

Wisconsin LocalGov Hub Briefing

September 12 to September 19, 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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Budgets and Finance

Have major Milwaukee County taxes generally risen under David Crowley?

Milwaukee County sales and property taxes both increased during County Executive David Crowley's tenure. The Milwaukee County Board approved raising the county sales tax from 0.5 percent to 0.9 percent under Act 12, the bipartisan state law that authorized counties to levy the additional increment, and Crowley signed the increase. County property tax levies rose from \$304.8 million in 2020 to \$309.9 million in 2025, dipping to \$292.3 million in 2023 before rebounding. The overall levy increase from 2020 through 2023 was 2.6 percent, matching the statewide average over the same period.

Source: WRJN 1400 AM Racine/Kenosha (Southeastern) | <https://wrjn.com/news/2026/09/18/have-major-milwaukee-county-taxes-generally-risen-under-david-crowley>

2027 Proposed Budget presented to Waushara County Board of Supervisors

Waushara County Administrator Megan Kapp presented the 2027 proposed budget to the County Board of Supervisors at the board's regular meeting on September 15.

Source: Waushara Argus (Northeastern) | <https://wausharaargus.com/stories/2027-proposed-budget-presented-to-waushara-county-board-of-supervisors,354530>

Workforce and Labor

DARE officer fired for falsifying timecards

Pierce County terminated DARE Officer Brette Huppert on February 10, 2026, following a two-month investigation led by Chief Deputy Colin Gilles that documented 21 timecard violations in 2024 and 22 in 2025 in which Huppert logged full workdays without being present. Investigators relied on computer login history, laptop GPS data, mobile data terminal login records, and building badge-access data. Sheriff Chad Koranda filed the formal complaint on December 22, 2025, citing policy violations covering payroll accuracy, attendance, mobile data terminal use, and fraudulent hours claims. Huppert received a warning on October 1, 2025, and left early the following day without authorization. Pierce County Administrator Jason Matthys released nearly 2,000 pages of investigative records on September 2, 2026, after a public records request by the newspaper and a Woznicki notice process that gave Huppert 12 business days to seek a court order blocking disclosure.

Source: Pierce County Journal (Western) | <https://www.piercecountyjournal.news/stories/dare-officer-fired-for-falsifying-timecards,205890>

Wisconsin mayor seeks removal of police chief after city investigation found 'highly concerning actions'

Greenfield Mayor Michael Neitzke filed a statement of charges against Police Chief Jay Johnson with the city's Police and Fire Commission on August 28, following Common Council

authorization on August 18. Johnson, appointed chief in 2019 and on paid administrative leave since April 2025, faces four felonies and a misdemeanor in a parallel criminal case stemming from alleged unauthorized use of a department surveillance camera during his divorce, along with subsequent bail jumping, evidence destruction, and obstruction charges. The Police and Fire Commission met in closed session Thursday and approved scheduling a conference with the parties to set a hearing date. That hearing will determine whether the city's investigation findings justify discipline and, if so, what penalty to impose. An evidentiary hearing in the criminal case is set for November 9.

Source: WPR News Madison (Southeastern) | <https://www.wpr.org/news/wisconsin-mayor-removal-police-chief-city-investigation-jay-johnson>

Chippewa Falls City Council votes to hire Chippewa Falls city administrator

The Chippewa Falls City Council voted in closed session Tuesday to hire Rebecca Glewen as city administrator, a position the city had not filled for 20 years. Glewen serves as Trempealeau County administrator and human resources administrator, a role she began in spring 2024, and previously served as mayor of Beaver Dam. She was selected over two other finalists. Mayor Jason Hiess cited the city's workforce of more than 120 employees, growing to 150 seasonally, as the reason for restoring the position.

Source: WEAU NBC13 Eau Claire (Western) | <https://www.weau.com/2026/09/17/chippewa-falls-city-council-votes-hire-chippewa-falls-city-administrator/>

Tuttle is Shell Lake chief of police

The Shell Lake City Council voted at its September 14 meeting to hire Warren Tuttle as full-time police chief. Tuttle is a 16-year law enforcement veteran and former patrol sergeant, field training officer, and emergency medical technician with the Washburn County Sheriff's Department. He replaces interim Chief Michael Jaszczak, who had held the role since 2024 following Chief Dave Wilson's retirement. The council had previously attempted to fill the position part-time, hiring Pat Kraetke earlier in 2026, but Kraetke resigned, prompting the full-time search.

Source: Spooner Advocate (Western) | https://apg-wi.com/spooner_advocate/news/local/tuttle-is-shell-lake-chief-of-police/article_b68e9996-6971-4a3e-961a-cc3eb35411ce.html

Portage County DA, Cass Cousins, gives update on office, staffing levels

Portage County District Attorney Cass Cousins reported that his office employs six staff, himself and five assistant district attorneys, up from four when he joined the office. Portage County received none of the dozens of new prosecutor and public defender support positions the state announced in June, and Cousins said higher-need counties were prioritized in that allocation. Cousins also said the new Portage County jail that broke ground in Plover will ease inmate-spacing limitations that previously required transferring detainees to other counties.

Source: WJFW NBC12 Rhinelander (Central/Northern) | https://www.wjfw.com/news/local/portage-county-da-cass-cousins-gives-update-on-office-staffing-levels/article_6c6eb34a-b105-43f6-8373-23162ffd5ec8.html

Infrastructure and Utilities

Ellsworth making the switch to Tennis for refuse and recycling services

The Ellsworth Village Board approved a five-year contract with Tennis Sanitation to replace GFL for village refuse and recycling collection beginning in the new year. The board selected Tennis from four bids, which also included Waste Management and Murtha Sanitation, based on the lowest combined initial rates of \$55.77, \$61.11, and \$73.92 per quarter for 35-, 65-, and 95-gallon carts respectively, a reduction of \$0.76 per quarter from current rates. Tennis committed to a 99 percent completion standard and same-business-day correction of missed pickups. A pickup-day change from Monday to Tuesday requires a future ordinance revision. The board separately approved ATV and UTV access on Main Street, subject to age, certification, and insurance requirements.

Source: Pierce County Journal (Western) | <https://www.piercecountyjournal.news/stories/ellsworth-making-the-switch-to-tennis-for-refuse-and-recycling-services,205857>

After pipeline project, Pulaski water bills likely to increase by at least 130%

The Village of Pulaski is seeking an approximately 132 percent increase in water rates to cover construction costs of a \$16 million pipeline connecting the village to Lake Michigan water via Hobart. Village President Keith Chambers said the pipeline was built in response to a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources mandate, issued five to six years ago, requiring greater emergency water capacity. The Public Service Commission will hold a public hearing September 28 to set the exact rate increase. Chambers noted the final figure could come in higher or lower than the village's 132 percent estimate.

Source: WGBA NBC26 Green Bay (Northeastern) | <https://www.nbc26.com/news/local-news/in-your-neighborhood/pulaski/after-pipeline-project-pulaski-water-bills-likely-to-increase-by-at-least-130>

Siren seeks phosphorus variance request ahead of DNR deadline

The Village of Siren will submit a phosphorus compliance report to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources by September 30 alongside its WPDES permit renewal application, requesting continuation of an individual economic hardship variance that caps discharge at 1 milligram per liter rather than the formula-derived limit of 0.04 milligrams per liter. Engineer Teresa Anderson of MSA Professional Services told the village board on September 9 that meeting the stricter standard would require an activated sludge system with tertiary filtration estimated at \$10 million, a cost projected to push sewer rates above 2 percent of median household income. If the department rejects the hardship argument, a fallback multi-discharger variance would cost Siren more than \$10,000 annually in phosphorus-discharge fees that are not currently budgeted. Water-quality trading in Siren's watershed remains unavailable. The board took no action. A Public Service Commission-approved 3 percent water rate increase takes effect October 1.

