

# Chicago Tribune



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Susie Williams, brought in by the state to help clear out Howe Developmental Center in Tinley Park, removes items from a group apartment. Williams was not on Howe's staff. DAVID PIERINI/TRIBUNE PHOTO

## Staff keeps jobs despite a record of poor care

**TRIBUNE WATCHDOG** Many employed at other state facilities for disabled

By Joel Hood and Kristen Schorsch  
TRIBUNE REPORTERS

By most measures, the Howe Developmental Center in Tinley Park was the worst-run state facility for developmentally disabled adults in Illinois, a place where alleged employee neglect

and improper care were blamed for more than 30 deaths and cost the state millions in added expenses over the last five years.

The problems at Howe were so pervasive and hopeless that the state shut it down in June once the last remaining residents found homes elsewhere.

Despite this dysfunction, and

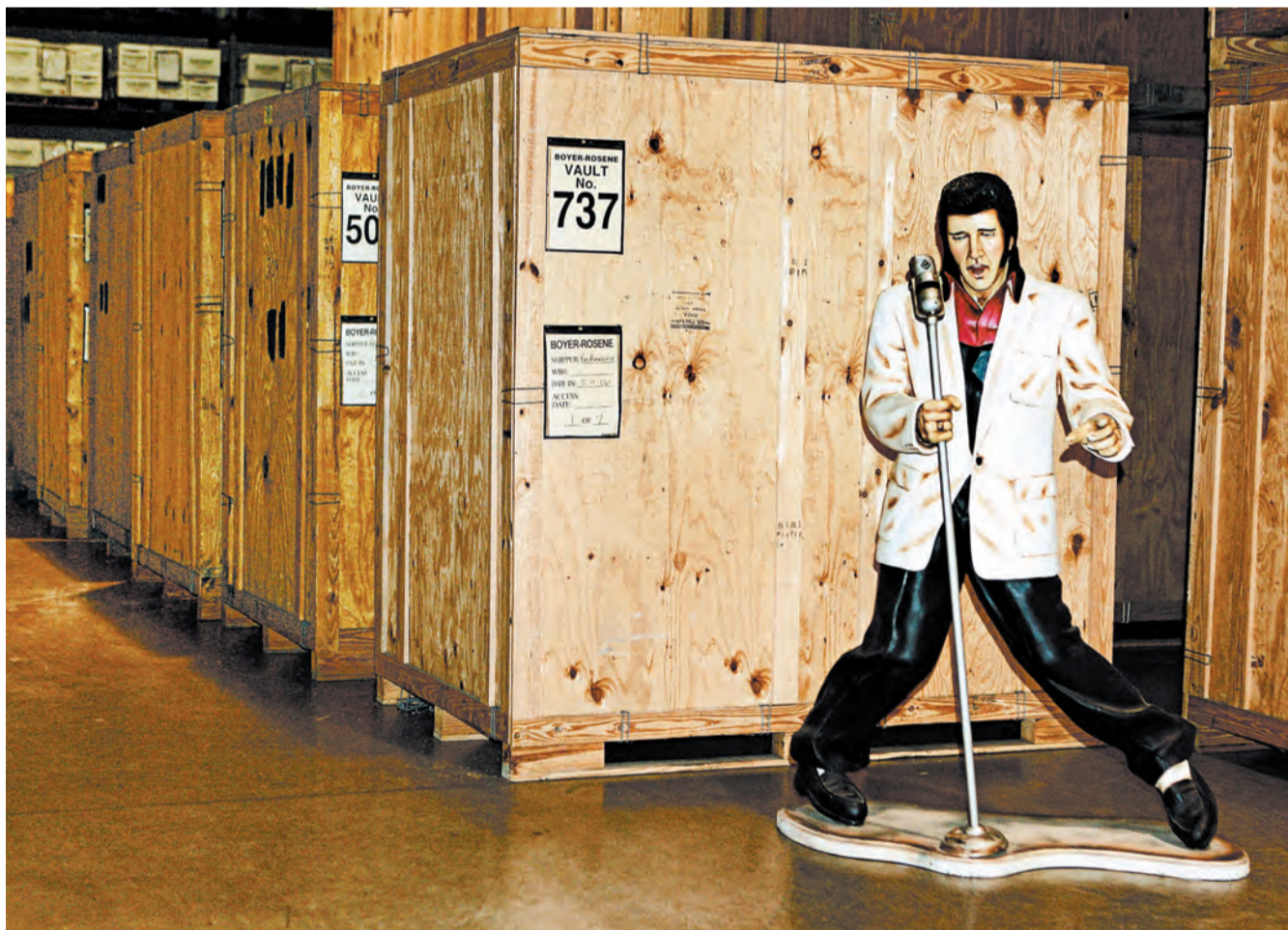
deep cuts to social services in the state budget, not a single Howe manager or employee was fired as a result of the closing, officials said. Records obtained by the Tribune show that nearly 400 former Howe workers — more than half of the facility's roughly 750 employees in 2008 — are employed at other state facilities for the developmentally disabled.

