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# Wisconsin LocalGov Hub Briefing

## *October 24 to October 31, 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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## Neighborhood Services shares update on Downtown EC's paid parking ordinance

Eau Claire Parking Administrator Aaron Roths reported that paid downtown street parking, which launched Aug. 1, generated more than $32,000 in its first month, with September and October revenue remaining within roughly $1,000 of that figure. Enforcement of citations began Oct. 15, delayed from the original schedule due to kiosk coin validator failures and Passport app syncing issues since corrected. Feedback from the first monthly parking meeting included requests for additional signage and clarification of 15-minute quick-stop zones. The city's Economic Development Division is preparing a vacancy rate report, with Roths indicating a 10 to 15 percent retail vacancy rate would signal a need for policy review.

Source: Leader-Telegram (Western) | https://www.leadertelegram.com/news/neighborhood-services-shares-update-on-downtown-ecs-paid-parking-ordinance/article_667f1f1f-5bc3-4911-b5fe-5817723b1428.html

## Eau Claire hosts first monthly meeting on paid parking

Eau Claire held its first monthly downtown paid parking meeting approximately two months after the program launched, with a handful of business owners raising concerns about enforcement hours, signage, kiosk placement, and employee safety. Parking Administrator Aaron Roths said policy issues will be forwarded to the city council. A potential shift to 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. enforcement hours was discussed. Roths said the city aims to resolve operational issues for residents and visitors.

Source: WEAU NBC13 Eau Claire (Western) | https://www.weau.com/2026/10/27/eau-claire-hosts-first-monthly-meeting-paid-parking/

## City borrows $8 million

The Stanley Common Council, meeting in special session Oct. 20, unanimously approved Resolution 2026-006 authorizing $8 million in general obligation promissory notes and note anticipation notes at 4.75 percent interest, maturing Nov. 1, 2029, and callable after two years. The borrowing covers the gap between city project payouts and state reimbursement, primarily for the central water treatment plant and Maple Street, and retires a prior $4 million loan taken out last year for the same purpose.

Source: Stanley Republican (Western) | https://stanleyrepublican.com/stories/untitled,211460

## 2027 city budget hearing planned Nov. 16

Stanley's public hearing on the proposed 2027 city budget is scheduled for Nov. 16 at 7 p.m. in city hall. The proposed budget totals $2,746,048.13 in revenues and expenditures, a 1.5 percent decrease from 2026. Revenue includes $943,000 in taxes and $1,550,132.13 in intergovernmental revenues. Notable expenditure changes include public safety up 5.34 percent to $847,472, health and human services up 39.57 percent to $25,750, and general government down 7.38 percent to

$731,725. Exact mill rates for Chippewa and Clark County portions are expected in early November.

Source: Stanley Republican (Western) | https://stanleyrepublican.com/stories/2027-city-budget-hearing-planned-nov-16,210748

## CVTC approves tax levy for 2026-2027

The Chippewa Valley Technical College district board approved its 2026-2027 tax levy at its Wednesday meeting, setting the mill rate at approximately 62.15 cents per $1,000 of property value, down from 63.88 cents the prior year. The total levy increased 4.98 percent to $30,767,570 from $29,307,087. The previously approved 2026-2027 budget set total expenditures at $115,475,407 against $104,107,191 in revenue. Levy information will now be transmitted to municipalities for inclusion in the tax roll.

Source: Leader-Telegram (Western) | https://www.leadertelegram.com/news/local/cvtc-approves-tax-levy-for-2026-2027/article_3b1548c8-696c-4f02-b125-ca9d9a31e9d1.html

## Challenge for county isn't an onus for taxpayers

Ozaukee County Administrator Jason Dzwinel presented the proposed 2027 budget to supervisors, proposing a tax levy of $23.52 million, up $335,224 or 1.45 percent from 2026, while the county tax rate drops 7 cents, or 5.79 percent, to $1.08 per $1,000 of equalized value. Operating costs rise $550,000 or 2.57 percent to $21.94 million, while debt costs fall $214,776 or 11.99 percent to $1.58 million following earlier debt prepayment. The Sheriff's Office, at $17.4 million in levy support, remains the largest department, with its budget increasing $766,000 or 4 percent. Human Services levy support rises $685,000 to approximately $6.4 million, up 12 percent. The Executive Committee meets November 2 to finalize the budget, followed by a public hearing; full County Board adoption is scheduled for November 4.

Source: Ozaukee Press (Southeastern) | https://ozaukeepress.com/content/challenge-county-isn%E2%80%99t-onus-taxpayers

## Anonymous donor gifts $5 million to Lake Geneva for Hillmoor Park overhaul

Lake Geneva City Council voted 7-2 to accept a $5 million matching gift from an anonymous donor for development of Hillmoor Park on the former Hillmoor Golf Course property. The donation is structured as a dollar-for-dollar match, requiring the city to raise $5 million to unlock the full pledge. Alder Joel Hoiland, who lives adjacent to the site, opposed acceptance citing concerns about donor anonymity. Initial construction could begin next year.

Source: WTMJ 4 NBC Milwaukee (Southeastern) | https://www.tmj4.com/news/local-news/county-reporting/walworth-county/anonymous-donor-gifts-5-million-to-lake-geneva-for-hillmoor-park-overhaul

## Madison finances steady post-referendum, enable new city investments

A Wisconsin Policy Forum brief on Madison's proposed 2027 budget finds general and library fund spending would total $477.5 million, a 5.5 percent increase over the prior year, while the property tax levy would grow to $337.9 million, up $11.2 million (3.4 percent). Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway's

proposal funds a new ambulance company, a northeast-side library, and employee raises, and would implement body cameras for most police officers with a $350,000 Madison Community Foundation grant. Madison Metro Transit remains stressed, with 2027 fare and other revenues projected 16.2 percent below 2019 levels; the budget includes a $25.5 million general fund transfer to address the shortfall. City reserves remain above target but the long-term plan calls for drawdowns. The Common Council will take up the budget in coming weeks.

Source: The Daily Reporter (South Central) | https://dailyreporter.com/2026/10/30/madison-finances-steady-post-referendum-new-investments/

### Wausau mayor promises credit card limits, new policy following Pilot investigation

Wausau Mayor Doug Diny issued a statement Oct. 22 committing the city to purchase caps on its 65 credit cards, refunds of sales tax paid in error, and replacement of its one-page card policy. The statement followed a Wausau Pilot & Review investigation, published Oct. 21, that found $408,500 in combined monthly limits with no transaction caps or merchant restrictions, along with personal purchases and more than $1,000 in sales tax paid despite the city's exemption. Finance Director MaryAnne Groat said the city uses no purchase limits or merchant blocks. Under the plan, finance staff will produce the remaining card statements by Oct. 30 and evaluate interim per-transaction limits and merchant-category restrictions with the card provider by Nov. 6. Every cardholder will be reissued the city's sales tax exemption certificate. A draft policy aligned with the city's 2022 travel policy is due at the Nov. 24 City Council meeting, and the city has promised a progress report within 45 to 60 days.

Source: Wausau Pilot & Review (Central/Northern) | https://wausaupilotandreview.com/2026/10/23/wausau-mayor-promises-credit-card-limits-new-policy-following-pilot-investigation/

## Workforce and Labor

### Karpinski is commission's pick for fire chief

The Grafton Police and Fire Commission unanimously appointed Matthew Karpinski as chief of the Ozaukee Central Fire Department on October 22, following a closed session. Karpinski has served as interim chief since March, when former Chief Bill Rice retired, and joined the department in 2015. He was the sole internal applicant. Commission Chairman Paul Moroder said the remaining step is Fire Board approval of Karpinski's contract, with the board's next regular meeting scheduled for November 18. Karpinski played a central role in the Grafton-Saukville fire department merger that eliminated $4.3 million in duplicate spending.

Source: Ozaukee Press (Southeastern) | https://ozaukeepress.com/content/karpinski-commission%E2%80%99s-pick-for-fire-chief

### Zoo's new leader started career at Shedd: 'Fish were my first love'

Jeff Mitchell assumed the role of Henry Vilas Zoo director on Oct. 19, succeeding Ronda Schwetz, who retired after 15 years. Interim director Janine Wachter returns to her position as deputy

director at the Alliant Energy Center. Mitchell previously led the Saskatoon Forestry Farm Park and Zoo for six and a half years and managed approximately $250 million in construction projects earlier in his career. County Executive Melissa Agard has set a goal of making the zoo fossil fuel-free by 2040, which Mitchell identified as a priority alongside continuing the zoo's 50-year AZA accreditation record.

Source: Capital Times (South Central) | https://captimes.com/news/community/zoo-s-new-leader-started-career-at-shedd-fish-were-my-first-love/article_8058fb5d-31b3-4e8d-b50b-b5eccb688e19.html

## Beloit Police Commission looks at why police jobs are hard to fill

The Beloit Police Commission reviewed a recruitment report showing the department still has 21 sworn officer vacancies out of 74 approved positions, with 12 candidates in final hiring steps. Since 2024, 1 in 23 applicants resulted in a hire; 434 candidates began the process and 19 were hired, with candidate withdrawals outpacing failures. Zero of 84 lateral applications from officers at other departments have converted to hires. The Rock County Sheriff's Office contract for supplemental patrol, approved in August, began Sept. 6. City Manager Daniel Ortiz Hernandez was invited to discuss recruitment and retention in the context of the city's new strategic plan.

Source: Beloit Daily News (South Central) | https://www.beloitdailynews.com/news/crime/beloit-police-commission-looks-at-why-police-jobs-are-hard-to-fill/article_9d21a368-f7a0-429b-a6df-b95ed45443e1.html

## Your Right to Know: DeGraaf's Janesville schools superintendent contract includes $230,000 salary

Allison DeGraaf will become Janesville School District superintendent at an annual salary of $230,000 under a two-year contract, $15,000 more than predecessor Mark Holzman's most recent contract, according to documents released in response to a Gazette open records request filed Sept. 27. The district's own peer analysis projects the average superintendent salary among comparable communities will reach $242,887, putting DeGraaf $12,887 below that benchmark. DeGraaf was selected through an internal succession process rather than the national search the district used in its two prior superintendent searches. Holzman submitted his retirement letter to the school board June 29.

