

Wisconsin LocalGov Hub Briefing

August 22 to August 29, 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

Losing Ground: Net New Construction and Inflation

Forward Analytics, the research office of the Wisconsin Counties Association, reported that the Wisconsin Department of Revenue released 2026 net new construction figures for the state, counties, and municipalities in mid-August 2026. The statewide net new construction rate held at 1.64 percent, compared with 1.65 percent in 2025 and 1.62 percent in 2024. Under Wisconsin's levy limit statutes, the net new construction rate sets the effective annual ceiling on county and municipal property tax levy growth absent a referendum, tying allowable growth to the percentage increase in equalized value from new construction minus value lost to demolished property. The report characterizes Wisconsin's levy limit structure as among the most restrictive in the country. County-level and municipal-level figures were released alongside the statewide rate. The full Spotlight report and its jurisdiction-level data are available through the Forward Analytics website.

Source: Forward Analytics (Statewide) | <https://www.forward-analytics.net/spotlight/losing-ground-net-new-construction-and-inflation/>

Construction spike gives county more to spend

Ozaukee County Administrator Jason Dzwinel presented an initial 2027 budget preview to the County Board in August 2026, reporting that the county's net new construction rate will rise from 1.5 percent to 2.3 percent for 2027. Under the state formula tying allowable levy increases to net new construction, that rate produces roughly \$530,000 in additional spending capacity. Nearly 80 percent of the increase comes from construction in Mequon, Port Washington, and Grafton, with the Vantage Data Centers Lighthouse Campus contributing because Port Washington held its first-year assessed value outside the tax incremental district. The 2026 tax levy totaled \$23.18 million, up 1.59 percent from 2025, with the Sheriff's Office accounting for \$16.7 million of that figure. Budget assumptions include a projected 10 percent increase in health insurance premiums and a 3 percent rise in salaries and benefits. Dzwinel expects to deliver a proposed budget in mid-September, with Executive Committee review targeted for mid-October and a full County Board vote in November.

Source: Ozaukee Press (Southeastern) | <https://ozaukeepress.com/content/construction-spike-gives-county-more-spend>

Wausau parks committee to weigh new monthly forestry fee, reduced pool days

The Wausau Parks and Recreation Committee scheduled an August 31, 2026 meeting at 5:15 p.m. to consider two 2027 budget proposals that together would move the department's bottom line by roughly \$550,000 against a \$72,500 savings target. The larger item is an urban forestry fee structured as a recurring monthly charge, under which 12,681 households would pay \$2 per month, or \$24 annually, and 1,899 commercial, industrial, and tax-exempt properties would pay \$8 per month, or \$96 annually, projecting \$486,648 in combined annual revenue. The proposal would for the first time require tax-exempt properties, including churches, hospitals, and nonprofits, to contribute to forestry funding. The committee will also weigh reduced operating days at the Kaiser, Memorial, and Schulenberg pools, with the option carrying the largest savings closing one pool Sunday through Friday for \$29,781. Staff requested committee

recommendations to the full Wausau City Council on both the forestry fee and the flower basket funding question.

Source: Wausau Pilot & Review (Central/Northern) | <https://wausaupilotandreview.com/2026/08/29/wausau-parks-committee-to-weigh-new-monthly-forestry-fee-reduced-pool-days/>

County board's September vote will decide how much Polk County libraries get to keep

The Polk County General Government Committee voted 3-2 on August 12, 2026 to reject a motion maintaining the county's library reimbursement rate at 95 percent under state Act 150, which requires counties to reimburse public libraries for services provided to residents of towns without their own library. Supervisors Adam Jarchow, Jeremy Hall, and Russ Arcand voted no, and Keith Karpenski and Jay Luke voted yes. The committee then voted unanimously to direct staff to draft a resolution leaving the reimbursement percentage blank, deferring the rate decision to the full county board in September. At the current 95 percent rate, the county's 11 libraries would collectively receive approximately \$1.13 million; at 100 percent that figure rises to roughly \$1.19 million, and the statutory minimum is 70 percent. Amery Area Public Library director Heather Wiarda said a reduction from 95 percent to 70 percent would remove approximately \$69,000 and erase the library's programming, print materials, and audiovisual budgets. The September county board vote will set the final rate.

Source: Amery Free Press (Western) | https://theameryfreepress.com/news/county-boards-september-vote-will-decide-how-much-polk-county-libraries-get-to-keep/article_69f3f159-37b6-469b-8d08-846ae7b53ebb.html

TID No. 10: Watertown considers new district for proposed River Crossing development

The City of Watertown Finance Committee discussed creating Tax Increment District No. 10 at its Monday meeting, centered on the proposed River Crossing housing development at 1911 Gateway Drive. Developer Free Heel Capital proposes 274 residential units across 22 buildings over a two-year construction period at approximately \$135,000 per unit, a roughly \$36 million development. The proposed district would be mixed-use, with newly platted residential land capped at 35 percent of its area. District 7 Alder Tony Arnett said he has no interest in proceeding if the district's primary purpose is funding the residential development. District 6 Alder Fred Smith said he wants additional information and noted the district encompasses land well beyond the River Crossing footprint. Sonja Kruesel of Vandewalle and Associates presented the proposal on the city's behalf. The Finance Committee will take up the development proposal again at its September 14 meeting.

Source: Watertown Daily Times (Southeastern) | https://www.wdtimes.com/news/local/tid-no-10-watertown-considers-new-district-for-proposed-river-crossing-development/article_40a1fa1b-7b47-4e2d-87a1-ab09ce61cc31.html

Rhineland property revaluations ongoing seeking more accurate market values

The Rhineland Common Council approved a contract with Associated Appraisal Consultants for a citywide property revaluation, with the city paying just over \$310,000 for interior and exterior inspection updates. The revaluation is required because Rhineland's assessed values have fallen outside the state-mandated 10 percent tolerance from actual market value. City Clerk Austyn Zarda said contracting with the firm saved the city a significant amount compared with

allowing the state to conduct the revaluation. Associated Appraisal Consultants began door-to-door inspections on August 17, 2026 and will continue every other week through the end of October. Inspectors evaluate home condition, neighborhood, and age, and will photograph the exterior of every home in each neighborhood. Property owners are not legally required to permit interior inspections, will receive written notice before each visit, and can verify inspectors by city-issued identification.

Source: WJFW NBC12 Rhinelander (Central/Northern) | https://www.wjfw.com/news/local/rhinelanders-property-revaluations-ongoing-seeking-more-accurate-market-values/article_95b59c29-2e0c-48aa-8b5c-f35a78ada337.html

Online bidding increases Douglas County land sales

The Douglas County Board voted on August 20, 2026 to approve more than \$70,000 in land sales generated by auctioning six tax-deed parcels through the Wisconsin surplus auction website, replacing a sealed-bid process that had produced only a few thousand dollars per sale cycle. The board rejected 19-1 an amendment offered by Supervisor Howard Hendrickson that would have referred one Oliver parcel back to the Land and Development Committee, then unanimously confirmed the sale of that parcel to high bidder Kenneth Schroeder for \$18,000 against a minimum bid of \$1,500. Schroeder owns adjacent property and sought river access. The Land and Development Committee had recommended awarding all parcels to high bidders at its July 28 meeting. Board Chairman Mark Liebaert and Supervisor Alan Jaques cited fiduciary responsibility to taxpayers as the basis for honoring high bids without regard to proposed use. County Clerk Kaci Lundgren implemented the online platform.

Source: Superior Telegram (Western) | <https://www.superiortelegam.com/news/local/online-bidding-increases-douglas-county-land-sales>

Douglas County panel OKs funding to support small businesses

The Douglas County Land and Development Committee voted unanimously on August 25, 2026 to recommend that the full County Board include a \$59,500 allocation from the Exodus Reserve in the 2027 budget to support small businesses during the anticipated multi-year closure of the Blatnik Bridge, expected to begin in February or March 2027. Committee Chairman Mark Liebaert made the motion, and Supervisors Alan Jaques and Charlie Glazman abstained because they serve as president and treasurer of the Development Association board. The county established the Exodus Reserve with repayment from Exodus Machines Inc.'s 2012 expansion, earmarked for economic development. The \$59,500 would serve as the local match for a \$250,000 Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation grant application funding grants or forgivable loans to small businesses. If the state application fails, the county could combine the funds with its Revolving Loan Fund to support a microloan program modeled on COVID-era loans of \$5,000 to \$10,000 with no interest. The County Board must adopt the 2027 budget to finalize the allocation.

Source: Superior Telegram (Western) | <https://www.superiortelegam.com/news/local/douglas-county-panel-oks-funding-to-support-small-businesses>

Barron, Cameron, and Ladysmith awarded state infrastructure grants

Gov. Tony Evers announced that three western Wisconsin municipalities will receive a combined \$2,785,530 through the Community Development Block Grant Public Facilities program, administered by the Wisconsin Department of Administration with funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The City of Barron received \$1 million, the

Village of Cameron received \$785,530, and the City of Ladysmith received \$1 million, each designated for street and utility infrastructure improvements. The three awards are part of a statewide allocation exceeding \$19.7 million distributed to 20 low- and moderate-income communities with populations of 50,000 or fewer. Recipient communities statewide will supplement the grants with more than \$37.1 million in local matching funds. Evers noted that the proposed Federal Fiscal Year 2027 budget would eliminate the Community Development Block Grant program and urged Wisconsin's Congressional delegation to oppose that cut.

Source: Chetek Alert (Western) | https://chetekalert.com/news/area_news/article_17744bab-cefc-40a9-beeb-cefde57eff7e.html

P.D. expansion referendum set for voters' decision

The Plymouth City Council voted Monday to place a question on the November 3, 2026 ballot asking voters to permanently increase the city's property tax levy by \$600,000 annually to fund three additional police officers, one patrol car, and associated equipment. The increase would be recurring rather than non-recurring, and state levy limits require voter approval before the city can implement it. The published account states that the Plymouth Police Department has not added an officer in a number of years. No vote count for the council action appears in the available text. The next procedural step is the November 3 referendum, at which Plymouth voters will render a binding decision on the levy increase.

Source: Plymouth Review (Southeastern) | <https://www.plymouth-review.com/articles/p-d-expansion-referendum-set-for-voters-decision/>

Workforce and Labor

City finalizing 'complete background investigation' before announcing City Manager finalist

The Janesville City Council directed interim City Manager Jay Shambeau to enter contract negotiations with one finalist for the city manager position following a closed session in late August 2026, in which council members conducted third and final one-hour interviews with candidates Rebecca Houseman and Colin Kennedy. City Council Vice President Michael Cass said the finalist's name will not appear in any publicly posted agenda or meeting material before the council's next regular meeting on September 14, 2026 at 6 p.m. at City Hall, where the council is expected to move formally to hire. Janesville Police Department detectives are conducting a background investigation that Cass described as more extensive than a standard employer check and as including in-person inquiry in the candidate's home community. The city used consultant Innovative Public Advisors throughout the search. A community hiring panel that included representatives from SNOW Janesville and state Rep. Ann Roe's team provided candidate feedback to the council.

Source: Janesville Gazette (South Central) | https://www.gazettextra.com/news/city-finalizing-complete-background-investigation-before-announcing-city-manager-finalist/article_6ec0a1ec-ced2-4e09-b8e3-c2a4071b61a0.html

22 officers left the Beloit Police Department in last eight months

The Beloit Police Department lost 22 officers in the eight months following Police Chief Schonella Stewart's swearing-in on December 1, 2024, according to monthly personnel reports in Beloit

Police and Fire Commission agendas. Three officers retired and 19 resigned, including a former school resource officer who pleaded no contest to misdemeanor disorderly conduct and battery charges in June. The department is budgeted for 74 sworn officers and reported 19 open positions as of August 13, 2026, with July producing the highest single-month departure count at six. The department has hired 12 officers since Stewart took over, including Stewart and two deputy chiefs who commute from Illinois in city-owned vehicles. On August 18, 2026 the Beloit City Council unanimously approved an indefinite contract with the Rock County Sheriff's Office for four deputies to patrol Beloit six days per week beginning September 8 at approximately \$16,300 per week excluding overtime, with the agreement potentially running through 2027. City Manager Daniel Ortiz Hernandez said he has not eliminated the possibility of commissioning an independent evaluation of the department.

Source: Beloit Daily News (South Central) | https://www.beloitdailynews.com/news/local-news/22-officers-left-the-beloit-police-department-in-last-eight-months/article_c459f4ef-1da3-4f65-9590-ab6117025dff.html

Fitchburg fast-tracks 2 new firefighter positions

The Fitchburg Common Council unanimously approved a resolution on August 25, 2026 authorizing the immediate hire of two additional firefighters using one-time funds redirected from 2026 police facility operating allocations that will not be fully spent. The two positions had been planned for 2027 but were accelerated after the city announced during the summer that fire engines would be staffed with three firefighters rather than four when filling the fourth position would require overtime. Alder Micah LaDousa spoke in favor of the resolution, citing staffing challenges that emerged midway through the year. Mayor Julia Arata-Fratta confirmed both positions are already included in her priorities for the 2027 budget. Fire Chief Scott Sarver said the hiring process could begin immediately upon authorization and that new firefighters could be on duty within 30 days, subject to background checks and vendor processes.

Source: WKOW ABC27 Madison (South Central) | https://www.wkow.com/news/fitchburg-fast-tracks-2-new-firefighter-positions/article_a2765384-6a8c-49bc-a8cb-e4f440dd3e80.html

Douglas County adopts artificial intelligence policy

The Douglas County Board adopted a generative artificial intelligence use policy on August 20, 2026 covering all appointed and elected officials and county employees. County Administrator Dave Sletten said the county developed the policy with the City of Superior and UW-Madison Extension and modeled it on a Bayfield County policy adopted several years earlier. Under the policy, employees may use only artificial intelligence tools licensed by the county, must cite artificial intelligence use in any work product, and may not use the tools when handling sensitive or confidential information. Employees must complete training in both artificial intelligence and cybersecurity. Information Technology Director Dan Lindberg said the policy places heavy emphasis on personal responsibility, and Supervisor Anders Hultstrom cautioned board members that generative tools produce errors and fabrications. Board Chairman Mark Liebaert said he anticipates revisions within a year, and Sletten said the county will update the policy as the technology evolves.

Source: Superior Telegram (Western) | <https://www.superiortelegram.com/news/local/douglas-county-adopts-artificial-intelligence-policy>

Winneconne School Board places district administrator on leave

The Winneconne Community School District Board of Education voted 4-2 on Monday, August 25, 2026 to place District Administrator Peggy Larson on paid administrative leave, four days before the start of the school year. Board President Kati Calewarts announced the action, describing the leave as pending further consideration of an internal investigation the board authorized, and did not specify the subject of the investigation. Dean Ackmann, Kati Calewarts, Kari Flagg, and Cindy Otten voted in favor; Donna Hanson and Mark Kunde voted against; member Jill Verich was absent because of a prior obligation. The board discussed the matter in closed session before reconvening for the open-session vote. Larson has worked for the district for 31 years. Communications previously directed to the district administrator are to be routed to Director of Learning Joe Pitsch.

Source: WTAQ 1360 AM / 97.5 FM Green Bay (Northeastern) | <https://wtaq.com/2026/08/28/winneconne-school-board-places-district-administrator-on-leave/>

Portage Co sergeant suspended after brawl outside neighbor's house

The Portage County Sheriff's Office imposed a one-day unpaid suspension on Sgt. Kevin Flick after an off-duty physical altercation on April 26 at approximately 7:30 p.m. outside a neighbor's home in Waupaca County. Flick has been employed by the department since 2008 and earns approximately \$44 per hour. To avoid a conflict of interest, the Waupaca County Sheriff's Office conducted the investigation and recommended that the Waupaca County District Attorney charge Flick with disorderly conduct and battery; the district attorney has not announced a charging decision. Capt. Josh Ostrowski conducted the internal review, examining body camera footage and interviewing witnesses including neighbor Joey Konkol and a bystander. Neither Flick nor Konkol was cited or arrested at the scene. Both sustained superficial injuries to their faces and knees, and Flick also reported a throat injury.

