



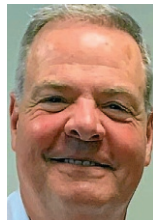
Jury awards \$6.2M to ex-lieutenant

Retired St. Louis Co. officer filed lawsuit over retaliation

BY DANA RIECK
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

CLAYTON — A jury has awarded more than \$6 million in favor of a police lieutenant who sued St. Louis County in 2022 after he said he was denied a promotion for refusing to retaliate against a Black colleague.

Lt. Michael Reifschneider's employment



Reifschneider

retaliation case stood a five-day trial last week, during which jurors heard evidence that then-Chief Mary Barton told him in late 2020 that he lost a promised promotion because he had refused an order to change Lt. Ray Rice's job performance evaluation and lower Rice's score without a real basis.

One of his lawyers, Joan Schwartz, told the Post-Dispatch on Monday that a

verdict of this amount, almost \$6.3 million, doesn't happen often.

"The jury decided to send a message," she said. "That's how I interpret this. And the message is: This should stop. This shouldn't happen."

Schwartz said there were six witnesses who testified, four of whom described their own experiences with discrimination while working for the county: Reifschneider, Rice, Barton and Brittany Young, a former park ranger aide who testified about sexual discrimination, sexual

harassment and retaliation for complaining about that conduct.

Barton, who had served 15 months as chief, retired after accepting a \$290,000 payout from the county to settle her own claims of discrimination filed with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Young also filed two lawsuits against the county, according to media reports, though it was unclear what happened in those cases.

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CREVE COEUR LAKE

SWEEP FOR CARP COMES UP EMPTY



LIZ RYMAREV PHOTOS, POST-DISPATCH

Fish biologists Adam McFall, from left, Joe Deters and Jesse Fischer remove a large net from Creve Coeur Lake in Maryland Heights on Thursday. The net was used to try to isolate invasive carp and corral them for collection.

Delayed by government shutdown, project misses window but will resume this fall

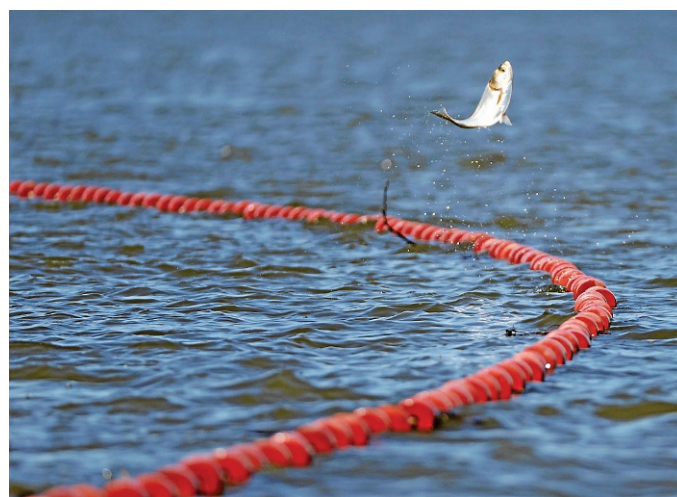
BY BRYCE GRAY
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

MARYLAND HEIGHTS — Any fisherman can tell you about the big one that got away. But perhaps tens of thousands will get away at Creve Coeur Lake, where state and federal officials are wrapping up an attempt to corral tons of invasive carp — without hauling a single one ashore.

A variety of factors conspired to thwart their removal.

Over the winter, Missouri Department of Conservation personnel said that the government shutdown put plans on hold because the work largely hinged on a partnership with the U.S. Geological Survey.

Now, with the month-long work of herding the fish stretching into April, the warming weather brings new



A carp jumps out of the water next to a large net spanning Creve Coeur Lake in Maryland Heights on Thursday. The fish try to leap over the net, making them difficult to control and capture.

layers of complications: The fish become more active in the warmer conditions. Plus, toastier water raises risks of a low-oxygen event that could

kill huge schools of the fish, when caught by the thousands in nets.

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St. Louis pitches water rate increase

Change would add hundreds annually to residents' bills

BY AUSTIN HUGUELET
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

ST. LOUIS — City officials on Monday proposed increasing water rates by around two-thirds over the next several years, adding hundreds of dollars to residents' annual bills.

The city water department said Monday it would seek two 18% hikes in 2026 and 2027, three 6% increases from 2028 to 2030 and smaller increases in 2031 and 2032.

For the average residential customer with a bill between \$35 and \$45 a month, the department said the increases would add \$7 to \$9 per month this year and next year, then \$2 to \$3 per month annually through 2032 — for a total increase of \$290-\$400 per year.

Officials have been laying the groundwork for the proposal for months, calling it a necessary step to stabilize a department squeezed by rising costs, low rates and an aging system that saw main breaks reach a seven-year high last year. Aldermen have already approved a nearly \$7 million infusion of federal pandemic aid to get the department through the current budget year.

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Cardinals raise concerns with food truck bill

BY AUSTIN HUGUELET
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

ST. LOUIS — An objection from the Cardinals has stalled a plan to give food trucks more places to operate in the city.

The team raised concerns it would lose exclusive control over street vending around the stadium, and Alderman Rasheen Aldridge agreed to delay a vote on his bill.

"It's not dead," Aldridge said. "It's on a break."

The Board of Aldermen had been set to vote Monday, the last day of the board's 2025-26 session, to allow trucks to stay open later, sell on more blocks downtown and expand to other high-traffic areas in the city. Advocates said the changes would help trucks do more business and boost a downtown still struggling to recover from the pandemic.

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Weather

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Bait and switch



POST-DISPATCH WEATHERBIRD



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