Source: Janesville Gazette (South Central) | https://www.gazettextra.com/news/your-right-to-know-degraafs-janesville-schools-superintendent-contract-includes-230-000-salary/article_1256951a-19f6-45c7-bc96-07712c292579.html

## Former Janesville city manager Kevin Lahner says personal attacks contributed to resignation

Former Janesville City Manager Kevin Lahner said personal attacks and job stress contributed to his April resignation, which he described as the end of a 25-year career in local government. Lahner made the remarks in an episode of the Gov360 podcast released Oct. 13. He said criticism during public comment periods became personal, including accusations that he was dishonest, and that it affected his home life. His resignation followed a contested proposal to redevelop the former GM/JATCO site as a data center. Janesville resident Leslie Watkins said residents had a right to

speak up about the proposal and about how decisions were made. According to Janesville Gazette reporting in April, the City Council unanimously approved a severance package in closed session, the city described the departure as a mutual agreement, and Lahner's last day was May 29.

Source: WISC CBS3 Madison (South Central) | https://www.channel3000.com/news/former-janesville-city-manager-kevin-lahner-says-personal-attacks-contributed-to-resignation/article_a2475a2d-42e1-4023-83c2-df34dcdabe9e.html

### HR job that fell one vote short in August returns to Wausau City Council

A resolution creating a full-time human resources coordinator position returned to the Wausau City Council's Oct. 27 consent agenda after the Human Resources Committee recommended it 5-0. The council voted 7-1 for the position on Aug. 18, one vote short of the eight required. The position would be pay grade 20, funded from about $99,000 set aside in the 2027 budget. The department has a director, an assistant director, and one generalist, and the director post has been vacant since Lisa Nowak resigned in July, with Anne Keenan serving as interim director. Keenan's Oct. 8 report counted 23 workers' compensation cases, 105 Family and Medical Leave Act requests, and 114 hires so far in 2026. The search for a permanent director drew 25 applicants and was narrowed to 10 as of early October. The council holds a public hearing on the full 2027 budget Nov. 10.

Source: Wausau Pilot & Review (Central/Northern) | https://wausaupilotandreview.com/2026/10/25/hr-job-that-fell-one-vote-short-in-august-returns-to-wausau-city-council/

## Infrastructure and Utilities

### Wi-Fi connects Monticello's downtown to the World Wide Web

Green County Development Corporation is deploying free downtown Wi-Fi across all Green County municipalities using remaining ARPA funds that must be spent by end of 2026. Monticello will install access points at Village Hall and the pool house to provide overlapping coverage extending to the ball diamond. Networks are already active in Albany and underway in Brooklyn, Juda, and Brodhead, with New Glarus and Monroe to follow.

Source: Monroe Times (South Central) | https://themonroetimes.com/local-news/wi-fi-connects-monticellos-downtown-to-the-world-wide-web/

### Beaver Dam Water Utility launches lead service line replacement outreach

The Beaver Dam Water Utility launched a "Getting the Lead Out" outreach campaign for its multi-year lead and galvanized service line replacement program. Approximately 1,100 affected lines are targeted for replacement by 2035. The city will cover the public portion of replacement costs; property owners are responsible for the private portion, with payment options including annual installments over up to 10 years with interest.

Source: WBEV 1430 AM Beaver Dam (South Central) | https://dailydodge.com/beaver-dam-water-utility-launches-lead-service-line-replacement-outreach/

## Manitowoc utility bills could rise 20% to 30% as costs climb statewide

Manitowoc Public Utilities awaits a final order from the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin on a base rate increase first requested in early 2025, with changes expected to take effect in the new year. MPU CEO Troy Adams cited transmission line upgrades, data center demand, and geopolitical factors as cost drivers. CFO Cindy Carter said a typical residential customer could see roughly $15 more per month on their electric bill from the base rate adjustment alone, with additional cost increases anticipated in 2027 regardless of the PSC's final ruling.

Source: WGBA NBC26 Green Bay (Northeastern) | https://www.nbc26.com/manitowoc/manitowoc-utility-bills-could-rise-20-to-30-as-costs-climb-statewide

## Rhinelander City Council passes motion to widen Hemlock Street to 30 feet

The Rhinelander City Council voted 6-2 to widen Hemlock Street to 30 feet and install gutters and curbs, without sidewalks. An original motion to widen the street to 36 feet with sidewalks on the west side, consistent with the city's Complete Streets Ordinance, was defeated 5-3. The project is tied to needed water and sewer line replacement on the aging street.

Source: WJFW NBC12 Rhinelander (Central/Northern) | https://www.wjfw.com/news/local/rhinelander-city-council-passes-motion-to-widen-hemlock-street-to-30-feet/article_6deeb27f-c6ce-47ba-b025-b97f00b7f4c3.html

## SWL&P sues Superior over water utility takeover ballot question

Superior Water, Light and Power filed suit in Douglas County Circuit Court seeking to block a proposed April 2027 referendum asking Superior voters whether the city should acquire SWL&P's water system. The utility argues the ballot language approved by the Superior City Council is vague, misleading, and contrary to state law, particularly the use of the word "should," which SWL&P contends makes the vote's legal effect ambiguous. Mayor Jim Paine called the suit "an obvious attempt to stop an election." SWL&P serves approximately 10,000 water customers in Superior and surrounding northwestern Wisconsin and has operated in the region since 1889.

Source: WDIO ABC10 Duluth (Western) | https://www.wdio.com/top-stories/swlp-sues-superior-over-water-utility-takeover-ballot-question/

## 'We're losing a lifeline': Wyocena residents petition to save library set to close

The Wyocena Village Board unanimously approved a voluntary library closure at year's end after the South Central Library System notified the village Oct. 8 that the library had been out of compliance with SCLS and Wisconsin DPI standards for two years, primarily due to the lack of a certified library director. The Library Board recommended voluntary closure over a forced removal from the library system. Resident Brad Hauge has gathered more than 175 petition signatures and pledged to match up to $12,500 toward a director's salary if both boards contribute equally. He plans to present the petition at the library board's next meeting.

Source: WMTV NBC15 Madison (South Central) | https://www.wmtv15news.com/2026/10/30/were-losing-lifeline-wyocena-residents-petition-save-library-set-close/

### AI assistant is helping Brown County 911 field non-emergency calls

Brown County 911 launched an AI-powered Automated Virtual Assistant (AVA) in October 2026 to handle non-emergency calls, which average about 160,000 per year. In its first full week, AVA fielded more than 60 percent of nearly 1,950 non-emergency calls, consuming 3,500 minutes, or 58 hours, that dispatchers were freed from non-emergency work. The platform costs $110,000 per year, with a grant covering 90 percent of this year's cost. AVA is also operating in Waukesha, La Crosse, and Dane Counties, with additional counties in a testing phase.

Source: WLUK FOX11 Green Bay (Northeastern) | https://fox11online.com/news/local/ai-assistant-is-helping-brown-county-911-field-non-emergency-calls-automated-virtual-assistant-ava-police-fire-ems-green-bay-technology

### Eau Claire County Park Passes Go Digital With 'Yodel'

Eau Claire County Parks and Forest Department announced this week that beginning Nov. 3, all park passes for the 2027 season must be purchased through Yodel, a digital platform, replacing vehicle window stickers and physical envelope payment systems. Parks and Forest Division Director Josh Pedersen described the county as the first in Wisconsin to adopt this model. Historical averages show 13,613 daily passes purchased annually through envelope drop boxes and roughly 1,886 to 1,658 annual passes sold through various existing channels. Passes already purchased for 2026 continue under the current system; 2026-2027 Tower Ridge County Recreation Area parking permits will also move to Yodel immediately.

Source: Volume One (Western) | https://volumeone.org/articles/2026/10/30/407421-ec-county-park-passes-go-digital-with-yodel-new-platform-for-visitors

## Public Safety

### Abundance of public safety referendums on local ballots raises question: Is the state doing enough to help?

Waukesha County communities are placing multiple public safety funding referendums before voters amid ongoing debate over state shared revenue adequacy. Upcoming November ballots include a $3 million referendum in New Berlin for police and fire staffing and a $5.9 million Muskego referendum to establish a municipal fire and EMS department and add public safety positions. The Town of Delafield approved a $450,000 referendum in August for Lake Country Fire and Rescue, the second phase of a 2023 fire referendum that together funded 21 additional staff. A $6 million Brookfield referendum failed in April 2025. Muskego Police Chief Steve Westphal cited "referendum fatigue" as successive ballot measures for public safety and schools compete for taxpayer support. State Rep. Scott Allen (R-Waukesha) acknowledged that Wisconsin Act 12's shared revenue formula, locked to historical aid levels, disadvantages communities whose needs have grown since the baseline was set.

Source: Waukesha Freeman (Southeastern) | https://www.gmtoday.com/the_freeman/news/local-governments-struggle-with-funding-for-police-and-fire/article_cc00adbf-3747-5d9d-b740-38cbde93341a.html

## Lincoln County board approves updated ambulance agreement with Merrill

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

Source: Tomahawk Leader (Central/Northern) | https://www.tomahawkleader.com/stories/lincoln-county-board-approves-updated-ambulance-agreement-with-merrill,361185

## Nokomis residents to consider project to improve quarters for ambulance crews

Town of Nokomis electors will vote at a special town meeting on November 12 at 6:00 p.m. at Nokomis Town Hall on a $1.2 million addition to the Nokomis fire station. The addition would provide code-compliant sleeping, living, and office space for the Oneida County Medic 4 ambulance crew, which serves Nokomis and southwestern Oneida County. The current station does not meet requirements for crews working 24-hour shifts.

Source: WXPR 91.7 FM Rhinelander (Central/Northern) | https://www.wxpr.org/health/2026-10-29/nokomis-residents-to-consider-project-to-improve-quarters-for-ambulance-crews

## Pound Fire Department awarded FEMA grant

The Pound Fire Department was awarded a $473,123.81 FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant, covering 95 percent of the total $496,780 cost, with $23,656.19 in required local funds, for the purchase of a new pumper-tender truck carrying 3,000 gallons and equipped with a 1,000 GPM pump. The vehicle will replace two 1984 tenders and serve dual use as a water tanker and engine. Fire Chief Turner Gross said the truck will improve emergency response and firefighter safety within the Marinette County Mutual Aid Box Alarm System.

