She admits only what she can no longer deny."

Tim O'Neill, a Republican seeking her office, said it appears Gorecki received some poor advice on how to initially handle the incident.

"It seemed to me if she came out right away and admitted that was her on the tape and she said she was sorry, we shouldn't be here. She'd be running for a second term," said O'Neill, who got in the race after Gorecki announced in August that she would not run again.

Gorecki, who is single, plunged into her work, juggling weight and sleep but gaining for her office a respect and recognition for professionalism that belied her personal battle. Those who know her say she's been hurt personally but she's been able to compartmentalize the ethics complaint so that it hasn't affected the work of her office.

"She moves cases through. She pursues cases that she has looked good on. She doesn't try to look good by charging people whose cases will be thrown out by a judge," Wegand said. "The performance of the office is up."

community suffered, it has not been obvious.

"I'm glad for Meg's sake that this is over," said Kane County Public Defender David Kliment. "She has been a great public defender, but she's been a poor politician. It's just an unfortunate thing."

In the courtroom, where she personally has argued numerous criminal and civil cases, Gorecki has been formidable, he said.

Joe Rago, who worked with Gorecki when they were both assistant state's attorneys in the early '90s and is running for her office as a Republican, gave her credit for instituting changes in the office, particularly in streamlining the bankruptcy process.

"Due to distractions, perhaps the total reform package that she was bringing before the voters was not fully realized," he said.

Kane County First Assistant State's Attorney Bob Berlin, career criminal prosecutor brought in by Gorecki soon after taking office, says the controversy that has swirled around her has not had a negative effect on office morale.

"The fact that she is approachable, that you can walk by her office and knock on the door and go see her is huge," he said. "You can't underestimate what that does for people."

Assistant State's Attorney Mike Coghlan, chief of the circuit II and criminal divisions and the former DeKalb County state's attorney, said Gorecki is unassuming—the parks in the public job, works in a small office and often takes on the hard cases herself.

McCoy said Gorecki long ago apologized to him and his family for the embarrassment of having his name dragged into the controversy.

"It's been four years ago now, and sometimes about a year ago, I kind of became numb to it," said McCoy, who announced last year that he will not seek a third term.

Supporters say they will be there for Gorecki, regardless of what she chooses to do next. But what they suggest is that this woman who came on so strong, who was disproportionately targeted, should simply forgo competing for the next election. "Part of it is she's a woman. She's not a good old boy. When she's not a good old boy, she's not a good old boy," said Wegand. "And to run for office, she was duking the established good old boy network. She outworked them and she won. She's an achiever. In many ways she is an overachiever, and overachievers often get punished because you are upsetting the everyday routine."

Are you... a candidate?

On Feb. 1, within 10 months of maintaining in her four-year term, Gorecki is likely to be forced from office based on a Supreme Court order last week. In it, the court denied without comment her petition to delay the four-month suspension of her law license until her term expires.

McCoy will ask the County Board to declare her job vacant, starting the process to find a successor. Likely ending her tenure as state's attorney and throwing into question a political future that had been filled with promises.

to inquiry

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Meg Gorecki

1-18-04 Daily Herald

Kane candidates speak at forum

BY DAVID SHAROS

Daily Herald Correspondent

Of the GOP candidates for Kane County posts who participated in a forum Saturday, the sharpest contrast was among the four men vying for state's attorney.

Former Kane County prosecutor John Barsanti, St. Charles City Attorney Tim O'Neil, West Dundee defense attorney Joe Rago and Michael Leuer, a corporate consultant and former Cook County prosecutor, are all vying for the GOP nomination to replace Meg Gorecki, who is not seeking re-election.

Democrat Renee Robinson is running unopposed for her party's nomination in the March primary.

Barsanti's comments left no doubt whom he felt was the most qualified.

"All of the people up here are qualified, but none have the experience I have," he said. "No one has prosecuted more criminal cases in the area than me. This race comes down to experience."

Leuer, who has an MBA as well as a law degree, touted his "unique educational experience" that would enable him to "to bring fresh ideas to the office."

O'Neil noted his work on the first gang crimes prosecution unit and said being state's attorney is about "accessibility."

"We want to find out what are the concerns of the elderly as well as the young and give them all the best chance we can," O'Neil said. "I want to protect your family, your neighbors and your friends because they're my family and neighbors and friends too."

Rago said he was familiar with the "agricultural base" of the county, adding he had "plowed land in the county myself."

"If elected, I have a number of priorities, which include dealing with drugs and gangs, financial crimes and identity theft," Rago said. "These issues are our problems of the future."

Nearly 100 people attended the candidates forum at the Batavia VFW hall, sponsored by local GOP organizations, to also hear from those vying for county board chairman, recorder, circuit court clerk, coroner and Kane County Board districts 10 and 14.

County board member Karen McConaughay spoke for five minutes about her vision, which included improving the quality of life in the area and bringing representatives from "the county, labor, schools, environmental groups, business and citizens together."

Her opponent, county Treasurer David Rickert, did not appear.

Batavia VFW dinner raises funds for sheriff's office

By TOM SCHLUEITER
Kane County Chronicle

BATAVIA — The county bomb squad's gear is stored in the garage of a private business because it must be kept at a constant temperature.

The sheriff's office hopes this year to build a garage for the truck and its equipment, and money donated Saturday from the Batavia VFW and Ladies Auxiliary will help toward that goal.

Sheriff Ken Ramsey said he has not decided what the money would be used for, but a bomb squad building would be the likely project.

"It would help with the building fund," Ramsey said.

Saturday was the 29th annual Batavia VFW Post 1197 and Ladies Auxiliary dinner dance,

which is meant to honor the men and women of the Batavia Police Department, Batavia Fire Department, Batavia ESDA, all city departments and the sheriff's office.

Each year, the VFW raises funds and makes a donation to help pay for items that are not included in the agencies' regular budgets, said Mike Breyne, junior vice commander and dinner program chairman.

Proceeds from the tickets to the dance and sales of raffle tickets during the evening help offset the cost of the food and music, Breyne said.

"The money raised throughout the year at various fund-raisers goes to the agencies," he said.

See VFW, page 2



Wayne Ratzliff — Chronicle photo staff
Mark Meyer leads the Pledge of Allegiance during the Salute to Men and Women in Uniform on Saturday in Batavia.

VFW

Continued from page 1

While the storage arrangement for the equipment has worked well, it cannot last forever, he said.

The robot contains sensitive equipment that must be kept at room temperature, he said.

Past post Cmdr. Mark Meyers said the dinner helps to honor those who work for the residents.

"This is in appreciation for all their efforts and everything they do for the community," Meyers said.

Ramsey, who is past commander of the post and a resident of Batavia, said the dance is a special event.

"It's wonderful," he said. "This is the only event in the county that does anything for the sheriff's office."

After a meal of roast beef or roast chicken and mashed potatoes, a color guard presented the flag.
A band played later.

To ensure that as many businesses as possible are rep- their stories and photographs

7-18-04 Chronicle
Kane County Notebook

Prairie Lakes deal likely won't make everyone happy

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

With a vote on Jan. 13, the county board ended its role in the seven-year-old Prairie Lakes lawsuit.

There will be routine action as the subdivision follows the development process, but, unless there comes unforeseen circumstances, the wrangling over the property is over.

The significance of the suit is county zoning won out over court-imposed zoning. This is either a good or a bad thing, depending on which side of this case you're on.

Inland Land Appreciation Fund, the developers, believe the zoning process was unfair and sued. The county saw too many houses on soil that could not sustain septic fields.

The developers believed they were right and fought tooth and nail in the courts.

The county stuck to its density and soil requirements and also fought tooth and nail.

Some residents will be disappointed that the property will be developed at all. This, too, is understandable. But Inland owns the land and is allowed to seek approval from the government to build houses on it.

It is likely that Inland will sell the property to B&B Enterprises and let B&B go through the machinations of development.

The next legal challenge to Kane County probably will be over its transportation impact fee program.

Also on Tuesday, the county board moved \$2 million from its riverboat fund into the farmland preservation fund.

The action will position the county to receive more federal matching funds to leverage more farmland protection.

On the down side, with higher state gambling taxes, the county is receiving fewer dollars from the Grand Victoria Casino in Elgin.

It already has most of its estimated \$7 million annual allocation set aside for ongoing expenses, such as the bond payment on the Juvenile Justice Center, the operating costs of the Child Advocacy Center, the stormwater management program and Water Resources Department.

The preservation program, one of the few in the Midwest, has caught the eye of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Over the years, the county board has doled out millions to local projects, for historical preservation, downtown beautification and environmental protection.

Donations to other agencies have been cut back because of the lower revenue.

Phil Zavitz, known as "Mr. Z" to many Kane County schoolchildren, retired Jan. 2 from the Animal Control Department after 13 years.

County board Chairman Mike McCoy read a resolution of appreciation at Tuesday's board meeting.

The resolution read in part that Zavitz "has had more photographs in the county's newspapers than any other county employees appearing with various animals he has saved, and some of them were almost as photogenic as his elfin self."

Zavitz brought a great-horned owl to the *Chronicle* offices one day, and another day a boa constrictor.

On suggestions from some employees, he stayed outside with the snake.

■ Tom Schlueter is the county reporter for the *Kane County Chronicle*. He may be reached at (630) 845-5380 or at tschlueter@kcchronicle.com.

GOP candidates tackle issues



Randy Pomaro — Chronicle photo staff

Republican candidates for county board District 14, from left, Arney Silvestri, James Neuman and Mark Davoust, outline why they should be elected at a forum on Saturday. The Batavia, Geneva and St. Charles Township Republican organizations sponsored the event at the Batavia VFW.

Forum focuses on growth, taxes, transportation

By GRANT MILLER
Shaw News Service

Inside

• State's attorney candidates detail their differences and similarities.

Page 2

BATAVIA — Republican candidates for county offices were mostly cordial in their first forum this year.

About 150 Republican faithful braved icy roads on Saturday to attend the forum. Though many candidates focused on growth, taxes and transportation, some challengers used the opportunity to criticize incumbents.

County recorder candidate Don Rage said Republican incumbent Sandy Wegman has run the office inefficiently. He said Wegman has mis-spent taxpayer money, and he prom-

ised to change that if elected.

Rage, a former Kane County Board member, is the party's Dundee Township chairman. As a board member, Rage proposed eliminating the recorder's office.

"(When I was on the board), I was always concerned about the amount of money going to the recorder's office,"

Rage said. "It's not that it was a frivolous amount, but how it was being used."

Rage said property owners unnecessarily wait weeks to obtain documents from the recorder's office. He also said the office should accept credit cards.

Wegman said she has revamped the office since her 2000 election. She said security measures have been taken to discourage identity theft or hacking the office's public computers. Wegman also said she improved a data backup system to save important records in case of fire. She said her office typically takes just days to send documents to property owners.

Wegman said Illinois law discourages recorders from accepting credit cards for payment.

"The credit card companies charge (an extra) fee, and by statute that cannot be passed on to the consumer," Wegman said. "Everyone should pay the same amount whether they're paying cash or with credit cards."

Dan Gurbal also seeks the party's nomination for recorder. The Geneva resident said his real estate research business puts him in the recorder's office daily as a customer. He said it's run well, but could be better.

See FORUM, page 2

Forum

Continued from page 1

"The timeliness and accuracy are not up to speed," Gurbal said.

The three coroner candidates also were quick to draw clear differences on the issues.

Challenger Bob Tiballi said mistakes have been made under Republican incumbent Chuck West's watch. Tiballi said he would avoid such mistakes and improve the office's bio-terrorism awareness. Tiballi is a doctor who specializes in infectious diseases.

"I can bring extensive knowledge to the table in what keeps people alive and what causes their death," Tiballi said.

West said he has run the office efficiently and recently upgraded the staff's computer systems with state-of-the-art technologies. He said these systems are a prototype that will be copied by coroner's offices nationwide.

"This program will be marketed all over the nation, and it will come at zero cost to Kane County. It'll cost nothing to the taxpayer," West said.

West said he is the only candidate with hands-on experience in disaster, such as the Oklahoma City Federal Building bombing and the Amtrak crash in suburban Bourbonnais.

West defended his sometimes testy relationship with the county board. He said he is passionate about his office and will argue at length to get a fair shake from the board.

Challenger Stan Hickrod said his experience as a li-

censed funeral director and police officer make him the ideal candidate for the job.

"I'm going to put investigations back into that office and reduce the budget," Hickrod said.

Hickrod worked for Streamwood Police from 1991 to 2002. Since then, he's run a small business. He said his business experience could make the office fiscally responsible.

Circuit clerk candidate Sue Norris said that office must be reformed to be effective. Norris supervises felony cases in the county prosecutor's office.

"I'm in the position to see what's being done and what's not being done," Norris said. "The circuit clerk's office has lost touch with the basics in the responsibilities of running an office."

Republican incumbent Deb Seyller said felony and criminal cases only are a portion of what her office manages.

She said she hopes to put more information online for the public and attorneys to cut down on paperwork and cut costs. Seyller said she nearly has completed a project to create an "electronic court room." The project will cut down on paperwork in the courtroom.

"This will improve data entry, improve accuracy and reduce the files that are going into the courtroom," Seyller said.

Other candidates attending Saturday's forum included those for county board Districts 10 and 14 and 16th circuit court judges. County board chairman candidate Karen McConnaughay spoke, but her opponent treasurer David Rickert did not attend.

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Race relations in Kane County evolve

1-18-04 Chronicle

Hazelwood, Mejia say there still is work to do

By HEATH HIXSON
Kane County Chronicle

The Rev. Truman Hazelwood and Clem Mejia are from different ethnic backgrounds but share a common experience. They have watched race re-

lations in Kane County evolve over the last few decades.

Hazelwood, 71, is a one-time Kentucky farmboy who in 1951 moved to Batavia. He became a well-known clergyman in the community before he retired and helped bring fair housing for blacks in Batavia.

Mejia, 56, grew up in the dusty border town of El Paso, Texas. He left the city on the banks of the Rio Grande in 1975 to teach Spanish-speaking children in Aurora's schools. He now is the Kane County regional superintendent of schools, an elected position he has held for 10 years.

Each has a different story, but both say race relations in Kane County have come a long way. On the eve of the day when people nationwide will



Mejia



Hazelwood

celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday and his vision of all people being treated

equally, the two men give the area a passing grade in race relations.

Monday is Martin Luther King Jr. Day, a day set aside to honor the slain civil-rights leader who dreamed that one day people of all races no longer would be judged by the color of their skin.

Hazelwood and Mejia said that changes in how people view others could help King's dream come to fruition.

See RELATIONS, page 2

Relations

Continued from page 1

"It has been a 180-degree turnaround," Hazelwood said.

Segregation

Hazelwood moved to Batavia to live with relatives. He was ordained in 1961 and preached at churches in Batavia and Aurora. When he arrived in Batavia, a small population of blacks lived exclusively on the city's east side because of racial separation in the city.

In the mid-1960s, when Fermilab was awarded to the community, Hazelwood and others were able to get a fair-housing policy enacted in the city. Many white residents opposed the plan that banned the denial of housing based upon race, he said.

Even after, Hazelwood said blacks in Batavia and Kane County still had trouble buying property because of their color.

In 1967, Hazelwood said his family was the first black family to move to the west side of Batavia. A real estate agent sold him property from his personal estate because no one else in the area would sell to blacks, he said.

Hazelwood said that even though prejudice might have existed decades ago, he has been treated well all his life.

"You have to forgive people," he said.

But he still believes there is work to do.

"The physical and social struggle may be over, but now it is more a mental (state), he said. "The prophecy of (King's) dream is being fulfilled, but it has not peeked yet."

'I'd give it about a 'C'

Mejia arrived in Aurora in 1975 to teach Spanish-speaking children who were part of a burgeoning population of immigrants. In his first year of teaching at then-Waldo Junior High, he said he taught all 56 seventh- through ninth-grade Spanish-speaking students in a makeshift classroom.

At times, he and his students felt like they were pushed to the side and separated from the white students, he said.

"The awareness of other cultures I think has gotten better," he said. "Certainly, (there is) more sensitivity towards minorities in the schools."

The school district eventually hired other teachers to help teach Spanish-speaking students, and the Latino students eventually were mixed with English-speaking students.

He later became dean of students at the school and director of bilingual students in the district. In 1987, he joined the regional superintendent's office as an assistant superintendent. He then was elected regional superintendent of schools and has served in that position for 10 years.

"I think there probably, as a general rule, is more tolerance and acceptance, but we have a long way to go," Mejia said. "I would give it about a 'C'. We certainly could be doing 'A' and 'B' work. But it takes time."

The blatant and sometimes visible ethnic separation might be a thing of the past, but the men said that sometimes unconscious subtle prejudice still is present.

'How would they treat me?'

Mejia said he does not want to "paint a picture of a

lot of people out there" who are acting racist. But he said he sometimes experiences "amusing" events where people unknowingly commit prejudiced acts.

"Even as an adult, I see little things in my life," he said. "You will go into a school and they do not know who you are and a secretary will think you are either a book salesman or a custodian. Once they find out, their (attitude) changes."

Mejia also said he experiences similar events at restaurants where employees first will talk to his wife, who is white, before they will talk to him.

Hazelwood said that when he drives around in his Jaguar — his daughter is a Jaguar saleswoman — wearing a suit, people recognize him. But when he is driving a truck wearing work clothes, the reaction is different.

"If it wasn't for who I am and what I am, how would they treat me?" he asked.

Hazelwood said that now the question is more of a separation between the "haves and have-nots." People are more judged on their class than color, he said.

Both men said people of all ethnicities should remember their pasts and learn from history. And they said learning tolerance would improve race relations. But each has his own thoughts on how to improve race relations.

Hazelwood said people should work on "family values and their relationship with God. That is what is hurting us. That is what is pulling us apart."

Mejia said, "I truly believe education is the key."

Dr. King's dream still might be a dream, but with progress as a gauge, there is more than just hope on the horizon.

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Bush

"Over the past few years, America has been confronted

"With this speech, he wants to set out the agenda

Ex-Geneva mayor may have had point in combating sprawl

Past Tri-Cities mayors often squared off with DuPage Airport Authority or county officials about how land-use plans in western DuPage would affect Kane County.

In the late 1980s, then-Geneva Mayor Dick Lewis went so far as to claim DuPage was establishing open space on its western border for "less desirable uses" like compost areas or landfills to make Kane appear to be a no-man's land for future development.

People who were generally happy that homes and businesses weren't covering Kane's eastern border pretty much wrote off Lewis' thoughts as silly. But were they?

You can sense the same thing happening on Kane's western edge today with open space being set aside through recent land-acquisition referendums and as part of the county's 2020 plan.

Talk of landfills and other "less desirable uses" on open land out west may surface in the future. It must leave some in DeKalb County wondering what our motives are, particularly with the Prairie Parkway proposal west of Route 47 certain to pick up steam.

Traffic victims:

During his mayoral tenure, Dick Lewis also talked to anyone who would listen about his vision for the county to govern or coordinate all land-use plans and a county transportation board that would oversee all road and traffic plans.

"We did not worry if we dumped traffic into St. Charles, Batavia or Elburn when I was mayor in Geneva and (Geneva) was also victimized by the same mentality," Lewis said recently. "It is absolutely imperative, and it's not too late, that Kane County take the responsibility to undertake that (coordination and planning)."

In addition to public review of the county's 2030 road plans, it's a perfect time for county board chairman candidates to make their viewpoints known.

It's plain to see that the choking traffic on Randall Road can't be allowed to spread to the rest of the county.

Don't shoot the dog:

Forest preserve executive John Duerr has been busy with his county map, marking recent land acquisitions that will be future county forest preserves.

The largest parcel is the Muirhead property in the Plato Center area.

With all of these future forest preserves, Duerr and his staff will be weighing the wants and needs of county residents.

Duerr knows that dog owners want places to take long walks with their pets.

He also knows many residents want more hunting grounds.

Which led Duerr to make this obvious and humorous comment: "We certainly can't have forest preserves in which people who are walking their dogs are in the same area as guys with shotguns."

Getting it organized:

Ah, yes, the Charlemagne Award season is upon us. It's that time of year when St. Charles honors its top citizen, which means the St. Charles Chamber of Commerce office is a busy place.



Dave Heun
Talk of the Town

A quick stop in the office this week revealed chamber Executive Director Lori Hewitt and her staff in typical mid-January mode: Working to keep track of those attending the

Charlemagne dinner.

It's a juggling act to know who has paid for whom and to accommodate requested table/seating arrangements in addition to all of the other details.

The classy reputation and success of Charlemagne, to be held Friday at Q Center (formerly the Arthur Andersen training facility), have everything to do with the grunt work unfolding now at the chamber office.

Helping Olivia:

If the Charlemagne Awards are not on your calendar, then a spaghetti dinner fund-raiser at St. John Neumann in St. Charles may be up your alley Friday night.

Olivia May, a fourth-grader at St. Patrick's Elementary School, was diagnosed with leukemia and has been in intensive care at Children's Memorial Hospital since October. Olivia and her family need help and this fund-raiser, from 5:30 to 9:30 p.m., will help them. Ticket information is available by calling Maurcen Niski at (630) 513-6867.

The cold or heat?

What's worse for those who work outside — a terrible heat wave or horrific cold snap? Who better to ask than a UPS driver? Here's two different takes:

Don Mabins, who delivers on the east side of St. Charles, chose the heat as worse. He claims you can always throw more clothes on in the cold.

Mabins compares it to a car engine. "When an engine overheats, all kinds of things can go wrong. And that's what happens with my body."

Terry Hein, who delivers in the Sugar Grove area and western Kane, claims the cold is far worse. He figures your body is always loose in the heat.

"In the cold," he says, "it is an unnatural event to be lifting heavy objects and jumping on and off a truck. You never really get comfortable."

Workshop for her:

An interesting item spotted at the Home Depot in Geneva: A poster promoting a series of "Do It Herself" workshops.

Someone has figured out that women who are home more often and become impatient with their husbands (who are either gone most of the week or not so handy with tools), can save a lot of time and money by tackling home improvement or repair projects. What a wonderful world we live in!

Tell me your talk:

I can be reached at dheun@earthlink.net, calling (630) 561-1986, faxing (630) 208-4806, or mailing to Dave Heun, Daily Herald, 3805 E. Main St., Suite A, St. Charles, IL 60174. A reporter's only as good as his sources, so be a good source, OK?

Opinion

1-18-04 Daily Herald

"Our aim: To fear God, tell the truth and make money."

H.C. Paddock
1852-1935

Daily Herald
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Develop fairer structure for new impact fees

Our View

While we strongly support fees to pay for developments impact on services, roads and schools, this fee puts communities in central Kane County at a disadvantage.

road in St. Charles than they would on the west side of the road in South Elgin. — despite the fact the shopping center would dump the same number of cars on county roads. To us, that seems inherently unfair.

More than one board member voiced support for the plan to help alleviate traffic backups. This impact fee will have little to no long-term effect on traffic in already populated areas.

While we strongly support fees to pay for developments impact on services, roads and schools, this fee puts communities in central Kane County at a disadvantage when attracting growth to their towns. They are battling for commercial and housing growth every bit as much as the southern, northern and western parts of the county, and a few thousand dollars makes a difference. We also agree this impact fee makes it more appealing to build in underdeveloped areas.

It might make a trip along Randall Road a bit smoother, but it is only going to get more congested as our towns continue to grow.

Board members also suggested a road impact fee was preferable to an increase in the gas tax or property taxes, based on the assumption that it will be

While the county may have followed the "letter of the law" in developing the impact fee structure it passed last week, it still spells unfairness to us.

The mayors of the Tri-Cities towns are fighting mad — at their own government representatives. The Kane County Board last week voted 18-7 in favor of a transportation impact fee that taxes the towns of Batavia, Geneva and St. Charles the highest. The fee had been talked about for years, and there was general agreement that it was needed to pay for an estimated \$350 million in repairs to county roads. But in its final form, the fee structure and its justification have generated threats of lawsuits rather than support.

Starting in April, the fees will be assessed on new homes and businesses and will be collected in eight so-called planning partnership areas. The money generated within any planning area will be spent

development in those areas while encouraging growth in unpopulated areas like western Kane County. Before wrestling with the logic of the plan, let's clear up some misconceptions.

1-18-04 Chronicle

State's attorney candidates detail similarities, differences

By GRANT MILLER
Shaw News Service

BATAVIA — The four Republican candidates for state's attorney tried to detail their differences during their 5-minute introductions. But a question from the audience showed that each are alike in at least four ways.

Candidates were asked where they stood on reproductive rights, the death penalty, physician assisted suicide and same-sex marriages. Each said he supports the death penalty and opposes abortion, physician assisted suicide and same-sex marriages.

Candidate John Barsanti said he has worked in every division of the prosecutor's office and has extensive administrative experience. Barsanti was the first assistant prosecutor under former state's attorney David Akemann.

Barsanti said each candidate has significant legal experience, but his knowledge of county administrative duties sets him apart.

"I've brought that budget in. I've hired and fired employees. I have the administrative and prosecutorial experience that they don't," Barsanti said.

Candidate T. Michael Leure said he will bring a unique outlook to the prosecutor's office. Leure previously worked for the Cook County State's Attorney's Office and holds an MBA from

Northwestern University.

Leure said he would avoid political appointments within his office and seek the best qualified prosecutors.

"I will recruit women and minorities for the job," Leure said. "No one will be a political hire in my office."

Leure said he hopes to bring the best aspects of Cook and other counties to the state's attorney's office.

Candidate Tim O'Neil spent five years in the prosecutor's office before entering private practice in 1990. Since then, he has represented several municipalities and police organizations. O'Neil said he was drafted into the race.

"(My supporters) were afraid things would go back to the old regime," O'Neil said. "They were looking for independent leadership, and I'm going to accept that challenge."

O'Neil said he would focus more prosecutors on crimes targeting the young and old, and he would seek to protect the county's natural resources.

Candidate Joe Rago said his experience as an assistant prosecutor in Kane and DeKalb counties sets him apart. While in DeKalb County, Rago said the board slashed the prosecutor's budget. Even so, Rago said the DeKalb office successfully prosecuted Illinois' first GHB crime and was tough on felonies.

"People who were actually charged with felonies were given felony sentences," Rago said.

U.S. Senate hopefuls try to stand out from crowd

1-19-04 BEACON NEWS

■ **Aurora forum:** Candidates for Kane County state's attorney among others at Prisco Center event

By Ed Fanselow
STAFF WRITER

AURORA — Four of the nine Republican candidates for U.S. Senate headlined a Sunday afternoon forum here, each trying to separate themselves from the pack in a crowded race that's still up for grabs just two months before the March primary.

Several polls of potential voters conducted within the last few weeks show that more than half of Illinois Republicans still haven't decided which of the Senate hopefuls will be their choice on March 16, a sure sign that none of the candidates has separated himself from the field.

Each of those who spoke at the Prisco Community Center on Sunday tried to use their three minutes of floor time to change that, touching on the aspects of their campaigns they thought would resonate the most with Kane County voters.

Andy McKenna, a Glenview businessman, said he's the only candidate serious about creating jobs.

❖ Turn to SENATE, A6

SENATE

From page A1

John Borling, a retired Army general from Rockford, noted that he's the only military veteran, the only senior citizen and the only pro-choice candidate in the race.

Steve Rauschenberger, a three-term state senator from Elgin, touted the fact that he's the only candidate with significant legislative experience.

Jonathan Wright, a long-shot candidate from downstate Lincoln, portrayed himself as an independent-minded conservative who's not afraid "to take the tough votes" to cut spending in Washington.

A fifth candidate, Aurora dairy mogul Jim Oberweis, didn't attend the event, but his daughter, Julie, told the crowd that her father is the only GOP candidate who's taken a firm stance against President Bush's plan to grant temporary amnesty to illegal immigrants.

Perhaps most importantly, though, each of the men tried to convince those on hand why they represent the party's best chance at beating the Democratic nominee in November's general election.

The incumbent, Republican Peter Fitzgerald, is not seeking re-election.

"We need someone who has credibility with the independents and somebody who's prepared and willing and able to take on the Chicago Democratic machine," Rauschenberger said, contending that his experience in previous campaigns makes him such a candidate.

McKenna said his plans to create and preserve jobs would win over both Republican and Democratic voters, while Borling countered that his pro-choice stance makes him the most electable Republican candidate. "It takes a social moderate to win this in November," Borling said. "We have to worry about who can inspire the Illinois voters — Republicans and Democrats."

The state's attorney race

The forum, which was sponsored by the Aurora Republican Women's Club, also featured candidates for seven countywide offices: County Board chairman; circuit clerk, coroner, auditor, recorder, 16th Circuit Court judge and state's attorney.

The four men seeking the latter — John



JONATHAN HOUSE / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

John Borling, Republican candidate for U.S. Senate, responds to a question from the audience during Sunday's forum at Prisco Community Center in Aurora. Waiting their turn are (from left) State Sen. Steve Rauschenberger, Jonathan Wright and Andy McKenna.

Barsanti, Michael Leuer, Tim O'Neil and Joe Rago — each said his prosecutorial and management experience makes him the best choice to succeed embattled State's Attorney Meg Gorecki, who is not seeking re-election.

Barsanti, a former first assistant Kane County state's attorney, said he is the only candidate who has experience handling the state's attorney's multimillion dollar budget.

"I've done that job, I've worked that budget ... and the breadth of my experience is unmatched by anyone in this field," he said.

He promised he would be a "hard-charging" prosecutor, but said he would also "temper aggressiveness with compassion."

O'Neil, meanwhile, seemed to take a tougher line on crime, saying that

reinstating the office's gang-prosecution unit would be his first priority upon taking office.

"I want to know why that office was disbanded," he said. "We need to have specialized, trained prosecutors take care of those cases. How many gang shootings have there been here in Aurora in the last 10 days alone?"

He also boasted of his wide-ranging experience as an attorney, saying that he is the only candidate in the race with experience in both civil and criminal law.

Leuer stressed his experience as a former Cook County prosecutor and his varied educational background that includes a law degree, an MBA and a CPA certificate.

He said he wants to improve the county's conviction rates by instituting training

programs for all prosecutors. "We need to professionalize this office," he said.

Rago, a former first assistant state's attorney in DeKalb County, said he wants to create a unit of prosecutors that focuses on identity theft and internet fraud.

"It used to be that people would burglarize our houses and they would come in through the doors and windows," he said. "Now they come in through a wire and they steal thousands of dollars."

Echoing an already-familiar campaign mantra, he added that he would have no conflicts of interest if elected, unlike O'Neil and Barsanti, both of whom work for large law firms.

One Democrat, Renee Robinson, is running unopposed in the Democratic primary.

Second chance



Editor's Note: This is the second in a three-part series on Aurora Animal Control and Care Facility's struggle with public perception and public irresponsibility.

It was a year and a half ago, but Kane County Sgt. Kevin Williams still brags about the time his partner found 150 pounds of marijuana hidden in 10,000 pounds of melons.

To be fair, smelling a needle of pot in a haystack of melons is a pretty good trick. It's not quite as magical, however, when you learn Williams' partner was a chocolate Labrador retriever named Buster.

"He climbed up on top of the melons

and stopped at one point," Williams said. "We just told them to unload the melons to that level — and there it was."

As the head of the canine unit for Kane County, Williams is familiar with the talents of animal officers. The sheriff's office recruited Buster and the seven other dogs in the canine unit from a training school in Indiana.

But the unit is funded entirely by donations. That meant, when Williams decided to add a new patrol pooch, he needed to go cheap. That's why he turned to the Aurora Animal Control and Care Facility.

At the center on River Street,

◆ Turn to **CHANCE, A2**

(Top photo) Tracy Williams and her husband, Kane County Sheriff's Department Sgt. Kevin Williams, at home with their newly adopted dog Oakley (left) and their resident canine Buster. The couple adopted Oakley from Aurora Animal Control and Care.

(Bottom photo) Sgt. Scott Flowers of the Kane County Sheriff's Department trains Jake, a recently adopted potential canine officer.

STORY BY MATT HANLEY

PHOTOS BY DONNELL COLLINS

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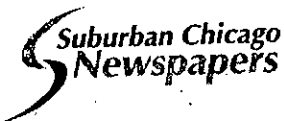
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CHANCE

From Page A1

Williams discovered Jake, a 2- to
3-year-old lab mix. Police animals
have to be passive alert — which
means they'll protect the officer but
not attack bystanders. Jake fit that
qualification, and on Jan. 5, the Kane
County jail had a new nose inside.

But Williams, an animal lover
since childhood, sympathized with
the shelter's other dogs. The older
ones, especially, had seen plenty of
potential adopters pass their cage.
Who wants an old dog, after all.

A home for Oakley

Kevin Williams decided he did.
That's how Oakley, a 7-year-old
shepherd mix, became the newest
member of his house.

"We don't know where he came
from, but we know he was treated
well when he was there," he said.

In the last two years, 581 dogs
like Oakley and Jake were adopted
from Aurora's shelter, a number
that is not high enough for some
animal lovers.

"The responsibilities rest square-
ly on the shoulders of (pet owners),
there's no doubt about that," said
former Aurora resident Char New-
man, who until she moved out of
state last year, long has been one of
this city's most vocal animal ac-
tivists. "But I think when they leave
their animals (at the city shelter),
they believe they are going to be
adopted."

In the past, Newman and other
activists have attempted to turn the
center into a no-kill shelter. But
shelter employees insist they re-
lease all they can safely to the pub-
lic.

All must be accepted

As a city entity, says Nass, the
Aurora shelter has the obligation to
take in all the animals brought to
its door. Sick, abused, neglected
and unwanted cats and dogs are
dropped off on the counter, leaving
Nass's staff to deal with them.

In 2003, there were 1,758 dogs
and 1,731 cats which passed
through the lobby of the shelter on
River Street. "There just aren't
enough homes" for all of them,"
said Nass.

In 2003, 28 dogs were killed be-
cause the shelter ran out of space.
By contrast, 183 were euthanized at
the owner's request, 86 because
they were too sick and 316 were
not safe to be in homes with peo-
ple.

Aurora's situation is not unusual.
Joliet has 50,000 less people but the

shelter there handles a few more
animals because it collects for sev-
eral communities.

Andy Ivanicky, director of the
Joliet Township Animal Control
Center, said his shelter euthanizes
a similar percentage of animals for
many of the same reasons as Auro-
ra.

"There is a lot of education that
has to go on (as to) why euthanasia
has to exist. It's not that we want to
do this. We have to do this."

Some good news

Nationally, the numbers of dogs
being housed and killed in shelters
is dropping. Kate Pullen, the direc-
tor of animal sheltering issues for
the United States Humane Society,
said 20 years ago, more than 10
million animals were euthanized
every year nationally. Thanks to an
aggressive spay and neuter cam-
paign, that number has dropped to
between three and four million.

While some insist low-kill shel-
ters are feasible, others say the
idea of holding all animals unless
they are too sick is unrealistic for
municipal shelters.

Ivanicky points out many of
these no-kill or low-kill shelters can
only operate because they turn ani-
mals away.

"We have to take (all of them),"
he said. "It's part of our responsibil-
ity."

It's owners' responsibility

But the real responsibility, Nass
said, lies with pet owners.

"It doesn't matter how long
you've worked at a facility. You still
ask the question, how could any-
one do that to an animal?" she said.

Nass tries not to dwell on the sad
stories. She's helped start a photo
album of the shelter's success sto-
ries that is filled with letters and
pictures of satisfied dog and cat
owners. She'd like Williams' two
dogs, Oakley and Jake, to become
part of that book soon.

Jake's first owner dropped him
off because he couldn't get along
with the other dog in the house.
Oakley came to the shelter in De-
cember when his owners decided
they could no longer care for the
old dog.

But within a month, Jake and
Oakley have found homes — and
their new owner couldn't be happi-
er.


"First of all, they'll be your best
friend forever," he said. "If some-
thing's sad, they'll cheer you up.

"And, he added, laughing, "They
won't talk back."


Coming Tuesday: Can you give
this dog a home?

THUMBS UP, THUMBS DOWN


Court is properly firm with Gorecki

 The Illinois Supreme Court has ordered that the law license of Kane County State's Attorney Meg Gorecki be suspended for four months starting Feb. 1. She cannot be state's attorney while that license is under suspension. Gorecki, accused of proposing a bogus jobs-for-cash scheme in 1998 and then being evasive about it, lost at every stage of her case before several Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission bodies and finally the Supreme Court. She had asked that her suspension be delayed until she completed her term as state's attorney. We give our **THUMBS UP** to the court's ruling. For the public Gorecki serves, justice delayed would indeed be justice denied.

It's good to encourage involvement

 Elements of both Democratic and Republican parties in Kane County are taking steps to attract more young people — ages 18 to 40 — to become involved in politics. Along with meetings, the groups are working with charities and doing volunteer tasks. We give our **THUMBS UP** to any efforts to stir interest in politics. The last presidential election once again drove home the importance of each vote, and it has never been more important to register, become informed and get to the polls. Political parties have a role in all three.

Conservation work moves ahead

 When the state committed \$1.9 million in grants through the Conservation 2000 Ecosystems program, two local organizations submitted successful applications. **THUMBS UP** to the Kane County Forest Preserve District, which will receive \$50,000 for the restoration and education programs at Nelson Lake Marsh, and the Conservation Foundation, which will receive \$26,250 for restoration of the Lake Renwick East Habitat near Plainfield, home to the endangered black-crowned night heron as well as several other magnificent bird species.

Keep weapons away from children

1-19-04 Chronicle

Doctor, former cop vying to unseat coroner

West seeks his second term

By PAUL ROCK
Kane County Chronicle

A former police officer and a physician are working hard to give Kane County Coroner Chuck West a significant push in the March 16 Republican primary.

West, 61, seeks his second term as coroner.

His opponents in the primary, Stan Hickrod and Bob Tiballi, accuse West of inefficiency and incompetence as they mount their campaigns for the coroner's post.

Stan Hickrod, 39, a former

Streamwood police officer and the owner of a crematory in East Dundee, said his background in investigating causes of death and handling bodies make him the best candidate.

"The coroner's job is to investigate the cause of death, and the coroner needs to work hand in hand with police," Hickrod said. "As a police officer, I know the importance of a crime scene, and I know how to investigate without damaging a crime scene."

Bob Tiballi, 45, an Elgin physician, said his mission is to protect the health and safety of the county's living citizens. He also believes he can improve the coroner's office by improving efficiency.

"I think I have the best administration skills, and I have the ability to restore the office to the

highest level of efficiency," Tiballi said. "Whatever I contend for, I think I'm the best person for it."

West said the work he has done in his first term warrant another four years, particularly because he has been able to stretch the office's budget with a small staff.

He said he also has experience outside the office, working as a grief counselor at the site of the bombing at the Federal Building in Oklahoma City and the plane crash that killed WGN radio personality Bob Collins.

"I think I've done an exemplary job," he said. "The coroner's office has been drastically underfunded for the last 26 years, and if you compare it to adjoining counties, we have the highest

caseload and the lowest budget." Hickrod said he has worked 20 years to be a qualified candidate for coroner.

"Everything I've done in my life to become a coroner," Hickrod said. "I stayed in a funeral service while I was a cop, and I left because I've been preparing half my life to be a coroner. I possess everything that's needed in that office, and I'm a good leader."

Tiballi said he would bring compassion, integrity and honesty to the coroner's office that has been lacking.

"What I bring to the table is a history of honesty and integrity that is lacking in this administration," he said.

The three candidates have leveled a series of accusations at

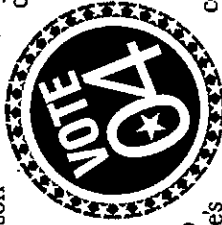
each other during the campaign. Hickrod attacked West for employing an underqualified deputy and abusing his office's budget and his county-owned vehicle.

West accused Hickrod of seeking the office so his crematorium business will profit. Hickrod said he would sell the business if elected.

Tiballi recently suggested that West has been uncompassionate toward the family members of victims and was negligent in the death of Tiballi's patient three years ago.

But West said he is the only candidate who has experience in the office and knows what it takes to do the job.

"My concern is that the other candidates won't be able to give the time required for the job," he said.



Only one month left to register to vote

1-19-04 Chronicle

Feb. 17 is deadline for March 16 primary

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — The last day to register to vote in the spring primary election is Feb. 17.

That is just less than a month from now. The primary is March 16.

Voters will select the parties' nominees to run Nov. 2 in the general election for county board, state's attorney, recorder, auditor, circuit clerk and coroner and even-numbered county board seats.

The parties' nominees for state representatives, U.S. representative, U.S. senator and president will be chosen, and voters will decide about a dozen referendum questions.

Among them, the Geneva school district seeks \$48.9 million for a new middle school and an increase in the education fund tax rate to 3.43 percent from 3.08 percent. Also, the Town & Country Library district, based in Elburn, seeks to raise the annual public library tax rate to .19 percent from .15 percent.

"We urge people to get out and register to vote because it is important," Kane County Clerk John Cunningham said.

To be eligible to vote, a person must be a citizen of the United States, 18 years old by the date of the election and a resident of the precinct for 30 days before the election.

Anyone who has changed names, by marriage or otherwise, must reregister in person. Also, those who have moved to Kane County from another county must reregister in person.



Register

Continued from page 1

Those who have moved to a different address within Kane County can use the change of address form on the back of their registration card and mail it in.

Director of elections Joan Rennie said eligible residents can register at the clerk's office during regular business hours between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

To assist with those who might wait until the last minute, the clerk's office will be open until 8 p.m. Feb. 11 and from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Feb. 14.

To register, you must have two forms of identification, one of which must include a current address, Rennie said.

Also, municipal and township offices and many libraries provide registration services.

As of Jan. 1, 179,439 registered voters lived in Kane

For information

- To learn who your precinct committeeman is, or for any other questions, call the clerk's office at (630) 232-5990.

- The county clerk's Web site contains a list of candidates and referendums, where to register, a list of polling places and requests for absentee ballots. The address is <http://www.co.kane.il.us>.

County.

Cunningham said many precinct committeemen also serve as deputy registrars.

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STC protests transportation impact fees

1-20-04 Chronicle

City council votes to table plan to extend fiber optic system to county buildings

By HEATH HIXSON
Kane County Chronicle

ST. CHARLES — A plan extending city fiber optic lines to county buildings is being held hostage to protest county impact fees Mayor Sue Klinkhamer described as "socialist."

City council members voted Monday to table a proposal extending the city's fiber optic system to two county buildings. The council also voted to approve a resolution opposing the fee system.

The moves are part of a protest of new transportation impact fees

approved by the Kane County Board to make developers pay their way.

Klinkhamer said the new fees would harm development in the Tri-Cities and said a lawsuit might be the only way to stop the county fees.

"We think that it is unfair (setting different fees), arbitrary and capricious," she said. "One of the rea-



Klinkhamer



Wyatt

sions we tabled that (fiber optic proposal) is because of the fact that we are not happy with the county."

The Kane County Board approved the fees Jan. 13. The fee plan calls for eight planning regions countywide and assesses fees on development in those areas. The fees are determined according to a formula

that takes into account road lane miles, current traffic and expected road traffic.

County Transportation Committee Chairman Bill Wyatt, R-Aurora, dismissed the council move as "childish" and said the new fees would help address transportation issues countywide.

"It is inherently fair," he said. "It has been tested in court. We did everything that we were supposed to do. How the numbers turned out is more of a tribute to how (well) the formula works."

See FEES, page 2

Fees

Continued from page 1

Because the new fees are much higher in the Tri-Cities than in other surrounding cities such as Aurora and South Elgin, Tri-Cities officials are changing the county board with approving a politically charged fee system at the expense of their communities.

Klinkhamer called the fees "socialist" because they help "those who do not have, while taking away from those (cities) that do have development."

Wyatt said the fee plan keeps fee revenue in a planning area to help maintain

and improve existing roads. He said the fees would not be sent to another part of the county.

Batavia and Geneva city councils are expected this week to consider joining St. Charles in litigation to stop the fee system.

Batavia Mayor Jeff Schielke said "we can't crawl into the dark hole that they want to put us in."

Klinkhamer would not say when the city council would consider the fiber optic proposal again. But she alluded to wanting to wait until after the primary election March 16 to see whether the county board's political atmosphere changes.

100-04 Daily Herald

St. Charles marks dislike of county fee plan

By LISA SMITH
Daily Herald Staff Writer

City also objects by delaying agreement with county on high-speed network

The St. Charles city council protested new road fees enacted by Kane County officials by withholding approval of an unrelated agreement with the county Monday night.

Aldermen voted to table an intergovernmental agreement that would have created high-speed underground fiber

connections in St. Charles between the Kane County Clerk's office and the Kane County Judicial Center. The council then approved a resolution outlining its opposition to the county's impact fee system.

"What they are doing is punishing us for our success," Mayor Sue Kinkhamer said after the

takes into account where the developments are and how close they are to existing county roads.

County officials estimate it would bring in an estimated \$27 million over the next 10 years.

But because of the disparity among road locations and uses, areas such as Campoton Hills and the Tri-Cities will be charged

more money than Aurora, Elgin or other municipalities.

"What they are doing is pitting communities against one another for development," Kinkhamer said.

She called the fee structure flawed, saying it is based on figures from 1990.

Kinkhamer said St. Charles,

Geneva and Batavia officials are considering suing the county to overturn the fee structure.

Geneva and Batavia city councils are scheduled to consider similar resolutions tonight that would oppose the county's ordinance.

"The growth is here and the people are here," Kinkhamer said. "If (the county board) wanted to enact this, they should've done it 10 years ago."

1-19-04 Beacon News

Anti-smoking billboards up throughout Kane

By Rhianna Wisniewski
SPECIAL TO THE BEACON NEWS

GENEVA — If you smoke one pack of cigarettes a day, and you quit smoking right now, you will save \$1,642.50 per year, at the price of cigarettes today.

That is the statistic motorists have been seeing on billboards in Kane County, as part of a new health campaign launched by Fred Carlson, director of environmental health for the Kane County Health Department. Although health departments in other counties have launched anti-smoking campaigns before, Carlson said this campaign is different.

"We're trying a different ap-

proach to get people's attention, to get these people who are still smoking to realize how much money they'll spend on cigarettes each year," he said.

Carlson said the campaign's aim is to put a positive spin on quitting. He planned the campaign launch for the holiday season because he thought he could connect quitting with saving money for the holidays.

"When you see that you're spending upwards of \$1,600 a year on cigarettes, that's a lot of gifts," he said.

The first batch of signs went up Dec. 24, 2003, just in time for Christmas. Most signs have been put up in Aurora and Elgin.

Carlson, a former smoker, quit

many years ago. He doesn't believe the anti-smoking campaign he's launching is personal — he just doesn't understand why people would want to waste their money.

"It just bothers me that people put so much money toward it, and these are people whose financial situations could be helped by that \$1,600," he said.

The billboards will stay up approximately a month, although Carlson said if the billboards make an impact, they might continue the campaign.

How do you measure the effects of a billboard? Carlson said they keep track of any public response the billboards generate, whether that be phone calls, e-mails or com-



A Smoke-Free Holiday:

Priceless!

These billboard images are part of an anti-smoking campaign launched by Fred Carlson, director of environmental health for the Kane County Health Department. Funding for the billboards came in the form of a grant from the state's share of a settlement against tobacco firms.

encouraged to sign up with the county to be smoke-free. They also help to sponsor cessation classes at local hospitals, many of which are going on now to coincide with the New Year.

For more information on the billboards or any anti-smoking campaign, call Carlson at (630) 208-3803.

uous anti-smoking campaigns already in effect.

The Kane County Health Department has a smoke-free restaurant campaign, where restaurants are

ments about them.

The funding for the billboards came from grant money from the state tobacco settlement, money that also goes to fund other contin-

Kane chair candidate to bow out

1-20-04 Beacon News

By Steve Lord and Daniel Duggan
STAFF WRITERS

Kane County Treasurer David Rickert will reportedly announce today that he is dropping out of the race for Kane County Board chairman.

While Rickert could not be reached for comment, one local official who asked not to be identified confirmed Monday night that Rickert will exit the race.

The official announcement is to be made at a press conference this morning, at which both Rickert and Kane County board member Karen McConnaughay, the other GOP candidate for board chairman, are expected to endorse state Sen. Steve Rauschenberger, R-Elgin, for the Republican U.S. Senate nomination.

Earlier Monday, a three-paragraph news release from Rauschenberger's campaign announced that, "In the race between GOP Kane County Board chairman candidates, Karen McConnaughay and David Rickert, one candidate will withdraw from that race. Both will rally around Rauschenberger and endorse him for U.S. Senate."

❖ Turn to **CANDIDATE, A2**

CANDIDATE

From page A1

Neither McConnaughay nor Rickert returned phone messages Monday night.

Rickert's departure would leave McConnaughay as the lone Republican candidate for chairman, slating her for a November matchup against Thomas Meadath, a St. Charles businessman running unopposed for the Democratic nomination for board chairman.

Rumors of Rickert pulling out of the race have been floating around for about a month, even before the official filing date for candidates. Both he and McConnaughay announced their candidacies last fall.



Sources say Kane County Treasurer David Rickert is likely to bow out of the race for County Board chairman, and Karen McConnaughay will stay in the running.

Already, one candidate has left the GOP chairman race. William Scardamaglia, of St. Charles, exited the race in the face of a challenge to his nominating petitions.

Rickert drops from race in Kane

1-21-04 Beacon News
By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

ELGIN — Kane County Treasurer David Rickert Tuesday dropped his candidacy for Kane County Board chairman. Rickert, of Elgin, said he will instead put his energies toward volunteering to help the candidacy of state Sen. Steve Rauschenberger of Elgin in the Republican primary for U.S. Senate. By withdrawing, Rickert paved the way

for County Board member Karen McConnaughay, R-St. Charles, to run unopposed in the March GOP primary for board chairman. McConnaughay most likely will face the sole Democratic candidate, Thomas Meadath of St. Charles, in the November general election.

