

Wisconsin LocalGov Hub Briefing

July 25 to August 1, 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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LAST CALL: Collective Bargaining Training

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING IS **NOT** JUST AN HR ISSUE.

Everyday management decisions can affect grievances, past practices, management rights, bargaining leverage, and the organization's position in future negotiations.

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- Negotiation preparation and strategy
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- Grievances, past practices, and prohibited practices
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the law and
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PREPARE
for negotiations
with strategy
and leverage.



PROTECT
your organization
through effective
contract and
grievance
management.



FOR ALL LEVELS OF PUBLIC-SECTOR MANAGEMENT
Not limited to law enforcement.



August 17–18, 2026

Waukesha County Technical College, Pewaukee

\$385 per participant



Day 1: 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Day 2: 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

12 total contact hours



Taught by **Patrick Glynn**
of BoldPath Consulting
and Attorney **Kyle Gulya** of
von Briesen & Roper.



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Budgets and Finance

Eau Claire plan highlights five years of capital projects

The Eau Claire City Council approved the 2027 through 2031 Capital Improvement Plan in July 2026, authorizing a framework covering \$305 million in capital projects over five years. Finance Director Kitzie Winters presented the plan, which schedules approximately \$63.5 million in expenditures for 2027 alone. The largest single 2027 investment is a \$22 million sewer utility infrastructure replacement project, for which the city intends to apply for Wisconsin DNR funding to reduce costs. The plan also carries an estimated \$22 million remodel or replacement of Fire Station Two, built in 1941 and described as having reached the end of its useful life, with CDS funding being pursued and the project slated for the 2028 capital budget; a siting study identified the west side of the Chippewa River as the preferred location. The Gibson Street parking ramp is programmed for a \$13 million replacement in 2031. Winters separately noted a \$2.2 million operating budget shortfall the city is addressing in part by holding positions open.

Source: Leader-Telegram (Western) | https://www.leadertelegram.com/news/eau-claire-plan-highlights-five-years-of-capital-projects/article_c562ba6f-cb62-4865-8541-0a7422519bcd.html

Early county audit suggests good news

Burnett County's preliminary 2025 audit, presented by April Anderson of CliftonLarsonAllen LLP to the County Board, shows the fund balance rose from \$12.2 million to \$12.79 million, with an unassigned fund balance of \$4.7 million equal to 25.6 percent of expenditures, just above the county's 25 percent minimum policy threshold. Sales tax receipts came in at nearly \$600,000 against a budgeted \$339,000. Outstanding debt stands at approximately \$24 million, or 9.1 percent of the county's statutory limit, with annual debt service of \$1.8 million and \$575,000 in interest tied primarily to the Public Safety Facility and Jail. County Administrator Nate Ehalt warned that the 2027 budget faces levy limit pressure, inflation, and rising energy costs, and that staff reductions are likely, noting the county has already cut 14 full-time positions during his tenure. The state released more than \$200,000 in tribal headquarters compensatory funds, up from an initially reported \$14,000.

Source: Burnett County Sentinel (Western) | https://burnettcountysentinel.com/news/early-county-audit-suggests-good-news/article_c8b13691-c612-434c-876a-ff9a845e5af5.html

Dane County Board chair cancels two budget engagement sessions

Dane County Board Chair Patrick Miles canceled two of four scheduled 2027 county budget community engagement sessions, according to a July 26 county board media advisory. The canceled sessions had been set for July 28 at the Goodman Community Center in Madison and July 30 at the Madison office of CENTRO, the latter a hybrid session with Zoom access. Miles cited the July 22 shooting death of a man by Madison police at the intersection of South Baldwin and Williamson streets as the reason for the cancellations. The sessions were designed to explain how the county budget is built, reviewed, and adopted, and to identify opportunities for public participation. Two sessions remain scheduled: August 4 at 5:30 p.m. at The Grove, 314 Anne St., Mazomanie, and August 7 at 12:30 p.m. at the Windsor Community Center, 4428 Windsor Rd., Windsor. Public hearings and committee meetings on the 2027 budget are planned for fall.

Source: Lodi Enterprise (South Central) | https://hngnews.com/tribune_enterprise/news/local/dane-county-board-chair-cancels-two-budget-engagement-sessions/article_8fc42f18-c6b1-4d81-81a8-166e68b8a657.html

EXCLUSIVE: Encampment could cost city 'hundreds of thousands of dollars,' mayor says

Madison Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway stated on July 31, 2026, that the encampment at Williamson and Baldwin streets is projected to cost the City of Madison hundreds of thousands of dollars, driven primarily by overtime and staffing costs associated with managing the site. The city deployed salt trucks and non-police staff in place of squad cars to secure makeshift barricades, a resource decision Rhodes-Conway attributed to the sensitivity of the situation following the Madison Police Department shooting death of Corey Ruiz. Rhodes-Conway acknowledged the city may need to amend its budget to absorb the costs but could not identify which areas would lose funding. The financial pressure compounds an existing \$11 million projected gap in the city's 2027 operating budget; in June she directed all city agencies to cut their budgets by 2 percent. The total cost will depend on how long the encampment remains in place.

Source: WISC CBS3 Madison (South Central) | https://www.channel3000.com/news/exclusive-encampment-could-cost-city-hundreds-of-thousands-of-dollars-mayor-says/article_c1faf871-a751-46e9-9a6c-9ad5091e796b.html

Fennimore City Council approves EDA grant match fund

The Fennimore City Council unanimously approved a 20 percent local match of \$797,000 toward a \$3.2 million U.S. Economic Development Administration grant awarded to the city. Grant funds will support roadway, water, and wastewater infrastructure improvements within a 72-acre expansion of the city-owned industrial park on U.S. Highway 18 between Bronson Boulevard and Switzer Road. Mayor Rob Krantz and City Clerk Ashley Edge clarified at the meeting that the \$23 million figure cited by U.S. Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick at a July 6 press conference in La Crosse represents a projection of potential economic impact rather than a city investment. The council also unanimously approved the lowest bid, from Belco, for a police squad car build, with Police Chief Walt Dresen noting Belco has performed the department's last three squad builds, and approved \$2,000 in county road aid. The next council meeting is scheduled for August 17 at 5:30 p.m.

Source: SW News Group (South Central) | <https://www.swnews4u.com/local/fennimore-city-council-approves-eda-grant-match-fund/>

Tax district to aid Sartori expansion approved, Resolution supporting library passed

The Plymouth City Council granted final approval to the city's 11th tax incremental finance district, which will support a \$4.7 million expansion of Sartori Foods' County PP facility. City Administrator and Utilities Manager Tim Blakeslee presented the project to the council, noting the expansion is projected to create 25 new jobs at the plant. The council also passed a resolution supporting the city's library. The published article text does not report a vote count, resolution identifier, or effective date, and does not disclose the district's base value, projected increment, or term length; the remainder of the report is behind a paywall.

Source: Plymouth Review (Southeastern) | <https://www.plymouth-review.com/articles/tax-district-to-aid-sartori-expansion-approved-resolution-supporting-library-passed/>

August 2026: County Funding 101

Forward Analytics' August 2026 Research Room brief documents the five primary revenue sources sustaining Wisconsin county government operations in fiscal year 2024. Property taxes represented the largest share at 34 percent of total county revenue, equal to approximately \$2.5 billion. State aids, including shared revenue, accounted for roughly 25 percent, or approximately \$1.9 billion. Counties collected \$689 million in local sales taxes under an optional 0.5 percent levy authority, with Milwaukee County permitted a higher 0.9 percent rate. Fees and charges for county services generated \$792 million. A combined \$904 million came from other sources, including opioid settlement funds and intergovernmental transfers. The brief notes that outside the property tax, counties hold limited local revenue options to fund state-mandated services. The full report is available through Forward Analytics and was published in Wisconsin Counties magazine on its bimonthly schedule.

Source: Forward Analytics (Statewide) | <https://www.forward-analytics.net/the-research-room/august-2026-county-funding-101/>

Kimberly-Clark pledges \$10 million to tornado relief

Kimberly-Clark announced on July 31, 2026, a \$10 million commitment over three years to support Fox Valley tornado relief and recovery, with funds directed to nonprofits, local governments, and community leaders. The company structured the grant as a multi-year commitment to sustain resources for long-term recovery and resilience work beyond the immediate disaster response. Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Mike Hsu cited the company's 1872 founding in Neenah as the basis for its commitment to the region. Kimberly-Clark is coordinating with local leaders, nonprofit organizations, and government officials to identify partners and target funding. The announcement does not identify which governmental bodies or organizations will receive funds, name a grant administrator, or establish an application process. The three-year distribution timeline establishes the operational horizon for local governments and nonprofits seeking access to the funds.

Source: Kaukauna Community News (Northeastern) | <https://kaukaunacommunitynews.com/2026/07/31/kimberly-clark-pledges-10-million-to-tornado-relief/>

Workforce and Labor

Marinette County hires recruiter in administrator search

The Marinette County Board voted Tuesday to hire Public Administration Associates to conduct a statewide and regional search for the county's next administrator, approving the contract on a voice vote after defeating an amendment that would have required a two-week internal-only application window first. The base contract fee is \$23,750, with potential deductions for virtual meetings and optional assessment components that could reduce the total to approximately \$21,000. Internal candidates may apply through the firm and will be evaluated alongside outside applicants. Supervisor Wally Hitt had proposed the internal-only window to give existing employees a defined advancement path, while Supervisor Mark Anderson argued the delay would compress an already tight timeline and strain current Administrator Kevin Solway, who will remain in place during the transition. Supervisor Connie Seefeldt cited the need for structured vetting,

background checks, and psychological assessments. No timeline for concluding the search was reported.

Source: EagleHerald (Northeastern) | https://www.ehextra.com/news/marinette-county-hires-recruiter-in-administrator-search/article_3df93d7f-88a2-4eba-8286-abea1f1e8258.html

24 applicants have applied for Janesville city manager position

Interim City Manager Jay Shambeau reported to the Janesville City Council at its July 28, 2026 meeting that 24 applicants have submitted materials for the permanent city manager vacancy, with 12 from Wisconsin and the remainder from ten other states including Rhode Island, Illinois, California, and Alaska. Shambeau stated that 18 of the 24 hold a master's degree or higher, meeting the preferred qualification in the job description. The position was posted June 23, 2026 on platforms including the International City/County Management Association, the Wisconsin City/County Management Association, and LinkedIn. The advertised salary range is \$240,000 to \$275,000, approximately matching former City Manager Kevin Lahner's base salary of \$253,000. The council met in closed session to determine which applicants advance to interviews, and no candidate names were released. A tentative in-person interview date is set for August 4, 2026.

Source: Janesville Gazette (South Central) | https://www.gazettextra.com/news/local/24-applicants-have-applied-for-janesville-city-manager-position/article_29d134c3-30ff-4f9d-b7d1-e2d4cf45384b.html

Milwaukee schools hoping to hire laid-off Chicago teachers

Milwaukee Public Schools officials traveled to a hotel on Clark Street in Chicago to recruit up to 200 teachers and approximately 100 paraprofessionals facing layoff from Chicago Public Schools, which announced a budget plan calling for the elimination of 760 teachers, 801 teachers' aides, and 162 central office employees. MPS Chief Human Resources Officer Dominick Maniscalco led the effort beginning Wednesday, with his team authorized to extend on-the-spot job offers to licensed teachers contingent on passing a background check. The average MPS teacher salary is \$90,000. As of Tuesday, MPS reported 111 teacher vacancies. The recruitment drive follows Superintendent Brenda Cassellius's plan to add more than 159 teaching positions and paraprofessionals districtwide to reduce class sizes. Chicago Public Schools was scheduled to finalize its budget Thursday. The district's stated goal is to complete new hires before September 1.

Source: WPR News Madison (Southeastern) | <https://www.wpr.org/news/milwaukee-schools-hire-laid-off-chicago-teachers>

Judge dismisses lawsuit filed by former Superior police officer

U.S. District Judge James D. Peterson of the Western District of Wisconsin granted summary judgment on July 27 in favor of the City of Superior and four named officers in a federal lawsuit brought by former Superior Police Department narcotics investigator Mikayla LeRette, who resigned in September. LeRette alleged the city violated the Fair Labor Standards Act by failing to provide an adequate place to pump breast milk, and alleged Fourth Amendment violations arising from a GPS tracking device placed on her assigned department vehicle by then-Capt. Thomas Champaigne. Peterson ruled the defendants provided an adequate lactation space that LeRette chose not to use, and that the defendants were entitled to qualified immunity on the Fourth Amendment claims because no clearly established law bars GPS tracking of employer-owned

vehicles. Retired Capt. Champaigne, Assistant Chief John Kiel, Capt. Jeffrey Harriman, and Assistant Chief Michelle Pope were named defendants. LeRette's attorney, Rick Gondik Jr., said they are reviewing the opinion and will decide whether to appeal.

Source: Superior Telegram (Western) | <https://www.superiortelegam.com/news/local/judge-dismisses-lawsuit-filed-by-former-superior-police-officer>

No, Manitowoc County Did Not Lose its Veteran Service Officer

The Manitowoc County Board of Supervisors voted last week to create an Equivalent Benefit Specialist position while simultaneously eliminating a Veteran Services Officer position, an action that generated public confusion about the status of Veteran Service Office Director Todd Brehmer. Brehmer confirmed that his own position was not eliminated. He had previously overseen three service officers, but one employee recently departed, leaving two remaining officers carrying increased workload with one paid position unfilled. Rather than refill the vacancy under its original classification, the board restructured it into a Benefit Specialist role designed to function as a front-desk support position that will schedule meetings with the remaining service officers and handle routine service requests. The office retains Brehmer and two service officers following the restructure. No further procedural steps were reported.

Source: Seehafer News (Northeastern) | <https://www.seehafernews.com/2026/07/31/no-manitowoc-county-did-not-lose-its-veteran-service-officer/>

TRAINING ANNOUNCEMENT: Generative AI Training Workshop




GENERATIVE AI

AS AN INTERNAL CONSULTANT

— IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT —



Not just another AI workshop.
Learn how to think about your problems so AI helps you get better results.



CLARIFY THE PROBLEM
Frame issues the right way so your prompts produce useful, defensible results.



GET DRAFTS THAT WORK
Produce decision memos, job documents, analyses, and reports with confidence.



YOU STAY IN CONTROL
AI creates the draft. Experienced judgment, supervision, and accountability make the decisions.



A structured, supervisory approach to using generative AI across HR, finance, and administration—governed by **judgment, oversight, and public trust.**



WEDNESDAY
SEPTEMBER 16, 2026



8:30 A.M.–4:00 P.M.
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Infrastructure and Utilities

Cybersecurity expert explains cyber threats facing Wisconsin water systems

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources issued a statewide alert to water and wastewater utilities warning of ongoing malicious activity targeting programmable logic controllers, the industrial computers that manage pumps, pressure, and water flow, following cyber incidents in at least seven states. The FBI and the Environmental Protection Agency jointly warned Thursday that malicious actors have targeted internet-facing controllers at water utilities across multiple states, with some incidents causing pressure loss and forcing a switch to manual operations. CISA separately reported a significant increase in actors targeting water and wastewater system controllers. The advisories specifically reference Allen-Bradley controllers manufactured by Milwaukee-based Rockwell Automation. Milwaukee Water Works confirmed it is actively monitoring its systems, and the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District said it remains in regular contact with Homeland Security. The DNR stated there are no confirmed compromises of Wisconsin water systems and said it will continue coordinating messages to systems as further information becomes available.

Source: WTMJ 4 NBC Milwaukee (Southeastern) | <https://www.tmj4.com/news/local-news/in-your-community/milwaukee-county/cybersecurity-expert-explains-cyber-threats-facing-wisconsin-water-systems>

MN water hacks trigger federal alerts for Wisconsin systems

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources issued a security warning on July 27 notifying local water managers of an active cybersecurity threat following cyberattacks on more than 30 municipal water facilities in Minnesota that disrupted operations and triggered boil water advisories in several communities. The DNR advisory identified three specific types of programmable logic controllers as highly vulnerable to malicious activity. Wisconsin was among seven states flagged in recent federal threat reports. Chippewa Falls utility manager Brandon Cesafsky confirmed that the municipal utility does not use any of the vulnerable controller brands identified in the state advisory. Chippewa Falls and Chippewa County officials met with EPA representatives during the week to receive briefings on the Minnesota attacks and review defensive strategies. Eau Claire Information Technology Director Bob Nelson stated in writing that no indication of system compromise exists. The FBI is investigating the Minnesota breaches, with intelligence reports indicating a possible link to Iranian hackers.

Source: WEAU NBC13 Eau Claire (Western) | <https://www.weau.com/2026/07/31/local-water-systems-monitor-cybersecurity-threats-following-minnesota-attacks/>

Waunakee electric rates to go up at the start of August

The Wisconsin Public Service Commission approved a \$578,676 annual revenue increase for Waunakee Utilities effective August 1, 2026, following the utility's May 2025 application requesting \$863,990. Residential customers will see the monthly customer charge rise from \$10.50 to \$12.00 and the energy rate increase from \$1.005 to \$1.084 per kilowatt-hour. General Service customers' monthly customer charge increases from \$13.00 to \$14.00, with the per-kilowatt-hour rate rising from \$0.1071 to \$0.1139. The commission held a public hearing on the request on April 21, 2026. Electric rates had not changed since July 2021. Waunakee Utilities General Manager Caitlin Stene attributed the increase to rising service costs and debt from

ongoing substation improvements. The increase is structured in two steps, with a second portion scheduled for the end of 2026, timed so customers begin paying for the substation upgrades only upon their completion.