Source: EagleHerald (Northeastern) | https://www.ehextra.com/community/pound-fire-department-awarded-fema-grant/article_3cc3e4a2-bf20-4aea-9c75-dd0f2211ffd0.html

## Traffic cams, body cams and shelter on Dane County Board agenda

Dane County's Sheriff's Office selected Axon Enterprise Inc. to replace Flock Safety license plate readers, proposing 26 cameras for $66,000 annually over five years as a 2026 budget amendment requiring two-thirds County Board approval. The contract goes to the Public Protection and Judiciary Committee Nov. 10, the Personnel and Finance Committee Nov. 30, and the full board in early December. County Executive Melissa Agard separately included a $3 million capital expenditure for body-worn cameras in the 2027 budget; a motion to remove that funding failed in committee. Board member Heidi Wegleitner sponsored amendments to redirect surveillance

funding to housing and jail communications resources; all failed. Vacant Sheriff's Office deputy positions and a proposed lawful sleeping campground are also under deliberation.

Source: Capital Times (South Central) | https://captimes.com/news/government/traffic-cams-body-cams-and-shelter-on-dane-county-board-agenda/article_50fd1c93-f4c7-4de4-a28a-1b268dc8eed5.html

## How Wausau plans to cover all 20 Flock cameras

The Wausau Common Council voted 9 to 1 to cover all 20 Flock automated license plate reader cameras, with a two-week implementation window targeting completion by Veterans Day. Flock Safety owns the cameras, so the city cannot alter them. Covering costs are estimated at approximately $2,500 in staff wages and equipment. The council also amended the city budget to remove the $50,000 Flock contract from 2027, contingent on final budget approval.

Source: WSAW CBS7 Wausau (Central/Northern) | https://www.wsaw.com/2026/10/29/how-wausau-plans-cover-all-20-flock-cameras/

## Privacy concerns, disruptions lead La Crosse County Jail to stop posting inmate photos online

La Crosse County Sheriff John Siegel has removed booking photos from the jail's public roster webpage, citing privacy concerns and disruptions in the booking process. A growing number of compliant individuals were refusing to have their photos taken because they did not want images posted online, complicating an already difficult booking process. Of approximately 3,000 annual jail bookings, about 25 percent of people do not spend a night in the facility. Names, charges, and bond information remain publicly visible on the roster; booking images remain obtainable through a formal open-records request.

Source: La Crosse Tribune (Western) | https://lacrossetribune.com/news/local/crime-courts/article_ea48d7d4-df4f-4c39-98ba-de7c838a6db1.html

## A quarter of Racine County's proposed property-tax levy would go to its jail

Racine County Executive Ralph Malicki's proposed 2027 budget allocates $21.1 million to run the county jail, with property taxpayers covering $17.2 million, about 25 percent of the proposed $68.8 million levy. That taxpayer share is $342,133, or 2 percent, above the 2026 budgeted figure, but 8.3 percent above current 2026 expected actual costs. Jail spending has risen from $12.8 million in taxpayer support in 2024 to the proposed $17.2 million, a 34 percent increase over three years. Major cost drivers include wages of $9.28 million (up $489,678, adding five corrections officer positions), medical services of $4.03 million (up $214,361), and a new $500,000 pharmacy account. The County Board approved $80,000 in opioid settlement funds on Sept. 22 to study feasibility of a county-run correctional mental health division. The county's district attorney said the largest driver of jail days is defendants who wait weeks and months without a lawyer. The County Board, not the county executive, adopts the final budget and may amend it first.

Source: WRJN 1400 AM Racine/Kenosha (Southeastern) | https://wrjn.com/news/2026/10/30/a-quarter-of-racine-countys-proposed-property-tax-levy-would-go-to-its-jail-the-da-says-a-shortage-of

## Antigo council passes e-bike/scooter ordinance

The Antigo City Council approved a new ordinance at its October monthly meeting clarifying rules for e-bikes and e-scooters, including a prohibition on riding them on any city sidewalks and updated safe-use standards for city streets. City Administrator Michael Wetzel said the ordinance had previously been returned to committee before being brought back for approval. The city plans to evaluate the ordinance as technology and usage patterns evolve.

Source: Antigo Daily Journal (Central/Northern) | https://www.antigojournal.com/news/antigo-council-passes-e-bike-scooter-ordinance/article_7838758d-f8a1-4dd3-8c09-be36ca879579.html

## Viroqua City Council expands motor vehicle ordinance to ban rolling coal, donuts, and parking lot short-cuts

The Viroqua Common Council voted unanimously on Oct. 13 to adopt Ordinance 26OR005, amending Chapter 10.38 of the municipal code to prohibit excessive engine noise, rolling coal, stunt driving, and cutting through private parking lots or city alleys to bypass traffic signals. Alderperson Todd Spaeth moved to approve and waive the second reading, allowing immediate effect. Police Chief Rick Niedfeldt, who presented the measure at Mayor Krista Browne's introduction, said the update replaces a narrow squealing-tire prohibition and gives officers a middle-ground tool between warnings and state criminal charges. The ordinance also covers jake brakes, with the city able to post informational signage at highway entrances.

Source: Vernon Reporter (Western) | https://vernonreporter.com/viroqua-city-council-expands-motor-vehicle-ordinance-to-ban-rolling-coal-donuts-and-parking-lot-short-cuts/

## Dunn County committee takes no action on law enforcement contract with Elk Mound

The Dunn County Judiciary and Law Committee took no action Monday on a proposed five-year contract under which the Dunn County Sheriff's Office would provide law enforcement to the village of Elk Mound. The Elk Mound Village Board had voted 6-1 on Oct. 6 to disband its police department and enter the contract, which sets the 2027 cost at $179,586, rising to $183,962 in 2028 and $188,998 in 2029. Committee chair Donald Gjestson said five of six public speakers opposed the contract, and the five committee members agreed to delay over concerns about whether Elk Mound properly posted meeting agendas, creating potential legal vulnerabilities. The committee can revisit the matter at any time.

Source: Leader-Telegram (Western) | https://www.leadertelegram.com/news/daily-updates/dunn-county-committee-takes-no-action-on-law-enforcement-contract-with-elk-mound/article_0ba0c582-ab10-429d-ba5f-64705a60d2f1.html

## Elk Mound policing contract put on hold amid pending litigation

Dunn County Judiciary and Law Committee Chair Donald Gjestson said the committee took no action on a proposed Elk Mound police services contract with the Dunn County Sheriff's Office because of pending litigation over an alleged violation of Wisconsin's Open Meetings Law at the village level, which he said could nullify the agreement. The Elk Mound Village Board voted 6-1 under Resolution 26-5 to disband its police department and pursue the sheriff's contract. The

department disbands only if the contract is approved, so it would continue to exist after Jan. 1. Recall papers alleging an Open Meetings Law violation were filed against Village President Tim Benjamin after the vote. Police Chief Chad Weinberger filed as a candidate for Dunn County sheriff, saying supporters had planned to write in his name. The committee will not reconsider the contract until the litigation is resolved, and the full county board vote scheduled for Nov. 10 is postponed.

Source: WEAU NBC13 Eau Claire (Western) | https://www.weau.com/2026/10/27/elk-mound-policing-contract-put-hold-amid-pending-litigation/

### Independent experts to review Madison Police use-of-force policies and training

The Madison Police Department has commissioned an independent review of its use-of-force policies, standards, and training curriculum, beginning January 2027. Professors Ian Adams and Scott Mourtgos of the University of South Carolina will conduct the evaluation, which will include on-site visits with MPD staff and virtual sessions with community stakeholders and the Common Council President's Workgroup on Police Department Use of Deadly Force, De-Escalation and Body-Worn Cameras Policies and Procedures. The review will conclude with a formal written report of recommendations.

Source: WMTV NBC15 Madison (South Central) | https://www.wmtv15news.com/2026/10/31/independent-experts-review-madison-police-use-of-force-policies-training/

## Siting and Moratoria

### Jefferson County becoming BECI transmission line intervenor

The Jefferson County Board voted 26-1 at a special session October 28 to approve a resolution granting the county intervenor status in the Public Service Commission's proceeding for the Bell Center-Columbia-Sugar Creek-Illinois/Wisconsin State Line 765-kV transmission line project, developed by Midcontinent Grid Solutions. As an intervenor, the county may submit testimony and evidence, call witnesses, and file written arguments. The county's first opportunity to intervene will be MGS's application for a Certificate of Authority, which would also authorize eminent domain. District 10 Supervisor Mark Groose cast the sole dissenting vote. The deadline for intervenor status requests was October 29.

Source: Watertown Daily Times (South Central) | https://www.wdtimes.com/news/local/jefferson-county-becoming-beci-transmission-line-intervenor/article_2fe79e43-5b4f-4db4-99ca-b8e70dea9f2e.html

### Power line foes now want data center to provide its own power

The Fredonia Town Board unanimously approved a resolution on October 14 opposing all high-voltage transmission lines through the town, a position advanced by the Responsible Energy Alliance, a nonprofit coalition of Saukville, Trenton, Fredonia, and Farmington residents. The updated resolution calls on Vantage Data Centers and tenants including Oracle and OpenAI to construct on-site power generation at the Lighthouse Campus in Port Washington rather than extend existing corridors. American Transmission Co.'s revised PSC application no longer includes

routes through Saukville or Trenton; the PSC has requested more information on that application. Town Chairman Chris Janik acknowledged the board's resolution carries no binding authority over the PSC. The town previously contributed $5,000 to the Alliance to support its opposition efforts.

Source: Ozaukee Press (Southeastern) | https://ozaukeepress.com/content/power-line-foes-now-want-data-center-provide-its-own-power

## 6 key questions Madison planners face about regulating data centers

With Madison's one-year data center construction moratorium expiring in January, city staff presented draft regulations at an Oct. 27 virtual meeting that attracted more registrants than its capacity. The proposed framework creates three size categories: under 10,000 sq ft, up to 50,000 sq ft, and up to 100,000 sq ft, with facilities above 100,000 sq ft banned outright. Larger facilities would be restricted to industrial zones, face 300-foot residential setbacks, 1,000-foot buffers from other data centers, and mandatory sound-engineer noise inspections. City officials noted at least six existing Madison data centers ranging from 1,200 to 17,000 sq ft have generated no complaints. Planning Director Meagan Tuttle said a complete ban could create legal exposure under state law. The city also cannot extend the moratorium to await state legislation.

