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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27, 2024

BREAKING NEWS AT CHICAGOTRIBUNE.COM

Ill. towns nix police training classes

Controversial firm under fire for promoting violence and unconstitutional tactics

By Jonathan Bullington
Chicago Tribune

Police department leaders in at least two Illinois towns have canceled upcoming training classes for their officers offered by a private firm whose past practices were criticized by a New Jersey state agency for promoting unconstitutional tactics and for glorifying violence.

Street Cop Training was slated to hold training classes in five Illinois communities between April and November: Burr Ridge, Cary, Elgin, Mount Vernon and Rochelle. Burr Ridge and Rochelle have since canceled classes. And Elgin has said its officers will not attend the company's training.

The company's courses are not certified by the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board, state officials said, meaning any officers who attended those classes would not receive continuing education credits.

In December, the New Jersey Office of the State Comptroller released a scathing report centered on a six-day training conference Street Cop held in Atlantic City in October 2021. Nearly 1,000 officers from departments across the country attended the conference, the report states, where they heard instructors who "promoted the use of unconstitutional policing tactics for motor vehicle stops," and "glorified violence and an excessively militaristic or 'warrior' approach to policing."

The agency's report counted "over 100 discriminatory and harassing remarks by speakers and instructors, with repeated references to speakers' genitalia, lewd gestures and demeaning quips about women and minorities."

"We found so many examples of so many instructors promoting views and tactics that were wildly inappropriate, offensive, discriminatory, harassing, and, in some cases, likely illegal," Kevin Walsh, acting state comptroller, said in

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BALTIMORE BRIDGE COLLAPSE

'UNTHINKABLE'

6 construction workers missing, presumed dead after cargo ship rams Md. structure | Fiery destruction of Chesapeake passage may disrupt vital shipping port for months



A Coast Guard cutter passes a cargo ship stuck under part of the Francis Scott Key Bridge on Tuesday in Baltimore. STEVE HELBER/AP

By Lea Skene
Associated Press

BALTIMORE — A cargo ship lost power and rammed into a major bridge in Baltimore early Tuesday, destroying the span in a matter of seconds and plunging it into the river in a terrifying collapse that could disrupt a vital shipping port for months.

Six construction workers were missing and presumed dead.

The ship's crew issued a mayday moments before the crash took down the Francis Scott Key Bridge, enabling authorities to limit vehicle traffic on the span, Maryland Gov. Wes Moore said.

The ship struck one of the bridge's supports, causing the structure to collapse

like a toy. The vessel caught fire, and thick, black smoke billowed out of it.

With the ship barreling toward the bridge at "a very, very rapid speed," authorities had just enough time to stop cars from coming over the bridge, Moore said.

"These people are heroes," he said. "They saved lives last night."

The crash happened in the middle of the night, long before the busy morning commute on the bridge that stretches 1.6 miles and was used by 12 million vehicles last year.

The workers still unaccounted for were part of a construction crew filling potholes on the bridge, said Paul Wiedefeld, the state's transportation secretary.

A senior executive at the company that

employed the workers said Tuesday afternoon that they were presumed dead, given the water's depth and the length of time since the crash.

The water temperature was about 47 degrees before dawn Tuesday, according to a buoy that collects data for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Jeffrey Pritzker, executive vice president of Brawner Builders, said the crew was working in the middle of the bridge when it came down.

"This was so completely unforeseen," Pritzker said. "We don't know what else to say. We take such great pride in safety, and we have cones and signs and lights and

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Migrants eat dinner after attending a religious service outside the city shelter on the Lower West Side on March 4. ARMANDO L. SANCHEZ/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

City speeds up measles shots for migrants as cases increase

By Alysa Guffey and Nell Salzman
Chicago Tribune

In response to a continuing measles outbreak, city officials are speeding up the process for migrants living at a densely populated Lower West Side shelter to become fully vaccinated and protected against the disease.

Previously unvaccinated migrants will receive a second dose of the measles vaccine 28 days after the first dosage, extending a quarantine period for children under age 5 that was instated to monitor and protect the most vulnerable population, the Chicago Department of Public Health said Monday.

There have been 31 confirmed cases of measles in Chicago this year, 21 of which are in children under 5. Seven cases have been

reported in the city in the past week despite an initial wave of vaccines administered two weeks ago.

Most of the cases are concentrated in the city's largest shelter, which houses families and many young children at 2241 S. Halsted St. in the Lower West Side, officials said. There are currently over 23 active shelters run by the city and state, housing more than 10,400 migrants as of Tuesday.

The uptick in confirmed measles cases comes even as the city says it has administered 4,500 vaccines since the first case was detected on March 7. Young children are especially vulnerable to disease after receiving the first dosage of the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine, said the city's health

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