

# THE Beacon-News

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## Suspect fatally shot after chase

### Aurora police say person tied to battery of Geneva cop showed weapon

Beacon-News

A person police said displayed a weapon following a vehicle chase was shot and killed by Aurora police on the city's East Side early Wednesday morning, officials said.

Around 1:30 a.m. Wednesday, Aurora police responded to a mutual aid request attempting to

locate a person wanted in connection with an aggravated battery to a Geneva police officer, according to a news release from the Aurora Police Department early Wednesday afternoon.

After obtaining the license plate of the vehicle and a description of the suspect, Aurora officers located the vehicle traveling southbound on Lake Street near Galena Boulevard in Aurora, according to the release.

Officers attempted to conduct a traffic stop on the vehicle, but the driver refused to stop, the release stated.

A vehicle pursuit followed, and ultimately, the vehicle traveled

northbound on Route 25, police said. As the vehicle approached Ashland Avenue, officers deployed stop sticks and the vehicle came to a stop a short distance later, according to the release.

As officers attempted to contact the driver, police said the driver displayed a weapon, and two Aurora police officers discharged their guns at the driver, who was struck by gunfire, according to the release.

Officers rendered aid to the individual until he was transported to a local hospital by Aurora Fire Department paramedics, police said. The individual, who has not been publicly

identified by officials, was pronounced dead a short time later, according to the release.

An investigation into the officers' actions is being conducted by the Kane County Major Crimes Task Force. Three officers have been placed on administrative leave, two who were involved and one who was present during the incident, which is standard procedure for officer-involved deaths, the release stated.

The task force will provide a report to Kane County State's Attorney Jamie Mosser, who will determine if the use of force was justified, according to a joint release from the Kane County

state's attorney's office and the Kane County coroner's office. The process will take place over the next few months, according to the release.

The Major Crimes Task Force comprises law enforcement officers from throughout Kane County. It provides independent assistance to member agencies that become involved in a major investigation, such as an officer-involved shooting, the release stated.

No officers from the Aurora Police Department will be involved in the investigation, the

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New East Aurora School District Superintendent Bob Halverson, left, poses with his grandparents Joe and Mona Middleton, and his oldest son R.J., in 2017. HALVERSON FAMILY

### EAST AURORA DISTRICT 131

## New superintendent has strong emotional ties



Denise Crosby

It's fair to say Bob Halverson is the first school superintendent in recent memory for East Aurora — at least the last half-century — to be born and raised in the district he now runs.

There's no question the new leader of East Aurora District 131 has roots that run deep, going

back a couple generations to when his grandmother was a student at Bardwell and later became president of the Krug PTO and a paraprofessional throughout the district's elementary schools.

Oh, and his great uncle Al Platt was not only a PTO leader and head of the Bardwell Dads Club, he served on the District 131 School Board for 14 years and was its president for a year.

That history and certainly those family ties are important to Halverson, who was introduced as the new District 131 super-

intendent at Monday evening's board meeting, and took over the reins the following morning.

Is he ready for such a quick transition?

It could be said that 47-year-old Halverson, who attended Krug through sixth grade, has been preparing for this job all his life.

Not that he eyed such a lofty title when he became a young teacher at Bardwell. Back then Halverson, armed with a degree in elementary education with an undergrad in sports management, had his eye on a college

coaching career. But then-Principal Tom Hartman saw something special in the young P.E. teacher and fifth-grade intramurals coach: strong leadership potential.

Halverson, who also taught fourth grade and kindergarten, began showing off those administrative skills at West Aurora School District 129, with stints as assistant principal at Greenman Elementary and as principal at Goodwin Elementary where, under his tutelage, exemplary

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### EAST AURORA SCHOOL BOARD

## Moreno, a '14 grad, tapped to fill vacancy

By Molly Morrow  
Beacon-News

On Monday, the East Aurora District 131 school board voted to approve the appointment of Brian Moreno to fill a vacant seat on the board.

The 28-year-old graduated from East Aurora High School just over a decade ago, and now returns to sit on the district's board.

Moreno fills the seat left by former board member Alex Arroyo, who had served on the board for nine years, according to past reporting. Arroyo now serves as the District 7 member of the Kane County Board, which voted on his appointment to that board in January. He resigned from East Aurora's board on Jan. 16, according to the school district.

Moreno

Moreno will serve the remainder of Arroyo's term, which expires in April 2027.

At the same meeting on Monday, Robert Halverson was approved as the district's new superintendent. He and the outgoing superintendent, Jennifer Norrell, will co-lead the district through June.

Moreno is the youngest member of the board in recent history, according to a statement from the city of Aurora. He attended Bardwell Elementary, Waldo Middle School and East Aurora High School, according to a release from the school district.

