

LAKE COUNTY

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LAW & ORDER

Chief of police in Gurnee to retire

By Clifford Ward
Lake County News-Sun

After a quarter-century of service to the residents of Gurnee, Police Chief Brian Smith has announced his retirement from the department.

“Serving this community has been the greatest privilege of my professional life,” Smith said. “My passion has been to serve others. While I will continue to do so in new ways, I feel deep gratitude and emotion as I close this chapter in my career.

“I am profoundly honored to have worked alongside such dedicated professionals and to have served the residents of Gurnee for the past six-plus years as police chief,” he said.

Smith joined the GPD in 2000 and rose through the ranks, serving as a patrol sergeant, commander and deputy chief before assuming the top job in 2019. His last day on the job will be Dec. 1.

“Throughout his entire career and time as chief, Brian has led with integrity, humility, selflessness and a genuine desire to serve others,” Mayor Tom Hood said. “He stressed integrity, customer service, transparency and technology, all aimed at improving relationships and increasing public safety and the safety of Gurnee’s officers.”

During his tenure, the number of officers on the force has risen from 62 to 72, and the number of women, veterans and diverse officers has risen to 54, according to the village. GPD has also sought to increase community engagement through several initiatives. Smith has also been a leader in public safety organizations, including two terms as head of the county’s police chiefs organization.

The mayor said he will seek to have Deputy Chief Jeremy Gaughan appointed as Smith’s replacement.

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A family walks past Libby Frank, right, a concerned neighbor, and Carson Bell, whose wife works at Funston Elementary School in Chicago’s Logan Square neighborhood, as they hold signs to support Funston students, staff and families as school gets out on Tuesday. EILEEN T. MESLAR/TRIBUNE

ICE fears ripple across Chicago-area schools

By Kate Armanini
Chicago Tribune

Monica Perez scanned the street as she left Funston Elementary, five of her children in tow. She kept her head down, her family close. After school pickup was once a familiar routine — in recent weeks, though, fear had crept into the family’s life and festered.

“Rápido,” Perez told her children, ushering them along Logan Square sidewalks. “Quickly.”

Perez came to Chicago from Mexico in 2007 without authorization. All seven of her children, ages 7 to 16, were born in the

U.S. But as federal immigration enforcement intensifies across the city, even the short walk from school feels dangerous.

Perez mentally mapped their route, again and again: one block west, a few blocks north. They moved fast. Just the day before, she had kept her younger children home after hearing reports of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement activity near campus.

“Ahorita, ando con miedo, pero los tuve que traer,” Perez, 36, said in Spanish. “I’m scared right now, but I had to bring them.”

Across Chicago Public Schools and surrounding districts, Presi-

dent Donald Trump’s immigration crackdown has left families on edge — including the city’s youngest residents. School staff have scrambled to offer support in the classroom, while volunteers have organized ICE watch groups and student escorts for safe arrival and dismissal.

In response, CPS is expanding its 24-hour Student Safety Center with a dedicated team to triage incidents related to federal law enforcement. The center allows school leaders to report incidents and receive real-time guidance, the district said in a statement.

Schools have also been directed

to establish ICE protocols and hold staff trainings, CPS interim Superintendent Macqueline King told the Chicago Board of Education on Wednesday.

“We understand the weight many of our families are carrying,” King said.

Since the launch of “Operation Midway Blitz” in early September, federal agents have made more than 800 arrests in the Chicago area, according to the most recent count from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. The Trump administration has vowed to target “the worst

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A Metra train stops at the Arlington Park station in Arlington Heights on May 23. The Bears released projections showing a new stadium in the suburb would generate thousands of jobs and billions of dollars in economic activity but would also cost \$855 million in public funds for infrastructure. STACEY WESCOTT/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

ILLINOIS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Lawmakers to grapple with trains, insurance and Bears

By Jeremy Gorner and John Lippert
Chicago Tribune

SPRINGFIELD — While Illinois continues to battle the Trump administration over deploying National Guard troops, the nuts-and-bolts world of state government will keep on turning in the capital as lawmakers head back to

potentially tackle high energy and insurance costs, legislation that could affect a new Chicago Bears stadium and the uncertain future of public transportation.

Gov. JB Pritzker said last week there are “lots of discussions, no determinations,” about a possible legislative response to the National Guard issue when lawmakers reconvene for the fall

veto session for three days starting Tuesday, with three more days at the end of October. As they are the final session days of the year, lawmakers could end up tackling numerous issues — or none at all.

But perhaps the most significant item on the to-do list is deciding whether to implement

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Metra unveils proposed budget for 2026, with riders facing fare hike

By Talia Soglin
Chicago Tribune

Metra riders should expect to pay an average of 13% more per ride next year as the commuter rail service proposes fare increases in response to a looming fiscal crisis.

The fare increases are outlined in Metra’s proposed 2026 budget, which agency board members voted to release Friday. The budget is subject to be approved by the agency’s board next month.

Metra, the CTA and suburban bus service Pace are facing a structural budget deficit as they get closer to running out of one-time federal pandemic relief funds. Ridership, meanwhile, hasn’t rebounded to pre-pandemic levels.

But despite the impending fiscal cliff, Metra has said it won’t need to cut train service next year — even if state lawmakers fail to approve additional transit funding during their legislative veto session this month.

That would change in 2027, Metra CEO Jim Derwinski said recently. Metra would then need to cut up to 40% of its service if lawmakers don’t green-light more funding, he said.

All in all, Metra is proposing an operating budget worth \$1.1 billion in 2026. It expects to run out of its pandemic relief funds toward the end of next year.



People buy Metra tickets at the Ogilvie Transportation Center in Chicago on Tuesday. TERRENCE ANTONIO JAMES/TRIBUNE

The plan is “not the budget Metra wants to implement in 2026,” Derwinski said. “But it is the budget we have to propose.”

Ticket prices on Metra are based on how many “fare zones” a traveler passes through.

Starting Feb. 1, the cost of a one-way ride between Zone 1 and Zone 2 would increase from \$3.75 to \$4.25 under the agency’s proposed plan. That pricing typically applies to trips between downtown Chicago and elsewhere in the city or near suburbs, like Cicero, Evanston or Park Ridge.

One-way trips between downtown Chicago and Zone 3 and Zone 4 destinations would

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