McConnaughay and Rickert appeared together for the withdrawal announcement Tuesday morning at Rauschenberger's campaign office in Elgin, where Rickert and McConnaughay both endorsed

Rauschenberger. "This is my decision to withdraw from the race," Rickert said. "... This way I can concentrate on working with Steve on his campaign, and working in the general election with Karen."

Both McConnaughay and Rickert said the decision was made with party unity in mind. McConnaughay said she and Rickert always did agree that the key issue at

◆ Turn to RICKERT, A2



Kane County Treasurer David Rickert (second from left) watches state Sen. Steve Rauschenberger and Kane County Board member Karen McConnaughay shake hands after Rickert announced he is dropping from the race to be County Board chairman. At right is Dennis Wiggins, Kane County Republican Party chairman.

MICHAEL SMART / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

deal to get him to leave the race. He did say, though, that he and McConnaughay talked privately about a number of issues the county will face within the next few years.

McConnaughay said the situation could serve as an example for party unity to Republicans in other races. There are primary races in the GOP for coroner, recorder, circuit clerk and state's attorney.

"It starts here today," she said. "We can all agree to disagree, and airing our differences is fine. But when it's all said and done, we're all Republicans. That's the message. We're trying to put out there."

In a bit of irony, Kane County Republican Party Chairman Dennis Wiggins of Aurora also appeared at the press conference to give his blessing to Rickert's decision and the message of party unity.

But he stopped short of joining the endorsement parade for Rauschenberger, in large part because another Kane County resident, Jim Oberweis of Aurora, also is in the running for the U.S. Senate nomination. Wiggins said he remains neutral in that race.

RICKERT

From page A1

the County Board level is "improved fiscal management" of the county.

"This is an unselfish example of working toward a better Republican Party in Kane County," McConnaughay said. "This is leading by example."

Charlie Stone, a spokesman for Rauschenberger's campaign, said when Rickert made his decision, he called Rauschenberger for advice on how to go about withdrawing. That's what prompted Tuesday's press conference, Stone said.

"Steve didn't pressure him or anything like that. Dave said he needed the help," Stone said.

"The momentum and the necessary support were not there," Rickert said of his own campaign. "I decided my efforts would be better spent toward Sen. Rauschenberger's campaign."

Rickert emphasized "there was no agreement whatsoever" or any

1-21-04 Beacon news

No holds barred in Kane County coroner race

Challengers' claims:
Allegations that incumbent misused nude cadaver photos, 'botched' investigations

By Ed Fanselow
STAFF WRITER

The race for Kane County coroner is off to a spirited start, with two of the candidates unleashing a barrage of allegations against incumbent Chuck West, one of them charging that West displayed photos of nude corpses in his office.

Stan Hickrod and Dr. Bob Tiballi, the two men seeking to unseat West in the

March 16 Republican primary, have repeatedly called the coroner's office "unprofessional" and "unethical." Tiballi has cited several examples of what he said were "botched" death investigations during West's tenure.

But the already-heated campaign took a bizarre turn during a recent Republican candidates' forum in Aurora. During a sometimes-rambling harangue, Tiballi said he was "nauseated" when he saw photographs of a post-mortem woman hanging on a wall in the lobby of West's Geneva office.

"To display photos like that in a public area is unethical, immoral and in violation of that deceased woman's privacy," Tiballi, an Elgin physician, said. "What if that were your daughter or your mother or your

sister shown off like that?"

West did not address the topic at the forum, but said Monday that he's never displayed cadaver photos in a public area. A cursory look over West's office by a Beacon News reporter earlier this month failed to find the pictures in question.

"There are no nude photos of women displayed in our office," West said, "and there never have been."

West maintains Tiballi's accusations are part of a smear campaign concocted to discredit him.

"Both of them don't have any idea of what the coroner's office is about, and that's quite clear when you hear them talk in public," West said. "They have no other way of winning office besides attacking me and doing it this viciously."

The two challengers counter they are more than qualified to head the coroner's office, which is primarily responsible for investigating suspicious and unexplained deaths.

Hickrod, a Dundee resident who is a funeral director and former Streamwood police officer, said he's wanted to be the county coroner since he was a teenager. "Everything I've done in my life, I've done to prepare myself to be coroner," he said. "I've been motivated to run in this election because of the many shortcomings I've seen under (West)."

He said West orders far too many autopsies, putting families of deceased relatives through undue stress and costing the county thousands of unnecessary dollars in the process.

Hickrod has questioned West's use of a county-owned vehicle, which, Hickrod said, West uses for purposes not related to his job.

West has said both charges are unfounded.

Tiballi, meanwhile, said he was inspired to run after witnessing West's techniques first-hand, during an investigation into the death of one of his patients.

He cites his experience as a physician and infectious disease expert as among his qualifications for the office.

"I just wouldn't be able to live with myself if I sat back and let Chuck West get re-elected," Tiballi said. "There are so many problems in that office and somebody has to step up and do something."

Kane officials bend legislators' ears at meeting

By Daniel Duggan
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — During a meeting with Fox Valley legislators Tuesday, Kane County Board members asked for two things: money and power.

"Planning is really the role for a county (government) in a growing, urban area," board Chairman Mike McCoy said. "We need to have teeth ... our plans can be totally ignored by municipalities."

The annual meeting is set up as a chance for legislators to better understand the problems facing the Kane County Board.

Legislators on Tuesday told the board members to call them when they are having problems with state agencies such as the Illinois Department of Transportation.

McCoy said he's had previous problems with IDOT not approving portions of the plans for pending bridge projects in St. Charles and Dundee townships. While McCoy and IDOT officials had a meeting with U.S. Speaker Dennis Hastert, R-Yorkville, to help Kane County's projects get priority, state Rep. Pat Lindner, R-Sugar Grove, offered her help, as well.

"Sometimes the best way to deal with IDOT is to sit them down with a group of legislators and tell them what the problem is," she said. "If the problems persist, call us and we'll set up a meeting."

Other county officials who attended Tuesday's meeting stressed the need to have funding for ongoing health and transportation projects. State Sen. Chris Lauzen, R-Aurora, said that, under the current administration, there are many grants that have been approved and are not being paid out to recipients.

"We bring this up when we have meetings with the administration," Lauzen said. "Come on, let our money go."

McCoy emphasized that a major problem the county board might eventually face will be how much power it has to deal with the massive growth in the northwest and west portions of the county.

As developers and municipalities work out agreements to bring thousands of houses to the area, McCoy and other officials have said, the county will not be able to keep up.

"We bear the brunt of local decisions and bear the brunt of the increasing traffic," McCoy said. "A developer can buy up 600 acres and propose a plan to double the size of a community, but they have no idea what it will take for the county to keep up with that."

Sen. Steve Rauschenberger, R-Elgin — who joked that Elgin will be expanding its borders to Iowa soon — suggested helping the county board with a law to give it more power.

"Maybe we could come up with an urban counties law," he said, "something to give you more statutory power — let counties have more of a say."

McCoy reminded the legislators about the impact of higher casino taxes on Kane County. A bill passed last year increased a portion of the taxes paid by the Grand Victoria Casino to 70 percent, and that in turn has reduced the portion of casino profits passed on to the county. While most tax dollars are spent fighting crime, McCoy said, the riverboat funds have given the board a chance to deal with other issues.

Rep. Tim Schmitz, R-Batavia, pointed out that Fox Valley legislators fought against the casino tax increase and have been sensitive to the new taxes.

"And, really, this hasn't brought the kind of money the administration hoped it would bring," Rep. Ruth Munson, R-Elgin, said of the casino tax.

County wants state aid for road projects

1-27-04 Chronicle

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — An "urban counties law" would give counties more power to plan for the type of burgeoning growth in Kane, State Sen. Steve Rauschenberger said.

Rauschenberger on Tuesday responded to concerns from county officials at a legislative breakfast at the government center.

County Board Chairman Mike McCoy said state statutes favor municipalities in planning efforts.

"There needs to be some strengthening of county planning initiatives in the statutes," McCoy said.

Rauschenberger and McCoy were members of the state's Smart Growth Task Force, and the idea of the "urban counties law" grew out of that.

Rauschenberger said growing counties, such as Kane, should have statutory authority along the "equivalent of the municipalities."

For example, a city or village has authority within its borders, plus an added 1½-mile "planning jurisdiction" outside its borders.

Counties have no such authority within municipalities.

With the Kane's population expected to top 600,000 in 30 years, and 90 percent of that growth expected within incorporated areas, planning will be the major role of county government, McCoy said.

"We bear the brunt of municipal decisions, and we carry the brunt of the traffic they create," McCoy said.

He mentioned the growing controversy sparked when the county adopted a transportation impact fee that Tri-Cities mayors say is unfair and will hurt commercial development in the cities.

One area where counties have



Wayne Ratzlaff — Chronicle photo staff

State Rep. Tim Schmitz, R-Batavia, front, was one of several state lawmakers in attendance at a county board sponsored legislative breakfast Tuesday at the Kane County Government Center.

countywide powers is in stormwater management. The county's stormwater ordinance applies inside and outside of municipal borders.

Another major topic put before the legislators was the confusion within the Illinois Department of Transportation.

Following the change in governors, IDOT has appeared paralyzed. Some engineering plans awaiting state approval have sat on desks for 10 months, McCoy said.

"Help us ensure we can move forward," McCoy said.

State Rep. Tim Schmitz, R-Batavia,

said Kane County legislators worked together when the initial Illinois FIRST projects were announced because it appeared Kane was being slighted.

"We stuck together then. Maybe we have to fire that group up again," Schmitz said.

"Our aim:
To fear God,
tell the truth
and make money."

H.C. Paddock
1852-1935

Opinion

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1-21-04 Daily Herald

Rising resistance to tax increases

The signs of an impending political explosion often can be seen long before the eruption comes to pass.

Any number of those signals — increasing stridency in more numerous letters to the editor, more militancy at public meetings and the rise of more anti-tax groups — have been pulsing across the Fox Valley for some time now. And despite improvements in the nation's economy, the atmosphere continues to grow more belligerent, not less.

With county department heads and county boards in dogfights over money nearly every week, with the state taking more but returning less, residents are growing ever more aggressive about resisting tax increases.

Politicians in office now and seeking office in March or November would be wise to sit in a school, county, park or city board meeting these days. What they would hear likely would make them cautious about any tax increases or fee increases they suggest anytime soon.

In McHenry County, they would see a big fight over county salaries, school referendum battles in

Our View

Wages have been static or barely rising. Private-sector pensions are a rarity.

Cary, Fox River Grove and Huntley, and traffic complaints without end.

Or try Carpentersville, where property taxes have been raised twice recently, along with a host of fees. East Dundee wants home-rule power, presumably to have more options for generating revenue. Elgin, which raised garbage fees a year ago, is now contemplating a telecommunications tax. And several towns already have raised or created a utility tax.

Kane County is considering, at various times, a gas tax for road projects, a senior citizen services tax, an open space referendum and a jail construction project bond issue. All of this, added to ever-rising property taxes, mostly for schools, has not made for a content electorate.

Wages have been static or barely rising. Private-

sector pensions are a rarity; double-digit percentage increases in health-care costs are not. Many wonder how they can send their kids to college and care for their parents while supporting all those units of government seeking tax increases.

The answer is that many can't — or don't want to anymore. That is why groups like Citizens for Reasonable and Fair Taxation (Harvard), Citizens Anti-Referendum Group (Huntley), Business Owners, Taxpayers and Homeowners Against Excessive Referendums (Carpentersville) and Taxpayers United for Referendum Force (Elgin U-46) can be added to anti-referendum stalwart Jack Roeser and his Family Taxpayers Network.

These groups aren't disappearing after a referendum anymore. They are uniting, sharing expertise, research and battle plans for the next one. They are writing letters, holding meetings and solidifying positions.

Elected officials blind to these signs and unable to explain new tax requests in a way that answers these groups' concerns may find themselves on the losing end of both referendum requests and re-election efforts.

1-21-04 Chicago Tribune

Casino tax hike hits Kane funding

Riverboat royalties fall, threatening county programs

By William Presecky
Tribune staff reporter

With riverboat funding from the Grand Victoria Casino in Elgin expected to slip again next year, several "quality of life" programs that gambling revenues help underwrite such as Kane County's child advocacy center and drug court may be reduced or eliminated, Board Chairman Mike McCoy warned Tuesday.

Due to the latest round of state tax-rate hikes on casino profits, McCoy told a delegation of area legislators that Kane expects to see its share of royalties from the Grand Victoria reduced to levels not seen since 1997.

With a projected disbursement from the boat in 2005 of between \$4 million and \$5 million, the County Board will be forced to reduce or eliminate funding for some of its own programs, after more than a year of having stopped grants for all but county purposes, according to McCoy.

In his final presentation of the county's state and federal legislative initiatives before he leaves office Nov. 30, McCoy called on the legislators for help in ensuring that the increases in state taxes on the large casinos like the Grand Victoria expire as scheduled.

The initiatives centered generally on a call by the county for more authority and increased flexibility to be able to respond to the impacts of growth, including increased traffic congestion

and public health problems.

"There's probably never a possibility of cutting back on taxes," McCoy said of the increased casino tax.

The legislators told him, however, that the higher tax rates the General Assembly approved to shore up the 2003 state budget included a sunset clause that ties them to the issuance of the state's only remaining casino license. The state's process of deciding who gets the license began this week.

Since the higher casino tax rates went into effect, McCoy said Kane has seen its share of money from the Grand Victoria reduced to \$6 million from \$12 million annually.

The projected riverboat revenue for 2005 will approximate the \$4.5 million Kane received in 1997, the first year of its profit-sharing agreement with the casino, according to McCoy.

Because of declining attendance and falling profits, state revenue from the higher tax rates has been about half the \$200 million that was projected.

Since 1997, Kane has received more than \$70 million from the Grand Victoria that it has redistributed to county agencies, departments, and other public and private agencies for various projects and programs.

The board imposed a funding moratorium in October 2002 on all but county-sponsored grants. Now some of those grants, for programs or projects as varied as the county's farmland protection program and a veterans memorial, are in danger of being reduced, McCoy said.

"Next year, we are going to cut into some county projects," he said.

Trust could be factor in state's attorney race

By ADAM KOVAC
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Despite their background and experience, Republican candidates for Kane County state's attorney think that the campaign could boil down to the public's trust in elected officials.

The four-way race to win the GOP nomination March 16 to succeed Kane County State's Attorney Meg Gorecki comprises former prosecutors with different visions for the office.

The Republicans include John Barsanti of St. Charles, and T. Michael Leuer, Tim O'Neil and Joseph Rago, all of Geneva. Barsanti, O'Neil and Rago met Tuesday with *Kane County Chronicle* editors. Leuer did not attend.

Because the primary election falls while Gorecki is to serve a four-month suspension of her law license for misconduct, the election might hinge on an ability to mend voter perception of Kane County's legal system.

"Elected officials right now don't have a good reputation," said O'Neil, 47. "It's important to restore the integrity of the office."

Barsanti already had announced his candidacy before Gorecki decided in August not to seek another term, influencing the others to widen the field of candidates for the county's top law enforcement officer.

A primary that included Gorecki likely would have focused on her ethics. Even though the candidates have shifted strategies, the fallout from her case is illustrated as the

campaign has heated up this month.

Rago recently blasted Barsanti and O'Neil for political and business connections he claims would create an "appearance of impropriety" if either is elected.

Barsanti, a former prosecutor in Kane County for 21 years, works for a law firm that represents several high-profile criminal clients. O'Neil, the St. Charles city attorney, represents several police unions.

"People want one fair system of justice," said Rago, 43. "It's a matter of public perception."

O'Neil maintains that he would prosecute police misconduct as vigorously as criminal cases. Barsanti said special favors would not be granted under his administration and noted that Rago also is backed by supporters in the legal profession.

Indeed, state's attorneys and judges often are faced with cases where they have a connection to participants on both sides of the courtroom and on the bench.

Leuer, a consultant for IBM in Chicago, has emphasized a hard stance against drugs and violent crime but has avoided becoming a target of political sniping.

Barsanti served as the top lieutenant of former state's attorney David Akemann and has experience prosecuting death-penalty cases and high-level administration of the office. He said he can improve efficiency.

O'Neil touts his experience in civil law, saying he is a more

rounded candidate who would be tough on street gangs but also better able to advise county leaders on issues such as growth and development.

Rago, who has a law firm in West Dundee, has endorsed creating special units to fight computer crime and identity theft and has served as the first assistant state's attorney in DeKalb County.

Rago and O'Neil also worked as prosecutors in Kane County.

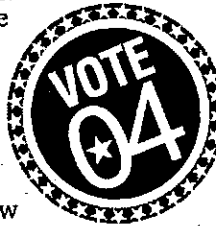
The winner of the GOP primary likely will face Democrat Renee Robinson of Aurora in November.

Gorecki, who could not be reached for comment, is poised to begin serving her suspension Feb. 1 for implicating Kane County Board Chairman Mike McCoy before she took office in a jobs-for-bribes scheme that never existed.

Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan is researching whether Gorecki is able to finish her term after serving the suspension or will be forced to resign. That decision had not been reached Tuesday.

While the candidates push their individual platforms, Barsanti, O'Neil and Rago also acknowledge that voters might be more interested in seeing a fresh face overseeing cases prosecuted in the county's judicial center in St. Charles.

"You're really voting for a guy who's going to do the right thing by you," said Barsanti, 52. "That's why it's important to look at all the candidates and decide who's the best qualified."



1-21-04 Chronicle

1-21-04 Chicago Tribune Campaign 2004

Treasurer exits Kane board race

McConaughay to be GOP nominee

By William Presecky
Tribune staff reporter

Kane Treasurer David Rickert withdrew from the race for County Board chairman Tuesday, clearing the way for rival Karen McConaughay to become the 2004 GOP nominee.

McConaughay, a County Board member from St. Charles, became the party's sole primary candidate for chairman after Rickert of Elgin announced he was abandoning his campaign. Rickert

has two years left as treasurer. In a joint appearance in Elgin, Rickert and McConaughay announced plans to redirect the political energy each would have expended against the other toward state Sen. Steve Rauschenberger's bid for a U.S. Senate nomination.

Rickert later filed formal notice with the county clerk that he was withdrawing his nominating papers. "This decision was not made lightly but with the

knowledge that there has not been the support necessary for a successful bid," Rickert said. A legal challenge by a conservative faction of the Kane County Republican Organization was successful last month in prodding a third GOP candidate to withdraw from the race after it challenged his nominating petitions. William J. Scardamaglia, a county highway employee from St. Charles, said he did not have the resources to contest the legal challenge.

Democrat Thomas Meadath of St. Charles is his party's lone candidate to be its nomi-

nee for board chairman. Rickert said he joins Rauschenberger's campaign team as its "technology office coordinator," with responsibility for his Web site and other logistics. Rickert told supporters "not to look at this as a defeat or a setback but as an opportunity to unite the Republican Party in Kane County" behind Rauschenberger.

Rauschenberger (R-Elgin) is among five GOP candidates, including James Oberweis of Aurora, vying for the Senate nomination. McConaughay, who

praised Rickert for "unifying

the Republican Party ... through his leadership by example," said there was no deal struck between the two for him to withdraw.

"Party unity and party building should always be a priority, not just in an election year, but as a foundation for the future as we welcome new participants in the political process," she said.

McConaughay said Rickert's decision will allow her to refocus her campaign but will not alter its scope.

"It really gives me more opportunity to talk about issues with people," she said.

Treasurer quits race for board chairman

1-21-04 Daily Herald
BY PATRICK WALDRON
Daily Herald Staff Writer

Calling for unity within the Kane County Republican Party, county treasurer and underdog David Rickert pulled out of the county board chairman race Tuesday, a move he touted as equally good for the county board table as for Illinois' U.S. Senate race.

The development brought an early, but not unwelcome or totally surprising, end to the primary election for Karen McConnaughay, the St. Charles Republican long-viewed by many as the favorite to win the party's nomination.

At the same time, it pulled top county Republicans together for an endorsement of state Sen. Steve Rauschenberger, an Elgin Republican, one of 14 candidates, including seven Republicans, running for U.S. Senate.

"The reality was that there are bigger issues in this county we can accomplish together," Rickert said in a morning news conference attended by McConnaughay at Rauschenberger's Senate campaign headquarters in Elgin.

"This is my decision to withdraw from this race," Rickert said. "The momentum and necessary support is simply not there to continue in this election."

Rickert said he will devote his political time to electing Rauschenberger.

"My election is over," he said. "I've got the opportunity to help another good representative get elected."

Eight weeks before the primary, it leaves McConnaughay alone on the GOP ticket for county board chairman and headed for a run against Democrat Tom Meadath in the



David Rickert

Chair: Some board members still don't see unity in party

Continued from Page 1

November general election.

Eight months ago, the party looked headed for a bitter primary battle to secure the county's top office between McConnaughay, a board member since 1992, and board Chairman Mike McCoy.

Before that race could develop, McCoy, an Aurora Republican, announced in June that he would not seek a third term.

McCoy, who recently described the county GOP as a dysfunctional family, cited his dissatisfaction with party politics as one reason for not seeking another term.

Within a week of that announcement, McConnaughay entered a then wide-open race where she was joined the same day by Rickert, considered a surprise candidate.

By the time the deadline to file papers to get on the ballot passed, a third GOP candidate, William Scardamaglia, had entered the race. Scardamaglia, of St. Charles, was kicked off the ballot earlier this month after his paperwork was challenged.

Now, McConnaughay is left alone, the GOP nominee and clear favorite to succeed McCoy. No Democrat has ever been elected county board chairman.

"I am very excited about the idea of creating party unity," she said. "I really believe we are at a critical point here in Kane County."

She said her and Rickert "agree on more things than we disagree on" and pledged to work with Rickert, who has two years left as treasurer, in keeping county finances under control.

McConnaughay didn't have much to say about her Democratic opponent and insisted she'd keep the focus on her own candidacy.

Meadath, despite the historic Republican dominance, said he was ready for the race and confident in his chances.

"I personally intend to work all year," Meadath said. "I am a political unknown, and the only way I can win this election is to get in front of the largest number of voters I can."

Meadath is running an outsider campaign with a message

centered on responsible spending of tax dollars, also a central theme to Rickert's former platform.

He even wished the GOP well in its unity celebration, a concept that itself might have only an outside chance at success.

County board member Lee Barrett, an East Dundee Republican and Rickert supporter, said, "I think the party is fragmented and I have never seen a candidate ... who has ever worked on unity have much success with it."

The trend of disunity has traditionally pitted the northern end of the county against the its central portion or even the southern end. Perceived hard feelings between areas such as Elgin or Dundee Township versus the Tri-Cities, or even Aurora, have hung over several debates.

Barrett said he saw Rickert as a countywide candidate while



Tom Meadath



Karen McConnaughay

calling McConnaughay the "parochial" choice.

Board Vice President Cathy Hurlbut, an Elgin Republican, who couldn't be described as a supporter of either the Rickert or McConnaughay candidacy, said she sees a unified party in terms of a U.S. Senate race but not on Kane County's day-to-day issues.

"The unity of support behind Steve Rauschenberger is feasible," she said. "I don't know about Karen McConnaughay."

Hurlbut says she is disappointed there will not be a primary.

"They both had different qualities," she said, of Rickert and McConnaughay. "I don't think either has the whole package."

St. Charles opposing new Kane impact fee

1-21-04 Beacon
By Mike Sullivan news
SPECIAL TO THE COURIER NEWS

ST. CHARLES — Higher road impact fees might bring in a projected \$27 million in new revenues to Kane County over the next decade, but also might drive out potential developers.

That sums up the feeling of Mayor Sue Klinkhamer, who commented at length about the fees during Monday night's City Council meeting.

A resolution opposing the higher road impact fees sailed through the council after Klinkhamer criticized last week's decision by the County Board to impose them.

She said that happened at a meeting "where logic and common sense went out the window."

Klinkhamer indicated city officials from Geneva and Batavia also were expected to approve similar resolutions Tuesday night.

Residential and commercial developers, under the new county plan, will kick in a fee for every home or store they build.

Klinkhamer's concern is based on the structure of the road impact fee system that comes down harder on municipalities in the Tri-Cities area than it does on Elgin or Aurora.

Klinkhamer suggested a gas tax increase would have been a more equitable way of generating revenue in lieu of higher road impact fees.

For two hours, Klinkhamer noted, she pleaded with Kane County Board members at last week's meeting to consider a 2-cent-per-gallon hike in the county's gasoline tax.

"Their feeling is that this (expense) should all be on the developers," Klinkhamer said.

Aldermen protested the Kane County Board's road impact fee system by tabling an intergovernmental agreement aimed at developing high-speed underground fiber hookups between the Kane County clerk's office, the Kane County Judicial Center and the city of St. Charles.

Although Klinkhamer stopped short of threatening Kane County with a lawsuit over the issue, she indicated she might meet with city attorneys to explore legal options.

Batavia OKs looking into lawsuit over fees

higher in the Tri-Cities because there are more county roads here. But residents from all over the county use those roadways, he said.

Noble said that efforts to convince county officials that the formula is unfair have been futile. "There was an attitude of arrogance," from county leaders at last week's county board meeting, Noble said. "We were dismissed out of hand. If that attitude continues, we will resort to litigation."

Batavia officials clearly hope that they can avoid a lawsuit and convince the county officials to amend the formula. "I don't think we just fired a warning shot over the bow, but I think we just loaded the gun," Schielke said.

Under Schielke, Batavia's development policies have been geared toward sales tax-producing retail projects, in order to hold down city property tax rates on homeowners.

Noble said county officials argue that the fees should be

in Aurora would cost the developer about \$95,000 in fees, while the same project just up the road at Kirk and Wind Energy Pass in Batavia would pay \$617,000.

"We want to adjust this thing so we have some kind of reality," Schielke said. "This is an issue that is here to stay and the Kane County Board will have to address it."

Noble said he expects the cities will make suggestions to the county for amending the formula. Under Schielke, Batavia's development policies have been geared toward sales tax-producing retail projects, in order to hold down city property tax rates on homeowners.

Noble said county officials argue that the fees should be

the eight zones, calling planning partnerships, were established for planning stormwater management projects. Noble said, not for dealing with traffic issues, he said.

Moreover, old traffic data was used in the county's method for determining the formula, Noble said.

For example, the county used data from a 1990 survey by the Chicago Area Transportation Study, Noble said.

"That study was done before a lot of the development here existed," Noble said.

Mayor Jeff Schielke, who last week spoke before the county board in opposition to the plan, said that 210,000-square-foot commercial building at the corner of Kirk and Butterfield roads

grades that are needed to accommodate the increased traffic produced by their projects.

The plan divides the county into eight zones, with developments in the Tri-Cities paying rates that are four or five times higher than in most other parts of the county.

"We're not saying there should not be an impact fee. We're saying it should be fair," Batavia city attorney John Noble said. "We don't want to resort to litigation unless we have to."

Aldermen authorized Noble to begin an investigation into a potential lawsuit.

"The whole basis of how they went about doing this is flawed," Noble said. "It's going to drive development west, contrary to the county's own 2020 plan."

The Kane County Board last week approved the fee plan, designed to make developers help pay for the transportation up-

By MARK FOSTER
Kane County Chronicle

BATAVIA — The city council on Tuesday set the stage for a legal challenge to the county's transportation impact fee formula.

The Kane County Board last week approved the fee plan, designed to make developers help pay for the transportation up-

By MARK FOSTER
Kane County Chronicle

BATAVIA — The city council on Tuesday set the stage for a legal challenge to the county's transportation impact fee formula.

The Kane County Board last week approved the fee plan, designed to make developers help pay for the transportation up-

County to adopt new evaluation tool for farmland

Current plan created in 1984

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — The Kane County Board likely will approve a new system to evaluate farmland quality.

Members of the Development Committee on Tuesday called for an update of its 1984 Land Evaluation and Site Assessment, a document that helps determine the suitability of land for agricultural purposes.

Jonathan Koepke, resource analyst with the Kane-DuPage Soil and Water Conservation District, said the updated LESA will be more objective.

A series of work sheets focus on 16 factors in evaluating land, including the number of acres on the property, the amount of land in production, distance to landmarks, and land use within 1.5 miles. The formula will help determine farmland eligible to be included in the federal farm protection program.

The LESA does not contain scientific data on soil, said Tom Ryterske, district conservationist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service.

"It's important to consider farmland," Ryterske said. "It is in the best interest to keep it as agriculture."

Christy Sabdo, executive planner with the Development Department, said the regional plan commission relies on the LESA when considering new developments.

The LESA also will be made available to cities and villages, Sabdo said.

"(It can be) a planning tool for municipalities who want to maintain farm land," she said.

The updated LESA uses Geographic Information System and makes the evaluation of land easier, Koepke said.

"Two different people will get same conclusion," he said.

1-21-04 Daily Herald Batavia to study county's fee plan

By GALA M. PIERCE
Daily Herald Staff Writer

Batavia officials unanimously authorized the city attorney to work with Geneva's lawyer to study the county's transportation impact fee formula, determine whether it's fair and seek legal remedies if it's not.

"I don't think we fired a warning shot across the bow, but I think we just loaded the gun," Batavia Mayor Jeff Schielke said at Tuesday's city council meeting.

The mayors of the Tri-Cities protested the impact fee, which was approved by the Kane County board last Tuesday with a vote of 18-7. The new developer-paid fee should generate \$27 million for future road projects in the next 10 years.

It charges developments in

Batavia, Geneva and St. Charles much higher than other communities, because more county roads are used in the Tri-Cities.

"We're not saying there shouldn't be an impact fee, but we want it to be fair," Batavia City Attorney John Noble said.

Noble added that Tri-Cities leaders were met with an attitude of arrogance at the county meeting.

"If that attitude continues, we will have to resort to litigation," Noble said.

The developer of a new house, store or office, will pay an amount determined by a complex formula. Tri-Cities leaders contend the formula is based on old data and hope to offer a more fair solution to pay for county roads.

"We still believe there are major elements of the impact

fee that are flawed at best and questionable at least," Geneva Mayor Kevin Burns said.

The fees, which will take effect April 1, will detract developers from investing in the Tri-Cities and provide an incentive to build out west, officials say.

"Contrary to the county's 2020 plan, this is going to make it attractive to build commercial developments out west," Noble said.

With new residential neighborhoods, the developer will put that financial burden on the home buyer, Noble said.

They also contend the fee schedule burdens the Tri-Cities when roads, such as Kirk and Randall, are used county-wide.

Batavia favors diplomacy over litigation, but will seek a fair solution foremost, officials said.

Rickert out of race for chairman

*McConnaughay is
GOP nominee for
county board spot*
1-21-04 Chronicle

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

ELGIN — Supporters of Treasurer David Rickert's bid for Kane County board chairman expressed disappointment Tuesday at news he dropped out of the race.

Rickert made the announcement alongside Karen McConnaughay, his former opponent in the Republican primary, at the U.S. Senate campaign office of State



Rickert

Sen. Steve Rauschenberger, who kicked off his effort at the same time.

"I'm disappointed. It's always good to have a race in the primary," said county board member Catherine Hurlbut, R-Elgin.

County board member Deborah Allan, R-Elgin, said she was in "complete disbelief."

"Dave was the most qualified candidate to lead the county," Allan said.

"I'm disappointed. I thought Dave was a pretty good candidate," said county board member Lee Barrett, R-East Dundee.

Rickert cited a lack of support and momentum, and a desire to unite Kane County Republicans behind Rauschenberger's Senate bid.

"The necessary support is not out there," Rickert said.

Although Rickert did not specifically cite money, McConnaughay was far ahead in campaign fund-raising.

"Fund-raising is the key to any campaign," Rickert said.

McConnaughay reported on campaign disclosure documents filed July 31 for money raised through June 30 that she had raised \$46,374. Rickert had not reached the \$3,000 threshold for filing documents.

A second filing period ended Dec. 31, and documents must be filed by Jan. 31.

Now that Rickert, of Elgin, and William Scardamaglia, of St. Charles Township, have dropped out of the Republican primary race, McConnaughay, a county board member from St. Charles, is the defacto GOP nominee in the March 16 primary.

She will face Democrat Thomas Meadath of St. Charles in the Nov. 2 general election.

"I'm disappointed he dropped out," Meadath said. "Mr. Rickert (in the race) gave a little broader voice."

Meadath does not have an opponent in the Democratic primary, but he said he wishes he did.

See RICKERT, page 2



Wayne Ratzlaff — Chronicle photo staff

U.S. Senate candidate Steve Rauschenberger, R-Elgin, center, picks up the endorsement of David Rickert, left, and Karen McConnaughay on Tuesday in Elgin. During Tuesday's announcement, David Rickert stated that he is dropping from the race for Kane County Board chairman.

Rickert

Continued from page 1

A primary debate gives candidates more opportunity to disseminate their messages. Also, debates also provide new ideas for campaigns, he said.

"I think having two candidates in the primary gives the voters a choice," he said.

Meadath said he will not change his campaign now that he knows his opponent.

"I don't think it's going to hurt me. It's too early to say whether it will help me. It will be interesting to see how Mrs. McConnaughay's opinions stack up against mine," Meadath said.

McConnaughay, standing next to Rickert at the announcement, thanked him and stressed party unity.

"I'm very excited about the opportunity to create party unity," she said.

Talking about GOP unity is easier said than done, especially with the geographic di-

visions among Aurora, Tri-Cities and Elgin Republicans, Hurlbut said.

"I think there is a lack of unity in this county," Hurlbut said.

Barrett agreed.

"There's no historical indications that anyone will work other than parochially," Barrett said. "I'm not so responsive to words as I am to actions."

Action that would appease Barrett would be an "even distribution of county effort," especially in transportation projects.

He said the highway projects are "clustered around the mid-towns," meaning the Tri-Cities.

McConnaughay and Rickert also officially endorsed Rauschenberger's bid to win the Republican nomination for the U.S. Senate seat being vacated by Peter Fitzgerald.

Rauschenberger's top opponents will be James Oberweis and Jack Ryan.

Rauschenberger appar-

ently served as broker between Rickert and McConnaughay in discussions that culminated in Tuesday's announcement.

Rickert said he called Rauschenberger and broached the topic of dropping out of the race. Rickert then said he would help with the technical side of the campaign as a volunteer setting up a Web site.

McConnaughay said Rauschenberger called her "over the weekend" to see about an endorsement from her and Rickert.

Rickert said he made no deal with the McConnaughay campaign to drop out of the race.

"This is my decision to drop out of the race. There has been no agreement whatsoever," Rickert said.

Rickert said his only regret in dropping out of the race is letting down those who supported him.

"I just felt I was the most qualified candidate to push for financial reform," he said.

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1-22-04
Chronicle



Bill
Page

Take a shot at Page's chin

How much would you pay for a beard? I'm talking about the fine, salt and pepper beard that presently graces my chin (OK, OK... chins). What do you think it's worth? Before you all think I've finally slipped that last cog, let me explain.

This Monday, Jan. 26, Avenue Two Barber Shop in St. Charles will be the site of a nifty fund-raiser for one of my absolute favorite charities. From 5 to 9 p.m. the folks at Avenue Two will donate all of the money they make cutting hair to the Special Olympics. So come on out. Get your ears lowered and support a terrific organization at the same time. What a deal!

Since my coiffure is all but perfect, I don't need a trim, but I've got an offer you just can't refuse. I'm putting my beard up for auction and best bid gets to wield the clippers.

Now I know there has to be someone out there who I might have tweaked in one of my columns who would love to do the honors, so here's your chance to get a little revenge while helping some very special people.

As you might imagine, I have a few conditions attached to this deal. First, the minimum this baby comes off for is \$150, so dig deep. Second, NO RAZORS! I'm not stupid enough to allow some of you anywhere near my neck with a sharp blade. Third, bidding ends at 4 p.m. Monday, with shearing at 6 p.m. (or later if the winner insists). Make your bids via e-mail, or by telephoning or mailing it to the address below.

Avenue Two is located at 204 East Main Street, and their phone number is (630) 584-2002. Drop by Monday, even if you're not getting a cut, and help us support all the wonderful Special Olympians.

On Tuesday, Dave Rickert dropped out of the race for the Republican nomination for chairman of the Kane County Board. Rickert's campaign, while earnest, never really gathered steam and never captured the public's imagination or financial support, so Tuesday's announcement was not a total surprise.

The biggest surprises that day were the comments by some other board members who proclaimed themselves to being "shocked" and "disappointed" by Rickert's decision. Coming from seasoned politicians, those are pretty odd comments, especially when they've known for months that Rickert was having trouble raising funds. If they felt he was the best person for the job, then they needed to be out helping him meet voters and raise money. Neither happened and Dave was left to fend for himself.

There is a lesson for future candidates and the short version is this: Politics, as the late Chicago alderman Paddy Bauler once said, ain't beanbag. It's rough and tumble and you'd better know who your friends really are before you take the plunge. Rickert showed a lot of courage by running and even more class when he quit. Too bad the people who talked him into the campaign did not show the same qualities.

Another race that a lot of observers thought would lose a candidate or two is the Republican primary contest for Kane County state's attorney. Smart money said Mike Leuer would drop out by now, but as of late Monday that hasn't happened. Frankly, this is puzzling, because if Leuer really is in this race he has an odd way of showing it.

So far, Leuer is the missing man at debates and other candidate functions. I don't know how he thinks he'll get elected if he avoids the public, but maybe it's some new political strategy I'm unfamiliar with. Failing that, one has to ask why Leuer bothered to go to all the effort of collecting petitions and forming an election committee if he hasn't the burning desire to get elected. Leuer needs to do what is commonly referred to as a "gut check" and decide if he's in or out.

• Bill Page lives in St. Charles and writes about local issues on Tuesday and Thursday. Calls and e-mails answered at (630) 584-0809 or wpage@mediawerks.org.

1-22-04 Republican

Republican candidates dwindle for county chairman seat

This is the second in a series of reports about the 2004 election.

The number of candidates running for Kane County Board chairman has dropped dramatically since ballot filing took place last month.

Kane County Treasurer Dave Rickert (R-Elgin) dropped out of the race Jan. 20, realizing he had a monumental battle ahead if he wanted to win.

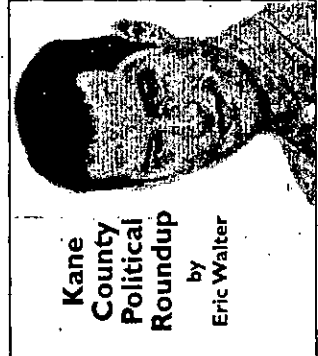
"He looked at the numbers and decided he couldn't win," said Denny Wiggins, Kane County Republican Party chairman.

Rickert's decision leaves current County Board member Karen McConnaughay (R-District 14) of St. Charles unopposed in the Republican primary Tuesday, March 16.

In fact, Wiggins said Rickert decided to put his support behind McConnaughay, an 11-year veteran of the County Board.

In a written statement, McConnaughay thanked Rickert for his support.

"I am honored by his support of my candidacy and laud him for his current and future service to the county," she wrote.



challenge hearing in front of the Kane County Election Commission.

Jon Zahm, a political consultant, had claimed Scardamaglia did not have enough valid signatures to qualify for candidacy. Candidates for County Board chairman needed 413 signatures from registered voters who reside within the county.

Rather than face a hearing before the county electoral board, Scardamaglia wrote a letter to Kane County Clerk John "Jack" Cunningham detailing his reason for leaving the race.

While Scardamaglia said he was certain that every signature he obtained was valid and that he properly filled out his nominating petition, he decided not to fight the challenge.

"While I believe I would overcome the objections, I do not have the resources that would be required to do so," he wrote.

Challenge fails

The other challenge, filed against Kane County recorder hopeful Dan Gurbal (R-Geneva), fell flat after fellow candidate Donald Rage (R-Sleepy Hollow) failed to convince the electoral board that Gurbal did not properly complete his petition and had more than 80 invalid signatures.

Cunningham, Kane County Circuit Clerk Deborah Seylter (R-Elgin) and Kane County Assistant State's Attorney Mike Coghlan sided with Gurbal, saying

that his paperwork met the minimum standards for filing.

Gurbal's retention on the ballot means he will face Rage and incumbent Recorder Sandy Wegman in the March primary.

Don't forget the Dems

Even though the primaries will be filled with electoral rhetoric from Republicans, we can't forget that there are Democratic candidates running in their own primary.

St. Charles businessman Thomas Meadath is the sole Democrat running for County Board chairman. He had said shortly after his announcement that he would welcome a challenger who could help bring out the issues of the campaign.

Looks like Meadath didn't get his wish, but I doubt he's complaining. He'll get that challenger for the Tuesday, Nov. 2, general election.

One Democrat is also in the race for Kane County recorder: North Aurora resident Michael Lowery is the Dems' only candidate for that office and, like Meadath, he'll face his real challenge in the November election.

Other Dems in the hunt for county offices include Aurora resident Robert Moore running for coroner, René Robinson for state's attorney, District 10 County Board candidate Howard Katz and District 14 County Board candidate Elaine Stern.

County board should review fee decision

The flaw is most evident along Randall Road, where a widget retail store on the east side of the road would pay thousands and thousands of dollars more than the widget competitor across the street on the west side of the road.

As well-intentioned as the decision might be, the transportation impact fee imposed by the Kane County Board is unfortunate and should be changed.

By a vote of 18-7, board members enacted a fee structure that penalizes central Kane County in general, and the Tri-Cities in particular. Board members also created a system by which a business on one side of the road would pay significantly more than their neighboring competitor across the street.

Makes sense? Not really. That is why it must change.

The impact fee is designed to create a pool of money to address some \$350 million in county transportation needs. The county was divided into eight planning areas and the dividing lines were based on the 2020 land-use plan. The plan was adopted nearly eight years ago, in 1996.

The county's theory was that developers in faster-growing areas should pay more in fees than those in slower-growing areas because the first group's projects places more drivers on the road.

A reasonable plan on the surface. And, certainly, the lines must be drawn somewhere. In the end, however, the philosophy is a bit shortsighted.

The flaw is most evident along Randall Road, where a widget retail store on the east side of the road would pay thousands and thousands of dollars more than the widget competitor across the street

on the west side of the road.

That inherent unfairness has prodded Tri-Cities officials to consider a lawsuit to overturn the county's decision.

The county's decision will do little to ease traffic congestion. At best, it will create money dedicated to the specific planning areas that will benefit road maintenance, not new transportation possibilities. We will wait in traffic on smoother roads, but we still will wait.

The county's decision also will not be a tax only on developers. Certainly, developers will pass the cost along to the consumer, and in doing so, will create an odd competitive environment with stores across the street from each other.

The county's decision will exacerbate the competition between communities vying for businesses and the tax revenue they generate, quite possibly giving developers yet another tool in their negotiations between competing communities. Such tools rarely help residents.

As a philosophy, impact fees are a solid instrument. When reasonable, they help fund needed infrastructure improvements that accompany new developments and act as a way to help manage growth.

The county's plan, as difficult as the decision was, directly harms central Kane, as well as other portions of the county. Although the board's intentions were admirable, the final product still needs work.

1-22-04

Chronicle

Fence Post

Think critically about Randall plans

This letter is regarding concerns alleged in recent local newspaper articles to have been expressed by Steve Cole regarding safety issues on the section of Randall Road between Silver Glen Road and Red Haw Road (or some portion thereof). I understand that these issues are to be discussed at a Kane County Board transportation committee meeting at 9 a.m. Friday. I regret that my job prevents me from attending so that I might comment in person. I hope this will suffice.

On behalf of the thousands of motorists who use this stretch of road every day without incident, I implore committee members to think critically about Cole's suggestions for "improvement" and to test his rationale thoroughly before making a recommendation to the county board.

As I understand it, Cole makes the following suggestions; to each of which I have indicated my reaction:

- Reduce the speed limit on this stretch of Randall from 55 to 45 mph permanently and to 35 mph on days with "inclement weather." Reaction: Who decides when the weather is "inclement," who monitors the deterioration and improvement in the weather every hour of every day and who enforces these subjective standards? • Put up signs during inclement weather advising motorists of some kind of danger. Reaction: See No. 1.
- Build a steel road divider along some portion of Randall Road. Reaction: Imagine the construction delays alone! Who is going to pay for this and does

this not just create something else to hit, making the road actually more dangerous?

- Erect a traffic light at Crane and Bolcum. Reaction: I am unclear on this suggestion. Does he mean Bolcum and Randall? Or does he mean Crane and Randall and Bolcum and Randall? It sounds as though Cole is just suggesting traffic lights at every intersection to be sure the traffic cannot reach even his proposed 45 mph. Traffic lights should not be used to control speed but to allow perpendicular traffic to enter. What is Cole's real motivation here?

• Enforcing speed limits on Randall Road. Reaction: It sounds like this is Cole's suggestion of last resort, and I agree with it. People do go faster than 55 mph here, and I think they should be cited. Obviously, everyone agrees

that accidents are a bad thing, especially those that involve personal injury. However, if that were our only concern, the speed limit would be reduced to 25 mph on all county roads and we would install speed bumps at close intervals. That way, we could be absolutely sure there would be no accidents.

The purpose of the road in the first place is to allow motorists to get from place to place quickly, a task that has become next to impossible on Randall Road as it is and which will become even more difficult if any of Cole's suggestions are implemented.

There are standards for traffic lights and speed limits on county roads. County engineers have repeatedly concluded there is nothing inherently dangerous about Randall Road or the intersections in this area,

and a safe speed limit has been in place for many years.

Accidents are not caused by the road; they are caused by bad or otherwise inattentive drivers. There is no evidence, to my knowledge, that any of the regrettable incidents to which Cole alludes in his public statements was caused by an inherent defect in Randall Road.

In the alternative, if this committee is bound and determined to recommend that the county board "do something," I would support a compromise by reducing the speed limit on this section of Randall to 50 mph. This would be consistent with the section north of Silver Glen so that instead of going from 45 to 55 to 50 mph as one goes north from Route 64, there would be only one adjustment.

Richard A. Rosenthal
St. Charles

1-22-04 Daily Herald

Growth issues at center of State of County address

1-22-04 Chronicle

Kane is second-fastest growing county in Illinois

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

ST. CHARLES — Respect for residents and land while preparing for tremendous growth will occupy county government for the next 25 years, Mike McCoy said.

McCoy, the Kane County Board chairman, spoke Wednesday to members of the DuKane Valley Council at the Hilton Garden Inn about the state of the county. DuPage County Board Vice Chairman Bill Maio and Kendall County Board member Kay Hatcher also addressed the council.

"Almost everything we do revolves around growth," McCoy said.

When McCoy first was elected to the county board in 1992, Kane's population was about 325,000. Today the population nears 455,000, a 40 percent increase in 12 years.

Kane is the second-fastest growing county in Illinois and 38th fastest in the United States.

"That issue will dominate county government for the next 25 years," he said. "I've been criticized for being anti-growth. I almost have to laugh at that."

McCoy, who leaves office Nov. 30 after two terms as chairman, said governments must "protect and respect" existing citizens and the

land in the face of growth that will bring 600,000 residents by 2020 and 700,000 by 2030.

"We want the new growth to pay for itself. In some respects, we rate (existing residents) higher than the future citizens," he said.

McCoy mentioned the transportation impact fee program, which was adopted last week and will take effect April 1. The program is controversial because the formula that determines the cost to developers charges developments in the Tri-Cities at a higher rate than other regions in the county.

He said Aurora has grown by 60,000 residents since he has been on the board and most of that growth has taken place in DuPage County, which has a transportation impact fee.

"I guarantee it will not stop development," he said.

Growth will affect the county's agricultural base and encroach on open space, which increases the risk of flooding, he said.

"We've learned if you don't respect the land, it will disrespect you," he said.

Maio spoke to DuPage's economic situation and likened budget cuts to cuts in a family's budget.

"We felt we had to make a cut in our own house," Maio said.

Kendall will see proportionately greater growth than Kane, Hatcher said. Kendall's population is 60,000. In 20 years it is expected to grow to 120,000.

"The stress put on existing infrastructure will be tremendous," Hatcher said.



McCoy

1-22-04 Daily Herald

Prairie Commons idea moves forward

BY GALA M. PIERCE
Daily Herald Staff Writer

More than two years in the making, Batavia planners Wednesday night approved the annexation and the preliminary development concept for the Lorenz property.

Developers outlined plans for Prairie Commons at the corner of Wind Energy Pass and Kirk road. The subdivision would consist of 253 two- and three-bedroom townhouses on about 35 acres. Twenty acres have been designated for commercial use.

"I liked this concept from the very beginning," plan commissioner Gene Schneider said at Wednesday's meeting.

Since July, the developer has hired consultants to analyze how the neighborhood would affect the combined 31,300 square feet of wetlands and the trees bordering the property. Consultants also were hired to analyze potential intersection traffic and also water detention. A tree survey has been conducted.

"We haven't been against this project," said Alan Long, an Aurora resident who lives in the Savannah subdivision, which borders the property. "We want to be good neighbors. ... At the same time, we're worried about the storm-water issues and the wetland buffer."

Long also addressed the planned location of the water tower, which now would be built on the eastern edge of the site, as recommended by the Batavia public works department.

"It will save the taxpayers and the city lots of money to put it where the public works department wants it," Schneider said.

The townhouses would begin in price at just below the \$200,000 mark and would range up to the \$300,000s. The neighborhood will include several small gardens and parks.

No retailers have been secured for the commercial end, but the city will grant space for offices and restaurants. City staff members will not permit automobile service shops or dealerships, banks, storage garages, massage or physical therapy practices, auditoriums and theaters, fast-food chains or other drive-through businesses.

Historic Fabyan garage in danger of demolition

1-22-04 Republican

Local area residents and businesses have been receiving letters from the Friends of Fabyan organization requesting pledges in their work to save the historic garage and maintenance/paint shop structure at the Fabyan Estate in the Fabyan Forest Preserve. The letters asked for support to help preserve the historic Fabyan garage complex, which was built in 1912. The Forest Preserve District of Kane County currently has proposed to demolish it.