Source: Burnett County Sentinel (Western) | https://burnettcountysentinel.com/news/siren-seeks-phosphorus-variance-request-ahead-of-dnr-deadline/article_745cee75-b3e3-44e0-bbcf-c553b65d1418.html

Appleton homeowners seeking answers after repeat flooding from Grand Chute sewer system

Residents in Appleton's Weatherstone neighborhood, whose homes connect to the Town of Grand Chute's sanitary sewer system, have experienced repeated basement sewage backups since 2025 from deteriorating infrastructure. Grand Chute Public Works Director Jordan Jolma confirmed that a temporary bypass pump was installed as an interim measure, and residents report it has failed twice. One homeowner cited more than \$18,000 in out-of-pocket restoration costs, and another said a private insurer dropped coverage after three flood claims. The town's insurer has denied resident damage claims. Permanent pipe replacement requires coordination with two railroad authorities and Department of Natural Resources permitting, with construction scheduled for 2027.

Source: WLUK FOX11 Green Bay (Northeastern) | <https://fox11online.com/news/local/appleton-homeowners-seeking-answers-after-repeat-flooding-from-grand-chute-sewer-system-damage-insurance-claim-resident-town-public-works-bypass-pump>

Bridge complete, Green Lake eyes next infrastructure needs

Green Lake's Committee of the Whole heard from Public Works Director Jason Carley on September 19 that the Mill Street bridge replacement is complete and slightly over budget, with final figures pending but expected to stay within reserve. Next priorities are tennis and pickleball courts at the Lake Street Sports Complex, north-side sewer rehabilitation scheduled for a council approval request in coming months, and development of Well No. 3, targeted for 2029 completion after a multi-year study and property acquisition process. A temporary PFAS treatment system is operating at Well No. 2. The Common Council voted 6-0 to approve a flagpole donation memorandum of understanding for Playground Park, amended Title 13 Chapter 1 on accessory dwelling units and cottage court housing, created two commercial zones, and approved a certified survey map dividing the Heidel House property into four parcels. Clerk-Treasurer Melissa Zamzow said the 2027 budget process now underway includes a two-year capital expenditure plan with a planned loan, new health insurance options, and potential City Hall HVAC upgrades.

Source: Ripon Commonwealth Press (Northeastern) | https://riponpress.com/news/bridge-complete-green-lake-eyes-next-infrastructure-needs/article_59ddcfda-3691-4e80-a970-b2c7d63552fa.html

Eau Claire Transit Sees 77% Surge In Youth Ridership

At its September 16 meeting, the Eau Claire Transit Commission received a ridership report showing year-to-date youth rides exceeding 30,000, a 77 percent increase over the same period in 2025, which staff attributed to the free K-12 fare program launched in January 2026. Overall ridership is up 4.4 percent year to date despite an 11 percent decline in income-qualifying pass usage, from roughly 192,000 to 171,000 riders, and a 4.5 percent drop in UW-Eau Claire student ridership. The meeting also covered a budget update and a proposal to combine Routes 15 and 21 into a single route. Transit Manager Katrina Running said school days have proven busier than Saturdays. The commission meets the third Wednesday of each month at 4:30 p.m.

Source: Volume One (Western) | <https://volumeone.org/articles/2026/09/17/402638-eau-claire-transit-sees-77-surge-in-youth-riders-2026>

Maritime Metro proposes fare increases; riders share mixed reactions

Maritime Metro Transit Division Manager Kevin Bottesi has proposed fare increases ranging from 25 cents to \$5 as part of the agency's five-year transit development plan, citing post-pandemic inflation in fuel and parts costs. The monthly pass increase is proposed at \$5. If the increases are approved, the new fares would take effect in 2027. A public hearing is scheduled for October 19 at Manitowoc City Hall.

Source: WGBA NBC26 Green Bay (Northeastern) | <https://www.nbc26.com/manitowoc/maritime-metro-proposes-fare-increases-riders-share-mixed-reactions>

Blind Milwaukee bus rider raises concerns about potential MCTS route cuts amid budget deficit

Milwaukee County Transit System is weighing two restructuring concepts to close a nearly \$16 million budget deficit. The ridership concept, which would reduce the number of routes while increasing frequency on remaining corridors, would eliminate Route 28 and trim Route 18, lines the agency acknowledges serve blind and visually impaired riders reaching employment and services. Legally blind rider Jedidiah Moss, who works at Beyond Vision, testified at public feedback sessions that manufacturing and office staff at that employer could lose transit access entirely. Senior Director of Public Affairs Brian DeNeve said Beyond Vision, Independence First, and the county's center on aging and disability services are part of the agency's stakeholder group. The agency is collecting input through five open houses, more than a dozen community tabling sessions, and an online survey before finalizing route changes.

Source: WTMJ 4 NBC Milwaukee (Southeastern) | <https://www.tmj4.com/news/local-news/in-your-community/milwaukee-county/blind-milwaukee-bus-rider-raises-concerns-about-potential-mcts-route-cuts-amid-budget-deficit>

ATC reapplies to build a more than \$2B transmission project serving Port Washington data center

American Transmission Co. filed a new application with the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin for the Ozaukee County Distribution Interconnection Project after the commission unanimously revoked the previous application's completeness determination last month, an action regulators and the utility said had not occurred in recent decades. The revised project, estimated at \$2.48 billion to \$2.72 billion, would build or rebuild high-voltage lines and up to five new substations across six counties to serve Oracle's Port Washington data center campus, which requires 1,300 megawatts in phase one and up to 3,500 megawatts at full build-out. Roughly \$1.1 billion is tied to a grid-stabilization system at a Decker substation that Oracle would fund, with no costs allocated to other ratepayers, though the Citizens Utility Board notes that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission must ultimately determine cost allocation. Commission review of the new application is the next procedural step.

Source: WPR News Madison (Southeastern) | <https://www.wpr.org/news/atc-reapplies-transmission-project-port-washington-data-center>

Dane County residents fear power line would turn 'heaven' into 'hell'

Midcontinent Grid Solutions has identified possible routes for the proposed 765-kilovolt BECI transmission line, which would stretch roughly 190 miles across nine southern Wisconsin counties including Dane at an estimated cost of \$1.2 billion shared among MISO-region utility customers. Towers would stand approximately 175 feet tall and require 180-foot ground easements along routes that do not follow existing lines, requiring new landowner agreements. The Wisconsin Public Service Commission holds final authority over whether and where the line is built. Midcontinent Grid Solutions plans to file its commission application in early 2027 following additional public open houses this fall, with the line potentially operational by 2033.