Source: Capital Times (South Central) | https://captimes.com/news/government/6-key-questions-madison-planners-face-about-regulating-data-centers/article_701bc191-9386-467e-9e24-37a8dd7bd4fa.html

## Village of Kekoskee Held Public Hearing for a Moratorium for Data Centers

Following a public hearing Oct. 20, the Kekoskee Village Board unanimously approved a 24-month moratorium on data center applications, extending the originally proposed 18-month term at a resident's request. The moratorium covers any building or equipment exceeding the ordinance's threshold used to process, store, or transmit digital information, but excludes internal business IT servers. The board also appointed Tim Gutjahr to fill the Board of Adjustment seat vacated by Gordon Weiss (term ending June 30, 2028), approved a 2027 Fire Department contract at $0.75 per thousand of valuation, and hired Katie Reible and Lisa Eggers as part-time assistant deputy clerks. A 2027 Budget Hearing is scheduled Nov. 15.

Source: Mayville Dodge County Pioneer (South Central) | https://www.dodgecountypionier.com/stories/village-of-kekoskee-held-public-hearing-for-a-moratorium-for-data-centers,360985

## Owners pull the plug on natural gas plant

Dairyland Power Cooperative and South Shore Energy notified the Public Service Commission they are canceling the Nemadji Trail Energy Center, a proposed $1 billion, 550-to-625-megawatt natural gas plant in Superior that had received PSC approval in 2020. The cancellation follows expired air, wetland, and construction permits, Minnesota Power's withdrawal in December, and the City of Superior's denial of local approvals. The project had faced years of legal challenges from Indigenous and environmental groups.

Source: Superior Telegram (Western) | https://www.superiortelegram.com/news/local/owners-pull-the-plug-on-natural-gas-plant

## Neighbors push back against proposed natural gas facility in Town of Brillion

Invenergy held a public question-and-answer session in Brillion on Oct. 28 regarding its proposed Forest Junction and Union Depot Energy Centers, two complementary natural gas plants that together would produce 1.9 gigawatts of power on agricultural land east of Highway 57 and Holmes Road in the Town of Brillion, with an alternate site west of Marx Road in the Town of Woodville. The project is in a pre-application phase requiring DNR and Public Service Commission review before construction. Invenergy projects 20 permanent jobs, hundreds of temporary construction positions, and up to $4.1 million in annual revenue for Calumet County. Brillion Mayor Mike Smith, attending as a resident, helped organize the Northern Calumet County Concerned Citizens group opposing the plant over water, air, noise, and environmental concerns. The PSC's Draft Strategic Energy Assessment for 2026-2032 projects Wisconsin energy demand will increase more than 40 percent over the next six years, largely driven by data center development.

Source: WGBA NBC26 Green Bay (Northeastern) | https://www.nbc26.com/lakeshore/neighbors-push-back-against-proposed-natural-gas-facility-in-town-of-brillion

## THE LANDFILL LIFESPAN: What Long-Term Solutions Come Next?

The Eau Claire County Parks and Forest Committee unanimously voted on Oct. 26 to deny GFL Environmental's request to purchase 120 acres of county forest for expansion of the Seven Mile Creek Landfill, which Parks and Forest Division Director Josh Pedersen estimates will reach capacity in 12 years. By denying the bid, the county forest acreage remains under public ownership and no appraisal or transaction analysis will be initiated. GFL already owns an additional 80 acres it can develop to extend the landfill's lifespan by approximately 12 years, pending DNR permitting review. County Administrator Jon Johnson said the county is in early stages of researching waste-to-energy alternatives, pointing to existing facilities in Barron County and La Crosse's French Island Generating Plant as regional models, but said no official process or formal site visits have been scheduled.

Source: Volume One (Western) | https://volumeone.org/articles/2026/10/27/407198-the-eau-claire-seven-mile-creek-landfill-lifespan-what-long-term-solutions-come-next

## Public hearing for Town of Mukwonago solar farm rescheduled for Monday

A joint Plan Commission and Town Board public hearing on a conditional use permit for the proposed Spring Lake Solar project in the Town of Mukwonago was rescheduled to 6:30 p.m. Monday at St. James Catholic Church after overflow attendance prevented the Oct. 14 hearing from proceeding at Town Hall. Seattle-based OneEnergy Development LLC proposes installing 13,000 solar panels across approximately 28 acres northwest of Highway I and Section Road, leased from property owner Stan Sugden, to generate 6 megawatts sufficient to power nearly 1,600 homes annually. If the CUP is approved, construction would begin in spring 2027 and take four to six months, with the facility expected to operate for 30 to 50 years.

Source: Waukesha Freeman (Southeastern) | https://www.gmtoday.com/the_freeman/news/mukwonago-solar-hearing-rescheduled/article_2311379b-065e-513e-a0c6-76f6afa1f0ac.html

## Five-Story Low-Income Housing Project On Barstow Street In The Works

The City of Eau Claire has entered a Memorandum of Understanding with Impact Seven, a Rice Lake-based nonprofit, to develop a 60-unit affordable apartment building at the city-owned Seaver Street parking lot (617 S. Barstow St.) in downtown Eau Claire. The project, tentatively called the Barstow Apartments, would comprise 26 one-bedroom, 22 two-bedroom, and 12 three-bedroom units across five stories, with a projected capital investment of approximately $12 million. Impact Seven would purchase the 13,000-square-foot lot for $20,000 (roughly $1.50 per square foot). The project is contingent on WHEDA approval of Low-Income Housing Tax Credits; units would serve families earning 40 percent to 60 percent of Eau Claire County's estimated 2026 median family income of $101,300. City Council received direction in a closed session on Oct. 13 to explore the proposal; plans were shared publicly at the Oct. 27 council meeting. Impact Seven also made a separate accepted offer on an adjacent privately owned parcel, also contingent on LIHTC approval.

Source: Volume One (Western) | https://volumeone.org/articles/2026/10/28/407312-five-story-low-income-housing-project-on-barstow-street-in-the-works-city-of-eau-claire-impact-seven

## Janesville begins negotiations for Beloit Ave. development proposal

The Janesville City Council voted unanimously after a closed session Monday to direct city staff to begin negotiations with Next Generation, a Beloit-based construction management firm, for a 250-unit mixed-use development on the city-owned 55-acre parcel at 2400 Beloit Avenue. The proposal includes 102 single-family lots, 16 duplexes, and 132 apartment units, with a Habitat for Humanity partnership for at least 10 homes. Next Generation proposed paying the city $17,000 per developable acre in phased payments and proposed TIF reimbursement of 75 percent for market-rate multifamily units and 100 percent for the affordable apartment component. A four-story, 48-unit affordable building would use federal low-income housing tax credits or Wisconsin's new residential TID financing. Engineering, zoning, and neighborhood engagement would begin next if the city confirms selection.

Source: Janesville Gazette (South Central) | https://www.gazettextra.com/news/janesville-begins-negotiations-for-beloit-ave-development-proposal/article_d8075730-910a-46c7-a535-f28019e87457.html

## La Crosse to seek proposals for Community Policing Center

La Crosse's Economic and Community Development Committee approved a request for proposals on October 29 inviting vendors to submit plans for the former Community Policing Center, vacant since December 2024. The RFP, modeled on a similar document used for the North Side Community Library, allows a wide range of residential or commercial uses. Council member Erin Goggin requested language clarifying that the parcel may be converted to housing. Vendors have until December 31 to respond, and the community development committee will evaluate submissions at its January 27 meeting, which may include selecting a proposal.

Source: La Crosse Tribune (Western) | https://lacrossetribune.com/news/local/government-politics/article_ea53d5aa-9293-4c6e-9f8e-1558ea564259.html

### Menasha hosts open house to plan neighborhood redevelopment

The City of Menasha is developing a tornado recovery and redevelopment plan targeting five neighborhoods, with a target of formal adoption by January 2027. Options under consideration include zoning code changes to allow townhomes, condominiums, or apartments; pre-approved building plan templates to expedite permitting and reduce costs; and creation of a tax incremental financing district. Most affected property is privately owned, limiting direct city action. The next public open house is scheduled for December 15.

Source: WLUK FOX11 Green Bay (Northeastern) | https://fox11online.com/news/local/menasha-hosts-open-house-to-plan-neighborhood-redevelopment

## Land Use and Zoning

### Residents group files second suit against Big Bend over Breck complex

Three Villages Association filed a second lawsuit challenging the Village of Big Bend's September approval of a second conditional use permit for the proposed Breck Athletic Complex, a 110-acre development near Highway 164 and Town Line Road that would include baseball fields, a hotel, retail, and restaurants. The complaint alleges the village failed to complete a traffic impact analysis before designating a formerly private road as public, relied on contradictory stormwater data, and allowed light poles three times the village height standard without required planned unit development overlay findings. A judge in a separate suit over the first CUP recently ordered the village to produce additional records. The new suit asks a court to find the second CUP approval lacked substantial evidence and exceeded proper legal scope.

Source: Waukesha Freeman (Southeastern) | https://www.gmtoday.com/the_freeman/news/residents-group-files-second-suit-against-big-bend-over-breck-complex/article_9d822bf1-a820-50c0-b61c-2a850d7a27bf.html

## Governance and Ethics

### La Crosse mayor urges residents to support his city administrator proposal

La Crosse Mayor Shaundel Washington-Spivey released a video on Oct. 28 urging residents to contact council members in support of his non-charter ordinance (agenda item 26-1138) to create a city administrator, arguing the rival charter ordinance from Council members Newberry and Sleznikow would reduce public accountability. Under the charter ordinance, the administrator would report to the Common Council and manage department heads and the budget; under the mayor's proposal, the administrator would report to both the mayor and council. A key structural difference: the charter ordinance is subject to a post-passage resident petition process requiring signatures from at least 7 percent of votes cast for governor in La Crosse, potentially triggering a binding referendum, while the mayor's ordinance is not. Both proposals go before the Judiciary and Administration Committee at 6 p.m. Nov. 4.