Source: Lodi Enterprise (South Central) | https://hngnews.com/tribune_enterprise/news/local/waunakee-electric-rates-to-go-up-at-the-start-of-august/article_33c47e47-c1b4-48ef-baba-151d6a31fb05.html

Waunakee homeowners seek answers after sewage flood

Owners of three of four condominiums damaged by sewer backups at 201 Kearney Way appeared before the Waunakee Utilities Commission on July 27 seeking insurance compensation after raw sewage erupted from a manhole on May 23 and again on June 2. Remediation costs totaled \$22,750 for the first backup and \$26,124 for the second, with the condominium association covering drywall replacement in entryways, hallways, and laundry rooms. After meeting in closed session with the village attorney, the commission reconvened and directed residents to contact Village Administrator Todd Schmidt. Commission Chair John Roessler stated the village board holds authority over insurance claims, with Schmidt confirming he can approve claims up to \$5,000 and that amounts above that threshold require village board consideration. Schmidt was unable to confirm on July 28 whether the homeowners and association would be eligible for compensation or how long the process would take. A claims discussion may appear on the August 3 village board agenda.

Source: Lodi Enterprise (South Central) | https://hngnews.com/tribune_enterprise/news/local/waunakee-homeowners-seek-answers-after-sewage-flood/article_173526bc-aeb9-458f-87dc-724ef5acc1b8.html

Kiel City Council Approves Electric Rate Study

The Kiel City Council voted 5-0 on July 31, 2026, to proceed with the second phase of its electric rate study, authorizing an 8.9 percent rate adjustment request to the Wisconsin Public Service Commission. Ehlers and Associates financial consultant Peter Curtin presented the proposal to the council. For an average customer using approximately 600 kilowatts per month, the adjustment would increase monthly bills by at least \$5. City Administrator Ryan Pafford previously stated the study is necessary to evaluate current electric rates against operating expenses, capital investments, and long-term financial stability. The increase is intended in part to fund temporary financing for a new utility building. The next procedural step is formal submission of the rate case to the Wisconsin Public Service Commission.

Source: Seehafer News (Northeastern) | <https://www.seehafernews.com/2026/07/31/kiel-city-council-approves-electric-rate-study/>

Officials expect a flood of feedback at dam hearing

The Grafton Village Board will hold a public hearing on August 3 at 6 p.m. in the Grafton High School auditorium to consider the fate of the Bridge Street Dam on the Milwaukee River, relocated from Village Hall to accommodate anticipated overflow attendance. Village Administrator Tim Wellnitz confirmed the venue change. The hearing follows a May 1 hydraulic cylinder failure that drained the village millpond; dam consultant J.F. Brennan Co. of La Crosse assessed repair costs at \$154,000 using a refurbished cylinder or \$180,000 for a new one. Village staff recommended the new-cylinder option, but the board voted in June to postpone a decision for 60 days pending further research, including input from the DNR and Milwaukee Riverkeepers. Director of Public

Works Julie Esch will present options at the hearing. A 2010 village referendum produced an overwhelming vote to preserve the dam. As of publication, four written comments had been submitted to the clerk, three favoring removal and one favoring repair.

Source: Ozaukee Press (Southeastern) | <https://ozaukeepress.com/content/officials-expect-flood-feedback-dam-hearing>

Downtown paid parking in Eau Claire begins this Saturday

Eau Claire's downtown paid parking system launched August 1, 2026, approximately two months after its original June 1 start date and following City Council approval of the paid parking ordinance in August 2025. Main downtown streets charge \$1.00 per hour from 1 to 11 p.m. Monday through Saturday, while peripheral streets including South Dewey, Doty, Seaver, and Emery charge \$0.50 per hour. The Farwell and Gibson parking ramps charge \$0.50 per hour with a \$10 maximum for 24 hours. Payment is accepted at more than 30 kiosks or through the Passport mobile app. A 2024 parking study found 80 percent of downtown respondents described parking as difficult. The City Hall lot will enforce paid parking only on Fridays and Saturdays from 1 to 11 p.m., with police and fire staff exempt, and 28 quick-stop spaces allow 15 minutes free. Parking Administrator Aaron Roths stated enforcement will be light during the first two weeks. Revenue remains within the parking utility to fund staff wages.

Source: Leader-Telegram (Western) | https://www.leadertelegram.com/news/downtown-paid-parking-in-eau-claire-begins-this-saturday/article_97ce4e11-83d9-4e5e-a0a1-55afcb9129b3.html

Baraboo secures \$106,600 for energy upgrades at city buildings

Baraboo's Common Council unanimously authorized Mayor Rob Nelson on July 14 to execute a \$106,600 Public Service Commission grant agreement under the commission's Rural Energy Start-Up Program to fund energy efficiency upgrades at multiple city buildings. The commission previously awarded the city \$75,000 for an energy audit that identified the improvement opportunities. Grant-funded projects include retro-commissioning the library and municipal building, installing a new HVAC system to optimize garage ventilation at the City Services Building, and adding load-shifting systems at the Civic Center, the Pierce Park hockey pavilion, and the water resource recovery facility. Nelson stated the projects are projected to reduce energy use by 110,000 kilowatt-hours of electricity and 8,600 thermal units of natural gas annually, saving approximately \$26,000 per year and cutting carbon dioxide emissions by 124 metric tons. The city is not required to provide matching funds. All grant-funded projects must be completed by June 30 of next year.

Source: WiscNews (South Central) | https://wiscnews.com/news/local/article_519564ef-6789-44a8-897f-07f240d0ac84.html

Janesville to apply for \$1.05 million in state disaster aid to help pay for roads and bridges damaged by the April flooding

The Janesville City Council approved a resolution authorizing the city to apply for \$1.05 million in state disaster aid through the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's Disaster Damage Aids Program to reimburse repairs to roads, bridges, culverts, and related infrastructure damaged during April 17 storms. City officials identified multiple damage sites totaling approximately \$1.05 million in eligible costs. Itemized projects include Park Road washout repairs at \$60,000, North

Franklin Street repairs at \$60,000, Sharon Road pavement washout repairs at \$40,000, Parkside Drive erosion repairs at \$40,000, North Washington Street culvert and shoulder repairs at \$40,000, Ridge Drive stormwater pipe repairs at \$30,000, and Black Bridge Road Landfill erosion repairs at \$8,500. Under state law, municipalities must submit a petition to the department within 120 days of the qualifying disaster identifying each damaged site and its estimated repair cost. If any projects are deemed ineligible, the city will seek reimbursement through FEMA's Public Assistance program.

Source: Janesville Gazette (South Central) | https://www.gazettextra.com/news/local/janesville-to-apply-for-1-05-million-in-state-disaster-aid-to-help-pay-for/article_92f88638-85ed-4a69-b3d7-0809f41676f6.html

Wood County Studying Whether a Public Transportation System Would Benefit the County

Wood County has launched a Public Transportation Feasibility Study to evaluate whether a countywide public transit system is viable, with the Wood County Health Department serving as the coordinating agency. The study will examine transportation options for residents, workers, students, and visitors, and will assess potential service design, operating hours, and fare structures. A public survey is available in English and Spanish through SurveyMonkey to collect community input that will directly inform service design parameters. The county will host two open houses in August: the first on Monday, August 17, from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the Marshfield Public Library Alder Room, and the second on Monday, August 24, from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. at McMillan Library in Wisconsin Rapids. No vote, funding commitment, or implementing action has been taken; the open houses are the next procedural step. Questions may be directed to the Wood County Health Department at 715-421-8911.

Source: WDLB 1450 AM Marshfield (Central/Northern) | <https://wdlbam.com/2026/07/28/wood-county-studying-whether-a-public-transportation-system-would-benefit-the-county/>

Citizens and municipalities continue to oppose 765 kV transmission line

Seneca and Haney townships in Crawford County and the Village of Ferryville each passed resolutions opposing the proposed 765 kV BECI and MariBell transmission lines through the Driftless Region, while the Town of Clayton adopted a separate information-request resolution directing developers to provide maps and project-impact data. In Seneca, 36 residents attended the town board meeting preceding that vote. The BECI project, a 190-mile line proposed by Midcontinent Grid Solutions, a consortium of American Electric Power, Transource, and Berkshire Hathaway Energy, would traverse Crawford, Richland, Sauk, Columbia, Dodge, Jefferson, and Walworth counties. Developers announced intent to file an application with the Wisconsin Public Service Commission following a seven-month public information phase. On July 16, 120 Richland County residents gathered at the Phoenix Center in Richland Center to hear opposition presenters. Opponents noted the Badger-Coulee and Cardinal Hickory Creek lines each carried public information phases exceeding three years.

Source: SW News Group (South Central) | <https://www.swnews4u.com/local/environment/citizens-and-municipalities-continue-to-oppose-765-kv-transmission-line/>

Data center well permit vote delayed amid uproar

The Port Washington Board of Public Works delayed action on a request from Vantage Data Centers to use three existing wells on its property during construction of its data center campus, following a contentious public meeting during which Board Chairman Mike Gasper, a city alderman, repeatedly gaveled for order and threatened to remove audience members. City Engineer Roger Strohm told the board that Vantage holds a DNR permit authorizing use of four wells on the site, one of which has been abandoned. Of the remaining three, one serves a tenant seed company and two will supply temporary construction offices via two 6,000-gallon holding tanks, with a maximum daily draw of approximately 12,000 gallons. Strohm confirmed the DNR requires annual metering reports and said the city may request monthly reporting. The board continued the matter to its next regular meeting at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, August 25, where members indicated they will seek a timeline, a sunset date for well use, and assurances that well water will not supply the closed-loop cooling system.

Source: Ozaukee Press (Southeastern) | <https://ozaukeepress.com/content/data-center-well-permit-vote-delayed-amid-uproar>

Power restored to 75% of Menasha Utilities customers as tornado cleanup continues

Menasha and Fox Crossing officials reported at a virtual news conference on Saturday, August 1, 2026, that Menasha Utilities had restored power to approximately 75 percent of its service area following Monday's tornado in Winnebago County. The Fox Crossing boil water advisory was lifted as of 9:45 a.m. Saturday. A burn ban remains in effect for Neenah, Menasha, and Fox Crossing, and a 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. curfew remains active for Neenah and Menasha. On Sunday, August 2, public works crews will collect storm-related household waste curbside in designated areas beginning at 6 a.m., with separate tree-debris removal operations also underway; residents must clear vehicles from streets beforehand. Menasha City Hall and the Public Works building will be open Sunday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. for public support. Approximately 2,700 volunteers had registered through Volunteer Fox Cities as of Saturday. Designated cleanup-zone maps are posted on the Winnebago County website.

Source: WLUK FOX11 Green Bay (Northeastern) | <https://fox11online.com/news/local/power-restored-to-75-of-menasha-utilities-customers-progress-continue-in-tornado-cleanup-menasha-fox-crossing-neenah-wisconsin-weather-city-hall-public-works-mercy-chefs-volunteer-fox-cities>

Boil Water Advisory lifted for Winnebago, Outagamie, Calumet Counties

The Wisconsin DNR approved the immediate lifting of a boil water advisory affecting residents and businesses in Winnebago, Outagamie, and Calumet counties, effective August 1, 2026. The advisory had been issued July 27, 2026, following low water pressure caused by damage to the Fox Crossing Utilities east water system. Affected parties included Village of Fox Crossing residents east of the Fox River, City of Menasha customers, City of Appleton customers, and Village of Harrison customers served by the Fox Crossing Utilities east water system. Repairs were completed by Fox Crossing Utilities and the Utility District for the Village of Fox Crossing before the DNR granted the lift. Customers are directed to conserve public water for seven days to allow system pressure and storage facilities to recover. Health-related questions are directed to the Winnebago County Public Health Department at (920) 232-3000.

Source: WLUK FOX11 Green Bay (Northeastern) | <https://fox11online.com/news/local/boil-water-advisory-lifted-for-winnebago-outagamie-calumet-county>

Kaukauna Utilities crew assists with power restoration in Menasha following tornado

A Kaukauna Utilities line crew deployed under mutual aid to help restore power in Menasha following the EF-3 tornado that struck the region on Monday. As of Thursday morning, more than 1,300 customers in Appleton and approximately 1,000 customers in Menasha remained without power in the hardest-hit areas. The tornado was first detected by radar at 11:56 a.m., produced winds up to 140 mph, and originated two miles west-northwest of Appleton before tracking south through Fox Crossing and into Menasha, damaging homes and businesses and downing power lines and trees along its path. The storm tracked on the surface for more than 12 miles over approximately 26 minutes before dissipating over Lake Winnebago at approximately 12:22 p.m. Kaukauna Utilities was one of nearly a dozen mutual aid public power utilities participating in the restoration effort. No timeline for full restoration was reported.

Source: Kaukauna Community News (Northeastern) | <https://kaukaunacommunitynews.com/2026/07/30/kaukauna-utilities-crew-assists-with-power-restoration-in-menasha-following-tornado/>

Tornado damage shuts five Neenah parks as crews clear debris and assess hazards

The City of Neenah closed five parks until further notice following the EF-3 tornado that struck the Fox Valley on July 27, 2026. The closed parks are Riverside Park, Kimberly Point Park, Doty Park, Lakeshore Avenue, and Fresh Air Park. Five additional parks, Quarry Park, Great Northern Park, Bill Miller Trail and Park, Southview Park, and Douglas Park, remain open under public caution advisories due to storm damage. Cited hazards at the closed sites include unstable trees, hanging limbs, damaged playground equipment, and compromised trails. The Parks and Recreation department has sequenced cleanup beginning with Riverside Park, followed by Kimberly Point Park, then Doty Park. Cleanup is expected to extend several months and continue into winter. Residents are directed to obey all posted closure signs and barricades, and the Neenah Parks and Recreation Facebook page will serve as the official channel for reopening updates.

Source: WLUK FOX11 Green Bay (Northeastern) | <https://fox11online.com/news/local/tornado-damage-shuts-five-neenah-parks-as-crews-clear-debris-and-assess-hazards-riverside-kimberly-point-doty-lakeshore-avenue-fresh-air-quarry-great-northern-bill-miller-trail-southview-douglas>

\$50,000 study eyes former UWSP campus as possible future WPD home

The Wausau Finance Committee approved \$50,000 from the city's general reserves to fund a consultant study examining whether the former UW-Stevens Point at Wausau campus could serve as a new Wausau Police Department facility. The funds will not be spent unless Marathon County, which owns the campus, selects the city's redevelopment proposal; the city's submission deadline is August 24, 2026. The proposed arrangement would relocate the police department to the former campus and move the fire department into the current police station on Grand Avenue. An estimated \$10,000 to \$15,000 of the \$50,000 would evaluate renovations needed to convert the police building for fire use. Fire Chief Jeremy Kopp cited a leaky roof, outdated electrical equipment, and cramped quarters at Fire Station 1. A June Capital Improvement Projects Committee proposal for a new standalone fire station on Grand and Floral avenues estimated construction costs at \$28 million. Police Chief Matthew Barnes said the department expects to need additional space within five years.

Source: WSAW CBS7 Wausau (Central/Northern) | <https://www.wsaw.com/2026/07/30/50000-study-eyes-former-uwsp-campus-possible-future-wpd-home/>

Sunnyview Expo Center West Campus improvements completed

Winnebago County completed the Sunnyview Expo Center West Campus Improvement Project in Oshkosh, with a ribbon-cutting ceremony held July 29, 2026, the opening day of the 2026 Winnebago County Fair. Construction began in August 2025 and concluded earlier in July 2026. County Executive Gordon Hintz stated the project was delivered on time and on budget; no total project cost figure was reported. Improvements carried out by the Winnebago County Parks Department addressed eight identified deficiencies, including reconfigured parking lots, resolution of recurring drainage issues around the parking lot and expo building, addition of a retention pond, upgraded parking lot lighting, expanded gravel overflow parking and camper space, improved wayfinding signage from County Road Y, upgraded electrical capacity for camping and event use, and installation of a historic Winnebago County Fair arch. Parks department leadership stated the upgrades were necessary given the facility's year-round event schedule, which includes the county fair, Lifest, and horse shows.

Source: WTAQ 1360 AM / 97.5 FM Green Bay (Northeastern) | <https://wtaq.com/2026/07/30/sunnyview-expo-center-west-campus-improvements-completed/>

The Madison Public Market opens today. Here's what to know

The Madison Public Market, a \$24 million, 45,000-square-foot public facility at 202 N. First St., opened July 29, 2026, concluding a planning and development effort that began approximately 22 years ago. The facility launched with nine to eleven businesses operating on opening day, and up to 17 vendors are expected to be open by the end of 2026. The building includes an events hall and retains capacity for additional tenants. Temporary operating hours at opening are 5 to 10 p.m. Wednesdays through Fridays, 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. Saturdays, and 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. Sundays. Organizers characterized July 29 as a soft opening, with a grand opening celebration planned for the following month.