Source: The Badger Project (Central/Northern) | <https://thebadgerproject.org/2026/08/25/portage-co-sergeant-suspended-after-brawl-outside-neighbors-house/>

NWTC adopts new provost model

Northeast Wisconsin Technical College adopted a provost leadership model and appointed Dr. Jennifer Flatt as its first provost and executive vice president of academic and student affairs, consolidating executive authority over academic direction and student affairs into a single position. NWTC President Dr. Kristen Raney announced the appointment. Flatt becomes the college's chief academic officer and has held multiple leadership roles at NWTC since joining in 2019, including vice president of student affairs and dean of the Marinette campus, following 19 years teaching at the two-year college level. The provost model is a component of the college's 2026-2029 Academic Plan, which also addresses workforce alignment, teaching quality, expanded K-12 and transfer pathways, and data-informed decision-making. Additional detail on the reorganization is published on the college's website.

Source: EagleHerald (Northeastern) | https://www.ehextra.com/community/nwtc-adopts-new-provost-model/article_2e4211a7-8410-4483-8884-6686c16b4832.html

Infrastructure and Utilities

Fire hydrant snafu plagues Hwy. LL

Port Washington City Engineer Roger Strohm confirmed that crews installed two fire hydrants along Highway LL closer to the roadway than required during a water and sewer service extension serving the Vantage Data Centers Lighthouse Campus. One hydrant sits approximately six feet from the pavement and the other approximately nine feet, against a standard Strohm said should place them about 10 feet farther from the highway. City crews have marked both hydrants with barricades. Strohm identified as many as four or five parties as potentially responsible, including contractor Vinton Construction and the Ozaukee County Highway Department, which paved the roadway, and said the relocation cost is expected to be split among those parties. Vantage Data Centers holds final financial responsibility for the utility and road work and will not pass remediation costs to the city. Strohm said the hydrants must be relocated before winter and expects the work to be completed by the end of October.

Source: Ozaukee Press (Southeastern) | <https://ozaukeepress.com/content/fire-hydrant-snafu-plagues-hwy-ll>

Taxi's night hours to be cut but not until January

Ozaukee County supervisors voted to reduce late-night hours for the Shared Ride Taxi Service, with the new schedule taking effect in January rather than the originally proposed October 1 date. The revised schedule eliminates service between 10 and 11:30 p.m. on weeknights, between 9 and 10 p.m. on Saturdays, and between 5 and 6 p.m. on Sundays, reallocating nine weekly service hours to higher-demand morning and mid-day periods. Transit Superintendent Kerise Zutz reported that an analysis found 40 unique riders used the service after 10 p.m., accounting for 1,089 trips over a six-month period. Supervisors also approved a fare-arrears policy capping individual rider balances at negative \$10, or negative \$36 for agency-sponsored riders, beyond which the service may suspend accounts; Zutz reported that approximately 40 percent of riders carry negative balances. Zutz said she will present a proposal in September to raise the minimum age for unaccompanied riders from 8 to 12, aligning with Washington County's policy.

Source: Ozaukee Press (Southeastern) | <https://ozaukeepress.com/content/taxi%E2%80%99s-night-hours-be-cut-not-until-january>

Elmwood submits water rate app to PSC

The Village of Elmwood Municipal Water Utility submitted a conventional rate case application to the Wisconsin Public Service Commission on July 28, identifying a preliminary minimum revenue adjustment of 36.09 percent as potentially necessary. For a typical residential customer using 3,000 gallons per month, the water portion of the monthly bill would increase by \$8.51 under that preliminary figure. The village's rate of return stood at negative 1.34 percent as of the 2025 annual report, against the commission's 6.5 percent benchmark for water utilities, and Elmwood's last rate case was a simplified case in 2018. The Elmwood Village Board authorized Ehlers Public Finance Advisors to conduct a water utility rate analysis at its June 8 meeting and approved submission of the application at its July 13 meeting. The commission will review the application, with a public comment period and public hearing expected in approximately four months and any approved rate changes anticipated to take effect in early 2027.

Source: Pierce County Journal (Western) | <https://www.piercecountyjournal.news/stories/elmwood-submits-water-rate-app-to-psc,203649>

Farm pollution goes largely unaddressed despite grievous risks

Chippewa Falls has spent \$200,000 annually since 1997 to operate nitrate filtration equipment and deeper wells after city utility managers detected elevated nitrate concentrations in a municipal supply well serving the city's 16,000 water customers. The treatment system keeps delivered water below the federal 10 parts-per-million limit established under the Safe Drinking Water Act, but approximately 67,000 other Chippewa County residents rely on private wells, some testing above that threshold. Water treatment plant supervisor Matthew Boos reported that his own private well has risen from 10 to 20 parts per million, and that his parents received a state grant to drill a new well after testing revealed similarly elevated levels. A study published in the journal Public Health found nitrate concentrations below the federal limit associated with 61 to 73 percent higher cancer mortality risk. An Environmental Working Group national study released in April identified 62.1 million people served by 6,114 community water systems drinking water at or above 3 parts per million. The article's language is partly advocacy-oriented.

Source: WFHR 1320 AM Wisconsin Rapids (Western) | <https://www.wfhr.com/news/2026/08/28/farm-pollution-like-nitrates-goes-largely-unaddressed-despite-risks>

Spill released 1,500 gallons of sewage in Eau Claire on Farwell and E. Lake Streets

The City of Eau Claire reported a sanitary sewer overflow at the intersection of Farwell Street and East Lake Street beginning at approximately 4:15 p.m. on Monday. The overflow occurred during reconstruction of Gray Street, for which a contractor had established a sanitary sewer bypass pumping operation; an aging sewer main upstream of the bypass broke, discharging approximately 1,500 gallons of sewage onto the street and into the storm sewer. The contractor responded by relocating bypass pumps and discharge hoses. Two City of Eau Claire Utilities Division employees then spent approximately three hours flushing the affected street and storm sewer with high-pressure water, and the division's sewer vacuum truck removed the flushed water to limit potential public contact. The city disclosed the overflow by press release and identified no further remediation steps or regulatory notifications.

Source: WEAU NBC13 Eau Claire (Western) | <https://www.weau.com/2026/08/25/spill-released-1500-gallons-sewage-eau-claire-farwell-e-lake-streets/>

One month later, what does Menasha look like?

Menasha Mayor Austin Hammond told WLUK on August 27, 2026 that the city has completed roadway and curbside debris removal one month after the July 27 tornado, but faces a multi-year redevelopment period. The storm destroyed the city's wastewater treatment plant, and Menasha is relying on Neenah's system while that infrastructure remains offline. Power and utilities were restored during the initial recovery phase. The city is drafting a redevelopment plan for affected neighborhoods, and Hammond said the priority is ensuring working families can remain in Menasha. Because damaged lots are private property, rebuild decisions rest with individual homeowners, and Hammond said he hopes the private sector will assist in redeveloping lots where homeowners choose not to rebuild. Many homeowners remain unable to begin repairs because of insurance or financial constraints. Hammond did not specify a timeline for completing or adopting the redevelopment plan.

Source: WLUK FOX11 Green Bay (Northeastern) | <https://fox11online.com/news/local/one-month-later-what-does-menasha-look-like>

Lake Geneva City Council rejects alternative site for public safety building

The Lake Geneva City Council voted 6-2 on August 19, 2026 to reject a proposal by Alders Joel Hoiland and Brian Smith directing City Administrator Dave De Angelis and City Attorney Dan Draper to evaluate 11.8 acres of city-owned property on Townline Road as an alternative site for a proposed public safety building. Mayor Todd Krause said the police and fire departments reviewed the Townline Road site and determined it does not include sufficient acreage for the facility. The council on May 26 had approved pursuing acquisition of approximately 16 acres at 1103 S. Edwards Blvd., listed by owner Gregory Baird for about \$2.34 million, for a joint police and fire station. Draper noted that Symphony Bay subdivision developer Fairwyn Ltd. donated the Townline Road parcel to the city under a recorded agreement restricting its use to a dog park with walking trails. The city continues to consider the South Edwards Boulevard property, which the comprehensive plan zones for commercial development.

Source: Lake Geneva Regional News (Southeastern) | https://lakegenevanews.net/news/local/government-politics/article_8722233b-f00a-45bf-8498-b4887329fde4.html

'We will be refileing': Utility says the need to power data center has not changed

The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin voted at its August 6 open meeting to revoke the completeness determination of American Transmission Company's application for a 345 kV transmission line intended to deliver electricity to a hyperscale artificial intelligence data center on the north side of Port Washington. The commission's administrative law judge had raised concerns about missing and changing information submitted after the commission first deemed the application complete in December 2025. The proposed route would span between 96 and 123 miles of transmission line crossing six counties, including Ozaukee and Washington, and the application describes one of the largest energy loads in Wisconsin. American Transmission Company confirmed it will refile once the commission issues its formal order. The commission has received more than 2,500 public comments on the project. The citizen group Responsible Energy Alliance, which opposes routing through undeveloped greenfield areas, announced plans to organize formally as a not-for-profit entity.

Source: Waukesha Freeman (Southeastern) | https://www.gmtoday.com/news_graphic/business/atc-refiles-ai-data-center-lines/article_28169e16-dd84-55ad-b368-c2aff88f3678.html

Microsoft, ratepayer advocates challenge ATC plan for data center transmission costs

Microsoft and the Citizens Utility Board filed separate protests Friday with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission challenging a transmission cost-allocation proposal submitted earlier in August by We Energies and American Transmission Company for Microsoft's Mount Pleasant data center. American Transmission Company anticipates spending more than \$500 million to upgrade the facility's grid connection, and transmission-related costs already account for approximately 10 percent of We Energies customers' bills. The 15-year billing arrangement would require We Energies to pay American Transmission Company for the data center's projected transmission capacity and pass that cost to Microsoft, mirroring a Wisconsin Public Service Commission order approved this spring. Citizens Utility Board regulatory affairs director Corey Singletary argued the

proposal bases minimum charges on standard interconnection rates that will likely underestimate actual data-center transmission costs. Microsoft asked the commission to refer the proposal to a settlement judge or reject it outright, and objected that the utilities excluded the company from pre-filing consultations. WEC Energy Group, We Energies' parent, is American Transmission Company's largest shareholder.

Source: Wisconsin Watch (Southeastern) | <https://wisconsinwatch.org/2026/08/wisconsin-data-center-microsoft-ratepayer-advocates-challenge-atc-plan-transmission-costs/>

175-foot towers, 190 miles: What to know about the power lines proposed for south-central Wisconsin

Midcontinent Grid Solutions has filed with the Wisconsin Public Service Commission seeking approval of the BECI Project, a \$1.3 billion, approximately 190-mile, 765,000-volt transmission line proposed to run through Crawford, Richland, Sauk, Columbia, Dane, Dodge, Jefferson, Rock, and Walworth counties on 175-foot towers. The joint venture between Transource Energy and BHE Transmission would own and operate the line. MISO projected in 2024 that electricity needs in central and eastern Wisconsin and western Michigan would increase by roughly 49 percent by 2035, and separately estimated that 20 power stations and existing transmission lines in the BECI study area could be overloaded by 2035. MISO further projected that the broader Tranche 2.1 line, of which BECI is a component, could return between \$1.80 and \$3.50 for every dollar spent, including more than \$14 billion each in savings from avoided new power plants, reduced electrical failures, and lower congestion and fuel costs. Residents have until September 7 to submit feedback to Midcontinent Grid Solutions through the project page at mgs-projects.com.

Source: WiscNews (South Central) | https://wiscnews.com/news/local/article_9c024007-03ce-49fe-ad5b-4da43be38a34.html

Land Conservation discusses data centers, transmission line and ordinances

The Crawford County Land Conservation Committee discussed data center regulation, the BECI 765 kV transmission line, and county ordinances at its August 11 meeting. County Conservation Director Dave Troester reported consulting County Corporate Counsel Mark Peterson regarding the county's regulatory authority absent countywide zoning, and the committee explored whether an operational ordinance or countywide moratorium is possible without zoning, noting that Crawford County has previously enacted moratoriums on frac-sand mines and concentrated animal feeding operations. On the transmission line, Troester and Highway Commissioner Kyle Kozelka met with BECI developers, who proposed running a line from Bell Center to the Columbia Substation near Portage and south to the Illinois state line. The committee directed Troester to draft a formal opposition resolution, mirroring one previously passed regarding the MariBell project, for consideration at the next regular meeting. Committee members also noted that townships must document pre-construction road conditions to secure repair commitments from developers, whose equipment includes cranes exceeding 100,000 pounds.

Source: SW News Group (South Central) | <https://www.swnews4u.com/local/government/land-conservation-discusses-data-centers-transmission-line-and-ordinances/>

Sauk Prairie school board opposes high-voltage transmission line project

The Sauk Prairie School Board voted unanimously Monday to approve a resolution opposing the proposed BECI transmission line, a 190-mile, 765-kilovolt high-voltage line planned across

southern Wisconsin. The resolution also requests that developer Midcontinent Grid Solutions provide additional information about potential impacts to district facilities. Initial routing maps show the line passing behind Tower Rock Elementary School in Prairie du Sac, approximately half a mile from the campus. Board Vice President John Hutchins cited concerns about noise, electromagnetic frequencies, and degraded viewsheds affecting outdoor learning programs tied to the school's rural landscape, and outdoor learning coordinator Angus Mossman noted the line would pass over areas used as classroom extensions. The public comment period for map feedback closes September 7, 2026. Midcontinent Grid Solutions plans to file its application with the Wisconsin Public Service Commission in early 2027, and if approved the line would not enter service until 2033.

Source: WMTV NBC15 Madison (South Central) | <https://www.wmtv15news.com/2026/08/28/sauk-prairie-school-board-opposes-high-voltage-transmission-line-project/>

Power company employees report death threats over proposed transmission line

Dairyland Power Cooperative, headquartered in La Crosse, reported an escalation of threats against employees working on the proposed MariBell transmission line, which would run from Rochester, Minnesota, to Bell Center and connect to the proposed BECI expansion line. President and Chief Executive Officer Brent Ridge said the threat level peaked approximately two weeks before the August 29 report. One landowner drew a gun on a group of workers maintaining existing lines, and police and the county prosecutor are now involved. Online comments on the MariBell Line's Facebook page referenced C4 explosive material, and Ridge said the cooperative plans to engage federal authorities. The company has compiled more than 600 public comments in its documentation ahead of its Wisconsin Public Service Commission filing, has strengthened security protocols at open-house events, and said it will submit all comments except threats to the commission when it files its formal proposal.

Source: La Crosse Tribune (Western) | https://lacrossetribune.com/news/local/article_6dd3653e-0a58-48cb-8431-9417dbe76ab8.html

Wisconsin DNR asks Enbridge to halt work on Line 5 reroute amid gas leak

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources sent an August 27 letter to Enbridge requesting that the company halt construction on its \$1 billion Line 5 reroute project following a natural gas liquids release that began Tuesday, August 26, in Iron County. Department Secretary Karen Hyun authored the letter, citing a lack of transparency from Enbridge and noting that the agency has issued four prior notices of non-compliance on the reroute project. The leak occurred when a parked semi truck rolled into an open excavation site and struck the pipe, and Line 5 remained shut down as of the report. The department posed approximately 20 questions to Enbridge covering estimated release volumes of propane and butane, air modeling results, groundwater depth, and monitoring well installation timelines. Enbridge anticipated restoring service between August 31 and September 5. The department has not formally ordered a work stoppage but may seek enforcement action under existing project permits, and a federal Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration investigator has been deployed to the site.