Source: WIZM 1410 AM La Crosse (Western) | https://www.wizmnews.com/2026/10/28/la-crosse-mayor-city-administrator-video/

## La Crosse Mayor moving forward with city administrator ordinance

La Crosse Mayor Shaundel Washington-Spivey announced he is advancing his own city administrator ordinance, distinct from a version proposed by two council members. The mayor's ordinance retains mayoral powers under Wisconsin state law, requires a simple majority to pass, and takes effect immediately rather than after a 60-day waiting period. No vote date was reported.

Source: WEAU NBC13 Eau Claire (Western) | https://www.weau.com/2026/10/28/la-crosse-mayor-moving-forward-with-city-administrator-ordinance/

## Setback in Wausau Mayor's Push to Switch to City Administrator Form of Local Government

Wausau's finance committee removed $150,000 for a city administrator salary from the proposed 2027 budget, redirecting the funds toward a citywide audit. Mayor Doug Diny had included the salary in anticipation of a formal debate over switching to an administrator or city manager form of government. Council members cited the absence of a formally created position as premature. A public hearing on the 2027 budget is scheduled for November 10.

Source: WDLB 1450 AM Marshfield (Central/Northern) | https://wdlbam.com/2026/10/29/setback-in-wausau-mayors-push-to-switch-to-city-administrator-form-of-local-government/

## Muskego alderperson accused of harassment toward city attorney, notice alleges

A notice of circumstances of claims document obtained by the Freeman through an open records request alleges Alderperson Deb Schroeder engaged in civil harassment and defamation against Muskego City Attorney Jeffrey Warchol over more than a year. The documents allege Schroeder filed three complaints against Warchol with the Wisconsin Supreme Court's Office of Lawyer Regulation on Oct. 22, 2025, Jan. 20, and Feb. 15, all of which the office rejected on March 11. Mayor Rick Petfalski issued a written no-contact directive to Schroeder on Jan. 29, 2026, and temporarily removed Warchol from council meetings, retaining outside counsel in his place. The Muskego Common Council discussed the matter in closed session in October with no outcome announced in open session. Warchol stated in the documents that he had considered resigning because of Schroeder's conduct. Schroeder told the Freeman the dispute originated from her questions about $1.1 million spent on the Hillendale Drive Watermain Project without what she believes were proper council approvals.

Source: Waukesha Freeman (Southeastern) | https://www.gmtoday.com/the_freeman/news/muskego-alderperson-harassment-claims/article_58928cb4-5b0c-5dc4-87c7-08fd9ac7cdfc.html

## Viroqua residents question changes to mayor, city administrator's roles

Following a closed session of the Viroqua City Council on Tuesday, the council directed Mayor Krista Browne to vacate her office to a former judge's office in the city hall basement by November 13, and allowed City Administrator Julie Emslie to work remotely without being required to meet individually with the mayor. The reason for the changes has not been disclosed. Browne stated the decisions "are not in the best interest of the city." Ward 8 Alderperson Tanja Birke said the council's goal is to ensure city hall staff can continue their work.

Source: WKBT CBS8 La Crosse (Western) | https://www.news8000.com/news/local-news/viroqua/viroqua-residents-question-changes-to-mayor-city-administrator-s-roles/article_2bbe2109-ddea-45e0-8c49-e785e00f662f.html

## McFarland village trustee resigns after 'hateful comments'

McFarland Village Trustee Ken Boyd resigned after social media comments targeting the Islamic faith and the LGBTQ community came to light, according to Village Administrator Matt Schuenke. Schuenke said the village condemns the comments, and he thanked residents who raised concerns at a recent meeting. The village will determine whether its Ethics Board should consider action related to Boyd's conduct. The Village Board will discuss options for filling the vacancy at a future meeting.

Source: WISC CBS3 Madison (South Central) | https://www.channel3000.com/news/mcfarland-village-trustee-resigns-after-hateful-comments/article_6bc70e6b-ba19-462b-8df0-dca741600ad4.html

## New Douglas County supervisor sworn in

Dennis Quam was appointed and sworn in as Douglas County Board supervisor for the 2nd District, replacing Wendy Bong, who resigned after moving out of the county. The 2nd District covers the eastern portion of North End, north of Belknap Street.

Source: Superior Telegram (Western) | https://www.superiortelegram.com/news/local/new-douglas-county-supervisor-sworn-in

## Eau Claire Chamber raises concerns over proposed citizens' healthcare advisory committee referendum ahead of Nov. 3 election

Eau Claire voters will decide Nov. 3 whether to enact an ordinance creating Chapter 2.53 of the city code, establishing a seven-member Citizens' Advisory Healthcare Action Committee focused on healthcare access and affordability. The Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce opposes the measure, citing the absence of a dedicated funding source, potential strain on city staff, no authority for the committee to change costs or policies, and possible duplication of the existing city-county board of health.

Source: WEAU NBC13 Eau Claire (Western) | https://www.weau.com/2026/10/30/eau-claire-chamber-raises-concerns-over-proposed-citizens-healthcare-advisory-committee-referendum-ahead-nov-3-election/

## Hobart-Lawrence police won't release Jacobs video for now

The Hobart-Lawrence Police Department denied media requests for video of a domestic violence incident involving Green Bay Packers running back Josh Jacobs, citing ongoing civil proceedings. Brown County Judge Marc Hammer had denied a request to permanently seal the video in September and cleared the department to release records under Wisconsin Public Records Law, but the department determined a statutory restriction still applies. Jacobs was convicted of misdemeanor battery and criminal damage to property. The department indicated the video could be released if authorized by law or court order.

Source: WTAQ 1360 AM / 97.5 FM Green Bay (Northeastern) | https://wtaq.com/2026/10/31/1150927/

### Pelz to fill vacant SV President position until April election

At a Oct. 26 special meeting, the Spring Valley Village Board voted to seat Trustee Nate Pelz as village president pro tempore, filling the vacancy left by Theresa Linder. Pelz will hold both trustee and president duties until the president term expires in April. Trustee Matt Huepfel cast the lone no vote, preferring to advertise the position before acting. A proposed board social media policy was discussed but tabled for further development, with concerns raised about free speech and the risk of establishing a walking quorum through social media exchanges.

Source: Pierce County Journal (Western) | https://www.piercecountyjournal.news/stories/pelz-to-fill-vacant-sv-president-position-until-april-election,211208

## Elections and Election Administration

### As Election Day nears, Wisconsin's in-person absentee ballots have surged

As of October 30, the Wisconsin Elections Commission reported 693,334 absentee ballots statewide, approximately 50,000 more than at the same point in 2022. In-person absentee ballots rose more than 50 percent, from about 259,000 in 2022 to about 394,000 in 2026, while mail-in ballots dropped more than 20 percent, from about 384,000 to about 300,000. The WEC earlier this year asked the U.S. Postal Service to expedite absentee ballot deliveries after a majority of clerks reported delivery delays, including Fond du Lac County receiving 100 ballots too late after the April 7 election.

Source: WPR News Madison (Statewide) (Statewide) | https://www.wpr.org/news/as-election-day-nears-wisconsins-in-person-absentee-ballots-have-surged

### Northwoods clerks see strong early, in-person voting turnout ahead of November 3 election

By 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, Rhinelander City Clerk Austyn Zarda reported 237 early in-person absentee votes cast, surpassing total in-person early voting from the 2022 midterm. As of Tuesday morning, nearly 1,000 people had voted in-person in Oneida County, close to the county's entire 2022 in-person total. Minocqua Town Clerk Roben Haggart reported more than 300 early in-person voters. Early in-person voting ends November 1, with the last day for both municipalities being Friday. Polls open November 3 from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Source: WXPR 91.7 FM Rhinelander (Central/Northern) | https://www.wxpr.org/election/2026-10-28/northwoods-clerks-see-strong-early-in-person-voting-turnout-ahead-of-november-3-election

### WI clerks balance absentee ballots with Election Day preparations

Appleton City Clerk Amy Molitor reported approximately 5,300 absentee ballots mailed out with a 78 percent return rate and about 3,400 in-person absentee votes cast, requiring poll workers to process nearly 8,000 absentee ballots on Election Day across 60 wards with at least 200 poll workers. Statewide absentee voting is up nearly 7 percent compared to four years ago, per the Wisconsin Elections Commission. Green Bay City Clerk Stacy Menke urged voters to use drop

boxes or the clerk's office rather than mail, noting that hundreds of ballots arrived too late to count in April. All ballots must be returned by 8 p.m. November 3.

Source: WTAQ 1360 AM / 97.5 FM Green Bay (Northeastern) | https://wtaq.com/2026/10/30/wi-clerks-balance-absentee-ballots-with-election-day-preparations/

### Former Hayward Woman Among 2 Canadian Citizens Charged with Illegal Voting in U.S. Elections

U.S. Attorney Chadwick M. Elgersma for the Western District of Wisconsin announced charges against two Canadian citizens for illegal voting. Monique Gignac-Yochum, 60, formerly of Hayward, faces one year in prison on a two-count information unsealed Oct. 29 for voting in the 2022 and 2024 federal elections. Rodger Dedrick, 66, of Stoughton, faces up to five years for falsely claiming U.S. citizenship when registering on Aug. 13, 2024, and up to one year for illegally voting Nov. 5, 2024. Both were released pending further proceedings. Assistant U.S. Attorney William M. Levins is handling both cases.

Source: DrydenWire (Statewide) | https://drydenwire.com/news/former-hayward-woman-among-2-canadian-citizens-charged-with-illegal-voting-in-u.s-elections/

### Challenger Rusty Brown wins recall election in Wisconsin Rapids alder race

Rusty Brown defeated incumbent District 7 Alderperson Michael Timm in a Wisconsin Rapids recall election on Oct. 27, receiving 172 votes to Timm's 144. The recall followed a petition certified by the city clerk on Sept. 18, after Timm sent emails to Hotel Mead leadership suggesting they stop selling "No Data Center" signs. The City Council ordered the election Sept. 23. Brown will serve the roughly five months remaining on the current two-year term.