The Friends of Fabyan routinely give history walks through the forest preserve and interpret the story of the former owner, millionaire George Fabyan, and his huge estate. The garage structure being threatened has a unique turntable that was used for turning vehicles around so they could drive out onto Highway 31 facing forward. The chauffeurs lived in apartments above the cars. Their families still live in this area.

The Friends of Fabyan organization is nonprofit and exists to preserve, restore and inter-

pret the historic value of the estate. The Friends receive no tax dollars and raise their own funds. The Friends currently have a Resource Center in the Fabyan garage available for historic research and continue to investigate additional possible adaptive reuses of the building.

Please help us save this historic structure that is so important in the story of the Fabyan estate. The Kane County Forest Preserve Utilization Committee may be voting on the demolition Jan. 29. Pledges are needed by Jan. 26, if possible, and can be sent to Friends of Fabyan, P.O. Box 801, Geneva, IL 60134. For questions and/or additional information, call 232-2378.

Diann Callenhire, Geneva
Friends of Fabyan Board of Directors

Schools, circuit clerk in the middle of feud

1-22-04 Chronicle

Cities holding fiber optic line hostage

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — The Kane County Circuit Clerk's office and St. Charles school district are caught in the middle of a feud between the county board and the city.

After the county board adopted a transportation impact fee program that St. Charles and other Tri-Cities officials say is unfair, the St. Charles City Council delayed action Monday on an agreement that would provide the school district and circuit clerks office with a larger

"pipeline" for online information. The agreement is to connect the Kane County Judicial Center and circuit clerk's office with fiber-optic cable.

Because the school district would use the same connection, it must wait until the sides resolve their issues.

Anne Fleming, the district's director of media and technology, said the greater bandwidth of the fiber optic cable would provide student computer users with faster access to the Internet.

"The bigger 'pipe' means instant pictures," Fleming said. The faster speed means "better use of instruction time."

The circuit clerk's office would use the greater bandwidth to send and receives files from the Judicial Center. The connection also would serve as a back system.

"We have nothing for back-

up right now," Circuit Clerk Deborah Seyler said.

The clerk's office began scanning court documents into digital images at the beginning of the year in anticipation of the new connect. Seyler said the digital images of court files contain some too much "space" on the current connection.

"Without that bandwidth, we're still in the stone age," she said.

The impact fee program, set to go into effect in April, charges developers more to build in the Tri-Cities than anywhere else in the county.

While county officials defend the program as following the formula set forth in state statutes, the mayors of the Tri-Cities argue it will stifle commercial development, which in turn hurts their cities' tax bases.

In a form of protest, the city council tabled the intergovern-

mental agreement that would have the county pay the city to hook up the fiber optic line.

St. Charles Mayor Sue Klinkhamer was not available for comment.

Kane County's Information Technology director Roger Fahnestock told members of the Administration Committee about the delay of the connection.

"I don't think they (the city) disagree with the technical value of it," Fahnestock said. "Their public works department has been very good to work with us."

Committee Chairman Paul Greviskes said he believed the sides will reach an agreement.

"It will work out," Greviskes said.

The connection for the school district would provide free Internet access, Fleming said. The money saved would be about \$200 a month.

Story tried to further a fraudulent DARE

Fence Post

The Daily Herald established a new low in coverage of the DARE controversy with its Jan. 17 story about the grammar school kids who recently completed the curriculum (Neighbor section, Page 1).

The lead paragraphs refer to "plenty of discussion" about DARE and imply that Kane County residents can form a sound opinion about DARE simply by talking with one another or by visiting a DARE classroom.

Such an implication misleads readers about the nature of the national discourse about DARE. DARE programs have always claimed they provide a kind of inoculation against drug abuse. That is the central reason why they were introduced into school programs.

Take away that claim — characterize them simply as police community relations programs — and the DARE movement would wither away even though good relationships between police and community are important to our society.

Over the past 15 years, mountains of research have shown that, at best, DARE programs do not reduce substance abuse

among the students who complete the program.

At worst, a DARE program might produce a so-called boomerang effect, which actually increases the probability some students will use drugs.

Thus, the debate over DARE is really a debate over the role of evidence in the design of educational curricula: Should we put programs in our schools because we have evidence that they work or should we put them in our schools because they make their proponents and some of the students feel good? The evidence shows DARE education is quack education.

DARE instructors might feel good while they deliver the instruction and DARE students might feel good when they get a certificate, but the program does not accomplish its fundamental mission.

If schools need programs to help police officers develop a better rapport with students, the officers should be giving students useful information rather than information that has no long-term positive effects and might, the evidence suggests, stimulate curiosity that otherwise would have remained dormant.

What's next? Will you be publishing stories that flatter other forms of quackery by interviewing other victims who do not understand they have been misled?

For example, let's have more stories from smokers who are happy when they smoke. Allow them to tell us that they themselves have not contracted cancer and their enjoyment proves the phoniness of studies that show smoking contributes to lung cancer.

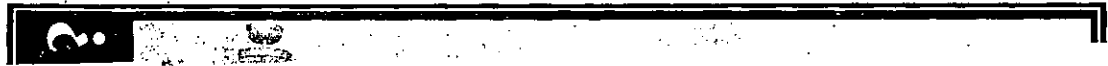
How about some stories from women who are going to continue estrogen therapy because they have wonderful visits with a physician who seems to care for them and believes the research is wrong about the dangers of the hormone?

Or how about some interviews with high school football players who talk about their determination to continue to use steroids because they just love the way their muscles grow and everyone knows the research about the bad effects of steroid use is not to be trusted?

Your paper exploited these kids to further the agenda of DARE advocates with this story.

It's time for you (and for them) to back opinions with evidence.

Joseph C. Kulis
St. Charles



N. Aurora concerned over Randall agreement

1-22-04 Chronicle

Some worry
about curb cuts

By ERIC SCHELKOPF
Kane County Chronicle

NORTH AURORA — Some village trustees are worried about the conditions being placed on a proposed agreement to transfer control of Randall Road from the county to the village.

Trustees on Wednesday reviewed an agreement to secure jurisdiction of a 1.6-mile stretch of Randall Road between Interstate 88 and Orchard Road. They are expected to vote on the agreement at Monday's Village Board meeting.

Prior to that meeting, the Kane County Board's Transportation Committee on Friday will review the agreement.

As part of the proposed agreement, the county would allow a right-in, right-out access on the west side of Randall Road, about 1,000 feet south of Comiskey Avenue.

The access would serve the 17.5-acre Randall Commons shopping center being proposed at the northwest corner of Randall Road and Oak Street.

Walgreens would be the first tenant in the center.



Berman

But Village Trustee Mike Herlihy did not like that the agreement also dictates where other curb cuts can be located. Along with that, the agreement states no curb cuts will be allowed within 500 feet of Orchard Road.

"This is the first I learned that this transfer was predicated on a list of curb cuts," Herlihy said.

But Village President Mark Ruby said he thought the agreement was "good planning."

"I think it is good planning as far as a lineup of curb cuts along Randall Road," Ruby said.

He warned that changing the agreement could put the proposed shopping center in jeopardy.

"If we start playing around with this, we could jeopardize the project," Ruby said.

Village Trustee Dale Berman said the board should accept the agreement.

"I think we have gotten the best we are going to get from the county," Berman said.

In reply, Village Trustee Max Herwig said, "I don't disagree, but we have to understand what our limitations are."

Ruby said the village still would have some flexibility where the curb cuts are located.

"It doesn't mean reasonable adjustments can't be made," Ruby said.

1-22-04 Daily Herald

Campton Township acreage may be preserved as wetlands

BY JOHN JOHNSTON
Daily Herald Correspondent

A company is proposing a new wetland on property owned by Campton Township.

The 90 acre area is just north of Route 38 and Pouley Road and south of Beith between Anderson Road on the west and a subdivision on the east. The land is currently used for agriculture and was purchased last year under the Open Space Initiative.

V3 Wetland Restoration presented the plan to the Campton Township board last week.

V3 Companies Group is a collection of companies that specialize in consulting, contracting and real estate. The consulting and realty companies are located in Woodridge, and the engineering is based in Denver and Chicago.

Patrick Keenan, vice president of V3 Realty, said this project will not have commercial development and will return the land to the way it was before it was drained for farming.

"Anybody who enjoys open space will like this very much," Keenan said.

The draft submitted to the board would allow the group 12 years to develop and sell the wetlands credits to other contractors who want to build on wetlands elsewhere. After the 12 years, any remaining credits would revert to Campton Township ownership, which the town could then sell. The credit system, which is regulated by the Army Corps of Engineers, ensures that if a developer wants to build on wetlands, he must purchase an equal amount of wetlands credits from another site. Keenan

said the Corps of Engineers started the credits programs to preserve wetlands. Currently one credit costs about \$45,000.

Keenan said that Corps of Engineers keeps wetlands credit exchanges in close proximity to one another, preferably on the same watershed. Keenan expects to deal with developers who want to build on other wetlands in the Kane County area.

Thomas Slowinski, principal director of wetland/ecology group at V3 Consultants said the conservation of the Blackberry watershed is important because it is a vital water source for the area. Slowinski said, "this is a nice project for the people of Campton, V3 and the environment. Everybody wins."

A final proposal is set to be delivered by V3 to the board next month.

1-22-04 Chronicle
Batavia planners OK townhouses

Plan includes shopping complex

By MARK FOSTER
Kane County Chronicle

BATAVIA — Plans moved ahead Wednesday for a 253-unit townhouse project at the southeast corner of Kirk Road and Wind Energy Pass.

The plan commission approved the annexation and conditional use permit for developer Dave Faganel's project, which eventually is to include a shopping center.

Faganel said he hopes to get

construction on the townhouses under way this year. The plan now moves to the city council Community Development Committee.

There will be four townhouse designs of two or three bedrooms, with prices ranging from \$170,000 for the 1,500-square-foot basic model to \$300,000 for a 2,600-square-foot unit, Faganel said.

The townhouses will cover a 36-acre portion of a 55-acre property. The remainder of the

land, nearest to Kirk Road, will be the site for a shopping center, but no proposal has yet materialized.

"We've marketed the property," Faganel said. "We still don't know."

The townhouse project abuts Fermilab on the east. At the east end of the development, along the Illinois Prairie Path, Faganel is donating land to the city for the new eastside water tower.

Faganel had wanted the tower to be located on the west side of the property along Kirk Road, but city officials insisted on the location to the east.

"I still don't like the location," Faganel said.

1-22-04
Fox Valley in 60 seconds

Daily Herald

Board candidate off ballot:

James Neuman's bid for a seat on the Kane County Board ended Wednesday when he withdrew his name from the ballot. Neuman, a South Elgin Republican, notified the county clerk on the last day to do so before the March 16 primary. Without Neuman, the race to replace District 14 board member Karen McConnaughay, who is the GOP nominee for county board chairman, remains one of the few contested races. Two St. Charles men, Arney Silvestri and Mark Davoust, will face each other in the Republican primary.

Township sets Lincoln dinner:

House Speaker Dennis Hastert is the invited guest speaker for the Aurora Township Republican Central Committee's 47th annual Lincoln Day Dinner. The dinner is Feb. 5 at Gaslite Manor, 2485 Church Road, Aurora. A social hour begins at 6 p.m. and dinner at 7 p.m. Cost is \$50 per person or \$600 for a table. Call Denny Wiggins at (630) 892-4598 or Dick Rokop at (630) 896-7683 for tickets.

Driver ed price could go up:

The West Aurora school district will petition the state to increase

the driver education fee from \$50 to as much as \$250 per student to help cover the cost of the class. According to a report given by board Vice President Neal Ormond, the class currently costs the district about \$216 per student. Fifty dollars comes from the student and the state pays about \$100 per student, leaving the district to pay the rest. Ormond said he wants to raise the amount the district can charge to \$250 per student, but only expects to charge students \$130 next year. The hearing with the state is set for Feb. 10.

1-22-04 Chronicle
Durkin backs Rauschenberger

KANE COUNTY
CHRONICLE

CHICAGO — Former State Rep. Jim Durkin will endorse Steven J. Rauschenberger for the Republican nomination for the U.S. Senate.

Durkin will make the announcement today at events in Springfield and Chicago.

In 2002, Durkin won the GOP nomination for U.S. Senate against John Cox and Jim Oberweis.

1-22-04 Daily Herald
N. Aurora wants control over stretch of Randall

BY DARRYL MELLEMA
Daily Herald Correspondent

Randall Road from Orchard Road to I-88 is set to become North Aurora property.

North Aurora's village board agreed in principle at Wednesday's committee of the whole meeting to the jurisdictional road transfer of 1.6 miles of what is currently Kane County roadway.

The village board is expected to formally approve the transfer at its Monday meeting. The matter then moves to the Kane County Board, which is expected to approve the transfer at its Jan. 30 meeting. The village and county have been in negotiations for some weeks finalizing the transfer, which is needed so planned village development can continue along Randall Road.

Among the projects that depend on North Aurora's con-

trol of Randall Road is the proposed Randall Commons business development west of Randall and north of Orchard Road.

"At this stage of the game, we either complete this or we forget about the development out there," Mayor Mark Ruby said.

While the board was in overall agreement with the transfer agreement, there was some concern about the list of allowed curb cuts, designated spots along the road where intersections or driveways may be constructed.

"Why are we agreeing now and forever that these are the curb cuts," Trustee Mark Herlihy asked. Ruby explained that the village was not just taking jurisdiction to take control of the curb cuts. He mentioned that the Randall Commons development would be "a dead issue" if the transfer did not take place.

1-22-04
Beacon News
Electionwatch

Citizens to Elect **Tim O'Neil** will host a fund-raiser in his honor from 5:30 to 8 p.m. today at The Royal Fox Country Club. The club is located at Royal and Ancient drives in St. Charles.

The cost is \$75 per person or \$125 per couple.

O'Neil is a Republican candidate for Kane County State's Attorney in the March 16 primary.

All are welcome to attend and meet O'Neil. To make a reservation, call (630) 377-0012.

Local candidates are invited to submit items about endorsements, fund-raisers, debates, appearances or other campaign activities to Election Watch. Mail items to: Election Watch, The Beacon News, 101 S. River St., Aurora 60506. Fax (630) 844-1043. Or e-mail beaconourtowns@scn1.com

1-23-04 Beacon News

Hastert: Oberweis 'stumbled'

But House speaker not picking a favorite – yet – in race for Senate

By Ed Fanslow
STAFF WRITER

AURORA — Dennis Hastert still hasn't decided if he'll play favorites in the upcoming Republican Primary for U.S. Senate, but he made it quite clear on Thursday that he won't be backing Jim Oberweis again.

The Speaker of the House surprised many political insiders during the 2002

Senate primary when he announced he was endorsing the little-known Aurora dairy mogul.

Oberweis fell far short in that race and then launched an unlikely second bid for the office this year. He's now leading the way in a few early polls, even amid criticism that he's exploiting the notoriety of his namesake stores for political gain.

But if the milk man ends up winning

the GOP nomination this time, it's likely that he'll have to do it without Hastert's blessing.

"I thought Jim was the best of the candidates (in 2002)," Hastert said during a visit to The Beacon News on Thursday. "But he did not run a great campaign last time. He didn't get his message out, and he kind of stumbled on what he really stood for. Obviously, I didn't endorse him this time."

Hastert added that he's "disappointed" in Oberweis for taking such a strong stance against President Bush's recent immigration-reform

❖ Turn to HASTERT, A2

Inside

■ GOP Senate candidates try to recover from George Ryan era. A8



JOHNATHAN HOUSE / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives Dennis Hastert, R-Yorkville, talks with The Beacon News Editorial Board Thursday afternoon.

because he's already been very effective in the state legislature and because he knows the process," Hastert said. "But he's at a distinct disadvantage because he's not a millionaire, and all these other guys are. I think he's going to have a hard time raising the money he needs to win."

Despite his kind words, Hastert stopped short of giving Rauschenberger his official endorsement, saying that he'd rather let the voters determine who's the best candidate to take on the Democrats in November.

"My view on it is, these guys have got to get out there and tell their stories to the voters," he said. "It's not time for me to weigh in and say 'This is the guy,' or 'That's the guy.' Quite frankly, I don't know."

Contact Staff Writer Ed Fanslow at (630) 844-5957 or e-mail efanslow@scr1.com.

HASTERT

From page A1

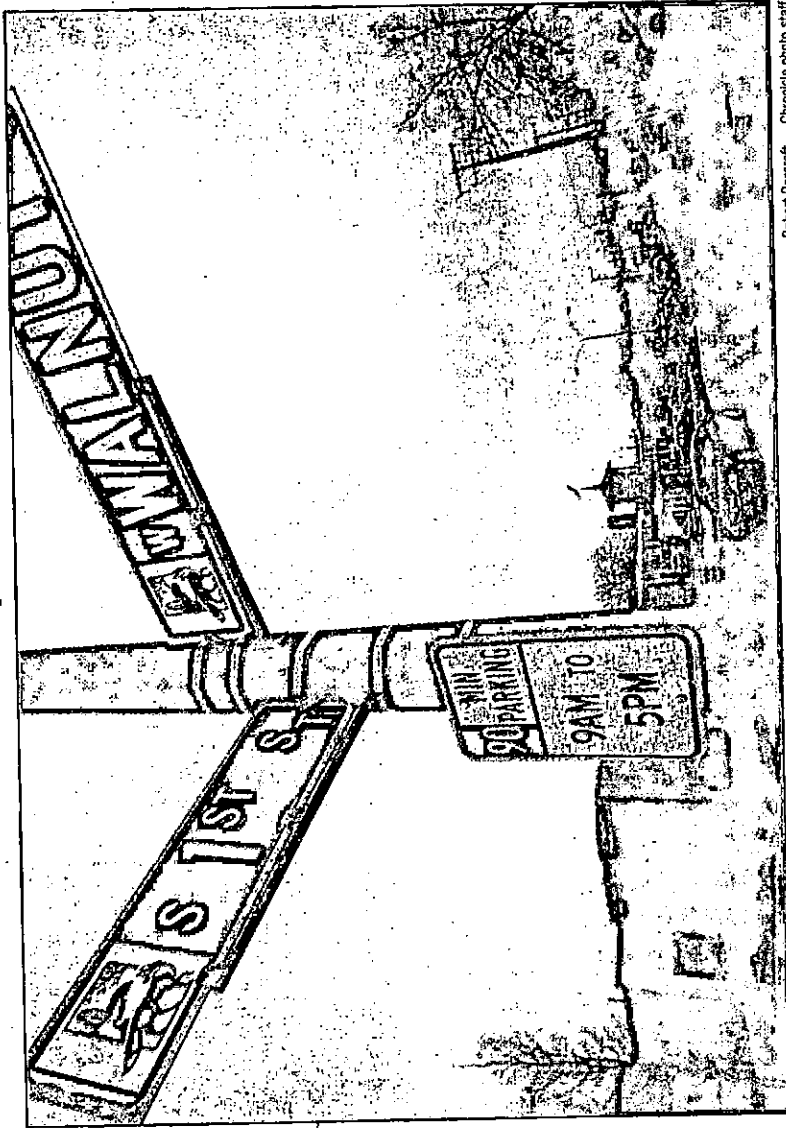
proposal. Oberweis has called the plan "blanket amnesty in disguise," a comment that doesn't seem to sit well with Hastert.

"He's trying to demagogue the immigration thing," Hastert said. "I wish he would talk about other issues that are important in this race, but I guess that's what he thinks will get more talk going."

Oberweis is one of nine Republicans vying to replace outgoing Sen. Peter Fitzgerald. Among the top contenders are millionaire businessmen Jack Ryan and Andy McKenna, and state Sen. Steve Rauschenberger of Elgin. Hastert said he doesn't know much about Ryan or McKenna but gave high marks to Rauschenberger.

"Of all the candidates, Steve is probably the best qualified

Fees could impact development



Robert Barcroft — Chronicle photo staff

An automobile travels past First Street businesses Wednesday in downtown St. Charles. Kane County's new impact fee schedule could boost costs for the proposed First Street Redevelopment project.

Impact fees might add costs to STC project

By HEATH HIXSON
Kane County Chronicle

City might have to help developers because of extra costs

The project is estimated to cost more than \$43 million and include nearly 285,000 square feet of retail, commercial and residential development. The project is an effort to revitalize a nearly four-block area between Main and Prairie streets.

The county uses a formula to set the new fees. The formula takes into account a development's type, size and use. The formula also includes expected traffic that would be generated and sets different fees according to region in the county.

Carl Schoedel, Kane County engineer, said portions of the redevelopment project might qualify for credits that would be added to the formula. The credits could lower the overall fee paid by a developer within the project.

Schoedel said a redevelopment project could qualify for credits that take into account a developer changing a business and a credit that awards development, which promotes pedestrian traffic and generates less automobile traffic.



McCoy

County Chairman Mike McCoy defended the fees. He said they are needed to make sure developers pay for the impact of their growth on county roads.

The fees could add an estimated \$400,000 in extra costs to developments already a part of the project, meaning the city might have to help developers, said Bob Hupp, city community development director.

"One of the significant issues that the city has to deal with this project, or any redevelopment project, is how much money does the city have to put into the project to make it more economically feasible," Hupp said. "The just adds another cost."

Fees

Continued from page 1

But for the city, the broader concern is the disparity in fees that the new county plan charges for the Tri-Cities in comparison to other cities. The plan's fee schedule charges more than \$1,900 per 1,000 square feet of commercial retail development in the Tri-Cities, but about \$300 in Aurora or nearly \$600 in South Elgin for the same space.

McCoy said fees collected from the developers will stay in the communities where the fees are collected to help maintain county roads. He downplayed suggestions that developers would flee to other communities.

"One thing that I am sure of is that impact fees will not slow development in Kane County," he said. "The fact that St. Charles has a higher impact fee than its neighbor South Elgin is not going to lessen the desirability of St. Charles. There are way more factors that a developer takes into account."

County set to replace Gorecki

McCoy proceeds without attorney general's opinion

BY PATRICK WALDRON
Daily Herald Staff Writer

Moving quickly to avoid a possible authority vacuum in the Kane County state's attorney's office come Feb. 1, county board Chairman Mike McCoy is calling a special meeting to appoint a successor to Meg Gorecki the following morning.

McCoy's actions come as the time of state's attorney Gorecki's Illinois Supreme Court-ordered suspension from the practice of law is just nine days away.



Meg Gorecki



Mike McCoy

that the suspension take effect Feb. 1.

What happens then at the top of the state's attorney's office has been on the minds of McCoy, Gorecki, lawyers, judges, defendants and residents throughout the county.

"It's a serious thing," McCoy said. "I don't think we can have a period of time where there isn't an authority there."

A year ago, McCoy asked Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan to advise him on the future of the state's attorney position in the event Gorecki were suspended.

At issue was, and still is, whether Gorecki can return to duty following a suspension and, regardless, who runs the office in her absence.

The latter question — the dilemma of who signs the indictments and acts officially as the people's lawyer — comes into play Feb. 1.

McCoy never got an answer and instead was told in March

time of state's attorney Gorecki's Illinois Supreme Court-ordered suspension from the practice of law is just nine days away.

In November, the supreme court ruled Gorecki's law license would be suspended as punishment for ethics violations. This month, the court ordered

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County: Quick action advised

Continued from Page 1.

that such an opinion would only be issued to the state's attorney. Gorecki has asked the same question, but an answer still has not come.

"I'm not going to wait for it," McCoy said.

He is interested in what Madigan has to say, but feels he must act to ensure a top prosecutor is in place before court opens Feb. 2, the first day of business during the suspension.

Under the advisement of Special Assistant State's Attorney Pat Kinnally, McCoy believes the office will be vacant as soon as Gorecki is suspended.

"I am not a lawyer, but the opinion before me at this point in time I agree with," McCoy said.

Absent any contrary opinion from Madigan, he will call upon the full county board to declare

that vacancy, as required by state statutes. A successor would serve as state's attorney until Gorecki's term expires at the end of November.

At the same meeting, likely to be at 8 a.m. Feb. 2, he will nominate a candidate to fill out Gorecki's term. Under state law, the county board chairman has the authority to name a candidate to fill such a vacancy with the consent of the county board.

The speed of McCoy's appointment is based on a 1995 precedent set when Jim Ryan resigned as DuPage County state's attorney to be sworn in as Illinois attorney general.

McCoy and others believe failure to move quickly could result in potential problems in cases throughout the county judicial system, as outlined for DuPage County Board members in January 1995 by George

Sotos, then chief of the DuPage office's civil division.

"This question poses some problems since, absent an immediate appointment to fill the vacancy, the statutory prosecution and defense of cases by a temporary or special state's attorney could be challenged," Sotos wrote.

"Any delay, including one day ... would result in an unnecessary displacement of judicial resources and possible interruption of pending cases."

All of this could change, depending on the next nine days.

"I've tried to think of every scenario," McCoy said.

Most boil down to the county board and the attorney general.

If no Madigan opinion comes, the board likely would declare the vacancy and the appointment would go forward.

If Madigan says Gorecki can

come back and no appointment is needed, that leaves the board with two conflicting rulings. At that point, they could declare a vacancy or leave things alone.

Whatever happens, McCoy says he'll be ready the first day of business following Gorecki's suspension.

Gorecki was unavailable for comment late Thursday and no information related to the Gorecki matter had been released by the attorney general's office.

As for successors, McCoy said he has not finalized any selections.

Since Gorecki's suspension was announced, McCoy has said he prefers to select someone who works in the office now and lives in Kane County. Assistants Bob Sandner and Kathy Moran remain strong possibilities.

See COUNTY on PAGE 14

1-23-04 Beacon News

Kane fears sex-offender plan too costly

'Life probation' plan: Kane officials like idea, but not without funding from state

By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — A Kane County Board committee Thursday said it could support legislation to force sex offenders in Illinois to be on probation the rest of their lives — if the state agrees to pay for it.

Members of the Corrections and Rehabilitation Committee

Thursday passed a motion to that effect to send on to the full County Board. Board members agreed with Kane County probation officials that lifetime probation is a good idea but too costly for counties to bear the financial brunt on their own.

"There are high-risk people, and we should do everything we can to supervise them," said Jim Mueller, Kane's court services director. "But from a financial standpoint, this needs to be looked at."

The sentiment is the same among other counties that run probation services. The biggest eight counties outside Cook in

Illinois got together earlier this month to come up with a strategy to oppose House Bill 3555.

The bill was introduced, but one of its prime supporters, Attorney General Lisa Madigan, agreed it needs to be looked at further, in part because of what the larger counties said.

"Originally, they were going to reintroduce it in the spring," Mueller said, "but the AG now is saying it will not be in its original form. They used the term 'tweaking.' I'm not sure what tweaking is, but that's what they're doing to it."

Besides the 16th Judicial

Circuit, which also includes DeKalb and Kendall counties, other counties expressing concerns about the bill are: Will

(12th Judicial Circuit), LaSalle (13th Circuit), Rock Island (14th Circuit), Winnebago (17th Circuit), DuPage (18th Circuit), McHenry (19th Circuit), Lake (19th Circuit) and Kankakee (21st Circuit).

Cost in the millions

Mueller said with the 124 sex offenders currently in Kane County, the bill immediately would add a cost of about \$130,000 to the probation budget. Looking at it

over 10 years, figuring population increases, there would be an estimated 461 sex offenders in Kane, and it would cost the county almost an additional \$1.3 million a year in 10 years, Mueller said.

For the eight largest counties combined, the cost would be about \$4.6 million additional by the end of that 10-year period, he said.

"It's a good idea, but unless they're going to come up with the dollars, we would have trouble," Mueller said.

Officials know it will be difficult to oppose the legislation outright because it is difficult to stand in opposition to more supervision of

sex offenders. Also, it will be difficult for area legislators to oppose it for that reason, Mueller said.

"It's a political nightmare," he said. "We just tried to look at it, what would be the cost?"

Board member Lee Barrett, R-Dundee, said the cost might not be so bad if the alternative is considered. He said the eight counties looked at the probation cost but did not look at how much might be saved by not having to incarcerate some of these people.

"This could be something that is cost-effective," he said. "I'd like to see those numbers."

Batavia mayor upset by new county impact fees

■ Looking at legality:

Schielke says the road fees are unfair to the Tri-Cities

By Jan Rammings

SPECIAL TO THE BEACON NEWS

BATAVIA — The City Council this week unanimously approved Mayor Jeff Schielke's decision to explore the legality of the Kane County Board's new transportation impact fees.

The council approved a resolution to have city attorney John Noble work with Geneva's attorney Chuck Radovich to determine the city's legal options

in the matter.

Last week, the Kane County Board passed the impact fee despite objections from the mayors of St. Charles, Geneva and Batavia.

This week, the St. Charles City Council approved a resolution to oppose the fees. Mayor Sue Klinkhamer indicated she might meet with her city attorneys on it, as well.

Schielke said the mayors had indicated their support to the county for some type of transportation impact fee. However, he said, they object to the disparities in the amounts to be charged.

He supplied his aldermen with a copy of the proposed road

impact fee schedule, with sample comparisons between areas.

"Somebody in Aurora who builds a 210,000-square-foot commercial center at Kirk and Butterfield roads would be charged \$94,920," Schielke said. "That same 210,000 feet in Batavia, under the county proposed fee, would be charged \$617,280."

Attorney Noble said it didn't make sense to burden the Tri-Cities with such higher fees. He said the county might have used old data and a 13-year-old survey in formulating the fees.

Residential developers will pass on the fees to new home buyers, resulting in higher new home prices. Commercial development

and potential sales tax revenues will be driven west of the Tri-Cities, where developers would be able to avoid the higher fees, he said.

Schielke said the disagreement between the mayors and the County Board has put a strain on an extraordinarily good year of governmental cooperation.

"Suddenly there's this dull pain over the thing, and it's been very counterproductive and left some scars on what had been a very good relationship," he said.

Schielke said he considers County Board Chairman Mike McCoy and Tri-Cities representative Doug Weigand his personal friends. He said he feels bad about the situation, and he did

not level any personal criticism of the two proponents of the fees.

"However, we now find ourselves in a rather unique situation where, as a city, we are faced with an enormous disparity as it applies to this transportation impact fee ordinance," Schielke said.

The mayor said he is meeting with various groups in trying to assemble some coalitions that can work with the city on the issue.

"We are trying to continue to search for some diplomacy here to avoid the major expense of litigation," Schielke said. "I would hope the County Board will take seriously what the cities are all about. As they say on the *Tonight Show*, 'There's more to come.'"

School seeks to de-annex land from Aurora, annex to N. Aurora

Deerpath Road would move 500 feet west

By ERIC SCHELKOPF
Kane County Chronicle

NORTH AURORA — More businesses soon could be coming to the village's west side.

Aurora Christian Schools wants to de-annex 6.7 acres it owns from Aurora and annex it to North Aurora. It wants business zoning for the land, which is along the west side of Deerpath Road and south of the ComEd right of way.

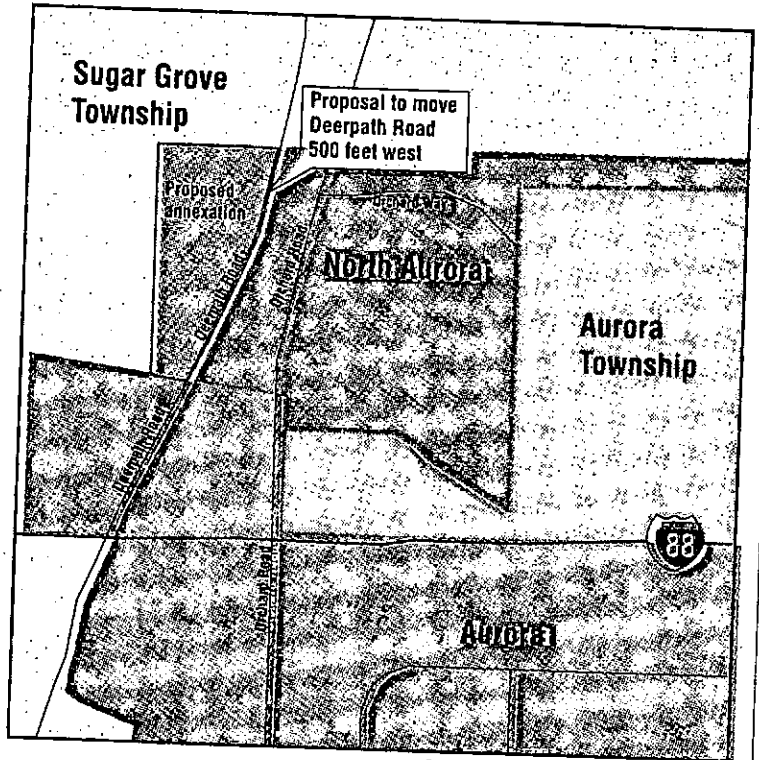


Ruby

The two lots are in the Deerpath Commerce Center.

The school, at 14 Blackhawk St., had planned to build a new campus between Deerpath and Orchard roads, but now plans to move into a building in Aurora.

Plan commissioners recently recommended zoning the land for business use. However, they recommended



Chronicle graphic by Joshua Monninger

that mini-warehouses not be allowed on the land.

School officials have not released any plans for the land.

Village officials want to shift Deerpath Road to the west to increase the economic opportunities on the village's western corridor.

Village trustees already have approved an agreement with Aurora that moves the road 500 feet to the west.

"It gives depth and value to

the entire property to do something with it," President Mark Ruby said.

Trustees discussed what would happen to the current Deerpath Road.

Village Attorney Kevin Drendel said the road could be removed or used as a private road.

"I am concerned about what happens to the old road, and the maintenance of the old road," Village Trustee Max Herwig said.

District 14 ¹⁻²³⁰⁴ Chronicle

hopefuls differ over gas tax

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — At first blush, there is little difference between Mark Davoust and Arney Silvestri in their quest for a seat on the county board.

The major difference between the two is that Silvestri, 35, supports increasing the county gas tax by 2 cents, while Davoust, 45, said he would vote against it.

"I wouldn't be prepared to vote on that," Davoust said.

Silvestri said a 2-cent increase in the gas tax would make little difference in the pump price. He said gas prices in counties that have higher county gas taxes, such as McHenry County, have lower prices than some gas stations in Kane.

His said his only concern would be for the business owner, but, "If they can compete up there, they can compete here."

Kane levies a 2-cent local tax, but it has the authority to impose two more cents. DuPage and McHenry counties levy 4 cents.

Silvestri and Davoust are seeking the position currently held by Karen McConnaughay, who is running for county board chairman.

District 14 includes the far west sides of St. Charles and Geneva. Randall Road runs through the district.

In a meeting with *Chronicle* editors Thursday, both candidates said transportation was one of the biggest issues facing the county and

the district.

Both candidates said they supported the concept of the Prairie Parkway, and both candidates said the recently imposed impact fee program should be revisited because of the disparity in costs throughout the county.

Davoust, of St. Charles, runs Brasel Products in Batavia, a firm that manufactures industrial cohesive tapes and bandages.



Davoust



Silvestri

Silvestri, of St. Charles, owns Silvestri Custom Homes of St. Charles.

When asked what separates the two, Silvestri cited his life-long residency in St. Charles and District 14, while Davoust said he was 10 years older, which gives him more experience.

"I have roots here," Silvestri said. "I want to maintain the quality of life."

"I've had many extra years of dealing with issues on national and international level," Davoust said.

Both candidates believe the current jail should be scrapped and that a new one should be built on the grounds of the judicial center.

And both candidates said the county's burn ban is one of the biggest issues in District 14, where many homes sit on large lots with numerous trees.

James Neumann of South Elgin has withdrawn his name from the ballot.

The winner in the March 16 primary will face Democrat Elaine Stern in the Nov. 2 general election.

County: Medical contract for jail not being followed

1-23-04 Chronicle

Health department might take over responsibilities

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Kane County officials might shift the responsibility of medical care at the jail to the health department, saying they are unhappy with the company contracted to provide it.

Wexford Health Sources of Pittsburgh, Pa., a health-care provider that specializes in jails and prisons, has not complied with terms of its \$1.4 million contract, the county said. Among its complaints are a failure to document hours worked by employees and failure to substitute for generic drugs.

"All we're asking is that they follow the contract," said James Mitchell, R-North Aurora.

Sheriff's Cmdr. Pat Keady said he has sent notices to Wexford requesting that the company comply with the contract.

Although some county officials favored withholding payment to Wexford, Assistant State's Attorney Michelle Niermann suggested that a better initial tactic would be to send a letter claiming that the company is in breach of contract.

A representative from Wexford did not return phone messages Thursday.

Committee Chairman Karen McConnaughay said

the committee will investigate other means to provide inmate health care, such as through the health department.

"Now is the time to take another step toward resolving the problem," McConnaughay said.

Health Department Executive Director Mary Lou England said she has not discussed the possibility of running the program.

"I will be discussing some of the issues around taking that over," England said. "There has to be a lot of planning that goes on and research into how best this gets done."

The contract with Wexford expires in May but has a clause that continues it into November. The clause was inserted to coincide contracts with the end of the county's fiscal year.

Jail medical services are required by state law.

The provider is responsible for routine medical care and prescribing medication to inmates with psychological problems.

See CONTRACT, page 2



Mitchell

Contract

Continued from page 1

One of the complaints against Wexford is that it has not provided a 14-day supply of these prescription drugs to inmates upon their release, which is required in the contract.

This is significant because without the drugs as part of an after-care program, some

inmates might commit other crimes and return to jail soon after leaving.

"We want them on the right track to after-care so they don't wind up back in the jail," McConnaughay said.

McConnaughay told Keady and jail director Todd Exline to keep track of when Wexford employees work.

Keeping track of their time would confirm the costs Wexford charges, she said.

Republicans race as county recorder primary nears

1-24-04 Chronicle
Key issues include accuracy, speed of office

By MARK FOSTER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — The two Republican challengers for Kane County recorder charge that the incumbent is not recording documents quickly or accurately.

Recorder Sandy Wegman responds that she has automated the office and improved customer service.

"My plan is to have the information freely accessible on the Internet," Wegman said during an interview with *Kane County Chronicle* editors.

Wegman said the office handles 2½ times the documents that it did when she was elected, and that she is making plans for further automation. She contends that her opponents' claims are inaccurate.

Challenging Wegman, of Elgin, in the Republican primary are Don Ragsdale of Sleepy Hollow and Dan Gurbal of Geneva. Voters will pick from the candidates in the March 16 Republican primary. Michael Lowery is the sole Democratic candidate running.

The office records mortgages, land plats, veterans information and other vital documents in the county. The office has about 33 full-time employees, and a \$2 million annual budget.

Ragsdale served eight years on the Kane County Board and is a member of the county Board of Tax Review.

While on the county board, Ragsdale served on the Public Services Committee, which oversees the recorder's office, and also served on the policy-making Executive Committee.

"The Recorder's office is not run effectively or efficiently at this time," Ragsdale said, charging that employee turnover is excessive, documents are not recorded accurately and that \$1.7 million is languishing unspent in an account for funding computer purchases.

"This office is so important," Ragsdale said. "When that document gets recorded, you assume it is right." Gurbal has worked in the real estate title business for 30 years. He worked for Chicago Title, and for the past 20 years has operated his own title firm. He said he deals with the recorder's office on a daily basis.

"The title companies are backing me," Gurbal said. "My peers asked if I could alleviate the problems that they see. They think I'm the person to do that. It's not the office that it once was."

Gurbal said the office is perpetually behind in making documents available for viewing. Wegman said the documents are recorded immediately but acknowledged that there is up to a six-week delay during peak periods to see mortgages and other documents. Ragsdale said the lag time frequently has been installed in the recorder's office jeopardizes the security of the entire Kane County computer network.

"Mistakes are not corrected," Wegman said her office records the documents as presented. She said her office is not responsible to make sure the information on the documents is accurate. However, she said her office will make corrections when errors are brought to its attention.

Ragsdale contends that a DSL line that has been installed in the recorder's office jeopardizes the security of the entire Kane County computer network. "A kid from St. Charles North High School who's sharp enough can hack into that network," Ragsdale said.

Wegman said her system is secure and asserted that her office has operated within budget, produces \$6 million a year in revenues for the county and is operating with a friendly atmosphere.

"I've worked hard to establish a positive environment in the office," Wegman said.



Hastert: Bush immigration plan faces fight

1-24-04 Beacon News

By Daniel Duggan
STAFF WRITER

AURORA — President George W. Bush's program to grant temporary work permits to undocumented immigrants faces a tough road ahead.

Before the program can proceed, it needs to pass the Congress — which probably won't happen, U.S. House Speaker Dennis Hastert told editorial boards of *The Beacon News* and *The Courier News* of Elgin this week.

"I don't think there's support to get that through Congress," the Yorkville Republican said. "But I think this is a chance to start a debate."

Hastert said the president was "brave" and "bold" to bring up the highly charged issue of immigration during an election year.

"It's not a popular subject," Hastert said, "but it's time to start the discussion because we need to find some solutions."

He acknowledged that immigration problems are growing in the Fox Valley — especially in places like Aurora, Elgin, Plano and West Chicago — and there should be a program for such people to come to the United States, work for a few years and be able to go home.

"That's why these people come," he said. "They've got work; they're trying to take care of their families, and they've got the drive to do it."

With agricultural and factory jobs across Illinois being filled by immigrant workers, Hastert stressed the immigrants are "doing important work."

"And they shouldn't be forced to stay here and hide," he said. "Quite frankly, a lot of these people do work that nobody else wants to do."

Still, Hastert puts his foot down when asked if undocumented immigrants already in the country should be given amnesty rather than proceed through the existing citizenship process.

"Amnesty is a problem because, when you give people amnesty you short-circuit the process," he said. "That way, everybody who goes through the legitimate process gets somebody that cuts in line in front of them, and I think that's the wrong signal. You can't change the rules, and amnesty changes the rules."

Medicare and energy

Hastert stressed the importance of two major bills that passed the U.S. House last year and their impact on the Fox Valley: energy and Medicare.

He said this area will be impacted the most by an energy bill that is still being reconciled between the House and Senate.

"If you go up and down the Fox Valley, you'll find 75 to 80 small businesses that deal with packaging,



JONATHAN HOUSE
STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert, R-Yorkville, talks with *The Beacon News* Editorial Board Thursday afternoon.

wrapping or infusion, and all those things need natural gas to run," he said. "We have to have a long durable supply of energy to make that happen."

The bill also provides for a natural gas pipeline to run from Alaska through Canada to the United States. Hastert said that project will have an immense impact on the Chicago area.

"That's a very important piece for Illinois," he said. "You have an inexhaustible supply of natural gas right at our doorstep."

The Medicare bill passed by the House last year will also have a big impact locally, the speaker said. But, more changes are needed, he said.

One change Hastert opposes is a program proposed in the Congress by U.S. Rep. Rahm Emanuel, D-Chicago, and in Illinois by Gov. Rod Blagojevich.

Hastert said Emanuel and Blagojevich are "flirting with dynamite" by pushing to have drugs from Canada imported to this country.

"They want to take 10 percent of what (U.S. drug companies) produce and sell to Canada, then re-import that to take care of 50 percent of our needs," Hastert said. "That's not going to work. You can't guarantee these are drugs made in the United States and re-imported. Canada is the number-one importer of drugs from Bangladesh and other Third World countries, plus you don't know if they are counterfeit drugs or not."

He stressed that a better solution would be to have the U.S. trade representatives work with the Canadian government to find a better system of sharing drugs and lowering prices.

Staff Writer Ed Fanselow contributed to this report.

1-26-04 Daily Herald

Advocacy center plan advances in Geneva

BY GARRETT ORDOWER
Daily Herald Staff Writer

A long-planned \$600,000 expansion of the Kane County Child Advocacy Center got the go-ahead from Geneva's historic preservation commission and should be under construction this year.

At the center, the county investigates sex crimes against children, but currently victims have to travel to Delnor-Community Hospital for medical exams. Every year the center works with more than 700 children and their families.

The existing building at 428 James St., on the same site as the planned expansion, will remain open during construction, Executive Director Lori Chassee said.

In April, the commission rejected a plan for a new building at 427 W. Campbell St., which continued a series of setbacks in the county's plans for expansion dating to the mid-1990s. At the time, the plan called for a building that was too massive and rectangular, commission members said.

The commission wanted to see something more fitting with the 19th-century homes surrounding the center and the old county courthouse.

The proposal endorsed last week would bring a modern, 4,587-square-foot building to the historic downtown area, but one keeping with some of the architectural cues of the historic area, city planner Dick Untch said. The entrance to the rectangular building will be on the narrow side of the building, in keeping with design characteristics of the area. There will be a wrap-around porch with a short up-step and a pitched roof, Untch said. The facade will not be flat, and the second-floor windows will feature dormers.

"This is a plan that really works very well and would be a compatible structure to our historic district," Untch said.

The commission did suggest several minor changes to the plan, which will be presented at its Feb. 17 meeting. Though the building permit process will go ahead after that, the area will require zoning changes to be approved by the plan commission and the city council.

1-25-04 Beacon news

Mayoral hopeful: City golf courses should be private

Follow county lead?: Aurora officials say move would result in green fee increase

By Dave Parro
STAFF WRITER

AURORA — Responding to a proposal by the city to eliminate season passes at the two municipal golf courses in order to boost revenue, one candidate running for mayor next year is calling for privatizing their operation.

Bill Wyatt, a commissioner on the Kane County Forest Preserve Board who praised private-management agreements at county courses, said Friday that doing the same in the city would "guarantee the taxpayers of Aurora a profit, and remove the element of risk associated with this highly competitive business."

Wyatt, who has announced his intention to run in the 2005 mayoral race, encouraged Mayor David Stover and the City Council to explore the option, citing "financial problems" at the Phillips Park Golf Course and Fox Valley Golf Club.

But city officials said the planned rate increases and elimination of season passes after this year aren't a result of financial problems, only a way to ensure the courses break even. The city's 2003 preaudited numbers show about \$2.05 million in golf course expenses, including paying down \$393,000 in debt from the recent Phillips Park course upgrade, and \$2.09 million in revenue.

The revenue includes a \$225,000 gaming tax subsidy from the city to cover the bond debt, meaning the actual loss was about \$183,000. Without the debt, the courses would have made \$210,000.

"They should be profitable, and they have been in the past," said Aurora Parks Director Jim Pilmer. "We're just barely making our bond payments now."

Pilmer said letting a management company run the courses would result in higher rates and

the elimination of about 10 full-time city jobs and 60 seasonal jobs.

"If you privatize it, and we looked at it, we'd end up charging higher rates," he said. "They'd be in it for profit. We're in it to break even."

"That's why we've got the lowest rates in the area."

Wyatt said Kane County's agreements to have private companies run the Settler's Hill, Hughes Creek and Deer Valley golf courses have worked out well. The two contracts — Settlers and the nine-hole Deer Valley are managed together — call for 14.5 percent of the revenue from the courses to come back to the Kane County Forest Preserve District.

"It just guarantees that you won't lose money," Wyatt said. "I guess the question is, do you keep

"They should be profitable, and they have been in the past. We're just barely making our bond payments now."

Jim Pilmer
Aurora Parks Director

the prices so cheap that you lose money on it?" Through three quarters of fiscal year 2003, the county courses have yielded the forest preserve district about \$383,000, said district Finance Director Bob Quinlan. The county doesn't have any maintenance or capital costs, he said.

The county's weekend golf rates with cart at the two 18-hole courses are \$46 and \$57 for residents or \$59 and \$75 for nonresidents. The city this year plans to charge residents \$24 and nonresidents \$35 on weekends at the Phillips Park Golf Course, plus \$13 to \$16 for a cart. The rate at the Fox Valley Golf Course is \$30, plus cart.

Stover said he has looked at privatizing the courses but decided against it so the city would maintain control of prices and operations. Privatization is unrealistic because the city would expect the management company to assume \$4.5 million in remaining debt on the Phillips Park upgrade, he said.

Two of Wyatt's potential opponents in the mayor's race, Richard Irvin and Angel Hernandez, said they don't plan on making the golf courses a campaign issue because there are more important problems facing Aurora, such as crime. Candidate Tom Weisner could not be reached for comment.

1-24-04 Beacon News

County to make safety changes to Randall

By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — The Kane County Board Transportation Committee Friday approved changes to a section of Randall Road between Red Haw Lane and Crane Road in an attempt to make the area safer to drive.

The so-called S-curve in the northern part of St. Charles has been a place of several serious accidents, most recently where a St. Charles North High School student was killed.

Residents and school officials in the area made an appeal last month to the Transportation Committee to make some changes. Committee members agreed to some of the changes Friday.

The committee agreed to better signs and warnings along the highway, but they stopped short of making some changes residents

suggested, including lowering the 55 mph speed limit there to 45 mph and building a median in the roadway.

"I've been driving 55 down that road since I was 16, and I don't think that's the problem," said board member Cathy Hurlbut, R-Elgin.

What is the problem, committee members agreed, is enforcement of the speed limit there. A Transportation Department traffic study showed that 75 percent of drivers along that section travel faster than the 55 mph speed limit.

"The sheriff is the person most of this has to be addressed to," said board member Don Wolfe, R-Elgin. "People travel well over the speed limit on these sections."

Costly consideration

Enforcing the speed limit is not enough, residents of the area said. Ann Stark, a parent of three St.

Charles North High School students and Parent Teacher Organization president, said the stretch of highway needs special consideration because of the number of high school students who drive there.

Two North High School students, Emily Zepeta, 16, and Katie Venegas, 17, presented a petition with 200 signatures from students at the school favoring the changes.

They called for lowering the speed limit and other safety changes. They also indicated they would have favored the county build a median between the lanes of traffic to prevent cars from crossing into oncoming traffic.

Committee members balked at that option. While Transportation Department staff recommended that change, they admitted it came with a \$225,000 price tag. Committee members said they wanted more study before approving con-

struction of that magnitude.

"I would like a little more thorough feedback on a median," said board member Dan Walter, R-South Elgin.

Board member Karen McConaughay, R-St. Charles, who is not a committee member but attended Friday's meeting because that section of highway is in her district, was disappointed committee members failed to recommend the median.