Now a community engagement specialist for the city of Aurora, Moreno has been honored for his work in the community.

In May 2024, he received an award from Aurora Mayor Richard Irvin for performing CPR on a 63-year-old resident who collapsed at the top of a stairwell and lost consciousness prior to a

Turn to Board, Page 2

## State legislators look to establish rules for artificial intelligence

### Lawmakers grappling with how to address evolving technology

By Jeremy Gorner  
Chicago Tribune

SPRINGFIELD — About a year and a half ago, Crystal Lake South High School math teacher Sarah Murmann grew concerned when she heard one of her students say he met his girlfriend through an artificial intelligence-based social media site.

The revelation ignited a larger conversation with her class about what they knew about AI, which made her realize she was not

adequately informed about the new technology.

"Despite all the potential that I've seen with AI, there's still a gap in Illinois," Murmann said last week during a state House committee hearing on legislation that would establish guidelines for teachers and school administrators on how to use AI. "A year and half after I had to start making my own decisions about AI in the classroom, I still have no official guidance to turn to."

"We look to the state for support and Illinois has no state guidance for educators on AI," Murmann said. "That means teachers like me in schools across all of Illinois have to make our

best guess every day and hope that it's right."

The bill Murmann testified on is one of several measures Illinois lawmakers are considering for the new legislative session on how to respond to the emergence of artificial intelligence.

Like other state legislatures around the country, the Illinois General Assembly in the last couple of years has grappled with how to address a rapidly evolving technology that replicates human intelligence and, everyone seems to agree, has potential benefits as well as the ability to cause significant harm.

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Sarah Murmann teaches her dual-credit statistics class for seniors at Crystal Lake South High School on Tuesday. ANTONIO PEREZ/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

TODAY'S WEATHER



High 44 Low 31

Complete Chicagoland forecast on back page

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# Would you let a robot draw your blood?

## Northwestern Medicine among health systems trying out new device

By **Lisa Schencker**  
*Chicago Tribune*

The practice of drawing blood has changed very little over the decades. It looks about the same now as it did 50 years ago. That process, however, may be about to get a modern makeover. Several health systems across the U.S. — including Northwestern Medicine — are gearing up to try a new way of drawing blood: using a robot.

Northwestern is among several health systems that have agreed to be part of a clinical trial of a device that automates blood collection. Northwestern and the company behind the device say it has the potential to make blood draws more efficient, while helping health systems deal with a shortage of phlebotomists, which are people trained to collect blood samples.

"This all ensures high accuracy and high reliability, and with such precision it reduces any pain and discomfort associated with a normal blood draw," said Bob Gerberich, chief commercial officer for North America for Vitestro,

the Netherlands-based company that makes the device, which is called Aletta.

Here's how it works: The patient sits in a chair by the 5-foot-tall Aletta device, and places an arm on a sloped armrest that's part of the device. The patient then presses a start button, and a tourniquet tightens around the patient's arm, above the elbow, to make the blood draw easier. The Aletta then uses an infrared light to locate the veins. The device sprays the patient's arm with alcohol to clean it, and an AI-driven doppler ultrasound probe on a robotic arm helps select a vein and determine needle placement. The Aletta then inserts the needle into the vein and collects blood into tubes.

When it's done, the Aletta applies a bandage to the area where the needle pierced the skin.

Unlike with a traditional blood draw, the patient does not see the needle go into the arm nor the tubes of blood. The entire process takes about two minutes.

"With this device they never see the needle and they never see or experi-



Northwestern Memorial Hospital Lavin Family Pavilion, center, on July 26, 2021. **TERRENCE ANTONIO JAMES/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

ence or feel the blood tubes being changed," Gerberich said. "That really helps with those types of patients that are ordinarily squeamish."

The Aletta has a 95% success rate when it comes to drawing usable blood on the first attempt, and the machine can be especially useful for patients who might otherwise be difficult to successfully stick, according to the company.

The device is already approved for use in Europe for patients ages 16 and older, and the company plans to soon seek approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for its commercial use in the U.S.

Northwestern is one of three sites in the U.S.

that have agreed to use the device as part of a multi-center clinical trial, Gerberich said. The company is not yet releasing the names of other two health systems, and is hoping to add one or two more systems as well, he said.

The Aletta will likely be sent to Northwestern next year, Gerberich said.

Each health system will get several Aletta devices for a period of time before the devices are moved on to other locations participating in the trial, with a goal of getting feedback on the use of the devices in the U.S. and showing how they perform, said Toon Overbeeke, CEO and co-founder of Vitestro.

Northwestern hopes the device allows it to ensure the quality of blood samples while dealing with an ongoing shortage of phlebotomists, said Dr. Gregory Retzinger, medical director of Pathology Clinical Services at Northwestern Memorial Hospital.