Source: WPR News Madison (Central/Northern) | <https://www.wpr.org/news/wisconsin-dnr-asks-enbridge-halt-work-line-5-reroute-gas-leak>

Nearby homes evacuated after semi-truck hits pipeline, causing natural gas release in Iron County

The Iron County Sheriff's Office issued a news release on August 25, 2026 documenting an emergency response in the Town of Saxon after a parked, unoccupied semi truck rolled into an open excavation site associated with a Line 5 valve project near Sitan Road at approximately 10 a.m. The truck struck the pipeline, releasing natural gas liquids including ethane, propane, butane, isobutane, and natural gasoline. Responders evacuated nearby homes as a precaution and reported no injuries. Crews isolated the affected pipeline section, and local emergency responders and hazardous materials teams were placed on scene. Sitan Road was closed until further notice, authorities established a temporary no-fly zone over the area, and power to the affected zone was shut down. The sheriff's office reported that arrangements were being made to assist residents affected by the temporary power outage, and that the scene remained active as of the release.

Source: WJFW NBC12 Rhinelander (Central/Northern) | https://www.wjfw.com/news/local/nearby-homes-evacuated-after-semi-truck-hits-pipeline-causing-natural-gas-release-in-iron-county/article_c206f41e-5e8a-40d2-a562-1b9e08d18e48.html

Dane County battery collection aimed at reducing fires

Dane County Executive Melissa Agard and Dane County Waste and Renewables Director John Welch announced a Battery Collection Month program at Dane County Clean Sweep running throughout September 2026, allowing residents to drop off household batteries and battery-containing devices at no charge during normal operating hours. The program is limited to one load per resident per week. The county designed the initiative to reduce battery-related fires at waste and recycling facilities, which occur thousands of times annually nationwide, with lithium-ion batteries cited as a primary cause including a 2023 fire that destroyed the Columbia County Recycling Center. Accepted items include cell phones, laptops, power tools, electric bicycles, smoke detectors, and other battery-powered devices. Clean Sweep operates six days per week and also accepts paints, pesticides, cleaners, and electronics. Residents can find hours and accepted materials at landfill.danecounty.gov.

Source: Sun Prairie Star (South Central) | https://hngnews.com/the_star/local_news/dane-county-battery-collection-aimed-at-reducing-fires/article_8450af7b-a82e-46d4-9e31-a0963122059a.html

City wants to keep weekly recycling pickup, but it comes at a cost

The Plymouth City Council Committee of the Whole endorsed retaining weekly recycling collection in the city's next garbage collection contract at its Monday meeting. The preferred option would cost homeowners \$24.60 more per year than the alternative bi-weekly recycling collection schedule. Public Works Director Cathy Austin presented the update on the upcoming garbage contract to the committee. The available account does not report a final contract award, contract term, total contract value, or the name of any hauler under consideration. The next procedural step is formal City Council action on the garbage contract, for which no date is specified.

Source: Plymouth Review (Southeastern) | <https://www.plymouth-review.com/articles/city-wants-to-keep-weekly-recycling-pickup-but-it-comes-at-a-cost/>

Council approves pool evaluation

The Barron City Council voted on Tuesday, August 11, 2026 to approve a swimming pool condition evaluation contract with Neuman Pools, Inc. for \$1,800 covering the Barron Municipal Swimming Pool at 27 West River Avenue. The agreement authorizes a non-destructive visual assessment of the pool shell, surrounding deck, and key mechanical infrastructure including pumps, filters, heaters, valves, and chemical treatment systems. Inspectors will also review maintenance records and consult with facility staff to identify equipment approaching or past its expected service life. Following the site visit, Neuman Pools will deliver a written summary to city officials detailing operational recommendations, estimated remaining equipment lifespans, and the feasibility of proposed repairs or upgrades. In separate action at the same meeting, the council approved a no-parking zone on the south side of Woodland Avenue between Pine and Oak streets, effective 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., as requested by the Barron Area School District.

Source: Barron News-Shield (Western) | https://news-shield.com/news/top_stories/article_4170186b-8a92-4c19-8aff-1b6450d795f5.html

Pickleball club's exclusive court time to continue through 2027

The Amery City Council voted August 19 to renew a one-year facility use agreement with the Amery Pickleball Club, granting the club exclusive use of six of South Twin Park's eight courts Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to noon through August 31, 2027. The agreement, identical to the 2025 pact, also permits the club to reserve all eight courts for up to 12 full-day league or tournament events annually with 30 days' written notice. The club pays the city \$1,000 per year, with funds designated for eventual court resurfacing, and must carry a minimum of \$1 million in liability coverage, name the city as an additional insured, and require participants to sign waivers for organized events. Council Member Roger Van Someren made the motion, which passed without opposition. City Administrator Alex Mansfield reported no complaints during the agreement's first year, and Public Works Director Jeff Mahoney said crews would address requested brush clearing along the courts' west side as schedules permit.

Source: Amery Free Press (Western) | https://theameryfreepress.com/news/pickleball-clubs-exclusive-court-time-to-continue-through-2027/article_37950c02-7e38-4048-b2cc-5a88a1b496a1.html

Monroe County rural broadband expansion

Monroe County has been awarded more than \$25 million in federal funding to expand high-speed internet service to 6,124 homes and businesses in rural areas of the county. The available text identifies the award as part of a federal program but does not name the program or the administering agency. No vote count, resolution identifier, named officials, contractor award, or effective date appears in the accessible portion of the article. No implementation timeline or service provider is identified.

Source: Monroe County Herald (Sparta) (Western) | <https://monroecountyherald.com/stories/monroe-county-rural-broadband-expansion,179647>

Public Safety

'A fragile balance'

The Chippewa County Ad Hoc EMS Study Committee voted 9-0 on August 6 to adopt a draft report recommending creation of a full-time County EMS Coordinator position funded through the county tax levy. The committee then passed 8-0, with Peter Gehring abstaining, a revised job description designating the role as a 1.0 full-time equivalent position after members deemed an initial part-time concept insufficient. The report documented staffing deficits across the county's services: Cadott Community Ambulance covered only 12,238 verified on-call hours in 2025, representing 69.9 percent of the 17,520 hours required for a 24-hour, two-person crew, leaving a 5,282-hour deficit, and Cornell Area Rescue posted a 1,955-hour deficit at 88.8 percent of required coverage. Boyd-Edson-Delmar met minimum thresholds at 101.9 percent, but three individuals supplied 83.7 percent of its hours. Committee members noted that a Rural Health Transformation grant could fund the coordinator position for up to four years. The draft report awaits review at the September Chippewa County Board meeting.

Source: Stanley Republican (Western) | <https://stanleyrepublican.com/stories/a-fragile-balance,203803>

Rice Lake Police Department to add second K-9 unit

The Rice Lake City Council voted unanimously at its August 25, 2026 meeting to approve Police Chief Steve Roux's request to add a second K-9 unit to the department. The city holds \$38,543 in its Law Enforcement Foundation of Barron County K-9 fund, and estimated basic training expenditures for the new unit total \$43,300, covering the dog, training, hotel, meals, and equipment. The existing K-9 team of Officer Sawyer Prinsen and dog Kash logged 492 deployments since 2023, and the department submitted 54 drug cases to the Wisconsin Crime Lab in 2025. Roux confirmed that no additional officer hire is required and that a vehicle is already budgeted, and reported that annual operational costs for the current unit have ranged between \$3,586 and \$5,923. Council Member Shasta Westaby moved approval and Council Member Eric Pelle seconded. The new unit will be scheduled on the day shift while the existing unit covers nights.

Source: Rice Lake Chronotype (Western) | https://apg-wi.com/rice_lake_chronotype/news/rice-lake-police-department-to-add-second-k-9-unit/article_329327ef-dda3-4545-9892-bc17e20aa73f.html

Prison inmates for county jail? Plan, if adopted, would be a year away, require lots of planning

The Barron County Board Law Enforcement and Emergency Management Committee voted on August 20, 2026 to recommend creating a full-time Sheriff's Department position dedicated primarily to processing records requests for bodycam and dashcam footage, and to include the position in the county's 2027 budget. The position is estimated to cost upward of \$100,000 per year in salary and benefits. To fund it, the committee was told the county could contract with the Wisconsin state prison system to house up to 10 state inmates per year in the 192-bed Barron County Jail, currently operating at 80 percent capacity, with the state paying the county an estimated \$120,000 annually. Jail Captain Tim Evenson said facility compliance work and a state prison inspection could take until mid-2027. County Board Chair Louie Okey requested a formal

implementation timeline before the 2027 budget vote, which the full Board of Supervisors is scheduled to take in November.

Source: Barron News-Shield (Western) | https://news-shield.com/news/top_stories/article_34dc82e7-e151-4fec-bf45-ec5193b19e91.html

Milwaukee jail death raises familiar concerns among reform advocates

Milwaukee County Supervisor Justin Bielinski, chair of the County Board's Judiciary, Law Enforcement and General Services Committee, is exploring a pilot program for wearable health monitors following the August 18 death of a 45-year-old man at the Milwaukee County Jail, the tenth death in Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office custody since June 2022. Deputies transferred the man from the West Allis Police Department at 4:25 a.m.; Wellpath nursing staff medically cleared him during booking with a secondary screening still pending; he reported vomiting shortly before 8:30 a.m. and was pronounced dead at 9:30 a.m. A 2024 independent audit identified deficiencies in mental health services, suicide prevention, and staffing at the jail. Bielinski said he has asked Wellpath, the jail's contracted health care provider, to explore a wearable-device pilot monitoring pulse and blood oxygen levels during the booking wait. The Waukesha County Sheriff's Office is conducting the death investigation, which Bielinski expects to take several months.

Source: Wisconsin Watch (Southeastern) | <https://wisconsinwatch.org/2026/08/milwaukee-jail-death-concerns-reform-advocates-sheriff-office-custody/>

Milwaukee homicide defendants intimidating witnesses and victims from jail through tablets, local judge says

Milwaukee County Circuit Court Judge David Borowski raised public objections on August 28, 2026 during a criminal hearing for a triple-homicide defendant, challenging a Milwaukee County contract with Texas-based ICSolutions that provides tablets to inmates at the Milwaukee County Jail and Community Reintegration Center. Borowski said one defendant used a county-issued device to contact witnesses before trial and allegedly accessed child pornography, and that a defendant in a separate case sent between 1,200 and 1,500 intimidating messages and phone calls by tablet. The County Board of Supervisors originally approved the ICSolutions contract in 2022 by a vote of 17-1 and reauthorized it in 2025, and County Executive David Crowley signed the agreement. Board Chairwoman Marcelia Nicholson announced on August 28 that she would request information from the Sheriff's Office regarding current monitoring policy, vendor security controls, and whether additional restrictions require board action or can be implemented administratively. The Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office did not respond to questions by publication time.

Source: WFHR 1320 AM Wisconsin Rapids (Southeastern) | <https://www.wfhr.com/news/2026/08/28/milwaukee-homicide-defendants-intimidating-witnesses-and-victims-from-jail-through-tablets-local-judge-says>

Milwaukee officials refuse to detail 911 probe into delayed response to beating of woman, 99

The City of Milwaukee's Department of Emergency Communications announced Wednesday that two employees who mishandled 911 calls reporting a July 27 home invasion and attack on a 99-year-old woman are no longer with the department, following a nearly month-long internal investigation. The two staff members failed to follow protocol after an emergency medical alert operator called Milwaukee's 911 center twice; the second call included audible moans of pain

and threats from the attacker, yet responders were not dispatched for nearly three hours. Department Executive Director Tony Bueno and his staff held a press conference but ended it after 15 minutes and declined additional reporter questions. Bueno said a dispatcher who handled the calls did not violate policy, will not be disciplined, and will receive additional training. The City Attorney's Office advised Bueno that the department's internal investigation report could not yet be released. Officials disclosed no specific policy or training updates at the press conference.

Source: WiscNews (Southeastern) | https://wiscnews.com/news/state-regional/wisconsin/article_02edc0b6-2e46-5912-9aff-362b76035181.html

Wisconsin prisons hit record population as crowding strains staffing and programs

The Wisconsin Department of Corrections held 23,854 people in custody as of the week ending in late August, surpassing the prior record of 23,826 set in 2019 and exceeding the prison system's designed capacity by nearly 6,000 people. The adult prison system is short approximately 658 full-time correctional officers and sergeants, a figure that declined by 35 positions over a span in which the prison population grew by roughly 250. Robert E. Ellsworth Correctional Center in Racine, designed for 230, held 495 people, and the Milwaukee Women's Center, designed for 42, held 104, making it the state's most overcrowded facility. Department spokesperson Kevin Hoffman said the agency has extremely limited statutory authority on its own to reduce the prison population. Gov. Tony Evers signed executive orders in April allowing eligible prisoners to apply for commutations for the first time in 25 years, and the Commutation Advisory Board heard its first dozen applicants on August 21, with a second hearing scheduled for September 18.

Source: Wisconsin Watch (Statewide) | <https://wisconsinwatch.org/2026/08/wisconsin-prisons-record-population-crowding-strains-staffing-programs/>

Wisconsin police agencies track use of force, but the numbers are hard to compare

A 2021 Wisconsin law requires the Department of Justice to catalog serious uses of force by law enforcement agencies statewide, but inconsistent reporting standards among departments limit meaningful comparison, according to an investigative report by Wisconsin Watch. The department's public Use-of-Force and Arrest-Related Death database covers only incidents resulting in great bodily harm, death, or gunfire, leaving agencies to set their own thresholds for lesser force types. Madison Police Department internal records document more than 2,300 uses of force between 2020 and the first quarter of 2026, including 197 Taser deployments and 127 pepper-spray uses, against an annual call volume averaging roughly 185,000. The state database lists 70 arrest-related deaths between 2022 and 2025, with the Rock County Sheriff's Office accounting for five entries. Madison's internal records omitted the arrest-related death of Richard Johnson in December 2024, a gap the state database corrected. Madison's Office of the Independent Police Monitor disputed the Dane County medical examiner's accidental-death ruling on Johnson's case in June, characterizing it as a homicide.

Source: PBS Wisconsin WHA21 (Statewide) | <https://pbswisconsin.org/news-item/wisconsin-police-agencies-track-use-of-force-but-the-numbers-are-hard-to-compare/>

Flock Safety cameras in Sheboygan covered up by city

Sheboygan's police chief and city administrator plan to ask the Common Council to terminate the city's contract with Flock Safety at a September 8 meeting, after the police department

determined that Flock Safety took actions believed to be inconsistent with the terms and expectations of the city's contract. The department has operated automated license plate reader technology for more than 10 years, with 15 Flock Safety cameras in use since 2024. Mayor Ryan Sorenson confirmed that public works staff have physically covered the cameras in plastic ahead of the council vote. Police Chief Kurt Zempel and Common Council President Susie Boorse both cited erosion of trust in Flock Safety's data handling as central to the decision. The move follows contract terminations by Oshkosh, Sturgeon Bay, Appleton, Verona, and Dane County. Separately, Brookfield Alder Catherine Kahler issued an August 26 statement requesting a review of that city's participation before its agreement automatically renews in July 2027.

Source: WPR News Madison (Southeastern) | <https://www.wpr.org/news/flock-safety-cameras-sheboygan-covered-by-city>

Flock Safety spent \$102,000 lobbying last year. Today cities are demanding safeguards.

Twelve of Milwaukee's 15 Common Council members signed a letter Tuesday asking the Fire and Police Commission and Police Chief Jeffrey Norman to review the Milwaukee Police Department's use of Flock automatic license plate reader cameras and implement additional safeguards before the city shapes its 2027 budget. That count is three times the number of alders who signed a similar letter in March. The letter demands case numbers and specific justifications for every Flock search, automated misuse detection, independent auditing, prohibitions on immigration enforcement use without a judicial warrant, and regular public reporting to the commission and council. It also requests a full accounting of how Milwaukee's Flock contracts received multiple sole-source waivers allowing the camera network to expand without council approval. In Wisconsin, Flock Safety spent \$102,000 lobbying in 2025 for Assembly Bill 300 and Senate Bill 299, which would have funded local installations; both bills failed. The department stated it will work with the commission and council to address concerns.