She said she probably will try to add building the median and lowering the speed limit when the matter comes before Executive Committee in February.

Board member John Hoscheit, R-St. Charles, said after the meeting he thinks the committee would support building a median, but they need a more definite building plan. Also, he said, with something as expensive as \$225,000, it needs to "be built into the budget."

County to improve Randall Road safety

1-24-04 Chronicle

Sheriff promises to increase patrols along S-curve

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Kane County highway officials will improve safety on the Randall Road S-curve north of St. Charles in two phases.

And Sheriff Ken Ramsey promised to increase patrols on the stretch after criticism from county board members.

The Transportation Committee approved the plan Friday after two St. Charles North High School students and a parent pleaded for safety improvements in light of the

Nov. 4, 2003, death of 17-year-old Samantha Joos.

Joos was killed when her car crossed the center line in a rain storm while traveling on the S-curve.

The plan calls for the installation of warning signs and a median.

Engineer Steve Pasinski said a study showed that 75 percent of drivers exceed the speed limit in the 3,000-foot stretch between Thorn Tree Drive and Crane Road.

"The combination of speed, inexperience and congestion makes this area very danger-

ous," parent Jan Stark said.

Senior Katie Venegas and sophomore Emily Zepeda presented committee members with the signatures of 200 students and adults who want to see improvements.

Committee member Donald Wolfe, R-Elgin, criticized Ramsey for what he called a lack of speed-limit enforcement.

"He (Ramsey) has to hear it from the parents and the school board. People travel well over the speed limit, students and adults," Wolfe said.

Rudolf Neuberger, D-Aurora, said students must learn about safety precautions in driver education classes, the sheriff's police must enforce the speed limit and the county must install safety improvements.

Pasinski said.

Phase 1 improvements will be warning signs, such as "Curve Ahead" and "Narrow Median."

Two "Slippery When Wet" signs will have flashing lights activated by sensors installed in the pavement.

Additional reflective pavement markers will be placed along the center median.

Phase 2 improvements will be a 9-foot-wide median with 9-inch-tall curbs. The median will include landscaping.

Drivers speed in that area for psychological reasons, Pasinski said.

When people see the wide open valley, they feel they can travel faster. Medians have a psychological effect of slowing drivers, he said.

"It's going to take a total coordinated effort," Neuberger said.

Ramsey said Friday that he would improve patrols on that stretch of road.

"I will have patrols out there effective immediately," Ramsey said.

A study of accidents in that stretch of Randall showed that three times as many are caused by wet or icy conditions than on typical straight stretch of road.

Pasinski said that on a straight road, 10 percent of accidents can be attributed to wet or icy conditions, while the same conditions caused 35 percent on the S-curve.

In the last three years, there have been 26 accidents on the stretch of road, most of which are deer-vehicle accidents,

1-24-04 Chronicle

Stop farm pollution

My wife and I moved out here west of the city to live in clean, fresh air. The Kane County Board is to be commended for banning leaf burning in the area. However, my wife and I have noticed a big pollution problem. In the fall, the farmers in the area combine their corn and their beans and they cause a lot of dust to be in the air. I bet that dust stays in the air for weeks. Perhaps the Kane County Board could put a stop to the pollution problem and make the area livable again.

Criticism unfounded

I was sad to read in Sound Off the attempts to discredit Jon Zahm. I do not know the facts of the issues the callers mentioned but I can say I have known Jon for more than 15 years, and the callers' comments were a gross misrepresentation of Jon. First, like one song says, you do not live in a great big house and you do not drive a big fancy car. If Jon is getting paid to help candidates, I am sure it cannot be much. Also, from numerous personal experiences with John, if Jon sees an issue that is a concern to the well-being or freedoms of Kane County citizens, he works tirelessly and for free to fight for all of the people of Kane County. Jon is a true American patriot, and I wish those who are not as dedicated and personally involved and committed as Jon would stick to the issues and stop the personal attacks.

Builder on the board

I, for one, am very encouraged to hear that local builder Arney Silvestri is running for the Kane County Board in the 14th District. Who better to help with the planning and growth of our community than someone who takes part in the actual building of this community? Let's face it, our county is growing and we need to plan for it. It sounds to me that a builder would have the experience and knowledge to help and control the growth that is so vital to our local economy. A builder on the county board is hardly a problem. In fact, it sounds like a solution.

Judicial system critic

My comment is I would like to know what gives the right to certain employees of the Kane County judicial system to blame a person, a passenger, for injuries sustained to the driver of a car accident. The person blamed was not driving, had anything to do with the accident. They both decided to go out that night and both were adults. They both sustained serious injuries and they made their own choices. It is unfortunate and heart-breaking when people are seriously injured but an accident is an accident and maybe there is a reason for it by a higher power that we have no control of. What gives these people a right to play God with these people's lives? Everyone in this situation has been punished more than anyone can imagine. The Kane County Board should look into procedures and methods of these people in their judicial system. If they cannot handle tragic situations, maybe they should not be in a power of authority. And whatever happened to forgiveness?

Thoughtful delivery

1-24-04 Daily Herald

County to turn over portion of road to N. Aurora

BY PATRICK WALDRON

Daily Herald Staff Writer

Kane County and North Aurora officials have reached agreement on a deal to transfer a portion of Randall Road to the village's control, but the arrangement doesn't come without cost.

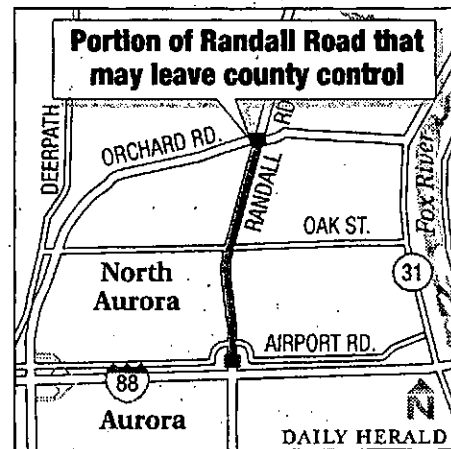
Later this year, a 1.6-mile stretch of Randall Road between I-88 and Orchard Road, now under county care, will be handed over to North Aurora.

For the chance to give up the road, the Kane County Transportation Department will pay the village a one-time fee of \$300,000, plow the lanes for the next two years and pay for the reconstruction of the Randall Road bridge over I-88 in about 12 years.

The county board's transportation committee unanimously recommended approval of the deal Friday. The matter should reach the full county board Feb. 10.

With the transfer, the county's long-term costs decrease because of less road to maintain and patrol, while the village gets the right to needed access points proposed as part of the new retail development, Randall Commons.

The deal, similar to a Randall Road jurisdictional transfer



arranged with the city of Aurora several years ago, has been in the works for months.

In December, it nearly got derailed because the village wanted permission to add more access points to Randall Road, in the form of mall entrances and exits, than were allowed under county regulations.

County design standards say side entrances or exits on Randall Road must be at least 630 feet apart from another entrance or intersection. The new agreement gives the village permission to drop that to 500 feet for three entrances connected to the new shopping center.

The North Aurora village board recommended accepting the terms of the deal this week and is expected to formally agree to the contract at its meeting Monday.

Elburn finds 'silver bullet' to solve radium problem

1-25-04 Daily Herald

BY DAVE ORRICK

Daily Herald Staff Writer

Some towns have been able to avoid worrying about what to do with radioactive radium after removing it from the drinking water supplies.

Prospect Heights is spending about \$1.3 million to switch from well water to Lake Michigan water, which is nearly radium-free.

Other towns whose water supply comes from wells changed their methods of disposal to avoid the possibly hazardous practice of spreading radium-enriched sludge on farm fields.

Last week, Elburn officials approved a plan to spend roughly \$2 million on a process by Colorado-based Water Remediation Technology that won't just remove the radium from the water; it'll get it out of the state.

Instead of flushing the sludge down the sewers, the company's process traps the radium in containers, and the company will be responsible for replacing those containers and getting the waste to a licensed disposal site.

Bartlett officials also have had talks with the company.

Elburn officials say two competing methods — ion exchange and water softening — would have cost \$4.6 million and \$9 million — and left them with radioactive sludge.

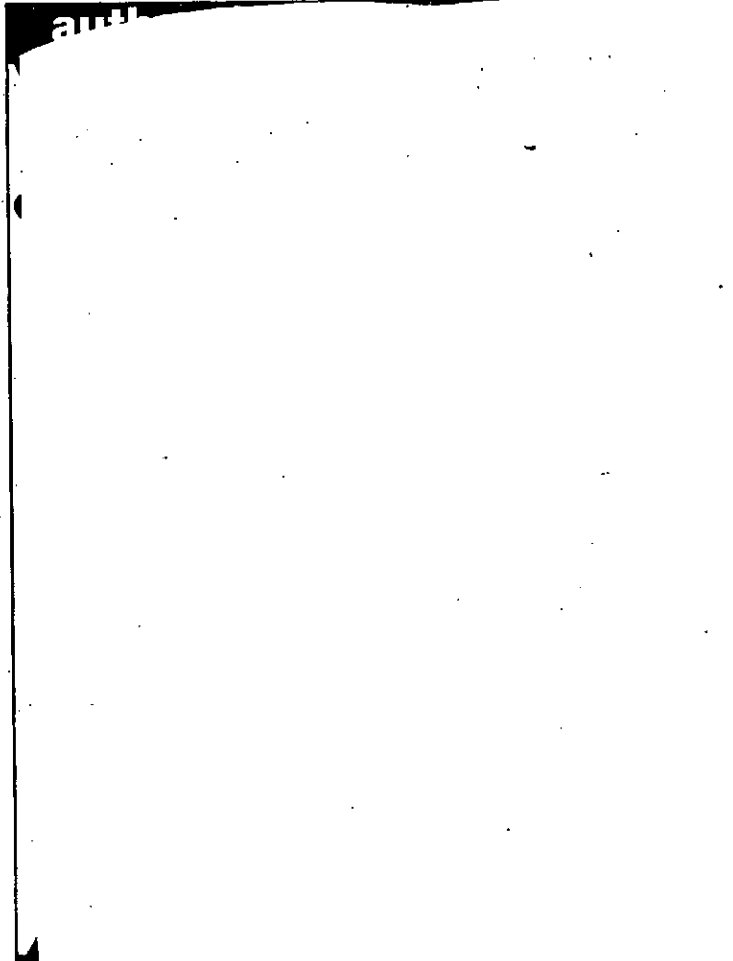
"This is the silver bullet of radium removal," village administrator David Morrison says. "It's better and cheaper."

He says he's not sure why Elburn officials appear to be more up to speed on regula-

tions than counterparts in many other communities, but he said common sense told him that generating radioactive sludge and spreading it on farms wasn't prudent.

"Our fear was the EPA would

begin to say, 'You're just moving all this radium around and not actually getting rid of it,' " he says. "Somebody was going to figure it out sooner or later."



THE LARGEST

Deerpath Road relocation would be closer to reality with land annexation

1-24-04 Daily Herald

BY DARRYL MELLEMA
Daily Herald Correspondent

Roughly 7 acres of land owned by Aurora Central schools is set to be annexed into North Aurora.

The village board voiced its approval of the annexation agreement at this week's committee of the whole meeting. Formal approval is expected at Monday's village board meeting.

The annexation will bring closer to fruition the rerouting of Deerpath Road. The property to be annexed — which will be zoned for business use — is west of the North Aurora Auto Mall, sitting between existing Deerpath Road and the planned

relocated site of Deerpath.

The existing location of Deerpath has created problems with development of the property North Aurora will annex.

Deerpath Road currently winds and comes too close to Orchard Road to allow for proper development due to green space and safety setbacks. Relocating Deerpath, which the village has planned, allows for development of the property.

One of the remaining issues regarding the annexation is how road access will be provided to the property. There is a road stub but it is not connected to any road.

Still, Deerpath relocation will not take place until the property

is developed. Eventually, trustees said, there will be a development plan, Deerpath will be moved and the development will take place in North Aurora.

"It's a four-step process, this is getting us steps three and four," Village Engineer Jim Bibby said. "Then in 2004 to 2005, we can put the other steps in process."

Village attorney Kevin Drenzel said there is also some question as to the fate of the current Deerpath Road once the new road is built.

He said it could be used as a private road in the developed property or it could be torn up.

Kane seeks public input on 2030 plan for transportation

GENEVA — A series of forums will begin this week to explain progress on the Kane County 2030 Transportation Plan.

An open house is set for 4 to 7 p.m. Wednesday in the auditorium of the Kane County Government Center, 719 S. Batavia Ave., Geneva.

Other forums will be held throughout February, one in each of the eight Planning Partnership Areas developed by the county.

The purpose of the forums is to help in determining major transportation projects, guiding transportation decisions and identifying resources to implement transportation projects.

The county expects to complete a draft of the plan in March and bring the plan to the County Board for adoption in the summer of 2004.

During the past year, forums were held in each of the Planning Partnership Areas. With more of the plan completed, transportation officials want more public comment.

After the first open house, the Planning Partnership area forums will be:

- 10 a.m. Jan. 30 — Randall Oaks Golf Club, for the Upper Fox area.
- 10 a.m. Feb. 3 — North Aurora Public Library, for the Aurora area.
- 10 a.m. Feb. 9 — Batavia Public Library, for the Tri-Cities area.
- 10 a.m. Feb. 11 — Elgin Country Club, Room 123, for the Elgin area.
- 10 a.m. Feb. 18 — Campton Community Center, for the Campton area.
- 10 a.m. Feb. 19 — Elburn Public Library, for the West Central area.
- 10 a.m. Feb. 23 — Huntley Village Hall, for the Northwest area.
- 1 p.m. Feb. 25 — Waubensee Community College, Bodie Hall, Room 150, for the Southwest area.

Information about the transportation planning process is available on the Kane County Division of Transportation's Web site at www.co.kane.il.us/dot.

Numbers say home monitoring of convicts saves Kane money

By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — Electronic monitoring of convicted offenders works in Kane County, and has saved the county millions of dollars.

Jim Mueller, Kane court services director, made that point last week to the County Board Corrections and Rehabilitation Committee. And while Mueller has said that for a while now, he brought numbers to back it up.

Mueller said that since December 1992, when the program started, electronic monitoring has saved Kane about \$7.4 million. That is money that would have been paid to keep those offenders in jail, and most likely being sent to the McHenry County jail, which houses some of Kane's offenders.

In addition, he said the program collected about \$676,041 from those offenders, who actually pay the county to be in the program.

"That is opposed to putting them in jail, where we pay for them," Mueller said.

During the past year, the county collected about \$90,000, and used about \$45,000 to pay for rental of the equipment needed. Beyond that, the money goes to the county's general fund.

There were 232 offenders put on electronic monitoring during the past year, and 98.4 percent of them com-

pleted the program successfully, Mueller said. Since December 1992, there were 2,142 in the program, and 79 percent completed it successfully.

Mueller said he considered the program completed successfully if the offenders did what they were told and were not re-arrested.

On electronic monitoring, an offender is basically confined to his home. He wears an electronic bracelet that probation officials can monitor around the clock to show that the offender stayed where he was supposed to.

Offenders are allowed to go to work, and do things like doctor's visits, but those outings must be approved by probation officials, who also monitor the trips.

"If you put people in jail, they have to quit their jobs, or drop out of school," Mueller said. "They can't support their families. They become a drag on society. This program has been successful, from a cost-effective standpoint."

Not everyone is eligible for electronic monitoring, but eligibility does not necessarily have to do with the type of crime an offender committed. Each offender is evaluated by probation officials as to whether he or she can enter the program or not, Mueller said.

"There is a certain segment that has to be behind bars," he said. "But there are a group of people who can be on this, and it works out well."

the numbers

98.4%

Percentage of home-monitored offenders who complete the program

Kane County Notebook

IDOT moves closer to bridge approval

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

Change in administrations in Springfield left some state agencies reeling. Many long-time staffers quit or retired after Gov. George Ryan left office.

One of the hardest hit has been the Illinois Department of Transportation.

This is significant to Kane County because designs for many road projects are delayed awaiting IDOT approval.

At Tuesday's legislative breakfast with county and state officials, county board Chairman Mike McCoy said the county has even spent money to keep projects moving that should have been paid by the state.

The biggest projects are the regional bridges.

Land acquisition has been held up because of the delays. The county cannot buy property until it receives approval.

"IDOT approval has become the critical path for bridge projects," McCoy said.

At Friday's Transportation Committee meeting, Paul Rogowski, director of the Kane County Division of Transportation, said IDOT is finishing up reviewing the "geometrics of the project." Once that is complete, the county can begin to buy land.

"This is huge if we get it," Rogowski said.

The controversy over the transportation impact fee program is ironic.

Batavia, Geneva and St. Charles officials are upset with the county because of what they consider to be an unfair mandate.

The county's program would charge higher fees for developments in the Tri-Cities than in other parts of the county.

The irony comes in when the county complains about state-imposed mandates.

At legislative breakfasts, the county people are lobbying for funding new programs or removal of unfunded mandates.

Sometimes legislators listen. Sometimes they don't.

In that sense, county officials should understand how the city people feel.

One unfunded mandate is lifetime probation for sex offenders.

No one would argue that sexual predators should be removed from society.

However, county probation officers wonder how they are going to pay for it.

"No one would argue that these are high-risk people. We should do everything we can to keep them off the streets, but I don't know how we can do that without an influx of money," court services director James Mueller said.

1-25-04 Chronicle

1-25-04
CHICAGO TRIBUNE



Tribune photo by Carl Wagner

Phil Zavitz holds his grand-daughter Madison before receiving an award from the county for his 13 years as its animal-control warden.

Former animal warden a rare breed

Despite having spent more than half his adult life tracking wayward livestock, abandoned pets and sick or injured varmints, retired Kane County Animal Control Warden Phil Zavitz, affectionately known as "Beast Master," is the last to suggest he has seen it all.

Just when the county's dog catcher and raccoon chaser thought he might have, he said, along came the next runaway lizard or displaced python, not to mention the unexpected meetings with critters ranging from tarantulas and wildcats to coyotes.

The job sometimes was as dangerous as it was interesting, Zavitz said. He was bitten by the

love bug so deeply, however, that he refused to quit even after some close calls.

A few years ago, a stray dog ripped open his hand so severely, he said, that he spent five days in the hospital recovering from blood loss. And an injured Doberman pinscher once clamped down on his face so hard he nearly lost an eye.

Zavitz's last day as warden was Jan. 2. The Kane County Board commended him this month for 13 years of "dedicated, knowledgeable and unselfish service."

He has spent more than 25 years in the animal-control business.

1-24-04 Beacon News

Kane, Yorkville get park grants

BEACON NEWS STAFF

SPRINGFIELD — The Kane County Forest Preserve District and the City of Yorkville are among the recipients of state grants for park development and land acquisition.

State officials this week announced the release of \$23 million in state grants to park districts and forest preserves statewide for the purchase and development of park facilities.

Parks in Aurora, Oswego, Plano, Campton Township, St.

Charles and Naperville previously were announced for funding.

The Yorkville Parks & Recreation Department will receive a \$74,000 grant to develop a neighborhood park on Poplar Drive in a new subdivision west of downtown. The development plan includes a picnic shelter, playground and landscaping.

A preliminary concept plan earlier this year for the site in the River's Edge subdivision called for a Big Wheel-themed park that would include a circuit designed for tricycles and

small bikes.

Yorkville's matching-fund request was among the first grants for which the city applied after hiring a grant consultant earlier this spring.

The Kane County Forest Preserve District received about \$750,000 to acquire 531 acres southwest of Pingree Grove on Rohrsen Road. Future development will include habitat restoration, wetland and creek naturalization; an interpretive shelter and trails; equestrian trails, and parking.

Who will replace Gorecki?

Attorney General Lisa Madigan's opinion confuses the issue

1-24-04 BEACON

By Daniel Duggan
STAFF WRITER

NEWS

GENEVA — With about one week until Kane County State's Attorney Meg Gorecki's license to practice law is suspended, a legal opinion expected to clear up the situation surrounding her office made it even more complicated Friday.

That stems from an opinion issued by Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan, stating the 16th Circuit Court must name a replacement for Gorecki during her four-month suspension.

The opinion, however, is in stark contrast to the legal advice Kane County Board Chairman Mike McCoy has been following — that the County Board will have the power to declare her office "vacant" and appoint a successor.

Both opinions can be expected to clash at a special meeting called by McCoy for Feb. 2 — just one day after Gorecki's license is suspended.

"That meeting is going to happen no matter what," McCoy said. "If it's still conflicting by then, the board will make a decision."

The Illinois Supreme Court handed down its decision in November to suspend Gorecki's law license for four months because she violated the ethical code for lawyers.

In a series of taped phone messages, she laid out a scheme — later proved to be bogus — where a friend could guarantee a Kane County job for her boyfriend by making political contributions to McCoy, who later was cleared of any wrongdoing.

Earlier this month, the court denied Gorecki's request to delay the suspension until her term expires in November. The court ruled her suspension must take effect on Feb. 1.

Conflicting opinions

McCoy obtained his opinion from Patrick Kinnally, an Aurora-based attorney appointed to sort out the situation.

The conflict between Kinnally's and Madigan's opinions revolves around whether there is a "vacancy."

GORECKI

From page A1

Under Kinnally's opinion, McCoy said the law requires a person to have a law license before he or she can run for state's attorney and holds that he or she must have a law license to hold that office as well.

"If you don't have the license, you can't stay in office," McCoy said.

Madigan's ruling states that Gorecki's four-month suspension technically does not stop her from being the state's attorney.

Rather, the suspension takes away her power to act in any legal capacity as state's attorney. Losing her legal power also takes away any power held by the prosecutors in her office — also called assistant state's attorneys — to prosecute crimes or indict those charged with crimes.

All acts performed by an assistant state's attorney in that capacity must be regarded as if done by the state's attorney himself or herself," the opinion reads. "Thus, if the state's attorney is disqualified from acting, so also are his or her assistant state's attorneys."

Madigan: Court to appoint

Because of the power problem, the opinion states, a special state's attorney can be appointed for any individual case or for the office as a whole.

Where McCoy says there is a vacancy, Madigan states there is not a vacancy.

Madigan's opinion states that, for a vacancy to be created, the state's attorney must be under a "legal disability" or some condition in which he or she is unable to act for on his or her own. Since Gorecki has not moved, been convicted, been removed from office or had her election declared void, there is no vacancy, the opinion states.

To ensure that the state's attorney's office will continue to fulfill its duties, the circuit court may, in its discretion, appoint a special state's attorney to serve during the period of Ms. Gorecki's disciplinary suspension," the opinion states.

Friday's opinion states the replacement will be made by the circuit court. That designation seems unclear to those contacted.

Philip DiMarzio, the chief judge of the 16th Circuit Court, said Friday he had not yet read the opinion and could not comment on it.

"If and when the matter comes before me, the judges will research and follow the law," he said. "But that time has not come."

McCoy said the board may be able to declare the vacancy. Then, he said, if that decision is challenged, it will be done in court.

Assistant prosecutor weighs in

Michael Coghlan, the chief of the civil division of the state's attorney's office, however, said the County Board will not have the authority to make the appointment.

"I seriously doubt the County Board has any authority to declare a vacancy here," he said. "This opinion says they don't have the authority to appoint a replacement or even an interim state's attorney."

Coghlan said he will study the issue through the week, since he has not read Kinnally's opinion. He will have a resolution by Feb. 2 when, at the very least, Gorecki's authority will be questioned.

"We want to be conservative to make sure no cases are challenged," he said. "We will have those issues resolved by Friday."



Kane County State's Attorney Meg Gorecki's law license will be suspended on Feb. 1.

Polls apart? Not these couples

Mixing love and politics

By Cheryl Jackson
THE CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

Linda Chapa LaVía is a straight-up, speak-her-mind-to-your-face Democrat. "My mom and dad started taking me into polling booths when I was 3," she said. Dad was "a union guy." And a Democrat Mom, a business owner, was slightly more conservative. But, again, a Democrat.

"It's the affiliation of taking care of the working people. We are about education, senior policies. We're about the working families of the state," the Democrat state representative from Aurora said. "That's the way I was raised."

So her parents weren't pleased when their son-in-law, businessman Vernon LaVía, served as an adviser to Aurora Republican state Sen. Chris Lauzen.

"My family hated it. I thought my parents were going to end the marriage," Chapa LaVía joked.

"I didn't mind it," she said, noting that the harder Vernon worked on the campaign, the more she and her husband learned. "He was learning tidbits of how politics work in Illinois and bringing it back to me, and I was soaking it up."

Their 12-year team functions now with Chapa LaVía serving as a freshman state representative while Vernon LaVía holds things down at home with daughters Jacqueline, 3, and Veronica, 6, and maintains a high community service profile.

The Aurora family is among a type growing in upscale neighborhoods across the

United States — that of politically mixed couples among educated people, the group most likely to register, vote and contribute money to campaigns.

Analysis of a recent poll of 40,000 people done by USA Today, CNN and Gallup indicates a growing gender gap between highly educated men and women. Men are mostly Republicans, while women are predominantly Democrats.

The setup for potential Carville-Martin matches — as with liberal consultant James Carville and conservative wife Mary Martin — is simply life in the 21st century, said Jay Lebow, at the Family Institute at Northwestern University. Another prominent example: Maria Shriver, born into a premier U.S. Democratic political family, helped drive hubby Arnold Schwarzenegger's successful bid to become California's Republican governor. Shriver's mother is Eunice Kennedy, sister to legendary Democrats John F., Robert F. and Edward Kennedy. Her dad, Sargent Shriver, once ran for vice president with George McGovern.

"There was a time when families were much more homogenous when it came to things like their political affiliation," Lebow said. "Today there's much more diversity in families in all sorts of ways. It's far more common for people and families to hold different political beliefs."

Born and reared a Democrat, Vernon LaVía, 40, was a Republican from ages 28 to 35, drawn to a focus on the economy.

"But I didn't see enough of a balance with pro-business and the societal issues I thought were critical that made America great," said the Duke University cum laude graduate. He's been an independent for



SUN-TIMES PHOTO
Linda Chapa LaVía, a Democrat, is a state representative from Aurora, while her husband, Vernon LaVía has served as an adviser to Republican State Sen. Chris Lauzen.

five years.

His wife believes his insight into the Republican Party assists her in representing other constituents.

"It helped me to understand their party a little bit better — the small business owner, the military aspect, being more fiscally responsible. I didn't vote for one tax or fee increase last year," she said.

Chapa LaVía, 37, did have to keep some opinions to herself while her husband worked with Lauzen, whose anti-illegal immigration stance she opposes.

"I had to hold my tongue a couple of times," she said. "I was just being cordial." Sunny Penedo Chico, 44, finds herself often doing the same these days to support

a politically connected, office-seeking spouse.

The former Sunny Abello had served as an administrator at Waubesa Community College in Sugar Grove and ran against Lauzen for the Republican state Senate nomination in the March 2000 GOP primary.

She was settling into her job as regional representative for the U.S. Education Department and excited about a passage of nonpartisan education bill when her hubby, Gery Chico, former chief of staff for Mayor Richard M. Daley and an ex-Chicago Board of Education president, decided to run for a U.S. Senate seat.

A Republican since setting foot in this country at age 10, she's been married to Chico — born and reared on the South Side of Chicago and a lifelong Democrat — for two years.

"I did a lot of soul searching before I left my job to support Gery. That was a difficult decision for me," Penedo Chico said.

Now, the president of SPC Consulting grants and bears the parties and mixers to support Chico's bid.

"I've gone to more Democratic events this year than I've gone to in my entire life," she said.

"I finally decided I'm there for Gery, and I need to focus on that."

"Obviously the two of us have got to be able to ... see the other's point of view and listen very carefully," Gery Chico said. "It's been our style to discuss things. If we don't reach an agreement, we respect each other's opinion. What lies at the base of our relationship is respect ... I don't think either



SUN-TIMES PHOTO
Sunny Penedo Chico, a Republican presidential appointee known as Sunny Abello when she took on Lauzen in the Republican state Senate primary in 2000, bears Democratic Party mixers with her husband Gery Chico, who is seeking his party's nomination for U.S. Senate.

one of us at the end of the day really tries to convert the other one."

"We try," his wife said. "We just don't bibe."

This is the second marriage for both, and the challenges in their blended lives don't begin and end with politics. He has three kids from his first marriage. She has two. The kids from his first marriage are being brought up Jewish. Hers are being reared in the Catholic faith.

"You can talk about the challenges of working with two different political ideologies — that's nothing compared to the much greater challenge of getting kids to do the dishes and make their beds," Gery Chico said. "If you can crack that one, you can be the secretary of state."

Cheryl Jackson is a freelance writer for The Chicago Sun-Times.

1-24-04 Daily Herald

Madigan sides with Gorecki

Attorney general says prosecutor can return after suspension



Lisa Madigan

BY PATRICK WALDRON
Daily Herald Staff Writer

In groundbreaking and potentially far-reaching opinion, state Attorney General Lisa Madigan declared Friday that Kane County State's Attorney Meg Gorecki cannot be stripped of her office as a result of the four-month suspension of her law license.

Links

[dailyherald.com/tz](#)
Bookmark our Web page for hyperlinks to more information
[Attorney General's opinion](#)

The 15-page opinion strongly states that such a suspension does not create a vacancy in a state's attorney's office but does

produce the need for another attorney to temporarily fill the role in Gorecki's absence.

It widely opens the door to Gorecki returning after her suspension, something that has been clouded in legal uncertainty since the Illinois Supreme Court ruled last year to suspend her license as punishment for ethics violations. Gorecki asked Madigan for the opinion to pro-

vide legal basis for that eventuality.

As important, the ruling indicates that the future of the Kane County office after Feb. 1 — the first day of Gorecki's suspension — rests with the courts and not the county board's appointment power.

"Although this disciplinary

See OPINION on PAGE 9



Meg Gorecki

Opinion: Legal showdown possible

Continued from Page 1

A suspension will not cause a vacancy in the office of state's attorney for the remainder of her term," Madigan writes in the opinion. "It will prevent her assistant state's attorneys from exercising the powers that they derive from her during the four-month suspension.

"To avoid the problems presented by this situation, the circuit court may appoint one or more special states attorneys to perform the duties of states attorney during the period of her suspension," the opinion said.

The opinion came on the same day county board Chairman Mike McCoy set a meeting for Feb. 2 to ask the county board to declare the state's attorney's office vacant and appoint a successor to fill out Gorecki's term, which expires Nov. 30. McCoy, relying on the work of special assistant state's attorney

Pat Kinnally was moving forward on the premise that the license suspension did create a vacancy.

"We have a special assistant ... to review this issue and he has given his own opinion," McCoy said late Friday. "Madigan's opinion is in conflict with that."

He will review this, and he will see if it changes the opinion he has issued to us, and we will go from there," McCoy added. On a basic level, however, having conflicting opinions in hand creates the possibility of a legal showdown before the county board over Gorecki's future, McCoy said.

"It's just an opinion," McCoy said. "We have to see if it changes our special assistant's opinion. They could argue it before the board."

Madigan spokeswoman Melissa Metz admits it is an opinion, but a very strong one. Much of Madigan's conclu-

sions deal with areas involving little or no legal precedent. More specifically, Madigan writes that there is no existing state law regulating what happens when a sitting state's attorney has her law license suspended.

In such unprecedented cases, the attorney general's official opinions heavily influence the court system, Metz said. "Opinions of the attorney general are advisory only," Metz said. "But the supreme court has repeatedly stated that a well-reasoned opinion of the attorney general is entitled to be accorded considerable weight by the courts, especially in a matter of first impression.

But it may not come to a matter of arguing the attorney general's opinion against that of a special assistant. Gorecki's likely course of action will take her before the 16th judicial circuit where she can, according to Madigan, ask the chief judge to appoint a

temporary special assistant state's attorney to act in her absence.

Deputy Chief Assistant State's Attorney Mike Coghlan, the man reviewing the opinion on behalf of Gorecki, said he will spend the week exploring such an option.

But whatever this heads, Coghlan said it is out of the county board's hands.

"It's not a vacancy," he said. "I suppose it doesn't hurt to have public discussion in an open forum, but I doubt that the county board has any authority whatsoever in this matter."

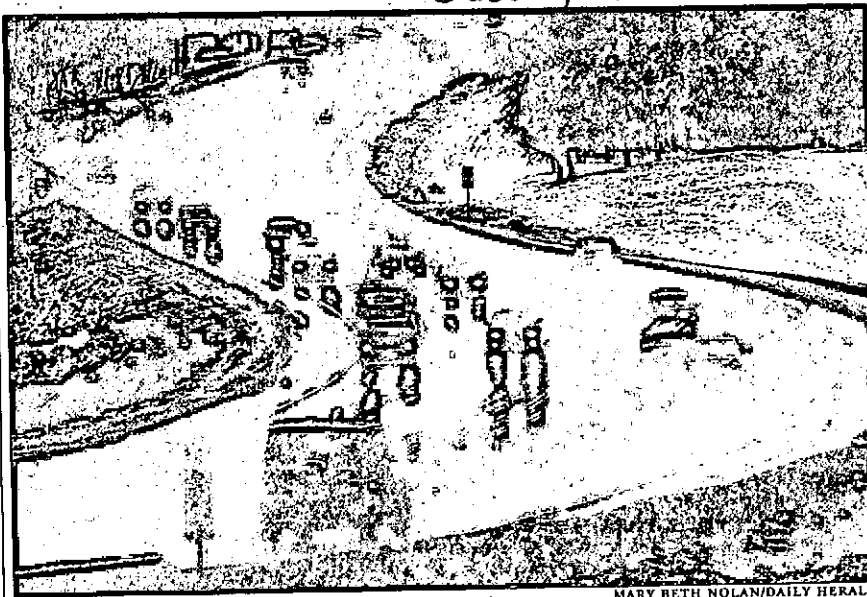
In that case, it falls to 16th Judicial Circuit Chief Judge Philip DiMarzio, who said he would research the situation diligently should such a case arrive.

"If and when the issue presents itself in court the law will be carefully studied and followed," DiMarzio said, declining further comment on

Highlights of the Attorney General opinion:

- The suspension of Meg Gorecki's law license does not create a vacancy in the elected office of Kane County State's Attorney.
- During the course of her suspension, Gorecki may not practice law or work within the office of the state's attorney.
- Gorecki's absence effectively takes away the legal authority her assistants have to prosecute cases in the absence of a special prosecutor.
- Any special prosecutor, named to temporarily take over the position of state's attorney, must be appointed by the 16th Judicial Circuit.
- At the conclusion of her suspension, Gorecki can resume her duties as state's attorney since never legally vacated her position.

sages seeking comment, but Coghlan spoke on her behalf. "She will respect the wishes of the Illinois Supreme Court and comply with the attorney general's opinion," he said.



MARY BETH NOLAN/DAILY HERALD

Kane County leaders are considering a number of safety measures to cut down on the number of accidents along this stretch of Randall Road south of Crane Road in St. Charles Township.

County tired of crashes

Leaders tell sheriff to slow drivers on Randall Road's S-curve

BY PATRICK WALDRON
Daily Herald Staff Writer

A steep hill, high speeds and lanes that tend to collect water are three traits that make the so-called Randall Road S-curve in St. Charles Township a dangerous and sometimes tragic stretch of county highway. Because of those factors and

the November traffic death of a St. Charles North High School student in that area, some residents have called for change.

That prompted some county leaders Friday to ask drivers to slow down and plead for the Kane County sheriff to make them do it.

"Any death is a tragedy, especially the death of a young

person," said board member Don Wolfe, an Elgin Republican, reviewing possible safety improvements for Randall Road.

"But there is only so much we can do."

With that Sheriff Ken Ramsey pledged stepped up enforce-

See RANDALL on PAGE 9

Randall: Wet weather, frequent speeding contribute to risk

Continued from Page 1

ment beginning immediately.

"I have ordered intensive traffic enforcement and that will start this afternoon," he said Friday. "It will make an impact."

But that alone won't do it, Ramsey said.

Stronger enforcement is only a temporary solution, Ramsey said. He'd like to see slower speed limits and some sort of barrier, solutions that rhyme with what was outlined by the county transportation department Friday.

County transportation officials presented a list of upgrade options for Randall that include lowering the speed limit from 55

mph to 50 mph, adding more flashing "slippery when wet" signs, installing additional reflectors to mark lanes and the center line, and stepped up speed enforcement.

More elaborate plans examine the possibility of a 9-foot wide concrete median or perhaps a 3½-foot high concrete dividing wall.

The county board's transportation committee recommended immediately moving forward with the new signs and lane markers but held off on lowering the speed limit or recommending a center line barrier or median.

Those barrier options, estimated to cost \$225,000 to

\$250,000, would need to be studied in greater detail with engineering plans and new budgets.

But committee members say the support for such a project is there, it just can't be done now.

Randall Road safety came to center stage last month when former St. Charles school board president Steve Cole urged county board members to act quickly in installing new safety measures following the death of North student Samantha Joos, 17, in November.

On Friday, two North students presented a petition with 200 student signatures to board members asking them to put in a median or other safety mea-

asures to prevent the type of head-on accident that killed Joos.

"Had a median been there Samantha's fate could have been different," said North sophomore Emily Zepeta.

Even with the support of quick action on the signs and exploration of a median, the talk still turned to speed.

Assistant county engineer Steve Pasinski said the S-curve's valley and the wide open view creates a situation where drivers speed up.

Those same circumstances in wet weather create a condition where water collects into pools at the bottom of the valley, making the road slippery.

Will suburbs clean up water by dirtying land?

By filtering radium, some regulators fear suburbs may create more problems

BY DAVE ORRICK
Daily Herald Staff Writer

From Batavia to Lake Zurich, Chicago-area suburbs have been scrambling to meet a federal deadline to remove radium from drinking water.

But they may be making a dangerous trade-off.

Page 10

• One town finds another solution.

Experts — ranging from regulators to environmentalists — say that in cleaning well-water of the naturally occurring radioactive material, they may wind up creating an environmental hazard for a greater number of people. The problem, they acknowledge, is that the issue is so new that no one has yet examined the ramifications of a piecemeal solution to address a known danger.

Within the next few years, water bill

hikes in about 100 well-water communities across the state will go up to pay tens, possibly hundreds, of millions of dollars for new water treatment facilities that will filter out the potentially hazardous element. Dozens of suburban communities are affected.



JEFF KNOX/DAILY HERALD

Waste water sludge is processed at the Batavia Water Treatment Plant before being sent to a landfill.

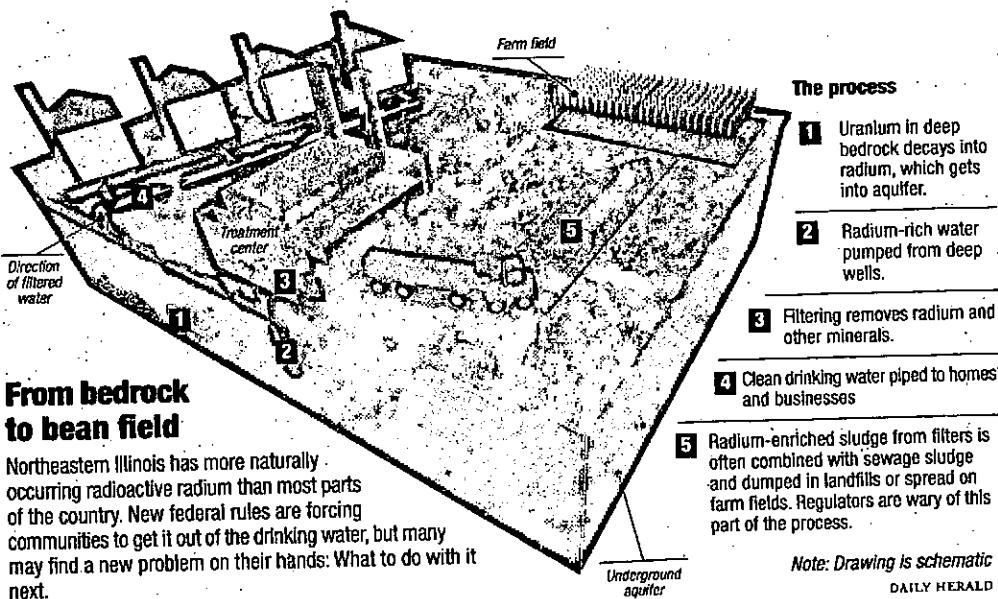
But filtering radium from the water, has sprung a new question: Will the solution in many communities

simply transfer the problem from the water supply to somewhere else, possibly affecting far more people?

It could, wary regulators warn.

"Are the municipalities aware of the right questions to ask? No, not really," says Rich Allen, a top environmental regulator for the Illinois Department of Nuclear Safety, which regulates

See RADIUM on PAGE 10



From bedrock to bean field

Northeastern Illinois has more naturally occurring radioactive radium than most parts of the country. New federal rules are forcing communities to get it out of the drinking water, but many may find a new problem on their hands: What to do with it next.

Radium: Officials unclear on how to enforce rules

Continued from Page 1

radioactive materials in Illinois. "A lot of them were in denial. For a long time (before it was clear radium would have to be removed from drinking water), U.S. EPA promised that this problem would go away."

It didn't. The hot potato is the radium itself, which collects on filters to form low-level radioactive waste. To dispose of it, many communities plan to mix it with sewage sludge and dump it in landfills or spread it on cornfields. But that may not be safe, experts say. Sewer pipes could become contaminated with radiation, wastewater workers could be exposed, runoff from fields could pollute groundwater and streams, and crops could potentially become poisoned, according to state regulators and their documents. For such communities, safely disposing of concentrated radium might require more spending. No one's sure how much.

"I really believe that some of the communities, if they hadn't been up against this December deadline, they might have taken a look at (other methods)," says Jim Willey, village president of Elburn, which changed its plans at the last minute to adopt a process that avoids the radium-sludge problem. The communities planning to spread the sludge over land, meanwhile, say they've found themselves caught in a swirl of frequently changing regulations and ambiguous bureaucratic guidelines. "We've never done this type of process before, so it's definitely a learning process for us," says

John Dillon, water superintendent for Batavia, which is planning to spend roughly \$12.5 million to make its water supply radium-safe. "We'll meet all the current regulations, but who knows what the regulations will be a few years from now?"

Case study
Lake Zurich taxpayers are spending about \$1.5 million to install a radium-removal system at two of the town's wells. Their situation is typical. The wells draw water up from deep aquifers sandwiched between layers of bedrock that includes seams of granite and clay laced with uranium. The uranium doesn't get into the water that gets pumped into Lake Zurich homes, but its chemical descendant, radium, does.

Because of the relatively low concentration in aquifers, radium in drinking water remained unregulated for decades. In 1974, the U.S. EPA imposed limits on it. Studies suggest that, when consumed over a lifetime, for example, radium can slightly increase the risk of bone cancer. But the rules became embroiled in court, and at one point EPA officials suggested looser standards would mean few communities would have to worry about it. It wasn't until 2001 that the EPA was cleared to fully enforce them, with a December 2003 deadline set.

Lake Zurich's solution is to install something similar to a water softener. The radium that's removed accumulates on filters and, every so often, gets flushed down the sewers, where it flows with other wastewater to

a treatment plant. Radium has always been washed down those sewers via toilets and sinks running with well water containing dissolved radium.

"Are we going to be generating any more radioactivity than before? The answer is no," says Bob Duprey, who deals with water for Lake Zurich. Nothing's really changed, he says. Nuclear regulators disagree. The problem, they say, is not a matter of content but of concentration.

A new problem
"If you're doing treatment (to remove radium), you wind up with batches," says Allen, the nuclear safety regulator. He's referring to clumps of sludge flushed off a radium-removal filter.

Such clumps, which can contain significantly higher concentrations of radium than anything occurring naturally, can lodge in sewer pipes. That creates a potential hazard for sewer workers, few of whom have the training or equipment to handle "hot" materials.

The sludge next winds up at a sewage treatment plant, potentially exposing a new group of workers, Allen says. While radium-enriched sludge hardly approaches the lethality of high-level radioactive waste from nuclear reactors, it can't be taken lightly. "It's something that needs to be addressed," Allen says.

Radioactive fertilizer
The next step in the process might create even more concern.

Many towns plan to mix the radium-rich sludge with regular sewage sludge and send it to local farmers, who'll spread it on corn and bean fields.

Nitrogen-rich sewage has been used as fertilizer for years, and that process has had its critics. Add in the radioactive element, and nuclear safety regulations kick in, even though the scientific community hasn't weighed in conclusively.

New Jersey has banned the process. And, according to EPA documents, Wisconsin has expressed "concern" that, for example, building a home on a former field fertilized with radium-concentrated sludge could pose several problems, including high accumulations of radon gas. Radium turns into radon, which evaporates into a hazardous gas.

Other problems might arise from the radioactive waste seeping into surface water or contaminating the crops themselves, potentially sickening those who eat them.

Some environmentalists say those risks aren't worth taking. "When it stays down in the (aquifers), it doesn't really affect us, but once it gets liberated, it's a problem," says Diane D'Arriago, radioactive waste project director for the Washington, D.C.-based Nuclear Information and Research Service. "The common sense preventative action should be to not allow contaminated sludge to be used on crops."

The Illinois Department of Nuclear Safety regulates sludge disposal, based on the concentration of radium. But it's unclear how its rules will be enforced because until recently, high concentrations of radium

were rare. Now the issue is more relevant.

Enforcement unclear

The only way to know for sure if the sludge is safe is to test it. But such testing is sophisticated, and no government agency is currently set up to do it in part because radioactivity was rarely an issue in sewage sludge.

And water officials in West Chicago, Geneva, Batavia, Lake Zurich and several residential neighborhoods with their own water supply said they weren't aware there might be any reason to test their sludge —

us somewhere to put it."

Hours: — M M V —



JONATHAN HOUSE / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Senior Services Associates case manager May Grandberry (left) takes notes while client Soloma White, of Aurora, leafs through copies of her bills.

1-25-04 Beacon News

Survey points to need for more senior services in Kane County

By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — The problems Soloma White has to deal with might sound all too familiar.

There's a troublesome credit card account she's got to worry about. She's got to make sure there's enough cash for lunch. She also worries about being alone at night. And she'd really like a bigger apartment.

But normal day-to-day worries tend to be magnified when you're 80 years old, you tire easily, you take oxygen and live on a fixed income. That's why people like White, a resident of the Senior Living Center in the YMCA building in Aurora, need help where others might not.

That's where May Grandberry, a case manager for Senior Services Associates, comes in.

"When you go out on a call, every

problem is different," says Grandberry, sitting on a couch next to White in the older woman's apartment. "It may or may not be something you've dealt with before."

Because of the fluid nature of seniors' concerns, it sometimes is difficult to assess exactly what those concerns are. That's why the Kane County Health Department, in conjunction with many of the organizations that provide senior citizen programs in the county, recently put

out a survey of senior needs.

While it may not be the perfect study, former St. Charles Mayor Fred Norris, who serves as president of the not-for-profit Senior Services Associates, says it is one of the most comprehensive he has seen in a long time.

"I hope the study will be distributed to our state legislators, so they also will understand what seniors

◆ Turn to SENIOR, A2

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Vol. 157 / No. 36

SENIOR

From Page A1

face," Norris says. "I find it very educational."

Norris and others involved with senior services are not just hoping the study will demonstrate the need for continued state funding but also the need for more local funding. They are pushing for a property-tax increase of 2.5 cents for each \$100 of assessed value, to be established by a county-wide referendum.

The tax would be an increase of less than \$20 a year on a \$250,000 house but would raise about \$2.5 million to put toward senior projects in the county.

"Some people spend more than that in a year on fertilizer for their lawns," Norris says.

Alarming suicide rate

Senior providers in the county already knew about the need for more services. Bette Schoenholz, director of Senior Services, said programs go as far as the money goes. In Elgin, for instance, the Senior Services-run center has activities almost every day.

But the center here, which Aurora Township pays for and Senior Services runs, has activities only on Wednesdays. Other than that, workers will assist the elderly with problems or refer them to other agencies. A daily lunch also is served through Salvation Army's Golden Diners program.

"The Aurora office is limited because there is limited money," Schoenholz says.

While the survey offered few surprises to those who provide services for seniors, some were taken aback by one particular issue. According to the survey, about 7 percent of those who responded said they have considered taking their own lives, with another 5 percent saying they actually had tried to commit suicide.

"Those numbers are very alarming," says Jerry Murphy, Mental Health and Mental Retardation board president.

He said if that percentage held for Kane County's entire senior population, estimated at about 46,000 people, that means 3,266 seniors thought about suicide and 2,300 have tried it.

Murphy pointed out many seniors have lost spouses and see friends and contemporaries dying. Often, their natural support system is gone, especially if there are no family members around. Also, losing the ability to

drive, which speaks to independence, can be depressing.

"It definitely is a quality-of-life issue," Murphy says, adding that the problem is particularly acute with the World War II generation because they have been a self-sufficient, pull-yourself-up-by-your-bootstraps group.

Some programs exist in the county to provide a support system to seniors. Family Counseling Service in Aurora runs Friends and Neighbors, and Tri-City Family Services operates the Friendly Visitor program.

But Murphy says "if we're going to get some of that at-risk group, we need to expand."

Quality of life

Murphy has two suggestions. One is a home visitation program that would be formed and run by the county. The other is an actual senior advocate, again organized and run by the county.

Murphy's sister is a senior advocate in Wallworth County, Wis. He said Kenosha County actually has two full-time advocates, who operate similarly to a public guardian.

Again, these ideas take money.

One of the ironies of the survey is that one of the most identified problems by seniors is high taxes.

"Please try to find ways to stop the constant increase in property taxes," one senior wrote. "We are like most seniors on a 'fixed' income. It does not grow as the inflation and taxes grow."

"I received a call from a senior who complained about there not being services," Schoenholz says. "She needed home-delivered meals and didn't realize there was a program available for it. She also needed work done on her stairs, and there is a program for that, too.

"Her husband needed help with computer training, and they were raising their grandchildren, and there are programs for that. It will take this lady seven years of paying these taxes just to equal what she will get for her stair payment alone."

