



the

COOK-WITTER REPORT

Volume 20, Number 4

September 20, 2005

Bill Signings

Medical malpractice - On August 25 Governor Rod Blagojevich, who called for medical malpractice reform in his State of the State address this year, approved legislation that reforms medical malpractice laws in Illinois. After an intense media campaign by proponents and opponents, legislative leaders and the Governor's Office worked with trial lawyers, hospitals, physicians, insurance and business to hammer out compromise legislation, which was sponsored by Sen. James Clayborne, Jr. and Rep. Dan Reitz.



Public Act 094-0677 limits personal pain and suffering awards to \$500,000 from physicians and \$1,000,000 for hospital judgments, requires a third-party physician to deem a lawsuit trial-worthy, increases citizens' ability to get information about physicians, enables the state to deny medical malpractice rate hikes, and increases the oversight of doctors.

While the new law takes effect immediately, many believe it will be tested in court.

Worker's compensation - On July 20 Governor Rod Blagojevich signed into law legislation which some consider the first comprehensive reform of worker's compensation in 30 years. Representative Jay Hoffman and Senator Terry Link sponsored the measure. Public Act 94-0277 was the result of months of negotiations between business and labor and is intended to control business's rising medical costs while improving workers' medical benefits.

Among other measures, the new law limits physicians' fees, increases workers' death and burial benefits, establishes a unit within the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation to investigate workers' comp fraud, increases penalties for unreasonably delayed compensation payments, and adds a panel to the Workers' Compensation Commission to more quickly resolve disputed cases.

Proponents, including the Illinois AFL-CIO, the Illinois Manufacturers' Association, and the Illinois Retail Merchants Association, say these measures will lower court costs, compensate workers faster, and increase their compensation.

The new law takes effect immediately.



Statehouse Security and Safety

As a result of changes in Statehouse security processes, some people may have questions about what they have to do to enter the building and other related safety issues. We got answers from Randy Nehrt, spokesman for the Secretary of State, which oversees Statehouse security.

Q - Since new security stations have been installed at the Statehouse, how will that change how people enter and exit the building?

A - The North and West entrances are open each

day and the East entrance is open most session days. Visitors must pass through magnetometers (metal detectors) and have bags screened by x-ray machines. Employees, public officials, lobbyists, vendors, and other officials with credentials may bypass the screening process.

Security screening equipment is now being utilized as well at the Stratton, Howlett, Archives, Library, and Appellate Court buildings. All visitors are subject to the same screening protocols at these locations as those that have been utilized at the Statehouse.

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Q - Should people allow more time now to get to a committee meeting or any other event at the Statehouse, in order to clear the new security stations?

A - Large crowds can slow down the process at times but staffing levels should minimize long delays.

Q - Which entrance should people with wheelchairs use?

A- The publicly accessible Statehouse entrance for persons with disabilities is the West entrance. On session days the East entrance is also open for persons with disabilities as staffing levels permit.

Q- If people with wheelchairs have questions about the Statehouse's accessibility, whom should they call?

A- All concerns for entrance directions should be made to security/police or the Capitol Command Center at 782-6008 or 782-2555.

Q- Who should someone call at the Statehouse if a person is experiencing signs of a heart attack?

A- For someone showing symptoms of a heart attack, stroke or other medical emergency, call 911. In addition, a Capitol police officer or security guard located in the building should be notified immediately. Visitors or employees may contact the Capitol Command Center at 782-6008 or 782-2555 at any time for emergencies.

(Editor's note -- For non-emergency situations, First Aid stations are located in the Capitol Complex at:

- Statehouse, third floor, room 305: 782-7035
- Stratton Building, first floor, room 1133: 785-3877
- Howlett Building, fourth floor, room 488: 782-3785)

Q - Who should someone contact if they see an unattended, suspicious package or person acting suspiciously?

A - Suspicious packages or persons should be reported to a security/police officer or to the Capitol Command Center: 782-6008 or 782-2555.

Q - Could you define what constitutes a "suspicious package"?