Source: Wausau Pilot & Review (Southeastern) | <https://wausaupilotandreview.com/2026/08/29/flock-safety-spent-102000-lobbying-last-year-today-cities-are-demanding-safeguards/>

Flock cameras stolen in Bayfield County

Two Flock Safety automated license plate reader cameras were stolen from the Highway 13 and U.S. Highway 2 roundabout west of Ashland in late July 2026, with thieves cutting down one mounting pole and setting a grass fire to destroy the other. Bayfield County Sheriff Tony Williams estimated total theft and damage at \$6,000 to \$10,000, and invoices obtained by the Ashland Daily Press show the county is billed \$2,500 to \$3,000 per camera depending on contract terms. The two stolen units were among six Flock plate readers the county operates countywide, plus two separate Flock Condor fixed video cameras that were not affected. Under the county's contract with Flock Safety, all camera hardware remains the company's property and title never transfers to the county, and Flock is under no contractual obligation to replace or repair stolen or damaged units. No arrests have been made, though Williams said investigators have leads. Williams said he has no immediate plans to expand the camera network beyond the current six units.

Source: Ashland Daily Press (Central/Northern) | https://apg-wi.com/ashland_daily_press/paywall/flock-cameras-stolen-in-bayfield-county/article_037ee0c4-b16a-4427-aade-f70636125ad2.html

Two Rivers addresses privacy concerns over use of Flock public safety cameras

The City of Two Rivers and its police department publicly defended their use of Flock automated license plate reader cameras, disclosing that initial installation cost approximately \$5,300 against a budgeted ceiling of \$10,000 within the city's 2025 capital borrowing program, and that the annual software subscription runs approximately \$18,000 within the police department's computer software operating account. Both expenditures went through the city's standard public budget process, including council work sessions and final council consideration. The city operates cameras along major highway corridors and around Neshotah Beach, has reduced data retention to seven days, conducts monthly audits of system access, and restricts access to law enforcement purposes. Officials stated the cameras read license plates only, do not use facial recognition, and are not monitored through continuous live feeds. The department cited assisted investigations over the past 12 months spanning arson, a \$9,000 theft leading to an arrest in Milwaukee, hit-and-run cases, stolen vehicle recoveries, and a juvenile runaway case. The city said it will continue evaluating safeguards as technology, laws, and community expectations evolve.

Source: WLUK FOX11 Green Bay (Northeastern) | <https://fox11online.com/news/local/two-rivers-addresses-privacy-concerns-over-use-of-flock-public-safety-cameras-budget-plate-reader>

City Council Votes to Bag Flock Cameras, Seek Contract Termination

The Chetek City Council voted during a special meeting on August 27, 2026 to immediately decommission the city's two automated license plate reader cameras and authorized Police Chief Ron Ambrozaitis to negotiate early termination of a multi-year contract with Flock Safety. The cameras, installed in May 2026, were bagged and tagged out of service by Ambrozaitis and the public works department shortly after the meeting concluded. The council's action followed months of national scrutiny, reported safety concerns for city hall personnel, and an influx of public records requests tied to the camera installations. The city is awaiting a response from Flock Safety regarding contract cancellation terms.

Source: Chetek Alert (Western) | https://chetekalert.com/news/free_news/article_a4487e2f-e7e5-4bda-8a35-896a74e810c8.html

Koranda fields questions on Flock at community meeting

Pierce County Sheriff Chad Koranda, River Falls Mayor Alison Page, and multiple River Falls City Council members joined dozens of residents at the River Falls Public Library on August 18 to discuss automated license plate reader technology in the area. River Falls operates nine Flock Safety cameras under a four-year contract at approximately \$25,000 to \$30,000 per year, currently in its second year. The Pierce County Sheriff's Department separately received Law Enforcement Committee approval to spend \$50,000 on four Axon-brand cameras funded through opioid settlement money, of which the county received close to \$1 million; those cameras have not yet been installed. The committee initially rejected a Flock proposal after finding the company's data practices insufficient. Koranda said he would explore forming a subcommittee to audit license plate reader use within his department, and Page directed residents with questions about River Falls' deployment to the October 20 Ask the City event at City Hall.

Source: Pierce County Journal (Western) | <https://www.piercecountyjournal.news/stories/koranda-fields-questions-on-flock-at-community-meeting,203654>

LAWSUIT: Waukesha County man gets 'Flocked' by sheriff's dept. after filing complaint against deputy

Napoleon Jones, a Sussex resident, filed an amended federal civil rights lawsuit against the Waukesha County Sheriff's Office alleging First Amendment retaliation after department records showed his license plate was searched more than 100 times in the department's Flock Safety database following a citizen complaint he filed in May 2025. The complaint arose from a May 4, 2025 arrest by Deputy Brandon Shayhorn in which Jones was held for five hours and released without citations or charges; internal department records subsequently confirmed the stop was not a legal traffic stop. Deposition testimony from Shayhorn states he was ordered to conduct the searches by Lt. Cory Farrell, and Captain Lisa Panas testified under oath that she also conducted searches, citing the internal investigation. Panas acknowledged that allowing the subject deputy to participate in an investigation of a complaint against him is not standard procedure. The department's Flock use policy restricts searches to legitimate law enforcement purposes. Lt. Farrell has not yet testified in the civil case.

Source: WTMJ 4 NBC Milwaukee (Southeastern) | <https://www.tmj4.com/news/local-news/in-your-community/waukesha-county/lawsuit-waukesha-county-man-gets-flocked-by-sheriffs-dept-after-filing-complaint-against-deputy>

Oregon schools to open without resource officer, amid investigations dispute

Oregon schools began the school year Tuesday without a school resource officer for the first time in decades, as the Village of Oregon and the Oregon School District remain unable to agree on a new officer contract. The existing agreement, which requires approval from both the district and the village, expired Monday. The dispute follows a May 2026 statement by Oregon Police Chief Jennifer Pagenkopf faulting the district for failing to notify police promptly about a teacher-student inappropriate-relationship allegation first raised in 2021 but not reported to police until 2026, a five-year delay she said significantly affected the ability to determine whether any criminal activity occurred. Until the parties reach a new agreement, a former Fitchburg Police Department officer will serve in a school security role, according to district spokesperson Erika Mundinger. Village leaders want new agreement language guaranteeing police participation in school investigations, and the district wants assurances the officer will focus on education and mentorship rather than traditional policing.

Source: WiscNews (South Central) | https://wiscnews.com/news/state-regional/wisconsin/article_a5030961-db42-568b-a2e2-38c96f268199.html

Rock County schools putting hundreds of casualty care kits in classrooms

The Rock County School Safety Committee, Janesville Police Department, Janesville Fire Department, and Janesville Jets distributed 677 casualty care kits to public and private schools throughout Rock County following a fundraising event that generated nearly \$24,000. Each kit contains gauze, wound dressings, gloves, and a tourniquet for controlling serious bleeding before first responders arrive. Sgt. Jeremy Wiley of the Janesville Police Department identified replacing and expanding the kits as one of the committee's largest needs. The 677 kits cover approximately one quarter of the estimated 2,200 to 2,300 public and private school classrooms in Rock County, leaving officials roughly 1,500 kits short of their goal of one kit per classroom, and some schools already held kits requiring replacement because of expired or missing supplies. The next Rock

County School Safety Night, intended to raise additional funds toward that goal, is scheduled for February 19, 2027 at the Woodman's Sports and Convention Center in Janesville.

Source: WMTV NBC15 Madison (South Central) | <https://www.wmtv15news.com/2026/08/29/rock-county-schools-putting-hundreds-casualty-care-kits-classrooms/>

WPS, We Energies donate \$225,000 to improve public safety

The Wisconsin Public Service and We Energies foundations awarded \$225,000 in Rewarding Responders Grants to nearly 120 first-response agencies across Wisconsin in 2026, bringing total program giving to more than \$1.4 million since the program began in 2014. In northeastern Wisconsin, 28 agencies received grants covering equipment including personal radiation detection devices for the Howard Fire Rescue Department, a traffic speed detection device for the Appleton Police Department, a mobile safety monitoring trailer for the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh Police Department, a battery-powered CPR device for Seymour EMS Inc., and a public safety drone equipment upgrade for the Hobart-Lawrence Police Department. Appleton Police Chief Polly Olson confirmed the speed detection unit will be used to identify hazardous driving behaviors. Beth Straka, president of the two foundations, announced the grants, which were presented to the Howard Fire Department and Appleton Police Department at an event on Thursday, August 27, 2026.

Source: WLUK FOX11 Green Bay (Northeastern) | <https://fox11online.com/news/local/wps-we-energies-donate-225000-to-improve-public-safety-howard-appleton-grant>

Land Use and Development

Sun Prairie Plan Commission recommends data center moratorium for approval

Sun Prairie's Plan Commission voted unanimously on August 25, 2026 to recommend approval of a zoning ordinance amendment imposing a 12-month moratorium on hyperscale data centers exceeding 10,000 square feet within the city. The single-item public hearing drew no public comment from residents either in person or virtually. Planning Director Josh Clements presented findings from the city's internal Data Center Workgroup and said staff believe the moratorium language is legally defensible, citing review of previously challenged moratoriums in other jurisdictions, and noted that Sun Prairie's draft drew on existing language from other Wisconsin communities that have enacted similar measures. Sun Prairie Utilities General Manager Jill Weiss clarified that electric service within city limits is not exclusive to the municipally owned utility, meaning a data center developer could annex into the city and remain a customer of Alliant Energy. The Sun Prairie City Council is scheduled to hold a second reading and vote on whether to pass or amend the ordinance at its September 1, 2026 meeting.

Source: Sun Prairie Star (South Central) | https://hngnews.com/the_star/local_news/sun-prairie-plan-commission-recommends-data-center-moratorium-for-approval/article_8dde4752-5226-4149-ba2b-32a0b5acbb6d.html

Oneida County board approves one-year moratorium on data centers

The Oneida County Board of Supervisors voted 20-0 on August 18 to approve Resolution 56-2026 and Ordinance Amendment 022026, establishing a 12-month moratorium on new data center development and expansion in unincorporated, zoned areas of the county. The action amends Section 9.57 of the Oneida County Zoning and Shoreland Protection Ordinance, a section

previously used for a livestock facility licensing moratorium that expired in March 2022. Under the new language, the county will not accept, process, or issue permits for new data center projects or expansions during the moratorium period, and no applications are currently pending. The ordinance defines data centers as facilities primarily housing servers, network equipment, and data storage systems, including supporting mechanical, electrical, cooling, and security infrastructure. A public hearing held July 8 drew 15 speakers in favor and none opposed. The Planning and Development Committee will use the 12-month period to study industry impacts and draft permanent zoning regulations before the moratorium expires or is extended.

Source: Tomahawk Leader (Central/Northern) | <https://www.tomahawkleader.com/stories/oneida-county-board-approves-one-year-moratorium-on-data-centers,351729>

Data Center Moratorium for Dodge County Passes

The Dodge County Board of Supervisors voted 29-2 on Monday, August 18 to enact an 18-month moratorium on data centers within the county's zoning areas. Five members of the Land Resources and Parks Committee signed the recommendation bringing the ordinance forward, following a public meeting on August 10 at which residents expressed support for the pause. Board Member Cathy Houchin cited public input and the need for an impact study before allowing additional data center development. Supervisors Jamie Klockow and Robert Ballweg cast the two votes against, and Supervisor Haley Justmann was absent. A resident raised water-quality concerns during public comment, referencing a data center under construction in Beaver Dam. The moratorium is not a permanent ban and is designed to allow the county time to study potential impacts on natural resources and public health before making further land-use decisions.

Source: Mayville Dodge County Pioneer (South Central) | <https://www.dodgecountypioneer.com/stories/data-center-moratorium-for-dodge-county-passes,351762>

Polk County Board approves data center one-year moratorium

The Polk County Board of Supervisors approved a one-year moratorium on data center development within the county on a 14-1 vote, with Supervisor Adam Jarchow casting the sole dissenting vote. Supervisor Kim O'Connell amended the resolution before final passage, adding language explicitly naming the area municipalities covered under the moratorium; Corporation Counsel Joe Loso said the added language was intended to remove ambiguity about geographic scope. A public hearing held the previous week at the Fine Arts Center of St. Croix Falls High School drew a large crowd, and no member of the public testified against the moratorium. Jarchow argued that data centers are already prohibited in 10 of the county's 12 zoning districts and that the county spends more than \$50,000 annually funding an economic development corporation whose mission is to attract businesses. The moratorium gives the county and local towns time to review and draft ordinances regulating potential data center development.

Source: Amery Free Press (Western) | https://theameryfreepress.com/news/polk-county-board-approves-data-center-one-year-moratorium/article_6dc44b7a-74d7-4923-b962-05c88fcd2ad0.html

Chippewa and Barron Counties join regional push for data center moratoriums

The Chippewa County Board of Supervisors unanimously passed a 12-month moratorium on data center development on August 11, applying to all towns under county zoning, following a public hearing. Board Chair Jason Bergeron cited zoning codes that have not kept pace with industry

growth. Barron County supervisors will convene a Special Committee of the Whole on August 31 at 1 p.m. at the Barron County Government Center to hear presentations from Wisconsin Counties Association Chief Executive Officer Mark O'Connell and attorney Rebecca Roeker on a draft ordinance proposing a nine-month moratorium. The Town of Lakeland adopted Resolution 2026-03 on August 13 and the Town of Maple Plain adopted Resolution 2026-02 on August 5, each petitioning Barron County for a minimum 12-month pause, and Polk County enacted Resolution 29-26 on July 21. Draft concerns include groundwater consumption from evaporative cooling, electrical grid upgrade costs, and the absence of decommissioning standards in current county code. Barron County's Town of Dovre will hold an informational meeting September 8 on joining county zoning.

Source: Chetek Alert (Western) | https://chetekalert.com/news/top_stories/article_bd375a8d-9da1-463c-9485-07d8f7665d16.html

Big Bend board OKs one-year data center moratorium

The Town of Big Bend Board approved a one-year moratorium on data centers at its June 3 meeting, pausing development while town officials consider potential regulations. Supervisor Marc Wiesner made the motion, Supervisor Alec Christianson seconded, and the board approved it. The board also accepted Traci Schoonover as a deputy clerk and corrected the financing request for the Dzimielia Road project from \$735,109 to \$512,517.99. Board members approved an amended fee schedule for residential solar projects limiting approval to ground-mounted installations only. Chairman Tom Meisner disclosed that he had discussed converting the clerk-treasurer position from elected to appointed, a change requiring action by both the Town Board and town electors, and the item is expected on next month's agenda. The board authorized Meisner to sign a draft slow-no-wake ordinance for Sand Lake and directed the Zoning Ordinance Committee to research private-road setback requirements and return a recommendation.

Source: Ladysmith News (Western) | https://ladysmithnews.com/news/area_news/article_f77221d1-da53-4002-998c-82960bd35e42.html

Kenosha residents back data center moratorium amid Microsoft proposal

Residents opposing a proposed Microsoft data center in Kenosha are calling on the city council to pass a moratorium, citing transparency deficits, environmental concerns, noise, water demand, and energy use. Microsoft purchased approximately 240 acres in Kenosha in early 2025 for data center development, roughly eight miles southwest of its operational Mount Pleasant campus. The city and Microsoft signed a non-disclosure agreement in May 2024, and Microsoft terminated that agreement on June 22, 2026. The project remains in site-plan review before building permits can proceed. The resident group Kenoshans Unite Against Microsoft Data Center is seeking a moratorium modeled on actions taken by Madison, Superior, Dane County, and Manitowoc County; Dane County's Board of Supervisors approved a temporary halt on hyperscale data center permits in unincorporated areas in June 2026, and Manitowoc County passed a similar measure in spring 2026. Mayor David Bogdala issued no comment as of August 27, 2026. Residents are also seeking a potential November ballot referendum on the project.