Fortunately, there are services available to help seniors. Often, it's a matter of helping people access those services. Soloma White can be assured of a good meal a day through the lunch served by the Golden Diners. Also, Grandberry is making sure she fills out a form for help in paying her heating bills.

"Many of us are living to an older age, which is good news," says Kane County Public Health chairman Gerry Jones, D-Aurora. "The bad news is, our quality of life is going down."

del



Madigan: Gorecki to return

Attorney general's ruling
pits judge vs. county
board chairman

1-24-04 Chronicle
By ADAM KOVAC
Kane County Chronicle

ST. CHARLES — Kane County State's Attorney Meg Gorecki can return to office after a four-month suspension of her law license she received for violating state ethics rules, Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan said Friday.

In Madigan's 15-page ruling, she indicated that Chief Circuit Judge Philip L. DiMarzio might oversee the selection of a special state's attorney who would serve as Gorecki's replacement until June 1, when she can return and finish her four-year term.



Gorecki

Madigan's decision, however, was disputed by Kane County Board Chairman Mike McCoy, who said he would pursue plans to solicit a new state's attorney through a meeting of the county board scheduled for Feb. 2, the day after Gorecki's suspension is to begin.

Meanwhile, Gorecki, 36, continued her silence on the matter, as she generally has since the Illinois Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission prosecuted Kane County's first female state's attorney for implicating McCoy in a jobs-for-bribes scheme that did not exist.

Until Friday, the meaning of the suspension Gorecki received Nov. 20 by the Illinois Supreme Court was cloaked in ambiguity because the court's rules do not address the impact of a suspension of less than six months on a disciplined attorney.

See GORECKI, page 2

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LOTTERIES

ILLINOIS LOTTERY
Fri. Pick 3 MIDDAY: 5-5-8
Fri. Pick 3 EVENING: 9-7-3
Fri. Pick 4 MIDDAY: 1-9-0-8
Fri. Pick 4 EVENING: 0-4-1-4
Fri. Little Lotto: 3-13-17-18-19
Lotto Jackpot: \$12.5 million

MEGA MILLIONS
Fri. Game Numbers: 10-18-33-46-51
Big Money Ball: 13
Est. Jackpot: \$51 million

INDIANA LOTTERY
Fri. Daily 3 MIDDAY: 6-6-3
Fri. Daily 3 EVENING: 1-4-5
Fri. Daily 4 MIDDAY: 4-2-3-1
Fri. Daily 4 EVENING: 7-9-7-6
Fri. Lucky 5 MIDDAY: 15-16-33-34-36
Fri. Lucky 5 EVENING: 2-11-27-30-35
Est. Jackpot: \$9 million

POWERBALL
Est. Jackpot: \$55 million

Gorecki

Continued from page 1

opinion conflicts with other legal research conducted at Gorecki's request that considers the position vacant during her suspension and requires the 26-member county board to appoint a replacement.
McCoy said he will continue with plans for the special board meeting he announced Friday to declare Gorecki's office vacant and nominate a substitute, pending new developments.
"There's a lot of unanswered questions," McCoy said. Melissa Merz, a Madigan spokeswoman, said legal precedent and state disciplinary rules were thoroughly researched in reaching the opinion.

"We believe that the conclusions expressed in the opinion properly interpret these provisions in the only way that gives reasonable meaning to them," Merz said.
Gorecki supporters lauded Madigan's opinion as a victory for Gorecki, whose legal and political future has been dogged since the allegations surfaced just before a hard-fought 2000 Republican primary that pitted her against longtime incumbent David Akemann.

"Meg has done an extraordinary job in office, and she deserves the right to come back," said Kay Catlin, Gorecki's former campaign spokeswoman. "Some of the people who've pushed for the punishment have bordered on sadistic."

McCoy said Madigan's does not disqualify her from holding the position of State's Attorney or create a vacancy in that office," Madigan wrote.
Gorecki's punishment was the midpoint between a two-month suspension that she requested and a six-month suspension that a hearing board recommended after she was charged by the ARDC, the disciplinary arm of the state Supreme Court.

In December, Gorecki appealed for a delay of her suspension until her term expires Dec. 1, citing her absence would disrupt administration of her office. The request was denied Jan. 13.
Madigan was asked to research the impact of the decision and whether the county needed a temporary substitute or a permanent replacement.

Part of Madigan's opinion was based on provisions that allow Gorecki to keep her license during the suspension, even though she is barred from practicing law and does not have to apply for reinstatement.

The length and circumstances of the sanction also were a factor because they do not violate the state election code that would call for a vacancy in Gorecki's office, ac-

cording to the opinion.
However, the punishment strips Gorecki's power to oversee the administration of the state's attorney's office, appear in court, advise the county board and county officers, and supervise her assistants.

Without a sitting state's attorney, elected or appointed, the opinion states, Gorecki's assistants also are prohibited from exercising the authority to practice law on her behalf.

"Thus, if the State's Attorney is disqualified from acting, so also are his or her Assistant State's Attorneys," Madigan wrote.

Madigan cites state code governing counties in Illinois that provide a mechanism for the 16th Judicial Circuit Court to appoint a special state's attorney to serve in Gorecki's absence, oversee and assign cases, and supervise junior prosecutors.

That means it is likely that Kane County judges, under the direction of DiMarzio, would vote to select the special state's attorney.
DiMarzio said late Friday that he has a copy of the opinion, but because he had not read it, he declined to comment.
"I'm unaware of any situation like this," DiMarzio said. "Vacancies do occur from time to time under different circumstances, but I'm unaware of any situation like this one."

Impact fee OK'd despite panel's objections

1-25-04 Chronicle

Some advisers say they did not back county's controversial plan

By TOM SCHLUETER

Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Members of the advisory committee that worked on Kane County's transportation impact fee ordinance say it was approved over their objections.

An advisory committee made up of county and local officials studied transportation impact fees for nearly two

years before the county board approved the plan Jan. 13.

One side sees the impact fee program, which imposes much higher costs to developments in the Tri-Cities than elsewhere in the county, as having the approval of the advisory committee.

Another side sees the county board ignoring the wishes of the advisory committee to make the fees equitable.

The 10-member advisory committee included Batavia Mayor Jeff Schielke, Elburn Village President Jim Willey, Carpentersville Village President Mark Boettger and county board members Karen McConnaughay, R-St. Charles, Don Wolfe, R-Elgin, and Cathy Hurlbut, R-Elgin. The other four members were nonelected officials. Wolfe was the committee chairman.

After two years of meetings, the advisory committee received the fee schedule. Some advisory committee members questioned the differences in the fees.

William Wyatt, R-Aurora, Transportation Committee chairman,

said the advisory committee's questions were sent to the staff members to see if the calculations were correct.

"They were sent to staff, with a 'Let's make sure we are not doing anything wrong,'" Wyatt said.

When the calculations were found to be correct, Wyatt said, the advisory committee's recommendations were sent through the process.

Not so, Schielke said.

"There is absolutely no way I would have approved that," Schielke said. "That is a gross misrepresentation of the facts."

See FEES, page 2

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County impact fees

<u>Service area</u>	<u>Single-family house</u>	<u>Convenience market</u>
Aurora	\$156	\$1,661
Campton Hills	\$1,780	\$5,226
Greater Elgin	\$297	\$3,326
Northwest	\$424	\$946
Southwest	\$965	\$6,790
Tri-Cities	\$1,249	\$11,145
Upper Fox	\$356	\$3,152
West Central	\$297	\$1,571

Fees

Continued from page 1

McConnaughay, former chairman of the Transportation Committee, said the numbers should have been reworked to prevent the disparity that allows fees in the Tri-Cities to be as much as 10 times more than in other parts of the county.

"No one is expecting perfect equity. This kind of disparity is significant," she said.

Wyatt said there is no political motivation to punish the Tri-Cities.

The county board vote was 18-7, effectively with members from the Tri-Cities area voting "no" and members from the rest of the county voting "yes."

"My political motivation is I have responsibility to maintain the infrastructure in the entire county, and that includes the Tri-Cities," Wyatt said.

Kane's impact fee program is modeled after the impact fee program adopted in DuPage County.

Under Kane's program, the county was divided into eight regions. Money collected must be spent in the region where it was collected.

The formula calculates the

effect that traffic in a given development will have on county highways.

Because the Tri-Cities have more county roads, they have the higher fees, Wyatt said.

"I entered this process thinking it would be a fair and equitable way of creating public policy," Schielke said.

The city councils of the Tri-Cities likely will authorize a lawsuit against the county over the issue.

St. Charles Mayor Sue Klinkhamer even called the plan "socialist."

Wyatt said DuPage County's ordinance has been unsuccessfully challenged by developers.

Schielke said DuPage's ordinance never was challenged by a municipality.

"As far as I am concerned, there is going to be a show-down," Schielke said.

Wyatt said that means the taxpayers will bear the cost of the legal battle.

"The developers will be sitting back and watching," Wyatt said.

McConnaughay and Schielke said they support the concept of countywide impact fees.

However, the program adopted by Kane is unfair, they said.

Dowell

Kay said in Washington in

1-27-04 Daily Herald

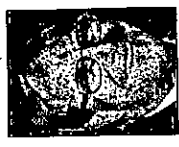
Gorecki goes to court to keep job

BY PATRICK WALDRON
Daily Herald Staff Writer

Pitting two ends of Kane County's government against each other, State's Attorney Meg Gorecki filed papers Monday asking a judge to block the county board's efforts to remove her from office.



Meg Gorecki



Mike McCoy

The filing comes as Gorecki scrambles to guarantee her return to her job following an

law license as punishment for ethics violations.

In January, the high court ruled that Gorecki would have to serve her suspension beginning Feb. 1.

With that order, Gorecki asked state Attorney General Lisa Madigan for an opinion on whether she would be stripped of her elected office because of the suspension.

Madigan issued her opinion

Friday saying Gorecki could return to her job in four months to complete her four-year term, which ends Nov. 30. But Madigan also said that Gorecki had to ask the 16th Judicial Circuit Court to appoint a special prosecutor to act as state's attorney during the suspension.

Before the Madigan opinion was released, Kane County Board Chairman Mike McCoy announced a special board

meeting for 8 a.m. Feb. 2 — the first business day of the suspension — to declare Gorecki's job vacant and appoint a successor to fill out her term.

He based that decision on legal advice provided by Aurora attorney Pat Kinnally, who was hired as a special assistant state's attorney to research the legal implications of Gorecki's suspension.

On Monday, Gorecki asked a

See JOB on PAGE 4

Job: No past rulings on other cases

Continued from Page 1

at the Kane County Courthouse in Geneva. Wechter and Cavins were unavailable for comment.

Gorecki's suspension originated from three phone messages left on a friend's answering machine in 1998 during which Gorecki suggested a county job could be bought in exchange for a campaign contribution to McCoy. The news of the tapes broke just weeks before Gorecki won a tight Republican primary in March 2000. A criminal investigation found no evidence of a bribes scheme, but the matter lived on as an attorney discipline case.

said. "It's a legal gray area. At some point it's going to be before a judge anyhow and Meg's suit makes that happen." The only thing McCoy thinks would clear up the situation — what he calls a "legal three-ring circus" — is Gorecki's resignation, something he doesn't see happening.

Gorecki's private attorneys, Larry Wechter and Cathy Cavins, are asking the court to issue an injunction against the county board. The issue is scheduled for hearing at 9:30 a.m. Wednesday



Deputy Cheryl Lyne, right, watches Monday as Kane County Sheriff Ken Ramsey places a badge on the collar of her new partner Fook. Fook is a German shepherd from Hungary and is being trained in explosive devices, handler protection and tracking.

Bob Gerrard — Chronicle photo staff

1-27-04
Chronicle



Bill
Page

Here we go again

When the Illinois Supreme Court imposed a four-month suspension of Meg Gorecki's law license, the justices created more questions than they answered.

Among the most pressing concerns was determining whether the court's ruling meant that Gorecki was out of a job or just on leave from the office. On Friday, Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan issued a 15-page ruling that seemed to put the matter to rest, but that was before Kane County Board Chairman Mike McCoy and State's Attorney Gorecki had their say. Now it seems we are in for yet another chapter of this story.

Madigan's ruling stated that Gorecki was barred only from practicing law, not stripped of her elected position. While Gorecki will not be allowed to run the state's attorney office from Feb. 1 through May 31, she may return on June 1 to finish her term, which ends in November. As such, a — and this is a key word — vacancy does not exist and there is no need to appoint a permanent replacement to Gorecki.

Madigan also says that while Gorecki's license is suspended, a temporary, or caretaker, state's attorney should be appointed. Madigan says the people who should make that appointment are the judges of 16th Judicial Circuit, under the guidance of Chief Circuit Judge Phil DiMarzio.

When Madigan's opinion was released last week, there was for many a sense that finally we could move forward. Here at last was a sensible, well-researched decision that would answer all of those questions that the Supreme Court had left hanging. More than that, it presented an easy plan and relieved the county board of any responsibility in the matter.

Not unexpectedly, being aced out of this decision did not sit well with McCoy, who has stated that he and the county board, not the attorney general of the state, should have final say in this matter. McCoy still plans to declare Gorecki's office vacant and nominate a replacement.

On Monday, Gorecki filed a lawsuit seeking to stop McCoy from following through with his plan. At the same time, however, she also challenges Madigan's ruling and asserts that she should be the one to name her own replacement.

Oh, man. We really did not need this. Three officials, each armed with their own legal research supporting their point of view. The worst part is it appears that the argument does not seem to be about anything other than who has the authority to appoint the temporary state's attorney. In other words, this is a fight over turf.

The best interests of Kane County would be served if McCoy and Gorecki would back off and let Madigan's ruling stand unchallenged. Offhand, my guess is that is not going to happen. Both parties believe their course is the right one, and both say they can produce the documentation to bolster their claim. Unfortunately for them, they may be the only ones in the entire county who care.

It is time — no, it is way past time — for Kane County to move on. We have a decision issued by the best source in the state, so please, in the interest of all of our patience, let's just run with that.

All the hooting and laughter you heard coming from Batavia last Friday night was from the crowd at Dan Klinkhamer's retirement party. The outgoing St. Charles Police Department commander was honored by an overflow crowd of more than 300 well-wishers; a fitting tribute to an old-school cop and his 29-year career.

This last item I couldn't resist...

According to news reports, some of the highest paid teachers in Illinois are those who teach driver's ed, with some instructors making close to \$100,000 a year.

The article seemed to disapprove of the payout, but not me. I don't think there's enough money in the state budget to put me in the front seat of a driver's ed car, and I tip my hat to any man or woman brave enough to take the job. A \$100,000 salary isn't near enough to face death every day while screaming in utter fear. I get enough of that with this job already.

■ Bill Page lives in St. Charles and writes about local issues on Tuesday and Thursday. Calls and e-mails answered at (630) 584-0809 or wpage@mediawerks.org.

1-27-04 Daily Herald

N. Aurora mayor urges talks on utility tax

BY DARRYL MELLEMA
Daily Herald Correspondent

North Aurora's village board is to again discuss a utility tax as a means for generating revenue to improve the city's aging road system.

"I think it's the responsible way of improving our community," Mayor Mark Ruby said. "I do not think it's a huge burden. But I do think it's something that is available to us."

During discussions regarding the 2003-04 budget, Ruby suggested implementation of a 3 percent utility tax as one way to help bridge a revenue gap and fund a road construction pro-

gram. The board balanced its current budget through other methods, mostly involving cuts. Ruby brought the issue back before the board during his mayor's comments at Monday's village board meeting. The board can institute a utility tax of up to 5 percent without a referendum vote. The tax would be levied on village natural gas, electric and telephone bills.

Ruby requested that the board take up discussions on a utility tax at its Feb. 2 committee-of-the-whole meeting. He said a vote authorizing collection of the tax would allow for use of revenues from that tax before the

end of the year. "We are the only town in our surrounding area that does not have a utility tax," Ruby said. "I could easily say 'great for us.' I could say that if we were keeping our maintenance level to where we wanted it. We are not."

Ruby highlighted streets, such as Laurel Drive and Long Avenue on the village's east side, as among those that need "major improvement."

"Streets are never finished," Ruby said. "There is a point where you can have a level of quality where you can maintain (streets) at a reasonable level. We're not at that point." Ruby said many areas of infra-

structure improvement are taking place quite well in the village. Among these, he said, were sewer and storm water infrastructure upgrades and the effort to keep the village's water system in line with village expansion.

"We have increased the value of our neighborhoods and we have done it with no special assessments on our residents," Ruby said.

In other action Monday, the village acknowledged without discussion that Comcast has completed a series of village cable system upgrades and unanimously approved a resolution that establishes Comcast as the village's cable agent for 12 years.

1-27-04 CHRONICLE

Ruby pushes utility tax to fund road repairs

suggested that the village board implement a utility tax to help catch up on road repairs.

"We made a commitment to improving our streets and sidewalks. I don't believe we are keeping up," Ruby said during Monday's village board meeting.

Ruby said some streets in the village are in such bad shape that "if you don't do something soon, they will seriously fall apart."

Trustees are expected to discuss the issue at Monday's

N. Aurora voters wouldn't have to approve tax

By ERIC SCHELKOPF
Kane County Chronicle

NORTH AURORA — Village President Mark Ruby on Monday

"Even though it is not popular to bring up the issue of a tax, we need to do it as soon as possible. If we were to consider this, the time is now, before we get our budget together for next year," Ruby said.

The village board can implement a utility tax without voter approval. Residents recently approved a boost in the village's sales tax to help bring in more revenues for road repairs.

Ruby said those revenues

could be combined with the utility tax and the state motor fuel tax to make a "huge dent" in repairing the village's streets.

The village also needs additional funds for projects such as the widening of Oak Street, Ruby said.

That project is estimated to cost \$1.8 million. Although the village is expected to get \$1.2 million in federal funds, it still would have to come up with \$600,000, Ruby said.

Randall, Route 64 location of most accidents in STC

1-27-04 Chronicle

*Nearly half of all accidents
were at that intersection*

By HEATH HIXSON
Kane County Chronicle

ST. CHARLES — Nearly half of all traffic accidents in 2003 in the city were at Randall Road and Route 64.

The police department on Monday released a list of the 10 locations where motorists most likely were to be involved in an accident last year. Nearly 47 percent of those accidents were at Randall Road and Route 64.

Also at the top of the list is the 2100 block of West Main Street, the 600 block of South Randall Road and the intersection of Dunham Road and East Main Street.

Information from the list will be used to "determine traffic enforcement needs and to identify locations that may need to be examined for road configuration changes," a department statement said.

The list shows 22 accidents occurred last year at Randall Road and Route 64. Four of those crashes resulted in injuries.

At least 15 of those crashes

at the intersection were because of incidents involving turning vehicles. Four accidents were rear-enders, two accidents were because of the angle of vehicles and one accident involved a car side-swiping another.

The list also shows:

- 19 accidents occurred on the 2100 block of West Main Street.

- 17 accidents occurred on the 600 block of South Randall Road.

- 17 accidents occurred at the intersection of Dunham Road and East Main Street.

- 16 accidents occurred on the 300 block of North Randall Road.

The list also names the 2000 block of West Main Street, the 2500 block of East Main Street, the 3800 block of East Main Street, the intersection of Randall Road and Route 38 and the 1600 block of East Main Street.

At least 155 traffic accidents occurred at the 10 locations last year. The accidents resulted in 30 injuries. At least three pedestrians were hit.

Study shows county clerk services costly

1-27-84 Chronicle

Cost to taxpayers is \$422,806

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Kane County Clerk John Cunningham wants increases in fees charged by his office to help recoup the cost of providing services.

A study conducted by Maximus Inc. of Northbrook looked at the direct and indirect costs of issuing marriages licenses, providing certified copies of vital records and canceling tax sales and issuing certificates of redemption.

Those services cost the county \$783,843 annually but take in \$361,037 in fees for the same services. That leaves a cost to the taxpayers of \$422,806.

Fee charges for providing services are set by the state statutes. In 1989, the General Assembly began allowing counties to increase fees by documenting the

cost of the services through a study. Fees can be raised only to reflect the cost.

The Maximus study was presented Monday to members of the Public Service Committee.

Committee Chairman Robert McConaughay, R-Geneva, asked members to read the study and be prepared to take action at the February meeting.

The current charge for a marriage license is \$15, but the study showed the actual cost to the clerk's office to issue the license is \$19.07.

There were 3,306 marriage licenses issued last year, which brought in \$49,590. However, it cost the office \$63,039.

Cunningham recommended the marriage license fee be raised to \$18.

The current fee for certified copies of vital records such as marriage, birth and death certificates is \$5. Of the \$5, \$2 goes into the clerk's automation fund.

The study showed that it cost the county \$9.39 to provide them. There were 60,527 requests last year for certified copies of vital records.

Cunningham recommends that copies of birth and marriage certificates

be increased to \$11, of which \$2 will go to the automation fund.

The recommended price for death certificates is \$13, with \$2 going to the automation fund.

The study found the biggest disparity between the fee charged for the canceling of tax sales and issuing certificates of redemption and the cost of providing the service.

Kane County charges \$3 for service, and the study found it costs taxpayers \$69.31 for each customer.

Last year, there were 2,203 cancellations of tax sales, which brought in \$6,609 but cost the county \$152,698.

Cunningham's recommendation is to set the fee at \$68.

Last year, the county board increased the recorder's fee by \$7 to help fund the Geographic Information Systems Department.

The board is considering increasing fees charged by the circuit clerk's office but has not taken action.

Cost studies were performed for both departments.

1-27-04 CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Kane works to improve safety on Randall Road

Precautions ready for site of crash that killed teen

By William Presecky
Tribune staff reporter

Kane County officials took preliminary steps last week to improve safety on a stretch of Randall Road near St. Charles where a high school senior died Nov. 4 after her car collided head-on with a truck.

As a first step, officials said they would increase enforcement of the 55 m.p.h. speed limit on the accident-prone stretch.

A combination of bad weather, worn tires, rolling topography and S-curve of the road were cited as contributors to the deadly crash.

Area residents, school officials and students have demanded more speed-limit enforcement, improved signage and structural changes on the approximately 3,000-foot-long, high-speed segment of Randall since Samantha Joos, 17, was killed on the rain-slicked road.

The fatal accident occurred in an unincorporated area of Kane about 2 miles from St. Charles North High School, where Joos was headed when she lost control of her car on a curved downgrade. Jan Stark, president of the high school's PTO, and Ka-

tie Venegas and Emily Zepeda, Joos' tennis teammates, asked the County Board's Transportation Committee to do whatever necessary to prevent another accident.

The committee authorized a study on constructing a permanent barrier along Randall to separate northbound and southbound traffic. It also recommended increasing enforcement of the 55 m.p.h. speed limit; adding more warning and advisory signs; and placing additional reflective markers along the road's center median and edge lines.

Committee member John Hoscheit (R-St. Charles) said there's also agreement that a traffic barrier would reduce the risk of crossover accidents.

According to engineers with the county's Division of Transportation, who recommend construction of a barrier, there are few other locations in Kane that have the combination of potentially dangerous factors.

According to engineer Steve Pasinski, the Randall Road S-curve has recorded 26 accidents in the past three years, compared with about three accidents, on average, in other busy sections of Randall of similar length.

According to Pasinski, recent traffic observations indicated that 75 percent of the 40,000 vehicles a day that drive the S-curve exceed its 55 m.p.h. speed limit.

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Gorecki files suit to keep her job

1-27-04 Chicago Tribune

Prosecutor fights replacement plan

By William Presecky
Tribune staff reporter

Kane County State's Atty. Meg Gorecki filed suit Monday against County Board members and board Chairman Mike McCoy to keep them from ousting her when her law license is suspended for four months beginning Sunday.

Gorecki's suit is scheduled to come before Kane County Circuit Judge Michael Colwell on Wednesday. Her attorneys will argue for an injunction to block the board from taking any action regarding the office's leadership while the lawsuit is pending.

"She is doing everything in her power to keep her job," said McCoy, adding that he was not surprised by the lawsuit.

According to Gorecki's complaint, "Any action . . . to declare a vacancy in the office . . . based on the suspension of [her] law license would violate both her federal and state constitutional rights to due process."

Gorecki also alleges in the lawsuit that she "retains the prerogative to appoint an acting state's attorney during the period of [her] suspension from the practice of law." The implication, although not stated, is that she would return to office and finish her term after the suspension.

In November, the Illinois Supreme Court ordered that her license be suspended for four months for professional misconduct and later decided the suspension should begin Feb. 1.

PLEASE SEE GORECKI, PAGE 4

GORECKI:

Lisa Madigan opinion cited in lawsuit

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Except to note that she filed the suit as a private citizen and used her own money, Gorecki declined to comment.

"Even though [state's attorney] is my title, I filed personally and retained my own private counsel. I'm bearing all expenses of this lawsuit," Gorecki said.

The lawsuit was filed three days after Illinois Atty. Gen. Lisa Madigan issued an opinion

that seemed to boost Gorecki's case for staying in office. It said that Gorecki could not exercise the powers of state's attorney while suspended, but was not disqualified from the position and the suspension did not cause a vacancy in the office.

Earlier this month, the County Board received a legal opinion suggesting that Gorecki's suspension would disqualify her from holding office, allowing the board to declare the post vacant and letting McCoy fill the vacancy with board consent.

Barring a court order to the contrary, McCoy said he expects to proceed with a special County Board meeting Monday to evaluate the conflicting legal opinions.

"If no one is officially state's attorney at that time, the court system conceivably will grind

to a halt, or certainly the prosecution division will," McCoy said.

Although he acknowledged that "a gray area" definitely exists about what should occur when Gorecki's license is suspended, he reiterated that Madigan's opinion is not binding and is "not a judgment by a court."



Gorecki

"If I had to follow that, we wouldn't need the courts. We would just go by the attorney general's opinion," he said.

But because of the conflicting legal positions, the attorney general's opinion carries considerable weight, said Madigan

spokeswoman Melissa Merz.

The Supreme Court did not address the issue of Gorecki's official status and absent any law or court cases to the point, "the attorney general's opinion, although not binding upon the courts, would be entitled to deference by the courts," Merz said.

Gorecki's attorneys, Larry Wechter of Geneva and Cathy Cavins of Batavia, cited Madigan's opinion in support of Gorecki's motion for a preliminary injunction.

Gorecki was elected in November 2000. The unethical conduct occurred in 1998, before she ran for office, when she suggested falsely to a friend that McCoy could be bribed in exchange for a county job. McCoy was cleared of any wrongdoing.

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1-27-04 Beacon news

Kane might give portion of Randall to North Aurora

By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — The Kane County Board Transportation Committee is recommending turning part of Randall Road over to North Aurora.

The committee voted to cede part of the county highway between Orchard Road and Interstate 88 to the village, which will allow North Aurora to grant itself access to Randall for a planned strip mall anchored by a Walgreen's drug store at Randall and Oak Street.

From the county's standpoint, the change in jurisdiction is no problem, because the regional aspect of Randall ceases at the Orchard intersection.

North Aurora and the county had talked previously about the switch in jurisdiction, but county officials had rejected it. Transportation Committee members said they thought North Aurora wanted too much to make the switch.

But during the past month, officials from both governmental bodies have been talking, and they came up with an agreement.

Some of the key points include:

- Kane County will pay North Aurora \$300,000 up front.
- The county will agree to mow

the area and maintain the road for two years after the agreement is approved.

- The county will continue to inspect and maintain the bridge over Interstate 88, until such time as the entire bridge deck is replaced. That replacement is not scheduled until 2016, but could occur sooner if there are problems with the bridge.

- North Aurora will not put an access point closer than 500 feet from Orchard Road.

The agreement also spells out a number of access points.

North Aurora was particularly interested in an access point onto Randall for the proposed Walgreen's at Oak and Randall, a project the village board has been pushing since summer.

The site would not have met county standards for access, because there is not enough distance between a church parking lot driveway and Oak Street. But with North Aurora controlling that part of the roadway, the county standard will not apply.

County committee members unanimously passed the agreement with little discussion.

Village Board members were expected to pass the agreement at Monday night's meeting.

1-27-04

Beacon news

PN

Dirty trick

On State's Attorney Gorecki stepping down, I think this is a dirty trick. The lady that was harassing her should be the one who gets the punishment, not State's Attorney Gorecki.

Shirley Brown, Aurora

1-27-04 Chronicle Letters

Consider a special prosecutor

To the Editor:

The Carpentersville financial mess is like the Energizer Bunny, it keeps going and going, and now appears to be heading to the Kane County Treasurer's Office.

State statute indicates that municipalities under 500,000 are required to submit an audit and certification showing date of publication; otherwise the treasurer shall withhold monies, which Mr. David Rickett says he

will now do — for this year.

Last year, the treasurer's office accepted a letter which advised progress was being made on the Carpentersville FY 2002 audit.

What's interesting is when the FY 2002 audit was released, the auditors refused to issue an opinion on the authenticity of Carpentersville finances for FY 2002, as they apparently did for the FY 2001 audit. Unfortunately, the statute doesn't appear to allow the Kane County treasurer the discretion to accept a letter or to make allowances. The statute indicates "... any county treasurer subject to the provisions of this act failing, neglecting, or refusing

to discharge any duties imposed upon him by this act shall be deemed guilty of a Class A misdemeanor." Another section discusses the civil suits.

I think the Kane County Board needs to consider a special prosecutor to review the matter and take any required legal action. Obviously, this should include a complete review of all municipalities' submissions and a determination if any reports were submitted to the state concerning Carpentersville finances, based upon the "questionable letter."

Richard Landwehr

Elgin

Gorecki files suit against McCoy

1-27-04 Chronicle

State's attorney says she, not court, should choose her temporary replacement

By ADAM KOVAC
and TOM SCHLUJETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Kane County State's Attorney Meg Gorecki on Monday filed a lawsuit to block the county's attempt to replace her while her law license is suspended.

Gorecki's lawsuit also questions Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan's opinion that Kane County's judicial leaders are empowered to choose a special state's attorney while Gorecki serves a four-month suspension.

Gorecki, 36, must take a leave of absence from her office beginning Sunday after the Illinois Supreme Court suspended her law license for an ethical miscue that occurred before she took office in 2000.

It is the first time that a sitting state's attorney in Illinois has been relieved from duty and, as such, has created a legal quagmire on exactly who decides the temporary administration of Gorecki's office.

In the lawsuit, Gorecki contends that the Kane County Board and Chairman Mike McCoy do not have the authority to declare her office vacant and select a replacement at a special meeting.

Gorecki also maintains that the circuit court cannot appoint a special prosecutor to act in her absence, as Madigan suggested, and seeks to tap an attorney of her own choosing to serve on her behalf, according to the lawsuit.

"The statute has no application here," according to the lawsuit filed on Gorecki's behalf by Geneva attorney Larry Wechter. "Therefore, the circuit court does not possess the authority to name an acting state's attorney."

McCoy, however, said other legal research indicates that Gorecki's office will be vacant during her suspension, a situation that requires him to nominate a replacement for approval by the 26-member county board.



Gorecki



McCoy

Gorecki

Continued from page 1

On Friday, Madigan, in a 15-page nonbinding opinion, said Gorecki could return June 1 after she completes the suspension, which strips her power to practice law and, thus, oversee operation of the state's attorney's office.

Madigan added that Gorecki's assistants would lose the authority they derive from her to prosecute cases and called on the 16th Judicial Circuit Court to select a special state's attorney as a surrogate.

Despite Madigan's opinion that allows Gorecki to finish her four-year term that ends Nov. 30, McCoy called a special county board meeting for Feb. 2 to replace her before the courts open for business that day.

But Gorecki maintains in her lawsuit that her sanction does not disqualify her from holding the office and aims to prevent the board from acting at the special meeting.

Gorecki also maintains that state law only allows the circuit court, under the direction of Chief Judge Phillip L. DiMarzio, to select her temporary replacement if she is suspended for more than one year.

Madigan spokeswoman Melissa Merz said Monday that she had not seen Gorecki's lawsuit and declined to comment. Instead, Merz restated Madigan's opinion that allows DiMarzio to appoint an acting state's attorney.

DiMarzio also declined to comment on the lawsuit but said he would take action on the matter if necessary.

Kane County judges could remove themselves from Gorecki's case or deny it outright.

By naming her own substitute, Gorecki would ensure the progression of fund-raising efforts that she has championed on behalf of several public safety programs, Assistant Kane County State's Attorney Michael Coghlan said.

"Legally, she remains the state's attorney during the suspension, and the interim (state's attorney) is simply a

caretaker," said Coghlan, Gorecki's deputy chief.

As part of her lawsuit, Gorecki included a memorandum dated May 20, 2003, six months before she was disciplined, that states in part, that one of her top lieutenants would serve in her place if her law license were suspended.

"I hereby designate the First Assistant State's Attorney to serve as acting State's Attorney of Kane County, Illinois. In the event that the First Assistant State's Attorney is unable to attend to the duties of acting State's Attorney, I hereby designate the Chief of the Civil Division," the document states.

McCoy previously has signaled that two of Gorecki's assistants, Robert Sandner and Katherine Moran, could be tapped for Gorecki's job. Sandner is assigned to the county board and Moran is chief of Gorecki's civil division.

McCoy said legal research on behalf of the county by Aurora attorney Pat Kinnally indicates that cases from Gorecki's office during her suspension might be more vulnerable to appeal if the board does not appoint a replacement.

On Monday, Gorecki maintained her silence on the matter as she has since the Illinois Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission prosecuted her for implicating McCoy in a job-for-bribes scheme that did not exist.

The state Supreme Court on Nov. 20 suspended Gorecki for violating the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct by suggesting in 1998 that a county job could be bought with a contribution to McCoy's campaign fund.

The sanction touched off a legal debate that remains clouded in uncertainty because the court's rules do not address the impact of a suspension of less than six months on a disciplined attorney.

"The state constitution never anticipated this situation," McCoy said. "Unless Meg resigns, it will be a war of lawyers, as it has been for years."

KANE'S NINTH K-9



DONNELL COLLINS / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Kane County Sheriff Ken Ramsey places a police badge on the collar of Foox, a police dog partnered with the unit's first female dog handler, Deputy Cheryl Lyne.

1-27-04 Beacon news

German shepherd Foox joins county's first female dog handler

By Daniel Duggan
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — Kane County Sheriff Ken Ramsey showcased the latest addition to his office's K-9 unit Monday.

Besides introducing Foox — the new German shepherd on the force — to local media, Ramsey staged an event with all eight of the department's dogs in one room. The dogs, however, weren't as friendly to their new member as their human counterparts were.

"They don't like each other much," said Deputy Eric Fisher amidst the piercing sound of the dogs barking at each other. "They all want to be the big dog in the room."

With the addition of Foox and another German shepherd, Jake, now in training, the Kane County K-9 unit will have nine dogs. Ramsey said the force is among the largest in the state.

The dogs can act as partners to the deputies, cutting down on staff costs, Ramsey said. And with most of the food and veterinary services donated, the program has

become self-sustaining. The Siers Feed store in Elgin donates all of the food.

Foox will be paired with Deputy Cheryl Lyne, who is the department's first female dog handler. The animal is specially trained in detecting explosives. Others are trained in finding human remains.

The sheriff's department places human/dog partners at posts in the Kane County jail, on its SWAT team and on special investigations.

Lyne has been trying to get onto the K-9 unit for nearly eight years.

"For me, this has always been 'the team' to be on," she said. "It's great. I love animals and I've wanted to do this for a long time."

Ramsey pointed out Foox also will be the last dog the department will have to acquire after it has been trained. Deputy Bob Baloun has finished his education in a program to train the animals at the Sheriff's Department's own facilities.

"This makes it an inexpensive way to have two officers out there," he said. "Because it's hard to get funding for more deputies."

The cost of Foox, Ramsey said, is nearly

\$7,000 — though the expense was paid by the Fraternal Order of Police as a donation to the department.

Training takes nine weeks for the dog, then an additional three weeks with the officer and the dog together. Most of the training is done by playing with the animals. And over the course of the training, the dogs develop a close bond with their partners.

"That dog will lay down its life for you under any circumstances," Baloun said.

The dogs aren't as generous, however, when it comes to people hiding in warehouses or back yards.

"It's called hold and bark," said Sgt. Scott Flowers. "The dog will sit in front of you and bark, and if you don't move you're fine — but if you move, it will engage you."

The officers spend their entire working days with the dogs, then take them home at night.

Fisher, who works with a dog named Idar, joked that he spends more time with the dog than with his family.

"Between working an eight-hour day, then spending time playing at home," he said, "it works out to a lot of time."

1-27-04 Beacon News

Gorecki sues to keep job

Tries to stop Kane County from replacing her when license suspended on Feb. 1

Legal showdown:
Chairman pledges to appoint an interim state's attorney

By Mike Cetera and Dan Duggan
STAFF WRITERS

ST. CHARLES TOWNSHIP — State's Attorney Meg Gorecki on Monday filed suit against the Kane

County Board and its chairman, seeking to head off a movement to replace her during the upcoming four-month suspension of her law license.

The lawsuit seeks to prevent board members from appointing someone to serve out the remainder of Gorecki's term, and also asks the court to weigh in on an area of law neither Illinois statutes nor the state Constitution appear to address.

Gorecki asked the 16th Circuit

Court to declare that her suspension for a phony bribe scheme will not disqualify her from holding office once her law license is reinstated. Her suspension is scheduled to begin Sunday.

Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan last week issued an opinion that suggested state law is silent on the matter, therefore Gorecki should remain in office. Madigan said the court should appoint a prosecutor to temporarily fill the office.

The attorney general's opinion is not binding, however.

County Board Chairman Mike McCoy, who asked Aurora attorney Patrick Kinnally to furnish a separate opinion for the board, plans to ask board members to declare the office vacant and appoint someone to fill out the remainder of Gorecki's term, which expires in November.

McCoy said Monday he planned to have a new state's attorney appointed before the courthouse

opens on Feb. 2 to avoid possible questions of whether the office has legal authority to prosecute in Gorecki's absence.

When asked what would best serve the public interest, McCoy said Gorecki's resignation is "the only clear thing."

"I'm not saying she should resign," said McCoy, R-Aurora, "but that's the clear thing."

The lawsuit, filed on behalf of

◆ **TURN TO GORECKI, A2**



Kane County State's Attorney Meg Gorecki is suing the Kane County Board and its chairman, Mike McCoy.

GORECKI

From page A1

Gorecki by two private-practice attorneys, seeks to temporarily bar the board from doing anything before the issue is settled in court. Attorneys Larry Wechter of Geneva and Cathy Cavins of Batavia, who filed the suit, did not return phone calls seeking comment.

A hearing before Kane County Judge Michael Colwell is scheduled for Wednesday.

Several board members said the legal shutdown was an expected conclusion to the nearly four-year odyssey that began with a voice mail left by Gorecki implying that a friend could obtain a county job by paying a bribe.

"I thought all along that Meg would sue, that's what she knows how to do anyway," said board member Lee Barrett, R-East Dundee. "This is forcing the issue into the courts, and that's where it should be resolved."

Board member Dan Walker said because of a lack of precedent, the matter was likely to end up in the court system regardless.

"I'm eager to hear what the circuit court has to say, and if they concur with the attorney general's office, I'd probably side with them," said Walker, R-South Elgin.

Neither board member said they had been served a copy of the complaint.

Gorecki, who has said little publicly about her legal situation, referred a phone call to an assistant who declined to comment for the office.

North Aurora mayor pushes for utility tax

1-27-04 Beacon News

By David Garbe
STAFF WRITER

NORTH AURORA — Village President Mark Ruby told trustees at Monday's village board meeting that creating a 3 to 5 percent utility tax to fund road repairs should be a top priority.

"I strongly believe, even though it's not popular to bring up the idea, that (a utility tax) is something we need to do," Ruby said. "I am proposing this as a responsible way of improving our community."

He said the village had made strong improvements to the village's water, sewer and sidewalk infrastructure in the last few years. But, in the area of road maintenance, he said, "I don't believe we are keeping up."

In making his case, Ruby cited "constant" complaints from residents and noted that North Aurora is the only town in the area without a utility tax. He said West Dundee is the closest town without one.

Ruby also said it would be more economical to pay for regular road maintenance rather than to allow roads to deteriorate and then have to make large single payments to replace them.

But, given the number of already deteriorated roads, the village does not have enough money to perform proper maintenance on all of them.

That point emerged very clearly this summer, after village staff assembled long-range budget projections showing the village will forever be scrambling to catch up with its backlog of necessary road repairs unless a new source of revenue is found.

That report also projected that a 3 to 5 percent utility tax would provide enough revenue to fund all needed road repairs

over the next decade.

Ruby had first proposed the utility tax in May of last year, and former village administrator Rob Nelis later called the tax "inevitable."

The utility tax proposal, which would tax residents' electric, gas and telephone bills, has been briefly discussed by trustees several times since then. Trustees have never rejected the idea of the tax, but have been hesitant to take action.

As Ruby put the matter back on the table Monday, he told trustees that with spring budget season approaching, "if we were to consider this, the time is now."

Trustees did not comment on the utility tax issue Monday night, and the matter will be under discussion at next Monday's Committee of the Whole meeting.

If and when trustees decide to enact a utility tax, the village would be legally entitled to begin collecting it within 90 days.

Unlike the .5 percent sales tax increase, which had to be ratified by village residents in a referendum last April, the proposed utility tax could be enacted solely by decision of the Village Board.


The .5 percent sales tax was North Aurora's most recent tax rate increase, and was intended to boost the village's general operating budget.

Ruby said the sales tax has provided few funds so far, as it excludes food and automobile sales. It will likely continue to have little effect until the village attracts more retail business development.

A utility tax, he said, will provide immediate funds, which he proposed would be used solely for road projects.

Contact staff writer David Garbe at (630) 844-5903 or dgarbe@scn1.com

Michael A. Covelli, Sr.
1923 - 2004

 Michael A. Covelli, Sr., 81, of North Aurora, IL, passed away from heart failure on January 23, 2004 at his home. He was born January 23, 1923 in Aurora, IL.



son of Henry D. and Marysa Covelli. He graduated from West Aurora High School. He married Bernice Fetzner on April 1, 1945. Mike served in the Armed Services as a Staff Sergeant in the Pacific Theatre. He owned a home in North Aurora for 40 years.

He was a member of Blessed Sacrament Church in North Aurora since 1950 and a member of the North Aurora Club for 30 years. He was also a member of the VFW in Montgomery and a member of the Italian American Club.

Mike was a loving husband and devoted father and grandfather. He was an avid fisherman at his cottage in Elmhurst, WI, golfer and card player. He was known for spinning stories related to many life experiences.

He leaves to cherish his memory his beloved wife of 58 years; six children, Dr. Henry (Rhonda) Covelli of Post Falls, Idaho, Judy (Geoff) Covelli of Henryville, PA, Kathryn (the late Stratton of Marietta, GA, Cheri Thuroff of North Aurora, Michael Covelli Jr. of North Aurora and (Dave) Covelli-Clausen of Aurora also survived by his sisters, Mary Jenny Pendergast of Rockford, Mafalda Mahoney of North Aurora grandchildren; and a great grandchild. He was preceded in death by his father, Henry, mother, Teresa; brothers, Mildred Bonie and Margaret Covelli. He will also be missed by friends and neighbors.

Funeral services will be Tuesday, January 27, 2004 at 1:30 PM from The Eden Mortuary to Blessed Sacrament Church at 2 PM. Entombment at West Hill Cemetery.

Visitation will be Monday, January 26, 2004 from 2 to 8 PM with a service at 8 PM.

1-27-04 Beacon News

Kane clerk wants to raise fees to cover service costs

By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — It could cost a little more to get married in Kane County, if fees are increased in the County Clerk's office.

The office has recommended several increases to bring fees charged closer to what it actually costs the clerk's office to do the work, according to Joan Rennie of the clerk's office.

Rennie, on behalf of County Clerk John Cunningham, presented the proposal Monday to the County Board Public Service Committee, which will take a month to look at the increases before making a recommendation.

The increases recommended are backed by a study done by Maximus Inc. of Northbrook, which has done similar fee studies for more than 50 Illinois counties.

The study compared what Kane County charges for certain functions to the actual cost of the work. A separate study showed what other area counties charge.

County clerk fees are set by state statute, and cannot be changed unless the office justifies the changes by doing a cost study.

"The statute hasn't been changed in a very long time," Rennie said.

Most of the increases are recom-

mended in some of the clerk's office's basic and most popular functions, such as issuing marriage licenses and making certified copies of marriage licenses, birth certificates and death certificates.

Currently, a copy of any process, file or record from the office costs 50 cents for each 100 words, and \$1 additional for certifying and putting a seal on the document. For marriage licenses, that has been \$7 for the first copy, and for death certificates, \$9 for the first copy.

The proposal is to raise that to a straight \$11 for the first certified copy of a birth certificate and a marriage license, with \$9 of that going to the clerk's office and \$2 to the county's automation fund to pay for computer upgrades to the clerk's office. A death certificate copy would be \$13 with \$9 of that going to the county, \$2 to the automation fund and \$2 to the state. Additional copies would be \$4 for birth certificates and marriage licenses, and \$6 for death certificates, which is the same as presently.

Fees vary

In addition, the proposal suggests raising the cost of issuing a marriage license to a newly married couple from the current \$15 to \$18. That new cost of \$18 is closer

to, but still shy of, the \$19.07 Maximus said it costs the office to issue the license.

The biggest increase proposed would be for people redeeming their property from tax sale. The proposal is to increase the cost of canceling the sale and issuing and sealing certificates of redemption from \$4 to \$68. Maximus said it costs the clerk's office \$69.31 to do that function.

"There's a lot to do with that," Rennie said.

The cost of redeeming tax sale items is dramatically different from county to county, according to the Maximus study of area counties. The new \$68 fee still would be lower than Cook, which charges \$75, and DeKalb, which charges \$70. Kendall charges \$40 for the function, while Will charges \$18. DuPage charges what Kane has been charging, \$4.

In the study, Bruce Cowans, Maximus vice president, wrote there is a difference between cost and price.

"Just because another county charges a lower fee does not mean that its cost is lower," Cowans wrote. "Many counties, not knowing their costs, unknowingly use other revenues to help fund that service."

Those other revenues would be property and sales taxes, he said.

1-27-04 Beacon news

Kane concerned about plight of homeless veterans

■ **Not easy:** Officials trying to develop programs, solutions

By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — Dorothy Sanchez admitted she should have known better.

But the County Board member, D-Aurora, said recent developments have opened her eyes to a problem she did not realize was as critical as it is: homeless veterans.

She said the realization came as she watched Democratic Party presidential candidates donating to a homeless shelter for veterans in Iowa.

"I'll be the first to admit I did not realize the situation," Sanchez said

Monday at a County Board Public Service Committee meeting. "You just assume that people who go to fight for this country are cared for. When you find out they're not, it's nauseating. They risked their lives, and now they're homeless, and we can't do enough about it?"

Her comments were made to John Carr, Kane County Veterans Affairs office director, who said estimates are that of the about 3,000 homeless people in Kane County, 1,000 are veterans. That one-third ratio holds true nationally, Carr said. There are 26,480 veterans living in Kane County, he added, the seventh most in the state.

Carr said his office has an outreach program for homeless vets, so they at least can get the benefits

❖ Turn to **HOMELESS, A2**

HOMELESS

From page A1

and medical care they have coming to them. He said it is a long-standing problem for which there is no easy solution.

"We have a largely mobile society," Carr said. "When people go from one place to another, certain benefits may not be available. When veterans leave the military, some don't have a place to come back to."

He pointed out that military pay is not hefty — there are plenty of military families who qualify for food stamps, he said. Also, many veterans suffer from mental illness or substance abuse, a key contributor to homelessness in general, he said.

He said "a very large block of veterans are moving through the system" at one time. They run the gamut, from World War II veterans who average 80 years old, to Vietnam vets who average 54 years old. Korean War veterans are in between. He said there are about 15 million veterans in the country who saw some type of combat.

"Unfortunately, as we all know, there are only so much resources to

go around," Carr said. "When you put programs together, no matter how you make the guidelines, there's always someone on the outside."

They've earned it

Carr said in addition to homeless veterans, there are more who "are hanging by their fingernails."

"For those on the verge of becoming homeless, we have a financial assistance program," he said. "We try to get to them before they are evicted."

Sanchez said this should be a time particularly attune to the problems of veterans, with a war going on and more coming home. Board member Jack Cook, R-Elgin, himself a veteran, said the public is "apathetic" in dealing with the veteran population.

Carr said sometimes veterans are their "own worst enemy" by not organizing, and not thinking ahead.

"Clients come in when they need immediate help, and didn't think about something ahead of time," he said.

"We in society tend not to think about things until it affects us. There are those who argue that veterans are a special interest group. Well, that's true, they are. But the difference is, they've earned the benefits."

Judge: Assistant will run office during absence

1-28-04 Chronicle

*Gorecki's 4-month suspension
starts Sunday*

By ADAM KOVAC
and TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

ST. CHARLES — One of Kane County State's Attorney Meg Gorecki's senior assistants will oversee her office while she serves a four-month suspension, a judge ordered Tuesday.

Katherine Moran, 51, the chief of Gorecki's civil division, will begin a temporary stint as the county's top law enforcement officer on Sunday, the day Gorecki must take a leave of absence.

Moran was appointed by Chief Judge Philip L. DiMarzio to serve until June 1, when Gorecki can return after serving a sanction she received for ethics violations that occurred in 1998, before she took office.

DiMarzio's order comes as Gorecki and county leaders wrangle over the unprecedented suspension of her law license that sparked a debate on exactly who decides the administration of the state's attorney's office.

In his two-page order, DiMarzio weighed a nonbinding opinion by Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan that called on Kane County judges to select a special state's attorney until Gorecki returns.

"This court has the authority to appoint a special state's attorney when the state's attorney is temporarily disqualified in order to prevent a failure of justice," DiMarzio wrote.

Tuesday's action is the lat-



Gorecki

est in a flurry of legal activity on Gorecki's suspension that has spiked as the deadline approaches for her to vacate her post.