A few of Howe's high-ranking administrators were awarded

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### TRIBUNE EXCLUSIVE

## It's now or never for ex-gov's stuff



A statue of Elvis is among seven containers' worth of items that may be sold at auction because Rod Blagojevich is more than a year behind on his rent, says the owner of Boyer-Rosene Moving & Storage. STACEY WESCOTT/TRIBUNE PHOTO

## Stuffed storage facility owner to put Blagojevich's belongings on the block

By Jo Napolitano  
SPECIAL TO THE TRIBUNE

A life-size statue of Elvis Presley is among a trove of Rod Blagojevich's belongings in an Arlington Heights storage facility that the warehouse owner says he will sell at auction if the former governor doesn't settle his debt.

Paul Lombardo, CEO of Boyer-Rosene Moving & Storage in Arlington Heights, said Blagojevich is more than a year past due and is accruing penalty charges on seven wooden storage units he has rented starting in 2002.

The public will be invited to buy the ex-governor's belongings Aug. 14, according to a certified letter sent to Blagojevich, his attorney and Friends for Rod Blagojevich on Thursday.

Proceeds from the auction will go to an institution that has played prominently in Blagojevich's and Lombardo's lives: Children's Memorial Hospital.

Lombardo lost two children in their infancy; both suffered from a congenital diaphragmatic hernia, in which a child is born without a diaphragm or with a hole in the diaphragm. He has

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### NEWS FOCUS

## Innovative interchange makes for an easy exit

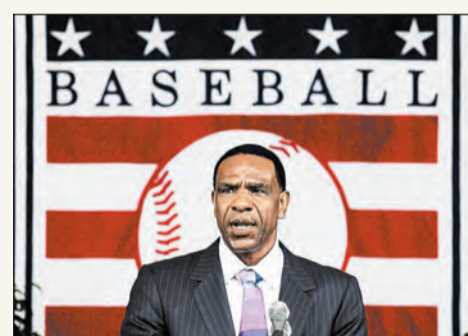
The traffic bottleneck at Naperville's Illinois Highway 59 and I-88 may benefit from a new road configuration called a diverging diamond interchange. Oddly enough, it sends traffic to the opposite side of the road but eases congestion because no left-turn light is needed to get on or off the highway. Check it out on **PAGE 4**

## It's electric! Car-sharing firm goes even greener

The Mitsubishi i MiEV is on I-Go's radar, Jon Hilkevitch writes. **PAGE 7**



### CHICAGO SPORTS



Andre Dawson was National League MVP in 1987 with the Cubs. JIM MCISAAC/GETTY PHOTO

## The Hawk has entered the Hall

"I never knew what it felt like to be loved by a city until I arrived in Chicago," said Andre Dawson during his Baseball Hall of Fame induction speech on Sunday in Cooperstown, N.Y.