Source: The Daily Reporter (Southeastern) | <https://dailyreporter.com/2026/08/27/kenosha-residents-push-data-center-moratorium-microsoft/>

In Wisconsin Rapids, data center objections include developers' Russian connections

The Wisconsin Rapids planning commission is scheduled to hold a public hearing September 16 and issue a recommendation to the city council on a conditional use permit application for a proposed 210-acre data center on a former paper mill site near downtown and the Wisconsin River. Developer Ruslan Zinurov, who filed the permit application in April and first emailed city planner Kyle Kearns on December 16, identified himself as affiliated with California-based Performance Computing Holdings and has since ceded the public-facing role to Anton Voronkin. Residents have raised concerns at multiple public meetings about water use, electricity rates, air quality, and noise, and have also raised the two developers' Russian origins, with one resident describing the applicant as a Russian national at a July city meeting and an audience member questioning Voronkin about his citizenship at an August developer-hosted meeting. Former New York City Mayor Eric Adams, whose federal conspiracy charges were dismissed in April 2025, was named as part of Voronkin's team visiting Wisconsin Rapids.

Source: Wisconsin Watch (Central/Northern) | <https://wisconsinwatch.org/2026/08/wisconsin-rapids-data-center-objections-developers-russian-connections/>

Marathon County board sends Hub City wind decision back to committee, with three meetings left before Alliant can file

The Marathon County Board voted to refer Resolution 55-26, a blank resolution regarding Alliant Energy's proposed Hub City Wind Farm, back to the Executive Committee, directing that body to return in September with an actual proposal. County Board Chair Kurt Gibbs, who has served more than 20 years on the board, said he could not recall a precedent for a deliberately blank resolution. The referral leaves three voting meetings remaining, on September 17, October 20, and November 10, before Alliant becomes eligible to file its application with the state Public Service Commission; Alliant notified the county June 12 of its intent to apply within 180 days, a window opening in early December. The board's final 2026 meeting falls December 17, after the filing window opens. Supervisors separately adopted a zoning ordinance requiring developers of large electric generating facilities to submit engineering plans to the county within 30 days of filing them with state agencies, though whether that ordinance will apply to Hub City is unresolved.

Source: Wausau Pilot & Review (Central/Northern) | <https://wausaupilotandreview.com/2026/08/29/marathon-county-board-sends-hub-city-wind-decision-back-to-committee-with-three-meetings-left-before-alliant-can-file/>

They lost one fight against a solar farm. Now this Dane County town is hoping to stop another

Chicago-based Invenergy filed initial paperwork with the Wisconsin Public Service Commission in June for Koshkonong Solar Energy Center II, a proposed 110-megawatt solar and 350-megawatt energy storage facility sited on roughly 770 acres in the Town of Christiana in eastern Dane County, a community of approximately 1,235 residents about 20 miles east of Madison. The second project would be approximately half the size of the first Koshkonong Solar Farm, whose first phase is nearing completion. The Town of Christiana previously sued to block the first project, arguing it lacked adequate environmental review; a Wisconsin Court of Appeals ruled against the town in June 2025 in a decision described as precedent-setting for utility-scale energy projects, and the Wisconsin Supreme Court declined to take up the town's appeal. Dane County Supervisor

Kerry Marren and Town Chair Jim Lowrey are among the officials tracking local response. The commission's permitting process for the second project is ongoing.

Source: WiscNews (South Central) | https://wiscnews.com/news/state-regional/wisconsin/article_a1e41c1b-dd24-5517-8d2e-88da88d5abbd.html

Pleasant Prairie sends extended stay hotel project back to Plan Commission

The Pleasant Prairie Village Board voted at its August 24 meeting to send the proposed WoodSprings Suites extended-stay hotel back to the Plan Commission for further review. The proposed development, located in the village's Riverview neighborhood near the recently opened Cooper's Hawk Restaurant and Winery and RiverView Apartments, would stand four stories tall with 106 rooms and nine employees under the current plan. Kenosha County Sheriff David Zoerner appeared before the board and said he believes the project should be paused for additional research, citing public safety concerns identified during his review. Pleasant Prairie Police Chief David Selvidge reported that a comparable WoodSprings property generated 171 service calls and another similar development generated 201 calls, with 77 and 91 such calls recorded at similar properties in 2026. Village President Dave Klimisch said he would have difficulty deciding because the developer was not present at the meeting. Village staff will research the matter and return it to the full Village Board at a later date.

Source: Kenosha News (Southeastern) | https://www.kenoshanews.com/news/local/business/article_d6e85e22-0225-4885-9fad-b54d7f771699.html

Menominee Tribe alters proposed Kenosha casino site plan under federal review

The Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin announced revisions to its site plan for the proposed \$360 million Kenosha casino complex. The tribe eliminated parking areas previously proposed east of Frontage Road on two land parcels: Parcel A, comprising 5.8 acres at the northeast corner of Frontage Road and 60th Street, and Parcel B, comprising 10.55 acres at the southeast corner of Frontage Road. Parcel A will remain in the federal trust application but be dedicated to stormwater management and water retention, while Parcel B has been removed from the trust application entirely and will remain subject to local property taxes. Parking will be consolidated west of the development, adjacent to the casino and hotel complex proposed on approximately 60 acres west of Interstate 94. The project includes a 150-room Hard Rock Hotel, 1,500 slot machines, and six restaurants. The bureau has concluded its Environmental Assessment comment period, receiving approximately 3,000 comments, and is reviewing them before forwarding a determination to Gov. Tony Evers, who holds final approval authority.

Source: Kenosha News (Southeastern) | https://www.kenoshanews.com/news/local/article_b2d18425-a90d-4011-945a-15b9f895f621.html

DeForest planners review concept for Conservancy Place's final neighborhood

The DeForest Village Planning and Zoning Commission reviewed a concept plan on August 25 for The Knolls, the final neighborhood of the Conservancy Place subdivision, encompassing 145 single-family homes and 42 duplex condominiums on 96.6 acres near the subdivision's northern edge. Planning consultant Mark Roffers presented the plan on behalf of the village, noting access challenges caused by poorly plotted land and a winding river corridor. Primary access would run via Tamarack Drive extending from River Road to the development's eastern edge. The project is envisioned in four phases through 2037, with construction starting on the western portion. The

plan includes a 4.6-acre park, tree preservation standards requiring retention of 70 percent of canopy area on wooded lots, and wetland protections. Developer Joe Ring of Park Towne Development said the goal is to move dirt this fall and begin building in spring. The final development plan is scheduled for commission review at its September 22 meeting.

Source: Sun Prairie Star (South Central) | https://hngnews.com/the_star/local_news/deforest-planners-review-concept-for-conservancy-places-final-neighborhood/article_edf70662-a958-4602-92f7-29e39c67a17b.html

The Oxbow returns: Commission recommends amended plan with 75 units

The Watertown Plan Commission on Monday approved amended general development and precise implementation plans for The Oxbow, a mixed-use residential project proposed for the former Johnsonville Sausage factory site at 100 and 104 E. Division St. The amended plans increase the unit count from 67 to 75, comprising five studio apartments, 38 one-bedroom units, 25 two-bedroom units, and seven three-bedroom units, and remove all previously proposed townhomes. The project, developed by Tom Stocco of Tessuto Development LLC, formerly Northtown Partners, will include 63 underground parking stalls and 47 surface stalls totaling 110 spaces, with paid parking for tenants. Stormwater management will be handled through a filtration device in the proposed storm sewer inlet, classified under redevelopment standards. December 2025 rent estimates average \$1,935 per month. District 3 Alder Ken Berg cited a projected investment of \$15 million to \$18 million and referenced tax incremental district financing as a necessary incentive component. The recommendation now advances to the Common Council for final approval.

Source: Watertown Daily Times (Southeastern) | https://www.wdtimes.com/news/local/the-oxbow-returns-commission-recommends-amended-plan-with-75-units/article_ebb86553-5f4f-4100-b900-d7f38a79cae3.html

Plans to expand private ski hill in Lisbon to be considered

The Lisbon Plan Commission tabled a conditional use permit application from Ausblick, Inc., a nonprofit private ski hill, for expansion improvements at its facility, rescheduling the item for the September 23 Plan Commission meeting, according to Village Administrator Dan Green. Trio Engineering submitted the application on behalf of Ausblick, citing the project as consistent with the long-range plan under a conditional use permit originally issued May 26, 2010. The proposed improvements include raising the ski hill by 20 feet, for which excavation work has already been completed, and installing a quad chairlift and associated infrastructure with a target completion date of 2030. Ausblick is also acquiring approximately 1.97 acres of adjoining property at the northeast corner of the site along Mary Hill Road to construct up to 99 additional parking spaces and establish a second driveway access from Mary Hill Road.

Source: Waukesha Freeman (Southeastern) | https://www.gmtoday.com/the_freeman/business/ausblick-ski-hill-expansion/article_a34d8d92-606f-5fe1-a842-b6353aaa1813.html

Potential housing redevelopment on Madison's west side sparks concern

Canada-based developer RFA submitted preliminary plans to Madison's Urban Design Commission this summer proposing demolition of the three-story UW Health administrative office at 301 S. Westfield Road to make way for approximately 570 apartments across five new five-story buildings. The plans show two mixed-use buildings at the south end of the property and a three-building residential complex toward the north end, with a new bisecting access road offering underground and surface parking options. UW Health has leased the site since 2011, and

its lease expires next August, after which employees will shift to remote or shared workspaces. City Council member Joann Pritchett, who represents the district, said she has significant reservations, citing existing traffic problems on Mineral Point and Gammon roads and calling for an early traffic analysis rather than waiting for the standard later stage in the development review process. No date has been set for Plan Commission discussion of the project.

Source: Capital Times (South Central) | https://captimes.com/news/government/potential-housing-redevelopment-on-madisons-west-side-sparks-concern/article_3eff0f3d-3101-4a75-8019-28f34373044f.html

GCDC launches Welcome Home Green County

Green County Development Corporation launched Welcome Home Green County, a first-time home buyer program providing a \$10,000 grant at closing toward the purchase or construction of an owner-occupied home in Green County. A \$690,000 combined investment from Colony Brands Foundation, the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, Klondike Cheese Company, The Bank of New Glarus, and Grandé funds the program. The grant is secured by a subordinate mortgage and fully forgiven after five years of continuous ownership, with recipients who sell before five years repaying on a prorated basis. In exchange for the grant, recipients must complete 100 hours of volunteer service over five years, 20 hours per year, with an approved Green County nonprofit. Applicants must be at least 18, contribute a minimum of \$5,000 in personal funds toward the purchase, and hold a total household income of at least \$55,000 annually, and mortgage prequalification or preapproval must come from The Bank of New Glarus. Prospective applicants can begin with a prequalification questionnaire at greencountydevelopment.com.

Source: Monroe Times (South Central) | <https://themonroetimes.com/local-news/gcdc-launches-welcome-home-green-county/>

Former mayor pitches conference center to save UW campus

Former Marinette Mayor Doug Oitzinger presented a concept at a Thursday meeting of the Marinette County UW Campus Committee to repurpose the vacant 17.76-acre UW-Green Bay Marinette campus as a bayfront conference center paired with a privately owned hotel. The campus has been vacant since in-person classes ended in fall 2024. Oitzinger called for a formal feasibility study with market analysis and identification of potential hotel developers. County Facilities Director Martin Keyport cautioned that a resolution headed to the county board the following week would state that the county intends to divest ownership of the campus and fieldhouse upon redevelopment, and Finance Director Hollie Viestenz cited a projected \$1.7 million county budget deficit for the current year. An online survey of 367 respondents showed more than 50 percent strongly favoring building preservation and 68 percent supporting a performing arts center. The committee voted to advance a proposal to hire UW-Extension's Community Economic Development team, estimated at \$5,000 to \$10,000 over six to eighteen months, to the infrastructure committee for further consideration.

Source: EagleHerald (Northeastern) | https://www.ehextra.com/news/former-mayor-pitches-conference-center-to-save-uw-campus/article_53a144b3-d18b-48a0-8bc6-5ad48891b14c.html

Mayville Common Council Meeting Recap

The Mayville Common Council, meeting August 10 with Mayor Boelk and Alderpersons DeBaker, Smith, Buske, and Olson present, gave second reading and unanimously approved Ordinance

1156-206 rezoning the lower portion of Theiler Park from park land to institutional use in preparation for a new EMS building. Mayor Boelk confirmed the EMS project will require a combination of tax levy funding, bonding, and an already-awarded \$800,000 grant. The council accepted a State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program award of \$12,312, with no municipal match required, to improve city data backup and migrate city email and website to a .gov domain. A zoning code update proposal from Community Planning and Consulting, LLC, to be included in the 2027 budget, passed 3-2 with Mayor Boelk casting the tie-breaking vote. The council also approved a resolution authorizing a grant application to the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation Vibrant Spaces Grant Program. New Controller Treasurer Darlene Smith was set to begin August 17, returning city hall to full staffing.

Source: Mayville Dodge County Pioneer (South Central) | <https://www.dodgecountypioneer.com/stories/mayville-common-council-meeting-recap.351768>

Resident tries unusual legal path to detach property from village

Richard Gruber appeared before the Cascade Village Board at its August meeting to request detachment of his property from the village and reattachment to the Town of Lyndon. Village Clerk Kayla Simanowski said she had not previously encountered a detachment request, noting the board more commonly handles annexations into the village. Simanowski cited Department of Administration rules governing the process by which a property owner may pursue such a detachment. The available text reports no vote, resolution number, dollar figures, or scheduled next step, as the full article is behind a subscription paywall. No board action or outcome is confirmed in the accessible portion of the article.

Source: Plymouth Review (Southeastern) | <https://www.plymouth-review.com/articles/resident-tries-unusual-legal-path-to-detach-property-from-village/>

Rebuilding citizen trust by engaging across Wisconsin

The UW-Madison La Follette School of Public Affairs is launching two components of its biennial Main Street Agenda project in 2026: five community assemblies focused on Wisconsin's housing crisis and a documentary on Gen Z political trust produced with the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. The assemblies will be held in Kenosha County, Dodgeville, Milwaukee, Crandon, and Marathon County, each producing a formal set of housing policy recommendations for delivery to local government officials, and the Kenosha County assembly is partnering with the Kenosha County Housing Task Force to examine factory-built housing as a supply solution. The documentary team interviewed more than 80 students, teachers, and researchers across the state. The 2024 Main Street Agenda cycle engaged nearly 350 Wisconsin residents through town halls and four cross-partisan dinner conversations. A Spring 2026 Harvard Youth Poll cited in the article found 13 percent of 18-to-29-year-olds believe the country is headed in the right direction. The policy recommendations generated by each assembly are slated for formal submission to local officials upon completion.

Source: UW-Madison La Follette School (Statewide) | <https://lafollette.wisc.edu/news/rebuilding-citizen-trust-by-engaging-across-wisconsin/>

Governance and Elections

Marathon County Board rejects chair's pick to lead Infrastructure Committee

The Marathon County Board on Tuesday rejected County Board Chair Kurt Gibbs's appointment of Supervisor Aaron Griner to chair the Infrastructure Committee. Gibbs had placed the appointment on the consent agenda, naming Griner effective September 1 to fill the seat vacated by Supervisor Chris Dickinson for a term running to the April 2028 organizational meeting. Supervisor Jennifer Aarrestad pulled the item for a separate vote, which then failed. Aarrestad and Dickinson both argued that Infrastructure Committee Vice Chair Duane Gau was the stronger choice, citing Gau's constituent response after a tornado struck Ringle, his participation in Hub City Wind Farm listening sessions, and prior service on the Dane County Board. Gibbs and Vice Chair Matthew Bootz defended Griner's appointment in part by citing a practice of not awarding standing committee chairmanships to first-term supervisors, noting Griner is in his second term and Gau his first. Gibbs said he and Bootz will confer and bring a new recommendation to the full board at its September 17 meeting.