Though "human involvement can certainly be reassuring to a patient," it can be difficult to find enough phlebotomists, Retzinger said. "We don't have enough people to draw the blood, so I had to look for a solution."

Employment of phlebotomists is expected to grow 8% between 2023 and 2033 — about double the growth rate for all occupations during that period, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The bureau projects about 19,600 openings for phlebotomists each year, on average, over that time. Attempts to reach the National Phlebotomy Association and several Chicago area colleges that train phlebotomists for their thoughts on the technology were unsuccessful this week.

The device also has a near-zero rate of hemolysis during blood collection, which is when red blood cells break down during or after the collection process

making a sample unusable, according to the company. Normally, with traditional blood draws, the hemolysis rate of blood samples can be as high as 3% to 4%, according to published research.

"You have to have a good sample in order to have meaningful data that can be interpreted on behalf of the patient," Retzinger said.

It has not yet been determined what the device will cost once it's available commercially in the U.S. But Gerberich said health systems should see a savings over the expense of traditional phlebotomy.

The company expects that one health care worker, trained on how to use the Aletta, will be able to oversee up to three of the devices at once.

The company also expects that the devices will improve patient experience. For example, patients in need of blood draws could see more available appointments and/or reduced wait times because health systems using the machines will be able to draw blood from more patients more quickly, Gerberich said.

"The main purpose of the device is really to enhance the quality of the samples and improve the patient experience," Overbeeke said.

## BRIDGE

Both vulnerable, South deals

**North**  
♠ A Q 10 2  
♥ 10 6 4  
♦ 8 7 4  
♣ 9 6 5

**West**  
♠ 9 5  
♥ K J 3  
♦ Q J 10 2  
♣ K 7 4 3

**East**  
♠ 6  
♥ 9 8 7 2  
♦ K 9 6 5 3  
♣ J 10 8

**South**  
♠ K J 8 7 4 3  
♥ A Q 5  
♦ A  
♣ A Q 2

The club's Saturday night duplicate saw almost every table reach four spades on this deal. Hard Luck Louie won the opening diamond lead with his ace, cashed the king of spades, and led a spade to dummy's ace. This drew the trumps and Louie next led a club to his queen, losing to West's king. Louie ruffed the diamond continuation, led a spade to dummy's queen, and led a heart to his queen. That lost

to West's king, and when the jack of hearts failed to drop under the ace later, Louie was down one. "How d'ya like that luck," complained Louie. "Both finesses were offside."

Lucky Larry also won the opening diamond lead with his ace, but then he led a spade to dummy's 10 and ruffed a diamond in hand. He crossed back to dummy with a spade to the queen and ruffed dummy's last diamond. He then led a spade to dummy's ace and a club back to his queen. West won with the king, but had to return a club. Larry won this with his ace and exited with his last club. East won and shifted to a heart, but Larry played low from his hand, losing to West's jack. West had to lead a heart back into Larry's ace-queen or give up a ruff-sluff. Making four!

— Bob Jones  
*Tribune Content Agency*

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## Board

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neighborhood group meeting, according to past reporting.

A few months before that, Moreno de-escalated a situation at the city's warming center at the Aurora Transportation Center, in which an 18-year-old was accused of entering with a firearm, pointing it at several people and striking someone at the center, according to past reporting. Moreno, who was staffing the warming center, called 911 and ushered individuals in the warming center outside to safety, officials said.

Applications for the vacant East Aurora board seat were due on Feb. 27, according to the district, and finalists were interviewed on March 1. Board members must be registered voters, over the age of 18, Illinois residents and U.S. citizens and live in the district for at least one year before they are appointed.

Moreno said the district has changed a lot since he graduated from East Aurora High School in 2014.

"Prior to my graduation, there was always statistics ... we would start out with 1,400 freshmen, and only 500 students would graduate," Moreno told The Beacon-News after

Monday's meeting.

Now, the district has a 90% graduation rate, according to the latest data from the Illinois State Board of Education.

Moreno is also a current student himself. He is taking classes part-time for a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Lewis University, as part of the 3+1 program at the College of DuPage. He previously received certification from Waubesa Community College to work as a paraprofessional in schools.

"Now, the kids can be like ... he went to Bardwell, he went to Waldo, he went to high school, he went to college, you know?"

Moreno said on Monday. "I could do the same because he went through what I went through."

The board could see further shake-ups in the near future. The terms of three of the current board members — longtime board member and current board president Annette Johnson, board secretary Bruce Schubert and member Theodia Gillespie — are expiring in April. All three are running for re-election in the April 1 election, against six non-incumbents, according to the Kane County clerk's office.

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## Police

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release said.

