

Council bans use of city property by feds

Aurora vote on immigration enforcement shows officials ‘standing with the community,’ mayor says

By R. Christian Smith
Beacon-News

The Aurora City Council on Wednesday unanimously approved a measure banning civil immigration enforcement efforts on city property, an idea which has seen significant community support. The ordinance now restricts any city-owned or controlled property

— including buildings, parking lots or city parks — from being used as a staging area, a processing location or a base of operations for federal immigration enforcement efforts. The restriction would not stop criminal enforcement efforts or federal agents with a judicial warrant. The ban also does not cover city-owned property that is being

leased out to a separate organization. Schools and libraries, as well as private businesses and residences, are not owned by the city and so aren’t covered by the ordinance. A growing number of other jurisdictions in the area have adopted similar measures, including East Aurora School District 131, Batavia, Elgin, Carpentersville, Will County, Lake County, Chicago and Cook County. Aurora officials have acknowledged, even within the ordi-

nance itself, that the restrictions offer residents no real safety from federal immigration enforcement efforts. However, it will give the city a way to document what federal immigration agents do on city property, which can then be passed along to the recently-established Illinois Accountability Commission, officials have said. While the measure isn’t a “silver bullet,” Aurora Mayor John Laesch said at the Wednesday meeting, it shows that the Aurora City Council and city government “are standing

with the community.” The proposal comes during what President Donald Trump’s Department of Homeland Security has called “Operation Midway Blitz,” a surge of immigration enforcement in the Chicago region that started in September. Locally and across the Chicago region, U.S. residents and others have said they’ve been detained, protestors have said they were met with pepper-spray and other harmful tactics, and some

Turn to Council, Page 2



A reception is held in the newly unveiled show house at the Habitat Green Freedom “smart neighborhood” in Aurora after a ribbon-cutting Wednesday. The neighborhood is the result of a partnership between Nicor Gas and Habitat for Humanity. R. CHRISTIAN SMITH/BEACON-NEWS

First home unveiled for ‘smart’ community

Aurora neighborhood’s houses built to resist weather damage, lower utility costs

By R. Christian Smith
Beacon-News

The first home to be built at Habitat Green Freedom, a “smart neighborhood” in Aurora being developed through a partnership between Nicor Gas and Habitat for Humanity, was officially unveiled at a ceremony on Wednesday. Along with the now-complete show home, other houses in the neighborhood could be seen in various stages of construction. The community, which is being built near the intersection of Jeri-

cho Road and Edgelawn Drive, is planned to one day hold 17 homes designed with energy efficiency, affordability and resiliency in mind. “We’ve been looking forward to this day for a long time,” Meena Beyers, vice president of business and community development for Nicor Gas, said at the ceremony. “The unveiling of this show home is a major accomplishment for our company, for the community and for the energy industry overall.” The show home highlights various features that houses in the neighborhood will have, from

solar panels on the roof to electric car chargers in the garage. The innovation going into these homes is expected to make them more resilient against inclement weather plus lead to lower utility costs, making them more affordable. One example of the houses’ innovative features is the method used to create the walls of the structure: foam blocks connected by plastic webs that fit together sort of like LEGO bricks. The modular foam pieces, made by BuildBlock Building Systems, are interlaced with rebar as they

build up the walls of the structure, then are used as a mold for concrete. This building method is expected to make the houses both disaster resilient and energy efficient, helping to lower utility costs by 30% to 40%, BuildBlock company officials previously told The Beacon-News. The homes are also “dual-fuel,” using both electricity and natural gas. For example, the show home features a cooktop and a furnace that use natural gas but a washing machine and an air source heat

Turn to Homes, Page 2

County board OKs \$409M budget

Four members vote against it; \$6M to come from cash reserves to cover shortfall

By Molly Morrow
Beacon-News

After months of discussion about cost-cutting and revenue-generating proposals meant to help close a budget shortfall, Kane County Board members approved a balanced fiscal year 2026 budget for the county on Monday. It was approved 19-4, with board members Mohammad Iqbal, Clifford Surges, Rick Williams and David Young voting against it. The County Board had until Dec. 1, the first day of the new fiscal year, to approve the county’s annual budget. The budget originally passed Monday was about \$405.7 million, but, at the same meeting, the board passed a roughly \$3.1 million adjustment to account for expenses in some of the elected offices and also \$1 million to make up for the loss of a grant. And the budget is being balanced with the use of about \$6 million in reserves, according to the board’s Finance Committee Chair Bill Lenert.

The county’s budget shortfall

Kane County has been facing a looming budget shortfall in its general fund in recent years, which its board has been solving since 2023 by dipping into the county’s cash reserves. Last year, for example, the budget was balanced with the planned use of about \$27 million in general fund reserves. Kane County Finance Director Kathleen Hopkinson has previously cautioned that the county must make significant cuts or find new revenue before 2027 to avoid dipping into its required 90-day reserves, leaving the board this year with the task of finding new revenue or cutting costs to avoid

Turn to County, Page 3

Veteran of Korean and Vietnam wars, 92, receives Yorkville High School diploma



Denise Crosby

Ronald Moos’ 92 years of life have been filled with adventure — not surprising since he said he entered the military at age 15 by fibbing about his age and served two decades in two branches of the service in two wars that took him to many parts of the globe. Moos, who was born in Aurora in 1933 but spent most of his

nonmilitary life in Yorkville, earned plenty of honors from both the Army and Air Force, including a Bronze Star during the Vietnam War and commendations for 48 missions as an aerial gunner during the Korean War. But Moos is especially proud of his latest award: An honorary high school diploma bestowed on him by the Yorkville School District at Monday’s school board meeting. Although Moos had received his GED in 1956 — eight years after enlisting in the National Guard following his freshman

year at Yorkville High School — he told me he’d always regretted not attaining that one important milestone in life. District officials, when hearing his request, were happy to present him with that diploma, recognizing his service to country and community and noting it’s never too late to close a chapter and honor a personal commitment. Turns out military service runs in the family blood. Moos lived in Aurora with his aunt and uncle Arthur E. Moos, Turn to Crosby, Page 3



Ronald Moos, center, a veteran of the Korean and Vietnam wars, receives an honorary high school diploma recently from Yorkville School District board member Jason Demas, while board secretary Mike Houston looks on. YORKVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT 115