

Chicago Tribune



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BREAKING NEWS AT CHICAGOTRIBUNE.COM



‘It doesn’t get treated like a public health issue’

At least 87 people drowned in the Great Lakes this year, and more than half of the deaths happened in Lake Michigan, according to the Great Lakes Surf Rescue Project.

“Drowning is way up there in fatality rates ... but it doesn’t get treated like a public health issue — which it is,” said Dave Benjamin, co-founder and executive director of the water safety group, which has tracked drownings in the region for more than 10 years. “It’s one of the leading causes of unintentional injury-related death in the nation, in the world. And that’s with a very poor drowning statistic database, so the problem is exponentially worse than anybody even knows.”

More than 1,300 people have drowned in the Great Lakes since the surf rescue project started collecting data in 2010. The highest number of drownings occurred in 2018 when 117 deaths were recorded.

Almost half of 87 Great Lakes drownings this year were in Lake Michigan

By Adriana Pérez | Chicago Tribune

Above: A summer storm creates risky swimming conditions Aug. 27 in Chicago at Ohio Street Beach.

TESS CROWLEY/
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

This year, at least 50 people have drowned in Lake Michigan. Since 2010, the group’s annual data indicates about half of all yearly drownings in Lake Michigan have happened on its south end — including Illinois’ lakefront — which is considered particularly dangerous because winds from the north and northeast create large waves and strong currents. The densely populated shores of Lake Michigan’s cities, like Chicago and Milwaukee, as well as the popular tourist destinations at its numerous sandy beaches also contribute to higher drowning risks.

The deadliest year for Lake Michigan was 2020 when 56 people died along its shores as the pandemic limited opportunities for safe entertainment indoors. According to the Outdoor Indus-

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Former ICE chief to be ‘border czar’

Homan expected to manage scope of deportation vows

By Jill Colvin
and Rebecca Santana
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President-elect Donald Trump said Tom Homan, his former acting U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement director, will serve as “border czar” in his incoming administration, a position that is likely to play a key role in Trump’s campaign pledges to secure the U.S.-Mexico border and mount a massive deportation operation.

“I am pleased to announce that the Former ICE Director, and stalwart on Border Control, Tom Homan, will be joining the Trump Administration, in charge of our Nation’s Borders,” he wrote late Sunday on his Truth Social site.

In addition to overseeing the southern and northern borders and “maritime, and aviation security,” Trump said Homan “will be in charge of all Deportation of Illegal Aliens back to their Country of Origin,” a central part of Trump’s agenda.

He says he had “no doubt” Homan “will do a fantastic, and long awaited for, job.”

Homan is a tough-talking former Border Patrol agent who worked his way up to head Immigration and Customs Enforcement in 2017 and 2018 as the acting director. He was never confirmed by the Senate, and his new role does not require it.

Bringing him on shows the lengths that the Trump administration is likely to go to carry out the hard-line immigration pledges that were a hallmark of the campaign. However, Homan has also pushed back on rhetoric suggesting massive roundups.

At the National Conservatism Conference in Washington earlier this year, Homan said that while he thinks the government needed

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Mike and Lynn Hoff, Freeport residents who attended Lorado Taft in 1969, walk through the retreat’s campus in Oregon on Sunday. TROY STOLT/FOR THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Students, teachers mourn closure of historic Illinois outdoor camp

By Vivian La
Chicago Tribune

The fading autumn colors along the Rock River made for a picturesque backdrop at the Lorado Taft Field Campus. Children and adults posed for photographs at the dining hall window that overlooks the bluffs, re-creating memories of school field trips to the northern Illinois camp.

At an open house event Sunday,

students and teachers walked the grounds one last time while reminiscing about the spots where they learned to build a fire, roamed the dining hall where they competed to leave the least food waste, and peeked into the dorms trying to spot their old bunk bed.

For more than 70 years, the outdoor education camp affiliated with Northern Illinois University in Oregon has hosted thousands of elementary and middle school

students each year for field trips.

In the Poley House, where students used to sit against a window identifying the birds that flew by, Mike Hoff of Freeport thumbed through old Polaroid photos he took of his classmates during his school’s trip to Lorado Taft in 1969.

“It was one of the greatest memories of our lives,” Hoff said.

Turn to Camp, Page 2

Wind Creek casino opens to huge crowds

After decades-long wait, patrons ‘blown away’ by first look

By Mike Nolan
Daily Southtown

Hundreds of people lined up Monday outside Wind Creek Chicago Southland, waiting to be among the first to see the south suburb casino on opening day.

The opening culminates a more than two-decade goal of south suburban politicians, and patrons, who began getting in line more than an hour before the opening, saying they were eager to see it.

“I’ve been looking forward to this for a long time,” said Tony Barber, of Lansing. “I’m hoping I will win some money today.”

Angelique Harper, of Calumet City, said she drives by the site, southwest of Halsted Street and Interstates 80/94, each day on her way to work in Joliet.

“I’m off today and had to come by to try it,” she said. “I’m think-



People wait in line Monday to enter the Wind Creek Chicago Southland casino on opening day. MIKE NOLAN/DAILY SOUTHTOWN

ing maybe because it’s opening day the slots will be a little looser so people come back.”

For now, just the casino and some food offerings are open, and the casino will operate from 8 a.m. to 4 a.m. seven days a week, according to Donia Lewis, a spokeswoman for Wind Creek.

The casino itself is in East

Turn to Casino, Page 5

Durbin mulls reelection bid

Last week’s election leaving Democrats in the Senate minority is part of his calculation as the senator evaluates his political future. **Chicagoland, Page 3**

US Rep. Stefanik named to UN job

President-elect Donald Trump has chosen Rep. Elise Stefanik to serve as his ambassador to the United Nations, picking a loyal ally with little foreign policy experience. **Nation & World**