On Monday, Gorecki, 36, sued the Kane County Board and Chairman Mike McCoy to block a special meeting set for Feb. 2 to declare her office vacant and vote on her permanent replacement.

Gorecki's lawsuit also questions the opinion that Madigan issued Friday and instead seeks to tap one of her top lieutenants to serve in her absence. A hearing on the lawsuit is scheduled for today.

McCoy said he supports Moran's appointment but still plans to call the special meeting unless a judge rules otherwise.

See GORECKI, page 2

Gorecki: Moran will maintain policies

Continued from page 1

McCoy maintains that the assembly is necessary because, according to research on behalf of the county board, Gorecki's suspension creates a vacancy in her office and requires him to nominate a replacement for approval. "I would never challenge the chief judge; Katherine Moran is an excellent choice," McCoy said. "This is not filling a vacancy; a vacancy is permanent."

Moran was on a short list of candidates whom McCoy indicated he would nominate to replace Gorecki. By naming her own substitute, Gorecki could ensure the success of several community-based programs that she has lobbied for during her term, which ends Nov. 30.

In a memorandum dated May 20, 2003, six months before she was disciplined, Gorecki stated First Assistant State's Attorney Bob Berlin and Jody Gleason, chief of the criminal division, to serve during her suspension. "If it had been offered to me, I would have accepted it," Berlin said. "Basically for continuity purposes."

Gleason did not return a telephone call for comment. Moran said all assistant state's attorneys will continue to prosecute full caseloads and that the initiatives championed by Gorecki would not be derailed during her absence.

"My goal as Special State's Attorney is to maintain the current programs and policies," Moran said in a statement. Moran's legal background primarily has focused on civil litigation, real estate transactions, employment law, administrative hearings and representation of elected officials and units of government. Moran has been licensed to practice law in Illinois since 1986 and has not been the subject of disciplinary action, according to the Illinois Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission.

A graduate of the University of Tulsa (Okla.) law school, Moran worked at the Aurora firm of Schanlaber & Reed from 1994 to 2000 before she joined the state's attorney's office. From 1987 to 1993, Moran practiced at the Aurora law firm of Drendel, Schanlaber, Horwitz, Tatnall & McCracken, where her clients included the East Aurora School District, wrongdoing.

On answering machine tapes that surfaced just before the 2000 Republican primary, Gorecki three times suggested that a friend could receive a county highway job by making a contribution to McCoy's campaign fund. A federal investigation cleared McCoy of any involvement and Gorecki of criminal wrongdoing.

Gorecki referred telephone calls Tuesday to one of her assistants. Her attorney in the lawsuit, Larry Wechter of Geneva, did not return calls for comment. The Illinois Supreme Court suspended Gorecki on Nov. 20, 2003, for implicating McCoy in a phony jobs-for-bribes scheme, making her the first sitting state's attorney disciplined by the state's highest court.

On answering machine tapes that surfaced just before the 2000 Republican primary, Gorecki three times suggested that a friend could receive a county highway job by making a contribution to McCoy's campaign fund. A federal investigation cleared McCoy of any involvement and Gorecki of criminal wrongdoing.

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1-28-04 Chronicle
Jail inmate uses mistake to escape

By ADAM KOVAC
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — An inmate at the Kane County Jail was mistakenly released Tuesday after his name was confused with another inmate scheduled for release, authorities said.

Juan L. Ramirez, 21, of Elgin, walked out of the jail about 6 p.m. by pretending to be a different inmate with a similar name. Ramirez remained at large amid a countywide manhunt, Kane County Sheriff Ken Ramsey said.

"Apparently, one of my employees let the wrong guy out," Ramsey said.

Ramirez, a gang member, was booked into the jail on June 13 on a warrant charging him with aggravated battery to a child, according to jail records.

Staff at the more than 500-bed facility said Ramirez has been involved in several jailhouse fights.

The error occurred when a corrections officer thought that Ramirez was another inmate who was set for release Tuesday night, Ramsey said.

Ramirez maintained the ruse throughout the jail's out-processing, which allowed him to change from his orange jail-issue uniform.

See INMATE, page 2

On the lam

- At the time of his escape, Juan Ramirez was wearing a dark blue or black jacket with horizontal stripes across the sleeves, and dark pants and shoes.
- Anyone with information about Ramirez's whereabouts can call the Kane County Sheriff's Office at (630) 232-6840.



Ramirez

Inmate

Continued from page 1

By the time jail staff discovered the mistake, Ramirez was gone.

The corrections officer responsible for the escape could face disciplinary action, pending the outcome of an internal investigation, Ramsey said.

Ramirez is described as 5-foot, 6-inches, 185 pounds, with close-cropped black hair,

brown eyes and a scar through his right eyebrow.

At the time of his escape, Ramirez was wearing a dark blue or black jacket with horizontal stripes across the sleeves, and dark pants and shoes.

His last known address was on the 500 block of Douglas Avenue in Elgin, according to jail records.

Anyone with information about Ramirez's whereabouts should contact the Kane County Sheriff's Office at (630) 232-6840.

1-28-04 Beacon News

Judge decides to name Gorecki's replacement

Katherine Moran could be Kane's interim state's attorney

By Daniel Duggan and Mike Cetera
STAFF WRITERS

GENEVA — Citing the possibility of a "failure of justice," Kane County's top judge Tuesday named a temporary state's attorney to take the helm of the office next week.

The order by Philip DiMarzio, chief judge of the 16th Judicial Circuit Court, comes in the midst of a legal battle

among the county's top officials over how to deal with the suspension of State's Attorney Meg Gorecki's law license.

When Gorecki's license is suspended Sunday, the post of state's attorney will go to Katherine Moran, the chief of Gorecki's civil division, according to the two-page order issued by DiMarzio.

Moran, a Geneva resident, has been with the state's attorney's office since December 2000. In a brief prepared statement issued Tuesday, she said the policies of the office

will remain the same, as will any ongoing programs administered by the office.

Gorecki's license will be suspended for four months on an order by the Illinois Supreme Court, which found she violated the ethical rules for attorneys by setting up a jobs-for-bribes scheme, later found to be bogus.

After June 1, however, when the suspension of Gorecki's law license ends, Moran will cede the post back to Gorecki, according to DiMarzio's order.

He followed an opinion issued Friday by Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan, which stated that, while Gorecki does not have to step down as state's attorney, the powers of the office would falter if she does not have a license to practice law. To prevent a situation where there is no state's attorney, the opinion states the court can appoint a temporary replacement.

❖ Turn to GORECKI, A2

fortherecord

The Beacon News tries to be accurate and fair in every story it publishes. When a mistake occurs, we want to fix it. To report errors, call the managing editor at 844-5881.

recentdeaths

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- Gebhardt, Claire Lonergan**, 76, Fairhope, Ala.
- Gunn, Fern**, 81, Aurora
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- Sellen, James J.**, 77, Oswego
- Stein, Glen Edward**, 78, Aurora
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GORECKI

From Page A1

Does not settle dispute

But Kane County Board Chairman Mike McCoy has held that his legal adviser — Aurora-based attorney Patrick Kinnally — interprets the law as setting up a scenario where the county board can declare a vacancy in the office in Gorecki's absence.

A "vacancy" is a different situation than that laid out in DiMarzio's order, McCoy said. Gorecki could return to her job under DiMarzio's order, but if a vacancy is declared and the County Board fills that vacancy, Gorecki would not be able to return.

Gorecki is seeking a court order to stop a special Kane County Board meeting McCoy has called for Monday, saying the process does not follow the law and disputing that the office is "vacant."

A hearing on her suit is set for 9:30 a.m. today.

Tuesday, McCoy said he supports the appointment of Moran — who is among the people he had been considering for the appointment — and also supports DiMarzio's move to step into the situation. He also said that DiMarzio's order "could be challenged," although McCoy added he will not be the one to challenge it.

McCoy also said Monday's special meeting will move forward, and he will leave it up to the County Board either to declare the post vacant or to declare that there is no vacancy.

"If the board votes that there's no vacancy, that would bring some finality to it," McCoy said, "but I know there are board members who believe there is a vacancy."

Gorecki assertion disputed

In his ruling, DiMarzio also rule out Gorecki's assertion that she has the authority to appoint her own successor. He cited a state law that the court where the state's attorney is practicing makes the appointment. He said she cites only "past office memoranda" in her argument that she should have the appointment power.

His ruling is in contrast to a claim Gorecki makes in her lawsuit against the County Board that it is her "prerogative" to appoint an acting state's attorney during her suspension. She cites a section of state law regarding the authority of county governments in making the argument.

Gorecki also notes previous occasions when she transferred authority to her assistants. Included in the lawsuit are copies of office memorandums distributed to prosecutors in 2001 and 2002 when she traveled to out-of-town conferences.

In several cases, she named Assistant State's Attorney Sal LoPiccolo as her replacement.

Gorecki addressed what she wanted done in the case of her suspension in a memo dated May 20, 2003. Her authority should be transferred either to the first assistant state's attorney or the chief of the civil division, she wrote.

Two days after that memo, Illinois Supreme Court justices delayed a ruling on a possible suspension, which they ultimately handed down in November and affirmed earlier this month.

Gorecki could not be contacted for a comment Tuesday, nor could the private attorneys representing her.

Officials at the CME and CFTC said investigators would likely try to determine whether information leaked about the infected cow had been leaked. "complete job," based agency said.

Fox Valley hospitals face crush from Cook

■ **Lack of insurance:**
Cutbacks at Stroger Hospital likely to strain local facilities

By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

1-28-04
Beacon
news

GENEVA — Hospitals in Kane County are trying to figure out how to pick up what might be an upcoming greater demand for major services normally taken care of by Cook County Hospital.

Mary Lou England, Kane County Health Department director, told the County Board Public Health Committee Tuesday it appears the John H. Stroger Jr. Hospital of Cook County no longer is accepting referrals from outside Cook County.

"This could be devastating," England said. "We're going to have to figure out how to pick up the load on our own."

❖ Turn to **HOSPITALS, A2**

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HOSPITALS

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Although there has been no official announcement of a policy change, England said local health officials are hearing from physicians and patients that Stroger no longer is taking referrals from outside Cook County. She said this is something officials have been hearing "within the last several months."

For years, patients from the Chicago area without health insurance have gone to Cook County Hospital for major work, such as surgeries, heart work and even for such things as setting broken bones. All of these procedures require physician referral.

Kane County has clinics, often staffed by physicians working for free, "but these are things no primary clinic can do," England said. "Even to get a

broken arm set requires a referral from an orthopedic doctor."

England said meetings with Rush-Copley Medical Center and Provena Mercy Center in Aurora are scheduled to discuss the situation. There was no official comment Tuesday from either hospital.

"It puts a burden on the rest of us, if it's true," one hospital employee said.

No one returned phone calls from Stroger Hospital Tuesday afternoon.

England said the move by Cook County apparently is because of financial constraints.

"They have always had a premier residency program," she said, "but it's astounding, the cost of health care."

Public Health Committee Chairman Gerry Jones, D-Aurora, said there is a "significant number" of patients from both DuPage and Kane counties who use the hospital in Cook.

"They were never restricted before," Jones said, "but they are like us, facing budget restrictions."

Catholic schools have provided

Gorecki stand-in selected by judge

Top aide to fill in during suspension for misconduct

By William Presecky
Tribune staff reporter

1-28-04
Chicago
Tribune

With Kane County State's Atty. Meg Gorecki about to be suspended from practicing law for four months, the county's chief judge Tuesday appointed one of Gorecki's top assistants to be special state's attorney during that time.

Judge Phillip L. DiMarzio said Assistant State's Atty. M. Katherine Moran of Geneva would be sworn in Sunday "to handle all matters pertaining to the office commencing Feb. 1 and ending June 1."

Moran, 51, has been chief of the office's civil division since she was hired by Gorecki in January 2001. She was in private practice for more than 14 years before that.

Citing "the public interest" and the "unique circumstances" surrounding Gorecki's pending suspension, DiMarzio said he made the appointment because Gorecki had not asked for a special state's attorney to fill in. He also said he knew Gorecki claimed in a lawsuit filed Monday "that she has authority to appoint a special state's attorney."

"I believe the court has an obligation to ensure that the office of state's attorney is occupied and that there is no lapse or gap. It is in the public interest that there be a duly authorized person [in place] at all times," DiMarzio said.

In his order, the judge said a legal opinion issued Friday by Illinois Atty. Gen. Lisa Madigan "persuasively asserts" that he has the authority to appoint a special state's attorney "when the state's attorney is temporarily disqualified in order to prevent a failure of justice."

Outside of court, DiMarzio described Moran as "a lawyer with an excellent reputation throughout the county. Everyone with whom I spoke had praise for her work and her professionalism. I believe she is well-qualified."

Although not a legal requirement, the fact that Moran is a Kane resident—Gorecki's two other top assistants live outside of Kane—

GORECKI: Hearing set on lawsuit to keep job

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

factored into his decision, DiMarzio said.

"I believe that Kane should have one of its own residents serving in this capacity," he said.

Moran specializes in civil litigation, real estate transactions, employment law, administrative hearings and the representation of elected officials and governmental units.

In an official statement Tuesday, Moran said it is her goal "to maintain the current programs and policies" instituted by Gorecki. "All attorneys will remain in the courtrooms with full case loads," she said.

DiMarzio declined to comment on what, if any, bearing his order might have on Gorecki's lawsuit in which she is challenging the County Board's authority to declare her office vacant and board Chairman Mike McCoy's authority to fill the post for the balance of her term.

An initial court hearing on Gorecki's motion for a preliminary injunction to block the

County Board from taking any action is set for Wednesday in Geneva.

McCoy, who is also a defendant in the lawsuit, said he welcomed DiMarzio's action.

"We want to make sure the situation is stable as of Monday. This is a step in that direction. It doesn't cover everything, but it's a good thing the chief judge appointed someone. I certainly won't dispute it and don't think the board would," McCoy said.

DiMarzio's order is silent on what happens after June 1 and said it would not be appropriate for him to speculate about it.

"I think I'm safe in saying this is an unprecedented situation," he said.

The appointment of a special state's attorney is the latest twist in nearly four years of legal maneuvers stemming from the professional misconduct that Gorecki admitted occurred more than a year before she ran for state's attorney.

The state Supreme Court ordered her four-month suspension for having undermined confidence in the integrity of government when she falsely suggested to a friend that McCoy could be bribed into providing a county job.

In taped messages left on a friend's answering machine, Gorecki is heard giving the outline of a fabricated scheme about how to mask the kickback to look like a campaign contribution.

discusses senior tax

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — If Kane County voters decide on a senior citizen referendum on the November ballot, they likely will see two questions.

The Public Health Committee on Tuesday considered details of the referendum and how the services would be administered if the referendum is successful.

If the county board puts the question on the ballot, voters would answer two questions. One question would ask voters to approve a quarter-cent increase to provide services for seniors; the second would ask voter approval to exceed the tax cap.

Assistant State's Attorney Robert Sandner said that by asking two questions, the county would avoid the legal battle that has embroiled the Batavia school district, which in April 2003 sought voter approval for 60-cent tax rate increase without asking approval to exceed the tax cap.

The case remains in litigation.

"Unless there is some enlightenment (from the appellate court), the safest way to do it is to have a double-barreled referendum," Sandner said.

But questions remain as to whether the issue even would appear on the ballot.

Some board members publicly have stated that they would not support a tax increase because seniors already face rising property taxes.

Others are willing to let voters decide.

Jackie Tredup, R-Elgin, said she has received many phone calls from constituents on the issue.

"Most of them have said 'Just put it on the ballot and let us decide,'" Tredup said.

A quarter-cent tax would cost the owner of a \$250,000 home an additional \$20 a year.

If voters approve the question, the health department would administer the estimated \$2.4 million that the tax would generate.

"There has to be work at the county level to decide how the money would be distributed," said Gerald Jones, D-Aurora, committee chairman.

According to a survey of seniors, the biggest problem they face is help with prescription drug costs. Transportation is another major concern.

Neither problem would be resolved with referendum approval, Jones said.

"Even if we levied \$1, there still wouldn't be enough money to address all the needs," Jones said.

Bette Schoenholtz, executive director of Senior Services Associates, said the money collected from the tax could be used to leverage grants from state and federal health agencies.

The agencies are more inclined to offer grants when local money also is being used, she said.

"They look very positive on that," Schoenholtz said.

Judge picks fill-in for Gorecki

1-28-04

Daily
Herald

BY PATRICK WALDRON

Daily Herald Staff Writer

Just four days before Kane County State's Attorney Meg Gorecki will have her law license suspended, the county's chief judge appointed one of Gorecki's senior assistants to temporarily take over as top prosecutor.

Following a legal path set by the state attorney general, Judge Philip DiMarzio selected Katherine Moran, chief of the state's attorney's civil division, to serve as a special state's attorney from Sunday through June 1.

But what happens to the office and Gorecki's role in it after that remains clouded in a "labyrinth" of legal interpretation, court rulings, and possibly, county board politics.

For now, however, the office and the local court system will continue uninterrupted, court officials say.

"This enables there to be some continuity and assures that the assistants will be able to act accordingly," said First Assistant State's Attorney Bob Berlin.

"The office is continuing to run,

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Judge: Board still scheduled to hold vacancy hearing

Continued from Page 1



Meg Gorecki

suspension. A court-appointed temporary assistant was needed to act in the interim, Madigan said.

Hours before Madigan said that, county board Chairman Mike McCoy called a special meeting of the county board set for 8 a.m. Monday — the first business day of the suspension — to declare the office vacant and appoint a successor to fill out Gorecki's term.

In response to the meeting, Gorecki filed a request for an injunction against the county board seeking to block ousting her from office.

A hearing on that matter is set for 9:30 a.m. today.

In the midst of it all, DiMarzio acted Tuesday morning "on the court's own initiative" and

selected an interim state's attorney.

"I believe the order I have entered is a valid one," DiMarzio said, relying on state laws that govern such a scenario.

"I entered it to prevent a failure of justice and I believe it is supported by law and logic and is the correct order."

He selected Moran, of Geneva, who has led the civil division since Gorecki's election in 2000.

Before her work in the state's attorney's office, Moran worked in private practice in Aurora, but ultimately must go before the county board.

"I think it is a good thing the chief judge did," McCoy said,

ment law as well as experience representing elected officials and government bodies.

"Everyone I have spoken with who is familiar with her work speaks very highly of her," DiMarzio said, stressing that she holds a senior position in the office today and lives in the county.

Moran did not return a message seeking comment but said in a written statement that her goal as special state's attorney is to maintain the current programs and policies.

DiMarzio's order doesn't address or solve the issue of vacancy in the office. That is something McCoy said could change at today's court hearing but ultimately must go before the county board.

"I think it is a good thing the chief judge did," McCoy said,

Continued from Page 1

applauding Moran as the temporary appointment.

But the vacancy issue is different, McCoy said.

"The county board should vote on the vacancy issue — either way," McCoy said.

McCoy, who described the last week as a "legal labyrinth," says it is a matter of certainty for the board to say "yes" or "no" to Gorecki.

As she has done throughout the discipline case, Gorecki did not return calls seeking comment Tuesday.

See JUDGE on PAGE 11

Geneva may drop DARE, add police officer

BY GARRETT ORDOWER
Daily Herald Staff Writer

The Geneva Police Department wants to stop funding the city's DARE program because of finances, not effectiveness.

Shedding its full-time Drug Abuse Resistance Education position would allow the department to respond to growth west of Randall Road with another patrol officer and fill a vacant investigator position.

By shifting the DARE officer

to patrol and hiring one more officer, the move would add \$48,000 to the department's annual personnel costs instead of double that amount.

"It's not an indictment for or against DARE," Police Chief William Kidwell said.

The department would continue to split funding with the district for its unique community intervention specialist position, which runs many anti-drug programs and helps students in crisis situations.

It also would make its middle school liaison officer available to help a curriculum with the same goals as DARE, depending on decisions made by the school district, Kidwell said.

To help minimize any effects from cutting DARE, the department suggested the district look at Project Alert. The U.S. Department of Education-endorsed program consists of 11 sessions during sixth grade and another three during seventh grade — at a much lower

cost than DARE.

"It looks to me to be a very effective and well-planned program," Superintendent Michael Jacoby said.

Jacoby said the school district has already begun looking at Project Alert and has plans to collaborate with the city and police should the plan to discontinue DARE at the end of this school year go through.

Whether the DARE program

See **DROP** on **PAGE 11**

Drop: St. Charles in same spot

Continued from Page 1

will return next year depends on whether or not the city council approves next year's budget with the modifications, Kidwell said.

The changes would bring the total number of patrol officers from 21 to 22 and investigators from two to three. The department could then create a fifth patrol beat, which would allow it to always have a car patrolling west of Randall Road.

"We have two critical needs

in the police department that are both growth-driven," Kidwell said.

St. Charles has been exploring whether to do away with DARE because of questions surrounding the program's effectiveness.

Federal and university studies have concluded that DARE had no significant effect on preventing drug use.

In addition to DARE in fifth grade, St. Charles currently offers Project Alert in middle school.

Health officials working on senior referendum

County Board members find wording they like

By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — Kane County Health Department officials continue looking at issues related to a referendum to raise taxes for senior citizens services.

But members of the Kane County Board Public Health Committee may have agreed upon wording for the referendum. Committee members Tuesday said they liked the phrasing that came almost word for word from state statute.

The board is considering putting a referendum on the November 2004 ballot asking voters

to approve a tax increase of 2.5 cents for each \$100 of assessed value.

The wording proposed says: Shall the Kane County Board annually impose a tax of not to exceed .025 percent of the value, as equalized or assessed by the Department of Revenue, of all property in Kane County for the purpose of providing social services for senior citizens?

"It's based on the statute, and any time you can cut and paste from the statute, you're in good shape," said Assistant State's Attorney Robert Sandner.

Members of the Public Health Committee agreed, but they also wondered if there might need to be a second referendum specifically asking voters to exceed the property tax cap.

Sandner said that was the situation the Batavia School District

ran into last year, when it passed a tax increase but did not have a second referendum to exceed the tax cap. Still, the 2nd District Appellate Court eventually said Batavia did not need that second referendum.

"But I think the consensus would be you need a double-barrel referendum," Sandner said.

Even with the "double-barrel" referendum, the voters could authorize the 2.5 cent levy but fail to approve the referendum stretching the tax cap.

"Then, you would have to fit it into the existing tax cap," Sandner said.

Health Department officials still are waiting to hear from senior service providers throughout the county on what they would want to see funded by the money. Also, the department has sent a survey to townships to find out

what services they provide.

Uche Onwute, a Health Department epidemiologist who is working on the referendum project, said department officials are recommending that the County Board administer the funds generated by a new tax levy and also administer matching state and federal grants that might be available because of the additional local money.

Onwute said the Health Department could concentrate on providing things like vaccinations and "what we already know how to do."

"I'm assuming, if the referendum were to be passed, we still would have work to do to figure out how funds would be distributed," said Gerry Jones, R-Aurora, chairman of the health committee. "That would include a detailed budget."

1-28-04
Fence Post Daily Herald

Gorecki, do right thing and resign

I find it extremely ironic that Meg Gorecki would claim her absence from the state's attorney's office would be disruptive to its proceedings, while in fact, it is her very presence that has been an incredible distraction for the past 3½ years.

Gorecki has made a mockery of the very system she has been sworn to uphold. She has made every end run possible to escape the consequences for her actions. Actions that are not in dispute and actions that violated the rules she and her profession are bound by.

Are we expected to believe it has been business as normal at the state's attorney's office while this atrocity continues?

What about the cost? Has anyone thought about the dollars this has cost the taxpayers? Consider the hours, days, weeks and months that have occupied the time and resources of the various courts, review boards, disciplinary committees, state licensing authority, county board, etc., etc., etc.

My estimate of the cost is in the tens of thousands of dollars, and for what?

The state's attorney should be the example of integrity and honesty and have character above reproach. This is not the case with Gorecki, and she, for some reason, thinks her own agenda is more important than the reputation of her office and of Kane County. Her actions have reflected poorly on all of us. Gorecki has dominated the front page of the newspapers for more than three years and for all the wrong reasons, not as the county's top prosecutor, but as the county's top arrogant



NYTS CL www.uts...

and selfish politician.
Why no one in authority has called for Gorecki to leave office and let the county get on with its work is a total mystery to me. Had this scenario played out in the private sector, the offender would have had two choices, resign or be fired. Should we expect any less from our elected officials?

Let me be so bold as to ask Meg Gorecki for once in this whole ordeal to do the right thing and ... resign!

Dick Graff
St. Charles

Kane jail mistakenly releases inmate

1-28-04 Daily Herald
BY JEFFREY GAUNT
Daily Herald Staff Writer

An inmate at the Kane County jail who was being held on charges of aggravated battery to a child was mistakenly released Thursday night, sheriff's deputies said.

Juan Landre Ramirez, 21, whose last known address was 571 Douglas Ave., Elgin, was released from the Kane County

Adult Corrections Center in Geneva just after 7 p.m. when he was mistaken for another inmate, deputies said.

The subject should be considered dangerous, they added.

He is 5'6" tall, weighs 185 pounds, with short black hair and brown eyes, and was last seen wearing a dark blue windbreaker with a white stripe across the chest, a white T-shirt, blue jeans and black tennis

shoes. Ramirez was being held on a \$75,000 bond, pending a Jan. 30 court date, deputies said.

Area law enforcement agencies were notified to assist in a comprehensive search for the subject.

Anyone with information on Ramirez whereabouts is asked to contact the Kane County Sheriff's Office at (630) 232-8400 or their local law enforcement agency.

N. Aurora officials OK plan to control part of Randall

By ERIC SCHELKOPF
Kane County Chronicle

NORTH AURORA — A stretch of Randall Road soon could be in the village's hands.

Village trustees this week approved a proposed agreement to transfer control of a 1.6-mile stretch of Randall Road between Interstate 88 and Orchard Road to the village from the county.

The Kane County Board's Transportation Committee approved the agreement last week. The full county board will vote in February on the agreement.

As part of the agreement, the county would pay North Aurora \$300,000 and continue to plow snow and mow grass until 2006. A previous agreement that county officials rejected had the county continuing those operations until 2008.

The county also would replace the bridge deck over Interstate 88 in approximately 2016.

But the county would not have to pay \$190,000 to repair a dip in the road, which also was part of the rejected agreement.

The county would allow several curb cuts as part of the new agreement, including a right-in, right-out access on the west side of Randall Road, about 1,000 feet south of Comiskey Avenue.

The access would serve the 17.5-acre Randall Commons shopping center being proposed for the northwest corner of Randall Road and Oak Street.

Walgreens would be the first tenant in the center.

But some trustees had concerns about the agreement.

Trustee Mike Herlihy said he did not like that the county would dictate where other curb cuts can be placed. Also, the agreement states that no curb cuts would be allowed within 500 feet of Orchard Road.

Village President Mark Ruby disagreed.

"I think it is good planning as far as a lineup of curb cuts along Randall Road," Ruby said.

He warned that changing the agreement could jeopardize the proposed shopping center.

Trustee Dale Berman said the board should accept the agreement.

"I think we have gotten the best we are going to get from the county," Berman said.

In reply, Trustee Max Herwig said, "I don't disagree, but we have to understand what our limitations are."

Ruby said the village still would have some flexibility with curb cuts.

"It doesn't mean reasonable adjustments can't be made," Ruby said.

1-28-04 Chronicle

Elburn poised for special census

Village officials believe actual population is 4,000

mean about \$100,000 more in tax dollars each year for Elburn, officials said.

The 2000 census counted 2,700 residents in Elburn. Village Administrator David Morrison said the number today is closer to 4,000. That is based on village estimates from occupancy and building permits.

Elburn is not the only municipality in central Kane County to seek a special census for a larger share of tax dollars.

In 2000, South Elgin had 16,100 residents. See CENSUS, page 2



Wayne Ratzliff - Chronicle photo staff

The village of Elburn is getting bigger, according to local officials. They are filing paperwork to get in line for a special census.

By DAN CHANZIT Kane County Chronicle

ELBURN — Village officials are gearing up for a special census that would bring in a greater share of tax dollars from the state.

Municipalities must apply for a special census, but village officials said there is a lag time between the application filing and the counting period.

"We will have to get into the queue," Village President James Willey said. "At this point, we're not setting a date. We're just asking to go ahead and send in the paperwork to

A special census can cost more than \$100,000, but growing villages and towns almost immediately recapture the cost from the increased funds realized by the count.

Municipalities collect about \$100 per person in state income, motor fuel and state use taxes. That would

Census

Continued from page 1

South Elgin officials estimate the population to be closer to 20,000. Results of a special census this spring are expected to net the village about \$367,000 more in annual funding.

Geneva expects an increase of 1,600 residents with a census that will begin this spring, official said.

In 2000, Batavia had 23,866 residents. A special census last year counted 24,978 residents.

The court cost the city \$210,000, but it provided an annual increase of \$108,000 in tax revenues.

"The special census is going to pay for itself in two years," Batavia Assistant City Administrator Randy Reckhaus said at the time.

Last month, North Aurora agreed to pay \$200,000 for a special census this year, but the count is expected to bring in an additional \$250,000 each year.

The 2000 census showed the village's population to be 10,585. Village officials estimate the number to be about 13,000.

1-28-04 Chronicle

STC Mayor: Grand Prairie will have tough time

Developers downplay impact

By HEATH HIXSON
Kane County Chronicle

ST. CHARLES — Developers of the proposed Grand Prairie subdivision on Tuesday downplayed suggestions that the project financially would harm three school districts that own land within its boundaries.
But St. Charles Mayor Sue

Klinkhamer questioned the plan, and said the developers will have a tough time persuading the city council to approve annexation of the project, possibly in early February.

The rosy forecast by the developer comes a day after a preliminary financial impact analysis of the 2,000-home project was made public. The analysis shows that the Geneva and Kaneland school districts could face huge deficits because of projected enrollment increases from the development.

A Town and Country Homes official argues that the districts as a whole would come out on top by nearly \$2 million over the first decade if the deal is ap-

proved. He said money could be shared among the districts to offset any deficits. And he said the plan would be a boon to St. Charles, which could see more than \$12 million in revenue over that period, including \$10 million in road impact fees.

However, that all could become moot.
"I don't think it has the support," Klinkhamer said. "It doesn't have enough votes on the city council to pass."

Town and Country Homes and Wyndham Deerpoint Homes proposed the development, which would be near unincorporated La Fox on nearly 1,200 acres in unincorporated Kane County,



Klinkhamer

University researchers to study the financial impacts of the subdivision.

The report shows that a new proposal from the developers includes age-restricted homes and commercial space

southwest of St. Charles' western boundary. The developers last year unsuccessfully pitched an annexation plan to the St. Charles City Council. Council members, however, commissioned Northern Illinois University researchers to study the financial impacts of the subdivision.

Peter Brennan, general counsel for Town and Country Homes, said the developer is considering in the next two weeks whether to present another annexation plan to the city council.

"The planning process has not even begun, we are in the initial negotiations with the municipal officials," Brennan said. "As a whole, I still think it is positive. I think it is a huge positive for the city."

See GRAND PRAIRIE, page 2

Grand Prairie

Continued from page 1

The financial analysis shows the Geneva school district would be hit hardest with a projected deficit of at least \$5.5 million over the first 10 years of the project. The Kaneland school district could see a deficit of nearly \$500,000.

Brennan, however, said the districts together actually would benefit from the development. He said that while the analysis shows deficits facing the two school districts,

the St. Charles district could receive nearly \$8 million in tax revenue from the development. In addition, he said the analysis does not account for impact fees paid by the developer.

Brennan said the districts could share this tax revenue. But he said that he could not provide details of how the money would be shared because the planning process is in the early stages.

St. Charles school board officials are divided in their response to the report.

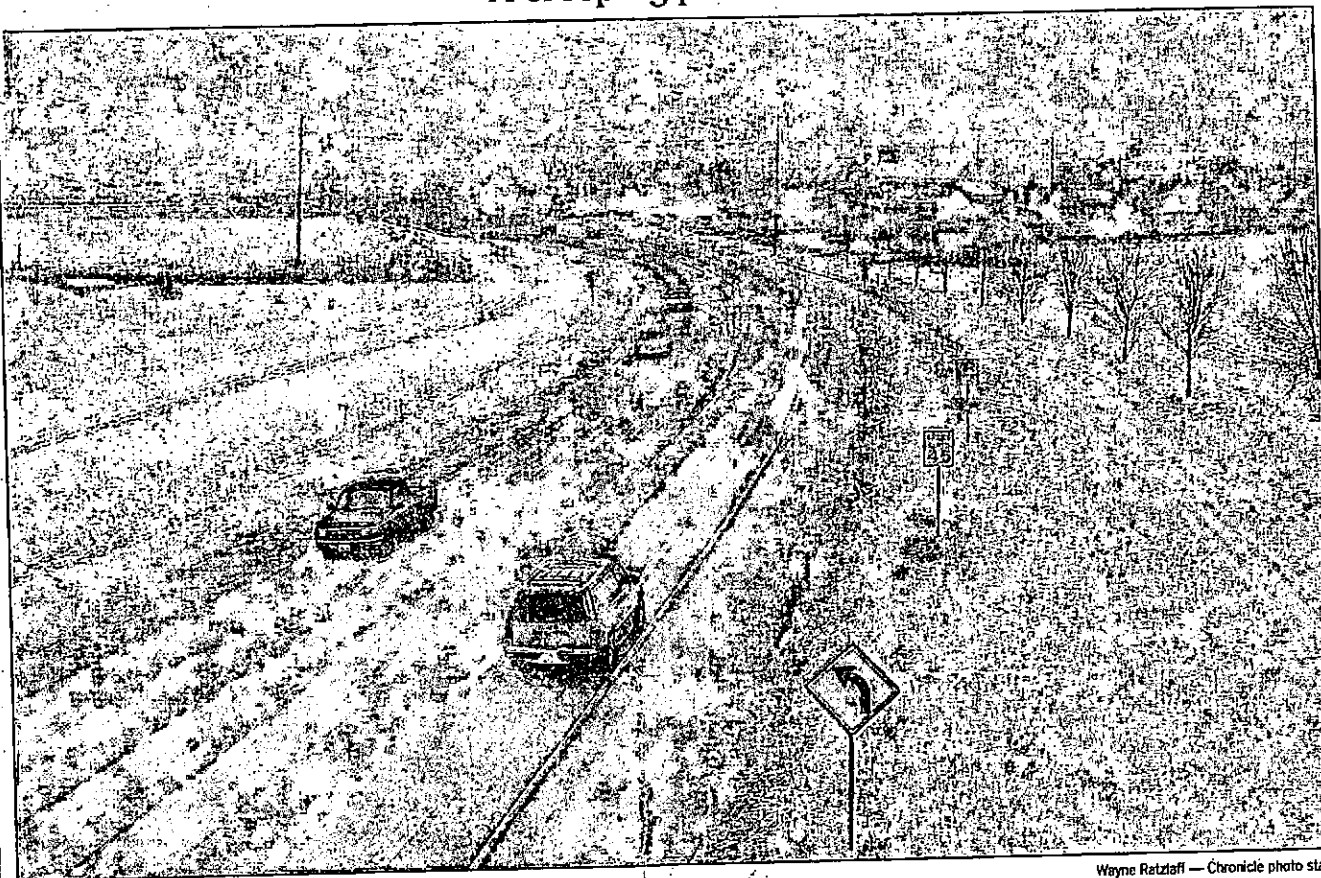
Board President Mary Jo Knipp questioned the plan's fairness to the Geneva school district Superintendent Fran Kostel called "unacceptable" any proposal that

would financially harm a school district on this scale.

However, board member Jim Gaffney said he wants to make sure St. Charles is not negatively affected by the development, and he would support the city council if the development is annexed.

"I am not trying to put Geneva in a bad position," Gaffney said. "But I have to look at the angle that I am representing (St. Charles school district) taxpayers."

Klinkhamer said the land eventually would be developed, but that she is opposed to the Grand Prairie project because it is "overwhelmingly huge."



Wayne Retzloff — Chronicle photo staff

Kane County's 2030 plan has identified the Burlington Road corridor as one of the areas likely to be affected by development in the western part of the county.

1-28-04 Chronicle

County braces for gridlock

Roadways to get busier

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Two-thirds of Kane County's roadways will be severely congested in 26 years, projections show.

The worse news is that even with an unprecedented influx of money, the majority of roads still will be congested.

Worse still, it is unlikely that there will be an unprecedented influx of money.

"There is no way we can buy our way out of the traffic congestion of the future," said Thomas Rickert, deputy director of the Kane County Division of Transportation.

The projections take into account all local, township, county and state highways and interstates.

To begin planning for the congestion and update its 2020 transportation plan, representatives of KDOT will be in the auditorium of Building A

of the Kane County Government Center from 4 to 7 p.m. today to take public input on the department's 2030 transportation plan.

In addition, KDOT will conduct public forums in each of the county's eight planning partnership areas in January and February.

Visitors to the public forums will see maps of projected congestion in 2030, when Kane's population will approach 700,000.

One of the maps shows projected congestion if no federal, state, county or local improvements are made. Two-thirds of all roads in the county are lined in red, meaning they will suffer severe congestion.

Another map shows projected congestion if a host of projects are implemented, including two additional regional bridges over the Fox River, the expansion to eight lanes for Interstates 88 and 90 in the eastern part of the county and to six lanes to Route 47; six lanes for Randall and Kirk roads; four lanes for Route 47; four lanes for Route 38 from Randall Road to Route 47; and four lanes for Route 64 from Randall to new LaFox Road.

To learn more, share opinions

• A public meeting/open house is 4 p.m. today in the auditorium of Building A, Kane County Government Center, 719 S. Batavia Ave., Geneva.

Public hearings on Kane County's update of its transportation plan:

- Friday, Jan. 30, 10 a.m., Upper Fox PPA, Randall Oaks Golf Club, Dundee
- Tuesday, Feb. 3, 10 a.m., Aurora Area PPA, North Aurora Public Library
- Monday, Feb. 9, 10 a.m. Tri-Cities PPA, Batavia Public Library
- Wednesday, Feb. 11, 10 a.m., Elgin Area PPA, Elgin Community College, Business Conference Center, Room 123
- Wednesday, Feb. 18, 10 a.m., Campton Area PPA, Campton Community Center
- Thursday, Feb. 19, 10 a.m., West Central PPA, Elburn Public Library
- Monday, Feb. 23, 10 Northwest PPA, Huntley Village Hall
- Wednesday, Feb. 25, 1 p.m., Southwest PPA, Wauabensee Community College, Bodie Hall, Room 150

See GRIDLOCK, page 2

Gridlock: Unlimited money won't remedy problem

Continued from page 1

Rickert did not offer a cost estimate for all the projects. "It's an unrestrained model. It has too many zeros," he said.

In other words, planning will be even more essential as transportation officials and the residents try to deal with the inevitable congestion.

Congestion is defined as traffic volume greater than what a roadway can handle, Rickert said.

"We're going to have to work with municipalities to make sure we don't put in developments that just throw traffic onto the highway," Rickert said.

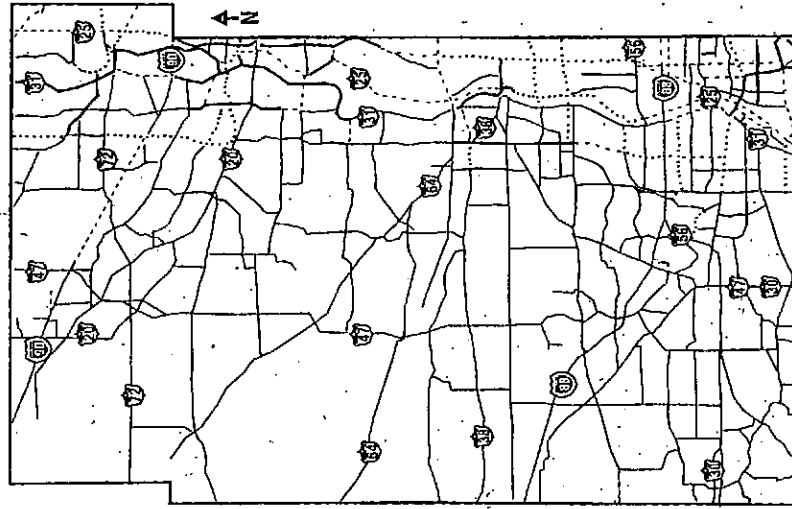
Transportation Committee Chairman William Wyatt, R-Aurora, said the recently approved impact fee ordinance that requires developers to pay for highway improvements needed because of the traffic generated by the projects will raise only \$2.7 million annually.

"Don't even start to think they are going to start to be the driving force in improving our infrastructure," Wyatt said.

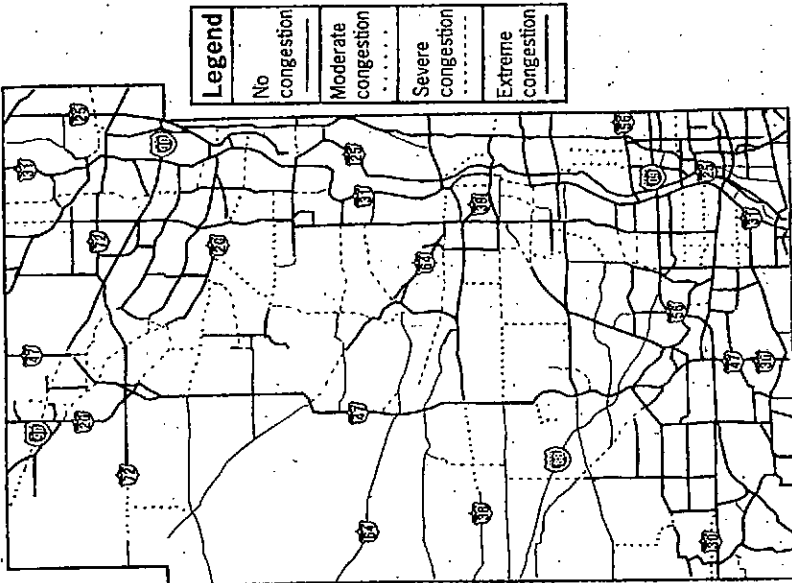
Rickert said the county money will be able to pay for 10 percent to 15 percent of the needed road projects over the next 30 years.

Future tie-ups creep west

Projected congestion in 2030
with no improvements



Congestion in 2003



Legend	
No congestion	—————
Moderate congestion	- - - - -
Severe congestion
Extreme congestion	- . - . -

Chronicle graphics by Janina Menninger

Gorecki rulings dueling

Decisions pending from county, courts

1-29-04 Beacon News

By Daniel Duggan
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — Sixteenth Circuit Court Judge Michael Colwell refused Wednesday to stop a special session of the Kane County Board planned for next week, despite pleas by embattled State's Attorney Meg Gorecki.

At the meeting scheduled for Monday, the County Board is expected to decide whether there will be a permanent replacement to Gorecki's position after her law license is suspended for four months beginning Sunday.

Colwell, however, will hand down his own ruling on the issue Friday, in a move that could make the board's forthcoming decision moot.

At issue is whether there will be a vacancy in the office requiring a permanent replacement for Gorecki once her law license is suspended or whether instead a temporary replacement should serve during Gorecki's four-month absence.

Wednesday's action was the latest development in a legal brouhaha that has followed the Illinois Supreme Court's decision to suspend Gorecki's law license. It marked the first time in state history that the law license of a sitting state's attorney has been ordered suspended. Gorecki was found to have violated the ethical code for lawyers when she suggested a jobs-for-bribes scheme later found to be bogus.

Dispute over vacancy

Kane County Board Chairman Mike McCoy said he called Monday's special meeting so the board could have a chance to declare the

GORECKI

From page A1

vacancy in Gorecki's office, then appoint a person to serve out her term.

The board also could decide there is no vacancy. Aurora attorney Patrick Kinnally, who is representing McCoy and the board, stressed that the board has the power to make either decision.

"They have the right to say whether or not it exists," Kinnally said in court Wednesday. "That is not up to the courts, and it is not up to the attorney general."

Such a move, however, flies in the face of an opinion issued Friday by Attorney General Lisa Madigan, who wrote that Gorecki can return to her position after the suspension ends. Madigan's opinion also stated that the circuit court — and not the county board — should appoint someone to hold the office until then.

Tuesday, 16th Circuit Chief Judge Philip DiMarzio followed Madigan's lead and issued an order naming Katherine Moran to act as state's attorney during Gorecki's absence. He did not rule on whether there will be a vacancy in the office when the suspension of Gorecki's law license begins Sunday, saying only that Moran should will serve from that day until June 1 when the suspension ends.

Gorecki's private attorney, Larry Wechter, said there will be "legal uncertainty" if the County Board declares a vacancy.

"Think about the uncertainty and disruption that will result if they think they have the authority here," he said.

Judge's ruling due Friday

Colwell now will weigh in on the vacancy issue. He said he will make his ruling at 10 a.m. Friday, setting the stage for what possibly could be a contentious meeting of the County Board Monday. He also offered a cautionary note to McCoy, saying the board does not have to hold the meeting.

"The easiest situation would be for the board to cancel its trip down this highway," Colwell said.

County Board member Jan Carlson, R-Elburn, who attended Wednesday's court hearing, said afterward that the issue should be left up to the judicial system.

"I'm not sure that the legislators should be performing a judicial function," he said. "Let the lawyers handle this. It's not our job."

Board member Paul Greviskes, D-Aurora, who also was at the hearing, said he believes there is a vacancy in the office and that it should be filled by an appointment from the County Board.

When asked if he would still hold the opinion if Colwell rules otherwise, Greviskes, an attorney himself, said, "I always do what the judges tell me to do."

❖ Turn to GORECKI, A2

Judge allows Gorecki meeting

But board advised to halt attempt to oust her

BY PATRICK WALDRON
Daily Herald Staff Writer

A Kane County judge Wednesday refused to block the county board from meeting next week and potentially throwing Kane County State's Attorney Meg Gorecki out of office.

At the same time, Judge Michael Colwell set a Friday court date to issue a ruling addressing whether Gorecki's four-month suspension, ordered by the Illinois Supreme Court as punishment for ethics violations and set to begin Sunday, creates a vacancy in the state's attorney's office.

Colwell's statements kept Gorecki and the county board on a collision course at 8 a.m. Monday, but also opened the door to a pre-emptive final answer to unprecedented legal questions that have seesawed back and forth for the last week.

After providing the 48-hour window, Colwell implied that the surest way to end the Gorecki conflict would be for the county board and its chairman, Mike McCoy, to pull back.

"I would suggest the easiest solution to this problem is to cancel the trip down this highway," Colwell said.

McCoy has maintained the stance he has taken since last week when he set the Monday meeting and stressed the county board duty and right to rule on the state's attorney's office status. He says he wants the board to vote "yes" or "no" when it comes to Gorecki's future.

Wednesday started with Gorecki's privately hired attorneys seeking a court order saying the county board had no authority in the matter.

Gorecki's team also wanted

See HEARING on PAGE 8

Hearing: Ruling on vacancy expected Friday

Continued from Page 1.

Colwell to affirm an opinion issued last week by state Attorney General Lisa Madigan that says Gorecki's suspension does not pull her from office.

That opinion, which says Illinois law does not have sequences of a serving state's attorney having his or her license suspended, rules that a temporary court-appointed successor can fill the void during Gorecki's suspension. The county board had no role, the opinion says.

"I think the attorney general's opinion was quite elegant and well stated," said Larry Wechter, one of Gorecki's lawyers. "We are in complete agreement with (Madigan's) comments that

(Gorecki) is not disqualified from holding office.

"Her law license has not been revoked or taken away," he added.

"Temporarily she loses the license. In four months, automatically, this license will be fully operational. Ms. Gorecki can practice law and return to the duties of state's attorney."

The time of the suspension, Wechter pointed out, is covered by the order issued Tuesday by Kane County Chief Judge Philip DiMarzio appointing Katherine Moran as an interim state's attorney from Feb. 1 to June 1. Lawyers on the other end of

the issue said Gorecki is wrongly trying to bypass the legislative arm of county government.

Pat Kinnally, a special assistant state's attorney representing the county board and McCoy, said the matter boiled down to the board's constitutional right to declare an office vacant.

"We are here today because the sitting state's attorney, Meg Gorecki, wants to tell the county board it cannot have a meeting or have a vote," Kinnally said. "They are trying to come into court and say (the county board members) cannot do their statutory duty."

Kinnally went on to argue that the issue of vacancy wasn't really in the discussion. Colwell disagreed with that

general assessment and questioned McCoy's apparent belief that a vacancy in the state's attorney office exists.

In response, Kinnally went right back to the legislative responsibility of the county board.

If the board votes to oust Gorecki Monday, then she can ask the courts for reconsideration. But not before, Kinnally said.

"I don't know what their decision will be, but they have a right to do it," Kinnally said of Monday's vote. "It's their call. That's not up to the courts and it's not up to the attorney general," he added.

Colwell's ruling on the vacancy could have profound influence on the outcome of Monday's meeting and possibly

keep it from happening.

Paul Greviskes, a lawyer and county board member who attended the court hearing, said he was pleased with the decision not to block the county board from meeting.

At this point, Greviskes, an Aurora Democrat, said he would vote to oust Gorecki but conceded that Friday's ruling could change that stance.

Attorneys for Gorecki and the county board declined to comment on the case after the hearing.

Gorecki, whose entire term has been clouded by this ethics case, did not attend.

It all stems from a series of 1998 taped messages Gorecki left on a friend's answering machine suggesting county jobs could be bought in exchange for

contributions to McCoy's campaign.

The tapes surfaced less than a month before Gorecki won the 2000 GOP primary. She went on to become the first female state's attorney in Kane County history but soon after the issue turned into a discipline case that made its way before the state Supreme Court.

After more than a year of hearings and arguments, the Supreme Court in November ordered her law license suspended.

Earlier this month, the court ordered the suspension to begin Feb. 1, an order that unleashed this latest round of legal battles as Gorecki seeks to guarantee she can return to office and finish her term, which expires Nov. 30.



