

# Mayors to residents: Fight rate hike

Bolingbrook, Homer Glen leaders urge sending feedback or attending forum on Illinois American Water's proposal

By Michelle Mullins  
FOR THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Southwest suburban officials are urging the Illinois Commerce Commission to reject Illinois American Water's proposed water and sewer rate hike, saying residents cannot afford increasing water bills. "Water is not a luxury," Bolingbrook Mayor Mary Alexander-Basta said Wednesday. "It is not a vacation. It is not a new television or a shopping trip that can be postponed. Water, electricity and natu-

ral gas are essential services that every family needs to live with dignity, safety and health." Alexander-Basta, along with state legislators, said Bolingbrook residents pay an average of \$220 a month for their water bills. Senior citizens on fixed incomes and households already cash-strapped by rising costs in food, insurance and housing, cannot afford more rate hikes, she said. "People should not be choosing if they should flush their toilet or take a shower," said state Rep. Dagmara

Avelar, D-Bolingbrook. Illinois American Water filed for a \$136.3 million rate increase, according to the Illinois Commerce Commission. The Citizens Utility Board, a state watchdog, is asking the ICC to reject rate hikes proposed by Illinois American Water and Aqua Illinois, the state's two biggest private water companies, which serve several towns in the Chicago region. American Water, the parent company of



Bolingbrook Mayor Mary Alexander-Basta talks about rising water bills and urges the Illinois Commerce Commission to reject a request by Illinois American Water to raise rates. The village will host a public forum on the subject at 7 p.m. Tuesday at the Bolingbrook Community Center, 201 Canterbury Lane. MICHELLE MULLINS/FOR THE DAILY SOUTHTOWN

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Members of the Lincolnway Special Recreation Association celebrate the organization's 50th anniversary June 26 during a Sneaker Ball at Gaelic Park in Oak Forest. LWSRA

# Group marks 50 years as athletes bring home medals

Lincolnway Special Recreation Association, others represent Illinois at recent USA Games

By Jeff Vorva  
FOR THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE

It's been a great summer so far for Special Olympics and special recreation athletes from the area. On June 26, the Lincolnway Special Recreation Association held a Sneaker Ball at Gaelic Park to celebrate its 50th anniversary. During that same week, Special Olympic athletes from LWSRA as well as others from across the Southland represented Illinois in the USA Games in Minnesota —

an event that featured more than 3,000 athletes. LWSRA was born July 1, 1976, when the Frankfort, Frankfort Square, Mokena and New Lenox park districts got together to create a program for people with special needs. Over the years, athletes from Crete, Manhattan, Peotone and Wilmington have joined in. This year's Sneaker Ball drew nearly 300 people, according to LWSRA Executive Director Keith Wallace.

"We brought family, friends and past co-workers together," Wallace said. "The whole thing was centered around family and fun and just having a good time." And, of course, reveling in the memories. Tami Pareti, the association's manager of programs, has been with LWSRA for 25 of those 50 years and at the Sneaker Ball, she was happy to see people of various ages who have participated over the years. "It's fun to watch the younger kids become the older kids and it's neat to see the progression," she said. How has the organization

lasted so long? "It's twofold," Wallace said. "It's the participant families that we continue to bring in, and our staff that we continue to bring in. Everybody has their own unique personality. And it just works. It really works." Over its five decades, the organization has hosted national wheelchair tournaments in basketball and softball, and even hosted a World Series wheelchair softball tournament featuring teams and players from Japan, the Netherlands and Ghana. "We all work hard and we work

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## TINLEY PARK

# Official: 'Be patient' with storm cleanup

By Evy Lewis  
DAILY SOUTHTOWN

Tinley Park public works employees are still working to clean up damage from the weekend's heavy storms, Public Works Director John Urbanski told the Village Board on Tuesday night. "We had over 200 emails Monday morning that we were welcomed with, and approximately 150 voice-mails," Urbanski said. "I've got all of my staff all hands on deck trying to go through and chip up and bring all of the brush away from the parkways, but I just ask everybody that's waiting to just please be patient." Urbanski asked anyone in need of cleanup who hasn't notified the village yet to reach out to the Public Works Department by email at tppw@tinleypark.org. Police Chief Thomas Tilton thanked officers, as well as the Fire Department, Public Works Department and emergency medical services for their work at the weekend Country Fest, which was disrupted by the severe weather, but ultimately went ahead. "Hats off to Public Works," said Trustee Colleen Sullivan. "I drove around, and seeing the destruction and all the trees down, and neighbors helping neighbors, bringing all the limbs to the curbs. I know you guys have been non-stop working, so great job to your team, John." BOATING SAFETY Trustee William Brady encouraged residents to be safe when boating, drawing attention to two recent accidents, including Friday's tragic accident on Lake Geneva, in which three children were drowned when a severe storm unexpectedly swept across the lake. "You need to check the weather."

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# Will NASCAR return to Chicago or Joliet next year?

'It could be both,' executive says after July Fourth event in suburb, one-off street race in San Diego

By Robert Channick  
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

With a successful return to Chicagoland Speedway in Joliet over July Fourth weekend in the rearview mirror, NASCAR is already mapping out its course for next summer. Chicago may figure prominently in those plans. While nothing is set, NASCAR is not only hoping to bring back the Chicago Street Race after a one-year hiatus, but perhaps add the long-dormant southwest suburban track to its regular schedule as well. "It could be both," said Ben Kennedy, NASCAR's chief operat-

ing officer and great-grandson of the family-owned racing organization's founder. "It's a market that's strong enough that absolutely we could have two events there in the future." Chicagoland Speedway, which hadn't hosted a NASCAR event since 2019, was packed for Sunday's Cup Race with 50,000 fans from 31 countries and all 50 states braving the region's traditional July Fourth rainstorms to watch Chase Briscoe take the checkered flag. The Joliet venue was added to the schedule this summer to fill the void left by the Chicago Street Race, which was put on hold for 2026 after completing a three-year agreement with the city to turn

Grant Park into a 12-turn, 2.2-mile pop-up urban racecourse. NASCAR said it paused the Chicago Street Race to explore rescheduling the event away from Independence Day and to look for ways to speed up the build-out and breakdown of the temporary track, in response to concerns from the city. This summer's street race was held at San Diego's Naval Base Coronado in June on a one-year deal. NASCAR is in negotiations with Chicago to come back to the shores of Lake Michigan next summer. "We're having conversations with the city," Kennedy said Tuesday. Last month, the Tribune reported that NASCAR and the city were

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Cars pass the starting line for the first lap of the NASCAR eero 400 at Chicagoland Speedway in Joliet on Sunday. VINCENT D. JOHNSON/FOR THE DAILY SOUTHTOWN