Wisconsin LocalGov Hub Briefing

November 7 to November 14, 2026

The Wisconsin LocalGov Hub Briefing is a weekly governance intelligence product curated by BoldPath Consulting from Wisconsin local journalism, public-sector think tanks, and credible regional media. Source collection is automated; editorial selection, summarization, and topic assignment are overseen by Patrick Glynn, and a source link accompanies every item so readers can verify the underlying reporting. Items are selected for governance relevance, not political leaning. If a story meets the newsworthiness standards built into this workflow, it is included regardless of which direction it cuts, and contested or uncomfortable decisions are reported rather than avoided. The intent is to put the week's governance record in front of the practitioners who have to work with it, not to add to the argument surrounding it. The briefing is offered as an informational service and does not constitute legal, financial, or policy advice.

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The Pendulum Is Swinging Back.
Is your organization ready for what comes next at the bargaining table?
2000s
2011
2026
Wisconsin Labor Relations & Collective Bargaining for the Public-Sector Supervisor
December 7-8, 2026 | WCTC, Pewaukee | 12 hours | $385
Register: wctc.edu/cjtraining
Attorney Kyle J. Gulya, von Briesen & Roper, s.c. | Patrick Glynn, BoldPath Consulting

County health, inspection fees to rise

The Barron County Board Health and Human Services Committee voted on Oct. 26 to approve a 2 percent increase in all county health inspection fees for 2027. Fees range from under $300 for annual inspections to more than $2,000 for large hotel and motel facilities. One percentage point of the increase is retained locally for inspector salaries and program costs while the other goes to the state. Health and Human Services Director Karla Potts-Shufelt reported that the county collected $5.6 million in child support payments through the end of the federal fiscal year on Sept. 30, 2026.

Source: Chetek Alert (Western) | https://chetekalert.com/news/top_stories/article_64850990-f27a-467f-aaf3-cbb4daa39fe6.html

Melissa Agard signs 2027 Dane County budget

Dane County Executive Melissa Agard signed the 2027 budget on Nov. 12 after the County Board approved it Nov. 4, setting total expenditures at approximately $955.3 million, comprising $861.1 million in operating costs and $94.1 million in capital investments. The property tax levy is held at $283.2 million and the mill rate falls from $2.48 to $2.43 per $1,000 of assessed value. The county entered the cycle with a projected $31 million structural deficit, reduced to approximately $15 million through position eliminations, contract reviews, and operational efficiencies. The board added approximately $7.25 million in capital investments beyond Agard's proposal, bringing housing and shelter capital to nearly $30 million with more than $26 million for programs serving people experiencing homelessness. Named appropriations include $20 million for affordable housing, $10 million for conservation, approximately $17 million for roads and bridges, $3.5 million for voting equipment, nearly $3 million for sheriff's office body-worn cameras, $750,000 for land improvements for a potential campground for people experiencing homelessness, $2.1 million toward the Salvation Army family shelter, and $25,000 for a permanent memorial for victims of police violence. Jury duty pay rises from $20 to $30 effective Jan. 1. The Sheriff's Office recorded 30 hires against 34 separations this year; 20 previously frozen deputy positions reopen in 2027, with 13 additional positions undecided.

Source: Lodi Enterprise (South Central) | https://hngnews.com/tribune_enterprise/news/regional/melissa-agard-signs-2027-dane-county-budget/article_b9f1a26a-b4ed-4292-b949-4e04eafee0f5.html
Source: Capital Times (South Central) | https://captimes.com/news/government/dane-county-finalizes-spending-plan-after-debating-priorities/article_5b1bc58f-8055-43d9-8da7-ba2c74218d3d.html

Dodge County approves 2027 budget

The Dodge County Board of Supervisors approved a 2027 budget totaling $213 million with a $39.2 million tax levy, an increase of roughly $1.1 million over the prior year. The mill rate is $3.29 per $1,000 of assessed value, a 6 percent decrease, reflecting equalized property values rising 7.27 percent to $11.9 billion. Supervisors adopted four amendments: two housekeeping items and two

adjusting the employee cost-of-living increase from 2 percent to 3.13 percent, based on Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission data.

Source: Watertown Daily Times (South Central) | https://www.wdtimes.com/news/local/dodge-county-approves-2026-budget/article_2033516a-6775-4fbe-a5d8-761ddfdd946f.html

Dunn County Board of Supervisors adopts county's 2027 budget

The Dunn County Board of Supervisors adopted the 2027 budget, setting a tax levy of approximately $25.36 million, an increase of less than 1 percent. The county tax rate dropped from $4.30 to $4.04 per $1,000 of equalized value, a reduction of more than 6 percent and the seventh consecutive annual rate decrease. County Manager Dan Dunbar said some services were reduced because of state-imposed levy limits. The adopted levy matches the figure in the county's November proposal.

Source: WEAU NBC13 Eau Claire (Western) | https://www.weau.com/2026/11/11/dunn-county-board-supervisors-adopts-countys-2027-budget/

Eau Claire County approves $157.3 million budget for 2027

The Eau Claire County Board approved a $157.3 million 2027 budget, a 5 percent decrease from the prior year. The budget includes a $388,000 reduction in staffing costs reflecting anticipated vacancies, with $250,000 attributed to expected Sheriff's Office turnover and $138,000 to other departmental vacancies. Nonrepresented employees receive a 2 percent cost-of-living adjustment and a 2 percent midyear increase. The property tax mill rate falls to a record low $2.62 per $1,000 of assessed value, down from $2.76, with the county projecting approximately $480,000 in additional property tax revenue from new construction. The county is considering selling its Altoona agricultural center, a move projected to save roughly $40,000 annually in utility and maintenance costs, though no sale has been finalized.

Source: WEAU NBC13 Eau Claire (Western) | https://www.weau.com/2026/11/13/eau-claire-county-approves-1573-million-budget-2027/

Family mediation outsourced, jobs cut by La Crosse County

La Crosse County's Board of Supervisors approved its 2027 budget Monday with less than a 1 percent increase in spending and a modest property tax decrease. The budget eliminates the county's in-house Family Mediation and Family Court Services program, laying off three remaining employees after one mediator retired in July. Beginning in 2027, TRY Mediation Inc., which also serves Eau Claire County, will provide the court-connected service under contract. County staff estimated the outsourcing will save approximately $400,000 annually. Circuit Court Judge Elliott Levine acknowledged the change at the budget hearing while crediting departing staff for their service. User fees for mediation sessions will remain unchanged, with the first session free and subsequent sessions capped at $200 under state statute.

Source: La Crosse Tribune (Western) | https://lacrossetribune.com/news/local/government-politics/article_cf24b8c9-13d9-4fd7-96a8-8b5d96066c66.html

Oneida County Board votes to cut tourism from 2027 budget

The Oneida County Board of Supervisors approved its 2027 budget on Nov. 10 with zero dollars allocated for tourism, eliminating $90,000 that had funded the Oneida County Tourism Council. The board rejected multiple amendments by District 12 Supervisor Kyle Kilbourn that would have restored the funding. Board executive committee chair and District 17 Supervisor Billy Fried said the redirected funds will maintain safety services for boats, all-terrain and utility-terrain vehicles, and snowmobiles, as well as airport funding. Local tourism operators opposed the cut, citing tightening consumer spending and competitive pressure from other Northwoods counties.

Source: WJFW NBC12 Rhinelander (Central/Northern) | https://www.wjfw.com/news/local/oneida-county-board-votes-to-cut-tourism-from-2027-budget/article_d9a63d93-f3ff-4f17-b3ca-628437217f0b.html
Source: WXPR 91.7 FM Rhinelander (Central/Northern) | https://www.wxpr.org/business-economics/2026-11-12/oneida-county-budget-cuts-tourism-council-funding

Budget includes $1.4M in nonprofit grants

The Ozaukee County Board unanimously approved a 2027 budget with a tax levy of $23.52 million, up $335,224 or 1.45 percent over 2026, while the county tax rate falls 7 cents to $1.08 per $1,000 of equalized value. The budget adds one attorney in the Corporation Counsel and Child Support office at $153,000. Nearly $1.45 million in nonprofit grants were approved, led by $1 million to the Monarch Federated Library System, $157,610 to the Southeast Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, and $145,000 to the Ozaukee County Economic Development Corporation. The Sheriff's Office, the largest levy recipient at $17.4 million, receives a $766,000 or 4 percent increase and adds a deputy partly funded by a school resource officer contract with Lumen Christi Catholic School. Human Services levy support rises $685,000 to $6.4 million, up 12 percent, driven by higher placement costs and benefits.

Source: Ozaukee Press (Southeastern) | https://ozaukeepress.com/content/budget-includes-14m-nonprofit-grants

Racine County votes on its tax levy tonight. Human services is the biggest cost, and most of the money

The Racine County Board was set to vote Nov. 10 on a $68.8 million property tax levy supporting a 2027 budget of $270.3 million, adopted 15 to 4 on Nov. 2 without amendments. The levy rises 3.8 percent from 2026 and the countywide rate falls to $2.470 per $1,000 of equalized value, with the estimated bill on a $250,000 home declining from $620 to $617. Within the total, the general countywide levy rises from $62.7 million to $65.1 million, with the balance supporting the Prairie Lakes Library System and county schools. Human services is the largest spending category at $74.9 million, up 29 percent since 2023, but draws only $11.5 million from the levy, with the remainder covered by state, federal, and other funds. Human Services Director Hope Otto told the Health and Human Development Committee that the county is underfunded in most program areas because of state pass-through funding practices. Criminal justice accounts for $46.1 million of the levy, the largest levy share.

Source: WRJN 1400 AM Racine/Kenosha (Southeastern) | https://wrjn.com/news/2026/11/10/racine-county-votes-on-its-tax-levy-tonight-human-services-is-the-biggest-cost-and-most-of-the-money

Burnett County Completes $1.8 Million Forest Carbon Credit Sale

Nearly three years after the Burnett County Board approved the Timberlands Carbon Program, the county completed its first carbon credit sale for just over $1.8 million, working with nonprofit developer The Climate Trust. Buyer Cool Effect conducted a due diligence review of the credits, each representing one metric ton of carbon dioxide kept out of the atmosphere beyond typical management and verified by an independent third party. Carbon revenues will support forest protection, stand regeneration, buffer maintenance along the St. Croix Riverway, and community lending. County Forest Administrator Jason Nichols described the program as an additional forest product from sound public land management.

Source: DrydenWire (Western) | https://drydenwire.com/news/burnett-county-completes-1.8-million-forest-carbon-credit-sale/

Dodge County and Wisconsin face the challenge of an aging population, leaders say

Dodge County Administrator Cameron Clapper and Forward Analytics staff presented demographic and fiscal data Thursday at the Beaver Dam Chamber of Commerce economic luncheon. Only residents aged 65 and older are projected to grow in Dodge County and statewide over the next decade, and the county would need 5,000 additional prime working-age adults between 25 and 64 by decade's end to maintain current workforce levels. Dodge County's unemployment rate is 2.7 percent against the state's 3.2 percent, which Clapper said makes hiring difficult. County costs have risen 49 percent since 2010 while the levy has increased 17 percent. Clapper cited $1.9 million invested through the community development fund for infrastructure and housing and announced a classrooms-to-careers program to align workforce skills with employer needs.

Source: WiscNews (South Central) | https://wiscnews.com/news/community/bdc/article_70605938-a8f9-4ca9-90bd-56df4d022bfa.html

Beaver Dam mayor touts more housing, improved infrastructure

Beaver Dam Mayor Bobbi Marck reported at the annual Chamber of Commerce economic update luncheon that active housing developments include 16 new homes in Eagle's View Subdivision, 16 new Crystal Ridge apartments, a 39-home Stoney Ridge Phase 2 subdivision, and a planned 700,000-square-foot Meta facility on 83 acres north of the city valued at $1 billion. The city has budgeted $500,000 per year for five years to replace approximately 1,100 remaining lead or galvanized water pipes by the 2035 federal deadline. The Common Council is working to acquire land for two fire stations, and Moody's recently upgraded the city's bond rating to Aa3.

Source: WiscNews (South Central) | https://wiscnews.com/news/community/bdc/article_1e3f7e29-fefa-4514-8006-7068aa816382.html

Delaying DPW building replacement suggested

At the Clintonville Finance and Personnel Committee's Oct. 26 budget workshop for 2027, members discussed delaying replacement of the city's Department of Public Works building. City

Administrator Craig Moser recommended a one-year pause to allow time for fiscal reassessment, citing uncertainty over fund balance and the added financial pressure of the city's newly launched ambulance service. Aldermen Brandon Braden and Jim Supanich supported the delay, citing the lack of a financing plan and concerns about the tax burden on lower-income residents. Alderman Branden Schirpke dissented, noting the building's deteriorating safety condition. Committee Chair Greg Rose indicated a one-year delay was acceptable provided the building remains a near-term replacement priority. No formal vote was recorded.

Source: Waupaca County Post (Northeastern) | https://www.waupacanow.com/stories/delaying-dpw-building-replacement-suggested,362275

Eau Claire approves 2027 budget, while pushing for shared revenue reform

The Eau Claire City Council approved its 2027 budget, addressing a projected $2.2 million shortfall by leaving 10 positions vacant across community services, parks maintenance, and finance, with no layoffs of current employees. Health insurance costs, a $17 million budget item, have risen 15 percent in each of the past two years. The city is estimated to receive $9.9 million in state shared revenue in 2027, representing less than 10 percent of the budget compared with more than 30 percent in 1995. The budget takes effect Jan. 1.

Source: WEAU NBC13 Eau Claire (Western) | https://www.weau.com/2026/11/12/eau-claire-approves-2027-budget-while-pushing-shared-revenue-reform/

Eau Claire City Council members propose changes to downtown paid parking

Council members Andrew Werthmann and Aaron Brewster introduced a proposed ordinance amendment to Eau Claire's downtown paid parking program, with a first reading this week and a vote scheduled at the Nov. 24 meeting. The proposal would eliminate Tier 1 50-cent parking zones, shift enforcement hours from 10 a.m. to 11 p.m. down to 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., offer the first hour free in city ramps, and waive paid parking on Saturdays from Thanksgiving through New Year's Day. City analysis projects the zone elimination would cost $22,302 in annual revenue plus one-time signage costs of $5,000 to $11,000, while the hours change would increase revenue by $46,572 with one-time costs of $8,642 to $28,263. The city is not recommending any of the changes, citing consultant advice to wait a full year before amending the program. A public parking forum is scheduled for Nov. 19.

Source: Leader-Telegram (Western) | https://www.leadertelegram.com/news/eau-claire-city-council-members-propose-changes-to-downtown-paid-parking/article_d3afc5d6-1b65-42e8-a8d6-be978922a6c2.html

New fee schedule unanimously approved, could impact the Eau Claire Farmer's Market

The Eau Claire City Council unanimously approved a new 2027 fee schedule on Tuesday that could substantially increase costs for the Eau Claire Downtown Farmers Market, which has no finalized contract for the 2027 season. The market's prior 10-year agreement, in place since 2016, fixed the Phoenix Park pavilion rental at $3,300 per year with no inflation adjustment, and a one-

year 2026 agreement set a flat $4,000. WEAU reported the market's fee could reach $10,750 per year at 100 percent of the schedule, and Volume One put the difference between the historic rate and the full schedule rate at approximately 220 percent; the Leader-Telegram reported the 2026 flat fee represented a 63 percent discount from that $10,750 figure. The proposed five-year contract would phase the market's fee toward a larger percentage of the user fee schedule. The city's standard hourly rate rises from $20 to $23 in 2027, and contracted rates have historically been discounted 60 percent or more. Individual vendor booth costs could rise from approximately $370 to $500. More than a dozen residents spoke in support of the market at the Nov. 9 council meeting though the contract was not on that agenda. Next steps include a possible closed council session, continued staff negotiations, and eventual council approval of a signed agreement.