Source: WAOW ABC9 Wausau (Central/Northern) | https://www.waow.com/news/challenger-rusty-brown-wins-recall-election-in-wisconsin-rapids-alder-race/article_664d72ae-9820-485e-a618-41f78ff27967.html

## Human Services

### Comments invited at Nov. 5 county meeting; Transportation for seniors and disabled citizens

Barron County's Aging and Disability Resource Center has scheduled a public hearing at 10 a.m. Nov. 5 at the county Government Center to gather comments on its AddLIFE transit program. The ADRC is applying for a $146,332 WisDOT grant to fund 80 percent of a projected 2027 operating budget of $175,598, with the county supplying the required 20 percent local match of $29,266. The Commission on Aging also learned Oct. 20 that the county Meals on Wheels head cook position remains vacant, and that Barron County Sheriff's detectives have flagged a resurgence of check-washing fraud targeting local seniors, with checks reportedly being intercepted in St. Paul.

Source: Bloomer Advance (Western) | https://www.bloomeradvance.com/news/regional_news/article_a1796a76-0d2b-4c87-b917-614ec015a3ff.html

## Increasing senior population strains Barron County resources

Barron County's senior population has surpassed 12,500 and is growing faster than the Aging and Disability Resource Center can serve, the Commission on Aging learned Oct. 20. Medicare re-enrollment appointments filled before the Oct. 15 enrollment period began, a first according to ADRC Director Jennifer Jako, with two staff handling hundreds of annual one-on-one sessions. The ADRC conducted a group signup at a Rice Lake college computer lab, serving 17 seniors simultaneously, as a potential model going forward. Commissioner Carsten Ellison estimated elevated ADRC budget pressures could persist 20 years. The ADRC is coordinating with the Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources to lobby for four priorities in the 2027-2029 biennial budget, with a planned presentation to the Joint Committee on Finance during its spring statewide hearings.

Source: Bloomer Advance (Western) | https://www.bloomeradvance.com/news/regional_news/article_ae914a8b-091a-47ac-aa8c-ca8ba97715bb.html

## Measles outbreak identified in Chippewa County with more than 30 cases confirmed

Wisconsin DHS identified a measles outbreak in Chippewa County with 33 confirmed cases as of Oct. 30, indicating local spread. A separate outbreak in southwest Wisconsin covering Grant, Iowa, Lafayette, and Vernon counties has 336 confirmed cases. DHS is working with local health departments to identify and notify exposed individuals.

Source: WEAU NBC13 Eau Claire (Western) | https://www.weau.com/2026/10/30/measles-outbreak-identified-chippewa-county-with-more-than-30-cases-confirmed/

## City of Milwaukee pulls commissioner from SDC board in latest loss of support

The City of Milwaukee withdrew its appointee, Department of Employee Relations Director Jackie Q. Carter, from the board of the Social Development Commission, Milwaukee County's longtime anti-poverty agency, which halted operations two years ago amid financial turmoil. In an Oct. 23 letter, the mayor's chief of staff, Nick DeSiato, wrote that the city found no "clear and credible path" for SDC to recover, citing governance consistency, transparency and documentation of board actions, and the separation of board oversight from executive management. The city is the fourth appointing body to withdraw support recently. Milwaukee Public Schools appointee Michael Harris resigned Oct. 15, and during the same week United Way of Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha County withdrew its appointee and the Milwaukee Area Labor Council's appointee resigned. MPS, United Way, and the Labor Council indicated they do not plan to fill their seats. Five commissioners remain, including Jorge Franco, who serves as chair and interim CEO.

Source: Milwaukee Neighborhood News Service (Southeastern) | https://milwaukeenns.org/2026/10/26/city-of-milwaukee-pulls-commissioner-from-sdc-board-in-latest-loss-of-support/

## More than 70 Wisconsin school districts seek $1.6B total in referendums Nov. 3

Seventy-two Wisconsin school districts have 79 referendums on the Nov. 3 ballot totaling $1.6 billion in operational and capital requests. The three largest operating referendums are non-recurring measures from Green Bay ($158 million), Middleton-Cross Plains ($119 million), and Janesville ($98 million). Sixteen districts that failed April referendums are seeking approval again. The 2025-27 state budget held general school aid flat at $5.58 billion for the third consecutive year. A March Marquette Law School Poll found 51 percent of respondents inclined to vote against a school referendum, up from 46 percent in June 2025.

Source: WPR News Madison (Statewide) (Statewide) | https://www.wpr.org/news/wisconsin-school-districts-referendums-nov-3-election

## Some rural school districts face dissolution if November referendums don't pass

Five Wisconsin school districts, including Siren, Dodgeville, Gillett, Winter, and one in Dodge County with a pending dissolution awaiting state approval, face possible dissolution if November referendums fail. Siren is seeking a four-year, $750,000-per-year non-recurring operational referendum after a prior $1.8 million measure failed and led to seven teacher layoffs. The Winter School District, serving about 275 students, faces a July 2027 dissolution deadline if its $1.5 million referendum fails, with a fund balance projected at $69,000 at year-end. The 2025-27 state budget held general school aid flat at $5.58 billion for the third consecutive year. There are 78 school referendums on the Nov. 3 ballot across 71 districts.

Source: WPR News Madison (Statewide) (Statewide) | https://www.wpr.org/news/rural-school-districts-dissolution-november-referendums

## School District explains referendum objectives

The Barron Area School District is asking voters to approve a five-year extension of a $7.5 million operational borrowing referendum to close a gap between state funding and operating costs and to support competitive employee compensation. The district, which is 79 percent state-aided as of 2025-26 calculations, states that for every referendum dollar, the state covers $0.79 and local taxpayers cover $0.21. Before bringing the referendum, the district eliminated 5 supervisory positions, 2 clerical positions, and 4 bus routes. Officials say further cuts would directly reduce student programs.

Source: Bloomer Advance (Western) | https://www.bloomeradvance.com/news/free_news/article_f30bbf4b-5a77-4cbf-873c-d88d9f69b39a.html

## Reedsburg seeking $83 million referendum to build middle school

The School District of Reedsburg is asking voters on November 3 to approve an $83 million capital referendum to replace Webb Middle School, which lost six school days during the 2024-25 school year due to structural failures. If approved, the referendum would add $224 to property taxes on a

$340,000 home, the district's average assessed value, with the tax first applying to district income taxes at the end of 2027. The board chose new construction after concluding renovations would not resolve standing water problems and would cost comparably. The referendum would be the district's third approved since November 2024.

Source: WiscNews (South Central) | https://wiscnews.com/news/local/education/article_f9c9ff84-fe4f-4659-8793-4bf9cdbc1b7f.html

## Ripon school officials explain referendum ahead of election

The Ripon Area School District is asking voters on November 3 to approve a nonrecurring referendum maintaining $1.35 million in annual operational funding through the 2032-33 school year by combining two existing measures expiring in 2026-27 ($500,000) and 2027-28 ($850,000). Superintendent Ron Rivard said the district is receiving approximately $3,380 less per pupil in inflation-adjusted terms than in 2003, representing a loss of over $4.5 million annually at current enrollment. The district has balanced its budget for eight consecutive years while reducing administrative FTEs from 13 to 11.3 and teaching positions by 4.9 FTEs. A September public survey showed more than 60 percent of respondents would vote for the referendum.

Source: Ripon Commonwealth Press (Northeastern) | https://riponpress.com/news/ripon-school-officials-explain-referendum-ahead-of-election/article_890b2fcd-53b9-46a7-96b6-8fa9703b6809.html

## CF School Board approves 2027 budget as another referendum looms

The Chippewa Falls School Board unanimously approved a $71.97 million budget for 2027, a 0.16 percent increase from the current $71.85 million budget. The property tax levy rose 9.85 percent to $36.42 million, while the tax rate edged down from $5.754 to $5.749 per $1,000 of valuation. Enrollment fell 3.07 percent (139 students) to 4,382, reducing state aid by $908,000 to $30.8 million. This budget concludes a three-year, $7.5 million referendum cycle. The board has already agreed to seek a new operational referendum in April 2027, with three options under community review ranging from $3.5 million to $4.5 million annually.

Source: Leader-Telegram (Western) | https://www.leadertelegram.com/news/daily-updates/cf-school-board-approves-2027-budget-as-another-referendum-looms/article_2a82e905-fca8-4d9b-92fa-c0f1163f8760.html

## Neenah schools close $1.7M budget gap without mass layoffs

The Neenah Joint School District balanced its 2026-27 budget after facing a roughly $1.7 million shortfall by leaving approximately 15 positions unfilled through retirements and resignations rather than conducting layoffs, consistent with a directive from the superintendent. Staffing reductions accounted for about $1.3 million of the gap; a health insurance renewal saved approximately $500,000. The adopted all-funds budget totals about $131 million, with a total property tax levy of $41,579,417. The mill rate is projected to decline from $5.77 to $5.55 per $1,000 of equalized value as districtwide property values rose 7.4 percent to $7.49 billion. Staff received 3 percent raises for the year.

Source: WGBA NBC26 Green Bay (Northeastern) | https://www.nbc26.com/neenah/neenah-schools-close-1-7m-budget-gap-without-mass-layoffs

## Sparta voters back $15.6 million school levy; proposed administrator pay cut ends in tie

Sparta Area School District residents approved a roughly $15.6 million school tax levy on Oct. 20, following discussion about spending, student departures, and administrator-to-staff pay gaps. A proposed administrator pay cut ended in a tie vote.

Source: Monroe County Herald (Sparta) (Western) | https://monroecountyherald.com/stories/sparta-voters-back-156-million-school-levy-proposed-administrator-pay-cut-ends-in-tie,186174

## 2026-27 Stanley-Boyd school levy set at $5.35 per thousand

The Stanley-Boyd School Board unanimously approved the 2026-27 budget and tax levy following a public hearing Oct. 26, setting the mill rate at $5.35 per thousand, down three cents from 2025. The levy will raise $4,472,957 locally toward a gross budget of $25,143,196.50. General fund revenues are $17,832,445.27 against $17,941,812.92 in expenditures, with the gap expected to be offset by high-cost transportation aid not yet received. A planned spring capital project includes resurfacing the south parking lot adjacent to the new district entrance.