Source: WiscNews (South Central) | https://wiscnews.com/news/state-regional/wisconsin/article_287398b8-6183-58d7-a384-f2cd0846f4a6.html

Public Safety

Dane County District Attorney releases statement about investigation into officer-involved shooting

Dane County District Attorney Ismael R. Ozanne issued a formal statement on July 31, 2026, regarding the investigation into the officer-involved shooting death of Corey Ruiz on July 22, 2026, involving Madison Police Department officers. Under Wisconsin law, the Wisconsin Department of Justice Division of Criminal Investigation serves as the outside investigating agency. The Madison Police Department took immediate steps to initiate the investigation, and the Wisconsin State Patrol assisted in documenting the scene. Ozanne stated that the division will transmit its completed investigative materials to his office and will not make a charging recommendation, leaving that decision solely with him. He indicated he personally reviews all materials in every officer-involved death case and may request follow-up investigative efforts. He will notify Ruiz's family before making any public statement on charging. Wisconsin's Rules of Professional Conduct for Attorneys preclude further public comment until the investigation concludes.

Source: WMTV NBC15 Madison (South Central) | <https://www.wmtv15news.com/2026/07/31/dane-county-district-attorney-releases-statement-about-investigation-into-officer-involved-shooting/>

Madison faces familiar pain, questions a week after police shooting

Madison Police Chief John Patterson announced an internal policy review following the July 22 fatal shooting of Corey Ruiz, 38, by a Madison police officer at the intersection of Williamson and South Baldwin streets, stating the review would not wait for separate external investigations to conclude. Four officers responded to a report of a man checking parked cars and intercepted Ruiz on Williamson Street after he fled on a bicycle, and a physical struggle followed. Patterson said Ruiz produced a knife, a Taser deployment was unsuccessful, and the officer injured by the knife then shot Ruiz. One officer who fired and a second officer were treated at a hospital and released. Ruiz was transported to a hospital and pronounced dead the same day. State investigators confirmed a knife was recovered at the scene. Patterson said he could not yet determine whether excessive force was used, citing the ongoing external investigation.

Source: Capital Times (South Central) | https://captimes.com/news/government/madison-faces-familiar-pain-questions-a-week-after-police-shooting/article_82c936e2-a3e2-4fda-8d33-17ab6b91fd4d.html

Protesters limit police access to Corey Ruiz encampment

Protesters have blockaded the intersection of Williamson and Baldwin streets in Madison using garbage carts, vehicles, wooden pallets, and other objects, restricting law enforcement access to the site of the July 22 fatal police shooting of Corey D. Ruiz. Madison Police Department spokesperson Stephanie Fryer stated Wednesday that officers would not seek to enter the area unless someone's life or safety was at risk, and that non-emergency matters such as noise complaints could be handled by phone or virtually. Protest leader Alan Robinson declared the site a law enforcement free zone and said police would not be permitted entry, adding that organizers would escort individuals needing to file police reports outside the perimeter. Madison Fire Department spokesperson Cynthia Schuster confirmed that fire and EMS personnel had already responded after one person fell and suffered a head injury and had no issues rendering care. Police said a 31-year-old man who entered the intersection and assaulted two people was detained by encampment occupants until officers arrived.

Source: La Crosse Tribune (South Central) | https://lacrossetribune.com/news/state-regional/wisconsin/article_98727b7e-60d7-5d4e-ac64-b767f87bc3ee.html

Madison mayor says encampment not sustainable or safe

Madison Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway publicly declared on July 30, 2026, that the encampment at the intersection of Williamson and Baldwin streets in the Marquette neighborhood is not sustainable or safe, citing multiple public safety and public health concerns. The mayor identified specific deficiencies including inadequate bathroom facilities relative to the number of people present, food preparation without refrigeration or sinks, and street blockage impeding fire and EMS response. A 31-year-old man was arrested at the site on Wednesday after punching and pushing protesters and now faces charges of substantial battery, battery, and disorderly conduct with a hate crime enhancer. The city reported receiving multiple complaints from both protesters and neighbors, including Marquette residents describing an inability to sleep, conduct business, and move safely through the neighborhood. City staff, local officials, and neighborhood leaders

are continuing outreach to residents and businesses, and the city published a FAQ page addressing public inquiries.

Source: WISC CBS3 Madison (South Central) | https://www.channel3000.com/news/madison-mayor-says-encampment-not-sustainable-or-safe/article_719b070b-b98d-4e3c-a56e-322526f245ee.html

Madison mayor calls for removal of barricades at Corey Ruiz memorial site

Madison Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway issued a public statement on August 1, 2026, calling for removal of barricades and tents at the intersection of Williamson and South Baldwin streets, closed since July 22, 2026, when Madison Police Department officers shot and killed Corey Ruiz. Rhodes-Conway stated that the Wisconsin Department of Justice Division of Criminal Investigation is independently investigating the death and that the Dane County District Attorney holds exclusive authority over arrest decisions and charge recommendations. She identified emergency response concerns arising from fire station detours caused by the encampment and described economic harm to Marquette neighborhood businesses and residents. Rhodes-Conway stated the city intends to establish a permanent memorial in coordination with the Ruiz family and referenced the forthcoming Bartillon men's shelter, a partnership among Dane County, the City of Madison, Porchlight, and Friends of Dane County Shelter, as a resource for unhoused individuals at the site. The city said it stands ready to assist anyone willing to deconstruct the barricades voluntarily.

Source: WMTV NBC15 Madison (South Central) | <https://www.wmtv15news.com/2026/08/01/madison-mayor-calls-removal-barricades-corey-ruiz-memorial-site/>

Madison protest encampment forces fire station detours, raises response time concerns

A protest encampment at the intersection of Williamson Street and South Baldwin Street has forced Madison Fire Station 3 to reroute every eastbound emergency response for more than a week, according to Madison Fire Department Assistant Chief Ron Blumer. The station sits between two barricades established by the encampment, preventing righthand egress entirely; crews must turn left, loop around the block, and take an alternate route on each eastbound call. Madison Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway cited the road blockage in a public statement issued July 30, 2026, noting that street closures can impede fire and EMS response. The precise impact on response times has not been determined; WMTV filed an open records request for pre-encampment and post-encampment Station 3 response data, which the department confirmed is being processed. Station 3 crews completed three medical calls from inside the encampment during the past week and reached patients successfully each time.

Source: WMTV NBC15 Madison (South Central) | <https://www.wmtv15news.com/2026/07/30/madison-protest-encampment-forces-fire-station-detours-raises-response-time-concerns/>

Madison revisits police body cameras after years of debate

Madison Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway announced Thursday she will support a Madison Police Department budget request of \$414,784 over three years to implement department-wide body-worn cameras through a phased rollout beginning in 2027 in the city's north policing district and reaching full deployment by 2029. The announcement followed the fatal police shooting of Corey Ruiz, 38, on July 22, 2026, after which four officers were placed on administrative leave pending a

Wisconsin Department of Justice investigation. Currently only Madison's SWAT team and motorcycle unit officers carry body-worn cameras. A November 2025 Common Council amendment by Alder Barbara Harrington-McKinney to redirect approximately \$400,000 from the Office of the Independent Police Monitor toward body camera implementation failed 17-3. Rhodes-Conway cited reduced cost estimates developed by the police chief as the factor shifting her position from support of a limited pilot to full program endorsement. Common Council President Sabrina Madison stated she expects a proposal to pass the council in 2026. The mayor's formal budget submission has not yet been filed.

Source: Wisconsin Watch (South Central) | <https://wisconsinwatch.org/2026/07/madison-revisits-police-body-cameras-after-years-of-debate/>

Madison alders pull back on adding reporting requirements for police monitor

Common Council President Sabrina Madison announced Monday that she and three co-sponsors, Alders Yannette Figueroa Cole, Derek Field, and Will Ochowicz, are withdrawing their names from two amendments that would have added quarterly public reporting requirements for Madison's Office of the Independent Police Monitor. The amendments, scheduled for a Common Council vote the following week, would have required quarterly reports in addition to the existing annual report, clarified the monitor's access to Madison Police Department records, affirmed its independence within the city's administrative structure on hiring, contracting, and budgeting matters, and specified conditions under which the monitor may retain independent legal counsel. Madison cited a conversation with Police Civilian Oversight Board Chair Maia Pearson, who outlined three priorities: public comment opportunities at council meetings, an end to the amendment process surrounding the monitor and the board, and collaborative construction of police oversight ordinances. Alder Davy Mayer separately withdrew a proposed amendment adding an alder to the oversight board. Madison said she will convene a follow-up meeting with Pearson and a facilitator recommended by NACOLE.

Source: WISC CBS3 Madison (South Central) | https://www.channel3000.com/news/madison-alders-pull-back-on-adding-reporting-requirements-for-police-monitor/article_87eb1022-45b9-44ec-8125-8aba402fd8ef.html

Milwaukee police chase policy changes lack Common Council support

The Milwaukee Common Council voted Friday, July 31, 2026, to reject a motion to bring proposed changes to the city's police pursuit policy to the floor for discussion and a vote. The proposed changes, recommended by the Fire and Police Commission in February and May 2026, would have barred officers from chasing reckless drivers who flee traffic stops and required officers to end pursuits that become too dangerous for the public. Police Chief Jeffrey Norman had previously rejected the commission's recommendations, stating the department regularly evaluates its pursuit policy and takes all feedback seriously. Alderman Alex Brower urged colleagues to advance the motion, while Alderwoman Sharlen Moore cited public interest in knowing council members' positions. The motion failed, leaving the existing pursuit policy in place without a council vote on the substance of the proposed changes.

Source: WISN 12 ABC Milwaukee (Southeastern) | <https://www.wisn.com/article/milwaukee-police-chase-policy-changes-lack-common-council-support/73319608>

Milwaukee man charged with felony battery after 99-year-old woman attacked during 3-hour 911 delay

Milwaukee's Department of Emergency Communications placed two city 911 dispatchers on administrative leave following a delayed emergency response to a July 27 attack on a 99-year-old woman at a South 14th Street residence. The first 911 call was logged at approximately 5:15 a.m. by a third-party LifeAlert operator reporting a disturbance and possible physical harm; police did not arrive until approximately 8:00 a.m., a gap of roughly three hours. Joseph Guadalupe Macias, 23, was formally charged July 31 by the Milwaukee County District Attorney's Office with three felony counts: battery to an elder person intentionally causing great bodily harm, first-degree reckless injury, and burglary of a dwelling. Combined maximum exposure on all counts is more than 77 years in prison and up to \$225,000 in fines. The victim remained hospitalized as of the complaint's filing date. The administrative leave of the two dispatchers remains ongoing, and the extent of the internal review has not been publicly detailed.

Source: WTMJ 4 NBC Milwaukee (Southeastern) | <https://www.tmj4.com/news/local-news/in-your-community/milwaukee-county/milwaukee-man-charged-with-felony-battery-after-99-year-old-woman-attacked-during-3-hour-911-delay>

Debate over flock cameras moves to Marinette

The Marinette Public Safety and Code Enforcement Committee heard public opposition on July 20, 2026, to the city's Flock automated license plate reader system, which is documented under a single-page invoice totaling \$13,100 rather than a full contract. Police Chief Jon LaCombe defended the system, reporting nine audit flags so far in 2026, all reviewed and deemed legitimate. LaCombe stated Marinette's cameras capture only license plates and vehicle rears, do not use facial recognition, and are no longer on Flock's nationwide sharing network, instead being accessible within Wisconsin and select border jurisdictions. A grassroots coalition of residents cited contract language capping the vendor's liability at total fees paid and privacy-policy terms allowing indefinite data retention after cancellation. The group submitted a petition with 322 signatures requesting the full Common Council address the matter; the issue was confined to the committee with no public comment period. Organizers are circulating a second petition seeking cancellation of the arrangement.

Source: EagleHerald (Northeastern) | https://www.ehextra.com/news/debate-over-flock-cameras-moves-to-marinette/article_d66f8c03-22f6-41be-a6d1-ec79b168b8a7.html

Flock cameras are getting mobbed

Madison is among at least six U.S. cities that have deactivated Flock Safety surveillance cameras or canceled contracts with the company, according to a CNN report published July 30, 2026. The other municipalities cited are Fort Collins, Colorado; Eugene, Oregon; Knoxville, Tennessee; Syracuse, New York; and Walla Walla, Washington. Flock Safety operates a network of approximately 120,000 automated license plate reader and pan-tilt-zoom cameras nationwide, capturing tens of billions of data points per month. The cancellations follow reporting that the company's FreeForm search capability allows users to query camera records by clothing description, tattoos, or race, contradicting public claims that the cameras log only vehicle data. Police officers in multiple jurisdictions have also been documented using the system to track former partners and colleagues. The article does not specify the date Madison's contract was

canceled, the contract dollar value, or the name of the Madison official who authorized the action.

Source: WKBT CBS8 La Crosse (South Central) | https://www.news8000.com/news/national-world/flock-cameras-are-getting-mobbed/article_5d647aef-c7d5-51be-aa0f-47c1dae10e7d.html

Lake Mills fire chief criticizes Oakland residents for response to fire and EMS

At the July 21 Town of Oakland board meeting, Lake Mills Fire Chief Jason Russ publicly rebutted residents who have criticized fire and EMS response times since Oakland left the Cambridge Fire and EMS Commission in January 2025. Oakland's town board voted in December 2023 to exit the commission, citing high costs and lack of transparency with the former EMS director, and in fall 2024 voted to contract separately with the cities of Fort Atkinson, Jefferson, and Lake Mills to cover different geographic portions of the town. Jefferson Fire Chief Ron Wegner also addressed the board, stating that response times vary greatly across departments. At Oakland's April 21 annual meeting, nearly a dozen residents urged the board to return to the Cambridge commission, with resident Tim Scott stating the change had drastically reduced survivability for residents on the far end of town. Cambridge Fire and EMS Commission chair Kristin Blackwood cited a four-to-six-minute window before permanent brain damage in cardiac events. Residents have continued raising the issue at subsequent board meetings.

Source: Cambridge Enterprise Sentinel (South Central) | https://hngnews.com/leader_independent/news/local/lake-mills-fire-chief-criticizes-oakland-residents-for-response-to-fire-and-ems/article_d45cc710-37af-42ac-bd95-1131c8ac32ea.html

New information released in Adams County officer-involved incident

The Adams County Sheriff's Office identified 48-year-old Brian Conrad of Hancock as the man killed in an officer-involved shooting on Monday evening in the Town of Leola, in the 600 block of 3rd Ave. Deputies received a 911 call at approximately 5 p.m. reporting a neighbor waving a gun; an Adams County deputy and a Town of Rome Police Department officer responded and gave repeated verbal commands to Conrad, who was holding a handgun in a field and later in a roadway. The deputy fired one round from a department-issued rifle, striking Conrad, who was pronounced dead at the scene. Per state statute, the Adams County Sheriff's Office designated the Columbia County Sheriff's Office as the lead investigating agency, assisted by the Sauk, Marquette, Waushara, and Juneau county sheriff's offices. Both officers were equipped with body-worn cameras and squad cameras. The deputy who fired has been placed on administrative assignment per department policy.

Source: WSAW CBS7 Wausau (Central/Northern) | <https://www.wsaw.com/2026/07/29/new-information-released-adams-county-officer-involved-incident/>

Deputy involved in deadly Oneida County shooting will not be charged

The Oneida County District Attorney determined that Deputy Justin Orth was justified in using lethal force during a June 17, 2026, shooting that killed 76-year-old John Krga in the town of Lake Tomahawk. Deputies Orth and Alyssa Knabenbauer had responded to a residence on Lumen Lake Rd to arrest Krga on charges of first-degree sexual assault of a child and repeated acts of sexual assault to the same child. Investigators found that Krga resisted arrest, produced a semi-automatic firearm, refused multiple commands to stop resisting and drop the weapon, and fired his gun before Orth returned fire multiple times. Krga was pronounced dead at the scene;

Knabenbauer did not discharge her weapon. The no-charge determination followed a review of an investigation conducted by the Wisconsin Department of Justice Division of Criminal Investigation. No further procedural steps were reported.

Source: WSAW CBS7 Wausau (Central/Northern) | <https://www.wsaw.com/2026/08/01/deputy-involved-deadly-oneida-county-shooting-will-not-be-charged/>

Shooting death in Forest County found to be justified

The Dodge County District Attorney's Office, acting as an outside reviewing agency, determined that a May 23, 2026, officer-involved fatal shooting on Indian Settlement Road on the Mole Lake Reservation in the Town of Nashville, Forest County, was justified. Floyd Vanzile was killed after officers from the Forest County Sheriff's Office, the Crandon Police Department, and a Wisconsin DNR warden responded to a report of multiple shots fired inside an apartment building. Vanzile exited the building in a wheelchair and continued firing; a shot fired by the DNR warden struck and killed him, while both Crandon police officers discharged their weapons without striking him. Crandon police vehicles and an LP gas tank were struck by gunfire from Vanzile during the incident. Dodge County District Attorney Andrea Will issued the full written decision. The Wisconsin Department of Justice Division of Criminal Investigation's investigative files, digital photos, video, and audio records have been posted to the Wisconsin DOJ website.