Source: WEAU NBC13 Eau Claire (Western) | https://www.weau.com/2026/11/10/new-fee-schedule-unanimously-approved-impacting-eau-claire-farmers-market/
Source: Volume One (Western) | https://volumeone.org/articles/2026/11/11/408692-no-the-downtown-eau-claire-farmers-market-is-not
Source: Leader-Telegram (Western) | https://www.leadertelegram.com/news/local/residents-raise-concerns-of-raised-farmer-s-market-contract-fees/article_207bf6f1-35c0-4a30-a851-ae6daefac7af.html

Voters can expect to see a city operational referendum question on their April ballots

Janesville Finance Director Dave Godek told the City Council that the $64.9 million proposed 2027 budget requires a $621,989 draw from reserves and that relying on reserves is unsustainable, pointing toward a proposed operational referendum on the April 2027 ballot. From 2015 to 2025 the Consumer Price Index rose 32.88 percent while net new construction grew only 17.27 percent, creating a 15-point gap. Janesville received $107 per resident in state shared revenue in 2024 against a peer-city average of $228, which staff put at an estimated $8.2 million shortfall. A $3 million levy increase would cost the median homeowner, assessed at $226,500, approximately $87.22 annually; a $9 million increase would cost $261.69. Staff estimated consulting and public communication costs at $100,000 to $115,000. The council must still determine the referendum amount, structure, and term.

Source: Janesville Gazette (South Central) | https://www.gazettextra.com/news/local/voters-can-expect-to-see-a-city-operational-referendum-question-on-their-april-ballots/article_a9777e23-a3b6-4a42-a535-14606c2dab92.html

Madison Common Council approves 2027 budget, avoids significant service cuts as property taxes rise

The Madison Common Council approved a roughly $477.7 million operating budget for 2027 on Nov. 10, avoiding service cuts officials had projected could reach $2.2 million. The owner of an average-value home will pay approximately $90 more in city property taxes, a 2.7 percent increase, as the tax rate falls from about $7.01 to $6.93 per $1,000 of assessed value while average assessed values rose from $481,300 to $500,300. The budget adds $12 million to the affordable housing fund, funds a 10th ambulance company, staffs the new Imagination Center Library, and launches a police body-worn camera program. The city identified nearly $1 million in

efficiencies, including technology purchasing and waste disposal changes, and drew approximately $6.5 million from reserves to balance operations. Metro Transit used federal capital funds for operations as a one-time measure. The city projects a $20 million shortfall in 2028 growing to $59 million by 2031, with the Wisconsin Policy Forum noting general fund spending growing at roughly 5.5 percent against a levy growing at approximately 3.4 percent.

Source: WMTV NBC15 Madison (South Central) | https://www.wmtv15news.com/2026/11/13/madison-common-council-approves-2027-budget-avoids-significant-service-cuts-property-taxes-rise/

Insights from the City of Seymour

Seymour's proposed 2027 municipal operating budget calls for a total levy of $1,661,006, an increase of $61,687 or 3.86 percent after four consecutive years of a flat levy, within a total budget of $3,358,534. The increase is driven by inflationary materials costs, cost-of-living wage increases, and benefits. General government services including police, fire, rescue, and public works account for $1,489,962 of the levy; library services account for $143,569; and debt obligations account for $75,475.

Source: Seymour Advertiser (Northeastern) | https://seymouradvertiser.com/stories/insights-from-the-city-of-seymour,363538

Finance Committee reviews proposed 2027 operating budget

The Stevens Point Finance Committee reviewed a proposed 2027 city operating budget of $31.9 million on Oct. 26, carrying an 8.73 percent property tax levy increase to $24,340,681 and raising the assessed tax rate from $9.74 to $10.59 per $1,000. Personnel costs make up 81 percent of the operating budget, and the plan includes a 3.13 percent cost-of-living adjustment totaling $256,000 and a 15 percent employee health insurance premium increase. State aid for campus police and fire protection fell by $93,000 after state assessors reduced UW-Stevens Point building valuations from $647 million to $396 million. The budget returns to the Finance Committee in November before Common Council final approval ahead of December tax billing.

Source: Stevens Point Gazette (Central/Northern) | https://stevenspointgazette.com/stories/finance-committee-reviews-proposed-2027-operating-budget,361927

Verona withholding future payments to Chamber of Commerce over financial concerns

Verona's Common Council voted 7 to 1 on Nov. 10 to withhold approximately $350,000 in annual tourism payments to the Verona Area Chamber of Commerce beginning in the first quarter of 2027. A $15,000 Baker Tilly review of 2024 and 2025 records found that 249 of 278 transactions lacked approval documentation and identified unsupported allocations, duplicate payments, and discrepancies. The chamber has not submitted required quarterly financial reports, with the first quarter still outstanding. The council will revisit the matter Jan. 11, at which point it could consider ending the agreement entirely.

Source: WMTV NBC15 Madison (South Central) | https://www.wmtv15news.com/2026/11/13/verona-withholding-future-payments-chamber-commerce-over-financial-concerns/

Cambridge village board OKs public fire protection fee increase

The Cambridge Village Board voted unanimously at its Nov. 10 meeting to shift 100 percent of public fire protection costs onto water ratepayers, pending Public Service Commission approval expected early next year. The change will increase water bills by approximately $11 per home and generate about $140,000 in additional revenue. The village faced an initial 2027 budget deficit of approximately $670,000; last year the board compromised at a 50 percent transfer of public fire protection costs. A final vote on the full 2027 budget is scheduled following a Dec. 1 public hearing.

Source: Waterloo/Marshall Courier (South Central) | https://hngnews.com/leader_independent/news/local/cambridge-village-board-oks-public-fire-protection-fee-increase/article_10a2ed84-0d0e-44ca-83b7-bd5c4cc0a7bd.html

Elmwood board green lights 2027 budget

The Elmwood Village Board approved its 2027 budget projecting an $8,637 General Fund surplus, a $27,494 swing from the shortfall identified in October. Total General Fund expenditures are $848,362.40, with the turnaround driven by reducing culture, recreation, and education spending from $105,000 to $72,618. The board also changed employee health benefits, cutting dependent child coverage from 100 percent to 50 percent while retaining full coverage for employees and spouses, and voted not to accept mail with insufficient postage.

Source: Pierce County Journal (Western) | https://www.piercecountyjournal.news/stories/elmwood-board-green-lights-2027-budget,212808

SV levy to see fractional decrease after budget conversations

The Spring Valley Village Board approved a 2027 budget setting the tax levy at $572,796, a 0.28 percent decrease. Total expenses rise 4.46 percent to $1,408,329, with public works up 20.7 percent to $405,133 and public safety up 16.49 percent to $413,691. Debt service falls 49.64 percent to $215,823, the only expenditure line to decrease. The finance committee began the process with a $189,000 deficit before reaching balance. All but $9,483 of the levy falls on Pierce County residents.

Source: Pierce County Journal (Western) | https://www.piercecountyjournal.news/stories/sv-levy-to-see-fractional-decrease-after-budget-conversations,212811

Stockton sets Nov. 18 hearing on proposed 2027 budget

The Town of Stockton has scheduled a Nov. 18 public hearing on a proposed 2027 budget of $1,399,217, a $24,167 or 1.8 percent increase. Public works spending would rise 11.5 percent to $987,020 while capital spending would fall from $96,840 to $26,513. The levy would increase $2,549 or 0.4 percent to $578,248, with the tax rate edging down from $1.78 to $1.77 per $1,000 of

assessed value. Following the hearing a special electors meeting will vote on the levy and road spending authority, and the Town Board will consider adopting the budget.

Source: Stevens Point Metro Wire (Central/Northern) | https://spmetrowire.com/stockton-sets-nov-18-hearing-on-proposed-2027-budget/

Workforce and Labor

Wisconsin Supreme Court will hear challenge to controversial Act 10

The Wisconsin Supreme Court voted 5 to 1 on Nov. 11 to accept review of Abbotsford Education Association v. Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission, a case arguing that Act 10's public safety worker carve-outs violate the state constitution's equal protection clause. Justice Annette Ziegler dissented from the decision to take the case. Justice Brian Hagedorn, who served as Gov. Scott Walker's chief legal counsel when Act 10 passed in 2011, did not participate. Act 10 remains in effect during review. Incoming Assembly Speaker Greta Neubauer said Democrats taking legislative control in January 2027 will push to restore collective bargaining rights, with timing to be determined, so the law faces simultaneous judicial and legislative challenge. The Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty, which has defended the law, estimates full repeal could cost taxpayers more than $2 billion annually and projects that cost would arrive gradually as union contracts are renegotiated. Act 10 limits wage increases to inflation for most public sector unions, caps government health premium contributions, and requires annual union recertification by a majority of all bargaining unit members rather than a majority of those voting.

Source: WISC CBS3 Madison (Statewide) | https://www.channel3000.com/news/wisconsin-supreme-court-will-hear-challenge-to-controversial-act-10/article_ddb810ae-0874-4f3e-a87f-b76c95321cfc.html
Source: WITI FOX6 Milwaukee (Statewide) | https://www.fox6now.com/news/wisconsin-act-10-double-threat-state-supreme-court-legislature

Act 10 returns to court: What's at stake for Wisconsin workers and taxpayers

The Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty, which has defended Act 10, estimates that overturning the law could cost taxpayers approximately $2 billion per year. South Central Federation of Labor President Kevin Gundlach argued that restoring bargaining could benefit taxpayers, citing $9 million to $11 million in first-year health insurance savings produced when labor-management advisory committees were active. The Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty said it expects the court could act as soon as early 2027.

Source: WKOW ABC27 Madison (Statewide) | https://www.wkow.com/news/act-10-returns-to-court-whats-at-stake-for-wisconsin-workers-and-taxpayers/article_e193a20e-266b-4098-ae55-ed4f535e1fb6.html

Madison teachers union prepares for Act 10 case at Wisconsin Supreme Court

Madison Teachers Inc. President Andrea Missureli said the union has bargaining proposals ready and would ask for a collective bargaining contract for the 2027-28 school year on the first day if the Wisconsin Supreme Court overturns Act 10. Missureli said bargaining would be mandatory on

health insurance, pay, terminations, layoffs, surplus, and the school year calendar. She said the district would first have to agree and come to the table on many other subjects. Missureli said repeated referendums have left local communities unable to carry more of the tax burden and that funding schools is the state's job. The article reported that supporters of the law say it has saved taxpayers billions of dollars.

Source: WMTV NBC15 Madison (South Central) | https://www.wmtv15news.com/2026/11/13/madison-teachers-union-prepares-act-10-case-wisconsin-supreme-court/

Wisconsin Supreme Court takes Act 10 case: Racine impact

Unions' written arguments in the Act 10 case are due Dec. 11 and no oral argument date has been set. At Racine Unified School District, 1,368 teachers and 158 maintenance workers are subject to Act 10's annual recertification requirement. The Racine Common Council approved a 2025 to 2028 agreement with the Racine Police Association on Feb. 3, 2026, estimated at $2.4 million in wages and benefits over four years, under the law's public safety carve-out now being challenged. Racine's proposed 2027 budget increased police spending by approximately $2.3 million and fire spending by approximately $1.7 million, partly because of contract wage and benefit increases.

Source: Civic Media (Southeastern) | https://civicmedia.us/news/2026/11/12/wisconsin-supreme-court-takes-act-10-case-racine-impact

UGHS parents want more transparency from district after superintendent's arrest

At a Nov. 9 regular board meeting, Union Grove High School parents presented the board with five requested actions following the arrest of Superintendent Tom Johnson. Parent Elissa Antongiorgi presented demands including transparency about an ongoing third-party internal investigation, a parent forum, mental health support, media policy clarification, and a security review. Board President Diane Skewes said a parent forum could occur later in November. Johnson's $250,000 cash bond was posted Monday. Principal Tom Blair is currently leading the school.

Source: Journal Times (Southeastern) | https://journaltimes.com/news/local/education/article_cabee317-e9f9-47a6-8361-c12e0bc80d7e.html

Union Grove High School aims to hire interim superintendent, business manager

The Union Grove High School Board, at a special meeting Thursday, approved searching for and potentially hiring an interim superintendent and authorized creating and hiring an interim contracted business manager position or service. The actions follow the Nov. 5 placement of Superintendent Tom Johnson on unpaid leave after Kenosha County charged him with two counts of child pornography possession, a Class D felony carrying up to 25 years imprisonment and a $100,000 fine. Principal Tom Blair has led the district as interim directing principal since Nov. 4 but lacks a superintendent's license, which limits his authority over referendum-related actions and large financial decisions. Johnson pleaded not guilty and waived his preliminary hearing, and a judicial pretrial is set for Jan. 4.

Source: Lake Geneva Regional News (Southeastern) | https://lakegenevanews.net/news/local/education/article_e2da5460-8c2e-5b5d-8140-54b9966811af.html

SEIU Wisconsin Calls for Bill to Restore UW Health Union Rights

SEIU Wisconsin announced Nov. 13 that it is urging the incoming Democratic-majority Legislature and Gov.-elect David Crowley to pass legislation restoring collective bargaining rights for more than 25,000 UW Health employees. Act 10 in 2011 removed pre-existing statutory union protections for UW Hospital and Clinics Authority workers that had been in place since 1996, and the Wisconsin Supreme Court ruled unanimously in 2025 that the state had no remaining obligation to recognize or bargain with those unions. The last contracts expired in 2014. The identified bills, AB 999 and SB 965, were introduced in February but never taken up; they would allow union recognition by majority petition rather than election, require UW Health to permit union access at new-employee orientations, and permit use of the work email system for organizing. SEIU Wisconsin Vice President Colin Gillis said Crowley, Senate leader Dianne Hesselbein, and Rep. Greta Neubauer verbally committed to the legislation as a priority. Rep. Lisa Subeck, named Speaker Pro Tempore and lead Assembly author on prior versions, said the timeline and exact form remain undetermined. UW Health said it "respects the legislative process" and is committed to dialogue.

Source: Urban Milwaukee (Statewide) | https://urbanmilwaukee.com/2026/11/14/seiu-wisconsin-calls-for-bill-to-restore-uw-health-union-rights/
Source: Civic Media (Statewide) | https://civicmedia.us/news/2026/11/13/seiu-wisconsin-calls-for-bill-to-restore-uw-health-union-rights

McCallum named new EC City-County Health Director ahead of Gieske's retirement

The Eau Claire City-County Health Department has hired Julie McCallum, RN, MPH, as its new health officer and director with a start date of Jan. 4. McCallum has served as health officer and public health supervisor for Sawyer County Health and Human Services since 2023, holds a master's degree in public health from the University of Michigan, and has more than 29 years of experience. She was selected through a national search that included review by an internal staff team and a broad community leadership panel. McCallum succeeds Lieske Giese, who is retiring after more than 14 years as director and 37 years in public health.