Source: Stanley Republican (Western) | https://stanleyrepublican.com/stories/untitled,211459

## Superior school tax levy to decrease 2%

The Superior School Board adopted a $26.88 million property tax levy on Oct. 26 to support a $59.6 million operations budget, a 2 percent decrease that saves district taxpayers collectively about $581,000 compared to the prior year. A $2.1 million increase in equalization aid, which received a 7 percent boost, drove the reduction. The levy decrease occurred alongside a $3.5 million operational referendum. Overall operating expenses rose 0.6 percent, below the 3.7 percent inflation rate, though health insurance costs increased by $1.9 million. Enrollment fell by the equivalent of 130 full-time students.

Source: Superior Telegram (Western) | https://www.superiortelegram.com/news/local/superior-school-tax-levy-to-decrease-2

## Antigo pool will stay open, after public outcry and board resignations

The Antigo School Board voted 5-2 to fund operations for the Clara R. McKenna Aquatic Center, committing approximately $600,000, roughly double the prior year's district contribution of about $300,000. The vote followed the September closure of the pool, a $140,000 funding shortfall that spurred community fundraising, board-member transparency disputes, the resignation of then-president Danny Pyeatt, and an internal election of new board officers at an Oct. 15 meeting. A motion by board member Randy Myers to delay the budget vote for additional public review failed. The board also simultaneously approved a $5 million athletic complex funded through a separate fund.

Source: WPR News Madison (Statewide) (Central/Northern) | https://www.wpr.org/news/antigo-pool-stay-open-after-public-outcry

## Antigo School Board OKs budget, tax rate

The Antigo School Board voted 5-2 at a special meeting to adopt the 2026-27 district budget, setting the school district tax rate at $6.53 per $1,000 of assessed value, down from $6.77 in 2025-26 and $7.16 in 2024-25. The Fund 80 levy was set at $600,000, with a total levy of $12,949,618. Board members Jill Mattek-Nelson and Angi Schreiber voted against. A key budget issue was a $141,000 reduction in the district's revenue limit imposed by DPI after Fund 10 employees were found performing Fund 80 community service duties in violation of agency guidance. Board member Randy Myers raised violations of the district's own five-day agenda policy and Wisconsin Statute 65.9 regarding public budget review; his motion to delay adoption failed.

Source: Antigo Daily Journal (Central/Northern) | https://www.antigojournal.com/news/antigo-school-board-oks-budget-tax-rate/article_0b2cae25-deba-4fbf-8c7e-4125913654f9.html

## Marinette School District passes budget amid state funding pressures

The Marinette School District Board of Education approved its 2026-27 budget at its Monday meeting. Finance Director Sean Kelly reported the district's revenue limit of $11,975 per pupil is among the lowest in Wisconsin, approximately $1,000 below the state average, a gap Kelly said would equate to roughly $2 million more annually if closed. The district is targeting a mill rate reduction of 32 cents per $1,000 to $5.81, which Kelly said would be the lowest level since the 1980s. The board also approved a separate agreement selling the former Garfield Elementary School to Woda Cooper Companies for $218,000 for conversion to senior housing.

Source: EagleHerald (Northeastern) | https://www.ehextra.com/news/marinette-school-district-passes-budget-amid-state-funding-pressures/article_ae434158-3396-4d19-8d2d-7827f35473fc.html

## Marinette School District accepts offer on Garfield property

The Marinette School District Board of Education voted unanimously to accept a $218,000 purchase offer from Woda Cooper Companies, Inc., a Columbus, Ohio-based affordable housing developer, for the former Garfield Elementary School at 1615 Carney Ave. Woda Cooper proposes converting the building into housing for adults aged 55 and older, subject to completion of financing and closing requirements and future zoning approvals. A prior opportunity to sell the property to St. Thomas Aquinas Academy for $300,000 in early 2024 did not proceed after the district added a deed restriction prohibiting pre-K through grade 12 educational use.

Source: EagleHerald (Northeastern) | https://www.ehextra.com/news/marinette-school-district-accepts-offer-on-garfield-property/article_a3a9feb3-b631-4d72-8213-a7b93967d6a7.html

## MPS awards $4.8 million demolition contract for Lincoln Avenue School

Milwaukee Public Schools signed a $4.8 million demolition contract with Illinois-based TW Chicago on Oct. 19 for Lincoln Avenue School, destroyed by fire June 30, with work to begin in November and finish by March. The contract was scheduled for final Milwaukee School Board approval Oct. 29 and is funded by a $5 million insurance payment from Travelers Insurance. The award followed two bidding rounds: MPS received one bid in the first round and six after reopening bidding in

September. Community meetings on the property's future are scheduled Nov. 5 at Mitchell Street Library at noon and 4:30 p.m.

Source: The Daily Reporter (Southeastern) | https://dailyreporter.com/2026/10/29/mps-demolition-contract-lincoln-avenue-school-milwaukee/

## Contractor appeals Lincoln Avenue School demolition award

MRD Group filed an appeal Oct. 27 urging the Milwaukee School Board to withhold approval of MPS's $4.8 million demolition contract with TW Chicago for Lincoln Avenue School, arguing the selection process lacked transparency. MRD Group bid $928,000 for the project, approximately $3.87 million less than TW Chicago's contract price. MPS spokesperson Kevin O'Connor said the award followed a competitive request-for-proposals process scored on price, experience, safety, environmental controls, and project approach, with TW Chicago receiving the highest composite score. Milwaukee teachers union president Ingrid Walker-Henry called the higher-cost selection "incredibly suspicious" given recent MPS budget cuts. The board was scheduled to vote on final approval Oct. 29; two community meetings on the site's future are set for Nov. 5 at Mitchell Street Library.

Source: The Daily Reporter (Southeastern) | https://dailyreporter.com/2026/10/30/contractor-appeals-milwaukee-public-schools-demolition-award/

## Wisconsin college admissions law spurs worries of 'gaming' the system

A 2024 Wisconsin law guaranteeing UW-Madison admission to students in the top 5 percent of their high school class and UW system admission to the top 10 percent has created inconsistent implementation across districts, with GPA calculation methods left to each school. Nearly two dozen districts, including 10 in Dane County, sought Department of Public Instruction exemptions to use alternative ranking methods and tiebreakers such as ACT scores, attendance, extracurriculars, or random draws, according to records obtained under state transparency laws. Administrators in multiple districts report students and families asking whether to drop advanced courses to protect GPAs. No state agency is tracking implementation choices. Early research indicates the Wisconsin Guarantee has not significantly changed UW-Madison applicant or enrollment demographics.

Source: Capital Times (Statewide) | https://captimes.com/news/education/wisconsin-college-admissions-law-spurs-worries-of-gaming-the-system/article_6a9332e9-d859-4baf-ad3a-8d98df03eab5.html

## Parents increasingly want kids in independent charter and parental choice schools, but face obstacles

A Badger Institute policy brief reports that independent charter and parental choice schools now enroll approximately 80,000 Wisconsin students, or 9.6 percent of publicly funded students, with combined enrollment up 317 percent more than 20 years while district enrollment fell 13 percent. Per-pupil funding for parental choice students is $11,929 and for independent charter students $12,369, compared to a district average of $18,746 in 2024-25, a gap of 36 percent or more. The brief recommends the next Legislature decouple choice and charter funding from local property

taxes, eliminate income caps on parental choice eligibility (currently capped at 300 percent of the federal poverty level in Milwaukee and Racine and 220 percent elsewhere), establish an independent statewide charter authorizer outside UW-Madison, provide equal access to Career and Technical Education grants, and create facilities funding for independent charter schools including right of first offer on unused district buildings. The article's language is partly advocacy-oriented.

Source: Badger Institute (Statewide) | https://www.badgerinstitute.org/parents-increasingly-want-kids-in-independent-charter-and-parental-choice-schools-but-face-obstacles-mandate26/

## Former board member sues Ashland School District in federal court

Former Ashland School Board member Kelly Maday filed a federal civil rights suit Aug. 31 in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Wisconsin against the School District of Ashland and its Board of Education, alleging retaliation for comments she made at a March 20, 2024, board meeting in violation of her First Amendment rights. The complaint says Superintendent Rob Prater denied her requests to place her concerns about what she described as unauthorized use of athletic and weightlifting facilities on a committee or board agenda. In July 2024 the board, meeting in closed session without Maday, voted to censure her based on an investigation conducted by an Eau Claire law firm, and her public records request for the complaint and final report was denied. Maday seeks compensatory damages, costs, and attorney's fees. The board met in closed session with its attorney Oct. 12 and took no action, and no preliminary pretrial conference has been scheduled.

Source: Ashland Daily Press (Central/Northern) | https://www.apg-wi.com/ashland_daily_press/news/local/former-board-member-sues-ashland-school-district-in-federal-court/article_fd4a79de-ae84-4d95-b4db-6a0a381c8bda.html

## Janesville schools has $2.5 million in FEMA flood aid requests pending review

The Janesville School District has received a $645,000 FEMA award for emergency stabilization costs at Washington Elementary School following the April 17 flood, representing roughly 20 percent of what the district is seeking. The district's business office has filed an additional $2.5 million FEMA claim for damage repairs and equipment replacement needed to reopen the building. District CFO Dan McCrea said the application has advanced to the second phase of FEMA vetting but that a decision is unlikely before late in the year. FEMA reimburses based on actual repair costs rather than issuing lump-sum payments.

Source: Janesville Gazette (South Central) | https://www.gazettextra.com/news/janesville-schools-has-2-5-million-in-fema-flood-aid-requests-pending-review/article_44802774-8ece-494e-ac21-6f7a454837fb.html

## Portage accepts offer on Endeavor school, sees interest in Lewiston

Portage School District has accepted a $550,000 offer on Endeavor Elementary School from an undisclosed Marquette County religious organization, $50,000 below the initial $600,000 asking price. Superintendent Josh Sween is targeting a mid-November closing date. The district also listed Lewiston Elementary at $350,000; four offers have been received, including one under consideration but not yet accepted. A couple whose offer was previously accepted on Lewiston

rescinded it after inspecting the building and assessing renovation costs. Closing both schools saves the district approximately $1.1 million this year. The School Board voted to close both schools after an April 7 three-year, $11.1 million operating referendum failed. All offers include 10-year non-compete contracts barring use of the properties for K-12 school purposes.

