

# THE Beacon-News

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## After fatal crashes, Batavia police aim to improve safety

AURORA BEACON-NEWS

Following two recent fatal crashes along the Randall Road corridor, the Batavia Police Department is analyzing crash data and enforcement activity and making recommendations aimed at improving safety in the future.

These efforts come in the wake of two recent fatal crashes, a news release from the city said — one on Feb. 24 at Randall Road and Mill

Street and another on March 25 at Randall Road and McKee Street.

In response, the police department conducted an assessment of crash data, enforcement activity, roadway conditions and other factors for the busy corridor, the city said.

“This analysis was conducted to better understand what is happening on Randall Road and how we can prevent future tragedies,” Batavia Police Chief Eric Blow-

ers said in the news release. “Our goal is to use data to guide enforcement, education and engineering decisions that improve safety for everyone.”

The study, which looked at crash data from 2019 to early 2026, found that crashes occurring on Randall Road — 767 in total — accounted for 16% of all crashes citywide, per the news release. Injury rates on the corridor were slightly lower than the citywide average, however,

though there have been two fatalities this year already.

The leading causes of crashes that resulted in injuries were failing to yield the right-of-way, or left-turn collisions, and failure to reduce speed, or rear-end collisions, the news release said. Other contributing factors included disregarding traffic signals, improper lane usage, following other vehicles too closely and distracted driving.

The report also found that traffic signal changes put in place in 2020 had little impact on crash frequency or severity, the city said, and that crash trends on Randall Road remain generally consistent with historical averages.

This year so far, the police department conducted 695 traffic stops on or near Randall Road, amounting to nearly one-third of

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Quintin Ingram, a licensed social worker at Family Counseling Service in Aurora, started an onsite food and clothing closet for clients to help them more easily get items to meet their basic needs. AURORA IN BLACK

## Young therapist creates on-site food, clothing pantry



Denise Crosby

As a therapist at Family Counseling Service in Aurora, Quintin Ingram not only listens to stories of struggle and resilience but tries to access resources for clients as they face mental health challenges.

But words and references, he realized, are not always enough.

And so, the 26-year-old licensed social worker took direct action: He came up with

the idea to create a small, accessible pantry within the nonprofit's downtown office, allowing those who use Family Counseling Service to leave a therapy session not only with emotional support but with tangible resources.

Proving once again that big accomplishments often come from little initiatives.

This project did indeed start small — a single gray tote placed in the downtown lobby of Family Counseling Service, where staff members could donate toys for the kids of families struggling with everyday hardships.

The response was so overwhelming, Ingram told me, it

only made sense to expand the idea to include the basic needs most of us take for granted, like food, clothing, hygiene products and small appliances.

As the response continued to grow, maintenance technician Mario Velazquez stepped up to build a dedicated room, complete with shelving and clothing racks, that is easily accessible to clients.

“If we have more than what we can handle, the goal is to take it to other food pantries ... push it out to the community to help everybody,” noted Jason Andrade, vice president of Family Counseling Service.

The success of the “Family

Donation Closet” — which now includes a second storage room — both surprised and delighted Ingram, a graduate of East Aurora High School, Waubensee Community College and Aurora University, where he received his bachelor's and master's degrees in social work.

“I was ecstatic,” Ingram said, referring not only to the outpouring of donations but to the “freedom” he received from Family Counseling Service management to turn an idea into an outreach reality.

When “we see leadership” and “hear ideas like that,

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## Indian Prairie D204 board OKs nearly \$1.4 million in repairs

By Molly Morrow  
AURORA BEACON-NEWS

More lighting and infrastructure renovations are coming to Indian Prairie School District 204, as the district's facilities overhaul continues.

On Monday, the district's school board approved almost \$1.4 million in LED lighting and infrastructure replacements, as well as building permits for flooring work at nine district elementary schools.

District 204 is currently undergoing a multi-year facilities overhaul, after voters in 2024 approved a proposal from the district to sell up to \$420 million in bonds to pay for facility improvements.

The bonds are to be paid for using a continuation of an existing 37-cent property tax per \$100 of equalized assessed value that would otherwise have expired at the end of 2026, meaning the tax rate for residents in terms of their contribution to capital projects will effectively remain flat as a result of the referendum question's passage.

Since the referendum question passed, the district has been proceeding with work on projects across district buildings that are set to extend through 2032. The renovations include school-specific work at Waubonsie Valley High School, Nequa Valley High School, Metea Valley High School, the Birkett Freshman Center and Gregory and Hill middle schools, along with district-wide safety and security upgrades, LED lighting installations and other infrastructure projects.

On Monday, District 204's school board approved a contract with Performance Services for LED lighting replacements at 18 district elementary schools' libraries, per a memo from the district. Metea Valley High School will also be getting a water heater and pool controls replaced as part of the contract, and Nequa Valley High School will be getting an exhaust fan and intake hood for its boiler room.

The contract with Performance Services is set to come in at \$1,388,758, per the district memo.

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## High Court won't challenge transit concealed carry ban



A train leaves the station at the 69th Street CTA Red Line on Feb. 12 in Chicago. ARMANDO L. SANCHEZ/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

By Jeremy Gornor  
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

SPRINGFIELD — The U.S. Supreme Court on Monday declined to hear a legal challenge to an Illinois law barring concealed carry permit holders from carrying loaded guns on public transportation, leaving intact the state's 2013 prohibition on firearms aboard buses and trains.

In September, a three-judge 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals panel in Chicago overturned a 2024 ruling from U.S. District Judge Iain Johnston in Rockford, who found the public transportation provision of Illinois' concealed carry law unconstitutional.

David Sigale, a lawyer for the Illinois State Rifle Association representing the plaintiffs, said in

a prepared statement that he and his clients are “very disappointed” with the Supreme Court's decision, “especially since law-abiding public transportation riders in Illinois are less safe as a result of the law.”

“We know that groups like the ISRA will continue to fight this prohibition in the legislative and political arenas, as well as the courts, so that Illinoisans' Second Amendment rights will be respected,” Sigale said.

The office of Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul, a defendant in the case, could not be reached for comment immediately. But another defendant, Cook County State's Attorney Eileen O'Neill Burke's office, applauded the high court's decision not to take up the case.

“Everyone deserves to feel safe

on public transit. Minimizing the risk from dangerous weapons is crucial to protect members of the public who use this vital public resource,” Burke's office said in a prepared statement. “We are pleased the Supreme Court agreed with our arguments, which will allow Illinois' commonsense law banning firearms on public transportation to stand.”

Central to Johnston's ruling was a constitutional standard requiring gun laws to be “historically” consistent with laws on the books in the 18th century, when the Second Amendment's right to bear arms was ratified. That standard emerged from the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark 2022 decision in *New York State Rifle & Pistol Association v.*

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