

# TRAFFIC NEWS

JULY 2018

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 7



## Tour Boat Accident Leaves 17 Dead



**A CRANE RAISES THE SUNKEN TOUR BOAT FROM TABLE ROCK LAKE. IMAGE SOURCE: THE NEWS GAZETTE**

An amphibious tour boat sank in Branson, Missouri, after succumbing to rough waters during a severe thunderstorm. The “duck boat” carried 31 people, of which 17 died.

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is currently investigating the fatal incident. The duck boats tours are owned by Ripley Entertainment, Inc. Jim Pattison, president of Ripley Entertainment, Inc.,

claimed that the storms “came out of nowhere”.

However, the statement quickly received backlash as meteorologists stressed that the storms were forecasted with a high degree of certainty for more than a day in advance. Furthermore, the storm, traveling across Missouri, was severe thunderstorm warned, carrying wind gusts of up to 63 mph, according to storm reports.

Preliminary investigations also revealed that the boats used in the tours were designed by an individual with no engineering background, revealing potential for mechanical flaws in the boats. In fact, mechanical flaws have plagued the safety of the duck boats frequently enough in the past couple of decades that safety officials have been vocalizing their concerns of safety aboard the boats.

Source: CBS News. [Available online at [cbsnews.com/news/branson-community-mourns-missouri-duck-boat-victims-today-2018-07-22/](http://cbsnews.com/news/branson-community-mourns-missouri-duck-boat-victims-today-2018-07-22/)]; CNN. [Available online at [cnn.com/2018/07/20/us/missouri-boat-incident/index.html](http://cnn.com/2018/07/20/us/missouri-boat-incident/index.html)]; Forbes. [Available online at [forbes.com/sites/marshallshepherd/2018/07/20/duck-boat-tragedy-was-preventable-because-storm-did-not-come-out-of-nowhere/#5a37642230f8](http://forbes.com/sites/marshallshepherd/2018/07/20/duck-boat-tragedy-was-preventable-because-storm-did-not-come-out-of-nowhere/#5a37642230f8)]; LA Times. [Available online at [latimes.com/nation/la-na-duck-boat-20180724-story.html](http://latimes.com/nation/la-na-duck-boat-20180724-story.html)]

## Total DUI Arrests in Illinois

The Alliance Against Intoxicated Motorists (AAIM) released the total counts for DUI arrests in Illinois. The alliance, headquartered in Schaumburg, was founded to raise awareness of the dangers of drinking and driving.

Their latest data release ranks Illinois county sheriff’s offices and Illinois municipal police departments by the number of DUI arrests that have been made in 2017. Winnebago County Sheriff’s Office topped the list with 571 DUI arrests, more than twice as many arrests than the Lake County Sheriff’s Office, the second place county. Likewise, Rockford was ranked the number one municipal police department outside of the Chicago Police Department (CPD) with 490 DUI arrests. CPD recorded 1,982 DUI arrests. The Illinois State Police made 5,234 DUI arrests across Illinois.

The grand total across all of Illinois was 32,576 DUI arrests. Overall, the county sheriff’s offices contributed to 5,066 DUI arrests, and the municipality police departments (including CPD) contributed to 22,264 DUI arrests. With 31,931 sworn officers in Illinois in 2017, the arrest rate per officer was approximately 1.02 DUI arrests. The North Pekin Police Department had the highest arrest rate of 10.33 DUI arrests per officer.

Visit [aaim1.org/dui-counts.html](http://aaim1.org/dui-counts.html) for the full ranking.

Source: Alliance Against Intoxicated Motorists, 2018: 2017 DUI Counts. Retrieved 16 July. [Available online at [aaim1.org/dui-counts.html](http://aaim1.org/dui-counts.html)]

### FOURTH OF JULY TRAFFIC STOPS IN LAKE COUNTY

Lake County’s Sheriff’s Office released their totals for the number of traffic stops held during the Fourth of July holidays: The sheriff’s office logged a total of 168 citations and arrests:

- Seat belt citations: 107
- Speeding citations: 24
- DUI arrests: 2
- Other traffic citations or arrests: 35

According to the Illinois Department of Transportation, about a quarter of fatal Independence Day crashes are related to alcohol.