Source: WXPB 91.7 FM Rhinelander (Central/Northern) | <https://www.wxpr.org/crime-courts/2026-07-30/shooting-death-in-forest-county-found-to-be-justified>

Superior officer cleared in shooting that hospitalized 2

Douglas County District Attorney Mark Fruehauf announced July 31 that no criminal charges will be filed against Superior Police Officer Ronald Robinson following a May 10 officer-involved shooting that hospitalized two people. Fruehauf's report concluded there was no proof of intentional, criminally reckless, or criminally negligent conduct, and that the state could not disprove beyond a reasonable doubt that Robinson acted in lawful self-defense. Robinson fired his rifle multiple times at Scott Roe, who was advancing toward him with a kitchen knife from approximately one car length away after Robinson ordered him to drop the weapon. Roe was struck in the lower abdomen and legs and required surgery; his girlfriend Macy Johnson, standing behind Roe, was struck in the hip and leg, suffered internal injuries, and also required surgery. Body camera footage confirmed Roe held a kitchen knife and that Robinson issued a verbal warning before firing. Fruehauf's report noted that self-defense protections extend to officers when an innocent bystander is injured during a lawful use of force.

Source: Superior Telegram (Western) | <https://www.superiortelegam.com/news/local/superior-officer-cleared-in-shooting-that-hospitalized-2>

Courtroom security implemented

Burnett County activated its first courtroom security officer position in late July 2026, with Deputy Jeff Carroll, formerly a jailer and dispatcher, assigned as bailiff to Circuit Court Judge Melissia Mogen's courtroom. The position was approved and funded in the 2026 Burnett County budget adopted the prior year and took effect after Carroll completed required training. Mogen credited the Burnett County Board for funding the role and cited an immediate operational impact, including a recent incident in which Carroll coordinated with dispatch to expedite medical

assistance for a courtroom visitor who experienced a diabetic episode and lost consciousness. Mogen's courtroom had experienced multiple threatening incidents in prior years, including one physical attack on the judge. Mogen separately reported that a renovation of the county's Treatment Court system is nearing completion, and that the updated program will expand eligibility to individuals with alcohol abuse issues who have accumulated more than three operating-while-intoxicated offenses.

Source: Burnett County Sentinel (Western) | https://burnettcountysentinel.com/news/courtroom-security-implemented/article_fc0e7cda-cc1e-4f1e-bac3-26a2ae40831c.html

Eau Claire firefighter dies after coming off duty

The Eau Claire Fire Department announced the line-of-duty death of Firefighter Bryce Jungbluth, who suffered a sudden medical emergency on July 26, 2026, after coming off duty and was subsequently hospitalized. Eau Claire City Council President Jeremy Gragert and City Manager Dave Solberg jointly ordered flags of the United States and the State of Wisconsin flown at half-staff at all city buildings effective immediately, continuing until sunset on August 10, 2026, the day of Jungbluth's interment. A procession was scheduled for August 1, 2026, beginning in Minneapolis at approximately 11 a.m. and arriving in Eau Claire around 12:30 p.m., concluding at Melby Street where the department's participation ended. The department stated that members of the fire service have maintained an Honor Watch ensuring Jungbluth is never alone until laid to rest. Jungbluth is survived by a wife and a young son.

Source: WEAU NBC13 Eau Claire (Western) | <https://www.weau.com/2026/08/01/eau-claire-firefighter-dies-after-coming-off-duty/>

Meet La Crosse County's two-person disaster response team

La Crosse County's Office of Emergency Management operates with a two-person staff, coordinator Seth Wilson and specialist Ali Herzog, housed within the sheriff's office and responsible for preparing and coordinating disaster response across all municipalities, school districts, and villages in the county. Wilson stated that approximately 75 percent of the office's work falls in the preparation and mitigation phases, including creating and maintaining state-compliant emergency plans for local jurisdictions that document shelter locations and emergency points of contact. The office coordinates with first responders, law enforcement, and school districts countywide, and Wilson recently worked with local law enforcement and school districts specifically to improve resource coordination in the event of a school shooting. When a disaster causes widespread damage, the office serves as a bridge to state resources. Wilson identified outdated emergency plan documents as an ongoing operational challenge, noting that critical information becomes outdated quickly.

Source: La Crosse Tribune (Western) | https://lacrossetribune.com/news/local/government-politics/article_741be28b-0bc8-4d8f-a165-d07cc60a20e1.html

Emergency services go through nuclear power plant emergency training

Pierce County emergency service workers convened at Elmwood High School on July 23 for a multi-agency training exercise simulating an emergency at the Prairie Island Nuclear Power Plant, located within 10 miles of the county. The exercise, last conducted in 2024, brought together local firefighters, EMS personnel, public health officials, human services staff, the American Red

Cross, and the Healthcare Emergency Readiness Coalition. Volunteers portrayed civilians moving through a reception center, undergoing contamination checks of their vehicles, clothing, and persons before entry into a holding facility. Pierce County Emergency Management Director Brad Jorgenson led the exercise, citing the county's status as a host-zone jurisdiction with a nuclear facility in close proximity as the basis for maintaining reception center readiness. Jorgenson stated the training identifies weak spots in the county's emergency plan and builds interagency coordination applicable to other widespread emergency scenarios. No next scheduled exercise date was reported.

Source: Pierce County Journal (Western) | <https://www.piercecountyjournal.news/stories/emergency-services-go-through-nuclear-power-plant-emergency-training.200177>

First responders train for school emergencies in Weston

Riverside Fire District and Mountain Bay Metro Police conducted a joint Rescue Task Force training exercise at D.C. Everest Middle School in Weston from Monday through Thursday, July 28 through 31, 2026, marking the first time the two agencies have partnered on this type of exercise. The Rescue Task Force model combines EMS and law enforcement personnel to enable medical aid during an active crisis while police simultaneously address the threat. Deputy Chief Nicholas Aldrich of Mountain Bay Metro Police identified the training scenarios as covering mass injury or mass casualty events, including active shooter incidents and weather disasters. The five school resource officers assigned to the D.C. Everest School District also participated, given their role as first responders to any on-campus crisis. The training was funded and conducted by instructors from each department. The D.C. Everest School District's first day of school is August 25, 2026.

Source: WSAW CBS7 Wausau (Central/Northern) | <https://www.wsaw.com/2026/07/28/first-responders-train-school-emergencies-weston/>

EF-2 tornado strikes the Fox Valley area, causing significant damage

A tornado struck the Fox Valley area on Monday, July 27, 2026, touching down near Menasha and moving over Lake Winnebago, causing significant damage across Menasha and Appleton, as confirmed by the National Weather Service. The City of Neenah declared a local state of emergency effective 5:30 p.m. Monday, enabling the city to coordinate resources and manage emergency efforts. The City of Menasha implemented a citywide curfew from 10:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m., effective until further notice, with an exemption for individuals required to work during those hours. The City of Appleton mobilized all city departments to prioritize emergency response and assess damages. Authorities in all three municipalities are coordinating recovery efforts with county and state emergency management agencies. No end date for the Menasha curfew was announced; residents are directed to monitor official communication channels for updates. This report carried the National Weather Service's initial EF-2 estimate, which later survey work revised upward.

Source: WFHR 1320 AM Wisconsin Rapids (Northeastern) | <https://www.wfhr.com/news/2026/07/28/ef-2-tornado-strikes-the-fox-valley-area-causing-significant-damage>

National Guard on the ground in Menasha, more new details in afternoon press conference

Winnebago County Executive Gordon Hintz convened a press briefing on Friday, July 31, 2026, announcing that 15 Wisconsin National Guard members arrived in Menasha to assist with traffic control ahead of a coordinated multi-municipality debris removal operation. The cities of Menasha and Neenah, the village of Fox Crossing, and Winnebago County jointly developed a debris hauling plan involving crews from Green Bay, Sheboygan, Milwaukee, Kimberly, Combined Locks, and Ashwaubenon beginning Saturday and Sunday. Brush and plant debris will be collected Saturday; storm-related trash, spoiled food, and water-damaged belongings will be collected Sunday, with residents required to clear vehicles from streets by 6:00 a.m. each day. A curfew from 10:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m. and a burn ban remain in effect across Menasha, Fox Crossing, and Neenah. A boil water advisory stays in place pending a second clean water test after the first passed. The 211 assistance line had received 280 calls as of 12:30 p.m. Friday.

Source: WLUK FOX11 Green Bay (Northeastern) | <https://fox11online.com/news/local/national-guard-on-the-ground-in-menasha-more-new-details-in-afternoon-press-conference>

4 days after EF-3 strike, Fox Valley residents and owners pick through wreckage

The Fox Crossing fire station sustained structural destruction from the EF-3 tornado that hit the Fox Valley on Monday, with its roof completely removed and three fire trucks rendered unusable, according to Fox Crossing firefighter and paramedic Richard Villacorte. Governor Tony Evers mobilized the Wisconsin National Guard on Thursday, July 30, 2026, following a request made on behalf of four municipalities struck by the tornado, with twenty soldiers expected to arrive over the weekend. At least two residential properties, one in the Palisades Park neighborhood of Fox Crossing and one in the Jefferson Park neighborhood of Menasha, have been assessed as unreturnable or requiring full demolition and rebuild. Manderfield's Bakery on Plank Road in downtown Menasha suffered a total loss, and owner Jerry Manderfield was scheduled to meet with an excavator Friday to plan demolition. The Boys and Girls Club of Menasha is providing showers, meals, charging stations, clothing, and mental health support daily through August 7.

Source: WLUK FOX11 Green Bay (Northeastern) | <https://fox11online.com/news/local/five-days-after-ef-3-strike-fox-valleyresidents-and-owners-pick-through-wreckage-palisades-park-neighborhood-menasha-tornado-homeowner-destruction-fire-station>

In-person resource hub opens Monday in Appleton for those recovering from tornado

Following the July 27, 2026 tornado that struck the Fox Cities region, a Multiagency Resource Center will open Monday, August 3, at the Mary Beth Nienhaus Activity Center, 3000 E College Ave, Suite B, Appleton. The center will operate from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. on August 3 and August 4, 2026. The center will co-locate representatives from local government agencies, nonprofit organizations, volunteer agencies, and community partners at a single site to provide storm-affected residents with immediate needs assistance, recovery planning, and referrals to additional services. The center is open to all Fox Cities residents. Latino Advocacy of the Fox Valley is credited with providing translation support. A separate official volunteer reception center is operating at the UW-Oshkosh Fox Cities campus on Midway Road in Menasha.

Source: Kaukauna Community News (Northeastern) | <https://kaukaunacommunitynews.com/2026/08/01/in-person-resouce-hub-opens-monday-in-appleton-for-those-recovering-from-tornado/>

One Month Left For Disaster Assistance Applications, Says FEMA And SBA

Wisconsin Emergency Management Administrator Greg Engle announced that more than \$44.1 million in federal disaster aid has been distributed to more than 16,000 survivors across 20 counties and the Oneida Nation following April storms centered on Manitowoc County. Eligible homeowners and renters can apply through DisasterAssistance.gov, while small businesses and nonprofit organizations may seek low-interest loans through the U.S. Small Business Administration at SBA.gov/disaster. Engle noted that applicants who have already received insurance settlements may still qualify for FEMA assistance to address unmet needs, and that SBA loans represent an additional resource beyond FEMA grants. The application deadline for both the FEMA and SBA disaster assistance programs falls approximately one month from August 1, 2026.

Source: Seehafer News (Northeastern) | <https://www.seehafernews.com/2026/08/01/one-month-left-for-disaster-assistance-applications-says-fema-and-sba/>

Stanley Fire gets new electric tools

The Stanley Fire Department procured \$35,000 in battery-powered extrication equipment to replace its hydraulic tools, funded through private donations rather than municipal appropriation. The purchase includes a Storm Surge ESLC 30 cutter, a Storm Surge ES 100-28 spreader, and a Storm Surge TNT Rescue ram with extensions, all manufactured in the United States. Martino's Restaurant contributed accumulated proceeds from its annual Pizza Fire and Prevention Fundraiser, and Chippewa Valley Electric Cooperative donated \$5,000 through the CHS Fire and EMS Grant Program, part of the CHS Seeds for Stewardship matching grants initiative targeting rural first-responder equipment upgrades, specialized training, and community preparedness. Michele Larson administered the CHS grant, and Stanley alderman and cooperative employee Mark Fitzsimmons also played a role in securing the contribution. No further procurement steps or governing-body votes were reported in connection with the acquisition.

Source: Stanley Republican (Western) | <https://stanleyrepublican.com/stories/stanley-fire-gets-new-electric-tools,200460>

Compeer donates to area emergency services

Compeer Financial awarded Emergency First Responder Grants totaling \$1,015,198 to 146 rural emergency response departments across Illinois, Minnesota, and Wisconsin, with 48 Wisconsin and Illinois departments each receiving grants of up to \$7,500. Three Green County area departments are among the recipients: the Belleville Fire Department received funds designated for portable AEDs, Monticello Fire and Rescue received funds for extrication tools, and the South Wayne Fire Department received \$7,500 specifically for portable radios. Forty-five of the 146 recipient departments are first-time grant recipients. Since the program launched in 2018, Compeer Giving has distributed more than \$5.75 million to volunteer first responders across its 144-county territory. Grants are evaluated on both community service equipment needs and responder life-safety needs. Compeer Giving has indicated it intends to offer the Emergency First Responder Grants again in 2027.

Source: Monroe Times (South Central) | <https://themonroetimes.com/community/compeer-donates-to-area-emergency-services/>

Land Use and Development

Turtle board rejects cost agreement with data center developer, passes moratorium resolution

The Town of Turtle Board of Supervisors voted 5-0 on Wednesday to reject a revised cost reimbursement agreement with Panattoni Development Co. of Irvine, California, which had proposed a \$1 billion hyperscale data center campus called Project Cornmaze in Rock County. In the same 16-minute special meeting, the board voted 5-0 to begin the process of enacting a 12-month moratorium on development proposals exceeding 10,000 square feet. The original cost reimbursement agreement, approved in early July, would have included an initial \$250,000 deposit to the town without binding the board to any plan approvals. Board Chairman Roger Anclam, one of three votes for the original agreement, reversed his position after the developer sought revisions. The proposal encompassed 2 million square feet along Prairie Avenue across the towns of Turtle and Beloit. The moratorium resolution triggers required next steps including public meetings, ordinance passage, and comprehensive plan revisions.

Source: Beloit Daily News (South Central) | https://www.beloitdailynews.com/news/local-news/turtle-board-rejects-cost-agreement-with-data-center-developer-passes-moratorium-resolution/article_f5febb86-6142-4ad0-bf23-c89c30752c81.html

Town of Beloit special board meeting on data center agreement is on for Friday

The Town of Beloit Board of Supervisors scheduled a special meeting for 3 p.m. Friday, August 1, 2026, at Town Hall, 3000 S. Bartells Drive, to consider a cost-sharing agreement with Panattoni Development Co. of Irvine, California, and to discuss a moratorium on data center proposals. The developer has publicly presented a \$1 billion hyperscale data center campus totaling 2 million square feet on properties along Prairie Avenue spanning both the Town of Beloit and the Town of Turtle. The Town of Turtle Board of Supervisors held a parallel special meeting Wednesday, July 28, to consider the same cost-sharing agreement and a possible moratorium. The project became public in March 2026. If both boards adopt moratoriums, applications to approve the project could be halted for up to 18 months. An overflow crowd appeared at the Town of Beloit board meeting on July 20 to oppose the project.

Source: Janesville Gazette (South Central) | https://www.gazettextra.com/news/local/town-of-beloit-special-board-meeting-on-data-center-agreement-is-on-for-friday/article_4e26b0c6-6e85-57b4-8fab-742136e5fce6.html

Janesville Town Board to consider 12-month data center moratorium

The Town of Janesville Planning and Zoning Committee voted Tuesday, July 29, 2026, to recommend that the full town board adopt a 12-month moratorium on data centers, following a public hearing held at the Woodman's Center to accommodate an expected large crowd. Committee member Mathew Everhart made the motion. The hearing drew attendees from the Town of Janesville, City of Janesville, and Town of Beloit, who testified for more than one hour. Town officials described the ordinance as proactive, noting no formal data center proposal is currently on file, only an April 2026 conceptual letter from an unnamed technology company proposing a facility at the corner of North Polzin and West Fenrick roads on farmland near residential properties. Rock County Supervisor Philip Gorman, a Town of Beloit resident, testified in support, noting a 1970s-era resolution stripped Rock County of zoning authority over

townships. If approved, the board may extend the moratorium beyond 12 months. The board is scheduled to consider the ordinance Monday, August 3.

