

Chicago Tribune



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BREAKING NEWS AT CHICAGOTRIBUNE.COM



‘WE WANT TO LIVE IN PEACE’

By Jeremy Gorner
Chicago Tribune

PEORIA — As word reached this central Illinois town that its sister city in Lebanon had been bombed by Israel, Henri Alwan was among many residents to feel a direct sense of loss.

The airstrike last month leveled a home owned by Alwan’s cousin Elie and killed more than 20 people, including, reportedly, 12 women and two children who had sought refuge in the village of Aitou after Israel started to target the Shiite militant group Hezbollah in Lebanon. The fatalities also included a person suspected of giving aid to Hezbollah, according to news reports.

Alwan chairs the board of Peoria’s Itoos Society, formed in 1914 — with a

Peoria’s Lebanese community feels pain of latest round of Middle East violence

Above: Albert Couri, owner of Western Meats, stands outside his shop in Peoria. He came to Peoria from Aitou, Lebanon, in 1980 to be with family and to get away from the Lebanese civil war. “We don’t want to die. We want to live in peace,” he said.

TESS CROWLEY/
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

phonetic spelling of the Middle East town — to provide aid to Lebanese immigrants in central Illinois as well as those still in their homeland. He expressed frustration at Israel and Hezbollah’s inability to maintain peace in the region.

“There could have been negotiations,” Alwan said. “It could’ve been done differently. This has been going on for a long time. They (Israel) knew about Hezbollah for a long time. They could’ve worked it out somehow.”

This week, a ceasefire was reached in the war between Israel and Hezbollah. That was welcome news to the several thousand Lebanese American residents in the Peoria area, many of whom were either born in or are considered

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INSIDE: Lebanon was on edge as it entered the second day of a fragile ceasefire between Israel and the militant group Hezbollah. The Lebanese army moved troops into Hezbollah strongholds, and Israel said it struck a Hezbollah site. **Nation & World**

Time on wane for 2025 city budget

Johnson, aldermen have month to figure out spending plan

By Jake Sheridan and Alice Yin
Chicago Tribune

At City Hall, the clock is ticking and anxiety is mounting as aldermen and Mayor Brandon Johnson work to pass a 2025 spending plan.

The mayor and City Council must agree on a budget by Dec. 31 or risk stark consequences such as credit downgrades or service shut-downs. But with that state-mandated deadline just one month away, a series of recent snafus and concessions have only made the budget-balancing act more difficult.

Chicago hasn’t entered December without an approved city budget since 2009, and this year not only is the city starting the month without an OK’d fiscal plan, but the mayor and aldermen are a chasm apart on key issues with aldermen finding few easy answers.

“Nobody agrees on anything,” Ald. Matt O’Shea, 19th, said.

Amid mounting pressure, Johnson has reversed himself several times this month, from halving the large property tax levy he proposed out of the gate with his overall \$17.3 billion budget plan to undoing Police Department cuts. While the backtracks relieved opponents of those controversial proposals, the decisions only add to the growing gap between the funds City Hall wants to spend next year and what revenues it expects to receive.

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Ambassadors make Loop welcoming for holidays

Group members do little things to enhance downtown experience

By Peter Breen
Chicago Tribune

Shoppers and tourists were bustling down State Street this week when a woman looking down at her phone stepped into a crosswalk. At the same time, a scooter rider with no intention of yielding barreled toward her.

Alfonso Redditt, an ambassador with the Chicago Loop Alliance, reached out his arm and called out a warning to the woman, who immediately took a step back, averting a collision.

As Loop foot traffic along State Street swells during the all-important shopping season between Black Friday and Christmas, alliance ambassadors will be on hand every day from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., performing all sorts of small — sometimes thankless — tasks to improve the experience of pedestrians.

“I love coming to work ... making it safe and clean out here,” said Redditt, a 57-year-old who supervised the first shift of ambassadors on Tuesday.

Ambassadors, who wear neon green jackets that indicate they are there to help, patrol the busy stretch of State Street between Wacker and Ida B. Wells drives that features the Chicago Theatre, Macy’s and other iconic attractions. The ambassadors store their equipment in a garage on Couch Place, an alley infamous due to the tragic Iroquois Theatre fire in 1903.

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Russia blasts Ukraine’s energy grid

Putin calls strikes retaliation for use of long-range missiles

By Maria Varenikova,
Ivan Nechepurenko
and Anatoly Kurmanaev
The New York Times

KYIV, Ukraine — Russia attacked Ukrainian energy infrastructure with missiles and drones Thursday, in what President Vladimir Putin said was retaliation for Kyiv’s hitting Russian territory with long-range U.S. missiles.

Putin suggested that such strikes could be stepped up, after millions of Ukrainians were left without power on Thursday, Ukrainian officials said. Ukraine’s energy ministry said it was the 11th major attack on the country’s energy infrastructure this year.

The total extent of the damage was not immediately clear, but explosions were heard in cities across Ukraine, and many officials reported power outages. Six people were reported injured across the country, according to the regional authorities.

“The energy sector is under massive enemy attack again,” Ukraine’s energy minister, Herman Halushchenko, wrote on his Facebook page. The operator of the Ukrainian transmission system “has urgently introduced

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INSIDE



JOHN J. KIM/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Another painful way to lose

Bears quarterback Caleb Williams is tackled by Lions linebacker Jack Campbell during the third quarter of Thursday’s game at Ford Field in Detroit. The Lions dominated the first half and held on late to win 23-20, extending the Bears’ losing streak to six games. **Chicago Sports**

Retiree goes undercover

An aging widower works as a spy at a retirement community in the Netflix comedy “A Man on the Inside.” **Review in A+E**



NETFLIX

Some affordable housing at risk

Heartland Housing’s collapse means Uptown apartment building may go to auction and be bought by a for-profit developer. **Business**