Source: Patch. [Available online at [patch.com/illinois/grayslake/168-cited-arrested-during-july-4th-mobilization-lake-co](http://patch.com/illinois/grayslake/168-cited-arrested-during-july-4th-mobilization-lake-co)]

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## Metra Faces Crowding Issues Amid Schedule Change

### CHICAGO CRASHES EXCEED 100,000

Since September, Chicago has observed over 100,000 crashes. This means that 100,000 crashes occurred in Chicago in less than one year. According to the Illinois Department of Transportation, the last time Chicago observed over 100,000 crashes in a year was in 2008, when the threshold for a reportable crash was lower than what it is now.

The 100 block of West 87th Street in Chatham was the worst area in Chicago for crashes, with 124 crashes occurring there. Thankfully, none of these crashes killed anyone. However, Chicago did report over 18,000 injuries and 100 fatalities since September.

Cell phone use and other distracted driving accounted for less than one percent of crashes, but four percent involved cyclists or pedestrians. The most common contributory causes for the crashes were failing to yield right of way and following too closely. This is expected in Chicago, where there are many cars, intersections, and lane changes throughout the city.

The data are from a newly publicized dataset that Chicago safety officials hope to use to mitigate the crash risks in the city.

Source: Chicago Sun Times. [Available online at [chicago.suntimes.com/news/chicago-crash-data-traffic-streets-driving-chatham-worst-block-vision-zero-transportation](http://chicago.suntimes.com/news/chicago-crash-data-traffic-streets-driving-chatham-worst-block-vision-zero-transportation).]

Metra has been scrambling to fix a backlog of issues involving the BNSF line. Commuters taking the Metra BNSF line share their grievances of being crammed in Metra trains, a problem that has been going on for over a month since Metra's schedule change along the BNSF line.

Metra states that an upgrade to the trains led to an inevitable schedule change in June. The upgrades are a part of a federal mandate to install the new braking technology called "positive train control" (PTC). Metra plans to install PTC on all trains by 2019.

The Metra BNSF line had always been busy. About 64,000 passengers take the Metra BNSF line on



PASSENGERS CROWD A METRA TRAIN ON A BNSF LINE COMMUTE  
IMAGE SOURCE: CHICAGO TRIBUNE

a typical workday. Even Metra CEO Jim Derwinski admitted that the line is "completely saturated". But since the schedule change, commuters found themselves in even more crowded trains.

Unfortunately for riders, this was not the end of the problems. On top of the crowded trains, several trains began to have issues with

broken air conditioners. Commuters dismayed with the decaying service quality are eagerly waiting for Metra to solve the problems. For now, cars have been added to the busier trains, although at the expense of cutting less-busy trains shorter.

The crowding problem also negatively impacts Metra financially because train conductors are unable to wade through the passengers to collect train fares. Metra plans to collect rider-count data to accurately fix the crowding problem.

In the meantime, the air conditioners are being repaired overnight, but Metra says the fix will also be slow because of worker shortages.

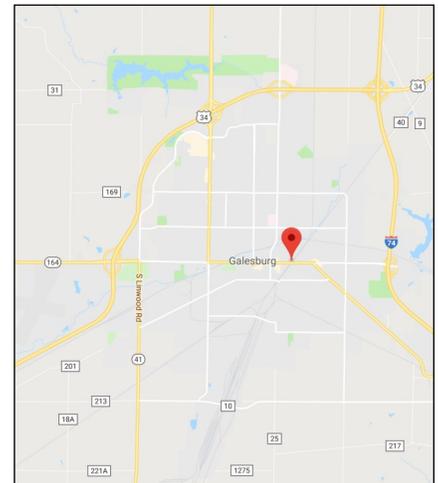
Source: Chicago Tribune. [Available online at [chicagotribune.com/news/ct-biz-metra-bnsf-crowding-20180612-story.html](http://chicagotribune.com/news/ct-biz-metra-bnsf-crowding-20180612-story.html).]; Chicago Tribune. [Available online at [chicagotribune.com/news/ct-biz-metra-bnsf-crowding-20180718-story.html](http://chicagotribune.com/news/ct-biz-metra-bnsf-crowding-20180718-story.html).]; CBS Chicago. [Available online at [chicago.cbslocal.com/2018/07/18/metra-struggles-with-broken-air-conditioning-units-crowding-on-bnsf-line/](http://chicago.cbslocal.com/2018/07/18/metra-struggles-with-broken-air-conditioning-units-crowding-on-bnsf-line/).]