Source: Janesville Gazette (South Central) | https://www.gazettextra.com/news/janesville-town-board-to-consider-12-month-data-center-moratorium/article_3000d4e6-909e-483e-994d-2e1ccd7ed9dc.html

City of Janesville to host public data center ordinance workshop

The Janesville City Council directed staff to draft a Data Center Companion Ordinance establishing operational guidelines beyond existing zoning and building codes for any future data center development within city limits. The directive followed a June 22 council vote allowing the city's letter of intent with developer Viridian Acquisitions LLC to expire, ending immediate consideration of a proposed project at the former General Motors and JATCO site on Janesville's south side. The proposed ordinance would address ongoing operational standards, reporting requirements, and financial assurances for data center facilities. To gather community input, the city will hold a public workshop on August 13, 2026, from 5:30 to 7 p.m. in the program room at Hedberg Public Library in a drop-in, multi-station format. Feedback from the workshop and a forthcoming community survey will inform the ordinance draft before it is presented for additional public review. Questions may be directed to the Economic Development Office at 608-755-3059.

Source: Janesville Gazette (South Central) | https://www.gazettextra.com/news/local/city-of-janesville-to-host-public-data-center-ordinance-workshop/article_70c9f8f3-0d77-409a-83c0-f4c24caff353.html

Chippewa County looks to temporary moratorium on data centers

The Chippewa County Planning and Zoning Committee voted unanimously on July 24, 2026, to advance a draft moratorium on data centers and set a public hearing for 5 p.m. August 3 in Room 302 of the Chippewa County Courthouse, 711 N. Bridge St., Chippewa Falls. The proposed moratorium would amend the county's zoning ordinance and, if adopted, would remain in effect through July 2027, a period County Board Chairman Jason Bergeron described as ten months. The county board is scheduled to hold a first reading at its August meeting and vote on the measure in September. The moratorium would apply only to the six towns that have adopted the county's zoning ordinance: Anson, Eagle Point, Hallie, Lafayette, Wheaton, and Woodmohr. The draft ordinance cites unaddressed impacts including noise from cooling equipment, water consumption, wastewater generation, hazardous materials, and required electrical substation and transmission-line infrastructure. Planning and Zoning Director Doug Clary was not available for comment.

Source: Leader-Telegram (Western) | https://www.leadertelegram.com/news/daily-updates/chippewa-county-looks-to-temporary-moratorium-on-data-centers/article_874d3b74-18e9-45eb-890d-b2344e5831f0.html

Little doubt on where Wisconsin voters stand on data centers

A Marquette University Law School Poll conducted July 8 through 16, 2026, with 838 registered Wisconsin voters found that 76 percent believe the costs of data centers outweigh their benefits, while 22 percent said benefits outweigh costs; the margin of error is plus or minus 4.5 percentage points. That represents a shift from an October 2025 Marquette survey in which 44 percent said benefits were greater and 55 percent said costs were greater, though the question wording differed between the two polls. Intervening surveys showed a 29-70 split in mid-February 2026 and a 30-69 split in mid-March 2026. Among Republicans, the share saying costs outweigh

benefits rose from 53 percent in October 2025 to 67 percent in July 2026; among Democrats it rose from 56 percent to 88 percent; among independents it moved from 55 percent to 71 percent. Only 5 percent of respondents identified data centers as their most important issue. Construction continues on Vantage Data Centers' \$15 billion campus in Port Washington.

Source: The Daily Reporter (Statewide) | <https://dailyreporter.com/2026/07/31/wisconsin-voters-largely-oppose-data-centers/>

Joint development agreement: Committee approves Sinnissippi Solar draft

The Jefferson County Executive Committee voted unanimously on July 30, 2026, to approve a draft joint development agreement for the Sinnissippi Solar Energy Center and transmit it to developer Invenergy for review. The proposed project would install 100 megawatts of solar capacity on land spanning the towns of Watertown, Ixonia, and Concord, with construction slated to begin in 2027 and operations targeted for 2028. Invenergy projects the facility will power approximately 19,000 typical American homes annually and has committed to \$91 million in local taxes and payments to Jefferson County over the project's 50-year lifetime. At peak construction, the company estimates 250 local construction jobs. Jefferson County Corporation Counsel Danielle Thompson confirmed all other participating entities had already approved the draft. The Town of Ixonia's participation remains unresolved, as the town has not confirmed whether it will join the multi-town agreement or negotiate a separate agreement. Decommissioning provisions must comply with Wisconsin Public Service Commission regulations.

Source: Watertown Daily Times (South Central) | https://www.wdtimes.com/news/local/joint-development-agreement-committee-approves-sinnissippi-solar-draft/article_0f94216b-f955-4405-bb6a-a9726e452af5.html

Vandewalle highlights zoning map changes

Sonja Kruesel of Vandewalle and Associates presented proposed zoning map changes to the Watertown Plan Commission as part of a comprehensive rewrite of the city's zoning code. The new map includes both upzoning and downzoning across multiple district categories. On the residential side, the city's single existing Single-Family District will be split into three districts reflecting variations in lot size, while three current residential districts, one Two-Family and two Multifamily, will be consolidated into three Mixed-Residential Districts; two entirely new districts, Mobile Home and Cottage Court, will also be added. Commercially, four existing districts will be reorganized into four new designations, including a Corridor Mixed-Use District combining Planned Business and General Business, and two new Downtown and Riverfront districts replacing the Central Business District. Three industrial districts will be reduced to two. One example of downzoning cited was a Boomer Street parcel shifted from industrial to agriculture. No vote was recorded; the commission received the overview as part of the ongoing code rewrite.

Source: Watertown Daily Times (South Central) | https://www.wdtimes.com/news/local/vandewalle-highlights-zoning-map-changes/article_1acc81e7-eeae-40be-a3d1-97ca7efbb2a8.html

City discusses comprehensive plan, addresses rumors on social media

The Shell Lake Plan Commission met to discuss the city's ongoing comprehensive plan revision and the implications of Wisconsin Act 173, signed in April 2026, which alters how cities and villages plan for housing and handle rezoning requests for housing projects. City Administrator Andy Eiche, briefed by the Northwest Regional Planning Commission, told members the new

legislation has prioritized zoning issues and may require the city to revise work already underway on its comprehensive plan. Eiche noted that townships that recently completed comprehensive plans could also face significant ramifications under Act 173. Mayor Rowie Hansberger separately addressed social media rumors that data centers were being recruited to Shell Lake, stating that the administration has not pursued or advocated for such facilities. The commission voted to defer further action on the comprehensive plan until its next scheduled meeting on August 18, 2026, when guidance from the Northwest Regional Planning Commission is expected to be available.

Source: Spooner Advocate (Western) | https://apg-wi.com/spooner_advocate/news/local/city-discusses-comprehensive-plan-addresses-rumors-on-social-media/article_99890548-3225-41b1-a4e5-6805112f12b0.html

Somers Maplecrest housing development under review by DNR

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is conducting a 30-day public comment period on a wetland permit application for the proposed Maplecrest subdivision in the Village of Somers, with comments accepted through August 8. The proposed development, located near the former Maplecrest Country Club, would include 271 single-family lots and 22 duplex lots for a total of 293 dwelling units. Because the project involves filling wetlands, it requires a DNR wetland permit; the agency hosted a public hearing on July 29. DNR water management specialist Sonya Ponzi said the developer has also purchased wetland mitigation credits to offset the wetland impact, with those credits to be applied in a wetland bank to create new wetlands outside the project site. Ponzi said a final DNR decision will be issued 10 days after the public comment period closes, placing the ruling on or around August 18. Village President George Stoner stated the completed stormwater retention pond at the site exceeded village requirements by 15 to 30 percent.

Source: Lake Geneva Regional News (Southeastern) | https://lakegenevanews.net/news/local/government-politics/article_b53039ef-c291-5b6c-8b23-615064e90e64.html

UW-Whitewater study: Business park expansion may transform city economy

The City of Whitewater is soliciting development proposals for 21.6 acres at the end of Universal Boulevard and along Howard Road, with proposals due August 15. Community Development Director Mason Becker identified the parcel as suited for mid-to-large footprint industrial uses. The city commissioned a study from the Fiscal and Economic Research Center at the UW-Whitewater College of Business and Economics to guide recruitment strategy. The study found that current business park tenants support more than 2,500 jobs and generate substantial labor income. It also identified a skill-opportunity gap: the 53190 zip code contains 894 residents with master's degrees, while local employment concentrates approximately 3,500 jobs in manufacturing, retail, food, and accommodation services. The study recommends targeting metal finishing and plating, tool and die and mold making, robotics system integration, and industrial packaging to complement existing anchor tenants HEXPOL and Husco Automotive. The city will also consider proposals from businesses outside those recommended sectors.

Source: Janesville Gazette (South Central) | https://www.gazettextra.com/news/uw-whitewater-study-business-park-expansion-may-transform-city-economy/article_a365d35d-6fef-4ca0-84cd-e9568c37b635.html

Monroe County Acquires 53 Acres of Land to Expand and Protect Historic Wegner Grotto County Park

Monroe County acquired 53 acres of land adjacent to Wegner Grotto County Park, purchasing the parcel from the Wegner family. The park has held designated county park status since 1987. Purchase price, vote count, resolution identifier, and next procedural steps are behind a subscriber paywall and are not available in the published text. The two verifiable data points in the accessible portion of the article are the 53-acre size of the acquisition and the 1987 date of the park's county designation.

Source: Monroe County Herald (Sparta) (Western) | <https://monroecountyherald.com/stories/monroe-county-acquires-53-acres-of-land-to-expand-and-protect-historic-wegner-grotto-county-park,176010>

Town of Scott wakeboarding suit thrown out

Chief U.S. District Judge James Peterson dismissed a federal civil suit against the Town of Scott in Burnett County on July 17, 2026, ruling that plaintiffs Chad McEver of Houston and Scott Oppenheimer of Florida lacked standing to challenge the town's wake boat ordinance. The ordinance, approved by the Town of Scott board of trustees in late 2024, restricts artificial wake enhancement on bodies of water at least 60 percent within town boundaries, targeting Birch Island Lake, which ranges from 768 to 837 acres with an average depth under six feet. McEver sought approximately \$135,000 in damages for his 2017 Mastercraft XT20, and Oppenheimer sought more than \$65,000 for his 2012 Ski Nautique. Peterson found neither plaintiff suffered actual harm because both continued using their vessels and were never ticketed or cited. The Town of Scott has not enforced the ordinance due to the absence of a patrol officer to issue fines, and enforcement status remains unresolved.

Source: Burnett County Sentinel (Western) | https://burnettcountysentinel.com/news/town-of-scott-wakeboarding-suit-thrown-out/article_f44c2b66-65f9-4ff4-8c4b-8f84cfb0f771.html

Bad River tribe, groups sue over waterway crossing approvals for Enbridge's Line 5 reroute

The Bad River Band of the Lake Superior Tribe of Chippewa Indians, Clean Wisconsin, 350 Wisconsin, and the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin filed suit Wednesday, July 30, 2026, in Ashland County Circuit Court challenging Wisconsin DNR decisions that granted Enbridge a permit to cross Beartrap Creek and permit exemptions for Little Beartrap Creek, Bay City Creek, and an unnamed tributary to the Brunsweller River. The plaintiffs argue Enbridge was ineligible for those authorizations because it did not own land adjacent to the crossings. Midwest Environmental Advocates represents 350 Wisconsin and the League of Women Voters. The lawsuit is the latest in ongoing litigation over the \$450 million, 41-mile Line 5 reroute, which crosses approximately 200 waterways and is projected to affect around 100 acres of wetlands in Ashland and Iron counties. A May 2026 Bayfield County ruling permitted construction to proceed except at these four waterways. A DNR spokesperson confirmed the agency is reviewing the lawsuit.

Source: Wausau Pilot & Review (Central/Northern) | <https://wausaupilotandreview.com/2026/08/01/bad-river-tribe-groups-sue-over-waterway-crossing-approvals-for-enbridges-line-5-reroute/>

Governance and Elections

La Crosse Mayor speaks out against the City Administrator position

La Crosse Mayor Shaundel Washington-Spivey publicly opposed a proposal to create a city administrator position, releasing a video statement on July 30, 2026, arguing the legislation would strip statutory powers from the mayor and remove voter accountability from city government. The proposed position would oversee day-to-day city operations, including monitoring all city ordinances, resolutions, and state statutes. Council members Aron Newberry and Larry Slezniuk placed the item back on the August agenda using the same language that was voted down in February 2026. Newberry cited a 2016 study finding La Crosse had the highest conflict index and the lowest cooperation index of any Wisconsin municipality studied, and that the administrator position was associated with significantly less governmental conflict. A public hearing on the proposal is scheduled for August 5, 2026, at 6 p.m. at City Hall.

Source: WXOW ABC19 La Crosse (Western) | https://www.wxow.com/news/la-crosse/la-crosse-mayor-speaks-out-against-the-city-administrator-position/article_5ae952f8-85d2-4db8-a0f9-dd2ecf0386bf.html

'Rudderless ship': Former city staff advocate for La Crosse administrator

Three former La Crosse city staff members, representing a combined approximately 25 years of municipal experience, publicly advocated for creation of a city administrator position ahead of the draft charter ordinance's scheduled committee hearing on August 5. Former city Finance Director Valerie Fenske, who served from 2016 through the end of 2021, said La Crosse's 13 city departments currently operate without centralized professional management coordination. Former Human Resources Department Director Dave Buroker, who spent five years with the city, added that mayoral turnover compounds the problem by disrupting institutional knowledge. Supporters cite La Crosse's approximately \$74 million operating budget and more than 600 full-time employees as justification for a professional administrator role. Council member Aron Newberry co-sponsored the administrator resolution and stated the proposal is not directed at current Mayor Shaundel Washington-Spivey. The draft charter ordinance proceeds to committee on August 5.

Source: La Crosse Tribune (Western) | https://lacrossetribune.com/news/local/government-politics/article_e13f131b-3b94-40bc-b27a-62cf884c0fc0.html

Columbia County Board makes it easier to pass a budget

At its July 15 meeting, the Columbia County Board voted 18-10 to replace the two-thirds supermajority requirement for annual budget approval with a simple majority vote, effective for the upcoming November budget cycle. The change was adopted as one of several new standing rules approved that night. District 25 Supervisor Douglas Richmond, newly elected board chair, said the switch to simple majority was recommended by legal counsel and aligns Columbia County with state law and standard municipal practice. District 16 Supervisor Denise Brusveen opposed the change, arguing state law requires only that budgets pass by at least a simple majority and does not prohibit a two-thirds threshold, and contending the county's 20-plus-year record of on-time budget passage under the higher threshold demonstrated its effectiveness. A motion to delay the vote on the rule change failed 15-13 before the simple majority measure

passed. The board will next apply the new threshold when it considers the 2027 county budget in November.

Source: WiscNews (South Central) | https://wiscnews.com/news/local/article_9a49f74a-2dd9-4515-a771-9fe7d7bcb8d0.html

Green Bay submits ballot-counting safeguards to WEC after duplicate mailing

The City of Green Bay submitted formal ballot-counting safeguard procedures to the Wisconsin Elections Commission on July 31, 2026, following a commission order stemming from a complaint about duplicate absentee ballot mailings affecting both the April 2026 election and the August 11, 2026 primary. City Attorney Lacey Cochart stated the procedures were implemented July 13, 2026, and include an initial review, secondary review, information comparison, documentation protocols, and issue-resolution steps. A newly created Ballot Custody Log and immediate alphabetization of returned certificate envelopes were added specifically to address the duplicate ballot problem. The duplicates originated on June 22, 2026, when City Clerk Celestine Jeffreys reprinted a portion of absentee voter labels after mistakenly believing some were missing from a batch and affixed the reprinted labels to additional ballot envelopes. For Election Day central count, staff will run an Absentee Ballots Associated View report from WisVote and perform a hand count and voter-by-voter comparison. Jeffreys has been placed on administrative leave. The commission has not scheduled formal action.

Source: WLUK FOX11 Green Bay (Northeastern) | <https://fox11online.com/news/local/green-bay-submits-ballot-counting-safeguards-to-wec-after-duplicate-mailing-wisconsin-elections-commission-august-11-april-policies-celestine-jeffreys-clerk-absentee>

Wisconsin judge says voters who have returned absentee ballot for state primary cannot get a new one

Dane County Circuit Judge David Conway ruled Wednesday that the unambiguous language of the statute does not allow a voter to spoil an absentee ballot after it is returned, denying a temporary restraining order sought by plaintiffs who had filed suit seeking to permit voters to void returned ballots and request replacements. More than 117,000 absentee ballots had already been returned as of Wednesday, the day of the ruling. The Wisconsin Elections Commission had voted on July 9 to issue guidance to approximately 2,000 local election clerks stating that absentee voters cannot change their ballot after it is returned, and Conway's ruling affirmed that guidance as consistent with state law. Attorney Eduardo Castro argued at a Tuesday hearing that state law permits voters to change their mind before ballots are counted on Election Day. The ruling is expected to be appealed, with voting already underway in the state's August primary.