Source: Leader-Telegram (Western) | https://www.leadertelegram.com/news/mccallum-named-new-ec-city-county-health-director-ahead-of-gieskes-retirement/article_0256b33e-b44f-4f1b-8835-4e16d41c9639.html

Racine County Sheriff's captain placed on administrative leave

Racine County Sheriff Christopher Schmaling placed Capt. Cary Madrigal on administrative leave pending an internal administrative review and the outcome of a criminal investigation of another individual being conducted by the Kenosha County Sheriff's Office. Madrigal is not the subject of the criminal investigation. The Kenosha County Sheriff's Office took over that case from Racine County to ensure investigative integrity; the underlying matter involves child pornography charges against Union Grove Superintendent Thomas Johnson, and a criminal complaint states that an

unnamed Racine County Sheriff's Office employee spoke with Johnson in his office about the investigation before it was assigned to investigators. The office's statement does not identify the investigation, disclose whether the leave is paid, or give its start date. Madrigal is a 26-year department veteran who served as operations captain for six years. The leave began four days after she lost the Nov. 3 sheriff's election to Donald Vandervest, 27,569 to 23,870, or 53.6 percent to 46.4 percent. Schmaling said the administrative leave is not related to that campaign.

Source: WITI FOX6 Milwaukee (Southeastern) | https://www.fox6now.com/news/racine-county-sheriffs-captain-placed-administrative-leave
Source: WRJN 1400 AM Racine/Kenosha (Southeastern) | https://wrjn.com/news/2026/11/08/cary-madrigal-placed-on-administrative-leave-by-racine-county-sheriff

Appleton deputy finance director sentenced for exchanging lewd photos with minor

Amanda Rae Toney, deputy finance director for the City of Appleton, was sentenced in Fond du Lac County Court to six months in jail, three years of probation, and sex offender registration for soliciting an intimate representation from a minor and child neglect. The offenses occurred in 2024 while she was deputy finance director for the City of Ripon. Appleton hired her as deputy finance director in November 2024 while she was already under police investigation. A child neglect charge in Waushara County was dismissed. Her current employment status with Appleton is unclear.

Source: WHBY 1150 AM Appleton (Northeastern) | https://www.whby.com/2026/11/12/appleton-deputy-finance-director-sentenced-for-exchanging-lewd-photos-with-minor/

Durand Police Chief announces his resignation

Durand Police Chief Stan Ridgeway announced his resignation effective Nov. 20, 2026, after 28 years in law enforcement including 15 years as chief. Ridgeway said he is pursuing an opportunity outside of law enforcement. The report does not identify an interim appointment, a recruitment timeline, or a council action date.

Source: WEAU NBC13 Eau Claire (Western) | https://www.weau.com/2026/11/12/durand-police-chief-announces-his-resignation/

Janesville teachers' union not thrilled with pay arrangement, seeks district revamp of wage schedule

The Janesville School Board approved a 2.63 percent cost-of-living wage increase for approximately 800 certified union staff, based on a starting salary of $46,700, after three bargaining sessions produced no formal agreement. The Janesville Education Association said in a public statement that the board "imposed" the increase and that for some teachers the raise is offset by higher health care costs. A district panel formed to redesign the decade-old pay schedule was shelved before the district's $98 million operational referendum and is set to resume work Dec. 1.

Source: Janesville Gazette (South Central) | https://www.gazettextra.com/news/janesville-teachers-union-not-thrilled-with-pay-arrangement-seeks-district-revamp-of-wage-schedule/article_0b878ba5-7449-4e55-9aa7-260e7655fb5f.html

Sheriff's Capt. Eibs is Port's pick for police chief

The Port Washington Police and Fire Commission selected Chad Eibs, operations captain with the Ozaukee County Sheriff's Office for the past 20 years, as the city's next police chief, chosen from three finalists in closed session. The other finalists were Sheboygan Police Captain of Patrol Joel Kuszynski and Door County Sheriff's Office Professional Standards Captain Carl Waterstreet. Eibs' appointment remains subject to a background check, physical, and drug test, with the commission targeting installation by the end of 2026. Eibs will succeed Kevin Hingiss, who retired in June after 42 years with the department; Captain Craig Czarnecki has been serving as interim chief. City Administrator Melissa Gossett confirmed the selection after an Ozaukee Press open records request.

Source: Ozaukee Press (Southeastern) | https://ozaukeepress.com/content/sheriff%E2%80%99s-capt-eibs-port%E2%80%99s-pick-police-chief

Two Rivers Seeks Interim City Manager to Free Up Police Chief Ben Meinnert

The City of Two Rivers is searching for both an interim and a permanent city manager after the position became vacant. Police Chief Ben Meinnert has served as acting city manager since early October. Under Wisconsin Statutes section 64.09 the city may operate without a full-time city manager for up to six months, with a possible six-month extension approved by the council. Council President Scott Stechmesser said the city's first priority is finding an interim manager to relieve Meinnert of the dual workload.

Source: Seehafer News (Northeastern) | https://www.seehafernews.com/2026/11/14/two-rivers-seeks-interim-city-manager-to-free-up-police-chief-ben-meinnert/

Infrastructure and Utilities

Whiting puts off McDill Dam funding as Stevens Point weighs shifting $200,000 to roads

The Whiting Village Board voted Nov. 10 to postpone indefinitely a request from Stevens Point Mayor Mike Wiza that Whiting contribute to an estimated $200,000 McDill Dam seepage repair. Trustee Paul Stroik moved for postponement, saying the city and the lake district must first resolve their expired maintenance agreement and establish their respective cost shares before approaching the village. At a separate Nov. 9 meeting the Stevens Point Finance Committee voted 3 to 2 to recommend redirecting the budgeted $200,000 from the dam to road maintenance; the funds remain in the capital budget pending Common Council action expected Nov. 16. The dam, a 261-acre impoundment of the Plover River, was transferred by Whiting to the McDill Inland Lake Protection and Rehabilitation District after costly repairs around 2012, and the city's maintenance

agreement with the district expired in 2022 and has not been renewed. Stevens Point has already spent about $40,000 on engineering and hired AECOM to draw up a repair plan. The Department of Natural Resources has acknowledged receipt of the plan but has not approved it.

Source: Stevens Point Metro Wire (Central/Northern) | https://spmetrowire.com/whiting-puts-off-mcdill-dam-funding-as-stevens-point-weighs-shifting-200000-to-roads/
Source: Stevens Point Metro Wire (Central/Northern) | https://spmetrowire.com/a-deeper-dive-whiting-trustee-a-little-appalled-by-citys-mcdill-dam-request/

Contaminated soil removed from spill site on Enbridge's Line 5 in northern Wisconsin

Enbridge has removed approximately 4,275 tons of contaminated soil and debris from the site of the Aug. 25 natural gas liquids spill on Line 5 in the town of Saxon, in Ashland and Iron counties. The spill released more than 1.3 million gallons, the state's largest oil and gas pipeline spill in more than 50 years. WPR reported the cause as a subcontractor's truck rolling into an open construction trench; WXPR reported the truck struck the pipeline. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources issued a notice of violation on Oct. 13 citing more than 30 violations, including construction of a temporary bypass in Iron County without a permit; Enbridge began construction two days after its Sept. 7 application, before the required five-day waiting period and before permits were approved Oct. 28. Soil sampling detected benzene above state residual contaminant levels and a temporary monitoring well exceeded groundwater standards before being abandoned. A groundwater release from a bore hole under the Marengo River in Ashland County remains under assessment. The Bad River Band and the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission have called for the permits to be revoked. An enforcement conference was held Oct. 26 and the department says it is still weighing options; backfill is targeted before year-end, after which a full site investigation will be required.

Source: WPR News Madison (Statewide) (Central/Northern) | https://www.wpr.org/news/contaminated-soil-removed-from-spill-site-on-enbridges-line-5-in-northern-wisconsin
Source: WJFW NBC12 Rhinelander (Central/Northern) | https://www.wjfw.com/news/local/dnr-still-considering-enforcement-on-line-5-violations/article_92ebbc50-c257-4473-a728-2e2162f5c02a.html
Source: WXPR 91.7 FM Rhinelander (Central/Northern) | https://www.wxpr.org/energy-environment/2026-11-13/contaminated-soil-removed-from-spill-site-on-enbridges-line-5-in-northern-wisconsin

Rural residents worry they'll be disconnected by Verizon's plan to end Wisconsin landlines

Verizon, through its Frontier subsidiary, plans to begin closing copper landline service on or after Nov. 16, potentially affecting approximately 3,500 Wisconsin addresses statewide, including up to 200 residents in Oneida County. Oneida County Economic Development Director Tony Pharo characterized the situation as an emergency, noting that cell and internet service are nonexistent in parts of the Northwoods and that more than 5,200 Oneida County residents lack high-speed internet, with broadband buildout not expected to finish until 2030. Verizon told U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin in an Oct. 28 letter that no customer whose copper line lacks an approved voice replacement will be disconnected. Verizon also plans to retire 136 landline service centers statewide.

Source: WPR News Madison (Statewide) (Central/Northern) | https://www.wpr.org/news/rural-residents-worry-disconnected-verizon-end-wisconsin-landlines

County OKs highway garage project

Green County's 31-member board gave final approval at its Nov. 5 meeting to a roughly $49 million highway garage replacement at the Pleasant View County complex, after pausing the project in June. The planned 160,000-square-foot facility, designed with contractor Kraemer Brothers Construction, is estimated to cost $42 million to $48 million. The tax impact is estimated at 60 cents added to the mill rate, or about $180 per year for the owner of a $300,000 home. Construction on the multi-year project is expected to begin in late spring or early summer. The existing primary highway shop building dates to 1937, and the site has been compressed to 5.5 acres by adjacent jail construction.

Source: Monroe Times (South Central) | https://themonroetimes.com/local-news/county-oks-highway-garage-project/

Oneida County looks to expand PFAS data collection

Oneida County Health Department Director Linda Conlon announced the county is pursuing the state PFAS Community Grants Sampling Program and the Wisconsin PFAS Private Well Testing Program to expand groundwater contamination data. The programs would fund private well testing, which Conlon described as expensive, and support installation of new wells and filters for affected homeowners. Applications are available on the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources website. No county board action date was reported.

Source: WXPR 91.7 FM Rhinelander (Central/Northern) | https://www.wxpr.org/energy-environment/2026-11-13/oneida-county-looks-to-expand-pfas-data-collection

New playground equipment coming soon to Waubedonia Park

Ozaukee County's Natural Resources Committee approved hiring Lee Recreation of Cambridge to install new playground equipment at Waubedonia County Park in Fredonia at a cost of $68,271, within a $70,000 budget, with installation expected before year-end for the 2027 camping season. The committee separately approved spending $163,996 to install security gates at Waubedonia's east and west entrances and at Tendick Nature Park. The committee had previously approved using a $120,000 U.S. Forest Service Community Forest Program grant, matched by a pending Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District Greenseams grant, to purchase 15 acres adjacent to the park for a total project cost of $240,000. Camping revenue at Waubedonia reached $38,157 through September, up from $28,811 in the same period of 2024.

Source: Ozaukee Press (Southeastern) | https://ozaukeepress.com/content/new-playground-equipment-coming-soon-waubedonia-park

Neighbors react after Cedarburg Common Council sends dam decision to a vote

The Cedarburg Common Council voted unanimously to send the fate of the Woolen Mills Dam to a public referendum, after presentations on two options, repair and removal, each estimated at approximately $2 million. The vote is expected to take place in April, though details have not been finalized. City Administrator Mikko Hilvo stated there is no imminent threat of dam failure but that inaction is no longer viable.

Source: WTMJ 4 NBC Milwaukee (Southeastern) | https://www.tmj4.com/news/local-news/county-reporting/ozaukee-county/neighbors-react-after-cedarburg-common-council-sends-dam-decision-to-a-vote

New Fond du Lac pump station brings relief to high risk flood areas

Fond du Lac has completed a $10 million stormwater pump station on North Lincoln Avenue, replacing 1950s-era equipment. Public Works Director Paul De Vries said the new station nearly doubles the pumping output of the previous installation and is designed to handle more intense storm events. Construction began approximately 18 months ago. De Vries estimated the new station's operational lifespan at roughly 50 years with consistent maintenance.

Source: WGBA NBC26 Green Bay (Northeastern) | https://www.nbc26.com/fonddulac/new-fond-du-lac-pump-station-brings-relief-to-high-risk-flood-areas

Madison prepares State Street Regional Bus Terminal for phased opening

Madison city officials announced Friday that construction is substantially complete on the new State Street Regional Bus Terminal, located on the ground floor of a mixed-use development on North Lake Street that combines housing and transportation. Regional bus carriers will begin moving into the terminal in phases through November and December. The city is working toward agreements with Badger Bus, FlixBus and Greyhound, Coach USA and Van Galder, and Jefferson Lines. The companion State Street Campus Garage opened in August after construction began in early 2024.

Source: WISC CBS3 Madison (South Central) | https://www.channel3000.com/news/madison-prepares-state-street-regional-bus-terminal-for-phased-opening/article_ddf44195-af75-405f-849b-5b544f5991a4.html

Superior businesses navigate shipyard expansion, gas plant cancellation as new opportunities emerge

The City of Superior assigned leases for the former CHS grain elevators to an entrepreneurial enterprise in Poplar. A planned city referendum on a possible municipal takeover of Superior Water, Light and Power's water utility was postponed from its originally scheduled fall date, with no new date reported. Dairyland Power Cooperative and Allete abandoned the proposed $1 billion Nemadji Trail Energy Center gas plant, ending related litigation. Fraser Shipyards sold to Miami-based Wildcat Defense in a $350 million private investment. Local governments and business groups are running workshops to help businesses prepare for the Blatnik Bridge closure early next year, with the Richard I. Bong Memorial Bridge serving as the alternate crossing.

Source: WPR News Madison (Statewide) (Western) | https://www.wpr.org/news/superior-businesses-navigate-shipyard-expansion-gas-plant-cancellation

City of Marshfield Installs New Frost Solutions Winter Weather System

The City of Marshfield has installed a Frost Solutions roadway weather information system on Veterans Parkway west of St. Joseph's Avenue to support winter operations decisions including plowing, sanding, salting, and scheduling. The system monitors pavement temperature, precipitation, and icing potential. The city stated that the system collects only weather and road-condition data and has no surveillance, license plate reading, or law enforcement function. Questions can be directed to the Street Division at 715-486-2081.

Source: WDLB 1450 AM Marshfield (Central/Northern) | https://wdlbam.com/2026/11/12/city-of-marshfield-installs-new-frost-solutions-winter-weather-system/

UPDATE: Recent Spill of Unknown Substance Into Mill Creek in Marshfield Doesn't Affect City's Drinking Water

On Nov. 11, 2026, the City of Marshfield was notified of an unknown substance released through its storm sewer system into Mill Creek at Wildwood Park, affecting surface water in the downtown drainage area south of the CN railroad tracks. The source and volume are unknown. City staff are monitoring the situation in coordination with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Marshfield Utilities confirmed the incident does not affect drinking water, which comes from groundwater wells tested daily. Anyone with information about the source is asked to contact the Public Works Department at 715-486-2034.

Source: WDLB 1450 AM Marshfield (Central/Northern) | https://wdlbam.com/2026/11/12/spill-of-an-unknown-substance-released-from-the-city-of-marshfields-storm-sewer-system-at-the-outfall-to-mill-creek/

New Town of Plum Lake Community Center officially opens with ribbon cutting ceremony

The Town of Plum Lake held a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Nov. 8 for a newly constructed community center funded in part by a $4.25 million Flexible Facilities Grant from the state of Wisconsin's $115 million program. Construction began in summer 2025 and was completed Nov. 6. The center includes telehealth services, a 24-hour public internet cafe, and rentable event space. Town Chair Jackey Postuchow said construction bids had more than doubled after the COVID-19 pandemic before the grant was secured.