Source: WiscNews (South Central) | https://wiscnews.com/news/local/education/article_da30279f-d7b0-4a3c-a7cd-e2d41354b999.html

## State-Local Interface

### After failed attempts, groundwater standards for PFAS advance in Wisconsin

The Wisconsin Natural Resources Board voted unanimously to approve groundwater standards for six PFAS substances, setting PFOA and PFOS limits at 4 parts per trillion, PFNA, PFHxS, and GenX at 10 ppt, and PFBS at 2,000 ppt. The DNR estimated the highest two-year compliance cost at $9.9 million, keeping it below the $10 million REINS Act threshold that triggered legislative review and halted a prior 2023 effort. Industry groups disputed that cost estimate. The Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District alone estimated up to $10 million in biosolids disposal costs. The rule still requires approval from the governor and the Legislature.

Source: WPR News Madison (Statewide) (Statewide) | https://www.wpr.org/news/groundwater-standards-pfas-advance-wisconsin

### Gov. Tony Evers approves state's first PFAS standards for groundwater

Gov. Tony Evers approved Wisconsin's first enforceable PFAS groundwater standards, setting a threshold of 4.0 parts per trillion for certain PFAS contaminants. The Wisconsin DNR reports that 95 percent of Wisconsin communities and 70 percent of residents rely on groundwater for drinking water. Evers previously secured a $125 million state investment in the 2023-25 Biennial Budget for PFAS remediation, though the Legislature blocked DNR access to those funds for over two years.

Source: WEAU NBC13 Eau Claire (Statewide) | https://www.weau.com/2026/10/29/gov-tony-evers-approves-states-first-pfas-standards-groundwater/

### Board to vote on whether Wisconsin DNR can craft new pesticide regulations

The Wisconsin Natural Resources Board voted to allow the DNR to begin crafting groundwater standards for 22 pesticides already detected or likely to be found in groundwater. Approximately one-third of Wisconsin residents rely on private wells, and a 2023 DATCP survey found 43 percent of wells contained at least one pesticide. Farm groups including the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation urged postponement until the Department of Health Services provides health-based thresholds, expected in November. DNR staff noted that approval to craft rules does not bar pesticide use; enforcement would apply only if groundwater levels exceed established limits. An economic impact analysis would follow if the rulemaking proceeds.

Source: WPR News Madison (Statewide) (Statewide) | https://www.wpr.org/news/board-vote-whether-wisconsin-dnr-new-pesticide-regulations

## A Cushion, Not a Windfall: Wisconsin's $3.3 Billion Surplus

Forward Analytics released a primer on Wisconsin's $3.31 billion general fund ending balance for fiscal year 2026, down from $4.61 billion at the start of the year. Revenues totaled $23.8 billion against spending and transfers of $25.1 billion, a $1.4 billion draw-down. The balance is less than half the FY 2023 peak of $7.07 billion. The Legislative Fiscal Bureau projects FY 2027 spending will exceed revenues by $582 million, leaving the 2027-29 budget with a smaller cushion. The report says decisions on shared revenue, county aids, and levy limits will be made with less fiscal room than in the prior two budget cycles.

Source: Forward Analytics (Statewide) | https://www.forward-analytics.net/spotlight/a-cushion-not-a-windfall-wisconsins-3-3-billion-surplus/

## How Wisconsin's data center tax break came to be

The Wisconsin Legislature's Joint Finance Committee inserted a sales and use tax exemption for data centers into the 2023-25 state budget via Motion 126, approved on a 12-6 party-line vote on June 22, 2023. The exemption covers construction of WEDC-certified data centers and the electricity they consume. A companion bill (AB 302) passed the Assembly 60-34 the day before but had not received a Senate hearing or vote. Ethics Commission records show 15 organizations hired 59 lobbyists to support the exemption. The Legislative Fiscal Bureau projected in March that if four data centers cost $36.9 billion to build between 2024 and 2028, the state could forfeit $1.5 billion in construction sales taxes plus $369 million annually in electricity tax revenue. Both major gubernatorial candidates now call for repeal.

Source: Isthmus (Statewide) | https://isthmus.com/news/news/how-wisconsins-data-center-tax-break-came-to-be/

## Department of Energy makes $5.1B funding commitment to Alliant Energy

The U.S. Department of Energy awarded Alliant Energy a $5.1 billion, 30-year loan to expand natural gas generation and storage, announced at a visit to Alliant's gas-fired plant in the town of Beloit by Energy Secretary Chris Wright. Alliant's priorities include 1.6 gigawatts of new natural gas capacity and 240 megawatts of expansion at existing facilities. In the town of Rock, Alliant plans to begin construction in 2027 of a liquefied natural gas storage facility capable of holding up to 10 days of supply. The loan is projected to save customers $1.2 billion over its 30-year term across Alliant's Wisconsin and Iowa service territory.

Source: Janesville Gazette (Statewide) | https://www.gazettextra.com/news/department-of-energy-makes-5-1b-funding-commitment-to-alliant-energy/article_31939da6-abdf-4607-a716-9238eed3c2e5.html

## DOC overhaul costs rise in efforts to close GBCI

Wisconsin's correctional overhaul plan, rejected in the 2025-27 biennial budget, has grown in cost from an estimated $325 million to $585 million and been delayed from a 2030 to at least a 2032 completion date. The plan, originally proposed by Gov. Tony Evers in February 2025, would close the 128-year-old Green Bay Correctional Institution, convert Waupun Correctional Institution into a vocational village, and transition Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake Schools to adult facilities. The first step, opening the Southeast Regional Care Center for Youth in Milwaukee, was completed this

week with the first youth expected to move in next month. Sen. Jamie Wall attributed the cost increase to legislative inaction.

Source: The Press Times (Green Bay) (Statewide) | https://gopresstimes.com/stories/doc-overhaul-costs-rise-in-efforts-to-close-gbci,360193

## Judge blocks Trump administration's Medicaid rule forcing sick recipients to prove they can't work

U.S. District Judge Richard Stearns in Boston partially blocked a Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services rule that required Medicaid enrollees claiming "medically frail" exemptions from the federal work requirement to also prove their conditions "significantly impair" their ability to comply. The ruling, issued Oct. 30, grants partial relief to a coalition of 25 states and the District of Columbia that sued in June. The One Big Beautiful Bill Act of 2025 established the first federal Medicaid work requirement, mandating that expansion enrollees ages 19 to 64 work or perform community service at least 80 hours monthly beginning Jan. 1. The CBO projects 5.3 million additional uninsured people by 2034 as a result of the work requirement. Stearns upheld two other CMS verification restrictions, including a requirement that medical frailty documentation not exceed one year in age.

Source: WAOW ABC9 Wausau (Statewide) | https://www.waow.com/news/judge-blocks-trump-administration-s-medicaid-rule-forcing-sick-recipients-to-prove-they-can-t/article_a9cccbc3-72a6-55be-83b9-d0ed1a23be40.html

## Judge imposes sweeping emergency order halting DOJ pressure campaign on election officials across the country

U.S. District Judge Trina Thompson issued a temporary restraining order Friday barring the Justice Department and Department of Homeland Security from demanding that election officials in any state segregate ballots, purge voter rolls, or halt ballot processing, and prohibiting threats of criminal prosecution against election officials. Thompson also required the administration to notify her of any search warrants, grand jury subpoenas, or other demands to access election materials related to its noncitizen voter lists. The DOJ appealed the order Saturday. The order expires November 16. The case was brought in the Northern District of California by a coalition including the NAACP and the League of United Latin American Citizens.

Source: WKBT CBS8 La Crosse (Statewide) | https://www.news8000.com/news/politics/national-politics/judge-imposes-sweeping-emergency-order-halting-doj-pressure-campaign-on-election-officials-across-the-country/article_99063de0-1931-58e2-96a9-15aaef82f813.html

## Outreach, education key to voting accessibility, Wisconsin advocates say

An August court ruling found Wisconsin's current absentee ballot violates the Americans with Disabilities Act, but no replacement was implemented before the November election. Disability Rights Wisconsin estimates 950,000 of the state's 3.8 million voters have a disability; Wisconsin's voter turnout gap between voters with and without disabilities stands at 11.7 percent, among the largest in the nation per a Rutgers University analysis of 2022 data. The Wisconsin Elections Commission's Accessibility Supply Program provides accessibility tools at no cost to

municipalities. All municipalities are required to offer curbside voting, accessible buildings and parking, and ExpressVote electronic ballot-marking machines.

Source: Wisconsin Watch (Statewide) | https://wisconsinwatch.org/2026/10/wisconsin-election-voting-ballot-disabilities-accessibility-requirements-advocates-outreach-education/

## Proposed change would make it illegal to operate UTVs/ATVs with open alcohol containers

The Wisconsin DNR held a public hearing on proposed regulations that would, for the first time, prohibit operating ATVs and UTVs with open containers of alcohol on roads, trails, frozen waterways, and other public areas, while exempting private lands. The agency reported alcohol was a factor in 43 percent of fatal ATV/UTV crashes from 2021 to 2025, and OWI citations among ATV/UTV operators nearly quadrupled more than 10 years, from 68 to 255. Waukesha County Public Works Director Allison Bussler and the Wisconsin ATV/UTV Association both expressed support. The Natural Resources Board is scheduled to take up the changes at its December meeting.

Source: WPR News Madison (Statewide) (Statewide) | https://www.wpr.org/news/proposed-change-illegal-operate-utvs-atvs-open-alcohol-containers

## State's unusual UWSP property valuation leaves Stevens Point with $93K budget shortfall

A state property valuation of University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point facilities has produced a $93,000 budget shortfall for the City of Stevens Point through the Municipal Services Payments Program, which compensates municipalities for services provided to state-owned properties.

Source: Stevens Point Metro Wire (Statewide) | https://spmetrowire.com/states-unusual-uwsp-property-valuation-leaves-stevens-point-with-93k-budget-shortfall/

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*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.*

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