Source: Capital Times (South Central) | https://captimes.com/news/government/dane-county-residents-fear-power-line-would-turn-heaven-into-hell/article_00936de2-cde3-4ed6-a43a-70e04b8eb568.html

Flooding shuts down state office building in downtown Madison

A chilled-water pipe failure on the penthouse floor of the Wisconsin Department of Administration's 10-story headquarters at 101 E. Wilson St. in Madison flooded all 10 floors in the early hours of September 14, closing the building to staff and the public. Building power was shut off and will remain off through at least early the following week, and employees are working remotely. Ceiling tiles fell in some work areas and wet carpet is widespread, though Deputy Secretary Anne Hanson's September 16 email to staff stated that no one was injured. Six state agencies occupy the building, including the Wisconsin Ethics Commission and the Office of the Commissioner of Insurance. The department is assisting staff in retrieving documents and equipment while the building remains closed to unauthorized personnel.

Source: Capital Times (South Central) | https://captimes.com/news/government/flooding-shuts-down-state-office-building-in-downtown-madison/article_eb5c0ecb-5345-4d7a-b7f2-436ca74f017d.html

Public Safety

Racine council ends Flock camera contract in 30 days, but only because the mayor broke a tie

Racine's Common Council voted 8-7 on September 15 to terminate its Flock Safety license plate reader contract within approximately 30 days, or roughly October 15, after Mayor Cory Mason broke a tied 7-7 alder roll call with a yes vote on Alder Malik Frazier's amendment. An earlier motion for immediate termination failed 6-8. The council then adopted the amended main motion 8-6 as the city's official position, superseding a Finance and Personnel Committee recommendation, file 0795-26, from September 8 to maintain the contract through December 31, 2026. Mason had urged immediate termination six days earlier at his September 9 State of the City address. The action covers only the city system; the Racine County Sheriff's Office separately removed a 10-camera Flock pilot on September 4.

Source: Racine County Eye (Southeastern) | <https://racinecountye.com/2026/09/16/racine-council-flock-camera-contract-ends/>

Flock cameras face pushback in Milwaukee

Under Milwaukee Mayor Cavalier Johnson's direction, the Milwaukee Police Department restricted Flock Safety camera access to supervisors only and limited its use to Part I crimes, and the Fire and Police Commission will conduct semiannual independent audits with results forwarded to the mayor's office. The policy change follows two arrests of Milwaukee officers and a third officer under investigation for misusing the license plate reader technology. Racine, Kenosha, and Fond du Lac counties have canceled Flock contracts, and UW-Milwaukee campus police announced last week that it would stop using Flock cameras. The department will also create a public dashboard disclosing its Flock usage.

Source: WUWM 89.7 Milwaukee Public Radio (Southeastern) | <https://www.wuwm.com/flock-cameras-face-pushback-in-milwaukee>

Flock replacements: Where Dane County would put new traffic cams

The Dane County Sheriff's Office is replacing approximately \$80,000 worth of Flock Safety automatic license plate readers with equipment from a new vendor and has solicited proposals for 26 readers across the county. Four companies responded: Axon Enterprises of Scottsdale, Arizona; Motorola of Chicago; Lucidia IT of Indianapolis; and Ubicquia of Fort Lauderdale. The Sun Prairie Police Department is the latest Dane County agency to exit its Flock contract, following Monona, McFarland, UW-Madison Police, Stoughton, and Middleton. County Board member Keith Furman, who chairs the Public Protection and Judiciary Committee, said County Executive Melissa Agard is expected to include sufficient funding in the budget. County staff will review the proposals before the Sheriff's Office negotiates a contract requiring full County Board approval.

Source: Capital Times (South Central) | https://captimes.com/news/government/flock-replacements-where-dane-county-would-put-new-traffic-cams/article_c057232d-ab90-474a-b97b-5aefaad679b1.html

Neenah ends Flock camera contract

Neenah's Common Council voted Wednesday to terminate the city's Flock Safety camera contract, acting on a recommendation from Police Chief Aaron Olson. Mayor Brian Borchardt cited privacy concerns and data misuse as the drivers of the decision. The city will not pursue a replacement system pending state legislative clarification on surveillance technology law. Neenah joins Menasha and other Northeast Wisconsin jurisdictions that have canceled Flock contracts.

Source: WGBA NBC26 Green Bay (Northeastern) | <https://www.nbc26.com/neenah/neenah-ends-flock-camera-contract>

Oconomowoc votes to cancel contract for Flock cameras

The Oconomowoc Common Council voted 5-2 on September 17 to terminate its contract with Flock Safety, ending use of six automated license plate reader cameras deployed around the city. Mayor Matt Rosek placed the resolution on the agenda after aldermen requested discussion amid privacy and Fourth Amendment concerns. Alderwomen Jennifer Aultman Kloth and Karen

Spiegelberg voted against termination, arguing the cameras enhance public safety. The Waukesha Common Council voted the same evening to discontinue its own Flock program.

Source: Oconomowoc Enterprise (Southeastern) | https://oconomowocenterprise.com/oconomowoc_enterprise/news/oconomowoc-ends-flock-camera-contract/article_1a2f75dc-16d3-47c1-91c9-b77ccd28cafb.html

Flock cameras: Oconomowoc Area School District to end use

The Oconomowoc Area School District will discontinue its Flock Safety automated license plate reader program after the Oconomowoc Common Council voted to cancel the city's Flock contract. The district leases four cameras at \$3,000 per camera annually, deployed at Oconomowoc High School since 2023. Audit logs show that Oconomowoc Police and Waukesha County searched the school district's camera database more than 1,300 times between June and August 2026. The district cited loss of police access as the reason for ending use and has not announced a termination date.

Source: WITI FOX6 Milwaukee (Southeastern) | <https://www.fox6now.com/news/oconomowoc-school-flock-cameras-end>

Clark County Sheriff's Office drops Flock Safety cameras citing privacy concerns

Clark County Sheriff Kerry Kirn announced on September 17 that the department notified Flock Safety on September 10 to cancel its license plate reader camera contract, ending the program county-wide. Kirn cited resident privacy concerns as the basis for the decision.

Source: WSAW CBS7 Wausau (Central/Northern) | <https://www.wsaw.com/2026/09/17/clark-county-sheriffs-office-drops-flock-safety-cameras-citing-privacy-concerns/>

City of Wautoma cancels Flock contract

Wautoma Police Chief Paul Mott informed the Common Council on September 14 that the department canceled its Flock Safety automated license plate reader contract over a compliance issue.

Source: Waushara Argus (Northeastern) | <https://wausharaargus.com/stories/city-of-wautoma-cancels-flock-contract,354536>

Former Kenosha County sheriff's deputy makes first court appearance on felony tracking charges

Frank McGrath, 45, appeared Thursday in Kenosha County court on two felony misconduct-in-office charges for allegedly misusing department surveillance tools to track a fellow deputy who is his former girlfriend. An internal audit identified 16 Flock Safety license plate database searches over four hours while McGrath was off duty last September, and a second charge involves misuse of a police GPS squad-vehicle tracking tool. The court granted a no-contact order and a signature bond. McGrath is the fourth southeastern Wisconsin officer to face criminal charges over alleged Flock Safety misuse. District Attorney Xavier Solis, whose law license was reinstated two days

earlier following a suspension by the state Office of Lawyer Regulation, is prosecuting the case. A preliminary hearing is scheduled for next month.