Source: WJFW NBC12 Rhinelander (Central/Northern) | https://www.wjfw.com/news/local/new-town-of-plum-lake-community-center-officially-opens-with-ribbon-cutting-ceremony/article_ca1372d8-3b04-4922-90a2-acaffa70a345.html

Wyocena's library set to close as staff question lack of effort to save it

The Wyocena Village Board and Library Board jointly decided Oct. 12 to close the Wyocena Public Library at the end of 2026, choosing voluntary closure rather than risking expulsion from the South

Central Library System by the Department of Public Instruction. The library has not had a director meeting the department's Grade III certification requirements, at least 54 college credits including specific subject areas, for six years, with multiple directors cycling through since 2020 including two appointees since 2024 who each lasted less than one day. South Central Library System Director Shannon Schultz's Oct. 8 letter had given the board the choice to voluntarily withdraw or face expulsion. Volunteer Brad Hauge and others said staff, volunteers, and community members received little notice before the Oct. 12 decision was made official. Wyocena's population was estimated at 737 in 2025.

Source: WiscNews (South Central) | https://wiscnews.com/news/local/article_b605d8f6-54d8-4579-ac57-a9edf7ac6f9c.html

Technology and AI Governance

Rock County District Attorney's office launches court case database in statewide transparency initiative

Rock County District Attorney Jason Sanders launched a public court case data dashboard Thursday as part of the Wisconsin Prosecutorial Data Collaborative, a six-county initiative that also includes Milwaukee, Winnebago, La Crosse, Jefferson, and Vilas counties. The dashboard, at wisconsin.prosecutiondata.org, is updated quarterly and is funded by grants from the Microsoft Justice Reform Initiative and the MacArthur Foundation. Rock County data show that in 2025 only 7 of 2,540 arrest cases, or 0.28 percent, resulted in a not-guilty finding, and 85 percent of cases closed with guilty pleas. Average felony case resolution time stands at 261 days and misdemeanor at 251 days, both above pre-COVID baselines of roughly seven and six months respectively. Sanders identified staffing levels and case prioritization as areas requiring further county review.

Source: Janesville Gazette (South Central) | https://www.gazettextra.com/news/rock-county-district-attorneys-office-launches-court-case-database-in-statewide-transparency-initiative/article_415ba640-6058-4181-a2d9-5046d6664681.html

Public Safety

Inmate found dead in cell at Barron County Jail

A Barron County Jail inmate was found unresponsive and pronounced dead at the scene on Nov. 8. Sheriff Jodi Kummet confirmed the inmate was the sole occupant of the cell. The Barron County Medical Examiner's Office is assisting with the investigation. The Wisconsin Department of Corrections Office of Detention Facilities has been notified and will conduct an independent review under state protocol. No further details were released.

Source: Chetek Alert (Western) | https://chetekalert.com/news/area_news/article_f751694c-c49a-46da-b77a-a5f91910852e.html

Lincoln County Board approves updated ambulance agreement with Merrill

The Lincoln County Board approved a new ambulance service agreement with the City of Merrill at its Oct. 20, 2026, regular meeting, replacing a contract in place since 2007. Beginning in 2027 the county will pay a base cost of $1.6 million, up from the 2026 budget of $1.32 million, with a 2 percent annual inflation adjustment. The updated agreement removes requirements tying funding to specific staffing positions and equipment, giving the city greater operational flexibility. The City of Merrill Committee of the Whole was scheduled to review and grant final approval on Oct. 27.

Source: Merrill Foto News (Central/Northern) | https://merrillfotonews.com/stories/lincoln-county-board-approves-updated-ambulance-agreement-with-merrill,362874

Protesters call for changes to Milwaukee Police vehicle pursuits, use of force

More than a dozen protesters gathered at the Milwaukee Police Department's District 5 station on Nov. 10 to demand changes to the department's vehicle pursuit policy and use-of-force practices. The Milwaukee Fire and Police Commission had earlier this year urged the department to revise its pursuit standard operating procedure, but the department declined to adopt the revisions. The next Fire and Police Commission meeting is scheduled for Nov. 19.

Source: WUWM 89.7 Milwaukee Public Radio (Southeastern) | https://www.wuwm.com/protesters-call-for-changes-to-milwaukee-police-vehicle-pursuits-use-of-force

Madison launches program that provides $20 Uber vouchers to prevent impaired driving

The City of Madison launched the Safe Nights Network, a Vision Zero initiative offering $20 Uber vouchers at eight participating bars on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights. City data show 861 impairment-related crashes occurred between January 2023 and January 2026, resulting in 416 injuries and 18 deaths. Beginning Nov. 25, $20 vouchers will also be available through the city's website on select holidays through Jan. 1. The city said it is exploring expansion to local taxi services.

Source: WMTV NBC15 Madison (South Central) | https://www.wmtv15news.com/2026/11/14/madison-launches-program-that-provides-20-uber-vouchers-prevent-impaired-driving/

Town of Algoma votes against creating EMS district with Oshkosh

The Algoma Town Board voted against creating a new emergency medical services district with Oshkosh after several hours of public opposition at its Nov. 12 meeting. The proposed district would not have changed existing service, because the town already contracts with Oshkosh for ambulance service, but it would have altered the governance structure and made the town eligible for a $50,000 annual state grant. Fire Chief Kevin Sawicki and residents argued the district was a pathway to a full department merger. Town Administrator Maggie Mahoney said the issue could return in the future.

Source: WLUK FOX11 Green Bay (Northeastern) | https://fox11online.com/news/local/town-of-algoma-votes-against-creating-ems-district-with-oshkosh

Boyceville police chief shares concerns over department's future

The Boyceville Village Board voted 4 to 3 on Monday against approving a full-time officer hire proposed by Police Chief Greg Lamkin, who has led the department since 2015. The department currently consists of Lamkin and one part-time sergeant. The officer position is funded in the existing balanced budget, and Lamkin said he intends to propose filling it again next year. Board President Jonathan Farrell declined to comment. Lamkin said he is concerned the vote signals a move toward disbanding the department, as occurred in neighboring Elk Mound.

Source: WEAU NBC13 Eau Claire (Western) | https://www.weau.com/2026/11/11/boyceville-police-chief-shares-concerns-over-departments-future/

Nokomis electors reject EMS upgrade

Town of Nokomis electors voted 156 to 76 at a Nov. 13 special town meeting to reject a $1.1 million to $1.2 million extension to the Nokomis Fire Department that would have provided living quarters for an Oneida County ambulance crew. The project would have added code-compliant sleeping, living, and office space for Oneida County Medic 4, whose crew currently cannot meet 24-hour shift requirements at the existing station because the space it uses does not meet fire safety code. The town's emergency medical services committee will next meet to consider alternative options for crew housing.

Source: WXPR 91.7 FM Rhinelander (Central/Northern) | https://www.wxpr.org/health/2026-11-13/nokomis-electors-reject-ems-upgrade
Source: WJFW NBC12 Rhinelander (Central/Northern) | https://www.wjfw.com/news/local/nokomis-votes-down-1-2-million-ems-building-living-space-project/article_1fa35bb8-91ea-433d-b67e-3ac7b247dcea.html

Siting and Moratoria

BECI transmission line developer delays regulatory filing, extends public engagement into 2027

Midcontinent Grid Solutions announced it will not file its Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity application with the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin before May 1, 2027, and will hold open houses in the first quarter of 2027 instead of fall 2026. The proposed Bell Center-Columbia-Sugar Creek project would run nearly 190 miles at 765 kilovolts from Crawford County through Rock County to Walworth County and into Illinois, and no final route has been selected. WKBT reported the delay follows a rally of nearly 200 people at the State Capitol in October and 69 recorded local government votes against the project; the Janesville Gazette reported that eight Wisconsin counties along the potential corridor, including Rock, Walworth, and Jefferson, have adopted advisory resolutions opposing it. MISO, the regional grid operator, has identified the additional capacity as necessary to address a projected electricity shortage, which the Gazette dated as early as 2032 and other coverage dated as early as 2034.

Source: WKBT CBS8 La Crosse (Statewide) | https://www.news8000.com/news/local-news/beci-transmission-line-developer-delays-regulatory-filing-extends-public-engagement-into-2027/article_79c31dff-1ced-4898-9553-4aea31bb0829.html
Source: Janesville Gazette (Statewide) | https://www.gazettextra.com/news/765-kv-transmission-line-developer-seeks-more-public-input-as-it-readies-plan-for-regulators/article_9291764d-2d04-4062-a455-1a614d08c1e7.html

Appleton considers temporary pause on large-scale AI data center development

The Appleton Plan Commission approved a proposed 12-month development moratorium on Nov. 11 targeting hyperscale artificial intelligence data centers of at least 20,000 square feet. The moratorium would give staff time to study infrastructure impacts and draft definitions and standards currently absent from the municipal code. The proposal must still complete required public notice and a hearing process before Common Council action. The next Council meeting was scheduled for Nov. 18.

Source: WGBA NBC26 Green Bay (Northeastern) | https://www.nbc26.com/appleton/appleton-considers-temporary-pause-on-large-scale-ai-data-center-development

Neighbors support proposed Port Washington policy governing road closures

Port Washington's Board of Public Works workshopped a draft road closure policy on Nov. 10, prompted by months of unscheduled closures on Lake Drive tied to construction of a $15 billion Vantage data center complex. Under the proposed policy, developers would apply 10 days in advance, pay an application fee and a closure fee, and notify affected neighbors and businesses. Members said they hope the policy will ultimately be adopted as a city ordinance.

Source: WTMJ 4 NBC Milwaukee (Southeastern) | https://www.tmj4.com/news/local-news/county-reporting/ozaukee-county/neighbors-support-proposed-port-washington-policy-governing-road-closures

Town of Mukwonago solar farm hearing adjourned again

A Nov. 12 joint meeting of the Town of Mukwonago Plan Commission and Town Board continued the public hearing on a conditional use permit for the proposed Spring Lake Solar project, a 6-megawatt facility that would place 13,000 solar panels across approximately 28 acres northwest of Highway I and Section Road. Applicant Peter Murphy of Seattle-based OneEnergy Development LLC spent roughly 45 minutes answering questions carried over from the Oct. 26 hearing, confirming that only one project is included in the proposal and that We Energies would own the project and be responsible for decommissioning at the end of its 30-to-50-year life. Town Board and Plan Commission members questioned whether We Energies would honor the decommissioning obligation and noted that the town is not a signatory to the lease agreement. Town Chairman Peter Topczewski said he wants to see the lease before moving forward. Construction is projected to begin in spring 2027 and take four to six months. The hearing was adjourned again, with residents to submit additional questions at a continuation hearing Dec. 2 at Mukwonago Town Hall, after which the Plan Commission could recommend the permit to the Town Board. A comparable 6-megawatt project, Pike Lake Solar, is under separate review in the Town of Hartford after the Hartford Town Board returned it to its Plan Commission in September.

Source: Waukesha Freeman (Southeastern) | https://www.gmtoday.com/the_freeman/news/mukwonago-solar-project-hearing/article_b46ced3b-b3ab-5cd2-a468-f812e567dfde.html
Source: Waukesha Freeman (Southeastern) | https://www.gmtoday.com/the_freeman/news/mukwonago-solar-project-hearing/article_0532c0d0-d862-5a1d-8ccf-31d0094b1033.html

Oakdale planners want more time on Nodiac data center

The Oakdale Town Planning Commission voted at its Nov. 10 meeting to inform the Town Board that it needs more information before recommending Nodiac's proposal to build a 6-megawatt data center on about 4.8 acres of the Wedemeier farm at 29903 County Highway CA. Nodiac, which has no currently operating facilities, proposes three prefabricated server units with a 50-decibel noise limit at the nearest home approximately 1,100 feet away, and an unspecified annual community contribution. Monroe County's Sanitation, Planning and Zoning Committee scheduled a public hearing for 6 p.m. Nov. 16 at the Monroe County Justice Center in Sparta. The Oakdale Town Board held a special meeting Nov. 13, and commissioners discussed requesting an additional 30 to 60 days. A resident-organized petition gathered 270 signatures opposing the project.

Source: Monroe County Herald (Sparta) (Western) | https://monroecountyherald.com/stories/oakdale-planners-want-more-time-on-nodiac-data-center,188033

Housing and Development

Regulatory hurdles hinder a possible affordability fix: houses from factories

A Badger Institute analysis finds that Wisconsin zoning and siting regulations place manufactured and modular housing on unequal regulatory footing with site-built homes, constraining a sector that accounts for roughly 1,400 units per year, about 2.5 percent of state production, and that the institute says contributes $2.5 billion annually to the state economy while supporting 22,064 jobs and $881 million in wages. Wisconsin Housing Alliance Executive Director Amy Bliss said manufactured homes cost 25 to 40 percent less than comparable site-built homes, but local rules often confine them to mobile home parks or impose aesthetic standards. The analysis reports the industry is seeking equal regulatory treatment rather than subsidies, in a market where the institute says a $108,000 household income is required to afford a median home in metropolitan Madison. The article's language is partly advocacy-oriented.

Source: Badger Institute (Statewide) | https://www.badgerinstitute.org/regulatory-hurdles-hinder-a-possible-affordability-fix-houses-from-factories/

DORA had a successful 6 months of operation

Janesville's Business Improvement District reported to the city's Alcohol Licensing Committee that the downtown Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area, established by unanimous City Council ordinance in May 2026, issued its 5,000th DORA cup sticker and recorded 4,000 QR code scans in its first season. Deputy Police Chief Mark Ratzlaff reported no significant enforcement

issues. The district is now seeking to convert the pilot into a permanent ordinance, with the only proposed change being a narrowing of hours to a 10 a.m. to noon daily start time.

Source: Janesville Gazette (South Central) | https://www.gazettextra.com/news/local/dora-had-a-successful-6-months-of-operation/article_63a2b577-82c9-4f35-b1f9-3690c55f69da.html

La Crosse council delays vote on North Side Library purchase, declares Girl Scouts building surplus

The La Crosse Common Council delayed a vote by 30 days Thursday on a purchase and development agreement for the former North Side Library, proposed for conversion to a community center. The council also declared the former Girl Scouts building on Quarry Road a surplus property, placing it on a path toward redevelopment. The Finance and Personnel Committee had voted unanimously to declare the Girl Scouts building surplus on Nov. 5.

Source: WKBT CBS8 La Crosse (Western) | https://www.news8000.com/news/local-news/la-crosse/la-crosse-council-delays-vote-on-north-side-library-purchase-declares-girl-scouts-building-surplus/article_6e29ddec-0686-4811-913e-f317b2b93352.html

136-Unit Housing Development Moves One Step Closer to Approval in Sheboygan

Sheboygan's City Plan Commission unanimously approved a conditional use permit for Harbor View Lofts LLC to construct a 136-unit housing development on the former Wells Fargo Bank building site in downtown Sheboygan. The project includes a five-story, 126-unit apartment complex with studio through three-bedroom units, plus a three-story, 10-unit residential townhome building. Residents raised parking concerns at the public hearing. The permit now advances to the Sheboygan Common Council for final approval.

Source: Seehafer News (Southeastern) | https://www.seehafernews.com/2026/11/13/136-unit-housing-development-moves-one-step-closer-to-approval-in-sheboygan/

Extended-stay hotel proposed in Superior

Superior's Redevelopment Authority recommended Nov. 5 that the city sell property at Tower Avenue and North Fourth Street to Twin Ports Development Corporation for construction of a 30-unit extended-stay hotel valued at $2.5 million. The city will sell the land at its appraised value of $95,000, then return $50,000 of that amount to the developer as an incentive at project completion. The city originally purchased the 25,000-square-foot parcel from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation for approximately $35,000. The Superior City Council was scheduled to vote on the sale Nov. 17; if approved, construction would begin no later than May 1 and take about 13 months.

