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The Cleveland-Cliffs Indiana Harbor steel facility in East Chicago on Jan. 28, 2025. **E. JASON WAMBSGANS/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

Cleveland-Cliffs reaches settlement agreement

By **Jim Woods**
Post-Tribune

Cleveland-Cliffs Inc. has reached a settlement to reduce the size of a proposed increase in the tax assessments of its multi-million-dollar steel mill facilities in Porter and Lake counties.

The Indiana Department of Local Government Finance revealed the agreement on Jan. 14 with the

steelmaker, before the appeal from Cleveland-Cliffs could be heard by the Indiana Board of Tax Review.

Property tax collections are based on the tax assessment. As a result, Porter and Lake County government entities will receive a lower increase because of the lower tax assessment.

Cleveland-Cliffs disputed the proposed 13.5% increase in the tax assessment to \$134 million from

\$118 million for its Porter County operation, centered in Burns Harbor. The settlement figure is \$121 million, which is a 2.5% increase.

The steelmaker also contested the 6.1% increase to \$121 million from \$114 million on its holdings in Lake County, around the city of East Chicago. The compromise will

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The Chicago skyline seen from North Avenue beach as the sun rises during the polar vortex on Jan. 30, 2019. **JOSE M. OSORIO / CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

Preparing for the cold

Schools closing, warming shelters open ahead of the coming temperatures

By **Post-Tribune**

Schools are closing or operating remotely and warming shelters are opening their doors as temperatures in Northwest Indiana are expected to plunge into the negative single digits Friday and wind chills as low as -28 are predicted, according to the National Weather Service.

A collapsing polar vortex is expected to bring high winds, a chance of snow and freezing temperatures through the weekend as dangerously frigid air from Siberia and the North Pole is expected to dip the Great Lakes into subzero territory.

"A piece of (the polar vortex) will break off and meander southward into our area," said Gino Izzi, a senior meteorologist with the National Weather Service.

The National Weather Service has issued a cold weather advisory from 3 a.m. Friday until 9 a.m. Saturday for Northwest Indiana.

A polar vortex is a constant cold, low-pressure system of air that circulates counterclockwise around both of the Earth's poles, acting like a wall that contains cold air. A jet stream is a band of strong wind that generally travels from west to east and acts as a boundary between cold, polar air and warmer air farther south. A weak polar vortex can cause the jet stream to buckle, sending Arctic air from the North Pole southward, according to NWS.

When a polar vortex collapsed in 2014 and brought dramatic subzero arctic air and windchills to the Midwest, Izzi said many Chicagoans started loosely referring to other severe winter storms as "polar vortexes." This time it's not expected to be as severe as in 2014 when that vortex was centered directly over the Great Lakes; this year it is farther north over Canada.

This winter may also be less predictable due to a weak La Niña year.



Chicago's 2014 weather saw a polar vortex that trapped the city in an arctic freeze in early January and 82 inches of snow, the city's third-snowiest winter. **ANTHONY SOUFFLE/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

La Niña is a climate pattern of cooler-than-average ocean temperatures in the Pacific Ocean that can affect weather worldwide, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. During a La Niña year, cooler-than-average global ocean temperatures bring cold weather to the Midwest and Great Lakes. But La

Niña weather conditions are also highly variable, Izzi said.

Indiana state agencies recommend the following precautions if you must leave your house in hazardous conditions: Slow down and adjust your speed to road conditions, especially in snow; Check conditions and forecasts

Turn to Cold, Page 3

Father: Daughter's addiction was a 'war' they 'lost'

By **Meredith Colias-Pete**
Post-Tribune

Timothy Anderson told a court Wednesday he was "shaking like a leaf" and was reluctant to speak of his grief over his daughter Sara's overdose death.

"We fought a war and we lost it," he said.

Yancy D. Craig, 65, of Kankakee and Dolton, Illinois, was charged with selling fentanyl to Sara Anderson, 25, of Schererville, the day before her March 20, 2021, death,

court records allege.

"Can I come by real quick n (sic) get a 40. Of boy (heroin)," Anderson texted him, according to court documents.

Craig was not sentenced Wednesday.

Judge Samuel Cappas reset the hearing for Feb. 6 after Deputy Prosecutor Kasey Dafoe alleged that a witness said in a deposition that Craig sold drugs even after Sara's death.

Defense lawyer Andrea Bonds hotly contested the accusation —

saying it wasn't anywhere in the case's discovery, i.e. evidence file.

The deposition's transcript will be ordered to see if it would impact his final sentence.

Throughout the hearing, both Anderson and Craig's sister shared how their families got trapped for years by drug addiction.

Early in the hearing, Timothy Anderson told the court his daughter became addicted after her "first boyfriend" gave her drugs in the Lake County marching band.

They sent her to rehab — setting

off a cycle of rehab and relapse.

Before her death, she was doing better, he said, with a "decent job" and a son, Drako.

Her final relapse came out of "nowhere." The night before, they went to Teibel's, which was unusual. They never would have gone if they knew it was her last night alive.

Anderson died of a fentanyl overdose, according to the Lake County Coroner's Office.

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Bill passes committee to attract Bears to Indiana

Plan would require an NFL team to enter a lease for at least 35 years

By **Alexandra Kukulka**
Post-Tribune

The Senate Appropriations Committee passed a stadium authority bill, aimed at attracting the Chicago Bears to Northwest Indiana, which means the bill will move forward for consideration by the Indiana Senate.

Senate Bill 27, authored by State Senators Ryan Mishler, R-Mishawaka, and Chris Garten, R-Charlestown, would establish the Northwest Indiana stadium authority to "acquire, construct, equip, own, lease, and finance" a sports stadium.

"The underlying bill sets up a stadium authority, a framework, for a possible project in northern Indiana," Garten said during Thursday's hearing.

The committee amended the bill to remove the authority's goal of 15% participation by minority business enterprises and 5% participation from women's business enterprises to participate in the procurement and contracting process.

State Sen. Lonnie Randolph, D-East Chicago, asked for a roll call on the amendment, and it passed 8-4, with all Republican members voting in favor and all Democratic members voting against it.

The bill would establish a three-member board: the director of the Office of Management and Budget, the public finance director or designee, and another member appointed by the Office of Management and Budget.

The authority would work toward acquiring, financing, constructing and leasing land and capital improvements. It would also have the power to finance,

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Lake Station school chief Cripliver set to step down

By **Carole Carlson**
Post-Tribune

Lake Station Superintendent Thomas Cripliver is retiring after guiding the school district for 11 years, capping a 41-year career as an educator.

The school board reluctantly accepted his resignation Wednesday night with board president David Wright and member Greg Tenorio voting "no."

Cripliver's retirement is effective at the end of the school year in June.

"I hope you understand what a difference you made for our community with all the work you've done," said Tenorio.

Cripliver led the district through rocky budget years as enrollment

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TODAY'S WEATHER



High -3 Low -9

Complete Chicagoland forecast on back page

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