### BLAGOJEVICH ON TRIAL

## Closing arguments start Monday

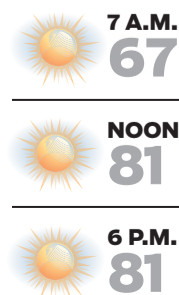
Watch for fireworks as precise federal prosecutors and theatrical defenders make their final statements in Rod Blagojevich's corruption trial. **PAGE 8**  
Find up-to-the-minute updates on closing arguments at [chicagotribune.com](http://chicagotribune.com)

### CHICAGOLAND

## Chicago area waterlogged

Some suburbs have declared themselves disaster areas because of flooding caused by heavy rains Friday and Saturday, and the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District had to pump sewer water into Lake Michigan. **PAGE 6**

### FORECAST



See complete forecast on the back of Live!  
SECTION 3

# Ex-governor's stuff to be sold

Continued from Page 1

been raising money for children's hospitals and aid groups since, saying that in times of crisis, health care workers are a family's salvation. Three of his four surviving children — all healthy now — have been treated at Children's in utero or after they were born.

"I'm extremely sensitive to children who are sick," he said. "And Children's Memorial is just incredible. They really helped coach us through the dark tunnel we were looking at. The staff goes above and beyond the scope of their work."

Prosecutors say the same about Blagojevich, at least about going beyond the scope of his work. The former governor, the subject of closing arguments Monday in his public corruption trial, is alleged to have demanded a \$50,000 campaign contribution from the head of the Lincoln Park hospital in return for backing \$8 million in funding for a statewide pediatric care initiative.

Some say it's among the most lurid of accusations against him.

His debt to the storage company is a small burden in comparison. Lombardo, of Plainfield, won't disclose exactly how much the ex-governor owes. But he said the figure is "in the thousands," with several hundred dollars accruing every month.

The business owner said he doesn't really need the money.

"I just thought that maybe something good could come out of this very bad situation," Lombardo said. "I don't think I'm ever going to get what we're owed. I'm

not trying to make money off of this for myself, which is why the proceeds will go to the hospital."

A spokeswoman for Children's Memorial said she could not comment on anything related to the former governor because of the ongoing trial.

Lombardo said he's been in contact with Blagojevich's attorney — they've spoken several times in the last few weeks — but hasn't seen a dime.

The attorney could not be reached for comment despite multiple phone messages left at his office by a reporter.

Aside from the colorful Elvis statue — it captures The King in full hip-swaying mode — most of the rest of Blagojevich's items are files. Lombardo said the 5-foot-by-7-foot storage units are nearly all filled.

So what's in there? Lombardo wouldn't say except that they contain professional and personal effects and that Blagojevich would probably want them back.

"There's just a lot of stuff," he said, "largely boxes and records."

Lombardo said he will either sell the ex-governor's possessions one by one or unload the entire stash on one lucky bidder.

He's not sure how much the items should bring in, but Lombardo said he hoped the former governor's notoriety will draw curiosity seekers willing to pay for a piece of history.

He said his company holds auctions about once a year, usually in late summer. They draw hundreds, from hoarders looking to add to their collections to everyday folks trying to score a deal on used furni-

ture and abandoned trinkets.

"It's like a flea market," Lombardo said. "We put all of the vaults (storage containers) out in the parking lot."

But Blagojevich's belongings won't get mixed into the general pile of worn couches and family photo albums.

Lombardo said he's flexible about delinquencies and doesn't strong-arm customers who are sick or down on their luck. He had one client who was terminally ill and delinquent on her payments. He delivered her property safely to her home, Lombardo said.

"Most warehouses would have auctioned this (Blagojevich property) off long ago because he hasn't paid it in such a long time, but Paul has been trying to work with them to get them to pay it in some way," said Rory McGinty, Lombardo's attorney. "He's just getting nowhere with it."

Bruce Rosene, whose father started the company in 1962 in Melrose Park, said the former governor is its highest profile client. Rosene recalled housing the possessions of a former U.S. ambassador, but that man stayed current on his bills.

He said clients typically store belongings for just a season. "Some go overseas and leave it for two or three years, while others just a month if they are looking for a house," he said.

They rarely leave things in storage as long as the governor has.

But if Blagojevich finds he's really missing something, he can always stop by and place a bid.

Doors open at 9 a.m.