Source: Superior Telegram (Western) | https://www.superiortelegram.com/news/local/extended-stay-hotel-proposed-in-superior

City Program Will Pay You $9,000 To Move to Milwaukee

The City of Milwaukee and Employ Milwaukee are launching Milwaukee Fresh, a talent recruitment program backed by a $455,763 Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation grant targeting up to 50 out-of-state households. Reimbursements range from $3,000 for a single person to $9,000 for a household of four or more, covering qualifying moving expenses. Applicants must live outside Wisconsin, relocate within Milwaukee city limits, and earn at least $55,000 annually. The program is one of 17 statewide talent recruitment projects funded through the 2025-2027 state budget. Milwaukee County separately received $217,000 through the same program to recruit workers for hard-to-fill county government positions.

Source: Urban Milwaukee (Southeastern) | https://urbanmilwaukee.com/2026/11/11/city-program-will-pay-you-9000-to-move-to-milwaukee/

Four Milwaukee Affordable Housing Projects Seek State Tax Credits

Four Milwaukee affordable housing developments totaling 297 apartments have submitted applications to the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority for competitively awarded low-income housing tax credits in the 2027 cycle. The proposals are KIN at Freshwater, 140 units in the Harbor District; Las Casitas, 69 units; Victory Lofts, 48 units; and The Revive Collective, 40 units. Statewide, the authority received 74 applications representing more than 4,100 units across its 4 percent and 9 percent tax credit programs. The authority plans to notify applicants of initial eligibility and scoring before the end of November, with full applications from advancing teams due Feb. 5, 2027, and credit awards expected in April 2027.

Source: Urban Milwaukee (Southeastern) | https://urbanmilwaukee.com/2026/11/13/four-milwaukee-affordable-housing-projects-seek-state-tax-credits/

Eau Claire shares preview of downtown business report

The Eau Claire Economic Development Division presented a preview of its Downtown Business Trends Report to the City Council on Tuesday, tracking commercial activity from 2021 through 2026. The full report, expected in the first quarter of 2027, will cover five districts including North and South Barstow, Water Street, and West Grand Avenue. Early data show North and South Barstow vacancy rates at roughly 6 percent, which the division described as within the healthy range. Downtown departures have averaged 10.66 businesses per year over six years, peaking at 15 in 2022, with 13 departures recorded so far in 2026. Business openings peaked at 36 in 2023 following pandemic-era lows. Each district report will include current commercial conditions, business tenure and retention data, property performance metrics, and recommendations for city division action.

Source: Leader-Telegram (Western) | https://www.leadertelegram.com/news/eau-claire-shares-preview-of-downtown-business-report/article_2962398c-72ed-40b4-88ef-20fdbcb1301f.html

Allouez, SPARK break ground on $30 million mixed-use development

The Village of Allouez and SPARK Development Co. broke ground Nov. 9 on a $30 million, three-story mixed-use building called Meridian at the northeast corner of Webster Avenue and East St. Joseph Street. The 103-unit market-rate apartment project, with ground-floor retail and restaurant space, sits on a site the village acquired in 2020 and cleared in 2023 after the village board voted to raze a vacant strip mall. The development anchors the village's Webster Avenue corridor plan, which originated from a 2015 community engagement process and a 2018 corridor study. RODAC LLC is the general contractor. Commercial tenants have not been finalized, and first residents are expected as early as summer 2028.

Source: The Press Times (Green Bay) (Northeastern) | https://gopresstimes.com/stories/allouez-spark-break-ground-on-30-million-mixed-use-development,363379

Land Use and Zoning

McFarland grows by nearly 400 residents following annexation vote

McFarland's Village Board voted unanimously on Nov. 11 to annex the April Hills subdivision in the town of Blooming Grove, adding approximately 400 residents to the village's population of around 9,800, a gain of about 4 percent. Around 90 percent of eligible voters in the 80-acre subdivision, roughly 250 adults, signed a petition for annexation into McFarland rather than Madison, which had been slated to absorb the area when Blooming Grove dissolves next year under a 2006 agreement. Village Administrator Matt Schuenke estimated that extending water, sewer, streets, and sidewalks to April Hills would cost approximately $21 million, or about $140,000 per lot, with infrastructure rolled out in phases and special assessment timing undetermined. The annexation petition had complicated a pending intergovernmental boundary agreement between Madison and McFarland. Madison's City Council passed a resolution in March indicating willingness to annex the area, and state officials sided with Madison's assessment in a June letter.

Source: Capital Times (South Central) | https://captimes.com/news/government/mcfarland-grows-by-nearly-400-residents-following-annexation-vote/article_af34fb2d-fb26-4763-8dd0-de164d4d850b.html
Source: Capital Times (South Central) | https://captimes.com/news/government/to-avoid-joining-madison-residents-urge-mcfarland-to-ok-annexation/article_8551b793-22d0-47db-aa52-43a58d62586f.html

Battle of Troy: Township residents push back against city's extraterritorial jurisdiction

The River Falls Plan Commission unanimously forwarded two items to the City Council with positive recommendations at its Nov. 4 meeting: amending the city's comprehensive plan to add a "city edge growth preservation area" land use classification, and rescinding a 2007 waiver that limited the city's extraterritorial plat approval jurisdiction to 1.5 miles rather than the full 3-mile statutory authority. The move is driven by a proposed cooperative boundary agreement between Hudson and the Town of Troy that overlaps River Falls' planning area. Town of Troy Chairperson Doug Rowen submitted a 10-page objection letter and spoke at the hearing, citing procedural deficiencies. The Council will hold a public hearing on the comprehensive plan amendment Nov.

24 and on rescinding the waiver Dec. 3, with both items requiring approval at a subsequent meeting.

Source: Pierce County Journal (Western) | https://www.piercecountyjournal.news/stories/battle-of-troy-township-residents-push-back-against-citys-extraterritorial-jurisdiction,212797

Oakland neighbors don't want campground

The Douglas County Zoning Committee on Nov. 11 referred back to the Oakland Town Board a conditional use permit application from Russel Caflisch of Superior to build three recreational vehicle campsites on a 5-acre parcel at 6035 E. Mabel Nelson Road to house bridge construction workers. The Town Board had recommended denial, but County Board Chairman Mark Liebaert and interim land services director Robin Haasis noted that state law on conditional use permits requires substantial evidence of detriment before denial, and that the application meets zoning requirements for small-scale campgrounds in R2 residential districts. Supervisor Howard Hendrickson moved to send the matter back to the town to provide documented proof that issuing the permit would be detrimental. The committee agreed unanimously.

Source: Superior Telegram (Western) | https://www.superiortelegram.com/news/local/oakland-neighbors-dont-want-campground

Lake Geneva considers changes to boat slip and buoy rentals

The Lake Geneva City Council unanimously authorized City Attorney Dan Draper on Nov. 9 to draft an ordinance governing proposed changes to boat slip, buoy, and kayak rack rentals, with changes set to take effect in 2027. Proposed changes include separate waiting lists for West End Pier slips, West End buoys, West End kayak racks, and Riviera Pier slips, with residency restrictions limiting West End Pier slips and kayak racks to residents only. Application fees of $50 for slip and buoy waiting lists and $25 for kayak racks are proposed. Beginning in 2030, slip renters would be required to install lifts to reduce pier damage; the city has spent about $100,000 in the past year on pier repairs. The current waiting list includes nearly 140 people, some listed for decades.

Source: Lake Geneva Regional News (Southeastern) | https://lakegenevanews.net/news/local/government-politics/article_7381c7ed-7001-4976-926c-70e30f01ed79.html

Insights from the City of Seymour

Seymour's Committee of the Whole has reviewed the proposed 2027 budget and a public hearing is scheduled for Nov. 23, 2026, at 6 p.m. in council chambers. The Plan Commission will meet Nov. 19 to review and approve the city's Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, prepared by the East Central Regional Planning Commission, which would enable grant applications for park upgrades. An Oct. 28 informational meeting on For US Eco Corp's proposed recycled-plastics operation at 201 Mainline Dr. drew approximately 50 residents, and commissioners requested additional information before further action.

Source: Seymour Advertiser (Northeastern) | https://seymouradvertiser.com/stories/insights-from-the-city-of-seymour,363521

Milwaukee Takes Next Step in Zoning Overhaul

Milwaukee's Department of City Development launched the second phase of its Housing Element initiative on Friday, announcing proposed zoning code changes to be published Nov. 16 at engage.milwaukee.gov/housing-tune-up, followed by three public engagement sessions. The phase follows the Common Council's July 2025 adoption of the Housing Element in a 12-2 vote with one abstention. Proposed changes address small-scale infill housing, larger multi-unit and mixed-use buildings, design standards, and technical definition updates, but will not reclassify individual properties. The council transferred $30,000 in September to fund public engagement and technical assistance for the zoning analysis.

Source: Urban Milwaukee (Southeastern) | https://urbanmilwaukee.com/2026/11/13/milwaukee-takes-next-step-in-zoning-overhaul/

REAL ESTATE | Slinger Plan Commission approves proposed Indoor and Outdoor Sports Complex off I-41

The Slinger Plan Commission unanimously approved three items for a proposed 142,000-square-foot indoor and outdoor sports complex on a roughly 37-acre site at Karius Court in the Merchant Village development near the I-41 and State Highway 60 interchange. The approved items were a planned unit development amendment, a conditional use permit and site plan for the indoor athletic facility, and a conditional use permit for outdoor alcohol service. One trustee recused on a fourth item because of a family connection. The planned unit development amendment allows modifications to building height, with walls to 25 feet and a roof peak to approximately 47 feet, as well as to green space requirements and exterior masonry standards. A traffic study estimates approximately 3,990 weekday vehicle trips. No liquor license is currently available, and a license to purchase would cost $10,000. The proposal does not require forwarding to the full Village Board.

Source: Washington County Insider (Southeastern) | https://www.washingtoncountyinsider.com/slinger-in-outdoor-sports-complex/

Governance and Ethics

Final election results

Burnett County voters approved a referendum by nine votes to reduce the County Board from 21 to 15 supervisors. Redistricting will take effect in one year, ahead of the spring 2028 elections. Sheriff-elect Mikal Anton and Clerk of Court-elect Danielle Kolecki ran unopposed.

Source: Burnett County Sentinel (Western) | https://burnettcountysentinel.com/news/final-election-results/article_6e2c0c74-82df-43b8-baa0-b6e7eed6358b.html

Gov. Evers appoints La Crosse attorney David Pierce to Monroe County Circuit Court

Gov. Tony Evers appointed La Crosse attorney David Pierce to Monroe County Circuit Court Branch 2, filling the vacancy created by Judge Mark Goodman's retirement, for a term through July 31, 2028. Pierce is a partner at Johns, Flaherty and Collins S.C. focusing on criminal defense. His resignation from the La Crosse County Board of Supervisors District 3 seat, where he served as first vice chair, creates a second vacancy. The county board is expected to begin an appointment process for a replacement to serve through April 2028.

Source: WKBT CBS8 La Crosse (Western) | https://www.news8000.com/news/local-news/gov-evers-appoints-la-crosse-attorney-david-pierce-to-monroe-county-circuit-court/article_753853d2-263a-4552-a0ea-e2e1b9079d56.html

Smith named to Antigo School Board

The Antigo School Board appointed Donna Smith as a new board member at a special meeting Monday, filling the seat vacated by former board President Danny Pyeatt, who resigned at a special meeting on Oct. 15. Smith was chosen over Bob Wilson and Rebecca Rank after two rounds of voting. The board reached a majority for Smith in the second round, with Parizek, Cornelius, Myers, and Adams voting for Smith while Nicholson and Schreiber voted for Rank. Seven of nine board positions have been vacated and filled in the past year, approximately 78 percent of the board.

Source: Antigo Daily Journal (Central/Northern) | https://www.antigojournal.com/news/smith-named-to-antigo-school-board/article_7351253f-257e-410e-85cd-88443e0c0f83.html

La Crosse moves to create powerful new city administrator role

The La Crosse Common Council voted 10 to 3 to create a city administrator position through a charter ordinance that removes executive powers from the mayor, on the third attempt after the measure failed to reach a supermajority in February and August. The La Crosse Tribune dated the vote Nov. 13 and WIZM dated it Nov. 12. Ordinance sponsors Aaron Newberry and Larry Sleznikow argued the position improves accountability and efficiency. The administrator will oversee all city departments and daily operations, including preparing the annual budget, with the council holding supervisory authority and the authority to hire and remove. A competing standard ordinance backed by Mayor Shaundel Washington-Spivey, which would have retained more authority in the mayor's office, was rejected by the Judiciary and Administration Committee on Nov. 4 and then failed 12 to 1 at the council. Council members Olivia Stine and Crystal Bedford changed their votes from August to supply the winning margin. Under state law the mayor has five days to sign or veto, and the council could override with the same supermajority. A 60-day referendum window follows, requiring 1,570 signatures to place the ordinance on the ballot. The council meets Nov. 16 to address funding the position in the 2027 operating budget.

Source: La Crosse Tribune (Western) | https://lacrossetribune.com/news/local/government-politics/article_d151ca70-1807-47ea-bcda-61748b456eca.html
Source: WIZM 1410 AM La Crosse (Western) | https://www.wizmnews.com/2026/11/12/la-crosse-city-council-supports-one-plan-for-city-administrator-rejects-another/
Source: WKBT CBS8 La Crosse (Western) | https://www.news8000.com/news/local-news/la-crosse/la-crosse-council-approves-proposal-to-create-city-administrator-position/article_fc835742-7358-498e-991b-196e02f17ed5.html

Future of Madison police oversight board uncertain after council resolution seeks suspension

Alder Yannette Figueroa Cole introduced a one-sentence resolution at Madison's Nov. 11 Common Council meeting to suspend the Police Civilian Oversight Board, created in 2020, and to amend city ordinances accordingly. Council President Sabrina Madison said title-only resolutions are normal while details are developed. The full council is scheduled to take up the resolution Nov. 24. Board Chair Devon Snyder said the board was not notified before the announcement and is calling for stronger ordinances to settle the authority question: the board contends its ordinance grants it sole hiring and supervisory authority over the Independent Police Monitor, while City Attorney Michael Haas argues the council could end interim monitor Aeiramique Glass's provisional appointment because the council had approved that extension. The council fired Glass on Oct. 21. The board then voted unanimously to appoint former Alder Rebecca Kemble as interim monitor effective immediately, but Haas said Human Resources Director Erin Stenson's approval is required and is unlikely to be given. At the same Nov. 11 budget hearing, alders added $50,000 to the Office of the Independent Monitor for contracted caseload management but declined to fund a full-time data analyst position. The office carries approximately 70 open investigations. A permanent monitor job description is expected before the board Dec. 16, with the position posted if approved.