Source: WXPR 91.7 FM Rhinelander (Statewide) | <https://www.wxpr.org/election/2026-07-29/wisconsin-judge-says-voters-who-have-returned-absentee-ballot-for-state-primary-cannot-get-a-new-one>

Clerks support 10-day mailing guidance for absentee ballots

The Wisconsin Elections Commission updated its absentee ballot return guideline from seven days to ten days before Election Day following mail delays that caused hundreds of ballots to arrive too late to be counted in the spring 2025 judicial election. After that election, two-thirds of Wisconsin clerks reported timeliness issues with mail delivery, and Milwaukee officials received an unprecedented number of ballots the morning after Election Day, none of which could be

counted under Wisconsin law. The commission sent a formal letter to the U.S. Postal Service in May urging delivery changes. Marathon County Clerk Kim Trueblood supports the 10-day guideline but recommends longer lead times for rural areas due to inconsistent processing at regional mail centers. The Wisconsin Department of Justice joined a multi-state coalition on July 2 filing a formal letter opposing a federal proposal that would have withheld ballot delivery in states declining to share voter data; a federal judge subsequently blocked that proposal. The updated guidance replaces the seven-day recommendation that still appears on MyVote WI.

Source: Wausau Pilot & Review (Statewide) | <https://wausaupilotandreview.com/2026/08/01/clerks-support-10-day-mailing-guidance-for-absentee-ballots/>

Amid USPS delays, Wisconsin officials tell voters to mail their ballots ASAP as voters sue for more options

The Wisconsin Elections Commission updated its voter guidance in June 2026, extending the recommended mail ballot return window from seven days before Election Day to at least ten days, and commissioners at an early-July meeting expressed concern that even ten days may be insufficient. Milwaukee election chief Paulina Gutierrez reported receiving only 20 mail ballots on Election Day during April's Wisconsin Supreme Court election but more than 269 late-arriving ballots the following day; in response, Milwaukee opened its drop boxes four weeks earlier than in past cycles for the August election. Madison City Clerk Lydia McComas reported more than 100 late ballots in April and confirmed drop boxes open three weeks before the August election. A recent survey found two-thirds of Wisconsin election officials observed absentee ballot mail-delivery problems in April, with nearly 40 percent rating mail performance as somewhat or much worse than in past elections. The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin filed suit Friday against the commission in Dane County Circuit Court over Election Day provisional ballots for mail voters.

Source: Wisconsin Watch (Statewide) | <https://wisconsinwatch.org/2026/07/wisconsin-election-officials-voters-mail-absentee-ballots-usps-delivery-delays-drop-boxes-clerks/>

Former Milwaukee city attorney Tearman Spencer found guilty of felony misconduct in office

A Milwaukee County jury found former Milwaukee City Attorney Tearman Spencer guilty of felony misconduct in public office while acquitting him on a separate misdemeanor obstruction charge. Spencer, elected city attorney in 2020, was charged in 2024 with abusing his office for personal benefit. The criminal complaint states Spencer exercised discretionary power in a manner inconsistent with the duties of his office with intent to obtain a dishonest advantage for himself or another. Specifically, Spencer directed the resources of the City Attorney's Office to shield himself and others from Department of Neighborhood Services inspections at a property he used on North Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, where he stored multiple vehicles. The complaint states this allowed Spencer to avoid fines and fees totaling thousands of dollars. Sentencing is scheduled for September 11.

Source: WTMJ 4 NBC Milwaukee (Southeastern) | <https://www.tmj4.com/news/local-news/in-your-community/milwaukee-county/former-milwaukee-city-attorney-tearman-spencer-found-guilty-of-felony-misconduct-in-office>

DA's Office Releases Statement On Sheriff Hakes; Hakes Responds

The Chippewa County District Attorney's Office issued a press release on July 22, 2026, stating that all prosecutors in the office believe Chippewa County Sheriff Travis Hakes does not meet the basic credibility standard necessary to continue as sheriff. The release was signed by District Attorney Wade Newell and all five assistant district attorneys. The statement disclosed that on December 18, 2023, Hakes was placed on Chippewa County's Brady List, a prosecutorial record identifying officers whose credibility could be undermined in court, and was advised to avoid active involvement in investigations or handling of physical evidence. Hakes responded the same day, attributing his Brady List placement to a body camera incident during his prior service with the Chetek Police Department involving a domestic abuse victim, and characterizing the release as a politically timed action issued three weeks before an election. Hakes stated he had discussed the underlying incident with Newell before running for sheriff and received no indication of concern at that time.

Source: Bloomer Advance (Western) | https://www.bloomeradvance.com/news/community_news/article_35c76dc6-1d89-4a0d-865b-6b16ec4265db.html

Hakes, Hollister square off in primary for Chippewa County sheriff

The Chippewa County Board recently approved the sheriff's salary at \$123,246 for 2027, rising to \$130,789 by 2030 with 2 percent annual increases, as incumbent Sheriff Travis Hakes faces deputy and court security officer Mark Hollister in the August 11, 2026 primary. Hakes won the seat in 2022 and was sworn in January 2023. Because no candidate filed from the opposing party, the primary winner will in all likelihood be sworn in as sheriff in January 2027. Hakes has faced scrutiny since spring 2023, when the board opened an investigation after a dispatcher filed a complaint on May 19, 2023; law firm von Briesen and Roper interviewed 25 people and concluded Hakes sent inappropriate texts, worked on outside businesses during shifts, was frequently absent, and failed to complete required training. In January 2024, the board stated Hakes had not cooperated with the investigation. Chippewa County District Attorney Wade Newell and five assistant district attorneys signed a letter stating Hakes should not continue as sheriff.

Source: Leader-Telegram (Western) | https://www.leadertelegram.com/townnews/police/hakes-hollister-square-off-in-primary-for-chippewa-county-sheriff/article_5fbc8183-f8ef-492b-8984-3631abd2a5e2.html

3 Washburn County sheriff candidates on Aug. 11 ballot

Former Washburn County Sheriff Dennis Stuart filed for non-candidacy and vacated the position in June 2026, and Governor Tony Evers subsequently appointed Bernard Brunkow to serve as interim sheriff until January 2027. Three candidates, Warren Tuttle, Jason Bartholomew, and Matt Prochnow, appear on the August 11, 2026 primary ballot, with the winner assuming the office effective January 2027. Bartholomew has worked for the Washburn County Sheriff's Office since 2005, serving as jailer, dispatcher, patrol deputy, and investigator since 2016. Prochnow joined the Washburn County Sheriff's Department in 1998 after six years with the Shell Lake Police Department. No candidates from the opposing party are listed on the ballot. The August 11 primary will determine which candidate advances to the general election for the permanently elected position.

Source: Spooner Advocate (Western) | https://apg-wi.com/spooner_advocate/news/local/3-washburn-county-sheriff-candidates-on-aug-11-ballot/article_1e1aba12-6f6e-43d5-bb49-a0627d5d72cd.html

Wisconsin DOJ appeals decision ordering release of all cop names

The Wisconsin Department of Justice filed a June 2026 appeal of Dane County Judge Rhonda Lanford's April 2026 ruling that the agency's denial of an open records request was unlawful and ordering release of names, birth years, zip codes, and work histories of every certified law enforcement officer in the state. The lawsuit was filed in 2023 by The Badger Project and the Invisible Institute after the department refused to fully comply with the original records request; home addresses were not sought. Plaintiff attorney Tom Kamenick, founder of the Wisconsin Transparency Project, stated the appellate ruling could take approximately one year. The department is required to file a brief supporting its appeal by August 2026. Wisconsin is one of 14 states that do not provide law enforcement officer names and work histories to the public due to legal barriers, according to the Invisible Institute. The plaintiffs argue the records are necessary to track officers who leave positions under negative circumstances and are subsequently hired elsewhere.

Source: The Badger Project (Statewide) | <https://thebadgerproject.org/2026/07/27/wisconsin-doj-appeals-decision-ordering-release-of-all-cop-names/>

Plow Restaurant in Cambridge at risk of losing liquor license as it plans to reopen

The Village of Cambridge issued a last chance agreement to Plow Restaurant owner Charles Fiesel on July 23, 2026, threatening revocation of his Class B Liquor License under a village ordinance that places license holders at risk if an establishment closes for 90 consecutive days or fails to post public hours. Village Administrator Kris Breunig delivered the agreement, which requires the restaurant to open to the public by August 31, remain open at least 12 days per month for the duration of the license, post regular business hours, submit dates and times of operation to the village by the end of October, and provide a list of beer and alcohol distributors. The last documented public opening was a December 2025 community meal. Fiesel, who has owned the Main and Water streets location since 2015, declined to sign without legal counsel when approached on July 29. Village Clerk Brian Wilson noted the ordinance was adopted specifically to prevent businesses from holding licenses without operating consistently. Fiesel has announced a soft reopening for August 5.

Source: Cambridge Enterprise Sentinel (South Central) | https://hngnews.com/leader_independent/news/local/plow-restaurant-in-cambridge-at-risk-of-losing-liquor-license-as-it-plans-to-reopen/article_60020cea-26d1-4a60-a1df-ebf07094b395.html

Dodge County judge who baked treats for juries is hanging up his robe

Dodge County Circuit Court Judge Brian Pfitzinger retired on Friday, July 25, 2026, after serving approximately 18 years on the bench. Pfitzinger was appointed to fill the seat vacated by Judge Daniel Klossner, who retired in 2007 after 24 years as a Dodge County judge. Before joining the judiciary, Pfitzinger began his legal career in 1988 as an assistant district attorney in Dodge County before moving to private practice at the firm of Doepke, Hannan and Elbert, and later co-founding Elbert and Pfitzinger. His last official act on the bench included presiding over the July 21 sentencing hearing in the Crystal Rasch murder case. His successor is Shawn Woller. Pfitzinger noted an increase in cases involving mental health issues during his time on the bench.

Source: WiscNews (South Central) | https://wiscnews.com/news/local/article_46ed3c3e-2fe5-403e-a24f-ecca5e98a7f4.html

Human Services

Newcap closure leaves northeast Wisconsin scrambling to prevent more homelessness

Newcap, a Community Action Agency serving 10 northeast Wisconsin counties, closed March 31, 2026, after filing for Chapter 11 bankruptcy and disclosing nearly \$4 million owed to creditors. The closure eliminated approximately 90 jobs and left more than 100 low-income households at risk of homelessness. At closure, Newcap operated nearly 250 beds across Brown, Florence, Marinette, Menominee, Oconto, Shawano, Forest, Langlade, Oneida, and Vilas counties, ranging from emergency shelter to permanent housing. Shawano County lost its only year-round homeless shelter. Shawano Area Matthew 25, a seasonal shelter open October 15 through May 15, reported it is still owed \$12,000 in state funds that Newcap controlled as coalition lead. Safe Haven, SAM25, and Shawano Area United Way have formed an unfunded coalition to restore Coordinated Entry access and have applied for grants to fund a housing coordinator position. No agency has been identified to permanently absorb Newcap's domestic violence housing grants.

Source: PBS Wisconsin WHA21 (Northeastern) | <https://pbswisconsin.org/news-item/newcap-closure-leaves-northeast-wisconsin-scrambling-to-prevent-more-homelessness/>

Thousands of Wisconsinites have lost food aid in largest cut in US history

Wisconsin Department of Health Services data show that 33,000 fewer Wisconsinites received SNAP benefits in April compared to July 2024, when the One Big Beautiful Bill Act took effect, while the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities SNAP tracker places the decline at approximately 24,000. The state's starting enrollment was more than 688,000 recipients in July 2024, falling to just over 655,000 by April. The federal law expanded general work requirements to cover ages 16 through 59, up from 18 through 54, and eliminated exemptions previously available to homeless individuals, veterans, and former foster youth. Feeding Wisconsin Executive Director Jackie Anderson reported demand is up 30 to 40 percent at most food banks statewide, with one location seeing a 400 percent increase. A separate Medicaid work requirement is scheduled to take effect in early 2027 for individuals ages 19 to 64. Kids Forward Government Affairs Director William Parke-Sutherland stated Wisconsin has one of the lowest SNAP error rates in the country and allocated funds to offset some federal reductions.

Source: WPR News Madison (Statewide) | <https://www.wpr.org/news/thousands-wisconsinites-have-lost-food-aid-largest-cut-us-history>

DHS: 63K Medicaid members lack documentation to meet federal work requirements next year

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services estimates that 200,000 current BadgerCare participants will be subject to federal Medicaid work requirements enacted under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, with DHS Secretary Kirsten Johnson reporting Thursday that the agency currently has no work history on file for approximately 63,000 of those members, placing them at immediate risk of coverage loss. The Trump administration published a final rule on June 1 establishing the requirements; adults ages 19 to 64 must document at least 80 hours per month of work, volunteering, schooling, or job training. New applicants face the documentation requirement beginning January 1, and current members must demonstrate compliance starting in

March at annual renewal. Wisconsin is a party to a multi-state lawsuit against the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services challenging the rule's definition of medically frail. The department plans to begin notifying current Medicaid members of the coming requirements in August and is seeking guidance from CMS before finalizing its own eligibility verification systems.

Source: WPR News Madison (Statewide) | <https://www.wpr.org/news/63k-medicaid-members-lack-documentation-meet-federal-work-requirements>

How the loss of Temporary Protected Status is being felt by Haitian immigrants in Wisconsin

The federal administration terminated Temporary Protected Status and associated work authorization for Haitian nationals, affecting an estimated 400 to 700 Haitian immigrants living in Wisconsin as of 2024. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled last month that the administration has the authority to end the status without challenge from other courts; Wisconsin's federal district courts have not yet acted on that ruling. The Department of Homeland Security notified employers that they should no longer hire workers whose authorization derived from Haitian Temporary Protected Status, and is offering affected individuals \$2,600 and a free flight to Haiti as a self-deportation incentive. Immigration attorney Marc Christopher, based in New London, said the termination is disrupting local employers including the Tyson plant in New London, which employs a significant number of Haitian workers. Christopher said community volunteers and small organizations are providing ad hoc legal clinics and donated goods but characterized the available support as insufficient.

Source: WPR News Madison (Statewide) | <https://www.wpr.org/news/loss-of-temporary-protected-status-haitian-immigrants-in-wisconsin>

After-school programs lose thousands each month as child care stabilization funding ends

The Wisconsin Legislature's Child Care Bridge Payments Program expired last month, cutting stabilization funding to approximately 90 Milwaukee Public Schools-based before-school and after-school programs that collectively received \$1.2 million in 2025. Journey House, the South Side nonprofit operating the H.W. Longfellow School Community Learning Center, received more than \$6,300 from the state in 2026 before payments ended. Statewide, Wisconsin Out of School Time Alliance lead Randy Neve estimates more than 500 before-school and after-school programs serving school-aged children are losing monthly stabilization payments. Milwaukee Recreation coordinator Leighton Cooper said the loss may force cuts to supplies and activities, elimination of staff bonuses, and staff position reductions beyond minimums required by the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families. State Sen. LaTonya Johnson, representing District 6, sponsored SB 322 to continue child care provider support, but the bill did not receive a hearing. The alliance is currently educating policymakers on the funding gap's consequences for providers and families.

Source: Wisconsin Watch (Southeastern) | <https://wisconsinwatch.org/2026/07/wisconsin-milwaukee-child-care-stabilization-funding-after-school-programs/>

State lawmakers of both parties say it's time to rethink America's fragile childcare system

A bipartisan group of 13 state lawmakers, convened through the National Conference of State Legislatures, released a 33-page report at the conference's annual summit in Chicago recommending an overhaul of the national childcare system. The report calls for greater private-sector employer participation, higher pay for childcare providers, and a review of potentially outdated regulations. Child Care Aware of America calculated an average annual childcare cost of approximately \$13,000 in 2025, with infant care averaging above \$15,000; in 38 states, childcare costs exceed in-state college tuition. Center-based infant care ranges from \$6,492 annually in Mississippi to \$27,067 in Massachusetts. Conference associate director Jenna Bannon stated that states are increasingly leading policy development as federal engagement recedes. The report identifies funding as a central challenge and calls for investment from philanthropic organizations and businesses alongside government. No Wisconsin-specific legislative action or vote was reported; the recommendations remain at the policy-proposal stage.

Source: Wausau Pilot & Review (Statewide) | <https://wausaupilotandreview.com/2026/08/01/state-lawmakers-of-both-parties-say-its-time-to-rethink-americas-fragile-childcare-system/>

Dane County's new court offers services to curb repeat offenses

Dane County Community Court began operations on May 26, some six years after county government officials began planning the initiative, according to Colleen Clark Bernhardt, director of the county's Office of Justice Reform. The treatment court, presided over by Judge Nia Trammell without a robe or elevated bench, targets repeat offenders ages 17 to 35 charged with nonviolent offenses. As of July 21, the Dane County District Attorney's Office had referred eight people to the court, and one participant had been accepted after pleading guilty and signing a court contract. District Attorney Ismael Ozanne is initially referring retail theft cases. Participants who complete the program, which may run up to 12 months and can include drug treatment, job training, and help securing housing coordinated by court coordinator Jael Currie, can have their charges dismissed or reduced. Failure to comply returns cases to the regular court system. The district attorney's office retains final authority over all referrals.

Source: WiscNews (South Central) | https://wiscnews.com/news/state-regional/wisconsin/article_4b4f43c9-d208-517c-8d27-3fbde865390c.html

Diversion and Deflection program sees tripled use

Project Hope and Dunn with Substances, a diversion and deflection initiative operating in Dunn County, reported a 282 percent increase in contacts between case workers and community members in 2025 compared to 2024. The program, managed by Aaron Bergh, deploys behavioral health officers to connect individuals struggling with mental health conditions, substance use, and homelessness to community resources before or in lieu of criminal justice involvement, functioning as a supplement to Dunn County's existing law enforcement. Dylan Crist, a behavioral health officer with the initiative, stated the program is designed to reduce deputy and officer caseload burden and lower community recidivism. The program operates under the umbrella of Dunn County's public safety and behavioral health infrastructure. Bergh announced the initiative is working to establish a situation table in fall 2026, designed to accelerate connections between individuals in need and available services.