Meg Gorecki

Developer backs off annex bid

Grand Prairie may take housing plan to Kane County instead of St. Charles

BY LISA SMITH
Daily Herald Staff Writer

1-29-04
Daily Herald

The developer of a proposed 1,800-home subdivision in LaFox Wednesday shelved plans to pursue annexation into the city of St. Charles.

Grand Prairie development representatives told city officials they would instead submit the 1,200-acre project — which also includes some commercial space — to the Kane County development department.

Wyndham Deerpoint and Town & Country Homes officials never officially submitted an annexation petition, instead opting to present concept plans in July 2002 to gauge the reactions of city officials and make changes accordingly.

But city leaders never warmed up to the plan, arguing it would put too much of a strain on the city and local school districts.

"We looked at it from all sides ... but ultimately the reality was an annexation has to have a two-thirds majority and that just was not going to happen," Mayor Sue Klinkhamer said Wednesday.

Seven of the 10 city council members are required to sign off on annexation requests.

The Geneva school district would be most adversely affected, losing as much as \$5.5 million over the next 10 years if the development were built as proposed, according to a recent analysis by Northern Illinois University's center for governmental studies.

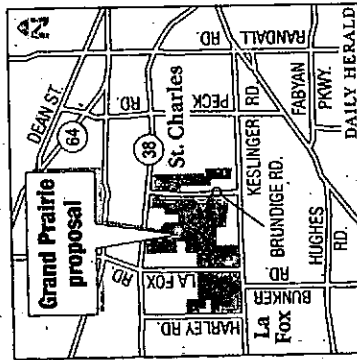
The plans include a developer donation of either land or cash to the school district, but that likely would not be enough to offset the costs of educating 860 more students, according to the NIU study.

"Obviously the Geneva schools are ... interested in mitigating against any negative impact there would be financially," said Geneva Superintendent Mike Jacoby.

It is unclear whether the developers will present the same plans to Kane County officials. Representatives of Lombard-based Town & Country Homes and North Aurora-based Wyndham Deerpoint Homes would not return phone calls Wednesday.

The development would be located along the southern edge of Route 38 between Brundige Road and Harley Road.

It consists of 800 single-family homes on lots ranging from 8,000 square feet to 1 acre and



Geneva district.
A city council committee of the whole was planning to review the NIU study Feb. 9 but now does not have to consider it. The city commissioned the study but the developers funded it at a cost of \$30,000.

Request: Schools could lose money

Continued from Page 1

houses in the \$200,000 range and 687 "active adult" homes for older residents without young children.

Also in the plans is 75 acres of commercial space, some of which is planned near the proposed LaFox Metra station. Metra officials plan to extend the Union Pacific West line, which now ends in Geneva, to Elburn and LaFox by late 2005 or early 2006.

The Kaneland school district would gain 112 more students and lose about \$460,000 in revenue if the development is built

as planned, which Tom Runty, assistant superintendent for business, called "small potatoes" compared to the impact of other proposed developments.

But the St. Charles school district would gain about \$8 million in taxes and would not see any new students from the development because the 500 planned homes within its borders are to be designed as "active adult" residences.

Still, St. Charles Superintendent Francis Kostel said he objects to the proposal because of its negative impact on the

Cities may sue over transportation fees

By Eric Walter
Staff writer

1-29-04 Republican
Kane County road impact fees \$\$\$\$\$\$

A series of transportation impact fees designed to offset the effects of increases in traffic caused by development is scheduled to become effective April 1. Here is a representation of these fees for eight zones and the cost to developer.

Type of development (cost per 1,000 square feet)

	Tri-Cities	Aurora area	Campton Hills
Big-box retail store	\$2,668	\$412	\$1,200
Small retail store	\$1,952	\$307	\$919
Site-down restaurant (non-bar lobby)	\$9,255	\$1,674	\$4,800
Industrial facility	\$1,999	\$293	\$1,640
Industrial warehouse	\$1,033	\$147	\$846

* based on gross floor area. Source: Kane County Board.

Jan. 20 the cities will need to examine the situation in order to determine whether the transportation fees are unfairly higher in the Tri-Cities than the rest of the county.

"The concern is that if there is going to be an impact fee, that it be allocated fairly and proportionately to development occurring and we are very concerned that this ordinance does not do that," said Radovich. "...There are serious questions about the assumptions the county has used to write this."

However, Radovich would not state specifics.

See Fees Page 6

A move to generate funds for improvements to county roads may be threatened by litigation.

Tri-Cities officials are considering legal action against the Kane County Board, after the board Jan. 13 approved a county-wide transportation impact fee.

Geneva City Attorney Chuck Radovich confirmed that the Geneva City Council discussed Jan. 20 whether to seek an injunction to stop implementation of the fee.

Batavia City Attorney John Noble said

Fees

Continued from Page 3

Radovich said it is "yet to be determined" whether the Tri-Cities will sue as one entity, even though they have been put into the same category by the county's ordinance.

Batavia Mayor Jeff Schielke and St.

Charles Mayor Sue Klinkhamer publicly criticized the act Jan. 20, saying it unfairly charges developers more in fees for the Tri-Cities than elsewhere in the county.

Noble maintained that the County Board's action would "drive development west" outside of the Tri-Cities.

"These are retail sales taxes that would go elsewhere," he said.

Kane County Board Chairman Mike McCoy denied that the impact fee will

threaten the cities' development

"My feeling is, they're overreacting. I don't feel it's going to affect development in their towns," he said Jan. 23.

McCoy believes that charging developers fees will benefit Tri-Cities residents by relieving some of the tax burden related to development.

Noble rejected the chairman's position, saying that the impact fee will drive developers outside of the Tri-Cities and

force taxpayers to shoulder more burden. "The municipalities would be forced to generate money in some other way like raising real estate taxes," he said Jan. 23.

On Jan. 20, Schielke cited a situation where Batavia could lose a development along Kirk Road to one of its southerly neighbors.

"If someone were to build a 210,000-square-foot business in Aurora, they'd be charged \$94,920. That same 210,000 square feet — if you moved it less than 800 feet to the north to the Lorenz property in Batavia — the impact fee would be \$617,280," he said.

The fees Schielke cited represent the estimated impact fee for a big-box retail store with an addition of a grocery store, totaling 210,000 square feet of floor space.

McCoy said Schielke's choice of properties slants the debate against the County Board.

"He's pulled out one extreme example," McCoy said Jan. 23.

One of the reasons the impact fees appear to be higher in the Tri-Cities is the number of county roads that fall within the planning area, said McCoy.

"We have more county roads in the Tri-Cities — the busiest roads, the most heavily trafficked roads and the ones we spend the most money on," he said.

Noble agreed with that, but said "a huge percentage of the county roads are really regional roads, which bring vehicles from outside the planning area."

Staff writers Rita Hoover and Meghan C. Smith contributed to this story.

Sheriff welcomes newest addition to force

Foos becomes 8th member of largest canine unit in state

By Rachel Conradt
Correspondent
1-27-04
Republican

Kane County Sheriff Kenneth Ramsey Jan. 26 swore in Foos, the newest member of the sheriff's office's Canine Unit. Foos, a German shepherd from Hungary, will accompany deputy Cheryl Lyne during her patrols. The canine had a sheriff's badge placed on his collar during a news conference Monday morning.

"Kane County has the largest Canine Unit in the entire state of Illinois, and the program is self-sustaining with donations from the citizens of Kane County," Ramsey said.

Foos becomes the eighth member of the office's Canine Unit, joining Buster, whose handler is Detective Sgt. Kevin Williams; Hete, who accompanies deputy Bob Baloun; Gero, who accompanies deputy Dean Sloggett; Anka, who accompanies Sgt. Scott Flowers; Idar, whose handler is deputy Eric Fisher; Nando, who accompanies deputy Nick Wolf; and Hill, who accompanies corrections officer Steve Lawrence.

The sheriff's office is currently training its ninth canine, Jake, for the Kane County Jail.

Officials said the dogs have repeatedly protected officers in potentially life-threatening situations the last several years.

"I don't like to call them dogs," Baloun said. "They're more like partners to the officers. That animal will lay down its life for you in any circumstance."

The canines are trained to smell explosives and illegal narcotics as well as to determine whether someone has died.

Wolf said his canine partner, Nando, tracked down a fugitive earlier this week who was arrested for a drug offense.

"Two nights ago, three guys jumped out of a car and ran from some Aurora officers," Wolf said.

Wolf and Nando participated in the chase and the canine jumped over a fence.

"I thought Nando was jumping for a bag of garbage. It turned out to be the guy I was looking for," Wolf said.

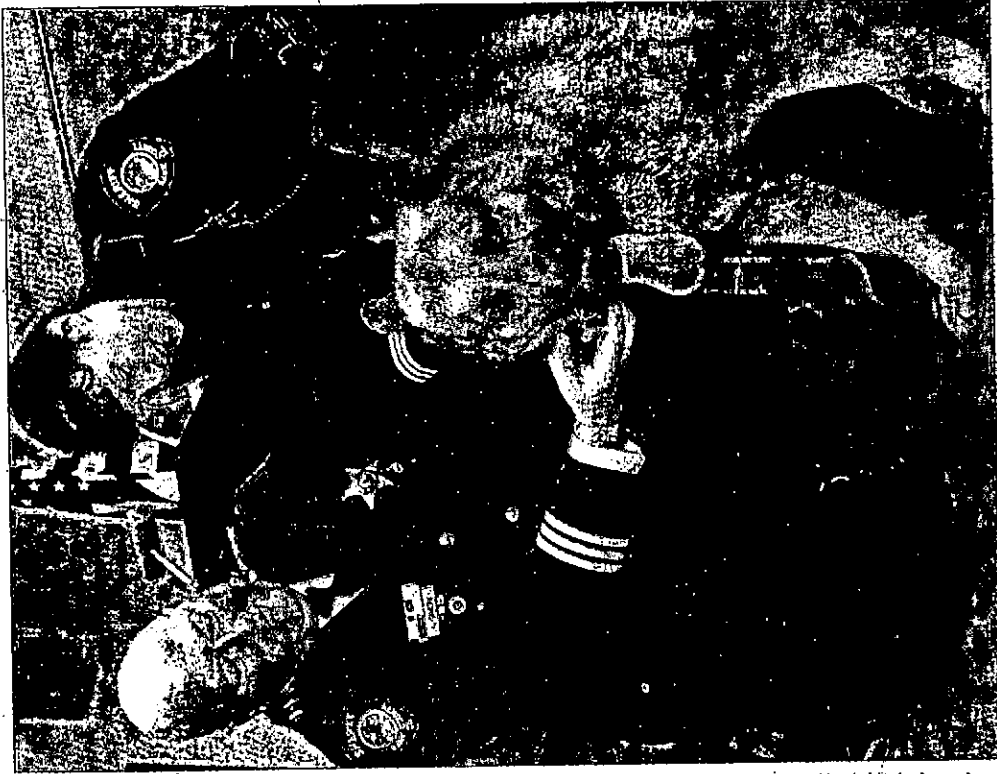
Nando barked at the suspect, who was trying to hide, and the man surrendered.

Ramsey said the Canine Unit has provided a cost-effective way for sheriff's officers to have partners and extra protection.

"It's a very inexpensive way to put two officers together," Ramsey said. "A starting human officer at our office would cost \$38,000, plus training. These dogs were donated by the Fraternal Order of Police (Lodge 14), and we don't have to pay the canines on a union scale."

The canines also work to protect prisoners and officers in the Kane County Jail.

"The dogs keep the prisoners in line," Ramsey said. "They sniff for narcotics, explosives and contraband. If there's a life threatened, and the prisoner ignores repeated warnings, the officer turns the dog loose to the offender."



Staff photo by Steve Bittinger

Kane County Sheriff Kenneth Ramsey Jan. 26 pins a deputy badge on the newest member of the sheriff's office's Canine Unit, Foos, as the dog's handler, deputy Cheryl Lyne, looks on.

'Extreme congestion' in Kane's future

Cooperation needed:
County can't buy its way out of problem

By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — The maps tell the story.

Tom Rickert, of the Kane County Transportation Department, just ran them off the computer, the latest maps from the travel command model the department uses to predict

the future.

And the future looks . . . crowded. Rickert used the maps as part of an update of the county's 2030 Transportation Plan before the County Board Transportation Committee. In living color, it showed the kind of congestion Kane County faces in the future.

The first map, which is current, showed some of the well-known and not-so-known congested hot spots in the county. Major roads marked in red indicated extreme congestion, while those in yellow showed severe congestion. After that, there was blue

for moderate congestion and gray for no congestion.

Currently, most of the county is gray. Hot spots include downtown Aurora, downtown Batavia, Randall Road and sections of state Routes 31 and 25, mostly in the north end of the county in South Elgin, Elgin, Dundee and Carpentersville.

"Some of these may surprise you, but when you're on a highway system, you might perceive it as one way or another," Rickert said.

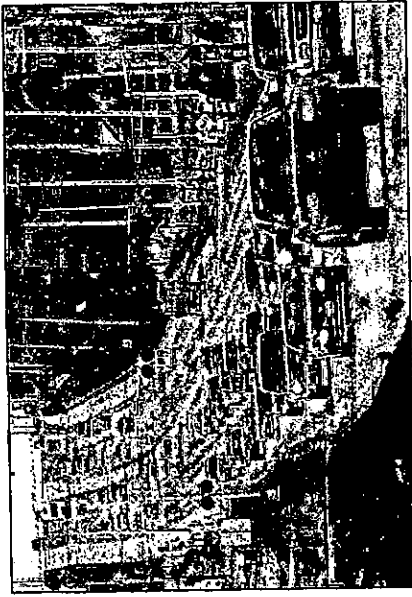
For instance, parts of Route 31 in the north qualify as extremely congested because they are only two

lanes but get 25,000 cars a day.

Turning to the second map, for 2030, the eye is treated to a shocking array of red. The map represents what roads will be like if nothing is done in the next 30 years. It is based on population projections, traffic projections and current lane configurations.

"We essentially end up with well over two-thirds of the county in extreme or severe congestion," Rickert said. "It's more than the highways can handle."

❖ Turn to CONGESTION, A2



MARIANNE MATHER / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Traffic flows on last week on Randall Road in St. Charles.

CONGESTION

From page A1

The third map shows a wish list dream of road projects county officials either have planned or have considered. Rickert said right away there is no way the county can afford to do all the projects. He even declined to venture a guess at how much money it would cost.

Still, it can be used to make a model and see how the projects would affect traffic in the future. Some of the projects will get done, such as the Stearns Road bridge over the Fox River or the widening of Randall Road to six lanes.

Some may get done, such as widening Route 56 and Orchard Road to six lanes, making Galena Boulevard four lanes west of Aurora to Route 47, widening Route 47 to four lanes through the county, and widening Route 72 in the north end to four lanes.

Still, with this "unrestrained" list, as Rickert called it, many

Transportation forums

- 10 a.m. Friday — Randall Oaks Golf Club, Dundee.
- 10 a.m. Feb. 3 — North Aurora Public Library.
- 10 a.m. Feb. 9 — Batavia Public Library.
- 10 a.m. Feb. 11 — Elgin Country Club.
- 10 a.m. Feb. 18 — Campton Community Center.
- 10 a.m. Feb. 19 — Elburn Public Library.
- 10 a.m. Feb. 23 — Huntley Village Hall.
- 1 p.m. Feb. 25 — Waubesa Community College, Room 150, Bodie Hall, Sugar Grove.

county collector roads would remain with extreme congestion, particularly in the south end. In fact, even with all the road projects done, the model shows every major collector in Aurora, Sugar Grove and even as far west as Hinckley, as congested.

1-29-04
Chronicle



Bill
Page

A quiet edge

With the March 16 primary only a few weeks away, political campaigns are entering the crucial "stretch" phase. Candidates are looking for every edge to set them apart from their opponents.

For many, the edge they seek comes in the form of endorsements from local elected officials, hoping that association translates into votes. Every candidate in every race is busy lining up people to say nice things about them, but in at least one instance, the nicest things aren't being said out loud.

In the contest for the Kane County Board's 14th District Republican nomination, Arney Silvestri is squaring off against Mark Dauvost. Dauvost announced his candidacy first and promptly went about the business of locking in endorsements. By the time Silvestri entered the race, more than a few area notables had given Dauvost, if not an endorsement, at least a nod and a smile. Now many of those same people find themselves in a very awkward situation, bound by their public promise to Dauvost, but privately supporting Silvestri.

I am not a resident of the 14th District, so I don't have a dog in this fight. However, as frequent readers of this column are aware, I know Silvestri through his involvement with the Kane County Eagles football team. Over the past few weeks, I noticed something odd: public officials were saying nice things about him, but only in private.

"Arney's a great guy, and I think he's perfect for the job," one told me the other day. "Unfortunately, I can't come out and say so." Another said their endorsement of Dauvost was made because "There was no one else in the race at the time." And another said "If I'd known Arney was going to run, I would have gone with him."

Over and over I've heard a variation of the same theme: "I want to support Arney, but I already said 'yes' to Mark."

None, by the way, think Dauvost would not be a decent county board member. Most believe he would do a fine job. However, when put against Silvestri, the feeling is that Arney would be as good, and perhaps the better choice.

Interesting, yes? To me, it is just another example of how goofy politics can be, especially when it comes to the

importance of endorsements. While I don't think people vote for someone just because another politician thinks he's a swell guy, it certainly cannot hurt.

In a tight race, a few votes swayed by an endorsement can make all the difference, so it probably would be best if endorsers wait until a campaign is well under way before they give their public blessings to a candidate.

If that patience had been exercised in the 14th District race, the list of who is endorsing whom might look quite different. For now, Arney Silvestri will just have to content himself with knowing that he really does have friends in high places... even if they cannot say so out loud.

For the first time since July the picture at the top of this column actually matches my real mug, for which I heartily apologize. The wonderfully evil beard I'd cultivated is no more, and I'll have a slightly harder time scaring small children. However, I lost the whiskers for the best of all possible reasons, not to mention cold, hard cash.

Monday evening, there was a hair-cutting benefit for the Special Olympics at Avenue Two Barber Shop in St. Charles, with the shop donating all the proceeds to the charity. A week ago, I offered to give up the beard for a minimum bid of \$150, but it turned out to be a bit better than that. Thanks to so many of you who called with pledges and donations, we were able to add \$500 to the night's collection.

Mayor Sue Klinkhamer did the shearing honors, and all I can say is that she is to barbering what Jack The Ripper was to surgery. I count myself lucky to have both lips in approximately the same places as they were before. (And don't listen to her that the problem was "One of your chins got stuck in the clippers.")

By the way, the folks at Avenue Two did a wonderful thing by sponsoring this event (and putting up with my foolishness). It is the sort of community involvement and caring that only comes from locally owned businesses. The best way to thank them is to support them, so stop in soon.

■ Bill Page lives in St. Charles and writes about local issues on Tuesday and Thursday. Calls and e-mails answered at (630) 584-0809 or wpage@mediawerks.org.

Gorecki ruling expected soon

Judge says he'll announce Friday

By William Presecky
Tribune staff reporter

A judge said he will rule Friday on whether the four-month suspension of Kane County State's Atty. Meg Gorecki's law license that begins Sunday disqualifies her from completing her term.

Circuit Judge Michael Colwell declined Wednesday to

grant a motion by Gorecki's attorneys to temporarily prevent the County Board from meeting in special session Monday to review the issue. The board is scheduled to debate whether the ban on Gorecki practicing law from Feb. 1 to June 1 creates a vacancy and whether board Chairman Mike McCoy (R-Aurora) has the authority to recommend someone to fill it.

"I am not inclined today to issue an injunction," Colwell told attorneys Larry Wechter, of Geneva and Patrick Kinnal-

ly of Aurora, after hearing arguments Wednesday.

Wechter is a private attorney representing Gorecki. Kinnally is the special assistant state's attorney hired to represent McCoy and the County Board.

Kinnally has advised McCoy and the board that Gorecki's suspension gives the board authority to declare the office vacant and the board chairman the right to name a replacement through the end of her term, Nov. 30.

But Wechter and co-counsel

Cathy Cavins, of Batavia, are relying extensively on an opinion issued Friday by Illinois Atty. Gen. Lisa Madigan that said Gorecki was not disqualified from continuing to hold office while her license was temporarily suspended, nor does her short-term suspension create a vacancy in the post.

"Her law license has not been revoked. It has not been taken away from her," argued Wechter. "She has not been or-

PLEASE SEE GORECKI, PAGE 6

GORECKI: County Board members split on vacancy

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

dered to surrender her license." Kinnally argued the County Board's authority to meet and to determine "whether a vacancy exists" should not be abridged.

"I don't know what the determination is going to be," he said. "We're here because the state's attorney wants to stop the board from meeting. If there is not a vacancy, life goes on."

But Wechter said, "A decision by the County Board to declare a vacancy will immensely complicate this situation."

Before taking the case under advisement, Colwell noted that Chief Judge Philip DiMarzio

"wisely" appointed a special state's attorney Tuesday to assume all the powers of the position while Gorecki's license is suspended. This step was necessary, he said, to ensure the legal ability of the office to function without interruption.

Like Madigan and DiMarzio, Colwell said the Gorecki case is unprecedented.

Regardless of how Colwell rules and whether the board meets Monday, McCoy said, "The issue of 'vacancy' is not going away." The County Board is obliged to act, he said.

"I think there is [a vacancy]," said County Board member Paul Greviskes (D-Aurora), an attorney, who observed Wednesday's hearing.

But board member Jan Carlson (R-Elburn), who also listened to the arguments, said the attorney general's opinion "ought to be sufficient. There's no point in dragging this out."

Carlson said his constituents in western Kane have been telling him: "Enough is enough.

We're tired of this issue." "If I had my way, there would be no meeting," Carlson said.

Assuming it remains unchanged, McCoy said DiMarzio's decision Tuesday to name a special state's attorney satisfies his immediate concern. He had said the ability of the office to operate legally would have been at risk beginning Sunday.

M. Katherine Moran, chief of the office's civil division, will be sworn in as special state's attorney Sunday. She is empowered to serve in that post only until June 1, when Gorecki's suspension ends.

"If I do cancel the meeting, I'm not canceling debate on the issue," McCoy said.

The state Supreme Court last year ordered Gorecki's four-month suspension for having undermined confidence in the integrity of government when, before she became state's attorney, Gorecki falsely suggested to a friend that McCoy could be bribed into providing a county job.

Panel endorses federal grant to Aunt Martha's

By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — Concerns about pregnancy counseling at Aunt Martha's Youth Services almost caused a holdup this week in a \$400,000 grant for the agency.

Kane County Board member Margaret Scalfaro, R-Carpentersville, was one of two Public Health Committee members who questioned the federal grant designed to pay for the agency to remodel a building at Broadway and Benton Street in downtown Aurora into a bigger facility, which includes a health clinic.

Scalfaro and board member Mary Richards, R-Aurora, declined to second a motion to recommend the grant for the full County Board agenda. Although the money comes from the federal government, it is administered through the county.

Scalfaro said she did not approve of Aunt Martha's pregnancy counseling to youths, which includes mention of abortion. Aunt Martha's offers a wide array of services for children, youth and families in health care, crisis intervention, foster care, residential care, counseling, delinquency prevention and parenting skills education.

There are facilities in Aurora and Elgin.

Mary Lou England, Health Department director, said Aunt Martha's follows federal guidelines for pregnancy counseling. The agency has to follow the

guidelines because it receives federal funding, England said.

"You can't single out Aunt Martha's, because this applies to all who get federal money," she said.

Needing space

Health Committee Chairman Gerry Jones, D-Aurora, said Aunt Martha's provides early care and prevention services that "saves money in the long run."

"Yet there are people at this table who don't want to vote for a health clinic in downtown Aurora," he said. "I'm amazed you want to deny health care to needy folks."

Richards and Scalfaro eventually gave their support to the measure.

Richards said after the meeting she has no problem with Aunt Martha's program. She said she only balked at first because she had not heard anything about the grant or the expansion.

"I knew nothing about this," she said. "It just seemed like all of a sudden this came out of nowhere."

Richards said she supports Aunt Martha's programs.

"I know their clinic now is tiny," she said. "But for the people of Aurora, it's a very good thing."

Theresa Heaton, of the Health Department, said Aunt Martha's will be able to provide better service in a bigger building, even if there is not enough money to hire more people.

"Providers have trouble if they don't have enough room to work in," she said.

1-29-04 Beacon News

Man slips out of Kane jail

By Daniel Duggan
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — Authorities said an Elgin man bought himself several hours of freedom from the Kane County jail Tuesday by donning the clothing of another inmate who happened to have the same name and how was set for release.

Juan Landre Ramirez, 21, left the jail at about 6:30 p.m. Tuesday and headed to an apartment in Elgin. He was taken into custody again at 1 a.m. He was confused with another Juan Ramirez, who was being held on charges filed in California and was set for release, Kane County Sheriff Ken Ramsey said.

He was dressed up in the other guy's clothes and just left," Ramsey said. "They didn't verify he was the right person."

It wasn't the first time the man was mixed up with someone else, said

Juan Landre Ramirez's attorney, Kane County Assistant Public Defender Brenda Covey.

She said the Kane County jail staff has brought the wrong Juan Ramirez to court hearings on several occasions, as recently as Friday.

Ramsey said the escape was the result of an employee not following the proper procedures.

"Had the policies we have in place been followed, this would not have happened," Ramsey said.

Under the jail's procedures, Ramsey said guards are required to look at inmates' identification badges — specifically, the picture of the person that appears on each badge.

"It's that simple; you look at the picture; you look at the person. If they don't match, there is something wrong," he said.

Ramsey said he will gather more facts on the situation before commenting on whether the staff mem-

bers involved will be disciplined.

In May 2002, another Elgin man mistakenly was let out of jail. Christopher Smith, convicted for his involvement in the city's infamous Burnham Wing Schoolhouse Apartments shooting, was paroled on another charge while awaiting his trial. He was let out as a result of a paperwork error.

Juan Landre Ramirez is charged with one count of battery to a child and one count of aggravated battery. He is held in jail in lieu of \$75,000 bond. Police say he hit a 12-year-old girl in the head with a baseball bat when she was trying to break up a fight in March.

A trial date on the matter is to be set Friday, Covey said.

Ramsey said Ramirez faces an extra felony count of escape after leaving the jail.

Covey, however, said that, if her client just signed his own name and left the jail, he might not be guilty.

Let's keep focus on Randall changes

On Jan. 23, the Kane County Transportation Department met with the Transportation Committee to discuss safety issues on Randall Road in the portion north of Red Haw Road to Silver Glen Road. This area includes the infamous "S" curve where a St. Charles student was killed two months ago. The discussion centered around three areas:

1. The sheriff department's responsibility in enforcing speed limits
2. Changes to the "S" curve, including warning signs, barriers, etc.
3. Speed limit changes.

There was no discussion on the key issue of road access at Crane and Bolcom roads where motorists have to "guess" at car

speeds and weave into Randall Road to cross. This will hopefully be discussed at future meetings. The meeting participants all agreed changes must be made. Tremendous pressure was put on the sheriff to enforce current speed limits, which can be exceeded by more than 20 mph. Both the sheriff and the Transportation Department recommended a reduction in speed limits.

The county committee did not act on a reduction in speed limits, opting to wait until the overall plan is completed before determining what the speed limits should be.

Pressure must be maintained to follow the recommendation of the sheriff and the Transportation Department to reduce speed limits. Comparable roads to Randall, which are less con-

gested and less dangerous, are 45 mph. For example, Kirk Road, which is controlled by Kane County; Route 59 from Route 64 to I-90, which is controlled by IDOT; and Sterns Road east of Route 25, which is controlled by DuPage County, are all four-lane highways with less dangerous designs and congestion. They are all 45 mph.

A major step forward has been accomplished by gaining commitment from the sheriff to better enforce existing speed limits. The key will be ongoing execution of this commitment.

The professionals believe that even an enforced 55 mph limit is still too high and should be lowered. Our elected county board members should make that a reality.

Stephen D. Cole
St. Charles

1-29-04 Beacon News Kane wants to encourage construction recycling

By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA - Building sites are common in a growing county like Kane.

While new home construction is a sign of good economic health, some county officials said they worry about what gets tossed to the side of those burgeoning rooftops.

Gary Mielke, the county's solid-waste coordinator, told the Solid Waste Committee Wednesday that more construction waste recycling facilities are coming into existence. He pointed to Construction Waste Recycling, a company along Route 72 in East Dundee, just over the Kane County line in Cook County.

It is handling basically all of the construction waste from the Dundee area, half from Elgin and waste from McHenry, Cook and Lake counties. The company charges a tipping fee of \$42 a ton, slightly less than the \$45 a ton charged by Settler's Hill landfill. County officials want construc-

tion contractors to recycle as much as possible, to keep from filling up the landfill. In the county's latest Solid Waste plan, the county estimates about 12.6 percent of the waste stream is construction waste.

"We've had big discussions on how do we dispose of construction waste," Mielke said. "Here is a company finally that's doing this."

Mielke said the company recycles clean and dirty wood, cardboard, concrete and brick, metals and residue. The company also takes drywall and roofing shingles.

He said waste haulers can bring in bins filled with the waste, and it is dumped on a conveyor for the recycling company to separate. The exception to that is drywall, which is the only construction material the law requires be treated separately.

"They are handling a big chunk of the county," Mielke said. "To handle all our construction waste, we probably need two or three more of these facilities. How do we encourage this?"

CALIFORNIA

1-29-04 Daily Herald

Gorecki is missing legal, moral licenses

I believe there are two things a person needs to possess to be qualified to hold the position of state's attorney for the County of Kane. The first of these is a legal one, the possession of a valid license to practice law in Illinois. The second is a personal one, but just as important, a moral license. It is quite evident that Meg Gorecki had the first, for it is being suspended as of Sunday.

Sadly, I am beginning to wonder if she ever had the second. If she did, was it foolishly squandered in the pursuit of political fame? Gorecki's struggle has been valiant and in her eyes, right, but it has gone on far too long. Whether she has been a successful prosecutor or not is of no consequence now. This is no longer just about her, although it seems that she is blind to anything but that.

This is about the office, herself and what is left of each of their futures. Gorecki herself should draw the curtain and end this unfortunate, tragic story of self-destruction, lost opportunity and personal shame. Even if by some unforeseen miracle there were to be a Cinderella-like final act to this drama, there will be no standing ovation, thunderous applause or requests for an encore.

Attempting to save one's own neck through the use of clever lawyering, stalling for time, plea bargaining, appeals and hoping to be saved by a technicality are the oh-so-familiar tactics and handiwork of the "other side."

Meg Gorecki, seize the high ground. Please resign.

Eric Isom
Elgin

1-29-04 Beacon
Lakeview News

GIS map included with tax information

Taxpayers can now view a Geographic Information System (GIS) map along with a copy of their property tax information by visiting the Treasurer's Web site at www.co.kane.il.us/treasurer. The feature will provide an aerial view of the property. Call (630) 292-3565.

1-29-04 Beacon News

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Save for the future

Before the end of January, decisions to begin the demolition of Kane County's historic assets already in the "safe" hands of forest preserve ownership will be made.

The Kane County Forest Preserve has an excellent opportunity to plan for the future by the stabilization and protection of the historic structures that are on its current properties.

Some day, the Kane County Forest Preserve will run out of land to buy, and the natural areas will be restored. At that point there will be even greater public demand for preserving our cultural heritage.

By protecting existing historic structures on preserve property, the forest preserve can let the future public make the decision to develop these cultural resources.

Historic preservation has tended to save only the famous or grand architecture of the wealthy. But the average person built this country, and that story needs to be preserved for future generations. Right now the Fabyan Estate in Fabyan Forest Preserve is a prime example.

The garage complex where the chauffeur and staff worked is threatened with demolition by public dollars, denying future generations an understanding that not everyone in America lived like Col. Fabyan.

I encourage both citizens and leaders to recognize our best assets are those we take for granted. Too often we vainly covet some other community's unique resources, and they, ours. Let your neighbors and leaders of the forest preserve know how you feel about the complete story of America's heritage.

Jerome M. Johnson, Executive Director
Garfield Farm Museum
LaFox

Tri-Cities mayors back O'Neil for prosecutor

1-29-04 Beacon

By Daniel Duggan
STAFF WRITER

news

ST. CHARLES — State's attorney candidate Tim O'Neil kicked off the opening of his campaign headquarters by announcing endorsements from officials across the county.

Most notable were the endorsements of St. Charles Mayor Sue Klinkhamer, Geneva Mayor Kevin Burns and Batavia Mayor Jeff Schielke.

O'Neil also had Rick Ciganek of the Elgin police officers union and Wayne Biles of the Aurora police officers union lend their vote of confidence. He additionally was endorsed by several labor unions and the Fox Valley division of the Illinois Police Association.

The race for the state's attorney seat has been hotly contested, with the current state's attorney, Meg Gorecki, not running for re-election.

O'Neil will face three other Republicans in the March 16 primary election: Joseph Rago, of Geneva; John Barsanti, of St. Charles, and Michael Leuer, of Geneva.

In his brief comments, O'Neil expressed his appreciation for the support of the local officials and organizations and promised to win the race.

"With 47 days left, I'll be out there hoofing my rear off," he said.

O'Neil stressed he will put more assistant

state's attorneys into the divisions where people will see the biggest impact. He pointed out the importance, for example, of a gang-prosecution unit.

"Anyone who says there isn't a gang problem hasn't talked to people in Elgin and Aurora," he said.

He also vowed to spend time meeting with people in the community.

"I won't be in that tower every day; I'll be out on the streets, meeting people like teachers and talking to them about what problems they are facing," O'Neil said.

While O'Neil boasted an endorsement by Kane County Sheriff Ken Ramsey, he is not alone in that designation. Ramsey endorsed both O'Neil and Barsanti.

"They're both good candidates," Ramsey said. "Either one could do a great job in that position."

Barsanti has picked up several key endorsements as well, including former state's attorneys David Akemann, Gary Johnson, Robert Casey and Robert Morrow. State Reps. John Millner, R-Carol Stream, and Tom Cross, R-Oswego, also have endorsed him, in addition to the police officers unions in South Elgin, Batavia, Carpentersville and Gilberts.

Leuer said he still is pursuing organizations for their endorsements. Rago said he will announce his endorsements shortly.

Planners talk about what they want in future

1-29-04 Daily Herald

BY DENISE PERRY
DONAVIN
Daily Herald Correspondent

Generally agreeing on slow, sensible growth, participants at a forum of plan commissioners from Elburn, Lily Lake and Campion Township met Wednesday at Campion Township hall to share their views on development for the next 30 years.

Participants planned buffers between communities, lots of green space and interconnected bike paths. They also applauded Elburn's plan to restrict growth within its natural borders.

"Elburn is not a different community from Campion; Lily Lake is not a different community," said David Bressler, chairman of the Campion Township planning commis-

sion. "Both are part of Campion Township and what happens in each affects us all. All of us share a similar philosophy of sensible growth to retain the nature of the community rather than change it. We like where we are living."

Sam Santell, director of Kane County's Planning and Projects Division, compared land-use strategy maps from 1976 to 2030. The maps showed little change in the county's comprehensive plan for the area, which he said demonstrates that careful planning can control growth.

Lily Lake plan commission Chairman Jeff Lonigro said his town's method of curbing growth is to demand 1 1/3 acre lots.

Some participants objected to a proposed plan for LaFox that was presented by Drew Frasz, a LaFox resident who is working

on the incorporation of the square, dense single-family area. Frasz presented a plan of a housing and townhouses that downtown hub with a town lead out to larger lots.

Daily Herald

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Batavia sets hearings for proposed waste station

1-29-04
Daily Herald

BY GALA M. PIERCE
Daily Herald Staff Writer

Batavia officials set public hearings for the week of April 12 to deliberate if the city's current garbage hauler should be allowed to open a waste transfer station.

The city services committee, made up of half the city council, was the panel assigned to hear the arguments for or against Onyx Waste Services Midwest Inc.'s proposal.

The Milwaukee company filed an application to approve a siting permit for a station at 766 Hunter Drive, the southeast corner of Hunter Drive and Hubbard Avenue, in the east-side industrial park.

The public hearings will be at 7 p.m. April 12, 13, 14 and 15; as well as 10 a.m. April 15 in the city council chambers at the government center, 100 N. Island Ave. Attorney Glenn

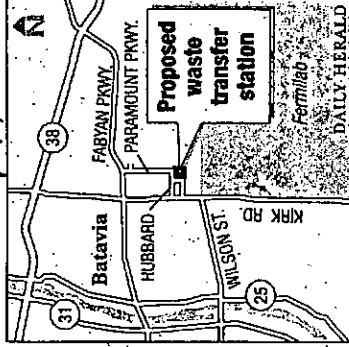
Such a station in Batavia may service all of Kane County. For information, call Assistant City Administrator Randy Recklaus at (630) 879-1424, ext. 115.

final approval by June 16, and officials may indicate conditions at that time. Alderman Dick Hart recommended writing up a frequently asked questions list with answers for residents because panel members are not allowed to discuss the merits of the application until city council has voted on it.

"We can do that," City Attorney John Noble said. "It's a good idea."

Before the hearings, residents can review Onyx's two-volume application, available at city hall, 100 N. Island Ave.

When Kane County revised its solid waste plan in 1997 and banned more landfills in the area, the city considered building its own transfer station since Settler's Hill is set to close by 2006. Transfer stations temporarily store and consolidate the garbage before it is taken to landfills farther away.



Sechen of the law firm of Schain, Burney, Ross & Citron of Chicago was appointed as the hearing officer that will preside over the proceedings.

Members appointed Jim Volk as chairman of the panel and Nancy Vance as vice chairman at Wednesday's meeting.

The panel will make findings and recommendations on the merits of the application. The full city council will need to give

PRE

1-29-04 Daily Herald

Mistakenly released inmate recaptured; jail probe continues

BY JEFFREY GAUNT
Daily Herald Staff Writer

A failure to follow policy led to the mistaken release of an inmate from the Kane County jail Tuesday, Sheriff Kenneth Ramsey said Wednesday.

"The bottom line is my employee did not do what he was supposed to," Ramsey said.

Juan Landre Ramirez, 21, whose last known address was 571 Douglas Ave., Elgin, was recaptured without incident by sheriff's detectives with assistance from Elgin police early Wednesday at a home on the 100 block of College Street in Elgin, police Lt. Paul McCurtain said.

Ramirez was in jail on aggravated child battery charges, deputies said. He was being held on \$75,000 bond, pending a Jan. 30 court date.

Ramsey said an investigation into the incident would be completed Wednesday, at which point he would decide whether to take disciplinary action.

Ramirez was released just after 7 p.m. Tuesday when

sheriff's deputies mistook him for another inmate with the same name, Ramsey said.

This wasn't the first time Kane County was been involved in a mistaken release, Ramsey said. Stricter policies regarding inmates at the jail were imposed because of a number of mistakes leading to the release of inmates, he said.

A man accused of driving the getaway car in an Elgin triple murder was released in May of 2002 because of a mix-up between the Illinois Department of Corrections and Kane County officials.

Another man accused of attempting to drive over two Hawthorn Woods police officers was mistakenly released from the jail in August of 2001 before he could be turned over to Lake County officials.

And in December of 2000, a convicted rapist who was supposed to serve time in Kane County was released by DuPage County officials after posting bond on a lesser charge.

All three men were eventually taken back into custody.

1-29-04 Daily Herald

Geneva budget picture slowly comes into focus

BY GARRETT ORDOWER
Daily Herald Staff Writer

As Geneva prepares its budget for next year, it expects to gain some additional revenue from a special population census but also see its share of sales tax come in below projections.

While estimates put expected sales for the 420,000-square-foot Geneva Commons at \$325 per square foot, the actual amount of sales taxes coming in is closer to \$250 per square foot, City Administrator Phil Page said.

That has caused the city to revise its estimated sales tax revenue for this year from \$4.8 million to \$4.5 million. It expected \$1.3 million of that to come from Geneva Commons. But like all the figures involved in the still developing \$11 million general fund budget, Page cautions they are not at all final.

"This is still preliminary," Page said. "We've got some work to do in the next couple of months to see how things shake

out." Particularly, the November and December sales figures from Geneva Commons could see sales tax revenues increase. The city expects to see an annual revenue increase of \$155,000 a year after its special census results come in, Page said.

About \$95,000 of that will come from state income taxes, \$45,000 from motor fuel taxes and \$14,000 from utility taxes. The city expects to add 1,600

people to its population with the partial special census, which will be conducted next month in the Fisher Farms, Eagle Brook and Fox Run subdivisions.

That would bring the total population of Geneva to 21,115. Estimates for the city's tax on telephone, gas and electric bills are running \$70,000 higher than expected, due to higher rates and more construction.

The city expected to see \$100,000 in interest this year,

but will actually see less than half that amount because rates have stayed below 1 percent. And the city expects revenues from building permits to continue dropping next year as it approaches final build out.

It has also seen its costs for employee health insurance rise \$75,000 this year as it works on a similar level of family coverage to other towns, 80 percent rather than the 50 percent in place until this year. It is now at 65 percent and closing that gap

Sales tax revenue expected to be down, but thanks to census more cash on its way

would cost another \$80,000.

All tallied, the city now expects its revenues for this year, the fiscal year stretching over 2003 and 2004, will come in at \$9.9 million, about \$300,000 less than expected. Revenue for the next fiscal year, which starts May 1, are projected to rise to about \$11 million. The city aims to have a balanced budget next year. The city will consider approving its 2004-05 budget schedule at its Monday city council meeting. That would put in on track for final budget approval on April 19.

Grand Prairie developer pulls STC annexation plan

129-04 Chronicle
Officials negotiating with La Fox residents

By HEATH HIXSON
Kane County Chronicle

ST. CHARLES — Developers of the proposed Grand Prairie subdivision will not pursue city annexation but instead negotiate with La Fox residents, Mayor Sue Klinkhamer said Wednesday.

Residents of the unincorporated hamlet have been meeting with developers about the project for several months and said an agreement could be reached if the density of the latest proposal is decreased.

An official with Town and Country Homes, one of the developers, said Tuesday that the La Fox talks were

moving along.

But one county official said she did not think the latest proposal by developers would meet county land-use regulations. The newest proposal to St. Charles involves up to 2,000 houses and commercial space.

Klinkhamer said the developers informed city officials Wednesday that they would not present a retooled annexation plan to a city committee in early February. The city last year rejected a similar proposal.

"They sent a fax saying that is what

Joint meeting

• Officials from Elburn, Lily Lake and Campton Township held a joint meeting to discuss growth, including the Grand Prairie proposal.

Page 3A

they are doing," Klinkhamer said. "They just said they were going to work with La Fox residents and with the county."

Town and Country Homes and

Wyndham Deerpoint Homes are proposing the project near La Fox in unincorporated Kane County, west of Geneva.

The land is within the St. Charles, Geneva and Kaneland school districts.

The group Concerned La Fox Area Residents has been negotiating with developers since the builders last year beat back a legislative attempt by the residents to incorporate and gain control of land use.

See GRAND PRAIRIE, page 2

Grand Prairie: Density of project is key

Continued from page 1

The residents have attempted to persuade developers to ditch annexation plans and work with them to craft a workable project that would decrease density and impact on surrounding property.

"We are delighted," Jim Morgan, a member of the La Fox group, said Wednesday. "We always wanted St. Charles to be a neighbor and a planning partner, but we did not want to be in St. Charles or surrounded by it. We look forward to working with St. Charles as a neighbor."

On Tuesday, Peter Brennan, Town and Country Homes general counsel, characterized the meetings with La Fox residents as "progressive."

Morgan called the meetings "informal," and said that while

residents and developers agree on many issues, basic concerns such as density of the project have yet to be addressed.

But with abandonment of the St. Charles annexation plan and the pledge to work with La Fox residents, the project again is likely to face county scrutiny if La Fox residents are unable to incorporate.

To win county approval, developers likely would have to downsize the plan they pitched to St. Charles.

The proposal called for a 2,000-unit subdivision with more than 750,000 square feet

of commercial space on 1,200 acres, according to a financial impact feasibility study ordered by the St. Charles City Council.

That plan likely would not meet the county's 2020 Land Resource Management Plan because of density concerns.

Nor would it gain approval by county officials, said county board member Catherine Hurlbut, R-Elgin.

"I don't think so, too dense for our requirements," said Hurlbut, who is chairman of the county board's Development Committee.

Nearly two years ago, a scaled-down version of the plan that called for at least 1,600 homes failed to clear the county planning process. That proposal stalled because county officials questioned the project's size and scope.

Developer's later sought to escape county regulations by seeking annexation to St. Charles.

Hurlbut said those same questions likely would be asked again if developers bring a proposal to county officials.

Contributing: Dan Charzitt.

Judge waits to rule on

Gorecki suit

29-04 Chronicle

Hints that county should cancel
Monday's special meeting

By ADAM KOVAC
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — A judge on Wednesday suggested that Kane County Board Chairman Mike McCoy drop his efforts to hold a special meeting to replace State's Attorney Meg Gorecki.

Judge Michael J. Colwell said he might rule Friday on a lawsuit that Gorecki filed to block the special board meeting that McCoy set for Monday to declare her office vacant and select a replacement.

The meeting comes the day after Gorecki must take a leave of absence and begin serving a four-month suspension of her law license for implicating McCoy in a fictitious jobs-for-bribes scheme. McCoy maintains that the state's attorney's office becomes vacant during the suspension and requires the county board to fill Gorecki's post, despite a court order appointing one of her assistants as a special state's attorney.

Colwell postponed a decision on the lawsuit in part because McCoy has endorsed Katherine Moran, Gorecki's civil chief, who was directed Tuesday to oversee the state's attorney's office until June 1.

"Perhaps the easiest solution to this problem is to cancel this trip down this highway," Colwell said at a hearing on the lawsuit.

Gorecki, 36, sued McCoy and the county board Monday, bolstered by an opinion from Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan that said she can return after her suspension and finish her term that ends Nov. 30.

However, Gorecki questioned a provision in Madigan's opinion that called on Kane County judges to appoint a special state's attorney during her absence and asked to select her own substitute, according to the lawsuit.

Gorecki's attorney, Larry Wechter of Geneva, argued that McCoy has taken steps to declare Gorecki's office vacant, despite conflicting guidance from Madigan and Moran's appointment by Chief Judge Philip L. DiMarzio.

"What we have here is a situation where she is not entitled to practice law," Wechter told Colwell. "The inability to do so is not considered a vacancy."

But Aurora attorney Pat Kinnally, who represents McCoy and the county in the lawsuit, said the state Constitution gives the county board authority to declare a vacancy in the state's attorney's office.

See GORECKI, page 2

Gorecki: Decision could come on Friday

Continued from page 1

"They're trying to come into court and tell my client, the county board, that they cannot perform their statutory function," Kinnally said. "It's their call."

Moran, 51, was on a short list of candidates who McCoy indicated he might nominate to replace Gorecki if she was suspended or forced to resign.

Still, it is unclear how the county board would react if the special meeting is allowed to convene or whether Gorecki plans to appeal her case.

County board member Paul Greviskes, D-Aurora, said

there is a legal argument for declaring Gorecki's office vacant, but added that he thought Colwell was right to postpone his ruling.

"I think Friday's the big day," Greviskes said.

The Illinois Supreme Court suspended Gorecki on Nov. 20, 2003, for violating the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct, creating uncertainty on exactly who decides the administration of her office.

Gorecki acknowledged that she left three messages on a friend's answering machine in 1998 suggesting that a county job could be obtained by making a contribution to

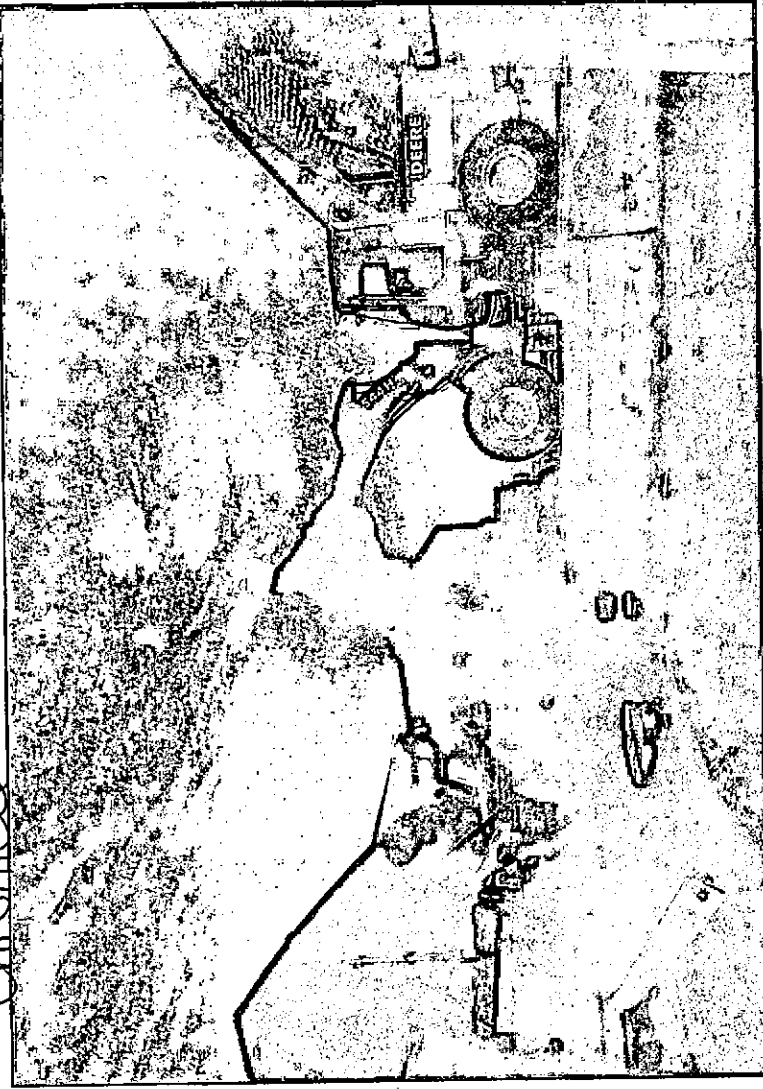
McCoy's campaign fund. A federal investigation after the comments surfaced before the 2000 Republican primary cleared McCoy of any involvement and Gorecki of criminal wrongdoing because the scheme never existed.