Source: WTMJ 4 NBC Milwaukee (Southeastern) | <https://www.tmj4.com/news/local-news/in-your-community/kenosha-county/former-kenosha-county-sheriffs-deputy-makes-first-court-appearance-on-felony-tracking-charges>

Racine County sheriff's deputy charged in turkey hunt shooting of man and 7-year-old boy

Racine County Deputy James D. Lehman, 35, was charged August 17 in Racine County Circuit Court with two counts of second-degree reckless injury with a dangerous weapon, Class F felonies carrying a maximum of 17.5 years each, and two counts of negligent use of a dangerous weapon, Class I felonies, stemming from an April 12 shooting that injured a 40-year-old man and his 7-year-old son at the Cherry Lake Sedge Meadow State Natural Area. Lehman was placed on administrative leave the day of the shooting and resigned September 9. He appeared September 17 before Judge Jessica Lynott and was released on a \$10,000 signature bond. Walworth County District Attorney Zeke Wiedenfeld is prosecuting after a referral from Racine County. The sheriff's office confirmed that its internal administrative investigation was subordinated to the criminal proceeding and did not confirm whether it was completed. A preliminary hearing is set for October 7.

Source: Racine County Eye (Southeastern) | <https://racinecountyeeye.com/2026/09/18/racine-county-deputy-charged-hunt/>

Records reveal what went wrong in 99-year-old Milwaukee 911 delay

Internal investigation records obtained through an open records request show that Milwaukee's emergency dispatch center classified a July 27 assault call involving a 99-year-old woman as a welfare call and then a threat call, when investigators determined that a battery classification, which carries a more urgent response, was warranted. A dispatcher also declined to monitor a live open line on which the operator reported hearing an elderly woman being kicked. Officers arrived at 8:23 a.m., nearly three hours after the first call at 5:15 a.m. Two call takers resigned in lieu of termination, and the primary dispatcher was not terminated but received additional training. Investigators found that employees exchanged text messages about the case despite instructions not to. The suspect, Joseph Guadalupe Macias, 23, remains jailed on charges including battery to an elder causing great bodily harm, with his next court date scheduled for next month.

Source: WTMJ 4 NBC Milwaukee (Southeastern) | <https://www.tmj4.com/news/local-news/in-your-community/milwaukee-county/records-reveal-what-went-wrong-in-99-year-old-milwaukee-911-delay>

Waukesha police shooting inside Meijer store justified: DA's office rules

The Waukesha County District Attorney's Office ruled that an officer-involved shooting inside the Meijer store on Sunset Drive on July 30 was justified, stating that there is no basis to prosecute the officer. The review found the use of deadly force warranted to protect the hostage, the officer, and bystanders during a hostage situation. The officer fired three shots, striking suspect Anthony

Lehman, 21, in the abdomen and arm; one round struck the 59-year-old hostage's thumb, causing partial amputation. Lehman faces six felony charges including first-degree reckless injury, false imprisonment, terrorist threats, and three counts of second-degree recklessly endangering safety.

Source: WITI FOX6 Milwaukee (Southeastern) | <https://www.fox6now.com/news/waukesha-police-shooting-inside-meijer-store-justified-das-office-rules>

Town of Nokomis seeks funding for paramedic living space upgrade for local paramedics

The Town of Nokomis held a public meeting September 14 at the Nokomis Fire Department to review options for bringing paramedic living quarters into Wisconsin code compliance. A town committee recommended a \$1.2 million station addition providing private rooms, bathrooms, and laundry, and town clerk Wendy Smith and other officers opposed that option as excessive debt. Two lower-cost alternatives were presented: a code-compliant conversion of the existing family room at \$100,000 to \$150,000, or a manufactured home adjacent to the station at \$225,000 to \$300,000. Approximately 75 residents attended. Any project requires a vote by town electors at an annual April meeting or at a special meeting called with 15 days' notice.

Source: WJFW NBC12 Rhinelander (Central/Northern) | https://www.wjfw.com/news/local/town-of-nokomis-seeks-funding-for-paramedic-living-space-upgrade-for-local-paramedics/article_8e6ab28e-bd0e-4dbd-a458-4401422c780a.html

Land Use and Development

Wisconsin Rapids Planning Commission recommends denying data center permit application

The Wisconsin Rapids Planning Commission voted 7-0 on September 17 to recommend denial of PNK Group's conditional use permit application for a data center at the former Rapids mill site, citing an incomplete and late application. The recommendation now goes to the Common Council, which will decide based on the planning commission's record; no council meeting date has been set. A public hearing on a moratorium on data center development is scheduled for October 5, and passage of a moratorium before PNK Group resubmits could significantly affect the project's timeline. PNK Group stated that the vote did not change its commitment to the project.

Source: WJFW NBC12 Rhinelander (Central/Northern) | https://www.wjfw.com/news/local/wisconsin-rapids-planning-commission-recommends-denying-data-center-permit-application/article_3b2fc99f-bc58-4744-b219-1eb14501e953.html

County moves toward October public hearing on data center zoning

Burnett County's Land Use and Information Committee reviewed a near-final draft ordinance on September 1 that would create a new I-2 Technology/Energy Industrial District under Chapter 30 of the county's land use ordinance, the county's first district built around large power users

including data centers and energy storage facilities. The district would be a floating zone requiring at least 40 acres, with a 20-acre minimum parcel size; uses of one megawatt or less could be permitted administratively, while larger projects would require a conditional use permit with a public hearing. Land Services Director Jason Towne said the state has no rules on data centers, making county review the primary local check. Corporate counsel Stephanie Thomas-Schmidt flagged the need for a severability clause in case future state legislation preempts local rules. No vote was taken; the draft goes to a public hearing October 6, where the committee could amend it, deny it, or forward it to the full county board.

Source: Burnett County Sentinel (Western) | https://burnettcountysentinel.com/news/county-moves-toward-october-public-hearing-on-data-center-zoning/article_0cba6d49-312b-43f6-bcaf-698624028b4d.html

Sheboygan residents pack data center forum to hear research on community impacts

Sheboygan's city-hosted data center speaker series held its second session, drawing approximately 100 Sheboygan County residents to Uptown Social. University of Michigan Professor Ben Green, co-author of "What Happens When Data Centers Come to Town?", presented research finding that utility bills have risen and many jobs created are temporary in communities that have hosted data centers. The Sheboygan Common Council passed a one-year moratorium on data centers in July. Council President Susie Boorse identified zoning changes as the next likely step, said no mechanism exists to permanently ban a lawful industry, and noted the city is exploring a ban on municipal staff signing nondisclosure agreements related to data center projects. Two additional speaker sessions are scheduled for consecutive Wednesdays in September.

Source: WGBA NBC26 Green Bay (Southeastern) | <https://www.nbc26.com/lakeshore/sheboygan-residents-pack-data-center-forum-to-hear-research-on-community-impacts>

Sustainability Committee approves data center considerations

The Eau Claire Sustainability Advisory Committee voted to approve data center zoning and siting considerations and to forward them to the City Council. The recommendations consolidate zoning size categories to hyperscale and large-scale only, drop the modular data center classification, and add air quality to the existing noise, light, and water-use standards. The committee specified that noise ordinances apply to backup generators and urged cooling technology requirements that minimize water consumption. No City Council hearing date was reported.

Source: WEAU NBC13 Eau Claire (Western) | <https://www.weau.com/2026/09/17/sustainability-committee-approves-data-center-considerations/>

Grow Janesville Responsibly continues 'Vote No' campaign on GM site referendum

Two Janesville business coalitions, Grow Janesville Responsibly and Forward Janesville, held a press conference at the former GM/JATCO site urging voters to reject a November ballot referendum that would require voter approval for any project at the site totaling more than \$450 million. George Cullen, chief executive of J.P. Cullen and board chair of Forward Janesville, said the \$450 million trigger is not indexed to inflation and applies to all project types, including

housing and manufacturing. Both groups separately support a city staff-proposed 12-month data center moratorium. The opposing coalition, SNOW Janesville, is canvassing over the next six weeks in support of the referendum. The former GM site has sat empty since 2014.