Source: WEAU NBC13 Eau Claire (Western) | <https://www.weau.com/2026/07/29/diversion-deflection-program-sees-tripled-use/>

'People don't want to go': Madison nonprofit questions city's motive behind hotel vouchers for unhoused community

The city of Madison is distributing hotel vouchers to relocate unhoused individuals gathered at the intersection of Williamson and South Baldwin streets following the July 22 police shooting of Corey Ruiz. Dane County Board Supervisor Yogesh Chawla and District 6 Alder Davy Mayer are coordinating the city and county response, which includes work to end road closures at the site. Brenda Konkell, executive director of Madison Street Medicine, estimated between 50 and 100 unhoused people are currently present at the intersection, and the organization currently serves more than 305 clients. Chawla stated that St. Vincent de Paul, which had been closed for approximately one week due to road closures, was reopened through his and Mayer's intervention; the organization serves one in five Dane County residents and provides services including diapers and utility assistance. No vote count, ordinance identifier, or dollar figure for the hotel voucher program was reported.

Source: WMTV NBC15 Madison (South Central) | <https://www.wmtv15news.com/2026/08/01/people-dont-want-go-madison-nonprofit-questions-citys-motive-behind-hotel-vouchers-unhoused-community/>

Free breakfast and lunch extended through 2030 for all Racine Unified students

The Racine Unified School District will continue providing free breakfast and lunch to all students through 2030 under the federal Community Eligibility Provision, administered through the National School Lunch and School Breakfast programs and overseen at the state level by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. The district first adopted the provision districtwide in 2021 as a COVID-19 pandemic response measure, according to Food Service Coordinator Cheryl Herman. Twenty schools and programs participate, including three high schools and multiple K-8 schools. Under the provision's rules, no household income applications are required; the district's Identified Student Percentage is multiplied by 1.6 to determine the share of meals reimbursed at the free rate by the USDA, with the remainder reimbursed at the paid rate. School Board member Sarah Walker-Cleveland and Board President Jane Barbian acknowledged the program at a recent board meeting. Herman noted that facilities funded through the district's 2020 referendum have enabled on-site meal preparation in 95 percent of district buildings.

Source: Racine County Eye (Southeastern) | <https://racinecountye.com/2026/07/28/free-breakfast-lunch-2030-students/>

Elevator outage leaves Northern Apartment residents stranded

The Chippewa Falls fire chief is preparing to file a complaint with the state over a multi-day elevator outage at Northern Apartments that has left disabled and elderly residents stranded on upper floors. The elevator has been out of commission after a part broke, with a posted sign warning that operating it could seriously injure someone. Apartment management, ACC Management Group Inc., has previously cited a \$60,000 repair cost as a budget constraint. Kari Mankus of Compass IL, an organization serving seniors and people with disabilities, said the outage may violate the Americans with Disabilities Act, specifically the requirement that residents unable to use stairs be relocated to first-floor units. At least one resident required Chippewa Falls Fire Department assistance to reach her third-floor unit after returning from the hospital. WEAU

made multiple calls and emails to the management company and visited its on-site office, which was closed. No timeline for repair or relocation action was reported.

Source: WEAU NBC13 Eau Claire (Western) | <https://www.weau.com/2026/07/31/elevator-outage-leaves-northern-apartment-residents-stranded/>

Mosquitoes Test Positive For West Nile in Wauwatosa

The Wauwatosa health department announced that mosquitoes have tested positive for West Nile Virus, the first positive result since the city's surveillance program began last month. The announcement follows earlier positive tests from mosquitoes elsewhere in Milwaukee County during July 2026. As of the date of the report, no human cases of West Nile Virus have been confirmed in Wisconsin. Health officials issued a public precaution advisory in response to the findings. No specific treatment thresholds, spraying decisions, or formal public health orders were reported in the announcement.

Source: Seehafer News (Southeastern) | <https://www.seehafernews.com/2026/07/31/mosquitoes-test-positive-for-west-nile-in-wauwatosa/>

School Districts

Feil approved as next interim superintendent

The Watertown Unified School District Board of Education voted Monday, July 28, 2026, to appoint James G. Feil as interim superintendent in a one-year appointment, with seven members voting in favor and one abstention. Board members Sam Ouwenneel, Tammy Fournier, Carl Schwarze, Julianne Appling, Christina DeGrave, Dan Voeltner, and David Handyside cast affirmative votes; Board member Craig Wortman abstained, citing insufficient time with Feil as a candidate compared to two other finalists he had spent considerably more hours evaluating. Board President Laurie Hoffmann was absent due to home maintenance issues but stated she would have voted in favor. Feil officially joined the district August 1, beginning in a remote capacity before assuming full leadership as the district's chief executive officer and primary board advisor while a permanent superintendent search proceeds. He succeeds a co-interim arrangement between Director of Special Education Sarah Oudenhoven and Director of Innovation, Technology, Data and Strategy Jason Bull, who led the district since January 2026.

Source: Watertown Daily Times (South Central) | https://www.wdtimes.com/news/local/feil-approved-as-next-interim-superintendent/article_0dceb256-ee75-434b-beea-d0f1068b48d9.html

Athletic director, finalist for interim superintendent leave School District of Beloit

The Beloit School Board received a resignation list on Tuesday containing 30 employees, including two notable departures from the School District of Beloit. Beloit Memorial High School Athletic Director Dan Gratz resigned effective June 16, ending a tenure of slightly less than two years. Also on the list was Kerry Wilson, principal of Robinson Elementary, whose resignation was effective May 15. Wilson had joined the district within the past year and was a finalist for the district's interim superintendent position, which ultimately went to Wayne Anderson in November. The district declined to comment on either resignation. Neither Gratz nor Wilson had updated their professional profiles to reflect new employment at the time of reporting. No replacements for either the athletic director or Robinson Elementary principal positions were announced.

Source: Beloit Daily News (South Central) | https://www.beloitdailynews.com/news/education/athletic-director-finalist-for-interim-superintendent-leave-school-district-of-beloit/article_01c67039-5113-4460-8b2e-645fe448cec5.html

Barron Area School District seeks board member

Orin Thompson resigned from the Barron Area School District Board of Education, notifying Board President Brittany Stephens of his resignation on July 13, 2026, with the seat vacating effective August 1, 2026. Thompson represented the Dallas area and served three terms over nine years. The district is now accepting applications to fill the unexpired term, which runs through spring 2027. Applicants must reside in the Dallas area. The application deadline is Friday, August 7, 2026. The board appointment will be made by the existing Board of Education members following the close of the application period.

Source: Barron News-Shield (Western) | https://news-shield.com/news/free_news/article_6fbe6e32-37c1-407e-b4d9-561325e189c3.html

Racine Unified adds teacher collaboration time to 2026-27 calendar

The Racine Unified School District Board of Education approved a 2026-27 school calendar incorporating 25 early-release Wednesdays to provide teachers with dedicated professional learning community collaboration time. Deputy Chief of Employee Relations Keri Hanstedt stated the early-release schedule reduces total instructional time to more closely align with Wisconsin's statutory minimums of 1,050 annual hours for grades one through six and 1,137 annual hours for grades seven through twelve. The early-release period runs from September 16, 2026, through May 26, 2027. During the additional hour created by early dismissal, staff will conduct collaborative meetings focused on reviewing student learning data and sharing instructional strategies. Bus schedules will be adjusted on affected Wednesdays. The district will also make its extended learning after-school program available on those Wednesdays for families of kindergarten through fifth-grade students requiring child care. Chief of Communication and Community Engagement Stacy Tapp confirmed both the transportation and child care accommodations.

Source: Racine County Eye (Southeastern) | <https://racinecountye.com/2026/08/01/racine-unified-teacher-calendar/>

Monroe school board removes milk from morning snack time

The School District of Monroe Board of Education voted 5-3 on July 27 to eliminate milk service during the morning nutritional snack break, reducing daily milk offerings from three or four opportunities to two. Superintendent Joe Monroe cited both financial cost to the district and staff burden as the drivers of the change; the reduction plan also includes eliminating 2.5 elementary custodian positions tied to snack-break distribution duties. Separately, Monroe informed the board that the Monroe Middle School chiller has failed after 26 years of service, exceeding its 15 to 20 year expected lifespan, with compressor replacement estimated at \$110,000, a full repair potentially reaching \$180,000 to \$200,000 with no guaranteed longevity, a temporary rental chiller costing \$25,000 per month, and a new unit running \$360,000 to \$385,000 plus approximately \$15,000 in installation costs. Business Manager Ron Olson said approximately \$180,000 will come from the long-term maintenance budget. The board also approved a continued reciprocal agreement with Monroe Parks and Recreation for athletic field use.

Source: Monroe Times (South Central) | <https://themonroetimes.com/local-news/monroe-school-board-removes-milk-from-morning-snack-time/>

Former finance director at Cadott School District sentenced in federal embezzlement case

A federal court sentenced Danielle Mittermeyer, former finance director of what is now the Alma Center-Humbird-Merrillan School District, formerly the Lincoln School District, to two years in prison on July 29, 2026, for embezzlement. Mittermeyer had pleaded guilty in May 2026 to stealing more than \$196,000 from the district. The court also ordered \$261,000 in restitution and three years of supervised release following her prison term. Mittermeyer had been placed on administrative leave in January after her federal indictment. The Cadott district administrator confirmed that Mittermeyer no longer works for that district. No further procedural steps were reported.

Source: WEAU NBC13 Eau Claire (Western) | <https://www.weau.com/2026/07/29/former-finance-director-cadott-school-district-sentenced-federal-embezzlement-case/>

Oginski gives monthly superintendent update

At its July 20 meeting, the Antigo School District Board of Education received a monthly superintendent update from Glenda Oginski covering several active governance and operational matters. Oginski reported that she and Buildings and Grounds Director Jake Leiterman have been meeting with Blue Design Group to finalize design plans for the new district office, including furniture, fixtures, and equipment selections across all referendum projects. Construction at John H. Bradley Elementary School is ongoing. The district's policy committee met to review updates required for compliance with Wisconsin Act 89, and revised policies will advance through the board's standard review and approval process. On July 16, the administrative team conducted first-round interviews for the vacant Antigo High School principal position, using a structured format that included a consistent question set and a data-based leadership plan presentation. Second-round interviews are being scheduled and will include district administrators, staff, parents, community representatives, and board members before a final selection is made.

Source: Antigo Daily Journal (Central/Northern) | https://www.antigojournal.com/news/oginski-gives-monthly-superintendent-update/article_df3fca54-b9e8-488e-ae7d-fe97b2f6c144.html

Tennis court replacement plan questioned

The Medford School Board is considering options for replacing deteriorating tennis courts at Medford Area Senior High School, with a decision unresolved as of the July 29, 2026 meeting. The existing asphalt base is cracking and has raised injury concerns, prompting the district to plan reconstruction no earlier than the following summer. A third location or configuration option was introduced at the meeting, leaving the board without consensus on the number of courts to build or their placement on the campus. Cost and snow removal logistics were identified as factors driving board members' concerns about the proposals already under review. No vote was taken and no dollar figures or resolution identifiers were reported in the published portion of the article. The board's next procedural step is to continue evaluating the three options before scheduling a formal decision on the project's scope and site.

Source: Medford Star News (Central/Northern) | <https://www.centralwinews.com/a-main/2026/07/29/tennis-court-replacement-plan-questioned/?destination=star-news>

SPASH to implement AI training after receiving major grant

The Sentry Insurance Foundation awarded a portion of a \$1.5 million grant to the Stevens Point Area School District to fund The AI Forge, a technology initiative covering AI ethics, cybersecurity, data analytics, and digital design through 2028. The grant, distributed among four Portage County schools including Pacelli Catholic Schools, Stevens Point Christian Academy, and St. Paul Lutheran School, is part of a recurring three-year funding cycle the foundation has maintained since 2009, through which it has distributed more than \$18 million to Stevens Point area schools. The district's share will establish an AI Innovation Lab with industry-standard tools and fund the purchase of AI robotics kits for students at Stevens Point Area Senior High School. Jeff Mlsna, Director of Secondary Education for Educational Services, confirmed the robotics kits are positioned as a foundation for a second-year program phase. The district plans to host a parent engagement forum on AI literacy in the fall as the next scheduled implementation step.

Source: WSAW CBS7 Wausau (Central/Northern) | <https://www.wsaw.com/2026/07/29/spash-implement-ai-training-after-receiving-major-grant/>

Anonymous \$100k donation jump starts all-day 4K

At its July 21 meeting, the Plymouth Board of Education accepted an anonymous \$100,000 donation to fund the startup of an all-day 4K program at Plymouth Forest Montessori School. The board also approved a memorandum of understanding governing the partnership structure for the initiative. The donation is described as covering much of the start-up cost for the program, which will operate at Plymouth Forest Montessori School. No vote count, resolution identifier, effective date, or additional financial figures were reported in the available article text, and no further procedural step was identified.

Source: Plymouth Review (Southeastern) | <https://www.plymouth-review.com/articles/anonymous-100k-donation-jump-starts-all-day-4k/>

Bank pledges \$100k for middle school gym naming rights

At its July 20 meeting, the Elkhart Lake-Glenbeulah School District accepted a \$100,000 donation from National Exchange Bank and Trust in exchange for naming rights to the district's newly constructed middle school gymnasium. The gymnasium will be named after the bank as a condition of the pledge. The same meeting featured presentations from the district's three principals on their recommendations regarding new cell phone and communication rules, which take effect when students return to class on September 1. No additional vote counts, resolution identifiers, or further procedural steps are reported in the available article text.

Source: Plymouth Review (Southeastern) | <https://www.plymouth-review.com/articles/bank-pledges-100k-for-middle-school-gym-naming-rights/>

How Beaver Dam is prioritizing safety at its new middle school

The Beaver Dam School District is constructing a new middle school off South Spring Street, approved through a 2024 referendum, with the project on time and on budget for completion the following summer to serve students in the 2027-28 school year. Superintendent Mark DiStefano stated the building will be enclosed by early fall 2026, with interior work continuing through subsequent months. The campus will include two pedestrian path access points, one along Spring Street and Highway G on the east side running from Judson Drive, and one along the west

side of Lombardi Lane. Approximately three bus routes are anticipated to serve students outside the walkable distance zone, with the exact number depending on ridership and routing. Site landscaping plans include restoration of an eastern meadow with Wisconsin grasses and wildflowers, along with planting of more than 150 native trees including oak, hickory, and maple. A buffer between the school and the rear of St. Patrick's Cemetery will use fencing, berms, landscaping, and plantings.

Source: WiscNews (South Central) | https://wiscnews.com/news/community/bdc/article_962bdfbd-aa74-4ca6-8b9e-e1a8f911e589.html

A Wisconsin school district made summer school fun. Now 2,600 kids show up.

Pulaski Community School District operates a six-week summer school program that enrolled more than 2,600 students in 2026, representing 68 percent of the district's approximately 3,800-student enrollment. The free program, administered through Pulaski Area Community Education and led by Director Mark Heck, has run for 22 years and is headquartered at Pulaski Community Middle School. The program offers courses ranging from academic remediation in reading and math to electives including swimming, cooking, knitting, American Sign Language, and science experiments. State funding rules that once restricted eligible programming to a few hours per day were subsequently changed to permit all-day, all-summer funding for qualifying programs, enabling the current full-day model. Registration for popular classes fills within minutes, and the program serves as a free child care resource for the community. No upcoming structural or budget actions were reported.

Source: WPR News Madison (Northeastern) | <https://www.wpr.org/news/pulaski-wisconsin-school-district-free-summer-school-kids>

Community weighs in on finalists for Madison's César Chávez Elementary School renaming

The Madison Metropolitan School District held a virtual public hearing July 30, 2026, as part of the formal renaming process for César Chávez Elementary School, after a Citizens Naming Committee narrowed 76 name submissions to 16 finalists. The renaming process was initiated following a New York Times investigation detailing allegations of sexual abuse against César Chávez. Associate Superintendent of Elementary Programming Chelsey Tubbs noted that district naming policy permits schools to be named after a deceased prominent individual, a geographic location, or a concept, virtue, or value. During the hearing, Maple Grove Elementary was the most-discussed finalist with approximately 35 comments; Roberto G. Sánchez Elementary received about 14 comments; and Ice Age Trail Elementary drew approximately 7 comments. Community members have 14 days from the hearing to submit additional written comments. The Citizens Naming Committee will then reconvene to narrow the list to no more than four names for submission to the Board of Education, which will make the final decision.