Source: Wausau Pilot & Review (Central/Northern) | <https://wausaupilotandreview.com/2026/08/29/marathon-county-board-rejects-chairs-pick-to-lead-infrastructure-committee/>

New Berlin mayor apologizes for social media posts

The New Berlin Common Council approved a resolution at its August 27, 2026 Common Council meeting condemning social media content Mayor Dave Ament shared on his personal Facebook page. The resolution states that Ament's posts, which targeted Muslims, women, and other groups, were not created, approved, or endorsed by the Common Council, city departments, or employees. The resolution acknowledges Ament's right to personal expression while noting that his role as mayor carries additional responsibilities and that his conduct can affect public trust and the city's reputation. Ament delivered a brief apology before recusing himself from chairing both meetings and yielding to the council president. Janan Najeeb of the Milwaukee Muslim Women's Coalition and Fauzia Qureshi of the Wisconsin Muslim Civic Alliance addressed the council during an extended public comment period, and Qureshi said a petition calling for Ament's resignation had gathered hundreds of signatures statewide. The Common Council has no authority to remove an elected mayor without a formal state legal process, and residents retain the right to pursue a recall.

Source: Waukesha Freeman (Southeastern) | https://www.gmtoday.com/the_freeman/news/new-berlin-mayor-resignation-protests/article_b68e5e8d-f76f-4a47-bea6-0a9a89cba7ae.html

Highway Robbery: County highway official convicted of sign theft

A Green County jury convicted Chris Narveson, Green County's Highway Commissioner and chairman of the New Glarus Town Board, on two misdemeanor counts of theft and obstruction of justice following a two-day trial that concluded last Friday in Green County Circuit Court before Judge Jane Bucher. The criminal complaint, filed March 24, alleged Narveson removed a political opponent's campaign sign on March 22 and subsequently denied taking it when contacted by police. An eyewitness testified to observing Narveson place the sign in his black Dodge Ram truck near the intersection of Zentner Road and Wisconsin Highway 39. Narveson has chaired the New Glarus Town Board since 2015 and has served on the board for nearly two decades. Each

conviction carries a maximum penalty of nine months in jail and a \$10,000 fine. District Attorney Laura Kohl declined to seek bond revocation following the verdict. Sentencing is scheduled for September 8, and Narveson remains free on bond.

Source: Monroe Times (South Central) | <https://themonroetimes.com/local-news/highway-robbery-county-highway-official-convicted-of-sign-theft/>

Wisconsin elections officials to decide Monday whether former Green Bay clerk broke law

The Wisconsin Elections Commission is scheduled to meet virtually at 9 a.m. on August 31, 2026 to determine whether former Green Bay City Clerk Celestine Jeffreys acted contrary to law and abused her discretion in connection with duplicate absentee ballots sent to voters during both the April and August 2026 elections. Commission staff attorney supervisor Angela O'Brien Sharpe concluded in a pre-meeting memo that Green Bay answered the commission's questions as fully as possible, and that the root cause in both incidents appeared to be individuals either not recognizing that a batch had already been sent or incorrectly concluding that address labels were missing. Jeffreys was placed on administrative leave before resigning after a city filing cited her actions as the cause of the August incident. The commission may vote on two possible motions under Wis. Stat. sec. 5.06(4) and sec. 5.06(6): directing further investigation, or issuing a summary decision that would also require revision of the related case Sipes v. Jeffreys (EL 26-12).

Source: WLUK FOX11 Green Bay (Northeastern) | <https://fox11online.com/news/local/green-bay-duplicate-absentee-ballots-investigation-former-clerk-celestine-jeffreys-wisconsin-elections-commission-meeting-scheduled-acted-contrary-law-abused-discretion>

Milwaukee central count officials acknowledge primary results reporting mistake

The Milwaukee Election Commission acknowledged that a team led by its deputy director mistakenly downloaded an audit log instead of election results on five of nine tabulators at the city's central count facility during the August 11, 2026 state primary, delaying the reporting of unofficial results. The commission stated in a letter that written download procedures were available at the time and that it takes responsibility for the error, while asserting the mistake did not affect the security and accuracy of the underlying election results. The Wisconsin Elections Commission planned to vote at its Monday meeting on a draft letter to the Milwaukee commission urging public transparency ahead of the November general election. The Milwaukee Election Commission had previously said producing related records would take several weeks to months, and now states those public records will be posted online by September 4, 2026.

Source: Barron News-Shield (Southeastern) | https://news-shield.com/news/national/article_a6cbce80-3ae9-5015-b501-ac332b6d0205.html

La Crosse County DA declines to pursue election bribery charges against Musk

La Crosse County District Attorney Tim Gruenke, appointed as a special prosecutor after Brown County declared a conflict of interest, announced on August 25 that he will not file election bribery charges against Elon Musk related to a March 2025 social media post offering \$1 million checks to attendees of a Green Bay rally open only to those who had voted. The Wisconsin Elections Commission had referred two complaints to prosecutors in July, concluding Musk likely violated state law. Gruenke determined no jury would convict because Musk replaced the original post within a day with one tying attendance to signing a petition, and because no money was paid

to anyone for voting. Musk and groups he supported spent at least \$20 million on the 2025 Wisconsin Supreme Court race, which the candidate he backed, Brad Schimel, lost by 10 percentage points to Susan Crawford. No further prosecutorial steps were announced.

Source: PBS Wisconsin WHA21 (Statewide) | <https://pbswisconsin.org/news-item/la-crosse-county-da-declines-to-pursue-election-bribery-charges-against-musk/>

Grassroots groups plan campaign to inform voters of GM/JATCO referendum

A November 2026 ballot referendum in Janesville would require city voters to approve any development project at the former General Motors site valued at more than \$450 million. The ballot question reached voters after citizen groups SNOW Janesville and No Janesville Data Center gathered qualifying signatures, and the Janesville City Council approved placing the question on the ballot under a legal requirement. In June 2026 the council voted not to extend a letter of intent and due-diligence agreement it had approved in November 2025 with Viridian Partners for a hyperscale data center proposal that included buying and remediating the GM site, removing that deal from consideration. Organizers Cathy Erdman and Alyssa Capozziello said they plan a public campaign timed closer to the November election in support of a yes vote. Grow Janesville Responsibly, a pro-development coalition, released a video opposing the measure.

Source: Janesville Gazette (South Central) | https://www.gazettextra.com/news/grassroots-groups-plan-campaign-to-inform-voters-of-gm-jatco-referendum/article_4acd3947-adda-46be-b47c-c1911ee74e0a.html

Winneconne community members push for recall of school board president, vice president

A recall effort targeting Winneconne School Board President Kati Calewarts and Vice President Dean Ackmann has collected more than 1,000 signatures since launching July 15, 2026, according to organizer and former board president Bob Ronk. Calewarts and Ackmann gained majority control of the board in April 2026. Recall organizers cite Calewarts signing a legal agreement for the district 10 days before board approval, the board accumulating approximately \$20,000 in legal fees, and a July 13 closed session for which board members were not notified of the topic in advance. A special closed session was also called Monday with four days' notice, and board member Jill Verich, who missed the meeting, said Calewarts has not disclosed what transpired. Calewarts estimates a recall election would cost taxpayers \$40,000 to \$80,000. If organizers gather sufficient signatures, an election would be held at least several months out.

Source: WLUK FOX11 Green Bay (Northeastern) | <https://fox11online.com/news/local/winneconne-community-members-push-for-recall-of-school-board-president-vice-president>

Oconomowoc council denies gas station request for bar operations

The Oconomowoc Common Council denied an application by Brenda Caraballo, agent and president of Lucky 7 Sport, LLC, for a Class B fermented malt beverage and Class C wine license to sell beer and wine for on-premise consumption at 744 E. Wisconsin Ave., inside the Oconomowoc BP gas station. The denial followed the council's July 21 vote to revoke a similar dual license held by Pub Summit LLC at 1004 Summit Ave., also situated inside a gas station, after a police inspection found the business open with no liquor present and no staff in the tavern area. The Oconomowoc Police Department reviewed the new application and recommended denial. Alderman Lou Kowieski said the denial reflected community sentiment rather than the station's operations, and Alderwoman Jennifer Aultman Kloth cited concerns about liquor

accessibility. The council also approved a special election order for Lake County Municipal Court judge, scheduled for April 6, 2027, to fill the term vacated when Judge Timothy Kay retired April 24.

Source: Waukesha Freeman (Southeastern) | https://www.gmtoday.com/the_freeman/news/oconomowoc-council-denies-gas-station-request-for-bar-operations/article_f0ebe7e0-72ce-53bb-83bc-532d95a99154.html

Human Services

Lafayette Co. Manor's future on ballot

The Lafayette County Board voted 14-2 Tuesday evening to place two referendum questions before voters on November 3 concerning the future of Lafayette Manor, the county's only skilled nursing home. The first question asks voters to authorize borrowing up to \$45.5 million to build and furnish a new 50-bed nursing home replacing the current facility, originally constructed in 1961. The second asks voters to shift manor operating costs off the general levy and create a dedicated non-recurring levy of up to \$500,000 annually for five years. Supervisors Luke McGuire and Mark Pinch cast the two dissenting votes. County Board Chair Jack Sauer cited the decision to bundle both questions on one ballot as a deliberate measure to avoid the sequencing problems experienced by the Monroe and Platteville school districts. Demolition costs for the former Memorial Hospital of Lafayette County have risen from an initial estimate of \$550,000 to an estimated \$1.1 million. The county board committed to holding informational meetings before the November election to reduce voter confusion about the two simultaneous ballot measures.

Source: Monroe Times (South Central) | <https://themonroetimes.com/local-news/lafayette-co-manors-future-on-ballot/>

Budget drops sharply for Office on Aging; Re-allocation of indirect costs the reason

The Barron County Commission on Aging voted August 18, 2026 to approve a proposed 2027 budget for the Aging and Disability Resource Center reflecting a nearly \$245,000 net reduction attributable to a reallocation of indirect costs, meaning county-wide overhead charges calculated by departmental time sheets, away from the Office on Aging and toward Human Services. The full budget excluding reallocated indirect costs totals \$2,286,912, up from the current \$2,041,341, with a property tax levy contribution of \$1,013,672 compared with \$1,010,269 this year. Nutrition program spending is projected at \$1,184,657, down from \$1,222,034, while transportation costs rise from \$272,327 to \$280,623. The commission also approved Director Jennifer Jako's request to apply for a state grant toward an \$87,000 Ford Transit wheelchair-accessible van, with the county's 20 percent local match of \$17,400 drawn from a \$49,000 private trust donation. The budget proposal advances to the County Board Executive Committee before an expected full Board of Supervisors vote in November.

Source: Barron News-Shield (Western) | https://news-shield.com/news/top_stories/article_0dac3b78-6176-4c19-a326-fc1981611975.html

Eau Claire City Council demands AG's answer on 'unlawful' transports

The Eau Claire City Council voted unanimously Tuesday to pass a resolution pressing Wisconsin Attorney General Josh Kaul to respond to a letter sent 19 months earlier regarding out-of-jurisdiction law enforcement agencies transporting unhoused individuals into Eau Claire without connecting them to services. Councilmember Andrew Werthmann of District 5 was absent from

the vote. City Attorney Stephen Nick and Eau Claire County Corporation Counsel Sharon McIlquham originally sent the letter to Kaul on January 13, 2025, describing the practice as unlawful at worst and unprofessional at best. Documented incidents include a Menomonie Police Department drop-off at a closed shelter on October 17, 2024 and a St. Croix County Sheriff's Office transport of a woman to a local gas station on November 21, 2024. The Attorney General's office has responded only that the request continues to be under review. The resolution also calls on the Department of Justice Training and Standards Bureau to develop statewide interagency agreements on jurisdictional transport practices through its WileyNet program.

Source: WEAU NBC13 Eau Claire (Western) | <https://www.weau.com/2026/08/26/eau-claire-city-council-demands-ags-answer-unlawful-transports/>

A 'financial crisis' sunk Karuna. What will it mean for La Crosse?

Karuna, one of La Crosse's only supportive housing organizations serving high-needs, chronically unsheltered individuals, announced August 14 that it would wind down operations because of a financial crisis compounded by a decision to expand its program this year. The organization houses 10 residents with a range of mental and physical challenges and operates with round-the-clock staffing. Its 2024 tax return reported \$365,000 in expenses against \$265,000 in revenue, and its 2026 budget was approximately \$500,000 to house those 10 residents. Former executive director Julie McDermid said the cost, roughly half a million dollars for 10 people, proved a difficult fundraising case. Former staff said the lack of funds is forcing closure sooner than planned, raising concern among advocates and city officials about whether current residents will remain housed long term and who will fill the service gap, particularly given Karuna's role as a partner to the city-county Pathways Home collaboration.

Source: La Crosse Tribune (Western) | https://lacrossetribune.com/news/local/article_276d7431-ac15-4c61-830d-b73905f9df76.html

Low vaccination rates drive southwest Wisconsin measles outbreak

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services identified 41 confirmed and seven probable measles cases across Iowa, Lafayette, and Grant counties as of late August 2026, with all but one infected individual unvaccinated. State data show Lafayette County's measles, mumps, and rubella vaccination rate for two-year-olds stood at 60 percent in 2025, Grant County's at just under 64 percent, and Iowa County's at nearly 81 percent, all below the 95 percent threshold required to prevent outbreak spread. Department spokesperson Jennifer Miller attributed rapid transmission to geographic pockets of under-vaccination. Iowa County Health Officer Debbie Siegenthaler confirmed her department is actively identifying cases and exposures and held a community vaccination clinic at the Mineral Point Rescue Squad office on Monday, August 24 from noon to 5 p.m. Lafayette County Board of Supervisors Chair Jack Sauer said he expects additional cases in his county given the rapid spread in neighboring Iowa County. Residents are directed to verify vaccination status through the Wisconsin Immunization Registry.

Source: Wisconsin Watch (South Central) | <https://wisconsinwatch.org/2026/08/low-vaccination-rates-drive-southwest-wisconsin-measles-outbreak/>

UW-Platteville asks students to voluntarily submit measles vaccine status amid regional outbreak

UW-Platteville, located in Grant County and enrolling approximately 6,300 students as of fall 2025, announced Wednesday that it will begin asking students to voluntarily enter their immunization records into an online system through MedProctor the following week, ahead of the September 2 start of classes. The request covers four vaccines: measles, mumps and rubella; tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis; varicella; and hepatitis B. The action follows a regional outbreak in which state health officials confirmed 44 cases and identified 17 probable cases across Grant, Iowa, and Lafayette counties as of Tuesday. The Wisconsin Department of Health Services sent a letter to the state's colleges and universities on Monday recommending that institutions verify student immunization status before students arrive on campus. UW-Madison, the only UW System institution currently requiring immunization record submission, began mandating disclosure in February after a student in an off-campus apartment tested positive for measles, with officials reporting at least 4,000 people were exposed.

Source: WiscNews (South Central) | https://wiscnews.com/news/state-regional/wisconsin/article_cea38002-6596-58bf-80ac-5e7cc7d60790.html

Wisconsin leads nation in elderly fall deaths; Eau Claire county program aims to lower risk

The Eau Claire County Aging and Disability Resource Center is deploying the Stepping On fall-prevention workshop program in response to Wisconsin ranking first in the nation for fall-related deaths among adults aged 60 and older. The center's health promotion coordinator is administering the intervention, a research-backed curriculum documented to reduce falls by 31 percent. The seven-session workshop runs Tuesdays from September 8 through October 20, 2026, from 10 a.m. to noon at Lake Street United Methodist Church, 337 Lake St., Eau Claire, with each two-hour session covering balance and strength exercises, home safety modification recommendations, and medication reviews. The program targets adults aged 60 or older who have previously fallen or fear falling. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that one in four older adults falls each year. Residents may register by contacting the center or online at adrcevents.org.

Source: WEAU NBC13 Eau Claire (Western) | <https://www.weau.com/2026/08/29/wisconsin-leads-nation-elderly-fall-deaths-eau-claire-county-program-aims-lower-risk/>

Rock County mosquitoes test positive for West Nile virus

The Rock County Public Health Department confirmed that mosquitoes collected in August at Schollmeyer Park in Beloit tested positive for West Nile virus, making Rock County one of six Wisconsin counties to record West Nile activity in mosquitoes or birds in 2026. As of August 26, no human cases have been reported in Rock County or any other Wisconsin county this year. The county's public health department conducts weekly mosquito collections across the county from June through November each year, forwarding specimens to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services for testing, which publishes results and returns findings to the county. Department vectorborne disease epidemiologist Rebecca Osborn noted that detection of the virus is more significant than the specific collection site, citing limited trap coverage as a factor in potential undetected spread. Wisconsin has recorded an average of 19 human West Nile cases annually since the state began tracking the virus in 2001, with peak activity in August and September.