Source: Janesville Gazette (South Central) | https://www.gazettextra.com/news/grow-janesville-responsibly-continues-vote-no-campaign-on-gm-site-referendum/article_2439b969-fa06-461c-89ae-11e52cb1f0f0.html

Janesville officials hope developers pitch southside housing proposal as deadline looms

Janesville Interim City Manager Jay Shambeau reported that the city's request for quotes to develop roughly 55 acres of city-owned land at 2400 Beloit Avenue had drawn no developer submissions as of Thursday, with the solicitation closing Friday. The project calls for a master developer or team to plan, finance, build, and deliver a mixed-income residential neighborhood, the first of its kind for the city. The city worked with CE Planning Studio to produce concept designs, which Shambeau characterized as illustrative rather than required. If proposals are received, an internal city team will review them before forwarding them to the city council, potentially as soon as October.

Source: Janesville Gazette (South Central) | https://www.gazettextra.com/news/local/janesville-officials-hope-developers-pitch-southside-housing-proposal-as-deadline-looms/article_3b1316ae-5c6a-4ec3-8be9-4003dcfd6.html

Milwaukee developer seeks rezoning for 25-story condo tower

New Land Enterprises has applied to rezone two parcels at 711 E. Kilbourn Ave. and 822 N. Van Buren St. in Milwaukee from a general planned development to a detailed planned development to advance Zenith, a 25-story, 226-unit condominium tower. The Milwaukee Plan Commission will hold a public hearing September 28. The sites were last rezoned in 2008 for a different New Land project that was never built. One-bedroom units start at \$458,000 and penthouses start above \$1.77 million. Developer Tim Gokhman projects that the completed building will generate \$190 million in value.

Source: The Daily Reporter (Southeastern) | <https://dailyreporter.com/2026/09/18/milwaukee-developer-rezoning-zenith-condo-tower/>

Triangle parcel development a heated topic in St. Francis

Cream City Real Estate Investments of Richfield presented its Seaport District planned unit development proposal for a nearly 13-acre city-owned parcel in St. Francis at a September 16 open house attended by dozens of residents. The \$100 million project includes two six-story apartment buildings with 155 units each, a 24,000-square-foot grocery store, a 6,000-square-foot retail building, and 632 parking spaces. KGI Construction Group Chief Executive Ignacio Garcia cited anticipated rents of approximately \$1,300 for one-bedroom units, \$1,600 for two-bedroom units, and \$3,100 for three-bedroom units. A tax incremental financing district is proposed, with closure projected in 2034. No vote was taken, and Mayor Ken Tutaj confirmed the project is not finalized. Garcia noted ground contamination under investigation by the Department of Natural

Resources and estimated a 19-month construction timeline. A public hearing is scheduled for October 14.

Source: The Daily Reporter (Southeastern) | <https://dailyreporter.com/2026/09/18/cream-city-seaport-district-apartments-st-francis/>

Lincoln-King Townhomes Mark New Phase in Racine Redevelopment

The Racine Community Development Authority is accepting applications through September 30 for 33 owner-occupied townhomes across eight buildings in the Lincoln-King neighborhood, or roughly 35 total units when two detached homes are included. Units target households earning under \$50,000 annually, and eligible buyers may receive up to \$10,000 in city down-payment assistance. The project is part of a broader Lincoln-King redevelopment plan encompassing street, utility, and public-space improvements, with total neighborhood investment projected at nearly \$100 million or more.

Source: WRJN 1400 AM Racine/Kenosha (Southeastern) | <https://wrjn.com/news/2026/09/17/lincoln-king-townhomes-mark-new-phase-in-racine-redevelopment>

Landfill company seeks to buy 120+ acres of Eau Claire County Forest

GFL Environmental, operator of the Seven Mile Landfill on Olson Drive, has approached Eau Claire County about purchasing more than 120 acres of county forest land bordering County Highway QQ and Highway L near the Tower Ridge Recreation Area. No formal offer or dollar figure has been submitted. Parks and Forestry Director Josh Pedersen said staff are evaluating impacts to the county's forest land-use plan, including environmental, recreational, and timber effects. Approval would require a Parks and Forest Committee recommendation followed by a two-thirds county board vote to withdraw the land from Wisconsin's County Forest Law. This would be the landfill's fifth expansion attempt in roughly 25 years. A community petition opposing the sale has collected more than 200 signatures, and no decision timeline has been set.

Source: WEAU NBC13 Eau Claire (Western) | <https://www.weau.com/2026/09/17/landfill-company-seeks-buy-120-acres-eau-claire-county-forest/>

Clark County postpones decision to knock down historic jail

The Clark County Board voted 26-1 on September 17 to postpone for three months a decision on demolishing the county's 1897 jail, a structure listed on the national, state, and Neillsville local registers of historic places. Board Chair Kenneth Gerhardt cited water damage, asbestos, lead paint, and high heating costs as reasons demolition is necessary. The county estimates demolition at \$259,000, while preservation costs were characterized as hundreds of thousands of dollars or more. The Historic Society vacated the building last year. A resident noted at the meeting that the site could become courthouse parking if the building comes down.

Source: WEAU NBC13 Eau Claire (Central/Northern) | <https://www.weau.com/2026/09/18/clark-county-postpones-decision-knock-down-historic-jail/>

Winnebago Co. planning vision for former college campus, taxpayers subsidizing upkeep

Winnebago County, which owns the 43-acre former UW-Oshkosh at Fox Cities campus in Menasha, is subsidizing roughly \$800,000 in annual upkeep costs while a long-term redevelopment plan remains unfinished. County Executive Gordon Hintz said the county expects to finalize its vision next year. Current revenue-generating uses include the Barlow Planetarium, the Community Arts Center, office space, and a fieldhouse, and the Menasha Joint School District operates the childcare center. The county's stated redevelopment priorities are fiscal self-sufficiency, tax revenue generation, preservation of community assets, and possible housing and expanded childcare development.

Source: WLUK FOX11 Green Bay (Northeastern) | <https://fox11online.com/news/local/uw-fox-update-winnebago-county-planning-vision-for-former-uw-oshkosh-at-fox-cities-college-campus-taxpayers-subsidizing-upkeep-tax-rate-universities-of-wisconsin-two-year-satellite-campus-closures>

Plans for Madison's Breese Stevens Field, more events, worry neighbors

Big Top Events owner Conor Caloia presented an \$8 million private improvement plan for Breese Stevens Field at a September 16 public meeting, paired with a proposed 21-year city operating agreement. Upgrades would include a permanent concert stage, locker rooms, a green room, and stormwater management, and all improvements would transfer to city ownership upon completion. The city would contribute roughly \$500,000 in capital funds over three years, with Big Top eligible for \$2.5 million in capital-improvement credits. The agreement would allow up to 20 concerts per year by 2030, raise permitted school-night concerts from three to five annually, and maintain the existing 10 p.m. curfew and decibel limits. Neighbors raised concerns about noise, parking, and traffic, and one resident called 20 concerts excessive given no dedicated parking. Agreement terms remain unfinalized, and next steps include further neighborhood consultation and city review.