Source: WISC CBS3 Madison (South Central) | https://www.channel3000.com/news/future-of-madison-police-oversight-board-uncertain-after-council-resolution-seeks-suspension/article_de1ae5ad-d4b0-4a8b-ab6a-d7f99be015b2.html
Source: WMTV NBC15 Madison (South Central) | https://www.wmtv15news.com/2026/11/13/madison-oversight-board-chair-calls-clearer-rules-amid-dispute-over-monitor-appointments/
Source: Capital Times (South Central) | https://captimes.com/news/government/madison-city-council-threatens-police-oversight-boards-reach/article_2e2d1a22-4aa5-4bf4-9559-73b0639b73b9.html

Superior council approves 2028 pay increase

The Superior City Council voted Nov. 10 to raise councilor salaries by $500 annually, to $7,745, effective after the April 2028 election, with an additional $500 for the council president during the year of service in that role. Councilor Robert Hering cast the lone no vote. The council amended the Human Resources Committee recommendation to reduce the council president's extra pay from the originally proposed $900 to $500, and added language clarifying that the president's additional pay applies only during the leadership year. A motion by Councilor Garner Moffat to set councilor pay at 20 percent of Superior's median household income, approximately $12,843, failed for lack of a second.

Source: Superior Telegram (Western) | https://www.superiortelegram.com/news/local/superior-council-approves-2028-pay-increase

Waupun school board condemns anti-Muslim comment attributed to board member

Waupun Area School District Board President Jennie Patrykus issued a statement condemning a Facebook comment attributed to board member Richard Baumann that suggested Muslim girls are not allowed to attend school. Patrykus said the comment "does not reflect the district's values or commitment to serving all students and families." The Waupun School Board confirmed the matter is under investigation. The post has been removed, and Baumann had not responded to requests for comment as of Thursday evening. Fauzia Qureshi, executive director of the Wisconsin Muslim Civic Alliance, called on Baumann to publicly retract the statement and apologize to Muslim students and families. No further board action was reported.

Source: WGBA NBC26 Green Bay (Northeastern) | https://www.nbc26.com/news/local-news/waupun-school-board-condemns-anti-muslim-comment-attributed-to-board-member
Source: WGBA NBC26 Green Bay (Northeastern) | https://www.nbc26.com/fonddulac/muslim-community-leaders-condemn-facebook-comment-from-waupun-school-board-member

Wausau Alder to Resign at Year's End

Wausau District 9 Alder Vicki Tierney will resign effective Dec. 31, citing family priorities. Tierney has served since 2024. Mayor Doug Diny acknowledged her service. The council will determine how to fill the vacancy at a later date.

Source: WSAU 550 AM / 99.9 FM Wausau (Central/Northern) | https://wsau.com/2026/11/12/wausau-alder-to-resign-at-years-end/

Elk Mound resident sues village board

Former Elk Mound Police Department volunteer John Fellenz filed a lawsuit in Dunn County Court on Nov. 6 challenging the Elk Mound Village Board's Oct. 6 vote to disband the village police department. The Leader-Telegram identified the defendants as the board and Village President Tim Benjamin; WKBT reported the suit names the board and five individual board members. The board's Oct. 6 vote, 6 to 1, authorized contracting with Dunn County for law enforcement services, funded in part by a four-year grant, at a stated cost of $179,000 per officer including wages, benefits, and equipment. Fellenz argues the board violated Wisconsin's open meetings law, citing 79 emails obtained through an open records request showing that discussions with Dunn County began in May, and alleging that board members deliberated by email outside a public meeting. He is asking the court to invalidate the vote and impose penalties on the members involved. The Chippewa County district attorney declined to file charges. The Dunn County Judiciary and Law Committee has not yet acted on the proposed contract, citing potential legal irregularities. Fellenz is also pursuing a recall effort against Benjamin. The village president had not responded to a request for comment.

Source: Leader-Telegram (Western) | https://www.leadertelegram.com/news/daily-updates/elk-mound-resident-sues-village-board/article_d8e63868-767a-40e6-b216-262c2eac9ea4.html
Source: WKBT CBS8 La Crosse (Western) | https://www.news8000.com/news/local-news/elk-mound-man-sues-village-alleges-open-meetings-violation-in-police-departments-dissolution/article_9ad92247-7dd0-4e81-81a2-4edb615f471e.html

Elections and Election Administration

When accessible voting isn't accessible: A blind voter's experience at the polls

A first-time blind voter in Wisconsin attempted to use an Express Vote accessible ballot-marking device on Election Day and found the machine inoperable because a required physical keypad component was missing. The voter completed a traditional ballot with assistance, forfeiting the private, independent voting the device is intended to provide. Poll workers apologized but appeared to lack training on the equipment. The account does not name the municipality or the clerk's office involved.

Source: Civic Media (Statewide) | https://civicmedia.us/news/2026/11/12/when-accessible-voting-isnt-accessible-a-blind-voters-experience-at-the-polls

Area city, village clerks share number of late absentee ballots

Clerks in six south-central Wisconsin municipalities reported fewer than 10 late-arriving absentee ballots each following the Nov. 3 general election. Cottage Grove received eight late ballots, Monona nine, Lake Mills three, and McFarland five, while Cambridge and Waterloo reported none too late to count. McFarland noted that four of its five late ballots bore postmarks of Nov. 1 or 2, three of them postmarked out of state. Wisconsin law requires that ballots be received by 8 p.m. on Election Day regardless of postmark date.

Source: Waterloo/Marshall Courier (South Central) | https://hngnews.com/leader_independent/news/local/area-city-village-clerks-share-number-of-late-absentee-ballots/article_b57953c5-3f8b-4416-8a5f-83136afc7a48.html

Waukesha County election canvass underway ahead of Dec. 15 vote

Waukesha County's canvassing board is certifying results from the Nov. 3 general election, with 81 percent voter turnout, a figure County Clerk Georgia Maxwell said is nearly identical to the last midterm. A special election for county executive is scheduled for Dec. 15, required by statute following the July death of County Executive Paul Farrow. Because the special election must fall within a 62-to-77-day window and the November general election caused a mandatory pause, the county executive race did not appear on the November ballot. Many municipalities will operate only one polling place for the Dec. 15 election.

Source: WITI FOX6 Milwaukee (Southeastern) | https://www.fox6now.com/news/waukesha-county-election-canvass-underway-ahead-dec-15-vote

Wisconsin Rapids clerk devoted her life to running elections. She died on Election Day.

Wisconsin Rapids City Clerk Jennifer Gossick died on Election Day after collapsing at home that morning, and was later found to have advanced cancer that had closed 80 percent of her lungs. She had overseen all election preparations, including poll worker recruitment and early voting management, working through her illness without disclosing it. Wood County Clerk Trent Miner stepped in on Election Day to ensure the city's election ran without reported issues, following the procedures Gossick had established, and is continuing to assist the city with post-election tasks. A 2024 national survey cited in the article found that only 34 percent of local election officials felt they could balance work and personal responsibilities, down from 54 percent four years earlier.

Source: Votebeat Wisconsin (Central/Northern) | https://www.votebeat.org/wisconsin/2026/11/11/wisconsin-rapids-election-clerk-jennifer-gossick-died-election-day/

City to Audit Voting Equipment Next Week

The City of Sheboygan will conduct a post-election audit of voting equipment at City Hall Conference Room 106 beginning at 8:30 a.m. Wednesday, continuing Thursday if needed. The Wisconsin Elections Commission randomly selected Wards 4, 17, and 22 for the audit. The audit is required under Wisconsin statutes and the federal Help America Vote Act of 2002, and it is open to the public.

Source: WHBL 1330 AM Sheboygan (Southeastern) | https://whbl.com/2026/11/13/city-to-audit-voting-equipment-next-week/

Human Services

US has lost measles elimination status, global health authorities say

Wisconsin reported its second measles-related child death this month, both in Grant County, which accounts for roughly one-third of the state's 651 confirmed cases across 22 counties in 2026. At least 14 Wisconsin cases resulted in hospitalization. The deaths are Wisconsin's first measles fatalities in 36 years and the case count is the highest the state has recorded. The Pan American Health Organization determined that the United States has lost its measles elimination status, concluding that the disease has reestablished regular transmission. Nationally, more than 8,000 people have been sickened in outbreaks costing an estimated $125 million, and 13 measles-associated deaths have been reported across states. The Wisconsin Department of Health Services announced the second death on Friday.

Source: Wisconsin Watch (Statewide) | https://wisconsinwatch.org/2026/11/us-has-lost-measles-elimination-status-global-health-authorities-say/

Second Wisconsin child dies of measles

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services announced on Nov. 14 that a second child in Grant County has died of measles-associated causes, one week after the department announced the

state's first measles death since 1990. No further identifying details were released. As of Nov. 14 Wisconsin has recorded 651 measles cases across 22 counties in 2026, the highest count in more than 35 years. State epidemiologist Dr. Ryan Westergaard said the actual case count is likely well over 1,000 because of underreporting. Wisconsin has the fourth-highest measles case total in the United States this year. The department recommends the MMR vaccine, which is 97 percent effective after two doses, and advises early vaccination at six months for infants at elevated exposure risk.

Source: WPR News Madison (Statewide) (Statewide) | https://www.wpr.org/news/second-wisconsin-child-dies-of-measles

UPDATE: Second measles death reported; Cases jump to 651 in WI

Wisconsin health officials and the Grant County Health Department confirmed a second pediatric measles-related death on Friday, following the first confirmed pediatric death announced Nov. 5. Confirmed or probable statewide cases now total 651 across 22 counties since the start of the year, with 14 hospitalizations, and all but four cases involved unvaccinated individuals. Grant County leads with 222 cases, followed by Lafayette with 122 and Iowa with 97.

Source: WIZM 1410 AM La Crosse (South Central) | https://www.wizmnews.com/2026/11/13/measles-case-reported-in-monroe-county-wi-at-551-cases/

La Crosse, Eau Claire voters approve new committees focused on healthcare costs

Voters in La Crosse and Eau Claire approved Nov. 3 referendums creating Citizens' Advisory Healthcare Action Committees in each city, with Eau Claire passing 55 percent to 45 percent and La Crosse 67 percent to 33 percent. The nearly identical measures reached the ballot through Wisconsin's direct legislation process, placed there by advocacy group Community Action Wisconsin on more than 8,000 petition signatures in Eau Claire and more than 5,000 in La Crosse. Each committee is established by ordinance and charged with collecting public testimony, reviewing data, and evaluating policy impacts on healthcare affordability every two years, with resulting Healthcare Action Plans submitted as recommendations to local, state, and federal officials. The committees have no direct regulatory authority. La Crosse City Council President Tamra Dickinson, who supported the referendum, cited rising insurance costs affecting city budgets. Committee member appointments are the next step, with each ordinance requiring seven members representative of diverse community interests including healthcare workers and uninsured residents.

Source: WPR News Madison (Statewide) (Western) | https://www.wpr.org/news/la-crosse-eau-claire-voters-approve-committees-focused-healthcare-costs

Rural Wisconsin seniors press state officials for nursing home oversight changes

Members of Small-Town and Rural Seniors from Sauk, Walworth, and Lincoln counties met Nov. 12 in Madison with Wisconsin Department of Health Services officials and staff from Sen. Kelda Roys' office to request changes to nursing home oversight. The group's requests include denying

new licenses to operators running facilities with one-star federal quality ratings, requiring appraisals before publicly owned nursing homes can be sold, restoring ownership information removed from the department's public nursing home directory during a data system transition, and establishing a department senior hotline. As of Nov. 13 the directory still did not include ownership information, despite a group letter requesting its restoration by Sept. 1. A department representative offered monthly follow-up discussions through virtual meetings and community visits. The appraisal request arises from county experience: the Sauk County Board approved a $5.1 million sale of the Sauk County Health Care Center to Aria Healthcare in September 2024, Aria withdrew in June 2025, the facility remains county-owned, and the Wisconsin Court of Appeals upheld dismissal of a lawsuit challenging that sale on Oct. 15, 2026.

Source: Civic Media (Statewide) | https://civicmedia.us/news/2026/11/13/rural-wisconsin-seniors-press-state-officials-for-nursing-home-oversight-changes
Source: WFHR 1320 AM Wisconsin Rapids (Statewide) | https://www.wfhr.com/news/2026/11/13/rural-wisconsin-seniors-press-state-officials-for-nursing-home-oversight-changes

Jefferson County Veterans Service Office secures nearly $1 million in benefits

Jefferson County Veterans Service Officer Brandie Hanson reported to the Jefferson County Board on Nov. 10 that the office secured approximately $990,000 in federal Veterans Affairs benefits for county veterans during 2025-26 and recorded 1,580 client interactions in 2025. The office also distributed $2,127 in emergency assistance through the Veterans Service Commission to veterans facing financial hardship.

Source: Watertown Daily Times (South Central) | https://www.wdtimes.com/news/local/jefferson-county-veterans-service-office-secures-nearly-1-million-in-benefits/article_b7529a54-9b80-4b79-be9e-de01d1d1794d.html

Rock Haven may provide care to non-Rock County residents

Rock County's Health Services Committee forwarded a recommendation to open Rock Haven, the county-owned nursing home, to out-of-county and out-of-state residents. The Janesville Gazette described the facility as 120 beds in one report and as 128 beds currently holding 97 residents in another. The county's most recent budget showed Rock Haven requiring a $750,000 subsidy, down from more than $2 million in prior years. Administrator Natalie Rolling-Edlebeck said Rock Haven receives two to three out-of-county referrals daily and that expanded admissions could reduce the facility's reliance on the county tax levy while still guaranteeing placement priority for Rock County residents. The recommendation requires approval by the full County Board, which could act as soon as the following Thursday. Rolling-Edlebeck proposed quarterly financial analysis of out-of-county resident costs and reimbursements.

Source: Janesville Gazette (South Central) | https://www.gazettextra.com/news/rock-haven-may-provide-care-to-non-rock-county-residents/article_7661d36b-68e3-429f-86a8-d0d18bbef343.html
Source: Janesville Gazette (South Central) | https://www.gazettextra.com/news/opening-rock-haven-to-out-of-county-residents-could-ease-subsidy/article_d7fe0fc9-c34d-4101-b227-59f56309ed35.html

Sauk County budget slashes funding for domestic violence and homeless shelters

Sauk County approved its 2027 budget on a 23-to-6 vote Tuesday, cutting funding for Hope House of South Central Wisconsin and Pathway Home, also called the Baraboo Area Homeless Shelter, from $25,000 each to $8,333.33 each, a two-thirds reduction. The initial proposal would have eliminated county funding entirely; an amendment by District 21 Supervisor Bernadette Greenwood added back partial funding by equally splitting $25,000 among the two shelters and the Sauk County Historical Society, which had also been receiving $25,000. The total 2027 county budget is $151,921,500, down from $153,864,467 this year, with property taxes funding $36,920,786 of revenues. Pathway Home reported a 2024 deficit of $120,260 and holds approximately $113,000 in cash reserves. Hope House co-executive director Jaime Sathasivam said the organization has lost nearly $600,000 per year in federal grant funds and that the county funding helped cover staff wages.

Source: WiscNews (South Central) | https://wiscnews.com/news/local/article_ea4cdb21-6fe9-4a4b-8182-bb0ed089e10b.html

Waukesha veterans honored as county expands benefit services

Waukesha County's Veterans Service Office plans to add a new benefits specialist position in January to address a current response delay of more than one week for veterans calling with benefits questions. Veterans Service Officer Jeremy Johns said the county serves 20,000 veterans and their dependents. Johns identified housing, and the lack of Section 8 options in particular, as the top issue facing veterans in the county.