## Galesburg Underpass Opens

The Rev. Jon A. Sibley Sr. Underpass in Galesburg opened on July 18th. This underpass located along E. Main St. and replaces a BNSF railroad crossing. The Amtrak Galesburg Station is just south of the underpass, and a BNSF railyard is located on the outskirts of Galesburg.

Governor Bruce Rauner and Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) secretary Randall Blenkinshorn joined Galesburg Mayor John Pritchard, Director Andy Williams of BNSF public affairs, and other municipal and regional representatives in the opening ceremony for the underpass. The underpass is named after the late Reverend Jon A. Sibley, who was a retired Illinois State Police Trooper. The opening ceremony also commemorated Sibley's life and service to the Galesburg community.

The construction for the overpass began in the fall of 2016, as the final piece of a large-scale project to alleviate delays at railroad crossings in Galesburg. A preceding leg of the project along W. Main St. was completed in 2012.



LOCATION OF NEW UNDERPASS IN GALESBURG (GOOGLE MAPS).

Source: Galesburg News. [Available online at [galesburg.com/news/20180706/underpass-officially-opening-july-18](http://galesburg.com/news/20180706/underpass-officially-opening-july-18).]; US News. [Available online at [usnews.com/best-states/illinois/articles/2018-07-22/galesburg-railroad-underpass-opens-eases-traffic-congestion](http://usnews.com/best-states/illinois/articles/2018-07-22/galesburg-railroad-underpass-opens-eases-traffic-congestion).]



### Congress Requests Amtrak to Investigate Delays

Illinois Senator Dick Durbin pushed an amendment to request that Amtrak’s Inspector General research frequent delays that happen on Amtrak. The last time Amtrak performed these on-time studies was in 2008.

According to Durbin, Amtrak is frequently late in one particular line that services passengers between Chicago and Carbondale. He says that the line had observed about 17,000 hours in delays just in 2017, amounting to about 200,000 passengers arriving late. This makes the Chicago-Carbondale line one of the worst Amtrak lines in the nation in terms of trains arriving on time.

Canadian National (CN) owns the line that Amtrak uses between Chicago and Carbondale. Amtrak claims that the delays along the

line are caused by having to wait for CN freight trains, but CN denies these claims.

Amtrak passengers were also interviewed for their experiences. Most of them have noted the ride itself is not bad, but they also confirmed the frequent delays. Nonetheless, trains being on time is important because delays cost businesses productivity and money. Some passengers have also considered driving instead of taking the train because of the ongoing delays.

In a unanimous vote in Washington, D.C., the senate passed the



AN AMTRAK TRAINS BOUNDS FOR CARBONDALE. IMAGE SOURCE: KFVS

amendment on July 25th, initializing the request for Amtrak to investigate the delays.

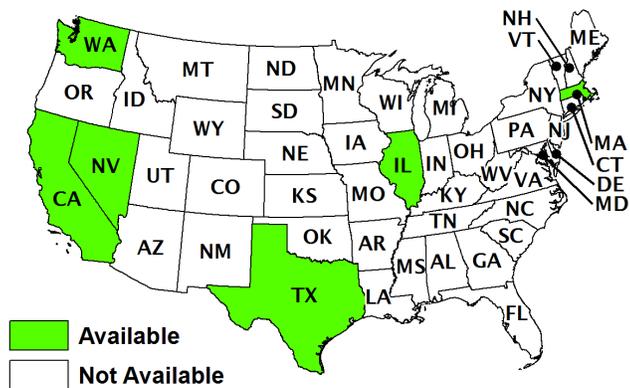
Meanwhile, Amtrak and the Illinois Department of Transportation are collaborating with Iowa to establish a new rail service that connects Chicago and the Quad Cities, a discussion that has been going on for over six years.