Source: Capital Times (South Central) | https://captimes.com/news/government/plans-for-madison-s-breese-stevens-field-more-events-worry-neighbors/article_109115b0-34ac-41f9-a287-9138a4c0dba2.html

CHS says it will break ground this fall on major soybean crushing plant in Evansville

CHS will break ground in October on a \$700 million soybean crushing plant at 400 County M in Evansville, with an opening targeted for fall 2028. The facility will produce 1 billion pounds of oil and 2 million tons of meal annually, employ 80 people, and accept soybeans by rail and truck. The project uses a tax incremental financing mechanism enabled by state legislation, championed by Governor Tony Evers, that lifted standard TIF caps. A change in processing scope, shifting to partially refined oilseed output, requires additional state permitting, and the city is finalizing alterations to its adjacent wastewater treatment plant. Union Pacific plans to build a loop track in Evansville to serve the facility.

Source: Janesville Gazette (South Central) | https://www.gazettextra.com/news/chs-says-it-will-break-ground-this-fall-on-major-soybean-crushing-plant-in-evansville/article_d2e1d400-c810-480a-aaf9-094464907100.html

Welcome Inn violations resolved, city review ends

Ripon's Welcome Inn at 240 E. Fond du Lac St. resolved five county health-code violations covering plumbing, restroom facilities, guardrails, emergency exit signage, and fire-rated doors, identified in a July 16 Fond du Lac County Health Department inspection. The city issued an August 2 notice, and the Ripon Fire Department confirmed that the fire alarm system passed inspection August 3. City Administrator Adam Sonntag confirmed that the county cleared all written violations. A parallel zoning review, triggered by an inspection report showing 11 of 38 rooms in short-term use with the remainder as long-term rentals, concluded after the hotel updated its occupancy data to designate 29 rooms for short-term and nine for long-term use, consistent with its B-1 zoning classification permitting hotel and motel use. No further enforcement action is pending and the property retains its existing business license.

Source: Ripon Commonwealth Press (Northeastern) | https://riponpress.com/news/welcome-inn-violations-resolved-city-review-ends/article_4055b8c6-bda9-4b67-af3c-8ab271c0c9b9.html

Governance and Elections

Petitions filed to remove New Berlin mayor for misconduct connected to proposed drug treatment center

Two formal petitions filed at New Berlin City Hall seek the removal of Mayor Dave Ament and Community Development Director Greg Kessler, alleging official misconduct tied to the Milwaukee Rescue Mission's proposed 120-bed drug treatment center. The petitions charge Ament with violating the city's code of conduct and Kessler with violating the open meetings law and arbitrarily applying zoning rules, specifically the classification of the facility as a church. Ament stated that the allegations are false and that the matter will be litigated. Kessler is on medical leave. This is the second removal effort against Ament in recent weeks.

Source: WTMJ 4 NBC Milwaukee (Southeastern) | <https://www.tmj4.com/news/local-news/in-your-community/waukesha-county/petitions-filed-to-remove-new-berlin-mayor-for-misconduct-connected-to-proposed-drug-treatment-center>

Milton Common Council fails to meet quorum threshold

Milton's Common Council canceled its September 15 meeting after failing to achieve a quorum of its six-member body. The vacancy stems from Alderperson Sharla Walker's August resignation following her move out of the city. The canceled agenda included an ordinance regulating e-bikes, e-scooters, and e-motos; a final plat for nine single-family lots in the fifth addition of the Red Hawk Farms subdivision; and a tax incremental financing agreement with Putnam Properties for a 38,480-square-foot facility at 1500 Putnam Parkway carrying \$46,450 in incentive payments over 10 years. The next council meeting is scheduled for October 6.

Source: Janesville Gazette (South Central) | https://www.gazettextra.com/news/milton-common-council-fails-to-meet-quorum-threshold/article_c8f1930b-fc40-4b3b-bae6-79bad62fa7c5.html

Wausau residents learn about city administrator model of government

Wausau held a public informational meeting Tuesday on adopting a city administrator model of government, and no decisions were made. UW-Oshkosh public administration professor Michael Ford told attendees that 127 of Wisconsin's 190 cities already use a hired administrator or manager, and that 10 of the state's 15 second-class cities, Wausau's peer category, have one. Mayor Diny said further discussions with the city council are planned.

Source: WSAW CBS7 Wausau (Central/Northern) | <https://www.wsaw.com/2026/09/16/ausau-residents-learn-about-city-administrator-model-government/>

Human Services

New plans unveiled for Fond du Lac County acute mental health unit

Following the Fond du Lac County Board's earlier vote to close the county's acute mental health unit, county Human Services Director Geri Vanevenhoven outlined a replacement model built on an enhanced crisis service system that adds full-time and part-time staff, with inpatient cases transferred to SSM Health's 16-bed unit in Fond du Lac. The former acute unit space is planned for conversion to an eight-bed community-based residential facility for voluntary crisis stabilization, pending state approval. County Executive Sam Kaufman said the transition will eliminate the unit's deficit but could not specify dollar savings. Staffing levels, final bed count, and cost details go before county committee and board for approval, and state approval of the residential facility could take several months after closure.

Source: WGBA NBC26 Green Bay (Northeastern) | <https://www.nbc26.com/fonddulac/new-plans-unveiled-for-fond-du-lac-county-acute-mental-health-unit>

Wisconsin health officials hopeful encouraging measles vaccination can stop growing outbreak

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services reported 164 total measles cases statewide in 2026, including 161 confirmed or probable in Iowa, Lafayette, and Grant counties and two new cases in Vernon County under investigation. Vernon County's MMR vaccination rate among two-year-olds stands at 42 percent, 38 points below the statewide average, and Lafayette County is at 60 percent. Five patients have been hospitalized. Federal CDC Epi-Aid support has ended, leaving county and state teams to restart containment efforts in Vernon County. Immunization Program Manager Stephanie Schauer said local health departments are offering vaccine doses in communities and schools. Dr. Ryan Westergaard said outcomes depend on whether the Vernon County cases remain travel-associated or indicate person-to-person spread.

Source: WPR News Madison (Western) | <https://www.wpr.org/news/wisconsin-health-officials-encouraging-measles-vaccination-stop-outbreak>

School Districts

Janesville School District announces Superintendent Holzman's retirement, will swiftly announce replacement

Janesville School District Superintendent Mark Holzman will retire at the end of the 2026-27 school year, and the district announced the departure late Friday, September 18, without prior public notice. The School Board is scheduled to vote Tuesday night on a successor under a succession plan whose process has not been disclosed. The Janesville Education Association said it had no advance knowledge of and no input on the replacement. The board held closed sessions on July 14, August 11, August 25, and September 8 on an undisclosed personnel matter. Holzman, who came from Manitowoc in 2022, departs as the district pursues a four-year, \$98 million operating referendum on the November 3 ballot. Tuesday's agenda lists an open-session action item to consider a recommendation of superintendent.