Source: Janesville Gazette (South Central) | https://www.gazettextra.com/news/rock-county-mosquitoes-test-positive-for-west-nile-virus/article_23939734-231c-4f86-a42e-e77800b13f7d.html

Wisconsin officials raise concerns over proposed federal Head Start deregulation

Wisconsin Department of Children and Families Secretary Jeff Pertl publicly opposed a federal proposal to eliminate hundreds of regulations governing the Head Start early childhood program during an August 26 tour of a Head Start site in Beloit. The proposal, advanced by Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., would remove regulations covering child-to-teacher ratios, health screenings, and family engagement services, with supporters projecting \$2.2 billion in savings to be reinvested in the program. Pertl said the changes would not transfer programmatic control or funding to states but would instead deregulate the program outright. Approximately 12,000 Wisconsin children currently receive Head Start services. The Wisconsin Head Start Association has identified the affected regulatory areas as including nutrition, health, and family engagement. The proposed rule has not been finalized and remains open for public comment for 41 days from the date of reporting.

Source: WISC CBS3 Madison (Statewide) | https://www.channel3000.com/news/wisconsin-officials-raise-concerns-over-proposed-federal-head-start-deregulation/article_6e1dde7e-7ffb-4003-8412-b87ceb20d234.html

School Districts

Dodgeland welcomes 150 Hustisford students amid their district's dissolution

Approximately 150 Hustisford School District students began attending Dodgeland School District for the 2026-27 school year after the two districts agreed in May that Dodgeland would educate Hustisford students for the year. Hustisford voted to dissolve its district after voters rejected a \$3.75 million operating referendum on April 7 that was intended to keep the school solvent for two more years. Hustisford Superintendent Todd Bugnaski attended the Dodgeland School Board meeting on Monday to express thanks for the arrangement. The Department of Public Instruction's School District Boundary Appeal Board will review the dissolution and decide by January 15 whether it concurs with the school board's dissolution order. If the appeal board concurs, it will assign Hustisford's territory, assets, and liabilities to one or more neighboring districts.

Source: WiscNews (South Central) | https://wiscnews.com/news/community/bdc/article_0f75fe19-a85d-4adc-8a80-d9d7c0ae8ec6.html

Cambridge School District ends budget year with surplus, unaudited numbers show

The Cambridge School District ended fiscal year 2025-26 with an unaudited surplus of \$672,283.61, reversing a previously approved deficit projection of \$163,526.13 that the board set in its final budget adopted October 27, 2025; the preliminary budget approved in August 2025 had projected a deficit of \$223,500. Business Manager Nicole Rothe presented the figures at the August 17 committee meeting, attributing the turnaround in part to spending discipline by department budget holders and, in some cases, unfilled positions. The improved year-end balance also reduces anticipated short-term borrowing for 2026-27 to no more than \$2.9 million, down from \$3.5 million the prior year. The proposed 2026-27 tax levy stands at \$9,608,105, approximately 1.16 percent above the prior year's \$9,498,038, and includes \$8,754,800 for

general operations. The annual meeting and budget hearing is scheduled for August 31 at 6 p.m. in the high school library, and the board must set the mill rate on or before November 1.

Source: Cambridge Enterprise Sentinel (South Central) |

https://hngnews.com/leader_independent/news/local/cambridge-school-district-ends-budget-year-with-surplus-unaudited-numbers-show/article_5efdc05d-5bea-4a69-bf23-32dceaadc607.html

CF schools to vote on \$7.1 million borrowing package

The Chippewa Falls School Board is scheduled to vote Tuesday on a resolution authorizing up to \$7.1 million in short-term borrowing to cover operating and maintenance expenses for the current school year, with repayment required no later than November 1 of the next school year. The resolution specifies that the borrowed amount cannot exceed one-half of the district's estimated receipts for operations as certified by the district clerk. The board will also review a final anticipated enrollment report showing 4,283 students district-wide, down from a historical average of 5,000 to 5,100 students. The projected kindergarten and first-grade classes each stand at 244 students, and all grades from kindergarten through fourth fall below 300 students. The district reports 438 students open-enrolling out against 190 enrolling in. The board meets at 7 p.m. at the district administration building, 1130 Miles St., Chippewa Falls.

Source: Leader-Telegram (Western) | https://www.leadertelegram.com/news/daily-updates/cf-schools-to-vote-on-7-1-million-borrowing-package/article_9843f021-47c4-48fd-ac32-339bfc6704cd.html

KUSD board moves forward with community poll, staff audit

The Kenosha Unified School Board voted August 25 to commission a community poll through Minneapolis-based Morris Leatherman Company at a cost of approximately \$26,000 as part of its referendum exploration process. The poll, which may run for about two weeks beginning September 29, will gather district-wide community input to inform planning for a potential operational referendum in April 2027; the board previously voted in June to pursue an April 2027 date rather than November. Board Clerk Todd Price and Board Vice President Sabrina Landry both emphasized engaging community members before polling, and Board Treasurer Bob Tierney suggested holding a town hall prior to the poll. The board also voted to proceed with a staffing audit through ERS, a Massachusetts-based nonprofit consulting firm, at a cost of \$10,000, with ERS partner Emily Parfit presenting the firm's methodology. The audit will evaluate district staffing at both the administrative and teaching levels.

Source: Lake Geneva Regional News (Southeastern) |

https://lakegenevanews.net/news/local/education/article_acc275f3-931d-59a1-8148-f8aa8630ee48.html

Waukesha schools enter a new era

Following a November 12 school board vote, the School District of Waukesha completed its Optimizing Our Future restructuring initiative, closing Bethesda, Hawthorne, and the former Whittier elementary schools and relocating the K-8 STEM school to Horning Middle School. The district launched the initiative in March 2025 in response to declining enrollment and excess building capacity, and conducted 37 public engagement opportunities over 18 months. Lowell Elementary, Banting, and Heyer schools are now designated as dual-language sites. The closures are designed to reduce districtwide building capacity by 10 to 15 percent. District bus routes increased from 77 last school year to 79 this year, including two additional routes serving the Waukesha STEM Academy. New attendance boundaries have placed some families farther from

their assigned schools, and the district is offering a pay-to-ride option for families ineligible for district-provided transportation. Superintendent Jim Sebert and Assistant Superintendent of Student Services Ryan Patt are overseeing implementation, with routes to be reviewed and adjusted through the start of the school year.

Source: Waukesha Freeman (Southeastern) | https://www.gmtoday.com/the_freeman/news/waukesha-school-restructuring-complete/article_3c5b6499-08f5-57ee-9b04-ed1e9c6500cf.html

Kaukauna School Board explains decision on middle school principal allegations

The Kaukauna Area School District Board of Education released a statement on August 26, 2026 explaining its decision not to place River View Middle School Principal Luke Cromell on administrative leave or take other adverse employment action, following a public meeting at which parents raised concerns. A 2026 federal civil complaint filed against the Oconto Falls Public School District Board of Education includes allegations involving Cromell spanning 2012 to 2016, when he was employed by that district. The Kaukauna district's personnel review, conducted in consultation with outside legal counsel, re-examined third-party background checks and reference checks completed at the time of Cromell's hire and found no information related to misconduct or the complaint's allegations. The district also confirmed it has received no misconduct complaints during Cromell's 10 years of employment with the district. Administration concluded the review has not identified sufficient evidence to substantiate the allegations, and the district stated it will continue evaluating any additional information that becomes available.

Source: Kaukauna Community News (Northeastern) | <https://kaukaunacommunitynews.com/2026/08/26/kaukauna-school-board-explains-decision-on-middle-school-principal-allegations/>

Sauk Prairie School District reaches \$2.1M settlement over alleged faulty athletic field construction

The Sauk Prairie School District Board accepted a \$2.105 million settlement resolving a lawsuit filed in Sauk County Circuit Court in April 2023 against Rettler Corporation, Lasar Construction, Top Tier Grading, and their bond companies over athletic fields voters approved in an April 2020 referendum and expected to open in 2022. Turf specialists found faulty soil composition and excessive compaction, leading the district to deem the fields unusable for approximately four and a half years. Prior mediation produced an initial offer of roughly \$30,000, followed by a second offer of \$150,000 payable over ten years; the district rejected both. The settlement carries no admission of liability. District attorney David McFarlane noted that trial had been scheduled for August 2027 and carried risks of additional legal costs and appeals. Settlement funds will finance complete reconstruction of the baseball field and second softball field, a new bathroom and concessions building, resurfacing of eight high school tennis courts, field maintenance equipment, and technology infrastructure, with new soil and seeded grass targeted by the end of September 2026.

Source: WMTV NBC15 Madison (South Central) | <https://www.wmtv15news.com/2026/08/27/sauk-prairie-school-district-reaches-21m-settlement-over-alleged-faulty-athletic-field-construction/>

Prescott passes 'bell-to-bell' cell phone ban

The Prescott School Board voted unanimously on August 19 to approve a policy banning student use of all personal communication devices bell-to-bell during the instructional school day,

effective the current school year. Under the policy, students must power off phones, smartwatches, wireless earbuds, and similar devices and secure them in district-designated storage at the start of each day, retrieving them only at day's end. An amendment to the policy grants principals authority to permit device use for specific events not already covered by law, such as individualized education program meetings, medical needs, or special class projects. Superintendent Jim Reif said confiscated devices may be held by an administrator for parent pickup. The policy exceeds the minimum standard set by Wisconsin Act 42, which requires all public school boards to prohibit student use of non-district wireless devices during instructional time. According to the Wisconsin Policy Forum, before Act 42 passed, 20.75 percent of Wisconsin's 421 districts had full bans in place while 9.7 percent had no restrictions at all.

Source: Pierce County Journal (Western) | <https://www.piercecountyjournal.news/stories/prescott-passes-bell-to-bell-cell-phone-ban,203655>

D.C. Everest outlines digital safety restrictions on school-issued devices

D.C. Everest Area School District, headquartered in Weston, issues every student a tenth-generation iPad, a practice the district has maintained for approximately 10 years. District administrators monitor student device activity and receive automated notifications when a search may compromise student safety; popular gaming sites and social media platforms are blocked by default, and students cannot remove filters or restrictions from the devices. Brady Messenberg, director of technology for the district, oversees the monitoring infrastructure. Parents may request a report of their child's online activity, though unlike the Wausau School District, which sends parents a weekly automated email summary, D.C. Everest does not distribute those reports automatically. Each student completes a security course upon receiving an iPad. The district's stated goal is to limit device use to educational and creative purposes rather than passive content consumption.

Source: WSAW CBS7 Wausau (Central/Northern) | <https://www.wsaw.com/2026/08/25/dc-everest-outlines-digital-safety-restrictions-school-issued-devices/>

Parent group pushing Madison schools to limit all screens in classrooms

A parent advocacy group called Parent Check on Tech, co-founded by Jacqui Shore and Amy Martino, is preparing a petition to the Madison Metropolitan School District Board of Education requesting that one-to-one Chromebook distribution be delayed until high school, that classrooms in kindergarten through second grade be device-free, and that grades three through eight use shared Chromebook carts or computer labs instead of individual devices. The group grew from approximately 30 members at its May founding to about 200 members. An April 2026 report to the board by district senior leaders documented that actual student screen time exceeds recommended instructional limits: middle schoolers average two hours per day against a 40-minute guideline, and high schoolers average 90 minutes against the same 40-minute limit, while kindergarteners and first graders receive 9 to 15 minutes despite a zero-minute recommendation. District spokesperson Edell Fiedler confirmed the district will begin revising its technology plan this month, with a draft expected to be presented to the board in April 2027.

Source: WPR News Madison (South Central) | <https://www.wpr.org/news/parent-group-pushing-madison-schools-to-limit-all-screens-in-classrooms>

As special educators face high burnout, new \$10.5M grant aims to stem Wisconsin teacher crisis

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction has received a \$10.5 million federal grant to address the state's special education teacher shortage over a five-year period. Department education consultant Barb Van Haren confirmed the award, which will fund recruitment initiatives and structured mentorship programs, including expansion of the existing Special Educator Induction Program. Department data show that only 43 percent of Wisconsin special education teachers remain in the field after eight years, and the Eau Claire Area School District currently carries 17 special education vacancies. The grant will initially launch as a pilot cohort of 25 participants through the University of Wisconsin-Madison who already hold bachelor's degrees, and the department intends to scale findings to additional campuses statewide. District Director of Special Education Kelsey Tichey noted that Eau Claire has participated in the induction program for years at no cost to the district, receiving a stipend covering professional learning and substitute costs. The department stated the funding will eventually reach every region of Wisconsin.

Source: WEAU NBC13 Eau Claire (Statewide) | <https://www.weau.com/2026/08/27/special-educators-face-high-burnout-new-105m-grant-aims-stem-wisconsin-teacher-crisis/>

School board hears review of Summer Academy

The Rice Lake Area School District Board of Education received a Summer Academy program review from Principal Natalie Springer at its August 24 meeting, reporting 1,203 total students in grades 4K through 8 participated across two sessions. The first session, held June 15 to 25, enrolled 529 students plus 44 in middle school summer skills, and the second session, July 27 to August 6, drew 630 students. Programming was delivered by 81 teachers, 40 aides and support staff, and eight high school students. The board also approved retaining the Wisconsin Association of School Boards to conduct its superintendent search at a cost of \$12,825, rejecting a \$16,500 proposal from an Illinois firm. Board members received the annual seclusion and physical restraint report documenting six physical restraint incidents and 12 seclusion incidents at Tainter Elementary and one each at Haugen Elementary, and authorized three employment resignations and 14 employment recommendations. Advanced Placement exam results showed students passed 68 of 80 attempts, an 85 percent pass rate against a 78 percent state average.

Source: Rice Lake Chronotype (Western) | https://apg-wi.com/rice_lake_chronotype/news/education/school-board-hears-review-of-summer-academy/article_bb73c044-8e23-4ff1-a007-5baf7918f495.html

Aquatic Center subcommittee holds initial meeting

The Antigo School Board on Monday established an August 31 deadline for the Antigo School District Foundation to produce \$150,000 to sustain community-services operations at the Clara R. McKenna Aquatic Center, or those operations will cease. The newly formed Aquatic Center Subcommittee held its initial meeting Tuesday evening to serve as liaison among the district, the Woodson YMCA, and the foundation. The five-member committee is chaired by Angi Schreiber and includes School Board President Danny Pyeatt, Mike Parizek, YMCA Chief Executive Officer Bryan Bailey, and Jean Adams. The board approved a Fund 80 staff position at its July meeting to oversee aquatic center finances, and the administrative team is preparing a job description, with Parizek advocating for an in-house, part-time arrangement to minimize cost. The committee identified four immediate priorities: obtaining a concrete operating budget, scheduling a

Department of Public Instruction informational session, securing Superintendent Glenda Oginski's signature on a timing-board installation agreement, and restoring routine pool maintenance. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday at 6 p.m. at the Antigo Middle School library.

Source: Antigo Daily Journal (Central/Northern) | https://www.antigojournal.com/news/aquatic-center-subcommittee-holds-initial-meeting/article_e0e86e89-0d48-4667-a780-aed645e7b5c4.html

New superintendent aims to make Solon Springs a 'destination district'

Kelly Ryder assumed the role of superintendent of the Solon Springs School District on July 1, her first superintendency after approximately 45 years as an educator in the Rice Lake, Cameron, Cumberland, and Hayward areas. Ryder identified \$4 million in deferred maintenance projects as an immediate fiscal challenge, noting that the last significant infrastructure investment in the district occurred in 1992. She has begun community conversations about potential capital investment, citing declining enrollment and school funding that she said lags behind inflation as compounding pressures. Ryder previously served in the Hayward district, where voters approved a \$49.7 million referendum to renovate and upgrade four schools. She indicated plans to pursue similar community dialogue in Solon Springs regarding a future referendum or investment strategy, though no vote or formal proposal has been scheduled. The district operates a single K-12 building.