County board member Jan Carlson, R-Elburn, said he had not reached a decision on the matter, however, he has fielded phone calls from the public as legal debate on Gorecki's case has escalated this month.

"Constituents are saying, 'Enough is enough ... why are we dragging this out?'" Carlson said. "They've just seen enough."

1-29-04
Chronicle

Keeping the roads clear



Robert Barcott — Chronicle photo staff

An Illinois Department of Transportation plow truck is loaded with salt Wednesday at the IDOT facility in St. Charles.

Kane on track with salt supplies

By DAN CHANZIT
Kane County Chronicle
with staff reports

Despite arctic temperatures, municipal snow removal budgets are roughly on track for the season, local public works officials said.

Temperatures this winter largely have been below freezing, which means more salt and more work to remove ice and snow.

But a six-inch snowfall deficit has saved everyone money.

The story is familiar across central Kane County, where 14.8 inches of snow have fallen since the second week of December.

"Which is pretty pathetic," AccuWeather senior meteorologist Laura Hannon said. "We are below normal."

The snow season is far from over. The first day of spring is March 20, seven weeks away. And last year, 1 1/2 inches of snow fell April 7.

"It was a full-plow operation," said Steve LeMaire, Geneva's streets superintendent. "We have six to eight weeks left. I don't think we are out of the woods."

Geneva has 1,700 tons of salt on hand. This season, crews have spread 1,000 tons on the city's 204 miles of roads.

LeMaire said his crews hope for warmer temperatures, but no one is counting on it.

"The sun helps melt everything that

has fallen, but not this year," LeMaire said. "The past few weeks have been an Arctic freeze. We're not relying on Mother Nature to help us out."

St. Charles has spent \$70,000 of its \$170,000 salt budget since Dec. 5. The city is responsible for 175 miles of roads.

The city started the season with about 2,000 tons of salt. About 1,800 tons have been used, and more has been ordered, officials said.

Kane County assistant transportation director Bob Skidmore said his department is responsible for 720 miles of highway. County trucks have been out 21 times, Skidmore said.

See SALT, page 2

Salt

Continued from page 1

"We average about 35 to 40 events (a year) that require us to go out for some reason," Skidmore said.

The county's budget for road salt is \$450,000, and so far the county has spent \$200,000. The department bought 8,000 tons and has used 4,500 tons.

KDOT has 27 full-time employees and six "snowbirds" hired on a seasonal basis to help keep the roads clear, he said.

Kane also has an automatic road de-icing unit on the bridge over the Union Pacific tracks at Peck and Keslinger Roads.

The process automatically sprays environmentally-friendly de-icing chemicals on the bridge deck.

"That has been working very well," Skidmore said.

Batavia Street Department Superintendent Scott Haines said the city has spread about 500 tons of salt. The city started the season with about 400 tons on hand.

"We don't have the capacity to store enough for a whole season," Haines said. "We hope to change that this summer with the addition of a storage facility."

The city has spent about \$20,000 on salt, Haines said. Batavia maintains 115 miles of streets. This season, street crews have gone out about 11 times, Haines said.

Workers use 12 large trucks to clear the streets and 15 pickup trucks to plow parking lots and cul-de-sacs.

North Aurora public works employees are responsible for 50 miles of roads. Crews have been out five times this season to clear snow and ice, which is down from previous years.

"We haven't had nearly the

snowfall as other years," Public Works Superintendent Mike Glock said. "Most of the time, we go out from 25 to 30 times a year. But we still have another two months to go."

The department has gone through 150 tons of salt. It started the season with almost 500 tons of salt, and can store up to 900 tons.

North Aurora has a budget of \$30,000 for salt. It has spent \$11,208 this winter.

The department also pre-treats streets to help in snow removal efforts.

"We try to pre-treat the roads three times a week. It keeps snow from binding to the pavement for easy cleanup," Glock said.

In South Elgin, winter spending has fluctuated wildly over the last few years, said Richard Babica, superintendent of operations.

The snow budget increased to \$48,600 this year because of an increase in roads that came with the village's growth. The public works department now is responsible for 77 miles of roads, Babica said.

By the time Tuesday's snow storm ended, the village had spent \$19,052 on road salt, liquid calcium chloride and dried calcium chloride since the first snow event of the season on Dec. 13.

Plows have been sent out eight times since December, Babica said.

Public works responded to 22 snow events last winter, three in the winter of 2001-02 and 13 in 1999-2000.

The snow removal budget does not include expenses such as plow maintenance and sand, which fall under a maintenance line item.

South Elgin has used up its first 1,000 tons of road salt and has ordered 400 more tons.

Contributing: Mark Foster, Paul Rock, Tom Schieter, Heath Hixson, Eric Schelkopf

1-29-04 Chronicle
**Escaped inmate found
after mistaken release**

*Police find Ramirez about
seven hours later in Elgin*

Elgin man could face escape charges

By ADAM KOVAC
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — A Kane County Jail inmate was returned to his cell Wednesday about seven hours after he was mistakenly released, authorities said.

Juan L. Ramirez, 21, of Elgin, was able to walk out of the jail at about 6 p.m. Tuesday after a corrections officer thought he was another inmate scheduled for release.

Acting on a tip, sheriff's deputies and Elgin antigang officers nabbed Ramirez at about 1:39 a.m. Wednesday in an upstairs apartment on the 100 block of College Street in Elgin, Kane County Sheriff Ken Ramsey said.

"He's the one that an-



Ramirez

swered the door," Ramsey said.

"The officers put their finger over the peep hole so he couldn't see who it was."

Ramirez, who investigators said has gang ties, had been jailed since June 13 in lieu of \$75,000 bond on a charge of aggravated battery to a child, according to jail records.

The escape occurred after a corrections officer confused Ramirez with an inmate who has a similar name and out-processed him from the jail, even allowing Ramirez to change into the other inmate's clothes.

Ramsey said he would wait until an internal investigation of the incident was complete before deciding to discipline the corrections officer who made the mistake.

Ramirez was held Wednesday without bond and now could face escape charges, which had not been filed Wednesday, Ramsey said.

1-29-04 Chronicle
**Mayors, unions
endorse O'Neil**

By ADAM KOVAC
Kane County Chronicle

ST. CHARLES — Kane County State's Attorney candidate Tim O'Neil was endorsed Wednesday by Tri-Cities mayors and several police, fire and labor unions.

O'Neil, 48, of St. Charles, is in a heated four-way race for the Republican nomination in the March 16 primary. The race includes St. Charles attorney John Barsanti, and Joseph Rago and T. Michael Leuer, both of Geneva.

The winner likely will face Democrat Renee Robinson in the November general election.

Citing his support in their own political endeavors, O'Neil was endorsed by Batavia Mayor Jeff Schielke,

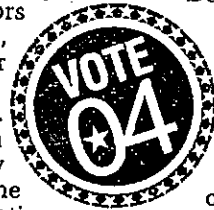
Geneva Mayor Kevin Burns and St. Charles Mayor Sue Klinkhamer. O'Neil is the St. Charles city attorney.

Sheriff Ken Ramsey, former state Rep. Suzanne Deuchler and Loren Golden, former president of the state bar association, also threw their support behind O'Neil on Wednesday.

O'Neil also received support from the International

Association of Firefighters Local 99, the Aurora and Elgin police officer's unions, the Fox Valley chapter of the Illinois Police Association, Laborer's Local 149, Pipefitters Local 501 and the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 150.

The endorsements were made at a ceremony opening O'Neil's campaign headquarters on Prairie Street in St. Charles.



1-29-04 Chronicle

Kane to give GIS to waste companies for transfer station siting

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Instead of searching for suitable sites for waste transfer stations, county officials may provide waste haulers with enough information to do the search themselves.

With a copy of Kane's Geographic Information Systems, waste haulers would have available aerial maps with overlays of zoning, flood plains and other information pertinent to siting a pollution control facility, Director of Environmental Management Timothy Harbaugh said.

"It would give them a lot of tools in their search throughout the county," Harbaugh said.

Members of the Solid Waste Committee agreed Wednesday that the GIS program would benefit firms in their searches. The committee is updating the county's solid waste plan, which calls for the siting of a series of transfer stations.

"It's in the spirit of trying to help identify areas that aren't compatible and steer them to areas that are compatible," said Dan Walter, R-South Elgin.

In December 2002, the county board denied an application by Waste Management to locate a transfer station on property it owns at the now-closed Woodland Landfill.

After the denial, some board members proposed developing a map of suitable locations for transfer sta-

tions. Others, however, did not want the county to get in the position of siting pollution control facilities.



McCoy

County board Chairman Mike McCoy, a member of the Solid

Waste Committee, said the board in the mid-1990s attempted to site a landfill in the western townships.

The process did not locate a site for a new landfill and served to create a groundswell of public opposition.

"The only thing to come out of that was we decided to never site the landfill," McCoy said.

Not only did the process create public opposition, it put the county board in the awkward position of siting a landfill and sitting as the quasi-judicial body that approve or denies the applicant's petition, he said.

The dual role of locating and then judging the site could provide the basis for appealing any decision, McCoy said.

Providing applicants for solid waste facilities the information to help them conduct their own searches would be beneficial, said Lee Adelman, spokesman for Waste Management.

"I applaud them for making the decision. I think it will be a useful tool," Adelman said.

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Campton Twp., Lily Lake, Elburn discuss growth

By DAN CHANZIT

Kang County Chronicle

1-22-04 Chronicle

CAMPTON TOWNSHIP —

Campton Township, Elburn and Lily Lake officials must work together to maintain their vision and sense of community.

That was the conclusion Wednesday of plan commissioners at a special joint meeting of the three bodies at the Campton Township community center.

The purpose of the meeting was for planners to ask questions and learn from each other. Most found that they all were on the same page when it came to growth philosophies.

"We're all next to each other. We're all on top of each other, yet we don't talk to each other," Campton Township plan commission Chairman David Bressler said. "That's why it's so important that we work together."

Discussion turned toward each group's future plans. Lily Lake officials said they plan to develop some commercial and more residential with lot sizes larger than an acre.

Elburn officials said future housing likely will be inside the wetlands that surround the community. Commercial growth is slated for Route 47 in clusters at Route 38 and Keslinger Road.

Campton officials said they plan to purchase more open space. They want to encourage only residential development with large lots. Bressler said he strongly opposed growth centers that would mimic little towns.

"How many neat, little, small towns do we need to have in Campton? People came out here to live in a rural area."

Lily Lake Plan Commission Chairman Jeff Ionigro said villages and townships mostly are powerless to stop development.

"This is America," he said. "As long as a developer follows the rules ... you just can't stick your head in the sand. Things are going to get developed."

Representatives for La Fox incorporation attended the meeting and addressed the plan commissioners. La Fox is an unincorporated settlement east of Elburn and west of Geneva. The La Fox group hopes to work with two builders that want to develop the 1,200-acre, 2,000-unit Grand Prairie subdivision.

"We want to have some rural character," said Drew Frasz, a La Fox spokesman. "A Metra station is coming. We have accepted what is going to happen to our area. Things are going to change."

Bressler objected to high-density housing near the station.

"Putting townhouses in La Fox seems so out of place," he said. "They belong in Elburn. They belong in Geneva. They don't belong in La Fox."

Elburn President James Willey stepped up to the map to explain the need.

"If they cluster those units (near the station), it makes more open space for everyone else" in the development, Willey said, drawing applause. "If these people are walking to the train station, they are not getting to their cars."

BY PATRICK WALDRON
Daily Herald Staff Writer



Karen McConnaughay

her race for a the GOP nomination for chairman geared up, according to financial disclosure papers due today.

That money was on top of the \$42,000 her supporters had amassed by the end of June 2003, just weeks after she announced her intention to seek the office.

"We did very well," said Jan Carlson, a county board member and McConnaughay's campaign director.

When the money started coming in the middle of last year, the chairman race looked to be forming as a battle between two-term incumbent Mike McCoy, an Aurora Republican, and McConnaughay, a county board member since 1992.

"When this whole thing started it was going to be a campaign of gargantuan — McConnaughay and McCoy," Carlson said.

But McCoy never entered the race,

and soon it was a case of David versus Goliath, without the story-book ending.

With McCoy gone, McConnaughay was challenged for the Republican nomination by Kane County Treasurer Dave Rickert, who back in July could put up only \$4,000 to McConnaughay's \$42,000.

When Rickert withdrew from the

See CASH on PAGE 10

FRIDAY, JANUARY 30, 2004

Cash: McConnaughay has spent nearly \$70,000

Continued from Page 1

face two weeks ago, he pointed to money as one of the factors in his decision.

His campaign disclosure forms had not been submitted Thursday, but he said he raised about \$9,000 during his campaign.

"I operated on a shoestring,"

disclosure forms.

He is not worried about McConnaughay's cash.

"It doesn't guarantee a win, I'll tell you that," Meadath said. "I really don't pay any attention to her finances."

Meadath says his campaign is all volunteer and he has spent his time speaking with community groups and indi-

viduals.

On the McConnaughay side, the money coming in is also going out.

Carlson said she has spent thousands on paid campaign consultants and regular bills associated with running a countywide campaign.

Of the total \$136,848 that has come in, the McConnaughay

effort has spent nearly \$70,000. By comparison, Kane County State's Attorney Meg Gorecki shelled out \$120,000 to win a tough primary and then a general election in 2000.

McConnaughay is not endorsing candidates in other races and her campaign will not be giving money to other individuals running for county offices.

Carlson said the fund-raising

1-30-04 Beacon News
Election Watch

Aurora mayoral candidate **Bill Wyatt** is underwriting the admission fee for the Paramount Theatre offerings of "Tuesday Nights" at the movies Tuesday and Feb. 10, 17 and 24.

North by Northwest will be shown at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday at the Paramount Theatre, 23 E. Galena Blvd. in Aurora.

Voter registration will be held in the lobby of the theater, where Wyatt will greet moviegoers. Call (630) 896-6666.

Local candidates are invited to submit items about endorsements, fund-raisers, debates, appearances or other campaign activities to Election Watch. Mail items to: Election Watch, The Beacon News, 101 S. River St., Aurora 60506. Fax (630) 844-1043. Or e-mail: beaconourtowns@scn1.com

1-30-04 Chronicle
Kane jail inmate charged with escape, forgery after 7 hours freedom

GENEVA — The inmate who was released from the Kane County Jail by mistake was charged Thursday with escape and forgery, authorities said.

Juan L. Ramirez, 21, of Elgin, was free for about seven hours Tuesday when he was confused with another inmate with a similar name who had posted bond, according to a Kane County sheriff's report.

Ramirez had been jailed since June on a charge of aggravated battery to a child.

The Kane County sheriff's internal affairs unit reviewing the incident to determine whether the corrections officer responsible for the mistake followed proper procedure.

— Kane County Chronicle

1-30-04 Beacon News
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Deal feels wrong

The article about the two ex-Kane County sheriff's deputies being given probation for theft bothers me on a couple of points.

For one thing, I am appalled by the comment made by one of the attorneys representing one of the accused when she said, "These things happen in police departments and sheriff's departments all the time, and rarely are charges filed."

Now, I'm not naive enough to believe that such things never happen, but I still believe that 99.9 percent of law enforcement personnel do not engage in such conduct, and for her to paint everyone who carries a badge with the same brush that smudged her client is outrageous.

I agree with Sheriff Ramsey that if she has any knowledge of people stealing things, she should report it.

I also agree with Ramsey that officers in a position of public trust who are stealing should be held to a higher standard, and, to me, probation does not do that.

Ed Jungels
Montgomery

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1-30-04 Daily Herald

Man charged after release from jail

BY JEFFREY GAUNT
Daily Herald Staff Writer

Six and a half hours on the lam earned a Kane County inmate who was mistakenly released from jail Tuesday night two more reasons to appear in court, sheriff's deputies said Thursday.

Juan Landre Ramirez, 21, whose last known address was 571 Douglas Ave., Elgin, was charged with felony counts of escape and forgery, deputies said.

Ramirez was in jail on a

\$75,000 bond for aggravated child battery charges when he was mistaken for another inmate with the same name and released, deputies said.

He was recaptured by sheriff's detectives and Elgin police early Wednesday morning at a residence in Elgin.

Ramirez is scheduled to appear at bond call this morning, deputies said.

The Kane County Sheriff's Internal Affairs Office continues to investigate whether proper procedures were followed in Ramirez's release,

deputies said.

The incident joined a list of mix-ups involving the Kane County sheriff's office that have led to the mistaken release of a number of inmates, including a man accused of driving a getaway car in an Elgin triple murder and another accused of trying to run down two Hawthorn Woods police officers.



Fox Valley in 60 seconds

1-30-04 Daily Herald

Fabyan decision delayed:

A panel of Kane County forest preserve commissioners Thursday decided to put off a decision on the demolition of the historic garage at the Fabyan Forest Preserve near Geneva until May. The garage, notable for its turntable system that can rotate a car 180 degrees so you can drive forward in and out of it, has made it onto a list of deteriorating buildings and could be facing the wrecking ball. The forest preserve board's utilization committee received a report of the building's failings Thursday but agreed to give the preservation group, Friends of Fabyan, a few more months to raise money and secure grants to pay for upgrades and repairs. Until then, the garage will stay undis-

turbed.

Sex abuse trial date set:

A trial date for former Geneva priest Mark Campobello has been set for March 18. Campobello, 39, is accused of sexually abusing a teenage girl in 1999 while he was a priest at St. Peter Catholic Church in Geneva. He also faces charges related to abuse allegations from a second person, but those charges are not involved in the case going to trial in March, Campobello attorney Paul Gaziano said Thursday. Campobello was ordained in 1991 and served as a parochial vicar at St. Peter in 1994. Campobello also was a resident priest at St. Peter while he was serving as an assistant principal and spiritual director

at Aurora Central Catholic High School. He was arrested in 2002.

Unclaimed funds available:

Kane County residents can view a list of unclaimed funds totaling more than \$68,000 collected by Treasurer Dave Rickert on the office Web site at www.co.kane.il.us/treasurer. If you believe any of the money is yours, you must present a sworn statement and proof of identification to collect it. The county treasurer holds unclaimed funds for seven years before transferring them to the state treasurer. Most of the unclaimed money comes from mortgage company refunds never cashed or double payments. If you believe you have unclaimed funds held by the treasurer, call (630) 232-3565.

1-30-04 Beacon news

Data will help waste haulers locate sites

By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — Kane County is willing to share information with waste haulers if it will make it easier to locate a waste transfer station in the county.

Board members on the Solid Waste Committee this week agreed to share data from the county's Geographical Information System.

GIS is a mapping system that shows information such as how close other properties are to a given site, if the site is in flood plain, who the nearby owners are, transportation systems nearby and many other things. The information could give waste haulers an idea if a transfer station is feasible on certain property, before the application process begins.

"It will give them a tool," said Tim Harbaugh, the county's Environmental Management director. "For instance, they'd be able to see if there is a house 1,000 feet from the property, which is an automatic reason for denial."

Haubaugh's suggestion came from the idea of some board members to possibly create a map that would show waste haulers recommended sites for transfer stations.

But other County Board members, including Board Chairman Mike McCoy, R-Aurora, did not like that idea, saying it was not good practice to pick out certain properties or areas and designate them for that purpose. They said that job falls to the waste-hauling companies.

The county, in its Solid Waste plan, has said it will no longer site landfills in the county. Kane will run the Settler's Hill Landfill in Geneva for a couple more years before it closes, and then will be out of the landfill business.

But the plan says it will encourage transfer stations — where garbage is brought temporarily by waste haulers, then transferred to a permanent landfill — as a way of keeping garbage collection costs down.

Familiar rivals face off again for county board

By TOM O'KONOWITZ
Daily Herald Staff Writer

Although he lost the first four rounds of this long fight, Larry Wegman says only he has the energy left to take on a Democrat in November and keep Kane County Board District 20 in the hands of the Republicans.

For the fifth primary election since 1996, Wegman is challenging board veteran Jack E. Cook in the Republican primary for Cook's seat representing north-east Elgin and parts of downtown.

Cook, 79, is a retired pharmacist who has been on the board since 1990. Wegman, 61, is an Elgin consultant and contractor who previously served as an



Jack E. Cook



Larry Wegman

Elgin Township trustee.

In an endorsement interview with the Daily Herald's editorial board Thursday, the two candidates sparred over who could serve the district and fend off a challenge from a Democrat in a November.

Wegman said Cook does not have the energy for a successful campaign and, as such, he pre-

dicted Cook would lose in November if he wins the GOP primary March 16.

Wegman said he believes he would win because he is better prepared for a competitive race.

"I had people come to me that live in the district and said, 'Here's what we see and we don't like it. We'd like you to try again,'" Wegman said. "The people who are supporting me are looking for more to come back to the district. Otherwise, what's the point of sending your tax dollars to Geneva and getting nothing in return?"

Wegman said the District 20 board member should do more for the district — which is wholly within Elgin's city limits — such as working to assign a commu-

nity prosecutor to the city of Elgin.

In response, Cook said he has done things for his district. He pointed to the drastic overhaul of Elgin's downtown riverfront, which was funded and made possible in part by the Kane County Forest Preserve, which Cook headed. Cook also said all county residents benefit from the more than 2,000 acres of open space that the county obtained through a \$70 million initiative Cook helped lead.

Cook on Thursday acknowledged that his narrow victory in November 2002 did stardle him after 12 years in office. Cook held on to his board seat after capturing just 57 more votes than newcomer Clark Landers.

Neighbors happier with 1,100 homes

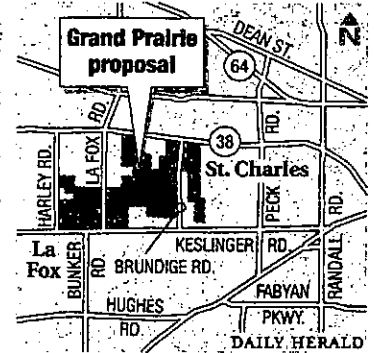
Scaled-back development meets LaFox residents' approval

BY LISA SMITH
Daily Herald Staff Writer

1-30-04
Daily Herald

A scaled-down version of the Grand Prairie development with half as many homes could be presented to Kane County officials within the next few months.

Grand Prairie representatives are close to reaching an agreement with a group of LaFox residents that would put about 1,100 homes on a 1,200-acre site along the southern edge of Route 38 between Brundige and Harley Roads.



The plan for 1,100 homes — down from nearly 2,000 previously proposed to St. Charles city officials — corresponds to guidelines outlined in Kane County's 2020 land-use plan.

It also falls in line with LaFox's own land-use plan, created in the past year with help from Kane County staff.

Wyndham Deerpoint Homes, of North Aurora, and Town & Country Homes, of Lombard, this week withdrew plans to seek annexation of the proposed development into the city of St. Charles, instead announcing they would continue working with LaFox residents on a revised proposal to be submitted to Kane County officials.

The developers began working with LaFox residents over the summer and have met weekly throughout the past month or so.

That's a marked change from three years ago,

Homes: Developers no longer oppose LaFox incorporation

Continued from Page 1

when 240 residents of LaFox and Elburn signed a petition opposing the development and asking Kane County to reject a concept plan.

"We can't just put a fence around LaFox, so rather than say no we had to come up with an alternate plan," said LaFox resident Drew Frasz, who sits on the community's planning committee.

In addition to several hundred single-family homes, the development plans in the works also include a group of town-

houses and a commercial center surrounding the proposed LaFox Metra station, which Metra officials expect to build in late 2005 or early 2006. But gone from previous drawings is additional commercial space fronting Route 38, said Wyndham Deerpoint partner Richard Guerard.

"Our plan is a neighborhood-based design... that maintains the identity of our community, instead of creating sprawl," Frasz said. Frasz said he also plans to work with Geneva school district officials, who had opposed

the higher-density plan as proposed in St. Charles because of the financial strain it would have put on the district.

"We hope to get an end product we're all proud of," Frasz said.

In return, the developers are expected to support LaFox's quest to become an official, incorporated village of 4.2 square miles between Geneva and Elburn.

Incorporation, which is granted by the state, gives residents more control over their community — particularly when it comes to development

— by establishing their own guidelines, rather than following those set by the county.

Just a year ago, the developers hired Springfield lobbyists to quash LaFox's incorporation bid when it came before state lawmakers.

Now, it's a different story.

"The bottom line is we don't object to their creation of LaFox and the properties we own could be a part of that," Guerard said.

"We would be consenting to an annexation upon the creation of a town or city."

1-30-04 Chronicle

Hampshire zoning board endorses halt on housing proposals

By ARACELY HERNANDEZ
Shaw News Service

HAMPSHIRE — The zoning board of appeals has recommended that the village board approve a new law that would stop any future proposals from coming before the village board.

"The focus of the board is to get other planning in order," village attorney Mark Schuster said.

Village board members are waiting for the Planning Commission to make a recommendation on a new land-use plan. They also are waiting for

the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission to make a decision on the village's request to expand its planning area over about 49 square miles.

Although the village does not plan to annex all that land, it would have the right to provide sewer and water service there.

Zoning board members approved the moratorium on a 4-0 vote without much discussion.

"I think it's an excellent idea," board Chairman Carl Christensen said. "Our comprehensive plan is in the

process and we're (making decisions) out in areas our (current) plan doesn't guide us."

Schuster said the new rule would be reconsidered after six months, and if all unfinished business is not complete, the rule could be re-adopted for another six months.

Village Trustee Chuck Anderson, who proposed the new law, said it would not apply to commercial development.

"With the amount of homes in front of us, we don't need to look at any more," he said.

Board members are con-

sidering proposals for about 2,600 homes in two subdivisions from Aurora-based developer Crown Community Development.

Crown wants the village to annex more than 1,700 acres for two subdivisions.

Prairie Ridge would have more than 1,800 homes on 1,277 acres on Harmony Road between Allen and Melms roads.

Oakstead would have more than 800 homes on 513 acres between Routes 20 and 47.

Three other proposals for about 1,400 homes total also are pending.

1-30-04 Chronicle

Hampshire might pay for open space

By ARACELY HERNANDEZ
Shaw News Service

property such as wetlands not suitable for public use would create more land for the district to maintain.

"They've already said they don't want it," Ruth said. "There has to be maintenance of these areas and the park district does not have (the funds)."

Hypke said park district officials would want to be part of the park committee. The district should have the option of taking the land when they can afford it, he added.

Ruth said the committee, if created, would include two park trustees, two village trustees and a resident.

"That's great," Hypke said. "It's more than what we were asking for."

Park board members are asking taxpayers to alleviate budget problems and help hire a full-time maintenance person by approving a March 16 referendum. The district's current tax rate is 12.7 cents per \$100 of assessed value. The owner of a \$150,000 house who takes the homestead exemption pays about \$59 to the district. The increase would cost the same homeowner about \$33 more.

The Hampshire Park District's boundaries are the same as Hampshire Township.

HAMPSHIRE — The village might have to pay to maintain land that developers donate as open space because the Hampshire Park District cannot afford to.

Trustee Orris Ruth recently recommended that the village board create a park committee to maintain walking trails and other open space such as wetlands donated to the village by developers.

The village asks developers to provide at least 40 percent of land in subdivisions as open space, but not all of it is for recreational use.

Park Executive Director Dan Hypke said if the committee is created, the village would not take control of park land donated for recreation.

"Retention and detention ponds, we don't take, because it's worthless," Hypke said. "We cannot maintain it because we don't have the budget. We're looking for ball fields and playgrounds and possibly facilities."

The park district is having a difficult time maintaining fields it already owns, Hypke said. It does not have full-time maintenance person to mow existing park lands. Adding

Fence Post

How can you explain penalty for crash?

I am angry, confused and in need of an explanation. If someone from the courts or the legal profession can shed some honest and humane light on what I have to say here, send it to me at robanderson123@yahoo.com.

Edward Edwardson Jr. of Elgin recently was sentenced to 25 years in jail for viciously attacking a man and a woman (they both lived) and killing a cat. That sentence, if he serves it all, is fine with me.

On the opposite end of the common-sense spectrum is Jason C. Janega. He is the man who mowed down Tiffany Baler, 19, with his car in July 2003 while she was out for a walk by Wheeler Park in Geneva.

Here is where the insanity of our judicial system makes me want to vomit and where I weep for Tiffany and her family. This man, I use that term loosely because he left the scene and drove home after blowing Tiffany out of her shoes and killing her, got a sentence of four months in a Kane County jail work-release program and four years' probation. Did your blood pressure just skyrocket like mine did when I read that?

He killed her by causing massive injuries to her neck and pelvis. She was just out for a walk for God's sake.

Why did Jason leave and run home to his wife who called police? He didn't call himself. Would Tiffany still be alive if he had stayed to help her? Maybe, maybe not, but it would have been worth a try.

By no means do I demean the brutality of Edwardson's attacks or the lifelong effect it will have

on his victims. But at least they lived. Tiffany is dead! It is unfathomable for me to believe our system of justice is so heartless and gutless that it lets such a horrible crime as killing a young girl be punished with barely a tap on the wrist. This is where I need the explanation. Where have we gone wrong? People who rob stores, sell drugs, steal cars are punished more severely than Janega, who killed someone.

Would it have helped if Tiffany could have somehow spoken for herself? She could have told of her sorrow at not being alive anymore, at never again being able to hug her family or go out with friends.

She could have told of her fear and pain when Janega demolished her body with his car. But as we know, dead victims can't speak for themselves. They are members of the singularly silent when the killers are

charged and tried.

Janega's attorney said Janega and three generations of his family are devastated by Tiffany's death. Oh please.

If he wants to know what devastation means, he should look into the eyes of Tiffany's family and friends, look into their broken hearts. In cases like this, we often hear, "But he'll have to live with his actions for the rest of his life." Oh please again.

The key word there is "live." Something Tiffany will never do. Janega will go home, maybe have a beer and pizza or go to a show. He will laugh again.

What will Tiffany and her loved ones be doing all that time? Death does not give back what it takes away.

A Kane County coroner's jury ruled this insanity an accident. An accident is when someone hits a baseball through a window or spills a glass of milk. Call it what you want, the reality

is that Tiffany is dead and Janega got the break of his life with his pitiful sentence for not only killing her, but running away to try to save his hide.

So help me out here. Try to make sense of this to me and to Tiffany's family. I know a deal was cut, but it never should have gone that far.

Why is there so much devastation, yet so little justice? Someone talk to me.

Rob Anderson
Sugar Grove

Mahler

1-30-04 Daily Herald

Cougars might tone down fireworks

1-30-04 Chronicle
Area residents have complained about noise after baseball games

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — The Kane County Cougars will report to the forest preserve next month on a plan to keep down noise from fireworks after games. Team general manager Jeff Sedivy

on Thursday told members of the Kane County Forest Preserve District's Enterprise Committee that he would meet with the company that provides the fireworks shows and report back to the committee at its February meeting on a plan to reduce the noise. Geneva 5th Ward Alderman Paul

DesCoteaux appeared to relay complaints that he has received from fire-works shows after Cougars games. "Let's see if we can find some im-

provement," DesCoteaux said. "We hopefully can come up with a solution."

Sedivy said the team does not have fireworks shows on nights when children have school the next day.

"We make sure we don't do shows when school is in session," Sedivy said. "Our success has been through families and kids, and we will not jeopardize that."

DesCoteaux said the complaints

Enterprise Committee
Kane County Forest Preserve will meet in February to deal with the noise.

that have come to him are from families who have a sick child who is unable to sleep because of the noise.

DesCoteaux also said many residents in the neighborhood enjoy the fireworks shows.

Forest preserve President John Hoscheit said the 2003 season was unusual in that the Cougars had a team

with good pitching and poor hitting, which led to long, extra-inning games. Enterprise Committee Chairman Robert McConaughay, R-Geneva, said he lives in the neighborhood just west of the stadium and has received noise complaints in the past.

"I didn't receive a single (noise) complaint this year," McConaughay said.

The Cougars play in the Class A Midwest League and are a minor league affiliate of the Oakland Athletics. They play in Elfstrom Stadium at the Kane County Events Center, which is owned by the forest preserve district.

Community

N. Aurora OKs annexation of Christian school's property

1-30-04 Chronicle
Village officials seek to shift Deerpath Road west by 500 feet

By ERIC SCHELKOPF
Kane County Chronicle

NORTH AURORA — More businesses soon could come to the village's west side.

Village trustees this week approved an annexation agreement for Aurora Christian Schools.

The agreement calls for Aurora Christian Schools to deannex 6.7 acres it owns from Aurora and annex it to North Aurora.

Trustees also approved business zoning for the land, which is along the west side of Deerpath Road and south of the ComEd right-of-way.

The two lots are in the Deerpath Commerce Center.

The school, at 14 Blackhawk St., had

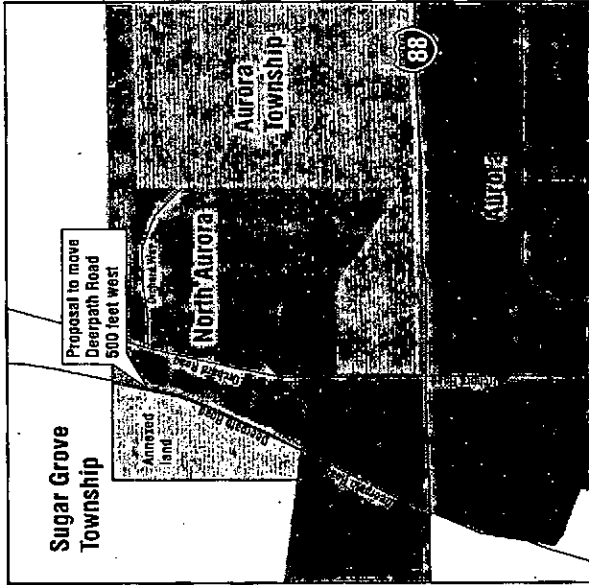
planned to build a new campus between Deerpath and Orchard roads, but now plans to move into a building in Aurora.

Plan commissioners recently recommended zoning the land for business use. However, they recommended that mini-warehouse houses not be allowed to be built on the land.

School officials have not released plans for the land. Village officials said that they want to shift Deerpath Road to the west to increase the economic opportunities on the village's western corridor. Village trustees already have approved an agreement with Aurora that moves the road 500 feet to the west.

"It gives depth and value to the entire property to do something with it," village President Mark Ruby said.

Trustees discussed what would happen to the current Deerpath Road. Village Attorney Kevin Drendel said the road could be removed or used as a private road.



Chronicle graphic by Joshua Morringner

Windmill will need volunteers

Official: Using it will keep it maintained

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — When the Fabyan Windmill is turning again, the forest preserve district will need a host of volunteers to operate it.

The best way to maintain the windmill is let it do what is supposed to do, which is turn in the wind, district operations director Mike Holan said.

"We have to keep it running to prevent it from falling into disrepair," Holan said.

To do that, members of the district's Utilization Committee on Thursday decided to establish a team of volunteer millers who would operate the machine.

Dutch windmill expert Lukas Verbig, who has been conducting some of the repairs at his home shop in Holland and acting as a consultant on the project, will develop a handbook, essentially an operator's manual, Holan said.

District officials have looked to another windmill restoration project in Fulton, which has a volunteer staff of 28 millers.

The millers grind the grain to make flour. The millers also have to turn the windmill cap, which turns the sails into the wind.

Two millers are on a duty at a time. Two are required for safety reason and because the job of operating the mill is not easy.

Holan said the Fulton windmill is not as large as the Fabyan windmill and at times they find themselves short-handed, meaning the forest preserve probably would need to sign up more than 28 volunteers.

The operating manual would keep the process consistent as people drop or join the volunteer group.

The Fulton group has an ap-



Bob Gerrard — Chronicle photo staff

Repairs to the Fayban windmill are on schedule, and it should be operating by June.

prentice miller and a master miller who are able to teach the skills to the volunteers.

Executive director Jon Duerr said the repairs "are on schedule, or maybe a week behind because of the cold weather."

The windows and upper siding have been refurbished. The lower siding has not been completed, he said.

The project could be completed in time for the sails to be turning again by June.

Verbig has discovered that the main shaft-bearing beam, a 12-foot-long, 20-inch diameter single piece of wood that connects the wind sails to the main shaft inside the mill, has deteriorated beyond repair.

Verbig estimated the cost to replace the shaft would be \$2,000 in Holland or \$6,000 in the United States.

"The machine operating in a modest fashion will help with maintenance," Duerr said.

Being a miller

- Millers would grind the grain to make flour. They also are responsible for turning the windmill cap.
- Two millers are required to be on duty at a time for safety reasons.
- Millers would have a handbook to refer to when learning how to operate the windmill.

1-30-04 Beacon News

Final ruling on Gorecki due today

■ **Legal issues: Attorneys hope that criminals won't fall through the cracks**

By Daniel Duggan and Mike Cetera
STAFF WRITERS

ST. CHARLES TOWNSHIP — It is the nightmare scenario, termed a "failure of justice" by the county's top judge.

What if the prosecutors who run the Kane County state's attorney's office no longer could do their jobs? Would potentially violent criminals walk? Would convictions be overturned?

These are questions that have been pondered within the county's legal circles in the midst of the official misconduct suspension of State's Attorney Meg Gorecki's law license.

Since the Illinois Supreme Court issued a four-month suspension of her license to practice law, there has been

some dispute about how the position should be filled.

Many hope the questions will be answered today with a ruling by 16th Circuit Judge Michael Colwell on the legal issues surrounding how to fill Gorecki's position.

However, his decision still could clash with the Kane County Board, which is scheduled to meet in a special session Monday to decide the same issues as Colwell.

Questions about indictments, plea

agreements and even guilty pleas all could be raised if there is not a state's attorney in good legal standing.

According to an opinion on the matter that Attorney General Lisa Madigan issued last week, all of the county's prosecutors, also called assistant state's attorneys, derive their power from the elected state's attorney.

The opinion stated "if the state's attorney is disqualified from acting, so also are his or her assistant state's attorneys."

Fears calmed, partly

When 16th Circuit Chief Judge Philip DiMarzio appointed Katherine Moran as a temporary replacement for Gorecki, many concerns that had been brewing were calmed, said defense attorney D.J. Tegeler.

"Before Judge DiMarzio's appointment, people were very concerned," he said. "I looked into the issue, and others I talked to who looked into it were very concerned."

◆ Turn to GORECKI, A2

fortherecord

The Beacon News tries to be accurate and fair in every story it publishes. When a mistake occurs, we want to fix it. To report errors, call the managing editor at 844-5881.


- A prayer vigil for murder victim Roderick "Ricky" Robb is scheduled for 4:30 p.m. today in the 500 block of North Constitution Drive in Aurora. The time was omitted in a story Thursday.
- A picture of a Kaneland High School wrestler in Tuesday's sports section was incorrectly identified as Bob Hopkins. The Kaneland wrestler was Jeremy Kenny.
- Richard Worzala, father of crash victim Jennifer Worzala, of Yorkville, was misidentified in Thursday's edition. Jennifer attended school in Aurora, but grew up in Yorkville.

recentdeaths

Obituaries / Page A10

- Buchner, Katherine**, 99, Aurora
- Dienst, Norman Ray**, 77, Hinckley
- Henry, Arlene K.**, 86, Yorkville
- Rios, Ramon**, 65, Aurora
- Schindlbeck, George V.**, 90, Aurora
- Schuler, Kenneth G.**, 62, Aurora
- Stees-Rumyon, Dorothy M.**, 69, formerly Geneva, Batavia
- Stein, Glen Edward**, 78, Aurora
- Worzala, Jennifer Lynne**, 21, Yorkville

The Beacon News

 A Hollinger

GORECKI

From page A1

Since there is now a court-appointed person to act as state's attorney, Tegeler said many attorneys have been able to stop worrying — somewhat.

"Right now, we can take a step back," he said. "I think there's a sigh of relief that something has happened, and we can appreciate the judge taking that step to alleviate the potential situation.

"That's not to say some attorneys won't look into it," he added.

Most hope to see a resolution to the matter by Monday — if the office of the state's attorney, the Kane County Board and DiMarzio can all agree on the situation.

If questions remain about the legal status of the state's attorney's office in coming days, weeks or months, however, some lawyers say they will be paying attention.

"It depends on the situation," said defense attorney Van Richards Jr. "If a defense lawyer researched the matter and came to a conclusion that (prosecutors) were acting without authority because there was not a legally designated state's attorney in place, he would be duty-bound to raise it on behalf of his clients."

'It's not a problem'

Michael Coghlan, an assistant state's attorney who has been researching the situation on behalf of the state's attorney's office, said there is nothing to worry about in terms of criminals' convictions being overturned.

"I've researched that; it's not a problem," he said. "Judge

DiMarzio's order precludes any legitimate challenge to a conviction — that's consistent with the attorney general opinion."

Larry Schlam, a professor in the Northern Illinois University College of Law in DeKalb, said he expects defense attorneys to "do anything that may give some negotiating, political or other advantage to their clients." He noted, however, that Madigan's opinion appears sound and likely will be followed by the court.

"Once the acting state's attorney is in place pursuant to the Illinois Constitution, prosecutions are valid and secure," he said.

Coghlan said he believes any attempt by a defense attorney to have a conviction reversed solely because of the situation in the state's attorney's office will be overturned later, possibly on an appeal.

However, he added that, if the office is not returned to Gorecki by June 2, there may be more challenges.

Some members of the County Board believe the suspension of Gorecki's law license may disqualify her from continuing to hold the office. That position, which is at odds with the attorney general's opinion, likely will be considered when the board meets Monday. The board could decide to declare the state's attorney's post vacant and appoint a successor to finish her term through November.

"I'd say that convictions could be challenged if anyone other than Meg served as state's attorney after June 1 because the citizens placed her in that position through the election process," Coghlan said.

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McCoy might halt meeting about Gorecki

1-30-04 Chronicle

Judge to rule today on replacement meeting

By ADAM KOVAC
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Kane County Board Chairman Mike McCoy said Thursday that he might cancel a special board meeting intended to permanently replace State's Attorney Meg Gorecki. Judge Michael J. Colwell is expected to rule today on a lawsuit Gorecki filed

to block the meeting set for Monday, the day after she is to begin serving a four-month suspension of her law license.

But McCoy said the appointment Tuesday of one of Gorecki's top assistants to serve in her absence might settle the dispute sparked by her suspension for violating the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct.

"I'm not sure we need a special meeting now," McCoy said "We'll wait and see what Judge Colwell decides."

Gorecki, 36, must take a leave of absence to serve the sanction she received Nov. 20, 2003, from the Illinois

Supreme Court for implicating McCoy in a jobs-for-bribes scheme in 1998, before she was elected.

Last Friday, Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan issued a nonbinding opinion that said Gorecki could return after the suspension and called on Kane County judges to appoint a special state's attorney to oversee the office.



McCoy



Gorecki

McCoy the same day called the special meeting to declare Gorecki's office vacant and nominate a replacement for the board's approval. McCoy maintains that the power to declare a vacancy rests with the county, not its judges.

Gorecki counterattacked Monday, using Madigan's opinion as ammunition to sue McCoy and the board, even though she questioned part of Madigan's opinion and asked to tap her own substitute.

See GORECKI, page 2

Gorecki

Continued from page 1

On Tuesday, Chief Judge Philip L. DiMarzio ordered Katherine Moran, chief of Gorecki's civil division, to act as the special state's attorney until June 1, the day Gorecki can return.

At a hearing Wednesday, Colwell declined to rule on the lawsuit. Colwell also suggested that McCoy drop the meeting because he has endorsed Moran's appointment.

McCoy also said Thursday that he would nominate Moran to replace Gorecki if Colwell allows the board to act at the meeting.

If not, McCoy said he still thinks the county board eventually will discuss whether it has authority to declare a vacancy in the state's attorney's office.

"I think what Judge DiMarzio did covers that issue," McCoy said. "Whether we have a special meeting or not, I think it's something we should discuss in our normal course of business."

Gorecki referred telephone calls on the matter to one of her assistants. Her attorney, Larry Wechter of Geneva, did not return calls for comment.

Fabyan garage gets more time

Committee grants volunteer group extension to raise money

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — The Friends of Fabyan have another five months in which to find ways to raise money to save the Fabyan garage.

The district's Utilization Committee on Thursday granted the volunteer group the time extension.

The committee originally set January as the deadline, but Darlene Larson, co-president of Friends of Fabyan, said the

Friends of Fabyan has applied to the National Trust and the Landmark Preservation Council for a state museum grant.

Architect Clayton Haldeman

schedule of state grant disbursements did not coincide with the January date.

Some agencies only will accept grant applications within a specific time frame, and some applications are available only after the first of the year, Larson said.

Haldeman's survey estimated that it would cost \$244,000 to refurbish the apartment/garage section and \$359,000 to repair the shop section.

See GARAGE, page 2

Garage

Continued from page 1

Demolishing the shop area would cost about \$43,000.

The Utilization Committee voted in June to demolish the garage. Friends of Fabyan and Preservation Partners, the group that operates the Fabyan Villa Museum, asked for time to develop a plan and attempt to raise money to save the building.

Col. George Fabyan built the garage in 1912 fitted with a huge turntable as a safety feature. The turntable allowed cars to pull into the garage off Route 31 and be-

Larson said 27 sites from the original estate have been lost.

"Saving dilapidated buildings that have no use is not high on my list, but I would be ready to save this structure," said Paul Greviskes, D-Aurora.

Committee Chairman Jan Carlson, R-Elburn, said the Friends of Fabyan will provide monthly updates on their fund-raising efforts.

The group has until May to show they can pay for and complete the renovations.

"I want them to exhaust all efforts before we have to make the tough decisions," Carlson said.

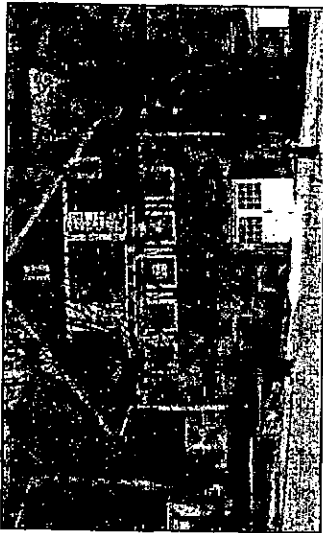
spun in place so that it was facing the road and would not have to back out onto the road.

Fabyan parked his Rolls Royce, Stutz Bearcat, Stevens Duryea, Bentley and two Cadillacs in the garage.

The living area above the garage was reserved for Fabyan's chauffeurs and their families.

Larson said she is applying to get the Fabyan estate site nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

The Fabyan family filled their estate with numerous amenities that no longer are there, such as a creek pool on the island.



Bob Gerrard — Chronicle photo staff

The Friends of Fabyan are trying to raise money to save the Fabyan garage from being demolished.

Hollywood Casino owners seek deal to run Emerald

■ **\$500 million bid:** Penn National would manage, state would own 10th casino

STAFF AND WIRE REPORTS

AURORA — Penn National Gaming Inc. confirmed late Friday it has submitted a \$506 million bid for

the state's 10th and last casino license and that it wants to strike a deal that would make the state the owner of the gambling hall while giving Penn National the long-term right to manage it.

Penn National, which owns Hollywood Casino-Aurora, would construct a \$255 million casino entertainment complex in Rosemont, including a 200-room hotel, the company said.

Under the proposal, Penn National would pay the license's current owners \$156 million, and the state would get \$350 million in cash.

Penn National then would sell the casino, the entertainment complex and all other assets and liabilities associated with the Rosemont complex to the state for \$1, the company said.

Millions of dollars in other

financial considerations also are part of the proposal.

Penn National would develop and manage the casino in return for 10 percent of its net revenues and a fee related to whatever benefit the state would have from owning the casino, as opposed to having it in the hands of a private company, according to the company's proposal.

The state and minority shareholders — Penn National's

proposed deal states that 20 percent of Emerald's stock would have to be owned by minorities or women — would keep the rest of the income, which could be more than \$3 billion over 10 years, the company said.

Sources said the proposed bid would give Penn National the rights to manage the casino for 20 years.

Penn National bid against six other companies for the license. All seven offers have an average value

of about \$300 million in cash, according to the Gaming Board, which refused to publicly disclose any bids.

Gaming Board spokesman Gene O'Shea said the bid amounts might be released after a closed-door special board meeting Tuesday. "The chairman wants to meet with the board and talk about the bids

◆ **TURN TO CASINO, A2**

CASINO

From page A1

before they release any kind of further information," O'Shea said. The board released a statement that said the offers included "an array of complex financing structures and contingencies."

Penn National wants to put its casino in Rosemont. Rights to the state's final riverboat are held by the bankrupt company Emerald Casino, which planned to open in Rosemont until it was blocked by state regulators.

The nine casinos operating in Illinois are privately owned, but Gov. Rod Blagojevich and Chicago Mayor Richard Daley both at times have expressed interest in the idea of having publicly owned casinos run by hired management firms.

The move also would help Blagojevich meet his goal of raising at least \$350 million from the transac-

tion to help ease the state's budget crisis.

Whether Penn National's proposal is legal is unclear, however. Susan Lichtenstein, Blagojevich's general counsel, said she was unaware of anyone in the administration who had spoken to Penn National about its bid.

"I haven't seen the bid," she said. "I don't know what they're proposing. To speculate about it in a vacuum would be unwise."

Gambling opponents vowed to fight state ownership of a casino. The Rev. Tom Grey, executive director of the Rockford-based National Coalition Against Legalized Gambling, questioned how the state could regulate a casino that it owns. Tom Swolk, executive director of the Illinois Casino and Gaming Association, an industry group, also said the group is uncomfortable with the state being both the regulator of gaming and the owners of a gaming venue.