Source: Janesville Gazette (South Central) | https://www.gazettextra.com/news/janesville-school-district-announces-superintendent-holzmans-retirement-will-swiftly-announce-replacement/article_07e79498-f8d2-4fd9-8883-06cba44eaefb.html

Sun Prairie schools' new leader wants to turn the page after scandal

Antoine Reed began as Sun Prairie Area School District superintendent on July 1, succeeding Brad Saron, who had led the district since 2015 and departed following a sexual misconduct scandal. Robert Gilkey-Meisegeier, a former dean of students, was convicted in April of producing child pornography and sentenced to 18 years in federal prison, and former principal Jennifer Ploeger pleaded no contest in June to one misdemeanor charge of failing to report child abuse under a deferred prosecution agreement. Reed said the district conducted more than 60 focus groups with over 130 participants and reviewed more than 1,300 survey responses during the superintendent search. In August, district leaders received investigation-procedure training from outside legal counsel, and the district added the state Office of School Safety's Speak Up, Speak Out electronic reporting tool. Reed identified inadequate state funding, enrollment loss to charter and private schools, and student achievement gaps as priorities.

Source: Capital Times (South Central) | https://captimes.com/news/education/sun-prairie-schools-new-leader-wants-to-turn-the-page-after-scandal/article_75f3a23e-f7bf-4efe-89df-0a1f1d8d5884.html

Racine Unified fills vacancy with City Council member Marlo Harmon

The Racine Unified School District board voted 4-3 Monday to appoint Racine City Council member Marlo Harmon to a vacant board seat. The vacancy arose when former member Scott Coey moved outside the district, rendering him ineligible to serve. Harmon had lost to Coey in the April election. The board passed over Union Grove High School social worker Carolyn Heifner for the appointment.

Source: WRJN 1400 AM Racine/Kenosha (Southeastern) | <https://wrjn.com/news/2026/09/15/racine-unified-fills-vacancy-with-city-council-member-marlo-harmon>

Luxemburg-Casco School District looks to renew operational referendum with vote added to November ballot

The Luxemburg-Casco School District has placed a \$1.8 million annual operational referendum renewal on the November 3 ballot. Superintendent Jo-Ellen Fairbanks said approval would maintain current spending levels through the 2029-30 school year with no change to the mill rate. Failure would force the elimination of 13 full-time and five part-time positions.

Source: WGBA NBC26 Green Bay (Northeastern) | <https://www.nbc26.com/news/education/luxemburg-casco-school-district-looks-to-renew-operational-referendum-with-vote-added-to-november-ballot>

Oshkosh North auditorium project \$5M over budget

The Oshkosh Area School District received a lowest bid of approximately \$23 million from Miron Construction for the Oshkosh North High School auditorium renovation, roughly \$5 million above the original \$18 million to \$20 million estimate. Superintendent Bryan Davis said savings from under-budget elementary school projects at Traeger, Oakwood, and Franklin offset the overrun, with no taxpayer impact. Construction begins this month and is expected to be complete in August 2027. Broader district projects, including the closure of Roosevelt Elementary and of South Park and Perry Tipler middle schools, continue through fall 2029.

Source: WGBA NBC26 Green Bay (Northeastern) | <https://www.nbc26.com/oshkosh/oshkosh-north-auditorium-project-5m-over-budget>

State-Local Interface

Only CAFO operators can challenge Eureka's livestock ordinance, Appellate Court rules

The Wisconsin Court of Appeals, District III, ruled September 1 that Ben and Jenny Binversie, Eureka-area residents who are not CAFO operators, lacked taxpayer standing to challenge the Town of Eureka's CAFO permitting ordinance, affirming Polk County Circuit Judge Angeline Winton's January 2025 dismissal. The three-judge panel, in an opinion authored by Judge Gregory Gill Jr. and recommended for publication, which would make it binding statewide, found that the ordinance's fees and enforcement costs fall on permit applicants rather than taxpayers, negating any cognizable pecuniary injury. The ruling leaves unresolved whether Eureka's fees, engineering requirements, and cost-shifting provisions are preempted by the state Livestock Facility Siting Law. Eight towns and three counties in northwest Wisconsin have adopted ordinances modeled on Eureka's. No CAFO currently operates in Eureka and no permit application has been filed. The Binversies may petition the Wisconsin Supreme Court for review.

Source: Burnett County Sentinel (Statewide) | https://burnettcountysentinel.com/news/only-cafo-operators-can-challenge-eureka-s-livestock-ordinance-appellate-court-rules/article_e3dbf0aa-0c94-420a-a026-8777a4c91762.html

A preliminary injunction granted blocking the federal government from demanding a state-owned database be turned over

A U.S. District Court judge granted a preliminary injunction blocking the U.S. Department of Transportation, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, and the Department of Homeland Security from compelling the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators to surrender a state-owned database containing sensitive personal information on 17 million drivers, including nearly 300,000 Wisconsin commercial drivers. The court also barred the federal agencies from withholding more than \$10 million in federal funding from the association for non-compliance. The Wisconsin Department of Justice filed the suit in August alongside a coalition, alleging that the federal agencies violated privacy laws by attempting to build a driver database without public notice or data safeguards. The injunction extends protections first established by a temporary restraining order, and litigation continues.

Source: WFHR 1320 AM Wisconsin Rapids (Statewide) | <https://www.wfhr.com/news/2026/09/19/a-preliminary-injunction-granted-blocking-the-federal-government-from-demanding-a-state-owned-database-be-turned-over>

Wisconsin congressional map, state Supreme Court hears arguments

The Wisconsin Supreme Court heard oral arguments September 16 on whether two lower-court judicial panels improperly dismissed lawsuits challenging the state's congressional map. The court's 5-2 liberal majority is weighing whether to remand both cases for reconsideration. Wisconsin's congressional delegation currently stands at six Republicans and two Democrats. Because election ballots have already been distributed, any ruling cannot alter district boundaries before 2028. The justices have not indicated a decision timeline.

Source: WITI FOX6 Milwaukee (Statewide) | <https://www.fox6now.com/news/wisconsin-congressional-map-supreme-court-091626>

Former Judge Dugan keeps law license for now, court rules

The Wisconsin Supreme Court on September 16 denied an Office of Lawyer Regulation motion to summarily suspend the law license of former Milwaukee County Judge Hannah Dugan, who resigned in January 2026 after a December 2025 jury conviction on felony obstruction. Justices Brian Hagedorn and Annette Ziegler dissented in favor of suspension. Dugan was sentenced to no prison time and fined \$5,000 by U.S. District Judge Lynn Adelman. The Office of Lawyer Regulation will now proceed through its full review process to determine whether to pursue suspension. Dugan's defense intends to appeal the conviction to the Seventh Circuit, centering on whether obstructing an immigration arrest constitutes interference with a federal proceeding.

Source: WITI FOX6 Milwaukee (Statewide) | <https://www.fox6now.com/news/wisconsin-court-judge-dugan-law-license>

Kenosha County DA's law license reinstated; here's what we know

The Wisconsin Supreme Court's Office of Lawyer Regulation suspended Kenosha County District Attorney Xavier Solis' law license on September 14, citing failure to cooperate with one or more office investigations, then reinstated it the following day. The office declined to explain either

action. Solis was sanctioned in February 2026 by Kenosha County Judge David Hughes for using AI-generated false case citations and failing to disclose the use of AI, and Hughes also dismissed two criminal cases Solis' office had filed. Solis was elected district attorney in fall 2024 and sworn in in January 2025.

Source: WITI FOX6 Milwaukee (Statewide) | <https://www.fox6now.com/news/kenosha-county-da-law-license-resinstated>

Judge officially dismisses residency suit against Michele Skinner

Dane County Judge Jacob Frost dismissed a residency challenge against Republican State Senate District 31 candidate Michele Magadance Skinner on September 14, allowing her to remain on the November ballot. The Wisconsin State Senate Democratic Committee filed the case on August 14, alleging that Skinner was a Georgia resident who had claimed property tax credits in that state. Skinner will face incumbent Senator Jeff Smith of the town of Brunswick in the general election.