Source: Superior Telegram (Western) | <https://www.superiortelegam.com/news/local/new-superintendent-aims-to-make-solon-springs-a-destination-district>

Sparta School Board approves gym plan

The Sparta Area School District School Board approved a \$6.9 million expansion of a planned three-station gymnasium at Sparta High School. The board voted to move forward with the project, with administrators continuing to gather information and seek additional details related to the expansion. The facility is described as a three-station gym, indicating a multi-use athletic design at the high school campus. No vote count, resolution identifier, contractor award, financing mechanism, or effective date appears in the accessible portion of the article. The next reported procedural step is continued administrative information gathering, indicating the project remains in a planning or procurement phase following board approval.

Source: Monroe County Herald (Sparta) (Western) | <https://monroecountyherald.com/stories/sparta-school-board-approves-gym-plan,179649>

Lien Elementary registration goes paperless, saves families and staff time

Lien Elementary School Principal Megan Challoner reported to the Amery School Board on Monday that the school completed a fully digital back-to-school registration process this year, replacing traditional paper packets with the district's existing Bright Arrow communication platform. The school sent individualized welcome packets to every family by grade level, including teacher welcome letters, with advance save-the-date notices followed by voicemail, text, and email delivery. Only two families out of the school's full enrollment requested paper copies. The school simultaneously launched PickUp Patrol, an app-based dismissal system allowing families to set and update default pickup or busing plans in real time, and half of Lien's families had logged in and set a default plan before Open House occurred. Board members identified postage and staff labor, previously consumed by printing, sorting, and stuffing individualized packets each

August, as the primary cost savings. The system also provides read-receipt data confirming when messages are opened. Lien Elementary served as the district's pilot site this year.

Source: Amery Free Press (Western) | https://theameryfreepress.com/news/lien-elementary-registration-goes-paperless-saves-families-and-staff-time/article_a66ac7a9-e468-4106-9731-dc149b9d6f3d.html

Complaint filed against Racine school board member, state Assembly candidate following profane post against women

Kelly Gallaher, chair of the Democratic Party of Racine County, filed a formal complaint Wednesday with the Racine Unified School District requesting immediate censure proceedings against school board member Mike Bellagio following a profane Facebook post in which Bellagio, writing under the name Mike Vincent, used a derogatory slur directed at Gallaher, State Rep. Angelina Cruz, and two local journalists. The complaint asks the board of education to place a formal resolution of censure on its next agenda, hold a roll-call vote condemning the statements, remove Bellagio from his position as board clerk, and strip him of any committee assignments or district representation roles. Board president Jane Barbian responded by email that the post does not reflect other board members' views but characterized it as protected free speech made in Bellagio's capacity as a private citizen. Bellagio was re-elected to the board in April 2025.

Source: WPR News Madison (Southeastern) | <https://www.wpr.org/news/complaint-filed-racine-school-board-member-state-assembly-candidate-profane-post>

State-Local Interface

Wisconsin tax collections 2% higher than expected, putting budget surplus at nearly \$3 billion

The Wisconsin Department of Revenue released a preliminary report on August 28, 2026 showing the state collected \$23.13 billion in taxes during fiscal year 2025-26, a 3.4 percent increase from the prior year and \$450.8 million above the department's \$22.6 billion projection. Income taxes exceeded projections by \$231.3 million, general sales and use tax by \$79.9 million, and corporate income tax by \$83.9 million. The stronger-than-expected collections could push the state's budget surplus above \$3 billion. A previously negotiated \$1.8 billion school funding and tax cut agreement between Gov. Tony Evers and Republican lawmakers, which would have included special education funding, property tax relief, \$600 rebate checks, and elimination of taxes on tips and overtime, failed in the state Senate in May. Joint Finance Committee co-chair Rep. Mark Born said he would be open to returning to session to address the surplus. Without further legislative action, disposition of the surplus will fall to the next governor and Legislature following the November elections.

Source: WFHR 1320 AM Wisconsin Rapids (Statewide) | <https://www.wfhr.com/news/2026/08/28/wisconsin-tax-collections-2-higher-than-expected-putting-budget-surplus-at-nearly-3b>

Wisconsin kids to be limited on Facebook, Instagram in settlement

Wisconsin Attorney General Josh Kaul announced Wednesday that the state will receive between \$219 million and \$313.6 million from a \$17.1 billion multistate settlement with Meta Platforms, which 47 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories joined after Wisconsin filed suit in 2023 alleging violations of the state's Deceptive Trade Practices Act. The settlement guarantees

Wisconsin \$219 million in at least 10 installments of \$2.1 million each, with the first due within 30 days and the rest each January starting next year. The higher figure becomes available if other platforms including Snapchat, YouTube, and TikTok adopt equivalent restrictions. Meta must implement platform changes within six months, including a two-hour daily limit for users ages 13 to 17, mandatory scrolling pauses, push-notification restrictions during school hours and evenings, stronger age verification, and limits on beauty filters and visible like counts. The Wisconsin Department of Justice controls the funds, with at least 50 percent required for youth mental health initiatives, and Kaul said the department will consult stakeholders over the coming weeks to determine allocations.

Source: Capital Times (Statewide) | https://captimes.com/news/government/wisconsin-kids-to-be-limited-on-facebook-instagram-in-settlement/article_65889d5e-6699-4126-a067-d0c110c78bfe.html

New federal housing law's impact on Wisconsin is a 'wait and see'

The 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act, which the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority describes as the most significant update to affordable housing programs in the United States in decades, consolidates 47 previous proposals affecting rental assistance, lending rules, manufactured housing, and local government incentives. Key provisions bar large institutional investors owning more than 350 single-family homes from purchasing additional properties, expand home repair grants and loans, and create an innovation fund incentivizing local zoning and permitting reforms. Cities receiving Community Development Block Grants may now direct up to 20 percent of those funds toward physical housing construction, a use previously prohibited, and a new requirement mandates that every block grant recipient community maintain an inventory of developable land. The law authorizes but does not directly appropriate funding for most programs, leaving federal agencies to determine implementation and request appropriations. Russell Kaney of the Wisconsin Council for Affordable and Rural Housing and Todd Mandel of the Wisconsin Partnership for Housing Development both said the law's impact depends on federal rulemaking and budget alignment.

Source: Capital Times (Statewide) | https://captimes.com/news/government/new-federal-housing-law-s-impact-on-wisconsin-is-a-wait-and-see/article_399360d1-8da5-48c9-8463-5bbff255c5af.html

Supreme Court backs Trump's order to curb mail ballots

The U.S. Supreme Court issued an unsigned order on August 24, 2026 allowing the Trump administration to begin implementing portions of a March executive order restricting mail voting, over the dissent of the court's three liberal justices. The ruling permits the Department of Homeland Security to compile state-specific lists of individuals it deems eligible to vote in states that had challenged the order in court. The court also authorized the U.S. Postal Service to implement new mandates requiring states that conduct mail voting to submit eligible-voter lists and include ballot-tracking information on envelopes; however, a separate lower-court nationwide injunction blocks that component from taking effect. The order did not rule on the underlying legality of the executive order, only on the timing of the legal challenge. States challenging the order warned the ruling will require them to divert administrative resources from November election preparation, with the election fewer than three months away. Additional court proceedings are required before the Postal Service can move forward.

Source: WKOW ABC27 Madison (Statewide) | https://www.wkow.com/news/top-stories/supreme-court-backs-trump-s-order-to-curb-mail-ballots/article_f72ef3b8-c5c8-5343-b48f-280ba3002729.html

Wisconsin, other states challenge mail-in ballots order

Wisconsin Attorney General Josh Kaul joined a multistate lawsuit against the U.S. Postal Service on Wednesday, August 27, 2026, seeking to block a federal rule implementing President Trump's March executive order directing the Postal Service to mail ballots only to voters on a new national eligibility list. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled 6-3 on Monday that Wisconsin and other states had filed their initial challenge prematurely, declining to rule on the order's legality. A federal judge temporarily blocked the Postal Service from enforcing the rule the day after Wisconsin joined the second lawsuit, and the White House stated it plans to appeal that block. Wisconsin's mail ballots are scheduled to be sent to voters in September 2026. Derek Clinger of the State Democracy Research Initiative stated that no changes to voting procedures are currently in effect for voters. A federal court hearing is set for September 3, 2026.

Source: WISC CBS3 Madison (Statewide) | https://www.channel3000.com/news/wisconsin-other-states-challenge-mail-in-ballots-order/article_b26825bc-5d80-48fe-9bfb-184f87518347.html

Judge sides with Pierce Co. residents in major victory in Ridge Breeze challenge

Administrative Law Judge Angela Chaput Foy ruled on August 24 that a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources permit authorizing Ridge Breeze Dairy's expansion at W2686 390th Ave., Maiden Rock, failed to adequately protect groundwater from pollution. The judge found the permit unreasonable because it directed Ridge Breeze to comply with Wisconsin's groundwater standards while giving the department no mechanism to verify actual compliance or detect violations, and declared the permit must be returned to the department for strengthening. The permit had allowed the dairy to spread nearly 80 million gallons of liquid manure on surrounding farm fields annually without requiring groundwater monitoring wells. Approximately 14 percent of tested wells in Pierce County already exceed Wisconsin's groundwater enforcement standard of 10 milligrams per liter for nitrates. The ruling does not halt the expansion but requires the department to revise the permit to add safeguards, potentially including groundwater monitoring capable of detecting standard violations. Midwest Environmental Advocates filed the challenge on behalf of GROWW and five individual Pierce County residents.

Source: Pierce County Journal (Statewide) | <https://www.piercecountyjournal.news/stories/judge-sides-with-pierce-co-residents-in-major-victory-in-ridge-breeze-challenge,203656>

Federal aid request for Fox Valley tornado includes data on damage

Gov. Tony Evers on August 27, 2026 formally requested a federal disaster declaration for the July 27 Fox Valley tornado, submitting the request one month after the storm struck. The Joint Preliminary Damage Assessment for Individual Assistance, conducted across Outagamie, Winnebago, Forest, and Vilas counties, reviewed 2,354 residential structures. Assessors found 94 structures destroyed, 412 with major damage, 1,331 with minor damage, and 519 otherwise affected, with total residential damage costs estimated at more than \$8.2 million. The Public Assistance damage assessment identified more than \$13.8 million in public-sector damage in Vilas and Winnebago counties. In Menasha alone, 665 homes were damaged and 140 deemed unsafe, with an estimated \$69.6 million in lost residential improvement value. WOW Logistics' distribution facility was destroyed, affecting more than 90 jobs, and Mativ Holdings estimates \$50 million to \$100 million in economic impact from destroyed inventory. No federal response timeline was reported.

Source: WiscNews (Statewide) | https://wiscnews.com/news/state-regional/wisconsin/article_187644b7-ff5c-5a08-aaa1-490b2d47018f.html

Gov. Tony Evers launches statewide injury and violence prevention plan

Gov. Tony Evers and the Wisconsin Department of Health Services released a five-year strategic plan on August 26, 2026 to reduce injuries and violence statewide, described by officials as the first such plan in more than 10 years. The plan identifies five priority areas: child maltreatment and abuse, intimate partner assault, intentional firearm injuries, unintentional drug overdoses, and self-harm and suicide. State Health Officer Paula Tran, administrator of the Division of Public Health, said schools, law enforcement agencies, and nonprofits are among the collaborators engaged in implementation. Officials reported a 25 percent decline in firearm homicides since 2022 and an 11 percent decrease in overall firearm deaths over 2023 and 2024. Milwaukee Police Department data show homicides in Milwaukee increased 7 percent from 2024 to 2025, though homicides through August 24, 2026 are down 25 percent compared with the same period the prior year. No legislative action or appropriation was announced alongside the plan's release.

Source: WFHR 1320 AM Wisconsin Rapids (Statewide) | <https://www.wfhr.com/news/2026/08/26/gov-tony-evers-launches-statewide-injury-and-violence-prevention-plan>

Fast Forward grants available to Wisconsin employers

Gov. Tony Evers and the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development announced approximately \$5 million in available funding through Wisconsin Fast Forward grants, open to employers of all sizes across industries including manufacturing, healthcare, and information technology. Individual grants range from \$5,000 to \$400,000, with higher amounts available for consortium applicants, and reimburse costs of customized occupational training for unemployed, underemployed, and existing workers. Eligible applicants include public agencies, private organizations, lead-applicant consortia, and tribal governing bodies of federally recognized tribes or organizations appointed by tribal governing bodies. Since the program launched in 2013, the department reports more than \$58 million awarded across 516 projects, supporting training for over 32,000 workers statewide. Department Secretary Amy Pechacek is listed as program authority. Applications are due Monday, October 5 at 3 p.m., with further information and instructions available at wisconsinfastforward.com.

Source: Tomahawk Leader (Statewide) | <https://www.tomahawkleader.com/stories/fast-forward-grants-available-to-wisconsin-employers,351925>

Wisconsin July employment data released

The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development released U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics preliminary nonseasonally adjusted employment and unemployment estimates for July 2026 covering metropolitan areas, major cities, and counties statewide. Lafayette County recorded the state's lowest unemployment rate at 2.5 percent, unchanged from June 2026 and 0.1 percentage points above its July 2025 rate, and Green County held at 2.8 percent, also unchanged from June and 0.2 percentage points above July 2025. Among the state's 13 metropolitan statistical areas, rates increased in one, Appleton, and decreased in four over the month, while rates increased in 12 areas over the year, with Fond du Lac the only area unchanged year-over-year. Among counties, rates increased in 22, decreased in 25, and held steady in 25 over the month, and 51

counties posted year-over-year increases, 10 posted decreases, and 11 were unchanged. Among Wisconsin's largest cities, rates increased in 10 and decreased in 19 over the month.

Source: Monroe Times (Statewide) | <https://themonroetimes.com/local-news/wisconsin-july-employment-data-released/>

WisEye Morning Minute: Study Committee on District Attorney Funding Formula

The Wisconsin Legislative Council Study Committee on District Attorney Funding Formula convened on August 25, 2026 to examine the state's weighted caseload formula used to determine staff allocations for district attorney offices across Wisconsin. The committee is tasked with assessing whether the existing formula accurately reflects the actual workload of district attorney offices and whether revisions are warranted. Outagamie County District Attorney Mindy Tempelis participated in the proceedings alongside Committee Chair Rep. Ron Tusler. No vote or formal determination was reported from this session. The full program was made available through WisEye at wiseye.org. The committee's work is ongoing, with members continuing to consider potential changes to the funding formula.

Source: Kenosha News (Statewide) | https://www.kenoshanews.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/video_f5c907b4-4b10-5cdb-854e-0cbcc770243f.html

Yes, Wisconsin Loves Its Technical Colleges

The Wisconsin Technical College System received \$867 million in public operating funds from state aid and local property taxes in fiscal year 2024-25, spread across 293,000 students, equaling less than \$3,000 per student in public subsidy. System President Layla Merrifield disputed findings in the CROWE report, which the organization says erroneously calculated per-student public funding at over \$14,000 by counting only full-time equivalent associate degree students while excluding more than 80 percent of system students who attend part-time and the 130,000 annually enrolled in diplomas, certificates, and workforce training. The Wisconsin Policy Forum identified the data limitations in its own review of the CROWE figures. General system state aid stands lower today than in 2010, and property tax levy authority has been capped since 2014; the most recent state budget provided \$2.7 million annually in general aid to technical colleges, compared with a \$250 million increase allocated to the Universities of Wisconsin. Chippewa Valley Technical College was named a Top 10 Aspen Institute finalist for 2026. The article's language is partly advocacy-oriented.

Source: Bloomer Advance (Statewide) | https://www.bloomeradvance.com/news/front_page/article_6f9d4837-9745-4a9a-a3fa-f3ee2a0b79a5.html

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