Source: WITI FOX6 Milwaukee (Southeastern) | https://www.fox6now.com/news/waukesha-veterans-honored-county-expands-benefit-services

Walker's Point Youth and Family Center still open and providing essential services to Milwaukee youth, though overnight shelter remains suspended

The Wisconsin Department of Children and Families launched an investigation into Walker's Point Youth and Family Center's runaway program after receiving complaints, resulting in suspension of the organization's eight-bed overnight shelter and a halt to new placements. Executive Director Kali Daugherty identified "serious compliance deficiencies" including missing background checks and training records for shelter personnel. The center is one of two licensed youth shelters and the only state-licensed group home for teen parents in Milwaukee County, and it continues drop-in services, a 24-hour hotline, therapy, case management, and housing programs. Five staff have been cleared to work. No reopening date has been announced.

Source: Milwaukee Neighborhood News Service (Southeastern) | https://milwaukeenns.org/2026/11/11/walkers-point-youth-family-center-still-open-and-providing-essential-services-to-milwaukee-youth-though-overnight-shelter-remains-suspended/

School Districts

Assata High School closing after 34 years in service, leaving those who worked there disappointed

The Milwaukee Public Schools Board of Directors voted Thursday to mutually end its contract with Assata High School effective Nov. 30, accelerating a closure that had been set for June. Assata, an independent alternative school offering Afro-centric curriculum in Milwaukee's Garden Homes neighborhood, reported 62 students enrolled this year, down from 109 a decade ago according to Department of Public Instruction records. The school requires 120 students to operate financially for a full year. Seven students will graduate at the end of November, while more than 50 remaining students will need to find new placements. Assata staff will hold in-person and virtual information sessions, with the first in-person session on Nov. 17 from 1 to 3 p.m.

Source: WTMJ 4 NBC Milwaukee (Southeastern) | https://www.tmj4.com/news/local-news/county-reporting/milwaukee-county/assata-high-school-closing-after-34-years-in-service-leaving-those-who-worked-there-disappointed

Build first, close later: MPS superintendent pitches new approach to school facilities

Milwaukee Public Schools Superintendent Brenda Cassellius told the Great Schools Committee on Monday that the district will propose a list of schools for building, renovation, or addition before identifying any for closure, reversing the sequence criticized at earlier meetings. Cassellius confirmed that closures and mergers remain likely over the facilities plan's 10-year horizon. The committee, formed in September, is advisory and uses district data including utilization rates, deferred maintenance costs, and enrollment trends to categorize schools. The district is simultaneously deciding how to cut $3.5 million in transportation costs, with stop consolidation potentially saving up to $11 million but raising access concerns.

Source: Milwaukee Neighborhood News Service (Southeastern) | https://milwaukeenns.org/2026/11/10/build-first-close-later-mps-superintendent-pitches-new-approach-to-school-facilities/

Third Time's A Charm? MPS Rebidding Lincoln Avenue Demo Again After Objection

Milwaukee Public Schools rejected all bids from its second solicitation for demolition of the fire-damaged Lincoln Avenue Elementary School and reissued a third solicitation as a competitive sealed bid requiring award to the lowest qualified bidder. The change follows an Oct. 27 appeal by West Milwaukee-based The MRD Group, which submitted a $928,000 proposal against the district's selection of Illinois-based TW Chicago at $4.8 million, a difference of nearly $3.9 million. District administrators had signed the TW Chicago contract Oct. 19, but the board removed it from its Oct. 29 agenda and took no action after a Nov. 2 closed session. The district has approximately $5 million in insurance proceeds available for the project. New bids are due Nov. 20 at 1:30 p.m.

Source: Urban Milwaukee (Southeastern) | https://urbanmilwaukee.com/2026/11/12/third-times-the-charm-mps-rebidding-lincoln-avenue-demo-again-after-objection/

Which schools will MPS close? New hopes for funding after election of Democratic trifecta

Milwaukee Public Schools Superintendent Brenda Cassellius held a Nov. 9 community meeting at Brown Street Academy, the second to last in a series examining potential school closures. Consultants previously recommended closing five schools, all in largely Black neighborhoods on Milwaukee's near north side. Cassellius said she hopes to use $355 million drawn from savings, potential new state funding from the incoming Democratic-controlled Legislature, and a possible future referendum to build three new schools and address deferred maintenance. A final community meeting is scheduled for Nov. 16 at 6 p.m. at North Division High School.

Source: WUWM 89.7 Milwaukee Public Radio (Southeastern) | https://www.wuwm.com/which-schools-will-mps-close-new-hopes-for-funding-after-election-of-democratic-trifecta

Enrollment at Historic Lows for Milwaukee Public Schools

Research by a Marquette University senior fellow shows that for the first time fewer than half of Milwaukee students are enrolled in Milwaukee Public Schools, with more than 50,000 Milwaukee students now attending other schools. District enrollment has dropped by more than 10,000 students over the past decade, which the research attributes to declining birth rates and private school voucher expansion. Superintendent Brenda Cassellius, delivering the district's "State of Our Schools" address Nov. 12 at Discovery World, cited completed remediation of lead hazards across thousands of classrooms. Cassellius put the district's loss in a bank impersonation fraud scheme at nearly $500,000; the district previously reported the loss as approximately $450,000. Cassellius also noted that a reversal of Act 10 by the Wisconsin Supreme Court could restore collective bargaining for teachers.

Source: Seehafer News (Southeastern) | https://www.seehafernews.com/2026/11/13/enrollment-at-historic-lows-for-milwaukee-public-schools/
Source: WUWM 89.7 Milwaukee Public Radio (Southeastern) | https://www.wuwm.com/mps-state-of-our-schools-address-shares-mixed-report

Eagleville parents push to save charter school ahead of Mukwonago School Board vote

The Mukwonago School Board is scheduled to vote on closing Eagleville Elementary Charter School, a public outdoor-based learning school that is the district's most expensive per pupil at approximately $15,000 per student, roughly $1,000 to $2,000 more than other elementary schools in the district. The district faces a $1.2 million deficit and cites overall declining enrollment, though Eagleville's own enrollment has held steady. Parents opposing closure say private donations and up to $1.2 million in potential charter grants should be explored before a decision is made. The board vote is scheduled for Monday at 6 p.m.

Source: WTMJ 4 NBC Milwaukee (Southeastern) | https://www.tmj4.com/news/local-news/county-reporting/waukesha-county/eagleville-parents-push-to-save-charter-school-ahead-of-mukwonago-school-board-vote

Mukwonago Area School Board to consider consolidating with Palmyra-Eagle

The Mukwonago Area School Board was scheduled to consider at a Monday meeting a resolution to begin formal evaluation of a potential consolidation with the Palmyra-Eagle Area School District under Wisconsin Statutes Chapter 117, and separately to consider closing Eagleville Elementary beginning with the 2027-28 school year. Closing Eagleville could save up to $852,000 annually in staffing, supplies, and transportation and avoid approximately $675,000 in deferred maintenance. The consolidation resolution would not commit either district to merging but would direct administrators to study educational, financial, and operational impacts. Projected financial benefits of full consolidation include approximately $790,000 annually in consolidation aid and a five-year general aid floor of at least $30.6 million, for a combined estimated benefit of about $3.95 million over five years. Under the alternative timeline specified in the resolution, consolidation resolutions would be adopted in December 2026, a referendum petition deadline falls in February 2027, and consolidation would take effect July 1, 2028 if approved.

Source: Waukesha Freeman (Southeastern) | https://www.gmtoday.com/the_freeman/news/mukwonago-palmyra-eagle-consolidation/article_6236bf05-4f94-5419-826c-1958a68b91fc.html

School voucher debate: How taxpayers are helping pay private tuition

Beginning with the 2026-27 school year Wisconsin's Parental Choice Program has no enrollment cap for the first time, with nearly 25,000 students statewide participating, up from fewer than 500 in 2013, and program funding growing by approximately $256.3 million over that period. The Eau Claire Area School District estimates that $3.5 million of its levy covers voucher costs this year, a figure that will appear as a line on December property tax bills. Reps. Christian Phelps and Jodi Emerson said they plan legislation to reinstate enrollment caps, citing inadequate public oversight and reduced funding for public schools.

Source: WEAU NBC13 Eau Claire (Western) | https://www.weau.com/2026/11/13/school-voucher-debate-how-taxpayers-are-helping-pay-private-tuition/

New grant funds financial literacy in Northeast Wisconsin schools

Cooperative Educational Service Agency 7 received a $22,500 Financial Literacy Innovation Grant from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction to fund financial education through 2027 in nine school districts: De Pere, Algoma, Denmark, Kewaunee, Kohler, Luxemburg-Casco, Mishicot, Sturgeon Bay, and Wrightstown. The Financial Futures Wisconsin Toolkit project is led by agency career and technical education specialist Lindsay Allen and De Pere business teacher Kerri Herrild. The program launched Oct. 28 at the agency's Green Bay office.

Source: The Press Times (Green Bay) (Northeastern) | https://gopresstimes.com/stories/new-grant-funds-financial-literacy-in-northeast-wisconsin-schools,362504

Antigo East Elementary School razed

Demolition crews completed the razing of East Elementary School in Antigo last week, following an Antigo School Board vote in December 2025 to demolish the vacant building at a cost of

approximately $150,000. The board chose demolition over renovation after prospective buyers found renovation costs prohibitive even for use as storage. The site will be prepared for eventual sale. The adjacent new John H. Bradley Elementary School, which consolidates students from the North, East, and West elementary schools, is expected to open in coming weeks.

Source: Antigo Daily Journal (Central/Northern) | https://www.antigojournal.com/news/antigo-east-elementary-school-razed/article_4e62dd46-a53b-46ce-9c0b-80b738600209.html

Bloomer School District 2026-27 Budget Approved

Bloomer School District electors approved a 2026-27 total tax levy of $7,526,505, up from $7,038,434 in 2025-26, at the annual meeting. The mill rate fell to 6.33256 from 6.47 because equalized value rose to $1,188,540,039. Total expenditures are $25,889,240, with benefits at $5,606,807 or 21 percent. The state general aid pool is frozen for a second consecutive year at $5.58 billion, with 62 percent of districts receiving less aid. Per-pupil aid remains at $742, unchanged since 2020-21, while the revenue limit increased $325 per pupil. District enrollment stands at 1,231 students, with a net open enrollment gain of 72.

Source: Bloomer Advance (Western) | https://www.bloomeradvance.com/news/community_news/article_c31702bc-b7cb-4ae0-a179-b8537cbe38b9.html

Bloomer School District Capital Referendum Fails

Bloomer School District voters rejected a $77 million capital referendum on Nov. 3 by a vote of 2,417 to 1,301, 65 percent no to 35 percent yes, based on Chippewa County unofficial results. The measure would have funded a new high school with a community performing arts center and maintenance work at the middle and elementary schools, at a tax impact of $2.31 per thousand dollars of assessed value. Superintendent Joushua Isaacson said the district will examine alternative options and plans to bring a revised proposal to voters in the near future.

Source: Bloomer Advance (Western) | https://www.bloomeradvance.com/news/community_news/article_8f60e2e9-275d-4749-9abd-c3a94a324328.html

Eau Claire Area School District deficit could grow as leaders work to address it

The Eau Claire Area School District is drawing on approximately $40 million in savings to cover a current $2 million budget deficit, with a projected gap of $5 million next school year. The district spends about $1,900 less per student than the state average, ranking 287th of 421 districts in spending. Open enrollment losses cost roughly $4 million and the state voucher program diverts about $3.5 million, up $1 million from the prior year. A staffing review this spring may shrink the projected deficit. The district plans to pursue a future referendum, with timing dependent on state budget decisions expected around July.

Source: WEAU NBC13 Eau Claire (Western) | https://www.weau.com/2026/11/10/eau-claire-area-school-district-deficit-could-grow-leaders-work-address-it/

Edgar School District operational referendum passes with Election Day vote

Edgar School District voters approved a $1.4 million annual operational referendum on Nov. 3 with 53.5 percent of the vote, effective July 2027 and running five years. The new referendum represents a $450,000 increase over the expiring one. District Administrator Cari Guden said the funds will cover utilities, transportation, and ongoing operating costs, and that without passage the district would have faced cutting $1 million from its approximately $10 million budget, including staff, bus routes, and maintenance.

Source: WJFW NBC12 Rhinelander (Central/Northern) | https://www.wjfw.com/news/local/edgar-school-district-operational-referendum-passes-with-election-day-vote/article_d1df059d-f4fe-4111-a396-8e32ddadf451.html

Mill and tax levy rates approved at annual board meeting

At its Oct. 28 annual meeting and regular monthly meeting, the Fennimore Community School District Board set the 2027 mill rate at $6.72, down from $7.07, the sixth consecutive annual decrease. The tax levy increased 2.3 percent from $3,201,231 to $3,275,474. The board unanimously approved adding a drone instruction course beginning next semester, in partnership with curriculum provider USI, which the district says may be the first such high school program in Wisconsin. The board accepted the resignations of varsity football head coach Tyrell Rosemeyer and assistant speech coach Jalissa Reynolds and approved several hirings.

Source: SW News Group (portal) (South Central) | https://www.swnews4u.com/local/mill-and-tax-levy-rates-approved-at-annual-board-meeting/

Mill rate to fall as budget edges up for La Crosse Public Schools

La Crosse Public Schools' 2026-27 budget reflects a $1.4 million revenue loss from declining enrollment, with district enrollment down 153 students to 5,411, a 2.7 percent reduction from 2025-26. An additional loss of nearly $81,000 in per-pupil aid compounds the shortfall. Superintendent Aaron Engel cited expense growth outpacing revenue as the district's central challenge. A consolidation plan funded by a 2024 $53 million referendum is underway, with a new $42 million combined elementary school under construction at the Hogan Administrative Center site; Emerson, Spence, and Hintgen elementaries will close. Engel said consolidation is expected to provide operational relief beginning in 2027-28, the first full year after the new building opens.

Source: La Crosse Tribune (Western) | https://lacrossetribune.com/news/local/education/article_a4183793-4260-449e-a2f5-7ef5da382bff.html

MPSD Looking At Future Operational Referendum

The Manitowoc Public School District board is considering an operational referendum to fund ongoing operations rather than a capital project. School Business Specialist Mary Blaha of Baird presented data showing the number of Wisconsin districts relying on operational referendums rose from 61 in 2021 to 124 in 2026, with a statewide passage rate she put at about 75 percent. District Business Services Director Nathan Mielke said he will bring a draft referendum question to the board next month, with the ask covering a five-year period. Superintendent Lee Thennes

said the amount sought would be significantly less than in previous referendums. The district is targeting the April 2027 spring general election.

Source: Seehafer News (Northeastern) | https://www.seehafernews.com/2026/11/13/mpsd-looking-at-future-operational-referendum/

BOE discusses timeline for potential cuts, referendum

The Monroe School District Board of Education met Nov. 9, approved the retirement of Business Administrator Ron Olson, and spent most of a two-and-a-half-hour meeting on the district's financial outlook. Olson projects a $900,000 deficit for the 2027-28 budget and outlined five reduction options: personnel cuts, service consolidation, asset sales, an operational referendum, and advocacy for state funding reform. The board is weighing a third operational referendum attempt after two prior failures. Monroe's 2025-26 base revenue per pupil is $12,108, among the lowest of seven Green County districts. The board endorsed a letter to the Legislature from a coalition of southern Wisconsin schools seeking increased special education reimbursement. A community listening session is scheduled for Nov. 18, with a staff communication on potential cuts set for Dec. 11 and a formal board presentation of administration recommendations on Dec. 14.