Source: Leader-Telegram (Statewide) | https://www.leadertelegram.com/news/judge-officially-dismisses-residency-suit-against-michele-skinner/article_05696130-f05f-4c3b-ac8d-55e632f0af00.html

DPI budget request will include spending on children with deafblindness, investigating educator misconduct

State Superintendent Jill Underly announced the first portion of the Department of Public Instruction's 2027-29 biennial budget request, totaling \$28 million, to be submitted to the Legislature in November. The request includes \$500,000 over the biennium for Deafblind Outreach serving 170 children after a federal grant termination, \$7.5 million for public library systems, \$12.5 million for information technology modernization, \$6.7 million for cybersecurity, \$350,200 for two additional educator license investigation positions, and \$300,000 for partner organizations. The second portion, covering state school aid, will be submitted to the Department of Administration in November before the full budget goes to the Legislature and the incoming governor.

Source: WPR News Madison (Statewide) | <https://www.wpr.org/news/dpi-budget-request-deafblind-children-educator-misconduct>

Legislation proposes screen-free Wisconsin classrooms until 3rd grade

State Representative David Steffen of Howard plans to introduce a bill in the 2027-28 legislative session banning screens in pre-kindergarten through second grade classrooms in public and charter schools statewide. Exceptions would cover standardized assessments, computer science requirements, and special-needs accommodations. The proposal mirrors the American Federation of Teachers' Devices Down, Eyes Up, Hands-on position. Sauk Prairie School District Superintendent Jeff Wright said removing shared classroom screens presents implementation challenges. The Madison Metropolitan School District is reviewing its screen policies but said eliminating computers entirely is not the right answer. The Department of Public Instruction has not reviewed the proposal and declined comment pending formal submission.

Source: WPR News Madison (Statewide) | <https://www.wpr.org/news/legislation-proposes-screen-free-wisconsin-classrooms-until-3rd-grade>

UW-Milwaukee could offer teachers a 3-year degree to help MPS teacher shortage

UW-Milwaukee Chancellor Thomas Gibson confirmed that discussions are underway with the School of Education to create a 90-credit education degree, following a March Board of Regents policy revision allowing UW campuses to reduce degree requirements from the standard 120 credits. The program would save in-state students approximately \$10,980 at the university's rate of \$366 per credit hour. Preliminary plans would place students in Milwaukee Public Schools during their fourth year as a teaching residency. Milwaukee Public Schools opened the 2025-26 school year with 60 teacher vacancies, and the district's 2026-27 budget added more than 159 teaching and paraprofessional positions. No implementation timeline has been set.

Source: WPR News Madison (Statewide) | <https://www.wpr.org/news/uw-milwaukee-teachers-3-year-degree-mps-teacher-shortage>

Proposed transmission lines unite some Republicans and Democrats in opposition

Bipartisan opposition has formed against two MISO-sponsored 765-kilovolt transmission projects through the Driftless Area: the MariBell Transmission Project, co-developed by Dairyland Power Cooperative along the Mississippi corridor, and the 190-mile BECI line through up to nine southwestern Wisconsin counties, overseen by Midcontinent Grid Solutions. Both 2026 gubernatorial candidates, Democrat David Crowley and Republican Tom Tiffany, oppose the projects, as do U.S. Representatives Derrick Van Orden and Mark Pocan and six state legislators. Van Orden, joined by Representatives Tranel and Kurtz and Senator Marklein, sent Governor Tony Evers a letter requesting a moratorium; Evers deflected, noting that the Public Service Commission holds jurisdiction. Both projects require commission approval, with MariBell developers planning to file this fall and BECI developers early next year.

Source: WPR News Madison (Statewide) | <https://www.wpr.org/news/proposed-transmission-projects-765-kv-driftless-wisconsin-politics>

WRN Daily: Lawmakers call for more PSC review of controversial power line projects

Representatives Tara Johnson and Andrew Hysell are calling for a 180-day extension of the Public Service Commission's transmission-line review timeline and for increased intervenor compensation funding, targeting projects including the proposed 140-mile, 765-kilovolt MariBell line through southwestern Wisconsin's Driftless Region, described as the largest transmission proposal in state history. A provision in Governor Tony Evers' budget that would have granted the commission chair authority to extend review by 180 days was removed by Republican lawmakers. Applications for the MariBell and BECI projects are expected to reach the commission early next year.

Source: Wisconsin Radio Network (Statewide) | <https://www.wrn.com/wrn-daily-lawmakers-call-for-more-psc-review-of-controversial-power-line-projects/>

More data, more gas? Wisconsin power plant rules face scrutiny

Evergreen Collaborative advocate Lauren Reeg, citing a Union of Concerned Scientists report, said state utility rules allow power companies to gain plant-construction approval before a utility commits to purchasing the output, potentially exposing customers to stranded costs. Invenergy has proposed two natural gas plants totaling nearly 2 gigawatts that We Energies plans to acquire. The Evergreen Collaborative estimates that data centers could represent up to 68 percent of Wisconsin's electricity demand growth by 2030 and generate as much as \$30 billion in added system costs over 25 years. Wisconsin residential electric rates have risen nearly 29 percent since 2021, and We Energies and Wisconsin Public Service are each seeking double-digit rate increases for the next two years. Reeg called for rules requiring utilities to evaluate all supply options before proposing new fossil fuel infrastructure. The article's language is partly advocacy-oriented.

Source: WXPB 91.7 FM Rhinelander (Statewide) | <https://www.wxpr.org/business-economics/2026-09-17/more-data-more-gas-wisconsin-power-plant-rules-face-scrutiny>

Attorney General Josh Kaul makes appearance in Wausau to discuss upcoming election, privacy issues

Wisconsin Attorney General Josh Kaul appeared in Wausau to discuss his reelection rematch against Fond du Lac County District Attorney Eric Toney. Kaul highlighted a \$17.1 billion multistate Meta settlement that will direct more than \$200 million to Wisconsin, which he said he intends to apply toward children's mental health. He called for statewide protocols governing Flock Safety camera data, used by more than 200 Wisconsin police departments and sheriff's offices, to prevent mass surveillance. He also called for legislative guardrails on artificial intelligence privacy and pricing practices.

Source: WJFW NBC12 Rhinelander (Statewide) | https://www.wjfw.com/news/local/attorney-general-josh-kaul-makes-appearance-in-wausau-to-discuss-upcoming-election-privacy-issues/article_b285f15d-1b27-47f5-aa69-3743b756e9c7.html

Tiffany promises more state agency audits if elected governor

Republican U.S. Representative Tom Tiffany, campaigning for governor, announced a Taxpayer Accountability Plan on Friday in Eau Claire that would hire additional state auditors to identify waste and duplication. He cited the Legislative Audit Bureau's loss of four auditor positions, vetoed by Governor Tony Evers from the most recent state budget, as the gap his plan would address. Tiffany also referenced the Newcap nonprofit financial collapse as evidence of insufficient state oversight. The Republican-controlled Legislative Audit Committee has already ordered an audit of Newcap and related entities.

Source: WPR News Madison (Statewide) | <https://www.wpr.org/news/tiffany-promises-more-state-agency-audits-if-elected-governor>

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.