A - Suspicious packages may have unnecessary excess postage, oily residues, or suspicious names and addresses, including return information. They may be unusually bulky envelopes or other packages that are not typically delivered or expected at a specific address.

Q - Anything else you want to add about general security or safety issues in the Statehouse?

A -Large groups that want to hold lobby days and events at the Capitol should contact the Secretary of State's Division of Special Events for arrangements or to obtain permits: 217/782-8495. Tours of the Illinois State Capitol Building may be scheduled through the Springfield Convention and Visitors Bureau by calling 217/789-2360.



In Memoriam - Roger Sweet

Roger Dean Sweet, 61, died in Springfield on August 11. Sweet, a U.S. Marine Corps veteran and Purple Heart recipient, was the former Chief of Staff for the Illinois Senate under Pate Philip. Sweet was also a former Director of both the Illinois Department of Revenue and the Capital Development Board. Memorial donations can be sent to the "Allison Sweet Education Fund," Bank of Springfield, 3400 West Wabash Avenue, Springfield, IL 62711.

Veto Session Reminder

Don't forget that Veto Session starts a little early this year. While October 19th is a perfunctory day for the House and Senate, both chambers are scheduled to be in session October 25th through the 27th, and November 2nd through the 4th.

Capitol Matters: Mather's Grove

Before the current Statehouse was built in the late 1860s, its ground was a hunter's paradise and then a private homestead. When Springfield co-founder Elijah Iles came to town in 1821, the land was full of wildlife, as he described in his 1883 autobiography, "Sketches of Early Life and Times in Kentucky, Missouri and Illinois" (Sangamon County Historical Society, 1995). "Deer were very plenty. They trailed through the town, up the town branch (a stream that cut through town), halting in a grove where now stands the governor's mansion; and if we wanted fresh venison for breakfast the Kelly boys would go to the grove early and kill a deer."

Later the ground became known as Mather's Grove. It was named for Thomas Mather, who came to Springfield in 1835 to head the newly-chartered (and ill-fated) State Bank of Illinois, according to Curtis Mann, Manager of Lincoln Library's Sangamon Valley Collection, which houses historical information and materials about Springfield.

Mather bought the land when he came to Springfield and built his home there. It's fitting that his home's land became the future home of the legislature since he served in both chambers himself, according to John Carroll Power's "History of the Early Settlers of Sangamon County, Illinois."

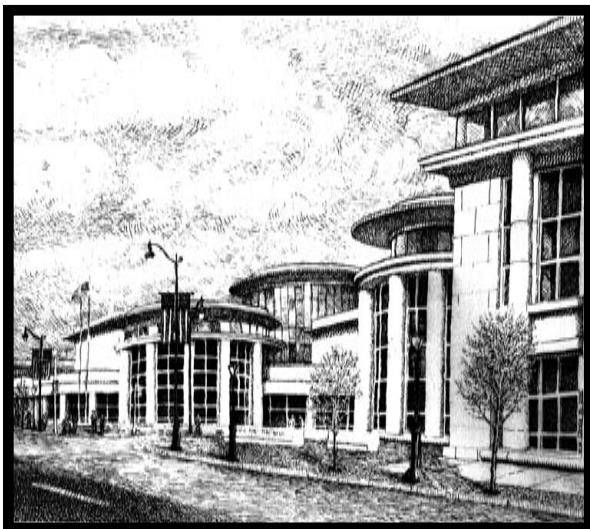
While Mather was a representative during the session of 1822-23, he played a key role in making

Illinois a Yankee state. Power wrote: "It was through the persistent opposition of Mr. Mather and kindred spirits, that Illinois was saved by the small majority (of a popular vote) from becoming a slave State."

Mather was known to most as "Colonel Mather;" he got the title by serving an "honorary position" on the staff of Illinois' second governor, abolitionist Edward Coles, according to Powers. Along with some partners, Mather bought the dilapidated Northern Cross Railroad, which ran from Meredosia to Springfield, and made it operational. He then helped start other railroad companies.