Source: Monroe Times (South Central) | https://themonroetimes.com/local-news/boe-discusses-timeline-for-potential-cuts-referendum/

School Board passes 2026-2027 budget

The North Crawford School Board adopted the 2026-27 district budget at its Oct. 21 regularly scheduled meeting, reducing the mill rate from $7.13 to $6.598 per $1,000 of assessed value. The total tax levy increased by $176,742, from $2,935,472 to $3,112,214, driven by higher assessed property values. The Fund 10 general fund levy rose from $2,414,303 to $2,663,714, while non-referendum debt service dropped to zero. Referendum debt service increased by $38,100 to $278,500. Enrollment grew by 30 students, and open enrollment shifted to a net gain of seven students inbound. The board also approved boys and girls basketball coaching staffs.

Source: SW News Group (portal) (Western) | https://www.swnews4u.com/local/education/school-board-passes-2026-2027-budget/

Closure of Fairview Elementary one possible response to declining enrollment

The Plymouth School District is advancing a proposal to address declining enrollment, with one or more public forums coming soon and a Board of Education decision expected in January or February 2027. Possible implementation could begin as early as the 2027-28 school year, with options including closing one of the district's three elementary schools. The district has not identified which school would close or published the enrollment projections behind the proposal.

Source: Plymouth Review (Southeastern) | https://www.plymouth-review.com/articles/closure-of-fairview-elementary-one-possible-response-to-declining-enrollment/

Prescott School Board approves tax levy, budget

The Prescott School Board unanimously approved the 2026-27 budget and tax levy at its Oct. 28 meeting, setting the levy at $12,730,736, a $124,789 or 0.99 percent increase over last year. The mill rate falls from 8.19 to 7.53, described as the lowest in at least 11 years. The budget transfers $1,777,261 from Fund 10 to Fund 27 for special education, budgeted at a 40 percent state reimbursement rate against a statutory 45 percent. The district projects deficit spending of $293,439, which would reduce the Fund 10 balance to 31.54 percent, above the board's 20 percent minimum policy threshold.

Source: Pierce County Journal (Western) | https://www.piercecountyjournal.news/stories/prescott-school-board-approves-tax-levy-budget,212907

Sheboygan Falls School Community shares excitement after the facility improvement funding referendum passes

Sheboygan Falls voters approved a $65.7 million school facilities referendum, the district's third attempt after failed votes in 2024 and 2025. Planned improvements include renovating career and technical education spaces, adding science and STEM labs, modernizing the auditorium and locker rooms, replacing aging plumbing, and meeting accessibility requirements. A homeowner with a $500,000 property will pay approximately $80 in additional annual property taxes. The 1969-era high school building is the primary focus of the upgrades.

Source: WTMJ 4 NBC Milwaukee (Southeastern) | https://www.tmj4.com/news/local-news/county-reporting/sheboygan-county/sheboygan-falls-school-community-shares-excitement-after-the-facility-improvement-funding-referendum-passes

School board approves district budget

The Stevens Point Area Public School District Board approved the 2026-27 operating budget 7 to 1 at a special meeting on Oct. 26, with Lepak casting the lone opposing vote. Total expenditures are $156,645,410 against projected revenues of $154,655,635. The board set the local property tax levy at $51,894,135, with the mill rate falling from $6.94 to $6.76 per $1,000 of equalized value as district equalized property value grew 6.46 percent to just under $7.7 billion. The Department of Public Instruction certified $56,475,249 in state equalization aid, up $879,612 or 1.58 percent. The district's three-year enrollment average declined by 92 students to 6,947.

Source: Stevens Point Gazette (Central/Northern) | https://stevenspointgazette.com/stories/school-board-approves-district-budget,361928

Stevens Point School District plans for enrollment decline by 2040

The Stevens Point School District, which operates 14 schools, has convened a task force after a consulting firm projected that at least one building will be unneeded by 2040. One option under review would convert SPASH to a traditional four-year high school, with associated renovations estimated at $4 million to $5 million. The district does not plan a referendum. A board

recommendation, originally expected within two months, is now anticipated in February or March after the task force fell behind schedule.

Source: WSAW CBS7 Wausau (Central/Northern) | https://www.wsaw.com/2026/11/13/stevens-point-school-district-plans-enrollment-decline-by-2040/

Williams Bay parents relieved after voters choose to continue school operating referendum

Williams Bay voters approved a school operating referendum extension by 57 percent, making Williams Bay the only district among four in Walworth County to pass a funding measure this election cycle. The extension provides approximately $10 million for staff and programs over four school years and does not raise taxes, continuing the rate approved in 2023. Referendums in Whitewater, Delavan-Darien, and the Woods School district all failed, with the Woods School measure defeated by a single vote.

Source: WTMJ 4 NBC Milwaukee (Southeastern) | https://www.tmj4.com/news/local-news/county-reporting/walworth-county/williams-bay-parents-relieved-after-voters-choose-to-continue-school-operating-referendum

Beloit schools eye what new Democratic majority will do on school funding, choice

The School District of Beloit's enrollment fell from 7,022 in 2014-15 to 4,471 this year, driven partly by school choice programs, and this year 955 students chose schools outside the district. The Wisconsin Parental Choice Program, launched in 2013, and Act 55 independent charter school authorization from 2015 enabled The Lincoln Academy, with 737 students, and Rock County Christian Schools, with 227 students and roughly 85 percent on vouchers. Senate President-elect Mark Spreitzer has said he would phase down the voucher program and reinstate income qualifications, while Gov.-elect David Crowley opposes immediate elimination. The School District of Beloit board has discussed closing two to five buildings because of continued enrollment declines, with the incoming legislative majority adding further uncertainty to those plans.

Source: Beloit Daily News (South Central) | https://www.beloitdailynews.com/news/education/beloit-schools-eye-what-new-democratic-majority-will-do-on-school-funding-choice/article_4ec84073-bcd0-42bc-adbe-9e9dc301bf88.html

Enrollment declines slightly for district

The Waupaca school district's full-time equivalency enrollment is down approximately 30 students spread across grade levels, meaning fixed costs remain unchanged. District Finance Director Austin Moore noted that 68 of Wisconsin's 72 counties saw enrollment declines, with only Dane County posting a substantial gain of roughly 200 students. District Administrator Mark Flatten is coordinating with 11 neighboring districts to align 2027-2028 calendars and bell schedules, enabling shared course access by video conference and inter-district travel to expand program options.

Source: Waupaca County Post (Northeastern) | https://www.waupacanow.com/stories/enrollment-declines-slightly-for-district,362270

State-Local Interface

Federal bill attacks environmental protections

The U.S. Senate voted 73 to 25 on Nov. 9 to invoke cloture on S.5363, the Bipartisan American Affordability and Jobs Act, advancing a bill that would expand Federal Energy Regulatory Commission authority to issue construction permits for certain interstate transmission projects, potentially bypassing state Public Service Commission review. Sen. Tammy Baldwin voted no and Sen. Ron Johnson voted yes. Opponents including the Wisconsin Farm Bureau and No 765 Line argue the bill could override a Wisconsin commission rejection of the MariBell and BECI 765-kilovolt transmission lines. The bill also limits the scope of National Environmental Policy Act review, narrows Clean Water Act permit obligations, shortens Endangered Species Act consultation timelines, and limits National Historic Preservation Act triggers. A final Senate vote was pending.

Source: SW News Group (portal) (Statewide) | https://www.swnews4u.com/local/environment/federal-bill-attacks-environmental-protections/

Speakers detail environmental impacts of proposed 765 kV line

As of Aug. 23, 2026, 91 towns, villages, cities, and counties had passed resolutions opposing the proposed MariBell and BECI 765-kilovolt transmission lines through the Driftless Region. The Wisconsin Public Service Commission announced it will hold a contested hearing to determine whether out-of-state BECI developer Midcontinent Grid Solutions can obtain status as a Wisconsin electrical utility, a prerequisite for filing a construction permit application. On Oct. 22 the Vernon County Board voted to call for a statewide moratorium on new 765-kilovolt transmission line construction, urging Gov. Tony Evers and the Legislature to act immediately.

Source: SW News Group (portal) (Statewide) | https://www.swnews4u.com/local/public-safety/speakers-detail-environmental-impacts-of-proposed-765-kv-line/

Appeals court sides with insurer after wells damaged by Sussex quarry blasts

Wisconsin's District II Court of Appeals on Nov. 12 reversed a Waukesha County Circuit Court ruling and found that West Bend Mutual Insurance Co. is not liable to cover approximately $2,355,278 in well-repair costs claimed by Lannon Stone Products following November 2022 blasting at its Sussex quarry. The appeals court held that Lannon Stone materially breached its insurance policy when it entered a 2021 agreement with the then-Town of Lisbon making itself solely responsible for costs determined by an inspector, without West Bend's consent, violating the policy's voluntary-assumption-of-obligation clause. Circuit Court Judge Michael Maxwell had granted summary judgment to Lannon Stone in June 2025. The appeals court ordered the case returned to the circuit court for a ruling in the insurer's favor.

Source: Waukesha Freeman (Statewide) | https://www.gmtoday.com/the_freeman/news/lannon-stone-well-damage-ruling/article_a7258c1e-56a4-53bc-acee-ff67c48113af.html

DPI Calls For 'Fundamental Shift' in School Funding, $2.75 Billion in New Aid

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction released the second half of its 2027-29 budget request on Nov. 13, requesting $2.75 billion in new state aid for K-12 schools and libraries and a restructuring of the school funding formula. Urban Milwaukee reported the increase at 14.1 percent over the current $17.7 billion biennial budget. Per-student revenue limits would rise $1,108 in 2028 and $374 in 2029; Kenosha News broke the first-year figure into a $366 levy-cap increase plus a one-time $742 per-pupil increase. Revenue limits would be tied to inflation for the first time since 2008. Special education reimbursement would rise from 39 percent to 50 percent in 2028 and 60 percent in 2029, changing from a sum-certain to a sum-specific commitment. WKBT reported that $574.7 million in per-pupil aid would move into general and equalization aid; Urban Milwaukee reported the broader shift of existing categorical aid into the equalization formula, which directs more dollars toward lower-property-wealth districts, at nearly $2 billion. Full-day 4K students would count as full-time pupils. State Superintendent Jill Underly said the overhaul aims to reduce district reliance on referendums, noting that more than 90 percent of districts have held one in the past nine years. The request goes to the Joint Finance Committee and then the Legislature, with a final budget bill expected on the governor's desk in summer 2027.

Source: Urban Milwaukee (Statewide) | https://urbanmilwaukee.com/2026/11/14/dpi-calls-for-fundamental-shift-in-school-funding-2-75-billion-in-new-aid/
Source: Kenosha News (Statewide) | https://www.kenoshanews.com/news/state-regional/wisconsin/article_249cbd1a-42fe-584c-a5c0-85778ba7a8a2.html
Source: WKBT CBS8 La Crosse (Statewide) | https://www.news8000.com/news/wisconsin-news/state-superintendent-proposes-budget-that-would-reshape-school-funding/article_8c7140a0-4676-514b-8292-99d4cb22c318.html
Source: WQOW ABC18 Eau Claire (Statewide) | https://www.wqow.com/news/politics-wisconsin/wisconsin-dpi-proposes-2-75-billion-in-new-aid-for-k-12-schools-libraries/article_e17687dd-992b-5064-a18f-4f275fe1698a.html

Eliminating Act 10 and right-to-work would be a big mistake

The Badger Institute's 2027 Mandate for Madison policy brief urges incoming Gov.-elect David Crowley and the new Democratic legislative majority against repealing Act 10, eliminating right-to-work, raising the state minimum wage from $7.25 to $15 immediately with further increases to $20 by 2030, increasing income taxes on high earners and businesses, and adopting legally enforceable carbon-free electricity mandates beginning in 2030. The brief contends that Act 10 has saved taxpayers billions in government labor costs over 15 years and that Wisconsin's 50.2 percent teenage employment rate in 2025 compares favorably with Illinois's 28.7 percent under a $15 minimum wage. Assembly Speaker-designate Greta Neubauer has publicly discussed raising taxes on high earners. The article's language is partly advocacy-oriented.

Source: Badger Institute (Statewide) | https://www.badgerinstitute.org/eliminating-act-10-and-right-to-work-would-be-big-mistake/

PSC OKs We Energies rate hike for 2027, 2028

The Wisconsin Public Service Commission approved a reduced electric rate increase for We Energies at a nearly 12-hour meeting, which the Waukesha Freeman dated Nov. 7 and WRJN dated Nov. 6. The Freeman reported the company's initial request as approximately 10 percent overall including a 15 percent residential increase, while WRJN reported roughly 9 percent overall; the approved increase is approximately 7 percent spread across 2027 and 2028. We Energies estimates the approved rates will raise residential bills by approximately $7 to $8 per month in 2027, a 3.9 percent increase, and $6 to $7 per month in 2028, a 3.5 percent increase. Commissioners lowered the utility's authorized rate of return from the requested 9.9 percent to 9.5 percent, which WRJN reported as saving ratepayers roughly $60 million over two years. The commission authorized the return of more than $25 million to customers through an expanded earnings-sharing mechanism and eliminated board of director expenses from customer rates. Data center construction costs were assigned directly to large data center customers rather than spread across all ratepayers. A pending agreement for Oracle to subscribe to Point Beach Nuclear Plant output could save non-data-center ratepayers approximately $300 million in fuel costs over five years, subject to commission approval. A written order with final rates is expected within a few weeks.

Source: Waukesha Freeman (Statewide) | https://www.gmtoday.com/the_freeman/business/psc-approves-reduced-we-energies-rate-hike-for-2027-and-2028/article_e0bdb2c8-ddd0-5dbb-9e81-f4382044db4a.html
Source: WRJN 1400 AM Racine/Kenosha (Statewide) | https://wrjn.com/news/2026/11/08/we-energies-customers-face-another-rate-hike-but-smaller-as-regulators-push-back-on-utility

US gives states another 6 months before they have to remove people from Medicaid for not working

The federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services told state Medicaid directors on Nov. 13 that states must still assess enrollees against new work requirements scheduled to take effect Jan. 1 but may delay terminating coverage or denying applications for noncompliance until July 1, 2027. The requirement applies only to Medicaid expansion enrollees and mandates 80 hours per month of work, school, or volunteering, with exceptions for those over 64, caregivers of children under 14, and the medically frail. A Boston federal court recently ruled that medically frail enrollees should not be bound by the requirements, adding legal uncertainty. Nebraska, the first state to implement early, found 533 people denied continuing coverage in a preliminary review, with most denials tied to paperwork failures rather than failure to work.

Source: Waukesha Freeman (Statewide) | https://www.gmtoday.com/health/us-gives-states-another-6-months-before-they-have-to-remove-people-from-medicaid-for/article_ecef95f2-3ce5-5f71-89ad-d3bc52acff5f.html

WisEye Morning Minute: 2026 State of the Judiciary Address

Wisconsin Chief Justice Jill Karofsky, in her 2026 State of the Judiciary address, identified court security as the top priority in the court system's 2027-29 budget request. The request includes $3 million for court security, with $1.5 million designated for a court security improvement grant program available to county courthouses. The source does not report grant eligibility or timing.

Source: Chippewa Herald (Statewide) | https://chippewa.com/news/state-regional/wisconsin/video_4a742a3e-d3c9-51ea-8c4a-a3353dc22716.html

Summaries are drawn from the linked source reporting and are not independently fact-checked, so errors in the original coverage can carry through. Some Wisconsin outlets restrict automated access to their content, which leaves known gaps in any given edition, and I keep refining the collection workflow to close them. If you spot an inaccuracy, or know of a governance story a colleague in another community would want to see, I want to know. Forward this edition to someone who works in Wisconsin local government. Reach me at patrick@boldpathconsulting.com or (920) 522-2413.