

Chicago Tribune



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BREAKING NEWS AT CHICAGOTRIBUNE.COM

Burke trial opens with some fiery comments

Prosecutors call former alderman ‘an extortionist’

By Jason Meisner, Ray Long and Megan Crepeau
Chicago Tribune

Even as a heavyweight politician constantly in the Chicago spotlight, Ed Burke lived a double life, federal prosecutors said Thursday.

Outwardly he was the most powerful and longest-serving alderman on the City Council, leading the Finance Committee for decades, according to prosecutors. But secretly, he was something else.

“He was a bribe-taker and he was an extortionist,” Assistant U.S. Attorney Timothy Chapman told jurors as opening statements in Burke’s landmark racketeering trial finally got underway. “(His) corruption rose from the very potent intersection of opportunity and power.”

Displaying a photo of the entrance to Burke’s longtime third-floor City Hall office suite, Chapman said the veil over Burke’s corruption was only pierced when prosecutors were able to secure the cooperation of his colleague, then-Ald. Daniel Solis, in 2016, leading to dozens of wiretapped calls and recorded meetings that will lay out Burke’s illegal schemes

Turn to Trial, Page 4

Natural gas pipe project put on pause

ICC pulls funding for Peoples Gas program

By Robert Channick
Chicago Tribune

The Illinois Commerce Commission disallowed funding and paused the multibillion-dollar Peoples Gas pipeline replacement program Thursday pending a new investigation into the best approach to modernization of the century-old underground infrastructure.

The decision pulls \$265 million earmarked to continue the long-running System Modernization Program out of the 2024 budget for Peoples Gas, but does not relieve the utility of its responsibility to identify and repair leaking pipes that may pose a danger across the city.

“The company offered inadequate record evidence for this level of spending to prudently accomplish SMP’s primary objective, which according to the record is to replace all cast iron and ductile iron pipeline,” said Doug Scott, chairman of the ICC, which regulates utilities in the state. The ruling does not remove any funding “related to emergency response to leaks, pipe breaks or other critically important safety measures,” he said.

The ICC also approved small-

Turn to Pipeline, Page 8



Officials work where dozens were injured Thursday after a CTA Yellow Line train crashed into rail equipment in the Howard Rail Yard in Rogers Park. E. JASON WAMBSGANS/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Dozens injured as CTA train car hits snowplow

Crash on Yellow Line comes during scheduled training; NTSB to lead probe

By Rebecca Johnson, Caroline Kubzansky and Sarah Freishtat
Chicago Tribune
and Alex Hulvalchick
Pioneer Press

Humdia Ahmad heard a loud thud on the Yellow Line train she was riding and was violently flung forward.

Up until that moment Thursday morning, her commute to school at DePaul University had been typical. Then, the Yellow Line train rounded a curve and slammed into a CTA snowplow moving slowly down the tracks in front of it, Chicago Fire Department officials said.

She reoriented herself, and saw others in her car — the second on the train —

were also confused. Glass was shattered toward the front of the car, and one man’s leg seemed to have hit a plexiglass divider. Another passenger hit his head on a divider and fell onto the seats. Ahmad, 20, bumped into a rail but didn’t have any major bruising or injuries.

When emergency responders showed up, Ahmad and the other passengers in her car walked to the front of the train to exit. That was when she heard the train operator “screaming in pain” and saw blood on the floor and rails, she said.

“When we actually got out I saw the front of the train, and it was completely busted open — the glass, everything,” she said. “Thank God I’m OK, but I was very worried for everyone in the first car who

had to experience that.”

All told, 23 people, including four children, were taken to hospitals after the crash, near the border of Evanston and Chicago where the Yellow Line from Skokie ends at the Howard station, according to the fire department. Many of the injured were taken to Swedish Hospital, Advocate Illinois Masonic Hospital and Ascension St. Francis Hospital, according to hospital and fire officials.

Three of the people were in serious or critical condition, though no injuries were believed to be life-threatening.

Thirty-eight were seen by paramedics, including seven CTA employees, but 15

Turn to Crash, Page 12

City to receive more state aid for asylum-seekers



Migrants from Venezuela and other countries who are sheltering at the 1st District police station on South State Street in Chicago wear donated clothing suited for cold weather on Oct. 31. TERENCE ANTONIO JAMES/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Additional \$160 million coming as winter approaches

By Dan Petrella and Jeremy Gerner
Chicago Tribune

After months of deflecting questions about additional state funding for Chicago’s migrant crisis and declaring instead the federal government needed to do more, Gov. J.B. Pritzker announced Thursday a new infusion of state cash as winter fast approaches and the city struggles to shelter asylum-seekers from the southern border.

While Illinois government is devoting an additional \$160 million, the move comes as both the state and city are also unveiling policy initiatives signaling the support is not indefinite.

The state will start cutting off a rental assistance program for new arrivals who aren’t already in the city’s shelter system and will begin looking to help asylum-

Turn to Migrants, Page 7

INSIDE



David Braun, his daughter, Blake, and wife, Kristin. STACEY WESCOTT/TRIBUNE

Interim tag removed

After leading Northwestern to a surprising 5-5 record, David Braun named the team’s head football coach. **Chicago Sports**

Communications blackout

Internet and telephone services in Gaza collapse as Israeli troops again search hospital for Hamas. **Nation & World**

TODAY’S WEATHER



High 52 Low 32

Complete Chicagoland forecast on Page 14

\$4.00 city and suburbs and elsewhere
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