

### **Epstein survivors** seek justice

NEWS, 1B



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# Firefighters get new contract

#### Bargain settled by an arbitrator for first time

**Steven Spearie** 

Springfield State Journal-Register USA TODAY NETWORK

City of Springfield firefighters have a new four-year contract, which, for the first time in history, was settled by an arbitrator. The ordinance authorizing the approval of the agreement, which had been negotiated over the past year, passed with seven "yes" votes on the Nov. 4 city council meet-

Ward 2 Ald. Shawn Gregory voted "present" over concern about residency issues in the contract. Ward 3 Ald. Roy Williams Jr. and Ward 5 Ald. Lakeisha Purchase were absent.

In a letter to city council members, former Mayor Jim Langfelder urged a vote down of the contract.

For Local 37 members, said union president Kainan Rinaberger, the contract, which is retroactive to March 1, means a 5% increase across the board over each of the next four years.

At the end of the contract, the new hire pay will be roughly \$74,500 annually, he

said. The overall impact to the city's budget over the life of the contract, said Ramona Metzger, the director of the Office of Budget & Management, would be \$11.5 million and goes up \$12.4 including items such as sick leave payout contribution, workman's compensation employer contributions.

See FIREFIGHTERS, Page 4A



A groundbreaking ceremony was held for Be Neighbors Affordable Housing for Veterans Inc. on Nov. 11 in Springfield. THOMAS J. TURNEY/THE STATE JOURNAL-REGISTER

# Groundbreaking held for tiny homes for veterans

#### Plan for unhoused has been controversial

**Claire Grant** 

Springfield State Journal-Register **USA TODAY NETWORK** 

A groundbreaking ceremony was held for a controversial housing project on Veterans Day in Springfield.

Be Neighbors Affordable Housing

for Veterans Inc., an Illinois nonprofit designated to develop veteran's communities and put unhoused veterans back onto their feet, held a groundbreaking event at the site of the nonprofit's first community.

The housing community at 2835 Stanton St. will have 18 homes at 546 square feet each with a connected parking space for an unhoused veteran to live. In the center for the community, a resource and learning center with computers and access to aid will be built to support the veterans

inside the housing. Harvey Hall, the founder of Be Neighbors and a veteran himself, said from the beginning he didn't want to create a place just to house veterans, but to provide them the

services they need to succeed. "Together we gather not only to

See TINY HOMES, Page 6A

#### **HEALTH INSPECTIONS**

## Roaches, flies and moldy food found in kitchens

#### **Claire Grant**

Springfield State Journal-Register USA TODAY NETWORK

A mainstay bar in Springfield has a mold problem.

During a routine health inspection on Oct. 23 at Main Gate Bar and Grill, 2143 N. 11th St., inspectors found mold on shelves and food items and sauces in the walk-in cooler

In total, the restaurant racked up 20 violations during the visit, which includes seven repeat violations.

The inspector also noted some food did not have any date marks, while other foods with date marks were well past the seven-day expiration date listed.

An inspector noted finding pans of raw chicken being stored above pans of raw fish in the walk-in cooler, which was also missing thermometers. Without a thermometer, multiple food items like chili, raw chicken and beef patties for burgers had to be tossed.

A reinspection for the restaurant took place on Nov. 3, with no public notes.

Throughout the course of October, 205 health inspections took place across Sangamon County, 10 businesses were found to have 10 or more violations.

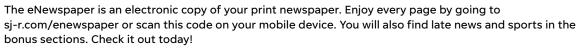
#### **How violations work**

Food establishments are inspected by the Sangamon County Department of Public Health on an annual schedule that is determined by assigned risk

See INSPECTIONS, Page 2A



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