Source: KFVS. [Available online at kfvs12.com/story/38732215/senate-directing-amtrak-to-inspect-frequent-delays-on-chicago-carbondale-route.]; WPSD. [Available online at wpsdlocal6.com/2018/07/26/senate-bill-change-aims-to-assess-how-delays-are-impacting-amtrak.]; WVik. [Available online at wvik.org/post/no-date-yet-amtrak-service-qc.]

### Waze Carpool Comes to Illinois

#### Traffic Safety and Business

#### States with Waze Carpool Available



STATES WITH WAZE CARPOOL SERVICES AVAILABLE.

Waze has announced in late June that their ride-sharing app Waze Carpool is now available in Illinois. This introduction adds Waze to a growing list of ride-sharing companies. The currently dominating ride-sharing companies are Uber, Lyft, and Via. The Google-owned company also has its ride-sharing service available for California, Massachusetts, Nevada, Texas, and Washington. The service is also available in Israel.

Waze appeals to users with a capability to personalize with whom to carpool instead of solely running an algorithm to match carpoolers as do Uber and Lyft.

Source: Chicago Sun-Times. [Available online at chicago.suntimes.com/news/waze-ride-share-comes-to-illinois.]

### Year-To-Date Fatal Crash Snapshot

July 30, 2018

541 Fatal Crashes\*  
591 Fatalities\*

On this day last year:  
569 Fatal Crashes\*  
626 Fatalities\*

35 Below  
Fatalities change

\* Provisional, subject to change  
Source: IDOT

### Last Month’s Traffic Digest June, 2018\*

Total Crashes: 18,202  
6,698 fewer than normal†

Total fatalities: 74  
15 fewer than normal†

Motorcycle fatalities: 15  
6 fewer than normal†

DUI crashes: 102  
71 fewer than normal†

\* Provisional, subject to change  
Source: IDOT  
† Based on 2012–16 five-year means





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[moveoverillinois.org](http://moveoverillinois.org)



***Ford and IDOT Teach Teen Driving Safety***

Ford Motor Co. held a Driving Skills for Life event over the weekend for young drivers at the DuPage Airport in West Chicago. The motivation for the program comes after Tazewell County witnessed 15 teen-related crashes in 15 months in the early 2000s, alarming the county for the need to raise awareness of teenage driving. In 2006, Tazewell County touted zero teen-related fatal crashes, commending the program for its positive influence.



**A TEEN DRIVER FIDDLES WITH HIS PHONE TO SIMULATE DISTRACTED DRIVING.**  
**IMAGE SOURCE: CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

In this year's event, over 300 teenagers attended, and many parents also attended. The event included four hands-on exercises designed to teach drivers how to quickly react to unexpected traffic situations, including real-wheel drifting, changing lanes to evade hazards, learning how anti-lock braking systems behave, and simulating impaired driving and distracted driving.

According to the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), there are 134 fatal crashes per year related to teen driving, based on a 2012-16 five-year mean. IDOT coordinated with Ford Motor Co. to make the Driving Skills for Life event a success.

Source: Chicago Tribune. [Available online at [chicagotribune.com/classified/automotive/ct-auto-ford-teen-driving-safety-20180723-story.html](http://chicagotribune.com/classified/automotive/ct-auto-ford-teen-driving-safety-20180723-story.html).]

***Illinois Scores Well for Speed Enforcement***

An analysis by WalletHub ranked Illinois the eighth strictest state in the U.S. in terms of speed enforcement. The state is tied with Virginia, Alabama, and Washington. Delaware ranks first place.

The study took into account several metrics related to speed enforcement by assessing state laws regarding speeding and reckless driving. These include the speed threshold that is considered reckless driving, how much insurance would increase after each speeding ticket, the effect of speeding tickets on an eventual license suspension, and whether certain consequences are ordered for reckless driving.

As of July 18th, there had been over 1,000 speed-related traffic crashes in Illinois. July 25th was Illinois Speed Awareness Day, during which police departments across the state crack down on speeders and raise awareness of the dangers of speeding.

Source: WalletHub [Available online at [wallethub.com/edu/strictest-and-most-lenient-states-on-speeding/14211](http://wallethub.com/edu/strictest-and-most-lenient-states-on-speeding/14211).]

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