No body-worn camera footage will be released yet regarding the officer-involved shooting in Aurora,

Mosser said at a news conference at Aurora City Hall on Wednesday.

The investigation will wait at least 72 hours before interviewing the involved officers, and the SAFE-T Act requires that police officers not see

body-worn camera footage before giving a statement or making a police report about an incident like this, Mosser said. The plan is to release the footage at a later date, she said.

Details on the identity of the man who was

fatally shot or of the officers involved cannot be released yet, officials said at Wednesday's press conference. They also said they are unable to release any details on the weapon police said the driver of the car displayed.

## Crosby

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ratings were earned three years in a row from the Illinois Board of Education.

Halverson's dream, however, was to someday return to help lead East Aurora.

He got that chance last year when he gave up his job as assistant director of grants and accountability with District 129 to become the executive director of finance and grants for the crosstown rival.

Assuming Jennifer Norrell still had four years or so left in the role as superintendent of East Aurora, "I figured I could come over and see what the needs were. And when that position opened up, I would be ready," he told me in a Tuesday phone interview just hours after leading his first cabinet meeting.

That opening popped up a lot sooner after Norrell announced in November she was stepping down to become superintendent of Homewood-Flossmoor Community High School District 233, where she once lived and where her mother still resides.

That call home is powerful, indeed.

Norrell originally intended to stay in her role with the district until the end of this school year. But the search to replace her seemed to quickly land on Halverson, who in the few months since joining East Aurora had earned a reputation as a great communicator and team builder.

"The board was 100% behind him," said East Aurora school board President Annette Johnson,

noting that Halverson was "always working" with staff in all the buildings to "help solve their problems."

The new superintendent, she added, "is ready to hit the ground running."

When I asked Halverson about the characteristics that made him the district's top choice, he again brought up those strong family ties, noting that it was his grandparents, Joe and Mona Middleton, who taught him "there's a reason you have two ears and one mouth," and not the other way around.

"Teachers," he said, "need to be heard a little bit more."

Halverson, who lives in Sugar Grove with wife Ruby and their three sons, insists it's all about bringing teams together for a common cause. And that means focusing on every player to help each one reach full potential.

If that sounds a lot like a coach, it should be noted Halverson held that title up until last year for oldest son R.J.'s basketball team and is still head coach for the 16-year-old's baseball team. Of course, now that he's superintendent of the oldest and 12th largest school district in the state, he realizes that role will also have to eventually be relinquished. After all, he noted, there are "big shoes to fill."

Norrell, who made history as the first female superintendent of East Aurora and first African-American superintendent in Kane County, has indeed made an impact at District 131. She's "put us on a trajectory to success," said Johnson at Monday's meeting, referring to

higher test scores and graduation rates, as well as all the schools earning "commendable" ratings or higher.

Norrell, who will help with the transition to the new superintendent, also was known as a visionary. She championed the district's PAWS Program, which put comfort dogs into the schools, and spearheaded the new grant-funded Resilience Education Center, as well as the upcoming high school career center that Halverson sees as a way to help "end the cycle of poverty" by not only teaching students the trades but offering night classes to parents as well.

Raised by a single mom working multiple jobs and the only one in his family to attend college, much less earn multiple advanced degrees, Halverson appreciates the importance of higher education. But as the grandson of a carpenter and son of a handyman who earned his GED through District 131, he also knows how vocational training, coupled with guidance, can impact lives.

Obviously saying farewell to Norrell and welcoming Halverson made for an emotional meeting earlier this week. It also should be noted that Brian Moreno, who was sworn in as the youngest board member in history for the district, was a former student of both Halverson and his wife, who met at Bardwell when she was a first-grade bilingual teacher.

It's no wonder there was standing room only, with many former teachers from that school in

attendance at Monday's meeting.

Halverson admits he was nervous. He acknowledged during a short speech there will be a learning curve and that "there may be a time I need grace." Still, no one can doubt the new superintendent's passion for this job, for the kids whose futures likely will be impacted by his leadership, for their parents and for the Aurora community as a whole.

While driving around the district last fall Halverson had the chance to pass many locations that brought back "great seminal memories for me."

Krug School was among them, as was his grandparents' and mother's homes on Elliott Avenue; the Fourth Street United Methodist Church, which his grandfather helped rebuild after fire damage in the 1980s; Phillips Park, where his grandparents would often take him; Garfield Park, where he played Aurora Boys Baseball; and the Platt Lighting store on Union Street, owned by his great uncle and where he "would spend countless hours" when his beloved grandmother worked there.

"Those adolescent experiences helped shape me," he said, specifically referring to the "servant leadership" modeled by his "Papa" and "Nana," who passed away in a short time span within the last 18 months.

"Therapeutic," is how Halverson defined this reconnection to his childhood.

"It feels good," he added, "to be home."

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