Source: WMTV NBC15 Madison (South Central) | <https://www.wmtv15news.com/2026/07/31/community-weighs-finalists-madisons-csar-chvez-elementary-school-renaming/>

Menasha schools' donation drive carrying greater need after devastating tornado

The Menasha Joint School District, which serves approximately 3,100 students, canceled its annual Bluejay Back 2 School Bash donation event, normally scheduled for August 11 at

Maplewood Middle School, due to tornado damage and ongoing building assessments following Monday's storm. District buildings remain closed pending safety evaluations to determine whether facilities are ready for the school year. The donation drive, relocated to the Mobile Health Team office in Neenah, has expanded its accepted items beyond clothing to include school supplies, personal hygiene products, gift cards, and small toys to address heightened post-tornado need. Mobile Health Team physician and owner Ann Liebeskind confirmed the office was selected because it is outside the tornado damage zone and accessible to donors. Organizers have not yet determined a replacement date or location for families to collect donated items, and that decision is contingent on when district buildings are cleared for staff reentry.

Source: WLUK FOX11 Green Bay (Northeastern) | <https://fox11online.com/news/making-a-difference/fox-cities-back-to-school-fair-carrying-greater-need-after-devastating-tornado>

State-Local Interface

Wisconsin appeals court overturns ruling that had restored collective bargaining power

A three-judge Wisconsin Court of Appeals panel voted 2-1 on Wednesday to overturn a December 2024 Dane County Circuit Court ruling by Judge Jacob Frost that had declared Act 10 unconstitutional. The appeals court held that the challenged provisions do not violate equal protection guarantees of the Wisconsin Constitution and that the Legislature had a rational basis for exempting certain public safety workers from the law's restrictions. Act 10, enacted in 2011, limits most public employee unions to bargaining solely over base wage increases capped at the rate of inflation, bars automatic dues withdrawal, requires annual union recertification votes, and mandates higher employee contributions for health insurance and retirement benefits. The December 2024 ruling striking down the law had been stayed pending appeal, so the decision does not alter the law's current operative status. The lawsuit was filed by seven unions and three union leaders. Unions have signaled they will appeal to the Wisconsin Supreme Court, which has held a liberal majority since 2023.

Source: Wisconsin Watch (Statewide) | <https://wisconsinwatch.org/2026/07/wisconsin-appeals-court-overturns-ruling-collective-bargaining-power-act-10-unions/>

Appeals court overturns ruling declaring Act 10 unconstitutional

Wisconsin's 2nd District Court of Appeals overturned a Dane County Circuit Court ruling in a 2-1 decision issued July 30, 2026, reinstating Act 10, the 2011 law that eliminated most collective bargaining rights for most public employees. Judges Mark Gundrum and Shelley Grogan formed the majority, with Gundrum writing the opinion; Judge Lisa Neubauer dissented. The majority applied a rational basis standard, concluding the Legislature could have reasonably determined that the public safety employees exempted from Act 10's restrictions represented the minimum number essential to maintain public safety during a potential mass illegal strike. The overturned ruling, issued by Dane County Judge Jacob Frost in late 2024, had found Act 10 violated the state constitution's equal protections clause by exempting certain public safety workers while excluding others in similar roles. Neubauer's dissent argued the exemptions were incoherent, citing the inclusion of state motor vehicle inspectors but exclusion of Capitol Police. The ruling returns Act 10 to full force unless further appealed.

Source: WFHR 1320 AM Wisconsin Rapids (Statewide) | <https://www.wfhr.com/news/2026/07/30/appeals-court-overturns-ruling-declaring-act-10-unconstitutional>

Gov. Evers Declares State of Emergency in Response to Severe Storms throughout Eastern Wisconsin

Gov. Tony Evers signed Executive Order #300 on July 28, 2026, declaring a state of emergency in response to severe storms that struck Eastern Wisconsin on July 27, 2026. Preliminary surveys indicated at least one confirmed tornado caused EF3-level damage in the Menasha and Appleton area. Associated impacts include high winds, hail, power outages, and disruptions to public water systems. The State Emergency Operations Center was elevated to a Level 3 on July 27 prior to the declaration. The declaration is effective immediately and is intended to ensure state agencies, local partners, utilities, and emergency management officials can coordinate resources and respond to storm damage. Wisconsin Emergency Management, a division of the Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs, is working with counties to assess damage and determine resource needs. Multiple fire services, law enforcement agencies, public works departments, utilities, and volunteer organizations have already deployed to assist recovery operations in affected areas.

Source: WFHR 1320 AM Wisconsin Rapids (Statewide) | <https://www.wfhr.com/news/2026/07/28/gov-evers-declares-state-of-emergency-in-response-to-severe-storms-throughout-eastern-wisconsin>

Evers activates National Guard to aid with Eastern Wisconsin storm cleanup

Governor Tony Evers activated the Wisconsin National Guard on July 30, 2026, to support storm recovery in Winnebago County following the severe storms that struck Eastern Wisconsin on Monday. At least one confirmed EF3 tornado touched down in the Menasha and Appleton area, producing high winds, hail, widespread power outages, and disruption to public water systems. Evers had previously signed an executive order declaring a state of emergency to coordinate the multi-agency response. National Guard members will assist local authorities with debris removal, traffic and safety support, wellness services, and other functions requested by county officials. Utility crews are actively working to restore power to thousands of affected residents, and community shelters are housing displaced individuals. Evers toured storm damage in Menasha on July 30 and met with local officials, first responders, and volunteers to assess ongoing recovery needs.

Source: WKBT CBS8 La Crosse (Statewide) | https://www.news8000.com/weather/weather_news/evers-activates-national-guard-to-aid-with-eastern-wisconsin-storm-cleanup/article_b148c47a-a8d7-4144-8b80-adf2950b7431.html

Wisconsin Congressional Republicans visit tornado damage in Menasha

A bipartisan group of Wisconsin state lawmakers sent a letter to the President and FEMA on July 31, 2026, requesting federal disaster aid for communities struck by the Fox Valley tornado. On the same day, U.S. Representative Glenn Grothman and U.S. Senator Ron Johnson visited Menasha to survey damage and receive a briefing from Winnebago County Sheriff John Matz and sheriff's office deputies on recovery progress. Representative Tony Wied also visited and appears in Grothman's social media post, though Menasha falls outside his district. The congressional visits followed Governor Tony Evers's July 30 visit to Menasha, during which he mobilized the Wisconsin National Guard in response to the tornado damage. The pending federal aid request to FEMA represents the next formal procedural step in the disaster response process.

Source: WLUK FOX11 Green Bay (Statewide) | <https://fox11online.com/news/local/wisconsin-congressional-republicans-visit-tornado-damage-in-menasha-glenn-grothman-tony-wied-ron-johnson-evers-fox-valley-storm>

State provides rural infrastructure with funding

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation and Gov. Tony Evers announced that 101 communities will receive nearly \$30 million through the newly created Local Small Structures Improvement Program to repair or replace aging culverts and small bridges on local roads. The \$30 million was set aside from \$150 million allocated to the Agricultural Roads Improvement Program in the 2025-27 biennial budget. Projects were selected from 430 applications totaling \$133.7 million in requests. Combined with prior Agricultural Roads Improvement Program awards, the two programs have now funded 221 projects across 64 of Wisconsin's 72 counties. In the South Central Wisconsin region, awards include Green County at \$359,100, the Town of Adams in Green County at \$119,700, Lafayette County at \$403,469, the Town of Kendall in Lafayette County at \$260,931, the Town of Avon in Rock County at \$189,000, and the Town of Spring Valley in Rock County at \$197,910, each receiving a 90 percent state share. An initial \$12.5 million inventory assessed more than 16,500 small structures statewide to identify eligibility.

Source: Monroe Times (Statewide) | <https://themonroetimes.com/local-news/state-provides-rural-infrastructure-with-funding/>

Gov. Evers, WEDC highlight \$229 million investment across Wisconsin

The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation invested \$229 million across 67 of Wisconsin's 72 counties in fiscal year 2026, which ended June 30, 2026, Governor Tony Evers and WEDC Secretary and Chief Executive Officer John W. Miller announced July 30, 2026. Enterprise Zone and Business Development Tax Credit incentives totaled more than \$132 million across 40 projects statewide; the Eli Lilly expansion in Kenosha County received up to \$100 million in Enterprise Zone tax credits, the largest such credit in state history, tied to a \$4 billion project expected to create 750 jobs. The corporation authorized a record \$32.1 million in Business Development Tax Credits to 39 other businesses. Five counties, Waukesha, Sauk, Richland, Wood, and Sheboygan, received nearly \$10 million to convert former University of Wisconsin facilities into housing and commercial space. Seven municipalities including Montello, Necedah, Princeton, and De Soto received first-round community-based development grants for downtown redevelopment and housing.

Source: WiscNews (Statewide) | https://wiscnews.com/community/article_fc00d752-a841-55ed-9dd3-c1c56f00ddb2.html

Evers highlights clean fleet policy and clean energy efforts

Gov. Tony Evers on July 30, 2026, announced a Clean Fleet Policy requiring Wisconsin state agencies to purchase alternative fuel vehicles, including electric vehicles or plug-in hybrids, for all new fleet acquisitions unless an approved exemption is granted. The policy was developed in partnership with the Office of Sustainability and Clean Energy and is tied to Executive Order #38 and the state's 2022 Clean Energy Plan, which sets a goal of 100 percent carbon-free electricity in Wisconsin by 2050. The state fleet comprises just over 6,000 vehicles, of which only 14 percent are currently alternative fuel vehicles. The policy encourages lifecycle cost analyses to identify the most cost-effective vehicle options. Separately, the state plans to purchase approximately 225,000 renewable energy certificates annually for 20 years beginning in January 2031,

representing 225,000 megawatt-hours of renewable electricity per year. The certificate procurement is being conducted through an active request for proposals, with proposals sought from Wisconsin utilities and renewable energy projects.

Source: Journal Times (Statewide) | https://journaltimes.com/news/community/article_cc4f5fc4-fbf0-5a19-8883-04b9e4c2912d.html

Evers approves rule changes to allow qualified RNs to teach clinical courses

Governor Tony Evers approved an emergency rule change to Wisconsin's nursing school faculty approval process, allowing qualified Registered Nurses without a master's degree in nursing to teach clinical courses if they meet specified criteria. The change follows a recommendation from the Governor's Task Force on the Healthcare Workforce, which Evers established in 2024 and which produced 10 recommendations and 26 action items aimed at addressing the state's healthcare workforce shortages. Previously, a master's degree in nursing was generally required to teach clinical courses in nursing programs. The new pathway aligns Wisconsin with at least 12 other states' nursing faculty accreditation standards, including Michigan. Supporting organizations include the Wisconsin Hospital Association, the Wisconsin Nurses Association, the Association of Nursing Education of Wisconsin, and nursing deans at Marquette University and Northeast Wisconsin Technical College. The Board of Nursing will continue promulgating a permanent rule on faculty accreditation standards, with a public hearing on the draft permanent rule scheduled for September 10 at 9:30 a.m.

Source: Tomahawk Leader (Statewide) | <https://www.tomahawkleader.com/stories/evers-approves-rule-changes-to-allow-qualified-rns-to-teach-clinical-courses,346867>

We Energies says Oracle dispute won't derail Port Washington data center

The Wisconsin Public Service Commission's April 2026 approval of a credit-rating threshold for very large customers of We Energies, requiring data center operators to hold a AAA-minus rating or post collateral as a backstop, has triggered a legal challenge from Oracle, which co-develops the Port Washington hyperscale campus with OpenAI and Vantage. Oracle, whose S&P Global credit rating was downgraded to BBB-minus on July 9, sued the commission in Ozaukee County Circuit Court, asking a judge to set aside, reverse, and remand the requirement on grounds the commission exceeded its authority. The collateral obligation could cost Oracle more than \$100 million per year. The commission earlier this month declined We Energies' separate request to reopen the credit-rating rule. WEC Energy Group Chief Executive Officer Scott Lauber told investors the Port Washington facility remains on schedule to come online as soon as late 2027 and said existing collateral arrangements are sufficient if Oracle's rating falls further. We Energies is an interested party in the lawsuit but did not join Oracle as a plaintiff.

Source: Wisconsin Watch (Statewide) | <https://wisconsinwatch.org/2026/07/wisconsin-we-energies-oracle-dispute-port-washington-data-center-on-schedule-legal-challenge-credit-rating/>

Enbridge pipeline trespassed on Wisconsin tribal land, must be moved, US appeals court finds

The 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled July 30 that Enbridge committed trespass by running its Line 5 pipeline approximately 12 miles under the Bad River Band of the Lake Superior Tribe of Chippewa Indians reservation in northern Wisconsin, affirming that the pipeline must be rerouted

but extending the deadline beyond the district court's original three-year window, which expired last month. Writing for a three-judge panel, Circuit Judge Michael Scudder directed U.S. District Judge William Conley in Madison to impose measures ensuring Enbridge reroutes as soon as possible. The court ordered a recalculation of the \$5.15 million restitution award Conley had issued following a June 2023 non-jury trial, finding Conley abused his discretion by double-counting the company's trespass profits and its deferred reroute expenses. The appeals court declined to hold Enbridge liable for nuisance, ruling federal law preempted that claim. Line 5 carries up to 540,000 barrels of oil per day through the Great Lakes region. The Bad River Band filed suit in 2019 after out-of-court negotiations failed.

Source: WSAU 550 AM / 99.9 FM Wausau (Statewide) | <https://wsau.com/2026/07/30/enbridge-pipeline-trespassed-on-wisconsin-tribal-land-must-be-moved-us-appeals-court-finds/>

Wisconsin immigrant's case breaks appeals court split on mandatory detention rule

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 7th Circuit issued a 2-1 ruling Thursday rejecting the federal administration's mandatory detention policy for immigrants in removal proceedings, resolving a months-long split within the court. The decision may allow hundreds of ICE detainees across Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin to seek bond hearings in immigration court. The case centered on Jaciel Cirrus Rojas, a Mexican national apprehended in Racine in June 2025 as collateral during an ICE operation targeting a different individual. Eastern District of Wisconsin Judge Brett Ludwig had denied Cirrus Rojas a bond hearing via habeas corpus petition in October 2024, and the ACLU of Wisconsin appealed that denial. Wisconsin's Eastern and Western District courts received roughly 100 habeas petitions over the past year, with approximately 30 cases remaining open as of Thursday. The 7th Circuit joins five other federal appeals courts in ruling against the policy, while two courts have sided with the administration. Judge Diane Sykes's dissent anticipates Supreme Court review.

Source: Wisconsin Watch (Statewide) | <https://wisconsinwatch.org/2026/07/wisconsin-ice-immigration-detainees-case-appeals-court-split-mandatory-detention-rule/>

Wisconsin Elections Commission Issues Advisory on Prediction Market Contracts

Wisconsin Elections Commission member Ann Jacobs stated that a commission advisory holds that buying and selling prediction market contracts on election outcomes violates state law governing bets and voting. Jacobs, a commission member with formal authority over state election administration guidance, discussed the advisory in a July 31, 2026 interview with PBS Wisconsin's Here and Now program. The article does not report a vote count, a specific statutory citation, a dollar figure, or an effective date for the advisory, and no next procedural step is reported.

Source: PBS Wisconsin WHA21 (Statewide) | <https://pbswisconsin.org/news-item/ann-jacobs-on-prediction-markets-and-wisconsin-election-law/>

31 states decide to join federal school choice program

Wisconsin is among the states that have not opted into the federal Education Freedom Scholarship Program, after Gov. Tony Evers vetoed legislation that would have required state participation. The program, established through the One Big Beautiful Bill Act signed in 2025, creates a federal income tax credit of up to \$1,700 annually for individuals who donate to certified

Scholarship Granting Organizations, which then distribute funds to families for education expenses including tuition, tutoring, and instructional materials. A January 2027 deadline applies to all states considering participation. As of publication, 31 states have opted in, while 19 states and Washington, D.C. have not. Wisconsin students are ineligible to receive scholarships funded through the federal initiative as a result of non-participation, though Wisconsin taxpayers may still claim the federal tax credit by donating to organizations operating in participating states. No further Wisconsin legislative action on the measure is reported.

Source: Barron News-Shield (Statewide) | https://news-shield.com/news/national/article_59d1e511-20a5-5a32-b57b-d90a4df0de34.html

DWD warns of scams targeting injured workers

The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development issued a public alert on July 29, 2026, warning of a possible multi-state fraud scheme targeting injured workers, primarily Spanish-speaking individuals. Fraudsters pose as fake agencies using names such as Workers' Compensation Board and communicate through email domains including workcompcourt.org. Victims are directed to attend fraudulent online hearings via platforms such as WhatsApp, Zoom, or Teams, where actors portraying a judge, bailiff, and attorneys lead victims to believe they have been awarded compensation but must pay fees to finalize the case. The department noted that the Wisconsin Worker's Compensation Division schedules hearings only through written letters, that all representing attorneys must be licensed in Wisconsin, and that all department correspondence telephone numbers carry Wisconsin area codes. Individuals who receive suspicious communications are directed to contact a worker's compensation specialist at 608-266-1340, and potential identity theft victims are referred to the Consumer Protection Hotline at 800-422-7128.

Source: Antigo Daily Journal (Statewide) | https://www.antigojournal.com/news/dwd-warns-of-scams-targeting-injured-workers/article_6e070f75-92e0-494b-a8f6-737e5949f8c0.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.