Mather's Grove occasionally served as a gathering place for mid-nineteenth century Springfield. In 1854 when the controversial Kentucky abolitionist Cassius Clay came to town to speak at the Statehouse, Illinois Secretary of State Alexander Starne barred him from the capitol (now the Old State Capitol). So Clay's supporters built him a speaker's platform in Mather's Grove, according to Paul Angle's "Here I Have Lived," which describes Springfield before and during Lincoln's time.

Abraham Lincoln and many others heard Clay speak there against slavery for two and a half hours, Angle's book says. Some were slavery advocates who came to heckle him. Like the crowd, Springfield's papers were divided about Clay's speech. True to their politics, they saw it quite differently. The pro-Whig Illinois State Journal, proclaimed Clay's talk "heroic," while the Democratic Illinois State Register said it was "atrocious" and traitorous.



Cook-Witter, Inc., is pleased to present Springfield artist William Crook, Jr.'s new pen and ink drawing of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, which opened last spring in Springfield. This black and white, pen and ink drawing is 20" x 21". This print is available for \$60 plus tax from Cook-Witter, Inc. Many other prints by Crook are available from Cook-Witter as well.

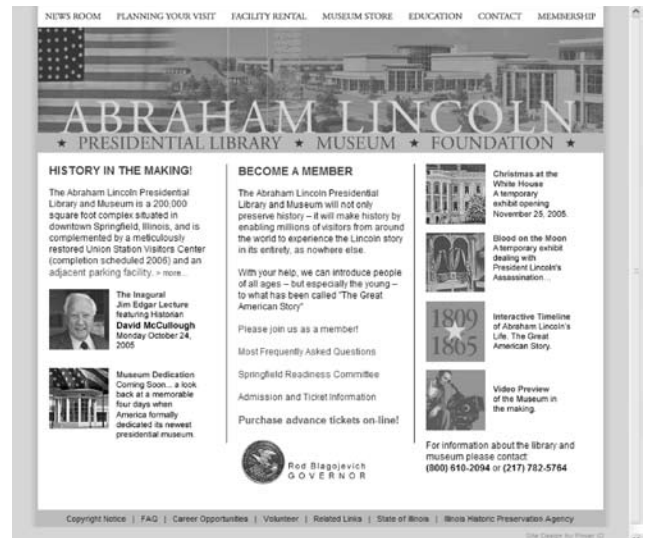
Phone (217) 789-6252
On the web at www.cook-witter.com



Web Sightings

If you or out-of-town friends are planning on visiting the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum, avoid possible ticket lines and order tickets in advance online. (Online tickets can be ordered no earlier than three days before your visit.) That's just one of the features of the Web site for the new museum and library. The site also has information about planning a group visit, frequently asked questions about the library and museum, and information and dates for the museum's teacher workshops. Has your group considered renting space at the museum or library for a meeting? Talk about atmosphere! There's information online about renting space there (though they don't rent for "partisan political activities.") Bone up on your Lincoln knowledge through the site's timeline of Abe's life or get info about Springfield's other Lincoln sites through related links. It's all at:

www.alplm.org/home.html



(Note: For information about the new Museum or any other Lincoln sites, contact the Springfield, Illinois Convention and Visitors Bureau at 109 North Seventh Street, 62701; 800/545-7300, 217/789-2360, www.visit-Springfield Illinois.com)



People In Transition

Fernando Grillo, former head of the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation, resigned on September 6. Dean Martinez was named acting secretary.

Michael Rumman, former director of the Illinois Department of Central Management Services, resigned in May. Paul Campbell was named acting director.

The Republican side of the Senate is going to look a lot different after next year's election. So far, seven members do not plan on running for re-election: **Senator Ed Petka** is running for a judgeship, **Senator Steve Rauschenberger** is running for governor, and **Senator Peter Roskam** is running for congress. **Senators Dave Sullivan, Kay Wojcik, Wendell Jones and Rick Winkel** have already resigned or tendered their resignation. **Former Representative John Millner** has taken **Senator Wojcik's** seat and **Randy Ramey** was appointed to fill Millner's vacated House seat.



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